

PEN CITY CURRENT

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

Wednesday, October 21, 2020 | 9 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 191



www.pencitycurrent.com

Branstad stops in FM



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Former Iowa Governor and U.S. Ambassador to China Terry Branstad made a campaign stop with the Fort Madison Rotary Club Tuesday afternoon.

ROTARY: Ambassador stops on campaign swing to talk China, candidates

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Former Iowa Governor and U.S. Ambassador to China Terry Branstad flew into Fort Madison Tuesday for a quick campaign stop.

Branstad spent just over three years in China and said it was the longest time he'd ever been away from Iowa.

"First of all, I'm gonna say I'm delighted to be back in Iowa," Branstad said with a chuckle.

He said it was challenging time to be ambassador to China. China is the biggest economic competitor to the United States

and Branstad said President Donald Trump has been successful at creating a more level playing field with the second largest economy in the world.

He said one of the biggest issues was getting fairness and reciprocity in trade and Trump did things the U.S. hasn't been successful at in the past three decades.

"That was a long, hard battle. President Trump had the courage to do something that past presidents haven't done in last 20 to 30 years and that's insist that we be treated fairly and have a trade agreement to open opportunities for America in terms of

See **ROTARY**, page 8

COUNCIL MEETING

Council backs off special election

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – And round and round we go.

The Fort Madison City Council voted unanimously Tuesday night to not put forth a special election for two vacant council seats, and proceed with potential appointments to fill seats in the 3rd and 2nd wards.



LAIR

The vacancies were created by the resignation of Tyler Miller in the 3rd Ward and the death of Bob Morawitz on Sept. 30 in Ward 2.

The move sets the stage for the city to publish on Nov. 2, an intent to

See **COUNCIL**, page 8

COUNTY NEWS

Supervisors OK shooting range north of FM

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – County officials gave a nod of support Tuesday morning to plan to open a shooting range north of Fort Madison.

The shooting range is planned to be located at 2958 County Road 103 about five minutes north of the city west of the airport.

Supervisors said they all received emails in support of the proposal submitted by Jim Seitz, of Seitz Firearms LLC.

The facility will be built on Seitz' property, according to a letter to Lee County Attorney Ross Braden in September.

Seitz is looking to sell firearms from his residence and construct a 140-yard range

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FOOD PANTRY

HTC alum putting together food drive for food pantry

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – A 2019 Holy Trinity Catholic graduate is doubling down on a food drives she's done over the past few years for the local food pantry.

Maille Sheerin, of Fort Madison, is putting the event together with a drop-off slated for Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon at the Fort Madison Food Pantry at 3405 Avenue L, across from McDonalds in Fort Madison.

Sheerin said she has a passion for the

food pantry's efforts and has always been looking for ways to assist the group's efforts to serve.

"I fell in love with the food pantry three years ago, and my love for the

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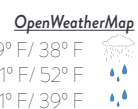
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WEATHER

WED 21 Oct..... Light Rain, 59° F/ 38° F
THU 22 Oct..... Warm and Rainy, 81° F/ 52° F
FRI 23 Oct..... Rain, 71° F/ 39° F



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For the Record/From the Front

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report

10/19/20 – 4:22 p.m.
 – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 1500 block of Avenue M.
 10/19/20 – 11:01 p.m.
 – Fort Madison Police cited Michael Joseph Snook, 43, of Fort Madison on a charge of driving while barred.
 10/20/20 – 5:03 a.m.
 – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a stolen vehicle in the 1200 block of Avenue F.

taken to Lee County Jail. 10/20/20 – 4:29 a.m.
 – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Taylem Brett Brown, 38, of Westfield, Mass, at the sheriff's office on a charge of criminal mischief. He was taken to Lee County Jail. 10/20/20 – 7:54 a.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Alexander Xavier Luna, 31, of Fort Madison, at the sheriff's office on warrants for driving under suspension. *Those listed above are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.*

Lee County Sheriff's Report

10/19/20 – 7:20 p.m.
 – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Braedon Colby Tinder, 21, of Keokuk, at the sheriff's office, on a warrant for violation of probation. He was

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report
 10/19/20 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to three medical calls, one gas leak, and one carbon monoxide test.

