

# Living

MAGAZINE

## A wedding TO REMEMBER

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

**Savory pork chili**  
RECIPE

**Meet Brittany Mendlik**  
EDUCATION

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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 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.

Joel and Halsey Altringer were  
married Aug. 3, 2024, in Adel.  
Photo by Blackcap Photography

## FEATURE

Joel and Halsey Altringer don't have a traditional story of their first meeting, but their unconventional love story led this couple to an Aug. 3 wedding in Adel.

"Joel was my brother's college buddy, and I went down there to hang out with my brother for the weekend," Halsey says. "When Joel saw me, he literally asked my brother, 'How serious are you about not dating your sister?' My brother wasn't great with it, so he never asked me out. We met again 14 years ago after we both had been through previous relationships and had children — and here we are."

The couple became engaged Aug. 3, 2023, one year before they married. Halsey is from St. Louis, and they decided to take a family trip there with the kids to explore the city. Joel proposed under the St. Louis arch, and then they celebrated at a Cardinals game.

Halsey works for Grimes Chamber and Economic Development planning events, so she wasn't interested in doing a ton of planning for the wedding. She was looking for a venue that would provide some low-

stress options for pulling things together. They attended a wedding show, where they saw a booth for Barnes Place.

"I fell in love with the pictures, and, once we went there to visit, I was sold," she says. "The reason I loved it was because they took care of a lot of the planning. A decorator is included, and they take care of everything. It's like a one-stop shop, which I loved."

Halsey met with the decorator and figured out how they wanted the tables set up and how they wanted things decorated. The venue has décor to choose from on site, and, if you want something they don't have, they will often buy it and keep it as part of their inventory. They also have both indoor and outdoor space for guests to gather during the ceremony and reception, which was appealing to the couple.

For the décor and look, the couple wanted something boho chic.

"I'm a little hippie girl," says Halsey. "That was the vibe I was going for. That's my personality and taste. I really wanted a vintage flair, so my save-the-dates,



For the décor at Barnes Place, the couple wanted "boho chic." Photo by Blackcap Photography

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# FEATURE

invites and programs were like a newspaper with stories about us and pictures of our time together.”

When it came time to choose wedding attire, Halsey grabbed her bridesmaids and went to Schaffer’s Bridal in Des Moines. She had an idea of the kind of dress she wanted, but the biggest requirement was that she wanted to wear Converse with it.

“I wanted tiers and lace and sexy. They brought me this dress and were like, ‘This is the one. Try it on,’ and I was like, ‘Oh my god, this is it.’ What I went in with wasn’t what I walked out with.”

The guys in the wedding party went casual because that was the vibe. The groom and groomsmen wore jeans from Bomgaars and vests from Amazon. Traditional? No. But it went with Joel’s style, was good for the hot weather, and saved them some money, too.

For the ceremony, it was



Joel and Halsey Altringer kiss after the ceremony. Photo by Blackcap Photography



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Barnes Place provided outdoor and indoor spaces for the Altringers' wedding. Photo by Blackcap Photography

important that Joel and Halsey incorporate their kids and recognize their blending of families. They did a unity ceremony with all five of them that featured different paint colors on their hands, which they smeared together to symbolize family blending.

"My older daughter was a bridesmaid," Halsey says. "My son and Joel's daughter opened the big door that reveals the bride once the wedding party is up front, which was really sweet. They also handed us the rings to exchange."

Of course, the couple added their own special and quirky elements, too. Joel wrote the vows in Taylor Swift lyrics because Halsey is a huge fan. She likes funny things, so she had full-grown flower women dancing down the aisle. The day was about togetherness without being too serious about it.

The wedding venue gave the couple a list of caterers and ones they recommend, and Joel and Halsey chose to go with Fireside Grille in Altoona. The menu featured chicken with white wine, pork with gravy, rotisserie chicken, potatoes, green beans and salad.

Sara Engelhart from Urbandale made the wedding cake and cupcakes. "She bakes out of her home," Halsey says. "It was amazing. If you give her a picture of a cake, she can replicate anything. It's phenomenal. She did our bridal shower cake and wedding cake. I picked a naked cake — one that has barely any frosting on it. It had little flowers but was very plain and simple. It was perfect."

