

# PEN CITY CURRENT

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

Tuesday, November 23, 2021 | 10 pages | Volume 5 • Issue 213



[www.pencitycurrent.com](http://www.pencitycurrent.com)

## Nauvoo couple takes over Lodi



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Jim Cobb, in blue, talks with Mohrfeld Electric's Rusty Andrews just prior to the electric company taking down the Lodi Shopping Center outdoor sign on Avenue L in Fort Madison.

### NEW OWNERS: Jim and Melanie Cobb plan to turn Lodi to The Plaza at Fort Madison

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – They're all in.

Jim and Melanie Cobb, formerly of Utah and now residing in Nauvoo, purchased the Lodi Shopping Center a couple months ago and have plans to re-energize the strip mall on the city's west side.

The Lodi, which will now be known as The Plaza at Fort Madison, has slowly become a quiet place of empty storefronts

minus Tena's Tap and Rent-A-Center.

But the couple has purchased the building, spoken with several economic development and chamber officials in the city, and are working to bring it back to life, including the 5,500 square foot banquet hall behind Tena's Tap.

The center also has Rent-A-Center taking up three units and Casebine Community Credit Union still on lease, but those are the only three tenants as of right now.

See **LODI**, page 9

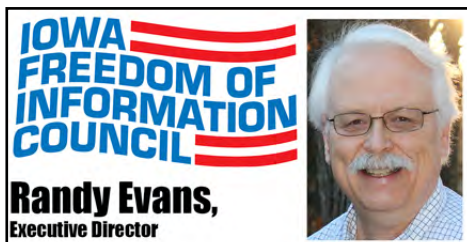
## OPINION

### Libraries are places for all Iowans; not just for some

There's a big birthday coming up in Iowa in about a month.

This place we call home — these 55,800 square miles of farm fields, wooded land, and clusters of housing and commerce — joined the Union 175 years ago on Dec. 28.

This should be cause for a celebration. But it probably won't be. We have difficulty agreeing on much of anything these



days, it seems — including libraries.

The spotlight was on them last week during a committee meeting in the

Johnston School District. The topic was whether two novels for teens, "The Hate U Give" and "The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian," should be available in the Johnston High School library for students to read. The school is the third largest in Iowa, with about 1,725 kids.

Parents Mandy and Rodney Gilbert complained the two books are inappropriate.

See **EVANS**, page 8

## PANDEMIC

### State OKs COVID-19 booster for all adults

DES MOINES - The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has authorized boosters of the Pfizer and Moderna Covid-19 vaccines for all adults age 18 and over. Prior to this authorization, eligibility had been limited to individuals age 65 and older and those who lived or worked in high risk environments.

Those who received a single shot of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine are already eligible for a booster two months after their initial dose. To date, 74% of Iowans age 18 and over and 71% of Iowans age 12 and over have received at least one dose of the vaccine. With the recent authorization of the pediatric Pfizer vaccine, over 31,000 Iowans in the 5-11 age group have also received their first vaccine.

While fewer children have been sick with COVID-19 compared to adults, children can be infected with the virus, and there is no way to tell in advance if a child will get a severe or mild case. After a natural infection, some children have developed a rare but serious disease that is linked to COVID-19 called multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C). Since the beginning of the pandemic, 63 cases of MIS-C have been reported to the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH).

One month into flu season, IDPH urges Iowans to get their flu vaccines as soon as possible. Flu activity in the state is still low, but cases have increased in the last week. Both the flu and COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization and death from these viruses. By getting vaccinated for both influenza and COVID-19, we can prevent avoidable hospitalizations and help preserve health care resources for other needs, including illnesses, injuries and emergencies. Iowans with questions about vaccines for themselves or loved ones consult with their health care provider.

