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a sport you can enjoy

Dominating dominoes:  
Two brothers win big

Axe to grind? No,  
Axe to throw

# Siouxland Life

A GUIDE FOR LIVING IN SIOUXLAND

## AIMING FOR FUN

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# Siouxland Life

Parents love to nag their children about getting off the couch and doing something. But this summer, we've got a lot of ideas that might just trip their triggers. Cup stacking? Cornhole? Domino designing? Siouxlanders are finding unique ways to leave their marks on activities you might not have considered. Find the target...and take aim this summer.



### ON THE COVER

Alise Brockhaus shoots arrows in the Lawton-Bronson High School gym. Brockhaus, a 2022 Lawton-Bronson graduate, is a state and national archery champion. .

Photograph by *Tim Hynds*.

4	HOME ease, convenience	32	TARGET SUMMER in the bag
14	TARGET SUMMER archery champ	38	TARGET SUMMER hope springs
19	TARGET SUMMER trampoline woes	44	TARGET SUMMER 'win' fall
24	TARGET SUMMER stack cups	46	TARGET SUMMER sliding fun
30	TARGET SUMMER sharpen your skills	47	PARTING SHOT camp? Oh no.

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### 4 GREAT VIEWS

Lewis and Clark loved the bluff overlooking the Missouri River. Now you can have that view, too.



### 32 CORNHOLE FUN

Tossing a beanbag in a target? Oddly, the sport of cornhole has a way of growing on you. Find out why.

### 38 CAMP HIGH HOPES

A favorite site in Siouxland has even more to offer this summer who love to call it their second home.





# GREAT VIEWS, LITTLE MAINTENANCE

*Flatwater Crossing makes living easy, attractive*

Text by Dolly Butz | Photograph by Jesse Brothers

**SOUTH SIOUX CITY** — A modern townhome nestled in Flatwater Crossing, Ho-Chunk's up and coming housing and commercial development in South Sioux City, features striking views of the Missouri River and the Floyd Monument.

Those scenic views are visible the moment you walk through the single-story two-bedroom, two-bathroom home's front door and look down a long hallway that leads to the spacious open concept kitchen, living and dining area.

Three of Flatwater Crossing's existing five townhomes have already been sold.

The townhome at 2630 Flatwater Drive has more than 1,500 square feet of finished living space, as well as an unfinished basement. Its exterior features hardboard; and stacked stone frames the dark chocolate brown garage door.

"These townhomes that we've built have a very modern look to them," said Pat Wojcik, community manager for Ho-Chunk Capital. "They're comfortable.

They're stylish."

Ho-Chunk, Inc., a development corporation owned by the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska, is developing 200 acres at 29th Street and Veterans Drive as a walkable urban neighborhood with a network of greenways, natural landscaping, plazas and trails. BluStone Homes, a subsidiary of Ho-Chunk Capital, built the townhomes.

"Whether it's the apartments or the townhomes or the single-family homes,



An electric fireplace framed in stone is shown in the living room at this Flatwater Crossing townhome in South Sioux City, Neb. Also features an open layout between the galley kitchen dining space and living room.

everybody has access to the river," said Wojcik, who has 25 years experience selling real estate. "You get the views. You get to go down there to enjoy the water."

The flooring running from the hallway to the living, kitchen and dining area is high definition wood laminate, which Wojcik said is scratch-resistant and easy to care for. The color palette is clean and on-trend with light gray walls and white woodwork.

The kitchen has light quartz coun-





This Flatwater Crossing townhome features a galley-style kitchen. A pocket door opens into the laundry room

A walk-in closet full of shelves is revealed by a pocket door at this Flatwater Crossing townhome in South Sioux City, Neb.

tertops, charcoal gray subway tile, white cabinetry around the stove and a spacious island with dark wood cabinetry and a deep sink. Pendant lighting hangs above the island, which could be used as an eating area. Currently, a long white table is positioned under a sparkling chandelier between the kitchen and living room to denote a dining room.

A laundry room, which is conveniently placed just off the kitchen, can also be accessed from the two-car garage.

A mantle is perched over the gas fireplace, which is positioned in a corner of the living room and surrounded by stacked stone. The space boasts a large picture window, which light pours through, as well as a fan, recessed light-

ing, surround sound system, and a door that leads to a Trek composite deck.

“The open concept, entertaining, relaxing is what buyers really, really like. They like the simplicity. You’re here. I’m here. We can talk and watch TV,” Wojcik said. “And, just the simple finishes. It just



This Flatwater Crossing townhome features two full bathrooms, including this one in the central hallway.

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The back patio is shown for a townhome at Flatwater Crossing. The home offers maintenance-free living.

makes it easy to decorate. It's soothing to their eye."

Down a hallway off the living room you'll find a large main bathroom and two bedrooms. The smaller of the bedrooms could be used as an office. It features pocket doors, a walk-in closet, recessed lighting, a ceiling fan and soft gray carpeting, which Wojcik loves.

"It feels good on my feet. It's got a neat look to it with the texture," she said. "The majority of people like carpet in their bedrooms."

The homeowner's suite has the same type of carpet, as well as a large walk-in closet with a custom-designed organizer and an attached bathroom with double sinks, quartz countertops and an oversized walk-in shower with a glass door and marble tile.

"You could have a dresser here, a TV," Wojcik said as she motioned around the bedroom. "Look at the windows up above!"

Wojcik said the original plans called for the townhome to have just a plain wall, where the headboard is placed up





# Maximizing Personal Potential through Dignified and Purposeful Living

Opportunities Unlimited (OU) has been serving individuals with special needs in Siouxland since the early 1990's.

Opportunities Unlimited provides Community-Based Neurobehavioral Services and Residential Rehabilitation Services for individuals who have sustained a traumatic brain injury, a spinal cord injury, or other physical disability. The OU campus, which is located on the north side of Sioux City, consists of nine residential homes and a large Community Center that serves as the hub for therapies and activities as well as houses the administrative offices.

In addition to providing Community-Based Neurobehavioral Services and Residential Rehabilitation Services, OU also provides Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) to children and adults with special needs. Individuals eligible for waiver programs can access services for a predetermined number of hours each month, set by the individual's caseworker. These services are offered at the Opportunities Unlimited Community Center, out in the community, and in the

privacy of the person served's home. OU also has two HCBS homes for individuals requiring assistance with skills needed to live in a more independent setting.

The Employment Services Department offers many vocational services to individuals with special needs to access meaningful employment.

For more information on programs and services available through Opportunities Unlimited, go to [www.opportunitiesunlimited.com](http://www.opportunitiesunlimited.com)



## Maximizing Personal Potential through Dignified and Purposeful Living.

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Pat Wojcik, community manager for Ho-Chunk Capital, is shown at the back door leading to the patio at this Flatwater Crossing townhome in South Sioux City, Neb.

against, but she said, “No. You’ve gotta bring some light in.” So, three small horizontal windows were added near the ceiling. A large window provides dramatic views of the river.

Wojcik said the property doesn’t require flood insurance and offers maintenance-free living. The HOA fee includes mowing, snow removal and a sprinkler system.

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The Sergeant Floyd monument can be seen from the back patio of this townhome at Flatwater Crossing.



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## REMODELING PROJECTS THAT ADD VALUE TO YOUR HOME



comfort level, and add to the resell value of your home. However, not all remodeling projects are equal when generating the greatest resell value for home owners.

Zonda, a housing market research firm, recently released their annual Cost vs. Value Report, which tracks the value ratio over the cost for 22 common remodeling projects. The report authors note that there is more than one kind of value, such as increased accessibility or comfort. Still, this report focuses specifically on the value that leads to a higher sale price of an existing home.

Half of the 22 remodeling projects listed in the report are exterior replacement projects. Here is a sampling of the home renovation projects from the report that recoup more than half of their costs:

**Garage and Entry Door Replacement.** Curb appeal remains one of the most important aspects of attracting buyers to a home. One essential home exterior feature

is a beautiful garage door. According to the Cost vs. Value Report, home owners can recoup a generous 93 percent of the garage door replacement cost. If you choose to replace your garage door, experts recommend focusing on function and design. A new garage door that complements your existing exterior style, such as craftsman or contemporary, is sure to be a head-turner.

