



# Pen City Current

Thursday, Oct. 25, 2018 | 9 pages | Volume 2 • Issue 242

## Keokuk PD makes KPLAY theft, forgery arrest

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG  
PCC EDITOR

KEOKUK - A Keokuk man has been arrested in connection with the misuse of funds and forgery associated with the non-profit KPLAY organization.

On Wednesday Keokuk Police Chief Dave Hinton released the arrest of Stephen Tyler McGhghy of rural Keokuk, age 36, at 10:15 a.m. He was charged with 2nd-degree theft and four counts of forgery.

"On October 24th, 2018, on a warrant for Theft 2nd Degree and, Four Counts of Forgery. The arrest is the result of an investigation into the misappropriation of



MCGHGHY

money donated to a local non-profit organization, which McGhghy was serving as the president of. The investigation was conducted by the Keokuk Police Department and the Lee County Attorney's Office," the release indicated.

Hinton said the forgery instruments were checks, but wouldn't elaborate on the value assessed to the alleged thefts, as the case is still being investigated

According to Lee County Attorney Ross Braden, McGhghy is facing five class D felonies, with each carrying a maximum five-year prison sentence, if convicted.

In addition to the 25 years potential prison penalty, Ross said the felonies also could carry restitution and fines of anywhere between \$750 and \$7,500 per felony. Theft of property valued at \$1,000 to \$10,000 is considered 2nd-degree theft in the state of Iowa. No hearing dates have been set.

McGhghy was taken to the Lee County Jail where he was booked and then bonded out on a \$5,000 cash bond.

KPLAY was the group responsible for helping bring Bentley's Playground to the city's Tolmie Park.

A criminal charge is merely an accusation and a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

### Minor injuries

Fort Madison police and rescue personnel investigate a two-vehicle accident at the intersection of Avenue H and 18th Street Wednesday afternoon. One person was taken to Fort Madison Community Hospital for observation. No other injuries were reported at the scene.

## Alliant acquires freight management firm

CEDAR RAPIDS – October 22, 2018 – Alliant Energy Transportation (AET), a wholly owned subsidiary of Alliant Energy Corp., has entered into a purchase agreement with Cedar Rapids-based, Hybrid Transit Systems.

Headquartered in Cedar Rapids, AET currently operates the Cedar Rapids

and Iowa City Railway, and IEI Barge Services in East Dubuque, Ill. The acquisition of Hybrid adds freight- management expertise to its portfolio.

"We are proud to add Hybrid's expanded services and experienced professionals to our team. By combining our considerable resources, we can

create a more competitive organization with custom supply chain solutions for our shippers," said Kevin Burke, President – Alliant Energy Transportation.

Hybrid President and CEO, John Miller explains how the opportunity is a smart strategy for both companies. "With our combined portfolio of

products and services we're fueled for growth with the financial strength to better provide long-lasting, seamless solutions. We look forward to this partnership."

No Alliant Energy utility customer dollars are being used for this sale. The purchase is wholly through a non-regulated subsidiary.



### Beside The Point

Chuck Vandenberg,  
Pen City Current - Editor

## The old county shed story keeps boppin' along

Lee County Supervisor Gary Folluo rubbed his head briskly in frustration at Tuesday's board meeting as the county leaders worked through an issue about a maintenance shed that sits between two properties in Argyle.

The building was in disrepair about a month ago, but in the last three weeks, county maintenance officials have made repairs including boarding up a hole on one side of the building and rehangng a door that had fallen off.

Supervisors directed County Engineer Ernie Steffensmeier, who also oversees the maintenance department, to get some figures on what it would cost to build a new facility along Ambrosia Lane east of Argyle. Estimates are anywhere from \$7,000, according to property owner Ron Burchett, to more than \$10,000 by Steffensmeier to "re-tin" the building.

So that's where we're at. But how did we get here?