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## WEATHER

TUE 23 Nov.....	Clear, 51° F / 28° F
WED 24 Nov.....	Overcast, 59° F / 43° F
FRI 25 Nov.....	Broken Clouds, 44° F / 26° F

## IOWA LOTTERY

LUCKY FOR LIFE 11/21.....	3 11 17 20 28, Lucky Ball: 5
PICK 3 11/21 MIDDAY.....	015
PICK 3 11/21 EVENING.....	296
PICK 4 11/21 MIDDAY.....	9464
PICK 4 11/21 EVENING.....	3588

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# For the Record

## For the Record

### Fort Madison Police report

11/18/21 - 7:11 a.m.  
 - Fort Madison police responded to a report of vandalism in the 2500 block of Avenue I.  
 11/18/21 - 10:18 a.m.  
 - Fort Madison police arrested Colin Jess Brooks, 28, of Fort Madison, in the 800 block of Avenue G, on warrants for pre-trial violations. He was taken to Lee County Jail.  
 11/18/21 - 12:15 p.m.  
 - Fort Madison police responded to a report of larceny/theft in the 2000 block of Avenue H.  
 11/18/21 - 4:25 p.m.  
 - Fort Madison police responded to a report of larceny/theft in the Fort Madison area.  
 11/19/21 - 1:13 a.m.  
 - Fort Madison police responded to a report of vandalism in the 3000 block of Avenue O.

11/19/21 - 8:28 a.m.  
 - Fort Madison police responded to a report of larceny/theft in the 1600 block of Avenue B.  
 11/19/21 - 11:22 a.m.  
 - Fort Madison police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 5400 block of Avenue O.  
 11/19/21 - 11:58 p.m.  
 - Fort Madison police cited Sara Ann Pauly, 38, of Fort Madison, no location given, on a charge of driving under suspension.  
 11/19/21 - 12:41 p.m.  
 - Fort Madison police responded to a report of larceny/theft in the 1500 block of 18th Street.  
 11/19/21 - 2:57 p.m.  
 - Fort Madison police responded to a report of burglary in the alley of the 1300 block of Avenue G.  
 11/19/21 - 8:41 p.m.  
 - Fort Madison police responded to a report

of burglary in the 400 block of Avenue E.  
 11/20/21 - 12:17 a.m.  
 - Fort Madison police cited Jaron Ray Blint, 38, of Fort Madison, at the intersection of 17th Street and Avenue D, on a charge of driving under suspension.  
 11/20/21 - 2:50 a.m.  
 - Fort Madison police arrested Chris Ann Turner, 37, of Fort Madison, at the intersection of 10th Street and Avenue D, on a warrant for voluntary absence from custody and a charge of driving while barred. She was taken to Lee County Jail.  
 11/20/21 - 5:41 a.m.  
 - Fort Madison police responded to a report of burglary in the 1100 block of Avenue F.  
 11/20/21 - 1:53 p.m.  
 - Fort Madison police responded to a report of larceny/theft in the 5200 block of

River Valley Road.  
 11/20/21 - 3:01 p.m.  
 - Fort Madison police responded to a report of a property damage accident at the intersection of 24th Street and Avenue E.  
 11/20/21 - 3:29 p.m.  
 - Fort Madison police arrested Payton Wrage VanPelt-Vice, 26, of Fort Madison, in the 2100 block of Avenue H, on a charge of unauthorized credit card use greater than \$1,500, less than \$10,000. She was taken to Lee County Jail.  
 11/20/21 - 9:02 p.m.  
 - Fort Madison police cited Kaila Fay Boock, 31, of Fort Madison, in the 5000 block of Avenue O, on a charge of driving under suspension.  
 11/21/21 - 2:40 a.m.  
 - Fort Madison police cited Tracy Lynn Livengood, 50, of Fort Madison, at the intersection of 27th

Street and Avenue N, on a charge of driving under suspension.  
 11/21/21 - 10:22 p.m.  
 - Fort Madison police cited Jason Michael Fortune, 46, of Fort Madison, in the 1900 block of Avenue M, on a charge of driving under suspension.