In addition, a functional and stylish steel door is an easy way to draw the attention of home buyers to your home. So, it is no surprise that home owners are likely to recoup more than half (63 percent) of their investment. This type of upgrade not only adds value to your home, but it's also durable, engineered with material to withstand the outdoor elements.

**Manufactured Stone Veneer.** An exterior refresh doesn't always mean a simple coat of paint or landscaping. Instead, home owners should explore different types of eye-catching materials to draw buyers in. Stone in and around homes, from fireplaces to facades, is generally popular among home buyers. Manufactured stone veneer exhibits the look of natural stone and is available in various colors and sizes. Home owners that tackle this remodeling project are estimated to recover 91% of their investment.

**Minor Kitchen Remodel.** Sometimes, a major overhaul of a specific room isn't necessary to reap the potential financial rewards. According to the report, home owners who invest in a minor kitchen remodel are likely to recoup more than 71 percent of their investment. This type of remodeling is generally smaller and involves replacing dated materials and fixtures instead of knocking down walls or reconfiguring plumbing and electrical.

**Window Replacement.** Another eye-catching investment is upgrading to vinyl or wood windows. Home owners investing in this project can expect to recoup 67.5% of the cost of a vinyl window replacement and 66.3% of a wood window replacement. Like other exterior upgrades, wood and vinyl windows offer various design options to compliment your home. In addition, energy-efficient options are available, so you can realize savings before you sell your home with lower heating or cooling bills.

Visit the Home Builders Association of Greater Siouxland website at [www.sioxlandhba.com/members](http://www.sioxlandhba.com/members) to search a list of suppliers and remodelers to help you with all your interior and exterior home remodeling projects.

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National archery champion Alise Brockhaus shoots arrows in the Lawton-Bronson High School gym.

# HITTING THE BULLSEYE

*Siouxland student Alise Brockhaus is a world-class archer*

Text by JARED MCNETT | Photographs by TIM HYNDS



A grouping of arrows shot by national archery champion Alise Brockhaus.

LAWTON, IOWA — Very few people can say they're one of the absolute best in their nation at something. But when it comes to archery, 18-year-old Alise Brockhaus can make the claim with total legitimacy.

Not that the recent Lawton-Bronson graduate is in the habit of talking herself up a whole lot. Not when her skills can speak for her.

"You'd never see it because she is super modest, super quiet, doesn't show emotion, but she is a competitor inside. There's a fire burning deep inside. When she gets up there, she wants to win every time," Lawton-Bronson Archery Coach Jason Carlson said.

At the end of April, in Utah, Brockhaus won the National Archery in the Schools Program's Western National 3-D shooting tournament (where contestants often take aim at foam animals) and finished seventh in a separate bullseye shooting tournament held at the same time. Even though it was her fourth time at nationals, Brockhaus admits she was a little bit nervous.

Gabby Hamann, a 14-year-old student at Siouxland Christian School who competed against Brockhaus at nationals, said Brockhaus' alleged nervousness didn't show at all.

"She's very good at keeping her composure. When we had started that day, she wasn't doing real great but she was just like: 'I'm going to put that behind me and forget about those.'"

## THE NATURAL

Before a seventh grade P.E. class with Carlson, Brockhaus had limited experience with the bow-and-arrow sport. She and her dad shot hunting bows a few times but that's about it.

After she tried archery in class, it wasn't long before Brockhaus was competing. And she realized pretty quickly she could excel at the sport.



Alise Brockhaus holds two of her numerous plaques she won for her archery skills.

“I think it was really the first tournament. Usually beginners are shooting in the 200 or 210 range and the very first tournament I was shooting 250s and coach and the upperclassmen were like ‘You should stay with this, you’re a natural.’” (300 is the highest score a person can attain.)

Within a year, Brockhaus finished as the runner-up at a state tournament.

“She’s always kind of had it,” Carlson said. “Once in a while, you find those kids who stand out.”

Carlson, who has also coached football, wrestling and golf, and helped out with track, said he started the archery program at Lawton-Bronson in 2016 after attending Iowa Department of Natural Resources classes for certifying teachers as basic archery instructors.

“Once I got my certification, we were allowed to start organizing and assembling a team and we got quite a few on board right away,” Carlson said.

According to Carlson, who grew up hunting and shooting a bow in the Loess Hills, one motivation for starting the Lawton-Bronson program is the way it allows for a different kind of student athlete to find success.

“Archery is one of those where I could take a kid who would probably never be successful on a basketball court or football field and they would be very successful and have a great career. It caters to anyone willing to put in the time,” Carlson said.

Brockhaus’ response to whether she’s ever had significant interest in competing in other sports supports Carlson’s idea. “Nope,” she flatly said.

Since starting the program, Carlson



Alise Brockhaus holds her top female archer trophy.

said Lawton-Bronson’s won two state championships as a team and had individual state champions including Brockhaus this year in March. There, she had high scores of 295 in both bullseye and 3D shooting which is almost as close to perfect as possible.

The school’s seen two national champions as well: Brockhaus this year and Breann Holtz, who still helps out with practices, in 2018. Another Lawton-Bronson archer, Adam Larson, finished as high as third in nationals (with a score of 297) and won five state championships.

Brockhaus’ state dominance this year was a breakthrough for her as she previously finished second on three different occasions.

“Those experiences she had, she used to keep calm. And it really showed her senior year,” Carlson said.

#### DROWNING IT OUT

Even though he has gotten to witness



Alise Brockhaus shoots arrows under the watchful eye of Lawton-Bronson team coach, Jason Carlson.



Alise Brockhaus removes arrows from a target.

his archers reach the absolute heights of success in the sport, Carlson admitted he’s still able to enjoy the simplest things when watching them compete.

“These kids are shooting bare fingers and sighting off an arrow which is the rawest form of shooting,” he said.

When Brockhaus practices her shooting, typically at school, she’ll often listen specific music or just find a random station to have on while she works. “It drowns out the rest of the noise for me,” she said.

To hear Brockhaus tell it, there isn’t much of a “routine” beyond that. She’ll just go in and shoot targets for however long she sees fit. “On the good days, I’m flinging arrows. On the bad days, I try to find my aim point again,” she said.

In the run-up to her appearance at a world open in Louisville in late June (where she finished as high as fifth in her own grade), Brockhaus was practicing for at least 30 minutes every day.

“She’s very good at routine,” Hamann said. “Some kids, when you’re first starting, you’ll just go at it. They’re not really going through the steps. She has a good routine and goes through all the steps.”

Whether at practice or in a tournament, Brockhaus will have her Genesis Compound Bow with her (she actually has two bows she won from state).

“There’s no sights on it,” she said. “So you just have to use the tip of your arrow to find your aim point.”



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Nebraska Game and Parks is proud to announce the 17th Annual Missouri River Outdoor Expo is scheduled for Sept. 17 & 18 at Ponca State Park in Ponca, NE. The Missouri River Outdoor Expo is an opportunity for people of all ages to connect with the outdoors through hands-on activities, educational exhibits, vendor displays and featured entertainment. With over 100 hands-on activities, there is something for everyone; shooting sports, fishing, kayaking, rock climbing, ropes obstacle course, outdoor cooking, logrolling, etc. Some of the entertainers lined up include; DockDogs Aquatic Competitions, International Regalia – Live Raptors, Axe Women Loggers of Maine, Gould Brothers, Matt Stutzman – Precision Archer, Go Dogs Omaha, and so much more.

For additional details on all facets of the 17th Annual Missouri River Outdoor Expo, please visit [www.MissouriRiverOutdoorExpo.com](http://www.MissouriRiverOutdoorExpo.com) or our Facebook page [MissouriRiverOutdoorExpo](https://www.facebook.com/moriverexpo)

The Missouri River Outdoor Expo is the only outdoor expo in the Midwest. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and over 900 volunteers all activities are free, you just need a state park vehicle permit. A daily vehicle permit for Nebraska licensed vehicle runs \$6, and a daily vehicle permit for out-of-state licensed vehicle is \$12. So if you have six people in a Nebraska licensed vehicle that equals \$1 per person. The 17th Annual Missouri River Outdoor Expo, September 17th & 18th, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm at Ponca State Park. Hope to see you there.

