

JANUARY 2026

CLIVE

Living

MAGAZINE

Big game, **BIG PARTY**

Capping off the football season with a watch party to remember

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EDUCATION

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COMMUNITY

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RECIPE



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A SUPER Sunday

What will you be doing on Sunday, Feb. 8? If you are like 127.7 million other people, you will be watching the Super Bowl on TV. That's a lot of people, many of whom don't know the difference between a touch-down and a home run. And, they don't care. Why? Because the Super Bowl is about much more than football. In fact, for many, it has become an entire Sunday tradition.

Some viewers don't catch a single football play, as they are watching only to be entertained by the advertisements. In most any other TV viewing situation, those watching TV will turn channels, lower the volume or run to the bathroom or to the refrigerator during breaks. But not during the Super Bowl. This viewing audience tunes in to the ads, and companies ante up \$8 million or more for just 30 seconds of promotion to reach them.

Yes, the Super Bowl is one of the most-watched television events in the United States. The record was set last year with the aforementioned 127.7 million, but the highest-rated Super Bowl remains Super Bowl XVI in 1982 with a 49.1 household rating. That means 49.1% of TV-owning households were tuned into the Super Bowl during its broadcast. Viewership of the Super Bowl has remained stable over the years, even as ratings for other events have declined.

My parents were in the half who didn't tune in to the Super Bowl. Football simply wasn't their thing. When I was in college, I began watching the games more seriously. And, when I made my way into the working world as a young man, I got into the Super Bowl scene even more. The food. The festivities. The fun. Oh, and the football, too.

The Super Bowl parties were aplenty, and my friends and I did our best to attend many, making Mondays a challenge. The problem continues today. "Super Sick Monday" is a real thing, as an estimated 22.6 million U.S. employees are expected to miss work due to post-game fatigue, hangovers, and the cultural significance of the event. Some have even suggested that the Monday following the Super Bowl should become a national holiday, possibly even moving Election Day to that date to help encourage more people to get to the polls. It is an interesting idea, although I am not sure it would help with voter turnout, especially for those mourning after their team lost.

I am now more comfortable lounging in my living room and watching the game with family or a few friends. But don't let me drag you down. Check out this month's cover story to see how others are celebrating Super Bowl Sunday — and be sure to get to work on Monday. ■

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Big game, **BIG PARTY**

Capping off the football season with a watch party to remember

By Darren Tromblay

It's time for the big game, and that's the perfect reason to gather with your fellow fans around the big screen to see which team finishes the year with a championship ring. And you won't be alone. Record-breaking viewership has been reported the last two years, with 127.7 million U.S. viewers last year, according to ESPN.

Reid Bermel attends a football game with his wife, Holley.

At first glance

If there ever was a person in street clothes who you might think would be a fan of professional football, it might be Reid Bermel.

Standing 6'7" and coming in at close to 300 pounds, Bermel is probably used to people asking him if he does one of two things: plays basketball or football.

Although he isn't exactly an old duffer, his answer is always the same at this juncture of life. That being, neither.

He did play some hoops back in "the day," but, surprisingly, he isn't that much of a football fan. A "take it or leave it" type. Bermel brings a great amount of enthusiasm to the foray at times, but, at other times, he doesn't. It just depends on how things are. He's flexible. He'll watch it when he's interested, but if it were to go away unexpectedly, his life would continue on as though nary a thing had changed.

The football fanatic at the Bermel household? His wife, Holley. Very much so, he says. Included in the festivities of the season is always that one day in the late winter when she takes Bermel to varying neighbors' parties to celebrate the National Football League's biggest game of the season — the Super Bowl. Despite him not being the biggest football fan in the world, it doesn't exactly take a lot of convincing to get him to go to a good party.

"I've gone to some Super Bowl parties with her and have had a great time," he says with a smile. "I would say she doesn't really have to drag me. It's a great socializing opportunity, and we really enjoy going to those types of things."

There was one particular party that was memorable, though, Bermel says.

"Holley is a big Minnesota Viking fan, and I don't think they were even playing in the game that year, but what was really cool was that our host and hostess had pennants of every team except for three or four of them," he says. "So, as a Christmas/Super Bowl parting gift, Holley gave them the Vikings pennant, which got them that much closer to having the full collection. It was really neat, I thought. Especially because some of the pennants had logos that had since been changed, so they had that old-school feel and mascot."

