

Living

MAGAZINE

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joy of their first car

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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 Ashley Rullestad

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.

Hailey Swanson was glad to get her first car, a Chevy Trailblazer, for her 14th birthday. She wasn't too concerned about what make and model she got, as long as it was blue.



Joan Warren first drove a 1970 Ford Maverick, but she's since moved on to a 2023 Chevy Camaro convertible.

The "Mav"

Joan Warren's first car was a 1970 Ford Maverick. The car, a two-door, three-speed on the column, was introduced that year at a price

of \$1,995. It replaced the Falcon as Ford's rival to the Chevy Nova and Dodge Dart.

"My stepdad found it for me," Warren says. "I think I had it for about two years. My

folks wouldn't let me bring it to school in Des Moines because I would wear the clutch out with all the stop lights."

When she received the car, Warren



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didn't even know how to operate a manual transmission, so she admits that was definitely a learning experience. Also, the gas gauge didn't work. It usually only read a quarter of a tank. When she did fill it up, it would read three quarters of a tank, until she shut it off, and then it would read a quarter of a tank after that. It took running out of gas a couple of times before she figured out how far she could go on a tank.

At that time, Warren lived in northwest Iowa in the small town of Sioux Rapids.

"My friends and I would go to Storm Lake on the weekend and cruise the loop. I was the one with the car, so I always drove. Our friends in Storm Lake knew we were in town when they saw the 'Mav,' as they lovingly named it. I always joked that I was going to pour a slab of concrete and park the Mav at Chautauqua Park, as everyone knew whose car it was."

The worst thing about the car was the windows would frost over in the winter — on the inside. That was fun, Warren jokes, scraping the window inside before she could drive it.

For the past 20 years, Warren has driven a Chevy Tahoe. But, several years ago, her

husband bought her what would be her first "toy" — a 2015 Chevy Camaro convertible that they called "The Bee" since it was bright yellow.

"The Bee, like the Transformer, because we are so original. I traded her back in 2022 for my current love, a 2023 Chevy Camaro convertible named Widow."

Camaro Cruisin'

Jo Anne Berry purchased her first car at age 19 from Dewey Ford on the east side of downtown Des Moines. It was a brown 1974 Chevy Camaro with a tan vinyl top. She paid \$3,000.

"That debt at 19 years old was somewhat daunting," she says. "I took on a part-time job along with my full-time job just to hurry up and pay off the car. But I had shared the family vehicle for three years, and not having to share was a definite thrill. Being able to get in the car and just go was always an awe moment. I drove the wheels off it."

Berry made her first car payment on a Friday, and the car was almost totaled on Sunday. She was hit head-on on a narrow, two-lane street by a new 1975 Ford Mustang. Both cars required towing.

"Needless to say, the street both ways was blocked, traffic got backed up both directions. The ripple effect was two more car accidents, one by an impaired, under-the-influence driver."

After repairs, the car, mechanically, was great, and Berry never had any kind of motor, transmission or radiator issues. It has a 350 V8, which was the standard engine back then.

"The car was just fun to drive, cool to look at, and the V8 power was awesome," she says. "I had no issues getting around in snow. I eventually added a cassette player and speakers. Had to be cool. The one con of the Camaro was it sat kind of low and wasn't easy to drive over the concrete parking dividers, which would scrape the plastic piece underneath."

Chevy seemed to be the preferred make of cars in those days, Berry says. Her mom drove a 1973 Chevy Chevelle Laguna and her brother a 1970 Chevelle. When it came time to say goodbye to the Camaro in the mid-1980s, her husband traded it in for a black Cadillac Seville. Ironically, when the dealership came to drive it away, it wouldn't start. That was a first.

Her new pride and joy is what she calls a

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Jo Anne Berry's first car was a 1974 Chevy Camaro. She is pictured with her late husband, Charles Berry.

“granny wagon” — a 2010 Lexus RX 350.

“I consider that vehicle not only my car but my casket,” she says. “I’ve had many offers from others for purchase. I cannot sell my casket. My new fondness and appreciation is SUVs, so I very much doubt I will ever go back to a sedan. The new Camaros I’m going to guess couldn’t begin to compare to my 1974 version, so why bother?”

Teen dream

Like many teen drivers, Hailey Swanson wasn’t worried so much about safety or reliability in a first car — she was just hoping to get one. And maybe have it be blue.

“She will be 15 in March and just received her school permit,” her mom, Candice, says.

