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For 20 years, we've been honored to assist so many lowans in the comfort and familiarity of the homes they love. Our team members are grateful for the opportunity to have woven quality clinical services and care, human kindness, and trusted presence into a tapestry of loving support to enhance dignity and independence in the lives of those we've served.

Making life better for thousands of lowans and their families has been our privilege ... and our story is just beginning.

To learn more about WesleyLife at Home, visit wesleylife.org/at-home-services or call (515) 978–2777.



In-Home Medical Services Non-Medical Home Services Hospice Meals on Wheels Charitable Public Health Services

WELCOME

DIRT under the fingernails

My dad worked in the "dirt business" much of his life. He and my uncle owned a gravel and excavation company in a small town in northern Iowa. They dug basements, built pads, cleared out groves, hauled gravel and did most anything else that involved heavy equipment and moving dirt. Dad's hands were stained from years of exposure to dirt and oil and grease, a symbol of his many years of manual work and service to his customers.



My hands may be stained with ink from time to time, but I don't work in the dirt like Dad did. The exceptions are when I am motivated to tackle a landscaping project or two, and those seem to be annual events. Tearing shrubbery out. Putting new bushes in. Wheelbarrowing dirt. Setting stones. Planting flowers. And watering, watering, watering. It's all part of the landscaping process. I am certainly not an expert, and I need to call in the pros from time to time, but I don't hesitate to dig in the dirt when I get a chance to do so.

Landscaping is something my wife and I can do together and not disagree much about. She has a good eye for landscaping design, and I still have a reasonably strong back — at least I think so until the day after proves otherwise.

We have done our share of landscaping in each home we have lived in, and we would like to think that each place looked better when we were done. Of course, the new owners likely tore out what we did and replaced it with something more their style, but that's OK. Landscaping is art, and beauty is in the eye of the beholder in lawns, too.

This month, we share examples of landscaping projects local residents have embarked on. We hope these stories inspire you to break out the shovels and get some dirt under your fingernails, too.

Thanks for reading.

SHANE GOODMAN

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Every house deserves Neu Blinds.





FEATURE

Grander plans

When Michael and Tracey Lebeck moved from their home in California to West Des Moines, their backyard was a typical suburban lawn, with a large lot to mow, a fenced-in yard, a small rectangle bed for flowers or a garden, few trees and little shade.

Yet, they had grander plans for their backyard than just grass. Since their arrival in 2012, they have transformed their backyard, which is now complete with fruit trees, rock paths, raised garden beds, a patio and more.

Their transformation began when their young daughter grew out of her large wood play structure. Since she didn't play on swings and slides anymore, they removed the structure to make room for fruit trees, garden beds and casual seating arrangements.

In 2021, they overhauled the yard, hiring a landscaper to assist with the design. They rebuilt their deck and created different levels of gardens. On their lower patio, they added a hot tub. The couple wanted space for their two dogs to roam, and the fenced-in area was also designed to keep out the rabbits.

"I worked with the landscaper to come up with some different designs. I thought one retaining wall would be good for multi levels," he recalls. "The designer thought two retaining walls might work better."

They installed a waterway so rain and runoff would drain better from their house. At the end, where the water accumulates, they planted water-loving plants including Iris and swamp milkweed. As a unique and lower cost way to separate garden beds, they used bricks.

One of the major landscape features is a gravel pathway lined with large stones.

"We used six tons of rocks. We kept adding more because of the slopes. One day, when the landscapers were here, they'd drop a bucket of rock — and did it 17 times in one day. It was painstaking to watch him dump all the rock," Michael says.

After the path was done, the pair planted their orchard alongside the one apple tree already present. They have pears, peaches, blackberries and blueberries. The apple tree was growing erratically so Michael pruned it, and, last year, it produced 200 pounds of apples.

"We made so much applesauce," Tracey says. "I have a newfound respect for people who lived in the 1800s — folks back then didn't have the tools we did to make it."

Other garden beds include tomatoes, strawberries, grapevines, lettuce and more.



Tracev and Michael Lebeck's backvard was barren before their landscaping renovations.

Among the rock are dwarf trees, perennial shrubs, flowers and ground cover.

In the back corner, where a shed used to be, they put comfortable chairs in a shady spot.

"We call it the chill spot. We drink coffee here and watch the birds," Tracey says. "We've got cardinals and robins nesting. We've noticed a greater diversity of birds since we built this. We saw a goldfinch for the first time."

They took advantage of purchasing lowcost trees each year from the city of West Des Moines during its shade crusade promotion. The pair scour the internet and watch numerous landscape and garden shows for inspiration. Trial and error is part of the process to learn where plants flourish — or die off. They keep things as natural and chemical-free as possible.

When they go out of town, it's a challenge to find folks to water and take care of plants.

"It's a lot to ask. Nobody has killed anything yet," Michael says.

The two work numerous hours a week in their garden — a labor of love they cherish.

"It's stress relief for me to pull weeds, listen to the birds and harvest food," Tracey says.

And, it's good exercise.

"It's very therapeutic — almost meditative. I love being able to feed ourselves. I enjoy the peaceful space where you just relax," Michael says.

The neighbors like the view as well.

"Our neighbors said it looks like a natural park, and they like to sit outside and view it," Michael says. "We have a garden party each year, where folks are complimentary."

Even though Michael no longer mows his back yard, the front yard still requires it.

"We want to work and redo the front. We want to try more gardens," he says. "It's our goal to continue growing our own food and supporting local wildlife."

