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NORTH POLK

JANUARY 2025

Living

MAGAZINE

An Unforgettable **RIDE**

Residents share the
joy of their first car

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RECIPE

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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 Lindsey Giardino

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.

The 1965 Ford Mustang sitting in Brandon Doyel's garage holds years' worth of memories.

Mustang to remember

The 1965 Ford Mustang sitting in Brandon Doyel's garage holds years' worth of memories.

Doyel bought the two-door coupe in December 1997, just before his 16th birthday. He initially wanted the car because his older brother had a 1966 Mustang.

"When I got old enough, I thought, 'I want a Mustang, too,'" Doyel says.

With lap seat belts in the front and none in the back, the car was a symbol of an earlier era of American muscle.

At just 15, Doyel turned to his mom for help with financing. As the vice president of a bank in their hometown of Manning, she agreed to loan him the \$3,500 needed to buy the car. The Mustang was listed in the classified section of the Omaha World-Herald, for sale by a woman whose father had died. Originally from Washington state, the car had already traveled far before finding its

home with Doyel.

The Mustang became a centerpiece of Doyel's high school years, during which he repainted it. As a member of a small class of 32, at a time when muscle cars were a common sight, the Mustang fit right in. Several of Doyel's classmates, himself included, have held onto those cars for decades.

After high school, Doyel joined the military, and the Mustang took on a new chapter. Deployed in 2001 and again in 2003, he decided it was time to have the car fully restored. He entrusted it to a man in Osceola who specialized in Mustangs.

Doyel remembers him saying, "As long as you make it back, young man, I'll have it ready for you."

Doyel poured nearly every penny from his deployment into restoring the car. By 2005, it returned to him fully restored, its glory days revived.

"Now that it's been restored, I kind of baby it," he jokes.

While he doesn't drive it as



Brandon Doyel bought his two-door 1965 Ford Mustang in December 1997, just before his 16th birthday. He initially wanted the car because his older brother had a 1966 Mustang.



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Mallori Phillips
Optometrist

FEATURE

often as he once did, the Mustang still makes appearances at car nights around Des Moines and a few car shows each year. Safely housed in his garage, it remains a prized possession. And with his brother still working on restoring his own '66 Mustang, it's a bond they continue to share — one that's as enduring as the classic cars they love.

A Chevy pickup with character

For Joel Aurand, the memory of his first car — a 1952 Chevy 3100 five-window pickup — is a time capsule of youthful adventures.

Aurand grew up in northern Pennsylvania, where his dad owned a small trucking company. Purchased from one of his father's mechanics in the mid 1970s, the pickup was a curious Frankenstein of parts: a 283 V8 engine salvaged from a 1957 Chevy car and an unsynchronized four-speed transmission pulled from a 1964 Chevy school bus.

The transmission, as Aurand recalls, was a feature that offered unintended security.

"Because it was unsynchronized, very few people could drive it," he says. "I never had to worry about it being stolen."



For Joel Aurand, the memory of his first car — a 1952 Chevy 3100 five-window pickup — is a time capsule of youthful adventures.

The truck was far from pristine. Someone had hand-painted it dark blue — with a paintbrush, no less — leaving visible streaks in the finish. Its exhaust was routed up the side of the cab, complete with a diesel-style stack and a rain flapper on top. It was quirky,

unconventional and undeniably cool.

Inside the cab, the truck reflected the era's culture, equipped with an 8-track player and a CB radio that Aurand would use to chat with friends while driving around.

But the truck wasn't without its challenges.

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Joel Aurand

Pennsylvania winters were brutal on the old Chevy, which lacked a defroster.

“So, in the wintertime, I had to drive with an ice scraper in my hand to scrape frost off the inside of the windshield that accumulated from my breath,” Aurand says. “The windshield wipers were driven by a vacuum hose off the engine. When I would go up a steep hill, they would slow down and increase in speed on the

downhill side.”

The truck carried Aurand through high school and into his first year of college, when he also worked driving a tank truck to pay his way. But by the late 1970s, rising gas prices from the oil embargo made the old Chevy less practical.

While it ran just fine, Aurand needed something more reliable and cheaper to run.

Eventually, he sold the Chevy to a friend and bought a Toyota truck, drawn by the brand’s reputation for reliability. Even so, the Chevy left a lasting mark.

“It has a lot of good memories,” Aurand says.

Bright yellow and full of memories

When Tamara Dark reminisces about her first car, it brings a smile to her face. Acquired for a modest \$900 from a dealer in Freeport, Illinois, the vehicle left an impression on not only her life, but also on anyone who spotted it.

“It was painted the brightest yellow,” Dark recalls. “Not quite neon, but, wowser. I never

had problems finding it in a parking lot. And it was so long.”

The Buick LaSalle, an enormous sedan with character to match its size, was more than just transportation for Dark. Its trunk was cavernous enough to carry a full collection of sports equipment, and its bench seats comfortably accommodated seven passengers.

But, as with many old cars, this one had quirks — some charming, some outright perplexing.

“The dealer told me that there was a hole in the gas tank in the top half, so I just needed to remember not to fill it up past half full,” Dark shares.

Despite her initial skepticism, both the dealer and her dad assured her it was fine. Legal? Safe? Those were questions for another day.

