### SPORTS: John Bohnenkamp looks at new attendance mandates • See page 5

# PEN CITY CURREN It's Black & White and Read all over

Wednesday, November 18, 2020 | 8 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 209

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**BOH takes firm stand BOARD OF HEALTH:** Residents taking "great risk" when around unmasked people

#### **BY CHUCK VANDENBERG** PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY - Following Monday's live televised address to the state by Gov. Kim Reynolds on the recent surge of the coronavirus, the Lee County Board of Health issued new strongly worded directives to Lee County residents.

The Board of Health met Tuesday morning and went a step further in recommending that people stay away from any gatherings where people may not be masked.

The directive tells residents to wear an appropriate face covering every time they leave their home, and when they



might be within 6 feet of anyone outside their household.

"The purposes of your face covering is to protect others and the purposed of their face covering is to protect you," the directive read. "If you find yourself in a place where other

people are not wearing face coverings appropriately, you are at great risk. You should

consider leaving or avoiding that place altogether." Michele Ross, administrator at LCHD said the intent of

#### See **DIRECTIVE**, page 3



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

County maintenance crews sweep up after a day's work at reinforcing the retaining walls at the North Lee Courthouse Monday evening. Work is being done to shore up the wall and steps at the courthouse.

# **COUNCIL MEETINGS** Schulz, Amandus tapped for council seats

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - After close to 90 minutes of interviews, the Fort Madison City Council appointed Tom Schulz and Donna Amandus to fill two vacancies.

The spots have been open for more than a month due to Tyler Miller's resignation in the 3rd Ward and the untimely death of Bob Morawitz in the 2nd Ward.

The candidates got two questions from each the five sitting councilman on a variety of issues focusing on city revenues, nuisance issues, economic development.

See COUNCIL, page 8

### **ISP** Inmate throws punches at C.O.

BY PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON- According to reports from the Iowa Department of Corrections, a correctional officer was assaulted by an inmate at the Iowa State Penitentiary at approximately 2:42 p.m. on Monday.

A release issued Monday evening indicated the officer was working at their post in a living unit when an inmate, unprovoked, approached the officer and began striking them several times in the face with closed-fists.

### THEATER

### **Old Fort Players offering fall comedy skit options**

#### BY DOROTHY SCHULTE **Old Fort Players**

FORT MADISON - Vintage comedy at its best! In order to generate revenue during the pandemic lockdown, Old Fort Players has recorded the performances of several skits from The Carol

Burnett Show. Produced by special arrangement with Pioneer Drama, they are sponsored by LP Custom Photos and Passionate Heart Creations. There are four skits to entertain you. First, is "Coffee Commercial" where two gals (Amanda Greenhalge and Dorothy Schulte) just want to have a

cup of coffee and a chat and then a TV Producer (Robbie Phillips) shows up. In "Hospital Nudge" a doctor (Ty Clute) tells his George (Richard Martindale) that he will soon go under the knife. George plans to fight for his life

See OFP, page 5

Additional staff arrived quickly to take control of the aggressive inmate.

The officer was taken by department vehicle to the local hospital to be seen for injuries to the face, and has since been released.

The inmate involved in the assault was found to have not suffered any injuries. The incident remains under investigation

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### WEATHER

THU 09 Jan		۶
FRI 10 Jan	Broken Clouds, 66° F/ 52° F	2
SAT 11 Jan	Light Rain, 61º F/ 53º F	

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### Obituaries

## THOMAS J. DURGIN

Thomas J. Durgin, 65, of Burlington, IA, passed away at 9:29 a.m. on Monday, November 16, 2020 at Fort Madison Community Hospital. He was born on September 7, 1955 in Des Moines, IA to Melvin J. & Marjorie M. Clare Durgin. He married Dawn L. Malcom on August 5, 1984 at the Guthrie Grove Campground in Guthrie Center, IA. He was a truck driver



and a member of the Community of Christ Church in Burlington, where he held the office of priest. He enjoyed riding his Harley Davidson, playing cards, going on cruises and working on the Burlington Thanksgiving Day Dinner Committee, where he was in charge of the cooking.

