

Viewpoints

Eckstein was the quintessential father, veteran and county treasurer

Our Neighborhood

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The other day, I was at a softball game in Ellsworth, watching my eight-year-old granddaughter play the best she could. Struggling to the plate in her catcher's garb, she still managed a smile at her overly proud Grandpa.

A vivid memory flashed through my mind, bringing me back to some thirty years ago. I was coaching the t-ball team of my older son, then all of three years old. He proudly strode to the plate (like a Casey just out of diapers), swung with all his might, actually hitting the ball.

Listening to his loud and excited "Coach," he promptly ran to third base!

Thus ended his dad's dreams of ever coaching a major league team.

Last Sunday was Father's Day; hopefully those who could, took full advantage of loving on their deserving Dad. Myself... well, let's say I think of my own father often, wondering if the way I've tried to raise my own kids would cause a grin or a shake of the head from him.

I like to think he had

plenty of opportunities for both reactions in the years we had to share my three children together. He came from German stock, having a grandfather that arrived in the United States from Germany in 1888.

My dad was also a Prisoner of War of the Germans in World War II; a kind of familial karma, I suppose.

John Eckstein also immigrated to the States a decade before the Civil War. By 1859, John and his wife, Catharine, had a daughter and, during the birth of their second, she died.

I cannot imagine the grief, or trials, he went through. John and his daughters moved to Webster City shortly afterward.

When the war broke out, John enlisted with several other Webster City men, seeing it as a duty to one's country.

He began in Company B

of the 32nd Iowa Infantry. A year later, he applied to be an officer in a United States Colored Troops regiment, becoming a Second Lieutenant in the 68th USCT.

Serving the remainder of the war in that post, he was discharged as a brevet Captain and returned to Webster City.

In 1870, he married Margaret Olmsted of this town. Together, they were married some 23 years until John's death in 1893 and shared another 10 children, in addition to John's two daughters.

He also ran, was elected, and served five full terms as County Treasurer in Hamilton County. In his obituary, John was praised by his fellow citizens.

The January 18, 1893, edition of the Freeman-Journal wrote, "No man in Hamilton County was more respected nor enjoyed the confidence of the people in a



greater degree than John Eckstein."

I am humbled, and so proud of this community

I now call home, every time I stroll through "Our Neighborhood" and meet someone new.

It's hard for me to think of a better tribute to fathers out there... "Way to go, Dad!"

Share Your Views

Send your letters: "To the Editor," Daily Freeman-Journal; P.O. Box 490, Webster City, IA 50595 Or email to: tanderson@freemanjournal.net

Letters should be 350 words or less and must be the original work of the author.

We reserve the right to edit for length, taste and possible libel, as well as personal attacks and inflammatory statements

about businesses, groups or individuals. Letters must be typed, signed and include a full address, plus a phone number for verification purposes.

One submission per month per writer.



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"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."



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 The White House
 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
 Washington, DC 20500
 Comments: 202-456-1111
 Switchboard: 202-456-1414
 www.whitehouse.gov

Sen. Charles Grassley
 135 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510-1501
 202-224-3744
 www.grassley.senate.gov

Sen. Joni Ernst
 730 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510-0001
 202-224-3254
 www.ernst.senate.gov

Rep. Randy Feenstra
 4th Congressional District
 1440 Longworth House
 Office Building
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 202-225-4426

How to Reach Your City Council members

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City Council meetings are held the first and third Mondays of the month at 6 p.m. at the Council Chambers in City Hall.

For more information, contact the City Manager's office, 515-832-9151.