

URBANDALE

AUGUST 2022

Living

GARDEN harvest

Where do all the tomatoes go?

Meet Alex Baranosky

EDUCATION

Overnight apple cinnamon French toast casserole

RECIPE

Vongphachanh's yard full of splendor and critters

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WELCOME

ONE TOMATO, two tomato, three tomato, four...

My childhood home had a backyard full of tomato plants. Mom was obsessed with this, especially in canning the tomato juice. Our basement was full of Mason jars of the red stuff, and most everything we seemed to eat had tomato juice in it.

The entire process seemed like a lot of work for something that could be purchased at the grocery store for pennies. Whenever I told Mom this, I was given the task of immediately pulling weeds in the garden. I learned to keep that opinion to myself.

Today, I am convinced that we would all be healthier if we ate more foods that we grew ourselves in the ground and less foods that we unwrapped from plastic. Maybe not a 100-percent diet of things made with tomato juice, but you get the idea.

That sounds like a good plan, but it does take a change of habits — and some patience.

I am often poked at by friends for not eating enough vegetables. I don't understand the criticism. After all, I eat potatoes. But what about green vegetables, I am often asked. Well, I eat pickles, too.

My wife, Jolene, helped broaden my vegetable diet, and our daughter, Abby, pushed it along. For years, we had a "salsa" garden off our deck. It was a humble display but one that kept them both busy with tomatoes, peppers, onions, lettuce, carrots, green beans, cucumbers and kale, among other items. To be honest, some of it tasted like grass, but I kept an open mind.

I would like to tell you that I have shunned all pre-packaged foods and am eating out of the garden now, but that would be a lie — unless there are Snickers candy bar seeds. Meanwhile, stories like the ones we feature this month are a gentle nudge to remind us all about not only the nutritional benefits of gardening but the social ones as well.

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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GARDEN harvest

Where do all the tomatoes go?

By Darren Tromblay

Tomatoes are ripening on the vines. Ears of sweet corn with their plump kernels are being shucked, grilled and devoured. Cucumber vines are spreading, and, below the ground, carrots and potatoes are approaching that just-right time for being pulled or dug up, washed and added to pot roasts and soups.

For gardeners, the bounty of the harvest delivers fresh ingredients for now and plenty to preserve for the upcoming winter. And, as often happens, they find themselves with an overabundance. Where do all those tomatoes, zucchini, cucumbers, onions and more go?

Liz Houge hopes to pass her love of gardening on to her granddaughter, Eilise.



FEATURE

Turning an eyesore into a garden

It was the fall of 2017, and Ashley Muilenburg, a second-grade teacher at Urbandale's Webster Elementary, had grown weary of a large clump of overgrown bushes outside her classroom window.

Random seeds had taken root and had grown into a mishmash of small trees and other rather unsightly green things.

"It looked awful," she remembers. "I thought there surely was a better way to use the space, so I had the idea of tearing it all out and building some raised garden beds that we could maybe grow some vegetables and use in the school and feed the kids and the community."

Muilenburg reached out to the Boy Scouts to see if any potential Eagle Scouts might be interested in getting such a project off the ground. Turns out, there was in the form of Ryan Muetzel. He grabbed the bull by the horns — and the bushes by their branches — and tore out all of the unwanted growth. He used donated materials to build raised garden beds built out of bricks and stone.

Muilenburg secured a grant for that first



Ashley Muilenburg oversees a group of Webster Elementary students working in a few of the school's six raised garden beds.

year of the project, and indoor growing lights were purchased to get things underway early in the fall and give the plants a kick start before being taken outside to the six garden beds.

"That didn't go very well," she laughs. "They shot up really tall right away, then they just died. After that, we decided that we really just needed to use the money to buy smaller plants and just plant them directly into the beds."

Things were looking better, at least from a gardening perspective. At home, however, Muilenburg's husband had been diagnosed with

cancer in 2019. Naturally, her concentration turned to him. Jade Fox and Jessy Sadler stepped into the void and have been there ever since. Muilenburg now is the "recruiter" of students to help get the planting done in the spring. The vegetables grown are used to feed those very same kids throughout the summer. Any excess is donated to the local food pantry.



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FEATURE

Getting the kids involved in the project from the outset has been a priority of Muilenburg's throughout.

"I think the more that they are involved, the more interested they become, and the more likely that they'll eat fresh vegetables if they're the ones helping grow them," she says. "One of my favorite parts of all is to be able to see our little preschool classes come out with their magnifying glasses and look for bugs among the plants. It's just the cutest thing."

Picnic benches were brought to the area to give it a "learning space" feel as well, she says.

Each summer, the beds are filled with cucumbers, tomatoes, a variety of peppers, melons and other plants that they've had success growing in the past.

This summer, anything harvested from the beds is used to make breakfast and lunches for the participating students.

"In the fall, our kitchen staff will go to the garden and harvest some of the vegetables and bring them to the lunchroom, where the kids will then have some options to grab some cherry tomatoes or cucumber slices when they go through the lunch line, as an additional option to the regular lunches," Muilenburg says.

In the past, portions of the harvest have been donated to the Urbandale Food Pantry, Muilenburg says. Some of the families who use the pantry are the same ones with students at the school. A full circle.

It's all good, growing kids' bodies, hearts and minds.

"I love hearing the kids' comments when we go out to plant," Muilenburg says. "They'll say, 'This is so cool.' I just think it's really great that they're having this hands-on experience, planting, and being able to see the fruits of their labor and see the plants grow throughout the summer. It's just so great to see that space being used purposefully."

For all to enjoy

Liz Houge comes from a long line of gardeners who have contributed thousands of pounds of fresh produce to households throughout the community over the years.

"I've been gardening for years and years," she says. "My grandparents and my parents were big gardeners, as are my siblings and I. My sons, Anthony and Sam, are gardeners as well, and I love that — being able to teach them and for them to carry on the tradition."

So storied is the family's gardening history



One of the joys of gardening for Liz Houge is being able to share her seasonal bounty with family and friends.

that Liz still has the newspaper clipping proclaiming her grandfather Nick Cardamon the "Champion Tomato Man of 1956." Also pictured is her grandmother, Mama Cardamon, who would take the often 2.5-pound beefsteak tomatoes from the 12-dozen tomato plants into the kitchen to can.

"They came here from Soveria Mannelli, Italy, which we were lucky enough to visit in 2019," Houge says. "I remember going to my grandfather's parents' home and visiting their garden, which was beautiful. That's why I love it that my granddaughter enjoys gardening and, hopefully, will be a fifth-generation gardener."

Houge grows Italian thin-skin peppers, jalapeños, other peppers and tomatoes, which provides quite a bit of food, salsa and sauce. It's not out of the ordinary to have neighbors go away with their Radio Flyer wagons filled with some of the bounty of Houge's gardens. On Tuesdays at the country club, Houge will bring large boxes of produce for everyone to help themselves. Neighbors are big beneficiaries of her green thumb.

The most popular items are the tomatoes and the peppers, she says. She's tried growing other things in the past but always returns to her core of favorites.

Interestingly enough, Houge doesn't can anything; she simply enjoys them while they're fresh. Her sister, Cathy Engblom, of Johnston does, however.

"We had to do that all the time as kids," Houge says. "My dad would bring home bushels of tomatoes. We'd have to clean them and dry them, and then sterilize all the jars.

It's a lot of work, but it was always a lot of fun being out there. We miss it now. It was always fun to be out there eating tomatoes right off the vine."

The fact that it is homegrown is one of the appeals of gardening, she says, but an even bigger factor is the ability to share it with others. For that very reason, Houge says she will never stop gardening. Ever.

"I hope to be gardening forever," she says.

Sharing with others

Hunger has no boundaries. It doesn't discriminate between young and old, Black or white, male or female. It's real — even for Iowans living in one of the most bountiful states in the country.

No one knows this better than Patty Sneddon-Kisting, executive director of the Urbandale Food Pantry, a nonprofit organization that exists to "fight against hunger so families and individuals never have to worry about where they will find their next meal," according to its website.

And the battle is far from over, according to Sneddon-Kisting. As a matter of fact, things have only gotten more difficult for families in recent months.

Locals have been generous in their willingness to help, however — a fact not lost upon Sneddon-Kisting.

