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LOCAL NEWS... LOCAL VIEWS

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Higby receives DAR award

Former Rochelle Police Chief Eric Higby was given a distinguished service award from the Rochelle DAR. **Page 2**

WEATHER

WEDNESDAY THURSDAY
HIGH LOW HIGH LOW
78 55 77 53

FRIDAY SATURDAY
HIGH LOW HIGH LOW
76 52 73 53

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OBITUARIES

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INSERTS

• FARM & FLEET

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TIF agreement approved Rochelle City Council meets Monday

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — At its meeting Monday, the Rochelle City Council unanimously approved an ordinance authorizing City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh to execute a tax increment financing (TIF) agreement between the city and Nextgen Ventures Rochelle, LLC for the development of Breakthru Beverage's new location at Illinois Route 251 and Flagg Road.

Nextgen Ventures Rochelle, LLC requested a TIF redevelopment agreement with the city to close "their potential funding gap" and to assist with property redevelopment including, but not limited to, a new loading dock on the south side of the facility, site/infrastructure improvements and façade and landscaping improvements.

The agreement approved Monday consists of Nextgen Ventures Rochelle, LLC seeking reimbursement of \$700,000 of \$1.7 million of TIF-eligible expenses and 85 percent of the increment created by the



(COURTESY PHOTO)

The Rochelle City Council unanimously approved an ordinance to execute a tax increment financing (TIF) agreement between the city and Nextgen Ventures Rochelle, LLC for the development of Breakthru Beverage's new location.

site redevelopment. The city will make payments by Dec. 31 of each year, beginning Dec. 31, 2024. The developer will have to show proof the property tax bill is paid in full and provide paid receipts for all TIF-eligible expenses. At this time, the developer will only be utilizing the access off Flagg Road and Illinois Route 251, so no improvements to 8th Street will be needed.

"We've been meeting with them now for several months and we came up with a proposal that I think works well for the developer and the city," Fiegenschuh said. "It's not going to develop a lot of sales tax at this point, but this is why we set the TIF up,

to redevelop blighted properties. The increment that they're receiving is increment that they create. They're generating the increment through the redevelopment of the parcel. They're already generating increment just by the purchase of the property. I think it's a good project and it's doing what we want, which is redevelopment of a blighted property."

Don Vitek, a representative of the development group, said Breakthru Beverage hopes to finish enough work to open by July and plans to finish improvements completely by September or October of this year.

See **CITY** page 5

Late former Creston resident honored by completion of children's home in Africa

‘She didn’t get to see it finished, but
it’s happening in her name’

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

WEST AFRICA — A children's home in Sierra Leone, Africa named in the honor of a late former Creston resident was completed in recent years.

Bonnie Rae Edwards Seigel grew up in Creston and attended Rochelle Township High School. She passed away in 2015. Seigel's daughter, Katja Starkey, founded Touch the Nations, a foundation that does missionary work in Africa, in 2004. Touch the Nations owns multiple children's homes in West Africa, including the Bonnie Memorial Children's Home in Sierra Leone, which had its initial construction funds come from memorial donations from Seigel's funeral in 2015.

"This is where it all started," Starkey said. "People from the area have given over the years. It's changing lives. People from the



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Pictured from left to right: Katja Starkey, founder and director of Touch the Nations; Miriama Menyongar, wife of Pastor Samuel Menyongar and Bonnie Rae Edwards Seigel, former secretary of Touch the Nations.

Creston and Rochelle areas have been part of it. These children lost their families to Ebola and flooding and this is helping them. There's three levels to it now and a school next door. The kids have safety. The facility is now completed and was finished in 2021. In 2022, a wall was built around it to keep them safe. My family will be going there at the end of this school year and we have donations we'll be

taking."

Starkey first visited Sierra Leone and other countries in Africa in 1999. She first purchased a children's home in Burundi and bought more, including two in Sierra Leone. Seigel spent the later years of her life helping her daughter with Touch the Nations work and visited Africa herself.

See **HOME** page 8



(COURTESY PHOTO)

One of the casualties of the March 31 storm was a 100-year-old tree at Memorial Park honoring those that died serving their country in World War I.

Storm knocks down 100-year-old tree at Memorial Park

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — One of the casualties of the March 31 storm that hit the area was a 100-year-old tree at Memorial Park honoring those that died serving their country in World War I, Flagg Township Museum Historian Tom McDermott said.

The tree was uprooted completely and was found the morning of April 1. Near the upturned roots, the plaque commemorating it that reads "This tree planted in memory of Rochelle World War dead" still stood.

Upon hearing of the loss of the tree, McDermott and his granddaughter, Kathryn Challand, went to inspect it and took pictures and notes for the museum. Upon his return home, the historian looked into the tree's history. He spoke to the News-Leader on April 6 about what he found.

Back in 1922, the Rochelle Woman's Club had a desire to have a park in Rochelle. The fairgrounds was a place for community recreation beforehand, but closed down in 1902 when the Vassar Swiss Underwear Company bought part of the land to build their wool works, which later became Caron Spinning.

Without a park in town, Laura Fessler led a charge to have one in Rochelle. After her passing, the Rochelle Woman's Club kept up the effort and bought what would eventually become Memorial Park from

Frank Benson of Dixon for \$1,000 in 1922. The land was then donated to the city. Rochelle didn't have a park district until 1966.

Initially, the area was called Oak Park, and it even had an arch with its name, similar to the arch in the park now that later replaced it.

On July 12, 1923, a gifting party was held for the donation of the park to the city, including a band, hot dogs and baseball games. As part of that day, American Legion Post 403, led by George O'Brien, donated the tree in question.

"It was a big party," McDermott said. "As part of that overall party, they changed the name to Memorial Park and it was to honor the veterans of World War I. They put a plaque in and planted the tree, which is a fir tree of some kind. That would have been in 1923. The beautiful thing is, it was exactly 100 years ago this year."

According to a list provided by McDermott, the tree honored those that gave their lives in WWI from Rochelle or the immediate area including: Walter Tigan, William Patton, Willis Storer, Pat Manning, William Rupe, Maine Groen, Glen Jaquet, Harry Strawbridge, Frank Pool, William Sherwood, William Holmes, Leo Sherlock, William Wolf, Jay Carpenter, Werne Lamont, Harold Alcock, Charles Grunstad and John Moore.

See **TREE** page 8

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LOCAL NEWS

Country Crossroads Quilt Guild to host April 17 program

FORRESTON — For its program for Monday April 17 at 7 p.m., Country Crossroads Quilt Guild will host Rhonda Streich from Sassy Farm Chicks Quilt Company in Orfordville, Wisconsin, who will present a trunk show. Rhonda will also be presenting a workshop for the members, starting at 10 a.m., teaching a fabric strip technique to create a Mariner's Compass.

Also save the date of May 15. We have a very special musical entertain-

ment program planned featuring Lil Rev (Marc Revenson) - a heart-warming, one-man show that weaves a unique tapestry of songs, stories, poems and quilting lore. He dedicates his program to the millions of quilters whose gifts of patience have kept the world warm in the thick of winter, brought a piece of home to the thick of war, and showered daily lives with a love that is unique to all who strive to let their stitches tell the story. You won't want to miss this fun

evening.

Guild meetings are held at the Forreston Grove Church, 7246 Freeport Road; Forreston, the third Monday of each month at 7 p.m. with ample time to meet and greet members before the meeting. Visitors are very much welcome; for visitors there is a fee of \$5 at the door. For more information call Program Committee Chairs Dawn Vehmeier 815-291-4592 or Ann Tully 815-238-2218, or Guild President Shelly Holverson 815-297-2381.



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Kishwaukee College students will not see a tuition rate increase for the 2023-2024 academic year. The College's Board of Trustees voted to maintain the current tuition rate for a third straight year.

Kishwaukee College keeps tuition rates flat for third straight year

MALTA — The Kishwaukee College Board of Trustees voted unanimously to maintain the college's current tuition rate of \$147 per credit hour for the 2023-2024 academic year. This is the third year in a row of no tuition increase.

