



The Wright County MONITOR



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County Democrats Gather for Caucus

Amanda Rink,
Editor

February 2, 2026 - Inside the Clarion library, Wright County Democrats gathered for their 2026 county caucus with the intention of laying the groundwork for elections still months away.

The Wright County Democratic Caucus, held without the popularity of a presidential election year, centered on organization, planning, and party-building. "This is about laying the groundwork for months ahead," said caucus secretary Nancy Duitscher.

Under Iowa law, if no candidate earns at least 35% of the vote in the June primary, the race advances to a party convention, where delegates select the nominee. Those delegates, along with party leadership and alternates, are chosen during county caucuses.

Along with conducting party business, the caucus offered a forum for local voices and emerging candidates. Letters from Democratic leaders, including Iowa Democratic Party Chair Rita Hart, were read aloud, but the most personal moments came from those in attendance.

Gary Berkland of Belmond received applause after speaking about his sup-

port for State Senator Zach Wahls, a candidate for U.S. Senate. Berkland, who said he recently "came out of the closet" as a Democrat and changed his party registration after decades as a Republican, spoke about Wahls's ethics, his want of generational change, and public accountability.

He shared Wahls' positions on term limits, campaign finance reform, protections for Social Security and Medicare, reproductive rights, public education, and expanded health care access. "It's time for somebody much younger to be serving the people of Iowa," Berkland said, calling Wahls a leader with "refreshing ideas and opportunities."

Attention then turned to the Democratic primary for Iowa's Congressional District, where several candidates are running for the nomination.

A letter from Ashley Wolf-Tolbene, a Storm Lake mother running for U.S. House, emphasized universal health care, generational leadership, and returning power to everyday Iowans. Wolf-Tolbene entered the race after Ryan Melton suspended his campaign and endorsed her.

Al Mattison of Belmond read a letter from Dave



Red knitted hats worn by a few at the Wright County Democratic Caucus offered warmth on the February winter night, but also symbolized resistance to Federal Immigration Enforcement in neighboring Minnesota. The use of knitted red hats is a tradition that dates back to WW2, when Norwegians protested against the Nazi invasion. (Photo: Amanda Rink)

Dawson, a former state legislator, longtime prosecutor, and Cherokee County native. In the letter, Dawson highlighted his upbringing in a family agricul-

tural business, nearly two decades in the Woodbury County Attorney's Office, and a bipartisan legislative record in the Iowa House. *continued on page 2*

City Council Discusses Water Plant, Grants, and Nuisance Properties

Amanda Rink,
Editor

February 3, 2026 -

The Clarion City Council met last week with Mayor Heiden's leading, moving through regular business before addressing a few issues that brought discussion, most notably the city's new water treatment plant, regional trail planning, and ongoing concerns about nuisance properties.

Council first heard from Wright County Economic Director Aaron Bugweg,

who shared of the desperate need for MIDAS transit drivers in the region. Wright County currently has no available drivers. Bugweg noted the company will cover the cost for new hires to get their commercial driver's licenses.

Nick Fredricksen of ISG, who is responsible for the Clarion Water Treatment Project, described ongoing testing challenges caused by cold weather and the complexity of dialing in water quality. The plant is

currently operating mostly off Well 4, with additional testing planned for Well 3 due to differences between the two once the water tower is full.

"We need some really solid progress to meet deadlines and close out in about two weeks," Fredricksen said, explaining that freezing temperatures have limited testing runs to only a few cycles per day.

Engineers continue to batch, test, dump, and re-batch water while address-

ing programming issues, valve timing problems, and a recently discovered loose wire that affected back washing operations.

Public Works Director Jon DeVries shared, "The taste test will be the final," he said. Residents may notice changes in water quality and taste as updated water moves through the system. Some residents closer to the source might notice the change first.

The Council then ap-

continued on page 2

County Republicans straw poll for Brad Sherman as Iowa governor and Jim Carlin for U.S. senator

Karen Weld,
Monitor Contributing
Writer

On a relatively calm winter night Monday, February 2, more than 75 Wright County Republicans attended their caucus at the Clarion-Goldfield-Dows High School gym. Steve Nichols, who recently took the reins of the county party following the untimely death of Brian Frye, chaired the event.

More than a dozen federal, state, and county offices were discussed during the meeting. Most federal and state office-seekers were not in attendance, as they were caucusing in their own voting areas. Instead, candidates were represented by supporters or by written statements that were read to the group.

Five candidates appeared on the Republican ballot for Iowa's next governor. Brad Sherman received the most votes in the straw poll. Sherman was cited for his legal, moral, and ethical stances. His background includes years as a blue-collar worker, real estate developer, pastor, grassroots political organizer, and service

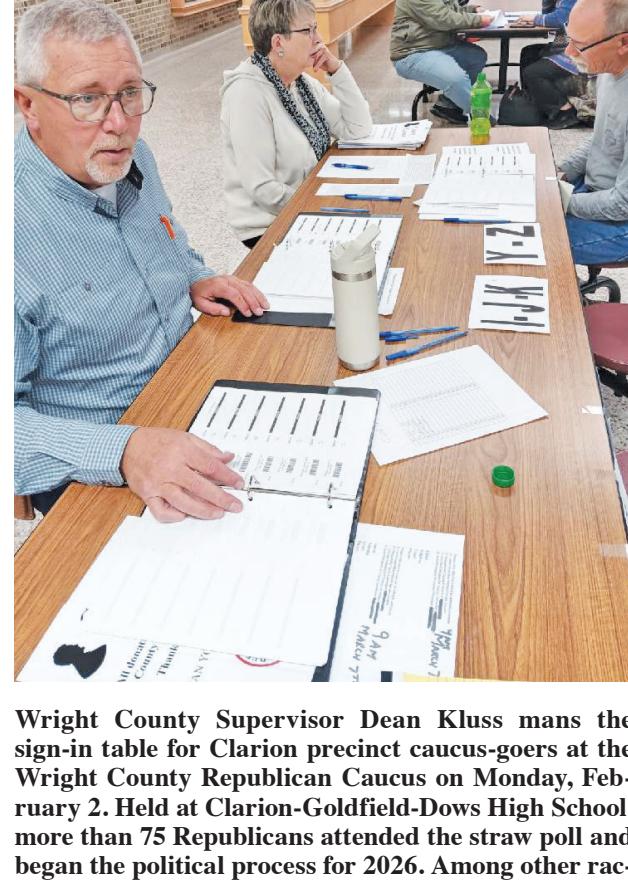
in the Iowa Legislature. He believes his wide range of experience shapes his approach to governing.

Jim Carlin narrowly defeated Ashley Hinson in the straw poll to replace U.S. Senator Joni Ernst. Carlin, a veteran and attorney, is running to represent Iowa values and curb reckless spending. He said he wants to restore economic freedom and represent all Iowans.

Three candidates are seeking Iowa's 4th Congressional District seat currently held by Randy Feenstra: Christian Schlaefler, Ryan Rhodes, and Chris McGowan. McGowan received the most local straw-poll votes. A veteran and businessman, McGowan supports secure borders, stopping illegal immigration, and supporting Iowa farmers and agriculture.

Chris Cournoyer and Abigail Maas are vying for the Republican nomination for Iowa Auditor, replacing Rob Sand. Cournoyer narrowly defeated Maas in the local straw poll. Cournoyer currently serves as Iowa's lieutenant governor

continued on page 2



Wright County Supervisor Dean Kluss mans the sign-in table for Clarion precinct caucus-goers at the Wright County Republican Caucus on Monday, February 2. Held at Clarion-Goldfield-Dows High School, more than 75 Republicans attended the straw poll and began the political process for 2026. Among other races, voters straw-poll Brad Sherman for Iowa's next governor and Jim Carlin to replace Joni Ernst as U.S. senator representing Iowa. (Photo: Karen Weld)

County sets date for Property Tax Levy Hearing

Amanda Rink,
Editor

February 9, 2026 - The Wright County Board of Supervisors met on Monday, recognizing long-time service, setting a date for the county's proposed property tax levy hearing, and receiving updates on county roads and emergency management planning.

To kick the meeting off, supervisors recognized Peter Smith for 10 years of service to Wright County, thanking him for his work and commitment to the county.

The board then set March 30, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. as the date for the public hearing on the county's proposed property tax levy. The hearing is required by law and must be listed as a separate agenda item when published for residents.

The board also received the monthly revenue report from the Wright County Sheriff's Office, which included \$2,561.90 in county car service fees and mileage, \$1,340 from new and renewed weapons permits, and \$60 in copy fees.

County Engineer Adam Clemons provided a secondary roads update, reporting that crews are focused on shop repairs and other routine maintenance.

Clemons said road crews have been using grader blades to smooth potholes and "corrugations," especially on the roads affected by freeze-and-thaw cycles. Crews have also been addressing icy spots as changing temperatures create slick conditions.

During meeting updates, supervisors discussed a recent emergency management meeting, where ongoing conversations centered on long-term building needs.

Supervisor Betty Ellis shared that the City of Clarion is exploring the construction of a new fire station and may consider a shared facility that could include emergency management offices and an emergency operations center. As previously reported by The Wright County Monitor, the city has \$2 million earmarked for a new fire station. Further planning is dependent on fundraising and partnerships.

It was also shared that the county is currently fully funding emergency management, with no city contributions. Additional budget considerations include potential building costs, storage needs, and equipment funding.

