

PEN CITY CURRENT

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

Wednesday, February 16, 2022 | 10 pages | Volume 6 • Issue 41



www.pencitycurrent.com

Leake hits 50 at bridal shop



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Madeline and Chuck Leake, of Fort Madison's The Colony Shop & Bridal Loft, sit at a soda fountain table and chair set that Chuck has reupholstered and refinished four times in the business' 50 years. The Leakes celebrated 50 years in business in February.

50 YEARS: Madeline Leake rolls over a half a century as city's premiere clothier

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – She's 80 years old. Her husband is 82. She just celebrated her 60th wedding anniversary and she's run a business in Fort Madison for half a century.

Those are longevity benchmarks a lot of people won't see in their lifetime, but Madeline Leake not only has checked all those boxes, but a sit-down with her doesn't lead one to believe she has any intention of stopping.

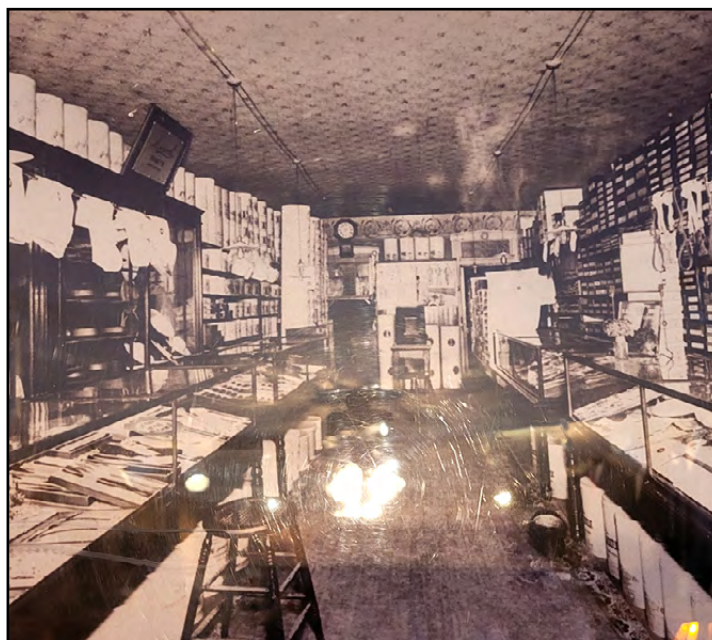
The Colony Shop & Bridal Loft, at 720 Avenue G, rolled over 50 years this month, Feb. 4 to be specific. The mark makes Madeline arguably the longest original business owner in the city, and one could easily assume one of the longest-serving owners in the vast reaches of retail in Iowa, the Midwest, and the country.

But Leake says she has no plans to stop.

"My hope is to do this until I die," she said Tuesday, from her second story office surrounded by flowing gowns, delicately hung coats and jackets, shoes, catalogs, and her husband Chuck leaning against a wall you can be sure he built and painted.

This black and white of the original Colony Shop hangs over the door to business that just passed 50 years under current ownership. Image courtesy of The Colony Shop & Bridal Loft in Fort Madison.

After a few minutes he pulled up a chair – after fixing a vacu-



um and trying it out on the stairs – to join the reminiscence.

"We don't do much slow around here," Chuck said. "Did you know we got married after just three dates?"

"Four," Madeline corrected. She knew the days 60 years later.

See **BRIDAL**, page 8

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council OKs inspection amendment

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – A pitch from the Fort Madison Mayor to let a contract for engineering inspection lapse on the next phase of the Hwy. 61 project was missed by the City Council.

At Tuesday's regular meeting of the Fort Madison City Council, Public Works Director Mark Boussetot spoke about his recommendation to allow HR Green to move inspection services on the project from 28 hours per week to 40 hours per week.

The inspector was going to share time between two different projects, but the city now will only have one project going on at that time. HR Green planned to share the cost of the inspector between the two projects, but with the other project being put on hold, the inspector will now be able to dedicate full time to observing the 10th to 18th project.

Fort Madison Mayor Matt Mohrfeld said HR Green said in the contract the city has already approved for the project that they could handle the inspections in 24 hours per week, but now need 40 just because they can't split the cost.

The issue came up several weeks ago at a previous council meeting, but in that discussion HR Green wanted to go to 40 hours and add 5 weeks of inspections prior to the start of the project.