"Kishwaukee College prides itself on keeping tuition as affordable as possible for its students," Bob Johnson, chair of the Kishwaukee College Board

of Trustees, said. "We are proud to be increasing the programs and services offered to support the changing needs of students and our communities with no tuition increase again next year."

Several factors have allowed the college to maintain the same tuition rate, including increased enrollment, increased property tax revenue from local economic development and

fiscal responsibility.

"Kish continues to focus on the needs of our students by providing equitable, student-centered education. We are fortunate to have the resources to support our students and fulfill our purpose of helping them create the life they want," Dr. Laurie Borowicz, president of Kishwaukee College, said.

For more information on Kishwaukee College, please visit kish.edu.



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Rochelle Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter Regent Laurie Perry and Vice Regent Debby Katzman attended recently-retired Rochelle Police Chief Eric Higby's April 4 retirement open house and took that opportunity to show the chapter's respect and appreciation for Chief Higby's service in public safety by presenting the chapter's first DAR Distinguished Citizen Medal.

Higby presented with Distinguished Citizen Award by Rochelle DAR

ROCHELLE — Rochelle Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter Regent Laurie Perry and Vice Regent Debby Katzman attended recently-retired Rochelle Police Chief Eric Higby's April 4 retirement open house and took that opportunity to show the chapter's respect and appreciation for Chief Higby's service in public

safety by presenting the chapter's first DAR Distinguished Citizen Medal.

Regent Perry expressed her pleasure in presenting the award and remarked that Chief Higby is the first recipient of a Distinguished Citizen award to be nominated by Rochelle Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution.

The DAR Distinguished

Citizen Medal is authorized under the National Society's National Defense Committee, upon approval by the state chairman, to honor traits such as honor, service, courage, leadership and patriotism; and may be awarded to citizens who have contributed to the defense, security or freedom in an exceptional manner.

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LOCAL NEWS

Kishwaukee College Foundation program enhancements continue to serve as valuable resources for students

MALTA — The Kishwaukee College Foundation awarded \$123,461 in program enhancement funds to Kishwaukee College departments for the 2022-2023 academic year. The Foundation has a variety of program enhancement funds established by the generosity of donors for specific purposes. Funds support various needs, including educational support for instructors, new equipment, and testing services for students.

Faculty and staff share that the additional funds help departments meet their goals, provide necessary resources to students, and allow programs to remain competitive in the local community.

The following program enhancement funds have been awarded this year:

Evelina Jose Cichy Fund

Evelina Cichy started this fund in honor of her many years of service to Kishwaukee College. The fund is used to help pay for fees associated with the Illinois High School Diploma test.

John & Barbara Dant Memorial Fund

The fund provides financial support for the needs of the Math or English departments. This year, the fund has been used to purchase Math corequisite course materials and fund outstanding student awards for English.

First Midwest Bank (former NB&T) BID

Class

This fund was instituted to provide support to area nonprofit organizations. The College works with the DeKalb County Non-profit Partnership to use training resources at no cost.

Jobe-Lewis Fund

Suzanne K. Lewis established this fund to honor her mother, Doris V. Lewis, who obtained a nursing degree. Suzanne wished to honor her mother by helping support others who chose the nursing field. This year, the fund provided support for the nursing program's "Hearing Voices" simulation lab.

Jenkins Presidential Endowment

The fund provides support to Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society to further enhance its activities.

Yvonne A. Johnson Endowment for Community Education

This fund is used for programmatic needs for the Fine Arts, Communications, Science, and Horticulture programs. This year, the funds supported the purchase of an automated seeding and environmental scanner for the Horticulture program.

KishHealth System Endowment

This fund is provided to underwrite the cost of health field instructors.

Leifheit Literacy Endowment

The Leifheit Literacy Endowment supports the adult and family literacy



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Kishwaukee College students utilize microscopes during a science class. The Kishwaukee College Foundation provided funds for program enhancements during the 2022-2023 school year, including new equipment, instructional support and additional student resources.

Library Endowment Fund

This fund was started to support the operations of the Kishwaukee College Library. This year, the funding helped update the nursing book collection.

Lifelong Learning Endowment

Honoring the retirement of Judy Krajewski, former Dean of Community Education & Services, this fund was established to ensure a legacy of lifelong learning for future generations by increas-

ing access to community education opportunities through scholarships in non-credit courses.

Matteson Horticulture Fund

The fund is used to support the programmatic needs of the Horticulture Department. This year, funds helped purchase an automated seeding machine.

Terry & Sherrie Martin Health & Science Endowment

The fund was born out of a deep commitment to education and strong faith in the values of

Kishwaukee College. The endowment supports program enhancements for the Allied Health or Science programs. This year, the endowment supported the Nursing Program ACEN accreditation process and the purchase of science lab kits for students taking online courses.

Terry & Sherrie Martin PTK Endowment

The endowment supports the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Hallmark Award, which is a student scholarship. Terry Martin was a long-time advisor of the College's PTK chapter.

Robert L. "Smitty" Smith Assistantship

The assistantship fund was established to honor Robert L. Smith, a highly regarded faculty member in the science department during Kishwaukee College's early years from 1968 to 1975. The fund supports two student assistantships in science departments.

For more information on Program Enhancements, contact the Kishwaukee College Foundation at 815-825-9803 or visit kish.edu/foundation-funds.

Kish alumna Myers named Coca-Cola Academic Team Silver Scholar

MALTA — Lydia Myers, a Kishwaukee College alumna and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) member, has been named a 2023 Coca-Cola Academic Team Silver Scholar and will receive a \$1,250 scholarship.

The Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation celebrates visionary leaders in PTK and sponsors the Coca-Cola Academic Team program by recognizing 50 Gold, 50 Silver, and 50 Bronze Scholars with nearly \$200,000 in scholarships annually. Each scholar also receives a commemorative medalion.

Students are nominated by their college administrators. Selection is based on academic achievement, leadership and engagement in college and community service. As a regular volunteer, Myers has a lengthy resume of

community service and leadership work.

"Throughout my years in school, I have taken every opportunity to get involved and serve," Myers said. "Serving has opened my heart, and I consider it a proud accomplishment."

Myers has performed hundreds of hours of service through Lions Club International, Feed My Starving Children, National Honor Society and local churches. She also served as president of Outdoor Adventure Club and Students Against Distracted Driving, where she gained valuable leadership experience. Most recently, Myers worked with the regional food pantry Faith Acres Foundation, helping reduce food waste and meet basic nutrition needs.

Myers completed her associate in arts degree with an emphasis in business and graduated from

Kish with honors in fall 2022. She has transferred to the University of Colorado-Boulder to attain a bachelor's degree in business. Myers credits Kish for providing her with the opportunities to pursue her goals.

"Kishwaukee College was my key to a brighter future," Myers said. "It gave me the opportunity to start my college degree a year early at age 17. Through this, Kish opened many doors for my future."

Coca-Cola Academic Team members will be honored in local and statewide ceremonies and recognized internationally during Phi Theta Kappa's annual convention, PTK Catalyst, in Columbus, Ohio, April 2022.

"The Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation has a long history of providing financial assistance to outstanding students at

community colleges," Jane Hale Hopkins, president of the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation, said. "We are proud to partner with Phi Theta Kappa to make it possible for more deserving students to achieve their educational goals and support tomorrow's leaders of the global community."

Each year, the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation awards over \$3.55 million in scholarships for more than 1,400 college students. The Phi Theta Kappa honor society recognizes the academic achievement of students at associate degree-granting colleges. PTK has more than 3.8 million members and nearly 1,300 chapters in 11 countries, with approximately 240,000 active members.

"We thank the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation for recognizing these

student leaders and for investing in their futures," Dr. Lynn Tischer-Ladner, president and CEO of Phi Theta Kappa, said. "Scholarships like these are integral to the success of these students in reaching their educational and career goals."

To learn more about PTK at Kishwaukee College, visit kish.edu.



