

Pen City Current

Friday, Jan. 4, 2019 | 20 pages | Volume 3 • Issue 17

2018 - A Year in Review

May & June

FMCSO bans 20 seniors from commencement

BY CHUCK
VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Fort Madison School district officials have suspended approximately 20 seniors after a Sunday night vandalism spree that took place inside the Fort Madison High School.

The suspension is through June 3, which would preclude the students from participating in graduation ceremonies on Saturday, June 2.

Parents of the students

involved in what was described as water balloons being thrown inside the building, tp-ing inside the school building and putting Vaseline on the door knobs throughout the school, made presentations to the board.

At Monday night's regular school board meeting, about 60 parents and students showed up for the meeting. Two parents and three students spoke to the issue.

Superintendent Erin Slater said after the meeting that she couldn't confirm or comment

on disciplinary action against any students. She also didn't comment on whether the board would reconsider the penalties.

However students outside the meeting afterwards confirmed that 20 students have been suspended and are facing criminal vandalism charges and are currently banned from participating in graduation ceremonies.

Two seniors, McKenna Fehseke and Sierra Howardson, both gave emotional pleas for the board and superintendent



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

It was an unusual sight Monday when about 60 parents and students packed the School District office meeting room after approximately 20 seniors were banned from commencement after vandalizing the inside of the Fort Madison High School.

to reconsider the penalty of the graduation.

"I'm hear to try to re-mediate some things that

happened this morning," See **SCHOOL**, page 2

Thurman twins get shot at state as freshman



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Vasin Thurman, foreground, and Jason Thurman go through workouts Tuesday evening at the Fort Madison High School tennis courts. The two will be playing in the state doubles tournament in Waterloo beginning Friday, May 25.

BY CHUCK
VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - They were born on July 30, 2003...both of them and 15 years later they're headed to the Iowa High School boys state tennis tournament on May 25 in Waterloo.

Jason and Vasin Thurman, who just started getting serious about tennis over the past year, qualified with a wonderful run through districts knocking off the No. 2 and No. 3 seeds at Fairfield Maharishi in doubles competition Wednesday.

The two boys from Holy Trinity Catholic play in a shared program agreement with Fort Madison High School under head coach Dean Hogan and went 9-16 during a better-than-expected regular season.

At Wednesday's district action the

two were seeded 15th out of 16 doubles teams and quickly knocked off Abbott and Gavin Haner of Keokuk, the No. 2 seed in the district tournament 6-4, 6-4. That win put them up against the No. 3 seed from Fairfield in Dante Cingari and Logan Williams and the Thurmans took that match in two sets 6-4, 6-2.

After winning in the top half of the bracket, the next match was against Fairfield Maharishi's 8th seeded doubles squad of Kartik Venpate and Bhavani Allison. Jason and Vasin won the first set in a close 7-5 score then dropped the 2nd set 6-7 with a 3-7 tiebreaker, but came back to win the third tiebreaker set 6-1 to advance to the top doubles team in the district in Maharishi's Kai Vessay and Devan Burke who ended the Thurmans' day with a 6-1, 6-0 loss.

See **TWINS**, page 5

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2018 - A Year in Review: May & June

Students, parents ask district to reconsider

SCHOOL - Continued from Page 1

Fehseke said.

“About 20% of the class was told we cannot attend graduation and we are suspended and we are facing criminal charges,” she said. “I’m hear to ask that decision be revoked regarding graduation. We all would do what we can, and is necessary, to fix what we’ve done. Whether that is set up or tear down graduation... anything we can do we are willing to do.”

Fehseke said of all the students have learned in their four years at the FMHS, the biggest lesson probably came Monday when they learned actions have consequences.

“Our small ideas which are meant to be fun and games have real consequences and we did not take that into consideration when we made the decision we did. I think we are all ashamed of what we’ve done so I ask you please, as a school board, please allow us to get back on the right track and allow us to walk the stage with the other 80% of our class.”

