

PEN CITY CURRENT

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

Thursday, January 28, 2021 | 8 pages | Volume 5 • Issue 28



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Snow birds of FM



Photo by Taylor Vandenberg for PCC

Geese and gulls patrol the open waters of the Mississippi River Tuesday morning as snow starts to fall in Fort Madison.

COVID VACCINE

State could see bump in COVID doses

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

DES MOINES – Iowa got some good news from the Biden Administration this week.

Next week's allotment of COVID-19 vaccines to Iowa could be bumped by 16%, on top of an already projected increase on Feb. 8.

The state may also get some unused vials from the state's pharmacy partners who are working under federal partnership to distribute currently to long-term care facilities.

Reynolds said, during her second press conference in a week, that state data around the pandemic continues to improve daily.

See **DOSES**, page 8

KINDERGARTEN KINDNESS

CL girl gives birthday boost to rescue boat efforts

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – An effort that started just 12 weeks ago to create a third rescue boat in Lee County has cleared its first hurdle.

Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weber said Monday that with the help of Crimestoppers, and private donations from all corners of the county, a new rescue boat was ordered Thursday.

The boat, with a price tag just short of \$21,000 should be in the Sheriff's Department's hands by mid-May to June. Keokuk Volunteer Emergency Corp and Fort Madison Fire & Rescue also have boats.

Weber has been wanting to add the rescue craft to the department from his first day in office on Jan. 3, 2017 when Bill White Sr., and Ronald Wagner drowned

See **BOAT**, page 2



Courtesy photo

Dempsey Wagner, center, along with mom Erin, presented Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weber with the first of her donations to a new rescue boat. Dempsey is a kindergartner at Central Lee, celebrating her 6th birthday.

PAW SHELTER

Fund drive nets close to \$30K

BY KATIE SCOVILLE
PCC INTERN

FORT MADISON – The PAWS fundraiser has come to a close and the community raised \$27,875.

Initially, an anonymous donor came into the PAW animal shelter and offered to match every donation up to \$30,000. The donation time lasted from December 15th, 2020 to December 30th, 2020.

Although the donation total didn't match \$30,000 exactly, the donor still gave the promised amount.

A unique donation came from the late Chris Wolfskill.

Chris has always been an animal lover, and we had a connection both being dog owners," Shane Carter, a friend of Wolfskill's, said.

Chris' donation of \$177 came from his

See **SHELTER**, page 4

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WEATHER

THU 28 Jan.....Clear Skies, 25° F/ 5° F
FRI 29 Jan.....Broken Clouds, 33° F/ 17° F
SAT 30 Jan.....Rain, 35° F/ 32° F

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PICK 3 01/26 EVENING.....180
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Obituaries/From the Front

OBITUARIES

SHARON J. BROEMMER

Sharon J. Broemmer, 71, crossed over to be with the Lord at 7:05 a.m. on Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at the University of Iowa Hospital. She was born on November 13, 1949, in Kewanee, IL, the daughter of Elmer Lee Webster & Erma Jean Phillips Martin. On March 12, 1971, she married Edward Ray Broemmer. He preceded her in death on January 1, 2003.



BROEMMER

Sharon worked various jobs in the area. Ed and Sharon loved going on scenic drives, they especially enjoyed their "deer rides" and vacations to the mountains. She loved her animals and listening to Christian music. She loved to spend time with her family and going to yard sales. She attended church at The Crossing in Keokuk, IA.

Survivors include one son, Edward Michael (Kim) Broemmer of Chatham, IL; two daughters, Dori Marie (Robert) Wenke of Donnellson, IA, Leslie Ann (Neil Hefner) Warner of West Burlington; six grandchildren, Noah Wenke, Heather Wenke, Ashley Broemmer, Nicholas Broemmer, Delaney Warner, & Cooper Warner; one great grandchild, Liam Noah Bullard - Wenke; five siblings, Dennis (Kathy) Martin, Donald (Julie) Martin & Melissa (Bill) Griesbaum, all of Taylor, MO; and Linda (Bob) Foust & Gina (Mike) Rennols, both of Maywood, MO; several nieces and nephews and her best friend of forty three years, Paula Whisenand of Ft. Madison. Besides her husband, she was preceded in death by her parents and a son in law, Daniel Warner.

Friends may call after 2 PM on Friday, January 29, 2021 at King-Lynk Funeral Home where the family will meet with friends from 4-6 PM. The funeral service will be held on Saturday, January 30, 2021 at 10 AM with Pastor A.J. Fuhrman officiating. Burial will be in Hillcrest Memorial Park Cemetery.