Japanese garden

A unique home in West Des Moines offered an Asian flair with gold, red and black decor, both inside and out. The distinct home was intriguing, with loads of potential. However, when Elizabeth and John Pickerill moved into the home last year, it was totally "beat up."

The home had been used as an Airbnb, and the previous owners had kept the Asian décor. However, things were in disarray, and the Pickerills were ready to renovate it.

"We wanted to repair it back to its glory and



Elizabeth Pickerill and her son, Joe, stand in front of the family's newly landscaped water features at their home in West Des Moines. Photo by Jackie Wilson

include original touches," Elizabeth says.

They started with the front of the home. A lanai was closed off, and an old water feature was broken. However, they liked the water feature idea and called on Just Add Water, a company that specializes in landscape, pond and water features.

They told the company of their vision.

"When we'd sit outside in the front of the home, we loved the idea of a water feature. We wanted to open up the patio. I asked if they could help with the vision," Elizabeth recalls.

Just Add Water assured her they could. They brought in large lava rocks, yet also used some of the original rocks to build around it. A flat stone bridge was installed over the waterway. They incorporated some of the silvery black stones that were in the original water feature and along the side of their home.

The patio provides shade and protection from wind. A new skylight was installed, bringing in rays of light.

"It used to be screened in, yet we removed the screens to open it up. We put celling fans up," Elizabeth says.

Off the patio was a front door with an original Asian dragon motif, which they framed and sealed.

In the garage, they found a half a dozen pagodas in varying sizes. They repaired lights and repainted the outside of the pagodas red, then scattered them among nooks and shrubs, lending to the décor style.

In the front, a newly constructed stone path leads to the front of the patio, and the lanai was reconstructed. The back of the home includes shade plants and trees. Elizabeth was excited to discover new plants that would grow in Iowa.

"Living in Minneapolis, we have a better growing zone here. I've always wanted a Japanese maple tree, but we couldn't grow it in Minnesota," she recalls. "However, in this zone, the weeds grow faster, too."



They dug up and brought their hostas and other plants from their home in Minneapolis and replanted them along the side of their home. One final feature, still in the early stages, is putting in a koi pond along with a bridge and another water feature created by Just Add Water.

Folks who visit the home are usually in awe.

"They say they've never seen a house like this — especially in West Des Moines. You wouldn't expect it," Elizabeth says. "People either love it, or it's not their taste. It's very unique."

Elizabeth and John, along with their son, Joe, want to continue both inside and out with the Asian style.

"We like the original touches," Elizabeth says. "We're having a lot of fun with it." ■

'The Daughters' War'

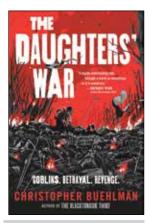
To be perfectly clear before we start, this is a book about grief. It is a story of loss and war and lives cut short in the pursuit of survival. Sure, this is a military fantasy at its most basic level, but, in truth, it is an ode to the beauty of grief, growing up and becoming something extraordinary.

Galva is the youngest daughter of prominent family, and instead of staying cloistered safety, she chooses to train with an experimental army unit that will likely mean her death. Humans are edging toward extinction, and the goblins just keep coming. Brutal, cunning and overwhelming, these goblins want one thing only: to tear down humanity and make them into livestock. Paired with a

diverse and fascinating array of comrades, Galva will fight for her people's right to live and lose almost everything along the way.

This is not an easy book to read, but the starkness and gritty horror make the moments of humor and hope that much more powerful. The prose is hypnotic and stunning, like an epic poem, and will linger long after the cover is closed. It is absolutely worth the tears.

— Review by Julie Goodrich

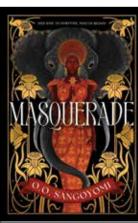


By Christopher Buehlman 6/25/24 **Tor Books** 416 pages \$28.99

'Masquerade'

There have been a handful of times in my life when I felt so wildly out of place that I couldn't tell up from down. That kind of upheaval is a powerful motivator for digging deep and finding out what you're made of. Transformation, power and self-discovery weave through this gripping, gorgeous story I fell in love with from the first page.

Òdòdó is a blacksmith in Timbuktu, a city being ground down under the heel of warrior king. Òdòdó's struggle suddenly changes, however, when she's kidnapped to be the bride of a warrior king who refuses to take no for an answer. Left with little recourse, the story follows Òdòdó as she learns to reclaim her power, navigate the politics of her new city, and embrace the power she finds unexpectedly at her fingertips.



By O.O. Sangoyomi 7/2/24 Forge Books 352 pages \$27.99

This is a deep, tense and deeply satisfying story that weaves together West African myth with the classic story of Hades and Persephone in a unique and utterly enthralling tale. I love the blending of the familiar and the new. This feels like a classic in the making.

— Review by Julie Goodrich



STAYING in control of your finances

We think about our financial capabilities as an important measure of independence, similar to our ability to drive or live alone. The thought of losing the ability to manage your finances is terrifying. Planning



ahead will help you stay in control of your finances.

"Diminished financial capacity" is the decline in a person's ability to manage money. When people of any age lose the capability to manage their finances, they may also become more vulnerable to fraud and other forms of financial abuse.

Taking the steps listed below will help avoid or minimize problems for you and your family:

First, organize and store important documents in a secure, easily accessible location. That way, they are readily available in an emergency. Give copies to trusted family members or let them know where to find the documents.

Second, make sure you have a valid financial power of attorney. A financial power of attorney gives someone the legal authority to make financial decisions for you if you cannot. The document is "durable" because it remains in effect even if you become incapacitated. You retain the ability to change it or cancel it as long as you are still able to make decisions.

