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The Denison Free Press

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SERVING DENISON & CRAWFORD COUNTY, IOWA

January 18, 2024

Crawford County Republicans choose Trump first, Ramaswamy second

Statewide it was Trump first and DeSantis second



PHOTO BY GORDON WOLF

At the beginning of the grassroots political process, Virgil Johnson (right) signs in to attend the Denison Ward 2/Denison Township Republican precinct caucus at Denison High School on Monday night. The registration table is staffed by his son, Darin Johnson (at left) and Jim Hugg.

BY GORDON WOLF

Despite the bitter weather on Monday, more Republicans turned out for the caucuses in Crawford County than may have been expected.

A total of 385 presidential preference votes were cast among the eight precinct caucuses conducted in eight different rooms at Denison High School.

Prior to the precinct caucuses, Republicans gathered in the high school's Fine Arts Center to listen to instructions and to hear speeches given by supporters of former president Donald Trump, Ron DeSantis, Nikki Haley, Ryan Binkley and finally Vivek Ramaswamy.

Gwen Ecklund also spoke to promote the Crawford County Republican Women's group.

The events in the Fine Arts Center started at 7 p.m., and at 7:30 p.m.

CAUCUSES, PAGE 2

Wiebers retiring at end of year

BY GORDON WOLF

Dave Wiebers, who has served the Denison Community School District for 40 years, will retire on June 30, the end of the 2023-2024 school year.

His letter of retirement was accepted by the school board at its meeting on Monday.

He asked for early retirement benefits in his letter.

Wiebers is currently the high school principal, a position he was appointed to in 2016. He served the prior year as the middle school principal. He also served as the district's activities director for many years.

Wiebers is also retiring from the head football coach's position.

WIEBERS, PAGE 3



Denison Education Association gives \$1,380 to Parks & Rec

Gift will help purchase new playground equipment for Washington Park

BY DAN MUNDT

The Denison Education Association (DEA) presented a check for \$1,380 to Denison Parks & Rec at the DEA meeting on Wednesday, January 10.

The funds were raised as part of the DEA's annual "Jeans Day Fundraiser" for which teachers make donations in exchange for four extra days when they may wear jeans to school.

"Every year, we donate that money to different causes around the city, and we like to give back to the community," said DEA President Peter Bekkerus. "With the Washington Park turnover this year, we thought it was a great way

PARK, PAGE 10



From left, Denison Education Association President Peter Bekkerus gives a check for \$1,380 to Denison Parks & Rec Director Sam Ellis; Parks & Rec Program Coordinator Tara Wareham and Denison Mayor Pam Soseman were also in attendance.

City of Denison approves wellness center management with YMCA

Focus turns toward New Markets Tax Credit

BY GORDON WOLF

After discussions and questions in two consecutive meetings, the Denison City Council on Tuesday voted to enter into a 28E agreement with the Nishna Valley YMCA for the management of the Crawford County Wellness Center.

That decision follows last week's announcement that the project will be getting a \$1 million Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) grant from the Enhance Iowa Board.

YMCA, PAGE 3

Dow City selected for Community Visioning Program

BY DAN MUNDT

Dow City has been selected to be one of 10 Iowa communities that will participate in the 2024 Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program.

"I think it's a fantastic opportunity for our small town," said Connie Garrett, Dow City City Council member.

Through the community visioning program, professional landscape architects will offer expertise in creating conceptual design plans for the town.

VISIONING, PAGE 3

The new face at Parks & Rec

Tara Wareham takes on program coordinator job

BY DAN MUNDT

Tara Wareham joined the Denison Parks & Recreation staff two weeks ago as the new program coordinator.

She takes over the role that Sam Ellis held before he was promoted to Parks & Rec director in November.

Tara was born and raised in North Carolina; she met and married her husband, Skyler, there.

Skyler is a Marine Corps veteran and a native of Odebolt, which is where the couple moved two years ago.

Tara has a 2021 bachelor's degree in recreation management with a minor in hospitality and tourism management from Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina.

"When I moved here, there weren't too many opportunities available for

me in recreation, so I did something more with my minor with customer service at a credit union," she said. "I saw this opportunity and I didn't want to pass it up."

She said recreation has been a big part of her life since she was a child.

"Everyone has their place they go to in hard times, and recreation was that for me," Tara said.

She wants to help provide programs and activities for kids in Denison that are similar to the activities she grew up around.



Tara Wareham

Tara said she wants to hear from residents interested in building new programs at Parks & Rec.

"I love getting to know people, forming relationships, learning from them and then them learning from me,"

WAREHAM, PAGE 3

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CAUCUSES, FROM PAGE 1

people were dismissed to their respective precinct caucus sites where the rules for the night's business were explained, including the election of delegates to the county convention and the forming of platform planks.

And of course, the presidential preference balloting took place.

But just prior to the balloting, or perhaps as it began in some local precinct groups, national news organizations called the caucus for Trump, at 7:31 p.m., an action that has garnered complaints.

In the voting, Crawford County Republicans were in step with their peers across the state when they overwhelmingly selected Trump as their candidate. He received 202 of the 385 preference votes cast – about 52% of the total.

Statewide, Trump received 56,260 of the 110,298 votes cast, for 51%.

In Crawford County, Vivek Ramaswamy received 92 votes for about 23.9%, Nikki Haley received 48 votes for about 12.5%, and Ron DeSantis received 37 votes for about 9.6%. Ryan Binkley received 6 votes for 1.5%. Asa Hutchinson and Chris Christie did not receive any votes.

Unlike Crawford County, Republicans statewide put DeSantis second. He received 23,420 votes for 21.2%.

Haley received 21,085 votes for 19.1%, Ramaswamy received 8,449 votes for 7.7%, Binkley took 7% of the total with 774 votes, Asa Hutchinson received 191 votes for 2% and Christie received 35 votes for .7%. Another 84 ballots were cast for other candidates.

Ramaswamy and Hutchinson dropped out of the race after the Iowa caucuses. Christie had dropped out of the race last week.



State Senator Jason Schultz (right) presides at the Schleswig/Ricketts/Kiron Republican precinct caucus in the Denison High School vocal music room.



At the Dow City/Arion/Buck Grove precinct, Paul Rehm directs the discussion of Republican Party business.

Democratic caucus



PHOTOS BY DAN MUNDT

Crawford County Democrats caucused on Monday night, but their event was much smaller because Iowa's caucuses no longer announce a presidential preference. At their caucus, Democrats offered resolutions for the county platform, elected delegates to the county convention and elected precinct committee members to the county central committee. Dustin Durbin, the Democratic candidate for District 12 Iowa House of Representatives, was introduced at the caucus.



Dustin Durbin, District 12 Iowa House of Representatives candidate



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YMCA, FROM PAGE 1

The motion to enter into the agreement was contingent on putting the legal description of the wellness center property in the language.

"I'm obviously supportive of this (agreement) because our city does not have a history of management and oversight of these types of facilities," said Councilwoman Jennifer Zupp-Smith, who is also a member of the wellness center committee.

She said the management agreement with the YMCA would help to secure funding through the New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC).

Information about the NMTC program says it was established in 2000 and helps economically distressed communities attract private capital by providing investors with a federal tax credit. Under the program, tax credit authority is allocated to Community Development Entities (CDEs) through a competitive application process.

A December 14 article in The Denison Free Press mentioned the potential of \$3.6 million in New Markets Tax Credits for the wellness center project.

