

# PEN CITY CURRENT

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

Thursday, July 8, 2021 | 9 pages | Volume 5 • Issue 134



[www.pencitycurrent.com](http://www.pencitycurrent.com)

## Canisters out for Rodeo kids

**LITTLE MISS RODEO/ALL-AROUND COWBOY:** Donations determine the winner

PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON – Contestants are being sought for the annual Little Miss Rodeo & All-Around Cowboy Contest!

This year's event is to be held on Monday, Sept. 6th at 6:30 p.m. at the Tri-State Rodeo Arena.

The contest is open to children ages 5-7. Contestants must be age 5 by Aug. 1st, and no older than age 7 at the time of the contest.

An entry form is available on the Tri-State Rodeo website at [www.tristaterodeo.org](http://www.tristaterodeo.org) under the "Events" tab.

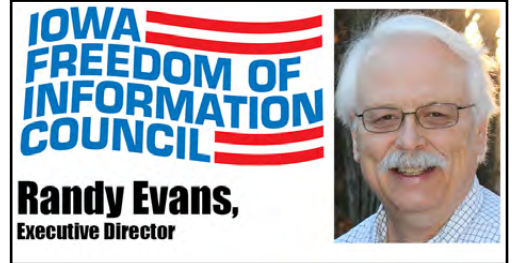
Entry forms and contestant photos must be postmarked by

Aug. 1st and can be mailed to Trish Eaves-Fedler, 1930 303rd Avenue Fort Madison, IA 52627. For more information, contact Trish at (319) 470-8030 or Lisa Frederick at (815) 343-0911.

Canisters, with each child's photo and name, will once again be placed in area businesses for family and friends to cast a vote by dropping their "spare change" into the canister.

The night of the event, contestants will be interviewed and have a chance to showcase their talent. Judges will score the children on personality, attire, interview and talent. Judges

See **KIDS**, page 3



## Controversy pulled up in the driveway

Controversy, of sorts, arrived in my driveway last week.

There was no commotion. There were no protesters. No picketers. No chants about destroying the economy or caving in to China.

In fact, there was virtually no sound at all when the revolution in the American automobile industry rolled to a stop — and our niece and her husband and their dog stepped out of their Tesla.

Annie and Nathan were on their way home to Texas after a vacation in the Midwest. They are not rabble-rousers. You won't find them marching with signs in front of government buildings.

But they are concerned about the environment. That is why they prefer their all-electric, five-passenger Tesla to the gasoline-burner they used to drive.

They are not really electric-vehicle pioneers. Tesla delivered a half million cars last year. Several of my friends made the switch a decade ago to hybrid cars, an intermediate step, when they bought Toyota Priuses, which use a battery-powered electric motor and a gasoline-powered engine.

Companies like Tesla, General Motors and Ford are putting huge sums into their belief that battery-powered, all-electric vehicles are the future and will ultimately win over people who now drive cars, trucks and SUVs that burn gasoline.

Some political leaders would have you think President Joe Biden is singlehandedly selling out Iowa and the United States by having the federal government invest in electric vehicles.

See **EVANS**, page 9



Photo courtesy of Robert Tabern

Greg Vreeland, owner of Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad, puts a logo on the front of the Mark Twain Zephyr in Wisconsin earlier this year. Author Robert Tabern will be giving a presentation on the train that used to stop in Fort Madison from 1935 to 1958 on day trips to St. Louis, at Fort Madison Library July 19.

## Mark Twain Zephyr history coming to Fort Madison

BY **CHUCK VANDENBERG**  
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Rail has always been a source of history, pride, and tradition in Fort Madison.

Those local enthusiasts are in for a treat on July 19th from a historian who's part of a family-owned company out of Wisconsin currently refurbishing the Mark Twain Zephyr train that used to run daily between St. Louis and Burlington from 1934 until

1958.

The new stainless steel train ran along the old CB&Q rail line and would run trips out of St. Louis in the morning to Burlington carrying mail, produce, packages and passengers, and then would return to the city after making stops in Fort Madison along the way.

On July 19 at 11 a.m., Robert Tabern, the Director of Passenger Development for the Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad, will be giving a presentation at the Fort Madison

Public Library about the history of the railroad and the current restoration project.