Lydia Myers

★ ★ **Thank You** ★ ★



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Tom McDermott
Rochelle City Council

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LOCAL NEWS

Ogle County Sheriff's Department

Deputies conduct traffic stops

OREGON—On April 7 at 4:44 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 6,000 block of South Illinois Route 2. As a result, Tabatha L. McLaughlin, 47, of Oregon was arrested for aggravated driving while license revoked. McLaughlin was additionally charged with driving while license revoked, possession of drug paraphernalia and unlawful possession of a hypodermic syringe. McLaughlin was transported to the Ogle County Jail pending an appearance before a judge.

On April 8 at 2:29 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 8,600 block of North Illinois Route 2. As a result, Jenny M. Clark, 34, of Rockford was arrested for driving while license expired (more than one year). Clark was additionally cited for operating an uninsured motor vehicle and operating a motor vehicle with suspended registration. Clark was released on an I-Bond with a court date to appear.

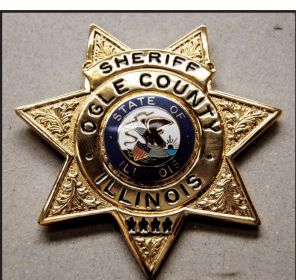
On April 8 at 9:21 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop at Fisher Road and Lincoln Lane in Rochelle. After a brief investigation, deputies arrested Jose Hernandez, 55, of Rochelle, for driving while license suspended. Hernandez was released on a \$2,500 individual bond with a return court date.

On April 8 at approximately 9:17 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 100 block of West Hitt Street in Mt. Morris. After an investigation, Amy M Welsh, 44, of Dixon was placed under arrest for possession of a controlled substance (cocaine), possession of controlled substance (alprazolam), possession of controlled substance (amphetamine/dextro-amphetamine), driving while license suspended, improper cannabis container as a driver and an active warrant for failure to appear for driving while license suspended. Welsh was additionally cited for operating a vehicle with suspended registration and operating an uninsured vehicle. Welsh was transported to the Ogle County Jail pending an appearance before a judge.

On April 9 at approximately 7 a.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop within the 3,000 block of North Illinois Route 251. After a brief investigation, deputies placed Jameireona Sams, 18, of Rockford under arrest for no valid driver's license. Sams was additionally cited for speeding. Sams was released from the scene on an I-Bond, with a future court date.

On April 10 at approximately 7:46 a.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop near the intersection of East Blackhawk Drive and Kysor Drive. After investigation, deputies placed Jose Baltazar, 45, of Rockford, under arrest for driving while license suspended. Baltazar was additionally issued a citation for operating an uninsured vehicle. Baltazar was released on an I-Bond at the scene and given a future court date.

On April 10 at approximately 11:05 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop at Mud Creek Road and Moose Drive in Mt. Morris. After an investigation, deputies arrested Summer M. Lemke, 20, of



Mt. Morris, for an active Winnebago County arrest warrant. Lemke was taken into custody without incident and transported to the Ogle County Jail, where she was held in lieu of bond. Lemke was additionally cited for speeding, operating an uninsured motor vehicle and failure to notify of address change.

On April 10 at approximately 10:03 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop on East Illinois Route 72 near Interstate 39. After an investigation, deputies arrested Christian McPherson, 29, of DeKalb, for driving while license suspended. McPherson was issued additional citations for operating an uninsured motor vehicle and an equipment violation. McPherson was given an I-Bond with a return court date later next month and released on scene.

On April 10 at approximately 2:21 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 6,000 block of North Freeport road. After a brief investigation, Mauricio Sanchez-Barrera, 29, of Freeport, was arrested for no valid driver's license. Sanchez-Barrera was also cited for speeding and operating an uninsured motor vehicle. Sanchez-Barrera was released on an I-Bond.

All individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty.

Rochelle Police Department

Officers make several arrests

ROCHELLE — On April 7 at 6:23 p.m. Steven K. Baldwin, 59, of Rochelle was arrested on an outstanding Ogle County warrant and transferred.

On April 7 at 9:55 p.m. Antonio Tapia-Martinez, 32, of Gilman was arrested on an outstanding Boone County warrant and for driving while license suspended and cited for no insurance, operating a motor vehicle with suspended registration and illegal transportation of alcohol and transferred.

On April 8 at 9:53 a.m. Deericka Blackmon-Martin, 22, of Joliet was cited for speeding 51 miles per hour in a 30-miles per hour zone. She signed a promise to comply and was given a May 12 Rochelle court date.

On April 8 at 2:03 p.m. 16-year-old female juvenile of Rochelle was cited for speeding 79 miles per hour in a 55-miles per hour zone. She signed a promise to comply and was given a May 12 Rochelle court date.

On April 8 at 1:14 p.m. Joseph F. Keller, 59, of Ashton was cited for speeding 76 miles per hour in a 55-miles per hour zone. He signed a promise to comply and was given a May 12 Rochelle court date.

On April 8 at 8:53 p.m. Justin D. Cockrell, 34, of Rochelle was arrested on an outstanding Ogle County warrant and cited for illegal transportation of alcohol as a passenger. He paid \$500 and was released with a May 3 Ogle County court date. In the same incident, Carol A. Cockrell, 57, of Rochelle was arrested for driving under the influence and cited for illegal transportation of alcohol. She was released on an I-Bond



with a May 12 Rochelle court date.

On April 9 at 1:52 a.m. Julio C. Ramos, 21, of Rochelle was arrested on an outstanding Ogle County warrant for driving while license suspended. He paid \$100 and was released with an April 28 Ogle County court date.

On April 11 at 1:58 a.m. Paul A. Garner, 36, of Rochelle was arrested for driving under the influence. He was released on an I-Bond with a May 12 Rochelle court date.

All individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty.

Oregon's Bandera selected for Texas Medical Center internship

ROCK ISLAND — Leslie Bandera, a biochemistry major of Oregon, was one of 11 Augustana College juniors selected for the Texas Medical Center Summer Research Internship Program.

The selected students will take part in the paid, full-time, 10-week experience at the Texas Medical Center in Houston this summer.

The Texas Medical Center has 10 million patients per year and performs over 180,000 surgeries annually. It is home to the world's largest children's hospital and largest cancer hospital, and it is the eighth-largest business district in the U.S.

It is the largest medical complex in the world. Internships are available to students in all majors and students selected for the opportunity can establish one-on-one mentoring relationships in a variety of areas, including in clinical or research medicine, any area of allied health, psychology, neuroscience or veterinary research. Additional areas of focus include human resources, health care economics, medical illustration, pastoral care, law, finance, health care policy and clinical ethics.

Previous Augustana students have been placed at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer

Center, one of the world's leading treatment and research centers; Texas Children's Hospital, an international leader in pediatric medicine; as well as Baylor College of Medicine, Rice University and the University of Texas Health Science Center's prestigious Center for Laboratory Animal Medicine and Care.

Internship students are selected for their curiosity, critical thinking, problem-solving and authentic self-reflection. These traits are fine-tuned in a series of spring, summer and fall seminars, with an emphasis on community building, vocational reflection and ethics.

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NIU STEM Café explores how digital technology is transforming agriculture

DEKALB — John Deere was founded in 1837 with the invention of the steel plow, which revolutionized agriculture. At the next NIU STEM Café, learn how the agricultural revolution has gone digital with technologies such as GPS, yield monitors and cloud-based data management.

The STEM Café will take place at Fatty's Pub and Grille (1312 W. Lincoln Highway, DeKalb) on April 12 at 6:30 p.m. It is free and open to the public with food and drink available for purchase from Fatty's. Registration and more information at go.niu.edu/stemcafe.

At the STEM Café, two Northern Illinois



Northern Illinois University

University alumni will discuss their work at John Deere helping to reshape the way farmers work. They'll share how new technologies, such as autonomous tractors, weed-targeting computers and precision fertilizer applicators, are helping farmers get better results while using fewer chemicals.

Carollyn Gehrke, a John Deere product man-

ager for the AOM Dynamic Portfolio, will discuss the development of digital agricultural products and share the decision-making process her team follows when choosing which new digital products to invest in.

