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JULY 2024

Living

MAGAZINE

YARDS WITH

personality

Residents share how their
landscaping choices
reflect their style.

Meet Darlene Wagner

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Cellentani Caprese pasta salad

RECIPE

Century-old flagpole has special meaning

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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. ■

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YARDS WITH

personality

Residents share how their landscaping choices reflect their style.

By Joe Baumgarter

A plethora of pots. A hillside of hostas. Wildflowers willy nilly. Manicured hedges and straight edges. From wild and unruly to precise and planned, the landscaping around a home often reflects the owner's own unique style. While some prefer lush, thick foliage, others enjoy succulents among a garden of rocks. From a tropical vibe to the charm of a country cottage. From mad about mulch to mad for magnolias. Whatever their preferences, homeowners with a green thumb and plenty of imagination enjoy creating landscaping masterpieces with pizzazz.

Cliff Heck placed a stone bench under one of his apple trees for a shady spot to enjoy his yard.

FEATURE

Built by hand over time

Cliff Heck is a self-taught gardener. He and his wife have lived in their Urbandale home for more than 25 years. They've raised two sons and a daughter who have long ago grown and flown.

Living on a corner, one of the first things Heck did was build a perennial garden diagonally, facing the corner. He planted sedum (stonecrop) in the front, and it was doing so well that his next task was to halve each one to give it more room and provide a less-crowded look. Sedum is a hardy plant, needing little care other than to be cut down to the ground before winter.

"They produce the giant flower heads that look really pretty in the fall," Heck says.

Backing up the sedum, he planted Russian sage.

"It's really taken over the garden," he says.

Of course, not all of the things growing in Heck's garden are of his design.

"The birds keep bringing these seeds in, and they grow like crazy," he says as he plucks out the start of one of their contributions. "Originally, I had a nice red oak here that grew nicely for quite a while until it developed a large blister on the trunk. One day I came out to go to work and found it laying out over the sidewalk. A small wind had blown it over."

Heck recommends putting some brick or stone edging around the garden. Not only does it give it a nice contained look, it makes for easy yard maintenance.

"I hate to mow and trim," he says.

Heck likes to organize the various gardens around his house into themes.

"In this section, I'm slowly converting it over to perennials. We used to plant annuals here, but they required a lot of watering, and we couldn't always keep up with that," he says. "However, last year we installed an irrigation system for the whole yard, and that helps a lot."



A variety of blooms adorn Cliff Heck's property.



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OF CLIVE

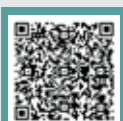
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FEATURE

As you drive up to the house, one of the first gardens you see is a large raised berm that extends about 30 feet parallel to the side street. It nicely brackets the back yard and provides just enough separation between the back deck and the busy side street.

"The berm was to add some beauty, but, at the same time, cut off some of the noise from people driving in and out of the neighborhood."

Like every other feature, Heck built this by hand over time.

This year's project is a fanciful one.

"That's my gnome garden. I have so many gnomes to put in," he says. "I'll do that later this week."

Heck also has two vegetable gardens and two large and heavily laden apple trees. One is a red delicious and the other is called "state fair."

"It was developed at the University of Minnesota and is the forerunner of many other varieties. They make delicious pies," he says.

Under the old apple tree is a stone bench that Heck built for his mother-in-law. He also built a winding brick path that leads up to it.

"She was handicapped from a stroke, and that way she could walk out here and enjoy the



The Demonstration Garden includes educational signs identifying the various plants.

yard."

Like many other gardeners, Heck has a love/hate relationship with the many rabbits in the neighborhood. He has fenced in his vegetable garden and says to "Elevate! Elevate!"

"This garden is 3 feet high and has my carrots and beans. They've learned to go elsewhere for a change," he happily reports.

Rabbits aren't his only furry visitors. Heck reports that the deer often come in the fall to enjoy his apples.

"I told the wife to stop picking up the apples on the ground because then the deer would eat the good ones off the tree. So, now, before I mow, I just throw the apples over there in a pile, and they know to go there first."

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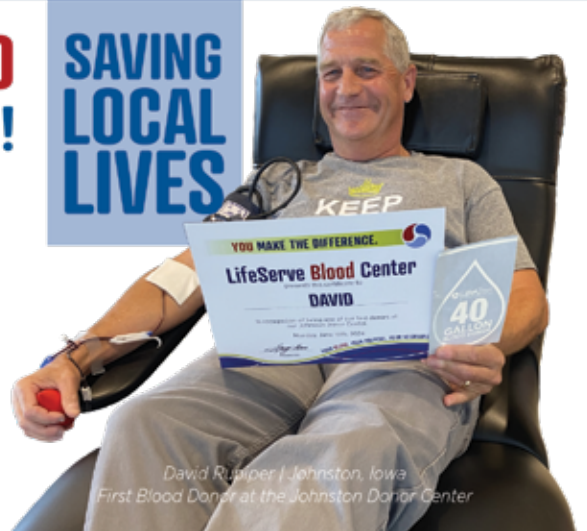
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The Urbandale Demonstration Garden at the corner of 92nd and Dewey Gibbs Road, adjacent to the Valerius Elementary School, provides education and inspiration.