"We have a variety of master gardeners, church gardens and community gardens that we receive quite a bit of produce from," she says. "During the summer months of 2021, we brought in and received about 13,000 pounds

FEATURE

of produce from area gardeners.”

The generosity begins each growing season with the appearance of rhubarb in the pantries, Sneddon-Kisting says. Then come the leafy greens such as cabbage, and later, beets, onions, cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers and squash.

Once there, volunteers go through the produce to make sure everything is fresh, and, once given the approval, it goes into the Anytime Room, which families have access to on a daily basis. The room is a busy one.

“I pretty much run out of food on a daily basis,” Sneddon-Kisting says. “There’s not a whole lot of waste or overage. We also have stand-up refrigerators, a milk cooler, a walk-in freezer, and a walk-in refrigerator, so, if it’s something that has to be refrigerated or contained, we have the ability to do that as well.”

An average of around 1,600 families checked into the pantry in both June and July, with the Anytime Room serving anywhere from 150-200 individuals every single day.

“The need is so high right now since the numbers have drastically increased over the last few months,” Sneddon-Kisting says. “In

March, the increased allotment families were given during the pandemic ended, which meant about a \$200 decrease, which is a lot of money.”

Gas prices, inflation and other contributors have played a factor as well.

As such, the number of families using the pantry has reached an all-time high. Typically, the highest numbers are seen in October, November and December, Sneddon-Kisting says, which gives the organization cause for concern.

Area gardeners who want to help are certainly welcome to do so, she says.

“The families absolutely love having access to different kinds of greens, or peppers, or vegetables,” Sneddon-Kisting says. “You never know what a few extra seeds of produce will do to help out, and we definitely appreciate it.”

Those wanting to donate produce can reach out to the pantry or simply stop by the



Patty Sneddon-Kisting is the executive director of the Urbandale Food Pantry.



More than 13,000 pounds of produce were donated to the Urbandale Food Pantry last summer.

building, located at 7611 Douglas Ave., Suite 34/35.

“We have donations dropped off every single day that we are open,” Sneddon-Kisting says. “The support the community has for the pantry is amazing.” ■

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WHILE Iowa phases in a flat income tax, you may get a break right away

Many pre-retirees and retirees are cheering as Iowa will join a growing list of U.S. states that do not tax your retirement income. Next year, Iowa will be added to the list of 12 states that don't tax distribution from pensions or defined contribution plans such as 401(k)s.

These changes are part of a bill Gov. Kim Reynolds signed into law earlier this year that also phases in a flat tax rate on all earned income. By 2026, Iowa will have a flat income tax rate of 3.9%. Currently, the state has nine brackets and a top marginal rate of 8.53%.

If you are 55 or older, you don't have to wait until 2026 for some of these reforms to kick in. Retirement income taxes go away next year on pension income and distributions from IRAs, annuities, and employer-sponsored plans like 401(k)s. State income taxes will also be eliminated on distributions from deferred compensation plans and plans maintained or contributed to by a self-employed person. You get these tax breaks even if you are still working.

These tax law changes may impact some of your retirement strategies. For example, if you are considering a Roth conversion, you may want



to wait until 2023. A Roth conversion involves transferring funds from a traditional IRA or 401(k) into a Roth account. The year you make the conversion, you pay income tax on the amount rolled over, but you never pay taxes on the money again. Not on the growth or the qualified distributions. You'll still have to pay federal taxes but, starting next year, you won't pay state income taxes on the conversion, if you are 55 or older.

If you are turning 72 this year, Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) are knocking on your door. RMDs are the amount of money the IRS requires you to take each year from retirement accounts you haven't paid taxes on yet, like a traditional IRA. The IRS does let you defer taking your first RMD until April 1 of the next year. There is some opportunity for tax savings here. Keep in mind, if you defer this year, you will have to take two RMDs next year and they are still subject to federal tax.

These are just a couple of strategies to consider. Before making any moves, you want to understand how they impact your overall retirement plan. See a professional for a retirement analysis that includes looking at your other sources of income and your retirement vision to help you decide which strategies are right for you. ■

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

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FINDING joy in right-sizing

The decision to move to a senior living community is rarely taken lightly. Even if you've had the urge to downsize for a while, you probably could use a little encouragement to get the process going. And that begins with focusing on what you think you're giving up while overlooking everything you'll gain, like no more wasted space, and a few things you'll lose, like unnecessary costs and maintenance.



If you're still living in the house you raised your family in, there are probably a few rooms that rarely get used yet still increase your utility costs and property taxes. Plus, fewer rooms equal less cleaning. Less cleaning equals less bending over, less pushing a vacuum around, and more time for your favorite activities and hobbies.

A larger house also drains your money with maintenance costs. As a long-time homeowner, you know there's always something that needs to be repaired, replaced or remodeled around the house. And those expenses aren't going to go down as the years go by.

But how do you make the transition from your existing home to a senior living community with minimum fuss? First, remember that

moving needn't be an all-at-once affair. Give yourself some grace as you go about the task of packing up. It also helps to have a goal in mind — specifically, knowing where you're going to move. When you've selected a senior living community, the stress of that decision evaporates, and the anticipation of new adventures begins.

It's also good to create a plan with concrete milestones. For example, set decluttering goals of so many rooms per month. Realistically, a six- or nine-month plan will give you adequate time to achieve your end goal without overloading you, your spouse, or the rest of your family with undue pressure.

Remember, whether you call it downsizing, right-sizing, minimizing or simply moving on, the end goal is to increase your quality of life. So, if you're considering the joys of the maintenance-free, worry-free, fun- and friend-filled lifestyle that a senior living community can offer, schedule a tour. ■

Information provided by Susie Ray, marketing director of The Arbordale, a 55+ independent living community in Urbandale. Learn more about having a comfortable and convenient summer season at TheArbordale.com.

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FAITH By Mike Johnson

WHERE is your gaze?

This early bird doesn't wake up for worms, but a sunrise on the beach is definitely worth setting the alarm early for. One morning before dawn, while vacationing on Hilton Head Island, I armed myself with a camera and tripod and hiked down to the beach, setting up just before the glorious orange sphere emerged from the Atlantic.



As I clicked off some shots, I noticed a few early joggers and dog walkers stop near my spot, pull out their smartphones and take their own pictures. When someone sets a nice Nikon on a tripod, they must look like they know what they're doing, and what they're pointing that big lens at must be important. I wasn't anticipating anything out of the ordinary for this sunrise, but my attention and commitment to it made others want to look, too.

Where do you fix your gaze? Worship of our Creator should be obvious and intentional. We glorify God when we make Him look good, and all we really need to do to make God look good is to show the world who He really is. That begins with our own contemplation of who He is.

God has revealed Himself to us in nature, including but not limited to beautiful sunrises. "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — His eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made..." (Romans 1:20)

God has revealed Himself in our hearts. Human beings' God-given moral consciences "show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts..." (Romans 2:15). People have an unshakable intuition about eternity (Ecclesiastes 3:11) and a persistent yearning to "seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him..." (Acts 17:27)

Most clearly, God has revealed Himself through His Son. When Jesus walked the sands of earth, He presented a close-up picture of God. In John 14:7, Jesus told His followers, "If you really know Me, you will know My Father as well. ...you do know Him and have seen Him." The apostle Paul declared Jesus "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation" (Galatians 1:15).

Finally, God has revealed Himself through His Word, "something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place until the day dawns..." (2 Peter 1:19). The Bible is God's written revelation about Himself, humanity, the Good News of redemption through Jesus Christ, and His future plan for His people.

We shouldn't be flamboyant in our worship (Matthew 6:5). But whether it's through a consideration of God's "general revelation" in creation and our hearts, exemplifying Christ in our own life, or studying His Word, our sincere fixation on God is bound to turn some heads for His glory. Start your day with an obvious heavenward focus and see who else follows your gaze. ■

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

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BEFORE YOU GO

By Jan Shawver

TALK about it

As my brother approached the end of his 25-year struggle with diabetes (many years before I started working in the deathcare industry), he wanted to make things as easy as possible for us. He began sharing with me what he wanted for his memorial service. At the time, I didn't want to hear it, but I was thankful when that day finally arrived that I knew exactly what he wanted.



