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Sunday, May 5, 2019 | 8 pages | Volume 3 • Issue 105

Bonaparte pilot helps corral burglar



Photo by Ethan Lillard/PCC

See page 5

Bonaparte's Dave Buford took to the skies Wednesday to help local law enforcement officers capture a suspect in a string of burglaries in the Van Buren and Lee county areas.

"

I'm very grateful for law enforcement, but nobody handles your business like you do. I just wanted to think outside the box and use my resources around me to do what we needed to do, because it's all about nailing the bad guy."

> -Dave Buford, Bonaparte pilot

Bonaparte

rent subscription donation here. While Buford isn't a super hero, his actions did mirror those of one of DC Comics' most well known characters in Bruce Wayne, A.K.A, Batman. Much like Batman, Buford collected his intel from allies around the area, communicated with police and took to the sky. hend and prosecute people that are committing these crimes."

One of the craziest aspects of the story is not only the use of a plane by a citizen to help track the suspect, but the fact Buford just started flying two years ago.

When most men hit a midlife crisis, they buy a motorcycle. When Buford turned 50, he told his wife he was going to start taking flying lessons and buy an airplane.

"You've got a better view (than on a motorcycle)," Buford said. "When I turned 50 I thought, 'I'm going to fly a plane.' I talked to my wife and told her I'm going to buy a plane and start taking lessons and get my license. It just kind of snowballed from there."

Buford runs his own business, allowing him to collect the three airplanes, but it also may have been the reason he was the target of the theft.

Tuesday when Buford got back to his shop, he could tell somebody had been through one of his work trucks. That's when he discovered someone had stolen a handgun, ammo, a grade laser and other tools at a value of more than \$5,000. From there Buford called the Van Buren County Sheriffs office. Officers came to the scene of the crime to investigate and tried to find prints and establish a timeline. That's when the tire tracks that would later lead Buford to the suspect were discovered.

Sky ...helped recover more than \$5K of his own property

An cyc

in the

BY ETHAN LILLARD PEN CITY CURRENT

BONAPARTE – Area law enforcement officers have a new friend in the skies.

In what is sure to go down as one of the quirkiest crime stories of the year, a Bonaparte man took matters into his own hands to solve a string of burglaries that resulted in him helping recover more than \$5,000 of his own personal belongings, including a stolen firearm.

Owning three airplanes and knowing what kind of vehicle the suspect was driving, Dave Buford took to the air and assisted the Lee County Sheriff's department with the arrest of a 16-year-old juvenile suspect Wednesday.



DONALDSON

Buford, with a second aerial assist and ground support from friends and family, isolated the suspect and then called in

the calvary to clean it up.

"It was fantastic," Lee County Sheriff's Department Detective Chad Donaldson said.

"I couldn't have asked for better directions. Ultimately, it ended up with us being able to take him into custody without incident (and) without anyone getting hurt. I don't think the suspect had any idea that he was being surveilled from the air by this individual. It definitely helped bring this to a safe conclusion."

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"The citizens are sick and tired of having crimes perpetrated against them and they are willing to work with law enforcement," Donaldson said.

"We have citizens out there that are the victims of crimes that have resources and are willing to use those resources in efforts to help law enforcement appre-

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Obituaries/Lottery Numbers

OBITUARIES

DARLENE FAYE VANTIGER

Darlene Faye Vantiger, 89, of Denmark, Iowa passed away at 9:15 p.m. Thursday, May 2, 2019 at the Great River Klein Center in West Burlington, Iowa.



Born on January 6, 1930, the daughter of Darius Sr. and Ada (Cloud) Derr. On May 7, 1955, she married Paul Vantiger in Fort Madison, Iowa. He preceded her in death on July 16,1992. Survivors include two sons: Paul (Alice) Vantiger of Dallas City, Illinois and Alan (Jeanne) Vantiger of West Point, Iowa; four daughters: Lynn Chipman of Texas, Mary (Doug) Seberg of Burlington, Iowa, Julie (Jim) Steffen of Mount Pleasant, Iowa, and Patty (Todd Ross) Vandenberg of Denmark, Iowa; eleven grandchildren, fourteen

great-grandchildren, and two great-great grandchildren. Also surviving are several nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband: Paul, one son, and her brothers and sisters.

