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PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and **Read** all over

Monday, November 25, 2024 | 6 pages | Volume 8 • Issue 194



www.pencitycurrent.com

Kickstarting holidays



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Downtown Fort Madison was abuzz Friday night as the annual Wine & Beer walk brought people to historic Avenue G for a couple hours of tasting and food. The annual Lighted Parade is this Friday night.

COMMENTARY



A special note to a special friend

Being the owner of a news outlet has its challenges. That's never been more evident than the past election cycle.

The advertising that comes with it is small recompense for the tough business of endorsements and the attacks that ensue. It's tough to push through it as an owner and even more so as a reporter.

But the work has its advantages and, in some cases, even pleasures.

As we go about chasing information and putting it together into a consumptive format, we actually run head on into the news. That can be painful, such as photographing five presumed innocent people sitting on a curb in handcuffs or zip ties following a raid of their home with geared up law enforcement in the background. The arrested look at you in vain and hide their faces, while you wish you had done a little better job of disappearing into the background. But that's the job.

It's also in the job to cultivate sources, and in small towns many, many times those sources become friends.

That's the case with outgoing Lee County Economic Development Group CEO Dennis Fraise. Dennis was one of the first people I got to know when I took over as publisher of Mississippi Valley Media in 2016. We set up a lunch and talked about plans.

I did most of the talking about the role of the newspaper in helping LCEDG with their objectives. I think we even talked a little about support and it came in the way of donating some ad space and keeping the public apprised of the group's accomplishments.

See **LADIES**, page 4

See **FRAISE**, page 6

Hounds win Urbandale Invitational behind Smith, DiPrima

SPORTS: Fort Madison girls off to a great start with title on Saturday

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

URBANDALE – The Fort Madison girls' wrestling team is sending a quick message this year. They could be one of the best in the area, if not the state.

The girls have won their first two events, the first being a dual at Cardinal last week, and then this Saturday they won the loaded 16-team Urbandale Girls' Wrestling Invitational with 173 points, six points ahead of Benton Community.

At Thursday's winter media event at Fort Madison High School, head coach Kyle Doherty said he's taking a softer approach this year, his third with the team.

"I think a lot of them would agree that I've taken a softer side this year," Doherty said. "You're a product of your environment and that's wrestling with (Ryan) Smith for four years. It's that a little bit, but it also goes hand-in-hand with them being that much more mature in wrestling IQ and it's easier for me to go in and do what I need to do instead of breaking everything down."



"We roll into practice and they know exactly what to do and we've had a really good first two weeks."

Those first two weeks have certainly produced results.

Junior Mara Smith is back after qualifying for state last year and has started right where she left off with a title at Cardinal and then a first-place finish Saturday at Urbandale wrestling at 130 lbs.

See **LADIES**, page 4

See **FRAISE**, page 6

INDEX

Business Directory.....P.5
CLASSIFIEDS.....P.5
Complete Rental.....P.2
Connection Bank.....P.4
Fort Colony Family Restaurant.....P.4
Fort Madison Family YMCA.....P.4
FROM THE FRONT.....Ps.4,6
Fullenkamp Insurance.....P.3
Hinterland Dairy.....P.6
LEE COUNTY NEWS.....P.2

LOCAL NEWS.....P.2
Mohrfeld Solar.....P.6
OBITUARIES.....Ps.2-3
• Jeffrey F. Fullenkamp 70
• Lucille A. Traut, 88
• Gary L. Walker, 80
OPINION.....P.6
Pen City Current.....Ps.2,5-6
Pothitakis Dental Group.....P.2
Public Notices.....P.5

Randolph Dental.....P.4
Ron Davoo.....P.3
SCENE AROUND TOWN.....P.2
Southeast Iowa Regional Airport.....P.4
Southeast Iowa
Regional Medical Center.....P.3
SPORTS.....P.4
Turnwater Bar & Grill.....P.6
Welch's Insurance.....P.6

WEATHER

MON 25 Nov..... Cloudy & chilly, turning clear later, 46° F/23° F
TUE 26 Nov..... Mostly sunny & chilly, turning to clouds, 40° F/31° F
WED 27 Nov..... Chance of rain early, snow/rain later, 41° F/27° F

