

BREMER COUNTY

INDEPENDENT

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CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY

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Married again!

Waverly transplants celebrate Thanksgiving with new vows, new home



BY ANELIA K. DIMITROVA /EDITORCFT@GMAIL.COM/

Above: With no witnesses on their list, Peter Folger and Joann Tompsett-LeRoy, both 53, pledged their love for each other before Magistrate Karen Thalacker on Nov 18. Right: Joann Tompsett-LeRoy says her vows to Peter Folger, as they were married at the Bremer County Courthouse on Friday.

BY ANELIA K. DIMITROVA AND JAMIE ROSS
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At the core of it, it's a heart-warming Thanksgiving story. But if you drill to the bottom, it is a story of a new beginning. Here's the gist of it: A Texas couple who moved to Waverly after finding their dream house here tied the knot at the Bremer County Courthouse on the Friday just before the Thanksgiving break.

With no witnesses on their list, Peter Folger and Joann

See MARRIED, A3



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What to expect as Iowa's attorney general, treasurer leave office after four decades

BY ROBIN OPSAHL
Iowa Capital Dispatch

Change is coming to Iowa's attorney general and treasurer's offices as voters chose to elect challengers who promised to work toward GOP goals over the Democratic incumbents who argued their tenure brought nonpartisan successes.

Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller and state Treasurer Michael Fitzgerald, both the nation's longest-serving officials in their positions, were defeated in this year's elections. Each has served 40 years. Miller was first elected in 1979 but left office for four years after running unsuccessfully for governor. Fitzgerald has served continuously since 1983.

Their opponents, Republican attorney general-elect Brenna Bird and treasurer-elect Roby Smith, will begin serving in 2023.

Both candidates campaigned in alignment with the state GOP leadership and said they would take action against President Joe Biden's administration. On the campaign trail, Bird promised to sue Biden while in office, saying at the Iowa State Fair her message for the president was "I'll see you in court."

The attorney general's office serves as the legal representative for Iowa, on behalf of both the Iowa Legislature and state agencies. While campaigning, Miller highlighted his lawsuit wins on issues like consumer protection and the opioid crisis, saying his opponent put too much emphasis on partisan politics.

Geoff Burgan, communications director for the Democratic Attorneys General Association, said Iowans may see a more partisan approach to the attorney general's duties with Bird in office. During the election, Gov. Kim Reynolds called for her supporters to also back Bird, saying she wanted "my own attorney general" in office.

Burgan said Iowans will see a "night and day" difference from Miller's approach to office, and that Bird's approach will be more aggressively partisan.

"No attorney general is the personal lawyer for the governor, no matter what state it is," Burgan said. "Governors retain their own legal counsel. ... The attorney general of any state should be first and foremost watching out for the people of the state and their interests."

But on the campaign trail, Bird argued Miller was partisan: She pointed to the AG's office not defending the state's "fetal



ATTORNEY GENERAL TOM MILLER



STATE TREASURER MICHAEL FITZGERALD

See LEAVE, A5

Volunteers pack 48,000 bags for Meals for the Heartland at Crosspoint Church



Grady Goetzinger, 9, the son of Chris and Heidi Goetzinger, stepped up when Pastor Dan Pattengill asked who'd pray over the food.

BY WAVERLY NEWSPAPERS STAFF

Five times in five years. That adds to 208,000.

That's how many meals have been packed since 2018 by volunteers at Crosspoint Church for Thanksgiving.

About 260 adults and kids gathered at Gym 24 in Waverly, the space adjacent to the church, on Wednesday. They packed the 48,000 bags for Meals from the Heartland, a non-profit dedicated to fighting hunger in Iowa and around the world.

Working in teams, kids and adults packed rice, soy, dry veggies and protein in bags, scooping and weighing each portion.

But before the meals were hauled off at the end of the evening, a whole lot of community spirit was fostered by kids, parents and grandparents working side by side.

They were all united by the spirit of volunteering.

In one of the highlights of the evening, right in the middle of the session, Grady Goetzinger, 9, the son of Chris and Heidi Goetzinger, stepped up when Pastor Dan Pattengill asked who'd pray over the food.

"I wanted someone from the young generation to pray," said Pastor Dan Pattengill.

The pastor started the initiative five years ago and has been spearheading it ever since.

See MEALS, A5

Love and Lace partners with IRUA for African Oasis Project

A Waverly business decided to add a global touch to a local celebration for Christmas. Love and Lace, at 220 East Bremer, is partnering with Iowa Regional Utilities Association to help change the lives of people in Malawi.

