

Living

MAGAZINE

Curtain call

Residents share their experiences on stage



Meet Jenny Rants

EDUCATION

Thompson enjoys helping out his new community

GOOD NEIGHBOR

Shrimp, broccoli and potato skewers with lemon and thyme

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WELCOME

FOUR reasons to participate in community theatre

Have you thought about getting involved in community theatre? If you want to participate, organizers will surely find a place for you. But what's in it for you personally? How about...



1. You can develop your creative talents.

Community theatre provides a supportive environment for people to explore their creative abilities. Whether you enjoy acting, singing, dancing or working behind the scenes, community theatre has opportunities for you to develop your skills and grow as an artist.

2. You can build confidence and self-esteem. Performing in front of an audience can be nerve-racking, but it can also be empowering. Participating in community theatre can help build confidence and self-esteem while learning to overcome fears and take risks. Through rehearsals, performances and feedback from peers and mentors, performers gain a sense of pride and accomplishment that carries over into all areas of their lives.

3. You can develop important life skills at any age. Community theatre is more than just a hobby; it is also an opportunity to develop life skills. From time management and teamwork to problem-solving and communication, the skills that performers learn through theatre can help them succeed in many aspects of life. In addition, community theatre provides a sense of belonging that is often difficult to find elsewhere. Performers build lasting friendships with their peers and develop connections with mentors and volunteers who share their passion for the arts.

4. You can make a difference in your community. The arts have the power to bring people together and make a positive impact in the community. By participating in productions, people have the opportunity to inspire, entertain and educate audiences of all ages. Community theatre programs strive to make the arts accessible to all people in the community, regardless of background or financial resources.

Are you inspired enough now to want to get involved? You can start by reading this month's cover story. Then take the leap and reach out to organizers and say, "How can I get started?" You will be glad you did.

Thanks for reading. ■

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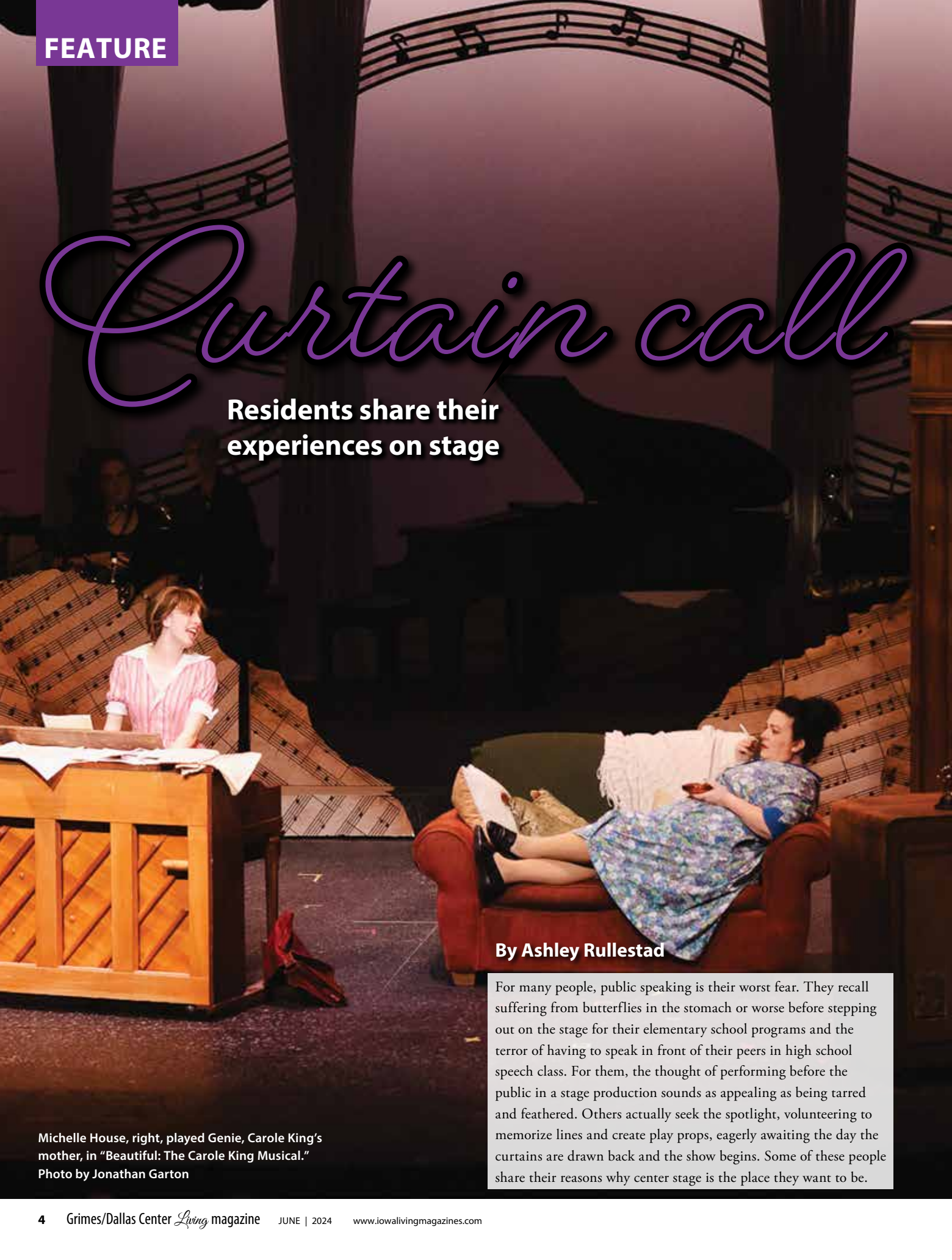
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Curtain call

Residents share their experiences on stage



By Ashley Rullestad

For many people, public speaking is their worst fear. They recall suffering from butterflies in the stomach or worse before stepping out on the stage for their elementary school programs and the terror of having to speak in front of their peers in high school speech class. For them, the thought of performing before the public in a stage production sounds as appealing as being tarred and feathered. Others actually seek the spotlight, volunteering to memorize lines and create play props, eagerly awaiting the day the curtains are drawn back and the show begins. Some of these people share their reasons why center stage is the place they want to be.

