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JUNE 2025

Living

MAGAZINE

Celebrate SUMMERFEST

Chamber festival commemorates
Ankeny's 150th anniversary July 11-13.

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WELCOME

AIRING of grievances and feats of strength

"A Festivus for the rest of us." If you watched the popular TV show "Seinfeld" in the late 1990s, you are smiling right now. If you didn't watch the show, well, read on, as you can still smile.

Festivus was depicted on "Seinfeld" as a Dec. 23 holiday that includes a Festivus dinner, an aluminum Festivus pole, practices such as the "airing of grievances" and "feats of strength," and the labeling of explainable events as "Festivus miracles." It's a Costanza tradition.

Every time I hear the word "festival," I think of "Festivus." And, this time of year in Iowa, festivals are aplenty. For several decades now, Jolene and I have been traveling to various communities in our great state to partake in their wonderful community festivals, including the one we write about in this month's cover story.

Do these others sound familiar to you? Tulip Time in Pella. Mac and Cheese Festival in Dubuque. John Wayne Birthday Celebration in Winterset. Scandinavian Days in Story City. Bell Tower Festival in Jefferson. Good Egg Days in Stuart. Ice Cream Days in Le Mars. RibFest in Sioux City. Four Seasons Festival in Polk City. Truckers Jamboree in Walcott. Beef Days in Solon. National Balloon Classic in Indianola. Watermelon Days in Newell. Hobo Days in Britt. Pufferbilly Days in Boone. And, not to be left out, the Testicle Festival at Appleberry Orchard in Donnellson.

The list goes on. And on. If there is one thing we Iowans know how to do, it is how to throw a community festival.

Many of the festivals have similarities. Some focus on food. Others on drink. Many include music. But they all have at least one unique selling point that makes them truly stand out.

My dad would take me to festivals around our hometown when I was a kid, whether I wanted to go or not. He enjoyed connecting with people and reminiscing about days gone by — the same things I do today.

When it comes down to it, though, all of our community festivals are about wholesome fun — with or without the Festivus pole.

Have a great month, and thanks for reading. ■

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Celebrate SUMMERFEST

**Chamber festival commemorates
Ankeny's 150th anniversary July 11-13.**

By Ashley Rullestad

Ankeny Chamber SummerFest, presented by Karl Chevrolet and platinum sponsor City of Ankeny, is celebrating 150 years of Ankeny with three days of live music, carnival rides, great food and family fun. Every year, hundreds of committee members, staff members and volunteers put in hundreds of hours to bring the festival to life. The celebration returns July 11-13 in The District at Prairie Trail, but the fun starts July 10 with the carnival. Enjoy an evening of rides and games as the carnival will once again be open on Thursday from 4-9 p.m. with the special wristband price of \$30. The rest of Ankeny Chamber SummerFest grounds will open on Friday.

The Ankeny Chamber SummerFest fireworks show lights up The District at Prairie Trail.

FEATURE

Details at The District

The Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce will showcase chamber businesses as sponsors, vendors and generous contributors to this ever-growing community. With this 150-year celebration, attendees can enjoy 12 bands on stage including local artists such as Jordan Beem, Dick Danger Band, kids from The School of Rock Ankeny, and a crowd favorite, The Pork Tornadoes.

“Ankeny Chamber SummerFest is a terrific opportunity for local businesses to connect with the community through sponsorships and vendor booths, showcasing their commitment to Ankeny’s continued growth and vibrancy,” Diane Weber, director of events and communications for the chamber, says. “This year’s three-day festival celebrates our history and the support of our dedicated chamber members while providing a fun, family-friendly atmosphere for people of all ages.”

Limited parking spaces are available in The District at Prairie Trail during Ankeny Chamber SummerFest hours. To accommodate attendees, parking is available at the DMACC Ankeny Campus, 2006 S. Ankeny Blvd., with



Bands will entertain attendees at SummerFest.

a free shuttle running to the festival entrance on Friday, July 11, from 3:30 p.m. to midnight; Saturday, July 12, from 12:30 p.m. to midnight; and Sunday, July 13, from 12:30-11 p.m.

Organizers are providing a safe environment for everyone. Bags and IDs will be checked upon entrance, and, to purchase or use beer tickets, attendees must be wearing a 21-plus

wristband. The event is also a pet-free, smoke-free and weapons-free event.

Once inside, attendees can enjoy tasty eats from more than 20 food vendors. The variety of offerings runs the gamut from ice cream to pizza and tacos to BBQ. Soda, water and Powerade will also be available to purchase. Outside food and beverages are not permitted.

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FEATURE

Friday, July 11

Ankeny Chamber SummerFest officially kicks off Friday at 4 p.m. with the carnival open until 11 p.m. Carnival wristbands are available for \$30 for unlimited rides from 5-11 p.m. All carnival wristbands and tickets must be purchased on site from the carnival ticket booth. Friday also features live music with Suede Rock Band kicking off the music at 4:30 p.m., Blake Jack and South 35 at 7 p.m., and country music singer and songwriter from Savannah, Georgia, Hannah Dasher, will close out the night at 9:30 p.m.

In addition to the fun at The District at Prairie Trail, visit Uptown Ankeny for Friday Family Fun Night with crafts, princesses and super-heroes, face painting, inflatables, games and more starting at 4 p.m. in the Ankeny Market and Pavilion hosted by the Ankeny Young Professionals.

Kids will be excited to participate in the Kiddie Parade where they are encouraged to dress up and decorate bikes or wagons in celebration of the city's 150-year milestone. Registration is at 5:30 p.m., and the kiddie parade starts at 6:30 p.m. The route begins at the Ankeny Market and Pavilion, goes to S.W. Third Street, then turns north on S.W. Cherry Street and finishes near the Ankeny First United Methodist Church.

After the kiddie parade ends, stick around for more family fun in Uptown Ankeny until Family Fun Night winds down at 8 p.m.



The carnival and vendors are highlights of the Ankeny Chamber SummerFest.



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Saturday, July 12

Starting bright and early on Saturday morning, from 7-10 a.m., is the Kiwanis PancakeFest at The Bandshell along the parade route at First Street and Ash Drive. Approximately 300 people enjoy all-you-can-eat pancakes, sausage and coffee/milk/juice.

PancakeFest is a special event for the club. All money raised through ticket sales and sponsorships goes to support Ankeny students through scholarships and through the support of the Ankeny High School Key Club service group. It is also one of the most visible events the Ankeny Kiwanis Club hosts, feeding several hundred people and being seen by hundreds more along the parade route.

Then it is time for one of the festival's biggest draws: the grand parade. This year's parade gets rolling from Southview Middle School, 1020 S.W. Cherry St., at 9 a.m. The parade travels north on S.W. Cherry Street,

turns slightly west to N.W. Ash Drive, then heads east on N.W. 18th Street and ends at Northview Middle School. For those participating in the parade, decorated floats with the "Celebrate Ankeny Through The Decades" theme are encouraged. Register your entry at ankenysummerfest.com.

After the parade, head to the Ankeny Market and Pavilion at 11 a.m. for the Ankeny Historical Society's chicken dinner to celebrate the Sesquicentennial. Tickets are a \$25 donation. Order a ticket ahead of time online at www.ankenystory.org.

Following the chicken dinner, head to The District at Prairie Trail and check out the entertainment garden, vendors and carnival, which all open at 1 p.m. The carnival wristband \$30 special is from 1-5 p.m. and 5-11 p.m. Free live music includes School of Rock at 1 p.m., Buckmiller Schwager Band at 2:30 p.m., Jordan Beem at 5 p.m., Kick at 7 p.m., and The Pork Tornadoes at 9 p.m.



Enjoy beverages, food, live entertainment and more at the Ankeny Chamber SummerFest.

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Sunday, July 13

On Sunday, the entertainment garden, carnival and vendors open at 1 p.m. Enjoy the sounds of DJ Big Lare at 1 p.m., Sons of Gladys Kravitz at 3 p.m., Dick Danger Band at 5 p.m., and round out the night with Good to be King: A Tribute to Tom Petty at 7 p.m.

