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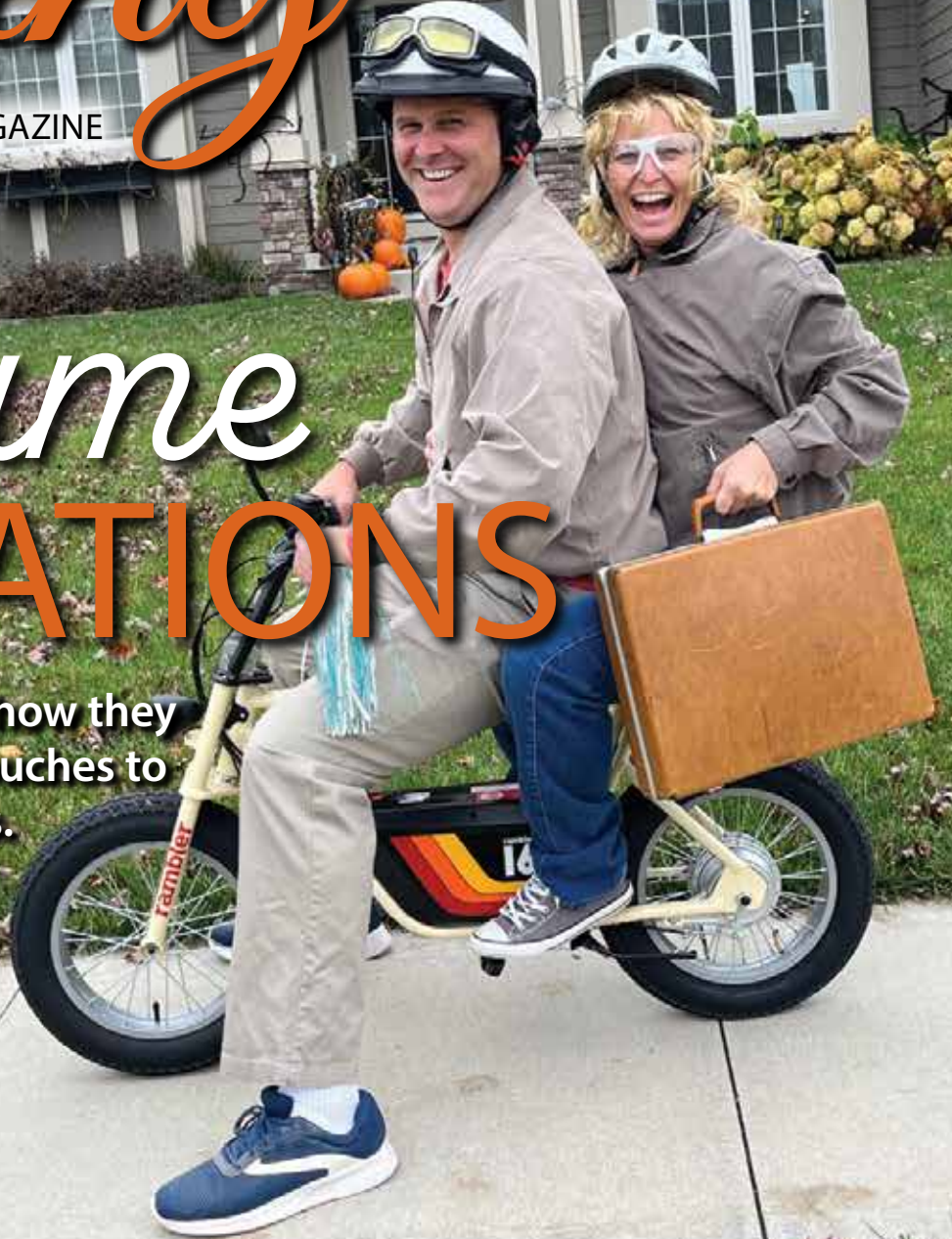
OCTOBER 2025

Living

MAGAZINE

Costume CREATIONS

Residents share how they
add their own touches to
Halloween garbs.



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WELCOME

HALLOWEEN is not just for kids

If you have not yet decided on a Halloween costume, you might want to hurry up. You can't wear that Elvis costume every year.

Yes, Halloween is near, and it's not just for kids. Most all of us have great memories of trick-or-treating with our siblings and friends, amassing a bag of candy we would struggle to carry.

Choosing a costume as a kid was not high pressure, as I simply wore whatever Mom had for me, which was usually a hand-me-down from my siblings. I really didn't care. As an adult, though, the pressure in choosing a Halloween costume intensified. I could no longer strap on a plastic mask and call it good.

Through the years, Jolene and I had some costume hits and some costume misses. The biggest miss was in our younger years when we dressed as mummies, wearing white long underwear tops and bottoms and covering each other with strips of white bed sheets. It seemed like a great idea — until we had to go to the bathroom.

Another year, we went with a group and dressed as the Gilligan's Island crew. Jolene and I were Mr. and Mrs. Howell. And, yes, I carried the teddy bear.

Speaking of bears, a few years later, we tried Goldilocks and the three bears with another couple. It didn't work. We looked like a little girl and three giant mice.

Jolene and I also did stints as the farmer and the cow, the hunter and the deer, the Lone Ranger and Tonto, and Farrah Fawcett and Michael Jackson.

The best costumes we ever had, though, were when we dressed as the couple that was throwing the party. We pulled that one off twice, to the dismay of the hosts.

I encourage you to get into the Halloween spirit this year. Attend a costume party or event, or just dress up and entertain the kids who are trick-or-treating. And, if you struggle to come up with a costume, well, there is always Elvis.

Happy Halloween, and thanks for reading. ■



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Costume CREATIONS

Residents share how they add their own touches to Halloween garbs.

By Lindsey Giardino

When it comes to Halloween, some people like to pull out all the stops. They turn their yards into haunted or cartoon landscapes. They carve pumpkins, bob for apples, and offer the best treats to their trick-or-treaters. And, they put their energy and holiday spirit into making sure their costumes — or their kids' — make others “ooh” and “aah” ... and perhaps shudder.

The Bormanns dressed as “Dumb & Dumber” one Halloween.

FEATURE

More than costumes

For many years, Brenda Hummel-Foreman has made her daughter, Andrea Capaldo's, Halloween costumes for one simple reason: Andrea is a wheelchair user, and there just aren't many options available.

For Andrea's first three Halloweens, Hummel-Foreman bought store costumes like candy corn, a bunny and a zebra. They were easy to get on because Andrea was still small.

"However, I felt we needed to do something bigger, something extra because she deserves it, and the wheelchair somewhat hid what she was wearing," Hummel-Foreman explains.