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# FEATURE

Though the temperature was more than 100 degrees that August day, BCP Weddings from Grimes kept people moving on the dance floor. They brought in a photo booth and glow sticks to add to the festivities. Required tunes included “Party in the USA,” “Shake Ya Tail Feather,” and a dollar dance.

Joel and Halsey chose Blackcap Photography owner Cody Kilgore to take their wedding pictures. What sold them was his use of natural photos, not just posed ones. The one that made Halsey fall in love was a photo of a bride and groom in their wedding attire drinking milkshakes in a downtown diner. But the best part was his commitment to be present for the entire day, Halsey says. He arrived at 8 a.m. and took pictures of everyone getting ready and didn’t leave until 11:30 p.m. He stayed until the end of the night to get the last shots of the couple together.

Though it was really hot and a whirlwind, Joel and Halsey say they



Blackcap Photography provided photos from throughout the day, staying until the reception was over. Photo by Blackcap Photography

couldn’t imagine a better day.

“We had a lot of family come in from 14 hours and longer away, so it was like a family reunion,” Halsey says. “With the blending of our families together, a lot of people met for the first time. But it was one big, fun, happy family.” ■

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## 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.shadetreeauto.biz/jump-start](http://www.shadetreeauto.biz/jump-start) or contact Shade Tree Auto at 515-986-5241 or [contactus@shadetreeauto.biz](mailto:contactus@shadetreeauto.biz). ■

## BLUE KANGAROO Packoutz opens

Blue Kangaroo Packoutz, the contents cleaning and restoration service dedicated to restoring items to a pre-loss condition, has opened a new franchise location in Grimes. The contents restoration service provider is part of the BELFOR Franchise Group family of brands.

The franchise location is owned and operated by husband and wife team, Bobby and Joy Johnson. Bobby and Joy both have extensive backgrounds in sales and marketing and started their own marketing consulting group that they have been successfully running for the past two years. In their free time, the Johnsons enjoy spending time with their two daughters and staying active in their community by volunteering at their church and frequently visiting local chambers of commerce and business networking groups.

"Soon after starting our marketing and sales consulting group, Joy and I decided it was time to take the next step in our careers as business owners," said Bobby Johnson, co-owner of Blue Kangaroo Packoutz of Central Iowa. "As we weighed our options, Blue Kangaroo Packoutz immediately stood out as a business that would allow us to help people through difficult times in their lives. Another factor that made our decision fairly simple was the incredible company culture and their mutual passion for helping people, both of which became immediately apparent during our first visit to their corporate office. As we embark on this exciting new chapter in our careers, we are looking forward to building relationships with local property owners in need of our services."

Whereas other businesses focus on restoring homes and business spaces after disaster strikes, Blue Kangaroo Packoutz is 100% dedicated to restoring the meaningful items that get damaged and destroyed during these disasters. The contents restoration company has a proven track record of expertly restoring various sentimental items, from furniture and valuable artwork to precious photographs and other beloved family heirlooms. Blue Kangaroo Packoutz also offers on-site contents services to reunite customers with their priceless belongings, one item at a time. ■

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# DANCING together

Contra dance events deliver fun and joy.



The Dallas Center contra dance community is growing.

The Dallas Center contra dance community is growing, and the recent dances at Memorial Hall proved just how much energy and enthusiasm there is for this traditional form of social dancing.

With a 35-foot by 35-foot dance floor, the hall comfortably held about 80 dancers of all ages and physical conditions.

A dedicated team of volunteers helped spread the word and fill the dance floor. Jennifer Senne led the dances with skill and enthusiasm, ensuring everyone, from beginners to experienced dancers, could enjoy the experience.

The event was made even better by the contributions of Abigail and Nathan Coder, whose sound system was perfectly suited to the space. Meanwhile, Lauri Pearson, Bob and Diane Findlay, and a host of generous contributors ensured that food and water were available to keep dancers fueled for the evening.

Bob King shared his excitement over the growing support for contra dancing in Dallas Center.

“It’s fun getting something started that’s new,” he says. “It’s the community coming together and having fun. In today’s world, I think that’s important.”

The sense of inclusion was clear, with participants spanning generations — from a baby to someone close to their 90s. Even middle schoolers who arrived under protest ended up joining in and having a great time.