Demonstration garden

The Urbandale Demonstration Garden at the corner of 92nd and Dewey Gibbs Road, adjacent to Valerius Elementary School, can be enjoyed by anyone. It is on ground donated by the school to Polk County Master Gardeners for the expressed purpose of building a demonstration garden that could be used by the school for education, as well as provide a beautiful area for the public.

Among the Master Gardeners tending to the plot are Patty Wright, Elise Stucky-Gregg and Dana Van der Werf, who were recently busy preparing the garden for the Polk County Master Gardener Garden Tour. The Urbandale garden is one of seven in the Des Moines metro area.

Like Heck, they have also engaged in a battle with a furry and destructive resident.

“Voles,” Stucky-Gregg says as she moves a live trap to a new section where the vole has recently done damage.

Stucky-Gregg says she became involved in the Master Gardener program when she moved to the area.

“It’s a wonderful course. Anybody can take and anybody can pass it,” she says. “One of the things that we learned in the coursework is a concept called IPM (Integrated Pest Management). This is a whole new way of looking at what a ‘pest’ is and how you manage it in your garden — even if it’s a weed. Using chemicals to wipe out weeds and other pests puts other life forms at risk. You don’t have to

use chemicals. There are ways you can learn to live more in balance with the wildlife around you. We all live together in this ecosystem.”

“For example,” Wright adds, “I am no longer pulling out all of the dandelions from my yard and garden. I leave some because they are one of the very first sources of nectar for the pollinators.” (For more information on IPM, see www.epa.gov/ipm/introduction-integrated-pest-management.)

The Demonstration garden features informative signs to help educate visitors.

“They are very informative. They give some of the history of the garden bed and what grows inside it,” Wright says.

But the garden is about more than just education.

“It’s my free therapy. It’s a combination of beauty, harmony and grounding,” Wright says.

“We get a lot of people coming here just to enjoy a quiet part of their day, maybe eat lunch, take pictures, draw a flower,” one of the Master Gardeners says.

“We’ve had senior pictures taken here,” another adds.

“Wouldn’t this be a beautiful place for a wedding?” another suggests, and everyone readily agrees.

One of Van der Werf’s pet projects in the Demonstration Garden is the Woodland Bed.

“This is the Woodland Walk and, as part of rehabilitating it, we wanted to incorporate a lot of wonderful underused Iowa native plants to show people what can be done,” she says. “I used

to be of the opinion that a shade garden didn’t give me a lot of options, but I’ve learned about the many varieties that are in here. There are a surprising amount of options.

“You see here wild ginger. This makes a lovely ground cover,” she continues. “Virginia bluebells come up in early spring and are absolutely beautiful. We have ferns, white wood aster, wood sage, Solomon’s seal.”

She also points out wild geraniums and other “shade-loving plants with fantastic names” like “Ghost Beard,” “Queen of the Prairie,” “Turtle Head,” “Siberian Squill” and “Jane’s Rocket.”

The garden also demonstrates how to grow edible plants, including fruit trees, six varieties of grapes and many vegetables.

“Last year, we donated 8,000 pounds of fresh food to the Urbandale Food Pantry. It just goes to show you how much food you can get out of a relatively small space,” one said.

A pollinator garden attracts bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. The plants are organized to flower at different times of the year to attract different pollinators who are more active at those times.

A variety of programs are offered at the demonstration gardens operated by the Master Gardeners. For more information, visit polkcountymastergardeners.org. And everyone is free to tour the gardens.

“To me, the joy of this garden is how much a part of this community the garden has become. It is truly a Zen place for everyone,” Stucky-Gregg says. ■

COOPERS find a wealth of amenities

Urbandale offers numerous recreational opportunities for families.



Caleb and Stacey Cooper enjoy the Urbandale Fourth of July parade with their son and family pet.

Caleb Cooper met his wife, Stacey, when they were both students at Drake University.

After graduation, they moved back to

their home state of Wisconsin but missed their friends and family in Des Moines so much they decided to return to the area in 2019.

“When looking for our house, we looked all over the metro and ended up finding a great house we loved in a wonderful neighborhood close to my wife’s work and within walking distance to everything we could need,” Cooper says.

The area brings a bit of nostalgia, too, as the Coopers’ home is only a block away from one of Stacey’s early apartments.

One of the best parts of the home is its big yard, which is great not only for the couple’s dog, Ruby, and foster dogs, but also their toddler, Calvin.

In addition, Cooper enjoys having enough space to entertain guests, especially on the back deck for grill outs during the summer, and a dedicated office on the first floor since he works from home. It doesn’t hurt that the home also includes a three-car garage where Cooper can store his hobby items, including his motorcycle and woodworking tools.

