

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

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State sees most positives to date

SOUTHEAST IOWA: Van Buren County latest in southeast Iowa with positive test

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – The Iowa Public Health Department reported Monday the largest number of positive coronavirus tests since the outbreak hit Iowa several weeks ago, but the state also administered the most tests to date over the past 24 hours.

Despite the uptick in positives and testing, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds is holding to her stance of not ordering a shelter in place.

During Monday's press conference update from the state's Emergency Operations Center in Johnston, Reynolds said she was sticking to a plan of watching data and making decisions based on that information. Reynolds also said she isn't reconsidering her position on allowing local control of sheltering in

place.

"No, we're going to continue to do what I'm doing. I think it's the best strategically to move forward in that manner," Reynolds said.

"I can look at this based on community, county, or region and that's how we should be making those decisions. We have some that are close and a couple different changes or variable could change that. We look at this every day and every night."

She said the state now has 1,900 tests available. During Monday's press conference, Reynolds said the state had 88 additional positive cases of Iowans with COVID-19, for a total of 424 positive cases, or 6.4% of those being tested. There have been a total of 6,162 negative tests to date, which includes testing reported

See COVID-19, page 5

EMPTY NEST

By Curt Swarm



Some face tougher social distancing

We might think we have it rough with restaurants closed, "shelter in place" (fancy words for "hunker down") and supermarkets devoid of toilet paper. Check out this Facebook post of a "Friend" from Monroe, Iowa: "I'm in England and have no idea when it will be safe...to come home...My current flight connects through Frankfurt (Germany) and Chicago. Not sure I want to do that as it might place me in limbo or quarantine. I certainly don't want to risk getting exposed just before I get home to my 85 y/o husband. We've already planned self-isolation when and if I get home....I'm with my daughter and her family here and we are doing fine so far. We're staying away from crowds and lying low...God help us!"

My Facebook "Friend," Suzanne, is married to my former high school history teacher Mr. (Bob) Johnson. I'm pretty sure I was his worst nightmare in high school, although he claims he was my worst nightmare. Hmm. Who will win the battle of nightmares? How's this for a newspaper headline? "History Teacher's Wife Lives History."

Suzanne is having a Brit snit. She can't get through to the airline by phone or website (each says to use the other). The American Embassy in London is jammed with throngs of people in the same flight-plaint. To top it off, because of her age and medical conditions, Suzanne is high risk for contracting COVID-19. Just what she needs.

Her husband's birthday, which is on the same day as Mother's Day in England, came and went, which

See SWARM, page 4



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Workers take down some trees along Avenue H across from Dollar General at the intersection of 5th Street. Crews are working on the stretch of road from 2nd to 6th Street.

VANDALISM

FM man charged with misdemeanor after graffiti spree

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Fort Madison police have arrested a Fort Madison man in connection with a string of graffiti crimes in Fort Madison.

According to Fort Madison Police Chief Mark Rohloff, Donald Bell, 18, of Fort Madison has been charged with criminal mischief in connection with the vandalism spree.



BELL

"He admitted to a half a dozen places that he tagged with spray paint, including the church," Rohloff said.

Two of the locations vandalized included St. Mary's Church and McAleer Hall, both on Avenue E.

Rohloff said the word "Smoke" is what Bell was marking the buildings with. He said he didn't know if that was a handle or alias, but police were still looking into

the incidents and assessing other areas for damage.

Fort Madison firefighters used power washers on the church and hall to remove the graffiti.

Several other business and private residences and property were part of the spree.

Bell was charged with misdemeanor criminal mischief, a given a court date, and released.

Bell is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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WEATHER

TUE 31 Mar.....Overcast, 46.5° F/ 37.0° F
WED 01 Apr.....Clear Skies, 54.1° F/ 47.5° F
THU 02 Apr.....Light Rain, 62.0° F/ 55.3° F

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Obituaries/Local News

OBITUARIES

CELIA SIEGRIST

Celia Siegrist, 82, of Fort Madison, passed away at 11:48 p.m. Friday, March 27, 2020 at her home.

She was born March 11, 1938 to Earl W. and Beatrice



SIEGRIST

Celia (Simmons) Mattox. On June 30, 1957 she married Donald C. Siegrist, they later divorced.

Celia is survived by six sons: Clayton Siegrist of Niota, Illinois; Mike (Nancy) Siegrist of Racine, Wisconsin; Pat (Sally) Siegrist of Fort Madison, Iowa; Tim (Margaret) Siegrist of Pueblo, Colorado; Cory Siegrist of Sparta, Wisconsin; Ryan Siegrist of Fort Madison, Iowa; nine grandchildren; one great grandchild and one on the way; two sisters: Betty Cullen and Sondra Bendlage of Fort Madison, Iowa.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her sister: Iris Kern; two brothers: Ed Mattox and Bobby Mattox.

