

WEST DES MOINES
JORDAN CREEK

MARCH 2025

Living

A wedding TO REMEMBER

**Couple shares how they
made their day special.**

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EDUCATION

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RECIPE

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See our lunch,
brunch, dinner
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WELCOME

AN OLD RV, a friendly farmer and a moose head

Jolene and I were married in Clive on Sept. 30, 1995. And, yes, this will be our 30-year anniversary.

Jolene's parents, Dean and Lois Porath, lived at Lake Panorama at the time, but we never even considered a lake wedding. I am not sure why. Maybe late September was pushing it for an outdoor wedding, but, more than likely, the decision had to do with our focus on being truly independent from our parents. Looking back, a lake wedding might have been the better option.

Our wedding ceremony was beautiful, and the church looked spectacular. From there, though, things got a little rocky. Rather than renting a limousine for the two of us, we thought it would be more fun to take the entire wedding party on a well-stocked cruise from the church to the reception hall. When a friend offered his RV for us to use, we thought we had the perfect plan. It was great fun — until the RV broke down on a rural road. We eventually found a friendly farmer who gave us a ride to the reception hall in his farm truck — complete in our wedding dress and tuxedo. He then gave the rest of the wedding party rides as well. Needless to say, the reception was delayed. Fortunately, or maybe unfortunately, the members of the wedding party were well-hydrated.

We had our wedding reception at the Jester Park Lodge, and not the new fancy one that is in the park today. We rented the old building with the giant moose head on the wall, which made for some entertaining photos. Not too many years later, that lodge burned to the ground, and that was probably a good thing.

Through it all, we sang, we danced, we toasted and we had one of the best nights of our lives. It certainly wasn't a storybook wedding, and after reading about the beautiful ceremony featured in this month's issue, it makes me wonder if we should have leaned on Dean and Lois to use their place instead. The scents of an approaching autumn. The sounds of nature. The love of my life. And a beautiful lake view.

Just no moose head or a broken-down RV. Aaaahhh, the memories. Happy 30th anniversary, Jolene! ■



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A wedding TO REMEMBER

**Couple shares how they
made their day special.**

By Jackie Wilson

Few milestones are as momentous as a wedding. Family and friends often gather from near and far, the preparations may take months, and every detail is given thought. From the wedding attire to the decorations, music and venue, the couple makes countless decisions with one goal in mind: for theirs to be a wedding to remember. This month, one couple shares the scrupulous planning they did so their special day would be exactly as they envisioned. If a wedding is in your future, we hope you find inspiration from their story. Or, perhaps, their journey will spark memories of your own.

Mallory and Aaron Rowe were married
June 22, 2024 at Barnes Place in Adel.
Photo by Mara Mapes Photography

Dancing and entertaining friends was a high priority on Mallory and Aaron Rowe's "must have" wedding list. After the wedding was over, both agreed the wedding day was spectacular.

Mallory (Wilson) and Aaron Rowe both attended Iowa State University and hung out with a group of mutual friends. When Mallory noticed Aaron's tattoo, which says "Be Kind," she was intrigued.

"Plus, I thought he was cute," she smiles.

The pair attended ISU football games and other college activities. She met his family in Wisconsin, while he visited Mallory's parents in West Des Moines.

The pair moved to Milwaukee after college graduation, where Aaron proposed to Mallory in 2022. They planned the wedding for 2024, upon moving back to Iowa. In addition, Mallory's brother, Jack, was getting married, too, and they wanted to space out their weddings.

While attending other people's weddings, Mallory gained ideas about what she wanted — and didn't want — at their wedding. The couple moved back to West Des Moines and began planning the wedding in earnest.

Mallory and Aaron discussed their priorities: a party atmosphere rather than a formal, stuffy affair. She wanted the wedding to match her lively personality.

A secluded venue

The first step was setting the date and selecting the venue. They chose Barnes Place in the countryside near Adel. It includes a space for indoor activities, a long porch and a pond. The tree-lined venue is secluded and quiet from traffic and other distractions.

They set the date for June 22, 2024. Since weather might be a concern, the ceremony could be moved indoors in case of inclement weather. Mallory liked the flexibility of the different indoor and outdoor seating options.

The couple used a free online wedding planning service, The Knot, for RSVPs and gift registry. The pair put together a guest list of about 230 of their friends and family.

"We wanted both sides of our families to be there," Mallory explains. "We love to host and celebrate, so it was the only time we could invite



Mallory and Aaron Rowe's engagement photos were taken by Mara Mapes, who also took the wedding photos.

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everyone. The venue was big enough.”

She and her mom went dress shopping and selected a dress from Holland Bridal in Pella.

