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MAY 2026

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Summer ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT Guide

Our comprehensive lists on what to do in central Iowa this summer from art shows, theatrical performances, sporting events, concerts and most everything in between.

CENTER STAGE

The Ingersoll is a performing arts phoenix

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

A cultural reset

Winter has finally loosened its grip, and with it goes the long stretch of indoor hibernation. The heavy coats are retired, the gray skies begin to lift, and the outdoors suddenly feel like an invitation. This seasonal shift isn't just about warmer temperatures. It's a cultural reset.

Across parks, streets and public squares, arts and entertainment are stepping back into the open air. Musicians trade dimly lit bars for sunny sidewalks. Local theater groups experiment with pop-up performances under the sky. Even the simple act of watching a movie feels different when it is projected onto a screen beneath the stars.

There is something uniquely communal about outdoor creativity. Strangers linger longer, conversations spark more easily, and art becomes less formal, more accessible. You don't need a ticket or a plan — just a willingness to wander and discover.

Winter may have its quiet charm, but spring and early summer belong to movement, color and shared experience. And right now, the stage is everywhere. Learn how you can participate in this month's Arts and Entertainment Guide.

God laughs

Jim Duncan's essay this month is a reflective memoir tracing his family lore, his life lessons and the unpredictability of plans. He reflects on how modern politics has become polarized, eroding cooperation once seen in leaders who crossed party lines. He also recounts struggles with language learning, music and math, and the humor of repeated failure despite extensive study. The piece ultimately argues for humor, moderation and skepticism toward dogma, suggesting that adaptability and levity are essential for navigating life's uncertainties. It notes that "God laughs" at human plans, encouraging acceptance of change and finding shelter in simplicity and perspective. It is a meditation on inherited stories, personal failure, cultural change and the value of humor in uncertainty. I enjoyed it, and I think you will, too.

Getting comfortable with AI

Small businesses are increasingly adopting artificial intelligence (AI) to improve efficiency, reduce costs and enhance customer experiences. AI tools can automate routine tasks such as scheduling, email responses, bookkeeping, and inventory management, allowing owners of local small businesses to focus more on strategy and growth. While challenges such as cost, learning curves and data privacy remain, AI is becoming more user-friendly and affordable, as you will see from examples in this month's feature in our Business Journal.

You will find all this and more in this month's CITYVIEW. As always, I thank you for reading. ■

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Our comprehensive lists on what to do in central Iowa this summer from art shows, theatrical performances, sporting events, concerts and most everything in between.

ON THE COVER: Photo courtesy of Greater Des Moines Partnership

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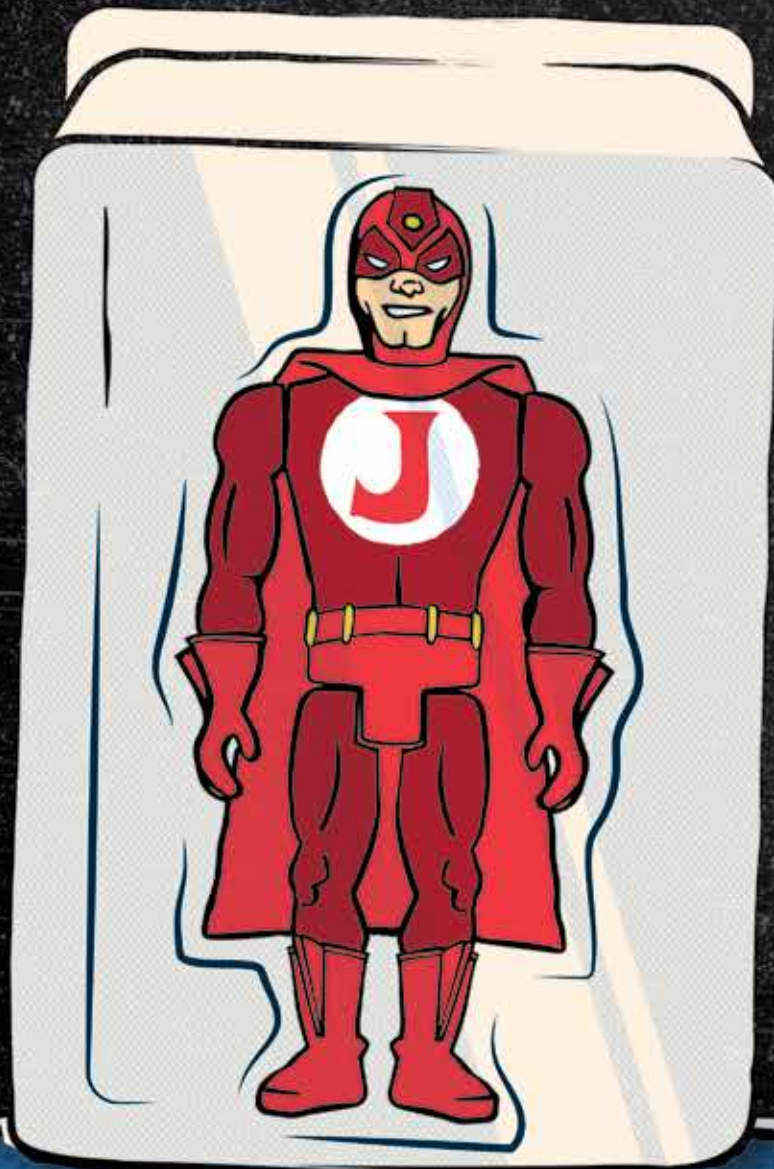
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ASK CITYVIEW

By CITYVIEW staff

Ask CITYVIEW anything by emailing editor@dmcityview.com.

Q. Is there a way to get notifications for when we should lower our American flags to half-staff?

A. Here is a site you may want to check out: halfstaff.org. The volunteers at Halfstaff.org seem to provide accurate and timely information on properly displaying the flag of the United States of America, listed out by state. Their website says, "The United States flag represents all the people of America as does our organization. We do not support any political candidate, nor do we endorse any religious organization. This website was created out of a need. Over the years patriotic Americans have desired to show the proper respect for their American Flags. The problem has been in the inability to obtain timely information on when and how to fly their American flags. We base our notices on the Flag Code of the United States of America."



Q. Is it true that there is an ape preserve on the south side of the city?



A. Yes, it is true. The Ape Cognition and Conservation Initiative was renamed to the Ape Initiative in December 2013. The Initiative earned its first apes in 2005 as the Great Ape Trust, which was launched in part by the primatologist Sue Savage-Rumbaugh and Des Moines businessman Ted Townsend.

The Great Ape Trust turned over the care of its bonobos to the Iowa Primate Learning Sanctuary. In 2013, the Ape Initiative then assumed responsibility and care of the bonobos. The bonobos' names are Maisha, Teco, Nyota, Clara, Mali, Elikya and Kanzi. Kanzi unfortunately passed away in March 2025 at 44 years old.

The Ape Initiative has a 230-acre property. The bonobos help the research scientists uncover the origins of human language, cognition and behavior, as bonobos are the closest living relative to humans. Bonobos are an endangered species of Great Ape with as few as 15-20,000 living in the wild. ■

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YOUR VIEW

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters are edited for space, spelling and clarity.

No Tim McGraw?

How can Tim McGraw not make the top 50 (CITYVIEW, March 2026)? After all the shows he has put on in Des Moines, and let's not forget he was the first big star to have a concert at Field of Dreams. Just thought he should have been included. His wife made the list. - Susan B.

Closer to home

I was so excited to see the heading "Refill and renew" in your Business Journal column (CITYVIEW, Business and trends, March 2026), but after reading it I was very disappointed that two businesses closer to home than Newton (not that the business isn't great; I'm sure it is fantastic) were not mentioned.

The Collective in the Highland Park neighborhood is a fantastic source for refills in body, hair and skin care. They also have household cleaning products that you can put right in your own refillable bottle or grab one of their recycled or donated bottles.

The Refill Market is right in Des Moines on Ingersoll and offers refillable grocery items from spices and basic cooking items like flour and sugar to teas. They also have a deli case and freezer items and Grab 'n' Go options every Wednesday.

Hope to see these places mentioned soon! Small businesses need all of our support. - Jeri Wendzel

Editor's note: We wrote about four businesses, one each from Valley Junction, Urbandale, Des Moines and Newton.

Interesting and informative

Just wanted to share how much I enjoyed and appreciated the March issue (CITYVIEW, March 2026). I packed several magazines on my recent airplane trip and never got to them because every article in CITYVIEW was so interesting and informative. Congratulations and thanks! - Connie Kelehan

Glad to see real estate photos back

Just a thank you again for getting the pictures of buildings that have been sold in the DSM area back. Today I sadly saw my old school, Franklin Jr High School, in the picture! That was such a grand school back in the late 1960s. So many wonderful memories took place in that building for the lucky ones who went there. I can still remember several names of my teachers:

Mr. Bench, Mr. Moe, Miss Cotton and Mrs. Traster the French teacher. They had a lasting impact on my life.

Thanks for the memories. - Marilyn

Warm and welcoming?

What Lutheran Church of Hope pastor Jeremy John said is accurate in my belief: "...people are exhausted from being judged....And I think people are looking and they're searching and they're finding that Jesus doesn't compare you based on everybody else."

While they say "welcoming (to all)," none of the mega-churches featured are reconciling toward LGBTQ individuals nor are they members of DSM's Rainbow Faith Coalition. Are they actually walking the full talk of welcoming and loving all their neighbors? Would they allow a LGBTQ as a full member... and have them teach Sunday school? Would they allow and have their pastor(s) perform a LGBTQ wedding? Or do they just want straight, cis-gender folks to fill their Barcaloungers and sip their coffee?

Good article but harder, more probing questions could enhance readers understanding of faith entertainment and saying, "Hey, we're all warm and welcoming..." but not fully open and to all. - Betty VanWoert

FACEBOOK COMMENTS



cityview magazine
(comments unedited)

CITYVIEW magazine: What would make the Des Moines Arts Festival even better?

Jordan Campbell: beer

Kurt Nicholson: Dancing bears

Steve Ratt Ratcliff: Maybe not charge the artist as much as they do drop it half price. Make it easier for local artist to get in on it and cheaper.

Alyce Dyer-Hall: Combine with busking and musical performances

Sandy Doerring: More shaded seating

Tiffany Noelle: Free downtown parking during it

Tiffany Noelle: Add dance & theatre arts to the stage performances, not just music. Unless, they have & I've missed it.

Christy Mcgoldrick-Bierma: Better food options/trucks and more places to sit in the shade

Lynn Andlauer: Yes. At least one section for art that the average person can afford.

Yolanda Jackson: Needs to stay open longer

Adam Henscheid: Des Moines Art

Dennis Frank: A band, since they scrapped the Italian Festival.

Lisa Hurt Johnson: No strollers or wagons or a special lane for them. Free parking and a section

of local artist

John Price: Brother Trucker.

Joel Bader: Shuttle services from West Des Moines, SouthRidge Mall, Ankeny, Altoona, Urbandale.

Kelly Davis: Put the artists and food vendors on only one side of the street, so it's not so congested and you can actually get down the street.

Jinx Etling: Drag queens, banned books and live music.

Rob Sherwood: Definitely little people on tall stilts.

John Aceto: Performance art!

Jessica Greenwell: Interactive art, or immersive art

Kell Lem J Punkadelic: More local art. More SHADE.

Dennis Long: A local artist section.

Kimberly Kelley: More places to sit down and relax inbetween booths and such.

Joey Dursky: Local authors

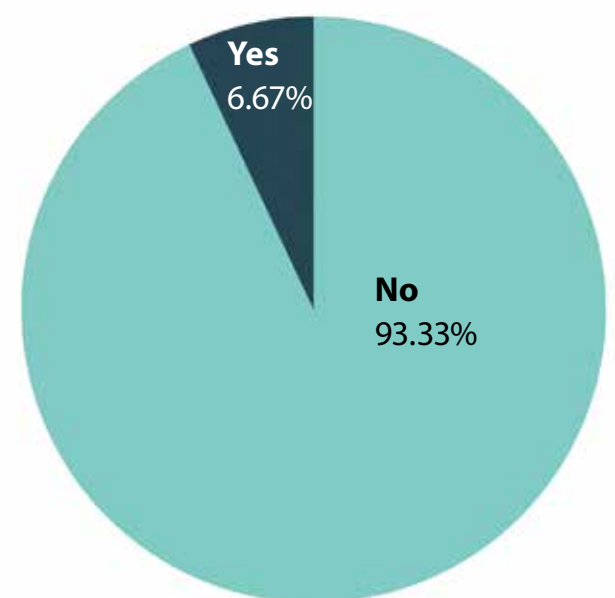
Danielle Palmer: More affordable art. The prices are insane!

POLL POSITION

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



Should U.S. Congress members be paid during government shutdowns?



STRAY THOUGHTS

BY RANDY EVANS

Lawmakers wag their fingers with new Ian Roberts Resume Fraud law

No more puffing the resume with false degrees

Come July, Iowa employers may want to add an ominous warning on their job application forms: tell a lie and you could go to jail.

That's right — no more puffing the resume with false degrees from the University of Okoboji or Faber College.

And do not claim to have a chauffeur's license when you lack the permit needed to drive a truck.

That's because Gov. Kim Reynolds signed House File 2337 into law, making it a crime to knowingly provide false academic degrees or credentials for the purpose of obtaining employment or other personal gain.

The legislation does not use these words, but the bill could have been named the Ian Roberts Resume Fraud Act.

Legislators saw an urgent need to act following the arrest last September of the Des Moines Public Schools superintendent. The conduct described in the new law closely tracks the misrepresentations by Roberts — fabricated academic degrees and

honors that came to light only after he was jailed on immigration and gun charges.

The language in the bill the governor approved on April 16 applies to a job candidate's academic degrees or academic credentials. The legislation also extends to when a person "knowingly and with intent" falsely represents oneself as having a license in a regulated professional or occupation.

Those positions subject to criminal penalties for misrepresentation span a wide swath of licensed work — from physicians, nurses and pharmacists, to plumbers, real estate appraisers, barbers and nursing home administrators, with many others in there, too.

The new law is punishable as a simple misdemeanor. Violators are subject to jail terms of up to 30 days and fines ranging from \$105 to \$855.

In fairness, though, the new law does have a loophole grounded in what an Iowa Supreme Court justice once described as the rough and tumble, Wild West world of politics.

So, lying in politics remains largely protected, largely unpunished and largely accepted as a way of life, even though deception used to get a regular job can now land you in jail.

Indeed, the politicians who write our criminal laws are as comfortable wagging a legal finger at others who falsify their credentials and as they are in preserving a system that embraces candidates who pad their resumes or misstate their qualifications.

Who does not remember the state senator from Ottumwa and his official biography listing that he had a business degree. Turns out, he passed a training course offered through the Sizzler restaurant chain.

In politics, however, candidates and officeholders operate in a space where even demonstrably false statements are often shielded as protected speech, leaving voters — not prosecutors — to sort truth from fiction.

The problem for the voters remains that often they learn of the politician's lie only after the votes are counted and the election is called.

Plus, when political candidates present an embellished version of their own record — polished, selective or outright false — or when they use manipulative or deceptive campaign practices, the consequences are far less certain. That's because it is not front-page news to find out that a politician lied.

This means that when it comes to political candidates, the burden falls on voters to separate fact from fiction.

The new law offers little recourse for campaign deception, even when it is deliberate. And the ballot box recourse may have to wait until the next two-year or four-year election cycle.

So, there is another lesson the politicians buried in the new Ian Roberts Resume Fraud law: "Do as I say. Don't do as I do." ■

Randy Evans can be reached at DMRevs2810@gmail.com.



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CIVIC SKINNY

BY CITYVIEW STAFF

A test run of Ramsey evidence? Offenburger, Evans, TV stations honored. Jail restraints confusion. And more lowans are fishing.

The arrest of **Kristin Ramsey** in the **Ashley Okland** murder case has raised a few questions, as what the public has been provided so far is not very helpful in determining why it was presented to a grand jury 15 years later. The use of a grand jury is also unusual in Iowa. A person in the know tells Skinny that perhaps the prosecutor wanted to test run the known evidence to see if it was enough to convince the grand jury. Maybe. Or, this person says, it could be a situation where the attorney general's cold case unit decided there would be no new information, and the family wanted some type of review. So the Dallas County attorney did a grand jury. Or, as many suspect, there is some new information that has not yet been disclosed. It is difficult to know at this juncture. Time will tell. ...

Former Des Moines Register "Iowa Boy" columnist **Chuck Offenburger** was honored recently for his work on highlighting the importance of bikeable communities and the restoration of the 89-mile Raccoon River Valley Trail. Offenburger received the Trail Champion Award at the Raccoon River Valley Trail Association's 20th Anniversary Fundraising Banquet on April 11 in Adel. This is the first year for the award, and organizers say they plan to make it an annual recognition. Offenburger, who famously wrote about Iowa's people, places and

events in the daily newspaper, said during the prime of his cycling career in 1995, he had ridden his bicycle on every Iowa trail. With all the growth in trails, he now says that he has not ridden even half. In speaking about the RRVT association, he said, "We've become the model for how you bind your communities to the trail so they will come in terms of investment, support, involvement and volunteering." ...

Another local writer also recently received an honor. Author of CITYVIEW's Stray Thoughts column and Iowa Freedom of Information Director, **Randy Evans**, was inducted into the hall of fame at the University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communications. Evans, who also served the editorial page editor for The Des Moines Register, has influenced writers and readers for six decades. ...

KCCI might need to add some more shelves to its trophy cabinet after the local CBS affiliate's recent showing at the Iowa Broadcast News Association awards ceremony in April. The awards include the distinction of Overall Excellence, First and Second place in the In-Depth Series, Public Affairs for DMPS Superintendent in ICE Custody, In-Depth Series for State of Cancer, Feature for Do You Want To Get Married Today, General Reporting for KCCI Investigates Iowa's Foster Care Task Force, Spot News for Arrest of DMPS Superintendent Ian Roberts, Best Sportscast

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for Iowa State Wins in Ireland and Best Newscast for News at 4:00. ...

Iowa PBS also received recognition recently at the IBNA awards. First-place awards included Farm and Agribusiness for Market to Market: Women in Ag, and Sports Play-by-Play for the 2025 IGHSAY Girls State Softball Championship between 3A teams Williamsburg and Wahlert. Second-place awards were for Public Affairs for Market to Market: Study: Ag Sources of Nitrates in Water, MtoM Podcast: Cattle Complex is Living Up to its Name, General Reporting for Market to Market: Migrant Labor in Texas. Iowa PBS also received third place for In-Depth Series for Market to Market: CRP Investigation. ...

Over the course of a month, CITYVIEW was playing a game of phone tag with the **Iowa Office of Ombudsmen (IOO)** and the **Iowa Department of Corrections (DOC)**. In February of last year, we reported the findings of the IOO report “Sitting In Place: A Re-Examination of Restraint Device Use and Regulations for Iowa’s County Jails.”

In the report, it stated that two county jails, Boone and Webster, misused restraint chairs against inmates, some of whom were in the midst of a mental health crisis. At the conclusion of the report, the IOO listed recommendations to implement, including less restrictive alternatives, training, and documentation, among others. We reached out to the IOO to see if any of the jails had implemented or made meaningful progress toward the recommendations.

Senior Deputy Ombudsmen **Bert Dalmer** responded that the IOO had followed up with the DOC in the months following the release of the report, but the DOC had not made them aware of any changes to date. He directed us to ask the DOC, which would be able to provide us with more substantive developments.

We reached out to the email, potentially **Zach Carlyle**, the DOC official spokesperson, despite the email account lacking his name or signature, posing the same question, and received this response:

“After looking at the report, it appears that it is focused more on jails, not the prisons. The Iowa DOC does not oversee the jails in the state of Iowa. We oversee the nine prisons.”

Playing our game of telephone, we told this to Dalmer, whose initial response was, “Can I ask who gave you that quote?”

After responding that the email had no name attached, Dalmer added, “Well, the answer surprises me, as it’s not exactly true. The Iowa Administrative Code clearly establishes a regimen of jail inspections to be performed by DOC at least annually. The recommendations on pages 56-57 of our report are clearly directed at DOC and sharpening/clarifying their jail rules. Of course, the jails operate with a lot of autonomy and you could follow up with them directly (Boone and Webster) since DOC is not obligated to ensure they are following up on our recommendations... But, again, we did make recommendations to DOC in this report.”

Back to the DOC we went, continuing the game of telephone, saying what Dalmer had told us, to the mysterious DOC email account. We asked who we were

speaking to, and did not receive a response. ...

Whereworkmatters.org is a website with an assessment of more than 12 million workers at 1,750 employers. They collected data points on how those workers report their career progression and compensation on sites like LinkedIn, Indeed, Glassdoor and other similar websites.

We looked at an employer list from the Des Moines Partnership of the largest non-government employers in the Des Moines metro. Companies are given plaques such as platinum, gold or silver in areas such as early career, growth, stability and overall. To keep it simple, we looked for companies that received overall employer honors, and those were.

John Deere and **Nationwide** were the only two that earned an overall platinum employer.

Companies that earned overall gold employers were **Hy-Vee, Mercy Health, Principal Financial Group, Corteva, Mercer, Blue Cross Blue Shield** and **Wells Fargo**, which might have been platinum before they found out about their quarterly layoffs. ...

FishingBooker.com helps people book fishing trips. The website released its America’s Best Fishing States Index of 2026. The national analysis of recreation fishing across the entire country shows that Iowa had the nation’s biggest leap, climbing 23 spots from 46th to 23rd. According to FishingBooker, it is the largest jump not only this year but in the entire four years of the index.

What drove the salmon-like leap in Iowa’s ranking came down to four factors. Financial accessibility, where Iowa was one of the most cost-effective states for fishing. Infrastructure and facilities, with Iowa allegedly adding 100 new fishing ponds to urban centers. Quality of access, with Iowa activating 105 natural infrastructure projects. And, modernization, through the GoOutdoorsIowa app. Local demand is soaring with more than 262,000 licenses sold. ■

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Author, illustrator Don Tate returns to Des Moines to inspire young readers

The Iowa native headlined a literacy event at King Elementary, encouraging students to read widely and embrace their talents as part of Black Child Development Institute-Iowa's Read to Succeed program.

Iowa native Don Tate jokes that people often ask if he was born with a pencil in hand.

It would explain a lot.

Tate, who was raised in Des Moines, has 90 published books to his name as both a writer and illustrator, with a four-decade career in book publishing and newspapers, including stints as a graphic journalist with The Des Moines Register and the Austin American-Statesman.

"I can't remember a day in my life when I wasn't drawing pictures," Tate said.

Now living in Austin, Texas, where he earned the 2021 Texas Writer Award at the Texas Book Festival, Tate returned to his roots and keynoted the Black Child Development Institute-organized Read to Succeed Luncheon in April, honoring King Elementary School students in Des Moines involved in a yearlong program aimed at boosting a love of reading.

Tate, an alumnus of the Des Moines Public Schools and Des Moines Area Community College, told several dozen elementary school students and their families, as well as other supporters of reading and the school system, that he had early inspiration as an artist.

"I wanted to be just like Jim Henson because I liked making puppets, too," Tate said, referencing the late creator of "The Muppets."

Tate told the students that "everybody is born with their own special talents."

He also encouraged them to read.

"When you read, you learn about other people who don't look like you," Tate said.

BCDI-Iowa has been working at King Elementary to help improve literacy rates, along with providing children with free books and distributing winter hats, socks and gloves to every student (and coats, as needed), according to a news release from the organization.



Dr. Anita Fleming-Rife speaks with Des Moines schools Superintendent Matt Smith.

According to BCDI, 48% of Des Moines Public Schools students are not reading at grade level, with many coming from homes where English is not the primary language.

"The African proverb 'It takes a village to raise a child' means an entire community must participate in a child's growth and development," Dr. Anita Fleming-Rife, president of BCDI-Iowa, said. "That's what we have with us today. We have a village. We have come out to show love and support to the children in our community, the children in our village."

The event was hosted by Black Child Development Institute-Iowa and Reach Out and Read-Midwest, serving Iowa and Nebraska.

One of the leaders in attendance was Des Moines Schools Superintendent Matt Smith. Smith said having an accomplished and nationally recognized alumnus of the Des Moines schools in Tate inspired him, as did the full celebration.

"I think it represents the heart of Des Moines and the community of Des Moines and the importance of an entire village gathered around our kids to impress upon them the significance of reading and how



Thirteen-year-old Saily Bah of Urbandale displays her published book "Rise Above" during the Read To Succeed luncheon in Des Moines at the Boys and Girls Club near the Drake University campus. Pictured with Saily are her mom Rohey Sallah (seated) and Elsie Jackson, the reading chair for Black Child Development Institute-Iowa.

foundational it is to who they are as people," Smith said in an interview.

Talented young people showcased published works during the luncheon.

Saily Bah, 13, of Urbandale, talked with well-wishers and readers about her published book, "Rise Above: How to Turn a Negative Situation Into a Positive One." She also illustrated the book.

She wrote it at age 11.

"I experienced an act of racism at school, and I felt horrible," Saily said. "I know many people go through this. So I just had to create something that people can benefit from so they can learn how to cope with negative situations."

The book is available in a number of places, including her Facebook page. It is also on Amazon. ■

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





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COMING UP

SUBMIT ENTRIES AND PHOTOS TO 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.

ANKENY ART FESTIVAL

Historic Uptown Ankeny, Third Street and Walnut Street, Ankeny

www.ankenyartcenter.org/artfestival

May 16

Uptown Ankeny becomes flush with art for this outdoor festival. This year, there will be more than 50 regional artists, live music, food trucks, hands-on activities and creative experiences for all ages.

VALLEY JUNCTION ARTS FESTIVAL

100-200 Blocks of Fifth Street, West Des Moines

www.valleyjunction.com/valley-junction-events/valley-junction-arts-festival/

May 17

Those who attend this festival can see the works of local artists as part of the juried exhibition. More than 50 Iowa and other artists take over Valley Junction with their eye-popping creativity. There will be live entertainment, food, activities, demonstrations and much more. The shops in the area will also be open during the festival.

WATERWORKS PARK

Lauridsen Amphitheater, Des Moines
Water Works Park, 2251 George Flagg Parkway

www.waterworkspark.org

- **May 7:** Dwight Yoakam and ZZ Top at 7 p.m.
- **May 21:** Styx with Cheap Trick at 6 p.m.

IOWA

BARNSTORMERS

Wells Fargo Arena, 730 Third St.,
Des Moines

www.theiowabarnstormers.com

Home games:

- **May 22** vs. Jacksonville Sharks at 7 p.m.



