



Pen City Current

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Pro-life advocates take to FM streets

March sees more than 100 participants downtown

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - They may have missed the freezing temps with their march on Saturday, but there was no missing their message as hundreds from around the

area, walked through Fort Madison.

The March for Life, which began at the intersection of 10th and Avenue at 10:30, attracted more than 100 people from Fort Madison, Lee County, and Illinois. The event was put on by the North Lee County Right to Life.

The throng carried signs with sayings such as "Today's kids are tomorrow's future. Don't kill the future", and "Life is Good".

Madeline Taylor, of Fort Madison carried a sign that

read, "All Things Grow with Love". She said this was her first time at the march.

"Life is good. I just want to be out here and say that all lives are good no matter what the circumstances. It doesn't matter how old they are, we should protect that."

Taylor walked with David Zaceski of Illinois who said he was marching in support of all people of all ages.

See **MARCH**, page 2



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Very few seats were empty on Saturday at the LULAC Club where a benefit was held to help raise money for Jesse Burgher who was attacked by an inmate at the Iowa State Penitentiary back in October.

Throng shows up for Burgher benefit

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - It was standing room only at the LULAC club as ISP workers, family, and friends turned out to help raise money to help support one of their own who currently is still deciding his future.

Jesse Burgher, a 50-year-old corrections officer at the Iowa State Penitentiary, was stabbed multiple times on Wednesday, Oct. 18 while

working a hall to escort a prisoner.

Burgher was originally taken to Fort Madison Community Hospital following the incident but was later transferred to University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics and then returned home on Friday of that week.

Burgher said he had a very clear memory of the incident.

"I was walking down to a cell and the guy I was working with was already down there letting him out," Burgher said. "He didn't have

any cuffs on and I didn't realize that because I don't work that hall very much and I didn't know they could come out without cuffs. So I'm walking down there and all of a sudden I see this guy running at me. I didn't know what was going on, but I saw that he had two shanks on him and then I just went into defensive mode and tried to block as much as I could," Burgher said.

See **BENEFIT**, page 2



Beside The Point

Chuck Vandenberg,
Pen City Current - Editor

See past the sticker shock in city manager's raise

We all had a bit of sticker shock when the Fort Madison City Council approved an immediate 8 percent increase for City Manager David Varley.

It was big enough news that I sent it out from Council Chambers on our social media platforms. We had responses before I even left the meeting.

Eight percent? I sat in a Lee County Supervisors budget meeting Friday afternoon, and they're talking about potential wage freezes if department heads can't bring expenses more in line. The suggestions were just part of many tossed around as possible solutions to a \$3 million fiscal year shortfall, but Varley's boost seemed lofty considering the economies of Lee County.

But we would encourage you to take a closer look at that number. It takes Varley's salary to just over \$110,000 from \$101,920. That may seem a bit hard to swallow, and considering the agenda listed a 5% increase, which was quickly amended by Councilman Chris Greenwald to 8 percent, it became a bigger gulp.

I heard a really cool guy once say, "if you pay peanuts, you get monkeys". Obviously \$101,920 isn't peanuts compared to some of the salaries in the county's private sector. But in the world of municipal administration the bar's set pretty high.

Let's take a little bit closer look at what city officials

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Participants walking to promote life at all levels

MARCH - Continued from Page 1

"I wanted to march to promote pro life causes and everything and show we care about babies and all kinds of people, the old and the young and everybody."

Sue Abel bundled up and walked with her granddaughter Xandra, 13, who carried a sign that read, 'Who'll speak for the little ones'.

"We're out here because we respect all life from conception to a natural death," Sue Abel said.

Sue, who makes the annual march each year, said she was impressed by the turnout for the event.

"This is the about the usual size, but it's a bit warmer today so we may have had a few more."

Her granddaughter Xandra, 13, was out to spend time with grandma and be part of something.

"I like just coming here and coming out with my grandma and I enjoy being here," she said.

The marchers worked their way down Avenue G to 6th Street and then north to Avenue F and headed west back to 10th Street. From there they walked up to McAleer Hall for refreshments and to warm up.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

At top, Madeline Taylor of Fort Madison and Dave Zaceski of Illinois walk with hundreds of others as part of the annual North Lee County Right to Life March for Life on Saturday morning.

Burgher undecided on return

BENEFIT - Continued from Page 1

He hasn't been back to work since the day of the incident and said he's still under a doctor's care and doesn't know whether he will return to work. He also said he's unsure of what the financial hardship will be.

