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Observer Guest Editorial

An Open Letter on Father's Day.

Editor's Note: The following piece was posted by a Facebook friend last Sunday on Father's Day. Enjoy these thoughts:

As I reflect on Father's Day, I'm grateful, thankful and honored that our almighty Father called me to being a parent. It is truly the greatest blessing of my time on Earth.

With that said, I am reminded daily that Fatherhood isn't exclusively what I do for my son. It's what my wife does for my son, it's what teachers do for my son, it's what my friends do for my son, and it's what complete strangers do for my son. We are all raising him...teaching him...growing him.

Fatherhood is also what so many people do for me. The advice, the listening, the encouragement...without it, I am not the man I need to be to help guide this little person into being a joy to others.

On this Father's Day, to all who are Fathers...and to all who are not. Thank you for being a positive force in this world. May you use your influence and your actions to be a model of behavior that is helping, positive, optimistic and fearless to the benefit of others. Thank you for helping all of us help shape our future!

A Statement from Iowa Right to Life...

By Kristi Judkins, executive director, Friday, June 16

Today we received the devastating Iowa Supreme Court ruling which permits the lower court's injunction against Iowa's 2018 Heartbeat Law to stand. The judicial system, therefore, has effectively blocked the law from going into effect. The ruling does leave the possibility for Iowa's lawmakers to re-pass the law – or something similar – to increase protection for unborn children. We are disappointed to say the least.

Iowa's elected representatives have already passed Heartbeat once. Subsequently, Iowa's people affirmed that decision by reelecting a Legislature committed to protecting innocent children in the womb, rather than a Legislature of Planned Parenthood allies that supports the slaughter of unborn babies throughout all 9 months of pregnancy. The people of Iowa have made it clear they stand for life. Unfortunately, today's ruling will result in more children killed, more women wounded, and cause additional delays in our ability to see that ALL innocent life is cherished and protected by law...

The Iowa March for Life which will be held Saturday, June 24, from 1-4 at the State Capitol, is more important than ever. It is our chance to show solidarity and send a clear message to our elected officials that they need to take action and not back down from the scrutiny of their adversaries.

Senator Joni Ernst: Disarm the IRS

Why do paper-pushing tax collectors at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) need guns? That's the 35 million-dollar question.

Since 2006, the IRS has doled out more than \$35 million of your tax dollars for firearms, ammunition, and tactical gear, including \$10 million in weaponry and equipment since 2020 alone. You'd think this federal agency was preparing for battle!

We saw in the so-called "Inflation Reduction Act" the Democrats' intent on expanding the power and size of the IRS, increasing its funding by \$80 billion. Weaponizing this agency threatens Americans' wallets, and when agents are armed to the teeth, our lives and property.

According to a report by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, special agents at the IRS accidentally fired their weapons more often than they intentionally fired them. And to make matters worse, the Inspector General could not determine if these IRS agents completed their "required" training.

Still, the IRS is hiring in all 50 states, looking for agents who "must be willing to use force up to and including the use of deadly force."

Americans should be gravely concerned that the IRS is armed, loaded, and coming after them. Especially given the agency's history of conducting armed raids on innocent Americans.

That's why I'm leading the "Why Does the IRS Have Guns" Act. This effort would disarm the IRS, auction off their guns to Federal Firearms License owners, and sell their ammo to the general public.

The proceeds from these sales would go directly to paying down our ballooning national deficit. My bill would also relocate the IRS Criminal Investigation Division within the Justice Department, where it would work alongside other law enforcement agencies such as the FBI and DEA.

Anyone with an ounce of common sense knows that IRS agents shouldn't be playing SWAT team dress-up on the taxpayers' dime! As the Senate's biggest foe of wasteful spending, I will continue shining a light on Biden's weaponized and oversized IRS. Between wasting money on guns, going after our small businesses, and evading their own taxes, there is plenty more to expose. It's time to disarm the taxman and end this abuse of power and tax dollars!

Joni Ernst, a native of Red Oak and a combat veteran, represents Iowa in the United States Senate.

Letter to the Editor... Book Ban

You may have heard about parents wanting to ban some books in the library. This does not mean that these books are going away. Some of these books the Biden administration want you to think will be thrown away so nobody can read them. This is not true because the books that are being looked at are not at the grade level for the students checking them out. They do not understand a lot of the meaning in the book.

Some people, maybe not in our small towns, are not pushing bad books on our very young students. A book with a title of "Gender Queer" should not be in any schools as most students have no need to read their book while they are still in school. When they graduate or turn 18 years old they should have enough common sense to decide if they want to read this.

