

TRIBUTE TO HONOR LOCAL HEROES PAGE A2

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TIGERS' SEASON ENDS AT SUBSTATE PAGE A11

Volume VIII Number 10



Aaron Thomas and his mother, Jan, react to the guilty verdict on Tuesday. POOL PHOTO

Becker is guilty

"Ed Thomas is the victim of a victim."

JOAN BECKER, MOTHER OF CONVICTED KILLER MARK BECKER



BY CHELSIE LUHRING AND ANELIA K. DIMITROVA

2008. Tuesday was judgment day. As he listened to the jury's verdict, Mark Becker, the man charged with the June 24, 2009, murder of his former football coach, Ed Thomas, on June 24, 2009, stood listlessly next to his lawyer Susan Flander. No outpouring of emotion, no gasps, and no tears followed the much-awaited verdict.

Guilty of murder in the first degree. This was the verdict a four-woman-eight-man jury reached Tuesday after a deadlock and lengthy deliberations.

"There are no winners in this case," Todd Thomas, the slain coach's son, later told the media.

Judge Stephen Carroll read the unanimous verdict to a packed courtroom at the Butler County Courthouse in Allison, where for 12 days, two Parkersburg families sat across from one another, torn apart by murder.

After the verdict, Becker, wearing a blue and white pin-striped shirt, was led away.

For over eight months, the Aplington-Parkersburg community waited for a resolution of a murder that was as shattering as the EF5 tornado that ripped through town on May 25,

It had taken the jury 25 hours to sift through the evidence and determine if Becker was legally insane,

See BECKER, page A5

PARKERSBURG RESIDENTS REACT TO VERDICT, PAGE A5

Council to discuss flood outlook Monday

BY STEPHANIE ABEL-HOHENZY

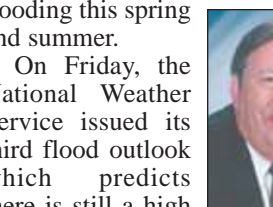
FLOOD OUTLOOK: WWW.NOAA.GOV

have a repeat of 2008. In fact, we could luck out this spring—the flooding may be less severe than our outlook indicates. If we have ideal snow melt conditions, and the rain does not fall at inopportune times, then we may be fortunate. But, the risk of flooding is elevated so we need to watch closely."

On Monday night, the C.F. City Council and city staff will discuss the city's preparedness for potential flooding this spring and summer.

On Friday, the National Weather Service issued its third flood outlook which predicts there is still a high risk for flooding around river towns in Iowa.

"The factors are lining up for this spring," an earlier report summarized. "This does not automatically mean that we'll



JON CREWS C.F. MAYOR

On March 5, the hydrologic report noted that flooding due to snow melt

See FLOOD, page A8

Beck runs for Iowa House

Barmuda CEO hopes to represent District 19

Local business leader and entrepreneur, Darin Beck, will be running for the Iowa House.

He hopes to represent District 19, which encompasses Cedar Falls, including the University of Northern Iowa, and western Black Hawk County. Democrat Bob Kressig currently holds this seat.

"As a small business owner I know firsthand how to put people to work, a skill that I intend to take with me to the Statehouse," said Beck. "State government has gotten too big, spends too much of our money and has lost touch with

"We need to reclaim Iowa as number one in education...and ensure our students have good paying jobs when they graduate. I have created jobs my entire adult life and will use my experience to lead in Des Moines."

— DARIN BECK, CEO BARMUDA CORPORATION

Iowans. I have experience balancing tough budgets and I will be sensible with Iowans' tax dollars."

Beck began his businesses in 1983, and has been focused in the restaurant industry, but over the years has expanded his business holdings into technology companies as well.

Currently he owns and operates 20 food and beverage establishments and related companies that employ over 600 people and partners in four technology companies that employ around 100 people. Almost all 700 of these jobs are within the Cedar Valley.

See BECK, page A5



DARIN BECK DIST. 19 CHALLENGER



BOB KRESSIG DIST. 19 REPRESENTATIVE

COUNTY CONVENTIONS: DEMOCRATS: March 20, 10 a.m., Central Middle School, Waterloo

REPUBLICANS: Today, 9 a.m., Cattle Congress Pavilion, Waterloo.

* Registration for both events, 8 a.m.

CEI I phone super highway

New Iowa legislation bans texting while on the road

BY JOHN SHOWALTER

Sidney Baker texts "all day, every day." The Janesville High School senior sends between 7,000 and 9,000 messages a month to communicate with friends.

However, Baker and other students caught up in the texting craze may have to give their thumbs a rest once they sit behind the wheel.

A new law bans texting while driving, but does not go as far as banning the reading of text messages. HF 2456 was approved by Iowa's House on Feb. 23 and by the Senate the following day.

After a one-year warnings-only period beginning July 1, any driver caught breaking the law will be charged with a simple misdemeanor and fined at least \$30.

If an injury results from the incident, the fine jumps to \$500 and a license suspension. If death occurs, the fine doubles. However, the bill does allow reading messages.

See TEXTING, page A5



WHAT THE LAW SAYS:

- Would ban the sending of text messaging while driving as of July 1 with a one-year warning period.
- Fines start at \$30.
- Reading messages is allowed.
- If an injury results while texting, fine would be \$500 plus license suspension. If accident is fatal, fine would be \$1,000 plus license suspension.

Girl Scouts give back for Easter

BY STEPHANIE ABEL-HOHENZY



STEPHANIE ABEL-HOHENZY PHOTO

To earn their latest badge, 12 Cedar Falls Girl Scouts recently stuffed Easter baskets for needy families as part of a community service project. Front: fifth-graders Sarah Venem, Katie Rygh, Alexis Eick, Hannah Rothermich, Jessica Sund and Kirsten Wyatt. Back: Claire Fienup, Bailey Gilbert, Rachael Sears, Morgan Schwab, Erin Ollendieck and Olivia Brown.

Easter is less than a month away and while many haven't begun to dye eggs yet, 12 Cedar Falls Girl Scouts are already hopping onto the holiday train for their chance to give back.

After months of planning, the fifth-graders from Southdale and Orchard Hill elementaries met on Sunday to see their service project ideas come to fruition.

After dinner, Troop 294 sat in circles stuffing jelly beans and chocolate into plastic eggs. Soon the gifts will be a sweet sugar surprise in an Easter basket stocked with goodies.

In all, 36 Easter baskets were filled with candy, books and toys to be distributed to local families who would not be able to afford one otherwise.

In two weeks, 19 families from

See SCOUTS, page A2



NU STUDENTS PRESENT FAIRY TALE

COURTESY PHOTO

Prince Dauntless, played by Northern University High School student Keith Hanson, professes his love for Princess Winnifred the Woebegone, played by Joni Griffith, as royal court member Jordan Bankston looks on in the musical performance of Once Upon a Mattress. See this lively comedy based on the fairytale, The Princess and the Pea, presented today, March 6, at 7 p.m. and Sunday, March 7 at 2 p.m. in Butzier Auditorium at Price Lab School. Admission is \$5.

MORE NU NEWS: STUDENTS EARN SPEECH HONORS, PAGE A7