

# Living

MAGAZINE

## COMPETING for TIME

Residents share how relationships are the "win" in sporting together

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# WELCOME

## MORE exercise, fewer excuses

As a younger man, I was an active runner. It was a great stress-reliever and kept my weight where I wanted it to be. I also coached wrestling and worked out directly with many of the young men. And I enjoyed weight lifting. Those activities kept me in decent shape.

Then the kids arrived, along with excuses to not exercise as much. As they grew, it seemed like most of my free time was spent dropping them off and picking them up from their various activities or attending their events. I enjoyed it all, but I did not commit as much time to my own physical exercise, and it now shows. Maybe some of you can relate.

Of course, that was not a great excuse to be inactive, as we all know folks with young kids who run marathons or participate in triathlons. Had I made regular exercise more of a priority, it most certainly would have happened. Maybe not marathons or triathlons, but at least something more than mowing the lawn. The good news is, it's not too late. And as an empty-nester, I can no longer blame it on running the kids.

Admittedly, exercise has changed in each chapter of my life. At 55 years old, I now count walking the dog as exercise. And recreational swimming. And a leisurely bicycle ride. Even a game of disc golf. And why not? That all beats watching another episode of "Yellowstone," doesn't it?

Ideally, Jolene and I would exercise together, but it's not as easy as it sounds. I like to play tennis. She prefers golf. She likes to prep for 20 minutes and go on a bicycle ride. I prefer to plop down on a stationary bike and pedal immediately. We operate at different paces, but that's OK. We do like to go on walks together, and, some day, when I am old enough, I might pick up golf. But probably not.

As most all of us know by now, we are creatures of habit. Good habits and bad habits. Once I break the bad habit of eating Snickers bars and reintroduce the habit of riding that now-dusty exercise bicycle in my basement, I will be started down the right path again.

This month's cover story on active people had me thinking about my exercise, or lack thereof, through the years, and it is even inspiring me to break out that stationary bike again. I might even still catch Beth and Rip on a few "Yellowstone" episodes while I am at it.

Thanks for reading. ■



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# COMPETING for TIME

Residents share how relationships are the “win” in sporting together

By Jackie Wilson and Darren Tromblay

Central Iowa has become a virtual oasis for those looking for sporting opportunities. Baseball, softball, soccer? Fields abound. How about tennis, volleyball, pickleball, basketball? The courts are there. So are the pools, trampolines, rock climbing walls, bowling alleys, skateboarding parks, trails, ice rinks, rivers, lakes, race tracks, and disc golf and golf courses. Want to learn martial arts, fencing, curling, bodybuilding? Go for it. Those wishing to pursue dreams of wins, trophies, accolades, personal bests and other achievements can find the opportunities to do so.

But not everyone is concerned about wins and losses. Some simply want to play sports for the fun of it. They want it to be about time with friends and family — about building relationships. Instead of looking for a chance to shine, they seek a time to share. Instead of medals, they seek memories. Instead of competition, they seek companionship. When the goal is time together, it’s always a win.

Rob and Elliot Liesland of Clive have played pickleball together, along with their extended family, for five years. Photo by Jackie Wilson

## Pickleball chemistry on the court with son, dad

Elliot Liesland's goal this summer is to beat his dad, Rob, at pickleball. He feels confident in his abilities, which he has sharpened over the past few years.

"My cousin and I always try to beat my dad and uncle. We have a chance to beat them. I think this summer, we can do it," he says.

Elliot, 17, and his dad, Rob, of Clive, began playing pickleball together in 2019 with their extended family. Rob's mother-in-law had a pickleball set, and Elliot began playing with it. Rob played competitively, while Elliott began improving his skills. The two either play each other or play doubles with other players. They often play outdoor courses, such as Walker Johnson Park or at Dinks Pickleball, an indoor course.

The two pair up to find other pickleball players of all ages. Initially, Rob thought older players might be easy to beat.

"It can be so humbling to lose to somebody older than me. I ask myself, how do I even lose? I love playing against older folks," he says.

When they first began playing pickleball, Rob made sure Elliot won a few games.

"In the beginning, I let him win to keep him playing," he explains. "Now I don't. Elliot's game is still developing, and he's getting better. It's fun to smash the ball against a teenager."

Elliot plays with his cousin, who is close to his age, but he declares not many high school students play the sport — or at least admit to it.

"It's not the coolest sport. None of my friends play it. Most think it's a sport for old people," he says.

Yet, that doesn't deter Elliot from competing. He runs track and cross country for Valley High School, so he knows his youth and athleticism might give him an advantage on the court.

Additionally, the duo also plays ping pong together. Rob heard that playing ping pong can help with crossover skills to pickleball.

"Elliot dominates me in ping pong," he admits. "I'm waiting for the day when he beats me at pickleball."

Both players encounter all skill levels in

pickleball.

"Some people you have to win 'softer' and be patient," Rob says. "There are always some skills to work on."

Rob likes the aspect that pickleball is a convenient game that is easy to learn.

"With five kids at home, it's hard to find time to do much," he says. "It's addictive. My wife says I'm obsessed."

Rob also works from home, and he likes how pickleball provides a way to get out of the house, as well as the community aspect of it, which appeals to all ages. He has met new people and runs into friends on the court.

Besides the competitive factor, time spent with his son is special.

"The purest reason you want to spend time is because you love your kids," he says. "It's a blast to spend that time together. There's not a ton of sports that the whole family can play together."

Elliot agrees and likes to stay active.

"I think it's fun. We have the best chemistry on the court when we play together. I like that about us."

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**Social aspect of golf a bonus**

Two years ago, a then-50-year-old Clive resident, Navin Mukraj, decided he wanted to take up a new sport: golf.

After watching his son, Jai, play the game successfully at West Des Moines Valley years earlier, Mukraj decided it was time for him to “get into the game.” So Mukraj got some clubs and headed for the course.

And it was a good thing he did. His travels across the world for his work would allow him access to some beautiful courses. More importantly, he wanted to “get in the mix” and have some fun with his son.

This summer, the family plans to incorporate their love of golf into their vacation, as they’ll be taking their golf clubs with them to Europe, and eventually to Iceland, where it’s a little bit less expensive.

