

ia



On the Cover:

During a springtime drive through Madison County, photographer Trent Preszler was drawn by the song of a meadowlark, who obligingly posed for this closeup after his open-air aria. See more of Preszler's work on Instagram at [@preszlerwoodshop](#).

Ever Constant, Forever New

Iowa, you continue to surprise me. As a lifelong resident, I've seen your beauty, your power, your quiet dignity and the innate goodness of your people. So why should I be surprised when our editors and contributors produce yet another issue of *ia* magazine that shows new and wonderful elements of this state I thought I knew so well?

Framed by rivers, enriched by glaciers and touched by something divine, Iowa continues to grow. It grows culturally, economically, politically and socially. It grows with the dreams of its youth and the energy of its young adults. It grows with the power of the prominent and the generosity of its philanthropists. It always will.

And that is what we celebrate with each issue of *ia* magazine: stories of Iowa growing — not just growing hogs and corn, but growing stronger, better, closer to our own ideals, generation after generation.

CONNIE WIMER
CHAIRMAN, BUSINESS PUBLICATIONS CORP. INC.

Stories in this issue come from across Iowa, from the banks of the Missouri to the cliffs of the Mississippi. Here's a list of some of the places we'll take you. Enjoy the journey.

AMES
BOONE
BURLINGTON
CEDAR FALLS
CHARLES CITY
CLARINDA
CLEAR LAKE
COLUMBUS JUNCTION
COON RAPIDS
CORALVILLE
DAVENPORT
DECORAH
DES MOINES
DUBUQUE
ELKADER
FAIRFIELD
GREENFIELD
HUBBARD



AROUND IOWA

A curiously creative endeavor; repurposed country schoolhouses; Iowa's natural wonders; whitewater excitement; student filmmakers; surprising fun facts; a celebration of diversity—and so much more.



IOWA MADE

Iowans are an inventive lot, whether they're making kaleidoscopes or vodka, bug repellent or jam.



AN IOWA EDEN

An expansive garden in Ames showcases a dazzling collection of peonies and irises.



CREATION IN TANDEM

Two talents are better than one for Cedar Falls printmakers Tim Dooley and Aaron Wilson.



THE REAL DEAL

Refined yet rustic, Dubuque's Brazen Open Kitchen serves simplicity with flair.



CLEARLY CONTEMPORARY

Every room in this stunning Clear Lake home features a spectacular view of the water.

KEOKUK
KEYSTONE
MADRID
MANCHESTER
MARSHALLTOWN
MASON CITY
MISSOURI VALLEY
MUSCATINE
NEW SHARON
PERRY
POCAHONTAS
ROCK VALLEY
SIOUX CENTER
SPIRIT LAKE
STORM LAKE
WAUKEE
WINTERSET
WHITE ROCK
WOODWARD



98

TOURING HISTORIC HOTELS

These seven restored hotels celebrate their heritage while offering modern-day luxuries.



124

GAME CHANGERS

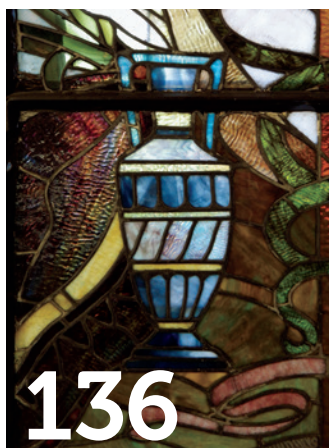
Iowa innovators are developing products that have global reach and impact.



130

SOLUTIONS AS SMOOTH AS ICE

A unique tax credit program supports the growth and quality of Iowa communities.



136

TRAIL OF TREASURES

The eastern edge of Iowa is home to a remarkable collection of stained-glass windows.



148

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

Recreation and conservation share space at Whiterock Conservancy.



154

HELP WANTED

Iowa schools tool up to provide students with skills needed to thrive in the 21st-century workplace. ■



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Peonies star in a showstopping
Ames garden. See story, page 54.
Photographer: Kelly Norris.



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TERRY W. HANDLEY
CEO, CASEY'S GENERAL STORES

We are proud to serve those special places that have provided the work ethic and values synonymous with being from the Midwest. Today – many small towns and rural communities are declining in population due to shifts in jobs, schools and community services. Casey's continues to be a strong supporter of local community activities, projects and events.

Please join us and provide the support and leadership these communities need to grow and flourish. Small towns and rural areas provide a quality living experience.

It is the goal of Casey's General Stores to assist Iowa and other Midwest States in exploring ways that can help these rural communities in building a sense of pride and vision for the future through the traditional can-do spirit of America.

Keep Iowa Beautiful has developed a highly successful assistance program called "Hometown Pride". It provides a five year pledge of financial support and community leadership through a program of professional community coaches. This program has the potential to be replicated throughout the Midwest.

Casey's continues to be a supporter of this great non-profit organization. Join Casey's and Keep Iowa Beautiful in supporting the cultural and economic vitality of rural America.

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A SONG OF OURSELVES

"I am large, I contain multitudes." So wrote poet Walt Whitman in explaining his breadth of sometimes inconsistent thought and his celebration of the natural world around him. So, too, is Iowa, where multitudes embrace the opportunity that each day brings.

In this section, sample the creativity of our state: the work of poets, artists, defenders of the past and visionaries of the future. Enjoy these stories and the chance to learn, to laugh and to appreciate the largeness of Iowa.



The Correspondence Project connects poets and artists in a creative, and unusual, way. See story, next page.
Photographer: Kate Greenstreet.



PROJECT LINKS WORK OF POETS AND ARTISTS

Writer: Liz Lidgett

Two wooden boxes constructed from Iowa walnut have been traveling the United States over the past two years—one box for visual artists and the other for poets. Each time the artists' box is shipped, it bears a 30-pound block of limestone and the tools needed to create images on stone. The poets' box carries sheets of Mylar, nibs and ink.

Artists and poets who receive the boxes are invited to work with these materials, then ship the boxes and their

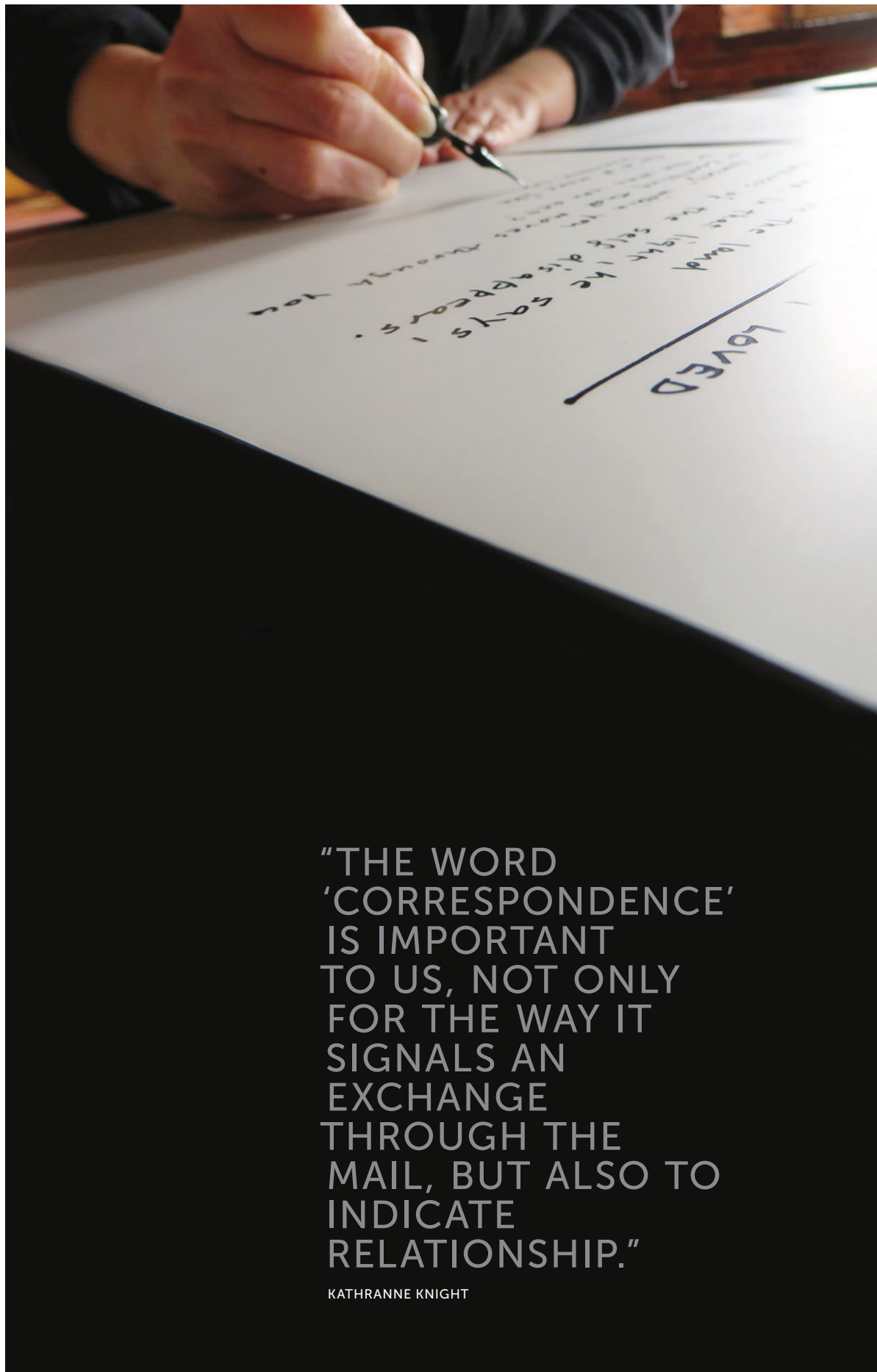
artistry back to Iowa to be combined in lithographic prints for a curiously creative enterprise called the Correspondence Project.

The project began with a \$10,000 grant from the Iowa Arts Council in 2015 and is driven by Ames artist Kathranne Knight, Massachusetts poet Lori Shine and Ames printmaker Asa Wentzel-Fisher.

"The word 'correspondence' is important to us, not only for the way it

Above: Thirty pounds of blank limestone is a hefty opportunity if you have etching skills like those in evidence here. Photographer: Bruce James Bale.

Right: A traditional pen nib presents a similar challenge to someone more poetically inclined. Photographer: Kate Greenstreet.



"THE WORD
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INDICATE
RELATIONSHIP."

KATHRANNE KNIGHT



signals an exchange through the mail, but also to indicate relationship,” says Knight. “The project is not a direct collaboration in the usual sense, but connections are created through the similarities of subject or by descriptive processes that work inside each piece. Each contribution deepens the reading of the other.”

Only 25 prints are created from each mail-order pairing of poet and artist. They’re available through Wentzel-

Fisher’s Ames shop, 505 Press. The project has drawn widespread attention, and Yale University’s Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library will be collecting the whole series of prints, which has no end in sight.

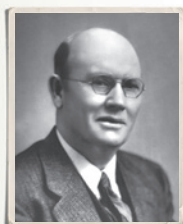
“The boxes are built to last,” Knight points out, “and we like thinking about them traveling to many studios for many years to come, crossing geographic and generational boundaries.”

If you receive one of these wooden boxes, the next move is yours. Your response will be combined with that of some other recipient in a unique bit of Iowa artistry. Photo courtesy of the Correspondence Project.



Our path to success began on a gravel road.

The Hy-Vee story is an Iowa story. And when Charles Hyde and David Vredenburg opened



their first store in 1930, they were driven by a commitment to serving their small community of

Beaconsfield. That even included driving from farm to farm to gather fresh produce for their local customers.

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At Hy-Vee, we're proud to have become one of America's largest grocers. We'll never forget, however, the small-town Iowa values that got us here.



CHERISHED PRESERVATION

Writer: Shawwna Stiver

Julie Lang rings the belfry bell at the Taylor No. 4 Country School in Marshalltown to summon students to their seats. A group of fourth-graders rushes inside to a classroom that has been transformed back to 1913. The re-enactments put on by Lang are part of a growing nostalgia for country schools and a movement to repurpose them.

The first one-room schoolhouse in Iowa, then called a conscription school, was built in 1830, 16 years before Iowa became a state. Parents paid 50 cents to a dollar per child to employ a teacher. The rural schools were spaced no more than four miles apart, ensuring all children would be within a two-mile walk to school. At their peak, more than 13,000 one-room schoolhouses peppered Iowa's countryside, more than any other state in the union.

Consolidation of the schools increased when paved roads and motorized transportation became everyday luxuries. By 1958, the Iowa Legislature had passed a law specifying

that all schools had to be part of a K-12 district, permanently shutting down any remaining country schools.

Today nearly 3,000 of those buildings remain—many transformed into museums, homes or public buildings. Many more were torn down or abandoned. In 1999, the state appropriated \$25,000 a year for grants to repurpose the old schools, the nation's only program dedicated to saving them.

The movement toward repurposing the buildings is enthusiastically embraced by Bill Sherman, Iowa's biggest country school cheerleader. Sherman coordinates an annual

conference on country schools and edited a 1998 book showcasing a history of the state's surviving examples.

"When I talk to people about their experience growing up in a one-room school, those are fond memories," Sherman says with a smile. "They treasured their experience, and they want to share that with children."

Several major repurpose projects are in the works, Sherman says, and he hopes the movement inspires a partnership with working teachers and local historical societies. His ultimate goal is to incorporate the impact one-room schools had on Iowa's history, culture and education into current curriculum.

When Sherman recalls his granddaughter's recent experience in one of Lang's interpretive programs, he gets emotional: "Those girls were just enthralled. That intergenerational experience is wonderful. Going through that kind of an experience is the best way to share history."



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IOWA WILD

Iowa's state parks, preserves, recreation areas and wildlife refuges showcase the beauty and wonders of the state's flora and fauna. How well do you know Iowa's natural areas? Find out by taking this quiz.

1. How many state parks does Iowa have?

- A. 35
- B. 55
- C. 85
- D. 105

2. Maquoketa Caves State Park (*pictured*) near Maquoketa contains more caves, including the popular Dancehall Cave, than any other Iowa park. What other cave can you explore there?

- A. Fat Man Misery
- B. Barbell Cave
- C. Eagle's Nest Cave
- D. Sak Cave
- E. A and B
- F. A and C

3. What feature distinguishes Pikes Peak State Park near McGregor?

- A. The tallest bluff on the Mississippi River
- B. Bridal Veil Falls
- C. Brachiopod fossil remains
- D. Native American burial mounds
- E. B and D
- F. All of the above

4. How was the 772-acre Lake Manwana, the centerpiece of Lake Manwana State Park in Council Bluffs, formed?

- A. A manmade dam
- B. A river flood
- C. A receding glacier
- D. An ancient meteorite
- E. Tectonic movement

5. About how many snow geese stop at DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge during their fall migration between the Arctic and the Gulf Coast?

- A. 100,000
- B. 250,000
- C. 500,000
- D. 750,000
- E. 1 million

6. Which of the following state parks contains a nine-hole golf course?

- A. Wapsipinicon State Park, Anamosa
- B. Waubesa State Park, Hamburg
- C. Twin Lakes State Park, Rockwell City
- D. Lake Ahquabi State Park, Indianola

7. Nestled in the Loess Hills, Stone State Park in Sioux City has been nationally recognized as an "Urban Wildlife Sanctuary." What wildlife *isn't* found there?

- A. Red fox
- B. Wolverine
- C. Wild turkey
- D. Olympia white butterfly
- E. B and D

8. What will you discover at the 1,439-acre Mines of Spain Recreation Area in Dubuque?

- A. A butterfly garden
- B. Ordovician dolomite rock
- C. A wetland
- D. 250-year-old Burr oak trees
- E. B and D
- F. All of the above

Answers: 1. C; 2. E; 3. F; 4. B; 5. C; 6. A; 7. B; 8. F Source: Iowa Department of Natural Resources

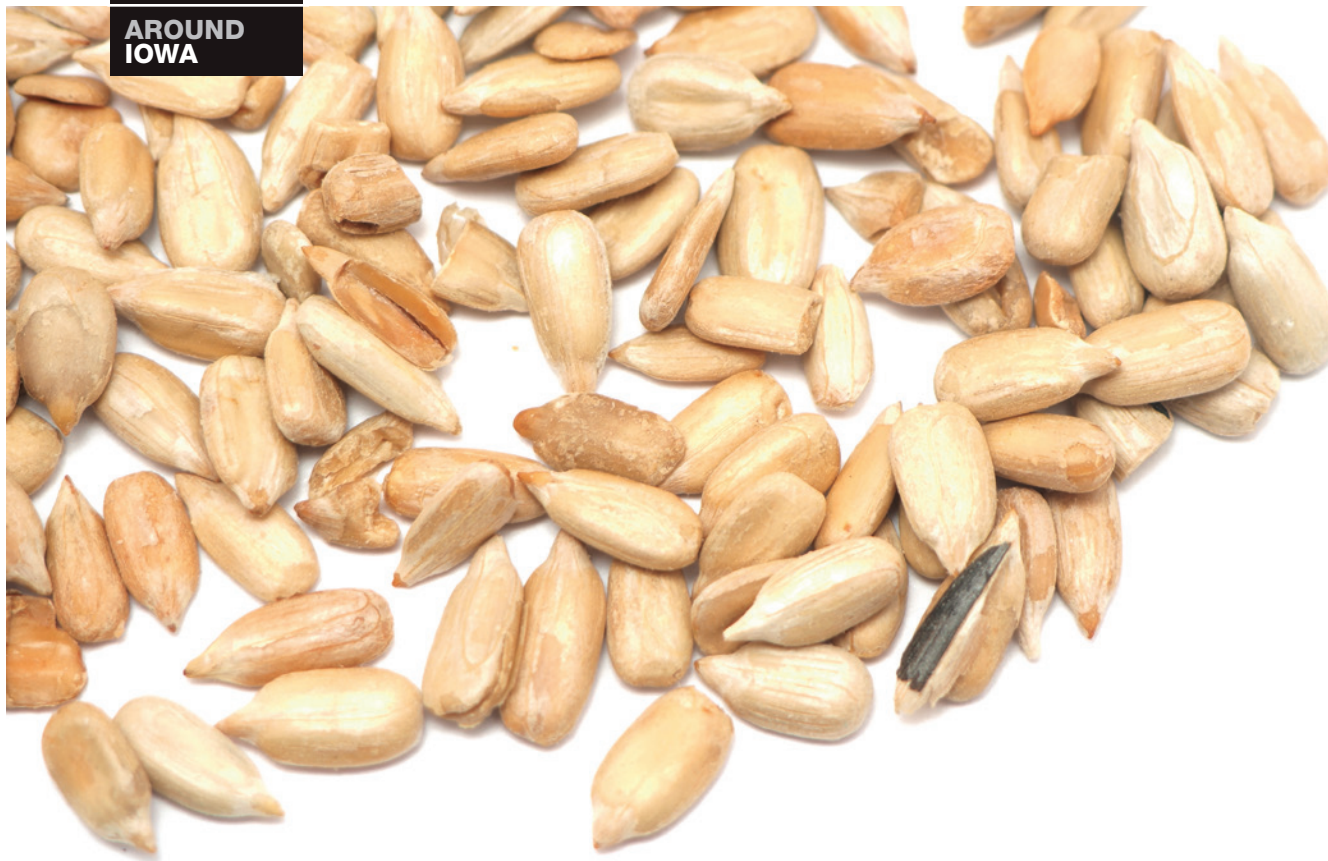
Image: You can explore the land down under at Maquoketa Caves State Park.



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DEEP ROOTS

Writer: Kelly Norris

Iowa may be known for its corn and soybeans, but the state's horticultural richness extends far beyond these row crops. Did you know, for example, that the "Delicious" apple was discovered near Winterset in the early 1880s? Or that today, Iowa has 13 percent of all U.S. flower seed production?

