

PEN CITY CURRENT

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

Wednesday, June 10, 2020 | 9 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 116



www.pencitycurrent.com

Pollmiller beach to open

NO CHARGE: Conservation board votes to make beach open to public at no cost

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

MONTROSE – Area residents will have access to the Pollmiller Beach at Pollmiller Park at no charge this year.

At Tuesday's regular meeting of the Lee County Conservation Board, the board discussed Pollmiller Park operations going forward in the hopeful wake of the coronavirus and COVID-19 illness.

The board approved opening the beach from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. and moving from five days a week to seven days a week starting Friday at the latest, according to Lee County Conservation Director Nathan Unsworth.

Several residents encouraged the Lee County Conservation District to open the Pollmiller Park beach as the state continues to reopen sectors of the state's economy on a limited basis.

Ashley Grinnell said her family has camped at Pollmiller the last couple years every weekend.

"The beach is something we utilize every day especially during the hot weather. I think just having it at the discretion of the parent and knowing social distancing is important," Grinnell said.

Several other residents on the teleconference meeting said

See **PARK**, page 8

SUPERVISORS

County to roll out soft openings

Buildings to remain closed, but officials to serve by appointment

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY – County residents will be allowed back into county offices starting Monday, but by appointment only.

And you have to wear a mask.

At the regular Lee County Board of Supervisor's meeting Tuesday, the board voted 5-0 to reopen county buildings June 15, but only with an appointment. Doors will remain locked and those with appointments will be allowed in if wearing a face covering.

Lee County Auditor Denise Fraise said all department heads had agreed that it was time to try the soft opening as state officials have reopened most sectors of the state economy on a limited basis.

"We're not going to just open the doors to let people flood in," Fraise said. "This will be by appointment only. I would think they may even appreciate that rather than sitting here for two hours."

County Treasurer Chris Spann said the Iowa Department of Transportation is suggesting that all counties conduct driver's license business by appointment from now on.

Supervisor Matt Pflug asked how long the county should run by appointment only.

Fraise said it was difficult to predict and left the conversation open ended.

"I have no idea. Who knows. Who knows how long this COVID-19 will be around?"

In an unrelated issue, supervisors voted 5-0 to continue discussing taking over countywide ambulance service, while awaiting approval from Lee County EMS Ambulance on a one-year proposed contract.

The county is offering \$900,000 for a year-long extension of the service with Lee

See **AMBULANCE**, page 5

SPRUCING UP

Old bank getting a grooming

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – One of the joys of pedaling around the city is that it brings a different view of what else is going on that you normally don't see on the main drags.

Sunday turned up four people working on the old drive-up bank building at the corner of 11th and Avenue G.

The building has been standing vacant since the early 90s, but now is getting a new pitched roof, some paint and a new life.

Micah Stewart, who recently moved back to the area from Springfield, Illinois was mowing the lawn Sunday afternoon, in anticipation of opening Cruiser's Pet Grooming later this month, or in early July.

"It's going to be more of a one-man grooming salon. We're going to start very simple, slow, and then hopefully it will grow and we'll be able to do more things. But we're just being cautious right now," Stewart said.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Micah Stewart works the lawn mower as work is being done on the former bank building at 11th and Avenue G. Stewart is transforming the building into a pet grooming business called Cruiser's Pet Grooming with an opening set for late June or July.

Cruiser's can be reached by email at CruisersPG@gmail.com or on Facebook at [facebook.com/cruiserspg](https://www.facebook.com/cruiserspg) for more information.

Stewart moved back to the area from Springfield, Illinois after the coronavirus shuttered his previous job at a veterinary clinic.

"With the whole virus thing, dog grooming wasn't considered essential business so I just decided to move everything under one roof. They had bought this building for a different reason, a BBQ or something, and it wasn't

working out. I always wanted to open my own dog grooming business, so we thought this might work."

The building is a former drive up facility for Iowa State Bank, and then State Central Bank before it was vacated. Stewart says the building is still very strong considering what it was built for. But he said the roof was a main concern and had some leaks.