But it’s right in Iowa that Mukraj is most comfortable.

“It’s a great opportunity right here,” he says. “You go to a lot of these other places and it’s so cost-prohibitive. It could be anywhere from \$100 to \$200 per round. You can get the

City of Des Moines membership and play four courses. I love just showing up and playing. We have push carts, so we walk. If we play nine holes, it’s about three miles, but typically we play 18 holes, which is around six miles.”

To get their money’s worth, he says he tries to get out onto a course at least three times per week. His company, Dell Technologies, actually supports it.

“Some companies, with their health care plans, they want you to be active,” he says. “Some kind of activity. My company, for example, will give a person a one-time \$500 to do like, 7,000 steps per day. They do it as an incentive. You get points, and points turn into dollars.”

The socialization aspect of playing golf is equally as important. Being able to card a good score is nice, but being able to communicate with others is even more so.

“I have my regular golf partner, Larry, but I do like just showing up randomly and meeting new people,” Mukraj says. “You run into a variety of people.”

He adds it is particularly true at the

municipal courses, where it’s more about the true love of the game rather than keeping up with the Joneses.

“You don’t have to pull up in a Mercedes Benz like you do in a country club,” he says. “You don’t have to be tipping everybody. You can just relax and be who you are. It’s almost an adventure because you don’t know who you will get paired up with, and once you do, they always have a story.”

Such was the case with one unnamed playing partner who had gotten into a bit of trouble for imbibing, resulting in a DUI charge.

“We played with him later, and he was having beers,” Mukraj laughs. “I was like, ‘What’s going on here?’ We exchanged numbers, and later he kept texting us, so we decided to go play Blank. He goes, ‘No, I can’t play Blank. I have a DUI.’ So, we ended up having to cart him around to all these other courses when it wasn’t within walking distance for him. He’s an interesting character.”

For Mukraj, golf isn’t just about having fun. Once in the tee box, it’s about doing better than the last round. Sure, he still has fun, but there’s

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# FEATURE

also the need to score well.

“It’s always about improvement,” he says. “It’s a nice mix of both. We want to have a good outing. We were there yesterday, had a great front nine, but the wheels came off on the back nine so we just decided to stop and go get something to eat.”

“I’ve found that the more I’m out there, the more I’m improving,” he adds. “But that really doesn’t matter once you’re playing. With golf, people can be at various skill levels and still play.”

Another element of a friendly game of golf is the people watching, which Mukraj enjoys as well.

“There are always all sorts of characters out there who we see and point out,” he says. “We’ll say, ‘Look at the woman over there playing in flip-flops.’ You don’t get that at the country club.” ■



Navin Mukraj at his graduation with his wife, Jill Andrews; mother-in-law, Joanne Andrews; mom, Chris Singh; and son, Jai.

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# BOOK signing

Dashae Engler (left), a DMACC Communications student from Clive, takes a photo with poet Danez Smith of Minneapolis after receiving a signed copy of Smith's award-winning "Homie: Poems" collection on April 15 during a DMACC Celebration of Literary Arts event on the College's Ankeny Campus. During the event, Smith read excerpts from "Homie: Poems," which explores the saving grace of friendship and was a 2020 National Book Critics Circle Award for Poetry finalist. Smith is also the author of "Don't Call Us Dead," which circles their Black, queer and HIV-positive status, and was a finalist for the 2017 National Book Award. Now in its 21st year, the DMACC Celebration of Literary Arts brings award-winning authors to DMACC throughout the fall and spring semesters. All events are free to attend and open to the public. For more information, visit [cla.dmac.edu](http://cla.dmac.edu). ■

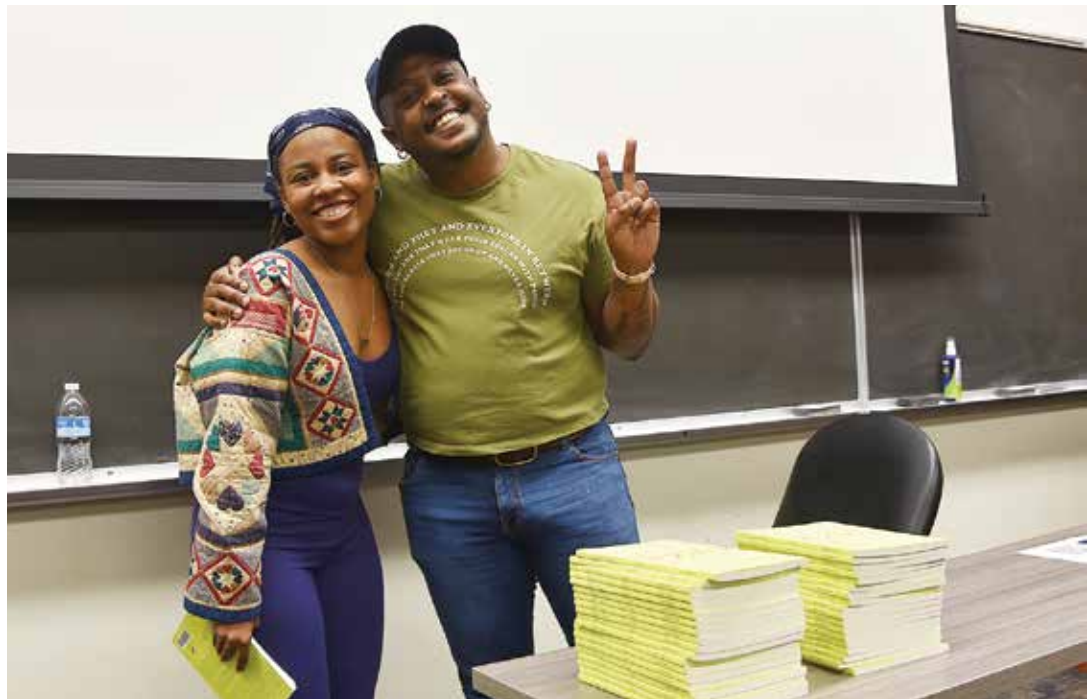


Photo by Lisa Schmitz for DMACC

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## RECIPE

# A CREAMY pasta delight perfect for dining outdoors

*(Family Features)* Warming weather brings with it plenty of opportunities to celebrate from holidays and birthdays to sunny afternoons offering an excuse to spend time outdoors with loved ones. Dining al fresco brings added freshness to favorite foods, and taking your next meal to the patio can be a fun, delicious way to soak in some vitamin D.