So, in 2012, she dreamed up a frog on a lily pad costume in memory of her own mother, who had passed away two years earlier.

"I went so big on this one, and I didn't think about access into the building or in the van," she recalls with a laugh. "The lily pad/water was too wide, so we had to take that off just to get inside. It was pretty funny, but she was a big hit, and, from there, it became a challenge for me to go bigger and better and continue to make it fun and interactive for Andrea."



Brenda Hummel-Foreman has made costumes for her daughter, Andrea Capaldo's, over the years to incorporate her wheelchair. One year, Andrea was a frog in a pond of lily pads.

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That year sparked a tradition — and a following. Each Halloween, people began asking what Andrea would be. Hummel-Foreman always kept it a surprise until the big reveal.

Over the years, Andrea has been everything from Velma in the Mystery Machine to a gumball machine, a butterfly, a tissue box and a crayon box. One of Hummel-Foreman's most memorable projects was dressing Andrea as Ellie from the Pixar movie "Up," while her brother, Sal, played Carl.

"The best memories are any time I can get the whole family on board with my crazy ideas," she says.

When designing, Hummel-Foreman starts with Andrea's personality, then searches for ideas online and imagines how to adapt them to her daughter's wheelchair. Andrea's tray and canopy poles offer easy ways to attach cardboard or build around the chair, and sometimes the whole family gets in on the fun.

"They know they are supporting Andrea, and it reflects unity and that we are all in this together," she says. "It's making memories, being silly and having fun. It takes our mind off the stressful times related to Andrea's complex medical needs and helps us see how far she's come."

Hummel-Foreman has noticed some positive changes in adaptive costumes in recent years, with stores like Target leading the way.

"They still look like costumes but might include special tube access for kids who are G-tube fed like my daughter, or roomier legs for easier dressing," she explains. "They also have cardboard or felt pieces that can be added to the side of the chair or wheels. But the best and most creative adaptive Halloween costumes still come from the parents who customize around their child's needs."

For Hummel-Foreman, the effort is worth every hour spent.

"As a mother of a child with complex medical needs, I'm exhausted mentally and physically, and sometimes there are more bad days than good. But anytime I can be a little extra with my daughter and let her shine, that's where I start."

Her advice for other parents? Begin with your child's personality and comfort.

"Start with what they like and enjoy, then think about how to make it happen," she says. "If a costume is easy to put on, start there and build around it with accessories. If it's too difficult or uncomfortable, work from the outside in and create something grand. Sometimes accessories are all you need to bring a costume together."

Cardboard has been her best tool. It's lightweight, cheap and easy to cut, tape and decorate. And, no matter how elaborate the final product, the result is always the same: Andrea gets to shine.

"I just want others to see my daughter having fun and doing activities her peers do, not her disabilities," Hummel-Foreman says.

Going all out

Jessica Bormann and her husband, Keith, went to college at Iowa State University — the place their love for going all out for Halloween started.

"Campus life brings out fun and unique theme parties, and we never missed a chance to dress up and dive into the fun," Bormann says.

"When Halloween week rolled around, Welch Avenue turned into a full-blown Halloween costume party. The bars were buzzing with creativity, and it was so much fun seeing everyone's outfits."

Since then, the Bormanns have made a point to go all out every year when Halloween rolls around.

Her top five favorite costumes over the years have been the ones that



Cops and robbers was another theme that let Andrea Capaldo shine with her family.

have also been crowd pleasers.

First, there were the trophies. Six friends went full gold, painted head to toe, and became trophies for the night.

Then came the square dancers — a costume that was a blast from start to finish.

"The hunt for the perfect outfits was half the fun," Bormann says. "We scored our gear on eBay, complete with authentic square dance flair thanks to the Grandins. The best part about this costume was the group we went with. We even rehearsed a group do-si-do with a real caller and performed it throughout the night. It was a hilarious, unforgettable night."

Next was "Dumb & Dumber," something Bormann says was "easy, comfy and instantly recognizable."

"The real challenge was finding a moped," she says. "We ended up with a retro e-bike that worked perfectly — and yes, we rode it around Polk City and even in a few bars. People were shouting quotes at us all night. 'So, you're telling me there's a chance?'"

And who could forget Harry and Marv from "Home Alone"?

"Keith nailed his costume dressed as Marv, and we went all in on the details: gold tooth, iron burn, doorknob 'M' hand mark, you name it," Bormann says. "Everyone knew exactly who we were, and it was a total

FEATURE

hit during the pub crawl.”

Finally, Bormann has fond memories of the Zombie Wedding Party.

“This one was a full production,” she shares. “We had a real bride in a wedding dress, five bridesmaids in matching royal blue and groomsmen in tuxes with blue bowties. We even brought props and did a bouquet toss at the party.”

When it comes to creating these costumes, Bormann says one of the hardest parts is tracking down props, like that year she needed multiple royal blue bridesmaid dresses.

“That was a full-on treasure hunt,” she says. “But honestly, that’s part of the fun. I love digging for quirky accessories and unexpected extras that take a costume to the next level.”

Like when Bormann and friends did “Office Space,” they made sure to have a minimum of 15 pieces of flair and carried a red stapler and TPS reports. Or the year they went as Roller Derby Girls.

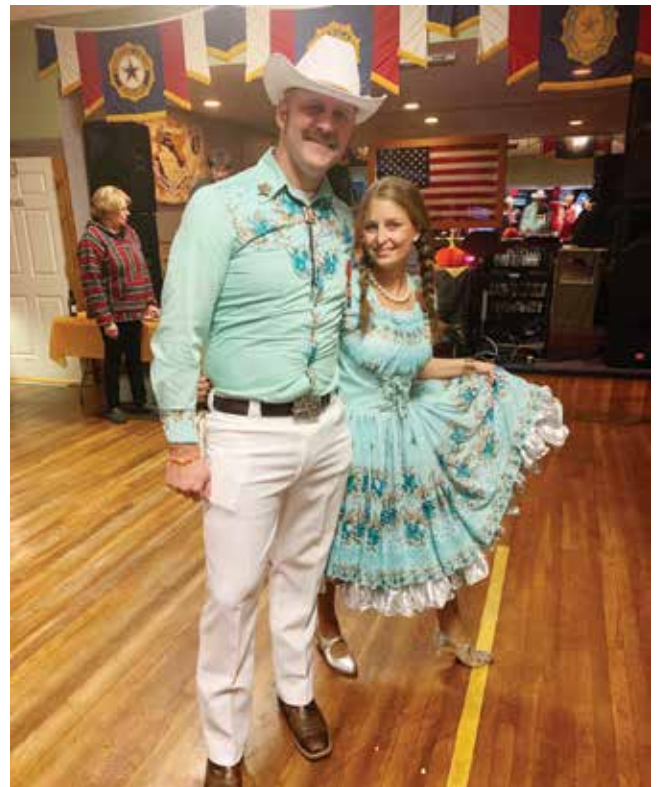
“A few of us wore actual roller skates and spent the night skating around the Legion,” Bormann says. “It’s those little touches that make the night extra fun and totally worth the effort.”

