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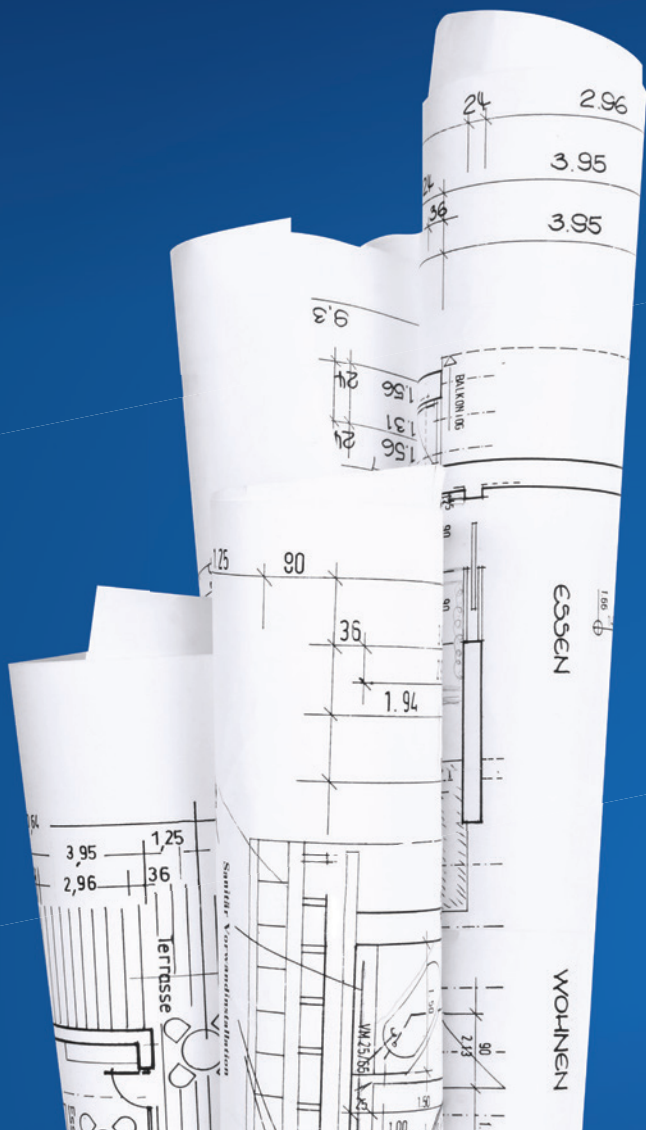
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Jessie Field Shambaugh, often referred to as “the mother of 4-H,” is one of the female leaders featured in a calendar commemorating the ratification of the 19th Amendment. The artwork was created by Cedar Falls artist Gary Kelley. See story, page 76.

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DISCUSSED.”**

Comedian Sid Juwarker, who opened Teehee's Comedy Club in November. See story, page 82.



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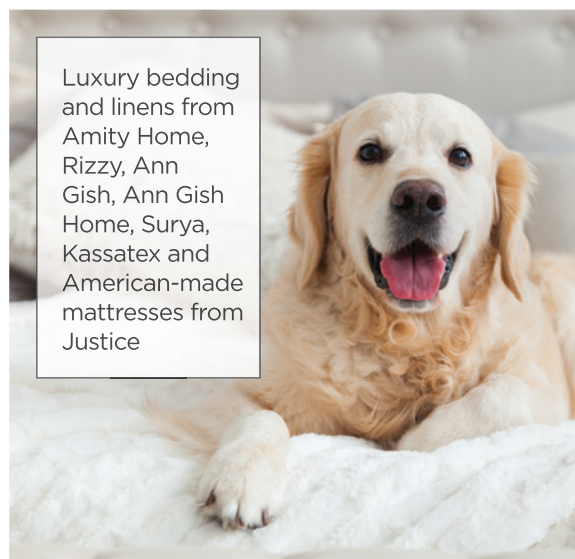


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# Let's Laugh

**M**y daughter recently introduced me to comedian John Mulaney (“I can’t *believe* you haven’t heard of him, Mom!” she said with the requisite eye roll). We binge-watched his stand-up specials on Netflix, and I honestly can’t recall when I’ve laughed longer or harder—it was the kind of chortle-until-you-cry, endorphin-releasing hilarity that makes you understand why “laughter is the best medicine” became a cliché.

While Mulaney most likely won’t be showing up in Iowa anytime soon, there are plenty of local comedians whose sole goal is to make you laugh. You’ll meet some of them in **Chad Taylor’s** story starting on page 82. Chad spent nearly a year immersed in the local stand-up scene, frequently going to Lefty’s open-mic nights and getting to know those who regularly put themselves on the line for the sake of amusing the rest of us.

“The more I went to Lefty’s and learned about the local scene, the more I found myself wondering not so much about what makes someone do comedy, but what makes someone do comedy *here*,” far from such comedy meccas as New York and Los Angeles, Chad says. “It’s a creative outlet, sure, but it’s one that has the potential to subject you to deep embarrassment and heckling on a nightly basis. I found that it’s a lot like a gambler’s high for most comics: The times you hit far outweigh the pain of the times you bust.”

Reading Chad’s story made me eager to check out open-mic nights as well as other types of comedy shows at Lefty’s and elsewhere. As I write this, comedian **Sid Juwarker’s** new venue, Teehee’s Comedy Club, has just opened, which promises to elevate the local and regional stand-up scene much like Noce, Teehee’s neighbor on Walnut Street, has done for jazz.

A different, but equally welcome, kind of comedy will be in Des Moines Jan. 24-Feb. 2, when Iowa Stage Theatre Company premieres “Adore Us! Line” (see page 36), created by well-regarded Des Moines playwright and composer **Robert John Ford**. In a time when divisiveness evidently has obliterated humor from our national psyche, I’m betting Ford’s musical comedy will remind us what intelligent and good-natured political fun is all about.

In her column for this issue (page 26), **Karla Walsh** explains why New Year’s resolutions typically fail and encourages you to reframe them in a way that adds more good to your life rather than subtract from it. Splendid advice, and I now know what my resolution will be: Add more laughter to my life. I hope you’ll join me! After all, as Charles Dickens so aptly put it, “there is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter.” ■





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**ONE WORD  
AFTER  
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AUTRY

**WHAT IF  
YOUR GUESTS  
HAVE SEEN  
EVERYTHING?**



Close friends from New York recently visited Sally and me. These are people who've been almost everywhere and seen almost everything. Although they admonished us not to go to any trouble, we knew they'd want to get some sense of Des Moines and Iowa. Plus, I have a hard time believing it when people tell me not to go to any trouble. Surely they expect us to go to some trouble.

But what to do? What to show them?

They'd made something of a big deal out of Iowa being flat, so we decided to take a drive and see something of the countryside, then stop in a small town where we could have lunch at a typical restaurant on the town square. In other words we'd try to give them a real Iowa experience.

I've often heard that it can be a revelation to see a familiar place through the eyes of someone who has not seen it before. My friends marveled at the long fields of ripening soybeans and corn, as well as the hills with their trees just showing the first tinges of fall color.

The town we chose was Winterset

in case they might appreciate seeing the famous bridges of Madison County. When we told them the plan, they became more enthusiastic than I would have thought. It turned out that my friends had liked Robert Waller's book, so it wasn't such a corny experience as I had expected, and I have to admit that even I was impressed by the covered bridges.

As if planned, another bridge visitor was from Connecticut and informed us that her great-grandfather had taken part in designing and building one of the bridges—a bit of serendipity.

I bragged a bit about Iowa's county courthouses, so we visited the one in Winterset. Like so many of the courthouses, it is rather monumental. My friends seemed most impressed by the signs, plaques and flags commemorating all the Madison County men and women who had served in World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm and Iraq.

As we were about to leave the courthouse, a woman came out of an office and greeted us. More serendipity. She was one of the county supervisors.

She chatted and answered questions, the perfect example of "Iowa Nice." Sally asked, "Are you the only woman supervisor?"

"No, I'm the second one," she replied, "in one hundred years." Well, that's at least some progress, I thought.

We then made our way across the square to the quilt museum. In yet another piece of serendipity, the museum was having a "homecoming" event featuring Winterset quilters Marianne Fons and Liz Porter, who happen to be two of America's best-known quilters. They were holding a lecture and workshop for a large group of women who had gathered to see and hear them.

The words "quilt" and "quilter" do not do justice to the artistic talent of Marianne and Liz or to the exquisite products of their work. My New York guests were entranced.

It was lunchtime so we sought out the Northside Cafe, made famous during the filming of the "Bridges" movie by the visits of Clint Eastwood and Meryl Streep. We found the cafe

*Continues on page 28*





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## THE ANTI-RESOLUTION RESOLUTION

Eighty percent. The proportion of calories from fat you're supposed to consume each day on the keto diet. Also, coincidentally, the percentage of Americans who break or fail at achieving their New Year's resolutions, according to several studies and surveys.

After writing for health magazines for more than a decade and penning more resolution how-to stories than I can count, I've honed my view on Jan. 1. Through research (and a lot of anecdotal evidence from friends, family and story sources), I've come to realize:

- Some 70% of people resolve to diet at the start of each year.
- More than 90% of dieters regain all of the weight they lose—or more—on traditional diets.

So what's the deal?

Being obese is unhealthy, true. But so is being too skinny. And the mindset of dieting is often one of deprivation. *"Don't eat vegetables grown under the ground." "Eliminate all carbs." "No processed foods, ever."*

The cycle typically looks like this: Your resolve is strong for the first week.

You stick to the same safe menu, shed a few pounds, and start feeling slightly more energized. But then someone has a birthday at work, you're invited to a neighborhood potluck or attend a church bake sale. Faced with cake (I mean, it's filled with a layer of caramel and it *is* a special occasion!), you slip off your perfect-diet plan. You beat yourself up. Then you vow to get back on track the next Monday. Which happens to be six days away.

The "on plan" and "off plan" mindset—one of black-and-white restrictions—is nearly impossible to stick with for a lifetime, unless you have a health-related reason to do so (say, an allergy or a religious reason for abstaining). And isn't that the goal of being healthy: extending your life and making it a high-quality one you look forward to living?

My new perspective is focused on that quality. For the new year that started Jan. 1, 2004, at the start of my recovery from anorexia, my psychiatrist helped me determine a resolution that added more good to my life or to the world. Every year since, I've set goals

accordingly. One favorite: "Each week, try something you've never done before," which resulted in skydiving, studying for and attaining a wine sommelier certification, and learning to surf.

From "do 10 minutes of yoga per day" to "try one new vegetable each week," these can still be health-boosting, if you like. But by flipping the script from eliminating to adding, the resolution takes on a whole new meaning. The same can be true if your resolution is financial: Don't buy any shoes this year vs. add \$20 more to your savings account each week, for example.

I listened to a podcast recently that challenged listeners to write down their goal, whether it's professional or personal, on the top half of a sheet of paper. Then, on the bottom half, write down the feelings that will result from reaching that goal. Now tear the paper in half and toss the top half. The bottom half—those feelings—are your *real* goals. Each is worth figuring out action steps so you can achieve it.

So my challenge to you is to ditch the diet this year, and instead make the

*Continues on page 28*



A photograph of a young man with glasses and a white baseball cap, wearing a dark jacket over a hoodie, playing a cello. The background is dark and textured. The text "MORE THAN A MAJOR" is overlaid on the image.

# MORE THAN A MAJOR

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## ONE WORD AFTER ANOTHER

*Continued from page 24*

was not open on Thursdays so, in yet another piece of serendipity, we decided to try the only restaurant open on the square, Mi Pueblito. It was packed with a very diverse crowd: farmers, truck drivers, families, people of all ages.

My friend said, "This is better than the Mexican restaurants in New York." Maybe he was just being nice, but judging by his clean plate, I think he was sincere.

By the time we headed back to Des Moines, I realized that in our quest to do and see everything in the big world, we too often overlook the pleasures right under our noses. That's another way of saying, in Iowan Meredith Willson's words, "You ought to give Iowa a try." ■

Mississippi native James A. Autry ([jamesaautry.com](http://jamesaautry.com)) of Des Moines is a well-known author, poet, musician and business consultant who has written 14 books on such topics as gratitude, servant leadership and his Southern boyhood. He also published the novel "The Cold Warrior: When Flying Was Dangerous and Sex Was Safe."

## NO FILTER

*Continued from page 26*

next 365 days all about abundance. Feast on life by sneaking in more wellness. More good deeds. More adventures. More self-care. More time with loved ones. I pretty much guarantee you'll feel 100% happier when you reframe your mission this way. ■

Karla Walsh is a freelance writer, restaurant brand manager and spin instructor. Feel free to share feedback or tell her about your 2020 goals on Instagram @karlaswalsh or via [karlaswalsh@gmail.com](mailto:karlaswalsh@gmail.com).



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# FOCUS

OUT AND ABOUT // HIGH 5 // NEW AND NOTABLE // FROM THE *DSM* ARCHIVE

If the ballet slipper fits: Cinderella's story in dance will be performed Feb. 13 at the Des Moines Civic Center. Turn to page 33 for details.



Can't we all just get along? As it turns out, yes we can—and have a good time in the process. That's the message behind "Come From Away," which plays the Des Moines Civic Center Jan. 28-Feb. 2.





## OUT AND ABOUT

### WHAT WE'RE DOING IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

# 1 HEARTFELT HOSPITALITY

We're looking forward to the feel-good lift we're confident we'll get from

**"Come From Away,"** which makes a stop at the Des Moines Civic Center **Jan. 28-Feb. 2**. Set in the week following the 9/11 attacks, the musical chronicles the true story of a small town in Newfoundland that welcomed, housed and fed 7,000 stranded passengers after planes were unexpectedly ordered to land. Tensions turned into trust, and friendships blossomed. As the Chicago Tribune noted, the show "offers comfort, understanding and hope for our shared future on this planet. It touches the heart."

Showtimes vary. Tickets start at \$40 (subject to change), available through [dmpa.org](http://dmpa.org) or at the Civic Center box office.

# 2 FAIRY TALE IN DANCE

Des Moines Performing Arts continues to wow with its Dance Series,

and the **Malandain Ballet Biarritz** promises to be no exception. Twenty-two dancers will perform "Cinderella" **Feb. 13** at the Des Moines Civic Center. The company, which is based in southern France, claims its version of the fairy tale will be "unlike any other you have seen." We don't doubt it, as artistic director Thierry Malandain is known for an approach that's rooted in classical ballet but has a contemporary, energetic style.

The performance begins at 7:30 p.m. Tickets start at \$16 (subject to change), available through [dmpa.org](http://dmpa.org) or at the Civic Center box office.

# 3 CAUCUS FUN

When it comes to politics these days, we could all use a laugh or

two. We're betting Iowa Stage Theatre Company will deliver those laughs when it presents the premiere of a new musical by Robert John Ford, **"Adore Us! Line," Jan. 24-Feb. 2** at Stoner Theater in the Des Moines Civic Center. For more on the show, turn to page 36.



# 4 HOPING TO CONNECT

**Des Moines Metro Opera** extends its

innovative Second Stages Series with a performance of Francis Poulenc's **"The Human Voice,"** a one-woman show playing **Jan. 31 and Feb. 2** at Grand View University's Viking Theater.