“Good golly,” she jokes. “It probably had a huge tank anyway, and I know gas was less than a dollar per gallon at the time.”

One thing is for certain about Dark’s first car: The bright yellow Buick LaSalle was a personality on wheels. ■

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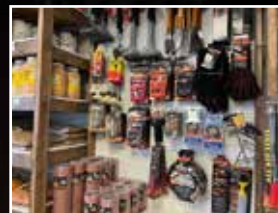
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IT'S BACK!

Who will be voted favorite in Ankeny and Northern Polk County?

We all have our favorite local people, places and things. And now it's time to share your choices and honor those who deserve the recognition.

Make your voice be heard and cast your votes in the 2025 Ankeny and Northern Polk County Residents' Choice Poll. This contest is being hosted by Iowa Living magazines, and the results will publish April issues of Ankeny and North Polk magazines. You can vote in one or every category, or anywhere in between.

HURRY! POLL CLOSES MARCH 1, 2025.

See rules and vote at www.iowalivingmagazines.com/residentspoll. One vote per resident, please.

SCAN HERE TO VOTE TODAY!



FOOD AND DRINK

- Restaurant
- Restaurant for Breakfast
- Restaurant for Lunch
- Restaurant for Dinner
- Restaurant for Dessert
- Place for Ice Cream
- Pizza Establishment
- Bar
- Coffee Shop
- Server/Bartender

AUTOMOTIVE

- Auto Service
- Auto Body Shop
- Car Dealership

COMMUNITY

- Preschool/Daycare
- Nonprofit
- School (name of building)
- Park
- Community Festival or Event
- Church
- Pastor
- Chamber of Commerce
- Library
- Camping Spot
- Coach
- Teacher

SHOPPING

- Grocery Store
- Boutique
- Retail Store
- Thrift Store
- Home Improvement Retail Store
- Nursery or Garden Center
- Place to Purchase a Gift for a Man
- Place to Purchase a Gift for a Woman
- Florist

ENTERTAINMENT

- Dad/Child Date Spot
- Mom/Child Date Spot
- Place to Take Your Mom and Dad
- Place to Take Your Kids or Grandkids
- Place for Child's Birthday Party
- Golf Course

HEALTH/BEAUTY

- Hair Salon
- Physicians Clinic
- Dental Office
- Orthodontist Office
- Chiropractic Office
- Vision Care
- Health Club or Gym
- Pharmacy
- Cosmetic Service
- Physical Therapy

HEALTH/BEAUTY

- Alternative Health Care
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- Senior Living Establishment
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- Realtor
- Bank/Credit Union
- Place for Guests to Stay
- Contractor/Construction Services/Remodeling
- Cleaning Company
- Painting Company
- Home Builder

POLK CITY Community Library news

The library will be closed Monday, Feb. 17, in observance of Presidents Day.

Polk City Community Library

1500 W. Broadway St., Polk City
515-984-6119
www.polkcitylibrary.org
Monday - Wednesday: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Thursday: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Friday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Sunday: closed



• **Chair Yoga, Mondays, 9 a.m.** Join Rachel via Zoom. We will be broadcasting the class on the big screen in the library, or you can join us from home. Yoga is for everyone and everybody. Yoga is not just for flexible people but for people who want to become more flexible. This chair yoga practice will include breathwork, mindfulness and simple, easy movements to release tension, reduce pain and restore your body to optimum movement. Props needed are an armless chair, like a kitchen chair, and a small hand towel or kitchen dish towel. Join the Zoom meeting on our website at polkcitylibrary.org.

• **STEAM Storytime, Mondays, 10:15 a.m.** Attend Miss Nicole's session for a STEAM-themed story along with an engaging STEAM activity or experiment. Designed for ages 3-5.

• **Geri-Fit Strength Training Workouts, Tuesdays, 9 a.m.** Strength training workouts that work for all ages and fitness levels. Geri-Fit is challenging, effective and safe to do. The Geri-Fit program requires a set of light dumbbell weights, a sturdy chair, and water to drink during the workout. Ages 50 and older. Stretch bands and a Zoom link are available upon request.

• **Lil Comets Storytime, Tuesdays at 10:15 a.m.** Join Miss Nicole at the library for stories, songs and activity stations. Every story can be logged in our 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program, too. Designed for ages 3 and younger.

• **Ladies' Wednesday Coffee, Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to noon.** Ladies, join us for coffee and conversation.

• **Sit N' Stitch, Thursdays, 6-8 p.m.** Bring your current project and join us for stitching and conversation.

• **Men's Friday Coffee, 10 a.m. to noon.** Gentlemen, drop in for coffee and conversation. Enjoy spending time and having a few laughs or interesting discussions with other men from around the area.

• **Adult Crafternoon Candy Heart Wreaths, Tuesday, Feb. 4, 6 p.m.** Create a Valentine's Day wreath themed around one of the holiday's most iconic sweets. Ages 17 and older. RSVP at www.polkcitylibrary.org.

• **Babble and Brew, Thursday, Feb. 6, 10 a.m.** Don't let the cold weather get you down. Come to the library for some climate-controlled fun. We will have coffee for you and exciting, age-appropriate toys for the kiddos.