After signing a durable financial power of attorney, you can still manage your money as long as you have the ability to make decisions. Also, you always have the option to change who you want to act as your appointed representative and the individuals you allow to access your financial information.

Third, keep things up to date. Be sure that, if something changes, you keep your

information as current as possible. Your trusted contacts may change over time. Keep your attorney and investment advisor informed of changes regarding who has authority to review your account or whom they should contact in case of an emergency.

Finally, speak up if something goes wrong. If you ever think someone is taking advantage of you, or that you've been the victim of a fraud, tell someone. The sooner you let someone know about it, the better chance there is of putting an end to it.

An experienced estate-planning attorney can help you put a power of attorney into place to plan for future incapacity and to safeguard your money.

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



BLODGETT a star chamber ambassador and more

Long-time resident gives back in a variety of ways.



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Long-time West Des Moines resident Connie Blodgett volunteers with the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce in nearly every way possible.

As an ambassador, Blodgett helps companies celebrate "life events for businesses," like store openings, new locations, remodels and anniversaries. She also supports the chamber by volunteering at regular events when extra assistance is needed, including the annual dinner, Black and Brown Business Summit, membership luncheons, Breakfast B4 Business and the Raccoon River Festival.

Because of her dedicated efforts over the past 18 years, Blodgett received the 2023 Ambassador of the Year award from the chamber. She was chosen based on her participation in events, member retention initiatives and monthly ambassador meetings.

The award was an honor to receive, but Blodgett simply enjoys the work she does for the chamber.

"I enjoy the satisfaction of helping companies celebrate their milestones," she says. "Personal and professional growth have been huge results of volunteering and networking."

For more than 15 years, Blodgett has also served as a volunteer board member for the HOA Association Board at her West Des Moines residence.

"It's very rewarding to have an impact on maintaining our property as a great place to live with increasing property values," she shares.

In addition, Blodgett has spent time serving other local groups at Valley Junction and Jolly Holiday Lights events.

For Blodgett, volunteering is just what she does, and she's happy to serve others.

"It feels good to give back time to help companies celebrate their milestones," she says. ■

Do you know a neighbor who deserves recognition?

Nominate him or her at tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.



Ryan Mehalovich of Edward Jones presents the Neighbor Spotlight certificate to Connie Blodgett.

Edward Jones

> edwardjones.com | Member SIPC



Dreaming up the ideal retirement is your job. Helping you get there is ours.

We're excited to hear from you.



Ryan P Mehalovich, CFP° 4601 Westown Pkwy Ste 218 West Des Moines, IA 50266 515-224-5284

RECIPES

BRING joy to mealtimes by dining together

(Family Features) The renowned Mediterranean Diet, celebrated for its myriad benefits, has been rated as a top diet in the world for years.

Recognizing the benefits of the foods included in the Mediterranean Diet, it's important to broaden the understanding beyond its ingredients to embrace the elements of the Mediterranean lifestyle, which also contribute to these benefits. Essentially, it's not just about what you eat; it's also about how you enjoy it and with whom you share the experience.

Nutrition, physical activity, sleep and togetherness comprise this balanced way of living, with preparing, eating and enjoying food together being key elements of the Mediterranean lifestyle. You can immerse yourself in the vibrant spirit of the Mediterranean lifestyle simply by inviting friends or family to gather around the table for a meal — like a family favorite pasta dish.

"Eating together is a joyful and important practice of the Mediterranean lifestyle that truly contributes to overall well-being," said Michele Lefebvre, registered dietitian nutritionist and manager of nutrition and well-being at Barilla America. "As a traditional yet versatile food, pasta brings a sense of nostalgia to meals as people gather together around the table and connect in an impactful way."

Visit barilla.com/recipes to discover more dishes that can help you follow the Mediterranean lifestyle.

Cellentani Caprese pasta salad

Prep time: 10 minutes Cook time: 15 minutes Servings: 7

- 1 box Barilla Protein+ Cellentani pasta
- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- · 2 pints grape tomatoes, mixed color, halved
- 4 tablespoons lemon juice
- 8 basil leaves, julienned
- 2 cups small mozzarella cheese balls, halved
- · salt, to taste
- · black pepper, to taste



- Bring large pot of water to boil. Cook pasta according to package directions and drain. Drizzle pasta with 1 tablespoon olive oil and place on sheet tray to cool. Set aside.
- In large bowl, combine tomatoes, lemon juice, basil, remaining olive oil and cheese. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Add pasta and stir.



Prep time: 5 minutes Cook time: 10 minutes

Servings: 8

- · 5 egg yolks
- · 1 cup Pecorino Romano cheese, grated, divided
- 1/2 cup milk
- salt, to taste
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium zucchini, julienned
- 1 box Barilla Linguine
- · 1 tablespoon fresh mint, chopped
- black pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS:

- Bring large pot of water to boil.
- In bowl, mix egg yolks, 1/3 cup Pecorino Romano cheese and milk. Season with salt, to taste. Set aside.
- · In large skillet, heat olive oil and cook zucchini.
- · Cook pasta according to package directions. Reserve 1/2 cup cooking



- Mix pasta in pan with zucchini. Add egg yolk mixture and 2 tablespoons cooking water. Combine well.
- Add remaining cheese and mint; mix. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

SOUTHWOODS addition provides CTE

Will better equip students for careers.

Two new additions to Valley Southwoods Freshman High School will offer more classroom space for career and technical education (CTE) courses, which will better equip students for careers after they graduate from high school.