The one-act opera (sung in English) stars acclaimed mezzo-soprano Elise Quagliata, a DMMO audience favorite, who portrays a young woman on a phone call from her lover. When she finds out he's leaving her, she tries to win him back through tactics ranging from tender pleading to threats of suicide and fits of violence.

The opera explores the struggle of maintaining meaningful relationships in an age when digital devices serve as the primary way people communicate—or *don't* communicate, says Michael Egel, DMMO's general and artistic director. He adds that the production "is the first time we've staged a one-woman show in Des Moines. This is special for us."

Showtimes are 7:30 p.m. Jan. 31 and 2 p.m. Feb. 2. Tickets are \$30-\$50, available through [dmmo.org](http://dmmo.org).





Karla Black (Scottish, born 1972), "Nothing is a Must" (2009); sugar paper, chalk, ribbon, lipstick, glitter and hairspray; Saatchi Gallery Collection.

## 5 ART CENTER SHOWS

We love the fact that female artists are in the limelight this winter at the Des Moines Art Center, where exhibits in the museum's various galleries feature works influenced by everything from how tractors operate to how kids play.

Scottish artist **Karla Black**, known for her large-scale installations that blur the line between sculpture and performance art, opens an exhibit **Feb. 8** in the Anna K. Meredith Gallery. Inspired by childhood play, Black uses everyday materials, such as cellophane,

cosmetics, Alka Seltzer and broken glass, to create large-scale pastel-colored abstract forms. About 15 sculptures will be installed in the gallery, plus two additional site-specific ones Black is creating for the I.M. Pei galleries.

Also be sure to check out these shows in the museum's smaller galleries:

At press time, "Hedda Sterne: Imagination and Machine" was expected to open Jan. 10 in the Blank One Gallery. In 1961, Fortune magazine commissioned Sterne to create paintings of her impressions of John Deere tractor parts. The resulting works depict valves, transmissions and other parts in a surreal way.

An exhibit opening Feb. 14 in the John Brady Print Gallery showcases drawings, photographs and prints based on biology, engineering, physics and other scientific fields. Female artists from the 17th century to today will be represented, including Mary Miss, Julie Mehretu and Mary Mattingly.

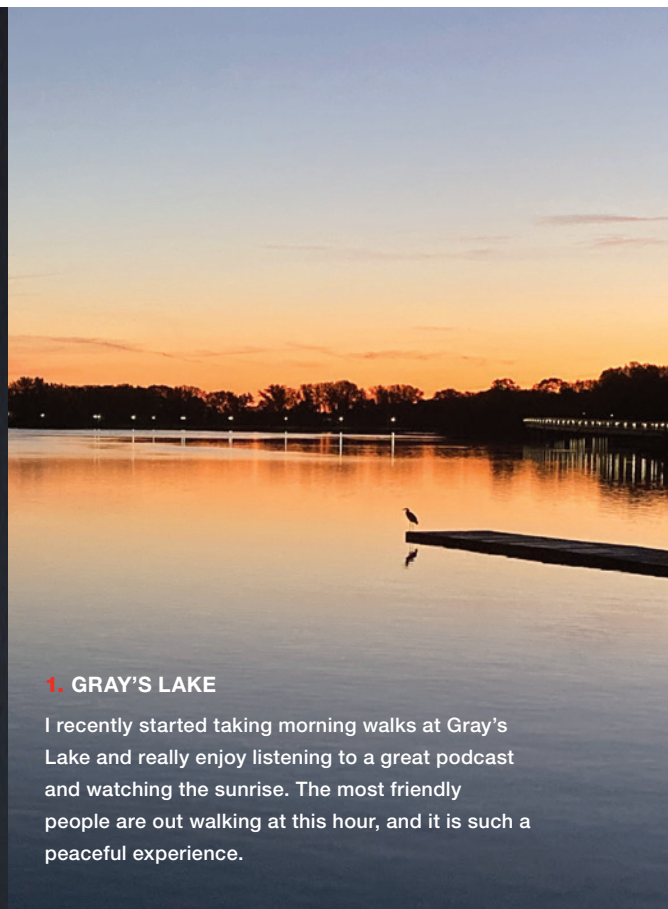
The documentary "Judith Loves Martha" explores how dancer and choreographer Martha Graham sparked the creative path of Judith Godwin, one of the few female abstract expressionist painters from the 1950s. Created by renowned art photographer and Des Moines native Anna Gaskell, the film opens Jan. 17 in the Pamela Bass-Bookey and Harry Bookey Gallery.



## HIGH 5

## EMILY STEELE

A self-described creative entrepreneur, Emily Steele specializes in online and social media marketing and public relations. She and local photographer Whitney Warne also created Brand Launch, which focuses on brand development through in-person appearances by local advocates, bloggers and influencers called “hummingbirds.” When Steele isn’t attending an event as a hummingbird, you’ll likely spot her at these places around town.



### 1. GRAY'S LAKE

I recently started taking morning walks at Gray's Lake and really enjoy listening to a great podcast and watching the sunrise. The most friendly people are out walking at this hour, and it is such a peaceful experience.

### 2. GREATER DES MOINES BOTANICAL GARDEN

The Botanical Garden offers exceptional events, and every experience I've had there, whether eating at Trellis or catching up with a friend on the walking paths, has been memorable.

### 3. MARS CAFE

Maybe it's because I'm working with Drake students this year as an adviser or because Mars has the best pumpkin chai in town, but I keep gravitating to [this coffee shop] to work on different community projects or do my morning journaling.

### 4. ST. KILDA ON SOUTHWEST FIFTH STREET

The restaurant's beautiful design, the incredible avocado toast and the amazing conversations I have with fellow business owners there keep me coming back and referring people to this place. I love seeing St. Kilda expand all over the metro.

### 5. THE AVENUES

We are currently partnering with Rally Cap Properties to restore a 1909 home near Ingersoll, and I absolutely love seeing all the new restaurants, like Lucky Lotus, popping up. The investment in that area is so exciting.



## NEW AND NOTABLE

## WHAT THEY'LL DO FOR LOVE

Since 2004, Des Moines playwright and composer Robert John Ford's comedy "Caucus! The Musical" has resurfaced every presidential campaign cycle, with the fictional candidates vying for the vote of the "typical" Iowa caucusgoer. For each election, Ford updated the script and freshened the song lyrics.

But since the 2016 election, "too much has changed, and I couldn't figure out how to update it," he says. "I had to start from scratch."

The result: **"Adore Us! Line,"**

Ford's new musical comedy that Iowa Stage Theatre Company will premiere Jan. 24 at Stoner Theater in the Des Moines Civic Center.

Unlike "Caucus! The Musical," the new show is based on real 2020 presidential contenders, not fictional ones. Like the previous show, though, the new one promises plenty of hilarity as it pokes good-natured fun at the political circus that caucus season brings to our state.

"Adore Us! Line" parodies "A Chorus Line," the blockbuster musical about a group of dancers auditioning for one part in a Broadway show. In Ford's musical, a fictional Iowa voter "auditions" this year's field of candidates for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination, who sing and dance to reworked lyrics of "A Chorus Line" songs.

Still, "you need zero understanding of 'A Chorus Line' to see this show,"



says Matthew McIver, artistic director of Iowa Stage Theatre. "The characters and show make sense on their own. But if you do know 'A Chorus Line,' you'll appreciate it at another level."

While humor is the show's main aim, Ford wanted to "go deeper" with each candidate. "This is not about their standard stump speech and talking points," he says. Instead, the candidates reveal "personal stories—their regrets, their failures. [The show] doesn't elevate them, but it gets to their human side in a humorous way."

What "Adore Us! Line" is decidedly *not* about: daily news or President Donald Trump. In fact, the president is not even mentioned in the musical.

"I did not want this show to be a commentary," Ford says. "This is not an

attack on Trump or a rehash of the last four years. It's not about current events; if we did that, we'd be changing the script every day."

Instead, the musical "is more about humanity than headlines," McIver adds. "The tone in [this kind of show] can be tricky, and Robert nailed it. He totally stuck the landing."

To get the right tone and balance, Ford thoroughly researched each candidate, digging into their backgrounds and past positions. "I did not want it to look like I favored any candidate," he says. Although the dialogue is fictional, he uses some direct quotes. Overall, how the candidates are portrayed is "consistent with what's known about them, but there are revelations that can [lead] to a deeper understanding," he says. "It's a character study ... a [way] to get to know the candidates better."

"It's a comedy, but it has real emotional depth to it," McIver adds. "You'll walk out having laughed and having had an emotional reaction. You'll feel better than you did going in."

Unlike its predecessor, "Adore Us! Line" won't be performed in future election years. "This is a one-time, one-off show," Ford says.

Directed by Maxwell Schaeffer and choreographed by Megan Helmers, "Adore Us! Line" will be performed Jan. 24-26 and Jan. 29-Feb. 2 (times vary) at Stoner Theater. Tickets are \$25-\$39, available through [dmpa.org](http://dmpa.org). For more information, visit [iowastage.org](http://iowastage.org).

—Christine Riccelli



### FROM THE *DSM* ARCHIVE

In 2016, then 9-year-old Pratik Sapkota inspired us with his unbridled hope and his dream to become an “engineer who makes things.” He had come to Des Moines with his parents, Durga Sapkota and Tara Gurung, and younger brother, Payag. Evicted from Bhutan, the family had spent more than two decades in a refugee camp in Nepal.

Since we published the story, the number of refugee children has continued to grow; today, of the world’s nearly 26 million refugees, more than half are

under the age of 18, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The good news: Children who are resettled not only typically adjust but often prosper as they learn a new language and customs, make friends and help their parents along the way. To learn more or to find out how you can help our newest neighbors, contact Lutheran Services in Iowa, the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, or Catholic Charities. ■



# 38

LOOK





**BETHANY ARGANBRIGHT**

**Age:** 34

**Profession:** Stylist, creative consultant, mom

**How would you describe your personal style?** I wore a lot of hand-me-downs as a kid, so I was always finding ways to mix things up and make old clothes feel new again. That's sort of how I dress now. I like a little juxtaposition.

**Where you like to shop:** Thrifting is time-consuming but worth it for the bragging rights. I love wearing something with a story.

**The accessory or piece of clothing you couldn't live without:** I have a little stack of skinny gold rings that I never take off; they give me something to fidget with.

**Your style icons:** James Dean, Harriet the Spy, Diane Keaton, Carrie Bradshaw, Patti Smith, Jenna Lyons, the Olsens, Soozie McBroom.

**In constant pursuit of:** The perfect white T-shirt.

**Never getting rid of:** A pair of Louis Vuitton sandals that I found in the basement of a thrift store in Paris.

**Closet MVP:** An old military jacket that I'm convinced goes with everything.

**When in doubt:** Leopard print goes with everything.

PHOTOGRAPHER: JOELLE BLANCHARD





## A DOG'S BEST FRIEND

WRITER: ERIN KIERNAN  
PHOTOGRAPHER: DUANE TINKEY

One of Haley Anderson's earliest memories is of her grandfather raising his voice. "He was usually so mild-mannered, and he never yelled," she recalls. "He was upset because I'd picked up a kitten by its neck and was accidentally choking it."

Her grandfather not only showed her the correct way to handle the cat, he also told her it was her job to show others how to treat animals.

That interaction set the tone for Anderson's life's work as an animal welfare advocate. She's been the executive director of the Iowa Pet Alliance for the past two years.

Born and raised in Ankeny, she spent every summer with her

grandparents in rural Iowa and developed a fondness for collecting wild cats and kittens. "Even as a child I was the 'crazy cat lady' and my grandparents let me keep them all," the now 37-year-old Anderson says with a laugh. "My grandfather cut a door in the garage and made beds for them so they'd survive the winter. He taught me a lot about kindness and compassion."

Anderson's love for animals inspired her to pursue a degree in animal science at Iowa State University. "It sounded like a perfect fit," she says, "but as soon as I realized what being a veterinarian really involved, I couldn't stomach it."

Another realization hit Anderson that year: Life is short. Her father died from pancreatic cancer, an event that served as "a tough and very vivid lesson on mortality" that made her want to focus on enjoying life and making the world a better place. She took a year off from college, then transferred to the University of Iowa, where she graduated in 2006 with a degree in English.

After working for a few years at Blank Park Zoo, Anderson spent seven years ping-ponging back and forth between working on behalf of animals in the United States and teaching English in Asia. She eventually landed in Thailand, working for a nonprofit focused on caring for street dogs and advocating for the country's first animal welfare law. It was enacted at the end of 2014 and, Anderson says, "This is when the power of advocating for laws really clicked with me." That mindset was cemented when she started working with groups throughout Asia as the international director for an anti-dog-meat campaign. "Writing press releases about protecting animals doesn't do anything," she says, "but enacting policy does."

That passion for policy is what turned a visit back home at the end of

2016 into a move back home. Anderson started volunteering for the nonprofit group Iowa Pet Alliance (then Iowa Voters for Companion Animals), and within a few months she became executive director.

"Iowa is ranked 48th in the nation for animal protection laws and continues to be a leading puppy mill state," Anderson says. "Our laws and enforcement aren't protecting Iowa pets, and people who harm pets aren't given appropriate sentences."

Bob Baker, executive director of the Missouri Alliance for Animal Legislation, says Anderson's efforts are admired by animal advocates across the country. "With Haley, the animals always come first and their welfare is her only concern," he says. "All Iowans who care about animals are fortunate to have her fighting the fight for them at the state Capitol."

Anderson has seen the sad effects abusive owners have on pets. Two years ago the self-described crazy cat lady took in Duke the dog, a rescue who was "afraid of his own shadow." Now, she says, he's blossomed into the "smartest and sweetest dog."

She'll spend the 2020 legislative session working for animals like Duke, pushing for legislation addressing companion animal cruelty laws and commercial dog breeding.

Her grandfather undoubtedly would be proud of the woman who rescued kittens as a little girl: "He taught me that we all need to be better people and work together. He's why I am who I am." ■





Storm, a 2-year-old mixed breed, shows his affection for Haley Anderson. Storm was rescued by AHeinz57, a foster-based animal rescue organization headquartered in De Soto.

IOWA'S LAWS  
"AREN'T  
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IOWA PETS, AND  
PEOPLE WHO  
HARM PETS  
AREN'T GIVEN  
APPROPRIATE  
SENTENCES."

HALEY ANDERSON





“My grandma Myrtle lived a simple but abundant life. No one fried chicken like Grandma and her cream gravy was the world’s best! I can still remember the smells coming from her kitchen 40 years later. We walked barefoot by the creek, and watched the sunrise while drinking coffee. She had a peace that came only from God as she told me stories of survival and perseverance.”

