
GRINNELL

BUSINESS JOURNAL

Presented by  ourgrinnell.com

OurGrinnell Media Corp.

September 24th, 2015

Volume 2 Issue 4



*****ECWSS*****
PSRT STD
EFCWSS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EDDM RETAIL

Local
Postal Customer

Page 2

Lorum Ipsum
Dolor

Page 4

Lorum Ipsum
Dolor

Page 6

Lorum Ipsum
Dolor

Page 8

Lorum Ipsum
Dolor

Page 10

Lorum Ipsum
Dolor

Todd L. Reding
President, Our Grinnell Media Corp.

Sarah Pfennigs
Features Writer and Assistant Editor

Teresa A. McCall
Writer

Keith Brake
Writer

Jack Mathews
Publisher

Michael J. Reid
Art Director

Story Ideas
todd@listracompany.com

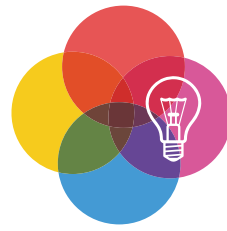
Ad Sales - Jack Mathews
jack@ourgrinnell.com

OurGrinnell.com and Grinnell Business Journal are seeking contributors to help shape an informative and quality web presence and publication for our community.

Experienced writers, photographers, videographers or graphic artists may email todd@listracompany.com for information on being a paid contributor.

The Grinnell Business Journal is independently published bi-monthly by Our Grinnell Media Corp. and is distributed free of charge to all households in the Grinnell area, and is also available at select retail locations.

It's All About...



INNOVATION

Welcome!

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Praesent sodales facilisis auctor. Curabitur suscipit suscipit massa, in viverra sapien molestie eu. Donec ligula ipsum, pulvinar semper est a, commodo bibendum metus. Aliquam viverra diam magna, eu interdum magna tincidunt mollis. Vivamus rhoncus bibendum risus ut scelerisque. In at iaculis libero. Integer semper pharetra arcu a vulputate. Mauris metus lectus, bibendum quis est et, fermentum semper arcu. Curabitur tincidunt venenatis turpis, vitae sagittis diam porta finibus.

Sed sed ipsum sollicitudin, sollicitudin sapien ac, venenatis nibh. In hac habitasse platea dictumst. Donec sit amet justo dui. Etiam condimentum nulla urna. Fusce placerat lectus odio, pretium sodales diam dignissim at. Praesent elementum imperdiet risus, eu condimentum metus mattis quis. Etiam vitae quam sed metus venenatis rutrum. Suspendisse luctus tortor et lectus auctor porta. Praesent tellus nisl, vulputate et ultrices sed, condimentum eget nisi. Vestibulum orci nisi, volutpat ut libero et, dignissim porta ligula. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et



Hunt & Peck
BOUTIQUE WRITING SERVICE

Hunt & Peck Boutique Writing Service can meet your professional and personal communication needs.

- Advertising and web content writing
- Resumes and business communication
- Blog content
- Business and small event photography

821 5th Avenue Grinnell, Iowa
www.huntandpeckboutique.com



ARTIFACT **docnav** **KATA**

HIRE (mjr) ME OK?
creative
www.michaeljreid.com

ANSWR makes online search for each support better... ready for the connected world.

ANSWR locates the power of search with the human touch, ensuring the best results validated by your tech support experts.

TAKE YOUR SUMMER CELEBRATION TO THE NEXT LEVEL! WHETHER IT'S A BIRTHDAY, ANNIVERSARY, CORPORATE EVENT, OR "JUST BECAUSE".

TOTAL CHOICE CAN HELP YOU MAKE IT A SUCCESS.



- ✓ INVITATIONS
- ✓ POSTERS
- ✓ BANNERS
- ✓ THANK YOU CARDS

HAVE A HUGE GUEST LIST?
WE CAN EVEN ADDRESS THE
ENVELOPES FOR YOU, AND BULK
MAIL SO YOU SAVE ON POSTAGE.

Relax and reroute

Track your shipments anytime at totalchoicegrinnell.com



Luggage to London
Ship your bags to your hotel or
destination for early arrival!



Souvenirs to Sacramento
Send home those special moments.
Total Choice can receive those packages
for you until you return home.



Fireworks to France
NOPE, this is prohibited!

Total Choice Shipping and Printing
800 4th Avenue

**NOW
ORDER
GROCERIES
ONLINE.**

HyVee
aisles
online

hy-veeaislesonline.com

STEVE LINK

Ford LINCOLN
GRINNELL, IA

YOUR LOCALLY OWNED AND FAMILY OPERATED DEALER
for over 30 years.

AWARD WINNING CUSTOMER SERVICE
and we will NOT be undersold!

IF IT DIDN'T COME FROM US
we're sorry you paid too much!!

IF WE DON'T HAVE THE VEHICLE YOU ARE LOOKING FOR,
Let us know and we will find it for you.

916 WEST ST, GRINNELL, IA 50112
PHONE: 641-236-3172 **WWW.STEVE-LINK.COM**

**ANY NEW FALL
CLOTHING ITEM
20%
OFF
REGULAR PRICE**

BRING THIS
COUPON

giggles & bows
CHILDREN'S BOUTIQUE
907 MAIN STREET - GRINNELL, IA - 641-236-0182
www.gigglesnbows.com
SALE EFFECTIVE THRU NOVEMBER NOVEMBER 9TH



GRINNELL-BORN BIAGGI'S FOUNDER

FINDS NATIONAL SUCCESS WITH NO SIGNS OF SLOWING DOWN

By Sarah Breemer Pfennigs



It all began in Iowa.