On Sunday, a contractor was putting up prefabricated roof beams and in-

See **GROOMER**, page 4

INDEX

Autism Speaks.....P.4
Business Directory.....P.6
BUSINESS NEWS.....Ps.4-5
CLASSIFIEDS.....Ps.6-7
Edward Jones - Tony Fullenkamp.....P.4
FOR THE RECORD.....P.3
Fort Madison Community Hospital.....P.3
Fort Madison Family YMCA.....P.4

FROM THE FRONT.....Ps.4-5,8
Fullenkamp Insurance.....P.3
Great River Regional Waste Authority.....P.8
HEALTH NEWS.....P.8
Lee County Health Department.....P.2
LEE COUNTY NEWS.....Ps.5,8
LOCAL NEWS.....Ps.3-4
NHTSA.gov/TheRightSeat.....P.7

North Lee County Relay for Life.....P.9
OBITUARIES.....P.4
• Julie L. Byrne, 101
Pen City Current.....Ps.4,6-7
Pohtakis Dentistry.....P.5
Scotts Miracle-Gro Company.....P.7
Sonny's Super Market.....P.4
Tony Wolfe Insurance Services.....P.5

WEATHER

OpenWeatherMap
WED 10 Jun.....Light Rain, 65.8° F/ 59.1° F
THU 11 Jun.....Clear & Sunny, 75.0° F/ 60.6° F
FRI 12 Jun.....Clear & Sunny, 76.9° F/ 62.1° F

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Local News/For the Record

FM library kicks off Summer Reading

BY SARA CLENDINENG
Fort Madison Public Library

FORT MADISON – It's June, the temperature has crept into the upper 80s and lawns need to be mowed weekly which also means it's time for Summer Reading at the Fort Madison Public Library. We have a lot of in-person and online activities to offer this summer. Not to mention, the opportunity to win prizes for doing something you would probably be doing anyway – READING! We will be providing weekly bookmarks with specific details of upcoming events at the library, as well as posting these on our Facebook page.

We plan to have weekly events on Tuesday and Wednesday. On Tuesday morning at 10am, we will be showing a weekly movie, with popcorn, of course. At 10:30, you can begin picking up our weekly Take Home Craft. Kits and instructions will be available at the library and we will be posting an instructional video on our Facebook page. Teens may want to stop by the library on Tuesday afternoon between 3:30 and 5:00 for more involved crafts featuring fairy and gnome house, painting and creating a world in a jar.

Wednesday morning is for the younger kiddos. We will have both an online and in-person story hour. The 10am online zoom story hour does require a specific internet link that can be picked up at the library. In-person story hour, beginning at 10:30am, does require pre-registration, as space is limited.

We have reading prizes for all ages. There are board books and sippy cups for babies and toddlers.

For older kids we have dragons, wands, slime, unicorns and inflatable swords. For adults, we have mermaid and shark notepads, color your own pencil case/hold-all and, if you complete three reading tickets, a coffee coupon. We also have a grand prize for the student who reads the most minutes this summer, a tie-dye kit and 4 passes to the Fox Theater. Stop in at the library to sign-up and pick up your reading log.

As with most events at this time, the activities at the library are subject to change depending on social distancing restrictions that may be implemented by the state government and the Iowa Department of Health. For this reason, rather than providing a one page sheet of upcoming activities, we will have weekly bookmarks that can be picked up any time after Tuesday at the library. These bookmarks will include more information about the weekly movie and other activities, the link for the Zoom story hour and a link to an online show provided by Absolute Science.

Finally, we are thinking about providing an online, creative show and tell type of program. If you are interested in meeting virtually with crafters and makers in the community involved in everything from baking to sewing to woodwork to Legos and beyond, please contact Sarah Clendineng to let her know and discuss possible days and times.

For additional information or questions about anything related to the library, contact Sarah Clendineng, (319) 372-5721, SarahClen@fortmadison.lib.ia.us at the Fort Madison Public Library.

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report

06/08/20 – 11:29 a.m. – Fort Madison Police arrested Jeremy Christopher Gillette, 19, of Fort Madison, in the 1200 block of Avenue H, on a warrants for probation violation and failure to appear and charges of possession of a marijuana, prescription medications and possession of drug paraphernalia. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
06/08/20 – 12:52 p.m. – Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a hit and run in the 600 block of Avenue E.
06/08/20 – 8:00 p.m. – Fort Madison Police cited and released Javen Peterman, 20, of Fort Madison at the police station on a charge of driving while license revoked.
06/08/20 – 8:30 p.m. – Fort Madison Police cited and

released Thomas Ruble, 53, of Fort Madison at the police station on a charge of driving while barred.

