FEBRUARY 2024

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OF DES MOINES

Cheers to this year's winners in another record-breaking readers' poll.



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Irina's and Hessen Haus

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A knitting needle
in your tushy?

ART NEWS
Jeff Fleming's "Absurdities" are delightful, sometimes ghostly.

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LOVE







GOODWILL

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DRAIN SERVICE

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Being the 'Best'

The word "best" is used quite frequently in today's world. Everyone seemingly has a best recipe or a best route or a best friend.

The dictionary defines "best" as "the highest possible state of excellence" or "the best quality or property of a person or thing." I agree with that.

We have a unique scenario with the word "best" when it is used with the following three words: "of Des Moines." When I purchased CITYVIEW 20 years ago, I also bought the registered mark "Best of Des Moines." Registering that phrase was a smart move the prior owner, Connie Wimer, made to ensure others didn't benefit from the success of the CITYVIEW readers' poll she created and I bought. A mistake I made was agreeing to allow Wimer to continue to use the mark with her Business Record publication. But I did agree to it, and I am a man of my word. I did not, however, allow other publications or organizations to use the phrase "Best of Des Moines." Each year, some continue to try. And, each year, I remind them that I own the phrase and that I will take all necessary measures to make sure they don't benefit from it.

Some have gotten "cute" with their efforts to copy us but have properly avoided using the Best of Des Moines words. Others appear to have blatantly benefited from our phrase, including the Des Moines Convention and Visitor's Bureau or See Des Moines or Catch Des Moines or whatever they are calling themselves now. Their "Des Best of Des Moines" promotion may seem quite similar to our Best of Des Moines promotion because it is. Not according to CEO Greg Edwards, though. "We in no way even thought that the slogans of 'Des Best of Greater Des Moines' and 'The Best of Des Moines' were in conflict," he told me in an email back in March, just a month after our Best of Des Moines issue published and our award certificates were delivered.

"I can assure you that we have no intention to cause confusion or deceive anyone as to the source of the information we provide in support of the businesses of Greater Des Moines," he stated, presumably with some legal advice. "Our 'Des Best of Greater Des Moines' program is a part of that marketing effort and is not a 'blatant play on words... created to benefit from CITYVIEW's longstanding Best of Des Moines campaigns.'"

Des Best of Des Moines? The Best of Des Moines? They sound similar to me. You can decide. Meanwhile, I like Greg Edwards, and we do have a common goal of helping to improve Greater Des Moines, so I don't have plans to press it further. Even so, I hope the creative person on his staff who ripped off our idea was creatively shown the door, as tax-paying businesses shouldn't have to compete with tax-funded organizations in any way. Ever.

It's time to move on and focus on the positive, the one and only CITYVIEW Best of Des Moines readers' poll that has its results in this month's issue. A record 22,969 votes were cast in this year's poll that recognized more than 800 local people, businesses, places and events in 271 categories. One of the winners approached me after our announcement event and told me, "A lot of other people try to copy your promotion and event, but this is the only one that matters."

I appreciate her comment, and I agree with it. I am glad that so many of you do, too. Congratulations to all the winners who continue to do their part in making Des Moines and central Iowa the best!

Thanks for reading.

Shane Goodman
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2023-2024 IOWA WILD PROMOTIONAL SCHEDULE

🖺 🥊 women in sports night

PINK IN THE RINK
Specialty Jersey, LED Light Up Giveaway (First 5000 Fans)

EE 19 SENSORY AWARENESS NIGHT \$1 Hot Dogs (End of 1ST Period)

器 **WINNING WEDNESDAY** When the Wild Win, You Win!

KIDS TAKEOVER DAY lowa Wild Book Drive

CRASH'S BIRTHDAY BASH
Youth Jersey Giveaway (First 1500 Kids, 12 & Under)

PRIDE NIGHT

uth Jersey Giveaway (First 1500 Kids, 12 & Under)

DAILY SPECIALS

SUNDAY - Post Game Skate

MONDAY - \$1 Hot Dogs

TUESDAY - \$2 Hot Dogs & \$2 Popcorn

WEDNESDAY — Winning Wednesday

THURSDAY - \$1 Popcorn

FRIDAY - \$2 Beers, Fireball Drink Special

SATURDAY - Local Concert Series,

2 for 1 Confluence Beers

Wild



BLACK OUT ALS NIGHT
Specialty Jersey, Velcro Patch Hat Giveaway (First 1500 Fans)

TWOSDAY
\$2 Hot Dogs & \$2 Popcorn (End of 1ST Period)

HAWKEYE NIGHT
White Alternate Jersey Game

WALLSTEDT BOBBLE NIGHT
Jesper Wallstedt Bobblehead Giveaway (First 1500 Fans)

TWOSDAY
\$2 Hot Dogs & \$2 Popcorn (End of 1ST Period)

WINNING WEDNESDAY
When the Wild Win, You Win!

FAN APPRECIATION NIGHT
Team Photo & Trading Cards Giveaway (First 1500 Fans)



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Cheers to this year's winners in another record-breaking readers' poll.

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CITYVIEW

FEBRUARY 2024

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ASK CITYVIEW

By CITYVIEW staff

Ask CITYVIEW anything by emailing editor@dmcityview.com.

Q.

Why does the DOT need 12 cranes, some next to each other, for the east mix project?

We posed this question to the Iowa DOT, and District Construction Engineer Scott Nixon responded.

"The contractor is getting ready to receive the steel girders for the section of the new flyover that will span both directions of I-235. When the contractor handles these steel girders, which are 9 feet tall in that section, they need multiple cranes due to the length and the weight of the girders. When setting girders, they typically need two cranes for the girders, and at least one additional crane to lift the man baskets and scaffolding needed to bolt the girders together in the air," said Nixon.

He added, "Rather than moving these sets of cranes from one side of the interstate to the other when setting the girders in sequence, the contractor has multiple cranes in multiple locations to speed up the process."

Q.

Why is there little gas price competition, except in southeast Ankeny?

Gas prices are affected for a number of reasons. The price of oil, the cost of transportation, the location of the store and gasoline tax are the main factors, with the first being the most important. "More than half the cost of filling your tank is influenced by the price of crude oil," per the Department of Energy. What it comes down to is competition.

Gas stations are willing to take a hit on their gas prices because a majority of their profits are made inside the store, not at the pump. According to energy5.com, "generally, fuel sales result in a profit margin of only a few cents per gallon, while the profits from selling snacks or other goodies can be much higher." Meaning, it's likely the large number of gas stations in the heavily populated parts of Ankeny account for the lower price of gas.

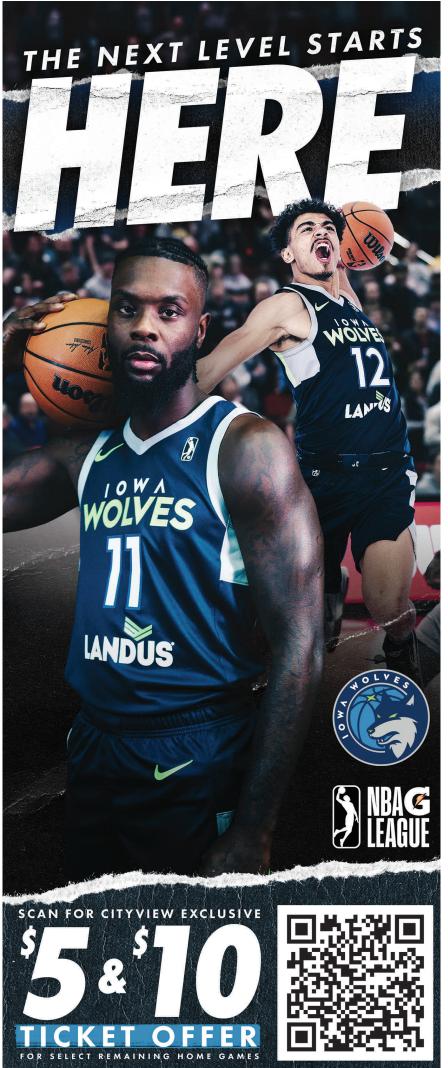
Q. A.

What's the most snow Des Moines has received in one week?

lowa was hammered with snowfall the week of Jan. 8-12. According to the National Weather Service of Des Moines, the Des Moines airport recorded 22.3 inches of snow, 12.4 inches from Jan. 8-10, and 9.9 inches from Jan. 11-12. That places the week's snowfall at second all-time on record for a five-day total, just .4 inches short of the record.

The three highest ranking weeks in terms of total snowfall in Des Moines history are now: 22.7 inches from Dec. 28, 1941, to Jan. 1, 1942; 22.3 inches from Jan. 8-12, 2024, and 20.2 inches from March 14-18, 1923.

When it comes to cold temperatures in general, heavy snow doesn't always mean deadly cold. However, the blizzard warning that was issued for most of lowa originally predicted sub-zero temperatures from Jan. 12 to Jan. 15. The record longest stretch of below-zero air temp is 132 hours, from 1 a.m. on Jan. 30 to 12 p.m. on Feb. 4, 1996. If you were curious, the coldest day in lowa occurred in Washta on Jan. 12 when it reached a frigid -47F. ■



YOUR VIEW

Letters are edited for space, spelling and clarity.

Join the conversation!

Do you have a comment or photo you'd like to share with readers of CITYVIEW through this page? Use the hashtag #dmcityview on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter — or email editor@dmcityview.com.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Mr. Goodman:

I enjoyed, and wholeheartedly agree with, your comments. (From The Publisher, January 2024). I agree that it is more difficult than ever to persuade people about ANYTHING. One of the things I enjoy most about CITYVIEW is that political content is minimal. Sometimes you just want to see what's going on in your community, without hearing about everything being Donald Trump or Kim Reynold's fault. I think you are on the right track and should try to avoid political content throughout the magazine, year-round. Thanks and keep up the great work! - Adam Jones

FACEBOOK COMMENTS



cityview magazine (comments unedited)

CITYVIEW magazine: What do you do with your cans with 5-cent refunds?

Tiffany Dorsett: Mine go in the recycling bin. If I have alot of people over then they go in a bag and I take and donate to the cub scouts.

Teresa Baustian: Substantially reduced purchasing

them now that the legislature has made it harder to redeem them. **Ann Dickinson Nida:** We are in Newton a lot and their redemption is fast and easy so we take everything there

Joe Dwight Hayes: I toss them in recycle. It's just too much of a hassle and not worth the time and effort. Had bags and bags of cans in the basement and when I turn them in it was like 25 bucks. The months of a basement mess isn't worth 25 bucks.

David Ewart: Recycling bin

Shannon Dueling: I return them, and if anyone reading this doesn't want to deal with returning them I would gladly come take them off your hands! I'm on disability and collect and return cans and bottles for a little extra \$

Jennifer Jean Brown: Southeast polk- Sep Club Roar Will happily take your cans for their work program for special needs kiddos to return and learn work skills!!

Jennifer Jean Brown: Donate or recycle. Too much of a hassle to redeem nowadays!!

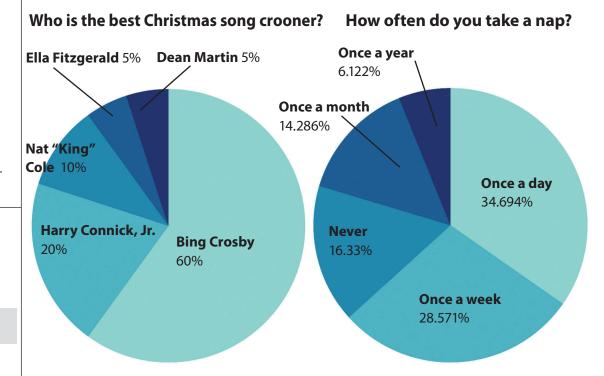
Travis Shannon: I take mine to Winterset Redemption. Easy peasy and great people to deal with. I'm glad they are there to take them! Michael H Hamilton: We bag them up and store them in the basement, saving them for when there is a rainy day financially. Then we take them to a can redemption center. We just can't bring ourselves to throw away money.

Jason Corbin: I donate them all to a kid's soccer club in town.

Joseph Nolte: We either give them to our youth at church or take them to drop off points in Carlisle for youth sports teams.

Libby Lewis: Droppett- the state should subsidize we need more locations!

POLL POSITION Results from last month's polls at www.dmcityview.com



RETWEETS (comments unedited)



@dadgivesjokes: What do you call 100 sheep rolling down a hill A lambslide

@craiguito: The eyes are the windows to the soul. A moustache is the front garden, and the mouth is that big pothole the council should do something about

@whoelsebutalf: My personal trainer said I should have a protein shake every night at 11pm.

That's whey past my bedtime.

@SoVeryBritish: "Don't take this the wrong way"

Translation: Prepare for insult.

@WilliamAder: Maybe Boeing should make their planes out of Legos.

They seem to stick together better than whatever they're using

@Aikiwomannc: Accidentally texted "Olay" instead of "Okay" and now my text has a smooth, youthful look.

@moonstruckinnyc: Well it's been a week and I've already f'ed things up so here's to 2025

@sarcasticmommy4: I don't know who needs to hear this but putting the dead batteries in the junk drawer does not charge them

@Heatinblack: I'd like to thank the municipal snow plow for recreating the wall from Game of Thrones at the end of my driveway

@SJKSalisbury: [showing a picture of a very healthy person to my doctor] I was thinking something a bit like this





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STRAY THOUGHTS BY RANDY EVANS

lowa needs to stop creeping secrecy over names

Cases where police withhold names continue to increase, with the secrecy maintained for inexplicable reasons.

The increasing secrecy by Iowa law enforcement and their lawyers about identifying people by name raises important questions underlying public confidence in the critical work of first-responders.

The question deals with whether police can or should refuse to identify persons involved in incidents and crimes. Despite Iowa's history of openness about crimes and accidents, with increasing frequency public officials refuse to provide names of people who end up in these events, whether as victims or perpetrators.

A few examples illustrate this issue:

Des Moines police officers encountered a tense standoff early in the morning after Christmas in 2022. The incident involved a 16-year-old boy with a handgun. The events unfolded inside the apartment where his grandmother lived. His mother and stepfather lived a couple of doors away.

In the five minutes after officers arrived, having been summoned by the stepfather, officers pleaded 70 times with the teen to put down the gun, according to a report from the Iowa attorney general's office. The standoff ended when the youth raised the gun toward officers, resulting in them firing 14 shots that struck him in the head and torso.

The attorney general's report identified the dead boy only by his initials, T.J.

Des Moines city attorneys ordered police not to make public their body camera video from the standoff or the teen's name, despite the willingness of officials to do so. The lawyers claimed releasing the name and video would violate Iowa's juvenile justice law because the teen had not been charged with any crime in connection with the standoff. Of course, authorities seldom prosecute the dead.

Keep this supposed legal analysis in mind and think back to the mass shootings at Perry High School. Within hours of the tragedy, law officers released the name of Dylan Butler, 17, the student who fatally shot one student and injured four other students and three school employees before he took his own

The day after the shootings, officials made public the name of Ahmir Jolliff, 11, a sixth-grader who died from gunshot wounds. High school principal Dan Marburger, 56, hailed as a hero for protecting

students, died from his wounds.

No one asserted Perry police and the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation violated any statute by making public the shooter's name or the name of the sixth-grader who was killed. However, officials have not made public the names of any of the survivors who

It is nonsense to believe officials acted improperly or against public interest in identifying the shooter or in naming the sixth-grader or principal. For anyone to assert otherwise makes a mockery of government transparency and implies Iowans are so detached from their communities they do not want to know who was involved in this tragedy.

But think back to last May and news of a tragic accident in Iowa City, when a motor vehicle struck and fatally injured an Iowa National Guard soldier. Corey Hite of Cedar Rapids was jogging near West High School when the vehicle hit him.

Iowa City police refused for more than a month to confirm the identity of the driver — the 16-yearold son of University of Iowa men's basketball coach Fran McCaffery — because he is a juvenile and had not been charged with any legal infraction then. (The younger McCaffery was convicted of a failure to yield charge and was fined \$1,000.)

Then, go back to the weekend before the Iowa City accident, when two classmates of the young McCaffery were involved in what state troopers said was a street race. The two teens, both 17, failed to heed a stop sign and collided with a car traveling through the intersection. The car's driver, Jennifer Russell, 22, of Waterloo, died a short time later.

The names of the two street racers and a passenger in one of their cars were released the next day by the Iowa State Patrol.

Cases where police withhold names continue to increase, with the secrecy maintained for inexplicable reasons. Some cases involve fatal traffic accidents. Others involve people shot by police. Some involve people who died in a drowning or similar tragedy.

All these incidents raise important questions: Why are some people's names made public, while other people's names are not?

The Legislature enacted a law more than 40 years

ago requiring law enforcement agencies to release the date, time, specific location and what the law calls the "immediate facts and circumstances" about a crime or other incident to which police are sent.

A 1990 legal opinion from the Iowa attorney general reminds government officials there is a presumption of disclosure of these facts "except in those unusual circumstances where disclosure would plainly and seriously jeopardize an investigation or pose a clear and present danger to the safety of an

The opinion stated victim names are one of the "immediate facts" covered by the disclosure

The lack of consistency from town to town, county to county and within state government raises the specter of favoritism. This inconsistency leads to suspicion young McCaffery's case received special treatment because of his famous father — something the two street-racers did not receive because their families are not well known. Indeed, some in Iowa City speculate the racers got different treatment because they are Black.

Keeping the actions of government employees transparent and open to scrutiny is vital to maintaining public trust and confidence in our government institutions. Accountability requires an informed public that obtains reliable information from public officials, rather than relying on rumor, gossip and theories woven on social media.

Another important element to releasing victim names often gets overlooked. Iowans have seen an outpouring of emotional and financial support that has warmed the hearts and tempered the pain of the victims in the Perry school tragedy, in the death of the Iowa National Guard sergeant in Iowa City, and in the recent drowning of a 9-year-old boy in a pond in Waukee (where police refused to identify him).

All of this underscores why access to accurate information from law enforcement is so important. It lies at the heart of being a community of caring and informed neighbors.

Randy Evans can be reached at DMRevans2810@gmail.com.



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CIVIC SKINNY BY CITYVIEW STAFF

University sabbaticals — cookbook, bees, knitting. Also... Baby names. Broken records. Growth ranking.

For most of us, taking a "sabbatical" is veiled as a simple vacation. It is a nice break from work, if nothing else. However, the definition, at least according to the Oxford dictionary is, "a period of paid leave granted to a university teacher or other worker for study or travel, traditionally one year for every seven years worked." We looked through the 106 sabbatical requests, or professional development assignments (PDAs), for fiscal year 2025 that have been approved by the Iowa Board of Regents. These will come at an estimated faculty replacement cost of \$266,468.

University of Northern Iowa

Fernando Calderon Herrera, a professor of history for 11 years at UNI, plans to do research on his sabbatical that will highlight how the impact of civil society organizations and nongovernmental actors has shaped Mexico's relationship with eastern bloc countries and oppressed people's causes in the Third World. His

request says he believes it is essential for UNI students to gain insight into the complex sociopolitical dynamics that have shaped history through the influx of Mexican musicians, teachers, feminists, activists, working-class youth and journalists to the Third World, and how they've been more effective in their efforts to earn Mexico's reputation as a leader in the Third World than the Institutional Revolutionary Government.

Sohyun Meacham has spent 10 years in curriculum and instruction. Her project is called "Intersectionality in Asian American Early Childhood" and is about issues surrounding Asian American children and their families. These issues are listed as Diversity of Asian American young children, AsianCrit and alternative theories, gendered practices and expectations of Asian American children, social class and untold/ hidden poverty in Asian American early childhood, multicultural picture books on Asian/Asian-Americanchildren, intersectional invisibility of Asian American

children with disabilities, and Asian American families' experiences in predominantly white communities.

The last of the three sabbatical requests from UNI faculty comes from Michael Prophet, mathematics professor who has 24 years under his belt. His project, "Simultaneous Minimal Extensions," looks at data modeling. He seeks to "accomplish the goal of minimal-error approximation, using an innovative technique. The new technique involves determining minimal-error, shape-preserving approximations on smaller 'subspaces' of a given large space of data, and then simultaneously 'extending' those approximations from the smaller sets to the original large set." Exactly.

Iowa State University

ISU had 38 sabbatical requests. These caught our eyes. Abby Dubisar is an associate professor of English

with 12 years of service. Her project is titled, "Cookbooks as Civic Action: Food Rhetoric's for



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CIVIC SKINNY CONT...

Peace and Justice." She says her project will explore and analyze cookbooks published between 1968 and 2017 to see how authors took position on civic and political issues, and how they might have instructed readers on persuasive strategies while being a platform for women's perspectives on world affairs.

Professor of Psychology, **Zlatan Krizan** has 16 years at ISU. His sabbatical project, titled "Fatigue during Investigations: Optimizing High-Stakes Interviewing," applies sleep and fatigue science to improve the effectiveness of interrogations. The goal of this project is to result in a new research program on interrogations and enhance ISU's reputation in legal-psychological scholarship.

After 13 years as a professor of ecology, evolution and organismal biology, Amy Toth requested a sabbatical titled, "Strengthening international collaborations for bee conservation using big data." The project looks at the decline in pollinators as a major area of research and public interest, because it has the potential to severely impact ecosystems and food supplies. As part of this research, Professor Toth will travel to Argentina to integrate bee conservation with big data, which will result in peerreviewed publications, seminars and conference presentations.

University of Iowa

The University of Iowa professors and faculty accounted for more than half of the total sabbatical requests with 65, including these three.

Monica Correia, professor of art and art history for 19 years, submitted a sabbatical request titled "Seamless Upholstery Design." Professor Correia will be applying for a Fulbright research grant in advanced weaving, knitting techniques and materials for seamless upholstery design. She plans to perform this research at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, France.

With seven years at UI, associate professor of cinematic arts, Christopher Goetz, has a sabbatical request of "Another Castle: Gaming Culture Behind the Screen." Professor Goetz plans to use this study to develop methods for preserving the past and present context of the video games people play. He plans to incorporate his findings into undergrad and graduate courses at UI. The description states, "Though they are still treated as an emerging art form, commercial video games have been around for more than 50 years. Preserving records of gaming's past is proving one of the greatest and most urgent challenges facing the academic study of games."

Inara Verzemnieks, associate professor of English for eight years, will write a book about soccer. The title of the project is "A Human History of Soccer, Error, and the Triumph of Calamity." She will explore the sport where achieving a "10/10" performance is the most difficult accomplishment, only completed by 15 players in the last 75 years. Professor Verzemnieks will use her findings to teach her students at UI and believes the book will have worldwide appeal. ...

MercyOne hospitals located across Iowa celebrated more than 8,200 births in 2023, which included 153 sets of twins and one set of triplets. The top boy names at MercyOne Medical Center in Des Moines were **Oliver**, **Liam** and **Henry**, and the top girl choices were Eleanor, Harper, Ava and Emma. The one set of triplets was born at the Northeast Iowa Medical Center. ...

Des Moines Water Works set a new record in 2023 for water production and distribution with more than 20 billion gallons of water being provided to their customers. "The increase in water demand is likely the result of increased population in central Iowa, as well as the drought, which led customers to water their lawns for longer stretches through the year, DMWW officials said." ...

The Des Moines Fire Department also set a record, apparently unrelated to the above item, for responses in 2023. Naturally, this set another record with the Fire Department responding to a call every 16 minutes, on average. They responded to a total of 33,351 calls during the year, 63% of which were EMS calls. A total of 952 calls were fire-related, which was a 10% increase from 2022. Fire Station No. 1, located on 1330 Mulberry St., was the busiest of them all. ...

According to moving truck, trailer and self-storage rental company U-Haul, fewer people are moving to Iowa, or at least fewer are using their trucks or trailers. From their 2023 U-Haul Growth States rankings, Iowa was 24th, falling three spots from the previous year.





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POLITICAL MERCURY BY DOUGLAS BURNS

What Tom Harkin would do if he were running for political office in 2024

It's a discipline of message, he says.

Tom Harkin still has it. The pulse of Iowa on instinct auto dial and a force of moral clarity and that defining doggedness, an aw-shucks ease with voters, and a rhetorical sledgehammer ever ready when he needs it. He's fast, too, on the draw with a prescription for Democrats in Iowa in 2024.

It's discipline of message, the former Democratic senator told me in an interview recently in Council

"If I were running for the Legislature in Iowa, there are only three issues I'd run on, no matter what part of the state I was in," Harkin said. "First, no public tax money for religious schools, period. The second issue I would campaign on: government should not be able to take your private property for a private company, period. And the third issue would be reproductive freedom for women. I'd just do those three issues. I wouldn't talk about anything else."

The boost to private schools through vouchers/ education savings accounts will come at an expense to the public schools, many Democrats and others argue. And the threat to property rights with pipeline proposals and roll back of women's rights on abortion also leave Republicans vulnerable, Harkin said.

Simply put, Democrats should be focusing on economic messages more than cultural issues, he said, adding that Democrats also need to get back to a shoeleather approach, face-to-face work with voters.

"We Democrats have to get every one of our voters out," Harkin said. "We have to double down on door knocking. We have to do better at making sure our voters are registered."

There are big challenges looming for Democrats in the next year.

Politics are nationalized in the modern era. And more than a third of Democrats themselves don't want to see President Biden run for re-election in 2024.

Harkin has a response to that.

"I would use Joe Biden's favorite phrase, 'Don't compare me to the almighty. Compare me to the alternative,' " Harkin said. "You ask about Joe Biden, and they think, 'Oh, there's got to be somebody better and younger and all that kind of stuff. But when it gets down to Biden and Trump, all those Democrats are coming home. And I think a fair amount of Republicans who just could not abide about Trump being president again — and then really taking over the Republican party lock, stock and barrel. There are enough moderate Republicans out there who still don't want that to happen."

Harkin, 84, a native of Cumming who graduated from Iowa State University and first ran for Congress in 1972 (winning election in 1974), said he became involved — "came of age," he said — in Iowa politics

"The Democrats in the Iowa Legislature (in the 1950s) always joked that they could caucus in a phone booth," Harkin said. "But then we just worked hard, and we started electing a few people that became good leaders, so we came up.

"These things kind of have a wave," Harkin said. "I would say right now there is a lot of turbulence politically, and people are upset and they don't know which way to go right now, so a lot of people gravitate toward a Trump for various reasons."

Recent elections have shown working-class, noncollege-educated voters fleeing the Democratic Party.

"Well, bring them back home," Harkin said. "I don't think we have done a good job of responding to the base. We drifted off under Clinton and maybe Obama, those years, of appealing only to the educated class in America. What we forgot was our base was getting decimated, and we didn't do things necessary to keep their wages and income up where it should have been. For probably 30-some years, our base kept losing ground, and we wonder why they left us. We never responded to them."

At the end of the interview, I asked Harkin if he ever planned to write a memoir about his 40 years of service in the U.S. House and Senate — and his 1992



presidential run. He left office a decade ago.

Don't expect one, Harkin said.

"Oh, I've thought about it, but I just never got around to it," Harkin said. "But you know, I don't know, a lot of these memoirs written by congressmen and senators, you know, they really aren't worth very much. I'd rather put my effort into the (Harkin) institute."

The non-partisan Tom and Ruth Harkin Institute is located in Des Moines on the Drake University campus. It assists in developing policies based on facts and data, he said.

"I'm hoping the institute will act as kind of a thing that maybe can even get the Republican Party back to a more moderate stance," Harkin said.

Douglas Burns of Carroll is fourth-generation journalist and founder of Mercury Boost, a marketing and public relations company.





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COMING UP

NOTE: The following events and attractions are subject to cancellation or last-minute changes. Before attending, be sure to check with each event individually to verify its status, start times, offerings and other details.

DES MOINES ART CENTER

4700 Grand Ave., **Des Moines** Desmoinesartcenter.org

Through Feb. 18: "Double Take"

SIXTH ANNUAL SUPER BAGS **TOURNAMENT**

Smash Park, 6625 Coachlight Drive, West Des Moines smashpark.com/location/west-des-moines Feb. 11

You honed your skills during tailgate season. Now it's time to see if you've got what it takes against the best bags, or cornhole, players in the metro area at Smash Park. Registration begins the day of at 9 a.m.

SHIVER ON THE RIVER

1900 Saylor Road, Des Moines captainroys.com

Feb. 17

Participate in, form teams, and compete in exciting outdoor games in a fun-filled fashion, you guessed it, right by the river.

"Les Misérables." Photo by Johan Perrson

DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS

Des Moines Civic Center, Cowles Commons, Stoner Theater, Temple Theatre, 221 Walnut St., Des Moines dmpa.org

- Feb. 6-11: "Company"
- Feb. 15: Capital City Pride Presents: Brea Baker
- Feb. 17: The Peking Acrobats
- Feb. 20: Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo
- Feb. 27 through March 3: "Les Misérables"
- Feb. 27 through March 17: "Dixie's Never Wear a Tube Top While Riding a Mechanical Bull"

IOWA WOLVES

Wells Fargo Arena 233 Center St., Des **Moines** iowa.gleague.nba.com

Home games:

- Feb. 3 at 7 p.m. vs. Sioux Falls
- Feb. 6 at 10:30 p.m. vs. Sioux
- Feb. 23 at 7 p.m. vs. Rio **Grande Valley Vipers**

DES MOINES BUCCANEERS

Buccaneer Arena, 7201 Hickman Road, Urbandale bucshockey.com

The Tier 1 USHL developmental hockey franchise continues to serve up a chance for amateur hockey players to enhance their ability to succeed at the next level. Home games through February:

- Feb. 10 vs. Lincoln
- · Feb. 16 vs. Waterloo
- Feb. 17 vs. Dubuque
- Feb. 18 vs. Cedar Rapids
- Feb. 23 vs. Cedar Rapids
- Feb. 24 vs. Sioux Falls



DRAKE BASKETBALL

Knapp Center 2601 Forest Ave., Des Moines Men's home games:

- Feb. 7 at 7 p.m. vs. Southern Valley
- Feb. 18 TBA vs. Murray State
- Feb. 21 at 7 p.m. vs. Belmont

Women's home games:

- Feb. 8 at 6 p.m. vs. Bradley
- Feb. 10 at 2 p.m. vs. Illinois State
- Feb. 22 at 6 p.m. vs. Missouri State
- Feb. 25 at 2 p.m. vs. University of Northern Iowa



Photo Courtesy of Iowa Wild

IOWA WILD

Wells Fargo Arena 233 Center St., Des Moines iowawild.com

Home games:

- Feb. 9 at 7 p.m. vs. Tucson
- Feb. 10 at 6 p.m. vs. Tucson
- · Feb. 19 at 5 p.m. vs. Rockford
- · Feb. 21 at 7 p.m. vs. Rockford

COMING UP



Photo Courtesy of Jester Park Nature Center



YMCA RED FLANNEL RUN

501 Grand Ave., Des Moines • Dmymca.org • Feb. 17 This annual YMCA event is great for a fun freezing run. After starting 35 years ago when two single guys didn't have Valentine's Day dates, it is credited with being the longest consecutively produced race in the Des Moines area.

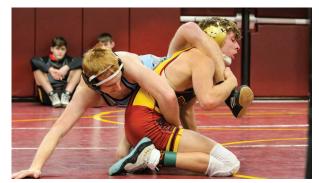


Photo by Betty Cooper

2024 IHSAA BOYS STATE WRESTLING TOURNAMENT

Wells Fargo Arena, 730 Third St., Des Moines iahsaa.org/wrestling Feb. 14-17

Sorry football and basketball fans, wrestling is still king in Iowa. Crowds fill Wells Fargo Arena this time every year to witness the best lowa high school wrestling stars the state has to offer.

THE SNOW BALL

Science Center of Iowa, 401 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway, Des Moines DSM.city/SnowBall Feb. 3

This family-friendly event provides an evening of dancing, refreshments, photo opportunities, art projects and science exhibits. From 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.



3000 E. Grand Ave., Des **Moines** iowastatefairgrounds.org Feb. 10-18

An entire week of beef packed into the Iowa State Fairgrounds. Parades, shows, sales and banquets, all in the name of Iowa beef.



Photo by Chris Monaghan

WINTER BLUES FEST 2024

Downtown Des Moines Marriott, 700 Grand Ave., Des Moines Cibs.org Feb. 9-10

Get out of the cold and into the rhythm of the 2024 Winter Blues Fest. Between the two nights of blues music, there will be 20 acts for your listening pleasure.



CITYVIEW CHOCOLATE WALK

West Glen Town Center, 5465 Mills Civic **Parkway, West Des Moines** chocolatewalk.dmcityview.com. Feb. 23

Like chocolate? Like chocolate drinks? Then you'll love this event. For a ticket price of \$25 (\$35 at the door), attendees will receive 10 drink tickets that can be redeemed for sample cocktails at participating venues. Attendees will also be provided tickets for chocolate dessert samples at participating retail stores. A shuttle bus from Majestic Limousine will be providing transportation to each location, although most are only a short walk away.

——— CITYVIEW'S ————

BUSINESS JORNAL







Managing partner of Buzzard Billy's, Jeff Kirby.

Dining

Located less than 500 feet from Wells Fargo Arena is Buzzard Billy's at 615 Third St. The restaurant, a popular choice among sports fans, features a variety of American, Southern and Cajun cuisine. Being in the heart of downtown, Buzzard Billy's is an eventdriven business, according to its managing partner of 10 years, Jeff Kirby.

"There's so many events throughout the year, whether it's the sports tournaments or the larger conventions, they all have a pretty big impact on our business," said Kirby.

Kirby said Buzzard Billy's busiest season, in terms of sales, is between January and June particularly February and March, state tournament season. To handle the rush, Kirby said it just requires more planning. The restaurant reviews the sales of years past to forecast their schedules.

"The state wrestling tournament is typically our busiest week of the year," said Kirby. "We keep pretty good records as far as staffing we've done in years past to be able to properly prepare. Staffing is the critical aspect of it. It's kind of the secret to success to me."

Kirby relies on staff members in the kitchen who have worked at Buzzard Billy's for years. They do their best to retain "top-tier" talent in order to do high-volume sales.

Getting people to the restaurant is never an issue, so they do not need to run promotions or specials. The focus is serving as many people as they can.

"It's a lot of bigger groups. You get a lot of people, especially wrestling people, that come from a lot of small towns all throughout the state," said Kirby. "They've been coming into Buzzard Billy's year after year, as long as we've been here. We'll see a lot of the same faces year after year that have been our loyal customers for a long time."

During the week of state wrestling, Buzzard Billy's opens its lower level to serve concession-style food. Kirby considers it a "service to the public," providing food and drinks to as many people as they can.

"I think that the wrestling tournament and the basketball tournaments are probably some of my favorite weeks," said Kirby. "A lot of times, the managers will end up working 70-80 hours, but it's fun, and we enjoy it."