This year is the perfect time to honor such diversity as it marks the 150th anniversary of the Iowa State Horticultural Society, a nonprofit founded to promote and encourage horticulture in Iowa. This hallmark year has provided an opportunity to celebrate the people and plants of Iowa's horticultural heritage at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden and other gardens in the state.

Certainly, growing plants and making gardens in Iowa have changed in the last 150 years. Take lawns, for

instance. Today, gardeners eschew constant spraying or fertilizing their turf, looking instead at organic methods like composting and aeration as more sustainable ways to keep the green. Vegetable gardens are different, too. Almost everyone seems to want one, if they don't have one already. Today, there is a cultural conversation about where our food comes from, instead of assuming it lands fresh in the grocery store. Even our flowers have changed. Roses, once thought to be fussy, grow in mall parking lots, thanks to advancements by breeders to make them durable, free-flowering and easy.

Overall, the state's horticulture industry is valued at \$172 million. Here are a few intriguing facts about the industry's history and impact:

- The "Delicious" apple, originally called "Hawkeye," was discovered as

a chance seedling by orchardist Jesse Hiatt. The fruit we know as "Red Delicious" looks a lot different from its early forebears, but owes its origins to this seminal pome raised from Iowa soil.

- Acreage dedicated to horticulture has jumped some 453 percent since 1950—from about 4,250 acres to around 23,500 acres.
- Iowa has 962 farms that produce vegetables and some 3,000 acres of orchards.
- Today, Des Moines-based Kemin Industries is revolutionizing horticultural crops like marigolds, breeding them for more than just showy flowers. Kemin extracts lutein from marigolds, which it uses in a variety of food preservatives and other products.

Image: Iowa produces 13 percent of the country's flower seeds.

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GROWING FOR GOOD

Writer: Terri Queck-Matzie

The rich bounty of Iowa farmland can yield a bonus crop of charitable giving, thanks to an innovative program called Keep Iowa Growing.

Offered through the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines and its affiliate foundations across the state, the program allows landowners to help fund causes they care about by donating farmland—yet they retain the land and keep it in production. This is unlike most philanthropic giving arrangements, in which a charity converts donated physical assets like land into cash investments.

“The program fit what we were trying to accomplish,” says Bob Vaughn, a Woodbury County landowner participating in Keep Iowa Growing. “We can keep our current tenant and specify the charities we want to receive the benefits.” Funds can be distributed

to a single charity or multiple nonprofits on a percentage or set-dollar-amount basis. The Vaughns have directed their giving toward Christian missions.

With Keep Iowa Growing, the landowner can choose the tenant or land manager, which is important to many landowners, says Sheila Kinman, chief advancement officer for the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines. “There is often a multigenerational emotional connection to the land in Iowa,” she explains. “And landowners and tenants often have a close relationship. Having that current tenant continue to farm the land matters a great deal.”

Gifts of farmland can be made in two ways: The retained ownership option allows landowners to continue to receive farm income for the remainder of their lives yet get an immediate tax

deduction on the donation. Once the landowner dies, the rental income from the land goes to a fund held at the community foundation, which then distributes the money to the causes the landowner had specified. The land stays in production and is managed by Keep Iowa Growing.

The second option immediately transfers ownership of the land to the foundation, which distributes the annual rental income according to the land donor’s wishes. With either option, the donor may qualify for the 25 percent Endow Iowa tax credit and also a federal tax deduction.

“Farmland is Iowa’s largest asset,” Kinman says. “This program keeps the land producing, and supporting communities, for generations to come.”

Want to find out more? Visit keepiowagrowing.org.



PHOTOGRAPHER: TRENT PRESZLER



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WHITEWATER WANDERLUST

Writer: Darrin Cline

Shrieks of glee rise above the burbles and gurgles of the Cedar River. Swept through the rushing churn of the current, kayakers scramble to shore and trek hastily back to the top of the whitewater park that has brought new life—and revenue—to the river that runs through Charles City.

Indeed, the rivers of northeast Iowa have long been renowned for their recreational wealth—a trout fisherman's haven, a paddler's paradise. Charles City is among a few Iowa communities that have added a splash of thrill-seeking to their once-languid streams. In addition, Manchester and Elkader have created whitewater parks and joined in a campaign to popularize the low-risk thrills of whitewater kayaking and rafting in the state.

Charles City led the way in 2006, adopting the idea of a whitewater feature

in the Cedar River as part of a riverfront revitalization. The town created three drops, and a destination, for summer fun-seekers with kayaks, rafts, canoes, even inner tubes. A decade later, in 2016, they hosted two competitive events—The Charles City Challenge: Whitewater Weekend in June and, two weeks later, the Iowa Games, when competitors paddled through a slalom course under sunny summer skies.

After paddling adventures in Wisconsin, two Elkader residents proposed developing the potential of the Turkey River at home. Following a hydrology study, boulders were added to a low dam in 2014 to create a drop appropriately dubbed the “Gobbler Wave.”

Split by the Maquoketa River, Manchester adopted its own whitewater culture as part of a riverfront

development in 2015. The auspicious project features six drops and covers more than 800 feet of river.

Local commerce has felt the benefits of a surge in tourism. Enthusiasts from across the state and as far away as Texas have added Iowa to their lists of destinations for whitewater wanderlust.

Paddling Organizations

Cedar Valley Paddlers
cedarvalleypaddlers.webs.com

Central Iowa Paddlers
centraliowapaddlers.org

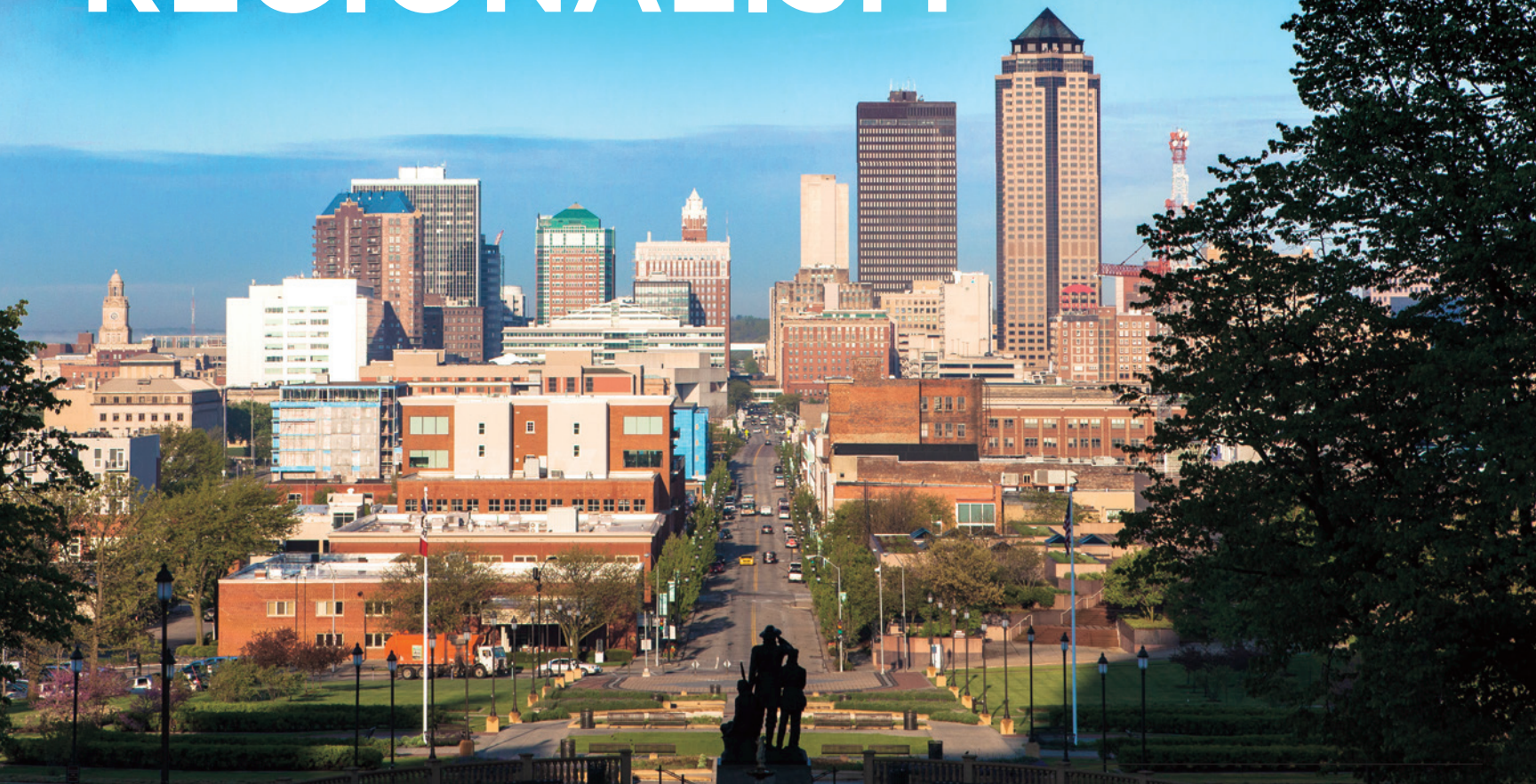
Iowa Whitewater Coalition
iowawhitewater.org

Saukenuk Paddlers Canoe and Kayak Club
rivers-end.org/saukenuk

Skunk River Paddlers
skunkriverpaddlers.org

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#1 Metro with the Most Community Pride — *Gallup*



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JIMINY! CRICKETS?

Writer: Barbara Hall

Cattle low. Hogs grunt. Becky and Jason Herman's livestock chirps. "This is the future of food," she says: crickets. "This is going to solve the human hunger problem."

Before starting their business, Iowa Cricket Farmer, the Hermans learned that more than 70 percent of the world's fresh water usage is for agriculture. "That is not sustainable," Becky says. Many scientists predict a water shortage by 2030, and Becky believes that crickets and other more sustainable sources of protein will help alleviate that.

The Hermans' cricket farm in Keystone is only the sixth in the country

to raise crickets for human consumption, Becky says. It's all indoors, not in barns but in barrel-like bins with egg-carton housing where a thousand bugs nestle cozily per square foot. On this farm, livestock isn't grouped in a herd or a flock; it's an orchestra of crickets. And what an orchestra it is: In a town of 600 people,

**"THIS IS
GOING TO
SOLVE THE
HUMAN
HUNGER
PROBLEM."**

BECKY HERMAN

Iowa Cricket Farmer can have as many as 900,000 crickets on site, with plans that could double that capacity as the appetite for cricket grows.

Nobody suggests replacing your favorite cut of steak with a handful of crickets, although you could. Crickets provide about half the protein of an equal amount of beef. But most agricultural crickets are ground into cricket flour that is added to protein bars, cookies, chips and other snacks that boast of cricket protein on their labels. Good news for home bakers: You can now buy cricket flour. It's even available online, at Amazon.com. Bon appetit.



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Contact your local community foundation
or visit iowacommunityfoundations.org.

Iowa Community Foundations is a collaborative effort of the Iowa Council of Foundations





STUDENTS FOCUS ON THE 'ACTION!'

Writer: Nick Renkoski

Over the decades, Iowa has cast a come-hither look toward Hollywood, batting its corn-silk eyelashes to attract film projects to the state. More recently, however, instead of bringing the next Spielberg feature to the state, Iowa has focused on *making* the next Spielberg. Six schools in Iowa now offer degrees—even a Ph.D.—in various forms of filmmaking, from cinema studies to film acting to cinematography.

As far north as Dordt College in Sioux Center and as far south as Graceland College in Lamoni, students are working toward careers in film. The University of Iowa now offers seven separate degrees, including a master's and a doctorate.

"When Dordt called me in 2005, I said, 'Iowa? Really? Don't you have to be on one of the coasts to do that?'"

recalls Mark Volkers, a photojournalist and documentary filmmaker who responded by creating Dordt's film program, which has sent graduates on to film careers in New York and Los Angeles. One stayed to launch a video company that specializes in shooting weddings.

As Dordt's program has grown, so has the film scene in Sioux Center, which now boasts the annual Prairie Grass Film Challenge, a 48-hour film festival for productions large and small.

The academic boom in film isn't just a local phenomenon. "In some ways, we are in the midst of a golden age of film and television, with a plethora of very fine works being created by independent media makers

from all over the world," says Michael Barnard, program director at the David Lynch MFA in Film at Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield. That's *the* David Lynch, cinematic director extraordinaire, cultivating future filmmakers in Iowa.

But in an age when everyone can make an iPhone movie, Volkers says that education is key. "I ask employers, 'What is the number one thing you're looking for in a new hire?'" he says. "Here's the response I always get: 'We're looking for well-rounded individuals—people who can think, people who are well-read, curious and big thinkers.' That's what you get from a liberal arts education." And students have been getting it here. In Iowa, prospective filmmakers have found plenty of lights, cameras and action.

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REALLY, IN IOWA? WHO KNEW?

“Startling” would be out of character for Iowa, but the state certainly claims its share of surprising facts, including these:

Burlington’s Snake Alley is the **WORLD’S MOST CROOKED STREET**, according to Ripley’s Believe It or Not.

With little more than a bench, a well and scrap of sod, Iowa’s **SMALLEST CITY PARK** is parked in the middle of the road in Hiteman.

Elk Horn is the **LARGEST DANISH SETTLEMENT** in the United States.

Iowa’s **OLDEST CONTINUALLY RUNNING THEATER** is in Story City.

Fenelon Place Elevator in Dubuque is the **WORLD’S STEEPEST AND SHORTEST RAILWAY**.

Wright County has the **COUNTRY’S HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF GRADE-A TOPSOIL**.

Cornell College is the only U.S. school to have its **ENTIRE CAMPUS LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**.

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RAGBRAI, the Register’s Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa, is the **LARGEST BIKE TOURING EVENT IN THE WORLD**. Since 1973, routes have covered 780 Iowa towns in all 99 counties.

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Who’s got you, babe? **THE FOUR MOST-ATTENDED IOWA STATE FAIR CONCERTS** were all in the 1970s, topped by Sonny and Cher, who drew 26,200 in 1972.

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STORM LAKE: A 'MELTING POT THAT NEVER BOILS OVER'

Writer: Art Cullen



Smoke and Mexican arias billow out of my neighbor's garage every Sunday morning as he prepares barbecue for a steady stream of cars that pull up for his unsanctioned fare. Another neighbor, a 75-year-old El Salvadoran grandfather, teaches his grandchildren how to work by raking leaves and planting a garden. Yet another is a teenage Guatemalan Dreamer who was brought here illegally by her parents when she was 6. She wants to go to college at Buena Vista University. Her mother is a maid, her father a carpenter.

This is everyday life in Storm Lake (census population 10,076, more likely 15,000, but nobody really knows), probably the most diverse city in the Midwest.

Here, adults speak about 30 languages or dialects, and 18 languages are commonly spoken in the schools. The public school district enrollment is 81 percent children of color. From Latin America. Burma, Samoa, Sudan, Micronesia and Brazil. And Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Mexican Mennonites who came here by way of Canada—and East Los Angeles and San Antonio and the south side of Chicago.

This is the ultimate melting pot that never boils over.

It started with Gov. Robert Ray and the Iowa Cares program. After the Vietnam War, Iowa resettled thousands



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of Tai Dam refugees from camps in Thailand. In Storm Lake, IBP in 1980 had just reopened an old union Hygrade pork plant as a non-union plant with a core of Tai Dam workers. IBP turned the beef industry on its ear, and it did the same with its first pork plant in Storm Lake. It changed the community permanently.

Now owned by Tyson, the pork plant has tripled in employment from its Hygrade days to about 1,500 workers. The farm boys who used to man the plant were gone as rural areas drained population. IBP and Tyson turned to the southern border for labor. A direct conduit was established between Ayotlan, Jalisco, Mexico, (population 15,000) and Storm Lake. Tyson also owns a turkey plant here that predominantly employs immigrants.

How did the lid not blow off?

First, the school district.

It hired 135 teacher aides, speaking every language available and assisting 170 teachers. Head Start was beefed up to get tots into school with their parents to learn English. A charter school was established to help high school students struggling with English get their diploma in five years and a jump on a college degree through Iowa Central Community College. These students are now welders, nurses, machinists and, yes, teachers in the Storm Lake School District.

Second, the police.

The Storm Lake Police Department has been cited by think tanks as a national model of policing a diverse community. Public notices are printed in Lao, Spanish and English. Two

SOME OF THE LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN STORM LAKE

LAOTIAN
VIETNAMESE
HMONG
CAMBODIAN
AMHARIC
IBO
TWI
YORUBA
BANTU
SWAHILI
SOMALI
CHINESE
FRENCH
DUTCH
AFRIKAANS
APACHE
CHEROKEE
DAKOTA
PIMA
YUPIK
DANISH
NORWEGIAN
SWEDISH

noncommissioned community service officers—one Latina and one Tai Dam—serve as liaisons for 19 commissioned officers in immigrant communities. The department regularly schedules town meetings in immigrant apartment complexes and neighborhoods. They conduct focus groups on how to better serve these clusters. And they do not arrest undocumented immigrants unless they commit some crime other than entering the country illegally. That, more than anything probably, builds trust among people who could not trust government in their homeland.

Third, Iowa neighbors.

Iowa has a rich history of welcoming the stranger, from Prussians escaping war to St. Ansgar, or Waterloo welcoming Bosnians, or the Tai Dam people sponsored by Lakeside Presbyterian Church in Storm Lake when they first arrived—they still have an Asian Christmas party with pad thai and egg rolls.

While 67 other rural Iowa counties are losing population every year, Buena Vista County is growing. Immigrant graduates are filling Lake Avenue's retail sector with clothing stores, the best authentic foreign cuisine anywhere, custom groceries and car dealerships. Latinos and Asians are graduating from Buena Vista University every year and staking their claim next to the families who brought them here.