When Todd Hovenden turned 14, he invited three of his best friends - Jim Ramsey, Stuart Kintzinger, and Jay Switzer - to Rube's Steakhouse in Montour. Hovenden didn't know that his birthday dinner would be a life-changing experience.

"I can envision it right now and pretty much point to the table we sat at," Hovenden remembers. "It was one of those first experiences I can remember really absorbing and feeling a restaurant and what it's supposed to be about. I immediately had an appreciation for all of what goes into making a restaurant experience great: the food, the service, the atmosphere, the hospitality. That was the first memory I had of truly wanting to be a part of it all."

Hovenden was born in Grinnell, but due to his father's job with Dekalb-Pfizer Genetics, moved to Bloomington, IL when he was very young. The Hovenden family moved back to the Grinnell area when Todd was in third grade and he continued on through the Grinnell-

Newburg school system until halfway through his sophomore year when the family once again returned to Bloomington. After finishing his high school career at an eastern boarding school, Hovenden's memory of his birthday visit to Rube's was still percolating in the back of his head.

At the rather tender age of 18, Hovenden pitched the idea of a steakhouse - loosely based on the Rube's concept - to his parents, their neighbors and a developer, all of whom looked on in bemusement.

"They reminded me - without hesitation - that I knew nothing about the restaurant business," Hovenden laughs. "I was able to raise exactly zero dollars. Every one of them suggested I go to college."

So, he did exactly that. A competitive swimmer who knew if he was going to swim at any undergraduate institution it would be the University of Iowa, Hovenden strapped on his goggles and spent four years earning swimming accolades and earning his business degree as an Iowa Hawkeye. He went on to work for



*Todd Hovenden,
founder of Biaggi's Ristorante Italiano*

Pepsi, which helped lay the foundation for Hovenden's career in the restaurant industry.

"At the time, Pepsi was the largest restaurant company in the world," Hovenden says. "Taco Bell, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut, California Pizza Kitchen - we were opening a restaurant somewhere in the world every four

hours. It was a great time to be part of Pepsi and their restaurant division."

Hovenden lived in Chicago, California and Moscow during his tenure with Pepsi, and after returning from Russia, he decided it was time get his graduate degree. He received his MBA in business management from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, and during the program, he developed the concept and business plan for Biaggi's Ristorante Italiano.

On March 8, 1999, he opened his first store.

"We opened at 11 am," Todd remembers. "That same morning, we actually broke ground on our second restaurant and were already working on a lease for our third. We said, 'If we're going down, we're going down big, and we're taking a lot of people with us.'"

Hovenden and his collaborators - John McDonnell and Peter Schonman - wanted to focus mainly on third-tier markets. Although Biaggi's would end up getting big enough to open stores in larger cities like Chicago and Minneapolis, the idea was to start in smaller markets, specifically those with 150,000 to 500,000 people. Biaggi's began in the Midwest, but has since spread, with



*Interior dining room of one of the restaurants.
Photo courtesy of Biaggi's Ristorante Italiano*



*Filet Mignon.
Photo courtesy of Biaggi's Ristorante Italiano*

restaurants in New York, Colorado, and Mississippi.

“You have to do something you love to do, but also you should undertake a market niche you enjoy, as well,” Hovenden advises. “We never had it in our business plan that we’d go to Chicago or Indianapolis or Minneapolis, even though eventually we did exactly that. We opened our first restaurant here in Bloomington, IL and it’s remained pretty Midwest focused.”

So why Italian?

“I’ve been to probably a hundred BBQ places in my lifetime, and if you blindfolded me, I’m not sure I could tell the difference between barbecued pork, barbecued beef, and barbecued chicken. It’s great, but it pretty much all tastes like barbecue! With Italian food, the flavor profile is much more varied. It’s very approachable, and many of the ingredients you find in authentic Italian cuisine are things you can find in your own home.”

Great food isn’t the only thing Hovenden and the Biaggi’s team hold the magnifying glass up to. The former farm kid likens the industry to a milk stool.

“Milk stools have three legs, and I think about the restaurant industry much the same way. The three legs are food, service, and atmosphere, with the stool being the value proposition. If one leg is out of balance, everything wobbles. You can have a restaurant that looks fantastic, but if the service is off, it’s a problem, or if the staff is great but the food is coming out poorly, again - it’s a problem. At Biaggi’s, we work very hard to make sure we’ve got a rock-solid milk stool.”

Biaggi’s also prides itself on a diverse menu. The restaurant offers salads, soups, pastas, pizzas, steaks, chicken, and even lamb. Hovenden points out that at many concept restaurants, it’s difficult to provide a truly varied menu - another reason the Italian route made sense to him.

“We were - and still are - really intent on the value proposition, to be able to deliver the food, service, and atmosphere at a modest price point,” Hovenden says. “You can go into any given Biaggi’s and order pasta on a Monday night, come back the following Wednesday and have a great steak, and then have pizza on Friday.”

With 22 restaurants in 10 states,

Biaggi’s is showing no signs of slowing down. Its biggest concentration is in Illinois with seven restaurants. There are three in Iowa - one in Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, and Davenport. Although the recession was tough on Biaggi’s, it only made Hovenden and his team sharpen their game.

“In the first three, three-and-a-half years, we opened 10 restaurants,” Hovenden says. “We’re opportunity-driven and position ourselves as sophisticated casual - kind of along the lines of a P.F. Chang’s or a Cheesecake Factory. There’s pressure on that segment of marketing coming from the fast casual guys. The next generation - millennials - are being weaned on the Chipotles, the Paneras. We have to



Burrata Caprese, Photo courtesy of Biaggi's Ristorante Italiano

years ago, he asked John McDonnell to step up as CEO. That’s not to say Hovenden is slowing down - he describes himself and his company as “opportunity driven”.