IOWA LOTTERY

DOUBLE PLAY 11/23..... 36 40 41 50 60, Powerball: 13
LOTTO AMERICA 11/23..... 2 8 10 14 49, Star Ball: 9 All Star Bonus: 2
LUCKY FOR LIFE 11/23..... 11 20 21 26 31, Lucky Ball: 7
MEGA MILLIONS 11/22..... 13 20 26 32 65, Mega Ball: 2 Megaplier: 2
PICK 3 MIDDAY 11/21, 11/22, 11/23..... 129, 336, 327
PICK 3 EVENING 11/21, 11/22, 11/23..... 810, 194, 123
PICK 4 MIDDAY 11/21, 11/22, 11/23..... 3305, 2104, 2233
PICK 4 EVENING 11/21, 11/22, 11/23..... 4243, 7101, 2825
POWERBALL 11/23..... 12 13 34 44 67, Powerball: 8 Power Play: 3

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Obituaries/Scene Around Town



Lee County Supervisor Chairman Garry Seyb, center and LCEDG Board President Jason Hutcherson present Dennis Fraise, left, a County Key honoring his economic development work Thursday at Fraise's retirement celebration.



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OBITUARIES

LUCILLE A. TRAUT

Lucille Ann Traut, 88, of Mt. Pleasant, IA, passed away at 8:25 p.m. on Thursday, November 21, 2024 at Arbor Court in Mt. Pleasant, IA. She was born on October 2, 1936 in Pontoosuc, IL to Frank & Anna Charles Privia. She married Harold B.



TRAUT

Smalley and he preceded her in death on August 25, 2001. She then married Thomas K. Traut and he preceded her in death on June 28, 2018. She was a CNA for over 35 years, lastly at the Donnellson Health Center. She loved caring for people in her work. She enjoyed playing bingo, going out to eat, going to church and spending time with her family.

Lucille is survived by: 4-daughters: Katherine Coutts of Ottumwa, IA, Diana Mitchell of Fort Madison, IA, Lisa Siefering of Virginia Beach, VA & Laura Luadzgers of West Point, IA; 3-sons: Jim Smalley of Iowa City, IA, Ralph Smalley of Richland, WI & Ronnie (Paulette) McDowell of Farmington, IA; numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren and 1-brother: Albert (Carolyn) Privia of Riverside, CA. She was preceded in death by her parents, 1-infant son, 2-grandchildren & 8-brothers & sisters.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A visitation will be held from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. on Monday, November 25, 2024 at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A memorial service will immediately follow at 10:30 a.m. with Pastor Phil Campbell officiating. Burial will be at Denmark Cemetery. A memorial has been established in her memory. Online condolences to Lucille's family may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: www.kinglynk.com.

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HAPPY

THANKSGIVING

In observance of the Thanksgiving holiday, we will not publish an e-Edition Wednesday, November 27 thru Friday, November 29. We'll resume publication on Monday, December 2. Breaking news will continue to be published on our website 24/7.

We wish you a very warm & wonderful Thanksgiving.

PEN CITY CURRENT
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Obituaries

OBITUARIES

JEFFREY F. FULLENKAMP

It is with great sadness to announce the passing of Dr. Jeffrey Francis Fullenkamp on Monday, November 18 at the age of 70 in Des Moines, Iowa. Jeff passed away peacefully with his family by his side. He was born on January 26, 1954 in Topeka, Kansas to Glenn and Jean (Schierbrock) Fullenkamp. Jeff married Susan Kruse on May 13, 2006 in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.



FULLENKAMP

Jeff graduated from Marquette High School in West Point, Iowa and went on to St. Ambrose University where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree. He then joined the United States Army and attended medical school at Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine in Kirksville, Missouri. After graduating, Jeff was stationed in Korea for a year before he returned to the Quad Cities where he was the director of the health clinic at the Rock Island Arsenal for several years.

After graduating as an anesthesiologist from Loyola University in Chicago, Jeff returned to the Quad Cities where he began his career with Trinity Healthcare. Throughout his 30+ year career, Jeff was dedicated to spreading kindness, generosity, and laughter to both patients and colleagues and was known for saying "It's a great day to be part of the Trinity team!" Jeff retired from medicine in 2019.