The additions were completed in May of this year. On the north side is a 2,000-square-foot culinary lab that can support approximately 140 students per semester. The equipment includes six fully equipped culinary lab stations, including a demonstration table.

On the southeast side is a 26,000-square-foot classroom space consisting of a construction yard and lab, emerging technologies room, manufacturing classroom and labs for robotics, competition field and digital design. The new facilities include welding bays, laser cutting equipment, HAAS CNC and lathe machines, auto equipment, water jet, saws, drill presses, sanders and more.

Shane Scott, secondary director of curriculum, says the CTE addition was built as a result of a study acknowledging a need to strengthen CTE programming.

"The results focused on providing students with learning experiences that are aligned with industry-level expectations using the same tools and equipment used in the industry," he says.

The purpose of the new addition is to ensure that WDM students have access to high-quality instruction in an updated facility, using industry-recognized equipment.

"Our students can develop career-ready skills for the current workforce needs," Scott explains. "Students' post-secondary plans will be supported, and the paradigm of success is much broader than a four-year university a student plans to attend after graduation."

Scott says there is a high demand for these highly skilled professionals.

"Exposure and experience is probably one of the most powerful opportunities a school can offer a student. These courses not only connect a student with career opportunities by developing a skill, they can also serve as a baseline of what they may not want to do," Scott says.

Students from grades 9-12 in Valley High School, Valley Southwoods and Walnut Creek Campus can attend classes. Reaction to the new facilities has been welcoming.

"Most are amazed at not only the size of the classroom rooms, but the high-quality equipment within. Most have never seen, up close, a fiber laser, CNC machine or powder coating booth," he says. "Most adults state they wished they had the chance to take classes in a facility like this one."



The new additions to Valley Southwoods Freshman High School provide CTE to better prepare students for careers.



The culinary lab can support 140 students a semester.

CELEBRATE the end of summer reading

We'll be hosting two parties at the end of the summer to celebrate readers. First is our family-friendly Summer Finale on Saturday, July 27 from 10 a.m. to noon. This year's finale celebrates all things comics, graphic novels and heroes of all kinds. Enjoy indoor and outdoor hero-themed activities and fun, no registration required. That evening, July 27 at 6:30 p.m., is the adults' turn to celebrate. The Adult Summer Reading Party: The Best Trivia Game Ever is part trivia game, part game show, all fun. Prizes and refreshments will also be provided. The Adult Summer Reading Party will be open to all adults who complete the Summer Reading Challenge. Please register for the adult party.



The Adult Summer Reading Party: The Best Trivia Game Ever will be July 27 at 6:30 p.m. Last year the group played bingo.



LIBRARY

West Des Moines Public Library

www.wdmlibrary.org 515-222-3400 4000 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines Mon.-Thu. 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Fri. 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sat. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Family Night at the Library: Water Tag! Monday, July 15, 6:30-7:30 p.m. (all ages)

July is always hot, so, we're going to head out back on the library lawn and have an oldfashioned water fight. We'll have obstacles, bases and teams. Think laser tag but with water. Register each person.

Brick by Brick: Building Home Knowledge - Selling Your Home

Monday, July 22 or July 29, 6:30-8:30 p.m. (adults)

Are you a first-time homebuyer and feeling overwhelmed by how much information is out there? Maybe you have a house and want to sell but don't know what steps to take or how to get the best price. Please join us for a series of

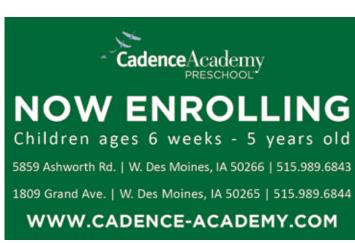


The family-friendly Summer Finale is Saturday, July 27, 10 a.m. to noon.

programs to learn the ins and outs of real estate. No registration required.

Zoo to You with Blank Park Zoo Thursday, July 25, 1:30-2:30 p.m. (ages 2-12) Learn about amazing animals with an educator from the Blank Park Zoo and an animal ambassador. Registration required. Preserve The Taste of Summer 101 Monday, July 30, 6:30-7:30 p.m. (adults)

Home food preservation is not difficult, but it does require following specific directions to keep you, your family and friends safe. Preserve the Taste of Summer 101 will teach you the research-backed basics of canning, freezing and drying foods safely at home. Registration requested.









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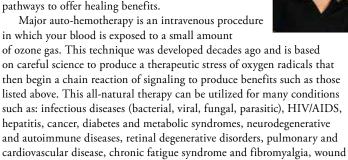
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WELLNESS By Amanda Kramme

HAVE YOU heard of ozone therapy?

Ozone therapy is a bio-oxidative therapy with countless benefits. Some of these key benefits include: stimulating white blood cell production, increasing oxygen delivery to cells, enhancing antioxidant enzyme efficiency, reducing inflammation and stimulating regenerative pathways to offer healing benefits.



healing and much more. We know that oxygen plays an important role in the mitochondria, which are cells that affect the metabolism of various factors such as fat, glucose and proteins. By utilizing ozone as a treatment method, we can increase oxygen utilization, therefore improving mitochondrial function. Research shows that ozone therapy also assists in producing antiinflammatory effects. An experienced team provides this therapy for athletes and those dealing with chronic illnesses. ■

Information provided by Amanda Kramme, BSN, CFMP, Certified Ozone Specialist, Vivid Wellness Lounge, 1980 N.W. 94th St., Suite E/F, Clive, Livin-Vivid.com 515-415-1550



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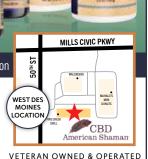
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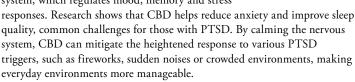


HEALTH By Ashley Powell

CBD, THC and managing PTSD

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can severely impact daily life, especially during triggers like firework displays, loud noises or crowded places. Fortunately, CBD (cannabidiol) and low doses of THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) products have shown promise in alleviating PTSD symptoms.