Ron Burchett and his wife are interested in the property and they've indicated so at several meetings. And this

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# Obituaries/Local News

## LCHD offers lead screenings for children

Submitted article

LEE COUNTY - Many homes built prior to 1978 have lead paint, but the majority of homes built before 1960 have an even greater chance of having lead paint on or in them. A U.S. Census established that 51% of the homes in Iowa were built before 1960; ranking Iowa 6th in the nation. Forty-one percent (41%) of the homes in Lee County were built before 1950. Lead can be present on any painted surface but is most often found on windows, trim, door railings, columns, porches and outside walls. Surfaces that have been repainted often have lead paint underneath.

Most children are poisoned by invisible lead dust that is released when the paint is peeling, damaged or disturbed. The dust settles on floors and other surfaces. From there, it can easily get on children's hands and toys and into their mouths. Children can also be poisoned by playing in bare soil which can contain lead from paint that has peeled from the outside walls, past use of leaded gasoline and other outside sources. Scraping, sanding or otherwise disturbing the surfaces can release large amounts of toxic lead dust. It is very important to keep the dust build up to a minimum by wetting the surface before sanding or scraping, and cleaning up daily after working in an area.

The test is simple, often just a finger stick, quick and available in a doctor's office or clinics associated with Lee County Health Department. Iowa has a law that all children must be tested before entering kindergarten but annual testing beginning at one year of age is strongly encouraged rather than waiting until 5 years of age. If a child would be poisoned the harmful effects could be greatly reduced early on with the proper diet and reducing the hazard.

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### OBITUARIES

## JUSTIN JACOBSMEIER

Justin Jacobsmeier, 75, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 23, 2018 at the Montrose Health Center. He was born on April 14, 1943 in Houghton, IA to William & Loretta Hellweg Jacobsmeier.

Justin is survived by: 1-daughter: Debbie Jacobsmeier of Solon, IA; 4-sisters: Luanne (Jim) Pruett of Fort Madison, IA, Laura Hyatt of Fort Madison, IA, Lillian (Stanley) Helling of Fort Madison, IA & Lorene (Ron) Ellerhoff of Middletown, IA; 2-brothers: Wendell Jacobsmeier of Fort Madison, IA & Martin (Donna) Jacobsmeier of Burlington, IA. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. No services are planned.

## Lead paint home safety tips

To make your home a healthy home-do the following:

- Keep the paint in good shape (check often, watch for water damage that can make paint peel)
- Work safely with lead paint (wet the surface before scraping, avoid creating dust or paint chips, seal off the work area, cover furniture or remove from the area, wash floors and walls with soap and water)
- Keep home free of dust (clean window sills and floor often, have children wash hands before eating and after playing outside)
- Watch where your children play (don't let them play in bare soil, look for areas with grass or safe coverings)
- Test your child (0-6 years old).

Call your doctor or Lee County Health Department at 319-372-5225 for more information.

### OBITUARIES

## GERTRUDE M. KRUSE

Gertrude M. Kruse, 90, of Salem, Iowa, passed away at 3:32 a.m. Wednesday, October 24, 2018, at her home.

Born May 6, 1928 in Fort Madison, Iowa, the daughter of George and Anna (Stuekerjuergen) Mermert. On May 2, 1953, she married LeRoy Kruse. He preceded her in death on September 13, 2015.



KRUSE

Survivors include her five children: Sandy (Gary) Moeller of Des Moines, Iowa; Sherry (Jerry) Kramer of Dallas, Texas, Debra Kruse-Hart of Dallas, Texas, Randy (Angie) Kruse of Salem, Iowa and Diane (Harry) Daugherty of Marion, Iowa; eight grandchildren: Brad, Heidi, Sean, Arielle, Charles, Sheldon, Jeromy and Christopher;

seven great grandchildren; two sisters: Rosie Ping of West Point, Iowa and Ceil Kruse of Donnellson, Iowa. Also surviving are several nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband: LeRoy; three sisters: Martha, Ruth and Marietta and two brothers: Joe and Barney.