The Coopers’ basement even has enough

room for a bounce house, which is perfect for helping Calvin expend his energy when it’s too cold to go outside in the winter or on rainy summer days.

Cooper’s favorite thing about where he lives, though, is being able to connect to the Urbandale trail system at the end of their street.

“Between Urbandale, with its over 54 miles of trails, and connecting to the regional trails, I am out walking the dog, biking or running with my son in a jogging stroller pretty much every day,” he says.

A park is also at the end of their street, and multiple other parks are within a mile or two, including Walker Johnson Park, where the couple can take Calvin.

Cooper is active on the Urbandale Library Board of Trustees and is a board member for the Urbandale Food Pantry. He and his family enjoy taking part in numerous activities, too.

“I love that Urbandale has so many great community events,” he says. “You will often see us at the Party in the Park, Fourth of July Celebration and any events at the library.” ■



Caleb Cooper enjoys time with his son at the Urbandale Public Library.



URBANDALE COUNCIL RECAP



in light blue and white, intertwined to form a star on a dark blue field. These colors, symbolizing stability and peace, are legacy colors for Urbandale. The two colors of the U's represent the two counties where Urbandale is expanding. The U's coming together unite the elements of people, natural resources, businesses, schools, transportation, and local government into a stronger, more beautiful whole. The endless pattern symbolizes the community's ongoing journey forward together. The bright star against the dark blue sky represents a firework from Urbandale's Independence Day celebration and is a bold statement about a positive future for the community. **Learn more at: www.Urbandale.org/flag.**

June 18, 2024 - Council Meeting

The Mayor and City Council met on Tuesday, June 18, and the Mayor began with a proclamation designating Juneteenth in Urbandale. Also known as Emancipation Day or Freedom Day, Juneteenth commemorates the historic moment on June 19, 1865, when Union General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, to announce the end of slavery and the enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation.

The City Council approved a master planning initiative to help transform downtown Urbandale. Stemming from the Forward Urbandale Comprehensive Plan adopted last December, this plan aims to breathe new life into the downtown area, making it a vibrant destination for residents and visitors alike.

The City of Urbandale's elected officials conduct a biennial strategic plan that sets the vision for the community and the roadmap to achieve that vision. The Council approved the 2024 Strategic Plan and established the vision for Urbandale as "A safe, regionally connected community where diversity is valued, opportunities are abundant, and all can thrive."

July 2, 2024 - Council Meeting

The Mayor and City Council met on Tuesday, July 2, and the Mayor began with the Oath of Office for Assistant Fire Chief Derrik Bingham and Battalion Chief Mike Gentosi. The Mayor also signed a proclamation designating July as Park and Recreation Month in the City of Urbandale.

The City Council approved a site plan for the proposed development of a child daycare center at the southwest corner of 152nd Street and Meredith Drive.

The City Council officially adopted the new City flag. Urbandale's new flag features six bold U's

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Council Recap is Online

Looking for a particular meeting recap? We have all the recaps online! www.urbandale.org/councilrecap

This is a custom publication from the City of Urbandale. The Council Recap is not the official minutes of the Council meeting, it's an easy-to-read and easy-to-understand digest of the Council Meetings specifically designed for residents. You can watch all the City Council meetings on YouTube and download Council agendas on the City's website.

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MAXIMIZING Social Security

John and Sue's journey to an extra \$93,000

As retirement nears, many face the critical question of how to optimize their resources, ensuring they can live the lifestyle they want and have the money to pay for it. One of the most significant components of this journey is the Social Security decision. The Social Security decision made by John and Sue, the stars of our online Journey to Retirement Workshop, is a shining example of how thoroughly analyzing your options can maximize your Social Security benefit.

John and Sue, aged 62, are at the crossroads of making their Social Security election. Their goal is clear: maximize their benefits while considering their income and lifestyle needs. Through our workshop, we illustrated three different Social Security scenarios to help them make an informed decision.

In the first scenario, John and Sue both opt



to take Social Security at the earliest possible age of 62. We use some assumptions about their benefit and an assumed life expectancy of 81 for John and 84 for Sue. In scenario No. 1, cumulatively, over their lifetimes, they would collect \$941,000.

In the second scenario, only Sue starts her benefits at 62, while John waits until full retirement age (FRA), which for him is 67. This strategic delay allowed John to receive his full Social Security benefit of \$3,000 monthly, yielding \$998,000 in total lifetime benefits.

The third scenario involves further delaying benefits. John waits until age 70, letting his benefit grow 8% yearly from age 67 to 70, while Sue begins taking her Social Security benefit at 65. Ultimately, this strategy brought their total Social Security benefits to \$1,034,000 — a staggering \$93,000 more than the first scenario.

Why does this matter? Beyond the obvious financial gain, this additional income provides John and Sue with the flexibility to adapt their plans as needed. Whether it's dealing

with unforeseen health expenses, adjusting for inflation, or simply enjoying a few extra vacations, the additional \$93,000 adds a significant cushion to their retirement portfolio.

