

PEN CITY CURRENT

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

Monday, February 17, 2020 | 6 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 44



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IHSAA MEET: Keokuk's Dylan Jones 3rd in 100-meter breaststroke

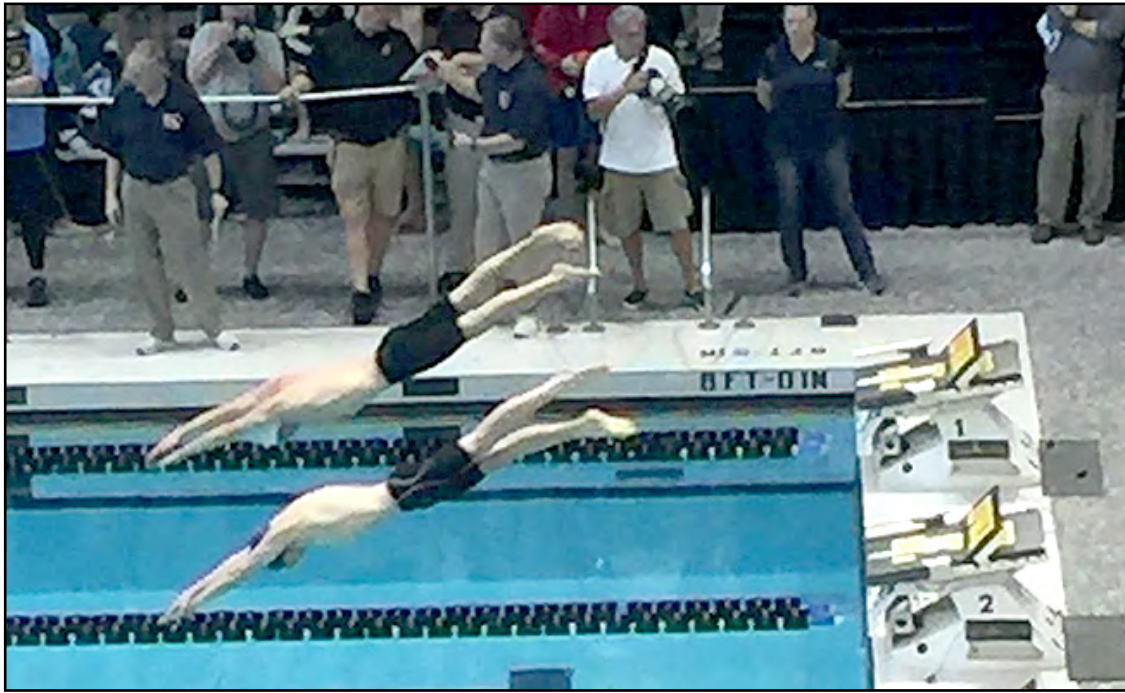
Mohrfeld 5th at State

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

IOWA CITY – Holy Trinity Catholic's Jacob Mohrfeld garnered a top five finish in the 100 breaststroke at the Iowa State Swim Meet Saturday in Iowa City.

Mohrfeld recorded a 58.54 in the 100 breaststroke, 5.39 seconds off the pace of Forrest Frazier of Iowa City High, whose 53.15 qualified him for All-American status. Mohrfeld, who swims for the Burlington Grayhounds, earned 14 team points for the

See **SWIM**, page 6



Courtesy photo

BHS swimmer Jacob Mohrfeld, from Holy Trinity Catholic, springs from the boards in Lane 2, bottom, at the start of the 100-meter breaststroke Saturday at the Iowa State High School Swim Meet.



March 3 levy vote isn't a G.O. bond consolation prize

The Fort Madison Community School District is putting another referendum in front of district tax payers on March 3.

The move, called a Voted Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PPEL), is geared toward upgrades to district buildings that not only include the elementary schools, but also the high school.

The district doesn't currently assess the voted PPEL, although there is a 33-cent PPEL levy including in the district's annual tax levy that generates close to \$250,000 annually.