CBD interacts with the body's endocannabinoid system, which regulates mood, memory and stress



In addition to CBD, low doses of THC can also be beneficial. THC can help reduce hyperarousal and intrusive thoughts, common PTSD symptoms. Combining CBD and THC may enhance therapeutic effects, offering a more comprehensive approach to managing PTSD. Resources such as the National Center for PTSD offer comprehensive information on treatment options, including the role of cannabinoids in symptom management.

One of the benefits of using hemp-derived CBD and THC products is that they are available without a medical card or prescription. If you or someone you know struggles with PTSD, stop in to talk to a certified hemp consultant and find the right product for you. ■

Information provided by Ashley Powell, CBD American Shaman, 800 S. 50th St., No. 106, West Des Moines, 515-380-5251, and 3418 Eighth St. S.W., No. 3, Altoona, 515-967-4036. Resource: Legare, Christopher A et al. "Therapeutic Potential of Cannabis, Cannabidiol, and Cannabinoid-Based Pharmaceuticals." Pharmacology vol. 107,3-4 (2022): 131-149. doi:10.1159/000521683

THE ROLE of funeral staff

"We don't need to worry about it; the church will take care of everything."

I have recently experienced the planning that goes into a family member's funeral service. When you want a celebration that truly reflects and honors the loved one who has died, you learn firsthand about the many details which need to come together.

100

You also appreciate the job of the funeral director and

support staff, who make sure all of these details come together seamlessly.

So, when a family says they do not need the funeral home involved with services... we cringe.

We cringe because we know that churches don't typically have staff ready to take care of the many details that need to be attended to: creating memorial folders, memorial DVDs and other service items: checking in flowers and arranging them for the service; setting up displays of personal items for the service; and providing ushers, just to name a few.

Individually, these may not seem like big things; however, these details can quickly become overwhelming. That is why I urge you to take my personal experience to heart and let the funeral home do what they are here to do for the family. Let the funeral director "direct" and guide the family through these many details and decisions.

And remember... planning in advance will make this a smoother and less stressful process for everyone. ■

Information provided by Scott Eriksen, Director of Hamilton's Advanced Planning, Hamilton's Funeral Home, 605 Lyon St., Des Moines, 515-697-3670, www.HamiltonsFuneralHome.com.





WANT TO stay in your home as you age?

Preparation is key

Continuing to live in your home as you age — "aging in place" is not always within the grasp of every person who desires to do so. If you end up needing a little assistance to remain in the place you love, chronic health



challenges can make living independently ill-advised, and full-time care at home can cost nearly as much as community living (sometimes even more, if you need 24/7 care, for example).

You might be asking yourself, then: "If I am not able to live at home, and I don't want to move into a community, what can I do?" Great news: Some organizations that serve older adults have designed Continuing Care at Home (CC@H) membership programs designed to help people proactively focus on their health at home while enabling them to

financially plan for potential services and care down the road.

If you're evaluating a CC@H program, here are some questions to help you make sure the program's premises, amenities and outcomes will be the best ones for you.

- Do you fully understand the program and what it offers? The primary advantages of a good CC@H program are twofold: Not only will it offer services and amenities to enhance your wellbeing so you can remain independent longer, but it will also help fund future long-term care needs.
- Does it provide personal support? Studies tell us people who embark on any kind of life-altering program or activity, such as a nutrition or exercise regimen, will be exponentially more successful with encouragement from a trusted adviser or advocate (think personal trainer, life coach, etc.). A program that provides you with a written guide but no personal interaction may not be setting you up for success.

• What will your care options be? A solid program will help fund your care, if it's needed, whether through home healthcare or services in a senior living community later on. If the program you're considering does offer both, make sure you're comfortable with the services and care provided by the organization's home healthcare team as well as in its communities. A reputable provider will have longevity and solid outcomes behind

If you're considering becoming part of a CC@H program, make sure it fits your current and future needs. Your health, your wellbeing, and your checkbook will thank you for it. ■

Aaron Wheeler is Vice President of Home and Community-Based Services for WesleyLife, which provides health and well-being services, including WellAhead — A WesleyLife Well-Being Experience, a CC@H offering designed for people who never want to move to a senior living community. To learn more, visit wesleylife.org/wellahead.



Broadlawns Medical Center

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UnityPoint Health - Des Moines

Iowa Methodist | Methodist West | Blank Children's | Iowa Lutheran

VA Centeral Iowa Health Care





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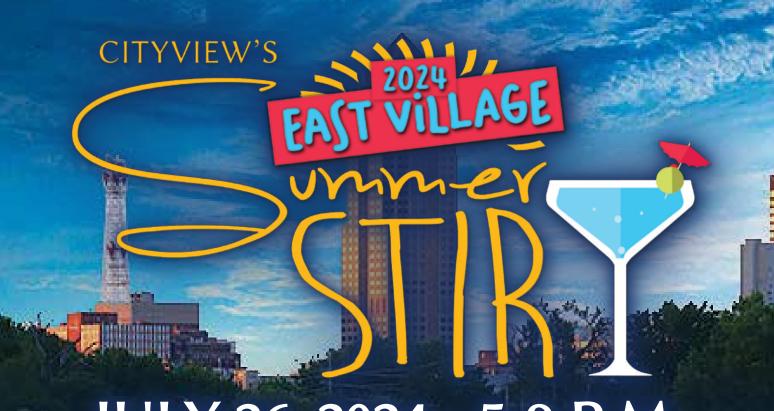
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APES. Pop-Tarts. Six kids and a pregnant wife. And more Mad Max.



"Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes" (in theaters)

This is the latest reboot of the popular series of films that started when I was a child. I was not a big fan of the last reboot, but this one seems much better from the start. We find the apes living in peace and harmony with humans. It's all fun and games until some other apes don't think that is such a good idea. Fighting ensues. Grade: B+



"Unsung Hero" (probably getting ready to stream) Sometimes, I like to go see movies that I have no idea what they are about. Last month's gem, "Wicked Little Letters," was a huge surprise and a real treat. Watch for it on the streaming services. So funny. This month's surprise is "Unsung Hero," a movie that has already come and gone. Watch for it on the streaming services. It is the true story of a concert promoter down on his luck after an Amy Grant Australian concert tour fizzled out. He is out of a job and lost a bunch of money. Did I mention he has six kids and a pregnant wife? I'm deliberately not going to give you a whole lot more information, as it is more fun to find out where this crazy-but-true story takes you. Grade: B-

"The Fall Guy" (in theaters)

The summer's biggest expectations fell on this romantic comedy/action film based on the early 1980s TV series starring Lee Majors. This big screen version has a great cast. With Ryan Gosling and Emily Blunt, how could you go wrong? I've got to blame the writers. This movie is a mess. It is boring, unfunny and pretty much a snooze. I sat in the theater



shaking my head, trying to figure out how this could have gone so wrong. What a waste of time and talent. Grade: C-



"Unfrosted" (streaming)

I was never much of a Seinfeld fan, but I will give him credit for putting together an enormous cast of comedic actors and actresses in this dreadfully unfunny comedy about the creation of the Pop-Tart. What was most amazing is how unfunny some of these funny people can be. Seinfeld's name obviously drew this great cast of actors and actresses, but it was all a waste with a dumb story and poor execution. It is just flat out not funny. Grade:



"The Idea of You" (streaming)

Anne Hathaway plays the parent of a teenage girl who takes her daughter and friends to a big concert. Hathaway accidentally meets the lead singer of the group before the concert, and they end up having a brief affair. The movie isn't too deep, but it was fun to see Hathaway, one of our greatest actresses, play a normal person in an awkward but interesting situation. Grade: B



"IF" (in theaters)

It is difficult to guess what this movie is about if you see the trailer or TV commercials. It's even more difficult to explain what it is about after you've seen it. The movie portrays a young girl going through major life issues. She is also able to see other people's imaginary friends. That's all I'm going to tell you, because I really want you to see this movie without too much knowledge about the story. What I can tell you is that it is so well done. So well done. Two words sum up this theatrical experience: charming and wonderful. I saw this movie with my 34-year-old son, and we both used the word wonderful to describe it. I can't wait to see it again. Grade: A



"Furiosa" (in theaters)

Writer/Director George Miller extends his Mad Max world to include a prequel to the most recent film ("Fury Road") with Charlize Theron. In this one, Anya Taylor-Joy (so good in "The Queen's Gambit") plays a young version of Theron's character. Like all the Mad Max films, the action starts almost immediately and doesn't let up until the film is over. Chris Hemsworth is all but unrecognizable as the leader of the bad guys who endlessly chase this young woman across great spans of desert. This series shows promise. Grade: B ■

Michael C. Woody has been reviewing movies on radio and television since 1986 and can be heard talking movies every Wednesday afternoon at 2:30 p.m. on KXn0 106.3 with Keith Murphy and Andy Fales.

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DSM Breakerz

Break dance club performs around metro.

At the Valley Junction Community Center, young boys are doing flips, slides, footwork and top rock to a familiar musical beat.

These dance moves — also known as break dancing — are performed by the DSM Breakerz. The group performs and takes lessons in the Des Moines metro.

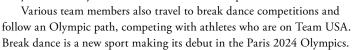
Tammra Swartwood established DSM Breakerz in 2020; however, studio costs proved too high. So, in 2022, she formed the group as a nonprofit. The classes are low cost and accessible to all students.

"We offer opportunities for kids to participate, especially those who suffer from cost barriers to participating in sports," she says. "Many dance clubs or sports have registration fees, uniform and recital fees. That's not what I'm running."

Classes take place at the Valley Junction Community Center in West Des Moines, Hope+Elim near Drake University and at Swartwood's home in Waukee. Currently they have

20-25 kids participating at all locations. Tammra is not a breakdancer; however, she did grow up in the dance community. She hires break dance instructors to show the moves and mentor young kids. DSM Breakerz has performed at the Iowa State Fair, an Iowa Wild game, Valley Junction Farmers Market and other events.

They were recently featured on a PBS television special.



Maria Nguyen brought her son, A.J. Sarminto, to the classes. She says, when her son joined, he felt included.

"When A.J. joined, he said, 'There's another boy who looks like me,' " she recalls. "It's neat he could find someone to bond with."

She likes that kids have found common interests.

"As a Filipino, I like that the group is very diverse. There's no judgment where you come from," she says.

The DSM Breakerz allows kids to tap into their own strengths and talents. Breakdancing is made up of elements such as hip hop, DJ, master of ceremony, hype man and graffiti or street art. Tammra says her own son is a hype man, who has a natural talent and is not afraid of crowds.

