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RESIDENTS' CHOICE AWARDS

Ankeny/Northern Polk County residents share their favorites.



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WELCOME

VOTING made easy

Voting for elected officials, bond issues or related items can be a lot of work. Voters should research the candidates or issues in advance and make selections that match their views. They often need to take time off from work or home activities to be available in person to cast their ballots. And, sometimes, they need to stand in line for lengthy periods of time to even get inside the polling places.



Nobody said voting was easy — unless you are voting in the Residents' Choice polls in our Living magazines. We keep it simple, and you can vote in the comfort of your own home on your personal computer, tablet or phone. Easy peasy.

A few decades ago, when we were first conducting reader polls in CITYVIEW magazine, all the votes were submitted on the paper ballots we published. Choices were written in by hand, and the votes were counted by hand, too. It was a tedious process, and, as a result, very few votes were cast compared to today.

Now, we subscribe to an online polling service so readers can cast their votes digitally. Voters still have to fill in the blanks, as we don't load the ballot with predetermined choices like some other polls do. It certainly would be easier to count the results if we loaded your options, but we think it is important to keep the choices for our readers' favorite people, businesses, places and events wide open. And, since our Living magazines are mailed to every household in the communities we serve, everyone is eligible to vote. You don't have to register. You don't have to be a certain age. You don't even have to vote in more than one category if you so choose.

There have always been, and always will be, cheaters in this world, including in this poll. Cheating doesn't work, though, as we easily identify those and throw them out. What does work is being a great person, being involved in a great organization or running a great business — and that is what the winners in this year's readers' poll are.

I thank all of you who took the time to vote in this year's Residents' Choice poll. And, if you didn't vote, well, there is always next year.

Thanks for reading. ■

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May 21 - Knights of Columbus Council Meeting
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May 21 - Catholic Women's Club out to dinner
this month @ Food Depot

May 25 - Mass @ Beaver Catholic Cemetery
starting at 9am for Memorial Day

May 25 - Parish Offices Closed for Memorial Day

May 26 - Rosary @ 7:30pm in the Church

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July 19 - Baptismal Prep Class

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RESIDENTS' CHOICE AWARDS



Ankeny/Northern Polk County residents share their favorites.



By Tammy Pearson

Once again, residents in the Ankeny/North Polk area have given kudos to the people, places, events and businesses that help make living in the area a pleasure and a breeze. Quality services, products, amenities and more are close to home, and those who live in the area tipped their hats to them by choosing their favorites in our annual Residents' Choice Poll.

With sometimes only a handful of votes between the winner and the runners up, we consider all three to be winners. If you are unfamiliar with any of them, pay them a visit and give them a chance to become one of your favorites, too. They come highly recommended by the voters in our poll, who also happen to be your neighbors.

The staff at Cupp Insurance, which was voted Residents' Choice for favorite insurance agency.

FEATURE

Ankeny/Northern Polk County Residents' Choice for favorite...

(Runners-up in alphabetical order. *Denotes repeat winners from last year.)

Restaurant

* Rising Sun Café

Runners up: Portofino's Italian Restaurant & Pizza; Sports Page Grill

Restaurant for breakfast

* Rising Sun Café

Runners up: Early Bird; It's My Jam Café

Restaurant for lunch

* Main Street Café & Bakery

Runners up: Rising Sun Café; Sports Page Grill

Restaurant for dinner

Portofino's Italian Restaurant & Pizza

Runners up: Arcadia; District 36 Wine Bar & Grille

Restaurant for dessert

* Main Street Café & Bakery

Runners up: Rising Sun Café; The Outside Scoop

Place for ice cream

* The Creamery

Runners up: The Outside Scoop; Uptown Dairy

Pizza establishment

Leaning Tower of Pizza

Runners up: Nonna's Pizza & Pasta; Papa's Pizzeria

Bar

Cabaret Sports Bar & Grille

Runners up: Polk City Pub; Uptown Garage Brewing Co.

Coffee shop

* Porch Light Coffeehouse

Runners up: Café Diem; Rising Sun Café

Server/bartender

* Erika Sedgwick - Cabaret Sports Bar & Grille

Runners up: Alex Fahey - Rising Sun Café; Cortney Burchett - Yankee Clipper

Auto Service

Christian Brothers Automotive

Runners up: Aim High Automotive; Heartland Tire & Auto

Auto Body Shop

* Karl Chevrolet, Inc.

Runners up: Caliber Collision; Gerber Collision & Glass



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FEATURE

Car dealership

* **Karl Chevrolet, Inc.**

Runners up: Bob Brown Buick GMC; Dewey Ford

Preschool/Daycare

* **Our Lady's Little Learners**

Runners up: Lakes Early Learning Center; Yellow Brick Road Early Childhood Development Center

Nonprofit

St. Vincent de Paul

Runners up: On With Life; The Ankeny Klothing Exchange (TAKE)

School

Ankeny Centennial High School

Runners up: North Polk High School; St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic School

Park

Jester Park

Runners up: Ankeny Miracle Park; Big Creek State Park

Community festival or event

* **Ankeny Chamber SummerFest**

Runners up: Ankeny Farmer's Market; Polk City Four Seasons Festival

Church

Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Catholic Church

Runners up: Lakeside Fellowship; Lutheran Church of Hope Ankeny

Pastor

Father James Ahenkora

Runners up: Scott Rains; Wendy Musgrave

Chamber of commerce

* **Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce**

Runners up: Polk City Chamber of Commerce; Uptown Ankeny

Library

* **Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library**

Runners up: Faith Baptist Bible College & Theological Seminary Library; Polk City Community Library

Camping spot

Cherry Glen Campground

Runners up: Jester Park; Prairie Flower Campground

Coach

* **Tim TeBrink, North Polk Football**

Runners up: Alayna Clark, Centennial Dance; Jerry Pezzetti, Ankeny Football

Teacher

Ryan Halterman, North Polk High School

Runners up: Katie Jones, North Polk West Elementary; Katie Molstad, Parkview Middle School

Grocery store

* **Fareway Meat & Grocery**

Runners up: Aldi; Hy-Vee

Boutique

* **Real Deals**

Runners up: Purple Poppy Boutique; The Funky Zebras Boutique

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Jason Thraen

Parks & Recreation Director

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FEATURE

Retail Store

* Real Deals

Runners up: Hawgeyes BBQ; Mainstream Boutique Ankeny

Thrift store

St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store

Runners up: Goodwill; Stuff Etc.

Home improvement retail store

* Menards

Runners up: Polk City Ace Hardware; The Home Depot

Nursery or garden center

* Earl May Garden Center

Runners up: Canoyer Garden Center; TNT Landscaping & Nursery

Place to purchase a gift for a man

Menards

Runners up: Kohl's; Tweedle Dee's

Place to purchase a gift for a woman

* Real Deals

Runners up: Purple Poppy Boutique; Tweedle Dee's



Rock Valley Physical Therapy was voted favorite place to for physical therapy.

Florist

* Carmen's Flowers

Runners up: Flowerama; Hy-Vee Floral

Dad/child date spot

The Playground for Kids

Runners up: B&B Theatres Ankeny; Rising Sun Café

Mom/child date spot

The Playground for Kids

Runners up: B&B Theatres Ankeny; Rising Sun Café

Place to take your mom and dad

* Rising Sun Café

Runners up: B&B Theatres Ankeny; Papa's Pizzeria

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FEATURE

Place to take your kids or grandkids

* The Playground for Kids

Runners up: B&B Theatres Ankeny; Jester Park

Children's birthday party spot

* The Playground for Kids

Runners up: B&B Theatres Ankeny; Urban Air Adventure Park

Golf course

* Otter Creek Golf Course

Runners up: Briarwood Golf Club; Tournament Club of Iowa

Hair salon

Lux Salon Studio

Runners up: Great Clips; Shear Style Hair Salon

Physicians clinic

* The Iowa Clinic

Runners up: MercyOne; UnityPoint

Dental office

Advanced Family Dentistry

Runners up: Ankeny Dental Associates; Summit Family Dental

Orthodontist office

* Ankeny Orthodontics

Runners up: Central Iowa Orthodontics; Iowa Orthodontic Solutions

Chiropractic office

* Polk City Chiropractic

Runners up: Bloyer Chiropractic and Wellness; Sands Clinic of Chiropractic

Vision care

* Ankeny Family Vision Center

Runners up: Elite Eye Care; Polk City EyeCare

Health club or gym

Trail Point Aquatics & Wellness

Runners up: Anytime Fitness; Legacy Fitness

Pharmacy

Hy-Vee Pharmacy

Runners up: CVS; Medicap Pharmacy

Cosmetic services

* RenuYou Aesthetics & MedSpa

Runners up: Nova MedSpa; Ultra Beauty



Chad Sutter, of Sutter Lawns, which was voted favorite lawn care business.

