

Perhaps I can make them an offer they can't refuse



EDITOR'S
NOTES
Michael
Hohenbrink

Maybe it's reading old books or watching re-runs of Scooby Doo as a kid, but secret passages fascinate me. Find the right book in a private library, watch the bookcase slide back and grab a candle to go exploring.

Actually, one of our twins is named after St. Nicholas Owen, who built hiding places during the persecution of King Henry VIII and his successors, though sadly he has exhibited none of his namesake's skill in carving secret rooms.

Indeed, not a single bookcase in our home has ever swung out, revealing a trove of forgotten gold, I am sad to say.

During my college days, rumors of a secret tunnel from the library over to the administration building were shared. I remember journeying down to the library basement to seek it out, though

it was likely just a legend spread by generations of bored college students.

In the Old Country, tales of helpful household gnomes and sprites abound, and I've enjoyed the idea of such Wee Folk, when it came time for their host families to emigrate, picking up stakes and following along.

Since my family is heavily German, I would suspect Kobolds, sturdy little folk.

I can picture them – bearded and with the accent of Lower Saxony – scurrying off one morning after helping with the household chores before the Big People catch a glimpse.

While they're at it, I'm wondering if I might nudge them – that secret passage would be a real gem, if they fill up to switch from fixing shoes overnight or whatever household sprites do.

Or, barring that, I've got some shoveling to do, given the quantity of snow we keep getting.

I'll up that saucer of milk on the stairs to a bottle of Jameson in exchange.

I wonder if they would bite at that offer?



Memories Of A Former Kid.

Seeking re-election

BJ Hoffman

In the Spring of 2016 I was on the fence about how I could help assure my then 13 year old son would have the best opportunity to live and thrive in Hardin County. I saw a means of bringing another generation back to the farm where my Yantis roots started when my grandfather came to Hardin County from Queen City, Missouri after the turn of the 20th century. That 13 year old son is now in his final weeks prior to graduation at Ellsworth Community College where he's receiving an amazing college experience and will receive a degree in May and if all goes well he'll stay in the County to pursue a career.

Now as a two term Hardin County Supervisor that has been blessed with two amazing colleagues on the board along with tremendously hardworking, dedicated, and trustworthy elected officials and department heads I believe we've moved the needle forward in Hardin County for the better.

In the past seven years we've worked hard and:

Reduced the property tax levy by 52 cents/\$1000 when the State took back mental health funding while other counties let the levy remain the same and kept taxing their residents.

I championed the push for constitutional protections for Hardin County to be a Second Amendment Sanctuary County even when I was scolded and told it would turn Hardin County into the Wild West. It hasn't become the Wild West and people appreciate their God given rights being protected.

As the Chairman of the Central Iowa Community Services Mental Health region I was able to lead the charge to allocate \$15 million dollars to the Youth and Shelter Services, Ember project that will provide 70 mental health crisis beds to Iowa youth in need.

I'm proud of the fact that Hardin County has implemented the hiring of our own Economic Development Director and the position with board support has been able to make significant strides in local small and large scale development projects.

In the last seven years serving as a Drainage District Trustee for well over 200 districts we have made significant strides in processes and procedures that reduce costs for the landowners in drainage districts. This includes wetlands (CREP) projects that are a critical part of water quality management.

I was highly engaged at the State level as a member of the Iowa Board of Nursing and was able to utilize

my 20+ years of healthcare experience to make nursing as safe, patient center care focused, and as fiscally feasible for new nurses to work in nursing in the State of Iowa.

My support of our law enforcement officers was unparalleled as I spent countless days at the Iowa State Capitol lobbying for the passage of the Back the Blue bill as the negative sentiment and disrespect for law enforcement grew across the Country. I also appreciated being part of a very equitable collective bargaining agreement with the Hardin County Sheriff's office that provides top notch law enforcement to Hardin County residents and guests.

Now I'll lobby alongside educators, parents and taxpayers to prevent Area Education Agencies from having services violently ripped apart while hoping that policy makers and experts will use surgical precision to improve processes and streamline services.

Lastly, during a worldwide pandemic I worked at both the State, County, and Local level to protect personal and religious freedoms while fostering an environment that gave parent's the right to make choices for their children in their best interest. As a County we worked hard to maintain continuity of operations and didn't push mandates upon our team without

knowing the long term consequences and impacts on health and safety.

On June 4, 2024 I look forward to earning Hardin County Republican votes in the primary election. In the meantime I look forward to: working to assure constitutional protections with guidance from our legal experts, work to craft a budget that fits into the State mandated reduced budget, work to have the State transition the Boys State Training School to the Iowa Department of Corrections so the State Training School staff members can go to work and return home safely, fight to bring additional State funding into support the current unfunded mandates, and work to preserve the principles of production agriculture that Hardin County is known for.

