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A July of

celebrations

Family fun at Waukee Arts Festival
and Fourth of July festivities

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WELCOME

FUNNEL cakes, chaos and community

There is nothing quite like a community festival to remind us that humanity is chaotic, charming and deeply committed to eating fried food outdoors.

On paper, festivals sound wholesome — live music, local vendors, smiling families. In reality, they are a delightful mash-up of sunburns, long lines and someone's uncle absolutely destroying a karaoke rendition of a 1980s power ballad. And yet, we keep coming back.

Maybe it is because community festivals turn ordinary places into something slightly magical. Suddenly they are packed with food trucks, handmade jewelry and a suspiciously competitive pie-eating contest.

The real entertainment, though, is the people. Festivals are one of the few places where strangers will strike up a conversation with others for no reason at all.

And then there is the food — arguably the main event. Community festivals operate under a simple rule that, if it can be fried, it will be fried. Oreos? Fried. Pickles? Fried. Possibly things that were never meant to be fried? Absolutely fried.

Music adds another layer. Local bands take the stage and give it everything they have got. And there is something refreshing about a performance where the lead singer might also be your dentist.

Of course, no festival is complete without at least one mildly chaotic moment. Maybe it is a sudden rain shower that sends everyone scrambling under tents. Maybe it is a child covered head to toe in cotton candy. Maybe it is you, realizing you have been walking around for an hour with powdered sugar on your face.

In the end, community festivals are messy, loud and a little ridiculous, but that's exactly why they matter. They pull people out of their routines and into shared space, where the goal isn't productivity or efficiency, but simply being there.

You may leave feeling slightly tired, possibly sticky and definitely overfed. But you also leave with a feeling that, for a few hours, you were part of something fun, spontaneous and genuinely human. ■



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A photograph of three people standing in an art studio. On the left is a man in a white t-shirt and dark shorts. In the center is a woman with blonde hair and glasses wearing a black t-shirt with 'KUNZLER' on it and black pants. On the right is a woman with brown hair and glasses wearing a black short-sleeved shirt and blue jeans. The background is filled with art supplies, shelves of pottery, and framed artwork.

A July of *celebrations*

Family fun at Waukee Arts Festival
and Fourth of July festivities

By Jackie Wilson

July in Waukee brings two of the city's biggest draws: the Waukee Arts Festival and the annual Independence Day celebration, which offer a full lineup of art, music, food, fireworks and family-friendly fun.

Kelly, Diane and Kendall Kunzler of Kunzler Studios are the featured artists for the Waukee Arts Festival. Photo by Jackie Wilson

WAUKEE ARTS FESTIVAL

Centennial Park, Waukee
JULY 17

- 5-8 p.m. — Art booths open
- 6 p.m. — Katie and the Honky Tonks
- 8 p.m. — XOLEX

JULY 18

- 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. — Art booths open
- 6 p.m. — The Adapters
- 8 p.m. — Born To Run: The Music of Bruce Springsteen Performed By The Monday Night Live Band



Attendees browse booths at the Waukee Arts Festival, set for July 17-18.

Waukee Arts Festival

Waukee's best-attended event, the Waukee Arts Festival, returns for another weekend of festivities July 17-18 at Centennial Park in Waukee. The festival celebrates 11 years and is considered one of the best regional art shows, according to numerous returning artists who display their work.

Last year's two-day event drew approximately 13,000 attendees. This year's

festival is at capacity with 140 booths, including artists, vendors, civic groups and others.

The Waukee Arts Festival is hosted by the Waukee Area Arts Council, a nonprofit organization. All festival proceeds go back to the community through additional artistic engagements and future festivals. In addition, the festival awards three high school scholarships to students choosing a creative field

of study beyond high school. The scholarships encourage graduating students pursuing visual or performing arts careers to continue their education.

A majority of the artists are from Iowa and neighboring states. A full spectrum of media will be represented, including fine art, pottery, jewelry, photography, sculpture, wood, ceramics and glass. Art collectors of all budgets can add to their personal collections with a variety of

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FEATURE

price points.

The event offers familiar favorites. While art is the main attraction, the family-friendly event also features food and beverage trucks and children's activities.

The art show is juried, and judges award cash prizes for best of show, second and third place. In addition, the Rotary Club of Waukee sponsors a juried K-12 student art exhibit featuring Waukee students. Award announcements take place between concerts on the main stage.

Concerts features XOLEX, others

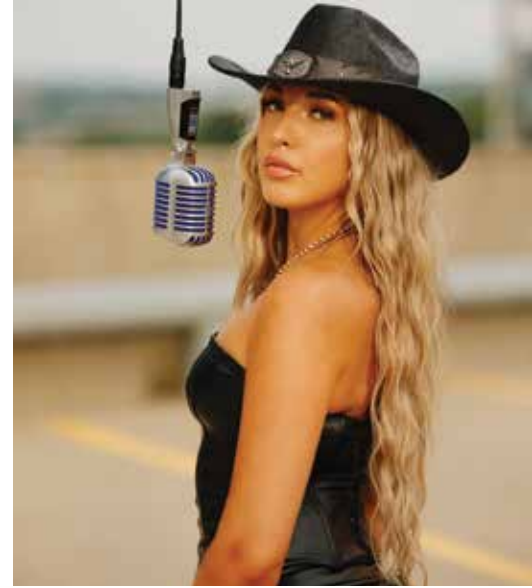
A highlight of the festival includes two evenings of free concerts. Friday night is "girls country night out." The headliner is Alexis Curran, known as XOLEX, a rising country rock artist from Nashville and an Iowa native. XOLEX is also the opening act for BigXthaPlug at the Iowa State Fair Grandstand on Aug. 22.

Friday night's opening band is Katie and the Honky Tonks, a 2025 Iowa Music Award Country Artist of the Year winner.