Pasta provides an easy option for sharing with a crowd, like this Creamy Tomato Smoked Sausage and Asparagus Tortellini. A cheesy, filling delight, it's ready to enjoy in less than half an hour.

Plus, locally grown Michigan Asparagus adds an extra level of freshness requiring just about three days to travel from family farms in Michigan to your kitchen. It doesn't need a passport to make it from farm to table, and you won't need one either to enjoy this Italian-inspired dish in the comfort of home.

Find more patio-friendly recipe ideas at [michiganasparagus.org](http://michiganasparagus.org). ■

## Creamy tomato smoked sausage and asparagus tortellini

Recipe courtesy of the Michigan Asparagus Advisory Board  
Servings: 6

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound smoked turkey sausage, sliced into bite-sized rounds
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 2/3 cups chicken broth
- 1 can (15 ounces) tomato sauce
- 3/4 cup heavy cream
- 18 ounces cheese tortellini
- 1/2 pound fresh asparagus, trimmed and cut into bite-sized pieces

- In large rimmed skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat.
- Add sausage and brown on both sides. Add garlic and stir until golden, 20-30 seconds.
- Add broth, tomato sauce, cream and tortellini; stir to combine. Bring to light simmer.
- Cover and simmer over low heat 10 minutes. Add asparagus during last 5 minutes of cooking until tortellini is tender and sauce has reduced.



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# HOW should I handle my finances after graduation?

Life after graduation can bring a new wave of opportunities and financial responsibilities. Below are key tips you can implement to make the most of this exciting new chapter.



**Create a budget:** A budget is an important tool to get finances in order and keep yourself accountable. The 50/30/20 approach allocates your money into three separate categories: 50% goes to essential expenses; 30% goes to wants; 20% goes to savings and debt repayments.

**Pay down student debt:** Budgeting will give you a head start in prioritizing student loan payments and any other debt. It's important to stay on top of making the monthly payments, and it's a good idea to pay more than the minimum payment if you can. This helps lower the principal of your balance and pay off

student loans faster.

**Open a credit card and start building credit:** If you have no credit history, consider opening a credit builder credit card or another introductory card to get started. Use the card and pay off balances on time and in full to establish good credit. In some circumstances, credit scores and/or credit history could be required to rent or buy a home, obtain utility services or enter other contracts.

**Pay your bills on time:** It's crucial to make all payments — including credit card balances, student loan payments, rent and other payments — on time. Late payments often involve hefty fees and will negatively impact credit scores. Consider setting up automatic payments and calendar reminders before payment due dates.

**Establish a retirement plan:** The sooner you start saving for retirement, the better off you will be in the future. See if your employer offers a retirement savings plan such as a Roth 401(k). If there's an employer

match on your contributions, it may be advantageous to contribute more than the minimum amount.

**Set up an emergency savings fund:** Unexpected costs often turn up at the most inopportune times. It's important to be prepared for when costly events occur. Whether it's an injury, a broken-down car, or losing your job, an emergency fund will give you a leg up.

**Seek out sound financial advice:** There is a lot of financial information on the internet and social media platforms. When you are looking for advice, pay attention to its credibility. There is a big difference between advice given by a Certified Financial Planner® and a social media influencer.

Keep these tips in mind to get started on the right track today. ■

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

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# CLIVE Public Library news

The following events are upcoming at the Clive Public Library:

• **Clive Art Gallery - Artist Ameer Ellis, June 1, all day.** Des Moines photographer Ameer Ellis will share her amazing photographic art with us. Ameer's photographs explore place, memory and identity in the Midwest landscape. Her work received Best in Show at Iowa Exhibited XXVI. Her current project explores relationships between people and the land.

• **Confetti Bowls - Clive Library Creations Take and Make Project, June 1, all day.** This free project is for adults. Pick up at the Clive or Harbach libraries. We'll be getting messy while making confetti bowls. While supplies last and no holds allowed. No registration required.

• **Pride Celebration, June 7, 1-2 p.m.** Celebrate Pride with the Clive Library. This is a free drop-in event for all ages, to be held in the Clive Library Teen Room. Enjoy rainbow-themed snacks and crafts and create a Pride button. Let's get together and celebrate LGBTQIA+ people and their allies. No registration required.

• **Romance Book Club, June 22, 10**

**a.m. to noon.** This free book club for adults meets in the Clive Public Library Community Room. Join us for all things romance-related from the sweet to the scandalous. We discuss books, movies, apps and anything in the romance genre. Do you have a great author to recommend to the group? Did you just see a fantastic film? This is your relaxed atmosphere to share and get ideas to feed your romance addiction. For more information and to participate, contact Stephanie Keller at skeller@cityofclive.com or via phone at 515-453-2221.

• **Family Game Day with the Dealt Hand, June 29, 1-4 p.m.** Registration is required for this event. Visit [https://cityofclive.activityreg.com/selectactivity\\_t2.wcs?leaguesid=2224](https://cityofclive.activityreg.com/selectactivity_t2.wcs?leaguesid=2224). Do you love playing games but feel overwhelmed by the options? Do you sometimes struggle to decipher the rules of a game? Look no further — the Dealt Hand are basically the librarians of board games. Join us for board games, food and fun. The Dealt Hand will bring their large collection of games for you to play. They will give suggestions based on what games you have enjoyed playing and even explain the rules to you, so you don't have to spend the whole time

## Clive Public Library

**1900 N.W. 114th St.**

(Use University Avenue to visit the Clive Public Library due to planned road construction this summer.)

Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Friday - 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday - 1-5 p.m.

## Harbach Public Library

**8505 Harbach Blvd.**

Monday, Wednesday and Friday - 3-7 p.m.

Saturday - 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

learning to play. We will be providing snacks, so registration is required for this event.