• **Hot Cocoa Spoons, Monday, Feb. 10, 6 p.m.** Come make a yummy gift for yourself or someone you love at this DIY food program. We'll make stirring spoons to flavor and decorate your hot chocolate with candy melts and sprinkles. Ages 17 and older, registration required.

• **Lego Club, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 3:45 p.m. grades K-2; 4:45 p.m. grades 3 and up.** Engage in learning through stacking and building with

these deceptively simple bricks. You can enhance your problem-solving skills and teamwork. For ages, 8-16. Registration is required online at polkcitylibrary.org.

• **Wiggles and Giggles: Music and Movement for Tots, Thursday, Feb. 13, 10 a.m.** A fun-filled, interactive class designed for toddlers and their caretakers to enjoy together. You'll bond through lively songs, playful rhythms and easy dances while helping your little one develop coordination, balance and creativity. This joyful, hands-on experience is perfect for both of you to move, sing and laugh together in a safe and welcoming environment.

• **Duck Tales Story Time, Saturday, Feb. 15, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** at Polk City United Methodist Church. For ages 12 and younger. Come for a duck-themed story time and then move into the Duck Factory where you will stuff your very own duck. This fun-filled program is funded by the Friends of the Library. Registration is required and opens Jan. 21 at 10 a.m.

• **Everyday AI with Sarah the Tech Tutor, Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2 p.m.** This evolving class aimed at seniors serves as a broad overview to artificial intelligence as well as discussing AI that is already integrated into daily life. Topics include: AI for writing, AI for research, AI for reviews, AI for advice, AI for images and how AI uses your data.

• **Comets Kids Club, Tuesday, Feb. 18, 4-4:45 p.m.** Kids will create their own craft to take home. Registration required. Register online at polkcitylibrary.org.

• **Adult Coloring, Tuesday, Feb. 18, 5-7 p.m.** Join us for a relaxing evening of coloring. Colored pencils and gel pens will be provided. You are also welcome to bring your own. Ages 17 and older.

• **Messy Munchkins, Thursday, Feb. 20, 10-11 a.m.** This fun-filled program invites little ones to dive into sensory play with squishy, splattery activities. Dress them in old clothes and watch as they explore, create and get delightfully messy in a safe environment.

• **Adult DIY Heart Book Folding, Thursday, Feb. 20, 6 p.m.** At this month's Adult DIY, we'll be folding the pages of a discarded library book so that, when you spread the pages, they form a heart. Ages 17 and older. RSVP at www.polkcitylibrary.org.

• **Early Out/No School:** Come relax with some coloring while watching a movie on Tuesday, Feb. 25. Movie starts at 2 p.m. Drop in again on Thursday, Feb. 27, for a craft from 2-4 p.m. Friday, Feb. 28, we will have BINGO at 2 p.m. ■

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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“Tender Years Daycare and Garbage Guys have had a working relationship with Availa Bank ever since they came to the Ankeny area. The support staff at Availa is excellent! They try to answer all my questions, and if they can't, they go out of their way to find someone who can.” — Paula Eichinger

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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.

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May you have a happy, prosperous and healthy new year!



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NEW Year's financial resolutions

Have you made New Year's resolutions, such as exercising more or learning a new skill? These are good objectives, but why not add some financial resolutions?

For starters, try to reduce your debt load. You'll improve your cash flow and have more to invest. And, speaking of investing, see whether you can boost your pre-tax contributions to your traditional IRA and 401(k). Once you're 50, you can even make catch-up contributions. If you have an education goal, consider investing in a tax-advantaged 529 education savings plan.

Also, try to build an emergency fund containing up to six months' worth of living expenses, with the money kept in a liquid, low-risk account.

Finally, even if you're relatively young, it's good to have your estate plans in order. And if you've already created these plans, you may want to review them, especially if you've had changes in your family situation involving marriage, divorce or birth of children or grandchildren.

You may not be able to tackle all these resolutions in 2025. But, by addressing as many of them as possible, you can make progress toward your goals and set yourself on a positive course for the future. ■



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MAGAZINES

KIWANIS honors Seniors of the Month

The Kiwanis Club of Polk City announced its October seniors of the month are Claire Nefzger, Addison Happ and Ruth Marie Turczynski. January seniors of the month are Makayla McGraw and Everett Ryan Eaton.

Addison Happ

"I am Addison Happ, a senior at North Polk High School, and I spend a lot of time working to benefit the North Polk community through leadership roles as president of both the Environmental Club and our Student Council. I also participate in mock trial and speech. I belong to the National Art Honor Society, the National Spanish Honor Society, the National Math Honor Society, National Honor Society, the Silver Cord program, and Gold Honor Roll. Outside of school, I spend my time hanging out with friends and family, at my church, hiking, reading, volunteering and working."

Addison's parents are Anna and Andrew Happ of Polk City, and siblings are Archer Happ (eighth grade at North Polk Middle School) and Aubrey Happ (sophomore at North Polk High School). After graduation, she plans to major in environmental policy and planning at the University of Iowa.