Lee County Sheriff's Report

06/07/20 – 2:40 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies responded to a two-vehicle accident in the 1900 block of Hwy 2. According to reports two motorcycles were passing a passenger vehicle east bound. One motorcycle driven by Rachel Ruth Sugars slowed down during the pass. The other motorcycle driven by Robert Alan Stansbery, 42, of Fort Madison locked up his breaks forcing him to lay the cycle down on the highway with a passenger, Racheal Lynn Stansbery. Both Stansbery's were transported to Fort Madison Community Hospital with non-life threatening

injuries. Stansbery was cited for failure to maintain control.
06/08/20 – 3:24 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Randy Ray Simmons, 59, of Judsonia, Ark., at the sheriff's office on a charge of being a fugitive from justice. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
06/08/20 – 8:52 p.m. – Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested David Christopher Dean, 28, of Palmyra, Ill., at the Hancock County Jail and a warrant for violation of probation. He was held in custody. *Those listed above are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.*

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report

06/08/20 – Fort Madison firefighters responded to four medical calls.

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- Cover your coughs & sneezes with your elbow or a tissue
- Keep your hands away from your face - eyes, nose, mouth are doorways for germs
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Left to right: Chris, Erin, Judy, Jill, Brian, Shelby, and Desiree

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PEN CITY CURRENT
It's Black & White and Read all over

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From the Front/Obituaries

WIU grad opens pet groom shop at 11th and G

GROOMER - Continued from Page 1

stalling a new pitched roof on the building, while Stewart's fiance Madeline Cox and her mother repainted the lengthy planter on the properties south side.

While Stewart refreshes the building and fits it for the new venture, he's working on city permits to get the work completed and the new business open.

"I'm hoping to have a soft opening this month yet, and if we can't get it ready by then, we'll look at something in July," he said.

Aside from shoring up the roof and sprucing up the property, Stewart said location won't require intense preparation.

"Pet grooming is such a simple business. We're just leaving it with cement walls and cement floors. Painting it up a bit, but the roof is the main concern because it was leaking pretty heavily," he said.

"It's essentially a bomb shelter the way it was built. It used to be a bank so there's no real concern of it caving in or anything. It's just a matter of finessing it at this point," Stewart said.

His experience in working with animals is curvy tail from a degree in broadcasting from Western Illinois University. With his degree he landed a job at a marketing agency doing marketing and front desk operations for a firm that specializes in veterinary clinics.

From there he started helping groom the animals and found a passion for working with cats and dogs, and decided this would be a good time to start his own business.

He would be the only one staffing the boutique at the outset, but may have family helping out a different times.

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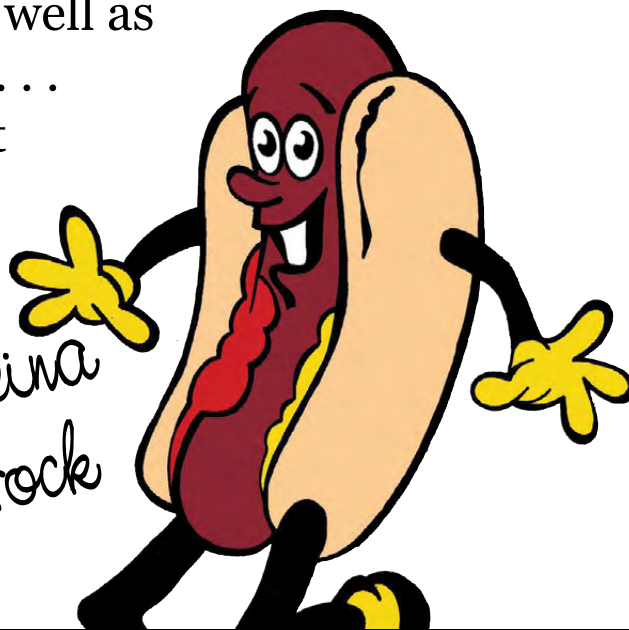
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OBITUARIES

JULIE L. BYRNE

Julia Louise Byrne, 101, long-time Keokuk resident, passed away Tuesday, June 9, 2020 at River Hills Village in Keokuk, IA.

