

EDITOR'S NOTE

WELL WROUGHT WORDS FROM A PAST PRESSMAN

I'm finding more and more that I and one of my predecessors long-past would have probably gotten along quite well.

Abraham Benjamin Funk wore more hats in his time than I could fit on my shoulders, he was not only owner and editor at the Spirit Lake Beacon, but his obituary noted he was the city's first mayor and was its postmaster from 1882 to 1885. He was elected to the Iowa Senate in 1887 and served for three terms before resigning and taking on other non-elected state positions. Heck, he even sat next to Abbie Gardner in the state capitol while legislators appropriated the \$5,000 in funding to construct the granite monument that stands in Arnolds Park today.

Busy guy, no doubt.

But what I imagine probably revealed Funk's personality and love for his newspaper was what he wrote in the paper's editorial columns — at least, I assume it was him...bylines weren't quite standard at the Beacon in his day.

You see, back then, newspapers could poke jabs and barbs at their fellow publications, and keen editors would respond on their own pages. I'm not sure whether I regret missing out on those days or whether I'm relieved I'm not burdened with pages through dozens upon dozens of Iowa newspapers to see if the DCN's name is being besmirched by someone on the opposite side of the state.

As it happened, I came across one such response in the Beacon's archives last week.

About 136 years ago, the Beacon had apparently taken some flack from the Peterson Patriot over the Beacon's printing operation. Knowing the paper's history as I do (see the paper's 150th anniversary story published in the Progress section of the March 25, 2020 edition) I know that it was around that time the Beacon was switching to a steam-powered press, thanks to the economic boom brought on by the railways. Prior to that, they'd been using an old press.

A very old one ... one with mismatched typesets and separators cut out of cigar boxes.

"From the dished condition of its bed, this printing machine was evidently much older than the state," Funk



Seth Boyes
News Editor

would later write.

But that press served the community for at least a decade — thanks in part to a "fine line of picturesque profanity" on the part of one press operator, according to Funk's account (but the news office is of course 100 percent profanity free these days, especially when deadlines are near). So it's no

wonder the Beacon took issue with the Patriot's words about their old type.

"It chronicled events more important to this county than will any other metal ever placed in form," the Beacon (and probably Funk himself in my opinion) said. "Even when the editor's faith was dim and his spirits were low, it spoke words of cheer to the discouraged homsteader and the businessman, weary with long waiting for the dawning of a more fruitful era. It told of the glee of the almost fairy-like transition of the lake country from the Slough of Despond to a position of prosperity and prominence."

Boy, they just don't write columns the way they used to (says the guy writing this column).

Bottom line is, there was some real love for the paper — not the formed-lead letters and the press itself so much mind you, but the actual work of the paper and what its purpose was. It's a difficult thing to describe, but it's an easy one to understand once you get your hands in it. And it's comforting to know that those who pursued that same goal — telling the public not only our triumph but our tragedy and everything in between in each and every edition — realized the calling is and never was contained in the concrete trappings of the press room.

"It has served its full destiny and must like us frail mortals make room for other and more serviceable agents; but for the sake of the tender memories clinging to its mute face, give it the credit due to a well spent existence," the Beacon's column said.

Every so often, words like this — the kind that reverberate with hues of Shakespeare — stretch across the decades and show they are as true today as they were then.

Time marches on, but those things which are worthwhile carry on anew somehow.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

CONCERT JAZZED US INTO THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

If you weren't full of Christmas spirit by Saturday night, the Jazzed Up Big Band of Okoboji brought you there in style.

The band's concert in the Roof Garden at Arnolds Park was everything one could hope for. Outstanding musicians, lively music, colorful decor and a big crowd.

Sixteen musicians comprise the band which plays every Tuesday night in the Roof Garden during the summer. These guys came from Vermillion and Sioux Falls in South Dakota; Omaha, Nebraska; Worthington, Minnesota; and Twin Lakes, Storm Lake, Sioux City and Spirit Lake in Iowa.

We got off to a very upbeat start with a lively rendition of "Jingle Bells," and the fun began.

The band played so many of our favorite yuletide songs with upbeat arrangements for jazz bands. It was so much fun to listen and tap our toes to the beat.

