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LOCAL NEWS... LOCAL VIEWS

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Inman announces retirement

RPD Deputy Chief Terry Inman recently announced his retirement from the department. **Page 2**

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Higby reflects on career with RPD 'I think Rochelle is a great place to be a police officer'

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — Recently-retired Rochelle Police Department Chief Eric Higby saw crimes change over his 27 years with the department.

He saw the advent of the internet and RPD having to turn its attention towards cybercrimes. As much as technology changed and how it changed the way the department did things, he said one thing remained the same in policing.

"And that's the camaraderie between the people working and the willingness to back each other up on calls and be there for each other while on duty," Higby said.

Higby's last day on duty was March 14. He was RPD's chief for 14 years. He joined the department in 1996 following his graduation from Western Illinois University. Upon completion of the police training institute, he was assigned to the Ogle County Narcotics Unit and then to the patrol unit and detective division. In 2001, he was promoted to sergeant and in 2006 to deputy chief. In 2009, Higby was sworn



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

Former Rochelle Police Chief Eric Higby's last day on duty was March 14. He was RPD's chief for 14 years after joining the department in 1996.

in as chief of police.

Higby worked as a field training officer, firearms instructor and was on the tactical team during his RPD tenure. He completed two elite programs in the Northwestern University School of Police Staff and Command and the FBI National Academy and served on the Board of Directors for HOPE of Ogle County and Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center for over 10 years.

Higby told the

News-Leader March 9 that he found purpose in helping people and families that were victims of crimes in the community find closure. He enjoyed all types of calls for service. He loved his time on patrol the most.

"You didn't know what calls were going to come in," Higby said. "It was just different. There was a lot of excitement. When I was younger, I enjoyed the action portion of it. I still love patrol, because that's

when you're out meeting people and it's different every day. At least it was to me. I was never bored by patrol. That's where I really enjoyed my time."

Higby said he always knew he wouldn't quite make 30 years in law enforcement due to recent changes impacting the profession. While the job can be gratifying, it also comes with hard cases, sights and conversations.

See HIGBY page 9

Statements made responding to Monday stabbing incident 'There is no evidence to indicate anything other than this being an isolated incident'

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — At its monthly meeting Monday, the Rochelle Township High School Board of Education read a statement responding to a Monday morning stabbing incident between two students at the school that resulted in both being transported to Rochelle Community Hospital and one being airlifted to another medical center with significant injuries.

The incident, isolated to the two students, caused a lockdown at the school and an early dismissal was seen at 10:30 a.m. The board meeting was held in the auditorium Monday and only included essential business. The statement was made by Board Member Jeff Tilton.

"Today we experienced an altercation between two students which resulted in serious harm to one student," Tilton said. "We'd like to publicly thank the Rochelle Fire Department,



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

The Rochelle Township High School Board of Education read a statement responding to a Monday morning stabbing incident between two students at the school that resulted in both being transported to Rochelle Community Hospital and one being airlifted to another medical center with significant injuries.

Rochelle Police Department and Ogle County Sheriff's Office for their support today. We would like to acknowledge the efforts made by RTHS personnel, especially School Nurse Lawrenz. The incident involving the two students this morning has been and will continue to be handled by the Rochelle Police Department and the Ogle County Sheriff's Office. We have received confirmation from law

enforcement that there is no evidence to indicate anything other than this being an isolated incident between two students. We understand that this is a frightening time for students, parents, staff and our community and will have a plan for school that calls for increased police presence and mental health support to help our students process today's events and feel more safe at school. At this moment we will

not be issuing any further comment. We ask for your continued patience as we work with law enforcement and other entities. If you or your student has any information pertaining to this incident, no matter how small, we urge you to contact Dean of Students Brett Zick at bzick@rthsd212.org or 815-562-4161 ext. 5106 or contact law enforcement directly."

See SCHOOL page 5



Stabbing incident at RTHS

ROCHELLE — Rochelle Township High School dismissed students early at 10:30 a.m. Monday due to a stabbing altercation that took place between two students that resulted in "significant injuries" to one student, press releases from Rochelle Township High School District 212 and Ogle County Sheriff Brian VanVickle said.

At 9:24 a.m. Monday an Ogle County deputy requested an ambulance to RTHS in reference to a student that had been stabbed, the press release said. RTHS immediately initiated planned protocols locking the building down and requiring students to stay in classrooms. RTHS's on-site school resource officer, school nurse and other personnel handled the student situation until paramedics from the Rochelle Fire Department and additional law enforcement arrived.

The sheriff's press release said that two male juveniles, both aged 17, were involved in a physical altercation.

"The Rochelle Fire Department transported both juveniles to Rochelle Community Hospital, one with minor injuries and one with significant injuries, who was later flown to an outside hospital," the press release said. "Officers from the Rochelle Police Department and additional deputies and investigators from the sheriff's office responded to RTHS to assist."

The early dismissal was called due to the altercation and the need for a continued investigation by law enforcement, the district press release said. Students exited the building under the supervision of local law enforcement. The school provided busing transportation and parents picked up students in the back of the building. All after-school programming was canceled. RTHS notified students that from 2-3:30 p.m. they could come back to process the events of the day with available counselors.

See RTHS page 2

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LOCAL NEWS

RPD Deputy Chief Inman announces retirement

ROCHELLE — Rochelle Police Department Deputy Chief Terry Inman has announced his upcoming retirement following 22 years of dedicated service to the City of Rochelle, a March 17 city press release said.

Fresh out of high school, DC Inman joined the Navy in 1987. He served two years of active duty and continued his service in the reserves for an additional eight years. In the fall of 1989, he enrolled at Western Illinois University where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in law enforcement administration.

In 2001, Inman joined the Rochelle Police Department as a patrol officer. He was assigned to the investigations division in 2004 where he served until his promotion to the deputy chief position in 2022. In 2023, when the City of Rochelle announced an early retirement incentive, Inman decided to move forward with retirement plans.

"Losing great people is the downside of offering early retirement incentives," City Manager Jeff

Fiengenschuh said. "I wish Terry well and will truly miss his expertise in the police department."

In his time with the Rochelle Police Department, DC Inman served on the ILEAS Mobile Force, the Illinois Child Death Review Committee and the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. One of the most memorable times in his career was being deployed to the 2008 Republican National Convention through his work with the ILEAS Mobile Force.

When asked about cases that he felt proud to solve, Inman shared the story of an individual operating a check scam locally.

"You typically don't catch the people," Inman said. "These types of things typically originate elsewhere or even outside the country."

In addition to the three special task forces, Inman obtained a master's degree in biosecurity and disaster preparedness and was named the City of Rochelle's emergency management coordinator in 2013. Since then, he has worked with numerous lo-



Terry Inman

cal organizations to implement emergency response plans and to enhance the levels of preparedness for a local incident. Inman was a driving force behind multiple full-scale, multi-agency disaster exercises.

On the future of the department, Inman remarked that he has enjoyed being part of the process to bring in several new officers and expressed his excitement about those who are heading to the police academy soon. Inman's retirement plans include pursuing opportunities in the corporate sector, spending time with his family & dogs, and reading.

The community is invited to wish DC Inman well at an Open House on Tuesday April 4 from 3-5 p.m. at City Hall.



Ogle County Bar Association donates to OCEC life skills program

On Friday, March 17, the Ogle County Bar Association donated \$400 in funds to the Ogle County Education Cooperative Life Skills Program. The funds will be used to directly purchase self-care kits for students in need. We thank the Ogle County Bar Association for your philanthropy. Pictured left to right: Mrs. Courtney Arnquist, OCEC nurse supervisor; Mr Eric Arnquist, Ogle County Bar Association member and Mr. Russell Crull, Ogle County Bar Association president

CFNIL neighborhood grants application window now open

OGLE COUNTY — The Community Foundation of Northern Illinois (CFNIL) is now accepting applications for the Neighborhood Grants Program! This program is open to neighborhood-based groups and nonprofit organizations operating in Boone, Ogle, Stephenson and Winnebago Counties. A unique feature of this grant program is that while the groups applying should be organized for a charitable purpose, they do not need to be registered 501c3s.