Claire Nefzger

"Hi! I'm Claire Nefzger, and I live in Alleman with my parents, Jeremy and Teresa, and my two younger sisters, Olivia and Evelyn. Throughout high school, I have participated in marching band, concert band, jazz band, pep band, show choir band, musical pit band, speech and student council. I also serve as an IASuCo Central District Officer and am a part of National Honor Society, National Math Honor Society and the Gold Honor Roll. Outside of school, I'm in church youth group and church youth council, and I love reading, creative writing and having movie nights with my family. After high school, I plan on attending Iowa State University to major in biomedical engineering or biochemistry."



Ruth Marie Turczynski

"As you can probably tell from the long list of activities, I have been involved in quite a few things during my time in high school. However, speech and youth group have probably been my favorite activities. As a middle schooler and freshman, I was a bit socially awkward, and speech helped me to break out of my shell a bit and allowed me to make more friends. Now, I enjoy being able to talk with different people. Being involved in youth group allowed me to grow in my faith, and I have been able to make new friends who share the same religion as me. After I graduate high school, I plan to attend Iowa State



University to major in software engineering. I choose to pursue this major because of my love of problem solving, programming and inspiration from my older brother, Luke. Luke has obtained a degree in software engineering, and he was the one who first introduced me to coding."

Ruth is the daughter of Anita Turczynski of Ankeny. She has two siblings, Luke and Max. Honors include National Honor Society, gold honor roll, and ITEC Fair purple ribbon winner. Her community activities include piano, youth group, CORE (church leadership group), music ministry, and lector.

Makayla McGraw

"My name is Makayla McGraw. My parents are Kyle and Sarah, and I have an older sibling, Madison. I am in band and choir, including jazz band and show choir, Nexus, and I am also involved in speech, both group and individual. I have been a part of Pep Band and traveled with the football team as well as the basketball team to give others a greater perspective of our fine arts program and what we are capable of. I have participated in the Show Choir for three years, and the school has this amazing fundraiser for the fine arts program. I have had the privilege to host a school during Comet Sensation and have created many friendships with the students in these schools. I've been a part of these wonderful communities, and it has become something that I look forward to being around every day. I have gotten the opportunity of being a mentor to a middle school student so they can have someone to talk to. I've had the opportunity to work at Hy-Vee for two years now. I always have a smile on my face when I get asked questions by customers and enjoy seeing people from the neighborhood or working with fellow students from school and creating a good relationship. I am looking to go to DMACC for general education to figure out what I would like to do in my future, but I am considering something in the field of psychology. I look forward to helping people to the best of my ability. I enjoy writing poetry and enjoy being able to use that as a form of expression, in hopes that one day I can make a book that allows others to read and find words for those feelings that are hard to describe."



Everett Ryan Eaton

"I'm a senior at North Polk High School with my biggest passion being band in high school. I've joined every band the school has to offer, and I'm playing tennis with the school as well. I love spending time with my family and friends, and I enjoy playing board games and card games. I enjoy being outside, going on bike rides, walks and swimming."

Everett's parents are Toni Pagni and Ryan Eaton, and he has a sibling, Reed Joseph Eaton. He has been on the Gold Honor Roll, and his favorite classes are math and science. Following graduation, he plans to attend Diesel Tech at DMACC. ■



ESTATE planning for stages of life

Estate planning is not only about directing the distribution of your assets when you pass away. Effective planning helps you manage each stage of your life, depending on your specific needs.



Young parents need to protect and provide for their minor children. Older couples need to plan for their financial and healthcare quality of life. Following the death of a spouse, the survivor needs to address important legal issues. Retired couples want to protect their assets in the face of long-term care costs.

The process of estate planning raises difficult emotional and personal issues. Your loved ones will be affected by the plans you make now. If you fail to make plans, your spouse or family will be left to handle those

issues without guidance. For many people, the most difficult step in the estate planning process is deciding to do it.

Estate planning comprises three major areas: planning for incapacity, directing your wealth, and preserving your assets.

The first component to estate planning is often overlooked. It is likely that, before you die, something will happen to you that will render you unable to assist in your financial or medical decisions. You should have in place contingent documents — financial power of attorney, health care power of attorney, and living will — that nominate somebody to help you make decisions.

The second step in estate planning is to direct your wealth. Your will or trust will designate your beneficiaries. Most people naturally think of planning for spouses, children, and relatives first. But you also have to take into account the possibility

that your spouse may be in poor mental or physical health or that your children may be minors. Effective planning will consider these contingencies.

The third part of estate planning works to minimize taxes and preserve assets. Careful estate planning minimizes inheritance tax and preserves the recipient's basis for calculating capital gains taxes. Long term care costs can be devastating to a couple's savings. Both spouses should establish estate plans that will maximize asset transfers to your heirs and minimize estate taxation.

You are never too young to think about estate planning. It is vital for every person to be responsible enough to create a plan for themselves and their family. Consult an attorney who specializes in estate planning. ■

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

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HOME STATE BANK

Happenings



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THANKS FOR A WONDERFUL 2024!

We hope everyone had a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season. From opening our doors to ending with a fun Light Up Polk City event and open house, we are grateful for all of our customers.



We look forward to building and growing customer relationships and continuing to give back to our amazing community. We hope 2025 brings you joy, laughter, and success in all of your endeavors. Stop in to learn more about Home State Bank.



