

OPINIONS

Local stories make national news

A lot has happened since the last time I wrote. I have met with protesters, been to the courthouse for a sentencing, ridden in a helicopter and celebrated a birthday, just to name a few.

I would have thought it rare for the things I cover for *The North Scott Press* to also be covered on a national level, but that has now happened twice in the eight months I have been here. When I wrote a story introducing the Eldridge/North Scott Chamber's "Wipe Local," part of its "Buy, Stay, Be Local" efforts, the story was also covered by the Huffington Post, AOL and the *Omaha Sun Times*. It was even mentioned, somewhat in jest, by a number of online websites and YouTube channels, including a YouTube segment called "WTFark," who dubbed the story, "The Great Wipe Hype: Iowa Town Urges Citizens to 'Wipe Local.' As In Their Butts. With Toilet Paper."

It is always fun when something I write is also discussed at a national level. Watching WTFark's commentary was quite entertaining, but the other story receiving national attention was much more serious.

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While I was in the courtroom, furiously writing notes as Benton Mackenzie and his family received probation in lieu of any jail time, the country followed along with their favorite news outlet. The Huffington Post, Aljazeera, the Las Vegas Sun and a number of marijuana websites and publications followed the Mackenzie trial closely, rarely questioning the guilt of breaking Iowa law, but rather discussing whether the laws that were broken should have even been laws in the first place.

Protestors lined the sidewalk outside of the courthouse, advocating for the legalization of medical marijuana. Most were locals, others came from Des Moines, but there were some who travelled from other states to show their support.

Growing up in the '90s, I never would have imagined that cannabis could one day be used for medicine. I spent much of my childhood being told by my parents and teachers how dangerous and illegal the drug was; how it would ruin my life.

It hasn't been too long since then, but many of the people who used to preach the dangers of marijuana are now fighting for its decriminalization and legalization. Benton Mackenzie claimed he saw tumors from his terminal cancer completely disappear while self-medicating with oil

Offended by 'Dumb American' label

Editor:

Re: "Students' lack of knowledge earns label of 'Dumb American,'" ("Sarah's space,") Sept. 17, 2014.

We are appalled that you would refer to North Scott High School students as "Dumb Americans." These students were attending a McCausland City Council meeting as an assignment, taking notes and asking questions, if they had any. They were not prepared to be targeted by the mayor and grilled on government and current events. We also did not know who the current lieutenant governor of Iowa is, so does that make us "Dumb Americans" as well, Ms. Hayden?

Was it really necessary, Mayor Koehn, to



The 'New' New Guy

by Eric Chalus

derived from his cannabis plants. If that is the case, I must throw my support behind his decision to break the law.

Following the law shouldn't have negative effects on your life, and it unfortunately takes many strong-willed people peacefully breaking those unfair laws for change to final happen. The civil rights movement is a perfect example of this. This is not suggesting that the cannabis discussion is as important to the human race as the civil rights movement was, but it took a number of African Americans going to jail, riots in the street and the National Guard escorting black students to school before serious changes were made.

It sometimes takes generations for what seems like common sense to sink in on the federal level, and I do not see this problem going away any time soon. This is a topic that will be discussed for many more years, and I plan on spending more time discussing this at length in a future column.

I hope you read about my helicopter ride last week. As a pole vaulter and an avid thrill-seeker, I have no fear of heights but must admit, I felt my stomach drop more than once when photographing the Pride of the Wapsi's 2014 Cy-Hawk Series Corn Maze from the passenger seat of a whirlybird.

The doors were taken off so we could lean out and take pictures, and the first time I poked my head outside of the helicopter and felt the wind slap me around, I immediately leaned back in, admittedly a little scared.

With nothing but a seat belt holding me in, I leaned out again and took the wind on full-force as I took as many pictures as I could, and that fear immediately turned into excitement as I looked at the countryside from 500 feet in the air. It was beautiful and an experience I will remember for the rest of my life.

Unfortunately for my mother, it in no way discouraged me from wanting to skydive. It is now at the top of my bucket list.

make these students stand up and intimidate them? We frown on bullying at North Scott, and that's exactly what you were doing. When you could clearly see that these students were nervous and uncomfortable, you continued to question them. Would it not have been enough to simply welcome them to your council meeting and thank them for coming?

Our son is also in the AP government class and has yet to attend a meeting. But I can assure you that he will not be attending it in McCausland. And I am confident that where he and other classmates choose to attend, they will be welcomed and respected.

Ben and Karen Apple
700 S. 7th St., Eldridge

The world could use more pie!