She admits she’s not a “detail” person, but the couple put together a binder of wedding plans, guest lists and addresses, so it would be easier when sending out thank you notes.

Barnes Place recommended various vendors, and the couple selected Fireside Grille in Altoona as the caterer. Barnes Place was helpful in coordinating the wedding plans and details.

“We had a decorator and coordinator through Barnes Place,” Mallory explains. “Paula (with Barnes Place) was great. We didn’t have to worry about anything. It went smoothly. The weight of the planning was off our shoulders.”

The couple chose to have an outdoor ceremony close to the pond and the reception indoors. The dance floor could be flexible — either inside or outside, depending on the weather.

Rain or not?

As the big day approached, it rained for several days, and rain was a looming threat on the wedding day.

“I avoided looking at the weather app. I knew rain was forecast. I didn’t check the weather as I knew it would stress me out,” Mallory says. “Regardless, we could have flipped it inside. I would have been anxious about the rain. I’m glad we had that option.”

June 22 arrived, and the rain held out, although the heat moved in.

“I was dripping with sweat the whole day,” she admits.

The ceremony consisted of 16 in the bridal party, with the women wearing varying black dresses. She also had two personal attendants, three ushers and her niece, Zoey, 2, who served as a flower girl.

Guests sat outside on benches while music played. The short ceremony was officiated by Mallory’s brother, Jack.

“That was one of the best parts — that I had my brother as an officiant,”



Mallory’s brother, Jack Wilson, officiated at the wedding. Photo by Mara Mapes Photography

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Beth Ades



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Mallory's third-grade students offered advice for the couple. Their notes became part of the décor. Photo by Mara Mapes Photography

she says.

The couple selected Mara Mapes, who was also a family friend, as the wedding photographer. While the pair took photos and spent time with the wedding party, Mallory's friend brought the couple's dog, Lola, onsite to be included.

"It was one of my favorite parts. Lola got to join in on the fun," she says.

Instead of a traditional guest book, guests signed a cornhole board/bags game. Guests were treated to appetizers and happy hour drinks, which included the couple's favorite signature cocktails — old fashioned for Aaron and margaritas for Mallory. Some folks went inside for a reprieve from the heat.



The bride's gown was selected from Holland Bridal in Pella. Photo by Mara Mapes Photography

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VETERAN OWNED

FEATURE

The reception and buffet dinner took place indoors while the bridal party was introduced. A funfetti cake with sprinkles made for a festive dessert. Baby pictures of Aaron and Mallory were displayed throughout the venue. The couple honored deceased grandparents by displaying their photos.

Guests from Milwaukee made the five-hour trip, uncles traveled from Florida, plus, all of their college friends attended the big celebration as the Rows were stars in their own production.

The weather held out, so, after dinner, the festivities moved outdoors, with dancing the “worm” to music provided by a DJ, who was a family friend.

Mallory says her wedding photographer knew many of the guests.

“She was a friend, and she really captured the spirit of our guests in all the photos. I’m happy with how the pictures turned out.”

All in all, Mallory was delighted with the outcome of all the planning.



Aaron and Mallory enjoyed taking some photos with their dog, Lola. Photo by Mara Mapes Photography

“Everything was exactly what I wanted. All of our friends were there. People were dancing, having fun and letting loose. Aaron’s family came from all over the place,” she reflects. “It was fun getting to see our worlds colliding on one special day.” ■



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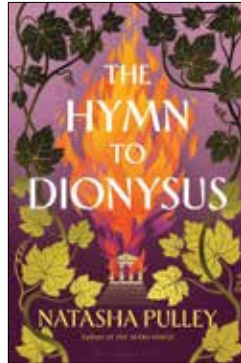
'The Hymn to Dionysus'

I can never get enough mythological retellings. Ancient stories retold for a modern audience attract me like a moth to flame. I spent so much of my childhood enthralled by stories of gods, monsters and mythic adventure that getting to relive it as an adult just feels right.

Dionysus has always been a fascinating god, with a hundred weird and wonderful myths. In this telling, Natasha Pulley pulls out all the stops to make this story as wild, intimate and confusing as the gods themselves.

Phaidros is a Theban soldier who has never seen the home he fights for, never met his parents, and who is thrust into tangled knots of politics over and over again, forced to follow orders he doesn't understand. As he matures, he finds himself struggling and experiencing strange and terrifying things until he finds himself caught up in something he never could have predicted.