Support for future dances is strong, with more than 60 families now signed up to receive email notifications. The event also raised a few hundred dollars in contributions, which will go toward hiring professional bands for future dances. The group has officially joined the National Folk Organization as well, securing liability insurance coverage as they plan for upcoming dances.

The second dance was held on March 8 and featured live music from the Barn Owls, followed by another dance on March 12, which was scheduled to showcase the Wild Mustard Band. To help cover the cost of live music, there is a \$10 charge per individual or \$20 per family. The contra band group plans to host a dance on April 5 as well.

King is currently exploring potential collaborations, with hopes of further strengthening community ties.

At the first dance, about 70% of the 80 dancers were from Dallas



Center, but the gathering also drew visitors from Adel, Ames, Ankeny, Des Moines, Indianola, Jewell, Urbandale and Waukee.

Contra dancing is proving to be a wonderful way for people to stay active, meet new friends, and build a stronger sense of community.

To join the mailing list for future dance notifications, email King at [roberteking706@gmail.com](mailto:roberteking706@gmail.com). ■



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# RECIPE

## 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](http://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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## VARSITY GIRLS GOLF

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Apr 10	2:00PM	Multiple Schools	Westwood Golf Course
Apr 14	12:00PM	Multiple Schools	Briarwood Club of Ankeny
Apr 15	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	Beaver Creek Golf Club Public Course
Apr 17	9:00AM	Multiple Schools	Otter Creek Golf Course
Apr 21	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	Willow Creek Golf Course
Apr 28	9:00AM	Multiple Schools	Westwood Golf Course
Apr 28	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	Veenker Memorial Golf Course
May 1	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	Elmwood Country Club
May 8	9:00AM	Multiple Schools	Copper Creek Golf Club
May 12	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	Edmundson Golf Course
May 15	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Perry Golf & Country Club

## VARSITY GIRLS TRACK

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Mar 11	2:00PM	Multiple Schools	UNI-Dome
Mar 14	3:15PM	Multiple Schools	Lied Recreation Athletic Center
Mar 25	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Simpson College Bill Buxton Stadium
Mar 27	4:15PM	Multiple Schools	Johnston High School
Apr 1	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Northwest High School Stadium
Apr 5	10:15AM	DCG Inv	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
Apr 7	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Norwalk Warrior Stadium
Apr 10	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Northwest High School
Apr 12	8:30AM	Jim Duncan Inv	Drake Stadium Track
Apr 15	4:30PM	DCG High School	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
Apr 17	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Northview Middle School
Apr 24	8:00AM	Drake University	Drake Stadium Track
Apr 25	8:00AM	Drake University	Drake Stadium Track
Apr 26	8:00AM	Drake University	Drake Stadium Track
Apr 29	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	ADM High School Tiger Stadium
May 1	4:00PM	Waukee	Waukee Stadium
May 8	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Dallas Center-Grimes High School

## VARSITY BOYS TRACK

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Mar 10	2:00PM	Multiple Schools	Lied Recreation Athletic Center
Mar 13	9:00AM	Multiple Schools	Waukee Stadium
Mar 27	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Indianola Stadium
Apr 3	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
Apr 5	10:15AM	Multiple Schools	Norwalk Warrior Stadium
Apr 7	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	ADM High School Tiger Stadium
Apr 8	4:30PM	Multiple Schools	Drake Stadium Track
Apr 12	8:30AM	Multiple Schools	Waukee Stadium
Apr 17	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	North Polk High School
Apr 18	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Northview Middle School
Apr 22	4:00PM	Multiple Schools	Drake Stadium Track
Apr 24	8:00AM	Multiple Schools	Drake Stadium Track
Apr 25	8:00AM	Multiple Schools	Drake Stadium Track
Apr 26	8:00AM	Multiple Schools	Bondurant-Farrar High School
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## SPRING SPORTS SCHEDULES 2025

