

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

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www.pencitycurrent.com

SHEERIN STEPS DOWN AT HTC

ABRUPT RETIREMENT: Principal, top academic officer, coach to retire on Friday

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Holy Trinity Catholic Elementary Principal and Chief Academic Officer Michael Sheerin announced his retirement today effective Friday.

Sheerin wrote in a text to Pen City Current that this is a perfect ending to 35 years teaching students in southeast Iowa.

“My time spent with the students, staff, and teachers are some of the most rewarding times of my life,” Sheerin wrote.

A release from Holy Trinity Catholic system indicated Sheerin informed the board Wednesday that his last day will be this Friday.

“HTC is extremely grateful for Mr. Sheerin’s many years of service and dedication to Holy Trinity. He was a tremendous part of HTC’s new state of the art elementary school, the creation of a 21st century classroom, and major upgrades in technology for our entire school system,” according to a release from Holy Trinity Wednesday afternoon.

The Holy Trinity school board will be in an immediate search to fill the role of the Elementary Principal at the sys-



PCC file photo

Michael Sheerin sings with students and staff at the kick off of the HTC Elementary Building campaign in 2017.

tem’s brand new elementary school in West Point.

In the interim, Craig Huebner, will serve as the principal for kindergarten – 12th grades.

See SHEERIN, page 5

SNOW DAYS

Area schools ponder using virtual learning on snow days

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – For several years now a small group of school districts in Iowa have been tinkering with holding virtual classes on snow days.

That idea is gathering steam around the country and with county school officials.

Fort Madison Superintendent Dr. Erin Slater said that district is looking at using virtual learning for snow days this year. But Central Lee Superintendent Dr. Andy Crozier said that district will not, unless snow days... pile up.

Crozier said the state mandates that the virtual learning be a K-12 program and he said that can prove difficult for elementary parents who are at that point in the morning”scrambling”.

“It’s really challenging when elementary parents are scrambling for daycare coverage, and now they have to have kids ready to sit for a zoom class or other medium,” Crozier said.

But he said the board is considering the option if snow days surpass four this year.

“We just kind of said this year, a snow day is a snow day. We’re not going to strip those away from the kids. We want to make sure it’s time for a mental break. But if looks like we’re headed into June, then we’ll consider going to virtual instruction,” he said.

The Fort Madison school district is on the last three days of hybrid learning after voting earlier this month to go back to daily face-to-face learning on Nov. 2. The district started the year in a hybrid week-in, week-out model and conducted a survey showing a majority of parents wanted kids back in school.

Slater said the year has been disrupted enough and officials want to reduce that as much as possible through the remainder of the year.

“Staff, students and families have seen many disruptions to learning during the

See SNOW DAYS, page 5



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Striping the new road

Crews with Quality Striping Inc. out of Des Moines work on prepping the lead up to the new construction on Hwy. 61 at 2nd Street Wednesday afternoon. The roadway is preliminarily being planned to be open in just over two weeks but that is subject to change based on weather.

INDEX

Business Directory.....P.6
CLASSIFIEDS.....Ps.6-7
Complete Rental.....P.8
CURRENT-LEE.....P.8
EDUCATION NEWS.....P.5
FOR THE RECORD.....P.3
Fort Madison Family YMCA.....P.4
Fort Madison Neighborhood
Watch Groups.....P.2
FROM THE FRONT.....P.5
Gary Fallou for

Lee County Board of Supervisors.....P.2
Great River Regional Waste Authority.....P.3
Jeff Reichman for Iowa Senate.....P.3
Lee County Health Department.....P.5
LEE COUNTY NEWS.....P.5
LOCAL NEWS.....Ps.4-5
Mobile Nursing Services.....P.7
OBITUARIES.....Ps.2-3
• Rosalie J. Bentzinger, 96
• Linda Jo Kruse, 67
• Randy K. Vass, 65

Pen City Current.....Ps.6-7
Pilot Grove Savings Bank.....P.5
Pothitakis Dentistry.....P.8
Public Notices.....P.7
Rich Taylor for Iowa Senate.....P.4
Scotts Miracle-Gro Company.....P.7
Tri-State Outdoor Products.....P.4
Welch’s Insurance.....P.8

WEATHER

THU 29 Oct.....Overcast, 47° F/ 35° F
FRI 30 Oct.....Clear Skies, 52° F/ 31° F
SAT 31 Oct.....Sunny and Warmer, 64° F/ 40° F

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Obituaries

OBITUARIES

ROSALIE J. BENTZINGER

Rosalie Jane Bentzinger, aged 96, of Donnellson, Iowa died on October 25, 2020, at her home in the care of Every Step Hospice. Her life began and ended in the room where she, her siblings and her mother were born.