“We look at growth, but not just growth,” Hovenden states. “Five years from now, we’ll be a bigger company than we are today. I can’t say how - whether it’s organic growth, acquisition, franchise, or a second concept. But we will be bigger.”

He also loves getting the reminder of why, exactly, he wants to be bigger. For Hovenden, it’s the people.

“Discovering a four top or six top table having a great time is the best. Maybe they’ve shared a bottle of wine before even opening their menu, or they’re calling friends over from across the room to say hello,” Hovenden muses. “It’s so much fun and really energizing to know you may have had something to do with that great time.”

These days, when Hovenden isn’t at the office or at one of his stores, he tries to spend as much time as he can with his family - wife (and high school sweetheart) Claudia and their two children, Max, 19 and Gabby, 18.

“We try to optimize our summers, mostly by traveling,” says Hovenden. “I’ve also been known to play a poker game or two.”

For this former Grinnellian, the poker game has definitely paid off.

www.biaggis.com



Todd Hovenden, photo by Steve Smedley of the Pantagraph

make sure we’re addressing that, as well. There’s not a tremendous growth in casual dining right now, especially since the recession. Everybody is really trying to adapt the Chipotle model, because - quite frankly - it’s the best restaurant concept that’s ever been developed.”

Hovenden has been the CEO, CFO, real estate, construction, and designer of the restaurant he founded, but two



WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM HER FRIENDS:

NICHOLE BUSHONG AND MEMORIES MAID

By Sarah Bremer Pfennigs

Nichole Bushong never intended to open her own business - the idea of being an entrepreneur seemed like something reserved for those living in big cities, or competing against others on reality television. The University of Northern Iowa graduate had a great job as the lead agent for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), as well as a new boyfriend (Lucas, who would eventually become her husband). Things were looking pretty rosy.

"I loved the people at NCAA, but I hated sitting at a desk every day," Bushong admits. "Lucas lived in the [Grinnell] area. After a long distance relationship for awhile, I decided to move here and look for a new career."

She loved to cook and entertain, and word-of-mouth grew after she whipped up a few freezer meals for family members and friends. Before she knew it, Bushong had a meeting with Emily Counts at the Grinnell Chamber of Commerce to discuss a possible storefront. Counts suggested Cynthia Sherman of Flowers by Dzyne for possible space rental, and after speaking with other businesses and the University of Northern Iowa's Small Business Devel-

opment Center, Bushong was well on her way to making her hobby a bonafide career.

Bushong set up camp in the lower level of Flowers by Dzyne, which initially worked very well. The downside was not being able to cook on-site, which made things slightly more complicated for Memories Maid. Within a year, the face of both businesses had already begun a positive shift, but with any growth comes a reevaluation of how the day-to-day practice needs to change.

"We knew the ideal goal would be that both businesses would grow to the point where we would have to separate," Bushong states. "Emily [Counts] is also to thank for finding this new location for me. The owners were doing some construction inside, anyway, so I was able to have them make a few adjustments to make the kitchen state-certified. Now I'm able to cook on-site."

In addition to moving her business to a more advantageous location, Bushong was also intrigued by the idea of inviting supplementary vendors. Although the freezer meals are central to her overall business plan, Bushong also offers event planning, from weddings to baby show-



Baby Kaylee visits Mom at work.

ers to reunions. She handles an exhaustive list of "to-dos", including vendor correspondence, invitation implementation, event set-up/tear-down, and a host of other chores that a host or hostess may not have the time or energy to take on.

"I have always loved planning and being behind the scenes for events," Bushong enthuses. "The freezer meals were taking off, but I needed a little more to complete my business. At first it seemed like a strange combination, but it all ties back into helping people. I want to people to come into my store and be able to feel like a weight is off their shoulders, whether it's because they're taking home dinner and don't have to worry about cooking or they don't have to worry about the details of the retirement party they are planning."

The additional vendors Bushong has incorporated into her space include a canvas artist/wreathist (Colene Blagden), a graphic designer (Kelly Elliott), and a sign artist/soapmaker (Lisa Stewart, of Dandelions & Vines). Bushong gave careful consideration to those sharing her space.

"They are each unique in their own

way," Bushong says. "Each vendor has a different personality that shows in their work. They also wanted to do something that they would enjoy, so they took a chance."

Kelly Elliott, a graphic designer and portrait photographer from Nevada, IA, has what she refers to as a "pop-up paperié" within Memories Maid. She designs and sells one-of-a-kind greeting cards, note card sets, buttons, magnets, gift tags, tea towels, wine bags, and other packaging/wrapping supplies and embellishments. With an established store already percolating on Etsy since 2011 (Kelly Elliott Creative) and a couple of small southern and central Iowa wholesalers also carrying her line, Elliott felt prepared to incorporate a storefront into her growing business plan.

"I knew after meeting Nichole in June [2015] that wanted to join her," said Elliott. "It wasn't until August 1 that I had actual product in her space."

Quirky and humorous one-liners are emblazoned on Elliott's offerings, and she believes - as does Bushong - that her wares are an original, fresh commentary Grinnell hasn't seen before.

“I like to think that I appeal to a wider range of mostly women in their late 20’s to hip and trendy women in their 60’s,” said Elliott. “That’s not to say men don’t get a chuckle out of my product or don’t appreciate it. I do get orders from men more often than I thought I would!”

