



Pen City Current

Friday, Dec. 16, 2016 | 3 pages | Volume 1 • Issue 4

SPORTS

HTC cagers head to Danville

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Sometimes in sports a win hinges on catching someone at the right time of the schedule.

Both the girls and boys varsity basketball teams may be looking at that scenario come Friday night at Danville.

The Danville boys, a perennial powerhouse in southeast Iowa basketball under Head Coach Ken Lafoon, typically are an intimidating presence with a long, enviable history. That history is not lost on HTC Coach John Hellige, who said the Crusaders haven't beaten Danville in 15 games going back six years.

"They beat us 15 games in a row dating back to Jan. 15, 2010 and that was a triple overtime win on homecoming night," Hellige said.

But the Crusaders may just be catching the Bears at the right time. Fort Madison High School handed the Bears one of their worst, if not the worst defeat in a long time 68-29 on Tuesday night. In that game they held Senior Kaleb Haeffner, who was averaging just under 20 points per game for the then No. 9 Class 1A ranked Bears, to just four points on the night.

The Bears also boast senior Kole Perkins who's averaging just under 17 points per game and he was held to nine points.

But Hellige said his 4-2

See HTC, page 2



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Lunch with the Governor

Governor Terry Branstad, center, sits with Fort Madison Mayor Brad Randolph, foreground, Neal Dodd, far right and Ali Randolph center, as they listen and watch a video presentation by Elliott Test Kitchen owner Kumar Wickramasingha on Tuesday afternoon.

Branstad visits Test Kitchen

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Current Iowa governor, and newly nominated Ambassador to China, Terry Branstad paid a visit to the Elliott Test Kitchen this morning and saw first-hand how the program is helping improve ACT performance for local students.

Kumar Wickramasingha, the facilities creator and owner, was able to seal the invitation as part of the Governor's 99-county sweep, with visits in Lee County today.

"Well I was informed that this Elliott Test Kitchen was a great program that was helping kids and helping students in FM and I wanted to see it personally," Branstad said this morning.

Wickramasingha welcomed the Governor and, after introductions to those in attendance, showed a video presentation of how the test kitchen came to be and how important education is in Wickramasingha's home country of Sri Lanka. A slide showed an auditorium full of students doing ACT prep and then a following slide of a full testing session at the Test Kitchen.

"I think it's great. I thought it was pretty interesting that (he) showed the picture of Sri Lanka," Branstad said. "And they're doing it in other countries, and in China, education is very important there."

"I think we've been too complacent sometimes here in the U.S. and in Iowa because we've historically had

"I think we've been too complacent sometimes here in the U.S. and Iowa because we've historically had a very good education system."

- Terry Branstad
Iowa Governor

Program helps local senior score 33 on ACT exam

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - The only really true way to see the meaning of something is to try it...or as the old adage goes, the proof is in the pudding.

That's apropos, especially when you're talking about Kumar Wickramasingha's Elliott Test Kitchen, where local students can go after school several nights a week to get additional help studying and preparing for exams, specifically the ACTs.

Jack Marek, a senior at Fort Madison High School recently took advantage of the programming at the Test Kitchen and nailed a 33 on his ACT. Marek said



MAREK

See MAREK, page 2

a very good education system. But we're competing in a world economy and it's important our students get the best education they can. And we have this Future Ready Iowa goal of having 70% of Iowa students and workers have education and training beyond high school by 2025."

"Here we have a great opportunity to see something interesting and unique."

Wickramasingha said it was a wonderful lunch and opportunity.

"I think it was a great honor, not only for the test

See BRANSTAD, page 2



See more photos on our Instagram and Pinterest sites @pencitycurrent



Advertiser Index

Pen City Current.....P.2
StopTextsStopWrecks.org
.....P.3

News Index

From the front.....P.2
For the record.....P.2
Local News.....P.3
Sports.....P.2,3

Scan the code to Subscribe today



From the Front

Branstad counting on history with China

BRANSTAD - Continued from Page 1

kitchen, but for the students to be able to spend time with Iowa's longest governor. But also for his support. I hope people see this and see what we're doing and come and support us," Wickramasingha said after the event.

Branstad pointed to the obstacles Wickramasingha had to overcome in coming to America and starting a program like this.

"It wasn't easy and people didn't initially accept it, but you've gained support and you've been able to get the word out. When the governor comes that kind of helps, too," Branstad said.

He indicated since his nomination as Ambassador of China, he hasn't had the opportunity to speak with Chinese President Xi Jinping, but is hearing some good feedback.

"That is what president-elect (Donald



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

In the kitchen

Students at the Elliott Test Kitchen pose with Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad on Tuesday morning. Test Kitchen owner Kumar Wickramasingha, right of Branstad, gave a presentation on the concept.

