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MAY 2023

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WELCOME

THAT ought to be enough

I was 20 years old and a junior in college before I ever stepped foot on an airplane. It wasn't some fancy commercial flight either.

My friend, Brian, had his pilot's license and offered to take me up in a small plane with another buddy. I reluctantly agreed. Filled with anxiety, I carefully stepped into the hangar where the plane was located. Brian opened up the gas tank, shrugged his shoulders, and said, "That ought to be enough." I mumbled and bumbled my words more than Mel Tillis at this point, and Brian turned his back on me and walked away, holding in his laughs.

I wasn't laughing.

This was a high-pressure moment for a young man of limited experiences who just recently dropped teenager status.

Before long, we were in the air, and I was viewing the rural Iowa scenery, floating among the clouds, listening to the hum of the plane engine — until the hum disappeared, and the plane started falling. The sweat beads were forming on my forehead, and that summer tan I had was nowhere to be seen as my skin turned milky white. Then, amidst the silence, I heard the engine hum again. My prankster pilot friend laughed some more and then proceeded with a myriad of airplane acrobatics.

When we finally landed, I said a quick thank you to Brian and spent the next 10 minutes in the bathroom. That was more than enough flying for my stomach.

Later that year, I went on my first commercial flight on a Boeing 747 and was amazed at the smooth ride, a much different experience than I had with my friend, Brian.

The last I heard, Brian was a commercial pilot for a major airline. I doubt that he is pulling his practical jokes on the crew and passengers of an Airbus A380.

Meanwhile, some local residents truly enjoy their time in the air and share their experiences in this month's feature story.

As for my buddy Brian's jokes on me, well, that ought to be enough. Thanks for reading. ■

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FEATURE

Nate Booth flying for work in the company's Bombardier Challenger 300 business jet.

Up in the AIR

Residents share their experiences as pilots

By Chantel Boyd

Our eyes often gaze upward in amazement. A clear, night sky filled with stars. Clouds painted in vibrant pinks and oranges by a rising sun. Ominous storms with lightning flashing across the heavens. Formations of geese traversing the continent, high above the land. And, heavy, metal airplanes with their human cargo miraculously crossing the skies as if light as hollow-boned birds.

While many of us are happily grounded, some pursue the dream of soaring above us, enjoying the view of expansive territories below, clouds from above, and the vastness of the blue sky surrounding them. This month, we ask local pilots to share the stories behind their passion for flight.

From military to commercial flights

Caleb “Cal” Ramsey of Urbandale has wanted to be a pilot since he was a kid.

“I come from a family with a lot of pilots, so it’s in my blood,” he says.

After high school, he toured Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona, Florida. He wanted to attend, but it was expensive, so he enlisted in the Air Force as a boom-operator on the KC-135, which refuels other airplanes in mid-flight.

“Choosing a job that had me flying on airplanes and working with pilots only fueled my passion for flying as a pilot,” he says. “It was a lot of responsibility but got me involved in flying and supporting other airplanes.”

While taking college courses, he flew as a crew member. He recalls sitting in the cockpit writing college papers over Afghanistan between fueling planes in the air. He finished his bachelor’s degree in 2004.

“There were lots of long days flying during the day and attending college classes at night.”

Cal left active duty in 2003 and joined the Nebraska Air National Guard, again flying



In 2019, Caleb “Cal” Ramsey joined the Iowa Air National Guard to fly the RC-26 and MQ-9. He is also a pilot for Delta airlines.



Early in his National Guard enlistment, Caleb “Cal” Ramsey flew the KC-135, which refuels other planes while in flight.

on the KC-135. After college, the Nebraska Air Guard sent him to pilot training in Enid, Oklahoma, in 2005, and he flew the KC-135 until 2010. Cal then joined the Wisconsin Air National Guard in Madison, Wisconsin, to fly the RC-26. In 2019, he joined the Iowa Air National Guard to fly the RC-26 and MQ-9.

He will retire from the Air Force this October with more than 24 years of service and 7,500 flying hours.

Those hours have taken Cal to all the continents except Antarctica. While on active duty with the Air Force, he was in the Middle East frequently.

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"I have more deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan, and surrounding countries than I can count," he says.

Since 2014, he has been a pilot for Delta Airlines. His more recent flights as an airline pilot have been mostly domestic, with some to the Caribbean and to Central and South America, varying in duration from one hour to 14 hours.

Cal says he enjoys flying and the opportunities it provides to interact with people, as well as how every day is unique and poses a mental challenge.

"When you are traveling 8 miles a minute, you always have to be thinking ahead and be on your toes."

Cal also enjoys supporting children interested in flying.

"I let kids up in my pilot seat to get their picture taken," he says.

While weather sometimes makes flying difficult, technology and thorough training help.

"My training and experience ensure I am operating the airplane as safely as possible, regardless of the conditions," he says.