For more info about the 17th annual Missouri River Outdoor Expo  
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# THE BIG BOUNCE

*Trampolines aren't exactly encouraged by insurance companies*

*Text by Mason Dockter | Photographs by Tim Hynds*

**SIOUX CITY** — Children love trampolines and swimming pools with slides and diving boards. Homeowners' insurance carriers typically do not.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 22**



Beth Nelson said having the trampoline have “been a godsend” as far as giving her grandchildren opportunities for outdoor play.

A number of insurance carriers won’t cover homes that have trampolines or pools at all. Or they’ll offer a policy on the property, but with an exclusion endorsement, which relieves the company of exposure to trampoline- or pool-related injuries, leaving the homeowners entirely on the hook.

Others might be willing to underwrite trampolines and pools, but with strings attached, and higher premiums due to the liability exposure.

“Usually what happens is, if it’s a brand-new account we’re writing, and you have a trampoline and/or swimming pool, that will make a difference which carriers we can write. Most will want a privacy fence with lockable gates, and that’s to protect from average persons walking by, or kids in the neighborhood, just coming and jumping in the pool, or getting on the trampoline,” said Tim McClintock, president of McClintock Insurance in Sioux City.

Insurance companies tend to be particular about these things. Chain-link fences do not qualify as “privacy fences,” because it’s rather easy for a passerby to see the enticing trampoline that’s just beyond the fence. The fence has to obscure whatever is behind it — a wood fence could suffice, if it’s tall enough and has a locked gate. Privacy fences are also often a requirement for

trampoline owners under many city codes.

Insurers are sometimes more lenient with trampolines situated on acreages out in the country, due to the fact that wayward children are less likely to wander over and injure themselves. Trampolines with nets around them can also be viewed more favorably, and pools without diving boards or slides might not be as much an impasse.

For insurers, pools and (especially) trampolines represent an “attractive nuisance” — meaning they have a reputation for attracting children and then injuring them. According to American Family Insurance, “most insurance companies do not cover trampolines because they consider them too costly due to liability risks.”

(As an aside, the legal concept of “attractive nuisance” was first applied in the U.S. in the 1873 Supreme Court case of *Sioux City & Pacific Railroad Co. v. Stout*, which determined that the Sioux City & Pacific Railroad was liable after a child was injured while playing on railroad property in Nebraska. The term “attractive nuisance” was not yet in use, but the concept was essentially the same; the term first appeared in another court case a few years later.)

The skittishness of insurance compa-

nies toward trampolines and pools stems entirely from the actuarial risk that a user will require costly medical care after an injury. Youthful exuberance can raise the stakes beyond an insurer’s wildest nightmares.

“When you see like the TikTok videos, ‘Hey let’s try this challenge’ and they run off the garage roof, onto the trampoline, into the pool, and the pool’s only four foot, there’s a lot of chances for injury that way. Especially if they overshoot the pool. So that can be a disaster,” McClintock said.

And health insurance companies increasingly don’t want to pay a bill that could be another entity’s responsibility — if, say, an injury occurred in a way that would make it a home insurance carrier’s liability.

“That’s what we’ve seen happening more and more, not only with homeowners’, property issues, car insurance, and everything else,” McClintock said.

“The health insurance carrier comes back and goes, ‘Oh, this was an accident. We want this company to pay for it, and reimburse us,’” he added.

Installing a pool or trampoline without telling the insurance company is a poor idea. It can result in a cancelled insurance policy, even before the term is up, due to misrepresentation at the time the policy was written.

Insurance carriers don’t joke around about this type of thing, McClintock said.



Tim McClintock

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 22**



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Some of them use Google Earth and even drones to monitor for the existence of attractive nuisances on properties they insure.

“There are existing accounts, where if they add a trampoline or a pool, and they don’t tell their agent, they’ll get one loss — say an injury — and then the company will not renew, because they don’t like those exposures,” he said. “So if the renewal is coming up, or they could cancel mid-term due to increase in hazard.”

Homeowners who take on the liability themselves (the aforementioned exclusion endorsement) may end up regretting that decision. You can’t get blood out of a turnip, but that probably won’t stop the plaintiff from trying after their child suffers a trampoline-induced fracture.

“Usually what ends up happening is, if it’s a medical bill high enough, and they don’t have the coverage, the family that has the property that has had the injury occur on the property, has to declare bankruptcy,” McClintock said.

McClintock is no stranger to trampoline and pool horror stories. “Diving boards where they’ve dove in and hurt themselves — we’ve had one where they broke their neck. That was a major lawsuit. The company paid out for it, and then set up to not offer renewal again, unless they took the diving board out.”

“If somebody gets hurt, the injury

could be substantial. So it can be a broken arm, we’ve had one where the kid’s

teeth got knocked out because he got them caught in the (trampoline) spring,” he said.

It wasn’t always this way. Decades ago, McClintock said, insurance carriers were somewhat less nervous about trampolines and pools. Things were different then.

“(In the past), lawsuits weren’t as prevalent as they are now,” he said. “Medical costs, medical bills are astronomical today compared to what they were then. You broke your arm, they’d set it in a cast, it might be \$200, \$300 back then. Now, you’re talking: ‘Well, we’re going to do

X-rays, we might have to have a plastic surgeon involved, how much injury are we talking about, oh gosh, you’ve got to go through therapy to get your arm strength back up.’ Back then it was, put it in a cast, you’re done.”

Nobody ever thinks it’s going to happen to them — a person likely wouldn’t buy a trampoline or a pool with a diving board if they saw it as a liability and a headache waiting to happen.

“Everybody’s your friend, your buddy and your pal when it comes time to being on the trampoline, but when somebody gets hurt, then they look at you like a bank account,” McClintock said. “All these bills are going to be taken care of by you, not us, even though it’s our kid, or us, jumping on the stuff or swimming in the pool.”



Grayson Nelson, 5, smiles at the entrance to a trampoline.

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Max Bower of Spirit Lake competes in a sport stacking event.

# MASTER STACKER

*How a Spirit Lake, Iowa kid became a world class athlete*

Text by Earl Horlyk | Photographs courtesy of Max Bower

A soon-to-be music education sophomore, Max Bower looks no different than any other 19-year-old at the University of Nebraska.

But the Spirit Lake, Iowa, native has a special talent that makes him an elite, world-class athlete.

Current, Bower is ranked 52nd in the



Max Bower of Spirit Lake holds a trophy he won for competitive sport stacking. Bower is a member of Team USA in the World Sport Stacking Association.

nation and 190th in the world when it comes to competitive sport stacking, according to the World Sports Stacking Association (WSSA).

“When I was younger, I took competition much more seriously,” he said. “In college, it is more of a conversation starter.”

### FAST TRACKING A STACKING SPORT

So, what the heck is sport stacking?

Also known as cup stacking or speed stacking, it involves stacking 9 or 12 cups in a predetermined sequence as quickly as possible.

Legend has it that Wayne Godinet invented the sport while working at the Boys & Girls Club, of Oceanside, California, in 1981.

After the kids he was working with grew tired of playing traditional sports, Godinet took paper cups, asking the kids to stack them. Noticing how much the children enjoyed the activity, he acquired plastic cups for his club.

The industrious Godinet eventually founded a company that manufactured specifically modified cups and began hosting a competitive tournament that caught the attention of “The Tonight Show’s” Johnny Carson.

Bob Fox, a Colorado-based physical education teacher was watching the



Max Bower races to stack cups quickly. Now in college, he says he doesn’t have time to compete as readily as he once did.

Carson show and, soon, introduced it to his own students. Like Godinet’s kids, Fox discovered students loved stacking cups.

Fox subsequently founded the World Sport Stacking Association, an official worldwide governing board promoting the activity, in 2005.

### DEBUT OF A STACKING MASTER

Bower was 6 years old when he was introduced to stacking at gym teacher Tim O’Hagan’s class at Spirit Lake Elementary School.