They are not so different from the Germans and Swedes who broke the sod here. It's just a continuation of the Iowa story at an accelerated pace. Storm Lake grows more invigorating every day. ■

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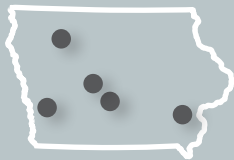
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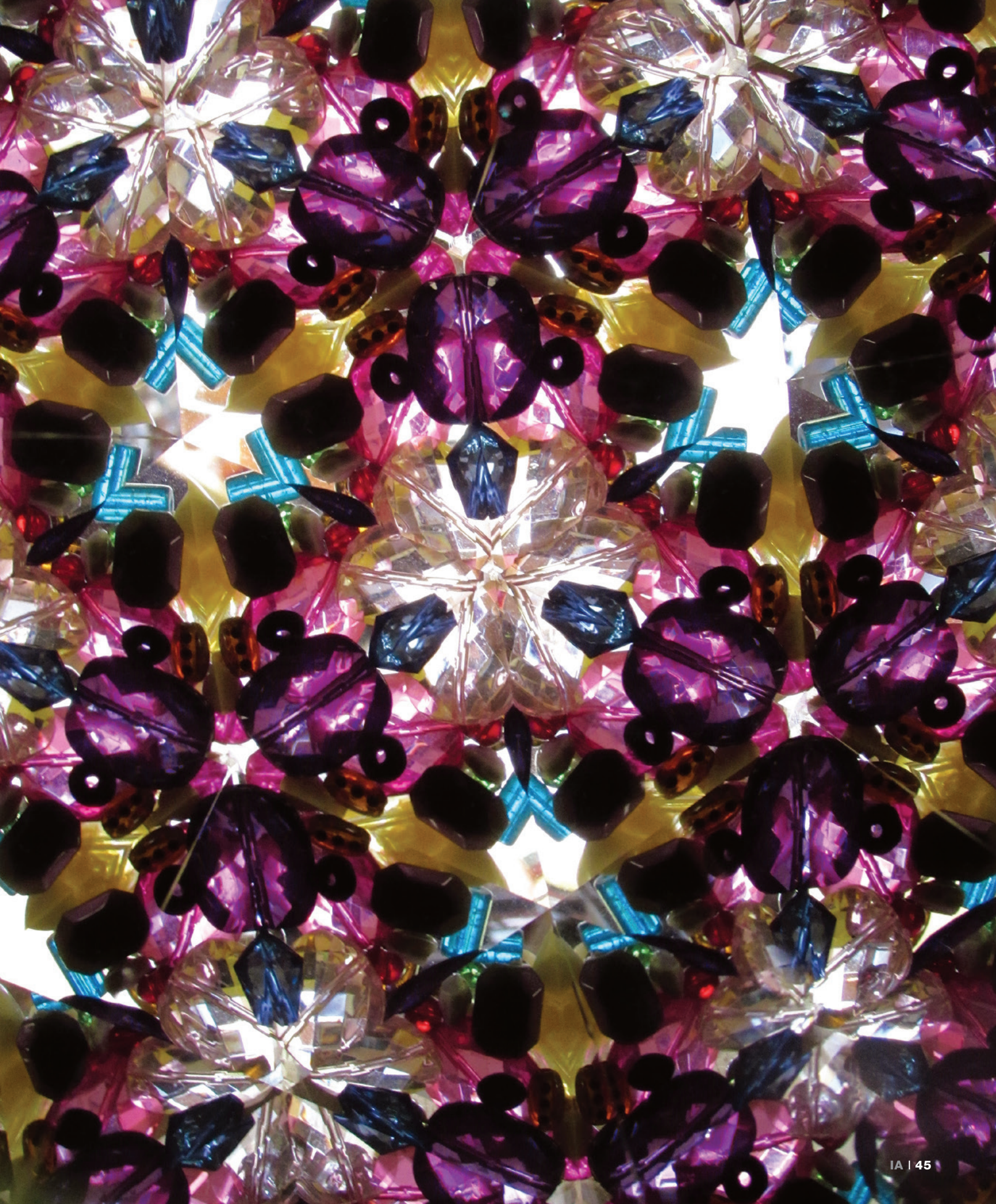
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IOWA MADE

SOLVING PROBLEMS AND SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES,
IOWANS ARE BY NATURE AN INVENTIVE LOT—
WHETHER THEY'RE MAKING KALEIDOSCOPES OR VODKA,
BUG REPELLANT OR JAM.

WRITER: CAROL MCGARVEY

"A kaleidoscope is a vehicle to recapture childhood," says Leonard Olson of Pocahontas. Olson builds dazzling kaleidoscopes encased in exotic woods, delighting viewers who peer into the mesmerizing devices.



Some 13,000 aronia berries got off to a good start in the Pitz family's picturesque land in the Loess Hills.

HOW DO AONIA BERRIES TASTE?
IMAGINE A BLUEBERRY WRAPPED IN
A CLOAK OF A WINE GRAPE.





LOESS IS MORE

In the Loess Hills of western Iowa, the Pittz family—son Andrew and parents Vaughn and Cindy—have made history since their introduction of aronia berries to North America 20 years ago. In fact, the United States Department of Agriculture honored them for having the first aronia berry farm in the country. There are about 100 others now, but they were the first.

Aronia berries, also called chokeberries, are one of the most nutritionally dense fruits, with three times more antioxidants than blueberries. As for taste, Andrew describes it as “a blueberry wrapped in a cloak of a wine grape.”

The family started with 13,000 plants on 26 of their 150 acres. The plants grow easily without chemicals. Plus, and this is a biggie, the deer don’t like the taste. Oh, well.

Andrew, a sixth-generation Iowa farmer and something of an aronia Johnny Appleseed, has planted aronia berries in all 99 Iowa counties and travels the country extolling the virtues of the berries. He hopes to make them as synonymous with Iowa as peaches are with Georgia.

The family produces aronia cayenne sauce (“perfect over cream cheese or over Iowa pork,” says Andrew), cayenne vinaigrette, jelly, syrup and chili starter, among other products. Order from the website or request their products from any Hy-Vee store.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Leonard Olson of Pocahontas hopes we all remember the simple joys of childhood: the wooden pull toys, the cribbage boards and the kaleidoscopes that offer a different view of the world. And you know what? There’s not a battery or a computer chip in the bunch. That’s saying a lot for a self-described former computer geek who lived in Denver, Colo. A 1997 heart attack changed all that. He took up woodworking as therapy, moved back to his home turf in northwest Iowa and set up shop.

He fashions “teleidoscopes”—a combination of telescopes and kaleidoscopes—to be filled with corn, jewels or your own pretties for ever-changing patterns of color and light. Olson buys the glass, brass and acrylic parts, but crafts the exteriors from interesting woods, such as zebrawood, bird’s-eye maple and Honduran rosewood. To showcase the grain, the only finish is tung oil. Each piece is one of a kind.

Because interest in his workshop keeps growing, he is on his third location—this one in Pocahontas, where he offers tours and classes. “A kaleidoscope is a vehicle to recapture childhood,” says Olson, whose beard gives him a Santa Claus look. “It’s hard not to smile when you’re looking through a kaleidoscope.”

Websites and other contact information for the Iowa products in this section are listed on page 50.



PRAIRELAND HERBS CREATES
HERB-INFUSED PRODUCTS THAT
SOOTHE BOTH BODY AND MIND.

Donna Julseth and Maggie Howe use lavender in some of their essential oils and personal care products.

FLOWERS TO FUNCTION

While many Iowans plant flowers for fun and bouquets, the mother-daughter team of Donna Julseth and Maggie Howe have a longer-reaching plan for their posies. Their Prairieland Herbs company near Woodward offers natural, herbal-infused products in a large line of “bath goodies,” as they call them. Donna, a microbiologist, taught at Des Moines Area Community College. Maggie has a degree in environmental studies and public service and administration from Iowa State University in Ames.

With a passion for gardening, the two grow perennial and annual herbs and flowers on two acres. Maggie says the process involves the cycles of planting, mulching, harvesting and drying. They use no synthetics or preservatives in their line of natural products. For soothing scents and essential oils, think cedarwood, cinnamon, ginger, lavender, mint, orange, patchouli, rosemary and sage.

Since their start in 1988, the two have done it all, from creating, bottling and labeling to packaging and shipping. They offer body scrubs, healing salves, lip balm, hair rinses, body butters and bath salts. Plus, there are baby care products and even pet shampoos. As supporters of the local economy, they also carry a line of soaps by Sue Denny of Pleasant Hill. Donna and Maggie even offer classes. Order from their website or make a visit to the shop.



A SWELL USE FOR CORN

In a state full of craft breweries and burgeoning wineries, John Sayles has developed a cool use for corn. He calls it Swell Vodka. By all accounts, it is, well, pretty swell. In his 30-plus years in the graphics field—he heads up J. Sayles Design Co. in Des Moines—he has loved the idea of “fun in a bottle.”

“I call it eye candy. I look at a great label, and I know that the product inside the bottle should match the ‘wow factor’ of the label,” he says. The bold, graphic label on a Swell bottle does just that.

So, in 2015, working with Iowa Distilling Co. of Cumming, he launched Swell, a vodka that is filtered six times for a *smoooooth* finish. Plus, it’s gluten-free and kosher.

Swell is available for \$11.99 per 750 ml bottle. It’s in more than 90 spots, including Hy-Vee, Casey’s General Stores, Price Chopper, Cost Savers and some Fareway stores, along with a number of restaurants and bars around the Midwest. Many use it as their well vodka, meaning it’s what they serve in a cocktail when a higher-priced spirit isn’t specified. Oh, and besides design and vodka ventures, Sayles operates Beaverdale Vintage in Des Moines, a retail shop featuring items from the 1950s to 1970s.

WHAT’S BUGGING YOU?

For enthusiasts of camping, walking, fishing, golfing, boating and hiking, there’s often one nasty little downside. That would be bugs. Freda Sojka of Columbus Junction thought she could help people on that score. After years of working for Monsanto, she knew her way around a lab.

Her experiments led to Simply Soothing Bug Soother, a repellent that even smells good. It’s not oily, and it’s DEET-free, so it is safe for kids and pets. Its vanilla and fresh lemon scent wears easily. With her husband, Jim, her children and friends, she heads a business that makes shea cream, lotions and other products, but the Bug Soother makes up 95 percent of the business. She started out in 2003 and chuckles at the idea that she was an overnight success a decade later.

“One thing I have learned is that products like this are categorized differently in different states and countries—from cosmetic to drug to pesticide,” she says. “What an interesting journey.”

Order from the Simply Soothing website or from Amazon, or find Sojka’s products at stores, including Ace Hardware, Casey’s General Stores, Fareway, Hy-Vee, True Value, Theissen’s and Walgreen’s. Or visit the retail store in Columbus Junction. Supplies come in pocket size, travel size, family size and refill amounts.

Websites and other contact information for the Iowa products in this section are listed on page 50.



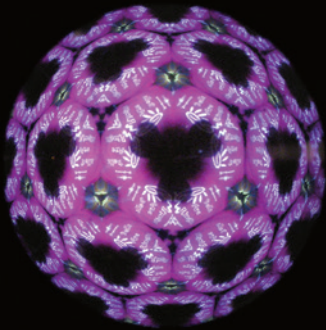
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Kris Jurik of Ames plans her garden by considering each variety and the timing of its flowering. "I want the show to go on," she says.



AN IOWA EDEN

AN AMES COUPLE'S EXPANSIVE 8-ACRE GARDEN IS A HEAVENLY
BLEND OF FLOWERS, PLANTS AND WILDLIFE.

WRITER AND PHOTOGRAPHER: KELLY NORRIS

Kris Jurik has become known for her peony obsession. Her garden has between 700 and 800 varieties, including this one, called Love's Touch.

Sitting at her dining room table in mid-June, Kris Jurik speaks as an obsessive plant collector. While that might be a matter-of-fact way of introducing one of central Iowa's keenest gardeners, it's a label she readily accepts.

"Why do I garden?" she asks, repeating my question to her. "Because I love it." She repeats her answer, this time with certitude: "Because I love it. You get exercise. You see nature. You see life. Look at that beautiful thing and what you can learn out here."

Caught up in the story of her garden, its plants and the chronology of its evolution, she often leaves the plot line to pause over sundry details along the way. Husband Tom Jurik, a biology professor at Iowa State University, fills in the background. The sidebars reveal the seriousness and passion that pervade the Juriks' efforts to cultivate their eight-acre property north of Ames into a private Eden.

"We pretty much built this," says Kris Jurik, eyes cast over a beautiful view of their gardens that sweep away from the house to the South Skunk River, snaking its way along the eastern boundary of their land. What they built wasn't just a garden, but a house perched on a ridge, seemingly in the canopies of trees defining the landscape they came to call home nearly 30 years ago.

Tom describes the building process, the carefully placed support beams to accommodate the weight of the house against a 20 percent grade, the structural engineer hired to design it properly and his own labor to construct it. "We designed the house to be an integral part of the landscape, materials, solar orientation etc.," Tom says.

For the garden's part, the magnitude of their efforts borders on public-scale, while the result is a private botanical odyssey. Their landscape is a front-row seat to a seemingly wild heaven, an untamed nature in spite of human presence.

"We have everything," Kris says, referring to the animal diversity that calls their property home. "Take last Sunday. It was a perfect day for raptors to kettle (follow updrafts) down the river. We might get as many as 100 coming down in one day."

Her awareness of the greater ecology strikes close to the contemporary narrative about making landscapes: We may make gardens, but nature is in our midst. She proceeds to list the wildlife—wild turkeys, owls, raccoons, foxes, butterflies, migrating waterfowl and eagles. Yes, deer, too.

"I got into peonies because deer didn't eat them," Kris says. "I started with hostas in the early 1990s because of the Russ O'Hara Hosta Society." (Today, the hosta portion of the garden exists behind an unobtrusive deer fence.) "Then my garden was recruited to be on tour for a Siberian iris convention in the early 2000s. I got into those. I had day lilies throughout all of this too."

It's the peony obsession that Kris has become known for. Her garden boasts between 700 and 800 varieties, a span she throws around lightly. What's a hundred or so peonies in the grand scheme of things? Even within the category, niches call for her attention. "I like the historicals as well as the new," she says. "I like *different* varieties. I want a peony flowering very early and I want a peony flowering very late. I want the show to go on."

That constant yearning for "the show to go on" runs as a thread through her gardens. Irises, hostas, peonies, day lilies, lilies, composites (cue the dictionary—daisy-shaped

Continues on page 61

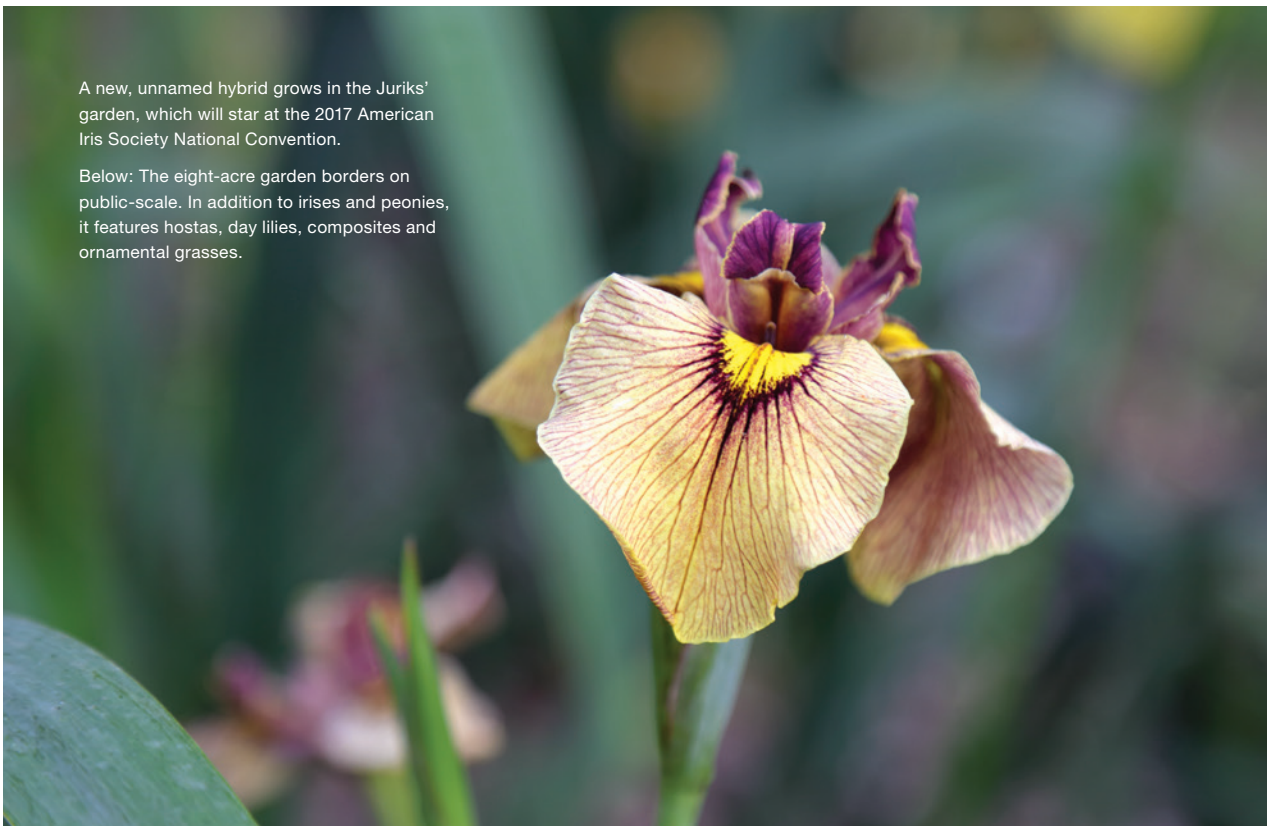




Siberian irises flourish in the Juriks' garden, including a variety called Wine Trail.

A new, unnamed hybrid grows in the Juriks' garden, which will star at the 2017 American Iris Society National Convention.

Below: The eight-acre garden borders on public-scale. In addition to irises and peonies, it features hostas, day lilies, composites and ornamental grasses.





"WHY DO I GARDEN? BECAUSE I LOVE IT.
YOU GET EXERCISE. YOU SEE NATURE.
YOU SEE LIFE."

KRIS JURIK





A Raspberry Clown peony offers mid-season blooms. "I want a peony flowering very early and I want a peony flowering very late," Kris Jurik says.



Kris Jurik has been working on her garden for nearly 30 years. "This didn't happen overnight," she says. "There's nothing static. It all changes."

Continued from page 54

flowers) and ornamental grasses are the themes of the Juriks' garden, the repetitive categories of horticultural compulsion, diversified by acquisitions that fulfill her mission. "I want something throughout the whole season," Kris insists.

As with any collector, the temperature of the passion can fluctuate with time and interest. Some planting adventures start as mild dabbling in the background. Others rage like a fever. Even a plant collector with eight acres has to make tough decisions about what stays and what goes. There's always something coveted to take its place. "Obtaining a few more interesting conifers would be nice. My hosta beds need colorful companions, too," says Kris of her current shopping list. "Every year it grows. I keep adding to it."

A garden of this size doesn't happen without considerable effort and skill. "It's the rhythm of my every day," Kris says. "But for us, it's total play. In the springtime it takes a lot, especially when we're getting ready for a tour of some kind. But we have leaves that we use as mulch,

because now it's summer and it's time to play. Now it's time to kayak and bicycle and everything. In the fall we get in to the garden and get it all ready for next year. In the winter we cross-country ski."

As evening settles in, Kris contemplates her relationship with the same landscape for so long. "Remember this was just woods and a cornfield," she says. "This is 29 years' worth of gardening. This didn't happen overnight. There's nothing static. It all changes."

The cadence of a landscape through time affords many lessons. "You learn things about those plants and the mistakes you make," Kris says. Tom has a motto about aggressive plants: If you spread, you're dead. "I've had some spreaders," Kris admits.

Against the backdrop of their personal state park, the Juriks live a staycation lifestyle, between planting more peonies, building retaining walls to keep their sizable hill in place and staying ahead of the harvest from the fruits and vegetables that grow beyond the sinuous perennial borders at the base of the hill. "Some people leave and go on vacation," Kris notes. "We're not going anywhere." ■

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CREATION IN TANDEM

TWO TALENTS ARE BETTER THAN ONE FOR PRINTMAKERS
TIM DOOLEY AND AARON WILSON.

WRITER: VICKI INGHAM

PHOTOGRAPHER: DUANE TINKEY

A print is gently peeled from the block for evaluation by artists Tim Dooley and Aaron Wilson. Working together, they explore a creative process that is complex and experimental.



A

ndy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat. Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg. Marcel Duchamp and Luis Buñuel. They all dabbled in making art as teams, but those efforts didn't define their legacy. For Cedar Falls printmakers Tim Dooley and Aaron

Wilson, however, collaboration is fundamental to their work. Their prints capture a freewheeling exchange between two creative personalities who share both a common aesthetic and confidence in each other's judgment.

Wilson and Dooley met more than 15 years ago at the University of Northern Iowa, where both teach printmaking. They were invited to lead a digital screen-printing workshop at North Dakota State University in 2001, and Dooley suggested they make a collaborative print as part of the class. Other invitations for workshops, visiting artist residencies and exhibitions followed, and gradually the work that each created independently began to seep into the work of the other. "We began to think about the entire exhibition, not 'this is my work and that's his,' " Dooley says.

Now working under the business name Midwest Pressed, they use silk-screen and relief printing in a way that, in a sense, turns printmaking on its head. Instead of producing multiples of the same image, they create a series of unique but related images. "We are not really interested in subverting the original purpose of printmaking," Dooley says. "It simply works out that way, that the particular tone achievable with printmaking techniques is integral to the work we do. The work is a lot about the ways in which a

suite can be both similar and unique, and where the boundaries are for that."