Some of the things he shared: location of service and officiant, songs he wanted sung and who should sing them, pallbearers (he had asked each one himself — I just had to confirm time and place), type of flowers he wanted (that was a given, he loved roses).

When the time came to meet with the funeral director, I was surprised to learn that he had pre-paid for everything — even his roses.

Maybe you are like I was. You don't want to discuss a loved one's inevitable death. Those visits were the hardest I had ever encountered. But I listened because I knew it was important to him.

Whether you are facing your own death or that of a loved one, don't be afraid to talk about it.

Give your family a gift of love and care for your future end-of-life needs now. ■

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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HOME DECOR

By Jennifer Coughenour

FURNITURE buying tips

The options for furniture shopping can be overwhelming, but there are a few things you can do to ease this stress and aid in your decision making.

Before shopping, you should always measure how much space you have. Don't miss out on buying that unique piece because you forgot to measure and need to check if it will fit.

Next, think twice before buying the entire matching set. Why? You may regret it in the near future. A room that's too monochromatic with the same colors and textures can be boring. Don't be afraid to mix it up a bit. This is a great reason to also consider adding a few consignment pieces.

For high traffic rooms, like living, dining and bedrooms, consider buying higher-end pieces. The sofa that you purchase will get a lot of future movie and binge watching use so make sure it will last. Look for dining tables made of solid wood versus veneer that doesn't have anywhere near the same lifespan.

Lastly, skip the big box stores and shop at your local furniture stores instead. You're more likely to find unique and high-quality furniture.

With these tips, you should be prepared to find the right furniture for your home. ■



Information provided by Jennifer Coughenour, store manager, Design Consign, 2715 86th St., Urbandale, 515-901-9294.

NATIONAL Immunization Awareness Month


August is National Immunization Awareness month, an annual observance that highlights the importance of getting recommended vaccines throughout your life. With the COVID-19 pandemic, the upcoming flu season, along with school around the corner, it is important to stay up to date with routine vaccinations available to you and your kids.



With help from your local pharmacy and primary care provider, you have the ability to keep yourself protected from vaccine-preventable diseases. COVID-19 vaccinations are available for children 6 months of age and older, and the annual flu vaccine is also available for those 6 months of age and older. There are many resources available that can provide routine vaccination recommendations, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health, as well as your local healthcare providers. These resources provide interactive guides that serve as a helpful tool to provide information on the vaccines recommended during pregnancy, throughout childhood, and into adulthood. Check with your health care provider and local pharmacies to see if you're eligible to receive any immunizations. ■

Information provided by John Forbes, RPh, Medicap Pharmacy, 8170 Douglas Ave., Urbandale, 515-276-3471, www.medicapurbandale.com.

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END of summer transition

As summer ends, it signals colder days ahead and kids returning to school, which can cause mixed reactions between parents and children. Often children are not ecstatic about this change, and resistance arises as summer fun ends and old routines return. As a caregiver, it is beneficial to ease this transition by reestablishing old habits early. Children thrive with structure and consistency, so start these conversations now.



Similar to coping skills, which are most effective when practiced early, having conversations weeks in advance can help children ease back into the school year. Discuss what it means to go back to school, how it will be different than being at home, and how sleeping habits will change. During this time, discuss their positive achievements from previous years such as friends that were made and things that were learned.

During this transition phase, discussing and enforcing sleep and wake schedules can reduce resistance on the first day. Throughout this process, it is important to maintain a positive attitude and remind your children that school plays a significant role and provides numerous opportunities for them. Overall, to ease your children back into school routines, be consistent, create structure and establish positive school relationships. ■

Information provided by Kendall Way, intern, SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd, 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, 515-528-8135, www.sstherapyandconsulting.com, way@sstherapyandconsulting.com.

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REJOIN the conversation

Treatment for hearing loss keeps people engaged.

The ability to hear and understand is an essential part of our everyday activities and overall quality of life. Many individuals take their hearing for granted until they can no longer communicate with their friends and family. Regardless of age, we all depend upon our hearing and the ability to communicate every day. Hearing is crucial whether you're at home, communicating with your family, watching television, talking on the telephone, listening to music, having a conversation in a busy restaurant, visiting your doctor, or simply hearing the sounds of a coffee maker or birds chirping in the backyard. No matter how mild or significant your hearing loss, it interferes with your ability to fully appreciate sounds and experiences.

Most people wait, on average, more than



seven years to get help for their hearing loss, to their own detriment and the detriment of family and friends. Once you learn more about hearing and take positive action to do something about your hearing loss, you will realize what you have been missing.

When is the right time for an individual to purchase hearing aids? There is no one-size-fits-all answer. Each person must evaluate the importance of better hearing in their lives. When addressing the challenges caused by untreated hearing loss becomes a priority, it is the right time to consider hearing aid technology.

Speech is the most important sound that we hear every day. Speech is made up of vowels (a, e, i, o, u) and consonants (for example, s, t, n, d, f). Vowel sounds are lower in pitch and louder in volume. Consonant sounds are higher in pitch and softer in volume, especially in female and children's voices. All types of hearing loss affect an individual's ability to hear and understand

conversational sounds. Many individuals with hearing loss will report: "I hear people talking but I don't understand what is being said."

Early diagnosis of hearing loss will enable both the patient and hearing healthcare professional to discuss a wider variety of treatment options. They may vary from assistive listening devices for use in the home to hearing aid technology. Understandably, very few people hope for a hearing aid recommendation. But, the use of hearing aid technology is a proactive step towards reconnecting with the conversations and sounds they may be struggling to enjoy.

If you, family members, friends, or loved ones suspect hearing difficulties, please have your hearing tested by a hearing health care professional. ■

Information provided by Dr. Kate Bergin, audiologist, Woodard Hearing Centers, 2328 Rocklyn Drive Building 3, Urbandale, 515-276-6122, www.WoodardHearing.com.

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ACNE: It's more than skin deep

The teenage years. Puberty. Bodies changing. Acne. Most people experience some form of acne during adolescence. In fact, it's the most common skin disease in the United States, affecting 85% of all teenagers and more than 50 million people (American Academy of Dermatology).

Acne can be difficult alone — then add the 24/7 use of cell phones, selfies and social media, and you can see why many teens are experiencing increased levels of anxiety compared to previous generations. According to a Harris Poll, a group of 1,010 teens aged 15-19 years old were surveyed, and 71% said acne negatively impacted their body image, 67% noted acne lowered their self-esteem, and 45% stated they were embarrassed to post photos on social media because of their acne.

Answering your acne questions

Q: After I get into my twenties, will my acne clear up?

A: Not always. Although most people will get acne in their teens, some will experience acne breakouts in their 20s, 30s and 40s. Acne can

affect you at any time because it's linked to hormones, not age.

Q: If I have acne, does that mean my skin is dirty?

A: No. Excessive dirt may aggravate acne, but acne is an inflammation of the oil glands and hair follicles which are below the skin's surface.

Q: Can stress make me breakout?

A: Yes. Stress has been linked to acne flare-ups. For example, students are more prone to acne problems during exam times.

Q: Should I wash my face several times a day with a strong cleanser?

A: No. Excessive scrubbing can irritate the skin and make acne worse. The best treatment plan includes washing twice a day with a gentle cleanser and using an oil-free moisturizer after.

Teen acne reminders

• **Take it seriously.** Even if your teen's acne is

not severe, it can affect how they feel about their appearance. So, if they ask about their acne, take them seriously, and let them know it's important to you, too.

• **Treat it early.** Waiting for acne to "go away" or thinking your teen will "grow out of it" is not a good idea. Early treatment can help prevent permanent scarring and reduce future outbreaks. Getting this "head start" is the best way to keep their acne under control.

• **Look for signs of emotional distress.**

These may include loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed, avoidance of social gatherings, poor performance in school, or feelings of anxiety or depression. If you see any of these signs, talk to your teen and make an appointment with a dermatologist.

Keep this in mind since many teens will be heading back to school for the fall term soon. ■

Information provided by Harlan Dermatology & Dermatologic Surgery Center, 8131 University Blvd., Clive, 515-225-8180.

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PROTECT your heart in the heat

Whatever brings you outside — RAGBRAI, a bike ride with friends, a walk around the block or a barbecue with family — it's important to stay safe when the temperature rises.