### VARSITY GIRLS SOCCER

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Mar 28	8:00PM	Southeast Polk	Ankeny High School
Mar 31	5:30PM	Johnston	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
Apr 4	TBD	Multiple Schools	Ankeny Centennial High School
Apr 4	7:00PM	Waukee Northwest	Ankeny High School
Apr 5	TBD	Multiple Schools	Ankeny Centennial High School
Apr 5	10:00AM	Ankeny Centennial	Ankeny Centennial High School
Apr 8	7:30PM	Norwalk	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
Apr 15	4:00PM	Pella Christian	Pella Christian High School
Apr 17	7:30PM	Valley	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
Apr 22	7:00PM	Indianola	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
Apr 25	7:30PM	Ankeny	Ankeny High School
Apr 29	7:00PM	Newton	H. A. Lynn Stadium
May 2	5:00PM	DCG Classic	GrimesPlex
May 3	10:00AM	DCG Classic	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
May 8	7:15PM	Bondurant-Farrar	Bondurant-Farrar High School
May 12	7:30PM	ADM	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
May 13	7:00PM	Oskaloosa	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
May 16	7:30PM	Gilbert	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
May 20	7:00PM	Pella	Pella High School
May 22	7:30PM	Dowling Catholic	Dallas Center-Grimes High School

### VARSITY BOYS SOCCER

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Mar 26	6:00PM	DM Roosevelt	Mediacom Stadium
Mar 31	7:30PM	Johnston	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
Apr 8	7:30PM	Norwalk	Norwalk Warrior Stadium
Apr 10	7:00PM	DM Christian	Des Moines Christian School
Apr 11	6:00PM	Spencer	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
Apr 12	2:00PM	Denison-Schleswig	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
Apr 15	5:45PM	Pella Christian	Pella Christian High School
Apr 18	7:00PM	ADM	ADM High School Tiger Stadium
Apr 19	10:00AM	Cedar Falls	Cedar Valley Soccer Complex
Apr 19	10:00AM	Wahawk Invite	Cedar Valley Soccer Complex
Apr 19	2:30PM	Waterloo West	Cedar Valley Soccer Complex
Apr 22	7:30PM	Indianola	Indianola Stadium
Apr 25	7:30PM	Southeast Polk	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
Apr 29	7:30PM	Newton	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
May 2	6:30PM	Muscatine	Muscatine Soccer Complex
May 5	7:00PM	Pella	Dallas Center-Grimes High School
May 8	7:30PM	Waukee NW	Northwest High School
May 13	7:00PM	Oskaloosa	Oskaloosa - Lacey Sports Complex

# GO MUSTANGS!

Schedules are subject to change. Scan for up-to-date schedule.



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## FITNESS **By Haley Powers-Risdal**

### Q: How important is my posture?

**A:** Maintaining good posture is essential for overall health and well-being. Proper posture involves aligning the body correctly, which helps distribute weight evenly across the muscles, joints and bones. This simple practice offers numerous physical, mental and emotional benefits that can significantly enhance daily life. One of the most significant advantages of good posture is its ability to reduce strain on muscles and joints. When the body is properly aligned, the spine is supported, preventing unnecessary tension in the neck, back and shoulders. This can help alleviate and prevent chronic pain, especially in the lower back and neck, areas prone to discomfort from poor posture habits.

Good posture also improves breathing by allowing the diaphragm to function effectively. When sitting or standing upright, the lungs have more space to expand, leading to deeper, more efficient breaths. This can increase oxygen levels in the body, promoting better energy levels and reducing fatigue. Additionally, proper posture can boost confidence and mental clarity. Standing tall with a straight back can make you appear more self-assured, which can positively influence social and professional interactions. Good posture also improves focus and concentration by promoting better blood circulation to the brain, which helps enhance cognitive function. ■



Information provided by Haley Powers-Risdal, certified personal trainer/head coach at Anytime Fitness 255 S.W. Brookside Drive, 515-300-9262, GrimesIA@anytimefitness.com.

## WELLNESS **By Vanessa Andersen**

### BUILDING character through teamwork

One of the most valuable lessons a child can learn is how to be a good teammate. Whether performing on a field or stage, allowing children to participate in athletics or performing arts at an early age helps them build essential character traits that will serve them well in life.

Team-based activities teach children responsibility, cooperation, perseverance, resiliency, adaptability and collaboration.

In sports, they learn to work toward a common goal, handle wins and losses gracefully, and develop discipline through practice.

In the arts, children gain confidence through self-expression, collaborate with peers to create, and cope with nervousness or performance anxiety.

Mental health professionals highlight the importance of social-emotional learning to foster self-awareness, emotional regulation and positive relationship skills. Studies show that children who engage in team activities demonstrate higher self-esteem and better stress management than their peers.