“We wanted something safe that would last her through college,” Candice says. “She wanted something blue.”

That dream came true as Hailey got her first car for her 14th birthday, a light blue Chevy Trailblazer, as a gift from her parents.

“I love the color and look of it, and I also love the sunroof,” she says. “It means that I have more freedom, and I don’t have to rely on my parents as much to get me places.”

Her favorite memory with the car — so far — was when she was first learning to drive, and her mom took her to the carwash. She freaked out about it.

“But I got french fries afterwards, so it was worth it,” she says. “I hope to keep the car for as long as I can, but if I did have to trade it, I’d want to get a Ford Bronco.”

Car means more opportunities

Teen driver Jack Perman was 14 years old and shopping with his parents for his first car. He saw a 2015 Honda Accord and immediately wanted it.

“After some consideration, we bought it, and I’ve been driving it ever since. I love the gas mileage and simplistic design, and the ride is also smooth and quiet.”

For Perman, having his own mode of transportation means more freedom and opportunities. He can now go to places of interest without relying on his parents or friends to take him.

Unfortunately, members of his family have bad luck when it comes to deer, and Jack is no exception. He hit one that jumped into his path on his way home from school. While he would rather not have hit a deer, he now has a story to add to the family lore about bad deer luck.

“I want to keep my car as long as possible as I’ve already made a handful of memories with it, and I want to make more,” he says. “I have always enjoyed driving it, and I want to make it last.” ■



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Bringing art and community together



Jimmy Navarro's works are among those displayed at Raccoon Valley Bank.



A group of William Wagner sketches are featured at Raccoon Valley Bank.

At Raccoon Valley Bank, financial services meet creativity.

Under the ownership of the Garst family, the bank has made a unique commitment to supporting local artists by featuring curated artwork in each of its four Iowa branches: Perry, Adel, Dallas Center and Grimes.

This initiative, which began in 2015, sets aside 5% of the cost of branch renovations or new builds for artwork. Terry Nielsen, the bank's president and CEO, explains that this dedication to the arts reflects the bank's broader commitment to fostering local connections.

"I think these are pieces that will continue to make a mark on local artists and something that we're proud of as people visit our branches," he says. "The artwork is one of a kind."

The bank's collaboration with Des Moines-based artist and curator Liz Lidgett Gallery and Design, which has partnered with the Garst family for years, has ensured that every piece is thoughtfully chosen and displayed. The result is

not only a visually appealing environment but also a celebration of the artistic talent within the community.

Each branch showcases a diverse collection of contemporary and modern works, ranging from paintings and photographs to sculptures, pottery and custom wall pieces. Most of the pieces are created by artists from central Iowa, but the bank also incorporates works from nationally recognized creators.

According to Nielsen, the artwork does more than beautify the branches — it creates a welcoming, one-of-a-kind atmosphere for customers and employees alike.

"Most of these prints and works are one of a kind, but the longstanding value has been the ownership and the family commitment to creating an environment where we have these original works of art, which certainly sets us apart a little bit from other banks, but is unique in every community that we serve," he says. "We're proud of the history and heritage of it."

The bank has received positive feedback, particularly during open houses and events, like a recent gathering at the Dallas Center branch. While the pandemic temporarily reduced opportunities for in-branch events, Raccoon Valley Bank is gradually reintroducing these community-building moments, with artwork playing a central role.

"It's been encouraging, and I don't look for us to stop any time soon," Nielsen says. "If we want to continue on with remodels or potentially opening new branches, we'll utilize the same program for our artwork."

For Raccoon Valley Bank, the commitment to art isn't just a trend — it's a legacy.

"The Garst family, third-generation bank owners, have been wonderful and supportive," Nielsen says. "This is pretty unique when you see some of this artwork. Their commitment has made this continually be great, not only to the family, but to the employees of the bank and our customers." ■

Start your morning off right with an update from the **daily** umbrella

Brief updates on local news, weather, events, career opportunities and the morning chuckle.



