

OTHER NEWS

MURPHY'S LAW

Fourteen years later and not done yet

BY PATRICK MURPHY

No fooling.
April 1 — April Fool's Day — is the 14th anniversary of my wife, Kelly, and I owning the Humphrey Democrat.

Time has gone by faster than we could have ever imagined it would.

I remember having to learn the ropes, the business end of it, the legal requirements, filling out a postal report, paying postage, paying printing costs and that there is so much more to putting out a newspaper than writing stories and taking photos.

The writing and photos I knew I could handle. I knew I could lay out the paper. I knew I

could figure out where the stories would come from.

But there was a lot I didn't know, and thankfully, I am still getting better and learning more.

I still enjoy coming to work, I still get excited to put out the paper, and I still appreciate the opportunities I have every week to tell stories.

My first edition was April 4, 2012, and the front pages included a story on Elaine's Addition, the second housing development going up in Humphrey; a picture of the Humphrey Community Center's East Egg hunt; a story and photo of Loup Public Power making upgrades, and

the Humphrey City Council conducting interviews for a new police chief.

The paper was eight pages and completely black and white.

My, how times have changed.

My first column was an introduction of myself and Kelly to our readers.

No introductions needed 14 years later.

Over that time I have shared a lot about myself and my family.

Our daughter, Claire, married Trent and they gave us our grandson, Linus.

Our son, Alek, married Anna, and they gave us our granddaughters Lyla and Bailey.

I turned 60, and am

heading toward 64, and Kelly celebrated 60 and will be 62 later this year.

We have had to say goodbye to family members.

We have had many family celebrations and gatherings.

And, of course, there have been many trips to Disneyland and Disney World, with another trip planned for June.

I cannot even begin to remember all the stories I have written, the meetings and events I've covered, the games I've seen, but telling those stories has always been something I've always enjoyed.

Some might think meetings aren't much

fun, but I've always understood the importance of them.

The community events, games, special events, everything that makes communities special I've enjoyed.

Of course, not all news is good news for everyone, but those stories need telling, too.

Fourteen years. I didn't think about longevity when we bought the paper, I was too busy trying to learn about the people and places I would be covering and learning the business.

I remember when customers came in they knew more about how the paper operated than I did, so I leaned on them.

That hasn't changed much. Newspapers still depend on subscribers and advertisers, now more than ever as social media takes over society.

I appreciate those who still read the paper and want to learn about the people and places here, and the advertisers who support local businesses instead of billionaire social media owners.

Fourteen years and we're not done yet.

Patrick Murphy, editor-publisher of the Humphrey Democrat and Newman Grove Reporter in Nebraska, is a former assistant managing editor at The Telegram.

ASKING ERIC

Boss is an alcoholic, but no one at office will face reality

BY R. ERIC THOMAS

Tribune Content Agency

Dear Eric: My boss is what could be called a "functioning alcoholic," which in this case means that, in spite of having a severe drinking problem, he manages to hold down a job, even while actively drunk.

Over the years, I have been phasing out the act of "looking the other way." My refusal to accept his drinking has led him to cast his wrath upon me on occasion. He thinks that I am trying to take him down. What I want is for him and for everyone in my office to face reality.

It is a very sad thing to watch. Thankfully, I don't have to interact with him much.

I feel let down by my boss. A big part of my job is to make him look good, and it seems like he is sabotaging my efforts. I have now basically given up my

support for him.

If I were to report him to upper management or talk to him about it directly (I would prefer to do the latter), he would just clean up his act for a few days and then revert.

Now it feels like working for him is making me an enabler of his habit. I am seeking some way, any way to cope here.

— *Lost Office Worker*

Dear Worker: It will help you to put an internal boundary between you and your boss. In your letter, there seems to be a sense of personal responsibility for, or disappointment in, your boss and his actions. While his drinking is a professional problem that's impacting your ability to do your job, stopping it seems to have taken on aspects of a personal crusade.

It's telling that you feel like you're enabling him. Doing your

job, even if that job requires fixing his mistakes, isn't enabling. There's a hierarchy here; you don't have the power. Drawing that distinction for yourself is going to be helpful.

It may not be feasible for you to make him and everyone in the office face reality. Nor is that your job.

To that end, talking to management is going to be a better choice than continuing to be drawn into and triggered by his actions. You can express your concerns about him — there is absolutely help available — but your focus in this conversation with management needs to be on what you need in order to be able to do your job successfully. That's the thing you can control.

Dear Eric: My boyfriend and I have been together for six months. We're men in our 30s. I have a very friendly relationship with my

ex-partner that my boyfriend resents. He never has anything nice to say about him and is always misreading the things my ex says and does.

I think my boyfriend mostly resents the fact that I have a close relationship with my ex because his relationship with his ex is basically nonexistent. I don't blame him for wanting nothing to do with his ex. Everything I've heard about the ex sounds terrible.