According to district Business Manager Sandy Elmore, that money is basically used to fund transportation maintenance and bus purchases, without much left over.

This would allow the district to tax up to \$1.34/\$1,000 of assessed valuation as part of that PPEL fund levy. However, district officials have indicated, as well as stated on their website, that current formulas show there won't be an increase to the property tax rate with the passage of the referendum.

"Under this model we are projecting under 2021, if you implement a voted PPEL of \$1.34 our property tax rate would be 12.8442, so two cents lower basically," Elmore said at a workshop in January.

In 2023, she said the rate looks to be \$12.42, in 2024 it would fall to \$12.12, and in 2025 the district's solvency ratio drops a bit, so additional cash reserves would be implemented to raise the levy to \$12.48.

"So really we're saying no impact for at least five of the years," Elmore said at the workshop.

Plans for the additional money include improving security entrances at Richard-

See **PPEL**, page 2

DOWNTOWN: Councilwoman, 10th Street Station owner to host open house

Forum set to discuss downtown plans

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – A downtown business owner and a Fort Madison councilwoman are hosting an informational meeting to discuss the future of Fort Madison's downtown.

According to a flyer emailed to the Pen City Current Sunday afternoon by Dave Taylor, owner and operator of 10th Street Station, the meeting has been set for Feb. 20 at 6 p.m. at 827 Avenue H.



BOWKER

The flyer indicates 1st Ward Councilwoman Rebecca Bowker will be hosting the event.

The flyer has a picture of the Cattermole Library and is titled "Formerly: Riverfront Business District" and has a section titled "Out With The Old – In With The New".

That section says, "The Riverfront Business District, DBA Main Street – is dissolved. What

See **FORUM**, page 2

EMPTY NEST: By Curt Swarm

Educator Foundation began with struggling student

Little Johnny was a bad boy. In the third grade at Elm Grove District Number 4 Country School, Northwest of Fairfield (Batavia) in the 1950's, he hated school and was a discipline problem. Johnny would have rather been anywhere except sitting in that stuffy,

one-room school, like riding his horse, searching for crawdads, or playing with his dog. If there was one thing he couldn't stand, it was some of the other kids who knew it all. They had to have their hands up all the time. Consequently, Johnny was a bully.

Druzilla Clark, the teacher at Elm

Grove, was in a quandary. She knew that if she complained about Johnny's behavior to the superintendent, expulsion might be the result, which wouldn't benefit anyone. She could see a little gleam in Johnny's eye, and decided that

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WEATHER

MON 17 FebModerate Rain, 38.5° F/ 35.6° F
TUE 18 FebBroken Clouds, 33.4° F/ 21.7° F
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From the Front/Ag News

PPEL levy approval would generate \$10M

PPEL - Continued from Page 1

son and Lincoln, completing phase 3 of the air conditioning upgrades at the high school, and recoating the Lincoln roof, according to the district website.

The first two projects would account for two years worth of the additional PPEL money if authorized by voters March 3 with a 50% +1 approval. The 60% supermajority required for general obligation bonds isn't required on the Voted PPEL.

Superintendent Dr. Erin Slater said she doesn't consider the Voted PPEL referendum any sort of "consolation prize" for the failed attempts at general obligation bond referendums.

When figuring in repairs to the high school, which is planned to start this summer, it would seem that the move is not associated the failed previous vote, but moreso to beef up maintenance and repair coffers.

One of the arguments made by voters during the failed referendums was that the district wasn't keeping up with maintenance at the buildings.

The district is also currently partnered with Estes Group and getting a full facility assessment. Those results could change how remaining year's PPEL funds

could be used.

The district can also technically borrow against the increased PPEL levy, which is projected to generate close to \$1 million annually or \$10 million over the 10-year life of the referendum.

But Elmore said not enough projects have been identified at this time to borrow against the full amount.

