

Living

RESIDENTS' CHOICE AWARDS



Johnston, Grimes, Dallas Center, Urbandale and Clive residents share their favorites

Meet Hope Kirby

EDUCATION

Quilts of Valor honor service members

COMMUNITY

Egg ravioli with sage and almonds

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WELCOME

RESIDENTS choose again

Welcome to our annual compilation of residents' choices in the northwest metro area. We launched this poll to determine the top people, places and events in the area, and the results make for a fun and informative read each year.

We invite residents in the area to vote for their favorites by answering more than 60 questions with open-ended responses. Some other polls rig the results by "suggesting" choices of businesses or requiring them to pay to be on the ballot. That is unethical, in our eyes, as it doesn't give a true snapshot of what the locals really like. Rest assured, these results are 100% organic responses that we received from our online and mail-in ballots.

We have become quite good at polling our readers and sharing results. I have been gathering this type of information for CITYVIEW magazine for many years, and you are likely familiar with the Best Of Des Moines readers' poll and the certificates you see across central Iowa. That poll was the first of its kind in the metro area, and it continues to be the primary source of central Iowans' favorites. Now we know it not only works for Des Moines, but for the northwest metro area as well.

You will likely agree with many of the results, and you will likely disagree with some, too. Hopefully, you took the time to cast your vote. If not, be sure to do so next year. Look to the pages of this magazine for full details as the time draws nearer.

We published the top three vote-getters in each of the categories inside these pages. Be sure to congratulate all the people, places and events that were selected as winners and let them know how much you appreciate them being in the area.

As always, thank you for reading, and thank you for voting, too. ■



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Letsch Law Firm, owned by Cynthia Letsch, was voted residents' favorite law firm.



RESIDENTS' CHOICE AWARDS



Johnston, Grimes, Dallas Center, Urbandale and Clive residents share their favorites

By Tammy Pearson

August has rolled around again, which means it is time to recognize the Residents' Choice Award winners for the northwest metro area. This year, we asked residents of the area to choose their favorites from the Johnston, Grimes, Dallas Center, Urbandale and Clive area. We recognize that residents of these communities often are patrons of businesses throughout this area and enjoy the amenities and events from their own and neighboring communities.

As we continue to improve our poll and respond to what readers say is important to them, we have added categories. This year, look for favorites you haven't seen before in the categories of Tree Service, Homebuilding/Remodeling Contractor and Exterior

Contractor. As always, remember that these favorites were chosen by residents. You are likely to agree with some choices and disagree with others, but the results were determined by your area neighbors. If you voted in this year's poll, thank you for participating. And, if you didn't, be sure to look for notices in this magazine for next year's poll opening and cast your vote. With some categories having only a few votes between the top vote-getter and the runners up, it's important to note that all those listed are winners, and we congratulate them all.

Johnston, Grimes, Dallas Center, Urbandale and Clive Residents' Choice for Favorite Northwest Metro ...

(Runners up in alphabetical order)

Restaurant

The Urban Grill

Runners up: Destination Grille; Trostel's Greenbriar Restaurant and Bar

Restaurant for Breakfast

Cozy Cafe

Runners up: 100th St. Corner Café; Perkins Restaurant and Bakery

Restaurant for Lunch

Palmer's Deli

Runners up: El Mariachi; The Urban Grill

Restaurant for Dinner

Trostel's Greenbriar Restaurant and Bar

Runners up: Destination Grille; The Urban Grill

Restaurant for Dessert

Al's Dairy Freeze

Runners up: Van Dee's Ice Cream Shoppe; Trostel's Greenbriar Restaurant and Bar

Place for Ice Cream

Van Dee's Ice Cream Shoppe

Runners up: Al's Dairy Freeze; Heavenly Delights

Pizza Establishment

Pagliari's Pizza

Runners up: Casey's; Pepp's Pizzeria

Bar

Stevie C's

Runners up: Blue Shark Ale House; Pour Choices Neighborhood Bar

Coffee Shop

Starbucks

Runners up: Lightbrite Coffee Roasters; Scooter's Coffee

Catering Company

HyVee

Runners up: Cyd's Catering; Destination Grille

Server /Bartender

Heather Loops, Trostel's Greenbriar Restaurant and Bar

Runners up: Britt Richards, 1st Street Tavern; Eduardo Granillo, Destination Grille

Auto Service

Iowa Auto Repair

Runners up: Finishline Auto Works; Shade Tree Auto

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FEATURE

Auto Body Shop

Finishline Auto Works

Runners up: Graham Collision; Iowa Auto Repair

Car Dealership

Toyota of Des Moines

Runners up: Bob Brown; Willis Auto Campus

Auto Parts Store

O'Reilly Auto Parts

Runners up: AutoZone Auto Parts; NAPA Auto Parts

Preschool/Daycare

St. Pius X Catholic School

Runners up: Generation Next Child Development Center and Preschool; Kids Korner

Nonprofit

Urbandale Food Pantry

Runners up: Johnston Partnership; LifeServe Blood Center

School

St. Pius X Catholic School

Runners up: Des Moines Christian School; Urbandale High School

Park

Walker Johnston Park

Runners up: Lions Park; Terra Park

Community Festival or Event

Urbandale 4th of July Celebration

Runners up: Grimes Governors Days; Johnston Green Days

Church

St. Pius X Catholic Church

Runners up: Lutheran Church of Hope; New Hope Assembly of God

Pastor

Daniel Adjei, St. Pius X Catholic Church

Runners up: Jeremy Carr, NorthPoint Church; Mike Housholder, Lutheran Church of Hope

Chamber of Commerce

Urbandale Chamber of Commerce

Runners up: Grimes Chamber and Economic Development; Johnston Chamber of Commerce

Grocery Store

Fareway

Runners up: Aldi; Hy-Vee

Boutique

Purple Poppy Boutique

Runners up: Simply Stella Rose; Styled. by JJ

Retail Store

Target

Runners up: Purple Poppy Boutique; Kohls

Thrift Store

Many Hands Thrift Market

Runners up: Every Step Giving Tree; Goodwill of Central Iowa

Home Improvement Retail Store

The Home Depot

Runners up: Johnston Ace Hardware; Menards

ELECT

JOHN FORBES

POLK COUNTY SUPERVISOR

JOHN'S PRIORITIES

Keep Property Taxes in Check

Worked across the aisle to balance the state budget including a surplus and reserves

Mental Health

As a healthcare professional, John will bring his expertise to expand mental health services in Polk County

