

DAILY GRIND



NEWS FROM THE MILL

Shaun Sayres

It’s been a minute since our last update and as usual there is much to be shared! We also do want to apologize in the delay in getting this issue out. There has been a lot of work in preparing our gardens for Spring and for Tivoli Fest that had to get done as soon as possible, and we just don’t have the help for those tasks that we used to.

The windmill had some interesting visitors in April including several different parties from Denmark. The Danish National Landscaping Team visited the windmill over Easter weekend where Shaun provided a thorough tour of the windmill and grounds before Tim Palmer took over for a tour of the Museum of Danish America’s campus. The group are eyeing their upcoming Euroskills competition to be hosted by Denmark for the first time this year. This tournament hosts several trade skills including landscaping, masonry, and carpentry. With Denmark hosting this year, Danish teams have been given some leeway and encouragement to train outside the country, and the landscaping team happened to be passing through Elk Horn in between locations.

The windmill also enjoyed a return visit from Ole Mieth before the end of the month. This marked his first time in Elk Horn since 2014 when Ole arrived to inspect the windmill and found the wings to be in exceptionally poor condition, inspiring the Spin Campaign that brought in new wings in 2017-18. Ole’s background in railroad engineering has made him an experienced expert on metal gear systems like those inside and outside the windmill. Ole graciously volunteered some of his time on a trip through the US to inspect all of our gears including the exposed wheels out on the fantail. Everything is in good order and Ole even coated the gears in a fresh layer of water-resistant grease for us.

The windmill also enjoyed a few large group tours so far including a large bus group in April followed by some busy field trips between Atlantic and Audubon third graders followed by the Atlantic Area homeschool group. The wind cooperated most of the time, allowing the kids some time to see how the windmill works and watch the sails go by.

On April 30, we celebrated another community Earth Day with some EEHK middle school

students. We didn’t get as big of a group this year, but that didn’t stop the kids from getting mulch spread for us. We’re thankful for EEHK’s willingness to keep this program going and always look forward to seeing some familiar faces and meeting some potential new volunteers eager to help us out.

And speaking of volunteers, we want to thank Justin Nelson for helping us out in preparing the gardens for Spring. We have opted to start over in the flower beds surrounding the windmill this year, and it took quite a bit of effort for Shaun and Justin to dig out some of the shrubs that have been there for years. We are almost done getting new flowers in place, and if all goes well, we will also have a new sprinkler system to optimize our garden maintenance and help conserve water. And of course during some of this we discovered one of the spigots burst in the basement, so we have not had a lot of time lately to get some other things done like this paper.

We would like to announce that the windmill has been invited back to Christkindlmarket Des Moines this year and we will be participating in both weekends! We’re excited to be back and hope for some mild weather. We also want to thank the Rasmussen Group of Des Moines for sponsoring our participation.

Finally, we are thrilled to share a couple of internal changes. Joni Griffin stepped down from the Board of Directors and joined our part-time staff at the windmill. In her place, Joanie Heuton has volunteered to join the Board and fulfill Joni Griffin’s term through 2026. We will have some additional vacancies on the Board coming up in January 2026, so please keep us in mind for anyone looking to get more involved in the community and support our cause.

Some additional housekeeping items to get out there:

Our digital billboard is live in Omaha next to the eastbound ramp for exit 451 and will be live with an ad for Tivoli Fest through most of May before we switch to Summer travel. Deb King designed the graphic based on the Tivoli Blend coffee we brought into the store a couple of months ago.

Our Spring catalog is being mailed out now and will arrive in the mail shortly. This catalog features some of our annual collectibles including our Royal Copenhagen and Bing & Grøndahl plates and a sneak peak on what is coming out with Georg Jensen this Fall. The catalog also features some of our more Summer-y items that don’t quite fit in with our usual holiday selection.

ELK HORN LIBRARY LANTERN

Shining the light on what is going on at your library!



The Elk Horn Public Library is celebrating Tivoli and our Summer Reading Kick-off in May! Please welcome our new employees here at the library, we will have them share more about themselves next month.