"At this time I don't know about the medical bills because I'm still seeing a doctor. But this is to basically help me to get through until I decide if I'm going back to work or not."

Sarah Martin, one of the volunteers who helped coordinate the event, said she was happy with the turnout.

"We've probably seen 250-300 people already through here," she said.

"We did this to help Jesse with expenses since he's been off since October. We've done food with free will donations, live auctions, silent auctions, we're raffling off two guns, and we're doing a 50/50 drawing at three different times. Then we've got a ribeye roll and a bone-in ham for dinner."

There was barely a seat to be found and the bar area was six or seven people deep while food was continuing to be brought in from the grill outside.

Burgher said most of the people in attendance were co-workers and he appreciated the outpouring of support.

"I see a lot of friends, co-workers, and some family out here. But a lot of them are my co-workers. I've even seen people here today that I went to school with," he said.

"I think it's great. I mean we're all union so they're all my union brothers and sisters that have come out here to support me."

He said he hopes in the unfortunate event that something like this would happen to someone else, that the same level of support would be seen for those officers as well.

The event runs until midnight and no numbers on total donations were available as of 3 p.m.

The benefit comes just two days after another officer was assaulted at the prison. On Thursday, an officer who has not been identified, was punched in an assault while searching a cell. The incident was quickly controlled and the officer was back at his post after receiving medical treatment that day. The inmate was taken to the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics with injuries.

Sports

HTC girls press FMHS to 15th straight loss

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Holy Trinity Catholic's girls basketball team pressed Fort Madison almost the entire game Saturday as the Crusaders evened their season at 8-8 with a 55-24 win over the host Bloodhounds.

The Hounds scored first and had one lead during the game at 2-0 before the Crusaders' uptempo game and pressure at every point quickly broke down the Hounds ballhandlers.

HTC went on a 15-4 run until Sarah Bernhart scored on back-to-back trips down the floor to close the gap to 15-8. HTC's Madison Mohrfeld scored for the Crusaders at the end of the first to push the lead to 17-8 at the end of one

Senior Brett Schneider, who's currently third in the Southeast Iowa Superconference South division in scoring at 15.3 points per game, scored nine in the opening period mostly in transition.

HTC junior Emily Box opened the 2nd period with a bucket inside and then both teams went cold from the field until Bernhart scored again with 5:16 left in the half. Braxtyn McGhyghy converted both ends of a one-and-one with about a minute left in the half, but HTC got a bucket from Eryn Anderson and then sophomore Avery Hopper scored inside and then proceeded to knock down the inbounds pass in the press and scored again with :26 left to give the Crusaders a 25-12 lead at the half.

The visitors kept the press on in the third period and ran past the Hounds 14-7 highlighted by Box's six points. The Hounds got a 3-ball from Taylor Shannon, a bucket from McGhyghy, and couple of free throws in the period.

With the press still in full go, the Hounds would only manage five points in the 4th period, while the disruption resulted in 16 points for the Crusaders.

Fort Madison head

coach Charlie Knipe said he understood the pressure.

"Everybody will press us because all they see is our turnovers and our guard play," he said.

"I thought our last four games we played very well. But today we just drew a blank especially beating the press, which is nothing new, we've seen it before. "But we get away from what we know and then we have turnovers."

He said Schneider and Box can be tough to match up against.

"Don't take anything away from HTC. Schneider is a great player and Box intimidates our posts," Knipe said. "We tried to get Box in some foul trouble and we did that, but then we went away from that, too."

Crusader head coach Tony Johnson said the crosstown atmosphere hyped the game a bit, but HTC had a long road trip last night coming back with a win at Cardinal.

"The biggest thing was we got the ball where we wanted, but we missed

some shots and then we started making them toward the end," he said. "We wanted to create some pressure and get some turnovers and had some success there."

He said sophomore Avery Hopper is building her confidence. Hopper finished with 10 points, her first time in double figures in varsity action.

"She's been coming along the last three or four games. She's working a lot with the assistants at the post and is only a sophomore so she's getting her confidence."

Bernhart led the 0-15 Hounds with eight points on the night, senior Kamryn Bailey and McGhyghy each had five points for Fort Madison. Shannon had three on the night, Maddie Rashid had two points, and Anna Kester chipped in with one.

Schneider finished with 17 for Holy Trinity. Box had 16, and Hopper finished in double figures for the first time at varsity with 10 points. Mohrfeld and Anderson each had four, Ashlyn Haas had three, and Taylor Boeding



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Holy Trinity's Emily Box gets a block on FMHS's Sarah Bernhart in early action Saturday.

converted a free throw to round out the Crusader scoring.

