

ANKENY

SEPTEMBER 2022

Living

MAGAZINE

A new LOOK

Residents share their home
improvement projects

New volunteer hub launched

EDUCATION

Nelson watches son embark on racing career

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WELCOME

SIMPLIFICATION efforts

As summer closes and fall creeps in, you may find yourself looking at your list of home improvement projects that you had great intentions of doing in the warm months but haven't been able to cross off the list quite yet. I can certainly relate.

In a next-stage-of-life simplification effort, my wife and I decided to sell our family home of 17 years and move into a townhome.

Not in a simplification effort, we also bought a lake cabin that needed a number of improvements. Our goal was to have the projects completed before summer began so we could get outside and enjoy the warm weather.

We made great progress on the indoor projects. What we didn't plan on were the outdoor ones. With a new septic system installed last fall, we had serious lawn work to do. Irrigation system installed. Lawn seeded. Bushes planted. The list went on, and so did the weeds. When will all the projects end? The answer, of course, is never. But we've got a few months before the snow falls to tackle the remaining tasks.

If you are like us, you will take on some DIY projects but will reach out to professionals, as well. I have often regretted taking on projects myself, but I have never regretted hiring a pro. Whether you are looking to start a new project and need ideas, or if you are up to your neck in tasks and need help, our feature story this month will surely aid you.

Thanks for reading. ■



SHANE GOODMAN

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Read more of Shane Goodman's columns each weekday morning by subscribing to The Daily Umbrella email newsletter for free at www.thedailyumbrella.com.



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A new **LOOK**

Residents share their home improvement projects

By Ashley Rullestad

Homeowners renovate for various reasons. Maybe they want a style that is more comfortable or attractive. Or maybe they want to add value should they decide to sell. For others, after spending many years living in a home, some things are simply broken, out of date or need attention. Whatever the reason, renovating can be a daunting task and requires a good plan — and often professionals who can help along the way. While the renovation process is time-consuming and disrupts everyday living, most say they couldn't be happier with the end result.

Jay and Shelly Jacobson wanted their guest suite bathroom to feel luxurious.

FEATURE

Bathroom glam

Jay and Shelly Jacobson moved to Ankeny in 2007. They had lived and worked in Pella where Jay managed a funeral home for 13 years prior to moving to town. When they chose their townhouse, they were fortunate that it was still in the construction phase, so they were able to select some of the finishes they wanted. However, the floor plan had already been established.

Four years ago, they remodeled the main floor, taking out a wall separating the living room from the guest bedroom, enlarging the living room, installing a fireplace, and adding an additional window to bring in more natural light.

The basement in the townhouse was unfinished, and they knew they wanted to finish the space eventually. The original builder had already plumbed the basement for a future bathroom.

"We wanted to put in a finished guest suite with bathroom and bedroom, as we enjoy having overnight guests and want them to feel pampered," Jay says. "We wanted a space with an oversized tile shower and wanted to use an antique sideboard as the bathroom vanity. This was something we had done in our home we built in Pella, and it was a way of bringing a piece of that home here. We

BEFORE



A modern, extra wide shower and an antique sideboard with a green glass sink highlight the bathroom remodel Jay and Shelly Jacobson completed.

AFTER



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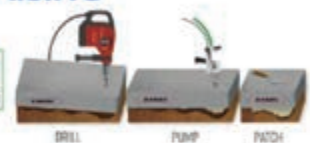
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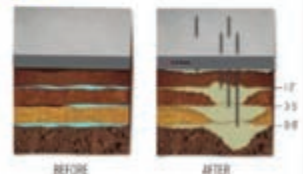
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FEATURE

wanted our guests to feel like they were in their own spa retreat when they stayed in the suite.”

Jay met the owner of Elk River Contracting at a meeting of the Ankeny Business Network. He had started his own company early in 2022 after working as a project manager for a commercial contracting company for many years. After having several conversations with him, Jay learned that he shared much of my same interests in architecture, design, construction and attention to detail when it comes to home improvement projects. Most of the design came from Jay.

“I’m a bit of an armchair architect, so I’d had much of the floor plan sketched out for several years. I did hire a professional architect to take my vision and put it into drawings that Elk River Contracting could easily transform into a finished product. Many of the design elements come from my wife’s and my love of craftsman-style homes.”

The bathroom is nearly finished now, and they say they’re thrilled with the results. The couple also has plans for a future kitchenette and home theater in the remainder of the finished basement space.

“My favorite thing in the design is the shower. I spent many, many months laying out and reworking the design for tile patterns to arrive at the final design. My wife’s favorite thing is, and has always been, the green glass bowl sink.”

When it comes to remodeling, Jay suggests: Have a plan and go for it.

“Don’t wait. Do it and enjoy the space the way you envision it. Don’t wait to fix or update things for when you are getting ready to sell the property. Ask lots of questions. The best money we spent was having an architect look over our sketches and put our ideas into formal plans.”

BEFORE



The McKillips' backyard before adding a cabana.

Backyard oasis

Nicole and Tony McKillip have lived in their home on Ankeny’s southwest side for almost 14 years.

“When we first moved into our house, we were just starting our family, and we liked our house as it was. We knew we would finish the basement but didn’t think then about updating anything else.”

As time went on, their family grew to four kids, Trey, 16, Carson, 13, and twins Quinn and Kylie, 8. After COVID hit, and people were spending more time outdoors, the McKillips decided it was time to take on an outside project.

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AFTER



The McKillips' backyard oasis includes a poolside cabana that provides ample space for relaxing and entertaining.

"I wanted a backyard paradise for our family to hang out. Instead of having to travel to a beach for that peaceful, relaxing feeling, I just wanted to have that stepping out to our backyard."

Valley Pools and Hot Tubs installed an in-ground pool in the fall of 2021. Nicole was pleased with the service and experience, as everyone she dealt with was helpful and quick to answer questions they had as they went through the process.

To further enhance the pool setting, they also wanted to add some sort of entertainment space to relax in. A friend of theirs, Matt Madsen of Madsen Renovations, does construction and remodeling, and Jason and Nicole had seen some of the beautiful home projects he had done.

Matt and his business partner, Jason Moore of Spot On Construction, came over and did

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FEATURE

BEFORE



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The Kenseths' master bedroom and bath were remodeled with a unique layout that allowed natural light to flow throughout and provided the walk-in closet they wanted.

an estimate for them. They had a couple of pictures of a basic gazebo cover that they were thinking about, and Matt and Jason came up with the design from there.

"It was their idea to use barn wood and

pillars — and that is what added so much character to our cabana. The whitewash really gives it a beach feel."

The McKillips are thrilled with the new space, which was completed in time for summer

hangouts with family and friends. Nicole's favorite thing about the project is how it makes her family feel. She says it is like their own little outdoor oasis right at their house. It also adds a lot of living space onto the house because, even



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FEATURE

BEFORE



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A walk-in shower was a must for the Kenseths when they remodeled.

during the heat of the summer, they are able to head outside and swim or relax in the cabana's shade instead of being cooped up indoors.

McKillip tells people who are thinking about taking on a project to go for it. You don't have to necessarily recoup the cost of your investment when you sell the property, if that project is something your family will love and enjoy — especially if you don't see yourselves moving any time soon.

