

Living

A wedding
TO REMEMBER

Couple shares how they made their day special.

Savory pork chili
RECIPE

Abbie Grove fifth graders spread kindness and fun
EDUCATION

Stordahl models, drives a school bus, podcasts and more
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Saturday, April 14
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

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Monday, April 28
2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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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 full-page photograph of a wedding couple. The groom is on the left, wearing a dark tuxedo with a light-colored bow tie and a boutonniere. The bride is on the right, wearing a white, long-sleeved, off-the-shoulder wedding gown with a long train and a large bouquet of white and blue flowers. They are standing in front of a wooden altar with a white cloth draped over it. To the left of the couple is a large, elaborate floral arrangement with white and blue flowers. The background is dark, making the couple and the altar stand out.

A wedding TO REMEMBER

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

By Ashley Rullestad

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.

Brody and Tayla Brecht were married at Lutheran Church of Hope – Ankeny. Photo by Shelby Sawyer Photography

FEATURE

High school sweethearts Brody and Tayla Brecht met in the spring of 2018 while they were both students at Ankeny High School. They started dating that summer, and the rest is history. In 2019, Tayla began college at the University of Northern Iowa, and they continued their relationship long distance. That continued when Brody went to the University of Iowa to play football and baseball. Tayla joined him in 2022 when she moved to Iowa City to begin her master's degree at the University of Iowa. Soon after, they both knew marriage was on the horizon.

"In 2023, we took a vacation to Fort Lauderdale," Tayla says. "Brody had planned to propose on this trip. While taking photographs on the beach, he got down on one knee and popped the question."

After the engagement, the couple started planning. They decided not to hire a wedding planner. Instead, Tayla and her mom, Cindy Ayers, handled most of the planning themselves.

One of the first decisions they tackled

was where to hold the wedding ceremony and reception. They quickly determined they wanted to have the ceremony at Lutheran Church of Hope in Ankeny, a place that holds deep meaning for them both.

"Brody and I have attended this church together since we started dating, and because our faith is such an important part of our relationship, we knew we wanted to be married in this special place."

They chose Toast in Ankeny for the reception. Since they were both born and raised in Ankeny, it was important to them to celebrate their big day in the place where they grew up and met. Tayla says Toast is a beautiful and spacious venue and conveniently located for their out-of-town guests. An added bonus of the venue is its elegant bridal suite, which allowed them to get ready there on the morning of the wedding.

For the rehearsal dinner, the couple chose Grimaldi's in The District in Ankeny — one of their date night spots.



Tayla found her wedding dress at Rosalie in The District in Ankeny. Photo by Shelby Sawyer Photography

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Grimaldi's is one of their favorite restaurants, and the private party room made it the perfect location for the rehearsal dinner.

Tayla found her wedding dress at Rosalie in The District in Ankeny, where store owner Chloe Peterson was easy to work with.

"She curated a selection of dresses that matched the style I was looking for and helped me find the perfect one. I wanted a simple and timeless dress, and she made that vision a reality," Tayla says.

Brody, the groomsmen, and their fathers picked their tuxedos from Skeffington's. The store provided the wedding party with the option to rent tuxes and fully customize the entire look. They aimed for a classy aesthetic.

Their florist, Sarah Wilkinson of Pretty Petunia, exceeded the couple's expectations. They envisioned a wedding that was classy, elegant and timeless, with a warm and feminine ambiance.

"To create a cozy atmosphere for our January wedding, we incorporated plenty of candles. Sarah designed a stunning mood board based on our wedding colors — white, champagne and dusty blue. Her incredible talent and attention to detail truly brought our



Brody and Tayla Brecht have their photo taken with the wedding party. Photo by Shelby Sawyer Photography

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FEATURE

vision to life.”

The florist also played a significant role in helping with the setup and final details on the big day, ensuring everything came together beautifully. Additionally, the couple rented some decor from Oh Happy Day Party Rentals in Ankeny. Owner Jenny Wirtz is a family friend of the couple and has a variety of rental decor for any event.

The wedding catering was provided by Bon Appétit, featuring a buffet-style menu that included lasagna, chicken de burgo, green beans, potatoes, salad and breadsticks.

“The food was exceptional and a hit with all our guests,” Tayla says. “People were raving about the green beans for days.”

For dessert, they had a small wedding cake along with a variety of cupcakes from Cakes by Marge. Her cakes are some of the best Tayla and Brody have ever had, and she offers an impressive selection of flavors, ensuring there was something for everyone to enjoy. The couple also offered cookies and bars from Julie’s Kitchen, owned by Julie Watson, that were a hit with their guests.

They used Marquee Events for the wedding

DJ, and DJ Tyson was absolutely wonderful, Tayla says, adding he is detail-oriented when it comes to curating the perfect music setlist for the couples he works with. In addition to the music, he offers a variety of enhancements that elevate the ambiance even further. Thanks to him, their guests were out on the dance floor all night.

To go along with the tunes, Tayla and Brody rented a dance floor from DSM Dance Parties. Their team handled both the setup and teardown, making the process seamless. The addition of the dance floor was the perfect touch to the reception, creating an inviting space for everyone to celebrate.

Their photographer, Shelby Sawyer, was recommended to the Brechts through mutual friends, and they couldn’t have been happier with the choice.

“She was very fun, professional and incredibly talented. From our engagement session to our wedding day, she beautifully captured the love we share. She made the entire photography process feel effortless, allowing us to enjoy every moment while ensuring we had stunning photos to cherish forever. Her photos



The reception décor from Oh Happy Day Party Rentals in Ankeny featured the colors chosen for the wedding and candles for a cozy feeling. Photo by Shelby Sawyer Photography

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FEATURE

are the best.”

Tayla and Brody wanted their wedding to be special and unique and reflect what was important to them as a couple. At the heart of it all was the ceremony itself.

“That was the most meaningful part of the day,” Tayla says. “We wanted it to feel intimate, with our faith at the center of it, and that’s exactly what it was.”