Halloween doesn’t just stop at costumes and parties for Bormann, though.

“The kids and I always have fun decorating the yard for Halloween, and we try to make the house extra spooky for trick or treat,” she says. “And while our kids have outgrown trick or treat night, we still love walking around Pine Ridge on Beggars Night, and our neighbors turn their garage into a haunted house every year.”

Because of all the fun memories she’s made over the years, Bormann has one big plug: participate in Polk City’s Halloween Pub Crawl.

“Whether you wear a pumpkin T-shirt or a costume, it’s such an entertaining night out,” she says. ■



Keith and Jessica Bormann and friends dressed in square-dancing outfits one year and even brought a caller to lead them in some steps.



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KIWANIS Seniors of the Month named

The Polk City Kiwanis Club has named its September Seniors of the Month.

Hannah Haaland

"My favorite hobbies are running, biking, hiking with my family, hanging out with my friends and getting ice cream. Some of my favorite memories from high school have been the distance 4x100 event, state track, the trip to Minnesota with the cross country team and my CAD class."

Hannah is the daughter of Kirk and Kelley Haaland and sister to Hayley and Kinley. Her favorite school subjects are chemistry, psychology and sports nutrition. She has participated in Key Club, Principal's Council, cross country, track, Comets for Christ, FCA, National Honor Society, Science Club, as basketball manager, show choir and stage crew. She has been named to the DMACC Dean's List and Gold Honor Roll and honored with the Key Club Gold Standard Award, Academic All-State, and named to RRC cross country all-conference. She is a church youth group leader and works at Tropical Smoothie. After graduation, she plans to major in education or dietetics and exercise to become a teacher or a sports dietician.



Mya Bond

"Hi, I'm Mya Bond. Outside of school activities, I enjoy hanging out with family and friends, running, biking, camping, crocheting, painting and traveling. Some of my favorite memories from high school were being a part of the legendary distance 4x100 with my best friends in track, qualifying for state as a team in cross country, performing on stage at show choir competitions and being a part of the NPKB team every year."

Mya is the daughter of Sarah and Bill Bond and sister of Maddie Bond. Her favorite subjects are choir, sculpture and history. She participated in marching band, concert band, cross country, track, golf, chamber choir, show choir, Key Club, speech and musical. Honors include Gold Honor Roll, DMACC Dean's List, Key Club Gold Standard Award, cross country second team all conference 2022-2024, cross country state participant 2022-2024 and all state show choir participant 2023-2025. She runs a small business, Made by Mya Crochet, sells at the farmers market, and manages her website. She also volunteers at RipRoar Youth Triathlons. After graduation, she plans to further her education at an undecided university. ■



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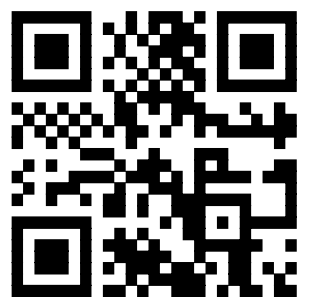
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HIDDEN gem of caregiving: adult day services

Caring for a loved one can certainly be rewarding, but balancing work, household responsibilities, and your own well-being can feel overwhelming. The good news: Resources are readily available in the form of adult day services, which can provide meaningful enrichment during the day while easing the stress of caregiving.



What are adult day services? Adult day services offer daytime support and engagement for adults who may need help with daily activities, face safety risks when left alone, or simply benefit from social interaction. Participants can attend daily or just a few times a week. While many participants live with dementia, a memory-challenge diagnosis is not required.

Safety and peace of mind. Safety is a cornerstone of adult day programs. Participants

thrive in secure environments with professional oversight, while families gain confidence knowing their loved one is supported.

One caregiver shared that she found relief when her husband, who was living with dementia, began attending an adult day program. At home, he had begun leaving the stove on and water running. “I was trying to work from home to make sure he was safe, but I couldn’t get anything done. Adult day was a godsend. I finally felt like I could stop worrying 24/7.”

More than “something to do.”

Programming is designed to nourish body, mind and spirit through:

- Social activities that reduce isolation
- Nutritious meals and snacks
- Physical and cognitive activities that promote engagement
- Safe spaces where participants can thrive, even with chronic conditions

Why families choose adult day services.

Although adult day services can make a

tremendous difference, many families are unaware they exist. Too often, the services remain a best-kept secret until caregiving stress reaches a breaking point.

Benefits extend to both participants and caregivers. Participants enjoy engagement, connection, and better nutrition. Caregivers experience reduced stress, more time for self-care, and confidence that their loved one is thriving.

Take the first step. If you’re balancing caregiving and searching for peace of mind, consider exploring adult day services in your area. These programs provide the support your loved one deserves — and the breathing room you need to be at your best. ■

Aaron Wheeler is Vice President of Home and Community-Based Services for WesleyLife, which provides health and well-being services for older adults — including adult day services in Des Moines and Newton. To learn more, visit wesleylife.org.



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REAL ESTATE

By Jacquelyn Duke

WHY YOU might want to list this fall

If you've been thinking about selling your home in the Polk County area, fall could be the perfect time to make your move. While summer is often thought of as the busy season, many serious buyers are still house hunting while the weather is nice. Families want to be settled before the holidays, and professionals often make job moves toward the end of the year. That means buyers shopping this fall are motivated and ready to make strong offers.



Inventory across the metro, from Waukee to Altoona, is still relatively tight, which means your home may stand out more this autumn than it would in the spring, when the market is crowded with new listings. Less competition can work in your favor.

And let's not forget that homes look beautiful in the fall. Colorful leaves, fall home decor, and a cozy front porch make for a welcoming first impression. Professional photos and video this time of year really shine, especially in tree-lined neighborhoods.

Many sellers wait until after the new year, but, by listing this fall, you could attract serious buyers who are encouraged by recent lower interest rates. If selling has been on your mind, this season is a great time to explore your options and see how today's market could work in your favor. ■

Information provided by Jacquelyn Duke REALTOR®, CRS, e-PRO, Realty One Group Impact, 617 S.W. Third St., Ankeny, IA 50023, 515-240-7483, jacquelyn@sellingcentraliowa.com, www.SellingCentralIowa.com.