Michelle House, right, played Genie, Carole King's mother, in "Beautiful: The Carole King Musical."
Photo by Jonathan Garton

Acting dreams

Caethen Stocker, 16, wanted to be an actor on television ever since he was a little boy.

“One day, I told my mom I wanted to start doing shows, and I took a Curtain Call Kids camp here in Grimes,” he says. “In 2019, I auditioned at the Des Moines Community Playhouse for their ‘Celebration of the Century’ show that featured area youth as emerging artists.”

The Des Moines Community Playhouse is a popular spot for community theatre actors. The theatre was founded in 1919 by members of the Iowa Press and Authors Club. The Playhouse is unique in that it has operated continuously, under various names and in various locations, since its founding. With more than 100 years of uninterrupted service, The Playhouse is among the six oldest continuously operating community theatres in the U.S. It is also one of the largest community theatres in the U.S.

Stocker was cast in that show and shortly after was cast as Slightly, a lost boy in the

Playhouse’s production of “Tinkerbell.” He also appeared in a Sept. 11 tribute called “Through Their Eyes” and, most recently, in “The Sound of Music” as Kurt Von Trapp.

“‘The Sound of Music’ was by far my favorite,” he says. “It was a really fun show to be in. My first experience seeing a musical was when DCG did ‘The Sound of Music’ at the high school. When the Playhouse announced ‘The Sound of Music’ in their lineup, I knew I wanted to audition for a part.”

Stocker took singing lessons to prepare for the audition and was thrilled to be cast in the role of the somewhat cheeky Von Trapp son.

Stocker also enjoys going to see shows whenever he can. “MJ the Musical,” recently performed at the Des Moines Civic Center, is his favorite of those he’s seen — so far. A self-proclaimed Jackson fan, Stocker says he’s been “obsessed” with Michael Jackson since he was young.

“When it was here in Des Moines recently, I had the opportunity to spend some



DCG sophomore Caethen Stocker enjoys performing.

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Caethen Stocker played Slightly, a lost boy in the Des Moines Playhouse's production of "Tinkerbell."

time with the actor who played Michael. My favorite musicals tend to be the ones whose music is from the 'oldies' genre, like 'Ain't Too Proud, the Life and Times of the Temptations,' 'MJ,' 'Jersey Boys,' and 'Beautiful: The Carole King Musical.' ”

Stocker is also a member of Momentum, the Dallas Center Grimes varsity show choir. His future goals include pursuing a career as an auto technician at Des Moines Area Community College, possibly playing baseball, and continuing to participate in theatre productions.

“I like performing in front of people. I like to transform out of myself and into the character. It’s a great experience.”

Theatre buff

Brent Roske’s involvement in theatre and film started in elementary school when he began acting. By high school, he was already directing and soon set out to pursue his dreams in Los Angeles, California.

“I made a low-budget movie when I first

got to L.A., which got me a job offer from NBC Universal where I was the creative director for the NBC stations group for 10 years.”

He continued to pursue theatre, though. He took on the title role of “Hamlet” at the Royal Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh, Scotland, and performed in “Desire Under the Elms” in Chicago.

Roske also wrote and directed the only play ever performed at the Iowa Capitol called “Lincoln’s Last Interview,” a play set on April 14, 1865, where President Lincoln and his wife, Mary, give an interview to a reporter before leaving to see the infamous play at Ford’s Theatre. The show took place in the Iowa State House chambers, and the audience sat at the representatives’ desks. The setting was used as a stand-in for the chambers of the U.S. House of Representatives. Roske wrote the hour-long play during his first few days in Des Moines in 2013.

He’s currently producing shows and

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FEATURE

films for his Flamingo Network on Roku, including the feature film, "Diana In Love," starring Shanti Fiennes as Princess Diana, which was a contender in last year's Golden Globe Awards. Roske wrote and directed the film about the spring of 1997 when Princess Diana found herself in Los Angeles starting a whirlwind romance with an Oscar winning movie producer named Dodi Fayed.

Now, the television and movie producer splits time between Grimes and California, where he still works as needed. His schedule keeps him plenty busy, but he's still interested in the possibility of getting more involved in theatre in his own town.

"I'd like to do more Midwest theatre and hoping to find time, and when I'm not in L.A., I live in Grimes and love it here."

A love of theatre

Michelle House has been a theatre fan since childhood. She participated in theatre as a high school student in Tampa, Florida, and returned to it during her time living in Germany with the military. She played the roles of Madame Thénardier in "Les Miserables" and Mrs. Bellamy in "The Fantasticks."

After moving to Grimes and taking a job as the librarian at South Union Elementary school in the Des Moines Community School District, she decided to start volunteering with the Des Moines Community Playhouse. She quickly decided to start auditioning for more roles as the acting bug bit again.



Brent Roske has been involved with theatre and film since he was a kid. Here he is directing Oscar winner Alison Janney and Melissa Fitzgerald from "The West Wing" in a public service announcement for the group Justice 4 Vets.

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Michelle House's, fifth from left, most recent stage role was in "Beautiful: The Carole King Musical." Photo by Jonathan Garton

"I have been a part of the ensemble in 'Kinky Boots.' And I most recently played Genie, Carole King's mother, in 'Beautiful: The Carole King Musical.' My favorite musical growing up was 'The Sound of Music.' But I have always been drawn to theatre," she says. "Seeing 'Wicked' in London is definitely a

memory I will keep forever."

