

URBANDALE

MARCH 2024

Living MAGAZINE *Trips* OF A *lifetime*

Residents share stories of their
dreams-come-true vacations

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WELCOME

104 vacation days

Dream vacation. You have heard the term. You may have even experienced one or two. But, more than likely, your dream vacation may still be something in your mind.

When I was a young man working at The Des Moines Register, I was planning a short vacation and told Denny, a customer of mine, that I would be off work. He looked at me with a stern face and said, "Vacation? You don't work Sundays, do you? That's 52 days of vacation a year." He continued, "Wait, you don't work Saturdays either, do you? That's another 52 days. That's 104 days of vacation per year. How much vacation do you need?"

I was without words. Denny was having fun with me, but there was some truth to what he was saying.

As a teenager, I worked at a local gas station that was open 24/7. Even in the 1980s, staffing was a challenge, especially on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. My family didn't take many vacations, so when the opportunity came to earn time-and-a-half for holiday pay, I was the first to sign up. I enjoyed working those days, as the store traffic was lighter, the customers were cheery, and I liked the paycheck.

When I worked at the Register, we were told that we would not be allowed to take vacation between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Those were the newspaper's busiest times with advertising, and we were to be there to make sure of it. We are not as strict today in our company, but a holiday does mean we have to complete five days of work in four days. The presses keep running.

Author Rob Hill said, "My goal is to build a life I don't need a vacation from." Now that makes sense to me. But, like most things in life, I have learned that there truly are different strokes for different folks. Some people love to travel and spend time on a beach; I get sunburned and have two days of diarrhea. Others want to take a week off and ride a bicycle 468 miles across the state in 90-degree weather; that's not my idea of a vacation. And a select few enjoy time at home working on a list of projects and relaxing with friends and family; that's more my style.

Meanwhile, my wife and kids not only enjoy vacations, they have come to expect them. I am slowly but surely learning to appreciate the time off as well. And, although our ideas of what a dream vacation may be differ, I am happy to be along for the ride.

Thanks for reading. ■



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Trips OF A *lifetime*

Residents share stories of their dreams-come-true vacations

By Chantel Boyd

For some people, vacationing is a part of their routine. They plan, take and enjoy numerous trips to see the sights and “get away” from the usual hustle and bustle of life. They enjoy good times and make fond memories. They share photos and stories, but it isn’t long before they are looking forward to their next excursion. For some others, a vacation turns out to be much more than that — it is a dream come true, and, no matter how many vacations may follow, none will ever compare. It is a trip of a lifetime.

During Tony Bibbs’ trip to Chile, he enjoyed the curanto (mussels).

FEATURE

Sharing her heritage with her kids

Alma Tosunbegovic, originally from Bosnia, has lived in Urbandale for 20 years. She recently took her kids, Harry and Melissa, on a trip of a lifetime halfway around the globe to share her heritage.

"I took six weeks with my children to take them on a trip back home to Bosnia to show them how beautiful my home country is," says Alma.

The children were born and raised in the Urbandale area, and it had been years since their first trip to their mother's homeland.

"I took Harry and Melissa to Bosnia once before, but they do not remember anything because they were so little then," says Alma, adding that she wanted to immerse them in her country of origin and its unique culture. "It was important to me to show them where I came from so that they could understand me better."

During the six-week trip, Alma also wanted her children to see "how beautiful Bosnia really is," so they visited many of the unique sights of the country.

"While we were there, we saw the wild



Alma Tosunbegovic took her children, Harry and Melissa, to her homeland of Bosnia, where they spent six weeks seeing the beauty of the country and learning of its culture.



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horses on the mountain of Cincar in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” says Alma.

It took Alma more than a year to plan the trip, but the investment in time was well worth it, considering the memories that were made, she says.

To afford the lavish, long trip, Alma worked long hours.

“I worked extra hard to save money and my annual work leave. Finally, I got approved for six weeks of vacation, so I bought tickets for the three of us,” she says. “I wanted my kids to see and experience everything Bosnia offers.”

The first two weeks were an extended family reunion, so Harry and Melissa could feel what it was like to be a part of a big family like Alma had growing up in Bosnia.

“We were meeting family and friends. Lots of my cousins live outside of Bosnia, but that summer, they all planned to be there at the same time as me and my kids. They had a blast with all the cousins they met.”

For the rest of the four weeks, Alma and her children traveled around Bosnia, Herzegovina and Croatia.

“We ate lots of good food, and we went

through the city’s vibrant history and even went to the mountains and the beach at the Adriatic Sea.”

Alma’s favorite memory is how much her kids enjoyed being around family and friends.

“They still talk about it,” she says.

Alma advises those wanting to travel in Europe to include Bosnia and Herzegovina.

“Bosnian hospitality is the best; there’s lots of history, the nature is great if you like mountains, and there is the beach and even pyramids,” she says.

An 18-state family trip

Rena Wilson Wilder, an Army veteran from Urbandale, went on the road trip of a lifetime in 2022 with her husband, Scott, and their grown sons, Hunter and Brady.

The excursion took the family two weeks, long enough to see much of the East Coast.

“We hit 18 states,” says Rena.

Highlights included seeing one of the Seven Wonders of the World — Niagara Falls, as well as other famous destinations like Times Square, Yale University, the 9-11 Memorial and Museum, Wright Brothers Museum, the

International Tennis Hall of Fame, Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel, among others.

