



Pen City Current

Monday, Oct. 30, 2017 | 10 pages | Volume 1 • Issue 252

Gibbs returns home with a message of strength

Rocker talks to FMHS student body on bullying, strength

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - A Fort Madison native brought his story of personal persistence and rise through the harsh world of recording artists back home Thursday afternoon

Fort Madison native and national recording artist Brandon Gibbs took time out of his touring schedule to talk with the FMHS student body about moving through personal goals without letting others derail your dreams.

The presentation was sponsored by the Fort Madison Activities Department and Gibbs was welcomed to the floor by FMHS activities director Andy Mitchell.

Gibbs said he wanted to bring a message to the group after he heard of the attempted suicide by a teenager in town after being bullied.

I've just seen a surge of people talking about bullying and getting bullied and of course I'm from here and I read about a case where someone was bullied and tried

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Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Fort Madison native Brandon Gibbs came back to Fort Madison on Thursday to deliver a message of strength for the FMHS student body. He said in the world of cyber-bullying and after a district student tried to commit suicide he had to come back and talk about his life and struggles, as well as the successes that came from inner strength.

FMMS students Get Low, Stay Low

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - The Fort Madison Fire Department in conjunction with Thomas Klann State Farm, got to experience a smoke-filled room and how to best protect and escape a dangerous fire situation.

The mobile-home style trailer was parked on the northwest slab at the FMMS and classes of students were able to go through the demonstration on Friday morning.

Jess Steenberg, with Klann's office, organized the event and has done so for the past several years. She said the students en-

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Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Fort Madison Middle School students got to experience a fire safety house Friday morning at the Fort Madison Middle School. The unit is used to help students identify secondary exits and how to identify hot spots as well as getting low in smoky rooms.

EMPTY NEST

BY Curt Swarm



Sometimes death confuses me. It's usually with the death of a younger person, a person who has not had the privilege of living to a "ripe old age." Somehow, for me anyway, it doesn't seem right that disease can come along and prematurely wipe out a life.

My friend Ray Tedrow recently passed away. I've written about Ray Ray before. He was my supervisor years ago at a machine shop. He was smart, hard working, and had cystic fibrosis. I didn't even know what cystic fibrosis was. Ray told me in an off hand way, like it was what-it-was, that there was nothing he could do about it, so he would just go ahead and set this machine up, that was what was important. That there was no cure for cystic fibrosis, that it was 100% fatal was something he couldn't control so why worry about it? Live for the moment. That seemed to be Ray Ray's philosophy. He was younger than me. He was a fighter and he was going

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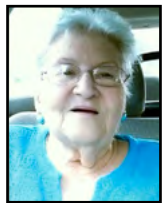


Obituaries

OBITUARIES

ELSIE EID

Elsie M. Eid, 89, of Ft. Madison passed away on Sunday, October 29, 2017 at 2:16 AM at the Ft. Madison Community Hospital.



EID

She was born on February 17, 1928 in rural Dallas City, IL to Harrison and Opal Fry Reed. On April 16, 1955 she married Ervin L. Eid in Ft. Madison and he passed away on April 2, 2009. Elsie was a homemaker. She was an avid Chicago Cubs and Kansas City Chiefs fan.

Elsie enjoyed sewing, quilting, cooking, baking, reading, gardening and her flowers. Her great love was her family, especially her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Survivors include three sons, Randy (Rhonda) Eid, Rick (Natalie) Eid and Scott(Lisa) Eid all of Ft. Madison; three daughters, Robyn McWhortor, Shelly (Ed) Stegall and Rona (Kenny White) Eid all of Ft. Madison; nineteen grandchildren, twenty great grandchildren and one on the way and two great great grandchildren on the way.

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband; a grandson; a great granddaughter and a brother.

Friends may call after 2 PM on Thursday, November 2, 2017 at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory where the family will meet with friends from 5-7 PM. Following the visitation her body will be cremated a burial will be in Oakwood Cemetery in Hamilton, IL.

A memorial has been established in her memory and online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.com.

CONNIE J. (HOYER) BARNES

Connie J. (Hoyer) Barnes, 74, of Fort Madison, Iowa, passed away on October 28, 2017, at 5:40 p.m. at The Kensington. She was born on November 27,



BARNES

1942, in Fort Madison, Iowa, to Willis and Viola (Grosenkemper) Hoyer. She married Ronald Barnes on April 27, 1968, in Fort Madison. Connie graduated from Aquinas Catholic High School in Fort Madison, Iowa in 1960. Connie began her career with a high school job at Lampe Drug in Fort Madison, where

she worked for many years at the cosmetics counter and as a buyer for the store from 1959 until 1977. In 1977, Connie opened a store of her own known as "Under the Sun", which was a gift and bath shop known throughout the region. Under the Sun quickly became a landmark in the Fort Madison downtown business community. The business quickly grew and expanded over the years, and in 1982 Connie opened a second business known as "The Avenue" in downtown Fort Madison selling Hallmark cards, candy and gifts. In 1994, Connie opened yet another store also located in Fort Madison, known as the "Under the Sun Next Door Store" with a vast array of seasonal holiday products, collectibles and unique food items. In 2000, Ron retired from Burrows Packaging to join with Connie in the family business ventures as partner and collaborator.