Cal explains that flying is an incredibly safe industry, and pilots undergo extensive training to rally through anything the weather throws at them. One of his scariest flights was when lightning struck the plane while flying over Iraq.

"It was at night, and I was blinded by the flash for only about 30 seconds, but it felt like an eternity."

Cal says he is grateful for the opportunity to serve his country by flying and supporting missions in various capacities.

"I never expected to serve this long in the military and make it a career, but, like they say, love what you do, and you'll never work a day in your life."

Flying with family

Nate Booth says he grew up in an airport. His father, Robert Booth, a private pilot, would frequently take him around planes and took him on his first flight when he was a baby. He began instructing Nate on flying as soon as he could walk.

"He knew I loved airplanes, and he was a pilot, so he would tell me how things worked



Nate Booth with his son Harrison having fun flying in a 1941 Stinson 10A.

and what they did," Nate says.

Nate began his formal training at the Boone Municipal Airport, flying after school and on weekends, earning his pilot's license. Next, he attended Iowa Central Community College, where they had a flight program, and earned additional licenses and ratings.

Nate began building more flight time by being a flight instructor and flying skydivers before he was hired as a co-pilot for a company in Cedar Falls. Nate's father, Robert, and his former boss and instructor, Connie Younger,

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believed in him.

"They gave me a lot of trust and responsibility that I took seriously," he says.

Years later, Nate still brings his kids to Boone to meet their grandfather at the annual flight breakfast each summer.

"It's so fun to share that with my children now," he says.

Over the years, Nate has flown everything from biplanes taking off and landing on grass landing strips, to larger planes on flights from regional airports into the busiest airports in the country, to now flying business jets globally.

Last year, he flew over the Great Pyramids at Giza and the Nile River to the Middle East. Currently, his typical flights are monthly trips to Europe.

Nate says he feels a sense of wonder from flying.

"I am still thrilled every time I take off in an airplane. It's amazing to know I can safely fly a plane tens of thousands of feet above the earth, travel great distances, and land in a new place."

Though Nate enjoys flying, it is sometimes challenging as a career pilot to find work/life

balance.

"Being gone for long periods, sometimes on short notice, isn't always easy."

He also finds it challenging to stay current on regulations and procedures when flying to other countries.

"You look at every flight as a learning opportunity because no two flights are the same," he says.

Through all of his experiences, it is the family memories that remain the best — flying with his father and taking his children for their first flights.

"Sharing aviation with my friends and family is more memorable and rewarding than flying to some far-off destination," he says.

Spark ignited

When Kirk Eno received a toy airplane as a child, then an airplane ride as a birthday gift from his parents, Lee and Mary Eno, a spark was ignited. He wanted a career that would let him take to the skies.

When he was 14, Kirk started taking flying lessons. He learned to fly at his local airport, working part-time throughout high school to



Kirk Eno on the day he had his first flight with his parents, Lee and Mary.

help offset the cost of his flight lessons.

"My parents encouraged me to work hard to pay for my flight training," he says.

By 19, as a commercial-rated pilot and flight instructor, he was flying professionally. At age 33, Kirk is now a corporate pilot for a Des Moines-area business.

Kirk says he has been keen on flying for many reasons, but at the top of the list is the sense of freedom.

"The freedom flying offers seems nearly unrivaled. Hopping into an airplane and traveling far distances in a fraction of the time

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FEATURE

most other travel modes offer really motivated me to fly and seek out new adventures.”

Kirk has flown to all 48 contiguous states, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean. The spontaneity of every flight is his favorite thing about being a pilot.

“No two days are the same — destinations, passengers, weather, or people — there is always something new to learn and experience.”

That unpredictability is also the biggest challenge of flying.

“Dealing with shifts in weather, changes in the schedule, or unforeseen mechanical issues forces a pilot to be constantly flexible,” he says.

Staying up to date with changes in best practices, regulations, procedures and technological advances is also vital.

“Keeping current on all the changes and constantly learning can be challenging, but it is necessary to build upon your knowledge as a pilot to further the overall safety of our industry.”

Kirk’s fondest flight memories relate to his family.

“My first favorite memory was when I was a young instructor and I taught my father, Lee, how to fly.”



Kirk Eno on the day he took his son Graham on his first flight.

After several lessons (one being learning how to take instruction from his son), Lee was ready to take his first flight alone.

“The look on my dad’s face when I told him he had advanced to his first solo flight was priceless,” says Kirk. “His reaction and emotions culminating to his first solo flight after learning a new skill as an adult, from me, his son, who deemed him safe enough, was

something I will never forget.”

Sometime later, Kirk shared his other favorite memories with his sons, Barrett and Graham.

“I have always dreamed of sharing my passion and love for aviation with my family. I look forward to many more future flying adventures with both my sons and my wife, Jessica.” ■

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DEBT CEILING, bank crisis, and your retirement

If you follow the news, something is constantly threatening the economy. In the last few years, COVID, the supply chain, interest rates and inflation have grabbed the headlines. Recently, the debt ceiling limit and banking crisis are stealing the show.