Darlene was a nurses aid at Sacred Heart Hospital and Fort Madison Community Hospital. She enjoyed gardening and the children in the OB department at the hospital where she worked. But most of all, she enjoyed her grandchildren.

Friends may call after 1:00 p.m. Monday, May 6, 2019 at Schmitz Funeral Home in West Point where family will receive friends from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

A funeral service will be held at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, May 7, 2019 at Schmitz Funeral Home in West Point with Father Dennis Hoffman officiating.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial has been established to the Denmark Fire & Rescue. Schmitz Funeral Home of West Point is assisting the family with arrangements.



OBITUARIES

RACHEL T. MARTINEZ

Rachel T. Martinez, 73, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away at 6:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 2, 2019 at the University of Iowa Hospitals in Iowa City. She was born on July 10, 1945 in Fort Madison, IA to Fidel Alvarez & Rosemary Mey-



ers and was adopted by Manuel & Hesiquia Mendez Salazar. She married Gabriel "Dutch" Martinez on June 9, 1962 in Fort Madison, IA. She worked at Sheaffer's, the Department of Human Services & the Fort Madison School System. She was a member of Sacred Heart Church and liked to donate to various Christian charities. She enjoyed spending time with family & friends, shopping

& traveling on the train to see her family. She was also a very good

MARTINEZ

cook. Rachel is survived by: her husband: Gabriel "Dutch" Martinez of Fort Madison, IA; 3-daughters: Stephanie Bergquist of Fort Madison, IA, Cindy (Chris) Wittry of Georgetown, KY & Ileen (Brett) Madara of Grand Rapids, MI; 1-son: Gabriel (Karin) Martinez of New Port News, VA; 8-grandchildren; numerous great grandchildren, nieces, nephews & cousins; 2-brothers: Brijido "Pip" Salazar of Indiana & Gregory Honts of Tipton, IA; 4-sisters: Angel Juarez of Chicago, IL, Lucy Prado of Fort Madison, IA, Concha & Irma both of Mexico. She was preceded in death by her parents & several brothers & sisters.

Friends may call after 2:00 p.m. on Monday, May 6, 2019 with the family to receive friends from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. with a rosary to immediately follow at 6:30 on Monday evening at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. The funeral mass will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 7, 2019 at Ss. Mary & Joseph Church with Rev. Joseph Phung officiating. Burial will be held at Sacred Heart Cemetery. A memorial has been established in Rachel's memory. Online condolences & a video tribute of Rachel's life may be viewed at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: 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.



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Fort Madison Flood of 2019









Aerial photos by Ethan Lillard, courtesy of Dave Buford

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Local News

FM Police Chief to retire May 31

City still looking at options during next search

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Fort Madison Police Chief Tim Sittig confirmed this morning to the Pen City Current, that he will be retiring as the city's chief of police effective May 31.

Sittig started with the police force in late 2016 and

suppose," Sittig said.



has 33 years in police work in Iowa and Missouri and more than two decades as a chief, assistant chief and instructor. "I haven't been thinking about it for years, but for the last couple months, I

SITTIG

"I started police work in 1986, so I've

got 33 years plus a couple months in, with 10 years as a chief and 9 or 10 years as an assistant chief. When the door closes behind me, I'm going to spend some time with the granddaughter and then see what comes up."

Sittig also had a stint teaching criminal justice classes at Des Moines Area Community College. He said depending on logistics and how retirement plays out, he may look at going back to teaching.

Sittig said he doesn't know what the city's transition will be.

"I've got to the point where I've got my time set and I'm working through that process and that would be question for David," he said.

City Manager David Varley said the decision was not a complete surprise.

"He's been kicking around the idea for a while," Varley said. "He's got other things he's been thinking about doing so it's not a complete surprise to me."

