

Observer Editorial**Holiday Clips & Comments**

By Janine Kock, Observer Editor and Publisher

...CLOSED FOR THE SEASON. Steve Hoogstraat and Joann Martin were saying anything but "Ho, Ho, Ho" when they came out to their tree farm near Arcadia Sunday. As Joann posted on the business's Facebook page, "Steve and I work very hard all year long to see such enjoyment of everyone when they come to get their Christmas tree. All the kids love the candy canes that we give out too. There are a few people out there that do like to ruin that enjoyment. Much to our surprise when we drove up to the tree farm today, someone had cut the orange snow fence and stole a tree last night. It's one thing to steal a Christmas tree but to do this damage. Come on! Another Korean Fir tree was stolen also last night, only they used a chainsaw and didn't do other damage."

The tree farm owners, who had previously posted "Closed for the Season" signs because they sold as many trees last Friday, Saturday and Sunday as they normally do during their three-week season, said the theft of a tree from the farm comes at the cost of "at least 10 to 12 years of taking care and trimming."

Joann said the Scotch pine would sell for at least \$60, and the Korean fir approximately \$77.

The less-than-smart thieves left their hand saw at the farm, and Hoogstraat invited them to call him if they wanted to stop by and pick it up!

They ended their comments with a tongue-in-cheek "Enjoy your Christmas Trees, and you have a Merry Christmas!"

...ON A BRIGHTER NOTE... The photos on page one of this edition are the result of an experiment. Due to scheduling conflicts (see "This and That" for explanation), I could not be at any of the three Santa Claus events this weekend. So, I invited anyone who was attending the Old-Fashioned Christmas in Breda, driving through to see Santa in Westside, or having Santa to their house in Arcadia, to share their photos with us here at The Observer.

Judging from the looks of my inbox, I'll have plenty of photos to print, not only on the front page this week but also in the Christmas Greetings edition on December 22! As of this writing, I hadn't looked through them, but you can see what I picked for page 1, and you can expect more like them later this month! Thanks to everyone!

Readers were also invited to submit their letters to Santa for publication and were encouraged to finish up their coloring contest entries for a chance to win some of the prize money from our 10 great area sponsors before Friday, December 9!

I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment to thank the many volunteers in all four towns who are planning the Christmas activities this month. Each of the Community Clubs spearheads the visits from Santa, and each one took a different attack on that goal in 2022. In Arcadia, Santa arrived by fire truck, invited country youngsters to stop by the Arcadia Park shelter, and visited houses around town which had registered prior to that day. In Westside, a drive-by event was held at the Community Building on Main Street, with Santa on hand for photos and to receive wish lists in exchange for goodie bags. Breda held its traditional "Old-Fashioned Christmas," with soup and goodies to enjoy and Santa on hand and various kids' activities ready to make it a special and fun afternoon.

...SPEAKING OF CHRISTMAS... Remember to stop by the home page of our e-edition, www.westsideobserveronline.com, and pick your answer to "When do you plan to put up your Christmas tree?" The answers from which readers may select range from "It's Been Up Since the Week of Halloween" to "On Christmas Eve." Check out the provided responses and pick one for the results to pop up. Happy Holidays!

Consider This Week's
Words of Wisdom
It is Christmas in the heart that puts
Christmas in the air.

~ ~ W.T. Ellis

Iowa Caucus**Comments**Pate: After 50 years,
DNC abandons Iowa

Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate issued the following statement on Friday, December 2, regarding the Iowa Caucuses:

"I am very disappointed in the Democratic National Committee's decision to apparently abandon Iowa. For 50 years, this state has done a fantastic job at vetting the candidates who wish to lead this nation. Iowans make presidential hopefuls from both parties answer the tough questions and undergo the rigors of earning their vote through grassroots campaigning. Without Iowa propelling him, it's doubtful Barack Obama would have ever become president, and it's unfortunate the Democratic Party has forgotten that fact.

"I'm very pleased that the Republican National Committee will maintain Iowa's First-in-the-Nation caucus status. I also agree with Iowa Democratic Party Chair Ross Wilburn's statement that Iowa Code requires the political parties to conduct caucuses prior to any other presidential nominating contest, and they plan to adhere to the State of Iowa's legal requirements."

The relevant section of Iowa Code is available at this link: [*43.4.pdf\(iowa.gov](http://*43.4.pdf(iowa.gov))

Grassley: DNC making grave mistake

After leaked reports of President Biden and the Democratic National Committee's desire to end Iowa's First-in-the-Nation Caucus, Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) released the following statement:

"I believe the Democratic National Committee is on its way to making a grave mistake to upend our democratic nominating process. Coastal elites and party bosses put their thumb on the electoral scale to drown out the voices and values of Middle America to advance their woke agenda. This move will further alienate rural Americans from the Democrat Party.

