



# Pen City Current

Monday, Nov. 13, 2017 | 8 pages | Volume 1 • Issue 264



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

## Lost Bear taking shape

The Lost Bear Coffee shop is getting closer to its planned opening date of Dec. 1. The coffee shop being opened by TJ Widbin and Melissa Cervantes is located on the parking lot at the Baxter Sports Complex on 48th Street in Fort Madison. The couple also own the Lost Bear Coffee outlet in the parking lot of Westland Mall in West Burlington

## EMPTY NEST

BY Curt Swarm



*Do something, even it's wrong*

If there's one motto I've lived by all my life, and especially now that I'm a (ahem) "senior citizen" it is, "Do something, even if it's wrong." I often get caught up in the morning in the myriad things I want to accomplish. But first and foremost I need to get my 30 minutes of aerobic exercise in, then I need to do the chicken chores, then I need to shower, then I need to eat breakfast, then the phone rings and it's the pharmacy reminding me of a prescription I need to pick up, then insurance appointments come in on the computer and I need to call the prospective clients and they're not home so I leave a message, then "breaking news" appears on the television that captures my attention (usually a mass shooting), then Ginnie texts me to see how my morning is going and we do a "back-and-forth" for 15 minutes, then one of the prospective clients calls back to tell me they have to "think about it," then some passerby on the highway pulls in and asks how much my metal pheasants are, then he has some idea for a rusty-metal sculpture he wants built and we spend half-an-hour drawing rough pencil sketches and b.s.'ing, then he tells me he'll have to "think about it." I look at the clock and it's 11:30, I haven't accomplished a dang thing, and it's time for lunch (dinner in the country).

That's when I tell myself, "Do something, even if it's wrong!" I heard it from my dad.

There are two major projects I want to accomplish before snow flies, both of which I've been putting off. I want to insulate the chicken house, and I want to give the grass its final mowing. Mowing is a major project on our two-and-a-half-acre Empty Nest farm. I have a 60-inch deck on the John Deere but it still takes a full day to do the mowing and trimming. If I had a zero-turn radius mower I know I could reduce the mowing time by half. Seeing how it's November, I bet I could get a real good deal on one of those fancy, zero-turn radius mowers. I text the

See **SWARM**, page 3

## Information is there for those who want it

Sometimes, and I've written this before, it's tough to throw an opinion out there for readers to consume. There are times when you can write from an emotional, but safe place. when your memories are put on display and you kind of open yourself up through your words for others' observation and consideration.

But there are also times when I find myself disappointed in those that live, shop, play, and volunteer around me.

This week was one of those times. And writing about that disappointment opens me up to ridicule



## Beside The Point

Chuck Vandenberg,  
Pen City Current - Editor

or the "who does this guy think he is?" comments. Then I remember that, traditionally, news outlets had a responsibility to write about things that others were just talking about....or worse...not talking about. So is the case this week.

Earlier this year, the town was struck with the tragedy and reality of one of our youngsters trying to take their own life because of the pressure being put

on them by other kids in the community. We can call it bullying, although I think bullying has been present, literally, since we invented fire. It's just in a fishbowl right now because of the progression of social media.

When that event happened, we watched the social media traffic of Pen City Current, as well as other traffic of our personal accounts. Most of the

blame was laid squarely on the doormat of the Fort Madison Community School District. There were not enough eyes and ears on the institution and hundreds and hundreds of people took to social media to express their concern and heartbreak for this family.

Behind the scenes, the district had already been taking steps to help students deal with the volatility of the behavior of our students and, honestly, parents, towards one another within the reach of the district.

Four school officials had  
See **INFORMED**, page 8

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# Obituaries/Local News



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## OBITUARIES

### CINDY LOU PEAK

Cindy Lou Peak, 56, of Ft. Madison passed away at 11:58 AM on Saturday, November 11, 2017 at her home.

She was born on October 2, 1961 in Keokuk, IA to Joseph and Dorothy Hammel Manewal. On February 7, 1987 she married Richard Peak in Ft. Madison. Cindy was supervisor of housekeeping at the Kensington for several years and had currently held that position at The Madison. She enjoyed cooking, spending time in her yard and gardening. Her greatest love was her family, especially spending time with her grandchildren.



SCHILLING

Survivors include her husband, Rick Peak of Ft. Madison; her daughter, Shannon (Todd) Smith of West Point; two grandchildren, Kynlee and Paxton Smith of West Point; two step daughters, Danielle Riggen of Simi Valley, CA and Jessica Christopher of Callahan, FL; five step grandchildren; seven sisters, Sue Burgess of Keokuk, Dianna Spence of Keokuk, Donna Manewal of Rhodes, IA, Connie Jones of Keokuk, Anne Lang of Ozark, AR, Judy Jones of Keokuk and Tammy Garcia of Keokuk; one brother, Randy Manewal of Ozark, AR; several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents; one brother, Joe and one sister, Nancy Jean.

