

BLINDSIDE

Many thanks

Last Saturday we picked up some needed medication at Costco. When we got down to Highway 6, Helen remembered she had not taken the medication out of the shopping cart. We returned to the store. She talked to the men returning the carts to the main area, the shop people, and the pharmacy, and no one had returned the medication. They promised they would call if someone turned it in.

We had lunch and resigned ourselves to the fact that Helen would have to go without the medication. While we were at lunch, our electronic doorbell signaled someone was at the front door of our home, but I could not see who it was.

When we returned home I checked the front door and discovered someone had picked up the medicine and delivered it to our front door.

What a relief. We don't know who it was, as we did not recognize the lady that came to the door.

Many thanks to that unidentified person who was so kind to deliver it to our house.

Where else could you live and have such a kind act.

Monday Memorial Day Ceremonies

Monday morning, I attended the Memorial Day ceremonies at Sharon Hill Cemetery in Kalona, staged by the Richmond VFW, Ladies VFW Auxiliary, Kalona Boy and Cub Scouts, and the Mid-Prairie Marching Band. It was a great



Ron Slechta
Observations

day with several hundred people in attendance.

Commander Kevin Reece paid tribute to those who have given their lives in the various wars. He also paid tribute to those Gold Star families who had sacrificed a son or daughter in the various battles. He noted that over 790,000 members of the armed forces, from the American Revolution to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, have given their lives for our freedom.

The VFW Ladies Auxiliary laid a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and a member of the VFW placed a bouquet of flowers on the tomb. The area Cub Scouts placed miniature flags at each corner of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The Mid-Prairie band provided music by playing the Battle Hymn of the Republic and Star-Spangled Banner.

The VFW firing squad gave a 21-gun salute and the ceremonies ended with someone playing Taps in the distance.

It's a shame more people weren't in attendance to witness the impressive ceremonies. Similar ceremonies were held at other cemeteries in Richmond, Riverside, Lone Tree and many other communities.

Growing up fast

Several years ago the Des Moines Register published a photo of a young guy skating at a skateboard park in the metro. The cutline identified the young man as a 25-year-old.

My first thought was, "When I was 25 I was so busy working I couldn't have gone skateboarding even if I could skateboard."

Back in the 1960s some of us grew up quickly. By the time I was 22 I had a good (albeit low paying) job, was married and my wife and I had purchased our first house. By the time I was 24, I was a father.

From the time I was a late teen I ran with an older crowd. Most of my friends were in their 20s and a few of them had already been discharged from the military.

What I'm saying is that while I still did some stupid things back then, I was a hard worker and had quickly become a responsible (boring) family man. And I was fine with that.

When I was 33 I was promoted to advertising director of the Sioux City Journal. Some of my older co-workers told me I was the youngest person ever to be named to that position at The Journal. I can't prove that and it makes no difference because I didn't think I was all that young.

Half of my sales staff was younger than I was and the other half older; most of them close to my father's age. I soon discovered that the two groups were motivated in different

ways. When it came to sales incentives, the younger crowd was most easily motivated by money. The older guys were motivated by time off.

My younger employees enjoyed more active after-hours activities and frequently invited me to join them.

Several times I did join them but I was seldom comfortable doing so. I remember joining the younger guys for an after-hours time at a new night club in town. Club management aimed at the younger crowd. The music was so loud conversation was difficult. One of my salesmen was a handsome young single guy and he was kept busy with sweet young things vying for his attention. I finally excused myself and went home and enjoyed supper with my wife and two kids.

On another occasion I accompanied the younger guys to a night of dog racing in North Sioux City. I gave myself a betting limit of \$20 and when I had won that back I quit gambling.

One evening a WWF (now WWE) pro-wrestling event was scheduled for the Sioux City Auditorium and the young guys invited me to join them. I had never witnessed such and thought it might be fun.

Everyone met at my house where the wives spent the evening and we guys crammed into my bus-sized Dodge Royal Monaco station wagon. We drove to the Auditorium, found a good parking place and enjoyed an evening of "wrasse-lin'" with lots of beer-enhanced



Arvid Huisman
Country Roads

cheering and jeering.

When we left we discovered I had parked in a place from which it was difficult to exit. One of the guys said, "I'll take care of it!" He exited the station wagon and began directing traffic as though he was in charge of traffic. With his help I backed out, he jumped back in the car and away we went.

On the way back to my house we drove on the three-quarter mile Gordon Drive viaduct on what was then U.S. Highway 20. With a car full of employees I was driving unhurriedly in the right lane. Another car was about to overtake us in left right lane. One of the young guys exclaimed, "They can't do that."

He promptly stuck his rear end up to the window, dropped his pants and mooned the occupants of the passing car. I suddenly realized how old I had become and worried that the occupants of the passing car might recognize us or my car. Everyone got a good laugh and, admittedly, I did too... later in the evening.

I did join the younger team a few more times before I moved on but none were as exciting as a night of pro-wrestling at the Auditorium.