Clean Water and Climate

Local governments must lead in reducing reliance on fossil fuels and encouraging use of alternative energy

Infrastructure

John will work to provide residents high quality services, including well maintained county roads and facilities

JOHN'S EXPERIENCE

- State Representative 2013-2024
- Urbandale pharmacy owner for 42 years
- Urbandale City Councilman 2005-2012
- Past President Urbandale Chamber of Commerce
- Urbandale Citizen of the Year
- Central Iowa Honor Flight Coordinator
- National Community Pharmacy Service Award
- Iowa Pharmacy Association President
- Polk County Pharmacists President



John with wife Cindy & Family

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FEATURE

Liquor Store

Hy-Vee Wine and Spirits

Runners up: Spirits Liquor; Urbandale Liquor

Nursery or Garden Center

Earl May Nursery and Garden Center

Runners up: Canoyer Garden Center; Piney Ridge Greenhouse

Place to Purchase a Gift for a Man

Menards

Runners up: Johnston Ace Hardware; The Home Depot

Place to Purchase a Gift for a Woman

Purple Poppy Boutique

Runners up: Studio IV; Target

Dad/Child Date Spot

Backpocket Pin and Pixel

Runners up: Emerge Academy; Jester Park

Mom/Child Date Spot

Backpocket Pin and Pixel

Runners up: Emerge Academy; Sky Zone Trampoline Park

Place to Take Your Mom and Dad

Trostel's Greenbriar Restaurant and Bar

Runners up: Destination Grille; The Machine Shed

Place to Take Your Kids or Grandkids

Sky Zone Trampoline Park

Runners up: Emerge Academy; Backpocket Pin and Pixel

Place for Children's Birthday Parties

Sky Zone Trampoline Park

Runners up: Emerge Academy; Get Air Trampoline Park

Golf Course

Jester Park Golf Course

Runners up: Beaver Creek Golf Club; Hyperion Field Club

Hair Salon

Art of Life Salon & Spa

Runners up: Great Clips; Talking Heads Salon

Health Clinic

MercyOne

Runners up: The Iowa Clinic; UnityPoint

Dental Office

Grove and Platt Dental Associates

Runners up: Johnston Dental; The Dental Studio of Iowa

Orthodontist Office

Mann Orthodontics

Runners up: Iowa Orthodontic Solutions; Stork Orthodontics

Mental Health Services

Pink Couch Wellness

Runners up: Compass Clinical Associates; RedCouch Counseling

Chiropractic Office

Thrive Chiropractic

Runners up: Active Wellness; Herrmann Family Chiropractic

Vision Care

Lifetime Vision

Runners up: Urbandale Eye Care; Vision Park Family Eye Care

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FEATURE

Health Club or Gym

CrossFit 8035 West

Runners up: Life Time; Planet Fitness

Pharmacy

Hy-Vee Pharmacy

Runners up: Medicap Pharmacy; Walgreens Pharmacy

Cosmetic Services

Central Iowa Dermatology

Runners up: Studio IV; Ulta Beauty

Physical Therapy

Elevate Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine

Runners up: Athletico Physical Therapy; Rock Valley Physical Therapy

Dance Studio

Inspiring Dance

Runners up: Dance Vision; Eshanjali Dance Academy



Grove and Platt Dental Associates was residents' choice for favorite dental practice. From left: Dr. Matthew Platt, Dr. Jennifer Grove, Dr. Shana Howard, Dr. Austin Tyskling

Gymnastics Studio

Emerge Academy

Runners up: Mid Iowa Gymnastics; Sapphire Gymnastics Academy

Tumbling Studio

Emerge Academy

Runners up: Mid Iowa Gymnastics; Tribe Athletics

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FEATURE

Financial Planner

Loren Merkle, Merkle Retirement Planning

Runners up: Tim Short, Edward Jones; Sharon Vickery, Edward Jones

Law Firm

Letsch Law Firm

Runners up: Abendroth Russell Barnett Law Firm; Brown, Fagen and Rouse

Accounting Firm

Welgaard CPAs and Advisors

Runners up: Ann M Hartz, CPA and Associates; ThornTree CPA services

Veterinarian

Prairie View Animal Hospital

Runners up: Grimes Plaza Veterinary Clinic; Value Vet

Dog Groomer

Clean and Breezy

Runners up: Bark Shop; Stylin Paws

Pet Care

Dogwoods Lodge

Runners up: Dog Days and Cat Naps; Prairie View Animal Hospital

Lawn Care Business

Ultimate Lawn Services

Runners up: Colby's Lawn and Landscape; Finer Cuts Lawn Care

Landscaping Company

Miller Nursery

Runners up: CLK Lawn Care; Ever Greene Sodding and Landscaping

Heating and Cooling Business

Schaal Plumbing, Heating and Cooling

Runners up: Golden Rule Plumbing, Heating, Cooling, Electrical; Greens Appliance, Heating and Cooling

Electrical Business

Deaver Electric

Runners up: All Things Electric; ARC Electric



Residents chose Andrea Sabus – State Farm as their favorite insurance agency.

Plumbing Company

Golden Rule Plumbing, Heating, Cooling, Electrical

Runners up: Herr Plumbing; Roto-Rooter

Senior Living Establishment

Kennybrook Village

Runners up: Bishop Drumm Retirement Center; Deerfield Retirement Community

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FEATURE

Insurance Company

Andrea Sabus, State Farm

Runners up: Buenzow Insurance Group; City State Bank Insurance

Realtor

Kristin Coffelt Real Estate

Runners up: Joleen Roskamp, RE/MAX Precision; Casee Woodley, RE/MAX Precision

Bank/Credit Union

Veridian Credit Union

Runners up: Charter Bank; Wells Fargo

Photographer

Carlye Bishop Photography

Runners up: Jenna McEntee Photography; Laura Wills Photography

Place for Guests to Stay

Stoney Creek Hotel and Conference Center

Runners up: Hilton Garden Inn; Hotel Renovo



Chris and Vanessa Anderson at the ribbon cutting for Pink Couch Wellness, which was voted residents' favorite place for mental health services.

Home Building/Remodeling Contractor

FIRSTCALL

Runners up: Buresh Home Solutions; Renov8 IA

Exterior Contractor (siding, roofing, windows, doors)

Sonntag Roofing

Runners up: Haggerty Windows and Siding; Midwest Construction

Pest Control

Preferred Pest Control

Runners up: Des Moines Pest Control – Urbandale; Miller Pest and Termite

Tree Service

MJ's Tree Service

Runners up: Trinity Tree Care; West Central Tree Service ■

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EMPOWERING futures through scholarships

DCG Education Foundation gears up for annual event.