House has plans to continue acting and looks forward to auditioning for "Beauty and the Beast" and "Jesus Christ Superstar" this year at Des Moines Community Playhouse. Acting is a fantastic way to watch a beloved story come to life and be a part of making it

happen, she says.

"Theatre is a great way to step into another world, meet amazing, talented people, and have a lot of fun. It's like a new family for every show. Being military and away from family, it's a great way to meet new people in a new town," she says. ■

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NEW citizen gives back

Thompson enjoys helping out his new community.

Dale Thompson has only lived in Grimes for a year (he moved to town from northern Wisconsin when his wife, Rhiannon, took a job promotion in the area) but has made a point to get involved in the community however he can.



Part of that involvement includes volunteering with Grimes Volunteer Support Services (GVSS). Thompson helps out with home repairs, snow removal and lawn mowing for those who need it. He also assists with transporting clients to various appointments and activities as time allows. Recently, Thompson became a board member for GVSS as well.

“GVSS is an awesome organization with a wonderful mission,” he says. “I think we all have a responsibility to others,” he says. “If we would all help each other and love our neighbors, the world would be a much better place. I like helping those in need when and where I can.”

One of his favorite memories from his volunteer work so far was clearing snow from steps, decks and driveways after the few snowstorms Grimes experienced last winter.

“I come from an area that has lots of snow, and I was starting to miss it,” Thompson says. “I had the equipment to get it accomplished, and it brought a sense of joy and accomplishment knowing I could help others.”

Volunteering with GVSS has also enabled Thompson to meet new people in Grimes.

“I enjoy hearing their stories of growing up here and how grateful they are that the community they live in has such a wonderful support group and program such as this one,” he shares.

Aside from his work with GVSS, Thompson is involved with the Crossroads Community Church, helping members who need assistance with things like moving and small maintenance repairs and helping set up/take down items in the church.

Thompson encourages others to consider volunteering because he believes everyone has a skillset that can be used as a blessing for those who do not or can no longer perform tasks.

“Volunteering comes in many forms, and your act of kindness is truly appreciated,” he says.

In particular, Thompson notes that GVSS is an all-volunteer





Dale Thompson volunteers in a variety of ways with GVSS, including mowing

organization that is always looking for new volunteers, even if they can only contribute an hour or two a month.

“We all have a skill or talent that we should share with others,” he says. ■

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LEGAL

By Cynthia P. Letsch, J.D.

NEW laws reviewed

We had a busy state house this year. Laws that have passed include the following:

Repeal of gender balance requirement for state boards and commissions. The gender balance requirement that state boards and commissions actively attempt to increase women participation was passed in the 1980s with the goal of helping women get appointed to decision-making bodies and eventually run for office. This requirement has been repealed. The Iowa Legislature is currently 33% women, in case you are wondering. Concern is that many government entities will revert to the previous male-dominated state. However, the opposite may be true. If enough women are willing to jump into the frying pan, they could rule the roost (mixed metaphor intended).



Staff allowed to have guns in schools. School staff may now obtain a professional permit to carry a firearm if their school board allows it, and it gives them civil and criminal liability protections if they use it, as long as they could prove “reasonable force.” It would require them to go through multiple rounds of training that would cover everything from emergency medicine to communication with law enforcement and simulated shooting scenarios.

Religious freedom restoration act. There is significant concern over what this law really means and how it might be used to further divide our communities into “they” and “we.” Some fear that it will allow business owners and landlords to refuse goods or services to single (unwed) mothers, persons who identify as LGBTQ+, and/or persons who are simply of a different religion than the person owning the business or rental property. Some of you in Grimes may remember the prolonged litigation over the Gortz Haus owner’s refusal to allow a same sex couple to be married in the event venue that had previously been (and is once again) a church. The owners claimed religious freedom to deny them the use of the venue that was routinely rented for weddings. The case was eventually settled, but not until legal fees depleted the couple’s financial resources to continue fighting. Presumably, if the same challenge were to rise now, the Gortz Haus may have been successful.

Income tax lowered for single people. The 2025 income tax rate for single people will be a flat 3.8%, down from 4.82%, for all income over \$6,210 per year. Rates for married persons were not affected.

There were several other changes too numerous to mention here but easily found with a quick internet search. ■

Information provided by Cynthia P. Letsch, J.D., Letsch Law Firm, 112 N.E. Ewing St., Suite D, Grimes, 515-986-2810, www.LetschLawFirm.com.

RECIPE

SCRUMPTIOUS ways to simplify springtime meals

(Family Features) From everyday weeknight dinners to picnics in the park, warmer weather and longer days mean families want to spend more time together and less time in the kitchen. This spring, look for kitchen hacks that can make fresh and healthy weeknight seasonal recipes a cinch.

Skipping complicated prep work is the first step toward simplifying springtime meals. Rather than recipes that call for a lot of prep or cooking time, consider easy dishes that require only a handful of steps and use everyday ingredients you may already have in your pantry, fridge or freezer.

For example, these shrimp, broccoli and potato skewers with lemon and thyme can let you put a little spring in your weeknight dinners. Grilled skewers keep the whole family happy and come together in less than 30 minutes, making them perfect for quick and healthy meals without the hassle. The versatility of potatoes means you can grill them, and this version calls for a 5-minute microwave steam first to cut down on grill time.

To find more ways to savor springtime meals outdoors with your family, visit littlepotatoes.com. ■

Shrimp, broccoli and potato skewers

Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 20 minutes
Servings: 4

- 1 pound bagged Little Potatoes
- 1 bunch broccoli
- 12 large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 1/2 lemons, juice only
- 3 tablespoons fresh thyme, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

- In large, microwave-safe bowl, microwave potatoes on high 5 minutes.
- Chop broccoli into large pieces.
- Add broccoli and shrimp to bowl once potatoes are steamed.
- Add lemon juice, thyme and olive oil; evenly coat potatoes, shrimp and broccoli. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.
- Build skewers and grill 10-15 minutes on medium-high heat, until shrimp is cooked through.