“We spent a lot of time on several DIY projects, so it was surreal to see those come to life on the big day,” she continues. “Our wedding day was even more beautiful than we had imagined. Being surrounded by our family and friends made it the best day of our lives.”

Their other favorite moment was their private last dance after the reception had ended.

“It was one of the few moments we had alone all day, and it was the perfect way to close our wedding day, just the two of us,” Tayla says. ■



The couple hired Sarah Wilkinson of Pretty Petunia as their florist. Photo by Shelby Sawyer Photography



For dessert, the couple had a small wedding cake along with a variety of cupcakes from Cakes by Marge. Photo by Shelby Sawyer Photography

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NEWS BRIEFS

SHADE TREE Auto launches Jump Start Program to provide transportation for veterans in need

Shade Tree Auto announced the launch of its Jump Start Program, a nonprofit initiative dedicated to providing safe and reliable vehicles to veterans facing transportation challenges. Through this program, Shade Tree Auto aims to give back to those who have served by helping them regain independence and stability through access to dependable transportation. The program's first vehicle giveaway was March 11 at Shade Tree Auto's Grimes location.

The Jump Start Program will identify and donate vehicles to veterans in need, ensuring they have the means to commute to work, attend medical appointments, and take care of daily responsibilities. Each donated vehicle will undergo a thorough inspection and necessary repairs to ensure safety and reliability.

"Our veterans have sacrificed so much for us, and we want to do our part in giving back," says Clint Dudley, owner of Shade Tree Auto. "Reliable transportation is a necessity, not a luxury, and through the Jump Start Program, we hope to remove barriers that prevent veterans from moving forward in their lives."

Shade Tree Auto is seeking community support through vehicle donations, sponsorships, and partnerships with local businesses and organizations. The program welcomes contributions of used vehicles, as well as financial donations to help with repairs and maintenance costs.

For more information about the Jump Start Program, or to learn how you can support the initiative, visit www.shadetreearauto.biz/jump-start or contact Shade Tree Auto at 515-986-5241 or contactus@shadetreearauto.biz. ■

EAT THE FROG Fitness under new ownership

Eat the Frog Fitness, a training program based on science and backed with the latest technology to give members the most results-driven and personal experience possible, was recently purchased by a group of its members, including Dan and Denise Varnum, Todd and Jonnell Miller, Adam and Jill Stevens, Eric Peterson, Mark and Jess Rinehart, Anne and Steve Deaton, Laura Myers and Dan DiMeo, Sara and Chris Jorgensen, Loretta Healy and Lance and Michelle Arrasmith. These now member-owners invested in the gym because they were passionate about the workouts, gym access and community aspects.

Eat the Frog Fitness offers daily exercise routines that are ever-changing to reach every muscle group. Classes include strength, cardio and agility. Both coach-led and virtual sessions are provided. This includes access to the studio 24/7, 365 days a year to allow members to do the same exercise routines with a live fitness instructor or avatar coach on the screen, guiding the workouts.

"ETF is a wonderful and supportive community of like-minded people all striving to become stronger and healthier and accepting every individual where they are in their health journey," says Daniel Varnum, an owner of ETF, Ankeny. "When we found out the studio was closing due to the previous owner retiring, several members banded together and quickly came to the solution we needed to keep this place going." ■

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LIFE is good at 70

Stordahl models, drives a school bus, podcasts and much more.

Before retiring, James Stordahl held 68 different jobs. Since leaving the postal service in 2008, he's added 12 more to the list.

One of his more surprising roles? Modeling — an opportunity that arrived with age.

"It appears I have grown into a small niche for older guys on camera," Stordahl says. "As a 70-plus-year-old, you get respect for your age. Kind of like being nice to your grandpa. There are very few that have a full head of natural hair, real facial hair, and have experience on set and in front of a camera."

He also enjoys his role as a bus driver in Ankeny, a well-paying part-time job he took up in 2011.

"I liked it right away and got along with all the kids due to my size, loud voice when needed, and being well trained by my four daughters and grandchildren," Stordahl says.

His side gigs don't stop there. Stordahl is also an author — what began as journaling for therapy led to self-publishing eight books on Amazon — a wedding officiant, a wedding photographer, an Uber driver and more.

Last year, Stordahl, who has lived with bipolar II disorder his entire life, was a guest speaker at the annual convention of the Minnesota Association of Farm Mutual Insurance Companies. Addressing a crowd of 300 at the luncheon, he spoke about living with mental illness. That summer, he was also the keynote speaker for a three-hour back-to-school rally in Minnesota.

As an actor, Stordahl is somewhat of a local

celebrity.

"Some people recognize me from two Wild Rose Casino commercials, others have noticed Stew Hanson's auto and the Iowa Lottery," Stordahl says. "Once I went to Rock Island, Illinois, for two days for the opening of the Heart Clinic. All day, I entered in an ambulance, with make-up on my chest, and left after the day of instant recovery."

His acting journey began 20 years ago when one of his daughters encouraged him to audition for a local Ankeny Community Theatre production. He was selected to play Major Metcalf in the Agatha Christie murder mystery, "The Mousetrap."

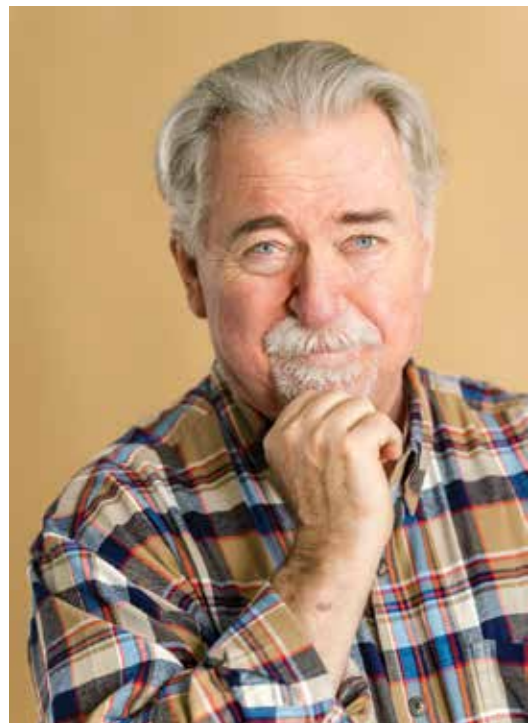
"I had a great time, and I was off and running," Stordahl says.

