



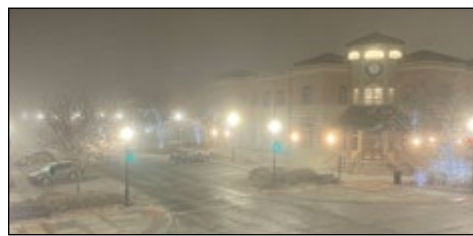
New police officers

PAGE 2



Charter Oak Cemetery

PAGE 3



Winter weather

PAGE 7



Little Hawks fundraiser

PAGE 10

Local News
Local Journalists
Local Ownership

The Denison Free Press

FREE
TAKE ONE!

Vol. 1 | No. 27

SERVING DENISON & CRAWFORD COUNTY, IOWA

January 04, 2024

Denison City Council considers future operation of conference center

Lessee given notice to vacate; arrangement made to staff events

BY GORDON WOLF

City of Denison staff and members of the Boulders Conference Center Commission are working on the operation of the conference center going forward now that the lessee has been given a notice to vacate.

City Manager Jessica Garcia informed the city council on Tuesday that the city had given Chris Polley and his company, WCP LLC, a notice to vacate for non-payment of rent, and at the same time representatives from the Majestic Hills Golf Course Board had given Polley a notice to vacate the

BOULDERS, PAGE 7

City council agrees to three-way split of \$250,000 pledge

Supervisors wary of budget restrictions

BY GORDON WOLF AND DAN MUNDT

Following a lengthy discourse on Tuesday night, the Denison City Council agreed to participate in a three-way split of a \$250,000 pledge to the Crawford County Wellness Center project.

The incentive for the three-way split was offered by the Denison Municipal Utilities (DMU) Board at a special meeting December 21. The DMU Board had been asked to provide an additional \$500,000 pledge to the wellness center project. The board voted to pledge \$250,000 and offered to share in a third of an additional \$250,000 if the city and the county would also pay a third.

The Crawford County Board of Supervisors discussed the incentive offer on Tuesday morning; no decision was made.

WELLNESS, PAGE 5



Two new book clubs at Norelius Library

BY DAN MUNDT

The Norelius Community Library has launched two new book clubs; the first two books have been chosen and the initial gatherings of club members will take place in the next month.

"The staff here was thinking about how we could expand our programming at the library and we came up with two new book clubs – one fiction and one true crime/true mystery book club," said Programming Librarian Michelle Hoffman.

"Our new fiction book club is called the Library Book Club because it will center around books about books and libraries."

Hoffman will lead the club.

The first book for the fiction club is "The Bookbinder" by Pip Williams.

"I'm reading it right now and I'm loving it. I actually bought my own copy because we hadn't gotten in our

BOOKS, PAGE 4

Retro modern Courthouse restroom remodel complete

BY DAN MUNDT

A four-month project to update the restrooms on the ground floor of the Crawford County Courthouse was completed in mid-December.

"Probably the greatest need (for the remodeling project) was for disability accessibility and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance," said Crawford County Auditor Terri Martens.

The old courthouse bathrooms consisted of two large rooms with stalls; the rooms were separated by a long corridor leading to the west exit on the ground floor.

After completion of the project, that corridor now has six doors that lead to six individual restrooms.

Three are labeled for women, two are for men and one is a family unit with a diaper changing station.



PHOTO BY AMY PIEPER

The restrooms on the ground floor of the Crawford County Courthouse have been completely remodeled to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and to address other issues.

All six rooms feature a toilet; there are no urinals.

If a decision is made to change the restrooms to unisex or a nondescript label, the only change would be to the signs, Martens said.

Three existing courthouse doors were reused for the project to help the

new restrooms blend into the original architecture of the building.

One door each from the old women's and men's rooms and a third door found in the courthouse basement were used.

The styles of the toilets and other

RESTROOMS, PAGE 8



After enduring cold temperatures for the first few weeks of their trip south, the Blakleys were relieved by the summer-like temperatures of Mobile, Alabama.

The Great Loop Blakleys head south on the water

BY DAN MUNDT

Part 2 of 2

Evan and Meriah Blakley sold their house in Denison at the end of November and headed for Tennessee with their 25-foot boat, Novella.

On December 2, they cast off from Pickwick Landing, Tennessee, to begin their 6,000-mile voyage on "The Great Loop," which will take them the

Gulf of Mexico, around Florida, up the East Coast, through the Great Lakes and Canadian Heritage Canals, and back into the Midwest.

The journey does not include a lot of time on open water far from land.

"Typically, you are in a river, you are in the Intracoastal Waterway, you're in a bay," Evan said.

"There's one point where you have to cross the gulf and there are a couple of options on how long your crossing will be. For us, it looks like we're going to do daylight crossings only, which could put us about 20 to 30 miles, at most, offshore. When you get up to New Jersey, you do have to go outside into the Atlantic for some time to get up to New York City."

Some potential routes across the Great Lakes may also take Novella

away from shore.

"But that represents a very small percentage of the entire trip," Evan said. "Most of the time, we're within at least a semi-protected waterway."

Safety was a primary concern when planning the voyage.

"You're always within range of a Coast Guard radio receiving station, you're always within range of other vessels that could assist," Evan said. "We have a membership with TowBoatUS, so if we ever got stuck, we'd have a free tow to get us wherever we need to be."

The Blakleys have a dinghy, named Puff, that can serve as a life raft if anything happens to Novella.

"There are only two or three times where we'll be making a crossing where we are not within sight of land," Evan

LOOP, PAGE 10

Police officers receive oaths of office



PHOTOS BY GORDON WOLF

Two new officers with the Denison Police Department received their oaths of office at Tuesday night's city council meeting. Mayor Pam Soseman administered the oaths to Sean Kosters and Sebastian Strong. Both are non-certified probationary officers starting at an hourly wage of \$28.14 effective January 15. The top picture shows Kosters (second from left) with family members and Soseman (at right). The bottom picture shows Strong (second from left) with family members and Soseman.

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Charter Oak Cemetery transferred to Charter Oak Township Trustees

BY DAN MUNDT

The Crawford County Board of Supervisors on December 19 voted to transfer ownership of the Charter Oak Cemetery to the Charter Oak Township Board of Trustees.

Supervisor Kyle Schultz noted that the transfer had been in the works for about a year.

“So, they’ll be in charge of hiring caretakers?” asked Chairman Ty Rosburg.

“They do that already, but they’re just not getting the money for it – other than (money for) a few graves we’ve had to go locate,” Schultz said. “They take care of the mowing.”

“They are getting the money; the money is in an account that they need to transfer to the township,” said Crawford County Auditor Terri Martens.

With ownership of the cemetery transferred, Martens said she hoped the account issue could be resolved.

Supervisor Craig Dozark asked if the county owns any other cemeteries.

Martens said Crawford County owns a cemetery near Arion that at one time was part of the county farm.

“But there are no new burials there,” Martens said.

Dozark asked how the county came to own the Charter Oak Cemetery.