Despite all these things you can't control, you still want to retire or stay retired, but how? Perspective and a plan.

Recently, three U.S. banks failed, lawmakers took emergency action, and there were more central bank rate hikes. Here's some perspective. Bank failures are fairly common. Since Oct. 1, 2000, there have been 565 bank failures, according to the FDIC. They just don't get as much press as the bank failures of 2023. The latest bank failures don't feel like the start of another 2008, but there could still be some aftershocks, including the possibility of increased volatility in the market.

As for the debt ceiling, the conversation has turned to Social Security and Medicare cuts as a solution — not what anyone retired or thinking about retirement wants to hear. While that grabs the headlines, lawmakers will more than likely raise taxes to lower the federal debt. Taxes are currently at historic lows, with the top tax bracket at 37%. It was just 42 years ago when the top bracket was 70%.



Now that we've discussed history, let's look to the future. You still want to retire or stay retired, despite all of this. And, so far, the families and individuals we work with have done just that, even during market downturns, despite inflation, and in the middle of a pandemic. How? They have a customized retirement plan that was built with retirement risk in mind. We can't predict a banking crisis or COVID, but a retirement plan can account for risks like market volatility, taxes and legislation. A customized retirement plan has action steps we can take when the market is down, such as dollar-cost-averaging or Roth conversions. It also includes a long-term tax plan. We help families and individuals build retirement strategies with the possibility of higher future tax rates in mind and talk about what we can do now to take advantage of taxes being on sale.

History has taught us that there is always a risk that can threaten your retirement. It's good to be aware but not scared of these risks. A customized plan allows you to take control of your retirement. Then when you see the headlines, you don't have to worry because you are still on track to live out your retirement vision. ■

Information provided by Loren Merkle CFP®, RICP®, Certified Financial Fiduciary®, Merkle Retirement Planning, 1860 S.E. Princeton Drive, Grimes, 515-278-1006. Source: [fdic.gov/resources/resolutions/bank-failures/failed-bank-list/](https://www.fdic.gov/resources/resolutions/bank-failures/failed-bank-list/) "Failed Bank List"; <https://www.fdic.gov/resources/resolutions/bank-failures/failed-bank-list/>

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LEGALITIES of selling a home

To save costs, many homeowners try to sell a house without listing it through a Realtor. This For-Sale-By-Owner (FSBO) sale can save you thousands in commissions by finding a buyer on your own.

However, important legal issues arise when you sell your home.

In order for an agreement to sell real estate to be binding, it must be in writing. The purchase agreement should contain the specifics of the transaction, such as the sales price, the closing date, the financing terms for the buyer, and any special contingencies, such as seller-paid closing costs or the sale of the buyer's home. The purchase agreement should also spell out the rights and remedies of the parties and how the transaction can be



canceled.

Iowa law requires that the seller provide a written disclosure statement to a purchaser. The disclosure statement is required even if a property is being sold in "as-is" condition. For homes built prior to 1978, a lead-based paint disclosure statement is required by Federal law. New legislation requires that a seller inform a buyer about radon testing.

Once you have a buyer, you should locate your original abstract to your property. This must be done quickly to avoid delays. The abstract of title must be brought up to date and the buyers and sellers searched to identify any adverse liens and judgments. The abstract will then be examined by an attorney on behalf of the buyer. There may be title issues to address, such as the death of a titleholder or judgments against a person of a similar name.

Once the title opinion is complete,

you will need to execute a deed and other supporting documents to transfer title to the new buyer. The recording statutes have very specific requirements for the format of the deed and is it vital to correctly vest title. The deed must be accompanied by a declaration of value, which is delivered to the local Assessor's Office. A groundwater hazard statement is required on all properties to disclose potential groundwater contamination. If the home has a septic system, a new law requires that the system be inspected prior to sale.

Selling a home involves more than shaking hands on a price. Finding a buyer is only the first step through the legal process. ■

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

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HOME DECOR

By Wanda Williams

CREATE a cozy home with the right furniture

Your home is your sanctuary, a place where you unwind and spend time with loved ones. And what better way to enhance the comfort and beauty of your living space than with the right furniture? Home furniture is more than just functional pieces; it's an expression of your style and personality.

Whether you're moving into a new home or just wanting to revamp your existing space, the right furniture can make all the difference. From elegant dining sets and comfortable beds to stylish sofas and functional storage solutions, there's something for everyone.

Picture coming home after a long day and sinking into a plush, cozy sofa to watch your favorite show. Or gathering around a stylish dining set with loved ones to enjoy a delicious meal together. With the right furniture, these experiences can be your reality.

Investing in quality home furniture is a way to improve your home's aesthetics and increases its overall value. Plus, with the wide range of options available, you can easily find pieces that fit your budget and taste.