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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 and 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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RECIPE

Oven-roasted sweet potatoes and beets

Servings: 4

- 1 jar (16 ounces) Aunt Nellie's Whole Pickled Beets
- 2 large sweet potatoes (about 1 pound) peeled and cubed (1/2-3/4-inch cubes)
- 2-3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 red onion, sliced about 1/4-inch thick
- 2 fresh rosemary sprigs, plus additional for garnish

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 400 F. Drain beets. Discard liquid or save for another use.
- In large bowl, toss sweet potatoes, olive oil, salt, pepper and onion until coated.
- Place silicone mat on baking sheet or line with aluminum foil.
- Pour contents of bowl onto baking sheet in single layer. Remove rosemary from stems; sprinkle over vegetables. Bake 30 minutes until potatoes are almost tender.
- Add beets to baking sheet. Return to oven 10-15 minutes, or until potatoes are fork-tender and beginning to brown. Garnish with additional rosemary, if desired.



Jennifer Grove, D.D.S., P.C. • Matthew Platt, D.D.S., P.C.
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3 STEPS to put your affairs in order for 2025

It's a new year and time to take care of those pesky New Year's resolutions before they get buried under the pile of life's everyday chores and burdens.



Step 1: Review your powers of attorney.

Do you know where they are? You should have two documents. One is a general durable power of attorney. The other is a health care power of attorney, which may include a living will, also known as an advanced medical directive. Is the person you named still living and well enough to assist you if needed? If you cannot find them, or if your power of attorney documents are more than two years old, make an appointment to review them. If you do not have both powers of attorney and are at least 18 years old, make an appointment to get them.

Step 2: Review your estate planning documents.

These are your last will and testament and/or your revocable living trust. Have you changed your mind about who the beneficiaries should be? Do you want to add a charitable donation? Is the person you nominated as executor or successor trustee still living in Iowa and well enough to serve? It should be revised if your assets have increased significantly or if you have had children since your will or trust was set up.

Step 3: Review your insurance policies (residential, auto and life).

What are your deductibles? What is your maximum coverage? Is it enough or too much? Do you have extra coverage for rental while you are displaced from your home or vehicle; how far will it pay to be towed? What if the party responsible for damage has no insurance; to what extent are you covered? Do you have flood insurance or need extra coverage for hard-to-replace or valuable items like jewelry or special collections? Who are the beneficiaries of your life insurance? Do they need to be changed? Note: Do not name minors as beneficiaries. Also, do not name a third party, like a family member, as a beneficiary with the idea that they will use the money for the kids. They may have every good intention of doing this, but there are significant risks with this type of planning. See an estate planning attorney for better alternatives. ■

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.

Auto Service Reimagined

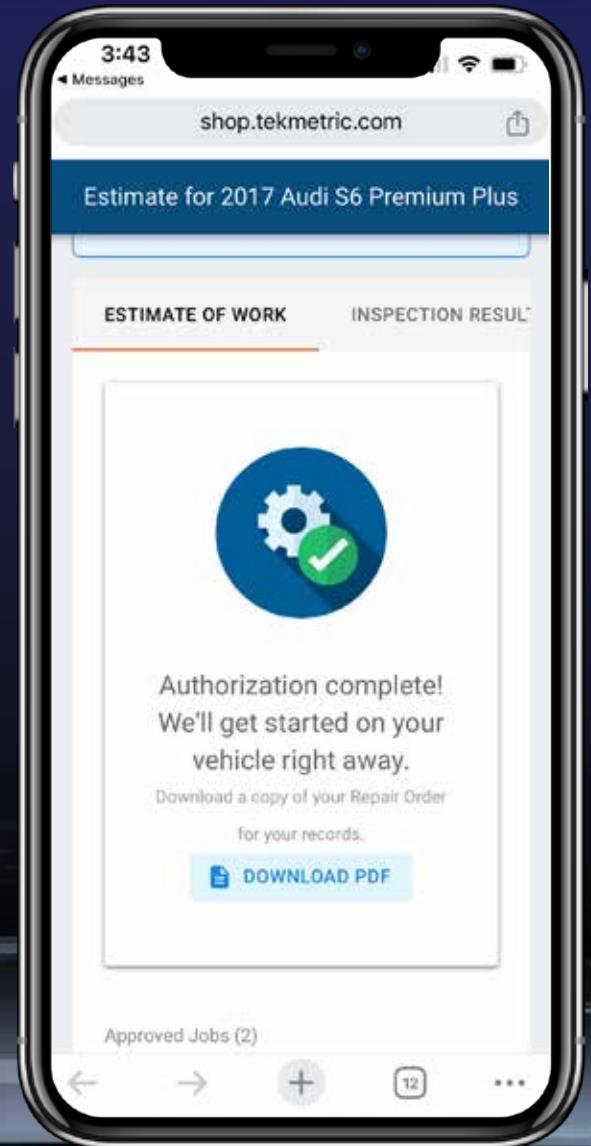
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BOOK REVIEWS