A memorial has been established for the Des Moines County Humane Society and online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.com.

OBITUARIES

BETTY M. WHIPPIE

Betty May Whippie, 71, of Keokuk, Iowa, formerly of Farmington, passed away at 3:45 p.m. Monday, January 25, 2021, at her home in Keokuk, Iowa.

She was born on May 8, 1949, in Ottumwa, Iowa, the daughter of Cecil Aaron and Dorothy Deane (Kruse) Rogers. On August 16, 1949, she married Lawrence Paul Whippie in Missouri.



WHIPPIE

Survivors include her husband: Larry; two sons: Michael (Cassie) Whippie of Keokuk, Iowa and Robert (Neysa) Whippie of Keokuk, Iowa; one step-daughter: Tabatha Meyers of Keokuk, Iowa; three grandchildren that she raised on her own; Amanda Westermeyer of Burlington, Iowa, Adam Westermeyer of Keokuk, Iowa and Alan Westermeyer of Keokuk, Iowa; one sister: Carolyn McAlister of Albia, Iowa; one brother: Dean (Nancy) Rogers of Scranton. Also surviving are several grandchildren and great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents; one brother and one sister.

Betty was a graduate of Albia Community High School. She worked as a secretary at Keokuk High School for over thirty years. She and her husband Larry were caretakers at Indian Lake Park in Farmington for years. Most of all, Betty enjoyed her grandchildren.

Her body has been entrusted to Schmitz Funeral Home for cremation.

A private family graveside service will be held at a later date.

Burial will be at Hickory Grove Cemetery rural Keokuk, Iowa.

A memorial has been established in her memory and can be mailed to the family at: Schmitz Funeral Home, P.O. Box 56, Donnellson, Iowa 52656.

Online condolences may be made to the family at www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com. The Schmitz Funeral Home of Farmington is assisting the family with arrangements.

Girl's donation effort for rescue boat runs through Feb. 15

BOAT - Continued from Page 1

when their boat capsized just south of Montrose.

The Sheriff said the county is almost surrounded by rivers and also has a large number of bigger lakes and ponds. The department currently has three certified divers and will continue training with Iowa DNR staff on rescues.

The project started in the fall and has quickly gained momentum.

"We started this back in November pushing out the calendars and in the past three months, with help from small businesses, citizens in the community and one little kindergartner, we're getting closer," Weber said.

The one little kindergartner is Demspey Wagner, a Central Lee student, who solicited donations, for her 6th birthday. Weber said she's raised more than \$3,000 for the life-saving equipment and is continuing to accept donations until Feb. 15.

Donations can be mailed to: Lee County CrimeStoppers, 2530 255th St. Montrose, IA 52639, or via Venmo at Erin-Wagner-49 or call the Sheriff's department for a pickup.

The department is still selling calendars at \$25 each with proceeds going to offset costs.

Funds are still needed to purchase the motor for the boat, which will run about \$10,000. Weber said he downsized slightly from a 250-horsepower motor to a 200-horsepower and changed the brand to reduce the costs a bit. A side scan SONAR system is also planned for the rescue boat.

An older truck the department had planned on trading in will probably now be kept and attached to the boat, so it will be jump-in-and-go scenario for boat rescues.

The craft is an aluminum flat boat that is long and wide so it can go in the back waters, but strong enough to be out in the open water as well. It will come with a small crane system for lowering divers.

Weber said he had hoped to get the boat in the water in the

spring, and with a five-month build and upfitting, he could still make that goal.

"I will be May or June before we get it and we will probably put most of the lights and striping on it ourselves. All the service and maintenance will be done locally," he said.

Weber said he wedged \$12,000 into his budget for next year in case fundraising came up short, but he thinks are looking good at the moment.

"It will be nice when it comes time, if I can go to the Supervisors and say, 'Guys, you can scratch that out of the budget.'"

Weber, who also looked to CrimeStoppers to help fulfill a campaign promise to bring K9 units to the department, said it's been incredibly heartwarming to see how people come together for causes.

"It's fun to watch the people who always seem to be behind us come up big. And then when you have projects like this and you see other people you didn't know were behind you, it's like, 'Whoa!'"

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PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

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Opinion

Repeat after me: Let the public know

The purpose was pretty simple when the Iowa Legislature wrote the state's public meetings law many years ago:

Government boards are required to announce their meetings at least one day in advance, and officials must tell the public what will be discussed and voted on.