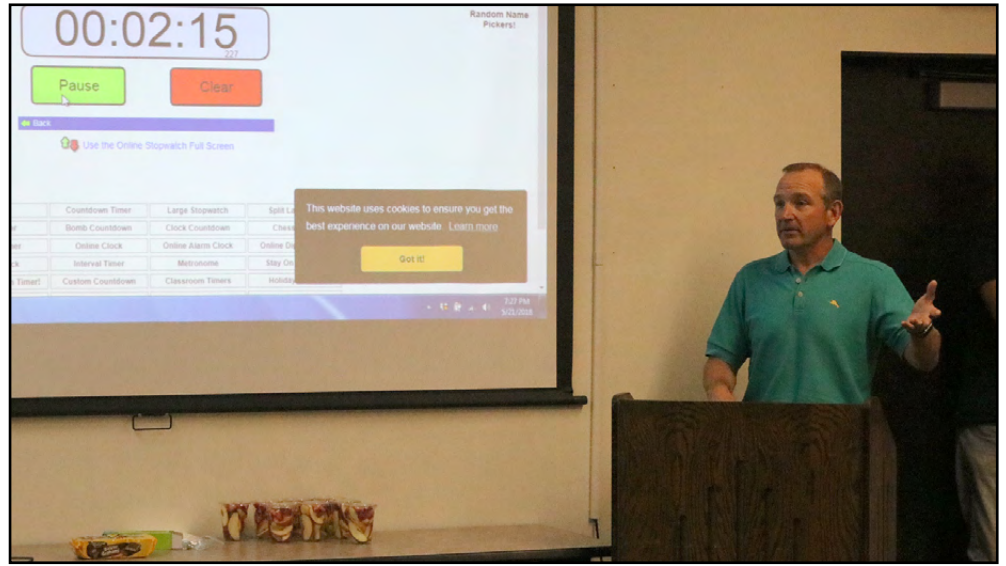
Fehseke’s father, Richard, said parents will be appealing the district’s decision to suspend the students. He asked that the board consider alternative punishments that would send the right message about consequences but at the same time allow the students to participate in graduation ceremonies.

“It’s a common practice that seniors do something as a senior class prank and echoing what McKenna has said, fun and games have consequences that impact others. I’ve talked with people investigating the incident. This involved students going into the school tp’ing, throwing water balloons, and putting Vaseline on the door handles. Concern existed that there may be some permanent damages. Fortunately as the day progressed we found out there wasn’t permanent damages,” Fehseke said.

“The decision of the school board and superintendent to suspend more than 20 seniors for the rest of their senior year and deny them participating in commencement proceedings is gonna be appealed by a

Richard Fehseke addresses the Fort Madison School Board Monday night on a timer asking the board to reconsider a ban it implemented on 20 seniors who were caught vandalizing the inside of the Fort Madison High School Sunday night.

Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC



lot of parents.”

He said the appeal works on procedural and result-based grounds, and the parent groups were going to ask the school board and superintendent to review the punishment in light of the circumstances for other appropriate steps that can be taken that would allow them to participate in commencement.

Senior Sierra Howardson was also emotional in her plea to be allowed to graduate.

“The reason I’m standing before you is not a reason I’m proud of. Over the weekend the senior class planned and followed a childish tradition to TP the FMHS,” she said. “While this prank appeared to be harmless, to it lead to members of our student body entering the school and vandalizing the inside of our school and for this I’m deeply sorry.”

Howardson said she was pleading on behalf of her fellow students and asked the board for leniency.

“While I will be the first to volunteer and clean up and do community service to pay for my horrible choices, I just ask that you please not take away the beautiful memories my class and I will make on graduation day,” she said.

Senior Logan Allen said he was part of the prank and understood the acts caused problems but didn’t want his mother to not have the chance to see him go across

the stage.

“I was part of the senior class prank, but my mom has not seen one of her kids graduate high school and my mom doesn’t deserve to not see a child walk across the stage because of a mistake I made,” Allen said.