### Lee County Sheriff's report

11/18/21 - Lee County sheriff deputies reported no arrests or accidents during this time period.  
 11/19/21 - 2:37 p.m.  
 - Lee County sheriff deputies arrested Dakota Oakley Haynes, 27, of Hillsboro, in the 700 block of Avenue F, on a warrant for violation of probation. He was taken to Lee County Jail.  
 11/20/21 - 12:20 a.m.  
 - Lee County sheriff deputies responded to a one-vehicle accident in the 3400 block of 180th Avenue. According to the report, a vehicle driven by Rachel Lynn Alber, 18, of Oquawka, Ill., was

driving south on 180th Avenue when the vehicle struck concrete barriers blocking entry to the Des Moines River bridge. The vehicle sustained damages to the front end, but Alber was able to drive the vehicle from the scene. No injuries or citations were reported.  
 11/20/21 - 4:05 p.m.  
 - Lee County sheriff deputies arrested Zachary Edward Weyrick, 34, of Montrose, at the sheriff's office, on a judgment entry/hold. He was taken to Lee County Jail.  
 11/20/21 - 4:27 p.m.  
 - Lee County sheriff deputies responded to a two-vehicle accident at the intersection of 255th Street and Hwy. 218. According to the report, a vehicle driven by Gary Lynn Mason, 53, of Argyle, was traveling east on 255th Street when he stopped at the stop sign at the intersection of 255th Street and Hwy. 218. Mason then proceeded through

See RECORD, page 4

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# PEN CITY CURRENT

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# Obituaries

## OBITUARIES

### SHAWN L. COCKRELL



COCKRELL

Shawn Lee Cockrell, 54, of Keokuk, IA, died Thursday, November 18, 2021 at Blessing Health Keokuk.

He was born on January 21, 1967 in Quincy, Ill., the son of Thomas Lee and Patricia Ann Frieden Cockrell. On June 17, 2016, Shawn was united in marriage to Marcy Stuart in Keokuk, IA. She survives.

He is also survived by five daughters, Roberta Overholt of Texas, Cassandra Dodge of Fairfield, IA, Amanda Russell of Tennessee, Shawna Bowen of Arkansas, Laura Jo Lane of Mt. Sterling, Ill., one son, Tristin Cockrell of Keokuk, one step-daughter, Jennifer Murphy of Quincy, Ill., one step-son, Cody Gordy of Quincy, Ill., nine grandchildren, Raynie Volk, Kolt Johnson, Eily Zinnert, Kaitlyn Dodge, Brantley Chapman, Calvin Overholt IV, Wyatt Abbott, Roslyn Russell and Thea Bowen, seven step-grandchildren, Alexis Beeler, Levi, Payton and Elliott Murphy, Breeze Noe, Caydn and Amelia Gordy. He is also survived by one brother, Lance Cockrell of Keokuk, one half-brother, Eric Kelly of Washington and one half-sister Hope Cavello of Oquaka, Ill.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Shawn had been employed as an over the road truck driver for C.R. England and W.W. Transport in West Burlington, IA. He was also a certified Harley Mechanic and a certified EMT.

He enjoyed fishing and working on motorcycles. He was a movie buff and was extremely knowledgeable about actors and movies.

Funeral services will be held at 4 p.m., Wednesday at the Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk, IA with Pastor Derek Olsen officiating.

Visitation will be held prior to the service on Wednesday from 2 - 4 p.m. at the funeral home with the family meeting with friends at that time.

Online condolences may be sent to the family at [www.vigenmemorialhome.com](http://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.

## OBITUARIES

### MELVIN L. "HUNK" SAPP, JR.



SAPP, JR.

Melvin (Lester) L. "Hunk" Sapp, Jr., 73, of Luray, MO died Thursday, November 18, 2021 at Scotland County Hospital in Memphis, MO.

He was born December 5, 1947 in, IL the son of Melvin L. and Mary Magdeline Morrison Sapp, Sr.



Melvin was a veteran of the United States Navy and proudly served his country in Vietnam.

On August 5, 1972 Melvin was united in marriage to Patricia Wrieden. She preceded him in death on August 17, 2017.

Melvin had been employed at Keokuk Steel Castings and Kahoka Prototype Foundry as a welder and retired in 2002.

He was a member of the American Legion in Warsaw, Ill.

Melvin loved the outdoors and especially liked to hunt and fish. He enjoyed coaching his son's baseball teams through the years but most of all, he treasured the time he spent with his family. His grandchildren were his pride and joy.

Melvin is survived by one son, Stacy Sapp of Granger, MO, one daughter, Tammy Sapp of Luray, MO, four grandchildren, Hunter and Kennady Sapp, Kaitlyn Zinnert and Hailey Ray. He is also survived by one brother, Troy Sapp of Denver, Ill., two sisters, Glenna Green (Jim) of Warsaw, Ill. and Sandy Young of Keokuk and several nieces and nephews.

