

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Thursday, March 21, 2024 | 6 pages | Volume 8 • Issue 53



www.pencitycurrent.com

Man airlifted after collision



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

AirEvac personnel take off just east of the intersection at 15th Street and Avenue M following a bike vs. SUV collision at the intersection. An area man was airlifted to a regional hospital as a result of the accident. The bicycle lays in the foreground near where it was struck.

BIKE AND SUV: Fort Madison Police investigating incident at 15th and Avenue M

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – An early Wednesday evening accident has sent one man to a regional hospital.

First responders were dispatched to the intersection of 15th Street and Avenue M at about 6:45 p.m. for a bicyclist who had been struck by a dark-colored Ford SUV.

According to witnesses, the SUV was headed westbound and believe the vehicle struck the bicyclist, who was traveling through the intersection. One witness said the sun could have been a factor with visibility.

People in the area administered first aid on the scene, including applying a tourniquet to stop blood loss.

AirEvac was called to the scene and landed on the street between the intersection and the Rail Yard. Lee County EMS crews treated the man at the scene and then he was taken by gurney to the helicopter where he was airlifted to a regional hospital.

The man was riding a bicycle and was towing a bicycle trailer with gear inside. Police cordoned off the intersection following the incident and it remains under investigation.

Fort Madison Police, Lee County EMS, Fort Madison Fire & Rescue, and AirEvac responded to the incident.

OLD FORT PLAYERS

Opal Is A Diamond - for offering a special Thursday show

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – It may have been delayed a little due to unforeseen circumstances, but the Old Fort Players 2024 excursion with Opal is something to see.

The show was canceled last weekend

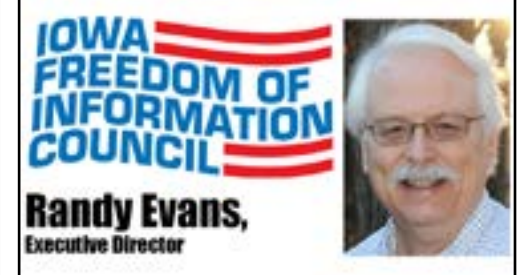
due to some last minute crew issues, but if Tuesday's dress rehearsal was any indication, the show is something to see.

OFP brings back the affable Opal Kro- nkie, this time to pull the rug out from under an unscrupulous politician named after a vacuum cleaner....because he may just suck.

Hector Bissell prays on the innocence of voters, but at the urging of some close friends gathered at Opal's home at the edge of the city, Opal may just put her name on a ballot to pull the plug on Bissell's antics. But the seasoned politician

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COMMENTARY



What were they thinking?

What were they thinking? That is a question I ask myself a lot lately.

Those were the first words out of my mouth when the Manhattan district attorney had to postpone Donald Trump's New York criminal trial on the alleged hush-money payments to porn star Stormy Daniels — the delay necessitated because government lawyers had dropped the ball.

I muttered those words during several days of court hearings in Georgia into Atlanta prosecutor Fani Willis' affair with a subordinate prosecutor — the one she chose to lead the criminal case against Trump and a dozen other defendants for trying to undo that state's 2020 presidential election results.

And those words come to mind about bills the Iowa Legislature is considering that would affect criminal cases like those brought against state university athletes for their online wagers on sporting events.

What were these government officials thinking? That is an excellent question in these cases.

In New York City, Trump's trial in state court was scheduled to start March 25. But the date went out the window when Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg announced the federal government, after a year's delay, finally handed over 100,000 pages of potential evidence to Trump's defense lawyers.

