



Approximately 120 people went to meetings held Nov. 18 (50 people) and Nov. 20 (70 people) at the Mendota Civic Center as the Reimagine Mendota and Community Heart & Soul groups presented vision statements to all attendees. (Reporter photo by Brandon LaChance)

Vision statements presented by Reimagine Mendota group

By BRANDON LaCHANCE
Staff writer

MENDOTA – The hard work members of Reimagine Mendota and the Community Heart & Soul Seed Grant Program have put in showed its dividends during meetings Nov. 18 and Nov. 20 at the Mendota Civic Center.

After two months of attending community, business, school, athletic and other functions to gain information about what the people of Mendota want or will support in the town, vision statements were prepared and shared with the 50 people who attended Nov. 18 and the 70 residents who went on Nov. 20.

Not only did the attendees get to see the vision statements—phrases of what Mendota has to offer, the positives, and why people want to live in the town—they got to anonymously vote on whether the statements accurately describe Mendota or if they need to be edited or completely deleted.

Throughout the data collecting, Reimagine Mendota and Community Heart & Soul asked Mendota what Mendota wanted whether it

was new businesses (Culvers and Chick-fil-A were popular vote getters), new programs, city updates, architecture, and art to name a few.

The ideas, projects, the residents brought to the table were brought to the Civic Center tables and were sorted through of what could be feasible to improve Mendota.

After the projects and suggestions for Mendota were discussed, the meeting attendees were given \$2,500 in fake grant money to put in jars with the ideas written on them.

On Nov. 18, the top five projects were: tie for first - downtown revitalization and a pavilion/amphitheater for events, markets, music downtown; third was a youth center with activities; fourth and fifth was a tie between fixing sidewalks/bike paths and hiring a full-time economic developer/grant writer.

On Nov. 20, the top fake grant money recipients were: No. 1 more industry; No. 2 pavilion/amphitheater; No. 3 add/fix sidewalks/bike paths

See Reimagine, Page A5



Holiday season is here!

❑ ‘A Mendota Christmas’ to be filled with holiday cheer

MENDOTA – The Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce is hosting “A Mendota Christmas” on Saturday, Dec. 2. It is a holiday celebration inviting everyone to come out and enjoy an afternoon of holiday cheer and begin their Christmas shopping. Mendota shops will be decorated and ready for Christmas, featuring gifts for everyone on your list.

Santa and Mrs. Claus will arrive at 11 a.m. and visit with children in their house on Illinois Avenue until 2 p.m. Parents are encouraged to bring a camera and take holiday photos of the children at various events.

Other features happening during the holiday event include:

- Free hot chocolate and hot dogs from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. provided by the Mendota Lions Club.
- Northbrook Grade School cheerleaders will perform at 10:30 a.m. and the school choir will entertain at 12:30 p.m.
- Cows Coffee selling hot beverages from 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Tacos Guzman and Salinas Mexican Food Truck selling food from 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Free Horse Drawn Carriage Rides, departing from corner of Jefferson Street and Indiana Avenue, around the downtown area from 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Touch a Truck for children of all ages from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Children can come and explore vehicles from police cars, fire trucks and tractors.



Santa Claus, along with this year’s Mendota Sweet Corn Festival mini-king Kaedyn Landers and mini-queen Karter Cassidy are anxious for the arrival of Saturday, Dec. 2 when “A Mendota Christmas” is held in downtown Mendota. Lots of holiday-related activities will take place during the day, including the return of Santa Claus to hear Christmas wishes from all of the children. (Reporter photo)

cars, fire trucks and tractors.

- Crafts for children to make and take from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. on Illinois Avenue.

Admission to all events is free, but the Chamber will be collecting free will donations

to benefit the Mendota Operation Elf Action program, which provides Christmas gifts to children ages 1-13, whose families need assistance this holiday season.

Chamber Ambassadors

will be on hand in the Information Booth for children to pick up their ugly sweater to compete for a chance to win

See Holiday, Page A5

MHS gets good marks on report card

MENDOTA – The Mendota High School District 280 Board of Education heard information about the school’s state report card and discussed the preliminary tax levy at its Nov. 20 regular meeting.

PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

Principal Joe Masini informed the board that MHS has been issued the rating of ‘Commendable’ for its 2023 Report Card issued by the state. The four summative ratings are Exemplary, Commendable, Targeted and Comprehensive. “The good news is we are not required for any targeted assistance from the state or improvement requirements,” Masini noted.

Some of the figures achieved by the district include 87% graduation rate, 78% FY22 evidenced-based funding, 23% chronic absenteeism (28.3% state average), 89.9% teacher retention, 18 average class size (20.8 state average) and 92% student attendance.

Masini announced that Madelyn Becker is the school’s DAR Good Citizen recipient and Bria Frey is the SAR recipient for the senior class of 2024.

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission recognized MHS for attaining a financial aid application completion rate above 75% for the class of 2023.

Seventeen MHS stu-

dents attended the Discover Manufacturing Expo on Oct. 24, sponsored by the North Central Regional Betterment Coalition and IVCC. Also, 45 students met with representatives from the Illinois Valley Building and Construction Trades Council on Oct. 31.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

During Superintendent Denise Aughenbaugh’s report, consideration and approval was granted for health and dental insurance renewals. The Blue Cross and Blue Shield health insurance renewal is at a 2.1% increase and the dental is a 5% increase.

See MHS, Page A5

City Council hires employee, awards bid for bridge culvert

By KIP CHEEK
Staff writer

MENDOTA – The Mendota City Council hired a new employee and approved several bids at its Nov. 20 regular meeting.

Alderman Vicki Johnson presented information for the hiring of a program manager for the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration grant and others. The council approved the employment of Annie Short to that position.

Alderman Mark Peasley gave figures on the Risk Management Insurance. He said the loss fund was up 15 percent and the workman’s compensation insurance was up 19 percent. The council approved the insurance renewals for calendar year 2024.

Alderman Jim Fitzpatrick presented several items for the council’s consideration. A request from the Mendota Police Department was approved to use Lake Mendota Park for the annual Polar Plunge benefitting Special Olympics. The event will take place on Sat-

urday, Feb. 24.

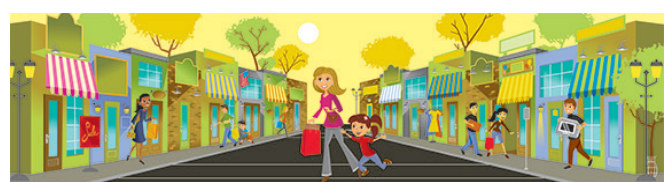
The council officially awarded the bid for the Pennsylvania Avenue bridge culvert project to Gillan Construction LLC of Cherry in the amount of \$89,270. Work will consist of replacing the concrete top.

The council approved a two-year extension to leases on farming city-owned property to Kyle Schoenholz. The farms include Snyder’s Grove (141.7 acres), gas plant (67.54 acres) and Mendota Industrial Park (83 acres).

The bid opening date and time for replacement of restrooms at Blackstone Park and Lake Mendota Park has been changed to 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 16 in the city clerk’s office.

Fitzpatrick said the leaf vacuum program will conclude the week of Nov. 27-Dec. 1. The final day for the city burn pit to be open for the season is Monday, Dec. 4.

The next regular meeting of the Mendota City Council will be Monday, Dec. 4 at 5:30 p.m.



SEE SHOPPE LOCAL DIRECTORY
AT WWW.MENDOTAREPORTER.COM



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Santa Claus
is coming to
town Dec. 2!



24/7 - We’re always on at www.mendotareporter.com



LOCAL AND AREA



Stonecroft Village donates to MASS


Stonecroft Village presented a check for \$793 to Mendota Area Senior Services at the Mendota City Council headquarters on Monday, Nov. 20. The funds were raised during Stonecroft’s Chili Drive-Thru. Offering and receiving the check were, left to right, MASS Board member Linda Grinka, Stonecroft Activity Director Jennifer Francis, Stonecroft Dietary Director Amy Aten, Stonecroft Director Megan Lock, MASS Board Secretary Darice Childs, MASS Director Rayanne Sester, MASS Board members Nancy Bogle and Luke O’Brien, and MASS Board President Al Bonnell. (Reporter photo by Brandon LaChance)

Write a letter to Santa Claus at Graves-Hume Library

MENDOTA – Come write a letter to Santa Claus and mail it to him from the Graves-Hume Public Library.

Make sure to include your child’s full name and address if you want to receive a letter back from the North Pole.

If your child would like, there are blank “Dear Santa” letter outlines located in the Youth Services Department



they can use to create a letter to Santa.

The mailbox to the North Pole is also located in the

Youth Services Department. Drop off letters from Dec. 1-15 at the library and the library will bring them to the mailbox.

Library programs are open to all. No library card required. Call 815-538-5142, check out the Graves-Hume Public Library Facebook page for more details or stop in at the library, 1401 W. Main St. Mendota, for a newsletter.

Books need adopted too; About-A-Book Program gives back

MENDOTA – Make it a holiday tradition to participate in Friends of the Library’s Adopt-A-Book Program.

Stop by the Graves-Hume Public Library Adopt-A-Book display and choose a book to donate to the library as a gift, or in memory, for a loved one.

A bookplate will be placed in the book with your name.

Your gift gives a book a good home at the Graves-Hume Public Library, where it will be read and enjoyed by many in the community.

Adopt-A-Book runs from Nov. 27-Dec. 22.

“This has become an annual favorite and we are so happy to be doing it again. What we love about this, it allows the patron to pick out which book they want to donate, which gives it more personal meaning,” said Carolynn Ohlendorf, the youth services manager at Graves-Hume.

Library programs are open to all. No library card required.

Call 815-538-5142, check out the Graves-Hume Facebook page for more details, or stop in at 1401 W. Main St. in Mendota for a newsletter.

Starved Rock & Mathiessen 2024 Calendars are available

OGLESBY – The Starved Rock & Mathiessen Calendar is coming back for the 2024 calendar year, once again with 100 percent of proceeds donated to the Starved Rock Foundation.

The Foundation is a 501(c)3 registered nonprofit with a commitment to the Parks.

“I believe these parks offer some of the most pristine, unique, and beautiful areas in the Midwest. The idea of creating a calendar to benefit the places I love exploring came naturally,” stated Matthew Klein, the creator of the annual calendar fundraiser.

With strong support from park supporters, local businesses, regional tourism bureaus, and the Illinois Office of Tourism, the 2022 and 2023 editions raised a combined \$6,600 for the parks.

Calendars were shipped across the United States and some even made it all the way to London.

“The Foundation is thrilled to be the recipient of the sales from the high-quality Starved Rock Calendar once again,” said President of the Starved Rock Foundation, Pam Grivetti. “The calendar brings back memories for locals and reminds them to come out and explore our amazing parks. For folks who have not been to the parks, the calendar serves as an invitation to come and see the amazing beauty that Starved Rock holds in all seasons.”

Contributors that are selected for final inclusion will be recognized digitally and on the 2024 calendar itself. The calendar will be sold at the Starved Rock Foundation LeRocher Gift Shop inside of the Visitor Center at Starved Rock State Park, as well as local businesses and regional outlets.

About the Starved Rock Foundation

The Starved Rock Historical and Educational Foundation is the nonprofit organization for Starved Rock State Park, located in North Central Illinois. The Foundation includes a volunteer program which staffs the Visitor Center information desk and leads interpretive hikes, provides educational materials, and conducts special events and presentations.

It also raises monies for appropriate materials, equipment, and the improvement of Starved Rock State Park through memberships, donations, and profit from the 100% volunteer run LeRocher Book Store in the Visitor Center. Over \$400,000 has been donated over the past 30+ years by an elected board of directors. Learn more about the Foundation, becoming a volunteer, or donating at www.starvedrock.org.

In addition, the Foundation is actively seeking donations for their \$33,000 audio/visual room project. Individuals or businesses looking to contribute to the audio/visual room should contact Starved Rock Foundation President Pam Grivetti by email at pjgrivetti@comcast.net. Donations are also being accepted online at <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/starvedrockIL>.

About Matthew Klein Films

Located in North-Central Illinois, Matthew Klein Films is a creative video production agency with over 2 million views online and 500 videos created for clients in public and private sectors. Recently, Klein’s video work has been included in an HBO original documentary produced by Unrealistic Productions – a Mark Wahlberg company, and in a holiday Hallmark movie.

Klein started his company at 17 and frequently visits Starved Rock and Mathiessen State Parks. Learn more at www.matthewkleinfilms.com/story


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LOCAL AND AREA

Lincoln Library acquires original photo Lincoln gave to injured political supporter

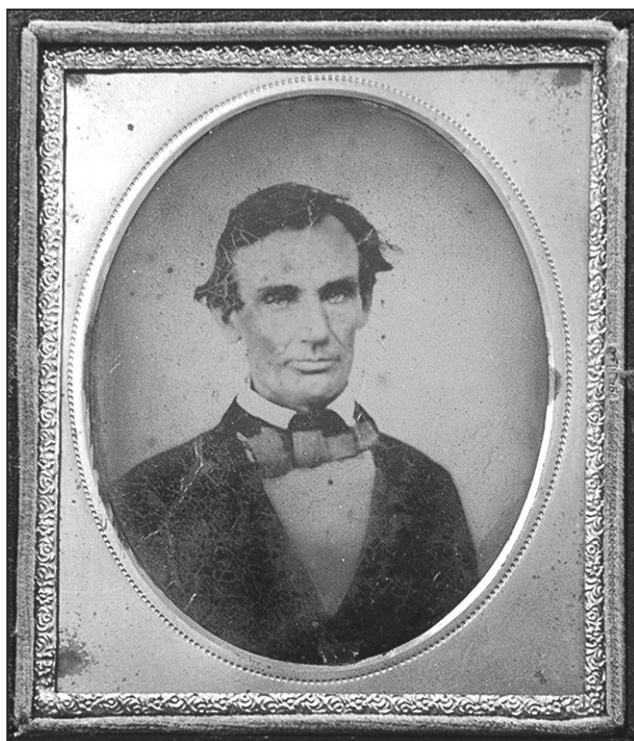
SPRINGFIELD — The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum has acquired an original photograph that Lincoln gave to a man who had been gravely injured while preparing for a rally during the historic 1858 U.S. Senate race.

Charles Lane was nearly killed when a cannon went off prematurely the day before a Lincoln political rally in Pittsfield. The next day, Lincoln arrived, held his rally and then tried to visit Lane. The doctor would not allow visitors, but Lincoln arranged for Lane to receive a photo that had been taken that day.

Lane recovered, and his family held onto the photo for generations. Now his descendants have donated it to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum so that it will be protected and shared with the public.

It is currently displayed in the museum's Treasures Gallery.

"Original images of Abraham Lincoln are extraordi-



narly rare, and images with a fascinating back story like this are even more rare. Lincoln fans everywhere should thank Charles Lane's descendants for this generous donation," said Christina Shutt, executive director of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

The photo is an ambrotype, a negative image on glass. The images were displayed on black backgrounds. That background showed through the clear portions of the negative image, creating the illusion of a black-and-white photo. The oval image is 2 3/4 inches high

by 2 1/4 inches wide.

Historian Leroy H. Fischer wrote about Lincoln's Oct. 1, 1858, visit to Pittsfield in a 1968 article for the Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society.

Fischer reports that it was common for political events to include the boom of unloaded cannons firing. The day before Lincoln spoke, Lane and another man had been test-firing a cannon. It went off as Lane was ramming gunpowder into the barrel. The blast burned his face, and the ramrod went through his arm, ending up embedded in a tree a block away.

Lane was rushed to his home, where a doctor administered what treatment he could. The doctor decided not to amputate Lane's arm, a dangerous gamble in an era before antibiotics. Infection set in, but Lane eventually overcame it and recovered. He lived almost 40 years more, dying in 1897.

The day after the accident, Lincoln delivered a two-hour speech in the town square,

devoting most of his time to condemning his opponent's position on slavery. He said Stephen Douglas's goal was "to deny the equality of men, and to assert the natural, moral, and religious right of one class to enslave another."

Afterward, Lincoln visited the studio of photographer Calvin Jackson, who made two identical ambrotypes of the 49-year-old candidate.

Before leaving town, Lincoln stopped by the Lane house to express his sympathies and tell the family that one of the ambrotypes would be delivered to them the next day.

"Lincoln's gift was a small gesture, but it reaffirms his reputation as a man of compassion. The photo that has so generously been donated to the ALPLM is a physical reminder of his kind spirit and concern for others," said Dr. Ian Hunt, head of acquisitions for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

The photo was passed down by Lane's descen-

dants until it was inherited by Mrs. Mary Davidson of Hendersonville, Tenn. She passed away in August 2022, and her children decided the image should come to Springfield, where it could be preserved and enjoyed by future generations.

The other ambrotype made that day is owned by the Library of Congress.

The mission of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum is to inspire civic engagement through the diverse lens of Illinois history and sharing with the world the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln. We pursue this mission through a combination of rigorous scholarship and high-tech showmanship built on the bedrock of the ALPLM's unparalleled collection of historical materials—roughly 13 million items from all eras of Illinois history.

For more information, visit www.PresidentLincoln.illinois.gov. You can follow the ALPLM of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Stage 212 to host "Her Majesty's Radio Theatre presents Sherlock Holmes in The Hound of the Baskervilles"

LaSALLE — Stage 212 will be hosting a very special entertainment event Saturday, Dec. 2 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 3 at 2:00 p.m., when "Her Majesty's Radio Theatre presents Sherlock Holmes in The Hound of the Baskervilles" takes the stage. This unique production is a two-man show presented in radio theatre style, and featuring ingenious theatrical machines.

Tickets for "Her Majesty's Radio Theatre presents Sherlock Holmes in The Hound of the Baskervilles" are \$15 each, and may be purchased online by visiting stage212.org or by calling the box office at 815-224-3025 and leaving a message.

Carus unveils third Giving Fence

PERU — Carus LLC is pleased to announce the third annual unveiling of the Holiday Giving Fence, a beloved community initiative dedicated to offering new and gently used winter apparel to those in need. As temperatures drop, the Giving Fence stands as a symbol of solidarity and warmth within the community.