His creative pursuits extend to podcasting. He produces shows called "Bus Biz" and "Bipolar Dad," which have led to voiceover auditions.

Being a wedding officiant for the past three years has been a great comfort to Stordahl as well — especially after 20 years as a commercial wedding photographer. His latest wedding was inside the Clarinda Correctional Facility.

Despite his packed schedule, Stordahl enjoys having a home base in Ankeny. He and his wife of 50 years moved to town from Minnesota in 1987 when he received a promotion with the postal service. At the time, the town had a population of around 35,000.

"I had a five-year game plan, and now we have been in the same house for 36 years,"



James Stordahl has had a myriad of jobs and continues to keep busy.

Stordahl says. "We are the senior citizens of the neighborhood."

And even with his many commitments, Stordahl wouldn't have it any other way.

"Since I turned 65, the calendar races by," he says. "The weeks go by really fast. The calendar fills up with many things." ■

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Making vet visits better for pets and their people

When I first began at the clinic in 2009, my cat, Lionel, was a veterinarian's nightmare. At home, he was sociable and friendly. But when his carrier crossed the clinic's threshold, his entire body stiffened. He growled, hissed and lashed out, making even getting him out of his carrier nearly impossible. The stress was overwhelming — for both of us. Each visit ended in sedation and exhaustion, reinforcing his fear and making me dread every appointment (and I was the vet).



A few years later, we learned about a revolutionary approach called “fear free” veterinary care, designed to reduce stress and anxiety in pets. At first, I was skeptical. Could soft music, different wall colors or pheromones really make a difference? Would slowing down to work at a pet's pace throw off our schedule? It sounded like wishful thinking. But then, we tried it.

We started with small changes — using non-slip mats, offering treats, and adjusting our handling techniques. Gone were the days of scruffing cats or pinning dogs to the floor. Over time, we saw a shift. Our patients became more willing to trust us, and their visits became smoother. But the real turning point for me was Lionel.

With a feline-only exam room, calming pheromones, and anti-anxiety medication, Lionel transformed. For the first time in 12 years, he didn't need sedation. I was able to take him out of his carrier without a struggle AND do a full exam. That moment changed everything. Lionel had never been difficult — he had been terrified. And now, he didn't have to be. I cried with relief.

And Lionel wasn't alone. Imagine being leashed or caged, taken to a building full of unfamiliar smells, surrounded by other scared animals, and handled by giant beings who don't speak your language — all while being poked and prodded. That's what vet visits feel like for many pets. But they don't have to. “Fear free” is not just a philosophy — it's a way of life that means better care.

Stress and anxiety don't just make vet visits difficult — they impact overall health. When pets feel safe, exams are more effective, treatments are easier, and long-term outcomes improve.

If vet visits have been stressful for your furry family member, consider giving “fear free” care a try. It might just turn what was once a dreaded trip into a positive, even enjoyable, experience for you and your pet. ■

Information provided by Dr. Amanda Gigler, Ankeny Animal & Avian Clinic, 742 S. Ankeny Blvd., Ankeny, 515-964-7387, amandagigler@ankenyanimal.com.

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LIBRARY

By Nicole Mueller,

YOUR 'FRIENDS' invite you to support the library

The Friends of the Ankeny Library are proud to be celebrating 20 years of supporting our library's "extra but essential" services in 2025.

We are the primary funders of the Ankeny Summer Library Program, which will be here before you know it. Your programming librarians are deep into the planning for a summer full of fun for all ages. Please save the date for the 2025 Summer Library Program Kick-Off Event on Thursday, May 29, beginning at 6:30 p.m. This event promises to offer something for everyone. Stay tuned for all the details.

The Summer Library Program encourages reading and community engagement for all ages throughout the summer. If you are interested in helping the Friends of the Ankeny Library support the 2025 Summer Library Program, the library is currently seeking donations in the following areas:

- Gift certificates from local businesses for free goods or services to be included in a swag bag for all registered participants. This is a great way to introduce customers to your business and reach a large number of Ankeny residents.
- Cash donation toward the purchase of new books or donations of gently used books to distribute to all participants during our midpoint book giveaway, as well as during the Bingo for Books programs.

Last summer, our library had more than 5,000 participants in the Summer Library Program, and, with your support, we know that the program will continue to grow this coming summer. If you are interested in contributing in any of the above ways, please reach out to Molly Guerra, public services manager, at mguerra@ankenyiowa.gov or at 515-965-6457.

As another fun part of our 20th birthday celebration, the Friends have partnered with Raygun to create an online T-shirt store. There are four T-shirt designs which have been specially created for the Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library, and proceeds go to the Friends of the Ankeny Library. Stay tuned to our social media for details on how you can order your shirt.

Interested in what else is happening at the library? If you haven't already, sign up to receive the library's monthly eNewsletter by visiting <https://bit.ly/ankenylibrarynewsletter>.

For more information about the Friends, visit <http://ankenylibraryfriends.org>. ■

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Here are a few suggestions:

- Maintain good records. Keep records of all your financial, investment and retirement accounts — and let a family member know where these records are kept.

- Keep a manageable number of financial accounts. The fewer bank and brokerage accounts you have, the easier it will be to keep track of everything. You might even want to consolidate accounts when possible.

- Report your change of address. Whenever you move, contact your financial services providers and any former employers with whom you may have retirement accounts.

- Report name changes. If you change your name, notify new and old 401(k) plan administrators, banks, brokerages and any other institution connected to your money.

- Manage retirement accounts when you change jobs. If you leave your job, you might be able to leave your 401(k) behind with your old employer. But, if you do, keep track of it. On the other hand, you could roll your old plan into your new employer's plan or into an IRA.

- Inform your financial professional about all your accounts. If you work with a financial professional, they can help you track your accounts, so inform them of all past and present IRAs and 401(k)s or similar employer-sponsored plans.

