



WINTER/SPRING SPEAKER SERIES 2024

Meet up at the LBC on Thursday afternoons for socializing and speakers. A different topic will be discussed each week. The **Thursday Speaker Series is FREE and open to everyone**, no membership is required to attend. If you have a topic you would like to present, contact our customer service staff to fill out a Speaker Proposal Form.

City of Mt Vernon Major Accomplishments Overview, *Chris Nosbish*

Thursday, January 11th at 1:00

City Administrator, Chris Nosbish, will be on hand to discuss the proposed projects that will be underway over the course of the next three years. While these projects will have a lasting impact on the community, they are not without a certain number of challenges. The Highway 1 reconstruction, downtown streetscape project, water meter replacement project, and pool replacement/renovation will have a profound impact on the economic vitality of the community. The City Administrator will provide a cursory review of other economic development and capital construction projects, before opening the session for a Q&A centric discussion.

A Yarn Story, *Gretchen Lindenbolt & Wendy Dorn-Recalde*

Thursday, January 18th at 1:00

Gretchen and Wendy will explore three diverse yarn companies and will share their histories, practices and uses along with their yarns and finished items. They will explore three authors that they find inspirational and have paired with these yarns.

Food Matters, *Laura Krouse*

Thursday, January 25th at 1:00

Learn about how your food choices support your concerns for natural resources, climate change, health, and rural community vitality. Small decisions matter! Laura Krouse operates Abbe Hills Farm, one of the oldest Community Supported Agriculture farms in Iowa, near Mount Vernon. She and her workers grow vegetables for local families for twenty weeks during the summer. The farm produces food and eggs for nearby restaurants and institutions for the remainder of the year.

This Land is Their Land, *Chris Jones*

Thursday, February 1st at 1:00

Water quality in Iowa is discussed within the backdrop of the state's agricultural production systems, and how both have changed over time.

Tending Iowa's Land: Our Environmental Past, Present, & Future, *Connie Mutel*

Thursday, February 8th at 1:00

In the last 200 years, much of Iowa's self-sustaining prairie landscape has been transformed into agricultural lands that have lost their original resilience and health. How did this happen, and what can be done to restore and ensure the environmental health of both agricultural and natural lands today? The new book, *Tending Iowa's Land: Pathways to a Sustainable Future* is the first comprehensive introduction to our major environmental problems and their solutions. Science-based chapters on our soils, water, climate, and biodiversity are complemented by essays written by Iowans who are actively addressing current problems. Together, these writings create an energizing call to action. *Tending Iowa's Land* has received the Midwest Book Award for the Best Nature Book.

A Not So Masterclass in Funeral Service, *Jacob Wittrock*

Thursday, February 15th at 1:00

Jacob Wittrok, co-owner of Stewart Baxter Funeral & Memorial Services, will touch on new forms of disposition, the importance of a meaningful service, current trends, and how preplanning makes a difference.

Alzheimer's and Dementia Awareness, *Marc Hall*

Thursday, February 22nd at 1:00

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support, and research. Worldwide, more than 55 million people are living with dementia. In the United States alone, more than 6 million have Alzheimer's, and over 11 million are providing unpaid care. The Association addresses this crisis by providing education and support to the millions who face dementia every day, while advancing critical research toward methods of treatment, prevention and, ultimately, a cure.

Thunder From the Prairie: The Life of Harold E. Hughes, *Jerry Harrington***Thursday, February 29th at 1:00**

Harold Hughes, Iowa governor (1963-1968) was a charismatic leader who dramatically reformed Iowa government and fearlessly faced controversial issues during his political career. A recovered alcoholic and a handsome man with a voice: borrowed from God," Hughes led the effort to create a national program to aid alcoholics and was a passionate opponent of the Vietnam War and American military deception. His leadership helped make the Iowa Democratic Party a viable alternative after nearly a century of Republican dominance and he was a major force in reforming the national Democratic Party presidential process to make it more open. After one term in the senate, Hughes stunned the political world by retiring from politics to enter the lay ministry and to counsel alcoholics. Jerry Harrington has written the first full biography of Hughes and will discuss his research.

Volunteerism - Giving Back to Your Community, *Rick Elliott***Thursday, March 7th at 1:00**

Rick Elliott, a long-time Mount Vernon resident and former teacher/coach, school board member, council member, mayor, business owner and current owner of the First Street Community Center, will talk of the importance of contributing what you are able to benefit all around you.

Monarch Butterfly Conservation, *Linda Black***Thursday, March 21st at 1:00**

Linda will show you her process for helping raise the decreasing monarch butterfly population. Along with growing pollinator flowers in her yard, she has lots of milkweed that the mama monarch lays her eggs on beginning in May. The eggs are brought inside where they hatch into teeny caterpillars that eventually eat a LOT, form a chrysalis, and emerge into beautiful monarch butterflies. The entire process takes just three weeks! This past summer, she finally reached her 1000 milestone of monarchs that have hopefully made their way to Mexico. It is such a fun and rewarding hobby that anyone could enjoy!

Think Different with Somatic Awareness, *Jennifer Zach***Thursday, March 28th at 1:00**

This eye-opening program will reshape the way you approach critical thinking. You will discover the profound connection between mind and body and its impact on creativity and higher brain function. Whether you're a leader, professional, or lifelong learner, this program will change your thinking and unlock new levels of innovation and self-discovery.

Design of the LBC, *Matthew Stewart***Thursday, April 4th at 1:00**

Matthew Stewart, OPN Architects, will walk through the design process for the LBC from interview, to fundraising, and into design and construction for the LBC. Once OPN was awarded the project by the selection committee, they worked on early design concepts, helped with grant materials, and assembled the team of consultants (Civil, Structural, Mechanical and Electrical Engineers). Once enough funding had been secured, OPN started the design process in earnest with benchmarking, meetings with the owner, selected user groups, and consultants. They developed and refined the design until the project went out to bid and started construction. OPN continued to coordinate the design during construction and finished with marketing documentation of the completed project.

I ♥ VB, *Jeff Meeker***Thursday, April 11th at 1:00**

Coach Meeker, Cornell's head women's volleyball coach and Athletic Director, will be speaking on why the sport of volleyball is amazing and how it has been such an important part of the Mount Vernon and Cornell communities.

Potters for Peace, *Doug Hansen***Thursday, April 18th at 1:00**

During the 1980's a revolution took place in Nicaragua ousting its dictator by a group called Sandinistas. The US boycotted that take over and supported a counter revolution lasting until 1990. Several Peace groups world wide formed NGO's supporting the Sandinistas in multiple ways. There were Farmers for Peace, City Planners for Peace, etc. including us, Potters for Peace, in 1986. This group has continued today helping Nicaragua plus dozens of other countries make potable water through clay pots.

Is Democracy Truly Under Threat in America?, *David Loeb sack***Thursday, April 25th at 1:00**

By now, there seems to be a consensus among politicians, academics, and the general public that American democracy is threatened by several forces. I think it's time we take a critical look at our democracy, its characteristics, its challenges, and where we may be going from here. I hope the audience will share their views of this critical topic and that we have a productive discussion of the future of something we have usually taken for granted over the course of our nation's history.