

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Monday, May 20, 2024 | 6 pages | Volume 8 • Issue 88



www.pencitycurrent.com

Hounds shine Saturday



Images courtesy of Matthew Putney

Fort Madison's Brandon Klein fist bumps Williamsburg's Adam Arp after finishing the boys' 200 meter para wheelchair at the Iowa High School State Track and Field Championships Saturday, May 18, 2024, in Des Moines, Iowa.

KLEIN 2ND IN SHOTPUT: Throw of 17' 9.75" gets silver in wheelchair shotput

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

DES MOINES – The Fort Madison boys and girls track teams finished on a better note Saturday at the IGHSAA/IAHSAA State High School Track and Field meet at Drake Stadium.

Sophomores Avery Rump and Mara Smith scored five of the Hounds' nine points on Saturday's final day of the meet.

Smith finished 6th in the open 800. The Lady Hound had a stellar year, regularly pulling seconds off her time, including her 800 legs in the distance medley and the 4x800 relay teams.

Her 2:19.43 on Saturday was a full six seconds better than her previous best time. Smith said after sectionals that having people in front of her helps her time, but she also has learned to run through the pain.

Avery Rump raced to a 4:52.96 in the 1500 on Saturday, good enough for 7th place in the state. She shaved a half second off her season-best 4:53.51 at the Brookhart-Crew relays in Fairfield on April 29 and now has the 35th fastest time in

See **TRACK**, page 3



Fort Madison's Mara Smith runs to a sixth-place finish in the 3A girls' 800 meter run at the Iowa High School State Track and Field Championships Saturday, May 18, 2024, in Des Moines.

COMMENTARY



We were meant to be explorers

I'm feeling a bit closed off lately. What's going on in the world? I was talking with my nephew this weekend and said I'd heard that the U.S. wants to put another person on the moon.

He said something steeped in skepticism about the U.S. actually landing on the moon. He owns his own turf business, so what does he know?

He's actually a damn smart kid with a nice business acumen and has built a large business in Charlotte, N.C. But what does he know about jet propulsion and lunar landings?

There's some conspiracy theorists who say we never did put a man on the moon, that it was all done in some studio somewhere.

I choose not to believe that. I think we're supposed to be explorers and the moon is part of what we are to explore. But have we done enough? Is Elon Musk really going to get us to Mars, or that Virgin Atlantic dude?

I'm always surprised at where we are as a species. Walking through the RiverWalk and Loop Districts in downtown Chicago this weekend, I spent a lot of time looking at the architecture. Say what you want about Donald Trump, and I could say plenty, but that's a marvel of a building downtown. We went to a rooftop lounge for about an hour as we waited for a dinner reservation and looking out over this rooftop 21 stories up, you could see all the bridges over the Chicago River. And then along the sides all the steel and concrete that makes up downtown Chicago.

It really is incredible. The river, steel

See **CHICAGO**, page 6

INDEX

Business Directory.....P.6
CLASSIFIEDS.....Ps.5-6
Complete Rental.....P.3
FROM THE FRONT.....Ps.3,6
Fullenkamp Insurance.....P.2

IOWA NEWS.....Ps.2,6
ILLINOIS NEWS.....P.2
James Healthcare & Associates, Inc.....P.4
OPINION.....Ps.4,6
Pen City Current.....P.5

Pothitakis Dental Group.....P.2
Public Notices.....P.5
SCENE AROUND TOWN.....P.2
Sonny's Super Market.....P.3
SPORTS.....P.3

WEATHER

MON 20 May.....Warm with chance of thunderstorms, 84° F/ 67° F
TUE 21 May.....Breezy with chance of thunderstorms, 86° F/ 58° F
WED 22 May.....Mostly sunny and cool, 73° F/ 53° F

