

Sioux Center library faces challenge

 **Thumbs-down for the unexpected headaches Sioux Center Public Library has to endure with the incoming closure of Baker and Taylor, the largest supplier of books to libraries in the U.S.**

One of the main impacts noticeable to library patrons so far are the delays in new library book purchases, with library director Becky Bilby commenting that the library is months behind on acquiring bestsellers.

In the last two years the Sioux Center library has acquired 1,454 books from Baker and Taylor, and has had a partnership with the company for more than a decade.

As a long time distributor, Baker and Taylor had a robust system allowing libraries to make standing orders on authors and series, sending books a week before release, and giving libraries time to catalog and prepare books beforehand.

For the Sioux Center library, which had over 500 standing orders on authors, the system made it easy to acquire new releases as soon as possible. Online readers have been unaffected by the closure.

Baker and Taylor also provided other services beyond distributing books. The company also processed books for libraries, meaning they would add protection and bar codes to the books for libraries. While Sioux Center still processes books in house and isn't affected in this area, the closure of Baker and Taylor's interface is another major change.

"Every year when public libraries fill out an annual report or survey it goes through their offshoot company. That's going belly-up as well, so the whole state has to figure out how to do their annual reporting," Bibly said.

The data goes back to 2000 and unless Sioux Center and other libraries go back and download the files, it will all be deleted.

Finding new distributors is a challenge, as each has their own limitations.

"I'm looking at companies who only do kids books, or large print. Baker did it all, that's what was nice about them," Bilby said.

Other major distributors such as Ingram Library Services are currently not accepting new orders due to an overwhelming number of requests. Meanwhile, companies like Amazon don't ship books prior to a release date, making it harder for libraries to offer books the same day.

Despite the challenges, we trust in our friends at the library to continue to do what they can to provide the excellent service for which they are known.

 **Thumbs-up for Dordt University and the completion of many large projects across its campus, which were celebrated with a dedication ceremony Oct. 18 as part of its Defender Days.**

Guest speakers, Dordt alumni and members of the public alike gathered Saturday in one of those newly completed spaces, the Atrium, to mark the occasion, dedicating the Atrium, the Overlook, the Cottages, the Spronk Animal Science Education Center and the Rozenboom Family Athletic Center as spaces to glorify God.

Dordt president Dr. Erik Hoekstra called the day one of celebration as well as one of reflection. In regards to the latter aspect, he commented on the many hands that came together and played a vital role in these projects and how God uses such work.

Among the many thanked during the ceremony, one stood out: John Baas. He served as the former vice president for advancement until January, stepping down as he battled leukemia. Baas died July 21at the age of 64.

"John's fingerprints and hands are all over this space," vice president for advancement and marketing Brandon Huisman said. "There's a conference room upstairs, and I would invite you stand in there and look at the clock tower to the north and look at the soccer field to the south and look at the happy students that are walking across this campus that John was able to impact over his 20 years of service here."

It's a wonderful reminder of the legacies we leave and how places such as Dordt are much more than the buildings on the land — it's the people. And that speaks strongly to its future in Sioux Center.

My time as a columnist is at its coda

Hello again, good people!
How many "best friends" can a person have? When talking to my son Dick I mentioned a "best friend," and he said, "Boy, you have a lot of them!"

I guess that's true. When you get old (and I think that starts when you hit 80), one tends to reminisce a bit more and count the blessings. Friends are definitely one of our biggest blessings. I hope some younger people read this because there may be some motivators here.

Check out these quotes.
"A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a true friend who sticks closer then a brother," Proverbs 18:24.

"There's nothing like old friends, make lots of them while you're young," anonymous.

"Good friends are hard to find, harder to leave, impossible to forget," G. Randolph.

"A friend in need is a friend in deed," Ben Franklin.

So think a little about your closest friends. How many can you name? Yes — this is a good time to think of those friends that have moved away, passed away, or slipped away somehow. Have you lost one or two you'd like to have back? Try to find out where they are and open the lines of communication again.

Can you ever have too many friends? I don't think so.
Meaningful friendships have to be

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worked at, cultivated and treasured. Good friends have to know how important they are to you, and time and sacrifices must be made available.

I take it as a real honor to be called "friend," and I've been very blessed with some great ones for a variety of chosen occasions. How does one define that good or best friend? I had one person say, "It's someone that will be at your funeral regardless of the weather." Another said, "It's someone that brings a smile whenever he/she comes to mind."

How do YOU define it? How many can you count? Do they know how much you value them? How and when are you going to let them know how much they mean to you? The Bible says, "They will know we are Christians by our love." (Substitute "friends" for "Christians.")

I have "best" friends in church, for golf, for trips, for coffee, going out to eat, prayer warriors, to invite over and a few other things. I'm gonna let them all know just how important each of them is to me. I'd better not loiter because I've already attended way too many funerals!

I hope you know by now that I like

quotes — so, I'll leave you with these last three.

"Whenever someone says something unkind about a person I know — I just say, 'Oh that's one of my best friends!'" Greta Siebersma.

"A friend is a wondrous treasure, a God-given gift. A someone who helps you become who you are and who you are meant to be," Guideposts.

