

Murie now facing attempted murder

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Review of charges results in more severe charge from assault

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Lee County Attorney Ross Braden has elevated the charges against a Fort Madison man accused of assaulting a former girlfriend who had a protective order in place.

Kristopher Robin Murie, 44, of Fort Madison, has been charged with Attempt to Commit Murder, Burglary in the First Degree, and Sexual Abuse in the First Degree. These charges were filed in North Lee County Court Wednesday and were the result of further investigation and case review stemming from the incident.

On Saturday, April 12, 2025, at approximately 12:48 p.m., officers with the Fort Madison Police Department responded to Southeast



MURIE

Iowa Regional Medical Center for a report of a female victim suffering from lacerations to her head and neck.

Murie was initially arrested and charged with Violation of a No Contact Order, Willful Injury Causing Serious Injury, and Domestic Abuse Assault with a Weapon. Following further investigation, and a review of pertinent information that was unavailable at the time, the charges were increased in severity. He is currently being held in the Lee County Jail.

The Fort Madison Police Department is the lead agency in the

See ASSAULT, page 6

Chamber sets nominees for small business of the year

BREAKFAST: Small business recognition breakfast set for May 9 at Turnwater

PCC Staff

FORT MADISON - The Fort Madison Area Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce the nominees for the 2025 Small Business and Micro Business of the Year awards. These recognitions celebrate the spirit, dedication, and impact of small businesses in our community—honoring those who go above and beyond in their work, service, and support of others. Winners will be announced during the annual Small Business Breakfast on Friday, May 9th at 7:30 a.m. at Turnwater Bar & Grill. The event is held each year in conjunction with National Small Business Week, a nationwide celebration of the vital role small businesses play in driving our economy and enriching our communities.

Tickets are \$15 per person and available until April 30th. This year’s event is made possible thanks to our generous sponsors. Premier sponsor: Huffman Welding & Machine, Inc. and Huffman’s Farm & Home. Buffet sponsors include Climax Molybdenum and Pilot Grove Savings Bank.

2025 Small Business of the Year Nominees:

Bent Oak Books

This cozy local bookstore has quickly become a beloved spot in Fort Madison. As one nominator shared, “It is just beautiful, such an asset to Fort Madison... and the interactions I have had with some of the girls who work there were just great.”

TNT Greenhouses

Rooted in passion and expertise, TNT Greenhouses continues to grow in ser-

See NOMINEES, page 4



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Construction work has begun on the the Avenue L overlay project from 27th Street to 30th Street in Fort Madison. New concrete was needed at the intersection of Avenue L and 27th due to an oversight in engineering.

Area News

GBP under fire for hiring of State Rep. Taylor Collins

PCC Staff

BURLINGTON – As part of an ongoing dialogue with the community, the Greater Burlington Partnership is emphasizing its commitment to ensuring economic development remains a collaborative and inclusive effort that benefits the entire region.

The appointment of Taylor Collins as Executive Director of Economic Development, effective May 1, 2025, has sparked dialogue throughout the community. As an organization, the Greater Burlington Partnership respects and values the many perspectives of the people we serve, and we welcome thoughtful engagement.

BTown Pride launched a petition to have Collins removed from the position with Greater Partnership as part of a statement accusing Collins of not being qualified to represent the entirety of the Greater Burlington area.

See BTOWN PRIDE, page 6

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WEATHER

THU 24 Apr/Mostly sunny, then slight chance of showers, 80° F/ 59° F ☀️
FRI 25 AprShowers likely, 71° F/ 46° F ☁️
SAT 26 AprMostly sunny, 65° F/ 47° F ☀️

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LUCKY FOR LIFE 04/2214 31 36 39 44, Lucky Ball: 8
MEGA MILLIONS 04/2225 39 49 52 65, Mega Ball: 22
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PICK 3 EVENING 04/225 8 9
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Obituaries

OBITUARIES

GERALD L. WEIRATHER

Gerald “Jerry” Leo Weirather, 85 of Keokuk, IA passed away Monday, April 21, 2025 at his home surrounded by his family.

He was born September 27, 1939, the son of Leo and Alberta Cale Weirather. On April 12, 1958, Jerry was united in marriage to Joyce Senf at the Montrose Trinity Church in Montrose, IA. She survives.



WEIRATHER

Other survivors include, two sons, Anthony Weirather of Polk City, FL and Scott (Patricia) Weirather of Keokuk, one daughter, Wendy Weirather Frakes of Keokuk, six grandchildren, Nathan Weirather, Brian Weirather (Kelsey Weigand), Ethan Frakes (Tess Kuhn) and Jeremy Frakes, Brock Weirather, Tara Weirather and two great-grandchildren, Aria and Caden, He is also survived by one brother, Norman Weirather of Nowata, OK, one sister-in-law, Mary Weirather of Keokuk and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents and one brother, Roland Weirather.