Gertrude was a member of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Houghton where she sang in the choir and was a member of the Altar and Rosary Society. She was former member of St. Ann's Daughters of Isabella. Gertrude worked at Sheaffer Pen Co. in Fort Madison and Mt. Pleasant Wal-Mart. She enjoyed dancing, sewing, talking to others, music, cooking, baking, the family farm and spending time with her grandchildren.

Friends may call after 2:30 p.m. Friday, October 26, 2018, at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Houghton where family will receive friends from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. that evening. A Parish Rosary will be recited at 3:00 p.m. and a Christian Wake Service will be held at 6:30 p.m. at the church.

The Mass of Christian Burial will be at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, October 27, 2018, at St. John's Catholic Church in Houghton with Father Bruce DeRamme-laere as celebrant.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial has been established in her memory for the Holy Trinity Catholic Schools Music Boosters.

Schmitz Funeral Home of West Point is assisting the family with arrangements.

On-line condolences to the family may be made at [www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com](http://www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com).



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Founded in 2016



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## GET YOUR FLU SHOT

### Lee County Health Department 2018 Flu Clinic Schedule:

- 10/25** LCHD  
(#3 John Bennett Drive)  
Ft. Madison  
Noon-5:30pm
- 11/1** McAleer Hall  
Fort Madison  
10:00am-2:00pm

**Please bring Medicare  
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**Private Pay cost \$25**

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# Current-Lee/Local News

## CURRENT-LEE

### LCHD offering October flu clinics

Lee County Health Department will be holding Flu Clinics throughout the month of October at various locations throughout Lee County. Flu clinics are open to the public, and offered to anyone ages 6 months or older. Medicare Part B, except Humana Gold choice, will be accepted for billing Medicare. Bring your Medicare card to the clinic. Flu vaccines for people without Medicare Part B will be \$25.

Complete Flu Clinic Schedule: Oct. 25, noon – 5:30 pm – Lee County Health Department, #3 John Bennett Dr., Fort Madison, IA. Visit Lee County Health Department's website here to learn more: <http://www.leecountyhd.org/index.php/flu-schedule/>.

### Elk's Laughfest Friday

It's a Halloween Laughfest at the Fort Madison Elks this Friday starting at 5:00pm. Featuring two national Comedians and Tacos and Enchiladas. See flyer below for more details. Call 319-372-3724 to reserve your ticket or VIP table. Learn more here: <https://www.facebook.com/FortMadisonElksLodge/>.

### YMCA's Trunk or Treat

This event had more than 600 children through the parking lot of the YMCA in 2017 and it's back for another year on Friday, October 26 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Vehicles can arrive at 5 p.m. for decorating. There is no charge for the event and businesses can decorate their car and handout candy as little goblins walk through the parking lot to receive goodies purchased by the businesses. Registration forms can be picked up at the YMCA and need to be returned by Friday, Oct. 19.

### Witches Walk

Fort Madison's Main Street will be hosting a Witches Walk October 26th from 5

Pen City Current will list your event in this highly visible CURRENT-LEE section in increments of 25 words for \$15. Add a photo for \$5. Non-profit organizations are eligible for the reduced rate of \$10 per 25 words and \$3 per photo. To place your listing, click here or call Lee at (319)371.4125.

## CURRENT-LEE

to 7 p.m. in downtown Fort Madison. For more information contact the Partner's offices at 319-372-5471. Wear your witches costume and shop downtown.

### Ghost Hunt

The Fort Madison Partners are sponsoring a Ghost Hunt on Oct. 26-27 with Iowa Paranormal conducting investigations at some of the most haunted homes west of the Mississippi. For more information or tickets contact the Partners office at 319-372-5471.