Soon enough I turned 40 and officially became one of the old guys.

FLYSOUP

BY MICHAEL D. DAVIS

The first time Doris modeled in her wool.

Rethinking agriculture

It is not a popular position to hold in Iowa, but I think we need to reimagine the way we do agriculture. And there are opportunities to act now that would be to the benefit of us all. For starters, look at the ongoing droughts in the American west. Why divert millions of gallons of water to agriculture in the west when most of those crops could be grown right here? That would allow westerners to respond to the drought, while we use our great soil to produce more actual food.

According to experts at Iowa State, all of the following vegetables thrive in Iowa and could do so at scale: kale, spinach, Brussel sprouts, Swiss chard, beets, green onions, lettuce, arugula, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, peas, beans, and radishes! We can grow just about everything!

My guess is that farmers in the west would hate the idea of ending production. But how much are we willing to spend to keep them in business? They are being heavily subsidized either way. So why use up all

the water? It would be cheaper and better for the planet to pay them NOT to grow anything.

Farmers in the Midwest would hate it, too. Why? 1) People dislike change. 2) Farmers would need some new equipment. 3) Growing the crops would be more labor intensive. 4) It would be viewed as Communist.

But Midwest farmers may NEED to consider something different soon. Because we are quickly moving to electric vehicles. What does that mean for farmers in the Midwest? Well, 33% of all corn goes toward ethanol. That ethanol will not be needed in electric vehicles. The market for a third of our corn could disappear. Shifting that cropland to food production makes a lot of sense.

Or farmers can get on the solar train! Consider the following stats from Bill Nussey:

If you compare the energy utility of an acre of solar panels to an acre of corn, the acre of solar wins by a landslide.

Each year, one acre of corn produces 551 gallons of ethanol, which is the equivalent of 386 gallons of gas. Using the average miles per gallon of a U.S. automobile, this equates to 9,691 miles driven per acre of corn per year.

In Iowa, an acre of solar panels produces 198,870 kilowatt hours each year. A typical EV drives approximately 3.6 miles per kilowatt hour. So, each year, an acre of solar panels produces enough energy for an EV to drive 710,250



Rod Sullivan
Sullivan's Salvos

miles. This is over 70 times the distance the same acre producing corn could provide.

Unlike ethanol, an acre of solar can power anything attached to the grid. The same Iowa acre, for instance, could also be used to provide 18 average U.S. homes with electricity for the year.

The financial utility of replacing corn with solar also promises huge gains for farmers. For example, it is not uncommon for a farmer to make two to three times more money per acre leasing to solar rather than planting corn. Solar also guarantees a steady stream of revenue, unlike corn which stands the risk of crop failure and price volatility.

Nussey doesn't even talk about the environmental benefits of less nitrogen and phosphate in the water supply, and more of our precious soil remaining in place. And the red herrings that are constantly brought up about taking up farmland? What if we simply exchange the amount of land dedicated to ethanol for land dedicated to vegetables and solar? Plus, solar panels are easy to remove. What a huge win!

It is well past time that we consider doing some things differently when it comes to agriculture. Let's get ahead of the curve and put our land to work in a better way!



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Postmaster: Send address changes to The News, P.O. Box 430, Kalona, IA 52247. Official paper for Kalona, Wellman, Riverside and Lone Tree; Mid-Prairie School District. Highland School District and Lone Tree School District; and Washington and Johnson counties. Entered at the post office at Kalona, Wellman, Riverside, Lone Tree, Iowa City, Iowa, for transmission acts of March 3, 1933 and July 2, 1948. Periodical class postage paid at the Kalona, Iowa Post office, through the mail as periodical class matter under the act of Congress of Sept. 14 1912 and as amended by the 302 Fifth St., Kalona, IA 52246. Published weekly.

302 Fifth St., Kalona, IA 52247. Published weekly.

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PRINT ISSN: 2834-9954 | E-RESOURCE ISSN: 2834-9962 | USPS#: 289-560

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PUBLIC NOTICES

IOWA NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

ADVERTISING DEADLINES

Display Advertising - 10 a.m., Monday, week of publication

Classified Advertising - 4 p.m., Monday, week of publication.

The publisher reserves the right to reject any advertising or news matter or cancel the same at any time.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Single copy - \$1.75

\$55 per year in Washington, Keokuk, Johnson and Iowa counties.

\$60 per year elsewhere in Iowa

\$65 Out-of-state, in the continental US

\$88 in Hawaii or Alaska • **\$88** in Canada

Other foreign countries quoted separately. All subscriptions are nonrefundable, but may be transferred at any time to other family members or to a nonprofit group such as a school or hospital.

Online only edition - \$45

419 B AVE., P.O. BOX 430, KALONA, IA 52247 | PHONE: 319-656-2273 | FAX: 319-656-2299 | OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY - FRIDAY 8 A.M. - 4 P.M.