The two have been married 23 years. Bermel has worked for the Department of Natural Resources for many years now, taking his love of the outdoors and transforming it into a full-blown career. He's loved these past seasons, and despite his awkwardness for the game of

SUPER BOWL LX

Teams: TBD

When: Sunday, Feb. 8

Where: Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California, the home of the San Francisco 49ers

Ways to watch: NBC will broadcast the Super Bowl with Spanish-language coverage on Telemundo and streaming on Peacock

Halftime show: Bad Bunny

Super Bowl commercials: 30-second spots cost about \$8 million

football, it's still good. And, it's all thanks to good ol' Dad.

"Growing up, every Sunday, Dad would take my brother and I out on nature hikes in the woods, or out hunting or fishing," Bermel recollects fondly. "Typically, that's when the NFL games are played, so naturally I just didn't get all that interested in it. I did play in seventh and eighth grade, but even though I was always tall, I wasn't this big, and I just remember getting banged up quite a bit, so I just didn't enjoy it as much as some other things."

So, more than likely, unless there's something of "real life" significance going on, the Bermel house will be filled with the sights and sounds of the NFL. Good places, good times.

As for the parties, they are memorable for many reasons, one of which is always the extra-large quantities of finger-licking game food available at the venue. And Bermel, despite not being the hugest football fan, takes everything in to the best of his abilities. He's just looking for a good time.

"Yes, it's kind of strange that I'm not the big football guy at this size," he jokes. "But it's OK. We just enjoy having a good time."

A great day

Football brings people together for different reasons. It could be food; it could be beverages.

Chris Bender knows what his is. It's simple: Mom.

"I saw through the Nebraska website that they were having a game in Kansas City between the Cornhuskers and Cincinnati," Bender says. "Originally it was someone else, but the person who was supposed to go backed out and didn't go."

The two left from Omaha early in the



Nadine Bender, left, and her son, Chris, took part in their first Nebraska Cornhuskers football game in Kansas City recently.

morning. The trip was supposed to take two and a half hours, but it wouldn't be as such. Try five and a half.

The game was great, except for climbing to the top.

"But, it was a great atmosphere, lots of Nebraska fans there, some Cincinnati fans," Bender says.

Nebraska won, 20-17.

That evening, instead of returning home late, mom and son stayed overnight.

It was fun to see the stars out on the field. Travis Kelce and Patrick Mahomes interacted with the team, Bender says. That and other things.

"It was a great day out with my mother."

Family first

Jeff Fernstein takes things seriously on the gridiron.

Well, pseudo-serious. When his teams are at home, he watches. When they're away, he watches, too. Kind of. For that one, it's a stretch. Home is where it's at.

"I watch football when I'm at the home with the kids," Fernstein says. "I'm a Bears fan, so I make sure I pay attention to that one."

The Super Bowl parties? They go to those with in-laws, taking in every second of the time. After all, it's the Super Bowl.

"Yeah, we will fry up a bunch of appetizer type things, get things going on that front and



Being with his family is at the top of Jeff Fernstein's priorities during football season.

just have a good time," he says. "It's great."

Wife, Tarah, concurs, deferring to her husband who picks up the slack.

"I'm a little bit bigger fan, so Tarah will root for the Vikings," Fernstein says.

Tips for a great watch party

(Family Features) Get ready to host this season's most memorable watch party with these tips:

- **Show your colors:** Get your house game ready and show your team spirit by decorating in the colors of the team you'll be cheering to victory. You don't need to go all out; just grab some simple decorations like streamers, balloons and disposable tablecloths to add some energy. If you'll have guests cheering on both sides, mix and match your decor and let guests pick their plate and cup color to root for their favorite team.

- **Take a seat:** When the game is underway, gathering everyone around the screen can get crowded. Make sure everyone is comfortable by offering additional seating. You can use stools, chairs from other rooms and even folding chairs or camping chairs if you need to create more space. If you need to resort to floor space for seating, make it extra comfy with some pillows or blankets for padding.

- **Multiply the screen time:** Chances are high your guests will scatter throughout your home, spilling out of the living room into your kitchen and dining spaces. Set up extra screens to show the game in multiple rooms, whether that's extra TVs, monitors or laptops. That way, even if someone steps away from the main screen, he or she won't miss any of the excitement.

- **Make snacks that score with the crowd:**

Simple Salami Sliders

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

Servings: 4-6

INGREDIENTS

- 1 package slider buns
- 8 slices Swiss cheese
- 8 slices salami
- 8 slices ham or other deli meat
- 1 stick butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- everything bagel seasoning (optional)

DIRECTIONS

- Heat oven to 350 F.
- Halve slider buns, creating top and bottom portions. Set top portion aside, leaving bottom portion in original container. Place bottom portion and container in baking dish to prevent



sticking.