We are still having after-school events on Mondays and Wednesdays in May with planting and preparing for Tivoli events. We will continue to have our Lego contest and Small Canvas contest, but we are also adding a Joke Contest for all ages! Stop in to the library to sign-up with your joke and be prepared to share it at the Fire Station on Saturday, May 24th at 3:00 pm!

The Summer Reading Kick-off is set for May 29th from 2-6. We will have reading logs and bingo sheets for all ages! Our theme this summer is ‘Storytime Starts Here’, we want to encourage everyone to find a character they want to learn more about and read all their books and/or create a book of their own or a video using this character this summer. Dress as one of your favorite storybook characters that day and we will enter you into a Facebook contest with prizes to be awarded!

June programming starts our Monday Matinees at 1:30 and Storytime Programming on

Wednesdays from 2-4. We are also adding our own character the ‘Library Gnome’ who will be doing an event on June 10th and the 20th.

For our teens we are having a Baking Workshop on Saturday, June 7th from 2-4 to make Crumbl inspired cookies!

Have you ever thought about writing your own book? Anna Redsand helped a group of us to get started with this process on March 12th. For those of you interested in joining this group, please plan to attend a pre-view workshop on June 14th at 8:30 am followed with the 9:30 – 4 workshop to refine our writing. We had a great time starting our writing process in March!

Storytime in the Prairie returns with the museum on June 13th at 10 am.

For our young adults, we are having Coffee and Silent Book Club from 2-4 on June 21st.

Kamryn Waymire will be giving a Pollinator Protectors workshop on June 24th at 2 for youth and a Healthy Lawns, Healthy People workshop at 6 for adults. Hope to see you there!

If there is a program you would like to see us do, please let us know so we can add it to our plans. We are adding to reasons to come to the library!

We hope to have you join us!

We look forward to serving you!

The Elk Horn Library Team

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tivoli Fest: **May 23 & 24**
Full schedule available at tivolifest.com

May 25: Elk Horn Lutheran Church
150th Anniversary Celebration
Elk Horn Park at 12PM

May 26: Veterans Tribute sponsored by the Elk Horn American Legion
Clay Township 9:30am
Monroe Church 10:00am
Elk Horn Church 11:00am

Free-will donation lunch to follow in Fellowship Hall



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PRAIRIE ROOTS RUN DEEP, Pt. 6
Warren Watson

In the year 1864 the Winters family along with three other families settled along the ridge south of Elk Horn Creek. They were four days travel from early Des Moines and month from their former homes in Wisconsin. They were weary and stopped to reflect on their condition. The statement was expressed, “This is the spot we have been seeking. Here is game, fuel, shelter and fertile land. We settle here”. [3] The Winters chose a site atop the ridge overlooking the Elk Horn and Indian Creek valleys. Others were established in the area. Theron Winters went to Des Moines and registered his farm under the Homestead Act of 1862. He was the first in Clay Township to do so. Not long after, the Winters and Whitney families set aside a corner of their land for a city of the dead. Two Whitney children were among the first to be laid to rest in the oak forest. [4] On October 10th, 1865, the first white child to be born in Clay Township arrived at the Winters’ home. They called him Will.

Early arrivals in Clay Township needed immediate shelter. Many were forced to construct dugouts near creek banks. Here water and wood were plentiful. Depressions until recently could still be discernible along Elk Horn Creek. The abandoned hamlet of Rorbeck at the junction of Elk Horn and Indian Creeks initially consisted of ‘homes’ dug into the banks of the creeks. It took a strong constitution to survive on the virgin prairie. The pioneer women were by necessity of a hardy stock. There was a daily gathering of wood and bark for fires. The gathering of wild plums, gooseberries, strawberries, and crab apples to supplement their diet was never-ending. They worked with animal hides to reinforce work clothes. And the loneliness and isolation took a toll on more than a few. The first log cabin dwelling in Clay is credited to Mason and Clarissa Fish. It was located near the west bank of Indian Creek four miles west and half a mile south of present-day Elk Horn.