Tom is survived by: his wife: Dawn Durgin of Burlington, IA; 1-son: Zachary (Meghan) Durgin of Dothan, AL; 2-daughters: Nichole (Tracy Barker) Coffman of Ankeny, IA & Jenni Patterson of Burlington, IA; 7-grandchildren:

Logan Patterson, Jordan Coffman, Valerie Prottsman, Drew Patterson, Gage Coffman, Anakin Durgin & Xander Durgin; 2-brothers: David (Marilyn) Durgin of Mississippi & Michael Durgin of West Des Moines, IA; 1-sister: Mary Dunn of West Des Moines, IA; 1-sister in law: Debbie Durgin of Omaha, NE & his mother in law: Trudi Malcom of South Sioux City, NE. He was preceded in death by: his parents, 1-brother: Robert Durgin, 1-brother in law: Jerry Dunn, 1-niece: Jennifer Dunn & his father in law: Wilmer Malcom.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory in Fort Madison. A private family service will be held at a later date. Online condolences to Tom's family may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: <u>www.kinglynk.com</u>.

### WILLIAM F. WOLF

William (Bill) Francis Wolf, 74, of Riverside, IA, formerly of Keokuk, died Friday, November 13, 2020 at his home in Riverside.

He was born February 21, 1946 in Carrollton, MO, the son of George H. and Nigel Parker Wolf. While on a trip in Rome, Italy with the love of his life, he proposed to Kathleen (Kathy). On November 20, 1970, Bill and Kathy were united in marriage in Chillicothe, IL. She survives.

Bill is also survived by a sister, Beverly A. Ryan of Indianapolis, IN, three nephews George M. Ryan III, William J. Ryan and David W. Winkleblack five nieces, Terri C. Nissley, Rita R. Trimble, Thais E. Priest, Katherine A. Winkleblack, and Claire E. Winkleblack, and a sister in law, Carole Winkleblack of Riverside, IA.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Bill attended Illinois Valley Central High School in Chillicothe, IL, and graduated in 1964. After high school, Bill joined the Navy. Upon his return from the Navy, he attended Canton Junior College in Canton, IL, graduating with an Associates of Arts Degree.

Bill worked for the Santa Fe Railroad as a conductor for over forty years. He retired in February of 2006. Bill was a member of the Keokuk Yacht Club and the Keokuk American Legion. Bill enjoyed fishing and traveling the world with Kathy.

A graveside service will be held at a later date.

The Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences may be made to the family at <u>vigenmemorialhome.com</u>.



DURGIN

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# Lee County News/Local News

# EMS group wants six new ambulances

#### BY CHUCK VANDENBERG PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – The committee overseeing the transition of the Lee County EMS services to county ownership is proposing to buy six new ambulances in the next six months.

After Tuesday's regular Lee County Board of Supervisor's meeting, Dennis Cosby, the director of the new ambulance service, said the committee is looking at purchasing three Type 3 ambulances, and three Type 2 ambulances prior to the county taking over the service on July 1, 2021.

Type 3 ambulances are the full service vehicles that respond to medical calls. The Type 2 ambulances are smaller ambulance vans that are primarily used for transfers.

The cost of the six would be close to \$800,000. The full-service type 3 units run between \$157,000 and \$160,000 a piece, while the smaller vehicles run between \$94,000 and \$95,000 each.

Initially the committee had looked into the cost of purchasing remounted ambulances, but Cosby said the cost to remount and the cost to purchase are closer than he expected.

"When we originally started looking at that, we thought those remount numbers would come in a little lower, but after discussing it with two of the three vendors, they both recommended that for \$17K per unit, if we buy new, we would be able to remount at least the large trucks (in the future)."

Cosby said purchasing the smaller units for transfers will help with several areas of the operational budget including keeping maintenance costs down, better fuel mileage and cheaper purchase price.

Lee County EMS is currently running with seven older fleet ambulances. Cosby said the new county operation will also need a minimum of six ambulances. However, he said they would eventually need to go to seven to keep one in maintenance rotations, but that could come down the road.

He said purchasing new would reduce the amount of time in maintenance so the fleet would be in good shape for several years.

The board agreed to put the item on the agenda for next weeks meeting to get approval to rebid for new equipment.

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# Health officials expect 100% mask usage

### DIRECTIVES - Continued from Page 1

that language is to encourage people to avoid putting themselves in high risk situations.

"If you go somewhere and people are gathering and not socially distancing or not wearing face coverings, you are putting yourself in a high risk situation for potential exposure to the virus since we do have substantial community spread," Ross said.

As with any mask recommendations, the exceptions are for children less than 2 years of age, or those with legitimate medical conditions that would preclude them from wearing a face covering.

"However, it is anticipated that the majority of people in the community can wear a face covering and 100% usage in public is expected to get the maximum benefit from this measure," the release indicated.

"During this pandemic, Lee County Board of Health asks each citizen of Lee County to immediately comply with these recommended directives to slow the transmission of the virus."

Ross said the directive is to let residents know how serious the spread is right now.

