Written by Kathleen McCarthy
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300 issues is an accomplishment to crow about, especially in the media-heavy Quad Cities. We wish to convey our deep gratitude to our loyal readers and advertisers for the past eight years of unwavering support.

When Todd and I started this paper, we crafted a mission that would reflect our desire to provide under-reported information to the public in a thorough, balanced, and thought-provoking format so that readers could make up their own minds about issues and subjects. The lack of such vital information in the mainstream media is disturbing, even alarming. The dumbing down of America becomes painfully obvious in the glaring lack of substance in today's press. This year's presidential election is but one of numerous subjects that avoid the substantive in favor of the sensational components of humanity's stories.

The Reader's format, known industry-wide as an "alternative newsweekly," is a significant national presence of independent journalism, which remains steadfastly committed to preserving America's right to information. We intensely believe that liberty is only as protected as the freedom with which information is disseminated to the public. The more that news is manufactured, manipulated and/or spun, the less essential our democracy—the less precious our individual part in the whole scheme of this great republic.

America has always been considered remarkable, in large part due to the freedom of the press. But the dedication that once held the press in higher regard as the nation's Fourth Estate has eroded to little more than just another entertainment venue. This can be seen at all levels of media coverage, from local to national news. There are countless newsworthy events and occurrences around the world, across the country, and throughout the Quad Cities that deserve coverage but are relentlessly ignored. We are confident that the alternative press, including the Reader, has helped to change the standard of information that merits our collective attention.

In the last 100 issues, the Reader has introduced such important issues as urban renewal and sustainable growth principles, culture and arts as it impacts a community's quality of life and economic developmental potential, and vigilant coverage of city government at its best and worst. The Reader has been instrumental in heralding citizens' grass-roots efforts for civic reform, such as CURV's successful block of the City of Davenport's dangerous levels of government spending, and the reopening of the doors of City Hall.

We at the Reader are extremely proud of the contribution we make to our community in supporting ongoing public debate, recognizing the importance of providing truthful information by which our community can make decisions about our direction, and defeating the status quo that has undermined our progress for too long. (In that spirit, it is important to attend Wednesday night's Davenport Council Meeting—12/6 at 7pm—to make sure that the new Rules of Order reflect the public's best interest, not just those of city officials and special interests.)

The next ten years are critical for the Quad Cities. We must make every effort to reposition ourselves as a strong economic force if we are to compete and survive. Our parents and grandparents are retiring, technology is exploding, and information is expanding geometrically. We must be prepared to meet the growing need for skilled employment by retaining and attracting a workforce not only to high wages, but also to a quality of life second to none. We

face the same challenges as all cities in America, but Iowa has a little further to go because our young people traditionally migrate away.

We must maximize our strengths, both uniquely and in conjunction with our sister cities. We must shift our attitudes away from parochialism toward unity, and we can certainly accomplish this without losing our individual municipal identities. Precisely because of our particular geographic and political fragmentation, we should be able to capitalize on our differences by combining them into a collective metropolitan strength. The Reader has always espoused incremental development as a means to engage public and private investment within our own community. There are no better partners than those vested in home, family, heritage, and a viable future.

As a company, we are pleased to share the promotion of Stacy Bloom to operations manager, and the addition of Jeff Ignatius as news and arts editor, Jeremy Jarr as ad designer, and Lisa Cundiff Vincent as marketing and distribution coordinator. Together we look forward to the next 100 issues and beyond in the same tradition of honesty, substance, humor, and advertising that relates and is meaningful to our readership, and therefore gets results.