"One of the factors that the New Markets Tax Credit CDEs look at is whether or not their investment is expected to last at least seven years," Zupp-Smith explained at Tuesday's city council meeting. "Obviously, with the management agreement in place, that takes care of the facility properly. That's going to be seen as a positive."

She added that the New Markets Tax Credit consultant the project is working with had indicated multiple times that the CDEs prefer to invest in projects where a nonprofit is involved. Having a nonprofit involved makes the investment look better to the federal government when the CDEs apply in the future to seek more New Markets Tax Credit allocations.

Zupp-Smith and City Manager Jessica Garcia pointed to the good working relationship that already exists with Dan Haynes, executive director of the Nishna Valley YMCA. Zupp-Smith also mentioned the history of success of the Nishna Valley YMCA and the longevity of the YMCA in general.

Zupp-Smith said the consultant for the New Market Tax Credit will attend a CDE conference next week starting January 24, where the consultant plans to try to get the city a deal with one, two or maybe even three CDEs.

"If she (the consultant) can know by next week that we actually have a management plan in place, the odds that she would be able to secure a deal for us are way higher than they otherwise would be," Zupp-Smith said.

She also pointed out that the award of the \$1 million CAT grant is contingent upon raising the remaining funding for the wellness center in the next six months.

"Which means, practically speaking, we need to close the New Markets Tax Credit deal, which takes time because

of a lot of legal work and real estate searches, so I feel strongly that we should go ahead and approve the YMCA management agreement tonight," she continued. "It's the most responsible, professional thing to do for a facility of this nature."

After the council meeting, Tim Stuart, a member of the wellness center fundraising committee, said that the fundraising level is now at 80% of the estimated \$18.9 million budget for the wellness center.

He added that he could think of two or three potential donors to the project who were waiting to see who would manage the facility before they committed money or a pledge.

One of the questions brought up at the council's January 2 meeting was language in the management agreement that set out amounts the city would pay to the Nishna Valley YMCA for bringing the facility online - initially \$200,000 - and for the operation of the facility - \$10,000 per month.

These amounts will come from the budget of the Parks and Rec Department, it was pointed out on Tuesday.

KR Buck, another member of the wellness center fundraising committee, said that the committee has already started an endowment to help fund the operation and management of the wellness center. He added that someone has already anonymously pledged \$300,000 toward the endowment, and the goal is to raise \$2 million for the endowment.

Councilman Dustin Logan alluded to some skepticism he had expressed at a previous meeting about the YMCA management agreement but said he combed through the agreement, had a good conversation with Garcia and asked questions.

"My biggest concern was the language concerning our local clubs and programs and how they would be a priority," he said. "I talked to some of the coaches and cleared a lot of that up. I want to be clear on that. We're not losing our local programs at all. This is more of a pay for proper management type of thing."

Later in the meeting, Garcia said legal counsel has to be hired for the New Markets Tax Credit program. The fee for the legal counsel is included in the New Markets Tax Credit so it's not an additional cost incurred by the city, she added.

Garcia and Zupp-Smith reviewed all the submissions from legal firms that responded to a request for proposals and selected the top three. Garcia said she hopes to schedule a time sometime this week for Zupp-Smith and her to hear from the top three and added that the council may have a quick special meeting on Friday to approve the hiring of one of those firms.

With that hiring completed this week, when the New Markets Tax Credit consultant goes to the conference next week to obtain a CDE for the city, the consultant will have the approved YMCA management agreement as well as an agreement for legal representation.

New program coordinator looks forward to revised Washington Park

WAREHAM, FROM PAGE 1

she said. "I'm a people person and I can probably sit here and talk your head off all day long. There's always so much you can learn in life. It's always changing, so adapting to that is always a big thing, as well."

She has spent her first few weeks getting to know the programs offered at Parks & Rec so she can plan her next steps.

"I want to add to it," she said. "I know winter is a time when there's not a lot going on, but I'd like to have as much going on as in the summer. I know the weather makes it hard but I'm open to trying to find ways around the weather to put kids in recreation so they're not stuck in the house 24/7 and they can get active."

She wants to be innovative with programming - but she noted that innovative doesn't always mean "new."

"You can take something old and revise it to make it better than it was before," Tara said. "If it's something that's gone on in the past and it hasn't gone great, how can we change it and make it so it works better? That's something that's in the works."

She enjoys a wide variety of recreation activities and doesn't necessarily have a favorite.

"I like to be busy, so the more the better, in my book," Tara said. "I'm used to high energy, a fast pace, and I don't like sitting around. If I'm able to put on six events in a week, I'd be happy to do that."

She's excited to be involved in the process to rework Washington Park and looks forward to the proposed Crawford County Recreation and Wellness Center.

"I'm excited to see how the feedback from the community goes with that," she said.

"Getting people's feedback is important. If things aren't working, how can we change things?"

With that in mind, Parks & Rec is in the process of running a survey concerning activities and programs currently offered in the community.

A five-question survey is posted on the Denison Parks & Rec Facebook page.

Individuals interested in providing feedback or suggestions to Tara may contact her at the Parks & Rec office at 712-263-8130.

Community involvement needed

VISIONING, FROM PAGE 1

"It's a work in progress; we're doing focus groups right now, and we'll have another focus group on March 23rd," Garrett said. "We already did a focus group up at the school with some kids on their needs and what they would like to see."

She said the Dow City Park and Main Street are areas she expects will benefit from the project.

"A goal for me is to see what we can do on Main Street to modernize it a little bit; maybe add some signs for things we have in town," she said. "We're already working on the park. We had some playground equipment that was donated. We have the cement pad down, now we just have to get it (the new playground equipment) up when the weather cooperates with us."

New and/or updated signage along Highway 30 through town is another possible goal.

"We have Dow City signs at each end of the town; I'm hoping we can update those and get lighting on them so we can see them at night," Garrett said.

"We're also working on planting trees

along highway 30 and in town. We're hoping to hear back about a grant for that."

Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program is sponsored by the Iowa Department of Transportation, Iowa State University Landscape Architecture Extension and Trees Forever, which is an Iowa-based nonprofit environmental advocacy organization that encourages the planting of trees.

The program is for communities with fewer than 10,000 residents; it provides funds to hire a landscape architect to develop a plan for the community.

"The architect will come back to us with some drawings and then we decide what projects we want to do and try to source the funding," Garrett said.

She said Dow City residents are interested in updating and refreshing the look of the town and making it more attractive.

She also wants to hear any other ideas residents may have.

"I hope people get involved because it will take everybody," Garrett said. "If their voices aren't heard, we won't know what they want."

WIEBERS, FROM PAGE 1

He was the head high school football coach from the 1989 season through the 2009 season, and then returned as the head coach for the 2023 season.

His youngest son, Luke, was a senior member of 2023 team.

Wiebers is a member of the Iowa Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame class for 2022.

He is a 1979 Denison High School graduate and graduated from Buena Vista College (now Buena Vista University) with degrees in business and physical education in 1983. He returned to his alma mater to teach business classes and to coach, according to the online archives of the Denison Review.

In his letter to the board, Wiebers wrote that he has been blessed to work in the school district for the past

40 years.

"During those 40 years, I have had the opportunity to work with so many great people. I would like to thank past and present school board members, administrators, teachers, coaches, cooks, transportation team, nurses, custodians, associates, maintenance staff, secretaries and parents for all of your support, guidance and camaraderie experienced throughout my time here. It will never be forgotten," he said in his letter.

He continued, "Lastly, to all of the students that I taught, coached, and worked with over my career, words can not express how you have impacted my life. Thank you."