Studies show that, when it gets hot outside, your heart has to beat faster and work harder to pump blood to the surface of your skin to assist with sweating to cool your body. If your body can't cool itself enough, strain is put on the heart, and organs can begin to suffer damage.

Anyone can suffer heat stroke, but people with heart disease and other cardiovascular diseases are at greater risk. If you have heart disease, your heart may not be able to work harder in the heat to maintain cooler body temperatures. Some medications prescribed to patients with heart conditions reduce water in the bloodstream. These medications can reduce a



person's ability to cool off in the heat.

Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke. If you experience the following symptoms, move to a cooler place and use cool wet cloths, compresses and fanning. Drink cool water as well. You may also need to seek medical attention:

- Heavy sweating with cool, moist/clammy skin
- Dizziness and light-headedness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Headaches
- Weakness
- Dark urine

Heat stroke is an emergency. If you experience the following, apply cool water to your skin immediately and seek medical help by calling 911 or going to your nearest emergency department right away.

- High fever (temperature above 104 degrees F)
- Hot, dry, red skin without sweating
- Pounding pulse

- Rapid shallow breathing
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Extreme confusion or dizziness
- Unconsciousness or seizures

Everyone is at risk in high heat, but the risks are even higher for those with heart disease or high blood pressure.

Whether it's a single hot day or a heat wave, remember these tips to stay cool and safe.

- Avoid vigorous physical activity in high heat
- Stay hydrated by drinking water and sports drinks that contain electrolytes
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol
- Choose a cooler environment
- Wear light-colored, lightweight clothing in breathable fabrics
- Apply sunscreen before you go outside. ■

Information provided by Eric Martin, MD, board-certified cardiologist specializing in prevention and wellness at MercyOne Iowa Heart Center, 5880 University Ave., West Des Moines, 515-633-3600, IowaHeart.com.

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NEWS BRIEFS

NEW park and natural playscape open

The City of Urbandale hosted a grand opening and ribbon cutting for Barrett Boesen Park on July 14. The new park features a natural playscape that consists of elements and textures from the earth, such as logs, stumps, boulders, sand, plants and water. The new park is located at 5301 165th St.

Unlike more traditional playgrounds, natural playscapes provide enhanced opportunities for exploration, discovery, learning and play. Natural playscapes enable children to move freely and creatively around the environment, helping connect kids with nature, develop gross motor functions and improve social skills. ■

CITY recognized for financial reporting

The Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting has been awarded to the City of Urbandale for its Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021. This is the 39th consecutive year that the City of Urbandale has received this award. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

“For nearly 40 years we have received a Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association,” said Nicci Lamb, director of finance. “This award recognizes the City’s financial procedures as being among the best in the nation, and our residents should be very proud of Urbandale’s fiscal stewardship.”

Only 21 other cities in Iowa earned the award, “which speaks to Urbandale’s commitment to providing our citizens with complete and accurate information about the City’s financial position,” said Lamb. “Transparency and raising awareness about government operations is of the upmost importance to the City Council.”

A copy of the ACFR can be downloaded from the City of Urbandale’s website at: <https://www.urbandale.org/230/Finance-Records>. ■

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HISTORY of Lawson Trolley Park

Drivers along 70th Street near Roseland Drive are aware of the Lawson Trolley Park. With the passing of long-time resident Bill Lawson, a leader in community betterment, you are encouraged to stop and read about the Urbandale history depicted in the park that bears his name. Lawson, named Citizen of the Year in 1992, was president of the Downtown Neighborhood Association and worked to establish the Trolley Park in its design, fundraising and construction.

The importance of ridership on the streetcars is shown at this historical site, which includes a metal skeletal replica of a trolley car and riders. Of special interest are informative plaques about the history of the trolley, the City's founding, coal mines, schools, Olmsted-Urban House and other aspects of local history.

The trolley line played an important role in the history of Urbandale. First developed by Des Moines City Railway in 1905, streetcars

operated on rails for public transportation on certain streets in and around Des Moines and to Fort Des Moines, Valley Junction, Highland Park and the Fairgrounds.

Urbandale Line No. 7 came north to the area of Veterans Hospital and generally followed the median of Urbandale Avenue past Westover until it made the turnaround at Walker Station, at what was to be 70th and Roseland. (Urbandale did not become an official city until 1917.) F.L. Hayes built a two-story building at the northeast corner with a blacksmith shop, general store and drive-in shed where farmers could tie their horses when the family came to take the streetcar into Des Moines.

In the early years, the streetcar came out about every hour and a half, but, by the 1930s, a car came about every 15 minutes during the day or every five to seven minutes during rush hour.

This was an important form of transportation for many people working or shopping in Des Moines. Coal miners came out to work in the mines in the Urbandale area. In the early years, hardware, feed and grocery items were hauled as well as passengers. Before the Urbandale school was built at 70th and Douglas in 1925, Urbandale students would ride the streetcar to attend high school at North or Roosevelt.

Originally, the cars had both a conductor and a motorman. Five-cent fares were collected or passes punched. By 1930, the streetcars became a one-man operation. Eventually, streetcars were replaced by gas shuttle buses and curb liner operations that did not require rails. The last trolley cars ran in Des Moines in 1951. The rails west of 49th Street and the 36-foot-long trestle bridge over Merle Hay Road at Urbandale Avenue were removed. The end of an era. ■



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VONGPHACHANH'S yard full of splendor

... and its fair share of critters



Vyada Vongphachanh and her family's yard has become an oasis for wildlife. She plants with purpose to provide habitat for a wide range of critters.

When Vyada Vongphachanh and her family moved to Urbandale six years ago, they wanted to be in a neighborhood that was established.

She is a nature lover and gardener, so she hoped to find a house surrounded by enough trees for the birds but not too many where she couldn't grow a garden. What she also didn't want was a cookie cutter neighborhood where all the houses were the same. She says they lucked out with the home they ultimately found. And she set to work on the garden right away.

"Immediately after gardening in this house, I started working toward a certification to make the yard a wildlife habitat, which is not that hard to do as I had already done the basics of not using pesticides, providing food and water for birds, planting pollinator plants and composting," Vongphachanh says. "When we moved in, our daughter was 2 years old, and I didn't want her to grow up with a nature deficit. It was important to me to try to make our yard as friendly as possible to the local critters."

The more things Vongphachanh checked off the list, the more critters she saw making the garden their home — and the more her daughter gets to interact and learn from nature.

"I started to take out more grass each year, small sections at a time because I do all the

work myself," she adds. "The front yard has two beds designated only for pollinators and is mostly populated with native and prairie plants."

Along the front pathway to the front door are tropical plumerias, which are a long-time addiction of Vongphachanh's.

"I'm quite certain I have the largest plumeria collection in Iowa, and people think I'm crazy for growing them in zone five," she says. "In the backyard, I have also taken out grass from both the east and west side of the house and planted a vegetable garden and a shade garden for pollinators and critters."

Then there's the one corner of the backyard that Vongphachanh designates as the wild area, where she piles small sticks for insects and critters to burrow in over winter. She also lets the native plants take over that section. It has become the most active part of the yard full of bees, hummingbirds, goldfinches and butterflies.

"The garden has become a significant part of my child's upbringing, and she has learned so much about insects that are endangered and how to care for the land so that the amphibians and all the critters can also call this their home," Vongphachanh says. "We have done some citizen science projects together in our yard to help wildlife, and it's quite amazing



what you can get out of a third of an acre plot. I call our garden Sabai Sabai garden because in the Thai and Lao language, Sabai Sabai means very relaxed."

Her garden and home are a true oasis, but for the community in general, Vongphachanh appreciates the diversity the most.

"I was honestly a little hesitant about coming to Iowa, but the Des Moines metro area has been more diverse than I was expecting, and our neighborhood especially is a good mix of different cultures and people of various races," she says. "It's important for us to have neighbors that represent what America looks like because we are a multicultural family also." ■

How to Ease Back-to-school Anxiety

1. Provide a safe space for children to share feelings.

Create regular one on one times with little distraction. Creative activities like playing and drawing in a low-key environment will encourage children to express their feelings to you.

2. Listen, listen, listen.

Let your child lead conversations. Resist the urge to do all the talking. When it is your turn to talk, remain calm and speak kindly and reassuringly.