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INVESTMENT

By Kyle Matzen

FINANCIAL steps to prepare for Alzheimer's and dementia

Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia affect more than 7 million Americans, per a 2025 report by the Alzheimer's Association. The emotional toll of watching a loved one's health decline can be overwhelming. And the financial burden can be significant, too.



Hopefully, these diseases never impact your family, but it's important to be financially prepared. Here are some steps to consider:

First, check your family's health insurance options, including Medicare, supplemental medical policies, long-term care policies and even veterans' benefits.

You'll also want to ensure legal documents are in place — such as a durable power of attorney for finances and health care decisions. An attorney can help.

For caregivers who pay health care costs out of pocket, there may be tax credits and deductions. These benefits vary by state, so consult with a tax advisor about your eligibility.

Work with qualified professionals to take proactive financial steps. It can help provide confidence for the journey ahead. ■

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A SAFE place to heal

Community shows up for Officer Cade Moritz



When the call went out for a need to finish the basement of injured police officer Cade Moritz, businesses and individuals stepped forward to do the work and buy the supplies.

Last September, news broke that Cade Moritz, a police officer with the Des Moines Police Department, had been shot during an exchange of gunfire with a suspect. He survived.

Later that month, he was discharged from the hospital and escorted by fellow DMPD officers to a rehabilitation program, where he continued his recovery.

Bry Wisecup, an area Realtor, heard the news soon after it happened. Moritz and his fiancée are her clients, as well as friends of hers and her husband's.

"When we learned of the shooting, it was actually my husband's idea to jump in and help by finishing the basement so Cade would have a cool, dark place to recover from brain surgery," Wisecup explains. "He knew, because of my career, I'd have the connections and community to make something really cool happen."

Prior to the shooting, Moritz and his father had just started working on his basement. They had only begun the framing when the incident occurred.

"We really had to line up contractors for every step of the finishing process," Wisecup explains. "Everything from framing to drywall hanging and texturing, plumbing, HVAC, electric, painting, trim work, cabinets, etc."

Ultimately, many contractors and donors came through, including 10G Heating Cooling Plumbing, C&K Electric, AD Premier Plumbing and more.

"Nathan Gillmore of 10G Heating, Cooling, and Plumbing in Elkhart was my most local contractor, and he was the biggest help," Wisecup says. "He assisted in coordination of the permit work with the city, and the city even waived their fees for the cause."

Wisecup says her commitment to the project stems in part from her deep respect for law enforcement.

"They put their lives on the line every day, and this was a very real reminder of that," Wisecup says. "Coordinating vendors to give Officer Moritz a safe place to recover was the least I could do."

She also hopes the effort shows the power of community when someone is in need.

"'Iowa Nice' is a very real thing," she says. "When you ask for help, Iowa shows up. The contractors who put their paid work on hold so they could donate their time to help finish this project in a timely manner are so appreciated. All of the donors who sent money to help us pay for supplies do not go unnoticed either. Finishing a basement is not cheap, and I am so amazed at how the community showed up for Officer Moritz." ■

IMPORTANCE of having an advance directive

Everyone should have an advance directive in place which expresses your wishes regarding medical care and nominates a person to make those decisions for you.



Competent adults have the right to refuse or accept medical treatment after being informed of the procedures and risks. However, there is concern over how these medical decisions will be made when a person is unable to make these decisions. An advance directive states your health care choices in writing while you are still able to articulate your decision.

If you have not executed an advance directive and are unable to make decisions, others will make health care decisions for you. Difficult and emotional decisions may fall to your spouse, children, or parents. If

your family disagrees on a course of action, problems can arise.

An advance directive expresses your health care choices in writing and nominates someone to carry them out. Without one, you have no control over who makes the decision or the choices made.

Two advance directives are crucial. A Durable Health Care Power of Attorney is a document through which you name another person to make health care decisions for you if you are unable to make them. Your agent is required to follow the directions you provide. If your wishes aren't known, your agent will make decisions in your best interest based on discussions you have had with your agent. The document is "durable" because it remains effective even if you become incapacitated or incompetent.

A Living Will is a written document that expresses your directions for your medical care if you are unable to express your wishes

yourself. It can direct your physician to withhold or withdraw certain life-sustaining procedures if you are in a terminal condition. However, it can be much more comprehensive, including what you want to happen in various situations.

These two documents work together. The health care power of attorney nominates somebody to make medical decisions for you. The living will gives your agent directions on specific decisions.

Advance directives allow you to anticipate medical emergencies and participate in your future care. These documents make health care decisions in advance and create peace of mind for you and your family. The most effective estate planning is accomplished before you need it. ■

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

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TRICKS, treats and pet safety this Halloween

October has always been one of my favorite months (and not just because it's my birthday month). There's something about the changing leaves, crisp fall air, and picking out pumpkins that calls to me. But my favorite part of October? Halloween!



And I know I'm not alone. "Spooky season" is a favorite for many, with costumes, scary movies and the joy and community of trick-or-treating. Our pets, however, may not share the same enthusiasm. For them, Halloween can be stressful and even risky in ways we don't always think about. Here are some things to keep in mind to make the holiday safer for our furry (and feathered) friends:

Candy: A full bag of candy is every child's dream — but a pet's nightmare. Chocolate, raisins and sugar-free gum or candy are toxic, and xylitol (common in sugar-free products)

can cause life-threatening hypoglycemia and liver failure. Even "safe" candies can upset stomachs, and swallowed wrappers may cause blockages. Keep candy bowls out of reach and remind kids that sharing sweets with pets is never a good idea.

Costumes: Pet costume photos are adorable, but not every pet enjoys dressing up. Choose outfits that are comfortable, don't restrict movement, and leave the face uncovered. Start a week or two in advance with treats and praise. And always supervise — because, while a cape makes a dog look like a superhero, it's not so super if it gets chewed or tangled.

The front door: A parade of trick-or-treaters can overwhelm even calm pets. Dogs may bark, rush the door or try to slip outside, and cats can dart out unnoticed. Consider a baby gate for dogs and a quiet, secure room for cats. Pheromone diffusers can help, and your veterinarian can advise if a short-acting anti-anxiety medication is appropriate.

Decorations: Cobwebs, cords, glow sticks and candles may look festive, but curious pets see toys... or snacks. Swap open flames for battery-powered candles and keep décor out of reach. Batteries themselves are especially dangerous if chewed or swallowed.

