



Pen City Current

Friday, June 7, 2019 | 9 pages | Volume 3 • Issue 130

For 50 years, all they want to do is...

Dance... Dance... Dance



Courtesy photo

Left to right: Shari Bartlett, Barb Wardlow and Martha Butler show off their kicks in a 1970s photo. Shari and Martha are celebrating their 50th year of recitals with the annual event at the Grand Theatre in Keokuk on Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m.

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

KEOKUK – For more than 50 years they’ve been dancing, coaching, choreographing, and inspiring young girls and women to step out of their shells and onto the stage, literally and figuratively.

Martha Butler and Shari Bartlett have been running Top Hatter Dance Studio in one form or another for the past 52 years and this weekend the duo will be celebrating 50 years of annual recitals with two shows at the Grand Theatre at 26 N. 6th Street in Keokuk.

The shows are at 7 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights.

The two started in 1969 as young girls who loved to dance and caught the attention of neighbors, friends and even shoppers on given days.

Shari said she’s always loved to dance and her mother saw that love and provided her with lessons, but Shari who longed for the fame.

“My passion was to get in the limelight and that was from a very early age,” Bartlett said. “My mom used to put me on the grocery counter and I would dance and people would give



me quarters. That was my candy money back then.”

Shari said she would always be dancing at home and at the age of 4 her mom got her started in lessons. She had two brothers and was kind of a tom boy. She said Fort Madison had a big long sidewalk that called to her.

“It was just waiting for me to do cartwheels all the way down. I wouldn’t dare to do that now, there’s no way I’m pulling that off.”

Bartlett started dancing as a girl with business partner Butler

and two other girls, Janie Woolridge and Butler’s sister Barb Wardlow.

The four traveled all over the region to talent shows in Illinois, Iowa and Missouri.

“It was always the four of us and we kept doing that and proceeding and then decided we wanted to do more with it and share our knowledge. We all loved working with the kids,” Bartlett said.

The four started teaching classes for the neighborhood

See **TOP HATTERS**, page 9

City Band to play in Central Park this Sunday

Submitted article

This Sunday, June 9th, the Ft. Madison City Band will be in concert at 7:30 pm in Central Park (in case of weather the concert will be held in the Methodist Church at 9th and E). This week you will want to bring a picnic or a lawn chair and enjoy the one hour concert that will take you through many genres of music from 1895 to the modern era.

The band would like to thank Connection Bank & Insurance, Potowonok Circle of Kings Daughters, Chalk Ridge Vineyard, Gene and Sherri Enke for sponsoring this week’s concert which will be featuring: King Cotton by John Philip Sousa, Highlights from Hello Dolly! arranged by John Cacavas, Tea for Two by Vincent Youmans, You’ll Never Walk Alone arranged by Richard Saucedo, Rainy Days and Mondays arranged by Bill

Holcombe, Light Cavalry arranged by Henry Fillmore, Lemon Merengue by Hugh Stuart, Grease! arranged by John Moss, Manifest Destiny March by Peter Berger and Exaltation by James Swearingen.

Each concert is supported by community sponsors; if you would like to be contributor to a long standing tradition in Ft. Madison please contact the city office for more information.

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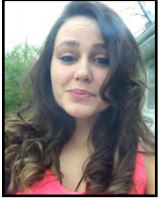
Obituaries/Iowa News

OBITUARIES

KASIE J. NAFZIGER

Kasie J. Nafziger, 28, of Burlington passed away on Monday, June 3, 2019 at 4:14 PM at her home.

She was born on February 23, 1991 in Burlington to Kirk and Kathy Davey Nafziger. Kasie was a 2009 graduate of Ft. Madison High School. She was currently working at IAAP. She enjoyed playing frisbee golf, going to concerts and playing with her dog.



Survivors include her Mom, Kathy Osborn of Wever; her Dad, Kirk Nafziger of Denmark; three sisters, Kori Nafziger of Wever, Kodee Nafziger of West Point and Kirklynn Nafziger of Wever; maternal grandparents, Carole and Tom Davey of Wever; aunts, uncles and cousins. She was preceded in death by her Paternal Grandmother, Barb Kirchgassner.

The funeral service will be held on Sunday, June 9, 2019 at 2 PM at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory with Pastor Jon Heyland officiating. The family will meet with friends from Noon until the time of the service at 2 PM. Burial will be held in Fairview Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial has been established in her memory and online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.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.

