

# PEN CITY CURRENT

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

Thursday, January 16, 2020 | 8 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 23



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Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

FMAAA director Brian Riggs shows the work of Lee County art students at the studio Wednesday.

## Student works take over FMAAA studio

**JANUARY EXHIBIT:** Reception Saturday for Lee County elementaries' artwork

**BY BRIAN RIGGS**  
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – The month of January always brings one last gift to the gallery, the Annual Budding Artist Exhibition. This is a fan favorite for many of our members as works of art are hung from ceiling to floor to represent the unfettered creative minds stirring in our educational system.

Whether their future calls for engineers or mathematicians, the creativity in these students is unchained this month at 825 Avenue G. Reception for the artists occurs January 18th from 2 – 4 p.m. with snacks galore provided by Hy-Vee of Ft. Madison. Pilot Grove Savings Bank is the sponsor for the exhibition.

“You’ll see repetitive projects, but boy when you put them all together it’s like one gigantic mosaic,” Riggs said. “Unless it’s a blizzard on Saturday, they’re going to come in here for that reception so that’s something to see.” No matter what your flavor, FMAAA has artistic subject matter to sate your cultural appetite from students at Central Lee, Holy Trinity, and Ft. Madison Public. There are six columns of examples of kindergarten work alone! Talk about starting them early.

Two-dimensional projects include emotive cats, flying cows, artist trading cards, landscapes with 3D elements, poet trees, sculpted animal trees, stem cell-like geometric art,

See FMAAA, page 4

## OLD FORT PLAYERS

### OFPP looking for a “Babe” and her sister

**BY DOROTHY SCHULTE**  
OLD FORT PLAYERS

FORT MADISON – Old Fort Players, Fort Madison’s community theater is looking for actors to fill the cast of their May 2020 production of “The Queen of Bingo” written by Jeanne Michels &

Phyllis Murphy. Drop by the theater on February 1st or 2nd starting at 5 pm to get in on the act! There’s nothing to memorize for the audition and no previous experience is required.

Directors Robbie & Lea Phillips are looking for two women and two men.

‘Sis’ and ‘Babe,’ are two sisters on the other side of 50 and are looking to add a little fun and excitement to their lives.

Sis is a good loser who just loves to play. Babe is a player who has always got to win. Sis is naturally fit and trim.

See THEATER, page 8

## Barker Group

### Downtown project earns development award

**BY CHUCK VANDENBERG**  
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – The Iowa City firm that resurrected the rehabilitation of two of Fort Madison’s oldest downtown buildings will be recognized for its work at a ceremony Tuesday in Des Moines.

The three-year renovation of the Old Lee County Bank building and the Cattermole Library by Barker Financial out of Iowa City is getting an award from the 1,000 Friends of Iowa as part of the group’s 2019 Best Development Awards.

The projects tied for Best Mixed Use projects and Kyle Galloway, Chief Financial Officer for Barker Financial, said he was surprised by the recognition.

“I think Dan Rice with RDG Construction saw the value in the project and submitted it. It’s an incredibly well-done project and some really good work,” Galloway said Wednesday. “I didn’t know anything about the award until today.”

According to release from the 1000 Friends of Iowa Tuesday, the work is inspiring other activity in Fort Madison’s Historic District.

“Fort Madison’s Downtown Commercial Historic District included the Lee County Bank, built in 1893, and Cattermole Library, built in 1894. Both sat vacant for many years. Barker Financial Group rehabilitated and renovated the exterior and interior of both buildings, leading to a renewed downtown area.

“The two upper floors of the Bank were transformed into 14 apartments while the lower floor was left mostly unchanged. The Cattermole Library was also converted to apartments on its upper floor while the lower floor is offices, with the original library circulation desk as the reception desk. Now fully occupied, the buildings are inspiring other

See AWARD, page 8

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## WEATHER

**THU 16 Jan.....** Scattered Clouds, 19.1° F/ 18.8° F  
**FRI 17 Jan.....** Snow, 32.3° F/ 29.7° F  
**SAT 18 Jan.....** Cold with Light Rain, 15.5° F/ 2.2° F

OpenWeatherMap

## IOWA LOTTERY

|                                  |                                     |                     |
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# Lee County News/Ag News