No decision was made nor were any comments made by the board other than board President Tim Wondra thanking those who spoke for their participation.

In other action, the board:

- heard from Brian Wright, who addressed the board about bruises that his daughter allegedly received at the hands of a school administrator for not saying good morning on the way into school. Wright produced pictures of the student’s bruised arm and directed any additional questions on the matter to Curtis Dial, a Keokuk attorney. Wright didn’t identify the administrator by name, but asked the board for the administrator’s dismissal.

- approved tentative union agreements with school teamster staffing.

- approved several policy changes. The changes are part of an ongoing process to bring district codes in line with the Iowa State Board of Education.

This news story and subsequent Letters to the Editor were read on pencitycurrent.com and social media 125,029 times and was engaged with 36,467 times.

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Pen City Current
Founded in 2016

Pen City current
P.O. Box 366 | Fort Madison, IA

Member LION Publishers
www.lionpublishers.com



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We Remember Our Loved Ones Lost in 2018

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Police looking into Sunday morning shooting

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Fort Madison police are looking into a shooting that took place early Sunday morning in the 1700 block of Avenue D in Fort Madison.

According to Police Chief Tim Sittig, seven shell casings were found at the scene and "more than one" slug was pulled from a residence.

Sittig said police are

actively pursuing suspects, but he said the case may take time to unfold as all the evidence will be sent to the state crime lab in Ankeny, coupled with the fact that no one was awake at the time of the shooting, no suspect or vehicle descriptions are available.

"This one's gonna be tough because no one was awake, not even the lady at the residence that was shot at," Sittig said. "We'll have to send all

the evidence to Ankeny and when they get caught up with their back log of cases and get to ours, we'll have some information."

Sittig put out a press release Wednesday afternoon, that indicated on Sunday May 27th 2018 at approximately 4:58 am Fort Madison Police were advised of a report of possible shots fired in the area of 1700 block of Ave. E. Responding officers checked the area and did not see any vehicles leav-

ing the area or any sign of damage or injuries.

At 7:33 am on the same day police were advised that some shell casings were located in an alley in the 1700 block of Ave. D. Officers located and recovered seven spent large caliber shells in the alley behind a residence in the 1700 block of Ave. D. Further investigation revealed that the residence had been struck multiple times.

There were no injuries at the residence but there was damage to the back of the house where the bullets struck the house.

The investigation is continuing in this case anyone with information regarding this case should contact the Fort Madison Police Department at 319-372-2525.

Sittig said there appears to be no threat to the public at this time and said he didn't believe it was a random crime.

This news story was read on pencitycurrent.com and social media 12,557 times and was engaged with 4,407 times.

Thursday crash sends family to hospital

Honda SUV crossed median southbound and struck northbound overpass bridge

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - A two-vehicle accident on the Hwy. 61 bypass late Thursday afternoon has sent a Keokuk family to area hospitals.

According to Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weber, a family of four from Keokuk in a Honda SUV was traveling southbound on Hwy. 61 when the vehicle entered the median and crossed into the northbound lane striking a bridge barrier and going airborne before coming to rest in the northbound lane facing north. The vehicle was torn in half by the impact. Another vehicle, a white pickup truck carrying another adult and four children, was also damaged in the accident. No injuries were reported to the occupants of the second vehicle.

Weber said two of the occupants in the Honda were being transported at about 6:30 p.m. to University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics by ambulance due to weather conditions preventing an airlift. A third occupant was sent to Iowa City at about 7:45 p.m.

The accident occurred about 4:30 p.m. with rescue crews from Lee County EMS, Montrose Fire and Rescue, and the Lee County Sheriff's Dept. and Fort Madison Police on the scene.

This news story and social media posts were read on pencitycurrent.com and social media 100,154 times and was engaged with 47,310 times.