Once you experience the joy of a well-furnished home, you'll wonder how you ever lived without it. ■

Information provided by Wanda Williams, Design Consign, 2715 86th St., Urbandale, 515-901-9294.





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BEFORE YOU GO

By Jan Shawver

WHAT WILL your memorial say about you?

Decoration Day (now known as Memorial Day) was first observed in 1868 when people placed flowers on the graves of those who had been killed in the Civil War. After World War I, the day was adjusted to honor the deceased in all wars and became a national holiday in 1971. Today, we observe not only the death of our veterans, but of all loved ones who have died.

It is interesting to walk through a cemetery and read the words on various memorials.

"Loving parents and grandparents," "Always in our hearts," "At home with God," "Gone, but not forgotten." These words can give a glimpse of what was important to those who lie beneath the soil. Some endearments are humorous: "I'd rather be fishing!" or "Sorry I can't get up!"

Does your family know how you want to be remembered? The wisdom you wish to share? When planning for your future memorial, take time to reflect on what you want future generations to know about you. One hundred years from now, the only thing most will know is what they see on your memorial. Choose your words carefully.

Memorial Day — a day to remember loved ones but also a day to begin thinking of how you wish to be remembered. ■

Information provided by Jan Shawver, family services representative, Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery, 1 N.E. 60th Ave., Des Moines, 515-289-2230.





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TYPES of hearing loss explained

Many people will find their ability to hear some sounds begins to decline around age 50. This is because hair cells in the cochlea, the spiral cavity in your inner ear, begin showing some wear and tear around that age. But other causes of hearing loss can affect people much earlier in life. Sometimes an ear infection or other medical condition can cause hearing loss. Environmental factors can also affect hearing, from loud sounds like fireworks or gunshots to chemotherapy or medication side effects. Still, the main cause of hearing loss is age. The cochlea in your ear has about 15,000 tiny hairs that transform sounds into electrical signals for your brain to process. Combined with the natural aging of your brain, the diminished function of these tiny hairs is one of the most common causes of hearing loss.



Sensorineural hearing loss takes place when there is damage

to the inner ear. Typically, the tiny hairs in the inner ear that conduct sound in the cochlea are damaged. However, it may also be caused by damage to the nerves that take sound to the brain. Some possible causes: again, genetic factors, chemotherapy drugs, repeated exposure to loud noise. A person with sensorineural hearing loss can be treated with technology that improves the ability to hear, like hearing aids.

Conductive hearing loss is one of the most common types of hearing loss, and it takes place in the outer or middle ear. It often results from a blockage to the ear that makes it harder for sound to reach the brain. Some possible causes are: swimmer's ear, excess wax in the ear, and sudden holes in the eardrum from a loud noise. The good news is conductive hearing loss is usually medically treatable and sometimes entirely curable. ■

Information provided by Kalyn Town, HIS, Woodard Hearing Center, 2328 Rocklyn Drive, Urbandale, 515-276-6122, woodardhearing.com.

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THE POWER of a smile

Have you ever seen the meme of a smiling guy missing his front tooth? The meme uses text to point out that the guy is also missing an eyebrow, but because a smile is the first thing you see, you don't even notice the eyebrow at first glance.



A smile is scientifically proven to make you appear more attractive, increase your confidence, and decrease your stress. If science isn't your thing, check out two interviews of patients regarding their smile and decide for yourself how powerful a smile can be.

Q: What made you decide to invest in your smile?

Jana: As I got older, my teeth started to shift, and I was extremely self-conscious about them. After years, I decided to get Invisalign. I felt it was finally time for me to do something for myself, and I believe I was worth it.

Angie: Before I sought treatment, I was not happy with my smile and was constantly talking about "one day" I would pull the trigger and seek treatment.

Q: Describe how your smile makes you feel now.

Jana: I feel absolutely amazing and couldn't be more pleased with my smile. It kind of seems silly that having straight teeth has the potential to make one feel so much better about themselves and can boost that much confidence, but it does. I have two little girls, and I want them to see me as a confident woman both inside and out so that one day they, too, will grow up to be strong and confident just like mom.

Angie: I love my smile now. It is an indescribable feeling to not want to hide behind a closed-mouth smile or refrain from taking pictures altogether. Really, it's not even all about the physical change — it's also about feeling happier and more confident every single day.

Q: What advice would you give to anyone considering orthodontic treatment?

Jana: If getting your smile corrected is important to you, and you can financially support it, then go for it, because you won't regret it. Invest in yourself. Your smile is something you wear every single day. You will have it for the rest of your life, and, for some, that could mean another 50-plus years. Don't ever minimize your self-worth.

Angie: Pull. The. Trigger. Just do it. Treatment will fly by, and you won't regret it.

