

PEN CITY CURRENT

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

Monday, October 5, 2020 | 10 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 182



www.pencitycurrent.com

Judge fines Humphrey \$150K

COMPLIANCE: Order suspends \$120K to allow demolition or repairs on building

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – A southeast Iowa district judge has fined Bryan Humphrey \$150,000 and ordered him to get plans in order to either demolish his downtown Fort Madison building or make city-mandated repairs within six months.

The order was handed down on Sept. 25 after a 90-minute hearing on Sept. 22 in North Lee County Court.

Judge Michael Schilling suspended \$120,000 of the fine in lieu of Humphrey either demolishing the building at

732 Avenue G in Fort Madison, or making repairs to the satisfaction of an engineer retained by the city.

The city has retained Michael Puro, a structural engineer with Poepping, Stone & Bach Associates out of Keokuk.

The order requires Humphrey to keep the westernmost parcel of the building vacant.

It also requires Humphrey to obtain permits to demolish the building by Oct. 31 or make all necessary repairs to bring the property into compliance with all applica-

See **BUILDING**, page 3



Mitchell, Fager differ on economics

Two battle for Iowa House 84th District seat on Nov. 3

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – Despite having different opinions on many sides of the geopolitical spectrum, State Rep. Joe Mitchell and challenger Jeff Fager agree the 2020 general election is a unique time in voter impact.

The two are facing off on Nov. 3 for the 84th Iowa House of Representative seat, which district creeps into North Lee County.

Mitchell, (R-Wayland) is the youngest legislator in Des Moines and has already worked his way up to the vice-chair of the powerful Ways and Means committee. He is finishing his first full term after winning election as a 21-year-old college student in 2018.

Fager is on the other side of the career tract having 15 years as a college faculty member and then retired from Iowa Wesleyan University as Vice President of Academic Affairs, following a move from rural Indiana.

“Now is the time I felt the need to get

See **VOTE**, page 8



MITCHELL



FAGER

50 years... and counting

The Kempker's True Value Rental family celebrated 50 years in business with a three-day celebration at the Fort Madison location. On Friday the family got together with members of the business community to celebrate the landmark anniversary.

Photo by Chuck Vandenberg



OPINION

Dr. Thurman goes from West Point to West Burlington

Noble, friendly, protector, dog rescuer, ready smile, popular, motivated, giving, outgoing, receptive to feedback, empathetic, thankful, eloquent, determined, caring, respectful, veteran, proud, charming, role model, universally loved by patients, heroic, Mayor of MacNeal, kind, precise, selfless, warm hearted, sensitive, husband, patriotic, professional, patient, funny, compassionate, advocate for his patients, humble, positive, continuous learner, all-around good guy.

EMPTY NEST

By Curt Swarm

These are some of the descriptors used by the students, faculty, and staff (including janitors) to describe Dr. John Thurman when he was doing his residency at MacNeal Family Medicine



Residency in Berwyn, IL. It's no wonder some of his patients today at Great River Medical Center in West Burlington look for an excuse to go see Dr. Thurman. He exudes health, compassion, and sound medical judgment.

Dr. Thurman hails from Midland, Texas. One of two children, he was smart, athletic, and an over achiever. His first love in sports was basketball,

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WEATHER

MON 05 Oct.....Clear Skies, 65° F/ 40° F
TUE 06 Oct.....Clear Skies, 75° F/ 52° F
WED 07 Oct.....Sunny and Warm, 77° F/ 57° F

IOWA LOTTERY

LOTTO AMERICA 10/03.....716 32 34 48, Star Ball: 2, All Star Bonus: 2
LUCKY FOR LIFE 10/01.....5 8 9 25 29, Lucky Ball: 1
MEGA MILLIONS 10/02.....9 38 47 49 68, Mega Ball: 25 Megaplier: 2
PICK 3 10/01, 10/02, 10/03 MIDDAY.....4 31, 125, 474
PICK 3 10/01, 10/02, 10/03 EVENING.....103, 860, 404
PICK 4 10/01, 10/02, 10/03 MIDDAY.....2 3 9 4, 719 4, 72 8 8
PICK 4 10/01, 10/02, 10/03 EVENING.....7 8 2 0, 5 6 6 1, 8 1 5 2
POWERBALL 10/03.....18 31 36 43 47, Powerball: 20, Power Play: 2

