

OPINION

YOU'LL FIGURE IT OUT! PLAY BALL

My highlight of the year narrows down to a couple of things, my first opportunity to win a couple of bucks off the "old geezers" at golf, (which won't take long at all), going for a nice leisurely walk with my lady of 50 years, (which probably won't happen again, this year), and BASEBALL, BASEBALL, BASEBALL.

So as much as I love taking candy from a baby, (winnings at geezer golf) and those nice evening walks with Deb, it's "Baseball, Baby, Baseball." And excluding the opening two-game series in Japan between the Dodgers & Cubs, baseball officially begins basically NOW.

Baseball pretty much officially starts on Thursday, March 27 and my beloved and injury-prone New York Yankees will be clobbering the Milwaukee Brewers that evening, in the Bronx. Not making any crazy predictions because it's a long season, but sure hoping the Dodgers are not anywhere near post-season play. They spend more money than the Yanks. Shame on them.

There are doubters for sure, but truly America's Official Pastime sport is baseball. Football, I guess, is okay, bas-



John Sheda

ketball, (is there pro basketball), maybe even a few enjoy hockey, but we all love singing our favorite song, "Take me out to the ball game..."

But, but, enough about baseball for a minute or two. It's our second favorite time of the year--NCAA Basketball tournament time. Now with the advent of Caitlin Clark, (Iowa's favorite girl), Women's pro basketball is just as popular as the guys. So without waiting a second longer here's "John's Official Prognostications."

Drum roll please.....In the Women's Championship, you will notice UCLA playing Notre Dame and the winner in double overtime is Notre Dame 102-97 over the Lady Bruins.

On the men's side, it's gonna be something else. Michigan State will win the South regional while Texas Tech comes out on top in the West. In the other action, the Wildcats of Arizona will come out on top when the smoke clears in the East division and Kentucky wins the Midwest regions. And the winner will be.....Michigan State 87, Kentucky 81. Haruumph, you heard it here first. Let me know what you think at johndebsheda@gmail.com, (NEW ADDRESS), or just simply give me a call at 319.327.4640

JUST JONATHAN: Artificial Introspection

While sitting in class I often find myself bored out of my mind. While not a great trait and something that I probably shouldn't be publishing in the newspaper, I make good use of my guaranteed boredom.

I'm sure we've all Googled ourselves at some point. It's really easy to type in your name and see what pops up. My Google search is flooded with online news articles and a little picture of me with my blue jacket on (that is staring at you now). The quick Google search is a fun little time killer, however we have a new toy...Artificial Intelligence.

In my music history class the other day I decided to test what A.I. would know about me. I pulled up the new program, Google Gemini, and searched "Do you know Jonathan Meyer from Tama, Iowa". After thinking for a few seconds the screen lit up with a few different things the chatbot pulled from the internet.

Here were the results given:

Attended South Tama County High School.

Is involved in athletics, particularly track and cross country.

Has continued his education at Wartburg College.

Has been accepted into Wartburg's Teacher Education Program.

Everything listed was accurate and sources were given. Gemini liked to pull information from the News Chronicle's online edition. I decided to push that a little further and see what it thinks of my role at the paper. With the prompt "Tell



Jonathan Meyer

me about his newspaper job", Gemini produced this information about my work:

Correspondent/Columnist:

He contributes to the Tama-Toledo News Chronicle, where he writes a column called "Just Jonathan." These columns often focus on local community topics and his perspectives on them.

He also contributes to the Times-Republican.

Award Recognition:

He received third place in the Master Columnist contest. This highlights that his writing is recognized.

Content of Work:

His work includes covering local events, community visioning projects, and offering his observations on community life.

In summary, Jonathan Meyer is a contributor to local newspapers, writing columns and covering local events.

To say I was impressed is an understatement. There I was, sitting in music history having my life and work summarized by a robot with internet access. While I should have been focusing on Vivaldi and baroque era music, I was interrogating a robot.