What were the federal attorneys thinking? They know the rules of "discovery," the obligation of prosecutors to turn over potentially exculpatory materials to a criminal defendant. They knew the nation is watching the New York case against Trump like hawks. And they surely knew any attempt to

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WEATHER

THU 21 Mar..... Scattered Flurries, 46° F/35° F
FRI 22 Mar..... Rain Likely, 51° F/25° F
SAT 23 Mar..... Cold & Sunny, 45° F/29° F

IOWA LOTTERY

LUCKY FOR LIFE 03/19.....25 19 26 38, Lucky Ball: 6
MEGA MILLIONS 03/19.....24 46 49 62 66, Mega Ball: 7
PICK 3 MIDDAY 03/19.....376
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PICK 4 MIDDAY 03/19.....0891
PICK 4 EVENING 03/19.....8105

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Obituaries/For the Record

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report
03/19/24 - 6:35 p.m. - Fort Madison police arrested Matthew Jay Wells, 23, of Davenport, in the 4600 block of Avenue J, on charges of 2nd degree harassment, 1st degree harassment, public intoxication, and interference with official acts. He was taken to Lee County Jail.

03/19/24 - 8:56 p.m. - Fort Madison police arrested Ashley Lynn McGhee, 37, of Kahoka, in the 800 block of Avenue E, on a warrant for 5th degree theft. She was taken to Lee County Jail.

Keokuk Police Report
03/19/24 - 11:22 a.m. - Keokuk police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 2100 block of Main Street.

03/19/24 - 11:22 a.m. - Keokuk police responded to a two-vehicle accident in the 2100 block of Main Street. According to the report, a vehicle driven by David L. Perkins, 62, of Nauvoo, was traveling westbound in the 2100 block of Main Street when an unidentified male walked in front of the vehicle, causing it to slam on its brakes and be rear-ended by a vehicle driven by Cole M. Tripp, 25, of Keokuk, who was also traveling westbound in the 2100 block of Main Street. Perkins and a passenger in Tripp's vehicle complained of injuries and were treated on scene. No citations were issued. Both vehicles sustained disabling damages and

were towed from the scene. The unidentified male was not found.

03/19/24 - 11:44 a.m. - Keokuk police arrested Jeremy James Davolt, 33, of Keokuk, in the 1600 block of Palean Street, on a warrant for violation of parole. He was taken to Lee County Jail.

03/19/24 - 12:38 p.m. - Keokuk police responded to a report of a stolen vehicle in the 300 block of High Street.

03/19/24 - 12:51 p.m. - Keokuk police responded to a report of larceny/theft in the 1300 block of Orleans Avenue.

03/19/24 - 1:50 p.m. - Keokuk police responded to a report of a property damage accident at Main Street and North Park Drive.

03/19/24 - 1:50 p.m. - Keokuk police responded to a report of a two-vehicle accident at Main Street and North Park Drive. According to the report, a vehicle driven by Clayton Edward Kendall, 30, of Keokuk, was traveling eastbound through the intersection when a vehicle driven by Edwin L. Cannon, 88, of Kahoka, failed to yield and was struck by Kendall's vehicle. Cannon was transported to Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center - Fort Madison campus E.R. for injuries. Kendall was treated on scene. Both vehicles were disabled and towed from the scene. No citations were reported.

03/19/24 - 8:54 p.m. - Keokuk

police cited and released Robert Lee Gregory, 61, of Keokuk, in the 2200 block of Main Street, on a charge of driving under suspension.

Lee County Sheriff Report
03/19/24 - 12:11 a.m. - Lee County sheriff deputies arrested Keyton William Lyons, 23, of Keokuk, at the South Lee County Courthouse, on a warrant for failure to appear. He was taken to Lee County Jail and later released on bond.

03/19/24 - 2:16 p.m. - Lee County sheriff deputies arrested Carl Andries, 56, of Burlington, at the sheriff's office, on a warrant for 5th degree theft less than \$300 and a warrant for 3rd degree theft \$750-\$1500. He was taken to Lee County Jail.

03/19/24 - 6:45 p.m. - Lee County sheriff deputies arrested Blake William Smith, 41, of Keokuk, in the 1800 block of Otte Road, Fort Madison, on a warrant for 3rd degree harassment. He was taken to Lee County Jail.

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue Report
03/18/24 - Fort Madison Firefighters responded to two medical calls and one lift assist

03/19/24 - Fort Madison Firefighters responded to four medical calls and two false alarms.