“Seeing the 9-11 memorial was extremely moving and a highlight for our family,” says Rena.

The Wilder family also visited a few lighthouses, such as Bodie Island Lighthouse and Nubble Lighthouse, and other coastal destinations, such as the Intercoastal Waterway, Cliff Walk, Harper’s Ferry and Assateague Island.

“This is where hundreds of wild horses roam and live,” says Rena.

It was the first extended vacation for the family, and they planned seeing as many sights as they could.

“Our goal was to see as much as possible in the 16 days we had,” says Rena.

To plan the trip, Rena and Scott used a good old-fashioned atlas.

“Scott and I sat down with an atlas and mapped must-see destinations and calculated drive times,” says Rena.

They were sure to include a visit to an old favorite: the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and Tunnel.

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FEATURE

"Though we've been on it many times, it still amazes us," says Rena.

The Intercoastal Waterway was another must-see.

"We had the privilege of watching a huge yacht pass through. This was neat for us land-locked Iowans to see," she says.

The Wilder family rounded out their trip with stops at Currituck National Wildlife Refuge, Kitty Hawk, Outer Banks, Kill Devil Hills, Nags Head, Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina, and Harper's Ferry, West Virginia. They topped it off with a family reunion.

"We had a nice visit with my family in Virginia Beach," says Rena.

All in all, the Wilders were in 18 states, not counting Iowa, and logged an incredible 4,238 miles.

Rena says it is difficult to choose one favorite memory from their travels.

"It's hard to pick just one favorite memory because everything was fantastic, including the weather," she

says.

Rena adds that she would have liked to spend more time as some of the many stops they made.

"What we would do differently next time would be to give ourselves more time in New York City, Harper's Ferry, Cooperstown, Maine and Rhode Island. There is so much to see, and it is all absolutely stunning, especially for this history-loving family."

The Wilders' advice for fellow travelers would be to get off the interstate and to go off the beaten path.

"Even if it takes an extra day or two," says Rena. "Some of the most beautiful parts of the country are not found on the major roadways."

Along the way, Rena, Scott and their sons wandered off the interstate to hit states they hadn't visited before.

"We had lunch in a small Michigan town, bathroom breaks in Vermont, etc. Our rule is you must take or leave something for the state to count," she says.



Rena Wilson Wilder, husband, Scott, and their grown sons, Hunter and Brady, took a family trip of a lifetime along the East Coast where they saw many famous sights, including lighthouses.

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A Chilean immersion

Tony Bibbs of Urbandale visited the Chilean Island of Chiloé last year.

"It was an absolutely amazing trip," he says.

Tony is a small business owner who traveled to see some of his team in Argentina.

"I've also got some friends from Chile and Argentina who live in the metro. It's only natural to exchange stories about our hometowns, so I jumped on the opportunity to visit a friend's," he says.

Tony had a chance years ago to travel to Chile with one of his closest friends, Juan Pablo "JP" San Martin, but had to cancel when his dad received a cancer diagnosis.

"It took until 2023 for the stars to realign for the trip," says Tony. "It was just the two of us, though JP's family there made me feel welcome. I can't overstate how awesome it was."

Tony visited Chile in late February of 2023, the end of summer in Chile. The climate in Chile is unique, especially in Santiago.

"You will be hard-pressed to find a day where the sun doesn't come out, at least for a bit. This is an ideal time to travel there to avoid the Santiago crowds and traffic jams," he says.

Tony spent a few days in Santiago, Chile, but most of their time was on the Island of Chiloé.

Tony's favorite memory was visiting a mussel (chorito) farm in person in Chiloé.

"We were on the water in great weather, and the trip was spontaneous. We even got to enjoy eating a few choritos, which were surprisingly good, even raw," says Tony.

Tony's trip was an opportunity to immerse himself in a culture he had heard about from his friend JP.

"The trip was about taking a deep dive into Chilean culture," he says. "It was truly an honor to have JP be my host in Chile."

The two also spent some time at a ski resort.

"We went 9,842 feet above sea level to the Valle Nevada Ski Resort just east of Santiago in the Andes Mountains range," says Tony. "I saw Andean Condors, the national bird of Chile with a wingspan of 10.5 feet. Then we went to Cerro El Plomo where, in 1954, a well-preserved Incan boy was discovered."

Tony fondly remembers the Chilean food he ate, like fresh ripe avocados, completos (similar to hot dogs), dobladitas (breakfast bread), provoleta (cheese and crackers), crudo (like steak tartare), prieta (blood sausage) and pisco sour (whiskey sour).

The travel companions stayed at Coo Lodge while at Chiloé.

"It's an amazing place, sitting right on the Gulf of Ancud, where we saw all the way out to mainland Chile and up to the Michinmahuida



Tony Bibbs visited some of the many wooden churches in Chile that missionaries and locals erected.

Volcano, which was still capped with snow," says Tony.

While at Chiloé and visiting Tepuhueico National Park, Tony saw penguins, dolphins, and other wildlife like pudu (the world's smallest deer) and nalcas (giant rhubarb with leaves as broad as 8 feet).

"Only the pictures and video I have can express the vast wildlife diversity in and around the waters of Chiloé," he says.

Tony also visited the wooden churches of Chiloé.

"Those beckon to a time when missionaries came to Chiloé," says Tony. "Today, there are roughly 60 wooden churches, but, at one time, there were as many as 150, all of which are unique and hand-crafted, blending the skills and resources of both the missionaries and the locals."