—Paula Spidell, *Executive Director*

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ANATOMY OF A DISH // I SNAGGED THE RECIPE  
WHAT'S BUZZING // PINCH OF WISDOM

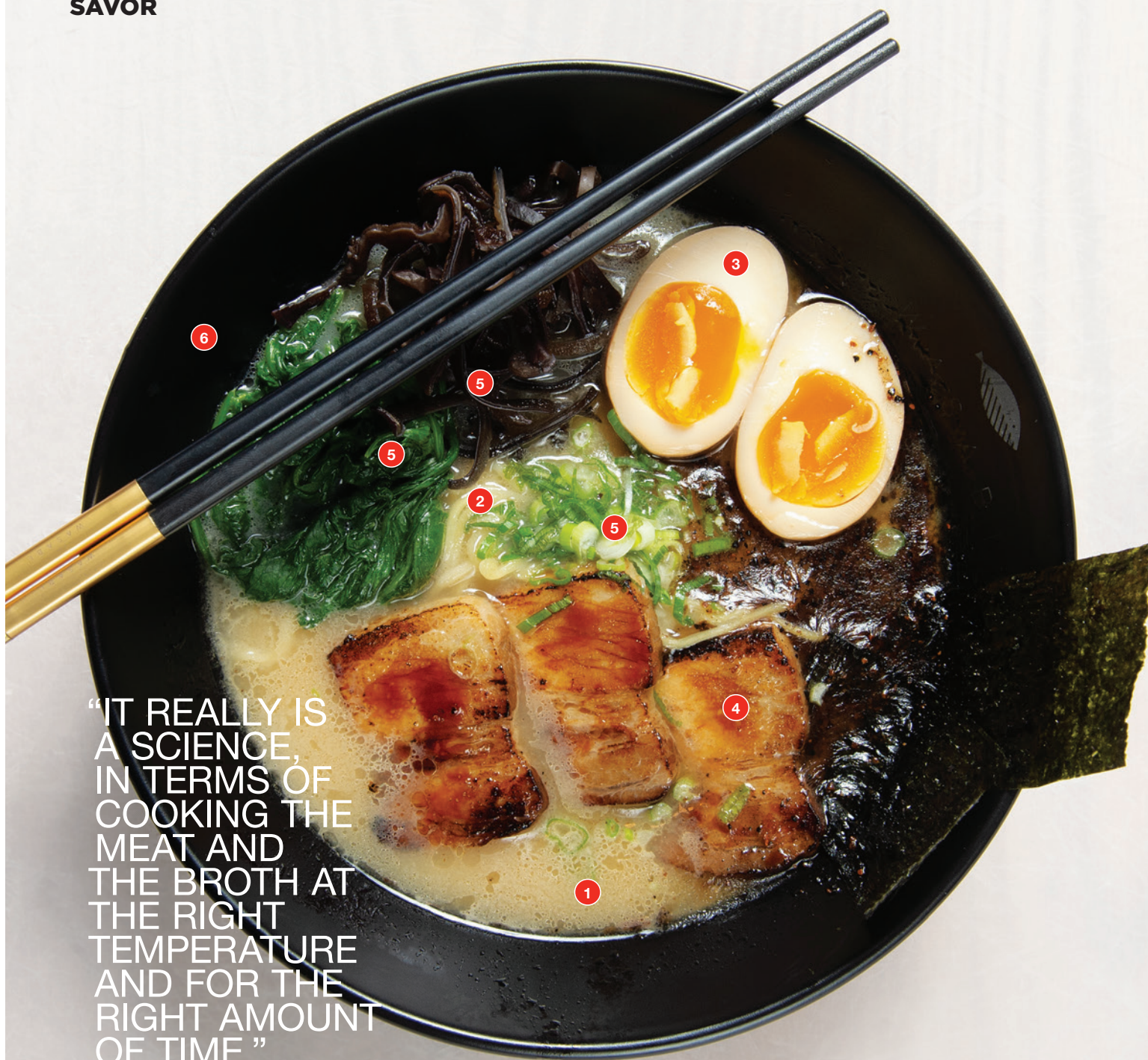


Whiskey fans will love this: Des Moines-based RackHouse Whiskey Club will deliver small-batch whiskeys right to your door. See story, page 49.



“IT REALLY IS A SCIENCE, IN TERMS OF COOKING THE MEAT AND THE BROTH AT THE RIGHT TEMPERATURE AND FOR THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF TIME.”

JAY WANG





## ANATOMY OF A DISH

### SOUP'S ON

"Use your noodle" gets new meaning at Jay Wang's Wasabi restaurants, which sell 150 bowls of ramen daily. That nets out to more than 56 pounds (yes, really) of noodles every day.

"Ramen is like a burger for Americans—the ultimate comfort food," says Jay Wang, owner of Wasabi Johnston, Wasabi Waukegan, Wasabi Chi and Wasabi Ankeny (the newest location, which opened last August).

To put his own twist on *tonkatsu* (pork) ramen, Wang says, "I attended a weeklong ramen training in Vancouver last May with a teacher who traveled from Japan. We learned how to make our own noodles, broth and spice mix. It really is a science, in terms of cooking the meat and the broth at the right temperature and for the right amount of time."

He's mastered that science at both the Wasabi Ankeny and Johnston locations—the only two that serve ramen. By one glance at the dish, you realize there's a lot of art that goes into each bowl, too. Here's the scoop.

**1. The broth:** "Broth is the number one key for ramen. You smell it first, then it's often the first bite you taste," Wang says. "For ours, we use pork bones, chicken bones, onion and garlic, which we simmer for six hours." Just before serving, the chefs top each broth with roasted black garlic oil. "The texture of the resulting broth is really creamy from the collagen in the pork bone," he adds.

**2. Ramen noodles:** Since the broth for this particular ramen is so creamy and rich from those pork bones, Wang uses a skinnier noodle. "Our noodles come from Sun Noodle, the same company that supplies 90% of the ramen noodles in New York City," he says.

**3. Soft-boiled egg:** For the just-right barely runny yolk, Wang and his team boil room-temperature eggs for 6 1/2 minutes. They remove the shells, then soak the eggs in a soy-tamari marinade for 12 hours before slicing and adding one to each bowl.

**4. Pork belly:** The pork belly is cooked for 4 1/2 hours in a simple marinade via *sous vide*. (This low-and-slow water bath cooking technique is one Wang snagged from his friend Joe Tripp, chef and co-owner of Harbinger.) "After that, we coat it in brown sugar, soy sauce, vinegar, ginger and garlic, and sear the sides to caramelize them."

**5. The vegetables:** *Kikurage* (aka wood ear) mushrooms are boiled for 15 seconds, then dunked in a cold water bath. That's clutch for adding a unique layer of texture to the ramen, Wang explains. "Depending on the time of year, we toss different in-season leafy greens into the broth. Right now, it's spinach. We add fresh green onions on top as well," he says.

**6. The bowl:** There's about a quarter of a chicken's-worth of essence in one bowl of Wasabi Black Garlic Tonkatsu Ramen. Each serving includes 16 ounces of broth, 6 ounces of noodles, 3 ounces of pork, 1 cup of veggies and one egg. "Between 80% and 90% of customers finish everything, which inspired me to order new custom-made bowls from China with our Wasabi logo on the outside and a 'Good Job!' message hiding at the bottom of the inside of the bowl," Wang says. —*Karla Walsh*



## I SNAGGED THE RECIPE

## A MUG OF MIDWESTERN COMFORT

WRITER: KARLA WALSH

PHOTOGRAPHER: DERA BURRESON

STYLIST: SAMMY MILA

**Scotcheroos (noun):**

1. Dessert bars made with a base of peanut butter-coated cereal squares topped with melted chocolate butterscotch frosting;

2. A treat that's a mainstay at any Midwestern bake sale, family celebration or neighborhood potluck.

Now, thanks to Jacob Schroeder of Urbandale, the owner of Crafted Food Services and a corporate chef at Workiva, we can add: 3. The flavor inspiration for the ultimate cup of hot cocoa.

Schroeder's culinary career was sparked right around the time I devoured my first scotcheroo. "As a child, I was drawn to watching cooking shows and snacking on ingredients while my mom cooked. Plus, I just loved eating," Schroeder says. "Over time, the more I thought about it, the more cooking appealed to me as an occupation. I knew I wanted to have a job that was hands-on, that I could potentially travel with and that was something that made people happy."

His first restaurant job was as a server, bartender and table busser at a restaurant in Ankeny. After that, Schroeder started moving toward the back of the house at Ohana Steakhouse in West Des Moines and other

restaurants in the area while attending the Iowa Culinary Institute at DMACC. After graduation, Schroeder moved to Denver, where he worked at neighborhood restaurants, country clubs, fine-dining restaurants and even for a sushi food cart. Along the way, he spent six months working at Michelin-starred restaurants in Portugal, Germany and New York.

"I have an insatiable hunger to learn and to be as versatile as possible," he says.

Since November 2015, Schroeder has put that versatility to use as a corporate chef at Workiva in Ames. The culinary team that fuels the tech company's cafeterias changes the menu every three weeks and rotates through recipe development for stations including pasta, pizza and grill.

Never one to allow himself too much time to simmer, in April 2019 Schroeder launched Crafted Food Services (craftedfoodservices.com), his own private/pop-up dinner and cooking class company.

"Each of my Crafted Food Services menus are tailored to the event's season and the participants' personal tastes and dietary restrictions," Schroeder says. "I do have some items I like to think of as my 'signature' dishes, though, that I like to share with people

**Tools of the Trade**

To ace this recipe, Schroeder recommends rounding up the following equipment before beginning step one of the hot cocoa.

A heavy-bottomed 4- or 5-quart pot or straight-sided saute pan

6-quart heavy-bottomed pot

Microwave-safe plastic pitcher or mixing bowl, at least 5 quarts in volume

Blender (Schroeder swears by his Vitamix)

One 18-inch-long piece of cheese cloth, folded into a square, and a strainer or a #120 mesh strainer

Straight-edged wooden spoon

Soup ladle

**Dress Up Your Drink**

Once you've mastered the basic Scotcheroo Hot Cocoa recipe, try these twists to take it to the next level.

Chill and enjoy as scotcheroo chocolate milk.

Slice up half-inch cubes of scotcheroo bars or Rice Krispies Treats to float on top of each toasty mug of cocoa.

Garnish with marshmallows or whipped cream.

Spike with a shot of espresso.

Pour over a scoop of gelato or ice cream for scotcheroo affogato.


as often as possible because I like them a lot and they represent my brand well."

Those include a split pea risotto with hickory-smoked balsamic brown butter-Parmesan hollandaise, shoyu chicken wing "lollipops" and buttermilk vanilla ice cream. Oh yes, and this Scotcheroo Hot Cocoa.

"I want to help people find the boundless joy that I have for food and cooking," he says. And after one sip of this warm-your-bones beverage, we are filled with exactly that.

*Continues on page 48*





"I HAVE AN  
INSATIABLE  
HUNGER  
TO LEARN  
AND TO  
BE AS  
VERSATILE  
AS  
POSSIBLE."

JACOB SCHROEDER



*Continued from page 46*

### SCOTCHEROO HOT COCOA

Yield: About 20 cups

#### Ingredients

- 1 pound bag white rice, such as Mahatma Extra Long Grain Enriched Rice (available at most local Hy-Vee locations)
- 1 gallon (16 cups) water
- 1 11 1/2-ounce bag milk chocolate chips
- 1 11-ounce bag butterscotch chips
- 2 cups creamy peanut butter
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt

#### Directions

##### Day 1:

1. Put the rice in a heavy-bottomed pot or saute pan. Place the pan on the largest burner on your stove and turn the heat to high.
2. Using a straight-edged wooden spoon, stir the rice frequently until it is evenly toasted and brown. Be patient: This takes about 10 minutes. (There will be smoke involved and the rice gets very hot, so be careful not to burn yourself.)
3. Turn off the heat and move the pan to a cool burner. Continue to stir the rice every few seconds for another 5 minutes to allow it to continue to toast as it cools down.
4. In a microwave-safe plastic pitcher or mixing bowl, add a few inches of water and then pour in the toasted rice. (This will keep the rice from melting the plastic.)
5. Add additional water to the pitcher to fill it to near the top. Place container in the refrigerator to chill overnight.

##### Day 2:

1. The rice will have almost tripled in size overnight. Use an immersion blender to “chop” the rice until it’s the texture of course cornmeal.
2. Strain the blended mixture through cheesecloth and a strainer or #120 mesh strainer (see chef’s tips, right, for more details) and into a 6-quart heavy-bottomed pot until most of the liquid has passed through. If necessary, use a wooden spoon to “scrape” along the mesh of the strainer or cheesecloth. Discard rice solids.
3. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until you have nothing left to blend and strain.
4. Pour the toasted rice milk from the 6-quart pot back into the pitcher or bowl and allow to rest for 5 minutes. If there are any rice solids in the bottom of the pan, discard them.
5. Place the pot of rice milk on the stove over high heat. Stir with a wooden spoon every few minutes.
6. As the rice milk warms, combine the peanut butter, chocolate chips and butterscotch chips in a microwave-safe pitcher and microwave for 1 minute. Remove from the microwave and stir. Repeat 1 minute microwave, then stir, pattern until the mixture is evenly melted.
7. When the rice milk reaches a boil, turn the heat off.
8. Using a soup ladle, transfer a few ladles of hot rice milk into the pitcher with the peanut butter mixture, and stir until combined. Repeat this twice more, then return the entire contents back into the pot of rice milk.
9. Add salt, stir to dissolve and enjoy.



JACOB SCHROEDER

#### CHEF'S TIPS

As you probably guessed by the number of steps in the directions, this drink can be deceptively tricky. Luckily, Schroeder is here to talk us through it.

**Get toasty.** Day one, step two, is crucial, Schroeder says. “Toasting the rice properly is one of the most important steps to ace the flavor in this drink.”

**Strain smartly.** Straining as much of the solid rice is important for the texture of the cocoa. “The second time I ever made this, I skipped the straining and finished with something the consistency of cake batter. That’s not necessarily a bad thing, but isn’t our goal here. I use a #120 mesh strainer,” he says. If you don’t want to drop the \$68 for his favorite model on Amazon (8-Inch Advantech Stainless Steel Test Sieve #120 Mesh), you can use a triple layer of cheesecloth over a regular kitchen strainer or sieve.

**Use the microwave to melt.** Warm the peanut butter, butterscotch and chocolate in the microwave, then add a few cups of the hot rice milk to thin the mixture before adding it all back to the pot.



## WHAT'S BUZZING

### SMALL-BATCH BROWN LIQUOR— STRAIGHT TO YOUR DOOR

Here's news for cocktail and whiskey fans, and it's worth raising a glass to: You now have your own version of those deliver-to-your-door wine clubs—and the company making it all possible is headquartered right here in Des Moines.

"There's a burgeoning craft distillery movement across the U.S., and our mission ... is to help those small-batch whiskey distilleries tell their



stories and connect them with whiskey fans across the country," says Sam Hoyle, co-founder and chief communications officer of RackHouse Whiskey Club, which shipped its first box in June 2018.

Hoyle says he and co-founders Dannie Strable and Mick Fouts "scour the country to find the best stories and small-batch whiskeys." As a result, they have partnered with distilleries from several states, including Iowa Legendary Rye in Carroll, Buckshee Bourbon in Washington, D.C., Treaty Oak in Texas and Bull Run in Oregon.

RackHouse offers two subscription options (select to receive one bottle or two bottles per distillery) and one gift box option, which ship free once you're a member. Slipped in with those bottles: a primer on the story of the featured distillery and some collectible merchandise like glassware, hats and coasters.

"We also have a private Facebook group where members can share what they think about each delivery," Hoyle says, noting that fostering community is an important aspect of the overall experience.

"Every whiskey has a story, and that's what RackHouse Whiskey Club is all about," Hoyle says. "Iowa has a significant and interesting history with whiskey, and we're proud to keep that legacy going." —Karla Walsh



## PINCH OF WISDOM CHOCOLATE CURLS

"A room-temperature Hershey's bar is the secret behind perfect chocolate curls for topping French silk pie or other desserts. Slide a potato peeler along the longer side of the bar and you'll achieve beautiful swirls. The chocolate will get warm in your hand, so only expose one side of it at first, and keep the other side in the wrapper as you hold it so your hand doesn't get all chocolatey."

