

Village of Halsey residents vote in sales tax

Marcia Hora

Thomas County reported a 64.34% voter turnout for the mid-term general election that took place November 8, 2022. A total of 247 voted at the polls and 76 cast early voting ballots for a total of 323 ballots cast out of a total of 502 registered voters.

Village of Halsey residents said yes to a one-half cent sales tax. Twenty two voted for and nine against.

Most local races were unopposed. Lorissa Hartman, Joseph Smith, and Andrea Thomas were elected to their county clerk, sheriff, and treasurer offices. Lewis Herbaugh and John Seeley were elected county commissioners (at large). Kurt Arganbright will continue as county attorney.

Spencer Burk, Alison Werner and Dixie Hoffman were elected to Thedford Public School Board of Education.

Albert Fisher, Darren Rinestine and Phil L. Kuenle were elected to the Village of Thedford Board of Trustees.

Thomas County results (unofficial):
Congress District 3
Smith.....265
Else.....28
Elworth Jr.....10
Governor
Pillen/Kelly.....265
Blood/Davis.....29
Zimmerman/
Blumenthal.....12
Secretary of State
Evnen.....280
State Treasurer
Murante.....271



LORISSA HARTMAN PHOTO

Poll workers at Thedford for the 2022 General Election greeted voters and helped them get their ballots for the election. Pictured above, l-r: Helen White, Barb Bryant, Marilyn Essman, Connie Broweleit and Alice Hodges.

Tomsen.....27	Seeley.....210	Judge Retention	No 47
Attorney General	County Sheriff	Retain Judge Heavican	Retain Judge Doyle IV
Hilgers287	Smith301	Yes171	Yes148
Bolinger.....17	County Surveyor	No49	No50
Auditor of Public	No Filings	Retain Judge	Retain Judge Piccolo
Accounts	County Treasurer	Freudenberg	Yes150
Foley279	Thomas303	Yes166	No51
Sladek16	Legislative District 42	No50	Retain Judge Jay
Lopez10	Bruns155	Yes160	Yes143
Public Service	Jacobson141	No52	No 52
Commissioner	State Board of Education	Retain Judge Fridrich	Retain Judge Paine
District 5	District 7	Yes148	Yes150
Stocker.....265	Tegtmeier 251	No 47	No 45
County Attorney	Stevens36	Retain Judge Coe	Retain Judge Wightman
Arganbright250	University of NE	Yes142	Yes144
County Clerk	Board of Regents	No 49	No50
Hartman.....285	District 7	Retain Judge Hoffert	Airport Authority
Commissioner	Wilmoth 150	Yes143	Hall..... 285
Herbaugh.....238	Williams107		Mid-Plains Community

He delivered 13,000 babies: He’s delivering more with his second heart

By: Leo Adam Biga
Flatwater Free Press

He celebrated the first anniversary by going to Mass. He celebrated by inviting a few loved ones to breakfast. Nothing fancy or loud for Dr. Keith Vrbicky in late September, on the one-year anniversary of the day he got a new heart. Just a quiet thanks for this second chance at life.

“A very special time,” Vrbicky said.

He hopes, someday soon, to celebrate with people he considers truly special guests: The Nebraska Medicine heart transplant team and cardiovascular unit who cared for him during his life-and-death struggle, and then gave him that new heart.

For the 68-year-old Vrbicky, a Norfolk obstetrician-gynecologist who’s delivered more than 13,000 babies, living with a pre-owned heart is a gift even though it doesn’t even come with a limited lifetime warranty.

There’s no such thing as a typical heart transplant story. When this physician who practiced what he preached by biking, walking, playing his trumpet and eating right developed fatigue in early September 2021, he got himself checked out. Tests revealed a shocking diagnosis: acute heart failure. Surprise turned to fear when within weeks a transplant became his last resort. His case became one for the medical jour-

nals.

The culprit: giant cell myocarditis, a rare cardiac disorder.

Soon after being hospitalized he was put on a machine to pump his blood and help his heart and lungs.

Doctors fought to keep his other organs from failing. Finally, he was stabilized enough to be listed for transplant.

For the transplant to happen, a match needed to be found within 48 hours. A heart that matched was procured after only 12.

Then came the hours-long surgery that started late September 24 and ended the next morning. After days in intensive care, Vrbicky had suffered muscle atrophy and lost 25 pounds. He needed a host of pain and anti-rejection drugs.

In the course of that first post-transplant week he went from not being able to get out of bed without aid to getting himself up on his own two feet. He started taking steps with a harness, a walker and a physical therapist by his side. Then he made it around the nurses’ station and back unassisted. Then he climbed a short set of stairs, and stood alone in a shower for the first time. The anticipation of resuming his life and his practice drove him.

He returned home in early November. For months his vitals were closely monitored. He made frequent doctor vis-



COURTESY

Vrbicky pointing to one of his future patients. The Norfolk obstetrician-gynecologist who has delivered 13,000-plus babies in the area returned to work four months after his heart transplant.

its. Progress proved slow but steady.

He gained muscle strength. He gained endurance. He began to be able to stay up later than 8 p.m. if he felt like it.

Living with someone’s else’s heart, he said, “is very humbling.”

“Every day I pray for the donor and their family,” he said. “I thank them and God that for some reason this little miracle happened that I could get

a heart so fast when I needed it to stay alive. I don’t take it for granted one second of any day.”

He follows the same Mediterranean diet as he did before his heart transplant, eating whole grains, extra virgin olive oil, fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts and seafood.

To build his stamina he rides his bicycle every day and takes two-mile walks. He lifts weights to maintain upper body strength.

Karyn Vrbicky, his wife of 44 years and the mother of their six adult children, often joins him on his walks. She observes that from day one he’s been highly motivated to get better.

“His biggest fear was that they were going to tell him he couldn’t do any more deliveries or surgeries,” she said, “because he feels his purpose on this Earth is to help people.

“He worried what he would do with himself if he couldn’t do his calling anymore. He was driven...to get back to helping people and taking care of his patients. He was like, ‘I’m not done yet.’”

Only four months after Dr. Vrbicky got a new heart, he returned to practicing medicine.

Many early patient encounters started with hugs and tears. Patients told him that they had prayed for his recovery. His staff wore matching heart transplant T-shirts and supported him in ways big and small.

At first Vrbicky worked part-time. He’s now back at a nearly full slate. That means an average of 26 deliveries per month of babies that come at all hours of the day or night.

Earlier this month he passed a comprehensive, two-day transplant check up at the Med Center.

He believes he couldn’t have come this far without the right mindset. “Our psychological, emotional well-being have a tremendous amount of healing power if we approach things in the right state of mind,” he said.

The family’s post-transplant celebrations of Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year’s and Easter took on more meaning than usual. “There was lots of crying,” he said.

The recent marriage of his youngest child, Michaela, reminded him

See Vrbicky
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