"I think if you know you are going to be in your house for a while, make the changes that you are excited about and that are good for your family and don't worry about what the next owner would like. Matt, Jason, and their crew did such an amazing job with the backyard, and we could not be happier with the results."

Master redo

The Kenseths moved into their house in 2003 and began slowly updating parts of the home as funds and their schedules allowed.

"A lot of the work was just paint, which we could tackle ourselves, but we hired professionals for the more complicated projects like bathrooms and the kitchen," Debbie says.

They saved the master renovation for last, as it was going to be the biggest project both in terms of time and cost. Their wish list included double sinks, a walk-in shower and walk-in closet.

"I spent many hours imagining how it could all work but could never quite figure it out on my own. We did quite a bit of research on local businesses that could help with the project and settled on Red House Remodeling in West Des Moines."

They were easy to work with from the beginning, Debbie says. She shared their vision for the space, and they came to her home to take measurements and photos of the existing space. Their in-house designer then came up with three different designs for the space, and they were impressed with all of them.

The family ended up choosing the most creative option that flowed the best for their needs, and they are happy with the end result.

"My favorite part was how the bathroom and closet were divided

AFTER



without losing any natural light for either space. My advice for those wanting to make a change is to do your research into any business you may hire and be prepared for a glitch in the project — there is always one." ■

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REAL ESTATE

By Mindy Selix and Yvonne Silvers

5 BENEFITS of working with a community bank for your mortgage

From record low interest rates in 2020 and 2021 to rapidly rising interest rates in 2022, or the strongest seller's market in history to homebuilding material shortages, the last couple years have brought challenges and opportunities to those looking to buy a home.

These unique scenarios have made it more important to work with a community bank that has the expertise to meet unique lending needs. Here are five benefits you could experience when working on your next home mortgage.

1. Product offering is based on your needs.

In-house loan products have been developed through our experiences working with customers, so they're based on your needs. And, if you're unsure of what kind of mortgage product is right for you, expert loan originators will make a recommendation. They will consider the rate environment, your personal financial factors, such as monthly payment budget, and how long you plan to own the home to help you make the right choice.

2. Local decision-making. One of the benefits of working with a community bank is that local decision-making allows for quick turn times. In addition to being more efficient, local decision-making also means your loan originator has more opportunity to discuss your case with the underwriter. This often makes the biggest difference for those facing difficult financing situations that national financial institutions may turn away.

3. Closing takes place with your local lender. This gives the loan originator the opportunity to wish you well in your new home in person. Checks are also distributed at closing, which normally allows immediate possession of your home.

4. Easy ability to refinance when the time's right. Interest rates are currently on the rise, which means homebuyers may want to refinance if rates come back down. When interest rates begin dropping, there's often a high demand for refinancing. Community banks tend to prioritize existing customers until they have the capacity to service non-customers, too. Therefore, obtaining your mortgage with a community bank will help make refinancing much easier in the future.

5. Help with a full array of other financial needs. If you'll soon be undertaking a significant home improvement or other major expense like education or medical bills, a home equity line of credit may be just what you need. This loan is based upon the equity you have in your property. You will get approved for a certain amount, and the money will sit in an account waiting for you to spend it. You are only charged interest for the money you take out of the account. Much like refinancing, you benefit from having your mortgage with the same bank that is equipped to help you with other financial needs, like a home equity loan, in the future. ■



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CREW of two

Nelson watches son embark on racing career.



Matt Nelson, Jr. and his father, Matt Nelson, Sr., work on the 1985 Monte Carlo that Junior competes in each week at Boone Speedway.

Matt Nelson, Sr. of Ankeny began building race cars in southern Iowa when he was in high school in the late 1980s and early 1990s but put things on pause to start a family.

The years passed, but his love of the sport didn't. Eventually, he passed that passion on to his son, Matt Nelson, Jr., who, just this year, at the age of 19, began to test his mettle on the track himself.

His first race was in June. The rookie has been driving a 1985 Monte Carlo purchased on Facebook Marketplace as a bare bones machine. Nine months later, it was in racing shape and time to do what he saw Dad do: race.

"We used to go Boone to watch the races every weekend, but we stopped that for awhile," Junior says. "Just last year we started going again, and I got really interested in it."

On April 9, Junior officially kicked off his racing career.

"There definitely were a lot of nerves going into it," he says.

That nervousness lasted about as long as his engine did: a lap and a half.

"It blew up," he laughs, noting that it took a couple of weeks to get another engine in and get ready for round two. In the process, they upgraded the transmission and learned the "joys of phinagling" a larger engine into the car. After things were finally track-ready, the rains came. Two weekends in a row of no racing. Finally, a month later, it was time to get behind the wheel once again.

The car drove a lot better. The engine, although they weren't able to get it to the RPM they liked, at least lasted. The race itself was a learning experience.

"It's definitely not as easy as it looks when you're watching it," Junior says. "It's a lot harder to stay off of people when you get into the corners, things like that."

Junior says he could feel himself getting more and more comfortable over the course of the next five races. One week he started his heat race at the front and led six out of the eight laps. All the work in their Ankeny garage was beginning to pay off.

"We probably put five to eight hours a week in here," Senior says.

Despite the learning curve, long hours and added expense, Junior's interest in the sport is at an all-time high. He's hooked.

"It's an experience that's hard to explain to anyone," he says. "You kind of have to be there and feel it for yourself." ■

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HVAC

By Scott Bontrager

REDUCE your utility bills

Staying cool is expensive, and, sadly, the cost increases every year. Let's discuss a few simple actions that can be taken now to help reduce your utility bills.



Repair leaky ductwork

If your home is new (less than 10 years old), you probably have well-sealed ductwork. If you have an older home, an average of 10-40% of your cooling dollars can be leaking through the gaps in your duct joints. That means cool air is being wasted in your attic, crawl space or your basement. A professional can test and fix the leaks, but, if you're up for the challenge, you can seal them on your own. Bottom line, fix the leaks.

Install a programmable thermostat

You can save energy by setting your thermostat 7-8 degrees warmer/cooler (depending on the season) while everyone is away at school and work. A programmable thermostat will automatically return your home to the desired comfort level upon the scheduled time. Besides the convenience, having a programmable thermostat can save you quite a bit of money over time — as much as 10%.

Switch to LED

Energy-efficient lighting allows you to use the same amount of light in your home at a lower cost. According to ENERGY STAR, LED lights use up to 90% less energy than incandescent lighting. They also last a lot longer and produce little to no heat, reducing maintenance and cooling costs. If you are still using incandescent bulbs, this is one of the fastest ways to cut your energy bill. Choose bulbs with ENERGY STAR approval for quality products that contribute the highest savings.

Annual maintenance

One of the most significant benefits of annual HVAC maintenance is lower energy bills. This isn't a DIY task per se, but more of an action you need to take. Your heating and cooling system will become less efficient when it's not taken care of properly. This results in higher monthly bills and compromises the comfort of your home. Routine annual maintenance can help reduce future repairs, keep warranties valid, and will help maintain the efficiency of your system.

There are many do-it-yourself hacks to help lower your energy costs. With the cost of living being so high, we are all trying to save money where we can. Take action on just a few of these items today, and you'll reap the savings quickly. ■

Information provided by Scott Bontrager, 72 Degrees Comfort Company, 811 S.W. Ordinance Road, Ankeny, 515-200-2728.

EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Check for cancellations

60th Anniversary of Cornerstone Baptist Church

Sept. 25, 10:45 a.m.
Ankeny Cornerstone Baptist Church, 701 E. First St., Ankeny

Cornerstone Baptist Church of Ankeny will celebrate 60 years of faithful service to the Lord with a special worship service followed by a potluck luncheon. Historical pictures and documents of the church will be on display. The public is invited to attend.

Ankeny Art Center fall classes

Various dates
Ankeny Art Center, 1520 S.W. Ordinance Road, Ankeny

Registration for fall classes at the Ankeny Art Center is now open. The following adult classes are offered for the fall: Watercolor Basics, Basics of Acrylic Painting (an eight-week workshop), and Basic Drawing. For more information and to register, visit <https://www.ankenyardcenter.org/adult-classes>.

Four-week classes in Pottery and Art Exploration are offered for grades K-8. For more information and to register, visit <https://www.ankenyardcenter.org/k-8-school-year>.

Pumpkin Pinch Pots, a three-week hand-building workshop is also offered. Learn how to make a pumpkin sculpture out of clay and how to underglaze pottery for a unique effect. For more information and to register, visit https://www.ankenyardcenter.org/service-page/workshop-pumpkin-pots?referral=service_list_widget. No pottery experience needed.

Ice Cream Social

Monday, Sept. 26, 5:30-7 p.m.
Hillside Park, 1925 S.E. Four Mile Drive, Ankeny

The Ankeny Park Board will host this free ice cream social. The social provides an opportunity for Ankeny families to enjoy an evening at the park and get to know members of the Ankeny Park Board and Parks & Recreation staff. Games for kids will also be part of the evening's festivities. Ice cream will be available while supplies last.



Fall Ball golf outing

Wednesday, Oct. 5 with an 11 a.m. shotgun start
Briarwood Golf Club of Ankeny, 3405 N.E. Trilein Drive

The Chamber golf outings are always a ton of fun and a great way to step away from the office and enjoy the great Iowa weather. Members can sign up as an individual or as a foursome. If you are interested in joining the Chamber, contact Jamie Anderson, senior director of membership & partnerships, at janderson@ankenyard.org.



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Check for cancellations

Discover Ankeny

Thursday, Nov. 3,
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Enjoy an evening filled with everything Ankeny has to offer. You will discover a new taste for a restaurant or caterer you might not have tried before and experience a new retail option. Tickets will go on sale soon.

Election-related dates

Check and make sure you are registered to vote at www.sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterreg/regtovote.

Know these important dates for the upcoming General Election.

- **Wednesday, Oct. 19:** First day of absentee voting
- **Monday, Oct. 24:** Pre-registration deadline; deadline to request absentee ballot to be mailed
- **Saturday, Nov. 5:** County auditor's office will be open for absentee voting
- **Monday, Nov. 7:** Absentee ballot in-person deadline. Be sure to verify what time your county auditor's office closes. Polk County Auditor's Office closes at 5 p.m.
- **Tuesday, Nov. 8:** General Election polls open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.; absentee ballot receipt deadline is 8 p.m. Find your polling location (it may have changed) at www.voterready.iowa.gov.

What positions will be on the ballot in Polk County? U.S. Senator, U.S. House, Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, State Auditor, Secretary of Agriculture, County Treasurer, County Attorney, County Recorder, Iowa House District 43 (Polk County), Iowa House District 44 (Polk County).

Beaverdale Fall Fest

Friday and Saturday, Sept. 16-17
Downtown Beaverdale, Beaver Avenue and Urbandale Avenue between Beaver Crest Drive and Adams Avenue

With more than three decades of tradition and a neighborhood that has been around for more than 100 years, the Beaverdale Fall Festival is an annual must for many residents. Enjoy food vendors, carnival, market, tree dedication, inflatables, several live bands, car night, belly dancing, karaoke, talent show and more. Due to construction, a parade will not be held this year. As part of the celebration, Beaverdale Books will have sidewalk specials and free ARCs (Advance Reader Copies) both days. Plus, a Trivia Contest will be held at 7 p.m. on Friday and a Sidewalk Chalk Contest from 1-3 p.m. on Saturday. See the details online at www.fallfestival.org.

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

Check for cancellations

Meet the Author events

Various dates

At Beaverdale Books, 2629 Beaver Ave. No. S1, Des Moines, unless otherwise indicated

Beaverdale Books is hosting several Meet the Author events coming up, including:

- Sunday, Sept. 18, 1 p.m., meet Graham Spanier, author of "In the Lions' Den."
- Tuesday, Sept. 27, 6:30 p.m. meet John T. Price, author of "All is Leaf"; Jody Keisner, author of "Curing Season"; and Kristine Langley Mahler, author of "Under My Bed."
- Tuesday, Sept. 27, 7 p.m. at Central Presbyterian Church, 3829 Grand Ave. Meet Beth Hoffman, author of "Bet the Farm: The Dollars and Sense of Growing Food in America." She will be in conversation with former, longtime Des Moines Register columnist Chuck Offenburger. This book is a first-hand account of the perils of farming today and a personal exploration of more just and sustainable ways of producing food.
- Thursday, Sept. 29, 6:30 p.m., meet Catherine Haustien, author of "Wrinkles in Spacetime."



Windsor Heights Book Fair

Sunday, Oct. 2, 12-6 p.m.

Masonic Lodge, 1141 69th St., Windsor Heights

Celebrate local authors, artists and businesses at the first Windsor Heights Book Fair — a unique yet traditional event that will feature more than a dozen local authors, including a Novelist Table hosted by Beaverdale Books and featuring, at noon, Kay Fenton Smith and Carol McGarvey, "Baking Blue Ribbons"; at 1 p.m., Dave Price, "Caucus Chaos"; at 2 p.m., Mary Lee Ashford, "Sugar and Spice Mystery" Series; at 3 p.m. Nick Holmberg, "Emergent"; at 4 p.m., Rachel Mans McKenny, "The Butterfly Effect"; and, at 5 p.m., R.E. Bellesmith, "Light Keeper Chronicle: The Unspoken Prophecy."

The Windsor Heights Book Fair will also feature a Children's Table, with the following children's authors: at noon, Jill Friestad-Tate; at 1 p.m., Patty DeDurr; at 2 p.m., Joseph Cassis; at 3 p.m., Liz Bedia; at 4 p.m., Brooke VanSickle; and, at 5 p.m., Cindy Johnson.

Renaissance Faire

Sept. 17-18

Sleepy Hollow, 4051 Dean Ave., Des Moines

Travel back a few centuries at Sleepy Hollow's Renaissance Faire, held annually the first three weekends of September. Explore 18 acres that include a quaint English village, picturesque landscapes, two castles, 30 merchant shops, eight stages of entertainment, a joust arena, blacksmith's forge and pirates' cove. Costumes are optional but encouraged. Grounds are open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., rain or shine. Admission covers the entire weekend. Purchase tickets and find information, including each weekend's theme, at sleepyhollowrenfaire.com.