Ankeny Chamber SummerFest winds down with a fireworks show at 9:30 p.m. Tune into 92.5 KJJY for music to go along with the show.

Without its sponsors, community partners, chamber investor and premier members,

committee members, and staff, there would be no Ankeny Chamber SummerFest. It takes hundreds of volunteers — from manning ticket sales to bar service, clean-up and putting on wristbands. If you are interested in volunteering, visit www.ankenysummerfest.com to sign up.

“Ankeny Chamber SummerFest is a staple in our community, and Karl Chevrolet’s sponsorship is core to the mission of giving back to the communities that support the dealerships,” Bret Moyer, dealer principle at

Karl Auto Group, says. “Splitting this event between Uptown and The District showcases Ankeny, our chamber members and all the great things our community has to offer, as well as highlighting the core business districts and locally owned businesses of our community. We are honored to be part of such a great community event,”

For the latest information on all Ankeny Chamber SummerFest has to offer, visit @AnkenyChamberSummerFest on Facebook and ankenysummerfest.com. ■

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July 11th-13th

@ The District At Prairie Trail
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Yanni's Grill

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday July 11

Friday
Entertainment Garden
Sponsor



4:00 PM Ankeny Chamber SummerFest Grounds Opens
4:00 PM AYP Friday Family Fun Night In Uptown Ankeny
4:30 PM Suede Rock Band
7:00 PM Blake Jack And South 35
9:30 PM **Headliner - Hannah Dasher**
11:00 PM: Ankeny Chamber SummerFest Closed

Saturday July 12

Saturday
Entertainment Garden
Sponsor



9:00 AM Grand Parade Begins
1:00 PM Ankeny Chamber SummerFest Grounds Opens
1:00 PM School Of Rock
2:30 PM Buckmiller Schwager Band
5:00 PM Jordan Beem
7:00 PM Kick
9:00 PM **Headliner - The Pork Tornadoes**
11:00 PM: Ankeny Chamber SummerFest Closed

Sunday July 13

Sunday
Entertainment Garden
Sponsor



1:00 PM Ankeny Chamber SummerFest Grounds Opens
1:00 PM DJ Big Lare
3:00 PM Sons Of Gladys Kravitz
5:00 PM Dick Danger Band
7:00 PM **Headliner - Good To Be King:
A Tom Petty Tribute**
9:30 PM Fireworks Begin
10:00 PM Ankeny Chamber SummerFest Closed

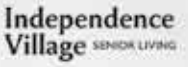
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Grand Parade

Saturday July 12 - Starts at 9am

Celebrate Ankeny Through The Decades

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Friday Family Fun Night

4:00 AYP Family Fun Night Activities Begin

5:30 Registration for Kiddie Parade

6:30 - 7:00 Kiddie Parade in Uptown Ankeny

7:00 - 8:00 AYP Family Fun Night Activities Resume



WRISTBANDS 21+

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Carnival Hours

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
July 10	July 11	July 12	July 13
4-9pm	4-11pm	1-11pm	1-10pm



Check for cancellations

Upcoming in Ankeny Living magazine:

Yards: Enjoying the green spaces around your home: Do you have a lush, green lawn with plenty of open spaces? Tell us how you keep your yard healthy and how your family makes the best of the space. Perhaps your yard provides space for barbecues, fun around the pool or hot tub, room for play equipment and lawn games. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com with your experiences enjoying the cool feeling of grass beneath your feet.

RV Camping: Do you enjoy packing up the RV and heading out on the open road for vacation? Share with us why you think RVing is the way to go and the adventures you've discovered. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com with your stories.

Ankeny Art Center Adult Classes

Various dates
1520 S.W. Ordinance Road

Register for adult classes online at www.ankenyardcenter.org.

- **Surface Decoration on Pottery:** Wednesdays, July 9-30, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- **Gestural Florals with Watercolor:** Wednesdays, July 9-30, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- **Figurative Abstraction:** Tuesdays, July 8-29, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- **Art Critique:** Saturday, June 28, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- **Pastel Basics:** Saturdays, July 26 to Aug. 30, 9 a.m. to noon
- **Pottery Basics:** Saturdays, July 26 to Aug. 30, 9 a.m. to noon
- **Pottery Studio:** June 19 to Sept. 4



Uptown's Farmers Market

Every Saturday until Sept. 27, 8 a.m. to noon (closed July 12)
Ankeny Market & Pavilion Park, 715 W. First St., Uptown Ankeny

The market features a variety of fresh seasonal produce, homemade baked goods, specialty food items, perennial plants and handmade crafts.

Ankeny Art Center Summer Camps

Various dates
1520 S.W. Ordinance Road

Register for youth summer camps and see schedules online at www.ankenyardcenter.org.

- Week 3, July 8-11: K-4th Grade Drawing, K-4th Grade Art Exploration, K-4th Grade Pottery Sculpture, 5th-8th Grade Drawing
- Week 4, July 15-18: 5th-8th Grade Painting, K-4th Grade Drawing, K-4th Grade Art Exploration, K-4th Grade Pottery Sculpture



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Yoga in the Park

Saturdays, through Aug. 30, 8-9 a.m.
Wagner Park, 410 W. First St., Ankeny

Bring a yoga mat and a friend to enjoy one hour of free outdoor yoga. Yoga in the Park is led by a different professional yoga instructor each week. Yoga in the Park is designed for improving community health, energy and relaxation. People of all ages and all skill levels are welcome. Yoga in the Park is sponsored by UnityPoint Health - Des Moines.



Sips and Songs

Fridays, June 20 and June 27, 6-10 p.m.

The District at Prairie Trail, S.W. District Drive, Ankeny

This show is always a great time. On June 20, Bradford Johnson will kick things off, followed by the legendary Dueling Pianos. June 27 features Taylor King followed by Gimikk. A night full of tunes, laughs and a whole lot of fun. There will be marked areas for lawn chairs so you can relax and enjoy the show in comfort. No outside drinks allowed, but feel free to grab take-out from your favorite District restaurants and bring it along. This is a free event open to all ages.

Check for cancellations

Beats and Eats

Ankeny Market and Pavillion,
715 W. First St., Ankeny

Join this fun summertime event featuring food trucks, live music, activities, yard games the Uptown train and more. Beats and Eats is a free community event produced by the City of Ankeny Parks & Recreation Department and sponsored by Uptown Ankeny. Food trucks and entertainment are subject to change. For more information, visit www.ankenyiowa.gov/eats.

• **June 26:** Music - Flying Silos; food trucks - Loudi's, Main Street Cafe, Nina's Tacos, Outside Scoop, Lucky Wife; activities - football inflatable, soccer inflatable, K Brede Art face paint, Parkour obstacle course.

• **July 10:** Music - Sumpin Doo; food trucks - Flame, Karam's Grill, Eggroll Ladies, Kona Ice, Lucky Wife; activities - mini golf, Interactive Play System, Leanne Otting Airbrush, Parkour obstacle course.

• **July 17:** Music - Cover That; food trucks - Main Street Cafe, Nina's Tacos, Pho All Seasons, Sweet Swirls, Lucky Wife; activities - Hock Farms petting zoo, Pink Stew balloon twist, spin art, Parkour obstacle course.

• **July 24:** Music - The Get Down Band; food trucks - Loudi's, Flame, Outside Scoop, Lucky Wife; activities - axe throw inflatable, basketball inflatable, K Brede Art face paint, Parkour obstacle course

Neighbor to Neighbor Free Meal

Sunday, June 29, doors open at 4 p.m., serving at 5 p.m.
St. Anne's Episcopal Church,
2110 W. First St., Ankeny

This month's meal will feature walking tacos in a bowl. 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.

Historical Society Chicken Dinner

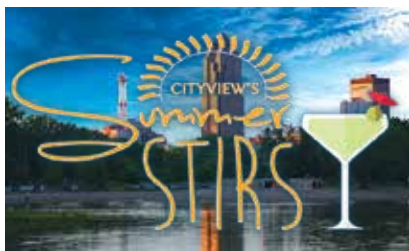
Saturday, July 12, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. • Ankeny Market Pavillion, 715 W. First St.