People are entitled to participate in our democracy by attending these meetings, so they can understand what the law calls "the basis and rationale" for government decisions.

If that was unclear to anyone, lawmakers added a second sentence to that declaration: "Ambiguity in the construction or application of this chapter should be resolved in favor of openness."

Today, we are in the middle of the worst health crisis since the early 1900s. A dozen or more people die in Iowa each day from coronavirus, and hundreds more contract the disease. Government officials across Iowa are making decisions about the virus that affect all of us.

But officials in Floyd County seem to have forgotten about truly informing the public before they meet.

It is unfortunate that some members of the Iowa Public Information Board, which is supposed to referee possible violations of the law, seem not to grasp the significance of the Floyd County case.

Last week, the state board heard a citizen complaint about the advance notice the Floyd County Board of Supervisors provides for its meetings. While that might seem fairly mundane, the ruling the state board hands down next month could provide government officials across Iowa with a road map for evading an important requirement in the law.

For their past 30 meetings, the Floyd County supervisors have included an item on each tentative agenda that says, somewhat cryptically: "Review/Action coronavirus (COVID-19) issues as applicable."

State and local government boards must inform the citizens what issues and topics will be discussed and acted upon at each meeting. But the Floyd County agendas do not meet this requirement.

The wording on Floyd County's agendas is not sufficient to inform the public of what aspect of "coronavirus issues" will be discussed or acted upon. That omission deprives people of knowing whether a topic they care deeply about will come up, because a multitude of issues fall under the coronavirus umbrella.

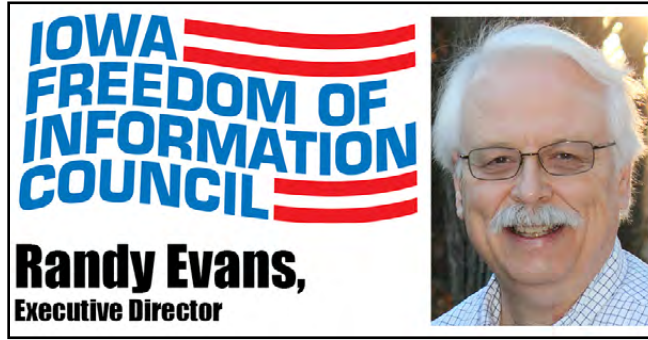
Subjects include setting up test sites, the trends in positive case numbers and deaths, and noteworthy outbreaks in care centers or large employers in a county.

In Floyd County, there have been concerns about coronavirus cases among employees in courthouse offices, about public access to the building, cleaning and sanitation procedures county employees follow, and more recently, whether to require masks for employees and visitors in the courthouse.

In some counties, topics for discussion have included food insecurity among unemployed and low-income residents. Counties also have discussed assistance for renters and small businesses and the county budget implications caused by the virus. In recent weeks, supervisors in all counties have dealt with issues of vaccine supplies and plans for inoculating residents.

The residents of Floyd County — and the 98 other counties in Iowa, too — deserve to be told what topics related to the disease are coming up for discussion or action at the next meeting of the county supervisors.

Residents should not have to guess. A cryptic, catch-all agenda item like Floyd County's is not adequate. People should be clearly informed so they can express their opinions to their officials.



I'm not the only person who believes this.

In 2002, Attorney General Tom Miller's staff issued guidance to government officials on agendas. That guidance was direct: "Agendas must provide notice sufficient to inform the

public of the specific actions to be taken and matters to be discussed at the meeting."

The Iowa Public Information Board's own guidance says agendas "must include more information than simply reciting such catch-all terms as ... 'old business,' 'new business,' or by using the same agenda contents for meeting after meeting."

Nevertheless, the staff of the state board recommended last week that the Floyd County citizen's complaint be dismissed as "legally insufficient" for the case to proceed.

The state board voted to delay its decision for a month. But one member said she does not believe the board has authority to accept the Floyd County case because county supervisors followed their attorney's legal advice when the agenda was issued without mentioning specific coronavirus matters that would be taken up.

The public meetings law states, "Ignorance of the legal requirements of this chapter shall be no defense to an enforcement proceeding brought under this section."

That applies irrespective of whether the ignorance is that of the supervisors, their lawyer who gives bad advice, or members of the Iowa Public Information Board who forget the policy declaration that says any ambiguity in the public meetings law should be resolved in favor of openness.

Randy Evans is Executive Director of the Iowa Freedom of Information Council. Pen City Current is a member of the council and will be running Evan's column as submitted.