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Sheerin holding food pantry drive Saturday

FOOD - Continued from P.1

volunteers and the pantry itself only grows," Sheerin said.

HTC graduate Maille Sheerin stands with food from a previous food drive she did for the Fort Madison Food Pantry. Sheerin is holding another food drive drop-off at the Food Pantry Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon on the backside of the facility.

"The feeling I get when I see our community coming together to do something like this is something indescribable. I have done two separate donations over the summer and they were very successful! I am hoping to make this one even bigger than before!"



Courtesy photo

2019 Holy Trinity graduate Maille Sheerin is holding a food drive drop-off at the Fort Madison Food Pantry on Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon.

Food donations can be dropped off on the back side of the Food Pantry and Sheerin said any donations are valued, but specific items are needed as the holidays approach.

Those items include:

personal hygiene items; regular size bottles of soaps/hand sanitizers; any canned vegetables (kidney beans, chili beans, pork and beans, mixed veggies, corn, green beans, etc; Ramen noo-

dles/pasta; cereal; juice; scalloped potatoes/boxed potatoes; corn bread mix; peanut butter; cake mix/brownie mix; frosting; crispy fried onions; cream of mushroom soup/any soups; and stuffing mixes.

Supervisors make plea for mask wearing

SUPERVISORS - Continued from Page 1

from shooting positions to a 12-foot tall earthen berm south down range that is 12 feet wide at its base. A 12-foot by 24-foot wooden structure with a tin roof is also planned at the shooting position.

Seitz indicated there is an additional 40 to 50 acres of timber behind the berm, all within his property boundaries.

Seitz said he anticipates the range being open from 5 p.m. to dusk Monday through Friday and from 9 a.m. to dusk on the weekends.

Board Chairman Ron Fedler said the county received a stack of emails in support of the shooting range, and he had one phone call opposing it.

The measure passed unanimously.

In other action, the board passed a resolution, 5-0, to authorize the county to enter into a loan agreement with Zion Bank Corp. of Salt Lake City for \$1.075 million on bonds for installation of a new digital camera system for Lee County Jail and repairs needed at other county facilities.

Supervisor Gary Folluo also reminded citizens that coronavirus case counts in Lee County are on the rise again and people need to be vigilant about wearing masks and taking recommended precautions such as frequent hand washing, sanitizing and social distancing.

"Nobody wants government intervention, but nobody wasn't people sick and dying either. Pay attention to what your doing and let's get through this as best we can," Folluo said.

Fedler said he lost a friend last week to the virus, and although he didn't support fining people for not adhering to recommendations, he agreed that people should be wearing masks.

"It's proven that masks help. I'm not saying there 100%, but I would like everybody in the city, county, state and federally to please wear a mask and think about the people around you," he said.

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Obituaries

OBITUARIES

KEVIN L. TRIPP

Kevin Lynn Tripp, 62 of Keokuk, IA died Saturday, October 17, 2020 at the University of Iowa Hospital.

He was born July 19, 1958 in Keokuk, IA the son of George and Shirley Hammel Bell.



TRIPP

Kevin was united in marriage in 1991 to Alice Ruth Johnson in Keokuk. She survives.

Other survivors include four sons, Charles Bittner of Keokuk, Robert Williams (Rebecca) of Keokuk, Zachariah Robert Lynn Tripp of Keokuk and Kevin Lynn Tripp, Jr. of Keokuk, two daughters, Jessica Schmelzer (McCory Slemmons, Sr.) of Arkansas and Alice C. Tripp (Jonathan Keefe) of Keokuk, twenty-two grandchildren with one on the way. He is also survived by five sisters, Carolyn Tripp, Penny Corbin, Mary Starr, Lori Chadaline and Stacie Bell (Nancy) and two brothers, Bobbie Tripp and Chuck Tripp.

He was preceded in death by his parents, son-in-law, Carl Schmelzer, brothers-in-law, David Starr, Dan Starr and Junior Corbin, sisters-in-law, Patricia Tripp, Lucille Bruehl, Rose James and Tressie McPherson, nephews, Brian Bell and "J.R." Wayne Sanders, and mother and father-in-law, Darlene Lille and Jesse Johnson.

