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WELCOME

# MY BABY blue Mustang

It was a 1980 Ford Mustang. Baby blue in color. Hatchback. Four-cylinder engine. The car was nothing special, but it was my first car — and it was all mine.

I, of course, pulled the factory stereo out of it and installed a Pioneer cassette deck and Jensen speakers. A guy has to have priorities, after all.

My life savings went into the purchase of that vehicle. Insurance. Gas. Oil changes. All on my dime. I was OK with that, as it was part of my greater independence — and I was the only one with the keys.

The Mustang got me through my college years, despite one unfortunate incident. I am by no means a gearhead, but I had a cracked fuel line, and it seemed easy enough to replace. In the process, some gas leaked out of the old line onto the engine. No big deal, I thought.

I drove the Mustang to a local car wash, and my mother rode along with me. I put some coins in the machine and motioned Mom to drive the car into the wash bay. (I should note that this was the first — and only — time my mother drove any vehicle of mine.) Mom turned the ignition, and I immediately saw flames peeking out of every possible opening in the hood and below the car. I yelled to her to pop the hood. She turned the lights on, applied the parking brake and started the wipers, but the hood remained closed. As I frantically ran to the car, the paint on the hood started bubbling. I opened the driver-side door, popped the hood and put out the fire with the car wash wand I still had in my hand. What was left was a melted mess.

Dad had a friend who was a local mechanic and rewired everything and got my Mustang running again. The mechanic said he did his best on my limited budget, but he wasn't making any promises on how well it would run. And he was right to say that. The best gas mileage I got after the repairs was 4 mpg.

When I graduated from college, I traded the Mustang in on a new vehicle. The dealer put it on the used car lot, and a potential buyer called me and asked about it. "Do not buy that car," I told him. "It caught on fire and only does about 4 mpg." He kept asking questions, so I repeated my comments. I think he still bought the car.

We all learned some lessons after the car fire incident, but my Dad's comments stuck with me the most. "If you ever have a car start on fire again, let it burn."

Thanks for reading. ■



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# An Unforgettable RIDE

Residents share the joy of their first car

By Jackie Wilson

What kids, strapped into the backseats of their parents' cars, gazing through the gaps between the front seats and watching the road ahead, don't think how great it will be when they are in the driver's seat? And not just any driver's seat, but the seat of their very own car. The power of the machine in their control. The freedom to choose the destination. The total control over the stereo. It's no wonder people's memories of their first auto stay vivid, and the stories remain a thrill to be told.

Sherrie Christiansen's first car was a 1979 Chevy Camaro. Her husband, Erik Christiansen, surprised her 45 years later with the same model of the car she purchased at age 16.  
Photo by Jackie Wilson





Erik and Sherrie Christiansen's first vehicles, a Camaro and a Jeep.



Erik Christiansen's first vehicle was a 1948 Jeep — a CJ-2A.



### First car returns

In 1979, Sherrie (Wasson) Christiansen worked as a waitress at Village Inn in West Des Moines. She saved up money so she could buy a car once she turned 16. With \$2,000 for a down payment, she bought a 1979 Chevrolet Camaro from Bob Brown Chevrolet.

“It was white with baby blue interior — to match my blue eyes,” she explains. “It was way cool.”

Her parents approved the purchase, and she made car payments of \$100 a month.

Her friends from Valley High School enjoyed the car. Everybody wanted to ride in it.

“When we went to the UNI Dome, we had three people in the back seat and one up front,” Sherrie says.

She sold the car for \$4,000 in 1987. She and her husband, Erik Christiansen, needed the money to buy a house, and Erik had a company car.

Throughout the years, she and Erik attended numerous car shows, and he participated in various car races. Often, when she attended a car event, she’d spy a car like her old Camaro.

“Every time she saw her Camaro, she’d say, ‘Is that the one I had? Ooh, I like it,’” Erik says.

So, Erik was on a secret hunt to bring back Sherrie’s old Camaro. He couldn’t locate the original one, so he searched online for the same year and model. It was challenging, as white Camaros were rare. He finally found a white 1979 Camaro, but the owner offered a word of

caution.

“A guy in Pennsylvania said he had the car. And he said to me, ‘Do you realize it has a baby blue interior?’”

It was a sign from heaven, and Erik arranged to have the car delivered to Iowa and keep it a secret. He enlisted the help of their daughter, Casady, and their grandson, Tut.

Tut told Sherrie (known as Gigi) to come to the garage because he had a surprise for her. When she walked into the garage, she recalls bursting into tears and screaming, “What?”

“It was like seeing an old friend,” she recalls. “I said, I gotta drive it!”

Once she got in, she says it was like an “old home.”

“I thought, how did I even fit my girlfriends in the back seat?” she laughs.

She sent a picture to her high school girlfriend, Holly, who recalled her memories of traveling to a football game at the UNI Dome.

