

WEST DES MOINES
JORDAN CREEK

JUNE 2026

Living

MAGAZINE

Hook, line and **LEGACY**

Passion for fishing connects
generations of residents.

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EDUCATION

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RECIPE

Maher creates purpose from pain
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BULLHEADS and bruised egos

I was introduced to fishing as a kid by my brother Steve along the riverbanks. At least we called it fishing. We eventually caught some fish — mostly bullheads — but I will get to those aquatic gremlins in a moment.

Our first fishing gear consisted of cane poles strapped to our bicycles as we bumped our way to the river. Later, we upgraded to some of Dad's old rods and reels. To my brother's everlasting frustration, I became remarkably skilled at snagging lines.

We spent hot summer days dreaming about perch, bluegills and sunfish. Instead, we hauled in bullheads. Most fish would not win beauty contests, but bullheads look like they already lost one.

If you have never encountered a bullhead, consider yourself fortunate. The black bullhead is a North American catfish with a square tail and the survival instincts of a cockroach. Also known as fiddleheads, yellowbellies, chuckleheads, mud cats or hornpouts, they will eat practically anything. They thrive in warm, muddy, low-oxygen water that would make other fish file for relocation.

Apparently, there are three types of bullheads — black, brown and yellow. I think we mostly caught black bullheads, the largest and most common species. They live everywhere from muddy rivers to weed-choked ponds.

What I remember most is getting stung repeatedly by their fins while trying to unhook them. Years later, while fishing with my brother Brian, I started using a leather glove to handle bullheads. He still mocks me for it.

For fans of quirky Iowa landmarks, the world's largest bullhead sits in Crystal Lake. The giant fish statue, built in 1958 by Carl Frick and Rush Gabrilson and restored in 2007, stretches 12 feet long atop a pile of rocks. It may be the only bullhead in history people intentionally travel to see.

Thankfully, fishing is about more than bullheads. It is about some great fish and is a fun activity, certainly, but it is also about slowing down, enjoying nature and spending time with family and friends — even if the fish are ugly and occasionally sting you. ■



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Hook, line and **LEGACY**

Passion for fishing connects generations of residents.

By Jackie Wilson

A tug on the line, the splash of water and the anticipation of the unknown keep anglers coming back. But, for many local families, fishing means more than the catch, stories and memories. It has become a passion that spans generations.

Ryan Schmitt gave his dad a fishing expedition for a Father's Day gift.

Fishing trip spurs lifelong love of the outdoors

When Scott Stover was 12 years old in 1970, he went on the “greatest fishing trip” of his life. That trip sparked a love of fishing for the West Des Moines resident.

“I still think about that week in northern Ontario,” he says. “It’s the only time I truly roughed it.”

Stover, along with his dad, uncle and brother, traveled to a remote lake near Sudbury, Ontario. His uncle was an outdoorsman, and his older brother had gone on previous fishing trips. Now it was Stover’s turn — although his mother warned him how “dangerous” it could be for a preteen.

Their log cabin sat on an island in the middle of the lake, and they were the only family there. The simple cabin included a wood-burning stove, an icebox cooled by a block of ice, a table, chairs and two sets of bunk beds.

With no electricity, plumbing or running water, it was a truly unique experience.

“The outhouse sat about 20 yards away,” he recalls. “It was a memorable walk in the middle of the night.”

Their days were spent fishing from morning until evening. They swam in the lake, paddled canoes and ended evenings with bonfires, eating whatever fish they caught that day. The nights were peaceful and quiet.

“We saw the aurora borealis several times. We saw millions of stars. You could hear wolves howling at night, and it was just amazing,” he recalls. “I had a ball. It was a true adventure.”

A few years later, the same uncle took him deep-sea fishing in Florida.

“I think those experiences really gave me a love for the water and being on boats,” he says.

Since then, he has gone deep-sea fishing off Cape Cod, Bermuda, St. Lucia, North Carolina and in the Gulf of Mexico. He has fished in Lake Erie and tried fly-fishing for the first time in the Rocky Mountains during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Fly-fishing was a completely different experience than anything I’d ever done, because it involves a lot of moving on the river and walking in the water,” he says. “It’s very physically taxing, and there’s an art to the flies you use and how you handle the rod and reel.”

Now, when he and his wife go on vacation, it usually involves water — whether boating or visiting an ocean, lake or river. He attributes his love of seafood to that memorable week in



Scott Stover has taken a variety of fishing trips throughout his lifetime.



Scott Stover of West Des Moines says a fishing trip when he was 12 years old spurred a life-long love of the outdoors.

Canada.

A bucket-list trip for Stover is fishing in the Caribbean.

“When I was in St. Lucia, we did not catch anything, but that’s some of the best marlin fishing in the world, right off that island,” he says.

Although he says he is not a “real” fisherman, he has had many memorable experiences and credits that early trip with shaping his appreciation for the outdoors.

“More than 50 years later, I still consider that week the most amazing adventure of my life,” he says. “It wasn’t just the fishing. It was the wilderness, the freedom and the time spent with family in a place so remote that the rest of the world simply disappeared.”

A Father’s Day gift

Ryan Schmitt describes himself as an “outdoorsy guy” who enjoys spending time in nature — even if his first fishing experience was unsuccessful.