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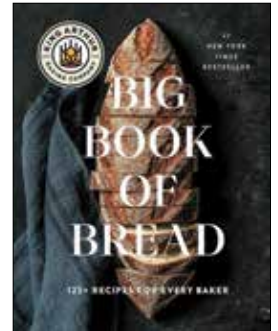
'The King Arthur Baking Company Big Book of Bread: 125+ Recipes for Every Baker'

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*



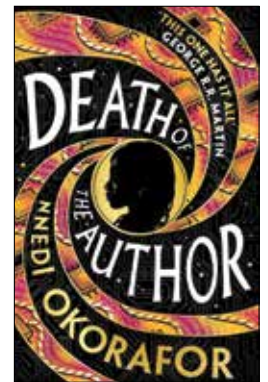
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Simon Element

'Death of the Author'

Meta-stories, or books written as a story within a story, often drop the ball on one or the other tale, and, by the end, I often feel cheated, as if I'm missing something. This book, however, takes that trope to a transcendent place, weaving the two stories so deftly I can't imagine one without the other. This kind of skill is breathtaking. I can't wait to read it over and over.

The frame story focuses on Zelu, a Nigerian-American author currently at a low point after losing her job and being unable to sell her novel. Then, inspiration strikes, and suddenly she has a bestselling science fiction book and she has to navigate a new existence in the public eye and within her family. Nestled into Zelu's "real life" story is the actual book she wrote, "Rusted Robots." The interplay between the two stories is pitch-perfect. They contrast and collide so well, I can't imagine one without the other.

If this book gets the attention it deserves, everyone will be reading and talking about it. Nnedi Okorafor is so extraordinary, I wouldn't be surprised to find her work as required reading someday soon. Treat yourself and pick it up this winter. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



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The evolution and tax strategies

IRAs play a key role in retirement planning for many Americans. According to the Investment Company Institute, 42% (or 55.5 million) of U.S. households reported owning an IRA in 2023.



until you take distributions.

They are a great way to save for retirement, especially as few employers offer pensions. However, a consequential factor that many overlook is the tax implications of withdrawing IRA funds in retirement. As the IRA grows, so does the tax bill. The tax-deferred nature of these accounts can essentially be viewed as a loan from the IRS. Essentially, your pre-tax IRA represents a debt to the IRS that you might have to repay at a less than convenient time — when you retire and perhaps desire financial simplicity more than ever.

This is where strategies like Roth conversions come into play. Converting a portion of your pre-tax IRA to a Roth IRA involves paying taxes on the converted amount at the time of the conversion. However, once the funds are in the Roth IRA, they grow tax-free, and qualified distributions are also tax-free. For most, this can significantly reduce the overall tax burden throughout retirement.

The Roth conversion is not the only strategy to consider. Qualified Charitable

Distributions (QCDs) offer another powerful tool. A QCD is a tax-free transfer of funds from an IRA to a qualified charity. Once you reach 70 1/2, you can transfer funds directly from your IRA to a qualifying charity annually (the limit is \$108,000 for 2025). This transfer counts toward your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) requirements when those kick in at age 73 or 75, depending on when you were born. For those already inclined to charitable giving, this is a win-win scenario — supporting causes you care about and lowering your RMD and possibly your retirement tax bill. The key is to think ahead now about how the IRA that helped you get to retirement could become tax-efficient income in retirement. ■

Information provided by Loren Merkle CFP®, RICP®, Certified Financial Fiduciary®, Merkle Retirement Planning, 1860 S.E. Princeton Drive, Grimes, 515-278-1006. Source: Investment Company Institute (2024, February 24) IRAs Play a Key Role in US Households' Retirement Planning [Press Release www.ici.org/files/2024/per30-01.pdf]



Learn what other tax strategies you could implement in this episode of *Retiring Today with Loren Merkle*. Scan the QR code to watch now.



Investment Advisory Services offered through Elite Retirement Planning, LLC. Insurance Services offered through MRP Insurance, LLC.

JOINTLY owned bank accounts

Spouses often have jointly owned bank accounts that allow both spouses to have access to the account. Joint accounts also allow the surviving spouse to become sole account owner when the other spouse passes away.