Physical therapy

* Rock Valley Physical Therapy

Runners up: Ankeny Physical Therapy Partners; Athletico

Alternative health care

Natural Health Family Medicine Clinic

Runners up: New Day Health & Hormones; RenuYou Aesthetics & MedSpa

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FEATURE

Weight loss clinic

* **RenuYou Aesthetics & MedSpa**

Runners up: New Day Health & Hormones; Weight Watchers

Medical spa

* **RenuYou Aesthetics & MedSpa**

Runners up: Lush Lifestyle Medicine; Spavia Ankeny

Dance studio

* **Michelle's School of Dance**

Runners up: Ashlee's Creative Arts Academy; Nicole's School of Dance

Gymnastics and/or tumbling studio

Triad Gymnastics

Runners up: Encore Dance Academy; Koach AllStars

CBD Store

Sunmed Your CBD Store

Runners up: CIV Plus; Fit Pharm Nutrition

Financial planner

Justin M. Bjerke, Edward Jones

Runners up: Brian D. Herbel, Edward Jones; Curt Brooks, Edward Jones

Law firm

Mark Gray Law, PLC

Runners up: Lamberti, Murphy & Strong; Sarah E. Wilson Law Firm, PLC

Veterinarian

* **Ankeny Animal & Avian Clinic**

Runners up: Creature Comforts Veterinary Hospital; Polk City Veterinary Hospital

Lawn care business

* **Sutter Lawns**

Runners up: Rasmussen Lawn Care; Total Quality Inc.

Landscaping company

* **TNT Landscaping & Nursery**

Runners up: Beeler Lawn & Landscape; Total Quality Inc.



Susie Sheldahl was voted as Residents' Choice for Favorite Realtor.

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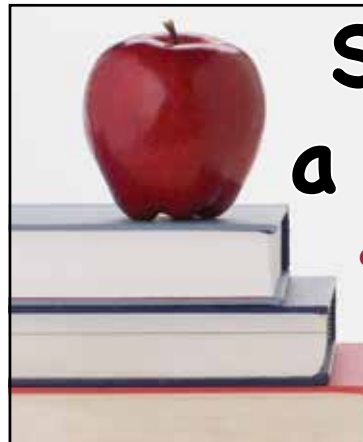
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Suggest a teacher

for an *Iowa Living*
education column!

Send an email to
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FEATURE

Heating and cooling business

* Polk County Heating and Cooling

Runners up: Bryant Iowa Heating & Cooling; Trade Allies Heating and Cooling

Plumbing company

* Premier Plumbing

Runners up: Polk County Heating and Cooling; Todd's Plumbing, Heating & Cooling

Senior living establishment

* Mill Pond

Runners up: Attivo Trail Ankeny; Suites of Ankeny

Insurance Agency

* Cupp Insurance

Runners up: Cullen & Associates; Doubleday Insurance Agency

Realtor

* Susie Sheldahl

Runners up: Alex Schwiete; Jacquelyn Duke

Bank/credit union

* Veridian Credit Union

Runners up: Luana Savings Bank; Wells Fargo

Place for guests to stay

Courtyard by Marriott

Runners up: Best Western Premier; Hampton Inn & Suites Ankeny

Contractor/construction services/remodeling

Renomads

Runners up: A & Co. Design LLC; Black Birch Homes and Design

Cleaning company

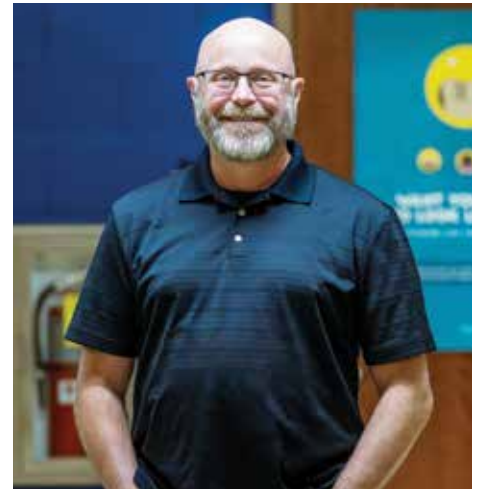
Tiffany Ferneding

Runners up: Molly Maid; phClean

Painting company

Painting By Jen

Runners up: Five Star Painting; Nick's Painting Plus LLC



Ryan Halterman, North Polk High School, was residents' choice for favorite teacher.

Home builder

Black Birch Homes and Design

Runners up: Redwood Builders; Strahan Construction Inc. ■

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INDOOR cats get bored, too

This past winter, my daughter and I unlocked a new favorite activity for our 9-month-old kitten: clicker training. To our surprise, she not only learned many of the same skills our dogs know — sit, fist-bump and target training — but she genuinely loved having something to do.



creep in — and it doesn't always look the way we expect.

Enrichment — simple additions that encourage cats to explore and interact with their environment — can be a complete game-changer. It can improve overall happiness while helping prevent weight gain, anxiety and unwanted behaviors like scratching or biting. The key is to keep it simple and start small. Mentally engaging options include puzzle feeders, treat hunts, and interactive wand toys that tap into natural hunting instincts. But don't overlook things you already have at home — cardboard boxes, paper bags and crinkled packing paper are often instant hits.

Adding vertical space can also make a big impact. Cat trees, shelves and window perches help cats feel secure while giving them a chance to observe the world from above. A bird feeder can quickly turn a quiet window into hours of "cat TV." In our house, this often looks like a tiny, chirping predator glued to the glass, convinced she's just one step away from catching a sparrow.

For more adventurous cats, screened porches, catios, or even leash walks can safely add even more stimulation.

And don't forget social interaction. As I discovered this winter, clicker training can be a fun bonding activity for the whole family. Our kitten now frequently initiates sessions by holding out her paw for a fist bump, just in case we forgot. Just five to 10 minutes a day can go a long way.

If you're ready to try enrichment at home, start small and build from there. Rotating toys and activities can help keep things interesting without overwhelming your cat.

As we head into the warmer months and spend more time outside with our dogs, it is worth thinking about how we can refresh our cats' environments as well. Even small changes can make a big difference in their overall wellbeing. ■

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 THE OWNER

Katie Reynolds,
co-owner & practice manager

After 20 years in the clinic, what's one thing that still makes you smile every day? The staff. After all this time, I still genuinely love the group of people I get to work with. That never gets old.

If you weren't running a veterinary clinic, what do you think you'd be doing instead? Honestly, probably something not too different at its core. I have a background in social work, so I'd likely be in a role focused on empowering and elevating women in some way. The setting would look different, but the heart behind it would be the same.

Having grown up around the clinic and now helping lead it, what's one memory or lesson from your family that still influences how you run things today? Growing up here, I watched our family make smart, thoughtful business decisions, and what stood out most was that taking care of your people was always part of that equation. That lesson has never left me. If the business is going to thrive, the people who show up every day have to feel that too.

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HOME HOSPICE: Comfort, familiarity and support

In a recent national survey, seven in 10 Americans said, if they were diagnosed with a life-limiting illness, they would prefer to spend their time in familiar surroundings with the routines and comforts they count on. In other words, they'd want to be home.



For families facing end-of-life decisions, that preference has helped drive growing interest in hospice care delivered at home. While inpatient hospice centers remain an important option, home-based hospice offers a different kind of experience — one centered on comfort, familiarity and personalized support.

Understanding hospice at home

Hospice is not limited to a specific location. It's a philosophy of care focused on comfort and quality of life, typically for individuals with a serious illness who no longer are pursuing curative treatment. When provided at home, hospice services are brought directly to wherever a person lives, whether that is a private residence, apartment or community setting.