This is a difficult book to discuss without spoilers, but there is so much to love about the rich characters, beautifully wrought settings and absolutely masterful writing. If you're looking for something that will challenge and delight you — something different, something wild — this is the book for you. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



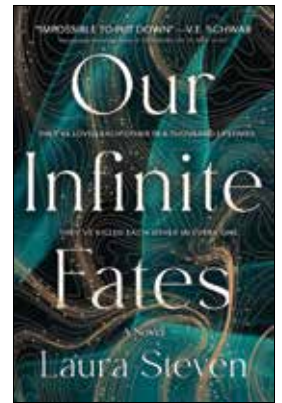
By Natasha Pulley
03/18/25
416 pages
\$32
Bloomsbury
Publishing

'Our Infinite Fates'

Romance is having a capital "M" moment. There's so much of it being published, it's dizzying to know how to even begin to find the gems amid the fluff. For those looking for something a little different than the typical bodice-ripper, this beautifully epic tale is a great place to start.

Evelyn and Arden are ancient souls with a lot of baggage. They've fought the same fight throughout time, living hundreds of lives that always end with Arden murdering Evelyn. Time and again, Evelyn sees the end coming but can't stop it. This time, however, she is determined to stop the fate she's faced so many times before. She's going to find Arden first and fight for this life she's built.

Told in alternating chapters between the current iteration of the pair and a variety of their past lives, this is a book filled with longing, regret and a unique spin on the concept of soul mates. I found the history fascinating and the writing felt poetic, like listening to an ancient epic. I was enthralled in a way that most romance fails to do for me. If you are looking for something soaring and heartbreaking this winter, I can't recommend this one enough. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



By Laura Steven
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Contact the library's Adult Services Desk, 515-222-3403, for more information. You can also register at wdmlibrary.org/events. The program is sponsored by Youth Justice Initiative, The City of West Des Moines, United Way, Google Fiber and Microsoft.



Upcoming events

Iowa Files: One Small Step for Iowa, One Giant Leap for America, Sunday, March 16, 2:30-3:30 p.m. (adults)

Learn about Iowa's role in the early NASA days and how it continues today from David Dubczakk. No registration required.

Final Friday Fiber Club, Friday, March 28, 10-11:30 a.m. (adults)

Final Friday Fiber Club is an informal opportunity to get together with other fiber artists to make new friends while creating your own handmade masterpieces. No registration required.

The Thankful Band Jazz Trio, Monday, March 31, 6:30-7:30 p.m. (adults)

Jazz trio The Thankful Band will be here to swing you through different styles of jazz in this family-friendly music appreciation event. No registration required. ■

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Upcoming in the April issue of West Des Moines / Jordan Creek Living magazine:

Foreign Exchange Students: Have you hosted a foreign exchange student in the past or are hosting one this year? Tell us about sharing your home and culture with a student from abroad and what you learned from the experience. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com by March 20 to be included in the April

Athene Black & Brown Business Summit

April 16-17

Sheraton West Des Moines Hotel

The West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce's fifth annual Athene Black & Brown Business Summit in April will bring everyone from entrepreneurs to seasoned professionals together in a hybrid setting at the Sheraton Hotel in West Des Moines. The summit includes a pitch competition, breakout sessions led by top experts, Mel Essex Entrepreneur of the Year Award, inspirational keynote speakers and more. The goal is to help build economic growth for all business owners across the country and position Iowa as the best place in the nation to start and lead a business. For information and registration, visit <https://wdmchamber.org/bbsummit>.

Parks and Recreation Programs

For information about upcoming programs and registration links, visit www.wdm.iowa.gov/government/parks-recreation/program-registration.

• **Lee Cole's Magicamp, ages 7-15, Monday and Wednesday, March 17 and March 19, 1:15-4 p.m., \$49, Nature Lodge.** Magicamp is for anyone who likes to have fun. You'll learn how to entertain and amaze your friends, family and classmates with magic that you can do anywhere, at any time, and for the rest of your life. Join professional magician Lee Cole for two days of fun at the Raccoon River Park Nature Lodge. All magic materials are provided.

• **Decorating Eggs with Naturally Made Dyes, ages 8 and older with adult, Sunday March 30, 3-4 p.m., Nature Lodge, \$7.** Discover the art of naturally dyeing eggs using everyday food scraps and spices in this interactive workshop. Learn how to create your own vibrant dyes at home and transform plain eggs into unique masterpieces. We'll also delve into innovative techniques like leaf print bundling for an added touch of creativity. Please bring a carton of eggs (either hardboiled or raw) to decorate during the session.



Sew Social Hour

Wednesday, March 5, 6:30-8 p.m.

Jordan House Museum, 2001 Fuller Road, West Des Moines

This event is a throwback to historic sewing circles where participants would bring their latest needlecraft projects and sit in the parlor with others, sharing tips, advice and sometimes gossip. Any needlecraft is welcome, and you don't have to be an expert. For example, if you've always wanted to learn how to knit, we'll be offering lessons each month on a specific craft. There will be multiple rooms — a quiet room and one where discussion will be encouraged. No registration is required, but, if you'd like to let the group know you're coming by emailing info@wdmhs.org or calling 515-225-1286, it would be appreciated.