JASPER WINERY SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

2400 George Flagg Parkway,
Des Moines

www.jasperwinery.com

- **May 7:** Kick
- **May 14:** Dueling Guitars feat. Brian and Brad
- **May 21:** Birdchild
- **May 28:** Blake Jack with Jordan Beem

Photo courtesy of Jasper Winery

CITYVIEW'S MIDDAY MIXER

The District at Prairie Trail, Ankeny

middaymixer.dmcityview.com

May 30

CITYVIEW is pleased to present the inaugural Midday Mixer to Ankeny on Saturday, May 30 from 1-4 p.m. For a ticket price of \$25 (\$35 at the door), attendees will receive 10 drink tickets that can be redeemed for sample cocktails at participating venues. The event runs from 1-4 p.m. You can check in at any time between those hours.



DES MOINES MENACE

Mediacom Stadium, 1427-1483 25th St.,
Des Moines

www.menacesoccer.com

Home games:

- **May 9** vs. Capital City Roots (Friendly) at 7 p.m.
- **May 15** vs. SantaFe Wanderers at 7 p.m.
- **May 20** vs. Sunflower State FC at 7 p.m.

COMING UP

SUBMIT ENTRIES AND PHOTOS TO EDITOR@DMCITYVIEW.COM



Photo by Dylan Heuer

IOWA CUBS

Principal Park, 1 Line Drive, Des Moines
www.iowacubs.com

Home games

- **May 7** vs. Columbus at 12:08 p.m.
- **May 8** vs. Columbus at 7:08 p.m. | Outdoors Night
- **May 9** vs. Columbus at 3:08 p.m. | Mental Health Awareness Day | Catch On The Field
- **May 10** vs. Columbus at 1:08 p.m. | Mother's Day
- **May 19** vs. Memphis at 6:38 p.m.
- **May 20** vs. Memphis at 12:08 p.m.
- **May 21** vs. Memphis at 12:08 p.m. | Iowa Oaks
- **May 22** vs. Memphis at 7:08 p.m. | Friday Night Fireworks
- **May 23** vs. Memphis at 6:08 p.m. | Catch On The Field
- **May 24** vs. Memphis at 1:08 p.m. | Kids Run The Bases

DES MOINES CON

Iowa Events Center, 730 Third St., Des Moines
www.desmoinescon.com
May 29-31

This annual convention welcomes some of the biggest names in voice acting, comic books and acting. There are also exhibitors, artists, and more entertainment throughout the weekend.



Photo courtesy of Iowa Asian Alliance

CELEBRASIAN

Western Gateway Park, 1205 Locust St., Des Moines
www.iowaasianalliance.com
May 22-23

Celebrate a rich array of Asian culture with authentic food, music, exhibits, entertainment and more.



TULIP TIME FESTIVAL

507 Franklin St., Pella
www.visitpella.com/tulip_time
May 7-9

Pella's Dutch heritage will be celebrated in a variety of eye-popping, colorful and cultural ways at the 2026 Tulip Time Festival. ■

Photo courtesy of Iowa Tourism Office

A free resource for the central Iowa business community

CITYVIEW'S

BUSINESS JOURNAL



SMALL BUSINESSES TURN TO AI

to boost efficiency without
losing the human touch

Entrepreneurs across upholstery, operations and digital marketing say AI is streamlining workflows and expanding opportunity — while raising new questions about balance, accuracy and connection.

By Lindsey Giardino

While the technology continues to evolve, many entrepreneurs say its greatest value lies not in replacing human work but in creating more space for it.

Riana LeJeune,
owner of Repinned.



FEATURE

AI in any industry

AI can be incorporated into just about any small business — even an upholstery business.

At Repinned, Riana LeJeune's upholstery business, AI helps streamline proposals, client communication and project planning so the team can stay focused on craftsmanship and execution.

But the real transformation is happening through Renewabl, LeJeune's platform for visualization and lead generation built specifically for upholsterers, workrooms and soft-furnishing professionals.

In the app, AI is used to create photorealistic visualizations of furniture so clients can see what their piece will become before committing. It removes uncertainty and builds confidence in the decision-making process, LeJeune said.

"I built Renewabl because nothing else existed that truly understood our industry," she said. "Most AI tools can generate a pretty image, but they don't understand furniture anatomy, seam placement or how materials behave in real life."

Renewabl aims to solve that.

"Upholstery is a centuries-old skilled trade that's been quietly neglected for decades," LeJeune said. "At the same time, we're discarding millions of pieces of furniture every year that were built to last."

She saw a gap between imagination and action. People could not always visualize the potential of what they already had, so they defaulted to buying new.

"With my background in psychology, I understand how people make decisions, and visualization plays a huge role in that," LeJeune said. "AI gave me a way to bridge that gap, so I took it upon myself to combine my expertise in upholstery with AI to build Renewabl."

For upholstery shops globally, LeJeune believes AI is solving a much bigger problem. At a larger scale, it is about creating a circular ecosystem.

"When people can see the potential in what they already own — or what they find secondhand — they're more likely to restore rather than replace," she said. "That supports skilled trades, reduces waste and keeps quality furniture in circulation longer."

She does not see AI replacing trades like hers.

"I see it bringing visibility back to them," LeJeune said. "And that visibility creates opportunity — for artisans, for small businesses and for the next generation entering the skilled trades."

Using AI as a tool

"AI is a tool. A powerful one, but still a tool," said Abby Martinez, owner of Well Balanced Business, which specializes in providing virtual assistant and operational behavior management services.

"The heart of every business is people, and the businesses that will thrive in this next chapter are the ones that use AI to become more human, not less," she said.

In practice, Martinez and her team use AI as a behind-the-scenes partner. It helps with the heavy lifting on tasks like drafting SOPs, organizing research, pulling action items from meetings and keeping projects moving. That means the OBMs and VAs are not buried in administrative work.

"They're freed up to think strategically, catch the nuances and have real conversations with the founders we support," Martinez said. "AI handles the mechanics so our people can handle the relationships."

Martinez decided to implement AI after noticing her team was spending its best energy on tasks that were not the reason they got into the work.

"When I realized AI could absorb some of that behind-the-scenes work, it was not about speed for speed's sake," she said. "It was about protecting the human parts of what we do — the strategic thinking, the relationship building, the creative problem-solving for our clients. That is what I wanted more of, and AI helped make

room for it."

Claude is the AI tool Martinez and her team return to daily. What she appreciates about it is its ability to understand nuance and tone — something especially important in a people-first business.

On the flip side, the biggest risk she sees is people using AI to replace human connection instead of support it.

"You can tell when a message was written by someone who actually cares versus something that was automated and sent without thought," Martinez said. "Our clients can feel that too, so we're really intentional."

Ultimately, AI has given Martinez and her team something unexpected: their attention back.

"AI did not make our business more efficient so we could do more work," she said. "It made our business more human so we could do better work."

Martinez added that she thinks the future is less about what AI can do and more about what it frees humans to do. That idea also shapes Kinflow, her other company — a business operating system built on GoHighLevel that gives coaches and service providers the systems and automation they need to run their businesses without losing the human touch.

"My goal is to help other entrepreneurs use these tools the same way we do — as a way to protect their humanity, not outsource it," she said.



Abby Martinez, owner of Well Balanced Business

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MENU

Crudite Platter: [13x13 board] Pepper sticks, cucumber slices, cherry tomatoes, carrot sticks served with a garden dill dip (24oz) and Roasted Hummus (24oz)

Salsa Bar with Tortilla and Kettle Chips [80oz]: Mango, Apple, Strawberry, Cilantro, Red Onion [48oz] + Fire Roasted Salsa [48oz] + Queso Corn [1/2 steam pan]

Choice of:

Hickory Bacon-Wrapped Pork Tenderloin
[8- 8oz servings / half steam pan]

-or-

Hickory Wood Smoked Brisket:
[8- 8oz servings / half steam pan]

Sides: Salted Pretzel Roll [8 pcs] + Grilled Asparagus [48oz]
+ Mashed Potatoes [1/2 steam pan]

Dessert: Dutch-crumbled apple pie [8pcs] with Vanilla Bean Crème [48oz] and Bourbon Caramel [8oz]

AI in the digital world

Ramya Prasad, owner of Tech Stack Digital Solutions, a digital marketing agency, uses AI in a number of ways in her day-to-day work. In fact, it has become a core part of how her team operates. They primarily use it to optimize web pages for SEO, create social media content and build automated workflows that keep marketing consistent without constant manual effort.

Prasad has also started creating simple apps to pull keyword insights from platforms like Reddit, giving her team a better understanding of what people are actually searching for and discussing.

One of the most notable implementations, she said, is AI voice on their website, which allows potential clients to interact and get answers at any time, effectively turning their site into a round-the-clock resource.

But what Prasad finds most powerful is how AI is leveling the playing field.

"Small businesses can now access tools and strategies that were once only available to larger companies," she said.

At the same time, Prasad emphasizes that AI works best when combined with real expertise. It can speed things up and improve efficiency, but the strategy behind it still matters.

"The businesses that will benefit the most are the ones that start using it now, build simple systems around it and stay consistent," she said.

She also notes that businesses that adapt and begin optimizing for both SEO and AI visibility will be in a stronger position moving forward.

In addition to saving time, another major shift has been using voice agents to handle client inquiries.

"Instead of missing calls or responding late, we now have systems in place that can engage with potential clients right away," Prasad said. "This helps us capture more opportunities while also improving the overall client experience."

Because of this, Prasad's team is no longer spending most of its time on backend execution, but instead focusing on overarching strategies to move both the business and its clients forward.

She acknowledges there are still challenges. One of the biggest is that AI can sound very confident even when the information is not fully accurate. Relying on it without review can lead to content that feels generic or slightly off.

There is also the pace of change.

"New AI tools are being released almost every day, and it can quickly become overwhelming," Prasad said. "It is easy to fall into the trap of constantly trying new tools instead of actually using what works. We have learned to be intentional about this. Instead of chasing every new tool, we focus on selecting the ones that truly improve our efficiency and results, and we avoid unnecessary distractions."

Overall, Prasad believes AI is opening up new opportunities for small businesses.

"In the past, a lot of advanced marketing tools and strategies were only available to larger companies with bigger budgets," she said.

Things like SEO content at scale, automation, customer follow-ups and data insights often required a full team or expensive software. Now, with AI, a small business owner can accomplish much of that without needing a large team.

"You can create content, respond to leads faster, automate follow-ups and stay consistent with your marketing without feeling overwhelmed," she said. "It removes a lot of the barriers that used to slow small businesses down."

At the end of the day, Prasad said, AI is not replacing small businesses.

"It is giving them tools to operate smarter, move faster and grow in ways that were not easily possible before." ■



Ramya Prasad, owner of Tech Stack Digital Solutions

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**1101 E. ARMY POST ROAD, DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2025-11-14
 SALE PRICE: \$1,050,000
 SELLER: MERCY CLINICS INC
 BUYER: NATIVE REAL ESTATE LLC
 ACRES: 1.915
 SQUARE FEET: 8,896

1506 GARFIELD ST., S.W., BONDURANT

SALE DATE: 2025-11-14
 SALE PRICE: \$750,000
 SELLER: TKRG HOLDINGS LLC
 BUYER: PARTON INVESTMENTS LLC
 ACRES: 3.180
 SQUARE FEET: 5,000

5714 HICKMAN ROAD, DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-11-14
 SALE PRICE: \$320,000
 SELLER: KARAIIDOS, RANDY G
 BUYER: DEEPITA INC
 ACRES: 0.486
 SQUARE FEET: 1,290

1165 SECOND AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-11-14
 SALE PRICE: \$9,550,000
 SELLER: SUD DES MOINES LLC
 BUYER: UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
 ACRES: 14.334
 SQUARE FEET: 262,491

5685 N.E. 16TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-11-17
 SALE PRICE: \$100
 SELLER: PS LP
 BUYER: STARKE, PETER T
 ACRES: 2.070
 SQUARE FEET: 20,250

1920 S.E. 14TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-11-17
 SALE PRICE: \$275,000
 SELLER: DANLEE CORP
 BUYER: BREW OIL LLC
 ACRES: 0.748
 SQUARE FEET: 3,360

1711 S.W. PLAZA PARKWAY, ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2025-11-18
 SALE PRICE: \$2,125,000
 SELLER: CEE 3 LLC
 BUYER: 1711 PARTNERS LLC
 ACRES: 0.985
 SQUARE FEET: 8,112

5922 N.E. 64TH ST., ALTOONA

SALE DATE: 2025-11-18
 SALE PRICE: \$2,942,230
 SELLER: FRANCOISE LOUISE BAILEY TRUST
 BUYER: ZH HOLDINGS LLC
 ACRES: 8.730
 SQUARE FEET: 0

4210 E. 14TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-11-18
 SALE PRICE: \$3,578,599
 SELLER: REAL ESTATE HOLDINGS VII LLC
 BUYER: PINE GROVE ESTATES LLC
 ACRES: 5.590
 SQUARE FEET: 468

1604 16TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-11-19
 SALE PRICE: \$250,000
 SELLER: BROAD STREET EQUITY LLC
 BUYER: GRABER, DYLAN
 ACRES: 0.123
 SQUARE FEET: 3,264

4268 N.W. 11TH COURT, DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-11-19
 SALE PRICE: \$341,000
 SELLER: MARVIN G KRAUSE REVOCABLE TRUST
 BUYER: LOWE, ANITA A
 ACRES: 0.667
 SQUARE FEET: 1,200

10331 UNIVERSITY AVE., CLIVE

SALE DATE: 2025-11-20
 SALE PRICE: \$7,875,000
 SELLER: KIMVEN COMPANY LLC
 BUYER: AT HOME INVESTORS LLC
 ACRES: 8.819
 SQUARE FEET: 91,030

648 19TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-11-21
 SALE PRICE: \$416,000
 SELLER: STEFFENSMEIER RENTALS LLC
 BUYER: STELLAZ VENTURES LLC
 ACRES: 0.172
 SQUARE FEET: 4,637

5921 FLEUR DRIVE, DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-11-21
 SALE PRICE: \$500,000
 SELLER: JET PARKING HOLDINGS LLC
 BUYER: SINGH DEVELOPMENT LLC
 ACRES: 1.438
 SQUARE FEET: 2,240

14111 DOUGLAS PARKWAY UNIT 101, URBANDALE

SALE DATE: 2025-11-22
 SALE PRICE: \$1,705,363
 SELLER: TIMBERLINE WELLNESS LLC
 BUYER: LOCK REAL ESTATE HOLDINGS LLC
 ACRES: 0.105
 SQUARE FEET: 12,260

14111 DOUGLAS PARKWAY, UNIT 103, URBANDALE

SALE DATE: 2025-11-22
 SALE PRICE: \$2,103,156
 SELLER: TIMBERLINE WELLNESS LLC
 BUYER: LINKS PROPERTIES LLC
 ACRES: 0.101
 SQUARE FEET: 12,260

5575 S.E. DELAWARE AVE., ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2025-11-24
 SALE PRICE: \$100
 SELLER: M-H PROPERTY ENTERPRISES LLC
 BUYER: TCEK REAL ESTATE LLC
 ACRES: 19.995
 SQUARE FEET: 0

2111 E. 17TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-11-24
 SALE PRICE: \$2,330,000
 SELLER: KEMIN INDUSTRIES INC
 BUYER: APOLLO DESIGN BUILD LLC
 ACRES: 2.380
 SQUARE FEET: 51,584

**1985 N.W. 94TH ST., CLIVE**

SALE DATE: 2025-11-25
 SALE PRICE: \$3,734,379
 SELLER: MARK ANDERSON PROPERTIES LC
 BUYER: 94TH PROPERTY LLC
 ACRES: 2.872
 SQUARE FEET: 35,000

NO ADDRESS LISTED

SALE DATE: 2025-11-25
 SALE PRICE: \$33,725
 SELLER: EBH INC
 BUYER: CITY OF GRIMES
 ACRES: 0
 SQUARE FEET: 0

NO ADDRESS LISTED

SALE DATE: 2025-11-25
 SALE PRICE: \$105,060
 SELLER: PRIME GRIMES LLC
 BUYER: CITY OF GRIMES
 ACRES: 4.827
 SQUARE FEET: 0

608 BOULDER AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-11-26
 SALE PRICE: \$220,000
 SELLER: ROBERTA M NIGRO REVOCABLE TRUST
 BUYER: 1458 LLC
 ACRES: 0.480
 SQUARE FEET: 2,022

301 E. FIRST ST., ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2025-11-30
 SALE PRICE: \$1,200,000
 SELLER: DENNY & CANDY ELWELL FOUNDATION
 BUYER: MUFA PROPERTIES LLC
 ACRES: 1.078
 SQUARE FEET: 4,981

9201 NORTH PARK DRIVE, URBANDALE

SALE DATE: 2025-12-01
 SALE PRICE: \$8,649,469
 SELLER: NPJTC LLC
 BUYER: REDI GROUP LLC
 ACRES: 8.155
 SQUARE FEET: 85,841

630 HILLSIDE AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-01
 SALE PRICE: \$471,000
 SELLER: PRIDE REAL ESTATE SERVICES LLC
 BUYER: LOFOTEN LLC
 ACRES: 0.746
 SQUARE FEET: 5,260

2811 S.E. 14TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-01
 SALE PRICE: \$210,000
 SELLER: REHA HOLDINGS LC
 BUYER: SINGH, SUKHJINDER
 ACRES: 0.260
 SQUARE FEET: 1,600

16 INDIANOLA ROAD, DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-01
 SALE PRICE: \$450,000
 SELLER: PETERSON, RAMONA
 BUYER: J&S REALTY LLC
 ACRES: 1.640

715 E. 25TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-02
 SALE PRICE: \$180,000
 SELLER: BASTOW, ROBERT
 BUYER: KLM ENDEAVORS LLC
 ACRES: 0.183
 SQUARE FEET: 1,972

8501 DOUGLAS AVE., UNIT 9, URBANDALE

SALE DATE: 2025-12-02
 SALE PRICE: \$175,000
 SELLER: NORTH CENTRAL POULTRY ASSOCIATION
 BUYER: JONES PROPERTY MANAGEMENT LLC
 ACRES: 0.199
 SQUARE FEET: 2,450

12 MAIN ST., S.E., BONDURANT

SALE DATE: 2025-12-02
 SALE PRICE: \$85,000
 SELLER: WANDA MAY BROWN REVOCABLE TRUST
 BUYER: BROWN, MICHAEL G
 ACRES: 0.126
 SQUARE FEET: 2,400

1513 N. ANKENY BLVD., ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2025-12-03
 SALE PRICE: \$835,000
 SELLER: MARYVILLE FAMILY PARTNERSHIP LP
 BUYER: KOREAN GRACE CHURCH
 ACRES: 1.400
 SQUARE FEET: 10,822

2825 E. UNIVERSITY AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-04
 SALE PRICE: \$1,100,000
 SELLER: SUNRISE REAL ESTATE INC
 BUYER: UNIVERSITY EQUITY GROUP LLC
 ACRES: 0.690
 SQUARE FEET: 9,352

251 S.E. GATEWAY CIRCLE, GRIMES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-04
 SALE PRICE: \$2,700,000
 SELLER: N&S HOSPITALITY INC
 BUYER: AMBCA215 LLC
 ACRES: 2.533
 SQUARE FEET: 30,012

5614 N.E. 12TH AVE., PLEASANT HILL

SALE DATE: 2025-12-05
 SALE PRICE: \$340,000
 SELLER: LEA HOLDINGS LLC
 BUYER: P-HILL PARTNERS LLC
 ACRES: 1.465
 SQUARE FEET: 0

185 N.W. BROADWAY AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-05
 SALE PRICE: \$810,000
 SELLER: BROADWAY AUTO SALES INC
 BUYER: KINGDOM HOMES LLC
 ACRES: 0.610
 SQUARE FEET: 2,910

5820 WINWOOD DRIVE, JOHNSTON

SALE DATE: 2025-12-05
 SALE PRICE: \$9,250,000
 SELLER: 5820 WINWOOD DR LLC
 BUYER: GATOR 25 LLC
 ACRES: 2.020
 SQUARE FEET: 15,005 ■



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Borrower Name	City	County	Cong. District	\$ Amount	Jobs Created	Jobs Retained	New Vs. Existing	Business Type
Exclusive B3 Company	Hudson	BLACK HAWK	02	\$240,500	2	2	NEW	Plumbing, Heating, and Air-Conditioning Contractors
ONE ELEVEN Design Collective, LLC	WATERLOO	BLACK HAWK	02	\$40,000	0	3	NEW	Architectural Services
Offline Cocktails, LLC	Adel	DALLAS	03	\$1,335,000	8	0	NEW	Distilleries
CMMMC LLC	Booneville	DALLAS	03	\$455,000	5	0	EXISTING	Landscaping Services
Arbor Springs Operations, LLC	West Des Moines	DALLAS	03	\$2,629,000	10	118	EXISTING	Homes for the Elderly
New View Psychiatry LLC	DUBUQUE	DUBUQUE	02	\$255,200	0	0	EXISTING	Offices of Mental Health Practitioners (except Physicians)
Scott T Borcharding	Latimer	FRANKLIN	04	\$570,000	0	0	EXISTING	Soybean Farming
Rowdy Christian Customs and Repair LLC	SIDNEY	FREMONT	03	\$110,000	5	1	NEW	General Automotive Repair
Elm Family Enterprises, Inc	Marion	LINN	02	\$325,000	2	5	NEW	Fluid Power Valve and Hose Fitting Manufacturing
Mull Family LLC	Marion	LINN	02	\$200,000	3	1	NEW	Exterminating and Pest Control Services
Wildwood Floors of Eastern low	Robins	LINN	02	\$298,000	0	0	EXISTING	Flooring Contractors
VanRoekel Appliance Sales & Service INC	OSKALOOSA	MAHASKA	01	\$100,000	1	3	NEW	Electronics and Appliance Retailers
VanRoekel Appliance Sales & Service INC	OSKALOOSA	MAHASKA	01	\$50,000	1	3	NEW	Electronics and Appliance Retailers
MICHAEL BISHOP	PELLA	MARION	01	\$35,000	0	0	EXISTING	Landscaping Services
DC UNDERGROUND, L.L.C.	PELLA	MARION	01	\$25,000	0	0	EXISTING	Water and Sewer Line and Related Structures Construction
JB TIMBER CONCEPTS LLC	PELLA	MARION	01	\$25,000	0	0	NEW	New Single-Family Housing Construction (except Operative Builders)
JB TIMBER CONCEPTS LLC	PELLA	MARION	01	\$25,000	0	0	NEW	Residential Remodelers
LeHoltz Collective LLC	Ankeny	POLK	03	\$924,000	2	2	NEW	All Other Amusement and Recreation Industries
FEED JAKE LLC	ANKENY	POLK	03	\$50,000	1	4	EXISTING	Pet Care (except Veterinary) Services
BristolA LLC	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$2,500,000	3	12	EXISTING	All Other Personal Services
Los Campeones Iowa LLC	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$350,000	7	3	NEW	Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers
Home Sweet Cone Ice Cream, LLC	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$150,000	10	0	EXISTING	Limited-Service Restaurants
BristolA LLC	Des Moines	POLK	03	\$50,000	3	12	EXISTING	Commercial and Industrial Machinery and Equipment
Los Campeones Iowa LLC	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$50,000	7	3	NEW	Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers
IGNITE CHIROPRACTIC	URBANDALE	POLK	03	\$358,700	0	3	NEW	Offices of Chiropractors
American Technology Consulting LLC	West Des moines	POLK	03	\$250,000	0	80	EXISTING	All Other Business Support Services
CHRYSALIS COUNSELING CENTER LL	WEST DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$168,000	0	6	EXISTING	Offices of Mental Health Practitioners (except Physicians)
Beef & Bourbon Chophouse	Bettendorf	SCOTT	01	\$907,000	1	0	EXISTING	Full-Service Restaurants
838 Boutique LLC	Bettendorf	SCOTT	01	\$65,000	0	3	EXISTING	Full-Service Restaurants
Active Health Chiropractic LLC	DAVENPORT	SCOTT	01	\$228,700	0	1	EXISTING	Offices of Chiropractors
Desh LLC	AMES	STORY	01	\$185,000	2	7	NEW	Retail Bakeries
Jet Drain Services, LLC	Ames	STORY	04	\$100,000	0	6	EXISTING	Plumbing, Heating, and Air-Conditioning Contractors
9 Iron Holdings, L.L.C.	Indianola	WARREN	01	\$222,000	1	0	EXISTING	Residential Remodelers

TRANSACTIONS FROM MARCH 2026

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Stavick appointed executive director of Wallace Centers of Iowa

The Wallace Centers of Iowa (WCI) announced the appointment of Rebecca Stavick as its new executive director. Stavick brings more than 15 years of nonprofit executive leadership to WCI, an organization dedicated to connecting Iowa's food, land and people through educational programming, community service and cultural events at its two historic sites. Stavick is best known as the founding executive director of Do Space, the nation's first community technology library, which she launched in Omaha, Nebraska, in 2015. Under her leadership, Do Space grew to more than 98,000 members at the end of 2025, earned national recognition in outlets including Forbes and NPR, and became a model replicated by communities around the world. A firm believer in the power of leading the country from the Midwest, Stavick's success in building Do Space is proof that transformational ideas don't require a coast. Before Do Space, she spent nearly five years at Omaha Public Library and co-founded Open Nebraska, a civic technology and open data initiative.



Rebecca Stavick

Connett named president-elect of ACOFP Board

David Connett, DO, FACOFP (dist.), dean of the Des Moines University College of Osteopathic Medicine, has been named president-elect of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians' Board of Governors. Connett will serve as president-elect for one year and be inaugurated as president during the ACOFP meeting in April 2027. He will succeed Greg Cohen, DO, FACOFP (dist.), a 1991 Des Moines University Medicine and Health Sciences graduate. Connett brings unique experience to the role, having been a family physician for 40 years, practicing and teaching holistic care that aligns with the values family physicians hold. ■



David Connett

Gamble named president and COO of Hubbell

Hubbell Realty Company (HRC) announced longtime executive Kyle Gamble as president and chief operating officer. Gamble, a graduate of DePauw and Northwestern Universities, and a lifelong Iowan, will succeed Rick Tollakson, who led Hubbell for the last 40 years including 20 years as president and CEO. Tollakson will serve as CEO through March 2026 when the company's long-term leadership plan calls for Gamble to become CEO.