While at Chiloé, Tony enjoyed local cuisine such as the curanto (which includes mussels), fresh choritos (mussels), lamb cooked over a firepit at an outdoor picnic, chupe de locos (abalone — mullosks — in a creamy cheese sauce) and wild blackberries.

Tony wanted to visit Patagonia — the southern-most region of South America — but reserved this for another time.

"I believe Patagonia is a trip requiring a lot of planning," he says. "If I ever return to Chile, I hope to add Patagonia to the itinerary."

Tony recommends those planning to visit Chile spend some time getting to know the language.

"My Spanish is good enough to get around, order food, and get the gist of conversations, but I couldn't fully participate in conversations with many of the people I encountered," he says.

Fortunately, JP was able to act as a translator when needed.

"If you don't have access to someone who can translate for you, then come prepared with apps on your phone to help you," Tony says.

Tony also recommends traveling in the summer months for Chile, November through February.

"If you are going to Chiloé, I'd recommend you rent a car to appreciate all that Chiloé has to offer." ■

"It's been through the addition of MAPLE that we have been able to get the kids to talk."

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A SENSE of community

Hollis-Keene has nothing but kind words for Urbandale.

Lisa Hollis-Keene's connection with the Urbandale community dates back to when her father attended Urbandale High School. One of her sisters did as well. Hollis-Keene herself has lived in town on and off for about 20 years.

Today, she is happy about where she lives, especially because of the location of her home.

"I am right behind the high school football field and in the middle of all the Urbandale action," Hollis-Keene says. "I enjoy hearing 7 a.m. marching band practice in the fall. Seriously, I open my windows just to hear it."

She also looks forward to sitting on her patio during home football games, soaking in all the noise, as well as being in the middle of the town's Fourth of July activities.

"I absolutely love my neighborhood for so many reasons, but one of the biggest things that brings me joy is seeing the kids out and about, riding their bikes and playing in the street," Hollis-Keene adds. "It's like a scene straight out of a nostalgic movie, and it warms my heart to witness that simple joy and freedom of childhood."

On top of that, the sense of community on her street is truly something special.

"We're not just neighbors; we're like an extended family," Hollis-Keene says. "It's incredible to see how everyone comes together to support one another and ensure the safety and wellbeing of our community. I feel incredibly blessed to be surrounded by such caring and wonderful neighbors who watch out for each other like family."

One of the things Hollis-Keene appreciates most about the larger Urbandale community is the "incredible sense of closeness and love that permeates through it.

"It's like being part of one big, extended



Lisa Hollis-Keene's backyard is an oasis to be enjoyed.

family where everyone looks out for each other," she says. "We are a big, small community."

From seeing people she knows at the grocery store, the genuine smiles on the faces of neighbors, or the way everyone comes together to support local initiatives, Hollis-Keene says there's an undeniable feeling of unity and care that makes Urbandale unique.

"I think that, for everyone, by finding new things you love about your city, you could enjoy where you live," she says. "And not 'new' things, but new to you, and that's what matters. Set out to find things that make you excited about living in the area — places, people and businesses that make you feel connected to Urbandale. We have some amazing local restaurants and businesses to visit. Reach out, and I will go with you and show you." ■



Lisa Hollis-Keene appreciates that her home is located "in the middle of all the Urbandale action."

THE \$12 million disappointment

Live comfortably, protect your nest egg, AND grow your investments. Is that too much to expect in retirement? It's what retirees want, but how do you get there? If you're like most folks, navigating the retirement planning maze can feel daunting. Here's the good news. You're not alone. The key isn't necessarily a complex strategy; it's about having a clear understanding of the numbers and what they mean.

We recently met with a couple, age 55; their financial advisor told them that the \$1 million they saved for retirement would grow to \$12 million by age 100. You might think the couple would celebrate, sit back, and get ready to enjoy retirement, but they didn't. They came to us and said something just didn't look right.



So, we took that \$1 million retirement savings and put together two comprehensive retirement plans. One showed them with \$1.7 million at age 100 (using a 6% rate of return), and the other showed them running out of money at age 88 (using a 4% rate of return).

So why are the projections so different? We need a clearer understanding of the numbers. The \$12 million projection did not include spending, taxes, or inflation. The advisor focused on one thing: investments. Plus, the projected rate of return was 8%.

We start our planning process by asking the couple about their lifestyle, what they want to do in retirement, and figuring out how much money it will take to pay for those things. Then, we work on an investment plan that doesn't solely rely on the stock market; we call this building a recession-resistant portfolio. We also like to use conservative stock market rates of return assumptions, like 4-6%, then, if the

market is great, you are ahead, but if the market is down, the plan still works.

Though our comprehensive plan showed them with more than \$10 million less at age 100 (even running out of money in one scenario), they felt better about the numbers. Why? We laid out a clear plan that includes how they are going to fund their retirement lifestyle, invest for growth, take steps to reduce their retirement tax bill, pay for health care, and leave a legacy with whatever is left when they are gone.

Now, they are heading into retirement with a clear understanding of how they could live comfortably, protect their nest egg, AND grow their investments. ■

Information provided by Loren Merkle CFP®, RICP®, Certified Financial Fiduciary®, Merkle Retirement Planning, 1860 S.E. Princeton Drive, Grimes, 515-278-1006.