Elliott has a more unusual situation from the other vendors housed in Memories Maid - she doesn’t live in Grinnell. She calls Nevada home and lives there with her boyfriend of many years and their beloved mutt, Max. With her current work schedule and family obligations, Elliott won’t see herself having a significant physical presence at her papiere, but plans to let her work speak for itself.

“I do hope to be around for special event dates,” she said.

Like many small business owners, Elliott is buoyed by family and friends.

“My mom is often playing the role of my assistant since I am still running

people who inspire the humor found in my work.”

Bushong also cites family and friends as her main anchor, and found herself becoming a first-time mom shortly after moving Memories Maid to her current location. She and her husband Lucas are in the process of adopting Kaylee, a beautiful baby girl who was born May 27.

“She came to us when she was six weeks old,” Bushong said. “I had already committed to this new store location at the time the baby came up for adoption. We fell in love with her instantly and knew we had to make it work. I have the greatest support system in my family, my husband, and his family. They all gave up a lot of their summers to help me paint and move into the new store, and make the adjustments at home to take in a baby.”

If having unexpected motherhood and opening a concept store all in the space of a month isn’t innovative, Bushong isn’t sure what is.



Bushong sells and uses Wildtree products.



A popular choice in Bushong's freezer meal lineup: Pizza Pasta Casserole.

solo. She helps me with shows, mail runs, set-ups and packaging inventory,” Elliott said. “My dad can usually be found finishing off a project for me or bringing an elaborate vision of mine to life in his wood shop. I have a group of dear friends who have supported my crazy ideas all along the way and continue to inspire me daily. They are the

“This area hasn’t had anything like my business before. The freezer meals were an entirely new concept, and most people think of event planning only in larger cities,” Bushong pointed out. “I had no idea if it would take off or flop. As word is getting out to more people, it has definitely taken off!”

“For me the most challenging aspect has been the unknown. Having a business unlike anything else around here, I didn’t have much to base my pricing on, I didn’t know what marketing tools were most beneficial, and I had to research what the state requirements were,” Bushong continued. “Also, I needed a few people to take a chance and try my services so that I could prove myself.”

Taking those leaps is beginning to pay off for Bushong.

“The pride is in knowing that everything I’ve done and everything I continue to do is for myself and my family, not for a boss,” she said. “It’s been long hours and sales go up and down, but at the end of the day it is a business I created and I can be proud of.”

There’s a quote Bushong loves that she recalls when her day goes long or there’s a stack of invoices to deal with when she’d rather be with family and friends. It keeps her rooted and serves as a reminder of why she traded her in her office desk for a storefront.

“Entrepreneurship is living a few years of your life like most people won’t so you can spend the rest of your life like most people can’t.”



Memories Maid is located at 901 Main Street and offers ready-made freezer meals, Wildtree products, decor rental, and event planning. Nichole can be reached at 319.610.1999.

<http://memoriesmaidbynichole.com>



SMALL TOWN, BIG SECRETS:

DEAN BAKOPOULOS ON SUMMERLONG, WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A WRITER, AND WHAT'S NEXT FOR HIM

By Sarah Breemer Pfennigs

Dean Bakopoulos knew he wanted to be a writer in second grade. His teacher, Mrs. Dixon, read a few of his stories to the class and the girl who held the young Bakopoulos's heart in her hands laughed at the jokes he'd peppered his assignment with.

"I was hooked," he remembers.

Fast forward several decades later and Bakopoulos is still make people laugh.

And cry. And think.

Bakopoulos just began his sixth year of teaching at Grinnell College, but he's also an acclaimed novelist. He published his first novel at age 29 and followed it up with two more. His third and most recent offering - *Summerlong*, which takes place in Grinnell - already has a script that's beginning to make its rounds in Hollywood, and Bakopoulos's first book, *Please Don't Come Back from the Moon*, has actor James Franco on board. The film version begins shooting in Ohio this fall.

That's not to say, however, that he always finds his craft easily accessible.

"Every novel is an exhausting and perplexing attempt at saying the unsay-

able," he admits. "Three novels into a career, with three other novels I've tossed in the trash, I feel I can finally speak with some authority. Novels are really hard to write and even published and edited and marketed by a big New York publisher, they remain perpetually imperfect. I will say that I've learned, finally, that pacing and structure and point of view are always the kind of problems you don't really work out until the fourth or fifth draft. So you just keep writing until the problems almost fix themselves."

Summerlong, his most acclaimed novel to date, unfolds during one unrelentingly hot summer in Grinnell, its characters unraveling under the weight of suburban weariness, forbidden desire, and unfettered grief. Bakopoulos has certainly gleaned some of the novel's content from his own life, but cites the often unexamined depth and wonder of small-town existence as additional inspiration.

"I like Grinnell and believe it's way more complicated than it appears," he muses. "Although my characters are rather messed up, I do hope the book portrays Grinnell as a somewhat magical place to live, because I do think it is a bit magic. And I would amend 'write



Author Dean Bakopoulos

what you know' to 'write what you're going through'. The writers that break out of the pack find some way, hidden or not, to write about their deepest fears, anxieties, and failures."

Bakopoulos is a first-generation American, born to a Ukrainian mother and a Greek father. He grew up just outside of Detroit, obtained his undergraduate at the University of Michigan and completed his graduate work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW). Bakopoulos found writing jobs where and when he could - from news reporting to ghostwriting - but not all of his positions were creative. He also toiled in a warehouse, had a stint as a farmhand,

and worked as a bookseller.