Celia worked at the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant, Sheaffer Pen Company, and was a home health care aid. She enjoyed pets, gardening flowers and yard work. She especially loved having her family together for holidays.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

Her body has been entrusted to Schmitz-Banks & Beals for cremation.

Memorials have been established in her memory to Fort Madison Community Hospital Home Health and Hospice or to Kensington Home Meals. Memorials can be mailed to Schmitz - Banks & Beals Funeral Home, P.O. Box 201, Nauvoo, Illinois 62354.

Schmitz-Banks & Beals Funeral Home is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.sbbfuneralhome.com.

Pen City Current obituary policy

The 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.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Volunteers continue to hand out meals for Fort Madison school district residents Monday through Friday at locations around Fort Madison, including here at Old Settlers Park, from 11 to 11:30 a.m. each day.

United Way postpones annual golf fundraiser

FORT MADISON - In efforts of continuing to be mindful of the health and safety of our community members and volunteers, United Way of the Great River Region will be following IDPH and LCHD guidelines of limiting groups to no more than 10 and practicing social distancing and postponing the United Way's Golf Outing that was scheduled for Friday, May 15.

The rescheduled date is Friday, August 28, 2020 at Sheaffer Golf Course.

"Businesses who have already committed to being sponsors will continue to be sponsors for the resched-

uled date and any individuals who have paid to participate will still be allowed to attend. We were hoping the COVID-19 threat would have slowed enough for us to hold our event on the original date, but with the extension to April 30th, we just don't feel comfortable holding the golf outing on May 15." said Karen Siefken, Executive Director.

United Way of the Great River Region supports non-profit organizations and agencies that provide programs addressing needs in health, education and financial stability to residents in Clark, Hancock, and Lee Counties.

IWD updates policy for leave under CARES Act

DES MOINES - Iowa Workforce Development has implemented updates to its leave policy for filing unemployment insurance benefits following the enactment of the CARES Act. Effective immediately, employees who are or will be laid off, or are unable to work for reasons related to COVID-19, will no longer be required to use all paid leave prior to being eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. This change is not retroactive and claims will not be backdated prior to the week of March 29, 2020, for new or existing claims by individuals who work for employers.

The policy requiring claimants to use all available paid leave prior to filing for unemployment benefits was necessary to help sustain the Iowa Unemployment Trust Fund, which is funded entirely by employers doing business in

Iowa and is the source of all benefit payments to claimants. The enactment of the CARES Act has provided a significant source of additional funding for claimants, and this policy change reflects the evolving situation.

The CARES Act benefit programs will expand the group of people eligible for unemployment benefits to include the self-employed, independent contractors, nonprofit employees, and gig economy workers as well as workers who have exhausted their benefits. Iowa Workforce Development will continue to share more information as guidance from the Department of Labor is received.

For updates about COVID-19-related information, please visit www.IowaWorkforceDevelopment.gov

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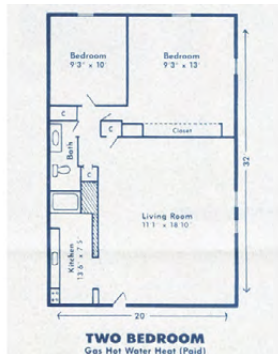
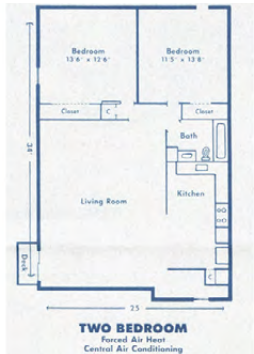
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Monroe couple separated by isolation orders

SWARM - Continued from Page 1

made Suzanne even more blue. But, thanks to WhatsApp, she and her husband are in visual and voice contact with each other almost daily, which helps a lot. The retired history teacher, who loves to talk, tells her not to worry, that, even though he misses her, he's doing fine. He takes the dogs for walks, works on the taxes, and has coffee (keeping a safe distance) with his pals at Kane Welding in Monroe. Welding and history: is there an analogy here?

Suzanne flew to Britain to be with her youngest

Suzanne and Bob's 16th grandchild. Grandma would help with Alexis' and husband, Warren's, four year old daughter, Isla (pronounced Ila). Grandma and Grandpa flew to Britain when Alexis and Warren had their first baby. But the trip was in the winter and they had a hard time getting home. Bob said that he didn't think he was up to another trip in the winter, and for Suzanne to go alone. Then President Trump announced that borders were going to be closed because of the pandemic, and for all Americans to hurry home ASAP.