“I got skunked. I wanted to keep trying until I caught something,” he says. “The feeling of something on the line was intriguing enough that I wanted to stick with it and invest in it.”

When a mutual friend, Cody Kihlullen, started a guiding service, CKil Outdoors, Schmitt connected with him to talk fishing.

When Father’s Day approached, Schmitt was looking for a gift for his dad, Mike.

“I thought, ‘Let’s take him fishing.’ You can’t go wrong being on a boat,” he says. “It was

a last-second Father’s Day gift because I hadn’t gotten him anything.”

He hired CKil Outdoors for the outing. Based on his past experience, Schmitt expected the worst — no fish.

“We ended up catching some fish and had a good time,” he says.

Schmitt says his father fished when he was younger but had not made time for it recently.

“He had kids, and life got in the way,” he says. “He was really excited about it. It’s not too often you get to take your dad out fishing.”

With a busy work schedule, summer is not ideal for Schmitt to fish. In the winter, he turns to ice fishing. In West Des Moines, his favorite spot is Raccoon River Park.

Schmitt says using a fishing guide provided valuable insight.

“When you have no idea what you’re doing, it’s nice to have someone say, ‘Try this,’ ” he says. “Fishing is kind of like a puzzle. You’re trying to figure out what to throw and what the water temperature is. You have to put things together and look for patterns. It’s relaxing, and you’re using your mind at the same time.”

He says fishing is a rewarding hobby.

“Floating on the water in a boat is a different experience you don’t get every day,” he says. “It’s refreshing and calming.”

Iowa DNR promotes fishing

For those who enjoy fishing in West Des Moines or the Des Moines metro, plenty of nearby options can be found. Most public

ponds are within a 10-minute drive.

Iowa DNR Community Fisheries Biologist Tyler Stubbs says the number of public ponds in the metro has grown from about 60 to about 150 over the past decade.

“It’s a growing trend with stormwater management and flood control, creating fishing access,” he says.

West Des Moines offers three city-access ponds, along with additional public options.

Stubbs says approximately 3,100 fishing licenses are held by West Des Moines residents. Statewide, about 300,000 fishing licenses have been issued.

The DNR’s role is to stock public waters, provide accessible fishing opportunities and maintain a balance of fish species. Common species in Iowa include largemouth bass, bluegill and channel catfish. Some fish also enter ponds via connected waterways.

For example, the Raccoon River flows into Blue Heron Lake, which can introduce carp and other species.

“We get goldfish or carp,” Stubbs says. “It’s illegal to dump aquarium fish into Iowa ponds or lakes.”

Stubbs says West Des Moines does a good job of offering fishing amenities. Fishing also draws visitors to the area. The all-ages activity is accessible and affordable.

“Fishing can improve your mental and physical health,” he says. “It’s a hobby for toddlers through older adults.”

Anglers are split on whether they keep their catch. Some prefer to eat the fish, while others practice catch-and-release.

“We encourage harvesting fish such as bluegills or catfish for meals,” Stubbs says. “That helps increase growth of the fish population.”

He adds that younger anglers are often drawn to public ponds,



Ryan Schmitt decided a fishing trip with his dad would be a great Father’s Day gift.

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Tyler Stubbs, an Iowa DNR community fishery biologist, is passionate about providing fishing opportunities in Iowa.

especially when nearby activities are taking place.

“Hopefully, fishing keeps kids out of trouble,” he says. “They learn to be good stewards and take care of the environment. Fishing is something for

everyone.”

The DNR supports fishing across Iowa.

“We’re here to answer questions and work with cities to expand fishing opportunities,” Stubbs says. ■

PUBLIC FISHING IN WEST DES MOINES

The DNR website offers a “Fish Local” page listing amenities at fishing sites. For more information, visit www.iowadnr.gov/things-to-do/fishing/where-fish/fish-local.

- **Raccoon River Park**, 2500 Grand Ave.
- **City Campus Pond**, 4200 Mills Civic Parkway
- **MidAmerican RecPlex**, 6500 Grand Ave.
- **DMACC West Campus Pond**, 5959 Grand Ave.
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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." ■



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MEET Jackie Scieszinski

Witnessing a shift is rewarding.

After 42 years of teaching, Jackie Scieszinski is retiring from Indian Hills Junior High School. Scieszinski taught for six years in New Jersey and six years at Crestview Elementary as a third-grade teacher. She spent the remaining years teaching math at Indian Hills.

Initially, she was drawn to teaching elementary-age children. Then, as she started a family, she wanted to work with older students and focus on just one subject.

"When I taught at the elementary level, I was responsible for multiple subjects," she says. "I never felt like I could truly master any one area," she explains. "Transitioning to teaching math allowed me to refine my instruction. I felt confident in my ability to explain math in ways that make sense to students."

Students often questioned why they needed to take notes every day. The structured, step-by-step method presents concepts in a logical sequence with examples.

"Over time, students appreciate that approach," she says. "I've had former students come back and tell me how much they miss my way of teaching — taking notes and having that clear, organized support. It's rewarding to see them recognize the value of it after the fact."

Scieszinski enjoys getting to know a new group of students each year.