His letter concluded, "It has been an honor to be able to be a part of the Denison Community District. The memories I've gained and the relationships I've formed will remain with me forever."

DHS student finalist in Iowa State Bar Association competition

Alex Avalos, a senior at Denison High School, is a finalist in The Iowa State Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division "Know Your Constitution" Project.

A total of 93 finalists were selected from the more than 500 students across the state who participated in the "Know Your Constitution" Project.

The finalists will be honored at a luncheon in Des Moines on January 26.

From the finalists, five students and their teachers will be chosen by a random drawing to receive scholarship grants and honoraria in recognition of their efforts.

The "Know Your Constitution" Project is designed to enrich students' understanding and appreciation of the Constitution. The students participating in the project were required to familiarize themselves with Constitution-related issues. A quiz was completed by each participating student. An essay question accompanied the quiz. This year's essay topic involved Constitutional questions concerning a legislative proposal to raise the voting age in the United States to 21. The question is modeled after



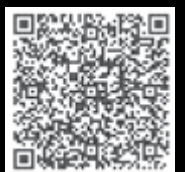
recent proposals floated by presidential candidates.

The "Know Your Constitution" program is sponsored by The Iowa State Bar Association, with additional funding from the Iowa State Bar Foundation and Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts.

Avalos, the son of Rosio Avalos, is a student of Denison High School government teacher Crystal Holt.

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LATE BREAKING NEWS

Facebook posts alert about school lockdown, threat not credible

The Denison Community Schools were placed under a lockdown on Thursday, according to a message posted to the district's Facebook page.

The post says that the lockdown occurred after a phone call was received at the high school that referred to a possible threat.

The post continues, "First and foremost, students are safe. Law enforcement and school district officials are investigating and believe there is no active threat to student safety. The lockdown will be removed and dismissal will happen at normal times with a law enforcement presence at our buildings out of an abundance of caution."

"While the threat was likely a hoax, we understand the anxiety a situation like this can cause families, students, staff and the community. Please know that our top priority is the safety and well-being of our students and staff. We take any and all reports of potential threats seriously, and we are making every effort to maintain an environment where students and staff feel safe. Thank you for your attention to this important update."

A Facebook post from Crawford County Emergency Management said the following: "Upon conducting an investigation, law enforcement officers were able to determine that the threat was not credible. This appears to have been a case of 'swatting,' a hoax that involves calls made to law enforcement or directly to schools, businesses, public libraries, or other entities where the public gathers. They are an attempt to cause disruptions by dispatching emergency services to a particular address."

Not necessarily the assessor's job

Weis appointed interim zoning administrator

BY DAN MUNDT

The Crawford County Board of Supervisors on January 12 appointed Chief Crawford County Deputy Assessor Seth Weis to be the interim Crawford County zoning administrator.

Weis has been with the assessor's office since June 2018.

He is currently running the assessor's office following the exit of former Crawford County Assessor Duane Zenk, whose resignation was effective January 4; he had also been the zoning administrator.

In a discussion with the board of supervisors on Tuesday, January 9, Weis and Deputy Assessor Madison Jacobsen looked for guidance from the supervisors as to how they should conduct the duties of the zoning administrator, as neither had been appointed to that position.

Weis asked who was supposed to accept applications for building permits and variances and handle other zoning duties.

Chairperson Jean Heiden noted that the zoning administrator is not always necessarily the assessor.

Jacobsen said that since Zenk retired, one individual had come to the assessor's office for an ag building permit; because no fee was involved, they simply provided the information.

She said she and Weis were more concerned about what to do if someone wants to build a new home or to put an addition on a home.

"I don't feel comfortable taking money from someone when I don't technically have the right to do so," she said.

Weis said that under Zenk, the deputies took building permits in the assessor's office.

Supervisor Craig Dozark asked if there was anything Zenk did that they could not do.

Jacobsen said the deputies were not part of variance meetings Zenk attended with the zoning board.

The deputies helped with meeting agendas and mailings to people who might want to give input about nearby projects being considered by the zoning board, she said.

Supervisor Kyle Schultz said the deputy assessors were better versed in zoning than anyone else in the courthouse.

Weis said he was OK with taking over the zoning duties, but noted he already had a lot on his plate having taken over Zenk's assessor duties.

Schultz said he was ready to appoint Weis as zoning administrator, but pointed out that when the next assessor takes over, the individual may not want their staff members to also do zoning.

Weis said he could do the interim zoning administrator job – and the issue could be revisited when a new assessor comes in.

The supervisors agreed to put a take-action item concerning the interim zoning administrator on the agenda for a special Friday, January 12 meeting.

Jacobsen asked if, in the time between the Tuesday and Friday meetings, the assessor's office should have individuals seeking building permits take their own checks to the treasurer's office rather than have someone from the assessor's office do it, as they normally would.

"Would it be in our best interest to have them hand-deliver their check?" she asked. "That way there is no money

being handled by someone who does not have the authority."

Supervisor Ty Rosburg said that was probably a good suggestion.

Supervisor Dave Muhlbauer said someone from the assessor's office could walk to the treasurer's office with the individual.

Weis said he expects to see lots of variance requests due to a new wind turbine project in the county.

The discussion continued at the Friday, January 12 meeting.

Crawford County Auditor Terri Martens noted that in some other counties, the zoning administrator is located in offices other than the assessor's; some are in conservation, engineer's and auditor's offices.

The supervisors discussed that the zoning administrator has in the past been given a stipend of \$5,049.

Rosburg said the job pays because the individual will be gathering information for the zoning board after hours, not during business hours.

"I don't think that's what happened before January 4th," Martens said.

"It's my understanding that they're doing it while they're on the clock doing the other job that we're paying them to do," Heiden said.

The zoning job is on top of their other job, she said.

"Is it something you can work into the job description of the position – where the assessor's job is to be the zoning administrator and you don't pay a stipend – it's just part of what you do?" Dozark asked.

"It would be up to the assessor a little bit," Martens said.

"It's not in the duties of the assessor," Weis said.

Rosburg said Iowa Code for the Department of Revenue would have to be checked to see whether zoning was an allowable part of the assessor's duties.

Heiden said it didn't seem fair to pay someone to do a job and then pay that person more to do the same thing during business hours.

"I don't know whose idea it was to do that," she said.

"It makes sense to have it be the assessor, because if I had a zoning question ... that's where I would go," Dozark said.

He said he thought it would be weird to take a zoning question to the conservation board or the county auditor.

Martens noted that the stipend works out to \$200 of biweekly pay.

"It's surely not a full-time job or it would be a full-time job," Rosburg said.

Dozark asked if it would be uncomfortable to have the chief deputy assessor or someone else in the assessor's office be the zoning administrator – and not the assessor.

"If it was OK with the assessor, I don't think there'd be any issue," Weis said.

He said he would do the interim zoning administrator job and would consider the permanent job if it were compensated, but noted he is currently doing the assessor's job along with his chief deputy duties.

The supervisors voted 5-0 to appoint Weis as the interim zoning administrator with compensation of \$200 per pay period.

Local Calendar

SATURDAY JANUARY 20, 2024

IHSSA District Large Group Speech Contest begins at 8 a.m. at Denison High School.

Low-cost spay/neuter clinic at CCHappyCats; \$40 per friendly cat, includes surgery, rabies vaccination, FVRCP vaccination, microchipping and deworming. Message CCHappyCats on Facebook or email cchappycats@gmail.com.