The Neighborhood

Grants Program funds neighborhood-focused and resident-led projects, including but not limited to beautification, crime prevention, surveys, clean ups, newsletters, organizing, reforestation and resident-focused education. The maximum award per project is \$2,500. Awards will be announced in May.

CFNIL staff will host an informational webinar to learn more about this grant program and answer questions from attendees on Monday, March 20 at 6 p.m. The webinar will be provided live via Zoom. Please RSVP to info@cfnil.org to confirm your attendance and receive the webinar link.

Applications must be submitted through CFNIL's online grants application portal by 5 p.m. on Monday, April 17. To learn

more about the program, view grant guidelines and start your application, visit: <https://cfnil.org/grants/neighborhood>.

Past year's recipients include African American Resource Center, Comprehensive Community Solutions, Coronado Haskell Neighborhood Association, Edgewater Neighborhood Association, Greater Freeport Partnership, Northwest Neighbors, Rock Valley College, Second First Church, Rockford Area Habitat for Humanity, Rockford Park District Foundation, and the Village of Poplar Grove.

CFNIL has operated a neighborhood grants program since 1995, distributing more than \$800,000 to build better neighborhoods in Rockford and beyond.

City-wide cleanup drop-off day April 1

ROCHELLE — The City of Rochelle's city-wide cleanup drop-off day is Saturday, April 1 from 8 a.m. to noon at the city's street department at 251 E. 1st Ave. near the intersection of Caron Road and 1st Avenue.

Accepted items in-

clude bulk items, electronics and household trash.

A complete list of accepted electronics is available on the city's website: <https://www.cityofrochelle.net/community/appliance-electronics-recycling.html>

No tires or hazardous waste such as paint, motor oil, etc. will be accepted.

The event is only open to city residents residing within city limits.

Please bring an ID with your address. Items will not be taken from businesses.



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- Sports medicine
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Rochelle Community Hospital

City of Rochelle announces rain barrel program

ROCHELLE — The City of Rochelle is rolling out a new rain barrel program to encourage Rochelle Municipal Utilities customers to utilize rain water for lawn irrigation. The program utilizes stormwater management funds to cover a portion of the cost of the barrels.

Rain barrels capture water from residential rooftops through the downspout. Since they are made from shipping barrels that were used to transport food, they may be lightly scuffed or have small imperfections.

The city has partnered with Upcycle Products,

Inc. where customers may order a rain barrel online and have it shipped directly to their home.

Two options are available—both 55 gallon—but one with an additional overflow hose. The utility will cover \$50 of the cost of each barrel, which is automatically deducted at checkout. Limit one per address. Customers are welcome to purchase additional barrels at full price.

In 2023, a total of 100 subsidized barrels are available.

To order a rain barrel, visit upcycle-products.com.

RTHS: Two injured after stabbing incident Monday

From page 1

"RTHS has fully cooperated with the Ogle County Sheriff's Office and the Rochelle Police Department as they have investigated this matter throughout the day," the district press release said. "The initial investigation concluded there is no evidence to indicate anything other than an isolated incident between the two students identified today."

Monday's statement from the school district said it had no further com-

ment regarding the situation as it is an active investigation with pending results. Further specific information about school will be communicated directly with parents.

No other Rochelle school buildings were impacted by the incident or early dismissal Monday.

VanVickle's press release said results of the investigation are pending and media was asked to refer any questions regarding charges to the Ogle County State's Attorney.

To learn more about XCEL Orthopedics or schedule an appointment with Dr. Delisca, call **815-562-3784** or visit rochellehospital.com/orthopedics.

LOCAL NEWS

RTHS 2023 National Honor Society members inducted

BY VICKI SNYDER-CHURA
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-LEADER

ROCHELLE — In an elegant and flawlessly-produced candlelight ceremony, 20 members of the junior and senior classes were inducted into the Rochelle Township High School Chapter of the National Honor Society.

Those 20 students had successfully proven they possessed the qualities of leadership, scholarship, service and character which are the cornerstones of the organization.

NHS Advisor Charity Prose allowed her officers: President Samantha Sanford, Vice President Kailey Harris, Treasurer John Green and Secretary Casandra Garcia to address the inductees on the four pillars of NHS: Leadership, Scholarship, Service and Character.

Sanford talked of Leadership, quoting author/pastor John Maxwell: "A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way." Green quoted Albert Einstein and then Nelson Mandela who said, "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world." Green encouraged new members to never, ever stop learning - following the RTHS mission of "preparing for tomorrow."

Garcia was passionate about Service. "The smallest project can have the most profound impact," she said, reminding members, "Induction does not mean you are finished

serving." Harris quoted John Hays Hammond regarding Character. He believes it is: "the real foundation of all worthwhile success." Kailey said Character is the thing you do when no one is looking. "Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved," according to Helen Keller.

Established in 1921, the National Honor Society is the oldest and most respected student recognition organization in America. Membership in NHS distinguishes students who have committed themselves to the pursuit of academic excellence, community improvement, and personal development.

While academic achievement is a core component of the NHS, today's students need much more than just good grades to get ahead. NHS focus on service, leadership and character helps students build skills and relationships to accommodate success throughout academic years and beyond.

When NHS members participate in community service projects like the RTHS Blood Drives or attend leadership events and serve as ambassadors to their schools & communities, they:

Connect with faculty, community leaders and local business leaders who can provide recommen-



(COURTESY PHOTO)

In an elegant and flawlessly-produced candlelight ceremony, 20 members of the junior and senior classes were inducted into the Rochelle Township High School Chapter of the National Honor Society.

dations and references, as well as leads on future internships and jobs. Build a portfolio of life achievements for use on college and career applications. Begin networking with other student leaders focused on personal growth and build a solid foundation for future endeavors. Become more effective leaders and learn why leadership skills are an essential tool at any stage of life.

With 102 years of history, the NHS membership card and NHS membership certificate represent participation in a proud tradition, a tradition that includes admired and respected names like model/actress Cindy Crawford (a DeKalb HS NHS member), Gloria Estefan, Cal Ripken Jr., Taylor Swift and journalist Diane Sawyer.

Welcoming the 2023 inductees were members:

Ellie Carmichael, Landon DeLille, Cassandra Garcia, John Green, Owen Haas, Kailey Harris, Ana Harvey, Bailey Jackson, Rylee Jackson, Olive Nauman, Yuelma Ortiz, Zalak Patel, Layla Pelan, Sophia Rocha, Samantha Sanford, Morgan Smardo, Bailey Sutton, Paul Swartz and David Wanner.

As attending secretary, Wanner presented 2023 National Honor Society nominees to Dr. Chris

Lewis for induction:

Seniors Jasmin Hernandez, Ava Lynn, Giselle Robles, and Ahtziri Zepeda and juniors Kennedy Adamski, Kyr Bivins, Haley Bozinovich, Katelyn Burdin, Jimmy Chavez, Alivia Henkel, Alexis Huerta, Parker Lenkaitis, Aiden Ramsey, Kendall Sachs, Kylie Smith, Addison Stewart, Anna Toczylowski, Daniela Ward, William Wise IV and Cale Workman.

Rochelle Legion accepting applications for Girls State

ROCHELLE — American Legion Auxiliary Illini Girls State is a week-long program held at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston dedicated to providing training for young women in city, county and state government. They participate in a two-party system and will run for office, campaign, vote and write legislation pertinent to American Legion Auxiliary Illini Girls State as well as the state and nation.

Along with forming their own government of these three levels, they will also hear from guest speakers in the political arena

(present and past), veterans and/or active service men and women, American Legion Auxiliary members and motivational speakers. Americanism and flag etiquette are taught this week as well.

Along with the educational benefits and the importance of voting and getting involved in your community, state, and nation, our goal is also to give young women confidence and knowledge to go forward in their adult lives and not be afraid to go for their dreams.