"Early in my career, I was focused on teaching content. Over time, that perspective has evolved. While teaching math is still important, I've come to understand that building relationships with students is just as essential," she says. "Sometimes they need more than just help with math."

Scieszinski knows math is sometimes a least-favorite subject. Yet, over the years, she has refined her craft and developed effective, understandable concepts. A highlight of her career is hearing from students who struggled with or disliked math but began to feel successful.

"There is nothing more rewarding than helping a student change their mindset from 'I can't do this' to 'I can do this.' Seeing that shift is incredibly meaningful to me," she reflects. "It's especially rewarding when students return years later and tell me they remember what they learned in my classroom. That lasting impact is what makes teaching so fulfilling."

When contemplating retirement, Scieszinski struggled with knowing the right time, as she knew she had to be doing something.

"Teaching has been such a constant in my life. I've either been a student or a teacher since I was 5 years old, so it's a big transition," Scieszinski reflects. "Teaching has never been just a job or a career for me. It's a core part of who I am."

She says she will always be a lifelong learner and will continue to share knowledge with others. ■



Although Jackie Scieszinski is retiring after 42 years as an educator, she says learning and teaching will always be part of her life.

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RECIPE

By Jolene Goodman

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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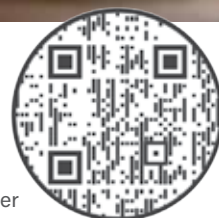
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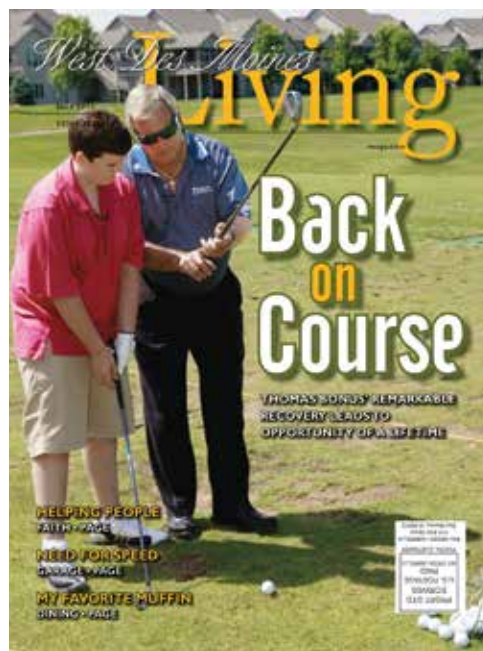
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LOOKING BACK



The June 2011 West Des Moines Living magazine featured the story, "Back on course: Thomas Bonus' remarkable recover leads to opportunity of a lifetime." The story began: "In 2008, 9-year-old Thomas Bonus was nearly paralyzed during a diving accident. Today, he's a healthy, active 12-year-old who loves golf — and who recently caddied for golf legend Fuzzy Zoeller at The Principal Charity Classic." ■

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Iowa Living MAGAZINES

WHY ADVERTISING is essential for small business growth and success

Small businesses often operate with limited resources, tight margins and strong local competition. In that environment, advertising is not a luxury — it's a necessity for survival and growth. Without it, even the best products or services can remain invisible to potential customers.



One of the primary reasons small businesses should advertise is to build awareness. Unlike large, established brands, small businesses usually lack name recognition. Advertising helps introduce the business to new audiences and reminds existing customers that it exists. Consistent visibility keeps a business top of mind when customers are ready to buy.

Advertising also plays a critical role in establishing credibility. Consumers tend to trust businesses they see regularly. A well-crafted advertisement signals professionalism and stability, even for a newer company. When potential customers encounter a business multiple times, they are more likely to view it as legitimate and reliable.

Advertising also drives sales by creating urgency and highlighting value. Promotions, limited-time offers and clear messaging can motivate customers to take action. Without advertising, potential buyers may

never learn about special deals or unique selling points that differentiate a business from competitors. In crowded markets, staying silent often means losing customers to more visible competitors.

In addition, advertising supports long-term growth. It's not just about immediate sales; it's about building a brand. Over time, consistent messaging shapes how customers perceive a business — its personality, values and quality. This brand identity can become a powerful asset, helping small businesses compete with larger companies that may have more resources but less personal connection with customers.

Finally, advertising allows small businesses to adapt and learn. By tracking which campaigns perform best, business owners gain insights into customer preferences and behavior. This data can inform not only future marketing efforts but also product development, pricing strategies and customer service improvements.

In short, advertising gives small businesses a voice in a competitive marketplace. It increases visibility, builds trust, drives sales and supports long-term success. Without it, even the most promising small business risks being overlooked. ■

Information provided by Martha Munro, Advertising Account Executive, Big Green Umbrella Media, 8101 Birchwood Court, Suite D, Johnston, Iowa 50131, 515-953-4822 x314, martha@iowalivingmagazines.com.

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SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

HOW TO CHOOSE GARAGE DOORS

Garage doors are often an afterthought to homeowners — but they shouldn't be. Garage doors are the first thing most notice about a home, so when it comes to choosing them for a new home or replacing them, significant thought and research should take place. If your garage faces the front of the house, a new door could dramatically improve your curb appeal and change the overall look of your home. If you're selling, new, dated doors tend to say a lot about the condition of the rest of the home. A garage door is also an excellent security asset for your home, allowing you to secure your vehicle inside. If you're thinking about installing a new garage door, you may be inspired at just how many options are on the market — and how affordably they can be installed.