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EVENTS IN THE AREA

Check for cancellations

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

World Food & Music Festival

Friday - Sunday, Sept. 16-18
Western Gateway Park, 1000 Grand Ave., Des Moines

Travel the world with nearly 50 vendors representing 27 different countries at the annual World Food & Music Festival. On top of trying foods from the various vendors — 22 of which are new this year — attendees will enjoy live music, cultural demonstrations and interactive activities. More details to be announced at dsmpartnership.com/worldfoodandmusicfestival.

Wine & Whiskey Walk

Friday, Sept. 23, 5-9 p.m.
West Glen Town Center,
West Des Moines

CITYVIEW's Wine & Whiskey Walk returns. Pre-ordered tickets are \$20 (\$30 at the door). The price includes 10 sample drinks. Visit participating businesses and enjoy their offerings. For more information and tickets, visit <https://whiskeywalk.dmcityview.com>.



Windsor Heights Fall Festival

Friday - Saturday, Sept. 23-24
Colby Park, 6900 School St., Windsor Heights

This brand-new festival will offer loads of family fun including live music, a petting zoo and bounce houses. The popular WHAMM 5K race returns at 9 a.m. on Saturday; registration is \$15. A bigger and better-than-ever parade will be Saturday at 1 p.m. Tickets for the Windsor Heights Firefighters Association's pancake breakfast will be available at the door. More details at windsorheights.org.



An Evening With Grant Wood

Tuesday, Sept. 20, 6:30 p.m.
Terrace Hill, 2300 Grand Ave., Des Moines

Enjoy this program at Terrace Hill, Iowa Governor's Residence and National Historic Landmark. In this 45-minute one-man show, the presenter will talk about the life of Grant Wood, the famous Iowa painter, and how he changed the art world forever with his work. Refreshments will be available after the program, and the first and second floors of the residence will be open for self-guided tours. This presentation is free but registration is required. To register, call the Terrace Hill office at 515-281-7205 or register online: <https://terracehill-grantwood.eventbrite.com>.



Image by Wikilimages from Pixabay

WDM Elks Fall Vendor Fair

Saturday, Sept. 24
West Des Moines Elks Lodge No. 2752,
2060 N.W. 94th St., Clive

Admission is free and more than 30 vendors are expected. A light lunch will be available for purchase. Proceeds will go to the St. Florian Burn Foundation and to Easter Seals of Iowa Camp Sunnyside Respite Care program. For more information, contact Nancy Newcomb at 515-681-0852 or Nina Steele at 515-201-9892. For information on being a vendor, contact Nisa Rittman at 515-585-0455.



Latino Heritage Festival

Saturday-Sunday, Sept. 24-25
Western Gateway Park,
1000 Grand Ave., Des Moines

Experience a "Taste of Latin America" at Iowa's Latino Heritage Festival. Artist displays will showcase local Latino arts and crafts, food vendors will serve a diverse array of cuisine, cultural booths and demonstrations will represent several Latin American countries, and children's activities will keep the little ones entertained. Celebrate the 22 Latin countries represented in Iowa at this family-friendly event. More information at latinoheritagefestival.org.



Music in the Garden

Thursdays, Sept. 22 and
Sept. 29 at 6:30 p.m.
909 Robert D. Ray Drive,
Des Moines

Catch the last two shows of the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden's summer series, with live concerts in the outdoor Koehn Garden. Doors open at 6 p.m. and music starts at 6:30 p.m., rain or shine. Bring your own seating or picnic blankets. Concert tickets are included with regular admission to the Garden. Performers include Rachel Brook on Sept. 22 and The Feel Right on Sept. 29.

Raccoon River Rally

Saturday, Oct. 8 • Raccoon River Park, 2500 Grand Ave., West Des Moines

The Second Annual Raccoon River Rally features The Nadas — Iowa's signature alt-rock-country band at 3 p.m. Prior to that concert, at 11 a.m., Stranger Than Fiction, an Ames-based folk-rock band will kick off the live music. This regional fall festival celebrates West Des Moines' community and outdoor recreation. Attractions for the event include a morning bike ride, live music, cardboard boat races, fun zone, food trucks, beverage tent featuring local craft beer, and business expo featuring WDM businesses and organizations.

HOSPICE doesn't mean 'giving up'

Virtually anyone with a life-limiting illness can qualify for hospice services, enabling a person to live life in comfort for the days, weeks, months or longer that remain in his or her life. And options for hospice services are nearly as varied as the individuals who seek them; they range from home care to services in a freestanding hospice center to in-between, hybrid models. And the type of care you and your loved one select is truly an individual choice.



If a person chooses home hospice services, the frequency of visits is determined by the individual and their care team and can change according to the person's condition. But no matter the type of services you're considering, you should always ask any provider on your list: "How can you help my loved one continue to live through this stage of life?"

Overall, hospice services should be about options to help a person live their best life as long as they're able, and that's how Gina P. of West Des Moines describes her mother's experience.

"When my mom's doctor said it was time for hospice, we felt really angry," she recalls. "To my mom and my brothers and me, that meant she was dying, and we were not ready to face that. We didn't know it could actually be a good thing."

A family friend who worked as a nurse talked Gina and her brothers into talking with some hospice providers. They ended up choosing a home hospice service, and, to their surprise, Gina, her mom and her brothers grew to love the hospice team. In fact, Gina credits them with keeping her mother alive for a longer time than she likely would have lived without them.

"Mom lived nearly a year after she started with hospice, which is a lot longer than her doctor thought she would," Gina says. "They helped with pain management, and they also provided a music therapist and even pet therapy. We also had a lot of time to spend with her, just talking, without wondering if we were doing a good enough job of caring for her."

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

Ward Phillips is a senior leader with WesleyLife, which offers a broad network of health- and well-being-focused communities and services, including home hospice care, for older adults. Celebrating its 75th anniversary this year and its 15th as a hospice provider, WesleyLife is a Level 4 partner of We Honor Veterans, a national program that empowers hospice providers to meet the unique needs of military veterans and their families at the end of life. Call Ward at 515-669-2205 to learn more.

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FAITH

By Pastor John Wagner

LOOK around

On the day I wrote this article, I had a meeting at a local coffee shop here in Ankeny. As I entered the coffee shop, it quickly became clear that this place was popular. Almost every table was occupied. I got in line for a drink and passed my eyes over the room. As I scanned for an open seat, I observed laughter, deep conversations, meetings, study groups and friends catching up over a drink. But what I really needed was a place to sit...

I got my drink and found a seat at the only table left. Minutes passed like seconds, and before I knew it, the person I had come to meet greeted me at my table. We had a lovely conversation about God's love, church, life and inclusion. As we were walking out of the coffee shop, the person I met with shared with me something that gave me pause. I will paraphrase what they said.

"Isn't it interesting how many other people were here? If we aren't careful, we might not even notice them." Then the person said, "That kinda sounds like a sermon..." I agreed.

Isn't it "interesting" how many people we bump into every day? When I am sitting in the junior high drop-off line, I notice how long the line is, but I rarely think about who the line is. As I walk through the grocery store, I lament how busy the meat counter is, but I don't remember who was at the counter. As I drive into the metro, I angrily bemoan the clogged passing lanes, but I rarely remember that others are in just as big of a hurry as I am.