American Legion posts select high school juniors to attend the program in June

right after their junior year. There are a limited number of Girls State scholarships available where individual expenses are paid by a sponsoring Legion Post,

a local business or another community-based organization. Parents and grandparents are also able to sponsor a participant.

Information and an ap-

plication can be obtained at <https://www.alaigs.org/>. For details, deadlines and further information, contact American Legion Post 403 Adjutant Steve Korth

815-766-0208 or Commander & Youth Program Officer John Gruben 815-761-6883 as soon as possible, since openings for Girls State are limited.

Oregon American Legion Post seeking Ogle County veterans

OREGON — Your brothers and sisters of Oregon Post #97 American Legion take this opportunity to thank you for your service to our great nation.

Each and every one of us stood ready to do whatever was asked of us to defend our nation and families without a second thought.

Without a doubt we would do it again if the need arose and that attitude is what makes our nation so strong.

We all have much in common no matter what branch we served in.

Here at Post 97 we all stand ready and eager to welcome you into our fold.

We meet at 6 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Oregon VFW Post #8739.

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LOCAL NEWS

Ogle County Sheriff's Department

Deputies conduct traffic stops

OREGON — On March 17 at approximately 2:38 p.m. deputies initiated a traffic stop at the intersection of East Illinois Route 64 and Rocky Hollow Road. Upon further investigation deputies arrested Anthony Walsh, 28, of Rochelle, for driving while license suspended and unlawful possession of cannabis. Walsh was released on an individual bond with a future court date given.

On March 17 at approximately 10:47 p.m. deputies initiated a traffic stop at the intersection of North Illinois Route 251 and Dutch Road. Upon further investigation deputies arrested Manda Katuta, 35, of Rockford, for no valid driver's license. Katuta was released on an individual bond with a future court date given.

On March 17 at approximately 8:46 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop on Interstate 39 near mile marker 106. After brief investigation, deputies arrested Edward Brown Sr., 53, of Rockford, for no valid driver's license. Brown was issued an additional citation for illegal window tint. Brown was given an I-Bond with a return court date later next month and released on scene.

On March 18 at approximately 2:54 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop at the intersection of Illinois Route 64 and Willow Road. After investigation deputies placed Katlyn Quandee, 28, of Dubuque, Iowa, under arrest for an active failure to appear.

On March 18 at approximately 3:52 a.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop near the intersection of East Illinois Route 38 and South Caron Road in Rochelle. After brief investigation, deputies arrested Beth Phandenbecker, 46, of Malta, for no valid driver's license. Phandenbecker was issued additional citations for suspended registration and operating an uninsured motor vehicle. Phandenbecker was given an I-Bond with a return court date later next month and released on scene.

On March 19 at approximately 6:58 p.m. deputies responded to the 700 block of Central Street in Woosung for

for speeding. Quandee was transported to the Ogle County Jail where she was held in lieu of bond.

On March 18 at 6:04 a.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop at Merchant and Union Street in Byron. After an investigation, deputies cited William Muraski, 73, of Byron for no valid license and expired registration. Muraski was released on an I-Bond and given a future court date.

On March 18 at approximately 12:05 a.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 17,000 block of East Illinois Route 64. After brief investigation, deputies arrested Anthony Christmas, 27, of Rockford, for driving while license suspended. Christmas was issued additional citations for disobeying a stop sign and operating an uninsured motor vehicle. Christmas was given an I-Bond with a return court date later next month and released on scene.

On March 19 at approximately 11:44 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 5,000 block of East Illinois Route 72. As a result, Brian S. Galor, 31, of Rockford, was arrested on a Lee County warrant, possession of methamphetamine and possession of a controlled substance. The driver, Danielle M. McKellips, 35, of Rockford, was cited for speeding and released at the scene. Galor was transported to the Ogle County Jail pending an appearance before a judge.

All individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty in the court of law.

the report of a domestic disturbance. After investigation, it was learned that the alleged offender, Brian W. Hackbarth, 57, of Woosung, had left the scene prior to police arrival. Hackbarth was located near the intersection of Galena Avenue and Bloody Gulch Road in Dixon where he was taken into custody for domestic battery. Hackbarth was transported to the Ogle County Jail with no bond and waits for an appearance before a Judge. Ogle County deputies were assisted by the Lee County Sheriff's Office and Dixon Police Department.

On March 19 at approximately 2:12 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop at Illinois Route 38 and Dement Road. After investigation, deputies cited Tyler House, 27, of Chillicothe for driving while license suspended, no insurance and suspended registration. House was given an I-bond for his citations and released from the scene.

On March 19 at approximately 1:08 a.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop on Interstate 39 near mile marker 111. After a brief investigation, deputies arrested Jose Romero-Ruiz, 32, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for driving while his license was suspended. Romero-Ruiz was released on an I-Bond with a return court date later next month and released on scene.

On March 20 at 11:44 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 5,000 block of East Illinois Route 72. As a result, Brian S. Galor, 31, of Rockford, was arrested on a Lee County warrant, possession of methamphetamine and possession of a controlled substance. The driver, Danielle M. McKellips, 35, of Rockford, was cited for speeding and released at the scene. Galor was transported to the Ogle County Jail pending an appearance before a judge.

All individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty in the court of law.



(COURTESY PHOTO)

The Kishwaukee College Horticulture department hosted guest designer Laura Daluga AIFD as part of the Artist In Residence (AIR) program offered through the American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD).

Kishwaukee College Horticulture hosts floral design expert for student demonstration

MALTA — The Kishwaukee College Horticulture department hosted guest designer Laura Daluga AIFD as part of the Artist In Residence (AIR) program offered through the American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD).

Daluga presented a floral fashion demonstration in Associate Professor of Horticulture Janet Gallagher's Floral Design class. The presentation gave students hands-on experience in deconstructing roses and arranging the different-colored pedals on a dress, hat and belt to create a floral ensemble.

"Floral fashion is not something we have done in class before. We have never done anything with clothing, so it is interesting to have a new challenge," horticulture student Livi Morey said. "And it has

been nice to have Laura here to talk about her experiences and the different ways you can get started in horticulture."

The AIR program is offered through the AIFD to bring together industry professionals and floral design students at colleges and universities with student AIFD chapters like Kish. The horticulture program has grown a strong reputation in the industry by providing students with real-world opportunities like the AIR program.

"I fell in love with horticulture, and it's what I work in now. I chose to study at Kish because my boss and so many other people I know recommended it," horticulture student Eden Lindenmeyer said.

Daluga is a fourth-gen-

eration florist specializing in floral fashion. She works as an event installation specialist at fleurdetroit and as design director for the Smithers-Oasis Company. Daluga is the creator of Detroit's annual floral sculpture show — Art in the Elements — and acts as a board member for the Detroit Institute of Arts Museum's Friends of Art and Flowers. Her work has ranked in the Bobbi Cup in 2014 and 2016, FTD America's Cup in 2018 and 2022, was the People's Choice winner of the Iron Designers America for the International Floral Expo in 2016, and has been published in "International Floral Art."

For more information on the Floral Design Program at Kishwaukee College, visit kish.edu/horticulture.

Epilepsy informational meeting/support group set for April 12

OREGON — Illinois Epilepsy and Supports and Resources offers an informational meeting/support group at The Village Bakery on April 12 at 9:30 a.m. At this group,

people with epilepsy and supporters share, eat and can get assistance from the program. Even if a person can't attend the meeting, they can contact Stephanie Harcharik, epilepsy coordinator, at 815.673.5574.

Services are designed to meet individual needs and can include, but aren't limited to: peer support, caregiver support, support in accessing benefits and/or services, navigating insurance, identification and linkage to medical professionals, access to counseling, referrals to employment specialists and help coordinating transportation.

Prior to this, the group met at The Village Bakery on Nov. 11, 2022. 11 people attended. They shared their

own stories of living with epilepsy and gave support to a caregiver whose family member had recently been diagnosed.