Schultz explained that an association managed the cemetery; in the 1990s, the last member of the association didn’t know what to do with it and gave it to the county.

The minutes of the April 2, 1991, Crawford County Board of Supervisors meeting shows that at that meeting, the supervisors met with the Charter Oak Township trustees and clerk and accepted a quit claim deed from the Charter Oak Cemetery Association dated 2/26/1991.

“This just gets it back to the township trustees to manage,” Schultz said.

“They want it back,” said Supervisor Jean Heiden.

Schultz noted that when the question of the transfer first came up, County Attorney Colin Johnson did some research on a possible problem.

The issue Johnson looked into concerned the February 26, 1991, quit claim deed, which had specified the assignment of a lot to the heirs of the woman buried there.

“There was a reservation on it,” Johnson said. “We, upon more research, found it’s not applicable anymore. That was holding us up a little bit.”

The supervisors voted 5-0 to transfer ownership of the cemetery to the Charter Oak Township Board of Trustees.



PHOTOS BY DAN MUNDT

Crawford County owned the Charter Oak Cemetery from 1991 until it was transferred to the Charter Oak Township two weeks ago.



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Local Calendar

SATURDAY
JANUARY 6, 2024

Read & Play at Norelius Community Library, 10-11 a.m.; stories, songs and special activities. This storytime is aimed at children ages 2-4, but any child is welcome to attend.

TUESDAY
JANUARY 9, 2024

Cards & Coffee at Norelius Community Library, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
Euchre Night at the Community Building in Ricketts starting at 7 p.m. Entry fee is \$5 and there is no need to bring a partner.
Crawford County for Life monthly meeting, 7 p.m. at Our Savior Lutheran Church. Everyone is welcome.

Submit events at denisonfreepress.com

WEDNESDAY
JANUARY 10, 2024

Read & Play at Norelius Community Library, 10-11 a.m. This storytime is aimed at children ages 2-4, but any child is welcome to attend.
Euchre Night at the Charter Oak Community Building; games begin at 7 p.m. No partners needed.

THURSDAY
JANUARY 11, 2024

Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) meets on Thursdays at United Presbyterian Church in Denison. Doors open at 7:30 a.m.; meeting begins at 8:30 a.m. Coffee provided. Call Carmen Swertzic at 712-269-6689 for more information.

NEWS BRIEFS

Denison Library Friends to meet

The Denison Library Friends will meet Monday, January 8, at 5:30 p.m. in the Carnegie Meeting Room at Norelius Community Library. The agenda includes the results of the Recycled Christmas sale, preparation for the White Elephant Sale in April, regular business reports, and the library director's report. The public is invited to attend. The next meeting will be March 11.

True crime/true mystery book club to be geared toward teens and adults

BOOKS, FROM PAGE 1

book club books yet," Hoffman said. "I have been underlining and making notes in it and it's really quite exciting."
"The Bookbinder" is about a woman who works in a bookbindery in 1914, at the beginning of World War I. "A young British woman working in a bookbindery gets a chance to pursue knowledge and love when World War I upends her life," is the publisher's description of the book.
"She volunteers to do reading and writing of letters for the soldiers that come in," Hoffman said.
"I haven't gotten to the part where the love comes in, but it is really interesting."
As of Tuesday, the Norelius Community Library had 10 regular-print and two large-print copies of "The Bookbinder" available for checkout.
The Library Book Club discussions will take place every fourth Thursday; the first will be at 5:30 p.m. on January 25 in the conference meeting room at the library.
The Library Book Club is for ages 19 and up.
Each month, a new book following the theme of books about books and libraries will be presented.
"We've actually gotten them all picked out for the year so that we'll be able to get enough books in for anyone who wants to join the book club and have a discussion about the book," Hoffman said.
The second book club, called Grim Readers, will tackle "Butcher Baker,"

by Walter Gilmour, as its first book. Summer Lamaak, library page, will lead the true crime/true mystery book club, which will meet every second Thursday in the Carnegie Room; the first meeting will be on February 8.
"Butcher Baker is the account of an Alaskan serial killer," Hoffman said. The publisher describes the book as "The horrific true story of serial kidnapper, rapist, and killer Robert Hansen's reign of terror."
Hansen had more than 30 victims between 1971 and 1983. Only six copies of the book remained at the library as of Tuesday.
"We had eight or 10 to start with, but some people have already started picking them up because we have a display up front advertising it," Hoffman said.
The other books for Grim Readers have already been chosen.
"Our assistant director Olivia will make sure we have enough books on hand for anyone who wants to join up," Hoffman said.
"The true crime/true mystery book club is going to be geared more towards teens and adults so we can get our teens to have some fun reading gory stuff. It's called the Grim Readers, so I think they'll have a lot of fun."
Book club members don't necessarily need a library card, she said.
"If you want to bring your own copy of a book, you may, but it would be great if you get a library card because then you don't have to buy a book - another benefit of the library," Hoffman said.

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*- the staff
at the Denison Free Press*

The  **Denison Free Press**

WELLNESS, FROM PAGE 1

DMU had previously pledged \$500,000 to the project over a period of three years, beginning the year after construction commences on the wellness center.

DMU is also allowing the project to take some dirt from the hill at the North 18th Street water tower site, which would save the project about \$100,000, and it will provide free electric utilities to the wellness center, as a city-owned property, estimated at \$100,000 to \$150,000 per year.

DMU's additional \$250,000 pledge, and its third of the other \$250,000 (roughly \$83,000), would be paid over a number of years, added to the end of the original three-year pledge.

The city and the county had each previously pledged \$1 million to the project, of which \$750,000 is coming from American Rescue Plan Act funds and the other \$250,000 is coming from their budgets.

A reason for the wellness center fundraising committee's ask for an additional pledge from DMU is to help with a \$1 million fundraising gap that the state Community Attractions and Tourism (CAT) Board had asked the committee to fill, to receive a \$1 million grant. The CAT Board had initially asked for this gap to be filled by a January 4 meeting, but that meeting was pushed back a week to January 11.

Jennifer Zupp-Smith, a council member and member of the wellness committee, said she considered the city's decision to share a third of the \$250,000 a "no brainer."

"This is just us putting out money that is back to us in order to get money from DMU and the county," she said.

Councilman Dustin Logan said the city would still be spending the money.

"True," said Zupp-Smith, "but you're spending it on us."

Logan said he was concerned about the next agenda item, a proposed agreement with the Nishna Valley YMCA to manage the wellness center, and the cost of the agreement.

The council discussed that YMCA agreement but did not make a decision. Council members wanted more information before they would take action.

Councilman Greg Miller said the city is borrowing \$250,000 for its initial \$250,000 donation via a bond issue.

City Manager Jessica Garcia said the \$250,000 could be paid out of other funds but the city decided to bond for it.