The Giving Fence remains open to the public, extending an open invitation to take what is needed or leave what you can, reinforcing the spirit of giving and support during the holiday season. Community members are once again



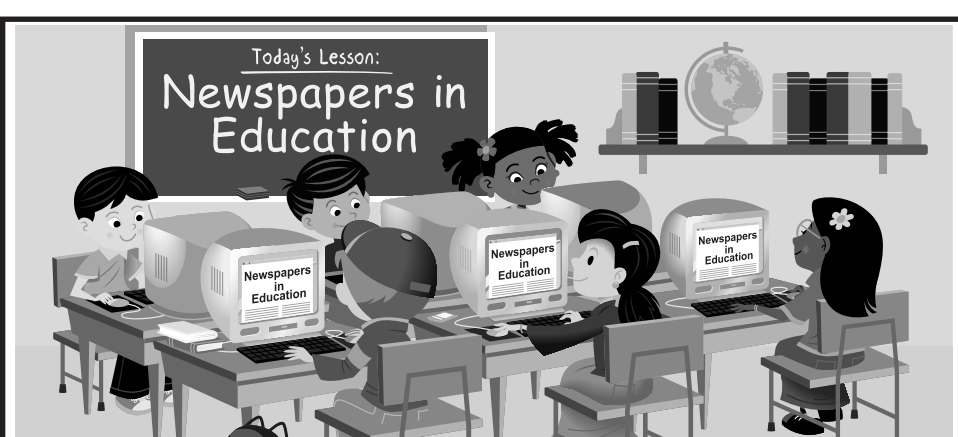
encouraged to participate by donating new or gently used coats, hats, gloves and scarves. To contribute, simply place the item in a plastic bag, label the bag and pin it to the fence. All clothing items are made available free of charge to anyone who requires them.

Lyndsay Bliss, vice presi-

dent of human resources and communications at Carus, remarked, "This initiative is a heartwarming way for our community to come together during the holiday season. The Giving Fence embodies the essence of helping a neighbor in need, and Carus is happy to continue supporting

this remarkable project."

Those interested in participating are welcome to visit the Giving Fence located in front of the Carus headquarters at 315 Fifth St., Peru. Donations can be made and collected anonymously, 24 hours a day, from now through the end of December.



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OBITUARIES/LOCAL NEWS

Gerald Klatt

MENDOTA – It is with deep sorrow we announce the death of Gerald (Jerry) Klatt, 80, of Mendota on Nov. 24, 2023.

Services will be held at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 29, 2023, at the Merritt Funeral Home, Mendota with Rev. Mary Bohall officiating. Visitation will be held from 9:30 a.m. until time of services. Jerry would appreciate everyone to wear casual attire. Private burial will be held at Precinct Cemetery in Earlville.

Jerry was born on Dec. 30, 1942, in Sandwich, to Herbert and Frances “Queenie” (McInturf) Klatt. He married Barbara Rider on April 4, 1964, in Mendota.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years Barbara of Mendota; sons Jay (Wendy) of Mendota, Dennis (Holly) of Wapella and Timothy (Laura) of Bloomington. He was proud grandpa to Taylor (Desiree) Klatt, Brooklyn (Dan) Loos, Avery Klatt, Payton Klatt, Karsyn Klatt, Chase (Ashley) McBride, Grant (Laura) McBride, Haley (Chad) Hoke, and Hannah Morris. He was great-grandpa to Saige Nickerson and Cooper Loos. Surviving brothers are Bob Klatt of DeKalb and Terry (Sue) Klatt of Bolingbrook. He is also survived by sisters-in-law Marian Klatt Mayerchin, Karen Klatt and brother-in-law George Ackley, and many, many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, brothers Dick in 1981 and Tom in 2018, and sister Mary Ann (George) Ackley in 2016, and sister-in-law Donnalee Klatt in 2018.

After spending his youth on the farm in Paw Paw, Jerry began his life career spending 27 years at Conco Inc. and their succeeding companies. He served in many capacities and eventually became an expert machinist. He spent 10 years at Avery Dennison in Rochelle where he was instrumental in designing and implementing many cost improvement ideas. Jerry retired from RR Donnelley in Mendota in 2010 where he served as head machinist and was well known for his ability to fabricate any type of equipment. He had a very strong work ethic with added humor and optimism.

His love of farming carried over throughout his life. His hobby was mowing, mowing and mowing. He kept many lawns in top notch condition. His boys may have rebelled at first, but he passed his standard of excellence to them. Not exactly a connoisseur of culture, he nevertheless enjoyed his grandchildren's events - dance recitals, concerts, ball games, plays, he was there. He was a lifelong member of the Mendota Elks Club and Mendota Moose Club. His retirement years found him maintaining lawns, porch and garage sitting, having coffee with his buddies and going for rides in his shiny, pristine trucks. He loved teasing his grandchildren and they love reminiscing the funny sayings he would tell them.

Memorials may be directed to the family for distribution to his favorite charities. Online condolences may be left at www.merrittfh.com.

DEATH NOTICES

The Mendota Reporter will print DEATH NOTICES (approximately 50 words including name, age, date of death, time/date of services) free of charge. OBITUARIES will be printed at a cost of \$100 to be billed to the arranging funeral home or prepaid with cash, check or credit card. Please submit obituaries or death notices to editor@mendotareporter.com.

JoAnne C. Sondgeroth

MENDOTA – JoAnne C. Sondgeroth, nee Whipple, 81, passed away Wednesday, Nov. 22, 2023, at Allure of Mendota.

Visitation will be from 10-11 a.m. Friday, Dec. 1, 2023, at Merritt Funeral Home in Mendota. The Rosary will be said at 11 a.m. and funeral services will directly follow with Father Jeffrey Windy officiating. Cremation rites will be accorded after and private burial will be held at Holy Cross Cemetery at a later date.

JoAnne was born Jan. 23, 1942, to Howard (H.K.) and Winona (Pevé) Whipple in Moline.

She was a graduate of Mendota High School. She met her future husband David “Whitey” Sondgeroth, when he worked for her dad in the construction business. They married on Aug. 26, 1961, and moved to Fort Hood, Texas, when David was drafted in the United States Army. After David's military service, they returned home to Mendota where they raised their three children, living their entire lives in only two homes, both on Guiles Avenue.

JoAnne is survived by daughters Patty (Larry; deceased) Noles of Mendota and Christine (Steve) Finley of Utica; one son, Charles (Shannon) Sondgeroth of Killeen, Texas; six grandchildren, Amber Badgett (DJ Kilanowski), Andrea (Corey) Friesz, Alexis (Andrew) Barnes, Sarah (Tiffany) Goetz, Rachel (Siddhanth) Paralkar and Rebecca Sondgeroth; and four great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband David in July of 2023; her only sister and brother-in-law, Wilma and Everett Olmstead; her parents and her stepmother, Gertrude Whipple-Nance.

She attended St. Mary's School of Nursing and graduated with her LPN. Her nursing career was spent at Mendota Community Hospital and the Mendota Lutheran Home. JoAnne was an avid reader, a faithful member of Holy Cross Church and member of TOPS where she served as secretary for the club. She enjoyed spending time with her family and especially Friday night chicken at Sip n' Snack.

Honorary pallbearers will be her grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, please directed memorials to Mendota Area Senior Services of Holy Cross Church. Online condolences may be left at www.merrittfh.com.

Elks to hold memorial service on December 3

MENDOTA – Relatives and friends are invited to attend the traditional Memorial Service honoring the departed members of the Mendota Elks Lodge who have passed since the 2022 service. The Memorial Service will be held in the lodge room at 1 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3, with refreshments to follow.

Departed members who will be honored are:

Frank Berger, *Robert L. Bresson, Robert R. Brockwell, *Michael A. Castiglia, Lynn L. Dewey, *Delmer Dinges, *Norman H. Fassig, *James H. Gard, *Don C. Gooden, *William E. Greenwood, James E. Mitchell, *Donald E. Norton, Brian Phalen, *Harry D. Schaller, *David Sondgeroth, John G. Stephenitch, *Gerald Walter, James E. Walters. (*indicates Life Member)

• See more Obituaries on page A5 •

Kevin P. J. Koerper

NEW YORK CITY – Kevin P. J. Koerper, 73, of New York City, was pronounced dead of natural causes on Oct. 11, 2023.

While no memorial service is planned, the family will be compiling a keepsake memorial book.

He was born on Nov. 16, 1949, in Mendota, to Paul and Lorraine Koerper.

He is survived by his sisters, Cheryl Ginder of Rochester and Leslie Wilson of Chicago; six beloved nieces and nephews, David Ginder, Matthew Ginder, Steven Ginder, Katharyn Wheeler, Mark Wilson, and Ruth Robinson; their families; and four first cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his brother-in-law, George Ginder.

After graduating from Mendota Township High School in 1967 and Illinois State University in 1971, Kevin relocated to New York City where he remained the balance of his life. He worked as a writer in various advertising agencies and financial houses. He was a senior writer at Morgan Stanley on Sept. 11, 2001, a day which forever changed him and many.

Kevin will be missed for his wit, acumen, facility with language, kindness, attention to detail, and sensitivity. Kevin was passionate about family, music, drama, and architecture. He remembered his 19 great nieces and great nephews and his chosen family in upstate New York on their birthdays and at holidays. Every year he compiled thematic holiday CDs from among his vast music collection, which he gifted to many family members and friends.

Kevin loved his chosen hometown and happily shared it with many. He maintained a subscription to the Roundabout Theater Company and membership in the Metropolitan Museum of Art for decades. Either of those institutions would be apt recipients of memorial donations.

Duane G. Kaiser

MENDOTA – Duane G. Kaiser, 75, of Mendota, passed away, Sunday, Nov. 5, 2023, at his home surrounded by his family after a courageous battle with cancer.

Services will be held at 11 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 30, 2023, at the Merritt Funeral Home, Mendota with Rev. Jeff Schlesinger officiating. Burial will be at Restland Cemetery, Mendota with military honors by Mendota VFW Post 4079. Visitation will be Wednesday, Nov. 29, 2023, from 4-7 p.m. at the funeral home.

Duane was born July 21, 1948, in Mendota to Wilbert and Henrietta (Politsch) Kaiser. He married Kathleen Topel on Feb. 15, 1969 in LaCrosse, Wis.

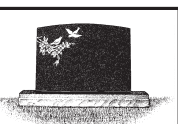
Duane is survived by his wife Kathleen of 54 years; his son Dan (Nicole) Kaiser of Mendota; his daughter Rebecca (Marc) Bond of Mendota; his sister Margaret (Dwight) Frick of Mendota; two grandsons, Jacob Swope and Kevin Swope; several nieces and nephews, their families and many other close relatives and friends. He will be greatly missed by all.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers-in-law David Wapp and Wes Blackwell and sister-in-law Margee (Topel) Manecke.

Duane was a graduate of Mendota High School where he was active in everything FFA. He was born to farm and loved everything about animals from very early in life. He joined the Army Reserves out of high school so he could remain active on the family farm with his dad. Duane also became part of the area township roads beside his father for 25 years. Duane completed the term of Arnold Kaiser after his passing in 1993 and then held office of Road Commissioner for 28 years before his retirement in 2020. When he wasn't farming, working with his cattle or tending to the roads for the township, you could find him pulling tractors at any local tractor pull, proudly driving his favorite Minneapolis Molines. Duane was a lifelong member of the Illinois Farm Bureau and Immanuel Lutheran Church of Compton.

Memorials may be directed to the family or the Mendota VFW Post 4079. Online condolences may be left at www.merrittfh.com.


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LOCAL NEWS/OBITUARIES

Candidate filing underway, signaling official start of the 2024 election cycle

By **DILPREET RAJU**
Capital News Illinois

SPRINGFIELD – November 29 marked the official beginning of the 2024 election cycle in Illinois, opening up the week-long period when candidates for local, state, congressional and judicial races are required to turn in the signatures they’ve spent the last two months collecting to get on the ballot.

The first day of petition filing has traditionally taken on a party atmosphere, as candidates and staff line up outside the Illinois State Board of Elections office in Springfield, where the line often reaches past the Chuck E. Cheese storefront, roughly 100 yards down from the board’s entrance in the capital city strip mall.

Those who get in line before 8 a.m. are entered into a lottery drawing to be placed atop the ballot for their respective position. The lottery drawing is scheduled for Dec. 13.

Though many candidates line up before filing opens, elections board spokesperson Matt Dietrich said he hasn’t seen any studies that prove being first on a primary ballot actually provides any advantage.

“Primary voters tend to be the most informed voters,” he said. “So these are the voters are most likely to know which candidates are on their primary ballot and they’re the voters who are most likely to have already made up their minds before they go into the polling place.”

Still, “political candidates, if they sense that there may be any type of advantage to something, they’ll go out of their way,” Dietrich said.

Some candidates also try for another myth of advantage by waiting until the last hour of the last day of the filing period, Dec. 4 from 4 to 5 p.m. This pool of candidates is entered into a lottery to be at the bottom of the list in their respective races.

Candidates can file petitions to be on the ballot from Nov. 27 through Dec. 4 at the elections office for any of the 17 U.S. House of Representatives seats, 141 Illinois General Assembly seats or 77 judicial vacancies.

After filing, the board opens a period for challenges to candidate petitions. Typically, opponents or party operatives will attempt to knock a newcomer off the ballot for signatures that may not have been collected properly, or in some cases are proven to be fraudulent.

The board will certify the primary ballot at its January meeting and the primary election is scheduled for March 19.

This filing day signals a return to normal from the last state election cycle, which was slowed by delays in 2020 U.S. Census data that caused a chain reaction — slowing the process of redistricting in 2021 and changing Illinois’ typical mid-March primary to a June primary last year. Instead of the usual November candidate filing in

2021, the Board of Elections pushed it to March 2022.

Dietrich said it was necessary as candidates needed the new maps — which had been challenged in court — finalized before they could start passing petitions for the new districts they sought to run in.

Election security

Even before petitions are filed, election authorities in Illinois are trying to get ahead of both conspiracy theories and genuine questions about election security and integrity that have continued to circulate and evolve on social media during the past several election cycles.

In late September a number of downstate county clerks hosted a series of coordinated news conferences to send the message that if constituents are concerned about election integrity, they should visit their local county clerk’s office to learn how the process is actually handled from start to finish.

In a Capitol Cast interview this fall, Tazewell County Clerk John Ackerman said that since 2016, county clerks throughout the state of Illinois have seen “unprecedented attention focused on elections.”

“A lot of misinformation [is] being placed out there,” Ackerman said. “Two presidential cycles in a row. Before we got to the third one, if you just keep doing the same thing, you’ll get the same result.”

Ackerman said he tries to tell people, “you know who we are, we’re in the community, our kids go to the same schools, we shop at the same supermarkets.”

On the podcast in September, Dietrich emphasized that the work of running elections is largely decentralized; the Board of Elections only provides administrative support to Illinois’ 108 local election authorities.

“They do all of the voter registration, they do all of the voter list maintenance on a daily basis, they recruit the election judges, they rent out the polling places,” he said.

One increased security measure requires that no one except Board of Elections employees and candidates filing their signatures will be allowed in the petition filing room next week.

The 2024 Illinois general primary election is March 19. Registered voters can begin requesting mail-in ballots Dec. 20, according to the Illinois State Board of Elections calendar.

Hannah Meisel contributed.
(Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service covering state government. It is distributed to hundreds of newspapers, radio and TV stations statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, along with major contributions from the Illinois Broadcasters Foundation and Southern Illinois Editorial Association.)



IVCC spring sign-up

IVCC students Emma Gonzalez and Jenny Cortes explore the slate of courses as registration for spring classes opened recently. Registration continues right up to when classes start on Jan. 11, 2024, but students should lock in their schedule soon to be certain of getting the classes they need and want. New students should discuss classes with a counselor first, and current students can view course information and register online at www.ivcc.edu/webadvisor. (Photo contributed)

Holiday

Continued from Page A1

a Nintendo Switch, which is donated by Liams Market. Mendota Gift Certificates will also be available. You can also pick up a free “shop local sticker” to help complete your card. The booth will be located on Illinois Avenue.

Shoppers are reminded that Mendota’s Shop Local Promotion kicks off Saturday, Nov. 18 and will continue through Dec. 21 at participating businesses. During this time shoppers

will receive a sticker for every \$10 they spend in a participating merchant’s business. Customers can place the stickers on cards, obtained at the participating business or at the Chamber office. When your cards are full, and contain at least five participating businesses, you can turn them in to the Chamber office for a chance to win valuable prizes. Don’t forget to pick up your free sticker at the Mendota Christmas downtown on Dec. 2.

Mendota Shop Local Promotion will be 12 days

of giving and will start on Dec. 8 with prizes given away every day until Dec. 21, with the Grand Prize being announced on Dec. 21. All cards will be put back in for the grand prize drawing, so you are encouraged to complete your cards early. Shoppers can turn in as many cards as they wish by the deadline, 4 p.m. Dec. 21.

In conjunction with “A Mendota Christmas” on Dec. 2, shoppers will receive “double stickers” for every \$10 they spend on that special day.

MHS

Continued from Page A1

The preliminary tax levy was presented. This is the annual legal mechanism to receive local tax dollars and funds next year’s budget. The proposed tax rate decreases to \$2.10, which is a proposed 10 cent decrease. The district will ask the county for a 8.56% increase in EAV. The historical trend since 2016 shows EAV has increased and the tax rate has decreased for MHS District 280 and taxpayers. The board set the public truth in taxation hearing for Monday, Dec. 18 at 6 p.m.

After discussion of the FY 23 audit summary, the board approved the FY 23 audit as presented. Gorenz and Associates has been the district’s auditor for several years. Aughenbaugh stated that the district is pleased to have received a financial profile score of 4.0 out of 4.0.

“Similar to other districts, MHS has benefited from the increase in interest earned on investments in addition to federal ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) grant funds,” explained Aughenbaugh. “In FY23, the district received over \$1

million in ESSER grant funds. Our district is also fortunate to reside within counties in which taxpayers pay their real estate taxes in a timely manner.”

Aughenbaugh said the district received four snow removal bids. After discussion, the board rejected all bids. The maintenance and custodial department will continue to remove snow for this school year.

The graduate date of Saturday, May 11, 2024, was previously set, and the board approved the time of 1 p.m. in the gymnasium.

The board previously authorized “fact-gathering” for a no-cost solar analysis. During the no-cost phase, ENGIE, an energy solutions company, will survey buildings and surrounding school-owned property to identify areas for potential solar installation, among other services, and provide the district with a final proposal for consideration. After that, the board would make a final decision on solar to approve or reject the ENGIE amendment and possibly provide notice to proceed.

“District 280 has been communicating with ENGIE since 2020 about comprehen-

sive energy savings and solar opportunities,” said Aughenbaugh. “There is no decision at this time to commit to solar, and the board is being very diligent and thorough in fully investigating all options.”

