



Pen City Current

Sunday, July 15, 2018 | 8 pages | Volume 2 • Issue 165

Hancock County still looking into July 9th stabbing

Argument between two men sends both to area hospitals

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

CARTHAGE - The Hancock County Sheriff's Office is still investigating a stabbing incident that occurred

about 10 p.m. on Monday, July 9th.

According to a release from the sheriff's office, an incident occurred about 11 p.m. on the 9th, however, Fort Madison Police, Fort Madison Fire & Rescue, and Lee County EMS were called to the west foot of the Fort Madison bridge at just after 10 p.m. Authorities responded to a call into LeeComm that a male with a stab wound to his chest was being brought across the river.

The Hancock County news release indicated that two

adult males, ages 34 and 43, got into an argument in a different vehicle and were both injured by a knife. Two other occupants in that vehicle were not injured.

The 43-year-old received the stab wound to the chest and was taken to Fort Madison by a private vehicle where they met the first responders at the bridge and were transported to Fort Madison Community Hospi-

See **KNIVES**, page 8



FM's Derr taking toys to Burlington retail outlet

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Although her father is no-longer alive, Brenda Derr is using her dad's nickname for her as an inspiration in her new business venture.

Derr, the owner of Dollhouse Dreams in Fort Madison, will be opening a new location this fall in a retail outlet in Burlington near Dick's Sporting Goods on Agency Street.

With a focus on educational toys and her Melissa & Doug collections, Derr wants to create an environment where children feel free to experience playtime again. But she's pulling from her past as a child when her father used to call her "Shug"...short for sugar.

"The new place is going to be called "Shug's Tiny Town" in honor of my dad. That's what he used to call me



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Dollhouse Dreams owner Brenda Derr, far left, and staffer Ashley Enger of Fort Madison, talk with customers about the pending fall opening of Brenda's new store, Shug's Tiny Town & Educational Toys, slated for September

when I was little, 'Shug,'" Derr said.

Her premiere line of Melissa & Doug toys was created by Melissa and Doug Bernstein, a husband and wife duo who started a toy company in 1988 in their basement and Doug's parents' garage and is headquartered in Wilton, Con-

necticut.

Derr said the company's philosophy is to take childhood back and Derr said the toys can bring back creativity and engagement that may be at risk in an ever-increasing digital world.

"We need to try and get kids away from all that and get them back

into imaginative play and creativity. That's something they will take with them later in life," she said.

"This is gonna be fun, it really is. I'd like to be up there all the time."

Ashley Enger will be Derr's manager at the

See **TOYS**, page 8

Trades contest debuts at 2018 Lee County Fair

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

DONNELLSON - With the need for skilled workers in the area becoming a focal point of economic and workforce development efforts, the Lee County Fair Board is doing its part to recognize that need at this year's fair.

Brian Foecke, a Lee County Fair board member, has been working with area schools and trade instructors for the past six months to incorporate a Competitive Trade Competition, in which students can enter trade projects and win prizes at the fair.

Foecke said he's been kicking the idea around for a couple years, but this year the competition became a reality after several manufacturing and contracting companies got on board to sponsor the event.

"This goes back several years with me. We were trying to figure out what we can do to get even more kids out to the fair. When kids come, parents and grandparents follow," Foecke said.

"Over the last few years, visiting with business and industry leaders who know and see a shortfall in their trades and trades in general, we just started having some discussions."

Those discussions were with prominent industry leaders such as Jenny Steffensmeier of Steffensmeier Welding & Manufacturing, Bobby Huffman of Huffman Welding & Machine Inc., both of Fort Madison, and Pat Jones of Jones Contracting Corp. of West Point.

Foecke said those conversations focused on the shortage of skilled workers who can fill positions that are open, so he thought the fair could be a vehicle to

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Scene Around the Area/For the Record



Makeshift slip 'n slide

Photo by Ava Peitz/PCC

Youngsters got a break from the heat during the Kids' Day on Friday at the Lee County Fair. Temperatures hovered in the 90s with heat indices pushing the 100 degree mark for the annual kids day sponsored by Fort Madison Community Hospital and UnityPoint Health of Keokuk.