Kyle Gamble

Enerson joins DMU Clinic - Physical Therapy

Ryan Enerson, PT, DPT, has joined the providers at the Des Moines University Clinic - Physical Therapy. Enerson will practice at the Des Moines University Clinic in the MidAmerican Energy Company RecPlex at 6500 Grand Ave., West Des Moines. Enerson earned a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from Des Moines University Medicine and Health Sciences in 2024, where he also received the DPT Service Award and Sandra Teague Memorial Scholarship. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in biological sciences education from North Dakota State University. With clinical experience in sports injury management, orthopedics, post-operative rehabilitation and treating musculoskeletal injuries, vertigo and balance issues, Enerson brings a well-rounded skill set to the DMU Clinic - Physical Therapy. He is also certified in dry needling, an intervention that supports improved blood flow to underlying tissues, pain reduction and restoration of movement. He knows that by eliminating or reducing his patients' pain, they can increase their activity levels and recover faster.



Ryan Enerson

Send information on new hires, promotions, expansions, openings and other business news to editor@dmcityview.com.

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

Photo courtesy of Greater Des Moines Partnership

FEATURE STORY



Summer ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT Guide

Our comprehensive lists on what to do in central Iowa this summer from art shows, theatrical performances, sporting events, concerts and most everything in between.

By Cyote Williams

Des Moines seems to punch above its weight in almost every way. The Des Moines Art Festival has received national acclaim, and now local ones are continuing to pop up and showcase some of the best local talent the city has to offer. The local food scene is marveled at by foodies already. Now, with friendly weather, food festivals like the World Food and Music Festival bring cuisines from all over the world to our streets.

Speaking of the world, Des Moines is also home to several of the region's best cultural celebrations.

CelebrAsian, the Latino Heritage Festival and the Greek Food Festival, just to name a few, showcase the wonderful array of heritages that are worthy of celebrating each year.

Don't worry, sports fans, the Menace and Iowa Cubs are two of the most respected and well-run sports organizations in their respective leagues and bring excellent performances and entertainment all summer long. And the sporting goodness doesn't stop there, either.

Add in the award-winning theatre

performances, live music on seemingly every corner, neighborhood festivals, the Iowa State Fair, and so much more. Des Moines has punched above its weight once again with its seemingly endless stream of Arts and Entertainment.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We strive for accuracy in these listings, but event details are subject to change. While many events are free, be sure to check event websites for any ticket and registration requirements before attending.

ART

DES MOINES ART FESTIVAL

June 26-28

Western Gateway Park, 1205 Locust St.,
Des Moines

www.desmoinesartsfestival.org

Nearly 200 artists from Iowa and around the country fill Western Gateway Park into an urban gallery. Des Moines' own artistic marvel, the Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park, serves as an ideal backdrop for the award-winning event that celebrates art, music and film.

ANKENY ART FESTIVAL

May 16

Historic Uptown Ankeny, Third Street
and Walnut Street, Ankeny

www.ankenyartcenter.org/artfestival

Uptown Ankeny becomes flush with art for this outdoor festival. This year, more than 50 regional artists, live music, food trucks, hands-on activities and creative experiences for all ages will be available.



FEATURE STORY

A stall at the Des Moines Art Festival. Photo by Madeleine King

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Art lines the streets at the Waukee Arts Festival. Photo courtesy of Waukee Arts Festival

VALLEY JUNCTION ARTS FESTIVAL

May 17

100-200 Blocks of Fifth Street, West Des Moines

www.valleyjunction.com/valley-junction-events/valley-junction-arts-festival

Those who attend this festival can see the works done by local artists as part of the juried exhibition. More than 50 Iowa and other artists take over Valley Junction with their eye-popping creativity. There will be live entertainment, food, activities, demonstrations and much more. The shops in the area will also be open during the festival.

WAUKEE ARTS FESTIVAL

July 17-18

Centennial Park, Waukee

www.waukeearts.org/waukee-arts-festival

The Waukee Arts Festival features concerts on Friday and Saturday night, with Saturday being a full day of art-filled fun for the whole family — not to mention some of the best local artwork being on display.

DES MOINES ART CENTER

4700 Grand Ave., Des Moines

www.desmoinesartcenter.org

Upcoming exhibits:

- **Through June 17:** “Iowa Artists 2026: Henry Payer - Aagakinak Hacıwi: We Live Opposite Each Other”
- **Through May 17:** “Honey, You’re a Wonderful Model - Maria Lassnig’s Animated Films”
- **April 19 to Aug. 23:** “Christine Rebet - Sound of Time”
- **April 25 to Aug. 30:** “Artists Around a Table - Artmaking and Merrymaking, 1927-1952”
- **June 13 to Sept. 20:** “Topographies - Mapping Being and Belonging”

ANKENY ART CENTER

1520 S.W. Ordinance Road, Ankeny

www.ankenyartcenter.org

Upcoming exhibits:

- **May 28 to July 21:** Rachel Goebel and Christian D’Cruz
- **Through June 4:** Justin Young (Kirkendall Library)
- **Through June 4:** Holly Majerus (Porch Light Coffee House)

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STAGE

ANDERSON GALLERY

Harmon Fine Arts Center, 1310 25th St., Des Moines
www.andersongallery.wp.drake.edu

Upcoming exhibits:

- **Through May 16:** "BFA Thesis Exhibitions"

FIRST FRIDAYS AT MAINFRAME STUDIOS

900 Keosauqua Way, Des Moines
www.mainframestudios.org

- **First Fridays of the month: June 5, July 3, Aug. 7 and Sept. 4.** See the creators behind the masterpieces while enjoying live music, food, and, of course, art.

OLSON-LARSEN GALLERIES

542 Fifth St., West Des Moines
www.olsonlarsen.com

Upcoming exhibits:

- **Through May 30:** "Inked"

POLK COUNTY HERITAGE GALLERY

Polk County Administration Building, 111 Court Ave., Des Moines
www.polkcountyheritagegallery.org

Upcoming exhibit:

- **May 7 through mid-July:** "Iowa Exhibited 2026"

ACTORS, INC. - AMES COMMUNITY THEATER

120 Abraham Drive, Ames
www.actorsinc.org

- **June 11-13, 19, 20, 26-28:** "Footloose"

ANKENY COMMUNITY THEATRE

1932 S.W. Third St., Ankeny
www.ankenycitycommunitytheatre.com

- **June 21-22:** "Once Upon A Mattress"
- **Aug. 7-16:** "Osage County"

CAROUSEL THEATRE OF INDIANOLA

117 E. Salem Ave., Indianola
www.carouseltheatre.org

- **July 17-19, 24-26:** "The Marvelous Wonderettes"

CLASS ACT PRODUCTIONS

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

- **June 5-7, 12-14:** "Disney's Alice in Wonderland Jr."

DES MOINES METRO OPERA

Pote Theatre, 513 N. D St., Indianola
www.desmoinesmetroopera.org

- **June 26, 28, July 3, 8, 11, 16, 19:** "Tosca"
- **June 27, July 5, 10, 15, 18:** "Of Mice and Men"
- **July 4, 9, 12, 14, 17:** "King Roger"

DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS

Des Moines Civic Center, Cowles Commons, Stoner Theater, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines
www.dmpa.org

- **May 9:** "Aesop Bops!"
- **May 16-17:** "Ballot Des Moines: Cinderella"
- **Sept. 2-6, 8-13, 15-20:** "Wicked"

DES MOINES PLAYHOUSE

831 42nd St., Des Moines
www.dmpayhouse.com

- **June 5-21:** "Noises Off!"
- **July 10-26:** "Legally Blonde: The Musical"

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IOWA STAGE THEATRE COMPANY

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

- **June 5-7, 10-14:** “I’m Gonna Marry You Tobey Maguire”

TALLGRASS THEATRE COMPANY

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

- **Through May 10:** “For Peter Pan on Her 70th Birthday”
- **Sept. 11-27:** “She Kills Monsters: Young Adventurers Edition”

URBANDALE COMMUNITY THEATRE

Urbandale High School Performing Arts Center,
7111 N.W. Aurora Ave., Urbandale
www.urbandaletheatre.com

- **Aug. 21-23:** “The Melodies That Made Us”

DES MOINES YOUNG ARTISTS’ THEATRE

Munro Building, Des Moines University Campus,
3380 Grand Ave., Des Moines
www.dmyat.org

- **July 24-26, 29-31, Aug. 1-2:** “Rent: School Edition”



A performance of “The Seagull.” Photo courtesy of Iowa Stage Theatre Company

ABOUT TIME THEATRE COMPANY

www.abouttimetheatre.com

- **June 19-28:** “Gutenberg! The Musical”
- **Sept. 25 to Oct. 4:** “Building the Wall”

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arts FESTIVAL

Sunday, May 17 10am-4pm

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Valley Junction PRIDE!

Sunday, June 28

Join us as Historic Valley Junction comes alive in the 3rd annual Pride with live music, colorful performances, and LGBTQ+-friendly local vendors showcasing unique art, crafts, and goods for all ages.



**Every Thursday starting May 7!
5-8:30pm**

See our website for the full list!

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 5/7 Cinco de Mayo | 7/23 The Barrelhouse Rockets |
| 5/14 Dirty Champaign | 7/30 The Get Down |
| 5/21 Bad Friends | 8/6 Gallivant |
| 5/28 Surf Zombies | 8/13 Faculty Lounge |
| 6/4 The People's Band | 8/20 English |
| 6/11 Decoy Trio | 8/27 Randy Burk & the Prisoners |
| 6/18 Kinda Petty Band | 9/3 Bittersweet Nation |
| 6/25 TBD | 9/10 Cedar Falls Rock & Roll Revue |
| 7/2 Recoil | 9/17 Gut Feeling |
| 7/9 Sons of Gladys Kravitz | 9/24 Jason Wells Band |
| 7/16 Dick Danger | |



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137 5th Street, West Des Moines, IA 50265 (515) 222-3642

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**6/2: Tell It Like It Is: Iowa Storytellers Project
"Search and Rescue"**
6/5: Marty Stuart and His Fabulous Superlatives
6/12: SPINNS A Contemporary Ballet
 Produced by SEEDS
6/14: The Wallflowers
6/18: Christopher Cross
6/25: The Robert Cray Band
6/28: I'm With Her
6/30: St. Paul & The Broken Bones
7/25: Aimee Mann
8/1: Spyro Gyra
8/21: Maria Bamford
8/27: Judy Collins co-starring Bruce Cockburn

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5/22-5/23	Indiana Fever vs. Golden State Valkyries	\$620
6/4-6/5	Indiana Fever vs. Atlanta Dream	\$620
6/11-6/12	Fireside Dinner Theatre: Million Dollar Quartet	\$475
6/15-6/21	Mackinac Island & The Upper Peninsula	\$1850
6/16-6/18	Views & Vibes in Hermann, MO	\$700
6/22-6/23	Indiana Fever vs. Phoenix Mercury	\$620
6/26-6/27	Chicago Cubs at Milwaukee Brewers	\$525
7/9-7/17	Boston Tall Ships	\$2900
7/27-8/2	Michigan's Fruit Loop	\$2250
8/6-8/7	Fireside Dinner Theatre: Disney's Frozen	\$475
8/11-8/12	Indiana Fever vs. NY Liberty	\$620
8/15-8/22	The Finger Lakes	\$3200
9/5-9/12	Smoky Mountain Fall	\$3850
9/8-9/15	Veteran's Salute to Washington D.C.	\$2700
9/19-10/1	New England Fall Foliage	\$3600
9/26-9/27	St. Louis Cardinals at Milwaukee Brewers	\$525
10/2-10/10	Fall in Love with Myrtle Beach	\$2500
10/5-10/13	Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta	\$3200
10/6-10/14	Athens & The Greek Islands	\$5249
10/13-10/20	Almost Heaven, West Virginia	\$2800
10/16-10/20	Season's Greetings from Branson	\$1375
10/23-10/25	Shipshewana Fall Vintage Market	\$715
11/10-11/18	Hawaii 3-Island Adventure	\$6699

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LIVE MUSIC

DES MOINES CIVIC CENTER

221 Walnut St., Des Moines, Temple Theater, 1011 Locust St., Des Moines
www.desmoinesperformingarts.org

- **May 15:** "Choir! Choir! Choir! Presents: We Will Choir You"
- **May 16:** Karla Bonoff
- **June 1:** Brit Floyd: "The Moon, The Wall and Beyond"
- **June 12:** "Electric Eden"

DES MOINES SYMPHONY

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

- **May 9-10:** Season Finale: "Courage - Alpine Symphony"

HOYT SHERMAN PLACE

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

- **June 5:** Marty Stuart and His Fabulous Superlatives at 8 p.m.
- **June 14:** The Wallflowers at 8 p.m.
- **June 18:** Christopher Cross at 7:30 p.m.
- **June 25:** The Robert Cray Band at 8 p.m.
- **June 28:** I'm With Her: Sing Me Alive Tour at 7:30 p.m.
- **June 30:** St. Paul & The Broken Bones at 7:30 p.m.
- **July 7:** Jazz in July 2026: Night 1 at 5:30 p.m.
- **July 14:** Jazz in July 2026: Night 2 at 5:30 p.m.
- **July 21:** Jazz in July 2026: Night 3 at 5:30 p.m.
- **July 28:** Jazz in July 2026: Night 4 at 5:30 p.m.
- **Sept. 11:** Jefferson Starship Runaway Again Tour at 8 p.m.

NOCE

1326 Walnut St., Suite 100, Des Moines
www.noceds.com

- **May 8:** A Night At Noce with Max & Napoleon at 7 p.m.
- **May 8:** After Hours at Noce at 9:30 p.m.
- **May 9:** Gina Gedler with The Soya Vista Jazz Orchestra at 7 p.m.
- **May 9:** Last Call with Max Wellman at 9:30 p.m.
- **May 12:** The Des Moines Big Band, in residence at 7 p.m.
- **May 13:** Jazz on the House with Antonio Lopes & Co. at 7 p.m.
- **May 14:** National Act: Five-Time Grammy Nominee Karrin Allyson at 7 p.m.
- **May 15:** National Act: Five-Time Grammy Nominee Karrin Allyson at 7 p.m.
- **May 15:** After Hours at Noce at 9:30 p.m.
- **May 16:** NOLA Does Disney at 7 p.m.
- **May 16:** Last Call with Max Wellman at 9:30 p.m.
- **May 19:** The Des Moines Big Band, in residence at 7 p.m.
- **May 20:** Jazz On The House with Napoleon Douglas & Co. at 7 p.m.
- **May 21:** KC Vocalist Jackie Myers at 7 p.m.
- **May 22:** The Next Ten Years: A Noce Soiree at 7 p.m.
- **May 22:** After Hours at Noce at 9:30 p.m.
- **May 23:** Jazz Vocalist Marisa Cravero at 7 p.m.
- **May 23:** Last Call with Max Wellman at 9:30 p.m.
- **May 26:** The Des Moines Big Band, in residence at 7 p.m.
- **May 27:** Jazz on the House with Trumpeter Scott Davis & Co. at 7 p.m.
- **May 28:** KC Trombonist Marcus Lewis with His Quintet at 7 p.m.

- **May 29:** Broadway Baby: A Night of Showtunes with Lauren Vilmain & Her Jazz Orchestra at 7 p.m.
- **May 29:** After Hours at Noce at 9:30 p.m.
- **May 30:** Joe & Jobim with Aviana Gedler at 7 p.m.
- **May 30:** Last Call with Max Wellman at 9:30 p.m.

CASEY'S CENTER

223 Center St., Des Moines
www.iowaeventscenter.com

- **May 9:** Cody Johnson at 7:30 p.m.
- **June 19:** Luke Bryan at 7 p.m.
- **July 15:** Tyler Childers at 7:30 p.m.
- **July 16:** Lil Wayne at 8 p.m.

IOWA STATE FAIR GRANDSTAND

3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines
www.iowastatefair.org/entertainment/grandstand

- **Aug. 13:** Hardy at 8 p.m.
- **Aug. 14:** Rod Stewart at 8 p.m.
- **Aug. 15:** The Red Clay Strays at 8 p.m.
- **Aug. 16:** Lainey Wilson at 8 p.m.
- **Aug. 17:** Staind at 8 p.m.
- **Aug. 18:** TLC & Salt-N-Pepa with En Vogue at 8 p.m.
- **Aug. 19:** AJR at 8 p.m.
- **Aug. 20:** Riley Green at 8 p.m.
- **Aug. 22:** BigXthaPlug at 8 p.m.
- **Aug. 23:** Josiah Queen at 6 p.m.

WOOLY'S

504 E. Locust St., Des Moines
www.firstfleetconcerts.com/first-fleet-venues/woolys

- **May 8:** Danny Brown at 7 p.m.
- **May 9:** Brenn! At 7 p.m.
- **May 10:** The Dave Matthews Tribute Band at 7 p.m.
- **May 15:** Emo Nite at 10 p.m.
- **May 16:** Y Si Se Puede Tour 2026 at 9:30 p.m.
- **May 22:** Stark Raving Madge: A Tribute To The 70's at 7 p.m.
- **May 23:** Blade Rave at 9 p.m.
- **May 29:** Alpha Wolf: Let It Rip USA Tour at 7 p.m.
- **May 30:** Meet Me @ The Altar: at 7 p.m.
- **May 31:** Spineshank at 6:30 p.m.
- **June 3:** Terror at 7 p.m.
- **June 5:** Satsang at 7 p.m.
- **June 6:** Anders Colsefni at 8 p.m.
- **June 7:** Kings Kaleidoscope at 8 p.m.
- **June 8:** Citizen Soldier: Secret Songs Tour II at 7 p.m.
- **June 11:** Dexter and The Moonrocks at 7 p.m.
- **June 12:** High Fade at 7 p.m.
- **June 18:** Tigers Jaw at 7 p.m.
- **June 19:** Taylor Fest at 9 p.m.
- **July 12:** Benjamin Tod and the Inline Six 2026 Tour at 7 p.m.
- **July 13:** Colony House at 7 p.m.
- **July 14:** Jeff Rosenstock at 7 p.m.
- **Aug. 13:** The Crane Wives - ACT III at 7 p.m.
- **Aug. 21:** Umphrey's McGee at 8 p.m.
- **Sept. 3:** Ugly Kid Joe at 7:30 p.m.
- **Sept. 4:** Lakeview at 7 p.m.

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DRINKS, LOCATIONS AND MORE TO COME IN THE JULY ISSUE!

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WATERWORKS PARK

Lauridsen Amphitheater,
2251 George Flagg Parkway
www.waterworkspark.org

- **May 7:** Dwight Yoakam and ZZ Top at 7 p.m.
- **May 21:** Styx with Cheap Trick at 6 p.m.
- **June 13:** Billy Currington and Kip Moore at 6 p.m.
- **June 14:** Alison Krauss and Union Station at 7 p.m.
- **Aug. 27:** Clay Walker with Blackhawk at 7 p.m.
- **Sept. 10:** Blues Traveler with Gin Blossoms and Spin Doctors

XBK LIVE

1159 24th St., Des Moines
www.xbklive.com

- **May 7:** Hang Your Hate with Happy Thoughts and Sundance at 7 p.m.
- **May 8:** Bridges of Aloha: A Benefit Show for Hawai'i at 8 p.m.
- **May 9:** Dickie with Joel Sires at 8 p.m.
- **May 11:** Call Me Karizma with Jady at 8 p.m.
- **May 13:** Lowertown with Micah Preite at 7 p.m.
- **May 14:** Ingrid Andress with Jake Simon at 7 p.m.
- **May 14:** Jazz Night at the Annex with the Austin Brown Trio at 8 p.m.
- **May 15:** Jackie Venson at 8 p.m.
- **May 16:** Beggars' Bargain at 8 p.m.
- **May 17:** Iced Wrist / Nyhelist / Crucifilth / Wrath of Sanity at 7 p.m.
- **May 20:** Songwriter Lounge Open Mic Night at 6:30 p.m.
- **May 20:** Panic! At the Burlesque Show at 8 p.m.
- **May 21:** Caster Volor / Psycho X / Parabola at 7 p.m.
- **May 22:** Peter Roberts "It's All Pastel" Album Release at 8 p.m.
- **May 24:** 80s kids at 7 p.m.
- **May 26:** Jaguar Sun and Kurt Travis at 7 p.m.
- **May 26:** John Till & John Waite at 7:30 p.m.
- **May 27:** Kyle Smith with Rootz Within at 8 p.m.
- **May 28:** Thelma and the Sleaze at 7 p.m.
- **May 29:** Amelia Day with Rutabaga at 8 p.m.
- **May 30:** The Guilty Pleasures with Super 8 at 7 p.m.
- **May 31:** TONK! at 7 p.m.
- **June 2:** Troy Doherty at 8 p.m.
- **June 3:** Songwriter Lounge Open Mic Night at 6:30 p.m.
- **June 5:** KBong and Johnny Cosmic at 8 p.m.
- **June 6:** K-POP Demon Hunters Fan Fest at 12:30 p.m.
- **June 6:** Naughty Nerds Cabaret presents: Strip the Binary at 8 p.m.
- **June 6:** Tommy Doggett & Seth Hedquist at 8 p.m.
- **June 7:** Season to Risk with Procedure and Quade at 7 p.m.
- **June 10:** Cory Waller and The Wicked Things with



Role Model at Hinterland in 2025. Photo by Katy Kelly

- Collin Donley at 7 p.m.
- **June 11:** The Bones of J.R. Jones at 7 p.m.
- **June 11:** Jazz Night at the Annex with the Austin Brown Trio at 8 p.m.
- **June 13:** Desecration / Diezeleater / Doyoubleed? / Fear of Falling at 7 p.m.
- **June 15:** Racing Mount Pleasant with Isobel at 8 p.m.
- **June 16:** Sawyer Fredericks at 7 p.m.
- **June 17:** Songwriter Lounge Open Mic Night at 6:30 p.m.
- **June 22:** Weary Ramblers, Ducharme-Jones, Chip Albright, Sam Pattison at 7 p.m.
- **June 23:** Elijah Scott at 7 p.m.
- **June 27:** Rhythm and Pep Presents: Y2GAY at 8 p.m.
- **July 1:** Songwriter Lounge Open Mic Night at 6:30 p.m.
- **July 1:** Carolina Liar with Andrew Hoyt at 7 p.m.
- **July 4:** Total Chaos with Noogy at 8 p.m.
- **July 9:** Keller Williams at 8 p.m.
- **July 9:** Jazz Night at the Annex with the Austin Brown Trio at 8 p.m.
- **July 11:** The Band Feel at 8 p.m.
- **July 12:** Daniel Donato at 7 p.m.
- **July 15:** Songwriter Lounge Open Mic Night at 6:30 p.m.
- **July 16:** Dad Rock Night (2000s Rock Tribute) at 8 p.m.
- **July 21:** DED with Dropout Kings, VRSTY, and SAFE SPACE at 7 p.m.
- **July 25:** BELLES at 8 p.m.
- **July 27:** Autumn Lies Buried with The Behest of Serpents at 7 p.m.
- **July 29:** Songwriter Lounge Open Mic Night at 6:30 p.m.
- **Aug. 5:** Bug Hunter / The Narcissist Cookbook / Jam Mechanics at 7 p.m.
- **Aug. 11:** Raynes at 7 p.m.
- **Aug. 12:** Songwriter Lounge Open Mic Night at 6:30 p.m.
- **Aug. 19:** American Vanity at 8 p.m.
- **Aug. 20:** Psychostick with Apathy Syndrome and Safe Space at 7 p.m.
- **Aug. 26:** Songwriter Lounge Open Mic Night at 6:30 p.m.
- **Sept. 16:** Songwriter Lounge Open Mic Night at 6:30 p.m.
- **Sept. 30:** Songwriter Lounge Open Mic Night at 6:30 p.m.

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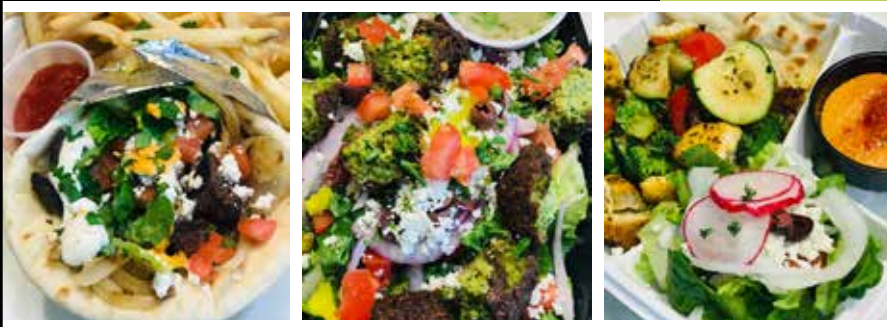


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The Beavertdale Bluegrass Festival. Photo courtesy of Beavertdale Neighborhood Association

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VIBRANT MUSIC HALL

2938 Grand Prairie Parkway, Waukee
 www.vibrantmusichall.com

- **May 15:** Cozy Worldwide: Throwback and Current R&B / Hip Hop at 9 p.m.
- **May 19:** George Thorogood and The Destroyers at 7:30 p.m.
- **June 14:** Todd Rundgren at 7:30 p.m.
- **June 27:** The Dead South with Amigo the Devil at 7:30 p.m.
- **July 9:** Ziggy Marley at 7:30 p.m.
- **July 19:** Studio One Presents: Lord Huron at 7:30 p.m.
- **July 29:** Cameron Whitcomb at 8 p.m.

JASPER WINERY

2400 George Flagg Parkway, Des Moines
 www.jasperwinery.com

When the warm weather rolls in, Jasper Winery welcomes all for their Summer Concert Series, occurring Thursdays from 6-9 p.m. Quench your thirst and appetite while enjoying live music under the summer sky. Bring your lawn chairs to this outdoor summer event, held from May through the end of July.

- **May 7:** Kick
- **May 14:** Dueling Guitars featuring Brian and Brad
- **May 21:** Birdchild
- **May 28:** Blake Jack with Jordan Beem
- **June 4:** Dirty Rotten Scoundrels

- **June 11:** Damon Dotson Band
- **June 18:** Tyler Richton and The High Bank Boys with River City Opry
- **June 25:** The Pork Tornadoes with Zachary Freedom
- **July 2:** The Nadas
- **July 9:** Pianopalooza Band
- **July 16:** Kris Lager Band
- **July 23:** Rhino
- **July 30:** Decoy
- **Aug. 6:** Not Quite Brothers with Brian Congdon

LOCALS BAR AND STAGE

1433 Walnut St., Suite A, Des Moines
www.localsdsm.com

- **May 8:** The High Bidders at 7 p.m.
- **May 9:** Jon Q Public, More Cheese at 7 p.m.
- **May 15:** Polly Mall Cops, Mary Jam, The Gunshy, Clip Clop at 7 p.m.
- **May 16:** Apollo's Death at 7 p.m.
- **May 22:** Stars Hollow at 7 p.m.
- **May 23:** Gh0stthekid, DSakota\$lim, Fooch the MC at 7 p.m.
- **May 26:** New Neighbors, Mrs Nezbitt, The Slow Retreat, On Hiatus at 7 p.m.
- **May 29:** Lady Revel at 7 p.m.
- **May 30:** Star Funeral, Look at Me at 7 p.m.

