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JULY 2025

# Living

MAGAZINE

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Learn from local industry experts

# Dream YARDS

Residents share how they  
make the best of their  
outdoor spaces.

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WELCOME

## LAWN striping

I vividly remember the pride that Jolene and I had in owning our first home. That was more than 30 years ago, but, in many ways, it still feels like yesterday.

One of the most satisfying aspects of home ownership, at least for us, was having a yard to care for. We couldn't wait to mow our own lawn, do our own landscaping, plant our own trees, etc. It was a matter of pride, and we enjoyed it. It was also a time before becoming parents when we had more hours and more energy to devote to such things. What we didn't have back then were two dimes to rub together, and that's why we begged and borrowed from family members for used mowers and used trimmers and all the other stuff necessary to take care of a lawn.

I remember when I decided I should apply fertilizer to our lawn. This was new to me, as my frugal parents never spent their hard-earned money on such frivolous things. Mom simply had my siblings and me pull weeds by hand. But, as a first-time homeowner, I wanted my lawn to look nice. So, I bought the fertilizer and the spreader and I went to work, making paths throughout my yard like the instructions said to do. What I didn't do was have the dial set to the right number for my fertilizer spreader, and I burned my entire yard with stripes. This was obviously not what I had hoped for, but it did provide fodder for some good-natured ribbing from my neighbors during the years that followed. I gladly gave that fertilizer spreader to my sister-in-law, and I hired a company to do the fertilization from that point forward. And, in time, my lawn took shape — just in time to sell the property and start all over again at our new home.

Today, I still enjoy taking care of my yard — mowing, trimming, gardening, mulching, landscaping, tree trimming — and I am even fertilizing again. But, as I have aged, these tasks became overwhelming, especially when doubled. A few years ago, Jolene and I bought a home on a nearby lake, which meant we now had two properties to care for. It didn't take long before we realized the benefits in owning a townhome and having those yard tasks handled by someone else. I continue to get my fill of yard maintenance enjoyment at our lake home, but I do smile when watching the pros take care of our townhome property. And, thankfully, neither place has lawn stripes burned into the yards.

Thanks for reading. ■

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# Dream YARDS

Residents share how they make the best of their outdoor spaces.

By Ashley Rullestad

Give 10 people the blank slate of a spacious yard, and you are likely to see those yards evolve into 10 different visions. Some will be a fenced-in oasis for dogs and kids to run, roll and play. Others will have pools and fire pits for summer fun. A few may even feature makeshift ballfields, sledding hills, playgrounds or ponds. And most all will provide a scenic setting for enjoying sunrises and sunsets. Whatever the vision, area residents share how their outdoor spaces have become their dream yards.

Vicki Meeker's yard is a colorful retreat.  
Photo by Todd Rullestad



## FEATURE

### The “lawn ranger”

Joel Hall was already a self-proclaimed lawn lover when he and his family moved into their new house in the fall of 2024. His first mow in May got him started on the path to taking care of the new space this season. Rather than seeing lawn mowing as a chore, for Hall, it is an art. He embraces his love of lawns in weekly Facebook videos with hashtags like #thelawnranger and #dadlife.

“Mowing the lawn has become a fun hobby,” he says. “A couple of years ago, I started recording post-lawn mow interviews. It started as fun videos to send to a friend who also enjoyed taking care of his lawn. My wife told me to post on social media, and it’s become a fun weekly tradition.”

Hall says that the current yard is relatively small but has been well taken care of by the previous owner. It has a fire pit area and



Joel Hall, the “lawn ranger,” has a new yard to take care of now. Photo by Todd Rullestad

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Sabetha Mumm's husband, AJ, made her a rain barrel system for watering the garden.

great landscaping with a lot of plant life. It backs up to one of the holes of the Briarwood Golf Club, so the view is great, and the kids get to add a stray golf ball or two each week to their collection.

The backyard is not fenced in, so the kids and their friends and cousins are able to run circles around the house. Their dog also enjoys chasing the occasional deer or rabbit.

"We have a great deck, which we enjoy hanging out on and watching the golfers come through. The fire pit provides a great spot for making s'mores."

They use a lawn service that provides fertilization and weed control services, which Hall recommends.

"Whether you hire it out or do it yourself, a lawn care program goes a long way to keep the grass looking great. Mowing once or twice a week is also key. Even if the grass isn't perfectly green, a fresh mow with straight lines makes any yard look better."

## Living large

Sabetha and AJ Mumm built their house on Ankeny's northwest side in 2010. What attracted them to the lot was the large yard. They live on almost an acre that backs up to woods and Rock Creek.

"I love how much space there is," Sabetha says. "I love the creek that runs through the backyard. I love that my dogs have so much room to run. But my favorite part of the yard is my garden and the rain barrel system my



One of the best parts of the Mumm yard is the firepit for s'mores.

husband set up so I can water it when it gets really hot."

AJ created the system to make it easier to manage the garden. Sabetha is a big fan of their garden veggies. AJ also created the family's fire pit, where they like to make s'mores and relax and chat as a family.

AJ is also tasked with mowing and trimming the yard, but they also use a lawn and landscaping service to keep it looking lush and green.

"We love to play with the dogs, sit at the fire pit, and enjoy the vegetables from the garden. I just love sitting out there and listening to all the birds and enjoying a small slice of nature while still living in the city," Sabetha says.



The Mums have almost an acre of land in northwest Ankeny.



## FEATURE

### Suburban oasis

Vicki and Jeff Meeker moved into their central Ankeny home in 2013. The backyard of the house backs up to First Street, and Vicki knew she wanted to create something special out of the nice corner lot yard.

"When we moved in, there was nothing in the backyard," Vicki says. "As an interior designer, I wanted to create a fairy garden. We also needed to block as much noise as possible from the traffic on First Street. I love my backyard because there are many places to enjoy something interesting."

Today, the yard features a pond with koi fish. They have a sidewalk made of broken plates put into a mosaic pattern. Wine bottles keep their dog from escaping through the fence but add whimsy, too. Vicki has decorated with birdhouses and other odds and ends. The couple likes to find treasures at flea markets and auctions, and they often repurpose items. The windows in the fence are from Vicki's grandmother's house built in 1950.

"The glasshouse is the best part. It

is cozy in front of the fireplace or on a rainy day. I doodled the plan out, and my incredible husband, Jeff, made it into a reality. I come up with crazy ideas, and Jeff makes them come to life."

The Meekers have family gatherings as often as possible. The grandchildren like to feed the fish and help pick the berries when ripe, and they are slowly figuring out what is a weed and what isn't.

Though the backyard is full of treasures, the corner lot still offers plenty of space for the kids to run around in the front and side yards. The Meekers do all the yard work except for using a lawn service for the front yard grass. As a retiree, Vicki has the time.

"The best times are to lounge on the swing with the breeze blowing and listen to the 6-foot wind chime play a tune. We are redoing our garden area, and that is my next project, so I am trying to figure out what to do. We spend a lot of time out in the yard and try our best at keeping it a great spot for birdwatching and relaxing." ■



Vicki Meeker's yard includes a pond, among a variety of features. Photo by Todd Rullestad

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### Upcoming in Ankeny Living magazine:

**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](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com) with your stories.