I think we often get so busy with our own "journey" — even our faith journey — that we miss how many other people are here with whom we can share it. When we have questions about God, we aren't the only ones. As we rejoice in God's blessing and goodness, there are others doing the same. When we lament an injustice or suffering, we can know there are others who are dealing with the same or looking to support ones who have been harmed.

But I'll never notice if all I can think about is where I am going to sit. Newsflash, Ankeny! Faith might be a personal decision, but it's a communal activity. Look around: God is pouring out grace and mercy and love everywhere and upon everyone. If we aren't careful, we'll miss an opportunity to share our faith — to notice or be noticed, to love or be loved.

God notices you. God loves you. And, when I'm at my best, I notice and love you, too. I encourage you to try it with me — to really see all of the people that God loves. It could lead to something amazing... ■

Information provided by John Wagner, campus pastor,
Christian Life Center, Ankeny First United Methodist Church.



PREPARING for the loss of a spouse

Preparing for the loss of a spouse is not the fun part of retirement planning. It's much more exciting to discuss developing an income plan that allows you to take that trip to Europe, spend winters in Arizona or start a new hobby. I get it, but as retirement planners, we feel that it's our responsibility to help you plan for all the aspects of retirement.



You've probably seen first-hand the burden a spouse is left with when spousal succession plans are not in place or how families can be torn apart when someone's wishes are not clear. Having a plan will take one more thing off the remaining spouse's plate as they grieve the loss of their loved one.

We have found that many people don't know how to get started, so we developed a Spousal Succession Plan Checklist. This checklist covers some of the decisions you can make now to help you get organized and some of the things you will have to do when your spouse passes.

Each retirement plan we help families and individuals create follows six guiding components: lifestyle, income, tax, investment, health care and legacy. The checklist includes action steps within each of these components.

For example, the lifestyle portion of the checklist helps you compile important information that the remaining spouse will need, such as how to contact your CPA, attorney and insurance agent. You also want to help avoid a technology nightmare by ensuring you both know important accounts' passwords.

The investment portion of the checklist includes things you will have to do when your spouse passes, such as change titles on accounts like checking or savings, credit cards and your mortgage. You may also have to call your spouse's insurance company and file a claim.

We are often one of the first phone calls that the families we work with make when a loved one passes. They are tough conversations but necessary ones as we work to help them execute their spousal succession plan. It's a privilege to help ease their burden and know that the wishes of their loved one are being fulfilled because they made some of these decisions together when we first started putting together their comprehensive retirement plan.

You can download the Spousal Succession Plan Checklist by going to SuccessionChecklist.com. By having open and honest conversations with your spouse regarding each of the outlined points, you'll be well on your way to having a purposeful plan that your spouse can turn to in one of life's most stressful and emotional moments.

Information provided by Loren Merkle, CFP®, Merkle Retirement Planning, 1860 S.E. Princeton Drive, Grimes, IA 50111, 515-278-1006.

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RECIPE

A PERFECT pasta for school nights

(Family Features) Weeknight meals are all about putting tasty dishes on the table in a short amount of time so you can share precious moments together despite busy schedules.

In a matter of minutes, you can prepare this lentil bolognese with veggie-based penne for a quick yet flavorful recipe that can be enjoyed by little ones and adults alike. Featuring Veggiecraft Farms Cauliflower Penne as its key ingredient, this family meal makes it easy to incorporate vegetables without sacrificing taste. Available in popular shapes like penne, spaghetti and elbow, and made with lentils, peas and cauliflower, zucchini or sweet potato, the veggie-based pastas are gluten-free, non-GMO, vegan, kosher and good sources of protein and fiber.

Visit veggiecraftfarms.com for more information and family-friendly recipes. ■

Lentil Bolognese with veggie-based penne

- 1 cup dry French green lentils or brown lentils
- 1 jar (24 ounces) marinara sauce
- 1/2 cup vegetable broth
- 1 box Veggiecraft Farms Cauliflower Penne

TOPPINGS:

- fresh basil
- Parmesan cheese
- red pepper flakes

DIRECTIONS

- Cook lentils according to package directions. Drain then return to pot and add marinara and vegetable broth. Stir well and simmer over low heat about 10 minutes.
- Cook penne according to package directions.
- Top cooked pasta with lentil Bolognese, fresh basil, Parmesan cheese and red pepper flakes.





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NEW volunteer hub is launched

Provides list of the myriad of opportunities

Ankeny Community School District launched a renewed volunteer program, Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS), last spring. The program has allowed members of the community to visit a centralized volunteer hub and sign up to serve students in a multitude of ways — by reading to preschoolers, mentoring elementary students, greeting middle schoolers as they arrive at school, and working at the high school coffee shops, to name a few.

Building on this success, the district has launched an upgraded central volunteer hub this year. Over the course of the fall, this new system will become the one-stop-shop for all volunteer opportunities in the district. As the system gets up and running, community members, parents and other volunteers will be able to see every way to get involved in the district through the new volunteer portal. All volunteers can access the portal through the district website by selecting “Community” then “Volunteer.”

Having one centralized spot will make it easier for people to find volunteer opportunities, will minimize the number of emails sent with inquiries, and, most importantly, will help the district enhance its measures to keep all students in the district safe.



Ankeny dad Bill Lu volunteers at the Parkview Middle School lunchroom.



Ankeny mom Amber Gustafson volunteers at The Perky Hawk, the Ankeny High School coffee shop.

Because the hub will be operated through a new system, BetterImpact, each volunteer will need to sign up for an account. New volunteers will be required to complete the district’s Volunteer Handbook and a background check. Anyone who is interested in volunteering is encouraged to complete the registration process through BetterImpact now in order to be ready to go when a volunteer opportunity arises.

As part of the renewed volunteer process, district leaders are challenging all members of the ACSD community — staff, students, parents and community members — to join them in giving one million minutes of service to students this year. Through the One Million Minutes campaign, and a bunch of fun incentives that will be announced, district leaders believe the entire Ankeny community can make a huge impact for its students. They encourage everyone to get involved in helping the next generation of Ankeny leaders grow and thrive. ■

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WHAT SHOULD Alzheimer's caregivers know?



If you have a family member who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or is starting to show symptoms, you will face some emotional and financial challenges. Here are a few suggestions that can help:

- **Plan for care costs and identify insurance coverage.** The list of Alzheimer's-related medical expenses is long and includes ongoing medical treatment, medical equipment, home safety modifications, prescription drugs and personal care supplies. As a caregiver, you'll want to know the extent of your loved one's health insurance: Medicare, supplemental policies, veterans' benefits if applicable, and so on. One big question is how much coverage they might have for adult day care services, in-home care services and full-time residential care services and other long-term care options. Long-term care is one of the largest health care costs not covered by Medicare, so you'll want to determine if your loved one has a long-term care policy or another insurance policy with a long-term care rider.

- **Identify assets and debts.** You'll need to know your family member's financial position, both what they own — bank accounts, investments, property, etc. — and what they owe, such as credit card debt, a mortgage, lines of credit and so on. This knowledge will be essential if you're granted power of attorney to take over your loved one's finances.

- **Look for tax breaks available to caregivers.** If you're a caregiver, you may have to pay for some care costs out of pocket. Consequently, you could receive some tax credits and deductions. These benefits vary by state, so you'll want to consult with your tax advisor to determine your eligibility.