The group was a safe space for people to connect with others who are living their life with epilepsy. The food was definitely part of the conversation, with The Bakery offering pastries, donuts, bagels and cookies from their business, which provides work and training opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Please join us on April 12 at 9:30 a.m. at The Village Bakery - 101 N. 3rd St. in Oregon. This is a free event meant to support and provide information to people with Epilepsy and their caregivers.

Rochelle Police Department

Officers make arrest

ROCHELLE — On March 19 at 8:44 a.m. Trenton O. Brown, 37, of Rochelle was arrested for an outstanding Ogle County warrant and transferred.

On March 21 at 2:03 a.m. Jair R. Bortoleto, 61,

of New Jersey was cited for disobeying a traffic control device. He signed a promise to comply and given an April 28 Rochelle court date.

All individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty.

Report policy

Any arrests listed in this paper are merely charges and the defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law. Please note that all police reports received from the Rochelle Police,

the Ogle County Sheriff's Department and the Illinois State Police, will be printed without exception. Requests to omit particular reports will not be considered or honored at any time.

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LOCAL NEWS

Park board talks future possibilities for Helms complex Skate park to be removed and possibly replaced or moved to different location

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — At its monthly meeting Monday, the Flagg-Rochelle Community Park District Board of Commissioners discussed potential future capital project park improvements including ideas for the future of the Helms complex, which it is looking at making changes to.

Park District Executive Director Jackie Ohlinger said the capital committee has been talking about different changes to the Helms complex including having a different type of play feature from other parks, competitive or challenging play such as a fitness or obstacle course, a new trail way through the park, a family comfort station or shelter and restroom, shade opportunities, demolishing and removing the track, enhancing dugouts and bringing in features at other parks such as a beginner disc golf course.

"We definitely have opportunities of making the property more park-esque," Ohlinger said. "And that could be trees as well for along the trails. We were thinking of some sort of trailway through the park

and we were hoping to replace the walking track we have now that some people use currently. It could be used for laps and activity and getting from one field to the next."

Skate park

Ohlinger said the skate park at Cooper Park is likely to be taken down due to safety issues. The skate park was built in 2001 and needs to be removed and doesn't meet today's safety standards, she said. The cost of replacing needed pieces would not be "financially responsible," Ohlinger said.

A social media survey will be presented to the community to see how it feels about replacing the skate park or moving on to a different type of play. The park district is also considering a new skate park at Helms Park.

"I think it would be important to think about this being a good time to move it if we chose to recreate it in a more visible setting," Ohlinger said. "I think it'd be in our best interest to not replace it in its current location. I do think it should be removed before the busy season this summer."

The surface of the skate park has issues with cracks

and ramp surfaces have seen issues due to years of use.

The cost of a new skate park can range from \$250,000-500,000, Ohlinger said.

Memorial Park

A capital project at Memorial Park was discussed that would include the removal of a current play structure due to safety concerns and its replacement with a playground through a grant process which would see the park district receive funding in exchange for information on the users.

"If we're rewarded dollars towards this project, there are certain criteria we need to have such as inclusive play, adult and/or youth fitness, balance and sensory play and things like that included in the design," Ohlinger said. "They would have a sign with a QR code where people could take a quick survey. It should provide us with a nice discount on the equipment and installation of this project."

The park district's current budget for the playground is about \$100,000 and the goal is to have it completed within the next nine months.



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

The Flagg-Rochelle Community Park District Board of Commissioners discussed potential future capital project park improvements including ideas for the future of the Helms complex, which it is looking at making changes to.

REC Center

The REC Center saw its highest numbers of members, attendees in activities and programs and drop ins in January and those numbers were eclipsed by February's, Ohlinger said.

"It's been incredible," Ohlinger said. "That takes a lot of work, effort and communication to accomplish that and it's been a job well done by staff. As of halfway through March, we were at 2,515 members and we've been hitting around 1,200 drop ins per month. Drop ins are non-members that pay a fee to use the facility. It's in addition to the

members we already have. There's been a lot of usage here at the REC Center."

Ohlinger said she expected 500 members for the first year of the REC and that the top-end of members would be 2,500.

Lake Sule

Ohlinger said work is ongoing on the park district's Lake Sule bank project and about 90 percent of the west side of the lake has been cleared, which she said opens it up for more fishing activities and visibility of the property.

The park district has plans to clear the entire perimeter of the lake and

apply chemicals to prevent willow trees and shrubs from growing back.

Tartaglia

Board President Tim Hayden said the board is accepting the resignation of Board Member Ryan Tartaglia, who has moved out of the district. Tartaglia will remain on the April 4 ballot because of the time frame. There will be a vacant seat until the April meeting and an appointment process will start.

Driving range

Ohlinger said the driving range at Skare Park will open on April 1.

SCHOOL: Board establishes graduation date for May 27

From page 1

"If you have any questions or concerns for your student's safety, please contact Superintendent Jason Harper at jharper@rths212.org or 815-562-4161 ext. 5108. The RTHS Board of Education will continue our meeting tonight to conduct essential school business. As the incident is still unfolding and under investigation, we deem it inappropriate to comment further at this time."

Ogle County Sheriff Brian VanVickle spoke at the meeting. His office responded to and investigated the Monday incident. VanVickle is a former RTHS board member and attended his last meeting last month.

"This is my first month not sitting at the table, but here I am," VanVickle said. "What I want to say is that everything that we and you have done as a board was put into effect today. Everybody should be very pleased with not only the

administration, but the teachers, support staff and kids and the way that they responded. Everything that we've done over the years with our policies, procedures and training paid off today. Even though there wasn't a threat to the kids, there certainly could have been and nobody knew that. And they responded appropriately and took the steps that we put in place as a board. Everyone should be very proud of the way we responded. I'm sure we'll find things that we could have done better and things that will be changed, but at the end of the day, everything worked exactly the way it should have. It was limited in scope and area, and the staff and students should be commended on their response."

RTHS teacher Sarah Flanagan spoke on behalf of the Rochelle Teacher Association during the meeting.

"I just want to thank the administration," Flanagan said. "I talked to a lot of teachers after we got out

of school and everybody felt safe and very informed with the emergency response protocol."

Students returned to normal schooling on Tuesday.

Swearing in

Harper swore in new board member Kathy Olson at the meeting. Olson was unanimously appointed last month and will serve the remainder of VanVickle's open term until the upcoming school board election on Tuesday, April 4. Olson served on the board for 20 years in the past and will not hold the position after the election.

Personnel

The board unanimously approved personnel changes including the resignations of Aby Guerrero (Spanish teacher), Ryan McQuade (social studies teacher and head girls basketball coach), Lizzie Cartwright (girls tennis coach for fall 2023 season only) and Abby Kerns (assistant girls soccer coach) and the employment of Sarai



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

Rochelle Superintendent Jason Harper swore in new board member Kathy Olson at the meeting. Olson was unanimously appointed last month and will serve the remainder of Brian VanVickle's open term.

Orozco (special education teacher, 2023-2024 school year).

The board also unanimously approved the re-employment of first, second, third and fourth-year teachers.

Graduation

The board established that RTHS graduation will be held on Saturday, May 27 at 10 a.m. As the calendar stood Monday, the last day of final exams is planned to be Thursday, May 25. Summer school

will begin on Wednesday, May 31 and conclude on Thursday, July 13.

Harper said that graduation will take place outdoors on the football field as it has in recent years if weather allows.

Executive session

Following meeting in executive session, the board accepted retirement letters and approved retirement contracts for both Assistant Superintendent

Tony Doyle (after 2026-2027 school year) and District Business Manager Kevin Dale (after 2027-2028 school year).

The board also approved employment contracts for Zick and Alison Vrana to serve as assistant principals for the 2023-2024 school year. Vrana will replace Assistant Principal David Perrin, who will finish his last year at the school before retirement in an instructional position to assist Vrana's transition to her new role.

