

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's **Black & White** and **Read** all over

Thursday, June 3, 2021 | 10 pages | Volume 5 • Issue 111



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Councilmen upset with depot bump

ENGINEER: Weather and other “unforeseen” issues push Klingner’s bill \$60,000

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – An amendment for \$60,000 to cover costs of additional construction inspection expenses drew fire from a Fort Madison councilman Tuesday night.

The amendment to the agreement between the city and Klingner & Associates P.C. of Quincy, Illinois for services related to the relocation of the Amtrak passenger depot to Riverview Park is for expenses required by the Iowa Department of Transportation for monitoring and testing frequencies that were extended due to delays caused by “weather and unforeseen existing conditions”, according to a report from city Public Works Director

See **DEPOT**, page 8

Memorial Day Tribute at Battlefield park



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Dr. Eugene Watkins, left, directs the firing of the cannon at the 1812 Battlefield site Monday morning at the annual Memorial Day service attended by about 75 people.

EMPTY NEST

By Curt Swarm



Whatchamacallits turn into artwork at Empty Nest

I have a number of these whatchamacallits. I make sculptures out of them. I weld the “jaws” open, attach the whatchamacallits to some other metal objects, and they look like angry-dog heads or some type of prehistoric monster. I find these whatchamacallits at flea markets and swap meets. Nobody ever knows what they are for sure, although they act like they do. I’ve asked many times. The answers I get fall into three categories: (A.) Log Carrier (B.) Rail Carrier or (C.) Fence Stretcher. Since I first ran across the whatchamacallits at a yard sale for a former sawmill operator, I assumed they were log carriers. I could visualize lumber jacks using them to roll or carry logs, since there is a cone or holder for an oak or hickory handle. (I never have found one with the wooden handle still in it.)

What I did not believe was “fence stretcher.” I built enough farm fence as a kid working for farmers, and never, ever used or saw one of these. We stretched fence using a little Ford Tractor, the same tractor we drilled the post holes with. I even worked for a construction company for a short time after graduating from high school, building fence on what would be the Red Rock Dam. I never saw one of these gadgets.

So what are they? I put the question out on social media, specifically Facebook—“I Grew Up In Iowa”—along with a picture. The answers I got were surprising and of course, humorous, as well as sarcastic.

I bet it’s that fence stretcher doodad, however I’m going to opt for thingamajig, because that’s my go to when I can’t remember or don’t know....Ebay is full of pictures of this and call it a railroad-tie puller....We called it a “come along” on the farm. Used it for many things that

See **SWARM**, page 2

Opinion

Stadium spruce up should be worth a couple bucks

The community got some good news last week.

Tara Johnson texted me and asked me to give her call about something. Sometimes journalists hope that people call with some inside scoop or tip.

But Tara was looking for some publicity for a project she was working on.

I spend quite a bit of time at the Fort Madison High School track getting in road work. It’s not the real road work, but I do get in the 5K run/walk and one of the things I’ve always noticed is the grimy grandstands on the home stands at Richmond Stadium.

The chipping paint and crumbling fencing aren’t so obvious, but they are in need.

Johnson and the Fort Madison Football, Inc. have started a grassroots



fundraiser to make improvements to the stadium. The trades programs, in conjunction with some heavy partnerships with local manufacturers, built a new press box/concession stand.

There’s a Go Fund Me page set up at Fort Madison Football, Inc. to donate to the project. FM Football Inc., helps fund equipment and programming for Fort Madison’s football program.

Starting with the youth football program and up to the varsity program, Fort Madison Football, Inc. functions as the

charitable arm of a football program, and really an athletic enhancement program, in a resurgence.

I spent some time conversing with outgoing Athletic Director Jeremy Swink a few months back and we talked casually about the level of the athletic programs in Fort Madison, among other things.

As part of our discussion, and discussions I’ve had with a few other people in the past month, I mentioned that not only are the athletes getting better, but they quality of kids is getting better as well as a whole.

I went to Pella for the Class 2A sub-state soccer final and witnessed not only what I think will amount to the state title match in Class 2A, but also some sportsmanship that surprised even the parents.

See **STADIUM**, page 8

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WEATHER

THU 03 Jun.....Light Rain, 78° F/ 56° F	
FRI 04 Jun.....Sunny and Warm, 79° F/ 58° F	
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Lee County News/From the Front

County Conservation to host fishing derby

LEE COUNTY - Celebrate Free Fishing Weekend with a family fishing derby at Chatfield Park on June 5 from 9-11am. There will be fun activities and prizes for the kids at this free event. Sponsored by Lee County Conservation and the Three Rivers Conservation Foundation. Meet at the Iowa Rd. picnic shelter. Contact LCC with any questions at (319) 463-7673.