Jerry graduated from Montrose High School with the class of 1957. He played baseball for The Junior Legion Ball Team in Keokuk. He then coached Little League in Keokuk for ten years, he loved to play with his boys. During that time he was also working at Ortho in the maintenance department. He also graduated college at Southeastern Community College in the 1970’s. In 1980 he started farming with his brother, Roland and farming was his passion. He was a member of Sandusky Methodist Church. Jerry was an up-standing and honest man that was a great provider for his family. He was an expert at fixing, maintaining and running most all machinery that was made. The St. Louis Cardinals was his favorite team, where he occasionally went to St. Louis to watch them play with family and friends. He loved to mushroom hunt and showed his grandchildren where to hunt them. The best part was eating them. He was a member of Tuesday and Wednesday night bowling league, where he enjoyed the evening with friends. His favorite thing to do was to be with his family, especially with his grandchildren. He will be greatly missed. It was his joy in life to teach them that with hard work their goals can be achieved.

A funeral service will be held at 11 a.m., Monday, April 28 at the Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk, IA with Penny Williams officiating. A private family burial will be held in the Montrose Cemetery in Montrose, IA.

Visitation will be held prior to the service from 10-11 a.m., Monday, at the funeral home with family meeting with friends at that time.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Lee County Hospice or to the Montrose Ball Association, in memory of Gerald Weirather.

The family would like to thank Lee County Hospice Nursing and Ancillary Staff for the above and beyond care and comfort that was given to our family.

Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.vigenmemorial-home.com.

OBITUARIES

SUSAN E. OLENICK

Susan Ellen “Sue” Olenick, 75, of Dallas City, Illinois, passed away Saturday, April 19, 2025, at home, surrounded by her family.

Sue was born April 30, 1949 in Englewood, New Jersey, the daughter of Levi and Dorothy (Schomp) Porter. On June 24, 1968 she married John Olenick in Three Bridges, New Jersey. He survives.



OLENICK

Sue was a graduate of Hunterdon Central High School in Flemington, New Jersey. Earlier in life, she worked for Lipton Tea and Eaton Corporation in New Jersey, before her husband’s work relocated them to Dallas City in 1977. Once in the Dallas City area, she worked for Shaefer Pen in Fort Madison and for Methode Electronics in Carthage for 19 years, retiring in 2008.

Sue was a creative individual who enjoyed drawing, crafts and painting. She also enjoyed camping and traveling, especially by motorcycle with her husband. They traveled all over the United States by Gold Wing motorcycles. She was a member of the Gold Wing Road Riders Association from 1989 until the groups recent dissolution. The last few years, she enjoyed camping in their fifth wheel camper.

Besides her husband, John, survivors include three daughters: Renee and Curtis Faul of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, Chandra Sue Olenick of Dallas City and Cheryl and Dillon Yaley of Quincy, Illinois, grandchildren: Nichole and Hunter Faul of Mt. Pleasant, Gavin Muller of Dallas City and Gabriel and Isaac Yaley of Quincy and great-grandchildren: Elliot Muller of Dallas City and Oakley Faul of Keokuk, Iowa.

She was preceded in death by her parents. The family will receive friends from 4:00 until 6:00 p.m. Thursday, April 24, 2025 at Banks & Beals Funeral Home in Dallas City. Services will be held at 6:00 p.m., following visitation, with Pastor Roger Welty officiating.

Cremation will be entrusted to Banks & Beals Funeral Home following the service. Burial will be held at later date at the Keokuk National Cemetery. A memorial fund has been established for Lee County Hospice or the Memorial Hospital. To leave an online condolence for the family, please visit her obituary at banksand-beals.com.

DONNA L. PEITZ

Donna Lee Peitz, 65, of Adrian, Illinois, passed away Sunday, April 20, 2025 at her home.

Donna was born July 27, 1959 in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, the daughter of Delmer and Frances (Pilkington) Peitz.

Donna graduated from the former Aquinas High School in Fort Madison, Iowa. She worked at Sheaffer Pen, Fort Madison, until their closing in 2008. She enjoyed animals, especially her dogs.

Survivors include two sisters: Linda Wilson of Nauvoo, Illinois and Kim Janusch of Argyle, Iowa.

