Burglars hit Rashid Pharmacy

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - A $1,000 reward is being offered for information in connection with the Monday morning burglary at Rashid Pharmacy & Wellness in Fort Madison.

Fort Madison Police are looking for suspects involved in the burglary that occurred sometime after 3:30 a.m. Monday.

Pharmacy owner, Joe Rashid, said Monday morning he is offering $1,000 for information that leads Fort Madison Police to the suspects involved in the incident.

Rashid said the burglars cut the phone lines to the building at about 3:30 Monday morning and then broke in a door to see if the alarm had been disconnected.

“They cut the place for about two hours after cutting the lines and then came back and took some narcotics,” Rashid said.

He said he couldn’t disclose additional information about the theft because the investigation is underway. He said there is video evidence and that will be released today to help with the investigation.

The store was closed for about three hours until about 11 a.m. when it was reopened for business.

Anyone with information on the incident should contact the Fort Madison Police Department at 372-2525.

According to Fort Madison Police Chief Tim Sittig, who was at the scene this morning, authorities received a report of the burglary at approximately 7:30 a.m. Monday morning.

Sittig said investigators reviewed video evidence of the break-in and worked with pharmacy staff to determine what medications and how much were taken.

Chamber plans another Hawkeye Day for Dec. 29

Tickets are just $10 for kids and $15 for adults

Submitted article

FORT MADISON - The Fort Madison Area Chamber of Commerce has once again partnered with the University of Iowa Athletics to secure premium seating for the community to enjoy a Iowa Hawkeyes football game.

A number of businesses in the community have stepped up to help us provide a t-shirt with every ticket purchase.

"We are excited to have the community sitting in the stands of Kinnick Stadium all sporting a Fort Madison day-t-shirt!” said Savannah Collier, Fort Madison Chamber Coordinator.

Tickets will be available for $10 for children and $15 for adults. The Chamber is also partnering with Burlington Trailways to offer a bus ride to Iowa City for the game.

Tickets will cost $5 per person. Tickets and t-shirts will be available before the Christmas holiday and will make the perfect gift for that special someone.

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INSIDE:
FMHS Building Trades program wins state competition for third year in a row.

Seven hundred sixty-three days and counting.

Pen City Current will enter its third year of writing about the people of north Lee County on Dec. 6... and we couldn’t be happier to still be here.

I’ve been reading a lot lately on the shape and future of community news gathering. The landscape is slowly improving and media experts are pointing to community journalism as the models that produce the most trustworthy news. If you follow social media a lot you’ll see that people are starting to filter what they are reading, but it’s a cycle that’s taking way too long to sort itself out.

As we continue to carve out our hyperlocal niche, and figure out growth strategies, it seems a good time to look at how things are changing in the world of reporting local news.

Pen City Current spent a year working for the release of video taken at a public school. A video that attorneys for the Fort Madison School District said wasn’t releasable due to it being a personnel matter and therefore confidential. With the help of Tri State Public Radio, we acquired the video and released it to the public to make its own determination. We’ve heard both the issue was serious and the issue was much ado of nothing.

Our goal wasn’t to sway anyone’s opinion but to fight for the release of the record. It’s our hope to continue to shine a light on public bodies even if that light isn’t the best for those public bodies. We also don’t hold the district responsible. It’s sincerely our opinion that this is a learning curve for everyone.

Over the past two years several things stand out as evidence that the stripping of the local newsroom is having a dramatic effect on public bodies and organizations that deal with them. A representative of Vikings Cruise line spoke to the full Dubuque City Council earlier this fall and as part of their presentation they noted how they are finding it more difficult to secure an interview with a city official.

Their presentation was a little too revealing considering the cruise line is a regular customer of the area.

On the other hand, Pen City Current will enter its third year of writing about the people of north Lee County on Dec. 6... and we couldn’t be happier to still be here.

Rolling into our third year

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For the Record

Fort Madison
Police report
11/30/18 - 12:05 a.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 700 block of 7th Street.

Lee County
Sheriff’s report
11/30/18 - 4:32 p.m. - Fort Madison Sheriff’s deputies arrested Nathaniel John Mortimer, 39, of Montrose, at the sheriff’s office on warrants for violation of probation. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held.

12/01/18 - Fort Madison firefighters had no calls.

12/02/18 - Fort Madison firefighters responded to two medical calls. 12/01/18 - Fort Madison firefighters had no calls. 12/02/18 - Fort Madison firefighters responded to two medical calls.