“I loved it,” he said. “As soon as I got home for school, I pulled out all of the drinking cups from our kitchen cupboard and started stacking them.”

Bower’s parents Lori and George Bower saw how much he enjoyed the quirky sport and purchasing a professional set of stacking cups as a Christmas present.

“The more I did it, the faster I became,” Bower said.

O’Hagan took note and approached Lori Bower, also a Spirit Lake Elementary School teacher, to see if her son wanted to compete.

### STACKING UP PLENTY OF WINS

“I entered my first tournament when I was 9,” Bower recalled. “Our family made the trip to Ames. During that tournament, I set a state record for my age group.”

Turns out it wasn’t beginner’s luck.

Bower eventually competed in regional tournaments, Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) Junior Olympics as well as WSSA National Tournaments.

“I really enjoyed going to tournaments because they were like family vacations for us,” he said, remembering trips made to places like Denver and Orlando.

Bower even enjoyed the company of other sport stackers.

“I’ve participated in other sports that are super competitive,” he said. “In sport stacking, nothing is cutthroat. Everybody is pulling for one another.”

### SIDE BENEFITS OF SUPER STACKERS

Perhaps that is because sport stackers know how beneficial the activity can be.

Proponents say stacking cups will help a person’s dexterity and hand-eye cooperation.

More significant are studies that show sport stacking can improve other comprehension skills for students.

Bower said he knows about the studies but insists his success can be pinpointed to muscle memory.

“If you do something often enough, you become better at it,” he said modestly.

But it must be more than that for Bower, who is also a gifted athlete and singer.

### NO SLACKING FROM STACKING

“I think stacking gave me the confidence to try other things,” he said. “Sport stacking is a pretty obscure sport to begin with. Knowing that I have a national and world ranking is both surreal and gratifying.”

Plus it still sets him apart as a college student.

“I love sport stacking,” Bower said. “Unfortunately, I don’t have time to do it very often.”

Although he sometimes has the urge to start stacking again.

“It’s more of a party trick at school,” Bower said with a laugh. “I’m still pretty fast.”

# SUMMER HOME IMPROVEMENT GUIDE

## 3 Questions to Determine Before Renovating Your Home

A do-it-yourself mentality has taken hold in millions of households across the globe. Popular television channels like HGTV and DIY Network as well as accessible home improvement content on apps like YouTube has inspired many homeowners to tackle renovation projects around their homes. Taking such initiative is admirable, though it also can prove costly if homeowners end up biting off more than they can chew. Home improvement videos and television shows have a tendency to oversimplify renovation projects, potentially giving homeowners a false sense of confidence in their DIY abilities. A concerted effort on the part of homeowners to determine if it's best to renovate on their own or hire a professional should always be the first step of any renovation project. No two homeowners are the same, but the following three questions can help homeowners determine if DIY is their best option.

### 1. Can I afford to DIY?

Professional home improvement projects are costly for a variety of reasons. Materials can be costly, but so are the tools and labor necessary to do the job right. Homeowners may not have the tools necessary to complete complicated projects. Specialty tools can be expensive to purchase or even rent, and the cost of acquiring such tools should be included in any DIY project cost estimates. Labor also factors heavily into professional projects, and for good reason. Talented contractors have unique skills that have been developed and perfected over many years. Those skills can ensure projects are completed quickly and correctly.

### 2. Do I have the time?

Homeowners must determine how much time they have to complete a project before deciding to do it themselves. No one wants to spend months staring at an unfinished renovation project. Homeowners who are already pressed for time may not be able to complete projects in a timely fashion, which can make homes less comfortable and even less safe.

### 3. Can I pull this off?

DIY projects can instill homeowners with a sense of pride in their homes, but it's imperative that homeowners considering the DIY option conduct an honest assessment of their skills. A lack of renovation experience does not necessarily mean a homeowner cannot successfully complete a DIY project. But in such instances, it may be best to start with small, straightforward projects and then gradually move up to bigger, more complicated projects as skills are fine tuned. Television shows and online tutorials can make renovations appear easier than they actually are. Homeowners considering DIY renovations can ask themselves a handful of questions to determine if they're ready for the challenge of renovating their homes on their own.



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# SUMMER HOME IMPROVEMENT GUIDE

## Wood Floor Installation Dos and Don'ts

Jaw-dropping features can sell a home in a heartbeat. A penthouse apartment with floor-to-ceiling windows and a panoramic view of a city skyline likely won't prove a hard sell, nor will a home with an infinity pool overlooking a landscape of rolling hills. As awe-inspiring as such features can be, some more subtle components, such as authentic hardwood floors, also can do much to make a home more appealing to prospective buyers.

Hardwood flooring is a sought-after commodity. Data from the National Association of Realtors indicates that 54 percent of home buyers are willing to pay more for hardwood floors. In fact, NAR figures indicate that 28 percent of buyers between the ages of 35 and 54 consider hardwood floors "very important" when looking for a home. Homeowners, who are considering selling their homes, or those who simply want to upgrade their existing flooring, may want to consider installing hardwood flooring. Though it's a project best left to professionals, hardwood flooring can be installed by skilled DIY'ers. In such instances, homeowners may want to keep these dos and don'ts in mind.

DO hire a professional if you have limited or no DIY flooring experience. Hardwood flooring installation is not generally a project for novice DIY'ers. Hardwood flooring projects may present some common challenges, but no two homes are the same. So unless they have prior experience installing floors in multiple rooms or homes, homeowners may save themselves time, trouble and a significant amount of money hiring a professional to do the job.

DO NOT ignore the subfloor. New hardwoods won't erase the problem of subfloors in poor condition. According to the home renovation

experts at BobVila.com, squeaky floors could be an indication that the subfloor has begun to warp or twist. Sinking floors are another indicator of deteriorating subfloors. Subfloors should be somewhat level before new hardwoods are installed, so DIY'ers should inspect and address subfloor issues before installing new flooring.

DO expose wood flooring to the elements in your home prior to installation. The home improvement resource BuildDirect recommends acclimating hardwoods to the space where they will be installed. Skipping this important step could result in gaps during the winter and cupping over the summer. To acclimate hardwoods, open the boxes and spread them out for about a week while running the air conditioner or heater at normal levels. When storing hardwoods prior to installation, avoid keeping them in potentially moist areas like a basement.

DO NOT skimp on tools. A DIY hardwood flooring installation might be less expensive than hiring a professional, but homeowners should resist any temptation to increase those savings further by purchasing less costly tools or fewer tools than is necessary to complete the job. Build Direct notes that DIY'ers will need at least a miter saw, table saw, cleat-nailer or stapler, finish nailer, compressor, jamb saw, chalk line, nail set, and tape measurer when installing hardwood floors. Purchase all necessary tools and read product reviews to ensure each tool is up to the task.

Wood floors can be awe-inspiring. Some homeowners can install such flooring on their own, and the project can be much easier if they learn as much about installation as possible prior to beginning the project.

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**12PM** MUSEUM EXHIBIT OPENING  
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**The story of the Iowa Rock 'n Roll Music Association** has very humble and simple beginnings. John Senn, who was one of the co-founders of Iowa Great Lakes Recording Company (IGL Records) with studios in Milford, IA, wanted to host a 30th Anniversary reunion concert for IGL Studio artists. The concert was slated for September 1996. John contacted his friend, Tom Tourville, and asked for assistance creating the event. Together, they reached out to many musicians and groups that recorded at the IGL Studios. Close to seventy musicians volunteered to attend, which included complete reunions for bands such as Dee Jay & The Runaways, The Upson Downs, The Canoise and The Velaires. John put together the sound and lights, and Tom contacted Arnolds Park Amusement Park to see if they could host the reunion event. His request resulted in Arnolds Park owner Chuck Long deciding to construct a new metal concert venue at the park. This act would ensure a stated venue for the IGL Studios Concert. The original Roof Garden was demolished in 1987, making the

new venue necessary. Construction did not move fast enough for the concert timing, so the event was held on a concrete slab with no roof yet on the building. The event was a smashing success, with over 800 in attendance.