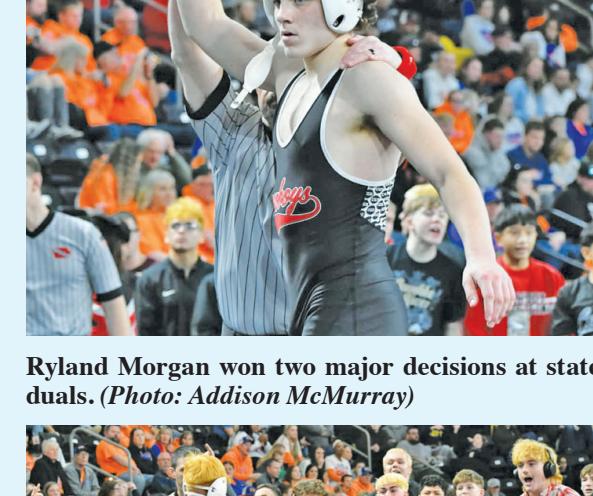
Conversations will continue as budget planning moves forward.

In other business, the board:

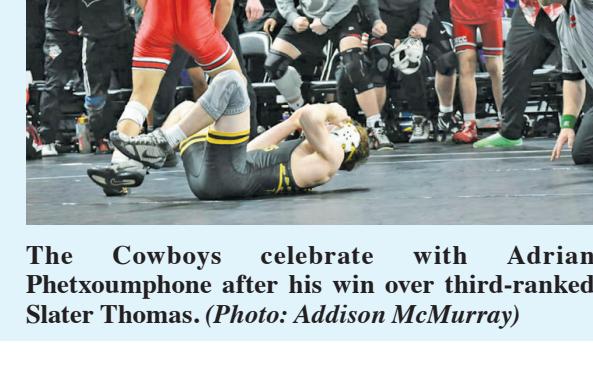
- Approved a liquor license for the Clarmond Country Club

The Wright County Board of Supervisors will meet again on February 16 at 9:00 a.m. This meeting, and past meetings, can be viewed online at youtube.com/@WrightCountyIowaOfficial8312.

Cowboys Bring Home Hardware From State Duals

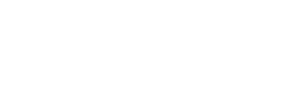


Ryland Morgan won two major decisions at state duals. (Photo: Addison McMurray)



The Cowboys celebrate with Adrian Phetxoumphone after his win over third-ranked Slater Thomas. (Photo: Addison McMurray)

Check out  Sports on pages 8 & 9



8 0 4 8 7 9 3 8 8 6 0 9

City Council continued from page 1

proved a resolution in support of the trail project, allowing ISG to submit a BOOST grant application through Empower Rural Iowa at no cost to the city. The \$10,000 grant would fund planning for the trail project. The grant requires a local match of \$5,000, which will be split with the City of Clarion and the Wright County Trails Committee.

Council members were told that involving multiple partners improves the application's competitiveness and that the planning work would better position Clarion for future state and federal trail funding.

The council also approved to terminate an Iowa Economic Development Authority grant tied to the apartments above the Clarion Fitness Center.

Clint Middleton explained that the developer could not move on with the portion of the project. Funds previously awarded have already been returned, and administrative costs will be paid following the resolution's passage. The council then moved on to reports, where council members took time to voice frustrations.

Mike Ennis first shared his annoyance over long-standing properties that remain in poor condition despite years of nuisance enforcement efforts. Several council members said Clarion residents are increasingly vocal, questioning why certain nuisance properties appear unchanged while others are cited.

City officials reported that roughly 50 citations were recently issued, but noted that progress is often slow, especially during winter months or other busy times like Fall Harvest. Council members pushed for monthly updates, stronger accountability, and more regular reporting on enforcement actions so they can better respond to community concerns.

Council gave direction for staff to move forward with stronger nuisance enforcement, while Middleton reminded council that they are not to discuss specific nuisance properties with community members.

The meeting ended with a brief mention of two recent water main breaks from DeVries. The council then went into break and moved on to budget talks.

The Clarion City Council will meet again on Tuesday, February 17, at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Wright County Economic Development Director Awarded State Scholarship for Advanced Training

Wright County Economic Development (WCED) is pleased to announce that Director Aaron J. Budweg has been awarded a professional development scholarship from the Professional Developers of Iowa (PDI). The \$500 award will support his attendance at the 2026 Heartland Economic Development Course, the premier regional training program for economic development professionals.

The scholarship, which is awarded to a select group of applicants across the state based on professional merit and commitment to community growth, reflects WCED's ongoing efforts to bring best-in-class strategies back to Wright County. The Heartland course, held in mid-April, is an intensive "bootcamp" that focuses on critical pillars of local success, including business retention and expansion, workforce talent development, site selection, and economic development finance.

"Staying competitive in today's market requires specialized training and regional connections," said Budweg. "This scholarship is an opportunity to strengthen our county's capacity while being fiscally responsible with our local resources. By pursuing external funding for this training, we are ensuring that Wright County remains at the table with regional partners and site selectors without adding a burden to the county budget."

The award comes at a time of significant momentum for the region. Following the recent announcement that the Wright County Charitable Foundation (WCCF) Endowment Fund has surpassed the \$1,000,000 milestone, this investment in professional leadership further signals a new chapter of growth for the area.

"Our goal is to ensure every community in Wright County—from our larger cities to our smaller rural towns—has access to the most effective economic tools available," Budweg added. "The strategies learned through the Professional Developers of Iowa will be directly applied to our 2026 initiatives in housing, grant readiness, and business support."

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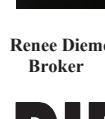
DEADLINE:

Legal Notices Noon Friday
Classifieds 1:00 a.m. Friday
Display Ads 1:00 a.m. Friday
Submitted News Noon Friday
Obituaries Noon Monday

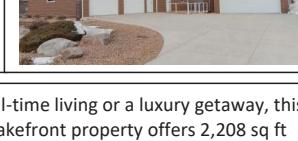
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Democrats Caucus continued from page 1

He said he is running to represent the people rather than party leadership or corporate interests.

Kyle Kruse, also running for the U.S. House, was introduced as a rural Hardy native raised on a small family farm. Kruse attended community college in the construction trades, traveled the state through his work, and founded his own business in 1999. Now semi-retired, he operates a custom furniture and woodworking business while living on a small farm outside Humboldt.

Beyond candidate introductions, organizers emphasized partnership across county lines and recent county business.

Upcoming party gatherings were mentioned: the county convention on March 21, the district convention on May 2, and the state convention on June 13.

When asked what issues mattered most to them personally, attendees pointed to challenges felt close to home. "I think all students should have access to quality education," said Mikayla Walker of Clarion. "I don't think it's fair that the money is leaving our district."

Stephanie Olmstead of Eagle Grove said she hopes to see broader participation across age groups. "I wish more young people would show up to events like this," she said, adding that she would also like to see more



Gary Berkland of Belmond received applause after speaking about his support for State Senator Zach Wahls, a candidate for U.S. Senate. Berkland, who said he recently "came out of the closet" as a Democrat and changed his party registration after decades as a Republican, spoke about Wahls's ethics, his want of generational change, and public accountability. (Photo: Amanda Rink)

middle ground in future elections.

Beyond electing delegates and updating Democrats of county business, a key point of the caucus was sharing formal statements, called resolutions. The resolutions help guide priorities and policy discussions at higher levels.

Resolution for the Democratic platform introduced in Wright County was to raise the minimum wage to a living wage, remove

swipe and card processing fees that small businesses say are cutting into profits,

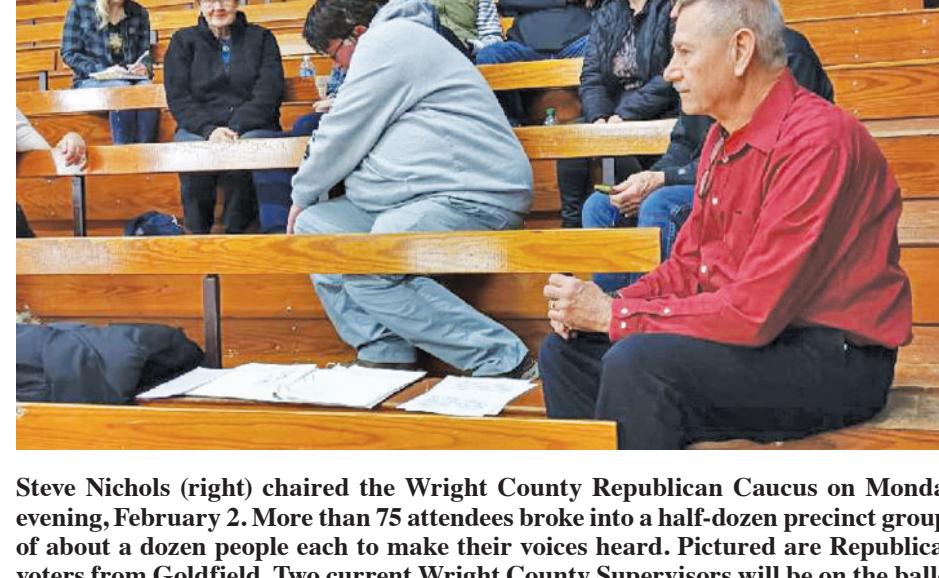
reinstate Roe v. Wade protections, fully fund public schools, establish a single-payer health care system, and adopt federal legislation to fully fund Social Security and Medicare.

Additional resolutions addressed developing a Democratic response to "Project 2025" in the form of a "Blueprint 2029," improving water quality amid

rising cancer rates in Iowa, and banning automatic and semi-automatic weapons for anyone outside the military or law enforcement.