Those listed above are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

OBITUARIES

DAVID L. RALPH

David Lawrence "Larry" Ralph, 68, of Nauvoo, Illinois, passed away at 9:25 a.m. Monday, March 18, 2024, at his home.

He was born on August 17, 1955, in Modesta, California, the son of William Kenneth and Geneva Ann (Gilbert) Ralph. On April 21, 1974, he married Betty Diane Metternich at the Christ Lutheran Church in Nauvoo. She preceded him in death on December 28, 2021.



RALPH

He is survived by his five sons: Chris (Jill) Ralph of Nauvoo, Illinois, Ben (Stephanie) Ralph of Niota, Illinois, Nathan (Lindsey De Pew) Ralph of Belleville, Illinois, Kenny (Tosha Sedore) Ralph of Colusa, Illinois, James (Rianna) Ralph of Nauvoo, Illinois; grandchildren: Brandon, Felicia, Abigail, Sydney, Libby, Liam, Aster, Langston, Emerson, Laynee, Carson, Madelyn; sister: Kathy Lee McIntyre of Centerville, Tennessee; brothers: Gary (Brenda) Ralph of Nauvoo, Illinois, Glen Dale Ralph of Nauvoo, Illinois and Kenneth Wayne Ralph of Detroit, Michigan. Also surviving are several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents and wife: Betty. Larry was a 1973 graduate of Nauvoo High School. He was member of Nauvoo Living Hope Church. He was the director of Fellowship of the Carpenter. Larry lived to serve the Lord and shared his love for others through Fellowship of the Carpenter. He and Betty went on several mission trips for over twenty years. He enjoyed fishing and spending time with his family, especially his grandchildren.

His body has been entrusted to Schmitz - Banks & Beals Funeral Home of Nauvoo for cremation.

A Gathering of Remembrance will be held from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Saturday, March 23, 2024, at the Nauvoo Living Hope Church.

A memorial has been established in his memory for Fellowship of the Carpenter. Schmitz - Banks & Beals Funeral Home of Nauvoo is assisting the family with arrangements. On-line condolences to the family may be left at www.sbbfuneral.com.

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The recommended age for colorectal cancer screening has been lowered from 50 to 45.

Colorectal cancer cases are on the rise among young and middle-aged people. Colorectal cancer is a growth of cells that begins in a part of the large intestine called the colon. The colon is the first and longest part of the large intestine. There are often no symptoms of colorectal cancer.

Colorectal cancer is one of the only cancer screening tests that can prevent cancer by finding precancerous polyps in the colon or rectum and removing them before they become cancer or find cancer early when it may be easier to treat.

There are several screening options available. So, if you are over the age of 45, or at high risk for colorectal cancer, talk to your doctor about getting screened and which screening option is best for you.

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PEN CITY CURRENT
It's Black & White and Read all over

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Obituaries/Education News

OBITUARIES

JUNE D. BREWER

June Darlene Brewer, 83, of Stonebrook in Mt. Pleasant, formerly of Stockport, Iowa, passed away at 8:38 p.m. Tuesday, March 19, 2024, at the Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center in West Burlington, Iowa.



BREWER

She was born on June 17, 1940 in Terre Haute, Illinois, the daughter of Melvin and Violet (William) Powelson. On January 11, 1958, she married Jesse Brewer in Stronghurst, Illinois. He preceded her in death on October 12, 2019.

She is survived by her two children: Jo (Michael) King of Burlington, Iowa and Jeffrey Lee Brewer of Burlington, Iowa; three grandchildren: Michele, Joshua, and Katje; two sisters: Helen Curl of Nebraska and Dorothy Wade of Texas. Also surviving are many nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband: Jesse and brother: Gerald "Junior" Powelson.

After Jesse returned from serving in the Army, he and June were married. Then, in the 1970's the Brewers moved from Blandinsville, Illinois, where they had farmed together, to Stockport, Iowa, where they bought the Tarpleywick farm. There they continued farming and raised hogs and cattle. June enjoyed living and working on the farm, where she was able to do her photography, which she loved. She also enjoyed her cats and attending the Old Threshers Reunion faithfully every year. Most of all, she loved her family.

