

PEN CITY CURRENT

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

Tuesday, July 6, 2021 | 7 pages | Volume 5 • Issue 132



www.pencitycurrent.com

Late mayor's daughter in health fight

CANCER BACK: Steve Ireland's daughter was in remission, now in fight for life

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – After losing her dad to a battle with lung cancer, and fighting off triple negative breast cancer, Jessica Kempker, is now staring the dreaded disease straight in the face again.

Kempker is the daughter of former Fort Madison Mayor Steve Ireland. Ireland married Kempker's mother when Jessica was just a year old and she said he's always been her dad.

Watching Steve try to knock back his battle with cancer in 2012 has her geared up for yet another fight. Steve succumbed to the disease that year, but Jessica was able to push her cancer into remission all the way up to just a month ago.

"I can't believe how quickly it happened. I saw my oncologist on May 5 and all my labs were perfect," she said Monday in an interview from her home in Dunkerton, Iowa, near Waterloo.

"My husband and I own a fishing resort in Canada, which we still can't open because of COVID, but we were getting ready

See **CANCER**, page 3



Courtesy image

Jessica Kempker, pictured here with husband Sean Anderson and their son Hank, is the daughter of former Mayor Steve Ireland and is fighting cancer for the second time. Cancer took the life of Ireland in 2012.

OLD FORT PLAYERS

OFP to offer two youth productions

BY DOROTHY SCHULTE
OLD FORT PLAYERS

FORT MADISON – Thanks to a generous grant from the United Way, Old Fort Players Youth Theater Program is a go for 2021. "Because we've been away from the stage for so long, we decided to expand our age limit and break the young people into two groups," Director Richar Abel told us.

The younger group (10-14) will perform a short version of "The Wizard of Oz" based on the book by Frank Baum and adapted by Carmella Gates. It is published by Classic Acts. The older group (15-18) will star in their own production of "The Rehearsal." Both shows will perform the same weekend with a short intermission in between. "The Rehearsal" written by Don Zolidis, is produced by special arrange-

See **SHOWS**, page 7



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

At far right, Juniper Strickland blows bubbles out of the back of pickup as a group of Children from Hilltop Child Care ride the Charlie Korschgen Kiddie Parade route just before 11 a.m. Saturday in Fort Madison.

KORSCHGEN PARADE

Children get perfect day for annual 4th of July parade

BY PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON – Prize results from the 109th Annual Charlie Korschgen 4th of July Kiddie Parade were released after the parade's completion on Saturday morning in Fort

Madison.

Residents lined Avenue G from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. as the children and adults alike dressed in patriotic red, white, and blue garb and adorned unicycles, bicycle, wagons and other motorized and non-motorized vehicles

to honor our country's birthday.

Grandma Mary Beth Orton holds Prizes were awarded to the best adorned and dressed parade entries and were announced

See **PARADE**, page 2

CITY NEWS

FM man tased after fleeing from police

BY PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON – A Fort Madison man was tased Monday afternoon by a Fort Madison Police officer after attempting to flee during a warrant service.

Nathan Eric Washburne, 43, of Fort Madison was arrested in the 2700 block of Avenue O on a warrant for voluntary absence from custody.

He was also charged with interference with official acts for attempting to flee from the officer resulting in him being tased. The officer stopped at a residence on the block to see if Washburne was present to serve him with the warrant, when he tried to run.

Washburne was taken into custody and transported to Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center in Fort Madison for an evaluation before being taken to Lee County Jail.

Suspects are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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WEATHER

OpenWeatherMap
TUE 06 JulOvercast, 85° F/ 67° F
WED 07 JulRain, 82° F/ 63° F
THU 08 JulOvercast, 70° F/ 59° F

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Obituaries/From the Front

OBITUARIES

MARILYN A. WALKER

Marilyn A. Walker, 83, of Ft. Madison, IA died Thursday, July 1, 2021 at the Montrose Health Center in Montrose, IA.

She was born March 11, 1938 in Keokuk the daughter of Roy and Lulu Goodrich Inman.



WALKER

On April 15, 1962 she was united in marriage to Stanley Eugene Walker. He preceded her in death on November 28, 2020.