Axe-throwing and Sing Along

March 22

Ironside Axe Club, 2700 University Ave., Suite 100, West Des Moines

Enjoy the Pirate Take Over and Sea Shanty Sing Along featuring the Orkes and Trolls. \$1 off drinks for all pirates. \$10 axe throwing from 6-10 p.m. Sing-a-long from 7-9 p.m.

Dome After Dark

Fridays through March, 6-10 p.m.

Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, 909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines
dmbotanicalgarden.com

The Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden's lush tropical conservatory and Gardeners Show House are colorfully illuminated for Dome After Dark. Flora, the botanical garden's restaurant, serves food and drinks till 9 p.m.

Jordan House Tours

Fridays and Sundays, 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Jordan House Museum, 2001 Fuller Road, West Des Moines

Weekly guided tours are offered at the Jordan House. The cut off for purchasing tickets is noon Thursday for Friday tours and noon Friday for Sunday tours. If you have missed that cutoff, please call 515-225-1286 to find out if walk up tickets are available. To reserve a ticket, see the schedule and links at <https://www.wdmhs.org/openhousevisit/>. All tours will be guided by a docent. Please arrive at the Jordan House Museum at least 10 minutes before the tour begins. The tour will involve taking stairs to the basement and the second floor, as well as walking and standing for at least one hour. If you have a group of eight or more, call to schedule a private tour.



"Jesus Christ Superstar"

Through March 23

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

The Des Moines Playhouse presents the Broadway musical "Jesus Christ Superstar." Tickets may be purchased online at dmplayhouse.com and by phone at 515-277-6261. "Jesus Christ Superstar" tells the story of Jesus in the final days leading up to his crucifixion. Loosely based on the Gospels, Superstar focuses on the conflicts between Jesus, his disciples, the people of Israel, and the leadership of Rome. Told by his wavering disciple and ultimate betrayer, Judas, the rock opera by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice features such songs as "I Don't Know How to Love Him," "Gethsemane" and "Superstar." Show times are 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays. Tickets start at \$29.

EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Check for cancellations

African Violet Show and Sale

March 28 and 29
Wesleyan Church,
2025 Lower Beaver Road,
Des Moines

The Evening African Violet Club of Des Moines invites the public to its 2025 African Violet Show and Sale. This is a nationally sanctioned show and sale that will have judges from the African Violet Society of America. Club members' plants and supplies will be available. The sale hours are Friday, March 28, noon to 6 p.m., and Saturday, March 29, noon to 5 p.m. The judging of violets, gesneriads and floral design will take place on Saturday 10 a.m. to noon. Educational exhibits and AVSA promotional information will also be displayed. The Evening African Violet Club of Des Moines meets monthly from February to November on the third Saturday of the month at 2 p.m. at the Debra Heights Wesleyan Church. The public is invited.

Playhouse Summer Classes

Various dates

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

The Des Moines Playhouse offers students from kindergarten through high school more than 30 different classes and camps this June-August to fill the long summer days and keep minds active. A complete list of classes and registration is available at dmplayhouse.com. Theatre arts education at The Playhouse provides students with the opportunity to explore, create, imagine and express themselves, all within a safe, nurturing environment. Every class at The Playhouse is unique and led by the theatre's professional teaching artists. For more information on summer theatre camps and other Playhouse educational offerings, contact The Playhouse education department at 515-974-5365.

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Friendly Sons of St. Patrick Pre-Party and Parade

March 15 and March 17

The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick is back with its St. Patrick's Day celebrations. Join them on Saturday, March 15, from 2-6 p.m. at The Shop DSM, 901 Cherry St., Des Moines, for a Pre-Paddy Party, featuring live music from Black Dirt Ramblers, a food truck and cash bar for an at-will donation. The parade is on Monday, March 17, and begins at noon. Participants will proceed from E. First Street, west on Grand Avenue to Eighth Street, with the parade officially ending at Eighth and Grand Avenue. The after party will be in the Des Moines Marriott Downtown Hotel. Visit www.friendlysonsiowa.com for more information.



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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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DSM Book Festival

Saturday, March 22, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Franklin Event Center, 4801 Franklin Ave.,
Des Moines

Readers and book lovers in central Iowa will be thrilled to find an outstanding array of authors appearing at this free, fun-filled event, presented by Beaverdale Books and Beaverdale Neighborhood

Association. In addition to author programs, panels, workshops and children's activities, the event will offer attendees the opportunity to have their books signed, visit with publishers, and enjoy mingling with fellow book lovers. For the complete schedule, visit <https://beaverdalebooks.com/dsmbookfestival/>.