—Brittney Haskins, owner of One Sweet Kitchen in Des Moines

*In January, Haskins is relaunching her #FrenchSilkFriday program. Each Friday, she'll deliver one free French silk pie to a deserving generous person or charitable workplace. Know some worthy recipients? Nominate them on [onesweetkitchen.com](http://onesweetkitchen.com). ■*



# 50

## LOCAL LOVE

ABBIEY KNOUS & EDWARD NGUGI



Living History Farms' Church of the Land provided the ideal venue for **Abbey Knous and Edward Ngugi's** summer wedding. "We wanted an intimate location, and I grew up going to Living History Farms camps and events," Abbey says. Against that pastoral backdrop was a joyous celebration that included dancing for hours and "Edward's mom and aunt infusing Kenyan wedding traditions into their toast to us at the reception," Abbey says. "And of course having our little boy, Aiden, with us was absolutely perfect. He even walked down the aisle with his wheeled walker!"

Wedding date: Aug. 24, 2019

Photographer: Mara Mapes Photography





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# 52

## LOCAL LOVE

ABBEY KNOUS & EDWARD NGUGI



To submit your wedding photos for consideration in *dsm*, send them to [dsmeditor@bpcdm.com](mailto:dsmeditor@bpcdm.com). Include your and your spouse's names, occupations, wedding date, location and the photographer's name. Please confirm that you either own the rights to the photograph or have the photographer's permission to submit the photo for publication. Also provide your phone number in case we need to contact you. ■





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A woman with blonde hair in a ponytail, wearing a black sports bra and shorts, is leaning against a white mattress. She is looking down and to the side. The background is a white brick wall. To the right, there is a bedside table with a lamp and a small vase. The mattress has a blue tag that says "ACTIVE breeze" and a snowflake logo. The word "TEMP" is visible on the side of the mattress.

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HOUSE.

WRITER: KELSEY BATSCHELET  
PHOTOGRAPHER: DUANE TINKEY





Though the decor is new, this top-to-bottom 1950s ranch house renovation hasn't forgotten where it came from. Note the bifold solid oak pocket doors tucked back into the wall to open up the space—and the light fixtures illuminating the kitchen island. Each is a modern redesign of the home's originals. Period touchpoints such as these are found throughout the house, alongside artistic and trendy updates, such as the crystal cube dining room table.

Left: A detail of a side table in the dining room. The concentric rings reflect the many lives and memories that have been hosted by this midcentury ranch home.



A

t the height of midcentury design in 1956, a spacious ranch home was built just outside of Des Moines. Little did the builders know they were creating a time capsule. The home remained unchanged until six decades later, when it was sold to its

current owner—a man who briefly lived in the house as a child. “The mahogany cupboards were the same, the cork floor was still there,” says the homeowner, who requested anonymity. “I thought it was absolutely beautiful.”

To a young boy, he recalls, the home had seemed extraordinary—spacious, modern and eye-catching. Returning to the house as an adult, the homeowner felt the same excitement about the space, but knew it would take talent, patience and an eye for detail to bring the space into the 21st century.

With the structural renovation underway, the search for a designer began. Drawn in by an artfully styled showroom window, the owner soon set up a meeting with Stacie and Kelli Schulz, the lead design team at K. Renee, a home furnishings boutique in West Des Moines.

“It was a perfect match,” he says. “I knew they had the talent to honor the architecture of the home while bringing in modern updates.”

In that first meeting, the homeowner pointed out an acrylic cocktail table from Bernhardt Interiors in the showroom, which served as the inspiration for the rest of the interior design. “It gave me a feel and an idea for where he wanted to take the space,” Kelli Schulz says.

But establishing a vision was just the first step. Styling a ranch house can be an exciting, although challenging, endeavor. Each room can function as a distinct, stand-alone area (thanks to those oak pocket doors), but still needs to flow together with the others. “The home had beautiful midcentury lines, and we built off of that,” says Kelli Schulz.

The K. Renee team combined modern pieces with the home’s original elements to achieve the homeowner’s vision. Many of the furnishings are from Bernhardt Interiors and Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams, a line well-known for its updated midcentury vibe.

“Kelli and Stacie helped me make the dream come true,” the homeowner says. “It’s more than I ever thought it could be.”

“The home had beautiful midcentury lines,  
and we built off of that.”

KELLI SCHULZ





As part of the renovation, the home's doorways were widened from a narrow 30 inches to a more comfortable 36 inches. The living room fireplace posed a challenge to widening one of the doorways, but the homeowner was keen to preserve it. Incredibly, the mason who applied the fireplace stone in the '50s still operated in the area with his son and grandson.

The mason removed the stone from the wall and fireplace, laid it out in the same pattern in another room and opened up the doorway. After the doorway was renovated, the stonemasons re-laid the authentic fireplace stone in its original design—adding a hearth for a modern touch. Many of the furnishings that complement the fireplace were sourced from Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams.





A mix of modern and '60s-era mod brightens up a formerly dark dining room. "Chrome adds a beautiful, bright, reflective quality, as do acrylics and other shiny surfaces," says Kelli Schulz. "In an older home, ceilings tend to be lower and don't receive as much natural light through windows. These kinds of surfaces assist in brightening the feel of a home."

The K. Renee team focused on situating design-forward furniture alongside pieces that evoked the home's history, such as the light fixture above the dining room table. The table is designed by Bernhardt Interiors, which is carried exclusively at K. Renee. "The dining table inspired the look and feel of the entire space," Schulz says.







The kitchen received a complete face-lift, which involved removing a closed-off U-shaped counter and cramped built-ins, and dropping in a bar-style island. The flat-front mahogany cabinets got a 21st-century update without straying from the original design intent. "We stayed true to the architecture," says the homeowner. That approach influenced the K. Renee team as well. "Our client loved clean and angular lines, which you see throughout the furnishing selections," says Kelli Schulz. "The homeowner never strayed from the house's original elements. On occasion I was concerned it was going to make the spaces feel heavy—but with the complement of the decor, it all turned out beautifully."



"The homeowner had specific feelings he wanted to [evoke] in each of the rooms," says Kelli Schulz. "For the piano room, he wanted it to be a little more lounge-y, with some more color added into the space." The team pulled elements from across the home to encourage a flow between the rooms. Note the acrylic side table next to the sectional, reminiscent of the crystal cube table in the dining

room. "Many of the acrylic items were pieces [from the Bernhardt Interiors line] our client loved and was drawn to," says Schulz.

"The colors and the furniture just make it pop," says the homeowner.

"The whole house reads so well together, but there's always the opportunity to section off a room and let it be perfect by itself." ■





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# COFFEE FOR A CAUSE

**BLK & BOLD IS A SPECIALTY BEVERAGE BRAND BUZZING WITH A CHARITABLE GOAL.**

WRITER: BRIANNE SANCHEZ

PHOTOGRAPHERS: KARLA CONRAD AND DUANE TINKEY







BLK & Bold founder Pernell Cezar Jr. is focused not only on creating quality coffee but also on serving the greater good: The company donates 5% of its wholesale proceeds to programs that serve marginalized youths.



**T**he first time Pernell Cezar Jr. had a cup of coffee, it was a punishment of sorts. He had dozed off in a sales meeting during an internship, and his supervisor sternly suggested to the University of Northern Iowa finance and marketing major that he find a way to make sure he never again fell asleep on the job. Coffee has fueled Cezar's career—one way or another—ever since.

The path to founding BLK & Bold, a roastery and wholesaler of specialty coffee and loose-leaf tea, was more winding than the line for a latte at 8 a.m. And considering he grew up in poverty in a place that Business Insider magazine recently named No. 1 on its list of "most miserable cities in America," even Cezar's journey to college was unexpected.

"UNI was the first domino," says the 33-year-old Cezar, who graduated from the university in 2010. "I was not thinking of higher ed whatsoever." But the Gary, Indiana, native had the opportunity to skip school to go on a college visit, and he was impressed by the friendliness on the UNI campus. He felt comfortable with the fact that some of the students on a panel had graduated from high school with his sister. He applied and, once at UNI, dove into student government, intramurals—all aspects of the student experience.

"I tell people all the time that I didn't have high expectations for myself until I realized how low my expectations actually were," Cezar says. "When you grow up low-income, disadvantaged in a marginalized community, it's [looked at as a] negative. But when you're raised in that, it's normal."

He's always had hustle—as a kid, Cezar charged his schoolmates a quarter to play his hand-held Sega NBA Jam—but now he had professional goals. Cezar landed a job at Target's corporate headquarters out of college and ended up managing strategic partnerships in the health and beauty division. That's where he was introduced to Sundial brands, a Long Island-based, immigrant-owned company known for its sustainable, fair trade lines like SheaMoisture. After three years at Target, he left to help that company increase its retail distribution sales.

"I wanted to flex more entrepreneurial muscle, and I kind of looked at [Sundial's founders] like business mentors," Cezar says. He spent five years leading sales for the brand with national retail chains, living in Houston but crisscrossing the country and working remotely from coffee shops. Soon, seeking out quality roasts became as essential as finding a cafe with a strong Wi-Fi connection.

"I wanted to understand the intricacies of the industry—what it is exactly that I'm drinking," he says.

#### **'THIRD WAVE' ROASTERS**

Specialty coffee begins with highly graded beans that are well-prepared, freshly roasted and then properly brewed. "Third wave" roasters—evolved from first wave commodity coffee (think Folgers) and darker roasted, goes-well-with-cream-and-sugar second wave (Starbucks and Caribou Coffee)—prefer a lighter roast to preserve the flavor of the beans. As Cezar and other specialty roasters analogize, it's treating coffee beans like you would a premium cut of meat.

After he and his wife, Jessica, welcomed their first child in 2016, they moved back to Iowa and Pernell bought a sample coffee roaster that he set up in his garage. He



**“WE’RE NOT  
APOLOGIZING  
FOR BEING FROM  
DES MOINES,  
WHICH IS NOT  
KNOWN AS A  
COFFEE  
EPICENTER.  
WE’RE  
EMBRACING IT.”**

ROD JOHNSON

started out roasting small batches, like homebrewers make beer, and learned the intricacies of the sourcing and roasting process.

Sundial sold to Unilever at the end of 2017, and Cezar made the leap into launching his own business in June 2018. He collaborated with Fox Brewing on a coffee stout, and eventually moved out of his garage and installed a commercial-grade roaster at the West Des Moines brewery.

Cezar also brought in his best friend from Gary, Rod Johnson, who is now based in San Francisco as a partner. Together, they’re committed not only to roasting high-quality, sustainably sourced and fairly traded coffee, but also to making a difference in the community.

For Johnson, who handles marketing for BLK & Bold while also working in the Eberhardt School of Business at the University of the Pacific, being a minority-owned business based in the Midwest is seen as an advantage. He and Cezar recently attended a supplier diversity conference and shared their story.

“It gives us another point of differentiation,” Johnson says. “We’re not apologizing for being from Des Moines, which is not known as a coffee epicenter. We’re embracing it.”

#### **SOCIAL IMPACT MODEL**

Johnson and Cezar had long dreamed about going into business together, and it was centering the social impact model at the core of the business that cemented the partnership. They’ve set a mission to give 5% of their wholesale proceeds to charity—specifically focusing their giving on domestic programs that serve marginalized youths, such as the Boys & Girls Club of Northwest Indiana,



On the go? BLK & Bold's single-serve packs offer convenience; just steep and drink. Another perk: The packaging is compostable.





## LOCAL SMALL-BATCH ROASTERS

As interest in specialty coffee grows, more and more local roasters are joining the scene. Des Moines has had handfuls of coffee shops featuring locally roasted beans for decades, and now a cottage industry of small-batch roasters is cropping up.

“There’s a lot of people trying to get into specialty coffee in Des Moines,” says Matt McNeece, 36, who works full time as director of missions for Lutheran Church of Hope. He started Lightbrite Coffee Roasters with his wife, Megan, as a way to support small coffee farmers and their communities. It’s a passion that grew after having memorable coffee experiences and witnessing the crop’s potential for economies on his international travels to places like Kenya.

McNeece participated in a commercial coffee roasting workshop this past summer that Minneapolis-based Mill City Roasters brought to Des Moines, where he met others here working to hone their craft. Some are set up in garages and basements, and others are renting downtime from other commercial roasters to create their own roasts without a huge investment.

“It’s interesting to see how this will develop in Des Moines,” he says

In addition to Lightbrite, other local roasters include Kingman Coffee; Happy Home Coffee Roasters; Corazon Coffee Roasters; Iowa Coffee Co.; and Black Silo Roasting.

which Cezar and Johnson felt was a second home to them growing up. Today, Cezar serves on the board of directors of the By Degrees Foundation in Des Moines.

By Degrees is “everything I wish existed in Gary, but didn’t,” Cezar says of the local nonprofit that engages with families and kids from kindergarten through high school to prepare them for success in school and beyond. “To be on this side is a way for me to pay respect.”

A coffee shop at North High School that By Degrees plans to launch will employ students—and serve BLK & Bold. DSM Brew is a local coffee shop client, as are restaurants like Harbinger and businesses like Gravitare coworking. In addition, Price Chopper is stocking BLK & Bold in its metro locations.

Robbie Gutierrez, assistant director with Price Chopper owner DGS Foods, says the charitable mission of the product made it a great fit. A former Harding Middle School student, Gutierrez says he understands the community By Degrees serves. “Price Chopper is trying to cement ourselves in the community and be involved,” he says.

Early this year, Target is expected to launch a national shelf distribution partnership with Cezar.

BLK & Bold packaging features graffiti icons of coffee snob paraphernalia, like the iconic Chemex pour-over silhouette, but they’re also selling single-serving coffee that steeps like tea.

“Our goal is to help the everyday consumer move forward with their coffee experience,” Cezar says.

When Cezar talks about his coffee—and expanding his business so that he can make a social impact through their business model—it’s clear that there’s no risk of him falling asleep on this job. ■



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PHOTO BY DYLAN HUEY





# A RIVER OF LIGHT AND SOUND

A NEW IMMERSIVE SCULPTURE SEEKS TO FOSTER A MEDITATIVE, YET COMMUNAL, EXPERIENCE FOR VISITORS TO WATER WORKS PARK.

WRITER: MICHAEL MORAIN PHOTOGRAPHER: DUANE TINKEY





Hung at various heights in a thicket of 10-foot-tall steel poles, the installation's illuminated polycarbonate orbs light the night.



**F**or thousands of years, stargazers have scanned the skies for new discoveries way out in the unthinkable distance. But now, they can set their sights closer to home. An ethereal new sculpture called “River Constellation” was installed this past November in Water Works Park, just south of the new Lauridsen Amphitheater near Fleur Drive.

About 200 illuminated polycarbonate orbs are hung at various heights in a thicket of 45 10-foot-tall steel poles anchored in concrete. Visitors can wander among the poles that loosely replicate the flowing path of the Raccoon and Des Moines rivers—as if floating with the current or, perhaps, through the Milky Way.

“We [wanted] to create a sense of intimacy in a vast space and the other way around,” the New York sculptor Natalia Zubko says.