3. Recognize that anxiety is normal.

Let your child know that being anxious or nervous is something that everyone goes through from time to time. Remind children that when they have a problem you are there to help.

4. Encourage kids to pace themselves.

Some teenagers particularly can become overextended. Encourage them to slow down and teach time management skills at an early age.

5. Maintain a normal daily routine.

Aim for your children to wake up and go to bed at the same time each day. Stay hydrated and keep up with a healthy diet. Encourage daily physical activity outside of school.

Consult your pediatrician if your child shows any of the following behaviors:

1. Has a significant change in sleep or eating habits.
2. Has repetitive, self-destructive behaviors such as hair-pulling or skin-pinching.
3. Withdraws from family, friends or activities.
4. Shows excessive worry about the future or needs constant reassurance.
5. Talks about self-harm or suicide.



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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Check for cancellations

Food and Personal Hygiene Drive

Saturday, Aug. 20, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
American Legion Building, 6805
Douglas Ave., Urbandale

A food and personal hygiene drive with curbside drop off of food and monetary donations is being held by VFW Post 9668 of Urbandale and Johnston, Urbandale American Legion, Boy Scout Troops 43 and 98 and the Urbandale Food Pantry. Food items needed include: meals in a can, canned fruits, peanut butter, tuna and canned meats, cereal, canned vegetables and pasta sauce. Personal hygiene items needed include: toilet paper, shampoo, laundry detergent, body wash/soap, toothpaste, deodorant, diapers and wipes.



Party in the Park

Friday, Aug. 19, 5-9 p.m.
Walker Johnston Park, 9000
Douglas Ave.

Party in the Park features free activities for the whole family. Food trucks and a beer garden will have options available for purchase. Enjoy live music and free kids activities including inflatables, laser tag and lawn games. Music is provided by Burnin' Sensations and adult beverages are provided by Rolling Taps.



Free Friday Flick

Friday, Aug. 26
Walnut Creek Regional Park large shelter, 4100 Walnut Creek Park Road
"Guardians of the Galaxy" is the featured movie. Bring your lawn chair, blankets, etc. and enjoy a movie with neighbors and friends at the Urbandale Parks & Recreation's Free Friday Flicks. No registration is needed. Food trucks will be onsite.

Open houses at school facilities

Urbandale schools will be hosting community open house events for Olmsted Elementary and the Urbandale High School Performance Lab & Studio (fitness center) from 6:30-8:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 14.



Pro Disc Golf Tournament Concert

Saturday, Aug. 20, 7-10 p.m.
Pickard Park, 2205 E. Second Ave., Indianola

Disc golf's top athletes will compete for more than \$50,000 in prizes at this stop on the Disc Golf Pro Tour. New for 2022 is a Cory Wong concert the evening of Aug. 20. Purchase tickets for the tournament, the concert, or both at <https://tinyurl.com/3kvs4mp5>.



Shine a Light NF Walk

Aug. 20, 8 a.m. registration,
9 a.m. walk
Raccoon River Park, 2500 Grand Ave.,
West Des Moines

This walk benefits the Children's Tumor Foundation. One in 3,000 babies born has NF, a genetic disorder that causes tumors to grow on nerves. There is no cure. Register at shinealightwalk.org/iowa2022. For information, contact Claudia Becerra at cbecerra@ctf.org.

High Trestle Trail Full Moon Ride

Saturday, Aug. 20
Various start locations

This free party ride starts at 8 p.m. at any of the three destination bars on the trail: Flat Tire Lounge in Madrid, Nite Hawk Bar and Grill in Slater, or The Whistlin' Donkey in Woodward. Each bar features live music. Riders are encouraged to wear a helmet, have proper bike lights and ride safely on the High Trestle Trail as these rides may include up to 600 riders. Details can be found at bikeiowa.com/events.



Iowa State Fair

Through Aug. 22
Iowa State Fairgrounds, 3000 E.
Grand Ave., Des Moines.

If you haven't been to the State Fair — where have you been? More than one million people visit this event every year. Enjoy every type of food you can imagine on a stick, carnival rides and games, the best of agriculture, live music and endless sights to see. For more information, visit iowastatefair.org.



25-Year Celebration

Saturday, Aug. 27
The Brenton Arboretum, 25141
260th St., Dallas Center

Celebrate The Brenton Arboretum's 25th anniversary. The ticketed event marks the 25th year of the planting of its first trees. The event includes dinner, music, good times and gorgeous trees. Individual or table sponsorship tickets can be purchased online at thebrentonarboretum.org/cheers or by phone, 515-992-4211 ext. 3.

EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Check for cancellations



Author reading

Thursday, Sept. 1, 6:30-8 p.m.
Beaverdale Books, 2629
Beaver Ave., Des Moines

Author Jennifer Ohman-Rodriguez will read from her memoir, "A Time to Mourn & A Time to Dance: A Love Story of Grief, Trauma, Healing & Faith" (Chalice Press, 2022). Interspersed with reading passages from her book, Ohman-Rodriguez will present real-life applications of somatic and spiritual healing practices. More information is available at: <https://beaverdalebooks.com/event/jennifer->

Multicultural Music Festival

Friday and Saturday, Sept. 2 -3, 2-10 p.m.
Friday: Raccoon River Nature Lodge,
2500 Grand Ave., West Des Moines
Saturday: Railroad Park,
Historic Valley Junction,
West Des Moines

The outdoor festival includes live music, food trucks, arts, culture, crafts and a kid fun zone. For more information, visit www.tasteofthejunction.org.



White Eagle Multicultural Powwow

Friday, Sept. 2, 5-8 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 3, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Sunday, Sept. 4, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Jester Park, 12130 N.W. 28th St.,
Granger

This is a free, family-friendly outdoors event to celebrate diversity in our community through performances, retail vendors and food vendors.

Prostate Cancer Awareness 5K Run/Walk

Sunday, Sept. 11

Principal Park, 1 Line Drive, Des Moines

Prostate Cancer Awareness of Central Iowa and the Urology Center of Iowa are partnering to hold a fundraising and awareness-raising 5K Run/Walk, along with a 1-mile walk and a Junior Blue Believers Run. Funds raised stay in the area to provide support and awareness to men and their family affected by prostate cancer. For more information, including partnership opportunities, visit www.prostatecancerawarenessofcentraliowa.com.



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We recommend that every individual, especially those age 55+, consider getting annual hearing tests as part of their overall wellness program. If you or a loved one are experiencing hearing loss, call us today!

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Sept 13
\$1 Hot Dogs
Berkwood Farms

EVENTS IN THE AREA

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

Check for cancellations



Summer Concert Series

Sept. 13, 6-8 p.m.

The Iowa Arboretum & Gardens, 1875 Peach Ave., Madrid

The Iowa Arboretum & Gardens is hosting its first-ever Summer Concert Series at the Beckwith Grand Pavilion. Tickets can be purchased at each event, free for members (kids 12 and under free) and \$5 for nonmembers. Food trucks will be onsite and drinks (including beer and wine) will be available for purchase. Bring a lawn chair and blanket and enjoy this beautiful setting. Entertainment will be Diva and the Deacons featuring Tina Haase Findlay, with food by Smokin' Big Dawgs.

The Iowa Arboretum is an educational nonprofit organization. All proceeds from this event support its mission. For more information about the Summer Concert Series, visit www.iowarboretum.org or contact Event Specialist Amber Schmidt at amber@iowarboretum.org or 515-795-3216.



Farmers Market/ Music in the Junction

Thursdays, through
September, 4-8:30 p.m.
Historic Valley Junction, Fifth
Street, West Des Moines

The Farmers Market/Music in the Junction series features live music and a beverage garden at Railroad Park. The beverage garden opens at 5:30 p.m. with live music from 6-8:30 p.m. Entertainers are: Aug. 25, Suede; Sept. 1, Cover That; Sept. 8, The Muddy Walters Band; Sept. 15, Gut Feeling; Sept. 22, Gimmick; and Sept. 29, The Matt Woods Band.