My ex, who is really just a good friend at this point, is part of a group trip that we've been invited on this spring. I really want to go but my boyfriend is acting very strange about it. He keeps talking about the cost. And he complains that he doesn't want to take time away from work. (He works for himself.)

He says I can just go without him, but should I believe him?

— *Vacation Friend*

Dear Friend: On one hand, sure. In relationships, we should be able to take what the other person says as the truth, or the truth as they understand it. And, in turn, we should endeavor to speak with vulnerability and transparency.

So many relationships get hamstrung by one or both partners expecting the other to read their minds. But when it comes to boyfriends, girlfriends, partners, spouses, the psychic hotline is disconnected. We have to say what's on our minds.

To that end, you should be able to take what your boyfriend is saying at face value. But that sentiment has an asterisk the size of an asteroid: I wouldn't recommend you do that now.

Although his doubts are unfounded, his insecurities are part of what he's

communicating to you. So, whether or not you decide to go away with your friends, you and your boyfriend need to have a conversation about trust. And he'd be wise to work on whatever trauma is still lingering from his last relationship. He doesn't have to be best friends with your ex, but our partners don't get to dictate who our friends are. This friendship was a part of your life when your current relationship started; he needs to learn how to accept it because that's a part of accepting you.

Send questions to R. Eric Thomas at eric@askingeric.com or P.O. Box 22474, Philadelphia, PA 19110. Follow him on Instagram and sign up for his weekly newsletter at ericthomas.com.

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HEART OF A TIGER

FHSU Tiger women's wrestling steps into the spotlight

BY TISA MASON

HAYS - In the wrestling room at Fort Hays State University, the focus is on the hard work and repetition required to build a brand-new program from the ground up. For the 17 women who put on the Tiger singlet

for the first time in the 2023-24 season, every practice was a step toward establishing a foundation that didn't exist just a few years ago.

When FHSU announced the addition of women's wrestling as the school's 17th varsity sport in late



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2022, it was a move that placed the university at the forefront of a national movement.

As the first NCAA school in Kansas and the first in the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association (MIAA) to sponsor the sport, FHSU wasn't just adding a program—it was answering a call from one of the fastest-growing high school sports in the nation.

Fast forward to March 2026, the Tigers aren't just participating; they are contending. Ranked No. 14 in the nation, as four student-athletes headed

into the National Championships in Coralville, Iowa, the program has transitioned from a "new addition" to a competing on the national stage in record time.

The rapid ascent of Tiger women's wrestling can be traced back to the hiring of Head Coach Alijah Jeffery. Arriving from Chadron State, Coach Jeffery saw more than just a job opening at Fort Hays State; he saw a community ready to embrace the grit of women's wrestling.

"I coached some wrestlers from Kansas previously, and they suggested I check out Fort Hays," Jeffery recalls. "The first day I got here, my wife and I found the community and the administration so welcoming. The facilities were top-notch; the campus was beautiful—I was sold from day one."

Coach Jeffery's task was monumental:

build a team culture from scratch. He didn't just look for talent; he looked for pathfinders. "We tried to build our team culture around well-rounded individuals—student-athletes who have good character and are focused on getting better every day," he says. "We looked for unselfishness and gratitude."

If Jeffery is the architect, sophomore Isabella Renfro is the cornerstone. A two-time Missouri state champion who went 47-0 during her final two years of high school, Renfro chose FHSU because of a gut feeling.

"I met Coach Jeffery at the National Duals competition when I was in high school," Isabella said. "I thought he knew what he was talking about. The way he talked about his program and what he saw in me just made me feel on board with his vision."

That decision paid dividends for the Tigers. Isabella, a 180-pound powerhouse from Seneca, Mo., etched her name into the record books this March by becoming FHSU's first-ever NCAA All-American in women's wrestling.

Entering the national tournament as the No. 3 seed with a 29-3 record and ranked No. 1 in the nation at one point in the season, she battled through a grueling bracket to finish fourth in the nation.

Isabella's impact isn't just on the scoreboard; she logged the "fastest pin" team record of 15 seconds during her 2024-25 freshman season, setting a standard of aggressiveness and technical prowess for the younger wrestlers to follow.

While Isabella represents the program's elite ceiling, the heart

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NOTICE TO BIDDERS.

Finney County, Kansas hereby solicits sealed bids from qualified and responsible contractors to provide roofing replacement, restoration, and coating services for designated County-owned facilities. Bid opening will be **Thursday, April 16, 2026**, at the Administration Building where the bids will be opened and read publicly. Bids need to be mailed or emailed to Finney County, 311 North 9th Street, Garden City, KS 67846, with "Roofing Replacement and Repair Bid" put on outside of envelope or in subject line of email and received before **12:59 p.m. Thursday, April 16, 2026**. Email to nthill@finneycounty.org or call 620.272.3594 with any questions.