But can you do anything if you suspect you've already left some money behind?

If you think you've lost tabs on an IRA, you can check old tax returns and bank statements to help you track your contributions and find the name of the financial provider that held your account. If it's a 401(k), you can contact your old employer's plan administrator.

You can get some help from other sources, too. The Department of Labor recently launched a retirement savings lost-and-found database (lostandfound.dol.gov) that can help you find pension or 401(k) plans connected to your Social Security number. For a stray IRA, you can check unclaimed.org, the website of the National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators.

And, for various other sources of money — including uncashed checks from corporations and financial institutions, inactive brokerage accounts and unclaimed safe deposit boxes — you can check MissingMoney.com, the unclaimed property website of the National Association of State Treasurers. These sites offer no guarantees of finding your lost or missing accounts or other sources of money, so you still may have to do your own sleuthing. But, as the old saying goes, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" — which, in this case, means you'll help yourself greatly by tracking your accounts from beginning to end. ■

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones. Member SIPC. Information provided by Justin Bjerke, Financial Advisor, 2005 S. Ankeny Blvd., Suite 500, Ankeny, 515-965-6901

Have questions about withdrawing funds, converting your account or generating income?

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GIVE UP or take on Lenten practices

Philippians 4:8 – “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of respect, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if something is excellent or praiseworthy, think about these things.”



If you participate in a faith community, you have probably heard that we are preparing for Easter in a season called “Lent.” Many Christian traditions celebrate this season by taking on new disciplines, abstaining from harmful practices, or spending more time intentionally thinking about God. I can remember from my childhood that a certain restaurant with “golden arches” offered sales on fish sandwiches during Lent. My dad always told me it was because our Catholic friends avoided certain types of meat in preparation for Easter. Nine-year-old me was a huge fan of the fish sandwich, so I remember being grateful and wondering if I should have been Catholic, too.

This year, I was asked by a number of church members about whether they should “give up” something for Lent. The idea is that, if we “sacrifice” or give something up, it can help us remember the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. Others asked if they should “take on” something new for Lent. Would pledging to read the Bible every day be a good idea? Should I start a new prayer practice? Would those things demonstrate my appreciation for the love of God made known in Jesus as we approach Easter?

(Full disclosure — I ignored questions about giving up caffeine... or fish sandwiches.)

While I didn’t answer everyone with the same set of words, all of my answers could have been simplified to this: “Yes. Yes, that sounds like a good idea.”

Take a moment and reread the scripture I offered at the beginning of this article. What should I be doing or thinking about during Lent? Ideally, it would be the same thing you are thinking about all of the time. The writer of this scripture says, if something is true, respectful, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent or worthy of praise, go ahead and spend your time thinking about that. While this scripture wasn’t written as a prescription explicitly for Lent, it sure wouldn’t be a bad idea to use it as if it were.

So, should you give something up for Lent? Well, if “something” you are doing isn’t good, pure, lovely or commendable, yes, you should give that up. Should you start something new for Lent? Well, if what you are doing could be more pure, excellent, true or Holy, yes, you should think about starting something new.

Lent feels a little like a “mini-new year” for our faith. Try taking the next few weeks before Easter to focus on things that align with the sacrificial love of Jesus — a love that is just, pure, lovely and true. “Give up” or “take on” — either way, let it be done in gratitude for the love God offers to us all. ■

Information provided by John Wagner, campus pastor, Christian Life Center, Ankeny First United Methodist Church, john.wagner@ankenyfirst.org.

CARS served as inspiration, education and hobbies

Lamb has owned at least 31 vehicles.



Joe Lamb and his wife enjoyed a cross-country trip on Route 66 in their 1954 Chevy convertible.



Joe Lamb restored a 1930 Model A Ford four-door sedan that he found in a pasture.

“I must have been born with an interest in cars. Or perhaps, more realistically, I attained this interest as a teenager,” Joe Lamb says. “I purchased my first car a month before I got my drivers license at age 16.”

Since then, Lamb has owned at least 31 cars, including two Model A Fords, two 1954 Chevrolet Bel Air convertibles and six pickup trucks.

“Driving around the city or touring the country in a very special car is truly a delight,” he says.

His favorite vehicles have been his 1930 Model A Ford sedan, 1954 Chevrolet Bel Air convertible and 2006 Ford Mustang. He bought his first Model A, a 1931 coupe with a rumble seat, while living in Kansas City.

“I brought home a truck load of parts and restored the car from the frame up, finishing it after moving back to Iowa,” Lamb says. “We had fun driving it in parades and taking part in activities with the Central Iowa Model A Ford Club, of which I later became president several times.”

A few years later, however, Lamb and his wife decided their family of five needed a larger car.

“We certainly did not want three little boys riding in the rumble seat,” he says. “I found a 1930 Model A Ford four-door sedan in a pasture in North Dakota. Actually, I found part of a car.”

Again, Lamb brought home a truck load of parts, with a lot of pieces missing. He spent several years collecting new parts and restoring the car from the frame up, back to its original condition.

“I did everything myself except painting, upholstery, and I had to buy and install a new engine,” he says. “I was heavily involved with the Model A Ford Club in Des Moines and drove my car throughout the Midwest, even around the Indianapolis Speedway and Knoxville race track.”

For 20 years, Lamb spearheaded the Great Annual Model A Rides Around Iowa (GAMARAI).

“I owned my beautiful car for 40 wonderful years and sold it to a man in Texas. The car moved to a warmer climate,” he says. “Watching him drive away with it brought tears to my eyes. I later received a letter from him and was happy to hear that he was enjoying the Ford as much as I had.”

Meanwhile, Lamb had bought his second 1954 Chevy — “a nice Chevrolet convertible,” he says.

“I had it painted red and upgraded the interior. The highlight of this car proved to be the best trip I ever took,” he adds. “We ‘got our kicks on Route 66.’ We started our journey on a Sunday morning in late April at Lou Mitchell’s 1930s Route 66 cafe in downtown Chicago near Lake Michigan.