STEAM Saturday at Norelius Community Library, 10-11 a.m.; science, technology, engineering, art and math activities for children ages 8-13.

Annual Family Dinner, Izaak Walton League-Clarence Bartlett Chapter, doors open 5 p.m.; dinner at 6 p.m. at Schleswig Community Building, catered by Lidderdale Country Store. For tickets, contact any Ikes member or get at door. Adults, \$35; kids under 10, \$15.

SUNDAY JANUARY 21, 2024

Ricketts Community Club Pancake Brunch, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at the Ricketts Community Center. For a freewill donation, pancakes, French toast, ham, apple sauce, and a variety of rolls and pastries will be served; takeout available. Proceeds will go toward expenses for the Ricketts 125th anniversary celebration on June 29 and 30.

TUESDAY JANUARY 23, 2024

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.

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 24, 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.

Soup Supper at First United Methodist Church, 4:30-6:30 p.m., or when the soup runs out. Bean & Ham, Chili, and Chicken Noodle soups will be served at this drive-thru event. \$10 per quart includes 4 cookies.

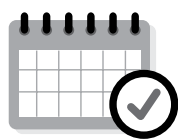
THURSDAY JANUARY 25, 2024

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.

Fireside book discussion at Norelius Community Library, 2-3 p.m. for adults. Inquire about this month's book at the circulation desk.

Denison Rotary Club Meet & Greet, 5:30 p.m. at the Bake Shop and Café in Uptown Denison. Learn about what Rotary has to offer and how Rotary serves the community. Appetizers and drinks will be available.

The Library Book Club at Norelius Community Library, 5:30-6:30 p.m.; books about books and libraries will be featured. Ages 19 and up.



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To the Editor:

Do not strip area education agencies of their services

Please do not strip Iowa's AEAs (area education agencies) of their services.

I have taught in Iowa high schools for 39 years and was lead instructor of the Morningside College alternative teacher licensure program for 12 years. I constantly made use of Northwest AEA's services in both positions for academic contests, curricular materials, and educational technology support.

What is the rationale for this bill? What are the reasons for destroying an educational support system that has functioned well since the 1960s? Is it to privatize Iowa public education? Would it allow the legislature to cut enough spending in order to meet the governor's

desire to eliminate the income tax? Legislators do not need to rubber stamp everything the governor wants.

If mental illness is a factor in school shootings, why would we shut down the agencies that provide counseling. If the idea is to consolidate services in the Iowa Department of Education, the department has never been effective in aiding educational programs in local schools. The AEAs are strategically located to provide timely services, especially to small rural districts.

This bill needs a lengthy public discussion for parents and educators to

ask questions as to motive and to relate positive experiences with their area agencies.

Please don't rush House Bill 542 through without public input and transparency. A midnight vote as has happened with previous education bills in the Iowa Legislature would look much like an authoritarian regime's behavior.

*Martin L Peterson,
Denison, IA*

The family of Roy M. Johnson would like to thank all of our relatives and friends for the many acts of kindness and sympathy shown to us in the loss of Roy.

Thanks for the memorials, flowers, cards and food that was sent.

The family would like to express their thanks to Pastor Manchester for his nice service. Also to Angels Care, the nurses at Crawford County Memorial Hospital and Dr. Ingram for their excellent care. And to the Huebner Funeral Home, the American Legion and the Ladies Aid for their wonderful service.

God's Blessings to all.

Zola Friedrichsen, Randy & Linda Friedrichsen, Les and Vicki Brown

County farm to go back on auction

Land to be put into CRP as soon as possible

BY DAN MUNDT

The Crawford County Board of Supervisors will conduct an auction to lease the county farm, which encompasses 121 acres of farmable land located about one mile east of Arion on Highway 30.

The supervisors had planned to enroll the farm in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) this year as the first step in transitioning the land into a public recreation/public use area.

A problem arose between the timing of the end of the current lease and when the county could enroll the land in CRP.

Even though the county sent notice that the lease would be terminated, the renter still has all legal rights to that land through the end of February, Supervisor Kyle Schultz explained to The Denison Free Press.

The USDA would not sign off on enrolling the land in CRP without the permission of the renter, he said.

The current renter, Jerry Brus, Jr., chose not to sign off on it, Schultz said.

The new contract for the coming year's lease will include language that will give the county the right to enroll the land into the CRP program.

Schultz noted that the supervisors don't know what will be in the next Farm Bill.

"There's no guarantee they'll even have CRP contracts in there," he said.

In past meetings, the supervisors have also discussed turning part of the county farm into an area that could be used by a proposed career academy that Western Iowa Tech Community College, Denison High School (DHS) and other area schools are working to create.

Supervisors Ty Rosburg said the schools were not yet prepared to initiate a program that would utilize the farm.

Schultz said he was told by the USDA that the county would have to pay a small penalty five years from now to take a portion of the farm's acres out of CRP for use by the schools in an education-based program.

Rosburg said he'd like to see farming, gardening and other practices taught at the farm.

"I think the focus of this board is to still try to work down that road and make it something available, and more beneficial to all the county," Schultz said.

In the discussion leading up to a 5-0 vote to conduct the lease auction, the supervisors covered a wide variety of issues related to the farm and the lease.

Supervisor Craig Dozark said any lease should be in the landowner's favor and, even though the new language of the lease might result in fewer bids and/or lower payments to the county, the county's objective for use of the land is more important than the dollar amount received.

Supervisor Jean Heiden noted her concern with language in the lease that states the landowner (the county) "may" reimburse the tenant for reasonable expenses or inputs.

Heiden had a concern about the difference between "may" and "shall" in the context of the lease and was concerned that the language might create a gray area for the county.

Dozark said, as an example, that if the renter plants a cover crop and then the county enrolls the land in CRP, he would expect the county would reimburse the renter for fertilizer.

Schultz said the renter would have to present receipts or other documentation in such a case.

If a COOP sprays anhydrous ammonia, there will be receipts, but spraying of manure could be a gray area because there wouldn't be a receipt, Rosburg said.

Dozark said the lease should be clear that the county plans to put the land into CRP when it becomes available.

"We should highlight that in the auction," said Supervisor Dave Muhlbauer.

The supervisors will set the date of the auction at their January 23 meeting.

Denison School Board gives update on superintendent hiring process

In a press release dated January 11, the Denison Community School District Board of Education provided an update on the superintendent hiring process, following a recent meeting with staff with Grundmeyer Leader Services.

Following is that update.

The job opportunity was posted on December 19 and will be open through January 28.

After the application window closes, the search consultants will present all candidates to the school board in closed session on February 1. The board will select 5-8 candidates to screen.

Candidate screening will be conducted on February 12. The search consultants will set up and facilitate the screening interviews, and finalists will be publicly named shortly after

those interviews take place. The desired qualifications identified by the district and board will continue to drive the hiring process.

Staff, administrators, community members, and students will soon be contacted to serve on the formal interview teams. The Denison and Schleswig Community school districts will both have representation in the interview process. Each person will provide the board with feedback on the finalists after the interviews.

The board will conduct formal interviews with the finalists on Monday, February 26.

The selected superintendent will officially begin leading the Denison Community School District and the Schleswig Community School District on July 1.

Funeral Notices

Roseann Olson

Funeral services for Roseann Olson, 78, of Deloit, will be conducted at 10 a.m. Friday, January 19, at Zion Lutheran Church in Denison with burial at the Morgan Cemetery in Schleswig.