BENTZINGER

Her birth was on August 9, 1924, to Carl M. and Edna Jane (Benjamin) Bentzinger. She was preceded in death by her parents and her brother: Richard Alvin Bentzinger. She is survived by her sister: Margaret

Bentzinger Gregory and nieces and nephews: Rosalie Jane Gregory Mills, Carl Gregory, Rebecca Bentzinger, Sarah Bentzinger Clarahan, John Bentzinger and Philip Bentzinger. She has seven great nieces and nephews.

Rosalie was a graduate of Ottumwa High School, Iowa Wesleyan College and Garrett Theological Seminary. She holds honorary doctorate degrees from Iowa Wesleyan, Westmar College and Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.

Throughout her adult life, she had a distinguished career in service to the United Methodist Church. Her passion was for Christian Education and she was elected president of the Christian Educators' Fellowship (CEF) – a newly formed national organization. She was consecrated as a Diaconal Minister (now the order of Deacon) in 1977.

Rosalie held Christian Educator positions at Methodist Churches in Ottumwa, Iowa; Columbus, Ohio; Webster City, Iowa; and Park Ridge, Illinois. She was the manager of the Iowa Area Methodist Book Center in Des Moines. In the 1970s, she joined the Iowa United Methodist Council on Ministries in Des Moines and traveled around the state in support of Christian Educators.

Rosalie was instrumental in the formation of Diaconal Ministry as an important part of laity in service to the Church. From 1979 – 1994, she served as the Associate General Secretary of the Division of Diaconal Ministry for

the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry at the national United Methodist Headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee. In this position, she traveled around the USA and the world. Rosalie was a key member of the team that helped to begin the formation of Africa University in Mutare, Zimbabwe. She coordinated the design of the School of Education and traveled to Africa 5 times to advise and consult with the faculty. This project was very exciting for her and the overwhelming success of the Africa University gave her great joy.

Upon retiring from the General Board of Higher Education in Nashville. Rosalie and her sister Margaret moved to Donnellson Iowa and lived in the house in which they were raised. They became active members of their home church, Donnellson United Methodist Church and participated in many community activities. Rosalie served on the Board of the Donnellson Public Library. She was a proud member of PEO and Pi Beta Phi. She generously supported Heifer International and causes related to world peace, education, the environment and social justice.

Rosalie writes of her life and career: "As I take risks, I realize that the Christian's call is to live 'on the brink', sacrificing comfort for growth and significant service. As is often true with ministry, I have never really known how significant or effective my efforts have been. I only know I have had many unusual opportunities for service; an abundance of hard work with wonderful colleagues; and much joy along the way."

The family is planning a Memorial Celebration for Rosalie to take place when the COVID-19 pandemic is over.

Memorial gifts in Rosalie's honor may be given to the Donnellson United Methodist Church, the Donnellson Public Library or Every Step Hospice in Mount Pleasant, Iowa. Schmitz Funeral Home of Donnellson is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com.

OBITUARIES

LINDA JO KRUSE

Linda Jo Kruse, 67, of West Point, Iowa, passed away at 1:30 a.m. Wednesday, October 28, 2020, at her home.

She was born on May 17, 1953, in Fort Madison, Iowa, the daughter of Floyd and Elaine (Carmean)



KRUSE

Wagner. On May 18, 1974, she married Kenneth Kruse at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Houghton, Iowa.

Survivors include her husband: Kenny; two daughters: Roxanne (Gene) Kruse Hilpert of West Point and Samantha (Brad) Menke of West Point; one son: Phil: (Jill) Kruse of West Point; seven grandchildren: Connor, Cole, Camille, Nilie, Nora, Owen and Mia; one brother: Chuck (Dawn) Wagner of San Antonio, Texas and one aunt: Janet (Gary) Lile. Also surviving are several nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents and sister Deborah.