### PORT Boo-Athlon

The Fort Madison PORT Trail committee will be holding it's annual Boo-Athlon on Saturday, Oct. 27 at the Baxter Sports Complex. A 5K Walk/Run, a 10-mile bike ride and Duathlon will start at 9 a.m. Registration forms can be found online at [www.fortmadison-ia.com](http://www.fortmadison-ia.com) under the Community tab/PORT; on the PORT of Fort Madison Facebook page or by calling Kathy Benda at 319-470-7848 and are due by Oct. 13 to guarantee a t-shirt.

### Boo-ti-ful Pumpkin Walk

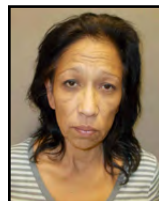
The city of Nauvoo is again coming alive in the Halloween Spirit hosting its annual Pumpkin Walk on Saturday, October 27, 2018, 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.. This year's event will again feature hundreds of hand-carved jack-o'-lanterns that will be lit and displayed along Mulholland Street.

### Key Club Halloween Carnival

The annual Fort Madison High School Key Club and Fort Madison Kiwanis Halloween Carnival will be held on Oct. 27 from noon to 2 p.m. at the high school with games, costume contests and prizes.

## FM woman nabbed on meth charges

FORT MADISON - The Lee County Narcotics Task Force reports the arrest of a Fort Madison, Iowa woman on a felony drug charge.



JONES

Tanya A. Jones, 55, of Fort Madison, Iowa was arrested on October 22nd, 2018 at her residence on a felony drug warrant. Jones is charged with delivery of more than five grams of methamphetamine, within 1000 Feet of a Park, class B felonies with an enhancement. If convicted, Jones faces up to 30 years in a state correctional facility.

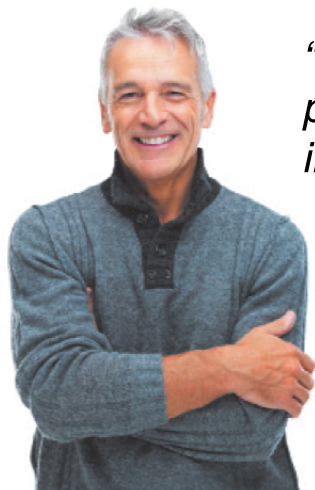
The arrest of Jones stems from an investigation by the Lee County Narcotics Task Force into allegations that she was involved in the distribution of illegal drugs in the Lee County area.

The Lee County Attorney's Office, Lee County Sheriff's Office, Iowa Division of Narcotics Enforcement, and the Fort Madison Police Department assisted the Lee County Narcotics Task Force in this investigation.

The defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

The Lee County Narcotics Task Force is funded in part by the U.S. Department of Justice and the funds administered by the Iowa Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy.

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Game	Draw Days	Sales Cutoff Time	Approx. Drawing Time
Lucky for Life®	Mon & Thu	8:30 pm	9:38 pm
Mega Millions®	Tues & Fri	8:59 pm	10:00 pm
Powerball®	Wed & Sat	8:59 pm	9:59 pm
Lotto America™	Wed & Sat	8:59 pm	10:00 pm
Pick 3 - Midday	Daily	Noon	12:20 pm
Pick 3 - Evening	Daily	9:40 pm	10:00 pm
Pick 4 - Midday	Daily	Noon	12:20 pm
Pick 4 - Evening	Daily	9:40 pm	10:00 pm



**10/23**  
5 28 62 65 70  
Mega Ball: 5  
Megaplier: 3



**10/23 MID-DAY**  
7 0 7  
**10/23 EVENING**  
7 0 6



**10/23 MID-DAY**  
7 0 4 6  
**10/23 EVENING**  
1 9 0 0

Pen City Current encourages you to play responsibly.



## Sports/Weather

# Hellige's cross country success comes in different size

*HTC junior wants to build on 2017 performance at Fort Dodge's Kennedy Park*

**BY CHUCK VANDENBERG**  
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - He's not your prototypical cross-country runner. At least not someone his size.

