



Pen City Current

Monday, Sept. 25 2017 | 8 pages | Volume 1 • Issue 229



Photos by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Mr. Pie and the Science guy

At top, Asst. Principal Pat Lamb gets a pie from Harrison Snaadt as a fundraiser, and below, Chris Brown receives an award for excellence from the National Academy of Future Scientists and Technologists at an assembly on Friday at the Fort Madison High School.

EMPTY NEST

BY Curt Swarm



All those double-yolk eggs might not be bringing the good luck I thought they would. I was backing the tractor into the garage to fill the fuel tank with diesel when I heard a crunch, bang and some popping noises. I stopped the tractor and turned around to see what I had run over. A sinking feeling swept through me. The roll bar on the tractor had caught on the garage door and about tore the whole thing down. Evidently I hadn't opened the manual door all the way. Well, duh!

My first inclination was to tell myself, "This really didn't happen." But it had. (Ginnie's so glad she didn't do this!) I tried to lift the door back in place, but the more I tried, the worse it got. I placed an emergency call to my contractor. He came right out with his crew. He looked the damage over and said, "Well, at least you didn't drive through the other end of the garage like another person who called me. I'll order you a new door." I'm glad my contractor has a sense of humor.

That night, I awoke at 2:00 a.m. I had forgotten to shut up the hen house before I went to bed. I grabbed a flashlight and headed out. The beam of light picked up the bad news. There was a dead chicken in front of the hen house. (That sinking feeling again.) Some critter had gotten it. I shown the light inside the hen house and looked at the mayhem. Boards were strewn every which way. The poor hens had had quite a night. They were bunched tightly on upper roosts, burring and buzzing about what they had been through. At least I only lost one hen. The poor thing.

My contractor was out the next morning replacing the garage door. I told him what had happened. He brought me out a live animal trap. Once a varmint gets the taste of chicken, it'll be back.

Ginnie and I had chicken wings for supper that night. I took the bones and put them in a bowl inside the live animal trap—it likes chicken, I'll give it chicken. I placed the trap in front of the hen house. Whatever

See **SWARM**, page 8

New Hawkeye tradition becoming a national hug for kids at Stead

I was trolling Facebook this morning and ran across a post from a friend who said she's crying at the end of the first quarter of every Hawkeye home game.

It's become a national cuddle every Saturday at Iowa home games when roughly 70,000 people turn and give a wave, and for sure some smiles, to the children and families peaking over the east side of Kinnick Stadium from the University of Iowa Stead Family



VANDEMBERG

Children's hospital.

Saturday night the fans added a twist (see video on www.pencitycurrent.com if you missed it- and one of the worst-best games I've ever seen the Hawkeyes play) and turned the flashlights on.

Fans waved like a star-studded black-n-gold blanket and cheered wildly for the children and families in the oval shaped steel wonder

of architecture.

I don't recall reading anything (and I read quite a bit) about that hospital being built so those kids could watch the football games perched above all else. But what a genius and compassionate decision.

She's right. We were there when the tradition started against Wyoming, and we were sitting in a spot where we could actually see the kids waving back

See **TRADITION**, page 8

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OBITUARIES

ELIZABETH KATHERINE WAGNER

Elizabeth Katherine Wagner, 94 years, of Fort Madison, Iowa died early Sunday morning, September 24, 2017 at her home. She was born April 5, 1923 in St. Paul, Iowa, a daughter of John and Katherine (Foecke) Merschbrock. Her mother died



WAGNER

when she was an infant. Her father remarried Louie Soppe, who raised Elizabeth as her daughter. On August 3, 1946, she married LeRoy E. Wagner.

Mrs. Wagner worked at the Rainbow Garden which later became known as the El Zarape restaurant for 37 years before retiring. She was of the Catholic Faith. She enjoyed bingo. She loved her family and had Sunday dinner for everyone every week!

Liz is survived by four sons: Robert (Phyllis) Wagner and Richard Wagner both of Donnellson, Iowa; Steven "Toby" (Tracy) Wagner, of Fort Madison; LeRoy Jr. (Angie) Wagner of Des Moines, Iowa; five daughters: Beverly (Bill) McGregor; Betty Sokolik; Karen (Bud) Huffman; Nancy Cangas; and Cindy (Clint) Hocker all of Fort Madison; one brother Louis (Carolyn) Merschbrock of Fort Madison; two sisters, Martha Taylor of LaHarpe, Illinois and Marylee Merschbrock of Fort Madison; 19 grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren, seven great great grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, including Louise, husband, one daughter Janet Pizana, and two sons, Dale and Ronald Wagner.