Marilyn had been employed by Southeastern Community College as the secretary to the dean for forty-two years.

She was a member of Calvary Community Church in Keokuk.

Marilyn had a lifelong love of music. She was a talented organist and enjoyed traveling to gospel music concerts. She kept her mind sharp by working crossword puzzles. Marilyn loved to travel, especially to Hawaii where she had visited fifteen times. She was an avid NASCAR fan and liked watching races on Sunday.

She is survived by her brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, Robert Walker, Rovene (Ronald) Cochran, Melba (Jim) Crago, Harold (Florence) Walker, Patricia (Wayne) Marshall and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents and sister-in-law, Wanda Walker.

A graveside service will be held at 11 a.m., Saturday, July 3 in the Sandusky Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to the Shriners Hospitals for Children.

Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.vigenmemorialhome.com.

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.

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OBITUARIES

EDWARD L. MCDOWELL

Edward Leo McDowell, 67, of Montrose, passed away on Wednesday, June 30, 2021, at Mississippi Valley Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center.

Edward was born on February 6, 1954, in Keokuk, Iowa, the son of Edward Leo and Dorothy Lee (Sinclair) McDowell. He graduated from Cardinal Stritch High School in 1972, and on November 23, 1986, he was united in marriage to Heather Ann Cline at the Church of All Saints in Keokuk. She preceded him in death on May 4, 2017.

Edward held numerous jobs in the Keokuk area, finishing his working career at Case in Burlington. He enjoyed spending most of his free time working on cars and drag racing.

Edward is survived by his son Cameron (Brittnie Terhune) McDowell of Farmington, Iowa; three sisters: Margaret Finton of Warsaw, Kathleen Farfel of Westminster, Colorado, and Dorothy (Jim) Wallace of Kersey, Colorado; his beloved puppy Tucker; and many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews and cousins.

Edward is preceded in death by his parents and his wife Heather.

Edward's life will be celebrated with a graveside service at 2:30 pm on Saturday, July 3, 2021, at Sandusky Cemetery. A gathering of friends and family will be held at the cemetery from 2 to 2:30 pm directly before the service.

Memorials may be directed to the family in care of Cameron McDowell.

Tributes and condolences may be left at www.dejongsfuneralhome.com.

DeJong-Greaves-Printy Funeral Home of Keokuk is in charge of arrangements.

Korschgen parade announces winners

PARADE - Continued from Page 1

as follows:

In the 100 series for best

decorate trike or stroller:

Margaret Biddens - 1st

place

Sam Jeffries - 2nd place

200 series - Best decorated

wagon or float

Jonah Carr - 1st place

Avalyn Robinson - 2nd

place

Charlie Park - 3rd place

300 - Walking Marching

Unit

Lyssa Roscum and Kinzlyn

and Hazel - 1st place

Hartman Flores Group -

2nd place

400 - Decorated Bike/

Scooter (8 and under)

Gracie Leonard - 1st Place

Gracie Marshall - 2nd place

Jacob Moehn - 3rd place

The Fort Madison and

Holy Trinity marching bands

joined together to make a

large marching band pres-

ence at Saturday's Charlie

Korschgen Kiddie Parade in

Fort Madison.

500 - Pets

Jr, Sis, and Nathan Hayes -

1st Place

Dani Campbell - 2nd place

Tanner Hellige - 3rd place

600 - Humerous

Jacob Walker - 1st Place

Tyler Martin - 2nd place

Maddie and Mason Pohl-

peter - 3rd place

700 - Family Group

Kanon and Kora Sanders

Lauren and Collin Andrews

800 - Patriotic

Blind Family - 1st Place

Carter and Addison Hardy

- 2nd place

Aunika King - 3rd place

900 - Decorated bike/

scooter (9 and up)

Violet Arnold - 1st place

Maddy Farber - 2nd place

Sophia Fullenkamp - 3rd

place.

1000 - Motorized

Creative Edge Daycare - 1st

Place

Old Fort Players - 2nd

Place

Corbin Strunk - 3rd Place-

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From the Front

GoFundMe page set up to help Kempker family get needed funding

CANCER - Continued from Page 1

to head back up there. But I started having trouble breathing and went to the ER and it's back."