DES MOINES BOTANICAL GARDEN

909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines
www.dmbotanicalgarden.com
Music in the Garden Series from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

- **June 4:** Diplomats of Solid Sound
- **June 11:** Weary Ramblers
- **June 18:** The Textures
- **June 25:** Mango Soul
- **July 2:** Son Peruchos
- **July 9:** June Bugs DSM
- **July 16:** The NOLA Jazz Band
- **July 23:** The Feel Right
- **July 30:** The Swallowtails
- **Aug. 6:** The Crowfoot Rakes
- **Aug. 13:** The Finesse
- **Aug. 20:** RetroSpect

BEAVERDALE BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

July 16
Tower Park, 4900 Hickman Road, Des Moines
www.beaverdalebluegrass.com
The Beaverdale Bluegrass Festival is a celebration of local music and community. It is free to the public and sponsored by the Beaverdale Neighborhood Association and local businesses. Some of the best bluegrass talents in Iowa pack the neighborhood park.

HINTERLAND

July 30 to Aug. 2
Avenue of the Saints Amphitheatre, 3357 Saint Charles Road, Saint Charles
www.hinterlandiowa.com

A short drive from Des Moines is where Iowa's largest music festival resides. Each summer, world-renowned musical artists descend onto the small town of Saint Charles for a weekend full of music, camping and good times.

Headliners:

- **July 30:** KATSEYE
- **July 31:** Lorde
- **Aug. 1:** Mumford and Sons
- **Aug. 2:** Kali Uchis

BEVINGTON BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

June 19-20
Briar Patch Amphitheater, 2103 Warren Ave., Bevington
Mama Said String Band, Baberhood Bluegrass Band, Black Dirt Ramblers, Stringfield, Foggy Memory Boys, The Steppers, Mountain Alice



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SPORTS

IHSAA AND IGHSAU FINALS

Various dates/locations

www.iahsaa.org and www.ighsau.org

Elite athletes from high schools across Iowa see their seasons culminate in state championship tournaments during the summer.

- **May 21-23:** Boys and girls track and field state championships. Drake Stadium
- **May 26-27:** Boys golf state tournament. Various locations
- **May 27-28, June 2-3, 9:** Boys tennis state tournament, singles, team. Various locations
- **May 28-29, June 10:** Girls golf state tournament, team and coed. Various locations
- **June 8, 9, 11, 13:** Girls soccer state tournament, Iowa State University, Ames
- **June 3-5:** Boys soccer state tournament, Mediacom Stadium, Des Moines
- **July 20-24:** Boys baseball state tournament, various locations
- **July 20-24:** Girls softball state tournament, Harlan Rogers Sports Complex, Fort Dodge

IOWA CUBS

Principal Park, 1 Line Drive, Des Moines

www.iowacubs.com

Affiliated with the MLB's Chicago Cubs, our very own minor league baseball team has been around since 1969, originally known as the Iowa Oaks. Cheer on the cubs all summer through September, with fireworks during Friday home games, plus the Fourth of July. **Remaining home games this season:**

- **May 7** vs. Columbus at 12:08 p.m.
- **May 8** vs. Columbus at 7:08 p.m. | Outdoors Night
- **May 9** vs. Columbus at 3:08 p.m. | Mental Health Awareness Day | Catch On The Field
- **May 10** vs. Columbus at 1:08 p.m. | Mother's Day
- **May 19** vs. Memphis at 6:38 p.m.
- **May 20** vs. Memphis at 12:08 p.m.
- **May 21** vs. Memphis at 12:08 p.m. | Iowa Oaks
- **May 22** vs. Memphis at 7:08 p.m. | Friday Night Fireworks
- **May 23** vs. Memphis at 6:08 p.m. | Catch On The Field
- **May 24** vs. Memphis at 1:08 p.m. | Kids Run The Bases
- **June 2** vs. Toledo at 6:38 p.m. | Lou Gehrig plus ALS Awareness Night
- **June 3** vs. Toledo at 12:08 p.m.
- **June 4** vs. Toledo at 6:38 p.m.
- **June 5** vs. Toledo at 7:08 p.m. | Star Wars Night |



Principal Park is routinely filled for the Iowa Cubs. Photo by Dylan Heuer

- Friday Night Fireworks
- **June 6** vs. Toledo at 6:08 p.m. | BBQ Bootcamp
- **June 7** vs. Toledo at 1:08 p.m. | Sensory Friendly Day
- **June 16** vs. Indianapolis at 6:38 p.m.
- **June 17** vs. Indianapolis at 12:08 p.m.
- **June 18** vs. Indianapolis at 6:38 p.m. | American Sign Language Night | First Responders Night
- **June 19** vs. Indianapolis at 7:08 p.m. | Pride Night | Friday Night Fireworks
- **June 20** vs. Indianapolis at 6:08 p.m. | Catch On The Field
- **June 21** vs. Indianapolis at 1:08 p.m. | Father's Day
- **June 23** vs. Buffalo at 6:38 p.m. | Dog Day
- **June 24** vs. Buffalo at 12:08 p.m.
- **June 25** vs. Buffalo at 6:38 p.m. | Citizenship Ceremony
- **June 26** vs. Buffalo at 7:08 pm | Hawaiian Night | Friday Night Fireworks
- **June 27** vs. Buffalo at 6:08 p.m. | 10 Year Chicago Cubs World Series Anniversary Celebration
- **June 28** vs. Buffalo at 1:08 p.m. | Kids Run The Bases
- **July 7** vs. St. Paul at 6:38 p.m.
- **July 8** vs. St. Paul at 12:08 p.m.
- **July 9** vs. St. Paul at 6:38 p.m.
- **July 10** vs. St. Paul at 7:08 p.m. | Friday Night Fireworks
- **July 11** vs. St. Paul at 6:08 p.m. | Catch On The Field
- **July 12** vs. St. Paul at 1:08 p.m. | Demonios de Des Moines | Kids Run The Bases
- **July 28** vs. Scranton/WB at 6:38 p.m. | Dog Day
- **July 29** vs. Scranton/WB at 12:08 p.m.
- **July 30** vs. Scranton/WB at 6:38 p.m. | Iowa Oaks
- **July 31** vs. Scranton/WB at 7:08 p.m. | Friday Night Fireworks
- **Aug. 1** vs. Scranton/WB at 6:08 p.m. | Catch On The Field
- **Aug. 2** vs. Scranton/WB at 1:08 p.m. | Kids Run The Bases
- **Aug. 11** MILB Field of Dreams game vs. St. Paul at 6:30 p.m. (In Dyersville)
- **Aug. 12** vs. St. Paul at 6:38 p.m.
- **Aug. 13** vs. St. Paul at 6:38 p.m.
- **Aug. 14** vs. St. Paul at 7:08 p.m. | Friday Night Fireworks
- **Aug. 15** vs. St. Paul at 6:08 p.m. | Catch On The Field
- **Aug. 16** vs. St. Paul at 1:08 p.m. | Kids Run The Bases
- **Aug. 25** vs. Omaha at 6:38 p.m. | Dog Day
- **Aug. 26** vs. Omaha at 12:08 p.m.
- **Aug. 27** vs. Omaha at 6:38 p.m. | Iowa Oaks
- **Aug. 28** vs. Omaha at 7:08 p.m. | Friday Night Fireworks
- **Aug. 29** vs. Omaha at 6:08 p.m. | Catch On The Field
- **Aug. 30** vs. Omaha at 1:08 p.m. | Demonios de Des Moines | Kids Run The Bases
- **Sept. 8** vs. Toledo at 6:38 p.m.
- **Sept. 9** vs. Toledo at 12:08 p.m.
- **Sept. 10** vs. Toledo at 6:38 p.m. | Iowa Oaks
- **Sept. 11** vs. Toledo at 7:08 p.m. | Friday Night Fireworks
- **Sept. 12** vs. Toledo at 6:08 p.m. | Catch On The Field
- **Sept. 13** vs. Toledo at 1:08 p.m. | Kids Run The Bases

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Keyshaun Taylor. Photo courtesy of Iowa Barnstormers



Photo courtesy of Des Moines Menace

IOWA BARNSTORMERS

Casey's Center, 730 Third St., Des Moines
www.theiowabarnstormers.com

Home games:

- **May 22** vs. Jacksonville Sharks at 7 p.m.
- **June 12** vs. Quad City Streamwheelers at 7 p.m.
- **June 27** vs. Tulsa Oilers at 7 p.m.
- **July 11** vs. Green Bay Blizzard at 5 p.m.
- **July 24** vs. San Antonio Gunslingers at 7 p.m.

DES MOINES MENACE

Mediacom Stadium, 1427-1483 25th St., Des Moines
www.menacesoccer.com

One of the nation's best semi-professional soccer organizations.

Home games:

- **May 9** vs. Capital City Roots (Friendly) at 7 p.m.
- **May 15** vs. Santafe Wanderers at 7 p.m.
- **May 20** vs. Sunflower State FC at 7 p.m.
- **June 13** vs. Springfield FC at 7 p.m.
- **June 20** vs. ICL All Stars (Friendly) at 7 p.m.
- **June 27** vs. Peoria City at 7 p.m.
- **July 3** vs. Santafe Wanderers at 7 p.m.
- **July 11** vs. FC Ambush at 7 p.m.

PRAIRIE MEADOWS

1 Prairie Meadows Drive, Altoona
www.prairiemeadows.com

Among their already impressive amount of gambling and entertainment, Prairie Meadows also offers live and simulcast horse racing. Pick your winner and cross your fingers.

- **Fridays to Mondays, May 2 to June 7, July 10, 11:** Thoroughbred only
- **Fridays to Mondays, June 8 to Sept. 26:** Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse
- **May 25:** Memorial Day
- **July 3:** Fireworks
- **July 4:** Independence Day
- **July 10-11:** Festival of Racing

- **Aug 14-15:** Regional Challenge
- **Sept. 7:** Labor Day
- **Sept 25:** Quarter horse championships
- **Sept. 26:** Iowa Classic

BOONE SPEEDWAY

1481 223rd Place, Boone
www.raceboone.com

This 1/3-mile high-banked dirt oval is known as "Iowa's Action Track." Catch their weekly Saturday night series through Aug. 19, or other special events:

- **May 9, 16, 23, 30:** Saturday night weekly series
- **June 6, 13, 20, 27:** Saturday night weekly series
- **June 23:** IMCA Harris Clash
- **July 4:** Eve of Destruction
- **July 4, 11, 18, 25:** Saturday night weekly series
- **Aug. 1, 8, 15:** Saturday night weekly series
- **Aug. 22:** Season Championship
- **Aug. 29:** IMCA Super Nationals Tune-up
- **Sept. 5-6:** NAPA Double Down Prelude to the Super Nationals
- **Sept. 7-12:** 2026 IMCA Speedway Motors Super Nationals

IOWA SPEEDWAY

3333 Rusty Wallace Drive, Newton
www.iowaspeedway.com

The paved track at the Iowa Speedway is 7/8-mile long and entertaining all the way around. For those of you with an RV, bring it to the multi-tiered viewing area situated along the backstretch to watch in style. This season's events include:

- **Aug. 7:** ARCA Menards Series Race
- **Aug. 8:** Hy-Vee Perks 250
- **Aug. 9:** Iowa Corn 350

KNOXVILLE RACEWAY

Marion County Fairgrounds, 1000 N. Lincoln, Knoxville

www.knoxvillraceway.com

The Knoxville Raceway, originally a horse-racing venue, is now known as the "Sprint Car Capital of the



Photo by Chuck Stowe

World." The raceway hosts sprint car racing events regularly:

- **May 9:** Knoxville Championship Series
- **May 16:** Dennison Racing Tee's/Jersey Freeze Night
- **May 23:** World of Outlaws - Stars and Stripes Salute
- **May 29-30:** Avanti Windows and Doors Corn Belt Clash - USAC Night
- **June 6:** Lakeside Hotel and Casino Knoxville Legends Night
- **June 12-13:** Premier Chevy Dealers Clash / World of Outlaws
- **June 20:** NO RACING for Huset's High Bank Nationals
- **June 27:** Farm Bureau Financial Services Night
- **July 4:** Nolan Wren Memorial Higher View Enterprises Mid-Season Championship
- **July 11:** Vermeer Night / Marion County Fair Night
- **July 18:** 3M Night and 360 Shootout
- **July 25:** VanWall Equipment Night
- **Aug. 1:** Weiler Night and 410 Border Battle
- **Aug. 6-8:** 36th Annual Xtream powered by Mediacom 360 Knoxville Nationals
- **Aug. 9:** Avanti Windows and Doors Capitani Classic
- **Aug. 12-15:** 65th Knoxville Nationals
- **Aug. 29:** McKay Group Season Championship Night at N/A
- **Sept. 17-19:** Lucas Oil Late Model Knoxville Nationals



Artists Around a Table: Artmaking and Merrymaking, 1927–1952

ON VIEW

APRIL 25 – AUGUST 30, 2026 | JOHN BRADY PRINT GALLERY

Presenting works on paper made by a group of artists, friends, and lovers who constructed figurative works of art inflected with humor and merrymaking.

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John Carroll (American, 1892 – 1959). Artists Around a Table, 1928 (detail).
Lithograph on paper / Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Carl Weeks, 1954.109

SWEAT

EVERY MONDAY AT 6 P.M., the Major Taylor Cycling Club of Iowa meets at the Lauridsen Amphitheater for a casual 16- to 17-mile bike ride around the Metro that features a scenic loop around Gray's Lake; www.majortayloriowa.org/index.html

MAY 9: 13th annual race to feed kids.

Starting at the Women of Achievement Bridge in downtown Des Moines, the Des Moines Mary's Meals Race to Feed Kids isn't your average 5K run/walk. It's a passion to end hunger for our world's youth. Every race registration will feed one child at Mcheza Primary School in Malawi, Africa, for an entire school year.

Participants must register; runsignup.com/Race/IA/DesMoines/DesMoinesMarysMeals5kWalkRun10K

MAY 12: Gators on the Green. The Blank Park Zoo's annual golf tournament helps raise funds for endangered animals. Shotgun start at 10 a.m. Legacy Golf Club, 400 Legacy Parkway, Norwalk; www.blankparkzoo.com.

MAY 16: Gary's Ride. Starting at Waukee Raccoon River Valley Trailhead, Waukee. This ride is a fundraiser to increase awareness of glioblastoma and to support Richard Deming Cancer Center's terminal brain cancer patients through their Integrative Medicine program, Iowa Oncology Research Association for Glioblastoma Clinical Trials, MercyOne Des Moines Foundation for gift cards for terminal brain cancer patients and their families, and Gary's Compassion Fund for financial assistance for terminal brain cancer patients and their families. The ride ends at Dallas Center downtown Main Street. Registration and information is available at garysrideiowa.org.

MAY 9: Race for Hope DSM. Inspired by a local teen who was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor. Since 2013, this race has raised more than \$400,000 for brain tumor research. Races start at Water Works Park, Des Moines; www.iowahoperun.org

MAY 16: Pigtails Ride. A 48-mile bike ride in one day is designed exclusively for women of all riding levels, taking them along the scenic High Trestle Trail. Starting at 7:30 a.m. at the High Trestle Trail Trailhead, Woodward; <https://iowabicyclecoalition.org>

MAY 16-17: Gladiator Assault Challenge. This intense obstacle course features a mix of natural terrain and man-made hurdles for individuals or teams to tackle. Are you up for the challenge? Seven Oaks Recreation, 1086 222nd Drive, Boone; www.facebook.com/GladiatorAssault

MAY 17: Pedal For Paws. The ARL's annual ride to support homeless pets. Multiple stops along the



Pedal for Paws. Photo courtesy of ARL

way, starting at 11 a.m. at Captain Roys, 1900 Saylor Road, Des Moines; www.arl-iowa.org/event/events/pedal-for-paws.

MAY 30: EMC Dam to DSM Half Marathon. For the 47th year, runners will take on the journey from the Saylorville Dam to Downtown Des Moines. With buses to the starting line, cold beer at the finish, and memorable rural and urban miles in the middle, this is one run you won't want to miss. N.W. 78th Ave., Johnston; www.damtodsm.com.

JUNE 13: Capital City Pride Stride 5k. Show support for the LGBTQ+ community at the 2026 Pride Stride. For the most experienced of runners to the biggest newbies, this stride has a place for you. PrideFest Main Stage at E. Sixth and Locust St., Des Moines; www.capitalcitypride.org/event/pride-stride.

JUNE 20: 12th annual Bacon Ride, May the Fork Be With You. The annual bike ride goes through several small towns along the Raccoon River Valley Trail. This year with a "Star Wars" theme, but still the same bacon. Starting at 7 a.m. Raccoon River Valley Trailhead, Waukee; www.facebook.com/baconrideiowa

JUNE 7: National Cancer Survivor Day Bike Ride. Join Above and Beyond Cancer in a celebration of life and living each day with passion and purpose. Get energized with a selection of coffee and snacks before heading off on the 25-mile ride to Woodward and back to Slater, on the High Trestle Trail. Starts in Earl Grimm Park, Slater; aboveandbeyondcancer.org/upcoming-events/national-cancer-survivor-day-bike-ride-1.

JULY 11: Moonlight Classic. This nighttime ride supports Orchard Place's commitment to children's mental health and welcomes cyclists of all skill levels and includes fun contests like best helmet light and best costume. Captain Roy's, 1900 Saylor Road, Des Moines; www.orchardplace.org/orchard-place-moonlight-classic.

EVENTS

MAY

RECURRING WEEKLY UNTIL OCTOBER, WEDNESDAY THROUGH SUNDAY: **Des**

Moines Biergarten. Local brews, bikes and bands descend on Water Works Park, 2201 George Flagg Parkway, Des Moines; <https://desmoinesbiergarten.com>.

MAY 8-10: Spring Garden Market. The Des Moines Botanical Garden hosts this market with hundreds of plant varieties and tried-and-true favorites selected by their horticulturists, especially plants that flourish in central Iowa. Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, 909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines; www.dmbotanicalgarden.com.

MAY 13: Summer Nights. The annual car show will be held at Karl Kustoms, 5927 Northeast Industry Drive, Des Moines; www.karlkustoms.com.

MAY 14: Sensory Friendly Night at the Science Center of Iowa. Science Center of Iowa, 401 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway; www.sciowa.org.

MAY 15: World Food Prize Foundation Spring Gala. Every dollar raised during this extraordinary evening stays right here at home, supporting the preservation and protection of the treasured landmark. The World Food Prize Hall of Laureates, 100 Locust St., Des Moines; www.worldfoodprize.org.

MAY 15: Smoke and Sip BBQ Festival. This event is just like a typical backyard BBQ hosted by a friend. Local pitmasters and BBQ experts, alongside plenty of live entertainment. Middlebrook Agrihood, 4300 Cumming Ave., Cumming; www.middlebrookfarm.com.

MAY 22-23: Celebrasian. Celebrate a rich array of Asian culture with authentic food, music, exhibits, entertainment and more. Western Gateway Park, 1205 Locust St, Des Moines; www.iowaasianalliance.com.

MAY 23: Decoration Day and Historic Baseball. Memorial Day was once Decoration Day. Living History Farms remembers the 600,000 soldiers lost in the Civil War, capped off with historic baseball. Living History Farms, 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale; www.lhf.org.

MAY 24: Memorial Day Foam Paw-ty. A foam-filled day at Paws and Pints, great for dogs, and people, to cool off. Paws and Pints, 6218 Willowmere Drive, Des Moines; www.pawsandpintsdsm.com.

MAY 29-31: Des Moines Con. This annual convention welcomes some of the biggest names in voice acting, comic books and acting. There are also exhibitors, artists, and more entertainment throughout



Photo courtesy of the World Pork Expo

the weekend. Iowa Events Center, 730 Third St., Des Moines; www.desmoinescon.com.

MAY 30: CITYVIEW's Midday Mixer. From 1-4 p.m., enjoy our Midday Mixer at participating locations in The District at Prairie Trail. For a ticket price of \$25 (\$35 at the door), attendees will receive 10 drink tickets that can be redeemed for sample cocktails. Plan for typical Iowa weather and be ready to have fun. El Presidente, 1465 S.W. Park Square Drive, Suite 102, Ankeny; middaymixer.dmcityview.com.

JUNE

THURSDAYS IN JUNE: Ankeny Beats and Eats. Featuring drinks, food and entertainment for all ages. Ankeny Market and Pavilion, 715 W. First St.; www.ankenyiowa.gov.

JUNE 3-4: World Pork Expo. Iowans are more than familiar with pork and all of its deliciousness, but if you want to learn even more, the National Pork Producers have you covered with this event. Iowa State Fairgrounds, 3000 East Grand Ave.; www.worldpork.org.

JUNE 4-6: Governors Days. A three-day festival in Grimes with food trucks, live music, car show, parade, talent show and plenty more. Grimes South Sports Complex, 750 S. James St., Grimes; www.governorsdays.com.

JUNE 5: Senior Fishing Day. Free fishing weekend for those 60-plus. There will be prizes for the biggest, smallest and most fish caught. Easter Lake Park, 2830 Easter Lake Drive, Des Moines; www.polkcountyiowa.gov.

JUNE 5: Wine and Craft Beer Fest. Wine, beer and live music. What's not to like? Civic Plaza, 360 Center Place, Altoona; www.altoonachamber.org.

JUNE 5-7: Greek Food Fair Festival. Enjoy the sights, sounds and most importantly, tastes, of Greek culture. 1110 35th St., Des Moines; www.facebook.com/StGeorgeDSM.



Pride Fest Parade. Photo by Joelle Blanchard and Danny Carman

JUNE 6: Raccoon River Palooza. This free family event goes on rain or shine and is packed full of activities that all families can enjoy. Just like the name, the festival is at Raccoon River Park, 2500 Grand Ave., West Des Moines; www.wdmchamber.org.

JUNE 6: Central Iowa Trans Lives Festival. This is the sixth annual event held in honor of International Transgender Day of Visibility. 1800 Bell Ave., Des Moines; www.ucdsm.org/trans-lives-festival.

JUNE 6: Iowa Craft Brew Festival. Iowans love a cold one, and you will be hard pressed to find another event this summer with more brews of all hops and sizes this summer. Water Works Park, 2201 George Flagg Parkway, Des Moines; www.iowacraftbrewfestival.com.

JUNE 6: Family Fest. Alpacas, fire engine climbs, activities, shaved ice and other treats all at this family-friendly event. Starting at 11 a.m. The Yard, 6221 Merle Hay Road, Johnston; www.johnstontowncenter.com.

JUNE 6: Waukee Palooza. Eighth Annual Music Festival with an online silent auction with items donated to raise funds for the local and international service projects supported by the Rotary Club of Waukee. Three local music groups will provide live entertainment, along with brews and wine from local breweries and wineries. 1005 East Hickman Road, Waukee; www.waukeepalooza.com.

JUNE 7: Classic Car Show. Bring your classic car to show or just show up and marvel at the classic beauties lining the lot and grounds. Iowa Arboretum, 1875 Peach Ave., Madrid; www.iowaarboretum.org.

JUNE 9: Sensory Friendly Night at the Science Center of Iowa. Science Center of Iowa, 401 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway; www.sciowa.org.

JUNE 10-14: The Principal Charity Classic. This PGA Tour event right in Des Moines' backyard has raised more than \$62 million in support of Iowa youth since 2007. Wakonda Club, 3915 Fleur Drive, Des Moines; www.principalcharityclassic.com.

FARMERS MARKETS

Des Moines Farmers Market

Located in the Historic Court District, it is the largest farmers market in the state and operates every Saturday morning from May to October.

Southside Sunday Market

Located in the parking lot of Southridge Mall featuring local businesses, farmers and entrepreneurs every Sunday between June and September.

Ankeny Farmers Market

Operates every Saturday from May through September, located at the Market Pavilion in Uptown Ankeny.

Valley Junction Farmers Market

Operates every Thursday evening from May to September, located in Historic Valley Junction.

Altoona Farmers' Market

Operates every Thursday evening from May to September, located at the Brightside Aleworks parking lot.

Beaverdale Farmers Market

Operates every Tuesday evening from June through September, located in the Franklin Junior High parking lot.

Johnston Farmers Market

Operates every Tuesday evening from June through September, located on the north side of the Johnston Town Center.

Indianola Farmers Market

Operates every Saturday morning from May through October, located on the Indianola Square.

Waukee Farmers Market

Operates every Wednesday evening, June through September, located in the downtown triangle.



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JUNE 11-13: Johnston Green Days 2026. Johnston's community celebrates its 30th year with all the typical fan faire of food, music and activities. Terra Park, 6400 Pioneer Parkway, Johnston; www.johnstongreendays.com.

JUNE 12, 19, 26, JULY 3: Rock Around the Clock: Fall Concert Series. Every Friday, enjoy live music, food and a fun community atmosphere. From classic rock to modern hits, there is something for everyone. Grimes Sports Complex, 410 S.E. Main St., Grimes; www.facebook.com/grimesparksandrec.

JUNE 12-14: PrideFest 2026. Celebrate PrideFest for the 47th time in its history. The event draws national acts. Plenty of food and other vendors line the streets of the East Village for a weekend of Pride. Des Moines Historic East Village; www.capitalcitypride.org/pridefest.

JUNE 13-14: 36th annual Iowa Metaphysical Fair. Ever wondered what it would be like to see the spiritual side of things, metaphysics, holistic health and more? It's all at this fair. Iowa State Fairgrounds, 3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines; www.iametaphysicalfair.com.

JUNE 20: Macksburg Skillet Toss. Ever wondered how far you could throw a skillet? Of course you have. Test your skillet tossing skills against the best of the best at the 50th National Skillet Throw. Macksburg City Park, Macksburg; www.macksburgskilletthrow.com.

JUNE 20: Cajun Fest. The south finds its way into West Des Moines with all of the requisite flavors and celebrations. 7001 Westown Parkway, Suite 100, West Des Moines; www.cajunfestiowa.com.

JUNE 20: Neighbor's Day Celebration. Hosted by the Iowa Juneteenth Organization. From noon to 6 p.m. at Western Gateway Park, 1000 Grand Ave., Des Moines; www.iowajuneteenth.org.