This type of Social Security analysis works best when the final decision on when to elect Social Security is made in connection with a broader retirement strategy that includes retirement lifestyle goals, other sources of income, investable assets, health status, market conditions and more.

Integrating these choices into a broader retirement strategy can unlock substantial benefits, offering financial security and the freedom to fully enjoy the retirement years. For those nearing retirement, I encourage you to take the time to explore your Social Security options thoroughly. Your future self will thank you. ■

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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BE prepared

Recently, I officiated a funeral for a 105-year-old man and attended the visitation for a 6-year-old child. Despite the vast disparity in their ages, the grievous reality of human frailty was driven home to me with great clarity.

I experienced, tangibly, life's brevity and death's certainty expressed by the Psalmist who said, "As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years... for soon it is gone and we fly away" (Psalm 90:10).

As ironic as it sounds, the pain of loss can profit us in life. According to Solomon, "It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, because that (physical death) is the end of every man and the living takes it to heart" (Ecclesiastes 7:2).

The living take to heart that our earthly existence is finite and heed the advice of Andrew, the angel of death in the old television series "Touched by An Angel." He aptly stated, "Death is not something to fear but something to prepare for."

We prepare for physical death by ensuring we'll live spiritually after it. How can we be assured of spiritual life after physical death? Jesus plainly stated, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live (spiritually) even if He dies (physically), and whoever lives (physically) and believes in me will never die (spiritually)" (John 11:25-26).

To "believe" in Jesus is to wholeheartedly embrace the good news of who He is and what He has done. "All we (humans) like sheep have gone astray" (Isaiah 53:6) from God's perfect moral standards and deserve His wrath (Rom. 6:23). "But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall upon Him" (Christ). Jesus, the fully divine and fully human sinless Son of God, died to take the punishment for our personal rebellion against God and give His righteousness to all who believe (Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:22-24,28; 5:8).

To live (spiritually) when we die (physically), we must personally believe that "Jesus died for our sins...and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

"Belief" is active trust. I knew intellectually the purpose of a hot air balloon. But it wasn't until I actually climbed into a basket connected to a huge nylon balloon inflated by an intense flame and rose into the air that I truly believed I could fly in one.

Be prepared to live when you die. Believe in Jesus and receive the eternal life God promises (John 3:16; 20:30-31). ■



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

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JOINT tenancy vs. tenancy in common

Our firm often sees errors in property deeds that create problems for owners of real estate. There are two ways of holding title to real estate in Iowa: joint tenancy and tenancy in common.

Joint tenancy is a form of ownership where all the owners hold title together. Joint tenancy has a survivorship component; when one owner dies, the interest is extinguished, and the other owners assume the ownership. Usually, all that is required is to record an affidavit reciting that one owner died and that title is vested in the remaining owners.

Tenancy in common is a form of ownership where each owner holds an undivided interest in the property. Unlike joint tenancy, the interest of a tenant in common doesn't terminate upon death. When the owner dies, the interest passes to the decedent's estate. Often, it is necessary to probate the decedent's estate to move an undivided interest to heirs.

The problem arises because, until recently, Iowa law presumed tenancy in common. If a married couple took title as John Doe and Jane Doe, without the phrase "as joint tenants with full rights of survivorship and not as tenants in common," then they each



own 50% of the property. If John dies, his estate would have to be probated so that the court could approve the transfer of half of the property to his heirs. This is frustrating if that heir is Jane, his surviving spouse. The failure to create joint tenancy at the time the property was purchased creates a problem that can only be solved through the timely and expensive probate process.

Iowa Code 557.15 was updated to address this issue. For all deeds executed after Jan. 1, 2015, if the grantees are married, it creates a presumption of joint tenancy, not tenancy in common.

The new law is designed to prevent the probate of a deceased spouse's estate in order to convey half a house. However, the law is prospective — it applies only to deeds executed on or after Jan. 1, 2015. This does not fix older deeds with incorrect vesting language.

It is vital that you understand the differences in types of ownership so that you can ensure that you hold title to your property correctly. If you have questions about how your home is owned, consult with an attorney who is experienced in both real estate and estate planning matters. ■

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

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FULL-OVERLAY cabinets

Are you looking to give your kitchen or bathroom a modern makeover? If so, you should definitely consider full-overlay cabinets. These sleek and stylish cabinets offer a seamless, flat surface that's perfect for creating a clean and uncluttered look.

So, what sets full-overlay cabinets apart from standard ones? For starters, the doors and drawers completely cover the cabinet box, giving you a smooth, frameless appearance. Plus, they're super versatile and can be used in a range of settings, from traditional to contemporary. You can even choose from a variety of materials, like wood, metal or thermofoil, to match your personal style.

One thing to keep in mind is that full-overlay cabinets work best when used consistently throughout a space. Mixing them with standard cabinets can create a disjointed look, so it's best to stick with one style for a cohesive, professional appearance.