IOWA LOTTERY

DOUBLE PLAY 05/18.....15 17 28 36 60, Powerball: 9
LOTTO AMERICA 05/18.....7 8 9 12 33, Star Ball: 9 All Star Bonus: 3
LUCKY FOR LIFE 05/18.....18 21 34 37 40, Lucky Ball: 13
MEGA MILLIONS 05/17.....8 17 40 60 70, Mega Ball: 3 Megaplier: 2
PICK 3 MIDDAY 05/16, 05/17, 05/18.....1 27, 771, 418
PICK 3 EVENING 05/16, 05/17, 05/18.....5 0 0, 175, 382
PICK 4 MIDDAY 05/16, 05/17, 05/18.....9 0 8 2, 978 3, 716 3
PICK 4 EVENING 05/16, 05/17, 05/18.....9 8 4 0, 353 7, 981 2
POWERBALL 05/18.....19 36 37 42 59, Powerball: 19 Power Play: 2

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Scene Around Town/Iowa News



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Workers on floating cranes have finally pulled a submerged barge from the bottom of the Mississippi over the weekend. The barge was part of a collision with the BNSF bridge that temporarily closed the bridge over the weekend.

WBPD arrests two with guns near school

WEST BURLINGTON - On 05/12/2024 at approximately 6:15pm, officers received a tip from a citizen advising he saw two males walking around the area of Leffler Street with what appeared to be a gun in their waistband.

Officers searched the immediate area and located two juvenile males walking on the property of the West Burlington Elementary school. Officers

recovered a firearm in the waistband of one of the juveniles.

The juvenile was placed under arrest and transported to Juvenile Hall in Montrose. He is currently being held in Juvenile Hall awaiting charges through adult court.

The juvenile was charged with Possession of a firearm on school grounds (Class D Felony).

Carthage sets up next Strawberry Strut

Submitted article

CARTHAGE - The 45th Strawberry Strut in Carthage is just a few days away scheduled on June 1.

The Strawberry Strut includes the classic five-mile run along the Carthage Lake. Other events in this year's Strut are a 5K run, a 5K walk and a one mile fun run/walk.

Participants can still register on-line at the advance price until end of the day May 31. To sign up, go to runsignup.com/Race/IL/Carthage/StrawberryStrut or use the link on the Strawberry Strut Facebook page.

Those who have pre-registered can pick up race packets on Friday, May 31, from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Hancock County Courthouse in Carthage, or after 7 a.m. the morning of the race. All race packets must be picked up by 7:45 a.m. Race day registration is available at 7 a.m. and will end at 7:45 a.m.

The fee for the five-mile run, the 5K run and 5K walk is \$30 in advance, increasing to \$35 on race day. The fee for the one-mile run/walk is \$10, or \$15 on race day.

Race day start times are staggered. Awards will be presented at around 10 a.m. Participants will start on the following schedule:

- 5-mile run - 8:15 a.m.
- 5K walk - 8:30 a.m.
- 5K run - 8:40 a.m.
- 1-mile fun run/ walk - 8:45 a.m.

There are three water stops along the course, sponsored by Carthage Kiwanis and area Scouts.

Race packets include many gifts from area merchants. Any business or group wanting to give items for the bags should call Kris Pilkington, 217-430-4724, or Joy Swearingin, 217-357-4989.

Sponsors of the Strawberry Strut this year include Carthage Veterinary Service, Fortress Bank, Marine Bank, Memorial Hospital, MORE Medical, MTC Communications, Ramsey Financial, Western Illinois Insurance, WCAZ, Will Sullivan Auction, Chem-Gro, Countryside Veterinary, Carson Motors, Brenda Young Real Estate, Connor Smith Country Companies, Berry Creek Creations and Steve and Mary Evelyn Evans.

Proceeds from the race this year have been pledged to benefit Hancock County Fights Cancer, whose summer event will be held on the Hancock County Courthouse lawn immediately after the Strut on June 1. Other events are planned on the square for that day, coordinated by the Carthage Area Chamber of Commerce.