The Memorial service will be held at 11 AM on Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory with Rev. John Simpson officiating. The family will meet with friends from 9 AM until the time of the service at 11. Burial will follow in Oakland Cemetery.

A memorial has been established in her memory and online condolences may be left at [www.kinglynk.com](http://www.kinglynk.com).



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## 5-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

<b>MON 13 Nov</b>	Partly Cloudy High – 44.4° F   Low – 39.6° F
<b>TUE 14 Nov</b>	Clear Skies High – 51.0° F   Low – 49.8° F
<b>WED 15 Nov</b>	Light Rain High – 48.2° F   Low – 32.6° F
<b>THU 16 Nov</b>	Clear Skies High – 44.2° F   Low – 43.5° F
<b>FRI 17 Nov</b>	Clear Skies High – 58.0° F   Low – 41.7° F

[OpenWeatherMap](http://OpenWeatherMap)



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## From the Front/Lottery Numbers

# Dad's direction still impacts his life on Empty Nest

**SWARM** - Continued from Page 1

dealer and spend a half an hour figuring out how to use the voice message feature. I tell myself that if I don't hear immediately back from the dealer (he'll never figure out the voice recording), I'll interpret it as a sign that I don't need a new mower. I don't hear immediately back. Ahh.

I have to get that hen house patched up and insulated before the cold wind starts blowing. There are gaping holes in the north wall and I need to set bales of straw around the foundation. What to do first? Stop it! Do something, even if it's wrong!

I go to town and get the insulation. That shoots a day. It's too cold and windy to do anything more.

The second day, I patch the holes on the north side of the chicken house and place bales of straw around the foundation.

That's enough for the second day.

On the third day, a Saturday, Ginnie and I watch the Iowa/Ohio State and Iowa State/West Virginia football games that come on at the same time, different networks. I spend an hour trying to figure out the split-screen feature on the television. I give up and decide to switch back and forth. Iowa upsets Ohio State and Iowa State is embarrassed by West Virginia. Excitement and disappointment clashing together leaves me feeling—uh, blank. And I have accomplished nothing.

On the fourth day I pull the guts out of the chicken house so I can hang insulation on the west wall. The chickens are beside themselves with curiosity and are a nuisance underfoot. I uncover a mouse nest and the chickens go berserk



catching mice. Hilarious!

Then the mower dealer texts back (he figured out the voice message after all) and says he has a real good deal on a zero-turn radius-mower and he will deliver. Dear God, do I stop everything to play with a new toy? No, a job started is a job worth finishing (also, from my dad). I text the dealer back, "I'll think about it."

I finish hanging insulation. The chickens seem to think they are owed the warmth and comfort of a newly insulated hen house and show no appreciation whatsoever.

Unannounced, the dealer shows up all smiles pulling the new zero-turn radius mower on a trailer. It's a beauty. He starts it up and backs it off the trailer. I give it a spin around the barnyard. It turns on a dime.

It starts to spit snow. The dealer looks at me, I

look at him. He says, "Do something, even if it's wrong, Curtis." I pull out my checkbook.

Have a good story? Call or text Curt Swarm in Mt. Pleasant at 319-

217-0526, email him at [curtswarm@yahoo.com](mailto:curtswarm@yahoo.com) or find him on Facebook. Curt's stories are also read at 106.3 FM in Farmington.

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Powerball®	Wed & Sat	8:59 pm	9:59 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



**11/12 MID-DAY**  
 5 3 4  
**11/12 EVENING**  
 9 0 8



**11/12 MID-DAY**  
 3 5 2 6  
**11/12 EVENING**  
 5 3 1 4

**Pen City Current encourages you to play responsibly.**

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## Pen City Current

Founded in 2016



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## Public Notices/Classifieds

### PUBLIC NOTICES

#### PUBLIC NOTICE NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Applicant: MBMRE, LLC – Michael Mohrfeld  
Requests: Approval to waive subdivision requirements.

Address: 3420 Woodland Heights, Fort Madison, IA

Legal Description: Part of the Northwest Quarter of Section 6, Township 67 North, Range 4 West of the 5th P.M., Lee County Iowa.

Notice is hereby given that the Fort Madison Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing regarding the above item at 6:00 PM on Tuesday November 28, 2017 at the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison, Iowa.