While off-year caucuses may lack the participation of presidential contests, attendees are aware that the impact can be lasting. The resolutions adopted, delegates selected, and conversations ultimately choose the ideas that will stay viable as Iowa's 2026 races begin to take shape.

Republicans Straw Poll continued from page 1



Steve Nichols (right) chaired the Wright County Republican Caucus on Monday evening, February 2. More than 75 attendees broke into a half-dozen precinct groups of about a dozen people each to make their voices heard. Pictured are Republican voters from Goldfield. Two current Wright County Supervisors will be on the ballot in 2026: Betty Ellis, District 5, and Rick Rasmussen, District 1. Ellis is unopposed in the primary. Rasmussen is being challenged by Greg Schipull. The primary election is set for Tuesday, June 2. Both Rasmussen and Schipull reside in Goldfield. (Photo: Karen Weld)



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reading between the lines

with Amanda Rink

The Secret Society of Cheerleaders

Amanda Rink,

Editor

"Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame." - Alexander Pope

Last week, I attended the Iowa Newspaper Association Convention and Awards Ceremony. It's a yearly event where newspapers from across the state come together for a day of continuing education, networking, entirely too much food, and the grand finale of the night: the awards ceremony.

This was my second time attending, but the first time I was able to sit in on all of the informational sessions. I came home with a lot of ideas I'm excited to put to use at The Monitor.

I was also honored to take home a second-place award for Best Continuing Coverage for my reporting on the search for hydrogen in Wright County. The

judges described the coverage as "thorough," which, coming from people who read a lot of newspapers, felt like a pretty solid compliment.

But the award I'm most excited to share is that this column, the one you're reading right now, received first place in the Master Columnist category.

I was allowed to submit three columns as examples of my work, and I narrowed it down to "It Takes a Village to Find a Dog," "Baby Carriers and Tractors," and "The Journalist Behind the Headlines." The judge noted that my topics are wide-ranging and that I use humor to soften tough issues. I'm choosing to believe that my natural self-deprecating humor and slightly corny jokes worked in my favor.

While recognition from industry professionals is always encouraging, the moment that felt the most rewarding to me didn't come from a judge's comment.

It came from a Facebook comment from one of our readers: "As a long-time former Clarion resident, I continue to learn more about my cherished hometown and its residents because of your excellent coverage."

The former publisher of

The Wright County Monitor also shared, "A wonderful reward for long hours and amazing work." And while awards are nice, truly, hearing from readers is what matters most. You're who I write for, after all.

One of the things I love most about living and working in small-town Iowa is the sense of community and connection. It shows up in good moments, like winning awards or telling meaningful stories. And it shows up just as strongly in the hard ones.

You really learn who

your cheerleaders are when

life gets heavy. That's something my family and

I were reminded of recently. People came out of the woodwork with advice, offers to help, or simply the gift of their presence. Many of them were people we casually chatted with around town, at school events, the grocery store, or in passing conversations on the sidewalk.

We admired them, of course. We just didn't realize we held a place with them, too... one that made them reach out during a difficult time for my husband and me.

It was a powerful reminder that you never really know who is rooting for you.

So I'll leave you with this tiny piece of advice: pay attention to the quiet cheerleaders in your life. The people who may not know

how you take your coffee or celebrate your birthday with you, but still care deeply about you. They still admire you and want the best for you.

Those small-town, built over time connections can mean the most when your world feels like it's caving in. So, if you're a quiet cheerleader for me, my kids, my husband... even my countyhopping silver lab, I am incredibly grateful for you.

Amanda Rink is the Editor of The Wright County Monitor and a children's book author. Her award-winning (mostly) weekly column is published in The Wright County Monitor and The Hampton Chronicle.

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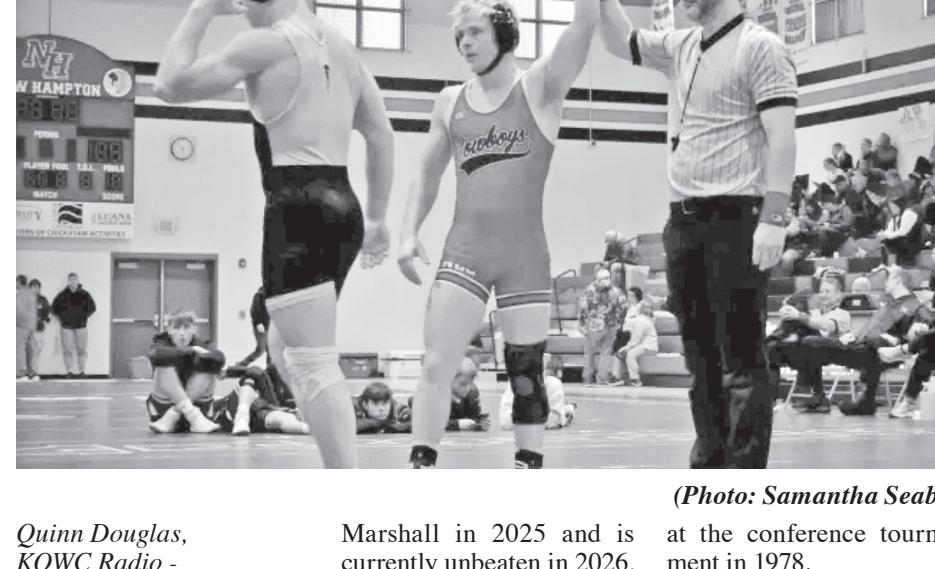
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OPINION -- The Free Market of Iowa High School Sports



(Photo: Samantha Seaba)

Marshall in 2025 and is currently unbeaten in 2026, is perhaps the best current example.

Along with conversations I've had with people who have been around the sport far longer than I have, the great programs in Iowa

High School Wrestling have cherry-picked wrestlers from lesser programs in the surrounding area for a long time.

Does it happen? Does it not happen? How do the rules get skirted around? Is there money involved?

These are questions that

are getting asked more

and more as we enter an

era of high school sports

in Iowa where it has never

been easier to move schools

without penalty, regardless if it's public to private, private to public, private to private, and now public to public.

Many transfers in Iowa have received im-

mediate eligibility to play

varsity sports thanks to an

option where adminis-

trators at the departing school

district and the receiving

school district can sign off on a waiver allowing the

student-athlete to be imme-

diately eligible. This has led

to a psuedo-free market of

high sports across Iowa.

And how's the reaction

to this new freedom of

movement from parents and

supporters?

Poor. Really, really poor.

Throughout the last couple of wrestling seasons, I

have had to deal with the fallout from said supporters when covering Clarion-Goldfield-Dows wrestling,

as the program has received an influx of talent that had settled in Clarion to compete for the Cowboys, while

also continuing training at Team Valley Wrestling Club.

The comments on our stations Facebook page whenever we provide cov-

erage on the program from surrounding communities

have been snarky, demean-

ing and simply embarrassing.

It's led me to a couple of

of talking points/realiza-

1. This isn't a new issue in

High School Wrestling in Iowa

Athlete movement and

wrestling in the state of

Iowa have been synony-

mous with one another for

over 2 decades now. Current

Iowa Hawkeye 141-pounder

Kale Peterson moved from

West Fork High School in

Sheffield to Greene County

High School in Jefferson in

2021 thanks to his connec-

tion to the Sebolt Wrestling

Club. Jacob and Evan Frost

hail from Louisiana, but

moved to the Des Moines

metro before their senior

seasons and competed for

Dowling Catholic, and now

compete at 149 pounds and

133 pounds for Iowa State.

Iowa State freshman 125

pounder Christian Castillo

wrestled for Ames High in

2024-25 after moving in

from Arizona, with Castillo

winning the 3A 126

title en route to a 43-0 sea-

son. Current Iowa Hawkeye

197-pounder Brody Sampson

wrestled his freshman

and sophomore year for

hometown Collins-Max-

well, before transferring to

Ballard High School in

nearby Huxley, placing 3rd

and runner-up his junior

and senior seasons.

There's also plenty of

current wrestlers in high

school wrestling who have

switched high schools in

their careers: Urijah Cour-

ter placed 3rd at 106 as a

freshman at Nevada before

winning a state title at West

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rounding area for a long

time.

They're doing this to

give their kids a chance at

a better future, whether it's

continuing their wrestling

careers, athletic careers in

general, OR taking the les-

sons they learn on the mat

and applying them to the

future. These parents did

NOT do it for the money

(that's if there even is any,

and I've yet to see evidence

that there is), they did it for

their kids.

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PUBLIC NOTICE
Wright County Supervisors Jan. 27, 2026 Minutes

January 26, 2026

Chairperson Bosch called the regular meeting of the Wright County Board of Supervisors to order at 9:00 a.m. Members present were Kluss, Rasmussen, Bosch, Loux, and Ellis.

Motion by Rasmussen and seconded by Loux to approve the tentative agenda. Motion carries.

Minutes of the last regular meeting of January 19, 2026 were read and approved.

Approved claims for payment.

In open forum, Heather Christensen was congratulated for 20 years of service to Wright County!

Motion by Rasmussen and seconded by Kluss to approve the liquor license for Oakdale Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America. Motion carries.

Motion by Kluss and seconded by Rasmussen to receive the 2025 Wright County Comprehensive Plan. Motion carries.

Motion by Kluss and seconded by Ellis to publish the 2025 Wright

County Comprehensive Plan in the February 4th paper and hold a public hearing on February 16th at 9:30 a.m. Motion carries.

Motion by Kluss and seconded by Rasmussen to receive the semi annual report from the Wright County Treasurer. Motion carries.

