



DAVE KETTERING • Telegraph Herald

Wetting his whistle

A beverage pacifies David Witthoef, 2, of Dubuque, while his mother, Laura (left), chats with Cathy Elwell, of Potosi, Wis., while shopping at the Locust Street Hy-Vee in Dubuque.

BALLOONS: Goal is to hit target with beanbag

Continued from Page 13A

"I think the factor that's kept me coming back all these years is the social aspect, the camaraderie," Blackburn said. "Balloonists are one great big family. There's just wonderful people. All the best people I've met in my life, I've met through ballooning. And they come from all walks of life, from ditch diggers to brain surgeons, you know, and everything in between. There's no barriers."

We see a big X painted on the ground in the distance — the balloons aren't "racing" for speed, but to try and drop a beanbag closest to the target. Ultimately, the wind decides where to take us.

However, Blackburn is an expert at navigating the air currents. When we pass over a small pond, complete with snapping turtles, he dips the basket in so water rushes up to our ankles, before lifting us right back up.

"I never do stuff I don't intend to do," he laughs, before radioing to the crew that he "splashed and dashed" us. His wife, Deb, or "screw-driver," over the radio, is also



MIKE BURLEY • Telegraph Herald

Balloons hover over Galena just after taking off Saturday during the Great Galena Balloon Race at the Eagle Ridge Resort and Spa.

a balloon pilot. They've traveled around the country and to Australia for ballooning.

The ride is smooth, but the landing is a little rough — we're instructed to bend our knees as the basket bounces a couple of times across the ground. The balloon spins as we descend.

But we can't pack up in this field, because the homeowner is still sleeping and we can't ask permission to bring the truck around. Blackburn stressed the importance of respecting landowners.

"Basically, every time we

land, we're trespassing," he said. So, within a moment, we're off again.

The winds take us over downtown Galena, offering stunning views as the town begins to wake, and people wave. When we pass near a farmhouse, we're close enough and the air is quiet enough to have a talk with the owner on his porch. He says he's got coffee ready for us.

When we land in the bean field, the truck quickly finds us. Crew members pack up the balloon as quickly as they unfurled it. Then, the

corks start popping.

Champagne has been a ballooning tradition since the early days of the sport, when confused villagers would think balloonists were magicians or demons. The balloonists brought a bottle of local wine — from the Champagne region of France — to show their good intentions.

Blackburn's love of the sport is obvious as he recites the "balloonist's prayer," another tradition.

"It becomes a part of your life," he said, "almost part of your identity."

tri-state week in review

Trucking firm considers leaving Illinois for Iowa

The sign outside Hirschbach Motor Lines announces the company is hiring, but the parking lot is crammed with cars and trucks.

"We're bursting at the seams here," said AJ Tucker, executive vice president of the company.

Leaders at the trucking company, which moved from South Sioux City, Neb., to an East Dubuque, Ill., location along U.S. 20 a little over a year ago, are considering crossing state lines once again, this time to Iowa.

Tucker is straightforward about the reasoning; the company needs more space and some assistance getting it. Hirschbach leaders approached Illinois state leaders about getting some assistance to expand.

Hirschbach leaders also explored some potential sites in Dubuque, and they were offered a \$2 million incentive deal, according to Rep. Jim Sacia, R-Peatonica. Hirschbach did not take Dubuque's offer. The company waited on an offer from Illinois, which Tucker said ended up being so unsubstantial it was "basically nothing."

Now, with the lease on the adjoining property set to run out soon, Tucker said Hirschbach leaders are once again "firing up the discussion" with Dubuque.

PARALYZED SOLDIER IN REHABILITATION

Cpl. Cody Skahill is working hard to be home in Dubuque when Iowa Army National Guard soldiers return from Afghanistan in July. Skahill, 19, is recovering at the Audie L. Murphy Department of Veterans Affairs Hospital in San Antonio.

He was injured on April 22 at Combat Operating Post Najil in Laghman Province, Afghanistan, as a result of a negligent discharge of a weapon. He is paralyzed from the chest down, according to his sister, Britini Skahill.

Skahill is assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division in Dubuque. Skahill's father, Robert Skahill, is in Texas with his son. Robert's girlfriend, Dawn Saunders, reported that medical authorities estimate it will be one to two years before they will be able to release Cody to where he is capable of being on his own.

DISTRICT OFFICIALLY FIRES BURKE

The Dubuque Community School Board officially approved the termination of Robert Burke's contract as Sageville Elementary School's principal at Monday's board meeting.

Burke, who pleaded not guilty to charges of receiving child pornography in U.S. District Court in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on Friday, legally had five days after being informed of the board's decision to begin termina-

tion proceedings on June 4 to request a review of his termination by an administrative law judge.

"We have not had a response from Mr. Burke, so the board is free to take action," said Stan Rheingans, executive director of Human Resources for the district.

The board didn't discuss Burke's status before it approved his termination by a 6-0 vote in a personnel report. Board member Craig Beytinen didn't attend the meeting.

Burke also admitted in court documents to installing a hidden video camera in a boys' bathroom at Sageville. As previously reported in the TH, Assistant U.S. Attorney Mark Tremmel said the investigation into the video camera is ongoing.