Finally, I want to help grow Hardin County through responsible Economic Development. I believe we can do that but we can't let Hardin County become, "New York's play thing" or "California's playground".

Hardin County has opportunity for socially and culturally appropriate growth based on the foundations of our rich history, heritage and Judeo-Christian beliefs and I plan to guide it while remembering those that came before me.

So much to do

Half A
Mind

By Linda
Halfpop



So much is happening, I just have to update everyone - I'll be as organized as I can in this:

1- I'm taking lessons in Country and Western dance - I want to learn the two step. My first class was amazing! I danced for a whole hour and the rods in my back didn't bother me at all, I didn't have to sit down once. I just loved doing the two step..I pretended I was Debra Winger in Urban Cowboy dancing with John Travolta. We also did the Electric slide which I haven't done in over 20 years. So much fun and getting back my balance.

2- I joined the local gym with Silver Sneakers and will start taking yoga for strength and balance. My insurance pays for the membership.

3- I'm going away for a wine probe tasting weekend in Tucson that my granddaughter, the firefighter, planned for all of us.

4- My great-granddaughter Kynlee, is only 4 months old and the doctor said she's ready to start on solid food because of her remarkable strength. She can sit straight up and hold her head erect... Her mother, my granddaughter the cop, is freaking out. We laugh because she thinks she's the only mother ever to experience these life changing things with a new baby... oh does she even know what an extraordinary life she's about to live!

5- Our dryer broke. My amazing daughter, the yoga teacher, rigged up a unique clothesline in our backyard. She strung extension wire across the yard attaching it to hooks along the fence and securing it with skewers.... it's working, she's amazing. We're fine till the dryer is fixed.

6- Griefshare meetings are going very well, we are all bonding and now everyone is contributing to the discussions.

Note: Feb. 6 is our graduation party from dance classes. We are going out to dance at a live CW band dance hall, all the classes.

I've got to get some cowgirl boots ASAP! Stay tuned.

Libraries as Community

By Marjean Clemons, Ackley Public Library; Lisa Littschwager, Dr. Grace O. Doan (Alden) Public Library; Joan Grothoff, Eldora Public Library; Rachel Thompson, Hubbard Public Library; Erin Finnegan-Andrews, Robert W. Barlow Memorial (Iowa Falls) Library; Marilyn Raska-Engelson, Radcliffe Public Library; Melissa Johanson, Steamboat Rock Public Library; Laura Newby, Union Public Library

As we welcome in 2024, the librarians of Hardin County would like to re-

mind its residents of the vibrant spaces we call public libraries. Hardin County is home to eight amazing public libraries. Libraries have been and continue to be more than just a place to check out books, but community hubs. Libraries are common spaces for everyone, no matter social status or income level. The library is free for all.

In communities with varying levels of socio-economic backgrounds, libraries bridge the gap by offering a wide array of educational materials, internet access, and business services. This inclusive

approach ensures that all members of the community, regardless of their financial status, have the opportunity to learn, work and participate in the ever-changing landscape of the digital age.

Recognizing the changing nature of the workplace, libraries are providing environments that can cater to the needs of local businesses. By offering co-working spaces, meeting rooms, and collaboration zones, libraries become accessible hubs for freelancers, startups, and small businesses to work, collaborate, and innovate.

Every day our libraries provide copying, scanning, faxing and computer services to our patrons. All for free or at a very low cost.

Last year we saw over 125,000 people through the doors of our Hardin County libraries. As librarians, we see patrons checking out reading materials. We see patrons using our public computers or WiFi to print documents. We see patrons coming in for fun, interesting and educational programs. We see patrons using our study and meeting rooms for business meetings, community events and fami-

ly gatherings. We see patrons benefiting from our outreach to schools and senior centers. We see patrons strolling our story walks. We see young patrons engaging with our STEM carts. We see patrons meeting with local social service agencies. We see patrons browsing our newspapers and magazines. We see patrons downloading movies, music, magazines, books, and audiobooks. We see patrons checking out our board games, bikes, snowshoes, puzzles, pickle ball sets, cake pans, WiFi hot spots and ice skates.

As budgets are being planned for the next fiscal year, we urge you to reach out to your elected officials. Your city council members, supervisors, and state representatives. Let them know that libraries are windows into our communities. In an era that values inclusivity and community engagement, our libraries stand as beacons, fostering a sense of belonging and unity among all residents. With your voice, you can help our Hardin County libraries continue to provide the needed materials, services and welcoming, safe spaces.

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