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Obituaries/National News

OBITUARIES

LARRY GENE COPPAGE

Larry Gene Coppage, 77, of Burlington, passed away October 2, 2020 at his home. Born June 15, 1943 in Ft. Madison to Percy and Gertrude Ricker Coppage, he married his lifelong love Mary Jane Winke on Feb 19, 1966 at St. Mary's Church. With degrees from Creighton University (1967) and Iowa (1969), he was a trusted pharmacist practicing for over 50 years, at Burlington Medical Center, Coppage Pharmacy in Mediapolis, the Iowa State Penitentiary, and for the past 3 decades at Great River Medical Center. Retiring in 2020, he mentored generations of pharmacists, while serving Southeast Iowa.



COPPAGE

Larry was a member of Divine Mercy Parish. He enjoyed playing golf, traveling, SCUBA diving and snorkeling in the Caribbean, and rooting for the Cubs, Hawkeyes, and Creighton Blue Jays. He mostly loved sharing these activities and spending time with family, especially his grandchildren.

Larry will be missed dearly by his, wife, Mary Jane Coppage of Burlington; a son, Dr. Kevin (Meredith) Coppage of Charlotte, NC; a daughter, Christine (Bill) Larkins of Burlington; four grandchildren, Jacob & Megan Larkins, Kate & Luke Coppage; two brothers, Roger and Mitchel Coppage; a sister, Jennifer Holmes; as well as numerous brother and sister-in-laws, nieces and nephews.

Known for his curls, bright smile, gentle manner, and generous heart; Larry was and continues to be a source of comfort, guidance, happiness and love for anyone who has had the good fortune to know him.

Larry chose Dance Marathon for memorial contributions; and he requested that donations be made in honor of grandson Jacob Larkins, be sure to place Jacob Larkins' name in the memo line. A shared service will occur once his beloved Mary Jane joins him in the grace of God's eternal light.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory and he will be interred in Sacred Heart Cemetery in Fort Madison at a later date. No services are planned at this time. Online condolences to Larry's family may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: www.kinglynk.com.

OBITUARIES

HILDA K. KROGMEIER

Hilda K. Krogmeier, 90, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away at 5:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 3, 2020 at Great River Hospice House in West Burlington. She was born on October 13, 1929 in Houghton, IA to Joseph & Eleanor Merschman Meierotto. She



KROGMEIER

married Joseph M. Krogmeier on April 25, 1950 in Houghton, IA. He preceded her in death on April 30, 2010. She was a homemaker and also worked at the former Breck & Chevron Companies. She was a member of Holy Family Parish and the Altar & Rosary Society. She enjoyed traveling, entertaining, playing cards and going to her coffee club.

Hilda is survived by: her brother, Joseph Meierotto of West Point and several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by: her parents, husband, 1-son: Michael, 4-infant brothers and 1-sister.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A graveside service will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 6, 2020 at Sacred Heart Cemetery with Rev. Joseph Phung officiating. A memorial has been established for Holy Family Parish. Online condolences to Hilda's family may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: www.kinglynk.com.

House passes updated Heros Act

WASHINGTON D.C.- Congressman Dave Loebsack announced the House passed an updated version of the Heroes Act to provide relief for individuals, families and small businesses that have been affected by the COVID-19

pandemic.

The updated Heroes Act includes:

Provides relief to the biofuels industry through direct per-gallon payments to producers of renewable and advanced biofuels who expe-

rienced unexpected market losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strong support for small businesses, by improving the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to serve the smallest businesses and struggling non-profits, providing hard-hit businesses with second loans, and delivering targeted assistance for the struggling restaurant industry and independent live venue operators.

Additional assistance for airline industry workers, extending the highly successful Payroll Support Program to keep airline industry workers paid.