Every new series begins with brainstorming ideas—say, "modern zombies, the walking dead of the fine art world," says Dooley. Each artist makes multiple drawings that they scan into their computers and manipulate. They volley the digitized drawings back and forth, each adding, subtracting and changing the image.

"It's a sort of call and response," Wilson says. "Tim will make a move and then I will, and we go back and forth until it's clear we need to sit in the same room and discuss what needs to happen."

Once they're satisfied with the image, they transfer the components to silk screens and begin a long process of printing. It's another call-and-response conversation, with each artist adding a layer of ink and image over what the other has done. As layers build up, they evaluate the effect. "If we're too comfortable with it," Dooley says, "it needs another run."

At that point, they may choose a strongly contrasting color, "to see if that finishes it," Dooley says, "or 'finishes' it," taking the print over the edge from provocative to ... not so interesting. "You have to be willing to fail, basically," Wilson says.

The goal for each print is to have the layered images "disguise and camouflage each other and make this new thing," Wilson explains. "We're after this unsettling juncture, that kind of unsteadiness of the layering," that gives each print a unique character.

Dooley and Wilson see the technique as wedded inextricably to the content of the prints. Silk-screen printing

Continues on page 72



With so many layers of both ink and paper, "it is incredibly simple to ruin them," Tim Dooley says of the work he creates cooperatively with Aaron Wilson.



"IF WE'RE TOO COMFORTABLE
WITH IT, IT NEEDS ANOTHER RUN."

TIM DOOLEY



Above: An example of screen-printed layers applied to a wooden panel, a medium the duo find intriguing. When do they agree that a print is complete? "When we feel challenged by it," Dooley says.

Left: Like a piece of an unfamiliar puzzle, another shape is inked and delicately placed on a work in progress.





Left: Four prints in a series called "Puppies vs. Kittens," where playful layers of colors and forms deliver fascinating results.

Above: Aaron Wilson, left, and Tim Dooley at work in their Cedar Falls studio.



Continued from page 66

is a mechanical process associated with commercial graphics, T-shirts and posters, and is therefore an ideal means of producing work based on cultural clichés. They deliberately choose subjects from popular culture that engage them as both fans and critics—Big Foot, unicorns, “Real Housewives,” for examples. “It’s hard to make fine art out of this kind of populist subject matter,” Wilson says, but that’s part of the challenge.

The influence of Andy Warhol is hard to miss; he was the first to capitalize on screen printing and kitschy themes to erase boundaries between high and low art. Wilson and Dooley explore similar territory, but from a different point of view and with different goals.

“Their imagery is so fun,” says Laura Burkhalter, who curated a 2013 exhibition at the Des Moines Art Center featuring Wilson and Dooley. “I think they look for things that culture is embracing, things people gravitate to, and they show us what we’re interested in.” What’s more, screen printing is “very democratic,” she says, and through their demonstrations and workshops, Wilson and Dooley “really bring people into the process, so it makes their work very approachable.”

Their newest body of work, “Cut Ups,” involves relief printing rather than silk screen. Inspired by the drips and ink blots of their “Futile Gesture” series, the duo turned the gestures and drips into an image that could be cut from wood with a laser cutter. The printing “block” is essentially a jigsaw puzzle of shapes that can be inked separately with one or more colors before the block is run through the press.

As with the screen prints, Wilson and Dooley build layers of transparent color with multiple passes through the press. In addition, they use a variety of rollers to apply multiple stripes of ink at one time, creating what they call super-blends—as many as 20 colors side by side on the roller, so that when the inks are spread onto the wooden shapes, the colors grade into each other, creating a shimmering effect. Applied over a woodgrain pattern, the prints suggest 17th-century Japanese woodblock prints and German Expressionism without actually quoting either.

The techniques Dooley and Wilson develop get passed along to their students, as does the experience of working collaboratively. “Collaboration isn’t for everybody,” Wilson admits, “but we want to make sure students experience it. Art is about communication, and you have to acknowledge you’re part of a larger community.” ■

Above: Titled “M.W.P. Remix #2,” this screen print collage measures 37x25 inches. It is priced at \$1,200 at Moberg Gallery in Des Moines.



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DUBUQUE



With its logo burned into a wooden sign on a stylishly weary-looking building, Brazen has the look of a retro hotspot. Living up to that image, the food is smart and engaging, such as the periodic specialty item at right—scallops with pickled grapes and celery.



THE REAL DEAL

REFINED YET RUSTIC, DUBUQUE'S BRAZEN OPEN KITCHEN SERVES SIMPLICITY WITH FLAIR.

WRITER: WINI MORANVILLE

Kevin Scharpf, chef-owner of one of Dubuque's newest upscale restaurants, originally wanted to name it the Offal Pig. The goal, he said, was to star offbeat cuts exclusively, in dishes such as pig's-tongue ramen and stuffed trotters.

He soon reconsidered. "We probably would not have been open a year if we had just focused on crispy pig-ear salad and the like," he admits.

After much thought and input from branding pros, however, he landed upon a name that fits much better, in so many ways: Brazen Open Kitchen.

The moniker says much about what you'll find here. There's a boldness to the venture itself: The

restaurant is situated in Dubuque's up-and-coming Historic Millwork District—think Omaha's Old Market area, but on a smaller scale and with an exciting, not-quite-settled edginess to it.

Going full-bore on its rough-and-tumble river town milieu, the restaurant's interior eschews fussiness. The brick, steel and well-worn wood hint at the grittiness of history, but in comfortable and contemporary ways, with modern lighting, banquette seating and sleek leather chairs. You'll spot very little artwork; lest you forget why you're here, the focal points of one dining room include an imposing antique lithograph of cattle breeds, a massive chalkboard of the features, and the flashy open kitchen itself.

The menu might not be as daring as Scharpf's original offal-only concept, but it still takes risks. A rib-eye steak, a prime burger and a salmon dish all appeal to the Midwest's fine-dining base, while offerings

Continues on page 82



Clockwise from top left: Poached monkfish with roasted Cipollini onions and cauliflower; a delightful approach to shrimp scampi; a pork shank over grits with microgreens and zested citrus; and scallops served with lentils, candied carrots and burnt carrot romesco.

A photograph of a rustic interior space, likely a restaurant. Two large, industrial-style lanterns with metal frames and glowing Edison bulbs hang from a dark, textured ceiling. The background is blurred, showing wooden beams and warm, ambient lighting. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

GOING FULL-BORE ON ITS
ROUGH-AND-TUMBLE RIVER TOWN
MILIEU, THE RESTAURANT'S
INTERIOR ESCHEWS FUSSINESS.





Chef Kevin Scharpf describes one of the day's blackboard specials to a group in the Brazen kitchen.

Continued from page 78

crafted of pork shank, pork belly and duck confit speak to a more adventurous (and growing) fringe.

For the latter crowd, the blackboard of features is where the real action is. Here, you'll find the likes of beef cheeks, pork trotters, and squid-ink pasta with lobster-shallot confit.

We tried the beef-cheeks feature, a robust dish of slick, ultra-tender stout-braised beef served atop a simple cauliflower purée and alongside sparkling sautéed rainbow chard and roasted baby carrots. The coffee-braised short ribs proved equally rich and tender; alongside, the cauliflower grits and cumin carrots both satisfied in fresh and simple ways, without distracting the focus from the beef.

Uncomplicated yet boldly flavored, each dish fit seamlessly in the refined-rustic appeal of the surroundings.

This is just the effect that Sharpf seeks. He explains that he wants the honest, uncomplicated food to match the beautiful simplicity of the building. "We don't try to hit all the sweet, crunchy, savory kinds of notes in every dish," he says. "If we do a short rib dish, it's about the short rib—we don't cover it up by adding 10 more ingredients."

"We might jazz up the roasted cauliflower with a miso glaze," he admits, "or maybe add some microgreens. But then we stop. We don't go crazy. We want people to walk away feeling gratified, not challenged or confused."

Scharpf sums up his approach humbly: "We take good Midwestern food and add a little flair to it." He has the Midwestern chops to do so, as his roots in the area run deep; he grew up across the river in nearby Galena, Ill. Except for his culinary training at Fougasse at the Hotel Sofitel in Minneapolis and an externship in Manhattan's esteemed Restaurant Daniel, he has lived his entire 30 years in the area. His "aha" moment—his decision to become a chef—came when he began working in the industry as a teenager.

"I always loved sports and played them all," he says. "Yet while I was good enough to get onto the court or field, I was never good enough to start."

When it came to food, however, he found out early on that he was a starter. The hospitality industry immediately made sense to him, and he's never worked in any other trade. After his stint in New York, he came back, working for five years at Dubuque's Diamond Jo Casino, honing his restaurant management and leadership skills. He opened Brazen Open Kitchen in February 2015.

Given the success of the beef cheeks, when I visit Brazen Open Kitchen next, it might be tempting to once again order lesser-known meat cuts that Scharpf does so well. However, it's nice to know that his more populist fare is given equally due attention. Even the fried chicken, with its creamed collard greens, shallots and pancetta, sounds like a refined-rustic winner.

And I hope to venture back soon. Since my visit, I've often looked back fondly on the thoroughly genuine nature of the experience. These days, upscale contemporary restaurants in midsize cities across the country can feel somewhat interchangeable; it's a rare pleasure to dine in a place where the tug of the past melds so well with the excitement of the here and now for such a bold—yes, even brazen—sense of place. ■

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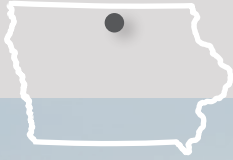
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CLEAR LAKE





CLEARLY CONTEMPORARY

WAVES AND RAVES SURROUND
STUNNING CLEAR LAKE HOME.

WRITER: CAROL McGARVEY

PHOTOGRAPHER: AARON THOMAS

Waters lap gently at the sands around this modern version of a cabin at the lake, designed by the Mason City architectural firm Bergland + Cram.

A wooden ceiling recalls the sense of a shaded porch overlooking the lake. Space flows fluidly among living, dining and kitchen areas. "Rooms" are defined casually, by furnishings and floor coverings. The exterior view at right accentuates the home's cubist forms.





When Brian Sansgaard of Story City and a friend sat in a boat on Clear Lake, checking out a house for sale at the tip of Grand View Point, they never envisioned the sleek contemporary

home that would replace it. Fast-forward to the present—just a couple of years and many decisions later—and Brian and his wife, Melody, couldn't be happier with the outcome.

"We needed a place not too far from home to relax and get away," Brian says, "and we just hadn't found the right spot." Then they saw the property on Bayside Avenue off South Shore Drive, within stone-skipping distance of Woodford Island. The land had an interesting history: Bayside Amusement Park occupied the point from 1909 to 1958.

The Sansgaards purchased the unusual, diamond-shape property in the fall of 2012 and were soon referred to Bergland + Cram Architects in nearby Mason City, where Andy Meyer became their project architect. The site's peculiar shape, dimensions and unrivaled views would all influence their design decisions.

"With this unique lot," Melody says, "we knew we needed to create a special home."

From the architect's perspective, Meyer says, "Our main concerns always are the vision of the owners and the possibilities of the site. Through many conversations, wish lists and pictures, the whole idea came into focus."

Goals included four or five bedrooms for family and visitors and ample entertaining spaces. "At the outset, we



This sleek kitchen with its long island is perfect for quick snacks or grand buffets. The design ensures that preparing food won't isolate the cooks from family and company.

discussed and explored various styles of design,” Meyer says, “but space requirements and site influences drove the contemporary outcome.”

WATER AND WOODS

The interesting shape of the property, jutting out toward the island, along with consideration for the proximity of neighbors, led them toward a two-story contemporary design with many large windows facing the water. Meyer came up with a 4,000-square-foot plan in which every room, except for bathrooms, has a spectacular view of the lake.

Looking back on the project today, recalling his work with contractor Keith Brcka of Fertile, Iowa, and others on the team, Meyer’s hindsight view is just as spectacular. Specifically, he says he enjoyed figuring out how to make the home work for the family and their friends, including incorporating natural woods to create a welcoming warmth.

Hickory flooring and maple doors play off the large commercial windows that frame the views. The home’s

central bearing wall became a design element, too. Cladding it in eucalyptus, a sustainable wood species, not only complements the other finishes but further identifies the wall as the “spine” around which many core utility functions take place.

In the great room, which encompasses the cooking, dining and social areas, the eucalyptus was repeated in the base of a large kitchen island. Cabinetmaker Kelly Minnis of nearby St. Ansgar used the wood in millwork and cabinetry and even in the light-fixture hood over the island to tie everything together.

For interior design expertise, Melody called on Susan Rognes of Sue Casa Interiors of Clear Lake and Ames. “Our home in Story City is traditional,” Melody explains, “so we needed some help to achieve the contemporary look we wanted in this home.”

Working on the interior design of the entire house presented “a rare opportunity,” according to Rognes. Her influence extends from the white painted cabinets, granite



A lucky teenager's bedroom overlooks Clear Lake beachfront on both sides of her bed. A cozy seating area makes this an inviting room in which to relax and read before retiring for the night.

Lower photo: This suite bathroom includes an ample shower for washing away sunscreen and sand after time on the water.



countertops and the marble-looking quartz on the island to working with Minnis to create that hooded light fixture over the kitchen island.

"This all was a special team effort," Rognes says. "We wanted to make sure the contemporary look didn't feel cold. By creating layers, but still keeping a streamlined focus, we were able to make the whole house flow together with colors and textures."

FLEXIBLE ROOMS

In addition to the great room on the main floor, the home's entertainment space includes a music room with a baby grand piano. A sleek full bath is tucked off the main hallway.

The kitchen is served by a butler's pantry with a modern twist: It contains an extra refrigerator and stove as well as ample pantry storage. A combination laundry/mud room is handy near the garage entrance.

The master suite's restful gray walls frame beautiful views of the lake that the homeowners can enjoy in the

privacy of their personal retreat. Its bathroom is a model of contemporary style, with flooring that flows seamlessly from the vanity area through the room and into the shower, terminating at a wall with no drain in sight. Water slips away through a slim gap, no wider than a grout seam, between a wall and the floor.

The home features "smart home" technology by Edge Tech Systems to control all lighting, security, HVAC, audiovisual and window treatments. Melody can raise the temperature and the window shades from her phone as she drives up from Story City.

SECOND LEVEL

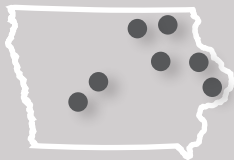
On the second floor, a family room offers spectacular views. There's a kitchenette for snacks and beverages near the second-floor patio, so it works well for outdoor relaxing. Eucalyptus cabinetry complements the nearby central spine wall and stairway.

The Sansgaards' daughter and son, both high school students, have rooms on this floor. Their son got the primo spot, they tell him, as his room has the best view for seeing both sunrises and sunsets. The room is decorated in navy and white, with a nautical theme. Their daughter's room, with a Pottery Barn vibe in turquoise and white, is perfect for hanging out with friends.

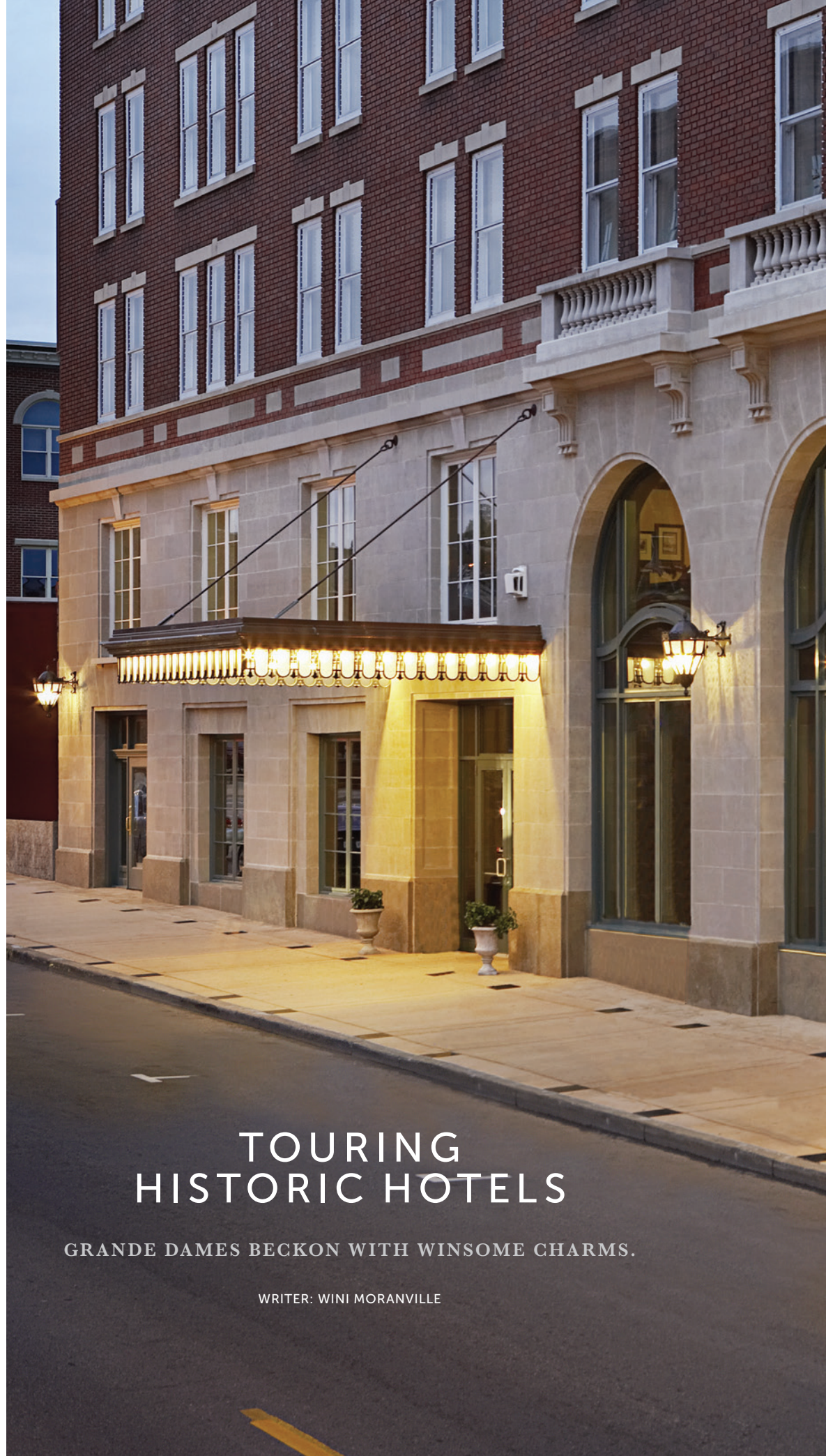
Designer Rognes took hues from two prints for the welcoming color schemes of the two guest rooms on this level. Meyer worked with the elevation to design a home office that overlooks the roofline of a neighboring home to capture yet another view of the lake.

"We couldn't be happier with the outcome," says Brian, who was in the seed business and is active in agricultural endeavors. "The home is perfect for our family."

Melody agrees. "Though unique in its design, it's exactly what we wanted," she says, "and it's just so peaceful. We love it." ■



CEDAR FALLS
DAVENPORT
DECORAH
DUBUQUE
GREENFIELD
MASON CITY
PERRY



TOURING HISTORIC HOTELS

GRANDE DAMES BECKON WITH WINSOME CHARMS.

WRITER: WINI MORANVILLE



Dubuque's elegant Hotel Julien has reclaimed its place as a showpiece of local style, surrounded by shops, restaurants and taverns of the Old Main District.

The glamorous Hotel Blackhawk in Davenport exudes contemporary luxury, starting with the hotel's sleek foyer with its cream-and-indigo color scheme.



Last winter, with a little time on my hands and a yearning to travel near and deep rather than far and wide, I decided to tool around Iowa and overnight in some of our state's restored historic hotels. Many of these structures have much the same story: They were built during an economic boom from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, then entered a period of sad, slow decline during the mid- to late 20th century. Some closed as hotels; their street-level spaces may have housed a random series of businesses over the years, while their upper floors deteriorated into mere pigeon roosts. Other former landmarks became flophouses, low-rent apartments, transient hotels—or worse.