**Home Improvement:** Our annual Home Improvement issue in which we share residents' stories about their remodeling projects is coming up. Please share your stories about the work you have done on your home and how it has changed your use of the space and enjoyment of your home. Email [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com) with your stories.

### 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 every Saturday morning through Aug. 30 at Wagner Park. Yoga is led by a different professional instructor each week. People of all ages and all skill levels are welcome to attend. Yoga in the Park is sponsored by UnityPoint Health - Des Moines. For more information, including a complete list of instructors, visit [www.ankenyiowa.gov/465/Yoga-in-the-Park](http://www.ankenyiowa.gov/465/Yoga-in-the-Park).

### Ankeny Art Center Adult Classes

1520 S.W. Ordinance Road, Ankeny

Register at [www.ankenyartcenter.org](http://www.ankenyartcenter.org).

Upcoming classes are:

- 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

### Uptown's Farmers Market

Every Saturday until Sept. 27,  
8 a.m. to noon

Ankeny Market & Pavilion Park,  
715 W. First St., Uptown Ankeny

The 2025 Farmers Market will be open every Saturday through Sept. 27. Support local vendors featuring a variety of produce and items.

### Neighbor to Neighbor Free Meal

July 27, 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 summer salads and cold meat sandwiches. 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.

### 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.

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## EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Check for cancellations

### Beats and Eats

July 17 and 24

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

Enjoy this fun summertime event featuring food trucks, live music, activities, yard games, the Uptown train and more. On July 17, enjoy music by Cover That and food trucks Main Street Cafe, Nina's Tacos, Pho All Seasons, Sweet Swirls and Lucky Wife. Activities will include Hock Farms petting zoo, Pink Stew balloon twist, spin art and a parkour obstacle course. Enjoy The Get Down Band on July 24 and food from Loudi's, Flame, Outside Scoop and Lucky Wife. Activities include axe throw inflatable, basketball inflatable, K Brede Art face paint and a parkour obstacle course. Beats & 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](http://www.ankenyiowa.gov/eats).

### Family Fun Night

July 25, Aug. 29, Sept. 26, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Edencrest at Siena Hills,  
455 S.W. Ankeny Road, Ankeny

The public is invited to Family Fun Night at Edencrest at Siena Hills. Enjoy food, live entertainment, kids' activities and ice cream.

### Music in the Garden Series

July 17, 24 and 31, and Aug. 7

Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden,  
909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines  
[www.dmbotanicalgarden.com](http://www.dmbotanicalgarden.com)

Enjoy live music in the beautiful setting of the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden. Upcoming concerts are: July 17: Flash in a Pan; July 24: The Crowfoot Rakes; July 31: Mango Soul; Aug. 7: Diplomats of Solid Sound. Doors open at 6 p.m. and concerts start at 6:30 p.m.



### CITYVIEW Summer Stir

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/>. ■



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# SDMJW celebrate with flower shower

The Suburban Des Moines Junior Women (SDMJW) celebrated their decades of friendship and service at Hyperion Field Club on a 90-degree May day with a Flower Shower — an exchange of flowers, plants, bulbs, herbs and seeds. Chair Shari Hawk led the reading of “The Collect” preceding the luncheon. Members continue to sow seeds of servant leadership in Women Lead Change, Interfaith Alliance of Iowa, Public School Strong, League of Women Voters, Cemetery Preservation boards (Highland Memorial Gardens and SAPIC), Child and Adolescent Brain and Mental Health Awareness, Iowa Barn Foundation, Friendship Force, Des Moines Metro Opera, food pantries, the Red Cross and their churches.

The SDMJW Ambassadors nurture their seeds of friendship when traveling to Italy, Iceland, European river cruises, Hawaii, California, Arizona, Florida, Colorado, Illinois, Missouri, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and along the Iowa roads this past year.



Nancy Lundstrom, Shari Hawk, Bobbi Segura, Mary Richards, Marcia Flaugh, Margo Lierman, Wendy Tack and Dianne Banning

The SDMJW women plant their enjoyment in ballroom dancing, gardening, fitness classes, Mah Jongg, writing memoirs, reading, swimming and bike riding.

Shari is arranging the SDMJW Harvest Gathering at DMACC Bistro restaurant. Contact her at [sharihawk@hotmail.com](mailto:sharihawk@hotmail.com). The SDMJW will celebrate our nation's Semiquincentennial, the signing of the Declaration of Independence, with Shari serving as chair of the 2026 Luncheon. Contact Mary Richards at [mrichards@netins.net](mailto:mrichards@netins.net) for information about SDMJW. ■

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## INVESTMENT

By Allison Ver Steegt

# THE IMPORTANCE of setting strong financial goals

There is a quote about the importance of setting goals that says, "If you don't know where you're going, any path will take you there." You probably have dreams about retirement, vacations, hobbies and more. But, if you don't have a strategy with financial goals in place, you may not make the choices that can best set you on the path to achieve those dreams.



Setting goals helps define and showcase your purpose, passions and priorities. And establishing your own strong financial goals can help you earn and enjoy a wide variety of short- and long-term achievements throughout your life. When you reach your financial goals, you can feel a sense of accomplishment in seeing your efforts literally pay off. But how do you get started?

**Prioritize your needs and wants.** Think about the things that are most important to you and then outline them as financial "must-haves" and "wish-list" targets. Start with the big-ticket items and work through to ideas that may not cost as much. A must-have for many people is having enough to live comfortably through retirement. Being able to afford the college of your child's choice, without incurring mounds of debt, is another. Your wish list, on the other hand, may include things like saving for vacations, hobbies or entertainment expenses.

**Create detailed short- and long-term goals within your financial strategy.** It is important to be specific about the goals you want to achieve and how much you will need to achieve them. One way to do this is by making your goals measurable. Assign estimated dates and costs to each goal so you can plan how much to save and how much time you have before you need the money. For example, for your retirement goal, be specific about how many years before you want to retire. And, once you do, how you plan to spend your time — perhaps traveling the world, turning your hobby into a business or taking your grandkids on outings. These can have vastly different price tags.

**Be willing to compromise.** Reaching one or more of your goals may mean compromising. If your must-have is building your dream home, but it is not looking quite affordable, you may need to make a trade-off — build it a bit smaller, work a year or two longer or trade in some of your wish-list goals so you can stay focused on your must-haves.

**Hold yourself accountable to stay on track.** Once your strategy is in place, it is not a set-and-forget exercise. Actively tracking your progress and managing your decisions and actions can help you be better positioned to reach your goals. Use time-tested principles for making financial decisions, not predictions. Diversify, own quality investments and keep a realistic perspective, especially for your long-term goals. Maintain your focus and do not let your emotions control your investment decisions. It can be helpful to meet with a financial advisor at least annually to review your full financial strategy, address any changes in your life or your goals, and discuss your progress and new ideas.