Parents can best support their children by providing opportunity and support. Enjoy cheering them on from the sidelines and avoid adding pressure or stress to the moment. Encouraging structured group activities, and modeling cooperation and character for your child will help equip them for success in school, relationships and future careers. ■



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

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## NO MORE Iowa death tax

There are two kinds of death taxes: federal and state. At the federal level, your estate will not have to pay death taxes unless you are a multimillionaire. The number goes up every year. For 2025, it is more than \$14 million. If you die having more than \$14 million, your estate will pay some very heavy taxes on the amount above the \$14 million, except that you can give the extra to your spouse and avoid the tax. Maybe you kick the can down the road until your spouse dies. It depends on how experienced your spouse's estate planning attorney is and how much is left at his/her death.



Also, you can give any person \$19,000 in 2025 without using up any of that \$14 million exemption. Neither the giver nor the receiver pays tax on it. You can do this for as many people as you like. So, if you are in danger of bumping into the \$14 million limit, dishing out \$19,000 each to your three kids, eight grandkids, 24 nieces and nephews, and seven kids who belong to friends who will share their "good" wine with you, will remove \$798,000 out of your estate in just one year. Rinse and repeat each year. The tax problem is solved.

The other death tax is called state inheritance tax. Iowa inheritance tax has been calculated using two factors: 1) how the beneficiary was related to the decedent and 2) how much money that person received. There has been no inheritance tax at all on lineal ascendants and descendants. But there has been a tax imposed on everyone else who is a beneficiary, until now.

Starting with deaths on and after Jan. 1, 2025, there is no more Iowa inheritance tax, regardless of how the beneficiary was related to the decedent. However, for those who died before then, a tax would still be imposed on siblings, nieces and nephews, cousins, friends, significant others, etc. The trigger is the date of death, not the date the probate estate is opened. Tax is owed whether there is a need for probate or not.

If you think you will be subject to inheritance tax, make sure to find out from the attorney whether you will need to pay it out of the money that is distributed to you or if it will have already been paid, and you have just been given the remainder. It is not fun to get and spend your inheritance and THEN get the tax bill. ■

Information provided by Cynthia P. Letsch, JD, CMP, Letsch Law Firm, 112 N.E. Ewing St., Suite D, Grimes, 515-986-2810, [www.LetschLawFirm.com](http://www.LetschLawFirm.com).



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## EVENTS IN THE AREA

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com).

Be sure to check for cancellations.

### Upcoming in Grimes/ Dallas Center 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](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com) to be included in the April issue.



### Citywide Garage Sales May 1-4

Mark your calendars for the annual Citywide Garage Sales. Watch for information on how to sign up to be on the map as the event gets closer.

### Grimes Lions Club Earth Day Cleanup

April 22, 5 p.m.  
Meet at Hy-Vee Fast & Fresh  
Cleanup will be down  
Gateway Drive

The Grimes Lions is organizing a litter pickup along Gateway Drive between First Street and Beaverbrooke Drive as an Earth Day project. Volunteers are invited to meet at Hy-Vee Fast & Fresh at 5 p.m. The group will head down Gateway Drive to clean up the accumulated trash. The Lions will provide garbage bags and plastic gloves, but feel free to bring your own "grabber" if you have one. Gather your family, and let's work together to make our community a cleaner place. For more information, contact Rich at [weiss.rich@gmail.com](mailto:weiss.rich@gmail.com) or 630-508-5033.

### Grimes Leadership Academy

Grimes Chamber & Economic Development would like to invite those interested in developing their personal leadership skills and wanting to increase their knowledge of the community to consider applying for the Grimes Leadership Academy (GLA). To learn more about this opportunity and to apply, visit [grimesleadership.com](http://grimesleadership.com).

### Grimes Spring Cleanup

Homes south of  
Highway 44,  
May 5 and 6  
Homes north of  
Highway 44,  
May 7 and 8

Grimes Clean Up is coming up. Learn about what will and won't be accepted for pick up at [grimesiowa.gov/events](http://grimesiowa.gov/events).