More funds to bolster education and childcare, with \$225 billion for education - including \$182 billion for K-12 schools and nearly \$39 billion for postsecondary education - and \$57 billion to support childcare for families.

Stability for American infrastructure, sending \$32 billion in Transit Emergency Relief to state Departments of Transportation, and \$13.5 billion in economic relief to airports.

Provides additional direct payments, cushioning the economic blow of the coronavirus crisis with a more robust second round of economic impact payments of \$1,200 per taxpayer and \$500 per dependent.

Restores unemployment benefits, ensuring weekly \$600 federal unemployment payments through next January and preventing unemployed workers from exhausting their eligibility, providing a vital safety net for the record number of Americans who are unemployed, including those connected to the gig-economy.

Support for renters and homeowners by authorizing \$50 billion for an Emergency Rental Assistance program, and extending and expanding the eviction and foreclosure moratoriums for one year.

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From the Front

Repairs must go through city's engineer

BUILDING - Continued from Page 1

ble Fort Madison building codes within 180 days, which would be March 25, 2021.

Schilling wrote that if Humphrey chooses to make all the repairs, he must, by Oct. 15 secure the west exterior wall of the building per city engineer's specifications and the work must be approved by a licensed engineer who must confer with Purol to ensure the work is completed correctly.

Humphrey has until Friday, Oct. 9 to inform city officials which options he will pursue.

If Humphrey fails to meet the Oct. 9 deadline or if he fails to shore up the structure's west side, the city may assume he intends to take no action and may proceed in abating the property as a nuisance. If Humphrey fails to adhere to any other parameters of the order, he must vacate the property by Dec. 15 to permit the city to take any action necessary to abate the nuisance.

Repeated calls to Humphrey by the Pen City Current have gone unreturned.

Humphrey was also ruled to be in default at the Sept. 22 hearing as neither he nor a representative appeared on his behalf.

The city worked informally for the past several years to get the building brought up to safety standards and city code and served a notice to abate the ongoing structural issues on Sept. 20, 2019.

According to court records and testimony Sept. 22, Humphrey had hired an engineer with Klingner and Associates who compiled a report of required repairs and had done some of that work to include shoring up inside and outside the building, but Purol said those repairs are not significant enough to render the building safe for occupation, or pedestrian travel near the west side.

Purol said the many repairs will actually have to be removed to do the work correctly as additional settling has occurred.

The city still has barricaded off the western sidewalk and angle parking lanes to protect against any further settling of the building, that has caused bricks to fall onto the concrete below.

Burlington doctor has worldly past

SWARM - Continued from Page 1

but it shifted to football, where he was quarterback and captain of his high school football team when he was a senior. (They take football seriously in Texas.) But he wasn't just a jock. John Thurman also played the violin, that segued into the viola. He made all-region orchestra, was homecoming king, class president, President of the National Honor Society, and President of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

And he was college bound. Many top universities, including Nebraska, were looking at him for a football scholarship. But because of a knee injury his junior year, making him unable to play that year, many universities passed him by.

Not Army. Dr. Thurman likes to keep his options open. He sat down with Ed Warriner, who was the offensive line and quarterbacks' coach for Army. (Warriner would go on to be an assistant coach at Kansas when they beat Ohio State in the Orange Bowl. He is currently the offensive line coach at Michigan.) West Point wanted John Thurman and John Thurman wanted West Point. He would be a backup quarterback and linebacker. His claim to fame as a backup quarterback was one carry for 25 yards.

One thing that really attracted John Thurman to West Point was their program in chemistry and life science. John was toying with the idea of becoming a doctor.

Then it was off to Kuwait and Iraq as an Army Officer. Oh, yes, he met the love of his life, Audrey, while in military training in Kansas.

Back in the States, while playing ultimate frisbee with his Army buddies, he sustained a debilitating

knee and leg injury. After four surgeries in two years, John called the Army quits. He was now free to pursue his ambitions of becoming a doctor. He was accepted at Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine at A.T. Still University. The rest is history.

Great River Medical Center in West Burlington recruited Dr. John Thurman. Audrey and he are now residents of Burlington.