Ryan Pritchard, John Deere engineering manager for ISG Operations, Reliability and Enablement, will talk about some of the company's new technology-enabled products, including the Autonomous 8R Tractor, See & Spray™ and ExactShot™.

Pritchard says that as the global population increases, farmers need to produce more crops with fewer resources —

and they want to do this in a way that's sustainable environmentally and economically.

"There are many challenges facing farmers today," Pritchard said. "And technology will be the key to helping them meet these challenges and be more productive, profitable and sustainable."

NIU STEM Cafés are part of NIU STEAM and are designed to increase public awareness of the critical role that STEM fields play in our everyday lives. They are offered in partnership with the NIU Alumni Association and made possible with support from Thermo Fisher Scientific and Bayer Fund.

ROCHELLE News-Leader

211 IL Route 38 East, Rochelle, IL 61068
(815) 562-4171

USPS (467-820) ISSN (1075-2811)
Published every Wednesday and Sunday by Rochelle Newspapers Inc. at 211 E. State Route 38, Rochelle, IL 61068.
Periodical postage paid at Rochelle, IL 61068. Postmaster send address changes to the Rochelle News-Leader, P.O. Box 46, Rochelle, IL 61068. Subscription rates are \$139.99 per year by mail in Ogle County. Outside county rate is \$149.99 per year. No mail delivery in newspaper-carrier serviced areas. The circulation department is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. If you are a carrier subscriber and your paper does not arrive, contact Kelly White at 561-2112.

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LOCAL NEWS



(PHOTOS BY JEFF HELFRICH)

Mayor John Bearrows read a proclamation making April 2023 Child Abuse Awareness Month in the city. He then presented the proclamation to Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center Executive Director Jessica Cash (right). Bearrows also read a proclamation making April 9-15, 2023 National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week in the city and presented the proclamation to Rochelle Police Department Dispatcher Senada Ajvazi-Moreau and Communications Supervisor Luisa Nambo (left).

CITY: April recognized as Child Abuse Awareness Month

From page 1

RITC

The council unanimously approved a change order to the development of its Rochelle Intermodal Transload Center that aims to begin operation July 1, bringing intermodal services back to the city after Global III closed in 2019.

The change order will consist of \$53,611.96 in city funds and \$396,679.77 funded by the Greater Rochelle Economic Development Corporation (GREDCO) and CHS Ethanol.

The improvements to the city's side of the project have been largely funded by a grant through the Illinois Department of Commerce (DCEO). The development of the container yard has been funded through GREDCO. CHS made a request for a fumigation lot to be added to the development of the intermodal container operation. The added service provided by CHS will increase the volumes of containers that will move through the RITC.

To provide an area for fumigating containers, new features needed to be added to the RITC including installation of a security gate, cameras, a fence, a concrete pad, power line and a storage area. Improvements under the change order that are built on city property will be covered by the city. Improvements that are located on the GREDCO property will be covered by GREDCO. The improvements that are located on both properties will be funded

50/50 between the city and GREDCO.

"Because they're now going to be able to fumigate at a much lower cost, they're going to be able to open the market to more potential sales internationally, which will bring more containers through our yard which will add more revenue to our yard," City Economic Development Director Jason Anderson said. "This is a great opportunity for the city and railroad. We've been working for the past four years to bring back intermodal service and this is just another added service we'll be able to offer."

Anderson also discussed a \$5.2 million grant the city has received for expanding the RITC in 2025, which would be the third phase of its development. Phase two is currently ongoing. The third phase would involve expansion to the east with rail extensions and paving to allow for more trains and containers to come through the RITC, adding more revenue.

The third phase would add "more than 50 percent" capacity to the RITC and the total cost of it would be just shy of \$7 million. After the grant, the city would pay \$700,000 and the Burlington Junction Railway would pay \$900,000.

The city's current expected added intermodal revenue from the operation is based on one train a week (\$52,000 a month). Anderson expects that once business is established, it could expect

two trains a week (about \$1 million a year in new revenue). Once phase three is done, Anderson believes it could see three trains a week (\$1.6 million a year).

"With the volume that we are anticipating this area could generate, we really do believe that this is going to be a great opportunity for the city and local businesses that want intermodal service back," Anderson said.

Change order

The council unanimously approved a \$224,792 change order with Tri-City Electric for a project involving the first phase of upgrades to the Rochelle Municipal Utilities diesel plant.

The change order was necessary due to "several price increases and a change of scope in work to be completed," the meeting's agenda packet said. The change

in the scope of work included reconductoring and replacing poles between North 12th Street and Woolf Court. There were also numerous parts used in the construction process that once ordered had "significant price increases."

Excavator

The council unanimously approved an ordinance waiving the competitive bidding to purchase a mini excavator for the RMU water department from Johnson Tractor for \$91,853.

The accepted bid was the lowest of three received through a bid sourcing program. The excavator will be used to perform small construction jobs such as repairing main breaks, relocating fire hydrants, service line repairs/installation and valve replacements. Currently, RMU has been using a 10+ year-old

combination backhoe to perform the type of work and upgrading to the mini excavator will "greatly improve" the ease of operation and efficiency.

Good News

During his Good News Award segment of the meeting, Fiegenschuh recognized RMU for being named in the top 25 percent of electric utilities in the country for reliability by the American Public Power Association. He also praised RMU for its work during the March 31 storm that hit town.

Proclamations

Mayor John Bearrows read a proclamation making April 2023 Child Abuse Awareness Month in the city. He then presented the proclamation to Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center Executive Director Jessica Cash.

"This year, I want to stress that abuse does not discriminate by a child's age, gender, family or community," Cash said. "It takes all of us to help protect kids. Everybody can play a part in helping protect kids in the community. We appreciate the partnership we have with the city and its police department."

Bearrows also read a proclamation making April 9-15, 2023 National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week in the city and presented the proclamation to Rochelle Police Department Dispatcher Senada Ajvazi-Moreau and Communications Supervisor Luisa Nambo.

"It's just amazing, the job that they do," Bearrows said. "They're the eyes and the ears for the callers and first responders. We can be very thankful to have the crew that we have."

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LOCAL VIEWS

Guest column

Farmers invest in sustainable agriculture throughout the year

EACH spring people around the world celebrate our planet, recognizing the need to find innovative solutions to protect our soil and water for generations to come.

Farmers, often called the “original conservationists,” continue the fight for cleaner, more sustainable agricultural practices throughout the year. We care deeply for our land and collaborate with our agricultural research partners to implement the best solutions to preserve our natural resources.

We invest time, money, and energy in protecting our land. We are investing in our future.

Our farmers utilize a variety of sustainable practices. One strategy that has gained momentum in recent years is the use of cover crops, or plants such as wheat, rye, and radishes which are planted after primary

cash crops like corn and soybeans are harvested. These special crops work hard to enrich the soil, maintain moisture, and prevent erosion among other benefits.

In February, University of Illinois researchers released a new study showing that Midwestern farmers are seeding more cover crops than ever. The study showed that cover crop adoption reached 7.2% in 2021, up from 1.8% a decade earlier. Researchers stated that the rapid increase in cover crop adoption between 2017 and 2021 coincided with increased state and federal incentive programs.

The U of I study, “Recent rapid increase of cover crop adoption across the U.S. Midwest detected by fusing multi-source satellite data,” was published in Geophysical Research Letters.

Farmers also work hard to voluntarily imple-

ment the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (NLRs) to reduce nutrient loss to the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico. Last year, Illinois Farm Bureau’s (IFB) environmental team joined forces with farmers and agricultural researchers to film a new documentary highlighting sustainability efforts in Illinois.

The hour-long film “Sustaining Our Future: A Farm Family Story,” celebrates farmers’ dedication to the environment while sharing with a broader consumer audience the trials, and in some cases, the financial risks farmers take to conserve our natural resources.