"I've done all sorts of jobs - for about a decade I wrote anything I could write for money, and very little money at that. I had a good eight years after college where it seemed I was doing nothing with my life but floundering," Bakopoulos says. "I covered boring city council meetings about goose poop and I wrote upbeat ice breakers for flimflam motivational speakers. There's no right path to becoming a novelist. You just put food on the table, practice your sentences anywhere that will let you, and skip sleep in favor of all-night novel writing binges."



Summerlong has been very well-received, by both the community and readers nationwide. NPR, the New York Times, and Entertainment Weekly - just to name a few - wrote glowingly about Bakopoulos's newest book, and Grinnell itself has been supportive.

"Overall, people have been very generous and kind in what they've said about the book," Bakopoulos says. "The College has always been very supportive of my work as a writer, and that is wonderful - to teach at a place where the administrators at the very highest level read the work of a novelist on the

faculty is wonderful and rare."

"Some people objected to all the sex in the book, including a few locals, and one person accused me of writing porn," he continues. "I feel like the job of a good novel is to go deep into a character's secret life and that usually includes sex. Most of us have at least some pornographic content in our lives, we just don't record it and share it, right? So I guess a good novelist won't shy away from sex, which is a huge motivator of human behavior, especially when relationships are falling apart. And behind closed doors, most of us are involved in dirty business from time to time. A novelist has to look beyond the closed doors."

In addition to being a successful novelist, Bakopoulos also spends a good deal of his time teaching other writers how to hone their respective crafts. He revises his coursework every year - specifically his seminars - and attempts to confront the issues he faces in his own work with his students.

"Teaching feeds my writing more than it robs from it; it's a very symbiotic relationship for me now that I teach at Grinnell," he says. "I also have learned not to over-extend myself and be Super Human Approval Seeker, which I once was. Now I focus on my family and my writing and my teaching, and I try to void any activity that includes the phrase 'weekly meeting' or 'task force'. Meetings and tasks are the enemy of creative output."

His advice to a struggling writer is simple: If you think you can quit writing and be happy without it, then quit.

"This life, this calling, it takes a lot of out you," he says. "It can wreck your relationships and your health. I'm not really kidding when I say this. If you must write, find a way to love something or someone more than you love to work."

Bakopoulos has definitely found that love within his own children - Lydia and Amos - who live with him when they're not with their mother. Bakopoulos is also sharing his space with his partner, fellow novelist and professor Alissa Nutting, and her daughter Spar-

row. So far, the living arrangements are just for the fall, but Bakopoulos is hoping they stay longer. Nutting and Bakopoulos are collaborating on a television project, which he's currently juggling with a new novel ("rooted firmly in the noir tradition of crime fiction, although it's not a crime novel") and a nonfiction book entitled *Undoing*.

Clearly, Bakopoulos is not a man who is content with resting on his laurels. He's won numerous awards, including a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) fellowship and a Guggenheim Fellowship, and has taught not only at Grinnell College, but also UW-Madison, Iowa State University, and Warren Wilson College. Bakopoulos is currently teaching a nonfiction course that focuses on personal and investigative essays and a fiction course that's making use of the College's Writers @ Grinnell reading series, a program dedicated to bringing a variety of accomplished writers to campus. He seems to be as excited about being in the classroom as he is about the material he's creating on his own time.

"I think there needs to be a delight in and facility with language in any promising student. You have to love to read sentences and write your own," he says. "And you can teach students about revision, and about grit, toughness. I used to scoff when I heard writers talk about novel writing as an act of toughness, but, man, there are a million reasons to quit a novel at page fifty, and it takes a remarkable amount of desire to keep going, especially when you are starting out. I never realized it at the time, but when I was twenty-five, I was a tenacious son of a gun."

"Ideas are easy, first drafts are easy," he continues. "Revision is the thing that kills you, takes years off your life. You know you're not finished, you've not made it perfect yet, but you're working without a map or net every dang time."

Dean Bakopoulos has written three novels: *Please Don't come Back from the Moon* (Harcourt, 2005), *My American Unhappiness* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011), and *Summerlong* (Ecco Press, 2015). He's currently a writer-in-residence at Grinnell College.



HOSPITAL WORKS TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE

By Keith L. Brake

The people at Grinnell Regional Medical Center are always looking for improved methods for taking care of patients.

The reason is to add value - not cost - to the services they already provide.

Kyle Wilcox, vice president of business development and finance, talked about two ways, one involving a software program, the other an enhancement of old-fashioned hands-on care.

The software program, recently added, is the Clinical Documentation Improvement System (CDIS).

"It doesn't change the way we deliver care, but it improves the story we tell about it," he said.

"CDIS helps us talk about the patient's entire care experience. The story is important," Wilcox said. "The more details you provide, the better."

"Let's say a month after your release, you become ill while in another state. The new care provider can request the records to gain a better picture of your overall health. The information in these records could make the difference in a life/death situation. It may assist care now and in future situations."

"It also enhances payment to the hospital from government sources," he said. "The government wants documentation and this allows us to show them how sick our patients are."

Wilcox said the program is not unique or brand new. "Most large hospitals have tools like this," he said. "But the original version wasn't designed for small hospitals. Now it is, and at a fraction of the cost that the large facilities have to pay."

The second, "hands-on" way of improving service is called "Transitions of Care," which GRMC has had for a number of years.



*Kyle Wilcox,
vice president of business development
and finance,*

Involves follow-up by nurses and other care providers after a patient is discharged from the hospital.

"Let's say an older person has pneumonia and comes here for treatment. That can be a high-risk situation. We have nurses who come in to visit with the person before they're sent home. Then, they'll follow up to make sure that person is taking his or her medications correctly, and has scheduled a follow-up with their physician and making sure everything is progressing nicely."