The district may also, in the near future, be able to access funds through the state's SAVE penny tax to again look at constructing a new facility on the junior high campus. It's an option. But there are some hurdles to clear there. The expenditure of construction funds wouldn't require a vote, but a revenue purpose statement to trigger additional SAVE bonding would require a simple majority vote.

Board President Tim Wondra said he understands that if the PPEL isn't passed then the district would be faced with either not doing maintenance upgrades or paying for needed projects from the general fund, which he said could result in staff reductions.

Here's the perfect scenario as we see it. We help beef up the district's maintenance budget to get the a/c fixed at the high school and secure our elementary

schools, among other things.

Then, in the near future, we look at possibly paying off the 20-year bond for the middle school, and pass a revenue purpose statement to allow us to utilize the extended SAVE tax money to build a new elementary. The only cost to tax payers would then be the extra \$1.01 on the PPEL, which won't be realized according to school officials, and the 1% of sales tax on things everyone in the state is buying.

Sounds good to us.

Hey, we've been watching FCC activity surrounding rural broadband funding and some interesting things have popped up including some providers getting whacked for not living up to the deal with federal grant money to extend coverage into rural areas. Google it. Oh...and Apple just got popped \$25 million in France for allegedly tapping the breaks on iPhones through IOS version updates... about two years from the date of purchase. That's a drop in the bucket for Apple, and I'm sure they'll 'a-peel'...

But that's Beside the Point.

Chuck Vandenberg is the editor/owner of the Pen City Current and can be reached at editor@pencitycurrent.com

Central Lee ag students win awards

WEST DES MOINES – The Iowa Agriculture Literacy Foundation (IALF) supported by the Iowa Pork Producers Association has awarded four scholarships to students researching pork and swine. The middle and high school students, who come from different schools, will compete at science fair events throughout Iowa over the next two months.

Kayla Livesay, Preston Feuerback, Hannah Tunender, and the team of Brody Moeller and Ward Fraise, were each awarded \$200 to support their research and present their work at one of the four science fairs and sympos-

iums hosted in Iowa. The scholarships are funded by the Iowa Pork Producers Association which hopes to encourage more students to get involved in swine and pork science research.

The team of Moeller and Fraise are researching disinfectants used on farrowing crates. The sixth graders from Central Lee Middle School in Donnellson will take swabs of farrowing crates after they have been cleaned and observe any bacteria growth. Their findings could provide evidence to farmers and a recommendation on the best cleaning product to use. This will

in turn ensure the health of the sow and the piglets throughout farrowing and after birth.

Tunender is a senior at Harlan High School and is researching swine and animal behavior. She will be observing how the pigs access their food and water. Her observations could result in recommendations for improvements to current systems. She hopes to use this work to then pursue a degree in animal science.

"We are excited to support these students," said Joyce Hoppes of the Iowa Pork Producers Association. "Good science helps propel responsible pork production forward. As the nation's top pork-producing state, it's in every

Iowan's interest to keep pork and pork by-products as an important part of farming and the food supply."

Students will compete with their research projects at one of the science fairs and symposiums hosted in Iowa including: the Junior Science & Humanities Symposium (March 2-3, 2020 in Iowa City, IA); the Western Iowa Science and Engineering Fair (March 14, 2020 in Fort Dodge, IA); the Eastern Iowa Science and Engineering Fair (March 20, 2020 in Cedar Rapids, IA); or the State Science and Technology Fair of Iowa (March 26-27, 2020 in Ames, IA). For more information, visit www.iowaagliteracy.org.

Chamber picked up downtown events

FORUM - Continued from Page 1

can we do as employees, business owners, residents and property owners to ensure that our downtown community has new growth, preservation and/or reconstruction and re-adaptive use for the sustainability of our community."

Fort Madison Main Street, and with it Riverfront Business District, was dissolved about nine months ago. After conversations with the Fort Madison Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber picked up the events and programming of the group to keep those running.