Catch Des Moines president and CEO Greg Edwards

Hotels

As soon as teams and athletes begin to qualify for the state tournaments, schools, families, current students and even alumni begin to book hotels for the week of the events, according to Jessica Dunker, president and CEO of the Iowa Hotel and Lodging Association.

"Tournaments bring capacity-filling numbers of people to area hotels," said Dunker. "It is an extremely important annual bump in business, especially midweek, and weather like we're facing, in what is generally a slow time of year."

The hotel industry, like many others, was devastated by COVID-19. Previous reporting by CITYVIEW showed occupancy rates at some hotels in the state were as low as 10% during the worst of the pandemic. Dunker said events like the state tournaments are important to returning to pre-pandemic levels.

"Hotel and lodging properties in the entire metro benefit from these large sporting events and appreciate the opportunity to host and serve as 'home base' for the many excited Iowans who come to town to cheer on their teams," Dunker said. "The hotel and lodging space depends on events like these as part of the long road to recovery post-pandemic. While revenues and room occupancies are returning to normal and even growth levels, we have three years of loss we're trying to recover from."

Reservations of all kinds are made for tournament weeks. Schools and teams typically book large, but usually no more than four people to a room. Dunker said that chains are popular with visitors and fans. However, there is some interest in

"Some families and fans enjoy these styles of rooms, and even some schools will enjoy these styles of hotels," she said.

To accommodate the increase in traffic, hotel staffing levels are increased during tournament days as they do during similar sell-out situations. However, occupancy rates decline when more metro teams and athletes make the cut as locals do not need overnight accommodations.

"Locations near the event center tend to do really well, especially for winter events due to the skywalk system, as well as eliminating the need to find parking at the venue if they can just walk there," Dunker said.

A strong interest exists in suburban hotels, too. Those located near metro malls are popular for their proximity to shopping, dining and entertainment offerings during tournament downtimes.



Store leader at SCHEELS, Chrissy Brabandt

Shopping

"We treat wrestling, girls basketball and boys basketball like the holiday season. I treat those weeks like they're weeks in December," said Randy Tennison, general manager of Jordan Creek Town Center.

Tennison said, across the board, the retail and dining experiences offered by Jordan Creek see significant increases during tournament weeks. While he did not offer specific metrics, he did say that one of the events tends to outpace the others.

"Honestly, in my experience, I believe that wrestling seems to have a stronger increase," said Tennison. "A lot of that is, it seems, like there are more schools from outside the metro that come in for wrestling... it just seems like there are more people from other areas of the state."

Working in favor of Jordan Creek is the fact that some of its retailers have only one or very few stores in the state.

"When people come to the area, they're getting to shop at places they don't always get to shop at elsewhere in the state. They're not getting to get around those retailers very often, whether it's Apple or Pottery Barn or Williams Sonoma. We just



Randy Tennison, general manager of Jordan Creek Town Center

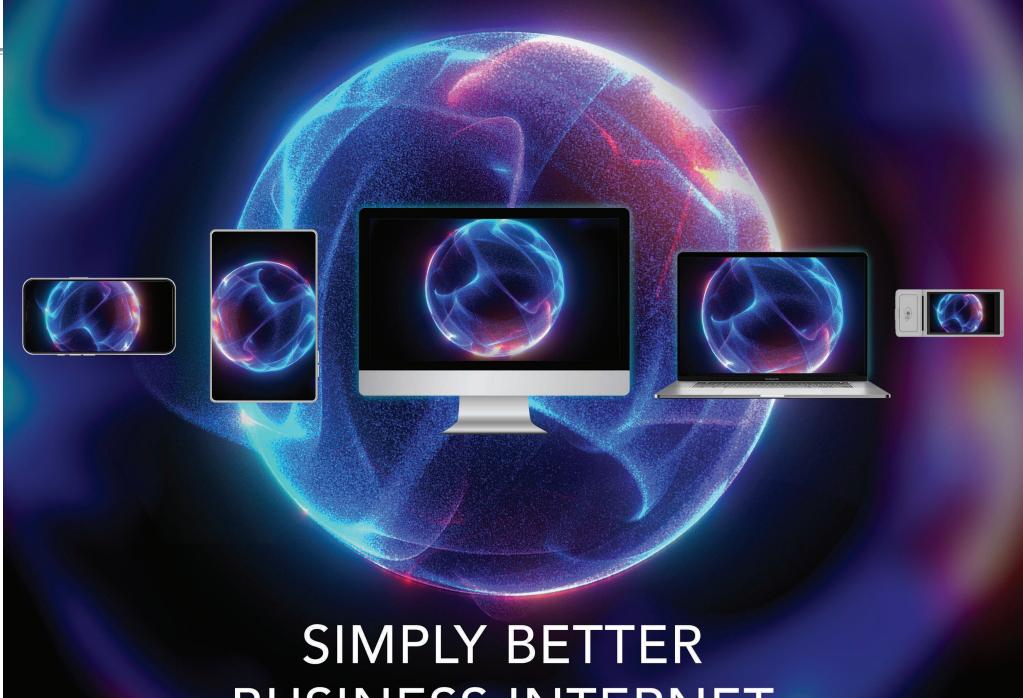
announced Lego, so that'll be something similar."

One of the leaders of those retailers, Chrissy Brabandt, the store leader at SCHEELS, agrees that extra traffic is seen during tournament weeks. Brabandt has worked for the company since 2001.

"We know the dates well in advance, so we are able to schedule extra crew to help us out with the extra traffic," she said. "From just before lunch until the evening events start is usually the most traffic. Because stuff is going on usually all day, the traffic flow is usually pretty consistent Friday and

To accommodate all the extra visitors to Jordan Creek, Tennison and his team adjust general operations. Security and cleaning are increased to similar levels to that of the holiday season.

"It's fun to have February and March weeks feel like the holiday," said Tennison. "February is typically the slowest month for shopping centers nationwide. For us, to be able to have state wrestling here, makes it feel like a December week, which is a blast. It's fun to have that energy in February. It's fun to have that energy in March that you typically don't see at a shopping center." ■



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1100 ARMY POST ROAD, **DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2023-11-19 SALE PRICE: \$155,000 SELLER: LILE, KAREN

BUYER: STJ INVESTMENTS LLC

ACRES: 0.177 SQUARE FEET: 1,364

1077 27TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-11-20 SALE PRICE: \$220,000

SELLER: BUCKINGHAM ASSETS LLC

BUYER: PARE, JASON

ACRES: 0.182 SQUARE FEET: 2,563

9439 PLUM DRIVE, URBANDALE

SALE DATE: 2023-11-21 SALE PRICE: \$1,722,362

SELLER: LANDMARK OFFICE PARK

11C

BUYER: GRACE REAL ESTATE

HOLDINGS LLC ACRES: 7.908 SQUARE FEET: 0

3500 SIXTH AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-11-29 SALE PRICE: \$700,000 SELLER: HENDERSON-HIGHLAND PARK FUNERAL SERVICE LLC

BUYER: HS RENTAL LLC

ACRES: 0.419

SQUARE FEET: 4,972

2812 BRATTLEBORO AVE., **DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2023-11-30 SALE PRICE: \$241,000

SELLER: BEAVERDALE HOUSING

LLC

BUYER: GALLUZZO, STEVEN

ACRES: 0.182 SQUARE FEET: 3,544

1625 DIXON ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-11-30 SALE PRICE: \$111,000

SELLER: HOUGHMAN, RONALD BUYER: SOUTHEAST 23RD STREET

PROPERTY LLC ACRES: 1.056 SQUARE FEET: 1,056

5299 N.E. 22ND ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-01 SALE PRICE: \$4,700,000 SELLER: TRIP PORTFOLIO LLC BUYER: SAIA MOTOR FREIGHT LINE

LLC

ACRES: 10.360 SQUARE FEET: 17,800

175 S. NINTH ST., SUITE 445, **WEST DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2023-12-04 SALE PRICE: \$225,000 SELLER: BLUE IGUANA INVESTMENTS LLC

BUYER: CUSTIS REAL ESTATE

HOLDINGS LLC ACRES: 0.044 SQUARE FEET: 1,920

175 S. NINTH ST., SUITE 450, **WEST DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2023-12-04 SALE PRICE: \$235,000 SELLER: BLUE IGUANA INVESTMENTS LLC

BUYER: CUSTIS REAL ESTATE

HOLDINGS LLC ACRES: 0.044 SQUARE FEET: 1,920

2400 HICKMAN ROAD, DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-06 SALE PRICE: \$13,200,000

SELLER: HICKMAN PARTNERS LLC BUYER: RT FAMILY PROPERTIES LLC

ACRES: 1.088

SQUARE FEET: 149,519

NO ADDRESS LISTED

SALE DATE: 2023-12-06 SALE PRICE: \$90,000

SELLER: THE PARKS FUNERAL

SERVICES INC

BUYER: CATON GOMEZ, JOSE

ACRES: 0.297 SQUARE FEET 0

1111 N. GRANT AVE., ELKHART

SALE DATE: 2023-12-06 SALE PRICE: \$200,000

SELLER: BILL & DONNA HUBER

FAMILY TRUST

BUYER: 1111 N GRANT AVENUE LLC

ACRES: 4.423 SQUARE FEET: 0

NO ADDRESS LISTED

SALE DATE: 2023-12-06 SALE PRICE: \$900,000

SELLER: CHAPMAN, KATHLEEN M BUYER: IOWA ESTATE GROUP LLC

ACRES: 0.708

SQUARE FEET: 11,792

7640 S.W. 22ND ST., SUITE 105, **DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2023-12-07 SALE PRICE: \$398,000

SELLER: 7600 SW 22ND STREET

BUYER: MOSAIC PROPERTY

GROUP LLC ACRES: 0.220 SQUARE FEET: 3,000

1264 CUMMINS ROAD, DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-08 SALE PRICE: \$4,200,000 SELLER: DES MOINES LEASED HOUSING ASSOCIATES VIII LP **BUYER: SOUTHWINDS LLC**

ACRES: 1.882

SQUARE FEET: 52,480

300 S.W. FIFTH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-08 SALE PRICE: \$16,000,000 SELLER: HARBACH LOFTS LLC

BUYER: 300 SW 5TH LLC

ACRES: 1.129

SQUARE FEET: 103,428

512 ELM ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-08 SALE PRICE: \$625,000 SELLER: ELM STREET PARTNERSHIP LLC **BUYER: 512 ELM LLC** ACRES: 0.478

SQUARE FEET: 9,900

1208 S.E. 16TH COURT, ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2023-12-08 SALE PRICE: \$5,509,677 SELLER: LARSON FAMILY LLLP **BUYER: GBI-ANKENY LLC**

ACRES: 3.082

SQUARE FEET: 34,900

5909 N.W. 90TH ST., JOHNSTON

SALE DATE: 2023-12-11 SALE PRICE: \$100,000 SELLER: IMPACT7G INC **BUYER: 7G DEVELOPMENT LLC**

ACRES: 1.463 SQUARE FEET: 0

5095 N.E. 14TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-11 SALE PRICE: \$550,000

SELLER: MCKEE AUTO CENTER INC

BUYER: 5095 NE 14TH ST LLC

ACRES: 0.683

SQUARE FEET: 1,380

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1106 CLINTON AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-11 SALE PRICE: \$230,000

SELLER: ARMADURA LEGAL INC

BUYER: COLLINS, SCOTT J

ACRES: 0.152 SQUARE FEET: 2,023

5965 MERLE HAY ROAD, JOHNSTON

SALE DATE: 2023-12-12 SALE PRICE: \$1,025,000

SELLER: LAS MANAGEMENT LLC **BUYER: EDF MANAGEMENT LLC**

ACRES: 1.127

SQUARE FEET: 8,040

1908 E. EUCLID AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-12 SALE PRICE: \$902,500

SELLER: MEADOWS WAREHOUSING

COMPANY

BUYER: S&N REAL ESTATE LLC

ACRES: 13.161

SQUARE FEET: 16,848

NO ADDRESS LISTED

SALE DATE: 2023-12-13 SALE PRICE: \$300.000 SELLER: HALLER, WILLIAM R **BUYER: HALLER LIVING TRUST**

ACRES: 12.029 SQUARE FEET: 7,200

NO ADDRESS LISTED

SALE DATE: 2023-12-13 SALE PRICE: \$1,305,000

SELLER: LONE WOLF REALTY LLC **BUYER: JEFFERSON WAY LLC**

ACRES: 7.993 SQUARE FEET: 0

536 43RD ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-14 SALE PRICE: \$395.000

SELLER: BEAVERDALE HOUSING LLC

BUYER: DOORIORS II LLC

ACRES: 0.418

SQUARE FEET: 6,458

320 EIGHTH ST. S.E., ALTOONA

SALE DATE: 2023-12-15 SALE PRICE: \$700,000 SELLER: GUIDO'S BUILDING

COMPANY LLC

BUYER: LIL-P-BUB LLC

ACRES: 0.516

SQUARE FEET: 3,750

2400 INGERSOLL AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-15 SALE PRICE: \$1,059,810 SELLER: NOAH & SARA ANN

LACONA REV TRUST BUYER: II LLC

ACRES: 1.242

SQUARE FEET: 12,004

1616 FULLER ROAD, **WEST DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2023-12-15 SALE PRICE: \$800,000

SELLER: SOMMERS, RONALD W

BUYER: 1616 LLC ACRES: 0.880 SQUARE FEET: 9,620



701 LOOMIS AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-18 SALE PRICE: \$1,307,000

SELLER: SOUTHTOWN TERRACE

BUYER: NH1 PROPERTIES A LLC

ACRES: 1.500

SQUARE FEET: 16,512

320 S.E. GATEWAY CIRCLE, GRIMES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-18 SALE PRICE: \$664,906

SELLER: SSD PROPERTIES LLC **BUYER: 49TH ST INVESTORS LLC**

ACRES: 2.828 SQUARE FEET: 0

1516 VALLEY WEST DRIVE, **WEST DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2023-12-18 SALE PRICE: \$1,875,000

SELLER: MDM EQUITY-2010 LLC

BUYER: CSA ACRES: 2.004

SQUARE FEET: 20,212

1800 WATROUS AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-18 SALE PRICE: \$22,744,275 SELLER: WAKONDA VILLAGE APARTMENTS PROPCO LLC BUYER: WAKONDA OWNER LP

ACRES: 21.730

SQUARE FEET: 273,964

3950 VANDALIA ROAD, DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-18 SALE PRICE: \$253,000

SELLER: JOHNSON, WALTER A BUYER: JAROD & JODI SMITH WHITEWATER REVOCABLE TRUST

ACRES: 1.754

SQUARE FEET: 13,380 ■

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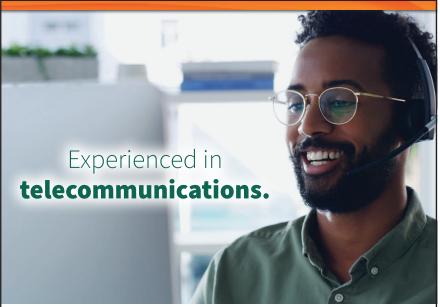
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Amanda Brunkhorst and Jarvis Williams



Daphne Strief and Isaiah Thomas



Evan Guest, Brennan McDonald and Christina Ellsbury



Jan. 16 at Merchants Bonding Company in West Des Moines. Lily Allen-Duenas and Susan Elder





Danny Beyer (speaker)



Taylor Kooker, Jared Coady and Bekah Link



Evan Hataway and Jacob Olson



By Cyote Williams

You won't find the iconic black and white Best Of Des Moines logo everywhere you go, so, when you do, a feeling of comfort is sure to set in. You're about to receive elite service, send your taste buds on a heavenly journey, or make a memory that will last a lifetime.

Two-hundred-seventy-one categories. Thousands of votes. You, the readers, have decided on what you view as the best representation of Des Moines. The best when it comes to choosing a place to eat, drink, dance, shop or visit. The best when it comes to your mental,

physical and social health. And the best when it comes to artists, representatives, home repair, car sales, and everything in between.

These people and businesses are scattered throughout the metro, giving us all their "Best." From the winners to the runners-up, CITYVIEW congratulates you all.

Editor's note: The voting for next year's Best Of Des Moines begins in October 2024. Be sure to save the date and cast your votes.

Best New Local Restaurant

Cajun Belle

"Simple. Different." Those are the words you're greeted with when visiting Cajun Belle's website. Now they can add another word, "Best." CITYVIEW readers voted the new southeast Texas cuisine spot as their favorite new restaurant. The drive-thru only storefront has Southern classics such as po' boys and jambalaya, and head chef Zach Hollier considers their gumbo "his childhood in a pot." There's also plenty of sweets to cut the heat, all made fresh in-house. 5460 Merle Hay Road, Suite A, Johnston, 515-207-5050; www.cajunbelleia.com.

Runners-up: Bix & Co.; Either/Or

Best-Kept Secret on the Local Restaurant Scene

Simon's

How many times do CITYVIEW readers need to teach you this lesson? This is the eighth year in a row that Simon's has been voted the Best-Kept Secret on the Local Restaurant Scene — and for good reason. The cozy space features one bar, nine booths, a couple three-top tables and a fish aquarium that pack plenty of flavor into the decor. 5800 Franklin Ave., Des Moines, 515-255-3725; www.simonsdsm.com.

Runners-up: Early Bird Brunch; Bistro at the lowa Culinary Institute at DMACC

Best Local Restaurant... Period Simon's

Guess who's back... Simon's takes the top spot for Best Local Restaurant for the second year in a row, according to CITYVIEW voters. Simon's has plenty of tasty items on the menu — from the beginning to the end of your meal — with spicy, three-cheese stuffed mushrooms, delicious pastas, steak DeBurgo, and more. Don't forget excellent wines to pair with it all. 5800 Franklin Ave., Des Moines, 515-255-3725; www.simonsdsm.com.

Runners-up: The Big Steer Restaurant and Lounge; Early Bird Brunch

Best Local Fine Dining Simon's

Cleaning house in the Best Of awards and cleaning out your evening plans was on Simon's agenda in 2023. CITYVIEW readers chose the 29-year-old restaurant as the Best Local Fine Dining in the city. There is no shortage of flavors from the pastas, house specialties, appetizers and more. 5800 Franklin Ave., Des Moines, 515-255-3725; www.simonsdsm.com.

Runners-up: 801 Chophouse; Harbinger

Best Valley Junction Restaurant Cooper's on 5th

Make that three years on the bounce for Cooper's on 5th. Cooper's returns to the Best Of Des Moines by offering



Voted Best New Local Restaurant by CITYVIEW readers, Cajun Belle. Photo courtesy of Cajun Belle

first-rate food in an old-school atmosphere. Indulge in a juicy burger or a savory Philly and wash it all down with an award-winning cocktail. Lunch or dinner, bar or patio, Cooper's on 5th is a must-stop in Historic Valley Junction. 227 Fifth St., West Des Moines, 515-255-9895; www.cooperson5th.com.

Runners-up: G. Mig's 5th Street Pub; Bix & Co.

Best West Glen Restaurant

Anna Dolce Ristorante

It's back-to-back for Anna Dolce Ristorante in West Glen. After opening in 2021, the upscale and modern Italian restaurant continues to make a name for itself with CITYVIEW readers, and for good reason. Their menu features plenty of classic pasta dishes, specialty pizzas and iconic Italian entrees to make your mouth water. 5585 Mills Civic Parkway, Suite 110, West Des Moines, 515-223-2302; www.annadolceristorante.com.

Runners-up: The Breakfast Club; El Fogon Mexican Restaurant

Best East Village Restaurant

This upscale restaurant has been in the hearts and stomachs of the Best Of Des Moines voters for several years. It features a four-course prix fixe dinner that changes weekly, but the flavors consistently remain elite with sandwiches, pastas and divine entrees scattered across the menu. The brick interior provides a welcoming atmosphere while you dine on Italian and Mediterranean

cuisine. 420 E. Locust St., Des Moines, 515-243-1115; www.luccadsm.com.

Runners-up: Olympic Flame Restaurant; Alba

Best Prairie Trail Restaurant

District 36 Wine Bar & Grille

District 36 hasn't let go of the grasp it has held on this category since it was added five years ago, according to the votes from CITYVIEW readers. Peppercorn Steak de Burgo, Almond-Crusted Mahi Mahi, Calamari Steak Etouffée, Pretzel Rarebit Burger, Grilled Pollo Farfalle Pasta — these menu items and famous drink choices continue to have diners' tastebuds firing. 1375 S.W. Vintage Parkway, Ankeny, 515-261-2502; www.district36winebar.com

Runners-Up: 30hop; Magee's Irish Pub & Eatery

Best Local Ingersoll Area Restaurant Eatery A

"Your Des Moines destination for Mediterranean-inspired cuisine. Perfecting simple dishes that focus on local, quality ingredients," according to Eatery A, and CITYVIEW readers certainly agree. With plenty of wood-fired pizza options, Spanish Octopus, Lamb Sliders, Chicken Shawarma skewers, this restaurant offers hints of Spain, Morocco, Egypt and Italy throughout its menu. 2932 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, 515-282-8085; www.eateryadsm.com.

Runners-up: Sakari Sushi Lounge; Lachele's Fine Foods

Best Beaverdale Area Restaurant Christopher's

This Beaverdale staple has been serving Des Moines residents award-winning Italian American food for more than 50 years. Incredible service, a tradition of donating Thanksgiving meals to the public each year, and great-tasting food keeps diners coming back all year long. 2816 Beaver Ave., Des Moines, 515-274-3694; www.christophersdsm.com.

Runners-up: The Dam Pub; Motley School Tavern

Best Drake Area Restaurant

Drake Diner

The landmark Drake neighborhood restaurant returns as one of the best places to find homemade comfort food and all-day breakfast. Located just south of Drake University since 1987, the "upscale retro diner" is family owned and operated. In need of something sweet nearing a comfort food coma? Drake Diner serves Pumpkin Pancakes, Cinnamon Swirl French Toast, Cap'n Crunch French Toast Sticks and homemade cinnamon rolls to boot. 1111 25th St., Des Moines, 515-277-1111; www.drakediner.com.

Runners-up: Lucky Horse Beer & Burgers; University Library Cafe

Best Local American Food Lachele's Fine Foods

Still in its infancy when compared to many other local American-style restaurants, Lachele's has captured CITYVIEW readers looking for something to sink their teeth into. Their smash burgers also took home Best Local Burger, again, no doubt thanks to their unique rotating specialty burgers, crispy yet fluffy fries and other savory American favorites. All inside their old-school diner-styled location. 2716 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, 515-330-6876; www.lacheles.com.

Runners-up: Drake Diner; B-Bop's

Best Local Vegetarian/Vegan Food Des Fresh

If you're looking to get away from the meat of it all, look no further than Des Fresh. This downtown favorite has a wide range of options that anyone can enjoy. Menu items such as the Crispy Chickpea Sandwich, Fried Tacos, BBQ or Mac Stack n Fries cover the savory side; Jam Bars, Peppermint Hot Chocolate Chip Cookies, Raspberry Lemon Pound Cake cover the sweet side. Don't forget to grab a smoothie, latte or fresh punch to help wash it all down. 520 S.W. Ninth St., Suite 116, Des Moines; www.des-fresh-foods.square.site.

Runners-up: Lucky Lotus; Veggie Thumper

Best Local Gluten Free Food Destination Grille

"We are proud to prioritize health and menu inclusivity with our extensive gluten-friendly options," says the Destination Grille website, and it's evident on the menu. Opened in 2022, Destination Grille has already attracted



Destination Grille's menu offers tons of gluten free options, including this delicious pizza, which led them to the title of 2024's Best Local Gluten Free Food. Photo courtesy of Destination Grille

CITYVIEW readers looking to avoid gluten. You can breathe a sigh of relief when seeing tasty dishes such as any of their pizzas, Black Bean Burger, Lobster Mac & Cheese, Chicken DeBurgo, and many, many more. 2491 E. First St., Grimes, 515-355-1153; www.destinationgrille.com.

Runners-up: Louie's Wine Dive; Gastro Grub & Pub

Best Local Italian Food

Tumea & Sons Restaurant

Located in the heart of the southside of Des Moines, this family-friendly and family-owned Italian establishment — chosen by readers as the Best Local Italian Food — has been serving classic Italian food at the highest level since 1998. With a regulation outdoor bocce ball court just outside its doors and consistently changing specialty menu on weekends, this classic restaurant gives you every reason and more to come back for seconds. 1501 S.E. First St., Des Moines, 515-282-7976; www.tumeaandsons.net.

Runners-up: Cosi Cucina; Noah's Ark Ristorante

Best Local Mexican Food El Fogon

El Fogon, which CITYVIEW readers chose as Best Local Mexican Food, packs tons of flavor into its dishes at its Johnston and West Des Moines locations. The family-owned and operated restaurants offer authentic Mexican options including the chance to design your own combo, tacos, enchiladas and fajitas — all with fresh ingredients, including tortillas made in-house. ¡Vamos a comer! Multiple locations; www.elfogondmi.com.

Runners-up: Tasty Tacos; Fiesta Mexican Restaurant West Des Moines

Best Local Thai Food

Thai Flavors

Thai Flavors has established itself as the city's premier destination for, well, Thai flavors. "The variety of ingredients and the different combinations of flavors make for an unforgettable national cuisine," is what they say about Thai food, and CITYVIEW readers agree. The four S's — spicy, sweet, sour and salty — are present across the menu from their Pad Thai, Chicken Satay, Sushi Rolls, Thai Custard and more. Multiple locations; www.thaiflavorsiowa.com.

Runners-Up: Cool Basil; Eat Thai, Thai Eatery

Best Local Chinese Food Tsing Tsao

Tsing Tsao has locations throughout the metro, each one serving quick and affordable Chinese food without sacrificing any of the taste, surely the reason CITYVIEW readers named it Best Local Chinese Food. Opened in 2008, they have restaurants on the south and east sides of Des Moines, Urbandale and Waukee. Each one offers the classics such as Orange Chicken, Beef and Broccoli, Hunan Pork and many other options. Don't forget to toss in an order of Sugar Donuts or their Crab Rangoons to cut through the spice. Multiple locations; www.tsingtsao.com.

Runners-up: Shanghai; Lucky Bamboo Asian Cuisine

Best Local Japanese Food

New Wasabi locations are popping up across the metro and bringing Best Of Des Moines awards with them. This favorite for Japanese food is now up to six locations with two more on the way thanks to their authentic and tasty menu options. Winner of the Best New Restaurant in 2011, as voted for by CITYVIEW readers, Wasabi offers numerous sushi rolls, entrees, noodle dishes, fried rice and more. Multiple locations; www.wasabidsm.com.

Runners-up: Sakari Sushi Lounge; Akebono 515

Best Local Mediterranean Food Fresh Mediterranean Express

Sit down for a meal and have yourself transported to the Mediterranean coast. CITYVIEW readers have voted Waukee's Fresh Mediterranean Express as their go-to for the simple, fresh and delicious flavors that Mediterranean food has to offer. Try their salads, kabobs, pita sandwiches, platters, rice bowls and more. 15 N.E. Carefree Lane, Waukee, 515-987-6870; www.orderfreshmed.com.

Runners-up: Gazali's; Green Olive

Best Local Seafood

Waterfront Seafood Market

No surprises here. For as long as we can remember, Waterfront has dominated the local seafood scene in the eyes of CITYVIEW Best Of voters. Family-owned and operated since 1984, they bring the bright and tasty flavors right from the ocean directly to your plate by frequently flying in fresh products from fishermen and brokers — never processors or wholesalers.

Locations in Ankeny and West Des Moines; www.waterfrontseafoodmarket.com.

Runners-up: Splash Seafood Bar & Grill; **Laughing Crab**

Best Local Sushi

Sakari Sushi Lounge

Ingersoll Avenue is your destination for the best sushi spot in the city — according to CITYVIEW readers. With all of the classic bright, spicy, sweet or sour tastes you can get from traditional to specialty rolls, Sakari has you, and the table, covered. They also have an extensive drink list to pair with anything you order. 2605 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, 515-288-3381; www.sakarisushilounge.com.

Runners-up: Pho Wheels & Sushi; Wasabi

Best Local Steakhouse

The Big Steer Restaurant and Lounge

"It is our objective to provide a first-quality dining experience for our patrons," say owners Randy and Sherri Fix, and they've accomplished just that. Meat and potato meals are a staple in the Midwest, and steaks are the peak. The Big Steer uses naturally aged, certified angus beef for all their cuts and delivers a mouthwatering experience that has garnered the restaurant the Best Local Steakhouse honor from CITYVIEW readers. 1715 Adventureland Drive, Altoona, 515-967-6933; www.thebigsteerrestaurant.com/home.

Runners-up: 801 Chophouse; Iowa Beef Steakhouse

Best Local Brunch/Breakfast

Early Bird Brunch

For the second year in a row, CITYVIEW readers say they prefer to start their day off right at Early Bird Brunch — as well as quell the effects of their hangovers. What better way to accomplish both of those things than with their creative twists on breakfast staples, like Cinny-Bobs, Churro Waffles, Cereal Killer pancakes, an A.M. Pot Pie, or some hair of the dog with their brunch cocktails. 9250 University Ave., Suite 107, West Des Moines, 515-528-2212; www.earlybirdbrunch.com.

Runners-up: The Breakfast Club; HomeGrown -**Des Moines**

Best Local Delicatessen

Manhattan Deli

The Hansen family has been serving Des Moines sandwich staples from the same Ingersoll Avenue location since 1982. At Manhattan Deli, you have one of the city's oldest sandwich spots with nothing but excellent flavors, and, when it comes to delicatessens, CITYVIEW voters say it's the best. With a different special each day besides Sunday, take your pick from warm or cold originals, Italian subs, hoagies, warm Italian subs, vegetarian options, delightful sides and salads, homemade soups and desserts — all at one iconic location. 3705 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, 515-274-1208; www.hansensmanhattandeli.com.

Runners-up: Palmer's Deli & Market; Maccabee's **Kosher Deli**



Best Local Burger

Lachele's Fine Foods

Lachele's Fine Foods has taken over the local American food and burger scene since they debuted in 2021. The crispy edges and juicy insides of their smash burgers have captured real estate inside CITYVIEW readers' minds, mouths and stomachs, garnering it the Best Local Burger honors. Unique specials, partnered with vegan and vegetarian options, give diners more than enough reason to visit the bustling Ingersoll Avenue spot. 2716 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, 515-330-6876; www.lacheles.com.

Runners-up: B-Bop's; Zombie Burger + Drink Lab

Best Local Pizza

The Tavern

When a business can survive the Great Depression, they've got to be doing something right, and CITYVIEW readers say, when it comes to pizza, The Tavern is tops. Operating as a small-town tavern, John and Mary Rilei purchased the business in 1945 and introduced food in the 1950s. Longtime friend Chuck Celsi bought the business in 1988 and has kept many of the original recipes intact, and for good reason. His children run the operation now and continue to provide the signature thin crust pizza to customers at both their Valley Junction and West Des Moines locations. Multiple locations; www.tavernpizza.com.

Runners-up: Dough Co. Pizza; Taste of New York Pizza



Lachele's has burst onto the food scene in recent years due in part to their Best Local Burger. Photo courtesy of Lachele's







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THANK YOU FOR VOTING DIG & HELPING US GET NOMINATED FOR:

Best Local Gluten Free Food Best Local Restaurant Patio Best Local Special Events Venue (non-wedding)





Best Local Bakery

La Mie Bakery

C'est délicieux. CITYVIEW readers can't get enough of the French bakery, which has won Best Local Bakery time and time again. However, it's not just the sweet, buttery, flakey, crispy baked goods bringing people in. Soups, omelets, pizzas, sandwiches, salads, and more are all to die for, no matter the time of day. 841 42nd St., Des Moines, 515-255-1625; www.lamiebakery.com.

Runners-up: ChaCha's Hiland Bakery; Nash's Confections

Best Local Cupcake Shop

Molly's Cupcakes

Attention all lovers of sweet delights. Molly's is the best place to get your handheld tasty treat. Buy one of their delectable offerings or choose your flavor, filling and topping. All of their cupcakes — voted the best by CITYVIEW readers — are made from scratch daily with fresh ingredients. 215 E. Third St., Des Moines, 515-244-0778; www.mollysdsm.com.

Runners-up: Crème; The Bake Shoppe

Best Local BBQ

Smokey D's BBQ

Make it six in a row for Smokey D's for Best Local BBQ. This establishment is the definition of Iowa BBQ, with more than 90 state BBQ championships and 1,000 local, regional and national awards. They have a downtown

location in the Des Moines skywalk; however, their main location is at 5055 N.W. Second Ave., Des Moines, 515-243-2747; www.smokeydsbbq.com.

Runners-up: Jethro's BBQ; Whatcha Smokin' BBQ & Brew

Best Local French Fries

B-Bop's

B-Bop's classic cut fries are second to none for another year running in Best Of Des Moines polling. They fit perfectly with their runner-up Best Local Burger and are just begging to be dipped in one of the restaurant's famous shakes for a sweet and salty American classic pairing. Multiple locations; www.b-bops.com.

Runners-up: Gastro Grub & Pub; Chicken Heat

Best Local Chicken Wings

Jethro's BBQ

No matter the sauce, style or tactic they use to consume wings, CITYVIEW readers know their favorite, and it's Jethro's. Their bone-in wings are soaked in buttermilk, smoked and fried to juicy and crispy heaven. From salty sauces like their garlic parmesan, to their heat-filled raspberry habanero, the variety satisfies any taste — and don't forget the ranch. Multiple locations; jethrosdesmoines.com.

Runners-up: Gerri's Bar & Grill; The Chicken Coop Sports Bar & Grill

Best Local Nachos

University Library Cafe

What's there to be said about University Library Café's famous nachos that CITYVIEW readers haven't already said? Whether you're a student looking for a study break snack, an avid football fan looking for a game-time meal, or you're just flat out hungry, bring yourself to the Dogtown area and try their freshly fried tortillas topped with pinto beans, shredded cheddar cheese, Monterey cheese sauce, salsa, mild banana pepper rings, pico de gallo, sour cream, and your choice of meat from cheeseburger, chicken, roast beef, bacon or corned beef. 3506 University Ave., Des Moines, 515-255-0433; https://thelibrarydm.com.

Runners-up: Jethro's BBQ; Skip's

Best Local Tacos

Tasty Tacos

Garnering runner-up plaudits for Best Local Mexican Food, Tasty Tacos takes the cake, or the shell, for CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Tacos again. The restaurant has received the award every year since its inception, and for good reason. The local chain's pillowy flour shell tacos are filled with steak, beef, chicken or beans for you veggie lovers, topped with lettuce and cheese. Don't forget to get some of their homemade hot sauce to finish them off. Multiple locations; www.tastytacos.com.