If you have ever thought about improving your smile, there is no time better than now. Patients we have talked to always regret not getting treatment sooner. As you can see from our conversation with Jana and Angie, investing in yourself is worth the cost and effort. ■

Information provided by Dr. James Stork, DDS, MS, Stork Orthodontics, 4090 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, 515-705-0644.

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JANA SEVERSON

and her Smile Story

Tell me about your experience in Invisalign. Was it what you expected?

I had a great experience with Invisalign. I changed the trays each week and wore them about 20 hours a day. Originally I was told it would take 18 months of treatment but actually ended up being only 15! Taking them out to eat was something to get used to, but I got used to it and it wasn't so bad!

Why was Stork Orthodontics the right office for you?

When I interviewed Dr. Stork and his team, something in my gut knew this was the right place for me. He spoke to me about the quality of care I would receive and I put value in quality over quantity. If I was going to invest in my smile, then I wanted the best treatment and wasn't willing to compromise.

Describe how your smile makes you feel now.

I feel absolutely amazing and couldn't be more pleased with my smile! It kind of seems silly that having straight teeth has the

potential to make one feel so much better about themselves and can boost that much confidence, but it does. I have 2 little girls and I want them to see me as a confident woman both inside and out so that one day they too, will grow up to be strong and confident just like mom. I feel Dr. Stork and his team added to the beauty and happiness I feel from within.

What advice would you give to anyone considering orthodontic treatment?

If getting your smile corrected is important to you, and you can financially support it, then go for it because you won't regret it. Invest in yourself! Your smile is something you wear every single day. You will have it for the rest of your life and for some that could mean another 50+ years! Don't ever minimize your self worth.



Jana Severson, Realtor, Urbandale

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4 BENEFITS of downsizing to a senior living community

As we age, our priorities and lifestyles change. One significant change is the desire to simplify our lives and live in a comfortable, manageable home. We need to consider downsizing to be able to focus more on priorities like spending time with friends and family or long days with the grandkids.

Downsizing to a senior living community can be an excellent solution for seniors who want to enjoy a more relaxed, social lifestyle with less clutter and fewer maintenance responsibilities. In this article, we will explore the evidence-based advantages of downsizing to a senior living community.

1. Enhances your quality of life

A smaller home means less stress and more time to enjoy your favorite hobbies, interests and activities. Moving to a senior living community allows you to enjoy the benefits of socializing, exploring new hobbies and traveling. According to a survey conducted by AARP, seniors who downsized to a senior living community reported improved life satisfaction and social wellbeing.

2. Improves your physical and mental health

Living in a clutter-free and manageable home has been linked to better physical and mental health outcomes. A study by the University of Kansas found that reducing clutter in the home led to better overall physical and mental health. Additionally, senior living communities offer a range of amenities and services that can promote physical activity, healthy eating and mental stimulation.

3. Reduces your expenses

Downsizing to a senior living community can reduce your expenses significantly. You will no longer have to worry about property taxes, home maintenance, repairs or utility bills. According to a study by the National Investment Center for Seniors Housing & Care, moving to a senior living community can reduce living expenses by up to 25%.

4. Provides peace of mind

Living in a senior living community can provide peace of mind for seniors and their families. Many communities offer 24-hour security, emergency response systems, and healthcare services, which can reduce the risk of accidents and medical emergencies. Knowing that help is always available can alleviate anxiety and improve overall wellbeing.

In conclusion, downsizing to a senior living community has numerous evidence-based advantages, including enhancing your quality of life, improving your physical and mental health, reducing your expenses, and providing peace of mind.

In case you're contemplating downsizing to a senior living community, it's essential to conduct thorough research to discover a community that matches your lifestyle and budget. ■

Information provided by Edencrest at Timberline, 14001 Douglas Parkway, Urbandale, 515-422-8096, welcometl@edencrestliving.com. Information from www.care.com.

A BACKYARD of wonders

Model train track is the highlight



Bob and Joy King's backyard features trains and tracks.

Bob King takes a lot of pride in his backyard oasis.

He and his wife, Joy, moved into their western Urbandale home in May 2012. Since then, King has made the outdoor space a real sight to see.

The yard started as a blank slate, but, over the years, the Kings have planted eight trees and installed a field-stone fountain. Then, one day a few years back, a friend — a train enthusiast — called King and asked if he had any interest in buying some G-scale outdoor garden trains.

King said yes, sight unseen, and purchased the equivalent of six U-Haul boxes worth of trains.

"It was a big leap of faith," King says. "Some of them had to have new engines, some needed a lot of cleaning, some were brand new."

King had talked for a long time about putting a model train setup in the backyard, but ultimately the trains sat in storage for a while before winter of 2018, when King's wife asked him something along the lines of, "Why not just do it?"

So, he did.

King read, studied and watched every YouTube video he could find about how to create a model train display.

Come spring 2019, King got in touch with a landscaper who came to the home and built a raised wall in the backyard. King took over from there, burying cables, digging trenches, laying track and much more.