We are grateful for the opportunity to care for your family's oral health & appreciate the trust you put in us to do so.

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From the Front

Rump has solid sophomore campaign at state meet

TRACK - Continued from Page 1

the state. Rump also took a top 5 in the 3000-meter run on Thursday where she set another personal best. Rump also progressed throughout the year, taking chunks off her times in the 1500 and 3000, and pulling strong legs on the distance relay teams.

Marissa Ferebee of Pella won the 1500 Saturday with a 4:31.48 which is 23rd best in the country and third best in the state on the season.

Probably the busiest athlete on the track Saturday was Fort Madison's Brandon Klein who participated in the 100-, 200-, and 400-meter wheelchair races and the wheelchair shotput.

Klein took 2nd out of an 8-team field in the shotput with a 17'9.75" heave. He finished 7th in the 100-wheelchair with a 30.91, 7th in the 400-meter race with a 1:53.48 which was a personal best on the season, and he finished 8th in the 200-meter with a 1:03.67.

The Bloodhound boys finished 30th overall with four points on Kenden Bowie's 5th place finish in the high jump Thursday.

The Lady Hounds finished 28th overall with nine points on Rump's two top-seven finishes and Smith's top six.



Photo by Matthew Putney/MP Media

Fort Madison's Avery Rump in a class 3A girls' 1500 meter run during the Iowa High School State Track and Field Championships Saturday, May 18, 2024, in Des Moines, Iowa



Photo by Matthew Putney/MP Media

Fort Madison's Brandon Klein hurls the shot in the boys' shotput para wheelchair at the Iowa High School State Track and Field Championships Saturday, May 18, 2024, in Des Moines, Iowa.



Lunch Specials
May 20 - 24
11am - 1pm

Monday, May 20

Tenderloin, Pasta Salad, Pudding

Tuesday, May 21

Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes, Corn

Wednesday, May 22

Tater Tot Casserole, Green Beans

THURSDAY, MAY 23

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Friday, May 24

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It's Black & White and Read all over

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Pen City Current, www.PenCityCurrent.com, and Pen e-Saver are products of Market Street Publishing, LLC. Pen City Current is published Monday through Friday mornings by 6AM.

Founded in 2016
P.O. Box 366 | Fort Madison, IA

Opinion

2024 Garden with Rule of Hoe and Ground Massage

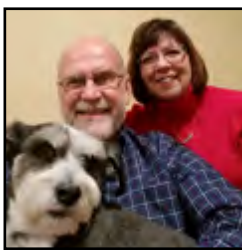
Saturday, May 11, 2024: I planted the rest of our garden. Ginnie lets me do the garden-ing. I had double tilled the garden (tilled in both directions) on Saturday, April 27, and put in tomato plants (one cherry, four Early Girls, and four Beef Eaters) and four Bell Peppers. I mulched the tomatoes and peppers with corn stalks left over from last year's corn-stalk blizzard. After all that work, I was shot, so decided to put off the rest of the garden for "a day

or so."

I knew it was going to rain, and it did—hard, which packed the soil and left a puddle standing in the garden. Then, this-and-that happened—mowing, spraying weeds, more rain, so I didn't get back to the garden for two weeks. My nicely tilled garden was hard packed, like a brick. By rights, I should have re-tilled, but I had taken the tiller off the tractor and didn't want to struggle putting it back on. Instead I struggled pushing the hand cultivator through the

EMPTY NEST

By Curt Swarm



baked soil.

I planted a gob of Blue Lake green beans in a spot where I had good luck with Blue Lakes in years past. If they produce well, and I'm guessing they will, we'll have our hands full and have to have a snap-chat party. This year I worked smarter not harder and

placed the bean seeds a hoe length apart for easier weeding. The Rule of Hoe.