"Joy to the World" really showcased the talented trumpet section. I very much enjoyed CJ Kocher's (Vermillion) rendition of "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" on his beautiful gold clarinet.

A fantastic version of "Christmas Time Is Here" featured the very talented Ken Hoyne (Sioux Falls). He plays the trombone like no other!

Two guest soloists appeared with the band. Carol Nesbitt is a former news anchor at KELO TV in Sioux Falls. She



Doris Welle
Performance Reviewer

made the trip from her present home in Denver, Colorado, to perform and has a beautiful voice. Shawn Cable is a former meteorologist at KELO who now resides in Mankato, Minnesota. They treated us to several duets throughout the evening as well as solo performances which were well done by both.

Nesbitt did a really neat version of "Merry Christmas Darling" with special accompaniment by Steve Smith (Sioux Falls) on keys. It was delightful.

I have waited since last year's show to hear Cable sing "O Holy Night" again. He does it the best I have ever heard. He did not disappoint me Saturday night. The audience went wild with cheers and applause. Even the band members applauded his performance. Thanks Shawn! It once again brought tears to my eyes and goose bumps on my skin.

The audience got involved in a singalong to "Silent Night" and, if I may brag ... we did a great job on that Christmas favorite. The audience was not ready for the evening to be over. A standing ovation brought a much appreciated encore from the band.

Thank you to Rick Ayres from Spirit Lake for all the work he, his family and friends did to bring this special concert to fruition. I sincerely hope they can come back and do it again next holiday season. But at least we only have to wait until June 2023 to hear this talented band again in the Roof Garden.

GUEST COMMENTARY

DUST SETTLING ON ELECTION

In my last newsletter, we had just wrapped up the Nov. 8 election. There were a number of elections with uncertain results and a number of recounts.

I think the dust has settled and we have a better picture of the composition of the legislature as we prepare for the start of session in January.

Republicans will maintain the trifecta in Des Moines. Gov. Kim Reynolds was reelected and the GOP maintained majorities in both the House and Senate.

The House will come in with 64 Republicans and 36 Democrats. Some interesting House races around the state: The Council Bluffs/Carter Lake seat was decided by only six votes. One of the Ankeny seats was decided by 23. A seat in Scott County initially had a Republican winner, only to be flipped after a recount.

The Senate Republicans increased their majority to 34 seats.



Megan Jones
State Rep.

This is considered a super majority which means the Senate is able to confirm boards and commission members as well as agency leaders with members of the majority party.

Also on the ballot of was Proposition 1. This is commonly referred to as the Freedom Amendment. It passed with 65% of the vote — 748,046 votes.

The official language reads: "The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. The sovereign state of Iowa affirms and recognizes this right to be a fundamental individual right. Any and all restrictions of this right shall be subject to strict scrutiny."

So, all that said, regardless of how your preferred candidates performed on election night — I think many are just happy to have the election behind us. I am honored to have been elected to another term — this is not a job I take lightly.

Thank you.

GUEST COMMENTARY

Q&A: 'TIS THE SEASON FOR SHIPPING AND SHOPPING

Q: WHAT'S THE OUTLOOK FOR THIS HOLIDAY SHOPPING SEASON?

A: Inflation is top of mind for consumers during this holiday season.

Rising interest rates are

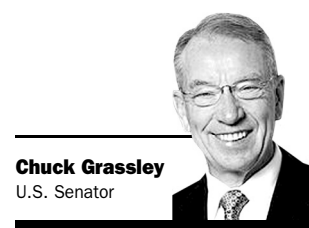
pinching household budgets and high energy costs will force Americans to pay more to heat their homes this winter. Whereas shipping bottlenecks and disrupted supply chains caused headaches for shoppers and retailers the last two years, yet another cloud loomed over this holiday season: a potential rail strike that would derail the U.S. economy and create significant hardship for American agriculture and other key sectors dependent on cargo shipped by rail. For months, I have repeatedly called upon Congress to take action. That's why I co-sponsored a resolution in September that would require the railroads and unions to accept the agreement negotiated by the Presidential Emergency Board, which notably recommended the largest pay increase in industry history at 24 percent. Unfortunately, the Biden administration punted, creating a cloud of uncertainty for all who rely on the railroads. Don't forget, this is the same administration that claimed inflation was "transitory" and that the border is secure. So, the U.S. economy was barreling towards a catastrophic rail strike, creating unnecessary havoc and costly shipping headaches for bulk commodities, including grain, biofuels, construction materials, chemicals and coal. Finally, Congress took the action I've been advocating for since September to prevent the strike and keep the trains and our economy running through the holiday season and beyond.