Pottery from Kunzler Studios will be available at the Waukee Arts Festival.

Saturday night's lineup includes opening band The Adapters, performing high-energy classic and alternative rock. Wrapping up the festival's musical lineup is Born To Run: The Music of Bruce Springsteen Performed By The Monday Night Live Band. All concerts are free, and attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and blankets.



Alexis Curran, known as XOLEX, performs July 17 at Centennial Park. Photo submitted

Featured artist

This year's featured artist is Kunzler Studios, which includes Diane Kunzler and her adult children, Kendall and Kelly.

Festival co-chair Lori Dale says Kunzler Studios was chosen due to its dedication to advancing the arts.

"Over the years, they have been deeply

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rooted in the Waukee Arts Festival and exude the heart of who the festival is for: the emerging artist and the continuance of growth through the artistic process,” Dale says.

All family members have participated in the festival since its inception and have won various “best of” awards for pottery, ceramics and paintings. They operate Kunzler Studios in Valley Junction and at Mainframe Studios.

The Kunzler family is an artistic household, as Diane was an art instructor for 38 years, and their father, Mike, is also an artist.

“The kids grew up around art. At night, everyone was drawing instead of playing or watching basketball,” Diane says.

This year, the family is displaying its artwork as a group instead of individually. Diane says the Waukee Arts Festival is a favorite to attend.

“We have a reputation and name recognition in Waukee,” she says.

Kendall has witnessed the festival’s growth.

“We’ve told other artists, this is how you run a festival. It’s a smart festival and continues to grow,” she says. “We always schedule around this show. The volunteers there are amazing.”

Volunteers needed

As co-chairs of the Waukee Area Arts Council, Karen Dluhos and Lori Dale are leading the 2026 festival with a goal of strengthening the board and ensuring long-term sustainability. The festival is powered entirely by volunteers, from leadership to committees to event staff.

Dluhos helped launch the festival in 2015 and remains a dedicated volunteer.

“As a Waukee native, Karen is inspired by creativity, connection and the deeper meaning art brings to our lives,” Dale says. “Her servant heart shines throughout the community she calls home.”

Dale is an artist, art educator and three-year council member who uses her private-sector experience to streamline operations and expand volunteer opportunities.

“It’s been a beautiful year of regeneration for our council. Our hearts are filled with gratitude for the support we have received from the city of Waukee, businesses, sponsors, donors and volunteers,” Dale says. “You can’t spell ‘heart’ without ‘art,’ and ours is overflowing.”

Dale says the focus is on quality rather than size.

“The event isn’t about being bigger,” she says.

“It’s a quality event that is different than any other festival. Every year it pulses and expands in ways that make each year shiny and new. We have a small-town feel and a community who supports local artists. It’s an honor and humbling to be a part of such an enriching event.”

Volunteers are still needed. To sign up, visit www.waukeearts.org/waukee-arts-festival/volunteer. For more information, visit www.waukeearts.org.

For updates, visit the Waukee Arts Festival Facebook page, Instagram or www.waukeeartsfestival.org.

Fourth of July Celebration

It wouldn’t be summer in Waukee without its annual Independence Day celebration. Festivities begin July 3 and continue through July 4, with most events at Centennial Park.

New this year is a kids market, where young entrepreneurs ages 5-17 will sell goods July 3 beginning at 4:30 p.m.

Old-fashioned games, including pie-eating and bubblegum-blowing contests, along with yard games and bingo, offer fun for all ages. Adults can compete in volleyball and bags tournaments. Friday night’s free movie in the

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FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION
JULY 3-4

Centennial Park

- For a complete schedule, parade route and registration information, visit: www.waukee.org/777/Independence-Day-Celebration
- To register for the Waukee Freedom 5K, visit: <https://runsignup.com/Race/IA/Waukee/WaukeeFreedom5K>



The July 4 parade begins at 10:30 a.m. and features more than 70 entries.

park is “National Treasure.”

The Waukee Freedom 5K begins July 4. The race is an annual fundraiser for Boy Scout Troop 178 and starts at Lutheran Church of Hope-Waukee.

A free pancake breakfast, hosted by the Rotary Club of Waukee, will be served at Centennial Park. Freewill donations are accepted.

The annual parade begins at 10:30 a.m. and features more than 70 entries. New this year is live commentary from Waukee podcast host Leisa Fox and Heather Behrens, director of

marketing and communications for the city of Waukee.

Later in the day, children can purchase wristbands for inflatables. Food and beverage vendors will be available. A live concert featuring Joshua Sinclair and The Sheet will provide evening entertainment.

At 8 p.m., the Des Moines Skydivers will perform, followed by fireworks at 9:30 p.m.

Behrens says community events are important.

“Events like this are part of what makes Waukee feel like home. Waukee is growing fast,

so we are intentional about making moments for both newcomers and longtime residents to have some fun, meet neighbors and feel like they are a part of this community,” she says.

Behrens describes the celebration as low-key and family-friendly.

“We hope this Independence Day celebration is part of Waukee’s family traditions. It’s designed to be an event you can enjoy at any stage of life, so rally some friends, bring your kids or spoil the grandkids with some ice cream,” she says. “It’s a relaxed evening of activities to kick off a fantastic holiday weekend.” ■

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PRE-PLANNING key to estate planning ease

In more than 30 years of practice, I have helped families through countless estates. Some are nearly insolvent; others have millions of dollars of assets. In every estate, pre-planning was the difference between



easy administration and a logistical nightmare. An organized and easily-understood estate plan is a gift to those you leave behind.

First, prepare a will or trust. These are written documents, drafted by an attorney, which direct the distribution of your assets. The executor or trustee is the person in charge of finalizing your affairs. The rest of the document is a set of instructions that directs who inherits assets. If your will is out of date (or you've never created one), update it.

Second, you should have a durable financial power of attorney. The financial power of attorney names an agent you trust to help manage your financial affairs. You can control the timing of when it goes into effect.