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1. To enjoy a more active retirement

We call the first phase of retirement the “go-go” years. This is when you have the most energy and ambition. Retiring early will allow you to seize the energy and ambition you will likely have during this retirement phase. You can still be around with grandkids, travel, or take up a sport like pickleball, a popular one among retirees.

2. To stay healthier

The working years can be physically and mentally draining. Retiring early can relieve stress and improve quality of life. You can use the extra time to prepare healthy meals, get more exercise, and get more sleep.

3. You have a plan for health care

Here are some health care options if you retire before Medicare eligibility. Some companies offer extended health care as part of retirement packages. If your spouse is still working, consider getting on their plan. There's also COBRA, a continuation (generally up to 18 months) of health care after leaving employment. You will be responsible for the full cost of the insurance premium, including the part your employer was previously paying. There's also the open market or income-based Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare.

4. You understand penalties

The U.S. government generally charges a 10%

penalty on the taxable portion of IRA or 401(k) distributions before age 59 ½, with a few exceptions. If you separate from your employer in or after the year you turn 55, the 10% tax on early 401(k) distributions does not apply.

5. You have a plan

Some of my favorite moments over the last 25 years as a Retirement Planner are when our planning process gives the families we serve “permission” to retire early. Together, we build a RetireSecure Roadmap that outlines their plan for income, taxes, investments, health care and what happens to their money when they are gone. They are thrilled because the RetireSecure Roadmap helps them confidently retire and focus on taking advantage of those extra years of retirement fun. ■

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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First Monday of the month, 5:30 p.m.
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Rhythms of Grace offers a one-hour orientation monthly for those who would like to learn more about Rhythms of Grace before committing to a volunteer application, background check and training.



Ice Cream Social

Sunday, July 14, 4-6:30 p.m.
Grimes First Presbyterian Church, 410 S.E. Third St.

A freewill offering will be taken. Beef burgers, hot dogs, chips, baked beans, homemade ice cream and cookies/bars will be served.



Highway 141

Garage Sale

Friday and Saturday,
Aug. 2-3

Grimes First Presbyterian Church,
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This 50-plus family garage sale will be held in the air-conditioned fellowship hall. A bake sale and \$5 meals will also be held.

Lunch & Learn

Wednesday, July 10,
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
TBA

Grimes Chamber & Economic Development gives its members the opportunity to meet for networking bi-monthly at its Lunch & Learns and hear speakers regarding Grimes and the metro area. The public is invited. Cost is \$25 for members and \$30 for nonmembers and walk-ins. Cost is \$15 without lunch. July's Lunch & Learn is sponsored by MetroNet. To register, visit business.grimesiowa.com.

REO Speedwagon with Night Ranger

June 21, 6:30 p.m.
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dsmwaterworkspark.com

Polk County Conservation events

Visit www.polkcountyiowa.gov/conservation/events/ for information about upcoming programs offered by Polk County Conservation and for registration links.

• **Pond Study at Yellow Banks: June 22, 10 a.m.** Meet at the pond parking lot and come discover what creatures live in and around a pond. All sampling equipment will be provided. The event is free, for ages 3 and older, and does not require registration.

• **Epic Adventures of Recycle Rabbit Puppet Show: Sunday, June 23, 1 p.m.**, at Jester Park Nature Center. Join Recycle Rabbit as he goes on an adventure where he will help you understand how to face challenges, make the world a better place and become Champions of Conservation. This free event is for all ages and does not require registration.

• **Sunset Yoga, Monday, June 24, 8 p.m.**, Jester Park Nature Center. Take time to unwind as the sun sets on the outdoor plaza or the Great Hall of the Jester Park Nature Center. The class will begin with a short nature hike to give participants a chance de-stress and enjoy the beauty of nature. The yoga class is perfect for beginners. The focus is on creating a mind and body nature connection as the sun sets. This Rooted in Nature program is offered in sponsorship with UnityPoint. Items to bring:

yoga mat and blocks, hiking shoes, comfortable clothing, water bottle. Cost is \$15 for this event for ages 12 and older. Registration is required two days in advance.

• **Story Tellebration, Wednesday, June 26, 10 a.m., Down at the Pond; Wednesday, July 24, 10 a.m., Color, Color Everywhere; Wednesday, Aug. 28, 10 a.m. I Love Bugs.**

Join volunteer storyteller Carmen Epstein for a fun, interactive tale tailored toward children ages 2 to 6 that explores the wonders of the outdoors. During each program, participants enjoy interactive stories and an activity. No registration required for this free event.

• **Horse Whispers in the Woods. Thursdays, June 27, Aug. 8 and Sept. 12 at 6 p.m.** at the Jester Park Equestrian Center. A women's circle of self-discovery through the intuitive and healing power of horses. This on-the-ground workshop provides a real-time experience in relationship skills and increased emotional intelligence through a partnership with the horse. Registration is required 24 hours prior to the event, which is for ages 21 and older. Cost is \$40.

• **Animal Guided Meditation. Friday, June 28, 6:30 p.m.**, Jester Park Nature Center. Registration is required by June 26 for this program for ages 12 and older. Cost

is \$15 per person. Each animal in our world offers powerful messages, healing and wisdom simply by being itself. Join Kara Simons for a guided meditation and discussion honoring our energetic and physical connections with animals as teachers and guides. Reframe your perception and explore the rich symbolism of animal characteristics and attributes, from birds to mammals to reptiles, amphibians and insects.

• **Older, Wiser, Livelier, Seniors - National Parks Bucket List. Tuesday, July 2, 11 a.m.**, Jester Park Nature Center. Join Naturalist Lindsey Page on an enriching educational journey as she highlights her adventures so far in our nation's National Parks. Participants will explore iconic National Parks such as Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons, venture into the lush forests of Olympic National Park, witness the towering Redwoods in California, and marvel at the vast biodiversity of National Parks in the beautiful state of Colorado. This program will foster a deep appreciation for nature's wonders but will also educate participants on conservation efforts and the rich cultural history embedded in these remarkable landscapes. This program is for ages 12 and older, free, and does not require registration.

EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancellations.



Blessing of the Animals

Sept. 15, 2 p.m.

Grimes First Presbyterian Church,
410 S.E. Third St.

Join in to celebrate and bless our furry family members. There will be treats, certificates and lots of fun. All creatures great and small are welcome.

Cajun Fest

June 22

Cowles Commons, 221 Walnut St.,
Des Moines

www.cajunfestiowa.com.

The self-proclaimed Mardi Gras of the Midwest is an all-day celebration of Cajun culture, from food to music and back to food again.

Harvest Home Fundraiser Dinner

Oct. 13, 4:30-7 p.m.

Grimes First Presbyterian Church,
410 S.E. Third St.

Turkey and dressing, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, cranberry sauce, rolls and pumpkin pie for a freewill offering. This is a drive-thru event only.



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.



CITYVIEW's Summer Stir - Downtown

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Photo provided by: Julie Glasgow

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FIRST-TIME CHAMPIONS!

The Dallas Center-Grimes Mustangs stamped their place in school history, upsetting the Des Moines Hoover Huskies 3-2 in overtime on June 1, 2024 to claim their first state championship. The Mustangs concluded their season 17-4.

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BENEFITS of a senior living community

Living in a senior living community offers a range of benefits that significantly enhance the quality of life for older adults. Communities are designed to cater to the specific needs of seniors, providing not just a place to live, but a supportive environment that promotes health, wellbeing and social engagement.



One of the primary advantages is the sense of community and social interaction. Senior living communities offer numerous social activities and events, fostering a sense of belonging and reducing the risk of isolation and loneliness, which are common concerns among older adults. Regularly scheduled activities and group outings provide residents with opportunities to form meaningful relationships and stay engaged in their interests.

Safety and security are other significant benefits. Senior living communities are typically equipped with secured entrances and emergency response systems, ensuring that residents feel safe and always protected. This peace of mind

is particularly important for seniors and their families, knowing that help is readily available if needed.

Healthcare access is another critical advantage. Many senior living communities offer on-site healthcare services, including routine medical care, physical therapy and assistance with medication management. These services are provided by trained healthcare professionals who are experienced in geriatric care. Having immediate access to healthcare ensures that residents receive timely medical attention, which can improve their overall health outcomes and prevent hospitalizations.

Maintenance-free living is a practical benefit that enhances the quality of life for seniors. Residents do not have to worry about home maintenance, repairs or landscaping. This convenience allows them to focus on enjoying their retirement years without the burdens of homeownership. Additionally, many communities offer amenities such as housekeeping, dining services and transportation, further easing the daily living responsibilities of residents.

Moreover, senior living communities provide tailored living arrangements that accommodate

various levels of care, from independent living to assisted living and memory care. This flexibility means that, as residents' needs change over time, they can receive the appropriate level of support without having to move to a new location. This continuity of care is beneficial for maintaining stability and comfort in their lives.

Here in Iowa, the scenic beauty and peaceful environment adds to the appeal of senior living communities. The natural landscapes, rolling hills and picturesque farmlands offer a serene and tranquil setting for retirement. Many communities are in areas that provide easy access to parks and walking trails, encouraging an active and healthy lifestyle.

In summary, senior living communities offer a comprehensive array of benefits that cater to the physical, emotional and social needs of older adults. From social interaction and healthcare access to safety and maintenance-free living, communities provide a supportive and enriching environment that enhances the quality of life for seniors. ■

This article was written by Cassia for use by Chris Ruzicka, local Director of Sales for Meadowview of Clive, Chris.Ruzicka@CassiaLife.org, 515-644-8740.



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MEET Jenny Rants

Finding the rewards in the challenges of special education

Jenny Rants graduated from Morningside College in Sioux City with a double major in elementary education and special education then went on to earn her master's degree in special education from Drake University. She taught for four years at Perry Elementary before coming to Dallas Center Grimes, and she has been at South Prairie Elementary School ever since, for the last 26 years.

"As an elementary special education teacher, I work with many students, all with a wide variety of needs. I enjoy the challenge of making school successful for all students."

For Rants, it does not get any better than DCG. The staff throughout the district works hard to make sure students have what they need to make progress and be the best they can be every day, she says.

Working in special education, every day is a challenge, Rants says. Students often have disabilities or disorders that can make accessing education harder for them, but the special education team works every day to design supports to allow those children to grow and thrive alongside their peers.

"Every day is a challenge, but in this you find the rewards. We strive for the days when the connection is made and great things happen for our kids. It's absolutely the best experience."

Every day, there are laughs in Rants' classroom, and most days have something memorable about them, too. It's always an adventure in a special education classroom and that is what makes it so enjoyable, she says.

Jen Ohannessian works as a paraprofessional at South Prairie, and she spent time in Rants' classroom last year.

"Jenny is the calmest, most patient teacher I've ever met. I've shared a student with her for the last two years," says Ohannessian. "She's a professional problem solver with high expectations for her students. I'm convinced that there is no behavior that Mrs. Rants can't change for the better."

When Rants isn't in the classroom, she is often spending time with her husband and two daughters, both of whom graduated from DCG. They enjoy travelling, being outside and cooking together. ■



Jenny Rants has been teaching special education at South Prairie Elementary School for the last 26 years.

EXPECTING an inheritance?

Here is what you should consider.

Inheriting assets can be a blessing at an emotionally challenging point in your life. Here are key considerations to navigate this process:



1. Understanding the assets: First, identify and understand the nature of the inherited assets. They might include cash, real estate, stocks, bonds, retirement accounts and personal property. Each asset type has different implications for management and taxes.