DCG Education Foundation supporters gather for last year's RED Dinner.

Those involved with the DCG Education Foundation know firsthand the power of community support. The organization is a 501(c)3 nonprofit on a mission to raise scholarship funds for DCG seniors pursuing higher education.

"While independent from the DCG Community School District, we do work together to educate our students, staff and community at large," Tiffany Hamil, president of the foundation, shares. "To date, we have distributed over \$1 million in scholarship funds."

The foundation's efforts are driven by a variety of fundraising events, the most prominent being the annual Raising Education Dollars (RED) Dinner and Auction. This November marks the seventh year of the event.

Held on Saturday, Nov. 2 from 5-9 p.m. at Three Sisters Barn in Dallas Center, RED brings the community together for a fun night of games, a meal, a live auction and, most importantly, the opportunity to raise funds for four-year renewable scholarships.

"We currently offer three scholarships but have lofty goals to increase that year over year," Hamil says. "It can only be done by getting participants to raise their paddles high."

Ahead of the event, the foundation offers an online silent auction that's available to the

community at large.

Hamil emphasizes that every dollar raised directly impacts the students.

"It's simple. The more we raise, the more we can give," she says.

The RED event is vital for continuing the foundation's mission of reducing financial barriers for students pursuing higher education.

"Having been on the board since 2017, my passion has grown exponentially as I've seen the impact that we have for these students," Hamil says. "As we all know, the cost of higher education is skyrocketing, and these kids deserve the opportunity to chase their dream, whether that be through a trade program, a two-year degree or anything beyond. We want to help them reduce as many barriers as we can. They have the potential to change the world, and being just a small part of that brings me so much joy."

Becky Bonefas, a board member, echoes Hamil's sentiments, noting the invaluable role volunteers play in making the foundation's mission a reality.

"It's rewarding to be a part of such a committed group of people working together supporting the education goals of our district's students," she says. "Obviously, we couldn't make the annual scholarship awards happen without generous financial support, most notably through the RED dinner. But we also

couldn't make it happen without the volunteer hours put in by all of our board and committee members."

Bonefas, who works for an area college, has also seen the impact of the DCG Education Foundation in her everyday life.

"A few times a semester, I will have a DCG graduate come into my office, and I always ask, 'Did you receive a scholarship from the education foundation?'" she shares. "It's a source of pride for both the students and myself to see the smiles when they answer, 'Yes, I did,' and get to really see the work of the foundation in action."

For many board members, like both Bonefas and Mary Tjeerdsma, helping seniors pursue their dreams is personal.

"The reason I got involved was to help graduating seniors have an opportunity to further their education either at a traditional or non-traditional institution," Tjeerdsma says. "There have been a number of scholarship recipients who have stated these scholarships help them focus on their studies, fine arts or athletics and not stress about the financial burden."

Tickets for the RED Dinner are \$75 per person or \$500 for a table of eight. More information and tickets are available at the DCG Education Foundation website, www.dcgeducationfoundation.org. ■

THEY ELIMINATED the stretch and other reasons to revisit your legacy plan

Recent law changes, including changes to IRAs, gift tax laws and trust rules, may have made legacy plans outdated.



You used to be able to leave your IRA to your children or grandchildren to use when they needed to help their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren pay for college tuition or purchase their first home. Recent legislation eliminated your ability to “stretch” IRA distributions across multiple generations (your children’s or grandchildren’s lifetimes).

Now, your family is forced to liquidate (and pay taxes on) your IRA much sooner, even though sudden extra income could impact their taxes. This massive change, included in the 2019 SECURE Act, killed the stretch and put in place the 10-year rule, meaning, generally, that if you leave your IRA to someone other than your

spouse, they have to withdraw (and pay taxes on) the full value of an inherited IRA or 401(k) within 10 years of inheritance.

Pass-through or conduit trusts were common ways to protect assets while allowing heirs to enjoy the benefits of an inherited IRA. However, recent laws removed many benefits of making trusts beneficiaries of IRAs.

Current laws have nearly doubled the estate and gift tax exemption through the end of 2025 (it’s \$13.61 million per person or \$27.22 million per couple in 2024). Plans may include formulas based on old federal estate-tax exemption amounts, which were as low as \$675,000 in 2001.

Many Tax Cuts and Jobs Act provisions are set to expire at the end of 2025. However, for some, there are actions they may want before then regarding gifts and the type of assets that are best for gifting.

It can be challenging to keep up with the changes and understand how they impact you,

but working with someone who does is essential. After the SECURE Act passed, we contacted several families and individuals we serve to discuss their IRAs, the end of the stretch and other options, including an IRA relocation strategy for helping them achieve their legacy ambitions.

Sometimes, people think legacy planning strategies are only for the super wealthy, but minor changes to retirement savings of all sizes can significantly impact how much you can leave to your loved ones and charities.

There are some strategies that you may want to take advantage of now before the rules change again. You might be surprised to see how much more you can leave to your loved ones and save on taxes just by making a few small changes to your legacy plan. ■

Information provided by Loren Merkle CFP®, RICP®, Certified Financial Fiduciary®, Merkle Retirement Planning, 1860 S.E. Princeton Drive, Grimes, 515-278-1006.

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QUILTS of Valor honor service members

A warm embrace for veterans

The Quilts of Valor Foundation is a nationwide organization that honors veterans with handmade quilts as symbols of comfort and appreciation for their service.

Inspired by a mother who crafted a quilt for her son serving in Iraq, this movement has grown into a well-organized effort that touches the lives of veterans across the United States, including those in the Dallas Center and Grimes communities.

The process begins when a veteran is nominated, often through their local American Legion chapter or by family members, to receive a quilt. Once a nomination is submitted, the Quilts of Valor Foundation evaluates and selects recipients, and the quilt is custom-made to reflect each veteran's service. The quilt is not only a token of comfort but also a deeply personal acknowledgment of a veteran's sacrifice, with the veteran's name, rank and service details sewn into it.

This past summer, the American Legion Post 49 in Dallas Center and its Auxiliary presented Quilts of Valor to 10 veterans in the area. At a ceremony to present the quilts, roughly 60 family members and friends of the veterans attended.

During the event, the quilt is draped around the veteran's shoulders. One recipient, Larry Murray, was so proud of his quilt that he wore it throughout the ceremony, despite the warmth of the summer day.