Third, you need advance medical directives. The health care power of attorney appoints someone to make medical decisions for you if you can't make them yourself. The living will sets out your wishes for end of life care. You should discuss both these documents with the people you are assigning, so they understand your wishes.

Fourth, make sure that you have beneficiaries listed on all assets that you can. The beneficiary designation supersedes the will or trust, so the asset goes directly to the beneficiary and doesn't go through probate. Make sure your beneficiary designations are up to date. Too often, I have seen assets designated

to someone who died years before, or to a guardian for children who are now adults.

Fifth, pre-arrange your funeral and pre-pay it if you can. When a family is grieving, they don't always make the best decisions. Take that burden off them by putting basic arrangements in place.

Lastly, have a family conversation. It is not easy to ponder mortality. But as difficult as this subject may be, it is important that someone knows your wishes and where key information can be found.

Lack of planning can leave a mess for your loved ones. If you have questions about how to update your estate plan, contact an attorney who has the experience and knowledge to assist you. ■

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

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Photo by Carlos Acebey

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0	Tyler Uittenbogaard	SO
1	Tate Schendel	SR
2	Brody Lind	SR
3	Amel Osmanovic	SR
4	Cal Blakely	JR
5	Jaxson Acebey	SR

#	Player	Gr.
6	Chris Weihe	SR
7	Ayden Gabrielson	SR
8	Sufyan Abosaida	SO
9	Gage Beckel	SR
10	Eddie Mihura	JR
11	Eman Alicic	SO

#	Player	Gr.
12	Caden Mueller	SO
13	Cale DeJong	JR
14	Sam Ratcliff	SR
15	Jaxson Simonini	FR
16	Grady Wilcox	JR
17	Minh Truong	JR

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Courtesy of Austin Lundberg

Courtesy of Tiffany Uittenbogaard

#	Player	Gr.
18	Sully Ervin	JR
19	Drew Thede	SO
21	Samuel Temple	SO
22	Jamison Simonini	SO
23	Jake Spalding	SO
24	Harrison Fleming	JR

#	Player	Gr.
25	Zak Shlomi	SR
26	Dillon Bailey	SR
27	Ezequiel Venales	FR
28	Christopher Leon	FR
29	Jose Venales	FR
30	Kenan Quaid	SR

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CELEBRATING 70 years of marriage

Don and Dorothy Wilson reflect on the passage of time.

When Don and Dorothy Wilson of Waukee married 70 years ago, they never imagined reaching such a milestone. Having watched their parents celebrate 50- and 60-year anniversaries, they knew lasting marriages were possible, but seven decades together seemed remarkable. “Whoever thought that we would be married for 70 years?” Dorothy says. “I never thought we’d be married that long. The years have gone by quickly.”

The couple both attended Des Moines Tech High School and met in history class. They dated and went to prom together. They both graduated from high school in 1954, got engaged in 1955 and married May 11, 1956.

The pair were only 19 years old when they married. “The minister gave us a card saying we were legally married,” Don explains. “We took that with us on our honeymoon.”

After Dorothy became pregnant and began showing, she had to quit her job as a secretary. The couple moved around Iowa as Don worked for the phone company and served in the National Guard. Dorothy stayed home with the children. Eventually, she returned to work at Grand View College.

They later moved back to the area to care for their aging parents and lived in West Des Moines for 26 years. About 12 years ago, the couple felt their home was too large, so they downsized and settled in a townhouse in Waukee, which offered a unique coincidence.

Dorothy’s father hauled coal and sand used to manufacture bullets and shells during World War II. The coal came from the Shuler mines in Waukee.

“It’s a small connection that I ended up retiring in Waukee,” she reflects. “My great-grandma also farmed in Waukee.”

Throughout the years, the couple immersed themselves in the community wherever they lived. Don attended chamber events. With four sons at home, he volunteered with the Boy Scouts, serving as a scoutmaster for 15 years, while Dorothy was a den mother.

They credit their longevity to having similar upbringings and interests, as well as attending school together. “We talk things over and come to an agreement,” Dorothy explains. “We take care of each other now.”

With children living on different coasts, they have traveled 1,500-mile trips to visit family. Don has researched family genealogy, scouring cemeteries and local courthouses. Dorothy is a NASCAR fan, as her



Dorothy and Don Wilson say their seven decades together have passed quickly.

father used to race hydroplane boats at Riverview.

As both turn 90 this year, they stay closer to home. Once a month, they get together with their Des Moines Tech classmates.

“There’s not a lot of us left. We’re losing a lot of our friends,” Don reflects.

To celebrate 70 years of marriage, their family hosted a party. The Wilson family includes four sons, eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Don and Dorothy are grateful for their health, family and friends. Downsizing 12 years ago while still in good health was a good decision.

“Waukee is a good choice,” Dorothy says. “We like it here a lot.” ■

TEACHING through service

Lilly leads by example through hands-on work with Meals from the Heartland.

The opportunity to teach others can present itself in many places and often appears both inside and outside the classroom. Karla Lilly embraces that opportunity in both settings, and she not only teaches what it means to serve others, she models it alongside her students.



Lilly works for Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates (iJAG), a nonprofit organization that helps students earn service hours.

"We help them learn soft skills for adulthood, such as connecting with the community," she explains. "We give them the opportunity to explore careers at a young age and help them understand the importance of discovering a purpose for what they do, to see that how people see them and how they present themselves matters."

The organization's vision is "to empower Iowa's youth to succeed, thrive and become future-ready leaders," and its goal is to equip young people with the skills necessary to become leaders who discover and follow their passion and purpose. The iJAG organization has been around for 26 years. For the past three years, Lilly has taken her students to learn skills and service opportunities with Meals from the Heartland.