### The Expo!

Wednesday, March 26, 4:30-6:30 p.m.  
Meadow's Gym, 2555 W. First St., Grimes

The public is invited to the 15th year of the Business Expo. Check out some local businesses and what they have to offer. Booths are available for chamber members only. The event will feature plenty of free goodies from Grimes Chamber member businesses, a face painter and Zoops Fun Zone, a talented balloon artist. The event is free and kids are welcome. ■

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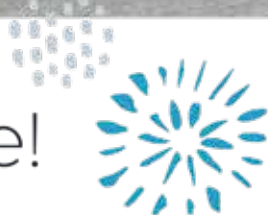




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- Covered patio
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- Main-level laundry
- Walk-in closet with wooden shelving in owner's suite
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## INVESTMENT

By Daniel Rundahl

# HOW ABOUT a Roth IRA?

As a financial advisor for over 20 years, there are many questions that we get from our clients about retirement, about saving, and about insurance. One of the most common questions that I receive pertains to whether a Roth IRA is a good choice as an investment and how can it be used to improve a retirement income platform. Here are five reasons we share with our clients.



- **Access.** A Roth IRA gives you the ability to access your contributions without incurring any type of penalty or income tax. You have already paid tax on those contributions, so pulling them back out, without accessing your gains, will allow you to utilize the benefit of its value immediately, regardless of your age.

- **Tax-free growth.** The Roth IRA is one of few investments that allows you the opportunity to grow your money without having to pay tax on gains. That means you don't pay any taxes along the way and will not have to pay additional tax in the future when you seek to take a withdrawal. As long as you follow the rules, like waiting five years from when you established the account and being over the age of 59 ½ before you pull money out, you will have access to 100% of the value without owing any additional money to "Uncle Sam."

- **Use for college.** The Roth IRA gives you money that can be used for college and for retirement. We tell people all the time, you can borrow money to go to college, but you cannot borrow money to retire. So, using a Roth IRA gives you some flexibility to be able to pull money out to send "Junior" to college without the burden of a long-term financial aid obligation. Your contributions are accessible without penalty. Your growth or interest will avoid a 10% penalty, but you will have to pay tax on that gain.

- **No Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs).** As of December 2022, under the SECURE Act 2.0, RMD age was increased to age 73 and 75 for withdrawals on any IRA or 401K. The Roth IRA has no requirements to draw money out at any particular age. So, you can allow this to grow all the way through your date of death. This will open up many opportunities for your legacy planning and for your golden years' income planning.

- **No tax consequences at your passing.** With taxes and inheritance being a big concern for many, securing a tax advantaged investment to pass on to the kids and grandkids is always important. The Roth IRA transfers, by beneficiary, to the next generation without income taxes needing to be paid. Your beneficiary will be subject to a 10-year RMD schedule if it is reinvested in an inherited-Roth IRA, but it will still never be subject to a 10% penalty or income taxation.

There are many savings vehicles available to everyone. A Roth IRA may be a great fit for you. ■

Information provided by Daniel Rundahl, Financial Advisor, Rundahl Financial Consultants, 8230 Hickman Road, Suite 300, Clive, 515-727-1701, drundahl@rundahlfinancial.com, www.rundahlfinancialconsultants.com.



### Dan Rundahl

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# MEET Brittany Mendlik

New North Ridge teacher enjoys her job at DCG.



Brittany Mendlik teaches third graders at North Ridge Elementary.

Third-grade teacher Brittany Mendlik graduated from UNI in 2019 with a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a minor in reading. Her career started at Center Point-Urbana Community Schools in eastern Iowa. During her time there, she obtained a master's degree in teacher leadership and instructional strategies from Buena Vista University.

She credits her five years teaching at Center Point-Urbana with providing many lessons and challenges that helped her grow as a young teacher. After her husband started a new job with Hy-Vee Corporate last February, she began looking for a school district where she felt she could flourish.

"DCG Schools stood out for many reasons, but especially due to their reputation of excellence in academics, arts and athletics. During my first year within the district, I have been blown away by how welcoming, kind and helpful everyone has been. The tight-knit feel in a quickly growing community is something I feel incredibly grateful to be a part of."

Aside from the influence of many impactful teachers throughout her own schooling, Mendlik has been passionate about working with children from early on. She enjoys the daily challenge of helping students reach their next goals and also the longer-term growth she sees in students from the beginning to the end of the school year and beyond.