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URBANDALE COUNCIL RECAP



Left to Right: Bridget Carberry Montgomery, Patricia Boddy, Mayor Bob Andeweg, and Amy Croll.

March 5, 2024 - Council Meeting

The Mayor and City Council met on Tuesday, March 5, and began with a proclamation for Women's History Month. March is a time to celebrate and honor the countless contributions of women, including Urbandale residents Vada Wilson, Elizabeth Williamson, Lyleene Lemon, Miriam Cline, Marilyn Kollmorgen, Susann Siebke, and Mary Polson, who have served on the Urbandale City Council; as well as Bridget Carberry Montgomery, Amy Croll, and Patricia Boddy, who are currently serving on the City Council.

The Council approved a bid to patch 91 locations on various streets that are generally located north of Aurora Avenue and East of 86th Street; approved two bids for the

purchase, delivery, and installation of playground equipment at North Karen Acres Park and Days Run Park for \$100,000 and \$70,000.00 respectively; and approved purchasing a Toyota Hybrid SUV for \$35,000 for use by the Police Department.

The annual Spring Cleanup event is scheduled for the week of April 15, 2024. The City hires outside contractors and rents additional equipment to help collect the approximately 800 tons of trash that will be set at the curb this year. The City Council accepted a \$29,000 quote for garbage trucks, equipment, and operators to help with Spring Cleanup.

At the end of the meeting, the Mayor and City Council discussed the Complete Streets Master Plan for Aurora Avenue and 70th Street.

February 20, 2024 - Council Meeting

The Mayor and City Council met on Tuesday, February 20, and the meeting began with a presentation on the upcoming \$118 million I-35/80 Hickman Road Interchange Reconstruction Project. Residents may notice some preliminary utility relocation work starting soon. The project is separated into three main phases and will begin this July. Phase I will widen the interstate, Phase II (planned to start in July 2025) will finish the reconstruction of the interior interstate lanes, and Phase III (planned to start in September 2026) will include most of the work on Hickman Road. The project is expected to be complete in the spring of 2029. You can view renderings of the interchange at www.Urbandale.org/CouncilRecap.



I-35/80 & Hickman Road Interchange Reconstruction Project, aerial rendering looking north.

The Council approved a bid to patch 65 locations on various streets that are generally located near the northeast corner of Meredith Drive and 72nd Street. The Council also approved a bid to patch 29 locations along Douglas Parkway generally west of the roundabout at 142nd Street.

The City Council set a public hearing for Tuesday, April 2, 2024, to consider the proposed property tax levy rate for the upcoming fiscal year. The City's proposed rate is 7 cents higher than the current fiscal year at \$10.08. Although an increase is proposed, the City of Urbandale still maintains one of the lowest tax levy rates in the Des Moines area.

This is a custom publication from the City of Urbandale. The Council Recap is not the official minutes of the Council meeting, it's an easy-to-read and easy-to-understand digest of the Council Meetings specifically designed for residents.

You can watch all the City Council meetings on YouTube and download Council agendas on the City's website.

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MAJOR life events requiring a legal checkup

Do you need to update your will or trust? It is a good idea to review your estate planning documents periodically. Through a strategic analysis of your documents, you can ensure that your loved ones continue to be provided for appropriately. There are certain major life events that require you to do a legal checkup.

Changes to your family: Births, deaths, marriages and other family changes are among the most common reasons for making revisions to wills, trusts, and powers of attorney.

Changes to your financial circumstances: Your will or trust should reflect your current financial situation. Past plans may no longer be appropriate due to changes in the value of your assets or income.

Have the right executor: Your executor or trustee will help settle your affairs. If your plans were made some time ago, the person you named may no longer be able to serve or may no longer be the right person for the job.

Provisions for children: If your children are beneficiaries, you may wish to delay their inheritance so they receive money when they are older and better able to manage assets. If you have nominated a guardian to



care for minor children, you want to ensure that the agent is still willing and able to assist you.

Loved ones with different needs: Over time, the needs of your heirs may change. Age or illness may require restructuring your estate plan to provide asset protection.

Recently moved to Iowa: Each state has its own laws governing the settlement of estates. Your will or trust may have been drafted under the laws of your former state of residence. You may wish to have them reviewed to be sure they are appropriate under the laws of the state of Iowa.

Real estate in another state: If you own real estate in another state, the laws of that state may apply to its disposition. You also have the potential for probate in two different states, doubling the time and expense of settling your affairs.

With thoughtful and periodic reviews of your will or trust, you can make certain that your estate planning documents reflect your current situation and goals. Make an appointment with an experienced estate planning attorney to help you update your estate plan. ■

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

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HEALTH

By Elijah Evans

EMOTIONAL granularity

The way we describe our emotions has a strong influence on how much relief we get from talking about them. For instance, simply acknowledging “I was mad” isn’t likely to change our feelings much, whereas something more specific has a much higher likelihood of creating insight and consolation, such as: “I felt disrespected because I had previously explained why I didn’t want a surprise birthday party, so when my friends threw me one anyway, it seemed like they were disregarding my wishes, on my birthday of all days. It also made me worried I couldn’t trust them to respect my feelings going forward.” Lisa Feldman Barrett explains this phenomenon in her book “How Emotions Are Made,” and she terms it emotional granularity. She also explains research she has carried out showing that, when people use more specificity (higher emotional granularity), this has the effect of heightening positive emotions and down-regulating the intensity of negative ones. Therefore, a simple (but not always easy) principle for enhancing our emotional wellness is pushing ourselves to be more detailed in how we label and explain our feelings. If this is something you are struggling to do on your own, a licensed mental health professional can help expand your emotional vocabulary and understand the source of troubling feelings. ■



Information provided by Elijah Evans, LMHC, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, IA 50322, 515-528-8135, evans@sstherapyandconsulting.com, www.sstherapyandconsulting.com.