My mother would call these books
LETTER TO THE EDITOR
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The Empty Nest

By Curt Swarm, Mount Pleasant

The Big Weigh-In

My friend Lonnie, from New Boston, Iowa, often challenges me on weight. He and I are about the same weight, and both of us are exercise fanatics. He's more of a runner, while I avoid the pounding and resulting back pain by working out on the elliptical machine. Like most Americans in the land of plenty, we tend to be over weight if we let ourselves go. Lonnie has the advantage that he works at the Y in Keokuk as a life guard and has access to the pool, weights and exercise equipment. Ginnie and I have our dedicated exercise room that has two treadmills and my elliptical machine. All I have to do is get up out of the recliner, which can be a chore, and walk to the exercise room. We have a television on the wall for listening to 24-hour news, classic rock, or movies—all of which aid in combating boredom while exercising. There are mirrors on the wall, an old-time balance scale for weighing, and photographs of Lonnie and me at various road races and triathlons. Lonnie and I are usually hamming it up by showing off muscles we don't have.

Anywho, we both, along with our wives, enjoy going to old-time, hippie, rock concerts. We went to see REO Speed Wagon and Styx in Des Moines, and, just recently, Three Dog Night in Ottumwa. Lonnie made sure we understood what a "three dog night" was. Gold miners in Alaska would huddle with their dogs for warmth on cold nights. If it was going to be real cold, they called it a "three-dog-night."

For the last two concerts Lonnie has challenged me: "Whoever weighs the most has to buy dinner for the four of us before the concert." For the REO concert, both Ginnie and I were recovering from COVID and I had lost a bunch of weight. I was in the high 170 lb range and Lonnie the 180's. He said I was cheating, like I had been purposely sick. But he begrudgingly bought dinner—fast food—big spender.

For the Three Dog Night concert, I had been gaining weight and Lonnie had me beat. However, he made a fatal mistake. Early on the morning of the concert, he texted me, bragging that he was 186, and wanting to know how much I weighed. I hadn't exercised yet, so told him to hold his horses.

I always weigh myself before exercising. I tipped the scales at 192. Gulp. However, I know that I can burn off about 4.5 lbs in an hour of exercising on the elliptical. If I pushed it, and went for a two-hour workout, could I burn off enough to beat Lonnie?

Yes! I did a two-hour workout on the elliptical and tipped the scales at 183 lbs—a 9 lb drop. Wow! I had Ginnie take a picture of me on the scales with the camera focused on the numbers, and sent it to Lonnie. He said I was cheating again, and for me to "put my other foot on the scales." I told him that I might be a liar, but he could trust Ginnie.

Once again, Lonnie begrudgingly conceded. However, at the restaurant, I forgot and tried to pay. Lonnie, with a gleam in his eye, was going to let me, but his wife, Gail, being honest, reminded Lonnie that he had lost the weight contest. Grrr.

At the Three Dog Night concert, the crowd was full of gray hairs, just like us. They even danced and the women screamed in front of the stage (a little disturbing). I asked if we looked like them. "Yep," was the consensus. It's unsettling when you see an auditorium full of selfies.

Lonnie's next contest is, whoever reaches 179 lbs first, the other has to buy dinner. I did some quick calculations and figured if I did a three-hour workout, I could hit 179. However, the next morning after the Three Dog Night concert, because of dehydration from the two-hour workout, I drank so much liquid I ballooned to 194. Gulp again. I didn't tell Lonnie.

We're leaving on vacation for North Carolina. Ginnie has a cousin she hasn't seen in a coon's age. Vacations are hard on diets. We eat too much and exercising takes a back seat. Lonnie figures he'll run a marathon (26.2 miles) and reach 179 lbs first. Dang.

Women might be finicky about their weight, but men are fanatics! LOL.

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

Observer Quick Poll

Opinions on Iowa's new child labor law...

The most recent Observer Quick Poll asked, "How do you feel about SF542, the relaxed child labor law which Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds signed into law last week?"

The options from which readers could choose included the following, with each one followed by the number of votes received from respondents: 1) Teenagers should not be allowed to work more hours, 2 votes; 2) Teenagers should not be allowed to work later at night, 1 vote; 3) Teenagers should not be allowed to work more dangerous jobs; 4) Iowa needs the employees. Teens should be able to work more and at more jobs, 2 votes; 5) Teens should not work -- they should save their time for school activities, 1 vote; 6) Parents should be able to use common sense to sign off on jobs for their children, 11 votes!

The next Observer Quick Poll asks, "What is your favorite meat to grill?" Choices include the following: 1) hamburgers, 2) hot dogs, 3) brats, 4) steaks, 5) chicken, 6) kabobs, 7) fish, 8) pork loin, 9) ribs, 10) foil meat and veggie packs, 11) other.

Visit www.westsideobserveronline.com, to register your choice! Once on the home page, scroll down until you see the heading "Take Our Poll."

Readers may vote once each day. Watch for the results of this poll in two weeks, and then watch for a new poll to be posted!

Consider This Week's
Words of Wisdom
If you are not obsessed with the life
you are living, change it!

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Caren Klink, Office Assistant/Billing
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Heather Edmonds, Graphic Designer

Phone -- 712-663-4362 Fax -- 712-663-4363
E-Mail -- observer@westianet.net

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