In recent decades, all have been given new life by philanthropists, foundations, local boosters or deep-pocketed individuals who simply loved the old relics and couldn't bear to see them gone forever.

Because I am primarily a food writer, I've often thought that restaurants are the best way to get to know a city. Indeed, they help you to do so on many levels. But after this trip, I realize that you get the most intimate connection to a town when you've slept in its bed. For this, the chains by the interstate simply will not do: Historic downtown hotels give you a deeper sense of where you are in the world, because they're where the city's past and present merge. Their lobbies, restaurants, lounges and meeting rooms are among the few places where locals and visitors often encounter one another. And then there's this: You sense a century of stories tucked into their walls and beneath their floorboards.

What I particularly loved was the way each hotel, because of its style of renovation and its environs, offered specific qualities that made my stay markedly different from the others. While you can travel a gratifying multi-night sweep, starting in Greenfield and ending in Davenport (or vice versa), each hotel could be a pleasant overnight destination in itself. A good way to choose which to visit is by simply thinking about the kind of experience you seek.

Historic Park Inn

15 W. State St., Mason City
641.422.0015 stoneycreekhoteles.com

The Hotel Greenfield

110 E. Iowa St., Greenfield
641.343.7323 hotel-greenfield.com

The Hotel Pattee

1112 Willis Ave., Perry
515.465.3511 hotelpattee.com

Blackhawk Hotel

115 Main St., Cedar Falls
319.277.1161 theblackhawkhotel.com

Hotel Blackhawk

200 E 3rd St., Davenport
563.322.5000 hotelblackhawk.com

Hotel Winnesheik

104 E Water St., Decorah
563.382.4164 hotelwinn.com

Hotel Julien

200 Main St., Dubuque
563.556.4200 hoteljuliendubuque.com

Historic Park Inn, Mason City

Built 1910 | Restored 2011

This is the sole remaining Frank Lloyd Wright-designed hotel in the world, and enthusiasts of the prairie-school architect will recognize his touches throughout. For example, the way the low-ceilinged lobby gives way to a soaring, skylit sitting room speaks to Wright's hallmark compression-and-release effects. Fan patterns in the plaster—reminiscent of prairie grasses—and warm, organic hues throughout the hotel are meant to replicate the natural world.

With its low ceiling, period furniture and plenty of sunlight pouring through the geometric art-glass windows, our room proved the very definition of cozy, which is to say that, in addition to being an appealing spot for architecture buffs, the Historic Park Inn would be great for a romantic getaway, too.

To complete your Frank Lloyd Wright-fest, combine a stay here with a visit to the Frank Lloyd Wright Stockman House. Also take a self-guided Prairie School Architectural Tour, which will lead you through a concentration of such homes within a 14-block area.





With just 27 guest rooms, the Park Inn offers a wealth of amenities beyond this Wright-inspired lobby: a grille and lounge, wine room, fitness center and even a "Ladies' Parlor" with a balcony.



The Hotel Greenfield, Greenfield

Built 1920 | Restored 2011

When was the last time a hotel desk clerk handed you a room key instead of a card? The keys, attached to the hotel's original brass room tags, are just one of the many true-to-the-period touches at the Greenfield, which seethes history through and through; many of the furnishings in the 20 guest rooms are antiques bought at farm sales and auctions across the state.

The parlor-like setting of the vintage lobby, with its nailhead-trimmed wingback chairs and vintage couches arranged in conversation clusters, makes a nice place to enjoy a cocktail—a limited menu of drinks is available. Stirring historical photographs are displayed throughout the first floor, including pictures of local boys posing together on the hotel's steps moments before they boarded the train to do their parts in World War II.

With a population of just under 2,000, Greenfield is a quintessential Iowa small town, complete with a notable town square. Overall, however, it's a make-your-own-fun kind of destination. The hotel often hosts gatherings, such as family and class reunions, hunting and fishing groups, motorcycle clubs, veteran groups, and aviation and car enthusiasts who take in related museums nearby. I could imagine coming here with a merry band of friends (a bowling alley/dive-karaoke bar lies just a few steps away). Or, time it right and take in a show. Just two doors down from the hotel, the equally well-restored opera house—now the Warren Cultural Center—hosts plays, comedy shows, musical events and more.



Hotel Blackhawk, Davenport

Built 1915 | Restored 2010

Walk into this hotel's sleek and chic foyer—with its trendy cream-and-indigo color scheme—and you'd never guess that, just a decade ago, this hotel had hit rock bottom. It provided low-rent lodgings for nearby casino gamblers until a fire, caused by a meth lab, damaged upper floors and shuttered the hotel. That was in 2006.

Today the Blackhawk oozes contemporary luxury—it's by far the most grand and glamorous of the hotels I visited. While plenty of touches swing retro, including a restored two-story atrium with vaulted ceilings, a stained-glass skylight and gold-plaster ornamental trim here and there, this hotel is more about big-city cool than yesteryear charm. To wit: the dashing Blackhawk Bowling Alley/Martini Lounge in the basement and the luxurious Spa Lucé, a full-service spa. It's clear, too, that the polished guest rooms, with such amenities as swishy chaise-longues and tufted headboards, benefited immensely from the \$40 million restoration.

Alas, the blocks surrounding the Blackhawk Hotel have not yet undergone such a renaissance. While the Quad Cities have their share of attractions (including museums, river cruises and casinos), the best part of my stay in Davenport was the pampering effects of the hotel itself. I particularly enjoyed the lively bar. It's the kind of spot where all kinds of people—wedding parties, conventioners, date-night couples and tourists like myself—enjoy the singular buzz of being thrown together in a city's newfound hotspot.



Blackhawk Hotel, Cedar Falls

Built late 1870s | Restored 2005

Of all the hotels I stayed in for this story, Cedar Falls' Blackhawk Hotel exuded the most character. Though the place is comfortably restored and spotlessly clean, you can still feel its true grit. In my room, the stamped tin ceilings, an entire wall of exposed brick—complete with vestiges of bricked-over windows from a bygone era—and the tall, narrow windows looking out at the Victorian Main Street buildings all radiated a genuine sense of history that went deeper than nostalgia. The floorboards in the cattywampus hallways even creaked, for heaven's sake, and I loved it.

I was offered a tour of some unoccupied rooms, and each was unique. All had period furniture, including armoires rather than closets, and each brought to mind the kind of sturdy furnishings you'd expect in the rooms for rent above an Old West saloon.

The brickwork that charmed me so much in my room served to lock in a sense of the city itself: Exposed brick is everywhere, both inside and out of the historic buildings that line both sides of the lively main street. There's plenty to do just steps from the door; hence, the Blackhawk is a great place to overnight with friends. Park your car, check in, and take a walk along the nearby Cedar River. Later, spend some time popping in and out of the many shops, bars and restaurants, and soak in an unmistakable sense of Cedar Falls.



Hotel Julien, Dubuque

Built 1915 | Restored 2009

I stayed at the Julien in 1993, and by then, it had changed its name to the Julien Motor Lodge; my room had an unfortunate mauve color scheme. Yet while the hotel felt a bit down-at-the-heels, you could still sense it had life in it—thanks partly to an aging but dedicated clientele who still gathered in the Riverboat Lounge, a piano bar just off the lobby. The surrounding downtown, however, felt defeated.

What a difference 20-plus years and a \$30 million restoration make.

Today, the landmark is once again the Hotel Julien (gone is that hapless motor-lodge business). The lobby entices guests with original marble floors, soaring arched windows, an atrium with cushy furniture and ornate touches throughout. The rooms are plush with mod-cons: luxury linens, elegant dark-wood furnishings, spacious bathrooms with walk-in showers, granite, decorative tile—the works. An updated Riverboat Lounge beckons the craft-cocktail generation.

Ask for a room with a river view. To gaze at the river beyond the port area, which is undergoing redevelopment, you must also take in the hardworking side of the city, complete with barges and oil tank trains. If a true sense of place is what you're after—the up-and-coming alongside the rough-and-tumble—you're looking at it.



Hotel Winnesheik, Decorah

Built 1905 | Restored 2000

What if you don't care for creaky floors and cattywampus hallways? What if you're thinking: I'll take a little history, yes; but hold the quirks, please. The Hotel Winnesheik is for you. With its grand cherry-wood staircase, marble walls and octagonal three-story atrium—all capped by a stained-glass skylight—the public spaces are replete with beaux-arts splendor. Agreeably appointed in neutral tones, our less-ornate (yet entirely comfortable) room felt more straightforward, in a business-hotel kind of way.

A major plus here is Decorah and its environs—in fact, a visit here merits a weekend, especially for outdoor enthusiasts. The town is nestled into northeast Iowa's bluff country, legendary for its dramatic scenery of limestone cliffs and wooded valleys. The area offers some of the state's best hiking, biking and canoeing.

Water Street, Decorah's hub, combines once-upon-a-time charm with a true, here-and-now vitality. After all, how many small-town main streets still have an alive-and-well J.C. Penney store? Other thriving landmarks include Amundson's Clothing Store (established 1968) and the Whippy Dip (a frozen custard stand established in 1954). Shoppers will also find many contemporary boutiques, such as gift shops, jewelry stores and that treasured rarity, a bricks-and-mortar bookstore—Dragonfly Books.



The Hotel Pattee, Perry

Built 1913 | Restored 1997

This hotel's public spaces seamlessly evoke the gleaming dark woodwork, native stone and decorative restraint of the Arts and Crafts style. Conversely, each themed guest room has its own signature decor, ranging from the down-to-earth to the rococo. For example, the Cream 'n' Eggs Room, with quilts and rag rugs, celebrates farmwives who sustained their families during the Depression by selling cream and eggs; the Marching Band Room honors community parades with its headboard and lamps built from musical instruments. There are 40 rooms in all, each telling the story of small-town Iowa in its own way.

Frankly, I thought that all sounded a little cheesy, until I stayed in the Telital Room. This journalism-themed room, named for the Perry High School newspaper and decorated with a manual typewriter, an antique camera and an old roll-top desk, proved warm and snug on a winter's night. Its motif also engaged me personally as a writer. From the Quilting Room and 1913 Farmhouse Room to the African, Welsh, and Russian rooms and more, you're sure to find a room that equally enchants you.

Billed as "A Destination Unto Itself," an overnight at the Hotel Pattee is a particularly great way to bring friends together for a fun night out, without having to designate a driver. When to go? Consider this: The lobby features live music most every Friday and Saturday night. ■

HELPING BUSINESSES GROW SO IOWANS CAN THRIVE.



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The Voice of Iowa Business since 1903.



ABI: TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS IN IOWA

As a second-generation owner of Agri-Industrial Plastics, an Iowa manufacturing company, I know our state is an excellent place to do business – for a number of reasons.

First, Iowa businesses tend to look beyond a goal of simply making a profit. Most Iowa business owners are just as driven by the desire to do right by their employees and their communities.

In addition, many Iowa business leaders recognize the benefits of joining forces through an effective organization such as the Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI) to ensure that Iowa continues to be a state where businesses can grow and thrive.

ABI's mission has remained the same for more than a century: to nurture a favorable business, economic, governmental and social climate within the state of Iowa so our citizens can have the opportunity to enjoy the highest possible quality of life.

Over the past year alone, thousands of Iowans have interacted with ABI programming in some way, whether they have participated in a professional development program through the ABI Foundation, toured a manufacturing facility during an event hosted by Elevate Advanced Manufacturing, or contacted their legislator after hearing from ABI and its members about an important issue facing our state.

I see this play out in my own company, my community and even my family.

My daughter recently participated in Business Horizons, a fabulous ABI Foundation program that teaches high school students from across Iowa about the world of business in a fun and challenging format. This is an experience that will serve her well as she goes on to college and the real world.

In my company, employees representing all different careers, serve as Elevate Advanced Manufacturing ambassadors, educating students, parents and teachers about the manufacturing careers they've fallen in love with and the opportunities those careers have afforded them.

In my community, dozens of local residents joined ABI's

Leadership Iowa class when it visited Fairfield for a vibrant discussion on Iowa's leading role in the insurance and finance industries as part of the Connecting Statewide Leaders series. Many of Fairfield's civic and business leaders are Leadership Iowa alumni themselves.

It's not just Fairfield. These connections are taking place all across the state, implementing ABI's main objectives.

For more than a century ABI has worked to:

- *Advocate* on behalf of companies for the sustainability of a favorable business climate.
- *Educate* business leaders and employees on how to best address the challenges facing Iowa companies today.
- *Motivate* Iowa's future civic and business leaders through its professional development and issues awareness programs, Business Horizons, Leadership Iowa University and Leadership Iowa.
- Provide an environment that encourages Iowa businesses to *collaborate* with one another to conduct business and share ideas.

More recently, ABI worked with Iowa's community colleges and manufacturing community to create an ambitious marketing campaign to ELEVATE the outdated perceptions people have of manufacturing careers – an important component to addressing Iowa's skills gap.

ABI also supports Iowa businesses as they continue to innovate and develop new products and processes.

I invite you to take a close look at the Iowa Association of Business and Industry and select one of the many ways to become involved in the organization's programs, supporting the culture of thriving businesses in Iowa and sharing in the state's success stories.



Lori Schaefer-Weaton
Chair, Iowa Association of Business and Industry
President, Agri-Industrial Plastics
Fairfield



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ADVOCATE: REPRESENTING BUSINESSES AT THE STATEHOUSE

In 2010, Garrett Burchett and his brother took a chance on their dream and founded the Mississippi River Distilling Co. in Le Claire. Their goal: Create “truly homegrown, handmade spirits.”

But the brothers soon discovered that legal restrictions in Iowa for liquor distillers limited their ability to expand their business and generate revenue. So for the past five years, Burchett has been on a mission, lobbying tirelessly for changes in outdated alcohol laws that have presented barriers to progress not just to his company, but in the entire alcohol industry in Iowa.

“All of the surrounding states bordering Iowa, along with almost 75 percent of the states in the United States, have changed these laws,” says Burchett, who is owner and manager of his company.

His lobbying effort has been a long one, but he has not been working alone. As a member of the Iowa Association of Business and Industry, Burchett was able to call on ABI for assistance in advocating his cause. Through ABI, he had unique access to the legislative process and key decision makers on the hill.

ABI strives to foster a pro-business climate in Iowa by supporting legislation and regulation that will ensure Iowa companies are able to thrive while also attracting new

businesses to the state. The group has three full-time lobbyists who represent general business issues at the Capitol every day of the legislative session, and its policy team works closely with state departments to ensure the concerns of Iowa businesses are heard during the administrative process.

“ABI has supported us through their PAC events and their annual legislative meeting,” Burchett says. “ABI lobbied on our behalf, set meetings with legislators and used their resources to connect customers to legislators.”

With ABI’s help, Mississippi River and other distilleries in the state were able to activate thousands of customers and industry advocates who reached out to their lawmakers across Iowa, letting them know this was an issue that needed to be addressed.

In August, Burchett’s hard work and ABI’s support paid off. Gov. Terry Branstad ordered a review of Iowa’s alcohol laws, assigning leaders to work with alcohol wholesalers, manufacturers, retailers, prevention specialists and regulators to review laws first written in 1934.

Burchett sees the review as long-awaited good news for the state’s alcohol producers, and he “absolutely” credits ABI with helping achieve this significant progress.

“Now we are looking forward to a nonbiased group looking at all of the laws,” Burchett says.



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EDUCATE: SMART EXECS LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER

The Iowa Association of Business and Industry strives to continually educate business leaders and employees, and that strikes a chord with ABI member Accumold LLC in Ankeny.

"Accumold is a growth company, so we recognize the inevitability of change in our organization," says Steve Boal, Accumold CFO and vice president of finance. "The world around us and the markets we sell into are also changing very fast. Consequently, we place a high value on relevant and fairly targeted education for our team members."

Boal is a participant in ABI's CFO Roundtable program, which is geared specifically toward the financial officers of ABI's member businesses. The group was founded in 2015 and meets about eight times per year.

The CFO Roundtable focuses on exploring interests that apply directly to CFOs, says Lance Gardner, managing director in the Midwest Region Business Center of Principal Financial Group Inc. and an organizer of the CFO Roundtable.

"CFOs deal with many things way beyond just the nickels and dimes," Gardner says. "We're trying to add value in areas that these executives are looking for."

Most meetings have two speakers, Boal says.

"Topics for speakers have included due diligence related to buying or selling a business, private equity ownership, ESOP ownership and trends in 401(k) plans," he says.

One popular session dealt with internet and data security, Gardner says. "It applied to some more than others, but it certainly was a big topic. They like to hear what's going on that may or may not affect them, but also what's important for the health and the wealth of the community in general."

Speakers may be other CFOs or leaders in the community, such as former Principal CEO and Chairman Larry Zimpleman, Director of Iowa Economic Development Authority Debi Durham and Iowa Department of Management Director David Roederer.

"We've also had a couple of social opportunities, such as attending an Iowa Cubs game and a reception at ABI's annual Taking Care of Business conference," Boal says.

Gardner says CFO Roundtable participants represent high-caliber professionals who reflect the integrity of ABI.

"It's an honor to be in the room with those folks," he says. "There's a lot of talent there. ABI is a great organization. It is well-run, and it has well-respected leadership across the state and across party lines."



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MOTIVATE: DEVELOPING IOWA'S FUTURE LEADERS

Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Co. may be a 107-year-old Iowa company, but President and CEO Larry J. Jansen doesn't want it and its 800 employees to be an old-fashioned company.

One of his goals when he became president five years ago was to change the culture of the company from "kind of a complacent, laid-back organization" to a more vibrant company that's growing with a sense of urgency in developing business.

"We've done that," Jansen says. "Last year was our best year ever in terms of underwriting profit. We're also a very employee-oriented company and try to make sure they feel good about working here."

Jansen's philosophy has evolved in part from his 26-year involvement in the Iowa Association of Business and Industry Foundation. He first went through the foundation's flagship program, Leadership Iowa, in 1990. Now he involves Grinnell Mutual in sponsoring not only Leadership Iowa, but also the foundation's college and high school programs — Leadership Iowa University and Business Horizons — as well. Jansen understands the important role all three programs play in motivating others to recognize the great business opportunities in Iowa.

"The Leadership Iowa program gives a very good basic overall understanding of different aspects of the state of Iowa," Jansen says. "It's a very worthwhile program."

Each month during the eight-month session, participants meet at different locations around Iowa, exposing them to government entities, businesses and educational facilities.

"It promotes the state of Iowa tremendously," Jansen says. "Also, it's a great networking resource."

Twenty-five percent of Grinnell Mutual's employee base will retire in the next decade, so hiring young, talented people is a primary focus for Jansen. The ABI Foundation plays an important role in that effort, he says, so Grinnell Mutual is eager to support it at each of its levels.

The company has sponsored Leadership Iowa at the Gold Sponsor level since 2013. "The Leadership Iowa program is designed to reinforce the people we already have on board, the future stars of the company," Jansen says. "It gets them more acclimated to the business climate in the state of Iowa."

Barb Baker, director of advertising and community relations, is one of five Grinnell Mutual employees who have

participated in Leadership Iowa. She attended in 2011-2012 and served as co-chair for the class of 2012-2013.

"Leadership Iowa motivated me to learn more about my state and the treasures it holds," Baker says. "I found that a very diverse group of strangers can quickly become personal and professional resources for me, as well as dear friends for life. The program prompted me to collaborate in the development of a high school internship program in my community that benefits the young students, the local schools and my company."

Baker says the program also helped her develop contacts that pushed her to new leadership roles both personally and professionally — including prompting her to begin a college teaching career. She also currently serves on the Leadership Iowa Board of Governors as curriculum co-chair.

"Leadership Iowa taught me the importance of mentors and mentorships, encouraging me to reach out to people who can mentor me and those whom I can mentor," Baker says.