PLAN AHEAD

By Kathy Dunbar

IT TRULY starts with a simple conversation

Addressing one’s own final arrangements can seem like an overwhelming task. There are many important decisions that need to be considered. It sometimes just seems to be easier to think about it another day. However, by doing this, it remains on your “to-do” list.

What people do not always realize is that the advanced planning process starts with a simple conversation.

An advanced planning counselor will guide you through all of the options available and help you with planning the final arrangements that are right for you.

We find that most of the people we meet with find the process to be surprisingly pleasant and are relieved to have it done.

As one client wrote after meeting with one of our staff members, “It was a joyful experience. I can honestly say that it was fun to think about how I would like to be remembered. I want my loved ones to have a chance to say good-bye and then live on with happy memories of our times together.”

It doesn’t cost anything to start the conversation, and you may find yourself happy that you did. ■



Information provided by Kathy Dunbar, Advanced Planning Counselor, Hamilton’s on Westown Parkway, 3601 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-697-3681

SS Therapy and Consulting



Adolescent STEPPS
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RECIPE

EASY Easter eats

(Family Features) Even if Easter hosting duties fell on your plate this year and added one more thing to your holiday to-do list, that doesn't mean it has to be difficult. After all, Easter is a time meant for fun and fellowship with the food just one part of the celebration.

Building the menu around simple, one-pan dishes can keep the focus where it needs to be: spending time and creating memories with family and friends. These dishes call for short lists of ingredients, many of which you may already have in your pantry, and simple preparation to create a full spread perfect for sharing with loved ones. Plus, using only one pan makes cleanup a breeze, so you can get back to the festivities quickly.

A dish like this Easter roast lets you check both the main course and side dishes off your list, relying on the oven to do most of the work for you after some quick prep work.

For more Easter recipe inspiration, visit Culinary.net. ■

Easter roast

Yield: 1 roast

- Salt
- pepper
- garlic powder
- 1 roast (3 pounds)
- 1 bag (1 pound) baby carrots
- 1 bag (1 1/2 pounds) trio potatoes or potato of choice
- 3 cups beef broth
- 1 can (10 ounces) cream of mushroom soup
- 1 tablespoon garlic pepper
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 onion, roughly chopped
- 1 bundle asparagus

Directions

- Preheat oven to 350 F.
- Sprinkle salt, pepper and garlic powder over roast and rub into front, back and sides. Place seasoned roast in middle of large roasting pan.



- Place carrots on one side of roasting pan and potatoes on other side.
- In large bowl, mix beef broth and cream of mushroom soup with garlic pepper. Pour mixture over roast, potatoes and carrots. Sprinkle brown sugar over carrots and add chopped onion. Cover and cook 2 1/2 hours then remove from oven, add asparagus and cook uncovered 30 minutes.
- Serve from pan or place on platter for more formal presentation.



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THE STELTER Company welcomes Hanna Plants

The Stelter Company announces Hanna Plants has been named digital experience director, a newly created role within the organization. Plants joins Stelter with more than 10 years of digital marketing experience, most recently at Two Rivers Marketing, where she developed strategic marketing plans for local and national brands and guided their CX, CRM and marketing automation practices.

As a planned giving marketing firm for some of the largest nonprofit programs, Stelter translates client goals and objectives into marketing campaigns. Stelter created the digital experience director position to address increasing client demand for enhanced digital strategy and consulting services. In her new role, Plants will direct the development, delivery and optimization of client digital campaigns and serve as a subject matter expert on digital marketing strategies for Stelter clients.

"I draw energy from helping to solve complex challenges and leading teams to build solutions together," Plants said. "I'm eager to apply my digital skills and leadership abilities to further elevate Stelter's digital service offerings for nonprofit organizations across the country. Being a small part of these meaningful efforts has already provided me with a new enthusiasm for my work."

Plants specializes in leveraging SEO, marketing automation, social media and web experiences to drive meaningful connections and has helped spearhead digital transformations for several marketing agencies. She attended Iowa State University where she earned her bachelor's



Hanna Plants



Marianne Coppock

degree in advertising. She holds numerous certifications, including AI-Powered Performance Ads, Advanced Google Analytics, HubSpot Content Marketing and Google Ads Search and Display.

"I honestly can't say enough good things about Hanna. Having worked with her in the past, I know her to be a digital-savvy marketer with a passion for crafting exceptional user experiences," said Marianne Coppock, Stelter CEO. "I can't wait to see the impact she'll make for both our clients' and internal teams' success." ■

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CHOOSING hospice care is all about living

Thinking about “living” in conjunction with services offered at the end of a person’s life might seem counterintuitive — but the keyword there is “life.” Any stage of life can include purposeful, meaningful moments that make life more than worth living.

Options for hospice services are nearly as varied as the individuals who seek them. They range from home care to services in a freestanding hospice center to in-between, hybrid models, and the type of care you and your loved one select is truly an individual choice.