He said many people return to the hospital simply because they don't take their medications correctly or see their doctor after they're sent home in a timely manner.

"The 'transition' is from being an inpatient to being healthy at home," Wilcox said.

"We don't get paid for this. We do it because it's the right thing to do," he said.

"Innovation' gets confused with 'technology,'" Wilcox said. "Health care innovation," he said, "is about improving the quality of life."

2014-15

Public Events Series



ALL RECIPES ARE HOME WORKING GROUP THEATRE

6 P.M. APRIL 13, 2015
CENTRAL CAMPUS STAGE

This event is **free** and **open** to the public. Tickets are required for this performance. Distribution begins at noon April 8 in the Bucksbaum Center box office. For more information, call 641-269-3235.

GRINNELL COLLEGE



Great Western Bank[®]
Making Life Great[®]

Grinnell: 1030 Broad • 641.236.7544

Find more great locations at GreatWesternBank.com



IF IT'S BROKE: THESE GUYS WILL FIX IT

GRINNELL OUTDOOR POWER & SERVICE

By Keith L. Brake

Russ Crawford blends a passion for helping people with an entrepreneurial spirit.

That's why he says, "We will service anything" when talking about Grinnell Outdoor Power & Service, the small engine repair, sales and service business he opened in early August.

The firm is located at 2034 6th Avenue, which is U.S. 6 East, in a building that once housed Onthank Body & Fender.

Crawford sells Husqvarna equipment as his main line, "and they have it all, riding mowers, walk-behind mowers, chain saws and more. But if you have another company's mower, go-cart, scooter, golf cart, motorcycle. . .we want to be the shop where you come to have your product taken care of. Whether it's John Deere, Cub Cadet, Sears Craftsman or something else, bring it in. We'll repair it."

Crawford spent 37 years in broadcasting and many remember him as the upbeat owner of KGRN, until he sold the station nine years ago.

He has served on various boards in the community, providing vision and a con-

sultant's problem-solving skills to all. It took him a little while to zero in on what he's doing now.

"Investigate, investigate, investigate," he said. "I had to find the right fit."

"I wanted to do something to enhance Grinnell and I knew this was an area where the community had a need."

Fixing gadgets and equipment has always been a part of Crawford's life.

"My dad raised us to fix everything on our own," he said. "But he did tell us to stay away from electricity."

Crawford said there are advantages to working with a home-owned firm instead of buying from a "big box" store.

"For example, you can't buy Husqvarna for a better price than you can get it here," he said. Regarding repairs, "I have lower labor costs and I own the building, so, lower overhead."

Roger Hines is Crawford's repair person employee. "He has more than 30 years of experience. He can make things hum," he said.



Russ Crawford speaks with a customer.

"I have the resources to find parts for everything," Crawford said.

They've been busy from the start. "There's a big need for small engine repair locally," Crawford said.

Crawford is forward-looking. "You can't look back," he said. However, he said he

draws on his years of experience working with people in helping to solve their problems and fill their needs now.

"I'm always looking at how to enhance the company to make it a little more attractive to the consumer," he said. "We're evolving every day."

Clearly, he is enjoying it.

"I always have fun," Crawford said. "I like doing. I love helping."

FAMILY: Wife Brenda, and four children.

CONTACT: Grinnell Outdoor Power & Service, 2034 6th Ave., Grinnell. Phone: (641) 236-4677. e-mail: grinnelloutdoorpower@gmail.com.



Russ with Husqvarna mower lineup.



FOUNDER OF GRINNELL

A VISIONARY AND INNOVATOR

By Keith L. Brake



Grinnell has been viewed as an innovative town right from the start.

The town's founder, Josiah Bushnell Grinnell (1821-1891) was an innovator.

Various accounts also called him a "radical."

He was, at various times in his life, a businessman, a minister, lawyer and a politician.

He was an abolitionist.

And he felt strongly that the town that bears his name should be anti-slavery and alcohol-free.

He knew the value of education.

Along the way, he saw the need for a strong agricultural economy and envisioned an important role for railroads in developing it.

J.B. Grinnell was born in Vermont, where his strong, lifelong anti-slavery views developed.

He considered a medical career, but went into the ministry. He founded the First Congregationalist Church

in Washington, D.C., where members didn't agree with his strong anti-slavery messages and forced him out.

Grinnell was friends with Horace Greeley, then-publisher of the New York Tribune newspaper. According to various accounts, including Grinnell's autobiography, he was the recipient of Greeley's famous advice, "Go west, young man. There is health in the country away from our crowds of idlers and imbeciles."

Grinnell envisioned an anti-slavery and temperance town.

Grinnell, along with another minister, a lawyer and a surveyor headed west. They considered sites in Missouri and Minnesota.

They decided on a stretch of land in Iowa between the Iowa and Skunk rivers, where the east/west and north/south Rock Island railways were set to cross.

Grinnell, Iowa, was born in 1854, with three temporary log cabins.

Land was sold for less than \$2 per acre and the town grew.

J.B. envisioned a "Grinnell University,"



so he created it . . . mostly on paper. He created a board of directors, and all of the town's residents were declared "professors."

No buildings were ever erected, nor were any classes held.

But Grinnell kept the dream going and in 1859 enticed the directors of 12-year-old Iowa College in Davenport to move the school to the west.

The "Grinnell University" was signed over to the trustees of Iowa College. It didn't become "Grinnell College" officially until 1909.

J.B. Grinnell, a Republican, served a term in the Iowa Senate. He was elected to Congress and was re-elected twice and his abolitionist stance sometimes

put his life in danger.