She was preceded in death by her parents. Cremation has been entrusted to Schmitz-Banks & Beals Funeral Home of Nauvoo. No services are planned. To leave an online tribute for the family, please visit Donna’s obituary at sbbfuneralhome.com.

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Obituaries

OBITUARIES

LLOYD B. SPARROW

Lloyd Beryl Sparrow, 104, of Lomax, Illinois, passed away Saturday, April 19, 2025, one day before his 105th birthday, at the Oak Lane Nursing & Rehab in Stronghurst, Illinois.



SPARROW

Beryl was born April 20, 1920 in Lomax the son of Lloyd W. and Bessie M. (Burkiett) Sparrow. On January 18, 1952 he married Fern F. Welch at the Church of the Nazarene in Lomax. She survives. Beryl lived all of his life in the Lomax area. He was a 1939 graduate of Dallas City High School. While in high school, Beryl assisted his father with the operation of the Lomax Canning Factory. Following high school, he attended college, before joining his brother, Vernal, in a farming operation. He also owned and operated heavy equipment on their farm and many other local farms. Later, Beryl returned to the Lomax Canning Factory, to work along side his father once more. After the closing of the Canning Factory, he continued to farm in the Lomax area until his retirement in 1990. After retirement, he remained active operating Beryl's This & That in Lomax. He was a member of the Henderson County Farm Bureau and the Lomax Church of the Nazerene, where he received the 2002 Distinguished Service Award.

Survivors include his wife of 73 years, Fern, five children: Carla (Don) Williams of West Burlington, Lloyd E. (Janie) Sparrow of Ocala, Florida, Ann (Michael) Brooks of Crestview, Florida, Martin Sparrow of Dallas City and Byron (Jennifer) Sparrow of Stronghurst; 11 grandchildren: Adonica (Michael) Gould, Lucas (Kaylin) Sparrow, John (Stephanie) Sparrow, Chastity (Steve) Heagerty, Marc (Skye Moore) Sparrow, Bobby Sparrow, Danielle Sparrow, Monte Cole, Kaitlin (Matt) McVey, Jacob Sparrow and Mitchell Sparrow, 13 great-grandchildren and one sister-in-law, Jean Anne Sparrow of Salem, Iowa.

He was preceded in death by two sisters: Helen Hunter Pfeiffer and Vera Mae Logan, one brother: Vernal Sparrow and one daughter-in-law: Traci Sparrow.

The funeral service for Beryl will be held at 11:00 a.m. Thursday, April 24, 2025 at Banks & Beals Funeral Home in LaHarpe with Pastor Jordan Knight officiating.

The family will receive friends Thursday, April 24th from 9:30 a.m. until time of services at Banks & Beals Funeral Home in LaHarpe.

As per Beryl's wishes, following services his body will be donated to the Deeded Body Program at the University of Iowa. Burial will be held at a later date in Crane Cemetery, near Lomax.

A memorial fund has been established for Oak lane Nursing and Rehab. To leave an online condolence for the family, please visit Beryl's obituary at banksandbeals.com.

Pen City Current obituary policy

Pen City Current runs obituaries one time at no charge to funeral homes and they run the day they are submitted in most cases. They are also run as submitted by the funeral homes. Reposting of obituaries due to changes can only be requested by the submitting funeral home and will be assessed a \$15 reposting fee.

OBITUARIES

JOSH D. ADAMS

Josh David Adams, 73, of Ft. Madison passed away on Friday, April 18, 2025 at 11:47 PM at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics.

He was born on June 18, 1951 in Raceland, LA to Josh and Marjorie Adams. On May 16, 1997 he married Jan Power. Josh served in the US Army. He is survived by his wife, Jan Adams of Ft. Madison.



Per his wishes, cremation has been entrusted to King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory and online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.com.

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Sports/From the Front

Four small businesses vie for microbusiness of the year

NOMINEES - Continued from Page 1

vice and size. One submission praised their legacy: “With over a century of combined greenhouse experience... Fort Madison is fortunate to have these industry leaders contributing to the local community and business landscape.”

The Cottage Café

A multi-generational, family-owned restaurant that’s stood strong through challenges. A supporter noted, “They have proudly served their community throughout much adversity... such an inspiration.”

2025 Micro Business of the Year Nominees:

Brecount Autobody

With more than 30 years of experience, this family-owned shop is known for excellent service and heartfelt care. A nominator shared, “They make everyone feel very welcome and like you are part of their family... you can expect them to do the best job at a fair price.”

Bee Inspired Discovery Center

Celebrated for her collaborative spirit and creative programs for kids, one nomination noted, “She is such an asset

to Fort Madison and works with many other businesses to create new experiences for kids.”