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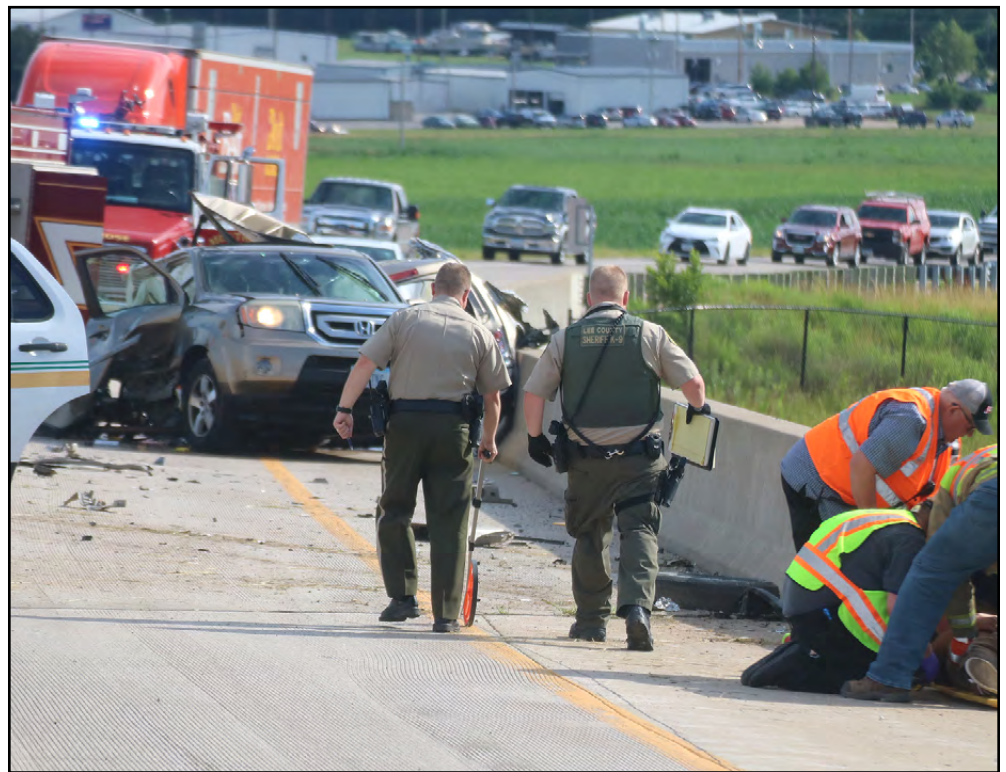


Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC



2018 - A Year in Review: May & June

HTC freshmen knocked off Nos. 2 and 3 at districts

TWINS - Continued from Page 1

When the two enter the state tournament they will be the only underclassmen who made it out of districts in doubles play. All the other competition will be from juniors and seniors.

The two have set a conservative goal for the tournament considering they knocked off the No. 2 and No. 3 seeds at districts.

Just to win a match.

"I think a good tournament for us would be getting at least one win. That would be nice. To win a match," Vasin said.

The two are clearly on the same page.

"Maybe winning a match..." Jason said.

"We'll be playing against some really good competition. So yeah..if we could win a match I think I would be happy with that."

Hogan said it's hard to tell how the tournament will shake out because the Thurmans have beaten good competition this year.

"It's kind of hard to say," Hogan said. They've been playing really well. They upset the number one players from Keokuk and two seniors from Fairfield that were their Nos. 1 and 2 players at both schools. They played some pretty powerful kids including the Maharishi team which is a top quality team.

They've got their work cut out and depends on the luck of the draw and where you're going to be placed. Maharishi will be in the opposite bracket. They will probably be seeded No. 1, that's my thought. The only way we would meet up with them is in the finals."

He gave a lot of credit for the twins' success to Sam Avery and Austin Krueger, the team's No. 1 doubles unit and No. 1 and No. 2 singles players.

"I got to give credit to Sam and Austin," Hogan said. "Those are the two guys that have been my go-to team members that have helped them along in becoming better players. And Jason and Vasin's mom said they often go over to the courts at HTC to work by themselves. Sam has been with them and Austin has been with them so that's been a good peer situation with them through the season."