The Huebner Funeral Home in Denison is in charge of arrangements where friends may call from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, January 18.

She passed away Monday, January 15, at Denison Care Center.

Survivors include her children, Rodney Olson and his wife, Erin, of Denison, Regina and her husband, Darin Schau, of Ida Grove, Ronnie Olson and his wife, Staci, of Avoca, and Rashelle and her husband, Bill Rickers, of Nebraska; eight grandchildren; one great-grandchild; four step-grandchildren; four step-great-grandchildren; a sister, Rhonda and her husband, Doug Wessel, of Denison; sisters-in-law, Norma Jaacks, of Webster City, LeAnn Jaacks, of Spirit Lake, Dona Siemer, of Missouri, Diana and her husband, Lonnie Blunk, of Missouri, Debbie and her husband, Creston Schubert, of Galva, and Cindy and her husband, Ron Hoffmeier, of Denison; brother-in-law, Wayne Olson, of Missouri; and nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

Services are entrusted to the Huebner Funeral Home.

Richard Tech

Funeral services for Richard Tech, 66, of Denison, were conducted at 11 a.m. Thursday, January 18, at Zion Lutheran Church in Denison with visitation one hour prior to the service.

Burial will be at 2 p.m. Friday, January 19, at the Dow City Cemetery.

He passed away January 7 at Crawford County Memorial Hospital in Denison.

Survivors include his daughter, Sara Hart, of Colorado; his son, Alex Tech (Savanna Pague), of Colorado; their mother, Dorothy Tech, of Denison; a brother, Larry Tech, of Spirit Lake; a sister, Denise Brink, of Dow City; and other relatives and friends.

Services are entrusted to the Huebner Funeral Home in Denison.

Mae Hennings

Visitation for Mae Hennings, 86, of Denison, was 9 to 10 a.m. Thursday, January 18, at the Huebner Funeral Home in



Denison with graveside services following at 10:30 a.m. at Morgan Cemetery in Schleswig.

She passed away Sunday, January 14, at Crawford County Memorial Hospital in Denison.

Survivors include two daughters, Jeri (Tim) Laubscher, of Missouri, and Kelly (Troy) Rosburg, of Denison; one granddaughter; four great-grandchildren; a brother Don (Joy) Lafrentz, of Oklahoma; and nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

Services were entrusted to the Huebner Funeral Home.

Charlotte Dueland

Funeral services for Charlotte Dueland, 81, of Norwalk, formerly of Denison, will be conducted at 12 p.m. Friday, January 19, at United Presbyterian Church in Denison with visitation one hour prior to the service.



Burial will be at the Oakland Cemetery in Denison.

She passed away Wednesday, January 10, at Iowa Methodist Medical Center in Des Moines.

Survivors include two daughters, Jami Siefken (Bryant), of Des Moines, and Janna Raper (Troy), of Kansas; one son, David Dueland (fiancée Jill Happel), of Norwalk; five grandchildren; two sisters, Carolyn Dalton, of New York, and Shirley Gibson, of Arizona; and numerous nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

Services are entrusted to the Huebner Funeral Home.

Gloria Ipsen

Visitation for Gloria Ipsen, 75, was conducted from 5 to 7 p.m. Monday, January 15, at the Huebner Funeral Home in Schleswig.



Private family services were conducted at United Church of Christ in Schleswig with interment at the Morgan Cemetery.

She passed away Wednesday, January 10, at Fonda Specialty Care in Fonda.

Survivors include two sons, Michael (Valerie) Ipsen, of Schleswig, and Jamie Ipsen (Annie Bode), of Schleswig; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; siblings, Roger (Ursula) Borecky, of Denison, and Steve Borecky, of Dunlap; and many other relatives and friends.

Services were entrusted to the Huebner Funeral Home in Schleswig.

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Monarchs

DENISON-SCHLESWIG MONARCHS BASKETBALL

Monarch girls fall to Lewis Central

The Denison-Schleswig Monarch girls fell 53-11 in a home basketball game against Lewis Central on Tuesday.

Kiana Schulz scored four points and had six rebounds and two steals. Lola Mendlik scored three points and Mayah Slater and Whitlee Auen each scored two points. Slater pulled down four rebounds and Auen had five.

The loss put the Monarchs' season record at 7-5. Their conference record is 3-3.

In the girls' junior varsity game, the Monarchs fell 49-38. Lola Mendlik led in scoring with seven, Kamden Bruhn and Norah Hueber each scored six and Lauryn Turin and Gaby Cardenas registered five apiece. The scoring was rounded out by Lyli Morgan and Ann Wessel with four each and Sam Chandler with one.



Gaby Cardenas fights for a rebound in the home game against Lewis Central.



Addison Inman goes up to block a shot against Lewis Central.



Lance Arkfeld blocks a shot against a Lewis Central player.



Luke Wiebers ties up the ball in a home game against Lewis Central on Tuesday. The Monarchs were edged by two points, 63-61.



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PHOTOS BY RHONDA RAUCH

DENISON-SCHLESWIG MONARCHS BOWLING

Monarch bowlers battle St. Albert

The Monarch boys' varsity bowling team lost their match against St. Albert on January 11.

High games from the varsity team include Jake Fink with a 210, Jett Paulsen with a 198, and Gavin Schmadeke with a 181.

Jake Fink had the high series of 412 with games of 202 and 210.

The varsity boys' finished the first round with a total of 1719. The varsity team knew they were down going into bakers, but it didn't stop them from competing, said Head Coach Shelby Brawner.

"They threw a 238 their first game managing to gain back 81 pins. They

continued with strong baker games of 222, 193, 226, and 205 to end the match," she said.

The boys ended up losing to St. Albert 3053 to 2803.

The Monarch girls' varsity team won their match against St. Albert, 2385 to 2303.

High games from the varsity team include Brianna Musgrave with a 202, Brittany Musgrave with a 202, Nevaeh Brandt with a 177, and Haley Lutz with a 158.

Brianna Musgrave had the high series of 390 with games of 202 and 188.

"There was definitely some competition within the team as Brittany

Musgrave finished just three pins behind her sister with a 387 series," said Brawner. They finished the first round with a total of 1640.

The varsity girls were winning going into bakers. They started off strong with a 176 and kept their lead bowling games of 143, 154, 136, and 136.

The boys' JV team won its match against St. Albert, 2335 to 2312.

High games from the JV team include Adyn Zenk with a 189, Lucien Steinkuehler with a 174, Cammerin Palmer with a 168, and Logan Harper with a 158.

Adyn Zenk had the high series of 361 with games of 189 and 172. They finished the first round with a total of 1572.

The JV boys were winning by only 41 pins going into bakers. They struggled to get started bowling games of 130 and 136, said Brawner. At that point they were only up 15 pins. They finished with games of 155, 189, and 153 to get the win.

The girls' JV team did not have a team to bowl against. High games from the JV team include Chloe Koch with a 138 and Isabelle Westphalen with a 122. They tied for their series at 224. Koch had games of Westphalen had games of 122 and 102.

The JV girls finished the first round with a total of 1077. The JV girls threw baker games of 117, 111, 98, 128, and 115. Their final score was 1646.

Sports

DENISON-SCHLESWIG MONARCHS WRESTLING

Monarch boys compete in last home wrestling dual for season

The Denison-Schleswig Monarch boys competed in their last home dual wrestling meet for the season on January 11.

Head Coach Nick Bradley thanked seniors Garret Plagge and Luis Chan for all the time, commitment, and leadership they have given to the wrestling program.