- **Ensure necessary legal documents are in place.** You may need to work with your legal and tax professionals to create appropriate documents, such as durable powers of attorney for health care and finances. And you'll want to take care of these while your loved one still has the capacity to give consent.

- **Finally, you don't have to go it alone.** You may also want to work with a financial professional who can look at your family's situation and make suitable recommendations.

A diagnosis of Alzheimer's will change the lives of everyone in your family. But, as a caregiver, you can help ease the burden. ■

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones. Member SIPC. Information provided by Ryleah Cross, 1255 N. Ankeny Blvd., Suite 102, Ankeny, 515-964-4404.

PROVIDING for a child with a disability

A 2018 University of Illinois study found that less than half of parents of children with disabilities have planned for their children's future. The reasons can be complex.



Family dynamics may complicate the process. Many clients aren't aware there are options for providing for a disabled child. Other clients are overwhelmed by the information available and are unable to choose the best options.

Because of advances in the medical field, many people with disabilities and chronic illnesses are living longer. That means they may outlive their parents and primary caregivers. Ensuring that you have a long-term plan in place is essential.

A special needs trust (also called a

supplemental needs trust) is set up to hold assets for a person with disabilities. The money can help pay for services, therapy and items that aren't covered by Medicaid or other insurance. Distributions from the trust are intended to supplement public benefits, not replace them. It allows the parents' assets to continue to be used to enhance the beneficiary's quality of life.

You should identify a successor to not only be the caregiver for a child with disabilities, but a trustee who is appointed to manage all spending. The trustee is the person who will handle the money and make decisions about paying for needs.

The beneficiary child has no control over the assets. Because the disabled beneficiary doesn't own the assets of the trust, the child remains eligible for government programs like Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid (Title XIX).

If the trust is established with money from

someone other than the disabled child (from parents, grandparents, friends or other family) then a properly-drafted special needs trust can prevent that money from being counted as a resource.

The special needs trust allows parents to provide for their children without endangering the child's SSI or Medicaid benefits. The trust can be independent or can be part of the parents' will or trust that fits within a larger estate plan that involves other family members.

Review your estate plan and update the provisions relating to a child with special needs. An attorney who focuses on estate planning, special needs trusts, and Medicaid planning can answer your questions and help you plan for the future. ■

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

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HEALTH

By Ellie McDonald

WITH CHANGE comes growth

Summer is winding down, and a new season of life is beginning for everyone in some capacity. Fall time is full of new things — whether that be a new school, new grade, new job, new schedule, new assignments, or simply just a new routine to adjust to. In the midst of the busy, it is important to check in on your mental health as the new season begins. Checking in often allows for feelings of burnout and being overwhelmed to be addressed early.



Positive mental health routines can be incorporated into your life in small and easy ways, such as going on a walk and enjoying the beautiful leaves changing colors, spending quality and uninterrupted time with those you love the most, trying out a new hobby or interest you feel you would enjoy, talking to a friend or family member you trust when feeling in a slump, and lastly, seeking help if you feel called to do so. While these tasks may seem small, if practiced daily, they can lead to substantial growth for your mental well-being. The activities listed may not be for everyone, but self care takes many forms. I encourage you to explore different options until you find what works best for you.

Change can be overwhelming and oftentimes scary, but, with change, comes growth. It is important to remember to fill your own cup in the midst of it all and help those around you to do the same. ■

Information provided by Ellie McDonald, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, 515-528-8135, www.sstherapyandconsulting.com, mcdonald@sstherapyandconsulting.com.

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HEALTH

Dr. Laura Myers, MD FAAD,

ABOUT molluscum contagiosum

Molluscum contagiosum. The diagnosis sounds like a curse in a Harry Potter novel. Fortunately, it's far less dreadful.

Molluscum are caused by a virus. They present as shiny pink skin bumps with a central dimple. Anyone can get them, but they are most common in kids aged 1-10.

As the name implies, molluscum are contagious. To prevent skin spread, it's best to keep skin clean and avoid picking, scratching or shaving affected areas. To prevent transmission from person to person, avoid skin-to-skin contact of affected areas and sharing items such as unwashed towels or contaminated sports equipment.

If the bumps aren't bothersome, and you have a healthy immune system, it's OK to let your body naturally fight the virus. Usually molluscum disappear without a trace in 6-18 months. Occasionally the bumps will become swollen and pustular. Dermatologists call this the "Beginning of the End" or the "BOTE" sign. It's usually a signal the body's immune system is fighting the virus and the spot will soon resolve.

In some circumstances, Molluscum contagiosum require medical intervention. If you are concerned you may have molluscum, or wonder about treatment options, see a board-certified dermatologist. ■



Information provided by Dr. Laura Myers, MD FAAD, co-owner, Iowa Dermatology Consultants, 2675 N. Ankeny Blvd., Suites 101/103, Ankeny, 515-348-4097.



A SERIOUS CANDIDATE FOR SERIOUS TIMES

Mike Franken is a western Iowan who helped put himself through school working at meat-packing plants. He refers to his bootstrap childhood as the youngest of a family of nine where everyone worked: his father ran a machine repair shop, his mother was a teacher and the family seamstress. Mike obtained a Navy scholarship in 1978 and graduated in engineering from the University of Nebraska. He rose from ensign to admiral during his navy career, where he solved a wide variety of problems around the globe.

Mike wants all Americans to have the high-quality care that military members have because he knows the system works for the good of the people. He understands the critical difference that social security can make in people's lives. The power of a strong public education made it possible for him to achieve his many goals, and he wants to use his position as a US Senator to ensure that we can increase the quality of education to all our children.

We live in serious times. Mike Franken is the candidate for the US Senate we need now. Check out our website – www.frankenforiowa.com – and join the campaign that brings people together to solve problems.



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WELLNESS

By Christopher M. Renze, D.C.

WHAT IS spinal stenosis?

Canal narrowing causes pain.

Spinal stenosis occurs when the channels through which your spinal cord and nerve roots travel become narrowed, thus squeezing the spinal cord and nerve roots. Spinal stenosis can lead to pain in your lower back, legs, neck, arms or hands, depending on where in your spine your spinal cord and/or nerves are getting squeezed. Spinal stenosis can happen anywhere in your spine, but it's most likely to happen in your low back (lumbar spine) or in your neck (cervical spine).

Symptoms of spinal stenosis

To get the best treatment for your spinal stenosis, it's important to recognize and understand the symptoms. Since spinal stenosis can gradually develop as you age, the symptoms can also gradually develop — and gradually worsen. Also, symptoms can vary a great deal. You may have no symptoms at all, since narrowing of the spinal canal or other channels does not always compress the spinal cord or nerves.

Spinal stenosis in your lumbar spine can cause pain or cramping in your legs when you stand for long periods of time or when you walk. The discomfort usually eases if you bend forward or sit down but comes back when you stand upright. Pain that eases when you bend forward is typical of lumbar spinal stenosis. Other symptoms of lumbar spinal stenosis may include numbness, weakness or tingling in the leg or foot.

Spinal stenosis in your cervical spine can cause pain in the neck and shoulders. It may radiate down your arm or hand. Cervical spinal stenosis can also cause headaches, numbness or muscle weakness. It can also affect the nerves that control your balance, which can lead to clumsiness or a tendency to fall. The pain from cervical spinal stenosis may be occasional or chronic, and it can range from mild to severe.