The availability of joint ownership on bank accounts is not limited to spouses. Jointly owned accounts can become problematic when the owners are a parent and a child. Sometimes, a parent will add an adult child as owner on a bank account to help manage bills, deposits and other transactions. Other times a child is added as joint owner in the hopes that it will simplify transfer of assets when the parent dies by avoiding probate and the need for more complex estate planning.

Naming a child or other relative as joint owner can have advantages. However, it is important to consider the potential disadvantages in doing so as well. Unfortunately, attorneys and banks come across far too many situations in which a child named joint owner of a parent's bank account has taken funds for personal use. The original intent of the parent may have been for the child listed as joint owner to help pay bills or deposit checks into the account. If the child decides to take money for his or her own use, contrary to the parent's wishes, there is nothing stopping the child from doing so. Quickly, the joint bank account can turn from a



situation of convenience for the parent to one of exploitation.

Another unpleasant, but all too common, potential disadvantage of joint bank accounts involves accidental disinheritance. Let's assume an elderly widow decides to add one of her three daughters as joint owner of her primary bank account. The mother's intent may be for the account to transition quickly and easily when the mother passes away and hopes that the daughter will divide the funds equally amongst all siblings. However, the daughter named joint owner is not legally required to do so. Even if the mother has a will directing all assets to be equally divided among the daughters, the joint account is not subject to the directives of the will. The siblings who were not named joint owner could receive nothing from the account, despite the well-intentioned mother.

While joint bank accounts certainly have their advantages, caution should be used before a joint bank account is utilized as a substitute for sound and thorough estate planning. ■

For more information, please contact Nathaniel Tagtow with City State Bank Trust & Investments at 515-981-1400. Member FDIC. (FDIC insurance covers funds in deposit accounts, including checking and savings accounts, money market deposit accounts and certificates of deposit (CDs). FDIC insurance does not cover other financial products and services that insured banks may offer, such as stocks, bonds, mutual fund shares, life insurance policies). City State Bank does not provide tax or legal advice. The information presented here is not specific to any individual's personal circumstances and the information may change at any time and without notice.

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Upcoming in Grimes/ Dallas Center Living magazine:

Grandparents who enjoy living near their grandchildren: Share why you enjoy living near your grandchildren and how you spend time together. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com by Jan. 24 to be included in the February issue.

Who's Got Game: Saturday Edition

Saturday, Jan. 18, 10 a.m. to noon
Grimes Public Library, 200 N.E. Beaverbrooke Blvd.

Come and learn how to play a board or card game from our collection or join in with a tabletop role-playing game. Sessions will vary between learning new games and participating in an ongoing game series. Each program will be a little different depending on the library staff running the program and the chosen game. Check out our calendar to stay up to date with each program's focus. Please arrive close to 10 a.m. so everyone can learn the rules and play together. Open to ages 16 and older, younger if accompanied by a parent.



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.



Family Night: Paint by Number

Monday, Feb. 3, 6-6:30 p.m.
Grimes Public Library, 200 N.E.
Beaverbrooke Blvd.

Evening activities simple enough for your youngest, but fun enough for the whole family. Join us for a paint by number night.



Family Art Stations

Saturday, Feb. 1, 10-11 a.m.
Grimes Public Library, 200 N.E.
Beaverbrooke Blvd.

Explore different art styles including painting, sculpture, mosaics, marbling and more.

Grimes city meetings

- City buildings closed - MLK Day, Jan. 20
- Library Board of Trustees Meeting, Jan. 21, 5-6 p.m., Grimes Public Library
- Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting, Jan. 22, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
- City Council Meeting, Jan. 28, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
- Planning & Zoning Meeting, Feb. 4, all day
- Tree Board Meeting, Feb. 5, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
- City Council Meeting, Feb. 11, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
- City buildings closed - staff in-service day, Feb. 17
- Library Board of Trustees Meeting, Feb. 18, 5-6 p.m. at the library
- City Council Meeting, Feb. 25, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
- Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting, Feb. 26, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Kling displays art in Grimes

Through Feb. 26
Grimes Public Library, 200 N.E. Beaverbrooke Blvd., Grimes

"Welcome to My Gardens" is an exhibit of oil paintings by Indianola Artist Bob Kling on display at the Grimes Public Library. Eighteen of Kling's paintings are on display and were created during the last four years. The show features work created from Kling's flower and vegetable gardens and from the produce department at Hy-Vee Grocery when the gardening season was over. "Although I paint everything from figures, portraits, landscapes, seascapes, hot air balloons, cars, trucks, motorcycles and still life, each has their own distinct characteristics which I enjoy — the personalities of people, the reflections of objects in water, the rippling folds in fabric or the dappling of shadows and sunlight through the trees. But there is something special about working from your own garden. When gardening, you discover all sorts of bugs, insects, butterflies, caterpillars and other living things. I like to have the viewers of my paintings also discover these same things." The exhibit is free and open to the public during the Grimes Public Library hours from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Bob Kling's painting and pottery studio is located in Indianola. His webpage is www.bobklingart.com.