Along side the Blue Lakes I put in six hills of Straight 8 Cukes—once again in a spot where they did well several years ago. I love garden cucumbers, sliced with salt. All we have to say is, "Come and get'm!" and we have plenty of takers (like Denise Snavelly).

Every year I try something new. This year it's Glass Gem corn, a different variety of decorative or Indian Corn, given to us by Susie Clark—using Rule of Hoe again. Also given to us by Susie Clark was a mess of Bird House Gourd seeds that she raised. I planted two hills of those, and stuck one of my American Gothic window trellises over the hill. We'll see if they climb. (Susie gave us way too many seeds if anyone wants some.)

Between the gourds and corn, I planted a row of

Peredovik Sunflowers for the birds.

Between the rows of Glass Gem corn, I planted two hills each of Howden Pumpkins and Cushaw Striped Pumpkins. Pumpkins love to run in cornrows, and I love giving away pumpkins and Indian Corn for fall and Halloween decoration. They're so colorful.

At the edge of the garden, for easy access, I planted one long row of Bell Cherry radishes, icicle radishes and Romaine lettuce. With the Straight 8 cukes, cherry and Early Girl tomatoes, there should be some scrumptious salads this summer. Throw in a side of green beans and bacon, and maybe some wilted lettuce, and it's a summer meal fit for Curt!

My back was bothering me considerably from all the bending over and planting, and pushing the cultivator through caked earth. I've heard it said that lying down on the ground, putting your arms over your head, and rolling, is the best cure for a sore back. I tried it. My back was immediately relieved, and it felt so good lying on the ground with the sun warming me, that I just laid there, spread eagle, and relaxed. The earth and sun have such a healing effect. I was out like a light. I woke up to a stranger (who shall remain nameless) standing over me. "You all right, Mister?" Our garden is beside the road, and a passerby, seeing me lying on the ground, stopped. I told him what I was doing. He said his back hurt, too. So he tried rolling with his arms over his head, and was amazed at how good it felt. I told him to come back in July for some cucumbers and green beans. He said he would.

That's our garden for 2024, complete with Rule of Hoe and ground massage.

Saturday, May 18. It's 87°. The radishes, beans, cucumbers, sunflowers, both pumpkins, and Indian Corn are all poking their heads up. God bless this earth!

Have a good story? Call or text Curt Swarm in Mt. Pleasant at 319-217-0526, or email him curtswarm@yahoo.com. Curt is available for public speaking.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE MEETING NOTICE
LEE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
****MONDAY****
May 6, 2024
MEETING CONVENING
TIME: 10:00 A.M.
933 AVE H

-----AGENDA-----

Lee County Board of Supervisors
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Please keep your microphone muted to cut down on background noise. If you are participating by phone, press *6, this will mute your phone.
 Pledge of Allegiance
 Approve Agenda
 Public Input
 Discussion and Possible Action on Offset of Buy-Out Payment with Maintenance Cost-Sharing Related to Expiration of IDOT Salt Storage Agreement

Consider Approval of Tax Suspension for Property Located at 220 N 14th Street, Keokuk
 Discussion and Possible Approval of Restructured Building Study Committee
 Consent Agenda
 • Monday, May 13, 2024 Board Minutes
 • Claims for Payment
 • Class B Retail Alcohol License for Montrose Dollar General
 Personnel Actions:
 A. New Hire -Treasurer's Office
 B. Temporary New Hires (2) - Conservation
 C. Step Increases (3) - Secondary Roads
 Reports:
 A. Manure Management Plan Form for Squeal Inn in Harrison Township
 Commission or Committee Reports
 Adjourn

PUBLIC MEETING CITIZENS WELCOME

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Contact Title VI Administrator
 319-372-3705
 County Website: www.leecounty.org

PUBLIC NOTICE MEETING NOTICE
FORT MADISON CITY COUNCIL
Tuesday, May 21, 2024
5:30 P.M.
City Council Chambers, City Hall

TENTATIVE AGENDA

INVOCATION
 ROLL CALL
 VISITORS AND APPEARANCE REQUESTS:
 At this time persons may address Council on any matters not on the Council agenda. After identifying yourself by name and address, please briefly state your issue.