The following morning, John Senn and Tom Tourville met at the Senn home to review the past night's concert and conduct a post-show review. When Senn and Tourville completed the review, the question was, "What can we do next?" The plan was simple, form a statewide non-profit association. The purpose is to recognize and honor Iowa-based musicians, music industry support partners, and regional/national musicians who strongly impacted Iowa rock music. This association would be called **the Iowa Rock 'n Roll Music Association** and would induct a Hall of Fame each year. Senn and Tourville started recruiting volunteer board members and implementing plans for the first-ever Iowa Rock 'n Roll Music Association Labor Day Weekend Spectacular.

The first class of inductees were

nominated and announced to the public. Tom Alan Bethke, a popular DJ in Fairmont, MN and very popular in the Lakes area during the '80s, was asked to be one of the presenters. Tom was honored to present the first plaque to Dale and the Devonaire, and all the other Class of 1997 Inductees.

2022 is here, and we will have the honor and pleasure of inducting our Twenty-Fifth Hall of Fame Class on September 4. With this class, 540 entities will have been honored, and we will be celebrating our third full season in our state-of-the-art Museum in Arnolds Park and looking forward to the future. The Labor Day Weekend Concert Spectacular will be held in the third, very modern Roof Garden Ballroom. Our mission is to "Celebrate the Legacy and Inspire the Future of Rock Music in Iowa". As we Honor the Legacy each year, we will look at ways to Inspire the Future. We will be turning more and more to educational programs, opportunities for musicians, expanding to new venues, and growing our reach statewide.

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Axe to Grind Store lead Ashley Mondor throws an axe at the store. Axe to Grind opened in 2019 as a urban ax-throwing venue open to people of all ages.

# FIRE AWAY

## *Summertime hatchet throwing can be a relaxing indoor activity*

Text and Photographs by *Caitlin Yamada*

SIoux CITY — Axe — or hatchet — throwing is a unique sport that has been steadily growing since the early 2000s.

It is well known as a way to relieve stress, by taking one's anger out by throwing a sharp object.

In Sioux City, there are two different axe-throwing places, offering similar experiences: Woody's Axe Throwing, 1227 Fourth St. and Axe to Grind, 2101 Hamilton Blvd.

Axe to Grind opened in 2019 as an urban axe-throwing venue open to people of all ages. Store lead Ashley Mondor has been with the business since it opened.

She knew someone who was a professional axe thrower and told her about the position. Mondor was a para-educator and needed a break. She wanted a job that was fast-paced and easy-going.

Mondor said the place instantly felt like home.

"We have people in their 80s or 90s

come in to throw and we have kids that love to come and throw," she said.

People axe throw for a variety of reasons. Whether it's a fun night out with friends or family, a hobby or a way to relieve stress, Mondor says it is an activity anyone can learn.

"You walk through these doors, and you know you're safe and you can relax," she said. "We try to make it fun, we make it so you always have somebody to talk to."

The story has a variety of regulars and first-timers each week, but Mondor said many of the new people become regulars. She said if someone throws once, a majority of the time they become hooked.

Some of the urban axe throwing locations are in bars. Axe to Grind offers about 70 different kinds of canned beers as well as soda and tea. She said people can have the bar feeling, while still being

in a family-oriented location.

Going axe throwing for the first time can be intimidating for people, she said. When someone walks in, she said they are immediately greeted and after signing a few forms, they are walked through a safety briefing. The briefing teaches newcomers the safety rules as well as a few different ways to throw.

Mondor said there are three main ways to throw an axe. The first way is with both hands called the batter's grip. The thrower puts their dominant hand on the bottom of the handle and the non-dominant on top.

The second throw is one-handed. Mondor recommends throwers put their pinkie on the bottom of the axe. She also said to avoid throwing it like swinging a baseball and swinging across the body.

"You need to make sure you're staying nice and straight," she said.

The third way to throw is called the pistol grip. The thrower puts their dominant hand on the bottom, line up both thumbs and grip together.

For beginners, she recommends throwing with two hands. To begin, she said that they instruct people to stick out their guts as they pull their arms back behind their heads. As they prepare to throw, they should lean forward and stick their butt out, she said.

Mondor does not encourage trick throwing, because it can be dangerous.

Axe to Grind also has mobile axe



Axe to Grind Store lead Ashley Mondor says safety comes first, that's why employees make sure visitors are fully versed in the proper ways of throwing an axe.

throwing and will be available to attend events and provide axe throwing opportunities. Mondor said oftentimes that's an easier way for people to become interested in the activity, and less intimidating than going to the physical location.

There is a target on the wood boards consisting of four rings and a bullseye in the center, while the two dots in the outer ring have a high risk and are known as kill shots. The traditional game of axe

throwing involves 10 throws, followed by a tiebreaker. The person with the highest number of points wins.

There are also a variety of other games people can play when axe throwing. The sport has its versions of Yahtzee and Cricket, as well as other games like Landmines, Odd Man Out, Called Shots, Tug of War and Cornhole Axe Style. Instructions can be provided for these games.

Axe throwing started to become popular in North America in the early 2000s. Backyard Axe Throwing League claims to be the first in the world to offer an urban venue for indoor axe throwing in 2006 and is a founding member of the International Axe Throwing Federation.

Throwing axes date back to prehistoric times as a weapon. There is no definite date or time when axe throwing became a recreational activity, but legend states the first axe-throwing competitions were amongst Celtic tribes or frontiersmen in North America. Modern sport axe throwing is said to have started in Europe around 2001.

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# BEST SUMMER FUN? IT'S A TOSS UP

*Cornhole gains in popularity in Siouxland*

Text and Photographs by Caitlin Yamada

SIoux CITY—Cornhole is commonly known for being a popular backyard or tailgating game, but in recent years, it has gained popularity in the competitive sphere.

Competitive cornhole — or bag toss depending on who you ask — has been growing throughout Siouxland, with both private and city-sponsored leagues.

Each week, a men's and a women's cornhole league meets at The Blue Ribbon Tap.

Many of those who participate started because it sounded like a fun way to get out of the house and meet new people.

Jonathan Tripp is one of the founding members of the Sioux City Baggerz league. His friend started it and invited him around the summer of 2019, but he eventually took over.

Tripp said cornhole is like a family. He said everyone is welcoming and willing to teach others how to play.

"It's a really easy game to get down," he said.

Tripp brought the idea of starting a league to Cody Worden, owner of the

Blue Ribbon Tap four or five years ago. Worden said it started a way for people to have a night away, to drink, play and relax.

"We all weren't very good at it," he said.

It naturally got more competitive. They started tournaments and leagues and it became what it is now.

Josh Montagne and Zach Bainbridge played softball together, but Montagne said he got tired of getting hurt. The pair played in a random tournament three years ago and said "this is so much fun and you're not going to hurt yourself."

What started as a fun activity became more competitive, leading the pair to attend national competitions.

Bainbridge said his favorite part is the atmosphere. He said he has met many friends and always has a good time.

Rachel Bagels and Amanda Jordan are partners in the women's league. Their friend Kayla Worden is one of the owners of The Blue Ribbon Tap and wanted the pair to join.

"We were kind of reluctant at first,"

Bagels said. "We're like the least competitive people."

In their first season, they were able to attend the championship and won every game ending in the first place. This year, they're in second place for the season.

Val Peterson and Bonnie Kleinhesselink are in first place in the Blue Ribbon league. They started playing a year and a half ago at The Marquee. Kleinhesselink said when they first started, they couldn't even hit the board, but they've gotten better.

Jordan said the best part of women's league is it is not as competitive as co-ed leagues and they can make new friendships.

"It's a lot harder to connect when you get older, so the set day to hang out with all of your girls is a really fun experience," Bagels said.

Bagels agreed. "We can stand next to somebody we haven't really played before and just joke around."

Kleinhesselink said she loves the competition, and everyone is relaxed and fun.



Cody Worden, left, says it's easy to learn cornhole, one of the fastest growing recreational games in the region.



Kayla Worden makes sure the bag gets the right amount of lift at Pearl's Wine and Booze.

## EASY TO LEARN

The game of cornhole is simple to learn. In teams of two, players throw four bags each team onto a board 27 feet away. Players stand across from their teammates and beside their competitors.