- Layer Swiss cheese, salami and ham then cover with top buns.
- Mix melted butter, Worcestershire sauce, brown sugar, Parmesan cheese, onion powder and garlic powder. Pour over sliders.
- Cover with foil and bake 15 minutes then remove foil, sprinkle with everything bagel seasoning, if desired, and bake, uncovered, 10 minutes.

Every party needs a menu, but you can keep it simple for a watch party. Guests typically want quick bites they can grab during timeouts and commercial breaks, so stick to finger foods and apps guests can self-serve quickly. Wings are a party staple, and chips and dip are always a hit. Be sure to offer some indulgent options, as well as foods for those who have special dietary needs. You can also make your food game easier by asking everyone to bring a dish to share instead of taking it all on yourself.

Find more entertaining tips and advice at eLivingtoday.com.

Enjoy the commercials

While commercials used to be the perfect time for a quick break and filling your plate, not so with the Super Bowl. Commercials are as big a part of the experience as the kick off. How many of these do you remember?

Best Super Bowl commercials of all time (including 2025) <https://filestage.io/blog/best-superbowl-commercials/>

1. Bud Light – Big Men on Cul-de-Sac (2025)
2. Hellmann's – When Harry Met Sally Recreation(2025)
3. Stella Artois – The Other David (2025)
4. Hellmann's – May-ow (2024)
5. Budweiser – Old School Delivery (2024)
6. Kawasaki – Business in the front, party in

the back (2024)

7. Uber Eats – The Beckhams (2024)
8. Pluto TV – Couch Potato Farms (2024)
9. Oikos – "Hold my Oikos" (2024)
10. Booking.com – Book whoever you want to be (2024)
11. Apple – 1984 (1984)
12. Snickers – Betty White (2010)
13. Amazon – Alexa Loses Her Voice (2018)
14. Always – #LikeaGirl (2015)
15. Wendy's – Where's The Beef (1984)
16. Pepsi – Cindy Crawford (1992)
17. Coca-Cola – Hey Kid, Catch (1980)
18. Tide – It's A Tide Ad (2018)
19. Nike – Hare Jordan (1993)
20. Budweiser – Puppy Love (2014)

Super Bowl trivia

Enjoy getting your guests in the game day spirit with some trivia.

- The highest combined point total in a Super Bowl is 75 points, in Super Bowl XXIX (49ers 49, Chargers 26).
- The lowest combined point total in a Super Bowl is 16 points, in SB LIII (Patriots 13, Rams 3).

Check out these websites for more Game Day trivia:

- <https://forgottenstars.net/super-bowl-trivia/>
- <https://greenlight.com/learning-center/fun-facts/super-bowl-trivia> ■

GREENBELT Landing project hits milestones

The \$10.6 million project will expand recreational activities and improve water quality.

Clive recently marked off project milestones with the construction of new and updated features at Greenbelt Landing this fall. The 14.89-acre project, located on the east side of N.W. 114th Street in Clive, will be completed in spring 2026. Once finished, Greenbelt Landing will expand recreational opportunities, improve water quality and enhance natural habitats.

“It’s exciting to see Greenbelt Landing come together as a community space created for all visitors. With an updated community building, permanent stage and inclusive playground, we are pleased to upgrade this beloved space in Clive,” Clive Leisure Services Director Richard Brown said. “Our community has supported this project from the beginning, and we’re counting down the days until we can officially open the space to everyone next spring.”

The total funding for the project is \$10.6 million. More than \$3.5 million has been raised through grants and fundraising from dozens of generous donors. City capital funds will support the remaining costs of the project.

Ashley Okland Star Playground: The playground equipment and rubber play surface have been installed. Variety – The Children’s Charity of Iowa donated the all-inclusive playground, which will serve children of all abilities.

Outdoor Concert Stage: The foundation and structural components have been installed at the MidAmerican Energy Stage, which is nearing completion.

Special Events Building: The special events building has been renovated with a covered outdoor patio, floor-to-ceiling windows, and improved kitchen facilities for events.

Boardwalk and Fishing Piers: The ADA-accessible raised boardwalk has been constructed. The fishing piers at the pond have been established and will provide ADA accessibility to the pond once they are completed.