He said for freshmen, the two play a very controlled, slower pace and look for gaps on the court.

"They play their

game, they don't play an uptempo game like a lot of the older players that have played several years. They play their pace and that throws off the opposition. Most kids like to play power with power and these fine Thurman brothers are patient, deliberate, and take time within reason. They analyze and try to focus on the game plan of playing one player at a time in doubles and not two. You select one and you play that player the best you can and wear them down."

The two started playing tennis just going over to city courts and hitting the ball around.

"We weren't very serious...and we weren't very good," Vasin said. "But then we started playing with Sam Avery for a while and he got us excited about it and then we started working with coach Hogan."

Avery, also from HTC,

was the team's No. 1 singles player for the year and also anchored the No. 1 doubles team with Austin Krueger.

Jason said the obvious chemistry that exists between the two after growing up and playing different sports with each other their whole lives is helping the on-court performance.

"A lot of it's our chemistry. We kind of just know where each other is at on the court. But coach also put in a new formation when we're serving. We didn't really do it during the season because we wanted to save it for conference and districts. The guy in the net is in a different spot than he usually is and they're having trouble reacting to it," Jason said.

Vasin said the new formation helped a lot in the district tournament.

"It makes it harder for the people to re-

turn. They don't see that formation very often and when we bring it out they don't know to react to it. It's usually hit right at the poacher or the poacher will eventually get a shot at it," he said.

The two also played singles with Jason in the No. 3 spot and Vasin in the No. 5 hole.

Through April, Jason had a game record of 123-65, with an 8-2 match record and 16-5 set record. Vasin was 8-1 in matches at No. 5 with a 16-4 set record and 116-65 in total games.

The two were 9-7 in doubles matches through April.

The tournament will be held at the Byrnes Park Tennis Center in Waterloo starting at 9 a.m. on Friday, May 25.

This news story was read on pencitycurrent.com and social media 25,184 times and was engaged with 677 times.



PCC file photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Senior Elijah Barnes is currently ranked 7th in the state in Class 3A in the shotput going into this week's state tournament at Drake University.

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2018 - A Year in Review: May & June

Fire breaks out on west side



Photos by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC



Fort Madison Fire Department firefighters work to quash a blaze that broke out in a garage at 3408 Avenue E Monday evening at about 6:20 p.m. Firefighters remained on the scene until approximately 8 p.m. The fire remains under investigation. See page 4 and www.pencitycurrent.com for more pictures.



The fire from the garage/car fire at 3408 Avenue E Monday night seems to creep over the top of a Fort Madison firefighter in the picture above. At left, Capt. Kern and another firefighter discuss strategy with the blaze. At the bottom firefighters shoot from across the street.



At top, Fort Madison Fire Department Captain Eric Kern holds up the hood of a 4-door sedan that was involved in the garage fire at 3408 Avenue E Monday evening. The fire destroyed the garage, the vehicle, and a large motor home outside the structure.



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2018 - A Year in Review: May & June



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Volunteers at the Fort Madison Food Pantry sort food to be shelved for the area's neediest families on Monday. The food was collected by postal carriers with the Fort Madison Post Office as part of a national letter carrier food collection on Saturday.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Former Fort Madison Food Pantry volunteer George Gaudette, right, helps load food onto a pickup truck for delivery from the Fort Madison Post Office Monday morning. The food pantry was struggling with inventory and funding in March, but officials say the situation is better going into the summer.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

HTC junior Taylor Boeding gets a running header into the net as the Crusaders took a 3-0 lead with less than 10 minutes gone in the game. Freshman Claire Pothitakis sent the assist in Boeding's direction and the Crusaders raced to a 10-0 win.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

FMHS senior Leigh Johnson works out Tuesday under the watchful eye of throwing coach Andrew Troxel. Johnson is making her first trip to state for track and field. Johnson joins seniors Elijah Barnes, Brett Schneider, and Caleb Gehle, along with sophomore Matthew Hellige at the state track meet which begins today in Des Moines.