Zubko dreamed up the project with the composer Beau Kenyon, a Creston native who recently moved from Boston to Des Moines. “We want viewers to get lost in the sound and light,” Kenyon says. “We want the experience to feel communal but also individual and meditative and peaceful.”

Kenyon recorded original music, featuring members of Des Moines Metro Opera and the Des Moines Symphony, and blended it with birdsongs from the park. The sound fades in and out from discreet speakers.

“I come from a classical composition background and have recently been experimenting with new ways to engage with sound,” he says. “This particular method of composition marries sound art with more traditional composition techniques to create an original new sound work.”

#### **PROJECT CHALLENGES**

Zubko and Kenyon have teamed up for several other projects, including interactive sound sculptures in

Boston and on Governors Island, in the New York City harbor. But their project in Des Moines involved a unique set of challenges.

It has to withstand floods, like the one that washed through the park last spring. It should be easy to clean. Its technical components need to be durable and self-sustaining.

What’s more, the Water Works Park Foundation wanted the artwork to honor the park’s donors as well as those who were memorialized by the approximately 180 crab apple trees that workers removed to make way for the park’s latest changes. In all, the \$13 million transformation includes the two-sided amphitheater that can accommodate crowds of 17,000 or more; a 30-acre lawn for picnics and games; a plaza for exhibitor booths and food trucks; two playgrounds; restrooms; and a tunnel to Gray’s Lake.

Kenyon and Zubko rose to the challenge. Their proposal was chosen from a nationwide search conducted by Group Creative Services, a local arts-consulting company led by Teva Dawson and Mat Greiner.

“If you involve artists in the process early on, you’ll often end up with very different results,” Greiner says. “Artists don’t look at problems as things they can’t solve. They’re used to using odd collections of resources to solve problems with distinction and novelty and innovation.”

#### **MEMORIAL AND DONOR RINGS**

For this project, the selection committee included several people who had purchased some of the crab apple trees that were removed. Committee member Tricia Drake, for example, works at Homesteaders Life Co., which had purchased a tree for an employee who had lost an infant daughter. The family often visited their daughter’s tree, especially since her gravesite was out of town.

“I was just really sad when I realized how many trees would be taken out,” Drake says.

But crab apples don’t live forever, and they’re not





THE ARTISTS  
SOUGHT TO  
“CREATE A  
SENSE OF  
INTIMACY IN A  
VAST SPACE  
AND THE OTHER  
WAY AROUND.”

Artist Natalia Zubko and composer  
Beau Kenyon discuss details last fall  
prior to the sculpture's installation.



Memorial names are etched onto rings at the base of the poles, as are the names of park donors. More than 300 blank rings are available for the names of future donors.

suited to floods. After the 180 trees were removed, the Water Works Park Foundation sent each memorial nameplate to the corresponding family, along with a new sapling they could plant on their own property.

All of the memorial names are etched onto rings at the bottom of each pole. So “while it doesn’t replace the trees, it’s still a place to go,” Drake says. “It’s still a memorial, and it’s connected to nature.”

“It’s our version of the plaques on the bridge” across Gray’s Lake, says Sam Carrell, Water Works Park Foundation executive director.

The names of donors also are etched on the rings. The \$250,000 artwork was funded privately by the Krause family and other donors. More than 300 blank rings are available for the names of future donors.

The focus on individuals who make up a community is one of the installation’s central themes. Zubko and Kenyon hope visitors will remember those who helped create the park and consider how they themselves can protect its future, one small step at a time.

The artists were guided by a Japanese proverb: If it piles up, even dust can become a mountain. ■



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# EDNA GRIFFIN

YEARS BEFORE ROSA PARKS REFUSED TO GIVE UP HER SEAT ON THE BUS IN MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA, EDNA GRIFFIN WAS LEADING HER OWN FIGHT FOR RACIAL EQUALITY IN DES MOINES, IOWA...



To commemorate the centennial of the ratification of the 19th amendment, well-known Cedar Falls artist Gary Kelley and his daughter, Cydney Kelley, created a calendar depicting milestones in women's fight for equality in Iowa. Pictured above: Known as "Iowa's Rosa Parks," Edna Griffin was a civil

rights leader who sued Katz Drug Store for refusing to serve her. Above right: Willie Stevenson Glanton was the first African American woman elected to the Iowa Legislature. Kelley's calendars are available free at Veridian Credit Union branches; you do not need to be a customer to get one.

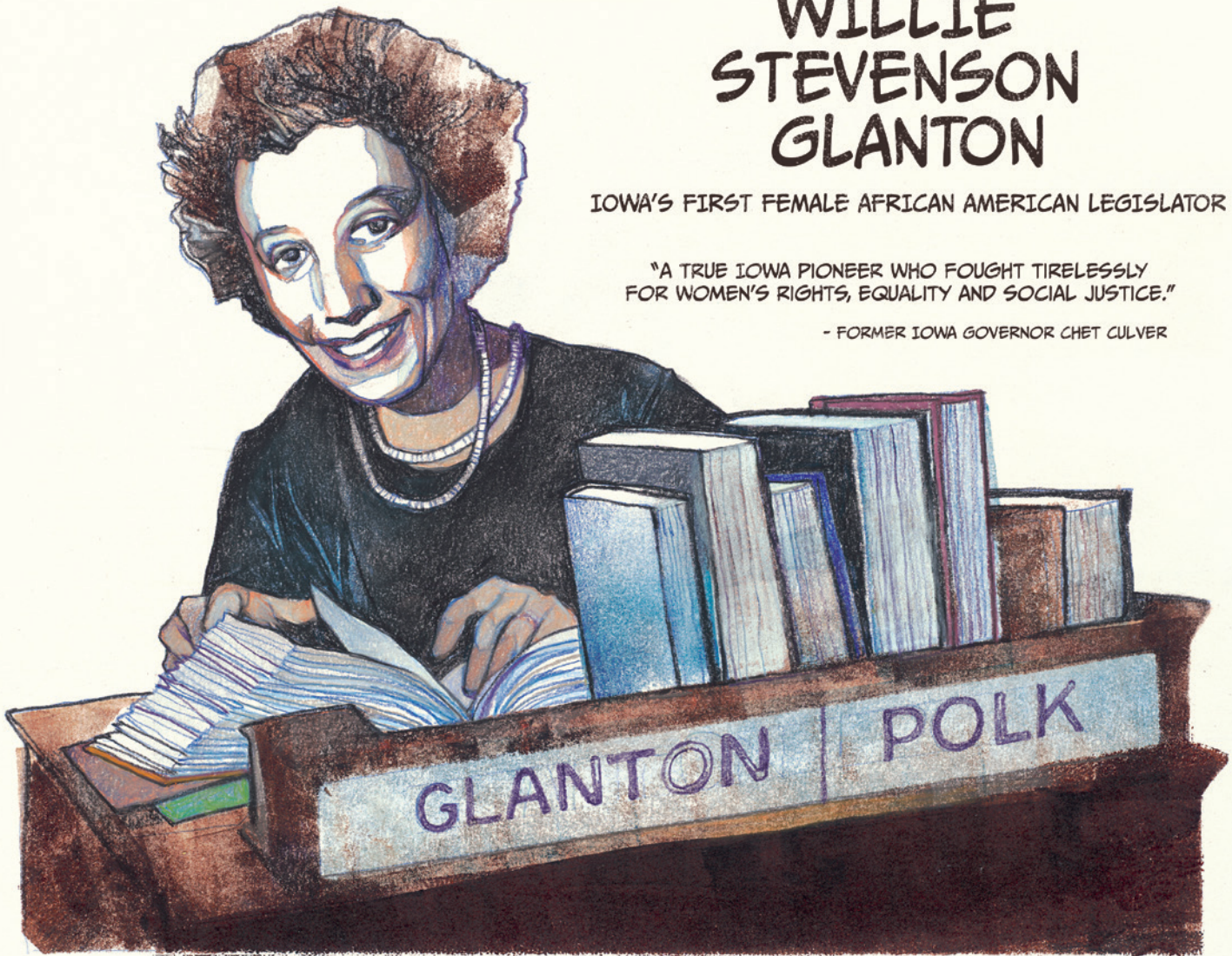


# WILLIE STEVENSON GLANTON

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- FORMER IOWA GOVERNOR CHET CULVER



## THE QUEST CONTINUES

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE  
AND THE MARCH TOWARD EQUAL RIGHTS.

WRITER: LAUREL LUND



**M**y paternal grandmother, Bertha Bodholdt Lund, felt herself a feminist in an era when the term barely moved the needle on the societal Richter Scale. Born in 1890 in Waterloo, this curious woman with a brilliant mind attended college in an age when even a majority of her male peers did not. She was among the few women of her time who attended, and then graduated from, a university.

And yet my grandmother's male peers, educated or not, could vote. She could not.

She was not alone, of course. Before 1920, when the 19th Amendment granting full voting rights to all women was signed into law by President Woodrow Wilson, American women were considered relatively voiceless in government affairs. That began to change in 1840 when American suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott were barred from attending the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London due to their gender. In protest, the duo held a public meeting in Seneca Falls, N.Y., in 1848 to fight for the social, civil and religious rights of women. Thus began the suffragist movement.

The suffragists' fight for justice continued for another 72 years. Opposition was intense. The women, along with some brave men, endured arrests, harassment, torture and imprisonment in order to win the right to vote.

To commemorate the 100-year anniversary of ratification, communities, schools, cultural organizations, businesses and other institutions across Iowa will host a wide range of activities and events throughout the year (see accompanying story, page 81). While the efforts are decentralized, two women are spearheading the overall effort: Doris J. Kelley, commemoration chair and a former member of the Iowa House of Representatives, representing the Iowa League of Women Voters, and Mary



Ellen Miller, fundraising chair, representing 50-50 in 2020, a group dedicated to ensuring that women have at least a 50% equity in political parity and voice by 2020.

In June 2017, Kelley and Miller met at the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics on Iowa State University's campus to plan the statewide celebration. Currently, 15 organizations are involved.

The duo's enthusiasm drew in Kelley's husband, Steven B. Corbin, professor emeritus of marketing at the University of Northern Iowa. He has since developed an online curriculum focused on women's suffrage for Iowa's high schools and 543 public and private libraries. He also has launched a female sports initiative for Iowa universities in which they dedicate one game during the 2020 sports season to honor women's fight for the right to vote.

"Helping the cause of gender equality has been a healthy awakening for me," Corbin says. "We can't rest on our laurels. Men now need to be the ones to lead the cause."

The goal of the commemoration committee is to raise \$400,000. The money will help fund more than two dozen activities planned throughout the state in 2020, with about half earmarked for promoting and advertising these activities. Donations will also help pay for two replicas of the original Suffrage Wagon, which is housed in the National Museum of American History. The replicas will be made available for parades and for displays at libraries and museums.

The overall theme of Iowa's 19th Amendment Centennial Commemoration is "Hard Won. Not Done."

"The first presidential election was held in 1789, and only white men who owned property were allowed to vote. Women did not gain the voting privilege until 1920—132 years later," Kelley explains. "Yet there is still work to be done, including what we are witnessing today: issues such as voter suppression, gerrymandering and women's continuing struggle for full equality in the workforce and in public policy. We are 'Not Done.' "

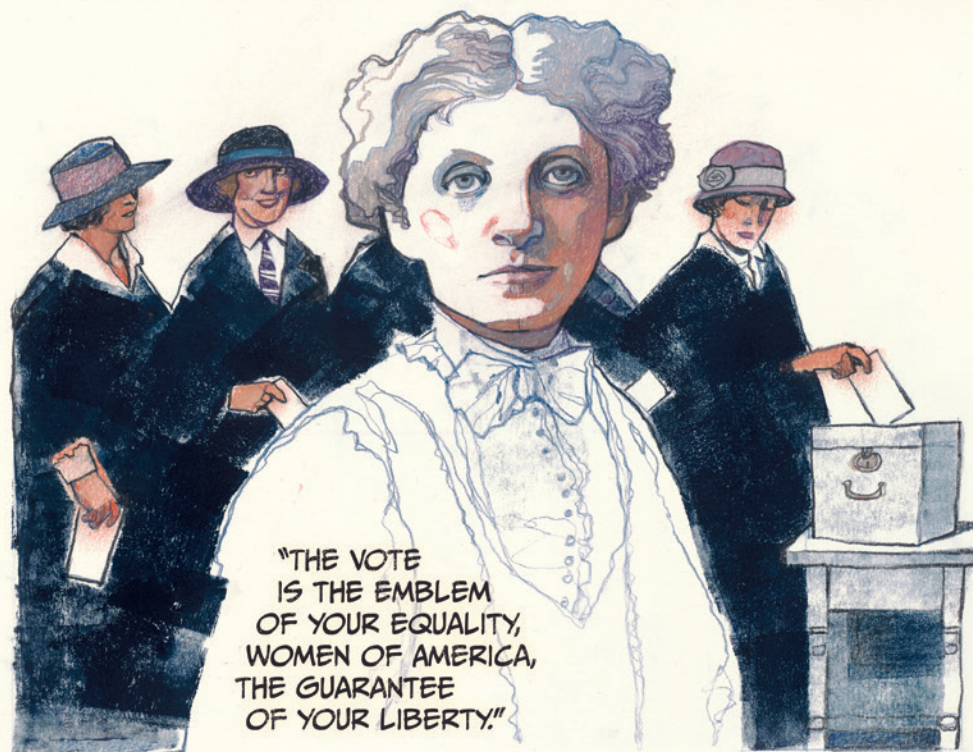
Above: This small flag from the early 1900s is upside-down for a reason: It's a signal of protest. The text says, "Let Iowa Women Vote. Add Another Star to the Flag of Free States." The artifact is part of the State Historical Museum of Iowa's collection.



THE RIGHT OF  
CITIZENS OF THE  
UNITED STATES  
TO VOTE SHALL  
NOT BE DENIED  
OR ABRIDGED BY  
THE UNITED  
STATES OR BY  
ANY STATE ON  
ACCOUNT OF SEX.



## CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT FOUNDED THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS



### IOWA LEADS THE WAY

Iowa played a prominent leadership role in the electoral emancipation of women. Among national suffrage leaders like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton was Iowan Carrie Chapman Catt. An Indiana native who grew up in Charles City, Iowa, she was the founder of the nation's League of Women Voters and the International Alliance of Women. She also served as president of the National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA), succeeding Susan B. Anthony.

At the peak of her influence, Catt was one of the best-known women in the country, and her "Winning Plan" in 1916 helped gain the support of state and federal legislators crucial to voting

the 19th Amendment into law.

According to Catt, "That vote is the emblem of your equality, women of America, the guarantee of your liberty. ... That vote has cost millions of dollars and the lives of thousands of women. ... That vote has been costly. Prize it!"

For her historically significant efforts, Catt was one of the first four women to be recognized on Des Moines' Iowa Women of Achievement Bridge in 2013. She was also the inspiration for the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics (Catt Center) established in her honor at Iowa State University in 1992.

Also pivotal to the suffrage movement was Des Moines' Mary Jane Coggeshall, whom Catt dubbed "the

mother of women suffrage in Iowa" and her "greatest inspiration." A noted wit, orator and writer, Coggeshall was elected to the board of NAWSA in 1895, the first woman so honored from west of the Mississippi River.