Mike "Buck" Buckalew, commander of American Legion Post 49, shares another experience that highlights how meaningful these Quilts of Valor are to recipients. Last spring, veteran Jerry Zayman received one. He served in Vietnam during the height of the war and received several medals but told Buckalew, "The quilt is something special to me. You can look at medals, but the quilt is something you can put on that's a comforting feeling."

For Wilma York, president of the American Legion Post 49 Auxiliary and a key figure in the Quilts of Valor process, the joy comes from witnessing how much these quilts mean to both veterans and their families.

During each ceremony, family members are invited to share in the presentation, whether at formal gatherings or in more intimate settings like the case of one veteran, who received his quilt at home due to hospitalization. "It's very special for the family," York says.

The Quilts of Valor serve as reminders that the nation remembers and honors the sacrifices of its veterans. This is a key reason why receiving a quilt can be such an emotional experience.

York recalls a powerful moment when they presented a quilt to a veteran taken to a nursing home in Ankeny.

"When we left, he said to his daughter, 'Now you take that home because, if I keep it, here, it might get dirty,'" York says. "She thought he needed to have it, so she got him a quilt hanger and put it on his wall. He was very emotional by it."

The Quilts of Valor Foundation not only provides comfort through these quilts but also creates connections among veterans, their families and the community, ensuring that the sacrifices of those who served are never forgotten. ■



Wilma York kicks off the Quilts of Valor ceremony with a reading of a poem.



Quilts of Valor recipients and representatives



Receiving Quilts of Valor in February were, front row: Albert Sandstrom, Jerry Sehman and Curtis Johnson; and, back row: Larry Davis, Larry Spray, Jeremy Hawthorn, Sondra Davis and Larry Myers.



Glenn Perkins' Quilt of Valor was delivered to his home in a ceremony attended by his family.

MEET Hope Kirby

Kindergarten teacher enjoys Heritage’s little learners.

Hope Kirby graduated from Mt. Mercy University in December 2022 with a degree in elementary education as well as a reading endorsement. The following January, she took on long-term sub positions in a third grade and special education classroom and then accepted her current position at Heritage Elementary School as a kindergarten teacher.



Hope Kirby

“This will be my second year with the DCG community, and I love it,” she says. “Initially, teaching was never an option for me. When I started college, my intent was pursuing a career in social work.”

After volunteering in classrooms and working as a camp counselor during the summer, she decided to switch her major to elementary education the day before classes started her third year.

After working with children, she realized their perspectives are valuable and that she wanted a profession where she could continue to work and collaborate daily with bright young minds.

Kirby says she is happy to be at a district like DCG that values its employees and their individuality, adding that Heritage Elementary has wonderful staff members she enjoys collaborating with daily.

“I came in not knowing anyone, and everyone made me feel so welcome and genuine in wanting me to succeed. I have an amazing grade-level team along with so many colleagues who work countless hours to help every student succeed. The staff is built with many differing personalities and strengths, and I can honestly say I would not be able to do my job without the support of the wonderful team that is Heritage.”

As a new teacher, one of the biggest challenges Kirby has had was a bit unexpected: saying goodbye to her students from last year. She still sees them occasionally in the halls or at dismissal, but it is difficult to go from seeing them all day every day to only getting a few brief interactions here and there.

On the flipside, she has a whole new class of students to watch grow.

“I love making relationships and seeing the enormous amounts of academic, social and whole-person growth made by each child. Each one has a unique starting point, and, by summer, they each have passed countless milestones and personal goals. It’s so fun to be their cheerleader and coach through this part of their journey. The hugs and smiles are also a huge bonus.”

Of course, the little ones keep her on her toes, too.

“One of my first days of teaching, I had a student bring in cupcakes for birthday treats. One of the students did not like the frosting, so they threw it away in a tissue. As we were leaving for the day and going to our dismissal spots, I saw a different student carrying a tissue licking the frosting from it.”

When she’s not at school, you’ll find Kirby trying new places to eat with her husband, Ethan. They like to take walks and spend time with family and friends. She also enjoys reading and binge-watching Hallmark movies. ■

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GRIMES Public Library news

We love our new library building, and so does the metro. The library has welcomed more than 106,000 visitors since it opened in January. The previous building saw 75,000 visitors in a full year. The Grimes Public Library was also recently featured in the American Libraries Magazine's 2024 Library Design Showcase. This recognized libraries across North America including buildings in Boston, Atlanta and Toronto.



Child: Eliana Miriam Grace McEachern
Parents: Scott and Sabrina McEachern
Age: 15 months
Favorite book: "The Bear Snores On" or "Highlights' Who Says Uh-Oh"
Favorite animal: Cat (specifically Krynkl, the family cat)



Child: Giana Gano
Parents: Amber and Michael Gano
Age: 5
Favorite book: "Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus"
Favorite animal: Unicorn ■

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FLOCKHART enjoys her cozy Dallas Center home

Perfect place to downsize

Eighteen years ago, Shellie Flockhart arrived in Dallas Center and was captivated by its charm.

She found the perfect house to make her home but says what truly made her fall in love with the community was the Easter egg hunt she attended after she moved in.

“We joined the town in an Easter egg hunt, reminiscent of the movie ‘Steel Magnolias,’ filling the air with joy and laughter,” she says.

Flockhart has lived in three different homes over the years she’s been in Dallas Center and says her current one on tree-lined Kellogg Avenue is a testament to the power of downsizing.

“As my oldest two children ventured out into the world, I embraced the opportunity to create a cozy and inviting space for my younger children,” she says. “This house is a gem.”

Flockhart shares it was originally owned by Penny Burnett, a local philanthropist, who hired an architect from Kansas City to create the plans for the 1940s house.

The home has lots of character, including large closets, a three-season porch, a two-car attached garage, original woodwork, arched doorways, a wood fireplace and grapevines that line the backyard.

“You might even find electric hurricane blinds that are on the outside of all the west windows,” Flockhart says. “The story goes a traveling salesman came down the street and sold them to three homeowners years ago. They now come in handy with our Iowa weather and for lazy movie days.”

Flockhart shares that, while Dallas Center is still considered a small town, her love of the community is big.

“I know my neighbors, and they know me,” she says. “We watch out for one another, and we do life together.”

She adds, “Christmas decor on our street is just like a movie. Trick-or-treat is magical. The fall trees have so much color. The town fox is always a sight to see in the springtime. We love it all.”

One of the reasons Flockhart moved to town in the first place was so her kids could grow up playing outside safely.