Four headlining presentations will be offered in the venue's large theater, including fiction writer Claire Lombardo, historian Alexis Coe, award-winning Hanif Abdurraqib and AViD author C.J. Box.



Covered Bridges Winery events

2207 1700th Trail, Winterset
coveredbridgeswinery.com

See website for tickets and any last minute changes.

- **March 23:** Sunday Music at the Winery, 2-4 p.m., no cover charge, Jake Schrodt
- **March 29:** Comedy Night Chowdown Improv
- **April 13:** Sunday Music at the Winery, 2-4 p.m., no cover charge, Liv McNair
- **April 19:** Music at the Winery, Kracklin, 6:30-9:30 p.m., \$5 cover

Vendor Markets

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.

Capital City Card Convention

March 28-30
Iowa Events Center, 730 Third St., Des Moines
iowaeventscenter.com

Iowa's largest card convention spans three days with thousands in attendance. There will be 224 tables of dealers from across the country offering cards, memorabilia and collectibles. JSA, an authentication company, will be available during show hours.

What's In YOUR Garage?

Iowa Living MAGAZINES

To suggest a garage, email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com

DMPA Concert Series

Various dates, 7 p.m.
Temple Theater, 1011 Locust St., Des Moines

Des Moines Performing Arts (DMPA) is excited to announce a new concert series. "Made in the Midwest" highlights the artistry of local musicians in the intimate Temple Theater. Celebrating the talents of independent artists from across our region, guests will enjoy a unique experience where the musicians take center stage in a venue known for its unparalleled acoustic quality.

- March 21: Matt Woods, roots/blues
- April 25: Allegra Hernandez, rock
- May 9: Abbie Sawyer, folk/Americana

Tickets are on sale now starting at \$20/show. You can purchase tickets by visiting DMPA.org, calling 515-246-2300, or stopping by the Civic Center Ticket Office at 221 Walnut St. You can also purchase tickets night of at the Temple Theater Ticket Office, 1011 Locust St., starting two hours before a performance. ■



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A LOADED casserole that's quick and comforting

(Family Features) It's tough to beat an easy dinner that's equal parts comforting, convenient and delicious. This loaded hamburger potato casserole is no exception. Just brown ground beef then mix in a casserole dish with potatoes, bacon, cheese and more before baking for an hour. Find more casserole recipes and beyond at Culinary.net.

Loaded hamburger potato casserole

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

Servings: 4-6

- 1 pound ground hamburger
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 bag (1 1/2 pounds) tri-colored baby potatoes
- 1 can (10 ounces) cream of mushroom soup
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1/2 cup fried onions (optional)
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 2 1/2 ounces bacon pieces
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- chives or green onions, for topping

Directions

- Heat oven to 375 F.
- In skillet over medium heat, brown ground beef with garlic powder; drain and set aside.
- Cut potatoes into small pieces. In casserole dish, mix beef; potatoes; soup; sour cream; milk; fried onions, if desired; cheese; and bacon pieces. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Bake, covered, 50 minutes then uncover and bake 10 minutes.
- Top with chives or green onions.



SAVORY pork chili fresh from the slow cooker

(Family Features) If you're hunting for a cool-weather warmup or just need a break from the kitchen, the slow cooker is a perfect tool to make dinner a breeze. This Barbecue Chili recipe from "Cookin' Savvy" offers a hearty meal that serves a crowd. Visit Culinary.net to find more family-friendly dinner inspiration and step-by-step recipe videos.

Barbecue chili

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

Servings: 8-10

- 1 pork loin (2-3 pounds)
- 1 can (10 ounces) diced tomatoes and green chilies
- 2 cups barbecue sauce, divided
- 1 cup water
- 1 can (29 ounces) tomato sauce
- 2 cans (27 ounces each) chili beans
- 1 package chili seasoning
- 1 tablespoon barbecue seasoning
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- sour cream, for serving
- shredded cheddar cheese, for serving
- corn chips, for serving

Directions

- Place pork loin in slow cooker. Cover with diced tomatoes and green chilies, 1 cup barbecue sauce and water; cook on low 4-6 hours.
- Cut up cooked meat and place in Dutch oven along with juices from slow cooker. Add remaining barbecue sauce, tomato sauce, chili beans, chili seasoning, barbecue seasoning, onion powder and garlic powder. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.
- Cook over medium heat 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- Serve with sour cream, shredded cheese and corn chips.
- Tip: Add can of beans if serving bigger crowd.