Trump saw, that I have a unique relationship in China.

"Now it's not going to be an easy job by any means because we have some significant differences in policy. So I hope I can be an effective communicator," Branstad said.

"That is what President Elect (Donald) Trump saw, that I have a unique relationship in China. Now it's not going to be an easy job..."

-Terry Branstad, Iowa Governor

FMHS wrestling team splits with MP, West Hancock

PEN CITY CURRENT

MT. PLEASANT - The Bloodhound wrestling team got a little fight from West Hancock on Thursday night, but got a lot more from Mt. Pleasant as Fort Madison split a three-way wrestling meet in Mt. Pleasant.

The Hounds knocked off West Hancock 48-24 and then fell 28-48 to Mount Pleasant.

Against the Titans, the Hounds recorded pins by Elton Kruse at 106, Dalton Woolever at 132, Harlan Steffensmeier at 138, Aaron Steffensmeier at 145, and Danen Settles at 195. All matches against the Titans were either won by pin or forfeit. Skylar Schau suffered a pin to Brett Hammel at 126, Jarrett Settles fell to a pin by Oliver Cole at 138. and West Hancock's Caleb Adams pinned Diego Lozano at the 2:30 mark

In the Mt. Pleasant matches the Hounds recorded three pins by Nathan and Harlan Steffensmeier at 120 and 145 respectively. Neither of those matches lasted past the :50 mark. Skylar Schau recorded another quick pin for the Hounds at the :36 mark. Ryan Steffensmeier recorded a 2-0 decision over Mt. Pleasant's Brayden Ackles at 113 and Dalton Woolever had a 11-3 decision at 132.

Those were the only mat wins for the Hounds as the Tigers took 4 wins by forfeit, Kruse was pinned at 3:00 mark at 106, Settles was pinned at 160 at the :55 mark, Lozano was pinned at the 2:57 mark at 182 and Settles was pinned by Dalton Bass at 195.

The Hounds now get ready for the Fort Madison Invitational this Saturday at the Fort Madison High School gym with wrestling to start at 10 a.m.

For the Record

Lee County Sheriff's report

12/14/2016 - 9:50 a.m. - Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Tyrell Devon Smith, 23, of Washington St. in Keokuk, on a charge of disorderly conduct. Smith was jailed at the Lee County Correctional Center before being released after paying a fine.
12/14/2016 - 4:14 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff's deputies responded to an incident on Hwy 61 where a vehicle driven by Nancy Jean Wilcox, 64, struck a ladder that fell off a truck driven by Bryant M Doyle, 32 of Basco, Ill. No injuries were sustained.
All persons in these listings are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

FMHS teachers help staff study group

MAREK - Continued from Page 1

he credits about two months worth of test preparation in achieving the high score. The highest score you can get on the national exam is a 36.

"I came down here once a week for about 8 weeks," Marek said Tuesday as he helped prepare and serve food for Governor Terry Branstad's visit. Branstad visited for lunch as part of 99-county swing through the state. Branstad said each year he visits all 99 counties in the state.

"We focus on math, science and reading in different sessions," Marek said. "Then we get some tips on the best way to take the test and how to maximize our time in each session."

Several teachers, who were in attendance Tuesday as part of the reception for the Governor, were Brent Zirkel and Andrew Troxel. Both teachers spend time at

Beside the Point

Customer service is a lost, but critical part of business

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

In heavy contemplation as we decided to roll out this new crazy digital product, one of the things (among many seemingly insurmountable things) I told myself I was going to get done, was to write an opinion piece on customer service.

This new Pen City Current adventure is a non-traditional format for news gathering that is very fast paced. My wife Lee, (who's trying to sell this product to all of you...hint..hint..hint) came up with the slogan hyper-local, super-fresh. Fresh



VANDENBERG

Analyze DISCUSS DISAGREE Thought Opinion PUBLIC RESPECT Agree ARTICULATE

to me means fast and we want you to get it fast and on your media device.

The non-traditional means that I want to provide a vehicle of news to you that you may not be so used to. I want it to be a vehicle that sometimes I drive...and sometimes you do. Why? Because I think that's the right way to do business. Accuracy, proper representation and giving you kind of a blank tablet to message to the community, I think (and we'll soon see) works. If you can tell your story the way you want, while allowing us here to cover the hard news the way we have to, helps strike a balance in confidence and respect.

I was in the quick service restaurant business for almost 20 years and I can honestly tell you this...the customer is not always right. That's an adage that went out with the razor strap and Olde English. But one fact is for certain, every penny you make comes from the customer, so you better do everything you can to get it right.