Kevin had been employed as a Union laborer for twenty years, until his retirement in 2016.

He was a member of the Salvation Army in Keokuk and Laborers International Union of North America Local 538.

Kevin was an outdoorsman and spent as much time as he could fishing, hunting and mushroom hunting. He enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren, great-grandchildren. He also adored his pets, Allie, Gracie and Mr. Kitty.

Private family services will be held at a later date.

Memorials may be made to the Tripp family.

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

Pen City Current obituary policy

The 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.

OBITUARIES

CATHY L. MEYERS

Cathy L. Meyers, 70 of Madeira Beach, FL formerly of Montrose, IA died peacefully October 14, 2020 at the University of Iowa Hospital, surrounded by her children.

Cathy was born April 4, 1950 in Keokuk, IA the daughter of John (Jack) and Elsie Weirather. On December 27, 1965, she married Paul Meyers, they recently celebrated their 54th wedding anniversary.

Cathy was a dedicated mother first and foremost. She treasured her children and embraced every moment with them. She especially loved her role as Grandma. Cathy's love for her grandchildren was a love without condition. They could count on her to listen, to comfort, to help. She enjoyed watching them grow and rarely missed any of their activities, often traveling from Florida to special events and streaming live on the internet to watch. She was their biggest fan. Cathy had a special connection with each one of them and treasured her time alone when they would travel to Florida for visits. She was also "Grandma" to many of their friends. Cathy was the life of the party and her vivacious personality would always make people laugh. She made friends everywhere she went. Cathy left a special place of herself in each of us, and asked for nothing in return.

Cathy is survived by her daughters, Tracy Woodley of Donnellson, IA, Lori Hickey and her husband Dan of Keokuk, one son, Carl Meyers and his wife Julie of Montrose, IA, seven grandchildren, Chloe and Sophie Woodley, Kelsey and Brett Azinger, Taylor Hickey, Savannah and Ashton Meyers, one great-grandson, Beckett Meyers Azinger. She is also survived by four sisters-in-law, Patty Schlobohm of Raleigh, NC, Sue Crawford and her husband Randy of Bedford, TX, Kathy Meyers of Macomb, IL and Michelle Hageman of Keokuk, four brothers-in-law, Dick Meyers and his wife Gail of Keokuk, Don Meyers and his wife Jeri of Ft. Madison, IA, Kevin Meyers of Montrose, IA, Chris Meyers and his wife Stephanie of Keokuk and many aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Paul on March 9, 2020, daughter, Catherine Marie, great-granddaughter, Nora Ann Azinger, two brothers-in-law, Carl and Steve, her parents, John and Elsie Weirather and parents-in-law, Paul and Elizabeth Meyers.

There will be no services.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Cathy's honor to Keokuk Area Community Foundation, Oakland Cemetery-Improvements for Nora c/o 1426 Grand Ave., Keokuk, IA 52632.

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

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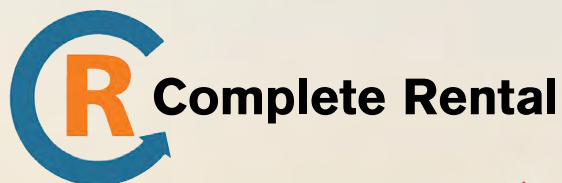
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Sports

Mt. Pleasant ends Lady Hounds volleyball season

Bailey announces retirement from coaching after loss

BY JOHN BOHNENKAMP
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – It was a close match. But you win close matches by getting long scoring runs, and Fort Madison’s volleyball team couldn’t do that in Tuesday’s 25-20, 25-20, 25-22 loss to Mount Pleasant in a Class 4A Region 8 quarterfinal at Fort Madison High School.



BAILEY

The Bloodhounds (11-18) only had two runs of four or more points as the Panthers (15-16) steadily held on to each game.

“We just couldn’t put together two points, three points, when we needed them,” Fort Madison coach Kent Bailey said. “We would serve a ball out. We

would hit an easy ball out. We couldn’t get into sync.”

Fort Madison had leads in the first two games, and just when it looked like the Panthers were in control in the third game, had a seven-point run that tied the game at 18. Reyna Lampe had three kills in that run, part of her eight-kill night.