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LOCAL VIEWS

Guest column

A bipartisan project worthy of the Land of Lincoln

I'M teaching a class on statesmanship at Southern Illinois University this spring and one of my recurring themes is that statesmanship can take place not only on national and international stages but also in city councils, schools boards and state legislatures. Statesmanship, at its essence, is the determination of leaders to look to the long term and a disposition to take difficult and politically-unpopular actions to advance the public good. Illinois' state budget cries out for statesmanship. It's important to note that there has been substantial fiscal progress in Illinois over the past several years. In late February, S&P Global, a top global rating agency, raised Illinois' long-term

credit rating to A- from BBB.* This represented the seventh upgrade the state has received from a rating agency in less than two years. S&P Global cited the state's "accelerating repayment of its liabilities, rebuilding its budget stabilization fund to decade highs, and a slowing of statutory pension funding growth." This is positive and most budget experts agree that Illinois' fiscal future is better than it has been in some time. However, this is a low bar. The state still faces formidable budgetary challenges. If the economy weakens significantly, today's surpluses will be quickly transformed into deficits. The state's long-term pension challenges remain enormous, and Illinoisans continue to want

more state services than they are willing to pay for. In my discussions with members of the Illinois General Assembly, I often hear that there is more bipartisan cooperation in Springfield than the public assumes but that this cooperation largely occurs on narrow issues. On budget policy, there is a familiar and dispiriting pattern. The majority party examines revenue estimates, tallies up spending requests, and assembles a budget that satisfies as many in its party as possible while remaining in balance, at least on paper. The minority party typically sees the budget not as opportunity to present an alternative vision but as an opening to criticize the majority. It would be inspiring and important if a small

group of Democratic and Republican lawmakers formed a bipartisan Future of Illinois caucus that worked thoughtfully and diligently on a long-term budget plan. This group would carefully examine the medium- and longer-term budget outlook and probe revenue projections and spending programs. It would not just "cut and paste" ideas from past budget cycles but contemplate major reforms of taxes and spending. It would honestly frame alternatives for Illinois voters. This Future of Illinois project could accomplish two significant things: generate substantive and creative fiscal proposals and establish a habit of bipartisan cooperation on large issues. The group might begin

its deliberations by reviewing a recently issued report by the Civic Federation that persuasively argues that a successful fiscal plan for Illinois should eliminate structural budget deficits for the foreseeable future, reform pension funding, and set a goal of Illinois achieving an AA credit rating in five years. How would the public react to this budget caucus? Would members get a hearing? Would they get a primary opponent for the impertinence of working with members of the other party? I don't know. However, I can make this modest pledge. They will be invited to the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute for a public event and offered a platform to present their ideas and explain the state's fiscal predicament.

Paul Simon understood that sound and future-oriented budget policy was the foundation of successful governance. "Anything worthwhile requires sacrifice. The worst course is drifting," he once wrote. Policymakers, he said, should "be builders of the future, not simply custodians of what we inherited from the past." *Editor's Note: This op-ed was distributed by Capitol News Illinois on behalf of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute. The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own. John. T. Shaw is the director of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois Carbondale. Shaw's monthly column explores how Illinois can work toward better politics and smarter government.*

Fiegenschuh: Service above self

ROTARY International's two official mottos are Service Above Self and One Profits Most Who Serves Best. There are many people in my life that I think of when I ponder these mottos. Two individuals who exemplify these statements in their professional work and in their volunteer efforts are recently-retired Rochelle Chief of Police Eric Higby and recently-retired Deputy Chief Terry Inman. Law enforcement is an admirable career and I wish more people would choose to serve their

communities and our society by taking it up. I cannot think of too many other professions where you make such a major difference in the lives of those you serve. Both gentlemen have 27 and 22 years respectively. This is a distinction I applaud. One of the most important aspects of our jobs at the city is building leadership capacity within the organization. Both individuals have done that. In the past six years, we've promoted several officers to new positions. These are people who will lead the department and organiza-

tion into the future. As for the future, both have overseen the hiring of several new officers. In fact, we have four new candidates preparing for the academy as I write this. These new team members will bring fresh ideas and talents to the department and the organization. Through these critical hires, both individuals are leaving a legacy of leadership for a generation. Outside of "work", both Eric and Terry served through the promotion of their profession and giving back to the community by volunteering.

Eric completed two elite law enforcement training programs and served as a volunteer for Rotary and on the board of the directors for HOPE of Ogle County and Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center. Terry has been a regional leader in disaster response preparations. He served on several special task forces and has worked with numerous local organizations to implement emergency response plans and to enhance the levels of preparedness for possible local incidents. He was an organizer of and

advocate for multiple full-scale, multi-agency disaster exercises. If that was not enough, Terry served on the ILEAS Mobile Force, the Illinois Child Death Review Committee and the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. These two individuals have given and continue to give so much to their profession, our community and our region. I will miss our daily conversations about everything and sometimes nothing at all. Gentlemen, wherever your next adventure takes you, I know you

will continue be driven by purpose, attracted to positivity and committed to excellence. Blessings to you and your families. "Occupy your thoughts with purpose and you will be so busy pursuing a meaningful future there will be no time for doubt, chaos and disappointment."-Carlos Wallace "Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing."-Hellen Keller *Jeffrey A. Fiegenschuh, MPA, ICMA-CM, is the city manager of the City of Rochelle.*

Letter: Support for Goodwin for high school board

DEAR Rochelle and surrounding area community members, As a teacher for 24 years and a mom to two school-aged children, I proudly support Patricia Goodwin as a school board member

candidate for Rochelle Township High School D212. Patricia is committed to our children's academic excellence first and foremost. She understands the responsibilities of being a board member and is

committed to serving our community. She is willing to do the work and make sure decisions are made that promote student growth and provide the necessary tools for our teachers to be suc-

cessful in the classroom, all while being fiscally responsible. In addition, she wants to build trust between the board and the parents. Every decision that Patricia will make will

be based on what is best for students. As a teacher, this is who I would want making decisions on the school board. I strongly encourage you to vote for Patricia Goodwin for the RTHS school board. A vote for

Patricia Goodwin is a vote for a candidate that supports academic excellence for all. **Jackie Bingham Ramsey**
Rochelle

Letter: Holiday decorating may come to an end

TO the Rochelle community, I am a 100 percent disabled veteran on a fixed income. I currently live at the corner of 8th Avenue and 9th Street

in Rochelle. Even though I have been forced to move into town, I have continued my late wife's tradition of decorating the property during the holidays for the children.

Everyone seems to enjoy the Halloween decorations and treats judging by the crowds we get. And I am constantly thanked for the

Christmas displays we have set up. However, thanks to the 10 percent of the community who desire to steal and vandalize thou-

sands of dollars of worth of decorations each year, and I can give detailed accounting, I regret that at this point my wife's family tradition may have to come to an end.

Although I have supported this community in many ways, it was shown me only disappointment. **Leon A. Bozek**
Rochelle

How to contact government officials

U.S. Con. Adam Kinzinger
1218 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-3635

IL Sen. Brian Stewart
M104A State House
Springfield, IL 62706
(217) 782-0180

IL Rep. Tom Demmer
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handwritten, and no anonymous letters will be published. Any letters from boards or organizations must include at least one name of an individual. Any criticism of public officials should be limited to issues related strictly to their position or actions made in office, as personal attacks will not be published. Letters involving private disputes between the writer and a business will not be published. Political endorsements will be published,

however letters from candidates endorsing themselves will not be printed. Letters may be dropped at the News-Leader office (211 IL Route 38 East), mailed to the News-Leader (P.O. Box 46, Rochelle, IL 61068) or e-mailed (news@rochellenews-leader.com.) The News-Leader reserves the right to edit or reject any letter to the editor for any reason, and letters chosen for publication do not necessarily reflect the views of this newspaper.