In her first year working with Meals from the Heartland, Lilly partnered with South Middle School seventh-grade students. The second year, she worked with Prairieview Middle School eighth- and ninth-grade students, and this year she worked with ninth-graders. "Some of them have been working with Meals from the Heartland as long as I have," she says. "We did hands-on work at the facility for a while, but I wondered how to help without taking the kids out of school." Amanda Parkins at Meals from the Heartland said they needed meal bags labeled. That service work allowed students to remain in school while still helping get food into the hands of those who need it in the community.

On Wednesdays, Lilly and her group of students have a service-learning day, where they either work in the community or in the classroom. They place "best by" stickers on bags that will hold weekly food deliveries for individuals. At the facility, work is set up in stations where Lilly and her students package food items such as rice and protein into labeled bags.

"Together, we decided who will do which job," she says. "Someone holds, someone fills, someone labels, and someone seals the boxes or bags. Another person checks to make sure the bags are at the correct capacity, and yet another will pick them up and put them on the pallet."

When Lilly and her student volunteer group go to the facility, they work a two-hour shift, scheduled on a day that works for most students. "We try to take all of them, and their opportunity to go is based on their attendance, grades and behavior," Lilly says. "There are approximately 25 to 30 students at a time."

Lilly appreciates working and volunteering with Meals from the Heartland for many reasons. It gives students a chance to get out of the school building and learn how to interact with others, including how to greet people using the GNAP method (greeting, name, affiliation and purpose). Working with Meals from the Heartland also gives Lilly a sense of pride because she and her students can give back to their community.

"Volunteering there is making an impact," she says. "We talk about

food insecurities. Students didn't realize at first that there were those in their own school dealing with that."

Lilly says that sometimes other students who are not part of the iJAG program see what her group is doing as they walk by her classroom. Her students talk about their volunteer work with classmates, and Lilly hopes they inspire others to find ways to give back to their community.

Lilly says volunteering with Meals from the Heartland makes sense because she has time to give and a passion for helping others.

"There have been times when I have had food insecurities myself," she admits. "I know the impact it makes. Meals from the Heartland is a Christian organization, but it serves everyone, no matter their religion or creed. I believe if you have time on your hands, you should find somewhere to share that time with and make a difference in the lives of others." ■



Travis Gaule, Trust Bridge Wealth Advisors, presents the Neighbor Spotlight certificate to Karla Lilly.

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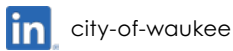
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Waukee's annual Independence Day Celebration, July 3-4 will feature inflatables, vendors, parade, live music, skydivers, tournaments, fireworks and more. The parade begins at 10:30 a.m. on July 4, following a northbound course on SE L.A. Grant Parkway. It's free to participate in the parade, but advanced registration is required by June 30. Find the details and register for the parade, volunteer opportunities and all-you-can-jump inflatables at Waukee.org/July.

Friday, July 3

- Yard games, bingo, pie-eating contest and more, 4:30-8:30 p.m. *free*
- Kids Market (NEW for 2026) and food vendors, 4:30-9 p.m.
- Movie in the Park: "National Treasure", dusk (~8:45 p.m.) *free*

Saturday, July 4

- Waukee Boy Scout Troop 178 "Waukee Freedom 5K", 7:45 a.m. at Lutheran Church of Hope Waukee *pre-registration required*
- Rotary Club of Waukee Pancake Breakfast, 8-10:30 a.m. *freewill donation*
- Parade, 10:30 a.m. *free*
- Food and beverage vendors, noon-10 p.m.
- Inflatables, 1-8 p.m. *\$15 armband or individual tickets*
- Live music: Joshua Sinclair and The Sheet, 4-9:30 p.m. *free*
- Des Moines Skydivers, 8 p.m. *free*
- Fireworks, 9:30 p.m. *free*

**All events are at Centennial Park unless otherwise noted.*



Dates to Know

Regular City Council Meetings
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Waukee.org/CityCouncil

Independence Day Celebration
July 3-4
Centennial Park
Waukee.org/July

City Offices & Library Closed
July 3 and 4
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See and Be Seen

The conversation is good. The beats are bumping. The sunset is pretty. It's easy to get distracted. But take a moment to tune in to what's happening around you when you're walking, riding or driving. Look left, right, left before crossing. Cross where you're most visible. Make eye contact with drivers or pedestrians and give them a friendly wave to confirm they see you. New or younger riders should walk bikes, scooters and other devices across roundabouts or streets. By staying aware and looking out for one another, we can help ensure We All Arrive.



Downtown Construction

There are several construction projects happening in the Downtown Triangle district this summer. We are enhancing parking at various spots and will reconstruct Walnut Street as part of downtown improvements. Plan ahead for lane and road closures if you travel in this area. One way is to get notified of street closures by text or email. Sign up at Waukee.org/NotifyMe. Get more info on projects at Waukee.org/DowntownStreets.



Save Water

Thank you for not watering lawns and conserving water where you can. It is helping lower the strain on our water system as all available treatment resources are managing high nitrates. CIWW is working to expand capacity for water treatment. Efforts include expanding the Saylorville Water Treatment Plant, advancing plans to expand the Grimes Water Treatment Plant, and planning a new water treatment facility in Dallas County. Get links to project info, answers to common questions and updates on the irrigation ban at Waukee.org/SaveWater.



Holiday Closures & Trash Delay

All City of Waukee offices, including the Waukee Public Library, will be closed on Friday, July 3 and Saturday, July 4. There is no change to trash collection that week.



Home Fireworks Only on July 3 & 4

Consumer fireworks are only legal on private property within Waukee city limits on July 3 and 4 between 9 a.m. and 11 p.m. Setting off fireworks on other days or times may result in a fine of at least \$250. Per state law, do not light fireworks on public property, such as parks, parking lots, sidewalks or streets, nor the public right-of-way (the grass between sidewalks and the curb). For non-emergency fireworks concerns, call Westcom Dispatch at 515-222-3321. For emergencies, call 911.