Also: Anytime — and the earlier the better — is the appropriate time to start a conversation about how you or someone you love can live with a life-altering illness and



about the fact that hospice services care can help ensure quality of life.

No matter the type of services you’re considering, you should always ask any provider on your list: “How can you help me or my loved one continue to LIVE through this stage of life?” Ideally, hospice services should be initiated when a person is still healthy. Virtually anyone with a life-limiting illness can qualify for hospice care, enabling a patient to live life in comfort for the time that remains in his or her life.

Robert J. of Ames describes his family’s hospice experience this way:

“To us, admitting that my brother needed hospice meant he was closer to death than we thought he was, and we weren’t ready for that,” Robert says. “We didn’t have any idea what it really meant and how it could actually make his life better.”

Once Robert’s family talked with a family friend who was a nurse and became more

comfortable with the idea of hospice, they ended up choosing home hospice, and they grew to love the hospice team. Robert’s brother lived several months longer than his doctor had predicted — a fact that the family credits in large part to the care the hospice team provided him.

If you’re considering hospice services for a loved one, do your research; consider the logistics of where the care is provided, by whom, and the specifics of services. Then, ask the provider about their philosophy of LIVING in the end stages of life. If the answer isn’t what you were hoping for, keep looking. ■

Aaron Wheeler is vice president of Home and Community-Based Services for WesleyLife, which offers health and well-being services, including award-winning hospice care, in Iowa and Illinois through communities and an array of at-home services. To learn more, please visit wesleylife.org/at-home-services.

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— Bob and Judy Ruch, Urbandale



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LIBRARY

By Staci Stanton,
Programming & Outreach Manager

URBANDALE Public Library news

The Science of Eclipses

Get ready for the partial solar eclipse on April 8. NASA JPL Solar System Ambassador Dan Hoy returns to the library on Thursday, March 28, at 6 p.m. to shine a light on the science behind these special events. Anyone who attends will be able to take home a pair of solar eclipse glasses to view the eclipse safely. This program is intended for teens and adults, but older children are encouraged to attend with their parent or guardian.

Book Sale

Our National Library Week book sale returns Saturday, April 6, and will run through Sunday, April 14. The book sale will be open during regular library hours for you to browse a large selection of books, movies, puzzles, cake pans, magazines, audiobooks, and more for all ages.

National Library Week (April 7-13)

We encourage everyone to visit the library and discover a new resource, service or program during National Library Week. In addition to our book sale, the library will be accepting donations of non-perishable food or new, full-sized personal care items to clear overdue fines from your library account. The library is also accepting donations regardless of account standing. All items will be donated to the Urbandale Food Pantry.

ECO-CELL

The library is excited to partner with Blank Park Zoo's ECO-CELL program in which you can recycle used or broken handheld electronics. Use our secure donation box in the lobby for items such as cell phones, tablets/eReaders, smart watches, chargers and more. These items will be refurbished or recycled, reducing the need for mining for materials and keeping them out of landfills. Proceeds will support the Gorilla Rehabilitation and Conservation Education Center (GRACE).

Art Day

The Urbandale Public Art Committee, Urbandale Public Library, and Urbandale Art Gallery are excited for the return of Art Day on Saturday, April 20, from 10 a.m. to noon. All ages are welcome to drop into the library meeting rooms and choose from a number of activities, including watercolors, bead bracelets and more.

New Resource: Craft & Hobby

Craft and Hobby provides access to more than 4,000 hours of content, including woodworking, gardening, cake design, sewing/quilting, outdoor photography, fitness and more. As the largest resource of video-on-demand learning in the craft and hobby space, Craft and Hobby lets you learn at your own pace with step-by-step tutorials in 20 different creative interests. ■

MEET Emily Mohling

Students explore careers and their creativity.

After graduating from Alta High School in northwest Iowa, Emily Mohling majored in family and consumer sciences education and studies at Iowa State University. While she was attending college, Mohling's parents relocated to West Des Moines, and she knew that she wanted to teach in the Des Moines metro after graduation. Now, Mohling teaches family and consumer sciences at the Urbandale Community School District. She was hired at the Urbandale High School in 2017 and has been teaching there since.



Emily Mohling teaches a variety of family and consumer science courses. Photo by Bailey Ashbacher

"I love that Urbandale is a diverse district with so many amazing students and colleagues to learn from each day. It's big enough that we have great resources and offerings for students but small enough to still feel like a community," she says.

One of Mohling's favorite things about working with students at the high school level is that she gets to teach students for multiple classes, and she could even have them for all four years. This allows Mohling to get to know her students on a more personal level. She also enjoys teaching a variety of classes with no two days the same.

"Getting to work with and be around students every day is the biggest reward for me as an educator. They are fun-loving, kind and curious. I love hearing about what they do after high school and seeing them become successful young adults," Mohling says.

Mohling teaches Adult Living Skills, Child Development 1 and 2, Foundations of Education, and Initial Field Experience. She also teaches Housing and Interior Design and Textiles and Clothing, both of which are hands-on, project-based classes.

Child Development 2 is a new class offering this year. Students are placed in a preschool classroom or daycare in order to get hands-on interaction working with young children. In addition, the Foundations of Education class and the Initial Field Experience class are both taught for DMACC credit at the high school. This allows students to explore education as a career while earning college credit.