Runners-up: Faustinos Taqueria; Flame the Taqueria

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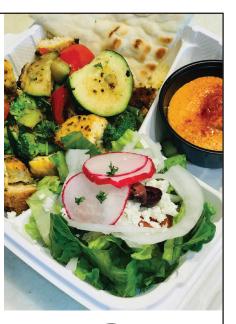


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Best Local Tenderloin

Smitty's Tenderloins

Smitty's "King Tenderloin" is big enough to satisfy the heartiest appetite, but you'll be hard pressed to avoid ordering another one after tasting the Best Local Tenderloin in Des Moines, according to CITYVIEW readers. Thin, crispy and full of porky goodness, the southside destination has been filling the metro's empty bellies since 1952. Make sure to get a milkshake or a sundae while you're at it "sez" Smitty. 1401 Army Post Road, Des Moines, 515-287-4742; www.smittystenderloin.com.

Runners-up: Jethro's BBQ; Goldie's Ice Cream Shoppe

Best Local Bar Food

Francie's Bar & Grill

Just off Fleur Drive, the locally owned and operated southside Francie's Bar & Grill has been open since 1987, serving up good food, drinks and vibes. Sit inside the classic bar and grill interior or make your way onto the patio and enjoy patrons' favorites such as Toasted Garlic Focaccia Bread, Bacon Cheddar Burger, French Dip, New York Steak and Peppers and much more. One bite and you'll know why Francie's is again readers' choice for Best Local Bar Food. 2100 Wakonda View Drive, Des Moines, 515-285-5207; www.franciesbarandgrill.com.

Runners-up: Lynn's on Merle Hay; The Dam Pub

Best Local Coffee/Coffeehouse Smokey Row Coffee Co.

Just rolls off the tongue, doesn't it? Smokey Row's original Des Moines store features that can't-miss neon sign pointing directly to where you can find CITYVIEW readers' favorite cup of Joe. They've been spreading their influence across the city with locations opening in most of the city's suburbs, all equipped to serve you an awardwinning coffee, latte, cappuccino, espresso and more. Multiple locations; www.smokeyrow.com.

Runners-up: Zanzibar's Coffee Adventure; **Fredrichs Coffee**

Best Local Wine Selection at a Restaurant

Louie's Wine Dive

"We celebrate great wine, locally sourced cuisine and the joy of savored moments shared with friends," according to Louie's Wine Dive's website. When you put wine in the name, you'd better do it right, and they certainly deliver, say CITYVIEW readers. With more than 40 wines to choose from based on their Des Moines menu alone, from reds, whites, rosé or sparkling, Louie's is sure to fill your glass with something special, responsibly, of course. 4040 University Ave., Suite A, Des Moines, 515-777-3416; www.louieswinedive.com.

Runners-up: Cooper's Hawk; WineStyles

Best Local Hangover Food Early Bird Brunch

Looking for a cure-all remedy for the pounding headache, strange bruise, and little to no recollection of the night before? When CITYVIEW readers are, they turn to Early Bird Brunch, their favorite provider of hangover food, thanks to plenty of quality carb options to soak up last night's regrets, coffee to wake you back up, and good service to put a smile on your face. 9250 University Ave., Suite 107, West Des Moines, 515-528-2212; www.earlybirdbrunch.com.

Runners-up: Waveland Cafe; Mullets Restaurant

Best Local First Date Spot Gastro Grub & Pub

Once upon a time, in 2016, CITYVIEW readers voted Gastro Grub for Best Local Food Truck. Now, the brick-and-mortar location is their favorite Local First Date Spot. Let the awkward tension of a first date be melted away by their excellent selection of food — from soups, sandwiches and burgers — or ease the nerves with a craft cocktail and several local and national favorites on tap. 1378 Hickman Road, Waukee, 515-300-2460; www.gastrogrubpub.com.

Runners-up: The Big Steer Restaurant and Lounge; Simon's

Best Local Restaurant Patio Big Grove Brewery

Big Grove Brewery started in Solon, opened locations in Iowa City and Cedar Rapids, and eventually made its debut in Des Moines in 2022. With that debut came an expansive outdoor seating area equipped with umbrellas, fireplaces and, most importantly, good drinks — welcoming enough to make it CITYVIEW readers' choice for best local restaurant patio. Their detailed list of locally brewed beers will have you coming back if the Iowa weather permits. Oh, and don't forget to bring an appetite. Their menu packs a punch of flavors from Pork Belly Bao Buns to Caribbean Mojo Pork sandwiches. Their Des Moines location is 555 17th St., 515-777-2337; www.biggrove.com.

Runners-up: Destination Grille; Eatery A

Best Local Place to get a Donut Hurts Donut Company

Since they opened up shop in December 2016, Hurts Donut Company has been CITYVIEW readers' favored spot for a donut. And, since they're open "25 hours a day, 8 days a week," there's really no reason for you to skip out on Hurts. Ring donuts, long Johns, donut holes, cake donuts, Bismarks — they're all available, and the flavors range from the classics to the wackiest. 5513 Mills Civic Parkway, Suite 105, West Des Moines, 515-267-1671; www.wannahurts.com.

Runners-up: Donut Hut; ChaCha's Hiland Bakery



Just like they did in 2023, Black Cat Ice Cream wins the Best Of Des Moines award for Best Local Ice Cream or Gelato Shop. Photo courtesy of Black Cat Ice Cream

Best Local Caterer

Cyd's Catering

Chef Cyd Koehn uses "Buy Fresh Buy Local" for her catering, and Spanish Tapas are a specialty. Meal options from Tastes of the Iowa State Fair to Greek Feasts have helped earn her readers' accolades as best caterer. Her personal belief is, "Whenever people gather around a table, the food should be joyful, nourishing, and eventful." And it is. 515-208-2091; www.cateringbycyd.com.

Runners-up: Taste! To Go Catering + Events; **Great Caterers of Iowa**

Best Local Restaurant Supply Company

Bolton & Hay

Just like last year, Bolton & Hay Inc. has been voted Best Local Restaurant Supply Company by CITYVIEW readers. There's a good chance many of the Best Of winners have been supplied by Bolton & Hay at one point or another for their product and equipment needs. 4333 Park Ave., Des Moines, 800-362-1861; www.boltonhay.com.

Runners-up: TriMark Hockenbergs; Iowa-Des **Moines Supply Inc.**

Best Local Vietnamese Food

A Dong Restaurant

Since 1989, A Dong has been serving customers excellent Vietnamese food in downtown Des Moines. "The name Á Đông is Vietnamese for East Asian, which refers to both our heritage and the style of food that we serve," says A Dong, and that style has been considered the best Vietnamese food in the city for several years running. Try their flavor-packed pho, other soup bowls, or gourmet rice bowls. They also have vegetarian options. 1511 High St., Des Moines, 515-284-5632; www.adongrestaurant.com.

Runners-up: Vietnam Cafe; Pho 515



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EATS

Best Local Food Truck

Pho Wheels & Sushi

Bursting onto the food truck scene in recent years, Pho Wheels & Sushi provides pho, sushi and other appetizers on, you guessed it, wheels. And CITYVIEW readers like what they offer, voting it Best Local Food Truck. With each menu option as tasty as the last, you might need to be wheeled out yourself, because, once you start eating here, you won't want to stop. Check their Facebook page for updates on where you can find their traditional house rolls to specialties, beef pho, or tsunami rolls from their vegetarian menu. 515-208-7310; Facebook @ Pho Wheels & Sushi.

Runners-up: Charlotte's Kitchen; Waffles & Whip

Best Local Chocolate/Candy Store

Chocolatarie Stam

Timothée Chalamet and his Willy Wonka rendition wish they packed the same sweet punch as Chocolaterie Stam does in its delectable treats. CITYVIEW readers looking to satisfy their sweet tooth agree this is the Best Local Chocolate/Candy Store. From Dutch pastry, licorice, boxes of chocolates or cupcakes, this spot is great for gifts or a delightful snack. Multiple locations; www.stamchocolate.com.

Runners-up: Chocolate Storybook; Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory

Best Local Korean Food

DZÔ Korean BBQ

Fresh on the scene and fresh on your plate, the recently opened Korean BBQ spot on Ingersoll Avenue has filled a craving that many metro diners have been missing, and they've filled it with ease — a feat that has earned them readers' choice for Best Local Korean Food. Let that table-top grill get fired up and enjoy a large selection of meats including La Kalbi, Beef Bulgogi, filet mignon, and a variety of Wagyu premium cuts. If you're feeling thirsty, the fully stocked bar has plenty of cocktails to enhance your dining experience. 2611 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, 515-216-1472; www.dzokoreanbbq.com.

Runners-up: Sook's Korean Kitchen; Naughtea

Best Server

Nate Foreman, Lynn's on Merle Hay

A talented server can take an average night out to a meal you won't forget. The food is only part of the dining experience, and Nate Foreman took CITYVIEW readers' meals to their table better than anyone else. With more and more self-checkouts and tabletoriented serving taking over businesses, high-quality service has waned, but standouts are waxing, and Foreman is at the top.

Runners-up: Ted Blackwood, The Big Steer Restaurant and Lounge; Zoey Osteen, Gastro Grub & Pub

Best Local Ice Cream or Gelato Shop

Black Cat Ice Cream

Make it back-to-back for Black Cat Ice Cream, voted by CITYVIEW readers as Best Ice Cream or Gelato Shop. The store name's origin started with a big, fat, black cat, (their words not ours) Boo Bear. Owners Alex and Angela Carter believed the only way to soften up the street-raised adopted cat was with ice cream. Needless to say, they've accomplished that. Black Cat's ice cream menu is constantly changing, with each flavor just as good as the last. 2511 Cottage Grove Ave., Des Moines, 515-689-7466; www.blackcaticecream.com.

Runners-up: Home Sweet Cone Ice Cream; The Outside Scoop

Best Local Boba Shop

Ocha Bubble Tea & Dessert Cafe

Congratulations Ocha Bubble Tea & Dessert Café. CITYVIEW readers have crowned you Best Local Boba Shop, a new category for this year's awards. Milk tea has been growing in popularity across the country. Ocha lists some of their customers' favorites as their Hokkaido Milk Tea with honey boba, the Lady in Pink (nom yen) and Matcha Milk Tea. Don't forget to grab a dessert while you're there, too. 7216 University Ave., Windsor Heights, 515-255-3979; www.ochabubbletea.com.

Runners-up: 8 Degrees Ice Cream & Boba; Zenko Tea



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420 8th St. SE Altoona, IA 50009 **West Des Moines**

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Best Local Store (Overall)

Mint Piercing

Describing the quality and not the taste (Yes, we're out of the "Eats" section. Keep up), Mint Piercing, while prioritizing safety and cleanliness, provides aesthetically pleasing and creative piercings for their customers. They've done such a fine job that readers have named it the Best Local Store. Appointments are required for all visits. Multiple locations, Text only, 515-992-9194; www.mintpiercing.com.

Runners-up: Bing's; Prysm Jewelry & Piercing

Best Local Men's Clothing Store Mr. B Clothing

Since 2016, Mr. B has earned the Best Local Men's Clothing Store honor by combining designer clothing and fantastic service. From suits to business casual looks, premier shoes and denim, Mr. B has the ability to enhance your personal style with a men's clothing shopping experience that remains unrivaled in Des Moines. 1995 N.W. 86th St. Clive, 515-276-8589; www.mrbclothing.com.

Runners-up: 515 Exclusive; Fontenelle Supply Co.

Best Local Women's Clothing Store Von Maur

The original Von Maur store opened in 1872 in a 20foot by 50-foot space in Davenport. Now, there are 37 storefronts located across the country. Von Maur moved its Des Moines location from Merle Hay to Jordan Creek in 2022, providing shoppers with their stylish favorites from shoes, tops, coats, bags and much more. CITYVIEW readers say it's the best when it comes to women's clothing. Jordan Creek Town Center, 101 Jordan Creek Parkway, Suite 6000, West Des Moines, 515-223-1311; www.vonmaur.com.

Runners-up: Harlow + James; Mainstream **Boutique**

Best Local Thrift Shop

Goodwill of Central Iowa

A growing disinterest in fast fashion, coupled with a desire to style vintage and forgotten clothes, has seen thrift stores grow exponentially in recent years. And CITYVIEW readers prefer to get their thrifting fix at Goodwill. Proceeds from Goodwill sales go to their mission to "make purposeful employment possible for all, while strengthening the community and environment." Multiple locations; www.dmgoodwill.org.

Runners-up: Many Hands Thrift Market; Caring **Hands Secondhand Treasures**



Shop 'til you drop at CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Shopping District, Valley Junction. Photo courtesy of Valley

Best Ankeny Store

Mint Piercing

It only makes sense that the Best Store (Overall) would also be the best store in its area. Mint Piercing's ability to blend high-quality jewelry with great service makes their Ankeny location the best store in the area, according to Best Of Des Moines polling. Again, appointments are required for all visits. Multiple locations, Text only, 515-992-9194; www.mintpiercing.com.

Runners-up: Real Deals; Goodwill of Central Iowa

Best Local Frame Shop

Tandem Brick Gallery

If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Tandem Brick Gallery is once again CITYVIEW readers' favorite Local Frame Shop. They've been putting together outstanding frames for articles, awards, degrees, family photos, mirrors and almost anything else you'd like to be shown in style on your walls. 2722 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, 515-282-1031; www.tandembrickgallery.com.

Runners-up: Dot's Gallery & Frame Shop; The **Great Frame Up**

Best Local Bridal Shop

Schaffer's Bridal

Your wedding day is one to be remembered by your family, friends and, most importantly, you - and the person standing across from you. What better way to accomplish that than with a jaw-dropping dress? Schaffer's Bridal can help make sure that's the case. Find dresses designed by Abella by Allure Bridals, Blue by

Enzoani, By Watters, Calla Blanche, Eddy K, Enzoani and plenty of others at this readers' choice for Best Local Bridal Shop. 5445 Mills Civic Parkway, West Des Moines, 515-288-0356; www.schaffers.com.

Runners-up: Rosalie; Weddings by Design + The **Tux Shop**

Best Local Tuxedo Shop

Skeffington's Formal Wear

Fellas, don't phone it in when you get the chance to dress to the nines. Whether it be a wedding, prom or just putting on your Sunday best, take CITYVIEW readers' advice and go to Skeffington's. They will help you find something you like, while matching it to any color scheme the occasion may call for. Multiple locations; www.skeffingtons.com.

Runners-up: Men's Wearhouse; Weddings by Design + The Tux Shop

Best Local Children's Store

Janes – Family Shop

The mother-daughter combo of Sarah and Jennifer have your little ones covered at Janes - Family Shop, CITYVIEW readers' choice of Best Local Children's Store. Kids items from clothing to make them look as cute as possible to their new favorite toy can be found at this shop. 350 E. Locust St., Suite 102, Des Moines; www.janesdsm.com.

Runners-up: Learning Post & Toys; Once Upon A Child

SHOPPING

Best New Local Store

Enchantasys

Is this real life or is this just Enchantasys? It's very real, and it's CITYVIEW readers' favorite New Local Store. Those of you who are younger than 18, avert your eyes. The one-stop sex shop emporium has your NSFW needs covered or uncovered. Toys, lingerie and everything in between. We'd tell you more, but the website is blocked on our servers. 3904 N.W. Urbandale Drive, Urbandale, 515-270-2012; www.enchantasys.com.

Runners-up: Harlow + James; Divine Times Vintage

Best Local Record Store

Vinyl Cup Records

What started in August 2017 as a Facebook page quickly grew into a storefront by the following August in Beaverdale. Vinyl Cup Records played their way into being the preferred spot for the purchase or sale of the traditional music media — and being CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Record Store. The friendly environment hopes to connect newbies of the vinyl scene with their large selection of records that span a multitude of genres. 2815 Beaver Ave., second floor, Des Moines, 515-203-2122; www.vinylcup.com.

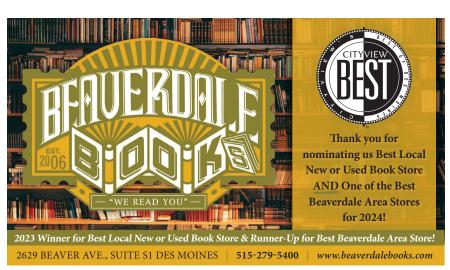
Runners-up: Jay's CD & Hobby; Zzz Records



Winner of Best Local Store (Overall), Best Ankeny Store, Best Local Jewelry Store, Best West Glen Store and Best Local Body Piercing Store, according to CITYVIEW readers, is Mint Piercing. Photo courtesy of Mint Piercing







SHOPPING

Best Local New or Used Book Store Beaverdale Books

Any genre of your liking can be found at Beaverdale Books, including many by local authors. The store boasts a section stocked full of offerings from more than 500 of Iowa's best wordsmiths. Chosen by CITYVIEW readers as Best Local New or Used Book Store, Beaverdale Books also hosts meet the author events and partners with schools, book clubs and other novel-related events. 2629 Beaver Ave., Des Moines, 515-279-5400; www.beaverdalebooks.com.

Runners-up: Half Price Books; Reading in Public **Bookstore + Cafe**

Best Local Car Dealership (Domestic)

Stivers Ford Lincoln

Look no further than CITYVIEW readers' favorite domestic local car dealership, Stivers Ford Lincoln, for your next car. Whether you're in the market for something new with all the bells and whistles or something used to get you safely from point A to point B, there's something on the lot for you. 1450 E. Highway 6, Waukee, 1-800-747-2744; www.stivers-waukee-ford.com.

Runners-up: Willis Automotive; Karl Chevrolet

Best Local Car Dealership (Foreign) Willis Automotive

With a lot full of new and used foreign vehicles, from the 2024 F-Pace Jaguar to a 2010 Lexus RX and plenty in between, the best car dealership for foreign cars, Willis Automotive, has you covered when looking for your foreign automotive favorites such as Infiniti, Land Rover, Nissan, Volvo and more. 2121 100th St., Clive, 855-638-1176; www.willisautocampus.com.

Runners-up: Toyota of Des Moines; Smart Honda

Best Local Motorcycle Shop

Mean Machine Cycle Parts

The lean, mean, fixing machine. If you're in search of a place for a custom build or looking for the best motorcycle parts available, CITYVIEW riders point to Mean Machine Cycle Parts as their choice for motorcycle shop. They guarantee satisfaction, fast shipping and elite customer support. Owner Robb Boggs has several award-winning builds to his name with more than 20 years of experience in design engineering to boot. 267 N.W. Main St., Elkhart, 515-367-7336; www.meanmachinecycleparts.com.

Runners-up: Big Barn Harley-Davidson; **Struthers Brothers**

Best Local Bicycle Shop

Bike World

Since 1979, this Des Moines bicycle shop stalworth has been an elite source for your biking needs. Whether you're looking to purchase, fix up, trade in or ride along, Bike World has the ability to get the wheels turning. And, it's the Best Local Bicycle Shop, say CITYVIEW readers. Multiple locations; www.bikeworldiowa.com.

Runners-up: Kyle's Bikes; Ichi Bike

Best Local Liquor Store

Central City Liquors

Central Iowans love their liquor — more than six million gallons worth of love in 2023, according to the Iowa Alcoholic Beverages division — and Best Of Des Moines voters chose Central City Liquors as their preferential spot for purchases. 1460 Second Ave., Des Moines, 515-244-0159; www.centralcityliquors.com.

Runners-up: Wall to Wall Wines & Spirits; **Ingersoll Wine & Spirits**

Best Local Wine Store

WineStyles

If you're looking for the ideal glass of wine to sip during an at-home meal, a gift for the wine enthusiast in your life, or maybe even an introduction to the wine world for the recently turned 21-year-old, WineStyles has options galore. The CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Wine Store isn't just limited to selling wine, however. Find tasteful glasses, gourmet treats, craft beer and other gift options. Join one of their wine, beer or cheese of the month groups if you're looking to stay in the flavorful loop. Locations in West Des Moines, Johnston and Ankeny; www.winestyles.com.

Runners-up: Wall to Wall Wine & Spirits; **Ingersoll Wine & Spirits**

Best Local Grocery Store

Fareway Meat & Grocery

Fareway Meat & Grocery looks to go on a winning streak, capturing CITYVIEW readers' choice as Best Local Grocery Store in back-to-back years. Well known around the metro for their excellent meat, the business is a top 10 employer in Iowa. Multiple locations; www.fareway.com.

Runners-up: Hy-Vee; Aldi

Best Local Jewelry Store

Mint Piercing

A clean sweep. CITYVIEW readers absolutely adored Mint Piercing in 2023. Taking home Best Local Store (Overall), Best Ankeny Store, Best West Glen Store (spoiler alert) and now, Best Local Jewelry Store. And yes, again, appointments are required for all visits. Multiple locations, Text only, 515-992-9194; www.mintpiercing.com.

Runners-up: Josephs; Prysm Jewelry & Piercing

Best Local Antique Store

Brass Armadillo Antique Mall

The Brass Armadillo Antique Mall — the Best Local Antique Store, according to CITYVIEW readers — has thousands of dealers under its roofs, with more than 450 at the Des Moines location. Be ready to buy the finest antiques such as art, China, clothes, furniture, quilts and loads more. Their arm has reached all the way out west to Goodyear, Arizona, but we're biased in saying the original store on the north side is its best. 701 N.E. 50th Ave., Des Moines, 515-282-0082; www.brassarmadillo.com/desmoines.

Runners-up: Raccoon Forks Trading Company; **Memory Lane**



Skates, sticks, pucks and gloves. All that and more at 2024's Best Local Skate Shop, JT's Slap Shot Hockey Shop. Photo courtesy of JT's Slap Shot Hockey Shop

Best Local Art Gallery

Kunzler Studios

It is five in a row for Kunzler Studios in the Best Of Des Moines polling. The family-owned art operation features art director Mike, art education director Diane, artist in residence Kelly, and graphic designer Kendall — all Kunzlers. Their goal is to be a "lifestyle location" by using their motto of "Create, Innovate, Educate, Celebrate!" 324 Fifth St., West Des Moines, 515-279-0322; www.kunzlerstudios.com.

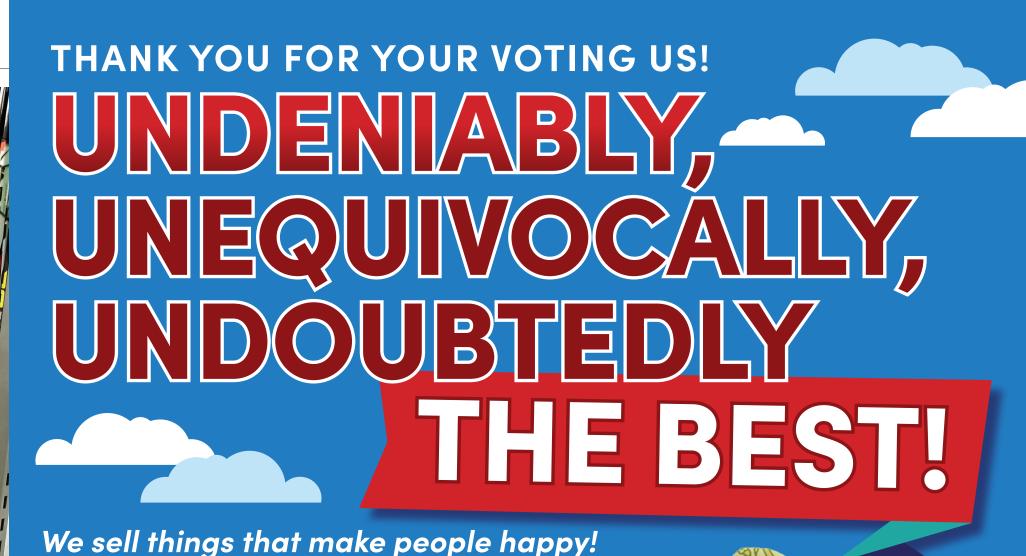
Runners-up: Mainframe Studios; Moberg Gallery

Best Local Hardware Store

Ace Hardware

You know the jingle, "Ace is the place with the helpful hardware folks," and CITYVIEW readers know it, too. Ace has more than 5,000 stores scattered across the globe, a majority of which are locally owned. Whether you're in need of a new grill, tools, paint, plumbing and tons more, well, there's not much else left to say other than Ace is your place. Multiple locations; www.acehardware.com.

Runners-up: True Value Hardware; Miller's Hardware





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SHOPPING



From the newest to the oldest, you can find it in 2024's Best Local Record Store, Vinyl Cup Records. Photo courtesy of Vinyl Cup Records

Best Shopping District

Valley Junction

One of the area's premier shopping districts, and the best according to the Best Of Des Moines poll, has its roots on the west side of Des Moines. Historic Valley Junction has a wealth of options for you to spend your hard-earned cash. See a play at a local theater, find all the best bits and bobs at a cute boutique, have a delicious meal or drink at one of many restaurants, or even get your phone fixed. No matter the shopping experience you left the house to search for, you can find it in and around Fifth Street in West Des Moines, 515-222-3642; www.valleyjunction.com.

Runners-up: East Village; Jordan Creek Town Center

Best Local Flower Shop

Boesen the Florist

With more than a century in the flower business, and it's not "just because" (like one of their flower arrangements), Boesen the Florist is once again CITYVIEW readers' choice for best spot to purchase your brightly colored pollen-producing plants and flowers. Tom Boesen is the third generation of Boesens to run the flower shop, serving your bouquet, wedding floral and wreath needs. Multiple locations; www.boesen.com.

Runners-up: Wildflower; Carmen's Flowers Uptown

Best Local Gift Shop

Bina's

If you're going to set up shop in CITYVIEW readers' favorite shopping district, you better bring your A-game, and Bing's certainly delivers. "We sell things that make people happy," says Bing's, with a selection of items ranging from gardening to socks, ceramics, books and much more. This makes it the sixth year in a row for Bing's to make the Best Of Des Moines selection as Best Local Gift shop. Here's to lucky number seven next year. 213 Fifth St., West Des Moines, 515-279-3141; www.bingsdsm.com.

Runners-up: Tandem Brick Gallery; give.



Best Local Place to Purchase a Musical Instrument

Rieman Music

Featured in the recent edition of Explore Des Moines, Rieman Music has been instrumental in providing the metro with all its musical needs — and CITYVIEW polling says it's the place to go. Whether you're introducing your young one to the musical arts via clarinet lessons or looking to finally learn how to strum those strings, make a trip to the closest Rieman Music and get started. Metro locations in Des Moines, Urbandale and Ames; www.riemanmusic.com.

Runners-up: Uptempo Music; Professional Music Center

Best Local Computer Repair Shop Little Dog Tech

They put the "it" factor in IT. OK, bad joke; however, there's nothing funny about Little Dog Tech's computer repairing ability. No matter the issue, for businesses or everyday folks, Little Dog Tech can remove a virus, help with security, backup to the cloud or recover your treasured data. For all these reasons and more, they're CITYVIEW readers' favorite computer repair shop. 5946 Ashworth Road, West Des Moines, 515-422-1995; www.littledogtech.com.

Runners-up: Dymin Systems; Mobile Spot

Best Local Phone Repair Shop

Mobile Spot

It doesn't matter if you like it or not, mobile phones dominate our world today. A broken cellular device can send even the calmest people into a panic, and Mobile Spot is the Best Local Phone Repair Shop to fix 'er up, according to the Best Of Des Moines poll. With more than 1,000 parts stocked, in-house micro soldering, lifetime warranties and incredibly quick turnaround, any of their technicians are more than qualified to get the job done. 8421 University Blvd., Clive, 515-223-7719; www.mymobilespot.com.

Runners-up: CPR Cell Phone Repair; uBreakiFix by Asurion

Best Local Pawn Shop

Solar Loan and Sales

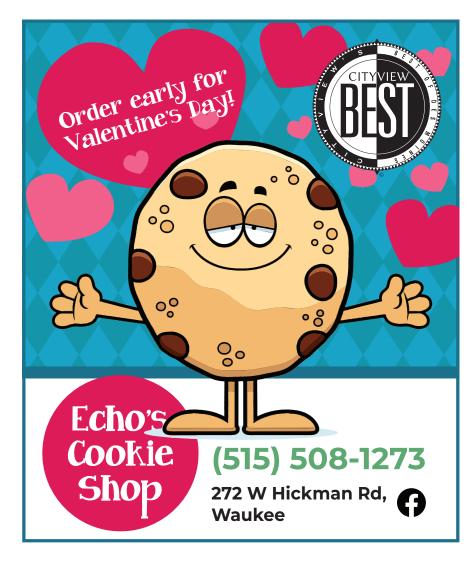
While pawn stores have a reputation of being places where you go when you need cash fast, Solar Loan & Sales owner Steve Kouri says, "We do the best when the economy is booming," according to CITYVIEW's recent Business Journal story. No matter the case, rain or shine, CITYVIEW readers voted Des Moines' oldest pawn shop as the best in the business. 3311 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, 888-244-7084; www.solarpawn.com.

Runners-up: EZPAWN; The Pawn Store



Looking to plant some veggies or brighten up the living room? You can find that and more at the Best Local Greenhouse, Goode Greenhouses. Photo courtesy of Goode Greenhouses







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SHOPPING

Best Local Convenience Store

Kwik Star

Gas stations in Iowa have become much more than just that. You can get basic car maintenance supplies, groceries, meals or even win the lottery. Convenient, right? Sure, you can get your gas there, too. For such needs, CITYVIEW readers say the Best Local Convenience Store is Kwik Star. And, with many Kwik Stars and Kwik Trips popping up all over the city, you don't have far to go to find one. Multiple locations; www.kwiktrip.com.

Runners-up: Casey's; Kum & Go

Best Local Place to Buy Cigars/ Tobacco

David's Fine Tobaccos

Grab a seat and a smoke inside David's Fine Tobaccos. Their state-of-the-art ventilation system allows you to relax in comfort and smoke one of their cigars, pipes, specialty cigarettes, hookah and more while watching the game or news. Their walk-in humidor is ideal for central Iowa's best selection of imported, hand-made, fresh cigars. When it comes to the best place to get your cigars/tobacco, CITYVIEW readers say it is David's Fine Tobaccos. 9759 University Ave., Clive, 515-278-8701; www.davidsfinetobaccos.com.

Runners-up: Iowa Cigar Company; Tobacco Hut

Best Local E-Cigarette Shop

Central Iowa Vapors

E-cigs, vapes and the like have become increasingly popular between for those looking to avoid traditional tobacco-based smoking products. CITYVIEW readers who love to blow clouds prefer to get their favorite e-cigarettes at Central Iowa Vapors. They also have cannabis and nootropic products at their disposal as well. Multiple locations; www.iowaecigs.com.

Runners-up: Atomic Cloud Vapor; Unkl Ruckus's **Smoking Emporium & Skate Shop**

Best Valley Junction Store

Back again. Just like we said earlier, if you're going to be located inside the Best Shopping District, you better be the best. CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Gift Shop also got their votes for Best Valley Junction Store. 213 Fifth St., West Des Moines, 515-279-3141; www.bingsdsm.com.

Runners-up: Hinge; Memory Lane

Best West Glen Store

Mint Piercing

Here's the reveal from that spoiler alert. Mint Piercing claims another Best Of Des Moines award — this time

as best West Glen store. As stated several times before, the local jeweler provides elite customer service, jewelry and piercings. Yes, appointments are still required for all visits. Text only, 515-992-9194; www.mintpiercing.com.

Runners-up: Josephs; WineStyles

Best East Village Store

RAYGUN

RAYGUN has slogans galore plastered on everything from clothes to hats, signs and more. Their unique prints with snarky phrases are seen all over the city and scream with Midwest culture, something that CITYVIEW readers repeatedly say makes RAYGUN the Best East Village Store. 505 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines, 515-288-1323; www.raygunsite.com.

Runners-up: AllSpice Culinarium; Porch Light

Best Beaverdale Area Store

Beaverdale Books

Books, books and more books. Once again taking home Best Beaverdale Area Store and Best Local New or Used Book Store honors, Beaverdale Books has more than enough options to keep the pages turning and you coming back. 2629 Beaver Ave., Des Moines, 515-279-5400; www.beaverdalebooks.com.

Runners-up: Back Country; Vinyl Cup Records



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SHOPPING

Best Drake Area Store

Groovy Goods Daydreams

Groovy Goods Daydreams says on its website, "From stones and crystals to Groovy Home Goods and apparel, we have everything for the hippie at heart," and that they do. Home to much more than the psychedelic tapestry you might find in your cousin's basement (don't worry, they have that, too), this best Drake area store, according to Best Of Des Moines polling, also has tarot cards, jewelry, incense, creative clothing and plenty of pipes. 2300 University Ave., Des Moines, 515-274-2799; www.groovy-goods.com.

Runners-up: 515 Exclusive; Ancient Ways

Best Ingersoll Area Store

Tandem Brick Gallery

CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Frame Store is also their favorite Ingersoll Area store — for the seventh year in a row. If you're looking for something other than a frame at this storied business, they are have figurines, candles, cards, mugs, mittens and other merchandise. 2722 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, 515-282-1031; www.tandembrickgallery.com.

Runners-up: Renovation Jungle; Zzz Records

Best Local Furniture Store

Homemakers

It doesn't matter if you're looking to fill your new home or apartment, replace a deteriorating piece of furniture, or spruce up an outdoor living space, Homemakers is the Best Local Furniture Store to get the job done, according to Best Of Des Moines poll voters. The store also boasts several Iowa-only delivery options to make the furniture upgrade journey as easy as possible. 10215 Douglas Ave., Urbandale, 515-276-2772; www.homemakers.com.

Runners-up: Redekers Furniture; Slumberland Furniture

Best Local Home Decor Store

Real Deals

A runner-up last year, Real Deals takes the top spot for Best Local Home Decor Store in 2023, with home decor options ranging from clocks, mirrors, wall art, furniture and more. The family-owned franchise has opened a staggering 69 locations in 19 states and several Canadian provinces after a little more than a decade of operation. Metro locations include Ankeny and Adel; www.realdeals.net.

Runners-up: At Home; MoMere

Best Jordan Creek Area Store

Scheels

With competition galore in such a large shopping district as Jordan Creek, Scheels manages to stand-out above the rest, in the opinion of CITYVIEW readers. The sporting goods giant has provided the metro with all its outdoor needs since 2004, with everything from basketball shoes to hunting rifles and balls for nearly every sport you could ever play. 101 Jordan Creek Parkway, Building 4000, West Des Moines, 515-727-4065; www.scheels.com.