They have a passion for travel. Before the Corona-virus came along, Audrey and John had been to 40 countries. It wasn't unusual for them to jump in a plane on a Thursday night and spend the weekend in Hong Kong.

They also love rescue dogs, old rescue dogs. They just adopted their 7th dog in the last 14 years, providing the senior dogs with a good, loving home during their final days.

Medical philosophy: Dr. John Thurman's medical philosophy is simple. It has always been predicated on, "How would I feel if I was in the patient's shoes? How do I want to be treated?" He tries to look at the whole person—mind, body and spirit—and make sure that the patient knows they are important and that they matter. And he tries to be an example. He exercises daily and hasn't eaten meat in 2020. Good health is powerful medicine. At 43, he's in the best shape of his life, and that includes when he was a college football player with 7% body fat.

It's no wonder patients look for a reason to go see Dr. John Thurman.

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

Prevention 101

MASK UP



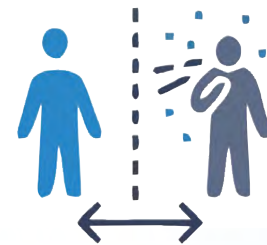
Wearing a mask in public helps stop the spread of infected droplets

WASH UP



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

KEEP YOUR DISTANCE



Being in close contact (less than 6') with others whether inside or outside more easily spreads the virus. Avoid large gatherings or crowded places.

HANDS DOWN



Try not to touch your face - eyes, nose, and mouth are doorways for germs to enter your body.

These important health care tips are brought to you by



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Sports

Hounds move to 5-1 with decisive win over MP

1st round playoff pairing will be announced on Saturday following regular season finale

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC SPORTS

FORT MADISON – Bloodhound football is on a path not seen in almost 40 years.

Fort Madison dispatched Mt. Pleasant (2-3) 44-7 in Class 3A District 5 action Friday night at Richmond Stadium in front of a heavier crowd and now sit 5-1 on the year.

“We’re very proud of our kids,” said Head Coach Derek Doherty. “We had our game plan and we focused on the things we needed to fix and our kids came out and executed.”

The Bloodhounds scored quick and often in the first half against a hampered Panthers squad missing a group of starters. The Panthers didn’t play last week against Keokuk due to health issues.



CALIFF

Senior Brock Calif got things going on the first possession for the Hounds. After returning the kick to the Hound’s 38, quarterback Landes Williams went right to the air hooking up with Calif on a 15-yard screen pass. Fort Madison would try the same play to the other side at Will Larson, but Larson was taken down for 3-yard loss.



WILLIAMS

After a 5-yard Illegal procedure penalty, Williams found Calif behind the secondary on a slant route and Calif pulled away for a 51-yard touchdown on the Hounds third snap of the game.

Both teams would go 4-and-out on the next three possessions and Fort Madison’s defense would pin the Panther’s at their own 10 on 4th and 15 forcing a punt.

Califf brought it back to the Panther 40, and then senior Calem Maclearn got free off tackle and rumbled 37 yards, but was tripped up at the 3. Williams would take the next snap in on a keeper for a 14-0 lead after Xander Wellman hit one of his five PATs on the night.

The Panthers would get back in it on the following series with a 10-play 68 yard drive. Back up quarterback Carson Coleman would hit senior Chase

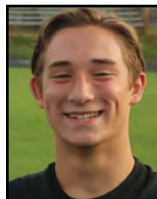


Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Fort Madison’s Calem Maclearn (24) gets free on a run early in the first quarter of the Bloodhounds’ 44-7 win over Mt. Pleasant Friday. The Hounds are now 5-1 and close out the regular season next Friday at home vs. Fairfield.

Williamson on a screen to the Panther sideline. Williamson would get free for 32 yards before the Hounds’ Tate Johnson would run him about of bounds at Fort Madison’s 32.

Coleman would then go 3 of 4 on the next three plays from scrimmage including a 15-yard strike to Avery Scandridge who was brought down at the



MACLEARN

1. Scandridge would then take the ball into the endzone on the next play for a 14-7 game just before the end of the first quarter.