Treatment for spinal stenosis

From my experience, many cases of spinal stenosis respond more favorably when a multidisciplinary approach is taken. A qualified chiropractor can significantly improve the function of the spinal joints, while, at the same time, a medical doctor can address the biochemical inflammatory components. When chiropractic physicians and medical physicians work together, the patient benefits.

If you or someone you know is suffering from spinal stenosis and have not found the relief for which you are looking, contact your chiropractor. ■

Information provided by Christopher M. Renze, D.C., D.I.B.C.N., of Renze Chiropractic Clinic, P.C. For more information, visit www.renzechiro.com or call the office at 515-965-3844.

GODWIN a 'reluctant author'

Book shares experiences of her spiritual journey.

Jennifer Godwin of Ankeny calls herself a reluctant author. And yet her 234-page book titled "Go... Make...Ripples" now is available on Amazon and in small businesses.

"It wasn't easy," Godwin says. "I never wrote an essay paper in high school or attended college. I'm not a computer person, and just getting my computer to give me a blank page to write on was difficult. Yet I sat down at my computer with a monster cookie and a glass of iced tea, and I started."

Jennifer and her husband Dean Godwin are high school sweethearts, who graduated from Saydel and have been married 34 years. She says the book has been 20 years in the making, because it was 20 years ago God planted the idea by telling her, "You will write a book."

"I know it was God because I would never have come up with this idea on my own," Godwin says. "It was a crazy thought at the time. But, as the years passed, I kept thinking about the possibility. Four years ago, the idea kept pressing on my heart, and I decided to do it."

Godwin had worked 24 years as a portrait photographer.

"I never dreamed about writing a book; it was never a desire of mine or a link on my bucket list," she says. "In the beginning, I had no idea who I was writing it for. I was about 90% of the way through it before I realized the book's purpose."

Godwin says she had a great childhood, but she was not raised in a family that went to church. At the age of 6, she was visiting a friend whose family sat down at the dinner table together and prayed before they ate. That started her on an inquisitive childhood journey that included asking questions about God, heaven and hell, baptism, churches and much more.

"I was 14 years old before I knew Easter was a religious holiday," she says. "I started a relationship with Jesus in my teens, but my education about who God is and how to serve him happened as an adult. This book includes a lot of my personal stories about how I came to know Christ as my Savior and my spiritual journey."

Godwin spent a year-and-a-half writing, and about the same amount of time getting the book edited and ready to print. The book was published by WestBow Press, which specializes in self-published Christian books. It was released May 23 of this year on Amazon in hard cover, paperback and Kindle versions. Portions of the first two chapters of the book can be viewed on Amazon at no cost.

Godwin placed an order for 1,500 books and is marketing those through Facebook and personal contacts with local businesses. "I think it's important to support small businesses," she says. "I sell books to them at a much lower price. This allows them to mark up the price to make a profit, and still be below the cost of purchasing on Amazon."

The book is available in Ankeny at several locations, including The Attic, Charlotte Louise Mercantile, Faith Baptist Bible College, Tweedle Dee's, Wall of Books, Walnut + Willow, and XoXo Gift & Home. ■



Jennifer Godwin shares her experiences in her first published book, "Go...Make...Ripples."

WHAT do you say?

When someone dies, it can be awkward or uncomfortable to talk to the grieving family or friend, especially if you have never been around death before. What do you say or do?

- Don't be afraid to talk about their loved one by name. Saying their name is not going to upset the family — it shows you care. Sometimes just hearing their loved one's name can be comforting.
- If you have a special memory of time spent with the deceased, share it briefly.
- Don't be afraid of tears (theirs or yours). Someone has died; tears are a natural form of grieving and should not be squelched.
- If you don't know what to say, a squeeze of a hand or a hug speaks volumes.

As time goes on following a death, do not isolate the grieving family member. Spend time with them: give a phone call to see how they are doing, meet them for coffee, let them talk about their loved one. Often, they are lonely and appreciate your company. If they refuse your gesture, don't write them off. Try again in a few days or weeks. They may have just needed to be alone that particular day.

Grief is not a disease. The strength they draw from your company will help them navigate these difficult days. ■

Information provided by Jan Shawver, family services representative, Highland Memory Gardens Cemetery, 1 N.E. 60th Ave., Des Moines, 515-289-2230.



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WHERE WE LIVE

By Lindsey Giardino

HOMETOWN is special

Lint has many reasons to stay in Ankeny.

Having been born and raised in Ankeny, Alycia Lint has strong ties to the community.

Her grandfather was a home builder, business owner and land developer in town from 1960 to 1990, and she continues to see his stamp on the community.

"It's been so cool to see how Ankeny has grown," Lint says. "I love this community. Although Ankeny is getting pretty big, we still have that small-town vibe at times, wonderful community events and great people."

Today, Lint lives on the southeast side of town. Her backyard backs up to First Street, and the interstate is just down the road from her.

"We chose this home because of the location," she says. "My favorite part of my location personally is listening to the cars and motorcycles pass by on First Street. Hearing the bells from the Catholic Church and having my cup of coffee on my patio is a real blessing."

Lint also enjoys meals at the Mexican restaurant within walking distance of her house. Sunrise Park, with its splash pad and other play equipment, is just down the block as well. Her daughter attended East Elementary — "a wonderful elementary school with amazing teachers" — which is down the road from her house, too.

"Just another added bonus for this area," Lint says. "It's perfect."

Not only is the location of her home ideal, but so is the neighborhood itself.

"I may be partial, but I do think my neighborhood is the best," Lint says. "I have amazing neighbors, and we all help each other out. Our whole block came together during the derecho in 2020 and throughout COVID doing what we can for each other."

One of her favorite memories from the neighborhood was on Christmas Eve in 2020, when many of the neighbors rang in Christmas with bells that were passed out to each house on the block.

"It was a wonderful sense of togetherness in such a separated time," she says. "Wonderful things on the southside, which is why it's my personal favorite."

Lint adds that she works at a hotel in town and likes being able to recommend local spots for guests to visit.

"We have some really great places to eat and shop on the southside of town and all over the Ankeny area," she says. "I think Ankeny all together is pretty special, too." ■



Alycia Lint enjoys her home's location, which is near many amenities, including ones her daughter enjoys.

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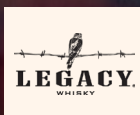
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THE EVENT WILL BE HELD RAIN OR SHINE

WHAT were they thinking?

Kevin Hart and Jamie Foxx should be ashamed. But read on for some gems.

September is the month that defines the term “mixed bag,” at least as far as movie releases are concerned. This September might even be more mixed than usual. There are a few gems, for sure, (including the locally made and produced “Kinnick” documentary) and an equal number of really, really bad movies (Kevin Hart and Jamie Foxx should be ashamed). Oh well, here they are, warts and all...