As you achieve certain milestones, celebrate them. You may even want to refresh your outlook with new goals. Take pride in your ability to strategize and accomplish a personal financial goal for yourself by following the path you envisioned and created. ■

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Member SIPC. Information provided by Allison Ver Steegt, Financial Advisor, 215 N.W. 18th St., Suite 103, Ankeny, 515-964-2122.



# PUBLIC and private

Summertime in Ankeny is in full swing. Uptown and the District are both busy with people moving between shops and restaurants. Public trails are busy with walkers, bikers and pets. Our city hosts outdoor concerts, celebrations and gatherings which have many of us out in public much more than we are during the cold months of winter. It's no secret that during the summer in Ankeny, many enjoy getting together and being — in public.



As a pastor in our community, I like doing many of these same things. As I'm out and about, I will occasionally have people ask me why I am not more PUBLIC or PRIVATE... about my faith. An exaggeration of actual questions I have received might sound something like this...

"Pastor John, why don't you stand in public with sandwich board signs and a bullhorn telling people that there is nothing more important than God's love?"

And/or, "Pastor John, why do you spend money on an article in the Ankeny Living promoting faith topics when faith should be a private matter?"

Balancing the PUBLIC and PRIVATE sides of faith is not easy. In fact, one of the things I hear regularly in conversations with people around church is how difficult it can be knowing when to "go public" and when to "stay private." While everyone's experience is different, let me share what has been helpful for me as I think about the public/private nature of faith.

I try not to boast or confront people with matters of faith in places where there isn't a chance to build relationships. I think some of the most impactful public expressions of faith happen when we have a chance to listen and get to know each other better. This is especially true when someone expresses need or hurt or suffering. Sometimes being public with faith in those moments is listening, offering a hug, buying someone a sandwich, or offering to pray with them — without ever telling anyone else. Being private in that situation seems to make perfect sense.

My "private" relationship with God calls me to be "public" by loving my neighbor as I love myself. I have never been perfect at this, but I'm at my best when I think less about whether it is a good time to share my "faith" and more about whether my actions reflect the private faith that I have publicly.

I believe in the power of evangelism, which I define as sharing one's faith. I believe that some faith matters are private and belong in a conversation between me and God. But, if we see each other in public this summer, I hope you know that my private faith is supposed to impact the way I treat you. I may not shout it through a bullhorn, but I really do believe God loves you — and I'll be as public as I can about that. ■

Information provided by John Wagner, campus pastor, Christian Life Center, Ankeny First United Methodist Church, [john.wagner@ankenyfirst.org](mailto:john.wagner@ankenyfirst.org).

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# SUMMER pet safety: What owners should know

Last summer, the dogs and I were enjoying a late-morning walk on a fiercely sunny day when my dog, Pixel, suddenly started limping. A quick check revealed the problem: a small burn on his paw pad. Thankfully, we were almost home, and it healed quickly — but I felt awful. As a veterinarian, I know pets face unique warm-weather hazards — ones they can't always communicate — and yet I had forgotten.

So, before you leash up and head out with your kiddo, here are a few quick ways to keep your pet safe, cool and comfortable during the hot summer months:

## Keep them cool

- Never leave pets in a parked car. Even at 70 degrees, the interior can hit 100 in 30 minutes. Flat-faced breeds, seniors and pets with heart or weight issues are especially vulnerable. Signs of heatstroke include excessive panting, abnormal gum color, vomiting, disorientation



or collapse.

Best bet? If you can't bring your pets inside, leave them at home with the AC.

- Walk early or late. When temps climb over 85 degrees, opt for indoor games or training sessions to burn energy instead.
- Limit outdoor time. Provide water and supervision — especially during mid-day heat.

## Protect those paws

- Hot asphalt, sand or even decking can cause burns. If you can't hold the back of your hand on the surface for seven seconds, it's too hot. Stick to grass, shaded trails, or try pet booties (just be sure to introduce them gradually).
- Watch for toxic waters. In Iowa, cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) blooms often appear in still or slow-moving water in summer — and can be fatal to dogs. Avoid any water that looks green, cloudy or has visible scum.

**Skip the BBQ scraps.** Cookouts can lead to ER visits:

- Corn on the cob can block intestines.
- Bones, grease and skewers can cause injury or pancreatitis.

- Grapes, onions, garlic and alcohol are toxic — even in small amounts.

Stick to pet-safe treats and let guests know not to share.

## Keep your yard safe

- Cocoa mulch smells great but contains theobromine — highly toxic to pets. Also beware of fertilizers, rodenticides, pesticides and plants like lilies and azaleas. If your pet loves to dig or nibble, double-check your landscaping for possible threats. If in doubt about a plant's safety, check with your veterinarian or visit the ASPCA website.

Summer should mean beachy walks, shady naps and shared adventures — not emergency vet visits. I learned the hard way with Pixel that even a short outing can have unexpected consequences. The good news? A little awareness — and knowing when to call your veterinarian — can make all the difference. Now go enjoy that summer day. ■

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

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## GET TO KNOW YOUR LOCAL VET

**Dr. Patrick Hepner**

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

I've been a veterinarian for 6 years, and graduated from Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine in 2019.

**2. What inspired you to be a veterinarian?**

I am very interested in medicine. Being a vet allows me to experience and work through many aspects of medicine and patient care.

**3. Do you have a special area of interest?**

I enjoy ophthalmology (eyes). Though I once considered specializing in ophthalmology, I've found great satisfaction treating eye cases in general practice.

**4. If you weren't a vet, what would you be doing instead?**

I would likely have pursued pharmacy school to become a pharmacist

**5. What's one tip you wish every pet owner knew?**

Google (and the internet in general) has a lot of incorrect and misleading information about pet care. Online sources are not always accurate or factual, but often opinion based. It is best to check with your veterinarian for answers.



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# NOT TOO late to join the summer fun

The Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library is in the thick of Summer Library Program fun. And we still have fun events for all ages through the month of July and into early August.

## Upcoming youth events

### • Sing and Shake at the

**Ankeny Market Pavilion** (715 W. First St.), Tuesday, July 22 at 10 a.m. Children from birth through grade 5 and their caregivers are invited to join library staff at the Ankeny Market Pavilion for singing, shaking and bubbles. No registration required.

### • Sing and Splash at the Prairie Ridge Aquatic Center

**Splash Park** (1220 N.W. Prairie Ridge Drive), Wednesday, July 23 at 9:30 a.m. Children from birth through grade 5 and their caregivers are invited to join us at the Prairie Ridge Splash Park for singing, splashing, dancing and bubbles. No registration required.

## Upcoming teen events

• **Fabric and Friends – Teen Craft and Chat** at the library, Mondays from 5–7:30 p.m. Bring a craft you're working on and connect with fellow crafters to share tips and inspiration. All crafts are welcome — sewing, knitting, crocheting, scrapbooking, paper crafts and more. This program is in partnership with Central Iowa Fiber Arts (C.I.F.A.). Tweens and teens in grades 4–12 are welcome; no registration required.