We crossed the Mississippi River to St. Louis, stopped at the Arch and went on to Springfield, Missouri, and into Oklahoma. There were many attractions along the way — cafes, motels, railroad stations, gas stations, all from the era of the 1930s. After the first four hours of driving, we had covered barely 100 miles. We were in no hurry and had no schedule to keep.”

The trip took the Lambs through Tulsa, Oklahoma City and Shamrock, Texas. They hit the midpoint at Adrian, Texas. They traveled through New Mexico, crossed the Continental Divide, went past the Grand Canyon and on to Santa Monica, California, and the Pacific Ocean.

“We saw many beautiful sites, museums, antique car lots and some long-time friends and cousins,” Lamb says. “We had traveled around 3,000 miles in three weeks and then took a quicker way home for a total of 5,200 miles in a 50-year-old car and had no real problems. Wow!”

Lamb’s last special car was a 2005 Ford Mustang.

“I only had it a few years, but I miss my yellow Mustang GT. But, wait, in November 2024, I bought another Mustang, a very low mileage 2006 model.

“I will never sell it,” he says. “I certainly have good memories with all of my special cars.” ■

BENEFITS of an assisted living community

Assisted living communities offer numerous benefits that enhance the quality of life for seniors who need some assistance while maintaining independence. One of the primary advantages is personalized care, where trained staff help residents with daily activities such as bathing, dressing, medication management and mobility, ensuring they receive the support they need while preserving their autonomy. Safety and security are also major benefits, as these communities provide 24/7 staff availability, emergency call systems and secure environments to prevent falls, medical emergencies and other risks.

Social engagement is another key aspect, helping seniors avoid loneliness and isolation through organized group activities, fitness programs, arts and crafts and social events that encourage meaningful connections. Additionally, nutritious meals tailored to dietary needs are provided, eliminating the stress of cooking while ensuring residents receive well-balanced, healthy food in a restaurant-style setting.

Assisted living also removes the burden of household chores, as housekeeping and maintenance services take care of cleaning, laundry



and home upkeep, allowing residents to focus on enjoyment and relaxation. Access to healthcare services is another important advantage, as many facilities offer on-site medical care, routine check-ups, therapy options, and medication management, ensuring residents receive prompt attention without frequent trips to the doctor.

These services provide peace of mind not only for the seniors but also for their families, who can rest assured knowing their loved ones are in a safe, supportive environment. Family members can focus on spending quality time with their loved ones rather than worrying about their well-being or day-to-day needs. Assisted living communities create an ideal balance between independence and assistance, allowing seniors to live comfortably while receiving the necessary care and support. By fostering an engaging and secure environment, these communities help residents thrive in their golden years, making life more enjoyable and fulfilling.

For those considering assisted living, exploring different options can open the door to a worry-free and enriching lifestyle that prioritizes health, happiness and social connection. ■

Information provided by Dylan Dyer, Executive Director, CopperWood at Prairie Trail Senior Living, 2855 S.W. Vintage Parkway, Ankeny, 515-415-4401, copperwoodseniorliving.com.

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JOINT accounts: What you should know

While the ease of shared access makes a joint account an appealing option, consider whether it aligns with your financial situation first. To help, we've outlined what a joint account is, its benefits and considerations to keep in mind.



Mindy Selix



Yvonne Silvers

What is a joint account?

A joint account is a bank account shared by two or more individuals. This can include checking and savings accounts, as well as credit cards and mortgage loans. While holders are typically couples, business partners or family members, joint accounts can be held by anyone.

All parties involved on the joint account have equal ownership and access to make deposits and withdrawals.

What are the benefits of joint accounts?

Convenience is the major benefit of having a joint account with an individual you have shared expenses with or someone whose financial affairs you manage. Two common scenarios we see:

- Couples who live together. Couples have many shared expenses, such as rent or a mortgage, home or renter's insurance, groceries and utilities. Setting up a joint account can help seamlessly pay for these expenses together.
- Children managing their aging parents' finances. Children added to parents' accounts can write checks, as well as withdraw and deposit funds, without needing their parents' permission. This is helpful when parents are unable to manage their finances, ensuring important payments and deposits are handled. Additionally, when the parent passes, the child continues to have access to the funds. An alternative is to add children only as authorized signers, which gives them the authority to make withdrawals and payments until the parent has passed.

What to consider before opening a joint account

Before you open a joint account, know funds in the account are equally held by all holders. The funds are also subject to garnishment — the legal process of collecting money to pay off debt, loss in a lawsuit, a dissolution of a marriage, and other financial dues.

Another aspect to consider is, generally, you can't remove an individual from a joint account unless they are deceased. If you wish to have an individual account but others on your joint account are still alive, you typically must close the joint account, open a new individual account, and transfer the funds. A joint account may simplify the process of managing shared expenses with a loved one, but be mindful of all aspects before opening one. ■

Information provided by Mindy Selix, 515-222-2017, mselix@bankerstrust.com, NMLS ID#: 571223 and Yvonne Silvers, 515-222-2005, ysilvers@bankerstrust.com, NMLS ID#: 571224, 1925 N. Ankeny Blvd. Ankeny.

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KIDS who care

Abbie Grove fifth graders spread kindness and fun.



Mr. Shaver's fifth grade class with their party kits.

Ankeny elementary students at Abbie Grove celebrate seasonal class parties each year in the fall, winter and early spring. This year, Abbie Grove students and staff decided to look at ways to have parties with a purpose.

"Abbie Grove's values are 'Be Kind, Show Up and Work Hard,' and fifth grade took the initiative to move from traditional classroom parties and celebrations and find a way to share our values with the community," school nurse Mandy Snyder says. "Collaboratively, the teachers and students are developing ways to implement these values into parties and celebrations."

School leaders and students decided that, during the fifth graders' winter party, they would create birthday kits for the community. The fifth-grade parents then took the lead of planning the materials that would be needed and where to donate the kits. Parents then donated all the materials to make 40 birthday cake kits.