All along, he knew he wanted his backyard to feature both a plant garden and his trains. Today, when all the flowers and plants have grown, King's trains ride through tunnels of foliage, as well as a stone tunnel he built.

"I ended up with my toy in the backyard," he says.

In total, King has 27 trains that can go around his backyard track.

King has been part of the Central Iowa Garden Railway Society (CIGRS) train show for the past few years.

Outside of his model train hobby, King enjoys cycling and will complete his 32nd consecutive RAGBRAI this summer, alongside his 17-year-old grandson. He's also a 36-year veteran of the Iowa Army National Guard, retiring as a colonel in 2004 and where he held the position of public affairs officer for 15 years.

In addition, in 2013, he was appointed by former Governor Terry Branstad to head the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs and serve as director of the Iowa Veterans Cemetery.

King retired for good in 2016, thus opening some free time for his other passions, namely, trains. ■

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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Check for cancellations

Urbandale Historical Society programs

Urbandale Historical Society, 4010 70th St.

- Sunday, May 21, 2-4 p.m. Program, "Glen McDole, Urbandale WWII hero." McDole was a POW and received 13 medals. This program will be held in the Urbandale Public Library, 3520 86th St., Urbandale.

- Sunday, June 4, 2-4 p.m., open house with tours available.

- Sunday, June 11, 2-4 p.m., "Iowa State Fair" through the years, by Mindy Williamson.

Pancakes for Pignon Haiti Fundraiser

Saturday, May 20, 8-11 a.m.
Creekside Church, 2743 82nd Place, Urbandale

Creekside's Haiti missions team has begun planning its next trip to Haiti. The public is invited to this fundraiser to help raise funds to purchase the supplies needed for ministry opportunities in Haiti.



Food drive

Saturday, May 20, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
The American Legion Building, 6805 Douglas Ave, Urbandale

The food drive will be curbside drop off of food and monetary support (cash or check made out to Urbandale Food Pantry). Food items needed include meals in a can, canned fruit, peanut butter, tuna and canned meats, cereal, canned vegetables and pasta sauce. Personal hygiene items needed are toilet paper, shampoo, laundry detergent, body wash and soap, toothpaste, deodorant, diapers and wipes. There has been a high demand recently for personal hygiene products. Keep this in mind with your donation as these are the items that they run out of the most.

Bankers Trust Summer Branch Celebrations

Thursday, June 1, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
North Branch, 3905 Merle Hay Road, Des Moines

Bankers Trust is showing its appreciation to its customers with Branch Celebrations, featuring free food while supplies last and giveaways.

Ice Cream Social

Sunday, June 25, 2-4 p.m.
Urbandale Historical Society, 4010 70th St.

Enjoy an old-fashioned ice cream social with homemade ice cream served with pie or cake and a beverage. Enjoy visiting with friends and other activities at the Olmsted Urban House. All for a donation to the Historical Society.

Urbandale Summer Performance Series

Tuesday, May 23, 6:30 p.m.
Charles Gabus Memorial Tree Park, 3400 86th St., Urbandale

Enjoy a free concert featuring The Rivas. All ages are welcome. Bring a lawn chair. ■

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HOME HEALTH

By Ward Phillips

HOSPICE services: making that first call

Diane had been living with cardiac disease for several years when her health took a turn, and she was told she was in congestive heart failure. Although Diane knew she was very ill, she and her husband, Carl, were stunned when Diane's cardiologist began talking about the benefits of hospice services.



"We heard that, and we thought, hold the phone; hospice is for people who are ready to die, and we weren't there yet," Carl recalls. "The cardiologist had initially said we were looking at maybe a year, so we were going to take a trip (and) do a few things while she still had energy. And then it felt like he was giving us a death sentence. We were confused, and I was pretty angry, actually."

The doctor explained, though, that even though he did feel Diane had some time, she qualified for hospice services because she had a life-limiting illness, and hospice care would afford her some amenities — all covered by insurance — that could enhance her quality of life.

That made sense to Diane and Carl, and their anger began to abate. They decided to look into home hospice services, and, after they returned from a short trip to see family, they scheduled a meeting with their care team.

"The trip was hard on Diane, so I think, in some ways, it helped her understand that maybe this was the right move," Carl recalls. "She loved the team right away — the nurse, the aide, the music therapist — and I really believe they extended her life. She lived 10 more months, and we were able to make some great memories."

Ideally, hospice services can and should be initiated when a person is still healthy. Virtually anyone with a life-limiting illness can qualify for services, enabling an individual to live life in comfort for the days, weeks or months that remain in their life. And, the earlier hospice services are started, the more they can — as in Diane's case — benefit the person who is ill, as well as the whole family.

"As Diane began to have less energy and feel like sleeping more, we were able to get a hospital bed brought to the house, and we put it in the living room, and the grandkids would come over and gather around the bed and sit with Diane," Carl says. "They would look at pictures, show her their drawings, and do quiet things that she enjoyed, and I think Diane was happy and at peace."