“As my kids have grown through the years, they could meet friends at the park or the pool,” she says. “They could ride their bikes around town with friends. There is Skate Night, the Farmer’s Market, Baker’s Pantry, an amazing swimming pool, parks, the library, the bike trail, faith-filled activities and the Fall Festival.”

So much to love, indeed.

As a way to give back to the community, Flockhart has served on the Friends of the Dallas Center Pool Committee for 11 years and organized a summer lunch program for kids for several years. The salon she owns, Studio S Salon, organizes the Dallas County Jail’s Christmas for All program. She also works as an election official for Dallas County and assists with the Fall Festival and other community events.

“Through these experiences, I have had the pleasure of meeting new people and fostering connections within the town,” Flockhart says. “I am filled with immense gratitude toward the people of our Dallas Center community and our DCG School District. This has been a remarkable place to raise my children, and I am so thankful for the support and opportunities they have received.” ■



Shellie Flockhart and her youngest children live in their third home in Dallas Center, having downsized as the older children left home. The three-season porch is one of the home’s highlights.





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Veterans Salute: Help us honor veterans. Email your information (name, town you reside in, military branch, rank, year enlisted and discharged/retired) and photo to tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.

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Recipes: Do you have a holiday recipe that has special meaning to you? Will you share it with our readers? Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com to have it included in our December issue. In your email, mention the community where you live.



Trunk or Treat

Oct. 20, 2-4 p.m.
South Sports Complex,
750 S. James St., Grimes

Keep the fall fun going at the Trunk or Treat event. Local businesses and city officials will have cars decked out for the holiday and will be handing out candy.



Grimes Annual Craft Sale

Saturday, Oct. 26, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Prairie Creek Church, 801 W. First St., Grimes

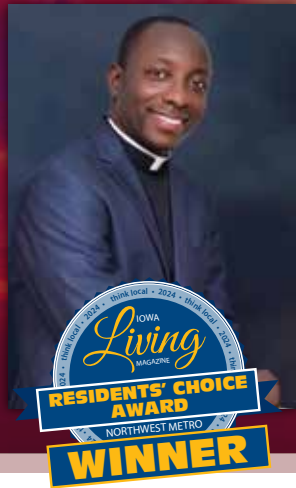
Enjoy the Prairie Creek Church's Annual Craft Sale. Start your holiday shopping at this free event. There will be many great products, as well as baked goods, for sale. Breakfast and lunch items will also be available for purchase.

Explore Grimes Guided Bus Tour

Thursday, Oct. 24, 2-4:30 p.m.

Join up to 100 business members, developers, real estate agents and community leaders for an exclusive tour of the Grimes community. Led by Brian Buehe, president and CEO of Grimes Chamber and Economic Development, or Alex Pfaltzgraff, assistant city administrator, you'll gain firsthand insights into the latest developments, upcoming projects and exciting opportunities in the community. This year's event includes a special behind-the-scenes preview of the new Iowa Ortho Surgery Center, opening in late 2024. After the tour, enjoy drinks, appetizers and networking with fellow attendees. Register online at <https://business.grimesiowa.com/events/details/explore-grimes-a-guided-bus-tour-of-growth-and-opportunity-1911?calendarMonth=2024-10-01>.

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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Trick-or-Treat

Tuesday, Oct. 31, 6-8 p.m.

Trick-or-Treat will take place in Grimes on Halloween. Here are five tips to help you stay safe this Halloween.

1. Cross at the street corners using traffic signals and crosswalks.
2. Always walk on sidewalks. If there are no sidewalks, walk facing traffic as far to the left as possible.
3. Watch for cars that are turning or backing up.
4. When selecting a costume, make sure it is the right size to prevent trips and falls.
5. Join kids under age 12 for trick-or-treating. If kids are mature enough to be out without supervision, tell them to stick to familiar areas that are well lit and trick-or-treat in groups.

Volunteer orientation

First Monday of the month,
5:30 p.m.
Rhythms of Grace,
23625 River Heights Drive,
Dallas Center

Rhythms of Grace offers a one-hour orientation monthly for those who would like to learn more about Rhythms of Grace before committing to a volunteer application, background check and training. To register, visit <https://rhythmsofgraceequine.org/volunteer>.

Joint Legislative Lunch

Wednesday, Nov. 20,
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Holiday Inn & Suites DM Northwest, 4800
Merle Hay Road, Urbandale

The Grimes, Johnston, Ankeny, Polk City and Urbandale Chamber of Commerce invite the public to attend their Joint Legislative Luncheon to hear from area state representatives, state senators and county supervisors ahead of the 2025 Legislative Session. All elected officials representing Ankeny, Johnston, Grimes and Urbandale have been invited to participate. Cost is \$29 for members and \$30 for non-members. Register through the Urbandale Chamber website, <https://uniquelyurbandale.com>, under events.

Bricker Price Block Senior Speaker Series

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- Nov. 8: Madison County in World War I, Linda Griffith Smith
- Nov. 15: Iowa in WWII, Michael Vogt, Iowa Gold Star Military Museum
- Nov. 22: Our World, Our Stories: International Students Share Their Heritage, Emilijia Rajic of Serbia and Vladilena Vetrova of Moldova. ■

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Adoration/Benediction
3rd Tuesday of the month
10/15, 11/19, 12/17, 1/21

Trunk or Treat Event
Sunday, October 27 - 12-1:30pm in the gym
Table Hosts WANTED! Call Brenda at the Parish offices

The Chosen Study Group
September 8 - November 3 at 6pm

Adult Faith - Study Group on Acts
Starting September 9 - November 18 (1st session)
Monday's 8:30am & Wednesday's 5pm & 7pm

K of C Breakfast
November 10 at 9am-11am (gym)
Free Will Donation

Next Baptismal Prep Class
Sunday, November 17 at 1pm
Register with Brenda at the Parish Office

Save the Date: Sat., October 26th

- Time: 6:00pm - Event: Costume Ball
- Theme: Characters from Books
- Cost: \$35 per person (includes dinner & drinks)

Scan the QR CODE for more information!

1st Saturday of the Month starting July 1st we will offer morning Mass at 8am.
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CIVICS IQ test

Civics? It is the study of the rights, duties and responsibilities of citizenship. We all are quite aware that we have rights. However, are we aware that we have duties and responsibilities? A civic duty is a legal obligation that is required by law. Failure to fulfill these duties typically results in legal consequences, such as a ticket for speeding. A civic responsibility is a social obligation that is perceived as important for the benefit of the community and society, but it is not legally required. These responsibilities are based on ethics and morality rather than law, such as volunteering and voting.