Varley said he's looking at several options and agencies for interim assistance, including possibly using the Lee County Sheriff's Department to fill in administratively while the city conducts a search.

Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weber wished Sittig the best in his retirement said his department would be willing to help if needed.

"I've enjoyed the friendship I've developed with Tim and I wish him all the best," Weber said. "Going forward, we're here to help any agency in the county that looks to us."

Varley said the search for a replacement will begin shortly.

"I'm still looking at the options about what to do in the interim. We'll start fairly soon looking for a new police chief. It wont' be in the next week or anything, but within the month will begin the process," Varley said.

"There may be a temporary assignment to hold us over until we get a new police chief in place. Obviously it takes three, four, five months sometimes to find somebody and do that search. But we'll do the best we can as fast as we can."

He said he's also considering on whether or not he will do the search or if the city will hire a company.

"We don't have a plan finalized yet and we'll let that out as soon as we have a final decision on that," he said.

In a release this morning from Varley's office, he wrote the city thanked Sittig for his service.

"The City thanks Chief Sittig for the service he has provided to the Police Department and the Fort Madison community. We wish him the best in his retirement and future endeavors."

Mayor Brad Randolph also expressed thanks to Sittig and said Varley will be entrusted to keep the department running smoothly. "I have an understanding the chief has elected to retire from the department and I haven't had a chance to go over the options with City Manager," Randolph said this morning.

"Until I have a chance to do that, I'm going to count on him to make sure the operations in the department run as smoothly as if the chief wasn't leaving. We wish Tim the best in his retirement and I'm looking forward to new possibilities with the department."

City considers bumping sewer rates again

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – A proposal in front of the Fort Madison City Council could bump city sewer rates by 13% starting in June.

At Tuesday's regular City Council meeting, the council will consider a recommendation from Public Works Director Larry Driscoll to boost sewer rates by .35/1,000 gallons.

The increase is applied to nonmonitored customers, as well as monitored customers' minimum monthly charge for nonmetered contributions. The Basic Service charge per bill would also go up by \$4.50 per month.

According to sample increase put together by Driscoll, on an average 4,500 gallon monthly consumer, the monthly bill would increase from \$45.98 per month to \$52.05 per month, an increase of \$6.07 per month or 13.2%.

Driscoll wrote in a memo for the upcoming meeting

See SEWER, page 8

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Sports

Boys take three titles at conference run

Schneider, Hellige, 4x400 tops in the Southeast

BY ETHAN LILLARD PCC Sports

FAIRFIELD – Fort Madison's team scores might have been towards the bottom of the standings by the end of



the Southeast Conference track meet yesterday at Fairfield High School, but multiple athletes collected gold for the Bloodhounds, bringing conference titles to their school.

SCHNEIDER

Fort Madison's boys finished fourth out of the five teams on the boys side with 65 points, while the girls finished fifth out of the five teams on the girls side with 28 total points.



Matt Hellige and Quentin Schneider had the best individual finishes on the day, with Helige taking first in the 3200-meter run with a time of 9:51.90, and Schneider taking gold for the Hounds in the

HELLIGE

400-meter hurdles with a time of 56.44. Combined, Hellige and Schneider's firstplace finishes contributed for 16 of the Hounds total 65 points total on the day.

Fort Madison's 4×400-meter relay team of Brock Califf, Garrett Hannum, Andrew Schaeffer and Schneider placed first with a time of 3:34.19 for eight team points. With the eight points added on, nearly 37 percent of the Bloodhounds points Thursday came from gold medal

finishes.

Hellige and Schneider weren't done after collecting their gold, adding in three more top finishes. Hellige chipped in another six points towards the team total with a second-place finish in the 1600-meter run with a time of 4:41.35, while Schneider placed third in the 100-meter dash and third in the 400-meter dash.

The Bloodhounds 4×200 relay team of Califf, Michael Mosena, Sheymouhr Redd-Donald and Schaeffer also took home a top three finish, placed second with a time of 1:37.48. Califf was part of another relay team that took a top three finish, as he teamed with Tate Johnson, Ross Quentin and Matthew Meierotto for third in the distance medley with a time of 4:03.28.