The holiday shopping season serves as the meat and potatoes for small businesses and retailers in communities across the country. The National Retail Federation estimates holiday sales will increase up to 8 percent from last year, reaching as much as \$960 billion during November and December. Consumers need to be vigilant to protect themselves from online scams. If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Organized retail crime is driving a stake through the U.S. marketplace. Small businesses are the bread and butter of the economy and can't sustain smash and grab thefts or compete fairly with stolen or counterfeit goods sold online. In addition to my efforts to avert a nationwide rail strike, I'm also working to put the brakes on criminal enterprise rings defrauding consumers and stealing from retailers. Paying top dollar for fake and counterfeit products is worse than a lump of coal in one's stocking and certainly takes the joy out of shopping.

Q: HOW WOULD YOUR BILL PROTECT CONSUMERS FROM STOLEN AND COUNTERFEIT GOODS?

A: Throughout the 117th Congress, I've worked across the aisle to forge a bipartisan consensus on the INFORM Consumers Act with members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Our bill would help fight organized crime that's putting the lives and livelihoods of small business owners and retail employees at risk. Organized crime rings have grown emboldened and more aggressive to swipe merchandise right off store shelves. This is shoplifting on steroids — a sophisticated criminal enterprise that resells stolen goods online. As a result, consumers pay more for products they need because retailers mark up prices to recoup losses from stolen merchandise. Retail crime rings also peddle counterfeit products that rip off consumers who believe they're buying authentic brands.

Transparency helps bring accountability. Specifically, our bill would require online marketplaces to verify the identities of high-volume third-party sellers. A seller with more than \$5,000 in at least 200 sales over the previous 12 months would be required to verify their identities. This would help prosecutors crack down on illegal activity and root out online scams. Our bill also would help neutralize the incentive for selling stolen and counterfeit goods. By requiring online platforms to verify the seller, our bill helps them become better stewards instead of complicit resellers for the bad actors peddling stolen and fake merchandise. Our bill would help expose the grinsches of organized crime who are lining their pockets by selling stolen and counterfeit goods online. These lawless outfits make it harder for retailers to stay financially afloat in their local communities and scam unsuspecting consumers with fake or stolen products. Enough is enough. I'm working with Chairman Dick Durbin to get our bill to the President's desk before the end of the year on a must-pass legislative vehicle. I've also introduced a bipartisan bill called Combating Organized Retail Crime Act to get a better handle on the growing reign of organized retail crime and help recover lost goods and proceeds. It would create a federal task force to examine the nearly \$70 billion problem confronting American businesses. These crime rings aren't stuffing their mattresses with their ill-gotten gains. According to the Department of Homeland Security, the profits from selling stolen merchandise help finance other criminal activities, such as human trafficking, drug smuggling and terrorism. From shipping to shopping, I'm working to help put our economy on the right track and ensure consumers aren't taken for a ride during this season of gift-giving.



Chuck Grassley
U.S. Senator

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR WELCOMED — The Dickinson County News invites readers to submit letters to the editor with comments, criticisms, praise and/or questions about issues of interest. The editor reserves the right to edit all letters. Anonymous letters will not be considered. Support for (and opposition to) specific political candidates in an upcoming election are best addressed as a paid campaign advertisement. Readers should also include their address and phone number to resolve any questions or to verify the identity of the writer. The author's name and town of residence will be printed.



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2004 · 2011 · 2012 · 2013 · 2014 · 2015 · 2016
2017 · 2018 · 2019 · 2020 · 2021 · 2022

"THE DICKINSON COUNTY NEWS" (USPS 510-900 ISSN 1531-0159), an Enterprise Media publication, formerly Spirit Lake Beacon, Lake Park News and Milford Mail/Terrill Record, is published weekly for \$50 per year in the Spirit Lake area, 1721 Hill Ave., Spirit Lake, IA. Periodicals postage paid at Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360.

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