Some of Grinnell's other offices show the wide range of his interests and thoughts:

- He founded and was a president of the Iowa Historical Society
- He was a "conductor" on the Underground Railroad, meaning the community was a stop along the way
- He was was a director of the Rock Island Railway.
- Grinnell founded the Iowa Stock Breeders Association.
- He was a president of the American Agricultural Association.

He moved back to Grinnell after losing his bid to be re-elected to Congress a third time. His final elective office: Mayor of Grinnell.



GRMC OFFERS AT-HOME SLEEP STUDIES

By Keith L. Brake



Grinnell Regional Medical Center (GRMC) embraces innovation and new technology.

The latest: GRMC is offering patients a self-administered at-home sleep test. This provides an option to inpatient studies done in the sleep lab on the hospital campus.

It's all about patient convenience, says Melisa Coaker, MD, a sleep specialist.

"I think that home sleep testing performed on the right patients has much opportunity and potential," Coaker says. "We can test many more patients and we can capture much of the same results as an inpatient procedure."

More tests at home means more testing can be done overall, with each expected to be at a fraction of the cost of inpatient sleep tests.

The main benefit of the new option, though, is the ease and convenience of administering the study at home.

"A lot of patients are scared to come in and sleep in the lab and this is a good

alternative, in their own homes," Coaker said.

The new device is about the shape and size of a standard mail envelope with several attachments that each patient will be trained in using. At home, patients sleep in their own beds while being monitored by the machine.

A general physician may refer patients to participate in the sleep study, or patients may opt for self-referral. Some insurance carriers require a referral for coverage.

For more information about sleep disorders, sleep studies, or to schedule a sleep test at home or at the hospital, contact the GRMC Sleep Lab at (515) 358-9640. The GRMC Sleep Lab contracts with CIC Associates, P.C., and Mercy Sleep Lab.

ANOTHER INNOVATION at GRMC was the Bioquell Robotic Cleaning Unit, which went into service in 2014. It cleans and decontaminates rooms. GRMC was the first hospital in Iowa to put the robotic cleaning unit into service, and the first under-50 beds hospital in the nation to do so.

GRINNELL REGIONAL SPECIALTY CLINICS

Exceptional specialty care without the hassles of traffic and parking.

Bariatric Center of Excellence	641-236-2069
Central Iowa Rheumatology Clinic	641-236-2338
Grinnell Regional Family Practice	641-236-2500
Grinnell Regional Internal Medicine	641-236-2382
Grinnell Regional Pain Clinic	641-236-2338
Grinnell Regional Sleep Lab	515-358-9640
Manatt Family Urgent Care	641-236-2378

For all other services and clinics, go to our website www.grmc.us or call 641-236-7511.



210 4TH AVE. • GRINNELL, IA 50112 • 641-236-7511 • WWW.GRMC.US





AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO DESIGN

THE CHARRETTE VENTURE GROUP

In the world of technology, startups there are thousands of venture capitalists, mentors, business plan competitions, co-working spaces and other resources built around making the start-up successful. Entrepreneurial journals advertise “pitch weekends” and incubator programs, roundtables and advisory groups. Technology’s explosion over the past quarter century has spawned a new era of involvement in early stage businesses.

Ironically, one of the most entrepreneurial and creative industries in the world has experienced very little of this activity. Of the tens of thousands of architecture firms in the United States, a large majority of them employ less than 10 people. Many were founded by highly creative and visionary leaders, and yet the resources for supporting, guiding and investing in these businesses have largely been non-existent.

The Charrette Venture Group was formed in 2014 to address this enormous opportunity. The ultimate goal of the group is to serve as an investment firm that helps growing design firms. Investments can be in the form of capital, or they can be technology, mentoring and business advice, marketing and business development support, or other expertise and resources.



The group launched the only Architecture Business Plan Competition in the United States in 2014. Open to licensed architects in the U.S. and Canada, this competition recognizes firms that have invested the time and attention into crafting a thorough plan for their future. The competition concludes with an awards reception in May where the grand prize winner is handed a \$10,000 check.

The company involves a complex network of industry leaders and consultants around the globe. Its actual headquarters are located at 833 Main Street in Grinnell, Iowa. Based in the historic Sullivan Bank Building, the innovative group serves new and growing firms from a virtual office environment. Software platforms such as Slack.com, Harvest, Google Drive, and the firm’s own proprietary Architecture Business Development Platform empower the team to collaborate and serve its investment partners regardless of their location.



INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR SMALLER CITIES

By Angela Harrington



The basic premise of business is to create value within an organization. Businesses build value only by creating competitive advantage. Great companies create and sustain competitive advantage over time through innovation. Innovation poses unique challenges and big opportunities in small cities. Critical Mass. If the vast majority of

your customers are local, this is especially difficult. There are only so many people who will choose to do business with you on a given day when only 9200 people live in the city. It takes the same energy on behalf of a business owner to be open to 10 customers as it does for 100 customers. Turning inventory, staff costs are all tougher when sales volume is low. An hourly worker costs the same as it does in larger places, as do utility costs. Thankfully, real estate costs are relatively low compared to urban cities which makes for all kinds of opportunities possible in a small town.