“A champagne bottle cork popped off unexpectedly and hit the roof of the car,” she says. “We’re lucky nobody lost an eye. We laughed the whole way home. That Camaro was the star of the show.”

Whenever Sherrie hops in, she’s taken back in time, and the memories come flooding back of her high school days.

“The car even smells the same,” she says.

### Jeeps, classic cars and racing

About Erik and Sherrie dating in high school, he sets the record straight.

“I didn’t date her for her car,” he jokes.

Erik’s first car was a 1948 Jeep — a CJ-2A, known as a Willy. He bought the flat-fender Jeep at age 15. He relied on friends to help with repairs, but mostly he was self-taught and painted it, replacing the engine with a 289 Mustang engine. He worked at a local Amoco gas station and learned mechanical repair.

Throughout the early years, he drove a variety of cars including a greenish-yellow 1972 Impala. He bought another Jeep, which had a Levi’s denim interior including button-fly metal snaps.

“I took the top off, and the sun would get on the rivets. When I sat down on the metal rivets, it would burn a hole in my leg,” he recalls.

As this Jeep wasn’t an automatic, he encouraged Sherrie to learn how to drive a manual.

“He took me to the top of the hill and taught me how to drive a stick,” she recalls.

Erik and his buddies often took the Jeep off-roading along the Raccoon River.

“We were teens and did what teens do: drive around and get into trouble,” he says.

Since then, he’s owned six different Jeeps. He’s raced numerous cars and is partial to classic cars, including his current Corvette. The whole family shares his love of cars.

All of the cars he’s owned aren’t considered exotic, but they’ve provided an important aspect to his life.

“Cars don’t love you back, but the memories do,” Erik reflects.





Mike Bronson's first car was a 1969 Mustang, and he recalls a lot of adventurous driving in it. Photo by Jackie Wilson

### Street racing in a small town

As a teenager, Mike Bronson was eager to get his first car — and he wanted it to be a fast one.

When he was 17, his dad came across a 1969 Mustang. The car looked speedy and fun for a teen, but it didn't run.

"My dad paid \$500 for it. It didn't move, as the transmission was messed up. It needed work. I discussed it with my 'car friend,' who thought we could fix it," he recalls.

Mike's dad paid for the car because Mike had helped him.

"Dad owned a lumber store, and I worked unpaid there over the years. My slave labor paid for it," he laughs. "He ended up paying for the repairs, which was more than the initial cost."

Once it was ready to drive, he and his friends took off. Growing up in a small town with no city police, their cars took over.

"We terrorized the town. We did burnouts and drag races. There weren't any cops. It was like 'The Dukes of Hazzard,' crazy stuff," Mike admits.

As the winters were brutally cold in northern Iowa, ice often formed on the roads.

"We'd see how far we could keep the car from sliding sideways. It was a small town with nobody on the roads."

The car had its share of problems, including an electrical system that would randomly stop working.

"The engine would shut off and lose lights, sometimes in the middle of the road," he explains. "Electrical gremlins plagued me."

His great uncle eventually figured the



problem out. He drove the car to college at UNI.

"I put bags of cement in the trunk. The car was horrendous in the snow, but, somehow, we managed."

A few years later, a friend who attended tech school helped restore and paint the car's body as a class project.

"It wasn't a good candidate to be restored. The beer cans used to fall through the rusted floor," he says.

He owned the car until 2001 when he sold it to a friend who was born in 1969 and wanted a 1969 model car.

With a penchant for speed, he attended driving school and races autocross with his son, Alex. The early drag racing helped with his driving skills today.

"There are so many memories," he recalls. "It was fun at the time, but a crazy time."

### Ford Focus for autocross

When Alex Bronson turned 16, he'd already driven with his learner's permit, as well as driving along in autocross with his dad, Mike.

On his birthday, he thought he might be able to choose one of four cars his parents



Alex Bronson's first car was a Ford Focus S.T. He now has a Ford Focus R.S., which he says is faster.

owned. The family took a drive, suddenly detouring to the Ford dealership. There, his dad purchased a brand new car.

It was a Ford Focus S.T.

"It was brand new. I thought it was the best car ever. I didn't have a daily driving car," Alex recalls. "It was a new experience, and it felt fast."

The Focus was ideal for autocross racing, in addition to driving to and from school. Through autocross, he's learned the car's limits and how it handles. His autocross experience has made him a better street car driver.

"I've learned cause and effect, steering and how the car handles in certain situations," he explains. "I've become familiar with the car by hard braking and how to avoid an accident."

After eight years, he recently saved up his money and traded in his first car for a Ford Focus R.S.

"I like the styling, and it's faster," he says.

Alex continues to participate in autocross events with his dad. He's grateful for the gift at age 16.