Runners-up: Von Maur; Christopher's Fine Jewelry

Best Local Appliance Store

Metro Appliance

Appliances are a crucial part of every home. From your dishwasher to your fridge, laundry machines and stovetop, you use them almost every day. Making sure you get the best is important, and CITYVIEW readers choose Metro Appliance as the Best Local Appliance Store. They offer repairs on select appliances and sell some of the best brands from Kenmore to KitchenAid. Locations on Hickman Road and Delaware Avenue, 515-271-8870; www.metro-appliance.com.

Runners-up: Nebraska Furniture Mart; Warners' Stellian







Best Local Shoe Store

Brown's Shoe Fit Co.

Certainly, a great fit indeed. For more than 100 years, Brown's Shoe Fit Co. has been providing comfortable, affordable and stylish shoe options for men and women. The company has stores located across the Midwest, and, when it comes to Des Moines, it is our readers' Best Local Shoe Store. Locations in Ankeny and West Des Moines. Multiple locations; www.brownsshoefitcompany.com.

Runners-up: Fit To Be Tied Shoes; Fitness Sports

Best Local Pool and Spa Store Hot Springs Spa

If you've been wanting to put in a new hot tub or spa to entertain guests or give your family an at-home relaxation option, Hot Springs Spa has the best options in the city, say CITYVIEW readers. The company has served more than 22,000 customers, providing options ranging from endless pools to water exercise systems. 10860 Hickman Road, Clive, 515-270-8702; www.hotspringgreen.com.

Runners-up: Valley Pool & Hot Tubs Inc.; Central Iowa Pools & Spa

Best Local Greenhouse

Goode Greenhouses

Talk about roots, Goode Greenhouses has been growing in its location since 1905. The Goodes do great business, growing their own poinsettias, Easter lilies, bedding plants and fall mums, a selection that makes it the Best Of Des Moines poll's top local greenhouse. This legendary greenhouse has all your gardening needs, including bird feed and feeders. 1050 N.E. 50th Ave., Des Moines, 515-262-6504; www.goodegreenhouses.com.

Runners-up: Conoyer Garden Center; Ted Lare Design Build & Garden Center

Best Local Skate Shop

JT's Slap Shot Hockey Shop

JT's Slap Shot Hockey Shop carries all the major hockey and figure skating brands you might hope to procure and claims to be the only location in the entire Midwest to have all three of the foot scan devices available to give you the best possible skate fit. No wonder it's CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Skate Shop. 8020 Douglas Ave., Urbandale, 515-331-2659; www.jtshockey.com.

Runners-up: Subsect Skateshop; Unkl Ruckus's Smoking Emporium & Skate Shop



Located in the Best Shopping District is the Best Of Des Moines voters' choice for Best Valley Junction Store, Bing's. Photo courtesy of Bing's



Best Whiskey

Prairie Fire

One, two, three, four, five, six. Six years in a row for Prairie Fire as CITYVIEW readers' favorite whiskey. According to the Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division report for FY 2023, more than 4,000 gallons of Prairie Fire was sold in our great state. Add some of this to your favorite apple cider or just drink it straight. 4349 Cumming Ave., Cumming, 515-981-4216; www.iowadistilling.com.

Runners-up: Templeton Rye; Crown Royal

Best Vodka

Tito's Vodka

More Tito's vodka was sold in Iowa than any other spirit in FY 2023, so it's no wonder it makes the top of the list of vodkas for CITYVIEW readers. Whether you're making a vodka cranberry, martini, bloody Mary, or whatever your favorite vodka-based cocktail may be, readers advice suggest you use Tito's. www.titosvodka.com.

Runners-up: Zone Vodka; Blue Ox

Best Rum

Steel Drum Rum

Likely Captain Jack Sparrow, but more importantly, CITYVIEW readers, agree, Steel Drum Rum is the Best Rum. Made from pure Caribbean molasses and sourced from Caribbean sugar cane, this versatile spirit gets distilled at Iowa Distilling Company and aged in American white oak barrels for one year. 4349 Cumming Ave., Cumming, 515-981-4216; www.iowadistilling.com.

Runners-up: Rum Coqui; Captain Morgan

Best Local Craft Beer

Exile Brewing Company

It's no secret that beer is big in Iowa. Naturally, with all that beer consumption, you're going to have a favorite. When it comes to craft beer, Exile Brewing Company stands above the rest for CITYVIEW readers. Exile's local brews range from sweet to sour, light to dark, all just as refreshing as the last. 1514 Walnut St., Des Moines, 515-883-2337; www.exilebrewing.com.

Runners-up: Confluence Brewing Company; Lua Brewing

Best New Local Bar

County Line Tap

Don't let the divey interior fool you, County Line Tap has a great selection including plenty of pizza options and more than enough drink options to go alongside them. They've got enough to keep you entertained as well with TVs, pool and darts. Put it all together, and you have CITYVIEW readers' favorite new local bar. 10894 County Line Road, Des Moines, 515-214-2068; www. facebook.com/pages/County-Line-Tap/158395117561515.

Runners-up: Bix & Co.; Either/Or



Great grapes, great vibes, and great times. Jasper Winery wins the 2024 Best Of Des Moines award for Best Local Winery.

Best Local Patio Bar

Big Grove Brewery

We'd be surprised if you haven't visited Big Grove's patio yet. Comfortable seating, combined with fireplaces and high quality TVs, all accompanied by great food and drinks, what more could you ask for? The brewery won Best New Local Bar last year, and it's becoming clear the establishment is here to stay as readers chose it as the Best Local Patio Bar this year. 555 17th St., Des Moines, 515-777-2337; www.biggrove.com.

Runners-up: The Pelican Post Bar & Grille; The Bartender's Handshake

Best Local Irish Pub

Sully's Irish Pub

Being established in 1977 makes Sully's the oldest Irish bar in the metro, and CITYVIEW readers name it the best. Bring your furry one to their dog-friendly patio and enjoy \$3 Fireball shots or a \$3 pint of Ireland's premier beverage, Guinness. Try some of their chicken wings or a bloody Mary while you're there. 860 First St., West Des Moines, 515-255-9970; www.sullysdesmoines.com.

Runners-up: Magee's Irish Pub & Eatery; Cooney's Tavern

Best Local Dive Bar

Carl's Place

Not everyone wants wall-rattling music, flashing lights, or fancy cocktails when they go out for a drink or three. Dive bars have been experiencing a resurgence in recent years, and Carl's Place is the choice for CITYVIEW readers. Located in Sherman Hill, this is a great place to

grab a drink after a Hoyt Sherman Place performance, or anytime. 1620 Woodland Ave., Des Moines, 515-243-9727; www.carlsplacedsm.com.

Runners-up: Lynn's on Merle Hay; County Line Tap

Best Local Fancy-Pants Bar

The Bartenders Handshake

A handshake is in order for The Bartender's Handshake after being voted Best Local Fancy-Pants Bar. Try an original cocktail with a twist on a classic like their Curry Negroni or stick to traditions with an Old Fashioned. Have the drink by itself or pair it with something from their "Snacks" menu from espresso ice cream to fried dumplings. 3615 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, 515-630-3008; www.thebartendershandshake.com.

Runners-up: Hello, Marjorie; The Winchester Public House

Best Local Sports Bar

Bix & Co.

Step inside this brick building and prepare to be greeted by ample seating, plenty of TVs for your viewing pleasure and great food and drinks — the perfect ingredients for watching the big game, say CITYVIEW readers. The locally owned sports bar sources its ingredients locally whenever possible for the best possible tasting food. They also have a brunch menu for you early risers. 111 Fifth St., West Des Moines, 515-606-1115; www.bixandco-wdm.com.

Runners-up: The Station on Ingersoll; Caffrey's Sports Pub

NIGHTLIFE

Best Local Bar (Overall)

Iowa Distilling Company

Home to the Best Whiskey and Best Rum for the year, it only makes sense that Iowa Distilling Company was also voted Best Local Bar (Overall) by CITYVIEW readers. Owner Kyle Doyle, who had his first drink in Cumming, where the bar is located, preaches his local-first standpoint and clearly has his customers coming back for more. 4349 Cumming Ave., Cumming, 515-981-4216; www.iowadistilling.com.

Runners-up: The Bartender's Handshake; Lynn's on Merle Hay

Best Ankeny Bar

Yankee Clipper

No haircuts here, just good times. Yankee Clipper has a lunch and dinner menu full of tasty options and plenty of libations to keep the vibes high and to earn it the title of Best Ankeny Bar in the Best Of Des Moines poll. Enjoy their taco Tuesdays, a Clipper Burger, and, most importantly, a fully stocked bar. All placed in the heart of Uptown Ankeny. 312 S.W. Maple St., #2915, Ankeny, 515-964-9484; www.yankeeclipperbar.com.

Runners-up: Whiskey River; Jakes Pub

Best Drake Area Bar

University Library Cafe

Also winner of the Best Local Nachos, University Library Café has earned CITYVIEW readers' nod as Best Drake Area Bar. "This is a place where you can relax with friends and enjoy hard-to-find craft beer on tap along with bottles and cans of all the national brews, plus our homemade twists on bar food," says the bar's website, and Best Of Des Moines voters agree. 3506 University Ave., Des Moines, 515-255-0433; www.thelibrarydm.com.

Runners-up: Lucky Horse Beer & Burgers; Peggy's Tavern

Best Beaverdale Area Bar

The Dam Pub

Enjoy great food, cocktails and a fantastic rooftop patio alongside The Dam Pub's eclectic 1980s-1990s theme. For all those reasons and more, CITYVIEW readers determined this spot to be the Best Beaverdale Area Bar. 2710 Beaver Ave., Des Moines, 515-279-4449; www.dampubdsm.com.

Runners-up: Beaver Tap; Cooney's Tavern

Best Downtown Bar

Hello, Marjorie

Runner-up for Best Local Fancy-Pants Bar, Hello, Marjorie takes the crown for Best Downtown Bar, according to CITYVIEW readers. "Cocktails, beers, and damn fine times." Their house cocktails are expertly made inside of the 1970s era "living room," providing customers with a unique experience. 717 Locust St., Des Moines, 515-369-2296; www.hellomarjorie.com.

Runners-up: The Lift; 300 Craft & Rooftop

Best West Side Bar

Shotgun Betty's

CITYVIEW readers are once again drawn to Shotgun Betty's as the Best West Side Bar. Cold beer, Crown Royal, and consistent live music performances. "We're a kickass country bar," says Shotgun Betty's. Leave your reservations at the door and enjoy yourself. 5535 Mills Civic Parkway, Suite 100, West Des Moines, 515-309-0744; www.facebook.com/shotgunbettys.

Runners-up: Wellman's Pub & Rooftop; The Winchester Public House

Best East Village Bar

Coa Cantina

It's back-to-back for Coa Cantina as CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best East Village Bar. It features an extensive selection of tequilas and a tight but tasty food menu, with nachos, tacos, tapas and more, making this a great place to spend your evening. 425 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines, 515-280-3097; www.coacantinadsm.com.

Runners-up: The Blazing Saddle; Bellhop

Best East Bar

Toads Tavern

Happy hour at Toads Tavern lasts seven hours from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. during the week and all day on weekends — and CITYVIEW readers couldn't be happier about it, naming it the Best East Bar. This bar's divey interior welcomes you in for a game of darts, pool or a cold beer at the bar. 3002 State Ave., Des Moines, 515-264-8623; www.facebook.com/toadstavern.

Runners-up: Cheap Seats Sports Bar; 1833 Saloon

Best South Bar

Francie's Bar & Grill

Francie's can add Best South Bar to its 2024 trophy cabinet next to its Best Local Bar Food title. With plenty of beers on tap to satiate your hoppy craving and a wine menu full of great flavors, this sports bar is CITYVIEW readers' favorite south bar. 2100 Wakonda View Drive, Des Moines, 515-285-5207; www.franciesbarandgrill.com.

Runners-up: County Line Tap; The Angry Goldfish Pub & Eatery

Best Local Winery

Jasper Winery

Jasper Winery has dominated the Best Local Winery category of the Best Of Des Moines poll for the last eight years for good reason. Its summer concert series brings in live music, food trucks and an unbeatable vibe. Locally grown grapes help produce some the brightest and bold flavors of any wine you can find, period. 2400 George Flagg Parkway, Des Moines, 515-282-9463; www.jasperwinery.com.

Runners-up: Summerset Winery; Madison County Winery



University Library Café takes home Best Drake Area Bar and Best Local Nachos. Photo courtesy of University Library Café

Best Local Brewery

Confluence Brewing Company

Confluence's ability to produce great tasting beer from the imaginative to classic makes it CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Brewery once more. Light, dark, sour, cider, barrel aged, doesn't matter — as long as you save us a glass. 1235 Thomas Beck Road, Des Moines, 515-285-9005; www.confluencebrewing.com.

Runners-up: Lua Brewing; Big Grove Brewery

Best Local Moscow Mule

The Copper Cup

With a double-digit number of Moscow mule options ranging from a simple fruity flavor to the outrageous specials they concoct each month, The Copper Cup does it the best when it comes to Moscow mules say CITYVIEW readers. The underground bar has been serving up mules since 2014. 207 Fourth St., Des Moines, 515-554-2606; www.thecoppercupdm.com.

Runners-up: 300 Craft & Rooftop; Gastro Grub & Pub

Best Local Bloody Mary

Iowa Distilling Company

CITYVIEW readers add another honor to Iowa Distilling Company's list — Best Local Bloody Mary. Bloody Marys are versatile. Some have pickles, some don't. Some have strips of bacon, some don't. No matter what, it's the taste that matters, and Iowa Distilling Company has it mastered. 4349 Cumming Ave., Cumming, 515-981-4216; www.iowadistilling.com.

Runners-up: Mullets; Early Bird Brunch

NIGHTLIFE

Best Local Bar to Play Games

Up-Down Des Moines

Des Moines' premier arcade bar, Up-Down Des Moines returns to the podium for Best Local Bar to Play Games, thanks to CITYVIEW readers. Let the nostalgia take over with more than 60 classic arcade games to choose from including favorites such Pac-Man, Galaga, Donkey Kong, Street Fighter and so much more. Don't forget about pinball or skeeball either. Plus, cocktails designed with gaming themes and 20 beers on tap. 500 E. Locust St., Des Moines, 515-243-4322; www.updownarcadebar.com/des-moines.

Runners-up: Smash Park; Ricochet

Best Local Place To See Beautiful People

Coachlight Clinic & Spa

CITYVIEW readers spotted more than enough stunning people at Coachlight Clinic & Spa to vote it as the Best Local Place To See Beautiful People. 6420 Coachlight Drive, Suite 200, West Des Moines, 515-221-9999; www.dsmcoachlight.com.

Runners-up: Saint Blonde Salon; Gastro Grub & Pub

Best Local Happy Hour

Eatery A

From 2-6 p.m., per their website, is happy hour at Eatery A. Also home to CITYVIEW readers' favorite Mediterranean food, discounted drinks and delicious food are sure to be had at Des Moines' Best Local Happy Hour. 2932 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, 515-282-8085; www.eateryadsm.com.

Runners-up: Gastro Grub & Pub; Toads Tavern

Best Local Bartender

Nate Foreman - Lynn's on Merle Hay

Bartenders can be a mixologist, therapist and friend all at the same time. CITYVIEW readers breathe a sigh of relief when visiting Lynn's on Merle Hay, thanks to their vote for Best Local Bartender, Nate Foreman. Whether he's passing you a pint or a cocktail, you're in good hands. 6014 N.W. 59th Court, Johnston, 515-270-9806; www.facebook.com/Lynnsmerlehay.

Runners-up: Cristi Crooks - Chamberlain Pub; Ashley Traver - Iowa Distilling Company

Best Local Martini Menu

The Stuffed Olive

The martini, a classic drink, is woven throughout pop culture and has built an aura of its own as a cocktail. Nobody does that iconic drink better than The Stuffed Olive, say CITYVIEW readers. By our rough count, according to their website, their martini options reach triple digits, each just as tasty as the last. 208 Third St., Des Moines, 515-243-4456;

www.thestuffedolive.com/dsm.

Runners-up: Star Bar; The Lift

Best Local Margarita

Coa Cantina

You can find the Best Local Margarita at CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best East Village Bar, Coa Cantina. Their margs range from sweet to salty to spicy with creative twists on each. No matter which one you choose, they have something to satisfy your tastebuds. 425 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines, 515-280-3097; www.coacantinadsm.com.

Runners-up: El Guapo's Tequila + Tacos; Malo

Best Local Dance Club

PLATFORM

PLATFORM is "a fusion of music, art, and tech... a creation of soul, substance, and connection." Most importantly, it's great for dancing. Catch live performances and outstanding DJ sets at this year's Best Local Dance Club, according to the Best Of Des Moines poll. 400 Walnut St., Des Moines, 515-822-2899; www.platformdsm.com.

Runners-up: The Garden Restaurant & Show Longue; Denny Arthur's

Best Local Drag Queen

Karma Kills

From drag brunches she directs, to The Blazing Saddle's stage lights, nobody could outperform Karma Kills this year as Best Local Drag Queen, according to CITYVIEW's Best Of Des Moines voters. Instagram @ thekarmakills

Runners-up: Vana B; Dominique Cass

Best Local Place to Karaoke

AJ's on East Court

It doesn't take the greatest singer, or even a good one, to hop on the mic during a karaoke night. It just takes a little liquid courage and onlookers to cheer you on, and there's no better place to do so than at AJ's on East Court, the Best Local Place to Karaoke, say CITYVIEW readers. Their music catalog is updated monthly with the top Billboard hits at your disposal. 419 E. Court Ave., Des Moines, 515-282-1888; www.ajsbar.com.

Runners-up: Buddy's Corral; Lynn's on Merle Hav

Best Local Place for a Bachelor/ Bachelorette Party

Your Private Bar

For another year, CITYVIEW bachelor and bachelorette party goers and throwers agreed, Your Private Bar is the best place to celebrate your final night out before tying the knot. Your Private Bar offers customizable services to match your occasion, from cocktails to mocktails, coffee, booze-infused desserts, charcuterie and more. 1701 25th St., West Des Moines, 515-599-1205; yourprivatebar.com.

Runners-up: AJ's on East Court; The Garden Restaurant & Show Lounge



2024's Best Local Bar to Play Games goes to Up-Down Des Moines. The pizza and drinks aren't half bad, either. Photo courtesy of Up-Down Des Moines

Best Local Trivia Night

Iowa Distilling Company

We all have that one friend, or maybe your entire group is that one friend, claiming they'll take anyone down in a game of trivia. You can put their trivial claims to the test at the Best Local Trivia Night — as determined by CITYVIEW readers — at Iowa Distilling Company. Don't forget to enjoy one of their several "Best Of Des Moines" winning liquors while you're at it. Iowa Distilling Company. 4349 Cumming Ave., Cumming, 515-981-4216; www.iowadistilling.com.

Runners-up: Smash Park; Lynn's on Merle Hay

Best Local Distillery

Iowa Distilling Company

Home to the Best Whiskey, Best Rum, Best Bloody Mary and Best Local Bar (Overall), Iowa Distilling Company goes back-to-back for Best Local Distillery honors from CITYVIEW readers. 4349 Cumming Ave., Cumming, 515-981-4216; www.iowadistilling.com.

Runners-up: Foundry Distilling Co.; Revelton Distilling Co.

Best Local LGBTQ Hangout

The Blazing Saddle

"Where it's always a double and never a cover." Since 1983, The Blazing Saddle has been a favorite among bargoers, and, this year, it is the Best Local LGBTQ Hangout, say CITYVIEW readers. Open seven days a week, catch a drag show by one of their "Saddle Gurls," who consistently win CITYVIEW's Best Local Drag Queen. 416 E. Fifth St, Des Moines, 515-246-1299; www.theblazingsaddle.com.

Runners-up: The Garden Restaurant & Show Lounge; Nightingale Cocktail

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NOMINATING



NIGHTLIFE

Best Whiskey Menu Alleged Lee's

There's nothing alleged about it, the Best Whiskey Menu once again belongs to Alleged Lee's, say CITYVIEW readers. Step-in and check out the award-winning menu of whiskeys and enjoy the relaxed, cozy atmosphere. 510 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines, 515-244-6624; www.facebook.com/ allegedleesdsm.

Runners-up: The **Winchester Public House; Gastro Grub & Pub**

Best Local Rooftop

300 Craft & Rooftop

It's hard to find a better view of the beautiful Des Moines skyline while enjoying a cocktail than at 300 Craft & Rooftop say CITYVIEW readers. The 360-degree bar makes it easy to get a drink, and DJ sets give you an enhanced musiclistening experience to keep you entertained. 300 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway, Des

Save us a glass. Exile Brewing Company wins this years Best Local Craft Beer. Photo courtesy of Exile **Brewing Company**

Moines, 515-288-3414; www.facebook.com.

Runners-up: The Garden Restaurant & Show Lounge; The Republic on Grand

Best Local Dog-Friendly Bar

Paws & Pints

It's a dog's dream destination. While they can't partake in the array of drink options offered at Paws & Pints, this year's Best Local Dog-Friendly Bar in CITYVIEW polling, dogs do have access to great socialization opportunities, with 20,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor space to play, jungle gym, trails and more. 6218 Willowmere Drive, Des Moines, 515-969-2275; www.pawsandpintsdsm.com.

Runners-up: County Line Tap; Kinship Brewing Co.

Best Local Mobile Bar Service

Your Private Bar

Your Private Bar is Best Local Mobile Bar Service in Des Moines for another year running, according to Best Of Des Moines polling. With the help of more than a decade of serving experience, they can "Bring the Bar to You" or host your event at their event bar location. 1701 25th St., West Des Moines, 515-599-1205; www.yourprivatebar.com.

Runners-up: Apres Bar Co.; Top It Off Liquid Catering

Best Speakeasy

Chicago Speakeasy

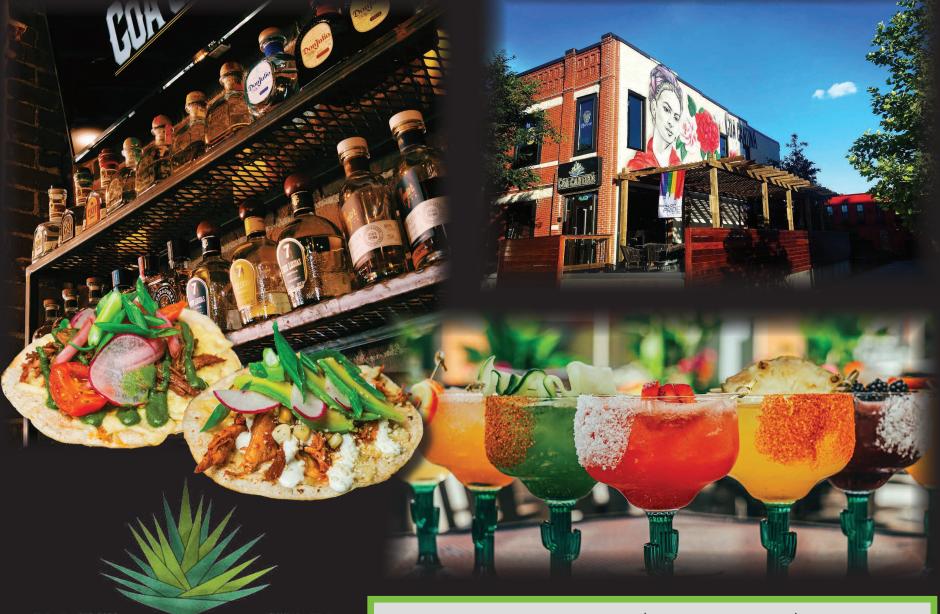
"Food. Fun. Booze." What else could you want? Those three reasons surely played a part in CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Speakeasy. Their menu dons several mafia puns, but there's nothing funny about the taste of their great food and drink options. 1520 Euclid Ave., Des Moines, 515-243-3141; www.chicagospeakeasyrestaurant.com.

Runners-up: In Confidence; Good News, Darling



BEST EAST VILLAGE BAR

BEST LOCAL MARGARITA



425 E Grand Ave, Des Moines | 515-280-3097 | @Coacantina Sun 11am-12am | Mon-Wed 3pm-12am Thurs 3pm-2am | Fri & Sat 11am-2am



Best Local Place to Play Golf

Waveland Golf Course

Get ready to hit the links at one of the country's oldest, and best, golf courses. A venue rich with Iowa golf history, Waveland Golf Course, CITYVIEW readers' favorite, is a great place for a challenging, yet enjoyable round. More than 40,000 rounds are played every year at the reigning Best Local Place to Play Golf. 4908 University Ave., Des Moines, 515-248-6302; www.golfwaveland.com.

Runners-up: Jester Park Golf Course; Woodland Hills Golf Course

Best Local Community to Live In Beaverdale

The largest of all recognized neighborhoods in Des Moines, Beaverdale once again takes the award for Best Local Community to Live In according to CITYVIEW readers. The storied brick homes, ample park space, and plenty of shops, restaurants and nightlife spots make Beaverdale a special place. www.beaverdale.org.

Runners-up: Ankeny; West Des Moines

Best Local Place to Worship

Lutheran Church of Hope

HOPE's community stretches all over central Iowa, with branches in West Des Moines, Ankeny, Des Moines, Grimes, Waukee, Ames and more. It only makes sense, as the largest church in Iowa, that CITYVIEW readers consistently choose Lutheran Church of Hope as the Best Local Place to Worship. Main location at 925 Jordan Creek Parkway, West Des Moines, 515-222-1520; www.hopewdm.org.

Runners-up: Walnut Creek Church - Downtown; Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Best Local Nonprofit

Animal Rescue League of Iowa

A countless number of pets have received care from the Animal Rescue League over the years. You may have had an experience with them from adoption, humane education, behavior training, spay/neutering, animal cruelty intervention and more. For their myriad of efforts, CITYVIEW readers have named ARL the Best Local Nonprofit. Make a difference with them by volunteering, fostering, or a making a donation. 5452 N.E. 22nd St., Des Moines, 515-262-9503; www.arl-iowa.org.

Runners-up: Knock and Drop Iowa; LifeServe Blood Center



The amount of beautiful artwork that resides in Pappajohn Sculpture Park, CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Place to Take Visitors, cannot be understated. Photo courtesy of Iowa Tourism Office

Best Local School District

Des Moines Public Schools

DMPS is the largest school district in the state by far with more than 30,000 students and 63 schools in total including 38 elementary schools, 11 middle schools, five comprehensive high schools, and 10 schools that provide a range of specialized and alternative educational programs. Not surprising, it is CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local School District. 901 Walnut St., Des Moines, 515-242-7911; www.dmschools.org.

Runners-up: Waukee Community School District; West Des Moines Community School District

Best Local Party/Event Transportation 515 Party Bus

515 Party Bus is CITYVIEW readers' favorite means of party and event transportation. Whether they're bar hopping for a bachelor or bachelorette party, on the way to a wedding, or needing a special ride for any other special occasion, readers say they turn to 515 Party Bus to get them there in their entertainment-filled vehicles, safely. 515-650-7463; www.515partybus.com.

Runners-up: Your Private Bar; Majestic Limo & Coach

Best Local Place to Hold a Corporate Event/Party

Your Private Bar

Make sure to circle your calendar for your company holiday party or celebration — especially when Your Private Bar is hosting, as it has been voted Best Local Place to Hold a Corporate Event/Party by CITYVIEW readers. 1701 25th St., West Des Moines, 515-599-1205; yourprivatebar.com.

Runners-up: ARL Mapes Auditorium; Curate

Best Local Place for a Wedding Reception

The Tea Room

CITYVIEW readers adore the space at The Tea Room, voting it the best space for a wedding reception. It features floor-to-ceiling windows, original and restored ornate plasterwork, a stage, dance floor, and Juliet balconies. The iconic venue, located in downtown Des Moines, will make any post wedding ceremony celebration special. 713 Walnut St., Unit 600, Des Moines, 515-336-1317; www.thetearoomdsm.com.

Runners-up: Curate; Toast

Best Local Place to Gamble

Prairie Meadows

Feeling lucky? Iowa is home to one of only two nonprofit casinos in the country. Prairie Meadows is again the Best Local Place to Gamble, according to the Best Of Des Moines poll. Hit the floor and try your hand at sit-down or virtual table games and slots or hit the sportsbook and create your own parlay. 1 Prairie Meadows Drive, Altoona, 515-967-1000; www.prairiemeadows.com.

Runner-up: Lakeside Hotel Casino

Best Local Musician

CeCe Stewart

CeCe Stewart is the Best Local Musician according to the Best Of Des Moines voters. CeCe performs rock, blues and new country, often backed by The Radio Train, voted as Best Local Band. www.facebook.com/radiotrain.

Runners-up: Damon Dotson; Joshua Sinclair

Best Local Band

CeCe Stewart & The Radio Train

With Best Local Musician CeCe Stewart on vocals, guitars and keys, Joel Cauterucci on the drums and John Behm Jr. with his vocals and bass guitar, CITYVIEW readers chose this trio as the Best Local Band for their ability to bring the sounds of rock, blues and new country to their ears. www.facebook.com/radiotrain.

Runners-up: Damon Dotson Band; The Nadas

Best Local Place to Go for a Comedy Show

Funny Bone Comedy Club

Funny Bone Comedy Clubs dot the entire country, bringing gut-grabbing and mouth-covering laughter along with them. Some of the biggest names in stand-up history have made their names at any one of the iconic venues. You might just see the next one get their start at the West Des Moines location, voted Best Place to Go for a Comedy Show by CITYVIEW readers. 560 S. Prairie View Drive, Suite 100, West Des Moines, 515-270-2100; www.desmoines.funnybone.com.

Runners-up: Teehee's Comedy Club; Hoyt Sherman Place

Best Local Artist

Kelly Kunzler

Hailing from the family-owned Best Local Art Gallery of Kunzler Studios, Kelly Kunzler's work primarily focuses on the figure and explores subjects of power and abuse and conflicting identities. This Best Local Artist, as determined by CITYVIEW readers, also creates some more lighthearted portraits. Located in Des Moines; www.kunzlerstudios.com/kelly-kunzler.

Runners-up: Alia Hendricks; Seso Marentes

Best Local Live Music Venue Wooly's

For 13 straight years, Wooly's has been CITYVIEW readers' pick for Best Local Live Music Venue. There have been plenty of famous acts on its stage, from The HU to



Fan interaction off the ice and great hockey on it leads to the lowa Wild winning the Best Local Indoor Sporting Event.

Grouplove. The site hosts concerts spanning all genres of music. Make sure to check their site for who's coming next. 504 E. Locust St., Des Moines, 515-244-0550; www.firstfleetconcerts.com/first-fleet-venues/woolys.

Runners-up: Hoyt Sherman Place; xBk

Best Local Theatrical Venue Des Moines Community Playhouse

The Des Moines Community Playhouse features largely volunteer, community-driven performances. The intimate venue, chosen Best Local Theatrical Venue in the Best Of Des Moines poll, hosts at least three musicals each season, with the rest a mix of comedy and drama, each just as good as the last. 831 42nd St., Des Moines, 515-277-6261; www.dmplayhouse.com.

Runners-up: Des Moines Civic Center; Hoyt Sherman Place

Best Local Place to Catch a Flick

The Palms Theatres & IMAX

In a world where streaming platforms rise and fall, there's something special about sitting down with a big bucket of buttery popcorn on an opening night and viewing the latest Hollywood blockbuster. No one creates that feeling better than The Palms in Waukee according to CITYVIEW readers. 200 N.E. Westgate Drive, Waukee, 515-444-5006; www.fridleytheatres.com.

Runners-up: Flix Brewhouse; Fleur Cinema & Cafe

Best Local Museum

Des Moines Art Center

If you were told that central Iowa's Best Local Museum, as determined by CITYVIEW readers, had free admission, would you believe it? The Des Moines Art Center not

only has free admission, it also has artwork ranging from eye-catching to thought-provoking to inspiring. Their latest exhibit is "Double Take," a print gallery that "calls attention to the way photographers attempt to both announce and erase their presence in the final image chosen for print and presentation." 4700 Grand Ave., Des Moines, 515-277-4405; www.desmoinesartcenter.org.

Runners-up: State Historical Museum of Iowa; Des Moines Children's Museum

Best Local Place to Have a Kid's Birthday Party

Let's Slumber It

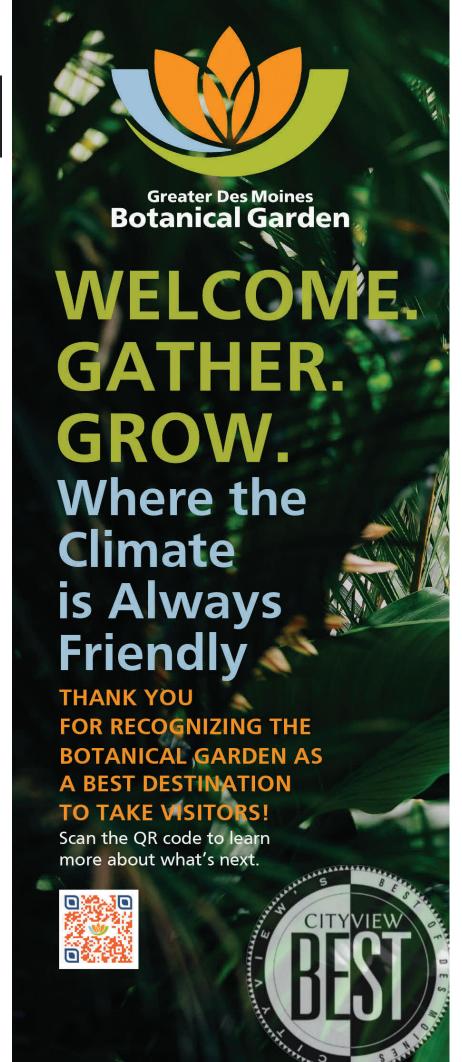
The Best Local Place to Have a Kid's Birthday Party is Let's Slumber It, say CITYVIEW readers. The family-owned business makes your child's sleepover dreams come true — as well as yours, by taking care of all the work: delivery, set-up, styling, tear down and pick-up. Ankeny; www.letsslumberit.com.

Runners-up: Des Moines Children's Museum; Animal Rescue League of Iowa

Best Local Place to Take Your Kids Blank Park Zoo

Des Moines' very own zoo is home to 104 different animal species and 1,484 animal specimens, from giraffes to red pandas, penguins, tigers and so many more. Their mission is to "inspire an appreciation of the natural world through conservation, education, research and recreation." No wonder it is CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Place to Take Your Kids. 7401 S.W. Ninth St., Des Moines, 515-285-4722; www.blankparkzoo.com.

Runners-up: Des Moines Children's Museum; Science Center of Iowa



CULTURE & RECREATION



Celebrate your wedding in the place CITYVIEW readers say is the Best Local Place for a Wedding Reception, The Tea Room. Photo courtesy of The Tea Room

Best Local Place to Take Visitors

Pappajohn Sculpture Park

Managed by the Des Moines Art Center and located on the 1330 block of Grand Avenue, Pappajohn Sculpture Park is one of the world's best. The Pappajohns have contributed more than 30 works of art to the park, giving Best Of Des Moines voters more than enough reason to vote it as the Best Local Place to Take Visitors.