Besides his wife, he was also preceded in death by his parents, one brother, Steve Sapp and several other relatives.

A memorial service will be held at 11:00 a.m., Wednesday at Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk, IA. Burial with military rites will be held in the Keokuk National Cemetery.

Visitation will be held after 1:00 p.m., Tuesday at the funeral home with family meeting with friends from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Memorials may be made to the family. Online condolences may be sent to the family at [www.vigenmemorialhome.com](http://www.vigenmemorialhome.com).

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# For the Record

## For the Record - Continued from Page 2

the stop sign, not seeing the vehicle driven by Debra Lynn Jensen, 63, of Keokuk, and striking her vehicle as it was traveling southbound on Hwy. 218. Both vehicles sustained approximately \$1,500 in damage, but were able to be driven from the scene. Mason was faulted for the accident and cited for not having a valid driver's license and not having proof of insurance. No other injuries or citations were reported. 11/20/21 - 6:49 p.m. - Lee County sheriff deputies arrested Anthony Charles Zurmuehlen, 37, of Burlington, in the 700

block of Avenue F, on a warrant for violation of probation. He was taken to Lee County Jail. 11/21/21 - 12:11 a.m. - Lee County sheriff deputies arrested April Lynn Fugate, 37, of Carthage, Ill., in the 2600 block of 241st Street, on charges of public intoxication and possession of drug paraphernalia. She was taken to Lee County Jail. 11/21/21 - 1:52 p.m. - Lee County sheriff deputies arrested Jeremy Lee Harris, 35, of Keokuk, at the intersection of Hwy. 218 and 353rd Street, on a warrant for violation of probation and a

charge of driving while barred. He was taken to Lee County Jail. 11/22/21 - 12:47 a.m. - Lee County sheriff deputies arrested Kyle Dean Seneca Meredith, 20, of West Burlington, in the 700 block of Avenue F, on a warrant for failure to appear. He was taken to Lee County Jail. 11/22/21 - Lee County sheriff deputies reported 5 accidents involving deer. No injuries were reported.

Hancock County Sheriff's report 11/17/21 - Jennifer R Agans, age 47, of Augusta, Ill. was arrested and

charged with Domestic Battery. Agans was also arrested on an Illinois Department of Corrections warrant charging her with Parole Violation. Egans remains lodged in the Hancock County Jail. 11/18/21 - Heather J Leffler, age 41, of Keokuk, IA was arrested on a Hancock County Warrant charging her with Failure to Appear on original charges of Unlawful Possession of Methamphetamine, Unlawful Possession of Hypodermic Syringes, and Unlawful Possession of Drug Paraphernalia. Leffler remains lodged in

the Hancock County Jail in lieu of bail awaiting her next court appearance. 11/18/21 - Christian A Widmann, age 25, of Keokuk, IA was arrested on a Hancock County Warrant charging him with Failure to Appear on original charges of Possession of Methamphetamine and Possession of Hypodermic Syringes. Widmann remains lodged in the Hancock County Jail awaiting his next court appearance. 11/21/21 - Gary P Anderson, age 57, of Dallas City, Ill. was arrested and charged with Driving Under the Influence, Driving While License Revoked, and Fleeing and Eluding an Accident. Anderson

remains lodged in the Hancock County Jail. Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report 11/19/21 - Fort Madison Firefighters responded to three assists and three medical calls. 11/20/21 - Fort Madison Firefighters responded to five medical calls, one lift assist, one odor complaint and four fire alarms and two burn complaints. 11/21/21 - no activity was reported. Those listed above are arrested or cited on a suspicion of a crime and are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

## Lee County Health Department Pfizer (5-11) Vaccine Clinic



**Tuesday, November 30, 2021**

LCHD, #3 John Bennett Dr, Fort Madison  
3:00pm-7:00pm

Appointments required - to schedule call (319)372-5225

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Paperwork for the clinic can be found at [www.leecountyhd.org](http://www.leecountyhd.org) or on the LCHD Facebook page.