"It's been an awesome thing with my dad. I wouldn't have become involved with any of that without his influence and the car," he says. ■



# COZY, comforting recipes to take on the cold

*(Family Features)* If blustery conditions are giving you the blues, come inside from the cold for a winter warmup in the comfort of your own kitchen. Cold-weather favorites that are baked, roasted or slow cooked are usually equal parts easy, delicious and filling, making them perfect solutions for chilly, snowy days.

Add a bit of comfort to your weeknight menu with this Loaded Chicken Bake that's ready in about half an hour. A short list of ingredients and allowing your oven to do most of the work for you mean it's ideal for saving time (and money at the grocery store) while still satisfying winter appetites.

Serving as the hearty base is READ German Potato Salad, made with thinly sliced potatoes and bacon in a traditional sweet-piquant dressing. While it's delicious when served chilled, heated or at room temperature on its own, it can also be the star of the show in family meals.

Find more favorite wintertime recipes by visiting [READSalads.com](http://READSalads.com) and [AuntNellies.com](http://AuntNellies.com). ■

## Loaded chicken bake

Recipe courtesy of Hungry In LA

**Prep time:** 20 minutes | **Cook time:** 15 minutes

**Servings:** 8

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2 cans (15 ounces each) READ German Potato Salad
- 4 cups shredded rotisserie chicken or other cooked chicken
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon finely ground black pepper
- 3/4 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1/4 cup crumbled, cooked bacon
- French fried onions (optional), plus additional for serving (optional), divided

### DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 375 F.
- Lightly coat 9-by-13-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.
- Spread German potato salad evenly in dish. Top evenly with chicken.
- In small bowl, stir heavy cream, salt and pepper. Pour mixture over chicken.
- Sprinkle with cheese, bacon and onions, if desired.
- Bake 15 minutes, or until casserole is bubbly. Let stand 10 minutes.
- Top with additional onions, if desired.



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CBD (cannabidiol) interacts with the body's endocannabinoid system to promote calmness, reduce anxiety and improve overall mood. It can help manage everyday stress, from work pressures to family responsibilities, providing a sense of balance and relaxation. Functional mushrooms like Reishi, often called the "mushroom of immortality," are adaptogens that help the body better handle stress while boosting immune function and promoting a calmer nervous system.

Adding functional mushrooms to your daily routine has never been easier. Whether you choose mushroom hot cocoa for a cozy start to your day, convenient mushroom capsules or gummies, or refreshing mushroom beverages, you can enjoy their stress-reducing benefits in a way that fits your lifestyle. Pairing these with a consistent CBD regimen will help you stay calm, centered and ready to take on the year ahead.

Stop by your locally owned CBD store to learn more about CBD, THC, functional mushrooms, and how they can help you stress less and live more. Certified hemp consultants are ready to guide you to the best options for your wellness goals. ■



Information provided by Ashley Powell, CBD American Shaman, 800 S. 50th St., No. 106, West Des Moines, 515-380-5251, and 3418 Eighth St. S.W., No. 3, Altoona, 515-967-4036. References: Project CBD, <https://projectcbd.org/what-is-cbd/cbd-vs-thc/>. Healthline: Medicinal Mushrooms, <https://www.healthline.com/health/food-nutrition/best-medicinal-mushrooms-to-try>

# MEET jazz director Heather Nail

Valley Vocal Jazz Summit is Jan. 30-31.

The Valley Vocal Jazz Summit at Valley High School brings in top jazz musicians, not only to give students expert advice, but to present a public concert.

Heather Nail, director of vocal music at Valley High School, says she is honored to provide opportunities for her students. The summit takes place Jan. 30-31 at Valley High School's Staplin Performing Arts Center.

Nail is the director for the Valley varsity jazz choirs, acapella and select treble clef choirs. She's judged jazz competitions and directed a variety of WDM school choirs since 2010, including nine years at Valley Southwoods and six years at VHS.

She has been passionate about music since childhood. Her dad sang in the choral society, while her mom played piano. Nail played clarinet in high school and bass in a jazz band, which cemented her love for jazz.

She began pursuing a degree in music evangelism and pastoral studies. Yet, as she explored that career, she noticed that students in public schools also required safe spaces to flourish, and she wanted to impact their future.

"I have a passion for music and a heart for people. I feel I've been called to be a music teacher," she reflects.

Her role as a music teacher and director means she spends extra time with students.

"In our line of work, it's not like a typical math teacher. Sometimes choir students spend more time together than with their families," she explains.

Jazz music is her happy place, as she listens to jazz music outside the classroom. She's fortunate to teach jazz, not only for the love of music, but for the people.

"The humans I get to work with are amazing. It gives me hope for the future," she says.

The jazz summit brings in professional musicians, plus 18 other jazz groups from across the state. The summit offers students a chance to interact with the best musicians in the field.

"It's our version of offering a real-life experience and to see people make a living doing that," she says.

It's motivating for students to work with professional musicians.

