

The Intentional Tourist
by Jarrod McCartney
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Writing this month's column has been a bit difficult. As some of you may know, I lost my Aunt Pat Arneson and my Uncle Jim Strobl within days of each other at the end of February. Their funerals were on back to back days with Jim's being in Red Cloud and Pat's in Wayne. It was great getting to see my Strobl cousins and Aunt Diane, even under difficult circumstances. Jim's influence in my life early on helped set the tone for who I'd become, something that is still in evidence today. I'd like to say it's my work ethic, but it's probably most clear in my rabid disdain for officials who make bad calls against the Huskers. I think Jim forgave me for eventually going to K-State, but I'm not certain.

Pat's death was very much unexpected, though she had been hospitalized. Pat was a celebrated educator and it was touching to see how many of her former students at Wayne State College expressed their admiration after her passing. If any of us can make it through life with even a fraction of the positive impact Pat had on her students and community, then we will have done a great job with our time on this planet.

I attended Wayne State College my freshman year. The only reason that happened was because of Pat. I had been accepted to UNL, but I wasn't an extraordinary student in high school, and my parents simply couldn't afford to send me to school as they were coming off of years of health difficulties and other family issues. My plan was to keep working the night shift at Wal-Mart. That's when Pat interceded and helped me get the help I needed to make a go of things in Wayne. As my wife put it, she served the role of a "really great grown up" at a time when I needed one. While I went on to transfer to Hastings College and eventually graduate school at Kansas State and Oklahoma, that year at Wayne State created a mindset shift for me and opened up my world. I will always be forever grateful to Pat and Marion for setting me on that path.

Both Pat and Jim taught me to take advantage of my opportunities and to carry myself with pride. I'd like to think I've brought that into my work here in Red Cloud and that we're building a great foundation for the community's long-term success partly because of their influence.

Finally, I want to make sure everyone knows that the Bike Ride Across Nebraska (BRAN 41) will return to Red Cloud June 6-7. Please let me know if your organization wants to do any sort of food or entertainment related activity/fundraiser. There will be approximately 375 people in town. You can also place an ad for your business or organization's event in the BRAN Rider booklet, with prices ranging from \$35-\$85. Ads are due in early April.