Connie was a member of the Fort Madison Chamber of Commerce, Fort Madison Main Street, the Potowonok Circle of King's Daughters and the Holy Family Catholic Parish and its Altar & Rosary Society. She was a past nominee for Business Woman of the Year, and a loyal volunteer for community Meals on

Wheels and elementary school eye screenings. She enjoyed tennis, golf, frogging, fishing, and travel to Jamaica, Mexico and the major gift markets, but most of all she loved spending time with family.

Connie is survived by her husband, Ron, together with four special feline fur babies known as Boots E, The Colonel, Grey Squirrel and Precious. She is also survived by her brother, Doyle Hoyer, sister-in-law, Linda (Wesley) Groene, and brother-in-law, Raymond (Sharon) Barnes. She is survived by nephews Gary (Lynn) Hoyer, Chad (Mindy) Ward, and Lee (Carla) Barnes, and nieces Jeanne (Brad) Hoyer Deery, Janis (Brad) Hoyer Randolph, and Dawn Barnes Wheeler. She loved and adored her many great nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, several cousins, aunts and uncles, as well as sister-in-law Bert (Bremhorst) Hoyer and niece Shereen (Owen) Zytowski.

Friends may call after 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 31, 2017 with the family to receive friends from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday evening at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory in Fort Madison, Iowa. The funeral Mass will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, November 1, 2017 at Ss. Mary & Joseph Church with Rev. Mark P. Spring officiating. Burial will be in Gethsemane Cemetery. Memorials have been established for P.A.W. Animal Shelter or Holy Family Parish in Fort Madison. The family extends a special acknowledgement of appreciation and gratitude to the staff at The Kensington/Primrose Path and Great River Hospice for their kindness and support. Online condolences to Connie's family may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: www.kinglynk.com.

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From the Front/Lottery Numbers

Friends leaving early is a bit hard to take

SWARM - Continued from Page 1

to whip the disease. I was impressed by his attitude.

Ray had a sister, Shirley, who also had the cystic fibrosis. I knew Ray and Shirley's father well. When Shirley died it was a bummer. Ray and his father and family seemed to take it in stride.

It wasn't long before Ray had to quit work and take disability. But he enjoyed

life. He had a Harley motorcycle, and liked to deer hunt, and race stock cars. He had a 2000 Dodge RT and participated, with his dad and family, in small tractor pulls.

When he had a double-lung transplant at the University of Iowa Hospital, I thought he would go on to live a rich, full life. To get a new set of lungs was a miracle. Characteristic of Ray, he was able to meet with the donor's family to express his gratitude for the gift of life. What the new lungs did was extend Ray's life for a few more years.

He spent the last couple of years living in Florida with his life mate. They both belonged to a Christian motorcycle group. When Ray passed away, members of the group rode from Florida to Iowa to attend the funeral.

I like to remember Ray tapping his work-booted toe to ear-splitting music by Brewer & Shipley as he set up a lathe to run production. "Awaitin' for the train that goes home sweet Mary, Hopin' that the train is on time."

Ray wasn't supposed to live past his teens. He lived to be 48. But it still doesn't seem right that Ray Ray is gone.

Casey was another friend, also younger than me. We partied hardy together, back in the day. He played third base on our softball team, and could wing it to first base like no one else. Mighty Casey at the bat.

That bladder cancer could come along and take down a guy like Casey just doesn't seem right. When Ginnie and I went out to see him in Colorado in his final days, he thought we had come out to party, and felt bad that he couldn't show us a good time. That we had come just to see him didn't seem to sink in.

Mighty Casey struck out.

Ginnie's mother recently passed away. She was just a few days short of ninety, and died fast with no extended suffering. That's the way it should be—live a long full life, raise a family, while faith grows stronger. Ginnie and her family grieve, but accept.

That's a proper death.

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.

Kids find fire dangers in mobile unit

STUDENTS - Continued from Page 1

joy the experience, but it's also informative and provides safety instructions on how to escape a smoke-filled home.

"We just do it to make sure the kids know the safety plan," Steenberg said. "If we can help one kid, it's a job well done."

She said State Farm and the Fort Madison Fire Department have been part of bringing the fire safety house each year to Fort Madison students. But this year is a new unit that has been upgraded with additional features.

"We have it every year. We started in 2012 with Richardson and Lincoln and decided to move it to the middle school level," she said. "Last year we didn't do it because we were getting a brand new fire safety house, but every October we do this."

