

Jeff Around Town – November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Jeff:** Another episode of Jeff Around Town. So recently I wanted to get away and unplug for, you know, just a little bit. So, I went to one of my favorite local spots to do that. Hitchcock Nature Center near Crescent, Iowa. That's north of Omaha, about 20 minutes. And if you haven't been, well, it's wonderful. When I'm there, I imagine that I might be hiking in the Austrian Alps, except yeah, there are no mountain huts with beer and sausage and sauerkraut. But anyhow, for me, it's just wonderful. And before my hike, I made a pit stop at the visitor center.

So, I walk in and what do I hear? The voice of Allyson Jay, host of Afternoon Classics and Modern Classics on KVNO. And for a split second, I thought that she was also there. And then I hear this glorious classical music. Literally the hills were alive with the sound of, you know, okay, well, you know. Anyhow, so of course they're playing KVNO. And I go up and talk to the two people at the visitor's desk to say if they had intentionally chosen KVNO. And they said yes. So, we got to chatting. And these two people, one was Amy Campagna, Environmental Education Coordinator for Pottawatomie Conservation. And the other was a guy named Glenn, Glenn Pollack.

So, I was saying how much I love Hitchcock Nature Center and how I'd once even brought my French conversation group there for a French hike. We're talking, having this great conversation. And Glenn mentioned something about French fur traders in the area. And he just knows so much about the history of that area and the land. And it's just very, very knowledgeable, very, very humble. And he has so many great stories.

Well, then I find out from Amy that Glenn has just won the 2024 Hagee Heritage Award. It's an award given annually to someone who's demonstrated extraordinary personal service and commitment to improving the quality of Iowa's natural environment while encouraging others to do the same. It's amazing.

In 1990, Glenn was a founding member of the Iowa Prairie Network, which spreads awareness of Iowa's prairies. And he's led countless prairie walks, done all these educational events, taught hundreds of people about prairies and native plants. And he also helped found the Lust Hills Preservation Society and all kinds of other cool stuff in Iowa.

Great conversation. I did eventually go on the hike, but honestly, though originally I wanted to unplug and not really talk with anyone for a while, that conversation was a highlight. And the whole time I was hiking, it made me really appreciate all the unsung heroes and volunteers that help bring us joy. It was one of the best visits to Hitchcock I've had in a very long time. And one of the reasons that place is so special beyond just its natural beauty is because of people like Amy and Glenn.

So just know that if you are a volunteer in any capacity, you are making a difference. You are touching lives. You are bringing joy. I'm grateful for that conversation with Amy and Glenn and grateful to those of you who spend time and energy to make things better. So, thank you for all of your hard work and all of your volunteering. That's another Jeff Around Town here on KVNO.