• **Spark: A Writers' Group, June 29, 2-4 p.m.** This group is for adults. Writers submit draft pages (fiction, essay, poetry, short story and children's stories) for feedback. Individuals have 10-15 minutes to receive feedback and to talk about their work. Our purpose is to meet, share, converse and give feedback in the time allotted. Drop-ins welcome. No registration is required. ■



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# KEY documents of an estate plan

You should ensure that you have a full slate of basic estate planning documents in place. These documents exist in the event of your death or incapacitation and provide your family instructions as to how to proceed. Here are the three key documents in constructing an effective estate plan:



## Durable financial power of attorney

In the event you become incapable of making financial decisions, a durable power of attorney allows someone you trust to sign documents and manage your assets. You can give someone a limited power of attorney that limits the authority to specific transactions, but a durable power of attorney that covers all transactions gives you trusted ally available to handle your affairs regardless of what lies ahead.

## Last will and testament

Most people know what a will is, but less than 40% of Americans have one. While it is difficult to contemplate your own mortality, it can be just as painful to think of leaving a mess for your heirs if you are no longer here. A will appoints an executor — the person who will manage your

affairs — and outlines a plan for the distribution of your assets.

A will can provide comfort to the person creating it, especially if you have children who are unable to handle or manage money. Avoiding the creation of a will can cause untold problems; if you don't take the time to create one, the state of Iowa will simply distribute your assets for you — and not necessarily in the same way you want.

## Medical directives

A healthcare POA is in place for a designated representative to be able to communicate your wishes to medical professionals if you are unable. These documents also include instructions as to whether or not you want to have life-saving measures performed. Creation of healthcare directives removes the need for your family members to make heart-wrenching decisions for you, which can be especially concerning if those decisions wouldn't necessarily match your own.

It's not easy to think about death, much less plan for it, but the true focus of estate planning is taking care of yourself today and your loved ones in the future. Schedule an appointment with an experienced estate planning attorney to make sure your plan is in place. ■

Information provided by Ross Barnett, Abendroth Russell Barnett Law Firm, 2560 73rd St., Urbandale, 515-278-0623, [www.ARPCLaw.com](http://www.ARPCLaw.com).

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**INVESTMENT**

By Daniel Rundahl

**DOES YOUR pension have to stay with your employer?**



In 1995, a study was done looking at the top 100 Fortune 500 companies in America. One part of this study was whether there was more value in a defined benefit pension or whether an employer sponsored savings plan would be best. You recognize the latter as a 401K or 403B plan. To understand this comparison, let's first understand the difference:

• **Employer Sponsored Savings Plan:**

A participating plan where your employer will contribute to the retirement savings investments for the employee after a certain period of employment. Often, these plans may include the employee participating at a 3-6% contribution to get a 3-6% matching contribution to the plan. This 401K or 403B plan will be yours and available after you are 59.5 years old for your needs.

• **Defined Benefit Pension Plan:** This plan can be participating or non-participating, but the risk lies completely on the employer to maintain an income payment for a certain period once the employee retires. Often, this benefit is selected for the lifetime of the employee and their spouse.

There are pros and cons to both investments. This month, on this topic, I will focus on whether it makes sense to leave your pension with your employer after you retire. Most retirees don't know that they can move it, and most don't recognize that it may make sense. Let's look at a couple of ideas on this.

A pension is a unique guarantee with your former employer to receive an income for a period of time or for life. Most of the time, the pension is insured by an annuity company. The annuity company will guarantee what they can while remaining profitable. So, here is the question: Have you ever thought of moving your pension to another annuity company? The fact is most of the largest companies in Iowa that provide pensions are having them serviced with an insurance and annuity company that isn't offering you the highest guarantee that could be available. So, what do you do?

A pension will often offer a lump sum value that you can take at retirement instead of the income option. It may be completely taxable, so it may have to go directly to the new company if it is in your best interest. In the understanding of how these "vehicles" work, you could consider taking this lump sum amount to a different insurance company and possibly locking in a higher guaranteed income payout for life. It may also guarantee a death benefit that may otherwise not exist with leaving it with your employer. The good news, with Iowa as the "insurance capital" of the USA, you have lots of options.

So, what do you do? Working with a fiduciary financial advisor will help you to understand whether it is better to leave your Defined Benefit Pension with your employer or move it to a different pension company. You might be leaving thousands of dollars on the table by not considering it.

Talk with your advisor. ■

Information provided by Daniel Rundahl, Financial Advisor, Rundahl Financial Consultants, 6165 N.W. 86th St., Johnston, drundahl@rundahlfinancial.com, 515-727-1701, www.rundahlfinancialconsultants.com.

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## Food Truck Fridays

Fridays, 5:30-8 p.m.

Campbell Park, 12385 Woodlands Parkway, Clive

Live entertainment and food are presented by Clive Parks and Recreation and the Clive Chamber of Commerce. Jump on the Greenbelt Trail and make your way to Campbell Park to enjoy music, food and fun. Bring the whole family. The park has three playgrounds and a green space. Bring a blanket or a lawn chair. **Note:** Campbell Park is now a cashless facility. No cash is accepted. Payment methods are Visa, Mastercard, Discover, American Express, Apple Pay and Google Pay.

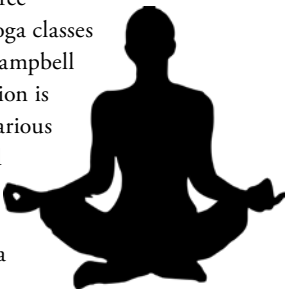
**Upcoming entertainment:** May 24: Damon Dotson; May 31: Brian Herrin Duo; June 7: The Unfortunate Sons; June 14: Lucas Beebe; June 21: Sons of Gladys Kravitz Lite; Sept. 6: Dick Danger Band; Sept. 13: Brother Trucker.

## Outdoor Yoga

Wednesdays, June 5 - Aug. 7,  
6-6:45 p.m.

Campbell Park, 12385 Woodlands Parkway, Clive

Join this free community yoga classes at beautiful Campbell Park. Instruction is provided by various local, certified instructors. Please bring your own yoga mat.