## Crime Stoppers event raises \$4,200

BY PCC STAFF

MONTROSE - Lee County Crime Stoppers held their meeting on Monday January 14th. Pictured at left is the winner of the Side by Side Poker Run, Jimmy Johnson, who graciously donated \$1,000 of his winnings to Lee County Crime Stoppers. Tommy Benner, owner of Charleston Board of Trade, and Shawn Schrepfer, of Golden Eagle Distributing, were the organizers and founders of the event to assist the funding of Lee County Crime Stoppers. Others in the picture are members of Lee County Crime Stoppers. The event was held on Saturday, November 2nd and it raised \$4,200 for the Lee County Crime Stopper Organization.

Another event is being planned for spring of 2020.

## FSA advises early enrollment in crop loss programs

*March 15 is deadline for ARC and PCL risk coverage plans*

WASHINGTON, D.C., Jan. 15, 2020 – USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages agricultural producers to enroll now in the Agriculture Risk Loss (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs. March 15, 2020 is the enrollment deadline for the 2019 crop year.

Although more than 200,000 producers have enrolled to date, FSA anticipates 1.5 million producers will enroll for ARC and PLC. By enrolling soon, producers can beat the rush as the deadline nears.

"FSA offices have multiple programs competing for the time and attention of our staff. Because of the importance and complexities of the ARC and PLC programs; and to ensure we meet your program delivery expectations, please do not wait to start the enrollment process," said FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce.

"I cannot emphasize enough the need to begin the program election and enrollment process now. Please call your FSA county office and make an appointment soon to ensure your elections are made and contracts signed well ahead of the deadlines."

ARC and PLC provide financial protections to farmers from substantial drops in crop prices or revenues and are vital economic safety nets for most American farms.

The programs cover the following commodities: barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat.

Until March 15, producers who have not yet enrolled in ARC or PLC for 2019 can enroll for both 2019 and 2020 during the same visit to an FSA county office unless yield updates are requested.

Additionally, farm owners have a one-time opportunity to update PLC payment yields that take effect beginning with crop year 2020. If the owner accompanies the producer to the office, the yield update and enrollments may be completed during the same office visit.

For more information on ARC and PLC, download our program fact sheet or our 2014-2018 farm bills comparison fact sheet. Online ARC and PLC election decision tools are available at [www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc). To enroll, contact your FSA county office for an appointment.

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# Obituaries/Local News

## OBITUARIES

### LOUISE COLLINS

Louise Collins, 97, of LaHarpe, Illinois passed away Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at OSF Saint Francis Hospital in Peoria, Illinois.

Louise was born on July 26, 1922 in La Crosse, Illinois the daughter of William Earnest and Dora Duncan Dunn. On April 12, 1941 she married Owen Glenn Collins in Kahoka, Missouri. He preceded her in death on October 12, 1987.

She worked at the former Hobby's Newsstand in LaHarpe and later in life retired from NTN Bower in Macomb, Illinois. Louise was a member of the LaHarpe American Legion Auxiliary, LaHarpe Senior Citizens and the LaHarpe Christian Church. She enjoyed playing Bingo with her daughter, Penny, watching the Chicago Cubs, playing cards and dancing. She loved spending time with her family.



COLLINS

Survivors include one son-in-law: Ron Brewer; two daughters-in-law: Becky Dickey and Becky Collins; four grandchildren: Karri (Adam) Wallace, Jody (Rebecca) Collins, Josh (Jodi) Collins and Joe Woodside and five great-grandchildren: Bryce Marsden, Myah Wallace and Tyler Collins, Stefany Collins and Tommy Collins.

Mrs. Collins was preceded in death by her husband; one daughter: Penny Brewer; one son: Jerry Collins; two grandchildren: Ronald Gregory Brewer and Jerome Woodside; three sister: Madge Housewright, Frances Boyer and Eva Boyd and one brother: Clint Clint Dunn.

The funeral service for Mrs. Collins will be held at 1:00 p.m. Friday, January 17, 2020 at Banks & Beals Funeral Home in LaHarpe with Nate McCarter officiating. Interment will follow in the LaHarpe Cemetery. The family will receive friends from noon until time of services Friday at Banks & Beals.