Viewers are invited to join the Ganschow family of Bureau County to learn how three generations of farmers have approached

sustainability to create a brighter future for generations to come. People can now watch the documentary for free on IFB’s YouTube channel.

This April, Illinois farmers and the agricultural research community are collaborating to showcase current and past conservation practices, including on-

going cover crop projects. These Spring Nutrient Stewardship Field days are an opportunity for those inside and outside of agriculture to learn more about farmers’ role in protecting the environment.

Now in its eighth year, IFB’s Nutrient Stewardship Grant Program supports research conservation projects across the state. Our organization has committed more than \$2.8 million to nutrient stewardship initiatives



Richard Guebert Jr.

since 2015. For the fiscal year 2023, IFB distributed \$175,000 in grants for local projects, including \$25,000 to support pollinator conservation across the state.

It is fitting that this year Illinois farmers will host two field day opportunities ahead of Earth Day. In Washington County, farmers will evaluate nutrient loss reduction practices in addition to evaluating cover crop projects. Young farmers in Knox County will also invite researchers and farmers to learn more about their goal to implement one cover crop plot in each township within the county. Farmers are at the forefront of climate-smart farming, putting scientific solutions, technology, and innovation to work to protect our land, air, and water. Every year is a learning curve, however.

We are constantly building upon previous research to develop better,

more sustainable practices and strategies to protect our land. It is important to also keep in mind this is a long-haul effort. Each year, our farmers find new ways to approach conservation and sustainability, moving the needle ever closer to a brighter, greener future.

I am proud of the work Illinois farmers are doing and will continue to do to preserve our natural resources. While the world celebrates our planet on April 22, I challenge everyone to learn more about how their local farmers are committing themselves to finding innovative solutions to protect our land.

Richard Guebert Jr. is the Illinois Farm Bureau president. This op-ed was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.

A certain appeal to being composted

“They’ll make fun of me and give me a goofy name.”

That was my mother’s reaction to the notion of her body being donated to a medical school for students to dissect.

I was a bit surprised by the vehemence she expressed against the idea. After all, she was a registered nurse married to a veterinarian. She knew the importance of medical professionals learning anatomy.

Still, she wanted nothing to do with it. My then-20-something self, wanted to say, “But Mom you’ll be dead. You won’t know the difference.”

The options for disposing of human remains in Illinois are limited. You can be buried, entombed or cremated. But a bill pending before the Illinois General Assembly would add another option: composting.

That process turns human remains into soil over the course of a few weeks. Companies that offer this service place a person’s

remains in a container with wood chips, straw and other organic material and heat it to accelerate the growth of bacteria that breaks down the body.

LeNette Van Haverbeke, a representative of Illinois Cemetery and Funeral Home Association, told lawmakers that many in the field “oppose human composting as lacking the traditional dignity afforded to the dead.”

Call me a cynic, but could it be that some in the funeral industry doesn’t like this idea because it limits their ability to up-sell grieving loved ones on expensive caskets, vaults and burial plots?

Somehow, American society has lost its way when dealing with death.

I remember when my maternal grandmother died, an aunt led me to her casket. The morticians had dabbed her corpse with rouge, stuck her glasses above eyes that would never see and put her in her nicest dress.

My aunt said, “Doesn’t Grandma look nice?”

I wanted to say, “No. She looks dead.” But not wanting to offend my saintly aunt, I nodded glumly at the body of the quarrelsome woman who rested in a satin-lined box.

Every society has rituals surrounding death. In Tibet remains are fed to buzzards. In India, they are placed on a pyre and burned.

And in America, we pump out the blood, pump in the formaldehyde, stitch the mouth shut, shove cotton up the rectum and apply enough makeup to make Tammy Faye Baker look natural.

Gosh, you think our society might have a problem dealing with death?

Why do Americans try so hard to delay the inevitable postmortem decay? My Grandma Wanda, who was from modest means, purchased an expensive vault when her husband of 49 years and 364 days died. (Living with her, I’m sure, just felt like much

longer.)

When asked why it was important that he be buried in a sealed vault, she exclaimed, “A tree root might grow into him.”

I wanted to say, “Why would he care? He’s put up with a thorn in his side for almost 50 years.” But again, I bit my tongue.

When Grandma’s never-dowell brother Harold died, our family took a more cost-conscious approach. After all, he’d been estranged from his relatives for decades. The Veterans’ Administration unexpectedly shipped his ashes via the U.S. Postal Service to his niece, who hadn’t seen him for decades.

When it arrived at my aunt’s house, her ever practical husband was dispatched spade in hand to the Brooklyn Cemetery in Schuyler County, Illinois for a covert burial – no plot was purchased.

State Rep. Kelly Cassidy,

D-Chicago, sponsored the composting bill, which passed the House March 24 and now proceeds to the Senate.

“Many people I know want to reduce their carbon footprint in life as well as death,” she said. Cassidy added, composting is a viable alternative for the ecologically minded.

“We do have ‘green burial’ available in Illinois, but it’s incredibly limited and pretty cost-prohibitive.”

Daniel Welter, the recently-retired chancellor of the Archdiocese of Chicago, has said the Catholic Conference of Illinois opposes the human composting bill.

“Turning the mortal remains of a human person into compost for the purpose of fertilization, as one would with vegetable trimmings or eggshells, degrades the human person and dishonors the life that was lived by that person,” he told House committee members.

But doesn’t the book

of Genesis say, “You are dust and to dust you shall return?”

I’m not of any inclination to delay the inevitable. When I die, I don’t want to be embalmed, I don’t want to be viewed and I certainly don’t want to be boxed up like merchandise. I want to be returned to the earth.

I have no desire to cling to these mortal bounds. Something far greater awaits in eternity.

There is a certain appeal to being composted.

Don’t get me wrong, I wouldn’t want to be placed in a hanging flowerpot that my daughters would inevitably forget to water. But the prospect of being shoveled into a grave with the rest of the dirt near where my relatives are buried has a certain appeal.

I just hope when they dig the hole, they don’t hit Uncle Harold.

Scott Reeder, a staff writer for the Illinois Times can be reached at sreeder@illinoistimes.com.

How to contact government officials

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Washington, D.C. 20515
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COMMUNITY



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

The RTHS show "Lost in Yonkers" runs Thursday, Friday and Saturday this week (April 13-15). Curtain is at 7:30 pm. Tickets are \$2 for students and educators. General admission is \$5.

RTHS spring comedy show 'Lost in Yonkers' is April 13-15

BY VICKI SNYDER-CHURA
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-LEADER

ROCHELLE — Neil Simon's *Lost in Yonkers* was the 1991 Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award Winner for Best Play. This is a memory play set in 1942 Yonkers, New York. You will meet Bella, 35-years-old and developmentally delayed. She lives at home with her mother, the stern Grandma Kurnitz. As the play opens, ne'er-do-well son Eddie deposits his two young sons on the

old lady's doorstep. Financially strapped, he's decided to take to the road as a salesman. His boys find themselves in the strange new world called Yonkers and must learn to contend with Grandma, with Bella and her secret romance, as well as with Louie, Bella's brother, a small-time hoodlum.

The Rochelle Township High School production will feature student stage veteran Mikayla Preston, who has been invited to pursue a bachelor of fine arts in acting

at Illinois Wesleyan University.

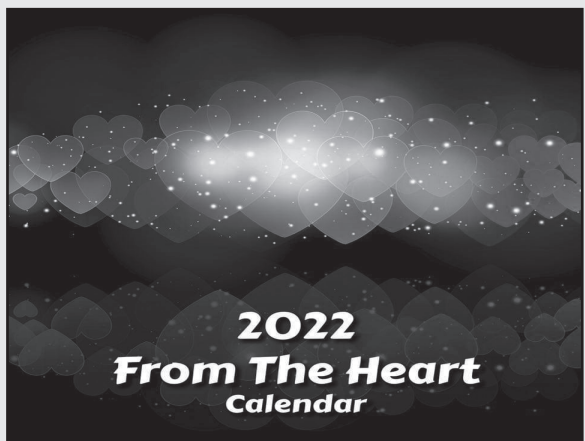
In order of appearance, the cast includes: Lucas Smardo as Jay, Olive Nauman as Arty, Noah LeFevre as Eddie, Preston as Bella, Bobbie Henning as Grandma Kurnitz, Storm Devers as Louie and Karma Lidren as Gert.