10 FREE THINGS TO DO THIS SUMMER:

- 1 Wander the Library art gallery and coal mining museum
- 2 Follow the Storywalk on Heart of the Warrior Trail near the roundabout
- 3 Explore a new park
- 4 Attend the Independence Day Celebration
- 5 Take a photo next to the colorful sculptures at Tallgrass Pond
- 6 Check out a STEAM kit from the library
- 7 Watch Movies in the Park
- 8 Read the City newsletter
- 9 Attend Library programs like storytimes or Snacks and Facts
- 10 Go to the Public Safety Day Open House

Discoveries Unearthed From Ancient Human Bones

July 21 at 6 p.m. (Adults)
Waukee Public Library
Free; register at WaukeePublicLibrary.org

Yoga in the Park

8:30 a.m., July 11 and 25
Windfield Park, \$5, ages 12 and up
Waukee.org/Yoga

Teen Color Tag

July 27 at 6 p.m.
Waukee Public Library
Free; register at WaukeePublicLibrary.org

RHUBARB season just got crispy

As a kid, you could find me following my mother around the yard while she planted, weeded and tended to her flowers and plants. Our backyard wasn't overflowing with produce — just a small strawberry patch lined with rhubarb. Back then, I wasn't a fan. Rhubarb was a little too bold for my taste. But, over time, especially when paired with apples and a bit of sugar, it won me over. Now, I look forward to it every year.



Rhubarb is also one of the easiest and most rewarding plants to grow. Give it a sunny spot — ideally on the south side of your house or garage — and it will thrive with very little fuss.

This crisp is inspired by my mother's classic apple crisp. Sort of. Like my mother, I don't really measure ingredients for these kinds of treats, which has made sharing the recipe a bit tricky over the years. Sometimes I add nuts or oatmeal. Sometimes I mix in apples. But one thing never changes: a generous, crispy crumble topping. If it's not crisp, we're not doing it right.

So, for the sake of sharing (and finally having something more useful to say than "just eyeball it"), I actually paid attention while making it this time. What you will find here is my best attempt at a real recipe. That said... I probably added a little extra of something along the way. I encourage you to do the same. That's where the magic happens. ■

Information provided by Jolene Goodman, vice president of Big Green Umbrella Media.

Jolene's Rhubarb Crisp

INGREDIENTS:

- 5 cups of rhubarb
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup oatmeal
- 1/3 cup chopped pecans
- 1/2 cup butter, room temperature (if it gets too dry, add a little more butter)



DIRECTIONS:

- Chop rhubarb in half inch pieces and place into an 8x8-inch dish. In a separate bowl, mix dry ingredients, then add butter. Cut butter into the dry ingredients until crumbly. Spread crumble mixture over rhubarb. Bake uncovered at 350 F for 45 minutes. Serve warm with vanilla ice cream. ■

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Be sure to check for cancellations.

Coming up in Waukee Living magazine:

Play sets, play houses and tree houses: Share the stories of your memorable play sets, play houses and tree houses. Perhaps your family has play structures that entertain your kids for hours. Or maybe you have memories of the play house you enjoyed as a child. Big or small, if it creates happy times, let us know. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.

Hobby photographers: Do you enjoy the hobby of photography? Perhaps you take wildlife photos or capture scenic scenes. Maybe you enter your photos in the county or state fair. Maybe you have taken a photography class. Tell us why you enjoy the hobby and share some of your favorite shots. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.

Movies in the Park

First Friday of the month during summer and fall
Centennial Park, 1225 Warrior Lane, Waukee

Enjoy Hollywood's biggest hits under the stars with Movies in the Park. These Friday night movies are free and a great way to make summer memories with friends and family. Showtime is at dusk, typically around 8:45 p.m. for summer movies and 6:30 p.m. for fall. Bring your lawn chairs or blankets to sit in the grassy area near the open shelter. You may also bring your favorite snacks.

- Friday, July 3: "National Treasure" (PG)
- Friday, Aug. 7: "The Super Mario Galaxy Movie" (PG)
- October: Movie to be determined.

Dallas County Fair

July 7-11

Dallas County Fairgrounds,
Adel

Enjoy a week of fun, food and hometown traditions at the Dallas County Fair. The grandstand will feature Tyler Braden with special guest Jordan Beem at 7 p.m. on July 10. For more information, tickets and full schedule, visit www.dallascountyfair.com.

Farmers Market

Wednesdays, 4-7 p.m. June
through Sept. 2

Waukee Downtown
Triangle

Waukee Triangle Businesses presents the Farmers Market. Find details at WaukeeDowntown.com. The market typically has a variety of local and regional vendors with fresh produce, flowers, crafts and sweet treats from local and regional vendors.

EyeQ celebrates 4 years serving Waukee

July 14, 2-6 p.m.

2157 S.E. L.A. Grant Parkway, Waukee

EyeQ is holding a customer appreciate event. Bring your friends and family and enjoy beverages and snacks from 4-6 p.m. Free ice cream treat from Home Sweet Cone truck for all current patients will be offered from 4-6 p.m. as a thank you for helping the business continue to grow. Also, there will be a frame show from 2-6 p.m. with 40% off ECO Eyeglass frames with sunclips. The ECO rep will be present with the full line to help you find a perfect fit. Drawings for a free complete pair of eyeglasses and other prizes will be held. ■

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WHOSE insurance pays when a neighbor's tree falls?

After several recent storms across Iowa, many homeowners have found themselves asking the same question: "If my neighbor's tree falls on my house or car, whose insurance covers the damage?"

Most people are surprised to learn that, in most cases, it is not the tree owner's insurance that pays.