On the flyer, Taylor calls the initiative volunteer driven and invites anyone with a vested interest in the success of the downtown to participate in any capacity.

"My goal is to create a transparent plan that elevates the downtown in the eyes of the community and the region, as a place to shop, dine, live and be entertained, through the arts in all their varied forms," Taylor wrote on the flyer.

The meeting is planned as an open house and discussion on how to move forward with programs and strategies that could increase business traffic downtown.

Taylor is looking RSVPs as light refreshments and a soup bar will be provided. You can RSVP by calling Taylor at 469-667-5405, the 10th Street Station at 319-372-6985 or via email at tenthstreetstation@outlook.com.

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From the Front/Ag News

Foundation awards first-year teachers \$2,000

SWARM - Continued from Page 1

she would try to work with him.

She began by helping Johnny read. Reading is the key to all learning, and if she could get Johnny reading, he would have a chance in the world. She kept him after school and patiently worked on his reading skills. One advantage she had: Johnny liked her. His reading began to improve slowly. Then it was penmanship, spelling and math. "Johnny," she would say, "if you have three catfish, two bullheads, and a frog, how many fish do you have?" Johnny knew the answer, he just couldn't say it. Slowly, very slowly, Druzilla began coaxing answers out of him. Johnny stopped bullying the other kids, and even held his hand up occasionally.

Johnny kept in contact with Druzilla through school at Cardinal of Eldon and Fairfield. "Johnny," she would ask, "what do you want to be? You can be anything

EMPTY NEST

By Curt Swarm



you want you know, if you work for it."

Johnny did. He graduated in the upper half of his class at Fairfield, and went on to college. After college he became a very successful businessman. He never forgot the help and encouragement that he received from Druzilla Clark, a very special teacher, and kept in contact with her. When he learned that her health was failing, he told her that he wanted to do something special in her name. After all, he owed his success to her.

Johnny, whose real name remains anonymous, set up a foundation, The Druzilla F. Clark Educators Foundation, that he funds. The foundation

gives \$2,000 to first year teachers in Fairfield and Cardinal of Eldon. It also gives \$2,000 to the teacher of the year in both schools. Ralph Messerli, a former principal and coach in Fairfield, another influential educator to the donor, is the DFC President. Linda Messerli is the executive secretary; Linda Booth, the secretary/treasurer; and Gloria Countryman, the public relations and event coordinator. Since its inception four years ago, the foundation will have given away approximately \$180,000 by the end of this year to first year teachers and teachers of the year. (In one year alone, there were 16 new teachers between the two schools.) It's first year teachers who are usually struggling financially because of student loans and trying to get started. One recipient used part of the money to buy material for students. Another wants to make the same impact on students as Druzilla Clark. Admira-

ble goal.

The Elm Grove Country School was moved to the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. Each year an awards ceremony is held at the school, followed by dinner at the country club. If you had a favorite teacher who touched and changed your life, tax deductible contributions can be made to the DFClark Foundation. They will be matched dollar for dollar by the anonymous donor. Information regarding contributions, testimonials, dedications, comments and current events may be found at dfclarkfoundation.org. It is a 501(c)(3) corporation.

Don't ask who the donor is, the board members, even if they know, won't tell you.

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

ISU Extension offers turf course March 4

DONNELLSON - Lee County will offer the Ornamental and Turfgrass Applicators Continuing Instruction Course (CIC) for commercial pesticide applicators Wednesday, March 4, 2020. The program can be seen at locations across Iowa through the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP) team.

The local attendance site is the Lee County Extension Office, 414 North Main Street, Donnellson, IA. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m., and the course runs from 9 to 11:30 a.m. The registration fee is \$35 on or before Feb. 26 and \$45 after Feb. 26. To register or to obtain additional information about the CIC, contact Alisha Davidson at the ISU Extension and Outreach office in Lee County by phoning 319-835-5116.