These two suffrage leaders, and others like them, made an effective case for women's right to vote. Success finally came on July 2, 1919, when Iowa's Gov. William L. Harding called the all-male 38th General Assembly into special session for the sole purpose of ratifying the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Iowa was the 10th of 36 states to ratify the amendment.

Shortly thereafter, on Aug. 26, 1920, President Woodrow Wilson made the law official.

Above: This portrait of prominent suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt is included artist Gary Kelley's commemorative calendar. See pages 76 and 81 for more information.





Iowa suffragists paid attention to activities in other states. In Massachusetts, activists distributed this tin bluebird sign to support a 1915 state referendum for women's suffrage. The referendum failed, and the sign eventually ended up in Iowa.

Women from Iowa helped elect Warren Harding in November 1920, just a few months after the 19th Amendment was adopted nationwide on Aug. 26. This pin declares, "My first vote is for Harding."

Both artifacts are from the State Historical Museum of Iowa's collection.

## ON THE DOCKET

The official commemoration kicks off Feb. 14 from 1 to 5 p.m. at Iowa State University's Memorial Union in Ames. Hosted by the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics, the event will include music, a performance of a one-woman show called "The Yellow Rose of Suffrage," food and drink, and discussions about the historical moment.

Other planned activities around the state include the following:

**Exhibits at history museums.** At the State Historical Museum in Des Moines, no specific exhibit plans had been made by press time, due to the museum's renovation, according to Michael Morain, communications manager of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, which oversees the museum. However, he is hoping the museum will display some of its women's suffrage artifacts. "We support banging the drums and sounding the trumpets to elevate this milestone event," he says.

**Memorial to be placed on the Iowa Women of Achievement Bridge in Des Moines.** Women Lead Change will recognize an Iowa woman who helped lead the efforts for voting rights. As of press time, the honoree had not been selected.

**A commemorative calendar by award-winning Cedar Falls-based artist Gary Kelley** (see images on pages 76, 77 and 80) and writer Cydney Kelley, Gary's daughter. The free calendars are available at Veridian Credit Union branches across the state; you don't need to be a customer to obtain one. About 15,000 calendars have been printed.

**Two replicas of the original suffragist wagon that was used by Lucy Stone** from 1913 to 1920 for rallies to support women's right to vote. The replicas will be made available for city, county and Iowa State Fair parades and to display at libraries and museums.

An exhibit by well-regarded **Des Moines artist Mary Kline-Misol** at Artisan Gallery 218 in West Des Moines. Opening on April 17, the exhibit will showcase 19 portraits of suffrage leaders. In November, the project will be installed at Iowa State University. For details on these and additional exhibit locales: [gallerymkm.com](http://gallerymkm.com).

**Premiere of "The Suffragist,"** a musical highlighting some of the most vivid moments in the struggle for voting rights, at the Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center in Cedar Falls.

**Speaker programs, forums, discussions and special projects** at Iowa's universities and colleges as well as at libraries across the state, which also plan to host book exhibits and readings for children and adults focused on women's suffrage.

**A documentary on Carrie Chapman Catt** to be produced by Iowa Public Television.

The commemoration will conclude with a celebration at the **Iowa Women's Foundation's 24th annual luncheon** at the Coralville Marriott and Convention Center on Oct. 9. ■

*The calendar of events celebrating the commemoration will continue to be updated throughout 2020 as more programs and activities are added. For information on events in your area, go to [19th-amendment-centennial.org](http://19th-amendment-centennial.org).*





# SERIOUSLY FUNNY

INSIDE THE NO-NONSENSE WORLD  
OF LOCAL STAND-UP COMEDY.

WRITER: CHAD TAYLOR

PHOTOGRAPHER: DUANE TINKEY





While Onnalee Kelley says her first love is improv, she also performs stand-up comedy, here at Lefty's.



S

itting in the basement of his Johnston home, Dan Umthun can be a lot to take in at one time.

Blisteringly smart, he can speak with authority on a great number of things, and sound like an authority on everything else. An active member of Des Moines'

stand-up comedy scene, the 38-year-old Umthun co-hosts the weekly open mic at Lefty's Live Music on Tuesday nights, along with Alex Carter and Toll McGrane. He's also the driving force behind the annual Beast Village Comedy Festival and host of his own podcast—"The Doomcast"—which he regularly records out of this very basement.

While the rest of the house boasts high ceilings and an open, airy floor plan, the basement is a low-slung, effectively windowless affair. But what really sets the room apart from the rest of the house is the way it's decorated: Everywhere—on every surface, along every wall, on every available flat space—are action figures, a dizzying array of them, drawing from nearly every possible iteration of comic book, movie, cartoon and television series. Everywhere you look, hundreds—possibly thousands—of tiny, painted eyes, arranged in neat rows, stare back at you.

It's here, surrounded by this bacchanalia of fandom, where Umthun stands, knee-deep in half-filled gift bags for this year's Beast Village, trying to explain comedy in Des Moines to me.

A glass of aged whiskey in his hand, he looks me in the eye.

"OK. I'm going to get unabashedly political here."

**TO BEGIN TO** understand where stand-up comedy in Des Moines is today, it helps to have a basic understanding of where it came from.

For years if you asked local residents if they'd seen a stand-up show here, the name you heard almost exclusively was the Funny Bone. As the city's longtime home for national touring acts, the Funny Bone often served as the entry point to comedy for many Des Moines denizens, since it was the only club bringing recognizable names to town. But if you were a comic *from* Des Moines, your avenues for getting to perform on the Funny Bone stage had always been limited.

Generally, a comic's career goes something like this: Start honing your skills at open mics, progress to hosting open mics, then become an opener for local indie shows, a headliner for indie shows, an opener for national touring acts. From there, in theory, a talented comic can go in any number of ways. Some become featured comics or MCs for places like the Funny Bone. Some hit the road on touring acts of their own. Many others eventually make the move to the three comedy meccas of Chicago, New York and Los Angeles to ply their trade on bigger stages or in the writing rooms of sitcoms or late-night talk shows.

"The Des Moines comedy scene circa 2010-2012 was focused on a group of people who all had the same kind of work ethic, and the focus was really on 'how f---ing good can we get at comedy?'" Umthun says. "People were calling one another out over how many open mics they were going to in a week.

"And there's nothing wrong with that, honestly," he adds. "But a lot of people who were doing that work at the time moved away."

There have been clubs other than the Funny Bone throughout the years, including on-again, off-again open mics and indie comics staging one-off shows at various venues. But most everyone involved in the scene today agrees that the current atmosphere started to take shape with the launch of the Last Laugh Comedy Theater in 2014.





Dan Umthun sits among his vast collection of action figures, pondering Libertarian politics and the future of local comedy.



Opened in the former Billy Joe's Pitcher Show space by local comic and former Second City instructor Josh Chamberlin, Last Laugh looked to bring Chicago-style improv to Des Moines, along with open mics and classes focused on helping local comedians hone their craft and find their voices.

Last Laugh closed abruptly in early 2017, but the seed it planted took root. Now, while a fair number of Iowa-based comics still make their way to LA or Chicago to try their luck, a dedicated group of talented locals is here to stay.

**“GROWING UP, I'D** always been interested in stand-up, but it never crossed my mind that I'd actually do it,” says Alex Carter. A Story City native, the 43-year-old Carter spent the first 15 years of his career in IT. After “completely burning out” on that track, he says he opted for a career change, turning his attention to food.

“I really got into bread baking,” he says. “Started working in some kitchens here and there and eventually landed as the pastry chef at Table 128.”

As part of his duties there, Carter was responsible for making three flavors of ice cream each week. “I got very into that,” he explains. “There weren't really any homemade ice cream shops around, so I thought, ‘this could be a thing.’ ”

That “thing” became Black Cat Ice Cream. Plying his trade out of the walk-up window on the 15th Street side of the Gas Lamp music venue downtown, Black Cat specialized in unique flavors made by hand. He still sells ice cream online by delivery while looking for “the right space and the right opportunity” for a shop of his own.

With IT and Table 128 and great ice cream all serving as window dressing, Carter has been a stand-up comic in Des Moines since 2010.

Describing himself as an ice cream maker who tells jokes—rather than a comic who also sells ice cream—

Carter started doing stand-up the same way most everyone else does: by stepping up to an open mic.

“When I went to my first one, everyone was very open and welcoming,” he recalls. “So I went and watched for a couple weeks, then I wrote a bunch of long-winded, dumb jokes and was like ‘I'm ready.’ ”

Some comics get their start with lofty goals of success. For others, it's simply a creative outlet with a rush of adrenaline. For Carter, who knew it was never going to be a career for him, it was a stimulating mental diversion from work.

“It was like starting to solve a puzzle,” he says. “It just felt like a fun thing for my brain to work on.”


Carter, like most of the comics in town, is drawn to the camaraderie of the local stand-up community. Like any specialized activity, comedians develop kinships with fellow enthusiasts.

Stand-up comedy is a pursuit that is impossible to work on alone. You need to have some live-fire experience to improve on the nuances of timing and delivery. And for that, you're going to have to start hitting up open mics.

**LEFTY'S ON A** Tuesday night is an exercise in barely controlled chaos. As the rotating co-hosts, Umthun, Carter and Toll McGrane will take turns getting to the venue early to sign up comics and determine the order for the night. Years ago, when this particular open mic night was being held at House of Bricks in the East Village, that process might entail eight comics putting their names on a list for the chance to perform for one another and maybe one or two curious passers-by. On this particular night at Lefty's, Carter has 36 names on slips of paper to sort through and stick to the wall in order of their slot onstage. While he does that, 30 or so people filter in and grab seats.

Open mics are, as the name implies, open to whoever



A black and white portrait of a man with a beard and mustache, smiling slightly. He is wearing a dark blazer over a dark V-neck shirt. The background is a blurred city street at night with bokeh lights.

**“GROWING UP, I’D ALWAYS  
BEEN INTERESTED IN  
STAND-UP, BUT IT NEVER  
CROSSED MY MIND  
THAT I’D ACTUALLY DO IT.”**

ALEX CARTER



wants to put their name in the hat. Each person gets five minutes to do what they want onstage. Some will be experienced comics getting in their practice reps for the week. Others are fresh-faced hopefuls, trying not to sound too much like Greg Giraldo or Patton Oswalt or whichever comic they've been cribbing from. Still others will be first-timers, well-lubricated with alcohol and giggling their way through whatever comes into their heads in the moment.

Even in the best of times, this can create confusion that can swing from wildly entertaining to painfully awkward. This particular Tuesday is not the best of times.

This week, Carter has brought a hazer to the bar, and each time he comes to the stage to introduce the next comic (always "a very funny guy ...") he douses the room in a liberal spray of fog. Four comics in and it's hard to see the stage from the back of the room. After the sixth comic, Lefty's co-owner Ann Mathey opens doors to dissipate the cloud, while Carter continues to pump out more fog.

Through it all, the parade continues. Perry Thompson tells a reworked version of a bit on dating that I've heard him do here before. There's Mohamed Yual, a whippet-thin comic whose particular brand of anti-comedy is cut from the Andy Kaufman mold; I've seen him bring a room to tears without actually telling anything that could conventionally be classified as a joke. A drunken neophyte gets onstage and does a more-or-less rehearsed bit focused entirely around her sexual skills. Umthun follows.

"That was wild," he says, looking around the room before entering into his own five-minute set that includes a three-minute, tightly scripted, meticulously rehearsed rant that starts on the subject of comic books and ends up serving as a primer on Libertarianism.

**"I'VE ALWAYS BEEN** kind of an artistic person," says Perry Thompson as he sits in Mars Cafe, munching on a muffin.

"I've always looked for an outlet to express that creativity. I never really set out to do comedy. But I saw it and decided that I could tell some interesting stories."

Born in Washington, D.C., Thompson moved to Iowa in 2002 to attend Iowa State. Now 35, he stays in Des Moines to be present in the life of his daughter, and got his first taste of the city's comedy scene thanks to a Bumble pity date.

"It was December of '14," he recalls. "I was laying down on my couch and I get up to go to the kitchen. I start to stretch, and I get lightheaded from getting up too fast. So I fall, and [break] my jaw. I had to get my jaw wired shut the night I was supposed to have this Bumble date, and got two pity dates out of it. One of the things that we could do that wouldn't involve a lot of talking was a comedy show."


The show piqued his interest enough that, once he got his jaw unwired, he started attending open mics. While many beginning comics rely on one-liners or short anecdotes to get laughs, Thompson's sets tend to be longer narratives. Many of them draw upon his experiences as an African American living in Iowa.

That perspective is what also led Thompson to create the Juneteenth Comedy Jam in 2018. "Being an Iowa comedian, there [aren't] a lot of opportunities to do comedy in front of a black room," he says. "It's a very different experience, I can assure you."

In the spring of 2018, Umthun reached out to Thompson about putting together some shows for the summer. Umthun had an open date on June 19 at Lefty's he wanted to book, and he asked Thompson if he had any ideas for a show. Thompson certainly did.

"Now, Dan's a white guy. And he was totally supportive, but I had to be like 'Look, I want to do this show, but I don't want to do it with you.' And he still booked the show, helped get everything in place, and I love him for that," Thompson recalls.





“BEING AN IOWA COMEDIAN,  
THERE [AREN’T] A LOT  
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COMEDY IN FRONT OF  
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DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE,  
I CAN ASSURE YOU.”

PERRY THOMPSON



That initial year, everyone in Thompson's circle came together to make the idea a reality. He had a comedian travel from California to headline, and he built a lineup entirely of black comedians. That first Juneteenth Comedy Jam had a turnout that was small, but big enough to convince Thompson that the idea was a winner. This past Juneteenth, Thompson kept the lineup all local, raised ticket prices, and drew twice as big a crowd. For year three, Thompson sees more room for growth.

"I figure that I have to go bigger," he says. "It's a work in progress, but what I'd like to have happen is multiple shows—maybe three different times in two or three venues."

**CALLING ON UMTHUN** for help in building a comedy festival is clearly the right thing to do. Since 2013, he's been the motor behind the annual Beast Village Comedy Festival, held in various venues across the city. The 2019 iteration, held Oct. 3-6, featured 50 comics from across the country, including national touring headliners Matt Braunger and Megan Koester.

"It's been an important six years," Umthun says. "House of Bricks was still open when we started. The East Village wasn't what it is now. It's hard to believe that this started in a completely different political climate, in a completely different world in a lot of ways."

For Umthun, an unabashed Libertarian and outspoken feminist, the political and intersectional drivers behind comedy and why people pursue it loom large.

"I think comedy itself is an inherently political act," he says. "Everyone perceives themselves to be powerless in some way or another, and I think that in many ways will inform their comedy."

"And in many ways that makes comedy a great equalizer," he continues. "Not that comedy is necessarily booked equally or is always super progressive or perfect."

But you can go to an open mic your first time, and if you ... are capable of writing things that make people laugh, you can seize that power right away."

He's right, of course. Comedy isn't the only place in the world where the politics of power are at play, but it's an easy place to suss it out. Early in his career, Carlos Mencia would end his racially charged sets with a challenge to his white audience: "Go to work tomorrow and try telling my jokes."

And just as the politics of race may determine how a comedian of color will adjust their set, gender politics have their sway as well.