Adam Clemons, Wright County Engineer, presented the 28E Agreement for road maintenance for City of Woolstock. Motion by Kluss and seconded by Rasmussen to approve the 28E Agreement with the City of Woolstock for County Road Maintenance on Secondary Road Extensions inside the corporate limits of Woolstock. Motion carries.

Clemons gave an update on the Secondary Roads department.

Motion by Kluss and seconded by Rasmussen to adjourn the meeting. Motion carries.

Ashley Bosch, Chairperson, Wright County Board of Supervisors

Amanda Meyer, Wright County Auditor

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PUBLIC NOTICE
City of Clarion Feb. 3, 2026 Minutes

The Clarion City Council met in regular session Tuesday February 3rd, 2026, at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers with Mayor Heiden presiding. Present were Council members Dave Flurer, Dan Hennigar, Mike Ennis, Nick McOllough, and Elmarie Nel. Also, in attendance City Administrator Clint Middleton, Attorney Zach Chizek, PWD Jon DeVries and Chief TerHark

Mayor Heiden called the meeting to order and polled the council for any conflicts of interest with the agenda, there were none. Mayor Heiden asked if there were any citizens listed to address the council, there was one. Aaron Budweg (WCED) presented on the annual report of the Heart of Iowa Housing Trust Fund. This is a multi- county fund that allows homeowners of modest income to receive a forgivable loan to do home repairs up to \$15,000. Budweg commented that there was a home in Clarion that took advantage of this last year. DRIVERS Needed! For the MIDAS public transit located in Clarion covering Wright County. Budweg is hitting all meetings promoting this.

Motioned by Flurer seconded by Hennigar to approve consent agenda consisting of Minutes-2026.01.20; Financial report-approve checks; Licenses/Permits-(Building, Liquor, Tobacco, Sign, Peddler, Street Closure) (Motion passed 3-0, absent Hennigar, En-

nis).

Nick Fredricksen (ISG) gave an update on the New WTP. Contractor is finishing up with the punch list, doing water quality tests by dialing in the chemicals. Good news, all air issues that have been holding us up have been resolved. Motioned by Flurer seconded by McOllough to approve Resolution (26-06) City Resolution of Support - Trails (Motion passed 5-0). This is support for a BOOST grant application for Wright County Trails Committee.

Motioned by Flurer seconded by Nel to approve Resolution (26-05) Terminating IEDA Grant Agreement 124 Main Street (Motion passed 5-0).

Early reports from the Council or Dept heads before Budget Workshop: Several Council Persons commented on certain properties that we have been working with over the years to get cleaned up, are sitting stagnant. Direction given to Middleton and TerHark to push forward and get it done, involve the city attorney if needed. Other properties that have been habitual offenders also need to be focused on.

Short break then the council entered the FY27 Budget Workshop.

Motioned by Hennigar seconded by McOllough to adjourn. All Ayes. (Motion passed 5-0).

Respectfully Submitted,

Clint Middleton City Administrator

Published in the Wright County Monitor on Wed. Feb. 11, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE
City of Clarion Feb. 3, 2026 Claims

CLAIMS REPORT
VENDOR AMOUNT
A.D TECH SOLUTIONS 242.7
ADVANTAGE ARCHIVES, LLC 187.5
AFLAC 223.1
AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES 270.79
ARNOLD MOTOR SUPPLY 226.06
BLACKSTRAP, INC 4,242.38
BROOKS, RODGER 842
BROTHERS MARKET 66.21
CASEY'S BUSINESS MASTER-CARD 189.82
CENTER POINT LARGE PRINT 98.28
CGD COMMUNITY SCHOOLS 150
CITY OF CLARION 416.8
CITY OF CLARION 510.74
CLARION DISTRIBUTING 113.7
CLARION HEALTH INS 1,569.07
CLARION VISION INS COLLECTION SERVICES CENTER 369.23
COLUMN SOFTWARE PBC 104.32
COMM1 827.94
COUNTRY LIVING 14.97
CULLIGAN 84.8
DEVRIES, JON 69.5
First Citizens Bank 14
FED FICA ELECTRONIC 14,102.53
FIRST CITIZENS BANK 30
GORDON FLESCH COMPANY 63
HAWKEYE WEST PEST CONTROL 68
HAWKINS, INC 80
HOMESERVE USA 5,400.60
HSA PERSONAL 1340.84
IA ATHLETIC FIELD CONSTRUCTION 17,000.00
IA DEPT OF REVENUE 131.15
IA. MUNIC. FIN. OFFICERS
ASSN 120
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES 713.24
IOWA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-AUTH 37,634.00
IOWA MEDICAID ENTERPRISE 2,818.04
IPERS 29,988.29
ISCIA 175
KANSAS CITY LIFE INSURANCE CO 134.6

Published in the Wright County Monitor on Wed. Feb. 11, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE
Estate of Alexander Hilipire

THE IOWA DISTRICT COURT
FOR WRIGHT COUNTY
IN THE MATTER OF
THE ESTATE OF:
ALEXANDER H. HILPIRE,
Deceased.

Case No. ESPR017779
NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT OF
ADMINISTRATOR AND NOTICE
TO CREDITORS

To All Persons Interested in the Estate of Alexander H. Hilipire, Deceased, who died on or about January 31, 2024:

You are hereby notified that on January 29, 2026, the undersigned was appointed Administrator of the estate.

Notice is hereby given that all persons indebted to the estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned, and creditors having claims against the estate shall file them with the clerk

Published in the Wright County Monitor on Wed. Feb. 11 & 18, 2026

of the above-named district court, as provided by law, duly authenticated, for allowance, and unless so filed by the later to occur of four months from the date of the second publication of this notice or one month from the date of the mailing of this notice (unless otherwise allowed or paid) a claim is thereafter forever barred.

Dated: February 2, 2026
Brenda J. Helgipire, Administrator
3102 7th Avenue South
Fort Dodge, IA 50501
Charles A. Walker
ICIS#: AT0008223
Attorney for Administrator
Walker Law Office, P.C.

320 S. 12th Street
Fort Dodge, IA 50501
Date of second publication:
February 19, 2026
Probate Code Section 230

Published in the Wright County Monitor on Wed. Feb. 11 & 18, 2026

**Legals are your
right to know!**

PUBLIC NOTICE
Estate of Sharron Rae Hauge

THE IOWA DISTRICT COURT
FOR WRIGHT COUNTY
IN THE MATTER OF
THE ESTATE OF SHARRON RAE
HAUGE, Deceased
CASE NO. ESPR017780
NOTICE OF PROBATE OF
WILL, OF APPOINTMENT OF
EXECUTORS, AND NOTICE TO
CREDITORS

To All Persons Interested in the Estate of Sharron Rae Hauge, Deceased, who died on or about December 1, 2025:

You are hereby notified that on February 3, 2026, the Last Will and Testament of Sharron Rae Hauge, deceased, bearing date of August 10, 2020, with codicil bearing date of February 17, 2025, was admitted to probate in the above-named district court, as provided by law, duly authenticated, for allowance, and unless so filed by the later to occur of four months from the date of the second publication of this notice or one month from the date of mailing of this notice (unless otherwise allowed or paid) a claim is thereafter forever barred.

Dated February 3, 2026
Kathryn A. Hauge Executor of Estate

809 Pesch St
Rowan, IA 50470

Scott A. Hall, ICIS#: AT00009988
Attorney for Executor

Carney & Appleby, P.L.C.

303 Locust Street, Suite 400
Des Moines, IA 50309

Published in the Wright County Monitor on Wed. Feb. 11 & 18, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE
Estate of Richard E. Pletcher

Public Notice
IN THE IOWA DISTRICT COURT
FOR WRIGHT COUNTY
IN THE MATTER OF THE
ESTATE OF

Richard E. Pletcher, Deceased
Probate No. ESPR017756
NOTICE OF PROOF OF WILL
WITHOUT ADMINISTRATION

To All Persons Interested in the Estate of Richard E. Pletcher, Deceased, who died on or about September 30, 2025.

You are hereby notified that on

the 3rd day of November, 2025, the

Last Will and Testament of Richard

E. Pletcher, deceased, bearing date

of the 20th day of November, 2013

, was admitted to probate in the

above named court and that there

will be no present administration of the estate. Any action to set aside the will must be brought in the dis

trict court of said county within the later to occur of four months from the date of the second publication of this notice or one month from the date of mailing this notice to all heirs of the decedent and devisees under the will whose identities are reasonably ascertainable, or thereafter be forever barred.

Notice is further given that all persons indebted to the estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned, and creditors having claims against the estate shall file them with the clerk of the above-named district court, as provided by law, duly authenticated, for allowance, and unless so filed by the later to occur of four months from the date of the second publication of this notice or one month from the date of mailing of this notice (unless otherwise allowed or paid) a claim is thereafter forever barred.

Dated this 13th day of November, 2025

Judith K. Pletcher
Proponent

Andrew C. Johnston
ICIS Pin No. AT0012303

Laird Law Firm

11 Fourth Street NE

P.O. Box 1567

Mason City, IA 50402-1567

Attorneys for the Estate

Date of second publication

February 11, 2026

Published in the Wright County Monitor on Wed. Feb. 4 & 11, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE
Estate of Darlene J. Dieger

IN THE IOWA DISTRICT COURT
IN AND FOR WRIGHT COUNTY
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE
OF DARLENE J. DIEGER,
Deceased.

CASE NO. ESPR017760
NOTICE OF PROBATE OF WILL,
APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTOR,
AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To All Persons Interested in the Estate of Darlene J. Dieger, Deceased, who died on or about September 28, 2025.