The event will welcome guests for a community meal reminiscent of the Lions Club Chicken Dinners held in decades past. Local organizations, including the Lions Club and the Boy Scouts, will help serve the meal, and the Ankeny Band is expected to provide live music. Tickets are \$25 per person, available in advance on the Historical Society's website, www.ankenyhistorical.org, or at the museum office during working hours before the event. That same day, the museum will have an open house from noon to 3 p.m. at 301 S.W. Third St., and the Daughters of the American Revolution will be there in costume as the Fletcher family.

District After Dark: Silent Disco

Friday, June 20, 10 p.m. to midnight
Town Square Park,
1500 S.W. Main St., Ankeny

The dance floor stays open after Sips and Songs with District After Dark: Silent Disco back in Town Square Park. This is your chance to keep the party going with high-energy beats, good vibes, and a one-of-a-kind wireless headphone experience. Choose your channel, dance at your own volume, and enjoy a night out that's anything but ordinary. Headphones are first-come, first-served. Free and open to all ages.



CITYVIEW Summer Stirs

Friday, June 20, 5-9 p.m.,
Downtown Des Moines
Friday, July 25, 5-9 p.m.,
East Village, Des Moines

This event is a relaxed opportunity to visit many great establishments in the early evening and sample their signature Summer Stir drinks. For \$25 (prepaid online), participants will receive 10 tickets to use to sample drinks at any of the participating venues. Tickets may also be purchased at the event for \$35. All of the establishments will be within walking distance. For more information, list of participating businesses and to order tickets, visit <https://summerstirs.dmcityview.com/>.

Yoga in Town Square Park

Every Wednesday, 5:30 p.m.
Town Square Park, 1500 S.W. Main St., Ankeny

Soak up the sunshine in the fresh air and enjoy weekly outdoor bliss with yoga in the park. Free to join and beginner friendly. Bring a friend, your water bottle, and have fun.



Family Fun Night at Prairie Ridge Aquatic Center

Sunday, June 22, 4-6 p.m.
Prairie Ridge Aquatic Center, 1220 N.W. Prairie Ridge Drive, Ankeny

Bring the family to Prairie Ridge Aquatic Center for Family Fun Night. Cost is \$12 for a family of up to four members. Pool passes are accepted.

Zoo Bites

Various dates

Zoo Bites is a community education class made possible through a partnership between Ankeny Community Schools and Blank Park Zoo. Students in grades K-3 with an adult are invited to join an evening of fun mixed with a "bite" of learning. Explore through science experiments, snacks and more. These classes focus on family bonding by discovering more about animals. Each class has a fun animal-based activity, interactive materials and two live animal visitors. Students do not need to be enrolled in Ankeny schools to participate. Registration is available at www.ankeny schools.org/community/community-engagement/course-registration.

Saturday, June 28, from 10:15-11:15 a.m., "Scaly not Slimy." Discover the softer side of snakes.

Saturday, July 12, from 10:15-11:15 a.m., "Pollen-Nation." Pollinators are all around us. Discover their importance with a favorite food: pizza. ■

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Losing a spouse is one of the most painful experiences anyone can have. Unfortunately, widows and widowers have to deal with more than just the emotional trauma — they also must consider a range of financial issues. If you've recently been widowed, what financial moves should you consider?

For starters, don't rush into any major decisions. If you're still in the grieving process, you are unlikely to be in the best shape to make significant choices affecting your finances and your life.

But once you feel ready to look at your situation objectively and make appropriate choices, consider the following steps:

- **Review your finances.** Look at your entire financial picture — your assets, investments, debts and income. If you and your spouse had communicated well about your finances, and you shared decisions, you hopefully won't encounter any big surprises. But if your spouse was the partner who mostly handled financial matters, you may need to get up to speed quickly on what you have and what you owe. And, if your spouse had provided a large amount of your household income, you will also need to determine what changes you may need to make to your lifestyle.

- **Address insurance issues.** If you will receive a death benefit from your spouse's insurance policy, what will you do with the money? It may prove helpful in funding your own retirement or meeting other financial goals. But you'll also want to be clear about what other beneficiaries, such as your children, might receive. And while you're looking at insurance, you also might want to look at your own policies — do you need to change beneficiaries?

- **Review your Social Security options.** If you are at least 60, and you were married at least nine months, you may be entitled to Social Security survivor benefits. (If you remarry before age 60, you typically cannot receive survivor benefits, but you can reinstate them if this subsequent marriage ends.) The amount of your survivor's benefits depends on your age and the age of your deceased spouse. You can't claim your deceased spouse's benefits along with your own retirement benefits, so if you qualify for survivor and retirement benefits, you'll receive the larger amount. Depending on your situation, you might come out ahead by delaying your retirement benefits, giving them the chance to grow, while you accept survivor benefits. For more details on receiving Social Security benefits, visit the Social Security Administration's website at www.ssa.gov.

- **Review your estate plans.** The death of a spouse can certainly affect your family's estate plans. So, it's a good idea to review these plans to see what changes, if any, need to be made. When conducting this review, you'll benefit from working with an estate-planning professional.

Finally, keep in mind that you don't have to go it alone during this difficult time. If you're already working with a financial professional, they can help. If you aren't currently working with one, now might be the time to start. By looking at your finances and your family situation holistically, a financial professional can provide guidance that can help ease the stress you are naturally feeling.

Few events are as sad as losing a spouse. But when you feel ready, start taking the steps necessary to continue forward on your life's journey. ■

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Member SIPC. Information provided by Stacey Koeppen, Financial Advisor, 1255 N. Ankeny Blvd., Suite 102, Ankeny, 515-964-4404.

WHY are we here?

About once a year, I have the distinct privilege of helping to lead a mission team to Malawi — a small country in the southern part of the African continent. The church I serve in Ankeny has partnered with churches in Malawi, building deep relationships that often lead to things like clean water wells, nursery schools, church development initiatives, and women's empowerment programs.



The last few years, I have written the "Faith" column in the June Ankeny Living while traveling through Malawi. As I type this article, far from Ankeny, I'm reminded of a question I've asked myself during this trip.

Why are we here?

The question has roots in purpose more than it does tasks. After all, I was just able to list off projects and exciting opportunities our church works in partnership to complete. In a similar way, maybe you could list tasks or opportunities before you today such as conference calls at work, watching the grandkids play ball, getting groceries, or other even more meaningful adventures. I'm not sure that's why we are here...

Preaching on a Sunday morning in Malawi, I found myself asking people in real time to consider a deeper "Why" that can reshape how we experience life and share it with others.

Why are we here? I believe a deeper answer is to (re)discover the God who loves us and learn to embrace the kingdom of heaven being welcomed around us. I believe God offers each of us a chance to learn that serving Jesus as Lord is a path to freedom. I have learned that believing in the power of Jesus' resurrection is the beginning of understanding how powerful God's love can be. I am learning that salvation isn't a task to be completed, but a chance to receive and rejoice every day that we are being saved — from evil, from ourselves, and from separation from Divine connection and relationship.

Sitting in Malawi today — a beautiful, welcoming and also economically impoverished country — I ask myself again... Why are we here? Why are we in Ankeny? Why is where we are born often so impactful? Why is there so much inequality, inequity and injustice in the world around us?

If you are waiting for an answer, you are about to discover I'm the one asking you the question. What I can suggest is this... if we direct our focus toward God and ask God for purpose and meaning through receiving God's grace and love, it will shape every other answer we discover together.

The name "Ankeny" is spoken in villages across Malawi — by thousands of people. Why? Perhaps because we need each other and reminders that our purpose is necessarily tied together in the answer to the question. We — all of us — are loved by God. May we embrace the opportunity to discover our "why" together. ■

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

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FEAR-FREE fireworks

A pet parent's guide to the 4th

As June melts into July, the smell of barbecue fills the air, lawn chairs hit the curb, and fireworks prep begins in earnest. While the Fourth of July is a highlight for many humans, it's more of a horror film for our pets. The sudden booms, flashing lights and strange smells can send even the most relaxed dog into a tailspin — or your cat under the bed for days.