## Summer Friendly Fridays

Various dates and parks

Join us for mid-morning playdates at various Clive park playgrounds. Meet new friends and families on the playground. Adult supervision is required. This program is simply free play on the playgrounds to connect families with others in our community. Clive staff will serve free treats (ice cream or popsicles) at 11 a.m. Come and go as you please. Events are:

- May 31 – Country Club Glen Park
- June 14 – Linnan Park
- June 28 – Stonegate Park
- July 12 – Greenbelt Park/Porter Shelter
- July 26 – Campbell Park
- Aug. 9 – Stonegate Park



## Youth Tennis Lessons

June and July sessions

Campbell Park Tennis Courts, 12385 Woodlands Parkway, Clive

Summer is a perfect time for your child to learn more about tennis. This partnership with Lifetime Tennis brings you two class options with multiple session offerings for each. This program is intended for both the beginner and intermediate player. Participants will need to bring clean tennis shoes, water bottle and racket if they have one. We do have extra rackets if you need to borrow one. Please indicate so at time of registration. For options and registration, visit [https://cityofclive.activityreg.com/selectactivity\\_t2.wcs?leagueid=2249](https://cityofclive.activityreg.com/selectactivity_t2.wcs?leagueid=2249).

## Wild Lights Festival

Through May 27, 7:30-10:30 p.m.

Blank Park Zoo, 7401 S.W. Ninth St., Des Moines  
[www.blankparkzoo.com](http://www.blankparkzoo.com)

The Blank Park Zoo's Wild Lights Festival returns. Visitors can see more than 50 hand-crafted creations that light up the zoo. The illuminated Asian mythical creatures create plenty of photo opportunities for families.



## Clive Aquatic Center opens Memorial Day weekend

The Clive Aquatic Center opens Memorial Day weekend. Purchase your season pass online. Online registration is available for swim lessons, with multiple sessions offered for mornings and evenings. For more information, call 515-223-5246 or email [parcsandrec@cityofclive.com](mailto:parcsandrec@cityofclive.com).

## CITYVIEW's Summer Stir - Downtown Des Moines

Friday, June 21, 5-9 p.m.

Court Avenue District, Des Moines

CITYVIEW's traveling cocktail party is back in downtown Des Moines. Sample many of summer's finest drinks at some of the area's best bars and restaurants. Try 10 different drinks for only \$25 with your online order (\$30 at the door). For more information and for tickets, visit [www.summerstirs.dmcityview.com](http://www.summerstirs.dmcityview.com).



## CelebrAsian

May 24-25

Western Gateway Park,  
1205 Locust St., Des Moines  
[www.iowaasianalliance.com](http://www.iowaasianalliance.com)

A weekend of Asian cuisine, music and entertainment. Vendors and performers will fill the area with an authentic celebration of Asian culture.



# EVENTS IN THE AREA

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com)

Be sure to check for cancelations.



## Vietnam War Living History Event

Iowa Gold Star Military Museum, 7105 N.W. 70th Ave., Johnston  
 Saturday, June 1, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.,  
 and Sunday, June 2,  
 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Discover what life was like for an American servicemember during the Vietnam War. Meet historians, explore historically accurate campsites, and see period military vehicles. Admission is free.



## Iowa Take Steps Walk

Saturday, June 22, 9 a.m.

Iowa State Capitol Grounds

The public is invited to join the Iowa Take Steps Walk to benefit the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation. The event starts at 9 a.m. with a ribbon cutting ceremony at 10 a.m. Learn more at [cctakesteps.org](http://cctakesteps.org).

## Events at The Brenton Arboretum

Various dates

The Brenton Arboretum, 25141 260th St., Dallas Center

For more information or to register, visit [www.TheBrentonArboretum.org/events](http://www.TheBrentonArboretum.org/events).

- **Nature Club**, varying times, register by age group: June 6 and 20, July 4 and 18, Aug. 1 and 15, Sept. 5 and 19, Oct. 3 and 17, Nov. 7 and 21, Dec. 5 and 19.
- May 30-31, **Animal Odyssey camp**.
- June 2, 1-3 p.m., **Go Hug a Tree**.
- June 3-4, **Animal Odyssey camp**, 9-11:30 a.m.
- June 6, 6-7 p.m., **Outdoor Foraging with Polk County Conservation**.
- June 8, 7-9 p.m., **Wine on the Prairie**. ■

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

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# CAN PLAY teaches life skills through sports

Breaking down barriers to participation

Because of an organization called Can Play, more people are finding that they... can play. The mission of Can Play is to “bring adapted and no cost recreational programs to our communities by removing barriers to play.”



Dylan DeClerck explains further.

“I’m one of the co-founders at Can Play. It actually started as two separate organizations. This will be our 13th summer. We started playing baseball at Linnan Park in Clive. We brought some balls and bats to offer baseball for kids that wouldn’t otherwise be able to participate in organized baseball,” DeClerck says. “I grew up in Clive, so I grew up going to Linnan Park to play baseball when I was a kid.”

From this humble beginning, the organization and its offerings have grown steadily.

“After the first couple of years, we started growing into other sports, and we became an official non-profit organization known as Opportunity on Deck for those first few years,” DeClerck says. “Then, just a few years ago in 2021, we merged with Courage League Sports.

“We serve participants with financial barriers to play, as well as



Daniel Timmons of Edward Jones presents the Neighbor Spotlight certificate to Ryan McCall and Amy Tagliareni with Can Play.

those with special needs and physical and/or mental barriers to play. The nice thing is, as we’ve grown, now we can offer football and softball and soccer and la crosse and ultimate Frisbee and some of those other opportunities both in Clive and surrounding areas.”

Most of the funding for Can Play comes through grants, as well as donations from individuals or corporations. There is also an annual wheelchair basketball event that raises awareness as well as money.

DeClerck explains that Can Play offers programs in two general areas. The no-cost program serves elementary and junior high students, while the adapted program serves both youth and adults with special needs. According to the Can Play website, more than 15,000 participants are served yearly throughout central Iowa.

“There’s no qualifications, we don’t screen for income,” DeClerck says. “But we are trying to reach participants in our no-cost program that wouldn’t otherwise be able to have that opportunity.”

He added that the Can Play website has an online registration for anyone interested in becoming a participant or volunteer.

“We’re always looking for coaches,” DeClerck says. “We need 400 to 500 volunteers per year.”

DeClerck also pointed out that, because most of the participants are at a beginner’s level, volunteer coaches do not need to be experts on a particular sport.