THE LOOK
Garage doors have seen an explosion in styles, materials and colors that are designed to match the architecture of any home, from

urban getaways. So if you thought your choices were limited to simple sheet metal styles, think again. You should also pay close attention to the materials. Today's garage doors can be made from expensive hardwoods, textured vinyl, fiberglass or basic aluminum, all of which will have a big impact on the look and longevity of your door. Pay close attention to the maintenance needs of whatever material you choose. Some can require regular staining and sealing every few years to keep them looking spectacular.

INSULATION
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HEATING & COOLING

By Dale Adams

IS YOUR AC protected from power surges?

An air conditioning (HVAC) system is a significant investment and an essential part of ensuring year-round comfort. With proper maintenance, an AC unit can last a great deal of time, but in the case of an electrical storm, an unexpected power surge can take your unit clean out.

In this article, we will explain how power surges can affect your AC unit and how you can protect it from potential damage.

Can a power outage damage an AC unit? Yes, a power outage from a storm can absolutely damage an AC unit. HVAC systems often have little room for sudden voltage fluctuations, and so, when a power surge or outage occurs, it can damage compressors, motors, circuit boards and other components within the air conditioner. If your AC unit fails to turn on after a storm, it may require outright replacement if the electrical damage is bad enough.

What's causing all these surges? One common cause of power surges for air conditioning systems is a lightning strike during a storm. When lightning strikes near a power line or transformer, it can send a surge of electricity through the electrical grid, potentially damaging the delicate circuitry within your HVAC system. Another cause of power surges is utility grid fluctuations, which occur when there are sudden changes in voltage levels supplied by the electric company. Some other causes are malfunctioning appliances and animal or tree interference.

The Solution: AC unit surge protectors. The most effective way to shield your AC unit from electrical damage is to install a dedicated HVAC surge protector. Like the surge protectors used for computers and TVs, these devices are wired into the electrical supply line and prevent power spikes from reaching your HVAC components. The surge protectors absorb excess voltage, shielding the air handler, condensing unit and other parts from damage.

AC unit surge protectors can be hardwired to the outside unit, the inside unit, or even directly to the high-efficiency motors that operate using DC voltage.

Given the high costs associated with replacing or repairing AC unit components like high-efficiency motors, compressors and circuit boards, we recommend opting to install an HVAC surge protector.

For those looking to add an extra layer of protection, there are surge protectors that also come with a voltage monitor. This device not only safeguards your HVAC system from power surges but can also shut down the unit if the voltage goes beyond set parameters. This preemptive measure can prevent severe damage from voltage fluctuations and save you from costly repairs or replacements.

It might seem excessive but consider this: The one-time cost of a surge protector pales in comparison to that of replacing an entire AC unit due to storm damage. ■

Do you still have questions? Visit www.tripleahomeservices.com for additional information. Dale and Natasha love to answer questions. Give them a call at 515-868-2779.



WHAT IS Sculptra?

Sculptra is an injectable dermal filler made from poly-L-lactic acid (PLLA), a biocompatible substance that stimulates the body's natural collagen production. Unlike traditional fillers that provide immediate volume, Sculptra works gradually to restore facial volume and improve skin texture over time. This leads to subtle, natural-looking enhancements that can last for up to two years.



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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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JOY

Webster's Dictionary defines joy as “a feeling of great happiness or pleasure; a state of great happiness; a source or cause of delight.” This year, instead of making a New Year's resolution, I chose a word for the year: Joy. I wanted to focus on what brings me joy and what I find truly meaningful in my life. I also chose this word because it is my goddaughter's middle name, and I wanted a reminder to make time with her a priority.



I enjoy the flexibility that comes with choosing a word. Unlike a resolution, there are fewer expectations, and the meaning can evolve throughout the year as life changes.

As summer approaches, I'm reminded of simple things that bring me happiness — taking walks outside, sitting on my back deck, working in the yard and enjoying bonfires with family and friends. But joy is different from happiness. Happiness often comes from a moment or activity, while joy is a deeper feeling that connects to our sense of peace and purpose.

For me, being outside isn't just enjoyable — it gives me time to reflect, recharge and appreciate life. That deeper sense of gratitude is where I find joy.

As you move through this month, I encourage you to think about what brings you joy. What fills your heart, renews your spirit, and helps you feel connected to what matters most? ■

Information provide by Mary Doherty, LISW, Renewed Strength Counseling, 2910 Westown Parkway, Suite 314, West Des Moines, IA 50266, 515-809-2419.

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MAHER creates purpose from pain

Support group invites those with transplant experiences.

In 2021, Reagan Maher underwent a kidney transplant that resulted in complications for about two and a half years afterward. He was in and out of the hospital but eventually began to heal. On the third anniversary of his transplant, his body went into antibody rejection, and he nearly lost his life again. Thankfully, his medical team was able to help Maher reach a better place than he had been in the past 12 years.