A special thank you to all the project partners, donors, volunteers and residents whose collective support continues to make Greenbelt Landing possible. If you are interested in donating to the project, visit cityofclive.com/GreenbeltLanding to learn more. ■



The Ashley Okland Star Playground construction site in October 2025.



The Special Events Building construction site pictured in October 2025.



Crews work on the MidAmerican Energy Stage in October 2025.

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INVESTMENT

By Daniel Rundahl

A SMART start to 2026



The start of a new year is one of the best times to reset, refresh and make intentional decisions about your money and finances. Rather than setting unrealistic “resolutions,” the most successful financial strategies are built on clear goals, consistent habits and thoughtful planning.

Begin with reflection: Before you look ahead, look behind. Assess how 2025 finished. Examine your income, expenses, savings and investments. Identify where your money went, what worked well and what didn't. Were there unexpected expenses or missed saving opportunities? This provides valuable insight and helps you avoid repeating the same mistakes.

Set clear, purpose-driven goals: Financial goals should be specific and meaningful. Define concrete objectives such as building a six-month emergency fund, paying off a credit card balance, or increasing retirement contributions by a certain percentage. Clear goals give your money direction and make progress measurable. Keep your goals in front of you. For years, I have kept three goals of varying importance taped to the corner of our bathroom mirror.

Pay yourself first through automation: Automation is one of the most effective tools in saving and planning. Set up automatic transfers to savings and investment accounts as soon as you receive your paycheck. This approach removes emotion from saving decisions and builds consistency. Over time, small, automated contributions can lead to significant results.

Strengthen your emergency fund: An emergency fund is the foundation of financial security. Aim to save three to six months of essential living expenses in a liquid, low-risk account. This cushion protects you from job changes, medical expenses or unexpected repairs and helps prevent reliance on high-interest debt.

Review investments and manage risk: The new year is an ideal time to review your investment portfolio. Ensure your asset allocation still aligns with your goals, time horizon and risk tolerance. Life changes — like marriage, children or career shifts — often require adjustments. Rebalancing keeps your strategy aligned rather than reactive to market noise.

Create a thoughtful debt strategy: Not all debts are built equal. High-interest consumer debt, like credit cards, should be addressed aggressively, while lower-interest debt may be managed more strategically. List balances, interest rates and payoff targets to create a clear and realistic plan.

Plan for known expenses: Planning for upcoming costs such as vacations, education expenses, insurance renewals, or major purchases in advance reduces financial stress and helps you stay within budget.

Keep it simple and sustainable: The most effective financial plans are simple and repeatable. Focus on habits you can maintain throughout the year. Review your progress periodically, adjust as needed, and celebrate milestones along the way.

A strong financial start to the new year is built on intention and consistency. With steady effort and a clear plan, you can create a financial foundation that supports both your short-term needs and long-term goals. ■

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

DeBACKER'S volunteering helps, bit by bit

Provides way to meet others in the community.

A Tanzanian proverb states, "Little by little, a little becomes a lot." That concept holds true regarding the volunteerism of Andrea DeBacker. One might assume that a mother of a young child wouldn't have time to volunteer and make a difference, but DeBacker finds a way.

"I have one child, and she's in first grade. I'm a stay-at-home mom," DeBacker says. "When she started kindergarten, I wanted to do something with my time and give back to my community because I'm not originally from this area. We moved here in 2021. I needed to make some connections, make some friends, and I found the library to be a good place to start. They have a ton of good programming for kids."

DeBacker has found that organizations are appreciative of her time, even in small chunks.

"I connected with Dee, the youth services director at the Clive library," DeBacker says. "So, when my child started school, I now volunteer at the library once a week and at her school once a week, and I also volunteer at Waypoint Resources, which is a food pantry, clothing closet and medical services in Waukee. I really enjoy doing it. I feel like my time is being utilized well to help a lot of people. I'm fortunate enough to have the time and resources to do that."

DeBacker enjoys the variety of tasks she deals with in her volunteering.

"At the library, if they have a project, I'll work on that. Other days, I do a lot of cleaning, especially in the children's area, cleaning books, cleaning tables, cleaning puzzles," DeBacker says. "I also do some organizing and putting things away."

DeBacker has found that, because she is a volunteer, she can focus on one task, whereas library staff may get interrupted with phone calls or requests from patrons. She enjoys occasionally putting together "craft kits" for kids at the library, which frees up library staff for other duties.

"I can just sit there for 45 minutes or so and knock that out. If staff has to do it — and is interrupted every couple of minutes — it takes a lot longer," DeBacker says. "If I can just help out for one or two hours, I can really do a lot when that is my sole focus."

