

SEPTEMBER 2026

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Fall

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Guide

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CITYVIEW'S

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FEATURE STORY
Paradise lost — the rich
black dirt of Iowa

BUSINESS STORY
Local butcher shops connect
Iowa farms to the table

JOE'S NEIGHBORHOOD
The wonderful serendipity
of showing up

2026-2027 IOWA WILD HOCKEY



HOME SCHEDULE

SEASON PRESENTED BY **Kwik Star**



FRI, OCT. 9
7PM vs. RFD



SAT, OCT. 10
6PM vs. RFD



WED, OCT. 21
7PM vs. MIL



FRI, OCT. 23
7PM vs. MB



SAT, OCT. 24
6PM vs. MB



FRI, OCT. 30
7PM vs. CLT



SUN, NOV. 1
3PM vs. CLT



THU, NOV. 5
10:30AM vs. RFD



FRI, NOV. 13
7PM vs. GR



SAT, NOV. 14
6PM vs. GR



TUE, DEC. 1
7PM vs. CHI



SAT, DEC. 5
6PM vs. GR



SUN, DEC. 6
3PM vs. MB



WED, DEC. 9
7PM vs. MIL



FRI, DEC. 18
7PM vs. LV



SAT, DEC. 19
6PM vs. LV



TUE, DEC. 29
6PM vs. TEX



THU, DEC. 31
6PM vs. TEX



MON, JAN. 4
7PM vs. CHI



WED, JAN. 13
7PM vs. CHI



FRI, JAN. 15
7PM vs. RFD



SAT, JAN. 16
6PM vs. RFD



FRI, JAN. 29
7PM vs. HSK



SAT, JAN. 30
6PM vs. HSK



FRI, FEB. 12
7PM vs. TUC



SAT, FEB. 13
6PM vs. TUC



WED, FEB. 24
7PM vs. SD



FRI, FEB. 26
7PM vs. SD



SUN, MAR. 7
3PM vs. GR



FRI, MAR. 12
7PM vs. MB



SAT, MAR. 13
6PM vs. MB



WED, MAR. 24
7PM vs. MIL



FRI, APR. 2
7PM vs. MIL



WED, APR. 7
7PM vs. CHI



FRI, APR. 9
7PM vs. TEX



SAT, APR. 10
6PM vs. TEX



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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Fall into Iowa

The autumn season in central Iowa has a way of making us want to get out of the house. Maybe it's the cooler temperatures, the changing leaves or simply the realization that winter is waiting around the corner. Whatever the reason, autumn is a terrific time to see, hear and experience what's happening in our communities. That's where CITYVIEW magazine comes in.

Each fall, we help readers discover the many ways to enjoy the season across central Iowa. And there's far more to do than watch football and rake leaves — although both have their place.

So, as the leaves begin to turn, don't just watch the season change. Get out and experience it. Plan your calendar from the hundreds of activities and events we listed in our Fall Arts and Entertainment Guide in this issue.

Iowa's valuable soil

Iowa is known for its cornfields, rolling hills and wide-open countryside, but beneath all of that is something even more valuable: our soil.

It's easy to take soil for granted. We walk on it, plant in it and occasionally complain when it sticks to our shoes. But Iowa's soil is one of the state's greatest natural resources. Our soil does more than grow corn and soybeans. Healthy soil stores carbon, filters water, supports countless organisms and helps reduce erosion. It also plays an important role in Iowa's economy, supporting farmers, livestock producers, businesses and communities across the state.

Unfortunately, good soil isn't guaranteed forever. Erosion, runoff and poor management can carry away valuable topsoil that took centuries to form. Iowa's soil may be under our feet, but as Jim Duncan explains in his feature story, sometimes the most important thing is what we are standing on.

The meat market

There is something comforting about walking into an Iowa butcher shop. The smell. The glass case filled with steaks, chops, brats and bacon. It's the feeling that you're buying dinner from someone who actually knows where the meat came from. Iowa's butcher shops are small-town institutions, gathering places and links to a time when shopping for food was a more personal experience. Gracie Kayko reminds us in this month's business feature that you don't just buy meat at an Iowa butcher shop. You buy a little bit of Iowa tradition — one package at a time. ■

Shane Goodman

Editor and Publisher

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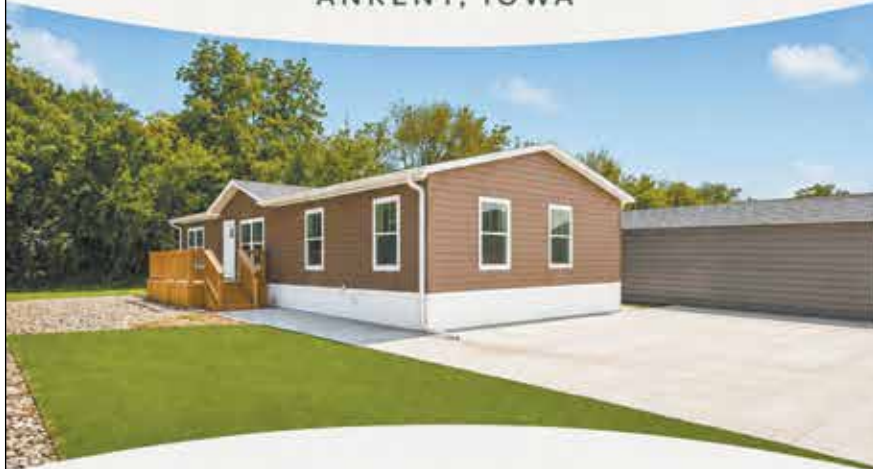
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CITYVIEW is delivered throughout central Iowa to more than 600 locations every month. To request delivery of CITYVIEW to your business, or to inquire about our distribution services, call 515-953-4822, ext. 304. Annual mailed subscriptions are available by mail at a rate of 12 issues for \$29. CITYVIEW is a monthly magazine published by Big Green Umbrella Media Inc., an Iowa corporation. Contents 2026 Big Green Umbrella Media, Inc. All rights reserved. Nothing may be reprinted in whole or in part without permission of the publisher. First copy of CITYVIEW is free at the newsstand. Subsequent copies are \$5 each. Copies of past issues, as available, may be purchased for \$5 each (plus shipping if required) from the CITYVIEW offices. One copy per reader, please. It is unlawful to remove copies in bulk; violators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Editorial Policies: Contact the publisher for permission to reprint articles, cartoons or any other portions of the paper. CITYVIEW is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts. All letters received become the property of the publisher. We reserve the right to print letters in condensed form and to edit them for libel.



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CITYVIEW

SEPTEMBER 2026



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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT
Guide

Plan your fall calendar now with our listings of hundreds of local activities related to art, stage, live music, sports and events.

FEATURE 30 FALL ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

Plan your fall calendar now with our listings of hundreds of local activities related to art, stage, live music, sports and events.

ON THE COVER: Two competitors from Joust Evolution are part of the long list of entertainment The Des Moines Renaissance Faire at Sleepy Hollow. Photo by Bryan Butcher with Dreamsenses Photography



LET'S CONNECT
CITYVIEW
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A photograph of two men working on a green John Deere combine harvester. One man is standing and leaning into the cab, while the other is sitting inside the cab. The harvester is green and has a large black tire visible in the foreground. The background is a clear blue sky.

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ASK CITYVIEW

By CITYVIEW staff

Ask CITYVIEW anything by emailing editor@dmcityview.com.

Q. What are the rules and regulations surrounding e-bikes and electric scooters in Des Moines?

A. You have likely been living under a rock if you haven't seen a teenager zooming through your neighborhood or side streets on an e-bike or electric scooter. Residents in Des Moines and the metro have seen them in greater numbers this summer and are curious about the rules and laws surrounding them.

First, there are the differences between e-bikes.

Presently, e-bikes are legal to ride anywhere bicycles are allowed. E-bikes are defined as having a motor less than or equal to 750 watts and must not have a top speed greater than 28 mph. They are legal on streets, trails and most sidewalks. E-bikes are also split into three different classes. Class One, Two and Three. The main differences are that Class One and Two bikes reach a top assisted speed of 20 mph, while Class Three bikes' top speed is 28 mpg. Class One and Two need to follow the posted speed limit; Class Three needs to follow the posted speed limit, or 20 mph. Class Three bikes are the only ones required to have a speedometer and have a minimum age requirement of 16.

E-scooters, according to the Iowa Department of Transportation, must also be 750 watts or less; must follow the posted speed limit; and can be ridden in the bike lane, vehicle lane, sidewalks and multi-use bike and pedestrian trails according to local rules and on DNR-designed park trails. They do not have a minimum rider age.

Local municipalities have begun developing their own regulations. Above all else, find out what your local rules are and follow them. And wear a helmet.

Q. How many Flock cameras are being used in the metro?

A. Flock cameras have made national headlines for many reasons. Increased vandalism to security cameras. Misuse by law enforcement. Communities around the metro ending their contracts with Flock Safety.

According to websites FlockHopper and DeFlock, roughly 230 cameras are being used in the Des Moines metro as of press time. With Waukee's announcement that the city is ending its partnership with Flock Safety, their 11 cameras will be shut down. Indianola will also be shutting down their eight cameras. And those may just be the beginning. ■



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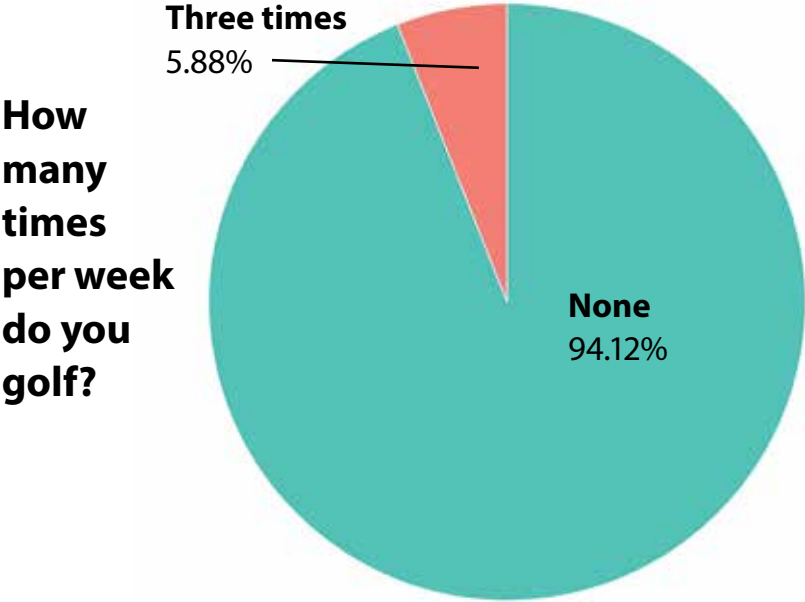
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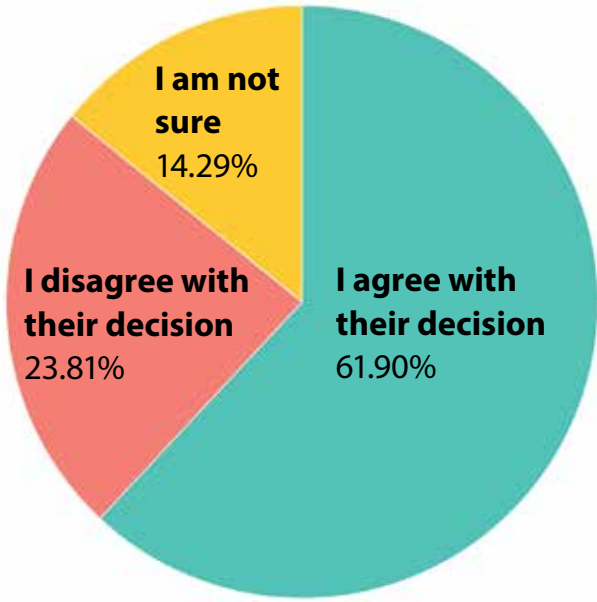
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POLL POSITION Results from last month's poll at www.dmcityview.com



What do you think of ABC, NBC and CBS' decisions to either decline to air live or cut away from President Donald Trump's July 16 primetime address?



FACEBOOK COMMENTS



cityview magazine
(comments unedited)

CITYVIEW magazine: What was your favorite hot lunch item served when you were in school?

- Julie Luepke: Pizza.
- Joey Dursky: Peanut butter bars
- Julie Nelson Adams: Chili & cinnamon rolls
- Michelle Brock: Weiner winks! Right Erin Petersen?!
- Jen Bailey: Pizza
- DG Joe: Turkey and gravy over mashed potatoes
- Lisa Simons Goodman: Chicken loaf and pizza
- JA Kristin: Crispito day! Turkey and gravy, Papa John's breadsticks, monster cookies.
- Felicia Marie Kauffman: Turkey gravy on mashed potatoes or pizza!
- Ally Sue Schlatter: Chili and cinnamon roll
- RaChelle Pickett: Chili and cinnamon rolls or the Mexican hat
- Marcy Mongar: Pizza!
- Tiffany Noelle: That rectangle pizza & the chocolate cake w/ white frosting.
- Casey Riker: Straw hats. Crisпитos (which they sell at the Jewell Market!). Square pizzas
- Jerri Hott: Chili with the homemade cinnamon rolls... Clarke Community High School 1970s lol
- Dierdre Work-Large: Pizza
- Joey Dursky: Chicken noodle mashed potatoes with a roll.
- Kevin D. Hyberger: Hot Turkey Sandwich
- Lori Anderson: Bologna Cups
- April Davis: Pizza
- Hannah Hope Harthoorn: Taquitos
- Kelly Roberts Srader: Chili or pizza
- Michael Nesbit: Noodles and mashed potato w/ curious meat
- Breck Bonnell: Rectangle pizza

- Betsy Davis: Chili and cinnamon rolls or tacos and strawberry fluff
- Stacy McKee Bjork: Bologna cups!
- Brad Lind: Spoonbread!
- Pat Meiners: Chili and grilled cheese! And brownies for dessert.
- Jordan Campbell: Pierogi
- Liza Kaufman: Chili and homemade cinnamon rolls.
- Katy Miller: Lil smokies and taters!
- Stephanie Gonzales: Pizza
- Kathy Kozuch Daub: Rectangle pizza
- Nancy Noethe Bobo: Goulash and chocolate cake
- Dawn Howard Edwards: Crisпитos
- Mindi Burgett: Pizza of course but the potatoes and lil smokies were good too
- Lisa Martin: Lol smokies potato's cinnamon roll vaggies
- Amanda Fusaro: Chicken and Gravy over Mashed potatoes
- Rachel Hall-Brindley: Burritos
- Hollie Harlea Dee: Well, it was absolutely disgusting, but when we heard pizza day, we were all in for hot lunch rectangle soggy nasty pizza that day.
- Virginia Rose: Salisbury steak
- Lisa Luiken Woxell: Pizza
- Curtis Christiansen: The pizza!
- Brittany Haberthur: Macaroni bar on Tuesday. Fresh baked cookie and grape juice for breakfast. Or the rectangle pizza
- Christopher John: Chili or tacos
- Jessica Spangler Neal: Creamed turkey on mashed potato. Chili and cinnamon roll. Wacky cake
- Ann Dickinson Nida: Chili and cinnamon rolls
- Katy Davenport: Chili and cinnamon rolls
- Kathy Hinrichs Boe: Chocolate pudding
- Breiyen Reed: Cheese bread

RETWEETS



(comments unedited)

- @gumvape: nobody told me as i get older the weather app would become part of my daily routine
- @synszo: Every few years a solar eclipse happens and every time they be like "this is the first solar eclipse since 1734"
- @artfulchaos: everything used to be 20 dollars and now that i finally have 20 dollars everything is now 200 dollars
- @Nick_Cerveza: Gum technology has completely stagnated. No progression in decades. The flavor should last minimum 8 hours by now. Ludicrous
- @Discollaborator: You could spend hours in Indiana. Hours of your life. Precious and irreplaceable. Gone, forever. In Indiana.
- @fvoriterecord: do the helen keller and talk with your hips is a line you could only get away with in 2008
- @NoahGarfinkel: When you click on a tracking number as soon as you get the email and the thing is like, "Uhhhhhh, we were kind of counting on you not clicking on that yet."
- @juumelo_: this meeting could've been a fist fight probably
- @BlessedCarbon: "Any thoughts?" No thanks I'm trying to quit
- @ErinChack: Best part of getting a divorce is saying "this is worse than my divorce" at minor inconveniences. ■

STRAY THOUGHTS

BY RANDY EVANS

D.M. school officials met the law — but missed the point

You would think a school district readily knows its A-B-C's.

Not the Des Moines Public Schools — at least not when informing the public what its 6,600 employees were paid during the academic year that ended June 30.

Yes, grade school teachers still call roll in alphabetical order. And next spring's high school graduates will walk across the stage as their names are announced, starting with the A's and moving through to the Z's.

But when publishing a list of its employees last month and how much taxpayers paid each one, the Des Moines Public Schools' alphabet started with Tiara S. Ziegler. Next was Pia Marcell Stites, and the list continued in an anything-but-organized manner.

Was this an attempt to hide names by randomness and make it difficult to compare salaries? Or was this the result of a brain freeze, much as when the school board hired Ian Roberts as superintendent without first doing a comprehensive background check and then fired him soon after he was arrested on federal immigration and gun charges?

A longstanding Iowa law requires public school districts to publish a list of their employees and wages each year. Des Moines complied with that law on July 20, taking up six full pages with an official notice in The Des Moines Register.

The publication requirement is simple. Lawmakers wanted every district to inform their residents who is being paid and how much each received. This is a basic principle of accountable government.

So what does it say about the Des Moines district's commitment to transparency when it puts the names in willy-nilly order? Taxpayers

paid the \$5,126 cost for publication of this notice.

Technically, perhaps, the district can say it met the letter of the compensation-disclosure law. The information is there. The salaries are public. Mission accomplished.

But transparency should not be a game of technicalities.

Randomizing thousands of names may satisfy a narrow interpretation of disclosure. But the way Des Moines did this undermines the purpose of the requirement and invites the public to distrust the district's commitment to transparency and accountability.

If citizen activists, journalists, watchdog groups and curious taxpayers must sift through a vast maze of names simply to determine how much certain employees were paid, Des Moines is guilty of placing an unnecessary obstacle between the public and the information people have a right to see and evaluate.

Few government expenditures are more significant — or more deserving of public attention — than the salaries employees receive.

Unlike private business, government agencies do not generate their own revenue in a competitive marketplace. They collect taxes and fees under authority granted by the citizens. Citizens are the ultimate shareholders of government, and they have a right to know how their tax money is spent.

Des Moines' decision to publish the employee compensation in a scattershot fashion represents a deeper problem than just poor optics. The way officials arranged the names suggests an attempt to circumvent the purpose of the requirement rather than embracing the responsibility.

This is not the first time the Des Moines

district has acted as if its residents were an annoyance. We saw this last October, when the school board accepted the immediate resignation of Robert Lundin, the district's chief academic officer, but decided — for reasons never explained to the public — to continue paying him his \$195,600 salary through June 30 of this year.

There is an important distinction between making information technically available and making it meaningfully accessible.

A school district genuinely committed to openness should recognize there are legitimate reasons for easily allowing people to examine salaries and other financial details. They may want to better understand how their tax money is spent, compare compensation among departments, identify unusually high salaries, investigate changes in compensation over time, or simply see what their teachers and administrators are paid.

This is not an extravagant demand. And that is why the random ordering of Des Moines school employee wages looks so bad. I've asked school officials for an explanation and continue to wait for their reply.

When the district makes the salaries hard to use, the public rightfully asks why. One wishes school leaders better understood how fragile the bond of trust is between the district and its constituents.

Secrecy breeds suspicion. And obfuscation invites contempt.

Being open and accountable is a mindset, and once you understand how it serves the public good, it is as easy as 1-2-3. ■

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



LET ME KNOW

My readers are located throughout Iowa. Please let me know whether your local school district publishes its employee salary list in random order, too. The list will appear in your local newspaper, typically between late July and late autumn. Email me at IowaFOICouncil@gmail.com.

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CIVIC SKINNY

BY CITYVIEW STAFF

UNI-Dome name change. A riverfront improvement. Credit card debt. Supportive housing. And turning lightning into lemons.

The **University of Northern Iowa** recently announced it will be selling the naming rights to its well-known **UNI-Dome** through **Learfield**. The facility, an impressive one for a university of UNI's size, opened in 1976 for \$7.5 million. It's well-known across the state for hosting the IHSAA state football championships.

Outside of its uses for Panther and high school football, former first lady Michelle Obama delivered the headlining address of the spring 2011 graduation ceremony. The venue has hosted concerts by some of music's biggest names including the Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, Grateful Dead and Fleetwood Mac, which set the attendance record of 25,500 in 1979.

The building has seen several renovations over the years. In 1994, the once air-supported roof collapsed due to a snowstorm and was replaced by a metal roof. The roof went through another renovation in 2010 after storm damages in 2009. In 2014, the dome added a 98-foot by 26-foot video board, which, at the time, was the second-largest in FCS football. Astroturf was installed to the field in 2017.

In 2024, UNI wrapped up phase one of its most recent renovation to the tune of \$11.2 million, complete with a new Teflon-coated fiberglass roof and new meeting rooms that double as suites. Phase two, which is currently in progress, is said to including an overhaul of the stadium seating, new suites and improved accessibility. Future parts of this current renovation are a new indoor track, restrooms, improved lighting and sound systems and enhanced finishes on graphics throughout the dome. According to the official renovation website for the dome, because everything must have its own website, the dome brings \$17 million in annual economic impact, 200,000 visitors from outside Black Hawk County and 500,000 annual visitors in total.

And the cost for these naming rights? The biggest price tags are currently \$5 million for the west concourse or the press box; \$3.5 million for the northwest, southwest, northeast and southeast entrance; and \$2.5 million for the east concourse or north deck. The cheapest naming rights for sale are \$150,000 for several of the field entrances. Some spots are already reserved. For a comparison, **Casey's** recent purchase of the former Wells Fargo Arena naming rights went for \$18.3 million over 10 years.

While it's unclear what the exact price tag will be for the entire dome, we have some thoughts on who might write a check. You can't rule Casey's out. The convenience store chain added to its naming empire in August after purchasing the naming rights to a new ice rink at the MidAmerican Energy RecPlex for \$1 million. **Hy-Vee** has had its toes dipped into naming rights game before, formerly with Hy-Vee Hall, now the EMC Expo Center, and currently with the Hy-Vee Multiplex, formerly the GrimesPlex. The grocery store chain also own the naming rights to the Hy-Vee Arena in Kansas City. **Wells Fargo** could possibly make a return. **John Deere** has naming rights to a PGA event and is also the official tractor of the MLB. Plus, they have some on-field branding partnerships across the state.

Locally, **Collins Aerospace** could make an interesting naming partnership. They are based close by in Cedar Rapids and could find an interesting play on words between their aerospace work and the space-like nature of the white-topped dome in Cedar Falls. ...

The **City of Des Moines** has continued to try to improve its riverfront area, now working on phase one of **Birdland Park and a Marina Master Plan**. The project is projected to cost approximately \$54.4 million in improvements across five project phases. The plan was originally adopted by the Parks and Recreation Board and the Des Moines City Council in 2021.

Currently under construction, phase one is designed to connect more people to the Des Moines River. Look for improved parkland, and the area between the Second and Sixth Avenue bridges will be made more accessible, connected and inviting. Once complete, the project will have a public boat dock, better fishing access, enhancements to the Neal Smith Trail and connection to the River Hills trail, two picnic pavilions and enhancements and restorations to natural wetlands. Work on this area is expected to be completed by winter 2026-2027. The project will bring much-needed improvements to the downtown area's lack of riverfront entertainment. ...

According to Achieve, a digital personal finance company, Iowa has the **fourth-lowest credit card debt** in the U.S. Using data from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Achieve says Iowans credit card debt per capita is \$3,250. The four states with lower numbers

were West Virginia, Kentucky and Mississippi, which holds the lowest at \$3,030 per capita. There's good and bad news that comes with this. The bad news is that the U.S. average rose by 4.1% in one year, and credit card balances increased in every single state. The good news is that Iowa had one of the smallest increases in debt, with balances growing by only \$80, or 2.5%. Alaska topped the list with the most debt per capita at \$5,250, but it looks like they are freezing their spending with the smallest one-year increase at 1.5%. ...

Greater Des Moines Supportive Housing, an organization that uses a model to offer housing stability to those in need, recently announced it closed on two former extended stay hotels that will become an 89-unit campus at 2701 Westown Parkway in West Des Moines and a 104-unit campus at 3940 114th St. in Urbandale. The organization says residents will have access to fully furnished studio apartments with kitchenettes, bathrooms, community spaces, recreation areas and on-site support services that include case management, counseling and life skills training supported by controlled access and 24-hour staffing. Renovation work is expected to begin this fall and be completed in late 2027. The combined cost of both projects is estimated at \$29 million, said to be funded through a combination of private and public sources. ...

Iowa's sixth-largest northern catalpa tree, located in Woodland Cemetery, was struck by lightning, scattering debris for hundreds of feet and putting its survival in danger. Woodland Cemetery enthusiast **Mike Rowley** has a suggestion if the tree is unable to recover from its shocking attack from above.

"Under the old adage, 'When life hands you a lemon, make the bittersweet and share it with others.' Sorry, I am notorious for misquoting old quotes but hopefully the meaning is not lost. I wonder if this might be an opportunity to turn this into the tallest or biggest tree sculpture in Iowa and at the same time, honor some of the history of our capital city of Des Moines?"

Rowley adds this would likely take significant volunteer effort and support. But, with chainsaw carving from the likes of **Gary Keenan**, **T.J. Jenkins** and **Clint Henik**, perhaps the Woodland Cemetery's tree issue could be resolved. ■

2ND ANNUAL

ROSES & IRONS GOLF

TOURNAMENT

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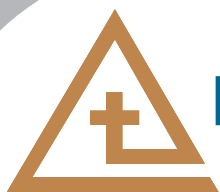
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No spoiler here, says Libertarian U.S. Senate candidate in Iowa who has won local elections

Thomas Laehn, the Greene County attorney, wants to reassert Constitutional role of Congress.

Greene County Attorney Thomas Laehn, the only Libertarian Party candidate ever elected in a partisan contest in Iowa, intends to use the Constitution to break the Democrat-Republican stranglehold on the nation's government in his race for the U.S. Senate, he said in a wide-ranging, hour-long interview in Jefferson.

Laehn, who says the American Republic is now an elective monarchy with oligarchic influences, is a fierce critic of the government use of eminent domain for private-interest carbon-capture pipelines. He thinks abortion should be decided fully at the state level. Although Laehn describes himself as “radically” anti-abortion, if elected at the state level, he would support a total abortion ban.

He supports decriminalization of marijuana possession and use, which he says is the first bill he would introduce in the Senate.

Laehn, 44, of Jefferson, has earned a spot on the ballot this fall in the U.S. Senate race along with Democrat State Rep. Josh Turek of Council Bluffs and Ashley Hinson, a Republican congresswoman from Marion.

Laehn says he is a rarity — a third-party candidate with electoral credibility as the voters of Greene County have elected Laehn twice, in 2018 and 2022. He was unopposed on the ballot.

“A clear majority of Americans would prefer to vote for a third party. So we are the majority,” Laehn said. “There’s this false narrative being propagated by the two major parties that you have to choose, and if you vote for a third-party candidate, you’re a spoiler. Really what they are saying is, if you go into the voting booth and you vote your conscience, you’re going to vote for a losing candidate.”

The fact is, in 2018 there were 3,044 Greene County residents who voted for Laehn as county attorney. In 2022, 2,679 did, according to the Greene County Auditor’s Office. He qualified this cycle for the ballot in the U.S. Senate race.

“Without any delusions about my odds, I am running to win; my motive is to win,” he said. “If there is any ulterior motive, it is to alert the Republic that the ship of state is sinking, and the best thing I can do to draw attention to this is running for office.”

Could he ever run as a Republican?

“If the party was no longer a cult,” Laehn said during a late morning interview over iced teas in a

Jefferson home.

“I think that right now the Republican Party is the greater threat to the Republic. If Kamala Harris had been elected, I’d probably be saying the same things,” he said.

Laehn does not think the Democratic Party is a cult — yet.

“But the same tendencies are there,” Laehn said. “When Obama was elected and said the seas will stop rising, there is the messianic complex that now surrounds the presidency regardless of who the occupant is. That’s the problem.”

If elected to the Senate, Laehn might caucus with the Democrats — and he might go with the Republicans. He would likely caucus with the opposite party to whoever is the president at the time, Laehn said.

“The Republicans in Congress are more loyal to Trump than they are to their own institution, so there are no checks and balances occurring across the branches,” he said. “The same is true if we have a Democratic president. The Democrats in Congress are more loyal to the president (if a Democrat is in the Oval Office) than they are to their own institution.”

A major issue Laehn thinks will form a central pull to his coalition: eminent domain and property rights. Laehn said Iowans — and notably many Republicans — outraged about certain Republicans’ efforts to clear a route for Summit Carbon Solutions pipeline will find a home with his campaign, even though he is running for federal office, as he’s a strong advocate for property rights.

“That’s definitely what political scientists call a wedge issue that can drive a wedge in the Republican coalition. This pipeline is the biggest boondoggle in the history of our state,” Laehn said. “This is obviously an example of the Legislature and the Republicans in the Legislature — and in the governor’s office — doing the bidding of their economic elite, oligarchic donors against the overwhelming wishes of the vast majority of the people of Iowa. The Legislature is actively obstructing the will of the people.”

Laehn grew up in the northeast Iowa town of Allison, a son of a Lutheran minister. Laehn later converted to Catholicism.

He went on to Drake University, Louisiana State University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and eventually to law school at the University of Iowa.



Libertarian candidate for the U.S. Senate, Thomas Laehn, talks about his campaign platform. Photo by Douglas Burns.

Laehn’s wife, Susan, is a political science professor at Iowa State University.

“The whole reason I went to law school was to have a path back to rural Iowa because I knew, at some point, I wanted to start a family,” Laehn said. “I wanted my kids to grow up in a town like Allison.

“I knew I wanted to do something in public service. I’ve always told people if my goal in life was to make money, I’ve made some very bad decisions.”

One area of expertise for him is in ancient political thought.

“Even when the job market is good, there are not many universities looking to hire professors of ancient political theory,” Laehn joked.

He focused on political theory and the Constitution while teaching at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, Louisiana — a place, Laehn said, “where Cajun country meets cowboy country.”

What did he learn about Iowa while living in Louisiana?

“I have yet to find a place better than small-town Iowa to raise a family,” he said. “It’s a combination of a sense of community — which you can find in other parts of the country — with a work ethic that’s uniquely Midwestern.” ■

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.

THINGS TO DO

DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS

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

dmpa.org

• Through Sept 20: "Wicked"



DES MOINES SYMPHONY

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

• Sept. 26-27: Season Debut. "Unity
- American Mosaic and West Side
Story"



TALLGRASS THEATRE COMPANY

2019 Grand Ave., Suite 100,
West Des Moines

tallgrasstheatre.org

• Sept. 12 to Sept. 28:
"Blithe Spirit"



DES MOINES BUCCANEERS

MidAmerican Energy RecPlex,
6500 Grand Ave., West Des Moines
bucshockey.com

• Sept. 17 vs. Youngstown Phantoms at noon



THE RENAISSANCE FAIRE AT SLEEPY HOLLOW

Sleepy Hollow Sports Park,
4051 Dean Ave., Des Moines
www.sleepyhollowrenfaire.com
Sept. 5-6, 12-13, 19-20

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of olde with performances
from jousting, acrobats, fire
breathing and more. Each
week has a theme: Viking Invasion,
Magic and Mischief and Party Like a
Pirate.