"Some athletes may walk away with a basketball trophy but may never meet Shaq. Lots of our students go on to be professional musicians," she says.

Talented Valley students have also won many awards over the years. Yet awards and concerts aren't the reason Nail enjoys her career.

"The most joy is not our concerts. It's the moments and the process in the rehearsals and classrooms. When something clicks in my student, I love seeing that and want my students to know their value and feel loved," she reflects. "I learn something from my students every day. There's no better career."

For information about the jazz summit, visit <https://valleyjazzsummit.weebly.com/event-information.html>. ■



Heather Nail, director of vocal music at Valley High School, says the Valley Vocal Jazz Summit provides students with the opportunity to work with renowned jazz musicians.

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# WOMBLE named citizen of year

Serves, volunteers in WDM



Al Womble

In 2024, Al Womble of West Des Moines was named Citizen of the Year. This is the 79th year of the annual award, presented by the West Des Moines Chamber, which recognizes citizens who have given of their time and talents to the community.

Womble is currently the chair of the Iowa Democratic Black Caucus and former chair of the Political Action Committee of the NAACP. He has served on several task forces, boards and other civic organizations. He's a volunteer with St. Mark's Lutheran Church, as well as a mock trial coach for Urbandale Schools.

Womble has partnered with the WDM City Council to offer talks about student activism — both past and present — along with various civil rights issues. He hosted a panel of African Americans who served in the military.

"It's important to understand the history and how it connects people in Iowa. During WWII, black officers trained at Fort Des Moines here in Iowa," Womble says.

He's a staunch supporter of voter registration and helping voters understand who they are voting for.

"Lots of people vote in the presidential election. Yet, local elections can also affect lives more directly. It's important to understand the issues and how the officials you've elected can affect your life," he explains.

When he moved from Davenport to Des Moines to attend Drake University, he found it important to become involved in the community. He attends WDM City Council meetings to understand how the city works.

"I believe the more involved you get, you can grow a better sense of responsibility, beyond your backyard," he says.

Womble says he feels a sense of connection with city officials.

"Through meetings and talks, I've learned about what West Des Moines is doing right. Even though we may not agree, I feel like these people care about West Des Moines. I feel valued," he says.

When he found out about the award, he says he was taken aback.

"I was shocked and extremely grateful and excited. For a person like myself, I don't do things to expect an award. I just show up," he explains. "It's a powerful moment for me."

With the award, comes responsibility.

"When I'm out in West Des Moines, I better make sure I'm acting like a citizen of the year. I always want to lend a helping hand, whether it's helping a person at a grocery store or volunteering."

He suggests citizens attend meetings and offer up service to their community.

"My community needs me to make it better for everyone else. There's no greater way to create good citizens, than by serving others," he says. ■

# DISABILITY and retirement

Clients frequently ask what happens when a disabled person meets retirement age. Simply put, when a disabled person attains full retirement age, disability benefits automatically convert to Retirement Insurance



Benefits. Most disabled beneficiaries will notice no difference when they become retirement beneficiaries.

A more complicated issue is whether to apply for disability or early retirement.

Some people close to — but not at — age 62 do not apply for disability thinking that they will just wait until they can apply for early retirement. This results in a reduced monthly benefit.

However, if you are having difficulty maintaining employment because of a severe

medical condition or combination of conditions expected to last at least 12 months, you may want to consider applying for both early retirement and Social Security Disability. You can apply for both at the same time, or, if you already have a disability claim filed, you can apply for early retirement while the disability claim is processed. This can provide for monthly income while you are waiting for a decision on your disability claim. Should you be found disabled, you may receive compensation for the period of time you received the lower amount. This back-pay amount can be significant.

The amount of monthly benefits you receive depends on when you are found disabled. Regardless of when you apply, if you are found disabled, and your disability began before the age of 62, you will receive your full retirement benefits. If you are found disabled

after the age of 62, your monthly payment will be reduced by the number of months of full retirement benefit but will still be more than the amount of early retirement. You cannot receive disability and full retirement.

Another factor to consider is Medicare. Individuals are eligible for Medicare at the age of 65. Rather than wait until age 65, disabled persons are eligible for Medicare after they have been entitled to SSDI for 24 months.

If you are close to, or over the age of 62, and unable to work because of a medical condition, you should consider filing for disability, early retirement, or both. Contact an attorney who specializes in Social Security disability claims to find out which options are best for you. ■

Information provided Gail Barnett, Abendroth Russell Barnett Law Firm, 2560 73rd St., Urbandale, 515-278-0623, www.ARPCLaw.com.

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# SERVICE and second chances

McCluskey, a cancer survivor, pays it forward.

An 18-year colorectal cancer survivor, David McCluskey uses the second chance at life he was given to dedicate his time and energy to causes close to his heart. When McCluskey received the news of his diagnosis, he decided to spend his time being as productive as possible.