DeBacker realizes that volunteers are often retired or semi-retired individuals who have lots of free time. But she understands the value in her contributions.

"At the food pantry, that takes a lot of people. One of the jobs is grocery transport. It's helping the clients get their groceries to their vehicle. Recently, I was helping a client get her groceries to her vehicle, and she said, 'I don't think I've ever had a young lady help me, usually it's an older gentleman,'" DeBacker says. "It's a physically demanding job, carrying things and a lot of up and down, so if that's something I can do, I'm happy to do it."

By organizing her volunteerism to match her schedule, DeBacker finds she can contribute without making major changes to her day.

"With the library in particular, that's a place I go to weekly anyway, so, if we're going to be at the library anyway, if I can carve out an extra hour or 90 minutes to help clean to organize books, that's not too big of a sacrifice," she says. "I feel like it's mutually beneficial. I really enjoy it, and I hope that I really am helping those organizations out as well."

DeBacker says she feels good about the example she is setting for her daughter.

"Every year, with a child, things change. My daughter's schedule comes first. Whatever time allows me to do, I certainly will continue. I hope as she gets older, she will volunteer at places with me," DeBacker says. "It's important to me to pass that along to her, to be community minded. We're a part of this, and we're all a team." ■



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WHERE I find inspiration — and a new comfort-food favorite

Today's home cooks have no shortage of inspiration. With a quick search online, we can access thousands of recipes from trusted test kitchens, community-driven platforms and individual food bloggers. While I appreciate that convenience, I still find myself reaching for cookbooks, browsing new releases at the bookstore and checking out titles from the library — a perfect way to “test drive” a recipe before committing to it.

Another favorite source of inspiration is Family Features, a free recipe site filled with reliable dishes and beautiful photography that never fails to spark my creativity in the kitchen. This month's recipe, loaded Philly cheesesteak baked potatoes, brings together two of my favorite comfort foods: steak and potatoes — both of which also happen to be Shane's favorites. It takes the familiar flavors of a classic Philly cheesesteak sandwich and transforms them into a warm, satisfying baked potato meal. It's hearty, comforting and perfect to enjoy for dinner, with plenty left over for lunches throughout the week. ■

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



Loaded Philly cheesesteak baked potato

Recipe courtesy of Real California Milk

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 1 hour, 11 minutes

Servings: 4

Ingredients

- 4 large russet potatoes, washed
- 1 cup Real California sour cream
- 1-2 tablespoons Real California whole milk
- 1/4 cup Real California unsalted butter, divided
- 1 small green bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1/2 small yellow onion, thinly sliced
- kosher salt, to taste
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 pound fresh shaved sirloin steak
- 2 cups shredded Real California provolone cheese

Directions

- Preheat oven to 425 degrees F and line baking sheet with aluminum foil.
- Prick potatoes all over with fork. Bake until potatoes are tender and fork

inserted easily comes out, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Split tops of potatoes open with knife and fluff potato flesh with fork. Set aside.

- In small bowl, combine sour cream and milk, adding more milk as needed, until sour cream is pourable. Set aside.
- In large skillet or on griddle over medium-high heat, heat 1 tablespoon butter. Add peppers and onions; cook until tender, 3-4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Transfer to plate and set aside.
- Clean skillet then melt remaining butter. Add steak and cook until fully cooked and lightly browned, 3-4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Return vegetables to skillet and toss to combine.
- Evenly top each potato with 1 tablespoon butter, steak mixture and cheese. Transfer to oven and bake until cheese is melted, 2-3 minutes. Drizzle with sour cream and serve.

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Information provided by Chris Beener, VP, Clive branch manager, CBeener@BankersTrust.com, 515-222-5888, 11111 University Ave., Clive.



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Be sure to check for cancellations.

Note about calendar events: This magazine is delivered the fourth Thursday of each month. Calendar items included are events happening after the delivery date and extend into the following month. If you receive and read your magazine upon delivery, you will not miss out on any calendar items.

Coming up in the Clive Living magazine:

"I do!" Stories about marriage proposals: Share the story of how your courtship culminated in a proposal to remember. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com to share your story!

Rescue animals: Do you have a beloved rescue animal in your family? Share your story of how you came to find your pet — or it came to find you! Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.