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Local News/From the Front

Funds give start to new PAW \$5 million shelter

SHELTER - Continued from Page 1

fantasy football winnings, and his friends believed it would be put to good use by donating it to PAWS.

With donations from generous people like Chris, PAWS is furthering their plan to build a new facility north of the current building. PAWS also plans to repurpose the current building in addition to new construction. The shelter will be a \$5 million project.

"We're hoping to accomplish this project within the next five years," Sandy Brown, Director at PAWS, said.

"We have already purchased land and are having plans drawn up," Brown said.

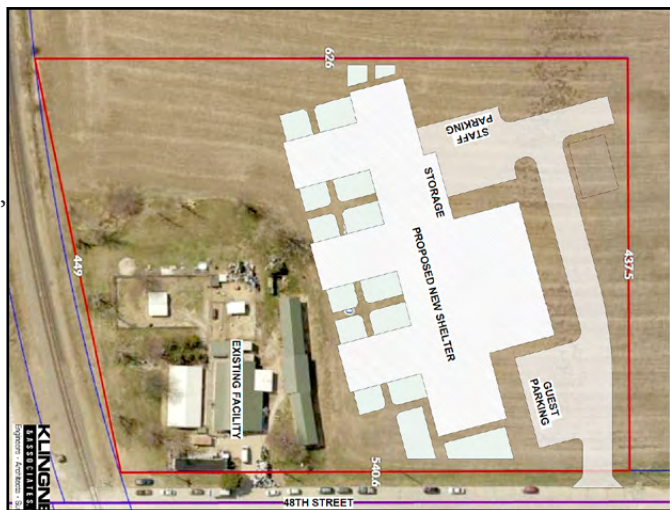
But with help from the community, the cost will be greatly reduced.

"Businesses are volunteering their time to build the new facility," Brown said. "People have really stepped up and have started to realize that PAWS services all of Lee County, Des Moines County, and Hancock County."

Frank Millard has already approached PAWS about offering their services with construction of the new facility.

With the new renovations, PAWS will be able to build a nursery, meet-and-greet rooms, as well as separate rooms for cats and dogs.

The shelter will be able to hold animals more efficiently and make PAWS more user-friendly.



Black history month at FM Library

BY SARAH
CLENDINENG
FM Public Library Director

FORT MADISON – Thanks to a donation from the Harper family, the library as a dedicated collection of materials about African-American history and issues. This is a growing collection, with new items added regularly to sit on the shelf alongside classics. Here a few highly recommended books from this collection, both new and classics:

Black Like Me by John Howard Griffen (B Griffen) John Howard Griffen's account of his decision to use medication that darkened his skin to deep brown, and exchange his privileged life as a Southern white man for the disenfranchised world of an unemployed black man.

My Grandmother's Hands by Resmaa Menakem (305.896 MEN) Therapist Resmaa Menakem delves into the complex effects of racism and white privilege,

exploring the mind-body connection and the physical and emotional effects of trauma.

The Skin I'm In by Sharon G. Flake (JF FLA) Maleeka is taunted every day by the other kids in her class, frequently about the color of her skin. A new teacher whose face is blotched with a startling white patch, who loves "the skin she's in" causes Maleeka to begin to question if she can ever do the same.

The Life I'm In by Sharon G. Flake (YA F FLA) This book takes a closer look at Charlese Jones, the bully who made Maleeka's life miserable in "The Skin I'm In" and offers insight to some of the causes and conditions that make a bully.

On Account of Race: the Supreme Court, White Supremacy, and the Ravaging of African American Voting Rights by Lawrence Goldstone (342.7308 GOL) Constitutional law historian, Lawrence Goldstone examines case-based evidence of

the court's bias against voting rights. Beginning in 1876, he explores the court's dismantling of the guarantees of both the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments, writing decisions at odds with the Constitution, preferring, instead, to reinforce the racial stereotypes of the day.

Driving while black: African American travel and the road to civil rights by Gretchen Sullivan Sorin (323.1196 SOR) Historian Gretchen Sorin reveals how the car -the ultimate symbol of independence and possibility -has always held particular importance for African Americans, allowing black families to evade the many dangers presented by an entrenched racist society and to enjoy, in some measure, the freedom of the open road.

You'll Never Believe What Happened to Lacey: crazy stories about racism by Amber Ruffin (305.896 RUF)

See **LIBRARY**, page 8



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Sports

Central Lee boys regressing as season hits final weeks

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

BURLINGTON – Central Lee Head Coach Evan Swanson says his team gets a C- right now.