COMMUNITY

St. John's Lutheran Church kumla/ham dinner scheduled for April 1

CRESTON — St. John's Lutheran Church, 124 South St., Creston will host its 26th annual kumla/ham dinner Saturday, April 1. The cost will be \$16. This year the dinner will be a drive thru with two pickup times. The first one will run from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and the second will be from 3-5:30 p.m. We will also be selling Norwegian homemade cookies. These will also be a presale order. All cookies are \$8 per dozen. Choices are kringla, krumkaka, tripolies and almond bars. Advanced presale tickets only can be purchased by calling Dorothy (815) 384-5325, the church (815) 384-3720, or contact any church member. No tickets will be available at the door.

St. Paul Lutheran School releases third quarter honor roll students for 2022-23

ROCHELLE — St. Paul recently released its honor roll information for the third quarter for the 2022-2023 school year. High honor roll: Charlie Frankenberry, Leni Haedt, Sophia Mueller, Reed Rowley, Taylor Thomas, Ty Vongsiri, Annaliese Cox, Elijah Good, Joey Chadwick, Esam Farraj, Mackenzie Johnson, Axel Alsop, Jillian Bruns, Cohen Haedt, DeLaney Heal, Mia Heitkamp, Tyler Johnson, Elijah Schweitzer, Magdalene Good, Taylor Rogers and Warren Schweitzer. Honor roll: Vincent Fulco, Jackson Hartnett, Haley Chapman, Om Shah, Chase Atkinson, Owen Heitkamp, Vinny Tornabene, Mackenzie Bybee, Tyson Carmichael, Andrew Eyster, Brody Bruns and Owen Carmichael.

School and sports physical clinic May 6

ROCHELLE — The State of Illinois requires school physicals for any child entering preschool (for the first time), kindergarten (for the first time), sixth grade, and ninth grade. Sports physicals are required for any child that is participating in any of the after-school sports programs at Rochelle Middle School and Rochelle Township High School. To help parents meet the requirements of the state, a school physical and sports physical clinic will be held on May 6. The clinic will be held at the Ogle County Health Department in Rochelle. Appointments are required and can be scheduled by calling 815-562-2847. The cost of a school physical is \$30 (cash). The cost of a sports physical is \$30 (cash). If a child needs both a school physical and sports physical, the cost is \$40 (cash). Insurance will not be billed for physicals. The Rochelle Elementary District does require students to have their school physicals for preschool, kindergarten and sixth grade before the first day of school. The Ogle County Health Department will be providing state-required immunizations at the time of the clinic. Children entering kindergarten, sixth grade and any child over the age of 16 will require state-re-

quired immunizations to be in school. These immunizations can be given at the time of a child's physical appointment. The health department is able to bill insurance providers for a child's immunizations. If you are interested in your child participating in this clinic, please call 815-562-2847 (English) or 815-562-8251 Ext. 529 (Spanish) to schedule an appointment.



- Feb. 24 - Dorie Golt, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 25 - Larry Hageman, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 26 - From the Heart, \$50
- Feb. 27 - Olivia Ankney, Rochelle, \$25
- Feb. 28 - Zekelman Employee, Rochelle, \$25
- Mar. 1 - Ed Messenger, Oregon, \$25
- Mar. 2 - First State Bank Employee, Rochelle, \$25
- Mar. 3 - Rachel Smith, Stillman Valley, \$25
- Mar. 4 - Tim Cech, Rochelle, \$25
- Mar. 5 - HOPE of Ogle County, \$50
- Mar. 6 - Matthew Browder, Waterman, \$25
- Mar. 7 - Jim & Lori Nalley, Ashton, \$25
- Mar. 8 - Miguel Lopez, Rochelle, \$25
- Mar. 9 - Hailey Thompson, Rochelle, \$25
- Mar. 10 - Veronica Wicks, Rochelle, \$25
- Mar. 11 - Jay Eller, Amboy, \$25
- Mar. 12 - Danielle Bettner, Rochelle, \$50
- Mar. 13 - Rochelle Chamber, \$25
- Mar. 14 - Glen Hughes, Dixon, \$25
- Mar. 15 - Rosemary VanKirk, Rochelle, \$25
- Mar. 16 - Judith Urban, Loves Park, \$25
- 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

Birthdays & Anniversaries

March 22
Wakely Peterman

March 23
Kristi Gonzales

March 24
John Wooten
Lanie McPherson

March 25
Chaz & Kathy Conant (anniversary)

Liz Danekas
Shaun Rosenbach

March 26
LeeAnn Komadina
Kim Dougherty
Bernie & Anna Sexton (anniversary)

March 30
Grace Olson

Call 815-561-2151 to submit names for birthdays and anniversaries



Coffee Break

King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Blunder

5 Sir's partner

9 Witty one

12 Massage target

13 Lamb alias

14 "Evil Woman" gp.

15 Dairy aisle purchase

17 Zodiac feline

18 Indiana city

19 TV's DeGeneres

21 Rejection

22 — buddy

24 Bears' hands

27 Candy-heart word

28 Ashen

31 "— Believer"

32 Epoch

33 Actress Ruby

34 Attire

36 The whole enchilada

37 Barking mammal

38 Dark and gloomy

40 "I see"

41 "Shrek" princess

43 Scents

47 Adj. modifier

48 Canning jar feature

51 King, in Cannes

12

15

18

24

31

34

41

47

51

54

52 Tale teller

53 "Woe —!"

54 World Cup cheer

55 China (Pref.)

56 Legendary loch

DOWN

1 Stare stupidly

2 Twice cuatro

3 "Hmm, I guess so"

4 Criminals

5 Office note

6 "The Greatest"

7 Be sick

8 "This — no sense!"

9 Built to last

10 Downwind

11 Thug

16 Punk-rock subgenre

20 Prune

22 Strapping

23 Track shape

24 Pot-bellied pet

25 Docs' bloc

26 "Dunkirk" or "Platoon," e.g.

27 Faucet problem

29 Meadow

30 Snaky fish

35 Chignon

37 Sure winner

39 "Lady Love" singer Lou

40 Branch

41 Gambling game

42 Pedestal occupant

43 Sleek, in car lingo

44 Inspiration

45 \$ dispensers

46 Females

49 Sundial numeral

50 Author Brown

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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: **C** equals **B**

RZRS GWPMIW CPGW CRYTGT PJ
CMFQRS YFR UPZRFRQ LS QRSTR
JMF, GWYG PSR LT GWR
WYLFLRF UYFFLRF.

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

Answer

Even though both beasts of burden are covered in dense fur, that one is the hairier carrier.

answer

King Crossword

Weekly SUDOKU

ASHTON NEWS



Ashton-Franklin Center FFA takes first place in food science career event

The Ashton-Franklin Center FFA took first place in both the high school and middle school divisions of the Section 2 FFA Food Science Career Development Event held in Rochelle. Students did triangle tests, identified aromas, tested their knowledge and math skills and designed a trail mix. The following students placed in the top 10: Justin Henert - first, Izzy Cater - second, Reese Polk - fourth, Austin Waters - fifth, Elijah Baker - sixth, Logan Mershon - seventh, Brody Ellis - ninth, Chase Hayes Near - 10th, Kate Viall - first middle school and Seth Degand - second middle school.



(COURTESY PHOTO)
AFC's Kate Viall was selected as the District Discovery FFA Star in Agricultural Placement.