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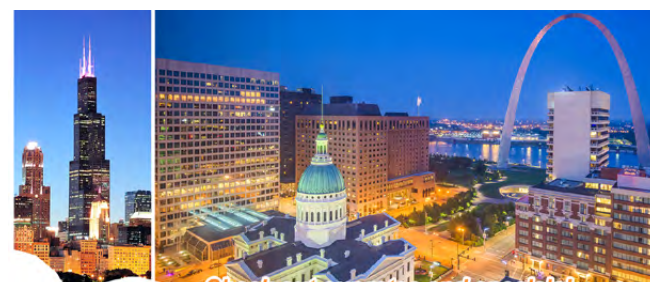
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# Sports

## Lady Hounds open season with win

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – A fairly one-sided offense and a stingy man defense helped Fort Madison to a 42-30 non-conference win over Ottumwa Monday night.

Senior Malarie Ross, who averaged close to 20 points per game last season, was held to just one bucket from the field, a 3-ball in the third period, but climbed to 14 points to lead Fort Madison going 11 of 12 from the free throw line.

Coree James had 10 points off the bench for Fort Madison. Camille Kruse and Anna Lynk both had 10 points for the Lady Hounds.

Head Coach Tony Sargent said he was happy with the play of his bench in the win.

“I’m proud of my bench, I think they’re doing pretty good,” Sargent said.

“Coree had a great game, and Alaina Simpson come out and her defense was very good.”

Fort Madison scored first and never trailed in the game. Kruse hit a three-pointer from the left wing to give the Lady Hounds a 5-1 lead. James would score inside off the dribble and then Simpson converted the second of two free throws to make it 8-1.

Ross would get on the board with her first two free throws and Kruse would hit another 3-ball to set the first quarter at 13-3.

Ottumwa cut the lead to six with about a minute left in the half at 19-13 on a bucket inside by Nellie Morgan, but Kruse would counter with a floater in the lane to make it a 21-13 Fort Madison lead at the half.

Fort Madison, who struggled from the field most of the night, went 1-8 in the third period, but got to the free throw line 10 times, converting eight, to extend the lead to 31-22 at the end of the third period.

The Bulldogs wouldn’t get within single digits the rest

See **HOUNDS**, page 8



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

The Lady Hounds’ Anna Lynk (24) fights for position with Ottumwa’s Riley Hinebaugh (1) for a rebound in the second half of Monday night’s non-conference 42-30 win.



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### ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT POSITION

The City of Fort Madison is taking applications for a Full-Time Administrative Assistant for the Planning, Zoning, Building and Fire Departments. Duties include answering the telephone, billing for the fire department and housing and nuisance abatement programs. The position will also respond to routine questions and requests regarding the rental housing inspection program, nuisance abatement, permits and zoning regulations as well as coordinate the rental program and assist with nuisance abatement paperwork. The City of Fort Madison provides equal opportunity in employment to all persons regardless of age, race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion or disability.

A complete job description is available at [www.fortmadison-ia.com](http://www.fortmadison-ia.com). Applicants must fill out a job application (available at [www.fortmadison-ia.com](http://www.fortmadison-ia.com)) and submit a resume to [dkrogmeier@fortmadison-ia.com](mailto:dkrogmeier@fortmadison-ia.com). Applications will be taken until the position is filled.



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Lee County Bank is currently seeking a full-time Accounting Assistant to provide highly specialized accounting functions for maintenance and recording of financial transactions. Prepares status reports, responsible for accounts payable, journal entries, depreciation, and performs other duties as assigned. Typically requires progressive experience in an accounting department or a related field. Intermediate working knowledge of Microsoft suite including excel, word and office. Must have good communication, computer and interpersonal skills and be able to work independently and as a part of a team. Lee County Bank is an equal opportunity employer, Member FDIC – Equal Housing Lender.

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Lee County EDG is an equal opportunity employer

## Obituaries/From the Front

### OBITUARIES

## LORETTA PAINTER

Loretta "Rita" Painter, 96, of Keokuk, IA died Friday, November 19, 2021 at River Hills Village in Keokuk.

She was born May 30, 1925 in Chicago, Ill. the daughter of Edward and Frances Matusek Barker. Rita graduated from high school with the class of 1943.