His commitment to service takes many forms, from his role on the Friends of West Des Moines Parks and Recreation Board to co-organizing the annual Get Your Rear in Gear event at Raccoon River Park with his wife, Winonah. The event raises money and awareness for the Colon Cancer Coalition, while also building a supportive network for those affected by colon and colorectal cancer.

McCluskey's passion for the event stems from his own experience of being diagnosed with cancer and finding no established community for patients like him.

McCluskey's battle with cancer inspired him and Winonah to establish their own nonprofit, the Colon Cancer Foundation of Iowa, a volunteer-only organization focused on providing resources for cancer patients. One of their standout initiatives, Snow Angels, coordinates snow removal for patients undergoing chemotherapy, as well as their care providers, helping ensure that the challenges of treatment don't prevent people from living their daily lives.

McCluskey's ties to West Des Moines run deep as well. He and his wife live and work in the area, and his appreciation for its parks and green spaces is personal. Raccoon River Park, where they host Get Your Rear in Gear, holds special significance for McCluskey, who has spent countless hours there over the years.

He's also excited about the ongoing development of Legacy Woods, an area that once hosted the church camp he attended as a child.

"I love seeing that it's being saved and will now be part of West Des Moines parks," he says.

Beyond his work with cancer awareness and the Friends of the Parks and Recreation Board, McCluskey stays involved in the community through various other avenues, like his church and through his service as a Freemason.

"First and foremost, I'm a Christian," he says. "My faith guides me to serve and make a difference in the community however I can."

Despite his many contributions, McCluskey prefers to work behind the scenes, avoiding the spotlight.

"I always feel weird about feeling like I'm bragging about the things I'm doing," he says. "To me, it's an intrinsic, internal feeling of satisfaction of serving the community."




Ryan Mehalovich of Edward Jones presents a Neighbor Spotlight certificate to David McCluskey.

For McCluskey, the rewards of his work lie in seeing the tangible impact it has on the lives of others.

"It's all about community," he says. ■

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## NEW YEAR, new plan

Staying independent at home as you age

Chris, 72, has lived in her home in West Des Moines for nearly 50 years and plans to remain there forever, but her son and daughter-in-law are concerned. Chris is healthy, but if she needs assistance at some point, her family won't be able to help, as they live abroad.

Chris's family members' concerns are reasonable; staying in our homes independently as we age is not always possible. Chronic health challenges can make living independently ill-advised, and full-time care at home can be expensive.

So, you may be asking yourself, on your own behalf or on behalf of someone you love: "If moving into a community for older adults is not a desired option and there are concerns about potential health issues later on, what can I do?"

Consider a Continuing Care at Home (CC@H) membership initiative. Usually administered by an organization that serves older adults, a CC@H program is designed to help people proactively focus on their health at home while enabling them to financially plan for potential services and care down the road.

If you're interested in looking into a CC@H program, make sure to ask specifically what the program includes. A reputable CC@H program not only will offer services to enhance your well-being so you can remain independent longer; it will also help fund future long-term care needs.

Here are some questions you'll want to consider asking before you join a program:

- **Does the program feature personal support, such as wellness coaching?** Studies show people who embark on a life-enriching program or activity will be more likely to succeed with encouragement from a trusted adviser or advocate.
- **Does it include care costs and options?** A solid program will help fund your care, if it's needed, whether through home healthcare or services in a senior living community later on.

- **How long has the organization that's backing the program been in business, and what's its reputation in the senior-living industry?** Even if the program itself does offer all the services you're looking for, make sure you're comfortable with the organization itself. A reputable provider will have longevity and solid outcomes behind it.

Not all CC@H programs are created equal. If a program appeals to you, make sure it meets both your current and future needs and provides you with peace of mind. ■

Aaron Wheeler is Vice President of Home and Community-Based Services for WesleyLife, which provides health and well-being services, including WellAhead — A WesleyLife Well-Being Experience, a CC@H offering. To learn more, visit [wesleylife.org/wellahead](http://wesleylife.org/wellahead).



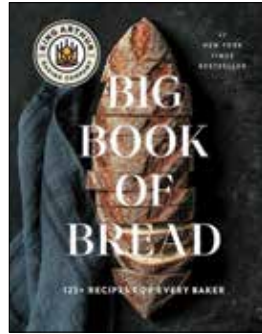


## 'The King Arthur Baking Company Big Book of Bread: 125+ Recipes for Every Baker'

I love a challenge, so it's not surprising that I joined with the many thousands who have tried to master bread baking over the last few years. It turns out, it's both more complicated and blissfully simple than I ever could have guessed. Baking the perfect loaf has not become an obsession, and I can't get enough.