Tabern and his wife, both historians, have written two books on the train and will have copies of those on sale at the presentation as well. The first book looks at the origin of the Zephyr and its creation, while the second looks at its life in service up until it was sold in 1958. A third, final novel, is in the works outlining the rehabilitation.

See **TRAIN**, page 8

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### WEATHER

THU 08 Jul .....Overcast, 74° F/ 64° F  
FRI 09 Jul .....Rain, 75° F/ 62° F  
SAT 10 Jul .....Heavy Rain, 68° F/ 66° F

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# Obituaries

## OBITUARIES

### CORAZON M. JONES

Corazon Mabini Noya Jones, 69, of Bonaparte, Iowa, passed away at 5:22 a.m. Sunday, July 4, 2021, at the Keosauqua Health Center in Keosauqua, Iowa.

She was born on March 19, 1952 in Cebu City, Philippines the daughter of Zacarias Q. and Matelde M. Noya. On March 22, 1974, she married Arlen Dean Jones. He preceded her in death on June 22, 1995.



JONES

She is survived by one daughter: Christalyn (Stacy) Thjorne of West Branch, Iowa; one son: Scott Jones of Bonaparte, Iowa; two sisters: Bernadette Noya Doller and Norma Noya Bobo; two brothers: Belzesar Mabini Noya and Zaharias Mabini Noya, Jr. Also surviving is her special friend: Lloyd Barrows.

She was preceded in death by her parents and husband.

Corazon worked at Scott's Company in Fort Madison and Pioneer Seed in Mt. Pleasant. She enjoyed going to casinos, church activities at Bonaparte Baptist Church and having a good time with family and friends.

Friends may call after 1:00 p.m. Thursday, July 8, 2021, at Schmitz Funeral Home in Farmington where the family will receive friends from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. that evening.

A graveside service will be held at 10:00 a.m. Friday, July 9, 2021, at Greenglade Cemetery with Pastor Mark Caston officiating.

A memorial has been established in her memory.

Online condolences may be made to the family at [www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com](http://www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com). Schmitz Funeral Home of Farmington is assisting the family with arrangements.

#### Pen City Current obituary policy

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.

## OBITUARIES

### JOHN P. RIIS

John Peter Riis, 77, of Donnellson, Iowa, passed away at 4:35 a.m. Sunday, July 4, 2021, at his home in Donnellson.

He was born on April 24, 1944, in Peoria, Illinois, the son of Earl and Frances (Wilkins) Riis. On July 21, 1979, he married Vickie Lay in Donnellson.



RIIS

He is survived by his wife: Vickie; five sons: Randy Riis, John Riis, Stephen Riis, Jason Scott, and Carl (Amanda) Riis; two daughters: Angie Brown and Carrie (Kurt) Wagner; three granddaughters: Lacy Vaughn, Bailey Vaughn and Addison Riis; one grandson Zachery Vaughn; two sisters: Kathy Benson and Debbie Vincent. He is also survived by several other grandchildren in Kansas and Missouri.

He was preceded in death by his parents and two brothers.

John served for three years in the United States Air Force. He worked for the Santa Fe Railroad for twenty-eight years, the Donnellson Nursing Home for four years and Gregory Manufacturing for eight years. He was a member of the Donnellson American Legion. He enjoyed animals, fishing and being with family.

The family will receive friends from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Thursday, July 8, 2021, at Schmitz Funeral Home in Donnellson.

A graveside service will be held at 11:00 a.m. Thursday, July 8, 2021, at Zion Mennonite Cemetery in rural Donnellson with Pastor Bob Molsberry officiating. Following the graveside service there will be a flag presentation by the Donnellson American Legion Gillaspay - Moodie Post #474.

A memorial has been established in his memory.

Online condolences may be made to the family at [www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com](http://www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com). Schmitz Funeral Home of Donnellson is assisting the family with arrangements.

### DERALD R. GILES

Derald Robert "Bob" Giles, 72, of Union Mills, Indiana, passed away on Saturday, May 29, 2021 at home. Bob was born in Lake Preston, South Dakota, on July 17, 1948 the son of Eugene and Beulah (Olson) Giles. On August 28, 1976 in Ft. Madison, Iowa, he married Joyce Niggemeyer who survives.



