

# OPINION

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THE BLOOMFIELD DEMOCRAT 5A

## EDITORIAL

### The Bloomfield Public Library is doing it right

Thanks to the energy and progressive thinking of the Library Board and librarians, the Bloomfield Public Library is becoming one of the community's greatest assets. The library will, no doubt, influence the lives of its patrons for years to come

Remember the days when the public walked into the library, quietly scanned the books on the shelves, and checked out an item or two or sat down at a table and read without so much as whispering to a nearby reader?

Those days are definitely gone!

Our local library is now full of vitality, interesting programming, a wide variety of educational resources and useful items to check out, meeting rooms that encourage community collaboration and connections, and attractive surroundings that stimulate learning and imaginative thought.

The real turning point for Davis County library patrons came in 2018 with the renovation and expansion of the library to include a full children's library, a library of things, several meeting room spaces for everything from toddler to adult activities to city council meetings, and a coffee lounge.

With facilities that would make most communities jealous, Library Director Anne Tews, Children's Librarian Margaret Nuttall and the Library Board decided to make the best use of the renovated library by initiating a strategic planning process under the guidance of the State Library of Iowa.

Becky Heil, a consultant for the State Library, launched the planning process by hosting two brain-storming sessions with input from 16 community members.

Out of that process came a mission statement:

"The mission of the Bloomfield Public Library is to serve all residents of the community and provide free and open access to information resources, equipment, programs and services that encourage literacy and lifelong learning through educational, cultural, and recreational activities.

And a vision statement:

"We strive to develop an informed, engaged, and connected community."

With those statements in place and taking the results of the community brain-storming sessions into consideration, a committee from the library board formulated goals that would benefit the community in the following ways:

- promote the expression of creativity through creating and sharing content;
- build successful enterprises through business and non-profit support;
- promote knowledge of community resources and services;
- provide the information the public needs to make informed decisions on health, wealth, and other life choices;
- celebrate diversity and cultural awareness.

Tews and Nuttall have wasted no time in initiating activities that will meet these goals over a three-year time frame.

High school students have already expressed their creativity by creating a virtual library tour that informs the public of the services provided by the library.

Children's Librarian Margaret Nuttall scheduled numerous creative projects for children during the summer reading program.

Teen volunteers are serving on a Teen Advisory Board (TAB) and assisting Nuttall with children's activities such as Stuff Sleepovers and more.

To raise awareness of community resources and services, the library donates bulletin board space and table space for informational materials. Librarians share information on community resources. (Don't be afraid to ask questions!)

The librarians are also happy to share information and help community members research information needed to make informed decisions. Librarians assist with technology skills needed for research and refer patrons to outside resources such as the Director of Veterans' Affairs.

When it comes to fulfilling the goal of cultural awareness, the librarians are selecting materials and activities that reflect and celebrate cultural diversity.

Library staff members are also implementing measures to improve the outreach of the library's services. For example, bookmarks are being created to promote use of the library's resources including the Library of Things available for public use at no cost. The bookmarks will be distributed at the local food banks and at the Lord's Cupboard.

Library staff will also coordinate new ways to distribute books to the underserved population, including Care Center residents.

Davis Countians are fortunate to have a library that is becoming a hub of activity, a library that encourages literacy, promotes learning, binds the community together through common interests and activities, prepares its citizens to make informed decisions, and enriches the lives of community residents.

Thank you, Librarians Anne Tews and Margaret Nuttall along with library board members Roger Wuthrich, Marilyn Piper, Amy Tyson, Lindsey Helton, Marty Hudson, Rhonda Eakins, Russ Mikels, Shannon Vesely, and Sheila Westegard for making this possible.

"Think left and think right and think low and think high. Oh, the thinks you can think up if only you try!"

—Dr. Seuss



## STRAY THOUGHTS

### It appears not every life in Iowa truly is sacred

By Randy Evans

Deanna Mahoney was like countless Iowa women through the years. She nurtured three children.

She worked outside the home to supplement the family income. She loved bowling and mushroom hunting.

That is how she lived. How she died tells us so much about the way some business owners, and too many government leaders in Iowa, have pushed aside their legal, moral and humanitarian obligations, especially to vulnerable Iowans.

The death of the 83-year-old Newton woman was tragic. Two photographs made that so horribly clear.

In spite of the statements and pledges about the sanctity of every human life, Mahoney's death illustrates that too many members of the Iowa Legislature, and our governor, too, show too little concern for the sanctity of the lives of people in Iowa's nursing homes.