Signs your pet may be struggling:

- Panting, drooling or pacing
- Hiding or escape attempts
- Barking, whining or meowing
- Destructive behavior (chewing doors, scratching floors)
- Indoor accidents

If any of this sounds like your pet, it's time to make a plan. These tips work for fireworks, but can also help with other noise triggers:

Talk to your vet. Calming medications can be game-changers — especially when used before anxiety kicks in. Your vet may also suggest pheromone diffusers, calming supplements or anxiety wraps.

Create a cozy safe zone. Set up a quiet space with minimal windows where your pet can retreat. Add favorite toys, soft bedding and soothing music. If you're not home, use a pet cam to check in.

Take an early walk. If your dog needs exercise, get that walk in well before the fireworks start. It gets them safely inside and helps burn off

anxious energy.

Muffle the noise. Shut windows, pull curtains, and turn on calming sounds — classical, soft rock or reggae are all pet approved.

Stay cool. Your pet feeds off your energy. Keep your tone calm, offer treats or try a frozen Kong. Skip frantic baby talk — it may make them more anxious.

Think long term. Desensitization training with a behaviorist takes time but can help your pet feel more confident around scary sounds in the future.

ID matters. Microchip your pet and check that their tags are up to date — just in case they pull a Houdini.

Whatever your holiday plans include, make sure they also include your pet's comfort. A little planning now can mean a much more peaceful Independence Day — for all of you. ■

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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GET TO KNOW YOUR LOCAL VET

**Dr. Terri Argotsinger,
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1. What inspired you to become a veterinarian?

The cliché answer is that I love animals. But it's true! However, I've also always loved the challenge of medicine; the desire to find a cause for the problems and then create a solution. And the added challenge of doing this with a patient that can't tell you what's wrong keeps my days from being boring!

2. How long have you been a veterinarian? Where did you go to school?

I graduated from Iowa State University's College of Veterinary Medicine in 2008. I did my undergraduate work at Wartburg College.

3. Do you have a special area of interest?

I enjoy performing ultrasounds and surgery. I'm also just starting to learn how to do echocardiograms (ultrasounds of the heart)!

4. What's a fun fact about you most people don't know?

I have four orange feline family members. And the joke that orange cats only have one brain cell isn't always that far off from reality!



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SUMMER-READY library account tips

Here are some tips so you can ensure that your account is summer-ready and ready to support your reading adventures:

Get your kids registered for their own library cards.

You can preregister through our website. Children younger than 12 need a parent or guardian to sign the application and show proof of Iowa residency when picking up their cards. Youth ages 12-17 must list their parent or guardian on their account and provide their own ID (like a school or state ID) or have their guardian with them.

Keep your account updated and in good standing. Accounts must be renewed every three years and free of fines or fees over \$5 to be in good standing. You can easily check your account status by logging into the library catalog with your library card number and PIN. Review contact information under "My Profile" to make sure we can keep you updated with notifications.

Give child caregivers permission on your account. If your child will be visiting the library with a nanny, grandparent or another caregiver, make sure they're authorized to check out books. Simply call the circulation desk to add those names to your account or hand them your library card for easy access.

Important update for AT&T wireless customers: Starting in July, AT&T will no longer support text notifications for library alerts. If you're an AT&T customer, update your account with a valid email or phone number for library notifications.

SummerFest and library services

The Ankeny Chamber SummerFest will be back at The District this July. The library will be open regular hours, but library services will be impacted from Sunday, July 6 through Monday, July 14.

The library's 24/7 outdoor book drop will be inaccessible beginning July 6. The parking lot will have limited access with limited parking near the east drive entrance. Curbside service will be available by calling 515-965-6460 option 3 for the circulation desk. There will be no items due between July 6 and July 13.

Regular access to the library and the 24/7 outdoor book drop will return on Monday, July 14. We appreciate your patience. This community event is not sponsored by the library and any questions can be directed to the Ankeny Chamber of Commerce.

Summer library intern

Welcome to our summer library intern, Aurora Michael-Caceres. She will be helping at library events and the service desks this summer. Aurora just finished her bachelor's degree in creative writing, and she has already begun classes toward her master of library and information science at the University of Iowa. We are very grateful to have her help this summer. ■



Aurora Michael-Caceres

Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library

1250 S.W. District Drive
515-965-6460
www.ankenyiowa.gov/library
Monday - Thursday: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Friday and Saturday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday: 1-5 p.m.



HPV VACCINATION

Help Protect Against Cancer

Human papillomavirus (HPV) infections may be common. Fortunately, the HPV vaccine prevents the virus and the cancers it can cause.

WHO SHOULD GET VACCINATED?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the HPV vaccine for boys and girls, starting as early as age 9 and through age 26.



Health and
Human Services



Ask your child's
healthcare provider
about the HPV vaccine.

Source: cdc.gov 4/25



Polk County Invests in Affordable Housing Initiatives & Homeless Shelter

Polk County Board of Supervisors distributing more than \$44 million on Affordable Housing initiatives & investing in critical infrastructure repairs at Central Iowa Shelter & Services' downtown Des Moines Homeless Shelter. Below are some initiatives Polk County has invested in using one-time federal funding.

Monarch Apartments (4845 Merle Hay Rd, Des Moines)



Anawim Housing converted a former hotel into permanent housing for those experiencing homelessness & offering wrap-around services

42 total housing units

Polk County's commitment: \$1 million

Goldfinch Lofts (3404 Ingersoll Ave, Des Moines)



Cutler Development's Goldfinch Lofts will be the first in the country that is carbon neutral certified and Iowa's first Passive House certified (for extremely high-efficient operational systems).

28 total housing units

Polk County's commitment: \$1 million

Central Iowa Shelter & Services' Downtown Des Moines Homeless Shelter (1420 Mulberry St, Des Moines)



Supporting critical repairs including HVAC, plumbing, electrical, kitchen repairs, and security upgrades

Polk County's commitment: \$817,333.93

"Access to affordable housing is one of the single most important issues facing this country," said Board Chair Matt McCoy. "Polk County is fortunate to have this one-time federal funds to invest in affordable housing initiatives and those experiencing homelessness, because wherever you're at in life, everyone deserves to have a roof over your head."

- Matt McCoy





Community Highlights

Anawim Supportive Hotel-to-Housing Initiative Launches in Des Moines

Polk County Supervisors Matt McCoy and Angela Connolly joined other community leaders to celebrate the grand opening of The Monarch Apartments, the latest achievement in supportive housing spearheaded by Anawim Housing. This innovative hotel-to-housing conversion aims to offer stable, long-term accommodation to 40 individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness. By leveraging funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Polk County has played a pivotal role in bringing this project to fruition. These efforts not only provide residents with much-needed housing but also offer a pathway toward enhanced independence and overall well-being.



Polk County and Ankeny Inaugurate Fourmile Creek Wetland Project

The Fourmile Creek Watershed Management Authority proudly dedicated the Creekview Stormwater Wetland, a landmark collaborative initiative between Polk County and the City of Ankeny. This ambitious project introduces a vast stormwater wetland meticulously crafted to manage urban runoff from approximately 423 acres of pre-regulation developments. Spanning 15 acres, the wetland incorporates key design features, including a precisely sized forebay, intricate micro-topography, and an innovative stream diversion structure. The dedication ceremony offered attendees a unique perspective with a hayrack ride tour, providing an up-close look at the transformational new wetland.



Open House Held for Center at Sixth Development

Polk County Board Chair Matt McCoy had the honor of speaking at the unveiling of the Center at Sixth Development, located along the vibrant 6th Ave. corridor in Des Moines. Proudly backed by Polk County's funding, this unique development aims to empower local minority entrepreneurs. The 9,000-square-foot space will blend innovation and community by offering live/work units alongside a dynamic mixed-use incubator tailored for local artists, chefs, and retailers. This groundbreaking project is poised to serve as a catalyst for revitalizing Des Moines' 6th Avenue corridor, fostering growth and opportunity in the area.