Suzanne and Bob have been married 40 years. They have six children between them: Kirsten, Dave, Dee, Daniel, Adrienne and Alexis. Her kids and grandkids tell her to sit tight, they will look after Bob, and everything will work out. Then Boris Johnson, the Prime Minister of England, announced a stay-at-home order with the closure of borders and cancellation of many airline flights. As if that weren't enough, Prince Charles tested positive for coronavirus. Suzanne has no idea when she will ever be able to go home. Talk about social long distancing! Now Boris Johnson has coronavirus!

So, if you're feeling a little inconvenienced with conditions as they are in the United States, think of Suzanne, and be thankful if you can hunker down in your own home in your own country.

She needs cheering. You can find her on Facebook as D Suzanne Johnson. You might send up a prayer or two, also.

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.



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From the Front

New Abbott Labs machine could speed up testing results

COVID-19 - Continued from Page 1

by the State Hygienic Lab and other labs.

According to IDPH, two Iowans with COVID-19 passed away last night, one elderly adult (81+) of Linn County, one elderly adult (81+) of Washington County, bringing the state total to 6 as of Monday afternoon.

Reynolds said the country and state are still facing a shortage of personal protective equipment that serves as a barrier for the state's health care professionals.

"They are risking their own health to serve those that are sick. So we are working closely with health care services, hospitals, long-term care facilities and others to monitor PPE and get supplies where they are needed most," she said.

The Iowa National Guard and other state agencies have been running supplies to all counties in the state, making more than 150 deliveries in the past week.

Reynolds also thanked the state's industries, companies and private citizens who have stepped up to help make gowns, masks, shields and other PPE including hand sanitizer in lieu of their normal business schedules.

She continued the call to those groups to keep providing the equipment as the state won't see the peak of the outbreak for at least two to three weeks.

With President Donald Trump extending the national social distancing order through the month of April, Reynolds said she is waiting for formal guidelines to come out Tuesday before looking at any state changes.

"I had already indicated that we would take another look at this at the end of the week," she said.

Reynolds also said Abbott Labs has come up with a new testing machine and that can give a result in about five minutes. She said, per her national governor's call Monday morning, the state should be getting at least 15 of those units.

She said the majority would be placed in hotspots around the state with a priority being to test health care workers.

"This is really good progress and we continue to look for additional testing opportunities," she said.

When asked if the state was in as position to predict when peaks would occur, Reynolds said its a marathon, not a sprint.

"Every day we learn more - new ways to test - there's work on vaccines, and other

ways to spread this out," she said.

"There's new modeling to anticipate when the peaks will be seen, but we have spring breakers coming back which could extend that. In the fall we could potentially head back up again. So this is a marathon and if you keep asking people to do more and more and not basing it on data, pretty soon they aren't going to take you serious."

According to IDPH, the locations and age ranges of the 88 individuals include:

- Audubon County, 1 older adult (61-80 years)
- Benton County, 1 middle-aged adult (41-60 years), 1 older adult (61-80 years), 1 elderly adult (81+)
- Cedar County, 1 older adult (61-80 years)
- Cerro Gordo County, 1 middle-aged adult (41-60 years)
- Clinton County, 1 middle-aged adult (41-60 years)
- Crawford County, 1 older adult (61-80 years)
- Dallas County, 3 adults (18-40 years), 1 middle-aged adult (41-60 years)
- Dubuque County, 3 middle-aged adults (41-60 years), 2 older adults (61-80 years),
- Guthrie County, 1 middle-aged adult (41-60 years)
- Iowa County, 1 older adult (61-80 years)
- Jackson County, 1 adult (18-40 years)
- Jasper County, 1 elderly adult (81+)
- Johnson County, 2 middle-aged adults (41-60 years), 3 older adults (61-80 years)
- Jones County, 1 adult (18-40 years)
- Linn County, 9 adults (18-40 years), 8 middle-aged adults (41-60 years), 6 older adults (61-80 years), 6 elderly adults (81+)

Monona County, 1 child (0-17 years), 1 adult (18-40 years), 1 older adult (61-80 years)

Muscatine County, 1 middle-aged adult (41-60 years), 2 older adults (61-80 years)

Polk County, 2 children (0-17 years), 2 adults (18-40 years), 6 middle-aged adults (41-60 years), 1 older adult (61-80 years)

Scott County, 1 adult (18-40 years), 2 middle-aged adults (41-60 years), 3 older adults (61-80 years)

Shelby County, 1 adult (18-40 years), 1 older adult (61-80 years)

Tama County, 1 adult (18-40 years)

Van Buren County, 1 older adult (61-80 years)

Washington County, 1 adult (18-40 years), 3 middle-aged adults (41-60 years), 1 older adult (61-80 years)

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