Care at home generally includes pain and symptom management, emotional and spiritual support, and assistance with daily needs that may become difficult over time. The goal is to help individuals remain as comfortable and engaged as possible and to support those close to them.

A team approach to care

One of the defining aspects of hospice is its team-based model. Families typically work with a group of professionals who collaborate to meet medical, emotional and practical needs. This may include registered nurses who oversee care plans and medications, nursing assistants who provide direct support, and social workers who help navigate resources and decisions. Many programs also offer volunteers, spiritual care providers and specialized services such as music therapy or pet visits. Together, this team adapts as needs change, aligning with the individual's condition and preferences.

When hospice is not the right fit

Not every situation calls for hospice. For individuals managing serious illness while still pursuing treatment, palliative care can provide similar layers of support without the same

eligibility requirements.

Palliative care focuses on symptom management, emotional support and planning for future care needs. In some cases, it can serve as a bridge, helping families transition if hospice becomes appropriate later.

Practical considerations

Deciding on hospice at home involves both emotional and logistical factors. Families often weigh a loved one's wishes alongside the realities of caregiving, the suitability of the home environment, and the availability of support.

Financial questions are also common. Medicare and many private insurers typically cover a wide range of hospice services, though details can vary.

Ultimately, there is no single "right" choice. What matters most is finding an approach that honors the individual's preferences while providing the level of care and support the family needs. ■

Stacey Miller is executive director of WesleyLife at Home, which offers a broad network of services, including medical and non-medical at-home care. Visit wesleylife.org or call 515-978-2777.

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FAQs about trusts

A revocable living trust is an estate planning document that manages your assets. A trust is a good option for transferring inheritance. After death, a trust avoids probate, protects the privacy of the beneficiaries, and minimizes estate taxes. But what about during your lifetime? A properly drafted trust allows you to own, invest, and spend your assets as you see fit with few, if any, restrictions. But to accomplish that, trusts require more work upfront to create. You will need to retitle key assets. You will also need to transfer real estate to your trust.



Can I sell my home if it is in a trust?

Yes, you can still sell your house. In general, a revocable living trust will allow you the flexibility to move assets in and out of it. This includes real estate. There is nothing in a trust preventing you from selling the home that you own.

Do I have to worry about the due-on-sale clause in my mortgage?

No, the transfer to a trust does not trigger your mortgage’s due-on-sale clause. If you have a loan against your home, it is probable that the

mortgage document contains a provision that if you sell the real estate, the entire loan becomes due. But there is a federal statute — 12 U.S. Code § 1701j-3(d)(8) — that contains a preemption of due-on-sale prohibitions. A transfer to a revocable living trust is specifically excluded from title transfers that trigger the due-on-sale clause.

If I refinance my home, will I have to take it out of the trust?

Maybe. A revocable trust can give the trustee the ability to borrow against the home owned by the trust. However, some lenders have a policy of not making loans to a trust. This comes up frequently with home equity loans or home equity lines of credit (HELOC). In that situation, you may need to deed the property from the trust back to yourself. Remember to re-convey the home to the trust after the loan is completed.

A revocable living trust shouldn’t be a burden. It should be a device that you use for your benefit to ensure that your assets are managed according to your wishes. If you have questions about how a trusts work, contact an attorney who specializes in estate planning. ■

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

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NORTH POLK FFA is 50 years strong

Chapter expands opportunities, adapts to a more urban student population.



The North Polk FFA chapter puts on Farm Safety Day for third graders.

The North Polk FFA chapter is celebrating a major milestone this year: 50 years of agricultural education, leadership and community involvement.

“Turning 50 as an FFA chapter shows that there has been strong community support throughout the years,” Jamie Waddingham, the chapter’s adviser, says. “Not all schools have the opportunity to provide agricultural education to students. It has been a strong program and will continue to be a strong program in the future.”

Over the years, the chapter’s mission has remained consistent: providing a quality curriculum and meaningful FFA experiences for students. One notable change this year is the agriculture department’s move into a new facility connected to the high school, offering expanded space and opportunities for learning.

In addition, “North Polk is becoming more urbanized, and there are fewer students who have agricultural roots,” Waddingham says. “The urban sprawl is very noticeable, so more FFA members are from urban areas.”

Today, FFA members also have opportunities to grow as leaders while exploring a wide range of career interests. Through career development events and leadership development events, students gain hands-on experience in areas ranging from agricultural mechanics to public speaking. These experiences support both personal growth and skill development.

One of the chapter’s most recognized efforts is its work at the Avenue of Breeds at the Iowa



North Polk FFA members at CDE Day.

State Fair. The event is a major undertaking that relies on the dedication of FFA members and parents to run smoothly. For many students, it is also where lasting memories are made.

Closer to home, the chapter prioritizes community involvement. Members create floats for local parades in Elkhart and Polk City, as well as the homecoming parade in Alleman. These events provide a visible presence in the community and help share the story of North Polk FFA.

The chapter also hosts an annual third-grade Farm Safety Day, giving younger students a hands-on introduction to agriculture and safety practices. The event allows FFA members to share their knowledge while building connections with the next generation.

Another longstanding tradition is the FFA plant sale, which continues to grow each year. Students in horticulture classes start and care for the plants until they are sold, gaining

valuable experience along the way.

Looking ahead, Waddingham hopes to continue expanding the program’s reach. Plans include adding another agriculture teacher and growing opportunities for younger students through middle school exploratory classes. With increasing involvement from students as early as eighth grade, the goal is to build stronger connections and a greater presence across grade levels.

“I hope the FFA continues to grow and get more nontraditional students involved in class and the FFA,” Waddingham says. “There is a misconception that, if students are not farm kids, agricultural classes are not for them. Agricultural classes are about learning to be a leader, exploring and learning new skills.”

Ultimately, after 50 years, North Polk FFA continues to evolve alongside its community while staying rooted in its mission to educate, lead and serve. ■

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EDUCATION

By Lindsey Giardino

MEET Melissa Craighton

From field trips to literacy leadership, her influence reaches beyond the classroom.

Melissa Craighton considers herself a “committed Comet.”

She attended North Polk schools from preschool through her 1989 graduation. After earning a bachelor's degree in elementary education, with special education and reading endorsements, from Northwest Missouri State University, she began her teaching career in 1998 as a special education teacher at North Polk Central Elementary. She later earned a master's degree in elementary education in 2001.



Melissa Craighton attended North Polk schools, where she says teachers inspired her to pursue a career in education.

Craighton has spent the past 25 years teaching fourth and third grades at West Elementary and, most recently, at Big Creek Elementary since it opened.

Her family's roots also run deep in North Polk. She and her husband, Kyle, have two adult children, Reece and Mason, who are both North Polk graduates.

Craighton credits her own teachers at North Polk for inspiring her to pursue a career in education.

“They were some of the most caring and dedicated individuals,” she says. “They challenged and encouraged me to push myself when things got hard.”

Over the years, Craighton says what she has enjoyed most is working alongside a group of teachers who are passionate about helping students reach their potential.

“It is an honor to be invited to a former student's graduation and see all they have accomplished at North Polk and how their education has made an impact on their future,” she says.

One recent challenge was piloting the literacy curriculum elementary teachers will begin using next year. The process was time consuming and carried significant responsibility in selecting a program that is rigorous and engaging for students, easy for teachers to navigate and aligned with essential standards — making the effort worthwhile.

Some of Craighton's favorite memories involve taking students on field trips.

“Many students don't have the opportunity to leave Polk City to experience places like Living History Farms, the Des Moines Civic Center to see ‘The Nutcracker,’ or fossil hunting in Rockford, Iowa,” she says.

“The Nutcracker” is a particular favorite, as audiences often get to see North Polk student dancers perform in the production.

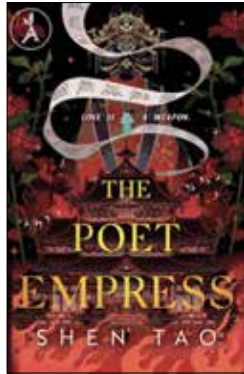
Through decades of teaching, Craighton continues to impact generations of North Polk students while proudly calling herself a “committed Comet.” ■

'The Poet Empress'

You should know that this is not a fantasy romance book, despite the piles of marketing that say otherwise. This is a book about power in 100 different forms, and, more specifically, this is a book about words. The magic in the setting literally comes from poetry. Also, the story itself is told so richly and beautifully, it becomes its own spell.