Jeff served not only his patients, but his country. He was a 34-year veteran of the United States Army and Army Reserves, serving in Korea, Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom for which he was recognized with a Bronze Star. Jeff retired as a Colonel in 2014.

Jeff's retirement years were spent doing what he loved most: being near the water. He enjoyed fishing, boating, and taking in nature's views. He also liked to golf, and travel with his wife, Susan, along with their family and friends.

Jeff is preceded in death by his mother, father, stepmother, Edna (Panther) Fullenkamp, and brother-in-law James Shambo.

He is survived by his wife Susan Kruse, daughter Allison Fullenkamp (Nathan Henkenius) of Rockville, Maryland, son Eric Fullenkamp of Savannah, Georgia, stepson Mason Kruse-Hoyer (Pooja Narayan) of Hanover, Maryland, stepdaughter Alison Cox (Aaron) of West Des Moines, Iowa; brothers Robert Fullenkamp (Sharon), Joseph Fullenkamp (Karen); sisters BJ Gay (George), Ann Shambo (Ted Ablaht); grandchildren Landry, Eli and Finneas Cox; and Zuri Narayan-Hoyer.

Family will receive visitors from 4:00pm to 7:00pm on Friday, December 13, 2024, at Halligan-McCabe-DeVries Funeral Home in Davenport, Iowa.

A Mass of Christian burial will be held at 10:30am on Saturday, December 14th, 2024, at St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church in Davenport.

A private burial will be held in Arlington National Cemetery on a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Online remembrances may be expressed at www.hmdfuneralhome.com.

OBITUARIES

GARY L. WALKER

Gary L. Walker, a cherished husband, father, grandfather, and pillar of the Denmark community, passed away peacefully on Friday, November 22, 2024 at Birkwood Village in Fort Madison, IA at the age of 80. Born on January 25, 1944 in Fort Madison, IA to Jack & Virginia Eoff Walker, Gary's life was a testament to his love for sports, family, and community.



WALKER

In his younger years, Gary was a passionate baseball and softball player. His dedication to the sport extended beyond the field, as he generously volunteered countless hours as a coach and President for the Denmark Ball Association and other local charities. He was a co-founder of the Denmark Ball Association in 1972. His enthusiasm and positive attitude inspired so many and fostered a love for the game in the hearts of the community. Beyond sports, Gary was a devoted Cubs fan and a loyal supporter of the Iowa Hawkeyes. He often shared his passion for these teams with his family and friends, creating lasting memories for many children at the ballpark. He was honored as the Grand Marshall of the Tri-State Rodeo parade in 2013 for his years of work at the rodeo.

Gary was a loving and devoted husband to his wife, Sue. They married on June 18, 1968 in Fort Madison, IA. She preceded him in death on May 1, 2020. Together, they built a beautiful life filled with love and laughter. He was a proud father to his sons, Bryan (Amy) Walker of Tega Cay, SC and Brad (Lindsay) Walker of Fort Madison, IA, and a doting grandfather to his grandchildren, Camille, Meredith, Evelyn, Jack, and Owen. He is also survived by 1-sister: Jacqueline (Dan) Enger of Fort Madison, IA, 1-brother: Robert (Patricia) Walker of Fort Madison, IA & 1-sister-in-law: Faye Walker of Fort Madison, IA. He was preceded in death by his parents, wife, 1-brother & 1-infant brother. His love for his family was unwavering, and he cherished every moment spent with them.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A celebration of Gary's life will be held at a later date. Burial will be held at Fairview Cemetery at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made directly to the Denmark Ball Association to honor his legacy of giving back to the community. Online condolences to the Walker family may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: www.kinglynk.com.

Gary Walker will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and the entire Fort Madison community. His kind heart, stamina, and unwavering support will forever be remembered.

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From the Front

Lady Hounds roll up 173 points in win at Urbandale

LADIES - Continued from Page 1

Smith recorded four pins on her way to the championship in Urbandale with a third period pin over Indianola's Callie Chapman at 5:54 and was up 13-3 when she secured the pin.

Kat DiPrima also recorded a first place finish for the Lady Hounds. DiPrima also had four pins at 140 lbs., getting a second period pin over Creston's Grace Keeler with a 10-0 lead at 3:55.