Polk County Gifts Adaptive Bikes to Ankeny Schools

Polk County Supervisor Mark Holm proudly awarded a Polk County Community Betterment Grant to Ankeny High School, marking a significant step towards inclusivity. The grant will fund the introduction of adaptive bikes, designed to empower students who are wheelchair-bound or have other special needs, enabling their active participation in school activities. This initiative underscores a commitment to ensuring accessibility and inclusivity for all students, fostering a more supportive and engaging educational environment.



Character Counts Expansion Supported by Community Funding

Polk County Supervisors are thrilled to back the expansion of the Character Counts initiative, made achievable through generous grants and support from local organizations such as Prairie Meadows and Polk County. This expansion aims to extend the program's influence, reaching more than 30% of classrooms statewide. The program offers early childhood kits centered around the six pillars of character, provided at no cost to classrooms. These kits include comprehensive lesson plans, family guides, music, and posters. Educators can benefit from on-site training at the Robert D. and Billie Ray Center at Drake University or participate in convenient webinars, ensuring impactful and widespread character education.



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EDUCATION

By Ashley Rullestad

MEET Scott Hook

Northside band director hits the right note.

Scott Hook came to Ankeny Centennial High School as its first band director when the school opened, but that position was far from his first band gig. He taught in Guthrie Center and Newton before heading to Ankeny to work alongside his wife, Janelle, who teaches ninth-grade band at Northview. He then moved to Centennial two years later.

Hook currently leads the marching band, the wind symphony and the jazz studio band. He also teaches saxophone, clarinet and flute lessons at Prairie Ridge Middle School, Northview Middle School and Centennial High School.

"I just love to work with students," he says. "Whether it is with our 240-plus member marching band or in a one-on-one lesson, I love to help them work through challenges, create goals and work to be better musicians, leaders and people. It's really amazing what my students are capable of."

In Ankeny, band has a tremendous amount of support from the community and what he calls the "band family," which includes the students, families, alumni, and anyone else they get to work with throughout the year. Hook says it is amazing how invested everyone is in providing the students with a high-level musical education and experience.

"Our goal in the Centennial Band Program is to provide a place for everyone that wants to be a part of it. Whether you want to push yourself to the highest level of your musical abilities and pursue music after high school, or you just want to learn about music and be a part of something that is bigger than you while in high school, we have a place for you. Getting to work with such a large variety of students and to help them meet their musical goals and personal potential is the best part of the job."

Hook's favorite band memory comes from the 2014 Ankeny vs. Centennial football game. It was only the second year Centennial existed, and, during the first quarter, they discovered that the stadium lights weren't working. At halftime, they sent the teams to the locker rooms while they frantically worked to fix the lights. While they were working on the lights, the student section was getting restless, so Hook took the marching band over and started playing pep band songs for them.

"As the sun went down, it became harder and harder to see, so the student section and parent helpers took out their phones and used their flashlights to help the students see the music. As we finished our final song in our pep band folder, the lights came on, and we turned to play the fight song for the team as they came back out. It was our second year of being a high school, but it really felt like we became Centennial that night for the first time. I have a great picture in my office that was taken from the other side of the field as the sun went down and the student section had their flashlights out."

Hook enjoys spending time with his family hiking, camping, playing board games or watching a movie or baseball game.

"Just spending time in the backyard reading a book with a cup of coffee and my two dogs, that's my happy place." ■



Scott Hook leads the Centennial marching band, the wind symphony and the jazz studio band.

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ANKENY named Top 25 Best Places to Live

U.S. News & World Report, the global authority in rankings and consumer advice, has named the city of Ankeny one of the 2025-2026 Best Places to Live in the United States. Ankeny ranked No. 18 in the nation, out of the top 250 unveiled. Ankeny was also named the No. 1 in Best Places to Live in Iowa and No. 11 in Best Small Cities to Live.

This year's list expanded to evaluate more than 850 of the country's top cities based on how well they meet consumers' living expectations, with measures including value, job market, desirability and quality of life.

"This national recognition reflects what makes Ankeny so special: high-quality services, safe neighborhoods, excellent schools and a strong sense of community," said Ankeny Interim City Manager Mike Schrock. "It's also a testament to the thoughtful leadership and long-term vision that guide our city. Our elected officials, staff and community partners work together every day to maintain the character that makes Ankeny feel like home while delivering the services and amenities people value most."

Ankeny is a vibrant growing community that offers a high quality of life, strong schools and safe neighborhoods. Known for its extensive trail system, the city features more than 100 miles of trails that connect over 50 parks, neighborhoods and natural areas. The city continues to invest in the services, spaces and connections that make it a great place to call home.

The four measures factored into this year's ranking were weighted in part based on a public survey of thousands of individuals throughout the U.S. to find out what qualities they consider important in a place to live. The methodology also factors in data from U.S. News' internal resources, Applied Geographic Solutions, and U.S. government agencies including the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census Bureau, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

For more information on Best Places to Live, explore Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) using #BestPlacesToLive. ■

ANKENY receives \$10,000 Betterment Grant

The City of Ankeny announced it received a \$10,000 Community Betterment Grant from the Polk County Board of Supervisors to support enhancements to the High Trestle Trail Experience Park. The funding will be used to install benches and waste receptacles along the trail. These improvements are part of the ongoing development of the High Trestle Trail Experience Park.

"We appreciate the support from the Polk County Board of Supervisors," said Derek Lord, City of Ankeny. "This grant will help us create a more welcoming and enjoyable space for trail and park users."

The Polk County Community Betterment Grant Program was designed to provide financial support to non-profit organizations that promote cultural, recreational, educational, and essential human services to residents. For more information, visit www.ankenyiowa.gov. ■

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THE SCOTCHEROOS that became a family tradition

“My mom’s Scotcheroos are the best!”

The first time I heard one of my daughters say that, I was deeply honored — and I still feel that way every time I hear it. They often tell me about other versions they have tried and always end with, “They were good, but yours are the best!”

In our family, Scotcheroos are a must-have at gatherings, reunions, road trips and just about any occasion. These sweet treats deliver a perfect combo: smooth peanut butter flavor, a satisfying crunch, and a thick, rich layer of butterscotch-chocolate topping that keeps everyone coming back for seconds. I am happy to share the secrets behind their success, but I first must give credit where credit is due. My friend Tammy Even gifted me this recipe more than 30 years ago at my bridal shower. I still have the recipe book my friends gave me that day, and I use it often.

Now, the secrets:

1. Use Special K cereal – it gives the perfect texture and structure. I know many recipes use crispy rice cereal, but trust me on this one. It is truly the ingredient that makes the difference.

2. Don’t skip on the topping – use one full bag each of semi-sweet chocolate chips and butterscotch chips.

3. Watch the syrup closely – this step can make or break the batch. Don’t overcook or undercook it. Bring it just to a boil (for maybe a minute). The sugar crystals need to melt completely, or the syrup will turn gritty. But overcook it, and your Scotcheroos will be too chewy.

Here’s a tip: Dip a spoon in the hot syrup, tap a little onto the counter, and taste it. If you can still feel sugar crystals, keep it on the stove a bit longer. The moment they are gone, pull it off the heat.

Give these a try and let me know what you think. Do you have recipe traditions you would like to share? Send them my way at jolene@iowalivingmagazines.com. Happy snacking! ■

Information provided by Jolene Goodman, vice president of Big Green Umbrella Media.



Scotcheroos

Ingredients

- 6 cups Special K cereal
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 cup corn syrup
- 1.5 cups peanut butter
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 12-ounce package of semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 12-ounce package of butterscotch chips



Directions

- Let sugar and corn syrup come to a boil in saucepan on the stove. Do not let boil long, just until sugar is not crystalized. Remove from stove. Add peanut butter and vanilla. Stir. Add cereal. Press into a 9-inch by 13-inch pan. Let cool. Melt all chips in a microwave-safe bowl in the microwave. Spread over bars. Allow topping to set before cutting and serving. Enjoy!