Overall, full-overlay cabinets are a great choice for anyone looking to update their kitchen or bathroom. They're space-saving, stylish and offer a clean, modern look that's hard to resist. So be sure to check out full-overlay cabinets when you start looking and see the difference they can make in your home. ■

Information provided by Karen Kolbe, Avid Kitchen and Bath, 2020 Grand Ave., Suite 1300, West Des Moines, 515-410-1968, www.Avid-KB.com.



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PLAN AHEAD By Scott Eriksen

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.

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.



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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



DIRECTIONS

- 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.

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"Good luck to all the students, and here's to another year of fun and learning!"



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 it.

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.

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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.

HOMEMAKERS celebrates 50 years

Homemakers, a destination for quality furniture and home decor, announced its 50th anniversary in business. Since 1974, Homemakers has been dedicated to transforming houses into homes, providing exceptional service and top-notch products to customers across the United States.

Founded by Carl and Ina Merschman, Homemakers has grown into Iowa's largest furniture retailer. Located in Urbandale, their spacious two-story showroom spanning 215,000 square feet features more than 11,000 items for customers to explore. Today, Homemakers stands as one of the nation's largest furniture retailers.

In 2000, Homemakers joined the family of Nebraska Furniture Mart, a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway. Despite this transition, Homemakers remains proudly managed and operated by second and third-generation members of the Merschman family, ensuring that the values and traditions established by its founders continue to thrive.

For more information about Homemakers' 50th anniversary celebrations and upcoming events, visit www.homemakers.com/events. ■

HIROS publishes children's book

Samra Hiros of Urbandale, an author, public health professional and mother of two, announces the release of her new children's book, "Hannah's Magic Adventures: Around the Globe."



"As a young girl, I dreamed of the incredible journey my life would take, and I couldn't have imagined the path and possibilities that unfolded. Life is truly a magical journey," says Hiros, reflecting on her own experiences that inspired the book.

Inspired by her diverse experiences, Hiros crafts a tale that celebrates cultural diversity, curiosity and the magic of exploration.

"Growing up in a rural German town surrounded by rolling hills and majestic castles, I dreamed of princesses like Hannah. My best friend, Lisa, who remains a dear friend to this day, taught me the value of friendship, hospitality and cherishing those bonds. Our 29-year friendship is a testament to the power of connection," Hiros shares, highlighting the importance of lifelong relationships.

In 2016, Hiros received the prestigious Iowa Passport to Prosperity Award through the Iowa International Center, given annually to only four immigrants in the state of Iowa who have made significant contributions to their communities.

Her book is available through Amazon and at Beaverdale Books, Books-A-Million (BAM), McLean and Eakin Booksellers, Grounds for Celebration (Windsor Heights and Beaverdale), and various online retailers. To purchase signed copies, reach out to suzunovic@hotmail.com. ■

URBANDALE Public Library news

One4Water with Hank Kohler

Hank Kohler will share how a nearly 2,000-mile canoe trip in 2021 turned into a passion for river conservation on Tuesday, July 30 at 6 p.m.

Kohler traveled down the Mississippi in his canoe with his friends to use the journey to spread a message and raise money for conservation efforts. After 64 days and 1,900 miles of paddling, the group arrived at The Gulf of Mexico. A year later, Kohler published his novel, "One4Water: Paddling North to Polar Bears and South to Alligators." Through donations and book sales, "One4Water" has raised tens of thousands of dollars to help fund youth conservation programs at The National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium in Dubuque.

Hear more from Kohler about the history behind his trips, the mission of One4Water, the ripple effect the donations have had, and his thoughts on our planet's future.

UpLift Book Discussion

The Urbandale Public Library is partnering with other Iowa libraries and Uplift - The Central Iowa Basic Income Pilot on a series of programs aimed at having important community conversations about poverty and its effect on Iowa.

For this special book discussion, we will be reading "Poverty, By America" by Matthew Desmond, in which the Pulitzer Prize-winning, bestselling author of "Evicted" reimagines the debate on poverty, making a new and bracing argument about why it persists in America: because the rest of us benefit from it. Copies of the book are available to check out at the front desk.

A 30-minute film screening of "Raising the Floor" will follow the book discussion on Tuesday, Aug. 20 at 6 p.m.

August Book Sale

The library will hold a book sale from Wednesday, Aug. 7 through Sunday, Aug. 11. The book sale will be open during regular library hours in the ICN Room. You can find fiction and nonfiction for all ages, as well as puzzles, audiobooks, cake pans and more.

We'll also share a sneak preview on Tuesday, Aug. 6 during National Night Out from 5-7:30 p.m.

Summer Reading Challenge reminder

We hope you've been tracking your reading and already collected a mid-point prize. Be sure to complete your reading log by July 31 if you're using the Beanstack app. If you've been tracking with a paper log, you have until Sunday, Aug. 11 to fill out the grand prize entry form. ■

Urbandale Public Library

3520 86th St., Urbandale, IA 50322
515-278-3945
www.urbandalelibrary.org
Mon.-Thu.: 9 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Fri.-Sat.: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sun.: noon to 6 p.m.