State puts another \$16M into Future Ready Iowa programs

DES MOINES - Today, Gov. Reynolds announced over \$16 million in new funding for her signature workforce policy initiative, the Future Ready Iowa Act. With H.F. 758, H.F. 546, and S.F. 608 all signed into law, more new high school graduates and adult learners will have access to great career opportunities and a better life. This includes the new Last-Dollar Scholarship that will help pay tuition for up to two-year postsecondary degrees leading to high-demand jobs.

"Future Ready Iowa is a powerful tool for growing family incomes, meeting employers' needs, and strengthening our communities," said Gov. Reynolds. "The Future Ready Iowa Act will ensure Iowans have the skills they need to succeed in a world driven by technological disruption - both now and in the future."

"With historically low unemployment, investing in job training, apprenticeships, and cutting-edge careers is the next step for improving the lives of Iowans," said Beth Townsend, Director of Iowa Workforce Development. "This initiative connects Iowans to the skills and education they need to pursue opportunities in good-paying, high-demand jobs."

"Iowa's education system is working hard to prepare students to succeed in high-demand careers," said Iowa Department of Education Director Ryan Wise. "One important approach is expanding work-based learning opportunities for students to engage in real-world, professional experiences that help them understand how the classroom and workplace connect."

"Future Ready Iowa programs will create new educational opportunities," said Karen Misjak, Executive Director of Iowa College Aid. "That's good news on all fronts, because research shows us that higher education levels will benefit individual Iowans, their families,

their communities, and the state as a whole."

"Iowa has been recognized as both a great place to do business and to find good jobs," said Debi Durham, Director of the Economic Development Authority and the Iowa Finance Authority. "We accomplish these high rankings not only by supporting student efforts to become qualified for higher paying jobs, but also by helping businesses find or train the workforce they need to be successful and grow here in the state."

Much of the \$16 million in new funding for FY 20 will go into the following three programs:

The \$13 million Last-Dollar Scholarship program will help more Iowans achieve education or training beyond high school leading to high-demand jobs by helping pay tuition for designated programs of study up to two-year degrees. This will create opportunities for good-paying careers that meet employers' needs for more skilled workers while growing our economy. Both new high school graduates and adults already in the workforce or unemployed, and who want to improve their skills, can participate.

The \$1 million Future Ready Iowa Grant program provides stipends to Iowans who left college after earning at least half the credits toward a four-year degree in a high-demand field, and who return to complete a degree. Iowa is experiencing employee shortages in occupations where a four-year degree is required. This program will provide a minimum of \$1,000 for tuition support.

The \$1.2 million Future Ready Iowa Employer Innovation Fund is a grant opportunity for employers and other partners to collaborate and carry out innovative, creative initiatives to address local workforce issues. A state matching grant is available to qualifying applicants.

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5-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

FRI 07 June Cloudy
High- 79.8° F | Low - 63.4° F

SAT 08 June Clear
High- 79.1° F | Low - 67.0° F

SUN 09 June Rain
High- 79.5° F | Low - 61.9° F

MON 10 June Cloudy
High- 71.9° F | Low - 58.4° F

TUE 11 June Partly cloudy
High- 75.7° F | Low - 60.6° F

[OpenWeatherMap](#)

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Scene Around Town/Area News

Granger Smith, 38-Special shows moved to Westland Mall

BURLINGTON – Westland Mall in West Burlington will be the site of a two-day outdoor concert event, June 21 and 22, originally planned for the Burlington Riverfront. The concert site was moved due to flooding at the original venue.

“We are very grateful to a variety of community partners including Westland Mall, the City of West Burlington, West Burlington Police Department, our event sponsors and Burlington Riverfront Entertainment Board of Directors for helping make this move on short notice. Because of them, the show can go on,” said Mike O Neil, Executive Director of Burlington Riverfront Entertainment.

The concerts will be held in the Westland Mall parking lot on the Northwest side near the space formerly occupied by Younkers. Burlington Riverfront Entertainment is organizing the concerts in collaboration with Peoria-based Inked Entertainment. Headliners for the two-day event are country artist Granger Smith featuring Earl Dobbles Jr. and Southern rock act 38 Special.