PLEASE NOTE: This is not an opportunity to discuss issues with Council or to get information. In accordance with Open Meetings law, Council may not deliberate upon, nor take action on any complaint or suggestion or respond to any allegations which are not part of the published agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA
 1. (Blank) MOVED and (blank) SECONDED to approve the consent agenda:
 • Minutes of May 7, 2024;
 • Liquor License Renewals: Fork Catering & Hospitality Group INC, 2103 303rd Avenue, effective June 6, 2024;
 • Noise Permit: Vinnie's Longbranch, Dry Creek, Sunday, May 26th, 2024 until 11:00pm.
 • Claims dated May 15, 2024, Library Claims; and
 • Payroll of May 17, 2024.

PUBLIC HEARING
 Concerning the Budget Amendments for Fiscal

Year 2023/2024.
 Close Public Hearing
 2. (Blank) MOVED and (blank) SECONDED to adopt a resolution approving the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget Amendments.

SPECIAL EVENTS PERMITS:
 a. Fort Madison Farmer's Markets, Mondays from June – September, 2024.

b. Parade of Lights & Mistletoe on Main, November 29-30, 2024.

COMMUNITY REPORTS: Fort Madison School Resource Officer, Jeremy Boecker

UPDATES: James Block Building
ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

3. (Blank) MOVED and (blank) SECONDED to approve the third and final reading amending Ordinance D-100, Title 2, Chapter 1: General Provisions, 2-1-1 Members.
 4. (Blank) MOVED and

(blank) SECONDED to approve the third and final reading amending Ordinance D-47, Title 2, Chapter 9: Historic Preservation Commission.

5. (Blank) MOVED and (blank) SECONDED to adopt a resolution directing the City Clerk to publish notice of the City Council's intent to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Donna Amandus, Third Ward Council Member, by appointment.

6. (Blank) MOVED and (blank) SECONDED to adopt a resolution consenting to the North Lee County Historical Society's request to sublet to Fort Madison Tourism for the summer months beginning Monday, May 20, 2024.

7. (Blank) MOVED and (blank) SECONDED to adopt a resolution consenting to the North Lee County Historical Society's request to sublet

a section of the CB & Q parking lot to American Trailways as needed.

OTHER
 8. (Blank) MOVED and (blank) SECONDED to approve the Mayor's reappointment of Ron Welder, Sharon Groene and Carl Hierstein to the Library Board of Trustees, filling expired terms, term expiring June 30, 2030.

9. (Blank) MOVED and (blank) SECONDED to approve the Mayor's appointment of Kathy Burkhardt, Ashley Walton, and Steven Dorrough to the Historic Preservation Commission, filling expired terms, term expiring December 31, 2026.

CITY MANAGER/DEPARTMENT REPORT COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS/MAYOR ANNOUNCEMENTS
ADJOURNMENT – The next City Council meeting will be held at 5:30 P.M. on Monday, June 3, 2024.

We remember and celebrate all those who fought for our freedom on this day.



Pen City Current will not publish an e-Edition on Monday or Tuesday, May 27th & 28th in observance of the Memorial Day holiday. Breaking news will continue to be published on our website 24/7 and we will resume publication of the e-Edition Wednesday, May 29th.

Please celebrate safely and responsibly. We care about all of you.
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Got a news tip?
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From the Front/Classifieds

AI generation unicorns, huh

CHICAGO - Continued from Page 1

stained green from St. Patty's Day, carries loads of people who want to know about the architectural landscape. A building to the east and south of the river has a breezeway about ¾ of the way up. The building was designed by a woman, which is nothing remarkable, but it did grab me again, thinking about how far we've come.