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VOICES of Ankeny

Tomlinson father-son duo behind the mic

If you've ever been to a football game in Ankeny, chances are you've heard Rodney Tomlinson's voice. He is the announcer for countless Centennial and Ankeny High School games.

Tomlinson got his start announcing in the late 1990s while living in Ames and traveling home to Jefferson to attend a high school football game.

"The gentleman on the PA was trying but didn't seem too familiar with football," Tomlinson recalls. "He didn't know what the penalty signals were, so he just didn't say anything."

Tomlinson was sitting with a group of grandparents who were there to support their grandkids.

"They weren't sure what was going on either, so I started telling them what the signals meant and what the penalties were," Tomlinson says. "They told me I should go up in the booth and do it from there."

After that, Tomlinson made an audition tape and sent it to the school's athletic director.

"He called me, and I was in the press box behind a microphone the following Friday night," he recalls. "That was October 1997. I drove to Jefferson to cover Ram football and some basketball for the next 14 years."

During that time, Tomlinson announced whatever he could to build his resume, including demolition derbies, tractor pulls, MMA fights and more.

He and his wife, Karen, moved to Ankeny in 2001, but since there were no announcing opportunities in town at the time, he continued traveling back to Jefferson.

When Ankeny announced it would build a second high school, Tomlinson jumped at the chance. He began sending his resume annually to the school administration.

"I sent them at least one resume every year," Tomlinson recalls.

Fast forward to 2012 — the first year of the split — and Tomlinson got a call from Brent Butjer, the new athletic director at Ankeny High School, about a basketball opportunity.

"I went in and auditioned for him and was given my first announcing job in Ankeny," he says. "I have been at Ankeny ever since."



Father-son duo Rodney and Cade Tomlinson announce for a variety of sports in Ankeny.

A few years later, Tomlinson began announcing for Centennial as well. Today, he covers soccer, volleyball, baseball and basketball for both schools. His son, Cade, has also joined the team.

Cade started attending events with his dad early on. One night, when he was 6, Tomlinson handed him the mic.

"I whispered in his ear, and he would repeat it over the microphone," Tomlinson says. "At 8, he no longer needed me to tell him what to say. He decided to start announcing on his own."

Cade worked alongside his dad until age 14. Then, as long as his mom could drive him, he started announcing solo. Now as an adult, he continues to announce both in Ankeny and across Iowa.

Tomlinson has added a few others to the team, including Will Moore (a current Ankeny Centennial student), Michael Porshe and Riley Roisin, their "IT-ographer" — an IT whiz and photography enthusiast behind Rusted Rose Studios.

For Tomlinson, the best part of the job is helping create the atmosphere and adding something special to the experience.

"One of my favorite things is when someone tells me they enjoyed their experience," he says. "It is especially fun when it is the visiting fans that take time to say something. Ankeny's dedication to sports is something that helps define our community. Contributing to that by announcing is a great way to give back to the Ankeny community." ■

FROM ISOLATION to connection

Why community is the missing piece in aging well.

When we talk about aging well, the conversation usually starts with health: staying active, eating right and avoiding falls. However, if the past few years have taught us anything, it's this: We were specially



designed for connection. We are hard wired for face-to-face interaction, for having someone nearby who notices when we're not ourselves, and especially for those small, everyday moments that make us feel like we belong somewhere and with someone.

And yet, loneliness is quietly impacting more older adults than ever before. The numbers are hard to ignore. According to the National Institute on Aging, seniors who are socially isolated face a significantly higher risk of dementia, high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. Some researchers even say loneliness affects health as much as smoking a pack a day.

It's hard to believe that something as emotional as loneliness can have such a strong impact on our physical health — but it does.

Behind those numbers are real lives. These are people who spent years surrounded by coworkers, friends, neighbors and family and now find themselves spending more and more time alone.

Here's the good news: Community can change everything.

When older adults live in a setting where relationships are part of the rhythm of daily life — whether that's over coffee in the morning, a shared meal in the evening, or someone stopping by to say hello — it changes more than just their mood. It supports memory, strengthens immunity, brings back a sense of purpose and even contributes to a longer lifespan.

Human connection meets a deep, emotional need. It reminds us that we matter, that someone notices when we're not at breakfast, and that life still holds meaningful moments to enjoy and share.

I've had so many conversations with families who tell me, "They're just not ready yet." And I understand. Change is hard, especially when it involves your home, your independence and your identity. But when we stop and ask, "What could this next chapter look like?" — with more connection, more support and more ease — it often becomes less about what you're giving up and more about what you're gaining.

Aging well isn't just about living longer. It's about living fully, with people who see you, know you and walk alongside you.

If you're thinking about what comes next for you or someone you love, don't underestimate the power of community. Sometimes the best kind of care isn't medical. It's relational.

And that kind of connection might just be the most important part of the journey. ■

Information provided by Erik Ofloy, Sales and Marketing Director at CopperWood at Prairie Trail, 2855 S.W. Vintage Parkway, Ankeny, IA 50023, 515-425-3262, eofloy@copperwoodsl.com.

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10 SUMMER maintenance tips for your home

Summer is coming, which means it's time to prepare your home for the warm weather. Follow these 10 summer maintenance tips:

Clear gutters and downspouts: Gutters and downspouts can accumulate a lot of debris throughout the winter and spring. If debris is stuck in your gutters, it can cause problems like slow drainage, debris dams or water overflow. This could potentially damage your home and result in expensive repairs.

Inspect and wash windows: Wash the inside and outside of your windows to remove any buildup from cooking, fireplaces or dust that accumulated. While doing this, inspect your window screens to ensure there are no necessary repairs needed.

Clean dryer vent: To remove any built-up lint and support its efficiency, clean your



exterior dryer vent.

Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors: While this is typically stressed during winter months, testing your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to ensure they are working is important year-round.

Clean and change HVAC filters: Change and clean your HVAC filters, vents and ducts for optimal performance. Consider scheduling a professional HVAC inspection to ensure your system is ready for the summer heat.

Service and clean your air conditioner: Depending on your air conditioner, consider hosing it down to clean any accumulated dust or debris from the winter and spring months. Cleaning the unit itself and removing any weeds around the unit will help it run more efficiently.

Adjust ceiling fans: In the summer, adjust your ceiling fans to spin counterclockwise by flipping the fan's reverse switch. This will provide a downdraft, keeping the room cool.

Seal air leaks: When temps rise, prevent

drafts that cause cool air loss and increase your AC bill. You can seal any leaks with weather stripping or caulk. Taking these precautions early will keep your house cool and your energy costs down.

Inspect roof: Prior to summer storms, assess your roof to ensure there are no cracked, curled or missing shingles. If so, contact a repairman to prevent any further damage.

Trim trees: Assess the trees around your house to ensure there are no broken branches, cracks or hollowed limbs. If you do see any, prune, cut or safely remove to prevent damage.

Summer weather can bring the heat. Follow these tips to help prevent high utility bills, avoid problems down the road, and ensure your home is summer-ready. ■

Information provided by Tracy Gibson, VP, Ankeny Branch Manager, 515-965-2497, tgibson@bankerstrust.com, 1925 N. Ankeny Blvd., Ankeny, IA 50023.



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WHEN a child with a disability turns 18

A child transitioning from a minor to a legal adult can be challenging for any parent. However, parents of children with a disability run into additional difficulties. A parent's ability to make decisions about services and medical care end when the child turns 18. There are three major things to consider:



Is my child able to make their own decisions about health care, finances and independent living? In January 2020, significant changes were made to the Iowa Code regarding guardianships. To establish a guardianship, there must be a finding of incapacity. This places restrictions on the rights of the individual under the guardianship. Under the new law, prior to establishing a guardianship, the court must consider less

restrictive alternatives. Children with minor impairments may be able to sign medical authorizations to release information to allow parents to continue to talk to providers. With more severe mental and cognitive disabilities, the adult child may be able to execute a power of attorney. If a guardianship is required, the law allows a petition to be filed when an individual is 17 ½ years old instead of waiting until after the child turns 18. This prevents a potential gap in services.