"They are both great young men and will be missed next year," said Bradley. "We wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors."

The last home dual featured a hard-fought contest against Logan-Magnolia. The Monarchs fell 49-27.

"We started off strong winning some matches and then we got outmatched later in the dual and ended up losing," Bradley said. "We are proud of the fight we gave in each match."

The Monarchs then registered a Hawkeye-10 Conference victory against Clarinda and won 45-24.

Bradley said Clarinda gave away a lot of weights, which helped the outcome.

Lewis Central was the Monarchs' last opponent for the night. Lewis Central won 55-15.

"I feel we came out a little flat and weren't ready for this dual like we were the other two," said Bradley. "We had a couple of wins in the middle of the lineup and gave up quite a few falls to Lewis Central in this dual."

Logan-Magnolia match results

James Lemon (150), Javier Medina (157) Giovanni Hernandez (165), Joel Murrillo (190) and Garret Plagge (heavyweight) all won by falls. Ismael

Alfaro (175) won a 7-5 decision.

Clarinda match results

Francisco Escalante (144) and James Lemon both won by falls. Trae Hartwig (113) won a 10-3 decision. Jayden Bradley (120), Jackson Graeve (126), Aden Esquerra (132), Luis Lopez (138) and Ismael Alfaro (175) all won by forfeit.

Lewis Central match results

Javier Medina won by fall, Ismael Alfaro won an 8-6 decision and James Lemon won by forfeit.



James Lemon throws his opponent to eventually get to a pin in a match on January 11.

PHOTOS BY RHONDA RAUCH



Ismael Alfaro tries to work for a pin. He won the match 8-6 against Braiden Pace of Lewis Central.

LAND TRANSACTIONS

January 5-11, 2024

Warranty Deeds

- Darlene T. Niehaus to Mark Alan Jackson and Rachel Marie Jackson: Lot 16, Block 40, Adams & Hoffman Second Addition, City of Vail.
- Alejandro Orizaba Tello to Jose Espinoza: Lot 8, Block 122, City of Denison; \$120,000.
- Troy Currier and Linda Currier to Benjamin Stolz and Tessa Stolz: Lot 8, Jentz Second Addition, City of Denison; \$55,000.
- Ivan FJ Rickers, Deann L. Cline, Atty. To Douglas Lee Schmitz and Cindy Ann Schmitz: SE1/4 SW1/4 SE1/4 Section 13, Westside Township; SW1/4 SW1/4 SE1/4 Section 13, Westside Township; \$13,000.
- Keith K. Kaspersen and Diane J. Kaspersen to Diane J. Kaspersen, LE, Tiffany Gordon and Tara Gordon: NW1/4 Section 36, Westside Township.
- Douglas E. Dowty and Jane Dowty to Douglas E. and Jane Dowty Trust, Douglas E. Dowty and Jane Dowty, Trustees.

- Kristin Kastner and Troy Ladehoff to Kurt Kastner and Lonnie Kastner, LE: E1/2 NW1/4 Section 32, Otter Creek Township; \$125,000.

Court Officer Deeds

- Barbara McKillip Estate to Rebecca Steinbach: Lot 12, Sunrise Addition, City of Denison; \$20,000.
- Michal Kent Stone Estate, Greg Stone, Administrator to Louis Gregory Stone and Greg Stone: W1/2 SW1/4 Section 33, Milford Township.

Quit Claim Deeds

- Michael J. Fink and Patricia J. Hoemann to Michael Fink Revocable Trust, Michael Fink, Trustee: SE1/2 SE1/4 Section 14, Goodrich Township; SW1/4 SW1/4 Section 13, Goodrich Township; NW1/4 SW1/4 Section 13, Goodrich Township; NW1/4 NW1/4 Section 24, Goodrich Township.
- Kristin Kastner and Troy Ladehoff to Kurt Kastner and Angela Kastner: NW1/4 NW1/4 Section 15, Otter Creek Township; SW1/4 Section 10, Otter Creek Township.

COURTHOUSE NEWS

January 5-12, 2024

SMALL CLAIMS

- Against: Reginald Louis Jenkins Jr., Denison. In favor of: Jacqueline Emilia Lima Salazar. Amount: \$1,675 plus \$100.50 costs.
- Against: Gerald Richard Swanson, Manilla. In favor of: Carroll Dental Clinic. Amount: \$1,116 plus \$95 costs.
- Against: Brooke Allison Hillhouse, Denison. In favor of: Plaza Services, LLC. Amount: \$1,982 plus \$95 costs.
- Against: Tyler J. Maynard, Denison. In favor of: BCG Equities, LLC. Amount: \$1,993.94 plus \$95 costs.
- Against: Dusti Arlene Garcia, Dow City. In favor of: LVNV Funding, LLC. Amount: \$600.07 plus \$115 costs.
- Against: Shandi Marie Steinkuehler, Schleswig. In favor of: First National Bank of Omaha. Amount: \$2,521.29 plus \$95 costs.

NON-SCHEDULED TRAFFIC FINES

- John Neyok Mayot Maiek, Yankton, SD, DUS – driving while license denied, suspended, cancelled or revoked, \$462.50.
- Barry Charles Ostrom, Cassopolis, MI, failure to stop in assured clear distance, \$180.75.

SCHEDULED TRAFFIC FINES

- Fernando Rigoberto Salinas Alberto, Denison, trespass, first offense, \$354.
- Carla Kay Rodriguez, Pisgah, failure to maintain control, \$240.25.
- John Neyok Mayot Maiek, Yankton, SD, failure to obey traffic control device, \$210.25.
- Alex William Harm, Schleswig, failure to comply with safety regulations rules, \$175.75.
- Nathaniel J. Gallagher, Vail, failure to maintain or use safety belts, adult, \$175.75.
- David Enrique Rauda Zavala, Denison, no valid driver's license, \$354.
- Ryan C. Meeves, Manilla, failure to maintain or use safety belts, adult, \$135.50.
- Janelly Patricia Rivas, Denison, violation of instruction permit limitation, \$135.50.
- Richard Eugene King, Wichita, KS, operating non-registered vehicle, \$175.75.

- Marco Antonio Mendoza Garcia, Denison, violation of instruction permit limitation, \$135.50.
- Aidan John Larson, Schleswig, person under 21 years of age using tobacco/vapor product, first offense, \$70.
- John Lee Hawk, Denison, leave scene of accident, property damage only, \$210.25.
- Baltazar Chino, Denison, no valid driver's license, \$354.
- Beatris Segura, Denison, no valid driver's license, \$354.
- Luis Angel Navar, Denison, operation without registration card or plate, \$135.50.
- Miguel Angel Salgado, Denison, failure to provide proof of financial liability, accident, \$796.75.
- Miguel Angel Salgado, Denison, no valid driver's license, \$354.
- Thomas Joseph Schulte, Earling, failure to obey stop sign and yield right of way, \$210.25.

SPEEDING (16-20 MPH OVER)

- Jessica Janel Badding, Carroll, \$193.
- Dustin Everett Short, Smithland, \$193.
- Yaricel Hernandez, Arion, \$262.

SPEEDING (11-15 MPH OVER)

- Michael Charles Clubine, Boone, \$175.75.
- Aaron Ramirez, Kansas City, KS, \$175.75.

SPEEDING (6-10 MPH OVER)

- Jason Wayne Webb, Arnold, MO, \$118.25.