In April, some of Mohling's students in her Textiles and Clothing class plan to attend the Iowa State Behind the Scenes Day fashion show. Students who are taking her Initial Field Experience course are also participating in practicum experiences in elementary, middle school and high school classrooms around the district.

"It's really exciting to observe them and see the future of education. We've got several more projects coming up in all of the classes, and I love seeing their creativity come through in these," Mohling says.

Mohling enjoys spending time with her husband and daughter. One of their favorite things to do together is grab a coffee and go for a walk. Mohling also likes to read, try new recipes, exercise, sew, and spend as much time as possible outdoors. ■

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Check for cancellations



Talk With Officials

Saturday, March 30, 10:30 a.m. to noon
Virtual

In-person attendance is limited at the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce office, but those interested may attend virtually. For more information and registration link, visit <https://businesses.uniquelyurbandale.com/events/calendar> and click on the event link. The Talk with Officials events are open to the general public and held on the last Saturday of the month. Elected officials confirmed to attend include: Sen. Brad Zaun (R), Rep. John Forbes (D), Rep. Eddie Andrews (R), Rep. Dan Gehlbach (R), Polk County Supervisor Robert Brownell (R) and Urbandale School Board member Jason Menke.

The Great Egg Hunt (ages 10 and younger)

Saturday, March 30, 10 a.m.
Giovannetti Community Shelter,
8900 Douglas Ave., Urbandale

Kids, fill up your baskets with all the candy and eggs you see. Some eggs even have a few special prizes in them. Come early. The event starts promptly at 10 a.m., and eggs are found quickly. No registration necessary. Meet at the parking lot at Giovannetti Community Shelter for the send off.

Spring Electronic Recycling Event

Saturday, April 13, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
City Hall, 3600 86th St., Urbandale

For information about the Electronic Recycling Event, including what is accepted, visit www.electronicassetsecurity.com/events.



Gardening with Marcia: Epic Vegetables

Monday, April 8, 2:30-3:30 p.m.
Urbandale Senior Recreation
Center, 7305 Aurora Ave.

Register by April 1 for this session led by a gardening expert. Learn about growing your favorite vegetables in containers and on the ground. This class will include a spotlight on the versatile tomato. For information and registration, call 515-278-3907.

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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History programs at the Library

Sunday, April 15
Urbandale Public Library,
3520 86th St.

The Urbandale Historical Society and the Urbandale Public Library are working together to present monthly history programs. April 14, Will Page will present What Style Is My House? The program will focus on domestic architecture and changing perspectives on its design. Bring photographs of houses of interest to talk about how they relate to this context. On May 19, the History of the Urbandale Library will be presented by Staci Stanton.

The Olmsted-Urban House, 4010 70th St., Urbandale, is open the first Sunday of every month, 2-4 p.m. for tours.

Art Day

Saturday, April 20
10 a.m. to noon
Urbandale Public Library,
3520 86th St.

The Urbandale Public Art Committee, Urbandale Public Library and Urbandale Art Gallery are excited for the return of Art Day. All ages are welcome to drop in to the library meeting rooms and choose from a number of activities, including watercolors, bead bracelets and more.

BINGO

6	22	34	53	72
11	27	38	56	71
4	●	●	52	69
13	21	42	●	67
14	24	32	59	68



5 Buck Bingo

Thursday, May 2, 2-3:30 p.m.
Urbandale Senior Recreation
Center, 7305 Aurora Ave.

Enjoy Bingo. No registration required for this free event, which includes 10 rounds. Winners from each round receive a choice of \$5 gift card.

Welcome to Medicare Seminar

Tuesday, April 23, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Urbandale Senior Recreation
Center, 7305 Aurora Ave.

The Senior Health Insurance Information Program volunteer counselors will present this Welcome to Medicare Seminar. Register by April 16 by calling 515-278-3907.

May Market

May 4, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Olmsted-Urban House lawn,
4010 70th St., Urbandale

Shop vendors at Urbandale Historical Society's outdoor vendor fair. Accepting applications for vendors now. Contact maymarket1904@gmail.com.

The Olmsted-Urban House is open the first Sunday of every month, 2-4 p.m. for tours.

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- March 24 at 8 p.m. Pink Floyd Laser Spectacular
- March 26 at 7:30 p.m. Brian Culbertson - The Trilogy Tour

53rd Annual Juried Student Exhibition

March 24-April 14
Anderson Gallery, 1310 25th St., Des Moines
andersongallery.wp.drake.edu

A showcase of the students of the Drake Art & Design program, this competitive juried exhibition highlights student work in a variety of media.

The Grimes Business Expo

Tuesday, March 26, 4:30-6:30 p.m.
Meadows Gymnasium, 2555 W. First St., Grimes

The public is invited to the 14th year of the Business Expo. Check out some local businesses and what they have to offer. Look for plenty of free goodies from Grimes Chamber member businesses, face painter, and a balloon artist. Free admission and kids are welcome.



Elks Spring Style Show Fundraiser

Saturday, April 6 from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
West Des Moines Elks Lodge, 2060 N.W. 94th St., Clive

Go shopping and enjoy lunch at the Elks Spring Style Show Fundraiser. Many fabulous vendors and terrific door prizes are included. Cost is \$15 for admission and funds benefit the Elks' veterans projects. Fashion show starts at 11 a.m. with shopping and lunch to follow. A 50/50 raffle will also be held. Must be present to win prizes.