Fort Madison got a couple of third-place finishes from Iris Arevalo at 120 and Briena Fenton at 125 lbs. The rest of the Hound contingency all placed in the meet.

Doherty said varsity has 10 wrestlers this year with a couple newcomers in Aubree Bunnell from Central Lee and McKayla Schinstock, a Fort Madison sophomore. Bunnell picked up her first career win with a pin Monday in Cardinal.

Fort Madison also returns Tatum Peters at 155 and Sadie Brandon, wrestling now at 135. Brandon wrestled at about 20 pounds higher last season after battling an illness over the summer. Lucille Zimmerman is wrestling again at 100, filling in for Hailey Kemper who graduated early.

"Obviously, we have Mara back as a state qualifier

and Tatum Peters is at 155 and she looks good. Lucille at 100 looks good. We lost Hailey there, but Lucille has filled in nicely. Sadie is down about 30 lbs. and she looked really good at Cardinal. She wrestled about two minutes there total and that was all business," Doherty said.

DiPrima had 30 wins last year and Doherty said she's been fun to watch.

He said the philosophy in the room is be in the top two at the end of the year.

"Whether that's regionals or advancing into the state tournament. They train hard. I'm a firm believer that our room is one of the hardest to train.

Doherty will have Janelle Cresswell and Ryan Peters back as assistants, but is also getting some notable help from state champion Russell Weakley and former Bloodhound Coach Ryan Smith.

Complete results from Saturday's match at Urbandale are below.

100 lbs - Lucille Zimmerman (5-2) placed 5th and scored 13.0 team points. Champ. Round 1 - Lucille Zimmerman (Fort Madison) 5-2 received a bye (I) (Bye); Quarterfinal - Lucille Zimmerman (Fort Madison) 5-2 won by fall over Sophia Ramirez (Ames) 1-5 (Fall 0:49); Semifinal - Nora Ohnemus (Indianola) 3-0 won by fall over Lucille Zimmerman (Fort Madison) 5-2 (Fall 0:25); Cons. Round 3 - Georgia Edwards (Dallas Center-Grimes) 2-2 won by fall over Lucille Zimmerman (Fort Madison) 5-2 (Fall 2:00); 5th Place Match - Lucille Zimmerman (Fort Madison) 5-2 won by fall over Natalie Nickey, 115 lbs - McKayla Schinstock (4-4) placed 7th and scored 11.0 team points. Champ. Round 1 - McKayla Schinstock (Fort Madison) 4-4 won by fall over Allanna Robinson (Marshalltown) 1-4 (Fall 0:55); Quarterfinal - Maribelle Geist-Rochau (Des Moines Hoover) 6-2 won by fall over McKayla Schinstock (Fort Madison) 4-4 (Fall 1:26); Cons. Round 2 - Isabella Smith (Pella) 3-1 won by fall over McKayla Schinstock (Fort Madison) 4-4 (Fall 0:51); Cons. Round 3 - McKayla Schinstock (Fort Madison) 4-4 won by fall over Delanee Smith (Dallas Center-Grimes) 0-2 (Fall 1:34); 7th Place Match - McKayla

