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Courtney: Halt dues to school board group

Association faces investigation into finances.

By JERMAINE PIGEE
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A state senator has suggested school districts stop paying dues to the Iowa Association of School Boards until an investigation regarding employee compensation and

travel is complete. "That's part of the money they're wasting on higher salaries and trips," said Sen. Tom Courtney, D-Burlington, a former Burlington School Board president. The Legislature's Government Oversight Committee is in its second week of investigating the IASB operation. At the center of the controversy is Maxine Kilcrease, the group's executive director,

who has been placed on administrative leave. The committee learned last week that Kilcrease's salary soared past \$400,000 a year and credit cards issued to the school board group were used to pay for a trip to Bora Bora, a vacation destination in the South Pacific. "This looks to be nothing but theft," said Courtney, the vice chairman of the Senate oversight committee. "For

them to spend that kind of money and waste it on trips, to me, is a travesty and a disgrace." Local school officials expressed their frustration with the organization. "I'm disappointed that the group got themselves involved in controversial issues," said West Burlington Superintendent Jim Sleister said. "I hope it doesn't impact the type of services they can

provide in the future." Sleister said the IASB helps train board members. The school board buys some of its property and casualty insurance through the IASB as well. The West Burlington School District pays \$2,358 a year in dues to the IASB. "You're getting a lot of services that no one else would specialize in," Sleister said. Burlington Superintendent

Lee Morrison said the association had a good reputation for providing insurance for school board members. "Members are going to have to answer serious questions about how their dues were spent and guarantee how that money will go to services in the future," Morrison said. The Burlington School Board Superintendent See Association page 4A

Sounds of String Fling



John Lovretta/The Hawk Eye

Top: Surekha Mullangi, 16, a sophomore at Burlington High School, smiles while playing "Fiddlers' Stew" with the rest of the high school orchestra during String Fling, a concert presented by the Burlington School District, made up of students from area schools and featuring performances from the beginner, intermediate, middle school and high school orchestras Tuesday at Memorial Auditorium. The concert, which lasted just over an hour, was directed by Millie Comiskey and Diana Wells.

Left: Elizabeth Frevert, 9, a fourth-grader at Grimes Elementary School, warms up with her violin before performing with other members of the beginner orchestra Tuesday at String Fling at Memorial Auditorium.

President signs health overhaul

By JENNIFER LOVEN
The Associated Press

• 13 state attorneys suing over health care. See page 5A.

WASHINGTON — It was a day of history for the nation — and sweet vindication for President Barack Obama. His grin seemed wider than any in recent memory.

After more than a year of arguing, struggling and dealing, Obama signed into law a nearly \$1 trillion health care overhaul that ranks among the biggest changes ever devised by Washington and will reshape the way virtually every American receives and pays for treatment. It will rework fully one-sixth of the U.S. economy and for the first time cement insurance coverage as the right of every U.S. citizen.

At the White House, jubilation was in the air Tuesday. Democratic lawmakers and advocates, crowded into the East Room for the signing ceremony, hooted and hollered at nearly every Obama sentence. They snapped photos of the president — and themselves. Vice President Joe Biden was caught whispering a profanity as he exclaimed to the president what a big deal it was.

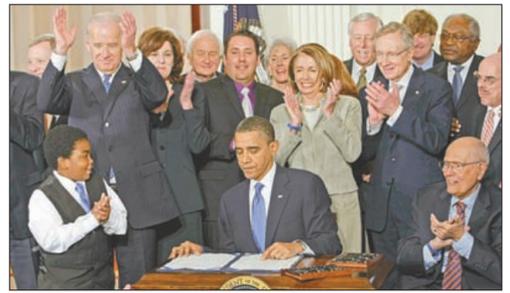
It seemed more like a campaign rally than a bill signing. No one seemed quite able to contain themselves.

It will be months before the November elections render a verdict on whether the public

approves of the bill the Democrats pushed through Congress without a single Republican vote. But after more than a year of hyperpartisan struggle — and numerous near-death moments for the measure — they sealed a victory denied to a line of presidents and Congresses stretching back more than a half-century.