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PLAN AHEAD By Buffy Peters

WHAT to know about 're-grief'

When children have someone significant in their life die, it can be difficult to know how to best support them. It's natural to want to "fix it," but this is one of those things we cannot fix.

Children will continue to grieve as their development and understanding of the world changes. When the death occurs, the child understands only as fully as their cognitive development allows. As they age, and their development changes, their understanding changes, too. They may have new questions or wonderings and may express their grief in new ways. This is called "re-grief" and can sometimes catch their adults off guard.

While our fundamental understanding of death may not change after adulthood, our understanding and experience of grief can change over time, too. Whenever a new life milestone occurs (i.e., we get married), we understand the world in a different way (as a newly married person). This can also have an impact on our grief. Remember, there is no time limit on grief.

How to help? 1. Listen, compassionately. "It makes sense you feel that way. Do you want to tell me more about it?" 2. Answer questions honestly — and repeatedly if asked — in consistent, developmentally appropriate ways. 3. Encourage creative and physical activities (that they enjoy) to get feelings out of their bodies. 4. Encourage sharing memories and, if you knew their person, share memories you have. They may learn something new about them, and what a gift that is. ■



Information provided by Buffy Peters, Director of Hamilton's Academy of Grief & Loss, 3601 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-697-3666.



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HEALTH By Ashley Powell

SPRING clean your mind and body

As nature reawakens, spring offers the perfect opportunity to refresh your wellness routine. Incorporating natural compounds like CBD, alkaloids and functional mushrooms can help support mental clarity, energy levels and overall balance.

CBD: clarity and calm — Cannabidiol (CBD) interacts with the body's endocannabinoid system to promote balance. Research suggests CBD may help reduce inflammation, ease stress and support cognitive function, making it a valuable tool for mental clarity and relaxation. Whether in tinctures, capsules or beverages, CBD can assist in resetting your body and mind.

Alkaloids for energy — Certain alkaloids, found in plants like kratom and coffee, can provide a natural energy boost. These compounds influence neurotransmitters, enhancing focus, stamina and vitality.

Functional mushrooms: nature's adaptogens — Mushrooms such as cordyceps and Lion's Mane are known for their adaptogenic properties, helping the body manage stress while improving cognitive function. Cordyceps has been shown to enhance stamina and oxygen utilization, while Lion's Mane supports nerve growth and mental acuity. Together, they contribute to sustained energy and sharper focus.

This spring, embrace a natural wellness reset. Visit your locally owned CBD store to explore high-quality products that support both mind and body. Certified hemp consultants can guide you toward the best options. ■



Information provided by Ashley Powell, CBD American Shaman, 800 S. 50th St., No. 106, West Des Moines, 515-380-5251, and 3418 Eighth St. S.W., No. 3, Altoona, 515-967-4036. Sources: https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6574952/?utm_source=frontiersin.org/journals/psychiatry/articles/10.3389/fpsy.2024.1356009/full?utm_source=chatgpt.com


LOCAL ABWA chapter offers \$2,000 grant

The West Des Moines Charter Chapter of the American Business Women's Association (ABWA) is offering one scholarship worth \$2,000, funded through the Stephen Bufton Memorial Educational Fund to one deserving, qualified student.

Each year, local leagues of ABWA provide Stephen Bufton Memorial Educational Scholarships (SBMEF) to female students who will be attending accredited U.S. colleges or universities that offer at least a baccalaureate degree. Applicants must be female, U.S. citizens and have completed at least 60 college credit hours by August 2025. Eligible women interested in applying for the scholarship should contact Kathy McBride, education/scholarship chair, kathymcbride.abwa@gmail.com.

Applicants are encouraged to reach out to the local chapter contact no later than April 20 in order to meet the application deadline of May 15 at www.sbmeff.org. A minimum of three eligible completed applications per scholarship are required in order for the scholarship to be awarded. The scholarship recipient(s) will be notified in July.

The West Des Moines Charter Chapter of the American Business Women's Association was established more than 20 years ago and includes membership in the entire Des Moines metro. Members from this chapter hold monthly professional development meetings on the third Thursday of each month, regularly scheduled social events and planned community outreach. For more information, visit <https://westdesmoinesabwa.org/>. ■




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Contact Mike Chiston at mike@dmcityview.com or 515-953-4822 x304 for more information.



WHAT DOES an executor of an estate do?

The executor is the person named in a Last Will and Testament who bears the responsibility of finalizing a deceased person's estate. If you have been nominated as an executor, there are certain critical things you need to do.



who may think they are entitled to money, creditors and more. Brace yourself for potential conflict. You have to manage the emotions and expectations of heirs. Some may resent your authority. Some may question why you were named as executor. Some may just be desperate for money and not understand that the process takes time.

