

BLINDSIDE

# Gaming commission should vote NO

Cedar Rapids is again applying to the Iowa Gaming Commission to grant them a license for a casino. The Cedar Rapids group is claiming that the casino could mean \$82 million in additional revenue for Cedar Rapids, but at what cost to all the other eastern Iowa towns and casinos?



Ron Slechta  
Observations

the casinos in Tama and Riverside, are going to suffer from Cedar Rapids bringing in more money.

For the survival of many smaller communities, the Gaming Commission should vote NO and freeze any future gaming operations in Iowa.

### More help needed at Fall Festival

Your help is still needed at the Kalona Historical Village during Fall Festival. It takes a community of volunteers to make this event successful.

You might object to paying for a wristband to volunteer at the Fall Festival. But you have to realize that the cost of the wristband is really a donation toward helping the Kalona Historical Society and the Iowa Mennonite Museum survive for another year. This is their main fundraiser of the year.

While you are there volunteering, take time to tour the Kalona Streetscape exhibit, depot, and other buildings. Kalona has a real treasure of historical buildings that is not matched by even the Amana Colonies. Take time to appreciate what Kalona has.

That small fee for entry is a bargain, as it helps keep the doors of the Village and Mennonite Museum open throughout the year.

Before the start of casinos in Iowa, Little Amana, along Interstate 80, was a thriving business district. When our children were younger, we would meet another family there so our children could have fun in the waterpark for a day.

Now people don't have discretionary dollars to spend on such a weekend. The three restaurants that used to be at that intersection are gone. The motels other than the Super 8 are gone, and it is struggling.

The Kalona Historical Village is also experiencing fewer busloads of visitors.

Some of this can be related to people spending their money at Meskwaki and Riverside Casinos, as well as others. The economy is also a factor.

If the Gaming Commission grants Cedar Rapids a casino license, every rural community in eastern Iowa, as well as

### Vote411.org informs, empowers voters

For more than 100 years, the League of Women Voters of Johnson County, Iowa has been a grassroots organization dedicated to empowering voters. The League is a trusted source of objective information on issues, candidates, and elections. We are a nonpartisan group of women and men who volunteer to register voters, research issues, and host forums, all with the goal of increasing citizen engagement.

Vote411.org is a website developed by the League's Voter Education Fund. It is a user-friendly, one-stop shop for voter registration, checking your registration status, and finding out who and what will be on your ballot, based on your address. Dates and polling locations will also be there when early voting starts.

Soon, the League will be asking candidates to complete a short, simple Vote411 questionnaire. It is important to note that while the basic candidate information comes directly from their filing affidavits, the candidates' positions are in their own words; no editing and no outside opinions. The candidates decide what issues to highlight, and what they believe is important for voters to know. If a candidate does not answer the League's questionnaire, there will be a blank space.

We encourage all candidates to complete this short, simple questionnaire. If a candidate on your ballot hasn't offered that information, we encourage you to contact them directly. A well-informed electorate is a cornerstone of a healthy democracy.

Vicki Aden, LWVJC President  
Iowa City



### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Invest in your future: support local businesses

I became a new bride over forty years ago. I was very intentional about setting up my new home.

I went to Iowa City to a large grocery store as I was stocking my new kitchen. When my mother saw what I was doing she gave me a bit of wisdom: "If we don't shop at our hometown stores now, when we are old, they won't be there for us."

From that day forward I never bought groceries anywhere but in my local store. I've seen the store change hands several times since then, but it made no difference - I gave them my business.

The world has changed. We now have so many voices calling for our business: online, curbside pickup, etc. Our local stores of any kind are struggling to stay in business.

America was not founded on the big box stores, but rather by people opening businesses to make a living for their families and to serve their communities. How many times do our local business get asked to donate to our schools, churches and civic groups? How many times do they turn us down? I have always found local businesses in our town to be very willing to give.

Local businesses also foster a sense of community and belonging for our residents.

As businesses are lost in town, it becomes more difficult to stay connected to each other. We run the risk of losing the one thing that makes "small town life" special.

Supporting local businesses is an investment in your future. Someday, you'll be my age, and you won't want to have to leave town every time you need something.

Tami Miller  
Wellman

#### Who will keep the lights on at Kalona Public Library?

I have been a patron of the Kalona Public Library for 50 years. If you ask me about our community library you will hear my enthusiasm, appreciation, and overall love for this library! This only grew after volunteering and working there.

We are fortunate to have

staff members that care about all members of the community, and anyone else who walks through the library doors... and I used to feel that we were also fortunate to have the physical building and spaces that our library provides. However, that has changed.

The building is used by hundreds of people of all ages every week, which is wonderful - but as with all things, as it has gotten older it is showing the wear and tear of the past 20 years. Floors and paint are aesthetics, and it is difficult to upgrade or renovate in a space that is used six days a week.

As a patron, what has been distressing to me while attempting to utilize the library while studying for college is the lack of lighting. I am a little older, so it requires good lighting for me to read. I can't imagine I am alone in that!

The library staff has put a small lamp in the study room, as half the lights do not work at all; this is appreciated but doesn't address the overall problem of the library. At this point, multiple lights are not working at all, or need bulbs replaced - leaving some areas dim, and some completely dark. It has been this way for months.

When I asked Olivia Kahler, the library director, when the lights would be fixed, she explained that along with being on a "waiting list" to have an electrician come, the overall bill for all the lights to be functional is costly and the Kalona Public Library Foundation nor the City of Kalona have been willing to help with the cost!

My understanding of the mission and purpose of the Library Foundation is that, among other things, they exist to enrich the library facilities and make library needs known to the public. They know of this need, and yet have not taken any action.

With the changing seasons, our library will be quite dark in just a few weeks. On a sunny day, it is lighter thanks to all the windows - but it is noticeably dimmer on a cloudy day.

I wonder if the number of non-functioning lights would be tolerated in any other city building or facility? Would the chamber building be left dim or dark? My guess is it would not, because that would, of course, affect tourism.

I do understand that the city and the library have both been affected significantly by budget cuts by the State of Iowa. However, this facility - our library - is part of the heart of our community for people of all ages, which leaves me asking the question:

WHO will keep the lights on at the Kalona Public Library?

Patty Stolbom  
Kalona

#### Banowsky and Chabal deserve our support

For many reasons, but just two mentioned here, I support our state-level Democratic candidates who are on the ballot this cycle: for House of Representatives Anna Banowsky and for Senate Ed Chabal.

Firstly, both candidates are strong advocates for fully funding public education. It boggles my mind that legislators who rail against "government handouts" have voted to send our limited and hard-earned tax dollars to private schools, even when the majority of families already had their children enrolled in private institutions.

Second, these candidates are in favor of the right to privacy about medical decisions. In what sane and reasonable scenario should pregnancy complications send a woman away from the emergency room until she's almost dying? And now we hear that two in Georgia have tragically lost their lives - women who could have been saved by simple procedures given in a timely way. Iowa women of child-bearing age face these types of threats now that abortion restrictions put laser scrutiny on what treatment is allowed.

Most Iowans are against overly strict limitations on abortion as well as on publicly funding private schools.

I'm a volunteer with Anna Banowsky's campaign because I want to put my time and energy behind people who will go to Des Moines and represent the interests of the majority, and this is what Anna and Ed have pledged to do. Please join me in voting for these candidates on November 5.

Eileen Beran  
Kalona

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Herbert finally found a copy of 'Wilbur Martin, Galactic Accountant of the 27th Century, and the Great Martian Audit'.

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