CLOSURES

Closed: January 20 for MLK Jr. Day

101 E. Bridge Road | Polk City | 515-329-8801



FINANCE

By Eric Hockenberry

AVOID fraud techniques

While the holiday season is a common time for increased fraud and scam attempts, it's important to be cautious all year round.

People looking to defraud you will go to great lengths to deceive you. Understanding the different ways in which they may attempt to access your information is vital in keeping yourself and your assets safe. The following are common ways in which fraudsters will try to take advantage of others.



Family and relationships. Fraudsters will use vulnerable audiences, like family members and close relationships, to defraud people. Beware if you have:

- Received an urgent call from a "family member," perhaps a grandchild, requesting bail money for an arrest or money for some other emergency, and have not spoken to other family about it.
- Been threatened to make a decision.
- Received a picture of the person you are talking to, then asked to send one of yourself.
- Sent money to a new acquaintance you have established a personal relationship with yet have never met them in person.
- Provided bank staff or others with false information about your transaction.

Technology and wire transfers. Many fraudsters will ask you to wire money or use specific technology that they specify. The following are examples of what they may ask you to do:

- Make transactions on behalf of a secret shopper, work-from-home offer, or an online loan application.
- Withdraw money/convert it to cryptocurrency (BitCoin) and/or deposit it into BitCoin machines.
- Download Control App (or similar) to allow someone to help find locations and purchase gift cards at specific retailers.
- Respond to an unsolicited request for payment on a past due bill you didn't know was owed or unpaid.
- Withdraw cash or send money via wire transfer to assist in a criminal investigation.
- Receive a message on your computer or phone that states you have a potential virus and to call the number provided.

Legal agencies and fear. Fear and legal repercussions are common techniques used by fraudsters. Below are some examples of how they may use these techniques:

- Sold something and the buyer sent payment via check or wire transfer for more than the selling price, then requested payment for excess funds.
- Created a sense of urgency and instructed you that this transaction must be done today.
- A representative from the IRS or any other government agency, including law enforcement, called, or demanded payment for unpaid taxes to avoid being arrested.
- Been told the bank is involved in fraud so you should not tell them why you are making the transaction.
- Told not to discuss the transaction with anyone due to a court order.

If you've experienced any of the above, or even have a suspicious feeling, contact your local law enforcement and banking institution, especially before proceeding with any request. ■

Information provided by Eric Hockenberry, market president, Home State Bank, 101 E. Bridge Road, Polk City, 515-329-8801.

MEET Aja Baskerville

Music teacher eager to help others.

Helping kids learn music by making it fun is one way Aja Baskerville keeps young students engaged.

Baskerville is the North Polk Central Elementary music teacher for kindergarten through fifth grade and is in her third year of teaching music.

Students take music every three days and perform in both winter and spring concerts.

“We picked lighthearted songs with mittens, snowmen and always sing Jingle Bells,” she says of the winter concert.

Baskerville became interested in music education because music classes were influential for her as a child. When she attended elementary school, Baskerville was dyslexic and took special classes. Yet, when she went to choir, her outlook changed.

“I struggled in class,” she recalls. “When I went to choir, I thought I was finally really good at something.”

After that, she joined various choirs in high school. Later, she sang in school musicals, such as “Legally Blonde.” In the “Shrek” musical, she sang the part of the donkey.

While attending college, kids on the autism spectrum came to hang out and do music. That’s when she realized how music can help others.

“I wanted to share how music helped me. If I can do that for someone else, that would be worth its weight in gold,” she reflects.

She is responsive to kids who struggle academically by including and encouraging them.

“I make sure to hype kids and let them know they are good — even if they are a math genius and not into music. Their genius can show in my classroom, too.”

Students learn to play the xylophone, ukelele and recorders. By making games out of music lessons, kids are more eager to learn and participate. Most students are generally happy to be in her classroom.

“It’s a good break from a regular classroom. It’s fun and lighthearted. We’re not just sitting there,” she explains.

One exciting new addition is Prescott, a therapy dog that Baskerville is training. Prescott accompanies her a few days a week.

“The kids are very excited to have a dog in the classroom. So far, kids are respectful and know to be calm around the dog,” she says.

The most challenging part of her job is staying on top of the schedule of concerts, field trips and lesson plans for all ages of students. She says students “lift each other up.”

“When kids have that ‘aha’ moment and connect the dots — it’s my favorite part about teaching,” she says. “When they learn music and discover how their hard work pays off for concert performances, that’s rewarding.” ■



Aja Baskerville teaches music and says her class is lighthearted and fun. She is sometimes accompanied by Prescott, a therapy dog she is training.

NEW treatment for dry eyes

Having dry eyes sounds like such a trivial problem, but those who suffer from it know it can be a serious burden. Approximately 16 million Americans suffer from dry eye disease, and it’s a growing problem due to increased screen time. The symptoms include stinging, burning, a gritty sensation, red eyes, fluctuating vision and, in some cases, watery eyes.