"Everyday we turn on our showers, wash our dishes, brew our coffees and cook our meals with the water readily available to us," said Deb Mummelthei, the store's owner. "We water our plants and we water our pets. We never think about what to do when we feel the pain of thirst in our mouths, but this is not a luxury that is given to everyone across the globe. We are blessed with clean and plentiful water."

This year Love and Lace, in partnership with our friends at IRUA (Iowa Regional Utilities Association), have joined an initiative

called The African Oasis Project.

"This village, and the children and families who live there, need a real life miracle... the miracle of running water," Mummelthei said. "We the people of Waverly can help to provide this Christmas miracle on Dec. 8. We have joined up with the African Oasis Project and are so excited to help this amazing organization build a well."

During the "Miracle on Main" event, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Dec. 8, Love and Lace will be selling light sticks for the kids, taking freewill donations for specialty Christmas ornaments and giving away a beautiful handmade Christmas wreath. \$5 light sticks can be purchased and freewill donations can be made from Dec. 5 to Dec. 9. All proceeds will go to this charity project.

See IRUA, A5

GAYLON WAMPLER

Right: This year Love and Lace, in partnership with our friends at IRUA (Iowa Regional Utilities Association), have decided to be apart of changing this for a village in Malawi.



Married again, Waverly transplants celebrate Thanksgiving with new vows, new home

CONTINUED FROM A1

Tompsett-LeRoy, both 53, pledged their love for each other before Magistrate Karen Thalacker on Nov 18.

It was not the first time that the two vowed to love one another 'till death do them part. But they both hope it will be the last time.

The two had married nine years ago in a backyard ceremony in the Dallas area, where they lived, but in the overall commotion rollercoaster of that special day, May 11, 2013, they would later find out, the paperwork formalizing their union did not get finished that day.

It just so happened that the pastor who performed the ceremony passed away before they could fix the omission, but until now, one thing or another stood in the way of correcting the record. In Texas, they were considered common law spouses, so there was no urgency to make the change.

It wasn't until their recent move to Waverly in July, which was a big leap of faith for both, that having a marriage license came to the fore.

Hence, their presence before the magistrate on Friday.

Prior to signing the marriage paperwork, Peter and Joann exchanged traditional vows, except that this time theirs had been tested by the passage of time.

Joann teared up as she repeated her portion of the vows guided by Thalacker's clear voice.

New transplants in town, the couple did not know a soul, so this editor and a student reporter agreed to perform the witness duty when asked by the judge to step in.

The brief ceremony was emotional as befitting a wedding.

Just before the judge came in, Joann



Jamie Ross, a journalism student at UNI, was one of the two witnesses to the Friday wedding of Peter Folger and Joann Tompsett-LeRoy.

BY ANELIA K. DIMITROVA / EDITORCFT@GMAIL.COM

asked, half jokingly, if Peter would marry her.

"Yes," he said with brief kiss. "I love you."

During the ceremony, Peter was true to his word, and so was Joann.

"This ring, I give you as a symbol of my love," Peter said, as he placed the ring that had been on Joann's finger for some time back in its place.

After the ceremony, Joan added, wiping away tears.

"Oh, my gosh, we are married, again," she said.

Summing up the experience, before she signed the paperwork, Thalacker echoed that feeling:

"I got goosebumps," she said.

And while the afternoon on Friday was just a work day for both of them, with no immediate special plans for a wedding dinner, the "newlyweds" will be celebrating the wedding and Thanksgiving all in one with Peter's mother, Bonne Doron, of Des Moines.

Prior to the ceremony, they said they bumped into each other at a gas

station when Peter offered to help Joann open a gas can she had been trying to fill.

"I am smarter than a gas can," she joked.

Listening to Joann recount the story, Peter quipped:

"When you are young, you're scared, when you are older, you're not," he said of talking to strangers.

The rest, they agreed, is now history.

For the couple, there's a well of gratitude to sip from as their new chapter of life in Waverly unfolds. They will be celebrating the blessings of a new house, a new marriage certificate (they both made sure this time all the paperwork was properly filled out) and new a tradition of cooking turkey with family.

"This is where we wanted to be," Joann said of their adopted hometown. "We have chickens and dogs and a big yard. You look out of the window, and you see cornfields. Yesterday, I came down and I saw a bald eagle... I had never seen that before."

Five elected to ISU Extension and Outreach Bremer County Council

Tripoli — Five Bremer County residents were elected to the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Bremer County Council in the Nov. 8 general election.