• **Teen Yoga with Megan May** at the library, Tuesday, July 22 at 6:30 p.m. Calling all teens. Spend your evening relaxing and learning yoga. Bring your own mat or borrow one from the library. For grades 4–12. Registration required. Register at [ankenylibrarycalendar.com](http://ankenylibrarycalendar.com).

## Upcoming family events

• **Family Bingo for Books** at the library, Thursday, July 24 at 1 p.m. The whole family is invited to play bingo for a chance to win books. No registration required. All are welcome.

• **Family Summer Library Finale Pool Party at Cascade Falls Aquatic Center** (2350 S.W. Prairie Trail Parkway), Wednesday, July 30, from 7:15–9:15 p.m. Celebrate the end of a great Summer Library Program with a free pool party for the whole family. No registration required — all are welcome.

• **Des MoiNTRAK Model Train Display** at the library, Saturday, Aug. 2 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, Aug. 3 from 1–3 p.m. All aboard. Visit an N scale modular train display by the Des MoiNTRAK railroad club. Located in the Large Meeting Room, this drop-in event is open to train enthusiasts of all ages. No registration required. ■

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# HOW-TO

# GUIDE



# HOW TO CHOOSE GARAGE DOORS

Garage doors are often an afterthought to homeowners — but they shouldn't be. Garage doors are the first thing most notice about a home, so when it comes to choosing them for a new home or replacing them, significant thought and research should take place. If your garage faces the front of the house, a new door could dramatically improve your curb appeal and change the overall look of your home. If you're selling, worn, dated doors tend to say a lot about the condition of the rest of the home. A garage door is also an excellent security asset for your home, allowing you to secure your vehicle inside. If you're thinking about installing a new garage door, you may be surprised

at just how many options are on the market — and how affordably they can be installed.

## THE LOOK

Garage doors have seen an explosion in styles, materials and colors that are designed to match the architecture of any home, from rural barns to craftsman bungalows or sleek urban getaways. So if you thought your choices were limited to simple sheet metal styles, think again. You should also pay close attention to the materials. Today's garage doors can be made from expensive hardwoods, textured vinyl, fiberglass or basic aluminum, all of which will have a big impact on the look

and longevity of your doors. Pay close attention to the maintenance needs of whatever material you choose. Some will hold their color longer than others, and real wood doors can require regular staining and sealing every few years to keep them looking spectacular.

## INSULATION

Depending on climate, the insulation of your garage door can be an important factor to help reduce your energy bills. This is especially important in heated garages. But even an insulated door on unheated garages can make a positive impact on your energy usage if it can keep the hot and cold weather away from the interior of your house. ■

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# HOW TO CHOOSE A MEDICAL SPA

It has been a clear trend that Americans are striving to be healthier, embracing exercise, healthy and nutritious food and taking stock of how they feel and look.

That is one reason why medical spas have experienced such growth. These specialized clinics provide certain medical treatments mixed with a selection of cosmetic and health-focused, anti-aging therapies in a relaxing, luxurious atmosphere. Here are some things to look for when choosing a medical spa.

## PHYSICIANS

Medical spas are typically affiliated with a fully licensed doctor, just like a regular medical clinic. But different medical spas handle the doctor's responsibilities in different ways, so you should find out about the doctor's background and what role he or she plays at the spa.

Regulations on medical spas differ from state to state, and most states do not

require a full-time doctor on site. If you are going there for a full medical procedure, as opposed to a traditional spa treatment, you should pay close attention to who will perform the procedure and what their experience and training level is.

In the unlikely event that a problem is encountered, it is good to have fully trained medical staff on site to deal with it. And while they are taking place in a spa-like environment, you should take them just as seriously as any medical procedure.

It is a good idea to check the doctor's certifications. The American Medical Association has online databases that let patients look up information about board-certified doctors.

## TREATMENTS

Most medical spas offer a range of treatments to help patients look their best. Botox injections, facial peels, dermal fillers, hair removal, microdermabrasion

and wellness consultations are performed by many medical spas.

You will want to find out what procedures a spa performs and get a doctor's recommendation for them before you start. A doctor should be able to give you a good idea of what kind of results to expect once the treatment is started, along with how often these treatments should be repeated.

You should also ask about who will be performing the procedures and what their qualifications are. The doctor may perform some treatments personally, while others will be handled by another professional under the doctor's supervision. Either way, you should ask about this and know who will be performing it up front.

If you find a good medical spa, you will see exactly why they are growing so quickly in popularity. They help you look and feel your best, all in the luxurious atmosphere of a high-end day spa. ■

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# HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT PODIATRIST

When foot or ankle pain begins to impact your quality of life, choosing the right podiatrist is one of the most important steps in your recovery. Whether you are facing a bunion, heel pain, sports injury or chronic discomfort, the expertise and approach of your provider will significantly influence your outcome.

## CREDENTIALS AND CLINICAL EXPERTISE

Start by verifying board certification through the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery (ABFAS). This distinction signals that your podiatric surgeon has met nationally recognized standards for education, surgical training and professional performance. Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (DPMs) complete four years of medical school focused on the full body — with a strong emphasis on lower extremity anatomy — followed by at several years of intensive residency training in foot and ankle medicine and surgery. In fact, they typically perform

more foot and ankle procedures during training than any other medical specialty.

## GO BEYOND WORD OF MOUTH

Recommendations from friends, family or your primary care doctor are a great starting point, but do not stop there. Take time to explore the podiatrist's website. You can learn a great deal about their background, areas of specialization, and the clinic's overall philosophy of care. Are they publishing research or contributing to medical education? If so, it often indicates a commitment to innovation and advancing the field. Patient reviews are also valuable — they offer real insight into what it is like to be under that provider's care.

## MODERN TREATMENTS AND MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION

The best podiatrists stay current with evidence-based, state-of-the-art treatments like Lapiplasty® for bunions

or laser therapy for soft tissue injuries. If a provider is still doing things the same way they did 20 years ago, it may be time to explore newer, more effective options.

Equally important is how well your provider communicates. You should leave each appointment feeling educated and confident — not confused or dismissed. Expect a thorough explanation of your diagnosis, treatment options and recovery plan. If that is missing, it is a red flag.

## YOUR CARE, YOUR CHOICE

Most insurance plans do not require a referral to see a podiatrist, though you should confirm with your provider. Even if you are referred within a larger health system, you are free to choose the specialist who best aligns with your needs, values and goals. And do not overlook the clinic's culture — a personable, knowledgeable and compassionate team speaks volumes about the care you'll receive throughout your journey. ■

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# HOW TO CHOOSE THE BEST RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

Retirement communities have come a long way since the days of a quiet home on the golf course or beach. Today's seniors are more active than ever and want to continue to enjoy their passions years into their retirement.

Modern retirement communities have become lifestyle communities, not solely about golf and tennis. Celebrities such as the late Jimmy Buffett — himself a senior citizen at the time — have created “branded” retirement communities that celebrate the fabled “Margaritaville” lifestyle.