She said the kids get very excited about going into the smoke room, but there is other safety instruction going on such as detecting secondary exits and identifying hot-spots in homes.

"We teach Get low, Stay low and we talk about secondary exits," Steenberg said. "The bedroom is simulated hot so we have them go down the ladder and get to their safe meeting place outside the house. But they love the smoke room. That's probably the room they are most excited about."



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Sports

No local medalists at state x-country meet

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT DODGE - Fort Madison High School sent three senior runners to the state meet in Fort Dodge Saturday with goals of medaling and Holy Trinity sent a sophomore who was feeling the tourney out for the first time.

No medals were brought home by any runner, but gritty performances were found all around as they raced the 5K Lakeside Municipal Golf Course site.

Holy Trinity senior Brett Schneider had the best run of the day running for FMHS finishing 43rd of 138 runners in Class 3A with a time of 20:02.6. Schneider said she was disappointed at first with her finish as it was her senior year.

"It was my senior year and I set my goals pretty high so I was going into to give it all I had, but then I realized that this is state and when you go to state it's a one-of-a-kind race. It's hard to prepare for," Schneider said. "The first half felt really good I was in the top 10 or so and the second half it hit me and I started falling farther and farther back.

"At first I thought I did really bad, but then I looked at my time and it was a second faster than districts. Everyone was super fast up there, the boys were faster, the girls were faster, but I love



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

HTCs Brett Schneider, who runs for Fort Madison High School, had the highest local finish at Saturday's state cross-country meet finishing 43rd in Class 3A girls. She's shown here at the halfway point on the course in Fort Dodge

running against that competition and I qualified all four years so I'm proud of that.

HTC doesn't have a girls cross-country team, but had Schneider been able to run in Class 1A her time would have put her in 16th place, one spot out of the medal by 3 seconds. The 15th place, Class 1A was 19:59.7 - but who knows what happens when you're chasing a medal at state.

FMHS senior Aaron Steffensmeier had the next highest finish placing 63rd out of 129 Class 3A

boys runners. The top time was 15:49.1 from Miles Back of Center Point-Urbana.

Steffensmeier said he tried to stay out of trouble looking both ways out of the starting gate, but then found himself in the middle of the pack.

"I was just trying not to get sucked in. I didn't want to screw myself at the beginning," he said.

Steffensmeier ran with tights and gloves on a cool day but said he didn't know if that had an

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Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

FMHS senior Aaron Steffensmeier comes out of the gate in the middle of the pack with the 3A runners on Saturday in Fort Dodge. Steffensmeier finished 63rd in the race.

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Sports/Classifieds

Seniors' times at state reflect progress through season

RUN - Continued from Page 1

impact.

"It was a gut race. I was running horrible and I don't know if the clothes made a difference or not. I was just feeling like crap and I wasn't happy with it," he said catching his breath immediately after the run. "I knew I didn't have a choice so I lived with and did the best I could."

HTC sophomore Matt



Hellige raced to 90th place out of 149 runners finishing at 18:04.4 in the Class 1A boys run. Hellige has led the HTC boys team all year and qualified with an 8th place finish at the Pekin qualifying run Oct. 18.

"At the beginning, I was a little nervous going to state for the first time. Once I started the nerves went away," Hellige said.

Hellige typically finished in the top five all year in district meets, usually in the top three, and he said running with so many runners in front of him was intimidating. "It felt a little different being behind that many people, I was just trying to run my race - but this was a lot more runners definitely."

The course has a few inclines but a similar

amount of downslopes and Hellige said that didn't bother him too much either.

"It was a little hilly on the first turn and then mostly it was flat with a few downhill. I'm pretty used to that terrain so I tried to take advantage of some of the downhill."

HTC head coach Matt Mohrfeld said he told Hellige to just try and stay clean at the start and enjoy the run.

"That's the real deal out there. You know you bring an athlete here and you run the numbers... given his desire and stuff that's exactly where I thought he'd be. My advice was, 'you're at state- enjoy it,'" Mohrfeld said. "I told him not to get boxed in, but I think he got out a little hot."

FMHS senior Sierra

Howardson finished at 104th at 21.09 in the Class 3A girls run. She was helped out of the runners chute at the end of the race.

She said the race as a whole didn't feel good to her, but she's happy she was able to qualify three times as a Bloodhound and once in Tennessee as a freshman.

"It didn't feel good to me. It was odd, my legs hurt and my hips were hurting," she said. "I just feel blessed I was able to go all four years. After the race my body was trying to figure itself out again."

She said the environment and magnitude of the race didn't have an impact on her.