Runners-up: Valley Junction; Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden

Best Local Annual Event

Iowa State Fair

The Iowa State Fair receives plaudits from all over the country. Whether it be for the food, livestock shows, grandstand performances, midway, giant slide, butter sculptures or any of its other features, it has garnered CITYVIEW readers' votes for Best Local Annual Event. Iowa State Fairgrounds, near East 30th and East University Avenue in Des Moines. 515-262-3111; www.iowastatefair.org.

Runners-up: ARL Raise Your Paw Auction; Des Moines Arts Festival

Best Local Sports Team

Iowa Cubs

The AAA baseball team affiliated with the MLB's Chicago Cubs also happens to be CITYVIEW readers' choice as the Best Local Sports Team. The Iowa Cubs finished 82-65 in 2023, good enough for third in the International League West. One Line Drive, Des Moines, 515-243-6111; www.iowacubs.com.

Runners-up: Iowa Wild; Iowa State University

Best Local Place to Go Swimming

Adventure Bay - Adventureland

Ready for a fun-filled day? The Adventure Bay at Adventureland wins Best Local Place to Go Swimming again in the Best Of Des Moines poll. There's enough to keep you and the kids busy during the swimming season here, with the state's largest wave pool and longest lazy river, 20 slides, a swim-up bar, 6,000-square-foot swimming pool and cabana rentals. 3200 Adventureland Drive, Altoona; www.adventurelandresort.com.

Runners-up: Clive Aquatic Center; Valley View Aquatic Center

Best Local Place to Bowl

Spare Time Entertainment

While they do more than just bowling at Spare Time Entertainment, they do it the best, say CITYVIEW readers. Their alleys have HD screens above every lane and comfortable plush seating for you to return to after you strike, spare, or hit the gutters. Ask for their pizza of the month as well if you're feeling peckish. 340 Jordan Creek Parkway, West Des Moines, 515-414-2824; www.sparetimeentertainment.com/desmoines.

Runners-up: Warrior Lanes; Air Lanes



THANK YOU FOR YOUR VOTES!





- Best Local Place for a Bachelor/Bachelorette Party
- Best Local Mobile Bar Service
- Best Local Place to Hold a Corporate Event/Party
- Best Local Place to Have an Adult Birthday Party
- Best Local Party/Event Transportation

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CULTURE & RECREATION

Best Local Indoor Sporting Event lowa Wild

The Iowa Wild are the AHL affiliate of the NHL's Minnesota Wild. They play at Wells Fargo Arena and bring a high quality and entertaining experience to the ice for their fans, making them CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Indoor Sporting Event. 515-564-8700; www.iowawild.com.

Runners-up: Des Moines Buccaneers; Iowa Wolves

Best Local Outdoor Sporting Event lowa Cubs

CITYVIEW readers' choice for central Iowa's Best Local Sports Team is also their choice for Best Local Outdoor Sporting Event. The Iowa Cubs have a rich history in Des Moines and play inside one of the nicest AAA stadiums the sport has to offer in Principal Park, with a gorgeous view of the Capitol building. 1 Line Drive, Des Moines, 515-243-6111; www.iowacubs.com.

Runners-up: DGPT TruBank Des Moines Challenge; West Des Moines Wombats Rugby

Best Local Farmers Market

Des Moines' Downtown Farmers' Market

Setting up shop in the Historic Court District of downtown Des Moines is CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Farmers Market. With farm-fresh produce from area farmers, arts and crafts from local vendors, and mouthwatering street food, this event is hard to beat. www.desmoinesfarmersmarket.com.

Runners-up: Valley Junction Farmers Market; Ankeny Uptown Farmers Market

Best Local Camping Spot

Jester Park Campgrounds

Looking for a nice escape from the bright lights, hustle and bustle of city life? CITYVIEW readers know just the place. Take a trip to the campgrounds at Jester Park for quality time in the wilderness. The park has 148 campsites along the lakeshore and across the

wooded hills overlooking Saylorville Lake, with 80 electric sites, 62 non-electric sites, and 1,661 acres of land to explore. 12130 N.W. 128th St., Granger, 515-323-5338; www.polkcountyiowa.gov/conservation/parks-trails/jester-park.

Runners-up: Prairie Flower Recreation Area; Yellow Banks Park

Best Local Place to Have an Adult Birthday Party

Your Private Bar

Why should the kids get to have all the fun? Sure, celebrating your birthday doesn't hit the same way it did when you were younger, but that doesn't mean you and your besties can't celebrate another year on Earth in the best way possible. And Best Of Des Moines voters agree, the best way to do so is with Your Private Bar. 1701 25th St., West Des Moines, 515-599-1205; yourprivatebar.com.

Runners-up: Smash Park Des Moines; AJ's on East Court

Best Local Wedding Venue

Curate

Located in the Historic East Village, Curate's gallery room has more than 6,000 square feet of event space, and the new studio room has more than 2,000, both of which can be rented for your wedding day. The art gallery style and excellent location made CITYVIEW readers say "I do" to Curate for Best Local Wedding Venue. 322 E. Court Ave., Des Moines, 515-523-0147; www.curatedsm.com.

Runners-up: The Tea Room; Willow on Grand

Best Local Event Decor/Rental Company

Bella Flora Event Design

If you're looking to take your event to the next level, Bella Flora Event Design does it better than anyone else in the metro, say CITYVIEW readers. "The creative and professional talent at Bella is passionate and diverse and this continues to inspire us to create beauty in various environments." One look at the events they've decorated, from galas to holiday parties, shows they certainly deliver. 3100 Justin Drive, Urbandale, 515-554-6964; www.bellafloraeventdesign.com.

Runners-up: Stuart Alexander Productions; Let's Slumber It

Best Local Special Events Venue (non-wedding)

Destination Grille

Destination Grille is much more than a restaurant, with five event spaces capable of holding 20 to more than 300-plus guests. Whether it be in their "Board Room" or on one of the patios, Destination Grille has the best spaces for special events, say CITYVIEW readers. 2491 E. First St., Grimes, 515-355-1153; www.destinationgrille.com.

Runners-up: The Tea Room; Events Center West

Best Local Spot to Pop the Question

AJ's on East Court

The Best Local Place to Karaoke is also CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Spot to Pop the Question. When you know, you know. And what better time to propose than during a duet of your special song. 419 E. Court Ave., Des Moines, 515-282-1888; www.ajsbar.com.

Runners-up: Pappajohn Sculpture Park; Iowa State Capitol

Best Local Landmark

Iowa State Capitol

Truly a work of art. The Iowa State Capitol receives praise from visitors and residents alike for everything from its iconic domes to the jaw-dropping library and inspiring rotunda. It's no wonder this architectural marvel is CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Landmark. 1007 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines, 515-281-5591; www.legis.iowa.gov/resources/tourCapitol.

Runners-up: Pappajohn Sculpture Park; Gray's Lake Bridge









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Best Local Pharmacy

Hv-Vee

A helpful smile in every aisle — and behind the pharmacy counter. More than just a grocery store, Hy-Vee has once again been voted by CITYVIEW readers as the Best Local Pharmacy. Multiple locations; www.hy-vee.com.

Runners-up: Medicap; Walgreens

Best Local Place to get LASIK Eye Surgery

Wolfe Eye Clinic

No need to fumble for your glasses or contacts, squint at that sign, or reach for your readers after a trip to Wolfe Eye Clinic. The popular LASIK eye surgery has benefits for those near- and far-sighted, and is, according to CITYVIEW readers, the Best Local Place to get LASIK Eye Surgery. Reach out to them to discover if it's for you. Multiple locations; www.wolfeeyeclinic.com.

Runners-up: Des Moines Eye Surgeons; LasikPlus

Best Local Place to Kickbox

Farrell's eXtreme Bodyshaping

Kickboxing is an excellent way to work up a sweat and shed pounds — all while learning some meaningful selfdefense in the process. Farrell's does it the best and that's why Best Of Des Moines voters chose their gyms as the Best Local Place to Kickbox. Multiple metro locations; www.extremebodyshaping.com.

Runners-up: Elite Edge Transformation Center; **RoundKick Gym**

Best Local Martial Arts Studio

Tiger-Rock Martial Arts of Waukee

There are more than 100 martial arts in the world to learn. You can do more than learn the intricate techniques of these ancient practices. You can also get in incredible shape. CITYVIEW readers agree, Tiger-Rock Martial Arts of Waukee is the Best Local Martial Arts Studio. Congrats! 739 S.E. Alice's Road, Waukee, 515-978-8070; www.tigerrockmartialarts.com/waukee.

Runners-up: Dojo's Family Martial Arts; Farrell's **Martial Arts**

Best Local Group Fitness

Burn Boot Camp

Getting into the groove of a consistent workout schedule is challenging, and participating in group fitness can be helpful when it comes to building that routine. Burn Boot Camp, named CITYVIEW readers' favorite group fitness, is "built on high fives," certainly maximizing



Winner of Best Local Place to Get a Massage, Best Local Place to Get Your Nails Done and runner up for Best Local Spa goes to East Village Spa. Photo courtesy of East Village Spa

the cooperative nature of their gyms. Multiple locations; www.burnbootcamp.com.

Runners-up: Elite Edge Transformation Center; **Power Life Yoga Barre Fitness**

Best Local Running Event

IMT Des Moines Marathon

The IMT Des Moines Marathon's 26.2-miles is the best race central Iowa has to offer, say CITYVIEW readers. The IMT Des Moines marathon has had runners taking to the streets since 2002. Last year's route took participants from the busy downtown roads, into the Drake neighborhood and around Gray's Lake Park. www.desmoinesmarathon.com.

Runners-up: Dam to DSM; Drake Relays

Best Local Personal Trainer

Anthony Wilson

Going on your fitness journey can be a difficult one. A high-quality, experienced trainer can make all the difference when finding what works best for you and your needs, and CITYVIEW readers' Best Local Personal Trainer is Anthony Wilson at Iron Chapel Barbell. 812 S.W. Cherry St., Suite 102, Ankeny, 641-275-5987; www.ironchapelbb.com.

Runners-up: Justin Shepherd; Ashley Wilson

Best Local Orthodontist

Stork Orthodontics

No one should feel like they should hide their smile. A crisp and clean line of teeth is possible and can be life changing. Whether you're looking to set your child up for the future or looking to make a change in your adult life, Stork Orthodontics is once again the choice for Best Of Des Moines voters. 4090 Westown Parkway, Suite 101, West Des Moines, 515-608-8722; www.storkorthodontics.com.

Runners-up: Bernhardt and Smith Orthodontics; **Mann Orthodontics**

Best Local Place to Work Out

Iron Chapel Barbell

Iron Chapel Barbell's team of certified professionals, including Best Local Personal Trainer Anthony Wilson, offer personalized nutrition counseling, exercise programs tailored to your needs and, of course, expert personal training. No wonder it has been chosen Best Local Place to Work Out by CITYVIEW readers. Now, go get that pump! 812 S.W. Cherry St., Suite 102, Ankeny, 641-275-5987; www.ironchapelbb.com.

Runners-up: Life Time Des Moines; CrossFit 8035. At The Garage

Best Local Yoga Studio

Power Life Yoga Barre Fitness

It's relaxing, enriching and good for your physical fitness, all at the same time. When CITYVIEW readers are looking for all that inside one yoga studio, they turn to Power Life Yoga Barre Fitness. Multiple locations; www.powerlife.com.

Runners-up: Rooted Yoga + Fitness; Yoga & Co.

Best Local Maternity Care or Birthing Center

UnityPoint Health - Methodist West Hospital

Bringing a baby into this world is no small feat and, for many, the happiest day of their lives. For another year running, CITYVIEW readers have chosen UnityPoint – Methodist West Hospital as the Best Local Maternity Care or Birthing Center. 1660 60th St., West Des Moines, 515-343-1000; www.unitypoint.org/locations/unitypoint-health---methodist-west-hospital.

Runners-up: Broadlawns Medical Center; MercyOne Des Moines Maternity & Infants' Care

Best Local Place To Get Your Eyelashes Done

Pure Salon

Need a little help accentuating your eyelashes? According to the Best Of Des Moines poll, Pure Salon and its team of experts is the place to go to get your batting-worthy eyelashes done. Multiple locations; www.mypuresalon.com.

Runners-up: Star's Beauty Bar; Dollhouse Lash and Brow

Best Local Place to Get a Massage

East Village Spa

Take a journey of relaxation at East Village Spa, CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Place to Get a Massage. If you're looking to release that built up tension, smooth out some kinks, or just treat yourself, the spa's extensive massage menu has you covered. 601 E. Locust St., Suite 202, Des Moines, 515-309-2904; www.evdayspa.com.

Runners-up: Ocean Breeze Wellness + Massage; Massages By Andrea

Best Local Place to Get Your Nails Done

East Village Spa

Finished with that massage? East Village Spa is CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Place to Get Your Nails Done. They have several manicure and pedicure options to get all your nails looking and feeling their best. 601 E. Locust St., Suite 202, Des Moines, 515-309-2904; www.evdayspa.com.

Runners-up: Premier Nail Bar; 4 Seasons Nails & Spa

Best Local Herbal/Nutritional Supplement Store

Campbell's Nutrition

In search of a natural solution for one of life's many ailments? Campbell's Nutrition offers experts and a large inventory to bring the store to the top of the podium again as Best Local Herbal/Nutritional Supplement Store, according to CITYVIEW readers. Locations in Des Moines and Urbandale; www.campbellsnutrition.com.

Runners-up: Your CBD Store; Elevate Nutrition

Best Local Tattoo Studio

Lucky Gal Tattoo and Piercing

Looking to get a tattoo to honor a loved one or cherished memory? In the market for adding some artwork to your body? No matter the case, when permanently adding art to your body, you want it done right. And Best Of Des Moines voters agree that Lucky Gal Tattoo and Piercing is the place to go for tattoos. Locations in Ankeny, Clive and Des Moines southside; www.luckygaltattoo.com.

Runners-up: Work of Ink; Black Magic Tattoo

Best Local Body Piercing Shop

Mint Piercing

What more is there to be said about Mint Piercing at this point, other than congratulations on another 2024 Best Of Des Moines honor. CITYVIEW readers have chosen the shop as the best in body piercing. Locations in Ankeny and West Des Moines; www.mintpiercing.com.

Runners-up: Prysm Jewelry & Piercing; Lucky Gal Tattoo and Piercing



HEALTH & BEAUTY

Best Local Place for Cosmetic Surgery Des Moines Plastic Surgery

Cosmetic surgery is so much more than what is seen in the stories about Hollywood stars. The practice is important for improving an individual's self-esteem or to correct a physical defect. Des Moines Plastic Surgery, CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Place for Cosmetic Surgery, was the first fully accredited surgical center in Des Moines, dedicated exclusively to cosmetic surgery, as well as having the only quadruple board-certified plastic surgeon in the state in Dr. David Robbins. 6420 Coachlight Drive, Suite 100, West Des Moines, 515-221-9999; www.dsmplasticsurgery.com.

Runners-up: Koch & Carlisle Plastic Surgery & Spa; The Iowa Clinic Plastic Surgery Department

Best Local Permanent Makeup Salon Star's Beauty Bar

Estrella Mireles at Star's Beauty Bar, the Best Local Permanent Makeup Salon according to CITYVIEW readers, is a licensed tattoo artist specializing in lip blush and ombre powder brows. Offered on the menu are lash options ranging from wet to dry, fills that last weeks, and more. 315 E. Fifth St., Aviva Salon Suites, Des Moines, 515-419-8690; www.facebook.com/MakeupbyEstrella.

Runners-up: The Cosmetic Tattoo Studio; Pinpoint Permanent Cosmetics

Best Local Tanning Salon Bronze515

It's no secret that Iowa isn't the sunshine-filled, tanning destination many dream of visiting. Mother Nature only provides so much time a year to get that beautiful tan, so someone else has to pick up the slack. Nobody picks that slack up better than Bronze515, according to CITYVIEW readers for the eighth year in a row. 3981 100th St., Urbandale, 515-218-5443; www.bronze515.com.

Runners-up: Tanique; Sun Tan City

Best Local Waxing Salon

MetroWaxx

MetroWaxx puts wax on and pulls wax off better than the others, say CITYVIEW readers who voted it the Best Local Waxing Salon for the eighth year in a row. They have comprehensive services for anyone looking to get hair removed "from backs to butts to legs and brows." Locations in Des Moines, Ankeny and Johnston; www.metrowaxx.com.

Runners-up: Pure Salon; Grass Orchid Skin Wellness Center & Sugaring DSM

Best Local Place for Non-Surgical Cosmetic Treatment

Coachlight Clinic & Spa

Coachlight Clinic & Spa won this award in 2022 and was a runner up in 2023. Back in the top spot, the clinic

and spa was chosen by Best Of Des Moines voters for their non-surgical cosmetic treatments that range from injectables to laser treatments and other services that keep you feeling and looking beautiful. Locations in Des Moines and Ankeny; www.dsmcoachlight.com.

Runners-up: Skin By Knight; Lotus Skincare Studio

Best Local Spa

Coachlight Clinic & Spa

Whether it's a gift to a loved one or to yourself, a quality spa can completely rejuvenate an individual. And CITYVIEW readers say no spa does it better than Coachlight Clinic & Spa. Any of its spa packages can give you that reset you've been looking for, from body scrubs to soaks, facials and more. Locations in Des Moines and Ankeny; www.dsmcoachlight.com.

Runners-up: East Village Spa; Lotus Skincare Studio

Best Local Holistic Health Center

Vero Health Center

Vero Health Center has been voted Best Local Holistic Health Center by CITYVIEW readers. The center provides holistic health services from knee pain relief to spinal decompression, neurologically based chiropractic care, and much more — all with the aim of making you feel your best. 630 S. 50th St., West Des Moines, 515-422-9552; www.verohealthcenter.com.

Runners-up: Thrive Family Chiropractic; Renew Massage Therapy



Best Local Hair Salon

Pure Salon

A new hairstyle can make you feel and look like a brandnew person, and CITYVIEW readers say the Best Local Hair Salon is Pure Salon. It offers hairstyling services for brides to be, designer haircuts for men, and much more. Take a survey and get paired up with the ideal stylist to take your hair to the next level, from extensions to coloring. Locations in Ankeny, Indianola and Johnston; www.mypuresalon.com.

Runners-up: Saint Blonde Salon; Hair by Ashley Haack

Best Local Health Food Store

Campbell's Nutrition

Also voted by CITYVIEW readers as Best Local Herbal/ Nutritional Supplement Store, Campbell's Nutrition takes the honors for Best Local Health Food Store. Their grocery section stocks "100 percent organic produce, meaning no pesticides, herbicides, or GMOs." Their canned products are also BPA-free. Locations in Des Moines and Urbandale; www.campbellsnutrition.com.

Runners-up: Whole Foods Market; Natural Grocers

Best Local Family Planning Services

Planned Parenthood

Planned Parenthood takes home the award for Best Local

Family Planning Services again, according to Best Of Des Moines voters. Planned Parenthood offers many services from health care options to education and more. Locations in Des Moines, Urbandale and Ames; www.plannedparenthood.org.

Runners-up: InnerVisions HealthCare; Agape **Pregnancy Resource Center**

Best Local Chiropractor

True Roots Chiropractic

With the use of state-of-the-art technology, True Roots Chiropractic is able to assess its patients' needs by finding and targeting the source of their pain. Voted CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Chiropractor, the clinic also offers specialized services in pregnancy, pediatric and family chiropractic care. Locations in Norwalk and Des Moines; www.truerootschiro.com.

Runners-up: Vero Health Center; Thrive Family Chiropractic

Best Local Doctor's Clinic

The Iowa Clinic

Locking down a doctor's clinic that you can trust with you and your family's health is important. When it comes to CITYVIEW readers, they have put their votes and trust into the team at The Iowa Clinic. Multiple locations; www.iowaclinic.com.

Runners-up: UnityPoint Health; MercyOne



The Best Local Place to Work Out, according to CITYVIEW readers, goes to Iron Chapel Barbell. Photo courtesy of Iron Chapel Barbell

Best Local Eye Clinic

Wolfe Eye Clinic

Also voted as Best Local Place to get LASIK Eye Surgery, it doesn't take 20-20 vision to see why Wolfe Eye Clinic was voted Best Local Eye Clinic by CITYVIEW readers once again. Wolfe Eye Clinic has been providing care for patients since 1919, specializing in cataracts, cornea disease, glaucoma, LASIK eye surgery, oculofacial plastics, pediatric eye care and retina disease. Multiple locations; www.wolfeeyeclinic.com.

Runners-up: Des Moines Eye Surgeons; Elite **Eyecare**



Best Local Hearing Center

Iowa Ear Center

Don't take your hearing for granted. If your hearing is damaged or fading, the team at Iowa Ear Center specializes in medical and surgical care for diseases of the ear, hearing and balance. Their ability to perform those specialties has earned them the nod for Best Local Hearing Center by CITYVIEW readers. 12499 University Ave., Suite 200, Clive, 515-418-9960; www.iowaearcenter.com.

Runners-up: The Iowa Clinic Audiology & Hearing Technology; Costco Hearing Aid Center

Best Local Hospital

UnityPoint Health Iowa Methodist Medical Center

Make that six years in a row for UnityPoint Health Iowa Methodist Medical Center as the Best Of Des Moines poll's choice for Best Local Hospital. Each year, the hospital serves just short of 8 million patients, including roughly 100,000 surgeries and more than 20,000 babies delivered. 1200 Pleasant St., Des Moines, 515-241-6212; www.unitypoint.org/desmoines/iowa-methodist-medical-center.aspx.

Runners-up: MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center; Broadlawns Medical Center

Best Local Physical Therapy Clinic

Core Physical Therapy

The rehab it takes to bounce back from a major injury/ surgery can last months and test the strongest of wills. The team at Core Physical Therapy, CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Physical Therapy Clinic, makes sure to locate the core issue of your pain and use their expertise in craniosacral therapy and myofascial release therapy to treat both chronic and acute pain. Locations in West Des Moines and Adel; www.coreptiowa.com.

Runners-up: Elevate Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine; Kaizen Health and Wellness

Best Local Dentist Office

Fleur Dentistry

Keep your chompers in tip-top shape by visiting Fleur Dentistry, CITYVIEW readers' choice since 2017 for Best Local Dentist Office. Whether you're in need of a cleaning, filling or root canal, they've got you covered. 4551 Fleur Drive, Des Moines, 515-287-2493; www.fleurdentistry.com.

Runners-up: Furrow Family Dentistry; Grove and Platt Dental Associates

Best Local Pediatric Clinic

Waggoner Pediatrics

Ten out of the last 11 awards for CITYVIEW readers' choice of Best Local Pediatric Clinic have gone to Waggoner Pediatrics. They've been putting families first

for more than 25 years. 2555 Berkshire Parkway, Suite A, Clive, 515-987-0051; www.waggonerpediatrics.org.

Runners-up: The Iowa Clinic Pediatrics Department; MercyOne Pediatrics Care

Best Local Dermatology Clinic

Dermatology P.C.

It's often forgotten that the body's largest organ is the skin. Being in Iowa, our skin is exposed to all different types of extreme weather, from hot to cold, dry to wet, and everything between. It's important to get the best care possible for your skin, and CITYVIEW readers voted for Dermatology P.C. as the Best Local Dermatology Clinic. Multiple locations; www.dermatologypc.com.

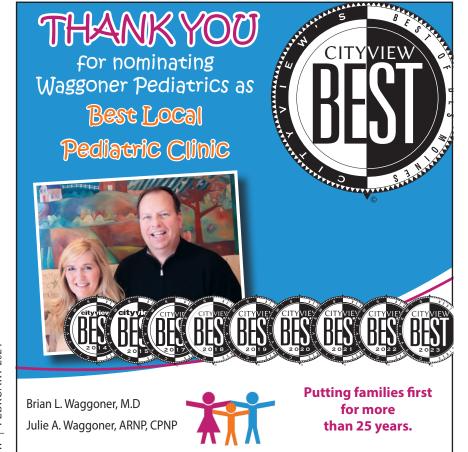
Runners-up: Greater Des Moines Dermatology; Ducharme Dermatology

Best Place for Laser Hair Removal

Coachlight Clinic & Spa

Back to the podium once more in 2024 for Coachlight Clinic & Spa. After winning awards for Best Local Place for Cosmetic Surgery, Best Local Place To See Beautiful People, Best Local Place for Non-Surgical Cosmetic Treatment and Best Local Spa, this one's for Best Place for Laser Hair Removal, as voted on by CITYVIEW readers. 6420 Coachlight Drive, Suite 200, West Des Moines, 515-221-9999; www.dsmcoachlight.com.

Runners-up: Milan Laser Hair Removal; Skin Body Soul Spa



Waggoner Pediatrics of Central Iowa

Schedule your child's appointment today! (515) 987-0051 2555 Berkshire Pkwy, Suite A, Clive • waggonerpediatrics.org



Best Local Orthopedic Clinic

DMOS Orthopaedic Centers

Their commitment to helping their patients achieve their goal of returning to normal living after an injury has seen DMOS Orthopaedic Centers receive the most votes in the Best Of Des Moines poll for Best Local Orthopedic Clinic for another year running. Locations in Des Moines, West Des Moines and Ankeny; www.dmos.com.

Runners-up: Iowa Ortho; Capital Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine

Best Local Mental Health Clinic Optimae LifeServices

The behavioral health services that Optimae LifeServices — CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Mental Health Clinic — offers are therapy, psychiatric medication evaluation and management, and skill-building to help those with life challenges such as anxiety, depression, trauma (PTSD), stress, relationship problems, psychotic disorders and more. Multiple locations; www.optimaelifeservices.com.

Runners-up: Imperfect Pathways; Broadlawns Medical Center

Best Local CBD Store

Your CBD Store

The list of health benefits that CBD provides individuals continues to grow, and with it the businesses that provide such products. Your CBD Store continues to impress and CITYVIEW readers gave it the thumbs up as Best Local CBD Store, thanks to its wide range of selections. Locations in Ankeny, Valley Junction, Des Moines, Waukee and Ames; www.getsunmed.com.

Runners-up: Despensary; Bud & Mary's

Best Local Allergy or Immunology Clinic

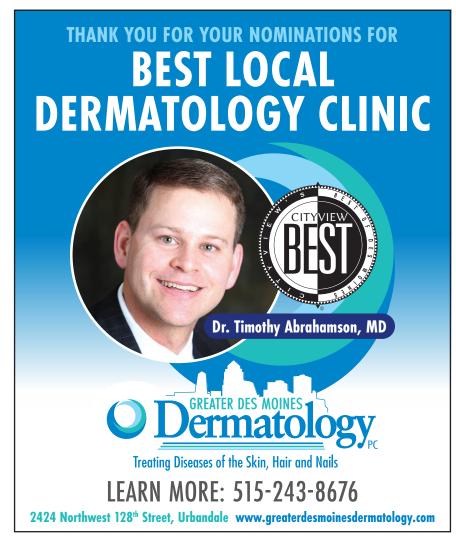
Iowa Allergy, Asthma & Immunology

There's almost nothing more annoying than when allergies get the better of you. From dogs to dust, allergies and the accompanying sniffles, sore throats, hives and more are a pain to deal with — and can even be life-threatening. For help, CITYVIEW readers say Iowa Allergy, Asthma & Immunology is the Best Local Allergy or Immunology Clinic and the place to go. Locations in West Des Moines and Ankeny; www.iowaallergyclinic.com.

Runners-up: The Iowa Clinic Allergy Department; Allergy Institute



Pure Salon has a plethora of hair styling options for events or just a regular trim. Photo courtesy of Pure Salon







BEST OF THE REST

Best Elected Official

Governor Kim Reynolds

The state of Iowa's first female governor wins the Best Of Des Moines award for Best Elected Official, as determined by CITYVIEW readers, for the sixth year in a row as she continues to serve her second full term. Iowa State Capitol, 1007 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines, 515-281-5211; www.governor.iowa.gov.

Runners-up: State Auditor Rob Sand; Former Des Moines Mayor Frank Cownie

Best Local Home Painter

Harmony Painting

Most everyone thinks they can paint their home, until it's time to do so. Leave that stuff to the experts, and CITYVIEW readers' preferred choice for Best Local Home Painter is Harmony Painting. The locally owned business has more than 15 years of experience to give you the best paint job possible. 3013 Lawnview Drive, Des Moines, 515-210-7663; www.harmonypainting.net.

Runners-up: GLS Painting; Peterson Painting

Best State University in Iowa

Iowa State University

Roll, Clones. Iowa State University has once again been voted as Best State University in Iowa by CITYVIEW readers. From their renowned engineering and veterinarian programs to their agriculture, liberal arts and more offerings, it's up to you to choose your adventure. The rivalries between Iowa's state universities runs deep and, at times, divides households, but not CITYVIEW readers. Ames, 515-294-4111; www.iastate.edu.

Runners-up: University of Iowa; University of Northern Iowa

Best Private College or Private University in Iowa

Drake University

Home to one of the finest journalism programs in the country, Drake University is the Best Private College or University in Iowa, as determined by CITYVIEW readers, once again. With just short of 5,000 students, the Bulldog faithful have more than 100 undergraduate major and minor programs to choose from. 2507 University Ave., Des Moines, 1-800-44-DRAKE; www.drake.edu.

Runners-up: Simpson College; Grand View University

Best Community College in Iowa

Des Moines Area Community College

DMACC offers central Iowans affordable college tuition without sacrificing the quality education expected from a place of higher learning. DMACC has campuses scattered throughout central Iowa, while also providing extensive choices for online classes — all





The team at Adamantine Spine Moving helped their clients go from home to home by being the Best Local Moving Company, according to votes. Photo courtesy of Adamantine Spine Moving

good reasons why CITYVIEW readers chose it as the Best Community College in Iowa. Campuses in Ankeny, Boone, Carroll, Newton, Des Moines and West Des Moines with additional learning centers around the metro; www.dmacc.edu.

Runners-up: Kirkwood Community College; Indian Hills Community College

Best Local Doggy Daycare/Boarding

Dogwoods Lodge

When CITYVIEW readers were asked to vote for where they prefer to send their canines for doggy daycare/boarding, the votes went to Dogwoods Lodge. It features a day camp, quality training programs and a grooming salon to have your furry loved one looking their best when you come to pick them up. 2960 S.E. Grimes Blvd., Grimes, 515-986-7387; www.dogwoodslodge.com.

Runners-up: Paws and Pints; Stylin Paws

Best Local Employer

Pure Salon

The Best Local Place to Get Your Eyelashes Done and Best Local Salon also happen to be Best Of Des Moines voters' choice for Best Local Employer. Congratulations! Multiple locations; www.mypuresalon.com.

Runners-up: Generation Next Child Development Center and Preschool; Optimae LifeServices

Best Local Home Improvement Company

Renewal By Andersen of Des Moines

Home improvement can be challenging, and sometimes the old box of tools you have sitting in your garage isn't going to cut it. However, Renewal By Andersen of Des Moines can, and will, handle the work for you. Put your trust in their team of experts. CITYVIEW readers did when naming the company Best Local Home Improvement Company. 517 Railroad Ave., West Des Moines, 515-274-9700; www.renewalbyandersen.com.

Runners-up: Buresh Home Solutions; TMJ Construction Services

Best Local Dog Groomer

Bark Shop

Most everyone thinks their dog is the best dog, but no matter the breed, they seem to have something in common. They can be messy and get scraggly and dirty. When looking for a place to get them cleaned, trimmed and looking their best, CITYVIEW readers chose Bark Shop as their Best Local Dog Groomer. Locations in Urbandale and West Des Moines; www.barkshop.com.

Runners-up: Dogwoods Lodge; Stylin Paws

Best Local Moving Company

Adamantine Spine Moving

This eco-friendly moving company has been helping central Iowans move their belongings for decades, and the company has impressed CITYVIEW readers, who voted it Best Local Moving Compny. Not only have they been moving you, but they've been moving their company into an eco-friendly world by electrifying their medium and heavy-duty vehicles over the years. 4701 N.W. Urbandale Drive, Des Moines, 515-305-2605; www.spinemoving.com.

Runners-up: The Affordable Movers; Two Men and a Truck

Best Local Credit Union

Veridian Credit Union

Veridian Credit Union continues its streak, winning the Best Local Credit Union honor in CITYVIEW's annual readers' poll again. What started as John Deere Employees Credit Union in Waterloo back in 1934 has become a perennial readers' favorite. Multiple locations; www.veridiancu.org.

Runners-up: GreenState Credit Union; **Community Choice Credit Union**

Best Local Bank

Bankers Trust

CITYVIEW readers continue to trust Bankers Trust, marking this the eighth year in a row the bank has been voted Best Local Bank. Multiple branches, with corporate headquarters in Des Moines; www.bankerstrust.com.

Runners-up: West Bank; Fortress Bank

Best Local Internet Provider

Metronet

Metronet prides itself on having brick and mortar stores to provide better customer service — perhaps the reason why CITYVIEW readers voted it Best Local Internet Provider for the second year in a row. 1311 Buckeye Ave., Suite A, Ames. 855-595-1006; www.metronet.com.

Runners-up: Google Fiber; Mediacom

Best Local Auto Shop

Shade Tree Auto

The options are limitless, and the service is excellent at Shade Tree Auto, say CITYVIEW readers who chose it as Best Local Auto Shop. It doesn't get more local as owner Clint Dudley started the business in a small garage in Johnston after receiving a degree in automotive technology from DMACC, and he hasn't looked back since. Multiple locations; www.shadetreeauto.biz.

Runners-up: Drake Garage; Beckley Automotive **Services**

Best TV Station for News

KCCI Channel 8

When looking for the latest update on news, good or bad, CITYVIEW readers agree KCCI Channel 8 provides accurate, up-to-the-minute updates on the what, who, when, where and why. www.kcci.com.

Runners-up: WHO Channel 13; WOI Channel 5



Fully equipped with a day camp, training programs and a grooming salon, Dogwoods Lodge wins Best Local Doggy Daycare/Boarding. Photo courtesy of Dogwoods Lodge

Best TV Station for Sports

WHO TV Channel 13

The sports team at WHO TV Channel 13 is known around the state. From RVTV to "SoundOFF," they win in a faceoff against the rest of the sports coverage competition, say CITYVIEW readers in the Best Of Des Moines poll. It's a good thing, too, or readers might have ended up on "What's Bugging Andy." www.who13.com.