2. Tax implications: Inherited assets often come with tax considerations. For example, in the U.S., inherited property generally receives a "step-up" in basis, meaning the property's value is adjusted to its market value at the decedent's date of death, potentially reducing capital gains tax if sold. However, some retirement accounts like IRAs or 401(k)s are subject to income tax upon distribution. It is important to consult your financial or tax advisor to understand these implications and optimize tax strategies.

3. Probate process: Assets not held in a trust may need to go through probate, a legal process for settling an estate. Probate can be time-consuming and expensive, so understanding whether the assets are subject to this process is important. Trusts are often used as an estate planning tool. Trusts are used to bypass probate, providing quicker access to assets.

4. Debt and liabilities: Inheriting debt is less common, but it's important to determine if the estate has outstanding debts. Creditors are typically paid from the estate's assets before distribution to heirs, potentially reducing the inheritance.

5. Investment decisions: Inherited investments require careful consideration. Your advisor can help evaluate whether to keep, sell, or reinvest based on your financial goals and market conditions. Your inherited assets can work in tandem with your overall investment strategy to help meet your goals.

6. Emotional considerations: Inheriting personal property or real estate with sentimental value can be emotionally challenging. Balancing the emotional attachment with practical decisions is key. Sometimes, holding on to an asset may not be financially feasible or practical.

7. Legal and financial advice: A team of estate attorneys and financial planners can provide guidance tailored to your situation and assist you in navigating the legal complexities, tax planning, and financial management to make the most of the inheritance.

Inheriting assets involves a multifaceted approach, combining emotional and practical considerations. Properly managing inherited assets can secure your financial future and honor the legacy of the benefactor. ■

For more information please contact Wade Lawrence or Bryce Block with City State Bank Trust and Investments at 515-986-2265. Not FDIC insured. Not deposits or other obligations of the bank and are not guaranteed by the bank. Are subject to investment risk, including possible loss of principal. City State Bank does not provide tax or legal advice. Each taxpayer should seek independent advice from a tax professional. These materials are based upon publicly available information that may change at any time without notice.

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HOW CAN I boost my mood this summer?

If you've been feeling a little down, it might be time for a dose of vitamin D. This vitamin can be a natural mood enhancer.

One of the easiest ways to get a vitamin D boost is to spend time in the sun. Just 5-30 minutes a day of midday sunlight can do wonders for your mood. When your skin is exposed to sunlight, it triggers a chemical reaction that makes vitamin D3. This vitamin is then processed by your liver and kidneys to become an active mood-booster.

If you don't have enough time to get outside during the day, consider getting your vitamin D boost from your food. Good sources of vitamin D include salmon, eggs and fortified milk. But, if you're still not getting enough in your daily diet, supplements taken in a recommended dose are also an option.

Another way to improve your mood this summer is to participate in dopamine-boosting activities. Dopamine is known as the "feel-good" hormone and is commonly associated with exercise. So, pick up a paddle and play a game of pickleball or take a leisurely bike ride outside. Both activities will have you smiling in no time.

Other easy ways to get a dose of dopamine include dancing, listening to music, or spending time with a friend or partner. When you're feeling down this summer, remember the delightful Ds that can naturally boost your mood. ■

Information provided by Vanessa Andersen, LISW, Licensed Mental Health Therapist, Pink Couch Wellness, 1220 N.E. Station Crossing, Suite 204, Grimes, www.pinkcouchwellness.com.



AMPHITHEATER to add to community amenities

Will be located near library



An outdoor amphitheater will be constructed on the east side of the Grimes Public Library to be used for library programs and Grimes Parks and Recreation programs, among other events.

The new Grimes Public Library at 200 N.E. Beaverbrooke Boulevard has already brought many enhanced amenities to the community, but the work isn't done yet.

Now, an outdoor amphitheater promises to elevate what Grimes can offer to residents and visitors.

The amphitheater will be located on the east side of the Grimes Public Library, overlooking the existing detention basin, and will be able to seat up to 100 people. Plans are in place to construct a boardwalk over the detention basin and to be wheelchair accessible.

Along with the library, the City of Grimes' Parks and Recreation Department will utilize the amphitheater.

Combined, the two entities will use the space for their respective programming, including youth science and STEM education, storytime, small live music events and fishing.

Construction is expected to begin yet this summer.

"It's really exciting to think about all the different programming we can offer in this new space," Library Director Cheryl Heid said in a press release. "Our new building has enabled us to serve our community in so many new ways. This amphitheater will be the perfect piece to complete the puzzle."

Brian Becker, director of the parks and recreation department, says his team is excited to use the amphitheater as well.

"This will be a beautiful place for our community to enjoy," he says. "Everyone will be welcome to stroll across the boardwalk, attend a concert or program, or just enjoy the outdoor space at their leisure."

Becker adds that the city of Grimes is making it a priority to offer exciting new amenities to the community.

"Recently, we've added the Waterworks Park Splash Pad, Glenstone MultiGolf Park, GrimesPlex and the new library building," he says. "The new amphitheater will offer another beautiful outdoor space for our community to enjoy." ■

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SKATE SHACK brings the fun

And it's free!



Manning the Skate Shack are Bethann Templeman and skate shack managers Nicole Waller and Darla MacConnell. Not pictured is Cora Templeman, another helper.

Looking for some family-friendly fun this summer — and perhaps a bit of nostalgia, too?

The Skate Shack, located at Mound Park, is a Dallas Center city-run event held throughout the summer on Tuesday and Friday evenings from 7-9 p.m.

The shack offers skateboards, scooters, inline and quad skates, all free to rent and for all ages. They also have pads, helmets and skate helpers for those learning to skate.

A small fee applies to concessions such as popsicles, a variety of candy, brownies, cotton candy, weekly theme treats and more. There are even free skating games, some of which include water, and fun music from various decades.