IBM RECEIVES EXTENSION TO MEET 1,300-JOB GOAL

IBM has received a six-month extension from the state to create the 1,300 jobs promised for the company's Dubuque center.

A company spokesman said the extra time was requested as a precaution, and IBM is on track to achieve all hiring and compensation criteria promised as part of the economic-development agreement.

But the move contradicts information released earlier this year; information that confirmed all 1,300 local jobs had been filled.

On Thursday, the Iowa Department of Economic Development board unanimously approved extending the deadline for the IBM project completion date, which was slated for July 1.

IBM's request to the board reported 1,250 jobs have been filled at the Dubuque global delivery services center. That's up from numbers released to the city in February, which showed 1,049 full-time workers and 109 subcontractors were employed at the beginning of this year.

Jeff Tieszen, an IBM spokesman, said the extension was needed as a "safeguard measure" due to "normal attrition rates and the difficulty of predicting exact employment numbers in advance." The extension is considered normal protocol by the state, said Tieszen, in an email to the TH.

POTTER OKS AUDITOR'S PLANS FOR PAY RAISES

Elected county officials may appropriate money from their budget as they see fit, according to an opinion by the Dubuque County Attorney.

That opinion might not sit well with Dubuque County supervisors.

In a memo last week to Dubuque County supervisors, County Auditor Denise Dolan said she is raising the salary of two of her deputies using money from her budget.

The supervisors, who already had decided on a pay freeze for employees in fiscal year 2012, voiced concern over Dolan "going directly against the directive" and asked County Attorney Ralph Potter to see if Dolan was in the legal right.

In his response, Potter said previous rulings allow for Dolan, or any other elected official, to work within his or her budget as long as the deputy's annual base salary does not exceed certain limitations.

"Perhaps the most fundamental misunderstanding of county government derives from a perception of all county offices as equal departments with department heads operating under the board of supervisors," Potter wrote. "Nothing could be further from the truth."

RON PAUL RALLIES LOCALS

One of eight announced candidates for the 2012 Republican nomination for president flew in to Dubuque on Monday for a quick meeting with the public.

Ron Paul, member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Texas, stepped outdoors through the green, wooden doors of the old, majestic Dubuque Star Brewery Co., where he was greeted with a standing ovation by a crowd of 200-plus people.

Paul, 75, last ran for president in 2008 and, while he wasn't chosen by the Republican Party, he was the nominee of the Libertarian Party in 1988, where he was on the ballot in 46 states and received more than 400,000 votes.

Two minutes into his speech, Paul hit his stride, like a preacher who understands the impact of short, declarative statements. "The gravy train is over," he declared. "The country is poorer. The government is poorer. The debt is skyrocketing. Our personal liberties are being undermined."

SPECIAL Only Female Fitness Center in the Tri-State
Buy 1 Month For Only \$25
New Clients Only
JUNE 19 - 25
SHAPES
Locally owned & operated by Roxanne For Women
3368 Center Grove Drive, Suite D • 563-690-BFIT (2348)
Summer Hours: Monday - Friday 5am - 7pm, Saturday 6am - Noon, Sunday CLOSED

Mario's Italian Restaurant
We will be closed for
Summer Vacation
June 26 - July 10th.
We will re-open July 11th.
13th & Main Street • Dubuque, IA
556-9424 • www.mariosdubuque.com

LOOKING FOR NEW WHEELS?
ACCESSDUBUQUECARS.COM

June Events
\$200,000 Big Money Draw
Qualifying Drawings Every Saturday at 8pm
Final Drawing June 25th
5 qualifiers will be drawn each week. Each qualifier will choose 3 envelopes from the Money Board. Win the total of the envelopes in Wild Rose Bucks. If the 3 envelopes equal \$300 win \$100,000!! See Guest Services for details.
Super Sundays
Earn 1000 points and receive \$10 in Wild Rose Bucks or a \$10 Hy-Vee Gas Card.
Wild Pepsi Play Wednesdays
Earn 300 points & receive a 2 LITER OF PEPSI ☞ Earn 600 points & receive a 6 PACK OF PEPSI ☞ Earn 900 points & receive a 2 LITER OF PEPSI & 6 PACK OF PEPSI.
Wild Wheel Mystery Spin
Mondays & Thursdays from 5pm - Midnight
Play the "Wild Wheel Mystery Spin" game at the Wild Rewards Center kiosk and WIN! See Guest Services for details.
WILD ROSE CASINO & RESORT
777 Wild Rose Drive, Clinton, IA 52732 • (800) 457-9975 or (563) 243-9000 • Gambling Problem? Call (800) BETS OFF.
WWW.WILDROSERESORTS.COM

Personally design your MyPic debit card that is
All about YOU!
NO ANNUAL FEE!*

Make your card about you. Visit www.bankfidelity.com.
Upload your photo.
Rotate. Shrink. Flip. Enlarge. Enjoy.

FIDELITY BANK & TRUST
Member FDIC

www.bankfidelity.com

Bellevue	Guttenberg	Peosta
Decorah	LaMotte	Postville
Dubuque	Luxemburg	Waukon
Dyersville	Maquoketa	Worthington
Epworth	Oelwein	

Applies to MyPic Cards. Terms and conditions may apply. Subject to credit approval.
*Annual fee will be waived if MyPic debit card is ordered during the promotional period.