You are hereby notified that on November 19, 2025, the Last Will and Testament of Darlene J. Dieger, deceased, bearing date of July 2, 1990, was admitted to probate in the above-named court and that Susan J. Hammen was appointed Executor of the estate. Any action to set aside the will must be brought in the district court of said county within the later to occur of four months from the date of the second publication of this notice or one month from the date of mailing of this notice (unless otherwise allowed or paid) a claim is thereafter forever barred.

Dated November 19, 2025, the Last Will and Testament of Darlene J. Dieger, deceased, bearing date of July 2, 1990, was admitted to probate in the above-named court and that Susan J. Hammen was appointed Executor of the estate. Any action to set aside the will must be brought in the district court of said county within the later to occur of four months from the date of the second publication of this notice or one month from the date of mailing of this notice (unless otherwise allowed or paid) a claim is thereafter forever barred.

Susan J. Hammen, Executor of Estate

217 2nd St SW

Clarion IA 50525

Lynn Collins Seaba, Attorney for Executor

Seaba Law Office PLC

503 N Main St

PO Box 68

Goldfield IA 50542

Published in the Wright County Monitor on Wed. Feb. 4 & 11, 2026

whose identities are reasonably ascertainable, or thereafter be forever barred.

Notice is further given that all persons indebted to the estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned, and creditors having claims against the estate shall file them with the clerk of the above-named district court, as provided by law, duly authenticated, for allowance, and unless so filed by the later to occur of four months from the date of the second publication of this notice or one month from the date of mailing of this notice (unless otherwise allowed or paid) a claim is thereafter forever barred.

The vendees under the Contract hereby demand a deed in satisfaction of the contract pursuant to Iowa Code 614.21.

If a deed is not provided within forty-five days of service and an action to foreclose or forfeit the contract has not been commenced within such forty-five day period, the vendees may file an affidavit showing service and compliance with Iowa Code 614.21 whereupon the auditor shall correct the county records as provided in section 558.67 to indicate that the rights of the vendors have vested in the vendees.

Dated February 5, 2026
Brandon J. Dodgen
Attorney for Vendees

Lemmenies & Dodgen
PO Box 337

Humboldt IA 50548
(515) 332-1157

Date of second publication February 12, 2026

Date of third publication February 19, 2026

Iowa Code Section 614.21, Iowa

Rules of Civil Procedure 1.310 – 1.313

Published in the Wright County Monitor on Wed. Feb. 4, 11 & 18, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE
Hiltabidle Demand For Deed

DEMAND FOR DEED
RE: LOTS 5 AND 6 IN BLOCK
1, WRIGHT'S THIRD ADDITION
TO EAGLE GROVE JUNCTION,
WRIGHT COUNTY, IOWA

To: Richard E. Hiltabidle, Wanema E. Hilt

The View From Here by Senator Dennis Guth

Senator Dennis Guth,
R-Klemme

The fourth week of the legislative session reminded me of the start of planting season. We've been preparing to get work done for a long time and we finally are "in the field" beginning that work. Subcommittees are the first step for any bill, so they are a little like planting as the first step in raising a new crop. All of the preparation work is for nothing if the subcommittee doesn't happen.

The Senate had over 50 subcommittees this week and a few full committees were held as well, meaning this year's "crop" of legislation is off to a good start. I'll try to pick a few of the bills that might be of interest to the folks in my district.

One of the first things we try to pass each year is funding for our K-12 education. The Senate is proposing an increase of almost \$100 million for the next school year, bringing the total spending on K-12 education to \$4.35 billion. That amounts to \$8,133 per student directly from the state.

When we talk about

education funding, school choice and educational savings accounts are often criticized by public school proponents. With ESAs, Iowa parents across the state have the opportunity to send their children to the school that works for them. While giving choice to parents, ESAs also encourage public schools to compete and improve the education landscape statewide. Recently, Iowa City Community Schools announced a new campaign titled "School Choice? Game On." They are promoting why their school may be the best fit for local parents who are looking at other options for their children. Competition fosters improvement in other sectors of the economy, and it will do so in education as well.

Property tax relief is a big issue for Iowans across the state and we currently have three different proposals that are being studied. The Senate version is the only one that does not use a hard cap of 2% revenue growth per year. Our version includes an inflation factor and is a more tailored approach to give local governments more flexibility while also implementing limitations that control local budgets to bring relief to Iowa taxpayers. If local governments want to spend more, they will have to take it before a vote of the people. I want local government to maintain local control, but I also want to en-

able residents to know why taxes go up and have input on new spending.

Smaller bills that advanced included SSB 3024 which prohibits the Iowa DOT from issuing drivers licenses or non-operators ID card if the applicant cannot provide proof of legal citizenship or legal immigration status. SSB 3038 deals with Iowa Public Retirement System (IPERS) and how they distribute funds, allowing a retired recipient of IPERS to choose a reloadable payment card instead of electronic funds transfer. It also changes the timing of when reports are issued in order to even out the workload of IPERS employees.

I will be holding a town hall in Forest City on Friday, Feb. 13th at Waldorf College.

On Saturday, Feb 14th I will hold three town halls. The first will be hosted by the League of Women Voters at 8:45 at the Roland Public Library located at 221 North Main St. in Roland. The second one will be at the Belmond City Hall at 1:00. The third one will be at the Humboldt Community Center at 3:00.

I will be at the Briggs Woods Conference Center near Webster City on Feb. 20th at 11:30.

"If you put the federal government in charge of the Sahara Desert, in 5 years there'd be a shortage of sand." - Milton Friedman

Look, a square!

Squares have four equal sides. Daddy's kind of a square too, but that's another story.

Everyday moments can be learning moments with your kids. For more tips, visit bornlearning.org

Parents: You may save the life of a child.

Potentially dangerous drugs are in the hands of Iowa children...

Synthetic drugs, sometimes called fake marijuana and bath salts.

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LAW OFFICE
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P.O. Box 111
CLARION, IOWA 50525
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Mid-America Publishing Takes Home Awards for 2026

Jennifer Burnham

Mid-America Publishing took home a number of awards during the 2026 Iowa Newspaper Association Award Ceremony last Thursday evening, Feb. 5. The following newspapers and journalists were recognized for their excellent work:

Wright County Monitor,

Amanda Rink

—First Place, Weekly Column (Class II)

—Second Place, Continuing Coverage (Class II)

Ida County Courier-Reminder,

Jenny Seuntjens

—First Place, Best Ad Featuring Financial, Insurance or Other Professional Service (Class II)

—Third Place, Best Ad Featuring Agriculture (Class II)

Calmar Courier, Michael Hohenbrink

—First Place, Harrison "Skip" Weber Coverage of Courts and Crime (Class I)

—Third Place, Coverage of Government and Politics (Class I)

Holstein Advance, Brent Harm

—Second Place, Best Sports Photo (Class I)

Butler County Tribune-Journal, Jensen Johnston

—Wagner Young Journalist Award

Sigourney News-Review, Mark Schafer

—Third Place, Best Sports Story (Class II)

Hampton Chronicle, Jennifer Burnham

—Third Place, Best Use of Social Media (Class II)



The Thompson Times

REPRESENTATIVE MARK THOMPSON

HOUSE DISTRICT 56

Representative

Mark Thompson,

House District 56

This week was filled with subcommittees and committee meetings. This coming week finalizes the legislation brought forward or written by individual legislators. As a review, the subcommittees are made up of 3 legislators from both parties. It is open for citizens and lobbyists to share their comments for or against the issue. Often the subcommittees are held in small areas when a large group is not expected. Space is at a premium in our Capitol so scheduling a subcommittee for the hundreds of bills waiting in the queue is a challenge to say the least. Finding a time slot of 15 or 30 minutes in which three legislators and a room availability can take a day or more to coordinate. Subcommittees can start long before the House gavels in at 8:30 am and can run past 5pm. I am on 5 committees, Judiciary, Local Government, Veterans, International Relations, and Justice Appropriations in which I am the vice-chair. Our clerks work hard to juggle our multiple subcommittees and committee meetings each week. My wife, Jacki, is my clerk and I appreciate her keeping me on track and on time for all.

I chaired a subcommittee for the legislation I brought forward for a dedicated human trafficking team of investigators, prosecutors, and victim advocacy. It has been a bipartisan effort and both chambers, House and Senate, are supportive of the effort, but it is too early to assume passage. It now goes to the full Judiciary Committee for a vote. If it passes through the committee it will go to the Speaker of the House to make a final decision on whether it is brought to the full House of

Representatives for a vote.

This legislation goes hand in hand with previous legislation I wrote regarding defining grooming with penalties and strengthening the penalties of those found guilty of trafficking. It is my goal to make those found guilty of human trafficking and grooming in Iowa to be subject to the most severe punishment.

The grooming law we passed in 2024 has been implemented recently. There are at least 7 cases of grooming which are in the trial process or have been found guilty.

I am also researching issues in our state regarding taxation, daycare, schools and student environments, food security, agriculture profitability for our farmers, the disabled and elderly, veterans, rural business growth, and many others; but this issue is protecting and rescuing the most vulnerable in our state is particularly important.

