

Zion News

Thought for the day: “You can never make the same mistake twice, because the second time you make it, it’s not a mistake,

it’s a choice.” - Unknown
Rev. Gartung and his wife Ruthie hosted a small, informal get together at the parsonage from 10:00

WISE AND OTHERWISE

By Kent A. Stock

The call of the wild (avian version)

Right now we have a pair of owls in our neighborhood who are quite the conversationalists. From other reports several pairs of our nighttime callers are hanging out about town. I like to hear them but don’t so much like the coyotes howling of an early morning when I walk the dog. That sound gives me the creeps. But the owls I enjoy hearing and sometimes I try to join in but I’m sure that does not surprise you if you have ever read this column more than once.

I like birds, in general, but not up close and personal. That is the way I feel about some people too but then that is a topic for another column. I feed my backyard birds through the winter because I figure if they are willing to stay here with us in the cold and snow I might as well feed them to say thanks.

My favorite birds are owls and penguins. I think it would be a neat idea if someone were able to merge the two into an owlguin or a pengowl. They would be very cute, would they not? This is why I am not allowed to actually practice any science type stuff.

All this bird calling calls to mind a trip my family made to St. Louis Zoo a few years (decades) back. It does involve the bird house there and an adventure we won’t forget.

First of all, our mom disliked birds in the extreme but agreed to go in the bird house. She had childhood trauma with chickens is all I can remember but she decided to be brave this trip. The very first room we went in had these large birds roosting on limbs or posts. That was it, they were just there staring at us and we were staring at them with nothing to stop them from swooping down and pecking our eyes out.

That was when mom made an early exit from the bird house charging back out the entrance knocking people out of the way like Walter Payton breaking tackles. She may have been only 5’3” but she had quite the forearm. She joined my dad outside to wait for us to come out.

We walked around talking to the birds, of course, and trying to get them to move because for all we knew they were stuffed and mounted in their enclosures. We even sang the kookaburra song to the, duh, kookaburra. He did not laugh; perhaps we weren’t Australian enough.

We were about at the end when we were all standing looking at what was a fairly ugly bird from Upper Zimbabwe or some such exotic locale. All of a sudden there was this horrible honking, screeching noise.

I was at the end of the line so I turned to my family and said loudly, “What the heck was that?” My family all took a step back and at the other end of the line was a gray crested, bespectacled, nose blower wiping his schnoz with a handkerchief and looking none too happy.

What did we do, burst out in laughter which really set the bird house alive including the ugly bird from Upper Zimbabwe. I think even the kookaburra was laughing. So we decide to make a speedy exit, laughing hysterically and literally running out of the bird house.

Our parents were waiting there as the obviously hysterical crowd of kids, grandkids, strollers and whatever else came speeding toward them. I remember my dad’s face and knew he was thinking, “Oh good grief, what have they done now.”

“We have to move he is after us.” At this point my parents just went along following at a safe distance behind their crazy brood. They were probably concocting a story for the St. Louis Zoo security team when they arrived to check on the disturbance and the disturbed. “We’ll tell them it was the heat” which is always a good excuse for a July day in St. Lou.

The story still makes us giggle to this day. A nice memory while I sit here writing up my plans on how to combine an owl and a penguin. Do I hear a kookaburra laughing?

PM until midnight to pray the old year out and the new year in. The evening concluded with the ringing of the church bell at the stroke of midnight.

Ruthie prepared the Paraguayan version of Egg-nog. It contained a lot of fruit and other ingredients. Very tasty.

Rev. Gartung’s background of being a “city-boy” was displayed in bold relief. In the evening, Rev. Gartung and Ruthie noticed the parsonage was getting a little chilly. By 10:00 PM, the temperature inside was 50 degrees. Wally Smith and Rev. Gartung checked the propane tank and found it was completely empty! Rev. Gartung has never lived in a house heated by propane, so he didn’t think to check it. Too late then to do anything about it.

However, everyone wore their coats, and the church bell rang twelve times at midnight. The propane tank was filled the next morning, so all is well, except Rev. Gartung is still blushing about inviting guests to a cold house!

Here are some “Praise the Lord!” happenings. Lane Drake is home from the hospital. Mary Fern Carlyle is home from the hospital and is at the Arthur Home in Room 35. Patty Heit has a new great grand-baby!

Don’t forget the Blood Drive at the Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, 128 E. Illinois St. in Arthur on Thursday, January 10 from 1:00 PM until 6:00.

The Arthur Ministerial Association is planning a Pulpit Exchange on Ecumenical Sunday, January 20, 2019. Rev. Bruce Weiman of the Arthur United Methodist Church will be speaking at Zion, and Rev. Gartung will be speaking at the First Baptist Church of Arthur.

Our prayer concerns continue to include Paul Knobloch, Katana Ponder, Jerry and B J Hale, J B and Jean White, Todd Martin and his family, Bobby and Reagan Miller, Jim and Jackie Tholen, Sharon Parsano, Donna Schultz, Jeff Romine, Ben Valerio, David Walker, Elsie Winings, Betty Sawyer, Wilmer and Lela Otto, LaVerne Smith, Jim Dycus, Marvin Helmuth, and Henry Schrock.