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report
07/11/18 - 9:27 a.m. - Fort Madison police cited Tracy Earl Williams, 45, of Burlington at the intersection of Avenue H and 14th Street on a charge of having no insurance. He was released upon citation.
07/12/18 - no reports listed
07/13/18 - 1:59 a.m. - Fort Madison police responded to a report of vandalism in the 1300 block of 14th Street.

Lee County Sheriff's report
07/12/18 - 9:40 a.m. - Lee County Sheriff's deputies responded to a two-vehicle accident on the off ramp from Hwy. 61 to Hwy 2. Ac-

ording to reports, a vehicle driven by Herold Thomas Edward, 63, of West Point was stopped at the stop sign onto Hwy 2. and was struck from behind by a vehicle driven by Janet Louise Henderson, 55, of Fort Madison. No citations or injuries were reported at the scene.
07/12/18 - 1:50 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Jarrod Ray Hagmeier, 37, of Keokuk, at the sheriff's office on a charges of possession of controlled substance and controlled substance violation. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
07/12/18 - 3:39 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Christopher Lee

Davis, 31, of Keokuk at the sheriff's office on a warrant for parole violation. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.
Those listed above are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue report
07/11/18 - Fort Madison firefighters responded to one burn complaint, two medical calls and one false alarm.
07/12/18 - Fort Madison firefighters responded to two medical calls.
07/13/18 - Fort Madison firefighters responded to two medical calls, one house fire, one false alarm.



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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



7/13
21 22 39 59 68
Mega Ball: 2
Megaplier: 2



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7/13 EVENING
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Opinion/Weather

Garden taking on a life of its own at Empty Nest

EMPTY NEST

By Curt Swarm



I told Ginnie that our life here on the Empty Nest Farm was all part of our art—the garden, and the animals, even the aronia bushes. She agreed. Our life is like a poem, flowing smoothly, everything in harmony, rhyming, a syncopated life. “Who could have imagined,” she said, “at our age, finding a life like this.” I’ll be 70 this month and Ginnie will be 67 in August, both of us on the same day, the 28th, making it easy for me to remember.

Chicken manure grows Hercules garden! The garden has exploded into a cornucopia of green, and red, and yellow vegetables, bursting with juice and flavor and color. I attribute the bounty to the chicken manure I tilled in, the timely rains we had in June, and of course, the Iowa heat and humidity.

The green beans are simply to die for. Lightly boiled with a little bacon and garden onion, they are the sweetest, most tender snappers I have ever eaten. When Ginnie was gone for a week visiting her sisters and father in Missouri, I actually

lived off the green beans and couldn’t have been happier or more satisfied.

And the tomatoes. My goodness! The vines are taller than Ginnie, and bursting out of their cages, leaning over like fallen women to spill their bounty to whoever is brave enough to penetrate the jungle of green and red. We thought we had planted them far enough apart—one plant every three feet or so. But nope. They have taken over, building an unpenetrable wall of python-like vines, reluctant to give up their once-thought-to-be-poisonous fruit. We have sweet baby-girl cherries, celebrity, super fantastic, early girls and better boys. My favorites are the early girls—not too big, bright red, and bursting with flavor. Eat them like an apple right out of the garden—sun warm, the juice dripping down your chin onto your chest.

I’ve never raised better sweetcorn. We have both

peaches-and-cream, and something called “incredible.” With Ginnie at work during the day, I’ve even taken over freezing the corn. It’s pretty easy. Just boil lightly, slice off the cob, eat till you’re sick, and put into freezer bags—guaranteed to bring sunshine and a lip-smacking smile to the coldest winter days.

In addition to sweetcorn, we also have three varieties of Indian (or decorative) Corn growing to compliment the “punkins.” We have the “punkins” running in the rows of Indian Corn, and the “punkins” have completely taken over. I don’t know for sure how we’re going to harvest the Indian Corn with the “punkins” dominating the landscape, but we’ll figure something out.