SPEEDING (1-5 MPH OVER)

- Amanda K. Musfeldt, Denison, \$106.75.
- Amy Nicole Vetter, Westside, \$89.50.
- Cecilia Carolina Sandoval, Denison, \$89.50.
- Lazaro A. Alvarez Perez, Denison, \$89.50.
- Brenda Lea Bergman, Arthur, \$89.50.
- Nyahook Tang Ngundeng Jal, Denison, \$89.50.
- Dana Lynn Buck, Tennant, \$89.50.



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International “political junkies” put boots on the ground in Denison to learn about immigration, politics and the Iowa caucuses

BY GORDON WOLF

A group of self-described political junkies, primarily from the United Kingdom, with one member each from Australia and Austria, spent time in Denison late last week to get an unfiltered view of American culture and politics ahead of the caucuses on Monday.

The group was hosted by Political Tours, a travel company founded in 2011 by former New York Times correspondent Nicholas Wood. Since the founding, Wood was joined by his wife, Karen Davey, a former South African doctor.

Wood and Davey have conducted tours to over 30 countries, including Ukraine, Russia, North Korea, China and Iran.

In Denison, the group of six tourists, plus Wood and Davey, met on Thursday with Lorena Lopez, publisher of La Prensa and The Denison Free Press, to hear her views on immigration and politics. Later in the day, they attended a meeting of the Crawford County Republican Party Central Committee.

The tour group was accompanied by Brad Knott, a political consultant from Iowa, and Dave Swenson, a retired Iowa State University economist, whose area of expertise for the tour was his knowledge of Iowa and its communities.

In addition to the stop in Denison, the group had planned to attend a Nikki Haley campaign event on Friday and a Donald Trump rally on Sunday. The group experienced the harshness of Iowa's January weather that caused the Haley event to be cancelled. The Trump event took place in Indianola as scheduled.

On Monday, the group observed a caucus in Des Moines, and was scheduled to fly home on Tuesday.

During the conversation with Lopez, Wood explained that the purpose of his company is to give people an understanding of issues from around the world, from the grassroots level on up.

“Our aim here is to meet the voters and learn about the local communities, like Denison. Denison is interesting - from what we've heard a potentially successful model of different communities mixing together,” he said.

“Everyone here wants to know, and we want to find out for ourselves,” Wood added later. “It's just not good enough to sit on a couch, as you might say, a sofa, and look at the news headlines. That's my view of what travel should be about. You should be able to really learn instead of wandering around a museum. What are you going to learn by wandering around a museum?”

Richard Murphy, who was born in Ireland and lives in the United Kingdom, said, “The reason it (the trip) appeals to people like me is that it's a deeper dive into the stuff we can sit and read at home.”

Alan Richenberg, from London, said, “We want to explore some of the conundrums of American politics. We want things explained to us. For instance, one of the great puzzles

of American politics for those of us who fail to understand the appeal of (Donald) Trump is why so many of the people who are voting for him seem like the kind of people who should be repelled by him in terms of what his policies are and what his personality is.

“You're not going to have that explained by sitting at home, but if you can start meeting a variety of people, not just professional politicians, and ask questions, you can maybe start to deepen your understanding of what's going on,” he explained.

Richenberg said the current trip was the 14th he had taken with Political Tours.

Caroline Sumnall, also from London, pointed out that sometimes it's the little things that make a difference.

For example, she said she asked people who were in line to see Trump to show where their hats were from. They were all made in China.

“You can't read about that,” she said.

She added, “You get to be in a room with Donald Trump and feel how that feels, not just see it on TV, and watch the caucuses in action.”

Prior to the Crawford County Republican Central Committee meeting, Eileen Sailer, the party's chairperson, told the group how Iowans get a chance to meet presidential candidates in person because of the first-in-the-nation caucuses. She said she was able to talk to every one of the 11 Republican candidates who initially ran and that she's met some of the candidates upwards of seven times, mainly the ones she is extremely interested in.

Asked about Trump, Sailer said she has probably met him five times. She added that she was active in his campaigns in 2016 and 2020. He was not her first choice, she said, but as he ended up being the party's nominee, she campaigned for him.

She told the members of the tour group that she was supporting Vivek Ramaswamy because his platform is to restore the county to the ideals of the founding fathers.

Sailer informed the group that others on the central committee have differing views and were supporting other candidates.

Doug Gronau, a member of the central committee and a farmer, said he was leaning in favor of Ron De Santis but that Ramaswamy was “right there” although he said Ramaswamy was dabbling in state issues that he shouldn't.

He said Trump's agriculture policies were disastrous.

“He says he'll do the same thing, put on tariffs, which means trade will go down, which means our prices will go down,” said Gronau. “We really can't stand that right now with what we're going through.”

Asked to think back in time to a favorite politician that he would be happy to vote for, Gronau said both Bushes (George H.W. and George W.) were good.

Another favorite of the past was



PHOTOS BY GORDON WOLF

At right, Brad Knott talks to a group who came to Denison on Thursday through the Political Tours travel company. They are at the offices of The Denison Free Press to talk to Lorena López (seated in the middle at the couch at left).



Eileen Sailer, chairperson of the Crawford County Republican Party, talks to people on a political tour prior to the party's central committee meeting at Bella Sera restaurant on Thursday evening.

Ronald Reagan.

Sailer said most people were happy with him.

“He told it the way it was, and I think most people really appreciated that about him,” said Gronau.

Sailer and a couple people on the tour got into a back-and-forth exchange about Ukraine and Russia. She said she favored Ramaswamy's solution for Ukraine and Russia. Parts of that solution were to cede territory in eastern Ukraine to Russia and block any attempt for Ukraine to join NATO. In return, Russia would have to end its military alliance with China. Sanctions on Russia would also be ended.

Wood asked if Sailer thought that was short-sighted and asked if she would have any sympathy if he said that policy would threaten the welfare of Europe, his future and his children's future.

Sailer responded. “I believe in the America first principle, and I believe that each country should make their own decision how they want to defend themselves. I don't think it's the United States' job to engage in every war. I think it's great to have allies and maybe give support in what ways we can, but certainly not at the risk of endangering our own borders.”

“Don't you think it would be detrimental to America's interests if Russia was allowed to run roughshod through Europe?” Wood asked.

“I don't think they will go through eastern Europe if we have a strong president who understands what our country is all about,” Sailer responded.

Richenberg said that Ramaswamy's plan for Ukraine sounded “excruciatingly naïve and dangerously so.”

“How many trillions has America expended on trying to contain Russia since the end of the Second World War and now we have Ukraine doing it on the cheap for them, and yet there are congressional maneuvers to choke off that money,” he challenged.

He said Russia has never kept an international promise regarding Ukraine.

Other questions and answers ranged from illegal immigration and the deficit to electric cars.

However, a main question for the central committee members was who they planned to vote for in the caucuses and why.

They were asked if they sensed a lot of competition among the candidates or if Trump had the nomination wrapped up.

One response was that there was as much support for Haley as there was for De Santis, but it would depend if Trump supporters would show up en masse on caucus night.

Some of the central committee members said they would decide who to vote for on caucus night.

Wood said he has looked at politics from all around world and added, “The great things is to come and hear people like you so we can understand it for ourselves.”

Another on the tour said that all the people they talked to were very clear, open and straightforward and asked if they will still be friends on Tuesday.

“Oh, yes,” was the response.