"This discussion is similar to what we had a couple weeks ago. But this one doesn't include the additional five weeks. This is more or less bringing our inspection from 24 hours to 40 hours per the original time period we have coverage on the project," Boussetot said.

The amendment increases the cost of the project to \$105,895. Boussetot said he recommended approving the amendment



BOWKER



MOHRFELD

See **INSPECTION**, page 3

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WEATHER

WED 16 Feb.....	Rain, 53° F/ 35° F	
THU 17 Feb.....	Rain and Snow, 33° F/ 4° F	
FRI 18 Feb.....	Partly Cloudy, 30° F/ -9° F	

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LUCKY FOR LIFE 02/14.....	3 10 20 27 41, Lucky Ball: 7
PICK 3 02/14 MIDDAY.....	2 6 1
PICK 3 02/14 EVENING.....	1 7 8
PICK 4 02/14 MIDDAY.....	9 12 7
PICK 4 02/14 EVENING.....	4 3 6 6
POWERBALL 02/14.....	16 25 27 49 55, Powerball: 17, Power Play: 3

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Obituaries/Lee County News

OBITUARIES

ANNA M. JONES

Anna Mary Jones, 91, of Webster, Illinois, passed away at 5:00 p.m. Friday, February 11, 2022 at the Keosauqua Health Care Center in Keosauqua, Iowa.

She was born August 26, 1930 in Webster, the daughter of James O. and Mary (Reynolds) Yetter. On July 24, 1949 she married Richard L. Jones at the Methodist Church in Carthage, Illinois. He preceded her in death on May 20, 2000.



JONES

Anna Mary attended grade school in Webster, attended high school in Fountain Green and graduated from LaHarpe High School. She and her husband enjoyed square dances, roller skating, gathering with family and friends, and traveling. In August 1968 they were blessed with a daughter, Judith, who brought lots of joy, love and happiness.

Anna Mary had many jobs over the years, but her favorite was cooking at the Fountain Green School with Alleyne Shumate. Anna Mary also enjoyed card club 16 and quilting with a group of ladies for several years at the Fountain Green United Presbyterian Church. She and good friend, Dorothy Luster quilted together for many years at both Fountain Green and in Anna Mary's home. She attended Fountain Green Presbyterian Church for the last several years.

Anna Mary is survived by her daughter: Judith (Ken) Clark of Farmington, Iowa, and two grandchildren, Sarah (Dylan) Mertens of West Point, Iowa and Ethan Thomas Clark of Urbandale, Iowa. They were her pride and joy. She is also survived by several nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband, her parents, sisters, Olive (Yetter) Hillers and Forest (Yetter) Fuller and two brothers, Harley Yetter and Franklin Yetter.

Funeral services will be held at 11:00 a.m. Wednesday, February 16, 2022 at Banks & Beals Funeral Home in LaHarpe with Bob Tillman and Mark Hanson officiating. Burial will follow in the Webster Cemetery.

The family will receive friends from 10:00 a.m. until time of services Wednesday at the funeral home.

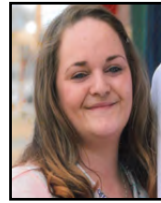
A memorial fund has been established for the Fountain Green Fire Department, Fountain Green United Presbyterian Church or the Webster Cemetery. To sign the guest book and leave a condolence, please visit her obituary at banksandbeals.com.

OBITUARIES

RIKKI J. GILMAN

Rikki J. Gilman, 34, of Fort Madison, passed away at 9:15 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 12, at her home.

She was born on Oct. 21, 1987, in Macomb, Ill., to Ricky Quigle and Jerri Reynolds Brewer. On Feb. 14, 2013, she married Aaron Gilman in Carthage, Ill.



GILMAN

Rikki worked at Lincoln Elementary in the kitchen. She enjoyed crocheting, doing crafts and art. Most of all, Rikki loved her family and spending time with her children.

Survivors include her husband, Aaron Gilman of Fort Madison; three children, Nicoli Reynolds, Trevor Gilman, and Desiree Gilman all of Fort Madison; her mother, Jerri and stepfather Terry Brewer of Dallas City, Ill; three sisters, Michelle Burch of Fort Madison, Linda Swyter and Cindy Swyter both of Marion, KY; her grandmother, Shirley Reynolds of Marion, KY; her mother-in-law, Debra Gilman of Donnellson; and her father-in-law, Steve Gilman of Montrose.

She was preceded in death by her maternal grandfather.