AFC's Viall recognized as District FFA Star winner

ASHTON — Kate Viall was selected as the District Discovery FFA Star in Agricultural Placement. Viall is a member of the Ashton-Franklin Center FFA Chapter of the Illinois Association of FFA. Illinois Association recognizes four outstanding FFA members in each of the five FFA Districts in Illinois. Each is honored as the District Star Award for outstanding accomplishments in FFA and agricultural education. The District Star Awards—including the Star Farmer, Star in Agribusiness, Star in Agricultural Placement and Star in Agriscience, recognize FFA members who demonstrate outstanding agricultural skills and competencies through record keeping,

leadership and scholastic achievement. SAEs allow students to learn by doing by either owning and operating an agricultural business, working or serving an internship at an agriculture-based business or conducting an agriculture-based scientific experiment and reporting results. Viall was selected as the District I winner by a committee of agriculture industry representatives and teachers knowledgeable in this work-based area. Viall is the daughter of Adam & Kelly Viall from Ashton. Receiving this honor now makes Kate eligible to compete in the State FFA Awards Selection process in Decatur on Saturday, March 25. Kate was previously

chosen as the Chapter and Section awardee in this area. Kate has been involved in the following other agricultural education and FFA activities: Meats Judging, Food Science, Conduct of Chapter Meetings, Agronomy, Grain Fair, Vo-Ag Fair, Poultry Judging, Dairy Judging, Livestock Judging, Vet Science and Ag Expo. Kelly Viall is the agriculture teacher and FFA Advisor at Ashton-Franklin Center Junior/Senior High School. Kate will receive plaques for her accomplishments. These plaques are made possible by gifts by individuals, businesses, corporations and organizations through the Illinois Foundation FFA.

Ashton UMC to host tractor blessing Saturday, March 25

ASHTON — The Ashton United Methodist Church, located at 906 Richardson Ave., invites all area farmers, gardeners etc., to join them for a tractor blessing at 11 a.m. on March 25. Planting season will soon be upon us and we

are ever thankful for those who farm the land so that we may eat and be healthy. Farmers or anyone that works the field, as well as their families, are invited to drive their tractors of all sizes to the church, the blessing will be held in the parking lot, followed by

a luncheon. If you can't bring the tractor, a photo of the farm can be brought in. Gardeners are encouraged to bring their gloves. To help plan the luncheon, if you plan to attend, please call the Ashton United Methodist Church at 815-453-2328.



(COURTESY PHOTO)
Ashton-Franklin Center FFA students competed at the FFA District 1 Proficiencies March 8 in Geneseo.

AFC FFA competes at FFA District 1 Proficiencies

GENESEO — Ashton-Franklin Center FFA students competed at the FFA District 1 Proficiencies March 8 in Geneseo. Each FFA member interviewed in front of a panel about their Supervised Agricultural Experience record book projects. In order to participate, members

must win their area at the section level to advance. AFC's Kate Viall will be advancing to State Proficiencies as the District I Discovery Star in Placement for her books on hog cooperative, baseball concessions and doing chicken chores for neighbors. Also competing were

Andrea Buhrow - Star Agribusiness & Ag Processing, Lane Koning - Ag Mechanics Design & Fabrication, Zane Murphy - Ag Mechanics Repair & Maintenance, Logan O'Brien - Swine Production Placement and Jack Delhotal - Turf Grass Management.

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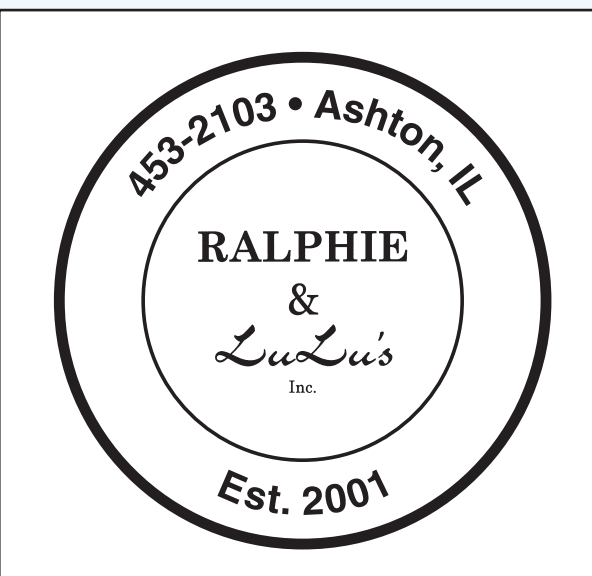
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LOCAL NEWS

HIGBY: Former chief reflects on 27 years with RPD

From page 1

Help for officers on those occasions is one area he's seen progress.

"That's one thing that people probably don't think about with a profession, is just the number of difficult situations that we deal with," Higby said. "Mental health in law enforcement is a huge thing. And I think they've made really good strides over the past years and that's a place where I've seen progress over 27 years. We didn't used to talk about those things and now there's classes, counseling and different things to do with that."

Ahead of his retirement, Higby's top priorities included positioning the department for the future amid an unprecedented time of retirements, promotions and new hires within RPD. Days before his retirement, the department finished work and filed charges stemming from a six month long murder investigation.

While his last few years with the department saw him saying goodbye to several longtime RPD officers that retired, Higby enjoyed seeing recent change.

"I enjoyed seeing so much change and new faces over the past few years," Higby said. "We went so long, 10-11 years or so, with not much change at all because nobody retired and we couldn't promote anybody. And then all of a sudden through a flurry of activity, we have different sergeants, a different K9 handler, a different detective and a different deputy chief. It was a lot



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

Ahead of his retirement, former Rochelle Police Chief Eric Higby's top priorities included positioning the department for the future amid an unprecedented time of retirements, promotions and new hires within RPD. Days before his retirement, the department finished work and filed charges stemming from a six month long murder investigation.

of fun that last little bit here because of all the changes."

Rochelle City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh commended Higby on his career and his leadership of RPD.

"He was here 27 years," Fiegenschuh said. "Especially nowadays, people don't put in 27 years in law enforcement. And he did and he needs to be commended for that. He wasn't our longest-serving chief, but he was chief for 14 years. He was

chief through the great recession, a pandemic and when there was negativity towards law enforcement nationally. There's something to be said for his leadership during all of that."

Higby's immediate plans for his retirement from RPD include traveling and taking some time away from work. He'll soon turn 51 and plans to continue working, but he's not sure in which capacity, law enforcement or otherwise.

"While I love this job, it's not always entirely relaxing," Higby said. "It's taking the phone home and waiting for calls and getting the calls and texts and emails. I'll look for something a little different in terms of responsibility."

Higby called Rochelle "a great place to be a police officer." He said the city has the right amount of activity for officers to be able to give each call the right amount of attention and the time to do proactive police work such

as traffic stops, pursuing drivers under the influence and drugs, warrant arrests and investigating gang activity.

"We're not as busy as Rockford or DeKalb where you're getting inundated with calls and you have to prioritize them and decide which ones to answer first," Higby said. "It's just a great dynamic in Rochelle. I never felt like we were super slow and I didn't feel like we couldn't keep up either."

The constant of RPD's

camaraderie was one thing that didn't change during Higby's 27 years in law enforcement. That's likely what he'll miss most about the job.

"One of the toughest, if not the toughest, things about retirement is going to be just not seeing these people on a day-to-day basis," Higby said. "But we'll keep in contact. There are people who have retired that still talk to me and I imagine that will be the case when I'm retired."

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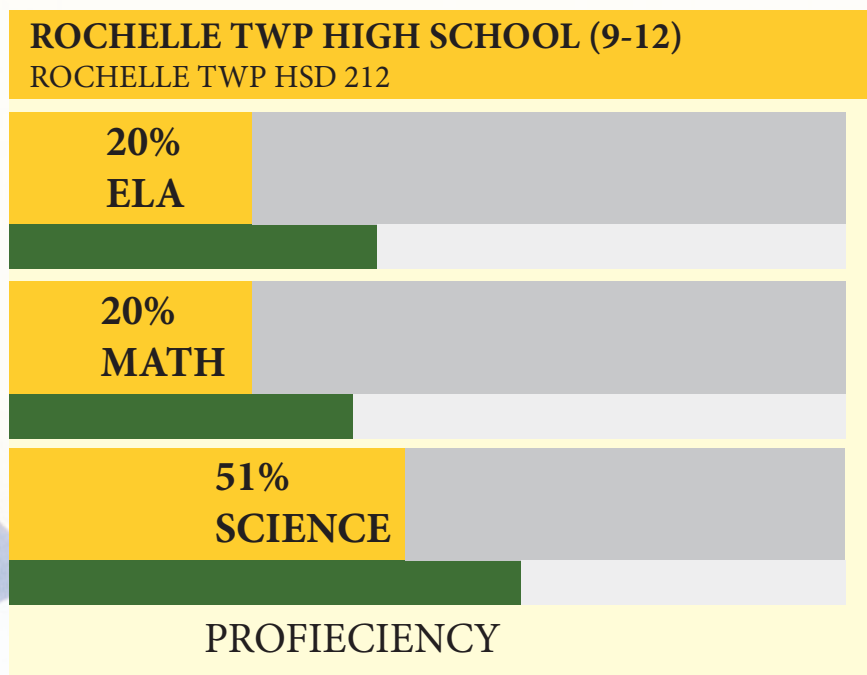
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ROCHELLE TWP HIGH SCHOOL | Academic Progress
from illinoisreportcard.com



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★ Provide the necessary tools for our teachers for success in our classrooms.