"But either way we're still paying for that, and then a portion of our ARPA funds went toward it," said Logan. "Yes, that's funds that we would not have had otherwise, but we could have easily spent that on other things. My whole problem with the \$83,000, it seems like we're so easy to just do \$80,000 here or there. If it's so easy to spend that money, why is everything in such bad shape? Everything. Why do we have \$300,000 worth of capital improvement projects just so our pools can stay running. If \$83,000 is that easy to come up at any point of time in the past five years, why does this find its way to the agenda so quickly, and everything that needs fixed doesn't?"

Zupp-Smith pointed out that the \$83,000 would be paid out over four years, from 2026 through 2029.

The council had a discussion about mismanagement by the city in the past.

Zupp-Smith then said, "I don't know how you all feel, but I feel like we have a decent group of people, level heads and business savvy mind sets."

Logan said he saw such a deficit in the city's infrastructure elsewhere.

"Just to be clear, I want this just as much as anybody else. But we've just got so many other things that don't seem to make the agenda as quickly as they should," Logan said.

Zupp-Smith said that is probably another problem.

"If we're going to go forth with the wellness center, and I assume that we are considering how deep we are into it and how much has been raised, why wouldn't the city take the opportunity to grab money from the county and

from DMU while it's on the table," said Zupp-Smith.

Other discussion ensued about the wellness center project, the \$1 million CAT grant, another \$4.5 million that the state has committed to the estimated \$18.8 million project and that once fundraising gets to the 80% level, more grant opportunities open up.

It was also pointed out that the city's commitment to a third of the \$250,000 would not be followed through if the county does not agree with the three-way split.

It was Logan who made the motion for the city to participate in the three-way split of the \$250,000.

"Given the gentle pledge amount (\$83,000 paid out over four years from 2026 through 2029), I am hesitant but not opposed to make the motion for this, but I have huge concerns on the next agenda item (the YMCA agreement) and the overall cost in general, which is for another day, don't get me wrong, but for this one I understand," Logan said.

Councilman John Granzen asked if the project could come to the point where the city needs to find \$1 million to cut from the project.

"I think that's always in the works," said Zupp-Smith. "Nobody wants it to be \$18.8 million."

She mentioned the 90% construction drawing phase coming up in February and the setting of a guaranteed maximum price.

She also pointed out that a 20% contingency was built into the \$18.8 million and the fact that some construction costs are coming down.

Tim Stuart, representing the Crawford County Wellness Center Committee, visited the Crawford County Board of Supervisors to discuss the DMU proposal on Tuesday morning.

Stuart said the new request for funds from the county and city would work out to a commitment of roughly \$20,000 per year each to be paid from 2026 through 2029.

The following are highlights of what the supervisors said were their concerns about committing additional funds to the project.

Supervisor Kyle Schultz said the timing of the request came at the worst possible time as the supervisors work to prepare the county budget for the year.

He noted that \$70,000 worth of raises to county elected officials had recently been recommended - and also noted the supervisors haven't decided whether or not those raises will be given.

Supervisor Dave Muhlbauer suggested the supervisors could consider making an in-kind donation by using the county's secondary roads crew for site preparation work for the wellness center.

Schultz said the state has been telling counties to expect that tax cuts will get bigger.

"It seems to be our purse strings they keep tightening," said Supervisor Ty Rosburg.

Supervisor Craig Dozark asked the other board members what they thought about committing a future board to spend money on the project.

"That's a tough commitment," Shultz said.

"We're up against the wall with tax changes," Muhlbauer said.

"We have core services to provide and until we get done with the budget here, I don't know how we can pledge more," Schultz said.

Chairperson Jean Heiden said that Iowa 6th District Senator Jason Schultz said at a recent Rotary meeting that the county would have to budget for less money.

Heiden said the state's recent tax cuts for senior citizens would have a big effect on Crawford County because of its older population.

Dozark said when the state cuts property taxes, it affects cities, counties and schools - but not the state.

Heiden said County Assessor Duane Zenk had estimated the county will lose \$600,000 on a change to the tax law for seniors and veterans.

The supervisors agreed to put the DMU proposal on the agenda for the January 9 meeting.

ON THE SCANNER

12-15: A Hawkeye hoodie valued at \$40 was stolen from the Good Samaritan Thrift Shop sometime between 12:17 and 5:17 p.m.

12-19: Vandalism occurred at the city park in Dow City. A bench was flipped over but not broken. An attempt was made to kick the door open at the pump house on the southwest corner of the park. No damage was done.

12-20, 10:18 p.m.: Axel Stalyn Perez Zuniga, 27, of Denison, was charged with an assault causing bodily injury.

12-24, 3 a.m.: Kevin Romeo Zuniga Godoy, 40, of Denison, was found walking down the street at 1st Avenue North and Main Street in Denison, and he appeared to be highly intoxicated. He was arrested for public intoxication.

12-25, 4:43 a.m.: Santos Omar Aguirre Portillo, 26, was arrested for OWI after a report was called in about someone in a vehicle driving around a yard in the 2700 block of K Avenue, Denison.

12-26, 6:52 p.m.: Miguel Angel Salgado, 29, and Marjorie Esmeralda Perez Zuniga, 22, were involved in a car accident at the intersection of North 15th Street and 1st Avenue North in Denison. Salgado was cited for no driver's license and failure to have insurance.

12-27, 7:12 a.m.: The law enforcement center received a report of a back window being broken out of a vehicle located at 2946 Highway 30 East, lot 13.

Funeral Notices

Donald "Butch" Jensen

A memorial service for Donald "Butch" Jensen, 86, of Denison, will be at 4 p.m. Saturday, January 6, at the Pauley Jones Funeral Home in Denison.



Visitation will be from 2-4 p.m. Saturday, January 6, at the Pauley Jones Funeral Home in Denison.

Interment will take place at a later date at Crawford Heights Memorial Garden in Denison.

He passed away Wednesday, December 27.

He is survived by his daughter, Robin Schiltz, of Denison; his son, Shawn (Traci) Jensen, of South Sioux City, Nebraska; grandchildren, Kati (Ben) Bostwick, Kendra Schiltz (Saul), Kelsey Schiltz, Cael Jensen, Wyatt Jensen, and Mackenzie Jensen; great-grandchildren, Kaidan, Leylani, Evan, AJ, Malayah, Emma, and Rylee; a sister, Paula (Mark) Kovalan, of Cedar Rapids; brother-in-law, Randell Bohlmann; and former son-in-law, James Schiltz.

The Pauley Jones Funeral Home in Denison is in charge of arrangements.