Grinnell Mutual also is a Trustee sponsor of the Leadership Iowa University program for college students. Wade Sheeler, a quality management professional at Grinnell Mutual, serves on the Leadership Iowa University Board of Directors.

"The primary purpose of that program is to expose young folks to Iowa and hopefully have them stay and work in the state of Iowa," Jansen says. Grinnell Mutual incorporates LIU with its summer internship program, which is designed to help identify future potential employees.

"It's one more method we have of recruiting great young talent to our company," Jansen says. "We're very much about the future of this company and bringing in great folks to work here. We are pleased we can offer our college interns the opportunity to participate in Leadership Iowa University each year to learn more about our state."

Grinnell Mutual thinks so highly of the LIU program, Jansen says, that in 2015, the company selected four of its interns to attend and paid extra tuition for the two additional participants.

Grinnell Mutual Group Foundation also sponsors ABI's Business Horizons program, which also exposes young people to career opportunities in Iowa. The foundation provides a scholarship for a local high school student to attend and, in 2016, it became an industry sponsor of a Business Horizons team and provided a mentor for the weeklong session.



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COLLABORATE: ABI MEMBERS SHARE IDEAS AND SERVICES

Over the past six years, Keystone Electrical Manufacturing has managed to reduce its greenhouse emissions and carbon footprint by 50 percent with help from MidAmerican Energy.

Keystone, a Des Moines-based manufacturer, replaced inefficient lighting and fixtures, and cut heating and cooling losses through various methods. MidAmerican gave Keystone a rebate for the lighting work and the company received a tax credit, which helped it quickly pay back the cost of the project.

"The program MidAmerican offers is an incredible resource," said Fred Buie, Keystone's chief executive officer. "It doesn't cost you anything to do it, and they have rebates that come directly from MidAmerican — plus you get the tax credits."

For more than a decade, MidAmerican has focused on providing a clean, sustainable energy future for customers, said Kathryn Kunert, MidAmerican vice president, economic connections and integration.

"MidAmerican Energy is taking major steps toward our vision of 100 percent renewable energy for our customers. Part of our 100 percent renewable vision also is powered by our work with ABI members to help them save energy and money through our energy efficiency programs."

The Iowa Association of Business and Industry helps to foster relationships and collaboration between Iowa businesses that can help companies save money, develop new products and processes, and operate more efficiently.

The Buy ABI affinity program, for instance, helps foster such relationships while providing customized benefits to help member companies succeed.

As a member of ABI, Keystone is able to take part in EMC Insurance's Manufacturers Insurance Program, which offers added coverage and support to ABI member companies.

Through the program, Keystone has access to EMC's training aids, support from technicians who assist with air

monitoring and other valuable services.

"These are the kind of relationships we need to allow me as a business owner to focus on my business and not things like my insurance," Buie said.

Keystone is one of more than 150 industrial/manufacturing companies and 3,200 commercial customers to participate in MidAmerican's Energy Advantage programs over the past two years.

According to the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance, industrial customers account for 33 percent of the Midwest's energy. Energy efficiency enables industrial businesses to reduce energy bills while increasing competitiveness.

But it can be difficult for businesses to determine when they are using — and losing — energy and money, Kunert says. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates up to 30 percent of the energy consumed by the average commercial building is wasted — which can put a significant dent in businesses' profit potential.

MidAmerican's Commercial Energy Solutions program provides small and large commercial business owners with the information and expertise they need to make sound energy- and money-saving improvements. The energy assessment program is available at no cost.

Also, the Industrial Partners program provides assistance identifying and supporting the implementation of energy-saving opportunities at manufacturing facilities. The program offers a mix of financial incentives, engineering services and dedicated program staff to assist with the identification and implementation of cost-effective, energy-saving opportunities.

"We want to help our customers save money and reduce their energy consumption, and offering energy efficiency programs and rebates are one way of doing that," Kunert says. "They make it more affordable to make energy efficiency improvements that businesses may otherwise not make."



At **Kreg Tool Company**, we're passionate about creating confidence through a sense of accomplishment in do-it-yourself home improvements projects. Our employee-owner team does everything from design and manufacturing of the product to ensuring that the customer has the best-possible experience using the product after the purchase. This dedication to serving the customer experience defines our global brand. We have been proud to do all of this in Iowa since 1989.



ELEVATE: SHOWCASING MANUFACTURING CAREERS

The Iowa Association of Business and Industry Foundation is determined to enlighten Iowans about the advantages of careers in manufacturing. Operating in partnership with Iowa's 15 community colleges, it created a statewide initiative called Elevate Advanced Manufacturing with the goal of encouraging enough potential employees to meet industry demand, as well as to arm them with the skills they need.

Ryan Junge of Montezuma, a supplier quality engineer at Lennox International Inc. in Marshalltown, knows the benefits of manufacturing careers because most of his family works as tool and die makers or engineers.

"I've been in manufacturing since I was 19," says Junge, 36. "It's kind of been a passion of mine my entire life. I really enjoy creating things."

But Junge recognizes that many people don't understand the benefits of a job in manufacturing.

"It's most definitely a viable career," he says. "But a lot of people have the 1980s idea of a dirty manufacturing company. They think it's hard work, low wages, all manual labor."

The reality, he says, is that today most manufacturing companies are "super clean."

"The floors are usually polished. Everything is arranged nice and neat, just like you're in your mom's kitchen," Junge says. "The wages are great, insurance is unbelievable and the work is great. It's a safe job, with great benefits. If you have the hunger to succeed, your ticket is whatever you want to write it."

Sarah Dvorak, vice president of operations at Kreg Tool Co. in Huxley, agrees that much of the general public does not understand how lucrative careers in the manufacturing industry can be.

"If we can help students, and especially parents, understand what manufacturing has evolved into and the opportunities that exist for career advancement and stable jobs, that would be amazing," she says.

Junge carries that message to others as an ambassador for ABI's Elevate Advanced Manufacturing program, speaking to groups at colleges and to high school students and other groups who tour the Lennox facility.

"I think people don't realize all the great things that actually are going on in Iowa, so I try to show them some success stories

like Lennox or Kinze Manufacturing Inc. near Williamsburg," Junge says. "These are Iowa companies, Iowa families. They're people from Iowa who could be your neighbors, and they started companies and took them to a worldwide stage."

Kreg Tool Co. also is an active participant in the Elevate Advanced Manufacturing program, Dvorak says.

"We have one team member on the steering committee to help offer insight and establish strategy for the program," she says. "We also have a team member who is an active ambassador. Kreg also has sponsored events that Elevate has hosted."

It's to Kreg's advantage to encourage enlightenment about the manufacturing industry, Dvorak says.

"As Kreg's manufacturing environment changes with automation and advanced machining, we have seen the required skill set change as well," she says. "We have been fortunate to have internal resources to train and develop those skills. However, as we have tried to recruit for key positions requiring advanced manufacturing skills, we struggle due to the lack of available people with those skills."

Dvorak says other manufacturing companies also face a lack of available labor. She once observed manufacturers clamoring over two high school students who attended a dinner hosted by the Elevate program.

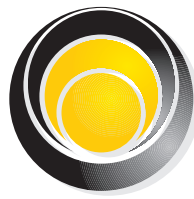
"These students were just starting their classes in advanced manufacturing, but they had numerous companies — global companies — telling them to call them when they graduate," she says.

Dvorak acknowledges that she once was among the ranks of the uninformed.

"When I started my engineering career, I had a perception that I wanted nothing to do with manufacturing," she says. "However, at one point of my career, I volunteered for a special project that was being kicked off in the manufacturing department. That was about 17 years ago, and I haven't left manufacturing since."

She says the challenges and opportunities that exist within manufacturing excite her every day.

"There is great pride in watching my team convert a raw material into something our customers use to build a project in their home and the pride our customers have when completing it," Dvorak says.



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INNOVATE: IOWA VALUES MAKE GOOD FIT FOR HIGH TECH

Manchester, a 150-year-old town of just more than 5,000 residents, is located within 45 miles of Waterloo, Dubuque and Cedar Rapids. It's the county seat of Delaware County – and the home of a facility that produces cutting-edge aviation technology.

Rockwell Collins Inc. – which designs and manufactures aircraft electronics that are installed in the cockpits of nearly every airline in the world – is headquartered in Cedar Rapids and operates facilities in four other Iowa locations – Bellevue, Coralville, Decorah and Manchester.

The Manchester facility in January 1977. It moved into the current 46,500-square-foot facility in 1986 and now employs 225 people, significantly boosting the local economy.

The company considers the small-town atmosphere a good fit for its innovative products.

"We have found that employees at Manchester and our other Iowa regional facilities in Decorah and Bellevue have an impeccable work ethic and are focused on making quality products," says Rockwell Collins Director of Business Communications Cindy Dietz. "They take immense pride in the work they do. More than 80 percent of the workforce is female, and they have an average of 18 years of work experience. So, once they start with us, they are likely to stay."

The Manchester employees enjoy the opportunity to have good-paying jobs in a clean environment, plus important employee benefits, Dietz says. In turn, their rural Iowa values are a benefit to the company.

"There is a real sense of community among the workforce," she says. "These people work beside each other during the day and sit on the bleachers or in the auditorium together in the evening cheering on the local sports team or enjoying a band concert."

Dietz, a member of the Iowa Association of Business and Industry Board of Directors, says ABI promotes a favorable

business climate and economic growth across the state. The organization helps manufacturers such as Rockwell Collins determine sites in Iowa where they can be successful – and where they can provide quality jobs.

"ABI hosts events like an annual Advanced Manufacturing Conference, where companies and best practices are highlighted and shared," she says. "They also initiated Elevate Advanced Manufacturing, a statewide, integrated marketing campaign to promote careers and educational pathways in advanced manufacturing. Elevate focuses on shaping a positive perception of manufacturing careers while addressing misconceptions of work environment, safety and wages."

Employees at Rockwell Collins Manchester know the benefits of advanced manufacturing, having built advanced aviation products for nearly 40 years, says plant manager, Maya Murphy. Today their site is known as Rockwell Collins' Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) Center of Excellence.

"LCDs are used in a host of display products across commercial and government markets and provide key information to the flight crew of the aircraft during all phases of flight," Murphy says. "Manchester displays and other avionics products are used in air transport aircraft like the Boeing 747, 787, 737 MAX and the 777X, as well as the Airbus A350. They also supply displays for the KC46 and KC390 Air Force tankers and products for the fighter aircraft for U.S. and foreign militaries. Additional products support multiple business jet platforms for Bombardier, Beechcraft, Embraer, Gulfstream and others."

In Manchester, the operators "ruggedize" the LCDs to meet stringent avionics requirements for temperature extremes, viewing angles and customer expected reliability. A variety of other key government and commercial products and solutions are built in Manchester; a model of innovation and advanced manufacturing in rural Iowa.



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GAME CHANGERS

YOUNG IOWA INNOVATORS HAVE GLOBAL REACH.

WRITER: BARBARA HALL

Frosty vials of vaccine in a freezer at Harrisvaccines await the next outbreak of disease when they'll be needed to save individual animals or entire herds. Photographer: Duane Tinkey.

"Think of us as a Fitbit for pigs," says Matthew Rooda, the founder, president and CEO of SwineTech in New Sharon. The 23-year-old Rooda developed a belt-like electronic device to prevent sows from inadvertently suffocating piglets by rolling over them.

Hog farmers say it's their No. 1 problem, killing more than 13 million baby pigs in the U.S. every year. Rooda's solution, an electronic signal that prompts the sow to move, is an example of the kind of game-changing innovation being cultivated in Iowa.

"It's a good time to be an Iowa innovator," says Debi Durham, director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority. "We own biofuels, ethanol and diesel," she claims, noting that Iowa is also the No. 1 state in corn, soybeans, eggs, red meat and pork.

Furthermore, Durham says, Iowa is one of the few states to boast a triple-A credit rating. Even with exports down and a struggling ag economy, she says the time is ripe to "grow our own" businesses in Iowa.

Rooda agrees that the state is "really good at supporting their entrepreneurs." He had planned on going to medical school until he came up with his solution for the problem of suffocated piglets.

In addition to the mastery of agriculture, Durham believes Iowa's strengths are in financial services, biosciences and manufacturing.

"The reason you're seeing so much on the innovation side is that we've been able to scale jobs and wealth in each of those three areas," she says. "We've been deliberate about that."

Iowa is one of the few states that offer tax credits for bio-renewable fuels, which is helping spark growth in innovative businesses, Durham says. She also points to Iowa's robust tax credit program for research and development, as well as strong universities and community colleges that feed and support innovation. "We know how to do holistic growth," she says. "At our core we are innovators."


TESTING, TESTING

"I think Iowa has some huge advantages," agrees Alec Whitters, 29-year-old founder and CEO of Higher Learning Technologies in Coralville. His company creates apps to help students study for exams. When Whitters was studying for his dental board exams a few years ago, he was disappointed that there wasn't an automated system to help him. He was using homemade paper flash cards in a digital age.

Staring at his smartphone, he says, "I was really frustrated that I had this device that I did everything else on, and I wasn't able to use it for the thing that mattered most to me."

When the idea of an app as a study aide came to him, Whitters dropped out of dental school and called on two longtime friends to help him start the company in 2012. Their first study app was for dental students, and they have developed similar products for nursing programs, admission tests for several graduate programs and others, expanding into new areas as quickly as they can. With more than a million users, they're the top-grossing producer of education apps.

Higher Learning Technologies now employs 172 nationwide, including 47 in Iowa. They intend to stay based here, Whitters says. "We've gotten mentors from the state



Life can be tough and all too brief for piglets who risk suffocation under their own unsuspecting mothers. A device developed in Iowa gives fresh hope (and maybe fresh air) to little guys like this.

MORE INFORMATION

Want to save a piglet?
facebook.com/swineguard/

Have a pesky virus to cure?
harrisvaccines.com

Have a test coming up?
hltpcorp.com.

and from the university who've gone out of their way to allow us to incubate our company," he explains. "We owe a huge debt of gratitude to all of those people who helped us, and that's part of the reason we want to keep our company in Iowa."

DISEASE BLOCKER

In Ames, Harrisvaccines develops animal vaccines, including one for bird flu as well as the porcine epidemic diarrhea virus, both of which have been devastating in Iowa and around the world.

"We focus on rapid response and custom, specific vaccines to meet the demands of emerging and foreign animal diseases," says Joel Harris, vice president of the company and son of founder Hank Harris. Since its inception in 2005, Harrisvaccines has grown to employ 45 people. It was acquired in 2015 by pharmaceutical giant Merck.

Harris says the company intends to stay and grow in Iowa. "Iowa State University and the state of Iowa have been very supportive in fostering innovation and growth for our company," he says.

The Harris products are manufactured in Ames, in a facility licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The company's biggest clients, including the USDA, are also in

Iowa. "That's important when you're trying to introduce new products," Harris says.

Their process allows the company to develop vaccines more rapidly than their competitors, Harris says, and enables them to be more nimble if a disease mutates. For example, the bird flu treatment developed in 2015 went from the Harris lab to USDA approval in about six months. One of the advantages to having been acquired by Merck, Harris adds, is that it will help them expand into worldwide markets quickly.

SQUEALING FOR AIR

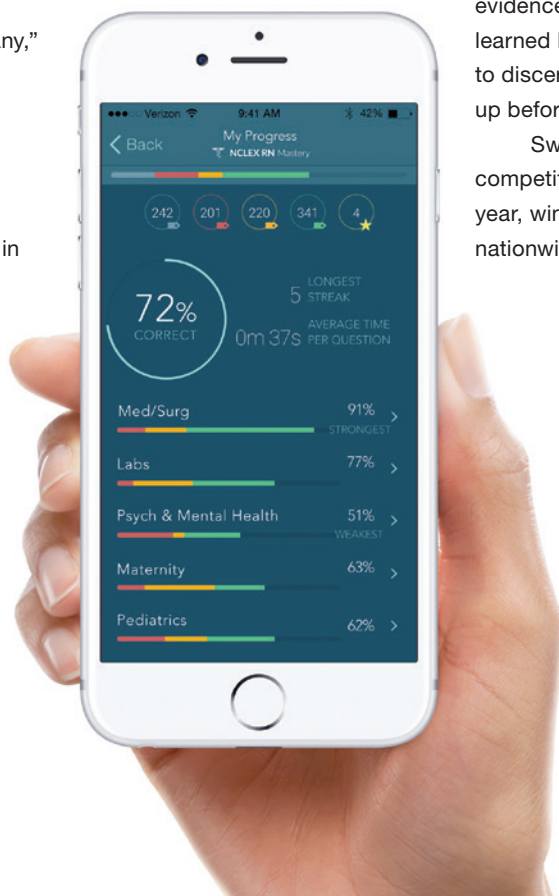
Back in New Sharon, SwineTech employs four people producing Rooda's "Fitbit for pigs." The device monitors the sow's temperature, breathing and other vital signs. Most importantly, it can discern between types of squeals from the sow's brood—is that piglet hungry or struggling for air?

The device sends a mild electronic shock, similar to that of a training collar for dogs, causing the sow to get up and allowing the piglet to run free. Rooda says there is

evidence that the process can create a learned behavior in the sow, training her to discern the piglet's squeal and stand up before the shock is administered.

SwineTech has been the darling of competitions among startups in the past year, winning numerous awards nationwide, many including cash. ■

Studying got a lot smarter when the process left flash cards behind. This phone-friendly system was developed by Higher Learning Technologies in Coralville.





Rae Shanahan, Chief Strategy Officer

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SOLUTIONS AS SMOOTH AS ICE

A UNIQUE TAX CREDIT PROGRAM SUPPORTS THE GROWTH
AND QUALITY OF IOWA COMMUNITIES.

WRITER: PERRY BEEMAN

Economic development isn't always measured by a new factory or industrial park. Significant gains can come from recreational or cultural improvements, which not only enhance the quality of life for residents but also instill an energy that attracts new workers and businesses.

Iowa's relatively rare tax credit program for giving to community foundations, called Endow Iowa, has helped spur such projects. In addition to monetary donations, the program encourages unusual gifts such as grain, livestock, securities, art, boats and lakeside condos.

"There are just a few states that have one of these tax credit programs, but Iowa's is the most expansive," says

Joe Sorenson, director of affiliate relations for the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines. "It often encourages bigger gifts."

The Endow Iowa tax credit program, created by the Iowa Legislature in 2003, benefits Iowans and communities in a variety of ways, says Kari McCann, president of the Iowa Council of Foundations: "Donors receive tax credits and federal charitable tax deductions, and communities receive funding to support their nonprofits, charitable programs and community initiatives." What's more, donations to endowments continue to grow and to distribute funds in perpetuity, she says.

The program also "keeps charitable dollars in our state to do good for Iowans," McCann says. "As our state



The Boji Bay Ice Arena in Spirit Lake was key in attracting employees to Polaris Industries.

"NOW, ON ANY GIVEN FRIDAY, THERE ARE 150 PEOPLE AT THE RINK."

JOE SORENSON

experiences a significant transfer of wealth over the next several years, this program incentivizes giving in our state."

Since the program's inception, Endow Iowa has leveraged more than 25,000 donations totaling over \$191 million for Iowa charities, McCann says.

In the early part of the program, the network of foundations received \$1.5 million in tax credits annually. More recently, it's been running \$6 million to \$8 million, says Kristi Knous, president of the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, which helps with projects in various parts of the state through its affiliates.

Donors are eligible to receive a 25 percent state tax credit for donations to qualified community foundations and affiliates. That's in addition to federal tax benefits. Together, the tax breaks mean a donor in the 35 percent federal tax bracket could make a \$10,000 donation and get \$6,000 of it back.

The following are a few ways the Endow Iowa program has made a difference for Iowa communities.

'A RIPPLE OF GOOD'

When Polaris Industries starting talking about expanding its production of motorcycles, ATVs and snowmobiles in the Spirit Lake area, local leaders started thinking about hockey.