MEET Darlene Wagner

Starting a new chapter of her career as a work-based learning facilitator



Darlene Wagner, second from right, with co-workers Jill Duffield, Amber McKenna, Holly Secaur and Carmen Salter.

Darlene Wagner, who grew up in Osage, decided to become a teacher at a young age. She graduated from the University of Northern Iowa and taught for a few years before working toward a school counseling degree at Drake University. Now, after almost two decades working as an Urbandale High School counselor, Wagner is excited to start her new position as the work-based learning facilitator.

“Urbandale is a wonderful district for a variety of reasons. We have a supportive community and so many resources available to us. Our size is another thing that I believe we have going for us. We are considered a big school, but we are actually a smaller community in which students and staff really get to know one another,” Wagner says.

Wagner likes working with students at the high school level because she never knows what to expect. Her students are independent yet still young and in need of guidance. Wagner is looking forward to her new position because she will be able to support students as they make some of the most important decisions of their lives.

“I enjoy helping them figure out a plan or solution for themselves and then helping support them along the way. That’s why I’m looking forward to this position,” Wagner says.

In her new role, Wagner will be building the work-based learning program from the ground up. Not only are there many directions to take the program, but Wagner also has access to many resources and a lot of support. In fact, Wagner has already begun meeting with people and visiting other programs. She plans to work closely with teachers, the community, and families to determine what is already being done to support the program and what students and the community need.

“Being able to find ways to help students find a career path, or at least get one step closer to that goal, has always been my favorite part of my job as a school counselor. I believe this position will allow me to focus on that and really make an organized and effective WBL program,” Wagner says.

In her free time, Wagner enjoys reading mostly fiction and fosters cats with her family. This summer, she also plans to visit family in Washington, D.C., South Dakota and Washington state. ■

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

Check for cancellations

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

Mobile Recreation

Various dates and parks

Join Urbandale parks and recreation staff at various parks throughout Urbandale. Staff will bring the mobile recreation van, with games, activities, crafts and sports equipment, free for everyone to use. Look for the City van with its logo.

- July 22, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Jeff Harm Park
- July 22, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Bestland Park
- July 24, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Walnut Creek

Regional Park Large Shelter, 4100 Walnut Creek Park Road

• July 25, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the All-Inclusive Playground

- July 25, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Murphy Park
- July 26, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Lions Park Centennial

Open Shelter

- July 29, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Bestland Park

- July 30, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Donald J.

Brush Park

- July 30, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Walker Johnston Park

- July 31, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Barrett Boesen Park

Shelter

- Aug. 1, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the All-Inclusive Playground

- Aug. 1, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Murphy Park

- Aug. 5, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Jeff Harm Park

- Aug. 5, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Bestland Park

- Aug. 6, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Donald J.

Brush Park

- Aug. 6, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Walker Johnston Park

- Aug. 7, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Walnut Creek

Regional Park Large Shelter, 4100 Walnut Creek Park Road

Road

- Aug. 8, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the All-Inclusive Playground

Inclusive Playground

- Aug. 8, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Murphy Park

- Aug. 9, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Lions Park Centennial

Open Shelter

Urbandale

Performance Series

Saturday, July 27, 1-3 p.m.

Charles Gabus Memorial Tree Park and Gardens, 3400 86th St.

The Carey Crowson Trio will be performing for the July Urbandale Performance Series.



Stage productions

Ankeny Community Theatre

1932 S.W. Third St., Ankeny

www.ankenycommunitytheatre.com

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

Des Moines Performing Arts

Des Moines Civic Center, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines

www.dmpa.org

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

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"

Art Shows

Des Moines Art Center

4700 Grand Ave., Des Moines

www.desmoinesartcenter.org

Through Sept. 22: "Hurricane Season" by Deborah Jack

Ankeny Art Center

1520 S.W. Ordinance Road, Ankeny

www.ankenyardcenter.org

July 31 - Sept. 24: Seso Marentes "explores the intersections of identity, culture and home through art."

July 31 - Sept. 24: Jonah Haug specializes in mixed media art and graphic design.

Mainframe Studios

900 Keosauqua Way, Des Moines

www.mainframestudios.org

First Fridays of the month: See the creators behind the masterpieces while enjoying live music, food and art.

Anderson Gallery

Harmon Fine Arts Center, 1310 25th St., Des Moines

andersongallery.wp.drake.edu

Sept. 5 - Oct. 20: Ken Buhler and Kim Uchiyama

Polk County Heritage Gallery

Polk County Administration Building,

111 Court Ave., Des Moines

polkcountyheritagegallery.org

Through Aug. 15: Iowa Exhibited 2024 - Annual Juried Show



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Urbandale 2024 Summer Concert Series

Tuesday, Aug. 13,
6:30-8 p.m.
Lions Park, 72nd Street and
N.W. Aurora Ave.