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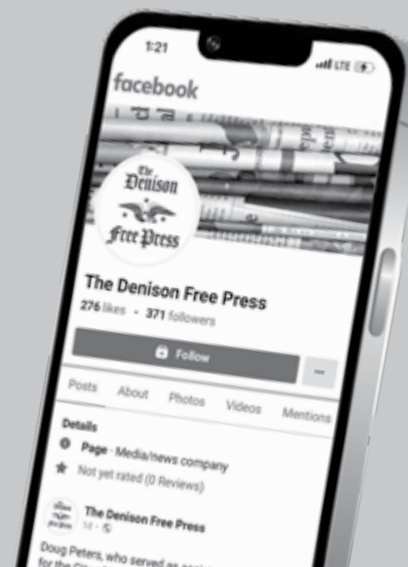
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COURTHOUSE NEWS

December 22-28, 2023

SCHEDULED TRAFFIC

- John Brian Hernandez Mendoza, Denison, failure to provide proof of financial liability, \$428.75.
- Adam Ray Ives, Omaha, NE, failure to display registration plate, \$89.50.
- Tanner Hoffman, Charter Oak, operation without registration card or plate, \$135.50.
- Tanner Hoffman, Charter Oak, failure to maintain or use safety belts, adult, \$135.50.
- Ana Gloria Ayala de Saravia, Denison, open container, driver 21 years old and older, \$503.30.
- Kyler Mark Schulz, Denison, failure to maintain or use safety belts, adult, \$135.50.
- Adonay Nicolas Arellano, Denison, failure to maintain control, \$210.25.
- Zoey Ayn Bernholtz, Carroll, person under 21 years of age using tobacco/vapor product, first offense, \$70.00.
- Angel Alejandro A. Montiel, Dow City, dark window/ windshield, \$112.50.
- Sean Ewoltdt, Denison, failure to maintain control, \$210.25.

SPEEDING (11-15 MPH OVER)

- John Brian Hernandez Mendoza, Denison, \$175.75.

- Adam Ross Blum, Charter Oak, \$175.75.
- Susan R. Ballantine, Vail, \$175.75.
- Xavi Alonzo Fonceca, Denison, \$175.75.

SPEEDING (6-10 MPH OVER)

- Jose A. Valdez, Denison, \$118.25.
- Jesus Emmanuel Ceja, Pharr, TX, \$118.25.
- Ruan Richard O'Neil, Schleswig, \$118.25.
- David Martin Ray, Coon Rapids, \$118.25.
- Christopher G. Ramirez, Omaha, NE, \$118.25.
- Jeffery Allen Bruck, Denison, \$118.25.
- Kevin Lee Garrett, Dow City, \$118.25.

SPEEDING (1-5 MPH OVER)

- Devin Dakota Robert Swanson, Audubon, \$106.75.
- Roberto Marquez Villa, Broadview, IL, \$89.50.
- Luis M. Chan, Denison, \$89.50.
- Amelia Santamaria Velazquez, Denison, \$106.75.
- Jacqueline Cuevas, Denison, \$106.75.
- Stellah Mora Bosire, Denison, \$89.50.

LAND TRANSACTIONS

December 22-28, 2023

Warranty Deeds

- Phyllis Jean Kusel to Bradley C. Kusel and Teri J. Kerkhoff: S1/2 SE1/4 Section 32, Iowa Township.
- Jerry Lilleholm, Trustee for A. Faye Clark Marital Trust to Buck Land LLC: NW1/4 SE1/4 Section 25, Goodrich Township; NE1/4 SE1/4 Section 25, Goodrich Township; \$657,315.05.
- Merle H. Schroeder Trust, Connie Natzke, Lynn Schroeder, Carmen Schroeder and Mark Schroeder, Trustees to Connie Natzke, Lynn Schroeder, Carmen Schroeder and Mark Schroeder: E3/4 SE1/4 Section 35, East Boyer Township.
- William Natzke and Connie Natzke to Mark Schroeder: E1/2 SE1/4 SE1/4 Section 35, East Boyer Township.
- Carmen Schroeder to Mark Schroeder: E1/2 SE1/4 SE1/4 Section 35, East Boyer Township.
- Lynn Schroeder to Mark Schroeder: E1/2 SE1/4 SE1/4 Section 35, East Boyer Township.
- William Natzke and Connie Natzke to Lynn Schroeder: W1/2 W1/2 SE1/4 Section 35, East Boyer Township; E1/2 E1/2 SW1/4 Section 35, East Boyer Township; E3/4 SE1/4 Section 35, East Boyer Township; \$500,000.
- Carmen Schroeder to Lynn Schroeder: W1/2 W1/2 SE1/4 Section 35, East Boyer Township; E1/2 E1/2 SW1/4 Section 35, East Boyer Township; E3/4 SE1/4 Section 35, East Boyer Township; \$500,000.
- Kaye Aldrich to Kaye L. Aldrich Trust, Kaye L. Aldrich, Trustee: S1/2 NE1/4 Section 2, Otter Creek Township.
- Jared R. Kropf and Tammy K. Kropf to Bradley Paul Gerald Meeves and Lindsey Kae Kropf: SE1/4 SW1/4 Section 31, Hayes Township; \$100,000.
- Eric J. Skoog and Teresa M. Skoog to Eric and Teresa Skoog Revocable Trust; Eric J. Skoog, Christopher E. Skoog and Teresa M. Skoog, Co-Trustees: Lot 5 and Lot 6, Block 153, City of Denison; Lot 55 and Lot 63, Ridgeway 5th Addition, City of Denison; Lot 7, Block 132, City of Denison.
- Kortney Brosamle to Barbara Putnam: W1/2 NW1/4 Section 5, Union Township; E1/2 NE1/4 Section 6, Union Township; N1/2 NE1/4 SE1/4 Section 6, Union Township; \$50,000.
- Demetrio Valdez and Irene Zarazua de Valdez to Demetrio Valdez and Irene Valdez Revocable Trust: Lot 1 and Lot 2, Block 112, City of Denison; Lot 2, Block 1, Ridgeway 4th Addition, City of Denison; W1/2 SE1/4 Section 2,

Goodrich Township; Lot 8 and Lot 9, Block 60, City of Denison; Lot 25 and Lot 26, Block 69, City of Denison; Lot 1 and Lot 2, Block 22, City of Denison.

Contract

- Christian Brandt Trust, Mary Ann Brandt, Trustee to David M. Brandt: SW1/4 Section 9, Iowa Township; \$607,896.91.

Court Officer Deeds

- Violet Schroeder Estate, Connie Netzke, Administrator to Connie Natzke, Lynn Schroeder, Carmen Schroeder and Mark Schroeder: W1/2 W1/2 SE1/4 Section 35, East Boyer Township; E1/2 E1/2 SW1/4 Section 35, East Boyer Township.
- Paulina Friedrichsen Trusteeship, Cal Kastner, Trustee to Cal Kastner, Cory Kastner and Trudi Andernacht: W1/2 NW1/4 Section 32, Otter Creek Township.
- Paulina Friedrichsen Trusteeship, Cal Kastner, Trustee to Larry Kastner: E1/2 NW1/4 Section 32, Otter Creek Township; W1/2 NW1/4 Section 32, Otter Creek Township.
- Paulina Friedrichsen Trusteeship, Cal Kastner, Trustee to Lodean Kastner: W1/2 NW1/4 Section 32, Otter Creek Township.
- Paulina Friedrichsen Trusteeship, Cal Kastner, Trustee to Kurt Kastner, Kari Blasey, Kristin Kastner and Lonnie Kastner, LE: E1/2 NW1/4 Section 32, Otter Creek Township.
- Paulina Friedrichsen Trusteeship, Cal Kastner, Trustee to Leila Maack: E1/2 NW1/4 Section 32, Otter Creek Township.