Antiques become useful art tools

SWARM - Continued from Page 1

had to be stretched tight but mostly for fencing.... Channel locks....Tooth extractor....In today's lingo it's called a "conversation piece"....It's called a chain-climbing fence stretcher. I have one that belonged to my dad and used it many times building fence....It's a fence stretcher. It "Walks Along" a chain, link-by-link. The correct chain would make it operate uniformly. It is not a spike puller, people!... It's a fence stretcher! The claws fit over a heavy

chain. A long wooden bar was used in the cone to work it back and forth one link at a time....I looked up the tool on a railroad site and it identified the tool as a rail lifter....It's not a rail lifter. It's not big enough and doesn't have two handles....I worked on the railroad laying rail and never used anything like this....Vintage antique railroad tie spike puller, mover, steam punk....Antique Railroad Track Spike Lifter Train Track Tool....Battery terminal puller....Ice

used to pick up blocks of ice in a meat freezer.

There you have it. No one seems to know for sure what these what-chamacallits are. However, I'm going to stand corrected. More people seem to think it's a fence stretcher. Just because I never used one doesn't mean it didn't come before my time. Since occasionally I find these whatchamacallits with the heavy log chain still through the loop on it's "head"—the chain that the stretcher "walks" along, one link-at-time, I'm going to go with fence stretcher.

However, as with other tools that start out being

designed for one job, because of their versatility, they get used for other things. A simple example of this is the butter knife, that gets used as a screwdriver, putty knife, paint scraper, gum remover, what-have-you.

All I know is this "fence stretcher" is a pretty cool looking thingamajig, and I'm going to keep on welding it's "jaws" open and making more and better looking "sculptures." You never know, the thingamajig might wind up someday in an artifact museum.

Have a good story? Call or text Curt Swarm in Mt. Pleasant at 319-217-0526, email him at curtswarm@yahoo.com or visit his website at www.empty-nest-

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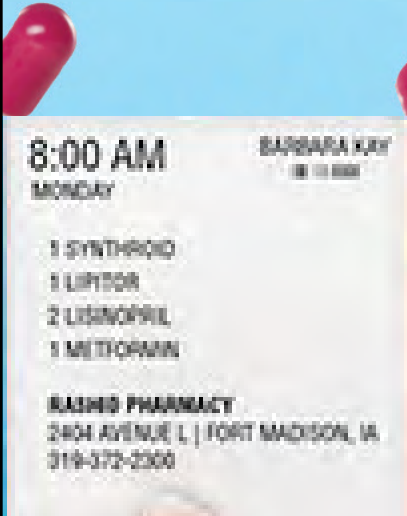


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Pen City Current and www.pencitycurrent.com are products of Market Street Publishing, LLC. Pen City Current is published Sunday through Friday mornings by 6AM.

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Obituaries

OBITUARIES

RANDALL A. BROWN

Randall "Randy" Allen Brown, 69, of Nauvoo, Illinois, passed away Thursday, May 27, 2021, at the Great River Hospice House in West Burlington, Iowa.

Randy was born on March 30, 1952, in Keosauqua, Iowa, the son of Clarence and Virginia (Wixom) Brown. On August 28, 1972, he married Martha Lynn Allen in Carthage, Illinois. She preceded him in death on April 27, 1993. On June 11, 1994, he married Barb Schuerkamp Jefferson in Nauvoo, Illinois. Survivors include his wife: Barb; six children: Karla McPherson of Fort Madison, Iowa, Victor Jefferson of Montrose, Iowa, Robin Fuller of Hamilton, Illinois, Melanie Wood of Grinnell, Iowa, Nathan Brown of Germany and Erin Dusenberry of Fort Madison, Iowa; one sister: Rebecca (Harry) Jarvis of Farmington, Iowa; sixteen grandchildren; eight great grandchildren; honorary children: Casey Cox and Jeremy Powell of Ankeny, Iowa. Also surviving are nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents and wife: Martha.

Randy was a 1970 graduate of Harmony High School. He received three certificates from Southeastern Community College for C.N.C. programming and operating. He worked as a machinist at Gleasons for thirty plus years. Randy was a member of Nauvoo United Methodist Church and he enjoyed fishing, camping, traveling, photography and his dogs.

His body has been entrusted to Schmitz - Banks & Beals Funeral Home for cremation. Friends may call after 12:00 noon, Tuesday, June 1, 2021, at Schmitz - Banks & Beals Funeral Home in Nauvoo, Illinois, where the family will receive friends from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. that evening.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, June 2, 2021, at Nauvoo United Methodist Church with Pastor Randy Azbell officiating.