Her body has been entrusted to the crematory of Schmitz Funeral Home for cremation.

A visitation will begin at 1:00 p.m. Monday, March 25, 2024, at Schmitz Funeral Home in West Point, where the family will receive friends and family from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. that evening.

A graveside service will be held at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, March 26, 2024, at the Keokuk National Cemetery in Keokuk.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial has been established in her memory for PAW Animal Shelter.

Schmitz Funeral Home of West Point is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences may be made to the family at www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com.

FMCS D CAMP

FM hosts week-long day camp

FORT MADISON - Fort Madison Community School District announced earlier this month that they will be hosting a week-long camp for students finishing kindergarten through 6th grade. The camp will run Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. at Fort Madison Junior and Senior High School the week of June 17th. Children will get an opportunity to explore different activities ranging from outdoor activities to sports and even yard games.

The activities department at FMCS D has worked in partnership with both the Lee County Conservation Department and Baxter Sports Complex to offer the students a wide variety of choices and experiences. This offering will allow for the children to explore activities they will have the opportunity to participate in when they reach 7th grade and beyond.

Fort Madison Activities Director Jeff Lamb said, "We're excited to offer all of our FMCS D community, and students of other communities, the opportunity to try new things and work with our incredible staff to develop relationships not only with their peers but with members of our area that they will be working with as they get older. Our goal is to create comfort for these students to try new things that they may not otherwise attempt and hopefully get them out for activities when they get to us in the Junior and Senior High."

The fee for the week is \$50.00 and you can register through the link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeFadlIUBVUbaU-79V7rH9riPTwLi-YhyTTX2F_g4ONu4r-wHbw/viewform?usp=sf_link. Families are welcome to reach out to the Fort Madison Activities Office at 319.470.7459 if they have any questions.

#HyperLocalSuperFresh

House passes immigration deportation bill

DES MOINES - On Tuesday, March 19th, Iowa House Republicans passed Senate File 2340, a bill prohibiting a person previously caught entering the country illegally from remaining in Iowa. The bill sets up a removal procedure for those in the state in violation of federal law.

Representative Steve Holt (R-Denison) led the bill through the Iowa House.

"There is a difference between legal immigration and illegal immigration," Holt said. "Yes, there are many in our country and our state illegally who just came here for a better life. We know that. But there are also gang members, drug dealers, and terrorists who are here endangering our citizens. We know that too. The federal government has abdicated its responsibilities and states can and must act. Many other states are standing up to protect their sovereignty and their citizens and Iowa must do the same."

The bill forbids law enforcement officers from arresting someone if the person is in a school, a place of worship, a health care facility, or a facility for survivors of sexual assault.

The bill passed through the Iowa House with a bipartisan vote of 64-30.

JAMES HEALTHCARE

March Madness

REFER A PATIENT = 5 TICKETS

SHARE A POST = 2 TICKETS

COMMENT ON A POST = 2 TICKETS

BOTH COMMENT & SHARE A POST = 5 TICKETS

REFERRAL ACCEPTS = 20 TICKETS

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Saturday, March 30th, 2024
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Join the Facebook Event for complete details and event updates

From the Front

Dowling, crew keep laughs coming in Opal sequel

PLAY - Continued from Page 1

has a few tricks of his own.

Opal is played once again by Shelley Dowling and is backed up by best friend Rosie Monefalco. The two are a couple of hens hanging out at Opal's hoarder house with innocent, but hilarious takes on society, men, politics, and other "junk".

Dowling is extremely comfortable as Kronkie, the professed collector of junk, including a dead chicken she collected from the highway near the dump. She has a nice rapport with the audience and is comfortable with the role.

Karen Schumaker brings her humor and presence to the stage again. She's had recurring roles in the Opal franchise and is a veteran of the OFP. She's a riot trying to usher Opal to the ballot box, all the while trying to hatch an egg in her cleavage.