Wouldn’t you know it, just when the garden is hitting hard, we have a vacation planned in Colorado. There’s only one thing to do—let the kids and friends know to “help themselves.” We didn’t have too much trouble convincing them.

On our last morning before leaving for Colorado, Ginnie and I walked through the garden to bid it farewell. It’s like an old friend. The zucchinis look as if they’re trying to repopulate the earth with bowling-pin size fruit; the watermelon are competing with the “mushmelon” for best of show; and the peppers are clamoring to join the tomatoes in a salsa fest. There’s a presence in the garden that makes it feel like it has a living, breathing life of its own. When I look at the garden, I see God.

Have a good story? Call or text Curt Swarm in Mt. Pleasant at 319-217-0526, email him at curtswarm@yahoo.com or find him on Facebook. Curt’s stories are also read at 106.3 FM in Farmington.

5-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

SUN 15 Jul	Clear Skies High – 89.5° F Low – 78.2° F
MON 16 Jul	Light Rain High– 86.3° F Low – 66.1° F
TUE 17 Jul	Heavy Rain High– 80.7° F Low – 71.7° F
WED 18 Jul	Clear Skies High – 77.1° F Low – 60.8° F
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Lee County Fair

Orton, Sporkman win first county fair trades competition

TRADES - Continued from Page 1

help showcase that work and its importance to the communities in the county.

Steffensmeier put Foecke in contact with an instructor at Southeastern Community College, who then hooked him up with instructors at area high schools in Lee County. Foecke then met with the instructors at Fort Madison High School, Central Lee High School, and Keokuk High School. Holy Trinity Catholic students can share in the FMHS programming.

“We covered all the schools and went around in January with flyers to promote it as much as we could,” he said. “We had a little bit of a late start, but there was interest initially from all of the instructors and from the students that were in the classrooms at the time we met with them.”

“

We do a great job at our local schools. There is some outstanding instruction going on, we just need to keep nudging that ball from every angle.”

-Brian Foecke, Lee County Fair boardmember

SCC came on as the overall sponsor of the contest and Steffensmeier and Jones also came on to help sponsor the event.

The board opened the competition to all county students in grades 7-12 and three categories: carpentry, welding, and drafting/design.

“We just wanted to open it up and see how it went. We may split it up differently next year,” Foecke said.

Milo Orton won the

welding competition with a dog box that he welded out of aluminum. The box can be used in the back of trucks for safe transportation of hunting dogs. Bradley Sporkman won the carpentry division by constructing a dog house. Foecke said there were no entries for the drafting/design competition.

Foecke said Orton is going to SCC for welding and Sporkman is already in an apprentice program with Siether and Cherry.



Photo courtesy of Lee County Fair

Milo Orton, left, and Bradley Sporkman, show the tools and equipment they won as part of the Lee County Fair’s first-ever trades competition held this year. Judging was done on Wednesday and Orton won in the welding category, while Sporkman won for carpentry.

“These are two fine young men who are entering trades programs in the area,” Foecke said. “We need to have more things going on to encourage these kids to explore the trades programs or the two-year vocational programs. A four-year college degree is fine, but it’s not for everyone.”

“When you and I went to college, we heard hundreds of times that college was the push, but

in today’s world this is so far from true. We’ve gotta do a better job of letting our students know that these jobs exist and then help steer those that are interested in the right direction.”

He said his conversations with school officials and instructors revealed that schools are offering multiple trades and programs that teach hard skills.

“We do a great job at our local schools. There

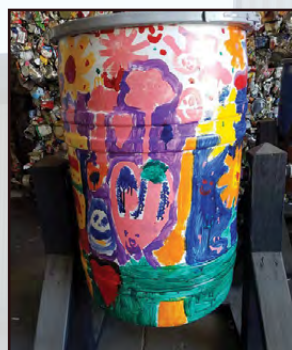
is some outstanding instruction going on, we just need to keep nudging that ball from every angle.”