Shen Tao's debut drops us into a world where women are forbidden to read, but the protagonist Wei Yin isn't going to let that stop her. Raised in poverty and the horrors therein, she is the rare kind of heroine who is genuinely, functionally competent without ever feeling like a caricature. She's desperate, brilliant and has to navigate a political labyrinth that would make Machiavelli sweat.

This is not an easy read. With power comes abuse, and while Tao writes with a poet's restraint, weaving the story so that pain and terror mean something, there is a lot of grim stuff. But there is also hope, and humanity, and the kind of epic tale that will resonate with me for a long, long time. Clear your weekend and surrender. It's so worth it. ■ — Review by Julie Goodrich



By Shen Tao
Jan. 20, 2026
400 pages
\$32.99
Tor Publishing

'Seek the Traitor's Son'

I came into this expecting something interesting and easy to read. I was not at all expecting to be swept off my feet — dazzled by this incredibly rich world, half in love with all the characters, and consumed by the need to know what happens next.

There is a deadly fever that blesses half its victims with mysterious gifts and kills the rest. In a situation that will seem familiar, part of the world welcomes the disease with religious fervor, while the other avoids it like the plague it is. Then a prophecy shakes up the status quo. Two enemies are told one of them will triumph and one will fall, but neither knows which. It's maddening and brilliant and so much fun to read.

Elegy is at the center of the prophecy, and she is exactly the kind of protagonist I want to follow into narrative peril. She is not the chosen one, but she is handed a terrible destiny and has to decide, in real time, what to do with it. There is a slow-burn romance, devilish politics, religious fanaticism and so much more. I don't think I've read a world that feels this live-in for a long time. It's just so good! ■ — Review by Julie Goodrich



By Veronica Roth
May 12, 2026
432 pages
\$39.99
Tor Publishing

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Polk City
Parks & Recreation

2026 SCHEDULE

JUNE 26

- 9:00am PCAC Golf Tournament at TCI
- 5:00pm Food Trucks
- 5:30-7:30pm Race Packet Pick-Up at Fenders
- 6:00pm Tot Trot & Youth Races
- 6:30-8:30pm Live Music in the Bandstand
Jesse & the Medicine Men
- 8:00pm Special Guest for Movie in the Park
- 8:30pm Movie in the Park: Cars (2006)
Popcorn by Lakeside Fellowship

JUNE 27

- 6:30am Race Check-In at City Hall
- 7-10am Sons of the American Legion
Pancake Breakfast
- 7:30am 2k/5k/8k Races Begin
- 8-9am Yoga in the Park
- 8:30am Race Medal Ceremony
- 10-11am Parade
- 11am-5pm Kids Fun Zone
(Face painting, balloon art, activities with local non-profits)
- 11am-6pm Vendor Fair
- 11am-6:30pm Knockerball Inflatables
(Requires wristband, purchased at Parks & Recreation tent)
- 11am-7pm Food Trucks
- 11am-10:30pm Beverage Tents
(Fenders Brewing, Papa's Pizzeria, Hacienda Vieja, The Pub)
- 11:15am-1pm Princess Party in Community Room
Kids Cake Walk 11:15am-12pm
Meet & Greet 12-1pm
- 12-3pm Bill Riley Talent Show on the Stage
- 1-3pm Friends of the Library BINGO in
Community Room
- 3-5pm Bags Tournament
- 4-4:45pm Magician in Community Room
- 4-6pm Live Music on the Stage
Oreo Meatwagon
- 7:30-10:30pm Live Music on the Stage
Standing Hampton

**All activities held at Polk City Town Square unless otherwise specified*



N O R T H P O L K COMETS

SUMMER SCHEDULE 2026

V. BASEBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
May 20	7:00 PM	Ames	N. Polk HS
May 22	7:00 PM	Waukee NW	Northwest HS
May 27	7:00 PM	Carlisle	Carlisle HS
May 28	7:00 PM	Norwalk	N. Polk HS
May 29	5:00 PM	SE. Polk	SE. Polk
May 29	6:45 PM	SE. Polk	SE. Polk
Jun 2	5:00 PM	Gilbert	Gilbert HS
Jun 3	7:00 PM	Bond.-Far.	Bond.-Far. HS
Jun 5	7:00 PM	Clear Lake	W. Anderson
Jun 10	7:00 PM	Boone	N. Polk HS
Jun 11	7:00 PM	ADM	ADM HS
Jun 12	5:00 PM	Waverly-SR	Wartburg
Jun 12	7:00 PM	Waverly-SR	Wartburg

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Jun 15	5/7:00PM	Carroll	Merchants Park
Jun 16	6:00 PM	Linn-Mar	N. Polk HS
Jun 18	7:00 PM	Saydel	N. Polk HS
Jun 22	5/7:00PM	Ballard	N. Polk HS
Jun 24	7:00 PM	Boone	Boone Memorial
Jun 25	7:00 PM	Bond.-Far.	N. Polk HS
Jun 26	10:00 AM	DM Christian	N. Polk HS
Jun 26	12:15 PM	Assumption	N. Polk HS
Jun 29	5/7:00PM	Winterset	N. Polk HS
July 1	7:00 PM	ADM	N. Polk HS
July 3	7:00 PM	DCG	N. Polk HS
July 6	7:00 PM	Carlisle	N. Polk HS

V. SOFTBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
May 20	7:00 PM	Ankeny	N. Polk HS
May 22	6:30 PM	Iowa City	Liberty HS
May 27	7:15 PM	Carlisle	Carlisle HS
May 29	7:00 PM	Ames	N. Polk HS
May 30	9/11:00 AM	Williams.	Williams. Rec
Jun 1	5:00 PM	Gilbert	Gilbert MS
Jun 2	7:00 PM	Waukee NW	Northwest HS
Jun 3	7:00 PM	Bond.-Far.	Bond.-Far. HS
Jun 5	7:00 PM	Clarinda	N. Polk HS
Jun 6	9:15 AM	Oskaloosa	Osk. - Lacey
Jun 9	7:00 PM	Ank. Cen.	N. Polk HS
Jun 10	7:00 PM	Boone	N. Polk HS
Jun 11	7:15 PM	ADM	ADM HS
Jun 12	9:00 AM	Xavier	Xavier HS
Jun 15	5/7:00PM	Carroll	Carroll

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Jun 18	7:00 PM	Saydel	N. Polk HS
Jun 19	9:00 AM	Ft. Dodge	Harlan Rogers
Jun 20	9:00 AM	Ft. Dodge	Harlan Rogers
Jun 20	2:15 PM	SE. Polk	Northwest HS
Jun 22	5/7:00PM	Ballard	N. Polk HS
Jun 24	7:15 PM	Boone	G. Creasman
Jun 25	7:00 PM	Bond.-Far.	N. Polk HS
Jun 26	7:00 PM	Van Meter	N. Polk HS
Jun 27	4:00 PM	Urbandale	N. Polk HS
Jun 29	5/7:00PM	Winterset	N. Polk HS
Jun 30	7:00 PM	Pella	Pella MS
Jul 1	7:00 PM	ADM	N. Polk HS
Jul 3	11:00 AM	Schlaflke Classic	Burnett
Jul 6	7:00 PM	Carlisle	N. Polk HS

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POLK CITY Community Library news

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The library will close at noon Friday, June 26, and remain closed Saturday, June 27. Visit the library at the Four Seasons Festival.

2026 Summer Reading Program

The 2026 Summer Reading Program has begun. This year's theme is "UnEarth a Story." Programs are available for children, teens and adults. The registration kickoff event is May 28 at the Polk City Farmers Market.

Kids and teens: June 1–July 31

Stop by the library for participation details, free events and prize opportunities. Offerings include Movies on Mondays, storytime on Tuesdays, Comets Kids Club on Wednesdays (grades K-5), and the performers series on Thursdays. Teen events are also planned. Programming runs June 8–July 24, with reading logs beginning June 1.