Visitation will be held from 1 to 3 pm on Friday, February 18, 2022, at DeJong-Greaves-Printy Funeral Home in Keokuk. A Celebration of Life will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, April 2, at the Ft. Madison Eagles Club.

Memorials may be directed to the family in care of Aaron Gilman.

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

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

ISU Extension offers gardening workshop

LEE COUNTY - Iowa State University Extension and Outreach of Lee County will host a Fruit and Vegetable Gardening 101 Workshop on Wednesday, March 16 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Lee County Extension Office, 414 North Main Street, Donnellson. This class is for anyone who is interested in learning more about gardening basics.

In this session we will discuss preparing a gardening site, starting seeds and selecting crop varieties, harvest and storage tips and managing pests, weeds, and disease.

"The flavor of a fresh homegrown tomato or strawberry cannot be beat and there's nothing more rewarding than knowing that you grew it

yourself," states Morgan Hoenig, ISU Extension and Outreach Local Food Coordinator.

This class is free to Lee County residents and \$10.00 for non-residents. To register contact the Lee County Extension Office at 319-835-5116 by March 10.

ISU Extension and Outreach is part of an educational network supported by Iowa State University, local county governments, and the United States Department of Agriculture. ISU Extension and Outreach works to provide learning opportunities for citizens of Iowa by providing unbiased, research-based information that will improve quality of life.

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Obituaries/From the Front

OBITUARIES

KENNETH W. RECHKEMMER

Kenneth Wayne Rechkemmer, 88, of Burlington, died at 9:45 PM Sunday, February 13, 2022, at the Southeast Iowa Regional Hospice House in West Burlington.



RECHKEMMER

Born June 18, 1933, in Des Moines County IA, he was the son of Alvin and Mabel Ruth Kramer Rechkemmer. On June 10, 1955, he married Doris Ann Riemann at Kingston Methodist Church.

He was a 1952 graduate of Oakville High School in Oakville.

He was a U.S. Army Veteran, serving during the Korean War from May 15, 1953 until April 26, 1955.

Ken worked for Champion Spark Plug for 34 years before retirement.

He was of Methodist faith and a member of Mediapolis United Methodist Church. He was a member of the American Legion Post #243, Union Local No. 1237 and Ducks Unlimited. Ken enjoyed woodworking, fishing, hunting and gardening. He also enjoyed spending time with his wife, Doris Ann, at their cabin at Lake Odesa. He loved baseball, playing on slow pitch teams and cheering his grandchildren on. He was also an avid fan of the New York Yankees, Hawkeye, and Green Bay Packers fan.

Survivors include his wife, Doris Ann of Burlington, IA; one daughter, Janice (Dick) Burch of Wever, IA; one son, Kevin (Jane) Rechkemmer of West Burlington; three grandchildren, Brett (Kara) Burch, Will (Danita) Rechkemmer, and Alison Rechkemmer; two great-grandchildren, Maris Burch and Ripken Burch; one brother, James Rechkemmer of Des Moines; and one sister, Cora Ater of Burlington.

He was preceded in death by his parents and four brothers, Melvin, Russell, Elwood, and Carl "Butch".

Visitation will be from 10:00 AM until 11:00 AM with the family to receive friends Saturday, February 19, 2022 at Prugh~Thielen Funeral Home.

The funeral service for Mr. Rechkemmer will be 11:00 AM Saturday, February 19, 2022, at Prugh~Thielen Funeral Home. Full military honors will be rendered by the Burlington Area Veterans Honor Guard. A time of food and fellowship will be held in the community room at Prugh~Thielen Funeral Home following the service. A private burial will be in Aspen Grove Cemetery.

Memorials have been established for Southeast Iowa Hospice House and Retinitis Pigmentosa Research in Iowa City.

Prugh Funeral Service is in care of the arrangements.

A photo tribute can be viewed and condolences can be sent to the family by visiting Kenneth's obituary at www.prughfuneral.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.

City sets 2023 tax rate at Tuesday meeting

INSPECTION - Continued from Page 1

"I'm going to trust the experts," said councilman Rebecca Bowker.

"I don't," Mohrfeld said. "Because the experts put right in their contract that they could the job in 24 hours. The people that spec'd the job put in their contract they will do it for that without any caveat.

"It would be far-fetched for them to recommend 24 hours and then ask for a change order before the thing even gets put into motion. This is their numbers. This is a binding contract."