Other factors may include whether you need living assistance or ready medical care. Of course, there's nothing wrong with finding a quiet place to live around people your own age. That is really what all of us look for in a community, and it's no different for seniors. If you're considering a move to a retirement community — or are in search of that lost shaker of salt — here are a few things to consider.

## COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND PARKING

Many seniors enjoy golf, tennis, swimming and walking. Any prospective retirement community should have easy access to such activities.

Other seniors enjoy arts and crafts, board games, dancing and organized activities. Taking part in social events can provide opportunities to make new friends. Research what kinds of social events are organized within the retirement community.

Also, find out if the community has ample opportunities for residents to travel to theaters, museums or shopping malls.

Parking is another important factor when choosing a retirement community. Most people enjoy having family and friends visit, so parking is a necessity.

## MEDICAL CARE FACILITIES

Retirement communities should be easily accessible to emergency personnel.

Know the location of the closest

hospitals, doctors, ambulance services and other personnel. You may wish to restrict your search to communities located near your preferred physician or other service providers.

Any prospective community should have a formal emergency plan in place. In addition, check to see if the retirement unit has custom safety features, such as railings in the bathrooms and entranceways.

## PET POLICIES

Pet policies are another feature to consider. Some facilities will allow you to bring your pet to live with you while others will not. Many communities now recognize the health benefits of having pets.

Additionally, a park or nearby dog walking area will benefit you and your animal companion, particularly if your pet requires daily exercise. Taking a walk each day will benefit both of you. ■

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# HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT DENTIST

We are taught from a very young age that caring for our teeth will save us a lifetime of pain and costly procedures. That is true, so choosing a dental professional you can trust, along with scheduling regular care and cleaning can result in just that — a lifetime of beautiful, healthy teeth.

If you do not already have a regular dentist, choosing the right dental health professional is essential to helping you maintain your health and appearance in addition to helping you avoid nasty dental problems down the road. Whether you are moving to a new area or haven't made time find a regular dentist, here's a few tips on how to start your search.

## ASK AROUND

First, ask your social network for recommendations. Friends, family and colleagues can be a great resource. Searching on the internet for dental offices in your area will also help.

Professionals often have their own websites, which include the backgrounds of those working there. The website may also tell you about how they handle procedures and appointments, as well as specialized services they offer.

## INTERVIEW DENTISTS

Once you have gathered a list, begin calling each prospective dentist. You can talk to a receptionist or other staff person if the dentist is unavailable.

Check to make sure the dentist earned the necessary degree from a reputable school and is current on all licensing and continuing educational requirements. Ideally, the dentist will be familiar with the latest dental technologies and trends.

Ask if the dental office provides emergency services. If you break a tooth or need to have a root canal done right away, you will want to use your chosen dentist. You don't want to have to search

for a dentist when you are in pain.

Your prospective dentist should accept your dental insurance. If you don't have dental insurance, inquire about payment plans. The office should give you an estimate before performing any work.

## OFFICE VISIT

When someone meets all of your requirements, visit the office. The staff should be professional and friendly. The dentist should be willing to answer your questions.

Some people are afraid of dentists or of pain. If you have any concerns, communicate with the staff and dentist. Many professionals are willing to go above and beyond to help you work through these issues.

Teeth are extremely important to your overall health. Finding a good dentist is like finding a friend who consistently brings out your best smile. ■

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## EDUCATION

By Ashley Rullestad

# MEET Fallon Blake

Helping students reach the Summit

Fallon Blake graduated from Iowa State University in 2015 and spent a year substitute teaching back home in northeast Iowa. She also worked as an ESOL teacher in Osceola before joining the Summit program in 2022. Summit is the dropout prevention program for both high schools in the Ankeny School District. It offers students and teachers a separate space where staff can really get to know and help each student.

"I have always loved working with at-risk populations, and this role is a perfect fit for me and what I am passionate about: helping kids to succeed outside of high school. Our students have been mislabeled, underserved and, a lot of the time, have fallen through the cracks of the education system. I love being part of the net that can give them another chance to earn their diploma."



Fallon Blake with her family

The biggest challenge is also the biggest reward in this position, Fallon says. Many Summit students have tough lives outside of school, and getting to know them and their stories can make one sad. It's hard to watch when they run into obstacles, barriers and difficult situations she's not able to help with. There are students who are homeless, in foster placement, living through poverty, living with things that would make adults falter, but they still manage to show up for school, she says.

The reward comes when those students overcome their life circumstances and achieve graduation. The reward is helping them to develop the life skills that will help them to become successful in whatever path they choose next. The greatest reward is helping students to shed the label they have been given as being "bad" kids, she adds.

This year, Blake had a group of male students who were mechanically minded and who told her right away they hated English class. She asked the boys what could motivate them to finish the courses they needed to earn their diploma, and after vetoing the requests for cash, cars and gold bricks, the boys asked for gold stars. She bought gold star stickers that day.

"I never thought that a bunch of senior boys wearing boots and tool belts would be motivated by gold star stickers. Every time they completed an assignment, they earned a sticker, and they had a running score board for who had the most stickers. I gave the star poster to the student who completed all his English requirements first, and he hung that poster at his graduation party. These boys who had decided that they hated English graduated this year, and I will never forget them."

When Blake isn't at school, she's home spending time with her husband and toddler. When she has time, Blake also enjoys sewing, gardening and watching movies with her husband and cat. She also likes other artistic hobbies like embroidery, painting, and photography. ■

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# ANKENY Police awarded grant for equipment

The Ankeny Police Department has received a \$9,853 Community Betterment Grant from the Polk County Board of Supervisors and Prairie Meadows to purchase new advanced radio earpieces for all current and future officers.

These earpieces feature cutting-edge micro speaker technology, allowing officers to hear radio transmissions clearly without blocking out surrounding sounds. This improves both situational awareness and safety during daily operations. The earpieces are also designed for comfort and long-term wear, helping reduce ear fatigue for the officer.

“One of the most critical tools an officer uses while serving the public is their radio,” said Ankeny Police Chief Darius Potts. “This grant helps ensure our officers can communicate clearly and safely, which directly impacts the level of service we provide to the community.”

The Ankeny Police Department is grateful for the partnership with Prairie Meadows and the Polk County Board of Supervisors for advancing its commitment to providing officers with the latest and best tools to improve communication, enhance safety and better serve the public. ■



Chief Darius Potts and Polk County Supervisor Mark Holm

# PINK COUCH Wellness adds Ankeny location

Pink Couch Wellness, a mental wellness clinic located in Grimes, announced the addition of a second location at 800 E. First St., Suite 2400, Ankeny, which began welcoming patients on June 23. In addition to the new location, six new providers have been added to serve mental health therapy and psychiatric medication management patients.

This expansion reflects the region’s growing need for accessible, compassionate mental health services. Since opening the current Grimes location in 2024, Pink Couch Wellness has seen rapid growth and demand for mental health services from men and women, ages 6 and older.

“We opened Pink Couch Wellness to fill a critical gap in care, and the response from the community has been overwhelming,” said Vanessa Andersen, owner of Pink Couch Wellness. “Our second location and expanded team will allow us to reach more individuals and families who are seeking needed support.”