Adults: June 1–July 31

Participants can earn tickets toward grand prizes by reading and attending programs. The schedule includes DIY workshops, author visits and a Laura Ingalls Wilder program.

ACTIVITIES

- **Geri-Fit Strength Training Workouts.** Mondays, 9 a.m. These strength-training workouts are designed for all ages and fitness levels. Participants will need light dumbbells, a sturdy chair and water. Open to ages 50 and older. Stretch bands and a Zoom link are available upon request.
- **Movie Mondays.** June 8, 15 and 22, 10 a.m. Family-friendly movies will be shown in the library multipurpose room. Popcorn is provided. June 8 — "Goat"; June 15 — "The Land Before Time"; June 22 — "Mulan"
- **Chair yoga.** Tuesdays, 9 a.m. Join via Zoom or watch on the library's big screen. This class includes breathwork, mindfulness and gentle movements. Participants will need an armless chair and a small towel. Visit polkcitylibrary.org for the Zoom link.
- **Tiny Tot Storytime (ages 5 and younger).** Tuesdays, 10 a.m. This 20-minute program includes stories, songs and movement activities, ending with bubbles.
- **Tuesday Playdate.** Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m. A drop-in play session with simple art and sensory activities for young children.
- **Qigong/Tai Chi.** Wednesdays, 9 a.m. This low-impact practice combines movement, breathing and mindfulness to improve balance, flexibility and strength. Recommended for ages 50 and older.
- **Ladies' Wednesday Coffee.** Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to noon Coffee and conversation.
- **Comets Kids Club (grades K-5).** Wednesdays, 10 a.m. or 4 p.m. Weekly hands-on activities. Registration opens the prior Wednesday; walk-ins welcome as space allows. June 10 — Paleontology; June 17 — Architecture Challenge; June 24 — Make Your Own Papyrus
- **Thursday Summer Performers Series.** 10 a.m., Luana Bank Community Room (north entrance). June 12 — University of Iowa Archaeology: Games and Toys; June 18 — "Dinosaurs Are Loose" with Kelly Crull; June 25 — Skippy the Human Drum Machine.
- **Sit N Stitch.** Thursdays, 6–8 p.m. Bring a project and enjoy

conversation.

- **Zumba/low-impact dance.** Fridays, 9 a.m. A dance-based fitness class featuring low-impact routines, designed for adults ages 50 and older.
- **Men's Friday Coffee.** Fridays, 10 a.m. Coffee and conversation.
- **Adult Coloring.** Wednesday, June 3, 1 p.m. Relaxed coloring session. Supplies provided; ages 17 and older.
- **Wednesday Book Club,** Wednesday, June 3, 7 p.m. Book: "Acceptance: A Memoir," by Emi Nietfeld.
- **Tiny Tweaks, Happy Life with Erin Port.** Thursday, June 4, 6 p.m. A workshop focused on small, sustainable lifestyle changes. Registration not required.
- **Mah Jongg Open Play.** Monday, June 8, 1 p.m. Drop-in play; beginners welcome. Ages 17 and older.
- **Adult Apron Adventures: Martha Stewart's Oatcakes.** Tuesday, June 9, 2 p.m. A tea-themed baking program. Registration required; ages 17 and older.
- **Welcome to Medicare.** Thursday, June 11, 6 p.m. A free seminar presented by Iowa SHIIP. Registration required.
- **Teen Hangout: Relax, Create and Connect.** June 12 and 19, 2:30–4:30 p.m. Drop-in program for grades 6–12.
- **Taylor & Travis Get Married!** Saturday, June 13, 11 a.m. All-ages celebration with crafts, snacks and activities. Registration requested.
- **Monday Book Club.** Monday, June 15, 2 p.m. Book: "The Journey of Karoline Olsen," by Ann Hanigan Kotz. Includes an author visit.
- **Calligraphy for Tweens and Teens (two-part series).** June 15 and 18, 3:30 p.m. Registration required; grades 6–12.
- **Adult Coloring.** Tuesday, June 16, 5 p.m. evening session; ages 17 and older.
- **Learn to Paint: Dinosaur Painting Party.** June 17, 2–3 p.m. Registration required; grades 2–6.
- **Men's Book Club.** Wednesday, June 17, 6 p.m. (note date change). Location: Fenders Brewing, Book: "The Last Green Valley," by Mark T. Sullivan.
- **PJ Storytime.** Thursday, June 18, 6:30 p.m. Evening storytime for families with young children.
- **Adult DIY: Second Act Studio Stations.** Tuesday, June 23, 6 p.m. Registration required; ages 17 and older.
- **Mah Jongg Open Play.** Thursday, June 25, 5 p.m. Drop-in play; ages 17 and older.
- **Teens and tweens: Learn to Beatbox.** Thursday, June 25, 1 p.m. Registration required.
- **Four Seasons Festival.** Saturday, June 27. The library will be closed. Look for the library in the parade and join Bingo at City Hall afterward. Free Wi-Fi is available at the library. Audiobooks and e-books are available at bridges.lib.overdrive.com. Follow the library on Facebook for updates. ■

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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HVAC

By Alex Messamer

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One of the easiest ways to improve efficiency is by changing your air filters regularly. Dirty filters restrict airflow and force your system to work harder. Most homes should replace filters every 1–3 months, especially households with pets or allergies.

Scheduling professional tune-ups in the spring and fall helps identify small issues before they become expensive repairs.

Homeowners should also seal air leaks around windows, doors and ductwork to prevent energy loss. Proper insulation helps maintain consistent indoor temperatures and reduces strain on your HVAC system.

Upgrading to a programmable or smart thermostat can also help reduce utility bills by automatically adjusting temperatures when you are away or asleep. Some utility companies even offer rebates on smart thermostats.

Keep vents and registers clear of furniture or rugs, and make sure outdoor units stay free of leaves, dirt and debris for proper airflow.

Finally, pay attention to warning signs like unusual noises, uneven temperatures or rising energy bills. Addressing problems early can help avoid costly repairs and keep your home comfortable year-round. ■

Information provided by Alex Messamer, owner, Trade Allies Heating & Cooling, www.tradeallieshc.com, 515-669-4481.

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Congratulations, 2026 North Polk graduates!



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INVESTMENT

By Kyle Matzen

HELP your graduate use credit and debit cards wisely

As your new graduate prepares to step into the next chapter of life — whether that is more education or starting a career — one of the best things you can do is help them understand how to use credit cards, debit cards and prepaid cards wisely.



Credit cards build credit history and earn rewards but come with risks. If your graduate doesn't pay the full balance monthly, interest adds up fast. Teach them to pay off balances monthly and on time.

Debit cards draw directly from their bank account, naturally limiting overspending. However, they can trigger overdraft fees and don't help build credit.

Prepaid cards let them load money first and spend only what is available. There is no debt risk, but these cards typically don't build credit and may come with fees.

Each card serves a different purpose. Help your graduate understand the difference and develop good financial habits now. It is an investment in their financial confidence for decades to come. ■

This content was provided by Edward Jones for use by Kyle Matzen, your Edward Jones financial advisor, 407 W. Bridge Road, Suite 7, Polk City. Edward Jones, Member SIPC.

The May 2016 North Polk Living magazine featured the story, "Sounds of Summer: A preview of the free summer concert series in Polk City." The cover photo was of the band Sister Sara, one of several bands performing at the free summer concert series. Members pictured were Chuck Vierling, Sara Lawrence, Howard Cook and Scott Spehar.



Nice Bangs and The Establishment band members Tim Roberts, Brad Campbell, Steve Hansen, Sara Cline, Holly Madison, Kayla Crann and Barry Norgaard were also pictured, as was Megan Griffith, art director for P&M Apparel, who designed the Sounds on the Square poster. ■

By Dr. Stephanie Koos

SUNSCREEN does more than prevent skin cancer

Every May, Skin Cancer Awareness Month serves as a timely reminder that protecting your skin is not just about aesthetics, it is about health. Skin cancer remains the most common cancer in the United States, yet it is also one of the most preventable. One simple, powerful habit makes a difference: daily sunscreen use.