Vendor Markets

Jan. 18, Feb. 15, March 15, April
19, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Outlets of Des Moines, 801 Bass
Pro Drive N.W., Suite 315, Altoona

Each show has a variety of vendors from Avon, Living Oils, Small Town Laser, Unicorn Clouds, MJ's Hometown Honey, 3D by LouAnn, Tupperware, Tastefully Simple, Good Vibrations Gems & Crystals, plus others. Come check out the vendors and buy local. If interested in being a vendor, email k2marketplacemagic@gmail.com for information.

EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancellations.

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 spring break and spring classes and summer camps. Scholarships are available through the Jeanne Hopson Angel Fund. For class descriptions, registrations and more information, visit dmpplayhouse.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 2, 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@dmpplayhouse.com, 515-974-5365

Dallas Center city calendar

- Jan. 27: Recycling day
- Feb. 10: Recycling day
- Feb. 17: City offices closed
- Feb. 24: Recycling day

Polk County Heritage Gallery exhibit

Until Jan. 24
Polk County Administration Building, 111 Court Ave., Des Moines
polkcountyheritagegallery.org

DSM Exhibited 2024 - Annual Juried Show is on display.

Des Moines Community Orchestra concerts

The Des Moines Community Orchestra has announced its concert dates for the 2024/2025 concert season. Admission is free. Concerts start at 2 p.m. with pre-concert talks at 1 p.m. For more information, visit desmoinescommunityorchestra.org. Concerts are:

- Sunday, Feb. 23, Winter Concert and Past Audience Favorites, Sheslow Auditorium.
- Sunday, May 11, Spring Concert, Carl's Favorite Finales, Sheslow Auditorium.



THEATRE

Actors, Inc. - Ames Community Theater

120 Abraham Drive, Ames
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

- 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

- Jan. 31 to Feb. 16: "Ripcord"

Stephens Auditorium

1900 Center Drive, Ames
center.iastate.edu/events

- Jan. 24: "Matt Mathews: Boujee On A Budget"

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>.



SPORTS

Iowa Wolves

Wells Fargo Arena, 233 Center St., Des Moines
iowagleague.nba.com

- Jan. 23 at 6:30 p.m. vs. Valley Suns (Phoenix Suns)
- Jan. 24 at 6:30 p.m. vs. Valley Suns

Iowa Wild

Wells Fargo Arena, 233 Center St., Des Moines
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 games

Knapp Center, 2601 Forest Ave., Des Moines
Men's home games

- 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

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

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

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FITNESS **By Haley Powers-Risdal**

Q: Does the size of the goal matter?

A: 'Tis the season for setting goals and trying out better habits. Whether you set resolutions at the beginning of the year or were already working toward a goal, let's use this as a check in. How is it going? If it is going great so far, then keep it up. That is awesome. If it is still a work in progress, that is OK, too. There is no rush to get goals completed, it is just about taking it day by day and trying your best. Right now, think about your goal or resolution. Is it a big goal or a lot of small changes you want to make? Both are completely OK in the long run. Try thinking of making smaller goals that will help you achieve that goal, that way it might not seem as taxing. If you want to change multiple little things, try taking one aspect and working on it and then adding the next thing. Do not try to over complicate it; take it day by day and keep chipping away. Eventually, goals will be achieved, and knowing you put in all of that hard work is a great feeling. Take this year and focus on yourself. I want you to be able to look back this time next year and be like, "I did that." Stay consistent, do not over complicate it, and remember, it is all about extending your quality of life. You got this. ■



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.

WELLNESS **By Vanessa Andersen**

EMBRACE forgiveness and acceptance in 2025

What's on your list of New Year's resolutions? Maybe you're focusing on advancing your career, growing your family, starting a new hobby or making new friends. No matter what your aspiration, first things first: Is your emotional slate clean and ready to grow?