Downtown Farmers' Market

Saturdays through October, 7 a.m.
to noon (8 a.m. to noon in October)
Des Moines Historic Court District

The Des Moines Downtown streets are filled with live music and the smells of fresh, local food at the Downtown Farmers' Market presented by UnityPoint Health – Des Moines. The Market spans nine city blocks in Downtown Des Moines in the Historic Court District, Court Avenue from Water Street to Fifth Avenue and extending north and south on Second Avenue, Third Street and Fourth Street. The Market is produced by the Greater Des Moines Partnership.

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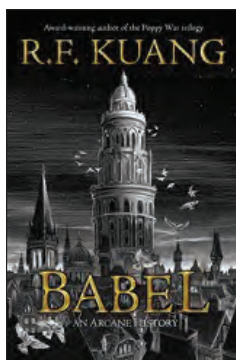
'Babel, or The Necessity of Violence: An Arcane History of the Oxford Translators' Revolution'

R. F. Kuang's Poppy War Trilogy lives rent-free in my head years after I read it, so I picked up her newest book with buckets of anticipation and high expectations. Lucky for me, "Babel" more than met every bar I set.

Set in the world of a subtly fantastical academia, this is an alternate history with deep ties to the real world. For all, it's a magic-filled fantasy. While this book has a wildly different setting and tone, it is soaked with a familiar thread of dread and realism that echoes her first books.

Robin Swift immigrated to London in 1828 after losing his parents in his native China. Taken under the wing of a shadowy professor, he's soon enraptured with the world of Oxford — high academics and mysterious magic that make the British Empire incredibly wealthy. The extent of their colonial efforts is seemingly endless as a result. Soon, though, an unjustified war against Robin's homeland calls everything he's been working on into question and upends his life in profound ways.

If you've never read a R.F. Kuang novel, prepare yourself to confront the dark side of humanity in ways both profound and intense, all while being highly entertained. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



By R.F. Kuang
8/23/22
560 pages
\$27.99
Harper Voyager

'The Book Eaters'

Do you remember the first time you discovered "real" fairy tales? The dark and deliciously brutal versions of "Cinderella," "Snow White" and "Hansel and Gretel" were nothing like the sweet, fluffy stories we were told as children. It seemed like a secret, exciting new world. That's what this book feels like: a decadent, gothic horror fable filled with monsters and magic and a moral that has less to do with obedience and more with how humanity can be both beautiful and, frankly, appalling.

Devon is raised in an isolated family that places no value on women. The family are book eaters — magical folk who can physically eat a book and retain the information therein. Devon, however, is limited to boring, moralistic meals — for her future is set. She will be sold off as a wife to create more book eaters — no matter what she wants.

When her son is born with a rare family curse, everything suddenly changes and Devon is forced to flee to protect him. Now left to her own strength, she will discover the true meaning of family and what it means to be a monster.

Full of gorgeously haunted prose and stark characters, this is a lovely, sad tale that will stick in your mind — however you consume it. ■

— *Review by Julie Goodrich*



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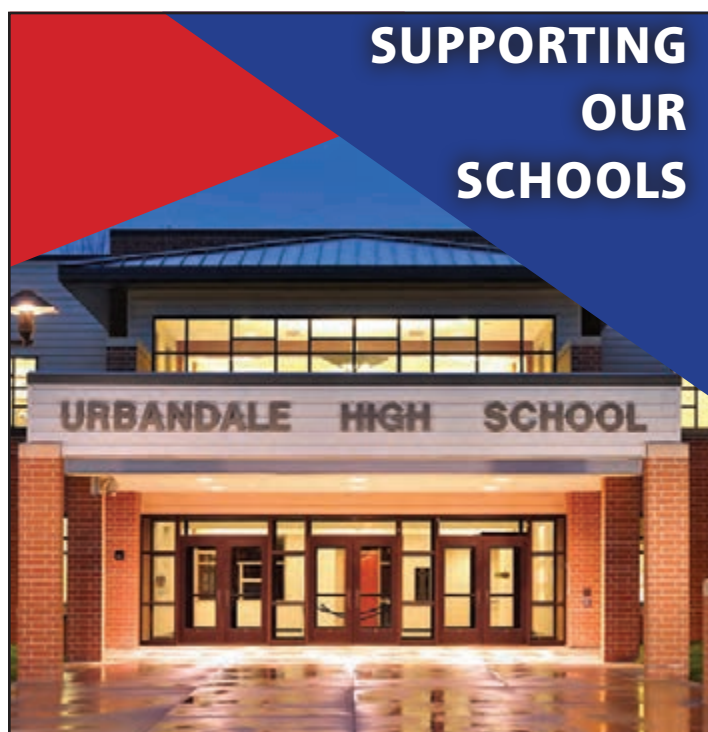
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HOME HEALTH

By Ward Phillips

CARING for someone with memory loss?

Adult-day services can help.

If you're caring for a family member who lives with memory loss, you may be feeling overwhelmed with balancing their needs with your responsibilities. Chances are you need to work. You also may be caring for children and attending to other accountabilities, and you may worry about leaving your loved one alone during the day.



Adult-day services can help. Usually offered in a public place, such as a center, the goal of these mini-communities is to help your family member maintain independence and receive support and encouragement in a safe environment when you can't be with them.

If you're looking for assistance for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia, here are a few things to look for in an adult-day center.

- A comfortable, positive, non-judgmental environment. Your loved one is more than their disease; they deserve to be treated with kindness and respect and made to feel as though their presence is wanted and appreciated.
- Programming that focuses specifically on memory challenges. One advantage: the nationally renowned "Best Friends" approach, which leads with empathy, support, respect, trust and humor. This type of programming helps ensure consistent, person-focused services and care.
- Healthcare on the premises, or close by. If your family member should need medical attention while attending the center, you'll want to make sure there's a plan in place.
- A schedule of activities that includes attention to holistic well-being. A well-balanced curriculum should include exercise for mind and body. Examples include daily walks, field trips and guests who offer presentations on topics of interest to the participants.
- Programming that includes a focus on music. Studies have shown music may reduce agitation that is common in the middle stages of Alzheimer's and is likely to appeal to anyone with a memory challenge. Even in later stages of the disease, a person may be able to tap a beat or sing lyrics to a song from earlier in life.

Additional programming components in addition to music therapy, including multi-sensory activities, pet therapy and aromatherapy.

Adult-day services should be available to anyone who needs them. Individuals who are financially able to do so pay directly for services, but financial aid is often available for families that need assistance. If you find a center that meets your needs, don't hesitate to ask for help paying for services. ■

Ward Phillips is Senior Director of Sales for 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.

IT'S PARTY time – and pests are not invited

As your outdoor spaces are looking beautiful and ready for guests with those perennials that are no longer hiding and the annuals blooming bright, some of your unwanted party guests are also starting to show up in your yard. There are some plants that can help keep some of those flying pests away from your outdoor events year after year. Take time to consider adding some of the plants provided in this article to your yard so you can enjoy your outdoor time with your friends and family.

First to consider is Allium, which is a member of the onion family and produces a colorful bloom and a fragrance that is not loved by aphids and slugs. Second, basil, thyme and mint fragrances are known to keep flying insects away. A note worth mentioning, many varieties of mint are invasive, and control is advised by putting them in a pot or beds with distinct borders. Third, Lavender and its beautiful color emits a strong fragrance that can repel mosquitoes, flies and fleas while adding beauty to your landscape. Some English varieties of

Lavender such as Munstead or Hidcote Superior are hardy here in Iowa to the range of -30 to -20 degrees F. To help Lavender survive the winter, use a layer of straw or mulch over the top for some added protection.

Fourth, the bright orange and yellow colors of the Marigold's varieties can add a great splash of color to the border of your deck or patio. Marigolds also come with insect repelling qualities as mosquitoes do not care for them.

Fifth, Chrysanthemum is a great plant that bugs do not like — especially the crawly ones such as ants, beetles, roaches, bed bugs and ticks — and is used in some bug repellants. Lastly, the most widely used ingredient in many mosquito repellents these days is Citronella, which is derived from Citronella Grass. A downfall of Citronella Grass is that it does not like Iowa's winter climate. However, plant it in a pot, and you can then bring it inside for the winter.