Runners-up: KCCI Channel 8; WOI Channel 5







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www.ruderealty.com

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Best TV Station for Weather

KCCI Channel 8

"If you don't like the weather, just wait 15 minutes." Sure, this phrase gets said frequently, but when the weather does change on a dime, KCCI Channel 8 will have the update on your TV screen in no time, making it CITYVIEW readers' choice. www.kcci.com.

Runners-up: WHO Channel 13; WOI Channel 5

Best Local TV Anchor

Chenue Her

WOI Channel 5's Good Morning Iowa star is an Emmy-award winning reporter and anchor — and now a CITYVIEW readers' Best Of Des Moines choice. When Her joined the We Are Iowa team in 2021, he became the first Hmong anchorman in Iowa and the country. Congratulations on a growing list of accolades, Chenue! www.weareiowa.com.

Runners-up: Samantha Mesa; Erin Kiernen

Best Local Sports Commentator or Columnist

Keith Murphy

Sorry, Keith, we already made a "SoundOFF joke." We hope that's not against Murphy's Law. Keith Murphy's ability to bring opinion, comedy and insight into a sports

broadcast or column continues to be the benchmark for what it takes to be the Best Of Des Moines winner for Best Local Sports Commentator or Columnist, according to poll voters.

Runners-up: Scott Reister; Andy Fales

Best Meteorologist

Ed Wilson

With a tenure lasting more than 35 years at WHO-TV, Ed Wilson continues to lay claim to CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Meteorologist. No matter the conditions, rain, sleet, snow or sunshine, Wilson will be there to let you know what to expect. www.who13.com.

Runners-up: Jason Sydejko; Jeriann Ritter

Best Radio Voice that Turns You On Kristian Day

Kristian Day, the voice of the weekly radio show, Iowa Basement Tapes, features Iowa musical artists. Music is known to, shall we say, get the mood going, and CITYVIEW readers say, so is Kristian Day's voice. You can listen to his radio show on the Best Of Des Moines poll's Best Radio Station, KFMG 98.9. www.kfmg.org.

Runners-up: Heather Lee; Andy Hall

Best Radio Station

KFMG 98.9

Speaking of KFMG 98.9, CITYVIEW readers chose it as Best Radio Station. The crew there hosts a mix of songs to get you through the workday and have several unique programs throughout the week to keep you entertained in the car, office or wherever you prefer to tune in. www.kfmg.org.

Runners-up: Lazer 103.3; Iowa Public Radio

Best Radio Personality

Ron Sorenson

The team at KFMG 98.9 is sweeping up the Best Of Des Moines radio-related awards, adding Best Radio Personality to the bunch, with Ron Sorenson being CITYVIEW readers' choice. He's been with the radio station since the 1960s and currently hosts the Ron Sorensen Show and Midday Music. www.kfmg.org.

Runners-up: Maxwell Schaeffer; Heather Lee

Best Local Real Estate Agent

Tim Scheib

Buying or selling a home is stressful and is rarely an easy undertaking. Finding the place where you plan to settle down for the foreseeable future, or looking to get a return on your original investment, are tall tasks. CITYVIEW readers' choice to quell those homebuying or selling nerves is Tim Scheib. www.scheibrealestate.com.

Runners-up: Bob Eisenlauer; Jason Rude







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Best Local Automotive Salesperson PJ Caffrey at Toyota of Des Moines

"PJ Caffrey is Master Certified, and his goal is to make every customer a repeat customer," according to Toyota of Des Moines' website. It appears he's made quite a few repeat customers over the years, winning Best Local Automotive Salesperson. www.toyotadm.com

Runners-up: Mark Menegay at Karl Chevrolet; Heidi Brickman, Deery Brother Chevrolet

Best Local Photographer Ryan Whitten

Someone needs to capture the moment, and Ryan Whitten does just that. Whitten picked up photography and videography within the past five years and works with the team at Scheib Real Estate to create eyecatching content — and now he's been chosen by CITYVIEW readers as the Best Local Photographer. www.scheibrealestate.com/ryan-bio.html.

Runners-up: Tracy Marie Photography; Ivory House Photography

Best Local Financial Planner

Loren Merkle of Merkle Retirement Planning

Money management is crucial. In the uncertain times we live in, it's important to make sure your finances are secure so you can enjoy your golden years in whatever way



Home of the Cyclones and home to the Best State University in Iowa, according to CITYVIEW readers, is Iowa State University. Photo courtesy of Iowa State University

you deem fit. CITYVIEW readers say the best financial planner to help you is Loren Merkle of Merkle Retirement Planning. 1860 S.E. Princeton Drive, Grimes, 515-278-

1006; www.merkleretirement planning.com.

Runners-up: Jeff Lohmeier of Edward Jones; Justin M. Bjerke of Edward Jones







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BEST OF THE REST

Best Local Insurance Agent

Cody Crumes of Crumes Insurance

Cody Crumes is this year's Best Of Des Moines readers' poll choice for Best Local Insurance Agent. Consultations are free at Crumes Insurance, and they will help you with determining what insurance is right for you, from Medicare supplement plans and long-term care plans to dental and life insurance. 950 Office Park Road, Suite 114, West Des Moines, 641-799-2506; www.crumesinsurance.com.

Runners-up: AnnaMarie Morrow of Merkle Retirement Planning; Ben Buenzow of Ben **Buenzow Insurance Group**

Best Local Mortgage Company

Midwest Family Lending

"You don't have to know it all, we've got your answers." Being able to safely put your mortgage in the hands of Midwest Family Lending is why CITYVIEW readers have chosen the company Best Local Mortgage Company for six of the last eight years. 2753 99th St., Urbandale, 515-252-7107; www.midwestfamilylending.com.

Runners-up: Fortress Bank; Halo Capital

Best Local Vet Clinic

Waukee-Clive Veterinary Clinic

The list of services that Waukee-Clive Veterinary Clinic provides for your pet is extensive, including health examinations, digital radiology, surgeries, and so much

more. They also offer vet services for exotic animals. No wonder the clinic is CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Vet Clinic. 15151 Hickman Road, Clive, 515-987-4552; www.waukee-clivevet.com.

Runners-up: Value Vet; Oaks Veterinary Clinic

Best Local Home Builder

Elevated Builders

When you're looking to put together the forever home you've dreamed of, follow the votes of CITYVIEW readers. They chose Elevated Builders for Best Local Home Builders, and one look at their project history proves why. Not looking to build an entire house? They also do renovations. 1011 N. Ankeny Blvd., Suite 1141, Ankeny, 515-446-8126; www.elevatedbuilders.com.

Runners-up: Elevate Homes Inc.; Happe Homes

Best Local Landscaper

Premier Landscape

An addition to the outside of your home can be just as valuable as one inside the home. Premier Landscape, CITYVIEW readers' choice for Best Local Lanscaper, handles the dirty work in order to bring you a new set of steps, an aesthetically pleasing pathway, a functional, yet stylish retaining wall, and numerous other outdoor amenities. 515-321-5101; www.facebook.com/ PremierLandscapeLLC.

Runners-up: Landmatters; Ted Lare Design + **Build**

Best Local Chamber of Commerce

Urbandale Chamber of Commerce

An efficient, quality chamber of commerce can help a growing or established community in many ways. There are several chambers located within the Des Moines metro area, but only one can be voted the best by CITYVIEW readers, and it's the Urbandale Chamber of

Commerce. 2830 100th St., Suite 110, Urbandale, 515-331-6855; www.uniquelyurbandale.com. **Runners-up: West Des Moines Chamber of**

Commerce; Ankeny Area Chamber of Commerce

Best Local Customer Service (overall)

Stork Orthodontics

When it comes to a medical practice such as orthodontic care, making sure patients are comfortable is paramount. Stork Orthodontics provides the Best Local Customer Service (overall) according to CITYVIEW readers, making the task of visiting the orthodontist as easy as possible. 4090 Westown Parkway, Suite 101, West Des Moines, 515-608-8722; www.storkorthodontics.com.

Runners-up: Prysm Jewelry and Piercing; Merkle **Retirement Planning**

Best Local Law Firm

Baer Law Office

This makes it nine years in a row for Baer Law Firm as Best Local Law Firm according to CITYVIEW readers. The



- Meditation
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- MS/ALS Water Walking
- HIIT
- BoGa Boot Camp
- · Survival Skills Swim Clinic
- Advanced Swimming Skills
- In-water Pilates
- Water Yoga
- Chair Yoga
- Yoga & SUP Yoga
- Trauma Informed Yoga · Pelvic Floor Yoga
- Aquatic Aerobics
- Water Safety Water Walking
- Lap Swimming
- ASD Swimming Lessons • Adult Swimming Lessons
- · Children's Swimming Lessons

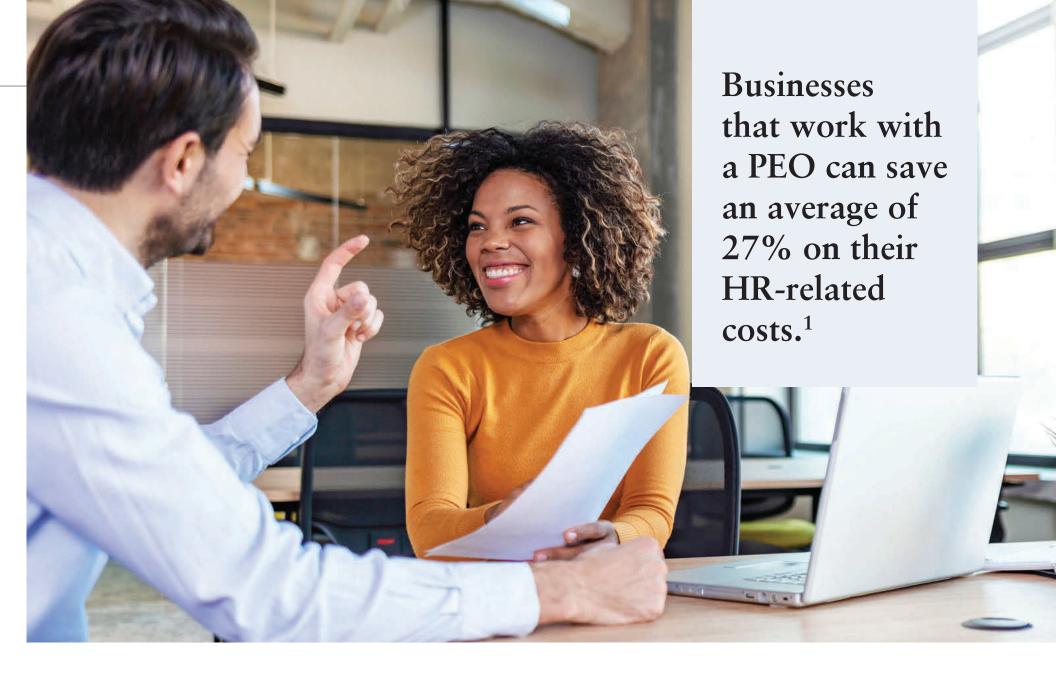


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law practice extends to the areas of personal injury, motor vehicle accidents, wrongful death claims, divorce and family law, business law and nursing home claims. 838 Fifth Ave., Des Moines, 515-279-2000; www.baerlawoffice.com.

Runners-up: Wasker, Dorr, Wimmer & Marcouiller, P.C.; Rieper Law P.C.

Best Local Daycare

Generation Next Child Development Center and Preschool

Since 2015, Generation Next has been chosen by Best Of Des Moines voters as Best Local Daycare. Your child's early years of learning are the most crucial, and setting a proper foundation can prepare them to be the best possible version of themselves. Locations in Johnston, Urbandale, Ankeny, West Des Moines and Bondurant; www.generationnextia.com.

Runners-up: Grace Preschool; Vine Street Child Care

Best Local Marketing Agency Northgate

Northgate's marketing services, which have garnered it CITYVIEW readers' vote for Best Local Marketing Agency, include brand identity, web design, video production, photography, graphic design, social media

design, email marketing and blogging. At the head of it all is David Tracy. 2323 Grand Ave., Des Moines, 515-518-6610; www.wearenorthgate.com.

Runners-up: Creative DSM; Strategic America

Best Local Apartment Complex

The Vibe @ 8035

It appears the vibes are high at The Vibe @ 8035. The Best Local Apartment Complex, according to CITYVIEW readers, offers several floor plans and 24-hour on-site emergency service management. 11428 Forest Ave., Clive, 515-250-7090; www.thevibeat8035.com.

Runners-up: The Village @ Grays Lake; City Square Lofts

Best Local HVAC Company

Modern Heating and Air

Locally owned and family operated since 2010, Modern Heating and Air touts that 99% of their installations are completed in the same day, which makes for some happy customers. CITYVIEW readers agree, naming the company Best Local HVAC Company. 675 N.E. 45th Place, Des Moines, 515-635-5525; www.modernhvacservices.com.

Runners-up: Obsidian Heating and Cooling; Schaal Plumbing, Heating and Cooling



Once again, Scottish Rite Park wins Best Local Senior Living Community. Photo courtesy of Scottish Rite Park



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Best Local Senior Living Community Scottish Rite Park

That's Rite! Those enjoying their twilight years and tapping into the pages of CITYVIEW magazine prefer Scottish Rite Park, according to the votes they cast for Best Local Senior Living Community. Scottish Rite Park provides plenty of activities and amenities to keep residents busy, but, most importantly, happy. 2909 Woodland Ave., Des Moines, 515-274-4614; www.scottishritepark.com.

Runners-up: Edencrest; Copper Shores Village

Best Local Place for Tax Preparation

Ann M. Hartz CPA and Associates

Only three things are certain in life. Death, taxes and Best Local Place for Tax Preparation in 2024 being Ann M. Hartz CPA and Associates, according to CITYVIEW readers. The accounting and tax experts there will make sure you're prepared heading into, during, and out of tax season. 7109 Hickman Road, Urbandale, 515-259-7779; www.cpadesmoines.com.

Runners-up: H&R Block; Flagg & Company

Best Local Bathroom Facility

Prysm Jewelry & Piercing

There's nothing worse than walking into a dingy, grimy bathroom when nature calls. On the flip side, there's

no better feeling than being able to answer that call in a pristine, comfortable, bathroom. Make sure to make that stop inside Prysm Jewelry & Piercing, as CITYVIEW readers say it's the best in the metro area. 13101 University Ave., Suite 2, Clive, 515-868-4653; www.prysmpiercing.com.

Runners-up: Shade Tree Auto; Star Bar

Best Local Hotel

Surety Hotel

"A Midwestern renaissance." Surety Hotel has once again been chosen Best Local Hotel by CITYVIEW readers. The combination of modern elegance with nods to the building's roots as the Savings & Loan building makes this a must-visit location. 206 Sixth Ave., Des Moines, 515-985-2066; www.suretyhotel.com.

Runners-up: Hotel Fort Des Moines; Hotel Renovo

Best Local Plumber

H&H Plumbing

Back again in the Best Of Des Moines top spot for Best Local Plumber is H&H Plumbing. When a leaky faucet, broken garbage disposal, dripping water heater or clogged toilet is giving you trouble, CITYVIEW readers say to turn to their services. 32411 170th St., Granger, 515-277-5755; www.handhplumbing.net.

Runners-up: Herr Plumbing; Cook Plumbing Corp.

Best Local Electric Company

Kline Electric

Don't let all those tricky wires get the best of you. Kline Electric helps keep those lights on and your power running when you're in need. Their services range from commercial to residential, regular maintenance, audio and video, fire alarms and more, which may be why CITYVIEW readers voted them the Best Local Electric Company. 355 N.E. 14th St., Des Moines, 515-963-1101; www.klineelectric.com.

Runners-up: B&L Electric LLC; Tri-City Electric Co.

Best Local Flooring Company

Louie's Floor Covering

For more than half a century, Louie's Floor Covering has been family owned and providing Des Moines-area families with elite flooring services. From carpet install to fireplace hearths, their work beneath your feet has earned them CITYVIEW readers' votes for Best Local Flooring Company. 2709 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, 515-243-8608; www.louiesfloorcovering.com.

Runners-up: Royal Flooring; Green Family Flooring

Best Local Roofing Company

Right Roofing & Siding

As the cherry on top of your home or business, your







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roof needs to be more than just sweet. Since 1996, Right Roofing & Siding has been providing customers with elite roofing services. Now CITYVIEW readers agree. 3250 99th St., Urbandale, 515-305-3113; www.rightroofing.com.

Runners-up: Walter's Roofing + Solar; Recon Roofing & Construction

Best Local Contractor

Amazed Construction Services

Chris Mortale started honing his roofing skills in 1998 and began working on home projects in 2004. Now, 20 years later, his Amazed Construction Services has won Best Local Contractor in the eyes of CITYVIEW readers agree. Ankeny area, 515-480-2900;

www.amazedconstruction.com.

Runners-up: Recon Roofing & Construction; Superstorm Restoration

Best Local Interior Designer

Eastbridge Interiors

Eastbridge Interiors describes its interior design style as "eclectic Zen" and "bridging the gap between East and West aesthetics." We know how CITYVIEW readers describe the company — as Best Local Interior Designer. 2323 Grand Ave., Des Moines, 515-553-9475; www.eastbridge-interiors.com.

Runners-up: Lynsy Anderson - Royal Flooring; The Redefined Home



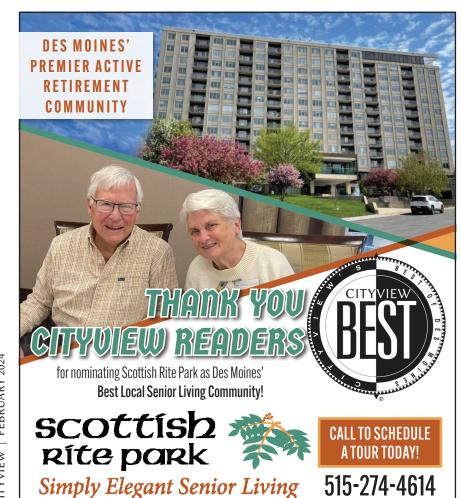
Looking to renovate your home or build a new one? Best Of Des Moines voters choose Elevated Builders. Photo courtesy of Elevated Builders

Best Local Pest Control Company

Pro-Staff Termite & Pest Control

Those creepy crawlies don't just disappear from your home when Halloween ends. When it comes time to get control of bedbugs, termites, bats and more, Pro-Staff Termite & Pest Control of Iowa — which CITYVIEW readers say is the Best Local Pest Control Company — will be there to save the day. 3601 Douglas Ave., Des Moines, 515-279-7378; www.desmoinespestservice.com.

Runners-up: The Bug Man; Preferred Pest Control



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BEST OF THE REST

Best Local Cleaning Company

The Queen of Clean

That's six on the bounce for The Queen of Clean as Best Local Cleaning Company in CITYVIEW polling. Call them the Queen of this award, thanks to their incredible attention to detail when it comes to bringing your home and office to its cleanest peak. 4949 Pleasant St., Suite 101, West Des Moines, 515-528-8723; www.thequeenofcleania.com.

Runners-up: Elite Cleaning of Des Moines; Two Mops and a Bucket

Best Local Preschool

Generation Next Child Development Center and Preschool

Voted Best Local Daycare and Best Local Preschool, Generation Next is trusted by CITYVIEW readers to provide quality childcare and education for your little one. They have several different curriculums tailored to your child's age group. Multiple locations; www.generationnextia.com.

Runners-up: Grace Preschool; Lutheran Church of Hope Preschool

Best Local Swim School

Natavi Swim School

In a state full of beautiful lakes, winding rivers, neighborly ponds and indoor and outdoor pools, knowing how to swim gives you the best chance to keep yourself and your watercentered plans afloat. When it comes to Best Local Swim School, CITYVIEW readers give the nod to Natavi Swim School. 275 S.W. Brookside Drive, Grimes, 515-300-3282; www.nataviswim.com.

Runners-up: Foss Swim School; Goldfish Swim School

Best Local Home Inspection Company

Keystone Home Inspections

A ridiculous number of details go into building a home. The one doing your home inspection should be just as important to you as the ones you trusted to build it. And, if you are buying, CITYVIEW readers say Keystone Home Inspections is the Best Local Home Inspection Company to make sure you don't buy a lemon. 320 N.E. 51st St., Ankeny, 515-371-8286; www.keystone-inspections.com.

Runners-up: Spotlight Home Inspection Services; Imperial Inspection

Best Local Foundation Repair Company

Midwest Foundation Repair

Midwest Foundation Repair has helped tens of thousands of Iowans with the foundations of their homes in their quest "to provide a level of customer service in basement waterproofing and foundation repair that is so high it would raise the bar for all home service contractors in the region." That mindset has led them to be this year's Best Local Foundation Repair Company, according to CITYVIEW readers. 9850 Douglas Ave., Suite 100, Urbandale, 515-992-7046; www.midwestfr.com.

Runners-up: BAM! Basements & Masons; Anchored Walls

Best Local Auto Glass Repair

Safelite AutoGlass

You may have heard their jingle, and CITYVIEW readers are even more sure Safelite AutoGlass is the place to go for auto glass repair. The unpredictable weather in Iowa could send a tree limb, hailstorm or larger-than-life icicle your car's way, and Safelite AutoGlass will be there to fix the damages. Multiple locations; www.safelite.com.

Runners-up: Scott's Auto Glass; R&B Auto Glass

Best Local Place to Get "Gas"

Casey's

You may have seen their recent rebrand at their stores across the metro. However, what remains unchanged at Casey's is its ability to provide Best Of Des Moines voters the Best Local Place to Get "Gas." (The pizza is good, too.) Multiple locations; www.caseys.com.

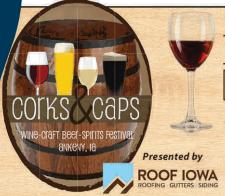
Runners-up: Kwik Star; Costco ■



ANKENY area chamber of commerce

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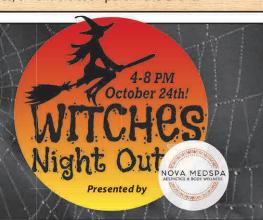
For more than 50 years, Ankeny Chamber SummerFest has brought Ankeny & the surrounding metro area together for 3 days of music, carnival rides, great local food & fun! Every year, our committee members, staff & volunteers work hard to bring this festival to life.

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Learn More: AnkenySummerFest.com

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PREMIER MEMBERS



CENTRALBANK



























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COURTESY OF BEAVERDALE BOOKS

'The Parliament'

I'm a huge fan of parallel stories — books that flutter back and forth between two worlds, two people's lives, or the past and the future. Here, in this gorgeous, deliciously dark modern fairy tale, the author gives us two stories in one in the best way — a book within a book.

Madeline "Mad" Purdy returns to her hometown to teach a group of teenagers at the local library. This is certainly not her forte, as she much prefers being alone at home. But when the library is surrounded by thousands of killer owls intent on tearing the trapped group to pieces, a new side of Mad blooms in the midst of the terror. Reading to the kids in her care to keep them calm as they look for a way out, the second story nested in the book "The Silent Queen" provides the

By Aimee Pokwatka 1/16/24 320 pages \$27.99 **Tordotcom**

perfect accompaniment to claustrophobic horror the characters experience.

This is a survivor's tale at its heart, a rich, gorgeously written story full of grief and strangeness but, above all, hope. I loved flipping between "real life" and the fairy tale. It stretched the already taut tension while pulling new threads in the narrative. A perfect balance.

— Review by Julie Goodrich

'Thirteen Ways to Kill Lulabelle Rock'

I don't think I'm the only person who's ever wished for a clone. It would be so nice to send a body double off to shovel the driveway while I stay warm inside with some coffee and a book. But what happens after the driveway is shoveled? Would that clone go off to read a different book? Does she need her own cup of coffee? Is she now a different person with a set of memories I'll never have?

These questions and more abound in this speculative thriller. In the riotous town of Bubble City, the richest and most famous have "Portraits," which are clones to ensure they are seen and involved in the dizzyingly complex social scene. Lulabelle Rock has 12 such beings wandering around, building unique lives and divergent personalities in surprising ways. When she creates a 13th copy with the sole purpose of killing the others, a

By Maud Woolf 1/9/24 240 pages \$18.99

Angry Robot

wild ride ensues, full of questions about personhood and the limits of humanity. A brilliant premise with a brisk pace and razor sharp writing that never falters, this book is highly recommended for readers who can never get enough of the question, what if? ■ — Review by Julie Goodrich



LUNCH WITH... BY JIM DUNCAN

Tim and Wendie O'Brien at Ted's Coney Island

Over chili, gyros, salads and Graziano sausage sandwiches, we talked about their "against the odds" marriage.

Tim and Wendie O'Brien are horse people with a challenging love story. Because it's St. Valentine's month, we asked them to lunch, and they chose Ted's Coney Island, an Ingersoll stalwart that occupies the iconic International House of Pancakes building that it succeeded. Ted's has been around Des Moines since 1927 and offers drive-through and sit-down services.

Over chili, gyros, salads and Graziano sausage sandwiches, we talked about their "against the odds"

Tim and Wendie suffered the ultimate challenge to love. Wendie backed up her car in the driveway without seeing her daughter behind it.

"At the time we were told that over 90% of couples who go through anything like that break apart," said

"Our bond got stronger. We had a surviving son to raise," said Tim.

"And he was devasted about losing his sister,"

Wendie added.

People grieve differently. Tim threw himself into work, and Wendie took time off to commiserate. Many of their friends worried they wouldn't make it. After all, they got married in a fever.

"We met in 1979 in Phoenix, even though we both grew up in Des Moines. Wendie opened a Spaghetti Works there, and I was working as a carpenter," said

While they were dating, Wendie opened a place in

"We would meet every weekend in Rustlers Roost, half way between Phoenix and Tucson. There was an Indian casino with an ATM."

A few years later, Tim was transferred to

"I didn't want to go. Then one day I opened the shower curtain, and Tim is there saying, 'I am going to Sacramento, even if we are married.' All I said was



Tim and Wendi O'Brien then.



LUNCH WITH CONT...

'worst proposal ever.' We ran off to Vegas and got married at the Little White Chapel. Just like in all the stereotypical movies. We passed on the Elvis package. We only had two witnesses, our best friends," said Wendie. "Our wedding package included a choice of a bottle of champagne or a wedding video. We wanted the video, but my best man had already taken the bottle of champagne. Our friends posted an over/under number on our marriage — three and a half years," Tim recalled.

"That was because I was a wild woman then," Wendie interjected.

"We honeymooned in Laughlin. At the time (1985), Laughlin was just pontoon boats and casinos. Nothing like today," said Tim.

"On our way home, we were so tired that we didn't know we were going in the wrong direction till we saw a sign saying, 'Los Angeles 100 miles.' A week later, we moved to Sacramento. A tire blew just as we entered the city. Friends from Bend came to our reception there," Wendie remembered.

They spent seven years in California's capital city when it was booming. Both took the real estate exam. Tim passed it on his first try but quickly realized, "I was the worst salesman in California." Wendie had a harder time with the exam but did

well in the business. Tim built houses, and Wendie sold them. What brought them back to Des Moines?

"Schools and family. I graduated from Valley High School, and Tim went to Dowling. We knew (son) TJ would get a far better education here than in Sacramento," Wendie recalled.

"The main thing that carried over from Sacramento is we are both still 49'ers fans," added Tim.

Psychologists believe that the presence of animals helps people get through tragedies. Living with animals prepares them better because one gets used to animals passing on. Wendie is a lifelong horseperson. A serious one. Both her mother and grandmother were, too. Her grandmother was the first female horse trainer at Madison Square Garden's National Equestrian Championships. Her mom owned a stable with 50 horses.

"Hardest job I ever had was moving the horses to Grand West after the stable caught fire. I grew up on the road. We would be away for horse shows Wednesdays through Sundays. It was a kind of a gypsy life. I didn't have time to learn how to swim until I was 26," Wendie said.

Her first job back in Iowa was at Jester Park Riding Stables.

"Yeah, I shattered my wrist early on. But I still gave



Tim and Wendi O'Brien now.

trail rides there from 1995-97. Campers liked to ride, but we got \$10 per ride and that barely covered our insurance. It was an interesting place for trail rides. Once I had a blind woman. Another time I had a lady who was too heavy to mount a horse by herself. We had 10 horses, and one of them was a biter. He got his mouth stuck full of a stirrup. The best thing about that job was Tim learned to ride," Wendie remembered.

TJ became a successful ultimate fighting competitor, and his son is now excelling at wrestling. Of course, Tim and Wendie are their biggest fans. It seems like the scions inherited the O'Brien grit.

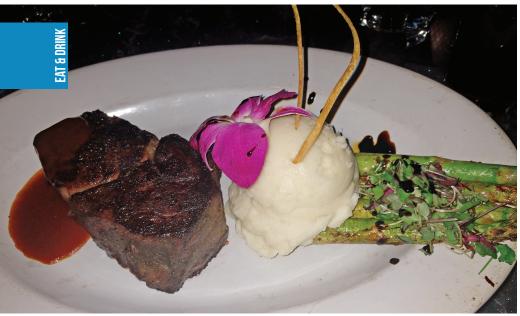
Tim and Wendie ride together today, and they still make gypsy jaunts to horse shows. ■





Romance by any other name...

Irina's Steak and Seafood and Hessen Haus both transport diners to another time and place.



Dry-aged ribeye at Irina's

Romance has been defined more ways than there are to ask for a date to the prom. Hollywood and the merchants of St. Valentine brand our young minds with very sentimental trappings — chocolates, flowers, linen table cloths, candlelight and violins.

There is another more expansive definition, sometimes ascribed to James Joyce but usually credited to anonymous: "Romance is that which transports one to another time or place." We went looking for examples.

Irina's Steak and Seafood has bits of both kinds. It's a lovely place with dramatic floor-to-ceiling curtains, tablecloths, subdued lighting, great music from another era, and fantastic presentations of both drinks and plates.

This is the third and finest incarnation of the restaurant for Irina, Dmitri and family. The couple met in the Black Sea resort of Sochi. They know a thing or two about entertaining diners there.

On Russia Nights, the live entertainment is sung in Russian. Last month's Lobster Fest featured live lobsters five ways, with one and a quarter pound crustaceans transported to another time and place by the magic of FedEx. They were reasonably priced, to say the least: Lobster chowder for \$8 to crab stuffed whole lobster with potatoes and sweet corn for \$60. Another event featured a whole crocodile. (It tasted better than chicken.)

Recently the restaurant has been offering slow night and happy hour deals that make it a bargain among fine dining establishments. Sunday and Monday, all steaks and most appetizers are half priced. Some nights, there is live music. Other times, the best soundtrack in town plays the music of the jazz era — Satchmo, Ella, Old Blue Eyes, Tony Bennet, Dino, Ray, etc.

The regular menu is purely classic with a Russian flare that is unique in Iowa. The oyster Rockefeller was served with caviar, bang bang shrimp with pickled ginger and seaweed. Ravioli are stuffed with short rib meat, spinach and blue cheese. Mac and cheese have truffles. The Caesar salad included roasted red peppers.

Irina's steak de Burgo, which won CITYVIEW's Ultimate de Burgo Challenge, is a creamy version. All steaks can be wet or dry aged. Desserts are special with my



Hessen Haus. Photo by Chris Maharry

favorite carrot cake ever keeping me from further exploration.

Most of the dramatic presentations include fried pasta and flowers. The bar, of course, specializes in vodkas. A distributor told me Irina has the best vodka selection in the state. One can order flights from several nations. Contrarily, they make an old fashioned with high end tequila.

IRINA'S STEAK AND SEAFOOD

650 S.W. Prairie View Drive, West Des Moines 515-225-8020

Sunday - Thursday, 3-10 p.m., Friday - Saturday, 3-10:30 p.m.

HESSEN HAUS

101 S.W. Fourth St., 515-288-2520 Sunday - Friday, opens at 11 a.m., 10 a.m. on Saturday; Sunday - Thursday closes at midnight, Friday - Saturday at 2 a.m.

My favorite example of a restaurant that transports a subject to another time and place is Hessen Haus. That is the original edition of the Full Court Press gang's efforts to provide unique experiential restaurants. Hessen Haus just does a better job than Royal Mile, Red Monk, High Life Lounge, Fong's Pizza and Mullets.

Every time I enter, I am transported to a Bavarian bier haus. There are 13 beers on tap that are imported from Germany. You can try all the German varieties — Munich dark, Kolsch, lager, brauweisse, hefeweizen, Märzen, festbier, wit, etc. And you can drink beer from a 67.5-ounce boot.

All the trappings of Bavaria are here, and it does not look like any other place in Iowa. This is no theme park restaurant like PF Chang's or Olive Garden; this is personalized. The food presents the best of German specialties, giving the lie to the idea (probably spread by the French) that German food is boring.

Jägerschnitzel is a superlative pork tenderloin. Sausages come in three German styles. Schweinshaxe is my favorite dish, a slow roasted pork shank. Sauerbraten is marinated 72 hours producing tender and tart roast beef. Potato pancakes, red cabbage slaw and German potato salad are all distinct from norms.

Jim Duncan is a food writer who has been covering the central Iowa scene for more than five decades.



The Cork in Johnston

Wine bar offers 175 different options... and more.

BY JACKIE WILSON

When walking into a bar, an instant vibe is set off. Is it a dive or too high-end? Or does it get lost in the shuffle, trying to please everyone?

At the Cork, the vibe matches what they do successfully — focus on unique wines. The Cork 50131, located at 6205 Merle Hay Road in the Johnston Town Center, opened December 2022.

The Cork offers about 175 different wines. Posted on their chalkboard is a list of 15-20 rotating wines by the glass, including bubbly, whites, rose and reds. The majority of the wines are available by the bottle. There's no corkage fee. If you don't drink it all, take it home. But who has that problem?

Wine costs between \$10-\$15 a glass for a 5-ounce pour. Bottles of wine are all across the price spectrum, with many in the \$35 to \$45 range. If you and your friend each drink two glasses of wine, do the math and buy a bottle instead.

Their most expensive is a \$350 bottle of 2017 Component Demi Lune Bordeaux from France and certified French region grapes.

A good way to sample wine is a four-flight for \$22, which gets you 2.5-ounce pours from any wines posted on the chalkboard. Arrive from 2:30-6 p.m. for happy hour Monday through Friday and get \$2 off flights, wine by the glass and food items; or \$1 off beer and spirits.

Yes, non-vino lovers can choose from a dozen or so spirits, Pulpit Rock beer from Decorah and a couple cans of domestic beer including Busch Light. Side note: After writing countless Belly Up columns, I've concluded that if you own a drinking establishment in Iowa, you must serve Busch Light.

The Cork doesn't have a kitchen; however, they offer "bites," which include a charcuterie tray, flatbread with La Quercia meats, lava cake, chocolate chip cookies or a premium bar mix. This salty and savory bar mix goes beyond a few seasoned pretzels, as my friend picked out the crunchy toffee nuts. Snack mix in a generous-sized bowl during happy hour costs just a buck. Patrons can bring in their own food if desired.