With a little planning, Halloween can be fun for the whole family — without a late-night trip to the vet. The best treat for your pet is a safe, cozy evening with you.

One last reminder: Don't stop heartworm, flea and tick prevention for fall and winter. Fleas and mosquitoes can survive and reproduce indoors, and ticks become active when temperatures rise above freezing, even with snow on the ground. To keep your pets fully protected, these products should be given monthly, year-round. ■

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. Jaime Stearns

1. What inspired you to become a veterinarian?

I've loved animals since childhood, and with my curiosity for science and passion for helping others, veterinary medicine was the perfect fit.

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

I've been practicing for over 10 years. I earned my bachelor's and master's degrees from Colorado State University and my Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from Iowa State University.

3. Do you have a special area of interest?

I especially enjoy surgery and wound repair. Helping an animal heal and regain comfort is one of the most rewarding parts of my work.

4. What do you love most about the bond between pets and their people?

The bond between pets and people is genuine and unconditional. It's rewarding to support that connection by helping animals stay healthy and giving families more time together.

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

I'd likely be an artist. Creativity and illustration have always been a passion of mine.



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CREAMY tomato soup is rich with sun-ripened flavor

There is something special about cooking with ingredients grown from your own backyard. Recently, I was watching our grandson at my daughter and son-in-law's house. He and I ventured outside to check on their garden and discovered a bumper crop of tomatoes.



Since the weather was cool, I decided that a batch of tomato soup for dinner would serve the harvest well. Our grandson, just 8 months old, is already a curious observer in the kitchen. He keeps me company from his high chair, happily armed with a dozen measuring cups to toss and a few snacks to keep him content. This creamy tomato soup, made with an abundance of fresh-picked tomatoes and a blend of herbs, is rich with sun-ripened flavor. Paired with a golden, melty grilled cheese on homemade sourdough, it was the perfect fall dinner — simple, cozy and made even sweeter by sharing it together with my grandson. ■

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

Creamy tomato soup

Total time: 45 minutes

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3-4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons olive or avocado oil
- 2 pounds fresh tomatoes (about 6 large), blanched, skins off and chopped
- 2 cups chicken broth (low sodium preferred)
- 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1/2 -3/4 cup heavy (whipping) cream
- 2 tablespoons honey
- Salt and pepper, basil, oregano — more of everything than you think
- Pinch of rosemary
- Fresh basil or parsley (optional, for garnish)

Directions

- Heat oil over medium heat. Add onion and sauté for about 5 minutes until soft.
- Add garlic and cook all for 2 more minutes.
- Add tomatoes and cook for 10 minutes.



- Add chicken broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes, uncovered. Stir occasionally.
- Blend until smooth by using an immersion blender and scooping the mixture into a traditional blender. Return soup to the pan.
- Add whipping cream and honey and stir. Season with salt, pepper, basil, oregano and other herbs of choice.
- Simmer for 5 more minutes.
- Serve immediately. Garnish with fresh basil or parsley. This pairs well with a grilled cheese sandwich on sourdough bread. Enjoy!

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MEET Anne Sloan

Sloan makes move to school counselor.

Anne Sloan has nearly two decades of experience working in education.

Originally from Decorah, she attended Iowa State University for her undergraduate degree. After college, she moved to Minnesota, where she landed her first teaching job at Holy Family Catholic High School in Victoria. Over her 10 years there, she and her husband started their family. Before their oldest was ready to begin school, they faced a big decision: stay in Minnesota or move back to Iowa.

"We missed Iowa and our friends and family," Sloan shares. So, the deal was sealed.

Her husband was the first to find a job, and, soon after, Sloan learned of an opening in the North Polk Community School District. She already knew people in the district and, as luck would have it, a PE/health teaching position became available right as their family decided to return.

"I had heard wonderful things about the school district, and we knew we wanted a somewhat smaller district in which there was a good community vibe, and North Polk has been that place for sure," she says.

This year marks Sloan's ninth in the district. For eight years, she served as the high school PE/health teacher, but this year she has stepped into a new role as middle school counselor while pursuing a master's degree in school counseling at Drake University. Her goal is to help others understand that everyone's journey in life is different — and that experiences don't always determine a set path.

"I really have found my passion in the area of mental, emotional health and wellness, and I really wanted to work with students beyond just the classroom," Sloan says. "I want to dig deeper into supporting our youth and our communities by being able to meet with them in a one-on-one or group setting where I have more time and opportunity to help and support them."

With a background in trauma-informed yoga, Sloan has enjoyed incorporating those skills into her teaching and plans to continue doing so as a counselor.

Though she is still settling into her new role, Sloan appreciates the opportunity to interact with students in new ways.

"I think a passion and area that I still get to be part of is forming those positive relationships with students," she says. "I think this is such an important piece of being in education and being a school counselor."

"Every person has — and comes from — a variety of different experiences, and it is so important to meet them where they are at and 'walk with them' in supporting them to help ensure they have what they need to find success and happiness in their lives, which also looks different for everyone," she adds. "Life is not a 'one size fits all' approach."

Outside of work, Sloan enjoys staying active and spending as much time as possible with family and friends, especially with her three daughters: Avery, 12; Raegyn, 10; and Taylor, 9.

"We are on the go but truly embrace the moments where we can just relax at home and grill and embrace the fall weather," Sloan says. "I have to remind myself to slow down and breathe and take in the moments intentionally." ■



Anne Sloan says she has found her passion in the area of mental, emotional health and wellness, which has led her to become a school counselor.

CITY and school board elections upcoming

City and school board elections are Tuesday, Nov. 4.

The city council is responsible for establishing city ordinances, the city budget and city policies. It decides the laws for the community and how its tax dollars are spent. The mayor acts as the chief executive officer of the city and presides over the city council meetings. Communities with city administrators assign some of the mayor's executive duties to administrators.

School boards set the policies and budget for the school district within the parameters set by the state.

To find your polling location, visit: <https://apps.sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterreg/pollingplace/search.aspx>.



Polk City city candidates:

- Mayor - Steve Karsjen
- City Council member at-large two seats - David Dvorak, James Hill

Alleman city candidates:

- City Council member at-large two seats - James Aswegan, Jenni Heller, Bobby Jones, John Kinsey, Perry Smith
- City Council member to fill a vacancy - Bill Stevens Jr.