PCC file photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

HTC senior Brett Schneider won't have to contend with these two Davenport Assumption speedsters at this year's state track meet. Schneider will be running in the 400-meter hurdles and the 800-meter run.

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Area girl killed in Sunday ATV tragedy

Morning ride along Pilot Grove Road ends in tragedy

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

PILOT GROVE - An ATV accident this morning in north Lee County has claimed the life of an area girl.

West Point Fire & Rescue, Lee County Sheriff's

Department, and Lee County EMS were paged to the 1400 block of Pilot Grove Road at approximately 9:07 a.m. Sunday morning to an accident involving a side-by-side all-terrain vehicle carrying three juveniles.

According to the Iowa State Patrol, the 2018 Polaris Ranger was traveling northbound on Pilot Grove Road when the incident occurred.

Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weber said the Iowa State Patrol is handling the investigation into the accident. A spokesperson for the Iowa State Patrol confirmed the death Sunday afternoon, but said no additional

information would be available until the accident scene investigation is finished.

No other injuries were listed on the accident report issued Sunday evening. The driver was listed as a juvenile.

Lee County EMS transferred the victim to Henry County Health Center in Mt. Pleasant where she was pronounced dead.

This news story and social media posts were read on pencitycurrent.com and social media 33,268 times and was engaged with 19,971 times.

Kahoka man arrested in WP on sex charge

BY PCC STAFF

WEST POINT - The West Point Police Department reports the arrest of a Missouri man on a felony sexual abuse charge.

Brandon D. Lewis, 39, 980 West Cedar Street, Kahoka, MO, was arrested on Tuesday, June 19th, 2018 at the Lee County Sheriff's Office on a charge of Sexual Abuse second degree. Sexual Abuse second degree is a Class B Felony. If convicted, Lewis faces up to 25 years in a state correctional facility.

The arrest stems from an investigation by Officers with the West Point Police Department into allegations that Lewis had committed sexual abuse to a minor victim in the West Point area.

The Lee County Attorney's Office, Lee County Sheriff's Office, and the Department of Human Services assisted the West Point Police Department in the investigation.

All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

This news story and social media posts were read on pencitycurrent.com and social media 9,239 times and was engaged with 5,985 times.



LEWIS

More parents voice concerns over FMMS incidents

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Two more couples and a former student have come forward with allegations of abuse at the hands of a Fort Madison school official.

At Monday's regular meeting of the Fort Madison School Board, Brian Wright, Amy and Kevin Wellman, Melissa Boyd, and former student Seth Wright all spoke to the school board in the public comment period of the meeting about the alleged abuses.

As has been school board protocol, the board allowed each person three minutes to speak. Board President Tim Wondra also asked those addressing the board not use the names of any parties associated with the reported incidents due to confidentiality. However several of the speakers brought the names out in the public meeting, including the names of their children.

Wright then said Fort Madison Middle School Principal Todd Dirth had assaulted his daughter by grabbing her arm and leaving a bruise, when his daughter didn't say good morning to school officials on the way in to school back in September.

"This is in regards to the last meeting I came to in regards to the physical assault of my daughter Brianna at the hands of Todd Dirth," Wright said.

He pointed to several school policy codes that he

believes the school violated in conducting the investigation.

Wright said according to school policy section 402.3-R-1, a Level 1 investigator, or the superintendent of the district, upon a report of alleged abuse, will file a report of which a copy is required to be provided to the parents of the student in addition to other parties. Then within five days an informal investigation is to take place including an interview with the student.

Wright said neither of those two requirements were met by the district.

The policy also states that, "Upon completion of the report, if the Level I investigator determines the allegations of physical abuse are founded and serious, the Level I investigator will notify law enforcement authorities. If the allegations are founded but the physical abuse is not of a serious nature, the Level I investigator will refer the case on to the Level II investigator."

Wright contends that the district did not refer the incident to a Level II officer, which is the district's school resource officer. Wright said he questioned the school's resource officer seven months after the incident and was told the school never referred the issue to the SRO.