Sunscreen has come a long way over the years. Older formulas were often heavy, greasy and filled with chemical filters that could irritate sensitive skin or leave users questioning long-term safety. Today, the industry has evolved toward more refined, skin-friendly options — particularly medical-grade, mineral-based sunscreens. These newer formulations use ingredients like zinc oxide and titanium dioxide to physically block and reflect harmful UV rays, rather than absorbing them like traditional chemical sunscreens.

Modern mineral sunscreens are also more cosmetically elegant than their predecessors. Advances in formulation mean they blend seamlessly into the skin without the chalky residue once associated with mineral protection. Many now include added skincare benefits such as antioxidants, hydration and even tinting to even out skin tone.

Sunscreen also plays a critical role in preserving youthful skin. Up to 90% of visible aging — fine lines, wrinkles and sunspots — is caused by UV exposure.

This May, consider sunscreen not just a seasonal product, but a year-round investment in your skin's health and longevity. ■

Provided by Dr. Stephanie Koos, RenuYou MedSpa, 1705 N. Ankeny Blvd., Suite B, Ankeny, www.renuyouaestheticsandbotox.com, 515-330-8900.

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3. Fallen behind on essentials
4. Nothing, the prices haven't affected me.

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RESULTS FROM APRIL POLL: April is National Hope Month. Which do you hope for most?

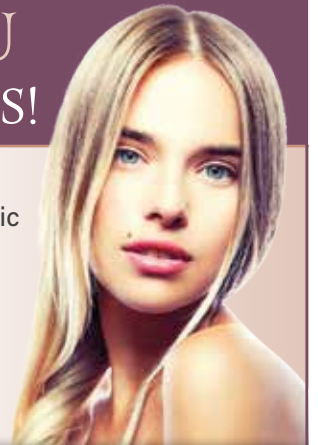


Better health..... 53%
 A surprise windfall of cash..... 30%
 A vacation 10%
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TIPS for container gardening success

Add color and seasonal interest throughout the landscape with container gardens. Set them in garden beds to add vertical interest, place pots of edible plants on a patio, deck or balcony for convenient picking and include pollinator-friendly plants in containers to attract and support pollinators.

Keep containers looking their best with proper selection, planting and care. As always, select plants suited to the growing conditions and combine those that require the same care and growing conditions. Drought-tolerant plants are more forgiving once established if looking to reduce maintenance.

Consider function as well as beauty when selecting containers. Make sure the container has drainage holes, helping prevent waterlogged soil that can lead to root rot. If the pot lacks drainage holes, try double potting. Place plants in a pot, like a nursery pot with drainage holes. Set this pot on a layer of pebbles in the pot that lacks drainage holes. The pebbles elevate the pot of plants above excess water that may collect. Check throughout the growing season and pour excess water out of the decorative pot as needed.

Fill containers with a quality potting mix that provides adequate drainage yet retains moisture. Every gardener seems to have a favorite or more often struggles to find one that works best for them. Check the label to see what the bag contains and recommendations for its use. Planting mixes usually contain peatmoss, coir and or compost as well as vermiculate, perlite or rice hulls for drainage. Check to see if it is

sterilized to kill weed seeds and pests.

Proper watering and fertilization are key to keeping plants alive and healthy. Check the potting mix daily and water thoroughly as needed for the plants growing. Reduce frequency with the help of self-watering containers with water reservoirs that provide water over a longer period. Mulching the soil in containers helps to conserve moisture and irrigation systems with timers make it much easier.

Fertilize planters as needed. A slow-release low nitrogen fertilizer used at planting and again as needed and according to label directions can greatly reduce time spent fertilizing. These fertilizers provide small amounts of nutrients over a longer period. Those who prefer to be a bit more hands-on can use a liquid fertilizer applied regularly throughout the season according to the label directions.

Despite a gardener's best effort, insects and diseases can impact the health and beauty of planters. Regularly check plants for any signs of insects, their damage and disease. Early intervention makes it easier to manage the problem and helps minimize the damage.

Remove small populations of insects and discolored leaves by hand. Use a garden hose and apply a strong blast of water to help dislodge aphids and mites. Follow this up, if needed, with an organic lightweight horticulture oil like Summit Year-Round Spray Oil (SummitResponsibleSolutions.com). These products kill the insects they contact but won't harm beneficial insects that land on a plant that has been treated. It is also effective against powdery mildew and certain other diseases. As always, read and follow label directions for the most effective and safest control.

Adjust container garden designs and maintenance to boost their beauty with minimal effort. Then enjoy a growing season of benefits these planters provide. ■

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the "Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition" and "Small Space Gardening." She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" instant video series and the nationally syndicated Melinda's Garden Moment radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and was commissioned by Summit Responsible Solutions for her expertise to write this article. Myers' website is www.MelindaMyers.com.



Photo by Melinda Myers

“

We have worked with Natalie as both buyers and sellers and she has been great on all transactions! She is educated on current market conditions, proactive in her communication, responsive to inquiries, and keeps her client's best interest in mind at all times. We recommend her to all of our family and friends!

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RECIPE

By Jolene Goodman

SAUSAGE and cheese breakfast bake is easy, filling and practical

Mornings get busy, which is why I love having a breakfast recipe I can rely on. This one checks every box for me. It is incredibly easy to make — just mix, pour and bake — with simple ingredients I usually already have in the fridge. No complicated steps. No mess. No standing over the stove while trying to get ready for the day. I love the idea of cooking once and enjoying for days.



What I appreciate most is how protein-packed this recipe is. Between the eggs, sausage and cheeses, it is the kind of breakfast that actually keeps you full and focused all morning. I am not reaching for a snack an hour later, which makes a big difference on busy days.

It is also perfectly sized for real life. The recipe makes enough for two people to enjoy breakfast for a couple of days, which means less cooking and more convenience. Or, double the batch and freeze some for future quick meals. I can warm up a slice and have a hot, satisfying meal in minutes. Easy, filling and practical — exactly how breakfast should be. ■

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

Savory sausage and cheese breakfast bake

INGREDIENTS:

- 8 large eggs
- 1/4 cup water
- 2/3 cup cottage cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 package of Jimmy Dean breakfast sausage cooked, crumbled
- 1 teaspoon Nature's Seasoning



DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat oven to 350 F. Lightly grease a small baking dish (8-inch by 8-inch works well).
- Blend eggs, water and cottage cheese for 10-15 seconds in a blender.
- Combine with mozzarella and sausage and pour into the prepared baking dish. Spread evenly.
- Bake for 30-35 minutes or until the center is set and the top is lightly golden. Rest for 5 minutes, then slice and serve.
- Vary this recipe by adding sauteed onions, peppers or mushrooms. Pictured is the original recipe plus a version with peppers and mushrooms. ■



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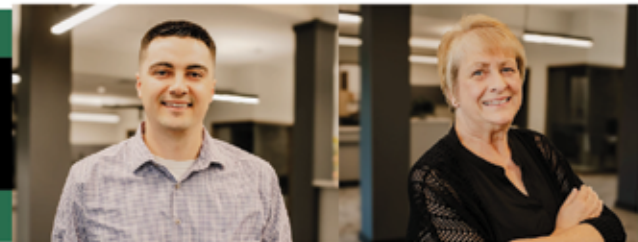


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WELCOME TO THE TEAM!



We're excited to welcome two new members to our Polk City team! Connor Nielsen joins us as a Business Banker and Marcia Parrish as a Customer Service Representative. Make sure to say hello when you stop in!

CLOSURES

Monday, May 25 (Memorial Day)

101 E. Bridge Road | Polk City | 515-329-8801



FINANCE

By Nikki Mulbrook

WHAT YOU need to know: First-time home buying

Making the decision to purchase your first home can come with a variety of emotions: excitement, joy and, sometimes, a sense of overwhelm. To ensure a good experience and reduce stress, there are specific considerations you'll want to figure out.



Approval vs. affordability

Getting a pre-approval is a great place to start, but it is important to remember that a pre-approval is your max but maybe not your comfort zone. In addition to getting a pre-approval (which will help narrow down options), it is important to sit down and decide what you can comfortably afford. Review all your current expenses and find a number that is right for you.

Upfront costs

From closing costs to appraisals and inspection fees, there can be more upfront costs that aren't realized. Closing costs are usually between 2-5%, there's earnest money, usually between 1-3%, and then inspection fees, which vary. While these aren't ongoing expenses like a mortgage payment, they can be a surprise to first-time homebuyers.