Schinstock (Fort Madison) 4-4 won by fall over Savannah Halstead (Norwalk) 1-3 (Fall 2:30). 120 lbs - Iris Arevalo (5-2) placed 3rd and scored 20.0 team points. Champ. Round 1 - Iris Arevalo (Fort Madison) 5-2 received a bye (I) (Bye); Quarterfinal - Iris Arevalo (Fort Madison) 5-2 won by fall over Josie Hill (Central Decatur) 1-3 (Fall 3:22); Semifinal - Kaitlyn Bonewitz (Benton Community) 2-3 won by fall over Iris Arevalo (Fort Madison) 5-2 (Fall 2:34); Cons. Round 3 - Iris Arevalo (Fort Madison) 5-2 won by fall over Audrey Lucas (Ankeny) 2-2 (Fall 2:01); 3rd Place Match - Iris Arevalo (Fort Madison) 5-2 won by fall over Hannah Smith (Norwalk) 2-2 (Fall 0:26). 125 lbs. - Briena Fenton (7-1) placed 3rd and scored 22.0 team points. Champ. Round 1 - Briena Fenton (Fort Madison) 7-1 won by fall over Maya Wojtowicz (Norwalk) 3-1 (Fall 0:48); Quarterfinal - Briena Fenton (Fort Madison) 7-1 won by fall over Kate Badding (Ames) 2-5 (Fall 0:45); Semifinal - Alainah Galanakis (Creston) 5-1 won by tech fall over Briena Fenton (Fort Madison) 7-1 (TF-1.5 4:37 (18-1)); Cons. Round 3 - Briena Fenton (Fort Madison) 7-1 won by fall over Ari Clinton (Ankeny) 6-3 (Fall 2:00); 3rd Place Match - Briena Fenton (Fort Madison) 7-1 won by fall over Josephine Bond (Dallas Center-Grimes) 2-2 (Fall 5:44). 130 lbs. - Mara Smith (7-0) placed 1st and scored 30.0 team points. Champ. Round 1 - Mara Smith (Fort Madison) 7-0 won by fall over Sofiya Pollard (Urbandale) 4-1 (Fall 1:39); Quarterfinal - Mara Smith (Fort Madison) 7-0 won by fall over Baylie Van Der Molen (Dallas Center-Grimes) 2-3 (Fall 0:55); Semifinal - Mara Smith (Fort Madison) 7-0 won by fall over Kenadi Montgomery (Pella) 3-2 (Fall 1:36). 1st Place Match - Mara Smith (Fort Madison) 7-0 won by fall over Callie Chapman (Indianola) 3-1 (Fall 5:54). 135 lbs. - Sadie Brandon (5-2) placed 6th and scored 11.0 team points. Champ. Round 1 - Sadie Brandon (Fort Madison) 5-2 won by fall over Madelyn Carroll (Norwalk) 0-2 (Fall 1:15); Quarterfinal - Sadie Brandon (Fort Madison) 5-2 won by fall over Brianna Freerksen (Colfax-Mingo) 4-5 (Fall 0:10); Semifinal - Evy Marlin (Creston) 5-1 won by fall over Sadie Brandon (Fort Madison) 5-2 (Fall 2:34); Cons. Round 3 - Lexa Rozevink (Ames) 7-1 won by medical forfeit over Sadie Brandon (Fort Madison) 5-2 (M. For.); 5th Place Match - Andrea Taylor (Indianola) 3-2 won by forfeit over Sadie Brandon (Fort Madison) 5-2 (For.). 140 lbs. - Kat Diprima (7-0) placed 1st and scored 30.0 team points. Champ. Round 1 - Kat Diprima (Fort Madison) 7-0 won by fall over Summer Wolff (Indianola) 4-1 (Fall 3:03); Quarterfinal - Kat Diprima (Fort Madison) 7-0 won by fall over Haley Togba (Ankeny) 4-4 (Fall 2:53); Semifinal - Kat Diprima (Fort Madison) 7-0 won by fall over Izzy Schoettmer (Benton Community) 5-3 (Fall 1:38); 1st Place Match - Kat Diprima (Fort Madison) 7-0 won by fall over Grace Keeler (Creston) 4-2 (Fall 3:55) > 145 lbs. - Aubree Bunnell (3-4) placed 6th and scored 9.0 team points. Champ. Round 1 - Aubree Bunnell (Fort Madison) 3-4 received a bye (I) (Bye); Quarterfinal - Aubree Bunnell (Fort Madison) 3-4 won by fall over Addyson Lovelace (Marshalltown) 4-3 (Fall 2:32); Semifinal - Kamryn Faas (Ames) 6-1 won by fall over Aubree Bunnell (Fort Madison) 3-4 (Fall 0:37); Cons. Round 3 - Hadley Millang (Colfax-Mingo) 7-3 won by fall over Aubree Bunnell (Fort Madison) 3-4 (Fall 2:30); 5th Place Match - Jordan Voelkel (Benton Community) 5-5 won by fall over Aubree Bunnell (Fort Madison) 3-4 (Fall 3:05). 155 lbs. - Tatum Peters (6-2) placed 5th and scored 14.0 team points. Champ. Round 1 - Tatum Peters (Fort Madison) 6-2 won by fall over AK Nolin (Ames) 1-2 (Fall 3:31); Quarterfinal - Elizabeth Briggs (Urbandale) 2-2 won by fall over Tatum Peters (Fort Madison) 6-2 (Fall 1:22); Cons. Round 2 - Tatum Peters (Fort Madison) 6-2 won by fall over Genevieve Lantigua (Marshalltown) 5-2 (Fall 1:43); Cons. Round 3 - Allie Van Der Molen (Dallas Center-Grimes) 3-1 won by fall over Tatum Peters (Fort Madison) 6-2 (Fall 3:56); 5th Place Match - Tatum Peters (Fort Madison) 6-2 won by fall over Abbi Lemke (Pella) 1-3 (Fall 4:58). 170 lbs. - Mady Emmett (7-1) placed 7th and scored 13.0 team points. Champ. Round 1 - Ashtyn Jahangir (Dallas Center-Grimes) 3-2 won by fall over Mady Emmett (Fort Madison) 7-1 (Fall 0:32); Cons. Round 1 - Mady Emmett (Fort Madison) 7-1 won by fall over Julia Hard (Ames) 0-5 (Fall 1:02); Cons. Round 2 - Mady Emmett (Fort Madison) 7-1 won by fall over Emma Beyer (Colfax-Mingo) 0-2 (Fall 1:08); Cons. Round 3 - Mady Emmett (Fort Madison) 7-1 won by fall over Miranda Ross (Ames) 1-3 (Fall 0:58); 7th Place Match - Mady Emmett (Fort Madison) 7-1 won by fall over Liana Krell (Valley, West Des Moines) 2-2 (Fall 1:57)