PERSONNEL, OTHER ITEMS

Following closed session, the following board motions and action items were taken:

- Accepted the resignation of Lexi Wamhoff as paraprofessional effective at the end of the fall semester.
- Accepted the resignation of Nicole Gibson as varsity volleyball coach and Christin Atherton as sophomore volleyball coach.
- Accepted the resignation of Dan Beck as assistant varsity football coach.
- Hired Arturo Serrano as paid assistant wrestling coach.
- Approved appointments of Pat Reeder as freshman boys’ basketball volunteer coach and Damon Musgrove as wrestling volunteer coach.
- Approved the future naming of the MHS athletic complex.

The next regular meeting of the District 280 Board will be Monday, Dec. 18 at 6 p.m.

OBITUARIES

Paul A. Harvey

LaMOILLE — Paul Allan Harvey, 55, passed into heaven Nov. 23, 2023. He died peacefully, with his parents beside him, from complications due to a pedestrian accident in Harlingen, Texas.

A memorial service will be held at 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2, 2023, at the Merritt Funeral Home, Mendota with Rev. Timothy Baltz officiating. Private burial will be held at Greenfield Cemetery, LaMoille at a later date. Visitation will be held Saturday from 10:30 a.m. until time of services.

He was born Dec. 28, 1967, to Roger and Linda (Carver) Harvey of LaMoille.

Paul is survived his parents, Roger and Linda (Carver) Harvey of LaMoille.

Paul was preceded in death by his very loving maternal and paternal grandparents. They have now welcomed him into heaven.

Paul was a 1986 graduate of LaMoille High School, graduated from IVCC, and Sangamon State University where he received a degree in juvenile criminal justice. After graduation, Paul was employed at the Covenant Children’s Home in Princeton where he worked as a youth counselor. Later, he worked at the Ottawa Correctional Facilities, drove for Roehl Trucking, worked at Mid American Growers in Granville and served as a guard at a prison in Beeville, Texas.

Paul was a great lover of the outdoors, (the Carver pond was one of his favorite solaces). He loved to read and made many creative, beautiful, and functional wood projects. He had a sympathetic and compassionate heart for those who needed a little extra help and would give of himself despite his own meager resources. He also loved God and family, and they loved him as well - so much.

Memorials may be directed to Greenfield Cemetery Association in LaMoille or the Mendota Area Christian Food Pantry. Online condolences may be left at www.merrittfh.com.



Reimagine

Continued from Page A1

to Mendota High School and OSF Saint Paul; No. 4 and No. 5 (tie) were Illinois Avenue revitalization and youth center with activities.

The activities at the meetings gave not only the groups, but Mayor David Boelk, City Clerk Emily McConville, alderpersons, and other city officials in attendance ideas of what people in the town want to happen in the town.

McConville and Reimagine Mendota’s Annie Short both discussed funding, writing grants, and how steps are being taken to help pay for costs of improving Mendota.

The end result isn’t in sight, but the steps to improve Mendota now, in a year, 10 years, and in the unforeseeable future are taking place.



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OPINION



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Letters to the editor should be typed or hand-printed. They should also be brief. All letters must contain a name, address and telephone number. The editor reserves the right to publish, condense, revise or reject any submissions.

Illinois lawmakers axe school choice program

By Chris Talgo

Since the pandemic exposed the corruption and decline of public schools throughout the country, school choice programs have become more popular than ever, especially among lower-income families who typically cannot afford to send their children to non-public schools. This has led to states passing an avalanche of school choice bills, with some even offering universal school choice via education savings accounts.

While the sudden rise in school choice programs is welcome news for many Americans, there has also been a backlash in several blue states, where lawmakers and teacher unions are scrambling to prevent school choice from gaining a foothold.

Take Illinois for example, where state lawmakers recently axed the Prairie State's lone school choice program: the Invest in Kids Act.

In 2017, the Illinois Legislature passed the Invest in Kids Act, which allowed private donors to provide money to six state-approved private school scholarship funds in exchange for a tax credit. Since its inception, the program has granted 40,940 private school scholarships. This year alone, the program has awarded scholarships to 9,656 students.

Most of the students who have received scholarships from the Invest in Kids Act reside in Chicago. More than half are black or Hispanic. And, all students receiving scholarships live in households that have incomes below 300 percent of the federal poverty level. In other words, the Invest in Kids Act was specifically designed to lend a helping hand to families living in poverty-stricken neighborhoods, where local public schools are failing to keep students safe and academic achievement is lagging.

According to a recent poll, 63% of Illinois voters support the Invest in Kids Act, including 67% of Independents and 60% of Democrats. Nearly seven in 10 Black and Hispanic voters also support the program, which will end at the close of 2023.

As expected, most of the pushback to extending the Invest in Kids Act beyond 2023 came from teacher unions. For instance, Illinois Education Association (IEA) President Al Llorens celebrated the decision to sunset the program, saying, "It is a new day in Illinois. We are incredibly grateful to our lawmakers for choosing to end the voucher scheme known as Invest in Kids. This program sent millions of taxpayer dollars to private schools and was created under the guise of helping students of color, but we now know the funds went primarily to white students."

Likewise, the Chicago Teachers Union applauded the decision to end the program, calling it "a significant milestone in the fight for anti-racist, gender affirming, pro-immigrant, equitable and fully funded public schools."

In blue states like Illinois, teacher unions wield vast power and they are unafraid to exercise that influence, especially when it comes to dismantling competition from non-public schools.

Unfortunately, the teacher unions' war on school choice produces collateral damage that has a disproportionately negative impact on low-income families who remain stuck in poor-performing and unsafe public schools.

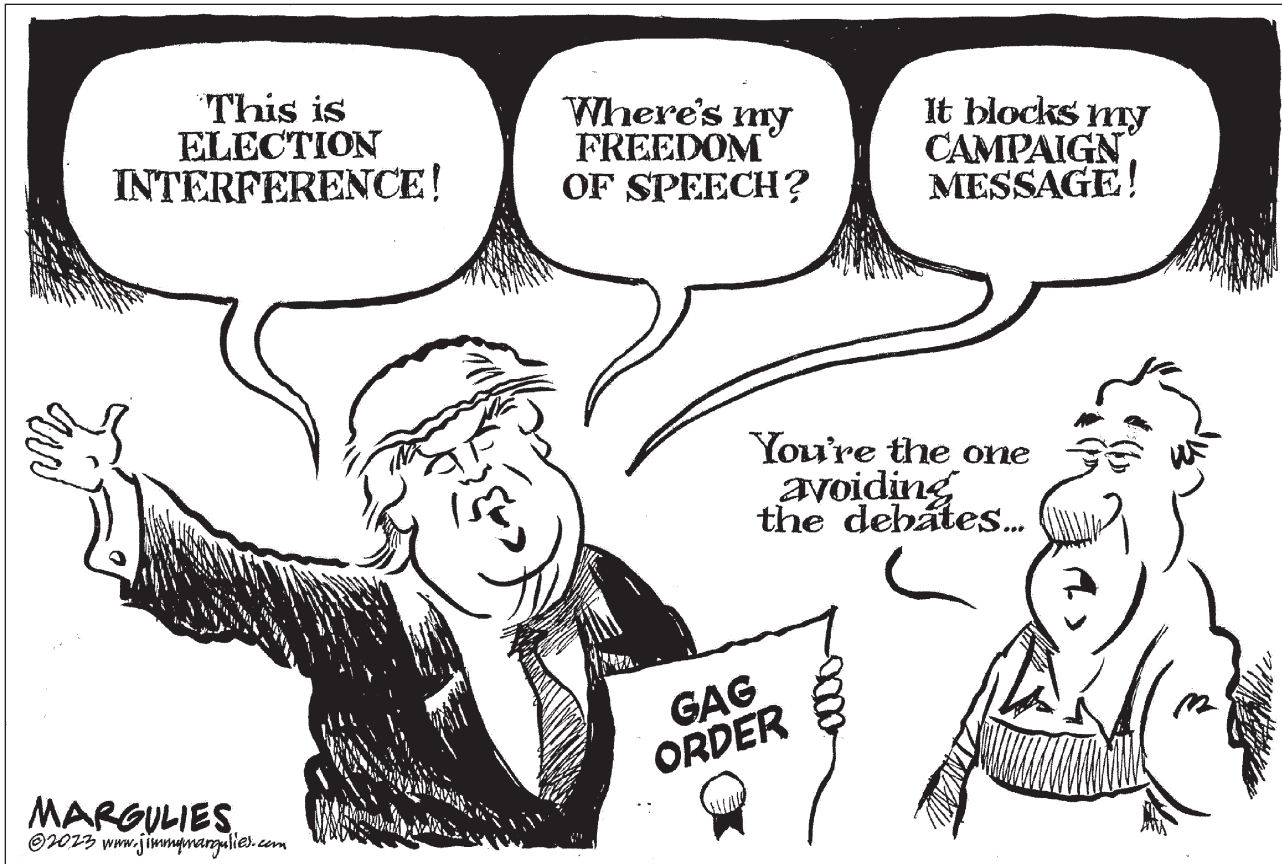
The teachers unions incorrectly claim that voucher programs like the Invest in Kids Act diverts money from public schools, which they constantly claim are woefully underfunded. However, this is simply not true. Illinois public schools spend, on average, nearly \$18,000 per pupil whereas the private school scholarships granted under the Invest in Kids Act averaged \$5,900 per student. Since the Invest in Kids Act was passed in 2017, Illinois has increased public school funding by more than \$2 billion. Moreover, Illinois spent \$39.1 billion on public education last year, of which 99.8 percent was allocated to public schools and 0.2 percent was left for school choice.

And, if non-public schools are such a threat to the very existence of public schools, why do 39% of Chicago Public School teachers send their own children to private schools? Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker, who voiced opposition to the Invest in Kids Act after initially supporting its extension while campaigning, along with many of his Democrat colleagues in the Illinois Legislature, also send their children to private schools. What's good for the goose is good for the gander.

In Illinois, about 85% of students attend public schools, but only 38% of families think K-12 public education is "headed in the right direction." Based on the results 2023 Illinois School Report Card, which shows Illinois public schools are failing miserably to properly educate the next generation of Illinoisans, this is hardly surprising.

The solution to a deteriorating public education system, which has operated as a near-monopoly for decades in Illinois, is more, not less, competition. All Illinois families, regardless of their household income, deserve the chance to send their children to the school that best fits their unique needs and circumstances, whether that be public, private, or charter.

(Chris Talgo (ctalgo@heartland.org) is editorial director at The Heartland Institute.)



It happened in 1868

(The following is from Jessica Nashold's *Backtracks & Sidetracks* column reprinted from Nov. 26, 2003.)

By Jessica Nashold

Just as we enjoy reviewing the old news of the 1900s today, a hundred years ago, The Sub-Bulletin was recalling news of the 1800s.

Nothing before 1853, of course.

In the Nov. 27, 1903 issue, The Sun-Bulletin carried, on the front page, a column designated "Ye Olden Times." Mark Ruggles was editor at the time, son of Robert Ruggles, who had founded The Bulletin in 1863. It went out of the family for a while, and Mark established The Sun. Within a couple of years, he acquired The Bulletin once more. It became The Sun-Bulletin.

In choosing items from the 1868 Bulletin for his Ye Olden Times column, Mark was portraying Mendota in its 15th year.

He led off with the death of Edward Ruggles, eldest son of Robert and Helen Ruggles, on Jan. 2, 1868. He had died at the age of 9 years old.

Next came a few market prices from the week of Jan. 9, 1868: wheat—\$1.68; corn—70 cents; oats—50 cents; hard coal—\$14.50-\$17.50; soft coal—\$5-\$6.50.

Mendota was said to be 88 miles from Chicago in 1868. (That distance had shrunk to 84 miles by 1903.) It was remarked that, in 1868, all produce raised within 20-30 miles from Mendota was brought here for shipment. On a Saturday, in January 1868, "a person counting teams headed for the railroad reported a total of 96."

One string of 16, their wagons loaded with hogs, passed by at one time.

One Saturday, over \$35,000 was paid to farmers in Mendota, for grain and other shipments.

Max A.F. Haass, a local druggist, was elected Chief Patriarch of the Mendota Encampment of Odd Fellows.

Twelve churches were listed: Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian,

Backtracks & Sidetracks

Universalist, Episcopal, two Lutheran (English and German), two Catholic (Irish and German), two Baptist and a Colored Church.

There were also two schools and two seminaries, for advanced education.

Business in 1867 had totaled \$6,662,638. Expense for "running the city" was \$4,165.

Mendota became a city in 1867. Boyd Lowe was the first mayor.

On Jan. 3, 1868, The First National Bank declared a dividend of 7%. John R. Woods, bank president, had married Miss Hattie L.V. Fassett on Jan. 1. The Rev. James Fargo performed the ceremony.

The news in the Jan. 16, 1868 issue of The Bulletin included the announcement that General Ulysses S. Grant would head the Republican ballot for President of the United States. His running mate was Reuben E. Fenton of New York for the office of Vice President.

It was explained the coal chutes had been built in 1868.

They were quite a novelty. The Y track for transfer of eastern freight to the CB&Q was built the same year. The CB&Q shipped 34,978,983 pounds of grain from this point, in 1867.

Samuel Edwards of Mendota was elected president of the Northern Illinois Horticultural Society in 1868.

He conducted a nursery. In its Jan. 23, 1868 issue, The Bulletin listed businesses by categories, and the volume of business done by some of them.

There were five hotels, three farm

implement dealers, four boot & shoe stores, five coal dealers, including B.C. Jack & Co., who did \$24,240 of business in 1867. There were 16 dry goods merchants, among them Samuel Fernberg, John & Son, and G.M. Black. Black did a \$96,708 business in 1867. (He had moved his store from Main Street to the brick building erected by G.N. Jones on Washington Street. He could probably afford the three-year lease he signed with rent of \$1,299 per year.)

Mendota had four drug stores in 1868, two furniture stores, nine grocery stores (among them Philip Erlenborn, Anton Erlenborn, Marks & Cooper), five hardware stores (including Wm. Edwards & Son, Curtiss & Runde), two jewelry stores, five lumber dealers. Kenower Wormley was the only dealer in produce, doing a business of \$40,000 annually.

Henning & Volk made beer, but had not yet launched their famous "Go Hed" label.

There were three harness dealers, Shepley & Fischer built houses, Blackstone & Grundy made wagons.

A number of reminiscences have been published about how Mendota got its start. They were not always in agreement. In 1868, The Bulletin used the following account:

The spot occupied by Mendota had been unbroken prairie in 1848, with not a white man of a log cabin in the township. The first house was built in 1853 by Thomas Schick. The second dwelling was a space beneath a wagon, where Mr. Stubbs lived for a few weeks. The first store was built by J.J. West. D.D. Guiles conducted a business there. It was described as being near the corner of what became Main and Washington streets. Most of the early settlers had their own versions of the early days of the town, but the quotes from 1868 make it clear that the first 15 years saw rapid growth.

When it set up its city government in 1867, it could boast a dozen churches, two schools, two seminaries, dozens of businesses, drawing trade from as much as 30 miles away.

The new Arab street is here at home

By Rich Lowry

The old conventional wisdom was that the U.S. couldn't be too pro-Israel for fear of inflaming "the Arab street."

The new conventional wisdom will have to be that we can't be too pro-Israel for fear of inflaming "the Western street."

The Arab street, a hoary cliché of commentary on the Middle East for decades, was a reference to public opinion in the Arab countries, with the strong implication that if we offended it, the result would be massive anti-Western demonstrations and perhaps violence.

Well, here we are, with this dynamic playing out throughout the United States and other Western countries. We have offended the new Arab street within our own societies. In response, it has lashed out in mass protests, intimidation of Jews, antisemitic chants and graffiti, property damage and anti-patriotic acts and sentiments.

It is hardly the global intifada that speakers at these events call for, but it is significant agitation. Left-of-center political parties will take it seriously, and the Biden administration -- hesitant to speak of antisemitism without reference to fashionable Islamophobia, as well -- has already been influenced by it.

The Arab street in the West is not literally Arab, although Muslim immigrants and their children, along with foreign students, are clearly a large component. Woke young people who come by their anti-Israel views via intersectional politics, along with traditional left-wing and anti-war activists, play a big role, too.

It makes for a noxious mix. The West's Arab street mobilized in the immediate aftermath of October 7 before Israel even had the chance to mount any substantial response. It inveighed against Israel on principle even after an unspeakable pogrom.

Of course, things have only picked up from there. A week or so ago, more than 300,000 pro-Palestinian protesters marched in London, chanting for the elimination of Israel. That would be a notable crowd in an Arab capital, but it's especially remarkable in one of the greatest cities in the Western world.

In a nice touch that, again, one would expect in a country in the Middle East, the protest march ended at the U.S. Embassy.

A couple of days earlier, thousands of protesters shut down midtown Manhattan. They vandalized a police cruiser, writing "IDF KKK" on it, and splattered fake blood on the New York Times building. They kicked and smashed windows at a shut-down Grand Central Station.

Unlike other mass movements, most famously the civil-rights movement, the protesters don't seek to swathe themselves in American symbolism and ideals. Palestinian flags, not American flags, are the banners of these marchers. In Manhattan, they removed American flags from a lamppost. And they've vandalized war memorials in Europe.

In some prominent cases, we have directly imported hatred of ourselves via the Middle East. At a large pro-Palestinian rally in Washington, D.C., the lawyer and activist Lamis Deek praised martyrdom and resistance, and bellowed that "the truth is the Western world is a lie." She comes from Nablus, and her worldview is about what you'd expect of someone from there.

At MIT, Israeli and Jewish students say they were blocked from attending class by a pro-Palestinian protest at the school's main entrance. The protest violated the rules, but when the school ordered all protesters to leave the area or face suspension, the contingent of Jewish counter-protesters left, while the pro-Palestinians stayed.

Were they suspended? No, apparently because many of them are foreign students. The president of MIT cited "visa issues" in not following through on the discipline.

This is perverse. But we can never forget the extent to which we ourselves, through determined inculcation in our own schools, have made students from right here in the United States haters of Israel and the West. Altogether, we've created the conditions for the ongoing cataract of anti-Israel agitation, coupled with outright antisemitism and harassment of Jews, that shows no signs of abating.

Why settle for an Arab Street abroad, when you can have one here at home?

