

Opinion & Politics

Letters

National Friends of the Library Week

Dear Editor:

We have the best friends! The public and our patrons have surely heard of them, but the Winterset library staff knows their true super powers. To us, the Friends of the Winterset Public Library are celebrities, because of how they make the library sparkle. Any staff member can tell you...

As the person in charge of seeing that the library's bills are paid, I know that so many of the new books, computer hardware, programs, and even the LED lighting in our library is due to financial support from the Friends of the Winterset Library. How can they do that?

In Winterset and Madison County, compared to several nearby counties' towns, the community – and our local governments – have historically showed extraordinary support for libraries. Others have adequate libraries, but ours are outstanding. As a historian, I have a long-range theory about that, but just look at

events of the last half-century.

Not once but twice, a lifelong Madison County resident literally gave their farm to the Winterset Public Library. In 1969, the late Armina Brownell of Lincoln Tp. gave her farm to the City of Winterset, in order to buy new children's and non-fiction materials for the library. Then, in 2012, Irvin and Lucille Martens gave their farm to Friends of the Winterset Library. Clarence Johnson, of Grip-Tite fame, was also a tremendous library supporter.

In addition dividends from those trusts (managed by the city and the friends, respectively), the friends manage a highly successful book sale and a mini-bookstore in the library, which together yields us several thousand dollars annually. They process our book donations, so that every year we can have a book sale and a

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY
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City ordinances

Dear Editor:

The Winterset City Council could pass an ordinance stating that if you wish to send your child to our school system you must give up some of your first amendment rights: criticizing teachers is forbidden. "It will make the schools safer."

Or they could pass an ordinance saying if you wish to have a gun in Winterset you have to give up some of your second amendment rights: all guns must be kept in the police department. "It will make our neighborhoods safer."

Or they could pass an ordinance saying if you wish to rent a house you own in Winterset you must give up your fourth amendment rights. It would require you to voluntarily allow government agents to enter your rented home without cause or warrant for an inspection. "It

will make our dangerous homes safer."

The problem is they have already passed the unconstitutional ordinance taking away our fourth amendment rights. The rented one-third of Winterset homes involving tenants and landlords have lost their fourth amendment rights against search and seizures.

If you believe your constitutional rights are important you should speak up, because if you give up your fourth amendment rights you know the process will continue like it has in San Francisco. But imagine this: even in San Francisco they do not require landlords to voluntarily give up their fourth amendment rights for themselves and their tenants. The Winterset City Council has gone more left wing than San Francisco. The mommy state wants to make things safer for you – 175 successful years without a rental inspection ordinance in Winterset proves nothing to some people.

—Mike Montross, Winterset

Brass Tacks from Rural Iowa

Guest Columnist Barb Kalbach
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Chickens coming home to roost

Our healthcare storm that's been brewing on the horizon is getting a lot closer these days. And if Congress doesn't get their act together soon, it could be a category 5 hurricane.

As I write this, we're entering the third week of the government shutdown. It's shut down because Democrats want to ensure that millions of Americans don't see their monthly healthcare premiums double – or worse – by the end of the year. I don't always agree with Democrats or how they go about governing, but in this case I couldn't agree more.

The "Big, Ugly Bill" that Republicans passed earlier this summer not only cut \$1 trillion from our Medicaid program, it also terminated the Affordable Care Act (ACA) subsidies put in place in 2021. In the past four years, the number of folks enrolled in ACA marketplace plans went from 11 million to almost 24 million.

These 24 million people are small business owners in our communities. They're independent contractors and gig workers just trying to get by in our turbulent economy. A sizeable chunk of the increase in enrollees are from our nation's farmers. Now they're about to be left out to dry.

And it's not like this was a problem that just presented itself. Our Representatives, Mariannette Miller-Meeks, Zach Nunn, Ashley Hinson, and Randy Feenstra knew this would happen when they all voted for the Big Ugly Bill. And they still knew this when they all voted for the continuing resolution to keep the government open that did not include an extension of the ACA subsidies.

Even more telling, State Insurance Commissioners across the board have been sounding this particular alarm for months now. These are Republicans and Democrats who have been united in telling Congress they needed to take action on ACA subsidies so their states don't see a tidal wave of rising premiums, constituents losing coverage, or disastrous health outcomes.

This impending storm isn't just limited to those who could face astronomical health insurance premiums. More of our rural hospitals will close, and quicker. The cuts to Medicaid were bad enough, but if folks choose to forgo health insurance that means they forgo hospital visits. Around 800 rural hospitals across the country are at risk of closure due to dire financial straits, with 314 at immediate risk of closing in the next 2-3 years.

If nothing is done, this will end up impacting all of us one way or the other. That's because if Congress doesn't act, millions of younger, healthier people will simply drop their coverage because the premiums are too high. Without this population, the risk pool becomes older and sicker, driving insurers to raise premiums even further. Then the ACA marketplace will inevitably crash and cease to exist.

Fixing this problem now is a no-brainer. The American people want access to affordable healthcare, not more tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires. A recent poll by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 78% of the public wants Congress to extend the ACA subsidies.