Elkhart city candidates:

- Mayor - John M. Kaczmarczyk
- Councilmember at large two seats - Rob Fouraker, Angela Schaffer, Travis Warnke

Sheldahl city candidates:

- Mayor - Todd B. Anderson
- Councilmember at large three seats - Travis Harris, Mark Murray, Luke S. Vance
- Councilmember at large to fill a vacancy - Chad Harris

North Polk Community School District

- School Board Director at large three seats - Matthew Aicher, Keith Bormann, Benjamin Engler, Holly Hunter ■



Suggest a teacher

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Send an email to
tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com

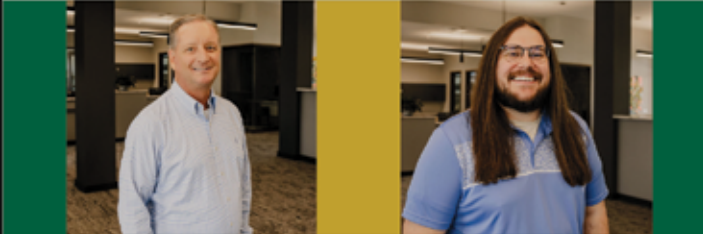


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FINANCE

By Rachel Moler

PREVENTING and recovering from identity theft

No one can escape the potential of becoming a victim of identity theft. It can happen to anyone, at any time.

In 2024, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) received more than 1.1 million identity theft reports and nearly 2.6 million cases related to fraud, collectively costing more than \$2.7 billion. The most common theft was credit card, and the most common type was imposter scams.



While there is no guarantee to keep you safe, there are many preventative measures you can take to reduce risk and protect your personal information.

Secure your information: The most important step in preventing identity theft is to secure your personal information, whether that is online, on paper or stored within a personal device, such as a computer or phone.

The following are ways you can protect yourself:

- Do not carry sensitive materials, such as your Social Security card, Medicaid card, or other identifying information, unless necessary.
- Keep all documents with personal information stored in a safe location. This could be a fireproof safe at home. Ensure that, at work, you do not leave personal information accessible to others. Consider using a locking file cabinet for purses and wallets or keep them with you at all times.
- Never share personal information, including financial or health, with anyone else in any manner (online, phone or written) unless you initiated and trust the other person.
- Do not use a debit card for purchases. Select one credit card and use it to pay off each month.
- Do not use the same passwords for all your secure logins. Each should be strong and different from the others.
- Monitor your bank accounts daily and review statements for any discrepancies.
- Monitor your credit reports.
- If you are donating or throwing away any technology, make sure you have wiped the data clean of any personal information that may be stored on it.

Preventing identity theft is crucial to avoiding the serious consequences of identity theft; however, what if it has already occurred? How does someone recover from identity theft? Let's take a look.

If you've been a victim or suspect identity fraud, follow these steps:

Call credit companies, banks, and other companies where fraud may have occurred and alert them of the fraud, and freeze or close accounts. Change all the passwords and PINs for your accounts. Place a fraud alert with one of the credit bureaus (Experian, TransUnion, or Equifax). Report the fraud to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). Report the fraud to your local law enforcement.

Once you have completed the above, it's time to recover and repair damage by doing the following: Close any new accounts that were opened in your name. Remove fraudulent charges from your accounts by contacting those businesses. Work with the credit bureaus to correct your credit report. Review your credit reports often.

Taking precautionary steps to secure your personal information is the first step to protecting yourself from identity theft. In addition to the above tips, your financial institution can also support you in ensuring your finances are safe and can offer additional security measures. ■

Contact Rachel Moler, Personal Banker, at 515-329-8801 for more information, HomeState Bank, 101 E. Bridge Road, Polk City. www.experian.com/blogs/ask-experian/identity-theft-statistics

POLK CITY Community Library news

Thanksgiving Holiday Hours:

Closing at 5 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 26

Closed Thursday, Nov. 27

Closed Friday, Nov. 28

Closed Saturday, Nov. 29

The Lit Bag. A free monthly subscription for PCCL teens in grades 7-12. Each themed bag includes two handpicked YA library books plus fun treats, crafts, or swag — personalized

to your reading interests. Register online each month and complete the form to secure your spot. Bags are ready the first Thursday of the month — keep the goodies, return the rest! **November pick-up: Nov. 6. December registration: Nov. 20.**

Puzzle Swap. Drop off: Oct. 20-31. Swap: Nov. 1, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bring in puzzles that you would like to trade. You will receive one ticket for each puzzle you bring in. On Nov. 1, use your tickets to “purchase” new puzzles.

Iowa Scenic Views by Foot, Tuesday, Nov. 4, 6 p.m. Join us for an engaging session with author, poet, and runner Tyler Sullivan, as he unveils hidden treasures of Iowa from his journey on foot. He has explored 97 counties, 1,298 cities, and more than 500 museums throughout the state. Registration requested but not required.

Adult Evening DIY: No-Sew Christmas Trees, Thursday, Nov. 6, 6 p.m. Join us for a fun evening of crafting! This month we'll be making no-sew Christmas trees. Registration required. Ages 17 and older.

Adult DIY Card Crafting, Monday, Nov. 24, 6 p.m. Join Jane and Kim in making handmade cards that are fun to create and treasured by the recipients. Make two cards each of four different designs using numerous techniques. There will be a \$5 material fee payable that night. Beginners are welcome. Feel free to bring scissors and adhesive if you have them, and prepare to have a good time! Registration required. Ages 17 and older.

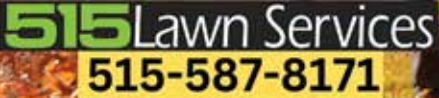
Adult Crafternoon: Glass Mosaic Feathers, Tuesday, Nov. 25, 2 p.m. Join us for a fun afternoon of crafting. This month we'll be making glass mosaic tile feathers. Registration required. Ages 17 and older.

MORE EVENTS

- Un-Schooled: School's out — fun's ON! Monday, Nov. 3, 1 p.m. Enjoy a variety of board games and grab a treat from our mini snack bar. Register online at polkcitylibrary.org.
- Adult Coloring, Wednesday, Nov. 5, 1-3 p.m. and Tuesday, Nov. 18, 5-7 p.m. Ages 17 and older.
- Wednesday Book Club, Wednesday, Nov. 5, 7 p.m. “The Murmur of Bees” by Sofia Segovia. Ages 18 and older.
- Babble & Brew, Thursday, Nov. 6, 10 a.m. Playtime for them, coffee and conversation for you.
- Block Party Lego Club, Monday, Nov. 10, 3:45-4:45 p.m. For ages 8-16.
- Adult Bingo - NEW Adult Program, Tuesday, Nov. 11, 1-2:30p.m.
- Comets Kids Club K-5th graders, Tuesday, Nov. 11, 4 p.m. Fall Watercolor Painting. Registration required. ■

Polk City Community Library

1500 W. Broadway St., Polk City
515-984-6119
www.polkcitylibrary.org
Monday - Wednesday: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Thursday: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Friday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Sunday: closed



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Saturday: 4:00pm
Sunday: 9:00am

Reconciliation:
Saturday 3:00 - 3:45pm
Sunday 8:00 - 8:45am

Let's Walk Together in Christ Scan here!