You may obtain further information or express your views concerning this issue either in person or through an authorized representative at the public hearing, or prior to the meeting by fax at (319) 372-8661, by telephone at (319) 372-7700 ext. 212 by email at [dkrog-meier@fortmadison-ia.com](mailto:dkrog-meier@fortmadison-ia.com) or in writing to the Planning Commission, P. O. Box 240, Fort Madison, Iowa 52627.

#### PUBLIC NOTICE NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Applicant: Bernie Schneider, Carol Schneider

Requests: Approval to waive subdivision requirements for Carol Schneider

Address: Parcel # 021714022000010, South of 2616 210th St., Ft Madison, IA

Legal Description: Part of the Northeast Quarter of Section 2, Township 67 North, Range 5 West, of the 5th P.M., Lee County Iowa.

Notice is hereby given that the Fort Madison Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing regarding the above item at 6:00 PM on Tuesday November 28, 2017 at the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison, Iowa.

You may obtain further information or express your views concerning this issue either in person or through an authorized representative at the public hearing, or prior to the meeting by fax at (319) 372-8661, by telephone at (319) 372-7700 ext. 212 by email at [dkrog-meier@fortmadison-ia.com](mailto:dkrog-meier@fortmadison-ia.com) or in writing to the Planning Commission, P. O. Box 240, Fort Madison, Iowa 52627.

#### PUBLIC NOTICE Fort Madison Community School District 1930 Avenue M Minutes of the Work Session November 6, 2017

I. The meeting was called to order by President Wondra at 6:01p.m. Directors DiPrima,

Young, Troxel, Hope and Ross were present. Also present were Superintendent Slater, Director of Curriculum and Student Services Harmon as acting secretary. Director Hotop was absent.

II. Recognition of guests. President Wondra welcomed members of the audience in attendance.

III. Approve the agenda. It was moved by DiPrima and seconded by Young to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed on a 6-0 voice vote.

IV. Finalize the Iowa Association of School Boards Presentation. The Board finalized their presentation for the upcoming Iowa Association of School Boards annual convention.

Break: 7:52 p.m.

End Break: 7:54 p.m.

V. Adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

President

Date

Secretary



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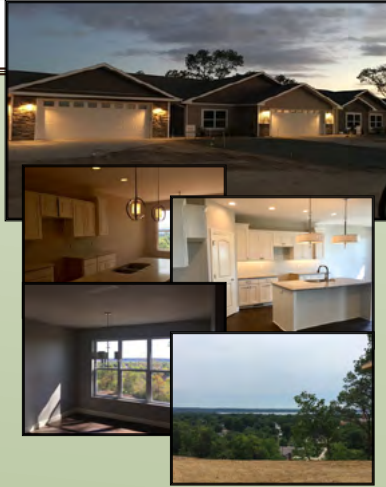


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1501580 State Farm Bank, F.S.B.,  
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**Classifieds**

# the classifieds

**APARTMENTS FOR RENT**

**Apartment for Rent in Downtown Fort Madison**  
*Utilities Included*



Now accepting applications for a downtown upstairs one bedroom apartment. This apartment is currently being remodeled with new flooring throughout, new appliances (stove/refrigerator) and state of the art heating & cooling system. It has tons of built-ins for storage in the bedroom. There is on-site free laundry. Absolutely no pets, no smoking. Available November 1st. \$725 per month. \$500 deposit. Will have pictures when the floor is installed. Text 319-371-7753.



*Brand New Listings*



**118 Avenue E • West Point**  
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**3032 Avenue E • Fort Madison**  
 3BR • 1BA • 1 car garage  
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**15 15th Street • Fort Madison**  
 3BR • 4BA • 3 car garage  
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**2188 Old Denmark Road E**  
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**48th Street**  
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*Listing #20162779*



**939 Avenue G**  
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## From the Front

**NATIONAL RECYCLING DAY IS NOV. 15<sup>TH</sup>**  
 NOW IS THE TIME TO START PREPARING OUR WORLD FOR A BETTER FUTURE!



**JOIN THE MOVEMENT!**

IMPLEMENT THESE SIMPLE STEPS TO CREATE A HEALTHY FOOTPRINT

### MONDAY

#### CREATE SPACE:



Create and indoor space for all your recyclables. Pick up recycling bins at our Ft. Madison or Keokuk facilities. Curb side pick up is available. Check the city websites for details.

### TUESDAY

#### GO PAPERLESS:



Decrease your need for paper products. Elect for paperless statements, digitize shopping lists, documents and more!

### WEDNESDAY

#### GO WASTE FREE:



Make a conscious effort to not use your waste bin. Recycle or compost any items that have an end of life solution.

### THURSDAY

#### REUSE:



Instill new life in items you would normally toss out. Such as jars and containers, clothing, paper products and more.