IOWA CUBS

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

• 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



IOWA STATE FOOTBALL

Jack Trice Stadium, 1732 S. Fourth St., Ames
cyclones.com

Home games:

• Sept. 5 vs. Southeast Missouri at 12 p.m.
• Sept. 19 vs. Bowling Green at 11 a.m.
• Sept 26 vs. Utah



OKTOBERFEST

The District at Prairie Trail,
Southwest District Drive,
Ankeny
oktoberfestdsm.com
Sept. 25-26

Two days, one big prost.
Celebrate all of the traditional German
style at the 22nd annual Oktoberfest.
Go in traditional garb, or go as yourself,
either way, have a beer.



COMING UP

SUBMIT ENTRIES AND PHOTOS TO EDITOR@DMCITYVIEW.COM

THINGS TO DO



Photo courtesy of City of Indianola

INDIANOLA ART FESTIVAL

Buxton Park, 705 N. Buxton St., Indianola
indianolaiowa.gov/1065/Indianola-Art-Festival
Sept. 20

The Indianola Arts Commission is bringing back its annual Art Festival. The return year will feature 30 artists with various live entertainment including music, food and more.



Photo courtesy of Latino Heritage Festival

LATINO HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Western Gateway Park,
100 Grand Ave., Des Moines
latinoheritagefestival.org
Sept. 26-27

This is the largest and longest-running Latino celebration in Iowa with two vibrant days of music, food, dance, art and coming together of various communities celebrating in Des Moines.



2026 DES MOINES CONCOURSE D'ELEGANCE

John and Mary Pappajohn
Sculpture Park, Western Gateway Park, 1330 Grand Ave., Des Moines
www.desmoinesconcours.com
Sept. 13

This is the premier automotive exhibition in Des Moines. The vehicles on display are vintage and classic, celebrating the fine art, design and innovation of motor vehicles through the years.



DSM OPEN STREET FESTIVAL ON SW NINTH STREET

3305 S.W. Ninth St., Des Moines
www.friendsofsw9th.com
Sept. 20

DSM Open Street Festival on S.W. Ninth Street. The Friends of SW 9th invite the southside to enjoy community attractions with food, games, music and fun.



HALFWAY TO ST. PAT'S CHARITY CAR SHOW

Charlie's Filling Station, 305 Grand Ave., West Des Moines
www.friendlysonsiowa.com
Sept. 20

The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick is holding a fundraising car show to benefit the St. Patrick's Day Parade. 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.



GALAXYCON

Iowa Events Center,
730 Third St., Des Moines
galaxycon.com/pages/galaxycon-des-moines
Sept. 11-13

A three-day festival of fandom. Celebrities, artists, writers, voice actors, cosplayers and so many more descend onto Des Moines to display fandoms from all over the galaxy.



Photo courtesy of Porchfest

PORCHFEST

Union Park, 2009 Saylor Road, Des Moines
www.porchfestdsm.org
Sept. 13

Twenty acts will perform this year on the front porches of residents in Union Park. This free event brings people into one of Des Moines oldest neighborhoods for 45-minute-long sets on various porches. A map of the performances can be found on their website. ■



BUSINESS JOURNAL



DES MOINES BUTCHER SHOPS connect Iowa farms to the table

A growing number of independent butchers are connecting consumers with local farmers while offering transparency, quality meat and a more personal shopping experience.

By Gracie Kayko

Some days they are accountants. On other days, they are recipe developers. One hour, they are marinating meat. And the next, they are in a marketing meeting. Through all their roles, they are always the consumer's liaison.

For years, Des Moines didn't need someone to bridge the gap between Iowa farmers and residents, but the COVID-19 pandemic changed that.

Calvin Schnucker, the owner of The Good Butcher, believes the pandemic inspired people to cook at home and care about what they were putting on their dinner plates for themselves and their families.

Tucker Maxwell, owner of Maxwell Custom Beefs, agrees.

"Stuck at home and cooped up, people started researching what was in their foods and how they can eat healthier, save money and support local businesses," Maxwell said.

"When they want to cook for themselves, they want to do it well," Schnucker said. "So that's what we're providing. If you want to put the best on your table, you come in and get it from us."

Schnucker can tell you exactly where his meats came from.

So can Maxwell.

The same is true of Nick Lenters, owner of Old Station Craft Meats.

"Before COVID-19, Des Moines didn't have the same level of demand for locally owned butcher shops as other cities such as Minneapolis, Chicago or New York. There were other pipelines for getting a quarter, half or whole beef in Iowa through established connections with farmers and Iowa's meat locker system," Schnucker said.

Cattle that are raised for Maxwell Custom Beefs. A customer can 100% customize their beef with Maxwell Custom Beefs.

Photo courtesy Tucker Maxwell

The farm-to-table movement, which started in

“Quality means different things to different people. Some consumers prioritize local sourcing, others care about animal welfare, production practices, flavor, freshness or how the food was raised and processed,” Lenters said. “Buying directly from farmers or from a butcher who works closely with farmers gives consumers more options and more



Meat that is being prepared for sale at Old Station Craft Meats. Photo courtesy Nick Lenters

Maxwell Custom Beefs has a network of 115 central Iowa farmers. The consumer, when buying an eighth, quarter, half or whole beef, can decide the size, genetics, feed, GMO and what portions of the animal they want, making it 100% customizable.

Includes your business' testimonials, photos, logo, contact information and a 100-word summary of your business in a full-page, full-color advertisement.

Going local can be more costly, but Maxwell is able to walk his customers through everything they need to know, he said.

Maxwell describes Maxwell Custom Beefs as a marketplace, connecting people with the farmers. While he prioritizes cattle, he has a network of chicken growers who raise and slaughter the chickens themselves. He also does lamb, goat, pig and deer processing in the fall and winter. A customer can also buy rib-eye, New York strips, ground beef, pork chops and little rib-eye sandwiches from the shop.

For Schnucker, being a butcher means getting customers the best meat and sourcing possible. All of The Good Butcher's processed beef, pork, chicken, lamb, bison and elk comes from local farmers and meat companies. They sell turkeys for Thanksgiving, marinated meats, side dishes and process deer for people who bring them in.

Schnucker purchases whole animals and locks in the lowest price he will pay the farmers for a year. So even if the price of beef goes down, Schnucker will pay the farmers the price they agreed upon.

"It's generally above the market because what I want my farmers to know is that I'm going to consistently buy their animals, and I need them to consistently do the best job they can," he said. "If the market collapses and beef goes back down to \$2 a pound, I'm still going to pay them what I think is a fair amount for that beef."

Schnucker wants to see Iowa have sustainable meat production, and locking in a yearly lowest cost with farmers is one way to do it.

"If we're all following the market and we're all chasing the bottom dollar, all that's doing is squeezing the farmers at the end of the day," he said.

The farmers raise the animals specifically for The Good Butcher on certain feedstocks, crate and hormone free and with no antibiotics ever for pork. Though it is not required in the state of Iowa, he has his pork raised Proposition 12-compliant, a California state law that prohibits confined enclosures when breeding pigs. Prop 12 requires at least 24 square feet of usable floor space per breeding pig, according to Prop 12 and CDFA standards.

The Good Butcher is a USDA-inspected facility, as is its partner locker, Guthrie County Quality Meats. The locker slaughters the animals for Schnucker, which come to him as whole, chilled carcasses. Beef continues to age for up to 21 days while pork and lamb are cut fresh and displayed in a case.

"We try to have as few steps as possible between

the farm and your plate because that allows us more accountability," Schnucker said.

Schnucker's goal is to tell a customer which farm the meat came from, on what day, and how it was raised.

When Lenters became a butcher, he pictured himself spending his days cutting meat and developing recipes to help customers create a memorable meal. In the years since he has been operating Old Station Craft Meats, it has been nothing like he imagined.

Lenters started curing his own meat at home in the early 2000s after following craft butcher shops such as Fleishers Craft Butchery in New York and Western Daughters Butcher Shoppe in Denver. These shops showed him that a butcher shop is more than a place to buy meat; it's where customers can learn their food, how to cook it, and the farmers who grow it. After Lenters' brother and he entered the cattle business, the obvious next step was to open Old Station Craft Meats.

"It gave us the opportunity to connect local farmers with local consumers while sharing our passion for great meat and helping customers create memorable meals," Lenters said.

Due to the growth of his business, Lenters' role has grown from that of butcher and owner to that of marketer, accountant, mechanic and compliance officer.

"At the end of the day, it's all in service of helping people have great experiences around good food, and that's still the part I love most," he said. "The key is listening to what customers want and finding ways to better serve them."

Lenters said he sources his meat based on quality and consistency, which allows his staff to become experts on their products in order to adequately answer customers' questions. This transparency is important to Lenters since Old Station Craft Meats makes their own bacon, ham, jerky, snack sticks, sausages, deli meats and more. This is how they differentiate themselves.

"If a customer asks whether a product contains a particular ingredient, how it was prepared, or how fresh it is, they're often talking directly to the person who made it or someone who works alongside the people who did," he said.

Being a butcher in Des Moines means connecting the community with hardworking farmers to ensure that the best meats end up on Iowans' dinner plates. A butcher is the link between the farmer and the consumer, and according to Lenters, a reputable one can tell their customers where the meat is from and how it was raised while helping them through the purchasing process.

In the last year, the price of beef has risen for the average consumer. Market price is almost \$4 a pound more than what it was last year, Maxwell said. Despite the increase of middle market beef, premium beef prices for The Good Butcher have remained the same. Schnucker views The Good Butcher as a specialty shop and isn't trying to compete with big grocery companies such as Hy-Vee.

The Good Butcher represents the extra spend.

Schnucker said 20,000 people walk into a Hy-Vee every day, and each store has to have something available for shoppers to buy.

"That's not the game we're playing. We're trying to have the best quality," he said. "It's going to be better because we're buying less of it, and we're very specific about who and how we're buying it."

The Good Butcher and Old Station Craft Meats have seen growth in sales of chicken over the past year. Schnucker sources his pasture-raised chicken from a group of farmers in Marion County, while Lenters chooses to look outside of the state to get the air-chilled chicken, chilled in a water bath, that he wants.

"Consumers seem to be diversifying their protein choices when looking for convenient, protein-rich foods," Lenters said. "Which is why he believes poultry has become increasingly popular."

Recently, Maxwell has seen a pushback on bigger carcass animals, which big companies try to produce due to the big emphasis on production. When animals are grown bigger, it leads to more waste. He thinks animals are going to start being grown at a more manageable size, which in turn will make them a better, more affordable product for the consumer.

And Maxwell believes there will be great opportunity for younger generations, especially those who grew up with the effects of the pandemic, as current business owners retire, to open and operate their own butcher shops.

"I think it's going to be a good opportunity for young people to create their own brand and really modernize an industry that's been so stuck in its ways for so long," Maxwell said.

Being a butcher for the community of Des Moines is more than just selling meat.

"You can grow up and live in Iowa your whole life and never actually be on a farm, so what we're doing is trying to bridge that divide," Schnucker said.

The butchers of Des Moines want to provide their customers with the best quality of meat, answer their questions and maybe give a little cooking advice, if it's needed. ■

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COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS IN POLK COUNTY FROM APRIL 9, 2026, TO MAY 12, 2026.

3355 S.E. MIEHE DRIVE, GRIMES

DATE: 2026-04-09
SALE PRICE: \$180,000
SELLER: DURACHEM LLC
BUYER: OLBERDING, DAVID
ACRES: 0.062
SQUARE FEET: 1,080

4111 DELAWARE AVE., DES MOINES

DATE: 2026-04-10
SALE PRICE: \$5,500,000
SELLER: M-H REAL ESTATE LLC
BUYER: IOWA EQUITY EXCHANGE PRKG 3475 LLC
ACRES: 6.596
SQUARE FEET: 36,095

1945 N.E. 36TH ST., ANKENY

DATE: 2026-04-10
SALE PRICE: \$1,644,988
SELLER: DRA PROPERTIES LC
BUYER: LS SLB EXCHANGE IV LLC
ACRES: 1.560
SQUARE FEET: 0

8435 UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD, CLIVE

DATE: 2026-04-15
SALE PRICE: \$1,050,000
SELLER: AAN LLC
BUYER: SUNRISE REAL ESTATE INC
ACRES: 0.871
SQUARE FEET: 8,000

1710 W. FIRST ST., ANKENY

DATE: 2026-04-15
SALE PRICE: \$1,300,000
SELLER: MARTIN INVESTMENTS LLC
BUYER: ANKENY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
ACRES: 0.248
SQUARE FEET: 2,500

4810 86TH ST., URBANDALE

DATE: 2026-04-15
SALE PRICE: \$1,550,000
SELLER: 86TH ST PROPERTIES LLC
BUYER: BCPEVEN LLC
ACRES: 1.114
SQUARE FEET: 4,968

2510 S.E. TONES DRIVE, ANKENY

DATE: 2026-04-16
SALE PRICE: \$2,300,000
SELLER: LODGING PARTNERS LLC
BUYER: HARMONY IOWA HOTELS LLC
ACRES: 1.486
SQUARE FEET: 35,548

8801 NORTH PARK COURT, URBANDALE

DATE: 2026-04-17
SALE PRICE: \$13,100,000
SELLER: NORTH PARK REAL ESTATE INVESTORS LLLP
BUYER: NORTH PARK PROPERTY LLC
ACRES: 9.393
SQUARE FEET: 82,952

NO ADDRESS LISTED

DATE: 2026-04-17
SALE PRICE: \$1,827,000
SELLER: WEBB, MARY J
BUYER: GLC-DCI LAND LLC
ACRES: 29.000
SQUARE FEET: 0

3330 109TH ST., UNIT 205, URBANDALE

DATE: 2026-04-17
SALE PRICE: \$375,000
SELLER: GREENSPON PROPERTY MANAGEMENT INC
BUYER: LETTWEEN FAMILY TRUST
ACRES: 0.154
SQUARE FEET: 32,500

974 73RD ST. SUITE 5, WEST DES MOINES

DATE: 2026-04-17
SALE PRICE: \$100
SELLER: RON LEWIS TRUST
BUYER: LEWIS, ERIC
ACRES: 0.107
SQUARE FEET: 1,250

2308 SUNSET ROAD, DES MOINES

DATE: 2026-04-20
SALE PRICE: \$5,500,000
SELLER: BSDL INC
BUYER: TRIPLE J ENVIRONMENTAL LLC
ACRES: 6.879
SQUARE FEET: 169,705

519 48TH ST., DES MOINES

DATE: 2026-04-20
SALE PRICE: \$95,000
SELLER: 4820 INGERSOLL PROPCO LLC
BUYER: MAYORGA, BEATRIS
ACRES: 0.143
SQUARE FEET: 0

3611 S.E. 14TH ST., DES MOINES

DATE: 2026-04-20
SALE PRICE: \$1,150,000
SELLER: VAQUERO IOWA DES MOINES PARTNERS LP
BUYER: PAR4 3611 SE 14TH LLC
ACRES: 0.891
SQUARE FEET: 2,168

2620 S.W. VINTAGE PARKWAY, ANKENY

DATE: 2026-04-20
SALE PRICE: \$4,100,000
SELLER: SLM PROPERTIES LLC
BUYER: TONNIGES PR 2 LLC
ACRES: 1.991
SQUARE FEET: 12,487

116 FIFTH ST., WEST DES MOINES

DATE: 2026-04-22
SALE PRICE: \$295,000
SELLER: LANE PROPERTIES LLC
BUYER: STANBROUGH RESIDENTIAL LLC
ACRES: 0.053
SQUARE FEET: 1,712

1120 23RD ST., DES MOINES

DATE: 2026-04-22
SALE PRICE: \$392,500
SELLER: MALILOBOO LLC
BUYER: DESAI 1120 23RD STREET LLC
ACRES: 0.147
SQUARE FEET: 3,672

1606 N.W. SECOND ST., ANKENY

DATE: 2026-04-22
SALE PRICE: \$640,000
SELLER: ANKENY CHRISTIAN HOLDINGS LLC
BUYER: CRG PROPERTIES LLC
ACRES: 0.481
SQUARE FEET: 5,808

509 S.E. SIXTH ST., DES MOINES

DATE: 2026-04-22
SALE PRICE: \$870,000
SELLER: 509 SE 6TH LLC
BUYER: MARKET DISTRICT APARTMENTS LP
ACRES: 0.818
SQUARE FEET: 3,780

9205 SWANSON BLVD., CLIVE

DATE: 2026-04-23
SALE PRICE: \$775,000
SELLER: PICKLE PROPERTIES DSM
SWANSON BLVD LLC
BUYER: ELIJAH HOLDINGS LLC
ACRES: 0.664
SQUARE FEET: 4,225

4418 DOUGLAS AVE., DES MOINES

DATE: 2026-04-24
SALE PRICE: \$220,000
SELLER: SMS LLC
BUYER: RED BRICK VENTURES LLC
ACRES: 0.334
SQUARE FEET: 2,437

4012 N.E. 62ND AVE., ANKENY

DATE: 2026-04-24
SALE PRICE: \$1,816,200
SELLER: RUDE, BROCK A
BUYER: IALCO POLK COUNTY LLC
ACRES: 15.000
SQUARE FEET: 3,156

550 S.E. GATEWAY DRIVE, GRIMES

DATE: 2026-04-27
SALE PRICE: \$260,000
SELLER: SANAV VENTURE LLC
BUYER: POTTEBAUM, STEVE
ACRES: 1.499
SQUARE FEET: 0

4240 ARMY POST ROAD, DES MOINES

DATE: 2026-04-28
SALE PRICE: \$44,256,000
SELLER: ELECTRO MANAGEMENT CORP
BUYER: ACS ACQUISITIONS INC
ACRES: 55.883
SQUARE FEET: 302,800

NO ADDRESS LISTED

DATE: 2026-04-28
SALE PRICE: \$8,854,615
SELLER: DONALD C TIMMINS LC
BUYER: VERMEER MANUFACTURING COMPANY
ACRES: 112.930
SQUARE FEET: 0

309 E. FIFTH ST., UNIT 104, DES MOINES

DATE: 2026-04-28
SALE PRICE: \$1,200,000
SELLER: RMV PROPERTIES LLC
BUYER: MARSHALL INVESTMENTS LLC
ACRES: 0.069
SQUARE FEET: 4,787

6555 N.E. 88TH ST., BONDURANT

DATE: 2026-04-28
SALE PRICE: \$5,847,669
SELLER: DONALD C TIMMINS
REVOCABLE TRUST
BUYER: VERMEER MANUFACTURING COMPANY
ACRES: 74.579
SQUARE FEET: 0

2101 DELAVAN DRIVE, SUITE 142, WEST DES MOINES

DATE: 2026-04-29
SALE PRICE: \$549,130
SELLER: DELAVAN DRIVE STORAGE LLC
BUYER: DELAVAN PROPERTIES LLC
ACRES: 0.089
SQUARE FEET: 3,852

3330 109TH ST., UNIT 211, URBANDALE

DATE: 2026-04-29
SALE PRICE: \$375,000
SELLER: GREENSPON PROPERTY MANAGEMENT INC
BUYER: CUNDY, RODNEY D
ACRES: 0.154
SQUARE FEET: 32,500

2325 DELAWARE AVE., DES MOINES

DATE: 2026-04-29
SALE PRICE: \$1,350,000
SELLER: IOWA PLAINS SIGNING INC
BUYER: JJC HOLDINGS LLC
ACRES: 3.261
SQUARE FEET: 8,109

3709 N.E. THRESHOLD DRIVE, ANKENY

DATE: 2026-04-30
SALE PRICE: \$1,637,420
SELLER: THRESHOLD DEVELOPMENT LLC
BUYER: MLY REAL ESTATE LLC
ACRES: 1.786
SQUARE FEET: 0

1715 S.W. PLAZA PARKWAY, ANKENY

DATE: 2026-04-30
SALE PRICE: \$4,000,000
SELLER: J JACK LLC
BUYER: CEE 3 LLC
ACRES: 2.529
SQUARE FEET: 16,262

4325 E. 50TH ST., DES MOINES

DATE: 2026-04-30
SALE PRICE: \$2,925,000
SELLER: JWR PROPERTIES LLC
BUYER: WILLIAMS TURF FARMS INC
ACRES: 3.503
SQUARE FEET: 20,000

459 27TH ST., DES MOINES
DATE: 2026-04-30
SALE PRICE: \$302,500
SELLER: VAN ALLEN BRACKETT, PARKE
BUYER: BEANE, JASON W
ACRES: 0.332
SQUARE FEET: 2,988

3330 109TH ST., UNIT 213, URBANDALE
DATE: 2026-04-30
SALE PRICE: \$365,000
SELLER: GREENSPON PROPERTY
MANAGEMENT INC
BUYER: TIMOTHY W ANNETT TRUST
ACRES: 0.154
SQUARE FEET: 32,500

3830 MERLE HAY ROAD, DES MOINES
DATE: 2026-05-01
SALE PRICE: \$1,390,000
SELLER: WALLUP LLC
BUYER: LAVA ROCK PROPERTIES LLC
ACRES: 0.438
SQUARE FEET: 1,864

355 S.W. 37TH ST., GRIMES
DATE: 2026-05-04
SALE PRICE: \$777,485
SELLER: ANDERSON FOUR LLC
BUYER: NEXT PHASE DEVELOPMENT LLC
ACRES: 3.500
SQUARE FEET: 0

850 S. 60TH ST., BUILDING 3000, WEST DES MOINES
DATE: 2026-05-04
SALE PRICE: \$2,517,113
SELLER: SHREE RAM DEVELOPMENT LLC
BUYER: DB MILLS CIVIC 374 LLC
ACRES: 1.993
SQUARE FEET: 0

2821 S. ANKENY BLVD., ANKENY
DATE: 2026-05-05
SALE PRICE: \$209,852
SELLER: DENNY ELWELL FAMILY LC
BUYER: HPM INVESTMENT INC
ACRES: 2.014
SQUARE FEET: 0

2400 86TH ST., UNIT 5 AND 6, URBANDALE
DATE: 2026-05-05
SALE PRICE: \$305,000
SELLER: RCJH LLC
BUYER: URBANDALE LLC
ACRES: 0.367
SQUARE FEET: 3,324

983 26TH ST., DES MOINES
DATE: 2026-05-06
SALE PRICE: \$245,000
SELLER: IMMING, CONNOR
BUYER: M&B SCOTT PROPERTIES LLC
ACRES: 0.176
SQUARE FEET: 2,160

NO ADDRESS LISTED
DATE: 2026-05-08
SALE PRICE: \$1,900,000
SELLER: PRAIRIE TRAIL COMMERCIAL LLC
BUYER: D7-5 LLC
ACRES: 3.203
SQUARE FEET: 0

1792 N.W. POLK CITY DRIVE, ANKENY
DATE: 2026-05-11
SALE PRICE: \$2,250,000
SELLER: T LEO CAPITAL LLC
BUYER: LEKAKS TEXAS LLC
ACRES: 4.494
SQUARE FEET: 64,824

1792 N.W. POLK CITY DRIVE, ANKENY
DATE: 2026-05-11
SALE PRICE: \$2,025,000
SELLER: ERIC & CAROL ZIEL REVOCABLE TRUST
BUYER: LEKAKS TEXAS LLC
ACRES: 4.494
SQUARE FEET: 64,824

3409 S.W. NINTH ST., DES MOINES
DATE: 2026-05-11
SALE PRICE: \$460,000
SELLER: RUBBY LLC
BUYER: BMSK INVESTMENT LLC
ACRES: 0.255
SQUARE FEET: 3,200

855 17TH ST., DES MOINES
DATE: 2026-05-11
SALE PRICE: \$415,000
SELLER: THE NORTHWEST DISTRICT OF THE WESLEYAN CHURCH
BUYER: WARNER-BLANKENSHIP, JENNIFER
ACRES: 0.212
SQUARE FEET: 3,520

1454 30TH ST., SUITE 204, WEST DES MOINES
DATE: 2026-05-12
SALE PRICE: \$200,000
SELLER: BOULEVARD DEVELOPMENT LLC
BUYER: PRIME ENTERPRISE HOLDINGS LLC
ACRES: 0.248
SQUARE FEET: 2,933

4100 UNIVERSITY AVE., WEST DES MOINES
DATE: 2026-05-12
SALE PRICE: \$45,241,699
SELLER: LOJA WTP LLC
BUYER: AAA WEST WATER TOWER PLACE LLC
ACRES: 24.740
SQUARE FEET: 276,735

6920 S.W. NINTH ST., DES MOINES
DATE: 2026-05-12
SALE PRICE: \$732,500
SELLER: STIDHAM FAMILY TRUST
BUYER: A&O LLC
ACRES: 0.546
SQUARE FEET: 8,064 ■



Ultimate Salad Bar

- Available for pickup or delivery
- Serves Eight People

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MENU

Garlic Bread Knots *[one dozen]*

Fresh in-season mixed greens (romaine *[80oz]*, spinach *[80oz]*, and arugula *[80oz]*), with **a variety of dressings** *[16oz each]*, including buttermilk ranch, Italian vinaigrette, blue cheese, balsamic vinaigrette, French herbed olive oil.

Marinated grilled flank steak *[1/2 pan]*

Buttermilk-marinated grilled chicken breast *[1/2 pan]*

Fresh and fabulous salad fixings, including diced tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, a variety of peppers, peas, chopped bacon, hard-boiled eggs, cottage cheese, shredded cheeses, sunflower seeds, Spanish Marcona almonds and butter croutons *[24 oz each]*

Quinoa Salad *[48oz]*, **Pasta Salad** *[48oz]*, **Cyd's Chicken Salad** *[48oz]*

Fresh in-season fruit including mixed berries, strawberries, pineapple, melon, grapes *[24 oz each]*

Chocolate Peanut Butter Bars *[one dozen]*



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Borrower Name	City	County	Cong. District	\$ Amount	Jobs Created	Jobs Retained	New Vs. Existing	Business Type
Seniors Helping Seniors Cedar Valley	Cedar Falls	BLACK HAWK	02	\$180,000	10	0	EXISTING	Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities
APEX Compressor, Inc.	WATERLOO	BLACK HAWK	02	\$435,000	0	4	EXISTING	Commercial and Industrial Machinery and Equipment (except Automotive and EI
Solar FX Corporation	Boone	BOONE	04	\$302,700	2	5	EXISTING	Solar Electric Power Generation
Orthaus Trucking	IONIA	CHICKASAW	02	\$54,000	0	1	EXISTING	General Freight Trucking, Local
Little Paws	NEW HAMPTON	CHICKASAW	02	\$32,500	2	1	EXISTING	Pet Care (except Veterinary) Services
Greer Capital Corp	IOWA CITY	JOHNSON	01	\$3,151,000	6	1	NEW	Plumbing, Heating, and Air-Conditioning Contractors
Greer Capital Corp	IOWA CITY	JOHNSON	01	\$3,151,000	6	1	NEW	Plumbing, Heating, and Air-Conditioning Contractors
Corridor Automotive Services, LLC	IOWA CITY	JOHNSON	01	\$341,900	0	12	EXISTING	Tire Dealers
Greer Capital Corp	IOWA CITY	JOHNSON	01	\$200,000	6	1	NEW	Plumbing, Heating, and Air-Conditioning Contractors
Greer Capital Corp	IOWA CITY	JOHNSON	01	\$200,000	6	1	NEW	Plumbing, Heating, and Air-Conditioning Contractors
East Fork Swine Veterinary Services P.C.	Algona	KOSSUTH	04	\$250,000	0	6	EXISTING	Full-Service Restaurants
Rittgers Insurance, LLC	West Point	LEE	01	\$1,074,300	2	2	EXISTING	Insurance Agencies and Brokerages
Little Waves, LLC	CEDAR RAPIDS	LINN	02	\$169,000	2	9	NEW	Sports and Recreation Instruction
S C C PROPERTY SERVICE LLC	CEDAR RAPIDS	LINN	02	\$22,300	7	7	EXISTING	Residential Remodelers
S & B Scapes, LLC	Marion	LINN	02	\$100,000	0	8	EXISTING	Landscaping Services
Hansen Home Solutions, LLC	VAN METER	MADISON	03	\$500,000	0	12	NEW	Other Building Equipment Contractors
JC AESTHETICS	HINTON	PLYMOUTH	04	\$22,900	0	0	NEW	Cosmetology and Barber Schools
DCM Wine, LLC	ANKENY	POLK	03	\$285,000	7	1	EXISTING	Wine and Distilled Alcoholic Beverage Merchant Wholesalers
620 NE 44th Ave. LLC	Des Moines	POLK	03	\$1,081,000	13	0	EXISTING	Landscaping Services
VFI, LLC	Des Moines	POLK	03	\$242,000	0	0	EXISTING	Car Washes
Ryan Giles Enterprises, LLC	Des Moines	POLK	03	\$202,000	1	5	NEW	Machine Shops
Ryan Giles Enterprises, LLC	Grimes	POLK	03	\$1,159,800	1	5	NEW	Machine Shops
Pour 515 Ventures Incorporated	GRIMES	POLK	03	\$615,000	6	1	NEW	Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)
Bryan Flooring and Construction LLC	Urbandale	POLK	03	\$624,600	3	20	EXISTING	Flooring Contractors
Vermeer Quist Consulting LLC	WEST DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$80,000	4	2	EXISTING	All Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Iowa Illinois Office Solutions, LLC	BETTENDORF	SCOTT	01	\$2,591,000	18	35	NEW	Office Supplies and Stationary Retailers
Little Dove LLC	Davenport	SCOTT	01	\$550,900	3	2	NEW	Caterers
Is It a Dream, LLC	Davenport	SCOTT	01	\$163,700	1	1	NEW	Clothing and Clothing Accessories Retailers
Elite Ink LLC	Davenport	SCOTT	01	\$150,000	1	3	NEW	Commercial Screen Printing
Everyone Can Dance LLC	Davenport	SCOTT	01	\$25,000	0	10	NEW	Dance Companies
Clarity Asset Management, Inc.	AMES	STORY	04	\$4,050,000	0	5	EXISTING	Portfolio Management and Investment Advice
REIMAN IOWA, LLC	AMES	STORY	04	\$50,000	0	0	NEW	Television Broadcasting
Sension Holdings LLC	INDIANOLA	WARREN	01	\$1,500,000	1	13	EXISTING	Commercial Screen Printing
Northside Tavern LLC	SAINT MARYS	WARREN	01	\$200,000	1	0	NEW	Full-Service Restaurants
Northside Tavern LLC	SAINT MARYS	WARREN	01	\$100,000	4	0	NEW	Full-Service Restaurants

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

King to be inducted into International Festivals and Events Association Hall of Fame

The International Festivals and Events Association (IFEA) has announced that Stephen King, Des Moines Arts Festival executive director, will be inducted into the IFEA Hall of Fame, the organization's highest honor, recognizing individuals whose careers have made a significant and lasting impact on festivals and events worldwide. King will be formally inducted during the IFEA Annual Convention and Expo on Monday, Oct. 5, in Tucson, Arizona. Over a career spanning more than 35 years, King has become one of the most respected leaders in the international festivals and events profession. Since joining the Des Moines Arts Festival in 2006, he has transformed the event into one of North America's premier arts and culture festivals while helping shape the future of the industry through leadership, innovation, education and mentorship.

Des Moines Area Association of Realtors announces Ganz as new CEO

The Des Moines Area Association of Realtors announced the appointment of Laurie Ganz as its new chief executive officer, bringing more than 20 years of association leadership experience serving Realtors at the local, state and national levels. Ganz joins DMAAR after seven years serving as senior director of professional development and broker outreach for Minnesota Realtors. In that leadership position, Ganz led statewide education initiatives, broker engagement, strategic planning and professional development for more than 22,000 members.



