

# OPINION

**Today's Bible Verse**  
 "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." **John 16:33**

**FROM THE EDITOR**

## What you learn from cleaning the attic

I spent several days this month sifting through more than 50 years of Sioux City Journal history.

Because we no longer need a building with a press, we're slated to move to new offices later this year. That means the building from the 1970s – dust and all – needs to be cleared.

Stashed in the attic of the Pavonia Street office, I found reporters' notebooks, yellowed papers, reference books and old giveaways that help tell the newspaper's story.

As someone who has been here most of those years, I had plenty of clutch moments. I'd see an old story and immediately flash back to the circumstances. I'd see a dusty cookbook and remember the turmoil that went into its making. I'd see a promotional

card and recall the effort that went into it.

Clearing an attic, I discovered, is like journeying through your past and, in many cases, going it alone. It's daunting.

You begin one box at a time. Each has something to say. Each has items that either need to be pitched (pens that didn't work) or saved (clips for an important story like the crash of Flight 232). All aren't gems but all spark those memories.

I found an old lifestyles page, for example, that had a marbled effect as a background. It looked great in print. But I remember we had to crumple paper, run it through the photocopy machine a couple of times and wax it to a page in order to get the proper look. We couldn't afford clip art, so we improvised.

I saw notes from Lynn Zerschling, our longtime city hall reporter, who had a color-coding system. A rainbow of quotes, it reminded me of her meticulous

detail when reporting. Accompanied by a flurry of post-it notes, it made me feel like she was still in the newsroom, telling her editors she just needed 10 more minutes to finish a story.

Some of her mother's "Out of the Past" scrapbooks were up there, too, and they told a different tale. Louise Zerschling's columns highlighted the outrageous things that happened in Sioux City and what she was able to glean from miles of microfilm. Even well into retirement, she'd come to the office and spend hours with her nose in a microfilm reader. Hooked up to an oxygen tank, she saw it as her mission to remind people about Siouxland's past.

Terry Hersom's detailed sports notebooks occupied their own little corner, arranged in chronological order. Like Lynn, he was a stickler for accuracy and made sure his notes were, too. He had great penmanship and a love for

the game. Those notebooks, held together with rubber cement and pride, were his part of the story.

There were boxes of my past up there, as well. Old movie press kits, cassette tapes of my interviews with everyone from Iowa's hiccupping man to Bette Davis, and photographs – lots of photographs – that detailed the passage of time and the people who filled it.

On the advertising side, I saw old promotional items – bumper stickers, rack cards, cups and carrier money bags. I saw ads for a car giveaway and I remember vividly how many people were stuffed in the office one night to find out who got the keys.

Christmas decorations told a different story. Often, they were a sign that Little Yellow Dog pitches were on the way.

The year I joined The Journal, I was assigned to interview families who were recipients of the toys and candy Mr. Goodfellow gave

away. I talked to five of them in one day and came home crying. I couldn't believe a bag of candy and a doll could make such a difference and yet they did. I realized how lucky I was and what a vital role Mr. Goodfellow plays in our community.

I found pictures of old staff members and tried to remember their names; I saw remnants of The Journal Bowling Tournament and smiled when I recalled the fun.

I was covered in 50 years of dirt and dust, but I didn't mind. For me, it was like one more visit with people who are no longer with us.

When we move, we won't be taking everything with us but we won't lose what's most important – those stories that defined The Journal for more than 160 years. Preserved online, they exist as a history book of our times and, for me, a record of the great people who worked so hard to craft them.



**BRUCE MILLER**

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Thanks for the show**

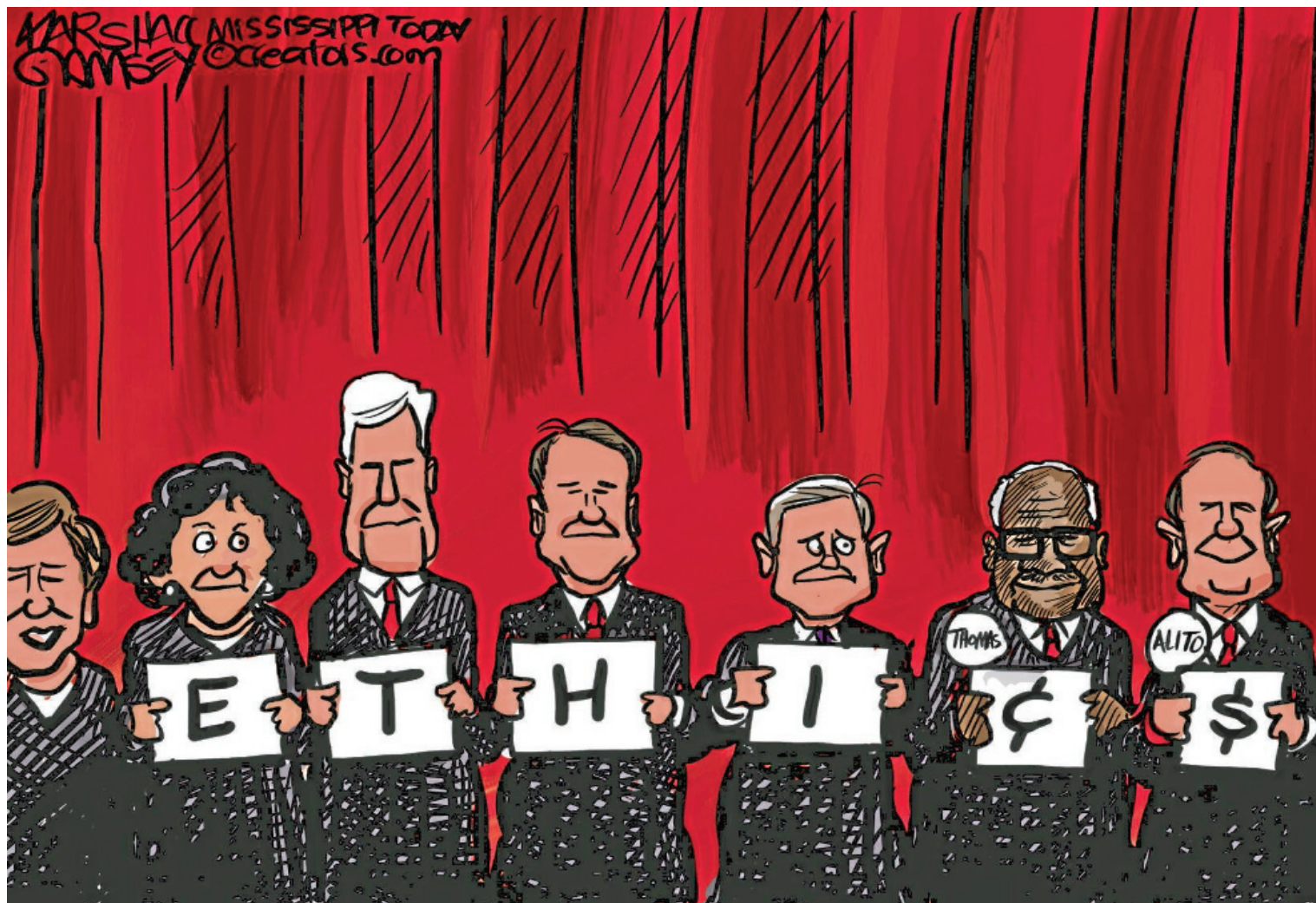
I would like to thank the City of Sioux City, Spectra, and all others that help promote entertainment in Sioux City. I saw the Doobie Brothers, with Michael McDonald, Saturday, June 17. The show was impressive, way beyond my expectations. Those guys are true musicians; there were many solos where they proved they still got it. Also, thank you to the promoters that get shows like this in Sioux City, especially something different from country. Rock stars.