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Classifieds/Public Notices

PEN CITY CURRENT CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICES

**PUBLIC NOTICE
MEETING NOTICE
LEE COUNTY BOARD
OF SUPERVISORS
MONDAY
November 25, 2024
MEETING CONVENING
TIME: 10:00 A.M.
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-----AGENDA-----

Lee County Board of Supervisors
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Chairman to address you. If you are participating by phone, please wait until everyone is done speaking before addressing the Board.
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
Consider Approval of Resolution Authorizing Lee County to Support the Great River Housing Trust Fund
Discussion and Possible Action on Montrose Site Lease Agreement for VA
Consider Approval of Shredding Contract with The Shredder for EMS
Consider Approval of Service Agreement to Participate in the ISAC HIPAA Program
Consider Approval of Second Reading and Possible Waiver of Third Reading of Alcohol Compliance Ordinance
Personnel Actions

- New Hire (Replacement) Secondary Roads
- Step Increases (4) - Health Dept
- Step Increase Correction - Conservation Consent Agenda
- Monday, November 18, 2024 Board Minutes
- Claims for Payment
- Class C Retail Alcohol License for Powdertown Golf
- Tax Abatement Resolutions (4) Reports:
- Commission of Veteran Affairs Minutes of Meeting
- Commission or Committee Reports
- Adjourn

**PUBLIC MEETING
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**PUBLIC NOTICE
Minutes for the
Lee County
Conservation Board
Meeting
October 8, 2024
Lee County
Conservation Center
2652 Hwy 61
Montrose, IA 52639**

Called to order at 5:00 p.m.
Roll call: Alton_X_Moore_X_Patrick_X_Benjamin_X_Reed_X_Staff Present: Huebner, Risser, Sestito
Supervisor: Holmes
1. Approval of Agenda Motion by Moore to approve the agenda
2nd: Benjamin Motion Carried
2. Approval of Minutes from September 10, 2024 Motion by Benjamin to approve the minutes
2nd: Moore Motion Carried
3. Public Input No public input
4. Approval of Bills Motion by Alton to approve of the bills
2nd: Moore Motion Carried