It's human nature to carry things around — emotional things, like frustrations and stress. But before we can truly move forward with something new, we must let go of what no longer serves us. We do this by choosing forgiveness and acceptance.

Forgiveness and acceptance can be misunderstood. They aren't about excusing harmful actions or giving up, but rather mental self-care and creating the emotional space necessary to welcome new opportunity.

Here are four benefits of forgiveness and acceptance.

- Emotional freedom. Letting go of grudges and resentment creates space for peace and joy.
- Improved relationships. Moving past conflict frees you to foster healthier connections.
- Better mental and physical health. Forgiveness reduces stress and lowers blood pressure, contributing to a healthier body and mind.
- Personal growth. Acceptance helps you focus on what you can control, allowing you to build resilience and focus on personal goals. ■



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

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MEET Kari Traver

Special education associate helps students feel loved.

Kari Traver began working as a special education associate in 2009 and chose the job because it worked well with being a mom. She came to Dallas Center Grimes in 2017 and has been at South Prairie since 2020.

“I have been doing this job since my youngest went to kindergarten in 2009 in Topeka, Kansas,” she says. “My job

is a one-to-one special education associate to help all students, not just special education students, become the best version of themselves academically, socially and emotionally. After realizing the positive impact I was having, I knew that this wasn’t just a job, but what I was meant to do.”

The best part of Traver’s job is welcoming each student to school each day. She and the other car duty staff enjoy finding ways to make the students (and some parents) smile and want to come to school.

Some of her favorite memories are school dress up days. On Grinch day, Traver emptied desks and hid things...Grinchy things. She once dressed up as Buddy from the movie “Elf” and offered a special spaghetti and had snowball fights.

“On Fridays, we have a dance party during morning drop offs. Staff and students come out and enjoy some time together to celebrate the week. I will do what I need to do to make sure a child smiles. They will learn to read, to write, do math and science, but I want to make sure they remember school is fun, too. I want to be a part of those memories.”

For Traver, South Prairie is a family. It’s somewhere students are loved and accepted. Everyone works together to make sure every child is met where they are, encouraged and motivated to reach beyond their own beliefs to something bigger.

When she’s not at school, Traver enjoys spending time with her husband, Greg, especially traveling. They enjoy Iowa football.

“We have two grown girls that we enjoy doing life with. I enjoy spending time with my friends. I love sitting and watching the ocean. But I love my job, which is to make sure every kid that walks into our building is loved and accepted.” ■



Kari Traver is a special education associate at South Prairie Elementary.

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LEWIS makes a difference

Dedicates time as a volunteer and board member

For the past seven years, Dave Lewis has been a dedicated volunteer with Grimes Volunteer Support Services (GVSS), an organization he describes as “exceptional” in its mission and impact.



As a GVSS board member for three years and an active volunteer, Lewis has made it his priority to help community members stay connected and supported.

“My job primarily is picking up people and taking them where they need to go and back home safe,” he says.

While his involvement is more limited than it once was due to his full-time job, he still carves out time to give rides and support GVSS in other ways.

Lewis first learned about GVSS at the Grimes Business Expo, when his business, Performance Display and Millwork, hosted. Stopping by the GVSS booth, he struck up a conversation with Jay Brewer, who explained the organization’s need for volunteers.

“If you have a few extra minutes, we could use an extra hand,” Brewer had said.



Tim Short of Edward Jones presents the Good Neighbor certificate to Dave Lewis.

Lewis figured it sounded like a “good organization and a good use of time.”

The heart of GVSS’ mission continues to resonate deeply with Lewis.

“Every encounter ends up being a little bit of a lasting memory, because you know you’re reaching out to somebody who appreciates the opportunity to stay in their home, and the only way they can do that is with the help of an organization like GVSS,” he explains.

While ridesharing is a primary focus of his volunteer work, Lewis points out that GVSS goes beyond transportation. Volunteers help with tasks like shoveling snow and providing support that enables individuals to maintain independence.

For Lewis, one of the greatest joys of volunteering is the time spent with those he helps. In the car, he has the opportunity to get to know people and engage with them in ways he otherwise would not be able to.

The relationships he’s formed through GVSS have left a lasting impact. Some individuals have moved away or passed on, but their stories and connections remain with him.

Ultimately, Lewis believes GVSS exemplifies the best definition of love.

