

This and That

By Janine L. Kock, Times Editor and Publisher

For the past few weeks, I have been working ahead, organizing, and making plans for our family tree to expand with my sixth grandchild. My daughter Kellsey and husband Wade, who live in Waukee, have been expecting their child No. 3 to join five-year-old Isabella and 18-month-old Logan, and the anticipation was tough on all of us.

With May being such a busy time of year, I just knew that the new arrival would decide to appear at a time when I was working toward a special section deadline or had work to do for one of my volunteer positions.

However, we completed our "Salute to Seniors"...no baby...

We finished our Rappin' Rocket editions for the year...no baby...

We compiled pages filled with Awards Day photos and information... no baby...

We sent lots of area athletes to the State Track meet and then reported on their results. We sold Beef Month ads and laid out pages... still no baby!

Saturday at about noon, I received a SnapChat that showed a photo of Kellsey's nine-month pregnant belly and the caption "Still Pregnant...Sigh."

However, two hours later, I finally got the message, "Mom, I think these contractions are for real. Can you come?"

AHHHH!! I quickly walked home from the office, where I had been doing some church work in the Saturday silence, changed my clothes, filled the car with gas, and took off, thinking I could get to Waukee and either pack the kids up and head for home if it seemed like the birth was going to be a long process, or take them to the park or the library or somewhere and then come home to greet the baby if it was quick.

As Kellsey, who used a midwife and home birth, reported to friends and family members, "Things went from zero to baby very quickly!"

I arrived at 4:15 and was greeted at the door by Bella, who yelled, "Grandma, our baby is already here! I heard it crying downstairs!"

The doula, who had totally missed the birth but who was supervising the kids so Wade could stay with Kellsey, affirmed the five-year-old's report with a nod and joined the family in the basement after noting that the time of birth was 3:38 p.m., and the midwife had driven 100 mph on the interstate between Des Moines and Waukee and arrived just a couple minutes before the big event.

An hour or so after my arrival (we spent some time playing and watching a video while their mom and dad and the birthing crew took some deep breaths and checked over Mom and baby), we learned it was time to meet the baby. Bella was excited to find out it was a baby sister and her name was Lilliana Rachel -- Lilly for short. "Rachel's my mom's middle name," Bella told me matter-of-factly (mmm... yea... I know that one, Bella), and then her attention turned to the presents that "the baby" had bought for her older brother and sister since they were going to be such good siblings to the new arrival.

Lilly continued the family's tradition of good-sized babies -- 9 pounds, 13 ounces, and 23 1/4 inches long. No wonder Kellsey felt like the baby was "half grown" in her tummy...it was!

After the excitement of meeting the baby was over, the "big kids" came home with me to spend the night and give Mom and Dad and Lilly some time to get acquainted without interruptions. Sunday night, we drove back to Waukee with Gigi (Great-Grandma Kock) riding along, and we all got a turn to hold our new little one. As Bella said, "I only got to see her head yesterday. I need to see her legs and her toes!" As of this writing, the five-year-old and the 18-month-old have been great help to their mom, and the question remains if they will come back home for a couple days with Grandma (or "Bacca," as Logan calls me), or if they will not want to miss out on any excitement which might happen at their house.

I'm sure there will lots of changes for us all in the next few weeks as Lilly grows and develops new habits other than rotating between eating and sleeping and dirtying diapers. We'll all spend time spoiling and enjoying this one and then turn our attention to Grandchild No. 7, which will expand the family tree again in early August.

For now, I'll just take a break and praise God for a relatively easy (although fast and furious) delivery for Kellsey, resulting in a beautiful and healthy baby! Hallelujah!

Watch upcoming editions for "Baby Updates" and reports on the antics of her siblings as well! You'd be disappointed if I didn't, right?

Two people sat down to have hamburgers.

He: "This is plant-based meat."

Her: "What sort of plant is the basis of this meat?"

He: "Packing Plant!"