How well do you understand our system of government?

- Under which branch of government does the governor serve?
 - Is the United States government a democracy or a republic?
 - Which governmental body is responsible for making a city ordinance?
 - Are the Democratic and Republican parties part of a branch of the government, and if so, which?

Answer 1) The governor serves under the executive branch of the government. This branch enforces the laws that are passed by the legislative branch and is responsible for all the administrative agencies that make rules about how to enforce the laws (departments of transportation, revenue, health and human services, corrections, education, agriculture, etc.). The governor appoints the heads of these agencies, and they answer to the governor. We refer to this as a "political appointment." Frequently, the person appointed to the top job is of the same political party as the governor. When the governor changes, typically, so do the heads of these agencies.

Answer 2) Both. In a democracy, each vote counts equally. Majority wins. Local elections are by democratic vote. In a republic, one person is chosen to represent the wishes of many. A state representative is chosen by democratic vote; however, the president is chosen by representative vote (electoral college). Individual laws are passed by representative vote rather than democratic vote. Therefore, our system of government is both a democracy and a republic.

Answer 3) A city council votes on ordinances that are enforceable for that city, which is a republic form of process.

Answer 4) Political parties are not part of the government. They are private organizations that devise their own methods of how to decide who will represent the party in an election for a government role. Republican Party does not equate to republic. Democratic Party does not equate to democracy. They are just titles, not descriptors.

For more education on civics visit <https://oconnorinstitute.org/civics-education>. ■

Information provided by Cynthia P. Letsch, JD, CMP, Letsch Law Firm, 112 N.E. Ewing St., Suite D, Grimes, 515-986-2810, www.LetschLawFirm.com.



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RECIPE

EGG ravioli with sage and almonds

Recipe courtesy of the American Heart Association

Servings: 4

- 8 cups water
- 1/2 cup fat-free ricotta cheese
- 1 tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 1/2 teaspoons fresh, chopped thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon grated orange zest
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 8 gyoza wrappers, shumai wrappers or wonton wrappers
- 4 large egg yolks, unbroken
- 1 large egg white, lightly beaten
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1/4 cup sliced almonds, chopped
- 1 tablespoon chopped, fresh sage
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped red bell pepper (optional)

DIRECTIONS

- Fill large pot with water. Bring water to gentle boil over medium-high heat.
- In medium bowl, stir ricotta cheese, Parmesan cheese, thyme, orange zest and pepper.

- Place four wrappers flour sides down on cutting board. Spoon 1 1/2 tablespoons cheese mixture onto center of each wrapper. Using back of spoon, press down on cheese mixture to create well about 1 1/2 inches across (width of large egg yolk), leaving at least 1/2 inch space around edges of wrapper. Without breaking it, carefully place one egg yolk in center of each well.
- Using pastry brush, brush edges of wrappers with egg white. Place one top wrapper with flour side up on each bottom wrapper. Using thumbs and forefingers, firmly press edges together to tightly seal each ravioli. Set aside.
- Using slotted spoon or spatula, carefully drop each ravioli into boiling water. Cook 2 1/2-3 minutes, or until wrappers are al dente (cooked not too soft but not overdone). Using slotted spoon, gently remove raviolis from pot, draining well. Transfer to plates. Drizzle with oil. Sprinkle with almonds, sage and bell pepper, if desired.
- Tips: Gyoza wrappers (or shumai wrappers) are preferred because they're thinner than wonton wraps. Look for gyoza wrappers in the dairy aisle, deli department or freezer



section.

- Use these guidelines to determine how you want eggs cooked: At 2 1/2 minutes, eggs are yellow and slightly thickened but not set around edges, similar to sunny-side up. At 3 minutes, eggs are deeper orange and slightly set around edges, similar to over-easy. ■



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Q: Why do I compare myself to others at the gym?

A: It is almost like an immediate instinct to walk into the gym and start comparing ourselves to others. To immediately look at someone and feel like you need to be better in whatever aspect is being compared. But why? Why do we do that to ourselves? Why do we instinctively try to put our abilities and capabilities in the same category as a stranger? There are many factors to be taken into consideration. You don't know how long they have been on their fitness journey; you don't know what struggles they have gone through to get where they are at, and, for all you know, they could be comparing themselves to you at that exact moment. Flip your mentality and use that person as inspiration. If you want to be as strong or as fit as someone, take it day by day and work for it. Do not inflict self-criticism, but rather start instilling a new sense of motivation. Use the ones around you as motivation, not a platform to start self-critiquing. For all you know, you could be that one that someone else is comparing themselves to. Someone is probably noticing your strength, your hard work, and your improvement. Remember that. You are more than likely someone else's inspiration, and you do not even know it. ■



Information provided by Haley Powers-Risdal, certified personal trainer/head coach at Anytime Fitness 255 S.W. Brookside Drive, 515-300-9262, GrimesIA@anytimefitness.com.

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COPING with grief and loss

Coping with grief is a deeply personal experience we all experience differently. It's important to remember there is no "right" way to grieve. Whether you've lost a loved one, a job or a pet, the feelings of sadness, anger and guilt are normal. Here are a few things to remember:



- **Allow yourself to feel.** Your emotions won't go away by ignoring them. Talk with a trusted friend or family member or consider joining a local GriefShare group.
- **Take care of your health.** Grief can take a toll on your body, so be sure to eat, drink water and sleep. It might feel hard to keep up with these things, but they're key to healing.
- **Don't set a timeline.** Grief comes and goes. Healing takes time.

Give yourself permission to heal at your own pace. Working through the grieving process might feel like a roller coaster at times. Even years after a loss, you may be triggered by certain events, places, or smells that remind you of what you once had.

If you ever find your grief is overwhelming, it's OK to ask for help from a mental health professional or a support group. You should never have to face loss alone.

Other grief resources: The Compassionate Friends, AARP Grief and Loss Resources, National Widower's Organization, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Whatsyourgrief.org and Taps.org. ■

Information provided by Vanessa Andersen, LISW, Licensed Mental Health Therapist, Pink Couch Wellness, 1220 N.E. Station Crossing, Suite 204, Grimes, IA 50111. www.pinkcouchwellness.com.