Linda was a 1971 graduate of Fort Madison Public High School. She worked for Sheaffer Pen Company and Sunshine Daycare. She managed the West Point American Legion, and operated daycare out of her home. Linda was a member of St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church in West Point and served on the West Point City Council for many years. She and her family owned and operated Phil's Pub in West Point and Sammy's in St. Paul. She enjoyed traveling and going out on Tuesday evenings for dinner with friends. Above all, Linda enjoyed her grandchildren and spending time with her family.

Friends may call from 12:00 noon to 7:00 p.m. Friday, October 30, 2020, at Schmitz Funeral Home in West Point.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 10:00 a.m. Saturday, October 31, 2020, at St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church in West Point with Father Dennis Hoffman as celebrant. Those attending are required to wear a mask and social distance.

Burial will be at Calvary Cemetery in West Point. In lieu of flowers, memorials have been established in her memory for St. Mary's Catholic Church or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Schmitz Funeral Home of West Point is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences may be made to the family at www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com.

RE-ELECT GARY FOLLUO NOVEMBER 3RD

Lee County Board of Supervisors

As a lifelong resident of Lee County, a former Labor Representative with Local # 148 I.U.O.E, past Mayor of Keokuk, former General Manager of Withers Broadcasting, and past business owner, alongside my wife Nancy, of 34 years, my priority has and always will be the people of Lee County.



With my experience in government, business, and public service, I understand that public input, availability, and enthusiasm is essential for creating quality representative government.

"I will continue working hard to maintain county services for all Lee County residents, continue updating security measures in our buildings, and protecting citizen's property rights while continuing to support our hospitals so they are able to provide services needed for our industries and citizens. In addition, I will be working to attract new economic development and expand our industrial base and I will support expanding rural broadband, identifying under-served areas and trying to find grants to remedy the situation."

Contact Gary at
gfollo@gmail.com or (319)795-1348

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Obituaries/For the Record

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report

10/26/20- 1:03 p.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested George Robert Genck, 71, of Fort Madison, in the 1900 block of Avenue E, on a warrant for failure to appear. 10/26/20 – 4:34 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 2000 block of Avenue B. 10/26/20 – 9:55 p.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Christian Sorrentino, 18, of Fort Madison, at the police department on a charge of simple domestic abuse assault. He was taken to Lee County Jail. 10/26/20 – 9:57 p.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Donald O’rien Bell, 19, of Fort Madison, in the 1800 block of Avenue A, on a warrant for

failure to appear. He was taken to Lee County Jail. 10/27/20 -7:50 a.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 2000 block of Avenue B. 10/27/20 – 3:51 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 700 block of 14th Street. 10/27/20 – 4:07 p.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Andrew Michael Schiedel, 32, of Fort Madison in the 2700 block of Avenue K, on a warrant for voluntary absence from custody. He was taken to Lee County Jail. 10/27/20 – 5:48 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 1800 block of Avenue A. 10/27/20 – 5:55 p.m. – Fort Madison Police

responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 400 block of Avenue H. 10/27/20 – 6:44 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 1600 block of 33rd Street.

Lee County Sheriff’s Report

10/26/20 – 9:16 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Lawrance Bernard Jackson, III, 49, of Fort Madison, no location

given, on a warrant for violation of probation. He was taken to Lee County Jail. 10/26/20 – 12:42 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Adrian Raul Garcia, 42, of Fort Madison, at the sheriff’s office on a charge of having contraband within a correctional facility. He was taken to Lee County Jail. 10/26/20 – 3:49 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Joshua Allen Soper, 32, of Keokuk, in the

3100 block of Main Street in Keokuk, on charges of drug trafficking, possession of drug paraphernalia and drug tax stamp violations, and a warrant for probation violation. He was taken to Lee County Jail. 10/27/20 – 2:48 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Annika Nicole O’Dell, in the 2400 block of Hwy. 2, on a charge of operating a vehicle while intoxicated. She was taken to Lee

County Jail and released on her recognizance. Those listed above are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report

10/26/20 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to four medical calls, one gas leak and one lift assist 10/26/20 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to one medical call.