But Mount Pleasant was able to close out the win and advance to Thursday’s semifinal against Burlington High School in Burlington.

“Give Mount Pleasant credit,” Bailey said “They made us work. They dug out balls, made us take an extra swing. Give them credit. They did the job.

“They found holes in our defense. But the bigger thing was they dug up everything we hit. That made our hitters have to try to get more, and we couldn’t do it.”



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Fort Madison’s Kailyn Guzman goes for a kill in the 2nd set of Tuesday’s three-set loss to Mt. Pleasant in Class 4A Regional volleyball. The loss ends Fort Madison’s season.

The Bloodhounds had a chance to set an early tone in the first game. They tied the game at 20, but Mount Pleasant scored the final five points.

They also made a late run in the second game, getting to within 23-20 before the Panthers closed out the match with back-to-back points.

“This was a great group of young ladies,” Bailey said. “I came to the gym every day enjoying coaching them. They’ve worked hard. It’s been one of those years when you never knew what to expect. But we made it to the end, and they appreciate that.”

Lauren Bailey was 16-16 serving with two aces and

23 assists, while Kendall Beebe was 10 of 10 serving. Nadia Boeding had 19 digs on the night to go with Bailey’s 17 and Madison Pirri’s 15. Alana Simpson and Reyna Lampe led the Lady Hounds at the net with eight kills each.

Bailey also announced that he was stepping down as the Bloodhounds head coach after the game.

“I announced to the players afterward that I was retiring with the seniors. I’ve been coaching at some level for 31 years and I’m looking forward to some other opportunities,” he said.

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Sports/Local News



At far left, FMHS Head volleyball coach Kent Bailey talks with the Lady Hounds during a time-out in the 2nd set of Fort Madison's 3-set loss to Mt. Pleasant in Class 4A, Region 8 quarterfinals. The loss ends Fort Madison's season at 11-18. At left, senior Nadia Boeding cheers on the Hounds after a point that brought Fort Madison within 3 at 23-20 in the second set.

Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Old Settlers Association releases details on Trick or Treat in the park

FORT MADISON - The Old Settlers Association and Fraise Auction and Real Estate are teaming up to host Trick or Treat in daylight hours from 3-5 pm on Saturday, October 31st in Old Settlers Park - 4th St. & Avenue E Fort Madison. All are welcome - children will be circling the park to trick or treat. Neighbors, friends and businesses not in the Main Street district of town are setting up at tables and passing out treats - and Fraise's are hosting a snack of hot dog, chips and drink until supplies are exhausted. Downtown merchants are hosting families from 5-7 pm, giving extra time to gather sweets and treats this year.

The Lee County Health Department has approved the event - and hopefully people will put on their best manners and masks if possible - and social distance thru food and treat lines - there will be plenty for all!

"It should be a fun afternoon and evening for everyone" states Sheryl Decker, Chair of Old Settlers Activities. "We would like to caution east end travelers to be aware of children crossing the streets on Avenues E and F in the 400 block - with Highway 61 construction routing traffic thru this area, families should use extra caution and cross at corners to keep everyone safe." Crossing guards are being recruited from the local Elks Lodge and Lions Clubs.

Set up by those passing out treats can begin at 2 pm - report to Fahey shelter to pick up your registration card - or if you did not register BY 10/19, you may set up your own table, but please register upon arrival if you are handing out treats.

When you arrive home be sure to turn your clocks back one hour as you head to bed - as Daylight Savings Time ends at 2 a.m November 1st! Have a safe and happy Halloween everyone!" To pre-register text Sheryl at 319-470-7813 or send a note to jsdecker67@msn.com.

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

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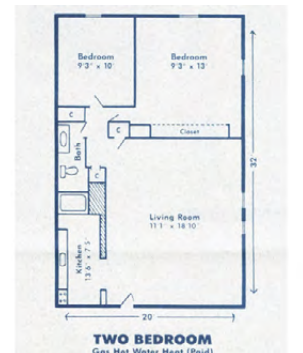
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From the Front

Mayor commits to open candidate interviews

COUNCIL - Continued from Page 1

fill the positions by appointment. At that point, residents have 14 days to file a petition to force a special election, or 14 days after an appointment is made.