On the note of inspections: Don't skip them to "save" money. Even new or great homes can have hidden issues, and any issues can become a negotiating tool in the house price.

Consider your surroundings

When it comes to purchasing your new home, there are other variables to consider. Neighborhoods, schools, commutes and local amenities create a lifestyle choice. Looking at the long term will help you decide whether a home or neighborhood is right for you. Some items may come with a budget, such as an HOA, longer commute times or memberships.

Build a trusted team

Building a trusted team can make a huge difference in setting yourself up for success and making the process manageable and fun. From your lender and Realtor to insurance agents, seek out individuals you feel comfortable with and have the knowledge to support you.

Be patient

Once you are pre-approved and have a budget set, it can be difficult to stay patient and wait for the right house to come along. Don't be discouraged if offers are not accepted or not accepted quickly. The process takes time and trusting in your team and keeping flexible will ensure that, when the right one does pop up, you'll be ready.

Buying your first home is a big milestone. Nerves, excitement, worry and happiness are all a part of the process and completely normal. Lean on your team for understanding and confidence. If you are ready to begin your first home-buying experience, connect with your trusted lender today to get started. ■

Information provided by Nikki Mulbrook, Personal Banker & Mortgage Specialist, NMLS 1752770, HomeState Bank, 101 E. Bridge Road, Polk City, 515-329-8816.

KIWANIS Seniors of the Month

Kate Brasier, Claire Heuermann and Colton Bough are the Polk City Kiwanis Students of the Month for April.



Kate Brasier

Kate Brasier is the daughter of Debbie and Tom Brasier of Polk City and sibling to Mitch and Jillian.

“I am passionate about expressing myself through creativity and the fine arts. Whether I’m working on a visual art project, singing or playing the bass clarinet, I love finding new ways to bring ideas to life. In my free time, I’m often creating art or capturing photos of sunrises, sunsets and unique cloud formations. My favorite subjects in school are art and band, and I stay involved through activities like marching band, concert band, jazz band, show choir, concert choir/chamber choir, jazz choir, high school musicals, speech and tennis. I’m honored to be part of the National Art Honor Society and grateful to have received awards including the UNI Art Scholarship, UNI Panther Impact Award, North Polk Student of the Month, All-State Jazz Choir 2024, and All-State Large Group Speech for Choral Reading 2026. I also enjoy giving back through volunteering as a worship leader, Hope Kids volunteer, and VBS song leader at Lutheran Church of Hope in Ankeny. After graduation, I plan to attend the University of Northern Iowa to major in art education.”



Claire Heuermann

Claire Heuermann is the daughter of Mike Heuermann and Erika Heuermann. She is involved in band, choir, musical, speech, winter guard, tennis, cheer and play. Honors include Gold Honor Roll, Lettering all four years in band and choir, and NHS chair for NHS recycling program. She also participates in community theater.

“I am in many fine arts activities. Music is my passion. I love to read and bake in my free time. I am going to Luther College and majoring in music education. Next year, I want to help kids learn the power of music and want to help them reach their full potential. I want to thank my family, teachers, coaches and directors for helping me get to where I am now.”



Colton Bough

Colton Bough is the third Polk City Kiwanis Student of the Month for April.

“I am Colton Bough, and I am a senior at North Polk High School. I am the son of Casey and Amy Bough of Polk City and have one younger brother: a sophomore named Chase. I am the vice president of Student Council, president of Principal’s Council, a member of NHS, and a member of Math Honor Society. I play baseball, football, KBL, and was a two-time state qualifier for knowledge bowl.

“I have made the gold honor roll all four years in high school in addition to being awarded AP Scholar. In football, I was an Academic All-State, Academic All-District, a state champion, and voted Mr. Comet by my teammates. In baseball, I am a state champion and was awarded 3A Second Team All State Pitcher, 3A Central District First Team Pitcher, and RRC First Team All Conference Pitcher. My goal for this next season of baseball is not just to make it to state, but to inspire my fellow teammates to work their hardest so the team can reach its full potential.

“After I graduate, I am going to attend Eastern Oklahoma State Junior College to play baseball and study optometry.” ■

Be sure to check for cancellations.

Upcoming in North Polk Living magazine:

Play sets, play houses and tree houses: Share the stories of your memorable play sets, play houses and tree houses. Perhaps your family has play structures that entertain your kids for hours. Or maybe you have memories of the play house you enjoyed as a child. Big or small, if it creates happy times, let us know. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.



Memorial Day Ceremony

Monday, May 25, 8 a.m. to noon
Post 232 114 W. Broadway St., Polk City

Join the Polk City American Legion Post 232 this Memorial Day to honor and remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Reflect on the meaning of the day through tradition, tribute and shared remembrance. Breakfast will be served by the Sons of the American Legion from 8-10:30 a.m. The Memorial Day Ceremony will take place on the Polk City Square at 11 a.m., followed by refreshments back at Post 232. In case of inclement weather, the ceremony will move indoors at Post 232. For updates and additional information, visit the Polk City Iowa American Legion Post 232 Facebook page.

Des Moines Art Center Museum Highlights Tour

Saturdays, 1-2 p.m.
4700 Grand Ave., Des Moines

Discover the vast variety of the Des Moines Art Center's permanent collections during the Museum Highlights Tour. This tour offers a unique journey through the galleries, featuring a selection of timeless paintings, sculptures and more. Join knowledgeable guides to uncover the stories, techniques and inspirations behind the art on view, and experience the highlights of the Art Center in a fresh and engaging way. This guided tour is perfect for art enthusiasts of all ages. Free to all, no registration required.

Historical Society Programs coming up

Big Creek Historical Society, 116 S. Third St., Polk City

• **The Dragoon Trail as Hiked by Kevin Mason: June 4, 6 p.m.**, presented by Assistant Professor of History at UNI Kevin Mason. The story begins with the 1835 expedition of the First U.S. Dragoons. With archival records, maps, indigenous histories and ecological data, Mason will explore how Iowa's prairies and wetlands gave way to farms towns and transportation networks.

Celebrate Spring in the Park

Monday, June 15, 6 p.m.
Water Works Park, 2201 George Flagg Parkway, Des Moines

The Kerry and Linda Killinger Foundation Community Series features live performances on the Killinger Family Stage throughout the summer. The Des Moines Performing Arts takes the stage in June, featuring a national touring act in the park. Learn more at www.waterworkspark.org/events-in-the-park/community-series.



Des Moines Downtown Farmers Market

Saturdays through Oct. 31, 7 a.m. to noon, 8 a.m. to noon in October
Historic Court District, Downtown Des Moines

The 2026 season will feature 305 vendors, including 43 new participants, with 75 produce and agriculture vendors highlighting the region's strong farming community. Vendors represent 74 cities across 42 Iowa counties, spanning 12 city blocks from Water Street to Fifth Street. For more information, visit www.dsmpartnership.com/desmoinesfarmersmarket.

Curbside yard waste collection underway

Easily dispose of leaves, grass clippings and more right at your curb. Yard waste curbside collection in Polk City occurs on Friday, the regular garbage collection day. You can set out a variety of yard waste for curbside collection, including: twigs and branches, leaves, grass clippings and garden vegetation (such as spoiled vegetables on the vine or wilted flowers from landscaping).

Items that are not accepted include: dirt, mulch, rocks, food or pet waste.

You have two options for curbside collection with Metro Waste Authority:

• **Bags and stickers:** Place yard waste in Compost It! bags or store-brand bags with a green Compost It! sticker attached. Set bags at the curb by 6 a.m. on your regular collection day. Bags and stickers are available at many local retailers.

• **Cart service:** If you have a lot of yard waste, consider a Compost It! cart. Just fill the 96-gallon cart and place it at the curb on your regular collection day each week.

Logs, stumps, large branches, rocks and dirt are not accepted in the curbside Compost It! program, but they can be self-hauled to Metro Park East Landfill, where yard waste is accepted year-round.

Once collected, your lawn and garden debris is taken to Metro Compost Center at Metro Park East Landfill. There, Metro Waste Authority's team turns and maintains the yard waste for four to nine months as it decomposes. The final product is Grow Gold Compost, a natural soil enhancer available for purchase for your home, garden or landscaping projects.