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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Santa's Christmas COLORING CONTEST

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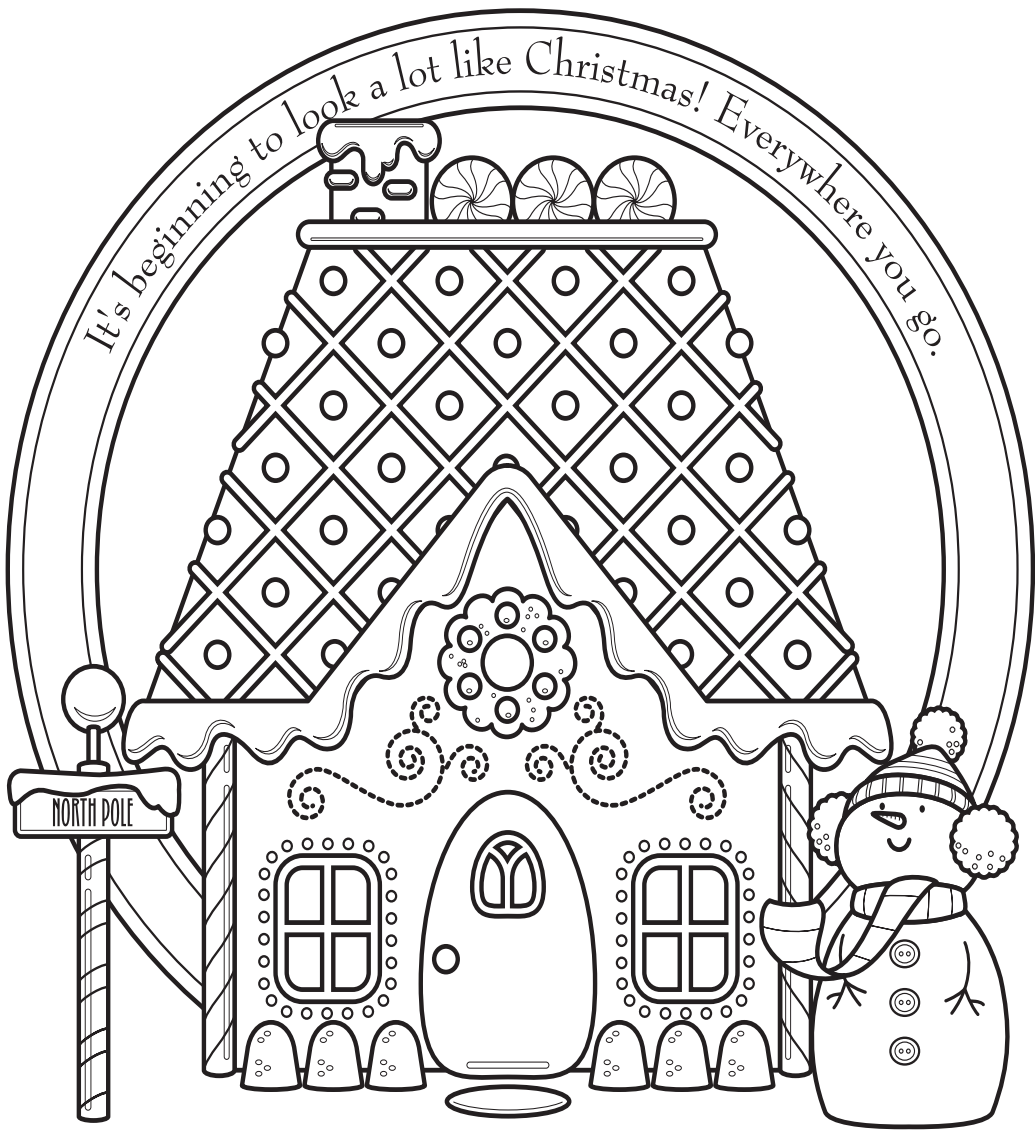
PHONE: _____

All children 10 years old & younger are invited to color the Christmas scene shown here & submit to The Mendota Reporter for a chance to win fabulous prizes.

Entries must be received at our office, 703 Illinois Ave., Mendota. Entries must be received by Dec. 14, 2023.

Winners will be notified.

Prizes awarded for:
1st Place
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LOCAL AND AREA



IVCC 21st Century Scholar Finalists, left to right, are Andrew Knipper, Caleb Savitch, Elizabeth Boyles and Logan Brandner. (Photo contributed)

Brandner among IVCC 21st Century Scholar finalists

OGLESBY — Andrew Knipper was named the Illinois Valley Community College Foundation 21st Century Scholar at a Nov. 16 ceremony at Starved Rock Lodge.

Knipper was honored along with three other finalists at the 17th annual 21st Century Scholars Society dinner.

The son of Jon and Tara Knipper plans on attending Liberty University to pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish next fall. He would like to continue at Liberty University School of Law and is considering becoming an International Law Attorney. "This scholarship means more to me than just financial support. It has impacted my future by allowing me to focus more on studies, engage

in meaningful experiences and contribute positively to society," said Andrew.

In his acceptance speech for the \$3,000, Andrew expressed his heartfelt gratitude for this award and stated, "I am immensely grateful for the doors this scholarship have opened for me and the difference it has made in my academic journey."

Finalists receiving \$1,500 each were:

- Logan Brandner of Mendota, the son of Dave and Dorothy Brandner.

- Caleb Savitch of Spring Valley, the son of David and Bernadette Savitch.

- Elizabeth Boyles of Princeton, the daughter of Dennis and Gina Boyles

Merit award winners receiving \$750 each were:

- Elizabeth Browder of

Earlville, the daughter of Adam and Carrie Browder.

- Madeline Klicker of Ottawa, the daughter of Trent and Elizabeth Klicker.

- Isabella Lambert of Tonica, the daughter of Chad and Catherine Lambert.

- Eric Lockwood of Peru, the son of Kirk and Dawnanne Lockwood.

- Earl Pantig of Ottawa, the son of Michael and Emmarose Pantig.

To qualify for these scholarships, students need a minimum 3.5 GPA as well as extensive college involvement and community service.

The 21st Century Scholars Society was established in 2007 to honor and reward IVCC's most promising second-year students. It has awarded more than \$225,000 to 200 students including

\$11,250 to nine scholars this year.

The Society is currently made up of generous members who each contribute \$500 annually. The Society meets once a year to hear the stories of the students that they have helped. "It is a very touching evening. Learning the stories, hearing the challenges and the accomplishments of these students is inspiring. There is nothing like being able to directly see and speak with the people that have benefited from your donation," said Tracy Beattie, executive director of the Foundation.

For information on becoming a member of the 21st Century Scholar Society, contact Beattie at (815) 224-0550 or tracy_beattie@ivcc.edu.

IVCC holding welding registration session Dec. 5

OGLESBY — IVCC's Welding Department is hosting a welding registration session on Tuesday, Dec. 5, from 5 to 7 p.m. in CTC-124.

All new welding students must register for the Spring 2024 semester through a welding information session. Contact the Workforce Development Division Office at (815) 224-0233 or email kim_herout@ivcc.edu to sign up for the session.

No previous welding experience is necessary, and instructors work to find the best fit for students at whatever stage they enter the program, said Program Coordinator Theresa Molln. "We try to find out who's done welding and what type of welding they're interested in so we can narrow down the program of study they're looking at," she said.

Info sessions are held on the main campus and just down the hall from the Admissions Department, so prospective students can register and enroll all at once, she added.

IVCC's welding program is ideal for beginners who've never welded, for those with some welding background, and for industry employees who want to expand skills at their current employer, Molln said. Some local industries allow flexible work schedules so employees can attend classes, or partner with IVCC to train their workers. The instructors are backed by experience across varied industries.

Classes are offered mornings, afternoons and evenings Monday through Thursday. "A flexible schedule of course offerings allows for students with all types of commitments to conveniently attend, from swing shift workers to students still enrolled in high school," Molln said.

Welding draws people looking for good-paying jobs, farmers and others who use the skill in repair work — even artists who want to build showcases for their work. Others just enjoy the skill and its many uses, Molln said.

IVCC's district is a prime labor market for welders because of its varied industries: vehicle manufacturing, architecture and structural metals manufacturing, agriculture, construction, mining, machine shops and fabricated metal product manufacturing. Graduates find a workforce that wel-

comes them at industries such as Vactor in Streator, HCC in Mendota, Sabic in Ottawa, Marquis Energy in Hennepin and Carus in La Salle, Molln said.

Current enrollment is about 65 students. More women are taking up the skill, noted Molln, who was accustomed to being the

only female in her welding classes in high school and college. A welding club lets students work independently on projects outside class.

Spring classes begin Jan. 11, 2024. For more information on the program, visit <https://www.ivcc.edu/programsbyareaofstudy/welding/index.php>.



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LaSalle Co. has FEMA CRS rating of class 8

OTTAWA — LaSalle County continues to take part in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS). CRS is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management practices that exceed the minimum requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program.

LaSalle County currently has a rating of a class 8. With this class rating, homeowners with flood insurance in unincorporated LaSalle

County save approximately 10% on their flood insurance policies annually.

To receive credit for one of the activities in the program, LaSalle County must review its flood mitigation strategies annually and provide press release notice. This review was completed on Nov. 1, and the updated 2023 strategies, and other flood mitigation resources, are available for review at the following link: <https://lasallemountyil.gov/393/Floodplain>.

Public Notice

The annual meeting of the St. Paul's Evangelical Cemetery Association on Old Chicago Road will be held on December 4, 2023 at Florence Buettner residence at 1665 William Way in Mendota at 1:00 pm. All people interested in upkeep of cemetery are invited to attend.

Secretary,
David Costello

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Looking for a truly "Mendota" gift?

Mendota Area Chamber Gift Certificates!

Mendota Shops offer a large and varied array of gift giving ideas for everyone on your Christmas List. **Puzzled?** Wondering what to get those hard to buy for relatives, friends and fellow employees? How about Mendota Area Chamber Gift Certificates! They can be made for any denomination and they are always the right size and color! The Certificates may be purchased at the Chamber office.

Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce
Gift Certificate
No Expiration Date

Date, Dec. 1, 2023
\$25.00

Mrs. Jane Doe
Twenty Five and 00/100.....Dollars
Presented by The Johnson Family

Signature: _____

MGG2023

AVAILABLE STARTING NOVEMBER 20TH

PICK A NAME OFF THE TREE!

"Christmas Elves" with names and ages of needy children will be available starting Nov. 20th, at Eureka Savings Bank, First State Bank, Financial Plus Credit Union, First Federal Savings Bank, and First State Bank Plaza North.

After shopping for that special child, the unwrapped gift may be taken to Eureka Savings Bank by 4 p.m., on Friday, Dec. 8 You may call ahead or go through the drive-up to let them know you are dropping off a gift. Financial support is also being accept-ed and may be dropped off at the Chamber office in December. For more information, call the Mendota Chamber of Commerce at 815-539-6507.



MGG2023

12 Days of Giving Shop Local & WIN!

November 18th is the kick off day for the Mendota Chamber's 2023 12 days of Giving Christmas Shop Local Promotion.

For every \$10 spent in a participating business, you will receive one sticker. In order to qualify for the 12 Days of Giving prizes, you must turn in a full card and each card must have stickers from at least FIVE OF THE PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES.

Double Stickers will be handed out during the Mendota Christmas event on Saturday, Dec. 2nd. Be sure to stop by the Mendota Chamber information booth downtown during the event for a special Mendota Chamber Shop Local Sticker.

Bring in your full cards to the Mendota Chamber Office at 800 Washington St. before Dec. 8th. You may also drop off your full card in the city's drop box on Illinois Avenue.

The 12 Days of Giving drawings will begin on Dec. 8 and be held every day, except Sundays, through Dec. 21. There will be 1 winner each day. The daily prizes will include merchandise and gift cards from our participating businesses.

On Dec. 21, the Chamber will draw for the grand prize. All daily winners will be added back into the Dec. 21 drawing. The Grand Prize will include merchandise and gift cards from our participating businesses.

4M Graphix Advanced Auto Parts Anderson Mosshart ARS Auto Repair Specialists Ashlee Kittleson Photo August Hill Winery & Illinois Sparkling Co. Beck's 1-39 Beck's BP Rt. 251 Cindy's on 34 Come Up Shop CVS/pharmacy De La O's	Dirty Dawgs Ekana Nursury El Rey El Zarape Expressions Floralcrest Inc. JC's Headquarters La Esquintia Lakeside Liquors Little Jo's Lube Cube Plus Main Street Station Maxie Salon McDonalds Mendota Area Y	Mendota Elks Lodge Mendota Moose Family Center Mendota Shell Mendota Sport Shop Meyers Furniture Moore Tires Nightengales OSF St Paul Gift Shop Parkway Restaurant Pizza's by Marchelloni Prairie States Tractor Purpose Nutrition Quest Red Ranch Photo Road Ranger	Rosati's Pizza Pub Salinas Food Truck Smooth Smoke and Vapor Sports-N-Stuff Studio 5100 Subway Sullivan Ace Hardware Sullivan's Foods Tacos Guzman The Chalet Sports Bar The Mendota Reporter Triple Service Inc. Uncle Joes Gaming VFW Ziggie's Family Restaurant
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GG2023

THE BACK PAGE

POLICE BLOTTER

NO VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE
Gabrielle Ward, 24, of Shabbona, was charged with no valid driver's license after contact with Mendota police in the 1300 block of 13th Avenue at 2:37 a.m. Nov. 21. The subject was released with a LaSalle County court date.

DRIVING WHILE LICENSE REVOKED
Dennis R. Juergensen, 63, of 111 S. 13th Ave., Lot A10, Mendota, was charged with driving while license revoked after a traffic stop at Seventh Avenue and Second Street at 12:07 p.m. Nov. 22. The subject was released with a LaSalle County court date.

NO VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE
Luis G. Raymundo-Ortiz,

18, of 211 Third Ave., Mendota, was charged with no valid driver's license after a traffic stop at Guiles Avenue and 12th Street at 5:48 p.m. Nov. 25. The subject was released with a LaSalle County court date.

RECKLESS DRIVING
Austin D. Switzer, 29, of 205 Sandra Ave., Apt. C3, Mendota, was charged with reckless driving after a traffic stop at U.S. 34 and First Avenue at 8:10 p.m. Nov. 25. The subject was released with a LaSalle County court date.

WARRANT ARREST
Tobi Walzer, 21, of 206 W. Railroad, LaMoille, was arrested at 5:20 p.m. Nov. 27 on an original Bureau County warrant for battery. The subject was released with a Bureau County court date.

Mendota Fire Department asks residents to clear fire hydrants

MENDOTA – The Mendota Fire Department would like to ask residents of Mendota that during snow removal efforts to keep fire hydrants free from obstruction of snow. As you blade, shovel or push snow off your driveways and sidewalks, take time to clear away the snow from around fire hydrants.

During a fire, seconds count. The extra minute removing snow from around fire hydrants may save you or your neighbor's home. If you are unable to clear the snow from around hydrants yourself, call the City Clerk's office at (815) 539-7459.

Also, keep your house numbers readily visible. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

Winter Weather Ordinances

MENDOTA – During winter weather conditions, the Mendota Police Department reminds residents to obey the following ordinances:

- Ordinance 41.38 – Parking After Snowfall
It shall be unlawful to park any vehicle on any public street in the city at any time after a snowfall of two inches or more has occurred, unless the snow has ceased and has been plowed off or otherwise removed from the street.
- Any person, firm, partnership, corporation or association found violating the provisions of this ordinance shall be subject to a fine of \$25 for each violation of this ordinance and may be subject to towing said vehicle away. The cost of said towing shall be the obligation and expense of those violating this Section.
- Ordinance 6.21 – Depositing Snow in Streets
No person within the city shall remove any snow from his private property or from offstreet parking lots or right of way parking into any of the city streets or alleys. This Section does not apply to removal of snow from sidewalks. This Section is specifically directed to, but not limited to gasoline stations, medical and dental clinics, or any other business or corporation which has private parking on the property or in those areas where the berm of the city has been dedicated or given over for parking facilities.

The above ordinances are in place to assist the city of Mendota with snow removal from the city streets.

MPD: Snowmobiles must stay on routes

MENDOTA – The Mendota Police Department would like to remind all snowmobile drivers to stay on the designated routes when traveling through the city.

The snowmobile routes are all clearly marked and are provided for riders to have a safe course of travel. Snowmobiles are prohibited in city parks, especially near the lakes and dam area. Riding on private property is also prohibited unless permission is given by the property owner.

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SPORTS

Giving LaMoille and Ohio credit

Amboy deserves credit. The Clipper football team won a state championship for only the second time in school history. What a huge statement. A prideful claim. A truth to never be erased from the record books. However, Amboy isn't the only town or school deserving credit for the Illinois 8-Man Football Association State Championship the Clippers won on Nov. 17 against Ridgewood, 74-22. Yes, I wrote the score there because, 74-22, WOW. Back to the intended task, the Amboy-LaMoille-Ohio football team also includes LaMoille and Ohio.



Not the Last Chance

By Brandon LaChance

This is not saying the Amboy faithful don't appreciate or thank the LaMoille and Ohio kids for being a part of the team and helping win the state title, but throughout the world wide web and through many cooler conversations, the other towns are kind of forgotten or at least not mentioned. It's always Amboy this and Amboy that. Except for ihsafootball.com, which lists the team as LaMoille. It should be Amboy-LaMoille-Ohio, the team name. Again, Amboy deserves all the credit it has coming its way. But just like they share the football field, the credit needs to be shared as well. LaMoille and Ohio both won the first state titles the schools have ever been a part of. Another huge statement.

"It's awesome. I still can't believe it has only been two weeks since it's been over. It's been amazing," said Kenny Shrimplin, LaMoille High School Athletic Director and a Clippers assistant football coach. "The atmosphere LaMoille had was so much fun. Winning the first state title for LaMoille and being a part of that is huge for me. "This is the 20th year of the co-op contract between Amboy and LaMoille. It's funny because my senior year at LaMoille High School was the first year with Amboy and now we win a state championship 20 years later. It's been a long time coming."

Shrimplin didn't understand football or know all the ins and outs until his time with Amboy. He played his first snaps with Amboy and has coached with Amboy for the last 12 years.