Laurie Ganz

Iowa PBS announces Clark as new director of communications and marketing

Iowa PBS announced Caryline Clark as the new director of communications and marketing for the network. As the newest member of the Iowa PBS leadership team, she will spearhead strategy and execution of communications, marketing of local programming, audience development and community engagement efforts.

CSI Iowa welcomes Fellers to board of directors

Common Sense Institute (CSI) Iowa announced the addition of Trent Fellers to its board of directors. With leadership experience spanning public affairs, technology, government and economic development, Fellers brings a unique perspective to the organization's mission of producing independent, data-driven research that helps shape better public policy and strengthen free enterprise in Iowa. Fellers currently serves on Google's Public Affairs team, where he leads regional community engagement and stakeholder relations across Iowa and Nebraska. His career has spanned leadership roles in both the public and private sectors, including government relations, state government, technology business development and elected office, giving him a broad perspective on the policies and partnerships that drive economic growth. ■

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

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Advice
from local
professionals



Do not ignore the warning signs of neuropathy

Early testing can identify underlying causes and help guide treatment before symptoms worsen.

Many people dismiss numbness, tingling, burning or pain in their feet as “just getting older.” Others simply learn to live with the discomfort because they believe nothing can be done. Unfortunately, waiting is often the worst decision someone with possible neuropathy can make.

Peripheral neuropathy is not a diagnosis itself; it is a sign that something is affecting your nerves. Diabetes is one of the most common causes, but neuropathy can also result from poor circulation, vitamin deficiencies, autoimmune conditions, medication side effects, spinal problems, alcohol use, chemotherapy and many other underlying issues. Because there are so many possible causes, the first and most important step is determining why the nerves are being affected.

That is where testing becomes critical.

A comprehensive neuropathy evaluation does not just confirm whether nerve damage is present. It can also provide valuable information about the severity of the condition and help identify factors that may be contributing to your symptoms. It also provides critical information about what therapies may be beneficial in reversing your neuropathy. This information allows your health care provider to recommend the most appropriate next steps rather than simply guessing or treating symptoms alone.

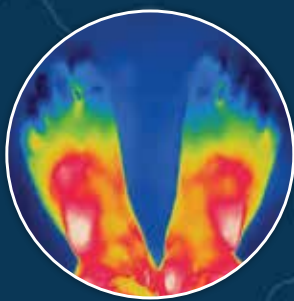
Early testing can also help prevent more serious complications. As neuropathy progresses, many people experience worsening numbness, poor balance, muscle weakness and a greater risk of falls. Others may lose the ability to feel cuts, blisters or pressure injuries on their feet, allowing small problems to become serious infections before they are even noticed.

Even if your symptoms seem mild or come and go, they deserve attention. Many people wish they had sought answers sooner rather than waiting until daily activities became difficult. The earlier an underlying problem is identified, the greater the opportunity to address contributing factors, support nerve health and develop a personalized treatment plan.

Perhaps most importantly, testing provides clarity. Instead of wondering what is causing your symptoms, or assuming they are simply part of aging, you gain objective information about your nerve health and can make informed decisions about your care.

If you have noticed numbness, tingling, burning, pain or changes in your balance, do not ignore the warning signs. Your nerves are sending you a message, and they deserve to be evaluated. A thorough assessment today could help protect your mobility, independence and quality of life for years to come. ■

Information provided by Dr. Ole J. Olson, D.C., Board Certified in Neuropathy and Chronic Pain Syndromes, Asuta Health, 210 N.E. Delaware Ave., Suite 110, Ankeny, www.AustaHealth.org.



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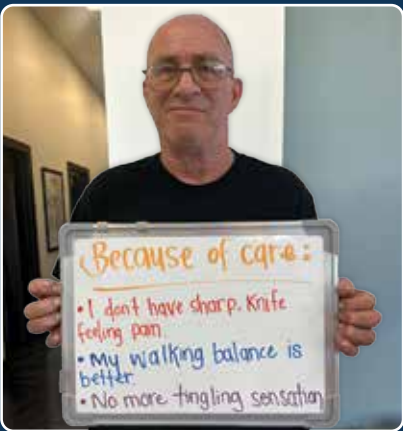
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- ✓ Pain, numbness, and tingling in hands/feet.
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- ✓ Increased sensitivity to touch.

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- ✓ Sudden Urgency
- ✓ Leakage
- ✓ Frequency



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The quiet crackdown on hemp

A federal ban threatens full-spectrum CBD and hemp products — unless consumers and lawmakers push back now. In 2018, Congress legalized hemp nationwide, creating a booming industry that now supports farmers, manufacturers, retailers and millions of consumers.

But in November 2025, language was quietly added to a federal spending bill that dramatically changed the definition of legal hemp. Unless Congress acts, the new law will impose a 0.4 milligram total THC limit per entire container, not per serving, beginning this November. That threshold is so low that it doesn't just threaten intoxicating products; many full-spectrum CBD products naturally contain trace amounts of THC and could also be pushed out of the legal hemp market. This includes all THC beverages, edibles and liquids.

Where are we now? There is finally movement in Washington. Lawmakers from both parties have introduced proposals that would delay or replace the ban with sensible federal regulations, including age restrictions, testing, labeling and packaging requirements. In July 2026, the Senate approved a temporary funding bill delaying implementation for most hemp products until Dec. 11. The House still needs to approve it.

Hemp needs regulation, not prohibition. Cannabis-based products pale in comparison to other intoxicants regulated and taxed today, such as alcohol and tobacco, when it comes to addiction, death and danger. Consumers deserve safe, tested products, and responsible businesses deserve clear rules to operate under.

How can you help? Contact your U.S. senators and representatives. Tell them you support common-sense regulation of hemp and ask them to protect access to federally legal hemp-derived products. ■

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.

Beyond the score: How MVX+ is interpreted matters

Forecasting vs. correcting: How a second look at your metabolic blood test could unlock a higher quality of life.

A blood test is only as useful as what is done with the result. That's especially true for MVX+ (Metabolic Vulnerability Index), a newer NMR (nuclear magnetic resonance)-based test that scores your combined metabolic, nutritional and inflammatory health on a single scale.

In its original clinical use, MVX+ was designed as a risk-stratification tool — a way to estimate a patient's statistical odds of survival over the coming years, particularly in people already managing chronic conditions like heart or kidney disease. Used this way, the number becomes a prognosis: useful for triage, but not necessarily a roadmap for change.

MVX+ can be used differently, as a tool for tracking and improving health, not just forecasting it. This approach was pioneered by Dr. Darren Schmidt. In this model, each of the six underlying markers becomes a clue: is inflammation being driven by hidden infection, gut trouble or diet? Is nutritional deficiency the problem? The score isn't a life-expectancy estimate — it is a starting point for targeted, personalized intervention that improves your quality of life.

That distinction — forecasting versus correcting — is why the same test can mean very different things depending on who's reading it and what they're trained to do with the numbers. If you already have your MVX+ results, it may be worth getting a second read from someone trained in the corrective approach rather than risk-stratification. ■

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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KEY FACTORS:

- ◆ Toxicity load and immune challenges
- ◆ B1 (thiamine) deficiency
- ◆ Protein deficiency
- ◆ Excessive carbohydrate intake patterns
- ◆ Mitochondrial dysfunction
- ◆ Cellular energy decline
- ◆ Predictive markers for lifespan and longevity.

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Balance your plate with produce, protein and whole grains

(Feature Impact) Making health-conscious decisions with your at-home menu doesn't have to be complicated, but it does require commitment and a little more foresight at the grocery store. Simple adjustments to overall eating patterns, like building your plate around produce, powerful proteins and whole grains, can encourage better health.

Nutritious meal-planning can be easy, affordable and delicious – and it all starts with a little balance. Consider this advice from the American Heart Association's Healthy for Good initiative, nationally sponsored by the Egg Nutrition Center, to adequately round out a healthy plate.

FILL HALF YOUR PLATE WITH FRUITS AND VEGGIES

Loaded with nutrients, fresh produce is a perfect place to start each plate. Fill about half your plate with combinations of bananas, strawberries, blueberries, sweet potatoes, peas, carrots and more of your favorites. To boost variety with each meal, look for fruit and veggie blends or step out of your usual routine and try something new.

Grocery tip: Frozen fruits and veggies are often cheaper and just as delicious as their fresh counterparts. It's frozen right after it's picked,

locking in freshness for a longer shelf life. Just be sure to avoid products with added salt or sugar.

CARVE OUT A QUARTER OF THE PLATE FOR POWERFUL PROTEINS

Healthy food isn't just fuel. It should be easy and nourish you, too. Look for versatile solutions that provide a protein power-up like skinless chicken breast, no-salt-added beans, low-sodium tuna, tofu or eggs.

High-quality protein from foods, along with a balanced diet and regular exercise, can help support the muscles in your body. Eggs are an example, along with lean animal protein and some plant-based proteins. According to the American Heart Association's guidelines, healthy people can include up to one whole egg daily, and up to seven per week, as part of a heart-healthy diet. For older adults with normal cholesterol, two eggs per day is acceptable.

Eggs deliver both protein and choline, nutrients that help support growing brains and bodies, especially early in life. In fact, many Americans don't get enough choline, a critical nutrient for supporting brain development, memory and mood.

Grocery tip: Stock up on proteins that offer both versatility and affordability, helping you cook

multiple meals per week without putting a dent in your wallet. Eggs are a perfect example as they can be used at any meal, not just breakfast – try them in wraps or omelets in the morning, hard-boil them to go with a lunchtime salad or add to a frittata at dinner.

SAVE A CORNER FOR WHOLE GRAINS

Finally, fill that last quarter of the plate with ready-to-go whole grains, many of which provide dietary fiber that can support a healthy heart and healthy digestion. Conversely, most refined grains contain little or no fiber.

Examples of whole grains include barley, brown rice, corn, oatmeal, rolled or steel-cut oats, popcorn, quinoa, sorghum and wild rice, along with products labeled "whole grain" or "whole wheat" like bread or pasta.

Grocery tip: Look for whole grains that can make mealtime a cinch. Corn tortillas, instant oats and even popcorn can help you create nutritious plates and better-for-you snacks with the snap of your fingers. Try keeping packets of pre-cooked brown rice on hand to bulk up favorite dishes or toss with leftovers to round out a healthy plate.

Visit [Heart.org](https://heart.org) to discover more nutrition guidance for heart-healthy meals. ■

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Fall ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT Guide

Plan your fall calendar now with our listings of hundreds of local activities related to art, stage, live music, sports and events.

By Cyote Williams

This month we begin trading the corn sweat, swimming pools, tank tops and shorts for crunchy leaves, crisp air, hoodies and blue jeans. What us central Iowans are fortunate we don't have to trade in are the events we have the opportunities to go to.

The weather changes, but so do the themes of the events we have the pleasure of attending. Art exhibits still cycle through renowned artwork. One community even revived its art festival. Concert venues still schedule rockers, rappers, pop stars and

country singers. Our high-quality theaters and performers say, "The show must go on!" and continue bringing us excellent performances. We trade I-Cubs bats for Iowa Wolves basketballs and Iowa Wild hockey pucks, and the Buc doesn't stop there with local sports.

If that wasn't enough, there are still plenty of festivals, conventions, block parties and more to fill up your evenings and weekends. Look for the details right here in our Fall Arts and Entertainment guide.

Two competitors from Joust Evolution are part of the long list of entertainment The Des Moines Renaissance Faire at Sleepy Hollow. Photo by Bryan Butcher with Dreamsenses Photography

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Art

DES MOINES ART CENTER

4700 Grand Ave., Des Moines
desmoinesartcenter.org

- Current and upcoming exhibits
- Through Sept. 20: “Topographies. Mapping Being and Belonging” by Sky Hopinka
- Through Nov. 29: “La Despedida” by Elle Pérez
- Sept. 5 through Jan. 10: “Artists on Fire” by Todd Hido
- Sept. 10 through Dec. 6: “La Défense” by Valentin Noujaïm

OLSON-LARSEN GALLERIES

542 Fifth St., West Des Moines
olsonlarsen.com

- Current and upcoming exhibits
- Through Sept. 26: “In The Abstract”
- Through Sept. 25: “John Preston Mini Solo”



A previous First Fridays event. Photo courtesy of Mainframe Studios

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ANDERSON GALLERY

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

Upcoming exhibits

- Sept. 10 through Oct. 18: “(Not) At Home.” Featuring the work of Katie Garth, Lois Harada, Tom Jones, Sean Morrissey and Henry Payer.
- Nov. 5 through Dec. 18: Exhibition curated by Dr. Crasnow’s Curatorial Seminar. Featuring artists from Mainframe Studios.

MAINFRAME STUDIOS

900 Keosauqua Way, Des Moines
mainframestudios.org

Mainframe Studios hosts “First Fridays” every first Friday of the month, featuring a changing theme, with the artist’s works on display alongside live music and food.

First Fridays

- Sept. 4: Fashion Forward
- Oct. 2: Steam
- Nov. 6: Black Art and Culture
- Dec. 4: Clay

MOBERG GALLERY

2411 Grand Ave., Des Moines
moberggallery.com

Upcoming exhibits

- Through Feb. 28: Edgard Camacho

POLK COUNTY HERITAGE GALLERY

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

Upcoming exhibits

- Through Sept. 24: “The Friday Group”
- Sept. 30 through Nov. 4: “By The Blade: Defining Collage”

ANKENY ART CENTER

1520 S.W. Ordinance Road, Ankeny
ankenyardcenter.org

Upcoming exhibits

- Through Sept. 22: Ankeny Quilters Guild and Anna Drake
- Oct. 1 through Nov. 24: Group Show featuring Lindsey Harrison, Kate Chandler, Chase Lilleholm and John Shymanski
- Dec. 4 through Jan. 26: Member Show

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 West Des Moines
 11am–2pm

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General Admission: FREE

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FINGERMAN LECTURE WITH ALISON SAAR

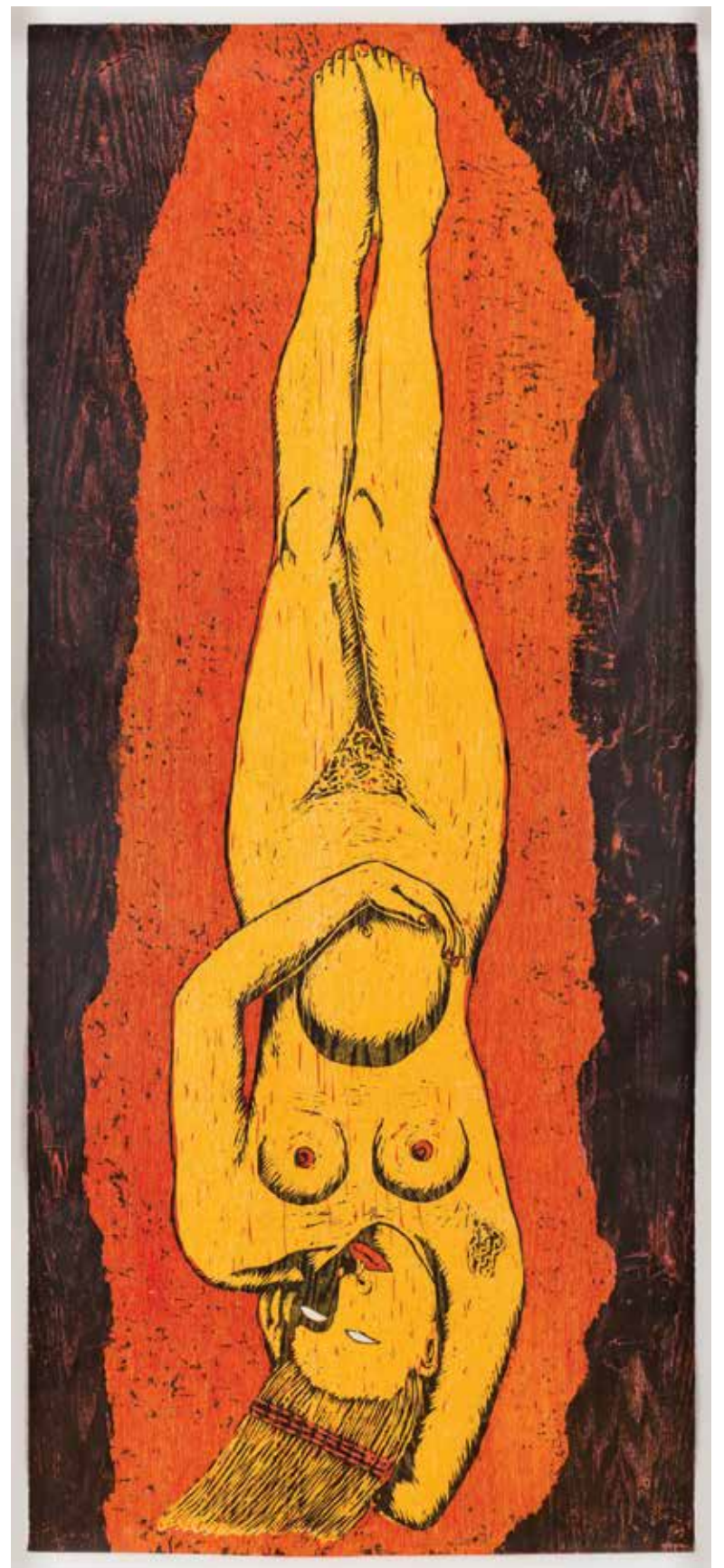


Self portrait by Alison Saar

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4 | 1:30 PM
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Alison Saar's work examines the place of the female body in the realms of politics and spirituality. She explores Black female identity, and the powerful, multifaceted roles women play — from everyday life to timeless, legendary figures.

The Fingerman Lecture series is made possible through generous gifts by Lois and the late Dr. Louis Fingerman. Saar represents the 36th installment in the series.



Alison Saar (American, born 1956). **Sweeping Beauty** 1997.
Color woodcut on paper. Des Moines Art Center's Louise Noun
Collection of Art by Women through Bequest, 2003.346.

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"Wicked" will be performing at the Civic Center through Sept. 20. Photo by Joan Marcus

STAGE

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120 Abraham Drive, Ames

actorsinc.org

Season 71: A Guide to Resilience, Humor, and Absurdity

- Sept. 10-12, 17-20: "Come From Away"
- Oct. 28-31, Nov. 6-8: "Evil Dead The Musical"

ANKENY COMMUNITY THEATRE

1932 S.W. Third St., Ankeny

ankenycommunitytheatre.com

- Sept. 25 through Oct. 4: "Clue"
- Dec. 4-13: "A Wonderful Life"

CLASS ACT PRODUCTIONS

201 First Ave. S., Altoona

captheatre.org

- Oct. 2-4: CAP Radio Hour: "Poe's Dark Tales"
- Nov. 5-8, 13-15, 20-22: "Something Rotten! JR."

DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS

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

dmpa.org

- Through Sept 20: "Wicked"
- Oct. 3: "Bluebird Improv"
- Oct. 6-11: "Hold On To Your Butts"
- Oct. 11: "The Best of Steve Martin and Martin Short"
- Oct. 17: "Velveteen, A New Musical"
- Oct. 20-25: "Spamalot"
- Oct. 27: "Ailey II"
- Nov. 4: "Wild Wolves of Yellowstone. National Geographic Live"
- Nov. 6: "Fraggle Rock: Back to the Rock Live"
- Dec. 1-6: "Maybe Happy Ending"
- Dec. 18-20: "Waitress"
- Dec. 21: "Mannheim Steamroller Christmas"

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A previous performance of "Gutenberg! The Musical!" by About Time Theatre Company. Photo by Silas Pippett

DES MOINES COMMUNITY PLAYHOUSE

831 42nd St., Des Moines

dmplayhouse.com

- Sept. 11 through Oct. 4: "Come From Away"
- Oct. 27: "Final Act Ensemble: Halloween Show"
- Dec. 4-27: "Annie"

IOWA STAGE THEATRE COMPANY

Stoner Theatre, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines

iowastage.org

- Oct. 2-11: "Reefer Madness"
- Dec. 11-20: "A Christmas Carol"

TALLGRASS THEATRE COMPANY

2019 Grand Ave., Suite 100, West Des Moines

tallgrasstheatre.org

- Sept. 12 to Sept. 28: "Blithe Spirit"
- Nov. 7 to Nov. 23: "The Boxcar Children"
- Dec. 19-21: "The A Sisters and Friends at The Velvet Lounge"

ABOUT TIME THEATRE COMPANY

2019 Grand Ave., Suite 100, West Des Moines

www.abouttimetheatre.com

- Oct. 2-11: "Building the Wall"

CAROUSEL THEATRE COMPANY

117 E. Salem Ave., Indianola

www.carouseltheatre.org

- Sept. 10-13: "110 Stories"

DES MOINES YOUNG ARTISTS' THEATRE

4801 Franklin Ave., Suite 1166, Des Moines

www.dmyat.org

- Oct. 23 through Nov. 1: "The Addams Family: School Edition"

TALLGRASS THEATRE COMPANY

2019 Grand Ave., Suite 100, West Des Moines

tallgrasstheatre.org

- Sept. 11-27: "She Kills Monsters: Young Adventurers Edition"
- Nov. 6-22: "POTUS or, Behind Every Great Dumbass Are Seven Women Trying to Keep Him Alive"

CASEY'S CENTER

223 Center St., Des Moines

www.iowaeventscenter.com/caseys-center

- Nov. 26-29: "Disney On Ice Presents Find Your Hero"



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Live music

DES MOINES CIVIC CENTER

221 Walnut St., Des Moines
dmpa.org

- Sept. 17: Made in the Midwest: Dickie
- Oct. 2: Live at the Temple: Alysha Brilla
- Oct. 15: Made in the Midwest: Tae and The Neighborly
- Oct. 23: Live at the Temple: Oh He Dead
- Nov. 7: Made in the Midwest: Nola Jazz Band Quartet
- Nov. 14: Made in the Midwest: GreenTTea and The Tempos
- Nov. 21: Live at the Temple: Mama Said String Band
- Dec. 3: Made in the Midwest: MoonShrom



A performance by the Central Iowa Wind Ensemble. Photo by Brian Kinnan, courtesy of CIWE

DES MOINES SYMPHONY

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

- Sept. 26-27: Season Debut. Unity - American Mosaic and West Side Story
- Oct. 31, Nov. 1: Beautiful Monsters - John Williams and Symphonie Fantastique
- Nov. 21-22: Renewal - Four Seasons and Bolero
- Dec. 31: New Year's Eve Pops: Cirque - Symphonic Cinema

CASEY'S CENTER

Casey's Center, 223 Center St., Des Moines
www.iowaeventscenr.com/caseys-center

- Oct. 8: Zach Top "Cold Beer and Country Music Fall Tour at 8 p.m.
- Oct. 22: Thomas Rhett at 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 29: Ella Langley: The Dandelion Tour at 7 p.m.
- Nov. 20: Zac Brown Band Love and Fear at 7 p.m.

CENTRAL IOWA WIND ENSEMBLE

Staplin Performing Arts Center, 3650 Woodland Ave., West Des Moines
www.ciwe.org

- Oct. 11: Under the Big Top
- Dec. 11: Memories, Music and Mistletoe

HOYT SHERMAN PLACE

1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines
hoytsheermon.org

- Sept. 10: Tig Notaro: Out of Nowhere at 7 p.m.
- Sept. 11: Jefferson Starship Runaway Again Tour at 8 p.m.
- Sept. 13: Hoyt Sherman Place Celebrates 250th Anniversary

of American Independence at 1 p.m.

- Sept. 18: Whose Live Anyway? at 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 20: John Crist Live! at 7 p.m.
- Sept. 29: Tell It Like It Is: Iowa Storytellers Project "Voyages" at 7 p.m.
- Oct. 2: Lauren Alaina: The Stages Tour 2026 at 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 5: Bruce Hornsby and The Noisemakers at 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 7: Jim Henson's Labyrinth: In Concert 40th Anniversary at 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 9: Leonid and Friends at 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 13: Snarky Puppy at 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 15: Becky Robinson: The Beasts In Me Tour at 8 p.m.
- Oct. 16: Big Head Todd and the Monsters at 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 17: The Black Jacket Symphony Presents Bon Jovi's "Slippery When Wet" at 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 27: Ben Folds and A Piano at 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 1: Daughtry - 20 Years Unplugged Tour at 7 p.m.
- Nov. 6: Justin Willman: One for the Ages Tour at 7 p.m.
- Nov. 7: Gary Owen: No Hard Feelings Tour at 8 p.m.
- Nov. 8: Micky Dolenz - 60 YEARS OF THE MONKEES at 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 10: Everclear - Lucky 7 Tour at 7 p.m.
- Nov. 12: Scott Bradlee's Postmodern Jukebox at 8 p.m.
- Nov. 13: Larry Fleet at 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 14: Derrick Stroup: Running Hot Tour at 7 and 9:30 p.m.
- Nov. 16: A Motown Christmas at 7 p.m.
- Nov. 17: Andy Grammer - Greater Than Pt. II: A One Man Show at 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 20: Stayin' Alive: One Night of the Bee Gees at 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 21: Kenny G at 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 22: Shaun Cassidy - Unwrapped at 8 p.m.
- Dec. 1: A Drag Queen Christmas at 7:30 p.m.
- Dec. 4: Dusty Slay: The Neighborhood Guy at 7 p.m.

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- Sept. 4: It's A 2000's Party: Waukee at 9 p.m.
- Sept. 5: 38 Special: 50 Year Legacy Tour at 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 18: Night Ranger at 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 20: Polyphia Tour MMXXVI at 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 25: Studio One Presents: Bleachers Forever at 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 27: Highly Suspect & Yelawolf - The War Within Tour at 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 2: Clint Black: Back On The Blacktop Tour at 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 3: Tucker Wetmore: The Brunette World Tour at 6:30 p.m.
- Oct. 7: Rise Against: Ricochet 2026 at 7 p.m.
- Oct. 9: Taste Of Chaos at 5 p.m.
- Oct. 14: gymclassheroes. & Lupe Fiasco - Back To Basics Tour at 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 18: BEAT: Belew/Vai/Levin/Bozzio Performing the Music of KING CRIMSON at 8 p.m.
- Oct. 24: Kansas at 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 30: Aries Spears at 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 5: Rodney Carrington at 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 14: Alicia Villarreal - Bendita Locura Tour 2026 at 8 p.m.
- Nov. 25: Sabaton: Legends on Tour at 7 p.m.

WOOLY'S

504 E. Locust St., Des Moines

firstfleetconcerts.com/first-fleet-venues/woolys

- Sept. 3: Ugly Kid Joe at 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 4: Lakeview at 7 p.m.
- Sept. 6: Agarron De Bandas at 9:30 p.m.
- Sept. 10: Lily Rose at 7 p.m.
- Sept. 11: All Shall Perish at 7 p.m.
- Sept. 12: GURNFEST X at 6 p.m.
- Sept. 13: Pokey LaFarge at 8 p.m.

- Sept. 14: Lil Skies at 7 p.m.
- Sept. 18: Ensiferum at 7 p.m.
- Sept. 19: Blade Rave at 9 p.m.
- Sept. 21: Saxsquatch at 8 p.m.
- Sept. 23: Icon For Hire at 7 p.m.
- Sept. 24: Gogol Bordello at 7 p.m.
- Sept. 25: Hemlock at 6:30 p.m.
- Sept. 26: Tanner Usrey at 7 p.m.
- Sept. 27: Alana Springsteen at 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 29: Ripe at 8 p.m.
- Sept. 30: Mon Rovia - Bloodline Tour at 7 p.m.
- Oct. 1: Jervis Campbell at 7 p.m.
- Oct. 2: Obsession Rave at 9 p.m.
- Oct. 3: Saturn Ascends at 8 p.m.
- Oct. 5: Kylie Morgan at 7 p.m.
- Oct. 8: The Ultimate Doors - A Tribute to the Doors at 8 p.m.
- Oct. 9: The Urge at 8 p.m.
- Oct. 10: The Haunt at 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 11: Roger Clyne & The Peacemakers at 7 p.m.
- Oct. 13: PeelingFlesh at 6:30 p.m.
- Oct. 15: An Evening With Geordie Greep at 7 p.m.
- Oct. 16: Danielle Nicole at 7 p.m.
- Oct. 17: Daft Disko at 9 p.m.
- Oct. 22: "Business In The Front, Party In The Back" Tour with TVBOO at 8 p.m.
- Oct. 24: Twiztid at 7 p.m.
- Oct. 25: Drowning Pool x Saliva at 7 p.m.
- Oct. 28: All Them Witches at 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 29: Spite at 7 p.m.
- Oct. 31: Winyah at 8 p.m.
- Nov. 1: Brother Ali at 7 p.m.
- Nov. 4: Pigeons Playing Ping Pong at 7 p.m.
- Nov. 7: Colby Acuff at 7 p.m.
- Nov. 10: Kurt Vile + The Violators at 7 p.m.
- Nov. 13: Boogie T at 8 p.m.
- Nov. 18: Tropidelic at 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 29: HARBOUR at 7 p.m.

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nocedsm.com

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www.localsdsm.com

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Lauridsen Amphitheater, 2251 George Flagg Parkway
dsmwaterworkspark.com

XBK

1159 24th St., Des Moines
xbklive.com

TEMPLE THEATRE

1011 Locust St., Des Moines
desmoinesperformingarts.org/venues/temple-theater

HORIZON EVENTS CENTER

2100 N.W. 100th St., Clive
horizoneventscenter.com

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calendar.drake.edu/sheslow_auditorium

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We've grown! Now three blocks long and more vendors.

PRESENTED BY  Google Fiber

VALLEY JUNCTION

VENDORS | VINTAGE

THRIFTED | FOOD TRUCKS

& HANDMADE

Sunday, Sept. 13 | 10am-4pm

A vendor show highlighting vintage home decor & clothing, unique thrifted finds, and local handmade items from Iowa business owners. 70+ vendors and food trucks.

Gallery Night

Friday, Oct. 9 | 5-8pm

Valley Junction's galleries showcase new artwork by regional, national, and international artists. For 2026 only - **Experience Vivid Junction: Off the Rails**, an unveiling of five murals and a meet & greet with the artists.



Every Thursday evening! 5-8:30pm

See our website for the full list!

9/3 | Bittersweet Nation
9/10 | Cedar Falls Rock & Roll Revue
9/17 | Gut Feeling
9/24 | Jason Wells Band

PRESENTED BY 

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

Yoga in the Park

Sept. 12, Oct. 10 | 9-10am

Pumpkin Walk

Sunday, Oct. 25 | 2-5pm

Jingle in the Junction

Nov. 19, Dec. 3, 10 & 17 | 5-8pm

Join us in The Junction! Join us in The Junction! Join us in The Junction! Join us in The Junction! Join us in The Junction! Join us in The Junction! Join us in The Junction!



HISTORIC VALLEY JUNCTION FOUNDATION

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

valleyjunction.com



HistoricValleyJunction



@valleyjunction

Sports

COLLEGE HOOPS AT THE CASEY'S CENTER DEC. 21

730 Third St., Des Moines

www.iowaeventscenter.com/events/detail/iowa-hawkeyes-vs.-alabama-crimson-tide

The Iowa Hawkeyes men's basketball team ditches Carver Arena for a neutral-site game at the Casey's Center against Alabama.