GILES

Also surviving are his children: Michele Winkel of Ash Fork, Arizona and Robert (Debra) Giles of St. Petersburg, Florida; five grandchildren: Taylor (Ben) Winkel of Scandia, Minnesota, Savanha (Jordan) Winkel of West Saint Paul, Minnesota, Megan (Hunter) Mynatt of Abingdon, Illinois, Matt (Diedra) Giles of Oswego, Illinois, and Lucas Giles of Scandia, Minnesota; siblings, Curt (Judy) Giles of Washington, Deloris (Don) Johnson of Vail, Arizona, and Rose Keen of Watertown, South Dakota; and nephew, Mark (Valerie) Lucas of Kingsford Heights, Indiana; as well as several other nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents and brother, Delmar Giles.

Bob owned and operated a trucking company for over thirty years. He was a member of the Lions Club. Bob enjoyed gardening and flowers. He loved to fish.

A graveside service will be held at 1:00 p.m. Sunday, July 11, 2021, at Calvary Cemetery in West Point, Iowa. A memorial has been established in his memory and can be mailed to the family at: Schmitz Funeral Home, P.O. Box 22, West Point, Iowa 52656

Online condolences may be made to the family at [www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com](http://www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com). Schmitz Funeral Home of West Point is assisting the family with arrangements.

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we'll be right back!

Pen City Current will not publish an e-Edition  
Wednesday, July 14 through Tuesday, July 20  
so we can enjoy some  
much-needed family time.  
The e-Edition will resume Wednesday, July 21.  
Thanx for reading!

**PEN CITY CURRENT**  
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# Obituaries/From the Front

## OBITUARIES

### HELEN M. DETTMER

Helen Marie Corley Dettmer, 93, of Argyle, IA died Tuesday, July 6, 2021 at her home.

She was born February 8, 1928 in Aledo, IL the daughter of Halyard and Bradie Alcock Corley. She graduated from Argyle High School and later attended Iowa Wesleyan College and received her teaching degree. On August 28, 1948 she was united in marriage to Edward M. Dettmer in Argyle, IA. He survives.



DETTMER

Other survivors include two daughters, Janice (Spencer) Brammer of Camdenton, MO and Lori (Richard) Boyer of Argyle, IA, one son, Ray (Peggy) Dettmer of Redding, CA, ten grandchildren, Nate (Stephanie) Dettmer of Forney, TX, Janelle (Marc) Girod Albuquerque, NM, Jared (Christina) Dettmer of Keller, TX, Micah (Stephanie) Dettmer of Denver, CO, Seth (Kate) Brammer of Quincy, IL, Justin (Shelbi) Brammer of Camdenton, MO, Miles Boyer of Washington, IA, Brandon Boyer of Hills, IA, Zachary Boyer of Washington, IA and Alisha Boyer Gunsauls of Argyle, IA and thirteen great-grandchildren, Annalyn Dettmer, Andrea, Beckett and Everett Girod, Adilai and Jace Brammer, Violet Boyer, Greg and Bonnie Dettmer, Kristianna, Kadence and Kegan Boyer and Kody Gunsauls.

She was preceded in death by her parents, two brothers, Bob and Billy Corley, two sisters, Opal Lee and Adeline Kennedy, daughter-in-law, Bonnie Dettmer and one granddaughter, Heather Dettmer.

Helen taught grades 1-8 at the Jackson Township Eagle School for many years. She later was employed by the United States Post Office until her retirement in 1978.

Helen was a member of the Argyle Presbyterian Church and the United Presbyterian Women's Circle.

Helen was gifted in arts and crafts made beautiful stained glass pieces. She was a skilled seamstress and created many beautiful handmade quilts for her family and friends to enjoy. Helen loved to travel with Edward. They spent many summers at their cabin in Minnesota and were snowbirds in Florida and Arizona. Helen was devoted to her family and loved spending time with her children and grandchildren.

A funeral service will be held at 3 p.m., Sunday, at the Argyle Presbyterian Church in Argyle, IA with Pastor Alice Hawes officiating. Burial will be in Argyle Memorial Park.

Visitation will be held after 2 p.m., Saturday, at the Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk, IA with family meeting with friends from 4- 6 p.m.