The birthday cake kits are created for families that may need access to materials to celebrate a birthday. Knowing that birthday cake kits aren't always a necessity, they felt it would be a way to spread kindness and cheer. They donated the kits to the Lutheran Church of Hope Cupboard.

"The church communicated how impactful these kits were when the pantry was running low after the Thanksgiving holiday," Snyder says. "The fifth-grade students were impacted by building awareness of the needs in our own community and how they can play an essential part in helping meet that need."

Abbie Grove Elementary opened in August of 2024, and its staff and students come from a variety of elementary schools throughout Ankeny and beyond.

"We challenge each other to look at new ways of doing things and how we can have a positive impact on our school and our community," Snyder says. Fifth grade has been the initial grade level to try this new community initiative, and we will continue to focus on service opportunities within the building and the community with the intent of expanding to all grade levels in the future." ■



Stay Safe From Shingles

1 in 3 people will get shingles. Prevention is possible.

Shingles can cause a painful skin rash and lead to serious health problems, such as long-term nerve pain and vision loss. Shingles stays dormant in your nervous system after you recover from chickenpox. Your risk of shingles increases with age.

The shingles vaccine is the best way to protect against the virus and its complications.

The shingles vaccine is recommended for:

- Adults 19 and older with weakened immune systems.
- Adults 50 and older.



Ask your healthcare provider about the shingles vaccine.

Source: cdc.gov 2/25

EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Check for cancellations

Upcoming in Ankeny Living magazine:

Pampered Pets: Do you enjoy pampering your pet(s)? We are looking to interview people whose cats, dogs and other animals live a life of luxury. If you are one of those spoiling their critters rotten and proud of it, reach out to be included in our May issue. We want to hear your story! Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.

Neighbor to Neighbor Free Meal

March 30, doors open at 4 p.m., serving at 5 p.m.
St. Anne's Episcopal Church,
2110 W. First St., Ankeny

This month, the meal will feature chicken and rice. No one is required or expected to be a member of St. Anne's. The meals are free and are followed by seven hands of free bingo. There are small prizes for six hands and a \$15 gift card for the last hand. Freewill donations are accepted but not required or expected.

AMOS Community Forum

March 30, 2-3:30 p.m.
Christian Life Center (Ankeny First United Methodist), 710 N.E. 36th St., Ankeny

The Ankeny cluster of AMOS, a community organizing group in central Iowa, has determined, through research and interviews it has conducted over the past year, that there are resource and behavior challenges facing our schools. AMOS invites community members to share their experiences at a community forum. What do you or your children experience in the Ankeny Schools? How could we work together to make the ACSD an even better place to learn and work?

Ankeny parents, students, teachers, grandparents, and others who care about Ankeny schools are invited. Information will be presented about Ankeny Schools, information about the cell phone policy effects will be presented from Dr. Pruitt, and small group conversations will be held for you to share your experiences. Childcare will be provided for children up to age 12 who are toilet trained.



Ankeny Lions Club Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, April 5, 7-11 a.m.
Ankeny First United Methodist Church, 206 S.W. Walnut St., Ankeny

A freewill donation will be accepted at the Ankeny Lions Club Pancake Breakfast. Come one come all to support the Lions and their community programs.

Broasted Chicken Dinner fundraiser

Sunday, April 27, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Ankeny Legion Post 42, 521 S.W. Third St., Ankeny

The public is invited to join the Ankeny Albaugh-McGovern Legion Post 42 for a delicious broasted chicken dinner. The Ankeny Legion Auxiliary will also be having a bake sale. The fundraiser supports the youth and veteran programs sponsored by the Legion Post. Dine in and carry out available. The meal is catered by Staley's Food Service. Cost is \$15 for adults, \$7 for children 4-12, free for children 3 and younger. Cash or checks only; no credit cards.



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Check for cancellations

Ankeny Art Center Classes and Workshops

Various dates

The Ankeny Art Center,
1520 S.W. Ordinance Road

Registration is open for summer classes and workshops at the Ankeny Art Center. Summer camps run June 10-13, June 17-20, July 8-11 and July 15-18. Each week will have different projects so campers can sign up for multiple sessions. For more information and to register, visit www.ankenycartcenter.org.

Ankeny Art Center Student Exhibit - Ankeny Schools

March 25 - April 24

Reception for South Feeder schools,
March 27, 5-7 p.m.

Reception for North Feeder schools,
April 3, 5-7 p.m.

The Ankeny Art Center,
1520 S.W. Ordinance Road

Artwork of Ankeny School District students will be on display and receptions held for the artists. The public is invited to attend to support the students.



Champagne and Dreams

April 3, 6-9:30 p.m.

Toast, 1345 S.W. Park Square
Drive, Ankeny

This event was created to raise money to grant a wish for one (and more in the future) child with a physical, mental or financial need. Children are nominated through an online application process, and the Wiedeman Family Foundation Board of Directors selects the child and determines the wish to grant. Champagne and Dreams draws almost 500 community members yearly who are willing to open their hearts to make a difference in a child's life. The first event was held in 2022, and organizers hope to grow the event every year. More information and tickets available at www.wiedemanfamilyfoundation.org.



Family art activity

Saturday, March 22, 12:30-4 p.m.

The Ankeny Art Center, 1520 S.W. Ordinance Road

The public is invited to a family-friendly art activity perfect for all ages 5 and older. Paint your own ceramic bowl for just \$15 per bowl (\$12 for members). Registration is required. Plan your time accordingly, as the event closes at 4 p.m. Most participants spend about an hour painting their bowl. Find information and registration link at www.ankenycartcenter.org.



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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.



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.

Elks Pancake Breakfast Buffet, Bake Sale and the Easter Bunny

Sunday, April 13, 8 a.m. to noon
West Des Moines Elks Lodge,
2060 N.W. 94th St., Clive

Yes, the Easter Bunny will be at the breakfast to greet the children and have treats to share. The breakfast buffet includes biscuits and gravy, French toast, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage patties, cheesy potatoes, and, of course, all you can eat pancakes (including blueberry and chocolate chip pancakes), orange juice, milk and coffee. Enjoy a bloody Mary or mimosa for \$3.50.