This dang A.I. chatbot seemed to have figured me out pretty well. It knows my passions and experiences that got me to this point.

My last question was, can it write for

me? If so, I might be out of a job pretty soon. I asked the prompt, "Write a hundred word column in the style of 'Just Jonathan' talking about youth participating in a food drive". Here's what we're working with...

"Alright, folks, gather 'round. You know, I've been thinking lately about the spirit of this town, and it shines brightest in our young ones. Saw a crew of South Tama kiddos the other day, buzzing around the grocery store like worker bees, collecting cans for the food bank. Not just a handful, mind you, but shopping carts overflowing. It got me thinking, doesn't it? In a world of screens and distractions, these kids are learning the real deal: community. They're seeing firsthand how a little effort makes a big difference. Makes you proud, doesn't it? Reminds you that even in the toughest times, there's always a helping hand, a shared meal, a bit of kindness. And that, my friends, is what Tama's all about."

Safe to say I'm not going to be replaced by that anytime soon. That was not at all my style of writing. Human writing remains supreme!

I am curious what the bot might think of me writing about it. More questions to ask this independent virtual being on my computer. This is not a healthy rabbit hole to go down. It's actually pretty scary. Maybe I'll stick to paying attention in music class from now on.

Until my next A.I. adventure, I'm Just Jonathan.

On the Record with Sheriff Schmidt: March 2025

It's been great to see so many of you engaging with us on social media. I really believe in the power of communication, and social media is a great way to share information quickly. But over the last couple of months, I've started to notice the tone of some comments and the lack of respect in certain conversations. While I'm all for open dialogue, we need to remember to treat each other with respect. Personal attacks and hurtful comments don't help anyone. Let's keep it civil, thoughtful, and productive.



Casey Schmidt

As your sheriff, I take our constitutional rights very seriously. Free speech is one of the cornerstones of our country, but it's important we use it responsibly. It's okay to disagree, but let's keep it respectful. Social media might not always be the best place for every discussion, but we can all work to engage in a more positive way.

I've had a lot of questions lately about immigration enforcement. Many have expressed concerns and have even suggested we should be doing more, often pointing to actions taken and statements by the federal government. While I understand where these concerns come from, I want to be clear: no one should ever be judged or targeted based on the color of their skin or their appearance. It's illegal, immoral, and unethical to profile people like that, and we won't do it in our office.

Immigration enforcement is a complex issue, and there's a lot of confusion about the role of local law enforcement. While crossing the border illegally is a federal crime, lo-

cal law enforcement does not have the authority to arrest someone simply for being undocumented. In Iowa, we can only detain someone if a federal immigration detainer has been issued. For now, we will continue to do what we've always done, focus on enforcing local laws and protecting our community. We'll work with immigration authorities, but our primary focus will remain on addressing those who are committing crimes in Tama County until we have more clarity. I'll keep the public informed as we receive more clarity from federal authorities.

On a much tougher note, I want to address something that makes my stomach turn: a recent child pornography case our office investigated, where we worked alongside the FBI and other local law enforcement agencies. It's heartbreaking to know these kinds of crimes are still happening, but we will not stand for it. We're committed to making sure those responsible are held accountable. We're also going to be stepping up our efforts

with the Sex Offender Registry (SOR) requirements, to include more spot checks and home visits. We all need to stay vigilant. If you see something, say something. That's how we can work together to keep Tama County safe.

Now, on a more positive note, I'm excited to share that we're planning a K9 fundraiser for late May or early June. The exact date and time might change a bit, but that's the target we're shooting for. Deputy Wall will be heading to K9 school in August, and we're hoping to raise the necessary funds to make this happen. It would be awesome to see the community come together to support this effort. K9s are vital tools in law enforcement, and with your help, we can make sure our K9 unit has everything they need to serve and protect Tama County.

Until next month!

Casey Schmidt, a Republican from Dysart, is the Tama County Sheriff. He was elected to office in 2024.