Jalen Hurts, quarterback of the Philadelphia Eagles, completed the requirements a couple weeks ago for a master's degree in human relations from the University of Oklahoma. Hurts, who is from Houston, started his college football career at Alabama, where he earned a bachelor's degree in communication and information sciences after only three years. He transferred to Oklahoma in 2019 and began working on his master's degree. And, even though he signed a \$255 million contract extension with the Eagles through 2028, he finished that degree.

I had a listing in my file of how Hurts spent his first million dollars after being drafted in 2020. Of that million, he put \$738,000 in savings. The rest was spent as follows: sister's college tuition, \$70,000; charity, \$60,000; living expenses, \$30,000; fashion, \$30,000; business fees, \$20,000; home improvement, \$15,000; vacation, \$15,000; car payments, \$10,000; self-care, \$10,000; brother's wedding gift, \$1,000; Philadelphia gear, \$1,000.

Thatch 'facelift' to give Hausbarn new life



Shown taking a break from the work re-thatching the roof at the Manning Hausbarn are (from left) Jay James, a thatcher who came from Europe who came to Manning to assist with the project, board member Mike Warner, Colin McGhee from the South Carolina thatching company, Todd Stadlander of Manning and his grandson Owen, and Colin McGhee's son, Duncan. The Manning Hausbarn was originally built in Germany in 1660 and was dismantled and moved to Manning, where it was rebuilt in 1999.

in the hausbarn's loft. "They were super dry," Warner noted. "If we tried to bend it in half, it would break. We layed it out, soaked it with water to get the moisture back in it and used it with their thatch as well."

Warner said the roof's horizontal wires had risen too close to the surface and were exposed. In some spots a four- to five-inch "haircut" with a hedge trimmer was necessitated while, in other spots, the reeds were too rotten and had to be pulled out and replaced. The reeds are pushed into place with a paddle, and with the slick finish and the steep pitch of the roof, water is repelled. The craftsmen's biggest challenge was re-doing the ridge peak at the top of the roof with a four-foot width of plywood and maintaining the "perfect angle."

Warner added that the weather in Western Iowa is pretty similar to that of Germany, so snow and ice do not affect the thatch. The way the reeds are weaved together and the use of chicken wire keeps birds from picking the reeds apart. After the initial part of the work, they went back through the whole roof, evening it up to make it "nice and flush." In evaluating the work at its completion, he said, "It looks way better than what it did."

The men averaged nine hours a day on the roof, he added. They arrived Friday night, May 5, and started the project on the weekend. Typical hours were 7 a.m.-4 or 4:30 p.m., and they finished Friday, May 12. A "Telehandler" and another lift allowed work on both sides of the roof to be going on at the same time, and the thatching experts said they were impressed with the work that had been done.

The work on the roof attracted the attention of locals, some who wanted to assist with jobs such as cleanup and cutting the chicken wire, and some who just wanted to watch the interesting process. A news crew from KCCI-TV in Des Moines even made the trip to film

a feature story which was aired last week and which was posted on the station's website with a link to when the roof was originally thatched; the men from Germany in town to do the work were involved in a car accident, and locals came in to assist them to complete the project.

The thatchers this time around also enjoyed visiting with the locals. However, Warner said, they were each provided with their own motor home camper at the Heritage Park Campground so they could have much-needed rest and privacy during the evenings. The men enjoyed the community during their week-long stay and relat-

ed to the Hausbarn volunteers that they "couldn't believe how good the people are here in Iowa."

The work on the Hausbarn as well as the rest of the Heritage Park can be viewed daily, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Saturday, including holidays, and 1-4 p.m. Sundays.

Megan Reis is the director of the Hausbarn-Heritage Park, which is governed by an 11-member board: Freda Dammann, president; Ron Halbur, vice-president; Lisa Halbur, secretary; Karen Kienast, treasurer; Mike Warner, Ben Puck, Cory Arp, Jean Stadlander, Laura Pepple, Mike Blum and Rexanne Struve.

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