Quit Claim Deeds

- Crawford County Iowa to Charter Oak Township: SW1/4 Section 14, Charter Oak Township.
- Wickersham Bros. Inc. To Brian L. Wickersham and Alan Ted Wickersham: Lot 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, Block 162-1/2, City of Denison; Lot 1 and Lot 2, Block 168, City of Denison; \$1.00.
- Dawn Brandt to David M. Brandt: E1/2 SW1/4 Section 15, Nishnabotna Township; S1/2 NE1/4 Section 15, Nishnabotna Township; N1/2 SE1/4 Section 15, Nishnabotna Township; SW1/4 SE1/4 Section 15, Nishnabotna Township; SE1/4 SE1/4 Section 15, Nishnabotna Township.

Tourism board pledges \$50,000 to wellness center

BY GORDON WOLF

The Denison Tourism Board last week Thursday pledged \$50,000 over 10 years to the Crawford County Wellness Center project.

The \$50,000 pledge puts the wellness center fundraising committee closer to filling a \$1 million funding gap that the Community Attractions and Tourism (CAT) Committee asked the fundraising committee to fill before a January 11 meeting at which a \$1 million grant is on the table.

During the tourism board conversation, City Manager Jessica Garcia said if there are people who have thought of giving and haven't donated yet, now is the time.

"When we go on January 11 (to the CAT Board), we can say that in the last month we've raised the \$1 million," she said.

She also said it is important that the number of different individuals donating or pledging increase.

"Give a dollar, give five dollars, give 10 dollars, but we need to grow that

list (of donors)," Garcia said.

At Tuesday night's city council meeting, Tim Stuart, a member of the wellness center fundraising committee, said about \$400,000 had been raised toward the \$1 million goal. That did not include the possibility of the \$250,000 given through the three-way split among DMU, the city and the county.

Garcia and KR Buck, another member of the fundraising committee, pointed out that once the fundraising reaches or surpasses the 80% level, it will open up the number of grant application possibilities.

Garcia added that once the project is in the year of the bid letting, the committee can also apply for more grants.

Buck said at the tourism board meeting that the amount of funds raised so far was 75% of the \$18.8 million goal in 10 months.

"We'll get it done," he added. "We've never had this much momentum."

More information about donating is on the Crawford County Recreation & Wellness Committee Facebook page. A link to a gofundme page is also on the Facebook page.

Donations and pledges can also be made at city hall.



Who knows, maybe they'll make a purchase while they're here? If your business would like to be a distribution point for The Denison Free Press, contact us and let us know. As a free newspaper, you would only need to provide a shelf from which community members could grab a copy.



Senior Lunch Menu

Served at the Senior Center on South Main in Denison
Call 712-263-4950 before 9:30 a.m.

Friday, January 5:

crispy baked chicken, macaroni and cheese, baked beans, mixed fruit

Monday, January 8:

beef stew, whole wheat roll, rice pudding

Tuesday, January 9:

BBQ pulled pork sandwich, whole wheat bun, coleslaw, cinnamon apples with crunchy topping

Wednesday, January 10:

half a meat sandwich, potato soup, whole wheat crackers, fresh baby carrots, mixed fruit

Thursday, January 11:

chicken noodles, green beans, apple slices, chocolate chip cookie

Friday, January 12:

meatloaf, mashed potatoes with gravy, whole wheat bread, broccoli, peaches

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Fog and frost



PHOTOS BY DAN MUNDT

Fog rolled through Crawford County early Wednesday, leaving an extra coating of frost on cars, trees and other cold surfaces.

BOULDERS, FROM PAGE 1

downstairs bar and grill for the same reason.

The notice was given last week Thursday.

At a Boulders Conference Center Commission meeting last week Thursday, Garcia said Polley is required to pay the monthly lease, which she added was six months outstanding.

Polley was allowed to take what property he owned off the property.

Commission member Kurt Miller called the meeting with Polley amicable.

Polley's company had leased the conference center since October 1, 2022, and he had operated Bogey's Grille At Majestic Hills in the lower level of the conference center, under a lease agreement with the Majestic Hills Golf Course Board, since early 2022.

The rent Polley was to pay the city for leasing the conference center was \$2,500 a month.

At the conference center commission meeting last week Thursday, Majestic Hills Golf Course had asked that their rent and utilities be forgiven for January and February and resume in March when business at the golf course picks up. The reason was that without the operation of the bar and grill, no income would be coming in.

The city council approved this forgiveness at its meeting on Tuesday night. To make it official, the lease agreement with the golf course will have to be amended.

The council also approved as part of its consent agenda on Tuesday the liquor license for Denison Country Club Inc., doing business as Majestic Hills Golf Course, to allow the country club to serve liquor going forward for

the downstairs businesses, when that opens up again, and for any events at the conference center at which liquor service is requested.

In return, a golf course employee would staff the conference center events that have already been booked.

At its meeting last week Thursday, members of the boulders commission made a recommendation to the council to continue to explore options for the future operation of the conference center.

Some city council members in the past had expressed a desire to sell the conference center. Boulders commission members said they wanted to explore options short of this and did not want to rush to a decision. They also pointed out they needed to get past the next few months of bookings at the conference center first.

Councilman Dustin Logan asked if the city was continuing to take bookings for the conference center. Garcia responded that it has been.

The phone number and email address for the conference center have been rolled over to city hall.

Logan asked if this was a smart choice.

Councilman Corey Curnyn said May would be the biggest month for bookings, with graduation parties, and right now a lot of events aren't booked for January through March.

"That's why we're willing to take on additional bookings because that's additional income for the city, and the golf course is gracious enough to take care of those events for us," said Curnyn.

He added that the city has now gone through three options of operating the conference center.

The first was to manage the facility using a conference center manager

employed by the city. That was the most costly for the city.

The second version was to contract with a manager. That was with Laura Matthews with Stables at Copper Ridge, and that saved the city \$35,000 to \$40,000 in benefit payments to employees.

The most recent option was with Polley's company. Curnyn said if the rent had been paid, the city would have been bringing in income.

Curnyn said the fourth option would be to sell the conference center.

"But the (Boulders) commission has not made a decision. They're just wanting to get by, for sure, these next two months because there are events coming up, day by day," he added.

Garcia said she has booked three new events on Tuesday, one in January, one in February and the third one in March. They are business meetings that take place during the day, which are easier to staff than other types of events.

Curnyn said he was in favor of forgiving the rent if the golf course staff takes care of the events, otherwise the city will have to pay someone staff the events.

The Boulders Commission is planning to have another meeting very soon and wants to come up with a recommendation on operating the conference center after January and February, Curnyn added.