“After having my life saved a second time, my mind was changed and my heart softened,” he says. “Over the last two years, I’ve lost about 100 pounds, and I decided that I want to help others going through organ transplants.”

On Jan. 6, 2026, Maher started a support group called Fauna Transplant Support, named after his kidney donor, Fauna, a 38-year-old woman from Madison, Wisconsin, who had died.

“We are unique because we are an in-person group and have Lutheran Church of Hope’s backing. We have access to their care team and counseling team. If things come up, we have resources to find help. When I went through that two and a half years of suffering, I couldn’t find any support groups in Iowa, much less in central Iowa, so I decided to start



Ryan Mehalovich of Edward Jones presents the Neighbor Spotlight certificate to Reagan Maher.

one myself,” Maher shares.

The group meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

“We are open to all transplant people — those who have received transplants and those who are still waiting. We have someone who has had a heart transplant, and we have a gentleman who donated a kidney to his wife. We also have a couple where the wife is in the waiting phase to donate to her husband.”

Maheer says it is amazing to walk and interact with people with different transplant experiences. He says they all share things like having to take immunosuppressants.

“For me, this group has totally changed my life in the best possible way,” he says. “I told myself that I was going to throw myself into people’s lives, and that is certainly what happened. I get to help others and ‘fill their cup up’ to help them be seen and heard.”

The group has plenty of room in the church to spread out when a member needs it and room to grow.

Over the last four years, Maher reached out by letter to Fauna’s mother three times in hopes of thanking her for the gift of her daughter’s kidney. In January of this year, he received a message through the transplant center that she wanted to connect with him. Later, she also reached out through the Fauna Transplant Support Facebook page. Maher was able to meet with her and Fauna’s sister on a phone call.

“She was so great and amazing, saying that Fauna would be so proud of what I’m doing,” he says.

Because of the conversations Maher had with Fauna’s mom, in April he founded the first annual Fauna 10K.

“It is not a race, but a month-long donor registration drive,” Maher explains. The goal is 10,000 registrants, thus the “10K” in the name. The registrations were sent to the Iowa Donor Network.

Maheer encourages anyone interested in learning more about Fauna Transplant Support to visit the public Fauna Transplant Support Facebook group page or email faunatransplantgroup@gmail.com. ■

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WEST DES MOINES

Public Library news



2026 Summer Reading Club continues

We hope you're having a blast tracking your reading days for the 2026 Summer Reading Challenge. Be sure to use the Beanstack app, available online or for download on Apple or Android devices. Each reader who registers will receive an exclusive WDM Library summer reading sticker. Once you complete the challenge, you'll also earn fun prizes and be invited to either the Summer Reading Wrap-Up Party for adults (Friday, July 24) or the Summer Finale for kids (Saturday, July 25). Register at wdmlibrary.org/summer.

Reminder: The library is now on summer hours:

Monday-Thursday: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Friday: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Sunday: Closed

UPCOMING EVENTS

Register at wdmlibrary.org/events.

- **Paths to Mastery: The Minor Arcana of Tarot, Monday, June 15, 6:30-8 p.m. (adults)**
Join us for an in-depth look at the 56 Minor Arcana in the standard tarot deck. Basic journals will be provided, but participants are encouraged to bring their own. Registration required.
- **Teen Anime Afternoon, Wednesday, June 17, 2:30-4:30 p.m. (grades 6-12)**
Teens: Dress up in your best cosplay and join us in the Community Room for an afternoon of anime appreciation. Games and snacks will be provided. Registration required.
- **Boom: Why Things Explode with Science Center of Iowa, Thursday, June 25, 10:30-11 a.m. (ages 5-12)**
We'll explore the interactions of pressure, temperature and states of matter to explain why things pop, bang or blow up. Registration required.
- **Owls of Iowa with Polk County Conservation, Tuesday, June 30, 1:30-2:15 p.m. (ages 5-12)**
Meet Jester Park's newest education ambassador, Luna the great horned owl. Learn about Iowa owls and the special adaptations that help them survive. Registration required. ■

West Des Moines Public Library

www.wdmlibrary.org
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West Des Moines
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Friday: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Sunday: closed

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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Upcoming in the West Des Moines / Jordan Creek 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.

Social Saturday: Pride and Seek

Saturday, June 13, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Des Moines Art Center, 4700 Grand Ave., Des Moines

Join the Des Moines Art Center's June Social Saturday event: Pride and Seek. During Des Moines' annual Capitol City Pride PrideFest, stop by the Art Center for a couple hours of fun, art making and educational engagement. Enjoy crafts in the Art School studios, a free screening of "Last American Gay Bar," a free guided tour, drag king storytime, treats in the Café, and so much more. Visit <https://desmoinesartcenter.org/event/social-saturday-pride-and-seek/> for full schedule.



CITYVIEW's Summer Stirs

Friday, June 26, Downtown Des Moines
Friday, July 31, Des Moines East Village

CITYVIEW's traveling cocktail parties return in 2026. For \$25 advance ticket, sample 10 summer cocktails at downtown bars and restaurants. Cost is \$35 at the door. For information and tickets, visit <https://summerstirs.dmcityview.com>.