But this time the breast cancer cells have spread to her liver, spine, lungs, and brain. Kempker said her oncologist is keeping things very realistic and has her scheduled for 10 rounds of whole brain radiation and chemotherapy.

"My doctor is very realistic and said they were giving me months and hopefully years to live. I am obviously looking for more than that."

With the cancer having spread throughout her body, Kempker said initially she wasn't optimistic, but her husband Sean, who is typically the glass-half empty person, is optimistic about winning the fight.

"I'm usually the one who's optimistic about things, but this has been tough. But now I've come back around to thinking I'm gonna win. I can't imagine leaving my boys."

Kempker and Sean have two children Hank, 5, and George, 3 months.

The triple negative breast cancer is the worst kind of breast cancer in terms of treatment options because it isn't receptive to estrogen, progesterone or proteins. She went through eight rounds of chemotherapy three years ago and a bilateral mastectomy and finally found remission.

"Now it's come back – and it's kind of everywhere," she said.

"I've always been a very happy and bubbly person. I constantly remind myself I don't want to leave my boys. And then I think, dammit, why me. But at the same time, I have to beat this and that's what drives me. I'm going to force myself to do the things I need to do, like eat when I'm not hungry.

"I always said if I got cancer I would let it take me because I saw what it did to my aunts, but once you have a child it changes you, and you do everything you can to be with your kids. That's pushed me."

She said the radiation will be a new treatment because it's in her brain this time. Kempker watched Steve, who's legally her stepdad, fight through radiation.

"I remember this mask he had to wear and when he died someone asked what we should do with the mask. I wanted to get rid of it because it reminded of his death. But I found out it's still in the basement at the house and I said keep it and we'll burn both of them together."

The family has set up a GoFundMe page with a \$50,000 goal to help with Kempker's medical and other costs associated with the fight she's up against. That link can be accessed by clicking here: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/m9w6g-team-jessica?qid=a714a5f80047529e99ba9cc152152f7c>.

Kempker said cancer has taken a very heavy toll on her family. All four of her aunts were



Courtesy Image

Jessica Kempker is pictured here with her son Hank, far right, George middle, and a niece, at the end of May. Kempker is battling cancer after doctors said she was in remission just a month ago.

diagnosed with breast cancer on her biological father's side of the family. She also had a grandmother with lymphoma and a grandfather who had mesothelioma.

Her doctors warned her that the cancer could come back.

"With triple negative if it comes back it's usually within the first two years. They did give a warning of that, but they said it was safe to have another baby because the cancer isn't hormone receptive and the baby would be fine."

She offered up advice to those reading and hearing about her story.

"Don't be afraid to get checked out. People are so scared to go the doctor and get checked or get a mammogram," she said.

"Just do it. I want people to know it is scary, it's always been scary for me. But you know your body. I've been getting mammograms since I was 29 and doing self checks. I found this cancer because I was doing the right things. Just don't be afraid to get checked," she said.

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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.

Thank for reading!

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BLOODHOUND BASEBALL

Hounds drop two, Southeast title to Burlington

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

BURLINGTON – Despite losing two close games and letting the Southeast Conference title slip away, Fort Madison Head Coach Ron Walker said he's happy with the Hounds effort in a 4-2, 2-1 sweep at the hands of the Burlington Grayhounds Monday night.

Although the scores show a couple of tight baseball games at Community Field, it seemed like the Fort Madison Bloodhounds couldn't ever get any momentum going until the final innings of both games.

In the opener, Burlington jumped out to a 3-0 lead after three innings. Sophomore Mateo Rascon hit a sacrifice fly to Fort Madison centerfielder Tate Johnson scoring Brendon Hale from third for a first inning 1-0 lead.

Jake Zahner was dealing for the Grayhounds and struck out five of the first six batters he faced, four swinging.