Though she enjoys her job, there are challenges, too. She says one of the biggest is finding balance. There is so much to learn, manage and reflect on, but it is also important to find a healthy balance to ensure she's not burning herself out.

The biggest reward is the long-lasting relationships she forms with students and their families.

"When students and/or parents of former students reach out to share memories or accomplishments of their students, it is a great reminder of just how important our role is and how even on the trickiest of days, teachers are making a difference," Mendlik says.

When she's not at school, you will find Mendlik spending time with her husband and friends and family, going biking, and attending sporting events. ■



## 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

# HELPING how she can

Claseman assists own family, as well as GVSS.

When Mary Claseman and her husband moved to Grimes in the fall of 2005, it was to be close to his aging parents. In a bit of fate, they were given the opportunity to move right next door.



“This close proximity turned out to be a blessing as it allowed us to help them and take some of the load off my sister-in-law and her family, who also live nearby and were already helping with some of their needs,” Claseman says.

Helping others is a recurring theme in Claseman’s life, especially when it comes to volunteering.

While she was still working, she didn’t have as much time to dedicate to volunteering, so she focused on being active in her church and occasionally helping out at Meals for the Heartland with her grandson’s Scout troop.

Claseman first heard about GVSS in 2013 and soon became involved. When she wasn’t traveling for work, she took on small tasks for the



Tim Short, Edward Jones, presents Mary Claseman with a Good Neighbor certificate.

organization, like handing out brochures during the Governors Day Parade. After retiring, she initially spent much of her time caring for her elderly parents in Minnesota before diving into volunteerism.

“Now that I have more time, I am getting more involved at GVSS with driving people to appointments and helping out in the office,” Claseman shares. “I believe in GVSS and their mission to help people stay in their homes as long as possible, especially since I did some of the same type of things for my parents and my in-laws.”

Claseman makes time to volunteer because she believes it’s simply the right thing to do.

“I saw what a difference it made to my parents and my in-laws when I helped them with small things, like changing batteries in smoke detectors,” she shares. “I enjoy being around people and making a difference in their lives.”

For her, the best part of volunteering with GVSS is seeing the smiles — and relief — on the faces of those she serves.

“They so appreciate the small things, which helps me keep life in perspective,” Claseman says. “I would encourage others to volunteer, as it helps keep one’s own life’s ups and downs in perspective — that the things you may be going through may not be such a big deal compared to what others are going through.” ■

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# GET ready for tax time

Many Americans would rather visit the dentist than file taxes. While tax season may not be enjoyable, proper preparation can make the process smoother. Here are a few things you can do to ease tax season trepidation:

## Review last year's return

While your tax situation may change, reviewing last year's return can provide useful information. If using a professional tax preparer, expect a checklist or questionnaire to help with organization.

## Consider life changes

Major life events in 2024 — such as marriage, divorce, buying or selling a home, changing jobs, having a child, retiring or incurring high medical expenses — can affect your tax return. These may impact your filing status, income, deductions, and tax credits.

## Gather essential documents

You'll receive some tax forms electronically or by mail in January or February, while others you may need to collect yourself. Key documents include:

- W-2 forms (wages from employers)
- 1099 forms (interest, dividends, Social Security, self-employment income)
- 1098 forms (mortgage interest, education payments)
- Receipts (medical expenses, childcare, charitable donations)

Keeping all documents in one place and making a checklist can help ensure you have everything needed.

## Consider IRA or HSA contributions

If eligible, you can contribute to a traditional or Roth IRA, or a Health Savings Account (HSA) for 2024 until the tax filing deadline, provided you haven't reached the annual limit.

Proper planning and preparation can make tax season less stressful and more manageable. ■

For more information, please contact Bryce Block with City State Bank Trust & Investments at 515-986-2265. Not FDIC insured. Not deposits or other obligations of the bank and are not guaranteed by the bank. Are subject to investment risk, including possible loss of principal. City State Bank does not provide tax or legal advice. Each taxpayer should seek independent advice from a tax professional. These materials are based upon publicly available information that may change at any time without notice.



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## CHAMBER

By Brian W. Buethe

# KNOW your community

I once read that Benjamin Franklin was the last true “Renaissance man.” According to Britannica, a Renaissance man is someone who “embraces all knowledge and develops their own capacities as fully as possible.” Franklin certainly did; he was a scientist, writer, inventor, diplomat and more.