A Path Forward: Linn County

I recently met with John Zakrasek from the Linn Clean Energy District (LCED) to discuss their process in developing renewable energy ordinances for Linn County. With the shutdown of the 690-Megawatt Duane Arnold Energy Center nuclear plant, a vacuum for new electric generation was created. Proposals to develop utility-scale solar farms soon followed, and Linn County experienced highly emotional public hearings. Accurate and inaccurate information was brought forward in these meetings which ran up to 6 hours. Security was present because of fears of possible violence.

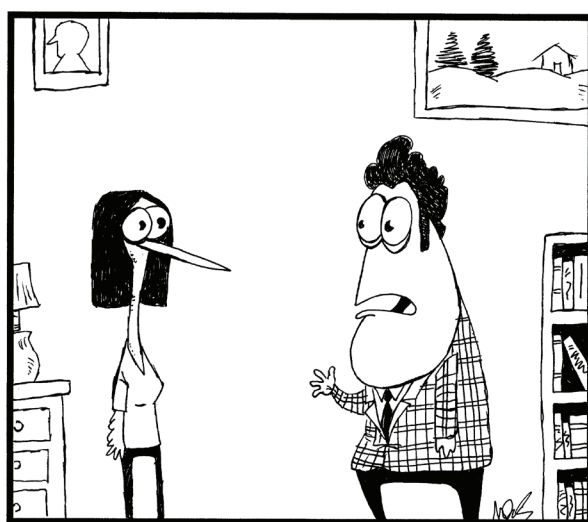
As a solution to calm down the tense situation, the Linn Clean Energy District, working with the Linn County Planning and Zoning staff, created a solar farm fact-finding task force to forge a productive path forward. The 16-member task force was made up of a diverse group of supporting and opposing influential community members, community leaders, county supervisors, and staff. The purpose was to use direct personal observation at three solar farms; one that had been in operation for five years, one that was just built, and one under construction. The task force toured the sites together, and everyone was given the opportunity to ask questions. These observations were documented, approved, and published online by consensus to counter inaccurate information. The task force then developed a set of recommendations based on the 2013 Linn County Comprehensive Plan. This plan provided guidance on the proposed ordinances based on the categories of the plan: Livable Communities, Economic Development and Opportunities, Resource Protection, Sustainable Development, Hazard Planning, and Transportation. A scorecard for commercial solar projects was then developed to determine if a project was to be approved. The scorecard balances the interests of the community, landowners, developers, adjacent landowners, and affected tenant farmers. A minimum score is required for approval of a project.

As Tama County reviews and rewrites renewable energy ordinances, CEDI wants to encourage county leaders to consider forming a task force, much like Linn County. This will allow the development of ordinances that consider the interests of all residents and stakeholders, which will produce a stronger Tama County. The responsible development of renewable energy projects can provide more tax revenue to fund public infrastructure projects and reduce school tax levies, diversify farm income, and keep more energy dollars in Tama County to be spent locally and benefit county businesses.

Paul Lovell is executive director of the non-profit organization Howard County Energy District (HCED); he is also renewable energy siting program manager for the Clean Energy Districts of Iowa (CEDI). Lovell grew up on the family farm near Morrison and is a proud graduate of Reinbeck High School. The Howard County case study he refers to in this column can be found here: <https://www.cfra.org/publications/case-study-direct-impact-wind-energy-development-howard-county-iowa>.

FLYSOUP

BY MICHAEL D. DAVIS



"You may have heard of my poem, 'Ode to a Slip in The Shower.'"

Iowa Statewide Database of Public Notices



Letters to the Editor Policy

Limit your submission to 400 words. The deadline to submit letters is no later than Monday at 10 a.m. for publication in that Friday's newspaper. Letters may be edited for libel and grammar. We reserve the right to shorten letters and reject those deemed libelous, in poor taste or of a personal nature. Letters must be signed with the author's real first and last name and must include a street address and a daytime phone number for verification. Individuals may submit no more than one letter per month. Send to: rmaharry@timesrepublican.com.

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