In the top of the third Aidan Pennock took a pitch between his shoulder blades for Fort Madison's first base runner. Kane Williams moved him over with a bunt and then Landes Williams singled to right to put runners at 1st and 3rd with two outs. Walker put the hit-and-run on, and Jason Thurman hit a bouncer up the middle that Rascon was able to back hand on the run and throw Thurman out at first.

"Jason did an excellent job of executing that, but they made a great play up the middle or that would have been a run scored," Walker said.

Juan Reyes would hit a one-out single to deep shortstop and then Taylor Bunton would double to left center to score Reyes for a 4-0 lead. Kane Williams would get the next two outs to retire the side.

After each side went 1-2-3 in the fifth, Landes Williams opened the sixth with a single followed by Jason Thurman's RBI double to right field to cut the lead to 4-1

Vasin Thurman and Reiburn Turnbull would both record outs and then Tate Johnson would lace a liner down the right field line scoring Thurman. Juan Reyes was shading Johnson a bit to the foul line and ran the ball down in a hurry and then fire to second to get Johnson trying to stretch a double.

Burlington's Mateo Rascon (5) gets ready to apply a tag to Tate Johnson (13) who was trying to stretch a drive down the right field line into a double in the sixth inning of the Hounds' opening game loss to BHS. Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Williams again would get the Grayhounds in order in the bottom half. The Bloodhounds would start the top of the 7th with a couple swinging strikeouts. Pennock would get on with an error at first, but a Zahner strike out would wrap things up.

Landes Williams had two hits to lead Fort Madison at the plate. Jason and Vasin Thurman each had hits and Johnson had the other hit. Kane Williams went the distance giving up eight hits and four runs, all earned while striking out two and walking one.

In the nightcap, Reyes held the Bloodhounds to just three hits and no runs through six innings, but the Hounds made a run of things in the seventh.

Johnson grounded out to open the top of the frame. Reiburn Turnbull walked and then Garrett Hannum, who had two of the Hounds hits in the nightcap, doubled moving Turnbull to third.

Colton Engeman would then score Turnbull on a fielder's choice ground out to second for the second out, but Hannum advanced to third representing the tying run. Reyes, who struck out eight going the distance, got Pennock swinging to end the game.

Landes Williams went 4 1/3 and give up both runs one earned on five hits. Jason Thurman came on in relief in the fifth and gave up two hits while striking out two.

Walker said he wasn't surprised by anything that the Grayhounds did, and was happy with how the Bloodhounds competed.

"Nothing surprised tonight. I told the kids at (batting practice) today and again tonight after the first game that it didn't matter if we came out and lost game 1 or got swept or won both," Walker said. "What matters is how we play and how we compete. I'm real happy. I told the kids to keep their heads up."

Walker said Fort Madison has had really close games with some of the best teams in the state losing all 6 games by a total of 12 runs.

"Those are good losses. Losses aren't fun, but they are part of the game and very few teams run the table in the baseball season at any level. We played hard and competed against a two big arms and great ball club. We came out and competed. We're shooting for the end of the year here."

The Bloodhounds take on Van Buren at 7 p.m. in Fort Madison Tuesday. The game scheduled with New London has been canceled for Wednesday. Then the Hounds wrap up the regular season next week with two games at Keokuk on July 12, and two games at (19-10) Muscatine on the 13th.

Class 3A Regional action starts on Friday, July 16 with a team to be named later. The Hounds will likely get Central DeWitt, Keokuk, or Mt. Pleasant in a first round game most likely in Fort Madison starting at 7 p.m. But those details have not been finalized by the IHSAA as of Monday.

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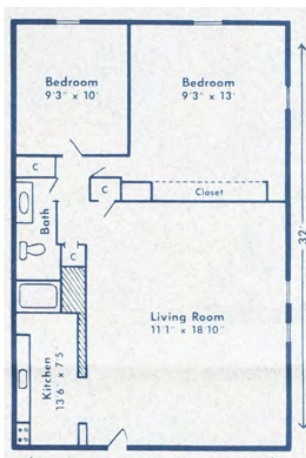
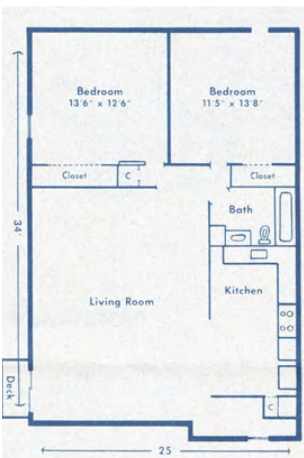