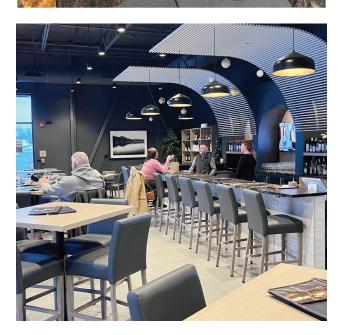
The place is an ideal spot for viewing outdoor Johnston Town Center activities in the summertime, as the back patio overlooks the area. Upcoming music in 2024 at the Town Center includes the Pork Tornadoes.

The Cork offers wine tastings, paired with cheeses and meats, about once a month and live music about every three weeks.

Cycrena, Cork's assistant manager, was knowledgeable in wine selections. After telling her I liked dry reds and no sweet wines, her suggestions were spot-on with my taste buds. She assured me they don't sell any Iowa wines. They secure wines from nine different distributors. The owners and staff do wine tastings about once a week, and favorites are kept in stock.

"You won't find these wines at Costco or Hy-Vee," she says.

The decor is simple, classy and relaxed — a vibe you'll want to try next time you're in Johnston. ■





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— not all butterflies and romance

Two lasting accounts involve extreme testing and dedication.

By Jim Duncan

What is your favorite true-life love story? Always an interesting question when getting to know someone, it can solicit many different answers. Achilles and Patroclus' love story has been both cherished and debated for 3,300 years. It was also far more honorable than the love "that launched a thousand ships," between Helen and Paris.

The love of Peter Abelard and Heloise Argenteuil has become the prototype of tragic and forbidden love, inspiring literature as well as honor killings for 800 years.

Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett's story is eternalized in their poetry and in their famous kiss under the Bridge of Sighs in Venice. That kiss inspired one of the greatest love story movies — George Roy Hill's "A Little Romance" in which young teens run away from Paris to reenact that kiss.

We sought special love stories in Des Moines and found a few that involved extreme testing and dedication.

Puppy love, grown up

Syd Klise believes human attitudes are changing the way we treat other living things.

"Plants are the new pets. Pets are the new kids. And kids are the new exotic animals: You have to be crazy and rich to have one."

The owner of Klise Dog Grooming in Johnston considers her dogs, and her customers' dogs, her kids. That started before she was walking.

"My grandpa was a veterinarian. His clinic was my day care center. I have a picture of myself at 18 months cuddling a fawn Doberman. Because of its color, I called it a pig. That was love.

"Grandpa had a rainbow litter of Dobermans. That's rare. That means one litter produced all four kinds of Doberman — black and rust, blue and rust, red and rust, and fawn and rust. I knew stuff like that before I started school. I wanted to join my grandfather in his practice when I grew up."

Is puppy love real love?

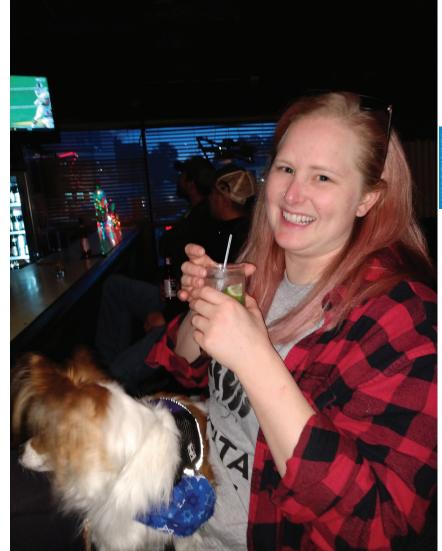
"It's not traditional love, that butterflies and romance thing that is marketed as love. It's the essence of taking care of others, though, and that's a form of love for sure. Dedication is love."

How did her dedication to dogs progress after she was 2?

"My favorite gift growing up was the 'Encyclopedia of Dogs.' I read that book so many times that the cover fell off. I learned the history, genealogy of all the breeds. My parents gave me dogs at a young age. I had a standard poodle with the same birthday as mine. My first golden retriever was more of a kid than a pet. Same thing with my first Doberman. Those were all gifts from my parents."

What was the first dog she bought herself?

"That developed out of a pique. I was playing golf with my family, and they were criticizing my swing. I got so mad I bought a papillon — Miko — to piss my mom



Syd Klise says the essence of taking care of others — including dogs — is a form of love for sure.





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off. She didn't think she liked papillons, but when I came home after a year at college, she wouldn't let me reclaim Miko."

Puppy love is not all butterflies and romance.

"One young memory of helping at the clinic is when we were drawing blood from a boxer, but he was sedated and he vomited on me. That was the first of a long line of incidents most people would consider ugly. I have been the recipient of an extraordinary amount of canine excrement.

"When I started to think about my higher education, I asked to observe an operation to remove a bowel obstruction in a Labrador. I passed out. Suddenly, I realized I was not cut out to be a veterinarian."

How did the golfer evolve into the groomer?

"I had to pitch my folks on an alternative education. I went to Texas to the Starmark Academy to become a certified trainer. When I was there, I became friends with a girl who was a groomer. Suddenly I realized that grooming could be a career.

"I went to Wisconsin School of Professional Pet Grooming. My next revelation was when I bought a Bernese mountain dog. They have short life spans, but I realized that meant I would have more dogs in my life. She made it to 11 and was my first kid of my own."

After that Syd was determined to become a breeder



Syd Klise's taxidermy collection is museum quality

like her grandfather.

"My first brood dog was Poochie, a red papillon and a bomb-proof dog. Kids could pull on her tail, and she never got fazed. My dad's mom was a small lady who had been knocked over by big dogs as a child and didn't like dogs until she met Poochie. She had to call her 'Kitty,' but she loved her. Now I have delivered nine years of litters.

"She had to deliver once by emergency C-section. It

was a 24-hour operation. Two of the three pups didn't make it. The third was a girl that I named Harvey, after Son of Sam's dog, the lab he claimed was host to a demon who spoke to him. I figured that she and I had been to hell and back together.

"She only weighed 53 grams. She had to be bottlefed, and I slept with her in the bathroom, which I could sterilize and humidify easier than other rooms. After a few days of that, she opened her eyes. She



survived and weighs all of 3 pounds now. She thinks she's a big dog, scared of nothing."

That must have been expensive?

"Yeah, the price of a good used car."

Syd has memorialized some of her dogs in unusual ways.

"Yeah, people think my shop is weird. Some people show up there and ask to take photos, but I keep the really weird stuff at home."

She cleans the skulls of her dogs and has a room with all of them. One dog she had freeze-dried, and it now resides next to her bed. Her taxidermy collection is museum quality.

"I think I have a more complete collection than Cabela's. Some of their works are replicas. Mine are all originals."

She has a zebra, a gemsbok (South African antelope) with 38-inch horns, a Jacob ram with four horns, a Corsican ram, three bears and a Chinese antelope that "looks like a vampire."

No buffalo or polar bears?

"Polar bears are protected now, so to have one it needs to be 100 years old. I will not own a buffalo. We white people killed hundreds of thousands of them just to starve and subdue Native Americans. I just won't have one."

What is Klise's favorite dog story?

"'Hachi-ko' by Kaneto Shindo. Richard Gere made it into a movie. The dog is an Akito and follows his master to the train station every day and greets him there every evening on his return commute. After the master dies, the dog still makes the same treks daily. In Tokyo, the story is so revered that they built a statue to Hachi at one main station."

Sounds like something Syd will do someday.



Syd Klise's love of dogs started before she was walking.



Love will keep us together

Irina Kharchenko laughs at the old Yiddish joke, "You know how to make God laugh? Tell Him your plans." A wildly unpredictable combination of setbacks and serendipities led her and husband Dmitri Iakovilev to their new home in central Iowa.

The couple met in the Black Sea resort Sochi, the host of the 2014 Olympics. Irina moved there with her family from Moscow when she was in second grade.

"Sochi has a semitropical climate; it's Russia's Florida. So, I thought I was done with cold winters," she laughed.

Everyone in her family had been teachers, pilots or engineers, but Irina wanted something more adventurous.

"I got my college degrees in international finance and accounting," she recalled, adding that, in 1996, she and Dmitri won a lottery for temporary work visas to Canada. The process of entering Canada was so cumbersome that they spent most of their savings before they even got to Quebec.

"We were just starting out, and we were broke, homeless and carless," Karchenko recalled. "Neither of us spoke any French and hardly any English. One time, I remember we were painting ceilings, and I would push Dmitri in a shopping cart — to work faster. That kind of work kept us eating.

"Then one day we got dressed up, Dmitri in a suit and tie and me in a black dress with stockings and 3-inch heels. I am sure I came off like a crazy European woman. This guy tells us he has a job for both of us and drives us out of town to the middle of nowhere. Then he tells us the job is to clear a field of stones. So, there we are, me driving a tractor in high heels and a cocktail dress with Dmitri running behind tossing stones in a cart wearing a business suit."

The couple moved on from Montreal to Vancouver and then Calgary in the next two years.

"We went through half a dozen \$100 and \$200 cars because that was all we could afford," she said. However, three applications to renew their visas were denied.

"We were going to be deported to Russia unless the U.S. accepted us as refugees. Fortunately, that's what happened," she recalled. They entered the U.S. in Montana and spent two years there and in Los Angeles.

"We always both worked two or three jobs, mainly trying to pay immigration attorneys. We owed \$40,000 at one time. At least in Los Angeles, it was warm enough to sleep in the car. Our last \$200 car took us from Montana to L.A. and on to Iowa. When we bought that car, there was grass growing on the dashboard," she recalled.

They also worked their first "good job" in Los Angeles, caring for a house and children of a wellconnected medical family.

"We cooked, cleaned and babysat. The lady of the family was very nice to us. She invited us to every big medical event in Hollywood," Kharchenko recalled.

Los Angeles was fun and comfortable, until Irina became pregnant. They then began looking for a place more suitable for starting a family.

"We heard that Iowa was good for that. We also knew that there was a community of Russians in Postville, so we moved to northeast Iowa.

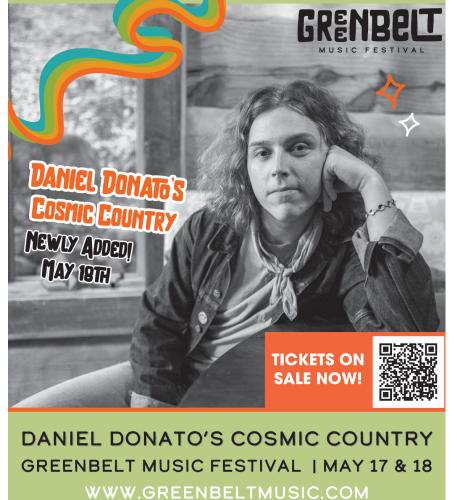
"Postville was a scary place then (seven years before the infamous Postville raid) with so many different immigrant groups in a small town including lots of former prisoners. It was depressing — not what we had in mind for starting a family. The transmission finally blew on our old car, too," she said.

They moved to the Des Moines area where both landed jobs at an Ankeny fiberglass company. Dmitri worked the assembly line, and Irina operated a forklift, stacking 50-pound boxes, without the 3-inch heels. "I had to hide my pregnancy to keep that job," she recalled.

After that, Dmitri became a project manager for a construction company and Irina a jewelry manager







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for Younkers. She became pregnant with her second child while working for Hubbell Homes in new construction sales.

"Our entire department got laid off on New Year's Eve. Happy New Year," she

Irina says those were scary times because they had just bought a house. However, serendipity came to the rescue, and she began her favorite job ever, working at Homemakers in sales.

In 2006, the couple quit their jobs and opened Irina's restaurant at 50th and E.P. True Parkway. Business grew well, but there were problems with infrastructure crumbling. The couple began looking for a new building, and a strange opportunity popped up.

Razzmatazz in Urbandale had an illicit image and at least one shooting.

"We visited one night, and all they sold was Heineken and Hennessy. The smoke was so thick that we got high on second-hand smoke. The VIP Club smelled like sex," Irina recalled.

Despite the building being on a one-year liquor license ban, the couple bought it in 2008. "There was mold growing in the coolers and refrigerators. There was a strange green goo all over," she recalled.

The couple decided they had to gut the place to its studs. Inside one piece of drywall, they found stashes of what looked like illegal drugs.

"We made some homeless dumpster diver very happy, if he found it," Irina laughed. Maybe because of that stash, the place was vandalized one night.

To drum up business for six months without a liquor license, they offered a "pay what you want" service. That got publicity from Europe and England as well as across the U.S. They actually increased their revenue during the offer, by 46%.

Then came the flood of 2010. While a new roof was being installed, a roofer failed to secure plastic covering during a rain.

"There were 12 inches of water on the floor. Everything turned moldy, even the





Dmitri lakovilev and Irina Kharchenko

inside of wine corks. We had to gut the entire place again. We were closed another five months," she said.

It's been 23 years since the couple became U.S. citizens and 14 years since the last biblical-sized setback. The couple now owns Irina's Steak & Seafood in West Des Moines.

"I still don't love the weather, but the people are so nice and so supportive. I get tired of hearing people complain. This is the land of opportunity. If you come to work hard, you can make a very good life here. I also believe Iowa is a lucky place. If you do a kindness, it comes back to reward you 10 times," she concluded. ■





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Tommy Doggett

Saxophone player releases album.

As a saxophone player, Tommy Doggett's musical path has experienced numerous curves, not only in teaching and performing, but among a variety of music genres over the years.

He's played contemporary, rock and roll, soul, funk and jazz for major audiences. The saxophone is often associated with jazz, but it's much more.

"Sometimes, the saxophone is a preconceived notion about what it sounds like, that it's all jazz," he explains.

His album, called "Lines + Lineage," was recently recorded. He will perform with a full band at an allages album release concert on Sunday, Feb. 18 at xBk.

The album is comprised of folks who have influenced Doggett over the years. The idea developed when he was chatting with his future wife, who noticed he talked about his family frequently, suggesting he write about them.

His instrumental music doesn't contain lyrics. But, in his mind, he recalled his Grandma Mildred climbing a tree. He remembers special family members who passed away. While rehearsing, he aspired to tell real stories during a live performance. He explains how the storytelling relates to instrumental music.

"A lot of instrumental music, you don't know what to listen for," he said. "I took an abstract idea, and the music follows."

The audience is receptive to his stories.

"During intermission, the audience shares stories about their family. All of a sudden, there's a connection with my music," he explains.

Doggett played saxophone in high school but never aspired to be a band director. He played in an orchestra, rock bands, electronic groups and taught saxophone lessons.

One rock group he played in, "Freestyle," was inducted into the Iowa Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in

"I initially said 'no' to them, but once I joined, it sounded great. When they asked me to go to the induction, they explained that I helped keep the band going," he says. "It's a great honor to be a part of it."

Another no turned into a yes when he thought about teaching music. While working at the Guitar Center, someone mentioned that he didn't need to go back to school for a full four years for a teaching degree. Instead, he completed his education, and he's now in his seventh year as the Urbandale High School's band instructor. He teaches concert, marching, jazz and musical theater. Because of his varied musical experience, he feels comfortable and confident talking about the music industry to his students.

"I can be honest about it. I tell them, 'Here is how to make it easier, don't make my mistakes.' I give them straight talk. It's not just getting up on stage. It's unloading a truck and promoting yourself," he says.

Doggett says it is important to invite his students to sit in on performances outside of school, which follows in the footsteps of his mentor, Greg.

"I want to continue in that tradition, where they sit on stage without notes and improvising," he said.

Doggett once sat in with some buddies who were considering a new band in 2008. As they chatted, he discovered one potential member was Slipknot's Corey Taylor.

"It really showed me that music is not onedimensional. We were talking about a funk project," he said. "It's always inspiring learning and listening to different types of music."



Photo by Jami Milne

Doggett enjoys performing on stage, as he gains immediate feedback from the audience. He says he feels selfish when wanting to play just for himself.

"It gives me time with my saxophone," he explains. "Music makes sense to me. I love the quote, 'music says what we can't put into words.' It's therapeutic for me, and I play for the joy of it."

Tickets for the Feb. 18 show at xBk cost \$15 in advance; \$20 day of show from www.xbklive.com

SOUND ADVICE BY JACKIE WILSON

Jay Ernest, a Minneapolis-based musician, channels the "man in black" with his group, the Church of Cash. This award-winning Johnny Cash tribute band plays the classic hits. The all-ages concert is Feb. 3 at Wooly's. Tickets \$20-\$25.

Craving an outdoor concert in the dead of winter? Head over to the Botanical Center to enjoy music among the warm greenery on Sundays for Botanical

Blues. On Feb. 14, **Drama Kings**; Feb. 11, **Buckmiller** Schwager; Feb. 18, Local Ukesters; and Feb. 25, Soul **Searchers**. Concerts are at 1 and 3 p.m. Tickets \$12 for adults; free for members.

Arkansauce, a progressive bluegrass band often referred to as "bluegrass ramblers," returns to Iowa, playing at xBk on Feb. 8. Opener is local bluegrass/jam band, Alleygrass. Tickets for the all-ages concert is

\$15 in advance; \$20 day of show.

The Iowa State Fair has named several grandstand acts for Aug. 8-18, 2024. Foreigner with opener Melissa Etheridge; Ne-Yo with opener Eric Bellinger; Thomas Rhett and Lauren Daigle with Blessing **Offor**. If you're looking for **Jelly Roll** tickets — too late—it's already sold out. Tickets range from \$35 to \$100; available at e-tix.com. ■

FILM REVIEW BY DAVID ROWLEY

'American Fiction' explores racism, identity and the commodification of Black narratives

Despite addressing serious topics, the film's tone is comedic.

Cord Jefferson's directorial debut, "American Fiction," is a delightful movie that transcends conventional storytelling. It's fueled by an exceptional cast and enriched by its exploration of identity, family dynamics and the challenges faced by Black creators in the creative industry.

Adapted from Percival Everett's 2001 novel "Erasure," the screenplay intelligently explores racism, identity and the commodification of Black narratives. Harvard-educated professor and published author, Thelonious "Monk" Ellison (Jeffrey Wright), is a bitter, prickly man. He can't find an audience (other than adoring academic critics) for his most recent book, he's grown tired of the students in his class, and, on top of all of that, he is forced to take a sabbatical after a classroom kerfuffle caused by his students brings him back home to visit his family — a task he dreads more than being forced to spend time with his students and colleagues.

During an already less than desired visit home, Monk is met with a tragedy that forces him to care for his mother, Agnes (Leslie Uggams), who is struggling with Alzheimer's. That task is made exponentially more difficult with the little support he receives from his recently divorced and out brother, Cliff (Sterling K. Brown), who, when given the choice, prefers to play with his boy-toys than assist Monk in their mother's

More than anything, Monk wishes to write books that change people's lives; instead, he's met with rejection after rejection, sitting on the sidelines while America opts for titles like Sinatra Golden's (Issa Rae) debut novel "We's Lives In Da Ghetto," a book written in Ebonics that he views as perpetuating stereotypes of African Americans.

Monk being Monk, he can't get over the fact that people would prefer a trashy novel to his passed over book. In response to the reception that Golden's novel has received, Monk writes a parody of black culture titled "My Pafology" under the pseudonym Stagg R. Leigh and forces his agent to submit it with the expectation that the book will never see the light of

The opposite occurs, and Monk's joke novel is feted by salivating white gatekeepers of the publishing industry, optioned to be adapted into a movie, and all of America wants to meet the man behind the pages. "The dumber I behave, the richer I get," he complains to his agent. He reluctantly pulls a "Bamboozled" (Spike Lee, 2000), and what follows are laughs, tears and everything in between as Monk attempts to



"American Fiction" R | 117 minutes

Director/Writer: Cord Jefferson Stars: Jeffrey Wright, Tracee Ellis Ross, John Ortiz

balance his family dynamics, relationships and being a celebrity that no one can know about.

The story is as much a comedy as it is a thorny existential character drama about a writer who feels unseen yet never makes himself vulnerable enough for people to truly see him. Wright is note-perfect as Monk, alongside stellar contributions from Tracee Ellis Ross, Sterling K Brown, Issa Rae and Leslie Uggams. Each actor brings a unique energy to the respective roles, contributing to the authenticity of the characters. The chemistry among the cast members is palpable, creating a cohesive ensemble that elevates the

Despite addressing serious topics including issues of racism and identity within the media, the film's tone is comedic, and the film is often genuinely funny in a laugh-out-loud way. The laughs are genuine and create conversation about the film's message, particularly using satirical and ironic humor throughout.

Cristina Dunlap's cinematography captures the organic spaces and emotional intricacies of the characters. The film's visual richness, complemented by a carefully chosen soundtrack, elevates "American Fiction" to becoming a vessel not only for fostering empathy but bridging the culture gaps in understanding.

Earning its audacious title, the plot of "American Fiction" is as well-crafted as its metaphors. Before it is finished, Black stereotypes and the tone-deaf white efforts to embrace them have fallen under its satirical scalpel. So have the worlds of academia, publishing and Hollywood moviemaking. Its humor is smart and sly while exposing the absurdity of a society struggling with communication and authenticity. It's no coincidence that Monk shares his last name with author Ralph Ellison, whose "Invisible Man" helped usher in the Black American literary renaissance of the 1950s and 1960s. ■

PREVIEWS BY DAVID ROWLEY

"Madam Web"

PG-13 | 116 minutes Director: S.J. Clarkson Writers: Matt Sazama, Burk Sharpless, Claire Parker



Stars: Dakota Johnson, Sydney Sweeney, Isabela Merced "Meanwhile, in another universe..."

A reality separate from the sacred timeline of the MCU, "Madam Web" promises to deliver less of a typical superhero movie than a suspense-driven thriller.

In a switch from the typical genre, Madame Web tells the standalone origin story of one of Marvel publishing's most enigmatic heroines. Dakota Johnson stars as Cassandra Webb, a paramedic in Manhattan who may have clairvoyant abilities. Forced to confront revelations about her past, she forges a relationship with three young women destined for powerful futures ... if they can all survive a deadly present.

"Lisa Frankenstein"

PG-13 | 101 minutes Director: Zelda Williams Writer: Diablo Cody Stars: Kathryn Newton, Liza Soberano, Jenna Davis



Focus Features' Lisa Frankenstein. A teen rom-com by way of Edward Scissorhands and Sweeney Todd, the story follows the very complicated existence of Goth misfit, Lisa Swallow (Kathryn Newton), at both home and high school. When she's gifted the man of her dreams via some very sketchy means, Lisa comes out of her shell. Featuring the tagline, "a coming of RAGE love story," Lisa Frankenstein is an ode to the 1980s and those Goths that never quite fit into the mainstream. From the mind of screenwriter Diablo Cody, Lisa Frankenstein is a misunderstood teen facing a lot of life changes. She's a loner who spends most of her time in a graveyard daydreaming about a dead prince charming (Cole Sprouse). After a set of playfully horrific circumstances bring him back to life, the two embark on a murderous journey to find love, happiness... and a few missing body parts along the way.

"Argylle"

PG-13 | 139 minutes Director: Matthew Vaughn Writer: Jason Fuchs Stars: Sofia Boutella, Henry Cavill, Dua Lipa



"Argylle" concerns Elly Conway

(Bryce Dallas Howard), an introverted spy novelist who seldom leaves her home. A very unassuming lady, Conway's life is thrown into chaos when she is drawn into the real world of espionage and the plots of her books get a little too close to the activities of a sinister underground syndicate. When Aiden (Sam Rockwell), a spy, shows up to save her (he says) from being kidnapped or killed (or both), Elly and her beloved cat Alfie are plunged into a covert world where nothing, and no one, is what it seems. Turns out her books have aligned with actual elements of real spy missions, and that's caught the interest of many interested parties, including a villainous figure played by Bryan Cranston. ■

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ART NEWS

Jeff Fleming's 'Absurdities'

Soft gray and white renderings of the artist's "memories and experiences"

BY JIM DUNCAN

"We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon." - Percy Bysshe Shelley

Jeff Fleming paints "absurdities," delightful, sometimes ghostly, works on canvas using gesso, India ink, white charcoal and pencil. The effect is that of a chalkboard used over and over again. To demonstrate that ongoing Geist, a very large wall drawing in the show will be redone and continued as the show goes on.

Besides the wall drawing, there are 18 paintings on canvass and 10 on paper. All are soft gray and white renderings of the artist's "memories and experiences." Some look like photographic negatives, others like positives.

"I always thought the work I did as a curator and director was creative finding the artists, putting together an exhibition, working with designers on publications. But that was not particularly personal. This is very personal all based in my memory and experience," said the Des Moines Art Center's former director.

His media facilitate the process of making memory visible. After all, memories are, often surprisingly, mutable. So why would they be rigidly fixed on canvas or paper? All the works in the show are from either 1980 or 2023.

Fleming calls the three pieces from 1980 "a return to where I began." "Bird and Turtle" depicts the small Carolina town where Fleming grew up. "Cow and Bill" is also from 1980 and depicts a naked man joining a herd of cows.

"That was a memory from my first trip to Europe. Coming from a small Carolina town, though I was by then living in New York City, the experience of Europe was memorable to say the least. These (paintings and drawings) are all tidbits of my memory," he explained.

The artist says his cloud paintings are all positives, and most others are negatives. He is particularly proud of the two figurative works in the show that are rhapsodies on a theme by Masaccio (Tommaso di Ser Giovanni di Simone), the mercurial painter who is considered the first artist of the Quattrocento (1400) that linked the Late Middle Ages to the High Renaissance. He died at 27 but had in just six years transformed Florentine painting.

"Adam" and "The Baptist" are Fleming's reflections on seeing Masaccio's frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel in Florence, first in 1980 and most recently just two years ago when a friendly curator from the Art Institute of Chicago arranged for him to view them up close and personally from scaffolding.

"The works are both drawings and histories of the progress of the drawings." Like memories of our experiences.



Wall painting in progress



"Cow and Bill"

News

Steven Vail Fine Arts (304 15th St.) has acquired some Salvador Dali works. They include his famous self-portrait with magnifying glasses and "Papillon Toreador," the butterfly matador.

Des Moines Art Center will premiere "States of Becoming," an exhibition of African artists working in America and the process of cultural assimilation, on Feb. 10.

The Jewish Museum (New York) received rave reviews for "Mood of the Moment: Gaby Aghion & the House of Chloé." That is an exhibition of the Egyptian woman who hit Paris fashion like a thunderbolt in 1952.

Chicago's Field Museum has pulled all displays of cultural artifacts by Native American tribes following a change in federal regulations. The Feds now require museums to gain consent from tribal leaders before showing objects that have ties to ancestral heritage.

Elton John is selling 900 items from his former Atlanta penthouse on Feb. 21. The collection is expected to fetch \$10 million. Highlights include: his Yamaha grand piano on which he wrote the hit Broadway shows "Billy Elliot" and "Aida" (\$50,000); Julian Schnabel's portrait of John (\$300,000); and a Banksy triptych of a masked man throwing a bouquet of flowers (\$1.5 million). The singer's iconic sunglasses, initialed silver platform boots, and a 1970s ivory and gold costume are also offered.

IOWA ARTISTS BY JACKIE WILSON

Alcohol ink artist

Keri Jo Storjohann uses intuitive techniques to create a joyful sense of peace.

Pouring three drops of yellow, teal and magenta ink on thick paper might not resemble much of an art piece. Yet, for Keri Jo Storjohann, once she begins manipulating the ink with a drop of alcohol, splotches of paint suddenly turn into flowers, the sun or a dreamy white tunnel.

Storjohann is an alcohol ink artist with Keri Jo Fine Art. She applies the colored ink and drips alcohol on the paper. Instead of applying with a paintbrush, she uses an airbrush, a hair dryer or blows through a straw. These techniques create shapes where the colors bleed together, forming unique, muted colors.

"It's a very intuitive process," she says. "If I don't like the color, I add more alcohol. You never know what it will turn out like once it dries."

After examining the piece, she might add dots with other paint, crackle or modeling paste. Each painting is unique.

"People see different things, such as a face. One person who bought a painting called me to say, 'Did you see the dog in there?' It's neat when people see something





One vision she found recurring in her work is an image of a tunnel of white light. The image is significant, as she suffered a near-death experience that changed her

Storjohann was 17 years old when she was in a car accident. She suffered severe injuries, and her heart stopped twice.

"The first time I saw myself in intensive care, and I looked down at the doctors putting paddles on my chest," she recalls.

The second time in surgery, she went through a white tunnel.

"I was given a choice whether I wanted to come back. At first I said no," she recalls. "Then I had a conversation with the angel or spirit."

She says the images of the white tunnel convey peace in her paintings.



"You feel it — the near death experience — the rest of your life," she reflects. "It shows up in how you view life."

Storjohann has sketched and painted most of her life. After graduating with a degree in technical illustration, she aspired to illustrate for Disney. Instead, she did catalog drawings for John Deere in the Quad Cities. She also worked in advertising and currently owns her own marketing company.



As an empty-nester, she ramped up

her artwork after her kids moved away from home. She applied for juried art shows, feeling surprised and ecstatic when they accepted her work. While art shows are challenging, it allows her to make friends and talk with attendees.

Storjohann scoffs when others suggest she rent a studio outside of her home.

"I'd lose my momentum if I had to go somewhere to paint. It's meditative, and I lose hours while painting," she reflects. "It's very energizing and fuels my soul."

She creates various commissioned pieces. After the person explains their desired colors and theme, Storjohann paints three unique artworks to choose from. Whenever the painting is completed, she wishes for one sentiment from the art buyers.

"I want people to feel happy and a joyful feeling sense of peace whenever they see my artwork," she says. ■

Find answers at www.dmcityview.com/the-games

SILLY SAILING

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- enforcement? 25 Finales Makes mother's milk 26
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- Defectively built flat-34 bottomed boat?
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- Just barely 48 Indian state known for silk
- 49 United 50 In a smoothly elegant way 126 Bert's pal 53 Neon, e.g. French mime master
- High-sterned ship orbiting Earth? "Brooklyn Nine-Nine" star 130
- Andy Central Canadian tribe
- members 67 Upscale hotel quarters
- Small combo Discovering a sharpbowed rowboat?
- 74 Safe, at sea Do a tally of

- 77 "Get what I'm sayin', man?"
- Zealous Paint a passenger ship? Soapmaking solution 83
- 86 Auditing org. 87 Message on a tombstone Kabuki sash 89
- 90 **Enthusiasm** 95 Prison, in London Very fast ship decorated
- with shrubbery? Coll. reunion attendee 102 Father Sarducci of old
- 3-Down 104 Quick-witted 105 Racing boat with lots of mollusks attached?
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- 118 Reproductive organs 120 Sub-sinking ship full of aguariums?
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- 28 "-- may be so bold ..." 30 -- Raton 31 Lovers' deity Neighbor of Thailand 32
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- 101 Fidgetiness 42 Welsh canine 102 Valuable rock 103 Long, loose outerwear 43 Mom's bro 44 Ball supporter 106 Nitpickers split them Org. for cavity fillers 45 107 Olympic skier Mahre 46 Doc's warm treatment 108
- "For" votes Like thrift store goods -- facto 52 Sly deception Prices to play
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Gold-fancying king

Torres with 12 Olympic

"Guilty" or "not guilty"

Onetime TV host Philbin

swimming medals

Debut on Wall St.

Woofing pet

Actor Vigoda

regulations

Mining strikes

Peace treaty

Big inits. in SUVs

Certain deer leather Hamlet's duel opponent

Sprayed, with "down"

110 Mining strikes

112 Electric car producer

117 Investments for later yrs.

116 Sicilian resort city

121 Suffix with budget

119 Home: Abbr.

111 Downed

Olympic skier Mahre

Meeting building

Boxers' event

Waffle brand

No, to Nikita

Antique item

"Hooray!"

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92 Tater Head, in Metz

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"Just because he resembles you _, it doesn't mean he's guilty . '

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SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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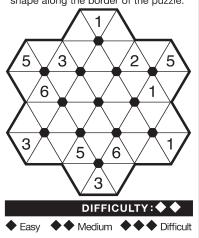
Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine

DIFFICULTY: ◆

♦ Moderate ♦ ♦ Challenging ♦♦♦ HOO BOY! © 2024 King Features Synd., Inc

GO FIGURE!

There are 13 black hexagons in the puzzle. Place the numbers 1 - 6 around each of them. No number can be repeated in any partial hexagon shape along the border of the puzzle.



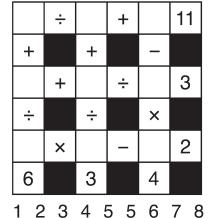
© 2024 King Features Synd., Inc

by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★★★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult *** GO FIGURE!



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WHAT THE...

Think you're funny?

Send us your best caption...

Email to celeste@dmcityview.com — **BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME**Next month's photo:



PHOTO COURTESY OF GRATISOGRAPHY

This month's winner

"Karen got the highlights color bottles mixed up."

— Teresa Hamilton



PHOTO COURTESY OF GRATISOGRAPHY

Runners-up

A time traveler from 1969 thought people would be more civilized and wise by 2024. She was shocked."—Howard Rye

"One too many political ads." — Bill McCoy

"Carrot Top's mother delivers in historic underwater birth!"

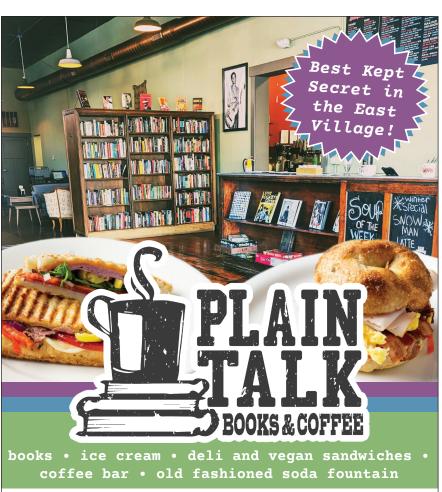
— L.C. Liston

"Finally, Emily shows her true primary colors." — Dennis Moore

"Virtual gaming has gotten completely out of control."

— Frank Schwartztrauber





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JOE'S NEIGHBORHOOD BY JOE WEEG

Bad luck as... comedy?

A knitting needle in your tushy.

Bad luck is bad luck. True enough. But there are certainly different types of bad luck. There's the really bad luck of being in the wrong place at the wrong time, and it's a matter of life or death. Like getting trapped by a falling boulder and having to cut off your arm to survive. Ouch, that's what happened to motivational speaker Aron Ralston. Or the bad luck of being caught out in a winter storm with no visibility and freezing winds and having to hold onto an ice-covered rope to get from the barn to the house, aka "Little House on the Prairie." Who wants that? And it is certainly bad luck to stumble upon a bull shark that travels 700 miles up the Mississippi River only to snack on you during Shark Week. That's such bad luck that it weirdly seems like just desserts — for the shark.