Friday’s concerts will feature all country music with Mitchell Tenpenny and Hardy joining headliner Smith in the lineup.

“We express our most sincere condolences to Granger Smith and his family for the recent tragedy resulting in the death of his son,” O Neil remarked. “We are in contact with the Granger Smith management team and at this point there are no changes to this concert.”

Smith is best known for his number one smash hit “Backroad Song” which he followed with top five single “If the Boot Fits.” His current full length album When the Good Guys Win has spawned the top fifteen hit “Happens Like That” and current fast-rising single “You’re In It.” Tenpenny will perform crowd-pleasing party songs like “Drunk Me” and “Alcohol You Later”. Hardy, a relative newcomer to the nationally touring country music scene is making waves with his debut single “Rednecker.” Local artists David Kroll & Heartland and Stumptown will play on the South Stage June 21.

June 22nd’s event will have a variety of music types. 38 Special has several Gold and Platinum albums to their credit, concert goers will recognize many songs from the featured band including “Hold On Loosely,” “Rockin’ Into the Night,” “Caught Up in You,” “Fantasy Girl,” “If I’d Been the One,” “Back Where You Belong,” “Chain Lightnin’,” “Second Chance.” Also Saturday evening will be rising country stars Tucker Beathard and Craig Gerdes. Regional rock acts Ghost of Judas and Evolver will perform on the South Stage.

Tickets for either night are \$30. A weekend pass is available for \$50. VIP tickets are also offered at \$10 more per ticket. Tickets can be purchased at Ticketmaster.com. Burlington Riverfront Entertainment Box Office is also being relocated due to flooding. Beginning June 11, tickets may be purchased at Drake Hardware and Software, 211 N. 5th Street in Burlington, Tuesday- Friday 10:30 am - 4:30 p.m

For more information, follow Burlington Memorial Auditorium on Facebook or visit www.burlingtonriverfront.com.



Photo courtesy of Travis Seidel

Trying to land a car-p

Nine-year old Legend Seidel decides there’s enough water at the corner of Avenue E and 21st Street to try his luck with a little fishing. This photo submitted by his father Travis was taken during Thursday’s afternoon storm.



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Powerball®	Wed & Sat	8:59 pm	9:59 pm
Lotto America SM	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



6/5
17 23 28 34 38
Powerball: 8
Power Play: 3



6/5
2 9 29 38 46
Star Ball: 10
All Star Bonus: 2



6/5 MID-DAY
6 1 5
6/5 EVENING
7 0 6



6/5 MID-DAY
4 9 0 1
6/5 EVENING
6 7 9 1

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Sports/Fishing Report

Featheringill's walk-off lifts Lady Hounds

BY PCC SPORTS

FORT MADISON- Fort Madison's softball team came into Wednesday's home contest against Wapello having lost four of its previous five games and looking for a hero.

They found that person in the bottom of the seventh, when Maycee Featheringill laced a single to left center scoring two with one gone in the bottom of the seventh to complete a 4-3 come-from-behind win.

The Bloodhounds were coming off a 1-1 double header split against Burlington High School, but lost the second game 12-0. Wednesday's win moves the Lady Hounds to 3-6 on the season.

Wapello scored the first three runs of the game over the course of three innings. The Hounds weren't dopping bad from the plate, collecting five hits trough three innings, they just couldn't bring the runners in. That is until the bottom of the seventh inning when Wapello had Fort Madison against the ropes.

An Ivy Geerdes double and an RBI single from Vanessa Golowach scored

the Bloodhounds' first run of the game in the bottom of the fourth inning, trimming the lead down to 3-1. Dennis held Wapello scoreless the final four innings, giving her team a chance in the home-half of the seventh.

In the all or nothing seventh, Olivia Williams starting things off with a single. Cashman followed with a single of her own before Logan Johnson walked to load the bases. Cassie Powers then lifted a flyball to deep left center scoring Williams from a tag-up at third to bring the Hounds within one. Featheringill then drilled a 1-1 offering into the grass for the walk off single to give Fort Madison win over.

Featheringill paced Fort Madison at the plate with two RBIs on a 1 for 4 day. Cashman had the best average on the day, going 3 for 4 at the dish. Dennis picked up the win, tossing 102 pitches over the course of seven innings. Dennis allowed nine hits and gave up just one earned run while striking out three.