Descriptions of the early tall grass prairie in Clay can be found in various writings left by early pastors. They not only served their congregations faithfully but embraced the entire community regardless of religious affiliation. Reverend J. Jorgensen, pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church from 1909 to 1932 in Kimballton was one such author. In 1922 he wrote this depiction of Clay Township: “Only 50 years ago most of this area was prairie, covered with tall grass and scrub oak. There were some forests, mostly along the streams. These forests consisted of oak, birch, elm, basswood, and others. The oak thickets were no bigger than they could be turned under with a sharp plow pulled by three horses: however, some were so heavy that it took six horses or twelve oxen to pull the plow. The plow had to be constantly sharpened in order to cut the oak roots and the tough grass roots which had been growing for centuries. [author’s note; it is of little wonder that in each small community that sprung up in and around Clay Township the first ‘business establishment’ was a blacksmith shop.] There were very few rocks. There is an old saying that ancestral earth is heavy to turn, but this was even heavier. Imagine! There had never been a plow in it before! One can understand that it took a rather robust man to steer such a plow; he did not have time to look back. He needed to turn all his attention to how the plow cut and turned the furrow. A man who had acquired the necessary oxen or sometimes horses and a good plow, broke the prairie not just for himself, but could be hired to break for others. The oak scrub and oak roots were gathered and used for fuel in the winter, which could be very severe. Winter was thought to be more severe than it is now, and the wind could, with unhindered velocity, blow across the prairie and was not easy to stop. The best thing one could do was seek shelter and a warm fire.”

Besides a strong back, another important element needed to turn a wilderness into the breadbasket of the world within the lifespan of one person was STUBBORNESS. The Clay Township Danes arrived with a heavy dose of natural determination, to say it politely. Most Danes had lived a challenging existence in Denmark. Life for the ‘common’ Dane was a daily challenge to provide for a life-sustaining existence. They were more than prepared to face any challenge this new life in America had to offer.

In many of the local family histories recorded in Clay Township, accounts relate just how poor their former life in Denmark had been. A Jens Jensen tells how his mother used to buy eggs from peasant Danish women and carry them to Faaborg, Denmark. There she sold them for a profit of one penny [American currency equivalent] per 20 eggs. Jensen relates similar hardships living in the New World. When his wife broke her only sewing needle a way forward was desperately needed. A sewing needle was one of the few items they could not make themselves. Jens went to town and signed a note for one dollar at 12% interest with a local shopkeeper.

IT’S ONLY SCIENCE
Bob Mortenson

One key step in examining a problem that has occurred previously is to examine what actions have been taken before. The means not only looking at the results but also determining how those results were achieved. Are there similarities between then and now? Has there been other discoveries that concern this problem since those initial findings were developed? And what changed between then and now? Taking these steps allows us to make the best decisions on what actions are required to solve the problem. It ensures that we are not duplicating studies already performed.

The HMS (Harrison, Monona, and Shelby Counties) Hub is looking into food insecurity issues in our area. This means that we have people in our area that often do not have enough to eat. They are dependent on the local food pantries to help fill out their food needs. Some will qualify for government programs to assist them, but many do not. And the future of these programs is not set in stone.

Often this problem exists because they are either under employed or are unable to find a living wage job. They may lack needed skills, reliable transportation, childcare, or even adult day care for a family member with health problems. Some lack the apparel to make a good impression in a job interview. Some may need training or continued education to round out their job skills in our highly digital focused business world. All of these require time to develop and deliver. They need something now, not in the future.

YES, THERE IS GOOD NEWS!
Bill Rollins

Do you know God? I believe that is a valid question for us today. Let me start off by saying it is imperative for us to know God! But how can we do that you ask. From my perspective, the knowledge we should glean about God is found in two ways. The first way is simply, getting to know Him through reading His word.