Councilwoman Donna Amandus asked what the extra 16 hours would be used for. Boussetot said it would be to have the inspectors on site.

Bowker said they approved the contract, but if they stick to the current hours and there's a problem down the road, the city will complain that they didn't see it.

"I think it's needed for the city," Boussetot said.

Mohrfeld said if the city didn't vote to extend the inspection time, HR Green could let that part of the contract fall off and the city could then hire an inspector at a possible savings.

Bowker said why would the city use money already allocated with the company contracted to pay for another inspector.

"We have a public works director asking us to approve this because he feels it's necessary. I for one support the city staff. If Mark's on board with it, I'm on board with it."

The council approved the inspection amendment 4-2 with Kevin Rink and Tom Schulz voting against the amendment.

In other action, the council:

- approved the maximum tax levy for property taxes within the city at \$15.06/\$1,000 including the city's debt service levy of \$1.64/\$1,000.
- approved hiring Impact7G Inc. to do an environmental impact study on the Humphrey building to assess asbestos and lead paint presence in the building at a cost of \$22,570 that is reimbursable at 100% by the Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources.
- approved a change order on the Hwy. 61 6th to 10th street phase for \$38,846 for grinding of a curb, the addition of a new intake, adding a section of chain link fencing, decorative landscape rock, reconnection of existing water lines, and sump pump connections.
- appointed Carmen Salazar to the Fort Madison Housing Authority to fill a current spot expiring June 3, 2023.

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Sports

Holy Trinity girls ousted in regionals by W-MU

Kassi Randolph goes for 16 as Lady Crusaders end year

BY JOHN BOHNENKAMP
PCC SPORTS

WINFIELD — A loss that ended Holy Trinity's girls basketball season is a starting point for the next one.

The Crusaders' 55-48 defeat to Winfield-Mount Union in Tuesday's Class 1A regional quarterfinal was another block in the foundation being built within the program.

Holy Trinity (11-12) was down 23-7 at the end of the first quarter and trailed 32-14 with three minutes to go in the second quarter before rallying to get to within two points in the second half.

But the Crusaders' youth, and W-MU's ability to control the inside, proved to be too much.

"There in the fourth quarter we missed some shots we could make, should make, and will make in the future," Holy Trinity coach Tony Johnson said. "We were down too big in the first quarter, and then they roared right back, and that's what we love about them. They never give up, never give up."

The Crusaders will bring back their top four scorers from this season, but it was one of their seniors who started the comeback.

Kassi Randolph had eight points in Holy Trinity's



13-1 run to end the first half, bringing the Crusaders to within 33-27.

"They got confidence," said W-MU coach Mitch Wachs, whose team got in foul trouble late in the half. "You could see their confidence grow, and we didn't have the inside presence contesting them."

Randolph finished the game as Holy Trinity's leading scorer with 16 points. Her last points of the game came on a 3-pointer with 2:50 left in fourth quarter that cut W-MU's lead to 52-46.

"I was happy for her as a senior," Johnson said. "You hope they go out with a bang."

It looked like the Wolves (19-4) were going to silence the Crusaders early. Their inside presence controlled the game — on one possession, they had four offensive rebounds before finally scoring — and Holy Trinity didn't seem to have an answer.

But once the Crusaders got going in the second quarter, the W-MU momentum was gone. Senior Raquel

Schneider came up with a steal as the clock was winding down in the third quarter and passed the ball ahead to Natalie Randolph, who was able to get a layup before time expired to bring Holy Trinity within 43-41.

But after Kassi Randolph's 3-pointer in the fourth, the Crusaders wouldn't get another field goal.

"Like I told our kids in one of the timeouts, it's going to come down to players making plays," Wachs said. "I can't do anything — the coaches are out of it, so players are going to have to make plays. So I was like, 'Hey, you're experienced. Somebody go make a play.'"

"I thought defensively we forced them into tougher shots on the perimeter, and I thought we got control of the defensive boards back."

Natalie Randolph had 15 points. Mary Kate Bendlage had eight.

Johnson was already thinking about next year, knowing what his team accomplished this season.

"I thought there were only a couple of games where we played badly," he said. "Every other game, we were in and either won or had chances to win. We've got to clean up turnovers, free throws and rebounding, and we'll be right where we want to be."

The work, he said, starts in the offseason.

"Just some mental hurdles we need to get over," Johnson said. "We can't put the ball up and not pick it up for the next eight months."