A memorial fund has been established for the LaHarpe American Legion Auxiliary or LaHarpe Senior Citizens. To leave a condolence please visit Louise's obituary at [banksandbeals.com](http://banksandbeals.com).

### THOMAS J. BELL

Thomas J. Bell, 74, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away at 2:02 p.m. on Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at his home. He was born on March 14, 1945 in Chicago, IL. He married Ruth A. Douglas on February 16, 2000 in Fort Madison, IA. He was a painter most of his life and served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. He enjoyed fishing, hunting, being outdoors, his dog Mia and riding the open road.

Tom is survived by: his wife: Ruth Bell of Fort Madison, IA & 1-daughter: Megan Hinderks-Bell of Macomb, IL. He was

preceded in death by: his parents & 1-son: Thomas Wilson.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. No services are planned. A memorial has been established for Tom's family and memorials may be sent to Ruth



Bell, 2902 Avenue K, Fort Madison, IA 52627. On-line condolences to Tom's family may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: [www.kinglynk.com](http://www.kinglynk.com).



Courtesy photo

## FMEDC donates \$1,000 to FMHS welding program

FORT MADISON - The Fort Madison Economic Development Corporation (FMEDC) presented a check for \$1000.00 to the FMHS Welding Program after challenging them with a match for any funds they raise- up to \$1,000.00.

These funds will go to help bolster the welding program at the high school, as well as provide the needed money to get a piece of equipment up and running, which will give the program the opportunity to fabricate projects that will allow them to raise money for the program. FMEDC's mission is to improve the economy of the Fort Madison area through the retention of jobs, while realizing a constant growth in employment through: job creation, focusing on industrial relations and development.

Continuing the on-going support for our trades program and giving the next generation of workforce the opportunity to experience these skills is a continued goal for the economic development group.

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Pen City Current and [www.pencitycurrent.com](http://www.pencitycurrent.com) are products of Market Street Publishing, LLC. Pen City Current is published Sunday through Friday mornings by 6AM.

Founded in 2016  
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## Sports/From the Front

# FMAAA offers extended hours, music lessons

**FMAAA** - Continued from Page 1

printmaking, birds of a feather, positive-negative design, collages, and dreamcatchers. Three-dimensional projects include ceramic ice cream cones, bird nests, sea life, penguins, masks, and paper mache donuts.

"If you want to see a show, we're open down here and doing lots of things with our extended hours," Riggs said.

FMAAA is currently open full-bore for hours of operation. A temporary increase in hours for our elder intern has 825 Avenue G open on Mondays 10am-5pm since December. Tuesdays and Thursdays are 12-7 p.m. as we do guitar and piano lessons on those evenings. Call 372-3996 for info on the new music lesson programs at FMAAA.

Musician Pro Shop guitarists Clay Huston and Nick Nedler and piano lessons are being provided by Teri Welborn.

And Wednesday-Friday-Saturday are 10am-5pm. Many thanks to our local art instructors for support of this annual art gift, Budding Artist Exhibition, at FMAAA gallery!



# Mt. Pleasant continues to have Hounds' number

BY PCC STAFF

MT. PLEASANT – Senior Jayden Fedler scored in double figures for the first time in four games, but Fort Madison couldn't snap a three-game skid falling to Mt. Pleasant Tuesday night on the road.

Fedler led the Bloodhounds with 14 points and senior Parker Denning added 11, but head coach Ryan Wilson got little production from the rest of the team.

The Hounds had one lead on the night on a three pointer with five minutes left in the first period. From that point on, the Hounds struggled to keep pace with the Panthers (6-5) who beat Fort Madison at home on Dec. 6 to sweep the season.

A small 6-2 run in the final minute of the half had Fort Madison down by three at 25-22 and a 3-ball from Denning tied things up a 25. Both teams would go scoreless for a couple minutes before the Panthers broke things open on a 18-2

run that extended into the fourth period. A bucket with six minutes left in the game got the Hounds back on the board facing a 45-29 deficit.

"We started a little slow, but got things turned around, but then a couple turnovers and everything just fell apart," Wilson said.

Mt. Pleasant outscored the Hounds 10-9 the rest of the way to put the game out of reach.