Fit Lee County

This fun, female-focused fitness business has seen exciting growth and collaboration. As one nomination said, “They work with many businesses and have grown so much... a fun place for women to come together and have fun with fitness.”

Wingert Bakehaus

Praised for both product and purpose, this bakery is making a big impact. A heartfelt nomination shared, “Their Free Community Bread Box is a shining example of business as a force for good... They embody the very best of what a micro business can be: small in size, but enormous in heart and impact.”

Join us in honoring these outstanding local businesses and the people behind them. For more information or to purchase tickets, contact the Fort Madison Area Chamber of Commerce at 319-372-5471 or chamber@fortmadison.com.

SPORTS DIGEST

Wade shoots 2-over 37 at Washington Invitational

WASHINGTON – Fort Madison claimed 2nd place in the Washington leg of Southeast Conference boys golf action Monday night, their highest finish in SEC play this year.

The Bloodhounds hold 3rd place overall in the series with 876 points behind Washington (792) and Mt. Pleasant (838).

Brady Wade led Fort Madison with a 37 on the par 35, 9-hole course in Washington. Wade was two shots out of the medalist running with Washington’s Carson Brown shooting an even-par 35 and Drew Conrad with runner-up honors with a 36.

Washington won the event with 156 points. Fort Madison was second with 168 edging Mt. Pleasant by just a stroke. Fairfield shot a 189 and Keokuk carded a team 197.

Cole Quittem shot a 42 for Fort Madison followed by Rowan Benda’s 44 and Graeme Merideth’s 45 to round out the Bloodhound scorers.

Colton Boyer shot a 51 and Conner Cale rounded the nine with a 67.

Keokuk was led by Mason Baker’s 42.

Bloodhounds split Saturday soccer matches

FORT MADISON – The Hound boys knocked off Centerville 11-0 in the first match of the day on Saturday at the Fort Madison Invitational at Baxter Sports Complex, but dropped game two to Davenport West 4-1.

Connor Horn scored four goals in the first game. Kayden Hansen had two, Hunter Weigand had two in the win. Jacob Shottenkirk had five assists. Tate Green had two and Jonah Santiago and Jake Haessig each had one.

In the second game Horn had the only goal giving him five on the day. He got an assist from Shottenkirk. Karson Dixon had one save in the loss.

The JV lost to Mediapolis 3-2.

The Hounds 4-2-1 (3-0) play at Mt. Pleasant on Thursday night in a battle of Southeast Conference unbeaten.

The Lady Hounds meet Monday in Washington was canceled due to lack of officials.

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Thursday, April 24th
Fried Chicken Dinners

Friday, April 25th
Grilling on the Sidewalk

Sports/Classifieds

NASCAR’s Kyle Larson working the long game

NEWTON, Iowa — I suppose if I’m going to be in the passenger seat of a Corvette going 100 mph down the short backstretch of Iowa Speedway, I’m going to be comfortable with Kyle Larson as the driver.

The NASCAR Cup Series driver was in Iowa on the series’ last off weekend of the season to drive a sprint car at Knoxville Raceway, but made a stop at Iowa Speedway on Friday to promote the August 3 Iowa Corn 350 at the .875-mile oval.

Larson can drive pretty much anything and drive it well — he’ll be doing the Indianapolis 500/Coca-Cola 600 double on Memorial Day weekend again this season, and it wouldn’t be that much of a stretch to think he could win both races.

Part of the day was spent giving media members rides in the track’s pace car, so I took the opportunity to get in a few laps with Larson.

He explained the nuances of the tight track to me in a conversation that was like two guys driving down the highway except we were diving into the turns as he would on race day, albeit at a little bit of a slower speed.

I’ve done the pace car rides at the track many times before — Regan Smith, Kenny Wallace, Austin Dillon and Elliott Sadler were some of the drivers — and it’s an opportunity to a.) see what kind of line they drive and b.) see how close they get to the wall on the backstretch and by the start/finish line.

The acceleration off pit road was a sign Larson wanted to get some speed out of the Corvette, and I was fine with it.

When Larson got done taking all of us around the track, we got some one-on-one time with him, and of course I had to ask him why, less than a week after practically sweeping the previous weekend at Bristol — he won the Cup Series and Xfinity Series races and finished second in the Truck Series race — he was going to be in a sprint car for the World of Outlaws races



the Knoxville Nationals at the track in August, and although he’s been at the track many times before, including last season’s victory, he still wanted the education.

“I have a lot of fun, and I love Knoxville,” said Larson, who finished second in Saturday’s A-Main. “And it was just an opportunity to get ready for the Nationals, which is important. So, glad that we were able to make it out for this and hopefully, hopefully it goes good, hopefully you learn something and get even better.”