Enter the makers of the best flour commercially available for at-home bakers. Already the authors of vital kitchen texts for cookies and cakes, here they tackle a mountain of bread-baking skills into a gorgeous, easy-to-follow book filled with recipes both common and unusual. With their characteristic style and simplicity, this book is a fantastic resource for bread bakers at every skill level. Everything from sourdoughs, to gluten-free options and dessert breads is covered in this massive book, and I have yet to find something I didn't want to try.

I've made several recipes so far, and I can't wait to try them all. I think this will be an indispensable guide for many years to come. Make some room on your shelf and dive into the best bread book out there. ■  
— *Review by Julie Goodrich*



By King Arthur Baking Company  
10/22/24  
464 pages  
\$45  
Simon Element

## LIBRARY

### JOIN the Winter Reading Challenge

Do you have a stack of good books you've been meaning to dig into? Are you hoping to start the new year with a new book or a fresh reading goal? We invite you to curl up with some good books this January. Readers of all ages may log their reading online during our Winter Reading Challenge that runs Jan. 1-31. You don't need to log books or minutes — just log if you read something. Readers who complete 10 days' worth of reading will be entered into a drawing for a gift certificate to Valley Junction that can be used at any business in the district. You can register at [wdmlibrary.beanstack.org/reader365](http://wdmlibrary.beanstack.org/reader365) or via the Beanstack app for iOS or Android.

**REMINDER:** The library will be closed on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Monday, Jan. 20.

See upcoming event highlights below.

**Model Train Display**, Friday, Jan. 17, 1-6 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 18, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sunday, Jan. 19, 2-4 p.m. Stop by the WDM Library to see the DesMoiNTrak's N-scale working layout. Make sure to stop by the Children's Department for a fun train craft before you leave. No registration needed.

**Final Friday Fiber Club**, Friday, Jan. 31, 10-11:30 a.m. (Adults). All fiber artists are invited to join us for Final Friday Fiber Club, an informal opportunity to get together with other fiber artists to make new friends while creating your own handmade masterpieces. Registration required. ■



## Protect Your Loved Ones from RSV

**RSV is a common respiratory virus,** which peaks in the winter months.

RSV can be dangerous for infants and older adults. These age groups are more likely to be hospitalized from RSV.

**Talk to your family's healthcare providers about RSV prevention.**



Check for cancellations

## Junior Menace

Wednesdays, Jan. 15 - Feb. 26  
Western Hills Elementary,  
600 39th St., West Des Moines

Junior Menace is a seven-week developmental program for boys and girls, ages 3 to 9. Ages 3-4 attend from 6:30-7 p.m. and ages 5-9 from 7-8 p.m. It is a program designed for all ability levels, and they encourage beginners. This is a great program to learn basic soccer skills if your child has never played before. Cost is \$60 for ages 3-4 and \$120 for ages 5-9. For more information and registration, visit [www.menacesoccer.com/juniormenace](http://www.menacesoccer.com/juniormenace).



## Playhouse classes offered

Various dates

The Des Moines Playhouse,  
831 42nd St., Des Moines

The Des Moines Playhouse offers classes year-round for ages 4 through adult. New this winter is an audition workshop for teens and adults. Registration is now open for winter, spring break and spring classes with summer camps posting in mid-January. Scholarships are available through the Jeanne Hopson Angel Fund. For class descriptions, registrations and more information, visit [dmplayhouse.com/education/classes-and-camps](http://dmplayhouse.com/education/classes-and-camps).

The Audition Workshop Series for ages 14 through adult will be led by Playhouse artistic director Katy Merriman. Held each Saturday in February, sessions will focus on song selection, cold reads, dance auditions with “Waitress” choreographer Kent Zimmerman, and a master class with area directors. Students can sign up for one, two, three or all four sessions.

Spring classes, starting March 29 are focused on musical theatre for pre-K through grade 7.

Spring break finds students in grades 5-8 learning “Seussical Kids,” a 35-minute version of the popular Broadway musical, with performances at the end of the week. Students in grades 3-4 will rehearse and perform a play while younger students will use favorite books to create scenes to share.

For more information on Playhouse educational offerings, contact Robin Spahr, Playhouse education director, at [rspahr@dmplayhouse.com](mailto:rspahr@dmplayhouse.com), 515-974-5365.



## Indoor Garage Sale Extravaganza

Jan. 11  
Iowa Events Center,  
730 Third St., Des Moines  
[www.iowaeventscenter.com](http://www.iowaeventscenter.com)

Need a mid-winter fix for your garage sale habit? This is the place to be.

## Square Dance Lessons

Sunday nights starting Jan. 19, 6:30 p.m.  
Douglas Avenue Presbyterian Church, 4601  
Douglas Ave., Des Moines

Ankeny Square Dance Club is sponsoring Square Dance Lessons. Cost is \$20 per person for the entire session accepted at the third lesson. Attend with or without a dance partner. You’ll learn the calls, one at a time, taught by a caller (instructor) and volunteers. For more information, call Sandy Townsend, 515-294-2624, or visit [www.ankenysquares.com](http://www.ankenysquares.com).