Dayton Davis scored four, followed by Michael Mosena with three points for Fort Madison. Jace Burgher, Tate Johnson and Julian Navarro each had buckets to close out the Hound scoring.

Mt. Pleasant was led by Jaxon Hoyle who had a game-high 23 points. Clayton Lowery had 17 for the Panthers.

The Bloodhounds (2-8) travel to Burlington for a key matchup with the Grayhounds Friday night and then host Holy Trinity Catholic on Saturday in junior varsity/varsity, boys/girls matchups beginning at 2 p.m.

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## Sports/Classifieds

# Lady Crusaders get road win

*Mt. Pleasant rallies in second half to down HTC Monday*

DANVILLE – Balanced scoring was the key for the Holy Trinity Catholic girls basketball team Tuesday night as the Crusaders won on the road at Danville 44-28.

No Crusader scored in double figures, but a stingy defense kept the Bears in single digits each quarter.

Both teams started slowly offensively with Danville holding a 9-8 first quarter lead. But HTC would start to heat up from long-range connecting on a three pointer as time expired in the first quarter.

Junior Bailey Hellweg and senior Ashlyn Haas combined for three 3-balls in the first half to ignite a 12-6 second quarter run. Holy Trinity would lead 21-15 at the half.

HTC would again hit on three 3-pointers in the

second half with Haas, senior Avery Hopper and junior Maria Rauenbuehler each scoring from long range. Hopper put in seven of her team high nine points in the second half.

Holy Trinity held Danville to just four points down the stretch to put the game away.

Claire Pothitakis and Haas each scored eight in the loss. Hellweg had six, while Rauenbuehler scored five. Raquel Schneider and Brooke Mueller each scored four points to round out the scoring for HTC.

On Monday night, the Crusaders squandered a 21-18 first half lead on the road at Mt. Pleasant scoring just six second half points. The Panthers rallied for a 37-28 win as HTC went cold for just three third quarter, and four fourth quarter points.

Haas and Hopper led the girls with seven and six points, respectively.

Holy Trinity (6-7) goes across town on Saturday for its annual matchup with Fort Madison. Junior varsity and varsity, boys and girls all play with games starting at 2 p.m.

# HTC boys can't recover from slow start

BY PCC STAFF

DANVILLE – The Danville Bears jumped all over Holy Trinity Catholic Tuesday night in a 67-43 Southeast Iowa Superconference boys win.

Jason Thurman had 14 points to lead the Crusaders, who had a tough run last week playing three games in seven days, two of which went into overtime.

Danville jumped out to a 19-4 first quarter lead putting up 11 points in the first two minutes as the Bears quickly had Holy Trinity on its heels.

The Crusaders would pull things together in the second quarter after trailing 22-6 at the end of the first period. HTC would outscore Danville 15-12 in the second, but still trailed by 13, 34-21 at the half.

Danville would extend the lead through the second half. Senior Matt Hellige would lead Holy Trinity with seven second half points, but the Crusaders wouldn't be able make a run trailing by as much as 27 with about five minutes left in the game.

"It was a rough night. We couldn't buy a basket," head coach John Hellige said.

"We dug ourselves in a hole after getting behind early and couldn't catch up."

Hellige and Vasin Thurman each had nine points and Quentin Schneider had seven points, while Chandler Rung and Blake Crabtree each scored two for HTC.

Taylor Kensett led the Bears with a game-high 20 points. Cam Edle had 14.

The Crusaders fall to 4-7 on the year and face Winfield Mt. Union on Thursday before playing at FMHS on Saturday in the annual intercity matchup.

## PEN CITY CURRENT CLASSIFIEDS

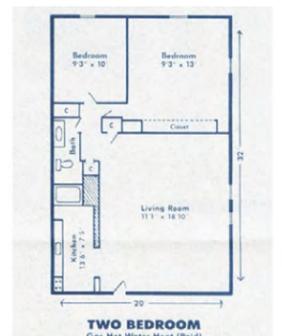
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The Pen City Current is seeking a part-time to full-time stringer/reporter for south Lee County.

Candidates will have some writing experience and basic photography skills. Compensation based on story production. Coverage would include the city of Keokuk, Keokuk Public Schools, Central Lee Public schools, south Lee County breaking news, and features. Sports coverage would be considered as an additional beat for the right candidate. This is an excellent opportunity with a rapidly growing local independent news outlet.