OBITUARIES

RANDY K. VASS

Randy K. “R.V.” Vass, 65, of Adrian, Illinois, passed away at 6:50 a.m. Wednesday, October 28, 2020 at the UnityPoint – Memorial Hospital in Carthage.

Randy was born on September 4, 1955 in LaHarpe, Illinois, the son of Robert C. and Betty (Deere) Vass. He married Penny Ellefritz. They later divorced.

Earlier in life Randy farmed. He enjoyed fishing and working on cars. He was an avid Chicago Cubs and Chicago Bears fan.

Survivors include two sons, Robert J. (Cassidy) Vass of Adrian and Cory Vass of Niota, Illinois; two grandchildren, Reese and Alex; his father, Robert C. Vass of Adrian; two brothers, Roger (Pauline) Vass of Nauvoo and Mike Vass of Adrian; one sister, Debbie (Mike Boyer) Schmidt of Adrian and several nieces, nephews and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Betty; one brother, Rodney Vass and two sisters, Stephanie Hale and Kathy Woods.

Friends may call after 2:00 p.m. Friday, October 30, 2020 at Schmitz-Banks & Beals where the family will receive friends from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

The funeral services will be held at 1:30 p.m. Saturday, October 31, 2020 at Schmitz-Banks & Beals Funeral Home in Nauvoo with Pastor Mark Anderson officiating. Burial will follow in the Harris Cemetery, near Dallas City, Illinois. Friends are encouraged to wear their Cubs attire to the service. Those atten

A memorial fund has been established in his memory. To leave a tribute, please visit Randy’s obituary at sbbfuneralhome.com.



2020 To Do List Save Our Planet

Thank you to all our customers who worked to reduce their environmental footprint last year. We look forward to helping you continue your efforts and to educating our communities on more ways to help this year.

Here are just a few ways you can help:

- Don’t put plastic bags in recycling bins
- Rinse & clean all food jars & cans before recycling
- Flatten empty boxes for better storage & volume reduction
- Place all recyclables loose in bins
- Don’t recycle wrapping paper
- Properly dispose of all electronics and household hazardous waste



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Local News

All-State

Lucy Graham, John Stinson, and Danny Caruso of Holy Trinity Catholic High School have attained the highest individual honor available to Iowa high school musicians by being selected as members of the 2020 All State Band and Choir. Lucy Graham is a clarinet student of Emily Otte, Director of the HTC Band. Lucy also earned this honor in 2019. John Stinson and Danny Caruso are choir students of Stewart Beyer, Director of the HTC Choir.



Courtesy photo

City sets controlled burn guidelines

FORT MADISON - The City of Fort Madison Fire Department will allow the controlled burning of leaves only from October 31 to December 6, 2020 without application for a temporary burning permit, subject to the following restrictions per International Fire Code:

1. The open burning of leaves shall only be allowed from one hour after sunrise, to one hour before sunset.
2. No open burning will be allowed on any Public Street, alley, or sidewalk.
3. The location of the burning area is not less than 50 feet from any structure or not less than 15 feet from any structure if an approved waste burner is used.
4. A competent person shall constantly attend all fires until the fire is completely extinguished.
5. A working garden hose or other fire extinguisher is readily available for use.
6. Any fire causing a nuisance or reported discomfort shall be immediately extinguished.
7. The Fire Chief may prohibit any or all open burning when atmospheric conditions or local circumstances make open burning hazardous.

Applicants for temporary fire permits for any purpose must be obtained from the City Fire Department.

Adherence and conformance with these procedures outlined should be of positive benefit to the citizens of Fort Madison.

The City of Fort Madison hereby notifies the citizens and property owners of the proper procedures for disposal of the fall accumulation of leaves.

According to City Code Title 6, Chapter 3, Section 14:

LITTERING: No person shall throw, rake, deposit, drop, or spill leaves, litter, solid waste material or foreign material upon the streets, sidewalks, or other public rights of ways within the city.