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Sports/Classifieds

Hounds losing streak may not equal substate doom

BY PCC STAFF

FORT MADISON – It may look like the Bloodhounds are doomed heading into Class 3A Substate action in eight days.

The Hounds have lost four in a row and are headed just west of Iowa City on Feb. 24 to take on Clear Creek-Amana at their place. The Clippers are 15-5 on the year with three of their losses by less than 10 points.

Fort Madison on the other hand finished the regular season 6-15 with a close 67-64 loss at home to Burlington Friday night.

But there are some things that stand out in the game that could give Head Coach Ryan Wilson pause as he looks forward to substate action.

First, sophomore Dayton Davis put up 19 points against the Grayhounds in one of his better performances of the year. Davis did that damage while only com-

mitting three personal fouls. The 19 was Davis' second best performance of the year, just two short of his 21 against a win at Centerville in December.

Davis usually gets reachy and gambles on defense and can find himself in foul trouble, but has been staying on the court recently.

Jayden Fedler, who battled influenza most of the last week, seemed to be showing signs of the bug in the first half against Burlington, but snapped out of it to finish with 17 points... all in the second half. He also put up 16 in Thursday's loss to Albia in this first game back since Feb. 4. Fedler also put up 20 Feb. 4 against Central Lee.

Senior guard Michael Mosena, who also battled the flu for a couple games, has reduced turnovers and has been running the offense much to the liking of Wilson. Mosena was also in double figures against Burlington with 13.

But Mosena was held scoreless coming off the bench Thursday night in the



WILSON

Hounds 60-47 loss to Albia on the road.

On Friday, the Hounds held a 6-2 lead in the early going and an 11-10 lead at the end of one, but the Grayhounds came flying back with a 17-7 run in the second quarter for a 29-21 halftime lead.

Fort Madison would return the favor holding Burlington to 13, while ripping off a 20-point third period, led by Fedler's eight, and trailed 42-41 going into the final period.

The Hounds pulled out to 52-48 lead, but the Grayhounds would battle back in the final three minutes erasing a 54-53 deficit to go ahead 65-61 on 7 of 9 free throw shooting down the stretch to get the game.

On Thursday, the Hounds were tied in Albia at 26 at the half, but an eight-point third period put them back seven at 41-24 to start the fourth and the Hounds

couldn't get any ground.

If you look deeper than the four recent losses, the Hounds had won three of the last four prior to that and we're feeling like the team had started to gel, right before the flu bug hit.

With Fedler averaging close to 18 in his last three games, Davis staying on the floor and putting up points, and Mosena and Miles Dear, who put up 14 against Muscatine, working well together things could get interesting. But the Hounds will have to contain junior Christian Withrow, who leads the WaMaC-West at 16 points per outing.

The scoring then falls off a bit, but not too much as seniors Nick O'Connor and Tyler Schrepfer are averaging 12 and 10 per outing respectively.

Junior TJ Bollers 6'4" and Withrow are in the top five in the conference in rebounds as well at just under six apiece.

The Clippers average 62 points per outing and give up slightly less at 57.

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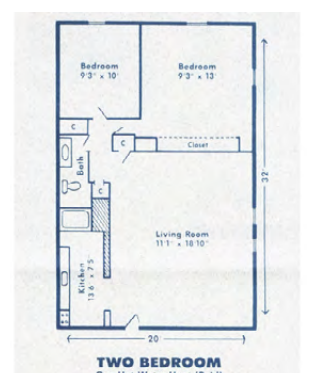
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From the Front/Iowa News

Senior to keep swimming in YMCA and USA meets

SWIM - Continued from Page 1

finish.

Keokuk's Dylan Jones was third in the event with a 57.38, earning the Keokuk team 16 points. Jones also tied for 11th in the 200 Individual Medley with a time of 1:56.73.

Mohrfeld said past experiences at the state tournament helped him keep perspective on the day.