Each Friday evening at the Skate Shack centers on a different theme. For example, June 21 is Country Western Night, while July 26 is Disney Night.

Nicole Waller, who manages the Skate Shack along with Darla MacConnell, shares that the shack benefits the community.

“The community comes together as a big family, where the adults mingle, and the kids skate with their friends,” Waller says. “Everybody knows everybody, and it is also open to new members outside our community. We are a growing, friendly city, and the Skate Shack has created childhood memories for generations.”

The Skate Shack has been around for decades, but last year was its biggest year yet, in part because Dallas Center is growing and the shack is gaining interest from people of other communities.

“We love it when our seniors visit and rekindle their childhood memories of it,” Waller says. “They have amazing stories to share,



A long-time tradition, Dallas Center's Skate Shack is growing in popularity. The shack offers skateboards, scooters, inline and quad skates, all free to rent and for all ages. They also have pads, helmets and skate helpers for those learning to skate.



Liam Fredericks and Calloway Waller are Skate Shack helpers.

and seeing their eyes light up and see that this is around for the next generations is priceless. We continue striving to keep the Skate Shack operational for many years for anyone's enjoyment.”

She adds that they're expecting an even larger crowd throughout this season.

“Many kids and adults tell us regularly how much they love the Skate Shack each summer and how it has become a staple in their summer activities,” Waller says. ■



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Polk County North/West Highlights

The Polk County Board of Supervisors are responsible for approving funding for numerous projects throughout the county. Funding of projects comes from gaming revenues generated by our partnership with Prairie Meadows Racetrack and Casino. The funds support Polk County Community Betterment Grants and Community Development Grants to enhance the quality of life throughout Polk County



Polk County Assists with Funding for GrimesPlex

Polk County provided a community development grant for the construction of GrimesPlex. The new 50-acre synthetic turf complex will be one of the largest facilities of this kind in the Midwest. This multi-sports facility will include baseball, softball, soccer and football fields located within the 200-acre Hope District. The one million square feet of field area is flexible to hold numerous sporting events and recreational activities. The new facility is projected to have an economic impact of \$16 million per year for the Greater Des Moines Area.



Cultivation Complex at Living History Farms Brought to you, in part, by Polk County

As Living History Farms in Clive transforms from a seasonal cultural attraction to a year-round destination, Polk County stepped in to help fund the new Cultivation Complex. The Cultivation Complex will provide year-round programming and address much needed space demands to meet Living History Farms programming needs. With a year-round facility, Living History Farms will bring enhanced value to the tri-membership program offered in conjunction with the Science Center of Iowa and Blank Park Zoo.



Youth Justice Initiative of West Des Moines Receives Upgrades from Polk County

The Youth Justice Initiative (YJI) is an organization dedicated to provide a restorative process for youth in the community to promote healing, increase accountability and support for repeat juvenile offenders. Polk County is providing a community betterment grant to help offset the costs for food, technology, and supplies for YJI's bi-weekly study table. The funds will also help expand fitness activities so youth can socialize, exercise, and be more focused to learn.



Polk County Central Iowa Source Water Research Study Underway

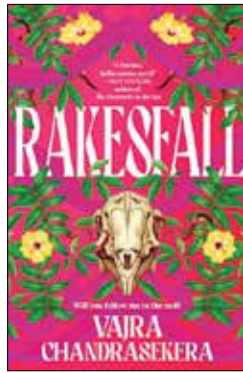
Our two rivers, the Raccoon and Des Moines, are one of our communities greatest assets with more than 240 miles of shoreline. These rivers play a significant role in central Iowa's local economy, culture, recreation community and overall identity. The rivers are the primary source of drinking water for over one-half million people. Right now, a two year study called the Central Iowa Source Water Research Assessment (C.I.S.W.R.A.) is underway to give us a better picture of what is in our water. A team of nationally renowned scientists are working to give us a comprehensive look at the cleanliness of our rivers and streams. Once complete in 2025, CISWRA will provide a road map for community leaders to create policies and best practices to cleaning our waterways and protecting this vital resource for future generations.

'Rakesfall'

There's a school of thought that there are only a handful of stories in the world, and everything else is just a retelling or mishmash of those few tales. I'm not philosophical enough to argue the concept, but something about this dark and glorious novel makes me think this couldn't possibly be true. Something this unique must be brand new.

This is the fragmented tale of two friends, Annelid and Leveret, who become soul-bound in the midst of war. Together, they live through endless lifetimes — growing, changing, learning- and holding on to each other. This is a grand celebration of fantasy, science fiction and the strange. The story is nonlinear and doesn't always follow a clear path, but it is worth the effort. The lyrical, astounding prose and glorious imagery give way to a stunning piece of literature that changed me for the better.

I like finding beauty in the shadows. There's something grand and universally human in the urge to find a light in the darkest of times. For me, that light often comes in the form of stories — and this book blazes. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



By Vajra Chandrasekera
6/18/24
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'The Tainted Cup'

If you've read my reviews before, you know I have a penchant for the weird. So, I was both thrilled and cautious to receive a book declaring itself a mix of Sherlock Holmes and Godzilla. When I finished it the next day after a marathon of compulsive reading, I was a thoroughly delighted, sleepless zombie.

The gruesome body of a high-ranking military official with a tree growing out of it is a problem for the Empire. So, reluctantly, they assign their greatest, and most irritating, detective, Ana Dolabra, and her brand new (terrified) assistant, Din, to the case.

As the pair search for a murder in a city under siege from otherworldly beasts intent on destruction, it soon becomes clear there is a conspiracy set to undermine everything they believe in and put thousands of lives at risk.

Full of wild twists, brilliant world-building and moments of suspense so taut I actually held my breath, this book absolutely enthralled me. I love the characters, the ominous setting and the complicated but familiar politics. Try this one if you've been bored with other books lately. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



By Robert Jackson Bennett
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BUSY times in the neighborhood

Johansens enjoy having a lot of kids and activity where they live.