He said the competition will be held again next year and the board will work harder to promote the program and trade fields.

“The main thing we know we need to do next year is start promoting it before the school year starts and encourage more kids to take a look.”

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FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

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FRIDAY

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 10:00pm

SATURDAY

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 10:00pm

SUNDAY

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 6:30pm

THE NATU BAND
 10:00pm

BRANDON GIBBS
 7:30pm

HINDER
 6:00pm

RADI ROMANCE
 7:00pm

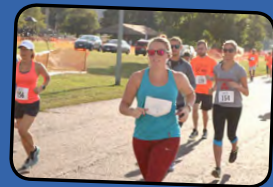
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From the Front/Celebrations

Shug's Tiny Town to focus on educational toys, activites

TOYS - Continued from Page 1

new facility.

"She's got some really good ideas on different things for the kids to do. We'll probably start a craft night up there like we've done here and a toy tester program. We might have a dress up party for the girls because there will be a boutique... or a fire drill with the firehouse."

She said she's been thinking about opening another location for years.

The sales rep with the Melissa & Doug line had been encouraging Derr to take the next step and open a new location.

"I knew it was going to happen I just didn't know when. And, of course, then the storm came and we dealt with that, but that spot in Burlington has been calling my name for years," she said.

The storm was an early 2017 spring thunderstorm with heavy winds that damaged the roof of the current building at 824 Avenue G. Derr had to renovate and repair a major portion of the building, while working out of a location next door. The current location also houses Megan's Old Fashioned Ice Cream Parlor where patrons can experience a mid-1900s lunch counter and ice cream parlor.

Derr said after taking a vacation in January she went up to Burlington to meet with the owners of the retail center and worked out a lease and got the ball rolling.

She wants the new location to be very interactive and educational. In addition to the Melissa & Doug line, she's hoping to bring some other lines in as well.

"It's going to be all educational toys. Since we're a premiere partner with Melissa & Doug, we'll continue

to carry that line, and we'll bring in other lines, but I'm just not sure what those will be yet," Derr said.

The 4,300 square foot retail space will also include a "Pay and Play" area for the kids that will consist of a fictional streetscape with structural homes and buildings that the kids interact with. Some of the buildings planned include a firehouse, a diner, and a beauty parlor that will be completely interactive for children.

"That came about because we have so many interactive toys here and the kids love to play with the toys. I ran across it on the Internet and just thought it would be a nice fit for up there," she said.

She's hoping to start construction very soon and be open in September or October. Derr said she's planning a grand opening in October to help kick off the holiday season with a huge Melissa & Doug sale. She is planning on having the store open seven days a week through the holiday season, but the hours are still to be determined.

She said she's had success selling toys in a world dominated by digital gadgets.

"If you take the phone away, they'll have to play with this toy and they'll be creative and they'll play," she said. "We kind of have to help them as parents and encourage them, but kids know what to do, they just have to be presented with it."

Dollhouse Dreams will be holding a Toy Tinkering Experience next Saturday at the Fort Madison location where kids can come into the store and "tinker" around with toys in the shop. There will also be a 20% discount on all Melissa & Doug toys for one week starting on Tuesday.

Birth Announcements

COLTON JOE LOTT

FORT MADISON - Marcia and Maurice Lott, of Keokuk, are proud to announce the birth of their son Colton Joe Lott on July 6, 2018 at the Fort Madison Community Hospital.

Colton is welcomed home by Dillon.

Grandparents are Kelley and Delbert Gilbert of Donnellson, Iowa.

The Pen City Current congratulates the family on this wonderful news.

Victims treated in Fort Madison, Carthage

KNIVES - Continued from Page 1

tal. The 34-year-old male received treatment at Carthage Memorial Hospital on Tuesday.

Several media outlets are reporting the names of the victims, however a spokesperson at the Hancock County Sheriff's office on Saturday said no press release has been issued identifying the victims and wouldn't confirm the names of the victims identified in other outlets.

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