Surround your outdoor living spaces with a few of these suggested plants, and you will insure that only the guests that you have invited come



Allium

for a visit. Not only will your guests have the visual beauty of your garden, they also will have abundant fragrances to enjoy. ■

Information provided by Dusty Rauschenberg, Dallas Center resident, Master Gardener, Master Conservationist, #thegoodpmgardener, dustyrauschenberg@gmail.com.



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WHY is my AC blowing warm air?

Summer is in motion, and we're all enjoying the outdoors while it lasts, but, at the end of the day, we need to recover in a cool and comfortable home. One of the most common AC malfunction questions we receive during the summer is, "Why is my HVAC blowing warm air?" Luckily, this malfunction can sometimes be fixed or prevented by the homeowner.



It may seem obvious, but the first thing you should check is your thermostat. If your system is blowing hot air, your thermostat might have been switched to heat by accident. If this is the case, the fix is as simple as flipping it back to cool.

After checking your thermostat, check if your HVAC system is receiving power. Locate your electrical panel and look for a tripped breaker or blown fuse. Since AC units use a lot of energy, the circuit breaker may automatically shut off as a safety precaution. If your breaker continues to shut off, call an HVAC professional to take a further look at this problem.

Although air filters alone can't cause your AC to blow warm air, debris can build up, leading to frozen evaporator coils. The word "frozen" could make you think of cool air, but, instead, it blocks cold air from flowing throughout your home. To fix this problem, turn your unit off and change the air filter. Wait until your AC has thawed before you turn it back on again. If the coils continue to freeze, this could signal a more serious problem. Turn your system off and call an HVAC professional immediately.

If you have checked everything inside and still can't find any problems, it's time to inspect the outdoor unit. Just like your indoor unit, the outdoor evaporator coils need good airflow. Keep at least a 2-foot clearance around the outdoor unit at all times. Getting regular maintenance done will also help to prevent your system from clogging. If your outdoor unit is congested, turn it off and remove anything within 2 feet. Go a step farther by rinsing off the smaller debris with a garden hose.

For future use, clip this article and tape it near your indoor equipment. Stay prepared and have this article handy when problems arise. It's always recommended to have your equipment receive annual maintenance, which is the ultimate way to continue optimal efficiency and hopefully prevent future emergencies. ■

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

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MEET Alex Baranosky

New principal looks forward to start of school.



Alex Baranosky is the new principal at St. Pius X Catholic School.

Originally from the Des Moines area, Alex Baranosky grew up attending Catholic schools. After receiving his degree, he taught at Dowling High School where he had the opportunity to serve as a teacher-leader. He then decided to pursue a master's degree in educational leadership at Drake University before becoming the assistant principal at St. Pius X Catholic School.

Today, Baranosky also has a specialist in education degree from Drake and, starting this school year, is the new principal at St. Pius X Catholic School.

"The role of building principal is an exciting step on my leadership journey," Baranosky says. "The transition from assistant principal to principal is very exciting and will allow me to serve St. Pius X school and parish in a more robust capacity."

As the new principal, Baranosky will help open the newly renovated parish center and new building on campus. He will also help incorporate a 3-year-old preschool as well as new STEM/enrichment programming. In addition to academic programming, St. Pius X Catholic School currently offers programs such as band, art, physical education, music, Spanish instruction and more.

While working at St. Pius X, Baranosky has also enjoyed participating in service projects that involve the entire school. For example, each year around Christmas, the school works with Catholic Charities in order to help support refugee families as they get settled in central Iowa.

"No doubt the best part is the strong sense of community at St. Pius X Catholic School. Being connected to our parish is such a blessing. The teachers, staff, students, families and parishioners all believe in what we each do, which makes coming to work a joy," he says.

In his free time, Baranosky enjoys spending time with his wife, Alice, and son, Otto. He also likes to cook, read, volunteer as a member of the Serve Credit Union Board of Directors and spend time outdoors. This includes walking his dogs, riding bikes and fishing. This upcoming school year, he says he is looking forward to working directly with students, teachers and families as well as welcoming new families and students to the school.

"The most rewarding part of working in education is helping students and families as they find their school home, get connected and begin their learning," Baranosky says. ■

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WAKE UP to a wonderful brunch

Perfect for any brunch occasion is a delicious dish that can be made a day in advance, simplifying your morning prep before guests arrive with growling stomachs.

Prepared the day before and chilled overnight, this Overnight Apple Cinnamon French Toast Casserole is ready to bake to perfection in the morning with a gooey interior and crisp exterior filled with mouthwatering flavor. Drizzle with glaze then dish out to loved ones for a delicious way to make brunch easy.

Find more breakfast and brunch recipes at Culinary.net. ■

Overnight Apple Cinnamon French Toast Casserole

Servings: 12

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1 package (20 ounces) French bread, cubed, divided
- 1 can (20 ounces) apple pie filling
- 9 eggs
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 cup powdered sugar, plus additional (optional)
- 2 tablespoons milk, plus additional (optional)
- Spray 8- by 8-inch glass baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.
- In baking dish, add 10 ounces cubed French bread in bottom of dish. Pour apple filling over bread. Top with remaining cubed French bread. Set aside.
- In medium bowl, whisk eggs, half-and-half and cinnamon. Pour evenly over bread.
- Cover with aluminum foil and chill overnight.
- Heat oven to 325 F.
- Remove foil and bake 50-60 minutes.
- Let cool 10-15 minutes.



- In small bowl, whisk powdered sugar and milk. Add additional, if needed, until pourable glaze is reached. Drizzle over casserole before serving.

SATISFY cake cravings with a brunch-worthy dessert

Whether your brunch feast consists of bacon and eggs, pancakes and waffles or a combination of favorites, you can cap it off with a sweet treat for the perfect ending. After all, no celebration is complete without dessert.

Once the table is cleared of the main courses, dish out decadent bites of this brown sugar pound cake baked with high-quality ingredients like C&H Sugars to end the meal on a sweet note. Top with whipped cream and your crowd's favorite fruits like strawberries and blueberries or serve the toppings separately for a customizable treat.

Visit chsugar.com for more brunch recipe ideas. ■

Brown Sugar Pound Cake

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 1 hour

Servings: 8

- 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour, plus additional for coating pan, divided
- 1 cup packed C&H Light Brown Sugar
- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
- 4 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- sweetened whipped cream, for topping (optional)
- fresh fruit, such as strawberries and blueberries, for topping (optional)
- Preheat oven to 350 F.
- Grease and flour 9-by-5-by-3-inch loaf pan. In large bowl, beat sugar and butter until fluffy. Beat in eggs one at a time. Add vanilla. In separate bowl, combine 1 3/4 cups flour, baking powder and salt. Gradually add to sugar mixture. Pour batter



into pan.

- Bake 1 hour, or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Remove from pan and turn out on rack to cool completely.
- Top with sweetened whipped cream and fresh fruit, if desired.

DISABILITY and retirement

Clients frequently ask what happens when a disabled person meets retirement age. Simply put, when a disabled person attains full retirement age, disability benefits automatically convert



to Retirement Insurance Benefits. Most disabled beneficiaries will notice no difference when they become retirement beneficiaries.

A more complicated issue is whether to apply for disability or early retirement.

Some people close to, but not at age 62 do not apply for disability thinking that they will just wait until they can apply for early retirement. This results in a reduced monthly benefit.

However, if you are having difficulty maintaining employment because of a

severe medical condition or combination of conditions expected to last at least 12 months, you may want to consider applying for both early retirement and Social Security Disability. You can apply for both at the same time, or, if you already have a disability claim filed, you can apply for early retirement while the disability claim is processed. This can provide for monthly income while you are waiting for a decision on your disability claim. Should you be found disabled, you may receive compensation for the period of time you received the lower amount. This back-pay amount can be significant.

The amount of monthly benefits you receive depends on when you are found disabled. Regardless of when you apply, if you are found disabled, and your disability began before the age of 62, you will receive your full retirement benefits. If you are found disabled after the age of 62, your monthly payment

will be reduced by the number of months of full retirement benefit, but will still be more than the amount of early retirement. You cannot receive disability and full retirement.

Another factor to consider is Medicare. Individuals are eligible for Medicare at the age of 65. Rather than wait until age 65, disabled persons are eligible for Medicare after they have been entitled to SSDI for 24 months.