How will my child support themselves? A child receiving benefits does not automatically qualify for disability as an adult. The standards for disability differ from children to adults. If a child receives Supplemental Security Income, the Social Security Administration will do a review to determine if that child's disability continues. A minor who is not eligible for child benefits may still meet the criteria for adult disability. After 18, a claim for Social Security

disability should be filed.

Who will provide for my child when I die? Parents of children with disabilities should review their own estate planning documents to ensure that when they die, money can be set aside for the children without making them ineligible for government benefits. This can be done with a Supplemental Needs Trust, also known as a Third Party Trust. This is a specifically worded Medicaid-compliant trust that conforms to the regulations of the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services and the Social Security Administration.

It is important to talk to an attorney who specializes in disability and is familiar with government benefits for your child and for yourself. ■

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

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PLAN AHEAD

By Kathy Dunbar

THE GIFT of funeral preplanning

As you enjoy the beautiful Iowa summer and time with family and friends, think about giving them the gift of having your final arrangements planned. There are so many things that can be done, whether or not you choose to take advantage of your funeral home's prepayment options.

Determine how you want your life to be celebrated and get those wishes on file with your funeral home of choice.

Get your personal information recorded and on file with your funeral home of choice.

Write your own obituary. You have lived a full life, and there are things you may want mentioned that others may not remember when a funeral home's services will be needed. Get that information on file with your funeral home of choice.

As we like to say to the folks who we have the privilege to serve, we will take as much information as you will give us. Even if you have that special file in your own home where all your important information resides, get that information on file with the funeral home. The funeral home is the place where this information will be needed, and it helps make things so much easier for the family when the funeral home already has these important pieces of information at their fingertips.

I will say it again...planning ahead is a gift. ■



Information provided by Kathy Dunbar, Advanced Planning Counselor, Hamilton's on Westown Parkway, 3601 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, 515-697-3681

WELLNESS

By Tricia Heberer

BENEFITS of medical grade retinol skin products

Retinol, a derivative of vitamin A, is widely used in skincare for its powerful anti-aging and skin-renewing effects. Here are the main benefits:

Reduces fine lines and wrinkles: Retinol stimulates collagen production, which helps improve skin elasticity and reduces the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles over time. **Improves skin texture and tone:** It promotes faster cell turnover, helping to smooth rough skin, fade dark spots, and even out skin tone. **Fights acne:** Retinol helps unclog pores, reduce inflammation and prevent future breakouts by promoting the shedding of dead skin cells. **Fades hyperpigmentation:** It can reduce sun spots, melasma and post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation by accelerating the fading of pigmented cells. **Minimizes pores. Improves skin firmness. Enhances product absorption:** By removing dead skin buildup, retinol allows other skincare ingredients to penetrate more effectively.

While effective, retinol can also cause irritation, dryness or sensitivity — especially when first introduced. Contact a skincare specialist to determine what product(s) are best suited for your skin type and how to meet your skincare goals. ■



Information provided by Tricia Heberer, Owner/LE, Luxe Medical Spa and Aesthetics, 88 Paine Circle, Suite 7, Bondurant, IA 50035, theberer@luxemedicalspa.net, 515-630-8637.

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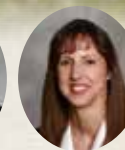
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HELP ensure continued independence as you age

Sandra, 68, is committed to aging in place. She's active, eats a balanced diet, and enjoys good health. But her son and daughter, both living out of state, can't help but worry. What if something changes — and she suddenly needs care?



a Continuing Care at Home (CC@H) membership. Typically offered by organizations that specialize in aging services, CC@H programs are designed to help older adults remain in their homes longer, with a strong focus on proactive health and financial planning for future care.

If you're considering a CC@H membership — for yourself or a loved one — be sure to ask the right questions:

Does the program offer personalized well-being support? A good program should provide guidance such as wellness coaching to help you stay independent and thrive. Research shows people achieve better outcomes with the support of a dedicated advocate.

Are future care costs covered? Quality programs help pay for services you may

need later, whether it's home health care or a transition to a senior living community.

Who's behind the program? Look into the organization offering it. Do they have a strong track record in the aging services space? Longevity and a solid reputation matter — they're signs the program will be there when you need it.

The bottom line: Not all CC@H programs are alike. Choose one that fits your current lifestyle and supports your future — while offering peace of mind for you and your family. ■

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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ON WITH LIFE receives certificate of achievement

On With Life has received a certificate of achievement for its participation in the American Heart Association's Mission: Lifeline Stroke post-acute care initiative to enhance guideline-based care for stroke patients, ultimately improving and prolonging lives.

Stroke is a leading cause of serious long-term disability in the U.S., and approximately 795,000 people each year experience a new or recurrent stroke, according to the American Heart Association's 2023 statistical update. Participation in the American Heart Association's post-acute care initiative can help facilities support faster and more effective recovery from stroke through standardized coordination, adherence and implementation of evidence-based care.

Certificate of achievement recipients have committed to establishing a stroke-specific rehab program, providing stroke education to all staff members, implementing evidence-based protocols and policies, and continuous quality improvement.

Evidence-based rehabilitation and secondary prevention interventions improve recovery after stroke and reduce secondary complications. However, stroke rehabilitation expertise, processes of care, and educational resources vary among sites where post-acute care is delivered. The American Heart Association, the world's leading nonprofit organization focused on heart and brain health for all, developed quality standards based on the Association's 2016 Guidelines for Adult Stroke Rehabilitation and Recovery to address these gaps.

The post-acute care initiative provides a framework for assisting facilities to improve care according to the American Heart Association's rigorous science-based requirements for stroke rehabilitation, including program management, patient and caregiver education and support, care coordination, clinical management and quality improvement.

"Participation in this program benefits the patient and the facility by standardizing care practices," said Dave Anders, On With Life Clinical Director. "When there are evidence-based processes during every phase of care, patients have the best opportunity for positive outcomes. This initiative helps patients and their loved ones know participating facilities follow these important best practices."

Facilities participating in the post-acute care initiative receive a participation stipend and site-specific quality improvement support and process improvement ideas surrounding quality standards for stroke recovery, rehabilitation and secondary prevention. Facilities also have the opportunity to be part of a learning collaborative, working with experts in stroke rehabilitation to build tools and share and create best practices. Participation improves collaboration between post-acute care facilities and others involved in stroke care, including hospitals and outpatient providers.

"On With Life is committed to improving patient care by adhering to the latest guidelines," said Anders. "The post-acute care initiative makes it easier for our teams to put proven knowledge and guidelines to work on a daily basis, which studies show can help patients recover better. The end goal is to ensure more people can experience longer, healthier lives." ■

ANKENY receives Urban Water Quality funds

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig announced the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship will invest in 14 urban water quality projects within communities across the state. Secretary Naig made the announcement alongside city and community leaders from West Des Moines at an event at Legacy Woods, the location of one of the new water quality projects. The announcement was made as part of the annual Iowa Soil and Water Conservation Week.

Polk County is partnering with the City of Ankeny to plan the construction of two stormwater wetlands. This is part of a larger Fourmile Creek greenway restoration project that includes nine oxbows and wetlands with stream restoration on Fourmile Creek. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship investment in the project is \$200,000.

Utilizing funding from the state's Water Quality Initiative (WQI) and other sources, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship will provide cost-share grants that cover up to 50 percent of the total cost of each project. The Department is investing nearly \$2.7 million to support the 14 projects, which will leverage an overall investment of more than \$5.7 million.

To learn more about urban conservation practices and projects in Iowa, visit CleanWaterIowa.org. ■

ALLBEE releases debut horror book

Ankeny Author Robert Allbee invites readers into a chilling world where the familiar landscapes of rural America turn hostile in his new anthology, "Harvest of Dread: 5 Tales of Terror." This gripping collection offers five standalone stories that reimagine classic horror in rural farms, forgotten towns and unsettling relics.