Fort Madison softball's next contest is scheduled for June 10 against Southeast conference foe Keokuk on the Chief's home field.

Fishing slow as waters find way back into banks

Big Hollow Lake

Water level has returned to close to normal, but the water remains fairly muddy. Largemouth Bass – Fair: Anglers are picking up a few bass in 5 to 6 feet of water around the flooded timber. Bluegill – Good: Anglers had been picking up pretty good numbers of bluegills before last week's heavy rains; a few nice dry days of weather should bring that fishing back. Black Crappie – Fair: Look for the crappies out in the trees and brush piles in 6 to 7 feet of water.

Iowa River (Columbus Junction to Mississippi River)

The water level on the Iowa River is falling, but remains above minor flood stage and will be a few more days.

Lake Belva Deer

The water level is close to normal again and is clearing up. Some decent weather this weekend would help clear it up. Black Crappie – Fair: Find crappies in 10-12 feet of water; you have to work for them. Largemouth Bass – Fair: A decent percentage of bass have spawned and moved off the beds.

Lake Darling

The boat docks are back to being above water and the lake has returned to a more normal level. The water remains fairly muddy. Largemouth Bass – Fair: Find bass in the post-spawn hideout around the thicker cover in 3-5 feet of water. Bluegill – Fair: The muddy

water is slowing down the bite, but bluegills are on the beds as well as some having already finished.

Lost Grove Lake

The lake level is falling, but it will still be a while before it gets back to normal. Water remains cloudy. Largemouth Bass – Fair: Anglers continue to catch bass; work them out along the edges of the weed beds and around the trees and brush piles in 4-6 feet of water. Black Crappie – Slow: Look for crappies out around the deeper habitat. Bluegill – Fair: Some bluegills are spawning, despite the cooler water temperatures.

Skunk River (Rose Hill to Coppock)

The Skunk River is finally back within its banks, but only by a foot or so. Canoeing or kayaking is not recommended.

For more information on the above lake, call the Lake Darling Fisheries Office at 319-694-2430.

Coralville Reservoir

The lake level as of June 6 is 704 feet (normal summer pool is 683 feet) and is predicted to start slowly falling. Mehafey Bridge is the only ramp open.

Diamond Lake

Channel Catfish – Good: Stink bait works best. Black Crappie – Fair: Try deeper brush or drift the basin for suspended fish with jigs. Bluegill – Fair: Try worms or small jigs in deeper brush.

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Sports

Bloodhounds go wild on Mepo pitching in 13-3 win

Bulldogs struggle from the mound as Hounds roll to a 10-run win on the road

BY ETHAN LILLARD
PCC SPORTS

MEDIAPOLIS- Since the 2014-2015 season when Fort Madison and Mediapolis starting playing on a seasonal basis, the Bulldogs have got the best of the Bloodhounds, winning all six contest.

That half decade winless drought came to an end Wednesday at Mediapolis, as Fort Madison posted two five-run innings to win 13-3.

“It shows the kids played hard,” Fort Madison Head Coach Ron Walker said. “We talked about staying (even keel). If you win 13-3 or you lose 10-2 and 8-3 and get swept, we can’t allow ourselves to get too low or high. I think today we did a great job of not getting too low after Monday’s losses and coming back tonight and competing hard.”

Jace Burgher drew the start for Fort Madison Wednesday, despite having just a total of three innings pitched coming into the contest. Berger delivered going

five strong and allowing just seven hits for three earned runs.

While Burger had things rolling from the mound, Mediapolis starter Drayven Fenton struggled.

Fenton started by issuing two straight walks before plunking Jordyn Gerdes to load the bases for Dayne Cordray.

Cordray answered with a sacrifice fly to center-field for the first run of the game before Mediapolis put an end to the threat with a double play. A single and a double tied the game at one in the bottom of the first before Fort Madison got to Fenton again.

The top of the second started with a walk, this time to Reed Fehseke. Fehseke advanced all the way to third on past balls during Tate Johnson’s at bat, before finishing the round trip by stealing home during Kane Williams at bat for the 2-1 lead.

Williams walked and moved all the way to third base on wild pitches himself before Burgher

also drew a walk.

Williams came in to score on another wild pitch during Landes Williams’ at bat, which resulted in a base on balls, putting runners on the corners with Burgher now at third.