I walked about 15 miles this weekend and regularly look up at the buildings, the bricks and mortar, and then there's the sculptures and statutes of such historical figures as Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Robert Morris, and Haym Salomon. If you don't know all those names, look it up. But those guys are important dudes in American History. It's another aspect of how far we've come.

From homes lit by fire, to incandescent, to LED, and more, we keep challenging ourselves to be better than those that came before us. This AI stuff scares the crap out of me. And I passed a billboard today that said something about AI gen unicorns. What?

AI unicorns are a generation now. So we went from Generation X to Generation Next to AI Unicorns. I'm sure I'm wrong about that. But I asked this smart nephew of mine what the hell AI Unicorns are and he looked at me like I was supposed to know. Apparently it's part of something called the Crunchbase

Unicorn Board which is a list of the most wealthy private companies in the world.

Talk about going places – we now have something called a CrunchBase Unicorn Board. Sounds like the next variety of Lucky Charms to me. I'm an old guy and I don't look at very many billboards aimed at passersby that I don't understand. But the AI Unicorn generation has me thinking that maybe, just maybe, we've passed ourselves along the way.

I want to believe that we are explorers in so many different arenas - that some day transportation will jump into the Jetson's age. Although it scares the heck out of me that people would actually pilot their own air vehicles with glass bubbles over them to get to work. We can't even handle cars yet. But nothing should make us stop – not even our own skepticism. At the point of the evolution of everything, there's a time when it didn't work or we didn't get it right. But then we eventually figured it out. And in that moment is where exploring pays off.

I did some exploring of my own this weekend and I'm beginning to enjoy exploring different places more and more. I just wish I knew what all the damned signs meant – But that's Beside the Point.

Chuck Vandenberg is editor and co-owner of Pen City Current and can be reached at Charles.V@PenCityCurrent.com.

FSA hiring across the state

BY MATT RUSSELL
State Executive Director in Iowa, USDA
Farm Service Agency

DES MOINES - In my role as the Iowa Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director (SED), I get to speak with farm groups, do radio interviews, and talk to newspaper reporters. Something I've been able to say every time over the past two and a half years is "We're hiring!"

Like most farmers in Iowa, I have a long experience with the team at Iowa USDA. My farm has directly benefited from programs through FSA and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). I'm filled with gratitude daily for the investments by the American public in my family's operations. As a farmer, I appreciate the amazing support the staff provide to help farmers thrive, and in some cases, survive. This includes when my parents got a USDA farm loan in 1985 that allowed us to stay on our farm. I have extended family that have used life changing investments from Rural Development (RD) in

housing and rural community development.

Iowa USDA is making historic investments across all of these agencies creating a more hopeful future for rural Iowa. If you're interested in being part of this hopeful future, stop by your county office to make sure you are connecting to these investments that can support your farm, ranch, small business, and community.

Also, look for job announcements and consider becoming part of the Iowa USDA team that is delivering these investments. You can find those at usajobs.gov by searching USDA and Iowa.

At Iowa Farm Service Agency, we're currently hiring our next class of County Executive Director Trainees (CEDT). When this group successfully completes their training program, they will be hired into our county service centers as County Executive Directors. This is an excellent opportunity for people interested in building a career as an agricultural leader in rural

Iowa. You can find that job announcement here, the application period is open until May 28, 2024. We're also hiring county office staff to deliver our safety-net, commodity, conservation, disaster, and farm loan programs.

In addition to taking care of producers, Iowa FSA also takes care of our employees. We enjoy a generous benefits package, matching thrift savings plan contributions, 12-weeks paid parental leave, telework opportunities, flexible work schedules, and 11 paid holidays. A career with Iowa FSA as well as NRCS and RD, also includes opportunities for advancement.

I'm honored to be part of the Biden-Harris Administration. Working with Congress and under the leadership of Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, USDA is making historic investments to empower rural Americans to provide the agricultural, energy, and environmental solutions the world needs for a hopeful future.

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