JUNE 20: Ankeny Pride Parade. This will be the fifth Ankeny Pride Celebration, bringing community, visibility and joy to the area. From 4-9 p.m., Ankeny Market and Pavilion, 715 W. First St.; www.ankenypride.org.

JUNE 26: CITYVIEW'S Downtown Summer Stir. Our traveling cocktail party is back in downtown Des Moines. Sample many of summer's finest drinks at some of the area's best bars and restaurants. Try 10 different drinks for only \$25 with your online order (\$35 at the door). Court Avenue District, Des Moines; summerstirs.dmcityview.com.

JUNE 26-28: Interrobang Film Festival. This includes a juried show, verified by IMDb, featuring public showings and talkbacks with directors. Filmmaker submissions are accepted in nine categories and are juried by a panel of peers. The 2025 Festival featured 24 juried films from nine countries. Des Moines Public Library 1000 Grand Ave., Des Moines; www.desmoinesartsfestival.org.

JUNE 28: The Yellow Chair Project: Close Call - A Storytelling Event at 7 p.m. 1159 24th St., Des Moines; www.xbklive.com.

JULY

JULY 2-4: Urbandale 4th of July Celebration. Urbandale goes all out for its Fourth of July event every year, and this one is no different. 7404 Prairie Ave., Urbandale; www.urbandale4thofjuly.org.

JULY 3: Junction Street Party. Enjoy live music, great food from local trucks, and a relaxed beverage garden under the Fifth Street arch in Historic Valley Junction. The West Des Moines parade will roll through the area, but the party will stay. 137 Fifth St., West Des Moines; www.valleyjunction.com.

JULY 3-4: Waukee Celebration of Independence. Waukee's celebration includes a fireworks display, food vendors, a pie-eating contest, volleyball tournaments and much more. Centennial Park in Waukee; waukee.org/777/ Celebration-of-Independence.

JULY 3-5: Goodguys 35th Speedway Motors Heartland Nationals. One of the premier events for car junkies for the summer. Iowa State Fairgrounds, 3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines; www.goodguys.com.

JULY 7-11: Dallas County Fair in Adel; www.dallascountyfair.com.

JULY 10-16: Marion County Fair in Knoxville; www.marioncofair.com.

JULY 10-12: Ankeny Summerfest. Three days of music, carnival rides, local food and plenty of other fun activities for all to enjoy. The District at Prairie Trail, 1500 S.W. Main St., Ankeny; www.ankenysummerfest.com.

JULY 14: Sensory Friendly Night at the Science Center of Iowa. Science Center of Iowa, 401 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway; www.sciowa.org.

JULY 15-19: Madison County Fair in Winterset; www.madisoncountyfair.net.

JULY 15-19: Story County Fair in Nevada; www.sc-fair.weebly.com.

JULY 15-19: Boone County Fair in Boone; www.boonecountyfairia.com.

JULY 17-23: Jasper County Fair in Colfax; www.jaspercofair.com.

JULY 17-18: Clive Festival. The metro is full of fun community celebrations, and Clive's is no exception. Fireworks, events, live music and more all at N.W. 114th St., Clive; www.cityofclive.com/parkandrecreation/programs_and_events/clive_festival.php.

JULY 18-24: Polk County Fair at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines; www.polkcountyfairiowa.com.

JULY 19: Iowa Reptile Show. Engage with premier reptile experts and explore a vast selection of amphibians, reptiles, invertebrates and supplies available for purchase by the general public. Hilton Garden Inn, 205 S. 64th St., West Des Moines; www.coldbloodedexpos.com.

JULY 18-25: RAGBRAI. Iowa's largest bicycle ride takes over the entire state during its weeklong trek across Iowa. Overnight stops in Onawa, Harlan, Boone, Marshalltown, Independence, Dyersville and Dubuque. www.ragbrai.com.

JULY 22-27: Warren County Fair in Indianola; www.warrencofair.com.

JULY 24-25: Polk City Four Seasons Festival in Polk City Square; www.4seasonsfest.com.

JULY 31: CITYVIEW'S East Village Summer Stir. Our traveling cocktail party is back in downtown Des Moines. Sample many of summer's finest drinks at some of the area's best bars and restaurants. Try 10 different drinks for only \$25 with your online order (\$35 at the door). AJs on Court, 419 E. Court Ave., Des Moines; summerstirs.dmcityview.com.

JULY 31 TO AUG. 8: National Balloon Classic. The skies over Indianola will be filled with a colorful display of floating balloons. The nationally recognized event is one of the most widely known in the state and will have more than 100 hot air balloons in the air. Memorial Balloon Field, 1136 150th Ave., Indianola; www.nationalballoonclassic.com.

AUGUST

AUG. 7-8: Adel Sweet Corn Festival. In a state that is mostly known for growing corn, it only makes sense one of its city's builds a festival around it. From 7:30 a.m. to midnight, Adel City Hall, 301 S. 10th St., Adel; www.adelpartners.org.

AUG. 7-9: 2026 Discmania Challenge. The Discmania Challenge is an official stop on the Disc Golf Pro Tour and has been played in and won by some of the most premier names in the sport. Pickard Disc Golf Course, Indianola; www.dgpt.com/event/2026-discmania-challenge

AUG. 13-23: Iowa State Fair - America250. National acts hit the grandstand, the best livestock in the state is shown off, and fried food from most every corner of the world is all found in one place. This year, the fair's theme is America250, celebrating the country's 250th birthday. Iowa State Fairgrounds, 3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines; www.iowastatefair.org.

AUG. 28-30: World Food and Music Festival. A city often defined by its food shows its stuff at the World Food and Music Festival. Food stalls reach nearly every corner of the world all while music from equal lengths is played, much to the delight of its attendees. Western Gateway Park, 1205 Locust St., Des Moines; www.dsmpartnership.com/worldfoodandmusicfestival.

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JUNE 13
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JUNE 14
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ALISON KRAUSS & UNION STATION
FEATURING **JERRY DOUGLAS**
WITH SPECIAL GUEST
THEO LAWRENCE

AUGUST 27
CLAY WALKER
WITH SPECIAL GUEST
Black Hawk

SEPTEMBER 10
BLUES TRAVELER
GIN BLOSSOMS
SPIN DOCTORS

AUG. 29: Ingersoll Live. One of Des Moines most well know street's hosts its own block party. Complete with live entertainment, family-friendly activities, food, and more. Along 2300 Ingersoll Ave.; www.theavenuesdsm.com.

AUG. 29: Wine and Cider Festival. Jasper Winery celebrates Iowa's grape and apple harvest with tastings from over 20 Iowa wineries and cideries. Jasper Winery, 2400 George Flag Parkway, Des Moines; www.jasperwinery.com

SEPTEMBER

SEPT 5-6, 12-13, 19-20: Fall Faire Renaissance Faire. The Renaissance Faire hosts two events, one in the spring and one in the fall. You had better go to both, just in case. Sleepy Hollow Sports Park, 4051 Dean Ave., Des Moines; www.sleepyhollowrenfaire.com.

SEPT 6: Norwalk Music Fest. Local musicians descend onto Norwalk for this local music festival. Norwalk City Park, 907 North Ave., Norwalk; www.norwalkhometownpride.org/home.

SEPT 12-13: Flea Market. No fleas but plenty of good finds at this market. 4-H building, Iowa State Fairgrounds, 3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines; www.iowastatefairgrounds.org.

www.iowastatefairgrounds.org.

SEPT 18-19: Beaverdale Fall Festival. One of the cities nicest neighborhoods puts on its own community festival, complete with live entertainment, food, drinks, art, and lots more. Downtown Beaverdale; www.fallfestival.org

SEPT. 18-20: Pufferbilly Days 2026. This year's theme is Through the Decades. Festival organizers say this year will be bigger and better than ever, featuring a diverse range of activities and entertainment for all ages. Downtown Boone, 903 Story St.; www.boonecounty-chamber.com.

SEPT. 19: Des Moines Art Center Gala. A night of art, music and celebration and support of Des Moines Art Center. Jazz syncopation meets punk disruption, elegance meets edge, and rhythm sparks connection at this event. Val Air Ballroom, 301 Ashworth Road, West Des Moines; www.desmoinesartcenter.org.

SEPT. 20: Halfway to St. Pat's Charity Car Show. The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick are holding a fundraising car show to benefit the St. Patrick's Day Parade at Charlie's Filling Station, 305 Grand Ave., West Des Moines. Bring your classic or unique vehicle. Registration is 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. Trophies will be awarded at 3 p.m. Vendors and food will be available. See more at www.friendlysonsiowa.com.

SEPT 24-26: Des Moines Area Quilt Guild Quilt Show. There's nothing like a handmade quilt. The Des Moines Area Quilters Guild hosts its annual quilt show at the Iowa State Fairgrounds. 3000 E. Grand Ave.; www.woodsidequilting.com/dmaqg-quilt-show.htm.

SEPT 25-26: Oktoberfest. Celebrate Oktoberfest traditions in true German style at Des Moines' Original 22nd Annual Oktoberfest. The District at Prairie Trail, Ankeny; www.oktoberfestdsm.com.

SEPT. 26-27: Latino Heritage Festival. As Iowa's largest celebration of Latin culture, this event provides plenty of excellent food, music and performances. Western Gateway Park, 1205 Locust St., Des Moines; www.latinoheritagefestival.org.

SEPT 26: Applefest. Delicious apples shown how they were once prepared, eaten and enjoyed in the days of old. Living History Farms, 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale; www.lhf.org.

SEPT 27: Iowa Reptile Show. Engage with premier reptile experts and explore a vast selection of amphibians, reptiles, invertebrates, and supplies available for purchase by the general public. Hilton Garden Inn, 205 S. 64th St., West Des Moines; www.coldbloodedexpos.com. ■

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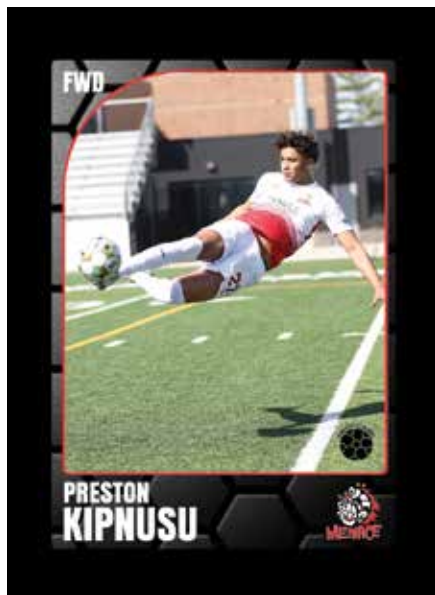
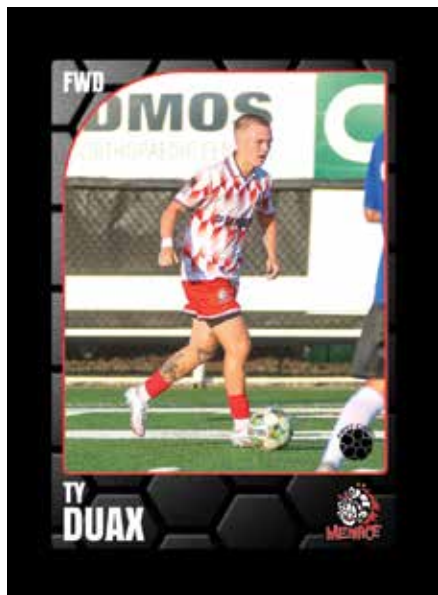
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MENACE RETURNS FOR 2026 SEASON, debuts new home at Mediacom Stadium

Defending Great Plains Division champions move all home matches to Drake University, highlight local talent and expanded matchday experience.

By Jackie Wilson

FEATURE STORY



The Des Moines Menace returns for the 2026 soccer season, looking to defend its Great Plains Division title from 2025.

After posting a 10-1-1 record, Charlie Latshaw III returns as head coach. Kyle Davy, Des Moines Menace club manager, is excited for Latshaw's return.

"Coach Latshaw led one of the most potent offensive attacks in the league," he said. "He's looking to do the same in 2026. We're ready to kick off a new season, building on last year's success."

As the player roster is being finalized, Davy is pleased to announce local Des Moines metro players who have signed on for this year's team.

Iowa native and Ankeny Centennial graduate Ty Duax returns to the Menace for his second season.

Preston Kipnusu, the 2023 Gatorade Player of the Year and West Des Moines Valley High School graduate, joins the Menace for his first season. Kipnusu attends Drake University and is a standout on the Drake men's soccer team.

Cole Schrage, a three-time state champion with Waukee Northwest High School, joins the 2026 Menace team for his first season. Schrage also attends Drake University and is a standout defender for the Drake men's soccer team.

GAMES MOVE TO MEDIACOM STADIUM AT DRAKE

This year, the Menace will play all home games at Mediacom Stadium on the Drake University campus. Previously, games were played at Valley Stadium in West Des Moines. The move allows the club to create a live-work-play environment for players, which Davy sees as a competitive advantage.

"Players will live, train and compete on Drake University's campus, creating major efficiencies for the club," Davy said. "Mediacom Stadium is regarded as the top soccer venue in the state. Fans can expect an exciting atmosphere with seating close to the action surrounding the field."

The Menace will host eight regular-season home matches from May 9 through July 11. All matches will be played on Friday or Saturday nights with 7 p.m. kickoff times.

What's a soccer match without a pregame party? New this year, the Menace will offer official pregame parties outside the stadium.

Parties begin at 6 p.m. before each home match on the plaza outside Mediacom Stadium. Fans can purchase beer, wine, seltzers and nonalcoholic drinks in the Schickler Club. Other activities include a DJ, lawn games and face painting.

Alcohol is not allowed inside Mediacom Stadium and is permitted only on the adjacent plaza.

Fan promotions and giveaways, along with high-level soccer, are reasons the public is invited to experience one of the top clubs in USL League Two.

"With a fresh home in the heart of Des Moines, fans can expect an elevated matchday atmosphere paired with the club's most dynamic promotional lineup yet," Davy said. "This season marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter as the Menace officially kicks off its first season at Mediacom Stadium. We look to add a third championship to the club's history this summer."

TICKETS: Season memberships start as low as \$80, which include a ticket to all eight home matches. Fans can also purchase a Pick 3 Flex Plan, starting at \$36. Individual game tickets start at \$9; up to \$40. For info on tickets, visit www.menacesoccer.com/tickets.

MENACE 2026 THEME NIGHTS AND GIVEAWAYS

Attending a Menace game is more than watching a top-level soccer match; it's family-friendly fun. From cultural celebrations and community impact nights to giveaways, these traditions deliver a memorable fan experience. Theme nights are presented by Fully Promoted Urbandale.

Giveaways are available for the first 500 fans through the gates starting at 6 p.m., unless otherwise noted. All matches kick off at 7 p.m. at Mediacom Stadium. Visit the Menace promotion schedule for more details.

May 9 – Latino Heritage Night. Presented by Jarritos, Hola Iowa and Jefas. Celebrate culture, community and the beautiful game as we welcome fans into a new era of Menace soccer. LED rally towel giveaway. Lucha Libre appearance featuring Latin Thunder and Corn Boi. Lucha Libre mask coloring on the concourse.

May 15 – Opening Night. Presented by Baker Group. The first official regular season match at Mediacom Stadium is hosted on 515 Day the Menace opens the season in their new home. 515 night T-shirt giveaway. \$2 hot dogs.

May 30 – Des Moines Public Schools Night. Presented by Bank of America. A celebration of students, educators and the Des Moines community. The Menace mascot, Maniac, celebrates its birthday with other mascots. Menace water bottle giveaway.

June 13 – United Against Racism Night. Benefitting BLK & Bold Foundation and By Degrees. Join the Menace for an impactful night as the Menace comes together to stand for equality and inclusion. Menace cowbell giveaway.

June 20 – Local Soccer Night. Presented by Kick It Forward and Lucky One. A night built for the local soccer community and its Paws at the Pitch, where fans are encouraged to bring their furry friend to the match. Youth, 12 and younger, receive a mini soccer ball. First 100 dogs through the gates receive a Menace collapsible pet bowl.

June 27 – Pride Night. Presented by Catch Des Moines, Benefitting Capital City Pride. Celebrate inclusivity, community and pride in one of the most vibrant nights of the summer. Pride scarf giveaway.

July 3 – Stars and Stripes Night. Presented by Coca-Cola and Des Moines Bacon and Meat Company. Celebrate Independence Day weekend with one of the biggest nights of the season. Military and first responder appreciation includes free tickets with ID Menace 16 oz. Koozie giveaway. \$2 hot dogs throughout the match.

July 11 – Kick Cancer Night. Benefitting Unravel Pediatric Cancer Iowa. Help the Menace close out the home slate by honoring local fighters – youth and adult – and raising awareness in their annual Kick Cancer match. "Goals for Good" T-shirt giveaway. ■

2026 MENACE SCHEDULE

HOME GAMES IN BOLD

- **MAY 9** - Capital City Roots
- **MAY 15** - Santafé Wanderers
- May 23 - Peoria City
- **MAY 30** - Sunflower State FC
- June 3 - Sunflower State FC
- June 10 - Santafé Wanderers
- **JUNE 13** - Springfield FC
- June 17 - FC Ambush
- **JUNE 20** - ICL All Stars
- **JUNE 27** - Peoria City
- June 30 - Sunflower State FC
- **JULY 3** - Santafé Wanderers
- July 7 - Springfield FC
- **JULY 11** - FC Ambush

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MAY 31
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JULY 12
DANNY GRAUSE

JULY 26
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CASEY PEASLEY

AUGUST 23
RUTABAGA W/MIA PROSPERI

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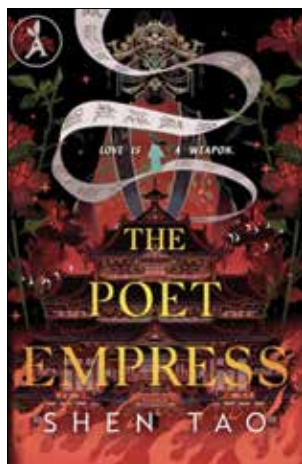
COURTESY OF BEAVERDALE BOOKS

'The Poet Empress'

You should know that this is not a fantasy romance book, despite the piles of marketing that say otherwise. This is a book about power in 100 different forms, and, more specifically, this is a book about words. The magic in the setting literally comes from poetry. Also, the story itself is told so richly and beautifully, it becomes its own spell.

Shen Tao's debut drops us into a world women are forbidden to read, but the protagonist Wei Yin isn't going to let that stop her. Raised in poverty and the horrors therein, she is the rare kind of heroine who is genuinely, functionally competent without ever feeling like a caricature. She's desperate, brilliant and has to navigate a political labyrinth that would make Machiavelli sweat.

This is not an easy read. With power comes abuse, and while Tao writes with a poet's restraint, weaving the story so that pain and terror mean something, there is a lot of grim stuff. But there is also hope, and humanity, and the kind of epic tale that will resonate with me for a long, long time. Clear your weekend and surrender. It's so worth it. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



By Shen Tao
Jan. 20, 2026
400 pages
\$32.99
Tor Publishing

'Seek the Traitor's Son'

I came into this expecting something interesting and easy to read. I was not at all expecting to be swept off my feet — dazzled by this incredibly rich world, half in love with all the characters, and consumed by the need to know what happens next.

There is a deadly fever that blesses half its victims with mysterious gifts and kills the rest. In a situation that will seem familiar, part of the world welcomes the disease with religious fervor, while the other avoids it like the plague it is. Then a prophecy shakes up the status quo. Two enemies are told one of them will triumph and one will fall, but neither knows which. It's maddening and brilliant and so much fun to read.

Elegy is at the center of the prophecy, and she is exactly the kind of protagonist I want to follow into narrative peril. She is not the chosen one, but she is handed a terrible destiny and has to decide, in real time, what to do with it. There is a slow-burn romance, devilish politics, religious fanaticism and so much more. I don't think I've read a world that feels this live-in for a long time. It's just so good! ■

— *Review by Julie Goodrich*



By Veronica Roth
May 12, 2026
432 pages
\$39.99
Tor Publishing

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Zeke's Rooftop and Grill brings elevated dining and patio vibes to Johnston Town Center

New two-level restaurant offers inventive comfort food, signature cocktails and a prime view of summer events in Johnston.

BY JACKIE WILSON

Johnston continues to expand its “new” downtown with the Johnston Town Center, and one of the latest additions is Zeke's Rooftop and Grill.

Zeke's is named after one of Johnston's earliest settlers, Ezekiel and Mary Hunt, and opened in January 2026.

Zeke's includes two levels of fun, food and the breezy outdoor vibes Iowans crave. The expansive patio features indoor and outdoor areas, along with a full bar. A large party room upstairs also includes a bar and is available for private events. Most recently, it was the scene for March Madness watch parties.

The upstairs patio offers just as much space as the lower-level restaurant. Head over this summer for a bird's-eye view of The Yard and its Tunes at Twilight concert series. Or, on Tuesdays, stop in for a drink before or after the Johnston Town Center's farmers market.

Inside, the décor features an industrial look with black exposed ceilings, cement floors, and tan and brown seating. If you are waiting for a table, sink into the comfortable chairs near the entrance and read about Zeke's history on the wall. A wraparound outdoor patio on the lower level adds more seating.

The menu ranges from Brussels sprouts starters to chicken pesto gnocchi entrees, plus everything in between. The trash can nachos (\$18) arrive in a mini trash can; when it's lifted, loaded nachos spill onto the plate. The dish includes chips, beef, salsa, guacamole and two kinds of cheese. The concept traces back to TV chef Guy Fieri, who popularized serving nachos this way to ensure even layering.

The pizzas feature fresh ingredients with local flair, including corn, Graziano sausage and tenderloins. The Peter P's Pot Roast pizza stands out. The unusual combination includes roast beef, marinara, jalapeno

tater kegs, mozzarella and cream cheese, drizzled with gravy. It works. Order it as a flatbread (\$12) or a pizza for \$23.

Other options include liver and onions, homemade rigatoni with Graziano sausage, grain bowls, salmon and entree salads — something for every palate. Save room for dessert. Chocolate lovers should try the skillet chocolate chip cookie or brownie, each topped with ice cream and drizzled with chocolate and caramel sauce (\$8).

A full bar offers signature drinks. The Soju Mojito blends Soonhari Strawberry Soju, lime, mint and club soda (\$10). The Gilligan's Island is a tropical mix of gin, pineapple and coconut liqueurs.

Zeke's is open for weekend brunch and until midnight on weekends. As patio season gets into full swing, add Zeke's to your must-visit list this summer. ■

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Restoration of The Latin King

The chicken spiedini in amogio sauce is referred to as “the million-dollar dish” in the kitchen.

The Latin King is an Iowa legend. Begun in 1947 by Rose and Jimmy Pigneri, its name comes from New York City’s Latin Quarter in the days when “Latin Americans” there, and here, were mostly Italian.

The restaurant then was limited to what are now parts of the “Pink Room” and the bar. In 1983, Bob and Amy Tursi bought it from his cousins. The Tursis added a “best in town” lobby with a revolving door, church pews, a rocking chair, historic photos, tables and a large pile of CITYVIEW magazines. The status of that lobby grew to mythical levels because Bobby ran the place from there. He was the last of a great line of Italian restaurateur-hosts that included owner hosts of 20 local restaurants. They dominated 20th-century dining in Des Moines by sheer force of their personalities.

A temperature-controlled wine cellar and two additional dining rooms — the Blue Room and the Main Room — were added one at a time. In 2021, the Tursis sold the restaurant to Kansas City’s Vin Zant group, which also owned Louie’s Wine Dives, Fresko, and 11 other chains.

The Latin King’s personality was lost in the enormity of it all. Worse, Vin Zant sold the real estate that The Latin King had assembled under Tursi, including the largest parking lot of any locally owned restaurant. Selling one’s real estate and leasing it back is the strategy that destroyed Red Lobster, among others. We suspect it financed Vin Zant’s relentless expansion, including his purchase of Sonoma vineyards sold at The Latin King, and the settlement of a lawsuit employees brought for withheld wages.

In the last year, the corporation sold managing partnerships to Matt McCartney and chef Mathew Schmeisser, former employees when Tursi owned it. Current employees, including several with more than 20 and 30 years of service, told us that customers had complained about the quality of ingredients that the corporation had degraded.

The two Matts have restored things from kitchen ordering on down. Among the restorations is longtime chef Pat Morris’ bone-scratch chicken and egg noodles with mashed potatoes, for the first time since his death in 2022. Morris used to announce its availability on an elite email list. Now it’s the star of the menu every third Thursday of the month.

Other dishes have attained icon status. The



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chicken spiedini in amogio sauce is referred to as “the million-dollar dish” in the kitchen. McCartney says it accounts for nearly 30% of orders. Spiedini is Italian for what Arabs call kebabs, Argentines call parilla, Vikings named skewers and Indians call tikka. The chicken is breast meat. Bobby Tursi discovered the dish at Garozzo’s in Kansas City. It has always been served there with marinara. Latin King serves it with amogio — olive oil, butter, herbs and spices.

Fried chicken is scratch made and fried in lard, as the Roman gods ordained. All dressings are homemade. Schmeisser says the creamy Parmesan is by far the most popular. Herby focaccia is the house bread, complimentary here.

Ravioli, boiled or fried, can be stuffed with lobster. Meatballs are from a Pigneri recipe. Among the scratch-made side dishes, American fries are made again the original way, very crisply crusted with melt-in-your mouth tenderness. Fried potatoes do not get better than these, with or without green onions and cheese options. They are generously plated, yet my waiter recently observed my enthusiasm for them this way.

“Thanks, we might not even need to use the dishwasher.”

Desserts include homemade cannoli, famous carrot cake, and tiramisu which I first saw in Des Moines at The Latin King. A recent Saturday visit was pumped up by scores of high schoolers in prom attire.

The Latin King is again a royal option for special occasions. ■

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



Chicken spiedini in amogio sauce.



Fried chicken with American fries.

Michael Egel at Allora

Over generous servings of salads and sandwiches, we talked about DMMO's astonishing success, its new season and its against-the-wind philosophy.

Michael Egel is the general and artistic director of Des Moines Metro Opera. We asked him to lunch recently and he chose Allora in the Krause Gateway Center.

Allora offers full lunch service now after several years of mostly morning hours with coffee and limited food offerings. Choices included panini, pasta, soups, salads and two entrees — cod and lamb osso bucco on our visit. Allora is run by Mike LaValle, who has run the opera's food tent for decades. Recipes are from three generations of his family, including Lisa LaValle's soups from the wind-grieved Trellis at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Gardens.