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PRESIDENTIAL elections and market performance

With the presidential election fast-approaching, investors may be wondering how the outcome might affect their portfolios. While the outcome may be uncertain, we can always count on plenty of opinions and predictions leading up to the days of the election. Politics bring out intense emotions among investors which causes major concern and anxiety around their investment portfolios as election day nears.



century of data shows that the stock market has performed well following an election. Regardless of which party wins, stocks trend upward. Data also shows, dating back to 1926, that stock market returns in months the presidential elections took place have not been significantly different from returns in any other given month.* Markets don't favor one party over another. Actions and policies that are put in place by the winning candidate may impact stock returns in the short-term but does not drive the long-term market trajectory.

Current market performance isn't based on presidential policies; instead, current market performance is focused on corporate earnings, Federal interest rate cuts, inflation and other economic factors. Shareholders will continue to invest in companies they believe in rather than political parties. Companies are focused on serving their customers, growing their business, and striving to be successful regardless of which political party is in office. In the end, stocks with strong long-term fundamentals will continue to rally after the election spotlight fades.

The history of market performance during election years makes a great case for sticking to a plan to achieve long-term goals. Focusing on broader economic trends rather than short-term election noise will lead to better performance among investment portfolios. Remaining diversified in your investment portfolios, continuing to monitor investment risk tolerance, and updating your investment goals with your financial planner are still the key factors of investment performance success. ■

*Dimensional Fund Advisors. (2020, October 28). Presidential elections: What do they mean for markets? Dimensional. For more information, please contact Wade Lawrence or Bryce Block with City State Bank Trust & Investments at 515-986-2265. Not FDIC insured. Not deposits or other obligations of the bank and are not guaranteed by the bank. Are subject to investment risk, including possible loss of principal. City State Bank does not provide tax or legal advice. Each taxpayer should seek independent advice from a tax professional. These materials are based upon publicly available information that may change at any time without notice.

Is the stock market going to experience a major hit/crash or will it benefit from an upswing/rally? Is there a correlation on stock market performance dependent on which party wins the election? These are all common questions we see leading up to elections and a natural response for investors is to look for a connection between who wins and which way stocks may go.

Putting all emotions aside, over nearly a

HONOR OUR VETERANS

Iowa Living magazines will be saluting veterans in November issues. If you are a veteran who would like to be included, please send a photo (military or current) and the following information:

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GIVING back in all forms

Volunteering impacts Wyatt's personal and professional lives

Melissa Wyatt knows Dallas Center well. She has lived in town since 2009 when she and her husband decided to plant their roots in the community.

In the 15 years since, she's given back to Dallas Center in numerous ways, primarily by serving as the leader of the Sugar Grove Clover Kids Club in Dallas Center and volunteering with her older daughter's 4-H clubs.

"4-H is an opportunity for children to learn so many skills — leadership, animals, STEM and more — and I feel that it is wonderful for my kids and others to have those experiences while building important social skills," Wyatt says.

One of her favorite experiences from her time with Clover Kids in particular was teaching the kids about the local food pantry.

"The food pantry coordinator helped teach the children about the pantry, and we talked about why someone may use the pantry and how we can help," Wyatt shares. "Our club collected food and hygiene items at a mini food drive and collected over 40 pounds."

Professionally, Wyatt works as the volunteer coordinator for UnityPoint Hospice, so she is extra familiar with the power of giving back.

"I am privileged to work with amazing volunteers, meet wonderful people, and help facilitate meaningful matches and partnerships for both the families and volunteers," she says. "The hospice volunteers I am privileged to work beside have taught me so much about selfless service. They are giving of their time to be with people and their families at a very vulnerable time, and they meet them with the utmost respect and dignity — something that everyone deserves."

Wyatt makes the time to volunteer in her own ways because of her belief that everyone has something to offer, whether it is interpersonal skills, administrative skills or otherwise.

"Volunteering not only benefits those you are volunteering for or with but will certainly make an impact on you as well," she says. "It gives me an opportunity to stay involved with my children's activities and support other program staff. I enjoy getting to meet new people and learn new things, too."

For people who feel ready to volunteer, Wyatt encourages them to decide what may best work for them and then research various opportunities.


"If you feel that the opportunity you have chosen doesn't work for you or feel right, don't be afraid to change," she says. "If you don't enjoy what you're doing, then it will not be beneficial for you or the organization."

Wyatt's dedication to volunteering serves as a reminder of how giving back can enrich the lives of not only those served but also the volunteers themselves. ■



Tim Short of Edward Jones presents the Good Neighbor certificate to Melissa Wyatt.


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MKD-8657E-A AECSPAD (10/4/20)

Do you know a Good Neighbor who deserves recognition?
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'Blood Over Bright Haven'

Intent versus impact. Does it matter if the result causes harm? Somehow, both compulsively readable and deeply philosophical, I was completely consumed by this book to the point that I left ice cream melting on the counter while I read.

Sciona is a member of the privileged class but unable to achieve her academic dreams due to being a woman. She fights to master the magic that keeps her city humming and makes a place for herself outside of traditional womanhood. Thomil is a survivor of horror, only to be virtually enslaved for his trouble. This shining beacon of an anachronistic city holds terrible secrets he's all too familiar with, and Sciona will need his help to finally understand where her real power lies. Together, these two will start the kind of revolution that will change the world.

Corruption, lies and the balance of power all come together to make for a very different story than the one I thought I was reading. I absolutely loved the gut-punch twists and the incredible emotion and raw humanity on display throughout the story. My world is a better place having read this, and yours will be, too. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



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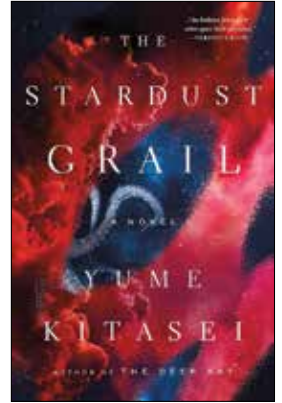
'The Stardust Grail'

I love science fiction, but even I can admit there are times when the humanity is drained even from the most exciting spaceship story. Never fear, though, Yume Kitasei is here to help. Whether far future or near, she seems to make the most out-there settings seem more human than the corner bar.

Maya is a retired thief, alien enthusiast and burnt-out grad student. Trying to rejoin life on the legal side and keep herself from losing her mind, she is not at all sure when an old friend contacts her for one last heist, this time for all the marbles. With a poignant pessimism and exhausted sense of duty, Maya builds herself a found family and takes off back to the stars. It's one last adventure that will change everything, whether she means to or not.