HTC junior Matt Hellige will be running Saturday in the Class 1A state cross-country meet on Lakeside Municipal Golf Course at Kennedy Park in Fort Dodge. It's Hellige's second straight year at the meet after missing by two places and less than 10 seconds in his freshman year.

Hellige, who stands at 6'2" and weighs right around 185 lbs., looks like a heavy runner, but is fleet of foot as he's won several events this year and typically finished in the top 5 in most district events this year. Hellige took 11th at the district qualifier at Iowa City Regina on Thursday.

Runners who have had Hellige's kind of success are



Photos by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

HTC's Matt Hellige (1053) comes down the final chute in the 2017 State Cross-Country meet on Oct. 28 last year. Hellige will return to try and improve on his 90th place finish this Saturday in Fort Dodge. Below left, Hellige does stretching drills after a mile run as part of Wednesday's workout.

typically smaller and thinner and run with quicker steps. Hellige says his height lets him extend his stride without having to take as many steps, but carries extra muscle mass for the bigger frame.

"Well, like how a bigger body would help you is if you're taller you can stride out farther and if you're shorter it's faster steps. Being taller means longer strides," he said Wednesday afternoon before a 1-mile warmup. After the warm-up, Hellige did stretch drills and then ran an alternating quick mile, slow mile 4-mile run from HTC to 48th Avenue along the Bluff and back.

He said he's looking to build on last year's 90th place finish. He ran the course, which is mapped out to be the same course as 2017, in 18:04.4.

"I just wanna improve on my time and improve where I placed from last year. I've definitely tried to eat healthier and ran a couple more miles each week

compared to last year in hopes of doing better this year," Hellige said.

"We did a little more weight lifting, especially in the summer. Every other day I would go work out in a gym in Nauvoo. I wanted to develop the legs a little more. I didn't want to necessarily get bigger, but become a stronger runner."

Head Coach Matt Mohrfeld said Hellige has been dedicated in the off-season to getting better. He said Hellige's kick in the last quarter mile this year has improved.

"He'll drop under 4:45 in the last quarter mile this year, which is just savage and about a minute faster than the rest of our team's times," Mohrfeld said.

"When you ask about Matt's training, he's a little

See **STATE**, page 7

### 5-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

**THU 25 Oct** \_\_\_\_\_

Light Rain  
High- 49.3° F | Low - 42.2° F

**FRI 26 Oct** \_\_\_\_\_

Light Rain  
High- 46.8° F | Low - 39.9° F

**SAT 27 Oct** \_\_\_\_\_

Light Rain  
High- 51.8° F | Low - 38.6° F

**SUN 28 Oct** \_\_\_\_\_

Light Rain  
High- 53.9° F | Low - 40.6° F

**MON 29 Oct** \_\_\_\_\_

Clear Skies  
High- 62.7° F | Low - 60.7° F

[OpenWeatherMap](http://OpenWeatherMap)

fly-ins welcome



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8:00am - 5:00pm





## Sports/Classifieds

# Hellige focusing on running his best race at state

**STATE** - Continued from Page 5

humble when it comes to that. What he's done different is he's been a machine. Running training is about a plan and he's stuck to his plan and executed it. He's trained smarter and more mature. If it's a five-mile easy, it's a five-mile easy. If it's one mile repeats at 6:55, he hits his numbers and sticks to the plan."

Mohrfeld said Hellige's execution during races has been better than previous years.

"His strategic execution in the races has been better than before. He knows what his capacity is and sticks to that. He isn't sucked into the kid who goes out quick, and not sucked in by the group that lags back. So maturity has helped him."

Hellige benefited from seeing some of the fastest kids in the state at the Iowa City districts. His time at districts was a half second faster than his 2017 state time, but like any outdoor sporting event, there are variables such as surface and weather conditions that can impact times.