If you question whether human trafficking is really going on in our state and area, I can assure you it is. Each week the Capitol is filled with differing entities and individuals to share in the subcommittees or to talk to legislators. This past week I was able to meet with several from District 56 while at the Capitol. Greg and Liz Soenen of Goldfield were with the Iowa Council of the United Blind. They discussed efforts to "Let Us Work" for the visually impaired. Wright County Supervisor, Dean Kluss and McKinley Bailey with Building Families were at the Capitol advocating for child daycare funding. Kim Belstene, Food Service Director at Belmond-Klemme school district came to the Capitol representing School Nutrition Association of Iowa. Iowa State University filled the Capitol Rotunda with groups representing

varied programs ranging from their robotics

program to the veterinarian testing lab. I also took the opportunity to visit the Altoona Police high tech operation center sponsored by Rep. Bill Gustoff.

The Justice Appropriations Committee which I Vice-Chair has had three budget briefings thus far. The Governor's Budget Recommendations were presented, the second briefing was from the Director of the Dept. of Corrections, and this past week the committee was briefed by the State Public Defender's Office. This coming week we will hear from the State Court Administration.

My email inbox has been filled with the issues listed below:

- Glycophosphate (the chemical in Roundup) The bill presented is more than just discussing the proper use, labeling and liability.

I had a long one-on-one conversation with the legislator presenting the bill to get all sides of the issue. I am still researching the real purpose of the legislation, SF394.

- Motorized devices (e-bikes).

- Community College select 4-year degree programs.

- Making animal torture a felony HF557

Several on the list above I have concerns. I continue to research the issues as to whether I support a bill moving forward as is, needs amendments or discontinuing altogether.

Each Monday at the morning opening, a representative is asked to share a patriotic, historical story or event in honor of our 250th year as a country. This Monday I will share my involvement in the Cuban Refugee operation in May 1980.

Words of Wisdom

Last week's trivia questions:
What two pro football teams are tied for the most Super Bowl wins? Answer: The New England Patriots and Pittsburgh Steelers have both won six Super Bowls (not including this year's game). The Dallas Cowboys and San Francisco 49'ers have both won five Super Bowls.

What two pro football teams are tied for the most Super Bowl losses? Answer: The New England Patriots and Denver Broncos have both lost five Super Bowls. The Minnesota Vikings and Buffalo Bills have both lost four Super Bowls.

This week's trivia questions:
This Saturday, Feb. 14, is Valentine's Day. In what country is it a tradition for women to give chocolates to men on Valentine's Day?

The 2026 Winter Olympics kicked off on Friday, Feb. 6, with the Opening Ceremony in Milan, Italy. What country has hosted the most Winter Olympic Games?

Feb. 11 is National Guitar Day, and National Inventor's Day; Feb. 12 is Hug Day; Feb. 13 is National Cheddar Day, and World Radio Day; Feb. 14 is Valentine's Day; Feb. 15 is World Hippo Day; Feb. 16 is President's Day; Feb. 17 is National Cabbage Day.

This week is Celebration of Love Week, Freelance Writer's Appreciation Week, National Hero Week, and Jell-O Week.

Funny personal ads posted by women:
Single woman looking for solid relationship. You must be between the ages of 30 and 45, own your own home, and have a steady job with income to meet or exceed mine (\$49,000). Looking a little like Brad Pitt would be a big plus in your favor.

Needed quick! Date to family reunion. Three days, all expenses paid. Looking for man who is 30-45, tall, healthy, and smart. Must be comfortable with strangers, able to play endless hours of frisbee, and not a vegetarian. Please don't respond if you don't think you can pretend to be my boyfriend.

I hate most men. I am looking for the man who can change my opinion.

The first Winter Olympic Games were in 1924 and were held in Chamonix, France.

In the early years of the Winter Olympics, animals participated in demonstration events, such as dog-sledding in 1932 and "skijoring" in 1928, where athletes were towed on skis by horses.

The town of Valentine, Nebraska is decorated with painted hearts on the sidewalks and on the candy-red street signs. As the self-proclaimed "Heart City," some restaurants even offer heart-shaped steaks.

Valentine is the county seat of Cherry County in Nebraska. Cherry County is approximately 6,000 square miles, compared to Ida County's 432 square miles.



Monitor Memories

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF THE WRIGHT COUNTY MONITOR

1984 - 1949

42 Years Ago

February 16, 1984

Even though the weather may not seem quite like winter, Clarion High School will be celebrating the season this Friday night when they hold the Winter Festival. A king and queen will be selected from these candidates to preside over the event. They are Lana Marker, Sonya Sego, Beth Hufmeister, Pat Redenius, Becky Taylor, Todd Burras, Steve Watne, Rod Middleton, Dave McAllister, and Darren Bierl.

What began as a simple field trip for a group of Clarion Kindergarteners to enjoy a midwinter sleigh ride turned into a farm festival, as the youngsters took advantage of the ample supply of snow, the mild weather and the surroundings of the rural Holmes farm owned by Richard Tesdahl. It has become an annual tradition for Tesdahl to host the Clarion youngsters for an afternoon in a genuine horse-drawn sleigh and on Thursday, the children had a good day for the event. As well as enjoying the sleigh rides, the students also discovered that some of Tesdahl's horses could be hand-fed some hay and that an old chicken coop, that had been buried by snow drifts, made a fine snow slide.

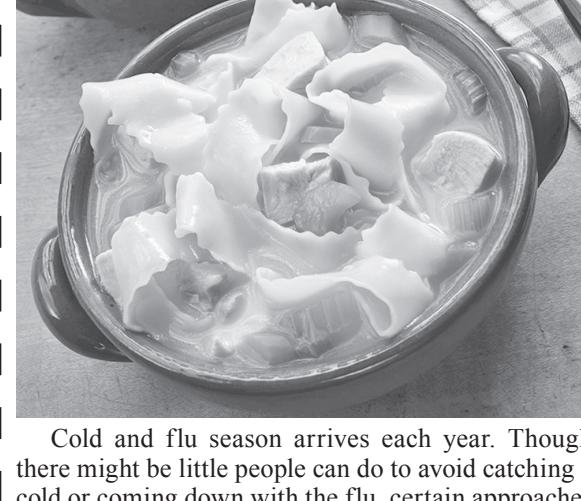
77 Years ago

February 17, 1949

Produce Owner Escapes Injury- Elmer A. Wilharm, owner of the Farmers Produce company, Clarion, narrowly missed serious injury last Thursday at the Municipal airport when he landed in his light plane. Wilharm's private plane settled far down the runway and he was unable to stop before hitting a snow bank at the end of the field. He was uninjured and the only damage to the plane was a broken propeller. Wilharm's home is in Tripoli.

The Clarion Community chorus will present "Minstrel Varieties," Friday, March 26 at 8 p.m. in the junior high school auditorium. Wayne Cross is in charge of the music and direction for the production while Jay Vendelboe is handling the scripts for the Minstrel show. The evening's entertainment will be divided into two parts. The first half will include skits which portray the highlights of the year's holidays. The second section of the production will be a regular old-time minstrel show with interlocutor and end men. All performers will be "black face" in this half of the program.

Homemade chicken soup is ideal for cold and flu season



Cold and flu season arrives each year. Though there might be little people can do to avoid catching a cold or coming down with the flu, certain approaches can make it easier to get through a bout with either illness. Flu vaccinations have been found to lessen the severity of infection with the influenza virus, while rest and plenty of fluids can help reduce the length of time a cold puts people out of commission.

Knowing what to eat when combatting a cold and the flu also can help people treat each virus. Chicken soup has long been a go-to when fighting a cold, and this recipe for "Homemade Chicken Noodle Soup" from Lines+Angles makes a worthy addition to anyone's cold- and flu-fighting culinary repertoire.

Homemade Chicken Noodle Soup
Makes 8 servings

1 3 1/2-pound whole chicken
10 cups low-sodium chicken broth
8 carrots, peeled and sliced
6 stalks celery, trimmed and sliced
3 onions, peeled and sliced
2 cloves of garlic, peeled and minced
8 sprigs fresh parsley
2 sprigs fresh thyme
1 bay leaf
2 tablespoons butter
Salt, to taste
Freshly cracked black pepper, to taste
12 ounces wide egg noodles

For the chicken stock:

1. Rinse the chicken inside and out under cold running water. Place the chicken in a large pot, set over medium heat and add the chicken broth. Add 1/4 of the carrots, 1/3 of the celery and 1/3 of the onions. Add the garlic, 2 sprigs parsley, thyme, bay leaf and enough water to just cover the chicken. Bring broth to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for about 1 1/4 hours, or until chicken is very tender, skimming any foam from the surface of the broth.

2. Remove chicken from broth and place in a colander to drain and cool. Strain the broth through a very fine mesh strainer into a large, clean soup pot. Discard the vegetables used to flavor the stock.

For the soup:

1. Skim any fat off the top of the strained broth.
2. Remove and discard the skin and bones from the chicken and cut the meat into bite-sized pieces; set aside.

3. Melt the butter in a large Dutch oven set over medium heat. Add the remaining carrots, celery and onions and cook for about 7 minutes or until the onions are translucent. Add the chicken pieces and chicken stock, season with salt and pepper. Bring soup to a simmer and cook for about 30 minutes or until the vegetables are tender.

4. Chop the remaining parsley; add the parsley and egg noodles, stirring frequently. Cook for 8 to 10 additional minutes or until the noodles are tender.
5. Ladle into soup bowls and serve hot.

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SPORTS

Hard Work Pays Off for Cowboy Hoops Team



Tristan Kakacek is averaging 4.7 PPG and 1.4 SPG this season for the 13-6 Cowboys. (Photo by Taylor Smith)

Taylor Smith,
Sports Editor

Last Monday night, the Cowboy basketball team started their week with a North Central Conference away game against the Algona Bulldogs (11-5 overall, 4-4 conference).