The smiles of pride and happiness at Monmouth College when the state title was official came from representing both, Amboy and LaMoille. "The kids celebrated on the field. They celebrated all week long. All year long, the kids have been awesome," Shrimplin said. "Almost all of the LaMoille students have been to multiple football games to cheer the team on. Meeting the administration and the teachers on the field right after we won the state title and seeing how happy they were was awesome. "The excitement it has brought to the entire town has been huge. We had so much backing. LaMoille is a small town, but I don't know everyone. I had some people I didn't know come up to me and say, 'Go get that state championship.' It's spreading and it's awesome to bring awareness to it. It has been a lot of fun. "Being involved with Amboy is great. The community cares. They always have our boys' backs and support the program in any way they can."

This season, the championship season, nine kids from LaMoille were on the team including two seniors in lineman Ian Sundberg and running back/defensive tackle Gio Gatzka, while Ohio was represented by senior defensive back Troy Anderson and senior defensive end Vincent Zembruski.

All four of those names were routinely called by game announcers throughout the season.

LaMoille has been averaging 8-10 kids on the team since before and after COVID-19, but there might be an uptick as the fun and the success is spreading from the football field to the high school hallways and classrooms.

"They see the fun the kids on the football team are having. They also see the success they're having," Shrimplin said. "I've had a bunch of kids come up to me and say, 'I want to play football for Amboy' or 'I want to be part of that.' It's kind of nice. I think our numbers are about to grow in LaMoille."

Second firearm deer season set for Nov. 30, Dec. 1-3

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has set dates for the deer archery season, and also the firearm and muzzleloader-only deer hunting and late winter deer seasons in the state.

The deer archery season will continue through Jan. 14, 2024. Archery season will be closed during the firearm seasons.

The second firearm deer season is Nov. 30, Dec. 1, 2, 3.

The muzzleloader-only deer season is Dec. 8, 9, 10. Hunters may also use a muzzleloader permit with a muzzleloading rifle during the second firearm season, Nov. 30, Dec. 1, 2, 3.

The 2023 deer firearm and muzzleloader lottery application period has ended. Remaining county-specific permits after the Lottery 3 drawings will be available for sale over the counter only at License Vendors on a first-come, first-served basis.

The late-winter deer hunting season dates are Dec.



28-31 and Jan. 12-14, 2024. Hunting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. The bag limit is one antlerless deer per legally authorized permit. Only antlerless deer may be harvested during late-winter deer season. An antlerless deer is defined as a deer without antlers or a deer having antlers less than 3 inches long. Illinois resident hunters must purchase a valid late-winter deer season permit or have a valid unfilled deer permit. Nonresident hunters must have a valid unfilled deer permit. For a list of counties open to late-winter deer season, log on to www.dnr.illinois.gov and click on the Hunt/Trap link.



State Tournament teams reunite

Members of the back-to-back state tournament Mendota High School girls' basketball teams gathered for a reunion at the present-day Lady Trojans' game on Nov. 21. The 1997-98 team advanced to the Class A State Tournament where it lost to West Frankfort, 73-67, in the quarterfinal round. The team finished with a 27-8 record. The 1998-99 team advanced to the Class A State Tournament where it finished in fourth place. Mendota was a 71-67 winner over Rockford Christian Life in the quarterfinal-round. It lost to Carrollton, 45-37, in the semifinals, and was defeated by Okawville, 56-38, in the third-place game. The team concluded with a 26-7 record. Attending the reunion, front row, left to right, are Megan McConville, Emily Sterchi and Sammy Kromm. Second row, Claudette Weber (manager), Jamie Kromm, Erica Henry and Juli Sondgeroth. Third row, Janelle Sondgeroth, Erin Wujek, Melissa Rose, Brooke Beetz, Jaci Bice, Jamie Emm and assistant coach Mike McKague. Back row, assistant coach Tim Dessing, Ryan Dessing (ball boy, manager), assistant coach Joe Masini, head coach Mike Kilmartin of 1998-99 team and head coach Randy Weibel of 1997-98 team. (Reporter photo)

Trojans win 2; finish 4th in Seneca Tourney

SENECA – The Mendota varsity boys' basketball team started off the new season in impressive fashion with a 62-23 drubbing of Newark in the opening round of the Seneca Thanksgiving Tournament on Nov. 20.

The Trojans zoomed out to a 15-4 lead after the first quarter and then got even hotter with 22 second-quarter points to take a commanding 37-8 lead to intermission. The count stood at 50-12 with three periods in the books.

Izaiah Nanez was the only Trojan in double-digit scoring with 24 points. He tallied 12 of his team's 22 points in the second stanza. The senior knocked down three shots from beyond the arc. Cale Strauss was next with nine points, while Braiden Freeman added seven markers.

Serena bested the Trojans, 52-43, in the second round of the tournament on Nov. 22.

The Trojans fell behind 12-6 after the first quarter, but began a comeback in the second period to climb within 23-19 at the break. Mendota completed the rally in the third quarter by outscoring the Huskers, 20-12, to grab a 39-35 lead heading to the fourth, but the Trojans managed just four points in

the fourth compared to 17 for Serena.

Nanez pumped in 18 points to pace the Trojans, while Strauss added 11 tallies.

It was another seesaw affair when Mendota and St. Anne squared off, and this time it was the Trojans who prevailed, 71-51, in a third-round game on Nov. 24.

Mendota lit up the scoreboard for 21 points in the first quarter and led 21-13 heading to the second period, but the opposite occurred in the second when St. Anne poured in 22 points compared to eight for the Trojans to make it 35-29 at intermission.

SERENA 52, MENDOTA 43				
Mendota (43)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Strauss	5	0-0	4	11
Baird	1	3-4	2	5
Nanez	8	0-0	2	18
Freeman	3	2-2	2	8
Tillman	0	1-2	2	1
Aughenbaugh	0	0-0	1	0
Kelly	0	0-1	3	0
Totals	17	6-9	16	43

Serena (52)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Baker	6	8-8	2	23
Raines	0	0-0	3	0
Faivre	3	0-1	4	7
Armour	7	0-0	4	14
Staton	3	2-2	2	8
Farrell	0	0-0	2	0
Totals	19	10-11	17	52

SCORE BY QUARTERS				
Mendota	6	19	39	43
Serena	12	23	35	52
Three-point goals: Mendota - Strauss 1, Nanez 2; Serena - Baker 3, Faivre 1				

sion. Back came the Trojans in the third quarter with a 25-point output to seize a 54-47 advantage, and then they pulled away in the fourth.

Strauss had the hot hand for Mendota with 22 points, leading three Trojans in double figures. He hit three shots from three-point land. Nanez also fired in three trifectas and finished with 16 points, while Aden Tillman chipped in with 13 points.

Mendota and Hall played in the third-place game and

MENDOTA 62, NEWARK 23				
Mendota (62)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Strauss	4	0-0	3	9
Baird	2	1-2	3	5
Nanez	8	5-8	1	24
Freeman	2	3-3	0	7
Tillman	2	0-0	0	6
Aughenbaugh	1	0-0	1	2
Stevenson	0	0-0	1	0
Kelly	1	0-0	3	2
Beetz	1	0-0	0	3
McPheeters	1	0-0	0	2
Doyle	1	0-0	3	2
Totals	23	9-13	15	62

Newark (23)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Kath	0	3-6	1	3
Long	2	1-4	1	6
Wills	1	0-0	1	2
Leggett	2	0-0	3	4
Wallin	1	0-0	2	2
Friestad	0	0-0	3	0
Kybartz	2	0-0	4	4
Brummel	1	0-0	0	2
Totals	9	4-10	15	23

SCORE BY QUARTERS				
Mendota	15	37	50	62
Newark	4	8	12	23
Three-point goals: Mendota - Strauss 1, Beetz 1, Nanez 3, Tillman 2; Newark - Long 1				

the Red Devils held on for a 61-53 triumph on Nov. 25.

The Trojans owned a 25-24 halftime lead, but Hall rallied in the third quarter to forge in front, 45-42, then the Red Devils pulled away in the fourth.

Tillman topped the scoring chart with 25 points as he drained four shots from three-point territory. Nanez, Freeman and Strauss all had nine points, while Nanez snared 11 rebounds.

Nanez was named to the all-tournament team.

MENDOTA 71, ST. ANNE 51				
Mendota (71)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Strauss	7	5-6	3	22
Baird	4	0-0	2	8
Kelly	1	2-5	2	5
Nanez	6	1-3	1	16
Tillman	4	3-4	0	13
Aughenbaugh	2	0-0	1	4
McPheeters	0	1-2	0	1
Doyle	0	2-2	1	2
Totals	24	14-22	10	71

St. Anne (51)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Pomarranski	0	0-0	4	0
Wyatt	5	0-0	0	12
Davis	2	2-2	3	6
Willis	0	0-0	1	0
Hapster	0	0-0	1	0
Link	4	3-6	0	11
Langellier	1	0-0	2	2
Walker	3	0-0	1	8
Bleye	4	0-0	3	9
Fixer	1	1-2	3	3
Totals	20	6-10	18	51

SCORE BY QUARTERS				
Mendota	21	29	54	71
St. Anne	13	35	47	51
Three-point goals: Mendota - Strauss 3, Nanez 3, Kelly 1, Tillman 2; St. Anne - Walker 2, Wyatt 2, Bleye 1				

MHS entered in Colmone Classic

SPRING VALLEY – The Mendota varsity boys' basketball team will compete in the 12-team Colmone Classic Holiday Tournament to be held Dec. 2-9 in Spring Valley.

The Trojans are in the White Pool along with Pontiac and Stillman Valley. The Red Pool consists of Hall, Rock Falls and St. Bede, the Black Pool includes Bureau Valley, LaSalle-Peru and Marquette, while the Gray Pool includes Fieldcrest, Princeton and Putnam County.

Mendota will open the tournament against Pontiac at 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2. The Trojans will battle Stillman Valley at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 6.

The outcome of games in pool play will determine the schedule for the final three days of the tournament.

Colmone Classic Holiday Tournament	
Saturday, Dec. 2	
1 – Pontiac vs. Mendota – 3:00	
2 – LaSalle-Peru vs. Bureau Valley – 4:30	
3 – Princeton vs. Fieldcrest – 6:00	
4 – St. Bede vs. Hall – 7:30	
Monday, Dec. 4	
5 – Marquette vs. Bureau Valley – 5:00	
6 – Rock Falls vs. St. Bede – 6:30	
7 – Princeton vs. Putnam County – 8:00	
Tuesday, Dec. 5	
8 – Fieldcrest vs. Putnam County – 5:00	
9 – Stillman Valley vs. Pontiac – 6:30	
10 – Hall vs. Rock Falls – 8:00	
Wednesday, Dec. 6	
11 – Mendota vs. Stillman Valley – 5:30	
12 – LaSalle-Peru vs. Marquette – 7:00	
Thursday, Dec. 7	
13 – Black #3 vs. Gray #3 – 5:00	
14 – Red #3 vs. White #3 – 6:30	
15 – Red #2 vs. White #2 – 8:00	
Friday, Dec. 8	
16 – Black #2 vs. Gray #2 – 5:00	
17 – Black #1 vs. Gray #1 – 6:30	
18 – Red #1 vs. White #1 – 8:00	
Saturday, Dec. 9	
19 – Loser 13 vs. Loser 14 – noon (11th place)	
20 – Winner 13 vs. Winner 14 – 1:30 (9th place)	
21 – Loser 15 vs. Loser 16 – 3:00 (7th place)	
22 – Winner 15 vs. Winner 16 – 4:30 (5th place)	
23 – Loser 17 vs. Loser 18 – 6:00 (3rd place)	
24 – Winner 17 vs. Winner 18 – 7:30 (1st place)	

SPORTS



Headed to SVCC

Mendota High School senior Reanna Brant, sitting right, signs a letter of intent to attend Sauk Valley Community College to play volleyball next fall. Also seated is her mom, Michelle Kaps-Musgrove, while standing in back, left to right, are Nicci Gibson, Brant's coach at Mendota High School; Jay Howell, head coach at Sauk Valley; and Jenn Crum, Brant's coach with the Lions Juniors Starved Rock Volleyball Club. (Reporter photo)

Girls fall to Oregon in overtime, Bureau Valley in league opener

A huge fourth-quarter comeback by Mendota sent its game with Oregon into overtime, but the Lady Trojans ran out of gas in the extra session and fell to the Hawks, 44-36, in a nonconference varsity girls' basketball game on Nov. 21 at the MHS gym.

Mendota tried to play catch-up with Oregon from the start, trailing 6-2 after the first quarter and 14-10 at the break. The Lady Trojans fell further behind in the third period when they were outscored, 16-10, to make the count 30-20 with just one quarter left to play. But in the final frame, Mendota poured in 14 points and held Oregon to four to tie the game after regulation.

In the overtime session, the Lady Trojans managed just two free throw while the visitors tallied five field goals to claim the victory.

"Our defense wasn't great in the first half and was bad in the third, but it was amazing in the fourth quarter," said Mendota coach John Hansen. "Down 13, we put on the pressure and attacked the basket to come back and

OREGON 44, MENDOTA 36 OT				
Oregon (44)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Shaffer	1	0-2	1	2
Eckardt	2	0-0	5	4
McLain	6	0-7	1	12
Sarver	6	0-1	4	12
Engelkes	1	0-0	5	2
Champlay	3	2-3	5	8
Girton	2	0-3	3	4
Carrero	0	0-0	2	0
Totals	21	2-16	26	44

Mendota (36)				
	FG	FT	Reb	TP
Eddy	4	2-10	0	10
Garcia	2	0-0	2	4
Frey	1	0-0	3	3
Knaff	1	0-0	0	2
Coss	2	2-2	3	6
Sondgeroth	0	0-0	3	0
Martin	0	0-2	3	0
Denault	2	1-3	4	5
Wasmer	0	6-12	6	6
Totals	12	11-29	24	36

SCORE BY QUARTERS				
Oregon	6	14	30	44
Mendota	2	10	20	36
Three-point goals: Mendota - Frey 1				

BUREAU V. 63, MENDOTA 27				
Mendota (27)				
	FG	FT	Reb	TP
Eddy	2	0-2	1	5
Garcia	1	0-0	4	2
Frey	0	0-2	1	0
Knaff	3	0-1	2	6
Sondgeroth	0	0-0	3	0
Martin	3	0-0	4	6
Denault	0	1-2	1	1
Wasmer	3	1-2	5	7
Totals	12	2-9	21	27

Bureau Valley (63)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Maynard	3	0-1	1	6
Salisbury	8	6-8	2	23
Stoller	3	0-0	2	7
Cady	3	0-0	4	6
Neuhalfen	3	1-2	1	7
Birkey	3	0-0	1	6
Zemke	0	1-2	1	1
Endress	3	0-0	0	7
Totals	26	8-13	12	63

SCORE BY QUARTERS				
Mendota	0	9	19	27
Bureau Valley	17	34	54	63
Three-point goals: Mendota - Eddy 1; Bureau Valley - Salisbury 1, Stoller 1, Endress 1				

force overtime. We got some looks that didn't fall in OT and just couldn't finish the deal."

Ava Eddy paced the Mendota scoring chart with 10 points, while Grace Wasmer and Ella Coss provided six points apiece. Wasmer led with six rebounds and she picked off five steals. Crystal Garcia led the squad with seven steals and Eddy added five steals.

Mendota opened Three Rivers Conference play with a 63-27 setback to Bureau Valley on Nov. 27 at Manlius.

The Lady Trojans were blanked in the first quarter while the Storm put up 17 points. The count was 34-9 at halftime.

Wasmer led Mendota (1-5, 0-1) with seven points and five rebounds.

LaMoille H.S. boys' basketball

AFC Thanksgiving Tournament

Nov. 20

LaMoille 47, West Carroll 38

Stats: Tyler Billhorn 29 points, 13 rebounds; Jhett Cowser 6 points, 8 rebounds; Braden Fischer 6 points (LaMoille outscored West Carroll, 35-9, in second half.)

Nov. 21

Ashton-Franklin Center 72, LaMoille 48

Stats: Billhorn 18 points, 13 rebounds; Braden Klein 15 points; Cowser 11 points

Nov. 24

Leland 56, LaMoille 36

Stats: Billhorn 14 points; Klein 10 points, 8 rebounds; Cowser 10 rebounds

Nov. 25

LaMoille 58, Hiawatha 50

Stats: Billhorn 24 points, 11 rebounds; Klein 20 points, 4 assists (LaMoille finishes in 5th place.)

Nov. 27

Alden-Hebron 38, LaMoille 31

Stats: Klein 17 points; Billhorn 19 rebounds

MHS wrestlers open with three wins

AMBOY – The Mendota High School wrestling team opened the season by sweeping three other teams in a quadrangular meet at Amboy on Nov. 21.

The Trojans won narrow decisions by identical 42-36 scores over Amboy and St. Bede, while they rolled over Putnam County-Hall, 54-24.

Against Amboy, winners by pin for Mendota were Gavin Stevenson, Trayvon Rucker, Gavin Evans and Madrick Musgrove. Picking up forfeits were Corbin Furar, Delila Kent and Emma Dearing.

Mendota got pin wins from Cole Kleckner and Furar against St. Bede, while forfeit victories went to Adrian Arteaga, Stevenson, Dearing, Laina Gonzales and Reese Lane.

Trojan winners by pin against Putnam County-Hall were Rucker, Kleckner, Rhett Watson, Furar and Lea Turner. Stevenson and Hayden Senders gained forfeit wins, while Arteaga got a victory via injury default and Zach

Schmidt recorded a triumph when his opponent was disqualified.