I still remember going to the eye doctor when I was in college to seek some help for my dry eyes, and all I got was a sample of some lubricating drops which did little to ease my suffering. Thankfully, dry eye management is now one of the most rapidly growing areas of eye care. There are a variety of new treatment options such as prescription medications, oral supplements, eyelid cleaners, improved artificial tears, and light therapy. Intense pulsed light, also known as IPL, is a machine that delivers controlled pulses of red and infrared light to the face and eyelids. IPL has been used for more than two decades in dermatology, but recently it has become popular in eye care due to the realization that it helps people with dry eyes. Treatment with IPL has been shown to improve oil gland function, decrease ocular inflammation, destroy vessels associated with rosacea, reduce the population of bacteria on the eyelids, and increase tone of eyelid skin, which may improve blinking.

All of those benefits can ease the discomfort and pain from dry eyes. Patients have had great success with IPL, and we are committed to helping patients get relief from their dry eye symptoms. ■

Information provided by Dr. Todd Pietig, Ankeny Family Vision Center, 311 N. Ankeny Blvd., Ankeny, 515-964-1671.



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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.

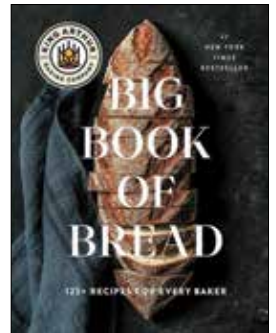


BOOK REVIEWS

Courtesy of Beaverdale Books

'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.



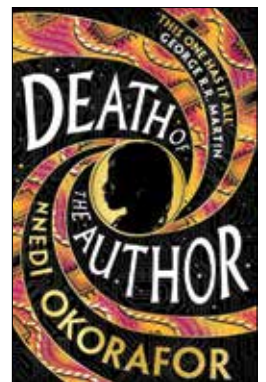
Enter the makers of the best flour commercially available for at-home bakers. Already the authors of vital kitchen texts for cookies and cakes, here they tackle a mountain of bread-baking skills into a gorgeous, easy-to-follow book filled with recipes both common and unusual. With their characteristic 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.

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

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*

'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.

By Nnedi Okorafor
01/16/25
448 pages
\$30
William Morrow

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*

EVENTS IN THE AREA

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com

Be sure to check for cancellations.



Upcoming in North Polk 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.

Galentine's Trivia

Thursday, Feb. 13, 7 p.m.
Polk City Legion Post, 114 W. Broadway St., Polk City

The annual Galentine's Trivia event, hosted by Polk City Friends of the Parks with help and support from Polk City Women, will be held. Trivia will be 1990s themed. Cost is \$100 per table of up to five people or \$25 per individual wishing to be placed with others to create a team. Bring your own food. Drinks will be available for purchase, cash only. Everyone will go home with a prize. Doors open at 6 p.m., and trivia will start at 7 p.m. Funds raised at this event will support Polk City parks, trails and green spaces. This event is LGBTQ friendly. Register at <https://donorbox.org/90s-trivia>



Library book club meetings

• **Wednesday Book Club**, "Concrete Rose" by Angie Thomas, Wednesday, Feb. 5, 7 p.m. If there's one thing 17-year-old Maverick Carter knows, it's that a real man takes care of his family. As the son of a former gang legend, Mav does that the only way he knows how: dealing for the King Lords. Life's not perfect, but with a fly girlfriend and a cousin who always has his back, Mav's got everything under control. Until, that is, Maverick finds out he's a father.

• **Graphic Novel Book Club**, Monday, Feb. 10, 4 p.m. Kids in grades 4-7 can dive into the world of colorful stories, amazing characters and thrilling adventures. Each month, we'll read a different graphic novel and discuss the art, plot and our favorite moments. Whether you're a comic book expert or new to graphic novels, everyone is welcome to join the fun. February book TBA. Registration required.

• **PCCL Homeschool Book Club**, Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2 p.m. This monthly book club is designed for homeschooling families with children reading levels 4.5-7. After completing your registration, visit the library to collect your copy of the book club book. February Book: "The Wild Robot." Registration required, Register online at polkcitylibrary.org.

• **Monday Adult Book Club**, "The Overnight Guest" by Heather Gudenkauf, Monday, Jan. 27, 2 p.m. True crime writer Wylie Lark doesn't mind being snowed in at the isolated farmhouse where she's retreated to write her new book. A cozy fire, complete silence. It would be perfect, if not for the fact that, decades earlier, at this very house, two people were murdered in cold blood and a girl disappeared without a trace.

"Death on the Nile" by Agatha Christie, Monday, Feb. 24, 2 p.m. A sweeping mystery of love, jealousy and betrayal, "Death on the Nile" is one of Christie's most legendary and timeless works. Join us to discuss the book, then we'll kick back with snacks and drinks and watch the 2022 film version starring Kenneth Branagh. Stop by the library ahead of the meeting for a free copy of the book.

• **K-5th Book Club**, Tuesday, Jan. 28, 4 p.m. January's Book Club book is called, "Little Olympians 1: Zeus, God of Thunder" and can be picked up at the library anytime in December or January before the meeting. Registration online at our website.

• **K-5 STEM Book Club**: No Book Club in February due to early out. But get a head start on March's book, "Narwhal: Unicorn of the Sea" It can be picked up at the library anytime in February or March before the meeting. Register online.

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to get started.



EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancellations.