Jerry Hamelton, one of the candidates seeking the 2nd Ward seat, said it is his intention to file the petition to put the seats in front of voters.



BOWKER

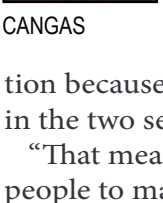
Mayor Matt Mohrfeld put the item on the agenda for the council to discuss and act upon the options.

He said putting a special election on a ballot wouldn't happen until Dec. 15, possibly Dec. 8 at the earliest.

Councilwoman Rebecca Bowker expressed concern that the city wouldn't be just looking at a special election, but possibly an additional run-off election which could extend the open seats for up to three months.

"Running with a five-person council is irresponsible to the voters who elected us," she said.

Bowker said the council could possibly find itself in a position where they don't have a quorum and may not be able to go about the business of the city.



CANGAS

Mark Lair initially said he thought the council should support the election because there are five people showing interest in the two seats.

"That means to me that we should allow the people to make the decision. I know it's costly and we won't have people right away, but in the long run we'd be better off," Lair said.

However after the discussion, Lair changed his mind and voted to not move forward with the election.

Councilman Chad Cangas said he was appointed and there were five or six people running for

that seat.

"I'm of the opinion if appointing is what we were planning on doing - they have a means with a petition, why don't we wait and see if they actually go through with it," he said.

Mohrfeld has said at the Oct. 6 meeting he would like to accept letters of intent until Nov. 10 and then make an appointment on Nov. 17.

But Mohrfeld confirmed Tuesday that no closed session interviews will be conducted with candidates and moreover, no closed sessions for interviews will be put on the agenda.

To be considered on a ballot, all candidates will need to collect and turn in petitions with the required number of signatures to be placed on the ballot. However, appointments are simply a majority vote of the council.

Tom Schulz, who's also running for the 2nd Ward, said ward residents deserve representation on the council.

"As a council you're responsible for seeing the residents of this community are represented," Schulz said.

"We could potentially be looking at two wards that are unrepresented for several months, and potentially be looking at City Council meetings that don't take place because we can't seat a quorum."

Donna Amandus, who's petitioning to run for 3rd Ward said transparency is important in today's political climate.

"I know the city's in trouble and we have a lot of challenges ahead of us very soon, but on that note, transparency would be the best way to go and let the people decide," she said.

In other action, the council:

- voted 5-0 to reappoint Charles Bock to the City's Board of Adjustment and Appeals
- voted 4-1 to approve two change orders for work being done on the Hwy. 61 project in the amount of \$89,951, and on the parking lot project behind City Hall in the amount of \$17,591. A change order on the Amtrak Depot project was pulled from agenda.

Branstad touts success with China trade

ROTARY - Continued from Page 1

exports of agriculture products.

He said China has made record purchases of corn, soybeans, pork, beef and chicken, and it's made a difference in prices U.S. farmers get.

He said there has also been progress in protecting intellectual property rights, and China opening their market to American companies in the financial services industry.

Fentanyl was also an issue tackled in negotiations with the Chinese during Branstad's term. He said Trump asked Chinese President Xi Jinping to make fentanyl a controlled substance, which he did in May 2019. Branstad said that helped stem the flow of that drug to the U.S.

Branstad also made pitches for Trump, Sen. Joni Ernst, and Mariannette Miller-Meeks candidate for U.S. Representative (Iowa-2nd District) and Iowa legislature candidates.

"We cannot afford to have the Democratic platform of the Green New Deal, socialism, and huge tax increases, which would stifle the economic growth our country is experiencing," said the 73-year-old Leland, Iowa native.

Branstad produced a COVID-19 economic impact flyer put together by the Council of State Governments, a non-partisan organization that put together a flyer on the COVID-19 fiscal impact to states.

He said Iowa was ranked as one of two states with low risk and high resiliency along with Utah. However, Iowa continues to be labeled a coronavirus hotspot by the White House.

He also said he was proud of the work Reynolds has done leading the state through the pandemic.

"She was a real soul mate of mine and as Lt. Governor she was a full partner. And I really believe she's improved on everything I taught her."



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