Generally, insurance follows the property that was damaged — not necessarily the property where the tree originated. That means if your neighbor's healthy tree falls onto your garage during a windstorm, your own homeowners insurance policy would typically cover the damage to your home. If the tree lands on your vehicle, your auto policy's comprehensive coverage would usually apply.

Here's an example: A strong thunderstorm moves through overnight. A large healthy oak tree from your neighbor's yard crashes onto your roof. Even though the tree belonged to the neighbor, your homeowners insurance would normally pay for repairs to your home, minus your deductible. The storm is considered an "act of nature," and there was no negligence involved.

The same principle applies to vehicles. If a tree falls on your parked car during a storm, your auto insurance would respond if you carry comprehensive coverage.

However, there are situations where the tree owner can be held responsible.

The key issue becomes negligence. If the tree owner knew — or reasonably should have known — that the tree was dangerous and failed to address it, their liability coverage may come into play.

For example, imagine a homeowner has a large dead tree leaning toward a neighbor's property. The neighbor becomes concerned and sends a written letter or email explaining that the tree appears rotten and could cause damage if it falls. The homeowner ignores the warning and takes no action. Months later, the tree falls and damages the neighbor's home.

In a case like this, the damaged homeowner may have a much stronger argument that the tree owner was negligent. In fact, we have seen situations where written documentation helped the affected homeowner successfully recover damages from the tree owner's insurance policy.

This is why documentation matters. If you notice a neighbor's tree appears dead, damaged, or unsafe, politely bringing it to their attention in writing can be important. Photos, emails, or letters may help establish that the hazard was known before the loss occurred.

The best advice? Maintain your trees, inspect them regularly, and address obvious hazards before storms arrive. A little prevention can save everyone a major headache later. ■

Information provided by Chase VanWerden, IFG Insurance, 520 Walnut St., Waukee, 515-987-9598.



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PREPARING to meet a financial advisor

Many people hesitate to seek certain professionals for guidance: lawyers, doctors, dentists and, often, a financial advisor. If you think about it, a wide range of emotions can surface when we seek assistance in areas where we do not consider ourselves experts. Questions about money can feel personal, emotional and sometimes intimidating. Let's look at what a first meeting with a financial advisor should entail and how preparation can make the experience more productive and comfortable.



Your first meeting with a financial advisor is less about numbers and more about clarity. It is an opportunity to establish goals, identify concerns and begin building a financial strategy that reflects your life today — and where you want to go tomorrow. The more prepared you are, the more meaningful the conversation will be.

As a financial advisor, I often tell clients they do not need to arrive with perfectly organized spreadsheets or an advanced understanding of investing. What matters most is bringing the right information and being open about your priorities, concerns and long-term objectives.

Start with a snapshot of your income and expenses. Recent pay stubs, tax returns and a rough monthly budget can help your advisor understand your cash flow and spending habits. Knowing what comes in — and what goes out — creates the foundation for financial recommendations like saving strategies, debt management and retirement planning.

Next, gather information about your assets. This includes bank accounts, retirement plans, investment accounts, pensions and insurance policies. If you have a 401(k), IRA, brokerage account or savings account, bring the most recent statements. These documents allow your advisor to assess how your money is currently allocated and whether your investments align with your long-term goals and risk tolerance.

It is equally important to bring details about your liabilities. Mortgage balances, student loans, credit card debt, auto loans, and other financial obligations all play a role in shaping your financial plan. Many hesitate to discuss debt, but transparency is essential. A good advisor is not there to judge your financial past. They are there to help assist in your financial future.

Think carefully about your goals before the meeting. Are you hoping to retire early? Save for a child's education? Purchase a home? Reduce taxes? Build a legacy? Financial planning is not just about growing money; it is about aligning money with purpose.

Bring a list of questions. Ask how the advisor is compensated, what services are included, how often meetings occur, and what type of clients they typically serve. Trust, communication and transparency matter just as much as credentials.

Preparation does not need to be perfect. Even incomplete information can help begin the conversation. The goal of the first meeting is simple: to gain a clearer understanding of where you are financially today and begin building a roadmap for where you want to go tomorrow. ■

Information provided by Daniel Rundahl, Financial Advisor, Rundahl Financial Consultants, 8230 Hickman Road, Suite 300, Clive, 515-727-1701, drundahl@rundahlfinancial.com, www.rundahlfinancialconsultants.com.

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IN-HOME services

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A few years ago, Jeanne Klock fell.

She had always had trouble with her knees, and she worried that a serious fall could force her to leave the home she loved. Like many older adults, Jeanne wanted to stay where she felt most comfortable, surrounded by her own belongings, routines and memories.

So, when she stumbled, her first thought was frightening: "Now I'll have to leave my home."

Jeanne's family knew how much staying home mattered to her, so they began looking for support that could help her remain independent without requiring a move. That search led them to in-home services, also known as non-medical assistance.

Today, Jeanne is living independently at 89 in her home near Des Moines. In-home services aides help keep her safe, assist with daily activities and provide companionship. "I like that they don't tell me what to do," Jeanne said. "They make suggestions, but they are very kind. They would do anything for me."

That balance matters. In-home support is not about taking over. It is about helping people continue living on their own terms, with the right level of assistance.

An in-home services aide may help someone get ready in the morning, prepare meals, provide light housekeeping or go along to appointments. Some days may include errands, shopping or social outings. Other days may be quieter, with conversation, a good meal and help around the home.

"I help her get ready in the mornings, and some days we are pretty active, going here and there," said Wendy, one of Jeanne's aides. "I go with her to doctors' appointments, we go shopping — really anyplace she needs or wants to go. Some days, we take it slower."

In-home services are different from medical home health care. In most cases, they are not covered by insurance and are paid for by the client or family. Services vary by provider, but they often include help with cooking, light housekeeping, laundry, errands, appointments, personal care, pet care, medication reminders and companionship.