Sports Briefs

FMMS girls A team wins

FORT MADISON — The Fort Madison middle school girl's basketball A team went 2-0 last weekend beating Ottumwa and Keokuk. Against Ottumwa Fort Madison won 24-15. Reilynn Turnbull and Natalie Wright shared the top scoring honors with 10 points each. Molly Schulte added three points and Keelee Edginton chipped in with two. The B team lost 14-4. Adelyn Lampe had all four points for the hounds.

Against Keokuk the A team won 19-10. Schulte led the team in scoring with eight points followed closely behind by Turnbull with seven. Charley Huebner and Alaina Scherwin each added two points to round out the scoring. The B team won 10-8 for their first win of the season. Kenna Gittings led with six points. Lampe and Alyvia Drummer each chipped in with two. The A

team is 4-0 on the season while the B team is 1-3.

Central Lee JV boys fall to Cardinal

DONNELLSON — Kegan Damico led Central Lee with eight points in a 51-34 loss to Cardinal of Eldon Tuesday night.

Reece Haley had six and Dante Merschman had five in the loss. Central Lee trailed by just one point 17-16 at the end of the first half, but the Rockets extended the lead in the third period to cruise to the win. Cardinal outscored the Hawks 16-7 in the third. Chase Johnson had three rebounds to lead Central Lee.

CL junior high downs West Burlington

WEST BURLINGTON — The Central Lee junior high Hawks edged West Burlington 30-29 Tuesday at

West Burlington. Owen Swan had 12 points, while Will Hayes had 10 and Brody Moeller had eight points and eight rebounds in the win. Carter Ellingboe had three points in a fifth quarter session.

In the 7th grade game, Central Lee rolled to a 43-6 win with Carson Morrison leading the way with 10 points. Evan Fogarty had eight and Kaden Swan had seven points.

On Monday, Swan poured in 18 points and pulled down five rebounds as Central Lee downed Cardinal 44-17. Moeller had nine points and five rebounds in the eighth grade win.

Fogarty had 19 in a 53-4 win over the Rockets. Brett Cook had 15 points and Carson Morrison had eight.

The Hawks 8th graders are 7-1 on the year, while the 7th grade team is a perfect 8-0. They take on Holy Trinity Catholic on Thursday.

FMMS boys down Burlington

FORT MADISON — The FMMS 8th grade boys team downed Burlington 38-21 Thursday in Fort Madison. Nolan Guzman led Fort Madison with 15 points. Jackson Haessig had eight and Case Fraise had five in the win. Fort Madison is 5-3 on the year and plays host to Keokuk Tuesday on Middle School night.

The B team lost 24-20. Chandler King had nine points for Fort Madison. Eden Mehmedi had four in the loss.

The A team 8th graders lost 39-32 at Washington Monday. Guzman had 16 in the loss and Haessig chipped in with 10 points for the A team.

The B team lost 21-10. Chandler King and Karson Dixon each had three points in the loss.

Also, last week the Little Hounds scored a last second win over Mt. Pleasant 42-40. Guzman had 33 points in the win. Haessig scored six. The B team also won 33-32. Bonar and Chandler King each had 10 points in the win. The A team moves to 4-2 on the year.

Wiseman, Smith make final IAWrestle rankings

Fort Madison senior Gavin Wiseman was ranked No. 12 at 152 pounds in the final IAWrestle rankings for Class 3A. Sophomore Teague Smith was the other ranked wrestler at No. 11 at 160 pounds. District action takes place Saturday at Iowa City High School with state wrestling taking place starting Wednesday in Des Moines. The top two finishers in each weight class at the district meet advance to the state tournament.

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Classifieds/Public Notices

PEN CITY CURRENT CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICES

**PUBLIC NOTICE
PROCEEDINGS
FORT MADISON
CITY COUNCIL
February 3, 2022**

The Fort Madison City Council met in an informal work session on Thursday, February 3, 2022, at 3:00 P.M. at City Hall, 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison. Mayor Mohrfeld presided with Council Members Bowker, Gray, Rink, Andrews and Cangas

present. Council Members Amandus and Schulz were absent.

City Manager David Varley presented the revised budget for FY 2021/22 and the proposed FY 2022/23 budget. Council members discussed options regarding the budget.

The meeting adjourned at 4:46 P.M.