On July 27, 1959 she was united in marriage to Clark Painter in Chicago, Ill. He preceded her in death on August 8, 2006. Rita was of the Catholic faith.

She enjoyed being a homemaker and spend her life making a wonderful home for her husband and children. Rita was an avid walker, read and studied nutritional books and kept her mind sharp by working word puzzles. The greatest joy in her life was her children and grandchildren.

She is survived by one son, Edward Adduci of Indiana, two daughters, Susan Flynn (Pat) of Tennessee and Carrie Helmick (Kevin) of Keokuk, five grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren. Besides her husband Clark, she was also preceded in death by her parents, one son, Dennis Adduci and two brothers, Edward Barker and Francis Barker.

There will be no services. Memorials may be made to the Every Step Hospice.

The Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk, IA is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences may be sent to the family at [www.vigenmemorialhome.com](http://www.vigenmemorialhome.com).

## Ross lead FMHS with 14 in win

### HOUNDS - Continued from Page 5

of the way despite the cool shooting for the Hounds. Fort Madison missed their last eight shots from the field, but Ottumwa was forced into some fouls to try and gain possessions. Ross would bury three of four in the final minutes to shore up the win for the Hounds 1-0.

Fort Madison is coming off a 1-point win over West Burlington in the Hall of Pride scrimmage 57-56, after leading by 20 at the end of the 3rd period.

Aija Jenkins and Alaina Simpson each had a point in the win.

"I want to push the ball a little harder, but today it got kinda bad because we were in foul trouble. It's hard to push it with just five kids. Camille didn't even come out tonight," Sargent said.

"Malarie didn't have the best game from the floor, but she made up for it defensively and with steals and free throws."

## Chapman wants felony penalty for providing certain books to students

### EVANS - Continued from Page 1

ate, obscene and offensive. The books contain sexually explicit language and material the Gilberts do not believe should be available to students.

State Senator Jake Chapman, a Republican from nearby Adel, attended the meeting and had similar concerns. "I don't know why the school thinks that they're above the law," he said, "but I intend to do something about it."

Chapman is the Senate's president and controls what bills come up for debate by senators. He said he is drafting legislation that would make it a felony for teachers or librarians to give what he believes are obscene materials to students.

The legislation also would include what he called "civil remedies." He did not elaborate, but people may recall that Texas' new law restricting abortions contains "remedies" that allow anyone, not just government, to bring a lawsuit to enforce the statute.

At the heart of the dispute in Johnston — and similar disputes in a handful of other Iowa communities — are books for teens involving lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender story themes.

Johnston teachers said the books have been used in English classes since 2017. But they have substituted other books for students whose parents ask for an alternative.

Veronica Lorson Fowler, an official of the American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa, said the ACLU opposes attempts to block young people from having access to books that are age-appropriate. Books should be judged on their overall artistic value and intellectual merit, she said, and not just on selected passages.

Put another way, a small group of parents should not be able to keep everyone else's children from having access to a certain book — whether it deals with coming of age as a teen who is gender-conflicted, or whether the book deals with growing up as a Black, Latino or Muslim.

Amanda Vasquez, chair of the Iowa Library Association's intellectual freedom committee, told The Des Moines Register: "We would hope that everyone would respect everyone else's right to read or view whatever it is that they like and for individual families to have those conversations with their children. ... No one should try to prohibit anyone else from reading materials just because they themselves may not find them appropriate for their own family."

It is telling that no objections were lodged against the two Johnston High School books until this school year. It is almost an ironclad certainty that banning the books would lead students to find ways to see what they are missing — by reading them at a public library, by passing around copies bought at stores, or by reading them on their phones or computers.

As for the language the Gilberts and Chapman find objectionable: If you were a mouse in the corner where many teens gather out of earshot of adults, you would almost certainly hear words and comments that would fit right in with the language found in many novels for young adults.

Chapman and other critics of some of these books casually throw around terms like "obscene" and "pornographic." The state's obscenity law, Chapter 728 of the Iowa Code, contains a very specific definition — material depicting sex acts that, when applying "contemporary community standards" and "taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, scientific, political or artistic value."