Visitation will be held 6:00 - 7:00 pm Wednesday, September 27, 2017 at the Barr Memorial Chapel, followed by a Christian Wake Service beginning at 7:00 pm Wednesday evening. Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 10:30 am Thursday, September 28, 2017 at Sacred Heart Church, Holy Family Parish, Fort Madison, with Rev. Mark Spring as Celebrant. Burial will be at Soldiers Circle, Oakland Cemetery, Fort Madison. A memorial has been established, contributions may be left at the Barr Memorial Chapel. Online condolences to the Wagner family may be made at the Barr Memorial Chapel website, www.barrmemorialchapel.com.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Hurtz?...She's killin' it

Erin Brown, of the Kensington, works her Hertz Donut getup on Friday as part of the group's Relay for Life fundraiser where \$20 got a dozen donuts from the Hertz Donut Co. out of Iowa City.

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Local News/For the Record



Photo courtesy of Dollhouse Dreams

Dollhouse Dreams holds Take Bake Childhood day Saturday

FORT MADISON - Dollhouse Dreams featured a Take Back Childhood Program from Melissa and Doug on Saturday. Owner Brenda Derr said the events were well attended with more than 16 local children coming in for treats, a free toy, and activities for children and parents alike. Then children were treated to free ice cream at the ice cream parlor. The program was from 11 to 3. Each child was given a notebook with instructions on how to play with the toy as well as different activities and a scavenger hunt throughout the store. Sabrina Fullhart was the official toy tester coordinator for the event.

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report
 09/20/17 - 4:59 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a hit-and-run in the 1300 block of Avenue E
 09/20/17 - 6:07 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 2100 block of Avenue G.
 09/20/17 - 7:17 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 800 block of Avenue F.
 09/21/17 - 1:59 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 2300 block of Avenue L.

09/21/17 - 2:56 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 1200 block of 37th Street.
 09/21/17 - 3:20 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 2700 block of Avenue M.
 09/21/17 - 11:19 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 1200 block of 33rd Street.
 09/21/17 - 11:58 p.m. - Fort Madison Police arrested Deborah Jo Johnson, 56, of Fort Madison on a warrant for failure to pay fine. She was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.

09/22/17 - 3:19 a.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 1200 block of 33rd Street.
Lee County Sheriff's report
 09/21/17 - 12:45 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Angela Jean Bryant, 25, of Mediapolis at the Henry County Jail in Cambridge, Ill., on a warrant for prohibited act by a registrant. She remained in custody. *Those listed above are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.*

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Pen City Current
 Founded in 2016



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FMHS boys 3rd, girls 6th at Anamosa Invite

Steffensmeier 2nd overall in boys race

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

ANAMOSA - The Fort Madison boys and girls varsity cross-country teams got a look at some different runners over the weekend and still put three runners in the top five.

Aaron Steffensmeier had one of his best finishes of the year taking second place in the 5K run with a 17:36 time just :21 off the leader Will Dehaan from Central DeWitt.

Dayne Cordray who has been finishing right on Steffensmeier's heels for most of the season, finished in 10th place with a 18:05 time, which had the Hounds in 2nd place through the top 10, but the next Hound to finish was Nathan Steffensmeier at 23rd with 19:06 mark to give the Hounds a third place finish overall

Scoring takes the top five finishers for each team so the last two to figure in the scoring were Elton Kruse at 26 with a 19:12 time and Noah Sissel at 33rd

finishing the run at 19:25. Owen Kruse finished in 35th place and Miguel Trejo finished in 48th place.

"Our boys continue to run very well. Aaron and Dayne have been very solid all season and the rest of the boys are following their lead. I have been impressed. Our girls are running well too and continue to to improve," said boys and girls head coach Brian Mendez.

Sierra Howardson took third in the 5K run with a 19:58, 40 secs off the pace. Brett Schneider came in fifth place with a 20:47 time, which when factoring in how cross-country meets are scored, put them in first place for about two minutes and 20 seconds.

The next FMHS runner to finish the event was Elizabeth Miller who took 31st place with a 23:10 time. Claire Mendez finished in 38th place with a 23:34 time. Ashlynn Haas rounded out the top five finishers for the Bloodhounds with a 49th place finish at 24:48 giving the Hounds a total of 126 points behind Monticello, Anamosa, Solon, Cascade and Central DeWitt.

Miho Shiria finished in 56th place and Lauren King took 58th to round out the places for the Hounds.



PCC File photo

Aaron Steffensmeier, front right, took 2nd place at the Anamosa Invitational on Saturday. Dayne Cordray (574) finished in 10th place as the Bloodhounds took 3rd place at the meet.

HTC 10th graders win at Pekin meet

FAIRFIELD - The Holy Trinity cross-country team competed in the first grade-specific event of the season Saturday at Fairfield Waterworks hosted by Pekin High School.