The state-owned American Gothic House in Eldon, Iowa, made famous by painter Grant Wood, has lost its tenant. Beth Howard, who has been living there and baking and selling pies from the house since moving in back in 2010, becoming famous in the process, has moved out.

Though she is a graduate of Davenport Assumption High School, Howard was born in Ottumwa and spent her early years there.

Howard returned to Iowa as a new widow to operate Pitchfork Pie Stand and become known as the Pie Lady.

According to her blog, theworldneedsmorepie.com, Howard started her business for fun, but it has grown to the point where she could no longer contain it in the historic little house. She said she has looked at many possible solutions to manage the volume. They include buying a commercial oven, baking off-site at a bigger kitchen and renting a storefront.

"But first and foremost I am a writer, and it was never my goal to run a pie business," she writes. "My true mission is to encourage others to make and share their own homemade pie, as I believe the act of giving makes the world a better place."

"At the pie stand I was selling, not giving, and I've always been uncomfortable with that. Therefore the best solution – for me personally – was to stop doing the pie stand completely."

She now plans to start on her next book. She already has written two. "Making Piece: A Memoir of Love, Loss and Pie" was published in 2012 and a cookbook, "Ms. American Pie," was released last April.

My wife and I traveled to Eldon in August of 2012. We stepped into the American Gothic House, met Howard and bought some pies from her. They were delicious, by the way.

Howard told us at the time she was a journalist. "But I don't have time to write anything anymore," she lamented.

But that has now changed, and she encourages people to make their own pies.

"I believe the world needs more pie. Especially homemade pie," she writes in her blog. "I promise you, when you make your own pie and share it with someone, you will experience the win-win joy that comes from giving and sharing."



Everyday People

by Phil Roberts

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Thom Cornelis: Congratulations times three to KWQC-TV's recently retired sports director, Thom Cornelis.

That's right, he has three reasons to celebrate his retirement:

- 1) He was able to spend a total of 44 years – first at WQAD-TV, then at KWQC – doing a job he loved.
- 2) He was able to spend his entire broadcasting career in one market, the Quad-Cities.
- 3) He was able to retire instead of being released as is so often the case with broadcast on-air talent.

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Politics: I will be thrilled when the mid-term election arrives in November. That's mainly because election day will mark an end to those disgusting personal attack ads on TV and those annoying phone calls – many of which are recorded – from candidates' backers.



Beth Howard

Why professional days are important

On Sept. 22, we had our first full day of professional development for teachers during the school year. Many parents and students wonder why we take days off during the year for teacher work days. These days are extremely valuable for the continuous improvement of North Scott School District.

In education today, we demand more out of our teachers than ever before. Teachers need to continually work on implementing higher standards for our students. In order to do this we need time for the teachers, not only to understand the standards, but to update our curriculum to meet the standards.

Public schools have more accountability than ever before. We strive to reach all of our students. Current educational research provides better teaching strategies to teach students. We want to keep our staff on the cutting edge, so we provide the teachers time to learn about best practices in teaching, integrating technology into lessons, and addressing the demands of 21st century education.

In order to reach all students, we must analyze our student data. Our teachers need time to collect, organize and analyze the data. They then use that information to plan for ways to meet all of our students' needs.

Evidence shows that schools who operate

Focus on Education

by Joe Stutting

Superintendent
North Scott Schools



as professional learning communities improve student learning. What this means is we need our teachers collaborating about students and curriculum on a regular basis. Education has gone from a profession where teachers were semi-isolated to a profession of collaboration. We use our late starts and work days to provide time for this collaboration.

The No. 1 factor in the quality of education is the teacher. The North Scott Community School District is committed to helping provide continuous improvement for all of our staff. We value the days we have to provide professional development, curriculum writing, data analysis, and student planning for the goal of improving student learning.

Written by Sue Kane and Joe Stutting

Readers' Poll

Last week's question:
CY-HAWK SERIES

With 35 votes counted, 86 percent said the annual Cy-Hawk rivalry football game between Iowa and Iowa State should continue because the competition is fun and the game is good for the state of Iowa. 14 percent said it should not continue because it makes it harder for both teams to go to a bowl game.



NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Will your interest in the games of the NFL change because of recent reports of unsanctioned domestic abuse by players?

Vote online at
www.northscottpress.com.
Results will be published next week.
Signed letters to the editor on any topic are welcomed. Send to: North Scott Press, P.O. Box 200, Eldridge, IA 52748, or e-mail: btubbs@northscottpress.com.