Know your role

The executor's job is to carry out the decedent's wishes outlined in the will. There is a reason the will writer named you. Your job is to ensure the estate is distributed correctly and that the decedent's affairs are wrapped up. You want to do it efficiently and correctly, but you also want to honor the decedent's wishes.

Get ready to rumble

You will need to communicate with many people: heirs, beneficiaries, family members

Get organized

You should take immediate steps to safeguard property. Secure the residence and take valuables to a safe place. Get all of the information you can on assets: bank records, investment information, life insurance policies, etc. Because being an executor is such an involved job, you should keep records of all of your work. Make a spreadsheet of assets and liabilities, keep meticulous records, and make a checklist of action items.

File the paperwork

Merely being named as the executor in a Last Will and Testament isn't enough. You have to file the will with the probate court and obtain a court order and letters of appointment (Letters Testamentary) to be vested with the authority to act on behalf of the estate. Make sure you go through the proper legal channels to guarantee you have the power to carry out your role.

Hire an attorney

The process of probate is not one that can be navigated alone. You need to have legal representation and advice to ensure that you follow the law. There are statutes regarding notification of heirs, timelines for disposing of property, and tax matters to handle. You don't have to do this job alone. Partner with an experienced probate attorney to help you. ■

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

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A LIFETIME of volunteering

Walters makes a meaningful difference in the lives of youth.



Volunteering is a part of who Leyria Walters is.

Since moving to West Des Moines in 1977, she has become an integral part of the community, dedicating her time and energy to causes that enhance it and uplift others.

"This is home," she says simply.

Over the years, Walters has been involved in a wide range of volunteer efforts. From Girl Scouts to Sunday school, the PTA, and the American Heart Association, she has found ways to support those around her.

But one of the causes closest to her heart is the Youth Justice Initiative (YJI) through the West Des Moines Police Department.

The YJI program is designed to engage crime victims and community members in the justice process. It holds young offenders accountable to those they have harmed, seeks to restore victims' losses as much as possible, and provides opportunities for conversation and problem-solving.

Participants take part in a monthly circle where they first address their offense and then focus on self-improvement. Each week, they attend a study table, receiving a free meal and homework assistance in a safe space where they can grow and learn. As part of the program, they also participate in family classes, volunteer in the community and write letters of apology. Some former participants now volunteer for the program, as do some parents.

"It's a pretty cool system," Walters says.

Her passion for working with young people extends beyond YJI. In her last teaching job, Walters worked with "at-promise" students — her way of referring to youth at risk. She found meaning in helping them believe in themselves and their potential.

Walters finds that volunteering not only allows her to give back but also enriches her own life. It helps her make new friends, stay connected to the community, and gives her a sense of purpose.

"I'm a people person," she says.

Over the years, she has received notes from the young people she has worked with — messages of gratitude that she keeps as reminders of the difference she's made. She knows that, one day, when she can no longer volunteer, those notes will serve as memories of a lifetime of service.

But, for now, she's still hard at work, alongside many other dedicated volunteers.

"It takes many people to get the job done," she says. ■



Ryan Mehalovich of Edward Jones presents the Neighbor Spotlight certificate to Leyria Walters.

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LIBRARY'S outreach program

Provides materials for 2,000 seniors

Books provide entertainment, information and an escape from the ordinary. Readers turn to the library for much-needed resources. Yet, not all folks can easily get to a library.

That's where the West Des Moines Public Library Senior Outreach Program comes in. The homebound delivery program provides a browsable collection of materials, including large print, DVDs, books on CD and Playaway audio books.

Betsy Richter is the WDMPL homebound and outreach assistant and manages deposit collections in 20 assisted living facilities in WDM, reaching about 2,000 seniors. Volunteers also deliver materials to the homebound.

Materials are exchanged once a month, and no library card or check out is needed.

"Many of our senior living communities have a very literate clientele," Betsy says. "One person told me that, in a month, she was able to read 18 of the books we had provided."

The service provides memory care bundles designed for people with memory concerns. Materials include no-text picture books, conversation cards and reminisce books highlighting different decades. These books prompt conversation with families and staff and are designed to calm and provide comfort.

After a need was identified to serve the homebound and senior communities, the program expanded over the years. The WDM Library Friends Foundation (a nonprofit that helps fund WDM library services, materials and programs) helped to fund the project.

Betsy says a recent study from the Alzheimer's Association shows that reading can help prevent or delay the onset of dementia.

"A recent census data estimates that 14.6% of West Des Moines' population is over the age of 65," she adds. "These tax-paying citizens deserve the right to have library materials. Many people at this age experience mobility issues. This service allows them to utilize their library and find ways to expand their minds and find entertainment."