Please send resume, writing/photography samples, and cover letter via email to:

**Chuck Vandenberg**  
Editor - Pen City Current  
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## From the Front

# Barker group having impact on Fort Madison's downtown

**AWARD** - Continued from Page 1

activity in the historic district.”

Galloway said there is a waiting list for the apartments and both commercial first floors are now full as well. Schickedanz Construction, who was the contractor for the both the projects has set up an office on the first floor of the Cattermole, while a photography business and a non-profit are in the bottom floor of the bank building.

Fort Madison native Wes Holtkamp has been hired as Barker's point man in southeast Iowa with office space in the building as well.

Galloway said the combined \$4 million projects just received final approvals from the National Park Service and Historic Preservation offices. Funding came from a combination of Community Development Block Grants and Barker financing. The project also qualified for several historic tax credits.

“It worked like its supposed to work. There were lots of complexities as the process was going on, but that's what makes them special,” Galloway said. “It's a done project and it feels good to see it complete.”

The Barker group also owns the building on the southwest corner of

8th Street and Avenue G that houses the Olive Branch Jiu Jitsu studio. Galloway and Holtkamp have worked with the YMCA and it's director Ryan Wilson to convert that commercial space into wellness centers.

“We bought that building 24 months ago and I think from my standpoint, its an amenity for the apartments, and fits in with restaurants, bars and movie theater,” he said.

“You add the work out facility to all that stuff downtown and that makes it more of attractive place to live as well.”

Galloway said Barker's is are financial investors first and foremost, but they do pride themselves on being able to help out when they can.

“It's not our primary focus, but the plan is to continue to evaluate potential products in southeast Iowa and Fort Madison is the epicenter of where we started.”

The group has also put money into renovating The Kingsley Inn and now that property is a fully functioning hotel. The facility was originally thought the be better suited for Air B&B clients, but Galloway said 99% of the reservations are from people just calling in.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Barker Companies' co-owner David Barker speaks with Mark Schickedanz, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, and Lt. Gov. Adam Gregg in July of 2018 at the ribbon cutting of the upper floor apartments rehabbed in downtown Fort Madison.

## Sisters looking to solve mid-life crises in May play

**THEATER** - Continued from Page 1

Babe is naturally overweight and always fighting the battle of the bulge.

Sis is content in her widowhood. Babe is still looking for love. On this particular night, Babe and Sis share something new as each confesses a secret and finds a special kind of redemption.

Father Mac and the Bingo Caller should both be men over 30. Father Mac is a kindly, hardworking priest while the Caller is a smooth-talking ladies' man.

On any Bingo night at St. Joseph's, you can find Father Mac, Lonnie and Cindy Conklin, Marge Meranski, Coach Anderson, and the many off beat, colorful regulars we meet through the eyes of Sis and Babe. They dish the dirt, giggle like school girls and share old memories. Sis and Babe are sisters and best friends. They've been coming to play Bingo together for years because they love it.

“The Queen of Bingo” will be presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York. Performances run May 1-3 & 8-10, 2020. Evening shows begin at 7:30 and the curtain rises on Sundays at 2:00 pm. (Adult \$15; Senior, Military, Vet \$12; Student \$10.) Tickets will be available at [www.oldfortplayers.com](http://www.oldfortplayers.com) just by clicking the 'Book Now' button.

Not quite the type who likes being in the spotlight? You can still be a part of the fun. Old Fort Players is always looking for hard-working, organized people to be stage managers, set crews, sound and light technicians as well as costume/prop stylists and makeup artists. There's even a spot for those who enjoy working with the public by selling concessions during performances.

Stop by on audition nights to volunteer or send us a message on Facebook.

Next season Old Fort Players will celebrate their 40th anniversary. The theater is located in downtown Fort Madison at 725 Avenue G. Send a Facebook message, send an email to [oldfortplayersfm@gmail.com](mailto:oldfortplayersfm@gmail.com) or call 319-372-9559 for more information. Like them on Facebook (Fb@oldfortplayers) or visit the website to keep up with everything that's going on at the theater.



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