"This is a position statement from our Board of Health that was adopted this morning with the intent that people understand how serious of the public health crisis we are in," Ross said this morning.

"These are public health directives the Board feels strongly about and recommends to our county residents and visitors."

The new directive also asks residents to limit the number of interactions with people from outside the household on a regular basis, avoiding all large gatherings of people, staying home when ill, and consider being tested if you are sick or have been exposed, and follow all advice given from health care professionals.

The directive also reiterated regularly promoted safety measures including washing hands frequently with warm water and soap, usage of hand sanitizer when necessary, and regular cleaning and disinfecting of contact surfaces.

The board met in a called meeting that wasn't previously scheduled due to COVID-19 surge underway in the county. As of Tuesday morning, the county has seen 1,685 positive cases and has 17% positivity rating overall, with a 21.9% 14-day positivity rating.

Of the 1,510 Iowans currently hospitalized with COVID-19, 1,097 have COVID-19 as the primary diagnosis, the remainder were hospitalized for different reasons but tested positive for the virus.

### FMHS Alumni Hall of Honor looking for nominees

Fort Madison High School Alumni Hall of Honor was established to recognize alumni who have distinguished themselves based upon elements of academic excellence and achievement, career accomplishments, community service, personal excellence and dedication to lifelong learning. If you know of someone who fits the criteria for the Hall of Honor please send your nomination forms

to the High School by December 31, 2020. You may get a form from our website <u>www.fmcsd.org</u>, or send an email to <u>HallofHonor@</u> <u>fmcsd.org</u> and one will be sent to you.

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### Lee County News

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# Board sends digital radio bond issue to public hearing

Residents will get chance to speak on \$6.2 million proposed emergency levy on Nov. 24

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG

LEE COUNTY – A \$6.2 million revenue bond to pay for a countywide upgrade in radio communication systems was moved to a public hearing next week.

The Lee County Board of Supervisors will hold the public hearing at the beginning of next week's meeting to garner public reaction to the new tax, which will result in an overhaul of all first-responder radio systems in the county.

The levy itself is countywide and could be up to a 20-year bond depending on rates and bids on the bond.

The total estimated cost of the project is \$6.3 million, but the Public Safety Answering Point, gave the county's E911 board \$600,000 to offset some of the costs, which resulted in a preliminary ask of \$5.7 million from taxpayers.

(Support local journalism. Make your Pen City Current subscription donation here: <u>https://www.pencitycurrent.com/subscribe/</u>)

However, engineering costs on Phase 3 of the project, which is the next phase, was rolled into the bond request resulting in the \$6.2 million figure.

Since the work is part of emergency services in the county, it does not have to go in front of voters. Board Chairman Ron Fedler has previously stated that he wanted voters to make the decision, but has since stepped back from that and put the item on for a public hearing.

Voters can still petition to have a special election to approve the spend, but would have to garner signatures and present the petition to the board within two weeks after publishing the intent to issue the bonds.

In an unrelated matter, Supervisor Matt Pflug said the Lee County Board of Health issued new directives Tuesday morning around specific additional safety measures to help curtail the surging COVID-19 numbers in the county.

"The board is asking that we acknowledge their statement and a lot does mirror Gov. Reynolds statements from (Monday), with the numbers going up. Our positivity rate is 22% and it's time to get serious here," Pflug said.

"This thing is out of control – just crazy out of control."

Pflug asked Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weber if law enforcement was going to start issuing citations.

Weber said it's his position that educating people on wearing masks is still the best option, but the governor did issue more of a mandate.

"We'll do a lot of education with folks and if we see them, we'll tell them to go ahead and get a mask on," Weber said.

Governor Kim Reynolds said Monday night that there aren't enough sheriff's in Iowa's counties to enforce the mandates, so it's up to Iowans to do the right thing.

In other action, the board:

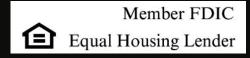
• approved a recount of the 2nd Congressional District votes in Lee County. Lee County Auditor Denise Fraise said the training process was underway for the recount, but the board just needed to approve the recount. Fraise said the margin of Mariannette Miller-Meeks win over Rita Hart was 40 votes statewide.

• approved a temporary easement with the City of Fort Madison for the future reconstruction of Hwy. 61 from 6th to 10th streets.

• heard from Budget Director Cindy Renstrom that the state had issued the county an additional \$291,000 in sales tax revenue as part of the semi-annual



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### Sports/Health News

# Governor's new mandates are better than the alternatives

### I get it.

If you're the parent of a high school athlete, I understand if you're unhappy.

