

Hellooooo Brookfield !!!!!

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By Bill Thudium

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Our family was deep into the wrestling season up until recently when the “world” shut down because of this virus scare. We had two grandsons wrestling in high school, one in Jr. High and two grandsons and granddaughter in Blue Pride Club kid’s wrestling this year. We also had a granddaughter in competitive gymnastics this year, another playing basketball. We spent several hours one evening in Kansas City a few weeks ago watching our young gymnast compete. Piper is quite good and it was fun to watch a new sport! Wonderful watching but similar to wrestling in that you wait and wait, they perform for a short time and then you wait and wait and wait until they go again!

Because of basketball and high school wrestling the school facilities are generally tied up on Saturdays through those seasons so kids wrestling hold many of their meets on Sundays. That means often times many in our family are unable to make it to Sunday Church services. I keep our Pastor up to date on how the kids are doing by texting her and she kept the congregation informed about how the kids were doing.

Our Grandson Donovan Parn is a Junior this year. He took a fourth place at State as a Freshman, a 1st Place as a Sophomore and this year finished second in his weight class. We are so proud of him and look forward to seeing him return to the podium again his senior year. Grandson Gambal was just a freshman this year but he did well and I think will qualify for the State tournament in future years.

Leadership Academy – Recently I attended the 14th Annual Leadership Development Academy Graduation. This year 18 adults and students took the 6 month course. The class included our Grandson Donovan – glad he was able and willing to participate. The course includes training that reaches across the full spectrum of leadership development, including life skills, some intense self-searching introspection which seems to always result in humble, appreciative graduates. Students learn about the community, local businesses, economic and community development efforts, community history, leadership styles, team building, communication skills, managing conflict, etc. This year’s class also included Jeanne Allen, Katherine Ballard, Heidi Beeler, Daniel Falcon, Kathy Harlan, Joel Kidwell, Brandie Mattox, Anthony Montes, Josh Moore, Emma Sheerman, Casey Smith, Kaley Smith, Kyle Smith, Kristy Sparks, Kaylee Sportsman, Richard Steele and Karen Wilder.

Throughout the 14 years a total of 210 students and adults have graduated from the BAGP Leadership Academy, spreading new leaders throughout our community and County.

BAGP Piccadilly – A couple of weeks ago the Brookfield Area Growth Partnership and its various committees held their annual Piccadilly for the purpose of raising funds for the Partnership and Downtown initiatives. The event was held in the wonderful new Linn County Event Center this year. What a great place to hold large events like this. The Piccadilly was sold out! Another great night for the crowd and BAGP, and it sure showcased what a fantastic new event center we have in Brookfield. Worked perfectly for the event.

Blue Pride Wrestling Club – This local kids wrestling Club continued to grow in size and success each year. This year there were 71 kids in the Club. 32 of them participated in Kids Districts with 30 advancing to Regionals this past

weekend. In order to qualify for State the kids had to finish in the top four at Regionals. Blue Pride qualified 18 kids for the State Tournament that unfortunately had to be cancelled due to virus concerns. This event was set to be held at the old Kemper Arena, now the HyVee Event Center. Regional BPWC finishers included 7 champions, 5 second place finishers, 2 third place finishers and 4 kids who placed fourth. Our grandson Devan was headed to Kids State as a two time State Champion and a one-time 2nd place finisher. He was a number one seed this year in his age and weight class. We sure looked forward to what very well could have been a glowing celebration of Blue Pride successes at the State Tournament – almost assuredly the Club's best finish ever. Grandson Kingston is not old enough to compete for State qualification and Granddaughter Dylan came up just short of qualifying for State this year. Girls and boys wrestle each other in kids wrestling. Dylan holds her own very well and wins much of the time but

she ran into some tough boy competition in the Regional tournament. Unfortunately so far girls have to wait until they are in high school before they wrestle only other girls. Dylan will be a handful when she gets to high school after all of her years of experience wrestling boys! Same can be said for several young girls who have started wrestling in the Blue Pride Club.

My Memories – When Shane and I were first married, over 45 years ago, our first residence was an apartment building in Jefferson City. Just a few blocks away was a local grocery store where we liked to shop. Our first set of Funk & Wagnall Encyclopedias came from shopping at this store! We accumulated premium points from our purchases and then traded them for the books and quite a lot of our dinnerware. Still have and use some of that dinnerware! We always felt so accomplished buying things this way. Lots of good memories of times when we didn't have much other than each other. Special times we both will always cherish.

The Corona - Wow, could any of us have ever imagined the situation we are in now with the Coronavirus?? It literally is shutting down our country. Brookfield is no exception. All of our restaurants have had to go to carry out only status. Dan's was spared by the County Health Department because they have plenty of space to spread their customers out but later told he had to close inside dining as well. I am concerned that this closing and sheltering at home idea may spread to Missouri as well. Can you imagine what would happen to our Brookfield economy if we had to close our factories and send everyone home for an extended period of time?? No paychecks mean no mortgage payments, no car payments, no bill paying, no money to purchase groceries and other essential items. Pershing Hospital is also under all kinds of pressure with providers cancelling non-essential and elective medical procedure clinics. Outpatient business has been the lifeblood of Pershing and most rural hospitals for several years now. Cutting off that

revenue in turn could put the Hospitals in financial jeopardy – at a time when the health care facilities could be facing overwhelming needs to address the coronavirus crisis. Every hospital in our Country is facing similar issues, particularly the rural facilities. I am afraid decision makers do not always consider or understand the consequences of their actions!

We all obviously have to hope the extraordinary efforts underway in Nation to mitigate this virus is successful and soon. We desperately need to get back to work, reopen our businesses and resume our normal lives.

SummerFest and Alumni Weekend? At this point everything is still scheduled to happen. We are all watching and waiting to see what happens with this virus and how long things will be shut down. I am hopeful and somewhat optimistic that we will have this thing turned around by May and back to normal by June. I suppose my guess is as good as the next guy! 😊

Brookfield History – I have had plenty of time at work the past couple of weeks to get back into studying Brookfield and Linn County history again. Plans are to begin writing again about our really interesting history and the folks who created and grew our Community. We have been fortunate to have some incredible Brookfield entrepreneurs. Look for some interesting stories about these folks very soon.

Stay safe and healthy! Thanks again for reading Helloooo Brookfield !!!!! When they reopen please shop Linn County businesses first and don't forget to let me know how you are doing and when you have interesting stories!