Logan asked if the city is booking the conference center for events this summer.

Garcia said she was at Boulders Friday night showing the facility for someone who wants to do an event in November. They did not book but took information. She added that on Saturday she showed the conference

center to two different people wanting to have a wedding. They did not sign a contract but took information.

She added that there are people inquiring about booking but she had not booked any events other than the business meetings she mentioned earlier.

Logan wanted to have a direction for the council if the conference center should be booking events months into the future. He said that last month the council gave a direction that it wanted to look at alternatives and said both can't be done.

However, Curnyn said the city has the volunteers on the Boulders commission for a reason.

"It's a very, very good board. They are not just taking this lightly. They want to exhaust every avenue before they make a recommendation," he said.

He said another meeting of the Boulders commission needs to take place sooner than later.

Garcia said her information from the Boulders commission meeting last week Thursday was to look at putting out a type of request for proposals on management options.

"That's where the commission would like to go first, rather than just jumping right away to selling it," she said.

She added that the commission members said a lot of work and effort and local dollars went into building the facility.

"If you have ever tried to hold an event in this community, the options are very limited," Garcia added.

Curnyn said even in the event that the city would sell the conference center, something should be put in the agreement that the upstairs has to remain a conference center and that the golf course lease needs to be protected.



The Denison Free Press is possible in part thanks to the Western Iowa Journalism Foundation

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The Denison Free Press

RESTROOMS, FROM PAGE 1

fixtures were also chosen to match the courthouse design.

"The marble they used on the walls very much resembles the marble that exists around the elevator currently," Martens said. "Any of the excess marble that came out of the old restrooms was also used to wrap that new closet under the stairwell. Those walls also emulate the old design."

Ventilation, which was essentially nonexistent in the old restrooms, was updated by hooking into a vent pipe that was located in a vault in the assessor's office, she said.

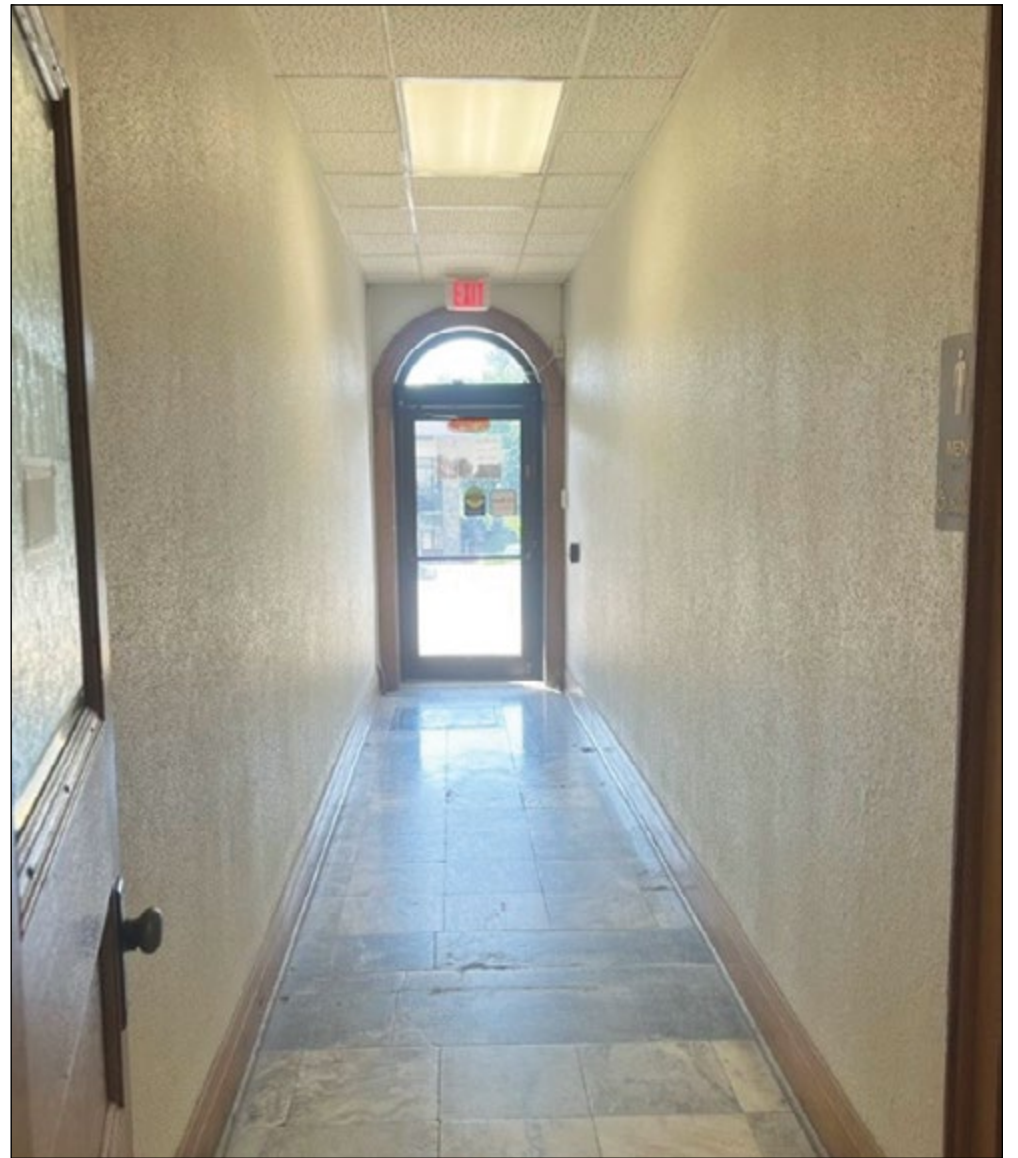
The general contractor for the

project was L&L Builders Co. of Sioux City.

Brittney Ruba of FEH Design, of Sioux City, designed the new restrooms.

"It was a really good project and it went well," Martens said. "The general contractor was really good and had meetings every couple weeks. If any contractor had a concern, or if we had a concern, we could always get it handled very promptly."

Subcontractors on the project included Heiden Concrete, Denison Drywall, MEP Subs, Midwestern Mechanical, Drees Electric, Custom Metal Works, Doors Inc., Blankenship, Jannings Tile, Construction Specialties, and Carroll Glass.



PHOTOS BY AMY PIEPER

The ground floor hallway and exit before six individual restroom doors were added in the remodeling project.



The sinks, toilets, doors and décor were chosen to fit with the current style of the courthouse.

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The 2024 Republican Precinct Caucuses will be held on Monday, January 15, at 7 PM at the locations listed below for each precinct.