Jordan House Tours

Fridays and Sundays, 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Jordan House Museum, 2001 Fuller Road, West Des Moines

Weekly guided tours are offered at the Jordan House. The cut off for purchasing tickets is noon Thursday for Friday tours and noon Friday for Sunday tours. If you have missed that cutoff, call 515-225-1286 to find out if walk-up tickets are available. To reserve a ticket, see the schedule and links at www.wdmhs.org/openhousevisit/. All tours will be guided by a docent. Arrive at the Jordan House Museum at least 10 minutes before the tour begins. The tour will involve taking stairs to the basement and the second floor, as well as walking and standing for at least one hour. If you have a group of eight or more, call to schedule a private tour.



Polk County Master Gardeners 2026 Garden Tour

Wednesday, June 27, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Jordan House, 2001 Fuller Road, West Des Moines

Visit gardens on the west side of Polk County, \$10 per adult, children under 12 are free. Gardens are open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. rain or shine. Buy tickets by scanning the QR code.



Des Moines Art Center Museum Highlights Tour

Saturdays, 1-2 p.m.

4700 Grand Ave., Des Moines

Discover the vast variety of the Des Moines Art Center's permanent collections during the Museum Highlights Tour. This tour offers a unique journey through the galleries, featuring a selection of timeless paintings, sculptures and more. Join knowledgeable guides to uncover the stories, techniques and inspirations behind the art on view, and experience the highlights of the Art Center in a fresh and engaging way. This guided tour is perfect for art enthusiasts of all ages. Free to all, no registration required.

Music In The Garden

Thursdays, June 4 to Aug. 20, doors open at 6 p.m., concerts 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, 909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines

Music in the Garden is one of Des Moines' premier outdoor concert series, offering a truly unique atmosphere. Set within the naturally beautiful surroundings of the garden, each evening blends live music, nature and community into an unforgettable experience. Whether you prefer to sit back and relax, get up and dance, or simply soak in the scenery, you'll enjoy great music surrounded by the beauty of the garden. See the lineup and get tickets by scanning the QR code.



'Christine Rebet: Sound of Time'

Through Aug. 23

Des Moines Art Center, 4700 Grand Ave., Des Moines

This survey exhibition presents five films made between 2015 and 2025 by Paris-based artist Christine Rebet, which play consecutively in the Pamela Bass-Bookey and Harry Bookey Gallery. Rebet has devoted her practice to the act of drawing, creating lush and labor-intensive hand-drawn animations marked by vivid color and lively images that change and morph alongside lyrical voice-over narrations.

EVENTS IN THE AREA

Check for cancellations

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

Seni-Om-Sed

Fridays through the summer

Des Moines Biergarten, Water Works Park, Des Moines Water Works Park, 2251 George Flagg Parkway, Des Moines

This summer, the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce invites the community to flip the script on their typical Friday and celebrate Des Moines and the end of the week with SENI-OM-SED — Des Moines, spelled backwards. This weekly event series brings together professionals, families and friends for an energized and easygoing kickoff to the weekend. Guests are encouraged to follow the Des Moines Biergarten on social media for the latest updates, including any schedule changes or closures due to weather. For more information, visit dtchamber.com.

Des Moines Downtown Farmers Market

Saturdays through Oct. 31, 7 a.m. to noon, 8 a.m. to noon in October

Historic Court District, Downtown Des Moines

The 2026 season will feature 305 vendors, including 43 new participants, with 75 produce and agriculture vendors highlighting the region's strong farming community. Vendors represent 74 cities across 42 Iowa counties, spanning 12 city blocks from Water Street to Fifth Street. For more information, visit www.dsmpartnership.com/desmoinesfarmersmarket.



Levitt AMP Earlam Music Series 2026 Food n' Drink Lineup

Sundays at 6 p.m.

Earlam City Park, Earlam

- June 14: Music: Ozone Creations, Robert Deitch. Food trucks: Smokin Bad Decisions, Iowa Noodz, Jack Frost Drink Lab.
- June 21: Music: Braided Janes, Soten Taiko Drums. Food trucks: Karam's Grill, Pho Wheels & Sushi, C'est La Crepe, Jodee Sodees.
- June 28: Music: Shannon Curfman, Iowa Military Veterans Band. Food trucks: Deardorff Highland Cattle, Sabores De Mexico, Zipps Pizza, C'est La Crepe, Jack Frost Drink Lab.
- July 12: Music: The Elders, Banjokat. Food trucks: Hotel Luna, Snappy's BBQ, Street Sweets.
- July 19: Music: BYOBrass, Beth and Brandon. Food trucks: Hotsy Totsy, Pho Wheels & Sushi, Street Sweets, Jack Frost Drink Lab.
- Aug. 2: Music: Leon Timbo, Carol Montag Music. Food trucks: Hotsy Totsy, Sabores De Mexico, Street Sweets, Jack Frost Drink Lab.
- Aug. 9: Music: Newfound Road, Cedar County Cobras. Food trucks: Karam's Grill, Hotsy Totsy, C'est La Crepe.
- Aug. 16: Music: XOLEX, Bone People. Food trucks: Hotel Luna, Snappy's BBQ, Pho Wheels & Sushi, Street Sweets. ■

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2026 Digital Wedding Guide

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www.iowalivingmagazines.com/wedding-guide-2026

WHAT IS diminished financial capacity?