NORELIUS COMMUNITY LIBRARY NEWS

Norelius Library Board to meet January 23

The Norelius Community Library Board of Trustees will conduct its annual meeting followed by the monthly business meeting on January 23 at 5:15 p.m. in the library Fireside Room. The annual meeting agenda includes a review of the annual report and election of officers. The monthly business meeting agenda includes trustee training, public forum, review of monthly reports, library director's report, bills, and committee reports. Old business includes server project updates, facilities updates, and active shooter training. A new business item is building and content security. Board meetings are subject to Iowa Open Meetings laws. The meetings are open to the public with the exception of personnel issues. Contact the library at 712-263-9355 for more information.

Senior Lunch Menu

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

Friday, January 19:

tater tot casserole, peas, bread,
banana cream pudding

Monday, January 22:

scalloped potatoes with ham, green
beans, whole wheat bread, fruit cup

Tuesday, January 23:

roast turkey, mashed potatoes
with gravy, California blend, whole
wheat bread, chocolate chip cookie

Wednesday, January 24:

chili, whole wheat crackers,
coleslaw, cinnamon roll

Thursday, January 25:

herb crusted pork loin with boiled
potatoes, classic mixed vegetables,
apple slices

Friday, January 26:

BBQ baked chicken, potato wedges,
coleslaw, blueberry crisp

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DHS group first in jazz festival

Denison High School (DHS) Jazz One placed first in class 3A at the Triton Jazz Festival in Fort Dodge on December 10. DHS musicians who received outstanding solo awards

are Shelby Kastner, Grant Olsen, Jayden Bradley, Nash Langenfeld, and Cooper Gehlsen. DHS Jazz One will next perform at the Iowa Lakes Jazz Festival in Estherville this Friday

(January 19), and both jazz bands (DHS Jazz One and DHS Jazz Two) will travel to Storm Lake on Monday, January 23, for the Iowa High School Music Association Jazz Festival.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF IOWA CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

DHS Jazz One

In Remembrance



Roy Manford Johnson
July 9, 1928 - January 4, 2024

Roy Manford Johnson was born on July 9, 1928, the son of Gunner and Anna (Jessen) Johnson of Ida Grove, Iowa. He graduated from Schleswig High School with the class of 1945. Following his education, he started farming with his dad. Roy enlisted into the United States Army and faithfully served until his honorable discharge.

Roy married Alice (Jochims) Gehring on June 28, 1959, at the United Church of Christ in Schleswig. Roy farmed in Ida County until his retirement in 1995, and the couple then moved to their home in Schleswig. Following retirement, he spent several years working at the FAC in Schleswig.

Roy was a lifetime member of the United Church of Christ as well as a longtime member of the VFW in Schleswig. He loved playing cards and socializing over morning coffee with his friends at KCK's in Schleswig. He enjoyed his 95th birthday celebration with family and friends.

Roy passed away at his home on Thursday, January 4, 2024, at the age of 95 years, five months and 26 days.

Roy preceded in death by his parents; wife, Alice Johnson in 2012; son-in-law, Norman Friedrichsen in 1999; step-grandson, Ricky Friedrichsen; step-great-grandson, Chad Brown; and sister: Mary Ellen Ludwig. He is survived by his step-daughter, Zola Friedrichsen of Schleswig; step-grandchildren: Randy (Linda) Friedrichsen of Parker, Colorado and Vicky (Les) Brown of Denison; step-great-grandchildren: Stacey (Steve) Vaughn of Parker, Colorado; nieces and nephews; and many other relatives and friends.

Funeral Services were held 10:30 A.M., Thursday, January 11, 2024 at United Church of Christ in Schleswig, Iowa with Kirk Manchester officiating. Organist Wendy Bumann provided accompaniment for congregational hymns "Amazing Grace" and "The Old Rugged Cross." Serving as honorary pallbearers were Les Brown, Darrel Brodersen, Dan Comstock, Randy Friedrichsen, Leroy Fredericks, Larry Grill, LaWayne Gronau, Chad Petersen and Dan Schroeder. Military Honors and pallbearers were members of the Schleswig VFW Post 3930 & American Legion Post 645. 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.



Jayden Bradley



Nash Langenfeld

First United Methodist Church

Annual Soup Supper

Weds. Jan. 24, 2024 · 4:30pm - 7:00pm
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PARK, FROM PAGE 1

to give back to the City of Denison to ... start looking for new park equipment. We know how much kids love that park and being able to use it."

He said the teachers support everything the city is doing with the park.

Denison Mayor Pam Soseman was in attendance, along with Denison City Manager Jessica Garcia, Parks & Rec Director Sam Ellis and new Parks & Rec Program Coordinator Tara Wareham.

Soseman said she, Ellis and Garcia had recently looked over renderings of the proposed playground that will replace Kids Kastle, which was demolished last August.

She said Ellis plans to take the renderings, which were produced by Beck Engineering, to the schools to get feedback from students.

"That's who we really want to engage," Soseman said.

She said the new design will include equipment to engage physical activity and stimulate math skills.

Old-fashioned monkey bars also will be included in the design.

Garcia asked when the Broadway Elementary School will have a useable playground again; the old playground is in the footprint of a remodeling project that began last year.

Bekkerus said fall of 2025 would probably be the soonest the school would have a useable playground.

The city's goal is to have the new playground at Washington Park completed in August of this year, Garcia said.

"Ordering equipment will have to happen no later than March for delivery to be by mid-June," she said.

The 2024 Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI) presents a wrinkle in the schedule.

"On January 27-28, we find out if we are a RAGBRAI host town," Garcia said.

If Denison is selected, the playground area will be kept open and empty as a camping area for the bicyclists.

"Then we would look at installation in the ... latter half of July and being done by the time school starts in August," she said. "If we're not selected, we can move that timeline up."

Soseman said the equipment takes 14-15 weeks for delivery,

"So we have to be right on target to get that done," she said.

The City of Denison and the Parks & Rec Board are working with an engineer to develop a master plan for all of the parks in Denison.

Soseman said a recent "community visioning" process brought in many suggestions for the parks from members of the public.

"We're concentrating on public safety, expansion of Northside Rec, wayfinding signs, and trails," The engineer will produce a master plan based on feedback from the community and from what the Parks & Rec Board says are the amenities needed in the parks.

Shovel-ready projects will be developed so that when the Washington Park playground project is complete, another can be started.

Garcia noted that the new playground will be all-inclusive and ADA-compliant with lots of activities for individuals of all abilities.

The closest playground with similar features is in Carroll; that park is quite a bit smaller and may be somewhat dated with respect to ADA compliance, she said.

The next-closest similar playground

is in Council Bluffs or Omaha.

"We figured if it was time to make a change, we should work on being inclusive for anyone and everyone," Garcia said.

Ellis said the new playground will offer more than physical activity and will have a little bit for everyone.

"I've been told even adults can go on it, but if you get stuck, we're not going to get you out of there," he said. "It's something we're all proud to be part of."

He said Washington Park and the new playground will be Denison's "crown jewel."

"We're going to promote it and get as much use as we can out of that park for the next 20-25 years," Ellis said.

"We also see it as a tourist attraction," Soseman said. "With proper wayfinding signage along Highway 30, we can direct them one block off the highway for an all-inclusive park."

Garcia provided the latest renderings of the new playground to The Denison Free Press.

She noted that the design is not final.

The city reserves the right to make changes to the layout of the park based on cost and feasibility, Garcia said.

Park Designs

The below are renderings by Beck Engineering of the current design for the new playground at Washington Park. The playground area will encompass most of the south quarter of the park. The design is not yet final and changes may be made for cost and feasibility.