IOWA WOLVES

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

iowa.gleague.nba.com

Scan this code for the Iowa Wolves schedule once it is released



IOWA WILD

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

iowawild.com

Home games:

- Oct. 9: vs. Rockford IceHogs at 7 p.m.
- Oct. 10: vs. Rockford IceHogs at 6 p.m.
- Oct. 21: vs. Milwaukee Admirals at 7 p.m.
- Oct. 23: vs. Manitoba Moose at 7 p.m.
- Oct. 24: vs. Manitoba Moose at 6 p.m.
- Oct. 30: vs. Charlotte Checkers at 7 p.m.
- Nov. 1: vs. Charlotte Checkers at 3 p.m.
- Nov. 5: vs. Rockford IceHogs at 10:30 a.m.
- Nov. 13: vs. Grand Rapids Griffins at 7 p.m.
- Nov. 14: vs. Grand Rapids Griffins at 6 p.m.
- Dec. 1: vs. Chicago Wolves at 7 p.m.
- Dec. 5: vs. Grand Rapids Griffins at 6 p.m.
- Dec. 6: vs. Grand Rapids Griffins at 3 p.m.
- Dec. 9: vs. Milwaukee Admirals at 7 p.m.
- Dec. 18: vs. Lehigh Valley Phantoms at 7 p.m.
- Dec. 19: vs. Lehigh Valley Phantoms at 6 p.m.
- Dec. 29: vs. Texas Stars at 6 p.m.
- Dec. 31: vs. Texas Stars at 6 p.m.

IOWA CUBS

Principal Park, 1 Line Drive, Des Moines

iowacubs.com

- 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



Photo by Tim Garland, courtesy of the Iowa Wild

IOWA STATE FOOTBALL

Jack Trice Stadium, 1732 S. Fourth St., Ames
cyclones.com

Home games:

- Sept. 5 vs. Southeast Missouri at 12 p.m.
- Sept. 19 vs. Bowling Green at 11 a.m.
- Sept 26 vs. Utah
- Oct. 3 vs. West Virginia
- Oct. 31 vs. Oklahoma State
- Nov. 14 vs. Cincinnati
- Nov. 28 vs. Kansas State

IOWA STATE BASKETBALL

Hilton Coliseum, 1705 Center Drive, Ames
cyclones.com

Men: Non-conference home games (times TBA):

- Nov. 6: vs. Southern Miss
- Nov. 10: vs. Southern
- Nov. 15: vs. Niagara
- Dec. 2: vs. Alcorn State
- Dec. 6: vs. Purdue
- Dec. 13: vs. North Carolina Central
- Dec. 21: vs. Northern Arizona
- Dec. 29: vs. New Hampshire

Big 12 home games (dates and times TBA):

- Kansas, Oklahoma State, West Virginia, Arizona, BYU, Cincinnati, Kansas State, TCU and Utah

Women:

Dates and times TBA, scan this code



DRAKE FOOTBALL

2719 Forest Ave., Des Moines
godrakebulldogs.com

- Oct. 3 vs. Dayton at 12 p.m.
- Oct. 17 vs. Marist at 12 p.m.
- Oct. 24 vs. Butler at 12 p.m.
- Nov. 7 vs. San Diego at 12 p.m.

DRAKE BASKETBALL

Knapp Center, 2601 Forest Ave., Des Moines
godrakebulldogs.com

Men's home games

Dates and times TBA scan this code



Women's home games

Dates and times TBA scan this code





Former Iowa Wolves player Tristen Newton. Photo by Jasey Michelle

DES MOINES BUCCANEERS

MidAmerican Energy RecPlex, 6500 Grand Ave., West Des Moines
bucshockey.com

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

Home games:

- Sept. 17 vs. Youngstown Phantoms at 12 p.m.
- Oct. 2 vs. Omaha Lancers at 7:05 p.m.
- Oct. 3 vs. Tri-City Storm at 6:05 p.m.
- Oct. 10 vs. Lincoln Stars at 6:05 p.m.
- Oct. 16 vs. Waterloo Black Hawks at 7:05 p.m.
- Oct. 30 vs. Youngstown Phantoms at 7:05 p.m.
- Oct. 31 vs. Youngstown Phantoms at 6:05 p.m.
- Nov. 13 vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints at 7:05 p.m.
- Nov. 20 vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks at 7:05 p.m.
- Nov. 21 vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks at 6:35 p.m.
- Nov. 27 vs. Chicago Steel at 7:05 p.m.
- Nov. 28 vs. Chicago Steel at 6:35 p.m.
- Dec. 4 vs. Cedar Rapids RoughRiders at 7:05 p.m.
- Dec. 15 vs. Cedar Rapids RoughRiders at 7:05 p.m.



WEDDING COLLECTIVE

V E N D O R L I S T

Planning your big day? These local pros are ready to help every step of the way. Reach out and let them help make your celebration one to remember.

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515-255-2253 | www.thebakeshoppe.org

CHACHA'S HILAND BAKERY

515-282-4059 | www.chachashilandbakery.com

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515-523-0147 | www.curatedsm.com

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Interested in learning more?

Contact Aaron Burns
515-953-4722 x 330
or scan to email Aaron



CITYVIEW

IOWA
Living
MAGAZINES

Events

SEPTEMBER

- **SEPTEMBER THROUGH OCTOBER: Des Moines Farmers Market.** Located in the Historic Court District, Iowa's largest farmers' market will cater to all of the local fall cravings every Saturday morning. dsmpartnership.com/desmoinesfarmersmarket
- **SEPT. 1-30: Country Celebration at Center Grove Orchard.** The orchard is celebrating all month long with horse-drawn wagons, rope making, corn shelling and more. 32835 610th Ave., Cambridge
- **SEPT. 3-5: Taste of the Junction Multicultural Festival.** Fun for the whole family includes face and mural painting, inflatables, crafts, food, and live music and street performances. Railroad Park Music Pavilion, 425 Railroad Place, Valley Junction, West Des Moines; www.facebook.com/tasteofthejunction
- **SEPT. 4-7: Labor Day Weekend Patio Fest.** Confluence Brewing Company hosts several musicians throughout the weekend, featuring the brewery's own beer garden. Confluence Brewing Company, 1235 Thomas Beck Road, Des Moines; www.confluencebrewing.com
- **SEPT. 5-6, 12-13, 19-20: The Renaissance Faire at Sleepy Hollow.** Immerse yourself in the days of olde with performances from jousting, acrobats, fire breathing and more. Each week has a theme: Viking Invasion, Magic and Mischief and Party Like a Pirate. Sleepy Hollow Sports Park, 4051 Dean Ave., Des Moines; www.sleepyhollowrenfaire.com (same as cover)
- **SEPT. 10, 17, 24: Confluence Brewing Summer Concert Series.** Free to attend, with Kevin Presbey, Jake Schrodt and Matt Cox performing in that order. Confluence Brewing Company, 1235 Thomas Beck Road, Des Moines; www.confluencebrewing.com
- **SEPT. 10, 17, 24: Music in the Junction.** Sept. 10 is Cedar Falls Rock and Roll Revue. Sept. 17 is Gut Feeling. Sept. 24 is Jason Wells Band. Historic Valley Junction, 100 to 300 Block of Fifth Street and Railroad Park; valleyjunction.com/events
- **SEPT. 11-13: GalaxyCon.** A three-day festival of fandom. Celebrities, artists, writers, voice actors, cosplayers and so many more descend onto Des Moines to display fandoms from all over the galaxy. Iowa Events Center, 730 Third St., Des Moines; galaxycon.com/pages/galaxycon-des-moines.
- **SEPT 11-13: Wauketoberfest.** Bake-offs, brat tosses, dachshund dashes, food of the German variety and ice-cold brews. Downtown Waukee Triangle, Ashworth Drive and Sixth Street; www.waukeehistory.org
- **SEPT. 12: Touchdown Tailgate.** The Civic Center once again hosts its Cy-Hawk watch party, complete with jumbotron TV, food and drink vendors present at Cowles Commons, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines; www.desmoinesperformingarts.org/events/touchdown-tailgate



Photo courtesy of GalaxyCon



Photo courtesy of Des Moines Civic Center

THE LUCKY GAL TIMES

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Voting for CityView's 2027 Best of Des Moines opens Sept 1.



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15 years of Lucky Gal and they would like to express their gratitude and love to the wonderful customers and artists that have helped make them the shop they are today. Help keep the tradition alive. Vote Today!

**FOUR LOCATIONS ACROSS
THE DES MOINES AREA**

SOUTHSIDE DSM

3104 SW 9th St right next to
Monsterama Pubcade

CLIVE 1800 SW 85th St.

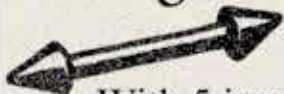
WAUKEE Located on
505 E Hickman Rd

ANKENY

1550 N ANKENY BLVD

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- **SEPT. 12-13, 19-20, 26-27: Apple and Pumpkin Festival.** There is plenty for the kids to enjoy with corn pools, spider webs, duck races and corn mazes, plus fresh apple- and pumpkin-related food ready to be taken home and enjoyed. From 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday and noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday at Wills Family Orchard, 33130 Panther Creek Road, Adel; www.willsfamilyorchard.com/apple-and-pumpkin-fest/
- **SEPT. 13: PorchFest.** 20 acts this year will perform on the front porches of residents in Union Park. This free event brings people into one of Des Moines oldest neighborhoods for 45-minute-long sets on various porches. A map of the performances can be found on their website. Union Park, 2009 Saylor Road, Des Moines; www.porchfestdsm.org
- **SEPT. 13: 2026 Des Moines Concours d'Elegance.** This is the premier automotive exhibition in Des Moines. The vehicles on display are vintage and classic, celebrating the fine art, design and innovation of motor vehicles through the years. John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park, Western Gateway Park, 1330 Grand Ave., Des Moines; www.desmoinesconcours.com
- **SEPT. 16: Pickle for a Purpose.** Pickleball tournament to help support Dorothy's House, an organization that supports survivors of human trafficking in Iowa. Hickory Glen Park, 1000 S.E. 68th St., Pleasant Hill; www.dorothyshouse.org
- **SEPT. 18-19: Beaverdale Fall Festival.** One of Des Moines premier neighborhoods hosts its annual Fall Festival, complete with parade, car show, live music, food vendors and so much more. Beaver Avenue and Urbandale Avenue; www.fallfestival.org
- **SEPT. 19: Recovery Festival.** A community event that celebrates recovery and connects individuals and families with local resources and support services. There will also be live entertainment, speakers, food and more. 710 Corning Avenue, Des Moines; www.kingdomlivingia.com/festival
- **SEPT. 19: Fly Iowa Festival.** The first Fly Iowa event, hosted by the Iowa Aviation Promotion Group, designed to elevate the scale, scope and community impact of this festival. Pilots, educators, visits are all welcome. 3405 N. Eighth Ave., Winterset; lyiowa2026.com
- **SEPT. 19: Brenton Night Roll.** Skate to your favorite music and get groovy. 18-plus. Brenton Skating Plaza, 520 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines;
- **SEPT. 19: Adventureland's Oktoberfest.** Adventureland is normally prepared for family fun, but its Oktoberfest is 21-plus and prepared for a day of polka music, games, contests and, of course, rides. 3200 Adventureland Drive, Altoona; www.adventurelandresort.com/discover-adventureland-resort/oktoberfest
- **SEPT. 19: Hot Rods for Heroes.** All proceeds benefit the Blue Star Mothers of Iowa, who send care packages to Iowans serving in the military. Des Moines Area Community College, 2006 S. Ankeny Blvd., Ankeny; www.bluestarmothersofiowa.com

- **SEPT. 20: DSM Open Street Festival** on S.W. Ninth Street. The Friends of SW 9th invite the southside to enjoy community attractions with food, games, music and fun. 3305 S.W. Ninth St., Des Moines; www.friendsofsw9th.com
- **SEPT 20: Indianola Art Festival.** The Indianola Arts Commission is bringing back its annual Art Festival. The return year will feature 30 artists with various live entertainment including music, food and more. Buxton Park, 705 N. Buxton St, Indianola; indianolaiowa.gov/1065/Indianola-Art-Festival
- **SEPT. 20: Halfway to St. Pat's Charity Car Show.** The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick is holding a fundraising car show to benefit the St. Patrick's Day Parade. 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. Charlie's Filling Station, 305 Grand Ave., West Des Moines; www.friendlysonsiowa.com
- **SEPT 24-26: Des Moines Area Quilters Guild annual show.** Iowa State Fairgrounds 3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines; www.dmaqq.org
- **SEPT. 25 through NOV. 1: The Slaughterhouse Haunter House.** Enter at your own risk. 500 Locust St., Des Moines; slaughterhousedm.com
- **SEPT 25-26: Oktoberfest.** Two days, one big prost. Celebrate all of the traditional German style at the 22nd annual Oktoberfest. Go in traditional garb, or go as yourself, either way, have a beer. The District at Prairie Trail, Southwest District Drive, Ankeny; oktoberfestdsm.com
- **SEPT. 25-27: Iowa's Largest Arts and Crafts Show.** More than 250 exhibitors from seven different states present and sell the finest products that Midwesterners can craft. Iowa State Fairgrounds, East 30th Street and East University Avenue, Des Moines; www.iowastatefairgrounds.org/event-calendar/iowa
- **SEPT. 26: 2026 Iowa Outdoor Expo.** Whether you are looking to cast a line, do some skeet shooting, bow shooting, slingshot shooting, BB gun shooting, or see animal presentations, the Iowa Outdoor Expo has you covered. 4343 George Flagg Parkway, Des Moines; desmoines-ikes.com/tag/iowa-outdoor-expo/
- **SEPT. 26: Iowa State Armwrestling Championship.** \$30 entry fee. Start training now. Big Grove Brewery, 555 17th St., Des Moines; www.facebook.com/events/1272994067127516
- **SEPT. 26: Applefest.** The name speaks for itself. All things related to apples' history, like how past cooks prepared them, served them, or turned them into cider. Living History Farms, 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale; lhf.org
- **SEPT. 26: Wild Boar Challenge.** Not to worry, competitors are not trying to catch boars here but will try to catch their breath. Participants navigate hay bales, mud, barbed wire and more on this 5-mile trek. Wildwood Hills Ranch, 2552 Union Lane St., St. Charles; www.wildboarchallenge.org



Oktoberfest. Photo by Danny Carman

- **SEPT. 26: Log Cabin Days Festival.** The annual festival brings you in for a taste of Indianola's history. Warren County Fairgrounds, 1400 W. Second Ave., Indianola; warrencountyhistory.org/event/log-cabin-festival
- **SEPT. 26-27: Latino Heritage Festival.** This is the largest and longest-running Latino celebration in Iowa with two vibrant days of music, food, dance, art and coming together of various communities celebrates in Des Moines. Western Gateway Park, 100 Grand Ave., Des Moines; latinoheritagefestival.org

OCTOBER

- **RECURRING WEEKLY THROUGH NOVEMBER: The Haunting at Exile.** This pop-up includes both the upstairs dining room and beer hall spaces. Halloween-themed drinks, dishes and decor create a unique and memorable experience for anyone looking to enjoy the holiday. Exile Brewing Company, 1514 Walnut St., Des Moines; www.exilebrewing.com
- **WEEKENDS IN OCTOBER: Phantom Fall Festival.** Adventureland hosts its Phantom Fall Festival each weekend throughout October with an array of ghosts, ghouls, goblins and eerie attractions. 3200 Adventureland Drive, Altoona; www.adventurelandpark.com
- **OCT. 1 through NOV. 6: Pumpkin Fest.** Center Grove Orchard is packed with pumpkins following the harvest season, with fun on the farm during the day and night. Center Grove Orchard, 32835 610th Ave., Cambridge; www.centergroveorchard.com
- **OCT. 1-4: Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Presents: The Greatest Show on Earth.** The Ringling Bros. have reinvented themselves for the new generation of viewers, bringing a fast-paced, high-energy circus back to stardom. Casey's Center, 730 Third St., Des Moines; www.ringling.com
- **OCT. 2-4: Panda Fest.** After launching in 2024 with 13 events being wildly popular, this festival brings Asian street food, activities, market fairs and live entertainment. Outlets of Des Moines, 801 Bass Pro Drive, Suite 125, Altoona; www.pandafests.com
- **OCT. 3: Des Moines Whiskey Festival.** Access to premium and reserve-level whiskey, great for both the long-time enjoyers and the first-time tasters. Meridian Event, 7001 Westown Parkway, Suite 100, West Des Moines; www.dsmwhiskeyfest.com

- **OCT. 3: Downtown Des Moines End of Summer Block Party.** Food trucks, vendors, drinks, live music, games and plenty of community related fun to end the summer season. HubSpot 215 Water St., Des Moines; desmoinesdna.com
- **OCT. 3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25: Apple and Pumpkin Festival.** There is plenty for the kids to enjoy with corn pools, spider webs, duck races and corn mazes, plus fresh apple- and pumpkin-related food ready to be taken home and enjoyed. From 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday and noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday at Wills Family Orchard, 33130 Panther Creek Road, Adel; www.willsfamilyorchard.com/apple-and-pumpkin-fest
- **OCT. 4: Des Moines Super Hero Heart Run.** A run, and for some, a fly, to support Help-A-Heart and Heart Heroes. Raccoon River Park, 2500 Grand Ave., West Des Moines; heartheroes.org/superhero-heart-run
- **OCT. 10: Spooky Sprint - Des Moines.** A run that the whole family can enjoy with runs at most paces and fitness levels. Big Creek State Park, 8550 N.W. 142nd Ave., Polk City; runsignup.com/Race/IA/PolkCity/SpookySprintDesMoines
- **OCT. 10: Indigenous Iowans Day.** Explore the native cultures that have shaped our state. Living History Farms, 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale; www.lhf.org
- **OCT. 10: 2026 Walk to End Alzheimer's.** One Line Drive, Des Moines; act.alz.org/site/SPageServer?pagename=walk_homepage
- **OCT. 10-11: Madison County Covered Bridges Festival.** Experience the delightful sights that is Madison County's Covered Bridges with their annual festival celebrating their beauty and history with vendors and entertainment throughout the weekend. Starting at 9 a.m. in Winterset Square, Winterset; www.exploremadisoncounty.com
- **OCT. 11: Des Moines Jazz Hall of Fame Gala.** Guitarist Rod Leaverton and saxophonist Bryan Schumacker become the 53rd and 54th inductees to the CJC Des Moines Jazz Hall of Fame. Community Jazz Center of Greater Des Moines, 1326 Walnut, Des Moines; www.cjc-dsm.org
- **OCT. 16-18: Capital City Gaming Con.** A weekend full of fun and games held annually. Meet local vendors, attend events and make new friends, all while playing the hobby's best games. Hilton Garden Inn, 205 S. 64 St., West Des Moines; www.capitalcitygamingcon.com
- **OCT. 17: SCI's Big Blast:** This year's theme is Sprinkled with Stardust. This is the Science Center's annual fundraising event. Science Center of Iowa, 401 W Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway, Des Moines; www.sciowa.org
- **OCT. 17-18: Des Moines Lapidary Society 2026 Gem, Jewelry, Mineral and Fossil Show.** Iowa State Fairgrounds, 3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines; dmlapidary.org

- **OCT. 17-18: Great Iowa Pet Expo.** A trade show acts a mall for your pets, education from experts helps you care for them the best, and entertainment includes free contests, pet performances and more. 2100 N.W. 100th St., Clive; greatiowapetexpo.com
- **OCT. 18: IMT Des Moines Marathon.** This annual marathon has taken runners through Des Moines since 2002. 1001 Grand Ave., West Des Moines; desmoinesmarathon.com
- **OCT. 23-25: Family Halloween at Living History Farms.** A townful of treats for the area's tricksters. Living History Farms, 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale; lhf.org/event/halloween
- **OCT. 24: Ninth Annual Fall Festival.** Hosted by the Valerius Elementary School in Urbandale, there will be 40 vendors, games, train rides, face paint and more fun for the family. 3305 92nd St., Urbandale; www.facebook.com/VALFallFest

NOVEMBER

- **NOV. 6-8: Des Moines Holiday Boutique.** Gathering 200 businesses for the premier shopping event of the season, this showcase features exceptional, high-quality vendors displaying the newest trends in holiday gifts, jewelry, children's goods, gourmet delicacies, and more. EMC Expo Center, Iowa Events Center, 730 Fourth St., Des Moines; www.desmoinesholidayboutique.com
- **NOV. 7: 25th annual Red Tie Gala.** Help support the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Iowa. Prairie Meadows, 1 Prairie Meadows Drive, Altoona; www.rmhdsmoines.org
- **NOV. 7: Living History Farms race.** Race across the grounds and see 300 years of Iowa history in the process. Living History Farms, 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale; www.lhf.org
- **NOV. 7-9: Pumpkin Destruction.** Frustrated by pumpkin spiced everything? Take out some of those frustrations at this fun annual event that sends pumpkins flying, splattering and crumbling. Center Grove Orchard, 32835 610th Ave., Cambridge; www.centergroveorchard.com
- **NOV. 8: Girls on the Run 5K.** This helps supports an organization that helps girls recognize their potential. Principal Park, 1 Line Drive, Des Moines; www.gotrcentraliowa.org/5k
- **NOV. 26: Des Moines Turkey Trot.** Don't worry, you won't be running against real turkeys in this race. They would beat you to the finish line, anyway. Starting at 9 a.m. on Court Avenue, Des Moines; www.desmoines turkeytrot.com
- **NOV. 27: Winterset Festival of Lights.** Celebrate the start of the holiday season with a magical light display, live musical performances and a great selection of food and beverages. Santa makes an appearance, and "Elf" will show at the end of the night. From 5-8 p.m. at Winterset Courthouse, 112 S. John Wayne Drive, Winterset; www.madisoncounty.com/special-events



Des Moines Turkey Trot. Photo by Archi Trujillo

- **NOV. 27-29: 42nd annual Festival of Trees and Lights.** Designed to benefit Blank Children's Hospital, this event features beautifully adorned trees, local musical acts, dance ensembles and an appearance by Santa himself. Iowa Events Center, 833 Fifth Ave., Des Moines; www.unitypoint.org/giving/blank-childrens-hospital-foundation/ways-to-give/events/festival-of-trees-and-lights
- **NOV. 28: Christmas in Olde Town.** Downtown Altoona turns into a bustling winter wonderland. S.E. Second Street, Altoona; www.visitaltoona.com

DECEMBER

- **DEC. 3-6, 10-13: ChristkindlMarket.** More than 700 years of European culture, food, shopping and entertainment all in one, two-weekend festival. There are activities for kids, artisanal products to make for a great late Christmas present, and for the adults, Glühwein. Principal Park, 1 Line Drive, Des Moines; christkindlmarketdsm.com
- **DEC. 4: Light Up Polk City** from 6-8 p.m. in the Polk City town square; www.polkcityia.gov
- **DEC. 4: City of Clive Mayor's Tree Lighting.** Clive Public Library, 1900 N.W. 114th St., Clive; www.cityofclive.com/parkandrecreation
- **DEC. 5: Family Christmas at Living History Farms.** 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale; lhf.org
- **DEC. 11-12: Winter Solstice Market.** Holiday shopping all in one market, previously voted best holiday market in Iowa. 116 S. First Ave., Winterset Courthouse Square; madisoncounty.com/special-events
- **DEC. 12: Santa 5K run.** Santa's big jolly belly isn't known for exercise, but it is at this 5K. 521 E. Locust St., Des Moines; fleetfeet.com/s/desmoines
- **DEC. 12: Peppermint Trail.** Winter festival located along Ingersoll Avenue, Des Moines; theavenuesdsm.com/peppermint-trail
- **DEC. 5 through DEC. 28: Holiday Hullabaloo.** Experience a family-friendly holiday event with festivities and entertainment every weekend through the dates posted. Southridge Event Center, 1111 Army Post Road, Des Moines; www.holidayhullabaloo.com ■

A CITYVIEW PUBLICATION

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FALL 2026

COSMOPOLITANISM

How the whole world became Des Moines' dining room

From Mexican and Southeast Asian cuisine to Ethiopian, Turkish and Brazilian fare, Des Moines' dining scene has grown far beyond its traditional roots.

THE DISH

A wild 6 months

THE VALUE STALKER

Cattle rustlers, jealous girlfriends and loss leaders

DES MOINES BAR CRAWLS WITH A TWIST

From Irish pubs and craft cocktails to wine bars, arcades and dance floors, these metro stops prove a bar crawl does not have to mean racing toward last call.



A wild 6 months

By Jim Duncan

The last six months have been brutal for legacy restaurants and their fans. **LJ's Burger** on Second Avenue closed after 54 years.

Summerset Winery in Indianola closed after 40 years. Mariella Maya announced **Panka** was closing, then that it was not closing and finally that it was closing for real. Lynn Pritchard shut down **Table 128** for a second time.

Beans & Beignets served their last Nawlins treat. **Clyde's Fine Diner** shut down. **Hi Fi Brew Lounge** and **Twisted Vine Brewery** followed suit. The last **Pita Pit** location in the Des Moines metro area shut down.

Some sad news came with encouraging asterisks. **Francie's Bar and Grill** sold to new owners after 39 years with little change. **China Place** closed in Dogtown after 25 years, but it stayed in the family, remodeled and reopened as **Pho-Dee-Licious**. David Baruthio closed his French Café **Madeleine**, but his chef Karston Ausborn took over the property and reopened as **Cuvee**, featuring more of a Champagne lounge ambiance.

Legends In't Veld's and **Flying Mango** sold to employees who planned no major changes. Mango even added lunch service. Nic Gonwa sold **Motley School Tavern** to real estate agents Emily and Chao Lin, who made no changes.

Cedar Ridge winery and distillery in Swisher took over the former **Americana** space downtown. Hoang Khao took over in the former **Curbin' Cuisine** space in Ankeny. **La Hacienda** opened in Johnston where **Cactus Bob's** used to be. **Scoops by Beth** opened in the old **Chicago Dog** venue in Highland Park. **False Nine**, a British soccer bar, took over **Mitzi's** real estate in Valley Junction. The former **Eggroll Ladies** space next to Des Moines Athletic Club downtown turned into **Nothing Major**, a new bar with ice cream, from Nick Tillinghast.

Sequels were big news. Tri and Julie Le reopened **Le's Chinese BBQ**, this time on Douglas. Patrick Orlando Renda and Bobby Felice reopened **Orlando's**, this time in Grimes. **515 Brewing Company** reopened under new ownership.

OPENINGS GALORE

The most astonishing food news though was the overwhelming volume of new places opening in the metro. **Dave's Hot Chicken**, from East Hollywood, opened its second Des Moines metro location, taking over a former Noodles & Co. space on Mills Civic Parkway. **Moe's Southwest Grill** of Atlanta opened its first local store just north of Merle Hay Mall in a former Dunkin' Donuts location. **Charlotte's Kitchen** announced expansion with a new Waukee location slated to open soon.

Dutch Bros of Oregon opened its first local store in the former Fazoli's on S.E. 14th. **Qdoba**, out of Denver, opened its newest store, on Mills Civic Parkway. **Izumi Sushi & Hibachi** of North Dakota opened an outlet just north of University in Clive.

Osaka opened at 50th and Mills in West Des Moines offering convenience store sushi and snacks. Tashi Chompel opened Hakata style **Toyo Ramen & Japanese Street Food** in The District at Prairie Trail. **Lux** announced an upscale Asian fusion restaurant and cocktail bar in the Kettlestone district in Waukee. Ventica Woods opened **Mama Africa** in the food hall on the lower level of the Greater Des Moines Partnership building downtown.

Saigon Day Café and Bakery opened on University in Clive. **Zeke's Rooftop**, named for original Johnston settler Ezekiel Hunter, opened on Merle Hay Road. **Kentzio Japanese Steakhouse and Sushi Lounge** opened on S.W. Ninth. **Doner Street** opened in the Jordan Creek Town Center food court. **Jungle Tea** opened on Douglas Avenue with a menu of freshly pressed sugarcane drinks, milk teas, smoothies, croffles and bingsu.

El Rincón Catracho 2, a family owned Honduran café, opened with rave reviews from top local chefs Phil Shires (Masao) and Tony Lemmo (Aposto). It is at 910 Hull Ave., Des Moines. **Mezze Mediterranean Kitchen** is the newest venture coming to the Temple for Performing Arts, next to Centro. The place will offer a fast-casual Mediterranean menu, led by Zombie Burger chef Tom McKern. Mike LaValle's **Atlas Cafe** opened in the Atlas Building on Westown Parkway.

Grocery stores had a big semester too. **Cerro Grande Meat Market** opened on Hubbell Avenue in Des Moines focusing on Latino and Mexican specialty cuts, marinated

fajita meat, ready-to-cook foods, and more than 42 varieties of sausage, plus a Mexican-style ice cream shop inside the same building. Vamsi Krishna and Amar Reddy opened a butcher, seafood and spice store — **Meat Mart** — just north of Jordan Creek Town Center.

Expansion was big, too. **Eggroll Ladies** added a second trailer. **La Familia** announced a move across the street to a much larger space. **Casey's** bought the family-owned **Pak-a-Sak** chain of Texas. **Kwik Star** announced a new store near Westown Parkway and Valley West Drive. **Jasper Winery** announced plans for expanding and building a cider house and events space near its current location on Bell Avenue. **Exile Brewing Co.** announced a new location inside the Kettlestone Social food hall coming to Waukee.

Mullet's expanded into Norwalk and Waukee. **Green Olive** opened a new store on S.W. Ninth in Des Moines. **The Station** expanded with a new Urbandale location taking over the former Beerhouse venue. **Graziano Brothers** expanded buying a 10,970-square-foot warehouse on Clark Street in Des Moines previously owned by Golden Valley Supply of Minneapolis. **Home Sweet Cone** announced a third store, in the Star Lofts on Ingersoll. **The Breakfast Club** in the East Village moved into a larger location at 418 E. Grand Ave. across from Zombie Burger. Rollins Mansion expanded its partnership with chef Jacob Schroeder of **Crafted Food Services**, planning to offer more culinary experiences at the historic venue. **Panchero's** opened a third local store on E. Hickman in Waukee.

IN OTHER NEWS

Chef **Stephanie Williams** joined the team at the Art Center Café. **Rebecca Stavick** took over as Wallace House director in Des Moines and leads the staff there and at the Orient farm location. **Donna Tweeten**, Hy-Vee's first female president, died at 63 after a career building the brand with achievements that included landing the first retail endorsement contract with basketball star Caitlin Clark. **El Bait Shop** was named one of the best bars in America by USA Today. ■

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



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COSMOPOLITANISM:

How the whole world became Des Moines' dining room

From Mexican and Southeast Asian cuisine to Ethiopian, Turkish and Brazilian fare, Des Moines' dining scene has grown far beyond its traditional roots.

By Jim Duncan

Growing up in Des Moines in the 1950s and 1960s, I graduated from high school before I met my first avocado, curry or croissant. International dining options here were southern Italian, northern Mexican, Americanized Cantonese and Olympic Flame. Most restaurants in those categories served pretty much the same menu.

Before culinary gunslinger Paul Trostel rode into town in the 1970s, appetizer choices were usually tomato juice, shrimp cocktail or canned fruit cocktail. Salads employed iceberg or Romaine lettuces exclusively and were served mostly with sweetened dressings like red Russian, orange French and Thousand Island. Trostel introduced an entire menu of appetizers that were new to Des Moines.

In high school, I wanted to be a travel writer because I wanted to try foods I had only read about — mangos, figs and sharks fin soup for starters. Des Moines kids needed to hit the road to expand their palates and pantries. Then, somewhere in time, the whole wide world of exotic flavors came to Iowa.

Des Moines fared better than most cities its size in attracting new dining choices. That was largely because of one man — Bob Ray, “The” Governor. By sheer force of personality, Ray convinced the white bread people of a mostly rural state to open their hearts, minds and doors to immigrants from Southeast Asia and Latin America. They brought sophisticated cuisines with them bearing regional distinctions within them.

