

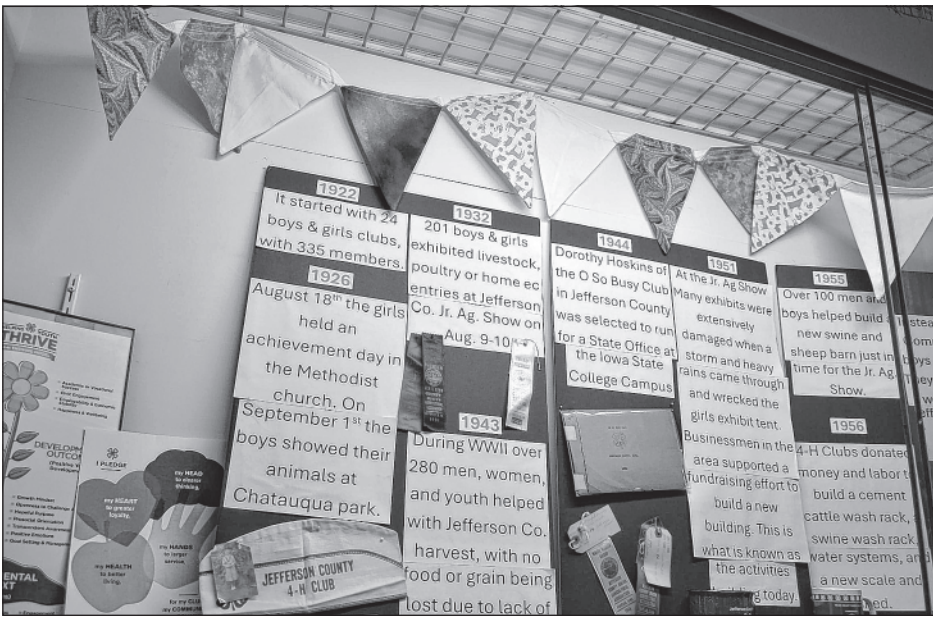
Museum

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Barbara Kistler, treasurer of Jefferson County ISU Extension Council, said a chance encounter at the museum prompted her to think of creating a 4-H exhibit. She was there one day to drop off a photo, and saw that Loretta Diers had just moments ago donated her 4-H dress and some of her ribbons to the museum. “A lightbulb went off,” Kistler said.

Kistler mentioned to Carnegie Museum Director Jake Schmidt that those artifacts would be nice to display to showcase the upcoming Greater Jefferson County Fair, which is June 23-30. Schmidt added that it would be even better to leave them up through the Iowa State Fair Aug. 7-17, and that’s what they decided.

4-H County Director Courtney Burkhalter suggested inviting the county’s 4-H clubs to submit items for the display, and Kistler said she “jumped right on that.”



Barbara Kistler made the banner that runs above the timeline of key events in the history of Jefferson County 4-H. (Andy Hallman/The Union)

Taylor Miller and Piper Miller got involved, and they belong to two different 4-H clubs, with Taylor on Leading Hands and Piper on Ceniteers. Piper said she was able to find a history of 4-H someone else had typed, and she highlighted some of the key events in the organization’s history by creating a timeline for the display, with help from fellow Ceniteer Natalie Steele.

The museum already had some 4-H artifacts such as old newspaper articles, and Burkhalter agreed to let the girls borrow some 4-H materials housed at the fairgrounds to use in the display. One of the neat facts highlighted in the display was how large 4-H was right off the bat. In its very first year in Jefferson County in 1922, the club boasted 335

members. Boys and girls belonged to separate clubs. The boys’ clubs showed animals while the girls’ clubs did home economics activities. Kistler mentioned that the Activities Building at the fairgrounds, built in the 1950s, was commonly referred to as the “Girls’ Building.” The display tells the story of how 4-H kids were recruited to harvest



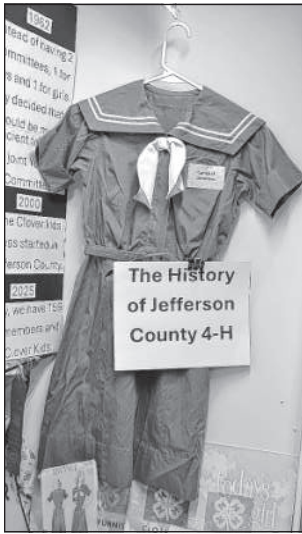
An artifact from Lenora McCormick from 1939. (Andy Hallman/The Union)

crops in 1943 while the men were fighting in World War II.

Piper said a thought that occurred to her while preparing this exhibit was that it would be nice to bring 4-H participation numbers back to what they were years ago.

“Today we have 159 members and 60 Clover Kids, and that’s quite a bit less than what we started with in 1922,” Piper said. “If we could get our numbers up, that would be nice.”

Call Andy Hallman at 641-575-0135 or email him at andy.hallman@southeastiowaunion.com



This 4-H dress, which served as a uniform, was donated to the Carnegie Historical Museum by Loretta Diers. (Andy Hallman/The Union)

Thomas

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**Union: An email in the court file shows that your attorney at the time, Kellie Paschke emailed Jefferson County Attorney Chauncey Moulding on April 25, 2024 stating, "My client signed the Agreement on April 17, 2024. He is withdrawing his revocation." Doesn't that mean that your attorney rescinded your revocation of the agreement, and that the agreement is therefore in effect?**

**Thomas:** That email from my former attorney, Kellie Paschke, does indicate she withdrew my revocation. However, I had already made it clear I did not agree with her actions. I was not fully informed of my rights at the time, and I now believe I received inadequate legal representation. Importantly, I never signed a formal settlement agreement, and I continue to assert that my resignation was not voluntary. Under Iowa law, veterans cannot be removed from covered positions without due process—including a hearing.