Crew chairs include: William Sykes Wise IV on set & lighting, Cassandra Aguilera on stage props and as sound manager, Preston as the troupe's acting guru, Vi-ollette Hull as the house

manager and Lidren as the student director.

Amy Creuziger, AEA, is the RTHS Theater arts director and advisor who reminds us, "It is the goal of RTHS Theater to inspire and enrich the lives of both the student artist and the audience through quality theatrical productions."

The show runs Thursday, Friday and Saturday this week (April 13-15). Curtain is at 7:30 pm. Tickets are \$2 for students and educators. General admission is \$5.



- Mar. 17 - Dena Doran, Princeton, \$250
- Mar. 18 - Brian Edwards, Rochelle, \$25
- Mar. 19 - Brittany Samp, Palos Heights, \$50
- Mar. 20 - Mike and Irma Seaworth, Holcomb, \$25
- Mar. 21 - Charlie Boonstra, Dixon, \$25
- Mar. 22 - Rochelle Chamber, \$25
- Mar. 23 - Troy Mowry, Rochelle, \$25
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- Mar. 31 - From the Heart, Rochelle, \$25
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Charles Peterman

April 14
Kristyn Sulser

April 16
Marissa Seldal
James Doering

April 18
Millie Danekas

April 19
Pastor Angelo Bonacquisti

April 21
Emma Waters

April 24
Lainie Arnold
Jose Tlapa

April 26
Evan Jones

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Oakley Gonzales
Nora Bridgeman

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King Crossword

ACROSS

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- 5 Spider's creation
- 8 Smith of Fox News
- 12 Wood strip
- 13 Hollywood's Gardner
- 14 Model Banks
- 15 Twistable cookie
- 16 "Wonder Woman" star
- 18 Reproductive cell
- 20 Old Geo models
- 21 Conceal, in a way
- 23 Zodiac cat
- 24 When a sporting event starts
- 28 Pvt.'s superiors
- 31 Historic period
- 32 Open a toothpaste tube
- 34 Consume
- 35 Beige
- 37 Floral wreaths
- 39 Mao — -tung
- 41 Coaster
- 42 Three-note chords
- 45 Doohickey
- 49 Hood
- 51 Roof overhang
- 52 "Got it"
- 53 French article
- 54 Pitcher Nolan
- 55 Waller or Domino
- 56 Inlet
- 57 Transmit
- 6 Ms. Longoria
- 7 Lip soother
- 8 Iowa and
- 9 Lightest element
- 10 Slangy suffix
- 11 Bits of butter
- 17 Solidify
- 19 Ballet wear
- 22 Community gym sites
- 24 "Gosh!"
- 25 Lob's path
- 26 Strict taskmaster
- 27 Tea choice
- 29 Wee bit
- 30 Map lines (Abbr.)
- 33 Entreaty
- 36 Applications
- 38 Venomous snakes
- 40 Mag. staff
- 42 End-of-wk. cry
- 43 Tabula —
- 44 Ticket half
- 46 "Mercy Mercy Me" singer
- 47 Novelist
- 48 Look after
- 50 Disney deer

DOWN

- 1 Trudge
- 2 News reporter
- 3 Detail
- 4 "Friends" role
- 5 Betting parlor activity

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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5			3			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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CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: K equals F

RK SDF CMRVCSWP QGCHCQSWHL
CHW PHCDM FM SGW LCVW
QCHSFFM KHCWV, R'P QCUU SGWV
QWU VCSWL.

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

Answer

Weekly SUDOKU

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

Answer

King Crossword

CryptoQuip

If two animated characters are drawn on the same cartoon frame, I'd call them cel mates.

LOCAL NEWS

HOME: Project honoring late former Creston resident completed

From page 1

Pastor Samuel Menyongar runs the Bonnie Memorial Children's Home in Sierra Leone, and visited the United States and the local area years ago and spent time with Seigel, who worked as an organizer for Touch the Nations from her home.

"My mom poured out her life so others would know God," Starkey said. "She was super organized and had a passion to bless other people. My mom was the person behind the scenes. I just want to honor her. I took her to Africa in 2008 and after that she said she always wanted to be a missionary. I never knew that before. Even though she's no longer with us, people rallied to get it built and Samuel put her



The late Bonnie Rae Edwards Seigel (right) spent the later years of her life working with Touch the Nations and children's homes in Africa. The recently-completed Bonnie Memorial Children's Home (left) was named in the former Creston resident's honor.

name on it. She didn't get to see it finished, but it's happening in her name."

Starkey wanted the Rochelle and Creston areas

to know how grateful she is for their donations and involvement in Touch the Nations and the children's home. The work has been



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

a passion of her's since she was a senior in high school.

"I took time to think about God and felt that

helping people in Africa was my calling around that time," Starkey said. "I started to feel for the people of Africa. I feel that

God took what my mom was praying to do and gave it to me. She didn't share that she wanted to do that with me for years."

TREE: Storm damage hits Memorial Park

From page 1

Challand takes notes for her grandfather when he's doing historical work around town such as the day the tree fell. A conversation they had that day moved them to take action.

"I picked her up and she said, 'Well it's too bad we can't do something about it,'" McDermott said. "I said it's too big to stand back up, but I have read about people doing cuttings, putting them in water and then they grow roots. She said, 'Well what would that be?' And I said it'd still be a 100-year-old tree. Because it's the same tree. And it could live to be 200 years old. She thought that was the bee's knees."

The pair took cuttings from the tree in hopes that they'll grow roots and be able to be planted again in a couple of years. McDermott asked that anyone with expertise in the area of replanting tree cuttings that may be able to help email him at tmcdermott1953@gmail.com.

The Flagg-Rochelle Community Park District is planning to plant another tree in the spot that housed the WWI tree at Memorial Park. McDermott said Park District Executive Director Jackee Ohlinger has promised him space in the park system for replanting if the tree can be saved through the cuttings.

"I would love in two years to be able to drive by with my granddaughter and say, 'Look, that's a 102-year-old tree now,'" McDermott said. "It's the concept of somebody putting in effort to keep it alive. The best thing that could happen is if my



(COURTESY PHOTO)

The Flagg-Rochelle Community Park District is planning to plant another tree in the spot that housed the WWI tree at Memorial Park. Kathryn Challand (above) has a family connection to WWI.

10-12 cuttings all take and somebody else gets some cuttings and we end up with 30 200-year-old trees and there's two in each park. I'm sure the city could find a place to put one tree in honor of our veterans. The VFW could be involved. There's just so much cool stuff that could come of it. The worst-case scenario is we stay where we are today with the tree dead."

Challand has a family connection to WWI and the organization that donated

the tree. Her great great grandfather, Charles E. Kepner, fought in the war and was a member of the American Legion.

"Things happen. Stuff dies. I know that," McDermott said. "I don't make the decisions. I just think if there's a chance to save it and two weeks of inactivity causes us to miss that window, that's a heartbreaker for me. My 14-year-old granddaughter can see the value of trying to keep history alive."

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SPORTS



DOUBLES CHAMPIONS

The Rochelle Hub tennis team won the 2023 Hubs Dubs Tournament on Friday.

See page 2 for more details

RTHS Softball

Girls cruise over Crusaders

Smardo finishes 4-for-4 with one RBI as Rochelle takes down Lutheran 11-2

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE — Senior Morgan Smardo reached base four times on Friday afternoon, when the Rochelle Lady Hub varsity softball team hosted a nonconference matchup against Rockford Lutheran.

Looking to be aggressive in the strike zone, Smardo attacked multiple fastballs early in the count, finishing 4-for-4 with four singles and one RBI as the Lady Hubs earned an 11-2 win over the Crusaders. It was a much-needed bounce-back win for the purple and white, who were handed a tough loss against the Sandwich Indians during Interstate 8 play on Thursday.