You may have a parent or other loved one with diminished financial capacity or who you worry may face that issue in the future. "Diminished financial capacity" is the decline in a person's ability to manage money. When people of any age lose the capability to manage their finances, they may also become more vulnerable to fraud and other forms of financial abuse.

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

First, have an open conversation about financial matters sooner rather than later. Ask your relative to consider how they want to maintain control of finances in the future. Explain that advance planning is a way to make sure that a trusted person makes decisions if the individual no longer can.

Second, make sure your family member has current estate planning documents. Your loved one may have named you as an agent under a power of attorney or a trustee under a revocable living trust. If these documents don't exist, explore how to get advance planning in place to ensure that you will be a legal substitute decision-maker in the future.

Third, if your family member or friend has named you to manage



money, understand your responsibilities. You may need to take a more active role in helping manage assets. You may have to take on immediate tasks, such as helping to pay bills, preparing tax returns or helping with investment decisions.

Be alert to mistakes your loved one may make in managing finances and to any signs of elder financial abuse. It can be hard to tell whether actions are the result of confusion or of financial exploitation. For example, if you find that a loved one has paid the same bill twice by mistake, you should help fix the error. But beware that multiple or unusual payments could also be a sign of financial exploitation.

Finally, keep complete records of everything you do. If there are questions about the use of assets in the future, you want documentation. Be sure that, if something changes, you keep your information as current as possible.

An experienced estate-planning attorney can help answer questions about powers of attorney, substitute decision-making and how to best help your family. ■

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

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MEET Jennifer Geis

Providing a safe space for kids

After 31 years of teaching elementary and middle school students, Jennifer Geis is set to retire in June. Geis finished her career at Indian Hills Junior High in the West Des Moines School District, where she taught science and at-risk students.

She has taught kindergarten through eighth grade in Iowa City, Solon, Prescott, Afton and Iowa City.

When she was pregnant, she and her family moved to Clive, and she stayed home with her two boys. She volunteered as a classroom mom and substituted in West Des Moines. When her youngest son was in eighth grade at Indian Hills, he learned there was a long-term substitute position in science.

"He told the vice principal, Shane Christiansen, I had my science specialization and I would love the job," she recalls. "I've been there ever since."

Her own teachers, her sister's desire to be a teacher and babysitting jobs helped her decide to teach.

"The idea of having summers off was also very appealing to me at age 18 heading off to college," she explains.

Initially, she taught at-risk students, reteaching skills, organization and planning. She drew on her own personal experiences of trauma and perseverance to relate to her students.

She says students look forward to coming into her room because of the small class sizes and quiet place to work. One of her former students sent her a letter explaining her anxiety attacks, which made her feel suffocated.

"When I was in your class last year I had a 45-minute mental break to get some work done and get help from you when I needed it," the student wrote. "That's when I asked you if I could hop into your fifth-period class to get some of my missing work done. After that class period, I realized why students liked having you as a teacher so much. It's not because you give out Oreos — it was because you offered a safe place for them."

The highlight of her career is when former students return, telling her she made a difference in their lives. One message she received said, "You are the kindest, sweetest, most empathetic teacher I know, and you have a gift for connecting with students, and helping them through tough times no matter how big or small."

"There is no better reward than this," Geis says.

The most challenging part of being a teacher was dealing with outside influences taking away students' desire to learn.

"Social media is a huge challenge," she explains.

Throughout her career, Geis says she has enjoyed making a difference in her students' lives.

"They may not remember me in the future, but when we made little victories day by day, I know I helped them in some way. When you love the environment you work in, it's reflected in the job you do," Geis says. "Teaching is not just a job; it's who you are." ■



Jennifer Geis is retiring this month after 31 years as an educator.

WEST DES MOINES Police welcome 3 officers



On Friday, May 1, Mayor Russ Trimble swore in West Des Moines Police Officers Carlson, McKinney and Stewart Jr. These three members graduated from the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy's 326th basic training class on Friday, April 24. ■

NEW QDOBA to open in West Des Moines

Roaring Fork Restaurant Group, a Midwest-based restaurant operator, is bringing QDOBA, one of America's fastest-growing Mexican fast-casual brands, to West Des Moines with the opening of a new restaurant in June at 6305 Mills Civic Parkway. The restaurant is the second QDOBA in the Des Moines area and will bring approximately 25 new jobs to the community.

The 2,300-square-foot restaurant features a convenient pick-up lane for online orders and offers QDOBA's full menu of burritos, bowls, tacos, quesadillas, nachos and salads. QDOBA prepares fresh ingredients by hand in-house throughout the day and flame-grills its chicken and steak to create a variety of bold, flavorful menu options.

Roaring Fork Restaurant Group, one of QDOBA's earliest and largest franchisees, opened its first Des Moines location on Ingersoll Avenue in 2012. ■

**What's In
YOUR
Garage?**

Iowa Living MAGAZINE

To suggest a garage, email
tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com

BANK IOWA names Herrboldt president/CEO

Bank Iowa announced that Jason Herrboldt will become president and chief executive officer as longtime leader Jim Plagge plans to retire after more than a decade in the role. The leadership transition comes as the family-owned bank marks its 50th year.