In the days since the circumstances of her death became public, we have heard not a peep from the state officials who were obsessed earlier this year with school books, drag show performers, and a belief that teachers and school librarians are out there coaxing kids to become transgender, gay or lesbian.

These state officials could not move fast enough to enact new laws to combat the perceived dangers to young Iowans from some school books or medical providers whose patients are children identifying as a different gender.

But these state officials have little to say about the treatment, and mistreatment, of people like Deanna Mahoney who live in certain nursing homes. Too many elderly Iowans are not receiving the care their families were promised and that they and Iowa's Medicaid program pay for. But there is no flurry of proposed laws to address such neglect.

There is a reason for that: In her travels around Iowa, the gov-

ernor often meets with CEOs of nursing homes. You do not see her meeting with loved ones of people like Deanna Mahoney. Families of nursing home residents are not a lucrative source of campaign donations the way the owners are.

The circumstances of Mahoney's death were laid out in words — and documented with two photographs — in a lawsuit filed Aug. 4 in court in Newton. Iowa Capital Dispatch, an online news report, shined the first spotlight on this unnecessary tragedy.

The photos were made by the emergency room staff at Iowa Lutheran Hospital in Des Moines soon after Mahoney arrived by ambulance early on April 19, 2022. The photos show two massive open wounds on her back and buttocks and on one heel.

Two weeks later, Mahoney was dead.

According to the lawsuit, hospital medical records stated Mahoney's largest wound that day was 6 inches in diameter and 2 inches deep. That wound was contaminated with feces. The photo shows her muscle and bone exposed in a gruesome mass of reddish flesh.

The wound on her heel was smaller, but it was black, a sign the skin was dying. The photo showed the wound had created a crater into the bottom of her foot.

This was not a case in which Mahoney had been trying to care for herself at home. For seven months she had been a resident of Newton Health Care Center, a supposedly skilled nursing and long-term care facility. But the care she received there, according to the lawsuit, was negligent and constituted a wanton disregard for her wellbeing.

Mahoney's death should not be explained away by assertions she was old and eventually would have died anyway.

She moved into Newton Health Care Center in June 2021. In the seven months that followed, she was seen twice at MercyOne Newton Medical Center, first for vomiting, fever and bloody stools, and then a month later for Covid. During neither hospital visit did nurses find any signs her skin was breaking down.

On the morning of Feb. 2, 2022, a registered nurse at Newton Health Care Center wrote in Mahoney's records that there were no open areas or skin issues observed. But six hours later, another nurse saw a wound at the base of Mahoney's tailbone. And 21 days after it was first noticed, the wound had grown significantly larger — it was three-quarters of an inch deep and had a foul odor.

She was placed on antibiotics to treat the infection. But Mahoney's condition worsened. That led to the ambulance trip to Des Moines on April 18, 2022, when the photos were made.

Death came on May 6, 2022, when her body was unable to fight the infection any longer.

Mahoney's family is not the first to complain about the care provided by the Newton nursing home, Iowa Capital Dispatch reported. In June 2022, the Iowa Department of Inspections, Appeals and Licensing investigated a backlog of complaints against the facility and concluded all were substantiated. The violations related to the treatment of pressure sores, insufficient nursing staff, insufficient support staff, medication errors, unsanitary conditions and poor infection prevention.

John and Terri Hale, advocates for elderly Iowans, wrote recently in the Des Moines Register, "We've been in the long-term care policy arena for over 15 years. We've seen the perpetual paralysis of elected officials and the power of trade associations and lobbyists who fight tooth and nail to preserve the status quo.

"... The crisis is becoming a catastrophe. Lawmakers serving Iowans need to step up and do what we elect them to do — lead. If they won't, they are complicit in the unfolding tragedy. And the message will be clear: The lives of vulnerable older Iowans and Iowans with disabilities just don't matter."

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Randy Evans can be reached at DMRevans2810@gmail.com. Readers can offer their opinions through letters to the editor in the Bloomfield Democrat

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Trump must be held accountable

The evidence contained in the most recent indictment against Donald Trump should disturb every American. Trump threatened the very bedrock of American

democracy.

Knowing he lost the 2020 presidential election, Trump cooked up numerous illegal schemes to stay in power, including pressuring state officials to overturn the will of voters and counterfeiting electoral

certificates that declared him the winner. He and his cronies leaned on everyone they could to carry out their plans, including former Vice President Pence, who refused.

SEE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, PAGE 6A

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