Cost is \$11 for adults and \$5 for children

10 and younger. Proceeds support the Elks Hoop Shoot Program, other youth activities and veteran support activities.



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“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.

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

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Check for cancellations

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.



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.



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.

- 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. ■

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.

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HOME HEALTH

By Aaron Wheeler

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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As part of our growing legacy of services to area older adults, we're proud to now offer palliative care for your family's journey. Palliative care is available to those in any stage of a serious or chronic illness and is a complement to other care they may be receiving. It provides symptom relief, comfort, and support to enhance overall well-being and quality of life.

And where family members are tasked with managing multiple doctors and treatments, the palliative care director can assume that role, coordinating with the care team to ensure fully integrated, efficient service.



Find out more.

To learn about palliative care from WesleyLife at Home, call (515) 978-2777.



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A LOADED casserole that is 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.



PITFALLS of putting child on title to house

The best of intentions can lead to the worst of results. With some frequency, a client will want to place their child's name on title to their house. The goal is to avoid probate and create a smooth transition in ownership. However, it is not advisable for a number of reasons.



a gift tax return.

Third, there's a capital gains tax problem. When a person inherits assets, he or she also inherits the decedent's date-of-death value as the basis. This is commonly called the "stepped-up" basis and is designed to prevent people who inherit property from paying capital gains tax. But, with a gift, the basis is the original purchase price. This means there can be a very large difference between the acquisition price and the sales price, resulting in a large capital gains tax bill.

Fourth, there are liability issues. The judgments and liens of all titleholders attach to real estate they own. If your house is your homestead, there is a general exemption from liability. But if you add a non-occupant to title (your children), all of their liabilities attach and can be enforced against title to your home.

Finally, there are sometimes practical problems with multiple titleholders. If you

want to sell your home, all titleholders and their spouses must agree to and participate in the conveyance. Even if all titleholders agree, there may still be logistical problems in circulating the documents for everyone to sign. If titleholders squabble or don't get along with each other, the issues can usually only be resolved after lengthy and expensive litigation.

Don't create problems by trying to simplify the transfer of a house. It is much better practice to prepare a will directing the division of your assets. You can also create a trust to hold and manage your property. Inheriting real estate eliminates the gift tax, capital gains tax and personal liability issues. Consult with an attorney who specializes in estate planning to find the right solution for you. ■

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

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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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WELLNESS By Teresa Sieck

FACIAL chemical peels

Facial chemical peels offer several benefits for the skin. Chemical peels improve skin texture and tone. Chemical peels help to smooth rough skin and even-out skin tone by removing or exfoliating dead skin cells and stimulating collagen production. Other notable benefits include reduction in acne and acne scarring, reduction in pigmentation and age spots, minimizing pore size and reduction in wrinkles and fine lines.

What to expect at your appointment

1. Consultation with a licensed medical professional or aesthetician to discuss your skin concerns and goals.

2. The professional will thoroughly cleanse your skin to remove dirt, oils and makeup, ensuring the peel solution can work effectively.

3. Application of the chemical peel solution: The chosen chemical peel solution is then applied to the skin. This solution is typically left on for a few minutes, depending on the type and strength of the peel. The solution may cause a mild tingling or stinging sensation. Some peels require neutralization following the peel solution.

The procedure is relatively quick, typically taking around 30 minutes to an hour, depending on the type of peel.

It's essential to consult with a professional to determine the best option for your skin. ■



Information provided by Teresa Sieck MPAS, PA-C, PhD, Luxe Medical Spa and Aesthetics, 88 Paine Circle S.E., Suite 7, Bondurant, 515-630-8637, www.luxemedicalspa.net.

FACET joint syndromes

You awaken with a “catch” in your neck. It hurts to move your neck in any direction, and you can not alleviate the discomfort. You don’t recall doing anything earlier that night or in the previous days that would cause such discomfort. What could possibly be wrong? You are likely suffering from a facet joint syndrome.

To understand the cause of a facet joint syndrome, we first must understand the anatomy involved. The neck consists of seven movable vertebrae, each with a disc-shaped shock absorber between them. Each vertebra is linked to the vertebra above and below with bony structures called facet joints. The facet joints are like drawer guides that keep the vertebrae in alignment, functioning together as a tracking mechanism. The facet joints keep the vertebrae moving smoothly without dislocation.

Typically, there is no significant trauma that causes facet-joint irritation. More often than not, it is simply caused by sleeping in a compromised position such as lying on your side on a couch with your head propped up against the armrest, sleeping while seated upright on a plane, or sleeping with an unfamiliar pillow.

A facet joint syndrome evolves in stages. It begins with a facet joint being immobile, which causes swelling. If caught early enough, the condition is easily treated with spinal manipulation. If the facet joint is left untreated and stays immobile and swollen, the neck muscles will reflexively respond by contracting on the opposite side, thereby pulling your head away from the swollen facet joint. This is sometimes referred to as torticollis. Once the muscles are involved and spasms are evident, a vicious cycle begins. Normal facet-joint motion needs to be restored in order for the joint to heal. However, muscle spasms are preventing the natural movement. This leads to further facet-joint irritation, with further muscle contractions and spasms to follow. This condition self-perpetuates and can become chronic, leading to facet-joint arthritis if left untreated.

As previously mentioned, the cause of the condition is the immobile and swollen facet joint that causes the muscle to contract. The contracted muscle is not the cause of the condition. If the immobile facet joint regains natural movement through specific spinal manipulation, the muscle contraction will typically resolve without further intervention. Treatment needs to be directed at the cause, not at the secondary symptoms. Many times, patients have previously received care that inadequately addressed the true mechanical component of the problem. A chemical problem needs a chemical solution, and a mechanical problem needs a mechanical solution. Chiropractic spinal manipulation provides a very safe and effective mechanical solution for facet joint syndromes.

If you or someone you know may be suffering from a facet joint syndrome, please consider chiropractic. They may be able to help. ■

Information provided by Christopher M. Renze, D.C., D.I.B.C.N., of Renze Chiropractic Clinic, P.C. For more information, visit www.renzechiro.com or call the office at 965-3844.