God, through His servant Jeremiah, tells us this, “Thus says the LORD: ‘Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.” Jeremiah 9:23-24 (English Standard Version)

So, it is possible for us to get to know the Almighty God, our heavenly Father. In this scripture we find three things to know about Him. We’ll get to these things in a bit.

So what is the second way to get to know Him? Paul in his letter to the Romans writes this, “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.” Romans 1:19-20 (English Standard Version)

We can get to know God as we observe the

His wife got her new needle.

The first Dane to settle in Clay Township arrived in 1868. His Danish name was Christian Jensen from the Island of Funen. Once in America he changed Jensen to Johnson. He and his Danish wife Mary had lived in Moline, Illinois for five years before arriving by covered wagon in Clay Township. They did not plan on settling here but were determined to homestead in Nebraska. They had stopped at the farm of a D. Hudson near Elk Horn Grove. Hudson tried to convince him to buy land here but the next morning they headed west. At least they thought they were on a westward trek. It must have been a very overcast day because as twilight overtook them, they found themselves back at Hudson’s farmstead. They took this as a significant positive omen and put down their roots.

Christian Johnson bought land just east of the Elk Horn Grove. To the south up on the ridge stood the Winter’s place. There was a stage route along that old buffalo trail on the ridge. It was a segment of a stage route that ran between Exira

One of the reasons for food insecurity has been the rising cost of groceries. Prices have increased dramatically in the last two decades. Ground beef has risen from \$2.10 a pound to \$5.50 a pound. Milk has risen from \$3.20 to \$4.47 a gallon. Russet potatoes have risen from \$.83 to \$1.37 a pound. And these are representative of food prices across the board. The rise in prices has pushed some food budgets to the limit. Perhaps we should revisit an older solution.

In war time food shipments coming to the US were impacted by our adversaries. This caused shortages of some items and also caused a rise in prices. The answer in WW1 was “War Gardens”. And in WW11 they were called “Victory Gardens”. They could be found in backyards, side yards, and even front yards. Some communities even used space in the local parks for those without a yard. Wherever they would receive enough sunlight. In the 1940s they provided 40% of the American family’s diet. The produce from these gardens had a much lower cost easing the family’s budget. Since most were raised within 100 yards of the consumer, there were no shipping problems. It is likely that we would need to teach folks how to preserve fresh fruits and vegetables for this to have the greatest benefit. But these programs have been done before and are already developed.

They do not have to be fancy or even large. When living in an apartment where you could not dig up the yard, a few empty 5-gallon pickle buckets became a place for tomatoes and peppers. And quite frankly allowed us to raise a “dilly” of a crop. Yes, pun intended! Something to ponder for us all.

created things around us in the world. If one takes the approach of coming to know God with a scientific point of view and starts with a true biblical worldview, He is there for us to both understand and know! Let’s follow this trail of knowledge for a while.

King David, the author of most of the Psalms, writes this, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day after day they pour forth speech, and night after night they reveal knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their measuring line goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber. Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.” Psalms 19:1-6

So, the creation of God is visible all around us and day by day, scientists with a biblical worldview have been making discoveries that do declare the glory of our God! In fact their study of the DNA structure in all things living, is now seen as a messaging code and that which is messaged must have a messenger. And if we have this biblical worldview we will know this messenger as the Creator; “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Gen. 1:1

And yet some are in denial still. So let me ask the question again, “Do you know God?” Are you seeking to know Him?

and Council Bluffs. It was said at the time that seven miles on the map was a hundred-mile trip by stage. Mail was dropped off into a box on the porch of Winter’s place. Settlers would drop and pick up their own mail from the box. Initially the drop off was called Indian Creek Village. When Johnson settled in Clay Township the drop had been moved a quarter mile west to a livery stable. For the mail drop to become an official United States Post Office, it needed a permanent name. Credit for the naming of the post office goes to the “Godmother” of Elk Horn, Caroline Winters. Due to the large collection of elk horns between the Winter’s place and the grove, she suggested Elk Horn. It stuck.

To be continued...