A bag on the board means one point, and a bag in the hole means three points, but if the player's competitor also gets bags on or in the board, they cancel each other out. The first to 21 points wins.

Around 80 percent of the game is mental and 20 percent is learning how to play, Montagne said.

"People defeat themselves before they even hit the board when they go up against somebody good," he said.

Montagne said people will start shaky, get better, then hit a downward spiral because they were in a mental rut.

Montagne said even though the game is simple to learn, there are a variety of different skills to master. There are different throws, different goals and changes for environmental factors.

"We all start throwing the bag how we do in the backyard, and you end up learning there's a technique to it," he said.

Montagne said the different types of throws all have names and purposes. There is a throw called the penguin shot, for example, that can scoop the bag in front of it to push both in the hole. Bainbridge said some shots are meant to block, or push through a block.

## STRATEGIZING

"It comes down to strategy a lot," Bainbridge said. "If you're going against

somebody that's just really good at just sliding it into the hole every time, that's where a blocker comes in," he said.

Each bag also has two different sides—a smooth side and a sticky side—and they have speed ratings.

"You have to find a bag company that you like the material," Montagne said.

Prices for bags can range from \$60 for four, or \$300 for four. Board sets also range in price with some as low as \$40 and as high as \$500.

## QUICK MASTERY

While it can vary from person to person, Montagne said after around six months of work, someone could be decent at the game and Bainbridge said after a year they could be strongly competing.

Montagne and Bainbridge have attended national competitions and both said it was an amazing experience.

"You will play against people you see on ESPN," Montagne said.

Most of the communication of the leagues and tournaments is through word-of-mouth and Facebook. The Sioux City Baggerz has a public Facebook group that anyone can join to learn about tournaments throughout Siouxland and surrounding communities.

The Blue Ribbon Tap league is \$100 for 12 weeks in a season, with one week of playoffs.

Every Monday, many cornhole competitors meet at The Don's in South Sioux City to compete. Bainbridge said those who attend range from really good, to just starting.

The City of Sioux City also has a league for adults. The next season starts Aug. 2 and runs until Sept. 13 for \$50. Signup is available online.

When asked what they would say to those interested in playing, everyone the Journal spoke to said "do it."

Each recommended going to a Monday night Don's competition or joining the Sioux City Baggerz league. At The Don's there is a \$10 buy-in and it changes from bringing your partner, singles and random doubles.

"Come play with us because we'll pump you up, we get new people all the time," Montagne said.

If someone doesn't know how to play, no problem; every individual said cornhole competitors in Sioux City are more than willing to teach and help a new player along.

Jordan said new players can be intimidated, but Jordan and Bagels said the group is about helping each other.

"If you come and you're nervous, and it's your first time, we're more than willing to give advice. We're just here for fun," Bagels said.

# GOLF SIOUXLAND

## Hit the Links and Tee off this Summer

### Choose the Right Golf Attire

Golf is played by millions of people all over the world. Throughout warm-weather seasons, courses are filled with enthusiasts driving and putting their way through 18 holes. The right equipment is instrumental to successful game play, and golfers also need to pay attention to the clothing they wear. Etiquette and decorum are a significant part of the game of golf, and that includes the clothing golfers wear while traversing the course. While there is no fixed dress code for golf, there are certain guidelines that golfers must follow. These rules and regulations may vary from course to course. Public and municipal courses may have very few rules, while private courses or exclusive golf clubs may have restrictive dress codes. The following are some good rules of thumb when heading to the course.

#### Bottoms

Men are advised to wear long pants made of cotton or polyester. Chinos typically are recommended. According to Golf Week, some clubs will permit men to wear jeans, but many do not. Dress shorts may be allowed if they have a pleated or flat front. Similarly, women also should don long trousers. Capris or dress shorts also may be applicable. Many women opt for golf skirts, which are specially designed and cut on the front or side to enable motion in the golf swing.

#### Shirts

A collared shirt is the preferred attire when golfing. Opt for a polo shirt over a T-shirt. While there are newer mock or crew neck shirts endorsed by some pro golfers, golf courses will not necessarily permit players to wear them. Women also are encouraged to wear polo shirts, though there is more flexibility in their shirt options, including sleeveless varieties. Modest shirts are highly encouraged, especially ones that will not expose the midriff. Men and women are encouraged to tuck in their shirts.

#### Footwear

Sneakers (often referred to as "trainers") tend to be off-limits on many courses. Golf shoes are a sport standard, and should include soft spikes rather than metal spikes, which may be banned on certain courses.

#### Socks

Socks should match one's choice of trousers. Light-colored socks are advised when wearing shorts. Some clubs require socks be a certain length when wearing dress shorts. Above all, socks should complement the clothing.

#### Hats

Golfers can wear baseball-style hats or visors to offer protection from the sun. Straw hats known as "Ben Hogan" caps also may be permitted. Other types of headwear are generally not appropriate. Players should keep in mind that attire that is acceptable on the course may not be suitable to wear inside of the club, including dining spaces or bars. A degree of formality is evident in the game of golf, and that often is reflected in players' attire. Players should confirm dress code with their respective clubs or golf courses before hitting the links.

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# GOLF SIOUXLAND

## Hit the Links and Tee off this Summer

### 6 Ways to Improve Your Putting Skills

Golf requires mastery of a wide array of skills. Many novice players focus on improving skills related to their swings. Yet they shouldn't overlook the importance of improving their short games as well.

- 1. Learn green-reading techniques.** Reading the green involves determining the correct slope and distance. Golfers who take depth-perception tests and continually practice their skills at reading both the distance and the slope can improve their putts.
- 2. Change perspective.** Different putts require different perspectives in order to assess both distance and slope. If the putt is downhill, read it from behind the hole. If the putt is uphill, read it from behind the ball.
- 3. Practice consistent putter travel distance.** While the total length of a putt stroke depends on the length of the putt, many golf instructors recommend consistency with the distance the putter head travels. Keep the same distance on the back stroke as on the forward stroke.
- 4. Focus on an imaginary channel.** When putting, imagine a three- or four-inch channel from the ball to the hole. Rather than staring at the ball, golfers can track their eyes down that imaginary line. Keeping a simpler focus rather than overthinking things can improve putting.
- 5. Keep a steady head.** Instead of following the ball with one's eyes, a golfer should hold the focus on the start of the putt to foster a more steady head.
- 6. Change ball placement.** Try moving to position the ball just forward of the center of the stance. This helps the putter make contact at the right moment to achieve the slight lift needed for a successful putt.



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Staff member Sarah Butcher helps Ayden Smith aim a water gun at Camp High Hopes.

# THERE'S NO 'CAN'T' IN THIS CAMP

*High Hopes offers range  
of activities for campers*

Text by Jared Mcnett | Photographs by Owen Ziliak

Since its founding in 2004, Sioux City's Camp High Hopes has worked to provide a slew of recreational opportunities for kids and adults with diagnosed disabilities.

If campers want to shoot a bow and arrow, they have the chance to do so. Maybe they want to go fishing on a lake? Totally doable. Say someone is interested in climbing a tree for the first time? The option exists.

But it isn't enough to simply provide the options. Staffers at High Hopes also effort to make sure each and every activity is as accessible as possible for campers.

Camp High Hopes Program Director Ashley Ayala refers to the accessibility-minded tweaks to common camp activities as "adaptions" and says they really help to build up the confidence of campers.

"We have the ability to take somebody who may not have the ability to climb

and we put them in a full harness and then we're able to raise them to the point where they're still able to look out and see how high they are," Ayala said. "A lot of our campers miss those opportunities because their entire life they are under the assumption that they just can't."

Josiah Hombs, left, and Spencer Neimann laugh as staff member Eric Rasmussen pulls a cord to drop water on them.



It's those sorts of opportunities that have kept campers such as 17-year-old Pehdyn Lawrey returning again and again. In terms of activities, two of her personal favorites are fishing and archery.

"I've gotten bullseyes almost every summer. I got one on the first week this summer," Lawrey said.

If, for some reason, a camper is unable to use a regular bow on the archery range, Ayala said Camp High Hopes has an "adaptive bow" that lets the user push a button to release an arrow.