“I felt like we played as a team today and we didn’t make as many mistakes as we did in our last game,” Smardo said. “We hit the ball better today. As soon as I see a strike, I swing the bat hard and my focus is to not let any strikes go by. We have a younger group this season and we’re continuing to work on the basics. We work well together and there’s good communication.”

Sophomore Lauren Dyer enjoyed a stellar out-

ing in the pitcher’s circle, throwing all seven innings while striking out 11 batters and allowing six hits to earn the win. Rochelle took a 2-0 lead in the bottom of the first inning, where junior Ella Alfano scored on an error after reaching on a hit-by-pitch to start the frame. Smardo then singled and reached home on a passed ball.

The Lady Hubs surged ahead 4-0 in the bottom of the third inning, where Smardo singled and sophomore Dempsey Atkinson blasted an RBI double to right-center field two batters later. Atkinson moved quickly around the bases, advancing once before scoring on a passed ball. Rockford Lutheran earned two runs back in the top of the fourth inning, cutting the Rochelle lead in half with a double and a run-scoring single as well as a run on a passed ball.

Rochelle answered with two runs in the bottom of the fourth inning. Junior Macy Belmonte drew a lead-off walk and Dyer belted an RBI double to center field during the next at-bat. Smardo followed with an RBI single on a hard grounder up the middle.



(PHOTOS BY RUSSELL HODGES)

Sophomore Dempsey Atkinson (left) and senior Morgan Smardo (right) were key contributors during the Rochelle Lady Hub varsity softball team’s win over Rockford Lutheran on Friday afternoon.

See **SOFTBALL** pg 6

RTHS Track & Field

Rochelle athletes battle at Assumption Invitational

Henkel sets new RTHS school record in 400-meter hurdle event on Saturday

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

DAVENPORT, Iowa — The Rochelle Township High School varsity track and field teams competed in the Assumption Invitational on Saturday, with the Lady Hubs scoring 25 points to finish ninth out of 15 schools and the Hubs totaling 30 points to take 10th out of 13 schools.

Hubs

Junior Luis Hernandez finished third in the 1600-meter run with a time of 4:57.36 and the 3200-meter run with a time of 10:31.31. Freshman Wyatt Worthington took 11th in the 400-meter dash with a time of 1:05.42 and senior Ethan Bergeson placed 14th in the 110-meter hurdles with a time of 19.71 seconds. Freshman Reece Harris finished 14th in the 100-meter dash with a time of 12.08 seconds and the 200-meter dash with a time of 24.97 seconds.

Junior Abel Huerta took 15th in the 800-meter run with a time of 2:32.09 and 19th in the 400-meter dash with a time of 1:05.09. Freshman Declan McGee placed 12th in the 1600-meter run with a time of 5:23.27 and 13th in the 3200-meter run with a time

of 11:41.32. Rochelle finished fourth in the shuttle hurdle relay with a time of 1:13.62, sixth in the 3200-meter relay with a time of 10:01.17 and ninth in the sprint medley relay with a time of 1:49.32.

Rochelle took 10th in the 400-meter relay with a time of 48.82 seconds, 11th in the 1600-meter relay with a time of 4:08.71 and 12th in the 800-meter relay with a time of 1:45.29. Sophomore Jack Tilton placed third in the high jump with a clearance of 5 feet 8 inches and sophomore Virgil O’Dell finished ninth in the long jump with a distance of 19 feet. Junior Landon Mickley took sixth in the shot put with a distance of 42 feet 6 inches and sophomore Jack Tarvestad finished 15th in the discus with a distance of 98 feet 3 inches.

Lady Hubs

Junior Alivia Henkel won the 400-meter hurdles with a time of 1:07.71. Henkel finished third in the 100-meter hurdles with a time of 17.19 seconds and seventh in the long jump with a distance of 14 feet 11 ¼ inches. Sophomore Bridgett Ramirez placed 10th in the 3000-meter run with a time of 13:49.15



Junior Nathan Sergeant (left) and senior Baylie Sutton (right) leap into the jump pits during the Assumption Invitational in Davenport, Iowa on Saturday afternoon.

and freshman Rose Luxton took 15th in the 1500-meter run with a time of 6:18.71. Freshman Brisa Zepeda finished 17th in the 800-meter run with a time of 3:35.82 and junior Kylie Smith took 19th in the 200-meter dash with

a time of 30.00 seconds.

Rochelle took fourth in the 400-meter relay with a time of 56.91 and fifth in the shuttle hurdle relay with a time of 1:30.29. The Lady Hubs placed sixth in the sprint medley relay with a time of 2:00.60 and



(PHOTOS BY MARCY DELILLE)

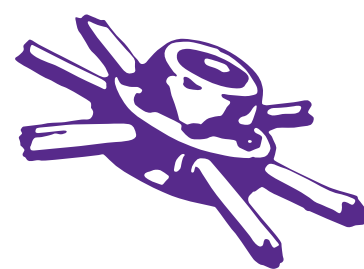
ninth in the 800-meter relay with a time of 1:59.92. Rochelle finished 11th in the 3200-meter relay with a time of 13:12.16 and 14th in the 1600-meter relay in 5:15.08.

Senior Macy Ramos placed 14th in the high

jump with a clearance of 4 feet 6 inches. Senior Samantha Sanford took 18th in the shot put with a distance of 27 feet 9 inches and junior Kyra Bivins finished 19th in the discus throw with a distance of 66 feet 9 ½ inches.



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SPORTS

T-Byrd Lanes

(COURTESY PHOTOS)



Local bowlers take home Youth League and High School League awards from T-Byrd Lanes

T-Byrd Lanes recently recognized several local bowlers with Youth League and High School League awards. Ethan Odle (Week 14), Evin Odle (Week 15) and Christian Thorne (Week 15) were named High School Bowlers of the Week. Jaxon Breit and Landon Leigh (Week 21) as well as Jaxon Harnesk and Josef Alanis (Week 22) were named Youth Bowlers of the Week. Giuliana Henderson and Dylan Aguirre were named Youth League and High School League Bowlers of the Month for March.

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ASHTON NEWS



Ashton-Franklin Center Varsity and Junior Varsity Boys Basketball teams take home awards

Congratulations to the 2022-23 Boys Basketball Award Winners. JV Award Winners: Logan Mershon: Outstanding Freshman, Aaron Lester: Outstanding Sophomore, Nolan Rueff: Leadership, Caleb Thomas: Offense, Brock Lehman: Defense and Ben Rockwood: Hustle. Varsity Award Winners: Zane Murphy: FT% & Hustle, Lane Koning: 300 Point Club, 200+ Point Club, & 2nd Team All-Conference, Riley Petersen: Heart & Soul, Carson Rueff: 400 Point Club, MVP, & 1st Team All-Conference Unanimous, Jordan Harris: 200+ Point Club, "Consider It Done", & Honorable Mention All-Conference and Kaleb Goldman: 300 Point Club, 200+ Point Club, Most Improved, & Honorable Mention All-Conference.



Ashton-Franklin Center Varsity Girls Basketball teams awarded

Congrats to the Varsity Girls Basketball award winners for the 22-23 Season: Outstanding Sophomore - Cameryn Winterland, Outstanding Freshman - Reese Polk, Captain, Best FT %, Leadership, MVP, 1st Team All-Conference - Taylor Jahn, Captain, Most Improved, 2nd Team All-Conference - Brianna Gonnerman, Hustle, Honorable Mention All-Conference - Alexis Schwarz and Heart - Jersey Sprague.

Ashton UMC tractor blessing now April 15

ASHTON – The Tractor Blessing at the Ashton United Methodist Church, originally scheduled for March 26 was cancelled due to snow. The Tractor Blessing will now be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 15. All are invited to drive your tractor to the church parking lot, located at 906 Richardson Ave. to participate in the blessing. If you prefer, you can bring a photo of your farm, family or crops. Gardeners are encouraged to bring your gardening gloves. After the blessing there will be a lunch served. Pray for no snow that day and hopefully we will see you then.