You Can Grow Orchids

Saturday, April 13, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Canoyer Garden Center, 3355 S.E. Gateway Drive, Grimes

The Central Iowa Orchid Society is hosting an orchid event, with an orchid display, culture information, orchid sale and orchid clinic in which experts will answer questions about your troubled orchid and even help to repot it. Follow them on: Central Iowa Orchid Society Facebook page.

Michael Jefry Stevens and Christian Howes

Sunday, May 5, 2 p.m.
Caspé Terrace, 33158 Ute Ave., Waukee

Over the past 40 years pianist/composer Michael Jefry Stevens has been associated with some of the most important figures in modern jazz. Ranked among the top violinists in jazz, Christian Howes has demonstrated his virtuosity and creativity on numerous recordings since the early 2000s. As evidenced by their 2023 release, "Precipice," when you combine these two improvisers, you end up with pure beauty and joy in every note. Tickets for Jazz at Caspé Terrace concerts are \$30 each and can be ordered by calling 515-279-6452 or emailing abegold1951@gmail.com. You can also purchase tickets at jazzatcaspe.weebly.com. Seating is limited to 130 so reservations are encouraged. Caspé Terrace is owned and operated by the Jewish Federation of Greater Des Moines.



Dome After Dark

Fridays, 6-10 p.m. through March
Des Moines Botanical Garden, 909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines

Enjoy the conservatory and gardeners show house which will be illuminated with unique and colorful lighting. Details at dmbotanicalgarden.com

Events at The Brenton Arboretum

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For more information or to register, visit www.thebrentonarboratum.org/events.

- Wednesday, March 27, 10-11 a.m., Nature's Healing.
- April 4 and April 18, Nature Club, varying times. Register by age group.
- April 21, noon to 3 p.m., Earth Day Celebrations; 1-3 p.m., Exploratory Beekeeping.
- April 27, 7 a.m., Birds & Bagels. ■

EASTER excitement

What about Easter generates excitement for you? The dawning of spring? A family gathering? Wearing new clothes? These good things are rightfully eclipsed by something far more exciting that we remember at Easter.

The wonder of Easter is set against the backdrop of mankind's desperate condition. There is bad news that makes the good news of Easter the greatest news of all time.

God's Word unapologetically teaches that human beings are corrupt by nature and by choice. Whether we are outwardly religious or openly rebellious, "There is none righteous, not even one" (Romans 3:9). Even a casual observer of our world notices glaring examples of human decadence that belie any claim to basic goodness. Violence on our streets, deception by the elites, jealousy in our hearts, and wars on many fronts are not evidence of essential human goodness.

Human beings are naturally "hostile towards God...unable to please" Him (Romans 8:7) and destined to experience His just punishment. "The wages of sin is spiritual death (Romans 6:23a). In a culture that selectively reprimands law-breaking — and often rewards it — many reject the idea of God's justice. Our distaste for God's demand for perfect compliance to His moral law doesn't alter His resolve or absolve us of responsibility for our actions. Humanity deserves condemnation, but God graciously and lovingly provided a grand solution.

"He (Jesus) was delivered over because of our transgression and raised for our justification" (Romans 4:25). The fact of, and faith in, Jesus' death and resurrection are the basis for our being declared righteous and thereby escaping God's judgment. God's morally perfect Son voluntarily suffered the penalty of death for us so that all who believe in Jesus would be counted righteous and forgiven (Romans 3:22-25).

When a parent pays for their child's parking ticket, the guilty party is considered righteous and guiltless before the law because the innocent party paid their fine. The parent is a picture of Jesus.

Christ's resurrection showed God's acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice as the sufficient payment for our sin. In His death and resurrection, Jesus secured pardon (Ephesians 1:7), ensured possession of eternal life (Romans 6:23), provided purpose (Galatians 2:20), gave power for godly living (Romans 6:4-6), and guaranteed the promise of being raised like Him (Romans 8:11) to all who truly believe.

Easter excitement centers on the glorious good news that Christ died and rose again so that everyone who trusts in Him will escape God's wrath and live eternally. Embrace the real excitement of Easter by turning from your rebellion and trusting Christ for deliverance from God's condemnation. ■



EASTER EGG HUNT 10:30 Saturday March 30th!

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

RIBBON Cutting

Wasabi held a ribbon cutting for the opening of its new location at 2301 Rocklyn Drive in Urbandale on Feb. 5.



Wasabi held a ribbon cutting for the opening of its new location at 2301 Rocklyn Drive in Urbandale on Feb. 5.



Maggie Wunschel, Lynn Ricke and LeAnn Thongvanh



Amin Ekalino and Pam Lowe



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Sandy Lin, Brooke Logue and Vivian Husa



Zach Vanderploeg and Carissa Rainey



Booboo Yartz and Alexuis Bloomer



Leslie German and Joan Ellis



Todd Stender-Custer and Kelsey Groff

AM Exchange

The Urbandale Chamber's AM Exchange was hosted at Upper Iowa University on Feb. 27.



Susan Leek, Molly Greenfield and Valerie Isenberg



Erik Moen and Deborah Harp



Kaity Hall and Emily Kohl



Taylor Hale and Jeff Rogers



Jay Mathes and Paul Schwegler



Nate Buch and Weston Hefel



Pearl Doty and Madeline Ward



John Savoia and Keith Riden



Joelle Gallick and Gina Chandler



Joey Higgins and Melisha Pals



Gina Wright and Tara Ortiz

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