This is very much the "Sanford and Son" of John Patrick's imagination. Patrick is the playwright who came up with the Opal series. He's created a good-natured woman who continues to fight back

against the seedy nature of society in an innocent and down-to-earth fashion.

Other OFP stalwarts include Jim French, Ty Wayne Clute, Joe St. Clair, Jan Jud, and Joe Harmon, who brings his best Mario Bros' "Luigi" to the role of Tony, the truck driver and ad hoc tv repairman. French plays another truck driver along with St. Clair and Brad Hart. Hart is playing in his first production as Ole Hansen. The truck drivers hang with Opal and Rosie and help her sniff out the corrupt nature of Bissell.

Aided by her new friends and old, Opal decides to fight back under the persuasion of others to run for office herself. Much to the surprise of the locals and to the mayoral candidate himself, Opal finds herself in the good graces of voters who, too, are tired of the political nonsense.

The path forward will keep the audience's attention, but also erupting in laughter if not at the boisterous nature of Rosie, Harmon's Italian accent will do the trick. A few changes of pace and quick turns

brings the story full circle in the five scene, two-act performance.

Opal is a Diamond is the long-awaited sequel to Patrick's Everybody Loves Opal. The play proceeds at hair-on-fire pace, many moments of laughter and reminders that we all are human in the social process.

Clute plays Bob Royce, Bissell's speechwriter, who starts to get a feel for Opal and the muckraking style of his boss. Royce's assistant is played by Cheryl Hardin, in her fourth stage appearance. The two turn their attentions from Bissell and toward each other as they play their parts in bringing the story to a close.

A special Thursday presentation has been added to the schedule after the first weekend of the production at Fort Madison's Old Fort Players Playhouse downtown was shuttered. Then the schedule gets back to normal with Friday and Saturday evening shows starting at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday's matinee is the wrap at 2 p.m.

Tickets can be purchased at the door or in advance at <https://oldfortplayers.com/>.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC



Most of the cast of "Opal Is A Diamond" cheers on Opal as she makes a decision to enter a city election. The show opens with a special Thursday performance at Fort Madison's downtown playhouse. Opal, played by Shelley Dowling, left, gets a mystic assist from best friend Rosie and a jar of pickle juice. Rosie is played by Karen Schumacher, both of whom have past Opal experience.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

**PUBLIC NOTICE
AGENDA
KEOKUK CITY
COUNCIL MEETING
March 21, 2024
501 Main Street
5:30 P.M.**

1. Call to Order.
2. Pledge of Allegiance:
3. Roll Call.
4. Mayor's Correspondence:
5. Citizen's Request.
6. Consent Agenda.
 - Minutes of the Regular City Council meeting & Council Workshop of March 7, 2024;
 - Cash Receipts & Treasurer's Report for February 2024;
 - Resolution approving a Liquor License for B.P.O. Elks, Lodge #106, 2200 Lincoln Avenue, Class F Retail Alcohol License – effective April 1, 2024, pending dram;

- Resolution approving a Liquor License for Angelini's, 1006 Main Street, Class C Retail Alcohol License with Outdoor Service – effective April 1, 2024;
- Appointment of Kimber Tinder to the Human Rights Commission, fulfilling a term to expire September 19, 2026;
- Appointment of Becky Crenshaw, Pam Broomhall, Kira Kruszynski, Dave Baum, Martha Neff and Joyce Glasscock to Architectural Design Review Commission, term to expire June 19, 2026;
- Motion to pay bills and transfers listed in Register No.'s 5394-5396;
- 7. (a) Now is the time and place for a public hearing awarding a contract for South 18th Street Water Main Reconstruction. A public hearing notice was published in the Daily Gate City on February 21, 2024.
- 8. Consider resolution awarding a contract to Dansco to construct restrooms at Rand Park.
- 9. Consider resolution designating Quincy Medical Group and TSS, Inc. offices located in Keokuk to provide professional services for the City of Keokuk.
- 10. Consider resolution to rescind agreement with Keokuk Community School District for Gowing Tennis Courts.
- 11. Consider resolution approving a final plat survey for Property Partners LLC.
- 12. Consider resolution authorizing the Mayor to sign letter of support for Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program Grant for redevelopment project located at 1000 Main Street.
- 13. Council Liaison Reports:
- 14. Staff Reports:
- 15. New Business:
- 16. Adjourn Meeting.