But that's trending down from a B+ he said the team would have earned in a stretch where they won four of six and were just three points from winning six in a row.

The Hawks dropped a 60-50 loss on the road to Burlington Notre Dame Tuesday night to go to 6-6 in the Southeast Iowa Superconference South and 6-10 overall.

"We're 6-10 and I hate that, but unfortunately we have a lot of work to do," Swanson said. We can be a dangerous team if we decide to be and that's gonna be up to the boys."

Central Lee started with a short lived 5-4 lead on Jax-on Betker's bucket and 3-pointer, but the Hawks would go cold from field missing their next five attempts from the floor.

In the meantime, the Nikes hit five of their next seven, including six points from Sam Brueck, to pull a 12-6 lead. The Hawks wouldn't close in on that until they went on an 8-3 run started by a Corbin Pohren 3-pointer from the right wing.

Dylan Stuecker hit bucket and a 3-pointer in consecutive possessions to cut the lead to five at 26-21. He would then answer with another deep three after a Nike free throw to make it 27-24.

Notre Dame's Anthony Hoffman would score just before the buzzer after the Hawks had a possession to try and tie things up the half, but turned the ball over just pass the half court line.

Notre Dame would extend it's lead to 11 at 35-24 on bucket by Josh Smith with 4:55 left in the third. Seth Mayes would score inside off a Bronson Sargent miss to cut the lead to seven at the end of third.

Sargent would score and get fouled on a big move in the post to open the fourth and get the Hawks' fans back in the game. But he would miss the foul shot to make it 41-36 and Notre Dame (8-3, 11-4) would pull away for the win.

"This was not a pretty game for us," Swanson said. "That's a good program. The kids work hard all the time and that's something we're trying to develop."

He said the Hawks are getting out played physically, which forces them to an outside game.

"The most frustrating thing as a coach is we can tell them and we can work on it in practice, but when it comes down to games and moments – its on them."

Central Lee was led by Betker's 15. Dylan Stuecker fired in 14, most from way downtown. Sargent had seven, Kaleb Sanders added six, while Derrick Denning and Pohren each had three. Seth Mayes finished with two on the night.

Notre Dame's Matt Johnson led all scorers with 20. Josh Smith and Brady Oleson each had 10 on the night.

The Hawks host Holy Trinity Catholic in another Southeast Iowa Superconference South matchup Friday night in a girls/boys varsity doubleheader.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg /PCC

At left, Central Lee's Bronson Sargent battles inside for a bucket in the second half of the Hawks' 60-50 loss to Notre Dame. Above, the Nikes' Cole Ward (5) holds off Central Lee's Kaleb Sanders.



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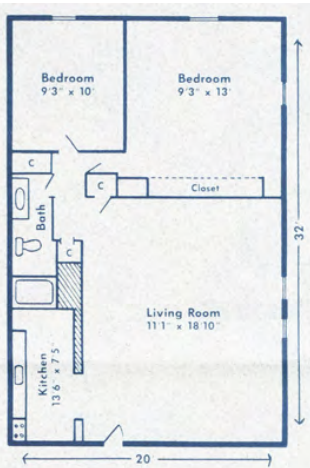
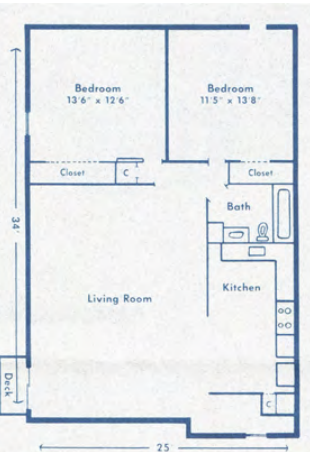
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Local News/From the Front

Beat the cold with some library time

LIBRARY - Continued from Page 4

Amber Ruffin and her sister Lacey share stories of her life as a black woman living in Nebraska. Painfully relatable or shockingly eye-opening (depending on how often you have personally been followed by security at department stores), this book tackles modern-day racism with the perfect balance of levity and gravity.

Rosa Parks: In Her Own Words by Susan Reyburn (323.092 REY) Susan Reyburn provides a candid look into Parks' personal life through previously unreleased letters, documents and photographs. The book features one hundred color and black-and-white photographs from the Parks collection, many appearing in print for the first time, along with ephemera from the long life of a private person in the public eye.