### FRIDAY

#### COMPOSTING:



Build or purchase a composting bin for food & yard waste. Use your composted goods to better build a healthy garden in the Spring.

### SATURDAY

#### PROCUREMENT:



Only purchase what is made to be recycled. Look for the recycling symbol on the packaging.

### SUNDAY

#### ENJOY:



Sit back, relax, and enjoy a healthier, happier, cleaner Earth!



**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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# Becoming informed is the task of those uninformed

**INFORMED** - Continued from Page 1

attended a National School Safety Conference with the goal of finding answers that would specifically address those concerns and they came back with a program that probably is as good of an investment (at a mere \$2,200 per year for the entire district) in our students' protection as they could find.

It was reported in several media outlets, including our own, that the new reporting app and online reporting system was very soon coming online. But the district wanted to hold meetings with the school, the students, and the community to roll out the program correctly and bring everyone into the program prior to it going live on Nov. 20. So FMHS Assistant Principal Pat Lamb sent out alerts on the FMHS Power system, which includes voicemail and texts, to all parents registered in the district to let them know of two meetings being held on Tuesday and Wednesday of this past week.

A grand total of three (3) parents showed up for those meetings. Three.

It's an assumption to be sure, but it would seem that people aren't really deeply interested in solving the problems that face our children, and our students. I don't buy at all that they didn't know about it. If a parent or family in the district honestly says they weren't aware of the meetings, it would beg the question. How could you not?

It was reported in several media outlets. The school alerted every parent via text and voicemail. If you didn't get that information, it's really alarming that we aren't paying attention to alerts coming from the district and we're only reacting to tragedy when it unfolds. So...we all want to throw daggers but no one wants to help prevent the war.

PCC did another story after the first meeting on the inner workings of the program. It's called P3 Campus. In a nutshell, to provide this information for at least the sixth time, it is a totally anonymous reporting system that students, parents, and families can take advantage of to help stave off potentially tragic occurrences. You can download the app for your phone or tablet or you can use the online reporting information. Those using the system can opt out of the anonymity if they choose, but you have to manually check a box or the system will automatically scrub any identifying characteristics of the person posting the information. There is also a 20+ member threat assessment team that reviews the programs and issues on a regular basis.

It takes away all the downside of reporting and removes any possibility of retribution. It eliminates the possibility of someone using a copied Facebook page from reporting under someone else's name. This is probably the biggest weapon the district could employ to help fight for students and families.

In addition to the several school board meetings where the new program was discussed, there were also several community meetings and church groups that went to work on the problem. I didn't see any of these people at these meetings, but I've continued to read posts from families that are concerned about the "meanness"

of children in the district or the dangers of social media. So where were you?

The only salvation to me is that you have all the information you need and you're ready to roll. If that's the case, let's hope this weapon is as powerful as it can be and our students are, effective Nov. 20, as safe as they can be.

And to piggy back on the issue, there is also the concern that some people aren't reacting to the FMHS alert system. This school district has made a priority of keeping the community informed of progress and issues facing the district. There are two media sources in town where people can get information in addition to the alert system.

What more do you need? These officials can't go to each house with cheese and crackers and have a conversation with every district taxpayer about what is going on in the district. And neither can your elected city officials. Bob Morawitz unseated Brian Wright for the 2nd Ward City Council seat in 2018. That night during a post-election interview Morawitz said one of his top priorities is improving communication between the city and its residents. I asked him how he intended to do that, when city agendas are posted, media will certainly do articles on the meetings and regularly do previews when important issues are in front of the council.

When does getting informed become their responsibility? You don't get out of a speeding ticket because you didn't know the speed limit. Why? Because it was posted. It's your responsibility to be informed about that information and its consequences. With two local media covering, and several regional reporters in attendance, at city meetings (not necessarily school board) and most meetings being available on the respective government's websites, how can you say you didn't know?

We're all busy, that's just the way life is. But being uninformed is the same choice as being informed. It's up to you. We'll continue to do all we can to keep you informed but you have to expose yourself to the information. It's not the school district's or city council's or Lee County Board of Supervisors' job to make sure you're informed. They have legal responsibilities to post information and I'm not aware of any infringement upon those rules.

So we're putting the information out there in all forms for you. You just have to come and get it.

In the sake of providing additional information, just a reminder that the city did approve an agreement with Amtrak and BNSF to build a platform at the historic depot and move passenger service to the downtown riverfront area. This a nice testament to the conviction of Mayor Brad Randolph and his commitment to then-Mayor Steve Ireland before his death to see the project through. It's not likely to be a economic boost to downtown business right away, but the potential is there with many working to create an arts district downtown and adding another feather to our riverfront appeal.

But that's Beside the Point.