Clive Public Library Events

1900 N.W. 114th St., Clive

- **Movers & Shakers:** Fridays (except Jan. 30 and Feb. 6), 9:15 a.m. and 10 a.m.
- **Play in the Bay:** Mondays (except Feb. 16), 9 a.m.
- **Little Learners:** Mondays (except Feb. 16), 10:45 a.m.
- **Truckin' Tuesday:** Tuesdays, 9 a.m.
- **Little Builders:** Tuesdays, 9 a.m.
- **Postpartum Play Group:** Tuesdays, Jan. 27, Feb. 24, March 24, April 28, 9 a.m.
- **Sensory Play:** Saturday, Jan. 31, 9:30 a.m.
- **Storytime:** Wednesdays and Thursdays beginning Feb. 11, 9:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.
- **Family Sing Along with Denise:** Thursday, Feb. 19, 6:15 p.m.
- **Saturday Stories:** Saturday, Feb. 21, 9:30 a.m.
- **Winter Blues Buster:** Thursday, Jan. 29, 6:15 p.m. Already going stir crazy this winter? Shake off the winter chill with a cozy, joy-filled evening. Beat the winter blues, get out of the house, and enjoy a night of winter-themed activities and hot chocolate. For more information, email staff@cityofclive.com.
- **Tween Taste Test:** Thursday, Feb. 26, 6:15 p.m. Ready to take your taste test challenge to the next level? Enjoy a true blind taste test. Tweens must correctly identify the food on their plate while wearing a blindfold. For more information, contact staff@cityofclive.com.
- **Harbach Cafe for Teens:** Wednesdays, Feb. 4 and 18, 5 p.m.
- **Let's Play Mah Jongg (adults):** Mondays, 10 a.m., Thursdays, 1:30 p.m. This is a group

Donations encouraged

Clive Community Services, 2190 N.W. 82nd St., Suite A, Clive

Seasonal clothing in good condition can be donated to Clive Community Services. Additionally, new, in-the-package underwear for all genders and sizes are needed. You can also contribute financially. As always, donations of food and personal care items are gratefully accepted. Your support helps provide essential resources to those in need. Learn more about how you can help by visiting clivecommunityservices.com.

Donations can be dropped off:

Monday, 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. to noon

The Food Pantry and Clothes Closet are open: Monday, 4-7 p.m., and Friday, 9 a.m. to noon.

The Medical Clinic hours are: Monday, patient registration 5-6:30 p.m.; patients seen 5-7:30 p.m.

for people who know how to play the game. Instruction not offered. Bring your copy of the 2025 Official Standard Hands and Rules form from the National Mah Jongg League.

- **Clive Book Club (adults):** Tuesdays, Jan. 27 and Feb. 24, 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.
- **Take and Make Filter Flowers (adults):** Come to the library starting Feb. 1 to pick up this month's take and make project: a coffee filter floral bouquet. While supplies last and no holds allowed. Available at both Clive and Harbach locations.
- **Tech Think Tank (adults):** Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2 p.m. Welcome to our monthly Tech Think Tank, a relaxed space to swap tips, ideas, and even rants about keeping up with the ever-changing world of personal technology. Whether you're a gadget geek, app addict, or just trying to keep your phone from exploding with updates, this roundtable is for you. Registration required, <https://cityofclive.activityreg.com/selectActivity?nLeaguesId=2705>.
- **Yoga Happy Hour (adults):** Fridays, Feb. 6 and 20, 4:30 p.m. It's time to slide into the weekend with a gentle hour of yoga guided by Jenna Schissel, mental health therapist and certified yoga therapist. It is strongly recommended that you bring your own yoga mat or large towel to participate, along with some water. If you've ever been curious about yoga, this class is for you. Drop in, no registration required.



CITYVIEW's Fire and Ice pub crawl

Saturday, Jan. 24, 1-4 p.m.
Valley Junction

CITYVIEW brings back its legendary Valley Junction area pub crawl. Fire and Ice is a hockey-themed liquor sampling event that will be sure to warm up your winter blues. With your event ticket, you will receive 10 individual drink tickets to sample some of the best winter cocktails from establishments in the Valley Junction area. Tickets are \$25 in advance and \$35 at the door. Follow the QR code for tickets.