Heather Wellman also spoke to the board about her son who was slapped in the back of the head by Dirth. Wellman said Dirth admitted to slapping her son in the back of the head as he walked by.

"Obviously, if we had done more, more kids wouldn't be getting assaulted by him," she said.

Wellman said she went to the police and they told her it wasn't an assault because there was no mark. Wellman said a whole class saw the alleged incident because her son had walked up to the school and had to walk back to the back of the class line.

See ALLEGATIONS, page 9

**There's
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for the
Holidays.**



Pen City Current will not publish an e-Edition Sunday, December 23 through Tuesday, January 1. Our special 2018 Recap editions will publish Wednesday, January 2 through Tuesday, January 8.

Breaking news will continue to be published on our website 24/7.

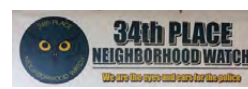
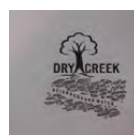
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CAUTION

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

2018 - A Year in Review: May & June

Parents complain district not investigating incidents properly

ALLEGATIONS - Continued from Page 8

Seth Wright, who went to the school years ago at the former middle school, said Dirth “plucked” a safety pin from his lip that he was wearing to keep a piercing closed while he was eating.

“I was approached by the person in question and was asked to take it out and I reminded him of a meeting my parents had with him two days before and he decided to pluck it out gouging my lip and then immediately had me restrained.”

Wright said to know this is still going on was ridiculous and if the district has a zero tolerance district, the issues need to be addressed and district officials aren’t doing their job if nothing is being done.

Melissa Boyd has a special needs child in the district who had gotten out of control in 2012 as a sixth grader. Boyd, a former employee of the district, admitted her son had behavioral issues.

She said her son was having a melt

down in class and said her son was out of instructional support control and Dirth was called down to the class that had been cleared. Dirth held her son down on the floor to restrain him and had his face held into the cement floor. She said her son indicated he couldn’t breathe and Dirth wouldn’t relent. She said there was another issue the same day, where Dirth used a chair to restrain her son “as a lion tamer would”.

Dirth has not been charged with assault in any of the cases and law enforcement was notified in each of the case.

District officials have declined to comment on the issue citing confidentiality laws regarding personal and personnel information.

This news story and social media posts were read on pencitycurrent.com and social media 13,735 times and was engaged with 5,804 times.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Alliant crews are on the scene of a large tree that has fallen at the corner of 18th and Avenue F disrupting power to a portion of Fort Madison’s east neighborhoods. #pencitycurrent . **This social media post was read 12,219 times and was engaged with 1,791 times.**

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Burglaries on the rise again in city

Fort Madison has had 15 break-ins in the last seven days

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - With the summer comes ramped up criminal activity and Fort Madison is experiencing that trend right now.

Fort Madison police reported 12 burglaries from Friday through Tuesday and 15 in the past seven days with most occurring in the 1100 to 1500 block of Avenues C through I.

Fort Madison Police Chief Tim Sittig said the bur-



SITTIG

glaries are residential and typically overnight.

"These are residential burglaries where people are going into homes," he said "They seem to be clustering around the Oak Drive, 29th Place neighborhoods within about a four-block area for the most part."

He said some of the burglaries are forced entry, but nothing that is causing a lot of damage. He also said two juveniles have been charged with using a credit card that was taken from one of the homes, but he said they haven't been able to determine if the juveniles were involved in the break-ins.

"These were overnight burglaries and I would proba-

bly say, in at least some cases, the residents were home," Sittig said.

He advised all residents to make sure their valuable are out of sight and doors, windows and access points to all property are locked securely. He also said leaving porch lights on at night can act as a deterrent. He said residents always have the options of surveillance or dogs for protection as well.

"Criminals like to work in the dark."

He also encouraged anyone who sees anything, even if it's just someone walking late at night, to contact the police department.

