

Jeff Around Town – March 11th, 2024

Otis: 7.. ah 7:46 on a Monday, a minute late, but we still got time to go about town with our good friend, Jeffrey Koterba. Jeff.

Jeff: Good morning, Otis.

Otis: How are you, sir?

Jeff: I'm doing well. Thanks. So Otis, I have a, uh, this moment, this sort of this magical moment, of people coming together for just a brief moment.

Otis: When you were outside of your apartment wandering around.

Jeff: Exactly. As I often wander around, uh, it was a bit of a convergence in Council Bluffs I had recently. Uh, so I'd love to share that with our listeners. First Otis, for you, have you had a moment of convergence, a moment when, just for a brief time when everything sort of lined up in a really cool way?

Otis: Yeah. The, uh, checkout, uh, checkout line at a Hy-Vee, suddenly was empty.

Jeff: What's that?

Otis: The, the, the assistant checkout, you know, with a real human being, I walked in there. It was open to me.

Jeff: So that's the beauty of a convergence. It can beam to you.

Otis: It was a magical moment

Jeff: ... magical moment for you. So, I was the moderator for, uh, an author talk.

Otis: Oh.

Jeff: And, uh, this was, uh, at the Hoff Family Center.

Otis: Over in council bluffs. Was it a Ted Wheeler book?

Jeff: It was a Ted Wheeler book.

Otis: I love him. He's a good writer.

Jeff: Very good writer. Uh, Pottawattamie Arts, Culture & Entertainment, Hoff Family Center, Ted Wheeler. Ted... Ted Wheeler born in Council Bluffs currently owns Dundee Books with his wife and grew up in Lincoln, but again, from Council Bluffs.

Otis: Great story.

Jeff: Great story. Indeed. And his new novel, the war begins in Paris, uh, a terrific book about two female war correspondents in Paris during World War II. One is, uh, is based on a real life war correspondent. And the other one is a war correspondent from Iowa.

Otis: Oh okay.

Jeff: So, it's sort of this mashup of, of, uh, real and, uh, real life and fiction, historic fiction.

Otis: 1939, Paris, the eve of the war.

Jeff: Absolutely.

Otis: Okay, alright.

Jeff: So when, when Ted was working on this book, he was in Paris with his family doing research and then a little thing called a pandemic came up and they had to leave, which is heartbreaking because he's working in this book. He continues to do research. Where do you think he writes the novel? Do you think he's writing it in Omaha or in Paris? No, he's writing it in an Airbnb in Platt Smith.

Otis: Well of course.

Jeff: I just, I love that, that this historic novel, historical novel about Paris is written in Platt Smith by a guy from Council Bluffs. So I just... I love all of that backstory. So, this event was sponsored by Alliance Française for, you know, reasons that...

Otis: It's your whole French thing.

Jeff: Exactly.

Otis: You're a Francophile.

Jeff: I am a Francophile, Francophone. And so there's that interest there, although this program was done in English. So, we're at Alliance Française event in Council Bluffs, people from the audience from both sides of the river, from all over from Council Bluffs to Omaha, Papillion. Some of you, our KVNO listeners, were there. Some of whom I'd met for the first time. It was lovely meeting you. So, thank you very much. In the audience was Toddy Stander. Now for those of you in the Omaha area, who've been here a long time, you might recognize the last name Stander.

Otis: Yeah.

Jeff: If you're new to Omaha or you're a little on the youngish side, you might not know this, but Ron Stander was a boxer from Council Bluffs known as the Bluffs Butcher.

Otis: The Bluffs Butcher. And I met him, knew him. I knew him, met him on several occasions.

Jeff: Exactly. And he's known for his famous...

Otis: Joe Frazier fight here in Omaha.

Jeff: Here in Omaha. So, Toddy, his... his widow is there with this beautiful, lovely hat. So, I believe these moments exist around us in the Omaha metro area all the time Otis. And, and I

would just, you know, like to encourage you our listeners when you're out and about you know, just to be open to those wonderful new experiences. It's, it's magical.

Otis: And how's Toddy doing?

Jeff: She's great.

Otis: Oh good.

Jeff: She's, she's lovely and brought me a pen, a beautiful pen set. It was, it was just a lovely moment. And so I, again, to our listeners, if you can think of a time when you've experienced a convergence like that, a feeling that's connected to all things you know, when it happens, it's magic. Whether you're in Council Bluffs or at the checkout checkout line and there's no one else there...

Otis: Yeah or meeting Anne Margaret at the Four Seasons in Beverly Hills.

Jeff: That's a great story. We'll, we'll have to go.

Otis: I'll tell it sometime.

Jeff: We'll do it sometime.

Otis: Yeah. Okay. Great. About town, buddy.

Jeff: Thanks Otis.

Otis: Now you're going to, you're going to be out looking for other convergences.

Jeff: I'm always on the lookout. I love that connectivity though, in our community. And, and that's another thing here on KVNO we're connecting with our listeners. So, thank you.

Otis: Right, right. And once again, the... the Hoff Center? Is that what it's called?

Jeff: Hoff Family Center.

Otis: Hoff Family Center.

Jeff: Yep. Pottawatomie Arts Culture...

Otis: Another little treasured spot.

Jeff: A jewel.

Otis: Place to go. All right. Thanks Jeff.

Jeff: Thanks.

Otis: Uh, yes. About town. Yeah. With Jeffrey.