## Polk County Heritage Gallery exhibit

Until Jan. 24  
Polk County Administration  
Building, 111 Court Ave., Des Moines  
[polkcountyheritagegallery.org](http://polkcountyheritagegallery.org)

DSM Exhibited 2024 - Annual Juried  
Show is on display.



## Cinch World’s Toughest Rodeo

Jan. 10-11  
Wells Fargo Arena,  
233 Center St., Des Moines  
[www.iowaeventscenter.com](http://www.iowaeventscenter.com)

Action-packed performance featuring some of the nation’s most talented rodeo athletes, livestock and specialty entertainers.

## Live music at Woolly’s

504 E. Locust St.,  
Des Moines  
[firstfleetconcerts.com/first-fleet-venues/woolys](http://firstfleetconcerts.com/first-fleet-venues/woolys)

- Jan. 17: Tyler Richton & The High Bank Boys at 7 p.m.
- Jan. 18: The Prince Experience at 8:30 p.m.
- Jan. 24: Smells Like Nirvana: A Tribute to Nirvana at 8 p.m.
- Jan. 26: Beach Bunny at 8 p.m.
- Jan. 30: Aaron Watson at 8 p.m.

## THEATRE

### Actors, Inc. - Ames Community Theater

120 Abraham Drive, Ames  
[actorsinc.org](http://actorsinc.org)

- Jan. 23-25, 31, Feb. 1-2: “Angel Street”

### Des Moines Performing Arts

Des Moines Civic Center, Cowles Commons, Stoner Theater, Temple Theatre, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines  
[desmoinesperformingarts.org](http://desmoinesperformingarts.org)

- Jan. 25: “A Night of Magic and Comedy”
- Jan. 28 to Feb. 2: “Shucked”

### Tallgrass Theatre Company

2019 Grand Ave., Suite 100,  
West Des Moines  
[tallgrasstheatre.org](http://tallgrasstheatre.org)

- Jan. 31 to Feb. 16: “Ripcord”

### Stephens Auditorium

1900 Center Drive, Ames  
[center.iastate.edu/events](http://center.iastate.edu/events)

- Jan. 24: “Matt Mathews: Boujee On A Budget”



Check for cancellations

## SPORTS

### Iowa Wolves home games

Wells Fargo Arena, 233 Center St.,  
Des Moines

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

- Jan. 13 at 6:30 p.m. vs. Rip City Remix (Portland Trailblazers)
- Jan. 15 at 6:30 p.m. vs. Greensboro Swarm (Charlotte Hornets)
- Jan. 23 at 6:30 p.m. vs. Valley Suns (Phoenix Suns)
- Jan. 24 at 6:30 p.m. vs. Valley Suns

### Iowa Wild home games

Wells Fargo Arena, 233 Center St.,  
Des Moines

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

- Jan. 17 at 7 p.m. vs. Rockford Icehogs
- Jan. 18 at 6 p.m. vs. Rockford Icehogs
- Jan. 22 at 7 p.m. vs. Charlotte Checkers
- Jan. 25 at 6 p.m. vs. Texas Stars
- Jan. 26 at 3 p.m. vs. Texas Stars
- Jan. 28 at 7 p.m. vs. Charlotte Checkers
- Jan. 31 at 7 p.m. vs. Springfield Thunderbirds

### Drake Basketball home games

Knapp Center, 2601 Forest Ave.,  
Des Moines

Men's home games

- Jan. 11 at 5 p.m. vs. Evansville
- Jan. 15 at 8 p.m. vs. Illinois State
- Jan. 22 at 6:30 p.m. vs. Valparaiso
- Jan. 29 at 6 p.m. vs. UNI

Women's home game

- Jan. 16 at 6 p.m. vs. Belmont



### Des Moines Buccaneers home game

The MidAmerican Energy Company  
RecPlex 6500 Grand Ave.,  
West Des Moines

[bucshockey.com](http://bucshockey.com)

- Jan. 24 at 7 p.m. vs. Lincoln Stars



### CITYVIEW's Fire and Ice

Saturday, Jan. 18, 1-4 p.m.

Historic Valley Junction  
Foundation, 137 Fifth St.,  
West Des Moines

Join CITYVIEW's Fire and Ice, an interactive winter pub crawl in Historic Valley Junction. Fire and Ice is a hockey-themed liquor sampling event that will be sure to warm up your winter blues. With your event ticket, you will receive 10 individual drink tickets to sample some of the best winter cocktails from establishments in the Valley Junction area. Tickets are \$25 in advance and \$35 at the door. For tickets, visit <https://fire-and-ice.dmcityview.com>. ■

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# SPINNING and weaving brings communities together

Guild grows, keeps artform alive.