"Sometimes as a woman, it's hard to say a joke because people can take things the wrong way," says Onnalee Kelley, while waiting for an improv gig to start at Embassy Club West. "For example, I have this joke about how I started a new diet: I just eat the sugar pills out of my birth control when I'm hungry. There's more that goes with it, but I've already lost people when I say, 'I've started a new diet,' because people are automatically like 'You don't need to be on a diet,' you know? Meanwhile, a guy can be like 'I didn't get out of bed yesterday,' and people are like 'Yeah, that sounds about right.'"

While most Des Moines comics cut their teeth at open mics, Iowa native Kelley's first taste of being funny in front of a crowd came in college, at Colgate University in New York.

An English major, Kelley took an improv class and immediately fell in love with the format. Once she moved back to Des Moines, she found Last Laugh, enrolled in some improv classes there and tried her hand at stand-up. Now, she bounces between the two, performing improv with Chowdown Comedy, and doing stand-up as, she says, "a hobby."

"If we were playing Screw/Marry/Kill, I'd screw stand-up, because the highs are high, the lows are low and it's a fun kind of side thing," says the 29-year-old Kelley. "I'd





Sid Juwarker opened Teehee's Comedy Club in November. He hopes the downtown venue will provide the "middle piece" of the Des Moines comedy scene, drawing local and national mid-tier performers.



marry improv because I absolutely love it to pieces and you can do it when you're old and gray.

"I'd kill podcasts," she adds with a shrug.

But where improv lends itself to a variety of characters and scenarios, the monologue nature of stand-up required Kelley to find one steady voice that worked for her. A tall, fresh-faced blonde, Kelley found herself stumbling against people's perceptions not aligning with the material she was writing. Looking to develop a more disarming persona, but not wanting to play into the bubble-headed stereotype, she went with a characterization that is more subdued.

Withdrawing back into her chair and lowering her gaze to the floor, she returns to the diet joke, this time with a reedier voice that sounds like she's been awake for two days.

"So my persona has to be a little more like this. 'I started a new diet yesterday ...,' a bit more scared to tell everybody about it." She sits up straight again and the force returns to her voice. "Because then people mentally approach it more like 'Oh, this girl is being vulnerable right now; let's listen.' "

**SINCE LAST LAUGH** closed, there has been a void in the city. Places like Lefty's and the Fourth Street Theater can host all the open mics in the world, but what Des Moines has lacked is a dedicated, midsize venue for regular comedy. Enter Sid Juwarker.

Born in India, Juwarker made his way to Iowa, by way of Singapore, in 1996 when he enrolled at Drake University, picking up a degree in environmental science. Now 41 and splitting his time working as an engineer and as an adjunct professor at Drake, Juwarker's entry into stand-up has an old refrain to it.

"I started by taking an improv class at Last Laugh, and that became my creative outlet for a while," he says. "I wanted, as a brown person in Des Moines, to talk about

## "SOMETIMES AS A WOMAN, IT'S HARD TO SAY A JOKE BECAUSE PEOPLE CAN TAKE THINGS THE WRONG WAY."

ONNALEE KELLEY

certain aspects of race that aren't normally discussed.

"I wanted to talk about social issues in a broader sense, where everyone in the room can laugh at the material, but you still get the point across," he adds. "For example, I have a joke now about winning a prize at the Ankeny Chamber of Commerce's charity golf outing. I didn't win money, I didn't win more golf, I won a yearlong tanning package. So I joke about the city sitting around picking prizes and thinking to themselves, 'It's golf. There's no way a nonwhite person is going to win anything today.' "

Blessed with an abundance of charisma, Juwarker quickly made a large circle of friends inside the stand-up community. From there, as his confidence and his abilities grew, he started to identify what the community needed to grow and thrive, and where he could help fill the void.

The answer to both of those questions came in the form of Teehee's Comedy Club.

Situated along a trendy stretch of Walnut Avenue along with Noce and Horizon Line Coffee, Teehee's is a 3,100-square-foot space with a 100-person capacity that features curated comedy, open mics and improv classes. The club opened in November.

"I started to think that for a town to really be able to say it has a comedy scene, you have to have varying degrees of comedy that all kind of funnel into one another," he says. "So you have your independent shows that run at Java Joes or wherever, then you have the Funny Bone, which brings in





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national touring acts, and then you have the superstars that fill the Civic Center. But there was no logical jump between the \$5 Java Joes shows ... and the national touring acts at Funny Bone. We need that middle piece.”

That middle piece is exactly what Teehee’s strives to be. With enough time, Juwarker hopes that his club will act as a kind of feeder system for the Funny Bone and beyond, giving comics who have earned their stripes doing indie shows a chance to play in front of a dedicated comedy crowd and show the Funny Bone bookers that they have the ability to open for a touring act. Additionally, Juwarker hopes that the venue’s comedy and downtown location will be a draw for mid-tier performers who don’t yet have the national name recognition to hit the Funny Bone’s radar.

“They’re all doing shows in Denver and Chicago and Kansas City and Minneapolis,” he says. “Well, to get between any of those cities, you have to pass through Des Moines. So why not break your long drive up? I’ll give you a stage to perform on, a place to sleep at night, and my whole model is based on paying comedians, not to create a venue where I’m making money on the backs of comedians’ work and the pretense of ‘exposure.’”

Long-term viability in a market like Des Moines will be a wait-and-see proposal for Teehee’s, but within the stand-up community, the buzz is intense.

“This is a dream for those of us doing independent comedy in Des Moines,” Carter says. “This is the first time that indie comedians have had a home [since Last Laugh]. There’s been no clubhouse.”

“That was our home,” Thompson says of Last Laugh. “What [Teehee’s] is really providing is an audience. You can do open mics and hone your craft, then go in there and really start killing. One of our own made this club.”

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‘EXPOSURE.’ ”**

SID JUWARKER

Open mics might lead to Teehee’s. Teehee’s might lead to the Funny Bone. But even then, the odds of that leading to a career in comedy are long, and there is no surefire path to bigger gigs or television writing jobs. But for the self-described lunatics who have chosen to do stand-up in Des Moines, moving away just to indulge in what you love is no longer the only viable option. And as long as there’s a venue with a stage and an open night of entertainment to fill, you’re going to find Kelley and Thompson and Carter and Umthun and dozens of others like them, ready to do a set.

“For people like me, it just lives in [our] system,” Carter says. “I can’t imagine not doing it.” ■





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WRITER: JULIA DELLITT



COURTNEY GORDON

Young people around the globe aren't afraid to tackle today's thorny issues: climate change, poverty, inequality and corruption, to name a few. And one group in Iowa is no exception.

Meet Global Shapers Des Moines, a team of 19 young professionals focused on building local solutions to worldwide problems. As an offshoot of the World Economic Forum, the local team took shape in 2015 and functions as one of 400 similar groups across 153 countries. Each group is capped at 50 "shapers" between the ages of 20 and 30; participants become alumni once they're past 30. Collectively, Global Shapers has more than 8,500 members, who work in hubs to review a set of issues each year, then determine the best way to foster grassroots support in their communities.

The goal? Drive meaningful change, often in partnership with other nonprofits and organizations, says Courtney Gordon, the Des Moines hub curator. After growing up in Minnesota, Gordon attended Drake University and then joined Vermeer Corp. as a global market intelligence specialist. She joined Global Shapers about two years ago to connect with other people her age similarly interested in community service and advocacy with an international spin.

In Des Moines this past summer, the group partnered with the American

Friends Service Committee to launch +Together Des Moines, a daylong event where proceeds from residents dining at area restaurants raised approximately \$1,700 for the Iowa Immigrant Rights Program.

In 2018, the Des Moines hub held a film screening of "All That Stands in the Way—The Girls" to raise awareness during Global Gender Parity Week. The documentary, which was shown alongside a facilitated panel of local female community leaders, chronicles the lives of four teenage girls based in London, Lesotho, Iceland and Jordan.

For both projects, Gordon says the Des Moines hub had to meet defined standards and report results back to Global Shapers.

While this year's activities are still in development, Gordon says the Des Moines hub is focusing on two issues: civic engagement and sustainable

agriculture. For example, they're working to identify ways to increase youth involvement in politics, such as collecting questions from fellow shapers around the world that the local group would then route to presidential candidates passing through Iowa.

Some hubs function as nonprofits or rely on corporate sponsors, but the Des Moines group currently operates with no such structure and does not request membership fees. As a result, all events are kept as low-cost as possible, often in partnership with other organizations, with voluntary member donations covering a portion. Establishing a sustainable growth plan is top of mind going forward, says Gordon, with a goal of achieving 501(c)(3) status at some point.

"Global Shapers has helped me as a young professional in so many wonderful ways," Gordon says. "Not only can I rely on a global network of professionals to lend advice, the friends I've made have helped me expand my worldview and influenced how I communicate cross-culturally."

"The group is an opportunity to be at the ground level of shaping real solutions for our community," she adds, "and getting to know other leaders who are doing incredible work to make Des Moines a better place to live."



## EVENTS

### JANUARY

#### **Variety, the Children's Charity—Iowa** **FEAST FOR YOUR SENSES**

When: Jan. 17, 6:30 p.m.

Where: Ron Pearson Center,  
West Des Moines

Details: Includes food, beverages, a mini concert from Girls Rock!, inspirational stories from Jay Byers and more. Local artist Ben Schuh will paint a mural of the event as the evening goes along. \$300 per person, or \$150 for young professionals ages 21-35; varietyiowa.com.

#### **Children and Families of Iowa** **KIDSFEST**

When: Jan. 17 and 18

Where: Iowa State Fairgrounds' Varied Industries Building

Details: Exhibits, live entertainment and children's activities make up this annual event for kids. \$7.50; free for children under age 1; cfiowa.org.

#### **UnityPoint Health** **RALLY AGAINST CANCER**

When: Jan. 23, 6 p.m.

Where: Ron Pearson Center,  
West Des Moines

Details: Dorothy Hamill, an Olympic gold medalist and cancer survivor, will keynote this fundraising event, which also will include cocktails, food stations, live music, and silent and live auctions. \$200 per person or \$100 for young professionals under age 35; unitypoint.org.

### FEBRUARY

#### **Bravo Greater Des Moines** **BRAVO AWARDS GALA**

When: Feb. 1, 6 p.m.

Where: Iowa Events Center

Details: Always the hottest ticket in town, this annual event celebrates the arts in Central Iowa. Awards are presented to organizations and individuals who support the region's cultural landscape. The event also includes dinner, drinks and dancing. \$350 per person; bravogreaterdesmoines.org/bravo-gala.

#### **Multiple Sclerosis Society** **TASTE OF GENEROSITY**

When: Feb. 7, 6 p.m.

Where: Sheraton West Des Moines

Details: Featuring a wine and spirits tasting, dinner, and silent and live auctions. \$100 per person, or \$200 for the Chairman's Tasting, which includes premiere hors d'oeuvres and some of the world's most collectable wines; nationalmssociety.org.

#### **American Heart Association** **Des Moines** **HEART BALL**

When: Feb. 15, 6 p.m.

Where: Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center

Details: With a cocktail reception, dinner, live auction and speaker presentation. \$350; heart.org/en/affiliates/iowa/des-moines.

#### **Science Center of Iowa** **BATTLE OF THE BRAINS**

When: Feb. 20, 6 p.m.

Where: Science Center of Iowa

Details: Compete in a STEM-based trivia game and see how much you understand about science, technology, engineering and math. Sign up a team with a table of eight people for \$500, or \$400 for young professionals under age 35; sciowa.org.

#### **Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Iowa** **CLUB TALENT SHOW**

When: Feb. 21, 5:30 p.m.

Where: Scottish Rite Consistory

Details: Performances from Club children and teens, games, crafts, activities, and snacks prepared by Club kids. \$50; free admission for children; bgccci.org.

#### **Des Moines Metro Opera** **WINE, FOOD AND BEER SHOWCASE**

When: Feb. 21, 6 p.m.

Where: Des Moines Marriott Downtown

Details: Featuring more than 40 of the region's restaurants, caterers, wineries, breweries and distilleries. \$50; or \$150 for the Reserve Experience, which includes exclusive fine wines and culinary options; dmmo.org.

#### **Variety, the Children's Charity—Iowa** **TELETHON**

When: Feb. 29 and March 1

Where: Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center Ballroom

Details: Every year, thousands of volunteers take pledges over the phone and solicit donations from family and friends. Donate or volunteer through the organization's website: varietyiowa.com/variety-telethon. ■

*dsm* invites nonprofit organizations to submit events for possible inclusion in this calendar. Please include the following information: name and a brief description of the event, date, time, location, ticket price, and a link to additional details. Send to dsmeditor@bpcdm.com. The deadline for the May/June issue is Feb. 15.



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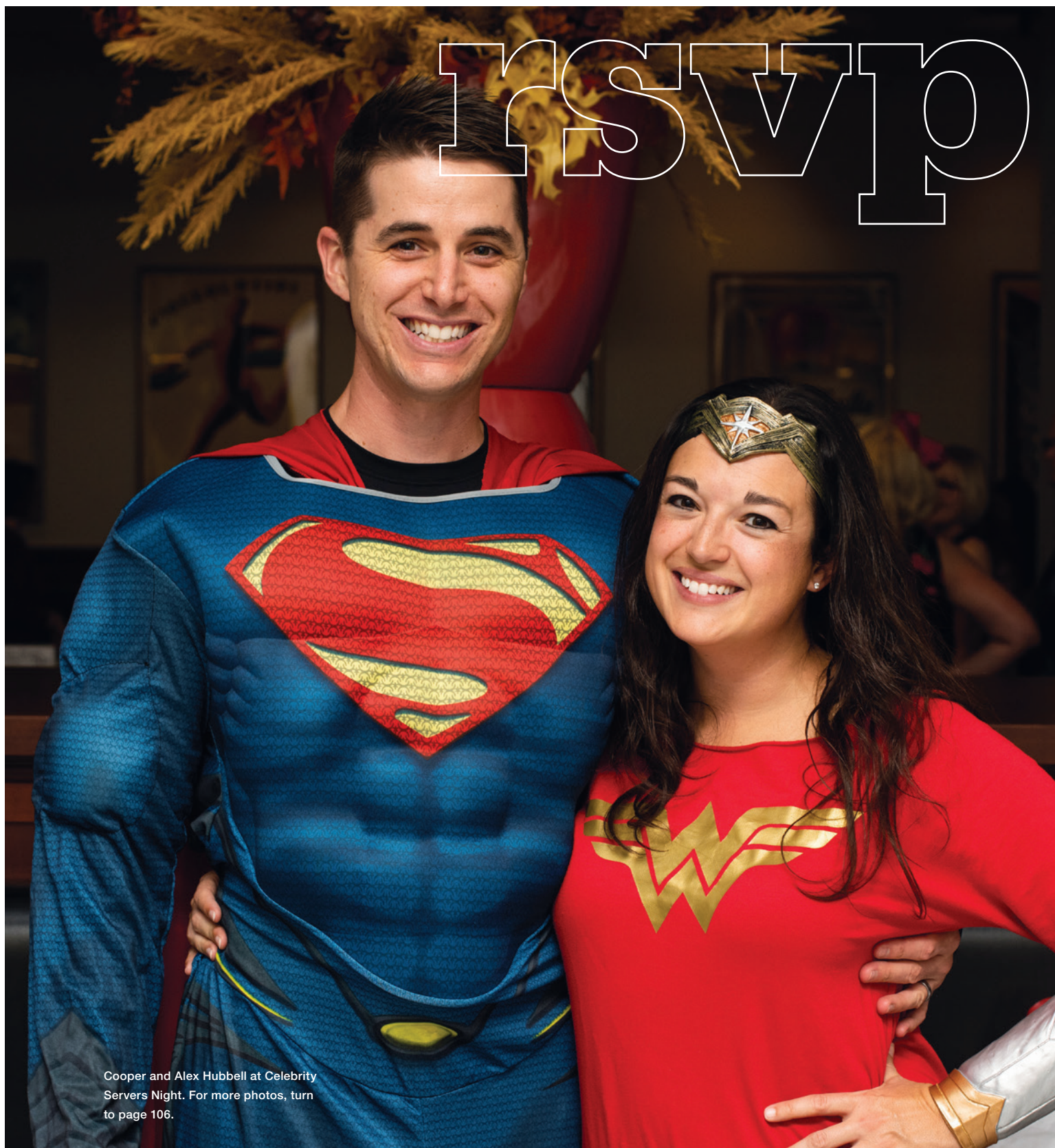
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# ISVP



Cooper and Alex Hubbell at Celebrity Servers Night. For more photos, turn to page 106.