A memorial has been established in his memory.

Schmitz-Banks & Beals Funeral Home in Nauvoo is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences may be made at: www.sbbfuneralhome.com.



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Pen City Current runs obituaries one time at no charge to funeral homes and they run the day they are submitted in most cases. They are also run as submitted by the funeral homes. Reposting of obituaries due to changes can only be requested by the submitting funeral home and will be assessed a \$15 reposting fee.

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Sports

North Scott ends Lady Hounds season with shutout

BY JOHN BOHNENKAMP
PCC SPORTS

ELDRIDGE — No coach likes to see their team's season end. Fort Madison's 6-0 loss to No. 6 North Scott in Wednesday's Class 2A girls soccer regional semifinal ended the Bloodhounds' season, but Carrie Burken, in her first season as head coach, hated to see the finish because she liked how her team was playing in the closing weeks.

"It's kind of frustrating, because I felt like we were just kind of getting everything together," Burken said. "The beginning of the season was very rough learning how to play together. We really didn't get going until the second half of the season. I was just really enjoying it right now, because it felt like things were clicking."

Fort Madison finished 8-7 after started the season 1-4 with a stretch that included three consecutive losses by one goal. What



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

North Scott's Bailey Arbogast tries a header off a corner kick in the 2nd half as Fort Madison's defense huddles in around the goal to block the attack. The Hounds lost 6-0 to end their year.

Burken liked was the frustration never set in with her team, and it showed in a seven-match stretch in which the Bloodhounds won six times.

Last Friday's 3-2 overtime win over Burlington was the first postseason victory in the program's history, but the Lancers (12-5), who advanced to Friday's regional final against Iowa City Liberty, ended any momentum the Bloodhounds had from that win.

"We knew that they were a good team," Burken said. "So the goal coming in was try to keep things as close as possible and then if we have an opportunity to score, try to take it. Everyone knew this was going to be a tough game for us. Any experience that we got out of this, it would be what we wanted against a team like this. To have that experience against a really good team is really good for us at this stage."

North Scott's offense put constant pressure on the Bloodhounds in the first half. The Lancers, though, didn't get a goal until 9 1/2 minutes into the match, when Kendall Knisley scored from the left side.

Hattie Hagedorn scored with 15:57 to go in the half, then

Knisley added two more goals to give the Lancers a 4-0 halftime lead.

Reese Hilsenbeck and Delaney Fitzgibbon scored for North Scott in the second half.

The Bloodhounds didn't get any offense going in the second half. Alana Simpson missed a scoring chance 17 1/2 minutes into the second half, then Claire Pothitakis appeared to have an open path to the goal but was knocked down before getting a shot away with 10 1/2 minutes left.

Burken said the program took big steps this season, especially with the regional quarterfinal win over Burlington.

"It takes away any sort of mental block that we can't win any (postseason) game," she said. "So it's good to have that experience. Now we know what it's like to win that. Just mentally, that's a huge weight lifted for the girls and myself."

"I think this program has gained a lot of momentum in the last four or five years. So I wanted to keep that going."

We're just too good of a team not to have success. So I think having that winning record was important to keep that momentum going into next season."

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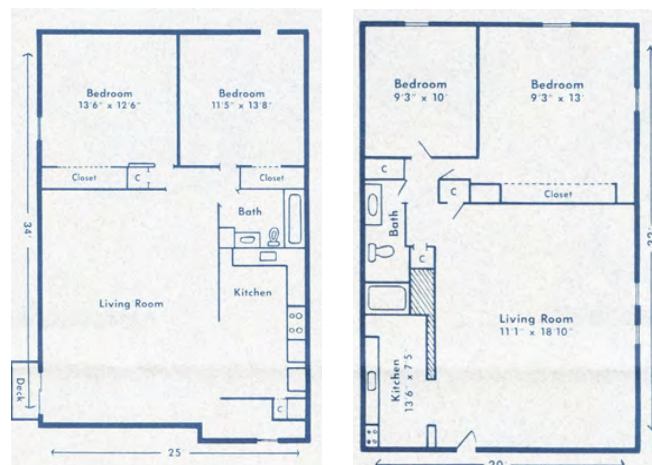
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From the Front

Donation to stadium upgrade has good ROI

STADIUM - Continued from Page 1

At one point several Hounds were cramping up, and before the officials even whistled play stopped, Pella kids were helping the Fort Madison kids stretch out the cramps.

At the end of regulation, the two team captains, Chandler Rung for the Hounds and Mason Holland for the Dutch, embraced to start the overtime period. That move brought applause from the stands. Both the Fort Madison and Pella faithful sat in the same home stands of the field.