"We go to big races on the weekend to experience big races so we get used to that," she said. "But being able to go to state all four years is an



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

HTC sophomore Matt Hellige (1053) takes the inside track at the state Class 1A cross country run on Saturday in Fort Dodge. At left, FMHS's Sierra Howardson works at the halfway point.

accomplishment. It so cool to see more people are joining cross country teams and more spectators showing up. It's not just a mom and dad a few

spectators anymore.

Howardson said she's looking at possibly continuing her cross-country at the United States Military Academy next year.

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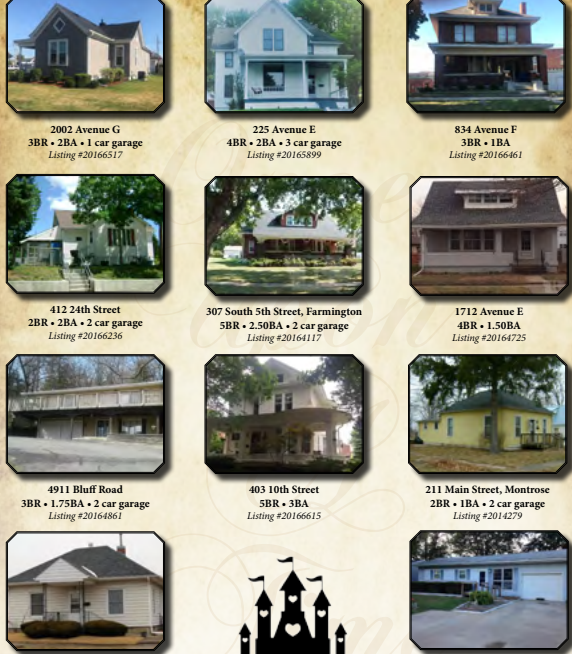
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From the Front/Weather

Gibbs giving back as music career hits high gear

GIBBS - Continued from Page 1

to take care of it in not so great a way," Gibbs said after the morning hour-long assembly. "I said, you know, I've got to get back home and talk about this because people see me as a rocker or guy that may have it all but they don't know what goes on behind closed doors or what went on inside. And in this business you put yourself out there and and

it can make you vulnerable."

Gibbs started his presentation by bringing volunteers in from the student body to form a "band" and then asked a couple instructors including Mike Ehlers and Tracy Madsen to be part of the group as well. Showing the students that individually things can be tough, but together bigger things

can be accomplished.

He also gave a speech to the group outlining his time building a band with his brother, who is a now a school resource officer and liaison officer with the Fort Madison Police Department.

Brandon Gibbs talked about how hard it was after building a local, then regional, and then national recording band with his brother, and then having his brother leave the band.

"I thought it was over... it was over. It was a punch in the stomach," Gibbs said with Brent standing in the gymnasium doorway. "But he told me he was taking another road, that he had another career he wanted to pursue."

Gibbs said he thought it was over for him at that time and left the recording industry taking a job as a janitor to pay the bills. He said the person who gave him the job as the custodian eventually let him go because he knew Gibbs was not living the life he wanted.

"He said I'm letting you go because I can't continue to watch you live this life. It's not what you want and you need to go back and do what you do," Gibbs recalled.

So he went back to recording and found hard



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

As part of his new "band" Gibbs shows the cover shot in hopes of landing "a deal" with FMHS Band instructor Tracy Madsen.

times and he said the reaction from the people who knew him was much harder to bear than the task itself. He said he would read and hear comments from people about "going out and finding a real job" or realizing that this wasn't the business for him.

He was ready to give up after a group of people told him his work trying to rebuild his career wasn't as good as his previous work. He was ready to give up until his mother called him and told him ESPN had emailed and wanted to use one of his songs, "This Town" on their network.

Now Gibbs has toured as front man for Poison, played with Devil City Angels, and has written and performed songs in a variety of venues.

He said he wants people to realize that he's a musician but also has a message that life can take weird paths but staying true to who you are is the key to success and perseverance.

With everyone carrying social media with them, he said people should use that to power their dreams and not derail them.

"So now you've got the Internet, Facebook, and other things and people

can take whatever jobs they want," he said. "I wanted to take the opportunity to tell them you can take the jobs and they can empower you. You don't have to let it hurt you."

He said he's spoken at several adult rallies and other locations but it was the first time he's given a presentation to students.

"This is the first high school, but I've done adult rallies, and suicide bully preventions, but honest-to-God, this was like my first show."

He said he starts touring again this week, but would like to continue to work with students and adults alike.

5-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

MON 30 Oct



Partly Cloudy
High - 45.8° F | Low - 33.5° F

TUE 31 Oct



Clear Skies
High - 39.0° F | Low - 25.8° F

WED 01 Nov



Light Rain
High - 43.7° F | Low - 36.0° F

THU 02 Nov



Light Rain
High - 47.1° F | Low - 40.7° F

FRI 03 Nov



Light Rain
High - 59.1° F | Low - 44.6° F

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