Perfectly paced, sharply written and full of an achingly human balance of optimism and angst, I loved every word of this book and can't wait to see what tangled questions Yuma Kitasei asks me to face next. She's become a must-read for me; don't miss this. ■

— *Review by Julie Goodrich*



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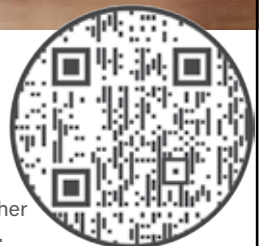
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A LOT can change in 50 years

History has a way of revealing what truly matters. Every day, we're bombarded with news of global events — conflicts, elections, major sports and celebrity happenings. While these stories might feel momentous at the time, most fade from memory as the years pass. It's only with the benefit of hindsight that we can see which moments truly shaped our world.



Consider a moment from nearly 50 years ago. In January 1975, Popular Electronics magazine featured the Altair 8800 on its cover, introducing the first commercially available personal computer. At the time, it was a niche product for hobbyists, something most people would have overlooked in favor of the more popular trends like Pet Rocks or 8-track tape players. But, today, we recognize the Altair 8800 as the spark that ignited the digital revolution, eventually leading to the world of computing that we now take for granted.

The Altair's introduction was a quiet revolution — one that would only be fully understood with the passage of time. Fast forward to today, and we find ourselves on the cusp of another technological leap: Artificial Intelligence (AI). Much like the early days of personal computing, AI is still in its formative stages, and it's hard to predict exactly how it will reshape our lives. But if history teaches us anything, it's that the technologies we overlook today could be the ones that define tomorrow.

As we think about the impact of AI, it's worth reflecting on how our own community has grown and changed over the years. In 1975, Grimes was a small town with fewer than 1,000 residents. Today, we're a thriving and rapidly growing community, shaped by the same forces of innovation and change that have transformed the broader world. Just as the Altair 8800 was a seed that grew into something far greater, the advancements we're seeing now — whether in AI or other fields — will likely have a profound impact on our future.

Whether you're an early adopter of AI or someone who prefers to take a wait-and-see approach, it's clear our world is on the brink of significant change. As a community, we have the opportunity to shape how these technologies influence our lives, just as we've shaped the growth of Grimes over the past few decades. My hope is that, as with the Altair 8800, the innovations of today will lead to a brighter and more connected future for all of us. And, while we may not fully grasp the importance of these developments right now, history will eventually reveal their true significance. ■

Information provided by Brian Buethe, President | CEO, www.GrimesIowa.com.



Jennifer Grove, D.D.S., P.C. • Matthew Platt, D.D.S., P.C.
Austin Tyskland, D.D.S. • Shana Howard, D.D.S.

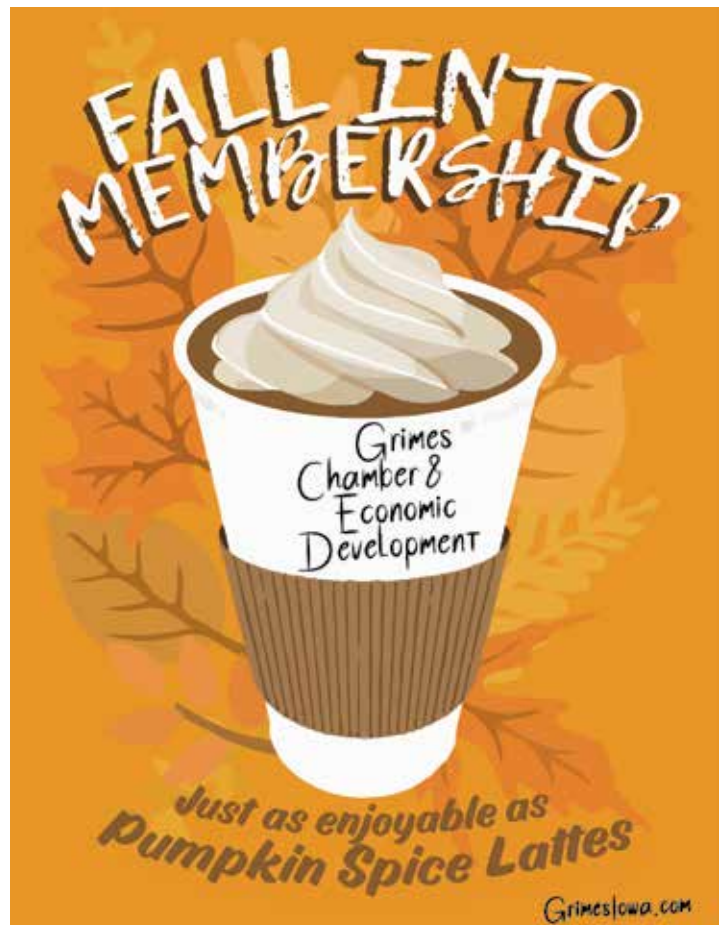


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VARSITY Volleyball

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Addie Abens



Addie Abens, Kylie Janssen and Anna Jackson



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Landry Glasgow



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Maliya Carlson



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Jacey McFarland



Ava Smid

OUT & ABOUT



Madison Taiber, Halsey Altringer and Cynthia Letsch at the Grimes Chamber Off the Clock event held at Letsch Law Firm on Sept. 19.



Chad Allison and Brian Buethe at the Grimes Chamber Off the Clock event held at Letsch Law Firm on Sept. 19.



Melissa Garton and Cynthia Letsch at the Grimes Chamber Off the Clock event held at Letsch Law Firm on Sept. 19.



Joseph Herst and Phil Fisher at the Grimes Chamber Off the Clock event held at Letsch Law Firm on Sept. 19.



Mary Claseman and David Letsch at the Grimes Chamber Off the Clock event held at Letsch Law Firm on Sept. 19.



Cynthia Letsch, Austin Quinn, Bethany Jefferies and Sandra Wisner at the Grimes Chamber Off the Clock event held at Letsch Law Firm on Sept. 19.



Sophie and Dan Juffer at the Grimes Chamber Off the Clock event held at Letsch Law Firm on Sept. 19.



Joan Warren, Donna Foster and Lu Anne Gafford at the Grimes Chamber Lunch and Learn at Hilton Garden Inn on Sept. 11.



Cyle Taylor and Greg Means at the Grimes Chamber Lunch and Learn at Hilton Garden Inn on Sept. 11.



Justin Niday and Jamey Grossnickle at the Grimes Chamber Lunch and Learn at Hilton Garden Inn on Sept. 11.



Chad Allison and Katie Woodward at the Grimes Chamber Lunch and Learn at Hilton Garden Inn on Sept. 11.



Madison Taiber and Christopher Porter at the Grimes Chamber Lunch and Learn at Hilton Garden Inn on Sept. 11.

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