Ethan Deacon led the way in the field events for Fort Madison, placing fourth in the shot put with a toss of 41-11, and fourth in the discus with a throw of 123-02.

Girls

Katie Dennis, Reyna Lampe, the distance medley team and the 4×100 -meter relay team owned the top finishes for Fort Madison's girls, with the 4×100 team placing second and the rest collecting third-place finishes.

Reyna Lampe, Taylor Barnes, Olivia Williams and Aleaya Klesner finished the 4×100-meter relay in 1:15.33 for second. Lampe, Williams, Barnes and



Courtesy photo

Garrett Hannum, Quentin Schneider, Andrew Schaeffer, and Brock Califf hold the gold baton after finishing first in the 4x400 meter relay at Thursday's Southeast Conference track meet in Fairfield.

Raquel Schneider combined in the distance medley for a third-place finish with a time of 4:56.54.

Dennis placed third in the 1500-meter run with a time of 5:43.50 for four points and fifth in the 400-meter dash with a time of 1:12.83. Lampe finished third in the 100-meter hurdles with a time of 17.61. Schneider placed fourth in the 400-meter hurdles with a time of 1:14.11, while Klesner finished right behind in fifth in 1:20.32.

When it came to long distance, Claire Hellman led the way with a fourth-place finish in the 3000-meter-run with a time of 12:55.16. Dennis took sixth in the 3000 with a time of 13:20.92.

Schneider finished sixth as well in the 100-meter hurdles with a time of 19.67. Olivia Koechle also had a sixth-place finish in the 200-meter dash with a time

Raquel Schneider combined in the of 31.83.

Fort Madison's 4×400-meter relay team of Schneider, Koechle, Lauren King and Kylee Cashman combined

King and Kylee Cashman combined for a fourth-place finish in the 4×400-meter relay with a time of 5:06.58. Williams, Klesner, Barnes and Lampe

finished fourth in the 800-sprint medley with a time of 2:05.12. The same combo minus Schneider in place of Klesner took third in the distance medley with a time of 4:56.54.

When it came to field events for the girls, Cashman collected a sixth-place finish in the shot put with a throw of 30-05.50, while Dalyn Wondra took sixth in the discus with a toss of 78-01.

This was the final tune up for both the boys and girls, as both squads head to Mount Pleasant Thursday for the state qualifying meet.

MP upends Bloodhounds BY ETHAN LILLARD PCC SPORTS

MT. PLEASANT - Fort Madison's boys soccer team was ready for what was supposed to be a big week when it came to conference play.

Although the weather conditions may not have been as favorable as one would hope for, the Bloodhounds were able to at least get in one of the conference games, taking on Mount Pleasant Thursday.

Fort Madison's AJ Nolting put he first goal across in the 16th minute coming off an assist from Austin Sexton and Brody Rung. The score would be the Hounds' last, as Mount Pleasant scored 10 minutes later in the first half,

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sending the game into the half tied at one.

In the 17th minute of the second half, Mount Pleasant put the game away with another goal for the 2-1 win.

Javier Trejo collected four saves for Fort Madison. The Bloodhounds drop to 6-6, 4-2 on the season with their next contest Monday May 6 at Washington High School.

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From the Front/Weather

Persistence and resources led to arrest of juvenile

MAVERICK - Continued from Page 1

"We drove around my shop and that's when we saw the tracks," Buford said. "We saw the tracks were 53 inches center to center, we could tell it was a smaller vehicle ... when they pulled away and the two tracks went to four, we could see one of the paths was really narrow because of a spare tire/donut. As it tracked around, we could tell it was on the rear.

"At that point in time we knew somewhat what we were dealing with. I rallied the troops and had about eight people out driving around and looking for a car/ little truck with a donut on it."

Buford put out a \$1,000 bounty for anyone that tracked down the suspect.