When choosing an in-home services provider, families should ask how support is delivered, not just what tasks are offered. A good provider will take time to understand a person's routines, preferences, safety needs and goals before recommending a plan. Ask how aides are trained, supervised and matched with clients; whether schedules can change as needs change; and how the provider communicates with family members.

For Jeanne, the arrangement has helped her keep what matters most: Her home, her choices and her sense of independence.

"My things are here, and I'm comfortable here," she said. "I just need a little help. I think it should be up to a person where they choose to live." ■

Stacey Miller is executive director of WesleyLife at Home, which offers a broad network of services, including medical and non-medical at-home care. Visit wesleylife.org or call 515- 978-2777.



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MEET Jenny Allen

From paraprofessional to teacher, educator finds her calling.

Jenny Allen grew up in San Diego, California, before attending college at Northern Arizona University. She then returned to her home state to earn a master's degree in social work from San Diego State University. Twenty years later, Allen returned to school to earn a special education degree from Western Governors University. Now, she has completed her first year of teaching and her fourth year working full time in the Waukee Community School District.



Jenny Allen took part in the para-to-teacher program and now has completed her first year of teaching.

“This district is growing so fast. The growth brings people from all over the country and all over the world. It is a joy to see all of the faces, all of the cultures and all of the ideas that are brought to the table in this district. We will never have a shortage of incredible thinkers, innovative ideas, love for students and families and a drive to create opportunities,” Allen says.

Allen joined the middle school as an associate/paraprofessional for a few years and says she felt right at home among the teachers, students and families. When the district offered a para-to-teacher program, it took Allen seconds to jump on board. She submitted an application, interviewed and, before she knew it, made the shift from a stay-at-home mom to a wife, mom, associate and full-time student.

“I joined the team at SMS as an associate/paraprofessional and fell in love with the work,” Allen says. “Being able to support students and help them connect with and fully access their education in a meaningful way is so fulfilling.”

As a special education teacher at South Middle School, Allen spends her days helping students reach their educational goals. She has the opportunity to design instruction specific to each of her students, mostly in reading, writing and math. Allen also helps students develop behaviors conducive to successful learning, such as managing time, organization and social skills. Her students have enjoyed learning about math through money, and Allen plans to build on this next year with classroom jobs, applications, interviews and more.

“Students come to us with questions about friends or social situations, or ask if they should join a club or activity,” Allen says. “These moments make every tough moment worth it. Seeing students mature and grow from the beginning of the year to the end is really special.”

This summer, Allen looks forward to accompanying her son on a choir trip to Austria and Germany. After the school trip, she and her son plan to stay behind to spend time exploring more countries when her husband and daughter meet up with them. As a family, they also plan to take West Coast college visits with their son. ■

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SENIOR

By Jay Heaton

CREATING connections

Making meaningful social connections is important at every stage of life, especially as we grow older. Transitioning into a new setting can feel like a major change in life, but it can also become an exciting opportunity to build new friendships and enjoy new experiences.



Many older adults already have lifelong friendships and close family relationships that remain very important. However, meeting new people later in life can bring a renewed sense of purpose, companionship and enjoyment to everyday routines. There are often many opportunities to connect with others through shared meals, activities, hobbies, games, exercise classes or simple daily conversations.

Connecting with people who are experiencing similar stages of life can provide comfort, understanding and emotional support. These social interactions can also help reduce feelings of loneliness and encourage a more positive outlook overall.

Creating new friendships does not replace the relationships someone already has. It simply adds to the support system and sense of community around them. Some of life's most rewarding friendships are formed later in life, proving meaningful experiences can happen at any age.

No matter where life takes you, there is always an opportunity to meet wonderful new people and create lasting memories along the way. ■

Information provided by Jay Heaton, leasing counselor, Attivo Trail Waukee, 835 N.E. Boston Parkway, Waukee, www.attivotrail.com.

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WELLNESS

By Ashley Powell

THE SEARCH for better energy

For many people, the answer to low energy has always been simple: more caffeine. But, as busy schedules, stress and poor sleep continue to affect daily life, many adults are starting to realize that energy is about more than just staying awake.



Today, the conversation is shifting from stimulation to performance. People are looking for ways to support both energy and focus without the jitters, crashes or disrupted sleep that can come from relying too heavily on caffeine alone.

That shift has fueled interest in ingredients like cordyceps mushrooms, lion's mane mushrooms, CBG, nootropics, and other wellness products designed to support mental clarity and sustained energy. While cordyceps is often associated with physical energy and endurance, lion's mane has become popular among people looking to support focus, memory and cognitive performance.

CBG, sometimes called the "mother cannabinoid," is commonly used in products designed for daytime wellness. Many people seek it out for its reputation for supporting energy, alertness and focus without any intoxicating effects.

Today, these ingredients are found in a variety of wellness products, including gummies, mushroom coffees, beverages, pouches and supplements. Different ingredients are often used for different goals, whether that is sustained energy, mental clarity, productivity or focus. ■

Information provided by Ashley Powell, CBD American Shaman, 800 S. 50th St., No. 106, West Des Moines, 515-380-5251, and 3418 Eighth St. S.W., No. 3, Altoona, 515-967-4036.

GRIEF and judgement

Do any of these sound familiar? “I shouldn’t feel...” “I can’t be angry...” “This is going to sound strange...” “I feel so weak...”

Do you know what I hear when I hear these statements made by people who are grieving?

Self-judgement. Perhaps reading the title, you thought I was referring to the judgement of others on those grieving. Certainly, that is something most grievers face at some point, but I want to talk about self-judgement. We don’t have control of others’ judgements, but, with awareness and intention, we do have power over our own.

Self-judgement makes our grief more difficult because we are self-imposing restrictions on the naturally occurring responses for the loss we have endured. Some of these responses may not feel natural and normal, but they are. It is important to remember that feelings aren’t necessarily facts but can give us information about what our hearts need tending to. It can take time for our heads and our hearts to come to a place of agreement. And, sometimes, they never do, and that is OK.