"He's the one who gets the group going," she says.

She says inclusivity is important to the youth. Kids come up with dance moves and contribute to the creativity.

"Building their confidence is so rewarding," she says. "We're teaching skills they'll use later in life."

A break dance performance always gets the "party going."



Bradyn Schminkey, A.J. Sarminto and Micah Swartwood are members of DSM Breakerz.



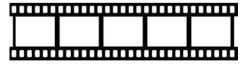
A.J. Sarminto demonstrates the skills he shares as a member of DSM Breakerz.

"It's exciting and always a fun atmosphere, and you can't help but smile," Tammra says.

Since DSM Breakerz is a nonprofit, the group depends on donations to keep the tuition low and to pay for transportation, training, instructors, competitions and more. For performance schedule or sponsorship opportunities, visit www.dsmbreakerz.org.

EVENTS IN THE AREA

Check for cancellations



Moonlit Movies

Jamie Hurd Amphitheater, 4100 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines

Friday, July 19, 8:45 p.m., "Mrs. Doubtfire" Friday, Aug. 16, 8:30 p.m., "Finding Nemo" Friday, Sept. 20, 8:30 p.m., "Ferris Bueller's Day Off"



Farmers Market | Music in the Junction

Through September, Thursdays, 4-8:30 p.m.

100-300 blocks of Fifth Street and Railroad Park

The Valley Junction Farmers Market features more than 80 weekly vendors selling fresh produce, baked goods, plants and flowers, arts and crafts, and prepared foods. The Farmers Market is from 4-8 p.m. Music in the Junction is 5-8:30 p.m. at Railroad Park. The beverage garden opens at 5 p.m. with live music starting at 6 p.m. Concerts are:

July 18: Ronley King Blues Band

July 25: Kinda Petty Band

Aug. 1: Standing Hampton

Aug. 8: The Unfortunate Sons

Aug. 15: Three on the Tree

Aug. 22: Echos V

Aug. 29: Recoil

Sept. 5: Sons of Gladys Kravitz

Sept. 12: Get Off My Lawn

Sept. 19: Jana West and Retrospect

Sept. 26: The Punching Pandas

Waukee Arts Festival

July 19-20

Centennial Park, Waukee www.waukeeartsfestival.org

Centennial Park in Waukee will host plenty of eye-catching local art from some of the area's best artists over the two-day-long festival. Live music and food trucks will be available to enjoy alongside the artwork.

Summer Sundaze

Sunday evenings through Sept. 8, 6-8 p.m. Jamie Hurd Amphitheater, 4100 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines

Enjoy free live music and food trucks. Visit wdm.iowa.gov/JHA for more information.

Storytime Party

Various dates, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Bennett School Museum, 4001 Fuller Road, West Des Moines

It's a storytime party at Bennett School Museum this summer. Pre-K through first graders will enjoy an hour of stories, songs and crafts. All children and their adults are welcome. An adult must accompany the children. The events are free, but donations are gratefully accepted to help cover expenses. Dates and themes are:

- Tuesday, July 16: Library Fun!
- Thursday, July 30: Let's Catch some Zzzzzs!
- Tuesday, Aug. 6: Rolling in the Dough; A Storytime About Cookies
- Thursday, Aug. 20: Scrub-A-Dub-Dub

County Fairs

- July 9-13: Dallas County Fair in Adel. www.dallascountyfair.com
- **July 12-18:** Marion County Fair in Knoxville. www.marioncofair.com
- July 17-21: Madison County Fair in Winterset. www.madisoncountyfair.net
- July 17-21: Story County Fair in Nevada. www.sc-fair.weebly.com
- July 18-21: Boone County Fair in Boone. www.boonecountyfairia.com
- July 19-25: Jasper County Fair in Colfax. www.jaspercofair.com
- July 24-29: Warren County Fair in Indianola. www.warrencofair.com
- July 25-28: Polk County Fair at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines. www.polkcountyfairiowa.com

Yoga in the Park

July 13 and Aug. 10, 9-10 a.m. Railroad Park stage by the old train depot, Valley Junction

Yoga in the Park offers a unique blend of tranquility and community, set against the backdrop of Historic Valley Junction. Led by local Yoga + Co instructor Lindsay Bordwell, each session is designed to harmonize your energy and enhance your practice, whether you're a beginner or a seasoned yogi. Bring your mat. This event is free, and all ages are welcome.

Ankeny Summerfest

July 12-14

The District at Prairie Trail, 1500 S.W. Main St., Ankeny

www.ankenysummerfest.com

Over the course of this three-day-long event, 24 food vendors will set up shop to serve hungry attendees, 13 musical acts will be performing throughout the weekend for listening pleasure, and plenty of family-friendly activities like a parade and carnival will be in the area.



CITYVIEW's Summer Stir - East Village

Friday, July 26, 5-9 p.m. East Village, E. Locust St., Des Moines

CITYVIEW's traveling cocktail party is back in East Village. 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 summerstirs.dmcityview.com.

EVENTS IN THE AREA

Check for cancellations



Music Festivals

• 80/35 Music Festival, July 12-13 Water Works Park, 2201 George Flagg Parkway, Des Moines 80/35 is moving out of downtown and into Water Works Park. The new location allows the festival to include camping for the first time. Headliners: Killer Mike and OK go. • Hinterland, Aug. 2-4

Avenue of the Saints Amphitheatre, 3357 St. Charles Road, St. Charles www.hinterlandiowa.com

Just a half hour outside of Des Moines is the state's largest music festival that continues to draw nationally renowned names to the small city of St. Charles. More than 20 musical acts will take the main stage and entertain travelers, campers and music lovers alike. Headliners: Aug. 2: Hozier; Aug. 3: Vampire Weekend; Aug. 4: Noah Kahan.