Memorials may be made to the Argyle Presbyterian Church.

Online condolences may be sent to the family at [www.vigenmemorialhome.com](http://www.vigenmemorialhome.com).

## OBITUARIES

### ROBERT POTHITAKIS

Robert Pothitakis, 97, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away at 5:24 p.m. on Tuesday, July 6, 2021 at Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center in Fort Madison, IA. He was born on March 28, 1924 in Burlington, IA to Harry & Ethel Brice Reuschenberg. He was raised by Jim & Ethel Pothitakis. He



POTHITAKIS

married Georgenia Engeman and they later divorced. He married Paula Sue Waters on January 19, 1991 in Burlington, IA. He went to work for the C B & Q Railroad during WWII and later owned Bob's Texaco Service in Fort Madison, IA. He enjoyed playing Euchre and detailing cars.

Bob is survived by: his wife: Paula Sue Waters of Fort Madison, IA; 1-daughter: Carol Thomas of Pinckneyville, IL & 1-step son: Larry (Alisha) Nolte of Fort Madison, IA. He was preceded in death by his parents.

A visitation will be held from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. on Friday, July 9, 2021 at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A memorial service will immediately follow at 10:30 a.m. with Pastor Gerald Dzawo officiating. Burial will be held in Oakland Cemetery.

A memorial has been established for P.A.W. Animal Shelter or West Avenue Baptist Church. Online condolences may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: [www.kinglynk.com](http://www.kinglynk.com).

## Little Miss Rodeo/All-Around Cowboy contest Sept. 6 at rodeo arena

**KIDS** - Continued from Page 1

have no knowledge of how much money each contestant has collected in their canister. In the event of a tie, the amount in the canister will help determine the winner.

A portion of the money collected in the canisters goes to Miss Rodeo Iowa to help defray traveling expenses as she competes for the coveted title of Miss Rodeo America in Las Vegas this coming December.

Each contestant will receive a goodie bag for participating, however only one girl and one boy can win the title of Little Miss Rodeo & All-Around Cowboy.

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## Sports

# Lady Hounds push Fairfield

BY PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON – The No. 10 team in the state in Class 4A handed Fort Madison a shutout in the first game of a doubleheader Tuesday. But the Lady Hounds gave Fairfield all they wanted in the nightcap coming up one run short resulting in a 10-0, 6-5 sweep in Fort Madison.

Fort Madison had a runner on with two outs in the bottom of the seventh of the second game trying to tie things up, but a Kylee Cashman grounder to second ended the game.

The Hounds took a 3-0 lead in the second inning when Lexi Whaley drilled one over the fence in dead center. Erika Kruse would reach on an error at second and then Lauryn Helmick doubled on a line drive to center moving both runners into scoring position.

McKenna Cashman hit an RBI groundout to second scoring Kruse and moving Helmick up. Allyson Helmick would then drive in her sister with a grounder to short for the second out, before Taylor Johnson flied out to center to end the inning.

Fairfield would get one in the third and one in the fourth while holding Fort Madison scoreless cutting the lead to 3-2 after four.

Lauryn Helmick would give up back-to-back singles in the fifth with one out, but would work out of the jam without giving up a run. Fort Madison would get its lead-off runner on as a result of an error, but the Trojans retired the next three in a row to get out unscathed.

Helmick retired the side in order in the sixth.

Kylee Cashman grounded out to start the bottom half before Logan Johnson

drew a walk. Whaley then drilled her second homer of the game, and 10th of the year, scoring courtesy runner Aija Jenkins for 5-2 Fort Madison lead. Kruse would fly out to right before Lauryn Helmick walked on five pitches. But McKenna Cashman would pop out in the infield to end the inning.

The Trojans got to Helmick in the top of the seventh, however. Brynley Allison singled to open the frame, and then Hannah Simpson drilled a shot out over the centerfield fence to cut the lead to one at 5-4. A flyout out to center, put the Hounds two outs away from the upset, but Emersyn Manley connected on a shot that cleared the centerfield fence to tie things up at 5.