Iowa's Representatives know this, but they went along with policies that gutted our healthcare anyway. The chickens are coming home to roost and time for action is now, not later. Otherwise, we'll be waking up to a wolf at the henhouse door.

Barb Kalbach is a 4th generation family farmer, Registered Nurse, and Iowa CCI Board member in Adair County.

Editorial Page Guidelines: We want to hear your perspective and views on local issues. We welcome letters with a unique viewpoint that are supported by facts and offer a solution if applicable. Send your letter to the editor to editor@wintersetmadisonian.com. Letters to the editor should be no more than 600 words. Submissions 200-300 words have the best chance of being published. You must include your name, address, and a daytime phone number for verification. All submissions of letters to the editor become the property of The Madisonian and may be edited for length, redundancy, clarity, civility, and accuracy and may be published or distributed in print, electronic, or other forms. Our intent in editing is not to change your opinions expressed, but to ensure your views are clear, concise, and easy to understand. We will try to contact you if we need to edit your letter, but cannot guarantee we will be able to do so because of time constraints. Not all letters submitted will be published. Typically, we will only publish one letter per writer every 30 days. We will not print letters that make false or damaging statements about another person or that are factually inaccurate.

Winterset City Government Update

By Tom Leners
Winterset Mayor

The Covered Bridge Festival had a great weather weekend. Thank you to all the dozens of volunteers that made this community showcase event a huge success! I am a Rotary Bus Tour Guide and the 30 or so passengers that toured Madison County on the 10 a.m. Sunday Tour were impressed by the beautiful countryside, the bridges of course and the friendly folks here in Madison County.

While I'm talking about the Covered Bridge Festival, I want to share a special thank you to the Winterset City Street Department. On Thursday the street sweeper became disabled. The Street Department worked in the early morning hours Friday hand cleaning the square with very limited equipment.

On Friday, Oct. 10, I attended the 65th anniversary recognition of the Iowa – Yamanashi Japan Friendship Agreement. The Iowa Economic Development Authority hosted the event, and several Iowa sister cities had representatives in attendance. Winterset and Minami Alps have a Friendship relationship and exchange Jr High student visits. Japan is an important trading partner for Iowa. My family has participated in the Friendship Exchange and I recommend it to any parent with a child the appropriate age in the Winterset School District. You can read about the history of this relationship at the IEDA website.

Thank you for your patience with our local construction projects. The water main replacement and street repair projects make navigating town a bit more complicated, but we will all enjoy the upgraded infrastructure when the projects are complete.

Cedar Lake, our source of drinking water was still overflowing on Sunday morning. Certainly a positive note as we prepare to enter the winter season.

All for now.

Relatively Minor

Vicki Minor, Editor
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Laughter does not have to come from a major source. It could indeed be ... relatively minor.

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Winning the War Against Dust Bunnies

A-CHOO!" "A-CHOO!" "A-CHOO!" Wow. After three sneezes in a row, my head was spinning. I placed my hand on the corner of the sofa in the living room to steady myself. Still feeling a bit light-headed, I grabbed a Kleenex, carefully made my way to the nearby recliner, and sat down for a moment to wipe my watery eyes and blow my nose.

In past years, I had suffered terribly from a stuffy nose and congestion caused by allergies in the fall and spring when the seasons changed. Now, relatively healthy, my only ailment seems to be senioritis, as I have crossed to the other side of the hill at the ripe old age of 67.

Rarely experiencing such explosive, spasmodic sneezes in quick succession, I became intensely curious about the cause of my outburst. (Though, as they say, curiosity killed the cat, as plain as the nose on my face.) I had a pretty good idea of how those foreign particles irritating my nasal mucosa were generated.

Ashes to ashes, dust to... dust bunnies!

As the self-proclaimed domestic goddess of my home, it wasn't long ago – just six months – that I pledged to eliminate those pesky dust bunnies from my house and clear them off the shelves of the bookcase before they invaded my flat-screen TV.

I was determined to call them out and use my extraordinarily powerful Hoover WindTunnel II to banish them. This vacuum boasts two channels of suction to lift and remove them, sending them to the hereafter (or at least into the bag-less cylindrical container).

The excavation began with the annoyingly persistent – yet relatively harmless – masses of varying sizes of fur. The first group of dust bunnies had claimed their territory under the sofa, love-seat, recliner, and dining room table at the front of the house. A few adventurous bunnies made their way to the kitchen, feasting on crumbs under the microwave cart. Others took a timeout in each of the four corners of the kitchen, not to mention the members of the herd who chose to nest among the hidden boxes under our bed.

It's a continuous battle to keep the bunnies at bay. I thought I had organized everything properly, but a word to the wise: trying to sweep them under the rug or beat them with a broom is entirely worthless. That just stirs them up, and they end up hopping onto the blades of the ceiling fan for a spin.

And so much for my lovely dogs, who I thought would do their best to chase the bunnies out the door. Instead, they sit side by side, wide-awake but distracted by the real squirrels scurrying up the tree in our backyard. Now, that is just nuts!



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