National Balloon Classic

July 26-Aug. 3 Memorial Balloon Field, 1136 150th Ave., Indianola www.nationalballoonclassic.com

Just look up. Beautifully colored hot air balloons adorn the skies of Indianola. The National Balloon Classic has been dropping jaws of Iowans and travelers with its wondrous display for more than 50 years.

Stage productions

Ankeny Community Theatre 1932 S.W. Third St., Ankeny

www.ankenycommunitytheatre.com

Aug. 2-11: "Vanya and Sonya and Masha and Spike"

Carousel Theatre of Indianola Indianola High School Auditorium, 1304 E. First Ave., Indianola

www.carouseltheatre.org Weekends July 19-28: "Urinetown"



Des Moines Metro Opera Pote Theatre, 513 N. D St., Indianola www.desmoinesmetroopera.org

July 12, 17, 21: "Pelléas & Mélisande" July 13, 18, 19: "American Apollo"

Des Moines Performing Arts Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines www.dmpa.org

Aug. 20 - Sept. 1: "Moulin Rouge: The Musical"

Des Moines Playhouse 831 42nd St., Des Moines www.dmplayhouse.com

July 12-28, Wednesdays through Saturdays: "School Of Rock - The Musical"

Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre **Stoner Theater** www.dmyat.org

July 19-28: "The Prom," 221 Walnut St., Des Moines

DMACC Ankeny Theatre Black Box Theatre, Building 5, 2006 S. Ankeny Blvd., Ankeny www.dmacc.edu/theatre/ankeny

July 19-20, 25-27: Summer Short Shakespeare '24 - "As You Like It"

Urbandale Community Theatre Urbandale High School Performing Arts Center, 7111 N.W. Aurora Ave., Urbandale

www.urbandaletheatre.com

July 26-28, Aug. 2-4: "The Wizard Of Oz" ■



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RIBBON cuttings



West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting for Blue Zoo Aquarium, 6925 Mills Civic Parkway, Unit 125, May 24.



West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Community Support Advocates, 1516 Valley West Drive, June 25.



West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Comparion Insurance Agency, 1354 S.E. University Ave., Waukee, May 23.

OUT & ABOUT



West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Aveda Institute, 6905 Mills Civic Parkway, Suite 120.



Carey Stover and Patrick Thompson at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Aveda Institute.



Connie Blodgett and Karl Seidel at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Aveda Institute.



Haley Ellis and Mady Arndt at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Aveda Institute.



Allison Barns, Kelsey Chaves White and Anna Eichinger at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Aveda Institute.



West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Inmobiliaria Inc., 3115 Douglas Ave., Des Moines, June 18.



Sam Dusenbery, Fernando Aveiga and Monica Reyes at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Inmobiliaria Inc.



Joseph Beedon, Frank Hanson and Patrick Onken at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Inmobiliaria Inc.



Sam Dusenbery and Peter Ginger at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Inmobiliaria Inc.



Joana Quintanilla, Jacqueline Villafana and Pilar Martinez at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Inmobiliaria Inc.

OUT & ABOUT



West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Harlow and James, 417 Maple St., on May 22.



Kelly Eddy and Brenda Garrison at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Harlow and James.



Mary Core and Everett Mullican at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Harlow and James.



Tara Knight-Ortiz and Amber Rhoades at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Harlow and James.



Denise Crawford and Dr. Danielle Leonard at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Jordan Creek Pediatric Dentistry.



West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting for Jordan Creek Pediatric Dentistry, 1111 Jordan Creek Parkway, June 13.



Shirley and Joseph Beedon at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Jordan Creek Pediatric Dentistry.



Connie Blodgett and Charity Baird at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Jordan Creek Pediatric Dentistry.



Shelley Cronin, Stephanie Wadsworth and Taylor Luick at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Jordan Creek Pediatric Dentistry.



Patrick Onken and Rob Reinard at the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Jordan Creek Pediatric Dentistry.

CLASSIFIEDS

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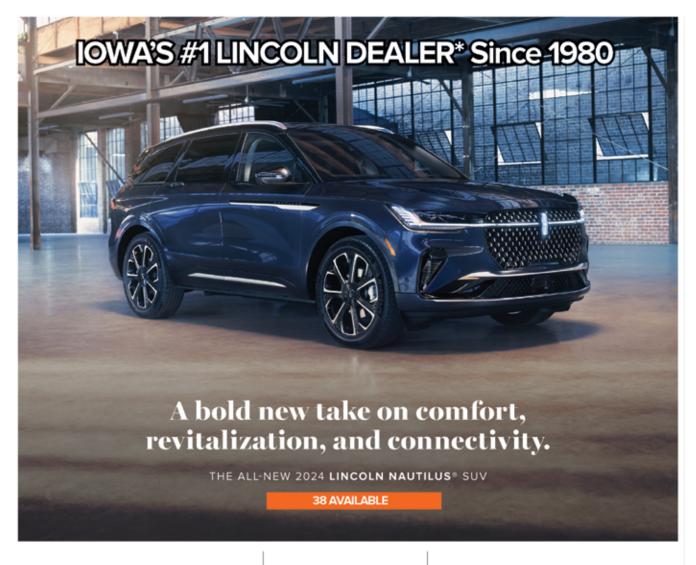
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