It’s hard to be better for Larson these days. He has two wins and five top-5s in the Cup Series this season as he sits fourth in the point standings.

He’s just a few weeks away from attempting the Indy/Charlotte double again. Larson finished 18th in the rain-delayed Indianapolis 500 last season, then by the time he got to Charlotte to at least some of the 600, the race was in a delay that would eventually wipe out the rest of the race.

“There was nothing that really surprised me last year,” he said. “I felt like (IndyCar) was very similar to Cup racing. I think just how traffic in the race is different than in practice, maybe that is all that I would be better prepared for this time.”

Larson was looking forward to being back at Iowa Speedway for the August race. He finished 34th in last season’s inaugural Cup Series race at the track, although he led 80 laps.

at Knoxville. What impressed Larson that day was the crowd — it was a sellout, and this year’s race is close to being sold out as well, with approximately 200 tickets still available.

“I was just happy to see that (the fans) were happy to have NASCAR racing here once again, especially the Cup Series,” Larson said. “So yeah, I got to see a lot of familiar faces from dirt racing fans here, and that always feels good. And then the racing on track was great as well. So yeah, I thought the atmosphere and everything made for a good weekend. Can’t wait to do it again.”

I thanked him for the fast laps and headed home. A ride down Interstate 80 was still ahead, but it wasn’t going to be as fun.

John Bohnenkamp is an award-winning sports reporter and regular contributor to Pen City Current.

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From the Front

Greater Burlington Partnership denies partisanship

BTOWN PRIDE - Continued from Page 1

In their statement last week the group said Collins’ record is one of “division, exclusion, and harm”. They cited several votes on Collins’ record as State Representative including:

- He voted in favor of HF718, which capped tax levies — even those previously approved by voters — slashing funding for critical public amenities like the library, community pool, art center, and municipal band.
- He supported efforts to strip diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs across Iowa, and backed measures that restrict academic freedom at state universities.
- He voted to remove rights from the Iowa Civil Rights Act — undoing protections that had been in place since 2007 and making Iowa the first state to remove civil protections, a dangerous precedent that could impact all Iowans.

According to a release from the partnership on Wednesday, the organization aligns with values of inclusion and nonpartisanship.

“The Greater Burlington Partnership is not a political entity, and staff roles are not vehicles for political advocacy. While the Economic Development Executive Director may hold public office, his responsibilities within the Partnership are focused solely on advancing economic growth and opportunity across the region,” the statement released by Dustin Roth, GBP Director of Marketing and Communication, explained.

“This is a results-driven position, measured by tangible outcomes such as business growth, job creation, and strategic partnerships that strengthen the local economy. Clear expectations are in place, and the position is overseen by the President & CEO and the Economic Development Board of Directors, who are committed to ensuring that all efforts reflect the best interests of Greater Burlington’s residents, businesses, and stakeholders.”

GBP President and CEO Amy O’Brien said the agency is focused on economic development.

“Greater Burlington is made up of people with many different perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences. And that’s what makes this community so strong,” she wrote.


“We’re proud to serve a place where people care deeply about their neighbors and their future. Our work in economic development is focused on expanding opportunity and strengthening our region, for everyone who calls this area home.”

The statement went on to add the partnership remains committed to advocating for the needs of the community and supporting efforts that contribute to long-term economic growth and regional vitality.

“All staff are required to uphold the Partnership’s core values: collaboration, integrity, and service to the entire community. We remain open to hearing from the community and working together to ensure our efforts reflect the values and goals of the region we proudly serve.”

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Reports show Murie tried to kill woman

ASSAULT - Continued from Page 1

investigation. The case is being prosecuted by the Lee County Attorney’s Office.

The public is reminded that a criminal charge is merely an accusation. All individuals are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

According to records filed in N. Lee County Court, the victim was asleep in the living room the evening of April 11, when she heard loud banging on the door and found Murie standing in the doorway and it being dark outside.

The victim’s statement to police indicated Murie and the victim became engaged in an altercation and he had a machete and a hammer, along with a shorter knife and a box cutter in his hand. Murie told her that he was going to kill her and then kill himself.

After a period of physical assaults, the victim reported that Murie began to wake her up to tell her she needed to get in her vehicle to be taken to the hospital, where staff notified law enforcement.

The complaint also indicated that Murie had no weapons or tools on him at the time of his arrest. The victim was stabilized and then transferred to another facility for advanced care.

Murie is being held on a \$20,000 cash only bond.

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