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From the Front

DCI put cart in front of horse with gambling investigation

EVANS - Continued from Page 1

cut corners would give America's court system an embarrassing black eye, especially when Trump and many supporters believe the courts and government lawyers have it in for him.

The nation has been watching the Georgia election case like hawks, too. The former president faces 13 state charges relating to his efforts undo Joe Biden's whisker-thin victory in that state in 2020.

Atlanta prosecutor Fani Willis should have been savvy enough to know her every move would be scrutinized by critics. So, what was she thinking when she

decided to engage in an affair with the man she picked to handle the Trump case? Well-educated people in positions of authority should be smart enough to know they need to be above even the appearance of a conflict when their every move will be dissected.

That brings me to Iowa.

Criminal charges of illegal gambling were filed last summer against 25 athletes and student managers at Iowa State University and the University of Iowa. The cases have had a devastating effect on these athletes' careers and held them up to ridicule. They lost their ability to

compete.

Most agreed to plead guilty to less serious charges to avoid the possibility of bigger fines by going to trial. But attorneys for four ISU athletes or former athletes fought back. They took sworn statements, called depositions, from investigators and used subpoenas to obtain evidence agents gathered. What the lawyers learned suggests the actions of Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation agents were an unconstitutional invasion of students' privacy rights.

Story County prosecutors agreed to drop the charges against the four athletes when the de-

fense attorneys' findings became public.

The DCI's tactics in this investigation are an embarrassing black mark on this respected law enforcement agency — just as delays by federal officials in the New York criminal case and the astoundingly poor judgment by the Georgia prosecutor are embarrassing black marks on our judicial system, too.

The response by state officials in Iowa is telling, however. Rather than evaluating how the lapse of judgment occurred and establishing clear procedures to ensure people are not subjected to unreasonable invasion of their privacy, state officials seem more interested in providing a legal shield to block defense lawyers from uncovering such scandals in the future.

The DCI's disturbing conduct came to light because the athletes' attorneys were able to issue investigative subpoenas and compel the deposition testimony of DCI agents to learn state agents gathered digital evidence of student gambling without first providing sufficient legal justification for a judge to issue a search warrant.

Bills now before the Legislature — pushed by Attorney General Brenna Bird, the DCI and a state senator who is a DCI agent — would virtually eliminate the use of investigative subpoenas and the ability of criminal defendants to take sworn testimony from witnesses and investigators.

Andrew Mertens, the executive director of the Iowa Association for Justice, an organization of trial lawyers, has a chilling analysis of these proposals. (By way of disclosure, Mertens is on the board of trustees of the Iowa Freedom of Information Association, the organization I lead.)

"These subpoenas are vital tools, especially when the state attempts to cover up evidence of their own misdeeds, as they've done in the gambling cases," Mertens wrote in a statement.

"Had the attorney general's pending bill been law, these cases would have likely never been dismissed, ruining the students' athletic careers, and the vast invasion of student privacy at our state universities would have never been uncovered. The attorney general's pending bill could

have let the DCI get away with their unconstitutional warrantless invasion without consequence."

Mertens said defense attorneys face stringent requirements under existing Iowa court rules before they can issue subpoenas. The attorney general's bill seeks to practically eliminate this already limited investigatory tool in criminal cases. In civil cases, on the other hand, where money is on the line rather than a person's freedoms, attorneys defending insurance companies or the state have much broader ability to subpoena evidence under existing court rules, he pointed out.

Mertens added, "It all begs the question: Are these legislative proposals motivated by the state's desire to hide their conduct during this and similar investigations? Should these be held to account, or allowed to run roughshod over Iowans' constitutional rights?"

That is a good question. And so is this one: What were they thinking?

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