Strictly looking at times and not course set up, condition, exact length and other variables, Hellige's qualifying time would have been good enough for a top five finish at the qualifiers in Guthrie Center and Cedar Rapids Kennedy. Marshalltown's 1A qualifier had 24 runners in under 18 minutes with Madrid's Sean McDermott, pulling the best time in the state at 16:32.8 a full 10 seconds in front of the second place runner. Regina had the second toughest district with 10 qualifiers running in under 18 minutes with the top runner, Hunter Rickels of Calamus-Wheatland, running a 17:10.9. The final West Sioux qualifier had nine runners in under 18 minutes. Gehlen Catholic's Will Roder had the best time there at 17:04.45.

Looking just at times, Hellige had the 54th best time

in the state on Thursday, but Mohrfeld said track-to-track numbers are inherently skewed.

"As I say, as long as they run up to their ability and give it their best, that will be their best race. And no matter what, I'm always proud of them," he said.

"Our district is as tough as I remember it being. Pekin kids are fast and they were third and fourth to the Cal-Wheatland kids. You got a look there at some kids who are going to take some positions at state. Even though there will be more people running, the competition will not be any greater. If you look at our district qualifier, that pack didn't break until late and he was right there battling in that pack."

Each district takes the top 15 runners, plus all the runners from the schools that qualify as a team that didn't qualify individually, are invited to run at the state meet. Last year there were 149 runners in Class 1A.

Hellige said he's done a few things with nutrition and ran some different training routes, but for the most part he's just focusing on his stride. Mohrfeld said he's become more fluid in his pace and mechanics are more in line.

"His style has gotten more fluid. His body isn't as rigid and he's firing the knee nice which drops the foot under him instead of reaching out forward. When I watch him go around the track and look at the forms, man, his form is consistent and his endurance backs his form, if that makes sense."

Hellige said he runs to exhaustion at each race, but runs through the shoot and then recovers.

"Every race is so exhausting. Obviously I try as hard as I can and definitely get exhausted, but I think I recover very quickly," he said.

This is also the first year the runners are allowed to wear GPS training watches on the course. Hellige



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

HTC's Matt Hellige gets in a warm up mile before hitting the pavement on a four mile alternating quick, slow workout Wednesday.

said he won't be looking at the watch very much and it shouldn't be a distraction.

"Well, I may glance down every now and then," he said with a smile.

The Class 1A boys run begins at 2:30 p.m. and is the last race of the day on Saturday.

# the classifieds

## HELP WANTED

**Got a news tip? Call Chuck (319)371.1670**

### Dental Assistant or Hygienist

Lee County Health Department is seeking a part time contracted dental assistant or dental hygienist to work within our school-based sealant program. Applicant must be a licensed assistant or hygienist with at least one year of clinical experience. Please send resume to Rachael Patterson-Rahn, Oral Health Program Coordinator at [rpahn@leecountyhd.org](mailto:rpahn@leecountyhd.org). LCHD is an equal opportunity employer.

**LEE CHD**  
Lee County Health Department

### Cleaning Person Part-Time

Part Time Cleaning Person needed at the Holy Trinity Catholic Elementary School in West Point, IA. Must be able to pass background check. Please call Judi at 319-837-6131 for application and/or interview.



Place your ad online 24/7

**YOUR AD HERE**  
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### LCHD Maternal Child and Adolescent Health Program Coordinator

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**From the Front**

# Maintenance shed embarrassing for all sides

**BESIDE THE POINT** - Continued from Page 1

is where it gets laughable - almost. These people are serious about making the property appealing, even if that means mowing the lawn and weeding the property on their own dime.

That's what they've done...for 12...years.

Laurie Burchett said the recent activity to mend the building "is the most traffic we've seen to that building in the two years I've lived here and the 12 years Ron's lived there."