- **Mystery Book Club (adults):** Monday, Feb. 9, 6:30 p.m. Check the library website for book title.
- **Bingo for Seniors (adults):** Tuesday, Feb. 10, 1 p.m.
- **Bucket List Book Club (adults):** Wednesdays, Feb. 11 and 25, 6:30 p.m. Here's your chance to read and discuss some of the "100 books to read before you die!" Check the library website for book title.
- **Journaling Circle (adults):** Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2 p.m. Explore writing prompts, creative techniques and personal reflection. Registration is required at <https://cityofclive.activityreg.com/selectActivity>.
- **Learn to Play Hand, Knee, Foot (adults):** Wednesday, Feb. 18, 1 p.m. Join us for a fun and social card game class. Hand, Knee & Foot is a variation of Canasta played with partners and multiple decks of cards. In this beginner-friendly session, you'll learn the basic rules, how to build "hands" and "books," scoring and common strategies. We'll walk through the game step-by-step and play a few practice rounds, so no experience is needed. Registration is required at <https://cityofclive.activityreg.com/selectActivity>.
- **Romance Book Club (adults):** Saturday, Feb. 21, 10 a.m. Discuss books, movies, apps, and anything in the romance genre. For more information and to participate, contact Stephanie Keller at skeller@cityofclive.com or via phone at 515-453-2221. ■

MEET Cameron Wendt

Giving back through coaching and education

Cameron Wendt has spent two decades as an educator. His inspiration for becoming an educator began at home.

"My dad was a teacher in the small town of Ogden, Iowa," Wendt shares. "He was my high school social studies teacher and one of my inspirations. I also had a basketball coach who was one of my math teachers. I loved the way he taught, and I had a connection with him as my coach."

Wendt attended Cornell College in Mount Vernon and played basketball for the college. While there, he took several math courses with the intention of becoming a math teacher.

"The math quickly became a little harder than I liked, so I switched my major to focus on social studies," Wendt says.

In the early years of his career, Wendt was both a teacher and a basketball and baseball coach.

"I wanted to give back to kids like me growing up," he states. "Teaching and coaching have kept me energized, and I have loved every minute of it."

His teaching career began as a social studies and geography teacher in Osceola. He next took a position as the activities director and assistant principal at Nodaway Valley Schools. Following that, Wendt worked as a shared elementary principal in Waukee. For the past several years, he worked in an eighth-grade and ninth-grade building as an assistant principal in the Ankeny School District. About a year ago, he saw a job posting for principal at Indian Hills Junior High School. Desiring career advancement, he applied for the job and was excited to be chosen. He began his principal position this year and has enjoyed his first semester at Indian Hills.

"I spent a lot of years teaching seventh grade, so working in a building with seventh and eighth graders seemed like a great fit," he explains.

Wendt and his wife live in the Dallas Center/Grimes school district and have two children, ages 8 and 9.

"Even before my own kids, the idea of mentoring kids interested me," he states. "The idea of having a small part in the lives of so many kids has been a passion of mine. It is probably at the core of what drives me in addition to the relationships I build with the school staff, students and my fellow teachers. The relationships I've built have been especially meaningful in my life, and they really showcase the idea that Iowa is really one big, small town."

Many of Wendt's core memories as an educator stem from his time as a basketball and baseball coach, built on both the successes and struggles he observed his students and athletes walk through, especially when they were able to overcome adversity. But those weren't the only moments. Like many other educators, he finds great joy in watching students succeed in the classroom.

"I love the lightbulb moments as well as the everyday moments that build relationships," he explains.

"Right now, we often hear that there are lots of teacher shortages," Wendt says. "If you are on the fence about whether to become an educator, don't take it lightly, because kids need us now more than ever. Jump in with both feet and give it a try. It is one of the most rewarding things you can ever do to see kids succeed and overcome adversity." ■



Cameron Wendt is the principal at Indian Hills Junior High School.

FIRE & ICE

WINTER BAR CRAWL

SATURDAY, JAN. 24

1-4 P.M. IN VALLEY JUNCTION

Break the winter blues, get out and have fun on a Saturday afternoon in Valley Junction!



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\$25 in advance, \$35 at the door

fire-and-ice.dmcityview.com



KNOWING your Social Security benefits

Social Security provides benefits for eligible individuals who cannot work due to a physical or mental disability. Other programs are linked to Social Security benefits. Make sure you know which programs can benefit you.



Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a program intended for those who have not worked long enough to qualify for Social Security Disability Insurance. In addition, an individual who has never worked may be eligible for Supplemental Security Income. Individuals applying for this program must have limited income and resources. These guidelines generally match the eligibility criteria for Medicaid (Title XIX).

If you receive SSI, you may also be eligible for Supplemental Nutritional Assistance

Program (SNAP) benefits. To make it even easier, when you apply for SSI, the Social Security Administration (SSA) also allows you to apply for your state's SNAP to save time.