WANT TO HONOR LOCAL VETERANS?

A grateful nation thanks its veterans for their service and sacrifices each **NOVEMBER** in honor of Veterans Day. We will recognize some of these local heroes in the November issue of North Polk Living magazine.

HURRY! Reserve your space by Nov. 5!

TO RESERVE YOUR SPACE, CALL DAN JUFFER at 515-371-2290 or dan.juffer@dmcityview.com





EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Be sure to check for cancellations.

Upcoming in North Polk Living magazine:

Veterans Salute: Help us salute local veterans in our November issue. Send us a photo of your veteran along with name, town of residence, rank, military branch, enlistment dates and what they would like others to know about serving their country. Please email to: Tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.



Community Trunk or Treat Oct. 26, 4-6 p.m. Polk City Square

Enjoy trick or treating around the Polk City Square as businesses set up their trunks for fun and treats.

Drive by Cavatelli Lunch

Saturday, Oct. 18, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Elkhart Christian Church, 252 N.W.
Washington Ave., Elkhart

Drive up and order, and the cavatelli is brought out to your car for a freewill donation.

Candidate forums

A North Polk School Board Candidate Forum will be held at Salem United Church in Alleman on Oct. 28 at 7 p.m.

Meet the candidates for Polk City City Council and Mayor at Luana Savings Bank Community Room on Oct. 29 at 7 p.m.

Great Iowa Pet Expo

Oct. 18-19
2100 N.W. 100th St., Clive
www.greatiowapetexpo.com

All things pets, including trade show, education and entertainment.

Bake Sale and Dinner

Saturday, Nov. 8, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Polk City O.E.S. Chapter 361 Masonic Temple, 106 Third St., Polk City

Homemade mincemeat, apple butter, nuts, white elephants. Dinner from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 5-10, under 5 free. Carryout available.

Fall Vendor Sale

Saturday, Nov. 1, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
West Des Moines Elks Lodge 2752,
2060 N.W. 94th St., Clive

Enjoy this Fall Vendor Sale in time to shop for Christmas from many great vendors and artisans, featuring: jewelry, home decor, candles, handcrafted goods, greeting cards, scents, clothes, accessories, 3-D toys, tasty treats and much more. There will be concessions and drawings for nice gifts. Profits will go toward Christmas presents for veterans in the Des Moines Veterans Hospital and other charities supported by the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks.

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancellations.

HALLOWEEN EVENTS

Check websites for admission costs

Scarecrow Festival

Through Nov. 2 • Center Grove Orchard, 32835 610th Ave., Cambridge • www.centergroveorchard.com

A farm-wide celebration filled with colorful displays, playful scarecrows, and the warm spirit of the season.

Apple and Pumpkin Festival

Oct. 18-19, 25-26 • Wills Family Orchard, 33130 Panther Creek Road, Adel • www.willsfamilyorchard.com

Wagon rides, corn maze, corn pool and, of course, apple and pumpkin picking. From 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and noon to 6 p.m. on Sundays.

Family Halloween at Living History Farms

Oct. 17-19 and 24-26 • 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale • www.lhf.org/event/halloween

Phantom Fall Festival

Every weekend through Oct. 26 • 3200 Adventureland Drive, Altoona

www.adventurelandresort.com/discover-adventureland-resort/Phantom-Fall-Fest

Adventureland hosts its fall festival with several haunted houses, ghosts, ghouls, goblins and more.

Des Moines Community Orchestra

Each concert will be conducted by a guest conductor this season as the orchestra searches for its new permanent conductor. The concerts are free and start at 2 p.m. A pre-concert talk will be given before each of the concerts. The orchestra does accept donations.

• **Oct. 26: Fall Concert.** Drake's Sheslow Auditorium. Guest conductor Dr. Jonathan Sturm, Featured Soloist Logan TeKolste, French Horn.

• **Dec. 7: Sing Messiah!** Grace United Methodist Church. Guest Conductor Dr. Marion Scott.

• **Feb. 22: Winter Concert.** Stallin Performing Arts Center. Guest Conductor Joshua Barlage, Featured Soloist Curtis Barr, Cello.

• **May 10: Spring Concert.** Drake's Sheslow Auditorium. Guest Conductor: Kara Mather, Featured Soloist Dr. Kevin Allemagne, Clarinet.

Archives Across America: Unlocking Genealogy Resources

Saturday, Oct. 18, 9 a.m.

Iowa Genealogical Society Library, 628 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines

The Iowa Genealogical Society will host this one-day conference at the IGS Library and via Zoom. Featured speaker Tina Beaird will present on the Library of Congress, the National Personnel Records Center, the U.S. National Archives, and Midwest repositories. Registration is \$70 for members and \$90 for non-members. Details at www.iowagenealogy.org.

IMT Des Moines Marathon

Oct. 19
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www.desmoinesmarathon.com

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LEGACY is more than a will

What we leave behind through who we are.

We tend to think of legacy as something we leave behind when we're gone — the material possessions that supposedly carry on our will — things such as a house, a savings account or a well-written will.

Those things matter, but most people won't be remembered for their possessions. They will be remembered for the way they lived.

All of us, to some extent, are building up our legacy, whether we realize it or not. It shows up in how we respond to hardship, how we treat people who cannot repay us, and in the words we choose when no one else is listening. Legacy is not built in one big moment. It is built quietly, over time.

Some people are remembered for what they built or accomplished. However, people are



remembered more for the ones who leave the deepest mark through their kindness, their consistency, and their quiet example. That kind of legacy carries on. It shows up in the way your kids treat others, in the stories your grandkids tell, or in the way someone else makes a decision because of something you once said or did.

I've talked with many older adults who wonder whether their life has made a difference. They may no longer be working or providing for a family in the way they once did, but I see something else. I see the steady hands that carried others through loss. I see the quiet strength that held a family together. I see the small, everyday faithfulness that few ever noticed but that mattered more than they know. Even if your story feels unfinished or marked by regret, legacy is still a choice you can make. It does not depend on a perfect past. It starts now with how you show up, how you speak, how you forgive. Even a simple offer of reconciliation unreciprocated can become part of the story you

leave behind.