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"

LIVE MUSIC

Wooly's

504 E. Locust St., Des Moines
firstfleetconcerts.com/first-fleet-venues/wooly's

- 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.

Des Moines Civic Center

221 Walnut St., Des Moines
www.desmoinesperformingarts.org

- Jan. 31: Judy Carmichael



Des Moines Symphony

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

- Feb. 8-9: Chen conducts Rachmaninoff
- Feb. 12: Youth Jazz Orchestra Winter Concert
- Feb. 24: Youth Orchestras Winter Concert
- Feb. 14-15: Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince in Concert

Hoyt Sherman Place

1501 Woodland Ave., Des Moines
hoytsherman.org

- Feb. 4: Guster at 8 p.m.
- Feb. 7: Folsom Prison Experience at 8 p.m.
- Feb. 19: The Black Jacket Symphony Presents The Beatles' "Abbey Road" at 8 p.m.
- Feb. 22: The Salvation Army: Unmasking The Singer at 6 p.m.

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

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.

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.



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>.



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. ■

SPORTS

Iowa Wolves home games

Wells Fargo Arena, 233 Center St., Des Moines

iowa.gleague.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 home games

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 home 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 home game

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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CHAMBER

By Staci Allen

POLK CITY: Celebrating 150 years of community and connection

This year, Polk City marks an extraordinary milestone — our 150th birthday. Founded in 1875, Polk City began as a modest settlement in the heart of Iowa, named after James K. Polk, the 11th president of the United States. Over the decades, we have grown into a vibrant community that proudly blends small-town charm with modern opportunities.



Polk City is rich in history and tradition. Our early settlers established the town with determination and vision, laying the foundation for the strong community we enjoy today. Nestled near Saylorville Lake, Polk City's picturesque surroundings have long attracted residents who value a tranquil yet thriving environment. Landmarks like the Polk City Square and our historic library are cherished reminders of where we've been and how far we've come.

As we celebrate our sesquicentennial, let's reflect on what makes Polk City special: its people. From the pioneers of the past to today's engaged citizens, we've always been a community that thrives on connection and collaboration. That spirit is alive and well, with residents and businesses coming together through Chamber and Economic Development events, like the Polk City Four Seasons Festival and our Farmers Market.

This New Year, consider making a resolution to slow down and connect with the people and places around you. Attend a chamber event, meet local business owners, or volunteer for a community project. These are opportunities to honor our history and shape our future.

If you're not already involved, now is the perfect time to join the chamber or participate in our events. You'll find a welcoming community eager to grow together and a chance to be part of the next chapter in Polk City's story. Whether you're a lifelong resident or new to the area, there's a place for you here. We have opportunities for businesses and citizens. You do not need a business to join.

As we honor 150 years of history, let's look ahead with optimism and a commitment to improving Polk City. Together, we can ensure our community remains a remarkable place to live, work and play for generations.

Join us in celebrating this momentous year and make Polk City your home for connection, growth and shared memories. Happy 150th birthday, Polk City. ■

Information provided by Staci Allen, Executive Director, Go Polk City Chamber, P.O. Box 226, Polk City IA 50226, 515-984-3098, admin@polkcitychamber.com.

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Polk City
CHAMBER + ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Join the Chamber!



CELEBRATING 150 years

Polk City enters sesquicentennial year.

As Polk City approaches its sesquicentennial celebration in 2025, the town is preparing to honor its history and the stories that have shaped it over the years.

To commemorate the city's 150th anniversary of incorporation, the Big Creek Historical Society is inviting the community to share their family stories. This initiative is open to everyone who lives in town — and even those who have moved away.

“Why you moved to Polk City, what your connection to the town is, what involvement your family has had here — things like that,” says Rosemary Taylor, a dedicated community member and active participant in the Big Creek Historical Society. “It’s anything they want to tell us so we can create a book of family histories.”

Once collected, these stories will be compiled into a single volume to be shared with future generations.

Taylor underscores the importance of preserving history before it fades from memory.

“Too many people come and go without telling their story,” she says.

This project aims to ensure that the community's history — from founding families to newer residents — is preserved and celebrated.

Residents are encouraged to submit their stories and family photos to info@polkcityhistory.org by May 1.

Taylor plans to contribute her own family story. A driving force behind cherished Polk City traditions, she recalls helping establish the beloved Square lighting at Christmastime.

“I was sitting here with my son, who was 2 at the time,” she reminisces. “It was back when Hallmark movies were just becoming popular, and I got a similar idea.”

The first lighting was a modest affair, with a few musicians and cookies.

“It was pretty simple,” Taylor says. “We decorated the bandstand and part of the Square ourselves — it wasn’t done by the city then.”

Over the years, Taylor has also served on the City Council and spent 25 years on the Library Board. Her deep involvement in Polk City ensures she has a story worth telling. But, so does everyone.



The Big Creek Historical Society is inviting the community to share their family stories. Located on the Polk City Square, the museum helps tell the story of the town's history.

Beyond the family history project, the sesquicentennial celebration will include a variety of events. In April, a murder mystery tea will feature local participants acting out a suspenseful whodunit. A historical reenactment in September will commemorate Khrushchev's 1959 visit to Iowa — a moment still vivid in the memories of longtime residents.