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From the Front

Youth shows hit stage in July

OFP - Continued from Page 1

ment with Playscripts, Inc. (www.playscripts.com)

“The Wizard of Oz” is the classic tale of a Kansas farm girl transported by a cyclone to the magical land of Oz. There she meets all sorts of colorful characters who help her on her journey of discovery complete with flying monkeys and a little dog, too. Dorothy may learn that there is no place like home, but it certainly is fun to go on an adventure every now and then especially when you can hitch a ride on a tornado.

“The Wizard of Oz” cast is as follows: Dorothy – Aida Troutman, Auntie Em – Mallory Troutman, Scarecrow – Sofia Gilbert, Tin Woodman – MaKenzie Daly, The Cowardly Lion – Sunshine Zioui, Queen of Field Mice – Chloe Smith, Doorman – Xandra Abel, The Wizard – Oscar Bauswell, Glinda the Good Witch of the North – Iley Troutman, Wicked Witch of the West – Aubrey Davis, Mayor of Munchkin Land – Cassidy Smith.

“Asleep in the Poppies” From The Wizard of Oz: Left to Right – lying down – Aida Troutman, Sunshine Zioui, standing: Makenzie Daly, Piper Shafer. Photo courtesy of Old Fort Players

Filling various roles as Munchkins, Wolves, Crows, Queens Soldiers, Winged Monkeys – Ellena Kellum, Jaxyn Kellum, Arya Sutton, Braelynn Menard Kellum.

“The Rehearsal” follows the antics of teenagers cast in their high school musical “Guys and Dolls.” There’s only one problem, a few of the cast members would rather be doing “Wicked” and they keep interjecting lines from the

wrong show. The Stage Manager is a bit of a tyrant with a list of rules as long as your arm and there don’t seem to be enough boys in the cast which has them wondering if they should rename it “Dolls and Dolls.” One of the few boys has to keep reminding everyone, “I will not wear tights,” while another actor, frustrated with not being cast in the lead reminds the Director, “My mother is on the school board, you know.”

“It’s a really funny script and the older kids are having a blast with it. Those that are here for the earlier rehearsal time are even helping out with the younger kids. So they are learning twice as much about theater – acting as well as directing,” Angela Sanford said. Sanford’s lending Abel some much needed help during the production.

“The Rehearsal” cast is as follows: Miss Henderson – Mallory Troutman, Julie – Sydney Amberger, Deb & Girl 1 – Piper Schafer, Angela & Mike – Xandra Abel, Morgan & Girl 4 – Olivia Shields, Guy – Oscar Bauswell, Barry & Tyler – Juniper Strickland, Savannah & Girl 2 – Emily Kayser, Girl 3 – Elianna Kerriker, Jessie & Darrel – Rosie Strickland, Jim – Gregory Waters.

Performances run July 23, 24 & 25, 2021. Evening shows begin at 7:30 and the Sunday matinee begins at 2:00 pm. Tickets will be available online July 9th and the link to purchase will be posted on www.oldfortplayers.com and the theater’s Facebook page. Adult tickets are \$8 and Students get in for \$5. For those wanting to pay cash or credit for tickets at the door, you

can and should reserve your seat by phone or Facebook Messenger.

This past season would have been Old Fort Players’ 40th anniversary but the celebration has been postponed until the next full season can be scheduled. The theater is located in downtown Fort Madison at 725 Avenue G. Send a Facebook message, send an email to oldfortplayersfm@gmail.com or call 319-372-9559 for more information. Like them on Facebook (Fb@oldfortplayers) or visit www.oldfortplayers.com to keep up with everything that’s going on at the theater.



Stage Manager and her Assistant” from ‘The Rehearsal’ - Left to Right: Xandra Abel, Elianna Kerriker, Sydney Amberger. Youth performances start July 23 with a 7:30 p.m. show.

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