Italian food was not restricted to Calabrian influences anymore. Michoacan, Poblano and Jaliscan cuisines replaced Sonoran as the predominant Mexican styles. Southeast Asian choices spread from Vietnamese kitchens to Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Malaysia. North Indian Mogul cuisine led before Deccan and South Indian styles dominated.

I met teenaged Rosa Martinez in the parking lot of La Tienda Mexicana in the late 1980s. At that time, the overwhelming majority of the local Latino population was young and male. Guys in pickup trucks and cowboy hats would back up in a line that sometimes stretched two blocks west and half a block north as they waited to buy homemade tamales from “la Rosa.” That store was the inspiration of the late visionary Eufrazio Majorga, who opened the first Latino tienda in Iowa in 1988 before branching out to the restaurant business with Los Laureles.

Before La Tienda Mexicana, aspiring restaurateurs like Martinez had to drive to Chicago to stock a week's worth of masa and corn husks for tamales, or anything else that came from Mexico. She would fret about the irony that



THIS BANANA LEAF PLATE AT MINGALABAR HOLDS SEVEN DISHES.

she drove past 350 miles of corn fields in each direction.

Before Los Laureles, Mexican food was mostly Chihuahuan-Sonoran style, with wheat flour tortillas that deep fried into the addictive Tasty Tacos or as something derivative of the Taco Bell. Majorga's café was a Rip Van Winkle-level awakening for Iowa taste buds long deprived of the excitement begat of fresh or dried chilies, tongue, ceviche, pozole, menudo, tamales, tomatillos, soft cornmeal tortillas and even cilantro, jicama and avocado. Los Laureles was the first place outside Mexico where I tasted multiple homemade hot sauces with chips. Decades later, it was the first place my grandson tried them. The restaurant now anchors an entire Latino business complex known as La Placita.



CREPES AT PHO 515 SHOW FRENCH INFLUENCES ON VIETNAMESE CUISINE.

MORE RECENTLY

Des Moines is having another international renaissance this decade. The Merle Hay Road neighborhood north of Urbandale makes the best case in point. Just a few years ago, that neighborhood was a fast-food alley with just a couple local outlets like Trostel’s Greenbriar, the Chinese gem Wong’s Chopsticks, the original Wasabi Chi and India Star.

Then came cosmopolitan transformation. Salvadoran military nurse Gloria Henriquez’s Tullpa brought the chaufa, chifa and Spanish influences of Peru’s coastal and mountain cuisines, plus dancing on weekends. La Tapatia opened a grocery store there. Smokin’ Goat Pub brought a soul food night, Cajun night and a barbecue night. The Merle Hay Mall food court solidified with Vietnam Café and Tamales Industry starring. Former Greenbriar chef Arturo Mora opened Flame, across the street. El Patron and Bamboo House added to the mix. Copa Burse brought her soul food gem Good Eatin’s to the Wasabi Chi venue, after Wasabi outgrew the neighborhood.

Bashatu Gutama and her husband, Abdissa Tumie, opened Habesha Ethio and Eritrean restaurant. Bashatu is Ethiopian and Abdissa is Eritrean, and they met in Des Moines. Their fare is Ethio with lentils, cabbages, collard greens, plus beef and chicken curries showing off the Indian influences on East African cuisine. All are served on rice or the marvelous teff flour sponge bread injera. An Ethiopian coffee ceremony on weekends after noon is featured.

Henriquez, who also headed the Latino Restaurant and Hospitality Council of Iowa, thinks immigrant chefs bring an open mind to Iowa along with their kitchen knives.

“In Iowa, Latino families fuse. My sisters married men from other Latino countries, so my extended family here is now Peruvian, Ecuadoran, Columbian and Central American. Family get-togethers are a big thing for us, and food is a huge part of that.

“Peruvian cuisine is superior to others. It’s so complex — the essence of fusion. Peruvian is part Chinese, part Japanese, part ocean, part mountains, part Spanish, part native, part nobility, part slave.”

It’s certainly caught the eye of the world. Maido in Lima was named “numero uno” at last year’s 50 Best Restaurants in the World awards in Las Vegas.

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5340 Buffalo Ridge Drive NE, Cedar Rapids



DOSA PLATE AT AMRUTH

“The yellow chilies are unique to Peru. We use them in sauces, dressings, stir fries and stews. Peru has more potatoes than anywhere on Earth; and corns like ‘mote’ and ‘culli,’ which we use to make purple corn beverages like ‘chica morada.’ Some of the brandies are, too — pisco being the most famous. Peruvians began making it because the Spanish taxed their brandies too



TERRA GRILL SERVES ROTISSERIE MEATS TABLESIDE.

much,” Henriquez explains.
Last year, Henriquez decided to transform Tullpa into Pupuseria La Gloria on weekends.
International innovations spread beyond Merle Hay. El Rincón Catracho 2 recently joined El Salvador del Mundo, La Cuzcataleca South, El Buen Sabor

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and Ristorante La Clinica as Central American cafés. Mi Patria is Ecuadoran. Puerto Rico restaurant is Boricua.

Ahmet Kaya left a career in international hotel and restaurants management to open Istanbul Café and Bakery (ICB) on 100th in Urbandale. ICB occupies the space best known as Stella's Blue Sky Diner and marvelously represents Turkish food, particularly baked treats like pistachio rolls.

I was told on a tour of the kitchens of Istanbul's Topkapi Palace that Turkish cuisine was "highly sophisticated when the French still subsided on acorn gruels." That same guide said that "Greek cuisine was Turkish food for poor people." Istanbul Café is evidence. The grilled meats (lamb and chicken in five forms) platter and the mezes platter (hummus, falafel, baba ganoush, grape leaves stuffed with currants and pine nuts, ezme and cheese balls) are a great introduction to the cuisine of the Ottoman sultans. Recently, ICB expanded with Doner Street in Jordan Creek Town Center (JCTC) food court.

Amar Sama left his job with the Des Moines school system to open The Palms on Ingersoll. The place was brilliant from day one, introducing West African/Jamaican cuisine with flair and devotion. Trappings are marvelous, including wall paper from Nigerian artist Uzo Njoku. Cocktail service specializes in tropical delights and dedication to scratch cooking. Mixes such as hibiscus simple syrup and even coconut cream are homemade from scratch. Sama actually renders his own coconut cream and reduces fresh hibiscus.

Sama's food menu is delightfully simple starring jerk chicken, a two-days-plus process, shrimp in suya pepper sauce and oxtail stew. Side dishes include yams, plantains, rice pilaf, rice and peas, plus mac and cheese. Applications include tacos and fettuccine for the chicken and pizza for the oxtails. Sliders, three kinds of wings, donut balls and banana bread complete the menu.

In Urbandale, the metro's first Burmese restaurant has taken over a former Pizza Hut. Mingalabar ranks with the best Burmese cafés I have visited in California, London, Chicago, St. Paul and Myanmar. Burmese cuisine is a fusion of the food cultures of three neighboring countries — India, China and Thailand. Like Thai cuisine, it is big on multiple, contrasting flavors. A Burmese American friend says that the motto of Burmese food is "Chin, ngat, sat," which translates as "sour,



GLORIA HENRIQUEZ OF TULLPA AND GLORIA'S PUPUSERIA

salty, spicy."

Amruth, a superb South Indian café with a dosa buffet, replaced Monterrey on Swanson Road after decades of Mexican restaurants replacing all other kinds of cuisine. Amruth brought choles ("Chennai croissants") to town. It is our favorite among a recent flood of new South Asian restaurants with inspirations from south India, the culinary cities of Hyderabad and Chennai. Saffron, Desi, Chowrastra, Bawarchi and Red Chillez are others. Kathmandu and Lzaza bring Nepalese and Pakistani flavors to town.

KPot, a Korean buffet chain from Maryland with a two-hour time limit, has drawn long lines since day one in Jordan Creek. Kura, a remarkably successful sushi bar out of the culinary city of Osaka, hopes to be open there by our press time.

The northerly burbs grew some needed restaurant diversity, too. Jennifer Vayding opened Hawker's Kitchen in Ankeny, bringing a Singaporean hawker center serving Pan-Asian street foods. Red Chillez opened in Kohl's Plaza in Ankeny with a menu covering all of India. Arcadia opened in Polk City "rooted in peace, simplicity and harmony with nature," plus 30 different whiskeys to help the peace along.

Kleber (Brazilian soccer players, musicians and restaurateurs go by a single name) came from Porto Alegre in the south of Brazil. That's close to Argentina and the pampas, legendary home of gauchos and grazing cattle. He brought the churrascaria with him, serving eight cuts of beef on rotisseries tableside. There are a couple other meats,



CARPACCIO ST. JACQUES AT MASAO

plus our favorite salad bar in town. And his Terra is a rare Brazilian steakhouse in that it serves lunch as well as dinner.

Nick Hanke is a child of the air freight revolution. His father, Ted, opened Waterfront Seafood Market Restaurant in West Des Moines in 1984. When Nick bought Masao in East Village, he thought he could use his extraordinary contacts from growing up at Waterfront to expand the city's palate.

Masao exudes the excitement of discovery. The menu changes more frequently than any other in town and balances a Japanese sushi bar with a French kitchen run by chef extraordinaire Phil Shires, the only Iowan to be named a James Beard Best Chef semifinalist at two different restaurants. Masao serves such formerly forbidden "fruits" as gizzard shad, blue snapper, suzuki, abalone, Iranian caviar and smoked trout roe. Nick says the selection will always be seasonal.

Joe Tripp of Harbinger runs a vegetable-forward restaurant that we think is Des Moines' most creative kitchen. Tripp loves Asian cuisines so much he takes his staff on annual trips to Thailand, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan for inspiration.

That represents a full circle. Des Moines no longer needs to go around the world for new flavors. The whole world has come to Des Moines. ■

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



DES MOINES BAR CRAWLS WITH A TWIST

From Irish pubs and craft cocktails to wine bars, arcades and dance floors, these metro stops prove a bar crawl does not have to mean racing toward last call.

By Cyote Williams

Bar crawls don't have to be resigned to the younger generation looking for a night of binge drinking until the early hours of the morning. We at CITYVIEW demonstrate that multiple times a year with our themed bar crawls: Summer Stir, Fire and Ice, the Chocolate Walk, Mid-day Mixer and Martini Fest. Crawls can have a theme outside of seeing how many beers or rum and Cokes you can down before 2 a.m. hits and it's time to call an Uber or Lyft to return home safely.

Des Moines and central Iowa are known for their restaurant scene, but their expansive number of bars is an underrated aspect. Iowans tend to love a drink, and there are plenty of places to do so. Knowing this, we took a look at several other themes you and your group of friends or family can experience during a day, or even over a weekend if you like to sip slowly. Most importantly, make sure you have a designated driver.



BARTENDERS HANDSHAKE. PHOTO BY ALLI PETERS

IRISH BARS

Are you feeling lucky? If your definition of luck is having a pint of Guinness, then you have just found a pot of gold. Spend a night or a weekend frequenting these bars, and you will be tempted to hop on the next flight to Dublin.

For the optimal route, you're going to go from West to East, starting in Waukee, and ending up on the east side of Des Moines. You'll cover nearly 40 miles, taking you all over the metro.

Start at Mickey's Irish Pub in Waukee. Mickey's has plenty of food and drink specials throughout the week, so no matter which day you start on, get a meal here to begin your night.

From there, you go into West Des Moines to The Irish. This bar is a little livelier, but comes with plenty of seating, both tables and booths, and a patio to enjoy your drinks.

Next stop is Sully's Irish Pub, also in West Des Moines. At this point, you've had a meal and perhaps a few drinks. They claim to be the number one seller of Guinness in Iowa. We can see why, because all day, every day, pints of Guinness are just \$4. Top that off with \$3 Fireball shots, and you might not make it past this bar.

Hopefully you've taken it easy and are now in Des Moines at Kathy's Irish Pub. And just a few short minutes away is your next stop, Cooney's Tavern in Beaverdale. Both of these no-frills bars make great stops.

The next stop is the longest part of the trip, but well worth the journey — Magee's Irish Pub & Eatery in Ankeny. After a few stops lacking meal options, Magee's brings the flavor. Stews. Scotch eggs. Sandwiches. You name it. Grab a bite to eat that will take you to the final stop.

Last but not least, head over to McCuen's Irish Pub on the east side. This is another classically American Irish style bar, fully prepared to be the last stop of the night. And, hopefully, a site for a few waters.



PHOTO COURTESY OF COONEY'S TAVERN

MICKEY'S IRISH PUB

50 S.E. Laurel St., Waukee
www.mickeyswaukee.com

THE IRISH

560 S. Prairie View Drive, West Des Moines
www.theirishwdm.com

SULLY'S IRISH PUB

860 First St., West Des Moines
www.sullysdesmoines.com

KATHY'S IRISH PUB

6705 Hickman Road, Des Moines
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3708 Beaver Ave., Des Moines
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MAGEE'S IRISH PUB AND EATERY

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COCKTAIL LOUNGES

For a night of fancy beverages in teeny and sometimes odd-shaped glasses, Des Moines and the metro have you covered. When you want to get dressed up and have an alcoholic drink that makes you say, “Is there even any alcohol in this?” these spots have some of the best bartenders and drink-makers around.

Lucky for you, these bars are mostly concentrated in downtown. But to be able to hit all of them, you’re going to start in West Des Moines with The Atlas Room. This hidden bar with a great story and even better drinks makes for a great first stop.

From there, make your way to The Bartender’s Handshake on Ingersoll. This small, neighborhood bar has a delicious menu of handcrafted drinks for your preferred spirit of choice.

One quick detour away from downtown makes for a stop at Highland Underground in Highland Park. There are plenty of classic cocktail options here and worth the trip away from the city.

After finishing off one, or maybe two, drinks at Highland Underground, the rest of your night will be spent downtown. First, Hello, Marjorie; then Secret Admirer; and finally, ending the night in the East Village at The Contrary. These bars can be walked to if you’re feeling like getting your steps in.



HELLO MARJORIE. PHOTO BY MICHAEL ENGLUND

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atlasroomwdm.com

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Moines
thebartendershandshake.com

HIGHLAND UNDERGROUND
3614 Sixth Ave., Suite 100,
Des Moines
highlandunderground.com

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717 Locust St., Unit 103, Des
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www.hellomarjorie.com

SECRET ADMIRER
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WINERIES AND WINE BARS

Iowa is lucky enough to have excellent wineries right in our own backyard. There are some challenges growing grapes in the Midwest’s climate, but these people know how to navigate those trials better than others. Plus, there are wine bars that know the best stuff from around the country and the world to bring those international flavors to the glass in front of you.

This crawl could be expanded into a day-long affair, but it can be shortened. For the shorter route, wine aficionados should start at Jasper Winery on the south side of Des Moines. Locally grown wines, ciders and their own delightful sangria all make for a tasteful beginning.

Then, just up the road, is The Cave DSM. Not only do they have a solid range of wines to choose from, but try their snacks to spruce up the experience.

A short drive from The Cave brings you to Purveyor, which claims to have Iowa’s finest — and most innovative — wine list. You can be the judge. And try the charcuterie, tapas and desserts while you are there.

After that, a trip to Johnston to finish the night at The Cork 50131 followed by The Rabbit Room. Both opened within the last few years, offering great wines and even better vibes.

To extend this trip and get a more scenic view of the Iowa wine scene, start the trip at Covered Bridges Winery in Winterset, followed by the Madison County Winery just outside of St. Charles.

COVERED BRIDGES WINERY

2207 170th Trail, Winterset
coveredbridgeswinery.com

MADISON COUNTY WINERY

3021 St. Charles Road, St. Charles
www.madisoncountywinery.com

JASPER WINERY

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

THE CAVE DSM

1437 Walnut St., Des Moines
www.thecavedsm.com

PURVEYOR

505 E. Grand Ave., Suite 105, Des Moines
purveyordsm.com

THE CORK 50131

6205 Merle Hay Road, Suite 130, Johnston
thecork50131.com

THE RABBIT ROOM

8460 Birchwood Court, Suite 500, Johnston
www.therabbitroomdsm.com

HERE ARE TWO MORE CRAWLS THAT ARE WORTH A TRIP.

ENTERTAINMENT BARS

Entertainment is a wide-ranging word in this instance, and for good reason. In this case, it means bars that have something to do in them besides offering a nice drink or meal. These bars have arcades, axe throwing, board games, mini golf and even ping pong.

BACKPOCKET PIN AND PIXEL

6205 Merle Hay Road, Suite 100, Johnston
www.backpocketpinandpixel.com

SMASH PARK DES MOINES

6625 Coachlight Drive, West Des Moines
smashpark.com/west-des-moines

MONSTERAMA PUBCADE

3108 S.W. Ninth St., Des Moines
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Most of these previously listed bars can be enjoyed calmly and peacefully. You could even convince your grandparents to attend. These bars, nightclubs specifically, are for when you just want to dance the night away. It doesn’t matter that you might bump shoulders with someone or spill your drink a tad. Patrons are here for the loud music, the dance floor and a seemingly never-ending night. ■

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Cyote Williams was born and raised on the south side of Des Moines and writes about entertainment, sports and personalities across the Des Moines metro for CITYVIEW. Phone: 515-953-4822 x333.



One-pan turkey sausage and vegetables makes dinners easy



By Jolene Goodman

Every home cook needs a reliable sheet pan meal in its recipe collection, and this one has become a favorite in our family. It checks all the boxes: nutritious, flavorful, easy to prepare and quick enough for a busy weeknight. Best of all, everything cooks together on a single pan, making cleanup almost as simple as the preparation.



The inspiration for this recipe came from my daughter, Sara, who has a talent for creating meals that are both practical, delicious and nutritious. By combining turkey sausage with colorful vegetables like sweet potatoes, broccoli, yellow peppers and red onion, she created a meal packed with flavor, texture and wholesome ingredients. Served over rice, it becomes a hearty dinner that satisfies everyone at the table.

One of the reasons we make this recipe so often is that it is perfect for meal planning. We typically double the ingredients and roast everything on two sheet pans so we have plenty of leftovers for lunches throughout the week. The flavors hold up beautifully, and it reheats well, making it a convenient option for busy days.

Whether you are feeding a family or preparing meals ahead of time, this simple sheet pan dinner is sure to earn a regular spot in your recipe rotation. ■

Information provided by Jolene Goodman, vice president of Big Green Umbrella Media.

TURKEY SAUSAGE RING SHEET PAN DINNER WITH RICE

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 turkey sausage ring (12-14 ounces), sliced into 1/2-inch rounds
- 1 large sweet potato, peeled and cut into half inch cubes
- 1 large head broccoli, cut into florets
- 1 yellow bell pepper, cut into half inch pieces
- 1 red onion, cut into wedges
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

FOR THE RICE:

- 1 cup uncooked rice
- 2 cups chicken broth

DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat oven to 425 F. Cook rice according to package directions using broth or water.
- On a large sheet pan, combine sweet potato, broccoli, yellow pepper, red onion and turkey sausage slices. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with garlic powder, smoked paprika, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper. Toss well to coat.
- Spread ingredients into a single layer. Roast for 30-35 minutes, stirring once halfway through, until the sweet potatoes are tender and the vegetables are lightly caramelized.
- Serve the sausage and vegetables over warm rice.



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The Value Stalker

Cattle rustlers, jealous girlfriends and loss leaders

By Jim Duncan

Affordability is the buzz word this fall as politicians hope to win votes simply by bitching about high prices or “feeling your pain.” That worked for Bill Clinton, but since then, bargain hunting is the only pain relief most people find satisfying.

In Texas, bargain hunters and profiteers have revived the 19th-century industry of cattle rustling. Beef prices are the most inflationary of all dinner-table staples, and there is no relief in sight. The national cattle population is the smallest since the early 1950s, and the number of human mouths to feed is double what it was then.

No rancher is in a hurry to replenish his herd, even with high prices. That is because grain prices are high, too, and America has converted the cattle business from grazing to feed lots. So, rustlers are selling sides of beef on the black market. A Texas lawman told Barron’s that the most effective tool for catching these thieves is “jealous girlfriends.”

We do not have a black market for beef in Iowa. The state has gone from the No. 1 cattle state in the 1940s and 1950s to outside the top 10. So, we are shopping around. Value stalkers are changing habits in search of better deals. That is a necessity. Even fast food is expensive now. From 1995 to 2026, the average price of a “Big Mac” jumped from \$1.99 to \$6.72, a 337% increase, equaling an annual inflation rate of nearly 11%.

“Loss leaders” are fewer than they used to be. We are talking about advertised specials that lose money but attract shoppers. Costco is famous for them, particularly its \$5 rotisserie chickens and \$1.50 kosher dog with a soda. Sam’s Club copies those. But supermarkets are not advertising as many nowadays.

Aldi does the most, particularly in dairy, eggs, produce and meats. For instance, it will occasionally sell chicken wings for less than \$1.99 per pound, half their average price in metro supermarkets. Fresh Thyme has far fewer than a few years ago. Its best deals are in seafood, like \$4.99 per pound for jumbo shrimp and \$6.99 per pound salmon fillets recently. We try to track these in the Daily Umbrella, but Hy-Vee’s best deals are



PIZZA IS HALF PRICED ON MONDAYS AT CENTRO.

usually released too late for our deadlines and are advertised mostly on weekend TV.

The biggest winner among restaurant bargain hunters has been Chili’s, a company that is now the envy of all fast-food and casual-dining chains. A burger deal sparked Chili’s massive turnaround — the “3 For Me” combo. It became a viral sensation when Chili’s used it to directly target rising prices at drive-thru chains. The deal allows diners to get a near-half-pound burger, fries, an appetizer (like bottomless chips and salsa or a side salad), and unlimited fountain drinks. Priced at \$10.99, it offered more food for just a few dollars more than a standard fast-food combo meal.

Chili’s has seen more than 20 consecutive quarters of same store sales increases. No other restaurant chain is even close. Since COVID, Chili’s stock (Brinker International) has moved from under \$11 to \$222 at our press time, an astronomical increase of more than 1,900%.

The best new restaurant in Des Moines for bargain shoppers is The Empire. Open less than a year now, the place has established itself as a top value with \$10 blue plates like hot beef sandwiches, chicken and noodles, or chicken fried steak plus \$5



HUGE OYSTERS AND SHRIMP ARE HALF-PRICED SATURDAY AFTERNOONS AT WATERFRONT.

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Other super bargains are mostly one-day-a-week deals. We stalk them Monday through Friday in the Daily Umbrella. Some recurring specials are named “wonder bargains” — Angry Goldfish’s burger, fries and a pint of beer for \$10 on Tuesdays; Centro’s half-priced pizza and Peroni on Monday; free pie with breakfast or dinner at Village Inn on Wednesdays; filet tips Stroganoff over pasta for \$14 Tuesdays at Johnny’s Italian Steakhouse; \$2 loaded tacos at Mariana’s on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays; \$1 burgers Thursdays at Chelsea’s Courtyard; \$10.99 pan-fried chicken dinners at Crouse Café on Sundays.

Even at the high end of metro dining, super bargains have popped up this year. For instance, Prime and Providence now offers a Sunday dinner for two at \$99 that includes two appetizers, two side dishes, two desserts and one choice among entrees that include a 16-ounce prime ribeye. Ruth’s Chris has a \$16 burger and side deal Thursdays, with a half-pound prime burger. This being Iowa, ordering these specials is encouraged, not shamed as one would expect in New York or Los Angeles.

VALUE VEGETABLES

Thanks to open AI, we were able to cross reference average national supermarket prices of all vegetables against their nutritional values. The best values in the vegetable kingdom begin with root vegetables. Carrots, sweet potatoes, yams, beets, onions, parsnips, turnips and potatoes all rank in the top 16 nutritional values.

We wondered why and discovered that common sense explains their value prices. Things that grow under the ground are susceptible to only minimal spoilage. Crops like potatoes, carrots and beets act as their own natural energy storage units. Their tough outer skins protect them, allowing them to last for weeks or even months in a cool, dark pantry or root cellar. This low spoilage rate reduces the “shrink” cost that grocers pass on to buyers. Carrots do not bruise, over ripen or easily spoil during shipment and storage. Insects are only a small problem underground, so pesticides are not needed.

Plus, root vegetables produce really high volumes of food per acre compared to those that grow above ground. Because they are hardy and adapt well to various climates, large-scale commercial farmers in Iowa and neighboring Midwest states can grow and harvest them mechanically in massive quantities, driving down the per-pound price.

Unlike tomatoes, peppers or eggplants, which often require expensive greenhouse sprouting and careful transplanting, root vegetables are sown directly into the soil by seed, keeping planting costs low. In the Midwest, staple root crops have a long harvesting and storage season. You can often find highly affordable local produce at local farmers markets and roadside stands in Iowa well into the autumn and winter months, reducing the markup associated with out-of-season, imported vegetables.

The easiest way to save money shopping for leafy greens is to buy whole vegetables, not packaged combos. That also helps one avoid parasites, like Cyclospora or tapeworms, and bacteria like salmonella, listeria and E. coli. Those usually get into food through careless handling. Plus, with whole foods, one can peel off outer layers of leaves where bugs of all sizes are most likely to rest.

New York Presbyterian Hospital (NYPH) touts watercress, spinach and Swiss chard as the best nutritional values among leafy greens. Watercress ranks at the top of CDC nutrient scores, rich in vitamin K, vitamin C and antioxidants. Spinach is loaded with iron, magnesium, folate and vitamins A and K. Swiss chard is packed with potassium, magnesium and vitamins A, C and K to help support healthy blood pressure.

Among cruciferous vegetables, NYPH touts broccoli, Brussels sprouts and Asian cabbages like bok choy and Napa as the top nutritional values. While shopping for broccoli, buy whole stalks not florets. The stalks (stems) are nutritional powerhouses packed with significantly more fiber, calcium and potassium. Cyd Koehn of Cyd’s Catering makes fabulous broccoli coleslaw with shredded stalks that are often thrown out by supermarkets.

LEGUMES

These days, the world can’t get enough beans. They have been around for millennia, but their value has changed in recent years because these miraculous legumes are packed with fiber and protein at a time when demand for those nutrients is almost insatiable. They can help your gut, your blood pressure and your cholesterol, according to Harvard Health.

Legumes are also fabulous bargains. First of all, a pound of them expands to six to eight pounds when cooked. The best values among them, from our search of five local markets, are split peas, followed by lentils (which do not require pre-soaking), pintos, black beans, yellow beans and chick peas, also known as garbanzos, chana, grams and chole.

Black lentils rank highest in overall protein and antioxidants. They are packed with deep-colored plant pigments called anthocyanins. Green lentils are highest in dietary fiber and resistant starch, which helps keep your gut healthy and blood sugar steady. Red and yellow lentils are highest in total iron and easiest on the stomach because their outer husks are removed.

Whether cooking vegan, vegetarian or non-vegetarian, the best legume recipes are almost always Indian. I love Julie Sahni’s “Classic Indian Cooking: Master Moghul Cuisine” and most all of Madhur Jaffrey’s many cookbooks. Jaffrey is a 92-year-old actress, movie producer and brilliant writer. No other celebrity writing about food in English can carry her pencil sharpener. The worst “nutrition for the buck” bargains in this food realm are vanilla, cacao and coffee beans.

On the subject of bargains, Des Moines is loaded with Indian-Pakistani-Nepalese buffets of ridiculous excellence. Among our favorites are Amruth, Saffron, Lzaza, India Star and Kathmandu. All offer 12 to 36 dishes for a single, reasonable price.

TOUTS

Master chef George Formaro (Centro, Gateway, South Union, Zombie Burger) has released the result of his lifelong quest for the perfect hamburger bun. Nostalgic for the “squishy texture” of the egg yolk-colored buns made by Dahl’s, he experimented for decades. His master bun is a potato brioche designed for really big burgers. Most people can’t get their mouth around the oversized and overdressed burgers that seem to be common today in sports bars and casual dining spots from Altoona to Booneville. These buns comply. Available in four-packs at Gateway Market.

Trader Joe’s consistently impresses us with wine values. Two new ones this summer continue this trend. Sauvigio contains a 50/50 mix of Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Grigio, each sourced from select vineyards across California. Villa Cerrina Montepulciano D’Abruzzo is made with 100% Montepulciano grapes from Abruzzo (in central Italy). It’s moderately dry, ruby red, medium-bodied and well-balanced. Both cost \$6.99.

The International, mostly African, Farmers Market on Carpenter at MLK is a total hit. Parking is easy making it a great Saturday morning alternative to downtown for those who have mobility issues. ■



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PARADISE LOST

The rich black dirt of Iowa

Soil is the uplifting four letter word.

By Jim Duncan

From the human point of view, dirt is the ultimate outsider. We try to keep it out of sight, out of mind and outdoors. We kick it off our shoes, spit on it and degrade it linguistically with dirty jokes, dirty minds, dirty secrets and dirty truths.

In the end, everything comes from it and everything returns to it. It is first on Aristotle's list of the "Big Four" elements of life, ahead of air, fire and water. Yet somehow, no one worries that it is disappearing.

When agriculture was the "new technology," 98% of the population worked the land to support the small ruling classes who somehow controlled its distribution and its bounty. Today, less than 1% of the U.S. population works the land. While the world population keeps growing, the amount of productive land that is farmed has been in steady decline since the 1970s.

The Mississippi River pushes a dump truck load of Midwest topsoil to the Caribbean's Dead Zone 86,400 times a day. That silt would make farms more productive, but, ironically, it kills sea life. Each year, 24 billion tons of soil are lost to water, fire and air. That adds up to 17 tons per person. Yet that is too little to interest the hearts or minds of politicians, or much of anyone else. Just visit your local supermarket and be reassured that this is no crisis.

Dirt's more virtuous sister is called soil. She gets more respect. While dirt is dead to us, soil is composed of a living, organized ecosystem made of minerals, organic matter, water, air and microorganisms that sustain plant life. Soil is the skin of planet Earth, but much thinner in proportion. Unlike our skin, soil acts as a destructive blanket that breaks down rock to form sand, silt and clay, which together become the best soil at a 40-40-20 ratio.

FEATURE STORY

And wheat no longer grew there. Barley was the region's cash crop; it's harder to kill than wheat and other grains. I ate "paqota" and "habya," porridges of simmered barley. Wheat was imported to Baghdad. I moved on to less disappointing romances but could never stop wondering what had happened to the Garden of Eden.

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Bringing it back home

Iowa was a source of pride when I traveled. Its legendary fertility was well known in India, even before Borlaug came there to feed the world. John Kennedy had famously confided to Time magazine’s Hugh Sidey, an Iowan, that “Your rich black dirt looks good enough to eat.”

Before he died in 1975, my grandfather asked me to drive him back to his former farm in Clay County. When we got there, he asked, “Where did my orchards go?” And his vineyards, gardens and hayfields? Like most of Iowa after World War II, his farm had been plowed over while his grasslands, orchards and vineyards were destroyed to the service of just two row crops — corn and soybeans.

Historically, grasslands, like Iowa before Europeans, have been essential to agriculture because they cover the most fertile soils. Before they were exterminated, millions of buffalo grazed there and fertilized the soil with their dung.

Because of technological advances in plant genetics and chemical fertilization, five crops — wheat, rice, corn, soybeans and barley — dominate the world. Once rare, they now cover nearly 2 million square miles, more land than covers all the forests in America, including Alaska and Hawaii.

Mohenjo Daro and the Garden of Eden are not exceptional stories. Their rises and falls share a common denominator with most great agricultural civilizations, including China’s Loess Plateau, Madagascar’s Highlands, Equatorial Africa, the Sahel, Congo, Amazon Basin, and the pampas and Cerrado of South America.