“We’re not really a sports organization; it’s really about youth development,” DeClerck says. “We don’t necessarily focus on MVPs on the field. We want to create MVPs in the community.”

When asked about a favorite success story, DeClerck told of participants who have come back to serve others at Can Play.

“There’s one in particular who participated in the program then went through our leadership academy that teaches how to be a volunteer, then he was a volunteer, and then he became that head coach position for us,” DeClerck says. “He’s accomplished a lot athletically and kept his grades up, and he’s been mature and willing to give back. Those have been some of the most rewarding stories for us.” ■

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## PLAN AHEAD

By **Sasha Mudlaff and Holly Peterson Miller**

### THANK YOU, Mom and Dad

Our mother died a few years ago after struggling through the late stages of Alzheimer's disease. Honoring her during this stressful time was our family's ultimate goal. And then, again, when she died, we wanted to honor her life in the best way we could. Well, we can tell you firsthand that having her preplanned funeral in place was extremely valuable in helping us achieve our goal. All of the information surrounding her death, visitation, service and burial were organized in a preplanning file at the funeral home. Knowing her wishes, having merchandise selections already made, having the details about what would be in her obituary already written down, and having the information for the death certificate already recorded all helped to make the process of funeral arrangements so much easier for our family.

Since that time, our dad has been "tweaking" his own preplan, which is currently in place at the funeral home, and, for that, we are so thankful. When that time comes, and our heads are spinning with grief, we won't have to wonder or guess. We will know exactly how best to honor him.

Thank you, Mom and Dad, for this gift. With love, from your two daughters. ■

Information provided by Sasha Mudlaff and Holly Peterson Miller, family owners, Hamilton's Funeral Home, 605 Lyon St., Des Moines, 515-243-5221.



## Plan Ahead for PEACE OF MIND

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## HEALTH

By **Dr. Amy Petersen**

### WELL-CHILD visits promote health and wellness

As the school year winds down, it is time to start preparing for the next school year. This includes scheduling your child's back-to-school physical or annual well-child visit. Over a year, a lot can change in a child's or teen's life, making it important that these routine visits are not interrupted.

During an annual exam, your pediatrician not only completes a thorough physical exam, but evaluates and addresses any emotional, developmental or social concerns. This visit also opens discussion of nutrition and exercise, provides vision and depression screening, and additionally addresses any other concerns. A yearly visit ensures that your child is up to date with the recommended vaccinations, an important part of preventing and protecting against serious diseases. A sports physical, required by most high schools, can be done concurrently with your child's physical, allowing your provider to address specific exercise-related issues, injuries or questions about training.

Yearly well-child visits allow your family and pediatrician to work together, forming a relationship of trust and respect, to ensure your child is growing and developing as expected. Get ahead of the game and schedule your child's annual well-child visit now. ■

Information provided by Dr. Amy Petersen, Cornerstone Pediatrics & Family Allergy, 6800 Lake Drive, Suite 260, West Des Moines, [www.cornerstonepfa.com](http://www.cornerstonepfa.com).



## Over a year a lot can CHANGE

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# PRETTY pollinator plants

Hundreds of trees, shrubs, perennials, vines and annuals can attract various types of pollinators.



Mixed coneflower at Brenton Arboretum, Dallas Center. Photo by Lynn Kuhn

Bees, butterflies, moths, beetles, flies, wasps, ants, hummingbirds and bats all have two things in common. They are pollinators, and they are in decline. Those are big deals.

Did you know 75% of our crops depend on pollinators to some degree? One way to help is to add pollinator plants to your landscape, and now is the perfect time, as June is pollinator month.

Hundreds of trees, shrubs, perennials, vines and annuals can attract various types of pollinators. For now, we'll highlight a few of the prettiest perennials that attract primarily bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.

## CONEFLOWER (*Echinacea*)

Mix natives with showier cultivars for a display that is attractive to both pollinators and humans.

- **Pale Purple Coneflower** (*Echinacea pallida*)
- **White Coneflower** (*Echinacea purpurea* "Alba")
- **Pica Bella Coneflower** (*Echinacea purpurea* "Pica Bella")
- **Pixie Meadowbrite Coneflower** (*Echinacea Pixie Meadowbrite*™)
- **Ruby Star Coneflower** (*Echinacea purpurea* "Ruby Star")
- **Rocky Top Tennessee Coneflower** (*Echinacea tennesseensis* "Rocky Top")

**Designer's Tip:** Rocky Top Tennessee Coneflower is fairly short with blooms that nod to the east, so be sure to position it accordingly.

## BLAZING STAR (*Liatris*)

*Liatris* looks best when mixed with other *liatris* or with other perennials such as coneflower. Try these cultivars for best results.

- **Kobold Gayfeather** (*Liatris spicata* "Kobold")
- **Floristan White Gayfeather** (*Liatris spicata* "Floristan White")
- **Marsh Blazing** (*Liatris spicata*)
- **Rough Blazingstar** (*Liatris aspera*)
- **Prairie Blazingstar** (*Liatris pycnostachya*)

**Designer's Tip:** Plant *liatris* amongst ornamental grasses such as prairie dropseed, little bluestem and autumn moore grass.

## BEEBALM (*Monarda*)

So many monarda, so little time. It's tough to pick a favorite, but I did my best. Look for these mildew resistant cultivars.

- **Garden View Scarlet** (Similar to Jacob Cline, but more resistant to powdery mildew)
- **Raspberry Wine**
- **Pardon My Purple**
- **Purple Rooster**

**Designer's Tip:** Pair monarda with Little Joe Joe Pye Weed (*Eupatorium dubium* "Little Joe"). They both attract pollinators, love full sun, and tolerate moist soil.

## BUTTERFLY WEED (*Asclepias*)

I'm amazed at how the showy orange blooms of butterfly weed steal the show for about two months straight, but that's nothing compared to the butterflies it attracts.

- **Hellow Yellow Milkweed** (*Asclepias tuberosa* "Hello Yellow")
- **Butterfly Weed** (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
- **Common Milkweed** (*Asclepias syriaca*)

**Designer's Tip:** Without common milkweed, there would be no monarch butterflies, so if possible let it grow if it pops up in your landscape. Be aware it can be aggressive and is not suitable for formal gardens.