For Taylor, the 150th celebration is more than just a look back — it's an opportunity to deepen connections.

“There's a lot of community participation, and it'd be very nice to see how the others

are involved,” she says. “It's kind of neat, too, because there are some people here who know that their families were part of the beginning of Polk City.”

From its earliest days to now, Polk City has thrived on a spirit of community. The 150-year celebration invites all residents to honor that legacy by sharing their stories.

For more details on the sesquicentennial events or to learn how to contribute your story, visit the Big Creek Historical Society on Facebook or contact them via email at info@polkcityhistory.org. ■

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VARSITY basketball

North Polk varsity basketball played against ADM on Dec. 6 in Adel.



Brooke Welch, Jamie McKnight, Bella Brandi, Elinor Austin and Olivia Nefzger



The team huddle



Brady Cathcart



Jake Hout



Sully Woosley



Rocky Bartleman



Eli Pederson and Ben Glasgow



Eli Pederson



Jayson Slings



Nathan Feldmann



Ben Glasgow



Drew Owen

JV BOYS basketball

North Polk JV boys basketball played against ADM at Adel on Jan. 6.



Connor Blake



Cody Rumbaugh



Josh Weig



Carter Petersen



Chase Twedt



Malachi Blevins



Logan Morrison



Sam Phillips



Hunter Bacino



THE COMETS CORNER

NEWS FROM NORTH POLK CSD

JANUARY 2025

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE NORTH POLK: SCHOOL CALENDAR: PUBLIC HEARING ON JANUARY 21

After having conversations with various stakeholders, including our Classified and Certified Employee Relations Groups, the Board of Education, district leadership teams, the Student Improvement Advisory Council (SIAC), along with feedback from all staff, we would like to inform the community of some important proposed changes to the 2025-2026 school calendar.

WHAT'S CHANGING?

Double-Routing Transportation System

To address our growing student enrollment and improve efficiency, we will be transitioning to a double-routing transportation system. This change will allow us to:

- Replace older buses rather than just adding more to accommodate the increase in enrollment, ensuring a sustainable, reliable fleet.
- Reduce overcrowding on buses and improve the overall reliability of transportation services.
- Address staffing challenges and maintain timely service for all students.

School Start Times

As a result of the new double-routing system, we will also be adjusting school start times. Specifically, we will offset start times for elementary and secondary schools by at least 30 minutes to optimize the flow of buses and reduce delays. Proposed start times are as follows:

- **Elementary:** 7:50 AM to 2:50 PM
- **Secondary:** 8:20 AM to 3:20 PM

This adjustment is necessary to accommodate the new transportation system and ensure efficient service for all students.

Full-Day Professional Learning (PD) Days

In addition to the transportation and start time changes, the district will **eliminate Monday late starts** and implement



full-day Professional Learning (PD) days throughout the school year. This adjustment aims to reduce scheduling burdens for working families and provide our staff with more focused time for professional development and collaboration.

WHY THE CHANGES?

These changes are aimed at optimizing our resources and meeting the needs of our growing district. By improving our transportation system, adjusting school start times, and enhancing professional development time for our staff, we can better serve students, ensure reliability, and address the challenges of staffing and bus fleet sustainability.

KEY CALENDAR POINTS

- 168 student contact days and 185 staff contract days, with full-day Professional Development (PD) days replacing Monday late starts.
- Student's First Day: Monday, August 25, 2025.

WHAT'S NEXT?

While these changes are not yet finalized, we invite the community to attend the Public Hearing at the Board of Education Meeting on January 21 in the High School Collaborative Center at 6:00 PM to share feedback.

CALLING FUTURE COMETS - PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION OPENS JANUARY 22!

We're excited to announce that registration for the 2025-26 Preschool Program will open on Wednesday, January 22, 2025! This is an exciting time for families with young children, and for the district as a whole, as we welcome the next generation of future Comets to North Polk.

Preschool Program Details

- Eligibility: Children must be 4 years old on or before September 15, 2025 to enroll in the 4-year-old preschool program.
- Children who turn 5 by that date should enroll in Kindergarten.
- Sessions Offered:
 - Morning: 7:50 AM to 10:50 AM
 - Afternoon: 11:50 AM to 2:50 PM
- Classes are held four days a week at both West Elementary and Central Elementary, with the same schedule at both locations.

In-district families will have priority registration, and proof of residency will be required.

How to Register

Registration for all levels in North Polk CSD is online. To get started, visit our website at northpolk.org/enroll. Be sure to visit us on January 22 to register your child for an unforgettable year of learning and growth!



A YEAR IN REVIEW: 2024 FLICKR GALLERY STATS

At North Polk, we take pride in capturing and sharing the moments that make our schools and community thrive. Our district produces and maintains an online photo gallery through Flickr, showcasing the amazing events and activities happening throughout our schools.

In 2024, we uploaded over 4,800 photos, which received more than 637,000 views, reflecting the pride and energy of our community.

Best of all, these photos are available for the community to view and download for free. We invite you to explore the gallery and relive the memories of an incredible year.

Preview the gallery by visiting www.flickr.com/photos/northpolk/albums or scanning the QR code below! >>



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