But I personally have had instances in this town where my money went out of town because customer service training failed and reps at those companies did

See **SERVICE**, page 3



Pen City Current
P.O. Box 366
Fort Madison, IA

The Pen City Current and www.pencitycurrent.com website are products of Market Street Publishing, LLC. The Pen City Current is published Sunday through Friday mornings.

Lee Vandenberg,
Sales manager
319-371-4125
sales@pencitycurrent.com
Charles Vandenberg,
Editor
319-371-1670
editor@pencitycurrent.com

For the Record/Local News



Happy 10th Anniversary Mohrfeld Electric!

Mike Mohrfeld, center with plaque, is visited by the Fort Madison Chamber Ambassador's Club on Friday in honor of the company's 10th anniversary of doing business in Fort Madison.

Photo courtesy of Fort Madison Chamber of Commerce

Top-shelf customer service should be in all business plans

SERVICE - Continued from Page 2

not have the skill set to rectify the problem and keep that sale.

Many..and I mean MANY of you came into contact with me at KFC and it was a rare occasion that I couldn't rectify any situation. That doesn't mean there were some customers who's sole purpose was free food...it happens and continues to I'm sure, but if I even sensed that a customer was leaving the store unhappy I inserted myself into that situation and regularly solved that problem and

held onto that customer. Even if I had to chase them into the parking lot to fix the problem. That happened..it did and I kept them as customers.

Very rarely is it that a manager and customer can't come to a reconciliation point and end a problem with a smile and solution.

So where did it go? Where is that top-shelf customer service that we should be getting at all of our local businesses? Is it training...is it attitude? When I

held training sessions for our managers I always said you hire for attitude and train for skill. Customer service skills are marketable, in high demand and the first contact that can literally make or break a business. Some of you hit it out of the park...some have opportunities.

So as you move about our town this week. Pay attention when you are out spending some money and running your errands. Take a second look at the service you're getting. Is it top-shelf? If

it was, make sure you let someone know. Business owners and managers hear the bad stuff. Believe me, they do. But it's really nice when someone lets them know the good stuff, too. But if it was bad... maybe you let someone know that, too.

Either way shop locally, engage with your customer base and get to know their names and faces, thank them for their business...and read the Pen City Current.

But that's Beside the Point.

Both HTC teams on upswing

HTC - Continued from Page 1

Crusaders have had high energy practices this week and have a game plan.

"We've had a couple of really good practices, with a lot of high energy," Hellige said. "Our kids are focused. This week was a huge breakthrough. The kids have been a little quiet in practice, and this week we got some ideas and perspective. With this group, we haven't had that up until now. That's a sign the kids are fully engaged and ready to play. It's gonna be a fun game."

The Crusaders are paced by Connor Conrad, who in case you haven't heard, dropped 40 on Central Lee Tuesday night including 14-to-16 from the free throw line. The 40 was a new HTC school record. Conrad is averaging 20.8 points per game atop the Southeast Iowa Superconference-South. He's also tops on the team in rebounds at eight per game and assists at 13. Cory Hopper is 3rd in the conference at 18.0, five boards and 12 assists.

The Crusaders also lead the conference in 3-point field goals with 111 on the season.

Hellige said he's seen some tape of Fort Madison's win on Tuesday night and the team has to execute a plan because Danville is still a very skilled team.

"We feel like were ready to make a step forward and compete with top teams in the conference. Really hoping to be ready for that," he said.

I think we've got a good game plan to hopefully minimize their offense."

RANDOLPH PICKING UP STEAM

Head Coach Tony Johnson's varsity girls squad is coming off a 64-53 loss to Central Lee, but the 4th quarter looked like the Lady Crusaders had found the right gear.

Senior Ali Randolph, who's averaging 8 points per game and 7 boards led HTC with 20 points, her highest offensive production of the season.

Taylor Boeding knocked down 14 points and is averaging 13 points per game putting her in the top 10 in the conference.

"We need to take care of the ball and stay focused for 32 minutes, especially at Danville," Johnson said. "That's a tough place to win."

Danville is lead by junior Emma Jarrett who scores at a 9.7 points per game clip and two seniors Kathryn Luers and Lauren Finke both chip in with 7 per game.

HTC has been getting some help inside from sophomore Emily Box. Box is averaging five points per game but is third in the SIESC-South with 9 boards per game.

"We've been working hard on our putbacks, rebounds and free throws," Johnson said.

The Lady Crusaders are 3-4 on the season going into Friday's game

Both junior varsity boys and girls teams play starting at 4:45 with the varsity action starting at 6 p.m girls tip off followed by the boys.

TEXTING AND DRIVING MAKES GOOD PEOPLE LOOK BAD.

STOPTEXTSSTOPWRECKS.ORG

Ad Council NHTSA