Peyton McCabe and Danielle Breen would follow with singles, but an error on Breen's hit allowed McCabe to come all the way from first for the go-ahead run. Savannah Hollander singled to center moving Breen to third, but a pop up in foul territory and a fly ball to Taylor Johnson in left ended the half setting up the Hounds final shot.

Whaley's line was 2-for 3 with two runs scored and 3 RBI on the two homers to lead Fort Madison. Emily Steffensmeier, Kylee Cashman, Logan Johnson and Lauryn Helmick all had hits for Fort Madison. McKenna Cashman and Allyson Helmick had RBIs.

Lauryn Helmick gave up 14 hits and six runs all earned while striking out two in the loss. In the opener, Neeley Rehm got roughed up for 10 runs, nine earned on 14 hits while striking out four. Sophomore Coty Engley gave up just two hits in the shutout while striking out five and

See SENIORS, page 5

# Central Lee girls ousted by Davis County in regionals

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

BLOOMFIELD – They say it's tough to beat the same team three times in the same year, but Davis County had Central Lee's number this year.

The Mustang's sophomore ace Madeline Barker did that twice including an 8-3 win Tuesday night in Class 3A Region 8 opening round softball, ending the Lady Hawks' season at 16-10.

Barker is 16-6 on the year with a strong 1.75 ERA and struck out 211 batters for 20-7 Davis County, playing out of the South Central Conference. The Mustangs swept Central Lee in a doubleheader in June.

Barker struck out 12 Tuesday night and allowed just three runs all earned, while scattering seven hits.

Sophie Turner took the loss for Fort Madison giving up 11 hits and eight runs, six earned and fanned one. Turner finished the year a respectable 12-5 with 66 strikeouts in 116 innings pitched. Hopp threw two outs in relief and gave up two hits. She finished the year 4-2 in the circle with 31 strikeouts and a 3.44 ERA.

Davis County got on the board in the first after Barker set the Lady Hawks down in order. Macy Hill hit a one-out double to center and a courtesy runner for her would score on an RBI single by the next hitter. Turner would get the next two hitters to strand one.

Abby Simmons would single with two outs in the second, but that's all the action Central Lee would get in that frame.

Central Lee retired the first two hitters in the bottom half of the second, but another double to left put a runner in scoring position.

Cadan VanLaningham would single to right scoring Jenna Marlow and then Sophia Young would double to Meghan Hopp in center to score another run. Turner would get the next hitter on pop out foul to Halo Arrowood to retire the side with Davis County up 3-0.

Barker would buzz through the top of third getting all three Lady Hawks on swinging strikeouts. Turner would give up just a single in the bottom of the third and retire the side on a

strikeout.

Central would get on the board in the fourth. Hopp would single to center and then Shanna Buford drilled a ball to center field for an RBI double cutting the lead to 3-1. Buford would get caught stealing third, followed by a ground out to end the threat.

The Mustangs would get a triple and double in the 4th to add two runs and take a 5-1 lead into the fifth inning. Barker would fan the first two hitters and then Navaeha Stice would line out back to Barker to retire that half.

With two runners on and one out in the bottom half, a grounder by Briley Lough got away from Buford at short allowing two runs to score and give Davis County a 7-1 lead. Turner got the next to hitters to end the fifth.

Bailey Schwartz singled on a pop to center and following a strikeout and a ground out, Hopp and Buford went to work again. Hopp singled to left scoring Schwartz from third, and Buford hit another double this time to right, scoring Hopp for Central's final run of the game. Barker got a strike out and two ground outs around a single from Alix Congdon to wrap things up.

Davis County got their final run in the top of the seventh on a solo home run from Sophia Young to left.

Hopp led the Lady Hawks at the plate going 2 for 3 with two runs scored and an RBI. Buford was also 2 for 3 and had 2 RBI. Simmons, Congdon and Schwartz had the other hits for Central Lee.

Buford led the Hawks in hits on the year with 40 with 14 for extra bases, including nine doubles, three triples and a two home runs.

She hit at .445 clip. Hopp had 29 hits on the year and a .329 batting average. Makayla Morrison, Arrowood, and Macy Watkins all had more than 20 hits on the year. Arrowood and Morrison both hit better than .300.

The Hawks finished 3rd in the Southeast Iowa Superconference South with an 8-4 loop mark behind Van Buren at 9-3 and No. 4 West Burlington who went through league play undefeated at 12-0.

