

AEA reorganization bill a focus of Sue Cahill’s ‘Community Conversation’

JAKE RYDER | SUN COURIER

MARSHALLTOWN — State Rep. Sue Cahill heard concerns from constituents on a piece of recently-proposed education legislation at a community conversation at the Marshalltown Public Library last Saturday afternoon.

The hour-long session with Cahill, a Marshalltown Democrat, was dominated by discussion of the early-drafted legislation. The original proposal restricted Iowa’s nine Area Education Agencies (AEA) across the state to only providing special education services and would stop them from providing media services, professional training and other help to Iowa schools as has been the standard.

Governor Kim Reynolds announced Thursday that the bill would be amended to allow for AEAs to continue providing all of their services by individual school request and after approval from the state Department of Education.

Cahill noted the overwhelming amount of feedback regarding this bill in the short time since it’s been introduced.

“We’re talking hundreds of thousands of emails, not just from one group, but widespread,” Cahill said. “I take some consolation in the fact that this past week, [Reynolds] has stepped back a little bit to say, ‘OK, well we are going to have to look at it, we’ve listened to the people.’”

That has not quelled the unease from those in attendance on Saturday, including Marshalltown Community School District Superintendent Theron Schutte.

The bill would allow for school districts to enter contracts with private companies or hire their own employees



Cahill

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

“50/50: The Key to Happily Ever After,” a book of 50 short stories detailing the lives of 50 couples who’ve been married for 50 years or more. The book was brought to fruition by Dysart native James (Jim) Rice who now lives in San Diego where he works as a life coach.

Finding the key to ‘happily ever after’

Tama Co. native’s book features 50 couples married 50 or more years

RUBY F. MCALLISTER | rbodeker@northtamatelegraph.com

DYSART — With Valentine’s Day just around the corner and wedding season not far off,

Dysart native James ‘Jim’ Rice believes he has created the perfect gift for those special occasions (and more) — “50/50: The Key to Happily Ever After,” a book of 50 short stories detailing the lives of 50 couples who’ve been married for 50 years or more.

“I was conversing about the importance of compromise, give and take, 50/50 in relationships, especially marriage,” Rice, a life coach who lives in San Diego where he operates the business Fit over 50, told the Telegraph in an email when asked to describe how the book came to be. “It struck me — why not share it and why not work with the theme, 50/50? Interview 50 people who

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High: 34 / Low: 26

Sunday: MOSTLY CLOUDY
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Bru finalist for 2024 Iowa Youth Pork Leadership Team

GMG senior currently holds Tama Co. Pork Queen title

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GLADBROOK – Rural Gladbrook resident and GMG High School senior Lillian ‘Lilly’ Bru was recently announced as one of eight finalists for the 2024 Iowa Youth Pork Leadership Team.

The team – which consists of one queen and two ambassadors – was set to be crowned this week Wednesday, Jan. 24, in Des Moines by the Iowa Pork Producers Association (IPPA) at the annual Iowa Pork Congress.

Bru – who lives with her parents Ryan and Laura Bru on a farm south of Gladbrook – is currently the Tama County Pork Queen.

Once crowned, the 2024 team will assist throughout the next year with state pork promotional and educational activities.

Bru told Tama-Grundy Publishing she was selected as a finalist by “heavily participating in the work of the Tama County Pork Producers and [through] my interest to take matters further by spreading positive and true messages about the pork industry in the state of Iowa.”

In the run-up to this week’s contest, Bru has been preparing by spending time with Tama County past state royalty including 2015 Iowa Pork Queen Christy Flamme, 2014 Iowa Pork Queen Sarah Reinberg, and 2006 Iowa Pork Princess Samantha DeWitt.

“I’m very blessed to be considered [as] one of the eight finalists in this competition,” Bru continued in her comments to the paper. “I couldn’t be here without the support of my family and the Tama County Pork Producers.”

Judging began Tuesday night for the contest and continued throughout the day Wednesday during which finalists were required to sit through interviews, appear before the media, give extemporaneous speeches, and attend a breakfast with members of the public that included incognito



PHOTO BY LAURA BRU/THE PIE LADY

GMG senior and Tama County Pork Queen Lilly Bru pictured competing in the Swine Show during last summer’s county fair. Bru is one of eight finalists this year for the 2024 Iowa Youth Pork Leadership Team which was set to be crowned this week Wednesday at the annual Iowa Pork Congress in Des Moines.

judges.

When contacted on Monday for comment, Bru’s mother Laura admitted she was quite possibly more anxious than her daughter heading into the Wednesday evening crowning.

“I feel like I’m more nervous than she is. So proud of her for going for big things!”

In addition to Bru, this year’s Iowa Youth Pork Leadership Team finalists include Ella Cole of Delaware County, Abby Elsamiller of Bremer County, Aubrey Johnson of Hardin County, Miranda Rickels of Clinton County, Hannah Tice of Story County, Ashlee Tomlinson of Warren County, and Riley Troendle of Allamakee County.

‘Fit and feisty’ and going strong at 101

Traer resident Kathleen Keefer marks milestone birthday

RUBY F. MCALLISTER

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TRAER — If the number of candles on Kathleen Keefer’s birthday cake this year is any indication, the Traer Public Library might just hold the secret to longevity.

As part of last Wednesday’s ‘Fit and Feisty’ library session — a thrice-weekly low-impact exercise class geared toward those in their ‘wiser’ years but open to all — a special celebration took place to mark participant Kathleen Keefer’s 101st birthday.

Kathleen has been attending Fit and Feisty for at least three years, librarian Laurie Schafer said, and is one of the group’s most dedicated members.

Seated front and center on Wednesday beside her son — retired Garwin UMC Pastor Mark Keefer who also participates in the class — Kathleen and close to a dozen other participants spent close to 30 minutes that afternoon practicing



PHOTO BY RUBY F. MCALLISTER

Kathleen Keefer (seated) pictured during her 101st birthday celebration alongside her son Pastor Mark Keefer and his wife Dotti Keefer on Wednesday, Jan. 17 in the Traer Public Library’s Talen Community Room.

yoga as an instructional video played on a large TV set up in the Talen Community Room.

Just before the class’s start time, Pastor Keefer and his wife Dotti Keefer surprised their family’s matriarch with a chocolate cake featuring candles spelling out ‘101.’

While her exercise “family” — as Pastor Keefer refers to the class participants — sang “Happy Birthday” to

their beloved friend, Kathleen’s eyes sparkled and a smile spread across her face.

“I’ll have to have a birthday every year!” she said when the group finished singing.

Several of her friends then asked what the secret to her longevity was to which she quipped, “I wouldn’t know. It’s a big surprise to me as well!”

Kathleen’s determination

to remain active in her later years — both physically and mentally — has more than likely contributed to her long life.

“She’s pretty much as active as she was last year,” Pastor Keefer said. “She doesn’t drive but she still lives independently in her own apartment. When the weather is nicer, we walk to the end of