Eric and Tara Johansen moved to their current home when they needed more room for their growing family. They sought out a neighborhood with a lot of kids.

Eric Johansen and his wife, Tara, chose to make Grimes their home 16 years ago after coming to know its close-knit community feel.

The couple's first home was on N.W. Eighth Street. They lived there for a little more than a decade and loved every minute of it.

"We had great neighbors, and our home backed to the trail and creek, which we really enjoyed," Johansen says. "As our family grew from two to five, we started looking for neighborhoods with more kids and a home with a little more space."

In the family's current home, Johansen appreciates the open kitchen and living room, which is great for when family and friends come over.

"Our patio is also a favorite spot to catch up with friends, watch football or just enjoy the outdoors," he says.

Johansen also likes the neighborhood they're in and how the kids can run between

yards. It's the epitome of an ideal childhood, he says.

"There is rarely a time when there isn't someone for our kids to play with, and, during summers, there are spontaneous wiffle ball games, backyard football and basketball games almost daily," he says. "Backyard patios are always open to join neighbors in watching a game or just catching up on life."

While the Grimes community has grown rapidly since the Johansens came to town, it hasn't lost its tight-knit feel.

"I love that every time we go to the grocery store, it always takes a little longer because, inevitably, we run into someone we know and stop to talk for a bit," Johansen says. "From Grimes Lions Club breakfasts to the DCG Education Foundation and Grimes Community Foundation fundraisers, and in a multitude of other ways, our community shows up."

He feels the faith community in Grimes is

strong and foundational to what makes Grimes special as well.

Being involved in the community is important to the Johansen family. Johansen himself joined the Grimes Lions Club soon after moving to town and serves as a Grimes City Council member, Grimes Community Foundation board member, Grimes Chamber & Economic Development board member and has coached many of his kids' sports teams. Tara has served on the DCG PTO and helps lead the Grimes Hunger Fight in partnership with Meals from the Heartland.

"If I had to sum it all up, while we love Grimes because of our great businesses, parks and amenities, most of all, the people of our community are really what sets Grimes apart," Johansen says. "We are an active community of friendly, caring people always willing to give a wave, stop to say hello and step up to whatever challenges come our way." ■



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GETTING organized

I've always been pretty good at accumulating things, and I'm confident that I'm not alone in this regard. Last month, the citywide garage sales took place, followed by the annual Grimes Cleanup Day — a day that allows some people to depart with things they've come to realize they don't need and others to gather things that they, too, will eventually realize they don't need either.



Whether it is garage sales or cleanup days, there are many observations that can be made about our community and lessons that can be learned. For example, when Grimes has garage sales, people from all over the region come to scout for treasures and bargains. On average, Grimes is an affluent community, so it is more likely that people with more wealth are going to have nicer things and may also be parting with nicer things. This makes for a good hunting ground when it comes to garage sales.

These events can also teach us that sometimes it is good to eliminate excess, the unused, or extra stuff that we don't need or don't want any longer. If you have too many clothes in your closet, getting rid of some of the stuff that is out of style, doesn't fit any longer, etc. can make it easier to find the outfits you do like wearing, makes wrinkles a little less prominent, and, for the shoppers, clears up some space to fill with new items.

We are fortunate to live in a community, in a region, where there is a lot of opportunity to find a job, to build wealth, and to work toward acquiring things we need and/or want. But we should also be wise with these opportunities. Getting organized is much more than decluttering. It often requires setting goals, creating a plan, and doing our best to stick to our plans, knowing that sometimes course corrections are to be expected.

As we work to organize our personal lives, we, too, can strive as businesses, neighborhoods and as a community to have goals, have plans to achieve those goals, and be ready to pivot when unforeseen opportunities or challenges arise. Like so many of the people in our community, Grimes seems to be positioning itself for a very bright future. We continue to attract new services, new employers, and new investment to the community. We continue to see improvements in our local infrastructure, which will help to sustain the current rate of growth. Furthermore, we continue to see neighborhoods evolve and new relationships being created continuously.

Grimes should confidently march forward, setting our priorities, addressing those things we need to “declutter” and keeping things that we value or that serve an important purpose. As a Chamber of Commerce, we encourage the good people of Grimes to engage in the community... patronize local business, participate in community events, and be a good neighbor to those around you. And if you have too much stuff, remember that the Highway 141 Garage Sale is right around the corner (www.141sale.com). #lovegrimes ■

Information provided by Brian Buethe, President | CEO, www.GrimesIowa.com

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RIBBON Cutting

A ribbon cutting was held for Inspiring Dance, 2340 S.E. Third St., Grimes, on May 3.



Mark Judge and Mike Bleskacek



Nick Reggio and Chris Watkins



Emily Mullen and Brittany Stadler



Raymond and Jonie Karns



Jacob Whitman and Jen Grandia



Ben and Jacque Butzke are presented with a plaque from Julie Quandt on behalf of Grimes Chamber and Economic Development.



Andrea Sabus and Ryleah Cross



Holly Patterson and Garrett Neel



Sarah Jeffries, Haley Lauterbach, Jacque Butzke, Alex Cordes, Rachel Kelly and Corbyn Paup

RIBBON Cutting

A ribbon cutting was held for Pink Couch Wellness, 1220 N.E. Station Crossing Drive, Suite 204, Grimes, on May 31.



Kala Frederikson and Kennedy Dalby



Adrian and Celeste Richardson



Greg Means, Grimes Chamber ambassador, presents a plaque to Vanessa Anderson



John Palmer and Mayor Scott Mikkelsen



Gloria Perry and Mike Bleskacek



Sarah and Dave Eickelberg



Todd Carlson and Julie Rose



Maegan Dillenburg and Lily Campbell



Chris and Vanessa Anderson

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