Nov. 21

Mendota 42, Amboy 36

106 – double forfeit; 113 – Flor-schuetz (A) pinned Adrian Arteaga (M), 0:22; 120 – Gavin Stevenson (M) pinned C. Huggins (A), 0:45; 126 – La. Blanton (A) won forfeit; 132 – Trayvon Rucker (M) pinned T. Huggins (A), 0:34; 138 – Heath (A) pinned Cole Kleckner (M), 1:04; 144 – Lopez (A) won forfeit; 150 – Gavin Evans (M) pinned Tucker (A), 0:52; 157 – Corbin Furar (M) won forfeit; 165 – Delila Kent (M) won forfeit; 175 – Lu. Blanton (A) pinned Reyli Sandoval (M), 2:25; 190 – Emma Dearing (M) won forfeit; 215 – Flanagan (A) pinned Mike Thornhill (M), 0:55; 285 – Madrick Musgrove (M) pinned Roath (A), 1:08

Mendota 42, St. Bede 36

106 – double forfeit; 113 – Arteaga (M) won forfeit; 120 – Stevenson (M) won forfeit; 126 – Schearer (SB) won forfeit; 132 – Savage (SB) pinned Rucker

(M); 138 – Kleckner (M) pinned Rizzi (SB); 144 – Coventry (SB) won forfeit; 150 – Pineda (SB) pinned Evans (M), 0:25; 157 – Furar (M) pinned Gillan (SB), 0:14; 165 – Maschmann (SB) won forfeit; 175 – Connely (SB) pinned Sandoval (M); 190 – Dearing (M) won forfeit; 215 – Laina Gonzales (M) won forfeit; 285 – Reese Lane (M) won forfeit

Mendota 54, Putnam Co.-Hall 24

106 – double forfeit; 113 – Arteaga (M) def. Smith (PC), injury default; 120 – Stevenson (M) won forfeit; 126 – Ziel (PC) won forfeit; 132 – Rucker (M) pinned Conlin (PC), 0:24; 138 – Kleckner (M) pinned Scribner (PC), 1:08; 144 – Senders (M) won forfeit; 150 – Watson (M) pinned Heerdt (PC), 1:59; 157 – Furar (M) pinned Hurtado (PC), 1:03; 165 – Lea Turner (M) pinned Webb (PC), 3:57; 175 – Zach Schmidt (M) def. Garcia, disqualification; 190 – Herr (PC) won forfeit; 215 – Tucker (PC) pinned Payton Gagliardo (M), 4:55; 285 – Leota (PC) pinned Nate Giberson (M), 0:38

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SPORTS

Fall turkey harvest totals 262 birds

SPRINGFIELD – Hunters in Illinois harvested a preliminary statewide total of 262 wild turkeys during the 2023 fall firearm turkey season. The season dates were Oct. 21-29.

The 2023 total compares with the statewide turkey harvest of 267 in 2022. The

record harvest was set in 2005 when 1,218 birds were harvested.

This year, 1,711 regular fall firearm season permits were sold compared to 1,727 last year. The highest permit sales total on record was in 2007 with 4,968 permits sold.

Fall turkey firearm was open in 56 of Illinois' 102 counties. The top counties for harvest this year were Jo Daviess, 23; Marion, 14; Williamson, 14; Franklin, 13; and Pope, 12. Preliminary data show 55% of the harvest were female birds and 48% were male.

How cardio benefits your body

Physical activity is a key component of a healthy lifestyle, and an effective fitness regimen is one that combines strength training with cardiovascular exercise.

Recommendations from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services urge adults to get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity each week. Aerobic activity includes cardiovascular exercises like hiking, running, dancing, cycling, or other activities that increase the heart rate and improve cardiorespiratory fitness.

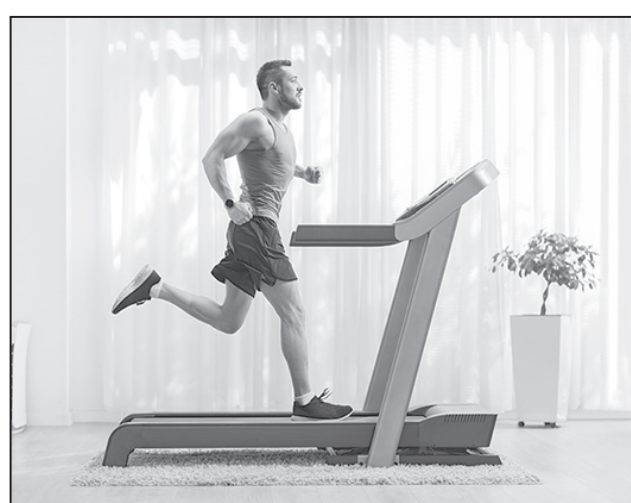
Though cardiovascular exercise is often discussed in terms of its heart healthy benefits, the Cleveland Clinic reports that aerobic activities benefit various parts of the body, including the heart but also the brain, the joints, skin, and muscles.

Cardio and your heart

Routine cardiovascular exercise leads to a decrease in resting blood pressure and heart rate. That's beneficial for the heart because it ensures the heart does not have to work unnecessarily hard. Cardiovascular exercise also improves good cholesterol levels and lowers blood fats, each of which also helps to improve heart health.

Cardio and your brain

The Alzheimer's Society reports that studies have shown that exercise that increases heart rate in middle-aged or older adults has led to improvements in



thinking and memory and lower rates of dementia. The Cleveland Clinic notes that cardio also decreases stroke risk by increasing blood flow to the brain.

Cardio and your joints

Osteoporosis is a condition in which bones become brittle and fragile from a loss of tissue. That tissue loss can be a side effect of aging, but even though the National Osteoporosis Foundation estimates that half of all women over 50 will develop osteoporosis, older adults are not helpless against the condition. The Cleveland Clinic notes that cardiovascular exercise can help fight osteoporosis and reduce risk for hip fractures. It's also important to note that men are not immune to osteoporosis, which has long been considered a more significant concern for women than men. Though women's risk for osteoporosis is greater than men's, UC San Diego

Health reports that between 20 and 25 percent of all hip fractures occur in men.

Cardio and your skin

Physical activity increases circulation, which the Cleveland Clinic reports leads to clearer, healthier skin. Cardio promotes better blood flow to the skin cells on the face, which can reduce signs of aging and improve complexion.

Cardio and your muscles

Cardio increases oxygen supply to the entire body, and the Cleveland Clinic notes that allows muscles throughout the body to work harder and more efficiently. In addition, routine cardiovascular exercise allows muscles to adapt to an increased workload, which can improve daily life by making routine physical activities easier.

Cardiovascular exercise is a key component of an effective fitness regimen. By committing to cardio, adults can benefit various parts of their bodies.

BOWLING

Elks 9

Youth League

Standings as of Nov. 18 – 1. Team 3 8-0; 2. Team 2 5-3; 3. Team 4 2-6; 4. Team 1 1-7

High team game (scratch) – Team 4 255, Team 2 211, Team 3 209

High team game (hdcp) – Team 4 627, Team 2 624, Team 3 612

High team series (scratch) – Team 4 719, Team 2 604, Team 3 574

High team series (hdcp) – Team 2 1843, Team 3 1835, Team 3 1783

Boys' high game (scratch) – Jaxon Stamberger 97, Keegan Mauch 90, Parker Krager 82

Boys' high game (scratch) – Jace Ganther 228, Parker Krager 219, Jaxon Stamberger 215

Boys' high series (scratch) – Keegan Mauch 251, Jaxon Stamberger 247, Parker Krager 221

Boys' high series (hdcp) – Jace Ganther 659, Parker Krager 632, Keegan Mauch 602

Girls' high game (scratch) – Grace Piskie 93, Sophia Martinez 82, Ady Law 76

Girls' high game (hdcp) – Grace Piskie 216, Sophia Martinez 214, Ady Law 207

Girls' high series (scratch) – Grace Piskie 270, Sophia Martinez 200, Brooklyn Bejster 199

Girls' high series (hdcp) – Grace Piskie 639, Brooklyn Bejster 601, Sophia Martinez 596

Elks 11

Youth League

Standings as of Nov. 18 – 1. Team 2 6.5-1.5; 2. Team 5 5-3; 3. Team 4 4-4; 4. Team 3 4-4; 5. Team 1 0.5-7.5; 6. Team 6 0-8

High team game (scratch) – Team 4 293, Team 5 290,

Team 2 277

High team game (hdcp) – Team 4 669, Team 3 618, Team 5 616

High team series (scratch) – Team 2 800, Team 5 794, Team 4 731

High team series (hdcp) – Team 4 1859, Team 2 1802, Team 3 1784

Boys' high game (scratch) – Parker Ramer 137, Jaxen Daley 105, Bentley Bejster 103

Boys' high series (scratch) – Parker Ramer 375, Jaxen Daley 281, Bentley Bejster 255

Girls' high game (scratch) – Chloe Klein 98, Eliana Eammes 86, Brooklyn Mauch 85

Girls' high game (scratch) – Chloe Klein 259, Eliana Eammes 227, Brooklyn Mauch 219

Monday Night Mixed League

Standings as of Nov. 20 – 1. Bad Kats 28-17; 2. Sports-N-Stuff 25-20; 3. Split Happens 24-21; 4. CM Farm 21-24; 5. Ramer Inc. 20-25; 6. Leagal Beagles 17-28

High team game (scratch) – Split Happens 792, Leagal Beagles 658, Ramer Inc. 649

High team game (hdcp) – Split Happens 1036, Bad Kats 1003, Leagal Beagles 945

High team series (scratch) – Split Happens 2097, Sports-N-Stuff 1798, Leagal Beagles 1797

High team series (hdcp) – Bad Kats 2866, Split Happens 2829, Sports-N-Stuff 2686

Men's high game (scratch) – Matt Ramer 258, Raul Diaz Jr. 231, Aaron Holocker 209

Men's high game (hdcp) – Matt Ramer 295, Raul Diaz Jr. 295, Aaron Ho-

locker 273

Men's high series (scratch) – Matt Ramer 638, Aaron Holocker 563, Raul Diaz Jr. 535

Men's high series (hdcp) – Aaron Holocker 755, Matt Ramer 749, Raul Diaz Jr. 727

Women's high game (scratch) – Gail Sessler 201, Jessica Robinson 199, Emily Thomas 196

Women's high game (hdcp) – Gail Sessler 275, Audrey Holocker 270, Hannah Westphal 263

Women's high series (scratch) – Emily Thomas 542, Jessica Robinson 538, Hannah Westphal 534

Women's high series (hdcp) – Gail Sessler 744, Hannah Westphal 741, Emily Thomas 737

Wednesday Night Men's League

Standings as of Nov. 22 – 1. O'Donnell Excavating 24-12; 2. Novak Farms 20-16; 3. Mendota Monument 18-18; 4. First State Bank 18-18; 5. JJ&L Carpentry 15-21; 6. Black Bros. 13-23

High team game (scratch) – Mendota Monument 1018, First State Bank 1008, Novak Farm 980

High team game (hdcp) – First State Bank 1149, Mendota Monument 1121, Novak Farms 1107

High team series (scratch) – JJ&L Carpentry 2841, First State Bank 2814, Novak Farms 2738

High team series (hdcp) – First State Bank 3237, Novak Farms 3119, JJ&L Carpentry 3111

High individual game (scratch) – Tyler Schmitt 237, Joel Bejster 236, Tom Dessing 236

High individual series (scratch) – Chris Eller 689, Tom Dessing 629, Tyler Schmitt 621

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ENTERTAINMENT

Hollywood

By Tony Rizzo

HOLLYWOOD -- Who isn't talking about Barbra Streisand's memoir "My Name Is Barbra"?

After doing a slew of interviews, many taped at her home in California, she revealed Judy Garland's advice to her: "Don't let them do to you what they did to me!" But what you won't read in her book was when I first met her; she was co-starring with Elliot Gould (who would then become her future husband) in "I Can Get It for You Wholesale" on Broadway. I asked her to take a photo, and she said, "I look a mess!"

You also won't read about the night Elliot assaulted me while protecting his wife from being photographed at the premiere of Steve McQueen's film "Bullitt" (1968). Barbra was removed from my lawsuit because she hadn't physically assaulted me, but still, I won two battery judgments against Elliot.



Streisand

There was also the time she killed my Cosmopolitan magazine cover for spite because of my lawsuit. Elliot apologized eventually. Still, I have loved, and will always love, her golden voice.

Word that "Young Sheldon" is ending after its seven seasons has upset fans, until word also came that Chuck Lorre, producer of "The Big Bang Theory," might develop a possible spin-off for the Max streaming service. Speculation is that the reboot could center around entirely new characters, the children of Sheldon and Amy and Howard and Bernadette, which would leave the door open for guest appearances or supporting roles for the original "Big Bang Theory" characters. This was successfully done in the reboot of "That '70s Show."

Disney's CEO Bob Iger turned Netflix down on its offer to license some of their Disney+ hits from Pixar, Marvel, Lucasfilm and other core brands such as the "Star Wars" franchise. Disney won't give

up, no matter how strapped for cash they have become.

The bold move from Netflix came after Warner Bros. licensed some of their DC hits -- "Man of Steel," "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice," "Suicide Squad," "Wonder Woman" and "Justice League" -- to Netflix, who allegedly have more money than all the other streaming services put together. How long will Disney hold out?

"Monk" fans rejoice! Peacock has announced that they have greenlit "Mr. Monk's Last Case: A Monk Movie." The story involves Monk looking for the killer of his stepdaughter's fiancé, who died in a bungee jumping accident.

Aiding and abetting Monk again is Ted Levine as Leland Stottlemeyer, Traylor Howard as Natalie Teeger and Jason Gray-Stanford as Randy Disher. Even though Monk has to overcome his fear of heights and germs to solve this case, he's now in a sympathetic post-COVID world. How can Monk stand out now that we've all become germophobes?

Couch Theater

"Minions: The Rise of Gru" (PG) -- Steve Carell's grouchy, yet lovable supervillain, Gru, first appeared on the big screen in 2010 during the box-office sensation "Despicable Me." The film quickly evolved into the highest-grossing animated franchise of all time, and "Minions: The Rise of Gru" was no different than its predecessors, garnering close to \$1 billion. Starring Carell as Gru and Pierre Coffin as the minions, the latest film in the franchise takes us back to 1976 where an 11-year-old Gru dreams of becoming a supervillain. But with ambitions as high as Gru's, he can't go it alone and will need to find some assistance -- specifically in the form of a yellow banana-loving species of creatures. Out now. (Peacock)

"The World to Come" (R) -- Winner of the 2020 Queer Lion award at the Venice International Film Festival, this drama film taking place in 1856 New York stars Katherine Waterston ("Fantastic Beasts") and Vanessa Kirby ("The Crown") as two

respectively married women who feel severe isolation in the farmlands they live in. Both being married to emotionally lacking men, and being devoid of children, the two women start spending their downtime together and find meaningful solace in their shared moments. Eventually, they find that their bond is much deeper than friendship. Waterston and Kirby are an incredible lead duo; their performances as actresses excellently sync up to the profound and poetic dialogue of their characters. Out now. (Hulu)

"Little Richard: I Am Everything" (NR) -- Known as the "Architect of Rock and Roll," Richard Penniman, aka Little Richard, was a pioneer of his genre and lives on as a legend of popular music and culture. This documentary, which features tons of archival footage and interviews with his family and other musicians, dives into his legacy and explores his influence as a Black queer icon. It also touches on how he inspired other artists of his time and the many eras of

music yet to come. The film depicts a very nuanced story that centers on the fact that Little Richard "was an omnibeing who contained multitudes -- he was unabashedly everything." Out now. (Max)

"Elisa & Marcela" (TV-MA) -- This Spanish-language biographical film shot entirely in black and white is one of Netflix's hidden gems and a must-watch for those who enjoy minimalist, character-driven movies. Inspired by the true story of Elisa Sanchez Loriga and Marcela Gracia Ibeas, the film recounts how a lesbian couple managed to get married in 1901 at the Church of Saint George in A Coruna, Spain. As if told in book chapters, it details how the two women met during their time at school and formed an immediate friendship that progressed into a forbidden romantic relationship. When outside forces threaten to drive them apart, Elisa and Marcela go to great lengths to conceal their relationship, with Elisa even taking the identity of her deceased male cousin. Out now. (Netflix)

Celebrity Extra

By Dana Jackson

Q: I recently started watching "General Hospital" again. What happened to Jax? He was my favorite character. -- K.A.

A: Actor Ingo Rademacher, who played Jax on and off since 1996, was fired by ABC in 2021 for refusing to adhere to the COVID-19 vaccine mandate. His character bid goodbye to Port Charles to conduct business in Sydney and hasn't been seen since.

Rademacher recently posted on Instagram about his mental health struggles since being fired. So far, no one from "General Hospital" or ABC has asked him to return, but that might be due to the fact that he attempted to sue ABC over its mandate. A Los Angeles judge ended up ruling in favor of ABC.

Q: Is the original "Law & Order" series returning anytime soon? I've always liked it more than the spin-offs, but I miss the original cast. -- K.J.

A: "Law & Order" debuted on NBC in the fall of 1990 and lasted a whopping 20 seasons. The late Jerry Orbach is probably the most fondly remembered actor from the show, but he didn't

debut as Detective Lennie Briscoe until the third season. The first season featured Chris Noth, Steven Hill and Michael Moriarty, but these core actors eventually departed the show. It endured two decades with a changing cast, but always had creator Dick Wolf's input and that signature "dun dun" theme song in the background.

"Law & Order" returned in 2022 after an 11-year hiatus with former cast members Sam Waterston and Anthony Anderson. Jeffrey Donovan ("Burn Notice"), Hugh Dancy ("Hannibal") and Camryn Manheim ("The Practice") rounded out the solid cast, but the revolving door kept swinging. Anderson departed after one season, and Mehead Brooks ("Supergirl") joined in his place.

"Law & Order" will return with 13 new episodes sometime in 2024, but Donovan won't be on the set. According to Entertainment Weekly, he has exited due to "creative reasons," and casting is on the hunt for his replacement.

Be sure to visit NBC.com/law-and-order for more updates about the show as it gets closer to its season 23 premiere.

Q: Is it true that "Big Little Lies" is returning for another season? Nicole Kidman and Reese Witherspoon are such busy actresses. I hope they have the time to film again and that it's not an all-new cast. -- W.S.

A: I agree. Not only are Kidman and Witherspoon busy starring in other films and shows, but they also work behind-the-scenes as producers to help develop other projects. This past January, Kidman joined the cast of "Special Ops: Lioness" on Paramount+, then followed it up with the Netflix series "The Perfect Couple." She'll also be seen in Netflix's "A Family Affair" in 2024.

Witherspoon produces and co-stars in Apple TV+'s "The Morning Show." She's also set to reprise her iconic character Elle Woods in the upcoming film "Legally Blonde 3."

As for HBO's "Big Little Lies," Kidman recently announced during a press event that they "will be bringing you a third one, just FYI." Nothing else has officially been announced, but I imagine that Witherspoon, Laura Dern and Zoe Kravitz will be reprising their roles.