Not everyone was cheering. Republicans said those Democratic lawmakers would pay dearly in this November's elections. Opinion polls show the public remains skeptical, too, and Obama will fly to Iowa on Thursday for the first of a number of appearances that will be more like a continuing sales job than a victory lap. Aside from the huge, real-life changes in store for many Americans, the White House hopes the victory — even as a companion Senate "fix-it" bill moves through the Senate — will revitalize an Obama presidency that has been all but preoccupied with health care for his first year and two months in office.

Republicans characterize See Health page 5A



J. Scott Applewhite

Participants applaud Tuesday in the East Room of the White House in Washington as President Barack Obama signs the health care bill.

Faster Internet could come to area

Lisco applying for grant to build fiber optic network.

By NICHOLAS BERGIN
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KEOKUK — Thanks to the

virtual world of the Internet, the globe is shrinking at a phenomenal rate, allowing businesses like Grasshose Animation Studio of Winfield to provide cutting edge services to film and news media across the planet.

But for residents and busi-

nesses in southeast Iowa to communicate with their counterparts in South Korea or France, a high-speed broadband Internet connection is required.

If Fairfield-based Internet service provider Lisco can procure a "multi-million dol-

lar" loan and grant from the USDA Rural Utilities Service, rural Lee and Des Moines counties could be blanketed in lightning fast 100 mbps fiber optic broadband network within three years, said

See Internet page 4A

Study: Older women need longer workouts

By LINDSEY TANNER
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Rev up the treadmill: Sobering new research spells out just how much exercise women need to keep the flab off as they age — and it's a lot.

At least an hour of moderate activity a day is needed for older women at a healthy weight who aren't dieting. For those who are already overweight — and that's most American women — even more exercise is called for to avoid gaining weight without eating less, the study results suggest.

"We all have to work at it. If it were easy to be skinny, we would all be skinny," said

John Foreyt, a behavioral medicine expert who reviewed the study but wasn't involved in the research.

Brisk walking, leisurely bicycling and golfing are all examples of moderate exercise. But don't throw in the towel if you can't do those things for at least an hour a day. Even a little exercise is good for your health even if it won't make you thin, the researchers said.

Their findings are based on 34,079 middle-aged women followed for about 13 years. Most were not on calorie-cutting diets. The women gained an average of almost 6 pounds during the study.

Those who started out at a healthy weight, with a body

mass index less than 25, and who gained little or no weight during the study consistently got the equivalent of about an hour of moderate activity daily. Few women — only 13 percent — were in this category.

Few already overweight women got that amount of exercise, and the results suggest it wasn't enough to stop them from gaining weight.

The results echo what gym-fun of middle-aged American women see every time they step off the treadmill and onto the scale.

"Talk to any group of women and they all say the same thing," said Janet Katzin, 61, a "slightly overweight" marketing director from Long Island who exer-

cises for an hour twice a week.

Thin as a younger adult, Katzin said the pounds started creeping up after she had her two children in the 1980s, despite exercising and watching what she eats. "It's just extremely frustrating and discouraging."

The study appears in today's Journal of the American Medical Association. Only women were studied, so the researchers from Harvard's Brigham and Women Hospital said it's uncertain whether the results would apply to men.

The research "reinforces in a nice, clear way the idea of

See Women page 4A

Local activists will hear Obama speak

By CHRISTINIA CRIPPES
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introduced him at a Burlington rally.

Burlington Democratic activist Nancy Schulte has admired Barack Obama since even before he announced his bid for president in February 2007.

Upon seeing him speak in Oquawka, Ill., when the then-state senator was running for U.S. Senate in 2004, Schulte thought, "Oh, he's the one."

It was just a month after Obama announced his candidacy for president that Schulte met him for the first time. By the end of 2007, she

Schulte's 66th birthday party was shared with the observance of Obama's historic speech accepting the Democratic Party's nomination. After Obama won the presidency, Schulte was in Washington, D.C., to celebrate his momentous inauguration.

So, when President Obama planned a trip to Iowa City on Thursday, it was only natural that Schulte would be reserved a seat.

Schulte is still connected See Obama page 5A