"And the hospice team was there when we needed them but also left us alone to have a lot of family time. They didn't hover around. And when it began looking like Diane wasn't going to be with us a lot longer, they made sure she wasn't in pain. The whole family was here, in the house that she loved, and we all held hands around the bed. When she went, it was very peaceful."

If you and your family are faced with the need to make a decision around hospice care, feelings of anger and confusion are normal, and making that first call to a hospice provider can be difficult. But know that — as was true in Carl and Diane's case — once you've taken that first step, having care in place can make your loved one's last weeks and months more relaxed and meaningful for all. ■

Ward Phillips is vice president of market strategy and business development for WesleyLife, which offers a broad network of health- and well-being-focused communities and services, including home hospice services, for older adults. Call Ward at 515-669-2205 to learn more.

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GRATITUDE Team spreads positivity

Members build leadership skills as they serve.



Members of the Gratitude Team come up with creative ways to show appreciation.

The fifth-grade students at Valerius Elementary School have the opportunity to take on leadership roles, and, this year, several volunteered to be part of the Gratitude Team for their area of service to their school. The team meets once a month to discuss potential projects and who they should express gratitude toward. Together, the team has taught other students about gratitude, inspired them to think about what they are grateful for, and regularly delivered notes to teachers and staff expressing thanks for all that they do.

"It's fun, and we can join anytime we want," says Hortence, a team member.

"It's a respectful way to get to know other people," adds fellow team member, Lydia.

The team has made cards to show appreciation. Around Thanksgiving, they helped each class decorate a feather in order to create a giant turkey that displayed all the things they were grateful for. During the remainder of the school year, the students are also looking forward to making sure their educators know how thankful they are for all they have taught them leading up to middle school.

"I like Gratitude Team because we get to help other people," says Cambria.

Valerius Elementary School Counselor Liz Donner likes helping with the Gratitude Team because she enjoys being a part of spreading positivity. She also enjoys hearing all the creative ideas her students come up with.

"Opportunities for leadership are so important for our older students so they can be role models for the younger students. Gratitude is a skill we can all benefit from practicing during our lifetime, so starting with kids in elementary school is a big win," Donner says. ■

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RECIPE

DISHING out the facts on good fats

(Family Features) For those seeking to be more health-conscious, the idea of eating nutritiously seems simple. However, understanding what's truly "good for you" can sometimes be confusing.

In honor of National Nutrition Month and Healthy Fats Day, Avocados From Mexico is sharing how avocados — a delicious food and source of good fats and several vitamins — make everything better. Avocados From Mexico conducted a survey and found that while 76% of respondents believe fat is an essential component of a healthy diet, less than one-third are confident they know why it's important to have "good fats" in their diets.

For starters, according to the survey, nearly half of Americans didn't realize foods with good fats, like avocados, can help with weight management. However, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats found in avocados can lower the risk of becoming overweight, according to research published in "Nutrients."

Virtually the only fresh fruit with good fats, avocados can help people meet both good fat and fruit and vegetable recommendations in the same bite with approximately 6 grams of good fats per serving (one-third of a medium avocado).

To find more nutritional facts and figures, along with recipes, visit AvocadosFromMexico.com. ■

Harvest bowl salad with balsamic vinaigrette

Servings: 8

Balsamic Vinaigrette:

- 1/2 Avocado From Mexico, diced
- 1 tablespoon avocado oil
- 2 tablespoons shallots, minced
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 3 tablespoons white balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 3 tablespoons water

Salad:

- 2 Avocados From Mexico, diced
- 2 sweet potatoes, roasted and diced
- 2 cups quinoa, cooked
- 2 cups arugula
- 2 cups kale
- 1 cup Brussels sprouts petals, roasted
- 2 Honeycrisp apples, diced
- 2 tablespoons roasted pecans, unsalted
- 2 tablespoons roasted pepitas, unsalted
- 2 tablespoons dried cranberries



- **To make balsamic vinaigrette:** In food processor, process avocado, avocado oil, shallots, Dijon mustard, balsamic vinegar, honey and water to smooth consistency. Set aside.
- **To make salad:** In large bowl, combine avocados, sweet potatoes, quinoa, arugula, kale, Brussels sprouts petals, apples, pecans, pepitas and dried cranberries. Pour balsamic vinaigrette over salad mixture.
- Toss salad to coat. Keep refrigerated until ready to serve.

Nutritional information per serving: 390 calories; 16 g total fat; 0 g saturated fat; 0 g cholesterol; 370 mg sodium; 55 g total carbohydrates; 11 g dietary fiber; 12 g sugar; 15 g protein.



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TLC for your air conditioner

Ah, spring. The flowers are blooming, the birds are chirping, and the weather is finally starting to warm up. And while you might be busy cleaning out your closets and getting your garden ready, don't forget about your air conditioner. After all, it's about to start working overtime to keep you cool in the coming months.