The Falcons won their 31st game in a 12-1 win over Columbus in regional action Tuesday. The Falcons will take on Davis County Friday at West Burlington.

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## Sports

# Johnson drives in six in Hounds win over Van Buren

PCC SPORTS

FORT MADISON – The Fort Madison boys got to celebrate senior night with a flare Tuesday night as they blew out Van Buren 19-4 highlighted by an 8-run third inning.

Senior hurler Garrett Hannum got in trouble early giving up a couple runs in the first inning due to an error in left with one out allowing two runs to come in for a quick 2-0 Van Buren lead.

Landes Williams would single to start things in the bottom half. After a groundout, Vasin Thurman singled to third and Tate Johnson would move him over with a fielder's choice back to the pitcher that scored Williams, before Van Buren would get out of the inning with a ground out.



JOHNSON

Taylor Sprouse opened the second with a double, but Hannum would settle in and retire the side without a run.

Fort Madison would get things turned around in the second with five runs highlighted by Johnson's triple that turned into a three-run play when he came all the way around to score on an error in left, driving in both Jason and Vasin Thurman.

The Warriors would plate their final two runs in the top of the third when Casey Yochum blasted a home run to center scoring Treyton Bainbridge from first.

It was all Fort Madison from that point on including the 8-spot in the 3rd and another five runs in the fourth to set the 15-run rule after four innings, 19-4.

Johnson would double for two more RBI in the third and triple to center in the fourth scoring a run. Jason Thurman also had a 2 RBI double in the third.

Johnson went 3-for-4 with six RBI and three runs scored to lead Fort Madison. Johnson now has seven triples on the year and 10 doubles, while hitting .386. Jason Thurman leads the team in average at .437, while Vasin Thurman is just under .400 at .397. Landes Williams is hitting .386 for the 22-6 Hounds.

Hannum gave up six hits and four runs, three earned while fanning two and walking two. Vasin Thurman pitched the fourth allowing two hits.

The Hounds honored Jason and Vasin Thurman, Chandler Rung, Hannum as seniors in front of the Fort Madison fans before the game.

Fort Madison travels to Keokuk tonight in a change from a doubleheader originally slated for Thursday. New London canceled Wednesday's originally scheduled game with Fort Madison. The Hounds are scheduled to travel to Muscatine (21-11) to wrap up the regular season on Tuesday with regional action starting on Friday the 16th.

Substate brackets released Wednesday show Fort Madison will take on Mt. Pleasant in the opening round of Class 4A Substate 4 in Fort Madison starting at 7 p.m. Friday July 16. The winner will take on the winner of Central DeWitt/Fairfield on July 19 at a location to be determined. The substate final will be played July 21 at 7 p.m. at a site to be determined.

On the other side of the bracket is Davenport Assumption, Keokuk, Washington and Clear-Creek Amana.

## Cashman, Helmick, Beebe honored

**SENIORS** - Continued from Page 4

walking two.

Kylee Cashman and Kruse had the hits for Fort Madison. Cashman's a single in the bottom of the first with one out, while Kruse doubled to center with one out in the second. Lauryn Helmick and Kendall Beebe drew back-to-back walks to put two on with one out in the fifth, but Helmick would get caught stealing third to end the inning.

Fort Madison wouldn't get another base runner after that.

Fort Madison fans recognized Kylee Cashman, Allyson Helmick, and Kendall Beebe prior to the game for senior night.

The Hounds fall to 13-18 on the year and 7-11 in Southeast Conference play putting them in 4th place ahead of Keokuk and Mt. Pleasant. The girls travel to Keokuk for a doubleheader tonight and then start Class 4A Region 5 action Thursday in Burlington with a 7 p.m. start.