The boys had entrants in the 10th and 11th grade events winning the 10th grade event with 13 points anchored by Matt Hellige's 2nd place finish at 17:47 just five seconds off the leader's pace. Blake Crabtree to 2nd place at 19:06 and Jacob Mohrfeld finished the top scorers for HTC with a 7th place finish at 20:40 to seal with the win with 13 points. Wyatt Hellman took 15th place with a 23:39 time.

Josh Barr finished in 13th place in the 11th grade run with a 23:58 time.

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From the Front/Weather

The "Empty Nest" seems to be growing

SWARM - Continued from Page 1

kind of critter it was that had gotten my hen, by golly it was time for a little payback.

The next morning I anxiously checked the trap. Nothing. The second morning the same thing. On the forth morning, the morning of this writing, bingo. The trap yielded up a not-so-ferocious looking, gray-striped pussycat. I had suspected it might be a cat because (one) it had not carried the carcass off, and (two) I had seen a cat around the chicken house on a previous occasion.

Now, what to do with the cat? Is it feral? I will check with the neighbors, the closest one being a quarter of a mile away. If no one claims it I will turn it in to the county vet. Mystery solved, for the time being anyway.

For all the trauma and nighttime activity, the hens (I'm down to 11 now) haven't missed a beat on laying.

About every third egg is a double-yolker, and the eggs are getting nice sized. Ginnie and I have microwave eggs in-a-bowl just about every morning for breakfast, with bacon bits and cheese. Pretty soon we'll have enough eggs to start giving them away. Nice brown eggs. Ginnie will be very popular at work.

At our garage sale during Old Threshers, a lady said she had a couple of hens she didn't want. She was tired of them messing on her patio. Would I take them? Sure.

I don't know how they'll get along with my hens, but it might make for another story.

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 at Stead deserve the attention

TRADITION - Continued from Page 1

through the slightly tinted windows last night. It was emotional. Even more so for me, and I would assume, my wife.

Our daughter, who's attending the University now was seated in the student section. When the crowd waved it took me back to when she was in the Pediatric intensive care unit at U of I Hospitals and Clinics for four days after being diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. In the grand scheme of things she has a condition as far as I'm concerned. One that, because of the relentless pursuit of a cure of this disease that costs Americans \$12 billion annually, takes a toll on her body every day, but she

courageously goes about building her future with this beast lingering in the back of her mind.

Almost one year ago, she had a seizure at home and if it wasn't for a quick thinking friend who spent the night, who alerted mom and dad, things could have turned out worse than they did. But I witnessed what that disease is. Right then and there. The U of I medical team that trained her mom and I on what to do in those situations, in my mind, saved her life that day. But with what they do and groups like JDRE, Dexcom, OneTouch, and others, her life is literally saved every day.

We were at a restaurant on a day after an



appointment where our daughter had been poked and prodded for about 3 hours checking all her blood levels not even a year after her diagnosis. She had to take an injection of insulin before eating. She doesn't have to do that now thanks to advances in technology, a pump does it for her. But at that time, she discreetly did it under the table. A woman sitting across the way noticed the injection and came over and told us she was offended that our daughter would do that at the table.

I told the lady to go back to her table. My wife lost... her... mind. The ready-for-jail - like lost her mind.

Those of you that know Lee know her to be extremely mild-mannered. She exploded. We removed ourselves from that situation, but it's something that at the time, I thought, this is who we are? We're this self-consumed and cold that this could happen in Iowa?

The restaurant went above and beyond their role in the ordeal and several people came over and apologized. Two weeks ago when we attended the game and the crowd

waved and those children and families waved back, I thought about that moment. In a flash of cheers and smiles and tears, I thought of my daughter who was sitting over in the student section of the college that she's wanted to attend since she was a kid.

These children are battling for their lives up there with diseases and conditions more critical than Type 1 Diabetes, and one can't help but think that kind of human emotional energy is having some kind of impact. It's palpable. You can fill it on your skin. ESPN hangs out over the first quarter deciding not to make money with commercials, but to show America what's happening in Iowa.

National news networks have been carrying and commenting on the new tradition. On the way up to Iowa City Saturday afternoon, I suggested to my wife that Kinnick can never get away from it. She said they should never, ever stop doing it. It should happen forever. Short of moving that stadium or that hospital these kids get a wave of love and support about six times a year from 70,000 people.

5-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

MON 25 Sep



Light Rain
High- 88.7° F | Low - 70.0° F

TUE 26 Sep



Partly Cloudy
High- 88.3° F | Low - 69.5° F

WED 27 Sep



Clear Skies
High - 69.1° F | Low - 51.4° F

THU 28 Sep



Clear Skies
High - 73.6° F | Low - 60.0° F

FRI 29 Sep



Clear Skies
High- 71.9° F | Low - 53.2° F

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