Have questions about yard waste or the Compost It! program? Visit www.WhereItShouldGo.com/YardWaste, or give Metro Waste Authority a call at 515-244-0021.

Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden Spring Programs

Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, 909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines

Summer Camp Registration: Give your child a summer of discovery, creativity and outdoor adventure. These nature-based camps combine science, art, exploration and play in a safe, inspiring environment led by experienced educators. Perfect for students entering grades 1-5. Register at <https://dmbotanicalgarden.com>.

EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Be sure to check for cancellations.



CITYVIEW Midday Mixer

Saturday, May 30, 1-4 p.m.
The District at Prairie Trail, S.W. District Drive, Ankeny

Enjoy summer cocktails to kick off the season. Check in is at El Presidente. Cost is \$25 for advance tickets, \$35 at the door. For more information, or to buy tickets, scan the QR code.



Iowa Craft Brew Festival

Saturday, June 6, noon to 4 p.m.
Water Works Park, 2201 George Flagg Parkway, Des Moines

The Iowa Brewers Guild Iowa Craft Brew Festival encourages attendees to log off, raise a glass and enjoy an afternoon together in a relaxed outdoor setting. Each festival ticket includes unlimited samples, a commemorative tasting glass and access to the festival grounds featuring shade tents, vendors, yard games and a variety of Iowa-based food trucks. The festival highlights the best in Iowa craft beer while also featuring Iowa craft cideries, wineries, distilleries and a growing selection of Iowa-produced non-alcoholic beverages. One hundred percent of festival revenue supports Iowa's craft beverage industry and the Iowa Brewers Guild Brewed in Iowa campaign, which raises awareness about the economic and community impact of local breweries across the state. Tickets available at www.iowacraftbrewfestival.com.



Garage Sale and Bake Sale

Saturday, June 6, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Sheldahl United Methodist Church, Sixth and Hubbell, Sheldahl

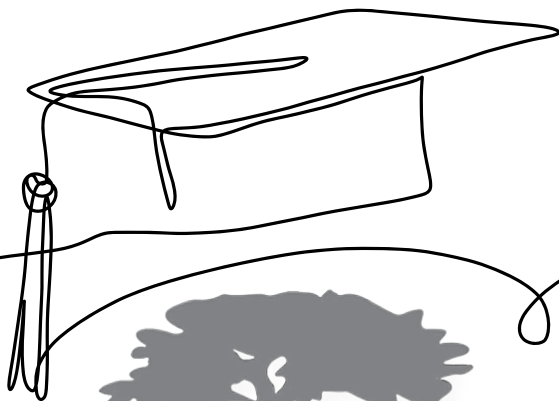
The Sheldahl United Women in Faith are having a garage sale and bake sale on Saturday, June 6, at the church. Denim rag rugs, free coffee and bottled water are featured.

Hoover on the Road Exhibit

Through May 31
Living History Farms, 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale

Designed to introduce audiences across Iowa to the life and legacy of President Herbert Hoover, the exhibit highlights Hoover's remarkable journey from his humble beginnings in Iowa to the presidency, along with his lasting humanitarian impact around the world.

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Be sure to check for cancellations.

Beyond The Summit

Thursday, June 11,
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
ITA Group, 7000 Vista Drive,
West Des Moines

Beyond the Summit is a one-day conference created for cancer survivors and caregivers seeking practical tools, inspiration and connection during and after the cancer journey. Through expert-led sessions, attendees will explore whole-person approaches to healing that support the body, mind and spirit. Sessions include: The Arts as Medicine; FOOD: What You Eat Matters; Strength in Motion, Clarity in Mind; and Living with Uncertainty and Change. Whether you are a survivor or a caregiver, Beyond the Summit offers education, encouragement and community — meeting you where you are and helping you move forward in your cancer journey. Register at <https://pro.gofundme.com/event/beyond-the-summit-2026/e761738>. Vendor space is available for nonprofits and more. Visit the registration page for more information.

Seni-Om-Sed: A Fresh Take on Fridays

Friday through the summer,
4-7 p.m.
Des Moines Biergarten,
Water Works Park, 2251
George Flagg Parkway

This summer, the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce invites the community to flip the script on their typical Friday and celebrate Des Moines and the end of the week with SENI-OM-SED — Des Moines, spelled backwards. This weekly event series brings together professionals, families and friends for an energized and easygoing kickoff to the weekend. Guests are encouraged to follow the Des Moines Biergarten on social media for the latest updates, including any schedule changes or closures due to weather. For more information, visit dtchamber.com.



CITYVIEW'S Summer Stirs

Friday, June 26, Downtown Des Moines
Friday, July 31, Des Moines East Village

CITYVIEW's traveling cocktail parties return in 2026. For \$25 advance ticket, sample 10 summer cocktails at downtown bars and restaurants. Cost is \$35 at the door. For information and tickets, visit summerstirs.dmcityview.com. ■



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A MESSAGE from the Chamber Board



The Polk City Chamber of Commerce has been busy rebranding for 2026 and reconnecting with both longtime members and new faces throughout the community. We are excited to continue growing our organization and partnering with local businesses to make a meaningful impact in Polk City.

Recently, we hosted our monthly Coffee and Connections and Lunch and Learn events, both of which brought great conversations and

community engagement. Be sure to follow Polk City Area Chamber of Commerce website and socials for updates as we continue to elevate and expand our efforts.

A special thank you to Jason Theaen from Polk City Parks and Recreation for serving as one of this month's luncheon guest speakers. Jason shared exciting updates about upcoming changes to the farmers market and Four Seasons Festival. Their team is doing a fantastic

job, and we look forward to supporting and passing the torch to them as these community events continue to grow.

For additional updates on city events and programs, follow the City of Polk City website and their Facebook pages. ■

Information provided by Polk City Area Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 226, Polk City IA 50226, 515-984-3098, admin@polkcitychamber.com.

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TRACK & Field

North Polk Varsity Girls Track and Field competed at ADM on May 6.



Amelia Kelsick



Ellie Bunnell



Sophia Bouchard



Hannah Haaland



Peyton Dirks



Reese Wagner



Jaiden Uhl



Brynn Ellston



Camryn Dentino



RaeLynne Monson



Frankie Huether

TRACK & Field

North Polk Varsity Boys Track and Field competed at ADM on May 6.



Avery Flemmer



Dylan Twedt and Brady Cathcart



Tyler Schmidt



Logan Morrison



Peyton Shipley

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THE COMETS CORNER

NEWS FROM NORTH POLK CSD

MAY 2026



70TH
COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY
CLASS OF 2026
NORTH POLK HIGH SCHOOL

A SEASON OF MILESTONES

North Polk High School - 70th Commencement

Congratulations, Class of 2026.

Earlier this month, 162 North Polk seniors walked across the stage at our 70th commencement ceremony, a milestone that belongs to the entire community. Seven decades of graduation celebrations. Thousands of young people shaped by this district and sent out into the world. The Class of 2026 carries on a proud tradition, and we are honored to have watched them get here. Behind every graduate is a village: the teachers who challenged them, the coaches who pushed them, the bus drivers who showed up for them every morning, the paraprofessionals, secretaries, and custodians who kept things running, and the neighbors and families who cheered them on every step of the way. Congratulations to every single graduate, and thank you to everyone who helped get them there.

HONORING OUR RETIREES – YOU'RE INVITED

This spring, members of North Polk are closing an incredible chapter of service. Each one has left a mark on this district that will be felt for years to come.

Sue Krantman - North Polk High School

Kris Wood - District Office

Rena Wickman - Central Elementary

Dennis Ober- Bus Driver

RETIREMENT OPEN HOUSE

Monday, June 1 · 1:30-3:00 PM

North Polk High School - Collaborative Center

All community members welcome

DECISION DAY — Where is the Class of 2026 headed?

Each spring, North Polk seniors celebrate Decision Day, sharing with their peers where life is taking them next. This year's class is heading in every direction imaginable: four-year universities, Ivy League programs, community colleges, trade apprenticeships, vocational paths like cosmetology, and military service. It's a reminder that success looks different for everyone — and North Polk prepares students for all of it.



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