But the Legislature wrote into that law a specific exemption for schools and public libraries. It states, "Nothing in this chapter prohibits the use of appropriate material for educational purposes in any accredited school, or any public library, or in any educational program in which the minor is participating. Nothing in this chapter prohibits the attendance of minors at an exhibition or display of art works or the use of any materials in any public library."

For a state that was years ahead of many in recognizing the rights of blacks and same-gender couples, it would be regrettable if we celebrate Iowa's 175th anniversary by rolling back access to other views in school libraries, even if those are upsetting and unsettling to some people.

Randy Evans is Executive Director of Iowa Freedom of Information Council and can be reached at [DMRevans2810@gmail.com](mailto:DMRevans2810@gmail.com).

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HAPPY

**THANKSGIVING**



In observance of the Thanksgiving holiday, we will not publish an e-Edition Thursday, November 25 through Sunday, November 28. We'll resume publication on Monday, November 29. Breaking news will continue to be published on our website 24/7.

*We wish you a very warm & wonderful Thanksgiving.*

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From the Front

# New Plaza is located in 2017 Opportunity Zone

**LODI** - Continued from Page 1

Melanie said there are 24 units total with five taken up and another store coming in January, leaving 18 units left to lease.

She said City Building Director Doug Krogmeier has been out to look at the property and is aware of the plans the Cobbs have for the building.

The two have also spoken with city economic development and chamber officials about some of the more pressing needs.

Melanie said she's hearing child care, meeting spaces, and even some additional franchise restaurants are what people are telling her the city needs.

"I have spoken with Ryan (Wilson) over at the YMCA, and I'm very anxious to help the city with what they need. I've spoken with Savanna (Collier) at the Chamber and gotten some reports and some ideas of what we can put in here that Fort Madison needs," Cobb said.

The couple is originally from St. George, Utah, but has recently transplanted to the Nauvoo area where they recently purchased a home. Their investment partner, Brian Christiansen, has already bought property in Nauvoo.

"He bought the Woodruff Hotel and the Family Inn and Suites and then we've started branching out a little bit since then. We were looking around and found this little mall and we thought, 'This is great and we can really help the community bring some business in and start that up and again,'" she said.

"We know we need a child care center and everyone is telling us we need a Jimmie Johns."



Jim and Melanie Cobb have purchased Lodi Shopping Center and are in the process of refurbishing the languishing center.

Jim is a general contractor and Melanie is a licensed realtor so they aren't new to properties and real estate development.

Jim said he is currently having a gas line brought to the property from the north side of Avenue L. He also is having the furnaces replaced and putting in more energy efficient LED lighting.

The strip mall is located in an incentivized Opportunity Zone. Opportunity Zones were created as part of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, and are designated for economically disadvantaged areas that can offer powerful tax incentives to investors willing to invest capital in the zones.

The incentive is to allow the private investors to defer capital gains taxes on the earnings until Dec. 31, 2026, while at the same time seeing possible earnings in an Op-

portunity, or "O" fund, which, depending on how long the investor leaves the money in the fund, could result in no capital gains tax on the earnings in the fund. The initial money rolled over into the fund would be subjected to capital gains rates at the time the fund is sold.

If an investor leaves the money in the O-fund for a minimum of 10 years, there would be no capital gains tax on the money earned in the fund, minus the original investment.

"The investment is long-term, it's not a short term being an Opportunity Zone. But the longer you hold the property, the longer the investment runs," Jim said.

"We aren't here to pay to fix it up and then turn it. We're here for the long term."

He said the move to the area took a little longer than they anticipated. They wanted to have some of the facade work done this fall, but now they will turn to the interior renovations through the winter.

The Cobbs said they are willing to work with entities that are looking for spaces and want to start at 0 or if they are interested in customizing the units, or those ready to move in.

Jim said it's important for people to know that the center is now under new ownership and they are excited to begin working with the community and businesses to get people back out to the west side.

Melanie said she'd like to get the banquet room modernized and back open for community events, receptions, and other gatherings.

"I'd like to do that because it's one of those community things that I keep hearing we've lost here," she said.

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- Lumiarias are also being sold in memory or honor of our loved ones. Forms are available by contacting Michelle at the number below & will also be included in the shopping bags
- Luminarias will be displayed in Central Park on Friday, November 26, during the Lighted Parade.

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