If you are close to, or over the age of 62, and unable to work because of a medical condition, you should consider filing for disability, early retirement, or both. Contact an attorney who specializes in Social Security disability claims to find out which options are best for you. ■

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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LIBRARY

By Staci Stanton, programming and outreach manager

URBANDALE Public Library news

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Summer Reading Challenge and attended activities throughout June and July, beginning with more than 800 people attending our Summer Reading Kickoff in June. Congratulations to everyone who committed to reading this summer and the lucky winners whose names were drawn for our grand prizes. We would like to thank the Urbandale Public Library Foundation for sponsoring the grand prizes and making it possible for everyone ages 0-17 to earn up to two free books. Visit www.urbandalelibrary.org/about-us/foundation if you're interested in supporting the library.

Who's ready for another challenge? From Sept. 1-30, join NASA's Artemis Project: To the Moon, Mars, and Beyond Reading Challenge where participants will discover more about the Artemis program and NASA's plans for a new generation of crewed spaceflight by completing the activity badges in this reading and activity challenge. Stay tuned for more details.

September is Library Card Sign-Up Month, the perfect time to remind the community of everything a library card provides. From free access to STEAM programs/activities, educational apps, in-person and virtual homework help, technology workshops to the expertise of librarians, a library card is one of the most cost-effective back-to-school supplies available.

While books have often been considered the trademark of the public library, librarians also know that the community's needs are diverse and constantly evolving. This means our collection has expanded over time to include cake pans, video games, puzzles, Wi-Fi hotspots and a seed library, to name a few. Services have expanded to job and homework help, language-learning, and access to basic but essential public needs including computers/printing, faxing, notary and test proctoring.

Likewise, libraries will continue to offer book clubs and storytimes to foster a lifelong love for learning, but we know there are other ways to create meaningful connections. We encourage you to try Afterschool Fun where kids can explore a variety of interests. For the adults, spark their inner artist at our monthly Adult DIY. "Visit" the library without leaving your house with our monthly podcast, "UPL Recommends," or by accessing the number of online resources we offer: Libby, Hoopla and databases like Consumer Reports, Ancestry, Morningstar and more. For Urbandale residents, we'll even bring the library to you with home delivery.

The removal of overdue fees for children's materials in 2022 has cemented the library card's status as the most valuable card in your wallet. What will you do with yours? ■



We all have our favorite local people, places and things. And now it's time to share your choices and honor those who deserve the recognition. **Make your voice be heard and cast your votes in the 2022 Northwest Polk County Residents' Choice Poll.** This contest is being hosted by Iowa Living magazines, and the results will publish in the October issue of our Grimes, Urbandale and Johnston editions. You can vote in one or every category, or anywhere in between. Mail in this paper ballot or vote online at the link below. But do so quickly, as the **poll closes on Sept. 1.** One vote per resident, please.

SCAN HERE TO VOTE



SEE RULES OR VOTE ONLINE AT
www.iowalivingmagazines.com/residentspoll

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13. Favorite NW Polk County Pastor (person) _____
14. Favorite NW Polk County Health Club or Gym _____
15. Favorite NW Polk County Boutique _____

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40. Favorite NW Polk County Bar _____
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65. Favorite NW Polk County Nonprofit _____

WATCH out for these elder fraud scams

Aug. 21 is National Senior Citizens Day.

According to the FBI, more than 92,000 victims older than 60 lost a combined \$1.7 billion in 2021 to elder fraud scams. Older adults are often targets for financial abuse. It's not only important that seniors are educated on how to spot potential fraud schemes, but loved ones should be as well so they can help protect them.



Common elder fraud schemes include:

- **Romance scams** — Criminals will reach out through dating sites and social media, pretending to be interested in companionship while gaining the trust of their victim and eventually asking for money. These scams have increased by 50% since 2019, according to the Federal Trade Commission.
- **Grandparent scam** — A fraudster may pretend to be a relative and ask for financial assistance due to an emergency situation. They may express urgency and try to sound panicked to motivate their targets to act quickly.
- **Charity scam** — In these scams, the criminals will try to get older adults to contribute to a fake charity, often by cash, gift card or a wire transfer. The criminals may try to pressure their targets to give immediately.
- **Sweepstakes/lottery scams** — The criminals will contact an older adult, informing them that they have won a sweepstakes or lottery and can collect their winnings for a fee.

How to protect elders from fraud

Anyone can help protect themselves from financial abuse by following these tips:

- **Keep personal information private.** Never share your Social Security number, account information or personal details over the phone or internet, unless you initiated contact with a trusted source.
- **Shred! Shred! Shred!** Shred receipts, bank statements and unused credit card offers before throwing them away so fraudsters can't piece together your personal information.
- **Don't let a so-called adviser pressure you.** Never let a new or untrusted adviser pressure you into sharing personal or financial details. They could be a fraudster.
- **Check your credit report.** Check your credit report at least once a year to ensure no new credit cards or accounts have been opened by criminals in your name. You can access your free credit report at annualcreditreport.com.

If you believe you or someone you know may have become a victim of fraud, contact your bank for help monitoring your/their accounts for fraudulent transactions. You should also file a complaint through the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov. ■

Information provided by Mackenzie Hunkele, branch manager, Iowa State Bank, 2301 128th St., Urbandale, 515-246-8240.



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OUT & ABOUT



The Urbandale Chamber celebrated a ribbon cutting for the Asset Pros, 6166 N.W. 86th St., Johnston, on July 22.



Matt Shaw, Tim Gootee, Jay Mathes and Shanequa Montgomery at the chamber's ribbon cutting for The Asset Pros on July 22.



Laura Franker and Courtney Buhrow at the chamber's ribbon cutting for The Asset Pros on July 22.



Pat Pithan, Kyle Lee and Riley Schneekloth at the chamber's ribbon cutting for The Asset Pros on July 22.



Laurie Fleming and Jermaine Hayes at the chamber's ribbon cutting for The Asset Pros on July 22.



Mark Courter and Jane Nady at the chamber's ribbon cutting for The Asset Pros on July 22.



Reonna Snyder and Tara Knight-Ortiz at the chamber's ribbon cutting for The Asset Pros on July 22.



Tim Peltzer and Ben Jensen at the chamber's AM Exchange hosted by LaunchIT on July 26.



Janet Fisher and Holli Adams at the chamber's AM Exchange hosted by LaunchIT on July 26.



Tiffany Menke and Courtney Buhrow at the chamber's AM Exchange hosted by LaunchIT on July 26.



Matt Nuetzman and Zach Bouslog at the chamber's AM Exchange hosted by LaunchIT on July 26.

OUT & ABOUT



The Urbandale Chamber celebrated a ribbon cutting for the opening of MinGaLaBar Burmese Kitchen at 8134 Douglas on July 28.



Lum Naw, Min Tun, Lum Ze and Lum Nan at the chamber's ribbon cutting for MinGaLaBar Burmese Kitchen at 8134 Douglas on July 28.



Gina Wright, Jolene Goodman and Tiffany Menke at the chamber's ribbon cutting for the new MinGaLaBar Burmese Kitchen at 8134 Douglas on July 28.



Larry McBurney, Bridget Carbarry Montgomery and Bob Andeweg at the chamber's ribbon cutting for the new MinGaLaBar Burmese Kitchen at 8134 Douglas on July 28.



Del Stevens, Edd Soenke and Millie Stevens at the chamber's ribbon cutting for the new MinGaLaBar Burmese Kitchen at 8134 Douglas on July 28.



The Urbandale Chamber of Commerce celebrated a ribbon cutting for Revive Physical Therapy & Wellness on July 20.



Dennis Appelhons, Alan Mcpherson, Gordon Hyke and Jack Lingelbach of the Urbandale/Johnston VFW at National Night Out hosted at the Urbandale Police Department on Aug. 2.



Laina Lewis, Ben Lewis and Maria Lewis at National Night Out hosted at the Urbandale Police Department on Aug. 2.



Larry Jablonski, Mary Polson and Kenny Neal of the Urbandale Lons Club at National Night Out hosted at the Urbandale Police Department on Aug. 2.



Amelia Kemmerer and Chloe Kemmerer at National Night Out hosted at the Urbandale Police Department on Aug. 2.

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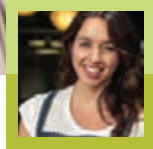
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