That's because they knew they would need to entice some of their experienced employees and new recruits from nearby Minnesota, where hockey is king.

"They said, 'Middle management isn't going to come down from Minnesota. We don't have an ice rink,' " Sorenson says.

The Endow Iowa tax credit program came into play as donors pledged enough money through the Okoboji Foundation to establish the Boji Bay Ice Arena. The project drew support from local businesses and regional heavyweights such as Bank Midwest Chairman and CEO Steve Goodenow and Le Mars businessman Dan Wells.

"Now, on any given Friday, there are 150 people at the rink," Sorenson says.

"The neat thing is that the right thing for Okoboji might not be the right thing for





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another community,” Sorenson adds. “For Okoboji, it’s water quality and recreation and arts and culture. They did that because they had listening sessions and went out to their community and got feedback. Then they focused on that.”

Mary Freiborg, Okoboji Foundation president, says nearly all of the donors received tax credits. “It’s a huge incentive,” she says. The foundation itself gave \$80,000 to the ice arena project, and more may be coming, Freiborg adds.

“We like to talk about looking out at the lakes on a calm day and thinking of dropping a pebble into the water, she says. “We create that ripple of good.”

GIFT OF GRAIN

Farmer Richard Dreifke works land that has been in his family for 112 years. To support the Hubbard Public Library, he donated what he had on hand: grain. The Hardin County Community Endowment Foundation keeps the account for the library. “We want to have the best quality of life in our small town as possible,” Dreifke said when he made the donation.

Dreifke says the tax credit allowed him to make a bigger gift. He also saved money by donating the grain directly, rather than selling it himself and donating the proceeds. The foundation decided when to sell. In this way, farmers have the advantage of not declaring income from sale of the grain, and they can deduct the expense of growing the donated commodity.

Knous of the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines says grain donations are relatively common.

Community foundations often have accounts at local grain elevators.

Donors also receive the tax credit if they donate land. Patricia and Russell Helms, for example, decided to donate their 83-acre farm to the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines to establish an endowment to benefit the Madrid Community Endowment Fund and the Madrid Historical Society. They also gave three acres, a farmhouse and a barn to the historical society separately. The farm will serve as a public education center.

VITAL SERVICE

In Boone, Stan Moffitt, chairman of Moffitt’s Ford Lincoln, discovered the Endow Iowa program would help him increase his support of the Boone County Hospital’s endowment. “The Boone County Hospital provides vital local health care services and is an important organization to support,” Moffitt says.

After learning about the tax benefits of giving to the Boone County Hospital Endow Iowa Fund, “we discovered we could give more financial support to the hospital—for the same cost,” he says.

McCann of the Iowa Council of Foundations says the Endow Iowa program is accomplishing its goals. “Endow Iowa benefits Iowa communities in many ways,” she says, “from agency endowment funds that provide nonprofits with steady support of income each year, to memorial endowment funds that help Iowans leave a legacy in their communities, to community funds that bring neighbors together for good.” ■

“WE LIKE TO TALK ABOUT
LOOKING OUT AT THE LAKES
ON A CALM DAY AND THINKING
OF DROPPING A PEBBLE
INTO THE WATER. WE CREATE
THAT RIPPLE OF GOOD.”

MARY FREIBORG



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TRAIL OF TREASURES

THE EASTERN EDGE OF IOWA IS HOME TO A STUNNING
COLLECTION OF STAINED GLASS WINDOWS.

WRITER: VICKI INGHAM



The opalescent glass window at Von Maur's distribution center in Davenport celebrates commerce, symbolized by trade goods and a caduceus, the classical symbol of commerce. The window was displayed at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

From Keokuk to Dubuque, a “stained glass trail” rewards visitors today with brilliant examples of art glass windows from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Aged but undimmed, they glisten in the sunlight like the timeless waters of the Mississippi River flowing nearby. While some of the stained glass was bought from small firms or even catalogs, much of it came from celebrated studios, including those of artists John La Farge, Louis Comfort Tiffany, Frederick Lamb and Emil Frei.

The local regard for elegant art glass at the time simply reflected the river towns’ “greater concentration of wealth, larger urban areas, ease of transportation and a larger population,” explains Jeff Bremer, assistant professor of history at Iowa State University.

In Davenport, a boomtown by the 1850s, Trinity Cathedral houses one of the most cohesive installations of medieval-revival windows. Completed in 1873 as the “Bishop’s Church” for the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa, the English Gothic structure features medieval-revival ornamental windows in the nave and figural windows depicting Christ and the four evangelists in the apse.

Upstream in Dubuque, St. John’s Episcopal Church has excellent examples of a medieval-style glass called *grisaille*—lattice and floral patterns stenciled in black on clear or pale glass. Just two blocks from St. John’s, St. Luke’s United Methodist Church owns the state’s best-known collection of Tiffany windows: five large and nine small figural ones commissioned in 1896 and four more added in 1916 and 1931, as well as dozens of ornamental ones.

Soaring windows fill the north wall of the sanctuary, showcasing the goal of artist Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933): letting the glass itself create the forms, shadows and highlights. The “Good Shepherd” and “Angel of Victory” windows are tours de force in the use of Tiffany’s characteristic types of glass, including drapery, rippled, streaky, confetti and herringbone. “The Good Shepherd” was a stock design. “The Angel of Victory,” on the other hand, was an original design by Tiffany staff artist Frederick Wilson. The same angel, on a smaller scale, appears at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Keokuk.

OPALESCENT GLASS

Although Tiffany became synonymous with opalescent glass, artist John La Farge (1835–1910) was the first to incorporate the material (previously used only for glassware) into windows and to use a technique called plating, which combined layers of colored or textured glass to achieve depth and subtlety.

St. John’s in Dubuque has four windows in the chancel attributed to La Farge and five by Tiffany Studios in the nave. (Work produced between 1892 and 1900 was usually signed Tiffany Glass & Decorating Co. Tiffany Studios indicates work made after 1900.)

Chief among other firms producing brilliant work in opalescent glass was J&R Lamb Studios of New York, whose windows fill First Presbyterian Church in Davenport. Founded in 1857 by brothers Joseph and Richard Lamb, the company was the first in America to focus on designing furnishings, textiles and glass for churches. The emphasis on opalescent glass came later, under the direction of Joseph’s son Frederick (1863–1928), who studied art in Paris and New York and mastered the technical aspects of glass chemistry, coloring, glazing and leading. Influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement and the work of La Farge, Frederick and his brother Charles moved the company forward artistically.

Frederick Lamb came to the attention of First Presbyterian’s pastor, the Rev. John Donaldson, in 1898 while he was visiting a church in New York. Donaldson felt Lamb’s work compared well with windows by La Farge and Tiffany in the same church. “Mr. Lamb’s window is counted by many good judges the best of them all,” he told the congregation later.

That opinion would be reinforced almost a century after, in 1993, when restoration authority Arthur Femenella

1. “The Boy Jesus in the Temple,” by Emil Frei Art Glass, at St. Mathias Catholic Church, Muscatine.
2. Detail, “The Agony in the Garden,” by Emil Frei Art Glass, at St. Mathias Catholic Church, Muscatine.
3. Detail, “St. Luke,” by J & R Lamb, First Presbyterian Church, Davenport.
4. Detail, English medieval-style memorial window by unidentified American stained glass company at Trinity Cathedral, Davenport. Photo by Rand Tapscott.



1



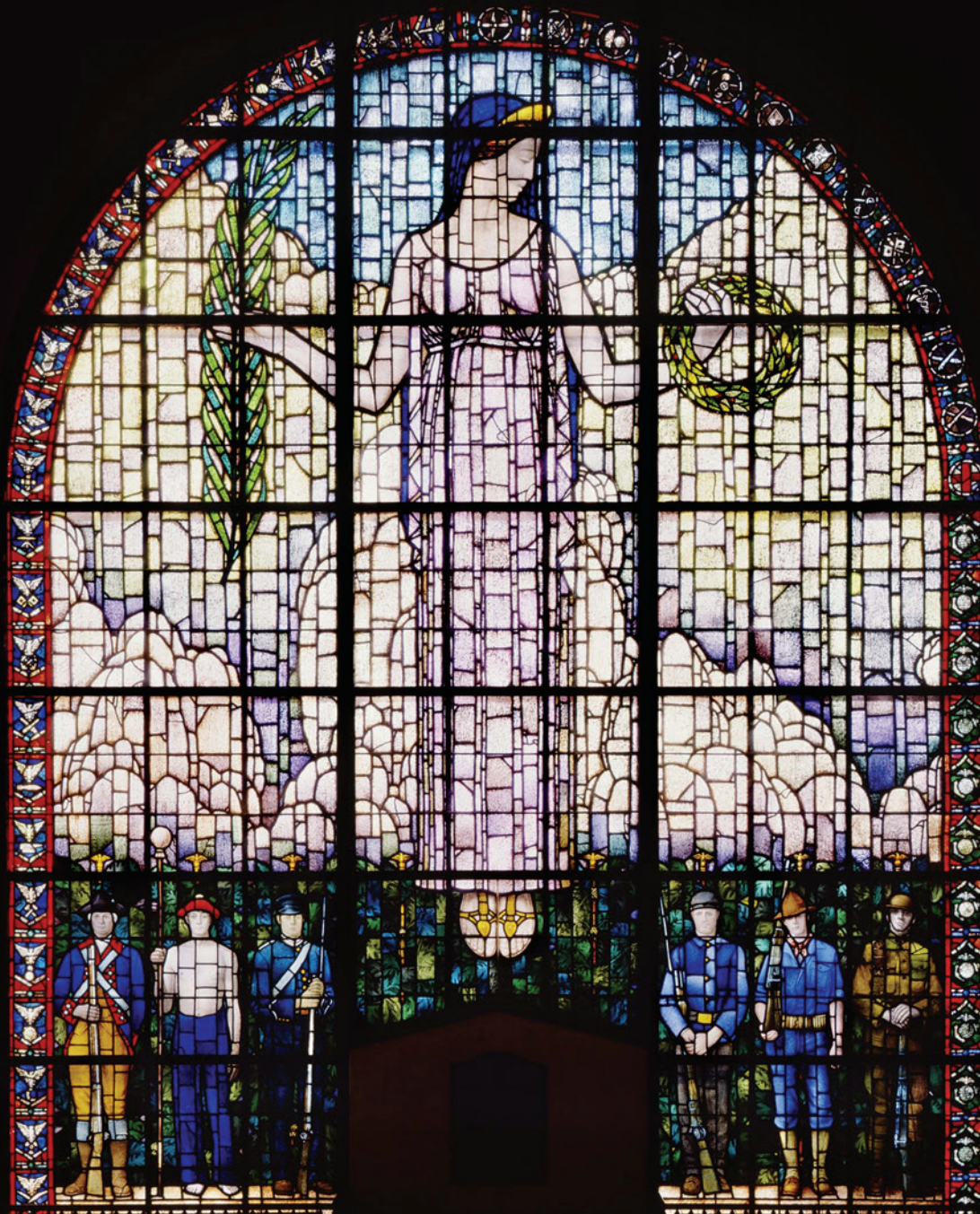
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3



4



At the Veterans Memorial Building in Cedar Rapids, the only stained glass window Grant Wood ever designed honors American soldiers from the Revolutionary War through World War I. Wood's sister, Nan, modeled for the female figure, who symbolizes the Republic, with the palm branch of peace in one hand and a laurel wreath of victory in the other. It measures 24 by 20 feet.

Grant Wood's New Direction

Emil Frei Art Glass fabricated the only stained-glass window ever designed by Iowa's best-known artist, Grant Wood. Seeing it requires a detour from the Mississippi River trail, but the Veterans Memorial Building window in Cedar Rapids merits a stop for the role it played in shaping Wood's career.

Wood received the commission in 1928 and, assisted by Arnold Pyle, spent months perfecting the full-size art from which the window would be crafted. Workers at the Quaker Oats plant served as models for the soldiers depicted.

Wood chose Emil Frei to fabricate the window, and the company assigned the manufacture of the glass to its studio in Munich. While Wood was in Bavaria supervising production, he visited art museums and encountered the work of Hans Memling and other Northern Renaissance painters. The combination of figures and landscape in these paintings inspired him to think differently about his own work and ultimately influenced his change of style from impressionism to the regionalism for which he became famous. Shortly after his trip to Munich, Wood painted the iconic "American Gothic," signaling the new direction his work would take.

observed that "the quality of the windows is exceptional, representing the best work of this gilded age."

Ultimately, J&R Lamb created 40 windows for the church, both decorative and figural. Like La Farge and Tiffany, Frederick Lamb never actually worked with the glass himself. His role as creative director included sketching designs, but his primary job was to oversee the artists and craftsmen who translated the drawings into finished windows.

ALL IN GOOD TASTE

The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago helped ensure the broad popularity of art glass for all kinds of architectural installations. Among the glass exhibited there was a large arched window celebrating commerce, science and learning. J.H.C. Petersen, a dry goods merchant from Davenport, bought it for his department store, J.H.C. Petersen's Sons, built in 1892.

For almost 100 years, the window overlooked a stairway landing. When Von Maur (the store's owner since 1916) moved to new headquarters in 1990, the window went along and now fills a wall in the company's lobby.

Flanagan & Biedenweg of Chicago also exhibited at the Columbian Exposition, and perhaps that's where Phillip Crapo of Burlington saw the firm's work. In 1896 he contacted the company about crafting a custom window for the Burlington Public Library (now the Des Moines County Heritage Center, where the window remains prominent).

GLASS AS CANVAS

Although opalescent glass dominated the market between 1880 and 1920, demand for Renaissance-style painted glass continued as well. Achieving the look of Old Master paintings on glass involved meticulous application of colored enamels to clear or pale glass, which was then fired for permanence. The best painted glass came from Bavaria, where Ludwig I had encouraged a revival of Renaissance techniques. Windows typically presented figures and scenes framed by elaborate Gothic canopies and columns and incorporated the window's architecture into the image as a screen dividing the viewer from the painted space.

The largest collection of Munich windows in eastern

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Iowa is found in Keokuk, at St. John's Episcopal Church, which has 18 windows by Mayer of Munich, one of the best-known German firms, founded by Joseph Gabriel Mayer in 1847. St. John's commissioned its first windows from Mayer in 1886 and added to the collection through the 1890s. The church also has three Tiffany angels and individual windows from other stained-glass companies, offering a concise survey of late 19th- and early 20th-century styles.

German artists brought the Munich style to America, setting up studios in cities with large German populations. Bavarian-born Emil Frei had studied at the Munich Academy of Art before emigrating to the U.S. He founded Emil Frei Art Glass in St. Louis in 1898 and served a national clientele. At St. Mathias Catholic Church in Muscatine, completed in 1911, Frei's windows combine exquisite Old Master-quality painting with the natural play of sunlight to create stunning pictorial effects. Although the scenes from the life of Jesus, each framed by a Gothic canopy, occupy pairs of slender lancet windows, the painted space is so monumental that the windows seem much larger.

CLEANING AND RESTORATION

Almost all of these great collections of windows have undergone cleaning and restoration, many by Bovard Studio of Fairfield, Iowa. Founder Ron Bovard says that, over time, the leading deteriorates and the weight of the glass causes the pieces to buckle. When that happens, the window must be removed, dismantled and reassembled in a painstaking and costly procedure that is nevertheless essential to prolonging the life of the artwork.

Most buildings with stained glass have a protective layer of glass or polycarbonate on the outside, but Bovard notes it's critical to provide ventilation, to prevent damage from condensation and trapped heat.

Although not well-cataloged or even well-publicized, the collections of stained glass in Iowa's river towns reward the effort it takes to see them. Art is always best seen in person, and that is particularly true for stained glass. Sunlight brings the colors and textures of the glass to life in a way that no photograph can truly capture. Seeing the effects of sunlight on these stained glass treasures is an experience you won't forget. ■

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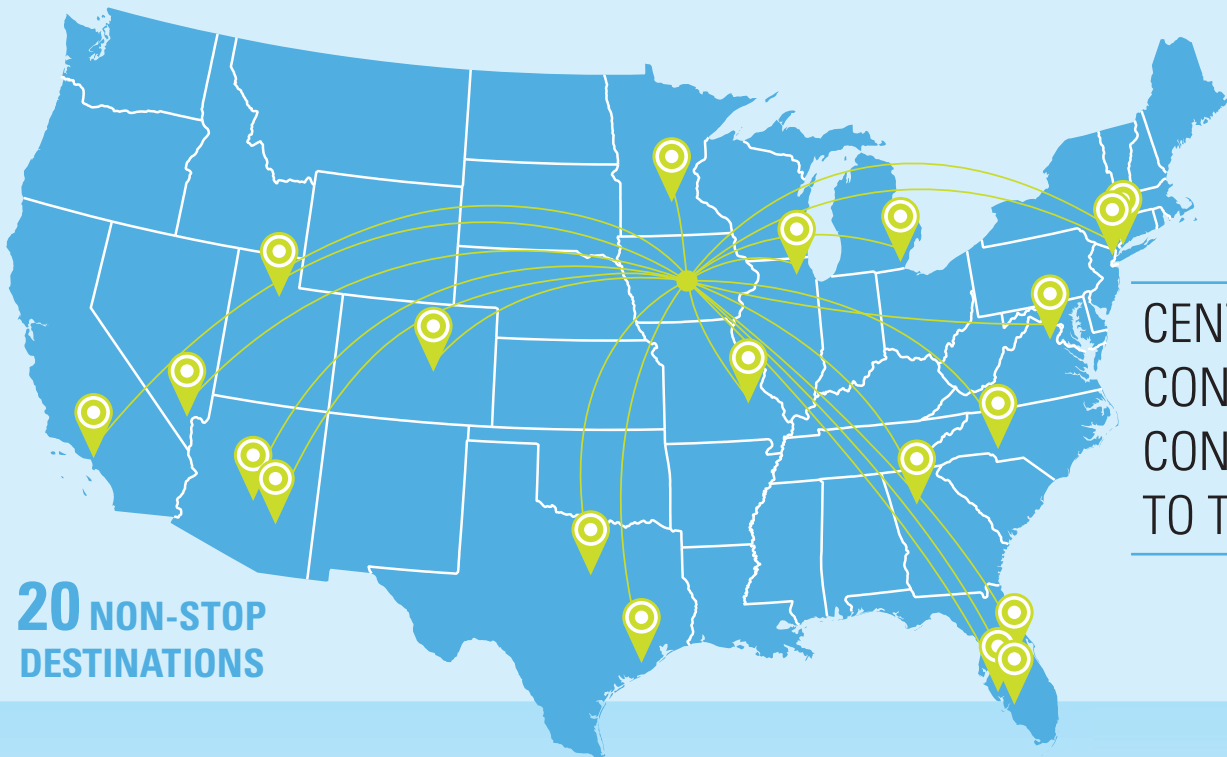
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COON RAPIDS



A playground for paddlers, the Raccoon River flows through the lush lowlands of the 5,500-acre Whiterock Conservancy.



WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION SHARE SPACE AT
WHITEROCK CONSERVANCY.

WRITER: BRIANNE SANCHEZ

A

black dog named Teton bounds ahead, eager to show off the oak savanna. The Labrador's enthusiasm for this land—5,500 acres given to the people of Iowa by the Garst family—shows in the slack-tongued smile of an animal accustomed to life along the ecologically diverse Middle Raccoon River.

Teton's human, Whiterock Conservancy Executive Director Conrad Kramer, navigates his Jeep along a rough trail, narrating the scenery and pointing out conservation efforts.

"Fire encourages the oaks," Kramer says of the prescribed burns in the savanna, adding that goats have joined the land stewardship team to help manage underbrush and restore one of Iowa's rare native ecosystems.

Nearby Coon Rapids owes its topography to the Ice Age. "The last glacier stopped here, and so should you!" is an unofficial tourism slogan.