"One of our directors from a couple years ago was actually the one (who) created it," she said.

For other adaptations, Ayala said Camp High Hopes staffers will work with people in the community who know a thing or two about how to make something adaptable. "If we have to

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create additional adaption, we can do that through trial and error," she said.

As for the waterfront, Ayala said there are rollers to get canoes in and out of the fully stocked pond if campers can't do it themselves.

"They get super excited they even have the opportunity to fish and we have two lifeguards on staff if ever there is a crisis moment," Ayala said.

Campers who stay over will start their day in one of two cabins Ayala said can hold 40. Days begin there at 7 a.m. and breakfast is served at 8 a.m. If needed, there are hospital beds and bed rails as well as shower chairs on the premises.

"They have full access to everything here," Ayala said.

After breakfast come the day's events: maybe archery for an hour followed by arts and crafts for another hour. In the evening outdoor program, there are lessons on building fires and creating knots. So-called "cabin chats" then help to close out the night.

On particularly hot days, Ayala said staff will keep camp goers occupied with indoor activities or less physically strenuous events such as tie-dyeing and creative dramatics.

The latter can involve participants doing dance moves around a circle while music plays. There will also be scattered pieces of paper with instructions for different maneuvers to try. For a session on Wednesday, June 29, Lawrey said it was the best thing she got to do for the day.

"I like music so I just sang along to it," Lawrey said.

Even though she's only been in the job since February and is still getting to know the area, Ayala said she'd like to add more activities including adaptive axe throwing (maybe this summer still).

"I do have plans to create this program into something that is awesome and adventurous and enjoyable for everybody," Ayala said.

Because of counselors like Ayala, Lawrey, who has also been to a muscular dystrophy camp, has developed such an affinity for High Hopes that she said she'd like to become a counselor one day too.

"I want to be a lead counselor or just a counselor in general. I like to work with the good kids," Lawrey said.

Those kinds of testimonials are a real highlight of Ayala's job. That and witnessing campers' own enjoyment.

"We had a young man catch a 16-inch bass on our lake. We've had a lot of archery bullseyes," Ayala said. "Just seeing their smiles on their faces when they're able to experience something like that."

Ethan Drury aims his water gun at staff member Camden Chandler at Camp High Hopes.



Chancellor Erickson lays on a Slip N' Slide during one of the activities.



Caroline Farrar walks around with a bucket on her head as part of an exercise.

"I do have plans to create this program into something that is awesome and adventurous and enjoyable for everybody."

**ASHLEY AYALA,**  
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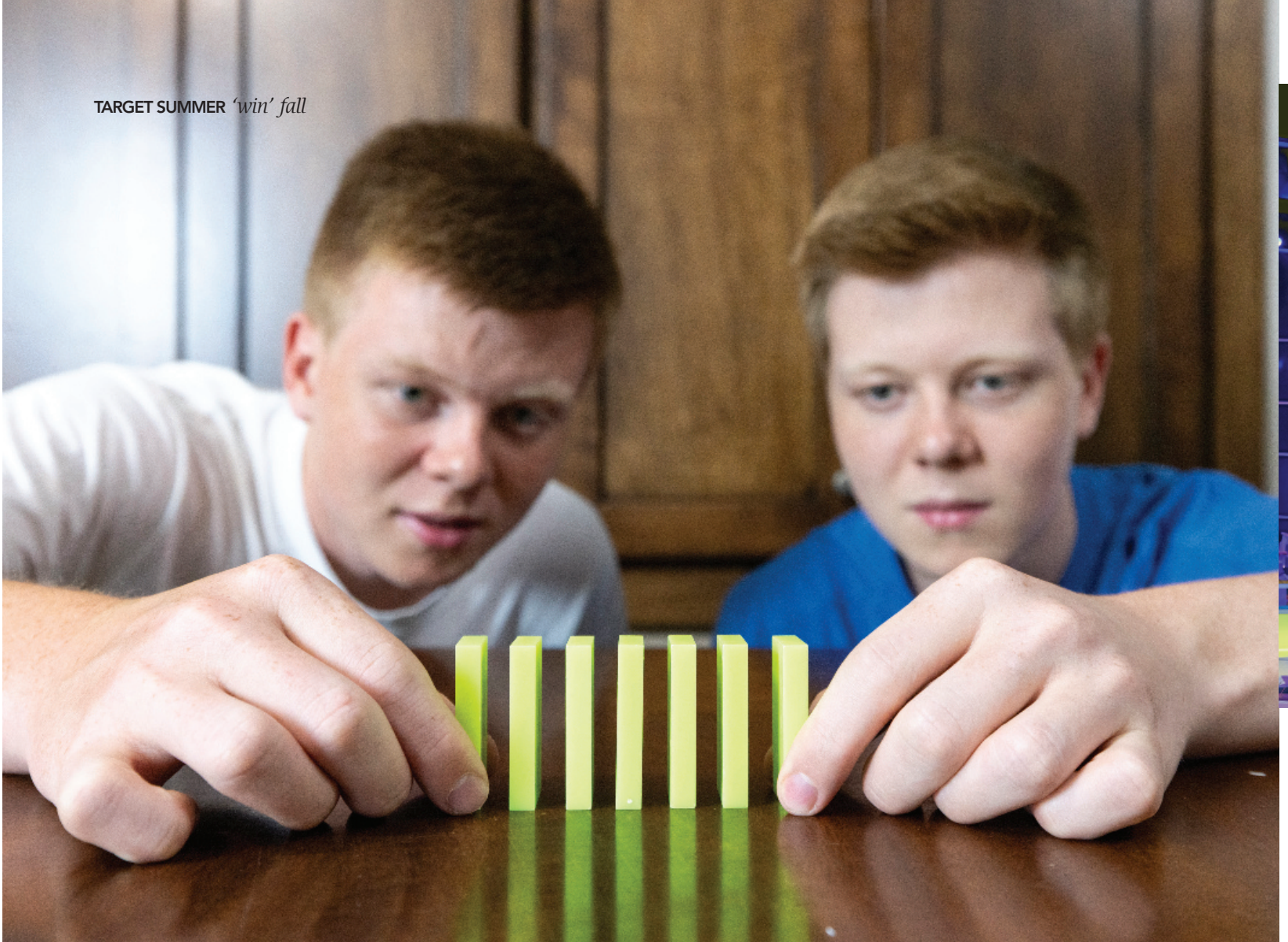
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# Sioux City Journal



JESSE BROTHERS SIOUX CITY JOURNAL

Alex Koops, left, and Derek Koops, right, set up dominoes at their home in Sioux Center, Iowa. The twins became interested in dominoes more than a decade ago.

# TRIUMPH OF THE DOMINERDS

*Sioux Center brothers topple over competition in TV domino-building show*

Text by Earl Horlyk

SIOUX CENTER, Iowa — Sometimes, it's good to be a nerd.

Alex and Derek Koops, along with teammate Lyle Broughton, of Hopkinson, Massachusetts, were named America's first-ever "Domino Masters" in the Fox television series of the same name.

Representing Team Dominerds, the trio competed against 15 other domino-

builders during the weekly series that ended its season on May 11.

For their victory, Alex and Derek, who are 21-year-old twins, split a \$100,000 prize with Broughton.

Which is a pretty good payday for the Koops Brothers, who've been fascinated with domino art for more than a decade.

"Over 10 years ago, we saw a guy by the

name of Kinetic King on (the NBC talent competition) 'America's Got Talent,'" Derek said. "He built all of these crazy contraptions that we thought we're really cool."

Following YouTube videos of the Kinetic King as well as other domino artists, the brothers soon began making elaborate Rube Goldberg-style models that would cause a chain reaction when



FOX

From left, Winners Derek Koops, Lyle Broughton and Alex Koops on "Domino Masters."



RAY MICKSHAW/FOX

Winners Derek Koops, from left, Lyle Broughton and Alex Koops, from Team Dominerds react to the announcement on "Domino Masters."



JESSE BROTHERS SIOUX CITY JOURNAL

Derek Koops, left, and Alex Koops, right, set up dominoes at their home studio in Sioux Center, Iowa.

the dominos fell.