Ingredients come from local gems including South Union breads, Berkwood ham, and La Quercia prosciutto. Krause family wines, from their Italian vineyards, and desserts from Lisa's ken are also available. Over generous servings of salads and sandwiches, we talked about DMMO's astonishing success, its new season and its against-the-wind philosophy.

Egel succeeded Robert Larson as artistic director. That is two leaders in 54 years. That's astonishing continuity in the art world.

"I began as an intern with the opera in 1994 when I was a student at Simpson. I did just about every job. I cleaned the bathroom floors after intermission. I literally raised the tent outdoors. Once, during a production of 'Carmen,' I pulled the curtain and then went on stage as an extra. In 2010, I became artistic director, and in 2013, I also became general director."

Was there also continuity in the mission?

"Yes. The hub belief of the founding mission was to be a place for development of skills, to foster a haven that people would return to year after year and to produce shows to be proud of, productions that look like the music."

DMMO regularly attracts elite art media — New York Times, New Yorker, Opera magazine, Wall Street Journal, etc. No other Iowa entity has anything close to that pull. How do you keep doing that?

"Survey after survey tells us the same thing — it's our theater and its intimacy. I go to Covent Gardens (London) and Paris Opera and watch performances in 3,000-seat auditoriums. There is no intimate relationship between performers and audiences. Backstage at those operas has no glamour. It's more like something out of Kafka.

"Our theater has 467 seats. New Yorker's (magazine) Alex Ross wrote that 'opera here is more like theater than it is elsewhere.' I had not thought about that before, but it's right. You can't see facial expression in the huge opera

halls of Europe, New York, etc. Our audiences can see sweat on a performer's brow. That is why our audiences return year after year."

DMMO's audience is uniquely catholic, more so than other Des Moines entities.

"Forty percent of our audience comes from outside the central Iowa metro area. We had ticket buyers last year from 42 states and six foreign countries."

DMMO is also unique in that it has remained successful without pandering to the shibboleth that audiences only want to see the classics.

"We have sold 93% of all seats year after year without having produced an Italian opera in 10 years. When we do 'Tosca' this year, it will be a fresh performance. The last time we did it was 2009. The Met does 'Tosca' nearly every year. (More than 1,000 times so far). They might list five different performers in every role. They recycle the production values — same sets, same costumes, etc.

"In my 18 years, we have never repeated a production. We do three operas a year, and every production is 100% fresh. This is not instant opera. We recently produced our first Hungarian, first Czech, first Russian and now our first Polish opera. I have committed to do one, and even two operas a year that are new to us. We champion the first third of the 20th century — Bartok, Juracek, Dvorak, etc. We even did Debussy and Richard Strauss in the same year."

DMMO has also championed lesser known composers of the Classical Era.

"Gluck has a home here. The opera I am proudest of is 'Platée' (by early 18th century's Jean-Philippe Rameau)."

The costumes in that were fantastic. We called it the 'Pretty in Pink opera.' It must be hard to cast when you do three, and just three, totally fresh shows.

"Visas are a lot of work. I cast three or four performers each year who need visas and three or four Americans who live in Europe."

Why do so many American singers move to Europe?

"Particularly to Germany. Germany has by far the biggest audience for opera. Going back to the 1950s and 1960s, American singers, even the very best like Renee Fleming, had to do Europe. Germany produces so much opera that the state signs singers to 'festival contracts.' Those make them government employees with all the benefits government workers get in Germany. It's easier now for American singers to make a living in Germany."

Let's go through this year's repertoire.

"'King Roger' is our first Polish opera. It's by Karol Szymanowski, from first third of the 20th century. It is concise — three acts in just 80 minutes. It comes from a



time between two world wars when Europe was looking to find order amidst chaos. Each act reflects a different culture's music — Byzantine, Islamic and bacchanalian Greek."

It's a rare opera in which the hero is a baritone. "Mice and Men" also casts a baritone in a co-lead role — John Moore.

"He is another Simpson grad. Now he's a star. New York Times called 'Of Mice and Men' the first truly American opera since 'Porgy and Bess.' It's a co-production with Houston Grand Opera. Composer Carlisle Floyd's career was based in Houston Grand Opera."

Tosca is what I call your "money shot." It's such a tear jerking, beautifully sung opera. Tosca is the ultimate diva. Her character is actually a diva.

"It's pure Puccini. Uniquely written in three acts all set on the same day in Rome. In Rome, you can take a tour of the three historic venues in which it is set."

DMMO's promotional photo of "Tosca" star Laura Wilde on the rooftop ledge of World Food Prize headquarters is mesmerizing.

"We are proud of all three operas' promotions. Ben Easter is a great photographer, and Kim Dragelivich does the creative design. I think our ad in Opera magazine is the best looking ad in the whole magazine." ■

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



AROUND TOWN

PHOTOS BY ALLYSSA ERTZ



Crystal Harrison and Kate Florer



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"The time you won your town the race,
We chaired you through the market-place;
Man and boy stood cheering by
And home we brought you shoulder-high."

- A.E. Houseman, "Ode to an Athlete Dying Young"

By Jim Duncan

My paternal grandfather died five years before I was born. I know of him only through family lore: Though only 5 foot, 5 inches and weighing more than 220 pounds, he could perform full backflips and run 100 yards in 11 seconds. After a spell in the carnival, his brothers brought him into their auctioneering business so he could afford to marry my grandmother.

In the early 20th century, auctions were mostly about livestock and estates after deaths and foreclosures, both of which were far more common than they are today. Auctioneers were as itinerant as carnivals. Grandfather was on the road most of the year. My father was homeschooled in hotel rooms and never attended a real school before enrolling at Drake when he was 16.

Dad's father was a gambler whose specialty was betting on himself on the Fat Man Racing Circuit. That was a real thing in the decades before and after the 20th century. Because auctioneers traveled most of the year, he was able to hustle whole towns into putting up their fastest youngsters against him in a race. He knew to avoid towns with a young sprinter who could

outrun him, so the odds were always in his favor. Until he died young of diabetes.

I grew up thinking his brother Bill was my Gramps. I was 9 when Bill explained life to me as dramatically as anyone ever would. He asked me if I knew how to make God laugh. When I could not pull any answer from my limited experiences with God, life and humor, he hit the punch line that I never forgot — "Tell Him your plans."

That comes from the Yiddish proverb, "Mann Tracht, Un Gott Lacht" ("Man plans, and God laughs"), a couple thousand years before Woody Allen made it his tagline and John Lennon sang that "Life is what happens while you are making other plans." The Biblical Isaac was named for the Hebrew word for "laughter," after being born to parents far too old to believe they could have a child. God then ordered Isaac's father Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. Abe complied before Isaac was spared, by divine grace I suppose. Bob Dylan wrote rock and roll's most influential album (Rolling Stone's opinion) about that non sacrifice "out on Highway 61."

Nobody needs a tribe

Uncle Bill taught me more than that happiness depended upon accepting life with irony. He lived when more people stubbornly avoided any political association with one party or the other. Bill believed in secret ballots, and the way he voted was his business and no one else's. He wrote lots of letters to newspaper editors. His most avuncular advice came from one. It's pertinent today.

"Nobody needs a tribe anymore. We have better ways of protecting our families — like laws and guns. The biggest tribes are the Democrats and Republicans. Don't join either — they stifle individual thinking. They want the whole tribe agreeing about everything. That's the end of creativity."

That came true in manners that would have repulsed him. Sometime during my 80 trips around the sun, politics turned into perpetual high school. Each political party became convinced that they were the cool guys, and they demanded complete submission to all their dogmatic decrees — if you wanted to sit at their table.

Independents decide most elections, but being one is anathema to getting along with either side of the dogma wars. Today, politics restrict people's freedom of expression. Like most grumpy old men, I grew up in the "good old days." In my life, those were when the Civil Rights Act was spearheaded by the most liberal Democrat (Daniel Patrick Moynihan) and the most conservative Republican (Everett Dirksen).

I don't think that could happen today. Neither political party wants to agree with the other about anything significant. Party has become more important than country. When any politician talks about "crossing the aisle" in the name of the common good, God laughs. And it never happens in any influential manner.

It has become so severe that some politicians demonize their opponents, inspiring all forms of violence, even assassinations. Moynihan and Dirksen wouldn't even recognize their political parties today.

Ancient tongues

Taking the avuncular persona seriously, Uncle Bill also advised me that languages, especially Latin, Greek and Sanskrit, were the key to success. My father agreed. My mother thought it was a ridiculous waste of time for me to learn languages that no one spoke anymore. I learned the hard way that mother knew best.

In high school and college, I studied all of those

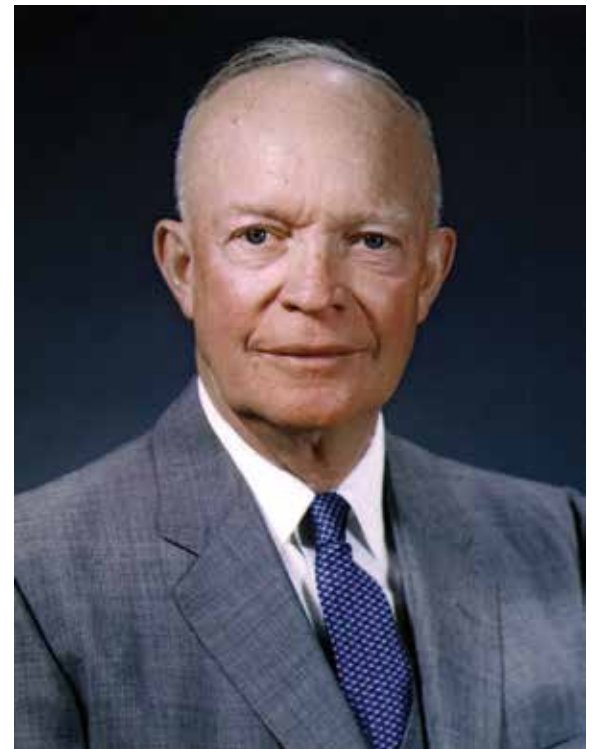
ancient tongues and also Telugu, Tamil and Japanese. I learned their secret codes and could read the food and sports sections of newspapers in eight languages. But I lacked the left-brain development to understand much of their spoken words. I was laughed at in more languages than I can count. I can no longer remember much of any of the Asian languages I once, sort of, got along in.

Music and math

I was also encouraged to study music. I am tone-deaf and thus became the worst singer, trumpeter and saxophonist in every chorus or band I ever joined. Man plans, God laughs with a background chorus from the cool kids' table.

Fortunately, Uncle Bill also believed in the mystical influences of mathematics. He taught me about Fibonacci numbers. They have mystified me ever since. There's no explanation why, for instance, sports winning streaks end on Fibonacci numbers like 3, 5 and 8 more frequently than on 4, 6 or 7. But they do.

Stock market technical analysts, sports gamblers, mathematicians and insurance companies all factor Fibonacci numbers into their calculations about probability. Actuarial science degrees now are among the most valuable in the post-college marketplace. As playwright David Mamet wrote, "I don't believe it's possible. But I've seen it."



Dwight David Eisenhower. Photo courtesy of White House - Eisenhower Presidential Library

Great advice from Ike

No one really knows what advice is important and what to discard. Until it's too late. Dwight David Eisenhower has been scorned by most historians who rate both World War II's commanders and

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U.S. Presidents. All he did was quietly coach more flamboyant generals like George Patton, Douglas MacArthur, Omar Bradley and Bernard Law Montgomery into a team that won the big war. Then Ike got the interstate highway system up and running while maintaining eight years of peace and prosperity.

Eisenhower also gave Baby Boomers great advice. He's the guy who famously warned America to "beware the military industrial complex." He also explained the great mystery of man's plans and God's laughter.

"When I was a small boy in Kansas, a friend of mine and I went fishing and, as we sat there in the warmth of the summer afternoon on a Smoky Hill River bank, we talked about what we wanted to do when we grew up. I told him that I wanted to be a real major league baseball player, a genuine professional like Honas Wagner. My friend said that he'd like to be President of the United States. Neither of us got our wish."

Eisenhower played center field on the Abilene High School baseball team, entered West Point and played JV baseball with Omar Bradley. Many years later, after winning battles, wars and elections, Ike wrote that "not making the baseball team at West Point was one of the greatest disappointments of my life, maybe my greatest."

The best laid plans of mice and men often go astray, not because they are bad plans. More likely

"...But trust me on the sunscreen."

it is because God, aka "The Unseen Hand," is what American Indians from the Urubamba to the Gila valleys called the Great Trickster. Economist John Maynard Keynes famously wrote "The inevitable never happens. It is the unexpected always." That observation is repeated over and over in his greatest work "The Economic Consequences of the Peace." Ike read Keynes' book, incidentally. So did Uncle Bill.

Sunscreen

As long as God is a trickster, advice remains as fool proof as roulette strategies. One of the most famous modern pieces of advice was itself a great trick. In the early days of the internet, five years before FactCheck.org (2003) and nine before PoliFact (2007), a commencement address to MIT graduates, supposedly by Kirk Vonnegut, went COVID-level viral. Vonnegut later told anyone who would listen that he had nothing to do with it and that he had never spoken at MIT. He also added that it was funny and intelligent and he would have been proud to have been its author.

The speech was actually written by Mary Schmich for the Chicago Tribune. In it she said that the best advice she has for the young was "to wear sunscreen." Outside of that, she wrote "Advice is a form of

nostalgia. Dispensing it is a way of fishing the past from the disposal, wiping it off, painting over the ugly parts and recycling it for more than it's worth. ... But trust me on the sunscreen."

Many dreams

My personal plans for adult life disposed of many dreams. Otherwise, I would have been a cowboy or a baseball player. I spent a year managing a horse ranch but never felt comfortable riding a rambunctious horse. Nearsightedness destroyed my ability to hit a curveball.

I found shelter from the storms of life in perpetual high school by writing, mostly about food. I learned to cook after my mother responded to my criticism of her cooking with the suggestion that I cook my own meals in the future. I was 10, but my grandmother had taught me a lot, including "Don't ever tell your mother that I let you use the sharp knives."

I even wrote my college thesis on South Indian cuisine differing between villages just a few miles apart. But food was just a great hobby until Connie Wimer asked me to write about it for this magazine's predecessor in the 1980s. And before I met the love of my life in 1996 at a travel writers convention. She was both a chef and comedian, making her a perfect



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“...But trust me on the nutrition.”

companion with whom to navigate a perverse world. We met after her airline lost her luggage and my hotel van service stood me up at the Spokane airport.

As Vonnegut wrote: “Abrupt changes in travel plans are dancing lessons from God.” We tangoed through life together after that until she died. The lesson, I think, is to never let anger interfere with opportunities.

Food writing came naturally to a guy who believed in the futility of anger, and in taking anything too seriously. As Larry McMurtry said: “Medicine is the softest science, and nutrition is its melted butter. Whatever is gospel today will be anathema in ten years.”

I lived through nutritional movements that demonized, in succession: pork, red meat, sugar, game, wine, hard liquor, raw food and all things even remotely connected to animal life. They all came and went. The only enduring food wisdom I gleaned came from the Sakyamuni Buddha 2000 years ago: “All things in moderation are good. All things in excess are bad.”

Nutritional gospel?

All the rest turned out to be noise, like politics. The greatest unnecessary health crisis of my lifetime was laid on the nutritional gospel that fats were evil but carbs were good and thus needed to be made artificially cheap. After the American Medical Association narrowly voted to recommend a diet low in fats and high in carbs in the early 1980s, political leaders initiated huge subsidies to increase new, highly processed carbs like high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). They pretty much replaced real 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.

As God laughed, 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. Today gospels and anathemas have turned upside down again. Proteins are the new gospel and fats have gone from all bad to half good. America's new food pyramid scorns the carbs that were once pushed down American throats like force fed geese.

Find shelter

What the world needs now is levity. Try turning off the mainstream noise and find shelter in “Inside Edition.” While summing up a day's news in 30 minutes, it provides survival lessons in a world that God finds hilarious.

Clothes might not make the man or woman but they definitely make the news.

Cute animals are just as important as anything that any politician did.

If you want people to watch something, just tell them that what they “are about to see may be graphic and disturbing.”

No news should take more than 30 seconds to tell.

Don't bother with “expert opinions.” Viewers like to make up their own minds and to not be lectured by someone who thinks he is smarter than they are.

All stories can be told in three minutes; most stories in less than one; the best in 30 seconds.

A tease creates anticipation and keeps viewers from leaving during commercials. Two teases are better. Three are best.

Beyond that, Ike dispensed additional wisdom worth repeating today. “The more baseball the better. It is a healthful sport and develops team play and initiative, plus an independent attitude.”

Independent attitudes are anathema at all the cool kids' tables today. Politicians vote on strict party lines for insane ideas like defunding police, unlimited access to assault rifles, open borders, and protecting the industrial complex's right to poison our water with a chemical that only kills — mostly syphilis and weeds.

But trust me on the nutrition. ■

JOE'S NEIGHBORHOOD

BY JOE WEEG

Fretting about flying

Just watch the river flow past.

The sky is definitely falling.

How do I know this? Because when we should be heading to the bunker, we're going to instead fly eight miles high over an ocean in several hundred tons of metal. Yup, my wife and I are flying out of Iowa to visit our daughter and her partner in Ireland. It's the perfect time to go. Let's review the events of the week we travel: unpaid TSA agents are not showing up to work causing long delays at security; a plane crashes into a firetruck on the tarmac at LaGuardia Airport; the U.S. started a war with Iran, who responds by shooting missiles at other countries and maybe that will include planes flying to Ireland with important Iowa dignitaries. Of course, we're not important Iowa dignitaries, but what if they get confused by my wife's smart airplane outfit?

And then there's this backpack in which I always carry just a little too much. Sure, I can get it on by lying down and slipping on the straps, but when I try to get up, I collapse into the corpse pose. It is a fun yoga pose to do in the privacy of your own home but not so good on the carpet in Terminal A.

So, I fret about all this.

Listen, I love Stoicism and Zen Buddhism and Alcoholics Anonymous — "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference." But someone has to fret. My mom held that position for nearly 98 years, and now it's my turn. Yup, it's a calling.

For my besieged wife, this means arriving at the Des Moines International Airport hours early for our flight to Ireland. It's just what I do. Sorry.

But I've been burned in the past. Not so long ago, I flew out of Denver where the security line started OUTSIDE the terminal. I dutifully stood in line, even though it was like standing outside a Taylor Swift concert hoping to buy a nonexistent ticket — you know it will never happen and that there's a strong possibility that standing in line could be how you spend your final years.

See, I'm a trauma victim.

So, today I insist that we get to the airport early. And, yes, "insist" might not be strong enough. I rush and rush and rush my poor wife — no time for breakfast, no time for coffee, just grab your phone and passport and run.

I sprint to the car, yelling all the way — "LET'S



GO!"

And off we go to the airport, where we race to the security line knowing the whole time that we're going to be late and we're going to miss our connection in Minneapolis and we'll be detained by ICE and eventually we'll be sent to a prison in El Salvador or, at a minimum, returned to our country of origin — Boone, Iowa. HELP!

Run faster. Jump the barrier. Go go go.

Here's what we see of the security line at the Des Moines International Airport.

Oops.

I've been reading a little Taoism in my old age. Lao Tzu says in the Tao Te Ching, "To live till you die is to live long enough." I like that.

Unfortunately, my wife feels I might be at that "long enough" point right now.

Once in seats made for much smaller people, she mutters, "You're on my side."

She's not saying this in a motivational "Let's go!



Team Weeg!" No siree.

I scoot over as much as I can but immediately drop a headphone case between my legs onto the floor.

Well, that's gone — whether it's a bag of airplane pretzels or a small child, only a Las Vegas contortionist could retrieve something from that abyss.

And there you have it — the journey to getting on the plane. Fretting at its purest.

But — HERE'S THE WONDERFUL SECRET — once you get on the plane, once the journey to getting in your seat is over, airplane travel offers an antidote to fretting. Yup, I know there are some disbelievers out there, but let's look at it. You have absolutely NO control over what happens once you're on the plane. You're not driving. You're not navigating. You don't decide when drinks will be served. You buckle up or don't buckle up totally on command of a small, Pavlovian overhead light. You can stand, but it's frowned upon. You can go to the bathroom, but please make it quick. "Do you want chicken or pasta?" That's enough time for that decision. "How about you — chicken or pasta?"

Even with my fretting mom, if you could get her away from home, sit her down, take away every possible choice, she relaxed.

Shhhhhhhhh ... just watch the river flow past.



And, so it goes on the plane.

My wife leans into my shoulder. My eyes shut. My head droops.

Peace.

Look at that, the sky isn't falling after all. ■

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.



A healthy lifestyles section

Health + Wellness

PROFILES

- The hidden dangers of spike protein — and what you can do about it
- The ABCs of hemp
- Did you know diabetes can impact your hearing?
- Discover the benefits of perinatal psychiatry



The hidden dangers of spike protein — and what you can do about it

One of the most toxic compounds humans can encounter is the spike protein produced by mRNA COVID-19 shots. Far from staying in the arm, this synthetic protein triggers profound inflammation, activates the full clotting cascade, damages the endothelium of blood vessels and generates autoimmune antibodies. It also disrupts genes that suppress cancer, opening pathways to aggressive “turbo cancers.”

A large study of 8.7 million people found vaccinated individuals had sharply elevated risks for seven major cancers: bladder, breast, colorectal, thyroid and gastric. CDC data show excess cancer deaths surging after mass vaccination, with more than 100,000 additional U.S. deaths. Case reports document tumors exploding within days or weeks of injection. Pfizer’s data revealed spikes of 279% in miscarriages, 487% in breast cancer, 350% in male infertility and more.

Shedding is real. Autopsies reveal astonishing levels of spike protein in spermatozoa. Vaccinated individuals exhale exosomes carrying the protein, exposing others via casual proximity, kissing, sex or breastfeeding.

Fortunately, testing is simple. I can refer you to LabCorp for the spike protein antibody test. Normal is less than 0.8 — if under 1,000, the spike is largely cleared. Levels above 1,000 signal ongoing risk.

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Information provided by Dr. Dale Kimberlin D.C., Kimberlin Chiropractic Health Systems, 219 S.W. Third St., Ankeny, 515-895-4927, drdaledc.com, email help@drdaledc.com.

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Information provided by Lacie Navin, Your CBD Store, owner of locations at 125 Fifth St., West Des Moines, 515-279-0150, and 2732 S.E. Delaware Ave., Suite 160, Ankeny, 515-964-9862.



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Did you know diabetes can impact your hearing?

May is Better Hearing Month, a time to raise awareness about the importance of hearing health and the often-overlooked connection between hearing loss and chronic conditions like diabetes. While many people associate hearing loss with aging or noise exposure, research shows that individuals with diabetes are significantly more likely to experience hearing impairment.

Diabetes can damage small blood vessels and nerves throughout the body, including those in the inner ear. The cochlea, a delicate structure responsible for translating sound into signals for the brain, relies on a healthy blood supply. When blood flow is compromised, it can lead to gradual, irreversible hearing loss. In addition, high blood sugar levels may contribute to nerve damage, further impacting auditory function.

Hearing loss related to diabetes often develops slowly, making it difficult to notice in its early stages. People may begin to struggle with understanding conversations, especially in noisy environments, or feel like others are mumbling. Because these symptoms can be subtle, regular hearing screenings are essential — particularly for those living with diabetes.

The good news is that managing diabetes effectively can help reduce the risk of hearing complications. Maintaining healthy blood sugar levels, following a balanced diet, staying physically active, and attending routine medical check-ups all play a role in protecting both overall and hearing health.

During Better Hearing Month, it's important to recognize that hearing care is a vital part of whole-body wellness. Early detection and intervention can significantly improve quality of life, communication, and long-term health outcomes. ■

Information provided by Dr. Andrew Keiner, AUD, Merit Hearing. To learn more about hearing health, visit us at www.merithearing.com or call 515-499-8622.

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Discover the benefits of perinatal psychiatry

Welcoming a new baby — or trying to — can bring joy, stress, exhaustion, and uncertainty, sometimes all at once. For many people, it also brings emotional changes they did not expect.

A perinatal psychiatrist works with individuals during pregnancy and after birth to support their mental health through these transitions. They care for people who are trying to conceive or coping with pregnancy loss.

What is perinatal psychiatry?

Perinatal psychiatry focuses on mental health during pregnancy and the first year after birth. It also includes care during other reproductive experiences that can affect emotional health.

Many people are surprised to learn how common these challenges are. About 1 in 5 women experience a mental health condition during this time, yet many do not receive care.

Symptoms are often dismissed or overlooked. It is easy to assume you should just push through or that how you feel is simply part of becoming a parent. In reality, these are medical conditions that can be treated.

When should you reach out?

There is no single reason to seek support. You may want to talk with someone if you are:

- Feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or persistently down
- Wondering if what you are experiencing is more than the “baby blues”

- Coping with loss after miscarriage, stillbirth, or a difficult delivery
- Managing an existing mental health condition during pregnancy or after birth
- Unsure about medication use during pregnancy or breastfeeding
- Experiencing intrusive or frightening thoughts
- Having thoughts about harming yourself or others, or feeling disconnected from reality

You do not need to wait until things feel severe. If something feels off, that is reason enough to ask for help.

What does care look like?

Care is based on your needs and goals. It may include therapy, medication, or both. Many conditions improve with the right support, especially when addressed early.

The approach is designed to be accessible and straightforward, with a focus on listening, understanding your situation, and helping you find a path forward.

You deserve support

Taking care of your mental health is part of caring for yourself and your family. If this sounds familiar, whether in your own experience or in someone you love, it may be time to talk with someone who understands perinatal mental health. ■

Information provided by Bailey Brooks, MD, Perinatal Psychiatrist, Broadlawns Medical Center, 515-282-5695, Broadlawns.org.

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Approximately 1 in 5 women experience a mental health-related condition during or after pregnancy. I'm here to help.

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Bailey Brooks, MD
Perinatal Psychiatrist



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FILM REVIEW

BY DAVID ROWLEY

'Balls Up' swings big but misses the laughs

Peter Farrelly's latest raunchy comedy pairs Paul Walter Hauser and Mark Wahlberg in a crude, chaotic romp that lacks the heart and consistency of his 1990s hits.

Back in 1994, director Peter Farrelly made "Dumb and Dumber," a willfully stupid, aggressively crude but ultimately lovable comic yarn. With his latest Prime Video offering, "Balls Up," Farrelly attempts to conjure that same magic, but the result has a generic, streaming-ready sheen that feels like the first draft of a pitch meeting. It is a movie that tries to recapture the gross-out crown but forgets to pack the heart — or, more crucially, the consistent laughs — that made his 1990s work so enduring.