The new Ankeny location mirrors the same warm, inclusive atmosphere of the original Grimes office and offers both in-person and telehealth services. The added team members include licensed therapists, medication management professionals and support staff, all trained to provide care rooted in empathy, collaboration and clinical excellence.

Pink Couch Wellness partners with local medical providers to ensure seamless care coordination and faster access to critical services. With wait times for mental health services still a major challenge in Central Iowa, the practice’s continued growth is a timely and welcome development. ■

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## BROCCOLI and friends salad

Step aside, “Trees and Raisins.” It’s 2025, and there is a new salad in town. The Broccoli and Friends Salad is bursting with flavor and packed with nutrients, making it a fresh favorite you will want to hang on to.

Salads and slaws have come a long way in the past 75 years. I’ll admit, I wasn’t a fan growing up, but now they are the dishes I look forward to most at potlucks. Add some cubed chicken or a piece of salmon, and you have got a light, satisfying meal.

These days, salads are more versatile than ever, thanks to healthier, more creative dressing options ranging from various oils and vinegars to honey, mustard, maple syrup, Greek yogurt, fat-free sour cream and soy sauce. To lighten this recipe, try swapping the mayo for Greek yogurt and cutting the sugar to half a cup. You will still get all the flavor with fewer calories.

Whip up a batch this weekend. You will be glad you did. ■

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



### Broccoli and friends salad

Recipe courtesy of “Cookin’ Savvy”

Servings: 4-6

#### Ingredients:

- 2 medium heads broccoli
- 2 apples
- lemon juice
- 1 carrot
- 1 cup blueberries
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 1 cup sunflower seeds
- 1 cup pecans
- 1 package (2 1/2 ounces) real bacon pieces

#### Dressing:

- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1/3 cup milk
- 1/3 cup apple cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons poppy seeds

#### Directions

- Coarsely chop broccoli and place in large bowl.
- Coarsely chop apples and brush with



lemon juice to prevent browning; add to bowl.

- Shred carrot and add to bowl with blueberries, cranberries, sunflower seeds, pecans and bacon.
- To make dressing: Mix mayonnaise, milk, apple cider vinegar, sugar and poppy seeds. Pour over broccoli salad and mix well.

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## RECIPE

# A PERFECT lemon and raspberry pairing

*(Family Features)* Enjoy the richness of summer with this Ooey Goopy Lemon Cake, which pairs a soft lemony cake with a sweet-tart raspberry drizzle that's perfect for sharing with your nearest and dearest. Find more summer dessert ideas at Culinary.net. ■

## Ooey goopy lemon cake

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

- 1 stick butter, melted
- 1 box lemon cake mix
- 2 eggs

### Topping:

- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 2 eggs
- 3 1/2 cups powdered sugar

### Raspberry drizzle:

- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1 cup fresh raspberries

- Heat oven to 350 F.
- To make cake: In bowl, mix butter, cake mix and eggs until blended well but thick. Spread into buttered 9-by-13-inch pan.
- To make topping: In another bowl, using mixer, mix softened cream cheese, eggs and powdered sugar until blended well. Pour over cake mixture but do not mix. Bake 30-35 minutes until edges of cake are golden brown but center is not. Wait until completely cooled to cut, 1-2 hours.
- To make drizzle: In saucepan over medium heat, add cornstarch and sugar. Mix in water and orange juice. Stir in raspberries and bring to boil. Remove from heat when it starts to thicken.
- Drizzle raspberry drizzle over each piece.



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# THE QUIET gift of being known

Why personal connection matters in later life.

Last month, I wrote about how community shapes our well-being as we age and why face-to-face connection is not just helpful, it is essential. This month, I want to take that thought a step farther. It is not only about being around others, but also about being known.



There is a certain sense of dignity that comes from someone remembering your favorite dinner order, asking how your family is doing, or noticing when something feels off. These simple interactions remind us we were handcrafted for more than routines. We were designed to live in relationship with people who know our names, our habits and our stories.

As we grow older, that need doesn't go away. In many ways, it becomes even more vital. When older adults begin to lose their daily routines or their roles shift, being known speaks to

something much deeper. It affirms that they are still seen, still valued, still created with purpose.

Sadly, many seniors who live alone can go days without meaningful interaction. Without someone checking in or truly noticing them, time begins to feel weightless.

In the right kind of environment, personal connection becomes part of the rhythm of life. People greet each other by name, ask thoughtful questions, and notice when something is missing. These small acts carry weight. They nourish our souls. They remind us that we were not meant to go through life alone.

And here's something just as important: The act of knowing others also shapes us. We were not only created to be seen but also created to see others fully. When we take the time to learn someone's story, remember the details that matter to them, and show up with genuine care, we reflect something sacred. We don't just offer dignity, we participate in it, and, in the process, we begin to discover more of ourselves. In loving others well, we often find ourselves more deeply

known.

Social activities may pass the time, but relationships help shape a life. It matters when someone is known by name and by story, but it matters just as much when we choose to know others in that same way. When we give and receive attention, when we both notice and are noticed, something in our soul settles. That's where identity takes root.

So, whether you are walking alongside someone you love or simply mindful of the people around you, take the time to invest in their lives. Learn their stories. Know their names. Because being known — and, more specifically, choosing to know others — is where lasting connection begins. It speaks to the very core of who we were designed to be. ■

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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# MONEY market account vs. money market fund

While both have the shared goal of helping you grow your savings, a money market account and fund are quite different in how they work and what they offer. Knowing the key differences can help you choose the right option for your financial situation.



## The differences between money market accounts and money market funds

### Money market account:

- Offered at a bank or credit union
- Considered low risk, as the principal is protected by deposit insurance (e.g. FDIC or NCUA insurance funds)
- Easy access to funds, often with check-

writing and debit card privileges

- Money is held as a deposit, not an investment
- Typically offer higher interest rates than regular savings accounts, but generally lower than money market funds
- May have monthly fees, which can typically be waived by meeting minimum balance requirements

### Money market fund:

- Offered at brokerage firms and fund companies
- Not deposit-insured, but may be covered by SIPC (Securities Investor Protection Corporation) when held in a brokerage account
- Considered low risk but not risk-free as the value of the fund can fluctuate
- Funds are accessed by selling shares, which may take a day or two to process

- Money is invested in short-term, low-risk securities
- Generally, offer higher returns than money market accounts, but also come with some risk
- May have expense ratios, which are fees charged to manage the fund

### Which option is right for you?

A money market account works well if you are seeking the security of deposit insurance and consistent interest rates, especially for emergency funds.

Money market funds work well if you are seeking to capitalize on investment or market opportunities with somewhat higher risk.

To learn more about a money market account, speak with a banker or financial advisor today. ■

Information provided by Rebecca Moomey, VP, Senior Private Banker, 1925 N. Ankeny Blvd., Ankeny.