**Jon Sulzbach,**  
Sioux City

**Leif Erikson melee**

Sioux City Police and members of the Parks and Rec Department have closed Leif Erikson Pool. The reason for the closure is to protect the Sioux City community from a 13- and a 16-year-old girl. The girls and their friends assaulted an 18-year-old girl, adults that were with her, the police, and lifeguards at the pool.

What do you say? To mock all parties involved seems like an understatement. Do you blame the Police, Department of Parks and Rec., Schools (whose job is to inculcate young people into society), the parent(s), the community, or the permissive culture of this Country.



When I was a young teenager we lived in fear of going to Eldora

Correctional Facility for delinquent youth. You didn't close the

pool, you dealt with the delinquents.

**Donald C. Parson,**  
Sioux City

**THE REGULARS**

## There's a mismatch between jobs and people employed



"Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts." Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote those words in 1983 while working on bipartisan legislation of importance at the time.

His quote came to mind having read and heard observations regarding the mismatch between the number of jobs available and the number of people employed. Among the most common include, "people don't want to work," and "government is incentivizing people not to work."

There once may have been some element of truth behind those comments. That time has since passed.

The shortage of people to jobs is a serious issue and deserves serious

attention, not disparagement of the American people.

Two million more Americans were employed in May 2023 than at the previous high in February 2020. If "people don't want to work," why are more of them working? The share of people aged 25 to 54 who are employed is the highest since 2007. The total labor force participation rate this March is the same as it was in August 2018.

The situation is similar at the state level. Iowa had 10,000 more people working this March than it did in March 2019. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of people employed in the Sioux City metro has only been higher one month in the last 10 years.

Indicators that the government is subsidizing people's choice not to work aren't solid. The national unemployment rate has been between 3.4 and 3.7 percent for

14 consecutive months. That has not happened in over 50 years.

Both the percentage and number of people unemployed for 27 weeks or longer have been around the same level for the past year as before the pandemic. The number of unemployed Americans is at or below the average for much of the past 20 years. The number of Iowans receiving unemployment compensation throughout 2022 was lower than at any point in the last 20 years.

We should understand that there have been major shifts in the employment situation since the pandemic. The number of people working in the leisure and hospitality industry has declined locally and nationally. There are 118,000 fewer public school teachers than before the pandemic across the country.

Meanwhile, occupational fields with greater salaries like manufacturing have increased. The nation has had two consecutive years of historically high new business starts – 30 percent higher than pre-pandemic. The resilience of America's private sector and entrepreneurial spirit remain high despite allegations of "communism" and government dependence.

For our region, state, and

nation to thrive economically, we need to address the workforce issue. We face demographic headwinds that make this issue more challenging than at present.

Americans are having fewer children, which reduces the number of future workers and those who contribute to programs like Social Security. The downward trend accelerated with the 2008 market crash.

From a practical standpoint, Americans having fewer children makes sense. Among industrialized countries, we have the highest maternal mortality rate. We are also the only one that lacks paid parental leave and universal health care.

Furthermore, the Annie Casey Foundation estimates that 14 percent of children under 5 years old had a parent quit a job due to lack of child care. AARP estimates that approximately one-third of those over age 40 are caregivers for other adults. That doesn't allow for much transition from providing care to children to care for seniors.

Addressing these facts is complicated, but essential for the vibrancy of our country. Demeaning those not presently employed is not going to solve the issue. It may be a symptom of the problem.

**Steve Warnstadt**  
 A Sioux City resident, Steve Warnstadt is government affairs coordinator for Western Iowa Tech Community College and a former Democratic state senator. He and his wife, Mary, are the parents of one son and one daughter.

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