For these plants and so much more, check out this local plant source: <https://plantlifedesigns.com/native-and-pollinator-plant-sale>

Celebrate Pollinator Month by adding these pretty perennials to your landscape, then sit back and enjoy the show. ■



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# INCLUSION Club involves peers of all abilities

Group has doubled in size.



The Inclusion Club involves students of all abilities and partners with Special Olympics and Best Buddies. Photos by Joe Thompson

Lindy McBratney and Erika Owens both have a strong passion for inclusion. They wanted to provide opportunities for the students at Indian Hills Junior High to partner with their peers and get to know peers of all abilities. When they started the Inclusion Club in the 2022-2023 school year, the club had 20 students and only partnered with the Special Olympics. Now, the club has grown to include 45 students this school year. The club has also focused on both Special Olympics and Best Buddies.

“The joy students experience from partnering together and forming friendships is heartwarming. Beyond club time, our students are often found interacting during lunch, recess, or in classrooms. It’s fun watching students grow confidence in themselves and build friendships that will last,” club organizers said in a statement.

The Inclusion Club meets once a month during ACCESS Clubs. Students also participate in outside activities as their schedules allow. The only criteria to join the club is that students want to participate and want to build relationships with students of all abilities.

“I have made new friends through Inclusion Club, and it is fun. It has helped me grow my confidence in myself,” Inclusion Club member Jenny Calderon said.

Through Special Olympics, students have participated in the Youth Leadership Conference, basketball skills competition, unified basketball and unified track and field.

Members of the club have also participated in after-school gatherings where they play games and complete crafts together. They have attended the School Mime and Improv Show, a girls basketball game, and the Best Buddies friendship ball.



“I like hanging out with Aya. She is my friend, and I met her through Inclusion Club. I eat lunch with her,” Inclusion Club member Rayley Beierle said.

Club member Noah Dunlap added that he enjoys “getting to hang out with new people. I feel happy and excited when I have participated in Special Olympics events because I have never been able to participate in those types of activities. Without this activity, I would never get medals.”

The club has been working toward a group of students leading the club with teacher support instead of teachers leading the club with student support. The club has helped incorporate and facilitate friendships not just through the club but schoolwide. ■

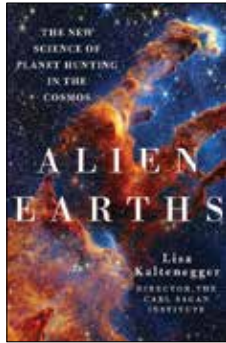
## 'Alien Earths: The New Science of Planet Hunting in the Cosmos'

I love space. I follow all the launches, the probes, the landers on Mars; I can't get enough of all the fascinating and paradigm-shifting discoveries that surround us in this era of technological wonders. If you've got a penchant for looking up at the stars and wondering, or just a love for "Star Trek," I've got a brilliant recommendation for your summer reading list.

Dr. Lisa Kaltenegger is a rock star in the science world for good reason. She has had a fascinating and glass-ceiling-shattering career and, along the way, has become a brilliant science educator with an effortless ability to teach complex topics with an infectious enthusiasm. Her skills are on full display in this overview of the vast, multi-disciplinary search for life on other planets. This very readable book explores the many different ways we are looking for any sign of life among the fascinating worlds we've discovered outside our own solar system and asks us to ponder what will happen if we find someone looking back at us.

Reading more like a conversation than a lecture, this is the epitome of what a popular science book should be. It's full of facts and context but never feels dry or boring. I was hooked from the first page. Be prepared to look at the night sky a little differently after this wonderful book. ■

— *Review by Julie Goodrich*



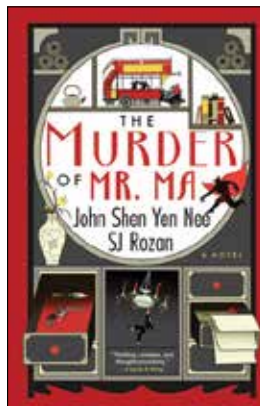
By Lisa Kaltenegger  
4/16/24  
288 pages  
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St. Martin's Press

## 'The Murder of Mr. Ma'

Mash-ups, genre-benders, unexpected fusion: these are the things I look for after decades of reading. I like mystery books that bring something new to the same old game, and, this time, the game is afoot wearing an entirely different shoe.

"The Murder of Mr. Ma" is a rollicking, fast-paced adventure that weaves the grand tradition of a Sherlock Holmesan homage into traditional Chinese gong'an crime fiction with explosive results. Academic Lao She is adapting to Edwardian London as best he can when he chanches into a meeting with the notorious Judge Dee Ren Jie, a well-known figure in the Chinese diaspora and not a man given to quiet study. Lao is soon caught up in a disturbing and highly dangerous murder mystery that has him running for his life more than once. Can he and Dee save themselves, along with the serial killer targeting immigrants?

This was such a fun book, with the beautiful writing and affections so well-known from the Holmes style but with intriguing history and a cultural influence I loved to learn about. Anyone with a need for a quick read that keeps you on your toes will love this one. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



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# RIBBON Cutting

Renew You Spa and Suites held a one-year anniversary ribbon cutting on May 7.



Renew You Spa and Suites held a one-year anniversary ribbon cutting on May 7.



Elissa Evans and Kristine Toms



Brittany Peine and Emily Arends



Jeremy Jones, Claudia Mash and Dave Dhainin



John Hollinger and Sophie Ort



Lu Anne Gafford, Andrea Hollinger, Tom Triplett and Eric Klein



Sarah and Raegan Schultz and Katie Krapfl



Kristy Schmidt, Edye Beckerman and Olivia Schmitt



Brandee Bloyer, Melissa Johnson, Andrea Hollinger, Carly Jones, Kellie Buckingham and Safiyah Grace



Valerie Gall and Kellie Buckingham



# OUT & ABOUT



Kelsey Vodenik, Matt Harris and Adam Kurt at the Clive Chamber Luncheon held at The Monroe on May 9.



Lu Anne Gafford and Olivia Schmitt at the Clive Chamber Luncheon held at The Monroe on May 9.