• Trivia Test •

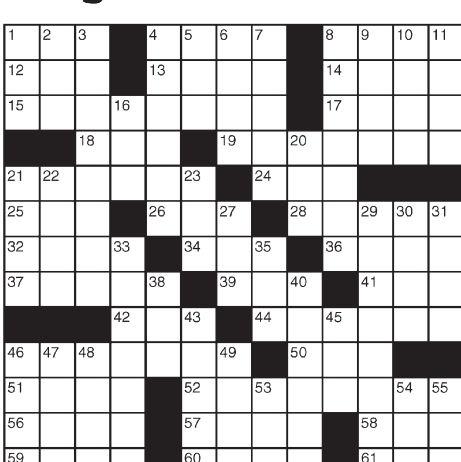
- TELEVISION: What is the name of the captain in "The Love Boat"?
- MOVIES: What is E.T.'s favorite candy in "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial"?
- FOOD & DRINK: What is Hungary's national spice?
- ADVERTISING: Which company's mascot is Elsie the Cow?
- PSYCHOLOGY: What fear is represented in the condition called plutoptophobia?
- GAMES: How many pawns are on a chessboard?
- SCIENCE: What is the name of the giant land mass that is believed to have existed on Earth 200 million years ago?
- GEOGRAPHY: Which of

- the Great Lakes is southernmost?
- LANGUAGE: What is an octothorpe?
 - LITERATURE: Where are the novels "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" and "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" set?
- Answers
- Capt. Merrill Stubing.
 - Reese's Pieces.
 - Paprika.
 - Borden Dairy Company.
 - Fear of wealth.
 - 16, eight pawns for each player.
 - Pangea.
 - Lake Erie.
 - A hashtag or pound sign.
 - Missouri.
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King Crossword

ACROSS

- Microwave
- Jubilant
- Scruff
- "-- Believer"
- Give temporarily
- Big-screen format
- Layered deserts
- Refer to
- Irate
- Breaks away
- Stockholm's land
- JFK's veep
- Fleur-de--
- Cutting tool
- Parlor pieces
- Now, on a memo
- Luau bowlful
- Karate level
- Prison-related
- Atty.'s title
- Mauna --
- Soda
- PC programs
- Ewe's mate
- Leaping antelopes
- Hosp. hook-ups
- Donald Duck's nephew
- Like a good golf score
- Greek mountain
- Cannes milk
- Blackbird
- Favorite
- Former mates
- High-five sound
- Docs' bloc
- Italian cheese
- Forest clearings
- Tiki bar necklace
- Tolkien creatures
- '50s Ford
- "Great work!"
- During
- Top of the head
- Former mates
- Passing craze
- "Survivor" ailer
- High-five
- Sagacious
- Snooze
- Misery
- Crystalline mineral
- Skin soother
- Twinkler in the sky
- Tropical fruits
- Leb. neighbor
- Texter's chuckle
- Calms
- "Straight Up" singer Abdul
- TiVo, for example
- Denny's rival
- Inspiration
- Nuisance
- Break suddenly
- Chips go-with
- Santa --
- Crater part



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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

	5		6	8			4	
1			3			7		
		2			1			5
6			4				8	
	9	8		3				4
	7				8	2	9	
	1			7	6		3	
		7	2			9		
4				5				1

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14		
15				16				17		
		18				19		20		
21	22				23	24				
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45										
46	47	48				49		50		
51						52		53		
54									55	
56						57			58	
59										61

Answer

Weekly SUDOKU

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FIRST STATE BANK

Strange But True

By Lucie Winborne

* When the D-Day forces landed on the beaches of Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944, Adolf Hitler was asleep. TITLE: None of his generals dared to send reinforcements without his permission, and no one even dared to wake him, since he'd issued strict orders not to be disturbed.

* On its one-year anniversary, NASA's Curiosity Rover sang the "Happy Birthday" song to itself on Mars.

* Atomic bomb tests were a major tourist attraction in Las Vegas during the 1950s.

* Microplastics aren't an issue only in the world's oceans and ice caps. Researchers have discovered the tiny particles in clouds over Japan's Mount Fuji and Mount Oyama.

* A study found that students who chewed gum earned better math test scores than those who didn't.

* Ever wonder why our friends across the pond wish each other a "Happy Christmas" as opposed to Americans' "Merry Christmas"? In the 19th century, the word "merry" also meant intoxicated, so they wanted to separate it from public inebriety.

* Next time you're feeling stressed, try reaching for a hunk of chocolate: The sweet's smell increases theta brain waves, which triggers relaxation.

* In 1987, Marvel Comics celebrated the wedding of Spider-Man, aka Peter Parker, and his red-haired, green-eyed, longtime girlfriend Mary Jane Watson with a grand, live-action ceremony at New York's Shea Stadium. Guests of the happy couple included actors costumed as the Fantastic Four, Captain America and even the Hulk.

* Right-handed people tend to chew food on their right side, while left-handed folks are prone to chewing on their left.

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M	V	H	S	P	A	V	S	E	T	E
I	N	V	A	I	T	A	T	A	S	S
A	P	A	R	H	E	R	N	D	E	R
S	A	L	I	S	A	L	I	M	A	T
R	E	D	D	E	D	E	D	E	D	E
V	O	L	O	S	E	L	A	V	E	N
S	A	L	I	B	E	R	I	O	D	A
S	A	L	O	S	M	V	S	S	I	T
S	E	B	E	R	N	E	D	E	M	S
S	E	D	E	C	E	S	E	M	A	V
C	E	I	C	S	T	I	F	L	A	V
X	A	L	E	N	D	E	M	A	V	E
L	A	P	E	G	E	N	E	S	S	E

Solution time: 25 mins.

Answers

King Crossword

Happy 21st Birthday Michelle!



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Carol Ann Smith, RN
Love, Joey



NIE FUN PAGE





THERE ARE MORE THAN 3,000 VARIETIES OF THIS FRUIT WORLDWIDE.

ANSWER: PEAR


Math Blocks

Fill in the missing blocks with numbers between 0-10.
The numbers in each row add up to the totals on the right.
The numbers in each column add up to the totals on the bottom.

	1		13
	0	2	9
5	5		18
15	6	19	

8	5	5
2	0	7
6	1	3
Solution		

THIS DAY IN...



HISTORY

- **1962:** WORKERS AT FOUR NYC NEWSPAPERS BEGIN A STRIKE THAT ULTIMATELY LASTS FOR 114 DAYS.
- **1990:** THE GALILEO SPACECRAFT FLIES PAST EARTH FOR THE FIRST TIME.
- **2013:** METALLICA PERFORMS A SHOW IN ANTARCTICA, MAKING THEM THE FIRST BAND TO PERFORM ON ALL SEVEN CONTINENTS.

Get Scrambled

Unscramble the words to determine the phrase.

REPA RTTA

Answer: Pear tart

New Word

MATURE

fully developed

How they SAY that in...

ENGLISH: Sweet

SPANISH: Dulce


ITALIAN: Dolce

FRENCH: Sucré

GERMAN: Süß

Did You Know?

PEARS ARE ONE OF THE FEW FRUITS THAT HAVE AN EXTENSIVE HISTORY, DATING BACK TO AROUND 1,000 B.C.



GET THE PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

ANSWER: PEARS

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LOCAL AND AREA

Finding joy in your everyday life

John 10:10 has been one of my favorite scriptures for many years. It says: “The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows)” (AMPC). This verse clearly shows us that God wants us to enjoy our lives—in abundance, to the full, until we’re overflowing with joy!

I remember when God gave me the revelation that it’s His will for me to enjoy my life. It was life-changing, because I used to be a miserable person who was emotionally unstable and couldn’t be happy unless I got my way most of the time. Because of the abuse I had experienced

throughout childhood, I was insecure, angry, and didn’t trust anyone. But once I started seriously studying God’s Word, I came to realize that He didn’t want me to live this way. I could be healed and whole in my mind and emotions, and I could learn how to really enjoy my everyday life.

Now, when I say God wanted me to enjoy my everyday life, I’m talking about living an ordinary life with a calm delight and a smile on my face (John 15:11). Enjoying life includes not dreading the normal, daily responsibilities we have to do—things like cleaning the house, doing the dishes, mowing the grass, going to work, and the list goes on.

It seems today that most people believe

they have to wait for their circumstances to change before they can enjoy life. We can have a “working for the weekend” mentality that says “I’ll be happy when Friday gets here...when I get to go on vacation...when the kids are back in school...when I get that promotion.” But the truth is we can make the decision to enjoy our ordinary life and make it extraordinary, regardless of our circumstances.

One of the ways you can take ordinary life and make it extraordinary is to learn to do every single thing you do with and for God. We make a mistake when we separate our sacred life from our secular life. We can be just as close to God in the grocery store as we are at church. And He wants us to do everything we need to do WITH Him.

It actually adds an edge of excitement when we let God be involved in everything we do. He’s everywhere, all the time, and He’s just as interested in the routine, mundane tasks of our lives as He is in the more “spiritual” things we do.

It’s amazing to realize that God wants to have fellowship with us—He wants to spend each day with us. Don’t just settle for seeking Him once a week at church or when you’re



in a desperate situation. Decide that you are going to enjoy your everyday relationship with God!

The abundant life Christ offers goes deeper in our hearts than the way we feel about things. It’s an amazing thing when we learn how to have the peace and joy only God can give in every area of our lives, instead of the type of enjoyment that’s just based on emotional excitement.

The joy of the Lord is much greater than simply feeling happy. It brings peace and contentment to your soul, even when your circumstances are difficult and don’t make any sense. Nehemiah 8:10 says, “The joy of the Lord is your strength.”

This kind of joy makes the Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday routine enjoyable. And since most of life is Monday through Friday, we need to enjoy it!

In John 15:11 (NIV), Jesus says, “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and

that your joy may be complete.” The Amplified Classic translation says “that your joy and gladness may be of full measure and complete and overflowing.” In the ten verses leading up to this one, Jesus is talking about abiding in Him, because that’s the key to living with His joy.

Abiding means “to live, dwell and remain in.” It’s having a personal relationship with Christ, getting to know Him through His Word, and talking to Him about anything and everything. It’s doing life together! The truth is that apart from Jesus, we can do nothing of real value, but with Him, we can bear much good fruit (John 15:5).

God wants to abide with you every day, all throughout the day. He doesn’t just want you to seek Him when you go to church or when you’re desperate. His desire is to have a personal relationship with you, so you can experience His presence in everything you do. That’s when your

everyday life is really enjoyable!

For more on this topic, order Joyce’s three-part teaching resource Joy and Enjoyment. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting www.joycemeyer.org.

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 140 books, including BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND and OVERCOMING EVERY PROBLEM (Faith Words). She hosts the Enjoying Everyday Life radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit www.joycemeyer.org.

Please note: The views and opinions expressed throughout this publication and/or website are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Joyce Meyer Ministries.


Where are the AUCTIONS?

See Page A8!

The 2024 From The Heart Cash Calendars are NOW AVAILABLE!!

The proceeds of the sale of the calendars benefit our From The Heart recipients: Pegasus Special Riders, Rochelle Christian Food Pantry, HOPE, Focus House, Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center, CASA, Rochelle Area Community Foundation, Hub City Senior Center & Rochelle Rotary.

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- ONLINE:** Go to <http://fromtheheartrochelle.org> and click on **CASH CALENDARS**. Once the calendar is purchased we will mail it out to you! Shipping and processing fees will be added to cost.
- IN PERSON:** You can pick up a 2024 From The Heart Cash Calendar **TODAY** at the following locations:
 - In Rochelle at: First State Bank, Stillman Bank, HOPE Chest, Colonial Flower Shoppe and Hub City Senior Center
 - In Oregon at: Merlin's
 - In Dixon at: Shining Star
 - In Mendota at: The Mendota Reporter/Amboy News office
- BY MAIL:** Fill out the form below and send it in to us and we will mail a 2024 From The Heart Cash Calendar to you! Shipping fees are added to cost.

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PHONE: _____

NUMBER OF CALENDARS: _____

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Rotary Calendar, PO BOX 372, Rochelle, IL 61068

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Tract 4: 79.25 acres m/l with 72.63 estimated tillable acres carrying an average PI of 127.7

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101 LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE
Public Notice is hereby given that on November 9, 2023 a certificate was filed in the Office of the County Clerk of LaSalle County, Illinois, setting forth the names and post-office addresses of all persons owning, conducting and transacting the business known as The Hairport located at 428 North 14th Road Lstant, IL. 61334.
Dated: November 9, 2023. Carol Stoens Applicant.
No. 1111
(Nov. 15, 22 & 29, 2023)

NOTICE
NOTICE OF COMPLAINT AT LAW AND SUMMONS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
LASALLE COUNTY, OTTAWA, ILLINOIS
CHRISTOPHER KMETZ, Plaintiff,
vs.
LYNDA MERRITT, Defendant.
2021 L 126
TO: LYNDA MERRITT YOU ARE HEREBY PUT ON NOTICE that on December 9, 2021, there was filed a Complaint in which you are a named Defendant.

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to file an Answer in this case, or otherwise file your Appearance, in the office of the clerk of this Court, Rooms 201, 119 W. Madison St., Ottawa, IL 61350 within 30 days after services of this Summons (01/06/2024), not counting the day of Service. IF YOU FAIL TO DO SO, A JUDGMENT OR DECREE BY DEFAULT MAY BE TAKEN AGAINST YOU FOR THE RELIEF ASKED IN THE COMPLAINT. Said Notice Running 11/22/23, 11/29/23 and 12/6/23.
No. 1115
(Nov. 22, 29 and Dec. 6, 2023)

NOTICE
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
LA SALLE COUNTY, ILLINOIS
ESTATE OF Betty Ann Gard, Deceased
Case No. 2023-PR-190
CLAIM NOTICE
Notice is given of the death of Betty Ann Gard of Mendota, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued on November 14, 2023 to Patricia Kim of 504 1st Avenue, Mendota, IL 61342 whose attorney is Guilfoyle & Stevenson, LLP, 1316 Meriden Street, Mendota, IL 61342.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Circuit Clerk, Probate Division, LaSalle County Courthouse, Ottawa, IL 61350, or with the representative, or both, on or before May 24, 2024. If a claim notice is mailed or delivered personally to a creditor of the decedent, the creditor's claim may be filed on or before the date stated in the notice, if later than the date shown above. Any claim not filed within the time allowed is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the Representative and to the Attorney within ten days after it has been filed.
No. 1117
(Nov. 22, 29 and Dec. 6, 2023)

NOTICE
Public Notice is hereby given that on November 17, 2023 a certificate was filed in the Office

of the County Clerk of LaSalle County, Illinois, setting forth the names and post-office addresses of all persons owning, conducting and transacting the business known as Two Girls And A Cupcake Inc. located at 723 North Clark Street Uti-ca, IL. 61373.
Dated: November 17, 2023. Jill Lee Applicant.
No. 1118
(Nov. 29, Dec. 6 and 13, 2023)

101 LEGAL NOTICE

This publication does not knowingly accept fraudulent or deceptive advertising. Readers are cautioned to thoroughly investigate all ads, especially those asking for money in advance.

105 BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

"This publication does not knowingly accept fraudulent or deceptive advertising. Readers are cautioned to thoroughly investigate all ads, especially those asking for money in advance."

113 FINANCIAL

NOTICE Advance Fee Loans or Credit Offers Companies that do business by phone can't ask you to pay for credit before you get it. For more information, call toll-free 1-877-FTC-HELP. A public service message from your hometown newspaper and the Federal Trade Commission.

119 ANNOUNCEMENTS

"This publication does not knowingly accept fraudulent or deceptive advertising. Readers are cautioned to thoroughly investigate all ads, especially those asking for money in advance."

127 SERVICES AND REPAIRS

FURMAN'S Lawn Care and Tree Work. Mowing, bushes, spring clean up, weeding and much more. Call Jeremy Furman 815-761-9619. Please leave a message will return call ASAP. Fully insured, in business since 1999. Servicing Rochelle and surrounding areas.

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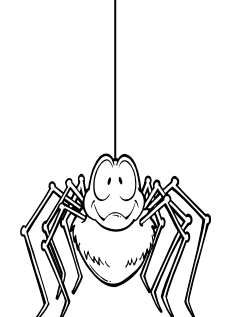
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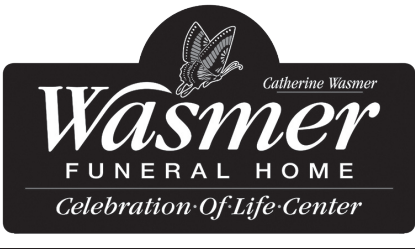
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CONTINGENT

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 laundry!! 3 baths!! Extra deep front
 porch!!!



CONTINGENT

401 12th Ave.
 BIG kitchen!! 2 vehicle
 HEATED garage!!!
 Hardwood floors!!!
 Beautiful original entry!!



1011 5th Ave.
 Curb appeal! Corner lot!!
 Front porch!! Beautiful
 original features still intact!! 3
 Bedrooms!!



CONTINGENT

1101 6th Ave.
 At last! One of Mendota's
 well known homes is on the
 market.

Christmas Through The Eyes of a Child



*Join Evelyn and Braden as
they experience wonder-filled
excitement for the holiday!*

5-year-old Evelyn Regan, daughter of Marcus Regan and Lorena Lemus, and 5-year-old Braden Matney, son of Luke and Mindy Matney, are counting down the days until Christmas. They invite you to get a glimpse of Christmas through the eyes of a child.

The Mendota Reporter, Wednesday, Nov. 29, 2023

Christmas Through the Eyes of a Child



All I want for Christmas is...

Braden and Evelyn dream up Christmas wishes as they stand in the gigantic vault at First State Bank in Mendota.



Tips to pick the perfect Christmas tree

Christmas trees are among the most recognizable symbols of the holiday season, and the popularity of trees is undeniable. According to the National Christmas Tree Association, approximately 25 to 30 million real Christmas trees are sold in the United States each year. Christmas trees also are big business in Canada, where Statistics Canada notes cash receipts from Canadian Christmas tree producers totaled nearly \$163.5 million in 2022.

Annual spending on Christmas trees underscores how important they are to holiday decor. Christmas trees serve as the centerpiece in millions of holiday home decor schemes, so it's important to pick a tree that can shine in that role. This holiday season, celebrants can consider these tips as they look for the perfect Christmas tree.