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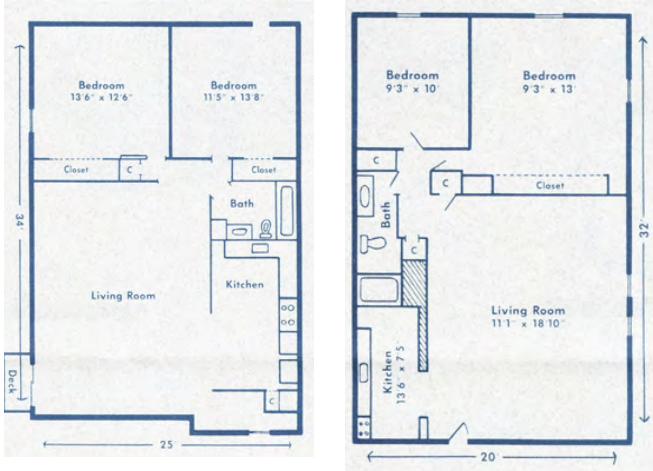
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For a job description and to apply, download an application from our county website, [www.leecounty.org](http://www.leecounty.org), or pick them up at the Engineer's office and return your completed application along with a resume to Lee County Engineer, P.O. Box 158, Fort Madison, Iowa 52627, or email it to [bhull@leecounty.org](mailto:bhull@leecounty.org) and copy it to [shartson@leecounty.org](mailto:shartson@leecounty.org). Applications will be accepted until Monday, July 19, 2021 at 3:30 p.m.

If you have any questions please contact Lee County Engineer, Ben Hull at (319) 372-2541 or email him at [bhull@leecounty.org](mailto:bhull@leecounty.org).

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From the Front

# Group would like to bring Zephyr back for tour

**TRAIN** - Continued from Page 1

Tabern said the Zephyr was a product of ingenuity when passenger rail lines started to compete with air travel and were looking for something a little lighter and faster.

“They started doing these lighter weight trains and that’s where the Zephyrs came into play on the CB&Q,” Tabern said. “There were three before the Mark Twain that started in 1935.”

Tabern said the Zephyr would hold up to 92 people in two passenger cars, but another car could carry live chickens and produce that could be sold on the streets of St. Louis the next morning. Fort Madison would typically get stops in the early afternoon on the way north and then in the early afternoon on the way back south.

He’s also looking for anyone along the Zephyr’s stops that has memories of the train. A documentary

crew would be available to interview anyone who is interested in being a part of the project and Tabern said, “isn’t too camera shy.”

In 1958, the train was taken out of service, sold and stored in Mt. Pleasant. It was then relocated to Kansas City, Chicago, and then St. Louis. The last 62 years it’s had seven private owners, all with different ideas.

“The first owner wanted to refurbish it and sell it Cuba,” Tabern said. “This guy actually spoke to Fidel Castro himself, but the Cuban Missile Crisis got in the way.”

The second owner wanted to clean up the train and use it as a tourist attraction to try and get people to stop in Mt. Pleasant and it sat there for about 17 years, according to Tabern’s research.

“The most recent owners had it for like 30 years as a hobby piece and really didn’t have the time or money to help with the thing. They

sold it to us in 2020.”

Now four of the Zephyrs five train cars are at the tourist railroad’s facility being brought back to life. Another fifth car is from the Pioneer Zephyr that ran through Galesburg and parts of Iowa. Three of that train’s other cars are in the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago.

He said owners of the Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad looked at the shell of a train different times when they were at the St. Louis rail yard.

“He’d always seen this shell of a train and every time he would look at that sad train and always say, ‘maybe some day,’” Tabern said. “We finally got it, shipped it up here on the highway and have spent the last 10 months on it.”

He said COVID has created some supply issues and the timeline for rehabbing the train is now



looking more like a 2022 finish date. But at that point, tours would begin that could range from 45 minutes to even several hours.

“We’re still trying to determine what those will look like, but they would take place on the historical lines in Wisconsin and could include a dinner tour or cocktail-and-appetizer shorter tours.”

Tabern said it would be wonderful if BNSF, which he said is open to helping tell the history of rail commerce in America, would at some point work out a way to let the Zephyr tour at different times along the original route from Burlington to St. Louis.

“We would love to be able to do that and bring that back to Fort Madison. 2024 would be the 90th anniversary of the train and 2034 would be the 100th anniversary. Wouldn’t it be wonderful to take that train down that line to celebrate those events?”

The ownership has 26 miles of track from Spooner to Hayward in northwestern Wisconsin. They’ve been running tours and Bed and Breakfast trains for 24 years.