Burgher came around to score on a wild pitch before Mediapolis pulled Fenton in favor of reliever Max Drebenstedt.

Things continued to spiral for Mediapolis, as Thurman hit a grounder that was misplayed by the Bulldog shortstop.

Gerdes then singled to center to score Landes Williams for the 5-1 lead and moved Thurman to third base. Dayne Cordray was plunked to load the bases for Fort Madison. A pop out was followed by a Fehseke walk, as Thurman came in to score and increase the Hounds’ lead to 6-1.

Mediapolis responded to the five-run inning with two runs in the bottom half of the second, but still trailed the Bloodhounds 6-3.

The pitching woes continued for Mediapolis in the top of the third inning, as Fort Madison started off with a hit by pitch. A sacrifice bunt



Photo by Ethan Lillard/PCC

Fort Madison infielder Jordyn Gerdes takes some practice balls before Wednesday’s game in Mediapolis. The Hounds shook off Monday’s double header loss to Fairfield to move to 4-4 on the year with a 13-3 win.

was followed by an RBI single from Landes Williams, increasing the lead to 7-3, before another wild pitch allowed Williams to eventually come around and score for an 8-3 lead.

Both teams went scoreless the rest of the way until Fort Madison batted around in the top of the seventh inning. A single and two walks loaded the bases for the Hounds before Cordray was hit again to bring home Landes Williams. Vasin Thurman then singled to

plate Jason Thurman.

Fehseke kept his strong day rolling, with a double to score Gerdes and Cordray for a 12-3 lead. Tate Johnson followed with a single to score Vasin Thurman for the 13-3 lead, before the Bulldogs get a double play to end the inning.

Landes Williams held the Bulldogs to a three-up, three-down bottom of the seventh to shut the door and give Fort Madison the 13-3 win.

“I thought it was huge the guys stayed involved

and kept making plays tonight,” Walker said. “The pitchers kept pounding the zone once we got a lead. The lineup kept rolling in the seventh and we put together some good at bats.”

Fehseke led the Bloodhounds with three RBIs. Gerdes and Landes Williams each had two RBIs. Burgher picked up the win, tossing 76 pitches over five innings.

Fort Madison’s next game is on the road on Monday against Keokuk for a double header.

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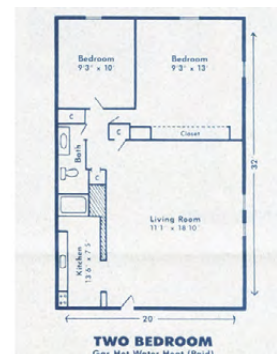
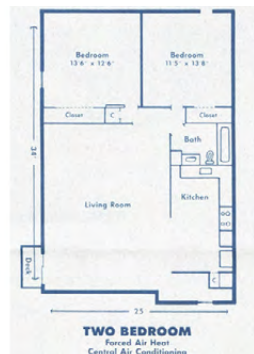
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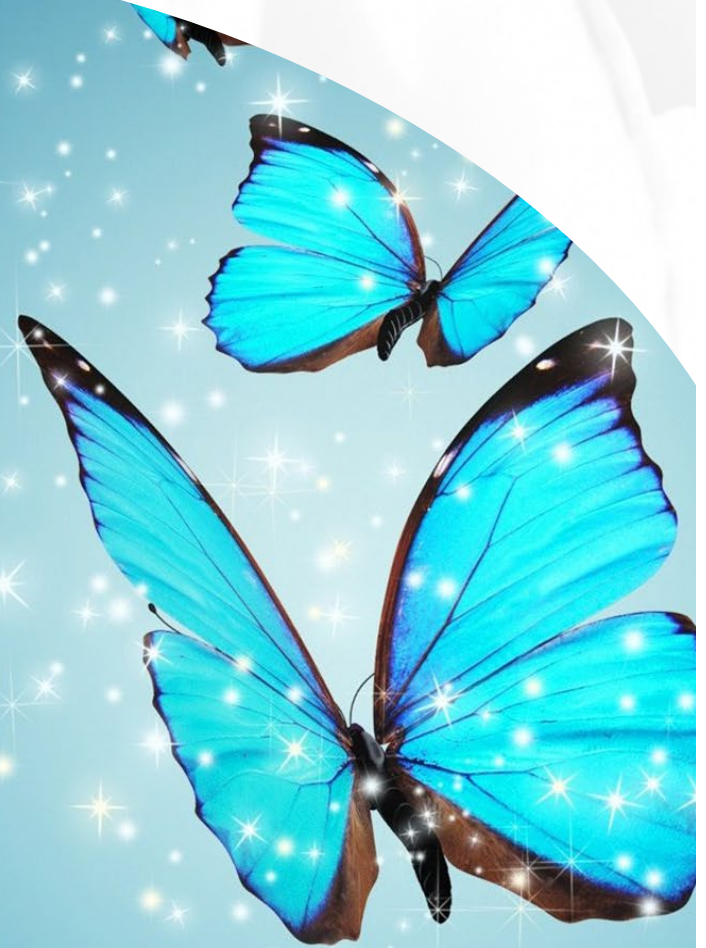
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From the Front