Kayte Cook and Riley Johnston at the Clive Chamber Luncheon held at The Monroe on May 9.



Lindsey Ellis and Ben Chambers at the Clive Chamber Luncheon held at The Monroe on May 9.



Lori Vande Krol at the Clive Chamber Luncheon held at The Monroe on May 9.



Mike Torrez and Alex Shcharansky at the Clive Chamber PM Exchange hosted on April 30 at Gilroy's.



Mary Anne Kennedy and Katie Woodward at the Clive Chamber PM Exchange hosted on April 30 at Gilroy's.



Axel Johnston and Kyle Christensen at the Clive Chamber Luncheon held at The Monroe on May 9.



Erik Anderson, Megan Farley, Derek Stewart and Kirsten Ingersoll at the Clive Chamber PM Exchange hosted on April 30 at Gilroy's.



Evan Hataway, Ben Chambers and Eric Klein at the Clive Chamber PM Exchange hosted on April 30 at Gilroy's.

**DISCLAIMER:** This publication does not knowingly accept advertising that is deceptive, fraudulent, or which might otherwise violate the law or accepted standards of taste. However, this publication does not warrant or guarantee the accuracy of any advertisement, or the quality of the goods or services advertised. Readers are cautioned to thoroughly investigate all claims made in any advertisement and to use good judgment and reasonable care, particularly when dealing with persons unknown to you who ask for money in advance of delivery of the goods or services advertised.

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**MANUFACTURED HOMES**, (2025, Vinyl/ Shingled. 2Br start at \$39,999). (16x80) (3Br- 2Ba.) \$79,999. (28X64) (4Br-2Ba) \$84,999. Delivered Factory-Direct, E. Of I-35, North of I-80, to Minnesota Border. 319-239-1920. (mcn)

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**CASH FOR CARS!** We buy all cars! Junk, high-end, totaled - it doesn't matter! Get free towing and same day cash! **NEWER MODELS** too! Call 1-877-978-2510. (mcn)

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Get your deduction ahead of the year-end! Donate your car, truck, or SUV to assist the blind and visually impaired. Arrange a swift, no-cost vehicle pickup and secure a generous year-end tax credit. Call Heritage for the Blind Today at 1-855-977-7030 today! (mcn)

Donate your car, truck, boat, RV and more to support our veterans! Schedule a **FAST, FREE** vehicle pickup and receive a top tax deduction! Call Veteran Car Donations at 1-888-429-2331 today! (mcn)

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**Remote Workers Needed.** Stay Home. Make \$726.00 Weekly...Simply Mailing Brochures for National Solar Company. No Experience Needed. PT/FT, Working from Home. Call Now! 1-877-267-7752. (mcn)

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**STOP OVERPAYING FOR HEALTH INSURANCE!** A recent study shows that a majority of people struggle to pay for health coverage. Let us show you how much you can save. Call Now for a no-obligation quote: 1-888-772-8454. You will need to have your zip code to connect to the right provider. (mcn)

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Don't Pay For Covered Home Repairs Again! Our home warranty covers ALL MAJOR SYSTEMS AND APPLIANCES. We stand by our service and if we can't fix it, we'll replace it! Pick the plan that fits your budget! Call: 1-877-743-7971 (mcn)

**AGING ROOF? NEW HOMEOWNER? STORM DAMAGE?** You need a local expert provider that proudly stands behind their work. Fast, free estimate. Financing available. Call 1-888-770-8025. Have zip code of property ready when calling! (mcn)

**WATER DAMAGE CLEANUP & RESTORATION:** A small amount of water can lead to major damage in your home. Our trusted professionals do complete repairs to protect your family and your home's value! Call 24/7: 1-888-750-5574. Have zip code of service location ready when you call! (mcn)

Want a greener lawn? TruGreen's your go-to for a tailored lawn care plan. Act now and get 50% off your first service with a purchase of an annual plan. Call us at 1-833-912-3666 to learn more. (mcn)

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**YOU MAY QUALIFY** for disability benefits if you have are between 52-63 years old and under a doctor's care for a health condition that prevents you from working for a year or more. Call now! 1-888-924-0449. (mcn)

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Replace your roof with the best looking and longest lasting material steel from Erie Metal Roofs! Three styles and multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited Time Offer up to 50% off installation + Additional 10% off install (for military, health workers & 1st responders.) Call Erie Metal Roofs: 1-844-907-2386. (mcn)

Switch and save up to \$250/year on your talk, text and data. No contract and no hidden fees. Unlimited talk and text with flexible data plans. Premium nationwide coverage. 100% U.S. based customer service. For more information, call 1-888-909-7338. (mcn)

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proudly stands behind their work. Fast, free estimate. Financing available. Call 1-888-878-9091 (ACP)

Water damage cleanup: A small amount of water can cause major damage to your home. Our trusted professionals dry out wet areas & repair to protect your family & your home value! Call 24/7: 1-888-872-2809. Have zip code! (ACP)

Professional lawn service: Fertilization, weed control, seeding, aeration & mosquito control. Call now for a free quote. Ask about our first application special! 1-833-606-6777 (ACP)

## MISCELLANEOUS

Prepare for power outages today with a Generac Home Standby Generator. Act now to receive a **FREE** 5-Year warranty with qualifying purchase\* Call 1-855-948-6176 today to schedule a free quote. It's not just a generator. It's a power move. (ACP)

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**Diagnosed with lung cancer & 65+?** You may qualify for a substantial cash award. No obligation! We've recovered millions. Let us help! Call 24/7 1-877-707-5707 (ACP)

Replace your roof w/the best looking & longest lasting material steel from Erie Metal Roofs! 3 styles & multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited Time Offer up to 50% off install + Additional 10% off install (military, health & 1st responders.) 1-833-370-1234 (ACP)

Jacuzzi Bath Remodel can install a new, custom bath or shower in as little as one day. For a limited time, waving ALL installation costs! (Additional terms apply. Subject to change and vary by dealer. Offer ends 6/30/24. Call 1-844-501-3208 (ACP)

Don't let the stairs limit your mobility! Discover the ideal solution for anyone who struggles on the stairs, is concerned about a fall or wants to regain access to their entire home. Call AmeriGlide today! 1-833-399-3595 (ACP)

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