Enjoy live music by Opus Taylor.



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.

Square Dance Lessons

Sundays starting Sept. 8,
6:30 p.m.
Douglas Avenue Presbyterian
Church, 4601 Douglas Ave.,
Des Moines

Ankeny Square Dance Club is sponsoring lessons. Cost is \$20 per person for the entire session, accepted at the third lesson. Attend with or without a dance partner. You'll learn the calls, one at a time, taught by a caller (instructor) and volunteers. For more information, call Sandy Townsend, 515-294-2624, or visit www.ankenysquares.com.

County Fairs

- **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



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.

Hinterland Music Festival

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.



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.

Together Through Sound Music Festival

Sept. 8, 1-10 p.m.
Riverview Park, 710 Corning Ave., Des Moines

This free, family-friendly event promises a vibrant day filled with diverse musical performances, interactive activities and community spirit. The festival will showcase an incredible lineup of local talent, featuring performances by the Blake Shaw Big-ish Band, Soten Taiko, Son Peruchos, Sonny Side Up, DJ Loose and the Real Afro Warriors, and a full symphony orchestra directed by Joshua Barlage. These artists will bring a rich tapestry of musical genres to life, ensuring there's something for everyone to enjoy and new genres to explore. Young attendees can explore their creativity at the Make Your Own Instrument Bar, enjoy face painting, and experience the magic of music at the Instrument Petting Zoo. In addition to the musical performances, the festival will feature local artists showcasing their unique creations and a variety of food trucks. For more information, visit www.togetherthroughsound.com or email info@togetherthroughsound.com. ■

CENTURY-OLD flagpole has special meaning

Now proudly standing at the Olmsted-Urban House

During Urbandale's Centennial year in 2017, a group of Urbandale alumni were building a float for the Fourth of July Parade. They noticed a picture of the old K-12 building that was located at the intersection of 70th Street and Douglas Avenue and remembered that a flagpole sat atop the building.

Audrey (Collins) DeCarlo, a 1964 graduate, was helping build the float. She shared that, after the building was torn down, the pole was relocated to her home, where it loomed in the backyard for many years.

That's because Audrey's father-in-law, Al DeCarlo, owned White and DeCarlo Demolition, which was the company that tore the building down in 1977 after it was no longer being used. Al took the flagpole to the home of Audrey and her husband, Eddie, since Audrey had attended the school.

Eventually, the DeCarlos sold their home to Rick and Mary Kading (classes of 1976 and 1977). When hearing Audrey tell the story of the flagpole, the Kadings remarked they knew that pole well.

It was still sitting in their backyard.

After this conversation, the group of alumni decided it would be neat to incorporate the flagpole into their float design for the parade. It took four very strong alumni to carry the pole, which is made of cast iron, down 70th Street from the Kading home to the Kading Properties business where they were building the float.

After the 2017 parade, the Kading family donated the flagpole to the Urbandale Alumni Association. The group started discussing where to best install the pole. In the meantime, they asked the Urbandale Historical Society if they could store it on their grounds. The organization agreed and provided a space for it.

The Alumni Association Board decided to refurbish the flagpole, as it was showing its age after weathering all types of storms for many decades. Audrey DeCarlo, who was a member of the board, offered to spearhead the project since the flagpole was near and dear to her heart.

The decision was ultimately made to permanently install the pole at the Olmsted-Urban House, which is home to a great deal of Urbandale memorabilia.

Not long after the installation project began, Audrey passed away. But, before her death, she shared with her son, Dan (Class of 1984), that she wanted the project completed even if something happened to her. Since her passing, her children and the Urbandale Alumni Association did just that.

On June 30, the project was finally completed with a proclamation read by Mayor Bob Andeweg dedicating the flagpole in Audrey's memory.

There's a brick plaza around the flagpole at the Olmsted-Urban home, which includes bricks with messages and names of Urbandale



The flagpole was originally atop the Urbandale K-12 building that has since been torn down.



Urbandale alumni gather for the flagpole dedication. Seventy years of graduates are represented in the photo, with the earliest from the Class of 1954 and latest from the Class of 2024.

alumni, school staff, parents and community members.

Meribeth Haynes, a 1976 graduate of Urbandale and chair of the Urbandale Alumni Association Board, explains that the flagpole project has taken on special meaning for graduates who attended the K-12 building during their school careers. She shared that Margaret Ann (Boals) Boatwright from the Class of 1956 said many of them lost their identity

and connection to Urbandale schools when the building was torn down.

"Finding and preserving the pole has given them a connection again to the schools and community," Haynes says. "With so much new construction of Urbandale school buildings in the last few years, this flagpole has taken on new meaning for many of the older alumni whose buildings no longer exist or are completely remodeled."

Next year is a big year for the flagpole, as it will officially have been around for a century.