Fort Madison would score two more times in the first half. The first came on the Hounds’ next possession. A Panther’s onside kick was recovered harmlessly by Tate Settles at the Hounds 42. Williams would then break off runs of 23 and 20 yards before hooking up with Larson on an 8-yard strike in the north corner of the west endzone for a 21-7 lead.

After another Panther’s stall at 4th and 15, the Hounds just missed blocking the punt and would start 1st and 10 at their own 21.

Maclearn, who finished with 158 yards on 12 carries, started the next series with a 39-yard run through the left side to the Panther 40. But Fort Madison would get hung up there forcing a punt.

On the next Hound possession, Williams and Maclearn took turns carrying the ball until Williams went in for his second rushing score of the day from the 3-yard line and a 28-7 lead just before half.

Mt. Pleasant would be forced to punt on it’s first possession out of the lockerroom, but Tanner Settles would slip past the right side and block the punt. Johnson would recover the block at the 3 and Williams would go in again from the 3 for a touchdown and a 35-7 lead.

The rest of the Hound scoring would fall in the hands of Xander Wellman. The sophomore would convert on field goals of 27 33, 37 as the Hounds started bringing in some bench relief with the game in hand.

Wellman said he doesn’t want to let offense down when called in.

“My teammates work hard to get us in that position, and I gotta go out there and do my job,” he said.

Wellman has a brother who kicks at the college level, so between the tips from him and heavy background in soccer, the kicks are coming more and more naturally.

See OFFENSE, page 7



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PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE
Lee County Board of Supervisors Meeting
Tue, Oct 6, 2020
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM (CDT)
AGENDA

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microphone muted to cut down on background noise. If you are participating by phone, press #6, this will mute your phone.

Pledge of Allegiance
 Approve Agenda
 9:01 a.m. Public Hearing for Proposed Bonding for Jail Cameras

9:06 a.m. Public Hearing for Proposed Bonding for Maintenance Projects

Consider Approval of Resolution Taking Additional Action on Proposal to Enter into General Obligation Loan Agreements and Consider Financing Proposals

9:11 a.m. Public Hearing for Proposed FY21 Budget Amendment

Consider Approval of Resolution Approving FY Budget Amendment

Consider Approval of Appropriations Resolution

Consider Approval of Engagement Letter with Piper Sandler for Private Placement of Bonds Public Input

Consider Approval of Resolution Supporting Great River Housing Trust Fund

Consider Approval of Resolution Supporting Home Base Iowa Initiative

Discussion and Possible Action on Repairing Estes Park Gazebo

Domestic Violence Awareness Month Proclamation

Introduction of Dennis Cosby, EMS Director

Consider Approval of Employment Agreement with Part-time Ambulance Director

Update on Powdertown

Consider Approval of Resolution Setting Public Hearing on Application for Shooting Range at 2958 County Road 103

Consider Approval of

Resolution Setting Public Hearing on Proposal to Vacate Certain Platted Street On Lost Creek Road in Green Bay Township

Consider Approval of Resolution Setting Public Hearing on Proposal to Vacate Moor Alley In Jackson Township

Consider Approval of Contract with Wayland Stone for Rock Stockpile

Consider Approval of Plans and Set Letting Date for Rehabilitation of Bridge #183 on 280th Street over Jack Creek

Consider Appointment to Veteran Affairs Commission

Consider Approval of Proposal for Remodeling Bathrooms at Administrative Building in Fort Madison

Consider Approval to Replace Deputy in Sheriff's Office

Consider Approval of

Resolution Transferring Funds from Rural Basic to Secondary Roads Fund
 Consider Approval of Tuesday, September 22, 2020 Board Minutes

Consider Approval of Claims

Personnel Actions:

A. New Hire-Health Department

B. New Hire-Ambulance Director

C. Step Increase-Attorney's Office

D. Change from Hourly to Salary-Auditor's Office

E. Step Increase-Sheriff's Office

F. Temporary Part-time New Hire-Conservation Reports:

A. Treasurer's Report of Fees Collected

B. Manure Management Annual Update for Pieper Inc. in Green Bay Township

C. Recorder's Report of Fees Collected

D. Manure Manage-

ment Annual Update for Tony Mertens in Cedar Township

Commission or Committee Reports

Adjourn

Workshop to Follow

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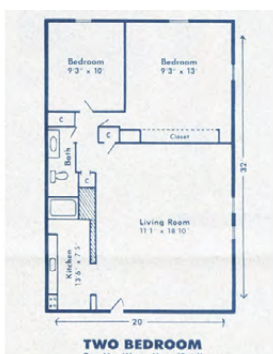
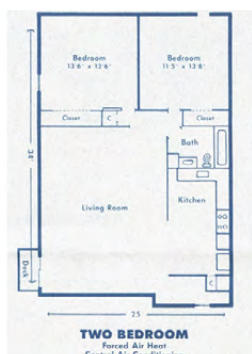
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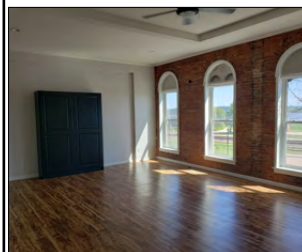


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AUTISM SPEAKS

Sports

Hawks can't keep pace with WB Falcons

BY JOHN BOHNENKAMP
PCC SPORTS

WEST BURLINGTON — Central Lee had an early answer for West Burlington-Notre Dame.

But the Hawks couldn't find a way to answer the Falcons' rushing attack.

Travain Donaldson rushed for 233 yards, 159 in the second half, as WB-ND pulled away for a 42-14 win on Friday night at Bill Nelson Field.

Donaldson had three touchdowns on three consecutive possessions in the second half and had four for the game.

Anthony Hoffman added 132 yards, all but eight in the first half, for the Falcons (3-3).

"We knew (Donaldson) was going to be a handful," Central Lee coach Chuck Banks said. "They're so big up front, and we knew that was going to be a problem."

The Hawks (0-6) weren't going to go away early. The game was scoreless after the first quarter after Central Lee stopped the Falcons on their first two possessions.

But WB-ND broke through to start the second quarter, needing just four plays to go 68 yards for a Donaldson touchdown to take a 7-0 lead.

Central Lee came right back. The Hawks went 61 yards on five plays, the last 40 on runs by Jaedon Betker. Betker's 24-yard touchdown run through the middle of the Falcon defense cut the lead to 7-6.

But the Falcons answered with a 30-yard touchdown run by Hoffman, then Brady Oleson's 50-yard interception return for a touchdown put the Falcons up, 21-6, at halftime.

"We had our chances in the first half," Banks said. "That pick-six right before halftime really hurt."

The Hawks could have gotten closer on their second possession of the third quarter, driving to the Falcons' 16-yard line. But an illegal procedure penalty, followed by back-to-back incompletions, gave the ball back to WB-ND.

Donaldson's 38-yard touchdown run gave the Falcons a 27-6 lead.

Central Lee needed just three plays for another answer. Dylan Stuecker threw a 41-yard pass to Kade Myhre, then on the next possession connected with Myhre for a 16-yard touchdown throw, and the Falcons' lead was down to 27-14.

But Donaldson scored twice more, and WB-ND was in command.

Betker rushed for 98 yards to lead the Hawks.

"This is a team we'll probably see in the playoffs," Banks said. "I think we showed tonight we can play with them."

Central Lee closes the regular season with a home game against Williamsburg next Friday.

FM wraps regular season on Friday at home

OFFENSE - Continued from Page 4



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

The Bloodhounds' Jakob McGowan gets a strip sack on Mt. Pleasant's Carson Coleman in the second quarter of Friday night's 44-7 win over the Panthers.

Doherty said Wellman would go in whenever needed.

"I'll tell you this, Xander would go out on a 40 yarder. He's a dog and he's special and we love his competitiveness."

Doherty said despite the lopsided score there were some things that slipped, but the Hounds were able to get big plays because of execution that continues to improve each week.