"I've been to state the past two years so that experience helps," he said. "I just kept thinking that this was my last high school event so I wanted to focus on that."

Having Olympic-bound Frazier several lanes down in his heat in the 100 breaststroke

didn't intimidate Mohrfeld.

"He isn't within reach. He's in USA Swimming with me and I've seen at him at other events, so I don't focus on him, I just go and try to compete with everyone else."

Mohrfeld said his future plans include swimming and he said he still has YMCA state and regionals to focus on in Iowa. He's also involved with the USA Futures Championships and that usually requires some travel.

The HTC senior competed at the Speedo™ Championships held in Minneapolis last year and had times good enough

to qualify for the USA Futures events.

"That's pretty serious there. They have some really fast swimmers and they divide the whole country into four sections."

Mohrfeld also competed in 200 meter freestyle and finished 21st with a time of 1:47.83.

The Burlington team of Wyatt Hellman, Colby Geiger, Taden Jameson, and Mohrfeld took 17th in the 200 meter freestyle relay, one position out of the points.

In the men's 400 freestyle, Hellman, Logan Crank, Jameson, and Mohrfeld took 23rd place with a time of 3:27.32.



Courtesy photo

BHS swimmer Jacob Mohrfeld, 5th from left, and Keokuk's Dylan Jones, 3rd from left, take the podium for the 100 breaststroke Saturday at the Iowa High School State Swim Meet in Iowa City.

IOWA NEWS

State historical society celebrates ratification of 19th Amendment

DES MOINES – American women started voting nationwide after the 19th Amendment was ratified in August 1920.

A hundred years later, the State Historical Society of Iowa is commemorating that milestone – and the

Iowans who marched toward it – with a series of monthly programs and events through August.

"The ratification of the 19th Amendment was one of the most significant equal rights issues that women all across the country faced 100

years ago, including women right here in Iowa," said Susan Kloewer, administrator of the State Historical Society of Iowa. "Over the next seven months, we will present a series of programs that explore the people, places and issues behind Women's Suffrage. I ask all Iowans to join us as we honor that period of our time in the history of our state and nation."

More information about the programs is below.

Saturday, Feb. 22, 1:30 p.m. - Screening of Award-Winning Suffrage Film "Iron Jawed Angels" at State Historical Museum of Iowa

Tuesday, March 10, Noon-1 p.m. - Lunch & Learn: Life and Legacy of Carrie Lane Chapman Catt. Featured Speaker: Karen Kedrowski from the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics at Iowa State University at State Historical Museum of Iowa

Thursday, April 23, 5:30-7 p.m. - History on the Rocks: Women of Woodland Cemetery Tour (18+) at Woodland Cemetery, Des Moines - Register in advance by Apr. 3

Saturday, May 30, 1:30 p.m.

"Carrie Chapman Catt: Warrior for Women" Documentary Screening and Panel. Courtesy of Iowa PBS at the State Historical Museum of Iowa

Saturday, June 27, 10:30 a.m. - Tour of Carrie Lane Chapman Catt Girlhood Home and Museum in Charles City, Iowa. Register in advance by June 22

Tuesday, July 7, Noon-1 p.m. - Lunch & Learn: Toward a Universal Suffrage. Featured Speakers: Eric Morse, Central Iowa Community Museum; Kristen Corey, Office on the Status of Women at State Historical Museum of Iowa.

Visit the state website for additional events.



2020 To Do List

Save Our Planet

Thank you to all our customers who worked to reduce their environmental footprint last year. We look forward to helping you continue your efforts and to educating our communities on more ways to help this year.

Here are just a few ways you can help:

- Don't put plastic bags in recycling bins
- Rinse & clean all food jars & cans before recycling
- Flatten empty boxes for better storage & volume reduction
- Place all recyclables loose in bins
- Don't recycle wrapping paper
- Properly dispose of all electronics and household hazardous waste



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