This section of the City Code prohibits the raking of leaves into the street or alley for the purpose of disposal. The Primary reason for this prohibition is to keep the leaves from entering the storm drain system. An accumulation of leaves can block the storm drain inlets or clog the storm drainage pipes that could result in flooding.

Residents have the option of bagging leaves in approved yard waste bags for pickup by city crews or to haul the leaves to the Landfill for composting. There is no charge for dumping yard waste at the Landfill.

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From the Front

FMCS D, Central Lee take different views

SNOW DAYS - Continued from Page 1

pandemic," Slater said.

"A snow day interrupts the flow of learning and we want to capture learning on an on-going/uninterrupted basis as much as possible. We see this as a benefit rather than adding on days in June when learning is not at an optimal level; nor is the climate temperature in our elementary buildings."

She said the move doesn't require board approval, however the board has been made aware that virtual learning on snow days is a part of the learning plan this year.

With the district starting in the hybrid model utilizing virtual learning, Slater said the students would adjust easily to the shift on a cancelled school day due to weather.

"Having students work online during a snow day would not be foreign to our students," she said.

Crozier said the Central Lee board feels students learn best in the classroom and not online.

"We have at least three snow days before our calendar is pushed into June. If we have a 4th day we will be above that threshold. But at this point, we're not going to convert snow days to virtual

learning," Crozier said.

The administration at Central Lee surveyed the staff and Crozier said about 40% favored the model of using virtual learning as a last resort to keep the calendar out of June. The other 60% were split down the middle of using virtual learning, and not.

Slater said the year has been stressful for teachers and staff, but she said the results have been outstanding.

"Our teachers have done an outstanding job of responding to students, families, and to the change in how teaching is being delivered," she said.

"This year has been extremely stressful for our educators as teaching looks completely different, not just in Fort Madison, but across the country.

"Our teachers have been working extremely hard to ensure the best learning possible every day. I am extremely proud of all of our teachers and how they continue to put kids first."

Slater said the district has four days built into the 2020-21 school calendar. She said the Iowa Department of Education allows up to five consecutive days of virtual learning due to inclement weather.

Huebner to take on additional roles during search process

SHEERIN - Continued from Page 1

"HTC has a tremendous staff who will work with Mr. Huebner to ensure a smooth transition through this process," the release indicated.

"HTC is confident that we will provide our students, teachers, and staff with a principal who will continue our tradition of excellence in education and a commitment to our Catholic Christian environment."

Sheerin began his

teaching career at Fort Madison Aquinas in 1985 and had teaching stints at Iowa Wesleyan College, Central Lee and Harmony school districts.

Sheerin was also the girls head varsity soccer coach and said he is stepping away from that as well, but said he will take those memories with him into retirement.

"A simple smile, gentle hug, consoling a worried or hurt child, talking a

parent off of the cliff, losing a sprint to the girls soccer team, being humbled by a child's words, witnessing the unsolicited generosity of parents and community for our small school system, all wrapped up with love make it a fitting journey's end," Sheerin wrote.

He moved to the United States in 1981 from Ireland, met his wife Shelley and the two have raised three daughters here.

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See LeeCounty.org website for employment application and job description. Submit application and resume to

Lee County IT Department
Attn: L.Schmitt
933 Avenue H
Fort Madison, IA 52627
or email to
lschmitt@leecounty.org

Deadline to apply is 4:00 pm on Friday, October 30, 2020.

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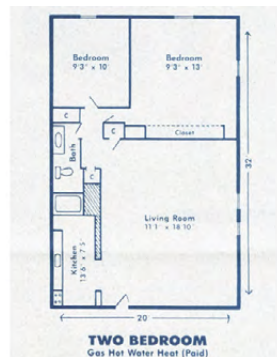
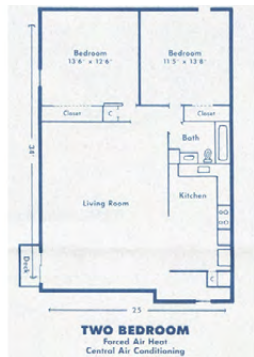
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PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Green Bay Levee & Drainage District will hold a regular meeting at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, October 29, 2020, at Heartland Co-op, east of Wever.