"We felt like the play calls were there again, all night," he said with a tip of the hat to offensive

coordinator Justin Menke.

"Whether we executed our not, coach Menke did a great job of calling what was open and we got it done on several plays tonight."

Austin Ensminger led the Hounds in tackles with seven, Keaton Poe had 6.5 including one of three sacks on the night for Fort Madison. Jakob McGowan had the other two sacks for 11 yards and a fumble recovery. Tate Johnson had a late interception.

Fort Madison's Jacob McGowan and Austin Ensminger wrap up Mt. Pleasant quarterback Carson Coleman for a loss. Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Settles and Levi Lowney each had blocked punts on special teams. Fort Madison had four penalties for 40 yards.

Williams went 7 of 15 for 96 yards and two touchdowns to Larson and Califf. He also had 91 yards on 16 carries and three more scores.

The Bloodhounds will close out the regular season next week against Fairfield at Jim Youel field looking to go 6-1 in the coronavirus-shortened year, and then gear up for a district playoff game to be determined.

All teams qualify for the post season this year and the traditional power index used to determine at-large entries and seedings has been tossed for 2020.

The playoffs will include 16 groupings in each class. With 54 teams, not including any teams ineligible due to health regs, in Class 3A, the top finishers in each district would get a bye and, according to the Iowa High School Athletic Union, the 10th bye would go to one of the best of the rest. So Fort Madison at 6-1 could, in theory get a bye, but in all likelihood would have a first round game in Fort Madison if they win Friday.

The union will pair teams from different districts in the first and second rounds when possible, but geography is the top priority in those rounds played on Oct. 16 and 23rd, and playing out of district isn't guaranteed. First round pairings won't be released until around noon on Saturday, Oct. 10, according to union officials.



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From the Front

Rural broadband access a bipartisan issue at ballot

VOTE - Continued from Page 1

into this," Fager said in an interview with Pen City Current Friday.

"Being an academic dean dealing with faculty, I've dealt with strong opinions and arguing points forcefully and sometimes I needed those negotiation skills so that even though I may not get everything I want, we can find those compromises and move the institution forward."

Fager was born in Indiana in a county he says is very similar to Henry County in its small town feel and base economy in agriculture. He moved to the area with his wife, Sally, and took a position with then Iowa Wesleyan College.

He retired from the university and still does a few adjunct courses in philosophy and decided to make Mt. Pleasant his permanent home.

"When we made that decision, we also decided to commit ourselves to its welfare," he said.

"When I saw what was going on in Des Moines and things were moving in the wrong direction and Iowa was slipping, I wanted to take some of my experience as a college administrator and help Iowa become a better place by running for office."

Fager said he this election cycle requires now, more than ever, civil discourse and clear thinking.

"One of the courses I taught was critical reasoning and I want to be able to apply what I taught in how to evaluate arguments to come to solutions based on reality and not on emotion," he said.

Some of those issues he sees that are critical to Iowa's future are rural health care, better support of educational systems from preschool to collegiate level, and providing access to broadband for all Iowans.

Fager is on the democratic line in saying that privatizing the state's medicaid program has been "disastrous".

"Our rural health care providers have been experiencing challenges for quite some time, but the passage of the medicaid management to the private sector has been disastrous for patients who had trouble getting timely responses, and are sometimes being denied access to health care," he said.

"We have to get rural providers paid in a more timely manner as this truly threatens access to adequate health care. That's a top priority for me."

On the heels of that, Fager said as an educator by profession he has a personal investment in the foundations

that help create solutions to today's problems.

"Coming from my background, I know education forms the foundation for the solutions to the problems Iowans, and Americans, face today," he said.

Fager said the state needs to bolster financial support for the entire education system from preschool to Iowa's universities, but he said the respect for the teaching system in Iowa also needs rebooted.

"I want to help raise the level of respect for the teaching profession. We need to treat our teachers as well as we treat our football coaches. Let teachers teach and get politicians out of the classroom. Give them the support they need and let them do what they're trained to do."

Rural broadband is an issue that Fager said has been brought even more to the discussion table with the emergence of the COVID-19 battle. He said the answer has to be a similar approach as the country had when it made a priority of extending electricity to every home.