"Our parents encouraged us, plus they knew what to get us as birthday and Christmas presents," Alex said. "We could always use more dominos and, now, we have more than 20,000 pieces."

Over time, the brothers' hobby took over mom and dad's house.

"Luckily, our parents have a second

living room that is the perfect place to set up dominos," Derek said.

Still, the Koops wanted their creations to be seen by the public.

The brothers created a popular Daks-Dominos YouTube page and filmed many of their momentous builds.

"You see, I'm a Dordt University business major and Derek's a digital media

major," Alex explained. "We figured the YouTube channel would attract attention from companies wanting to do business with us."

Not only did DaksDominos bring the Koops a handful of sponsors, it also attracted the attention of producers of "Domino Masters" in 2020.

Due to signing a confidentially contract, the brothers had to keep their involvement in the series a complete secret.

"We were cast on the show in 2020, taped our episodes in 2021, and couldn't tell anyone the outcome until the final show aired in May," Derek said. "That's a long time to keep something this big a secret."

It's been a few months since Team Dominerds emerged as "Domino Masters" big winners and Alex still can't wrap his mind around their victory.

"Feels really good to be the first-ever 'Domino Masters' but it hasn't changed our lives," he explained.

Derek said the brothers haven't received their cut of the \$100,000 prize yet.

"When we do, we won't go crazy and buy expensive cars or anything like that," he said. "We'll use the money to pay off some of college debt and, maybe, spend a little of it on ourselves."

Who knows, the brothers may use a portion of their prize money on more dominos?

"Well, we can always use more dominos," Alex said.

# SLIDING INTO SUMMER

*Cone Park's new tubing run has fans singing its praises*

Text by Dolly A. Butz | Photographs by Jesse Brothers

SIOUX CITY — Seth Hodgins described Cone Park's new summer tubing track as "the next best thing since sliced bread."

"I see all the kids. They're just having a bunch of fun. They like it," said the University of South Dakota freshman, who works at the Sioux City park. "It's new. It's just awesome!"

Two lanes of plastic-type track on Cone Park's main hill opened to the public on June 18.

The addition of summer tubing makes the park, 3800 Line Drive, a year-round destination for family fun. The inaugural summer tubing season is currently slated to run until Sept. 5, although Sioux City Recreation Supervisor John Byrnes said city staff are looking at potentially extending the season into October.

There is a small amount of mist on the track on hot summer days, but, otherwise, the lanes use no water.

"We have a bit of mist on the hill, so you're not going to get too soaked," said Tyler Wagner, a recent graduate of Morningside University who works as a manager at the park. "It's just a nice refresher."

The surface, which acts like snow, is installed at the park annually on the hill at the beginning of the summer season and removed before the end of the year to make way for snow tubing. Tubers use the lift in summer and winter to get up to the top of the hill during 2 1/2-hour sessions.

"It's basically like a big treadmill," Wagner said of the lift. "It takes you all the way up, so you don't have to walk the whole way."

## TICKETS

Anyone at least 42-inches tall, can tube on the hill, according to Wagner.

He said the best time to visit Cone Park is the last session on a Friday or Saturday.

"We have cosmic lights that turn on. They're kind of like these rainbow lights that light up the whole hill. It makes it just a little bit more fun," he said.

It's best to purchase tickets ahead of time at [coneparksiouxcity.com](http://coneparksiouxcity.com) or by call-



Tyler Schlotman, right, Seth Hodgins, center, and Tyler Wagner, left, prepare to slide down the hill at Cone Park in Sioux City.

ing 712-279-6126.

However, Wagner said walk-ins might be accepted, depending on the day. Eighty tubers can be accommodated per session. Tickets are \$10 per person for Friday, Saturday and Sunday sessions, and \$7 for Thursday and Sunday night sessions.

## GEAR

Closed-toed shoes are required, so leave your flip-flops and sandals at home. Wagner doesn't like to have to send people home for not wearing the proper footwear.

"If you were wearing sandals, it's just not safe, if you drag your feet on it or anything," he said of the track.

Wagner said you don't need to wear a bathing suit, either. You'll feel a bit of mist spraying you on a hot day, but he assured it's just to refresh you, rather than soak you.

"A lot of people have been confused and thought it was like a waterslide thing, just because this is the first summer we've been open. There's a bit of mist that speeds it up a little bit, but you're not getting soaked or anything," he said.

## GOING DOWN THE HILL

Wagner said tubers aren't allowed to on lie on their stomachs and go down the hill headfirst. However, they can spin as much as they'd like as they make their descent.

"There's always an attendant at the top if you want them to push you, spin you. If you go backwards, they'll help you up there and you'll go down the hill," he said.

Unlike winter tubing, Wagner said summer tubing allows for tubers to go down in "trains" of two or three people.

"You can connect your tube to the person in front of you and maybe someone behind you, as well, and you can all three go at the same time. It's a lot of fun," he said.

## LODGE

When park-goers need a break from the hill, they can cool off in the splashpad, which is open daily from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., or in the air-conditioned day lodge.

"We've got a splashpad. It's for the kids," Hodgins said. "There's a nice fire pit over there. You can get your family and just hang out around the fire. We've also got the inside lodge."

# DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT CAMPING

I saw plenty of photos over the July 4 holiday of folks camping. Charcuteries were big this year (we used to call them “meat and cheese trays”) and cookouts seemed mandatory. Folks swam, kids fished, adults drank.

It looked like fun – with one exception: I can’t stand camping.

Oh, sure, I’ve seen the Kardashians glamping in some remote place and I’m sure that’s do-able. But the “pitch a tent and start a fire” kind of camping doesn’t appeal to me in the least. I’ve tried it several times without positive results.

I’ve fallen like the woman on the Life Alert commercials. I’ve been devoured by mosquitoes. I’ve had close encounters with snakes on the way to the, um, toilet. No thank you.

As a child, I was constantly urged to go camp. My parents thought church camp, music camp, you-name-it camp would be good for me.

I begged them not to send me. If they needed to get me to behave, they just threatened a week in camp. For my sister, it was prison.

She, by the way, WORKED at a summer camp and thought it was the best thing ever. Even if they handed out winning Powerball tickets, I don’t think I

could get that enthused.

For starters, I can’t swim. I’m also not good with unbearable heat or three days of rain. I can plunk with the best of them but when folks start talking about hiking, cooking on a camp stove, or “roughing it,” I’m out.

Given the choice between staying outside with hungry bears or lounging by the pool at a Holiday Inn, you know what you’d choose. I’m not so far off on this one.

And yet, my parents insisted.

For years, we’d pack a cooler with the express purpose of picnicking along the way. We’d crack that thing once or twice, then start looking for a place that served pie. Before the potato salad even turned, we were out of the picnic business and onto other things.

We tried the tenting concept as well but, as dad would say, “The #\$\$@ thing won’t stay up.” While he and mom were willing to stay in sleeping bags outside the remains of the tent, my sister and I shared the car.

To sate our fishing desires, we went to a place in the Black Hills called Trout Haven. You dropped a line in a pool of water and, in seconds, you had a fish on the hook. Efficient. Clean. Quick. (Of course,

when dad discovered he had to pay for each fish caught AND someone to cook them, he was less than sold. The meal was more expensive than one at a four-star restaurant. And I don’t like fish.)

Hiking never agreed with mom. She never had appropriate shoes for a three-hour walk up a hill and, if there wasn’t a thermos of coffee, she really wasn’t interested. Often, she’d “watch the car” while the three of us made like Von Trapps.

By Day Three, we’d scour motel signs just to find a place to light. Never mind that Norman Bates ran the thing. If it had running water and a nearby restaurant, we were in.

Over the years, we stayed in places that had fistfights right out our front door and gunshots at the pool. No problem. As long as you turned up the air conditioning and the TV, you didn’t hear a thing.

In my vacation world, there’s no set-up, no tear-down, no cooking, no dousing fires, no scary stories around a campfire, no search for ticks.

And if you really feel like you need to have S’mores, you can always make them at a convenience store. Just make sure mom has a new cigarette lighter.







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