PUBLIC NOTICE FORT MADISON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS WORK SESSION November 2, 2020 6:00 P.M. AGENDA

Call meeting to order and determination of a quorum
Approve the agenda
Iowa Association of School Board (IASB) board training and workshop: Harry Heiligenthal, IASB Consultant
VI. Announcements
November 16, 2020
6:00 PM, Regular Meet-

ing, Board Room, Central Office
November 16-20: American Education Week
December 7, 2020 6:00 PM, Work Session, Board Room, Central Office
December 21, 2020 6:00 PM, Regular Meeting, Board Room, Central Office
VII. Adjourn

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A brief personal message is also welcome.


Submissions are due by the end of the day Monday, November 9th.

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CURRENT-LEE

The following is a list of upcoming events and gatherings in North Lee County.

34th Street Trunk or Treat

Volunteers with the 34th Street Neighborhood Watch group and other city watch groups are holding a Trunk or Treat on 34th Street and Avenue D from 5 to 7 p.m. on Oct. 31. Cars can either drive up or attendees can park and walk around to volunteers who are handing out candy.

Montrose Cemetery Cleanup

All plastic flowers that are in the ground must be picked up by Nov. 1. After that date they will be discarded. In addition Memorial Day flowers will now have to be picked up no later than two weeks after the holiday.

Halloween Dinner and Comedy

The Kingsley Inn will be featuring a Halloween Dinner and Comedy on Oct. 31 beginning at with a social hour at 5 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m, with the show starting at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$20 per person and can be booked in advance by texting 309-221-9803

FM Beggar's Night

The traditional Beggar's Night will be held on Oct. 31 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. in Old Settler's Park and the citywide beggar's night will follow from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Vendors will be handing our candy with food and drink specials at the safe event.

Montrose Trick or Treat

The Montrose City Treak or Treat will be held on Saturday, Oct. 31 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Halloween guidance from the Iowa Department of Public Health can be found at <https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus/Public>.

Lighted Parade Work Nights

Work nights for the Fort Madison Lighted Parade are on Monday nights be-

ginning at 5:30 p.m. at the Warehouse at 12th Street and Avenue I.

DConservation online auction

The Lee County Conservation Board is participating in an online auction. The items can be found at <https://www.govdeals.com/index.cfm?fa=Main.AdvSearchResults&myseller=11764>. Any questions can be directed to the Lee County Conservation Office at 319-463-7673.

Bridges out of Poverty - Staying Ahead

Getting Ahead provides the foundation for understanding the root causes of poverty and focuses on resources needed to rise above it. Staying Ahead is the next step to self sufficiency and is a program from the Bridges out of Poverty. Meetings are the first Monday of every month from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. For questions or to become a member contact Shayla at 319-371-7465 or by email at sblackburn@younghouse.org.

Witch's Walk

Wear your witch costume and come downtown for an evening of fun. This year's event is Oct. 30 from 5 to p.m. presented by the Fort Madison Chamber of Commerce. More details on this event will be released at a later date.

Sensational Chef

The Fort Madison Chamber's annual fundraiser is set for Nov. 21, at Harvestville Farm beginning at 6 p.m. with first course served at 6:30 p.m. This fine dining event will feature Amy Thacher preparing a 5-course meal. Tickets are \$65 per person and are limited, so call 319-372-5471 for information.

Tree Planting at Dog Park

Volunteers are still needed for Nov. 13 for a tree planting at the city's new dog park in Rodeo Park. The committee overseeing the park received a grant of trees to plant on the property.

YMCA Basketball Leagues

Leagus are forming for the nov. 9-Dec. 13 league for grades 3rd through 6th. Registration deadline is Nov. 6 and can be done at the YMCA. Coaches are also needed. Cost is \$30 per person. Games are on Sunday afternoons at the FMMS, Central Lee and Harmony/Van Buren schools.

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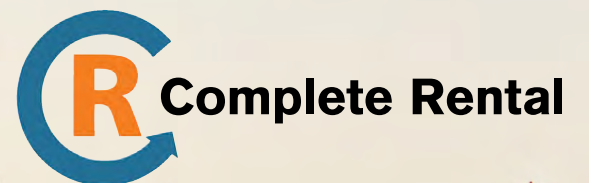


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