5. Approval of Financial Report
Huebner stated that the county did a budget amendment to the trust for the land purchase
Motion by Benjamin to approve the financial report
2nd: Moore Motion Carried
6. Staff and Director Reports
Risser gave the education report, highlighting field trip season, raising and releasing 31 monarchs, and public programs – OWLS, monarch tagging, and Master Conservationist course.
The rangers were away at training – Huebner presented their report, highlighting 810 camping nights, 32 cabin nights, and 5 shelter rentals.
Huebner gave her director report, highlighting staff attending the ICCS conference, working on recent and upcoming events, partnering with Hery County and Homestead 1839 for an Americorp team next year, the concrete is done for the

fishing area shelter, auction is open and closing soon, and an organization wants to partner and apply for grants for new signage at Croton.
7. Board Member Comments
Alton stated that she visited Wilson Lake and thought the new paint on the old bathroom looked great.
8. Adjournment
Motion by Moore to adjourn the meeting at 5:18 p.m.
2nd: Benjamin Motion Carried
Jim Patrick, LCCB President
Caroline Veihl, LCCB Secretary

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From the Front

Fraise a great example of reporter, source relations

FRAISE - Continued from Page 1

But there's a little separation between the relationship with Fraise that continued when Lee and I started Pen City Current, at least in comparison with a lot of other sources.

Many looked at us as an outside nuisance, but a necessity in any growing community.

Another news outlet in a town of 10,000 and half a county of 30,000 was more than some wanted to deal with.

But not Fraise. He welcomed the additional coverage like a coach who gets more exposure for his team. This isn't a big secret, but most people want the media only to know what they want them to know. Dennis was different as our relationship grew. He knew the role we had to play and how we had to play it. And he respected that. And we responded in kind and respected the role he was playing and how he needed to play it.

That was understood from the outset and our relationship was very strong and full of trust. Fraise knew it was my job to ask tough questions and it was his duty to dodge them. That's a little tongue-in-cheek because Dennis was about as open and accessible as any source I've ever had. There were times he talked to me about developments that were in front of the group that I'd gotten wind of. A lot of publishers say their responsibility is to their readers first and foremost, and it is. But the landscape for that work diminishes greatly and very quickly when you

print things that can hinder the work of others, or at least make it more difficult to do.

Sometimes there is no option. I tell people all the time, "If I could print everything I hear, I'd probably make more money for about a month, then I'd be broke."

I also had a very respected mentor when I was in Nebraska who said something I'll never forget as a journalist.

"We have the right to print it, but is it right to print it?"

I think he got it from a mentor of his who had it printed on a banner in what I'm sure was an old editor's office with papers stacked everywhere and done completely in wood.

Dennis and I talked about many things that were happening with GROW Lee and MVM jumped in on the World Record Tulip planting with some messaging and designing.

I really got to know him and his style of getting people in a room and it has, well – grown ever since.

Fraise photographed my brother's and sister-in-law's wedding many moons ago, and apparently many, many seniors in the area. He then moved on to non-profit work with the Alzheimers Association and quickly gravitated to economic development. That work set him up as a unique person to be the catalyst for building partnerships in Lee County. Fraise went about the work with vision and a zeal for greatness. Our headline last week of "The Right Guy at



The crowd at Turnwater Bar & Grill gives a standing ovation to outgoing LCEDG CEO Dennis Fraise Thursday at the reception for Fraise's retirement.

the right time." was on point.

He now has the top Economic Development podcast in the country and has ushered in many state, national, and international economic development awards.

He'd be the first to tell you it hasn't been without hurdles and even some opposition to the goals at hand. But show me any plan with 100% undeniable support and I'll show you a fictional plan.

No one operates on a plane of perfection, but successful people try to gravitate to those that reach for the stars. For 11 years in Lee County, Fraise reached for the stars. I'll never forget this gentle giant pointing to me in a room of people way more important and saying "Our special friend Chuck Vandenberg is with us again in the back of the room and we're happy about that."

It was at a March 2020 58-minute

LCEDG breakfast. It was also the very first event I forced myself to cover following Kelsey's death several weeks earlier. I got up and went to the bathroom and wept.

I'm sure Dennis will be around for a lunch every now and then, but as just one small media dude, in a pretty small pond, we're gonna miss him. Fraise retired from his post on Thursday. I went not to cover the celebration event at Turnwater, but to listen to what I was pretty sure would be a funny wave to those who'd been a part of his life over the past several decades.

He didn't disappoint.

Godspeed, Mr. Fraise, on your retirement. You're a special friend, as well – 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.

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