"It has to be the same as we did 120 years ago with electricity where we had private and public partnerships and established cooperatives to get that service to everyone. It was necessary to function in society," he said.

"We're going into the third decade of the 21st century and in order to truly participate in the modern world, you have to have that access."

He said the grant process at the state and national level has to be made easier for smaller Internet Service Providers to engage in.

"Major corporations are soaking up all that money and that hurts some of the local providers who have a better chance of getting that rural broadband out further into the state."

Mitchell said the broadband access issue is really a bipartisan issue and has to be addressed.

"We have kids in lower economic statuses that don't even have Internet. This argument that we all have to be online can't happen until we have sufficient broadband in the state, which we don't."

But Mitchell said the state continues to increase funding to education, and the legislature has made it a priority.

"I think we're funding it as adequately as we can. Money doesn't grow on trees and we can look how history could repeat itself," he said.

"Ten years ago under Gov. (Chet) Culver, they overspent and we went into debt, then we had to have budget cuts at the end of the year for multiple years at a

time."

Mitchell said he looks at state budgeting like family budgeting.

"You have to have a savings account and not overspend. Maybe you can't buy the new TV or the new car because you have to have savings in case of an emergency," he said.

"As House Republicans we've done that. But we still don't know the real impact of the coronavirus, or really even the derecho that went through. But we have savings so we can help our businesses and farmers."

The state recently released a budget report indicating that the state will have a \$305 million budget surplus at the end of this fiscal year.

"This isn't a chicken and egg, thing. You don't have those funds unless you have people paying into the tax system and growing wages," he said. "We have to make sure the first line of defense is protected so we can keep having these \$100 million increases for public education, which is a good thing."

Mitchell said his first term in the House has been an eye-opening experience despite having served as a page in the legislature since he was 17.

"It has been the experience of a lifetime. As a 21-year-old to be trusted by your district to be elected to represent 33,000 people there's nothing I would change about it. There's no better way to serve your community than to be a public official and directly impact what's going on in your community."

He said now the legislator needs to stay focused on being fiscally responsible, continue to fund public education, have policies that are small business friendly, and address child care shortages.

"People just won't move to southeast Iowa if we don't have reliable child care," he said.

He said it's also an important time to keep a focus on manufacturing retention and taking care of those that are already here

Two industries in north Lee County have announced cutbacks in workforce with Siemens Gamesa laying off 130 and Bagcraft in Fort Madison announcing its closure on Oct. 22 ending 103 good paying jobs.

"We have to focus on the manufacturers already there and keeping them there," Mitchell said. "We have an extremely high corporate and S Corp tax rate pass through. Obviously, if they can go Texas or Florida and pay 0% they're going to expand there. They could save millions and that's where they can grow the jobs."

Mitchell said two years ago the state had more jobs than people to fill them and things were very optimistic.

"Then COVID hit and we got flipped on the backside of our head. At this point we're just trying to make sure we've got a balanced budget, but it's a waiting game at this point," he said.

"We don't know how corona has affected the economy and in my opinion it'll still be six months to a year from now until we see the side effects of this. My biggest thing going in is the budget. If you don't have a balanced budget you can't fund your schools adequately and your hospitals."

Both candidates say absentee and mail-in voting will have a marked influence on the election, but Mitchell said the system in Iowa is state of the art and believes in the integrity of the system here, but questions the systems in other states.

"The way we do it is great, but we're gonna see problems in places like Pennsylvania and New York," he said.

Fager said Iowans will vote heavily by mail-in and absentee in the general election Nov. 3.

"I think there will be a pretty powerful increase in the number, but that's not particularly surprising. What is less predictable is the political reaction on Nov. 4 and what's going to end up in courts and that concerns me."

Fager said now has to be a time of patience for Iowans.

"We don't know the implications of COVID yet, and we may have some potentially tougher times ahead. We have to come together and be united," he said.

"We have an absolutely terrible divided national political scene and it's incredibly dangerous to our democracy and what's going on in the country."

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