"That seed bank was waiting over 100 years for the opportunity to see some sun," Kramer says, gesturing to a patch of rare remnant sand prairie returning to a hill made up of rocky glacial deposit. "Whiterock is a museum. This landscape has become an artifact of the past."

Chief historian, co-founder and live-in volunteer Liz Garst, granddaughter of Roswell Garst, connects the family's values and vision to the natural playground and living laboratory Whiterock Conservancy has become. Made famous by the visit of corn-curious Soviet leader

Nikita Khrushchev in 1959, Roswell Garst's farm is now home to the Whiterock nonprofit, which seeks to inspire conventional farmers to embrace sustainable practices such as planting cover crops and no-till farming.

"We're about leading and learning," Liz Garst says. Her latest "land lab" experiment is high-intensity grazing, which puts 150 cows on one acre at a time. "I'm envisioning we get the public to drink wine and watch the cows move every day."

She may be only half kidding. Garst's picturesque River Place home and barn venue are at the epicenter of the property, and her enthusiasm for ecotourism is evident in the many offerings at Whiterock. The Conservancy offers amenities for fishing, bow-hunting, biking, hiking, canoeing, horseback-riding and stargazing. It is dotted with campgrounds for tents, trailers and a variety of other unique lodging opportunities. The original farmhouse, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, operates as a bed-and-breakfast inn with a bison pasture just up from the backyard.

Active, conventional farming frames—and funds—the Conservancy.

"This is the first nonprofit I've worked at that actually grows half of its budget," Kramer says. "At Whiterock, we have this wonderful celebration that brings agriculture, ecological restoration and outdoor recreation together, but there's always also tension."

That tension plays out in daily decisions, like whether to use crushed limestone or river rock to reinforce a small section of the 16 miles of single-track mountain biking

1. You can enjoy Whiterock at high speed. 2. Or savor its tranquility. 3. See it from the water. 4. Or encounter some surprising new friends.



FAMILY FUN

For my family, an overnight in Hollyhock Cottage, a converted chicken coop, provided a comfortable opportunity to stay close to nature. The cottage, which sleeps four and features indoor plumbing, heating, cooling and a kitchenette, was home base for our weekend trip.

We explored Whiterock's trails at a toddler's pace, listening for frogs and pausing to stir up mud puddles. We hoisted the baby into a backpack and took her to see livestock grazing in the pastures. My husband got in some trail time on his mountain bike while I puttered with the kids around the Garst Farm garden. Rain clouds rolled in as we were packing to return to Des Moines, but I squeezed in one more walk with my son zooming along the crushed gravel path on his balance bike. We looked at the birds and the river, listened to the thunder and admired the land.

—Brianne Sanchez

trails. Kramer debates with his crew: On one hand, the limestone could alter the alkalinity of the soil, to the detriment of the plants growing downhill. On the other, river rock gets slick when wet, which could be a hazard for cyclists.

One of Kramer's goals is to get more visitors out to experience the property. He acknowledges that not everyone is interested in or capable of hiking or camping, and the many ways to experience Whiterock are designed to make it attractive and accessible to everyone.

The addition of a shower house near the bike trails was a huge hit for mud-caked day-trippers. A fun event for all-terrain vehicles drew dozens of community members last summer—a different crowd than typically attends their land stewardship, stargazing or “bio blitz” events. An RV campground is coming online in an area Kramer predicts will be popular among equestrians.

New interpretive signs will go up soon to explain the connection between the scenery, history and vision. Kramer wants Whiterock's visitors to understand that Iowa is the country's most ecologically altered state. Even here, where generations have respected the land as a valuable asset, a biodiversity assessment deemed only 8 percent of the natural lands as high quality, high diversity.

The average visitor in awe of the existing flora and fauna may not notice, but Kramer would like to double that number over the next decade, and strengthen the Conservancy's education initiatives.

“It takes a long time to rebuild lost diversity,” he says. “It's ecology time.”

Today, though, there is still so much more to see. A sparkling pond sits in a valley beside a rustic cabin, surrounded by wetlands. Teton jumps in, swimming after a stick, wet coat glistening in the sunshine. ■

The vistas have changed little over time, but vary with the seasons.

IF YOU GO

Whiterock Conservancy rolls through the hills just southeast of Coon Rapids. The Conservancy boasts 45 miles of trails for hiking and biking, as well as some equestrian paths and access for ATVs. Twelve stocked ponds and equipment rental make fishing a popular choice. Bring or rent a canoe or kayak to enjoy the eight-mile Middle Raccoon River water trail. Stargazers can camp out in a field known for the darkest skies in Iowa. Many additional events attract bird-watchers, mushroom-hunters, history buffs and volunteers.

More information:
whiterockconservancy.org

Trails connect Whiterock Conservancy to downtown Coon Rapids, where cars really can park in the middle of the street. A golf course, sculpture park and bowling alley are among the attractions. Pose for a photo beside the 10-foot, rotating ear of corn next to the town's welcome sign.

More information:
coonrapidsiowa.com

Trail riders can bring their horses to enjoy miles of equestrian and mixed-use trails. Horse trailers can be parked at two trailhead campgrounds.





CLARINDA
ROCK VALLEY
WAUKEE

HELP WANTED

SCHOOLS TOOL UP TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH THE SKILLS NEEDED TO THRIVE IN THE 21ST-CENTURY WORKPLACE—AND TO MEET THE NEEDS OF IOWA BUSINESSES.

WRITER: PERRY BEEMAN



A growing number of schools are working with industry to offer students marketable technical skills, such as welding, gained through real-world experience.

In a growing number of technical industries, Iowa has become a land of rich opportunity for skilled workers.

This has led to a retooling at the state's community colleges, which are teaching students how to fix wind turbines, crunch big data and land internships that will mold them into tomorrow's manufacturers and tech workers.

High schools, too, are becoming a bigger part of that equation. Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, co-leader of the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) Council, and others have noted that many students don't realize they could be interested in technical skills simply because they've never been exposed to the work. So it's important to encourage them explore in middle and high school, whether that means checking out computer science or using a metal lathe to create products that local business can use.

School districts across the state have teamed with community colleges and local manufacturers to offer work spaces and equipment that go far beyond your parents' old wood and metal shops. Here's a look at three innovative initiatives.

ROCKET MANUFACTURING

ROCK VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL, ROCK VALLEY

When businesses in northwest Iowa saw a shortage of welders and construction workers, they appealed to the Rock Valley school district for help.

Superintendent Chad Janzen supported the idea of offering hands-on welding instruction to high school

students, and the initiative took off. Working with local businesses, the district planned a new shop in an addition to the school.

"Students graduating from high school need to have a plan, whether that plan is to go to college or to learn a skill," Janzen says. "Students can no longer afford to graduate from high school without a plan."

Instructors Todd VanderVelde and Micah Weber, borrowing concepts used in a school district in Wisconsin, helped set up a program in Rock Valley called Rocket Manufacturing. The program was one of the first five to receive a \$25,000 matching grant from the Governor's STEM Advisory Council. Since then, the school has dedicated a 10,000-square-foot shop—part of a \$1 million manufacturing addition—that has portable welding stations, lathes and other modern equipment donated by a community college and local manufacturers.

"The vision of Rocket Manufacturing is to create a self-sustaining program that will provide opportunities for our students to obtain hands-on, real-world experiences," Janzen says. "These experiences will allow students to apply the knowledge they have learned in STEM-related courses."

In addition to 21st-century skills, students will learn working-world values, such as responsibility, timeliness and accountability, that will prepare them for future employment. Some businesses have said that teaching the "soft skills" of showing up to work on time and knowing how to be part of a team are more important than technical knowledge of industrial skills, school officials say.

In Rock Valley's case, the students are actually *running*

"STUDENTS GRADUATING FROM
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OR TO LEARN A SKILL."

CHAD JANZEN, ROCK VALLEY

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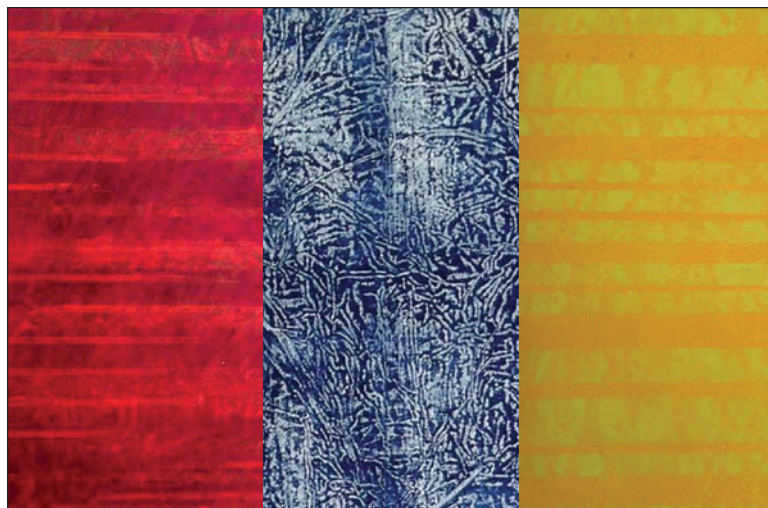
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ARE MAKING REAL PARTS
FOR REAL PEOPLE IN THE REAL
WORLD FOR REAL MONEY.”

CHAD JANZEN, ROCK VALLEY

a business. “The program is unique in the fact that it really is student-run,” Janzen says. “The students do all the communicating with the businesses. A student accountant does all the bookwork and uses professional industry software, donated at a value of \$50,000.”

And students don’t just take assignments from businesses, either. “For some projects, students actually design the product themselves,” Janzen says. “Students are not making widgets like most of us did in shop class. They are making real parts for real people in the real world for real money. About 80 percent of what they do is act as subcontractors for local businesses. It is truly a team effort between business and education.”

So far, six businesses have worked with the 13 students currently in the program. The students have, for examples, made lockers, deer-stand carts, feed mixers, custom gates and fences. Now they are looking to amp up their marketing, including social media, and to expand their market beyond the local area.

VIRTUAL WELDING

CLARINDA HIGH SCHOOL

Clarinda High School once had some teachers from Southwestern Community College in Creston stop by to show students how to “paint” cars through virtual reality. That led industrial technology teacher Dave Carper to think about how to improve welding instruction. Local manufacturers had said they were in critical need of more welders, but Carper knew he couldn’t always watch the students weld while he was also teaching auto mechanics.

The solution: a virtual reality welding system in which students wear a welding mask and gloves and use a welding gun, but “work” on parts with the help of a laptop computer simulation and no heat. This is the first year the school has used the \$4,900 system. A grant from the local Cardinal Fund paid for the software and equipment.

The system lets students work on three types of basic joints. The computer rates them on the angle of the gun and other factors. If they see a yellow signal, they’ve done everything right.

“It trains them,” says Carper, who uses the system as part of his auto mechanics class. Once the students have some experience with the virtual reality system, he has them weld for real under his close supervision. That’s important, he says, because “virtual reality doesn’t do anything on setting heat or wire speed.”

Carper even lets study-hall students try the virtual welding, and the software rates their performance. “It’s like a video game,” Carper says. “They love it.”

APEX WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE

WAUKEE HIGH SCHOOL

Waukee’s Aspiring Professional Experience, or APEX (formerly known as the Center for Advanced Professional Studies), is one of the more elaborate programs for addressing the shortage of workers in certain fields and teaching real-world skills to students.

Students work in local businesses to learn about modern technology in fields such as finance and insurance, engineering, human services, bioscience and agriculture.



Vivian Maier

THROUGH A CRITICAL LENS

THROUGH JANUARY 22, 2017 | ANNA K. MEREDITH GALLERY

Vivian Maier (American, 1926 – 2009) / *New York City, September 10, 1955* / Gelatin silver print; printed later
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The idea is to help students explore interests and build skills in critical thinking, communication, creativity, collaboration and flexibility. Other skill sets emphasized include productivity, accountability, customer service, leadership, career exploration, entrepreneurship and ethics.

The APEX program does not require a formal application, but students have to commit part of the school day for two terms. They earn high school credit and typically college credit, too. Teachers consider the program a success even if it helps students decide to pursue other fields.

"I believe schools can do a better job of preparing students for life outside school walls," says Waukee Superintendent David Wilkerson. "I also believe that we can't truly replicate those real-world experiences in a classroom, so it is imperative to get students out into the workplace for that learning."

In Waukee's case, that means embedding a class of 15 to 18 students and an instructor in businesses for half a day. An important element: The business has to benefit along with the students.

The students and teacher "are providing real value to the business and working on real projects for those businesses," Wilkerson says. "If we can't bring value to the business, then we don't want to partner. It's important that the businesses are receiving a tangible benefit out of this."

As of press time, about 400 students were expected to be involved in the program this fall. In addition, "we have nearly 200 businesses partnering with us in some form or another," Wilkerson says. "Some are hosts for classes, some help with the curriculum."

The program, started in 2014, was "created to help identify workforce needs in the Des Moines metro, and create early talent pipelines for those workforce needs in support of our businesses," Wilkerson says. "Another primary goal is to provide students with a better grasp of what different jobs, occupations or careers are truly like, and to help develop and coach students in the soft skills that we so often hear from businesses our young people are lacking." Those simple skills include knowing how to dress for work and arriving on time.

At press time, the \$20 million Waukee Innovation and Learning Center was scheduled to open in the fall of 2016 to support the APEX programs, after a construction effort that included design input from businesses. "It doesn't look like a school, won't feel or sound like a school," Wilkerson says. "Rather, it's a quasi research and office facility for learning."

In addition to APEX, Waukee offers a school-to-work program that currently has 75 students participating in internships. The district also hopes to add an accelerator or business incubator at some point. ■

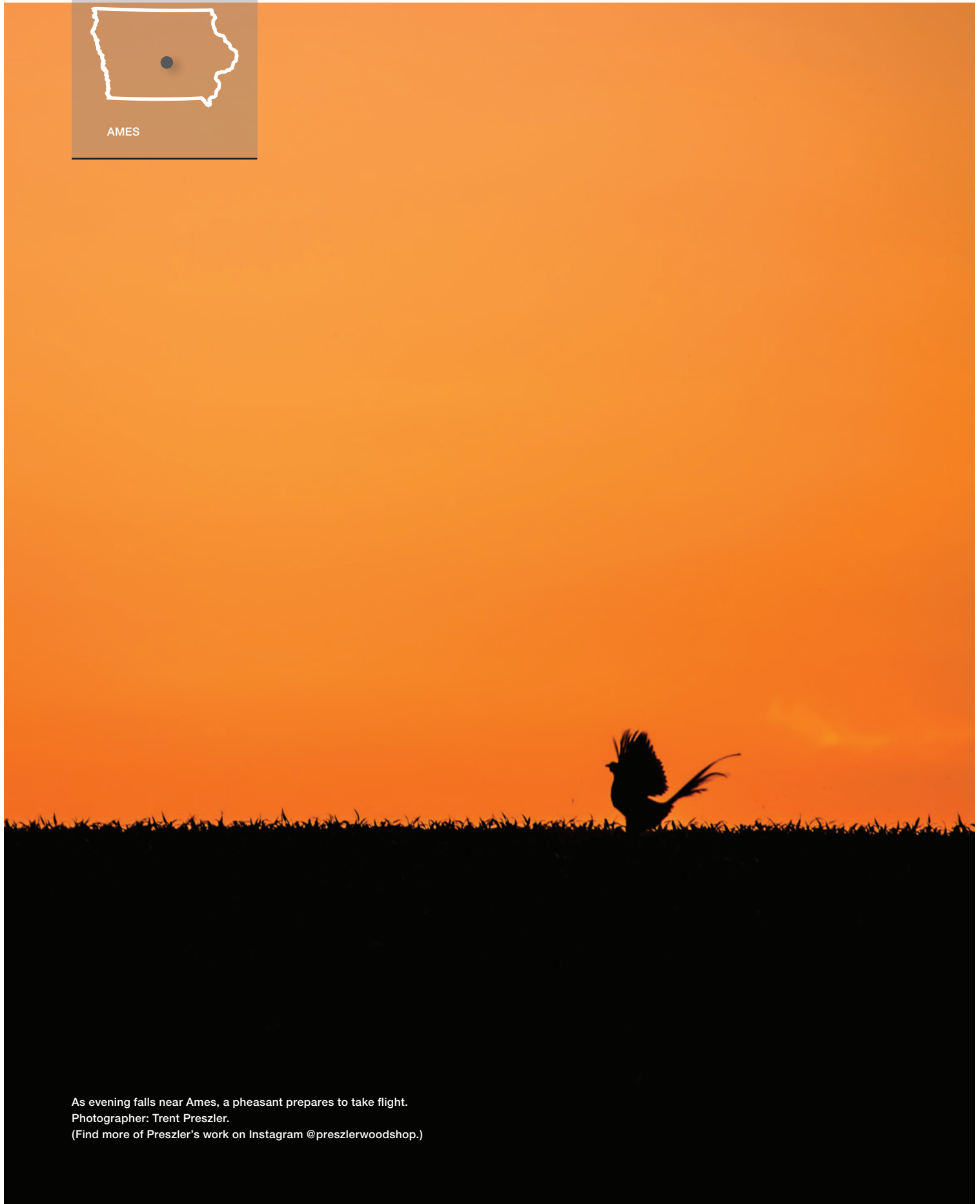
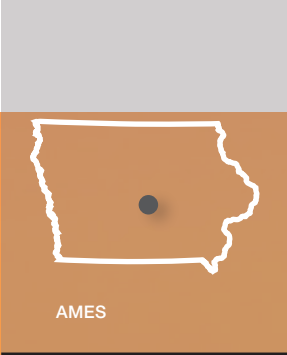
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THAT LEARNING."

DAVID WILKERSON, WAUKEE

ADVERTISER'S

Index

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 21st Century Rehab 116 | Dickinson Law 27 | Lincoln Savings Bank 35 |
| ABI 122 | Eastern Iowa Airport 63 | Loralie's Gift Shop 75 |
| Agri-Industrial Plastics Co. 120 | Eastern Polk Reg Dev., Inc. 163 | Lost Island Waterpark 37 |
| American Institute of Architects 157 | EmbarkIT 143 | MidAmerican Energy 112 |
| Ballet Des Moines 157 | Faulconer Gallery 75 | Nationwide 135 |
| Bankers Trust Company 51 | Farm Bureau Financial Services 29 | Olson Larsen Galleries 157 |
| Briar Cliff University 123 | Giggles & Bows 75 | Phase 2 Consignments 75 |
| Businessolver 129 | Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden 159 | Pioneer Book Shop 75 |
| Casey's 12 | Greater Des Moines Convention & Visitors Bureau 11 | Prairie Meadows Racetrack & Casino 39 |
| Central College 147 | Greater Des Moines Partnership 31 | Principal Financial Group 41 |
| Grinnell Convention & Visitors Bureau 74-75 | Grinnell College 73 | Projects Contemporary Furniture 145 |
| City of Okoboji 13 | Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Company 114 | Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce 91 |
| Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines 146 | Hy-Vee 21 | Renewable Energy Group 14-15 |
| Davis Brown Law Firm 123 | Iowa Area Development Group 146 | Rockwell Collins 110 |
| Delta Dental 25 | Iowa Clinic 133 | Sahar's 23 |
| Des Moines Art Center 159 | Iowa Community Foundations 33 | The Prairie Canary 74 |
| Des Moines International Airport 147 | Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs 42-43 | University of Iowa 16 |
| Des Moines Metro Opera 157 | Iowa Economic Development Authority 83-90 | Weitz Co. 91 |
| Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center 159 | Iowa Innovation Corporation 146 | Wells Fargo Bank BC |
| Des Moines Symphony 159 | Iowa Lottery 8 | |
| Des Moines University 9 | Knapp Properties, Inc. 135 | |
| | Kreg Tool 118 | |



As evening falls near Ames, a pheasant prepares to take flight.
Photographer: Trent Preszler.
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