The decision by Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds to limit attendance at prep sporting events to two spectators per each "athlete, performer or competitor" may seem inconvenient.

Guess what? Convenience disappeared as soon as the COVID-19 pandemic began.

And if you're not used to it by now, well...

So let's put the governor's decision into perspective. Iowa got through a summer high school season with few issues. With the crowning of state football champions this weekend, the fall season will be concluded again, with few issues.

Now the winter season is approaching, and you know what? There was a good chance that season might not have started on time.

The rumblings on Monday preceding Reynolds' emergency declaration were ominous. There was the possibility that schools might be shut down for in-person learning until after January 1, which would have meant no sports, or any extracurricular activities, at all until the beginning of 2021.

Instead, it will be left up to the school districts that



have in-person or hybrid schedules to choose whether to play.

Some have already delayed the start of the season. Some are moving forward.

It's better than nothing.

Consider what high school sports are like in Illinois right now. The winter seasons are on hold, and there's a possibility that all of the sports seasons could be crammed into a period of 4-5 months.

If you want unfairness, consider the choices athletes in that state may have to make into the coming weeks.

Reynolds' ruling angered some with the state football championships coming up. An online petition to allow more people to attend the games at the UNI-Dome in Cedar Falls had more than 3,200 signatures by Tuesday afternoon.

"This is important because, this is a once in a life time opportunity for students and parents," the petition said.

"To witness their friends and family compete in the highest level of high school football. This opportunity is never promised again, the seniors have already had enough taken from them this year and this would be the worst thing you could do to them and our community. We have made it this far, All we're asking is one more week. SEND THIS TO EVERYONE!!"

Again, I understand it. I have COVID-19 fatigue. We all do.

But this, too, must be understood — the numbers of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths are rising in Iowa, and around the nation. Which means there has to be limits. The lives affected by this virus, directly or indirectly, are what has to be considered now.

There are vaccines coming, and maybe life gets back to somewhat normal sooner rather than later.

For now, we can deal with being inconvenienced for a while longer.

Smaller crowds for winter sports events, with everyone in attendance wearing masks? Put in perspective, it could be a lot worse.

John Bohnenkamp is an award-winning sports editor and reporter, and is a regular contributor to the Pen City Current.

# **Donations trigger link to skits**

#### **OFP** - Continued from Page 1

until his wife (Amanda Greenhalge) arrives. The third skit, "Wallflowers" follows two women (Amanda Greenhalge and Dorothy Schulte) – with great personalities - who attend a dance and do their best to deal with the flirtations of a couple of eligible men (Robbie Phillips and Ty Clute).

"Bonnie & Clod" highlights Clod (Richard Martindale) who is feeling low and considering getting an honest job. When his wife (Dorothy Schulte) finds out, she decides he needs a pep talk. (Previously seen on Facebook LIVE, we've corrected a few mishaps and improved the audio.)

Last but not least, enjoy some "Out-Takes." Go behind the scenes of just a few of our screwups and goofs that didn't quite make it into the final cut. To view these skits, you'll need a Facebook account and either a

Paypal account or a credit card. Starting November 21st, you can simply go to https://www.paypal.com/ donate?hosted\_button\_ id=E6CRBCUKE8TXE to make your donation. For \$6 or more, you will receive a 7-day VIP link to our special Facebook viewing page where you can watch these hilarious skits as often as you like.

After OFP has received your donation, we'll email you the VIP link and a promo code. These will be sent to the email address you entered when you donated. Just click on that VIP link to our special Facebook viewing page and type in your code to begin viewing! (You will be able to react and comment on the videos, but not share them.)

December 15th, whichever comes first.

The Old Fort Players have been entertaining the community since 1981 are located in downtown Fort Madison at 725 Avenue G. Call 319-372-9559 for more information. Like them on Facebook or visit <u>www.oldfortplay-</u> ers.com to keep up with everything that's going on at the theater.

### LCHD is reporting 17 additional cases added to the total case count in the last 24 hours.

Total Positive Cases (as of 3:30pm 11/17/2020)	1,686
Total Cases Reported as Recovered	888
Current 14-day average Positivity Rate (number of people tested positive/number tested in last 14 days)	21.8%

LCHD continues to encourage the public to practice social distancing, wash your hands, avoid large crowds where social distancing is not possible, and to #MaskUpLeeCounty.



VIP links and access codes will be emailed on November 28th by 7:30 pm. Your access will expire 7 days from the day you receive your code or



Wearing a mask in public helps stop the spread of infected droplets

Wash your hands like your life depended on it! Wash frequently touched surfaces often.