The Des Moines Weavers and Spinners Guild formed in 1945. Originally, they met in members' homes and, later, at the Des Moines Arts Center.

"Back then it was just the Des Moines Weavers Guild," shares Cherie Maxson, current president of the guild. Cherie, who joined 10 years ago, says, when she and Shari Janssen became president and vice-president in 2019, they succeeded in finding a permanent space at Franklin Jr. High in Des Moines. Since that time, the guild has grown from 35 members to around 100 members from all over the Greater Des Moines area.

The guild meets the second Saturday of every month from September to May. It has a Fiber Day twice a month where members can spin and weave with others. One is on a weekday and the other on a weekend. Beginner classes are taught each month. Band weaving, tapestry, spinning, weave structures, rigid heddle, and dye study groups meet once a month. Lynda Rogers is the current vice-president and is in charge of education.

"We have something going on six out of eight weekend days a month," she shares. "We fill in a lot of days in the week, too. We do outreach in the sheep barn on the first Sunday of the State Fair every year. We are also in the Blue Ribbon Quilt room all day, every day of the fair. Ten to 12 times a year, we spin with the alpacas at Blank Park Zoo. We have also taught at Urbandale and Franklin libraries."

This past year, the guild participated in Hands-On History Camp at Jordan House Historical Society and, in June, at the 4-H Conference in Ames teaching various weaving and spinning classes. In the past, the guild has also partnered with Ames High School Fiber Club to teach classes, as well as participating in the Beversdale Farmers Market.

"We try to do a lot of community outreach to get the word out that people still do this stuff," Cherie says. "FiberFest is one day that we teach, demonstrate and have vendors. We also try to host two nationally known experts to teach per year."

Cherie has taken a variety of classes over the years that have been offered by fellow members and guests. In June 2023, she participated in the Midwest Weavers



Cherie Maxson is the current president of The Des Moines Weavers and Spinners Guild.

Conference and took a Deflected Double Weave class.

"This is where two layers of fabric are woven simultaneously and are interwoven with each other," Cherie explains. "I love the way those interact."

Joan Hentschel, a guild member since 2020, bought her first loom during COVID and, about a year later, started weaving. Her yearning to weave started as a desire to finish a rug project that her mother had begun before she passed away. Cherie Maxson taught Joan how to weave, and, since then, she has completed several projects such as a blanket, another rug and kitchen towels. She is currently working on a complex rep weave wall hanging. Through the guild, she has participated in drop-in weaving and spinning, a rag rug weaving class, and fiber structure days. She also attended a Navajo weaving class in Gallup, New Mexico, and a split shed weaving class at the Midwest Weavers conference.

"Learning skills like weaving comes with trials, and having the resource of the group has



Joan Hentschel took up weaving during COVID and has been a member of The Des Moines Weavers and Spinners Guild since 2020.



been really helpful in figuring out what to do," Joan says.

Membership in the guild is \$40 per year, and the fee helps cover the guild's rent, equipment maintenance, and keeping everything up to date. Members can gather to ply their crafts together at monthly meetings, and they can check out equipment, looms and instructional books and videos from the guild's library. ■



# OUT & ABOUT



Amy Gano and Olya Safris at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce Holiday Party.



Allison Barns, Connie Blodgett and Jared Hassel at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce Holiday Party.



Frank Hanson and Everett Mullican at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce Holiday Party.



Kara Matheson, Meredith Murphy and Debby Hudson at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce Holiday Party.



Katherine Harrington and Tom Florian at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce Holiday Party.



Norm Boaz and Jay Mathes at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce Holiday Party.



The staff of Family Pet Veterinary Centers at their annual Pet Photos with Santa event Dec. 7.



Chelsea Musick and Melvin at the Family Pet Veterinary Centers' annual Pet Photos with Santa event Dec. 7.



Santa and Daphne at the Family Pet Veterinary Centers' annual Pet Photos with Santa event Dec. 7.



Santa and Ricco at the Family Pet Veterinary Centers' annual Pet Photos with Santa event Dec. 7.



Santa and Moose at the Family Pet Veterinary Centers' annual Pet Photos with Santa event Dec. 7.



Brooke Currier and Tator Tot at the Family Pet Veterinary Centers' annual Pet Photos with Santa event Dec. 7.



# RIBBON Cutting

The West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Wasabi on Dec. 16.



West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Wasabi on Dec. 16.



Jay Wang and Peter Ginter



Charity Baird and Allison Barnes



Katie and Joe Nguyen



Frank Hanson and Peter Ginter



Tom Florian and Connie Blodgett



Nick Hageman and Mike Franke





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Mary R. in Des Moines says, "I'm 77 and planning for my future. I want quality time with my family, not difficult decisions during difficult times. WellAhead offers me a holistic approach and a leading-edge philosophy towards aging, with benefits for the future and for today."

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