You do not have to be wealthy or well-known to leave something meaningful behind. You simply have to be intentional. A legacy can be as simple as offering encouragement when it is needed most, forgiving when it is hard, or showing up for someone when no one else does.

As we move into a season of family, gratitude and reflection, this is a good time to ask not "What am I passing on?" but rather, "What will people remember about who I was?" We were not created just to build something for ourselves. We were made to shape the lives around us. And, sometimes, the most lasting thing we leave behind is not what we gave, but how we loved those around us. ■

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.

CopperWood Social Hour

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

October 31 • November 21
December 19

Unwind with us at **CopperWood at Prairie Trail in Ankeny** for an evening of music, light refreshments and great company. Our residents, families and neighbors are invited to come together, enjoy conversation and experience the warm, welcoming spirit of our community.

Whether you're catching up with friends or meeting someone new, our Social Hour is the perfect time to relax and connect.



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WHY chambers matter to our communities

When people think of what makes a town thrive, they often picture strong schools, safe neighborhoods and welcoming parks. But just as important, and sometimes overlooked, is the role of a chamber. Chambers are the heartbeat of local business, working every day to support growth, create connections and ensure the community is a place where families and businesses alike can flourish.



At its core, a chamber is about relationships. It gives business owners a seat at the table, a place where their voices can be heard, their needs can be addressed, and their successes can be celebrated. For new businesses, chambers offer mentorship, ribbon cuttings and networking opportunities that help them gain traction. For established businesses, chambers provide ongoing marketing, advocacy and resources to keep them strong and relevant.

But the chamber's role goes beyond business. A healthy ratio of commercial to residential growth is critical for every city. Without it, property taxes fall disproportionately on homeowners, making it harder to maintain the services and amenities we all enjoy. Chambers help bridge that gap by attracting new businesses, supporting expansions, and showcasing the community as a great place to invest. That is not just good for business, it is good for every resident who benefits from a stronger tax base and more local options for shopping, dining and services.

Events are another way chambers enrich the community. From farmers markets to festivals, chambers bring people together in ways that strengthen civic pride and create lasting memories. These events also give local businesses exposure, helping them reach new customers in a fun, family-friendly atmosphere.

Here are a few upcoming events you can participate in and learn more about Polk City's Chamber. We look forward to seeing you there.

Upcoming events

Oct. 22, 11:30 a.m. – Networking Luncheon at Luana Savings Bank Community Room with guest speaker On With Life.

Oct. 26, 4-6 p.m. – North Polk Community Trunk or Treat on the Polk City Square.

Oct. 28, 7 p.m. – School Board Candidate Forum at Salem United Church in Alleman.

Oct. 29, 7 p.m. – Meet the Candidate Forum for City Council and Mayor at Luana Savings Bank Community Room.

Strong communities don't happen by accident. They are built by collaboration, vision and shared commitment. The chamber is a vital piece of that puzzle, helping ensure our town is not just a place to live, but a place to grow and belong. ■

Information provided by Staci Allen, Executive Director, Go Polk City Chamber, P.O. Box 226, Polk City IA 50226, 515-984-3098, admin@polkcitychamber.com.

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HONOR OUR VETERANS

Iowa Living magazines will be saluting veterans in November issues. If you are a veteran who would like to be included, please send a photo (military or current) and the following information:

NAME:

CURRENT TOWN:

MILITARY BRANCH:

RANK:

ENLISTMENT DATES::

QUOTE: "What would you like others to know about serving your country?"

Email to tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com or mail to:

Iowa Living magazines, 8101 Birchwood Court Suite D, Johnston, IA 50131

SUBMISSIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY OCT. 30.

CLASSIFIEDS

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VARSITY volleyball

North Polk varsity volleyball at ADM on Sept. 16.



Jaslyn Rasmussen



Reese Wagner



Claire Riker



Jaiden Uhl



Aylee Ihle



Addison Bingham



Peyton Dirks



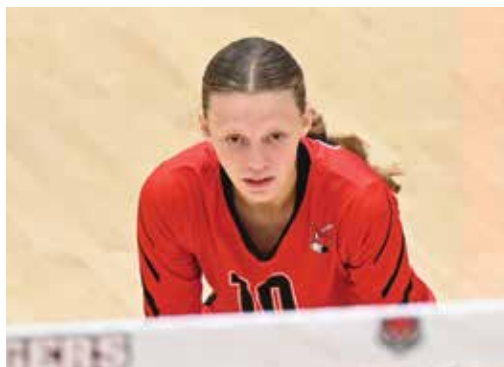
Jenna Krantz



Jacinda Nemmers



Ava Koudelka



Madelyn Klever



Reagan Peterson

HOMECOMING events



Homecoming Queen Kate Muhlbauer, King Drew Fausch, Prince Nathan Harrington and Princess Mya Bond.





THE COMETS CORNER

NEWS FROM NORTH POLK CSD

OCTOBER 2025



CELEBRATING HOMECOMING WEEK AT NORTH POLK

School years are filled with celebrations and remarkable achievements, but nothing quite matches the excitement of Homecoming Week, and this year was no exception. North Polk proudly celebrated Homecoming Week from September 22 to September 26. The week was full of school spirit and cherished traditions, including an incredible parade and pep rally, followed by a big victory for the Comet football team. Thank you to all our families and the community for their support in making this week a tremendous success!



GROWING MINDS IN GREEN SPACES - NPMS OPENS NEW OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

Thanks to the collaboration and support from Corteva Agriscience and the Corteva Grows Green Space initiative, North Polk Middle School now has an officially designated outdoor classroom.



Located to the south of the building, this vibrant new space includes an outdoor classroom, rain gardens, butterfly gardens, and native Iowa plants. A huge thank you goes to the amazing volunteers from Corteva and our middle school students for making this space ready for use.

This project was a collective endeavor involving many individuals who helped bring the vision to life. The Outdoor Classroom is now open for exploration, and we look forward to seeing students enjoy their learning experiences outside in this new environment.



NORTH POLK HOSTS THE FIRST ANNUAL NORTH POLK MARCHING INVITATIONAL

For the first time, on October 4th, North Polk hosted the inaugural North Polk Marching Invitational!



The district is proud to have hosted this first-ever event, the beginning of a new tradition that celebrates the incredible talent, dedication, and spirit of some of the best student musicians from across our state.

A total of 23 schools took to the field to showcase their talents. The event wrapped up with two exceptional exhibition performances: one by our very own Comet Marching Band and another by the Iowa State University Marching Band.

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