She was born on August 19, 1918 in Albia, IA, the third child and first girl to David Lee and Sara Belle Allison Bush. At the age of seven she was adopted by Charles and Bertha Cox.



BYRNE

On September 27, 1937 Louise was united in marriage to Harold "Ray" Byrne in Kahoka, MO. To this union were born two children, Sharleen and Marciene. Ray preceded her in death on December 18, 1977.

Louise was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and was baptized on October 31, 1927.

She had been employed at Graham/Keokuk Area Hospital in the obstetrics department for thirty years.

Louise enjoyed canning, quilting, embroidery and spending time with her family. After her retirement she made many mittens and stocking caps for babies which were given to the newborns in the hospital. She enjoyed playing solitaire and probably played over two million games. She also enjoyed working on her family genealogy.

She is survived by four grandchildren, John Helenthal (Shannon) of Keokuk, Julia McDaniel (Ritchie) of Kahoka, Robert Helenthal (Peggy) of Keokuk and Sarah Stuecker (Todd) of Quincy, IL, seventeen great-grandchildren and twenty-seven great-great-grandchildren and one sister, Regina Severson (Dick) of Fifty Lakes, MN.

Besides her husband, she was also preceded in death by her parents, two daughters, Sharleen Marie Byrne and Marciene Louise Dietzman and a great-great-granddaughter, Elaine Marie White.

A graveside service will be held at 11 a.m. Friday at Sunset Memorial Garden in Keokuk with Branch President Brian Johnson officiating.

Visitation will be held on Friday from 10 am - 11 am at the Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk with family meeting with friends at that time.

A memorial has been established.

Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.vigenmemorialhome.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.

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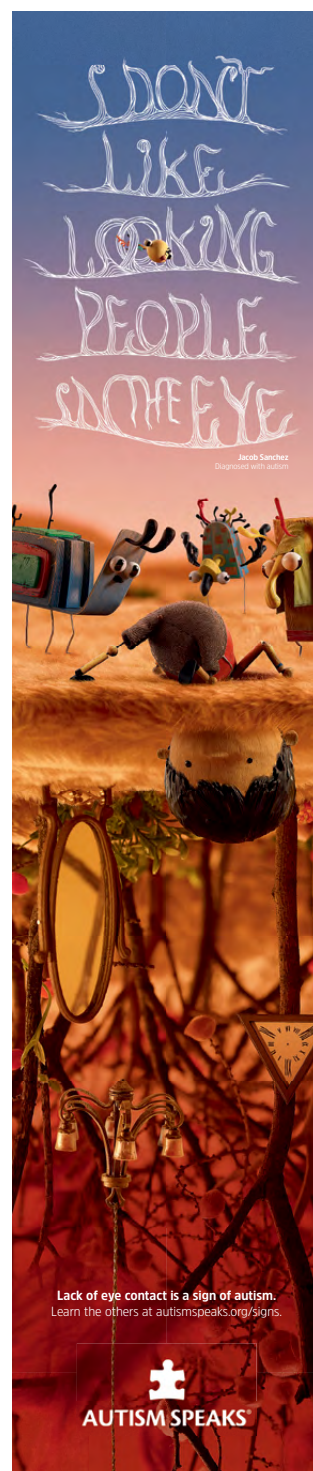
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AUTISM SPEAKS

Business News/From the Front

Little Scholars becoming Little Sprouts

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

WEST POINT – She wants to be “the top dog” in early childhood education, and she’s got the pedigree and passion to make it happen.

Asia Millizer, a former staffer with Head Start out of Community Action of Southeast Iowa is the new owner of the Little Scholars Preschool in West Point.

She purchased the early education center from Jill Kruse in June and is well on her way to reopening the business to service families in southeast Iowa.

Millizer was with Head Start for the past five years as an instructional coach for all Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms in four southeast Iowa counties, and said she “absolutely loved it”.

“I’m very passionate about their mission, but it’s always been my dream to have my own place and my own preschool. When I found out Jill was going to be closing I reached out to her... and here we are,” Millizer said Tuesday.