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Have you dreamt about making a difference in someone's life?



There is a relatively easy way you can make a significant impact on someone's life. Serve as a mentor. The Cambridge dictionary defines a mentor as someone who gives a younger or less experienced person help or advice over a period of time. Most of the time, we think of serving as a mentor on a formal basis and in the workplace. You can serve as a mentor not only in your career but also in someone's personal life.

I believe mentors possess the following qualities:

Momentum – Mentors share the energy and drive that builds as a person keeps moving forward, even when things get tough. It's all about maintaining that positive forward motion.

Enthusiasm and empathy – Without using words, mentees know and feel their mentors are truly honored and glad to be there for them. Displaying a sense of "I understand how you feel" can help them know their feelings are completely normal and their mentors have their back.

Nurturing presence – Mentors emphasize the importance of personal and professional growth as well as self-care. If you take care of yourself, you'll be around to take care of others and business. It's about supporting progress and improvement, not perfection.

Time and talent – One of the best ways you can let someone know you care is to make time to share your work/life experiences with them.

Opportunity – As a mentor, share it's about knowing when to say yes and no. Learn from every experience no matter what the outcome.

Resilience – Mentors acknowledge the importance of facing whatever life throws at you with grace and humility. Embrace setbacks as opportunities to bounce back stronger, showing true strength in adversity. Resilience is about having the courage to keep moving forward, no matter what the challenges.

Integrity – Mentors share insights, and that growth comes from learning, seeking knowledge, and staying true to your values. It's OK not to have all the answers or be an expert in everything. What matters is doing things right and doing the right thing.

Navigate – Mentors partner with people through challenges, obstacles and uncertain situations. They remind them they have the ability to direct their own path and find their way forward, no matter the challenges faced.

Give with gratitude – Mentors possess a positive attitude that encourages their mentee, fostering optimism and a mindset of abundance that can drive further success.

Join us at Mentoring for Women on April 1 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., hosted by the Ankeny Chamber of Commerce, where our mentors and I will share insight on a plethora of topics including Transformation, Restoration, Determination, Leadership, Empowerment, Self-Worth, Passion, Curiosity and Adaptation. ■

Ann is the owner of The Wright Coaching and Training Solutions and a member of the Ankeny Chamber. She is a leadership and team coach, author of "Leading the Team Within," trainer, and keynote speaker. She can be reached at ann@annwrightsolutions.com or www.annwrightsolutions.com



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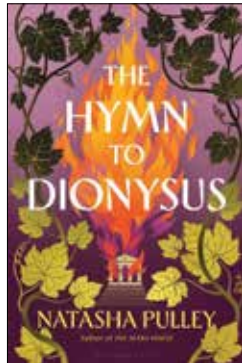
‘The Hymn to Dionysus’

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 Thebean 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*



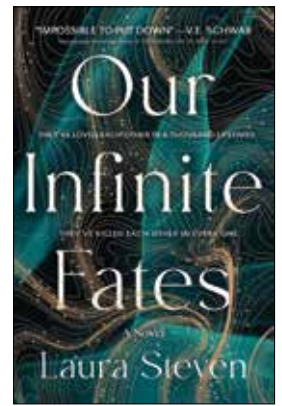
By Natasha Pulley
03/18/25
416 pages
\$32
Bloomsbury
Publishing

‘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*



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Beth Ades



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CHAMBER Dinner

The Ankeny Chamber Annual Dinner was presented by Murphy Enterprises on Feb. 20 at the FFA Enrichment Center.



Kim Bauer and Chris Renze



Olivia Latusek and Rylee Lamb



Riley Close, Natalie Shanks, Sam and Andrew Cochran



Andy Schnurr, Nick Wagner, Jeanne Gruis and Grace Watson



Jeff Perry and Don Zuck



Gabriel and Shevaughn Moore



Joey Beech and Rob Denson



Joy Burk, Ali Kauffman, Sarah Barthole and Stephanie Gott



Sydney and Isaiah Milton and Connor Buchahan

OUT & ABOUT



Cathy Blair and Alessandra Leo at the Ankeny Art Center Silent Auction at Uptown Garage Brewing on Feb. 7.



Claire Hays and Katie Anderson at the Ankeny Art Center Silent Auction at Uptown Garage Brewing on Feb. 7.



Hilary Elizabeth and Mandi Borst at the Ankeny Art Center Silent Auction at Uptown Garage Brewing on Feb. 7.



Lorie and Allen Hancock at the Ankeny Art Center Silent Auction at Uptown Garage Brewing on Feb. 7.



Trent and Laura Murphy at the Ankeny Art Center Silent Auction at Uptown Garage Brewing on Feb. 7.



Matt Hall and Ashley Middle at the Ankeny Art Center Silent Auction at Uptown Garage Brewing on Feb. 7.



Dale and Jan Street at the Business After Hours, sponsored by Barb Wiedenman & Associates, at Ankeny Golf & Country Club on Feb. 13.



Ann Wright and Tony Mills at the Business After Hours, sponsored by Barb Wiedenman & Associates, at Ankeny Golf & Country Club on Feb. 13.



Jim and Kathryn Bisbey and Linda Lundquist at the Business After Hours, sponsored by Barb Wiedenman & Associates, at Ankeny Golf & Country Club on Feb. 13.



Jenn Oliver and Jen Walter at the Business After Hours, sponsored by Barb Wiedenman & Associates, at Ankeny Golf & Country Club on Feb. 13.



Molly and Caleb Carratt at the Business After Hours, sponsored by Barb Wiedenman & Associates, at Ankeny Golf & Country Club on Feb. 13.



Mark Land, Scott and Kim Schaaf at the Business After Hours, sponsored by Barb Wiedenman & Associates, at Ankeny Golf & Country Club on Feb. 13.

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TRIP PLAN

DAY 1

**THE BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY
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DAY 2

**AMERICAN GOTHIC HOUSE
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DAY 3

**FIELD OF DREAMS MOVIE SITE
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DAY 4

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