SNAP provides food-purchasing assistance to low-income households. Benefits are deposited monthly into SNAP accounts linked to EBT cards, which work just like credit or debit cards. Most major grocery store chains and retailers — like Target or Walmart, for example — accept EBT cards to purchase SNAP-eligible items. Eligible items are typically food items that can be prepared at home (or seeds to plant and later provide food), excluding food that is hot when sold or other prepared meals.

SSI provides benefits to those with limited income and resources. SSI is also for certain people who are 65 or older, and those who are blind or have disabilities.

While your SNAP benefit amount depends on your household income and size, the basic

monthly SSI payment for 2026 is the same nationwide — \$994 for one person or \$1,491 for a couple.

If your household is applying for SSI or already receiving SSI, the SSA will help you complete your SNAP application over the phone, in person, or through the state's benefit portal.

If you believe that you qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), but have not applied — or if you've been denied — then you need an experienced attorney to assist you. Applying for disability can be a long and complicated process. An expert attorney is able to analyze an individual's eligibility and assist with the application and appeal processes, so that you can receive all of the benefits you're entitled to. ■

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

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PLAN AHEAD

By Scott Eriksen

PLAN ahead in 2026

Will 2026 be the year? It might be cleaning out the basement. Perhaps it is getting a will in place...or updated. Or maybe it is finally getting your funeral prearrangements addressed. We hear it all the time: "I am so glad to have this taken care of."

Planning your final arrangements begins with a simple conversation and can be a pleasant process. Planning ahead also allows you time to give thoughtful consideration to these important decisions. There are many options to think about when addressing your final arrangements, and there are even prepayment options available to those who wish to have their final financial obligations handled in advance.

An advanced planning consultant can walk you through these choices and options.

Start the year by crossing something off your "to-do" list. Reach out to your funeral home of choice and schedule a meeting to get your prearrangements in place.

You will be glad you did...and so will your family. ■

Information provided by Scott Eriksen, Director of Hamilton's Advanced Planning, Hamilton's Funeral Home, 605 Lyon St., Des Moines, 515-697-3670, www.HamiltonsFuneralHome.com.



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Scott Eriksen Dave Cortner Robert Christensen Sarah Masteller

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HEALTH

By Annette Smith

NEW year, new neck

Simple habits that reduce headache triggers

Headaches often feel mysterious, but everyday habits can quietly load the system that supports your head and neck. Long periods of looking down at a phone, working on a laptop or driving can increase tension in the upper neck and shoulders. That tension may irritate sensitive tissues, amplify migraine pathways, or contribute to "tight band" tension headaches.

A good starting point is movement variety. Every 30–45 minutes, reset your posture. Let your shoulders drop, take two slow breaths and gently turn your head right and left. Add a 20–30 second chest stretch in a doorway to counter slumped positions.

Sleep and hydration matter, too. Inconsistent sleep times can raise migraine risk, and mild dehydration may lower your threshold for headache. Aim for a steady sleep schedule, regular water intake and balanced meals so you're not running on fumes by mid-morning. If you drink caffeine, try to keep it moderate and earlier in the day — late-day caffeine can disrupt sleep, which can set you up for more headaches.

If you track triggers, include stress, skipped meals, jaw clenching and prolonged screen time. A brief walk, heat to the neck or gentle stretching can often reduce tension.

Red flags include a sudden "worst headache;" headache with weakness, slurred speech or fever; or a new headache pattern after age 50. These deserve urgent medical evaluation. ■

Information provided by Annette Smith, Mountain Laurel Physical Therapy, 974 73rd St., Suite 33, West Des Moines, IA 50265, 515-520-8037, www.mountainlaurelpt.com.





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CHAMBER Luncheon

The Clive Chamber of Commerce held its annual membership luncheon featuring the 2025 new members at Sherwood Forest Event Center on Jan. 14.



Todd Van Arsdale and Joe Casper



Chase Steuben, Joe Bach and James Bach



Kirsten Bury and Stephanie Oral



Matt Janssen and Ann Fuller



Shane Larsen and Mike Earp



Amy Heston and Sue Bennett



Ahmed Abraham and Ben Chambers



Travis Gaule and Matt Wonderlin



Stephany Hanes and Edye Beckerman



Renee Nash and Gwen Peters



Terry Snyder and Stephany Hanes

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Kyle Faulkner and Andrea Vetos



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Heidi Koll and Chris Koll



Susan Dunn, Ahmed Ibrahim and Edye Beckerman

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