Precinct	Location	Address	Delegates
Charter Oak	Denison High School	819 N 16th Street, Denison	4
Dow City, Arion, Buck Grove	Denison High School	819 N 16th Street, Denison	6
Denison Ward 1	Denison High School	819 N 16th Street, Denison	5
Denison Ward 2, Denison TWP	Denison High School	819 N 16th Street, Denison	5
Denison Ward 3, Goodrich TWP	Denison High School	819 N 16th Street, Denison	8
Northeast	Denison High School	819 N 16th Street, Denison	7
Southeast	Denison High School	819 N 16th Street, Denison	8
Schleswig, Ricketts, Kiron	Denison High School	819 N 16th Street, Denison	7


The Precinct Caucuses will perform the following functions:

- A. Elect 4 persons, Republican residents of the precinct to serve on the County Central Committee.**
- B. Elect delegates and alternate delegates to the Crawford County Republican convention held on Saturday, February 17, 2024. The number of delegates to be elected at each caucus is listed above.**
- C. Propose and vote on platform planks to send to County Convention.**

Voter registration forms will be available to register or to update your information.

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In Remembrance



Richard Paul Boell
March 17, 1933 - December 25, 2023

Richard Paul Boell was born on March 17, 1933, in Carroll, Iowa, to his parents Paul and Helen (Baumhaver) Boell. He was baptized in 1933 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Carroll. After attending country school north of Manning through the eighth grade, he graduated from Manning High School in 1952.

Following graduation, Richard entered the United States Army on May 12, 1953 where he served during the Korean War. His commitment to serving his country was evident throughout his two-year tenure until he was honorably discharged on March 2, 1955, at Fort Sheridan, Illinois. Upon returning home, he pursued his passion for farming.

On January 10, 1956, Richard married the love of his life, Margaret Ann Dales. They were united in marriage at the Zion Lutheran Church in Manning and were blessed with five children. The couple moved to Scranton, Iowa where they resided for a short time before returning to Manning. They farmed around the area for ten years before moving to a farm near Ricketts. Three years later, they acquired a farm north of Ricketts and then eventually purchased a farm south of Schleswig in 1989 where they resided until Margaret's passing in 2008. In June 2020, Richard relocated to Denison.

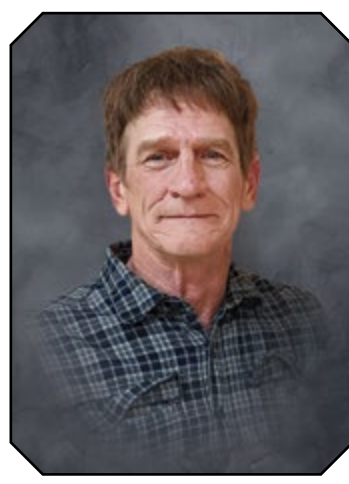
Richard found joy in various hobbies and interests. He enjoyed farming (especially baling hay) and was an avid collector of John Deere. He took immense pleasure in the companionship of his parrot named Rainbow. Richard's children and their families were a source of pride and joy to him, and he delighted in sharing stories about them. Above all, he cherished his family more than anything.

Richard held employment at Farmland in Denison for over 20+ years. He was a proud lifetime member of the Manning V.F.W. Post 3517 which was a testament to his commitment to his fellow veterans. Additionally, his devotion to his faith was unwavering, as he was a longtime member at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Hanover Township, Charter Oak where he volunteered on the church counsel.

Richard passed away peacefully on Christmas Day, Monday, December 25, 2023, attaining the age of 90 years, 9 months, and 8 days. His kindness, generosity, and dedication to family and country are attributes that will be remembered fondly by all who were fortunate enough to have crossed paths with him.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Paul and Helen Boell; wife, Margaret Boell; two grandchildren: Bruce Boell and Jessica Boell; brothers: Louis (Lucille) Boell, his twin brother, Robert (Ruth) Boell, and Kenneth (Cherryl) Boell; and brother-in-law, Jon Muenchow. Survivors include his children: Mary and her husband Dave Bruck of Denison, Andy Boell and his significant other Melissa of Council Bluffs, Alan Boell and his significant other Gina of Lee's Summit, Missouri, Mike Boell of Oakland, Nebraska, and Lynette Reeder and her husband Ronnie of Kearney, Missouri; 13 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren with another great-grandson on the way; and 1 great-great-granddaughter; sister, Ella Mae Muenchow of Arcadia; many nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

Funeral Services were held 10:30 AM, Wednesday January 3, 2024 at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Hanover Township, Charter Oak, Iowa with Rev. Richard Merrill officiating. Organist Karen Kahl provided accompaniment for congregational hymns "Just As I Am," "On Eagle's Wings" and "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." Serving as honorary pallbearers were Jamie Riesselman, Jason Schmidt, Alan Boell, Darren Bruck, Aaron Boell, Jesse Boell, Nathan Bruck, Ryan Boell, Michael Boell II and Caden Boell. Serving as pallbearers were the Schleswig VFW Post 3930 and the Schleswig American Legion Post 645. Interment was in the Morgan Cemetery in Schleswig, Iowa with Military Honors provided by the Manning VFW Post 3517, Schleswig VFW Post 3930, Schleswig American Legion Post 645 and Iowa Army Honor Guard. Following the burial, the family invited everyone to return to the church for a time of fellowship and lunch. Services were entrusted to the Huebner Funeral Home.



Dennis Donald Waderich
December 7, 1961 - December 16, 2023

Dennis "Denny" Donald Waderich was born on December 7, 1961, in Denison, Iowa, to Ralph and Donna Waderich. Denny attended Dow City - Arion Community School and graduated in 1980. After graduation, Denny worked with various local businesses. He embarked on a lifelong career as a mechanic and eventually became the proud owner of Waderich Auto Repair. His exceptional skills and unwavering dedication earned him the respect and admiration of all who sought his services.

On November 27, 1982, Denny married the love of his life, DaNette Adams, at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Dow City where he was a member. Together they built a loving home and were blessed with two wonderful sons: Dustin and David. Family was paramount to Denny, and he always put the needs of his loved ones above his own. He embodied the true essence of selflessness and devotion as he went above and beyond to support his family.

Denny's warm personality touched the lives of many. He was known for his loving nature and expressed his affection through acts of service and kindness. If you ever received a pat on the head from him, you knew just how much he cared. He was an active member of the community and could always be counted on to lend a helping hand to anyone in need; his impact resonated far and wide.

Partaking in hobbies alongside close family and friends brought immense joy to Denny's life. He enjoyed bowling and was a car enthusiast. Denny spent many lunch breaks with friends at Etleman's and then, like clockwork, he and his buddies would gather at his shop at 4:30 p.m. to play Dow City Dice, fostering a sense of camaraderie. Denny also spent countless hours and fun-filled evenings with his core group of friends. The 4 couples spent time going to concerts, playing cards, going to each other's homes to celebrate life's milestones, and laughing until their bellies hurt. You always knew lifelong memories were being made with Denny around.

Denny's true pride and joy resided in his family. He adored spending quality time with DaNette and their sons. As a doting "Papa", he reveled in the company of his beloved grandchildren, Jonah, Mason, Henry, and Simon. Watching them grow and thrive brought him immeasurable happiness that will forever hold a special place in their hearts.