Betsy's goal is to provide better services and materials for all residents, including service to folks in hospice.

"It is a joy to know that people who find



Betsy Richter is the WDMPL homebound and outreach assistant.



The Words on Wheels vehicle helps take the library to the public.

comfort in reading are able to do so until the very end," she says.

The goal is to provide the aging population with the best possible care.

"Writer Rita Mae Brown said, 'When I got (my) library card, that is when my life began,'" Betsy says. "It's never too late to get a library card and start your next adventure with a good

book."

The public can help by donating to the library and joining the WDM Library Friends Foundation. The tax-deductible donations also support library youth and adult programming and the new Words on Wheels vehicle. For more information on homebound and other library services, visit www.wdmlibrary.org. ■

MEET Ann Krois

Honored as Social Studies Teacher of the Year

Ann Krois, an 11-year history and social studies teacher at Valley High School, was awarded an Iowa Council for Social Studies Teacher of the Year award in 2024.

The award recognizes teachers who provide leadership in social studies education. Krois serves on the board for the West Des Moines Historical Society, Living History Farms and the Iowa Council for Social Studies.

She was nominated by Kelsey Hudson, a longtime VHS teacher and one of Krois' former teachers.

When Krois attended VHS as a student, she was inspired by Hudson, not only because of her teaching style, but for the intriguing subject matter.

"I fell in love with history," she recalls. "I aspired to be like her (Hudson)."

Today, Krois teaches alongside her former high school teacher.

"It's funny to see how I saw her as a teacher, and, now, we're not only coworkers, but best friends," she reflects.

One of the ways she engages students is through oral history and personal experiences. She offers guest speakers, including Vietnam War veterans, refugees and boat people for their personal stories.

"It's very cathartic for veterans. Some of them have never talked about their experiences before."

Krois interviewed a parent about 9/11.

"It's really a memorable day in history for a lot of people," she explains.

She says some people think social studies is controversial.

"I teach history and what happened. I let kids see different perspectives," she explains. "There are always topics to build on each other throughout history."

In her classes, she tries to represent other countries.

"Sometimes history has been Americanized. I work with a wide population of kids, and I want them to see themselves in the subjects I teach," Krois says.

Krois travels during summer months and returns with ideas and history to share in the classroom. It's a bucket-list goal of hers to visit every presidential grave.

"Now I have to go see Jimmy Carter's," she reflects.

One reason she likes teaching is the diverse population of the students.

"I learn so much from them. It's like I get to travel abroad when they share their traditions. It's neat."

Krois says she enjoyed "coming home" to teach at Valley.

"I work with really good people," she says. "All of the people I work with are deserving of the award. I just happened to get it." ■



Ann Krois was awarded an Iowa Council for Social Studies Teacher of the Year award in 2024.

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Source: cdc.gov 2/25

PALLIATIVE care: An option for someone you love?

Q. My husband's doctor suggested we look into palliative care. This is not a term that's familiar to me. My husband lives with a chronic health condition. Thankfully, the illness is not immediately life-threatening, but my husband's quality of life isn't what we'd like it to be. What can palliative care do for him?



A. I'm sorry to hear about your spouse's health condition, but it's great that you're exploring palliative care — a specialized form of care focused on providing relief from the symptoms, pain and stress of a serious illness, rather than trying to cure the illness itself. It's aimed at improving the quality of life for both the person living with illness and their family.

Here's what you should know about palliative care.

- **It's available to anyone with a serious or chronic health condition, regardless of their prognosis.** The goal is to alleviate suffering and improve comfort by managing physical symptoms, but it also addresses emotional, social and spiritual needs.

- **Palliative care typically includes a variety of specialists,** such as physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains and therapists. They will all work together to create a care plan that's tailored to your spouse's needs.

- **It's focused on managing pain, fatigue, nausea, breathing difficulties, and any other symptoms of illness.** If your spouse is dealing with discomfort related to their chronic condition, palliative care can significantly help decrease that.

- **It also supports loved ones.** Assistance offered with palliative care can include counseling, caregiver support and education, and help navigating health care systems and decisions.

- **Palliative care doesn't replace other treatments for your spouse's condition.** It can be given alongside curative treatments, helping to manage the side effects or helping cope with difficult symptoms during treatments like chemotherapy or dialysis.

- **It's offered in various settings.** If receiving care at home is preferable to you and your husband, make sure you find a provider that offers home-based palliative care. The overall aim will be to provide your spouse with enhanced quality of life while managing the challenges presented by his condition. The care is highly personalized, and most families report that palliative care enhances comfort and helps everyone navigate the health care journey more smoothly. Best wishes to you both. ■

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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