Millizer is currently accepting registrations for acceptance into the program and is going through the proper licensing and Department of Human Services regulations to be able to open in the fall.

In the meantime, she’s offering parents an incentive to check out the new brand. Information on registering can be obtained by emailing Millizer at littlesproutsam@gmail.com or by calling her at 319-457-1395.

Anyone registering before July 1 will have all registration fees waived and receive a 5% discount on the first three months of tuition. Anyone registering by Aug. 1 will still get the waived registration fees.

The school is located at 311 Avenue D in West Point and has been known as the Little Scholars Preschool for about 15 years. Millizer is changing the name per a recommendation from DHS to avoid any overlaps. When the school opens in the fall it will be called Little Sprouts Preschool.

Millizer said the name is similar because she wants people to know that Little Scholars was a high quality early education program, and she plans on continuing that tradition in a county where high quality child care is in demand.

“Lee County has a real need for child care and quality programming and Little Scholars has a history of providing that,” she said.

“I looked at other options and nothing really struck me as something I wanted to take a chance with, but Little Scholars came along and it seemed like a good fit. We’re very excited.”

She said Kruse and her staff have been wonderful in the transition and she couldn’t imagine the transition without their help.

“They’ve been absolutely wonderful to work with. They’ve been readily available and helped with communication between families and myself.”

Millizer said she has already been looking for asso-

ciates to hire to keep the ratio of staff to students very small.

“We will follow DHS licensing guidelines for classroom ratios. We’re probably going to hire two associates no matter what, just because smaller ratios are always better,” she said.

Kruse was forced to close the center following the governor’s declarations around the coronavirus outbreak. Millizer was then made aware of Kruse’s decision to not reopen the center after 15 years serving families in southeast Iowa.

The preschool will be program during the regular school year, but Millizer said she is already in the process of surveying families to see if there are other needs. She said a summer enrichment program is not out of the question at this point.

“The sky’s the limit. Lee County has a lot of opportunity and need and spots are filling up. All people need to do is contact me through Facebook or my email address and I can get them a form,” Millizer said.

“I’m so passionate about early childhood and I’m determined to make this a success. Little Scholars has a reputation of high quality Montessori Curriculum and other enrichment activities and we’re going to continue that. We’re gonna be top dogs in early childhood.”

Those interested can reach Millizer at littlesproutsam@gmail.com or by text at 319-457-1395. The Little Scholars Facebook page is still at <https://www.facebook.com/Littlescholarswp/>.

Kruse said she was forced to close on Friday the 13th of all days in March.

“It was kind of a shock. I still had planned on reopening even though I knew my lead teacher was going to retire,” Kruse said. “But as this COVID hit, I started to think maybe this is the time for a new chapter in my life and I didn’t know what it would look like in the fall.”

Kruse said she applied for state grants for gap funding, but was declined for any of the state grants and didn’t really understand that, but said the decision was one she was comfortable with.

She said Millizer contacted her initially through Facebook and the two hit it off.

“She’s going to have no problem taking over the preschool. It’s a Montessori based program so she’ll get certified for that and should be done by spring.”

Supervisors push public ambulance issue

AMBULANCE - Continued from Page 1

County EMS, but the contract contains language that allows the county to purchase the service from the company and make it public owned.

Supervisor Chairman Ron Fedler said both the county and the ambulance service would provide independent appraisers to assess the value of Lee County EMS equipment and facilities in the event the county purchased that equipment as part of the take over. But he said there was no obligation that would require the county to purchase company equipment.

Fraise, County Budget Director Cindy Renstrom, Supervisor Rick Larkin, Fedler, and Lee County Attorney Ross Braden met with Lee County Ambulance Director Bill Young and presented the proposed extension more than a week ago.

Fedler said input was also received from Dr. Phillip Caropreso of Keokuk, and Bryor McMillen, a county volunteer firefighter and reserve sheriff’s deputy.

“I still haven’t heard back from the ambulance service on the proposed contract,” Fedler said. “I’ve been talking with Ross and Denise, and I don’t want to wait til the end of the month to have that contract done for the next fiscal year.”

The new contract would take effect July 1.