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# CHOOSING an executor for your estate

One of the more important decisions you make when writing your will is the selection of an executor. The executor is responsible for administering your will and ensuring that your assets are distributed according to your wishes. An executor should combine the tact of a diplomat with the administrative skills of an executive.



If you die without a will (intestate), the court will appoint an administrator to perform the executor's duties. When no relative or beneficiary is able to take the job, the appointee could be a civil servant or even a creditor.

Any person you trust can be your executor. For most, the best choice is a spouse or a child. Large estates may require two executors: a

personal representative to interpret your wishes and a professional representative or institution — such as a bank — to make business or financial management decisions, pay taxes and keep records. The person should also be close enough to you and your family to do as you would wish yet be able to act without being swayed by emotions if conflict arises between family members.

An executor's job is to "wrap up" your financial affairs. The executor must identify and determine the value of the assets in your estate. It will be necessary to liquidate assets or sell real estate to carry out your wishes.

During this time, the executor may have to pay ongoing bills (such as mortgage payments) in order to preserve the assets. An executor is also responsible for paying all remaining debts, filing your final personal tax returns, and distributing whatever remains to your heirs.

Most probate courts will demand a full and detailed accounting of all money received, spent or held by your estate. Throughout the process, the executor must keep the heirs and family members informed of the status of the estate and keep careful records.

When choosing an executor, objectivity is essential in order to make the proper decision. Be sure whomever you select will accept the responsibility. It is also wise to choose an alternate executor to serve in the event your initial executor is unable to do so. Consider choosing an executor now, if you have not yet done so, to eliminate potential complications in the event of your death. ■

Information provided by Ross Barnett, Abendroth Russell Barnett Law Firm, 2560 73rd St., Urbandale, 515-278-0623, [www.ARPCLaw.com](http://www.ARPCLaw.com)

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## 'Dinner with King Tut:

How Rogue Archaeologists Are Re-creating the Sights, Sounds, Smells, and Tastes of Lost Civilizations'

Archaeology isn't boring, but it sure can seem that way from the outside (Indiana Jones excepted, of course). Tiny brushes and trowels and patient, years-long digs to unearth the detritus of ancient humans doesn't make for the most exciting of fields. But what if there were more to uncover than just pot sherds? What if one could actually experience a bit of our ancestors' lives?

Some archaeologists have taken to recreating the items they so carefully uncover and actually using them to discover what ancient life might have actually felt like, smelled like, even sounded like. Building boats without modern tools; cooking with actual ancient ingredients and methods; forging weapons and testing them on unsuspecting watermelon. Sam Kean tags along with a wide array of researchers and historical enthusiasts in a quest to experience history as it really was.

Engaging, often hilarious, and surprisingly deep, this is a great addition to any history buff's shelf. The thread of humanity and its ingenuity is genuinely lovely and awe-inspiring at the same time. This is not your average history book; it's a travelogue of time. ■

— Review by Julie Goodrich



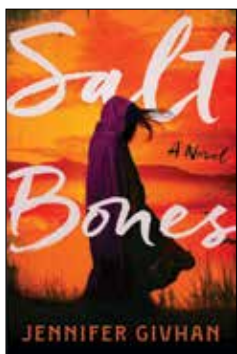
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## 'Salt Bones'

Mothers and daughters. Nightmares and reality. Humans and the earth. The relationships between these pairs are never easy. Fraught and intense and often dangerous, they make for excellent stories — the kind that unsettle and linger long after they're over. I'm reminded of another complicated duo — author and reader. Lucky for us, Jennifer Givhan is an incredibly talented writer.

On the edge of the Salton Sea, a haunting myth might be stalking the young women of El Valle, but Malamar Veracruz will not allow it to rip her family apart, not again. Years after her own sister is numbered amongst the missing girls of the town, Mal begins to experience visions of a legendary horse-headed woman who may or may not be tied to the mystery. Determined to end the terror, Mal and her daughters must face secrets and lies and reckon with life-changing truths to understand what's happening to the town— and to themselves.

Gorgeously written and full of twists and gasp-out-loud moments, this tale was absolutely riveting and heartbreakingly sad. Above all, this is a story about the bonds and boundaries that will always bind us in so many ways. ■ — Review by Julie Goodrich



By Jennifer Givhan  
7/22/25  
384 pages  
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## THANK YOU, Mom and Dad

Our mother died a few years ago after struggling through the late stages of Alzheimer's disease. Honoring her during this stressful time was our family's ultimate goal. And, then again, when she died, we wanted to honor her life in the best way we could. Well, we can tell you firsthand that having her preplanned funeral in place was extremely valuable in helping us achieve our goal. All of the information surrounding her death, visitation, service and burial were organized in a preplanning file at the funeral home. Knowing her wishes, having merchandise selections already made, having the details about what would be in her obituary already written down and having the information for the death certificate already recorded all helped to make the process of funeral arrangements so much easier for our family.

Since that time, our dad has been "tweaking" his own preplan, which is currently in place at the funeral home — and for that we are so thankful. While we certainly don't wish for his death any time soon, we are grateful that his thoughts and wishes are safely in a file at the funeral home so that, when that time comes, and our heads are spinning with grief, we won't have to wonder or guess — we will know exactly how best to honor him.

Thank you, Mom and Dad, for this gift. With love from your daughters. ■



Information provided by Sasha Mudlaff and Holly Peterson Miller, family owners, Hamilton's Funeral Home, 605 Lyon St., Des Moines, IA 50309, 515-243-5221.

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# HOSPICE care may be a gift to your family

For Linda's family, summer had always meant joy — a season of togetherness, with loved ones traveling from near and far to reconnect and celebrate.

But last year was different. Linda's health was steadily declining due to several chronic conditions, and although she still cherished the idea of seeing her family, she and her husband, Tom, weren't sure how they could fully take part in the usual reunion activities.

Support from an in-home hospice team helped shift the focus from what they couldn't do to what was still possible — allowing the family to create lasting memories during a meaningful summer.

"Hospice began caring for Linda just after Easter," Tom recalls. "They gave her the support she needed to enjoy a few very good months, and she was able to take part in our June family gathering. It might sound unusual, but that



summer felt full of life."

When you're exploring hospice care for someone you love, it may feel difficult — even paradoxical — to associate it with the idea of living. But that's exactly what hospice is meant to support: living well, with dignity and comfort, even as health declines.

Hospice care isn't one-size-fits-all. It can be provided at home, in a dedicated hospice facility, or in a blended care model — and the right choice depends on your family's unique situation and needs.

Whatever form of care you consider, one of the most important questions to ask is: "How can this help my loved one live fully during this stage of life?"

Many people are surprised to learn that hospice can begin earlier than they think — as soon as a person has received a diagnosis of a life-limiting condition. Early access to hospice can improve comfort and quality of life for weeks or even months, providing space and peace to focus on what matters most.

If you're navigating a loved one's illness this summer, consider how you want to spend that time together. Hospice providers can often deliver care in a person's home, helping preserve familiar surroundings while supporting both the individual and their family.

While reaching out to a hospice team can feel daunting, having compassionate, expert care in place can ease stress and allow for more meaningful moments — especially during treasured family traditions.