Connectedness To say people in a small town are connected more so than their more urban counterparts is likely an understatement. Negative gossip and speculation are really tough in a small place. A rumor can start out of nowhere and spread like wildfire in a small place, because gossip yields more of a punch or impact when all parties are familiar with the subject. Bad rumors are bad for business. Armchair quarterbacking is an art form in a small town, as is pessimism toward new, big ideas. The good news is that connecting with your customer in a small place is easier if you truly participate in meaningful commu-

nity engagement. Opportunity Cost Normal market economics simply are not in play in small places. Innovation and business growth take resources. Investment dollars are hard to come by for small places because the same amount of money invested where the customer base is larger has greater likelihood for return and less risk. It takes longer to get your money back because of how fast something can sell where the market is limited. The bright side is that banks make the same amount on a loan here that they do elsewhere. The risk goes up because of the volume issue but the amount of capital needed is apt to go down. Without community leaders who are in business to propel local economic growth, small cities would really be in trouble. **The Last Frontier** Being a big part of moving things forward is very rewarding in a small place. Opportunities for collaboration are plentiful and a necessary, fun part of innovation here. It takes people who not only want to create business value but value for the community itself. A passion for this specific place on earth seems to be an important ingredient for success in a small town. It takes true grit, crazy tenacity, and collaborative spirit here.

Playing a significant role in growing our local economy is something that is wonderfully inclusive to small cities. Indeed small cities like Grinnell may be last frontier where each of us has the capacity to make a big difference.

Angela developed auxiliary start-up enterprises on behalf of larger parent companies for ten years in Minnesota and Iowa, owned and operated two of her own businesses over ten years in Iowa and Colorado, and has spent the last six in community development as the chamber and tourism CEO in Grinnell. She is currently the managing partner of an investment group developing a 32-room boutique hotel and 500-seat event center in downtown Grinnell. Angela holds an undergraduate degree in Behavioral Science from Metropolitan State University of Denver and master certificates in Hospitality Management, Marketing and Revenue from Cornell University. She can be reached at angelaharrington3@gmail.com.

TAKING CARE OF YOUR FAMILY'S FUTURE

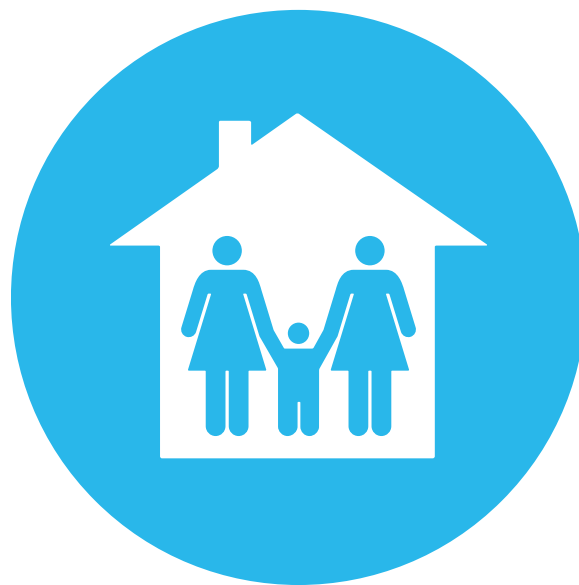
By Dustin Smith, Financial Advisor, Ramsey-Weeks, Inc.



September is life insurance awareness month. It is a little different than many of the other commemorative days and months. There are no charitable donation requests or 5K's to run. However, there is reason for raising significant awareness. It is about education and promotion of the most basic building block of any financial plan. Life insurance ownership is at a 50 year low. A 2010 life insurance ownership study conducted by the Life Insurance Marketing and Research Association (LIMRA), showed that in 1960, 77% of Americans owned life insurance. In 2010 that number had fallen to just 42%.

Many who participated in the LIMRA survey indicated that life insurance was too expensive. At the same time, these same participants also overestimated the cost of life insurance by as much as 300%. We have all heard the commercials about how affordable life insurance can be. Let me share a secret with you.....they are absolutely true. A healthy 45-year old male can get a 20 year, \$250,000 term policy for less than \$35 a month. A healthy 30-year old female can get \$500,000 of 20 year term for just over \$20 a month.

So in honor of life insurance awareness month, I want to remind everyone what life insurance really is and what the benefits are.



For instance, life insurance is really “paycheck insurance”. If the primary breadwinner is no longer around to earn an income, life insurance can replace that lost income. It is also “tuition insurance”. Having adequate life insurance may allow a child to go to college even if tragedy strikes. Furthermore, life insurance is “mortgage insurance”. By paying off the home mortgage, life insurance can make sure your family does not lose their home due to your premature death.

Finally, it is “retirement insurance” meaning your spouse can enjoy the retirement you have both been planning even if you do not live long enough to save your goal amount.

Back to the LIMRA survey for a moment: 70% of Americans agree that they need life insurance. Of those who own some, only 40% feel they have adequate coverage. Often the reason people give for not purchasing life insurance is that no one ever asked them about it. Well, if you are in this boat, let's have a conversation! Let's talk about life insurance and how it may relate to “paycheck, tuition, mortgage and retirement” insurance regarding your particular situation. We will talk about the tough but relevant questions such as “How long after the passing of a primary wage earner is the financial impact felt by surviving family members?” or “If I were not around to provide for those I love, what would their lives look like?”

Finally, I encourage you visit the organization Life Happens website at www.lifehappens.org. Life Happens is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping people take personal financial responsibility through the ownership of life insurance and other related financial products. Take some time to explore the website and use the calculator to assess your personal life insurance needs. It is one great way to celebrate life insurance awareness month!



RAMSEY-WEEKS, INC.

INSURANCE FINANCIAL SERVICES REAL ESTATE

715 5th AVENUE, GRINNELL, IA 50112
(641) 236-3141 www.ramseyweeks.com

We are proud and privileged to work with you on all your insurance needs!

**YOUR LIFE
AND HEALTH
INSURANCE EXPERT**

call: (641) 236-3141

or email: dustin@ramseyweeks.com



DUSTIN SMITH