Huxley Lingenfelter had 15 points, 10 rebounds, and three steals, but sadly, Clarion-Goldfield-Dows fell, 69-53.

Tristan Kakacek added seven points, six rebounds, four assists, and two steals.

On Thursday, CGD traveled to Sheffield for a non-conference matchup vs. the West Fork Warhawks (8-10).

The Cowboys were able to prevent a late Warhawk

comeback attempt and got back into the win column after triumphing, 61-59.

Lane had 27 points on 55% shooting and secured eight rebounds.

Huxley Lingenfelter added 11 points, and Kakacek scored six.

The boys returned home a day later to face rival Webster City (2-16, 1-11).

A hot shooting Cowboy team would go on an 18-4 run to end the second quarter and build a 34-20 lead at the half.

Lane scored 16 of his team-high 28 points in the first half.

The Lynx, led by the junior guard duo of Alex Staley and Coyce Bertran, stormed back and poured in

26 in the fourth.

Then, after a pair of fast-break baskets, Webster City evened things up at 52-52 to send the game to overtime.

In OT, the Lynx captured a 55-53 lead when Staley banked in a layup with two minutes left on the clock.

Lane trimmed the advantage to one at the charity stripe, and his go-ahead make at the rim put CGD ahead once and for all with ten seconds left.

Huxley Lingenfelter scored 13, snagged 12 boards, and had two steals in the 56-55 Cowboy victory.

After the win, the Clarion-Goldfield-Dows improved to 13-6 overall and 7-6 in conference play.

"It's been a great season for our team," Head Coach Jason Berning commented as his team's regular season draws to a close. "It has been a lot of fun watching them grow into a highly competitive group team."

"It has taken a lot of work to get to this point," he added. "I'm really happy that their hard work is paying off. The best thing about them is they play great team basketball and are genuinely great teammates. They are a joy to coach!"

On Thursday, February 12, the team will wrap up their regular season on the road against Southeast Valley (17-1).

Classifieds

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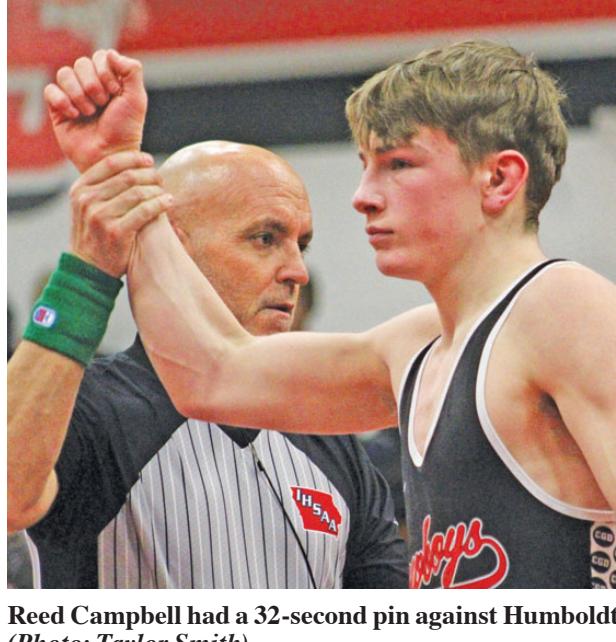
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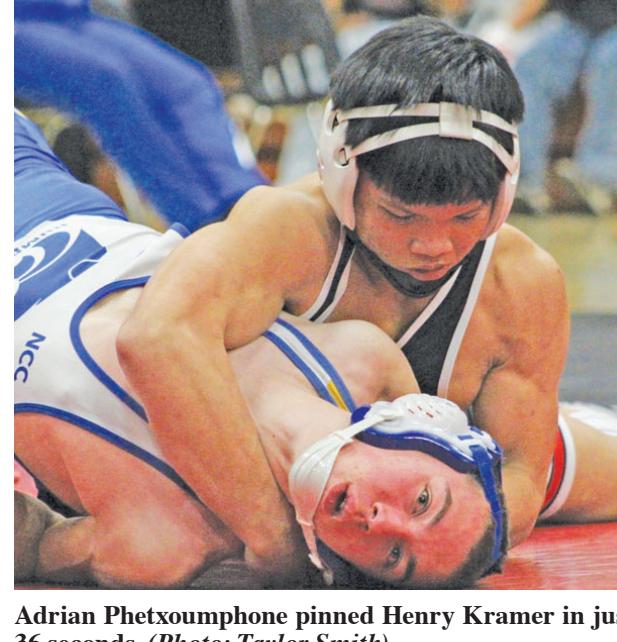
#2 Cowboys Rout #20 Humboldt to Qualify for State



Estuardo Lopez defeated Carson Ireland via technical fall to give CGD an 11-0 lead early on. (Photo: Taylor Smith)



Reed Campbell had a 32-second pin against Humboldt. (Photo: Taylor Smith)



Adrian Phetxoumphone pinned Henry Kramer in just 36 seconds. (Photo: Taylor Smith)

*Taylor Smith,
Sports Editor*

On February 3rd, Clarion-Goldfield-Dows High School was the host site for a regional dual featuring three powerhouse 2A wrestling programs.

#20 Humboldt would eke out a 37-32 over #19 Denver to earn the right to face #2 Clarion-Goldfield-Dows and their powerful

buzzsaw of a lineup.

The winner of CGD vs. Humboldt would qualify for the state duals in Coralville.

A year ago, the Cowboys advanced to state after defeating Humboldt in their own house, 38-37.

In Tuesday's rematch, CGD left no doubt and steamrolled Humboldt, 70-9.

Cole Wibholm

(106-pounds), Paxton Redenius (120), and Adrian Phetxoumphone (126) all collected pins as CGD jumped to a 23-0 lead.

After pinning Humboldt's Owen Stattelman in just 19-seconds, 132-pounder Linden Phetxoumphone let out a scream of joy in front of the Clarion crowd and gestured for his home fans to get out

of their seats. The Cowboy faithful obliged, and crowd favorite Reed Campbell gave CGD another fall at 144-pounds.

Estuardo Lopez (113) and Ryan Hartwig (138) won via technical fall, and Dawson Beyer (150) had a fall against his Wildcat opponent as CGD advanced to state.

Ryan Hartwig gets his hand raised after a technical fall at 138-pounds. (Photo: Taylor Smith)



Cowboys Bring Home Hardware from State Duals



The team shows off their third place trophy at Xtream Arena in Coralville. (Photo by Kristen Beyer)

*Taylor Smith,
Sports Editor*

After qualifying for state duals in dominant fashion, the (2A) #2 Clarion-Goldfield-Dows boys wrestling program took the trip to Xtream Arena in Coralville to battle the best the state has to offer.

The Cowboys would face North Central Confer-

ence representative (2A) #8 Algona on Saturday morning.

"In the quarterfinals against Algona, we came out and wrestled really well," said Coach Cory Yoder after the meet. "It was pretty much the outcome we expected, and the score was about the same as the first dual. It was great to

get out to a fast start and leave no doubt who was the better team."

Cole Wibholm (106-pounds), Estuardo Lopez (113), Paxton Redenius (120), Adrian Phetxoumphone (126), Linden Phetxoumphone (132), and Ryan Hartwig (138)

rattled off six straight Cowboys wins to kick off the

dual.

The boys went on to win, 50-18, over seven-seed Algona, setting up for an afternoon showdown against #3 Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont.

"Against EBF, we came out flat," Coach Yoder continued. "Against a very good team, that can't happen." Adrian

Phetxoumphone got us on the board with a big 4-1 overtime win over #3-ranked Slater Thomas, and I thought the momentum was shifting towards our team. They took it right back, and we never recovered. They are a very good team, but when you are not ready to wrestle, things like this happen."

Ryland Morgan won a 17-3 major decision over 175-pounds for CGD, and Linden Phetxoumphone (138), Easton Beyer (190), and JT Kelso (285) all received forfeits. Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont prevailed, 41-25.

After the heartbreaking loss, the Cowboys would face five-seed Independence for a shot at third place.

Wibholm won an 8-7

decision, Lopez got a fall, and Redenius notched a decision to give CGD a 12-0

lead.

Linden Phetxoumphone (132) and Colin Sesker (157) had pins, and Hartwig won by tech fall.

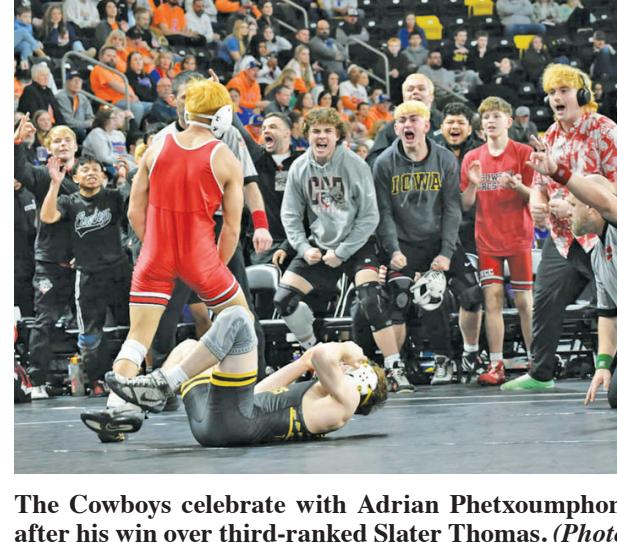
The Cowboys would top Independence, 36-23, to earn the third place state dual trophy for the second consecutive season.