HTC hosts Central Lee on Tuesday before traveling to Danville on Friday night. The Hounds travel to Danville on Tuesday before hosting Mt. Pleasant on Friday.

In junior varsity action,

HTC won 51-33. Scoring for the Hounds were Dallyn Wondra with 8 points, Nadia Boeding had seven, Brandy Walker had six, and Kailyn Guzman and Kylee Cashman each had four. Josie Pumphrey and Eleesha Estrada both had two points.

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Sports/Classifieds

Hounds put up 92 in win over Crusaders

Unbeaten Clark County, Mt. Pleasant loom this week

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - It was a crosstown rival hoops contest served with a lot of hoops and some cake and ice cream.

The Fort Madison Bloodhounds won their eighth game of the last nine with a 92-67 win over Holy Trinity Catholic on Saturday night on the Hounds' annual Cake Auction night.

The Hounds' senior Treavor James-Kokjohn provided a little icing of his own with a dunk toward the end of the third quarter. The bucket was nullified and James-Kokjohn was assessed a technical when he hung on the rim just

long enough for the ball, which bounced on the rim, to go up and back in the hoop.

The Hounds had already put a 23-8 lead on the young Crusaders, as junior Logan Rashid was hitting from everywhere but the cafeteria enroute to a 22-point first half. Rashid connected on four 3-pointers in the first quarter alone.

Despite the Hounds leading by as many as 21, HTC playing with no seniors and only one junior, kept putting up points and working the ball into sophomore post Matt Hellige, who finished with 17 points on the night in the paint.

Sophomore Reed Feheske also seemed to find another gear for the

Crusaders as he put up 16 points in the first half to lead HTC.

In the third period, the Bloodhounds flirted with a 35-point continuous clock, but Holy Trinity kept countering with buckets on the other end to keep the margin under the rule.

Fort Madison pushed the lead to as many as 31 with less than a minute remaining in the third period, but two free throws by Hellige got the margin back under 30. The two teams traded buckets throughout the fourth quarter as Fort Madison Head Coach Ryan Wilson emptied the bench with about five minutes left in the game.

"We had four guys in double figures. I was really happy with the way these boys played against a very-well coached, disciplined 10-4 Class 3A

school," said HTC coach John Hellige

"This is a crosstown rival and these kids all know each other and have played together. I'm just super proud of the way these kids played all the way to the end."

Wilson said the rivalry wasn't lost on his team either.

"The kids said in the lockerroom that they wanted to win this game and let the town see how good we can play," he said.

Rashid's first-half performance wasn't unexpected.

"He played well," Wilson said. "It was his night to step up and he got some open looks."

Feheske led the Crusaders with 21 points, followed by Hellige's 17, Quentin Scheider had 13

See **BOYS**, page 7



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Hound senior Treavor-James Kokjohn finishes off a dunk in Saturday's game with Holy Trinity. James-Kokjohn was called for a technical on the play for hanging on the rim and the basket was waived off.

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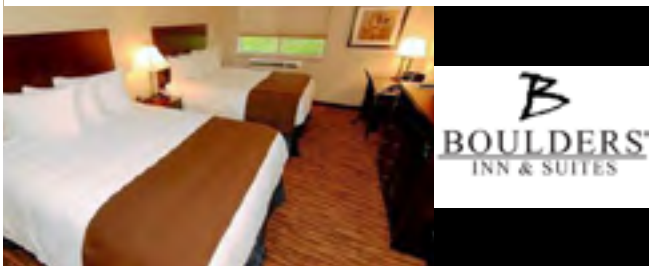
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From the Front/Weather

FM city manager pay still below smaller cities

VARLEY - Continued from Page 1

are up against when the salaries of other communities' city managers are stacked up against Fort Madison.

As part of the discussion on the increase, several tables were introduced that compared Fort Madison data on taxable property valuations, per capita property tax, and revenue per capita to 10 other cities in Iowa between populations of 10,000 and 15,000. That table included the cities of Altoona and North Liberty with city manager salaries at \$159,585 for Altoona and \$140,642 for North Liberty. However the populations according to www.iowa-demographics.com listed North Liberty at 18,520 and Altoona at 17,938.

In contrast, the Iowa Demographics site had

Carroll, another city listed as being in the 10,000 to 15,000 range only had a population of 9,900, with a city manager's salary of \$116,050, a full \$6,000 per year over Varley's new pay rate.