/s/ Matt J. Mohrfeld, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/ Melinda L. Blind, City Clerk

Electronic Meeting (Pursuant to Iowa Code Section 21.8)

An electronic meeting is being held because a meeting in person is impossible or impractical for the health and safety of Library Board members, library employees and the public presented by COVID-19. You can participate in the meeting via telephone and can comment on an agenda item by joining the Zoom meeting. Using your telephone, dial (312) 626 6799 and enter the meeting ID (848 9246 2976) when prompted. If you have trouble connecting to the meeting, please call (319) 372-5721.

- I. Excused absences
- II. Approval of Agenda
- III. Public Comments
- IV. Approval of minutes
 - a. Regular Meeting January 20

V. Approval of the Bills
a. Approval of February 2022 Bills

VI. Correspondence
VII. Director's Report - be sure to include trust fund end of year summaries

- a. Financial
- b. Personnel
- c. Programming
- d. Collection Development
- e. Operations
- f. Facilities - landscaping

g. Professional Reports to City Council

i. Aarin Guzman Update
VIII. Unfinished Business

- a. Newspaper Database
- b. Library Board By-Laws Secretary Position
- IX. New Business
 - a. Review Study Room Policy
 - b. Weeding XX book from Special Collections

c. Review and Add Digital Resources

- i. Bridges
- ii. BeanStack
- iii. A to Z World Travel
- d. Strategic Plan Objectives

X. Trustee Education
a. Lee County Library Funding

XI. Upcoming Events and Information
Next Meeting March 17, 2022

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**PUBLIC NOTICE
AGENDA
FORT MADISON
PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Date: Thursday,
February 17, 2022
Time: 5:30 P.M.
Place: Sheaffer Meeting
Room and Online**

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- Perform detailed mechanical and/or instrumentation/electrical troubleshooting, repair and preventative maintenance duties on plant process, utility, and packaging equipment.
- Perform multi-discipline maintenance and/or electrical work. Maintain equipment documentation for all equipment and revise per modifications.

What you'll need to be successful:

- High School Diploma or Equivalent
- PLC technician /Electrical educational courses
- 5 to 7 years in electrical maintenance field preferably in a manufacturing setting
- In depth mechanical/electrical aptitude, schematic reading/interpretation

Maintenance Mechanic

Some things you'll do in this role:

- Troubleshoots production machinery and equipment for electrical and mechanical malfunctions. Assists in the teardown and rebuild of machines.
- Performs scheduled preventive maintenance tasks and periodic inspections on production machinery and equipment. Lubricates and cleans parts. Adjusts devices positions and controls.
- Troubleshoots mechanical failures. Repairs or places defective parts. Dismantles devices to gain access to and remove defective parts. Installs parts into devices. Starts devices to determine their performance.

What you'll need to be successful:

- High School Diploma or Equivalent
- 3-5 years maintenance experience in a manufacturing environment.
- Must have basic computer skills, hydraulics and pneumatics aptitude.
- Must read and interpret Hydraulic, Pneumatic and Electrical schematics.
- Mechanical troubleshooting skills, electrical troubleshooting skills.

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From the Front

Locals help turn Leake's dream into a reality

BRIDAL - Continued from Page 1

Over the next 60 years, the two raised a family and built a business. Madeline said she found a passion for clothing styles in high school during home economics.

Leake started as a private secretary for Henry Rippenkroeger at Sheaffer Pen, but didn't like the gig so she left what everyone said was the "good job" to start selling clothing for Golden Rule in Keokuk in 1962, while also doing Minnesota Woolen party plan events on the road.

"I've never really been away from this for the past 60 years or so," she said. "It's just in ya."

"I think you have to love it. When I was in high school and taking home economics, I took this one class on clothing and I still have the little book I made at home. Little sheets of paper ribboned together and I drew pictures of clothes and all that. So it's never been something I didn't want to do."

In 1971 Leake started looking for her own storefront in downtown Fort Madison, but most of the storefronts were full. After stopping in at Merle Norman's to ask a few questions about the business, Leake, unbeknownst to her at the time, had actually found her storefront.

She got a call the next day from the store's owner who said she was closing. The building was owned by John Amborn who also owned a building across the street where "The Next Door" is now. Amborn offered to rent the first floor to Leake for \$200 a month.

"I was a wife and a mother with a family and I wanted to start my own business," she said.