"For decades, Iowans of all political stripes have been united in our pride for hosting the First-in-the-Nation Caucuses and winnowing the field in the contest for U.S. president. For a half century, Iowa voters have taken seriously the opportunity and responsibility to vet every candidate who campaigns to become the leader of the free world. Candidates can launch their presidential campaign at minimal cost. In fact, Iowa has a record of catapulting two Democrats to the White House, Jimmy Carter and Barack Obama. Without having the chance to build momentum in Iowa with grassroots-based retail politics, they may have never been president.

"Regardless of what the DNC says, I encourage the Iowa Democratic Party to move forward with its plan to follow Iowa law and hold Iowa's First-in-the-Nation Caucuses just as the Republican Party of Iowa is doing. Iowa should not allow coastal headwinds to blow away Iowa's First-in-the-Nation status."

Letters Welcome!

The Observer welcomes and encourages letters to the editor on this or any topic. However, the editor reserves the right to edit any letter for length (500 words maximum), and the editor may refuse publication of any letter.

All letters must be signed by the writer and include an address and phone number for verification prior to publication.

The Empty Nest

By Curt Swarm, Mount Pleasant

She Bought Her Husband!!

Marcia Marshall was not going to be outbid. She started the bidding high for a date with the good looking blonde haired gentleman in a flashy tuxedo. She had a feeling about this guy. When other ladies bid, Marcia, on the edge of her seat, immediately raised them. The other ladies could tell by the set of Marcia's jaw and the gleam in her eye that Marcia would pay whatever it cost for Burlington's eligible bachelor. They let Marcia have the date with Dan Wiedemeier (Weed-a-meyer) for a whopping \$200, which in 1987 was a substantial amount. (It still is.)

This was a benefit for the March of Dimes at the Pzazz in Burlington. Eligible bachelors let themselves be auctioned for dates. With ages ranging from 25 to 50, the bachelors looked sharp in their tuxedos, their hair slicked back with Vitalis, and smelling of Polo. Dan Wiedemeier's spiel was that he would pick up his date in a limousine, take her to dinner, then to a production at the Little Theater. The ladies' mouths watered. But Marcia beat them out. She had to have a date with this man. She had a feeling.

Marcia was 41. Her husband had died four years earlier. She found herself alone and had given up hope of finding another life companion. When Marcia's friend goaded her into attending the March of Dimes Bachelor For a Date Auction, she reluctantly agreed, only if they could drive separately. Marcia had to go to work in Mt. Pleasant the next morning at 6:30. She had kissed enough frogs, she doubted she'd find a prince at an auction.

At the meet-and-greet before the auction, Marcia met Dan Wiedemeier. "My my," she thought, "what a handsome gentleman. He carries himself with such confidence, and has impeccable manners." Maybe she wouldn't leave the auction so early after all.

Following the auction, Marcia was writing a check to the March of Dimes. Dan Wiedemeier approached and suggested they meet afterwards for a nightcap to get to know each other and exchange telephone numbers. Now she had his business card.

When she arrived home that night, her phone was ringing. It was Dan checking to make sure she had arrived home safely. What a gentleman! Marcia was smitten and so was Dan.

Over the next few months it was a whirlwind of activity and romance. Dan would call her from work to see how she was doing. When he traveled on business, he would write her love letters—letters that Marcia still has today, wrapped in ribbon.

His three kids became her instant family. Dan's parents and Marcia's parents agreed that the two were meant to be. Marcia and Dan were married on November 19, 1988, a year after meeting. They were married for 33 years and lived in a beautiful home close to Starr's Cave Nature Center. Dan never stopped being a gentleman.

Dan was also a most prestigious business man, and well known in telecommunications and transportation circles. Prior to moving back to his hometown of Burlington in 1987, he retired as Vice President of AT&T in New York. In Burlington he held too many public, volunteer and business positions, and received too many awards to mention, the most noteworthy being the Burlington Chamber Emmy Award.

Dan Wiedemeier passed away in April of this year at the age of 83. He is waiting for Marcia in heaven to welcome her to Glory and pay back the \$200 she so lovingly paid for him. RIP, Dan Wiedemeier, the love of your life will join you some day.

Have a good story? Call or text Curt Swarm in Mt. Pleasant at 319-217-0526, find him on Facebook, email him at curtswarm@yahoo.com, or visit his website at www.empty-nest-words-photos-and-frames.com.

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