"I loved the resilience of our kids coming out, battling, and finishing third," said Coach Yoder. "Kudos to our kids for bouncing back after a tough loss in the semifinals. We didn't reach our goal of winning a state championship, but placing third the last two years is a great accomplishment."

The Cowboys finish the regular season with a record of 23-5 and will get back to work in the wrestling room to prepare for Saturday's district meet in Webster City.



Ryland Morgan won two major decisions at state duals. (Photo: Addison McMurray)



The Cowboys celebrate with Adrian Phetxoumphone after his win over third-ranked Slater Thomas. (Photo: Addison McMurray)

Paxton Redenius battles EBF's Simon Bettis. (Photo: Addison McMurray)



Easton Beyer earned his 100th career win on January 26 at a home triangular. (Photo by Taylor Smith)

100-Win Club: Cowboy Questionnaire

EASTON BEYER | JUNIOR | 175

Who initially talked you into going out for wrestling? My brothers and I all went out for wrestling when we were little and stuck with it.

Who's your wrestling role model? Brody Teske.

Other than your 100th win, what was the most memorable win of your career? My district finals match last year.

What are your pre-match rituals? Playing spikeball and listening to music.

Who's your favorite teacher? Mrs. Stanton.

What's the best part about being a Cowboy? Having good coaches to look up to and having fun teammates.

Clarion-Goldfield-Dows School District

Middle School/High School Sports Calendar

Thursday, February 12

Junior High Girls Wrestling @ Eldora, 4:15 p.m.
7th Grade Boys Basketball @ St. Edmond, 4:15 p.m.
JV/Varsity Boys Basketball @ SE Valley, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 14

Class 2A, District 10 - Varsity Boys Wrestling @ WC, 10:00 a.m.
Class 2A, Region 7 - Varsity Girls Basketball @ MNW, 7:00 p.m.

Monday, February 16

7th Grade Boys Basketball @ WC, 4:15 p.m.
8th Grade Boys Basketball vs. WC @ CGDMS, 4:15 p.m.

Tuesday, February 17

7th/8th Grade Boys Basketball @ Algona, 4:15 p.m.

Aerial views

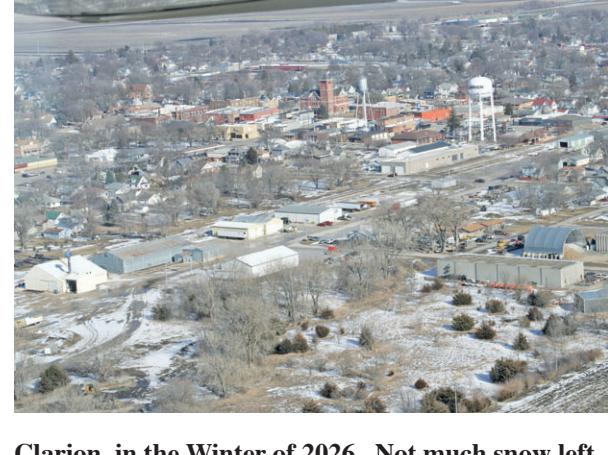
Bruce Voigts, Aerial Photographer (Photos taken February 6, 2026)



Ice fishing may soon change on Lake Cornelia with the warmer weather forecasted. However, on 2-6-26, it was doing well with ice houses and vehicles on the ice.



The snow delineates the newly installed tile lines used to drain excess water from the farm field.



Clarion, in the Winter of 2026. Not much snow left.

The Sport of Kings



This is my peregrine in her first year, brown bird plumage. Like all peregrines, she loves to fly. (Photos: Lowell Washburn)

Lowell Washburn

Commonly referred to as The Sport of Kings, falconry is defined as the pursuit of wild game with trained raptors. Doesn't matter if your current protégé is a red-tail, goshawk, or peregrine falcon, training a wild bird-of-prey to accept you as a trusted hunting partner is a step by step process with each bird bringing its own unique personality and providing its own set of challenges.

Training a bird for falconry has two major milestones. The first is having your bird return following its first free flight. The second is the day you take your first head of wild game. Taking wild game represents a life changing event, firmly cementing the bond between earth bound trainer and free flying raptor. In most cases, the first successful hunt is a joyous occasion that results in bringing home a rabbit, pheasant, or wild duck.

There are exceptions, of course. One of my most memorable occurred three winters ago while training a young-of-the-year, female peregrine that I was trying

continued down the road until out of sight. After releasing the falcon, she began her usual routine of wandering the sky. When she finally headed back in my direction, I began a cautious approach toward the fence. The roosters stayed put and it appeared as if this might finally be the flight we had been waiting for. Before long, the pinned pheasants could not only see the approaching falcon, but could now see me as well. Aware of the developing situation, one of the roosters lost his nerve and launched into the air. The peregrine immediately gave chase, coming across the winter sky in a long, slanting dive. If only the pheasant had held for another minute or two.

It quickly became apparent where the rooster was headed – a thick stand of cover located to the side of Dean's farmstead. As the flight progressed, it quickly developed into a spectacular high-speed, high-stakes, all for nothing chase with each bird flying as hard as it could go. The peregrine had begun closing the gap, and it was going to be another too-close-to-call, photo finish contest. The speeding rooster appeared to agree with this assessment. With its destination still a hundred yards distant, the pheasant began to rapidly lose altitude while looking for an alternate plan. Within seconds, both birds disappeared into the building site with the peregrine still hot on the rooster's tail.

This was not good. With a lengthy list of potential dangers – which include high voltage power poles, cats, dogs, and other hazards – rural building sites are not a safe place for hawks to sit. Heading back for my vehicle, I sprinted until I ran out of breath and was forced to slow my pace to a walk. Finally reaching the Suburban, I sped for the farmstead. My falcon was outfitted with an electronic locator which is used to recover "lost hawks" in occasions such as this. Upon reaching the building site, I looked down to

switch on the telemetry. In the second it took to do that, my front wheel slipped off the edge of the gravel. The rear wheel followed, and I ended up with my truck frame high centered on the edge of the roadbed. Just a few yards from Dean's driveway, I was hopelessly stuck.

But I could worry about the truck later. Right now,

I desperately needed to find my falcon – hopefully sitting nearby, alive and well. While struggling to exit my tilted vehicle, I must have bumped the lock. And as gravity swung the door shut, I could hear the sickening sound of all four doors locking behind me. Worst of all, the telemetry set that I needed to locate the hawk was still sitting on the seat behind those locked doors.

My afternoon adventure was no longer feeling like the Sport of Kings.

In a growing state of panic, I began running around the buildings searching for any sign of the missing hawk. There wasn't any, and I began to wonder if the pheasant had made it to cover and if my bird had kept on rocketing to who knows where. She was, after all, still in the early stages of training. I had to get into that truck.

No one was home at the farm, and I began looking for a heavy length of wire with which to burglarize my vehicle. I eventually found a suitable piece, and with some effort managed to free one of the locks without breaking any windows. Grabbing the telemetry, I was elated to receive a strong transmitter signal

coming from somewhere within the building site. As I followed the ever strengthening beeps, my ongoing progress was monitored by three or four friendly cats. I wondered if those cats had witnessed any speeding birds passing by.

Upon rounding the corner of a steel building some minutes later, I was greeted to the sight of a rolling procession of brightly colored, wind driven pheasant feathers.

Although the telemetry was really pounding now, the electronics were no longer needed. I simply followed the feather trail to where, concealed behind a huge snow drift, my precious peregrine was standing atop a recently deceased, long tailed rooster. Praise God!

Still a bit out of breath and sweaty, I was completely frazzled. By contrast, the falcon was calm and collected; looking up at me as if to say, "What took you so long?"

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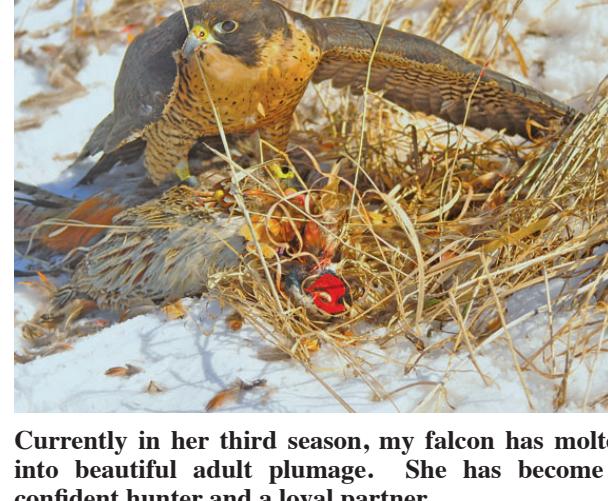
Because of my lengthy delay, the hawk had already eaten more of the pheasant than I would normally permit. But in this case, I didn't care – she was welcome to my portion too. It had been a hair raising flight and she had earned the meal. I was just thrilled over her safe recovery.

Dean returned home about the time I was getting back to the truck. Driving a tractor from the machine shed, we hooked a chain onto my vehicle and had it back on the road in seconds.

In more than forty years of falconry, this remains the most harrowing, first successful flight on game that I've ever had.

Now in her third winter, the peregrine has become a confident hunter and a loyal partner. A joy to fly, I love her dearly. Once again, falconry is feeling like the Sport of Kings.

Enjoy more wildlife tales online at Washburn's Outdoor Journal at iawildlife.org/blog



Currently in her third season, my falcon has molted into beautiful adult plumage. She has become a confident hunter and a loyal partner.

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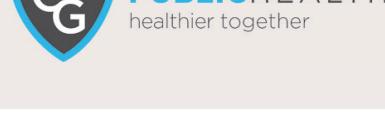
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