Twisted: The Tangled History of Black Hair Culture by Emma Dabiri (391.508 DAB) This collection of essays by Emma Dabiri, BBC race correspondent, explore the ways in which black hair has been appropriated and stigmatized throughout history, with ruminations on body politics, race, pop culture, and Dabiri's own journey to loving her hair.

The Compton Cowboys: The New Generation of Cowboys in America's Urban Heartland by WalterThompson-Hernandez (979.4004 THO) New York Times reporter, Walter Thompson-Hernandez, tells the compelling story of The Compton Cowboys, a group of African-American men and women who defy stereotypes and continue the proud, centuries-old tradition of black cowboys in the heart of one of America's most notorious cities.

Upcoming Events at the Fort Madison Public Library - Masks are required to be worn in the library and at all in-person library programs.

1st Thursday @ the Library - Make the 1st Thursday of the month library day! On February 4, no fines on overdue books returned that day, our book discussion group meets at 1:30, our monthly Take and Make craft (Pompom monster and corner bookmark) launches and, in February, we have an evening program beginning at 5:30. Art Journaling, beginning at 5:30 either in-person or via Zoom, contact Sarah, 372-5721, for information on how to attend online.

Pre-School/Toddler Story Hour - Wednesday morning at 10:30

Thursday Crafternoon - Thursday, 3:30-5:00, for ages 14-adult. On February 4, they will be having a one day class on paper quilling (not quilting, quilling, with two l's, it's a really cool craft). Beginning February 11, spend some extra time working on a more in-depth sculpture craft for a whole month.

Hang Teen - Tuesday, 3:30-5:00 (except for February 9), for ages 12-19.

Minecraft - 4:00-5:30, ages 9-18 on Mondays. Space is limited by the number of computers we have and we are not taking registrations this year, please arrive promptly.

Wacky Wednesday - School is out early on February 10 and 24. On February 10 at noon, Lee County Extension has a Color Creations STEAM activity, bring your own pre-washed cotton item to tie-dye. We will have a craft day on February 24 from 2pm to 4pm.

All Booked Up! - The library's book discussion group meets on the first Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. On Thursday, February 4, we will be discussing "Siracusa" by Delia Ephron. On Thursday, March 4, we will be discussing "The Underground Railroad" by Colson Whitehead. Copies of the book are available at the library for check out. Join us for a lively discussion.

Wacky Wednesday - School is out early on February 10 and 24. On February 10 at noon, Lee County Extension has a Color Creations STEAM activity, bring your own pre-washed cotton item to tie-dye. We will have a craft day on February 24 from 2pm to 4pm.

Reynolds still asks for patience

DOSES - Continued from Page 1

It was also the second time Reynolds has ended her conference after a pressing question from reporters.

Reynolds was asked about doses of vaccines that are alleged to have gone to large campaign contributors, a moved that State Auditor Rob Sands is investigating.

Reynolds said those doses were handed out based on recommendations from many state leaders including those from the Iowa Finance Authority, the Dept. of Agriculture and Department of Humans Services. She called the claims "unjustified".

"Thank goodness when we were setting up these programs we were basing it on metrics and criteria, Reynolds said.

"We took recommendations from state officials, Debi Durham, Dept. of Ag. Kelly Garcia... We rolled out the program and if you qualify you qualify. It's that simple.

Reynolds said facilities involved in the food supply chain, specifically pork producers, were part of the rollout due to the critical nature of the food supply chain. She said the allocations had nothing to do with campaign contributors.

"It's unjustified. It has nothing to do with the other. To my knowledge no one was told "no". And I will make no apologies for doing that. None."

At that point, the press conference was ended with no further questions.

Last week, Reynolds ended her conference after a question regarding putting government officials in front of Iowa's elderly in the line for vaccines under Phase 1b.

Reynolds said hospitalizations are down from November when the state saw more than 1,500 people in state hospitals, to less than 400 a few days ago. Today that number was 408.

She said part of that is due to Iowans taking monoclonal antibody treatment and staying at home, in addition to the state's positive progress in COVID-19 response and recovery.

"I know we can attribute progress to one thing and that's Iowans. Iowans realized the seriousness of the situation and the importance being part of the solution to overcome it and sustain it.

The increased dosages account for about 6,300 and Reynolds said that is guaranteed for three weeks. She said a new Johnson & Johnson vaccine is on the horizon that only requires one dose and that help simplify the process.

"I still want to remind Iowans that the vaccine supply will remain limited for quite some time. We've made good progress in our efforts to vaccinate," Reynolds said.

She said 200,000 Iowans have been vaccinated in the last 46 days and just nine months since the first case was reported in the state.

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