Plagge, who has served as president/CEO since 2012, will remain in a leadership role with the bank's holding company during a short transition period to support Herrboldt and ensure continuity.

Herrboldt brings more than 25 years of banking leadership experience across commercial, retail, agriculture, mortgage and wealth management. He has led teams in both rural and metropolitan markets, most recently serving as chief banking officer at First Bank & Trust in South Dakota.

Known for building high-performing teams and driving growth, Herrboldt has led initiatives that expanded product offerings, improved earnings and unified organizations through periods of change.

"What stands out to me about Bank Iowa is its culture and the strong commitment to community, rooted in its family ownership and especially reflected in its support of farm families and businesses across Iowa," said Herrboldt, who grew up on a family farm in eastern South Dakota. "That stewardship mindset has shaped who the bank is today, and I look forward to building on that legacy to help shape the next 50 years."

Plagge said Herrboldt's leadership style and values made him a natural fit.

"Jason's journey, from his rural roots to leading in community banking, reflects a deep, authentic connection to people and communities," said Plagge. "He recognizes that what we've built at Bank Iowa is something to be honored and strengthened. His commitment to earning trust, practicing accountability and applying a 'one team' mindset makes Jason the right leader to carry our purpose forward."

During Plagge's tenure, Bank Iowa grew from \$1.1 billion in assets in 2012 to more than \$2.4 billion today, while maintaining focus on its community-first approach.

Under his leadership, the bank: expanded lending and deposit portfolios by more than \$1 billion each; achieved record net income in 2025; modernized its core banking platform; expanded its footprint through new locations and acquisitions; and launched the Bank Iowa Foundation and fostered a culture of giving, with team members donating a collective 12,000 volunteer hours each year.

"Jim's impact goes far beyond financial growth," said family owner and Board Chair Paige Duncan. "He built a strong leadership team and a culture that will carry Bank Iowa forward for years to come. His commitment to our communities, team members and clients has shaped who we are, and his leadership has positioned the bank for a smooth and successful transition. We're deeply grateful for the foundation he's built and excited for what's ahead." ■



Jason Herrboldt



Jim Plagge

WEST DES MOINES earns Tree City USA honor



Austin Decker and Paul Tauke, center, accept the Tree City USA honor on behalf of the city of West Des Moines.

The Arbor Day Foundation has officially designated West Des Moines as a 2025 Tree City USA, recognizing the city's dedication to planting, growing and maintaining trees that enhance the community.

"We are proud to have received a Growth Award for our commitment to improving tree care and fostering community engagement," city officials said in a press release.

For more than 50 years, the Arbor Day Foundation has honored cities and towns that prioritize urban forestry, helping to make local areas more livable and sustainable. As a global nonprofit, their mission focuses on inspiring individuals to plant, nurture and celebrate trees. Through their network of over a million supporters and partners, they have successfully planted more than 500 million trees globally since 1972.

Michelle Saulnier, vice president of programs at the Arbor Day Foundation, stated, "By recognizing the role of trees as critical infrastructure, West Des Moines is helping shape a healthier and more resilient future. We're proud West Des Moines is among the Arbor Day Foundation's growing network of communities to create positive impact through trees."

"As a city, we are excited to receive this recognition from the Arbor Day Foundation," said Urban Forestry Supervisor Austin Decker. "Each tree we plant represents our commitment to a healthier environment and a better community. Trees provide essential benefits that truly enhance our quality of life."

To achieve Tree City USA status, cities must meet four standards: maintaining a tree board or department, having a community tree ordinance, spending at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry, and participating in an Arbor Day celebration.

This program is managed in partnership with the National Association of State Foresters and the USDA Forest Service. For more information about the Tree City USA program or how to apply, please visit arborday.org. ■



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FARMERS Market

Valley Junction Farmers Market was held in West Des Moines on May 28.



Olivia Franzen, Noah Miller, Charlie Darnell and Trevor Black, G Mig's



Darcy and Ulises Pancheco, Rancho Pacheco LLC



Hannah Fordyce, Hannah Banana Fabrics



Hannah Perkins, Pines and Pixels



Catelyn Olivares, Peace of Dirt



Haylee Wethy, Haylee's Hobbies



Heidi Blanchard, The Good Stuff



Jeff Lynch, Iowa Pepper Company



Spencer Collins and Theodore, Collins Culinary Creations



Maria Weiland, EarGame



Adrienne Robles, Hold this Moment Co.



Nicole Ahrens-Stigers, Fern and Co.



Tiffany Rhames, Way Cutter



Megan Jorgensen, Oat So Good Bake Co. Gluten Free Sourdough

OUT & ABOUT

RIBBON Cutting

West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting for Equity Bank on May 18.



Brendon Shaw and Brad Elliott



David Carlson and Jim Brown



Katherine Harrington, Jan Olson and Jared Galligan



Rick Sems, Makenzie Dalbey, Tayler Reece, Hayes, Ed May and Jill Dalbey



Brenda Thorp and Dawn Carey



Kris Wood and Jade Olson



Kathy Staudt and Michael Carey



Ryan Cooley and Jan Olson

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