If you would like to order a brick from the Urbandale Alumni Association, visit urbsaf.org/fundraising/urbandale-alumni-bricks.html. Questions may be directed to Meribeth Haynes at haynesm@urbsaf.org. ■



Meribeth Haynes with the plaque that will go by the flagpole. Dan DeCarlo holds a photo of his parents. The pole was dedicated in his mother's memory.

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HURRY! POLL CLOSES SEPT. 3, 2024.

See rules and vote at www.iowalivingmagazines.com/residentpoll. One vote per resident, please.

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FOOD AND DRINK

- Restaurant
- Restaurant for Breakfast
- Restaurant for Lunch
- Restaurant for Dinner
- Restaurant for Dessert
- Place for Ice Cream
- Pizza Establishment
- Bar
- Coffee Shop
- Catering Company
- Server/Bartender

AUTOMOTIVE

- Auto Service
- Auto Body Shop
- Car Dealership
- Auto Parts Store

COMMUNITY

- Preschool/Daycare
- Non Profit
- School (name of building)
- Park
- Community Festival or Event
- Church
- Pastor
- Chamber of Commerce

SHOPPING

- Grocery Store
- Boutique
- Retail Store
- Thrift Store
- Home Improvement Retail Store
- Liquor Store
- Nursery or Garden Center
- Place to Purchase a Gift for a Man
- Place to Purchase a Gift for a Woman

ENTERTAINMENT

- Dad/Child Date Spot
- Mom/Child Date Spot
- Place to Take Your Mom and Dad
- Place to Take Your Kids or Grandkids
- Place for Children's Birthday Parties
- Golf Course

HEALTH/BEAUTY

- Hair Salon
- Health Clinic
- Dental Office
- Orthodontist Office
- Mental Health Services
- Chiropractic Office
- Vision Care
- Health Club or Gym
- Pharmacy

HEALTH/BEAUTY

- Cosmetic Services
- Physical Therapy
- Dance Studio
- Gymnastics Studio
- Tumbling Studio

OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- Financial Planner
- Law Firm
- Accounting Firm
- Veterinarian
- Dog Groomer
- Pet Care
- Lawn Care Business
- Landscaping Company
- Heating and Cooling Business
- Electrical Business
- Plumbing Company
- Senior Living Establishment
- Insurance Company
- Realtor
- Bank/Credit Union
- Photographer
- Place for Guests to Stay
- Home Building/Remodeling Contractor
- Exterior Contractor (siding, roofing, windows, doors)
- Pest Control
- Tree Service

GRAND Opening

DMOS celebrated the grand opening of its new location at 4850 100th St., Urbandale, with the Urbandale Chamber on June 17.



Cristen Rich and Monica Aunan



Holly Birkey, Derek Temple and Dylan Temple



Dani Lynch and Aaliyah Moore



Ryan Dea and Kevin Lease



David Russel and Aisha R. Syed



Andy Erickson and Liz Williamson



Gail and Ross Barnett



Scott Reentz and Shawn Brown



Stacy and Rob Walker

OUT & ABOUT

50 YEAR Anniversary

Homemakers, 10215 Douglas Ave., Urbandale, celebrated 50 years in business on June 20.



Aaron Burns and Lauren Wiskus



Emily and Evan Aschbrenner



Nick Jung and Anny Merschman



Dave McNelly and Brenda Krumel



Derek Zarn and Mary Horton



Mena Nayrei and Amanda Fay



Kate Thomas and Erik Schmidt



Carol and Mark Weaver



Megan Muur, Allison Miller and Whylie Massey



Chris Rohloff and Paul Robidoux



Stephanie Stanisic and Jack Tiarks

CLASSIFIEDS

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FOR SALE

MANUFACTURED HOMES, (2025, Vinyl/Shingled, 2Br start at \$39,999). (16x80) (3Br-2Ba.) \$89,999. (28X64) (4Br-2Ba) \$94,999. Delivered Factory-Direct, E. Of I-35, North of I-80, to Minnesota Border. 319-239-1920. (mcn)

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IF YOU HAD HIP, KNEE OR HEART VALVE REPLACEMENT SURGERY AND SUFFERED A BACTERIAL INFECTION POST-OPERATIVELY and a Bair Hugger (BLUE BLANKET) forced-air warming blanket was used during the surgery, between 2020 - present time, you may be entitled to compensation. Call Attorney Charles H. Johnson 1-800-535-5727. (mcn)

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WANT TO BUY your manufactured or mobile home 1990 and newer CENTURY HOMES of OSKALOOSA 641-672-2344 (mcn)

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

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FINANCIAL

The COVID crisis has cost us all something. Many have lost jobs and financial security. Have \$10K In Debt? Credit Cards. Medical Bills. Car Loans. Call NATIONAL DEBT RELIEF! We can help! Get a FREE debt relief quote: Call 1-866-552-0649. (mcn)

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ATTENTION OXYGEN THERAPY USERS! Discover Oxygen Therapy That Moves with You with Inogen Portable Oxygen Concentrators.

FREE information kit. Call 1-888-815-4903. (mcn)

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

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