“Love is an act of will that seeks the higher good of other people,” he says. “If you think about it, GVSS exemplifies that definition: It’s about action, it’s about making a choice, and it’s about betterment.”

He’s inspired by the team of volunteers, whom he describes as “givers, people who have a heart for others. You can feel their desire to do something good for someone else.”

Volunteering with GVSS has been a two-way street for Lewis, providing as much enrichment to his life as he offers to others.

“We get so wound up in our own lives, that it softens your heart,” he says. “It makes you slow down and appreciate what you have.”

As he looks to the future, Lewis hopes that GVSS will continue to thrive.

“People are of eternal value,” he says. “That’s the thing we should be investing in.” ■

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UNMASKING everyday superheroes in Grimes

As we look ahead to 2025, Grimes Chamber & Economic Development is thrilled to embrace our annual theme: Superheroes. While capes and masks might come to mind, this year we are focusing on a different kind of hero — the everyday superheroes who quietly enrich our community with their selfless acts.



Everyday superheroes are all around us. They're the neighbor who shovels snow for someone who can't, the colleague who lifts others up during a tough project, or the volunteer who dedicates countless hours to a cause close to their heart. These heroes often work in silence, asking for nothing in return. Their humility is their hallmark, but their impact is immeasurable.

In 2025, let's make a concerted effort to not only notice these everyday heroes but also celebrate them. A simple thank you, a kind word, or even sharing their story can shine a light on their contributions and inspire others.

This superhero spirit extends beyond individuals. It lives within our businesses, too. Many local businesses in Grimes go above and beyond as corporate citizens, quietly making a difference through charitable donations, employee volunteer programs, or environmentally conscious practices. Whether they're sponsoring youth sports teams, donating to food pantries, or spearheading initiatives to beautify the community, these businesses set a powerful example of what it means to give back.

And what about you? Being a hero doesn't require superpowers; it starts with small, meaningful acts of kindness. At work, it could mean mentoring a teammate or bringing fresh ideas to your organization. In the community, it might be supporting a local charity or volunteering your time. And, at home, it's about being there for the people who matter most.

Grimes is already brimming with heroes — individuals and businesses alike. In 2025, let's not only recognize them but challenge ourselves to join their ranks. Together, we can create a community where every contribution, no matter how small, builds a better tomorrow.

This year let's all aim to be a little more super. ■

Information provided by Brian W. Buethe, President | CEO, Grimes Chamber & Economic Development, www.GrimesIowa.com

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Logan Halverson on bass and Quinton Oberender on guitar performed with the DCG Jazz Band at the Grimes Chamber of Commerce Lunch and Learn on Dec. 11 at DCG High School.



Patrick Schmitz on alto sax performed with the DCG Jazz Band at the Grimes Chamber of Commerce Lunch and Learn on Dec. 11 at DCG High School.



Marley Eickelberg on trumpet performed with the DCG Jazz Band at the Grimes Chamber of Commerce Lunch and Learn on Dec. 11 at DCG High School.



Kyle Cason at the DCG varsity boys basketball game against Norwalk at Norwalk on Jan. 7.



Ben Maggard on trombone performed with the DCG Jazz Band at the Grimes Chamber of Commerce Lunch and Learn on Dec. 11 at DCG High School.



Nathan Fitch on tenor sax performed with the DCG Jazz Band at the Grimes Chamber of Commerce Lunch and Learn on Dec. 11 at DCG High School.



Camren Allen and Brody Burke at the DCG varsity boys basketball game against Norwalk at Norwalk on Jan. 7.



Tate Perrin at the DCG varsity boys basketball game against Norwalk at Norwalk on Jan. 7.



Hudson Heidgerken at the DCG varsity boys basketball game against Norwalk at Norwalk on Jan. 7.



Wyatt Valenta at the DCG varsity boys basketball game against Norwalk at Norwalk on Jan. 7.



Mateo Dzolota at the DCG varsity boys basketball game against Norwalk at Norwalk on Jan. 7.



Chase Perrin at the DCG varsity boys basketball game against Norwalk at Norwalk on Jan. 7.

VARSITY Basketball

DCG varsity girls basketball played against Norwalk at Norwalk on Jan. 7.



Macy Meyer



Ava Smid



Addie Abens



Leah Brauch



Aniyah Boens



Neela Williamson



Devon Carlile



Akeelah Washington, Emily Romig, Kylie Sonberg, Elana Hamp and Mia Long



Tessa Jones

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