Being in close contact

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spreads the virus. Avoid large gatherings

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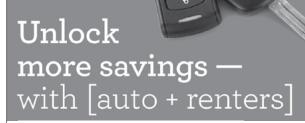
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### **Classifieds/Public Notices**

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### **PUBLIC NOTICES**

**PUBLIC NOTICE** AGENDA FORT MADISON **PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES** Date: Thursday, November 19, 2020 Time: 5:30 P.M. Place: Sheaffer Meeting **Room and Online** 

**Electronic Meeting** (Pursuant to Iowa Code Section 21.8)

An electronic meeting is being held because a meeting in person is impossible or impractical for the health and safety of Library Board members, library employees and the public presented by COVID-19. You can participate in the meeting via telephone and can comment on an agenda item by joining the Zoom meeting.

Using your telephone, dial (312) 626 6799 and enter the meeting ID (857 6432 7073) when prompted. If you have trouble connecting to the meeting, please call (319) 372-5721.

I. Excused absences – II. Approval of Agenda –

**III.** Public Comments IV. Approval of minutes a. Regular Meeting October 15 V. Approval of the Bills

a. Approval of November 2020 Bills VI. Correspondence

VII. Director's Report

- a. Financial b. Personnel
- c. Programming
- d. Collection Develop-

ment

e. Operations

f. Facilities

g. Professional VIII. Unfinished Business

IX. New Business a. Budget discussion i. Anything to consider apart of building maintenance?

ii. Library employee salaries

b. Adjustment to library policy in light of the State of Iowa Executive Order dated November 16.

i. Face masks ii. Use of Sheaffer Meeting Room Next Meeting - Thurs-

day, January 21, 2020, 5:30 pm Fort Madison Public Library

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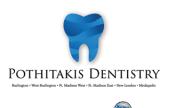
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Please contact Brian Graham, Search Committee Chair - Holy Trinity Board of Education, with any questions at brian@holytrinityschools.org.

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### Lee County News/From the Front



### Cities show support for wildlife project

Courtesy photos

Above, Mayor Matt Mohrfeld presents a 'Resolution of Support' to Lee County Conservation Board President Tom Pollpeter and J.R. Noll, Project Liaison, as support for a proposed project that would resurrect old islands inundated in 1913 by the building of the Keokuk dam. In addition, restoration of riverine features which encourage growth of feedstocks for fish, ducks, and a plethora of other animals commonly found in this area. These features will likely produce many new outdoor opportunities for recreation as well. At right, Keokuk Mayor Tom Richardson presents a similar resolution to Noll.

## Lee County Jail inmate dies Tuesday morning

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG

LEE COUNTY – An inmate at Lee County Jail was found unresponsive Tuesday morning and was pronounced dead at Fort Madison Community Hospital later in the day.

According to Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weber, the incident has been investigated by the Iowa Department of Criminal Investigation and at this time no foul play is suspected.

The inmate, Carl Linn Washburn, 47, was found in his cell unresponsive at about 7:20 a.m.

"Correctional Officers began CPR and administered an (automated external defibrilator) in attempts to revive Mr. Washburn. Deputies, Fort Madison Fire and Rescue, and Lee County EMS all arrived and assisted as well, but shortly after being transported to the Fort Madison Community Hospital ER, Mr. Washburn was pronounced dead," Weber indicated in a release Tuesday night.

Weber said he contacted the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigations to investigate out of an abundance of caution.

Mr. Washburn was brought to jail earlier Tuesday morning by Keokuk Police Department on charges of Operating While Intoxicated.

No other information can be released at this time Weber said he and his staff wish to express their condolences to Mr. Washburn's family at this terrible time.



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### Chapman loses on first nomination 2-3

#### COUNCIL - Continued from Page 1

Schulz was voted in on a 5-0 vote after a nomination from councilman Chad Cangas. Amandus was voted in on a 4-1 vote after Cangas' nomination of Mike Chapman was defeated 2-3 with Councilwoman Rebecca Bowker voting fifth and casting a no vote breaking a 2-2 tie.

After being sworn in by Mayor Mohrfeld, Schulz and Amandus took positions for the regular agenda.

Jerry Hamelton, a candidate for 2nd Ward filed a petition that has yet to be verified. If verified, that petition would force a special election on December 29th, according to Lee County Auditor Denise Fraise.

Originally Fraise said the election would be January 5th, but further investigation turned up the election had to take place with 90 days of Morawitz death which changed the date.

The other candidate for 3rd Ward was Brian Peterschmidt.



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