“When they started out they had nothing and they would collect money for a train ride. While they were on the train, the wife would go to buy diesel fuel for the next ride. That’s

how bare bones it was, now it’s a multi-million dollar company.”

Tabern said Hannibal and Quincy had both looked at purchasing and refurbishing the Zephyr, but it never materialized. He said the train set was valued at between \$4 million and \$6 million in the 80’s if it were restored to its working condition.

Tabern’s books are available at [www.mtzstore.com](http://www.mtzstore.com). He’s also looking for memorabilia from the train’s heyday and is wanting to talk with anyone that may have ticket stubs or other artifacts from the train.

He can be reached by email at [rtabern@spooner-trainride.com](mailto:rtabern@spooner-trainride.com).

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## Opinion

# Even John Deere moving toward electrical farm vehicles

**EVANS** - Continued from Page 1

In reality, those choices are being made by consumers like Annie and Nathan. Auto manufacturers recognize the advantages of battery-powered vehicles, and they see a trend that will dramatically change how we travel — and how farmers plant and harvest crops.

Electronic vehicles now account for about 2 percent of global car sales. By the end of this decade, that share is expected to reach 24 percent.

If you need further evidence the all-electric trend is here to stay, look no further than rural America icon John Deere, the world's largest maker of tractors and other farm implements and Iowa's largest manufacturing employer.

The company believes electricity, not diesel or biodiesel, is the power source of the future for its products. Deere is already developing all-electric green tractors.

President Biden recently toured Ford's electric vehicle center in Dearborn, Mich., and got a preview of a revolutionary new Ford F-150 pickup truck that is all-electric.

"This sucker's quick," he said after a test drive.

Ford does not monkey with the F-150 without a good idea what consumers want. The F-150 has been the best-selling vehicle in the United States for the past four decades and accounts for one-third of Ford's annual revenue.

Biden is pushing Congress to provide \$174 billion in his infrastructure package for transportation electrification. That money would be used to speed expansion of the network of electric-vehicle charging stations that already is being installed across the nation, electrify the federal government's own vehicle fleet, and provide tax incen-



tives and rebates for consumers buying electric cars and pickups.

But five of the six Iowa senators and representatives in Congress, all Republicans, recently wrote to the president criticizing his electric-vehicle initiatives. They want the government to make biofuels, not electricity, the transportation power source of choice.

"Biofuels should not be treated as a transitional fuel, but prioritized as a fuel of the future," they wrote.

Am I the only one who sees similarities between the current transition in the power source for cars and trucks and a similar transition 120 years ago when the nation began moving from horses and buggies to "horseless carriages"?

Or when farmers put their horses out to pasture, literally, and began using self-propelled tractors with names like Waterloo Boy and Hart-Parr?

Or when our nation transitioned to electricity from oil lamps and coal-burning and wood-burning stoves to heat and light homes, businesses and farms?

These changes all came at a cost, too. Yes, these negatively affected some people who had a fi-

nancial stake in the way we had been living. But overall, the changes moved the nation and our economy forward — and Congress did not stand in the way.

Auto repair shops and gas stations sprung up to serve this new need. The demand dropped for horses and oats. Buggy whip manufacturers disappeared or converted to other products.

The transformation coming in transportation, and the federal government's role in it, is similar to the growth of ethanol as an alternative to 100 percent petroleum-based motor fuels.

In large measure, that growth occurred because of action Congress and state legislatures took. Ethanol-blended fuel was excluded from part of the highway fuel tax, and the feds required petroleum companies to blend a certain percentage of their gasoline with ethanol.

But tax incentives and ethanol policy were not what Annie and Nathan wanted to talk about as the Evanses admired their four-door Tesla.

They can travel about 350 miles on a fully charged battery. With the touch screen on the dash and the car's wireless connection, they plot their route and know where and how far the next charging station is.

It takes about 20 minutes to fully recharge at one of those commercial locations, compared to an overnight charge to replenish the Tesla battery at home.

The roadside charging stations are perfect for humans, and dogs, to recharge themselves on a trip, too — sort of like a stop for water and feed was for the horses my ancestors relied on.

Randy Evans is director of the Iowa Freedom of Information Council and can be reached at [DMRe-vans2810@gmail.com](mailto:DMRe-vans2810@gmail.com).



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