"There were many times when I would go to give him the rent and he would ask if I had enough to pay it. He said we could just skip a month if I needed it for something else. I paid him every month, but I'll always remember that kindness. You really don't see that type of thing anymore."

When the Amborn family's health deteriorated they offered to sell the building to Leake, but she had to make a decision quick or the building would go into probate. A nephew in the family called to let Leake know if she wanted the building she had to buy it that day.

"Before I went down to the bank I asked him how much it was and he said, "I don't care how much it is. So I called over to the Wild Pear building which had just sold for a



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

This offset print block was used in ads back in the 1970s for The Colony Shop, that quickly became The Colony Shop & Bridal Loft, owned by Madeline Leake of Fort Madison.

comparable price. But he didn't care how long it took to pay for it and there was no interest and you don't get that now days."

Leake went down to Charlie Walker at Fort Madison Bank & Trust and, in less than an hour, the papers were ready to be signed. Leake said when she got back, the Amborns already had electricians putting in new air conditioners for the building because they didn't want her to be saddled with the cost.

She said kindness was a big part of the transition as neighbors and friends took care of her garbage at night.

With the help of a Small Business Administration Loan and some funding from Fort Madison Bank and Trust, Leake was on her way.

At first the shop featured formal wear, but quickly moved to bridal wear after their son Robbie pointed out some flowing bridal gowns at a shop in

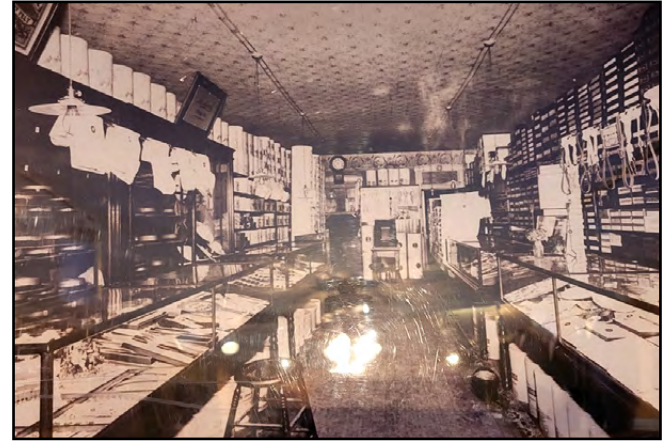


Image courtesy of The Colony Shop & Bridal Loft in Fort Madison

This black and white of the original Colony Shop hangs over the door to business that just passed 50 years under current ownership.

Hannibal, Missouri. Her son said she should sell those at her store, and the new line was added.

After 50 years Leake has just a few key business concepts she sticks with, and one is being there for customers.

"I think the most important thing about running a business is you've got to be there. You can't open and then expect everyone else to do what you do. You'll sell harder than anybody," she said.

"And the other is you have to have steady hours."

Many retail outlets now have fluctuating hours and it's difficult to tell when people are open. Leake said that makes it hard to sustain customer loyalty.

Because she had a family, she thought it would be good to start the business with a partner and she reached out to Kathy Porter who agreed to partner with her, but health reasons ended Porter's role after about a year. From that point it was just Leake and a salesperson or two at different times. Now she has seven employees.

During that time, Leake has expanded to full wedding attire services including tuxedo rentals. She's even experimented with creating flower arrangements after a business in town closed. There were thoughts of expanding in Carthage and Keokuk, but the Leakes never pulled the trigger.

"We were close to opening in Keokuk, but one of my distributors said I would end up being my own competition because people were willing to drive up here for what we have," Leake said.

"He was right."

What happens after she eventually ends her time with the business is something she hasn't thought about.

"I have no idea. And I don't really care."

She still makes a list every night before she goes to bed of all the things she wants to get done the next day.

"I have it written down. You know me, I'm old fashioned."

Madeline can be reached at 319-372-8271 or online at <https://mlcolonyshop.wixsite.com/website>. Or just stop in and say "Hi" in beautiful historic downtown Fort Madison.



Lunch Specials

Feb 14-18
11am - 1pm

<p>Monday, February 14 Chicken & Noodles, Mashed Potatoes</p>
<p>Tuesday, February 15 Meatloaf, Baked Potato</p>
<p>Wednesday, February 16 Ravioli Lasagna & Breadstick</p>
<p>Thursday, February 17 Fried Chicken Dinners</p>
<p>Friday, February 18 Sonny's Bratwurst, Macaroni & Cheese</p>



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