The common theme in all these stories is the quiet, slow-building fear that something deeply unnatural is stirring. Each story immerses readers in atmospheric settings, bringing to life a haunting version of the countryside where the ordinary becomes terrifying.

The anthology opens with "Big Jake," a gripping story set on a struggling Iowa farm. Here, the introduction of a revolutionary new livestock feed triggers a horrifying transformation in the animals. Readers are drawn into the emotional struggle of farmer Thomas Allen, whose desperation to save his family's legacy collides with forces he cannot control. Through suspenseful storytelling, the author explores what it truly means to survive.

Other stories in the collection include "Hillcrest," where a run-down, drive-in movie theater holds memories too powerful to stay buried, and "The Marionette Museum," where obsession and dark history twist together inside a museum filled with eerie, lifelike puppets. In "Lancelot," medieval legend merges with horror in a modern setting, while "Howl" follows a community grappling with ancient forces that threaten to rip apart everything they know.

With his rich, accessible style and attention to emotional detail, the author has created horror that lingers well beyond the final page. "Harvest of Dread: 5 Tales of Terror" is now available in paperback and hardcover editions on Amazon. ■

SPONDYLO... What?

What is a Spondylolisthesis?

The word "spondylolisthesis" derives from "spondylo," meaning spine, and "listhesis," meaning slippage. A spondylolisthesis is a forward slippage of one vertebra (one of the 33 spinal column bones) relative to another. A spondylolisthesis usually occurs toward the base of the lumbar spine. Spondylolisthesis can be described according to the extent of slippage. Commonly, the slippage grading system identifies Grade 1 as the least advanced and Grade 5 as the most advanced. The spondylolisthesis is graded by measuring how much of a vertebral body has slipped forward over the body beneath it.

Types of Spondylolisthesis

There are several types of spondylolisthesis, commonly categorized as developmental or acquired. "Developmental" indicates that the condition may have existed at birth or may have developed during early childhood. "Acquired" means that the condition is due to trauma (like falling off a horse or ladder) or due to degeneration from the joints wearing out due to repetitive forces.

What symptoms might I notice?

Many people with a spondylolisthesis have no symptoms and will only become aware of it when revealed on an X-ray for a different problem. However, there are several symptoms that often accompany spondylolisthesis:

- Pain in the low back, especially after exercise.
- Increased lordosis (i.e., swayback).
- Pain and/or weakness in one or both thighs or legs.
- Reduced ability to control bowel and bladder functions.
- Tight hamstring musculature and hip pain.

In advanced spondylolisthesis cases, changes may occur in the way people stand and walk, for example, development of a waddling style of walking. This causes the abdomen to protrude further, due to the low back curving forward more. The torso (chest, etc.) may seem shorter; muscle spasms in the low back may occur.

How is a spondylolisthesis treated?

The slippage grade and the symptoms will help determine a suitable spondylolisthesis treatment. Treatment focuses on decreasing symptoms, healing damaged tissues, and restoring the stabilizing musculature for long-term relief. The further the vertebra has slipped, the more difficult it is to find a treatment that will offer relief. There is no perfect fix for the spondylolisthesis. Treatment is focused on symptoms management rather than finding a cure, much like diabetes care. When a spondylolisthesis fails to respond to conservative care, surgery may be necessary or beneficial.

Chiropractors have developed successful treatment protocols to manage many grades of spondylolisthesis without the use of drugs or surgery. If you or someone you know is suffering from back pain and have not found the relief for which you are looking, 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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SUMMERFEST: THE event of the season

I was born and raised in Ankeny, and, for as long as I can remember, SummerFest has been a cornerstone of my summer. It wasn't just an event — it was THE event. As a kid, I'd hop on my bike, gather with friends, and ride straight to SummerFest. On the days I wasn't biking, I'd beg my grandma to drop me off.



SummerFest was where all the best memories happened. One dollar corndogs from the fire department were non-negotiable, paired with the amazing, ice-cold, fresh lemonade. The smell of kettle corn and funnel cakes filled the air, and the carnival rides called our names. I remember hanging out with friends until curfew, chasing laughter and fireworks under the summer sky. I also remember riding the Ferris wheel with my girlfriend, who, years later, became my wife.

Today, my wife, Laura, and I are proud to call ourselves business owners in this incredible community. Ankeny has given us so much — lifelong friendships, meaningful opportunities, and a place to build both our family and our future. Being part of this city, personally and professionally, means everything to us. Now, raising our two children here, we get to relive the magic of SummerFest through their eyes. Watching them light up over the same rides, food and fun I once cherished is a full-circle joy I'll never take for granted.

Ankeny SummerFest is more than food and fun. It's community. It's tradition. It's a celebration of everything that makes Ankeny feel like home. It brings people together from all walks of life, generations apart, all sharing in a weekend of connection and memories.

In 2025, I'm humbled to serve as co-chair of SummerFest. And, in 2026, I'll be stepping into the role of chair. It's a surreal honor — one I never imagined as that 13-year-old kid riding his bike to the fairgrounds. But I couldn't be more excited to give back to the event that gave so much to me.

SummerFest helped shape my childhood, brought me closer to lifelong friends, and now gives my kids something magical to look forward to every year. Being part of its future is both a privilege and a responsibility I hold close to my heart.

The Ankeny Chamber is excited to be able to showcase local Ankeny area chamber businesses as sponsors, vendors and generous contributors to this ever-growing community. With this 150-year celebration, attendees will enjoy 12 amazing bands on stage including Jordan Beem, Dick Danger Band, kids from The School of Rock Ankeny, and, everyone's favorite, The Pork Tornadoes.

As Diane Weber, director of events and communications at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce, says, "Ankeny Chamber SummerFest is a terrific opportunity for local businesses to connect with the community through sponsorships and vendor booths, showcasing their commitment to Ankeny's continued growth and vibrancy. This year's three-day festival celebrates our history and the support of our dedicated chamber members while providing a fun, family-friendly atmosphere for people of all ages." ■

Information provided by Cody Gebauer, 2025 SummerFest Co-Chair and Co-Owner of Gebauer Enterprises, 5207 N.W. 10th St., Ankeny, 515-491-0545, gebauerenterprises.com, cody@gebauerenterprises.com.



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ARTS Festival

Ankeny Art Center's Second Annual Arts Festival featured 50 artists on May 17 in Uptown Ankeny.



Julie and Brian Hayes



Maggie Douglas won Best of Show



David and Sara Midkiff



Nicole Ahrens-Stigers, Matt Stigers, Grant Thornton and Kelsey Krois



Lauren and Jill Heimerman



Reagan Kruse



Joe and Sarah McGaffey



Pam Worthington



Jana and Evelyn Hardie



Molly Spain and Tessa Fjelland



Hilary E. Kodatt and Alexa Middleton

OUT & ABOUT



The Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting at Benway Beauty, 1515 S.W. Main St., Suite 101, on May 6.



Katlyn and Thomas Baumhover at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting at Benway Beauty on May 6.



Bre Harken, Gabby Farrington and Veronica Gevik at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting at Benway Beauty on May 6.



Mendy Rogers and Kenley Strovers at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting at Benway Beauty on May 6.



Nikki Doran and Laura Wallace at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting at Benway Beauty on May 6.



Chase VanLoon and Taylor Voitel at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours at Ankeny Real Estate Group on May 8.



Heather Phillips and Joanne Friedman at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours at Ankeny Real Estate Group on May 8.



Stacey Shaffer and Troy Boelman at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours at Ankeny Real Estate Group on May 8.



Jayden Moore and Hunter Regan at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours at Ankeny Real Estate Group on May 8.



Andrew Boyles, Matt May and David Schabold at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours at Ankeny Real Estate Group on May 8.



Kyle and Cevriye Horn at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours at Ankeny Real Estate Group on May 8.

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MISCELLANEOUS

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MISCELLANEOUS

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