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Lotto Drawings

Game Draw Days Sales Cut-off Time Approx. Drawing Time
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Pick 3 - Midday Daily Noon 12:20 pm
Pick 3 - Evening Daily 9:40 pm 10:00 pm
Pick 4 - Midday Daily Noon 12:20 pm
Pick 4 - Evening Daily 9:40 pm 10:00 pm

Pen City Current encourages you to play responsibly.

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OBITUARIES

GEORGE D. DEMETRAL

George D. Demetral, 91, of Ft. Madison, passed away on Monday, December 3, 2018 at 1:33 AM at the Fort Madison Community Hospital.

He was born on March 23, 1927 in Chicago to William and Emma Hoeff-Efling Demetral. On March 17, 1949 he married Shirley Wright in Chicago, IL, and she passed away on January 17, 2005. George was a member of Holy Family Parish and a 4th Degree Knights of Columbus member. He was a lifelong diehard Chicago Bears fan and also a master woodworker. George was a lover of pets, especially his dog “Baby.” George served in the US Navy during WWII and the Korean Conflict.

Survivors include one son, David (Kathy) Demetral of Stockton, CA; two daughters, Ann (Bill) Ferrel of Barstow, CA and Dale(fiancé, Mark) Lesher of Wever, IA; nine grandchildren, Kelly, Lindsey, Ashley, Casey, Corie, Megan, Melissa, Katy and Tyler; seven great grandchildren; one brother, Jim Demetral of Frankford, IL and one son-in-law, Andy “Butch” Parrilli of Joliet, IL and she passed away on January 17, 2005. George was preceded in death by his parents; wife; a sister, Margaret Leonard.

The Memorial Mass will be held on Saturday, December 15, 2018 at 9:30 AM at Ss. Mary & Joseph Church.

ROGER A. PLOECKELMANN

Roger A. Ploeckelmann, 80, of Fort Madison, passed away on Monday, December 3, 2018 at the University of Iowa Hospitals. Arrangements are pending at KingLynk Funeral Home & Crematory.

CURRENT-LEE

Community Blood Drives

The Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center will be holding a blood drive called 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Dec. 8 at Cultural Hall - 2193 Old Denmark Road from 8-10:30 a.m.

Tree of Love Gatherings

The Lee County Health Department is hosting a series of gatherings to help with holiday healing after a loss. The events are on Wednesday Dec. 5, 12, and 19th from 2 to 3 p.m. at 3 John Bennett Drive in Fort Madison.

You-Time Yuletide

The Fort Madison Chamber of Commerce's Business Women Connect will hold a You-Time, Yuletide at Harvestville Farm at 1977 Hwy 2 near Donnellson. The event will be held on Dec. 6th from 5:30 pm to 7 pm. Will feature hors d'oeuvres, drinks and fund. RSVP to the chamber at chamber@fortmadison.com.

Journaling Workshop

The Fort Madison Public Library will be hosting a journaling workshop on Dec. 6 beginning at 5:30 p.m. at the library.

OPF’s “Making God Laugh”

The Old Fort Players will be bringing “Making God Laugh” to the stage Dec. 7-9 & 14-16. Shows start at 7:30 pm on Friday and Saturday and 2 p.m. on Sunday at the Old Fort Players playhouse at 725 Avenue G.

Downtown Enchanted Forest

The Fort Madison downtown Enchanted Forest will be open from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Lee County Bank Building at 803 Avenue G on Dec. 8, 15, and 22, with visits with Santa from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Senior Community BINGO at The Kensington

Each month on the second Wednesday of the month, The Kensington hosts Senior Community BINGO at 2 p.m. in their dining room at 2210 Avenue H in Fort Madison. All seniors are welcome and cash prizes are awarded. December’s BINGO games will be held Wednesday, December 12.

Caregivers Connection at The Kensington

The Kensington hosts this monthly gathering to help educate attendees about all dementia types. Held at noon the 4th Tuesday of every month in The Kensington’s private dining room, 2210 Avenue H in Fort Madison. December’s luncheon will not be held due to falling on Christmas Day. The next luncheon will be held January 22, 2019. Call 319-372-4233 to RSVP or for more information.