Validating our own losses is a powerful tool in our coping-with-grief toolbox. When you have a judgmental thought, take a deep breath and tune into the feeling. Allow the feeling to exist as it is instead of dismissing it with a “I shouldn’t feel this way.” See what it has to tell you instead. You can learn a lot when you listen to what feelings are trying to teach you. ■

Information provided by Buffy Peters, Director of Hamilton’s Academy of Grief & Loss, 3601 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-697-3666, www.HamiltonsFuneralHome.com/academy-of-grief-and-loss.



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Why use Sculptra? Long-lasting results – The effects of Sculptra often last up to two years. Natural appearance – Sculptra promotes gradual changes in the skin, allowing for a more organic enhancement that avoids an “overdone” look. Versatility – Sculptra can be used in various areas of the face, and even non-facial areas like neck, hands and buttocks, making it a comprehensive solution for volume loss. Minimal downtime – patients can return to their regular activities very shortly after treatment. Collagen stimulations – by encouraging collagen production, Sculptra improves appearance and enhances overall skin health and elasticity over time.

Treatment process: Consultation – A thorough consultation is essential to assess individual needs and determine how many vials will be required to get optimal results. Injection – Most patients require three sessions spaced four to six weeks apart. Aftercare – Post treatment care includes massaging the injected areas for five minutes five times a day for five days to ensure even distribution of the product. Avoid strenuous activities for 24 hours. ■

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Planning a big adventure, a weekend road trip or a relaxing staycation? Wherever you are headed this summer — even if it is just your own backyard — the library is your ultimate travel companion. From vacation prep to screen-free fun for the kids, we have everything you need to make this summer unforgettable.

Pack your bags (and your library card)

Before you hit the road, stop by the library to grab books, movies and STEAM kits to keep everyone entertained. And don't forget: The online library is open 24/7 — free with your Waukee Public Library card.

Here are just a few ways to “Unearth a Story” this summer:

Explore and learn

- Libby — Enjoy instant access to e-books and audiobooks for every reader and every mood. Perfect for road trips, poolside lounging or winding down after a busy day.
 - Pronunciator — Planning to travel or just love learning new things? Explore 80-plus languages with interactive lessons and optional live coaching to boost your skills and confidence.
 - Flipster — From travel and wellness to hobbies and entertainment, Flipster offers digital editions of your favorite magazines. Easy to download, easy to enjoy.

Watch and discover

- Infobase — Stream high-quality videos that educate and entertain. From beloved children's series like Sesame Street to compelling documentaries and biographies, there is something for every age and interest.

- Creativebug — Tap into your creativity with step-by-step video classes led by professional artists. Learn to paint, knit, sew and more at your own pace, wherever summer takes you.

Read and play

- BookFlix — Storytime with a twist. BookFlix pairs engaging animated storybooks with nonfiction titles to build early literacy skills and keep young readers curious and captivated.
 - TumbleBooks — An always-available collection of animated books kids can explore on their own. No holds, no waiting.
 - Dial-A-Story — Call anytime to hear library staff read stories aloud. Perfect for screen-free quiet time or bedtime listening.

Waukee Public Library

950 S. Warrior Lane, Waukee
 515-978-7944
www.waukeepubliclibrary.org
 Monday - Tuesday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.;
 Wednesday - Thursday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.;
 Friday, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Sunday, closed

Join the 2026 Summer Challenge: “Unearth a Story”

There's still time to log your reading and earn prizes. From now through July 31, readers of all ages are invited to read, explore and connect through fun programs and activities. Every minute you spend with a story helps you “Unearth a Story.” Register today at waukee.beanstack.org, on the Beanstack Tracker app or by visiting the library.

With books, programs and activities for every age and interest, the library is a go-to destination for summer discovery and fun.

For a list of events, or to learn more about the Waukee Public Library, visit waukeepubliclibrary.org or call 515-978-7944.

Upcoming closures: Friday, July 3, and Saturday, July 4 ■

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OUT & ABOUT



Aly Davis and Rob Grove at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for The Breakfast Club on June 8.



The Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for The Breakfast Club on June 8.



Andrew Pauley, Ben Gerdes and Connor Hehli at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for The Breakfast Club on June 8.



Wendy Marsh and Lori Lyons at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for The Breakfast Club on June 8.



Aaron Creger and Lynn Harder at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for The Breakfast Club on June 8.



Ashley and Dom Carapella at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for The Breakfast Club on June 8.



Todd Van Arsdale and Travis Gaule at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for The Breakfast Club on June 8.



Maddie Starman and Emilie Ball at the Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for The Breakfast Club on June 8.



Cory Van Der Wal and Matt Van Gelder at Gary's Ride on May 16.



Steve Balderson and Susan Harshman at Gary's Ride on May 16.



Dan Divine and Time Annett at Gary's Ride on May 16.

GARY'S Ride

Gary's Annual Brain Cancer Bike Ride was held on May 16.



Gary's Annual Brain Cancer Bike Ride was held on May 16.



Bob German, Erna Morain and Pam German



Rob Grove and Erna Morain



Vicki Davis, Leslie Schrimper and Karen Young



Meredith Arpy and John Wolfe



Doug Pullin, Jeanine Cloyd-Voelker, Mary Eure and Deb Dunn



Zachary Schwager, Ben Hansen, Courtney Luna, Maddie Starman and Brady Thompson



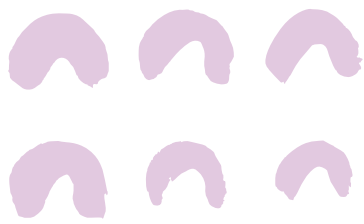
Jeff and Nancy Kafer



Rob Grove, Kristin Wiedenfeld and Travis Gaule



Mary Overend and Nick Fortmeyer



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