## How to Submit Party Photos

Want your event pics in *dsm*? You'll find submission details on our website, [dsmMagazine.com](http://dsmMagazine.com). But remember, we need your accurate input. For example, please make sure to provide the proper spellings of the names of all the people pictured. And please provide a phone number and an email address of a contact person in case we get confused. It happens.

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# 100

RSVP



## GHOULISH GALA

**Organization:** Salisbury House Foundation

**Date:** Oct. 19, 2019

**Venue:** Salisbury House and Gardens

**Main Attraction:** Guests celebrated their dark side in style, as they enjoyed cocktails, dinner and dancing.

**Unique Touch:** Many dressed in stylish macabre attire, fitting the theme perfectly.

**Photography:** Christopher Maharry, Maharry Photography

JASON AND PAIGE CONNOLLY



### ROSÉ SOIRÉE

**Organization:** Broadlawns Medical Center Foundation

**Date:** Sept. 12, 2019

**Venue:** Jasper Winery

**Main Attraction:** A vineyard party with live music featuring musicians from the Sons of Gladys Kravitz, hors d'oeuvres from the Tangerine Food Co., and cookies by Desserts by Theresa.

**Bottom line:** \$43,000 to benefit Broadlawns Medical Center's new Family Birthing Center.

**Photography:** Faye Frein



Kurtis Chicoine, Kourtney Morris



Deval and Yogesh Shah



Sarah and David Ling



Stacie Codr, Connie Diekema



Juliane Winters, James Maixner, Hayley Harvey



Lil and Eric Waters



## RSVP



Kyle Krause, Jeff Fleming, Sharon Krause



Angela Dethlefs-Trettin, Georgia Van Gundy, Sally Dix



Dan and Nicolette Keough

## ANNUAL GALA

**Organization:** Des Moines Art Center

**Date:** Sept. 28, 2019

**Venue:** Krause Gateway Center

**Main Attraction:** This year's gala celebrated the 10th anniversary of the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park. The event took place in the new Renzo Piano-designed headquarters of Kum & Go, which is located directly across the street from the park.

**Photography:** Eric J. Salmon



Mary and John Pappajohn



Trudy Holman Hurd, Richard Deming, Mary Chapman, Teresa Adams-Tomka





## ANNUAL DINNER

**Organization:** Great Outdoors Foundation

**Date:** Nov. 15, 2019

**Venue:** Curate

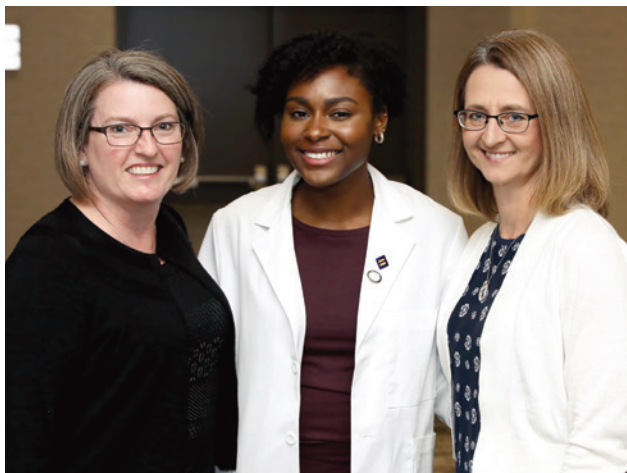
**Main Attraction:** A "formal flannel" event to raise money for Central Iowa Water Trails.

**Photography:** Christopher Maharry, Maharry Photography

JEN CROSS, HANNAH INMAN



## RSVP



Catherine Stevermer, Britney Williams, Kari Smith



Ricardo Bodra, Alexis Cross, Sedale Boire



Shahbaz Ahmed Merchant

## ANNUAL GLANTON DINNER

**Organization:** Des Moines University

**Date:** Oct. 16, 2019

**Venue:** Meadows Events and Conference Center, Altoona

**Main Attraction:** The event raises funds for DMU's endowed Glanton Fund, which supports scholarships for minority students underrepresented in health care and supports multicultural programs for all students.

**Bottom Line:** \$367,985

**Photographers:** Brett Roseman, Des Moines University; Rich Sanders, Sanders Photographics



Thaddeus Franklin and Angela Walker Franklin, Rob and Pat Denson



Simon Estes



# THE SUFFRAGE PROJECT

Mary Kline-Misol

APRIL 17–NOVEMBER 30, 2020

# 10

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

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Learn more about how you can help the youth of Central Iowa continue to grow into tomorrow's leaders at Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Iowa by visiting [bgcci.org](http://bgcci.org).



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[bgcci.org](http://bgcci.org) | 515.242.7925

Boys & Girls Clubs CEO Jodie Warth, Youth of the Year Winner Kathy Le and Boys & Girls Club Board President Brent Wilberts



## RSVP



Soozie McBroom, Wicker Van Orsdel, Rosalie Gallagher



Frank Vaia, Mayor Frank Cownie



Jackie Schmillen

### CELEBRITY SERVERS NIGHT

**Organization:** Young Women's Resource Center

**Date:** Oct. 7, 2019

**Venues:** Centro and Malo restaurants

**Main Attraction:** Fifty-six local celebrities and community leaders hosted about 600 guests for a three-course meal. The celebrity servers dressed in costume, created table themes and provided entertainment, including music performances, a piñata and Polaroid photo sessions.

**Photography:** Christopher Maharry, Marharry Photography



Christine Polson, Jami Milne



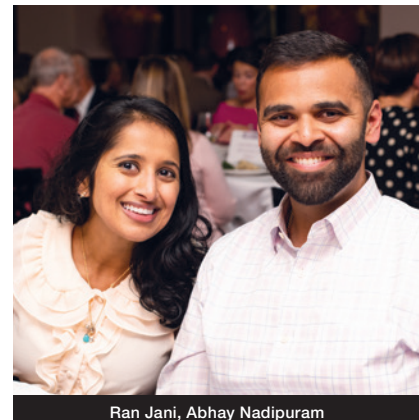
Keshia Meissner, Christina Moffatt



Amy Hock, Teresa Roof



Annie von Gillern, Cole Mayer



Ran Jani, Abhay Nadipuram



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JANUARY 10 – APRIL 15

ANNA GASKELL:  
JUDITH LOVES MARTHA

JANUARY 17 – MAY 17

RESEARCHERS:  
WOMEN ARTISTS INSPIRED  
BY SCIENCE

FEBRUARY 14 – MAY 10

MORE AT DESMOINESARTCENTER.ORG

Karla Black (Scottish, born 1972) / *What To Ask Of Others*, 2011 (detail)  
Polythene, chalk dust, thread / Overall: 55 1/8 x 118 1/8 x 11 13/16 inches (140 x 300 x 30 cm.)  
Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy / Photo Courtesy Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne.  
Photographer: ©Dario Lasagni

DE  
MOINES  
ART  
CENTER

ENTIRELY UNEXPECTED

## RSVP



Chaden Halfhill, Donnie Popejoy



Ann Kooker, Stacey and Tray Wade, Rob Kooker

### 2019 ART OF COMPASSION

**Organization:** EveryStep

**Date:** Oct. 10, 2019

**Venue:** Ron Pearson Center

**Main Attraction:** With the theme "Building Communities," the EveryStep Foundation partnered with local builders to construct clubhouses that were displayed at Jordan Creek Town Center. The campaign culminated with a gala featuring a program, dinner, and silent and live auctions.

**Bottom Line:** \$136,000

**Photography:** Jacie Farris, Ruben Rodriguez



Shawn Reinert, Allie Wilson, Tammy Thrapp, Leann Thrapp



Chuck Schoffner, Sue Swords, Pam Schoffner



Rich Willis, Suzie Glazer Burt, Lynn Graves



Mark Iles, Deb and George Milligan, David Iles



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*Our House will begin serving families on January 7, 2020.*



Read and share the stories of Lifting the Veil with our digital version at [dsmmagazine.com](http://dsmmagazine.com).

# Iowa Character Awards

Nominations for individuals and organizations are due **May 3, 2020.**

[IowaCharacterAwards.org](http://IowaCharacterAwards.org)

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# 110

RSVP



Marty and Laura Martin



Kristen Hurd, Joseph Jones

## DSM SAGES OVER 70

Organization: *dsm* magazine

Date: Nov. 11, 2019

Venue: Sheraton West Des Moines

Main Attraction: At our annual event, we celebrated Penny Furgerson, Ruth Ann Gaines, Ruth and Tom Harkin, John Pappajohn, Ila Plasencia and Mary Seidler at the Sheraton in West Des Moines.

Photography: Duane Tinkey,  
John Retzlaff



Steve and Kathy Zumbach



Bob Riley, Elisabeth Buck



Penny Furgerson



Ruth Ann Gaines



Sen. Tom and Ruth Harkin



Ila Plasencia



Mary Seidler

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# 112

RSVP

BACK ROW: JONATHAN WILSON,  
TERRI HALE, GEORGE BELITSOS  
FRONT ROW: KAREN MACKEY,  
SHARON MALHEIRO, SONIA REYES-  
SNYDER, GEORGIA ROBISON

## DSM LGBTQ LEGACY LEADER AWARDS

Organization: *dsm* magazine

Date: Oct. 24, 2019

Venue: Temple for Performing Arts

Main Attraction: Honoring LGBTQ individuals in Iowa who have made a positive impact on their communities. Terri Hale also was recognized for her role as an ally. In addition, this year's LGBTQ Leadership Institute class was introduced.

Photographer: Duane Tinkey

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2AU <b>29</b>	MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center <b>5</b>
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Bank Iowa <b>2</b>	Morning Star Senior Living <b>42</b>
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K. Renee <b>9</b>	

**UNTIL  
NEXT TIME**



## DSM MAGAZINE NOVEMBER/ DECEMBER ISSUE UNVEILING

### PARTY LIKE IT'S A NEW ISSUE OF *DSM* MAGAZINE

When they hosted the *dsm* launch party for the November/December issue, the folks running the new Revel Hotel sure proved that they know their business. The sleek and sophisticated Urbandale hotel provided the perfect venue for the 350-plus guests to celebrate the new issue, listen to Jason Walsmith of the Nadas perform, and sample the evening's signature drink and extensive spread of hors d'oeuvres.

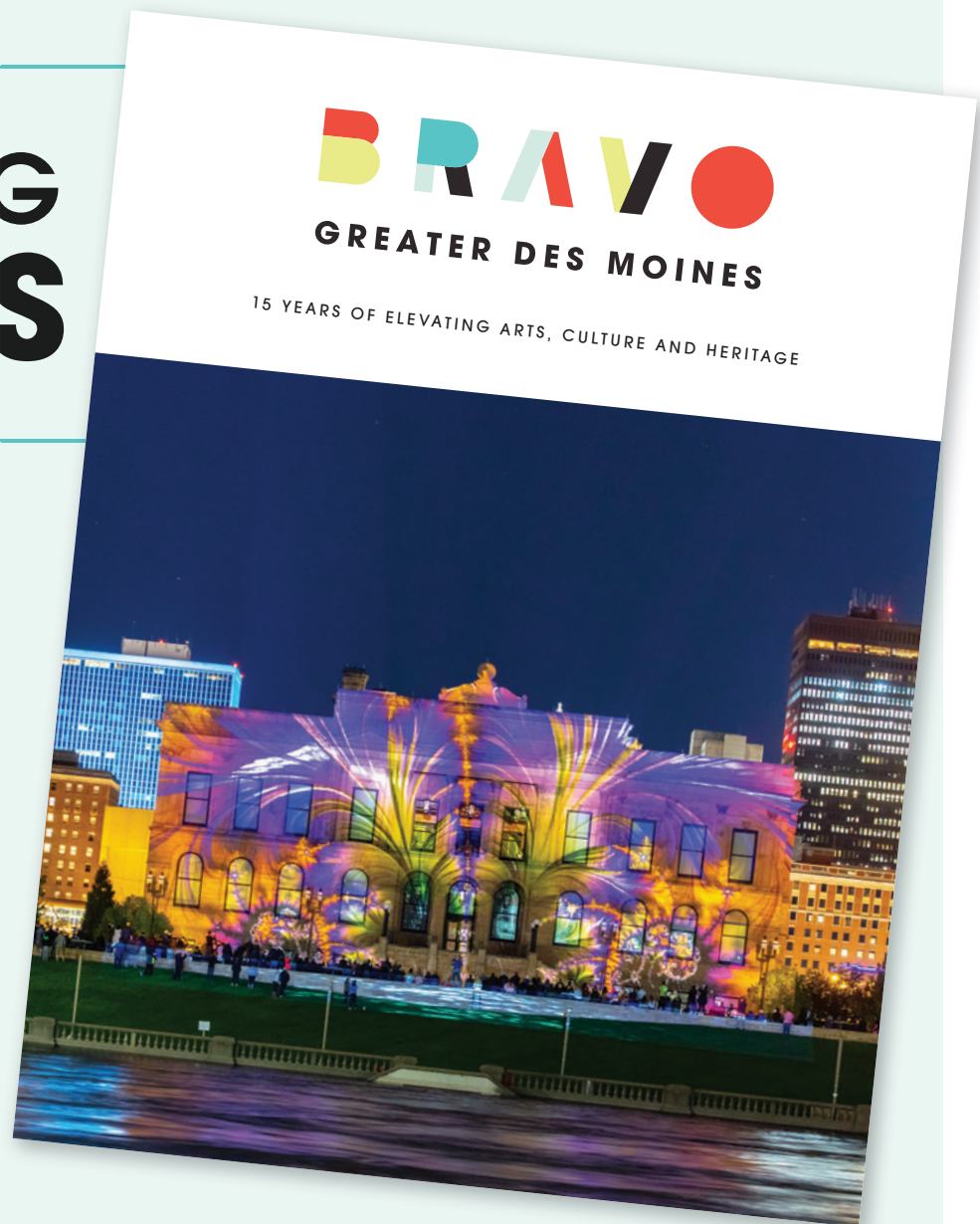
Next up: Join us on Feb. 25 for the unveiling of the March/April issue at Royal Flooring's newly opened location, 11801 Hickman Road in Urbandale. See page 12 for more details.



# BRAVO, GREATER DES MOINES!

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**Kevin Tiernan, Vice President - Treasury Management**

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