Fedler said it would take six to nine months to get everything in order and he didn’t want the county to find itself in the same situation it has this year.

Larkin said it was important for all the supervisors to be on the same page.

“We wanted to proceed with having a public-owned ambulance service... that’s why we’re bringing it forward right now,” he said.

In other action, the board:

- voted 5-0, to approved hiring Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission to handle county floodplain administration at a cost of \$13,000 per year for the first year.
- voted 5-0 to approve a contract for the repair of two boilers in the South Lee County Courthouse.
- voted 5-0, to approve new confidentiality and segregation of duties policies.
- voted 5-0 to accept the canvass of the June 2 primary election results.

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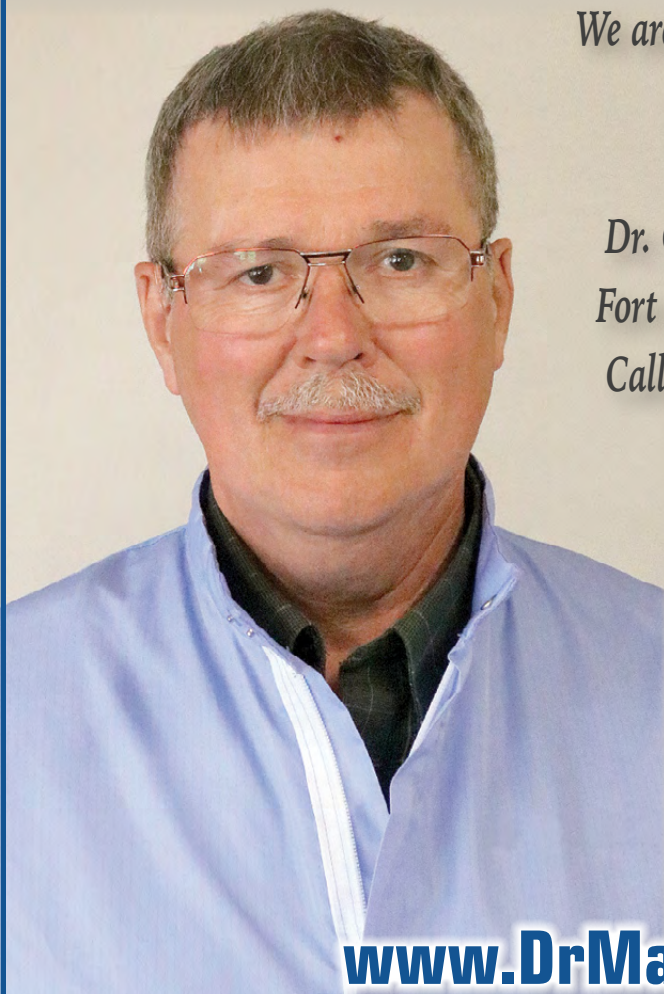
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Attorney At Law

Saunders/ Bunger
An Association of Sole Practitioners

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Ph: 319-372-2100/ Fax: 319-372-2200

320 N. 3rd Floor 6, PO Box 223, Burlington, IA 52601
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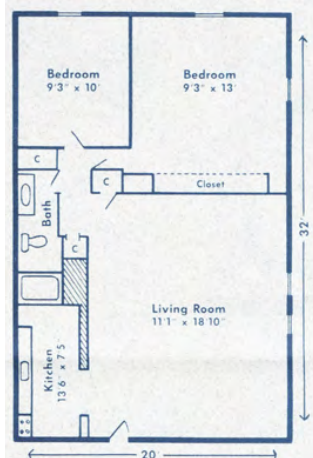
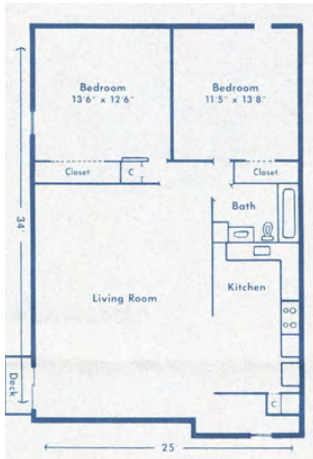
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HELP WANTED

HOME HEALTH AIDE

Lee County Health Department is seeking a full-time Certified Home Health Aide to work in the agency's homecare and hospice programs. This position requires travel to client homes in the agency's service area. Submit either a Letter of Interest or Resume to Tammy Wilson, Finance Director, at LCHD, PO Box 1426, Fort Madison, IA 52627 or email to twilson@leecountyhd.org by June 12, 2020. LCHD is an EOE.