But then there is the other kind of bad luck that's just... mildly unlucky.

The cry comes from upstairs.

"Joe, can you come fast," my wife said in a high voice, tinged with controlled panic.

I do, and I find my wife with a knitting needle sticking in her butt.

By the way, my very precise granddaughter informs me that I cannot say the word "butt."

"Really, Juliette, so what can I say? Derriere? Fanny?"
"No, grandpa, 'tushy.'"

OK, folks, there's a knitting needle sticking in my wife's tushy (a very skinny, U.S. size 1 — for you crazy knitters out there).

You are probably not very sympathetic to this scenario. But knitting needles are long and sharp and are essentially a stiletto knife, which is automatically considered a "dangerous weapon" under Iowa Code section 702.7. And there's a reason for that.

"Stilettos were developed in late Medieval and Renaissance Italy as anti-armour knives. The slenderness of a stiletto blade focuses the force of the attack into a tiny area, which multiplies its pressure enormously. This means it could pierce plate armour or cut through chain mail rings."





Yup, a knitting needle is an anti-armour weapon just waiting for an unsuspecting knitter to blindly impale herself or himself.

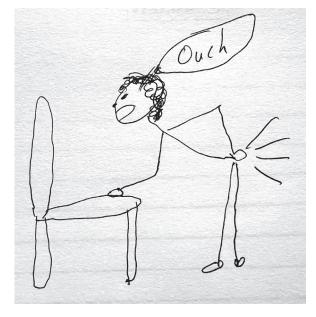
In fact, a search online revealed how dangerous this dangerous weapon can be. The British Medical Journal reported a fatal brain injury caused by a baby rolling off a changing table onto a knitting needle. ABC News reported a knitting needle piercing a woman's heart after she tripped on the stairs, And the Journal of Cardiothoracic Surgery reported a knitting needle ascended the body of a woman for 33 years after a self-induced abortion. My goodness, who knew? Story after story after story. And I don't even count all the articles about knitters poking themselves in the thigh. That seems like a prerequisite to even being called a knitter.

OK, a knitting needle is no joke.

But a knitting needle in your tushy?

In a few days, it will be 43 years since I married my wife. It was a forced marriage, of course. Forced by me. Here's a surprise for my reader, I am not quite the catch my wife is. Therefore, I had to propose quickly (two weeks after we met) so as to lock down the sale before my wife could reflect on my personality and good looks and her future in-laws. So I tread lightly in the arena of wife humor. But...

... a knitting needle in the tushy? I wanted to take a photo, but my guardian angel cautioned against that clever idea. And I wanted to suggest we call the neighbors and charge admission. I might have done so in the early years of our marriage, but 43 years later? Perhaps too soon. So I bit the inside of my lip and treated the puncture wound, as any good husband would do, and bided my time. Well, I've bided long



enough.

But now I'm having second thoughts about becoming Mr. Jokester. I remember back in law school an old professor would always ask us students to consider "whose ox is being gored?" In other words, who is really paying the price for what happened. Isn't the person with the knitting needle in their tushy really the one being gored? How dare I make fun of someone else's pain? Particularly if that someone is my sweetie?

"Knock, knock.

TV/1 -> .1 - 2

Who's there?

Needle.

Needle who?

Needle a little more target practice before your next sweater."

Yup, I crack myself up.

Joe (formerly married to Theresa) ■

Joe Weeg spent 31 years bumping around this town as a prosecutor for the Polk County Attorney's Office. Now retired, he writes about the frequently overlooked people, places and events in Des Moines on his blog: www.joesneighborhood.com.











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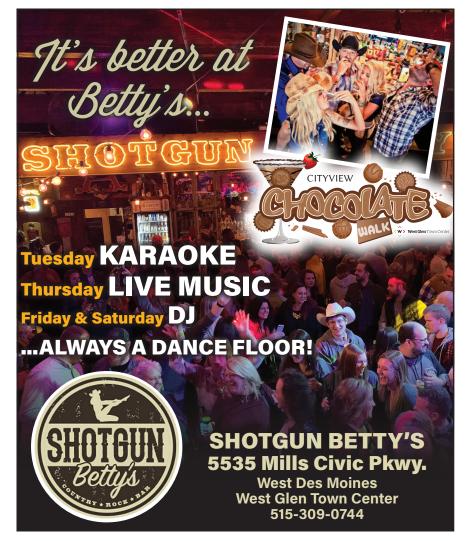


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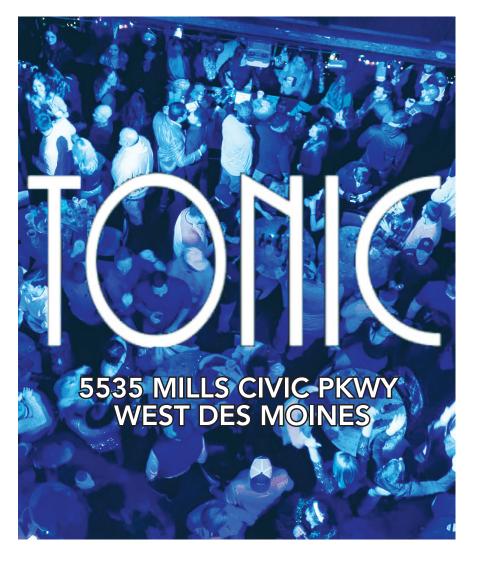
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CENTER STAGE BY JOHN BUSBEE

From stage famine to performance feast

It's time to sally forth and appreciate what's happening on stage.

February stages come to vibrant life, enticing winter dwellers from their cozy confines. A tantalizing range of shows spans from classic to comedy to musical to children's theatre as the region's talent focuses on a bounty of shows to savor. Ballet Des Moines even brings another world premiere to the stage as they continue their nationally acclaimed engagement of new patrons to the powerfully expressive "language of movement." Acclimating to winter weather has happened. Now, it's time to sally forth and appreciate what's happening on stage.

The diversity of regional productions being offered suggests that companies are doing excellent work at not only listening to what their audiences desire, but also what fits into a well-rounded regional offering of shows. "Our Town," "Equus," "Company," "The Odd Couple" (Female version), and "Les Miserables" anchor February's shows, an eclectic selection of drama, musicals and comedy.

"Our Town" graces the Playhouse stage. "Our Town" was created by Thornton Wilder in 1938. Described by Edward Albee as "the greatest American play ever written," it presents the fictional American town of Grover's Corners through the everyday lives of its citizens. I have always had a great appreciation for this script and how it resonates with audiences. My nephew, T.J. Sullivan (as "Joe Crowell") made his Broadway debut in the 2002 production starring Paul Newman. A sixth production of "Our Town" on Broadway is planned for later this year. This show should be on everyone's bucket list of live performances to see, and the Playhouse production should be a gem.

"'Our Town' is set in the early 1900s, but it's an enduring play because it reminds us of what makes us human and that we must soak up every wonderful moment of our lives while we can," shares its director, Katy Merriman. "It is simple, beautiful, and meant for anyone and everyone to hear."

With a boldness that reflects the spirit of Tallgrass Theatre's annual Dream Project, "Equus" is Peter Schaffer's story of a psychiatrist who attempts to treat a young man who has a pathological religious fascination with horses. Nominated in 1975 for five Tony Awards, winning Best Play and Best Direction of a Play, this production is not for young people nor the faint of heart, but is for cultural adventurers and connoisseurs of great playwrighting. Any use of recording devices during this show is strictly prohibited due to the show's nudity and content.

"It fits perfectly with our Sarah Frank and Jack



The classic play, "Our Town," comes to life at the Des Moines Community Playhouse Feb. 2-18. Emily (Jula Spera) and George (Derek Steffen), two of the special residents of Grover's Corners. Photo by Brent Isenberger Photography

Balcombe Dream Project," says Thomas D. Perrine, Tallgrass' artistic director. "I fondly remember a deep discussion I had with Jack and Sarah about this script while TTC was still producing shows at Rex Mathes Auditorium."

Restrictions with that space forced Tallgrass to wait until they moved to their new black box theater, a performing hall perfectly suited for the thoughtprovoking journey Shaffer's script takes its audiences.

Storming into town are two national Broadway tours at Des Moines Performing Arts. "Company" is the winner of five Tony Awards, including Best Revival of a Musical, which, as Variety says, "...strikes like a lightning bolt. It's brilliantly conceived and funny as hell." Cameron Mackintosh's timelessly irresistible "Les Miserables" will always be an exhilarating experience, whether for the first or the 51st time.

Two great family shows are on the docket, perfect for getting the young ones out to experience live theatre as presented by their peers. These familiar stories will give parents and grandparents the chance to chat about the stories beforehand and lead to lively discussions afterwards. CAP (Class Action Productions) Theatre brings "The Music Man Jr" to life on stage, and Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre presents the musical adaptation of "Finding Nemo Jr." Both shows are a shorter presentation length, suited for the less patient and younger patrons of the arts. These two companies have become springboards for many students to engage in learning about theatre arts, whether as patrons, actors or in production roles.

Spicing up this short month, long on live performance arts, are several one-off gems. Ballet Des Moines, under the artistic direction of the

OVERHEARD IN THE LOBBY

Des Moines Community Playhouse

Feb. 2-18. "Our Town"

Tallgrass Theatre Company

Feb. 2-11. "Equus" (The 9th Annual Frank and Balcombe Dream Project)

Tallgrass Theatre Company

Feb. 4. "Broadway Karaoke"

Des Moines Performing Arts

Feb. 6-11. "Company"

Ankeny Community Theatre

Feb. 9-18. "The Odd Couple" (Female Version)

Once in a While Productions

Feb. 9, 11, 14. "The Vagina Monologues" (at The

Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre

Feb. 9-18. "Finding Nemo Jr"

CAP (Class Act Productions) Theatre

Feb. 16-25. "The Music Man Jr"

Iowa Stage Theatre Company

Feb. 19. "Grand Horizons" (Scriptease – play reading at TeeHee's Comedy Club)

Ballet Des Moines

Feb. 22. "Love Letters" – a sneak peek of this world premiere, Beer & Ballet at Big Grove **Brewery & Taproom**

Des Moines Performing Arts

Feb. 27 - March 3. "Les Miserables"

Des Moines Performing Arts

Feb. 27 - March 17. "Dixie's Never Wear a Tube Top While Riding a Mechanical Bull"

uber-talented Tom Mattingly, gifts the region with a world premiere valentine - "Love Letters." A popup company, Once in a While Productions, raises awareness through their production at The Garden, "The Vagina Monologues." The irreverent, irrepressible comedy of Dixie Longate returns for another run of hilarity as the Temple Theatre will reverberate with gales of laughter in her "Dixie's Never Wear a Tube Top While Riding a Mechanical Bull." Add a script reading and some Broadway karaoke, and this month will deliver plenty of chances to shake off the winter doldrums through a wealth of performing arts entertainment.

John Busbee is a creative project developer, critic, playwright, author, producer and media professional. He has produced his weekly show, The Culture Buzz, on KFMG since 2007.





Subaru Crosstrek

All-wheel drive is ideal for an adventure destination or navigating the parking lot.

BY JACKIE WILSON

With Iowa in full swing in winter driving conditions, it's easy to criticize your current ride's ability to handle snow drifts, slick spots and unplowed paths.

If your car didn't quite make it in the latest blizzard, you might want to consider an all-wheel-drive vehicle, such as the Subaru Crosstrek. The sub-compact SUV Crosstrek debuted 10 years ago with a full redesign for 2024. The model test driven, a sapphire blue pearl in the Limited Trim edition, rings in at \$35,405.

Fortunately, I test drove it before the big blizzard. After a bit of research, along with the salesman's expert tips, I learned why the Subaru does so well in varying road conditions.

The biggest feature is the all-wheel drive (AWD), which is standard on all Subarus. Vehicles with AWD have better traction in wet snow, loose gravel and icy road conditions. AWD shifts power to all its wheels simultaneously, which provides better acceleration and handling.

The ground clearance of the Crosstrek is 8.7 inches. Ironically, a Chevy Silverado pickup truck is just 8 inches, while an average car is 6.5. A higher ground clearance is better equipped for off-road ventures, snow and uneven surfaces.

The X-Mode with hill descent control gives better traction. The brakes are only applied to the wheels that need it on steep hills.

Another feature of the Crosstrek is its engine. It's not a typical 4-cylinder. Subaru installs boxer engines in its vehicles and has for 45 years. Porsche is the only other vehicle manufacturer that has boxer engines.

So, what's a boxer engine? Imagine Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier going at it, jabbing back and forth. Well that's what the boxer engine does. The horizontal movement of the pistons are like two boxers, throwing punches, but without the black eyes. The boxer engine is lower in the vehicle, which means a lower center of gravity. The lower it is, the more responsive it is when cornering. It also has less vibration than a typical engine and slightly better fuel economy. The Crosstrek gets up to 33 highway mpg with an average of 29, almost as much as any sedan.

There are plenty of safety features, phone connectivity, an 11.6-inch tablet-like touch screen and heated seats. Driving was easy, and the adjustable lumbar support felt good on my too-much-shoveling achy back.

The rear seats are roomy enough for a few adults. A small cargo space expands if you fold down the back seats. Got extra gear? Heave it up on top, as the roof holds up to 700 pounds off the rails.

For even better gas mileage, the Crosstrek goes into auto start and stop mode. The engine stops when it is at a stoplight or while you are waiting for your morning java. Of course, what you save on fuel costs will be quickly offset by that expensive latte.

If you're in the market for a sub-compact SUV, the Subaru Crosstrek checks off all the boxes with regards to price, fuel efficiency and getting up those steep, snowy hills for an adventure destination or navigating the grocery store parking lot.







BY KRISTIAN DAY

The Bock Stops Here

A deep dive into CITYVIEW's Best of Des Moines archives

It's the busiest time of the year at the CITYVIEW offices with our annual BEST OF DES MOINES winners being announced. I thought it would be fun to dive into some of the past BEST OF DES MOINES winners, which means taking a walk into the deep dark tomb that is under the CITYVIEW headquarters.

To find out about past CITYVIEW lore, I had to enter a dark cave filled with booby traps before I found an underground cliff. I walked to the edge and stared into the dark abyss, wondering if man was ever meant to see the bottom or if whatever lived beneath the surface had ever seen the clouds in the heavens. I tied a rope to a boulder and descended into darkness. The further I descended, I saw the remains of an untamed world: a horoscope column by Brock Wommack, an advertisement for Babe's Brewery with the slogan "The Bock Stops Here" and the most upsetting of all... a Coldwell Banker real estate ad for a four-bedroom,

two-story home with a three-car garage for \$175,900 in West Des Moines. What madness is this?

When my feet touched the cold floor, I realized that not since the Knights Templar had man set foot into this hollow tomb of CITYVIEW back issues. I cracked open the lid of the coffin that may have been carved by the same blacksmith who forged the tomb of Dracula. Inside, wrapped in shroud, were the hardbound copies of CITYVIEW dating back to the 1980s. I pulled one out, and it is all the issues from 1993, the year "Jurassic Park" was released in theaters and the year the great flood destroyed our downtown.

On Feb. 24, 1993, CITYVIEW No. 8, Vol. 2 was released with the announcement of the 1993 Best of Des Moines Hall of Fame. I turned the page and saw what I would call the ghosts of the 515. BEST KARAOKE – Billy Joe's Pitcher Show, BEST PLACE TO RENT A VIDEO – Movies to Go, and BEST

ASIAN-CHINESE – Café Su (RIP King). I didn't live in Des Moines in 1993, and I had only checked out Billy Joe's a few times back in 2007 when I attended a midnight screening of "The Rocky Horror Picture Show." I did love Café Su when it was in Valley Junction, but my heart will remain with Kwong Tung Restaurant, which would later win BEST ASIAN-CHINESE in 2009.

The actual history of the BEST OF DES MOINES is a little spotty but dates to the 1980s. That 1993 edition did mention it was the 10-year anniversary but, unfortunately, we believe those issues may be lost to the gods of time. It did include the 1992 BEST OF DES MOINES HALL OF FAME, which included Sears for Best Place to Buy Exercise Equipment for you to hang your laundry on, KGGO's Lou & Larry for BEST RADIO PERSONALITY / TEAM, and the 1992 Greater Des Moines Ruan Grand Prix as BEST





THING TO HAPPEN TO DES MOINES.

Taking a dive into the 2009 BEST OF DES MOINES, I started to see some more familiar names. Along the way, the categories received a massive expansion including BEST PLACE TO CHOW AFTER 2 A.M., BEST ADULT STORE, and BEST PLACE FOR A \$5 LUNCH, which has clearly phased out due to inflation. Movies to Go had been long gone by this point and was replaced by BEST PLACE TO RENT A VIDEO (which simultaneously won BEST LOCALLY OWNED STORE). Since 2009, KFMG Radio has consistently taken home the BEST LOCAL RADIO STATION and BEST VOICE TO TURN YOU ON (paying homage to the great Dic Youngs). In regard to BEST ADULT STORE, I was hoping to see Des Moines come in and support the local mom and pops, but instead they have consistently voted for Romantix, probably due to name recognition.

As I crawled out of the tomb of forgotten CITYVIEW back issues, I turned and sealed it once again. I saw a lot of local heroes now forgotten as I flipped through those pages. I want to say congratulations to all the winners for 2024 BEST OF DES MOINES. Ten years from now, I hope to dust off these pages and tell tales about you to whatever generation is paying attention then.

Kristian Day is a filmmaker and writer based in Des Moines. He also hosts the syndicated Iowa Basement Tapes radio program on 98.9 FM KFMG. Instagram: @kristianday Twitter: @kristianmday









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PERSONALITI

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Behind the scenes with a zookeeper

Amara Austin talks about the ups and downs, excitement and challenges involved in zookeeping.

If you have spent any time in Des Moines, it's almost a certainty you have been to the Blank Park Zoo. It's been open since the mid 1960s and has been home to a countless number of animals throughout the years, courtesy of the zookeepers who work mostly behind the

Amara Austin is the lead bird and reptile keeper at the Blank Park Zoo. She's from Boone, graduated from Iowa State University, and interned at the Big Cat Sanctuary in Texas. Austin spent a lot of her undergrad at Blank, working on education programs, summer camps, early childhood classes and more. After spending time in Minnesota, she rejoined the Blank team for a seasonal position on the bird team, then eventually became a full-time keeper. She is now the lead bird and reptile keeper and has been since August

What originally got her into the zookeeping world?

"I thought I wanted to go to vet school, and then I hit organic chemistry in college and I was like, that's too much for me," she said.

Austin wasn't a big fan of birds before her current position, but the time she's spent with them has changed her perspective.

"All of our birds have such big personalities, and they're all so different," she said. "They're so funny to watch. I think people don't appreciate that about birds, but they're very unique and different from other animals that you might find."

Her passion for the birds at the zoo was evident by the detail she went into about some of her favorite birds she works with. From birds being timid or too friendly, Austin does have one feathery friend that sticks out above the rest.

"My No. 1 favorite is probably our female cassowary, Sydney. I train her, and she just has a very



Amara Austin, second from the right, says being a zookeeper is special, but being able to work with the people on her team makes the experience exponentially more enjoyable. Photo

big personality. Some people are probably like, 'Oh, she's just being mean to you,' and I'm like, 'No, she's just a spunky bird, and she just wants to see what you're doing," Austin said.



Since Austin has spent time in multiple locations, she's been able to work with some "out-of-the-box" animals.

"There were about 31 or 32 bears at that sanctuary in Texas. My favorite was a grizzly bear named Spearmint. He would always sit in his water bowl. He was really cute and was one of my favorites," she said.

Other favorites she has worked with are a bearded dragon named Beaker, giant African millipedes, a white tiger named Arusha that was always "chuffing" (an affectionate sound made by tigers) at her, an Australian wood duck in the Discovery Center, and everyone's favorite, Barnaby, the largest Aldabra tortoise at the zoo that loves neck scratches.

The desire to take care of and watch over interesting creatures is one many people have while growing up. What isn't thought of too often, though, are the difficult challenges that arise in this line of work. Austin mentions handling an upsetting moment with one of her favorite birds.

STOP HIV IOWA

"Our female bush thick-knee, she had collapsed on exhibit one day. It just ended up that she just had a calcium deficiency. We were able to resolve the issue very quickly, but it was really hard for me seeing her in that state," Austin said.

Nevertheless, with the challenges also come successes.

"One thing I was especially proud of, in addition to the training successes, was successfully growing hydroponic barley grass during HPAI (highly pathogenic avian influenza). It provided a great enrichment opportunity for all of our birds, plus it's a great addition to the tortoise diet. I was also able to offer it to four other teams as enrichment for their animals," she said.

While they try to stick to routines as much as possible, it isn't always that simple when working with animals.

"We try to be organized, but the animals definitely throw everything they have at us. We can plan and plan and plan and plan all we want, but the animals are in control. If they decide that they don't want to cooperate that day, then that is just something that we have to roll with. I think definitely being flexible is the biggest part of working at a zoo," she said.



Amara Austin's long-term goal for the field is to become an animal care director. Photo courtesy of Amara Austin.

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PEOPLE & PETS BY JACKIE WILSON

Love for Luca

Sarah Muller says black cats are delightful, not scary.

A litter of kittens, along with their "street cat" mama, was found nearly six years ago under a busy highway bridge.

Hope Animal Rescue of Iowa rescued the mom and kittens, then offered them up for adoption. One black kitten, which looked like it was struck by lightning, caught the attention of Sarah Muller, and she adopted

The kitten, formerly named Bob Seeger, was renamed Luca. Muller explains she learned about a dog named Puccini and then searched for Italian names.

"I came across the name 'Luca' and thought he looked like a suave Italian mob boss," she recalls.

Muller wanted a pet ever since living on her own. She considered getting a dog, yet, at the time, a long work commute meant little time to care for it.

As a child, she had a cat briefly, but her dad was allergic to it and they couldn't keep the pet. She liked cats and searched on the Petfinder app, specifically looking for a black cat.

"Black cats have a bad reputation and don't get adopted. A lot of people think that black cats are bad luck or scary," she says.

As she researched black cats, she discovered they are the least likely pet to be adopted.

"I knew that I wanted to go in that direction," she

Luca likes to curl up but has his 'zoomie' moments.

"I love that he's feisty and fun but never aggressive. He likes to wake up at 2 a.m. running laps around my head," she laughs.

Because she works remotely, with a lot of time at home, she says Luca is "privileged." In addition, three out of four of her coworkers also have black cats.



"At team meetings online, all of our black cats hang out together," she says.

As she acquired Luca from Hope Animal Rescue, she feels it's important to adopt.

"Sometimes the ARL has no place to put cats. There are so many stray cats. There's no need to shop — adopt instead," she recalls the mantra.

If people are unsure of cat ownership, they can test the waters by fostering. Being a foster cat mom or dad offers a temporary home until the cat is adopted.

Muller is also an advocate for pets with owners who are in domestic violence situations. Victims often can't bring pets with them to shelters.



"RedRover places animals in crisis in the interim, when the humans are struggling. Often people forget that animals are impacted by domestic violence and homelessness," she says.

Muller is delighted with Luca.

"He's obviously the cutest cat. He's chill. I couldn't ask for more," she reflects. "Except at 2 a.m. If he would just go back to sleep and not run around."

For more information on fostering cats, visit http:// hopeanimalrescueofiowa.org/; or for resources and assistance for pets in domestic violence situations, visit https://redrover.org/get-help/. ■



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COLLECTIONS & HOBBIES BY CYOTE WILLIAMS

Local Digimon prodigy shares his journey

Antonio Leovan went from watching Digimon as a child to playing the card game on a national stage.



Antonio Leovan

When someone thinks about playing a card game, the typical thoughts come to mind. For the older generations, it could be UNO, spades, rummy, solitaire, and maybe even blackjack for you gamblers. Many in younger generations grew up with a different style of card games, like the seemingly infinitely popular Pokémon or Magic the Gathering. For Antonio Leovan, the choice was Digimon.

Digimon is a Japanese media franchise that encompasses virtual pet toys, anime, manga, video games, films, and, of course, a trading card game. Like many, Leovan's introduction to the franchise came through the show, "Digimon Data Squad." This eventually led to him getting the Nintendo DS game, "Digimon World Dawn," that he sunk countless hours into.

Originally, like many, Leovan started with Pokémon. So, why switch to Digimon?

"I like the gameplay of Digimon compared to other card games," he said. "Digimon is based on a number system from 10 to 0 to 10, called the memory system. You do as much as you can with how much 'memory' your opponent gives you. You're able to attack your opponent as many times as you want, and it doesn't end your turn. You can Digivolve, you can play option cards. All of these can happen while you have enough 'memory' to do it, and once it passes 0, it goes to your opponent's turn."

The newfound passion for the game and its style of play led Leovan to become



Antonio Leovan and the team that joined him at the Digimon National Championships in Los Angeles.

more serious with his hobby.

"I've always been very competitive in what I did," he said. "So when my friend showed me the (Digimon) cards at a Pokémon event I was playing in, within the next few weeks, I started playing with a starter deck I had."

When it comes to his collection, Leovan likes to keep it simple. While he does keep 50 to 100 cards for playing in tournaments or with friends, his dedicated collection is much smaller. He keeps the special cards he's won at regional and national tournaments because of their sentimental value, while opting to sell the rarer, more expensive cards he's pulled from opening packs.

"I'd rather have the money to use for something else than keep it in a binder," Leovan said.

While he didn't have much success in the competitive scene right away, he kept practicing and became better over time. He continued to grow his skillset and became further entrenched in the growing Digimon community in Des Moines.

"It's a very welcoming community for people of any skill level," he said. "We always welcome new players with cards that they need or give advice to help make their decks efficient when playing against others."

Leovan added that people from as far as Cedar Falls and Waterloo have made the trip to the capital city to participate in tournaments they have hosted.

Leovan and his team even made the lengthy trip to the Digimon National

Tournament that took place in Los Angeles last year.

"Nope, I definitely wouldn't have expected that happening at all," Leovan said of the thought he would end up playing in a national tournament.

He earned the invite to nationals by placing first at an in-store championship he traveled to Omaha for, which Leovan says is one of his proudest moments. However, the memory making wouldn't stop there, as he recounts his performance at nationals.

"The most memorable moment was probably making top 16 in the first inperson nationals for Digimon in 2023," he said. "It was the best performance I've had in a trading card game, and I would not have ever expected that I would get that far in the tourney."

Leovan and his team spent months preparing decks, strategies and gameplans for when they reached nationals, which further strengthened the bond he has with his teammates.

"Even the night before nationals happened, it was all testing to figure out what was the right 50 cards to put in a deck to optimize them for all of us to do well in the tourney. Also eating really good tacos at a stand that was right next to the Airbnb we stayed at," said Leovan.

There are several reasons why Leovan wants to convince others to join in on his hobby. He says it is a cheap game to get into. A quick search shows starter decks can go for less than \$20. He also notes the friendly community.

"There are people that will help you understand the game because people want to grow the game to others that have never heard of it," he said. "It's a very welcoming environment." ■



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WALKS OF LIFE

COMPILED FROM THE IOWA LIVING MAGAZINES

Class act

You learn something new every day. Sometimes it's by accident, but sometimes it's intentional. Some people continue their education out of necessity — to maintain a license, for example — while others enroll to further their career or launch a new one. Still others simply want to learn a new hobby or expand their horizons. Whatever the case, the thirst for knowledge knows no age limit or bounds. And plenty of opportunities — in person and online — are out there to quench it.



Kris Hinkeldey Plagman

A master gardener

Kris Hinkeldey Plagman, who has lived in Adel for more than 30 years, works at Drake University, so education is a big part of her life. She recently took coursework to become a Master Gardener.

"Gardening is something I have always enjoyed, so I took the Master Gardner class through Iowa State University Extension," she says.

The Master Gardener program is designed for anyone interested in gardening or horticulture, and the series of courses aims to inspire and educate.

"Anyone interested in learning more about flowers, gardens, trees, pest management, and landscape design can take this course," says Plagman. "Gardening has been on my bucket list to learn more about it," she says.

Her favorite part about the coursework was when she and her fellow Master Gardener group cleaned up the demonstration garden at Dallas County Fairgrounds this fall.

"I loved volunteering with others with the same interests and making our county more beautiful," she says. "I have learned so much more than I ever knew before and will continue to gain more knowledge over the years of attending more classes and working with others."

Source: Adel Living, January 2024; by Chantel Boyd



Shannon Johnston

Slow and steady

To say that Shannon Johnston is busy would be an understatement. Not only is she a wife, but she is also mom to five and employed full time. She had often thought about going back to school and took a few classes here and there.

"I love learning new things and gaining knowledge in whatever I am doing," she says. "As my boys got older, and we started talking about college for them, I decided maybe I should lead by example since I didn't finish the degree I started 20 years ago."

Johnston was nervous going back to school, but she is in it for the long haul, even though it's often hard to find a quiet space or good time to study.

"If I can do it, anyone can," she says. "I don't think we're ever too old to follow our dreams or passions. Even if I never use my degree, at least I can show my children that I will always thirst for knowledge and adventure, and I won't let my fears or age stop me."

Source: Indianola Living, January 2024; by Becky Kolosik



Linda Davis

Free opportunities

Linda Davis of West Des Moines is a fan of the library — and not just for checking out books or movies. She takes advantage of the many adult classes and events offered each month.

In fact, Linda and her son, Tom, often attend classes together. They have enjoyed the music series, adult craft night and educational sessions.

Linda began attending classes at the library when she moved to West Des Moines a year ago. She said she thought attending the classes might be a great way to get out of the house to meet some people. And an added bonus: Most events are free.

"It's like a routine now. We see what is available at the library and plan our month."

Linda says she has met new friends at classes, and it's vital for her to experience new things.

"It's great for mental health and to see a different side than just staying at home," she says. "I'm not a lonely person, but I think you have to work at taking advantage of the opportunities you have. You feel so much better about yourself getting out and doing things."

Source: West Des Moines Jordan Creek Living, January 2024; by Jackie Wilson



Mary Voss

A crafty crew

The Voss family is a crafty crew. They have been crafters since childhood and have continued to expand their skills and interests over the years.

Mary Voss and her husband, Terry, attend monthly woodcarving classes, and Mary and their daughter, Staci Barba, attended Craftcation in California for a week. Demonstration, education and creation have been a big part of Mary's life since childhood.

"I was in 4-H and participated in sewing, cooking, canning, gardening and livestock."

She later was a leader for Staci's 4-H club, and she and Terry spent years helping the local Boy Scout troop while son Jeremy participated.

Now that the kids are grown, Terry and Mary find many ways to scratch "the creative itch." One way is attending Mid Iowa Woodcarvers Club meetings.

"I am relatively new to carving but love to sit on the deck with a carving knife and a piece of basswood," says Mary. "I soon realized that the beauty of this craft is that each finished item has its own personality, and sometimes 'happy accidents' result in the most whimsical pieces."

Source: Norwalk Living, January 2024; by Chantel Boyd

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Harnessing the power of age

5 key benefits of hiring older workers



Helpful tips for your employment search

(BPT) - By Gary A. Officer, President and CEO of the Center for Workforce Inclusion

When you think of new hires, who do you picture? While you may expect applicants to be 20-somethings straight out of college or 30- to 40-somethings making a career change, in reality, you'll likely see more applicants who are older adults. According to a report by the U.S. Special Committee on Aging, workers 55 and older will soon represent 25% of our nation's workforce.

However, just because more older adults are applying for jobs doesn't mean they are getting hired. Many older applicants face ageism during the hiring process. A survey by AARP found that it took older workers who were displaced during the Great Recession twice as long to find a new job than younger workers. The association also found that only 4% of firms have committed to programs that help integrate older workers into their talent pool.

Businesses that ignore this fast-growing workforce segment need to rethink their hiring process. With record-low unemployment numbers, many job openings across industries still need to be filled. But there is a mostly overlooked talent pool readily available — older Americans. Now more than ever, businesses must recognize that older workers bring much-needed experience, emotional intelligence and generational diversity to our workplaces.

Not convinced? Here are five key values older workers offer employers.

1. Problem-solving abilities

Problem-solving is a critical skill that is attained over time. Through their lived experience in the workforce, older workers have accumulated a wealth of industry-specific knowledge they can use to make informed decisions that help your business thrive. More importantly, they can impart this knowledge to younger colleagues, providing mentorship opportunities that benefit the mentors, mentees and the business as a whole.

The result is a more innovative team. A 2018 study by Cloverpop found that multigenerational teams with an age range of 25 years or more (from the youngest member to the oldest member) met or exceeded expectations 73% of the time, while those with a narrow range of less than 10 years did so only 35% of the time.

2. Reliability

Older workers are incredibly reliable. This usually means they are known for punctuality and dependability. You can count on them to show up on time to meetings, meet strict deadlines and provide a consistency that may be missing from your workplace. Best of all, they set a positive example for the rest of the company.

3. Improved team productivity

It's been reported that seven out of 10 workers in the United States enjoy working with people from other generations. Older workers appreciate the creativity of younger workers and younger workers appreciate the value of older workers' experience and wisdom (AARP).

These benefits extend beyond workplace satisfaction, too. Significant profitability and performance gains have been reported for companies that have above-average diversity. For example, according to an AARP report, companies with above-average diversity in age, gender, nationality, career path, industry background and education on their management teams report innovation revenue that is 19% higher and profit margins that are 9% higher than companies with below-average diversity.

4. Adaptability

Older adults have seen technology rapidly change throughout their lifetime. Contrary to popular belief, older workers are adaptable and willing to learn and master new skills and technologies.

The fact is that they've had to adapt quickly to keep pace with the increasingly connected and technology-forward world. These experiences have taught them to effectively navigate change, a valuable asset for businesses across many industries.

5. Low turnover

Hiring and training new employees can cost a company extensive time, money and resources. To reduce turnovers and increase employee retention, businesses should look to hire older workers.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that older workers ages 55-64 have a higher employee tenure rate than their younger colleagues. They typically stay with a company for nearly 10 years, more than three times the rate of workers ages 25-34.

So, while the assumption might be that an older applicant is ready to retire — that is likely not the case. Many older Americans are delaying retirement, unretiring or simply unable to retire and are prepared to stay on board for many years to come.

Age is a value-add, not a detriment

While working for the Center for Workforce Inclusion, I've seen firsthand the benefits of hiring older employees. Embracing age diversity in your workforce can only help to improve your company's overall performance and workplace culture.

We often partner with businesses to help them tap into the talent pool of older workers to achieve successful business outcomes. We also work directly with older job seekers to overcome barriers to employment, develop in-demand skills and secure employment. To learn more about our work and how we can help, visit CenterForWorkforceInclusion.org.



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