**Union: You have said in court filings that your resignation was made under duress. Can you speak to how you were under duress?**

**Thomas:** On April 17, 2024, I was summoned into a meeting with County Attorney Chauncey Moulding and others without prior notice, legal representation, or opportunity to respond. I was told I had to resign immediately or face potential termination. This happened while I was actively recovering from documented PTSD and other service-connected disabilities. I felt isolated, threatened, and pressured into a decision under circumstances that were neither fair nor lawful. That meeting was recorded, and I have repeatedly requested the county to release that recording, which they continue to withhold.

**Union: In Jefferson County's lawsuit against you filed May 23, 2025, it states that**

**you resigned "in lieu of investigation into acts and/or omissions during the course of his employment with Plaintiff, including but not limited to concerns over fraternization or inappropriate relationships with subordinates, misuse of material or equipment belonging to JCAS, and failure to adequately supervise subordinates." Did you not want the county to investigate these accusations, and if not, why not?**

**Thomas:** The allegations raised by Jefferson County are unsubstantiated, vague, and retaliatory in nature. There were never any formal investigations into my conduct, nor was I ever given an opportunity to respond to any allegations prior to my forced resignation. In fact, I was repeatedly praised for my leadership of Jefferson County Ambulance, and no discipline or documented concerns were raised before the events of April 17, 2024.

The civil action filed against me in May 2025 appears to be a strategic effort to undermine my veterans preference claim and to deflect from potential violations of Iowa Code 35C, the Open Meetings Law, and my civil rights.

I want to make clear: I do not fear investigation. What I oppose is the misuse of authority to sidestep due process and strip a disabled combat veteran of his rights without legal justification.

RECORDING OF APRIL 17, 2024 MEETING

One of the points of contention between the two sides concerns an audio recording of a meeting at the Jefferson County Attorney’s Office on April 17, 2024 with Brian Thomas, Chauncey Moulding and investigator Jon Thomas of Workforce Solutions. Brian Thomas has filed a motion to compel production of this audio recording. He argues that Jon Thomas told him he would receive a copy of this recording, and that he has been trying to obtain a copy of it through

open records requests beginning in June 2024.

Brian Thomas argues in his motion filed June 15, 2025, that the recording is central to his lawsuit against the county since it speaks to whether his resignation was voluntary or coerced, and whether the county complied with notice and hearing requirements under the state’s veterans preference statute. Jefferson County has refused to produce this recording. Moulding wrote to The Union to say that this recording is not releasable under Iowa’s open records law since it represents “confidential attorney work product relating to litigation or a claim against a public body, under Iowa Code 22.7(4).”

“Mr. Thomas’ continued pressing of this issue and other baseless claims against the County are simply a disgruntled former employee attempting to denigrate his former employer because he didn’t like the employment decisions that employer made following his resignation,” Moulding wrote.

Call Andy Hallman at 641-575-0135 or email him at andy.hallman@southeastiowaunion.com

**CINEMA  
FAIRFIELD  
SHOWTIMES**

**Fairfield History Series:  
When Maharishi Came to Town**  
June 20, 21 @ 7:30 pm  
June 22 @ 3 pm

**One to One:  
John & Yoko**  
June 26, 27 @ 7 pm  
June 28 @ 4 pm, 7 pm

**The King of Kong: A Fistful of Quarters**  
June 29 @ 4 pm

**Arcades & Love Songs:  
The Ballad of Walter Day**  
June 29, 30 &  
July 1 @ 7 pm

**JEFFERSON COUNTY  
CONSERVATION**

July 2025

**Naturally Speaking**

**JULY BIRDY BRUNCH**  
Jul 7 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm  
Join Naturalist, Austin Roe, for some activities geared towards noticing birds more than just surface level. Summer is the time to slow down and get to know the nesting residents near us. Bringing your own binoculars is recommended, but we do have limited pairs to borrow if needed. Also, bring any sketchbooks or notebooks you might like to utilize for the birding activity.

**FISHING CAMP**  
Jul 8 @ 9:00 am - Jul 11 @ 2:00 pm  
Campers will learn to rig their own pole, bait their hook, take their catch off the line, and identify fish as we fish around Jefferson County! Included in the \$60 camp fee are snacks and t-shirt. Camp will have limited participants. Campers do not need to bring their own fishing equipment.

**BEST OF THE BEST**  
Jul 15 @ 9:00 am - Jul 18 @ 9:00 am  
We have combined all the favorite activities into one camp which will include fishing, archery, spear throwing, kayaking, fire building, and an optional overnight campout. Included in the \$75 camp fee are snacks, a t-shirt, and food during the overnight campout. Camp will have limited participants

**YOUNG NATURALISTS**  
Jul 21 @ 9:00 am - Jul 24 @ 2:00 pm  
Learn what it takes to become a naturalist. In this camp we will learn how to identify the plants and animals around us and how to observe them in an intentional way through nature journaling. This camp features hiking, wildlife identification, and journaling sessions. Included in the \$75 camp fee are snacks, a t-shirt, basic nature journal and a pencil. Camp will have limited participants.

**MISSION STATEMENT:** Our mission is to enhance the quality of life in Jefferson County by acquiring, developing and managing public areas so that its citizens will have opportunities for quality outdoor recreation experiences, and to cultivate good land stewardship through natural history and environmental education activities.

Our offices are located in Jefferson County Park 2003 Libertyville Rd Fairfield, IA 52556 641-472-4421 [Info@jeffersoncountyconservation.com](mailto:Info@jeffersoncountyconservation.com)

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Bob Leazer, Operations Supervisor  
Austin Roe, Naturalist  
Kristin Burnstedt, Ranger

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