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Pen City Current will list your event in this highly visible CURRENT-LEE section in increments of 25 words for $15. Add a photo for $5. Non-profit rates also available. To place your listing, click here or call Lee at (319)371-4125.
Local News/Education News

LCHD Hospice holds holiday relaxation session

POC STAFF

FORT MADISON - The first of three of the Lee County Health Department's Hospice Tree of Love Gatherings will be on Wednesday, December 5th from 2:00-3:00pm around the LCHD Tree of Love in the lobby of LCHD (#3 John Bennett Drive, Fort Madison). The gatherings are free and open to the public. This week's gathering will be guided by Julie Schneider, LCHD Hospice Massage Therapist, which will focus on relaxing during the holidays with breathing techniques and comfort skills. A short candlelight ceremony will be held at the end. “We invite everyone to join us as we prepare for the holidays to learn about taking a moment for ourselves,” says Michele Ross, LCHD Administrator.

Other gatherings will be on Wednesday December 12th and 19th. The sessions take place in conjunction with the LHCD-Hospice Tree of Love which allows people to support hospice through ornaments in honor/memory of loved ones. Purchase of an ornament is not required to participate in the Tree of Love Gatherings.

The public can attend one or all the sessions. An RSVP is not necessary, but appreciated. If you have any questions about the Tree of Love Gatherings please call LCHD at (319)372-5225 or (800)458-6672.

Bloodhound Trades Program wins again

DES MOINES - The FMHS Bloodhound Construction Crew took home yet another state carpentry championship for the third year in a row. The crew consisted of two returning members, Elton Kruse & Brandon Reichelt, and three new members, Alex Steffensmeier, Alec Nolting, & Dominic Frantz.

This year’s competition consisted of 20 teams throughout the entire state of Iowa. Students are given a blueprint and materials with 4.5 hours to build. Students come into the competition not knowing what to expect until the blueprint is in their hands and the clock starts ticking. Not only is there a time-pressure, students are only given the materials that they absolutely need. Giving them little room for error.

The FMHS crew was able to finish 20 minutes early while others struggled to finish on time. Kobelt attributes this timeliness to their ability to work efficiently both as a team and independently.

“Most of the teams had to do everything as a group, but the FMHS crew were able to split-off into different side projects and come together to create the finished product.”

Kobelt said Kobelt said he is very proud of these young men who are gaining a considerable amount of hands-on experience and leadership skills.

“It was really cool to see the guys working so well together, but it was also cool to see how each individual’s talents were clearly showcased in the final project,” he said.

Fort Madison Community School District’s building trades program grabbed the spotlight at the state competition this year again taking home the title. The championship Bloodhound Construction Crew is pictured here.

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Fort de Love Gatherings

Lee County Health Department would like to invite you to a series of gatherings that will take place in LCHD’s lobby along with our annual Tree of Love which will be making its first debut in its new home.

These sessions are being offered to help bring people together during the holidays & to support those who are grieving the loss of a loved one. You are welcome to join any or all gatherings. Light refreshments will be provided.

If you have any questions, please contact Lee County Health Department.
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of the discussion handed out a presentation that went along with a video. The representative said he wasn’t really prepared to discuss the specifics of Vikings plans, and asked that the presentations be returned as they weren’t ready for public consumption. This was a discussion in front of one of the state’s largest cities with an international company, and neither side realized that the information was automatically public when it was handed to elected officials.

Maybe no media was in the room at the time. That’s an assumption, but in newspaper’s heyday that would have been contested at that moment, at a minimum cleaned up after the meeting.

I can say that covering most public bodies in north Lee County, at one point or another there was an issue where open meetings records or processes came into question and we do our best to question and work with the groups to make sure things are handled correctly. It’s not a “gotcha” mentality, but a relationship-building approach.

I didn’t take body language classes in high school, but I think I’m pretty good at reading people from the body language. It’s no secret that some in the district are upset with the coverage of the video. We just hope it serves to show that we are here to report the news to the best our resources at this point allow.

This business, like all others, is constantly evolving. Relationships change and new sources become part of the fold. It is the sincerest intention of Pen City Current to work with, and not against, our sources and resources. It’s our intention to follow the good news, and yes, the unfortunate news. We expend our effort to stop using resources to follow one student eight hours to a state body language. It’s no secret that some in the district

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In a twist of an old Italian saying, success has a saying that you can’t please all the people all the time. And we don’t try that, but what we do try to do is be as complete of a service to this area as we can.

We strive for fairness in political reporting, keeping the space and time between major political parties equal. We wait for confirmation on news so we aren’t putting things out that aren’t verifiable on our part.

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