YOUR AD HERE
319.371.4125

PRE-K TEACHER

Holy Trinity Catholic Schools System is looking for a qualified Pre-Kindergarten Teacher who is ready to make a difference with an interactive teaching approach that engages early learners.

Requirements

- Excellent understanding of the principles of child development and pre-kindergarten educational methods
- Familiarity with safety and sanitation guidelines for classrooms
- Excellent communication and instructional skills
- Able to understand and complete all Iowa DHS regulations
- BS/BA in Early Childhood Education or relevant field
- Valid Iowa teaching license

Job Type: Full-time with benefits

Please contact Judi at judi.dinwiddie@holytrinity-schools.org for application information.



ANNOUNCEMENTS



Lee County Iowa Sheriff's Office
Law Enforcement Testing
Saturday, July 11, 2020
9 AM - 12 PM
Lee County Iowa Sheriff's Office
2530 255th Street,
Montrose, Iowa 52639

Applications are available at the Lee County Sheriff's office or on the Lee County website at <https://www.leecounty.org/announcements.htm>

Application to test must be returned to the Lee County Sheriff's office by Thursday, July 2, 2020 at 3:30 PM.

Lee County Sheriff's Office
C/O Detective Sgt. Clint Wray
2530 255th Street
Montrose, IA 52639
(319) 372-1152



If you love them enough to sit through their favorite movies, then surely you'll check to make sure they're in the right car seat.

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COME GRO WITH US!

Lee County News/From the Front

Pollmiller beach could be open Thursday

PARK - Continued from Page 1

they too favored having the beach open under the discretion of parents.

Unsworth said it's important to look at the Pollmiller Park operations for a standpoint of public safety and not just financially.

The district would normally charge \$1 per person to use the beach and would average 100 to 150 people per day, with heavy usage at 250 people.

Obviously, we have some people ready to use

our beach and we want to provide that, but I'm trying to strike a balance here with facilitating usage while trying to keep people comfortable with guidelines.

Board member Liza Alton said the safety of staff and patrons has to be at the forefront of the decision to open.

"Anytime we have someone taking cash or counting people we put them at risk. I think we should just open with no

admission, leave it to the discretion of the users and post guidelines for safety," she said.

"I don't think we should sell snacks to help keep things sanitized. We don't rent kayaks, canoes or life jackets at this time. It would be a lot of work to keep those things clean."

Unsworth said he wasn't sure what the best answer is, but said everyone knows this year that things are going to be

different.

Board member Kritter Hayes, said the people that have commenting have all been practicing social distancing and safety measures for several months.

"If people get too close, they start to get away from each other. If it's easier to not charge money and better for personal safety, let's go that way and open it up. I think it's a great thing for everybody," Hayes said.

LCHD identifies 35th person with coronavirus

LEE COUNTY - The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Lee County Health Department have identified two additional cases of COVID-19 in the county, two adults who are currently in isolation. This makes 35 confirmed cases in Lee County to date with 25 reported cases as recovered.

We encourage interested residents to access the Iowa Coronavirus website at <https://coronavirus.iowa.gov> if interested in county testing data, confirmed case counts, and other useful information.

Lee County Health Department website, www.lee-countyhd.org, and their Facebook page, will continue to be updated with information as well.

Do Your Part!

Great River Regional Waste Authority encourages you to wear gloves when moving bins for residential trash pick-up.

Those workers can touch over 2000 bins a day before even touching your bin. Don't forget to wash your hands after bringing in your bin!!