That's why it's important to take the time to give your air conditioner a little TLC this spring. Here are some easy maintenance tips to help prepare your AC for the warmer weather ahead:

- **Change your air filter.** This is probably the easiest and most important step you can take to maintain your air conditioner. A dirty air filter can restrict airflow and cause your AC to work harder than it needs to, which can lead to higher energy bills and even system breakdowns. So make sure to replace your air filter regularly.

- **Clean the outdoor unit.** Over the winter months, leaves, dirt and other debris can accumulate around your outdoor AC unit. This can hinder airflow and cause your system to work less efficiently. Take a few minutes to clear away any debris and make sure the area around your unit is clean and clear.

- **Schedule a professional tune-up.** While there are some maintenance tasks you can do yourself, it's always a good idea to have a professional tune-up your air conditioner at least once a year. A trained technician can identify any potential problems before they turn into bigger issues, ensure that your system is running at peak efficiency, and help extend the lifespan of your AC.

- **Check your thermostat.** As the temperatures start to rise, it's important to make sure that your thermostat is working properly. If you have an older manual thermostat, consider upgrading to a programmable one to help save on energy costs. And, if you're not sure how to properly set your thermostat for optimal comfort and efficiency, don't hesitate to ask a professional for help.

Taking the time to perform these simple maintenance tasks can help ensure that your air conditioner is ready to handle the summer heat. And, not only will regular maintenance help keep your system running efficiently and effectively, it can also help save you money on energy bills and prevent costly repairs down the line.

So, this spring, show your air conditioner a little love and give it the attention it deserves. Your wallet (and your home's comfort level) will thank you. ■

Information provided by Scott Bontrager, 72 Degrees Comfort Company, 811 S.W. Ordinance Road, Ankeny, 515-200-2728.

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FAITH

By Steve Smith

'BELIEVE and live'



I recently returned from another country where I saw first hand people's belief in numerous gods.

Logically, I thought, "If anything and everything is a god, then nothing is truly god." It was Abraham Lincoln who said, "How many legs does a dog have if you call his tail a leg? Four. Saying that a tail is a leg doesn't make it a leg." Saying something is a god doesn't make it so.

Spiritually, I was challenged to ask if I'm the one "calling a tail a leg" when it comes to my faith. I believe that the man Jesus Christ is fully God not merely because I say it, or someone else says it. I believe Jesus is God because He proved it by the way He lived (Hebrews 1:3), the words He spoke and those written about Him (John 20:30-31), the works (miracles) He performed (Matthew 8:1-17), the witnesses He has (1 Corinthians 15:1-8), and the wonder of His resurrection (John 20:1-18).

My belief in Christ is not a matter of tradition, an emotion, or a cultural accommodation. It's a heartfelt conviction reinforced by historical facts, the Biblical record, and the testimony of His followers. C.S. Lewis said, "Jesus Christ was either a liar, a lunatic, or He was who He said He was."

I accept not only Jesus' claim to be God (John 8:58;10:30), but also His assertion that, "I am the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6).

That's a startling and liberating claim.

It's startling for God the Son to claim He's the only way for humans to come to God the Father. Scripture tells us that our rebellion against or indifference towards God separates us from Him (Isaiah 59:2). We deserve His judgment (Romans 6:23) as those, "having no hope and without God in the world." (Ephesians 2:12)

It's liberating to know that we can be forgiven, avoid eternal separation from God, and gain eternal life through Christ. How? "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13).

We don't have to wander hopelessly uncertain of our ultimate destiny. If we believe Christ died in our place and rose again to secure our pardon, we have eternal life.

It's not that we believe, but what (or who) we believe in that matters. It's not the fact of faith, but the object of faith that counts.

Believe in Jesus and you will live (John 3:16). ■

Information provided by Steve Smith, Creekside Church, 2743 82nd Place, Urbandale, 515-279-3919.

OUT & ABOUT

RIBBON Cutting

The Urbandale Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting for Body Renewal Clinic & Med Spa, 1441 29th St., Suite 216, West Des Moines, on April 27.



The Urbandale Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting for Body Renewal Clinic & Med Spa, 1441 29th St., Suite 216, West Des Moines, on April 27.



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Dory and Sean Stevens



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Dr. Margaret Vitiritto-Kahn (owner), Anna Kahn and Al Kahn



Tom Slender-Custer and Austin Lange



Bee White and Taylor Drummond



Kamsa Thephavong and August Vu

RIBBON Cutting

A ribbon cutting was held for Gardner Law Firm's 10-year anniversary on April 28.



A ribbon cutting was held for Gardner Law Firm's 10-year anniversary on April 28.



Santee Cook and Matthew Gardner



Adria Millard and Jennifer Pithan



Stefanie Gardner and Ruthie Ingersoll



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