Decades after not eating wheat in Baghdad, I visited the Argentine pampas expecting to eat grass-fed beef. Sadly, that, too, is a thing of the past. I discovered that the pampas of Argentina and Brazil have been plowed over and converted to corn and soybean farming and that the cattle mostly eat grains in confinements, just as in the U.S.

That same old story goes like this, laid out by David Montgomery in “Dirt: The Erosion of Civilizations.” In fertile valleys, farming allows populations to grow to the point that agriculture is extended into the forests, grasslands and hillsides. There, it is susceptible to erosion at faster rates than it can be replenished. The land fails to support the population. The population moves on to the next place, colony or civilization.

In the 465 years between the First Republic and Julius Caesar, it took 10 times as much Italian land to feed the same number of people. Centuries of aggressive agriculture, overgrazing and demand for timber led to soil erosion, permanently removing some areas from agricultural use. That drove Roman conquest — to rape the fields of the far-flung empire and subjugate slaves to feed the growing population.

Medieval Europe ran out of fertile land quicker than Rome and moved on to conquest of colonies to support its population. Serfs were the new slaves, but not much else changed. By the 15th century, the Roman Catholic Church had overtaken nobility as the largest landowner class in Europe. Many historians now believe the Reformation of 1517 was fueled by the church’s poor stewardship of the land more than by the corrupt sale of indulgences.

America was designed for raping the land and then “drifting along” in Woody Guthrie’s words. We called it Manifest Destiny. As early as 1902, the U.S. Geological Society warned that the Great Plains were “fatally vulnerable” to erosion when plowed. Manifest Destiny remained in denial, settling the plains and turning its soil over for decades with bigger plows than ever before. By 1909, the annual loss of topsoil in the Great Plains equaled twice the amount removed to build the Panama Canal. Eleven million acres were abandoned because of soil erosion.

Then, all hell broke loose. The first major wind storm hit South Dakota on Armistice Day 1933, a God-forsaken reminder that death is inescapable. Many farms lost all their topsoil on that single day. The following day, the sky was completely dark at noon. The atmosphere measured three parts dust to one part air. That was just the beginning.

On May 9, 1934, winds tore across Montana, Wyoming and both Dakotas, moving east at 100 miles per hour. On May 10, 4 pounds of Great Plains’ dust fell on

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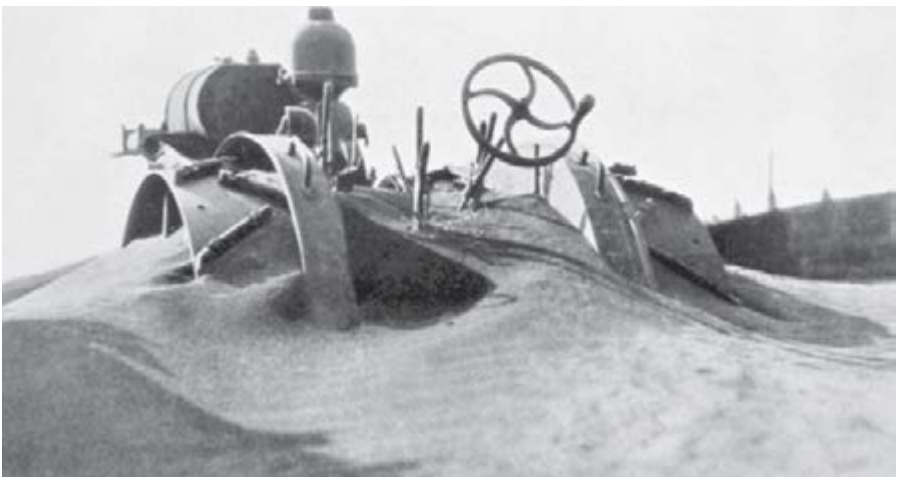
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Wind erosion in the Dust Bowl lasted for years in the 1930s, moving dramatic amounts of valuable soil — enough to practically bury this farm machine. Photo by NOAA, Dept. of Commerce.

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Dust bowl. Photo by daflee on Flickr

each resident of Chicago. On May 11, dust fell over New York City and Washington, D.C.

By the end of that year, the National Resources Board announced that wind had destroyed farmland the size of Virginia. In spring 1935, right after fields were plowed, winds blew across the plains from Texas to Nebraska, embedding grains of sand in fence posts and rising 10,000 feet, blotting out all light and piling Sahara-class dunes over railroad tracks, roads and horses.

By the end of that decade, 3 million people had moved out of the Great Plains, mostly to labor-hungry California. The cotton fields of the Southeast also lost 6 inches of topsoil in that decade, driving workers north to Chicago and Detroit, along with their blues and soul food. Dixie's cotton fields mostly moved to West Texas.

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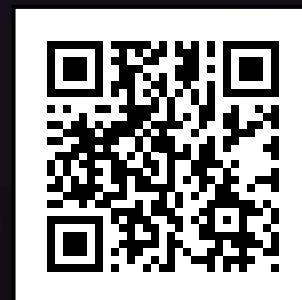
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The corn and beans dilemma

Iowa lost 200,000 acres of farmland to 1935's dust storm, eroded beyond redemption and abandoned. A quarter of the soil was lost over a billion acres of mid-America. A government research station in Missouri, near the Iowa border, reported that soil was lost in cornfields at 300 times the rate in alfalfa fields. Another research station in Oklahoma reported that soil eroded in cotton fields 10,000 times more than over grasslands. No wonder my grandfather rued the loss of his hayfields.

Somehow, Iowa survived the Dust Bowl years and still produces bumper crops of corn and soy that are the envy of all other farm states. But are we deluded? Iowa today has lost one-third of its topsoil in 150 years. I sought out sage opinions, asking the Iowa State University media office for contacts with a biologist and a geologist. My thinking was the latter thinks in terms of millennia while the former is more concerned with just the next planting and harvesting season. They told me that there was one guy who thought in both disciplines.

Richard Cruse is a professor of agronomy at Iowa State University and director of the Iowa Water Center. He leads the Agricultural Conservation Planning Framework National Hub and co-leads the Daily Erosion Project. His program involves modeling research in soil erosion, soil management and soil physical properties. We asked him for the last words in this story.

Is Iowa another Garden of Eden, a paradise of fertility lost to desert?

"What's your timeline? Biology is limited not by averages but by extremes. As long as climate changes can be measured in fractions of a degree a year, we will see (devastation) as a 'not in my life cycle' problem.

"Politics and policies are more devastating than climate in the short term. Certainly, soil degradation is a player in terms of food production capacity. Iowa has lost a third of its top soil since the 1870s. Before then, it wasn't significant agriculturally; it was a swamp that had to be drained and tilled."

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How much tile is there under Iowa's fields of grain?

"No one knows. There are many, many miles of it but no one kept records in the early days. The worry today is that most Iowa agriculture is row crop ag. That's a very erosive system, especially because it's mostly corn and beans, and those are annual crops. It would be better if we planted perennials. Annuals are planted in spring, harvested in fall and are barren the rest of the year — susceptible to rain, wind and pestilence. Raindrops falling on empty fields are the start of the process of destruction, if the ground isn't able to absorb them."

Is there an upside?

"We aren't doing as much damage to the soil now as we were in the 20th century. We don't till as deeply or destructively. We know now that crop residue retards erosion, so we harvest with that in mind. Corn stalks protect the soil after harvest. Chemical weed control is not as bad as shovel weed control. Slope farming is worse for erosion than flatland farming, and Iowa is a relatively flat state."

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



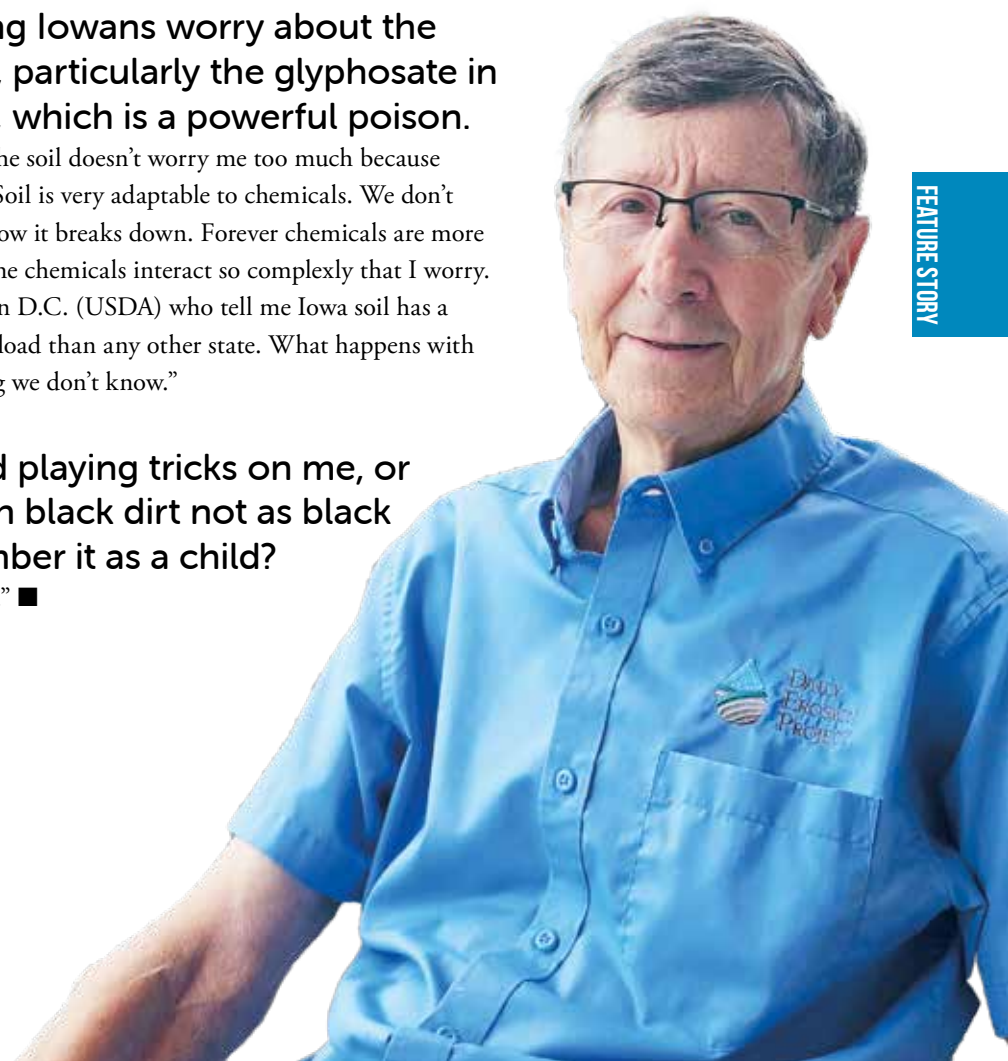
Nonfarming Iowans worry about the chemicals, particularly the glyphosate in Round-up, which is a powerful poison.

"Glyphosate in the soil doesn't worry me too much because it is short-lived. Soil is very adaptable to chemicals. We don't know, though, how it breaks down. Forever chemicals are more worrisome. All the chemicals interact so complexly that I worry. I talk to people in D.C. (USDA) who tell me Iowa soil has a higher chemical load than any other state. What happens with that is something we don't know."

Is my mind playing tricks on me, or is JFK's rich black dirt not as black as I remember it as a child?

"It's not as black." ■

Rick Cruse



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CITYVIEW'S SUMMER STIR

in Des Moines' Historic East Village on July 31.





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AROUND TOWN

PHOTOS BY AVA ELSBERRY



CITYVIEW'S SUMMER STIR

in Des Moines' Historic East Village
on July 31.



The American buffet on steroids

KPOT takes the all-you-can-eat buffet to a new level.

Each August, old friends call while in town for the Iowa State Fair. They want advice about where to eat when they are not eating at the fair. This year, I was asked about KPOT more often than any other restaurant. I don't visit all-you-can-eat (AYCE) buffets as much as I used to, but it was time to check out KPOT because they are both the hottest buffet in America and the most talked-about restaurant in nearly every town where they open a store.

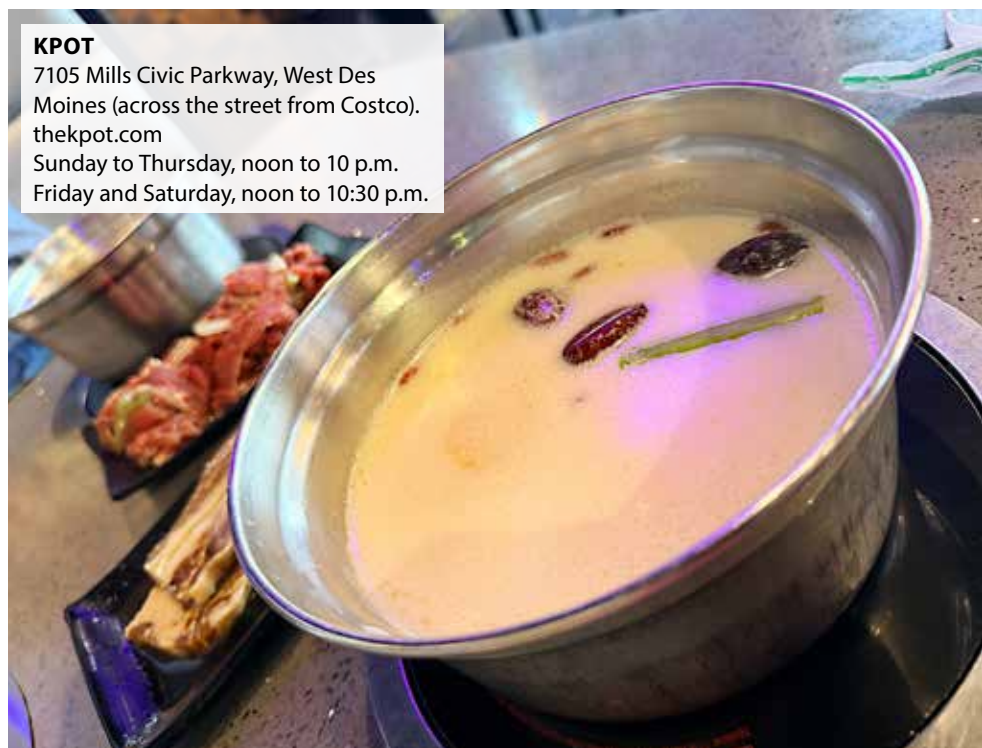
AYCE buffets are an American invention. They had a precedent in the smorgasbord, which was carried to America by the Swedish pavilion at the 1939 World Fair. But El Rancho Vegas is credited with the first AYCE buffet when employee Herb McDonald talked his bosses into sponsoring a late-night experiment in 1946. It cost \$1 and justified its losses by keeping customers awake long enough to gamble all night. Only in America, and only in Las Vegas, could such an icon of excess and gluttony have been invented.

In Iowa, Alvin "Caroll" Meyer opened Gold Buffet in 1958 in a Winterset bowling alley. For more than three decades, it was probably Iowa's most famous restaurant, advertising frequently on radio and TV. It grew to 350 seats and expanded to an even larger location in North Kansas City, also attached to a bowling alley.

This century, AYCE buffets have become Asian-dominated. Chinese versions chased most of Des Moines' marvelous independent Chinese restaurants away. South Asian versions are included in most Indian, Pakistani and Nepalese restaurants here. I have embraced the latter because they give me a chance to sample small bites of many dishes.

To comment on KPOT, I first visited Hibachi Grill Supreme Buffet in West Des Moines for context. "Supreme" is a warranted adjective. The place has 13,000 square feet and seats 430. The buffet promises "over 250 dishes" seven days a week. I don't doubt that. It also has a large koi pond with "don't feed or throw coins to the fish" signs.

Four soups tasted of true stocks. Sushi offerings were supermarket quality at best, with little actual fish. Salads combined Asian with American expectations.



KPOT

7105 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines (across the street from Costco).
thekpot.com
Sunday to Thursday, noon to 10 p.m.
Friday and Saturday, noon to 10:30 p.m.

Fried foods were quite good, especially fish. "Steak" was what I call pot roast but an excellent buffet choice that stayed tender in its heated pan.

When the local KPOT opened in November 2024, people reportedly waited up to an hour to be seated. So, we went for a 4 p.m. dinner and were immediately seated. The restaurant occupies 5,500 square feet but lists no capacity, even by the fire marshal. Yet it feels as big as Hibachi, probably because it's almost entirely dining areas with huge booths and tables, tall chairs and only one small table offering self-service "sauce bar." All tabletops included multiple burners and a grill.

Diners order from a hot pot menu, a BBQ menu or both. A choice of eight hot pot bases included excellent "heathy herbs" and Szechuan broths. Hot pot ingredients included 69 options, and BBQ had 32. The difference was largely a number of items that should not be grilled, such as noodles, rice, leafy greens and bamboo shoots.

Baby octopi on the BBQ menu were served raw. We were told not to cook them in the hot pot, but we disobeyed. I was taught to always parboil octopi 20 minutes or longer before grilling. Same thing with calamari. This made us wonder how much training the waitstaff has.

Overall, meats were superior to what I have found at Hibachi and casino buffets. Beef belly, pork belly, pork cheeks and beef tongue were nice surprises. Steak was ribeye.

KPOT dinner cost \$38 with both hot pot and BBQ options, compared with \$19 at Hibachi. The price was justified by superior ingredients. It was also more fun to cook. I missed the self-service aspect, especially after being told that we could not have half orders of ingredients, no matter how much food went to waste. ■

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



Shannon Earhardt at Lua Brewing

Over chicken karaage, tomato bisque, fried tofu and passion fruit crème brûlée, we talked about television sports broadcasting.

Shannon Earhardt is sports reporter/anchor at KCCI TV 8. Last year she became the first woman ever named “sportscaster of the year” in Iowa by National Sports Media Association. Earhardt impressed us four years ago immediately after arriving in Des Moines directly from University of Oklahoma (OU) journalism school after growing up in Chicago.

We asked her to lunch, and she chose Lua Brewery. Over chicken karaage, tomato bisque, fried tofu and passion fruit crème brûlée, we talked about her business.

Why is Lua a favorite lunch place?

“Brewhouses are new to me. Des Moines has a lot, but I don’t remember any growing up in Chicago or at OU. The drinking age in Norman is 21, so underage drinking is restricted to house parties, mostly in the fraternities and sororities. I love the concept of sports bars. Plus, Lua is really close to the (KCCI) studio, and their food is great.”

What part of Chicago did she grow up in?

“Southwest, in Hinsdale. But I didn’t go to Hinsdale Central (high school) like all my middle school friends. I went to Fenwick. That meant taking both the train and the bus two ways, every day, but it was worth it. Even though I had to make all new friends, I was just more comfortable there.”

Is she a Cubs or White Sox fan?

“Sox, emphatically. My grandparents were friends with Carlton Fisk. We called him Pudge. He was at my grandparents’ wedding. I believe in inherited loyalties. I’m suspicious of a lot of Cubs and Bears fans who just jumped on the bandwagons now that the teams are good. That might be creeping in with the Sox now that they’re hot again. We’re playing 13 young players out of our farm system now. So, things are looking up.”

Is she more of a Bulls or Blackhawks fan?

“I like the Bulls, but the ‘Hawks are a passion. My dad was a hockey guy. Patrick Kane is my Michael Jordan. He’s back now with the Blackhawks and will lead a bunch of young kids. I love that chemistry. It’s going to be a good year.”

Does she have any other sports idols?

“Baker Mayfield. My first year at OU just missed overlapping his career there, but I like his leadership. Plus, he actually took time to recruit me to OU. I think Tampa Bay might be the right fit for him now. (Former KCCI sports reporter) Jeff Dubrof is working at a channel in Tampa Bay now. That’s his hometown, and he’s high on the (Tampa Bay) Bucs this year.”

KCCI is Earhardt’s first job out of college. It’s extremely rare that KCCI hires anchor chair talent directly out of college. Des Moines is a top 65 news market, and KCCI has dominated it for decades.

“I was told that. I suppose I’m lucky, but OU is a fabulous school for TV journalism. They prepared me well. The Dean of the Journalism college personally recruited me when I was in high school. I met him in Chicago with my parents. He promised to put me on camera immediately as a freshman at OUTV, the university channel. They followed through, too. I was doing ‘OU Nightly,’ ‘Sooner Sports Pad’ and ‘Game Day’ from my freshman year. They also helped get me an internship at a Tulsa TV station. I did that for two years.”

What were her favorite Big 12 road trips?

“Lawrence and especially Manhattan were great. K State fans really love their team. They remind me of Cyclone fans, passionate with a little chip on their shoulders. Waco was great, fabulous stadium. Stillwater was the worst. At OU we call them OS Who?”

Why did she choose OU?

“Journalism, period. It’s a great journalism school with its own TV channel. I played club soccer growing up, and I had been there for a tournament, so even though I didn’t know a single person who was going there, it felt familiar. And I had been through the routine before. In high school, I started over not knowing anyone at my school, too. I was an early commitment. After one campus visit, I told my parents I was going there.”

What made her want a career in sports TV?

“I was told I couldn’t do it. ‘Girls don’t get hired in sports casting.’ Even at OU, I was told to work on newscasting because sports were an unlikely career for a girl. I am competitive. Nothing fires me up like being told that I can’t do it.”

What is her favorite sport?

“Soccer. I also played volleyball, basketball and tennis, but I was planning to walk-on as a soccer player at OU, before journalism put me to work full time.”

Is she going through fan withdrawal after soccer’s World Cup? And who was she cheering for after the USA lost?

“Total withdrawal. And Norway. There was just something infectious about their team, and their fans. I was for Argentina after Norway lost. Again, their fans were the best. I wanted to join in their enthusiasm. And



then there’s Lionel Messi. He reminds me of Caitlyn Clark. They both seem to be carrying the weight of the world on their shoulders sometimes. And they do it with such grace.”

Earhardt’s enthusiasm plays extremely well to the camera. We have observed her work in person and discovered the enthusiasm is genuine. It’s the same off camera as on.

“I am authentic. What’s the point of faking it? It’s easy for me. I feel like I have the greatest job in the world. I can’t believe sometimes that I actually get paid to do it.”

Role models?

“Erin Andrews. She did it after being told she couldn’t. Laura Rutledge, Jenny Taft, Jenny Dell, Brooke Fletcher and Molly McGrath. Oh, and Taylor McGregor, even though she’s a Cubs fan. She’s fabulous. Keith Murphy is a role model anchorman.”

Football season is here. Where are Earhardt’s favorite football haunts in Iowa?

“I love how small towns come alive on Friday nights. I like getting there as early as possible and watching the stadium come to life. Pella and Madrid are really special that way. The kids all get in costume to show support. Gilbert, Newton, North Polk, ADM are all great places to go for games. Waukee is my favorite environment for big schools. Old Waukee.

“We have a new Friday night show this fall – ‘Friday Night Hype.’ Tune in, I’ll be there.” ■

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



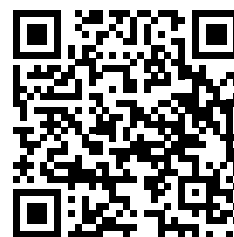
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BELLY UP TO:

BY JACKIE WILSON

False 9 brings old-school pub vibes to Valley Junction

Soccer, sports, cheap drinks and hearty pub fare make this new West Des Moines neighborhood bar a casual spot for happy hour, weekly food specials and weekend brunch.



FALSE 9 SOCIAL CLUB

206 Fifth St., West Des Moines

Monday - Friday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Saturday, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Sunday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

When you are craving a casual neighborhood pub with happy hour, drink specials and entrees less than \$18, head to The Junction.

Valley Junction in West Des Moines is home to the False 9 Social Club, which opened in March 2026. It occupies the former space of Mitzi's. Before that, it was a general store and deli.

False 9's name is an ode to soccer lingo. The nine refers to striker, or the person who scores the most goals. Oftentimes, the game is played with a false nine pulling defenders out of position to disrupt the defense, creating space for teammates to attack.

The owners are soccer fans with soccer matches playing on the tube. A rerun of the final World Cup played, and I can finally declare that I watched a game.

With black bar stools and a few booths, the weathered spot resembles a long lost bar of yesterday. There's kitschy music and sports posters on the walls, including a wall featuring Iowa athletes.

If you are looking for food and drink specials, arrive for happy hour, Monday through Friday. From 3-6 p.m., select drafts cost \$3; \$4 for house wine, draw and domestic beers and well drinks; \$5 for call liquor, craft beers and seltzers; and \$6 mules. Happy hour also takes place during the Valley Junction Farmers Market, so it is a hopping spot to imbibe.

The liquor selection doesn't include 20 vodka flavors or an extensive whiskey list, like some cocktail bars. False 9 serves straight-up, basic drinks — think Jack Daniels, Black Velvet or Jameson. One trend they embraced is the canned cocktail craze. Viewing the beverage cooler, I counted more than 80 different canned beverage flavors including beer, cocktails, non-alcoholic and THC-infused beverages.

Various food specials are offered five days a week. Tuesdays include all appetizers at half price. That means Birra egg rolls cost \$7, wings \$8 and pickle balls for \$6.50. No, these are not the kind of pickle balls you hit with a paddle. These trendy pickle-flavored, deep-fried balls are made with cream cheese, pickles and garlic, served with dipping sauce.

Casual pub fare rounds out the menu. The Steak Pie includes slow braised beef in a puff pastry with veggies and seasonings, served with gravy and mashed potatoes (\$14). On Mondays, the Steak Pie is only \$10.

On Thursdays, order \$10 jacket potatoes, which are a baked potato loaded with different toppings each week. Previous toppings include Birria, queso fresco, pico de gallo, or chili cheese. Whatever flavor, plan on



lots of cheese, butter and sour cream.

Look for fish and chips, bison burgers and several chicken dishes, including golden-fried half chicken with mashed potatoes. End with a British dessert, Banoffee Pie, made with graham cracker crust, topped with bananas, caramel and whip cream for \$7.

Still hungry on the weekend? Come for brunch, where favorites such as walnut blueberry pancakes are served.

Eclectic music, such as “Wipeout” and “A Tear in My Beer,” provided a backdrop for an entertaining, casual evening, nearly matching the music posters plastered on the walls.

False 9 is one neighborhood bar that is sure to be a long-time staple in The Junction. ■

Jackie Wilson has written hundreds of articles for CITYVIEW and the Iowa Living magazines. She has covered many ordinary people living extraordinary lives.



BOOK REVIEWS

COURTESY OF BEAVERDALE BOOKS

‘Crocodilopolis: A Novel’

This is a dreamy jungle of story, set in the dreamy jungle of Costa Rica, and filled with a lush prose that takes the dreaminess to yet another level. This is a book that very much fills itself to the brim with its themes with stunning results. Witty, weird and wise; It would be a great choice for a book club.

Seth and Osario were born to be both brothers and rivals to their family’s rich and powerful empire in Costa Rica. Set against each other from the beginning, the rift between them turns into a war that consumes them, their country and their souls with the same relentlessness of the eponymous crocodiles that haunt their story. Their ambitions and resentments finally come to a head in a spectacular political act of betrayal. Exile follows, and soon a murder plot both familiar and inevitable.

Hilarious and propulsive, I finished this both gasping and grinning in less than a weekend. I just couldn’t stop waiting for the next devious twist. A modern, fast-paced story that feels like myth; the perfect pitch balance of power politics, family fractures and decadent drama — I loved every second — even if I ended up dreaming of crocodiles. ■

— Review by Julie Goodrich



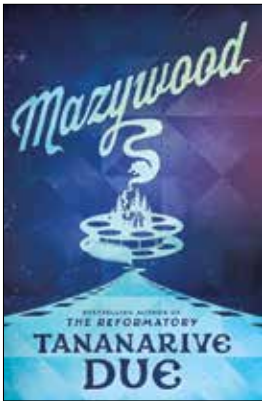
By John Manuel Arias
8/25/26
352 pages
\$29.99
Bloomsbury Publishing

‘Mazywood’

If you have been following these reviews for a while, you know I prefer to read anything that is not labeled “traditional.” If a book is hailed as a sterling example of its singular genre, I will go find something weirder. Like any good human, though, I am full of contradictions. Tananarive Due is a traditional, classic horror writer whose books I will pick up every time, without question. She’s just that good.

Johnny Washington is the grandson of a famous actress from the golden age of movies. Continuing his family’s legacy, he’s a talented screenwriter but has recently hit a wall. Taking some time away with his family at his grandmother’s cabin, he is forced to confront the shadows in grandmother’s history; the pain, sorrow and ever-present weight of racism and the past will not let go easily.