Two current members of the county extension council were re-elected to 4-year terms. They are Nancy Foelske and Jason Lobeck. Three new members who will be joining the council in January 2023 are Wendy Brase, David Lehman and Roger Lenius. The new members will replace Mark Lenius, Chris Pries and Bob Steffen.

Extension council members whose terms expire at the end of 2024 are Dave Drape, Abby Rippe, Melinda Schroeder and Mary Beth Zelle. Council members elected in November will begin their terms in January 2023. The extension council meets in January to elect officers.

Extension council members make programming and budget decisions for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach in Bremer County. They work with decision makers, build relationships, and address local issues. Extension council members are advocates, stewards and everyday citizens who link people with life-changing programs from Iowa State University. Through partnerships, they bring significant programs that help people solve critical issues affecting their lives, said Ron Lenth, ISU Extension and Outreach County Extension Coordinator.

The Iowa State University Extension and Outreach office in Bremer County is located at 720 7th Ave SW, Tripoli, IA 50676. Phone (319)882-4275. Learn more at www.extension.iastate.edu/bremer.

Community Insect Management and Public Health Pest Control

The Community Insect Management and Public Health Pest Control Continuing Instruction Course (CIC) for commercial pesticide applicators is now available. The program is provided by the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP). This class will run from 9-11:30 a.m. on Nov. 29.

The course will provide continuing instruction credit for commercial pesticide applicators certified in categories 7D (Community Insect Management) and 8 (Public Health Pest Control). The course will cover topics such as: pesticide use and the environment, including a variety of environments ranging from streams to inside of buildings; pesticide comprehension, formulations and labels, including restricted entry interval; and category-specific pests, pest management and pesticides.

To obtain additional information about the CIC, contact Ron Lenth at the ISU Extension and Outreach office in Bremer County at 319-882-4275. The registration fee is \$35.

Additional information about this and other courses offered through the Pesticide Safety Education Program may be accessed at www.extension.iastate.edu/psep.

Contacts: Evan Alderman, Pesticide Safety Education Program, 515-294-1122, alderman@iastate.edu
Ron Lenth, Bremer Extension Director, 319-882-4275, rlenth@iastate.edu

Related website: www.extension.iastate.edu/PSEP

Cedar Valley family gives back to MercyOne Waterloo Birth Center on World Prematurity Day

Waterloo, Iowa— In 2014, when Cheryl Meller was only 25 weeks pregnant, the last thing she expected was to go into labor. After an emergency cesarean section at MercyOne Waterloo Birth Center, her son Wyatt was born weighing only 1 pound 10 ounces.

"I'll never forget the exceptional care we received from the doctors and nurses," Meller said. "From the nurse who held my hand in the operating room as I whispered that I was scared to the many nurses who stopped into my room after I got out of recovery – they would tell me everything was going to be OK. They were so sincere and compassionate. I believed them and with all my heart, I knew Wyatt was going to be OK."

Each year, 380,000 babies in the United States are born prematurely – before 37 weeks of gestation, according to the March of Dimes. Babies born too early often face health problems and extended hospital stays.

After spending about six months in two neonatal intensive care units (NICUs), Meller and Wyatt were finally able to go home. After Wyatt's discharge, Meller wanted to thank the providers and staff at MercyOne who helped her family through the toughest time of their lives.

"But how do you say thank you for saving your baby's life?" she said. "We reflected on our time in the NICU and one of the few things we could do to bond with Wyatt was to read to him."

On Nov. 17, 2017 – three years since Wyatt's discharge day – the family dropped off its first basket of board books at the MercyOne Waterloo Birth Center, and the Warrior Wyatt Lending Library was born. Now, each year, the family collects and donates books to the library.

"Pregnancy is one of the most exciting times of a parent's life, but things don't always go as planned," said Kymm Ehler, MercyOne Northeast Iowa director of women and children's services. "There are instances where babies need advanced care, and MercyOne's unique model allows for a more family-centered approach."

MercyOne's Integrated Neonatal Intensive Care model allows the team of specialists to care for babies in the same room as their mothers, meaning more time for skin-to-skin contact, better bonding and increased breastfeeding success rates.

Nov. 17 is also World Prematurity Day, which aims to raise awareness of preterm birth and the health issues preterm babies and their families face. About one in 10 of all babies worldwide are born prematurely.

Know the signs of preterm labor (before 37 weeks):

- Change in discharge
- Pressure in pelvis or lower belly
- Constant low, dull backache
- Belly cramps
- Regular or frequent contractions
- Water breaks

Even if you take every precaution during pregnancy, you can still give birth early. It's important to have a relationship with your provider and attend all your prenatal care check-ups.



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