“Bullet Train” (in theaters)

Brad Pitt in a roller-coaster-ride of a movie that will have you on the edge of your seat the entire time. Non-stop action on a Japanese bullet train full of bad guys/girls. Very few believable moments in the film, but Pitt is ultra-cool and reminds you many times why he is such a great movie star/actor. **Grade: B**



“Thirteen Lives” (streaming on Prime Video)

Viggo Mortensen, Colin Farrell and Joel Edgerton play the real-life rescuers of the 13 young soccer players in Thailand who were accidentally trapped in a cave when the flood waters rose too high and too quickly. It is a tense and nerve-wracking two-and-a-half-hour film. You might have followed the real-life event but you will be surprised at what you learn here. **Grade: A**



“Prey” (streaming on Hulu)

Who knew that the “Predator” creatures were on our planet hunting human prey way back in time? I’m not sure we needed another “Predator” sequel, or prequel, but it isn’t a bad movie. **Grade: C+**



“A League of Their Own” (streaming on Prime Video)

If you are a big fan of the movie with Geena Davis, Madonna and Tom Hanks, my recommendation is to completely skip this

overbearing, message-laden series. While I am certain that there were lesbians on these teams and that Black women were treated horribly, I am also certain that I didn’t need my nose rubbed in it for the first three episodes. They also pretty much forgot any baseball action and humor. A missed opportunity. **Grade: D**



“Emily the Criminal” (in theaters)

The nice thing about the early fall is that there are a bunch of movies that don’t ever get a chance for a release. “Emily the Criminal” could not have come out at a better time. It is a very interesting movie about a woman who is struggling to make ends meet after a mistake in her past keeps showing up when she interviews, preventing her from getting hired. She turns to a life of easy crime, which, we all know, is never as easy as it might seem. Gritty, well-acted and very good. **Grade: A-**



“Day Shift” (streaming on Netflix)

I have no idea what Jamie Foxx was thinking when he thought a vampire slasher film would be a good career decision. I figured it out way early, and since it was on Netflix, I simply reached for the remote control and hit OFF. **Grade: D**



“Beast” (in theaters)

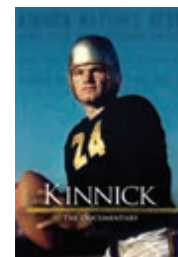
I have no idea what Idris Elba was thinking when he thought a rapid lion film would be a good career decision. I figured it out way early, but since I was in the theater, I suffered through the predictable and completely unsatisfying ending. **Grade: D**



“Kinnick” (through Vimeo on demand)

<https://vimeo.com/onedemand/kinnick-documentary>

My friend Scott Siepker and many of his obviously talented compadres have delivered an excellent look at the life and brief career of Adel’s own Nile Kinnick. I went to the University of Iowa in the late 1970s and, of course, know the Kinnick story...or thought I did. “Kinnick” can be found on Vimeo, and I’ve included the link to the site. This is an emotional, eye-opening look at this great young man and the beginning of the greatness of Iowa football. Kinnick’s cousin is an excellent guide. It would be a great film to watch after Iowa beats ISU again this year. Just kidding. Kind of. **Grade: A**



“Me Time” (streaming on Netflix)

Kevin Hart and Mark Wahlberg take some time off from making very entertaining and fun movies to give us this ridiculous movie that shows how to not make a good career move. It is a really bad, rude and crude update of “Mr. Mom” with all the fun and humor sucked out of it. **Grade: D+**



“McEnroe” (on Showtime)

The bad boy of tennis takes center court in this documentary about the life and times of one of the greatest tennis players of all time. What a great look at this complicated and mostly misunderstood athlete. An excellent sports doc. **Grade: A ■**



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. You can also follow him on Twitter @MrMovieDSM.

PROMOTING and supporting our members

I was reminded the other day that Ankeny isn't a small town anymore but prides itself on the "hometown" feel that it brings. The people of Ankeny love their city and want it to be the best place to live, to work and to play. As you are out enjoying your community, please take time to visit a new business or re-experience one of the existing favorites in town.



Local businesses are owned by people who live in this community and are invested in the community's welfare and future. I encourage you to visit our local Chamber member businesses for personal or work needs. Chamber member businesses in the Ankeny area help every aspect of what makes our community great. Take time to support the business owners that work hard each day to provide quality service to Ankeny.

The Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce recently changed its mission statement to better align with the booming small business community it supports. The mission now reads: "The Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to the promotion and development of our members within the community." The chamber staff and board of directors are diligently working to find new ways to promote and support our members through events, education, advocacy and more.

An easy way to support Chamber members is to attend a ribbon cutting to visit a new storefront. The chamber also offers you the opportunity to meet several member businesses all in one location. Join us for Discover Ankeny on Thursday, Nov. 3 at the FFA Enrichment Center. Bring the whole family to experience all that Ankeny has to offer. Go to Ankeny.org to get more information.

Upcoming Events

- Corks & Caps, Ankeny Market and Pavilion. Sunday, Sept. 18, noon to 4 p.m. (Noon to 1 p.m. VIP Hour)
- Business Illumination Series, Luana Savings Bank, Polk City. Wednesday, Sept. 21, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- Fall Ball Four Person Best Shot Tournament (members only), Briarwood Golf Course. Wednesday, Oct. 5, shotgun start at 11 a.m.
- Discover Ankeny, FFA Enrichment Center. Thursday, Nov. 3, 5-8 p.m.

Shop local – eat local – spend local – enjoy local

"Support the local businesses who support the area where you live, work and play." - Sara Ward, Professional in Sustainability. ■

Information provided by Melisa Cox, president/CEO, Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce.

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OUT & ABOUT



A ribbon cutting was held for Midwest Dance Collective at 1802 S.E. Delaware Ave., Suite 115, on Aug. 5.



A ribbon cutting was held for Wolfe Eye Clinic at 800 E. First St., Suite 2500, on Aug. 10.



A ribbon cutting was held for Smitten Kitten at 322 S. Ankeny Blvd. on Aug. 16.



A ribbon cutting was held for Slim Chickens at 1730 N. Ankeny Blvd. on Aug. 23.



A ribbon cutting was held for Jiffy Lube at 1525 S.W. Tradition Drive on Aug. 25.



A ribbon cutting was held for Fresh Fit Meals at 2405 S.W. White Birch Drive on Aug. 30.



A ribbon cutting was held for Nova MedSpa at 320 S.E. Delaware Ave. on Aug. 31.



Elizabeth Jackson, Kim Tobin and Erica Cory at the Ankeny Farmers Market on Aug. 27.

OUT & ABOUT



Ellen Myers and Julie Smith at Real Deals during the Ankeny Living Magazine Shopping Spree on Sept. 1.



Hannah Balukoff, Madi McCormick, Laura Long and Samantha Grinstead at Real Deals during the Ankeny Living Magazine Shopping Spree on Sept. 1.



Samantha Woods and Emily Archibald at the Ankeny Farmers Market on Aug. 27.



Ross and Diane Segar at the Ankeny Farmers Market on Aug. 27.



Desiree and Gary Meyer at the Ankeny Farmers Market on Aug. 27.



Mary Montgomery and Mary Echer with Ella at the Ankeny Farmers Market on Aug. 27.



Mallory and Aaron Craig at the Ankeny Farmers Market on Aug. 27.



Nicole Vogler with Marc at the Ankeny Farmers Market on Aug. 27.



Robert and Samantha Johnson at the Ankeny Farmers Market on Aug. 27.



Michael Clawson with Celia at the Ankeny Farmers Market on Aug. 27.



Stacy Cox with Quinn at the Ankeny Farmers Market on Aug. 27.

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