"I got a call from a neighbor that's a friend of ours," he said. "(My neighbor) said, 'I think I've got your guy.' He said the guy was at his place and was going through his garage. The homeowner heard a noise and went out there and asked what he was doing."

The suspect claimed he was at the residence because



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2nd Wednesday of every month at 2pm in our dining room he had a flat tire and was looking for a jack. Not wanting to spook the suspect, Buford's friend obliged and helped put another donut on, keeping the vehicle more identifiable. Buford's neighbor called him back and let him know the situation.

Buford called the police to provide them with an update and a description of the suspect. At that point they had a good feeling of who it was. The following day Buford received a picture message from a friend. His friend noticed that in the photo he saw, the gun and clips looked a lot like Buford's.

That's when Buford again contacted the Van Buren Sheriff's department and also reached out to the Lee County Sheriffs office as well. Knowing there was a chance the suspect may try to ditch or get money from the stolen goods, Buford also went to pawn shops and gave out the list of items stolen.

With a lead on who the suspect was, authorities went to a nearby family members' home, but had no success.

That's when Buford decided he was going to take matters into his own hands. After the police left the family members' home, the suspect later returned.

"I flew down and spotted the car at the residence that we had suspected him to be at," Buford said. "I circled around and called Chad. Then the car moved around and he ended up getting away."

Not to be deterred from his mission, Buford called his nephew, Tyler Buford, for an extra set of eyes in the sky.

"We went grid flying, just trying to cover everywhere, and we spotted him again," Buford said.

"I dropped down to get a good look at the car to make sure it was the right one, sure enough it was. I called Chad back again and we kept following him and circling until the police could get there."

The vehicle ended up pulling into a different residence, but with Buford still on his tail, the police were able to track down the suspect and bring him into

5-DAY WEATHER FORECASTSUN 05 May Overcast High- 69.4° F | Low - 55.5° F

MON 06 May -

Overcast High– 69.6° F | Low – 54.6° F

TUE 07 May



High– 66.9° F | Low – 57.4° F

WED 08 May -

custody.

"We watched them take him down," Buford said with a grin. "Then Chad called me and said it was him and that my gun was in the car."

After the arrest, Donaldson was asked if he had ever seen anything like this in his nearly 20 years in law enforcement.

"Never," he said. "Obviously we've had citizen assistance, (but Buford) was very good at what he did. Obviously he did some things that are just a little different than what we do. We work under the confines of the laws and things of that nature, so we had to reign him in just a little bit because we have to think of safety concerns and things of that nature."

With Buford putting in so much time and effort and proving to have above average investigation skills, Donaldson was asked about the potential of Buford joining the task force.

"Mr. Buford is definitely one of those individuals with some training and some direction, he'd be excellent doing the type of job we do," Donaldson said. Buford didn't disagree.

"I'd like to assist law enforcement," he said. "If the law enforcement needs assistance, I'd be more than happy to help."

Now when tri-state area riffraff think about committing a crime, maybe next time they will look to the sky and see a symbol in the clouds, or whatever Buford decides his superhero logo should be.

"I'm very grateful for law enforcement, but nobody handles your business like you do," he said. "I just wanted to think outside the box and use my resources around me to do what we needed to do because it's all about nailing the bad guy."

State-mandated sewer work at root of bump

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that the increase would help pay for Combined Sewer Separation projects mandated by the state.

"We have completed about 50% of the CSO projects and we are still sticking with the final completion date, which is scheduled for 2027," Driscoll wrote. "In order to complete these mandated projects, as well as continue with the ongoing maintenance and upkeep projects required by a sewer system, a rate increase is necessary."

The city's last sewer rate increase study was completed in 2012 with a fairly large increase and then another smaller increase in 2016.

The resolution in front of the council would also carry an annual 2% increase in the rate beginning in 2020. Any late paymenets would subject to a 10% late fee.

In a related issue, the council will also vote on transferring \$113,000 in this budget and in the next fiscal year budget from city water department maintenance and operations funds to the city's general fund to reimburse the general fund for a booster station built on Bluff Road.





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