"Even if you're just getting up to get something to drink and you see something out the window, even if it's just someone walking by, give us a call. They may not have done anything to you, but maybe they've been somewhere else. It's very important for us in finding these people to be able to get to them as soon as possible."

Local neighborhood watch groups Facebook threads this week were tracking burglary activity and information about break-ins and burglaries taking place when people are home.

This news story and social media posts were read on pencitycurrent.com and social media 9,948 times and was engaged with 2,064 times.

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- Compost**
Build or purchase a composting bin for food & yard waste. Use your composted goods to build a healthy garden in the spring.

Backyard composting improves soil quality & makes for healthier plants!

Girl Scouts lend a brush to PAW

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Four members of a Fort Madison Girl Scout troop and some leaders partnered with Sherwin Williams on Saturday and spruced up the front to the PAW no-kill animal shelter.

In temperatures higher than 90 degrees, leaders and girls from Troop 9406 in Fort Madison crawled all over the front of the animal shelter and put a new coat of paint on the metal front of the building.

Lisa Engeman, the store manager at Sherwin-Williams in Keokuk, said the company does a community service project every year.

"We have to do a community service project for national paint week every year," Engeman said. "I wanted to do here. I adopted from here, my sales rep adopted from here, too. So we thought this was a good project. The shelter got new siding on three sides, but budget constraints stopped them from doing the front so we're just trying to freshen it up and make it match what's already there."

Engeman said they also painted the shed in front of the facility.

Sherwin Williams donated all the paint and brushes for the project.

Stephanie King, the troop's leader, along with Brooke Patton, said part of the girl scouts' activities are doing community service projects such as donating food to the local food pantry and hospitals.

"We also adopted the garden around the flagpole in Riverview park and provided the gardening work there."

The high temperatures kept the girls from being on the project too long at one time. The girls rotated from painting to finding shade and playing with some of the dogs that were chained up outside.

"It's pretty hot out. They've been helping where they can reach but they've also been spending time with the animals," Engeman said.

The shelter is currently housing over 120 dogs and 90 cats.

This news story and social media posts were read on pencitycurrent.com and social media 9,132 times and was engaged with 1,035 times.



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2018 - A Year in Review: May & June

Thursday storm beats up on city

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - A storm that blew into the area at about 2:30 p.m. has city crews scrambling around Fort Madison cutting trees and picking up debris from heavy winds and lightning that accompanied down-pours for about an hour.

Crews first responded on the east side of the town where a tree had fallen across Avenue E in the 200 block. City workers were also on the scene of a large tree that had fallen across the road in the 1500 block of Avenue E. Workers were out with bucket tractors and chain saws cutting that tree that was blocking traffic for about 45 minutes before crews got a lane open.

LeeComm dispatch operators were busy sending emergency crews throughout the county, including Denmark where a powerline had fallen in town.

Another large tree fell on a vehicle near Shopton park on Avenue O. Behind a home at the corner of 24th and F, another large tree fell to the east and took out power lines running across the property where Fort Madison firefighters stood by until Alliant Energy crews were on the way.

The Fort Madison Athletic boosters fireworks tent was damaged by the wind and sales at that location are temporarily suspended until the tent can be secured and dry product can be obtained. Efforts were underway Thursday night to have the tent up and running again by Friday.

This news story and social media posts were read on pencitycurrent.com and social media 11,208 times and was engaged with 3,298 times.



Photos by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC



Above, a large tree fell in the back yard of a home at the corner of 25th Street and Avenue F. Fort Madison Fire & Rescue stayed on the scene until Alliant had been notified of the incident. The tree was just one of many that were taken out as a strong storm blew through the area Thursday at about 2:30 p.m. At left, city workers brave the heavy rain to clear roads.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Athena Snook, 10, of Fort Madison puts a coat of paint on the front of the PAW Animal Shelter in Fort Madison as part of a service project in conjunction with Sherwin-Williams Co. Athena's mom Alta, oversees the project, while Lisa Engeman, store manager for Sherwin-Williams in Keokuk, works in the background.

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