The premise is pure Farrelly: Elijah (Paul Walter Hauser), a socially inept designer with a revolutionary idea for a condom that covers both the "shaft and the stones," teams up with Brad (Mark Wahlberg), a hard-charging salesman with the intensity of a man who has not blinked since the days of Marky Mark and the Funky Bunch. Together, they stumble into a World Cup sponsorship deal for Brazil, only to lose it almost immediately by accidentally ending the cup president's nine-year sobriety streak. What follows is a chaotic spiral that turns them into the most hated men in South America — "os estúpidos" on the run — leaning into an "ugly Americans" trope with all the subtlety of a vuvuzela to the skull.

If there is any reason to keep watching, it is Hauser. He is a comedic heavyweight in every sense and clearly understands the assignment. He delivers Elijah's lines with careful precision, lending genuine charm to an otherwise thin character. He even squeezes real laughter out of a scene with a drug lord, which is more than the script deserves. Wahlberg, meanwhile, leans on his usual tough-guy routine, though he is at his best when he embraces the humiliation the script requires. The two share decent chemistry — their karaoke number offers a rare spark — but it is not enough to keep the film afloat.

The real culprit is not the acting. It is the remarkably bland screenplay by Rhett Reese and Paul Wernick, the writers behind "Deadpool" and "Zombieland," which makes the mediocrity all the more baffling. After a



"Balls Up"

R | 1 hour 44 minutes

Director: Peter Farrelly

Writers: Paul Wernick, Rhett Reese

Stars: Mark Wahlberg, Paul Walter Hauser, Sacha Baron Cohen

promising first 30 minutes, the structure dissolves into a series of airless set pieces that feel like rejected sketch ideas. What if a soccer mascot looked like a giant phallus? What if a group of eco-warriors licked hallucinogenic frogs? What if two men were forced to swallow ball-shaped condoms in a joke that feels stuck in a 1990s "gay panic" time capsule? By the time Sacha Baron Cohen appears as a drug cartel boss, the film attempts to regain its footing with his brand of over-the-top eccentricity, but it often drifts into "Movie 43" territory, feeling more like a collection of vignettes than a cohesive story.

Visually, "Balls Up" is the quintessential platform movie — critic shorthand for "utterly forgettable" (think "Red Notice" on Netflix). It has the expected raunchy humor, a reminder that Farrelly still has plenty of crude jokes in his system, even if he has run out of ways to make them feel fresh or necessary.

"Balls Up" is a mess, but a mostly harmless one. Its willingness to embrace its own stupidity is its only real saving grace. If you expect a masterpiece from the director who won two Oscars for "Green Book," you will be disappointed. If you expect a raunchy, crude and occasionally exhausting barrage of cheap laughs, it might suffice. Ultimately, this is a film that will likely be forgotten within a week of its release — the kind of movie that plays in the background while you fold laundry. Asking for full attention would be too much. ■

PREVIEWS

BY DAVID ROWLEY

"Hokum"

R | 1h 47m

Director/Writer: Damian McCarthy

Stars: Adam Scott, Peter Coonan, David Wilmot

Ohm Bauman (Adam Scott) is a prickly author on a grim personal odyssey to rural Ireland and the remote heritage hotel where his parents honeymooned 40 years ago. Now dead, he's returned with their ashes to the last (and perhaps only) place they were truly happy. But the Baumans had dark secrets. And this hotel? It has secrets of its own. Forced to confront the "haunted" top floor firsthand, Bauman breaks the seal on the infamous suite. But what is waiting behind the door isn't just a campfire legend or a transparent specter. It is something far more tangible, far more sinister, and infinitely more monstrous.



"The Sheep Detectives"

PG | 1h 49m

Director: Kyle Balda

Writers: Craig Mazin, Leonie Swann

Stars: Hugh Jackman, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Bryan Cranston

A flock of unusually intelligent sheep turns sleuth after their beloved shepherd, George (Hugh Jackman), is found dead under mysterious circumstances. Having spent years listening to George read detective novels aloud, the flock — led by the sharp-witted Lily (Julia Louis-Dreyfus) — decides to solve the murder themselves, navigating a web of human greed and small-town secrets. As they follow the clues and investigate human suspects, they prove that even sheep can be brilliant gumshoes.



"Mortal Kombat II"

R | 1h 56m

Director: Simon McQuoid

Writers: Jeremy Slater, Ed Boon, John Tobias

Stars: Karl Urban, Ludi Lin, Jessica McNamee

The stakes have never been higher for Earthrealm in "Mortal Kombat II," as the long-promised tournament finally begins under the shadow of the tyrannical Shao Kahn (Marty Ford). Picking up after the 2021 reboot, the sequel shifts its focus to the arrival of the legendary Johnny Cage (Karl Urban), a washed-up action star whose Hollywood ego is put to the ultimate test against the brutal reality of Outworld. This installment promises a visceral, "no-holds-barred" expansion of the franchise's brutal lore. ■



The Ingersoll is a performing arts phoenix

Connor Delaney's cherished memories of growing up in the area contributed to the renaissance of this venerable performance hall.

Celluloid to old school dinner theatre to its glitziest iteration yet. Connor Delaney's cherished memories of growing up in the area contributed to the renaissance of this venerable performance hall. His tenacity and acumen provided the fuel to carry its reawakening to realization. The Ingersoll resonates with a revival energy as it prepares for a season of stage productions sure to please the palates of patrons while satisfying their hunger for the best regional theatre can produce.

Boyhood belief in community

"The Ingersoll Theater is loved by many, myself included," Delaney said. "Some of my earliest memories are there, with my Grandma Mary, my Great Grandma Alice. Mini pizzas, cherry Cokes, 'Peter Pan,' 'The Velveteen Rabbit,' 'Raggedy Ann.' I still have a scrapbook at home with ticket stubs, programs, notes and newspaper clippings from the shows we saw together."

He sees a new generation of patrons joining those returning to this memory-making site to similarly gather experiences of fine dining, libations and great entertainment.

"Chuck Carnes created an institution there. Des Moines loved what he and his team built."

Shortly after graduating from Roosevelt High School, the theater went dark.

"For years, people talked about it — what should happen, whether it could ever come back, who might take it on."

A few tentative efforts were started but never took root. As Delaney established White Oak Realty, his commercial development business, he continued considering how he could make his vision of a revitalized Ingersoll Theatre become the community's reality.

"I began investing in the same stretch of Ingersoll that I grew up around, renovating buildings like 3619 Ingersoll and helping bring my sister's plant shop to life nearby," Delaney said. "Spending that kind of time in the neighborhood led to a relationship with the Lee family, who owned the theater and several surrounding properties. We eventually reached an agreement to purchase the theater. The building had deteriorated significantly. The early work was about stabilization, all done out of pocket just to keep the building standing. About a year and half in, the project was preliminarily approved for state and federal historic tax credits.

He realized that he needed to find the right operator for the theater, someone who could successfully combine performance with food and beverage. After appearing on a local news broadcast, he received a phone call.

"I saw you on the news," the caller said. "We manage theaters; that's what we do."

The caller was Steve Peters, VenuWorks CEO. They met the next morning. The vision Delaney had carried all those years was coalescing. He found a perfect partner. He visited the famous Chanhassen Dinner Theatre. It all clicked for him.

"The experience was there," he recalled. "It wasn't just about reopening a building; it was about restoring an experience."



The new digital marquee at The Ingersoll shines again as an entertainment beacon. Photo by VenuWorks marketing

Enter a veteran of stage

Music will be an inherent part of The Ingersoll's programming. Its first venture into theatre was a hit. Two sold-out performances of "Love Letters" with two celebrated television personalities, Mollie and Kevin Cooney, proved that this market was ready for theatre. Maxwell Schaeffer, whose own career as a personality, performer and director is highly respected, was brought in to help with producing theatrical shows.

As someone familiar with the central Iowa performing arts scene, Schaeffer said, "More than ever, our central Iowa theatre audiences are craving experience, surprise and connection. The dinner theatre concept is in revival. The experience of elevated dining, the surprise of highly entertaining music and theatre, and the connection to a roster of immensely talented Iowa actors and musicians, I believe, is a formula that will satisfy our theater goers' hunger for a memorable night at the Ingersoll."

He will direct the first show of a planned season, which will be revealed in tantalizing steps. The inaugural comedy is "The Roommate," opening May 14, and will feature regional stars Kellie Kramer and Kristin Larson. Written by Jen Silverman, who brings another Iowa connection to this show as she received her MFA in Playwriting from the University of Iowa, this brilliant script is in the hands of a stellar professional production team.

The rebirth of The Ingersoll has been long awaited and its strategic addition to the performing arts scene will enhance options for central Iowans and travelers alike. ■

John Busbee produces The Culture Buzz, a weekly arts and culture radio show on 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.



BARE BOARDS CHATTER

Tallgrass Theatre Company. "Peter Pan on her 70th birthday." Through May 10.

The Ingersoll. Jim Brickman. May 9 (two shows).

Des Moines Playhouse. Adventure Clubhouse with "Chicken Little" May 15 (three shows).

Des Moines Performing Arts - Temple Theatre. Wellmark Family Series. "Aesop Bops." May 9.

Des Moines Symphony. Season Finale "Courage - Alpine Symphony." May 9-10.

The Ingersoll. "The Roommate." May 14-31.

Comedy Xperiment at Tallgrass Theatre Company. Comedy Improv. May 15-16.

Des Moines Performing Arts - Temple Theatre. "Choir! Choir! Choir! Presents: We Will Choir You." May 15 (two shows).

Des Moines Performing Arts - Live at the Temple Theatre. Karla Bonoff. May 16.

Ballet Des Moines at the Civic Center. "Cinderella." May 16-17.

Iowa Stage Theatre Company. "I'm Gonna Marry You Tobey Maguire." June 5-14.

CAP Theatre. "Alice in Wonderland Jr." June 5-14.

The year of Duchamp, and Chad Elliott

Art critics reviewing the MOMA show are falling over each other trying to rediscover Duchamp's genius.



Portrait of Marcel Duchamp, 1953, printed 2006. Gelatin silver print. Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Jim and Ellen Hubbell, 2020.14. Victor Obsatz (American, born 1925). Photo credit: Rich Sanders, Des Moines

New York City's Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) premiered "Marcel Duchamp," the first retrospective of the controversial artist in six decades. The reaction has been overwhelmingly positive, ending all controversies about what this year's event of year will be in the art world.

Duchamp has long been considered the third part of the Holy Trinity of artists, with Picasso and Brecht, who defined modern art after the Industrial Revolution. His reputation, though, has come with an asterisk. Unlike Picasso and Brecht, Duchamp fled Nazi-occupied Paris and moved to New York for the last 25 years of his life. That move was key to New York surpassing Paris as the center of avant garde 20th century art. It was viewed as cowardice in France, which never recovered from losing its status.

Haters tried to write Duchamp off as "political," "conceptual" and "the father of Ready-Made." He was best remembered for the urinal he elevated to art by redefining creativity. In his "The Creative Act," Duchamp famously declared that "an artwork is not truly finished by the artist alone; rather, it is the viewer who, by deciphering, interpreting and reacting to the work, brings it into the external world."

Art critics reviewing the MOMA show are falling over each other trying to

rediscover Duchamp's genius. Conceptualism is back as a buzz word. Duchamp's "Nude Descending the Staircase," which the artist infamously withdrew from a show in Paris to premiere in America, is finally transcending his urinal as his signature work. "Marcel Duchamp's" 300 works play MOMA through Aug. 22, then will move to Philadelphia all fall.

In Iowa, 2026 is the year of Chad Elliott. His *Weary Ramblers*, with Katherine Fox, won best solo or duo act at the Memphis Blues Challenge in January, beating 140 other contestants. Elliott won "best guitar player" there, too. He is also an exciting painter of Americana. His nostalgia-rife murals are highlights of road trips through both Guthrie and Greene counties.

His Elliott Art Studio in Jefferson now offers personal instruction on Studio Tuesdays. Just bring a project or purchase a canvas at the studio. Acrylic paints are provided. \$40.



Chad Elliott. Photo by Natural Expression Photography

Scan the QR code to read the CITYVIEW 2020 interview with Chad Elliott or visit www.dmcityview.com/lunch-with/2020/05/07/lunch-with-chad-elliott-at-ritual-cafe/



May touts

- Des Moines Art Center also celebrates the movement of artists and art scenes between New York and Paris a century ago with "Artists Around a Table." Drawing on prints from the Art Center, Stanley Museum of Art, Figge Art Museum and private individuals, this exhibition depicts artists gabbing, preening, debating, smoking and drinking in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. Dorothy Parker would be proud. Through August.

- Moberg Gallery will feature the art of Huxley muralist Siricasso, nee Siriaco Garcia. He has more than 50 murals in central Iowa that are great fun. Moberg Gallery will celebrate his art with a three-day event that includes taco trucks, lowriders, tattoo artists, live music and an artist talk. May 15-17.

- Grinnell College Museum of Art shows "Unruly Lines: The Art of Sonja Sekula." Sekula was born Swiss and moved to America in 1936, a few years before Duchamp. Both lived there till their deaths in the early 1960s. Sekula's unruly lines resemble Duchamp's in many ways. Her legacy was interrupted by frequent bouts of schizophrenia leading to hallucinations and art described as "psychedelic."

- Brunnier Art Museum is exhibiting Norwood Viviano sculptures "that reveal patterns of change in American cities and landscapes." Three series share space with a new commission that connects Iowa State's agricultural legacy through cast glass architecture and topographical maps. Through May.

- Des Moines Symphony's season finale explodes with the monumental storytelling of Richard Strauss and DMSO's crack, 34-member brass section in "Vienna Philharmonic Fanfare" and "Alpine Symphony." Amaryn Olmeda returns for Mendelssohn's "Violin Concerto." May 9-10. ■

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

Cat artist turns playful sketches into thriving studio

Melanie Jacobs, creator of Cat Loaf Studio, builds a business with whimsical feline prints inspired by her pet and a devoted fan base.

Prints of cats drenched in colorful backgrounds, a cat squeezed into a box and another kitty slurping milk are displayed at Melanie Jacobs' art studio.

Jacobs' studio, Cat Loaf Studio, is named after the way cats look when they are scrunched together with their tails tucked in, resembling a loaf of bread.

Jacobs opened her studio at Mainframe Studios last fall, but she has been sketching her entire life and majored in fashion design. When she was given a theme for a local art show, she drew a robot cat.

"I never drew robots. I had so much fun, it sparked more cat drawings," she said.

She began sketching commissioned cat portraits and drawing other cats. Her main inspiration is her own Persian cat, Sansa — named after a "Game of Thrones" character — that appears in several drawings.

"I fell into my niche, and it exploded," she said.

When she moved to Des Moines with her fiancé three years ago, she focused full time on her cat art.

Sansa and other cats — including those from online videos and photos — stretch her imagination. She has drawn a stack of cats, similar to a stack of pancakes. Her cousin's cat has been fashioned into a chicken nugget and a mushroom.

Recently, her drawings have included diverse breeds of cats, as people who visit her art booth often look for their own breed. By drawing cats of different colors, she attracts a wider range of followers.

"A lot of people gravitate toward a cat that looks like theirs," she said.

One aspect of her business is offering prints and products rather than selling original artwork.

"My business model is different from other artists," she said. "Prints and physical products in this economy are one way to survive as an artist. My art apparel you can wear, as opposed to original art, which is more costly."

She sells items online through Faire, as well as at festivals, events and her studio. One place she found success was at the Des Moines and Nebraska Comic-Con events and Pride festivals.

"It's a big draw. Cats are relatable at so many different events. I didn't know if Comic-Con would be a good place," she said. "My niche fits in a lot of unusual



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



places."

Recently, at Mainframe Studios, she curated a themed art show called "Critters and Creatures," which featured artwork by other Mainframe artists.

Customers who stop by her booth often show her pictures of their cats.

"Even introverts will come out of their shell and talk about their cat. It's easily approachable and relatable," she said.

Although she receives many requests for custom cat portraits, she has declined them. She is currently creating different cat colors and fulfilling orders. About 40 retailers carry her items. Because the word "cat" is in her business name, she gets frequent search hits, including from cat shops and gift shops.

Because she prefers working independently, each day is different.

"Working for myself was always a pipe dream. Now the possibilities are endless," she said. "Having a subject matter that makes people happy brings me joy every day."

Find Jacobs' work at <https://catloafstudio.co/> or at Studio No. 227 at Mainframe Studios in Des Moines. ■

Styx keeps the grand illusion alive after 5 decades

Keyboardist Lawrence Gowan reflects on the band's enduring sound, new music and upcoming Des Moines stop on May 21.

Welcome to the "Grand Illusion." Come on in and see what's happening. Pay the price. Get your tickets for the show.

And what a show it's been for the band Styx.

Over the past five decades, Styx's iconic 1970s and 1980s rock has endured. Its classic keyboard sound, solid vocals and guitar riffs have produced four multiplatinum albums, Grammy nominations, and more than 54 million records sold.

In addition to "The Grand Illusion," other timeless songs include "Come Sail Away," "Too Much Time on My Hands," "Fooling Yourself" and "Renegade."

With more than a half-century of touring, Styx will make a stop at Des Moines Water Works Park on May 21. Cheap Trick will open as part of the Willis Summer Series at Lauridsen Amphitheater.

CITYVIEW spoke with singer and keyboardist Lawrence Gowan in advance of the show.

At a recent Styx concert, I witnessed Gowan's moving, elevated keyboard, which keeps concertgoers engaged. He originally brought the ever-shifting keyboard to the stage during a video shoot.

"My part felt too rigid. I like to connect with the audience," he said. "When I joined Styx, they asked, 'Where's that spinning thing?' I've had it ever since."

Gowan began his singing career in Canada, producing various hit songs and building a solo career. He thought he would always remain a solo act.

"I told my friends I didn't think I'd ever be in a band," he said. "But if I did, Styx would be the one."

A year after that realization, Tommy Shaw asked Gowan to open for one of Styx's concerts. While performing at an event tied to a Princess Diana memorial, Gowan shared the stage with Styx. Later, as the band searched for a new keyboardist and singer, his name surfaced.

"In a few months, I was part of Styx. It was a great coincidence in a very unusual way," he said. "I'm in my



STYX by JasonPowell

28th year with Styx."

Gowan's frontman style sets a glam-rock tone. His sparkling jackets and vibrant shoes are stage staples, and he often shops for new outfits while on tour.

"I splurged on shoes and have gotten so many comments," he said. "People notice the details — women tend to recognize it more than men. I see that as important, as I'm an artist presenting on a stage."

Gowan's brother, Terry Gowan, recently joined Styx, playing bass and singing. Styx drummer Todd Sucherman and Terry Gowan had performed more than 200 shows together.

"When Terry auditioned, I was the quietest voice in the room," he said. "It's one of the greatest surprises that I would be introducing my younger brother in Styx."

New music released in 2025 has gained momentum from the band's 18th album, "Circling From Above." The album reflects a traditional Styx sound with a fresh take, attracting fans of all ages.

Making new music is vital, Gowan said.

"Young people under 40 weren't born in the classic

rock era," he said. "They listen to Styx and are the most vocal about us doing new music. Younger fans connect with the lyrics in their lives. We come up with lyrics that reflect today's environment."

Styx's decades-long success combines elements longtime fans appreciate.

"A multitude of things add up. There was still a demand to see them long before I was part of the group," he said. "A cross-generation of fans can relate to the narratives in the songs. The band consistently delivers a high-energy, epic, high-caliber rock show. The strength of the band and our endurance are why we do so well."

At each concert, Gowan's favorite part is the audience reaction.

"You see the audience in an ecstatic state of mind, every emotion, arms in the air," he said.

He recalled performing at the Iowa State Fair, where the "audience was on fire."

"Styx is alive and touring in our 54th year of existence," he said. "We're looking forward to performing in Des Moines. Life goes onward." ■

SOUND ADVICE

BY JACKIE WILSON

It's May, and Memorial Day kicks off the unofficial start of summer. It is time to unwind and enjoy the great outdoors with live music right here in the Des Moines metro.

Music in the Junction is a free concert series on Thursday evenings at Valley Junction in West Des Moines. On May 7, Cinco de Mayo with **Guitarras ATM**, May 14 **Dirty Champaign**, May 21 **Bad Friends** and May 28 **Surf Zombies**.

Don't forget mom on Mother's Day, May 10. Head out to The Cellar Winery in

Madrid. They offer free Sunday afternoon concerts, plus wine. On May 10 listen to **Meadowbrook Circle**, an Americana, alt-folk band. Head to Wooly's on May 10 for a **Dave Matthew's Tribute Band**. Tickets \$35 www.axs.com. Celebrate mom early with Grammy-award winning pianist, songwriter and singer **Jim Brickman** on May 9. He performs at The Ingersoll. Tickets \$150, includes dinner. If mom is into country music, tickets remain for **Cody Johnson**, with opener **Clint Black** at Casey's Center on May 9. Tickets start at \$76. <https://hyveetix.venue.net/events/CJO>. ■

Water buffalo's escape inspires shift to veganism

After Phill the water buffalo survived a dramatic 2024 escape, Sara Schroeder found new purpose volunteering with Iowa Farm Sanctuary and advocating for rescued farm animals.



A four-legged media sensation in Pleasant Hill went viral in 2024.

A water buffalo named Phill — named after Pleasant Hill and known as P-Hill — escaped from his handler's home. The nearly half-ton animal wandered into the city before police shot him. Homeowners captured video on doorbell cameras, and he was eventually captured.

Phill escaped slaughter and was brought to live out his life at the Iowa Farm Sanctuary.

The sanctuary is a nonprofit that provides a safe haven for rescued farm animals, including some with special needs. Pigs that have fallen off trailers on the interstate have found a home there. It is located outside Oxford, about 100 miles east of Des Moines.

Sara Schroeder, who lives in rural Baxter County, was intrigued by Phill.

"I was captivated by his story. He was going to live at the sanctuary. I had tears rolling down my face," she said. "I was moved by what they are doing for farm animals."

After sponsoring Phill with a donation, she began reading books about veganism.

"I've lived in Iowa my whole life. I never considered being a vegan," she said. "I made a decision to become one because of Phill. It changed my entire lifestyle. It was like an epiphany."

She began volunteering at the sanctuary and joined its board in 2025.

Schroeder has been an animal lover her whole life, growing up with dogs. Her grandparents raised animals on a farm. Today, she and her family have four goats, three dogs and a cat.

Schroeder formerly worked in the pork industry and now works for Girl Scouts of Greater Des Moines.

"After I left the pork industry and worked for the Girl Scouts, the aspect of working for a nonprofit is important," she said. "It connected with how I felt about the sanctuary and why I got involved."

She said her decision to embrace veganism came from firsthand experience.

"I saw firsthand what happened in these facilities.

It's come full circle, and I made a decision that was right for me," Schroeder said.

The Iowa Farm Sanctuary was established 10 years ago and has saved more than 150 farm animals, including cows, goats, pigs and turkeys. The sanctuary offers Sunday afternoon strolls where the public can meet the animals and read their stories.

Because of her "obsession" with Phill, Schroeder got a tattoo of an abstract water buffalo and goat.

"In Phill, I saw courage," she said. "He saw a friend slaughtered, then escaped and survived after being shot. His will to live was so strong, and it spoke to me. It made me think of my goats. I love them to death."

Phill died in February 2025.

Schroeder said animals of all species form relationships with humans.

"It's not any different than with my dog or cat," she said. "There is just as much love and connection with other animals."

For more information about the Iowa Farm Sanctuary, visit www.iowafarmsanctuary.org. ■

DES MOINES FORGOTTEN

BY KRISTIAN DAY

Iowa's lasting legacy of educational broadcasting

From classroom stations to real-time crisis coverage, KDPS and its successors show how local radio shaped generations — and why it still matters when everything else goes silent.

Radio is still one of the most personal media formats. In a car, it becomes a companion — something you turn on without thinking, something that fills the space of a commute. After a few consistent listening sessions, hosts start to feel familiar, even personal, as if they are speaking directly to you for those 20 minutes a day.

Yes, podcasts can create a similar effect. But this is not about podcasts. It is about something older, faster and still irreplaceable when it matters most. Radio is not dead.

A STATION BUILT FOR EDUCATION

In 1953, Des Moines Public Schools founded KDPS 88.1 FM as an educational station for students. But its history stretches even further back. Before becoming a classroom tool, the license belonged to a local bus company that had planned to use it for onboard advertising. That plan never materialized. Instead, the company sold the license to the school district, transforming a failed commercial idea into one of Iowa's most distinctive educational platforms.

By the early 1980s, Grand View College began leasing airtime from KDPS after college president C. Arild Olsen sought a community-facing broadcast presence.

THE WINZENBURG ERA

Steve Winzenburg arrived in 1989 and quickly became a defining figure in Iowa radio education. He had started working in radio in high school and eventually worked at 16 stations, including the now-defunct Marycrest College station in Davenport. Even while teaching full time, he continued working professionally at WHO Radio.

By the 1990s, Winzenburg had built one of the strongest college radio programs in the state.

In 1992, he co-created “Kids Radio Mania” with Judy Richardson, a weekend program designed entirely for children. It mixed music, talk segments and on-air personalities that built a loyal audience well beyond Des Moines. Among those voices were Kate, Mary, Jenna, Crazy Dave (Dan Wardell of Iowa Public Television) and Goofy Gilbert.

“The whole point was to get students on the air, let them make mistakes and learn from them,” Winzenburg said. “There weren't many places where college students could get on a real, full-power station like that. We had high school students during the day, college students at night, and kids programming on the weekends.”



Steve Winzenburg, 1998



Kirk Johnson with Adrianna Aguilar

A SHARED SIGNAL

By 2007, Kirk Johnson joined Des Moines Public Schools radio operations, moving from a closed-circuit high school setup into KDPS at Central Campus.

“During the day, it was KDPS with the high school students,” Johnson said. “Then around 6 p.m., we'd hit a button and it switched over to Grand View through a phone line, and they'd run nights and overnights as The Edge. Weekends were Kids Radio Mania. It was just a shared station, which sometimes made for a bit of an identity issue.”

That same year, Grand View expanded again, purchasing 94.1 FM from Drake University after its low-power station KDRA-LP “The Dog” ended. The new station became KGVC-LP, a low-power sister outlet.

LEARNING LIVE ON AIR

For students like Sean Roberts, the station was more than a class — it was opportunity.

Originally focused on college athletics, Roberts shifted direction after realizing baseball was not going to be his long-term path. Grand View offered something else: real broadcasting experience.