ISP announces results of occupant restraint enforcement patrols

STERLING— Illinois State Police (ISP) Troop 1 Commander Captain Joseph Blanchette announces the results of occupant restraint enforcement patrols (OREP) held in Ogle, Lee, Stephenson, Whiteside and Winnebago Counties during March. These OREPs provided extra patrol coverage for the ISP so officers could focus on saving lives by making sure all vehicle occupants were buckled up. Safety belt citations: 52, child restraint citations: three, total citations: 110 and total written warnings: 14. Most motorists know safety belts save lives, but some ignore their safety and that of their families by neglecting to use safety belts and child restraint devices. These patrols reinforce the occupant protection message by focusing on those who ignore the law. Lives can be saved if people simply "buckle up!" This project is funded through the Illinois Department of Transportation.

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AFC Raider baseball team scores multiple victories

ASHTON — The Ashton-Franklin Center varsity baseball team downed Hinckley-Big Rock 14-3 in five innings on Tuesday, March 28. Carson Rueff and Griffin Bushman each recorded three RBIs to lead the Raider offense, while Michael Cochrane and Brock Lehman each added two RBIs, with Lehman finishing 3-for-4 at the dish. Jordan Harris earned the start for the Raiders, throwing four and one-third innings while striking out seven batters and allowing only one hit. The Ashton-Franklin Center varsity baseball team picked up a 12-6 win over Amboy on Wednesday, April 5. Auden Polk went 3-for-3 with three RBIs to lead the AFC offense, while Griffin Bushman went 2-for-4 with two RBIs. Austin June and Aaron Lester each totaled two RBIs and Michael Cochrane pitched five innings, striking out seven batters to earn the win. The Ashton-Franklin Center varsity baseball team faced Amboy on Thursday, April 6, falling 17-10. Jordan Harris and Brock Lehman each recorded three RBIs for the Raiders, with Lehman going 3-for-3 and Harris finishing 2-for-4 at the plate. Aaron Lester scored four runs and Carson Rueff added two runs scored for AFC.



Rueff commits to St. Ambrose University

Congratulations to Carson Rueff for signing to play basketball with St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa. AFC is very excited to see what is in store for Carson as a member of the Fighting Bees Basketball program.

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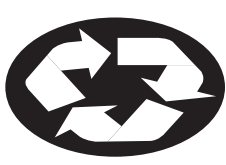
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SPORTS

RTHS Baseball

Hubs concede nonconference doubleheader against Streator

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE — The Rochelle Hub varsity baseball team faced Streator for a nonconference doubleheader on Saturday. The Bulldogs edged Rochelle 3-2 in the opener before outlasting the Hubs 7-5 in the finale to send the purple and white home with two losses. Rochelle (3-6, 1-1 Interstate 8) will host Sandwich for the start of an Interstate 8 Conference series on Monday.

Game 1

Streator took a 2-0 lead on a two-run double in the bottom of the second inning. Rochelle tallied one run in the top of the third inning, where senior Aidan Rodriguez drew a one-out walk before stealing second base and scoring on senior Colton O'Rorke's RBI single into left-center field. The Bulldogs scratched one run on a sacrifice fly in the bottom of the fifth inning to take a 3-1 lead over

the Hubs, who earned one run back after junior Brock Metzger's lead-off double led to a one-out RBI single from senior Noah Lara in the top of the sixth inning. Senior Bradley Cooney took the mound for the Hubs, throwing five and two-thirds innings while striking out five batters and allowing two earned runs. Streator held the Rochelle offense to three hits in the loss.

Game 2

Rochelle surged ahead early in the second game, scoring twice after Lara reached on an error in the top of the first inning. O'Rorke's second RBI single of the day allowed Cooney to score and give the Hubs a 3-0 lead in the top of the second inning. The score became 4-0 after senior Garrett Gensler reached on an error and scored on a wild pitch in the top of the fifth inning. The Hubs were unable to keep their four-run lead, however, with Streator

tying the game in the bottom of the fifth inning. The Bulldogs tallied four runs on one double, two singles, two walks and one error in the frame. Rochelle took control back in the top of the sixth inning, taking a 5-4 lead after sophomore Brandyn Metzger plated Cooney with an RBI single up the middle.

Streator delivered the final blow in the contest, scoring three runs on three walks, one double and one sacrifice fly in the bottom of the sixth inning to surge ahead 7-5. Two Rochelle hitters reached base in the top of the seventh inning, but a flyout to right field ended the threat.

O'Rorke started on the mound for the Hubs, tossing four innings while striking out six batters and allowing two earned runs. O'Rorke also went 2-for-4 to lead the Rochelle offense, which compiled six hits in the loss. Gensler reached base twice and scored two runs for the Hubs.

RTHS Girls Soccer

Lady Hubs fall at Indian Creek

SHABBONA — The Rochelle Lady Hub varsity soccer team battled Indian Creek on the road Thursday evening, falling 5-1 with sophomore midfielder Makayla Lara scoring the lone goal for the purple and white. Rochelle (3-4, 1-0 Interstate 8) will host Sycamore on

Monday evening. Junior Danica Ward totaled two saves in net.

The Lady Hubs outshot Indian Creek 16-8, but the Timberwolves held a 7-3 advantage in shots on goal during the contest. Indian Creek surged ahead early in the match, scoring goals during the first minute and

the 14th minute to command a 2-0 lead.

The Timberwolves added a goal in the 32nd minute before Lara's unassisted goal in the 40th minute made the score 3-1 at half. Indian Creek sealed the nonconference win with goals during the 54th and 72nd minutes.

SOFTBALL: Rochelle scores road win over Boylan Catholic

From page 1

Senior Layla Pelan walked and scored on sophomore Erin Murphy's RBI single in the bottom of the fifth inning to give the Lady Hubs (2-4, 1-1 Interstate 8) a 7-2 advantage over the Crusaders.

Rochelle sealed the win on Friday with a four-run effort in the bottom of the sixth inning, where Belmonte (single), Dyer (walk) and Smardo (single) all reached base and scored on passed balls to start the frame. Atkinson walked and scored on a wild pitch for Rochelle's final run of the game. The Lady Hub offense finished with 11 hits and eight stolen bases in the victory.

Boylan

The Rochelle Lady Hub varsity softball team scored its second consecutive nonconference win on Saturday, defeating Boylan Catholic 12-4. Senior Morgan Smardo reached base five times for the Lady Hubs (3-4, 1-1 Interstate 8), finishing 4-for-4 with two RBIs. Senior Adamaris Betancourt doubled twice and totaled three RBIs in the victory.

Rochelle struck in the top of the first inning, tallying three runs to take a 3-0 lead. Freshman Madigan Williams reached on a pair of errors that allowed both Smardo and junior Macy Belmonte to score. Betancourt followed with an RBI double to right field during



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

Freshman Madigan Williams makes a throw from third base during the Rochelle Lady Hub varsity softball game against Lutheran on Friday afternoon.

the next at-bat.

Sydney Dannenberg singled and scored on two Rochelle errors in the bottom of the second inning for Boylan Catholic's first run of the game. The Lady Hubs added three runs in the top of the third inning, where Betancourt belted a two-out, two-run double into center field before senior outfielder Maleah Pointer sent an RBI single into center field three batters later.

Rochelle added to its lead in the top of the fourth inning, scoring four runs to surge ahead 10-1. Belmonte drew a lead-off walk and scored on an RBI triple from Smardo, who scored

on a passed ball soon after. Williams and senior Layla Pelan each drew walks and scored on passed balls to keep the offense moving. The Titans earned two runs back in the bottom of the fourth inning, where Dannenberg homered and Samantha Appino walked before scoring on an error.

Boylan Catholic's final run came after Elizabeth Horst singled and scored on a passed ball in the bottom of the fifth inning. Rochelle sealed its win in the top of the seventh inning, where sophomore Lauren Dyer smacked a one-out double and Smardo followed with an RBI single.



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