Passion comes from students' successes

TOP HATTERS - Continued from Page 1

girls, but Janie would only stay with the group for a while.

Shari and Martha both got full-time jobs and started to navigate life as adults with jobs and families, but they both also wanted to see where the dance business would take them. Barb would end up teaching classes across the river.

After a couple years of teaching at homes and in basements, the two were spotted by a family that wanted them to teach in Farmington as well as Fort Madison, and even offered up some studio space. A move the girls jumped at.

After about three years in Farmington, Martha said they started looking for a place back in Fort Madison with a studio and they wound up taking some space from Kenny Lampe, of Lampe Drug. At the time the drug store was in the Old Lee County Bank building, and Lampe offered them the third floor studio and a few other rooms on the floor.

Then in 2008, the two purchased the current location of Top Hatters on the southwest corner of 6th Street and Avenue G in downtown Fort Madison.

From there everything has blossomed to include, among other things, assistant instructors and choreographers, including Fort Madison choreography staple Ann Chapman.

Chapman has been with Top Hatters for more than 30 years as an instructor and said the girls are humble, but their story is almost unbelievable.

"Shari and Martha are both so humble and modest they don't make a big deal of things," Chapman said.

"That's just who they are as people. They never toot their own horn. We've gotta do those big things, but this is such a huge accomplishment."

Chapman started with Top Hatter as an instructor when she was still in high school and is back teaching again.

"I took a six year hiatus and then came back," she said. "That's the crazy thing...the loyalty the teachers have for them. Most of the teachers studied, taught and stayed with them. And that's what's really cool about it."

Butler said she never imagined she'd still be teaching 50 years later

"Absolutely not. In my mind I was thinking, 'Yeah it was like next season will be it, and then...ok, next season.' It wasn't until this last couple weeks I was thinking, 'Wow how did we get this far,'" Butler said.

"I realized our enjoyment was still there and we grew enough to sustain us, financially. I was married with two kids and working two jobs and I thought I could drop the full-time job and do this simply because of the hours we were putting in building it. But you just had to be careful in those days so you could make it and have a family, eat and sleep, and carry on mentally."

Butler said its watching the progression of the students that keeps fueling her passion. She said she even keeps tabs on former students who are continuing to use what they were taught.

"It's the kids... the kids," she said. "Watching them grow. Watching that little girl hanging onto her mom's pants when she first comes in and then working through that fear and shyness and getting on stage. That's what makes this all worth it."

"We keep telling them they are going to get it, to keep after it and take that out into the world. That's my emotional want for all of them."

Butler said students have gone on to professional lives in dance, theater, entertainment and some are doing choreography professionally.

"The deep root for me is that most them will be able to carry on as adults in the real world... this competitive world...and be humble at the same time, while getting what they've worked hard for in life."

Butler won't count the students she has now or has had in the past.

"Oh my gosh, I don't know if I could count how many we've taught, but I don't think that I'd want to. You start counting and something happens," she said.

“

It's the kids... the kids... Watching that little girl hanging onto her mom's pants when she first comes in and then working through that fear and shyness and getting on stage. That's what makes it all worth it."

-Martha Butler

Top Hatters co-owner/instructor

Her best advice for people who are trying to follow a path of entrepreneurship is to get after it and stay after it. "You need to have enthusiasm for your business and believe in yourself. Work hard. It's not easy to be your own boss. You might think it is, but you have to get up every day and have a plan and do it...and keep at it."



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