"Once we had hospice involved and a plan in place, it lifted a huge burden," Tom says. "We could concentrate on celebrating the season with Linda, knowing she was comfortable and cared for. We'll never forget that summer — it was a gift." ■

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](http://wesleylife.org/wellahead).

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## RESEARCH shows chiropractic care is safe and effective

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"Patients with chronic low-back pain treated by chiropractors showed greater improvement and satisfaction at one month than patients treated by family physicians. Satisfaction scores were higher for chiropractic patients. A higher proportion of chiropractic patients (56% versus 13%) reported that their low-back pain was better or much better, whereas nearly one-third of medical patients reported their low-back pain was worse or much worse." — *Nyiendo et al (2000), Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*

In a randomized, controlled trial, 183 patients with neck pain were randomly allocated to manual therapy (spinal mobilization), physiotherapy (mainly exercise) or general-practitioner care (counseling, education and drugs) in a 52-week study. The clinical outcome measures showed that manual therapy resulted in faster recovery than physiotherapy and general-practitioner care. Moreover, total costs of the manual therapy-treated patients were about one-third of the costs of physiotherapy or general practitioner care. — *Korthals-de Bos et al (2003), British Medical Journal*

### In comparison to other treatment alternatives

"Acute and chronic chiropractic patients experienced better outcomes in pain, functional disability and patient satisfaction; clinically important differences in pain and disability improvement were found for chronic patients." — *Haas et al (2005), Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*

"In our randomized, controlled trial, we compared the effectiveness of manual therapy, physical therapy and continued care by a general practitioner in patients with nonspecific neck pain. The success rate at seven weeks was twice as high for the manual-therapy group (68.3%) as for the continued-care group (general practitioner). Manual therapy scored better than physical therapy on all outcome measures. Patients receiving manual therapy had fewer absences from work than patients receiving physical therapy or continued care, and manual therapy and physical therapy each resulted in statistically significant less analgesic use than continued care." — *Hoving et al (2002), Annals of Internal Medicine*

### For headaches

"Cervical-spine manipulation was associated with significant improvement in headache outcomes in trials involving patients with neck pain and/or neck dysfunction and headache." — *Duke Evidence Report, McCrory, Penzlen, Hasselblad, Gray (2001)*

"The results of this study show that spinal manipulative is an effective treatment for tension headaches ... Four weeks after cessation of treatment ... the patients who received spinal manipulation experienced a sustained therapeutic benefit in all major outcomes in contrast to the patients that received amitriptyline therapy, who reverted to baseline values." — *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics, Boline et al. (1995)* ■

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](http://www.renzechiro.com) or call the office at 965-3844.

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# SUMMERFEST a success, and more events to come

Hello Ankeny,

Thank you for making Ankeny Chamber SummerFest 2025 such an incredible success. Every year, this signature event reminds us why we love our Ankeny community, and 2025 was no exception. From the Grand and Kiddie parades, Friday Family Fun Night, and four days of carnival rides to the food trucks and fireworks, there was something for everyone to enjoy. We are especially grateful to all who came out to experience the free live music, including local favorites The Pork Tornadoes, who brought high energy and a great show to cap off a weekend of fun.

We appreciate the ongoing support you show the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce, not only during Ankeny Chamber SummerFest but throughout the year. Your participation helps us continue to offer programs and events that support and strengthen our local businesses, fostering connections across our community.

Coming up next is our Minority-Owned Business Summit on Wednesday, Aug. 20. This half-day event is dedicated to empowering and uplifting minority entrepreneurs and professionals and is open to anyone looking to grow in their business or leadership journey. The summit will feature insightful conversations, expert-led breakout sessions, and a keynote presentation focused on mental health in the workplace and community.

Our breakout session speakers include:

- Dr. Eric Idehen of the Evelyn K. Davis Center for Working Families
- Jerrica Marshall with the 2025 One Economy Report
- Angela Williams on Inclusive Leadership
- Johnny Cintron discussing the Power of Capital
- Edgar Ortiz exploring Cybersecurity and AI readiness for small businesses.

During the midday session, attendees will enjoy lunch while hearing from keynote speaker Brianna Sink of the Iowa Healthiest State Initiative's Make It OK campaign, offering timely insight into supporting mental health within organizations and beyond.

Whether you are a small business owner, a corporate leader, or just starting your professional journey, this event will provide meaningful connections, practical tools and inspiration to guide your next steps.

Looking ahead to fall, we're excited for more fun events:

• Fall Ball Golf Outing on Oct. 1, a great day of networking and friendly competition on the green.

Witches Night Out on Oct. 23, where buses transport groups of "witches" to shop and explore participating chamber businesses around town.

We are proud to serve such a dynamic, supportive and engaged community. Thank you for being a part of it. We cannot wait to see you at our upcoming events. ■

Information provided by Mackenzie Cowden, Director of Marketing & Graphic Design for the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce, 1360 S.W. Park Square Drive, Suite 104, Ankeny, 515-964-0685, [www.ankeny.org](http://www.ankeny.org).



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## OUT & ABOUT



Ribbon cuttings were held for the Party Event Space in Ankeny. The Local Event Venue ribbon cutting was April 14 and Graceful Gatherings ribbon cutting was held April 18.



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Sierra McGinnis, Abbie Cross and Alexa Middleton at the ribbon cutting for The Local Event Venue or Graceful Gatherings.



Jayden Moore, William Navarro, Shevaughn Moore, Randy Pelham and Elena Dunblazier at the ribbon cutting for The Local Event Venue or Graceful Gatherings.



Stephanie and Jerry Warner at the ribbon cutting for The Local Event Venue or Graceful Gatherings.



The Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce held a ground breaking for Premier Credit Union, 1450 S.W. Tradition Drive on June 27.



Joe Bethel and Josh Klyn at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ground breaking for Premier Credit Union.



Greg Schulte and Roger Kluesner at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ground breaking for Premier Credit Union.



Lindsay Drake, Heather Phillips and Erika Mears at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ground breaking for Premier Credit Union.



Jill Mathew and Adam Lenze at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ground breaking for Premier Credit Union.



## OUT & ABOUT



The Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting ceremony at Mill Pond on June 5.



Kyle and Lisa Sitzmann at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting ceremony at Mill Pond.



Ashley Salen and Karen Brockelsby at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting ceremony at Mill Pond.



Kathleen McCombs, Vincent Bete, Juliana Jacobs, Mike Salonga and Mark Hudson at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting ceremony at Mill Pond.



Elena Dunblazier and Nicole Proesch at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting ceremony at Mill Pond.



The Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting for Bubbly Paws, 2410 S.W. White Birch, Suite 105, on July 1.



Laura Brassell and Abbie Cross at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Bubbly Paws.



Antoinette Robb with Midget and Leslie Shipp with R.J. at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Bubbly Paws.



Charles Reed, Reyna Immerfall and Jeff Perry at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Bubbly Paws.



Randy Larsen, Jeff Perry and Crystal Wright at the Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Bubbly Paws.





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