Today, no one can master all human knowledge. We live in an age of information, where facts, discoveries and ideas grow faster than anyone can keep up. But while we may never know everything, we can set a more achievable goal: truly understanding our own community.

For those of us in the Midwest, that means knowing how local government works, understanding our school system, and being aware of the nonprofits, businesses and churches that shape our daily lives. It's about asking questions:

- How do these institutions work together?
- How can we get involved?
- What challenges and opportunities does our community face?

Gaining this knowledge and using it to serve the greater good isn't always easy. That's why Grimes Chamber & Economic Development, along with the support of many local leaders, created the Grimes Leadership Academy (GLA).

This program is designed to give participants a deeper understanding of Grimes — its institutions, businesses and organizations. It also helps people develop leadership skills that can make an impact at work, in the community and at home.

Leadership isn't just about taking charge; it's about understanding the people and places around you. Whether you want to improve your leadership abilities, expand your network, or simply know more about Grimes, the Grimes Leadership Academy is a great opportunity.

If this sounds like something for you, applications are open for the second class. Visit [www.GrimesLeadership.com](http://www.GrimesLeadership.com) to learn more and apply before May 31.

Even if participation in the GLA isn't for you, please be encouraged to take the time to learn about your community. It's a rewarding experience that can lead to deeper connections, better decision-making, and a stronger Grimes for everyone. If you're a business owner here in Grimes, this is Corporate Citizenship 101. If you live here, it is just good practice. #LoveGrimes ■



Information provided by Brian W. Buethe, President | CEO,  
Grimes Chamber & Economic Development,  
[www.GrimesIowa.com](http://www.GrimesIowa.com)

#GRIMESLEADERSHIPACADEMY

## FROM LEARNING TO LEADING

The Grimes Leadership Academy is more than a program—it's a transformation. Through expert guidance and hands-on experience, participants develop the skills they need to lead with impact.



APPLY TODAY!

### WHY APPLY?

- ✓ Develop Leadership Skills
- ✓ Expand Your Professional Network
- ✓ Master Effective Communication
- ✓ Engage in Community Impact



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



# OUT & ABOUT



Philip Fisher was named the 2024 Citizen of the Year by the Grimes Chamber of Commerce at its annual awards dinner.



Heather Every was named the 2024 Educator of the Year by the Grimes Chamber of Commerce at its annual awards dinner.



Colleen Miller and Madison Taiber at the Grimes Chamber lunch held at the Grimes Public Library on Jan. 22.



Al's Dairy Freeze was named the 2024 Business of the Year by the Grimes Chamber of Commerce at its annual awards dinner.



Julie Quandt and Erin Lego at the Grimes Chamber lunch held at the Grimes Public Library on Jan. 22.



Brian Buethe and Kristi Knous at the Grimes Chamber lunch held at the Grimes Public Library on Jan. 22.



Cliff Cunningham and Cyle Taylor at the Grimes Chamber lunch held at the Grimes Public Library on Jan. 22.



Dave Anderson and Kody Lueders at the Grimes Chamber lunch held at the Grimes Public Library on Jan. 22.



Maureen Cahill, Brenda Lynch and Alana Marean at the New Skills Lab ribbon cutting at Spurgeon Manor in Dallas Center on Feb. 18.



Kasey Finnell, Alana Marean, Maureen Cahill, Carli Chapman and Brenda Lynch at the New Skills Lab ribbon cutting at Spurgeon Manor in Dallas Center on Feb. 18.

# OFF the Clock

Grimes Chamber of Commerce Off the Clock was held at Rainbow of the Heartland on Feb. 27.



Tom Blomme and Carey Elson



Rod Fox, Dave Anderson and Todd Heithoff



Rayleigh Scales and Debbie Palmer



Blake Campbell and Garrett Neel



Jeremy Kane and Tim Kozitza



Kyle Pieper and Andy Stoecken



Tom Armstrong and Pete Colman



Erin Huiatt and Mindi Dayton



Beth Hansen and Greg Means



Clint Dudley and Halsey Altringer



Dan Boes, Cyle Taylor and Tom Armstrong

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Resistant Stainless Steel



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