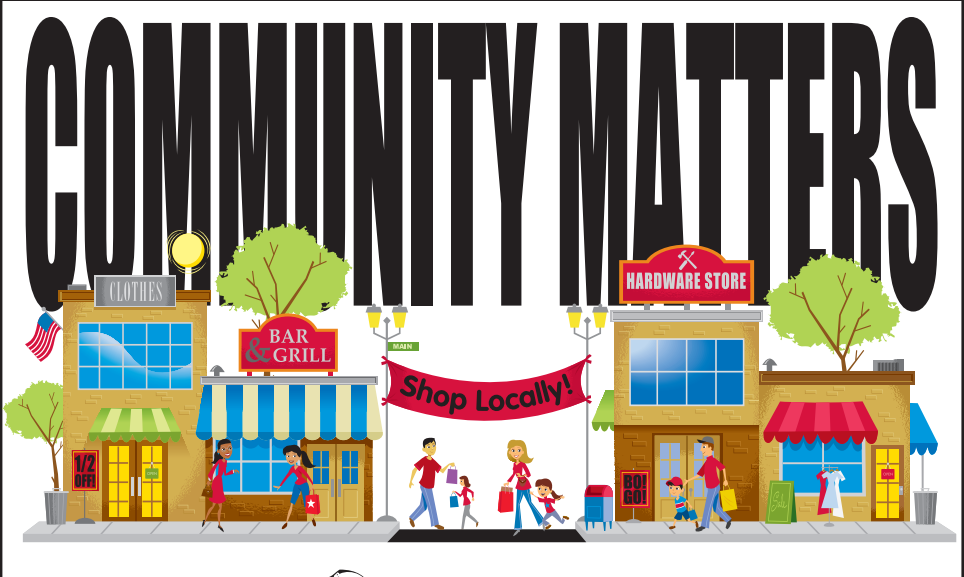
- Measure the area where the tree will be placed. A large tree can be awe-inspiring, but also can stick out like a sore thumb if it takes up too much space. There should be enough room around the tree for families and their guests to sit around it. The home

interior experts at Better Homes & Gardens recommend leaving a minimum of six inches between the top of the tree and the ceiling. If a tree topper will be added, make sure the top of the tree is at least 12 inches from the ceiling. Measure the area before leaving to buy a tree so it can fit nicely into the room and the surrounding decor.

- Try the shake test. Anyone who has purchased a fresh-cut Christmas tree is undoubtedly familiar with the shake test, which remains an effective way to measure the dryness of the tree. A slight shake will produce some fallen needles. If the needles are brown and few and far between, then the tree likely is not overly dry. However, a lot of falling green needles indicates the tree is already drying out, which means it could shed quite a bit and lose its looks before Christmas Day.
- Pick a tree with a symmetrical look. Trees are living things, so it's unlikely that buyers will find a perfectly symmetrical tree. However, a tree that's misshapen or already has some sagging branches won't make for an awe-inspiring addition to a home decor scheme.
- Find the trunk (if you can). A trunk that's visible through the branches indicates the tree does not have dense branches, which will be necessary if homeowners want to dress the tree with ornaments. If it's hard to find the trunk because of all the thick branches and green needles, then the tree is likely pretty healthy.
- Test the needles. The home improvement experts at Lowes note that needles should be flexible but still snap when bent sharply. Avoid trees with needles that are already losing their color and can easily be pulled off.

A Christmas tree garners a lot of attention come the holiday season, which only underscores the significance of finding a tree worthy of being the centerpiece of holiday decor.

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The Mendota Reporter

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Merry Christmas

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Christmas Through the Eyes of a Child



Reading up on Christmas
Evelyn and Braden are amazed at the large selection of Christmas stories that can be found on the shelves of Graves-Hume Public Library in Mendota.



- Youth Holiday Book List**
1. The Ice House by Monica Sherwood
 2. Santa Shark: A Great White Christmas by Mike Lowery
 3. Cats Don't Like Christmas by Andy Wortlock
 4. One Snowy Day by Diana Murray & Diana Toledano
 5. Middle School: Winter Blunderland by James Patterson
 6. How to Rock a Snow Day by Jean Reagan
 7. Snow, Snow, Snow! by Sandra Boynton
 8. The Christmas Cactus by Beth Ferry
 9. Bundle Up, Little Pup by Dori Elys
 10. Elves Are the Worst by Alex Willan
 11. Meet the Latkes by Alan Silberberg

- Adult Holiday Book List**
1. The Secret of Snow by Viola Shipman
 2. Christmas on Winter Hill by Melody Carlson
 3. Gingerbread Cookie Murder by Joanne Fluke
 4. Midnight at the Christmas Bookshop by Jenny Colgan
 5. Wreck the Halls by Tessa Bailey
 6. A Christmas Vanishing by Anne Perry
 7. It's a Wonderful Woof by Spencer Quinn
 8. Icebreaker by Hannah Grace
 9. Christmas at the Shelter Inn by RaeAnne Thayne
 10. Twelve Dogs of Christmas by Susan Wiggs
 11. The Christmas Hummingbird by T. Davis Bunn



Mmm, mmm, good
Evelyn and Braden are in need of a thirst-quenching drink and they find what they're craving with a delicious and healthy beverage from Purpose Nutrition in Mendota.



Toys, toys and more toys
It didn't take long for Evelyn and Braden to find the toy section and love the amount of toys there are to choose from at Nightengales Thrift Shop in Mendota.

Festive films that make for a perfect family movie night this season

A family movie night makes for a great way for families to bond and enjoy some relaxing time together. Such nights are a tradition in households across the globe, and they can even become a fun way for extended families to celebrate the holiday days together. When hosting overnight guests this holiday season, hosts can plan a family movie night and line up any of these family-friendly holiday movies.

- "A Christmas Story" (1983): This beloved classic based on the writings of author Jean Shepherd focuses

on young Ralphie Parker and his humorous family. That family includes his father, played to much laughs by legendary actor Darren McGavin. All Ralphie wants for Christmas is a coveted Red Ryder air rifle, and generations of fans have enjoyed watching this film to see if Ralphie's dream comes true.

- "Home Alone" (1990): Not unlike "A Christmas Story," this instant classic devotes much of its story to a young boy. Eight-year-old Kevin McAllister (Macaulay Culkin) awakens to an empty house after his parents for-

getfully leave him behind as they depart on a holiday trip to Paris with their extended family. That proves to be bad news for bungling burglars Harry (Joe Pesci) and Marv (Daniel Stern), who are outwitted by Kevin at every turn.

- Elf (2003): Middle-aged Buddy (Will Ferrell) grew up in the North Pole believing he is an elf, despite being significantly larger than the kind-hearted elves who raised him. Upon learning he is not an actual elf, Buddy is determined to reunite with the father (James Caan) he's never known. Hilarity ensues

as the innocent Buddy ends up in the big city in search of his father.

- "It's a Wonderful Life" (1946): Among the most beloved holiday movies ever made, this classic stars Jimmy Stewart as George Bailey, a devoted family man who set aside his own big-city dreams to save the family business and, ultimately, his small hometown of Bedford Falls. Lamenting some bad luck that leaves him on the cusp of financial ruin, George wishes he'd never been born, only to be shown by an especially kind

and patient angel-in-training (Henry Travers) how much worse off Bedford Falls and its residents might have been had George Bailey never existed.

- "Jingle All the Way" (1996): Featuring a future Governor of California in the lead role, this hijinks-filled holiday classic follows the efforts of Howard Langston (Arnold Schwarzenegger) as

he tries to secure the must-have gift of the season for his son, Jamie (Jake Lloyd). Howard soon finds himself competing against a father (Sinbad) who's equally devoted to find the coveted Turbo-Man action figure.

A holiday movie night makes for a fun, family-friendly evening when hosting overnight guests during this special time of year.

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708 Jefferson St., Mendota

Christmas Through the Eyes of a Child

Help Santa find his way through the maze!

Dot-to-Dot

Maze Craze

Can you find your way through the maze?

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to holiday decorating.

NGLEA

Answer: Angel

DECK THE HALLS WORD SEARCH

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Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

WORDS

ANGEL
BELLS
BOUGH
CHRISTMAS TREE
DECORATE
DISPLAY
FIREPLACE
GARLAND
HOLLY
INFLATABLE
MANTEL
MENORAH
MISTLETOE
NUTCRACKER
ORNAMENTS
POINSETTIA
SANTA
SLEIGH
SNOWMAN
STAND
STOCKINGS
STRINGED LIGHTS
WINDOW
WREATH

Have fun coloring these Christmas holiday scenes!

Christmas Through the Eyes of a Child



Chilling out

Evelyn and Braden find a relaxing spot on one of the many selections of comfortable couches that are available at Meyers Furniture in Mendota.



Puppy love

Braden and Evelyn give some loving to a pair of cute little puppies while visiting Setchell Agency Ltd. in Mendota.

Christian holiday season traditions

Many adjectives can be used to describe the holiday season, including festive, jolly and religious. Another word that may come to mind is tradition. Traditions factor heavily into holiday celebrations of faith and family.

According to The Public Religion Research Institute's "2020 Census of American Religion," 70 percent of Americans identify as Christian. Here are some popular Christian traditions during the holiday season.

Advent calendars, wreaths

The word "Advent" is derived from Latin and means "coming forward." Advent is the four-week period preceding the Christmas celebration. Advent wreaths and calendars typically are part of Christmas in Christian households. Advent calendars are sold in stores or can be made as craft projects.

Nativity scene

Another popular religious tradition is setting up a nativity scene. A nativity scene places the focus on Jesus Christ. One tradition involves moving nativity figurines closer to the manger leading up to Christmas, and placing the infant Jesus in the manger on Christmas Day.

Christmas caroling

Caroling has a long history and was originally tied to winter solstice celebrations. Chris-

tians started singing carols to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Many of the songs carolers sing are traditional religious hymns. During Advent, carols will herald the coming of Jesus. After Christmas, carols are even more joyous in nature.

The three masses

Midnight Mass is a special celebration that takes place in the late hours of the evening on Christmas Eve. It is the first liturgy of Christmas that begins at midnight. It originated in 430 AD

under Pope Sixtus III in the Basilica of St. Mary Major. The popularity of Midnight Mass grew by the 12th century, when the celebration of three Masses on Christmas day was granted to all priests. Midnight Mass is treated as a solemn High Mass, which involves singing and praying by the light of candles. A Mass at dawn is the second Christmas mass, followed by Mass of the Day, which is the midmorning Mass of the Christmas celebration.



Wishing You
and Yours A Very Safe
and Happy Holidays!

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Festive facts about oft-misunderstood fruitcake

Certain sights and sounds are ingrained in the holiday season, from twinkling lights to carols piping over retailers' sound systems. Amid the shelves of holiday wares and delicacies, fruitcake makes its annual appearance.

Fruitcake, sometimes referred to as plum cake or Christmas cake, can be prepared in various ways. However, a dense bundt-type cake dotted with dried, candied fruit and often soaked in rum or brandy has become the standard. Loathed or loved, seldom anything in between, fruitcake is typically mocked as the ultimate regift. But just like Charlie Brown's scant Christmas tree, which was initially mocked, it's time to see fruitcake in a new light. Consider these fruitcake fun facts.

- The texture of fruitcake can vary from cake-like to more of a sweet bread like brioche. Italians dig into panettone, Germans delight with stollen and Jamaicans serve black cake.

- The first fruitcakes weren't eaten. According to historians, fruitcakes were initially made by ancient Egyptians, who tucked the desserts into the tombs with their dead so a sweet treat could be enjoyed in the afterlife.

- Fruitcake gained popularity as military rations, as everyone from Roman soldiers to Crusaders found fruitcake provided a diverse array of nutrients and an energy boost in battle. Fruitcake also stores well, which can be beneficial for military personnel in battle.

- Fruitcake seemingly is indestructible. While it likely cannot last forever, Tastemade says if a fruitcake is kept in an airtight container and stored in a dark, cool place, it could be reheated years after being baked.

Starch crystals and dried fruit in the cake will release stored water when warmed, rehydrating the cake.

- Historical accounts indicate Romans were among the first people to eat fruitcake, which they might have enjoyed as early as 100 A.D. A version called "satura" was made by mixing stale bread with pine nuts, pomegranate seeds, raisins, and then soaking it in a barley mash and an alcoholic beverage brewed from honey.

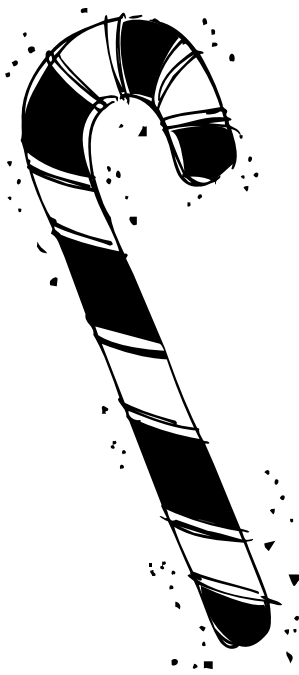
- Fruitcake became a popular dish to serve at British royals' weddings. Queen Victoria, Princess Diana and Prince William served fruitcake at their receptions.

- The Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. has a fruitcake on display. It traveled into space on Apollo 11 in 1969, but was never eaten.

- Seth Greenberg, who worked in his family's New York City bakery, attests that fruitcake is delicious when made with the right ingredients. The neon-colored, dry and overly sweet fruit that many bakers use is the problem with poor cakes. But proper ingredients like brandy, glace cherries, apricots, figs, and dates can make for a delicious fruitcake.

- The average fruitcake weighs between two and three pounds. However, the heaviest fruitcake on record, according to "The Guinness Book of World Records," came in at 9,596 pounds. Despite the hefty weight of this cake, it's only around 92 to 160 calories per serving.

Regardless of its unfavorable reputation, fruitcake remains an unwavering holiday tradition. The website Serious Eats reports that more than two million fruitcakes are sold each year.



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Christmas Through the Eyes of a Child



Fill my stocking with glee
Braden and Evelyn get into the Christmas spirit with the decorations at Eureka Savings Bank in Mendota and have their stockings ready to be hung for Santa Claus to fill with lots of goodies on Christmas morning.

A version of gingerbread with historical roots

Gingerbread is a popular sweet that often finds its way onto holiday dessert tables. Some people bake and construct lavish gingerbread houses, while others make cut-outs of gingerbread people to turn into cookies. Legend suggests that gingerbread originally landed in Europe in 992 with an Armenian monk named Gregory of Nicopolis, who brought a honey-and-spice cake to other monks in France, where it quickly became a favorite and was considered a “food from heaven.” Historians are not really sure if the original gingerbread had any ginger in it at all. In fact, typical medieval recipes for gingerbread include no ginger and the French would later refer to it as “pain d’épices,” or spiced bread.

Gingerbread once was a treat only for the elite, but as the masses discovered it, recipes evolved to include soft cakes to hard biscuits and everything in between. The following recipe for medieval “Gingerbread” produces a chewy, almost candy-like texture with potent ginger flavor. Try it for holiday gatherings, courtesy of “Tasting History” (Simon Element) by Max Miller.

Gingerbread
(Makes 20 to 25 1-inch pieces)
12 to 14 slices (238 g) stale white bread
1 cup (330 g) honey
1 tablespoon ground ginger
3/4 teaspoon ground long pepper (a spice similar to black pepper but with more heat that typically must be ordered online)
1/2 teaspoon sandalwood powder, if desired, for color (one drop of red food dye can be used instead)
1/2 cup (50 g) or less sugar (enough for sprinkling)
20 to 25 whole cloves
Gold leaf

1. Either with a food processor or by hand, grind the bread into coarse bread

crumbs. Commercially bought bread crumbs will work as well, though the texture from homemade bread crumbs is preferable.

2. Pour the honey into a large saucepan set over medium heat, and heat to a rolling boil; the honey will become like syrup. Note that it will boil up quite a bit, so do not use a small saucepan. Slowly add the bread crumbs to the honey while stirring. The mixture should come together and begin to pull away from the sides of the saucepan. Continue to mix until fully combined. Remove the pan from the heat and quickly stir in the ginger, long pepper and sandalwood, if desired. Turn the mixture out onto a sheet of parchment and spread

with a spatula. Then, place another sheet of parchment and, with a rolling pin, roll the gingerbread out to about 1/2-inch thick (1.2 cm). Wrap in plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator until stiff, about 2 hours.

3. Once the gingerbread is cool, sprinkle sugar on top and cut into 1-inch squares

or whatever shape you like. Keep in mind that each piece should be bite size, as they are very strong. They will also be quite sticky, so handle them as little as possible. Insert a whole clove into each piece of gingerbread and fleck with gold leaf. Leave the clove in until serving, then remove it just before eating.



Although it can be frustrating to deal with tangled lights that look like balls of yarn in a knitting basket, there are ways to disentangle them with relative ease.

Simple tricks to help disentangle holiday lights

The joyous holiday season is enhanced by the beautiful and festive decorations that adorn homes and businesses during this special time of year. Twinkling lights are part of the holiday decorating equation. However, tangled lights in storage bins and boxes can sap anyone’s holiday spirit.

Christmas lights can turn into a tangled mess no matter how hard people work to avoid such an outcome. Christmas lights get tangled partly because of their design. There is a metal wire inside the cord to help with the packaging of the lights, which gives the cord a natural curve. Furthermore, most light cords are made from twisted or braided wires that have spaces throughout. The lights themselves can get snagged in these pockets between the wires.

Although it can be frustrating to deal with tangled lights that look like balls of yarn in a knitting basket, there are ways to disentangle them with relative ease — and then pack them in a way that can reduce further tangles.

Begin by plugging all lights into the outlet to see if they work. If most of the bulbs are burnt out or the lights do not go on at all, discard the strand. There’s no point untangling lights only to learn they don’t work.

Start slowly, beginning on the plug end, when untangling the lights. Keep the strand you’re working on separate from the other lights so they do not inadvertently become entangled. Tackle this job in a space with a lot of room. Lay the lights out on a large table or sit on the floor to do the untangling.

Utilize a pen or pencil to fish out more stubborn snags. This can help you loosen any knots and make it easier to pull snags through.

Lay the untangled strands out in a safe area away from your working space as you work through each strand.

One of the ways to avoid the hassle of tangled lights is to remember to store the lights in ways that will reduce their propensity for tangling in the first place.

- Rather than wrap lights around your hand or arm to condense the strand, use something else. A piece of cardboard, a hanger and some PVC tubing can keep lights from becoming tangled.

- Store lights in a zip-top bag to keep them from tangling with other strands stored together.

- Save the original boxes and return the lights to them after each use.

- Icicle lights have hanging strands of lights on longer strands, which can compound tangling issues. Use a rubber band to gather the hanging “icicles” together, or use some plastic wrap for the same purpose.

- Invest in a cord reel, similar to what you might use for a garden hose. Longer light strands or wires are stored on such reels, and they can be used with Christmas lights.

Patience and care can prevent holiday lights from becoming tangled.

Christmas may be just around the corner, but it’s not too early to start thinking about Christmas 2024!

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