Denny passed away unexpectedly on Saturday, December 16, 2023, attaining the age of 62 years and 9 days. He was preceded in death by his sister-in-law, Kim Waderich.

He is survived by his devoted wife, DaNette Waderich of Dow City; two sons: Dustin Waderich and his wife E'ebess and their sons: Henry and Simon Waderich all of Omaha, Nebraska; and David Waderich and his wife Brittany and their sons: Jonah and Mason Waderich all of Omaha, Nebraska; parents, Ralph and Donna Waderich of Omaha, Nebraska; brother, Roger Waderich and his wife Marsha of Denison; two sisters: Renita and her husband Rolly Laubscher of Norwalk; and Joan and her husband Randy Workman of Omaha, Nebraska; many nieces, nephews, other relatives, and friends.

Celebration of Life was held 11:00 AM., Friday, December 29, 2023 at the Huebner Funeral Home in Denison, Iowa with Ace Etleman officiating. Recorded musical selections included "Amazing Grace" by Dan Vasc, "Hold On to Memories" by Disturbed and "Spirit in the Sky" by Norman Greenbaum. Serving as honorary pallbearers were Jonah Waderich, Mason Waderich, Henry Waderich and Simon Waderich. Following the Celebration of Life, the family invited everyone to the Dow City Community Building for a time of fellowship and lunch. Services were entrusted to the Huebner Funeral Home.

Tildy the cat goes along for water voyage

LOOP, FROM PAGE 1

said. "Most of the time, you're within sight and you could swim to land."

A 6,000-mile water voyage will inevitably include times when they will be out of their comfort zone.

"Some things could turn into dangerous situations if you're not prepared," he said. "That's why you have to study, learn, read from all sorts of sources to know how to handle all the different things that can happen, and have a plan for what you do in those scenarios."

Evan said he and Meriah anticipated that they would have many lessons to learn during the first weeks on the water.

One of the first things they learned was that they needed checklists.

"There are so many things to do when you come to a dock, when you leave a dock, when you hoist your sails, when you start your motor; there are all kinds of steps involved and it's very easy to forget something that makes life difficult later," Evan said.

They also had to learn how to live on a 25-foot boat.

"There is endless reorganizing and moving of things to get to something else," he said. "Whether you're making coffee or cooking dinner or getting ready in the morning, everything is organized and put away somewhere."

Most "Loopers" make the voyage on much larger boats, he noted.

"They basically have every luxury you would have in a house; we have those things, too, for the most part, but on a much smaller and more simple scale," Evan said.

"I'm still trying to wrap my head around everything because we've been working on this for so long, but also everything kind of came together at the last minute," Meriah said.

She spends much of her time below deck working on jobs for clients of her company, Roo Bea Design Co.

Their first weeks on the water were too cold for both of them.

"While Meriah works below and I am outside motoring, I'll call her up to see the sights; come up and look at these birds, come look at these cliffs along the river; this is really beautiful," Evan said. "She'd pop her head out and take a picture and go back below and go back to work. She's absolutely right – it's been way colder than we could have imagined."

He said the trip would have been a lot more enjoyable if the temperatures had been higher.

"There've been long times of not-enjoyable motoring down a river 100% exposed – with no autopilot – just 100% hand-steering the whole time," Evan said. "It's kind of like driving a car for 11 hours a day, except you're driving a boat and the scenery's different."

They had visited Pickwick Landing at Christmas in 2022 and spent their time in short sleeves; when they arrived a year later to begin their journey, they were confronted with temperatures in the 20s and 30s.

"We just have a little Walmart heater because you have to buy the smallest thing you can," he said. "We were trying to outrun the cold at every turn and it just wasn't really happening most of the way down the river."

Cold or not, they still found enjoyment during the first weeks on the water.

"There are little moments of intense beauty that we could not have imagined," Evan said. "We were docked

in Fulton, Mississippi, and I had no hopes for that place to be anything remarkable. We were docked next to flooded timber with all these tree trunks sticking out from the water just feet from our dock. We could see the stars perfectly and the sunsets there were absolutely amazing. We just figured it was a cheap place to stop when we headed downriver, and it ended up being one of our favorite marinas."

A positive distraction on their voyage is Tildy, their 13-year-old cat.

"I found her in a parking lot before her eyes were even open. She was bottle fed and toted along wherever we went," Meriah said. "She is a very laid-back cat and we thought she would be well-suited for boat life."

Tildy has always been fascinated by water and adjusted effortlessly when Meriah and Evan took her on their test cruises last summer.

Meriah said Tildy naps most of the day on their trip.

"She comes out typically once we anchor to explore around the boat," she said.

They have to keep an eye on her because she likes to explore other boats, as well.

"More than anything, she likes to be held and petted. She is incredibly snuggly," Meriah said. "It is nice having her along – she makes the boat feel like home."

The coldest day of the first part of the Blakleys' trip was on the last leg to Mobile, Alabama.

"I kept having to ask Meriah to come out and steer so I could go down below and warm my hands over the stove we have," Evan said. "Then I'd go back out for an hour and come back in and warm my hands."

The big payoff came when they arrived in Mobile two days before Christmas.

"It was like a switch had been turned and it was summer," he said.

"As soon as we got into the bay, it opened up and the sun was shining, and the boat was surrounded by a small pod of dolphins," Meriah said. "It was almost like they were out there waiting for us. It made everything worth it."

"That was the turning point when it really felt more like what we had imagined," Evan said.

"Pelicans were flying by – I swear one almost hit me with his wing," Meriah said. "I'm an animal lover, so anytime I can see animals in the wild, it's thrilling to me. Then we saw a shrimp. I've never seen a shrimp in the wild."

"It swam right up to our boat," Evan said.

"They're adorable," Meriah said.

"One large reason we're doing this is we love to be outdoors, we love to be active and see nature," Evan said. "We're hopeful that this trip opens up year-round outdoor activity."

The Blakleys departed Mobile on December 27 and reached Florida three days later.

"We plan to be stationed in St. Augustine (Florida) at the end of winter for a week or two and wait for the temperatures to rise, and then we'll head up the coast and follow the spring temperatures up," Evan said. "By the time summer hits, we'd like to be in New York City."

You can follow the Blakleys' journey at Sailing Novella on Facebook and Sailingnovella on Intstagram.



The appearance of dolphins signaled a change in the weather and a fresh outlook for Meriah and Evan.



Meriah and Evan's 13-year-old cat, Tildy, came along for the trip around the Great Loop.



Novella and Puff docked at Fairhope, Alabama, after a trip across Mobile Bay.

New Year's Eve fundraiser for Little Hawks



PHOTOS BY GORDON WOLF



Little Hawks Preschool in Manilla hosted a New Year's Eve fundraising event at the Manilla Memorial Hall on Sunday night. Pictured, Jared Muhlbauer auctions items on the live auction after the meal. At left, Corey Gaskill gets ready to bring up the next item to auction. Silent auction items were also sold. Also pictured, 2 1/2 Guitars, based in Carroll, provided the evening's entertainment.