"Friendship makes your life better. Walk up to your friends and give them a big hug!" All God's Creatures.

Now the "coda." This is the second time I've written about friends. That's obviously because I think they are so important. It also tells me it's time to "hang up the old typewriter" and stop writing. So this is my last article for "The News." I thank Eric and the good people at the paper for tolerating me and look forward to just reading. Thanks to you good people for your comments and friendship. You musicians figured out that this was the end when you saw the title "coda." May our Lord Bless each one of you. (And by the way — I married my BEST FRIEND over 63 years ago!)

Dave Mulder of Sioux Center was a Northwestern College economics professor and coach for 25 years. Before that, he taught and coached 20 years at Sioux Center High School. He served on the Iowa Senate for the 2nd District, 2005-09. In his retirement, he enjoys golf and lay preaching on occasion. Mulder and his wife, Dot, have two children.

Voting for PPEL supports students

We are already one quarter through the school year. Thank you for your strong support in lifting us up, so we could get off to an excellent start. Each year brings new challenges, and we have experienced something that has only happened four times in the past 20 years. We had a negative number regarding student enrollment.

Sioux Center School District has served 30 fewer students this year than a year ago. We are not alone with this scenario. All the districts in the Siouland Conference and most of our other neighboring schools are showing a negative student enrollment this year.

Is this an anomaly or something that could be our new "normal"? I will optimistically lean towards an anomaly for Sioux Center School District. There is a wide range of theories that leadership in our area think could lead to these decreasing numbers. Each community and school is, as always, a bit different. Housing is one of the uniform challenges.

We are very excited about the new Warrior staff members this year and how they are great advocates for our district and students. We are in a very competitive job market to recruit the best candidates, and we are blessed by each person in the role they play each day for our community.

If you have ever considered being a substitute teacher, we are here to help you get that certification. This community is full of outstanding mentors and people-driven supporters. I think that everyone from our community either sees or hears something regarding our community's unwavering commitment to decades of cooperation on a weekly basis. You hear that message from our city, Dordt University, Sioux Center Christian School, as well as Sioux Cen-

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ter School District.

We are coming up to a PPEL vote on the Nov. 4 ballot. PPEL is Physical Plant and Equipment Levy. This levy is currently \$1.03 and has been at \$1.03 for decades. The district could ask for up to \$1.34 but wants to continue to be good stewards with our constituents' very important tax dollars. We will only be asking for \$1.03 again. We are working very hard to utilize the funds, and we must provide the best support and opportunities for our students and staff.

If approved, this 2025 vote lasts for 10 years, and we are asking you to please consider supporting this again. The levy rate is locked in at \$1.03 for that additional 10 years. Thank you for taking the time to vote for our PPEL Levy and for our school board members' election on Nov. 4. It may not be a national or state level heavy ballot, but these items are paramount to our continued success in providing a great education for our students and to keep the cooperation torch moving forward.

PPEL Funds are very specific as to what they can be used for as one of the district's very rigid categorical funds. PPEL cannot be used on employees or instructional materials. Our best examples of what our PPEL is dedicated to are technology, school buses and other vehicles. Sioux Center School District and Sioux Center Christian have a very atypical relationship where Sioux Center School District transports over 300 students to and from Sioux Center Christian each day. We are blessed to

have our transportation people having strong relationships, and this partnership is often rare. That should not come as a surprise. Cooperation is key to our community's success. We have dedicated drivers, and we would love to meet with you if you have an interest in joining our Transportation Department.

Sioux Center School District continues to grow and support extracurricular opportunities for our students. Our participation numbers are increasing to all-time highs in most every team and group. This growth is a testament to the fantastic passion and the willingness to lift up our students beyond the 8:10 a.m.-3:20 p.m. classrooms. We are blessed to have strong continuity and also the adding of new leaders to our respective teams and groups.

The time and effort that goes into coaching and sponsoring is not done for the stipend. These leaders are in tune with the opportunity to connect young people to common goals and to instill some valuable life learning opportunities. Our activities directors are passionate about finding opportunities for our growing teams and groups. Tyler Reichle and Chase Rozeboom are longtime Warriors, and they dedicate an incredible amount of time to making sure our students and coaches, directors, and sponsors have the tools to succeed. Leading takes time away from your families. Thank you to all of you that provide leadership and guidance outside of our school in our churches and community.

Thank you for your continued support of our Warriors. It is always a welcome sight to see all the orange and blue at games, concerts, musicals and all things Sioux Center Warriors.

Gary McElDowney is the superintendent of Sioux Center School District.

Opinion Page Lesson

■ **What's an editorial?**
An editorial is the newspaper's view on an issue. In developing editorials, employees of the newspaper consider what, in their collective view, is best for the community. Editorials are solely meant to suggest a course of action or

foster discussion about important issues.
■ **What's a column?**
A column is one person's opinion on any given issue, published as a regular feature in the newspaper. A column does not necessarily reflect the views of

the newspaper.
■ **What's a letter to the editor?**
A letter to the editor is a reader's view on an issue, submitted to the newspaper for publication. All letters require a verifiable name, telephone number, address and signature, and are subject to editing.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America

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