The most telling information came when comparing Keokuk to Fort Madison. According to the Iowa Demographic data, Keokuk and Fort Madison are only 166 residents apart in population with Fort Madison slightly larger. The data presented to the council, showed Keokuk with a taxable valuation of \$300.2 million and Fort Madison at \$282.3 million, roughly 94% of Keokuk's.

The same table showed Keokuk's property tax per capita at \$390 while Fort Madison's is \$381,

98%. Expenditures by the city on its residents was roughly 26% higher in Fort Madison but Varley's pay rate was 85% of Burnett's, who did get bumped to his current rate in the second half of 2017. Varley's increase now puts his salary at 92% of Burnett's.

Another chart presented at the meeting showed Varley's pay 14 places below comparable positions of cities in Iowa with less than 10,000 in population.

Greenwald compared Varley to a plant manager with 96 employees. "What would that plant manager make?" And then figure in that Varley has to be an expert all things municipal.

But the largest consideration has to be the future of Fort Madison.



Varley has said he has about eight years left in his career work, but if and when he does go, is Fort Madison positioned to be competitive in attracting the successor we need.

It's a rarity to find even a coffee group, or card party, let alone a board, commission, council or city that agrees on every decision. But it has to be at least observed that this city is making progress under Varley's leadership,

along with the department heads at the city's and the council's direction. As a community, we may be divided on what we think are good and bad investments, but progress is being made nonetheless. Roads are being repaired, we're setting ourselves up for growth with water and sewer, rebuilding our highways, building new parks, and bringing in new business.

Yeah, it was sticker shock to me, too. I just think, in very simple terms, if we want to attract top quality people to lead our city, we, at the very least, need to be competitive in that market. We're not there at \$110,000, but we're a bit closer.

Take a closer look folks, this city's just startin' to percolate - but that's Beside the Point.

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MON 22 Jan Snow
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TUE 23 Jan Light Snow
 High - 33.0° F | Low - 28.5° F

WED 24 Jan Light Snow
 High - 29.1° F | Low - 24.0° F

THU 25 Jan Clear Skies
 High - 49.2° F | Low - 48.2° F

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Sports/Lottery Numbers

Hounds crack top 25 in MaxPreps 3A rankings

BOYS - Continued from Page 4

for HTC, and Brant Holtkamp had 11. Rounding out the scoring for the visitors was Jake Eaves with three and Blake Crabtree with two.

James-Kokjohn and Rashid each had 23 for Fort Madison, Kaleb Cresswell had 16 on the night followed by Brandon Keester and Lorenzo Riles who each had eight, Parker Denning had seven points, AJ Nolting had three, and Romeo Maestro and Jayden Fedler each had two.

Last year through 14 games the Hounds were 9-5. Wilson said with this year's 10-4 mark his squad may be playing a little better.

"I really hope so. We've had a pretty good start, but we had a couple mistakes in the early going that cost us some

games," Wilson said. "But we've got a slough of tough games coming up this week."

Tuesday starts the madness when 14-0 Clark County, ranked in top 20 in the state of Missouri according to MaxPreps, comes to town on Tuesday night. They bring with them 6'7" Chandler Bevans.

"Kaleb and Treavor have seen him in club ball and he's a pretty tough player," Wilson said.

The week doesn't get any better when the Bloodhounds travel to 5th-ranked Mt. Pleasant on Friday, and then travel to Central Lee on Saturday. The Hounds are currently ranked 24th in Class 3A according to MaxPreps.com.



Photos by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC



Above, HTCs Matt Hellige drives against FMHS seniors Treavor James-Kokjohn and Lorenzo Riles (44). The Hounds downed the Crusaders 92-67 Saturday at the Hound Dome. At left, HTC's Matt Hellige and Blake Crabtree (11) get tied up with FMHS's Treavor James-Kokjohn in early action.



IOWA LOTTERY WINNING NUMBERS

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Lotto America [™]	Wed & Sat	8:59 pm	10:00 pm
Pick 3 - Midday	Daily	Noon	12:20 pm
Pick 3 - Evening	Daily	9:40 pm	10:00 pm
Pick 4 - Midday	Daily	Noon	12:20 pm
Pick 4 - Evening	Daily	9:40 pm	10:00 pm



1/20
15 23 40 43 45
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1/19 MID-DAY
6 1 0
1/19 EVENING
4 1 9

1/20 MID-DAY
7 4 3
1/20 EVENING
9 3 9



1/19 MID-DAY
6 1 5 5
1/19 EVENING
5 6 8 0

1/20 MID-DAY
1 7 5 0
1/20 EVENING
8 3 0 2

Pen City Current encourages you to play responsibly.

Two heads are better than one.



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