Rev. Gartung’s suggested New Year’s resolution: “Living Lord, I long for a deeper devotional life. May I consecrate myself completely to You. Amen.”

Chuckle for the day: “Faith is like Wi-Fi. It’s invisible but it has the power to connect you to what you need.”

Rev. Gartung welcomes your calls and email. You may reach him at 460-1892 or at dennis@gartung.me. He and his wife, Ruthie, would be glad to visit with you. Just give them a call or send an email.

Zion’s worship service starts at 9:00 AM each Sunday with various Sunday School activities following at 10:30 AM.

Tindle sentenced

(Continued from Page 1)
Police Department, Bement Police Department and Douglas County Sheriff’s Office responded to assist with the incident.

The Arthur Police Department later received a report that a vehicle was off the roadway and near the railroad tracks at 100 E and 500 N. The vehicle matched the description of the one taken from Atwood. The baby was located in the vehicle, unharmed. Tindle was located a short distance away from

Sweeping changes coming to IHSA football in 2021

By KENT A. STOCK
Staff Writer

The division over the Illinois High School Football Association moving to divisional play may have been settled by a vote of member schools but the dust has not completely settled on the issue. In short, IHSA members voted to move from the traditional conference model, in football ONLY, to divisional play based strictly on enrollment and geographic factors, at least as much as possible on the latter one.

The measure had failed twice over the prior years and rather decisively at that. However, this go round was different and, to many coaches and athletic directors surprise, the change passed by a slim 17 vote margin (324 – 307 - 69).

The side supporting the change most frequently used argument was for stability and to stop “conference hopping”. Schools searched for a conference which was stable with members, competitive and could help them reach the five/six win plateau necessary for qualifying for the post season.

In order to keep the right fit for their football program, conference realignments became a yearly rite with all kinds of havoc left in the wake of these decisions. When a conference switch was made it was not just a football move but an alteration for every other sport, both girls and boys, into a brand new conference arrangement. New conference set-ups even impacted music and activities such

DAR, SAR Good Citizens Announced

The Stephen A. Douglas Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution would like to announce this year’s selection of Good Citizens. Each year since 1937 the Stephen A. Douglas Chapter DAR has recognized the outstanding high school senior of each of our county’s schools who most closely represents the qualities of dependability, service, leadership, and patriotism. The DAR Good Citizen Program reflects two of the missions of the National Society which are education and patriotism.

Selected for the DAR Good Citizen Award is Alayna Johns from Arcola, Makenna Green from Arthur Lovington Atwood Hammond, Brianna Bange from Shiloh, J. D. Barrett from Tuscola, and Ashley Fulk from Villa Grove.

The Piankeshaw Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution recognizes the SAR Good Citizen Award. Selected this year is Myles Roberts from Arcola, Taylor Powell from Arthur Lovington Atwood Hammond, Logan Richardson from Shiloh, Ashton Smith from Tuscola, and Tristan Harrison from Villa Grove.

The DAR/SAR Good Citizens, families, and friends will be honored February 9, 2019 at a luncheon at the Douglas County Museum..

as scholastic bowl. This worked out well for some but not necessarily for others.

Decades old conferences such as the Okaw and the Little Okaw dissolved or at least the LOVC will be no more at the end of this school year.

To reiterate, this change does not impact any other sport or activity and schools can remain in the conference of choice as they see fit except football. In all other IHSA sports, the post-season involves every school but in football, you only have a certain number of playoff spots so with the gridiron programs taken out of the equation, those favoring the changes hope to stabilize the conference system by making the need to move a moot point.

For the next two years, 2019 and 2020, the system in place will remain as is. The football post-season will be composed of conference champions and teams who have won six regular season games. The remaining spots in the field of 256 teams will come from 5 – 4 teams that have the most points thus allowing them to earn an at-large bid.

Once the field has been set, the IHSA divides the schools up by class size based on enrollments which include a separate measure for private or what are known as “unboundaried schools”. This leaves many schools not knowing which of the eight classes they will compete in during the post-season until the final field is announced just one week prior to the start of the playoffs.

The new system, starting in 2021, will put the class breakdown right up front. The eight or nine team divisions (some will be nine due to numbers of schools playing football) based on

this pre-season classification. The top four teams in each division will make the playoffs already knowing in which class they will fall.

This will leave athletic directors finding two or just one opponent to fill out the nine game schedule which is being kept. These games played outside of the division will help preserve some traditional rivalry games but will not have any play-off ramifications whatsoever. Post-season will be determined strictly by games within one’s division.

Most involved in Illinois High School football don’t see the change unfavorably. Most would agree that something needed to be done but many wonder how this will all actually play out in reality. Illinois will not be the first state to go to this format and, where it is in place, things seem to work out fine.

The “unknown” is one of the factors that puts a damper on enthusiasm for the change. The idea of keeping the divisions geographically aligned seems to also be a bit of a concern. While it may make scheduling easier it takes lots of decision-making power away from the schools and puts it into the hands of the powers that be at the Illinois High School Association. If you don’t like where they “stick” you that will be too bad and you will have to wait two years before they review division alignments.

In the end, everyone will have to wait until the divisions are announced in two years and everyone who follows high school football will have to see how it works out.

This will be the first of several articles about this change and any others the IHSA might be contemplating regarding high school sports and activities.

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