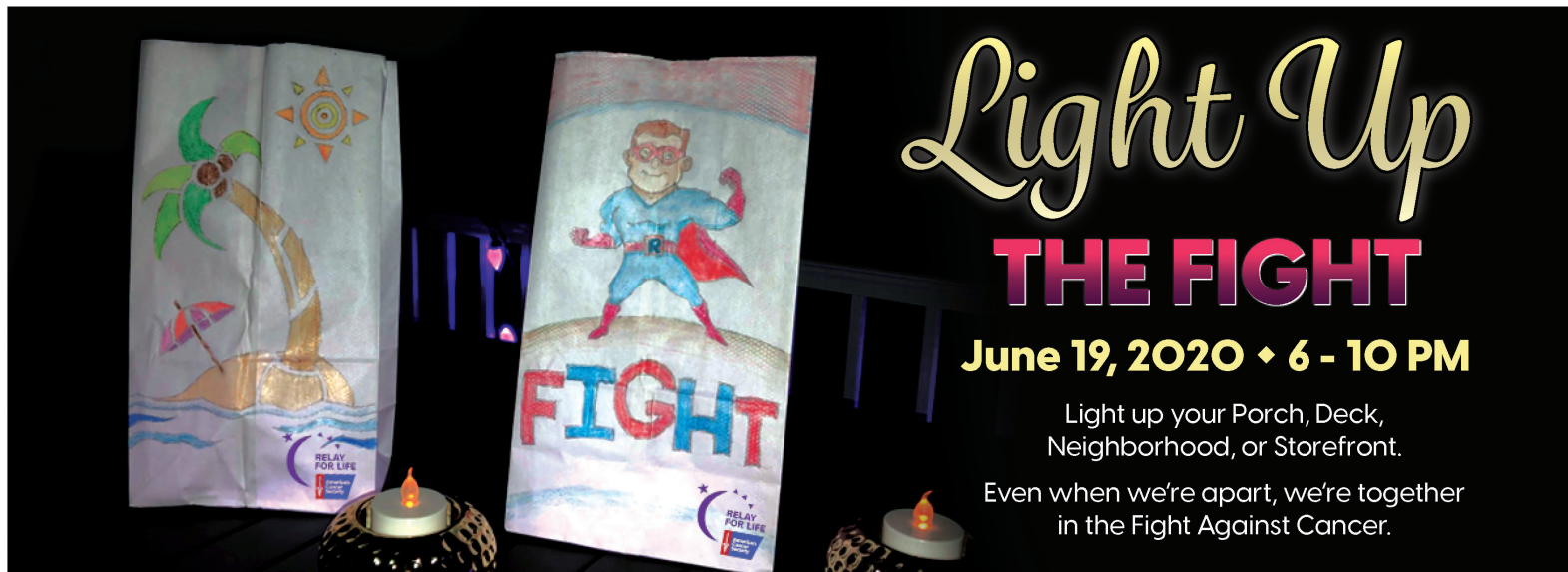


Great River Regional Waste Authority

Ft. Madison Main Office:
2092 303rd Ave
Fort Madison, IA
1-319-372-6140

Keokuk Transfer Station:
111 Carbide Lane
Keokuk, IA
1-319-524-6175

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Light Up

THE FIGHT

June 19, 2020 ♦ 6 - 10 PM

Light up your Porch, Deck,
Neighborhood, or Storefront.

Even when we're apart, we're together
in the Fight Against Cancer.

Cancer didn't stop because of COVID-19 and neither have we!

Join us as we *Light Up The Fight* on **June 19 from 6:00 - 10:00 PM.**

This year we are asking our community members to purchase Luminaria Bags and place them at their home, neighborhood, or storefront then cruise around, taking pictures & posting on the North Lee County Relay for Life Facebook Page.

Undecorated bag with "In Honor of" or "In Memory of" with the name of Recognized Person on Label.

Want a community member to decorate your bag for you? Will also include Recognized Person Label.

1 bag for \$5

1 bag for \$10

5 bags for \$20

5 bags for \$40

12 bags for \$50

12 bags for \$100

Deadline for purchase with customized label is Monday, June, 15.

Deadline to purchase decorated bags is Monday, June 15.

Un-customized bags available for purchase Wednesday, June 17 from 3-6PM at Central Park.

A Relay for Life Committee Member can also deliver your bags and glow-sticks to your door for a \$5 fee.

Pick up your luminarias at Central Park from 3-6 PM on Wednesday, June 17.

Please call 319-376-2249 if you have any questions. Thank you for your continued support of The American Cancer Society and the Fight for more Birthdays!

~ The North Lee County Relay for Life.