“I'm not where I am today without that station,” Roberts said. “I loved that place so much. I hosted a show with my buddy called ‘Sean and Jose Two Hour Bonanza Mash-Up.’ It was a loose format show with music (lots of EDM), sports talk and random segments like YouTube Video of the Week. It was live, too. You turned the microphone on, and it was go time. There's no going back.”



Sean Roberts at The Edge 88.1FM

THE SLOW FADE

By 2019, the Grand View University presence on the station was gone. It did not end with a single decision or announcement. It faded quietly, gradually, like many institutional things do.

After Winzenburg stepped away due to health issues, there was little institutional momentum left to sustain it. Grand View shifted focus toward athletics and other programs.

Then, in 2025, KDPS itself went dark as Des Moines Public Schools began the process of selling the station, ending more than 70 years of educational broadcasting.

WHY RADIO STILL MATTERS

The idea that “radio is dead” usually comes from those who do not work in it. Radio still does something nothing else can: it reacts in real time. Sean Roberts experienced that firsthand while working at a sports station in Des Moines. During the 2016 police shootings, the format changed instantly. One moment it was sports talk. The next, it was public information. That is the distinction often missed in conversations about streaming or podcasts. When something is happening right now, you do not queue it up. You turn on the radio.

THE ARCHIVES REMAIN

Even as stations shut down, their output persists. KDPS, The Edge, and KGVC-LP archives continue to circulate online, preserved by Steve Winzenburg through his YouTube channels @SWinzenburg and @KidsRadioMania. Central Campus has also archived KDPS promotional material on @CCBroadcastFilm.

A LARGER PATTERN

When federal funding cuts hit the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, National Public Radio and public television systems absorbed major losses. Stations like Marfa Public Radio in far West Texas — serving vast, sparsely populated regions — highlight what is at stake.

Iowa has places like that, too, communities where local radio is still the only immediate public voice. And that is the point. Radio is not gone. It is just quieter now, more fragile — and when it matters most, still there. ■

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



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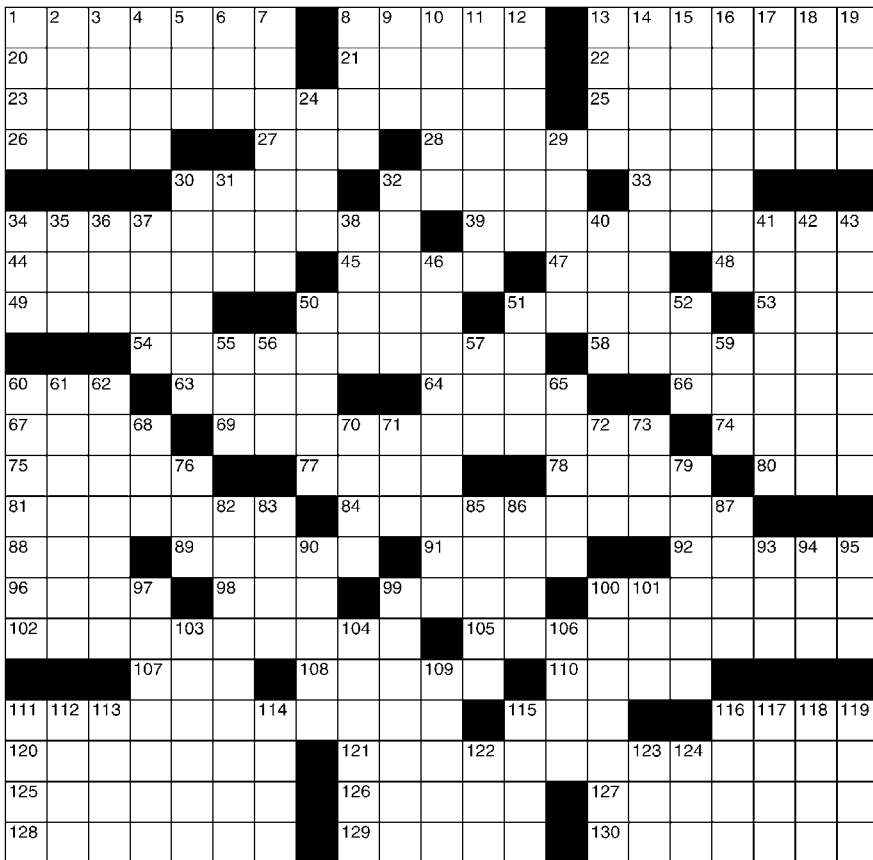
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CITYVIEW BEST 2026

PUZZLES

Find answers at www.dmcityview.com/the-games

CHARACTER-BUILDING



- ACROSS**
- 1 Huntsville's state
 - 8 "Dig in!"
 - 13 Watched a child for pay
 - 20 Recuperate
 - 21 Bodily trunks
 - 22 French writer France
 - 23 1983 film for which Robert Duvall won Best Actor
 - 25 Hold within
 - 26 --Ball
 - 27 Bullring cry
 - 28 Illegal trade medium
 - 30 Common med. scans
 - 32 The Beatles' "I've Just -- Face"
 - 33 Folk singer DiFranco
 - 34 Many a morning bowlful
 - 39 Preview release of a new product
 - 44 Hardship
 - 45 Vid shooters
 - 47 Relative of "BTW"
 - 48 Further
 - 49 Actress Blair
 - 50 "Spamalot" creator Idle
 - 51 Brimless cap
 - 53 --to manual
 - 54 High roller
 - 58 Per the norm
 - 60 GQ, e.g.
 - 63 Entre --
 - 64 Other, in Acapulco
 - 66 Rich, nutty cake
 - 67 Iraqi, e.g.
 - 69 Tulsa's largest suburb
 - 74 Chap from Chelsea, e.g.
 - 75 Thumbs-ups
 - 77 "Call Jane" actress Kate
 - 78 Oven knob
 - 80 Sun --sen
 - 81 Sentimental songs
 - 84 Coin worth two quarters
 - 88 Defunct U.K. record label
 - 89 Long (for)
 - 91 Active sort
 - 92 Aussie buds
 - 96 Rational
 - 98 "Phooey!"
 - 99 General -- chicken
 - 100 Music genre for Brian Eno
 - 102 Ali Baba's password
 - 105 South American
 - 107 Knight, e.g.
 - 108 Drifts about
 - 110 Beehive State team
 - 111 Something barely recalled
 - 115 Here, in Lyon
 - 116 Knight, e.g.
 - 120 Crated up
 - 121 Cavalry soldier without heavy weaponry
 - 125 Arranging in rows
 - 126 Emollient plants
 - 127 Arbitrary change of mind
 - 128 A bit firm, as cooked pasta
 - 129 Snake killed by Hercules
 - 130 Word that can follow the starts of 11 answers in this puzzle
 - DOWN**
 - 1 Part of B.A.
 - 2 Onion cousin
 - 3 Oxy 5 target
 - 4 Be a sign of
 - 5 "Hail, Nero!"
 - 6 French sea
 - 7 Large, ornate wardrobe
 - 8 Raison d'--
 - 9 Member of "The Squad" in D.C., for short
 - 10 Family group
 - 11 Futile
 - 12 Italian sculptor Andrea
 - 13 Reverse side
 - 14 Abnormalities
 - 15 Daiquiri fruit
 - 16 Rare-earth element
 - 17 Drench
 - 18 "I cannot tell --"
 - 19 Circus shelter
 - 24 Alternatively
 - 29 --latte (kind of espresso)
 - 30 "The Mugged" novelist Ed
 - 31 Subj. for a theologian
 - 32 Done in, as a dragon
 - 34 Euro divs.
 - 35 Often-refined resource
 - 36 IM giggle
 - 37 Word before luck or struck
 - 38 Farmland unit
 - 40 Model Banks
 - 41 "Take your time"
 - 42 Zagreb's land
 - 43 --Packard
 - 46 Rival of Burger King
 - 50 Word with salts or Downs
 - 51 "I'm f-f-freezing!"
 - 52 Boy pharaoh, for short
 - 55 Hunk
 - 56 Prefix with tax or charge
 - 57 Greek "H"
 - 59 Weep audibly
 - 60 "Possibly"
 - 61 Tourist's aid
 - 62 Fuel conduit
 - 65 Zeal
 - 68 --Paese cheese
 - 70 Madeline of "Mixed Nuts"
 - 71 Age
 - 72 Often-refined resource
 - 73 Retail store's beginning?
 - 76 Declare
 - 79 Italian luxury cars, for short
 - 82 Postponing of military service
 - 83 Je ne -- quoi
 - 85 Dupes
 - 86 Lucy's Arnaz
 - 87 Picnic spoiler
 - 90 Weaponize anew
 - 93 William Shatner's "-- War"
 - 94 Propyl ending
 - 95 Hog haven
 - 97 Trap in a net
 - 99 With a bit of crying
 - 100 Capital of ancient Syria
 - 101 Mrs., in Metz
 - 103 Substitutes (for)
 - 104 Dough
 - 106 "That hurts!"
 - 109 "Mon Dieu!"
 - 111 Greek salad cheese
 - 112 Blue dye
 - 113 Chilled
 - 114 Border
 - 115 "-- miracle!"
 - 116 Mr., in Berlin
 - 117 Send out
 - 118 Indy 500, e.g.
 - 119 Lacking width and depth, for short
 - 122 That lady
 - 123 "Vengeance" actress Issa
 - 124 Jacuzzi site

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!



"That one is in case you want another _____!"

Stay
MARINE _____

Chance
MODARN _____

Fake
SOUPED _____

Values
SCITHE _____

TODAY'S WORD _____

SUDOKU

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

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

DIFFICULTY: ◆◆◆

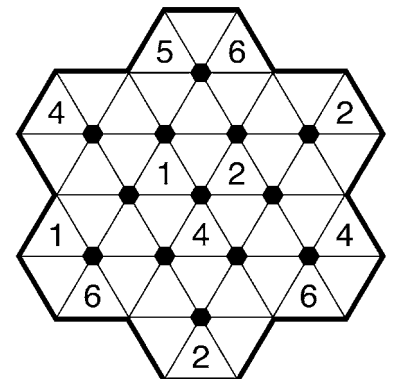
◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging
◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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SNOWFLAKES

by Japheth Light

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



DIFFICULTY: ◆

◆ Easy ◆◆ Medium ◆◆◆ Difficult

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GO FIGURE!

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.

	+		÷		= 17			
+		+		+				
	+		+		= 14			
+		-		+				
	+		-		= 9			
=		=		=				
17		9		7				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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WHAT THE...

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Send us your best caption...

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Next month's photo:



IMAGE BY GRATISOGRAPHY

This month's winner

"You're gonna need a bigger umbrella to prevent skin cancer!"

- John Gray



IMAGE BY GRATISOGRAPHY

Runners-up

"Bob shows up for his first meeting of Vacationers Anonymous."

-Beth Ohringer

"Stoner Melvin was a glowing example of why they call Hawaii the rainbow state." - Mark Alvord

"Jerry evidently thought SPF stood for 'Some Pineapple First.'"

- David C.

"Mark, wanting to embrace the full Hawaiian experience, now regrets climbing the tree to retrieve that perfect pineapple."

- Linda Oleson

"Deregulated sunscreen, \$20. Pineapple drink mid tariffs, \$35. Front row to the apocalypse... priceless." - Colby Richardson

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Volunteer's pandemic start grows into lasting impact at Food Bank of Iowa

Steve Siembieda turns a nudge from his wife into hundreds of volunteer hours, helping fight food insecurity across 55 counties



In 2023, the Food Bank of Iowa passed out 22 million pounds of food. In 2025, they distributed almost 28 million pounds of food, according to Steve Siembieda.



Lydia Youngquist and Steve Siembieda

Did you know that volunteers with the Food Bank of Iowa invest more than 50,000 hours annually? That's the equivalent of 24 full-time employees. Longtime food bank volunteer and ambassador Steve Siembieda knows that, along with plenty of other facts about the state's largest food bank.

Siembieda has a background in the biotechnology industry and has lived in the area since 1998. Like many others, he was looking for something to do during the pandemic.

"My wife basically said, 'Go find something to do.' And I think she actually signed me up for the first shift at the Food Bank of Iowa. I went with one of my friends, and it was just fun," Siembieda said.

That gentle nudge led to an extended relationship with the food bank for several reasons.

"It was a physical activity and it was a social activity. We were packing mobile boxes, which contain canned foods and pasta to pass out to people in need. What brought me back time and time again was not just those physical and social activities, but the people at the food bank — just really outstanding people," he said.

Siembieda found that the food bank's mission aligns closely with his own values. Providing food for those in need is something he is passionate about.

"Food should not be something that only some people have. We have an obligation — those of us who have money and resources and a life that provides

for us — to make sure that others have food," he said.

You can usually find Siembieda on the Wednesday night shift at the food bank, repacking apples, onions, carrots and other fruits and vegetables. That work helps not only the local area, but the state as a whole.

"What the food bank does is get bulk items and put them into smaller packages for local pantries. There are 700 that the food bank serves across 55 counties. Those pantries can then order whatever the food bank has in stock," he said.

Another statistic Siembieda shares: 96 cents of every dollar at the Food Bank of Iowa goes toward buying food. He also attends community events as an ambassador.

"Last week, I was at Urbandale High School because there was a jazz event that five schools put on. Each year, they ask students and parents to sponsor one nonprofit, and the food bank was chosen. They raised more than \$1,200 in one day and brought in 180 pounds of canned goods," he said.

The food bank receives plenty of volunteers, food and monetary donations, but there is still work to do to reduce food insecurity in Iowa.

"In a state where we make plenty of food, there shouldn't be anybody hungry. Yet 385,000 Iowans consider themselves food insecure. Roughly 12% of our population is food insecure, which is just nuts when we're the breadbasket of the United States. How

can 12% of our population not have enough food? Right here in the metro area, 60,000 people deal with hunger on a daily basis," he said.

Those statistics are sobering but important. Siembieda is doing his part, and adding some fun along the way. He convinced his co-workers to dress up in costumes for a Halloween shift, where he and his family donate \$1 for every bag packed that night.

"We have done that activity for the last four years. Last year, I think we donated \$7,000, and my work at the time also matched that donation. So we raised \$14,000 for the food bank in one evening," he said.

The group also rewards the best costume. Last year's winner was Lydia Youngquist, who dressed up as Siembieda.

Siembieda plans to retire this summer. With about 600 volunteer hours under his belt, he was asked whether he plans to increase his time at the food bank or spend more time traveling. He said he will likely expand where he volunteers, naming the Blank Park Zoo and Habitat for Humanity.

Whatever direction he chooses, Siembieda encourages others to get involved.

"People have to pay more for gas, food and living expenses — everything is going up. More people who are on that razor's edge may be falling into needing assistance. The food bank and local pantries are here to help those people, and I'm glad to be part of that," he said. ■

CARS IN THE CITY



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Kia skips 2026, rolls out tech-packed 2027 Telluride

Second-generation SUV debuts early with hybrid power, innovative features and a redesigned driving experience.

BY JACKIE WILSON

With technology advancing quickly, one car manufacturer skipped the 2026 model year and instead recently debuted the 2027 model.

The 2027 Kia Telluride was delivered to dealers in March 2026. According to Kia, the Telluride entered its second generation, and the company wanted to avoid an overstock of outdated 2026 models.

Test-driving the Kia Telluride SX Hybrid, I discovered several unique tech features. The Telluride, which launched in 2019, is Kia's larger SUV, compared with the Sportage, a less expensive, best-selling SUV. With 10 trim levels, the SX lands in the middle and starts at \$53,910.

The Telluride offers a hybrid powertrain with a 2.5-liter turbocharged four-cylinder engine and gets about 33 mpg. The hybrid turbo gives it a noticeable boost during acceleration.

Let's start with the start button. To start the car, you press a knob — which is also the gear shifter — located on the steering wheel. Yes, you read that right. It feels like a second turn-signal stalk, making you wonder: Do I twist it forward to start? How do I put it in park?

Kia may have moved the start button to the steering wheel to make room for two wireless charging docks in

the center console. There is always that one passenger who announces his or her phone is less than 10% battery and needs immediate charging.

It features a dual-pane sunroof, so both front- and back-seat passengers can enjoy a sunny ride. It seats seven adults, with a third row in the back. The rear seats fold down easily with the touch of a button for added storage.

One unique tech feature parents will appreciate is called Passenger Talk. With the push of a button, the driver's voice is projected through a speaker to the back seat. This booming voice is sure to warn young kids who might be misbehaving. It's probably safer and more efficient than when my mom used to turn around and yell, "If I have to tell you one more time to settle down, I'm stopping this car."

The surround cameras are another bonus. With different views, you can see the front, back and sides of the vehicle. I noticed that when I used my turn signal, the camera view automatically switched to the corresponding side to check for cars in that lane. This feature is also helpful when parking. If you are not perfectly centered, you can use the camera views to double-check your position.



One trend I have noticed is that steering wheels are no longer completely round. Many models, including the Telluride, are flattened at the bottom. This racecar-inspired design also makes it easier to slide your legs under the wheel.

With technology advancing so quickly, few drivers will miss the 2026 model. ■

Rugby builds community in Des Moines through sport and outreach

Local player Anna Anderson highlights safety, teamwork and inclusivity in growing Iowa rugby scene.

Rugby is a centuries-old sport that originated in England. The sport has grown in popularity over the years and has spread throughout the world. It has also grown in Iowa and the Midwest at large, eventually leading to the creation of the Des Moines Rugby Club in 1970. One player, Anna Anderson, explained the ins and outs of the sport and how Des Moines' local rugby squad is making a difference in the community.

Anderson grew up playing football and soccer in Waverly. Rugby, essentially a combination of the two sports, seemed a perfect fit for Anderson.

"My husband has been interested in joining rugby, and we happened to be at a farmers market, the new one on the south side, and I'm like, 'Hey, there's a rugby team over there if you want to go and talk to them,'" Anderson said. "We ended up going to the Try Rugby Night, and he loved it. He happened to mention to someone that I played soccer and football, and they're like, 'We're just gonna add you to the girls chat,' then I got roped in."

That was last summer, and Anderson has been hooked ever since. She explained some of the basics of the sport to help others better understand it, something she was learning just a few months ago.

"You can't pass forward; you have to pass backward, but you can kick it forward. There's a straight line on defense that you have to be five yards back. There are places where turnovers can happen. We scrum, ruck and have lineouts," Anderson said.

A lineout is a reset once the ball has gone out of play; the ball is thrown down the middle between the two teams, who try to gain possession. A scrum resembles a football snap, with both teams pushing against each other to try to win possession of the ball. When someone is tackled, they must release the ball, allowing players from each side to compete for possession.

A common misconception about rugby is that it is more dangerous because of its physicality and lack of protective equipment such as football pads or soccer shin guards.

"Coming from a female who played football with boys in high school, rugby is so much safer. I went into rugby like, I know how to tackle. And they were like, oh, you shouldn't tackle with your head in front. In football, we were kind of taught that you want to be in front of the player you're tackling. In rugby, that's not safe because if they're going fast enough, they're heavy enough, they're just going to take your head off," Anderson said.

There are specific rules about how players are supposed to tackle. The lack of protective equipment also means players on both sides are more focused on safety.

One of Anderson's favorite memories came early in her rugby career. When she gets dehydrated, she tends to get "loopy." After her first game, she became dehydrated, and her teammates and even her husband worried she had a concussion.

"I didn't even think that I would ever need to tell my husband that. All of the girls were constantly coming over and checking on me and making sure I was good. Eventually, he called my dad, and my dad was like, 'Oh, she's probably just dehydrated. Tell her to drink some water.' But it was just really cool to see the community show up in that way when I didn't know anyone," Anderson said.

Her teammates rallying around her is one reason she has come to love the



sport. That sense of community is a major benefit for Anderson. Other players are comfortable bringing their kids to practices and games, making it fun for the whole family. The rugby club also recently participated in the 10th anniversary Barefoot Autism Challenge, which encourages participants to remove their shoes to better understand the sensory experiences of those on the autism spectrum.

"My friend is the one who kind of runs that challenge. He was thinking about what he wanted to do for an event. Because it's the 10th year, he wanted to do something bigger. So I talked to the club to see if we could practice barefoot," Anderson said.

And barefoot they went. The club also invited food vendors and local advocates to raise awareness about neurodiversity and sensory processing.

Anderson said one thing she struggled with after high school was not having a competitive sport for physical activity. For anyone who feels the same, rugby could be a great outlet for exercise and making new friends.

"Practices are on Tuesday and Thursday night, so anybody can come and try it out. We have a ton of veteran players that are willing to take a break from their practice and just teach a guy how to pass the ball, because that's honestly the hardest part of rugby. It's just learning how to pass this weird-shaped ball," Anderson said. ■

WALKS OF LIFE

COMPILED FROM THE IOWA LIVING MAGAZINES

Celebrating heritage

From traditional dance and cultural celebrations to food and storytelling, residents across central Iowa are finding meaningful ways to preserve and share their heritage. For many, these traditions not only honor the past but also help build community and connection for future generations.



Tania Barbosa

A beautiful mixture

Tania Barbosa is of Mexican-Lebanese heritage. Her great-grandparents left Lebanon and settled in Mexico. After many years, they returned to Lebanon when her grandfather was 3. Decades later, amid civil unrest, he chose to move his family back to Mexico. Tania's mother was 11 at the time.

"The family lived in an apartment where they became very good friends with the neighbors — my father's family," Barbosa says. "That's where they met, fell in love and married."

Mexico has a large Lebanese community, allowing her family to remain connected to their roots.

"Saturday lunches at my grandparents' home were the best," she says. "We would often hear conversations in a mix of Arabic, French and Spanish."

Growing up in a multicultural household inspired Barbosa to pursue international business. Early in her career, she joined DuPont and later accepted an international assignment in Wilmington, Delaware, where she lived for 13 years. She met her now ex-husband there, and after he received a job offer in Iowa, they relocated with their two children.

"We are very proud of our history and enjoy passing traditions from one generation to the next," Barbosa says.

Source: Johnston Living, April 2026;
by Ashley Rullestad

Read the full story here:



Giancarlo and Betsy Amato

Preserving Italian connections

Giancarlo "John" Amato and his wife, Betsy, have built a family life deeply rooted in their Italian heritage — one shaped by tradition, food and a devotion to togetherness.

Their kitchen remains the heart of that legacy. They still make Italian dishes by hand, and the family pasta sauce recipe — passed down from Amato's mother — has become a treasured heirloom. In 2022, Amato printed the recipe on notecards and tied them to small wooden spoons as thoughtful gifts for guests.

His pride in his heritage traces back to his childhood. Amato grew up with a father who immigrated from Italy to the United States in the early 1950s. His mother, who was of French and Irish descent, was born in the United States, but the Italian influence in the household was unmistakable.

"My dad did instill a sense of pride in our Italian heritage, and we were able to spend a month there every summer growing up," Amato says. "We loved the lifestyle, the food, the love for soccer and the bond of our family."

Source: North Polk Living, April 2026;
by Lindsey Giardino

Read the full story here:



Jennifer Juarez

Heritage of dance

For Jennifer Juarez, her heritage is central to her identity.

"Being Mexican has always been a big part of who I am," Jennifer says. "As I've gotten older, I've realized how important it is to stay connected to those roots. It helps me feel closer to my family, my ancestors and where they come from."

Food, traditions and celebrations all play a role.

"Our family traditions make me feel connected to my ancestors," she says. "Cooking recipes passed down through generations connects me to the places my family comes from, and celebrations bring us together as a community."

Dance is another meaningful connection.

"One of the most important ways I connect to my heritage is through a Mexican folkloric dance group, GF Jóvenes Embajadores, which my mother-in-law started in 2002," Jennifer says. "My husband and I began helping last summer. It's been a meaningful experience because we're helping keep traditional dances and music alive and sharing them with our community."

Source: Altoona Living, April 2026;
by Sean Dengler

Read the full story here:



Andrea Barutta

Cherishing Italian traditions

Italian-born Andrea Barutta is passionate about his heritage — not only preserving it, but ensuring his two children experience the same traditions he did growing up.

One way he stays connected is by volunteering with the Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa, which is undergoing a \$25 million renovation. He serves on the Heritage Council, helping organize events focused on Italian traditions, including fundraisers and food and wine events.

He also serves as committee chair for the Iowa Economic Development and Finance Authority and is involved in Iowa's sister state relationship with Veneto, Italy, where he was born.

Barutta was raised in Padova in the Veneto region. He recalls a longtime tradition of La Befana, celebrated Jan. 6. The holiday features a folkloric old woman — similar to Santa Claus — who delivers candy and small gifts to good children and coal to those who misbehave. At the end of the day, an effigy is burned in a bonfire.

He speaks Italian regularly and meets with a small group of Italians in Des Moines for breakfast conversations. His accent often sparks curiosity.

"People are intrigued. I have an authentic Italian accent — not like Luigi," he says with a laugh. ■

Source: Waukee Living, April 2026;
by Jackie Wilson

Read the full story here:



NATIONAL MARKETPLACE

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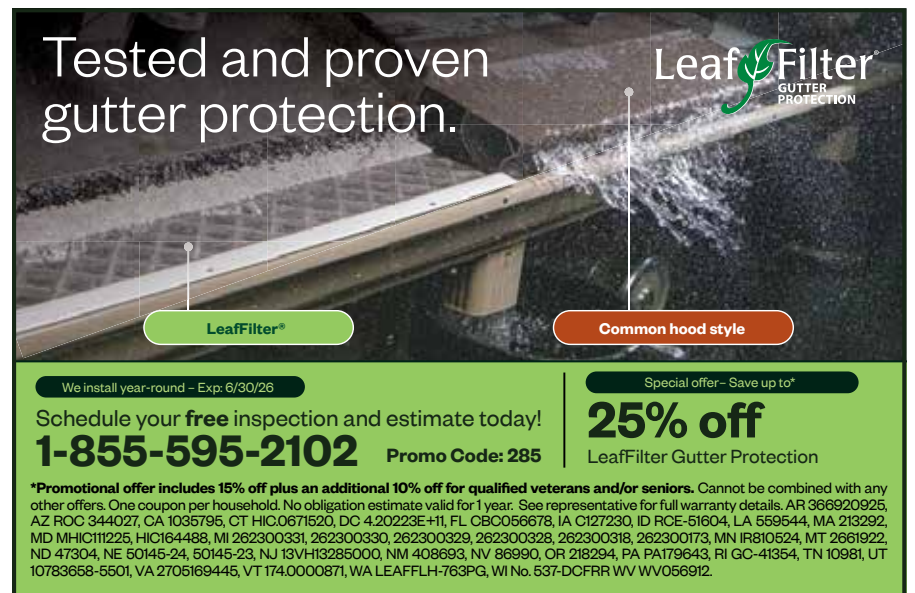
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