Twisting between the past and the present with sharp pacing, this is a brilliant story full of dread, daring, and rage — and what inheritance really means. The history and the horror are blended perfectly, and I loved the theme of loneliness threading through it all. No one writes “traditional” horror quite like Tananarive Due, and I hope she never stops. ■ — Review by Julie Goodrich



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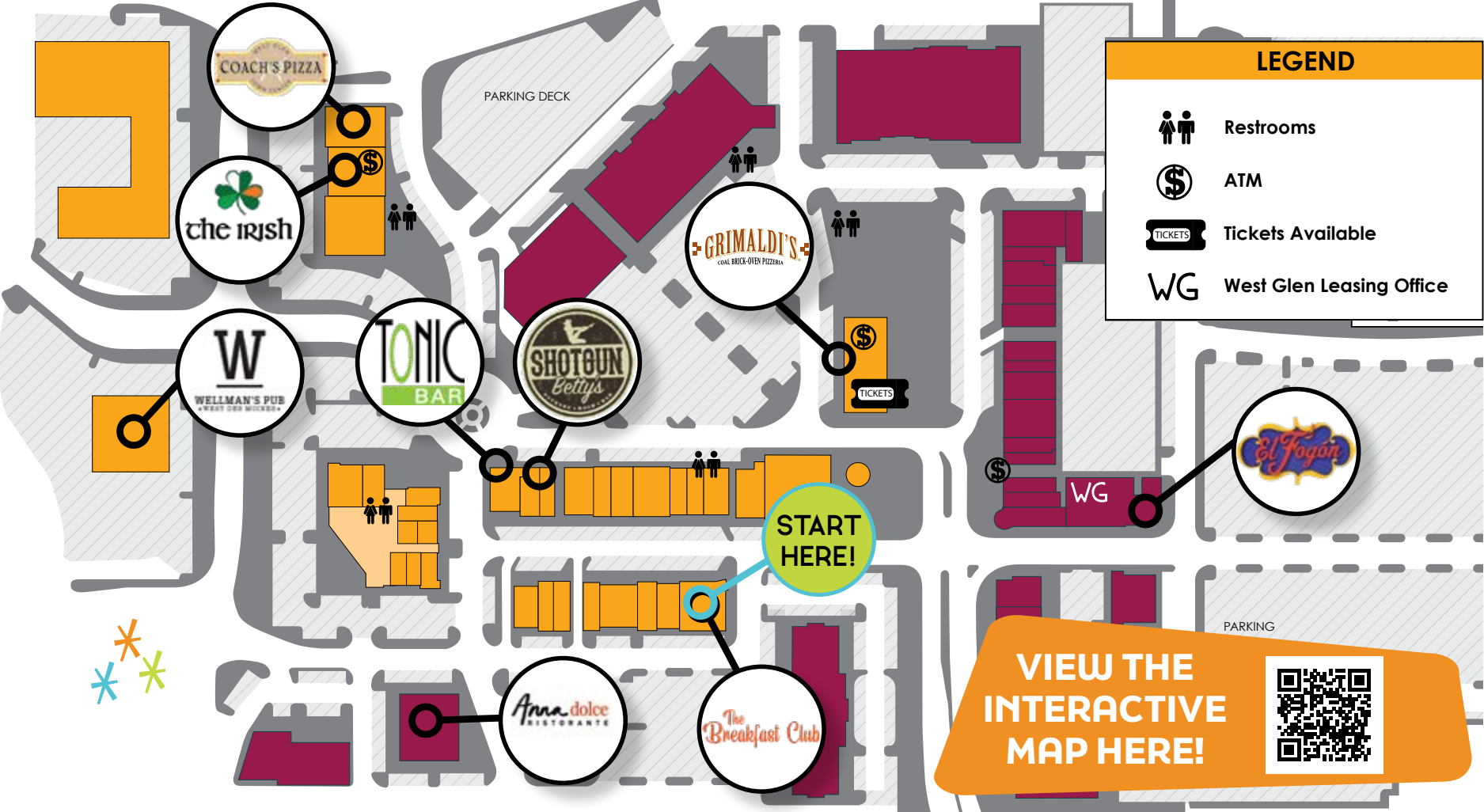
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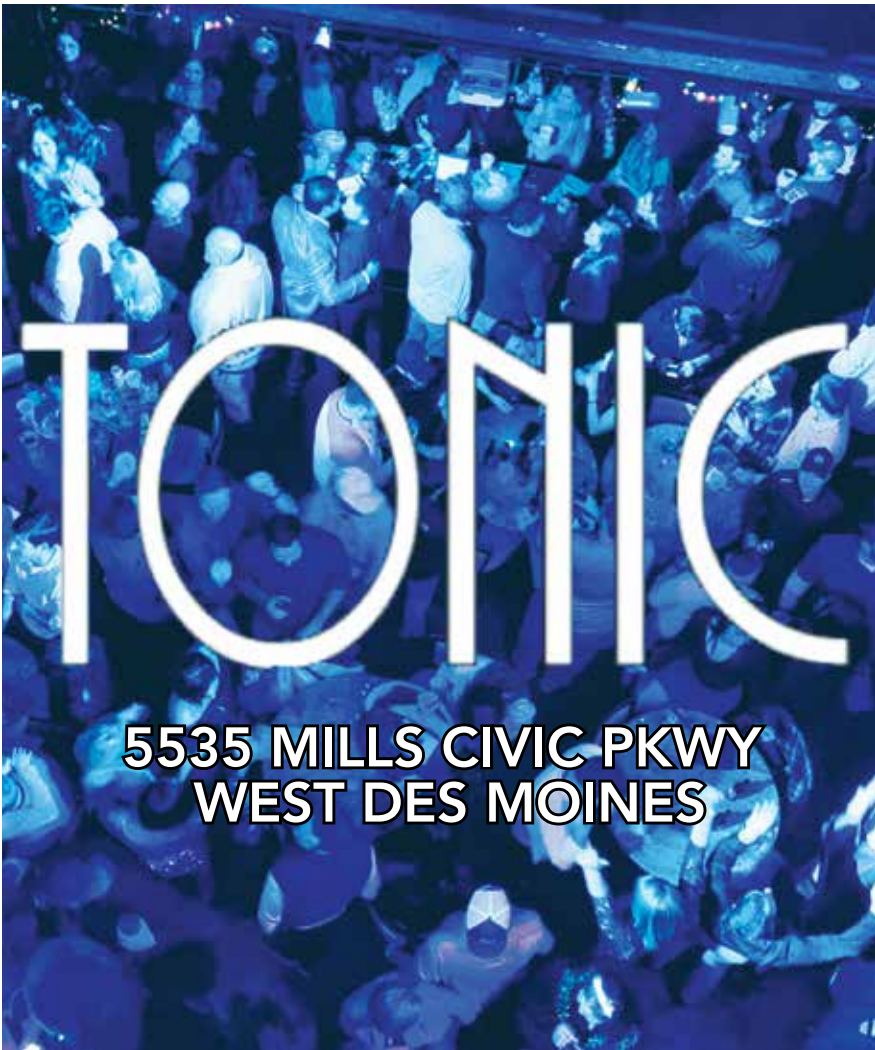
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DES MOINES FORGOTTEN

BY KRISTIAN DAY

The night Des Moines started to feel like home

People's Court, Gwar and a vanished downtown nightlife bring back memories of growing up — and growing older — in Des Moines.

September is here. School is back in session. The Iowa State Fair is over, which is Iowa's official way of announcing that summer has packed its bags. It is also my birthday month. On Sept. 11, I will turn 41. I have lived in Des Moines since 2007. I moved here from Denver, where entire neighborhoods seemed to come alive at night. Bands played at places such as the Ogden Theatre and the Gothic Theatre; when the shows ended, everyone seemed to scatter into the surrounding bars.

As a 22-year-old moving to a new city, I had no idea what Des Moines would be like. Whenever I asked about nightlife, the answer was essentially the same: Court Avenue. That was about it. The East Village was still a year or two away from becoming the destination it is today. There were dive bars scattered around town. Lime Lounge, at 2706 Ingersoll Ave., always seemed slightly out of place. GT's was there. Alpine was alive and apparently on its third life. The Locust Tap was where many of my soon-to-be friends tended bar. But for a night out, Court Avenue was the place.

At 216 Court Ave., People's Court occupied the second floor of a three-story building. Above it was Liar's Club, owned by Frankie Farrell before he opened the Gas Lamp in 2010. Liar's Club was not really my scene. People's Court was. It was a solid, medium-sized venue, similar in feel to Wooly's. Down the street was Vaudeville Mews, the darling of downtown and a place that remains sorely missed.

People's Court had an interesting history. It began in Ames as People's Bar and Grill, at 2430 Lincoln Way, opened by Tom Zmolek. It became a popular stop for some of Ames' legendary punk bands, including Total Passover and Grain USA. Then, in 2007, the landlord decided not to renew the leases of several tenants. People's Bar and Grill closed May 31. That same day, People's Court opened in Des Moines. The new venue could hold as many as 900 people and boasted 100 beers on tap. It also had a brand-new sound system, which probably came in handy considering it had to compete with whatever was coming through the floor from Liar's Club.

You entered from the street and climbed the stairs to the second floor.

Around it were restaurants that are now part of



Bury Your Dead played at People's Court in 2010.



Des Moines history: Spaghetti Works, Court Avenue Brewing and, my favorite, 4th Street Italian Beef. Java Joes on Fourth Street stayed open late, providing coffee and sandwiches for those who needed to sober up, fuel up or simply keep the night going.

In 2012, I saw Gwar's "Return of the World Maggot Tour" at People's Court. It was the last Gwar tour I would see with Dave Brockie onstage before his death in 2014. Ghoul, Municipal Waste and Legacy of Disorder also played that night.

I remember walking out onto Court Avenue afterward covered in fake blood and various bodily substances. The twenty-somethings were not ready for this.

I vaguely remember walking to 4th Street Italian Beef after the show. The restaurant was on the bottom floor of the Randolph Hotel, where I sat while Tommy Farrell showed me a magazine featuring his brother — for the third time.

Today, 216 Court Ave. is home to The Stuffed Olive. People's closed in 2019. 4th Street Italian Beef is gone. Java Joes closed in 2021. The buildings



Halestorm played at People's Court in 2010.

remain, but much of the city I knew at 22 has disappeared.

Maybe that is what birthdays are really good for. They force you to notice that the places you once thought would always be there are not. The bars close. The bands move on. The restaurants disappear. And, somehow, you become the person telling younger people about the places they missed.

That is why I was especially happy to receive a recording of Total Passover's final show at People's Bar and Grill in Ames in 1993, courtesy of the band's drummer. You can listen to it for free at Iowa Basement Tapes on Bandcamp. Give it a listen. It is a little piece of Iowa history — and a reminder that while the buildings, bars and bands may change, the best part of a city is what we carry with us when we leave them. ■

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



FILM REVIEW

BY DAVID ROWLEY

'Facing El Chapo' offers a suspenseful standoff — after the first act

A routine traffic stop places two officers next to Mexico's most ruthless cartel kingpin.

Netflix's "Facing El Chapo" (original title "La Captura") makes an unusual bet: Instead of building its story around Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, it turns the spotlight on two ordinary federal officers who stumble into the biggest arrest of their careers.

Director Chava Cartas opens with Officer Arturo Carmona (Alfonso Herrera), who is haunted by nightmares from a past shooting and buried under money problems as his wife's third pregnancy adds pressure to an already stretched household. It's a deliberately small, human problem — how does a cop with two kids and a baby on the way cover the bills? — and it works precisely because it's unglamorous. Viewers aren't asked to root for a hero; they're asked to worry about a guy picking up dangerous night shifts to keep his family afloat.

Unfortunately, the pacing doesn't deliver. The film spends a long stretch of its first act establishing Arturo's home life, his new partnership with the wary, watch-flashing Rosales (Noé Hernández), and the day-to-day grind of patrol work before the actual inciting incident — pulling over a car that happens to be carrying El Chapo himself — finally arrives.

Once the arrest happens, though, the movie shifts gears, and this is where the excitement genuinely spikes. The rest of the runtime plays out almost in real time: two officers alone on the road with the most wanted man in the country, unsure which of their own colleagues might be compromised, waiting for backup that may or may not arrive in time. That central uncertainty — who can be trusted? — is the film's strongest engine. It doesn't need elaborate action to generate tension; it needs a car, a radio and the constant possibility that the next person in uniform might not be on their side.

El Chapo (Hector Kotsifakis) becomes the film's best tool for keeping viewers locked in during this stretch. He doesn't rage or threaten outright; he negotiates, needles and dangles enormous sums of money in the officers' faces, forcing the audience to sit with the same temptation the characters are supposedly resisting. It's a classic hostage-in-plain-sight dynamic, and it works.

But here's the catch: the film wants audiences to feel the pull of that temptation, yet its heroes never truly waver. Rosales gets a fleeting moment of hesitation over the money and drops it almost immediately, never to raise it again. Arturo never considers it at all. For a story built entirely around the question of what these two men will do under pressure, the answer is never in doubt.

Suspense depends on uncertainty, and a film that



"Facing El Chapo"

R | 1 hour, 31 minutes

Director: Chava Cartas

Writers: Bernardo Esquinca, Héctor de Mauleón

Stars: Alfonso Herrera, Noé Hernández, Hector Kotsifakis

keeps insisting its protagonists are incorruptible is quietly deflating its own stakes. It's easy to sense the film's reluctance to complicate the real-life officers it's honoring, but that same reluctance flattens them into figures rather than people, which makes it more difficult to stay emotionally locked in even as the countdown keep ticking.

Even so, what keeps the film from losing its audience entirely is craft outside the writing. The cinematography leans into cool, tense color work that gives even ordinary scenes — a gas station standoff, a motel hideout — the sense of dread. Viewers who've spent time with films like "End of Watch" will recognize the DNA: the partnership-under-fire structure, the sense that a single wrong turn could end everything. That familiarity is a double-edged sword for audiences — comforting for genre fans, predictable for anyone hoping for surprises.

Adding another layer of pull, the film benefits from being rooted in a real, relatively recent event. Knowing this happened — that two officers really did find themselves boxed into this exact situation in January 2016 — adds a layer of investment that fiction alone wouldn't generate, even when the on-screen conversations feel a little too neat to be verbatim history.

At just more than 90 minutes, "Facing El Chapo" is most engaging exactly when it trusts its premise and does not try to turn the story into a large-scale action spectacle. Instead, it focuses on what happens when two ordinary officers find themselves in an extraordinary situation. This makes the film feel more personal, as the danger is seen through men who have little idea of what they have walked into.

For audiences willing to sit through a slower opening act, the back half delivers a tense, well-shot thriller. ■

PREVIEWS

BY DAVID ROWLEY

"The Dog Stars"

R | 1 hour, 58 minutes

Director: Ridley Scott

Writers: Peter

Heller, Mark L.

Smith, Christopher

Wilkinson

Stars: Jacob Elordi, Margaret Qualley, Josh Brolin

Set in a post-apocalyptic world in which a virus has wiped out most of humanity, survivors are being terrorized by roaming scavengers called "Reapers." The protagonist is Hig, a pilot who survived the flu that killed everyone he knew, his wife included. He lives in the hangar of a small, abandoned airport with his dog, his only neighbor being a gun-toting ex-Marine. Hig sometimes heads off in his 1956 Cessna, where he can fish and pretend things are how they used to be. When a random transmission somehow beams through his radio, the voice ignites a hope deep inside him that a better life might exist if he flies a bit further. He risks it all to chase a possible haven in Grand Junction.



"Buddy"

R | 1 hour, 35 minutes

Director: Casper Kelly

Writers: Casper Kelly,

Jamie King

Stars: Cristin Milioti,

Delaney Quinn, Tophér Grace

Remember Buddy — the bright orange unicorn and star of that classic children's television show who brought joy and life lessons into your living room? Inside the colorful world of "It's Buddy!", a group of children spend their days singing, dancing and helping Buddy spread happiness. But when one child refuses to play along, Buddy is not pleased, and cracks begin to appear in this seemingly perfect world.



"Coyote vs. ACME"

PG | 1 hour, 41

minutes

Director: Dave Green

Writers: Samy Burch,

James Gunn, Jeremy

Slater

Stars: Will Forte, Lana

Condor, John Cena

After all of the products made by ACME Corporation backfire on Wile E. Coyote in his pursuit of the Road Runner, he hires an equally unlucky human attorney to sue the company. When Wile E.'s lawyer finds out that his former law firm's intimidating boss is ACME's CEO, he teams up with Wile E. to win the court case against him. ■



Dynamic story, music anchor ‘Come From Away’

A season of connection, compassion and community theater

One of America’s best community theatres, the Des Moines Community Playhouse, does stellar work in what it produces. Comedies, dramas, musicals — all developed through a professional production team and the invaluable contributions of thousands of volunteer hours for each show. With a rich tradition that blends a strong book and score with powerful messaging, their season-opening musical promises to be a dandy.

“Come From Away,” the 2017 musical, was nominated for seven Tony Awards, winning for Best Direction of a Musical. The show was inspired by events in Gander, Newfoundland, during the week following the Sept. 11 attacks. Thirty-eight planes, carrying about 7,000 passengers, were ordered to land unexpectedly at Gander International Airport. Its characters, based on actual Gander residents and passengers, tell a story of compassion, fear, resolve and love. It also showcases the courage of the locals who housed and fed the stranded travelers, and acknowledges the relationships and conflicts that were created.

A brief exchange with Katy Merriman, the show’s director and the Playhouse’s Artistic Director, reveals wonderful insight into this production.

CS: Talk about the heart and soul of “Come from Away.”

KM: The heart is human connection. “Come From Away” takes a step beyond the singular day (Sept. 11 attacks) and affirms that in the midst of this terrifying attack, there were also people from around the globe who opened their homes and hearts to welcome strangers and take care of people trying to cope with this tragedy. For as much shock and destruction as the attacks on 9/11 brought, there was even more hope, strength, connection, and determination to make the world better.

CS: Describe some takeaways from “Come from Away.”

KM: One of the most striking messages is summarized at the end of the play when two plane passengers visit the Dover Fault, (when) millions of years ago, two continents crashed together at that spot. They separated, but a little part of each continent was left behind. When the “plane people” leave Gander, everyone has crashed together and left parts of themselves with each other that will always remain. They’ve changed each other forever. It feels like confirmation that most people will take care of each other when it really comes down to it.

CS: How does this being anchored in a real event adds to the power of this show?

KM: Many plays and musicals are based on real



“Come From Away” cast members, Dean Wipperman, bodhran, Maggie Stagner, violin, F Michael Miller, bass, Tyler Heep, percussion (he’s got the ugly stick in the photo) and Anna Stenson, mandolin. Credit: Steve Gibbons, Des Moines Playhouse

historical events, but I haven’t directed many where every person in the cast remembers it and has a personal story about where they were when it happened. The youngest members of the cast were in elementary school and had a vastly different experience of the 9/11 attacks from another cast member, who was living in New York City when it happened. There is an inherent understanding and a deep respect for this event and story, and it leads to very connected and meaningful performances. We are fortunate to get to honor the 25th anniversary of 9/11 on our opening night.

New seasons beckon

Now is a perfect time to make performing arts plans for the coming season, as most theatre producers are encouraging engagement through special ticket packaging deals. From national Broadway tours to dynamic regionally produced theatre, a bounty awaits cultural adventurers.

Under guidance from their new CEO, Des Moines Performing Arts continues its legacy of touring productions. With its savvy track record of investing in Broadway shows, DMPA often welcomes new shows early in their touring schedules. “Spamalot” begins the new Willis Broadway Series. Add other series — Temple Comedy, Dance, Family and more — and the beginning of a properly filled calendar of superb shows is awaiting patrons.

The Des Moines Playhouse anchors its producing with its Signature Series and Kate Goldman Family Series. These Playhouse series begin with “Come from Away” and “Junie B. Jones in Boo...and Mean It,” respectively. Add a healthy sprinkling of other programming and shows, and this nationally recognized community theatre has plenty to offer.

BARE BOARDS CHATTER

Des Moines Performing Arts. “Wicked.” Through Sept. 20.

Carousel Theatre of Indianola. “110 Stories.” Sept. 10-13

Des Moines Playhouse. “Come From Away.” Sept. 11 through Oct 4.

Tallgrass Theatre Company. “She Kills Monsters: Young Adventurers Edition.” Sept. 11-27.

Des Moines Performing Arts – Temple Theater. “Rewired. Live with Vanessa McNeal.” Sept. 11.

Des Moines Performing Arts – Stoner Theater. Made in the Midwest. Dickie. Sept. 17.

Des Moines Symphony. “Unity – American Mosaic & West Side Story.” Sept. 26-27.

Des Moines Performing Arts – Live at the Temple Theater. Alysha Brilla. Oct 2.

Iowa Stage Theatre Company. “Reefer Madness.” Oct 2-11.

CAP Theatre – CAP Radio Hour: Poe’s Dark Tales. Oct 2-4.

About Time Theatre. “Building the Wall”. Oct 2-11.

Des Moines Performing Arts – Temple Theater. “Bluebird Improv.” Oct 3.

Tallgrass Theatre, Iowa Stage Theatre, Des Moines Young Artists’ Theatre, CAP Theatre and Carousel Theatre have their season schedules on their websites. As with DMPA and the Playhouse, they offer ticketing packages with discounts and first-booking benefits. Add consideration for the Des Moines Symphony and Ballet Des Moines as well.

Other producers in the area invite performing arts patrons to consider their shows as well. About Time Theatre, a relative newcomer, offers immersive and adventurous experiences in “found spaces.” Midwest Theatre tours its namesake region, periodically landing in Des Moines to present a show. Urbandale Community Theatre produces one show each summer. ■

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.



Lani Eclatt brings Selena's legacy to life on Des Moines stage

Iowa's 2024 Latin Artist of the Year celebrates the late Tejano star's influence with a Selena Tribute concert at the Iowa Latino Heritage Festival Sept. 27.

As a multitalented musician, Lani Eclatt sings and plays the guitar, piano and accordion. She was named Latin Artist of the Year at the Iowa Music Awards and performs a mix of cover and original songs, sung in both Spanish and English. The band covers songs that range from Selena, Shakira, Michael Jackson and Madonna to obscure Latin rock group songs.

Eclatt, along with the Lani Full Band, will perform a Selena Tribute concert at the Iowa Latino Heritage Festival, held Sept. 26-27 at Western Gateway Park.

Eclatt performed solo acts for six years and formed the band in 2022. One popular performance is Selena Tribute act. Selena Quintanilla-Pérez was a rising Mexican-American Tejano singer who was killed at age 23 in 1995. Eclatt's band performed recently for a tribute concert commemorating the 30-year anniversary since Selena's passing.

She says Selena's impact and legacy of combining American and Latino heritage was important to molding her view of life as a musician.

"Growing up, we listened to her songs. She was a reminder of what women can do in the Tejano scene and across the Latino sphere of music. I'm Columbian America," she said. "We're not necessarily the exact same ethnicity, but she represents a lot of that first-generation Latino American personality."

Selena was an inspiration to Eclatt as she explored music.

"I loved that she was the first-gen representation of the fusion of American and Mexican culture. It was nice to know that somebody else had done that, especially a woman. She was not just Mexican, but

she was Mexican American, and her interest in the American pop scene from the 1980s and 1990s influenced her performances, her music and her fashion. That's why she was such a revolutionary at the time and created a pathway for women to move forward in the Latino music scene."

At age 13, Eclatt began writing songs, first seated at a piano, along with a chord book, a pencil and a notebook. She wrote her feelings in poetry form, added melodies and played on the piano, in a mix of English and Spanish.

"I like to make it easy for people to understand, but sometimes you just got to write what's on your heart, and Spanish will convey those emotions the right way."

She graduated with a bachelor's degree in vocal music. In 2024 she was named Latin Artist of the Year for the Iowa Music Awards. She says it was an honor to be recognized in Iowa.

"It's amazing to feel like I'm representing the first-generation Latino-Americans who were born here and raised with their cultural heritage like I was," she said. "It's truly a privilege, and I'm excited to continue pushing forward and put Iowa on the national map for music, arts and culture."

Her favorite aspect of performing is connecting with the energy of audience and "bringing the party."

"It's fun for me, knowing we're working at creating something bigger than ourselves when we're on stage as a band," she said. "The full band offers more energy. so it feels more like a party and we're bringing something different to the crowd."

She says supporting local live music in Des Moines



MUSIC

is vital to her career.

"Supporting and showing up when your friends invite you to their gig, paying the ticket or being there as a support is so crucial," she said. "I'm part of a younger generation of musicians who want to put Des Moines on the map."

At 26, Eclatt's goal is to eventually make music her full-time career.

"We artists like to dream big," she said.

Catch Lani Eclatt for a Selena Tribute concert on Sept. 27. For more information on other performers at the Iowa Latino Heritage Festival, visit www.latinoheritagefestival.org. ■

SOUND ADVICE

BY JACKIE WILSON

PorchFest DSM is back for its 5th year on Sept. 13 in the Union Park area in Des Moines. This rolling festival features 20 bands playing on various porches and grassy lawns in the area. Musicians performing includes **Willie Mac and the Lost Cousins, Bob Pace and Steve E. George, Velvet Trio** and others. The event is free and attendees are encouraged to bring tip money and folding chairs to the event. For a map and complete line-up of musicians, visit www.porchfestdsm.org.

Yachtley Crew, a Los Angeles-based cover band, performs in West Des Moines' Val Air Ballroom on Sept. 23 to play all the smooth cover tunes of the 1970s and 1980s. Tickets are \$46 from axs.com.

In celebration of the 250th anniversary of American independence, Hoyt Sherman Place is offering a free concert on Sept. 13, featuring the **34th Army Band of the Iowa National Guard**. Concert begins at 3 p.m. Arrive at 1 p.m. for interactive activities for all ages.

The **Beaverdale Fall Festival** takes place on Sept.

18-19. This year's free event includes more than a dozen musical acts on three stages. Bands include **Stark Raving Madge, The Other Brothers, Sharane Callister and The Feel Right band**, among others. For a complete schedule, visit www.fallfestival.org/schedule. ■

Jackie Wilson has written hundreds of articles for CITYVIEW and the Iowa Living magazines. She covers ordinary people living extraordinary lives.



Punching above our weight

Why Des Moines arts are world-class.



A DMMO curtain call

Des Moines is a triple A city. We are proud of that. The major leagues are close enough in Kansas City, Minneapolis and Chicago. We embrace our size and limited aspirations as a tradeoff for escaping the rat races that accompany major league status. We choose blithe over blight and bright lights.

We restrict our bragging to girls basketball, agricultural production and “our state fair.” Then some outsider visits and points out superlative things that we take for granted. That happens every summer when the opera world sends its elite correspondents to Indianola to cover the entirety of Des Moines Metro Opera’s season.

They make it harder each year to ignore the fact that our opera is elite on a worldwide level. This summer, 14 sold-out shows played to audiences from six countries and 42 states.

Among them was James Sohre, the director of Opera Las Vegas. Writing in “Opera Today,” he declared: “Des Moines Metro Opera’s unsurpassingly ravishing production of Karol Szymanowski’s ‘King Roger’ has joined the ranks of the finest performances I have ever experienced... If Twyla Tharp and Mark Morris had a love child it might be Isaac Martin Lerner who provided stylish and evocative choreography that was all pulsing limbs, and ethereal lifts, and carnal undulations. The dancers were exceptionally gifted and added immeasurably to the mystery and mayhem.”

Sohre concluded, “There is simply no other

company in the world that could have created such an intimate, overpowering ‘Gesamtkunstwerk’ with such a fever pitch high level of artistry. Full stop. Opera is a fusion of so many disciplines, and it takes a consummate degree of quality control to meld so many disparate talents together. But that is just what Des Moines Metro Opera consistently does, opera after opera after opera, after year after year after year.” And Sohre has seen a thing or two in Vegas.

Autumn brings us back to the business of an AAA town. Music is still at the helm with new seasons commencing for Des Moines Symphony Orchestra (DMSO) and Civic Music Association (CMA), which begins its second century bringing major league talent to our friendly confines.

It looks like a really good kickoff for both. The Harlem String Quartet joins DMSO for Michael Abels’ “Urban Legends.” That is part of the September 2026-27 celebration of America 250, which begins with Kevin Put’s “Heartland” and Linda Robbins Coleman’s “In Good King Charles’s Golden Days” before “American Mosaic” by Peter Boyer and video artist Joe Sohm. It concludes with Leonard Bernstein’s “Symphonic Dances from West Side Story.”

CMA’s 101st lineup begins Oct. 2 with a collaboration by Boston Brass and Turtle Island blending classical, jazz, and crossover styles reimagining of “Romeo and Juliet.” After, they move from Kabalevsky and Prokofiev to Elvis Costello’s



Jeffrey Gibson, American, Mississippi Choctaw/Cherokee, born 1972. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth. Photo: Chris Roque, courtesy of UAP | Urban Art Projects

“Juliet Letters” and Bernstein’s “West Side Story.”

In a special musical treat this fall, St. John’s Lutheran brings Australian guitarist Andrew Blanch and Argentine singer Maria Eugenia Nieva here Sept. 20 on their “Spanish Romance” tour. That evening begins with a solo Spanish guitar recital J.S. Bach to the works of Spanish Maestros Fernando Sor, Francisco Tárrega, and Manuel de Falla. Then it turns 20th-century masterpieces by Astor Piazzolla and Antonio Lauro. The concert’s finale brings mezzo-soprano Maria Eugenia Nieva on stage for love songs from Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Venezuela and Puerto Rico.

Beyond musical fronts, Jeffrey A. Gibson joins the Des Moines Art Center’s (DMAC) permanent collection. He is an American Mississippi Choctaw/Cherokee painter and sculptor. His monumental sculpture “nashoba holba/wayaha/coyote/they are witty and transform themselves in order to guide us” is the latest acquisition of DMAC. Originally presented at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gibson’s sculpture is an homage to the animal kingdom. ■

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



IOWA ARTIST



'Art for Everyone'

Des Moines gallery owner Liz Lidgett's guide to collecting on any budget.

BY JACKIE WILSON

Artwork offered on the auction block frequently makes headlines. A Van Gogh painting sold for \$62 million. A self-portrait by Frida Kahlo fetched \$54 million.

Yet, not all artwork costs the price of a home, a car or even a new sofa. One local gallery owner wants art lovers to embrace art offered at all budgets and has written a book dedicated to fostering a love of art for everyone.

Liz Lidgett, owner of Liz Lidgett Gallery + Design, offers tips and resources for art-related inspiration in her new book, "Art for Everyone: How to Collect Art & Personalize Your Space on Any Budget."

Lidgett wrote the book to empower people to find their own style and begin an art collection. She dispels the myth that big bucks are needed to purchase art.

"For a long time, folks thought you needed to be a millionaire to buy art. Auctions made people feel like they could never buy it," she said.

The book takes a nuts-and-bolts approach to collecting art, as well as decorating, installing and creating a gallery wall, while tying in various room design elements.

"Art For Everyone" is full of brightly colored pages and high-quality photos throughout. Approximately 250 artists' works are represented in the book, along

with art walls from Iowa homeowners.

The book hit No. 1 in its category on Amazon Books. It's sold at the Museum of Modern Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art and Des Moines Arts Center.

"It's always been my dream to be in a museum gift shop," she reflects.

Instagram followers have offered Lidgett feedback about the book.

"They took the art down and put it up in a new place, making everything look different in the house. The client finally felt like they found the right place to hang it," she said. "It feels like we are succeeding in our mission."

Lidgett grew up as the "art kid" at Roosevelt High School. She attended college for art history, journalism and public art, and became an in-house art curator for corporate collections.

She served as an art adviser and opened her own art gallery in the East Village in 2019. The gallery, now located on Ingersoll Avenue, represents 75 artists while Lidgett assists clients across the U.S. in finding that perfect piece of art.

The gallery's public art division has created more than 100 murals across central Iowa and puts on new

shows featuring different artists each month. Her goal is to have at least 50% of the art displayed by women.

"In most galleries, women only count for 13% of the artists represented. We're trying to combat that," she said. "We are doing our best to get rid of the starving artist stigma. Art collecting can be exclusive. We want to be inclusive."

Lidgett says Des Moines nurtures artists and values art.

"I feel like it's the right place at the right time. We have so many talented and successful artists from Iowa, making a difference in our community and in the art world."

Lidgett wants others to experience art. She says she is personally drawn to art because of how it can make a person feel, noting how it is a human experience seeing a painting and wanting to be a part of it.

"It's surreal to have my book in the art world, helping clients live in a home they love," she said. "It makes my heart sing." ■

Jackie Wilson has written hundreds of articles for CITYVIEW and the Iowa Living magazines. She covers ordinary people living extraordinary lives.



JOE'S NEIGHBORHOOD

BY JOE WEEG

The wonderful serendipity of showing up

My mom always enjoyed a good funeral.

Up until she was nearly 98, she traveled many miles to attend the funeral of someone's mother or father, or aunt or uncle. Did she know them? Maybe — perhaps by the slimmest of threads — the mother of a friend of a friend of my oldest sister. But my mom religiously went. She sat through the service, went to the burial site, and then attended the church luncheon that followed. And the mourners loved her, this little old lady in her church best. It meant something to them and something to her.

Yup, my mom showed up.

Of course, my siblings and I made endless fun of her behind her back — as loving children will do (as I'm sure my adult children do). Why would anyone go to so many funerals?

Years ago, when my boss was then Polk County Attorney John Sarcone, I made a decision declining to prosecute a case in West Des Moines. That was not what the West Des Moines Police Department wanted. They were not happy.

Sarcone said, "Joe, why don't you go out to the West Des Moines PD and explain your reasoning?"

Well, there were a lot of reasons to not go out. Let's start with they were going to yell at me.

Sarcone would not be put off. So off I went to meet the unhappy officers at the West Des Moines Police Department.

Lo and behold, a crowd was waiting for me. Yikes. I'm going to get yelled at by a room full of cops. This is going to stink, and I'm going to feel crappy. So I gave them my arguments as to why I decided what I decided — and, folks, this is not a fairy tale — they yelled at me. A lot of opinionated people. Yuck!

That night, Sarcone called and asked how it went. I told him I was roundly hated. He commiserated and thanked me for going.

But the next day I started hearing from the cops in West Des Moines. Cop after cop reached out to me. They still thought I was completely wrong, that I had clearly lost my marbles — but that isn't why they called. They wanted to thank me for showing up. My showing up and taking the heat eclipsed everything else. Showing up counted.

My goodness. Who knew?

Daniel Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson wrote a book called "The Power of Showing Up: How Parental Presence Shapes Who Our Kids Become and How Their Brains Get Wired." Yes, it's a catchy title — and fairly indicting of my parenting. But they

explain the importance of showing up. The book is grounded in attachment theory (which, yes, helps explain why I want to hide in my closet) and neurobiology ("Anything we give attention to creates new links in the brain").