So a contribution to the Fort Madison Football, Inc. project is a small way to help these dedicated folks present a better brand of athletics to the students, the families, the community, and visiting communities.

We donated in memory of Kelsey. She loved to go to football games with her friends, and did the best she could in band performances considering the fatigue that had to come with her then-undiagnosed pulmonary hypertension.

But we also donated because there are so many doing so much.

Johnson said very poignantly that it's the usual suspects that make these donations work. The industries, banks, the wealthy and those that typically shoulder those responsibilities because they can.

But this is a great way for alumni to honor their school and give back to programs that, good or bad, gave a lot to them to. Memories.

Grassroots efforts are those that focus on small donations from lots of people. The goal is \$20,000 and the depth of the repairs is based on the amount received.

To donate, simply click here <https://gofund.me/51705544>, they'll take any amount. Share the link or this story so it trickles down the social media world to everyone who has ever gone to FMHS. The \$5 and \$10 donations, obviously the larger ones as well, will be the

gestures that bring the project over the finish line.

At the Bloodhounds substate semi-final soccer game against Clear Creek-Amana, I mentioned to Head Coach Kevin Wellman that we're seeing a better brand of athlete in Fort Madison.

"It's that guy right over there...that guy right there," Wellman said pointing to Fort Madison athletic enhancement director Derek Doherty, who had come over right after the Hounds downed CCA, and congratulated the coaches.

The camaraderie that now exists within the sports, boys and girls both, is part of a winning formula. They are putting in the sweat equity to build the programs and the athletes. We have to be the ones that throw a couple bucks at the facility.

We're developing a new sense of pride in our programs, now we have to carry that pride into our facilities.

The fund is currently at 5,800, but has grown from \$1,500 in the past four days. It's the right thing to do for the Crimson and Black. The stadium is used by the middle school for events, high school events and community events.

Come see what's beginning to be fuss at FMHS. The commitment from those that help these students athletes is very real. Our support should be as well.

Talking about support. I stopped out for some pictures of the Fort Madison Fire Dept. putting up flags in Memorial Park. These men not only put up about 75 American flags, but they help fund the work. They also put up flags on the graves of former FMFD fire fighters. Yes, I know someone's gotta do it. Well maybe someone doesn't have to do it, but here they are anyway - But that's Beside the Point.

Chuck Vandenberg is the editor and co-founder of www.pencitycurrent.com.

Schulz, Rink vote against additional spend

DEPOT - Continued from Page 1

Mark Boussetot.

The amendment is also being back-dated a week to May 24 and increases the agreement to a total of \$236,090.

"We now have a gun to our head. Two months ago this should have come to us with a 'Hey this project is going to go long and we're going to need more money, but instead we wait and we say we have to change it, and then back date to May because we've already used up all our money,'" Councilman Tom Schulz fired at the council.

"This is just crappy work from a crappy engineering firm."

Schulz said he understands that Fort Madison Mayor Matt Mohrfeld has tried to hold the engineering firm accountable to previous issues and they seem to be doing better as the project moves forward, but the problems should have been foreseen.

"They may be doing a fine job at this point and going forward, but by God they created this situation and we're being told we have to write the checks for it."

Mohrfeld said the city would have had to write the check to Klingner anyway, because the new inspections are required by the DOT and weather has drawn the project out. He said Klingner has written off some costs due to previous issues the city has pointed out.

"He gave me a whole billable list that they wrote off, and none of us complained about that," Mohrfeld said.

"Now I'm not going to say it was \$60,000 it was more like \$27,000."

Councilman Rusty Andrews said Klingner did make an effort to balance things out when the city was upset with some flaws in the original designs.

The motion to approve the amendment passed 6-2 with Schulz and Kevin Rink opposing.



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FRIDAY

Tractor/Gas Engine Registration
Town Wide Yard Sales

7 a.m.
8 a.m.

SATURDAY

Breakfast at Fire Station 7:30 a.m.-9:30 a.m.
Pink Heals of Western Illinois
Town Wide Sales 8 a.m.
Custom Cars & Pickups 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Sidewalk Chalk Drawing Contest 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
Car/Tractor Parade 1 p.m.
Live Auction 1:30 p.m.
Silver Steppers 2:30 p.m.
Pedal Tractor Pulls 2:30 p.m.
Bill Riley Talent Competition 3:30 p.m.
Pork Meal in Shelter House 5 p.m.
Live Music in Shelter House 5:30 p.m.
by Lonesome Fugitive

SUNDAY

Breakfast at Church
Ham Ball Dinner at Church
Tractor Parade

7:30 a.m.
11 a.m.
1 p.m.

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