Laurie told the board that over the past dozen years, residents have probably spent more than \$11,000 dollars mowing and weeding the property. The other oddity is that a garden has somehow popped up on part of the property, and a dog enclosure spills onto the property.

But who owns the property? The county says it's their property. Steffensmeier said maintenance crews haven't tended to the mowing or weeding because they weren't sure of the status of the Argyle Sanitary District which owned a section of the lot. You didn't ask somebody... for 12 years? County Auditor Denise Fraise said the sanitary district has not been dissolved, and in actuality, the supervisors under a determination from former County Attorney Mike Short, are the representatives of the district, because...no one would run to sit on the sanitary district board. And those people that were written in during elections, declined to sit on the board.

Supervisor Matt Pflug, who appeared at times just as frustrated with the turn of events as Folluo, said the county will now maintain the property and asked that County Attorney Ross Braden look into the garden and dog enclosure being on the property, suggesting that will be short-lived.

So, residents have been mowing the lot for the dozen years, officially unbeknownst to the county. One would think that after the costs got ohh.... a couple hundred bucks, someone would go to the county and say, 'Hey, I'm done mowing the lawn for free.'

Jim Noll, who was at the meeting for a different reason concerning the use of

jake brakes around county neighborhoods, said the board should consider giving the property to the Burchetts as compensation for costs they've shouldered to date.

What? Did they let anyone know they were mowing the lawn? Did they have permission from anyone in the county to mow the lawn? Granted, some people do things to just be nice, but 12 years? And then when the county won't sell you the property, you bring up the amount you've 'invested' in the property without the county's permission or knowledge.

"What if these people were to submit a bill for \$11,000?" Noll asked the board. "What would you do?"

As taxpayers we'd hope

the county would return the bill unpaid with a notice politely asking the Burchetts to stay off the property as the county could be exposed to insurance claims if something unfortunate were to happen.

But how can a county 'not know' that someone has been mowing their lawn? They've been able to see the building for the past 12 years. Did they see a patch of grass taller than a house sitting between two homes? According to the Burchetts no one's been near the place in two years. Supervisors themselves have been out to the property and apparently they assumed the county was mowing and maintaining it. You have to imagine the looks on the supervisors' faces when three weeks ago

they were told the neighbors had been mowing the lawn for 12 years.

And what is still a little disconcerting is that Steffensmeier has been asking to build a new maintenance shed for at least the two years Pen City Current has been covering county budget talks. Both times the plans were nixed as a victim of budget cuts. It's pretty clear Mr. Steffensmeier has costs to build a new maintenance building. The one they are looking at now is probably a smaller footprint and isn't out near West Point where he originally wanted to add the space.

The shed contains a bulldozer that Steffensmeier claims is still functional, but he said in the winter they'll move some rollers into the building.

We make light of it, not because it's not important,

it is. And it's not laughable because these folks are entitled to an appealing neighborhood, and the county has a responsibility to maintain the structure and the property. On the other hand, taking care of someone else's property in the short term due to sickness or temporary absence is admirable, but 12 years mowing public property without notification and then deciding to ask for the property, tongue-in-cheek or not, in exchange for sweat equity... we feel is just a little out of bounds.

But just a little.

Speaking of property, in case you read this but not the news we sprint after every day, Viking Cruises found a domestic builder for their longboats that, it would appear anyway, are back on track for Mississippi cruises. The boats

would make seven-day excursions along the Mississippi River, the most relevant being a St. Louis to St. Paul run that would have stops in Hannibal, Davenport, Dubuque and, as it stands as of September 17, either Fort Madison or Burlington. The company is projecting 165,000 passengers by 2027 on the Mississippi cruises. They break that down to between 300 and 400 passengers per cruise that would make at least two stops weekly for about four hours in one of the locations that, as of yet, is undetermined.

This is fast-moving development, according to a Viking spokesperson talking to Dubuque city officials last month. This story could get very interesting as communities vie for docking agreements - but that's Beside the Point.

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