Siegel and Bryson make a bold claim: No matter how imperfect of a parent you are, no matter how many times you have screwed up discipline or rewards — or whatever else parenting books recommend — you need only to default to one thing: show up. And that's enough.

I believe the same rules apply to us as adults. Showing up is what counts.

Now don't get me wrong, showing up to face the music rarely ended in kudos in my career. A young woman from one large family died in a car accident where members of another large family were involved. Very Hatfields-and-McCoys situation. I declined charges, and at Sarcone's insistence, met with both families. Trust me, both families hated me. And neither family reached out and said "attaboy" for showing up. Nope. It was miserable.

But that was all right. Showing up was the right thing to do.

By the way, Sarcone also went to funerals. A lot. He knew people, and he made a point of being present to honor the dead and the living. I would see him at work all decked out in his dark suit, heading out to another funeral. I was impressed. He showed up.

And if you're concerned about what to say or what to do when you show up, no worries. Showing up is enough. My mom didn't speak wise words at those funerals she attended. She didn't entertain the crowd. She didn't gossip. She didn't perform for anyone's enjoyment. She wore her Sunday dress without any expectation that it would be on the cover of "Vanity Fair." Her purse contained giant wrap-around sunglasses and crackers and cheese and a water bottle. She had an emergency grocery sack in the car for her other food items in case there was a nuclear disaster. And there she was in all her glory. She showed up and smiled and listened. That was enough.

My mom died last year. Her funeral was in Boone. As I looked out from the family seats in the front row, I saw the emptiness created by living longer than your friends and peers. They had passed a decade before my mom. And we, her kids still left alive, were all old men and women ourselves.

But there in the back, sitting alone, was Shane Goodman, my CITYVIEW editor. Lordy. He caught me by surprise — in a wonderful way. As I'm sure John Sarcone did for mourners back in the day. And as my mom did until the end of her life. They showed up.

There is a wonderful serendipity to showing up — no one expects it, and it is a lovely surprise. So get ready. Pack your bag with cheese and crackers and a water bottle. It's time to show up. ■

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





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From pack leader to perfect pair

How two corgis changed Allison Kaiman's life

When Allison Kaiman moved back to Iowa with her dog, Bandit, a corgi, she admits her mischievous dog got away with “bloody murder.”

“I felt bad for Bandit with all the changes he encountered. He was running the show, where he was the pack leader,” she said. “I wasn’t the pack leader.”

One of her friends suggested dog trainer Kim Smith, who helped with Bandit’s behavioral issues. Smith also runs a pack dog training program, Chasing The Wild, where she takes dogs on hikes, including Bandit.

Smith needed another dog to assist with her pack training in Utah.

“I volunteered Bandit, and he went to Utah with her. He got to hike the rocks and all kinds of stuff,” Kaiman said. “She sent me dog photos. I said, ‘My dog is doing things I’ve never done.’ My dog is living his best life.”

Bandit now goes on hikes at least once a week, which has helped instill confidence.

“We know the boundaries now,” she said. “It’s been a really great experience. He gets to play in the field, get dirty and stinky, but comes home and sleeps for two days because he’s so worn out.”

Kaiman noticed Smith’s corgi, Otis, who went on hikes with Bandit. Otis had recently been surrendered and was staying temporarily with the trainer.

Kaiman and her partner, James Dawson, took Otis for the weekend to see if the two corgis could get along. They did, and the pair took Otis home the next day.

Since Kaiman picked Bandit as a puppy, Dawson didn’t have a dog of his own. After bringing Otis home, he and Dawson bonded.

“It was funny. Here’s a dog who needs a family, and we needed a dog that needs James,” she said.

The duo takes both dogs on vacation. The humans and dogs all love being at the Lake of the Ozarks, riding on a paddleboard, boat, wave runner or kayak.

When traveling, the two corgis sit in car seats, strapped in.

“It’s just like just like our kids. They jump in, each knowing which side to sit



Allison Kaiman and James Dawson with Bandit and Otis.

on,” she said.

Through the hiking program, the dogs have made friends with massive dogs five times their size. Thanks to his weekly hikes, Bandit is now calm when approached by other dogs.

“He’s excited and wants to say hello to everybody,” she said. “There’s no pulling on leashes and being out of control anymore.”

The dogs love playing fetch and catching the Frisbee.

“Otis has rejuvenated Bandit, and now Bandit wants to play all the time, too,” she said.

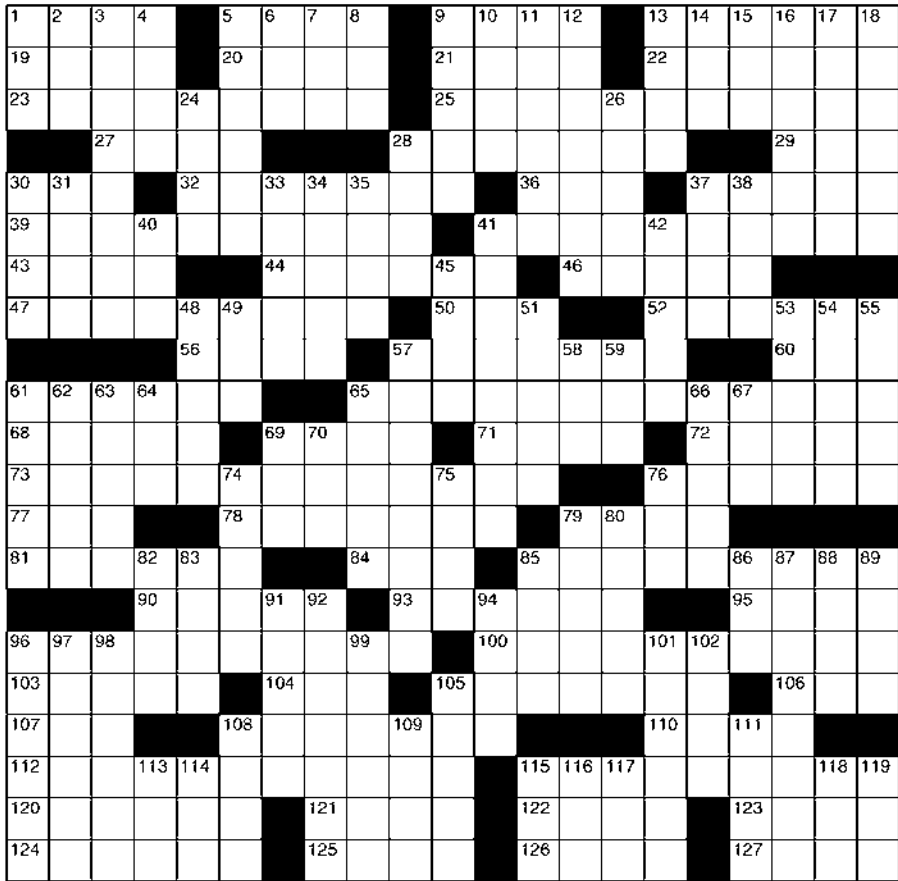
Allison likes corgis because of their playful, smart and protective nature.

“With their big ears and short legs, I feel like that’s kind of me, because I’m a short person and we go together. People are enamored with corgis and like these happy-go-lucky, funny-looking dogs,” she said. ■

Jackie Wilson has written hundreds of articles for CITYVIEW and the Iowa Living magazines. She covers ordinary people living extraordinary lives.



SHORT MONTHS



- ACROSS**
- 1 Gentle
- 5 Not active
- 9 Hockey great Gordie
- 13 Certain utility meter reader
- 19 "Pronto!"
- 20 Back end
- 21 Notion
- 22 Hun leader
- 23 "Klute" actress
- 25 Line of air fresheners requiring an outlet
- 27 Element #10
- 28 See 38-Down
- 29 Texting format, for short
- 30 Land in eau
- 32 Strong-arms
- 36 Lobbying org.
- 37 Singer Ross
- 39 "Let's Get It On" singer
- 41 Certain fruit stone
- 43 "... fair in love and war"
- 44 Stood to lose
- 46 Idyllic places
- 47 City official on "Family Guy"
- 50 Part of UCLA
- 52 Make tidy
- 56 Noted Deco master
- 57 Notion
- 60 Go in haste
- 61 Fogged up, as a sauna
- 65 School for associate's degrees
- 68 Caribbean resort
- 69 "Let it stand"
- 71 Goes after in court
- 72 Intended (to)
- 73 Bartending tool with holes
- 76 1841-45 first family
- 77 Primo pitcher
- 78 Cape Cod resort village
- 79 Dried up
- 81 Heptathlete Jackie Joyner---
- 84 Railroad depot: Abbr.
- 85 Portend a good outcome
- 90 Dog's reward
- 93 Scored a major victory
- 95 Mine, in France
- 96 Brownish-toned picture
- 100 Stuff squirted by a cephalopod
- 103 Slow to react
- 104 NFL notable Manning
- 105 Some private planes
- 106 "Is that so!"
- 107 Univ. senior's test
- 108 Weapons depot
- 110 Tiger's sound, to tots
- 112 Halifax native
- 115 Poolside seat
- 120 Large moon of Uranus
- 121 "I'm buying"
- 122 Region
- 123 Rebuke from Caesar
- 124 Lie comfy close
- 125 Belgian river
- 126 Frat guys
- 127 Span represented by the first three letters of 12 answers in this puzzle
- DOWN**
- 1 -- Mahal
- 2 "Hugo" title role player
- 3 Butterfield
- 4 Goes after in court
- 5 Sword variety
- 6 Patch variety
- 7 Animal lair
- 8 Young fellow
- 9 Old LP players
- 10 Polish river
- 11 Program running in a browser
- 12 Topic of an otologist's instructions
- 13 Intent stare
- 14 Munched on
- 15 Fuel additive brand
- 16 Country singer Ronnie
- 17 School reunion-goers
- 18 Pestors
- 24 Central points
- 26 "Champion" of Spain
- 28 Overly docile
- 30 Muslim prayer leader
- 31 See 70-Down
- 33 Heron variety
- 34 Elevate
- 35 Sac in anatomy
- 37 "Finished!"
- 38 With 28-Across, church meeting cry
- 40 Abbr. on a brandy bottle
- 41 Dreamy guys
- 42 Italian for "hundred"
- 45 SpaceX head Musk
- 48 Chart anew
- 49 Ironical, as wit
- 51 Rub to clean
- 53 Main topic
- 54 "The -- Sanction" (1975 film)
- 55 Must have
- 57 Halve with an ax, say
- 58 Prior to, to a bard
- 59 Mac rivals
- 61 "Wheel of Fortune" host Pat
- 62 Halting of hostilities
- 63 Leonhard of pure
- 64 mathematics
- 65 Prez Lincoln
- 66 Denim pants
- 67 Cake tier
- 68 "Abner"
- 69 Hog's pen
- 70 With 31-Down, lilting song syllables
- 74 Ovine animal
- 75 El -- (ocean current)
- 76 --TV ("Tacoma FD" channel)
- 79 Armani offerings
- 80 Incite
- 82 Incite
- 83 Part of QED
- 85 Basic lessons
- 86 Once lived
- 87 Move to a new country
- 88 Individual
- 89 Similar to
- 91 "Billy, Don't Be --"
- 92 "Anna Karenina" novelist
- 94 Yule tune
- 96 Join the team
- 97 Get dressed
- 98 Irritates
- 99 Promotional connections
- 101 Ski jackets
- 102 Quadrennial games org.
- 105 Seat weaver
- 108 Clearasil target
- 109 Moniker
- 111 Curds and --
- 113 Craft
- 114 Pine- --
- 115 Small dollop
- 116 Make a gaffe
- 117 Co. top dog
- 118 Give -- shot
- 119 Classic Karel Capek play

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!

Speak **ARING**

Dame **ROMANT**

Taut **ENSET**

First **DIEMAN**

TODAY'S WORD

... and does Stanley's affect your sleep, Mrs. Feeny? Mrs. Feeny...

SUDOKU

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

	-	÷		=	3			
+		+		+				
	+		+		= 15			
÷		-		+				
	+	÷			= 3			
=		=		=				
2		2		14				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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WHAT THE...

Think you're funny?

Send us your best caption...

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

Next month's photo:



IMAGE BY GRATISOGRAPHY

This month's winner

"Do not wear your new Meta glasses outside in a thunderstorm!"

- Kevin Teale



IMAGE BY GRATISOGRAPHY

Runners-up

"These rose-colored glasses aren't working!"

- Elizabeth Jones

"I drank too many snowcones on 'Electric Avenue!'"

- Victoria Bustamante

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

BY JACKIE WILSON

Classic cars bring personality, history to Des Moines

More than 100 meticulously restored vehicles will take over Pappajohn Sculpture Park Sept. 13.



Before cars came with cameras, Bluetooth and high-tech features, they offered something else: personality. A 1958 Ford Edsel Pacer loaded with chrome, a spacious back seat and a turquoise-colored frame turned heads while scooping the loop.

For car enthusiasts who want to see the Edsel and other top-of-the line classic cars, attend the Des Moines Concours d'Elegance on Sept. 13 at the Pappajohn Sculpture Park.

In its 26th year, the free event features more than 100 meticulously restored classic cars in various classes of vehicles, including exotics, muscle cars, space-age classics and more. This year's featured class includes Pontiac's 100-year anniversary vehicles and cars from Disney Pixar's "Cars" movie.

Joseph Phillips, Des Moines Concours co-chair, says real life cars from the "Cars" movies will be on display, hoping to attract attendees of all ages.

"Kids love Doc Hudson, and all the other characters from the 'Cars' movies," he said.

Organizers say this is "not your average" vintage car show. Car owners apply by submitting photos along with the stories behind the restorations.

"I love the story of folks finding the cars," Phillips said. "Often the story is just as important as the car."

Last year, the event averaged more than 22,000 attendees. In addition to the car show, the Concours Charity Gala kicks off the event. This year's speaker is Kip Wasenko, a 40-year automotive designer from General Motors who also created the Cadillac EVOQ. The event raised \$10,000 last year, benefitting the Children's Cancer Connection.

Fund supports youth auto repair training

Part of the Des Moines Concours' mission is to educate the public about the car-collecting hobby. Organizers recognize that younger generations may not share the same appreciation for classic cars.

In response, they established the Automotive Heritage Grant. It was developed to provide financial assistance for tools, project funding, equipment or training that supports high school automotive education in Iowa.

Phillips is a teacher for Southeast Polk High School's automotive program. He teaches an automotive restoration class, where high school students have restored a 1971 Dodge Power Wagon and others.

Phillips said the older cars are easier to fix, as opposed to today's tech-heavy vehicles.

"You can diagnose and fix old cars. Kids usually can get them running. It's loud and hands-on. Kids love it," he said.

He wants to get young adults interested in trade jobs, including car repair and restoration.

"We've already got some kids making \$30-\$40,000 a year working parttime. There's such a demand for trade skills," he said.

The Iowa Automotive Heritage Foundation will distribute grants to students or teachers, based on an application, with requested restoration equipment or car project needs. The board will choose projects to fund in 2027.

"Many of the younger generation only know old cars through their grandparents or parents," he said. "We need kids who will be our caretakers for the historic vehicles."

Phillips has owned and restored various vintage cars throughout the years, fueled by his passionate for car history.

"I like the simplicity of older cars," he said. "I like the unique stories associated with cars and want to continue preserving history."

For more information about the event, visit desmoinesconcours.com. ■

Jackie Wilson has written hundreds of articles for CITYVIEW and the Iowa Living magazines. She covers ordinary people living extraordinary lives.



At The Blazing Saddle, security starts with de-escalation, not force

Marine veteran Eligh Cade works as part of a security team focused on keeping patrons safe, preventing trouble and building trust at one of Des Moines' most iconic bars.

Security staff at most bar tends is relegated to the biggest, buffest human beings a bar manager could possibly find. The hope is that this "bouncer" is a person who will be a deterrent to bad behavior and, in worst case scenarios, can throw unruly patrons out of the bar, crashing through saloon doors like seen in old western films.

Security at The Blazing Saddle, one of Des Moines most iconic bars, is approached in a different way, Security Lead Eligh Cade tells us.

Before Cade, a multi-time mullet competition winner, took on security duties at The Saddle, he was in New Orleans, Louisiana. After graduating from high school, he went directly into the Marine Corps. At only 17, he had to do so with parental permission. Cade worked on F-35 Bravos, stealth fighter jets. When his time in the Marines concluded, Cade moved to Iowa.

"I had no intention of staying in Iowa," Cade said. "I got asked to work for The Saddle because they found out that I was a Marine, and I fell in love with it and made a family there and didn't leave Iowa. I've been here for almost five years now. I just fell in love with Des Moines."

The folks at The Saddle seems to be pleased that Cade has decided to stick around, too, as he has been keeping the East Village staple safe for more than four years. The opportunity arose after Cade started frequenting the bar and became friends with the owner and one of the assistant managers.

"Betty, the assistant manager, was like, 'Hey, have you ever done security?' And I was like, 'Well, yes. I'm trained in it.' So, they hired me, and I've been working pretty much every Friday and Saturday, sometimes Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday for four years now."

Finding a group of friends and community within The Saddle helped Cade in his life post-Marines.

"When I got out of the Marine Corps, I lost purpose, and this has given me purpose, and it's done a lot for me. What I get back for making sure that my community is really safe, that fulfills me again as a person, because that's why I joined the Marine Corps," Cade said.

The Saddle handles security in a different way than typical bars do. Cade's training in de-escalation has helped him, and the rest of the staff, tremendously.

"Our entire goal is to keep everybody that's in the building as safe as possible, whether that be safe from an outside threat or safe from themselves because, unfortunately, when people get really drunk, sometimes their minds aren't really in the right spot," Cade said. "We do as much de-escalation as possible. I've had people threaten to kill me. It's not our job to swing first. It's our job to stop you from swinging and to not even try to."

Security guards at The Saddle wear body cameras, and the bar has cameras inside and outside, too. Guards also have radios in order to communicate with each other, as well as wands, ID scanners and more at their disposal.

"We have over 200 fakes that we've caught in the last three years, and we don't want to take your fake ID. But, we also don't want to lose an institution that's been here for 43 years," Cade said.

Cade tells a story of having to take the fake ID of a daughter who was out for drinks with her family as one of the crazier things he experienced.

"We said, 'You can't come in. You have a fake ID,' and she goes. 'I'm studying to be a lawyer. It's not a fake ID.' And we're just like, 'We have a machine. The machine is connected to the DMV. This is a fake ID.' Her dad tried to fight us. He literally bucked up to me and another security guard, got in our faces, and was screaming at us to give her ID back. And we were just like, 'You can call DMPD, bud,' " Cade said.



Eligh Cade, second from left, with The Blazing Saddle security team.

That prevention before things come to blows is what is most important to Cade and the rest of the security team.

"I genuinely think that if more bars approached security in a way of — not keeping the bad out, but keeping just the inside safe — then you would have less issues. Because if you stop it at the door, then the issue doesn't get in the bar," Cade said.

When those events that do happen around nightlife occur, like an active shooting event in the area, the team and Cade act quickly, calmly and orderly to secure the place.

As much as Cade knows it can be difficult for patrons to tell him that something has happened to them, knowing the Saddle security makes them feel safe enough to trust them is what he has enjoyed most about being on the job.

"When people feel comfortable enough to come tell us what has happened or what they think might be happening, to see something, say something. It's really nice to know that people, members of the community, are realizing what we're there for," Cade said.

Outside of the job, working at The Saddle has connected Cade with lifelong friends and even introduced him to some famous faces over the years.

"I met the entire original cast of 'Hamilton' on a Sunday night. We've had quite a few very famous drag queens. We've had Gottmik. We've had Violet Chachki, who won RuPaul's Drag Race. I met Bob the Drag Queen; the cast of 'Chicago' came through," Cade said.

Members of The Saddle security team have branched out, working other events like Ames Pride, the Governor's Conference, and even lady's roller derby.

"One of my favorite things is the Governor's Conference that we do. It's youth, so we're there to show them like, hey, look, we made it to adulthood. You can, too. We're going to keep you safe. Nothing's gonna happen to you here as long as we're here," Cade said. ■

collCyote Williams was born and raised on the south side of Des Moines and writes about entertainment, sports and personalities across the Des Moines metro for CITYVIEW. Phone: 515-953-4822 x333.



Zach Steffen's lifelong love of golf

The Des Moines golfer turned a childhood passion into a standout amateur and professional career and now helps the next generation improve their game.

Did you know that Iowa has one of the highest rates of golf courses per capita? The roughly 400 courses within its borders mean there are 12.46 golf courses per 100,000 people in the Hawkeye state. Nearly 20 golf courses exist around the Des Moines metro alone. One of the area's best players, Zach Steffen, shared his thoughts and journey with the half-century-old sport.

Steffen grew up on the south side, especially close to one of Des Moines most well-known courses: Blank.

"It was an easy connection to start playing golf there," Steffen said.

Steffen's best round came at Blank, where he shot a 61. He believes it is the course record to this day.

Growing up, his father and grandfather were giving him an early introduction to the game.

"They were both golfers. I'd go and spend a lot of time in the summer at my grandparents in Oskaloosa, and pretty much my fondest memories are going to the golf course with my grandpa and playing first thing in the morning," Steffen said.

Steffen would stick with his south-side roots and play golf at Lincoln High School. It was his freshman year when he truly got into the swing of things.

"I was able to be on varsity the whole season and ended up qualifying as a freshman individually for state. I think that was where I was like, 'OK. I'm pretty good at this,' " Steffen said.

While at Lincoln, in addition to qualifying for state as an individual as a freshman, he lost the state title on a playoff hole as a junior and helped the Railsplitters qualify as a team for the state tournament. The latter was one of his favorite golf memories.

"The look on my coach's face when we qualified as a team my senior year to make it to state — it was the upset of the century for sure. We had to have a team get disqualified because a kid signed for the wrong score for us to make it happen. I don't think he had had a team qualify for state ever in his coaching career. That was awesome," Steffen said.

The success didn't stop in high school. Steffen would go on to win the national championship with Indian Hills Community College his freshman year, which helped him earn a scholarship to play golf at Iowa State.

"I didn't really have much of a plan work-wise. So I decided to turn pro and played professionally for about four full years down in Florida, down in Arizona, back



up in the Midwest," Steffen said. "I think I've had more success as a pro than I did as an amateur playing in college."

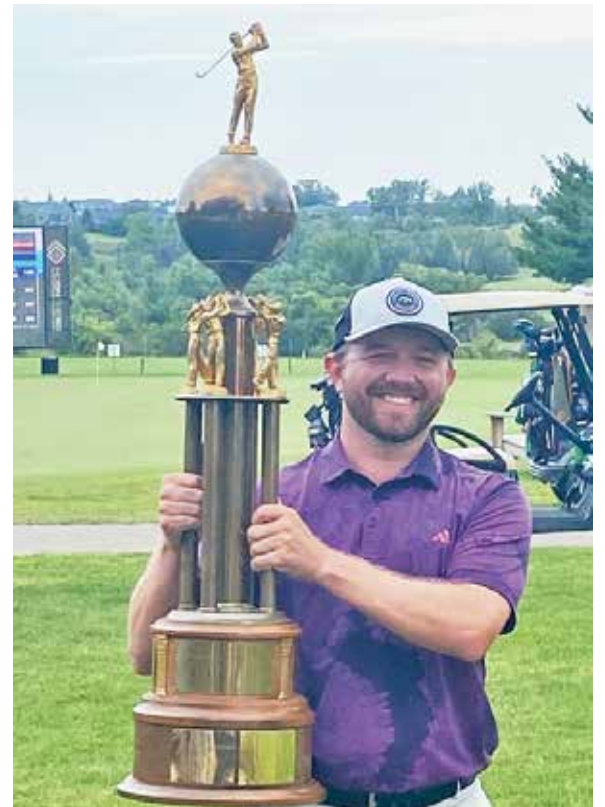
Steffen won one of his earliest tournaments while playing on the Dakota's tour. He has also qualified for a Korn Ferry Tour event and a PGA Tour event, the John Deere Classic. Those are some the best career highlights he points to.

"The most recent thing that I'm trying to do is win the Herman Sani tournament in Iowa the most times that anybody ever has. I've won it three times. I think the number to beat is five," Steffen said.

Steffen didn't end up winning this year's Herman Sani, but a three-time winner is already impressive. In his time as a golfer, he has two hole-in-ones — one in a tournament and one in a casual round, both witnessed by his dad.

He adds that his favorite club is his putter, but his favorite club for a full swing is his seven iron, one of which he had to retire because the clubface had become worn down from striking the center so often. Steffen doesn't compete as a full-time pro anymore, but he stays close to the game by teaching golf lessons. Although it was not something he originally planned on doing, it has become a passion.

"People had asked me a lot when I was playing, 'Are you ever going to give lessons?' And I kind of scoffed at it. Like, no, I'm not going to do any of that. Then, when I stopped playing, I needed something to do. I started doing it, and I fell in love with it," Steffen said. "The excitement that I see people get when you tell them to do something and they do it and they pull it off and they hit a shot that they've never hit before — that was addicting to me, and I've never looked back. I really enjoy it. I



Steffen with the Herman Sani trophy

enjoy working with high school kids and giving them quality instruction to help them reach their potential. I think it's really fun to help people, and that was always something that I wanted to do, and I just didn't know how I was going to be able to do it. I'm glad I could do it through golf."

One of the main reasons Steffen says golf is the sport he has stuck with for so long, and enjoys so much, is the personal challenge the game presents him.

"I'm never going to stop learning. I'm constantly trying to figure out how to do something better, how to teach better, how to improve people faster, and I think that's what I love about it. It's a never-ending journey of gathering information and relaying that information the best way that I can. And you know, it's just a fun thing to go out and do for the rest of your life. I see people that are out there playing until they're 95 years old, and I think that's awesome," Steffen said. ■

Cyote Williams was born and raised on the south side of Des Moines and writes about entertainment, sports and personalities across the Des Moines metro for CITYVIEW. Phone: 515-953-4822 x333.



WALKS OF LIFE

COMPILED FROM THE IOWA LIVING MAGAZINES

Capturing the moment

For some, photography is a way to preserve memories. Others find it a creative outlet or even an adventure into the unknown. For three local photographers, it is all of that and more. From capturing everyday moments to embracing the beauty of the ordinary, each has found a unique perspective through the lens.



Emily Osweiler Seeing the world

Emily Osweiler took on a photo-of-the-day challenge in 2022, and it quickly trained her brain to look for one meaningful image each day instead of rushing past everything.

“There are a lot of ways people find joy. For me, it’s through awe and gratitude, and taking a picture and sharing it are both part of the same practice,” she says. “Most of my photos happen on walks, just with my iPhone.”

Osweiler gravitates toward nature, including plants, animals and outdoor scenes. Photographing people can be trickier, so she prefers subjects that allow her to take her time with lighting and composition. Rather than planning shots, she often walks and captures whatever draws her attention.

She says she is fine with using her phone for photos and has no plans to upgrade her equipment. Photography remains a creative hobby she enjoys. For Christmas, she printed several of her photos as greeting cards and gifted sets to friends and family.

“After thousands of photos, I’ve realized the hobby hasn’t just changed what I see through the lens... it’s changed how I see the world,” she says.

Source: Johnston Living, August 2026;
by Ashley Rullestad

Read the full story here:



Michelle Tunney Perfect moments in an imperfect world

As a young child, Michelle Tunney enjoyed taking pictures. She developed a passion for photography by watching her mother, who she says always carried a Canon camera everywhere she went.

“She was always taking pictures of things, but I didn’t understand why she took pictures of some of those things until I got behind the lens,” Tunney says, adding she especially enjoys taking pictures of scenery and animals.

When her children grew up and Tunney became an empty nester, she developed some health issues. She now uses her photography to find something positive in each day. Her son put up bird feeders in her yard because he knew she likes birds.

“Watching the birds reminds me about the Scriptures that talk about sparrows and how God takes care of them. It helps me on days that are hard,” she says.

She enjoys going to places like Pammel Park, Middle River, Lake Ahquabi and Ledges State Park to photograph nature when she is away from home, but she often finds her moments along backroads. Tunney is delighted that three of her five daughters have also grown to love photography, and they often ask to borrow Tunney’s camera — a Nikon her husband bought her one Christmas.

Source: Winterset Living, August 2026;
by Rachel Harrington

Read the full story here:



Steve Givens Wildlife photography

Steve Givens’ patience is tested repeatedly as he waits with his camera for the perfect shot of an eagle. With his finger on the shutter, he can take 30 pictures per second in burst mode. Knowing how quickly eagles fly and land, he has less than five seconds to react.

“When it appears, it’s all hands on deck,” he says.

One favorite photo features a bald eagle near the water searching for its next meal.

“It got too close to shoreline and there was a blackbird’s nest close by. The blackbird was defending its nest trying to scare the eagle away,” he explains. “It was incredible. You can see its toenail pulling on the bald eagle. That makes for a great story.”

Storytelling through photography has long been a passion, but his career as a CPA left little time to pursue it. After retiring in 2021, Givens turned his focus to photography. He admired wildlife photographer Thomas Mangelsen and took a trip to the Grand Tetons where he joined a scenic wildlife tour.

“I got hooked on it,” he explains.

He recalls traveling to Yellowstone National Park to follow a wolf pack but arriving too early. He explored another area and ended up photographing grizzly bears instead.

Source: West Des Moines / Jordan Creek Living, August 2026;
by Jackie Wilson

Read the full story here:



Heather Johnson Shooting the stars

Heather Johnson says the art of photography fascinates her, so, about five years ago, she decided to dive in.

“I absolutely love the night skies, and, once I started photographing them, I was hooked,” she said. “Milky Way photography is my passion. Once I start talking about it, you can’t shut me up. It’s a pretty niche type of photography. I plan my vacations around the new moon so I can get the darkest skies.”

Johnson uses an astro-modified Sony A7III camera, Sony lenses and a star tracker. She is mostly self-taught, but she attends night photography workshops around the country that have helped her hone her craft.

For some photos, like her Milky Way images, she uses blends. This means she may take a picture at blue hour (after sunset) and then wait until nighttime to capture a Milky Way image at the same location. Once it’s completely dark, she puts her camera on the star tracker, which moves to counteract the Earth’s rotation.

“I don’t think it’s hard, because I’m totally invested in the process,” Johnson said. “It’s so cool. I also do deep space objects, which is where it gets really crazy. Photography gives me a creative outlet, and it brings me peace.” ■

Source: Ankeny Living, August 2026;
by Ashley Rullestad

Read the full story here:



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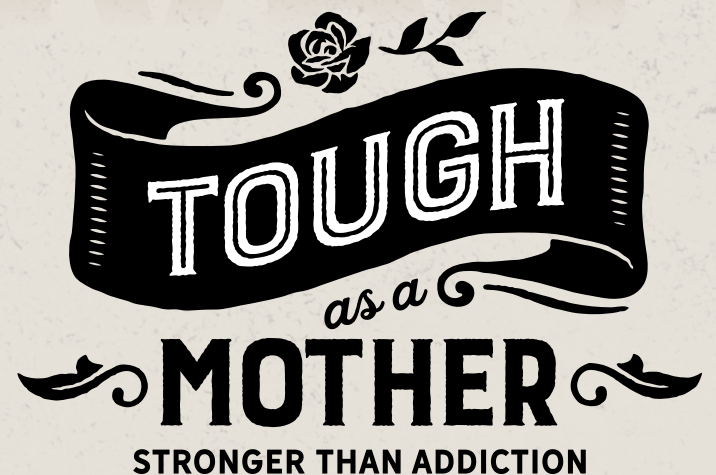
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