★ Partner with parents for their child's educational success.

★ Curriculum transparency.

★ Back our administrators and educators to combat bullying and bad behaviors at RTHS.

★ Foster positive & productive realtionships & rapport between school & home.

★ Help our school provide a quality education where our students will be supported & successful.

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on April 4th, 2023 for
Rochelle High School District 212 Board**

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on April 4th for Rochelle City Council!**

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Goodwin answered the call of Police Officer for over 17 years as a member of the Rochelle and DeKalb Police Departments.

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"Over the past few years my eyes have been opened to many things. I have spoken on numerous occasions that 'we need change.' I am stepping up to be that change. My experiences in life have given me great knowledge and insight into all walks of life. I believe these life experiences have prepared me for this endeavor. I look forward to serving the citizens of Rochelle once again. As always, I will strive to make Rochelle better than I found it for our citizens, children & grandchildren."

Jason Goodwin



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SPORTS



MONMOUTH BOUND

RTHS senior David Gerber will play football at Monmouth College next year.

See page 2 for more details

RTHS Track & Field

Indoor season concludes

Rochelle athletes record top finishes during Warrior Invitational at Westwood

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

STERLING—The Rochelle Hub and Lady Hub track and field teams concluded their indoor seasons at the Warrior Invitational on Saturday afternoon. Several Rochelle student-athletes brought home top finishes in the five-team meet, which featured Erie, Sterling, United Township and Rock Island. Rochelle will start the outdoor season with a coed meet at Plano on April 4.

Hubs

Junior Luis Hernandez set two personal records in the distance events, finishing second in the 3200-meter run with a time of 10:48.73 and fifth in the 1600-meter run with a time of 4:59.22. Senior Ethan Bergeson took fifth in the 60-meter hurdles with a time of 10.32 seconds and sixth in the pole vault with a clearance of 2.90 meters. Sophomore Jack Tilton finished fourth in the high jump and the triple jump with personal-record leaps of 1.77 meters and 11.50 meters.

Junior Landon Mickley and senior Landon DeLille placed fourth and sixth in the shot put with respective

throws of 12.44 meters and 11.93 meters. Junior Abel Huerta finished sixth in the 800-meter run with a time of 2:32.68 and sophomore Chris Hickey took ninth in the 400-meter run with a time of 1:04.17. Freshmen Caleb Dreska and Elijah Mayen placed 10th and 11th.

Rochelle's 3200-meter relay team (Thomas Koziol, Abel Huerta, Declan McGee and Elijah Mayen) took second with a time of 10:15.31 and Rochelle's 1600-meter relay team (Irving Escalante, Jackson Smith, Declan McGee and Wyatt Worthington) finished sixth with a time of 4:17.08. Rochelle's 800-meter relay (Irving Escalante, Reece Harris, Jackson Smith and Miles Hunley) placed fifth with a time of 1:44.25. Harris finished 12th in the 200-meter dash with a time of 26.05 seconds. and Hunley took 14th in the 60-meter dash with a time of 7.86 seconds.

Lady Hubs

Junior Alivia Henkel finished first in the 60-meter hurdles and the 400-meter dash with personal-record times of 10.11 seconds and 1:01.16.

See **TRACK** page 3



(PHOTO BY MARCY DELILLE)

Junior Landon Mickley makes a throw during the shot put competition at the Warrior Invitational on Saturday. Mickley took fourth place for the Hubs in the event.

RTHS Girls Soccer

Tarvestad signs with Kishwaukee College

Senior defender intending to study nursing while playing for Lady Kougars

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE—Senior defender Abby Tarvestad has seen her skills on the soccer field grow over her three seasons with the Rochelle Lady Hub varsity soccer team. Tarvestad will continue her athletic career and her academics at Kishwaukee College, where she intends to study nursing while playing soccer for the Lady Kougars. Tarvestad becomes the latest of a growing number of Rochelle Township High School athletes continuing on with Kishwaukee College.

"I chose Kishwaukee College because it's a quality school that's close to home and it has a good program for the field I want to pursue," Tarvestad said. "I'm looking forward to meeting new teammates and furthering my knowledge and skills. Rochelle has given me the opportunity to really start my career in soccer and I've been able to grow with my team throughout the years."

Tarvestad has played soccer at RTHS for the last three years, with all three seasons coming on the varsity team. The senior helped the Lady Hubs to a 10-10 record as well as their first

victory in an IHSA Regional tournament since 2009. Tarvestad will be one of many seniors returning for the varsity team this spring, where the Lady Hubs look to build on their success from 2022.

"I think I've improved on understanding the technicality of the game and it's helped me become more aware during games and practices," Tarvestad said. "I'm hoping to improve on that going forward and apply that improvement to my skills. I'm hoping this season that I can improve on every aspect that comes with the game and I hope that as a team, we can learn from each other throughout the season. I'm hoping we can all say that we improved by the end of the season."

In addition to three years with the soccer program, Tarvestad spent four years with the Rochelle Lady Hub tennis program, starting two seasons on the varsity team and earning Interstate 8 Academic All-Conference honors during her junior and senior seasons. Tarvestad, who was also named the Most Improved Player Award winner during her junior tennis season, also received Interstate 8 Academic All-Conference recognition during her junior soccer season at RTHS.



(PHOTO BY MARCY DELILLE)

Senior Abby Tarvestad will continue her academics and her soccer career at Kishwaukee College next year. Tarvestad intends to study nursing.



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HUB SPOTLIGHT

Gerber commits to Monmouth College football program

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE — David Gerber was grateful that his friends convinced him to return to the Rochelle Hub football program for his senior season. After spending one year away from the team to focus on basketball, Gerber started at wide receiver and cornerback for the Hubs this fall, helping Rochelle to a 9-3 season as well as a berth in the IHSA 4A Playoff Quarterfinals.

With a renewed passion for the sport, Gerber recently committed to continuing his academics and his football career at Monmouth College next year. Gerber, who intends to study physical education in hopes of pursuing a career as an athletic director, will reunite with senior teammate and close friend Trey Taft, who committed to Monmouth College earlier this year. Taft was one of two senior teammates who helped convince Gerber to return to the gridiron this year.

"They have a really solid education program and I bonded with their coaching staff right away," Gerber said. "I felt really comfortable with them and I know I can trust them. I enjoyed being on campus and talking with the coaches and players. I'm looking forward to playing with one of my best friends, Trey, and I'm looking forward to having fun and trying to win football games."

Gerber received an All-Conference Honorable Mention in the Interstate 8 this season, finishing with seven receptions for 176 yards and two touchdowns while adding 16 tackles on defense. A multi-sport athlete at RTHS, Gerber spent four years with the basketball program in addition to his three years with the football program. The 6-foot-2, 175-pounder will look to make a difference for the Monmouth College offense with his one-on-one pass catching abilities.

"I think Monmouth will be getting a deep-ball playmaker who can take advantage of one-on-one plays and make the most of his opportunities," Gerber said. "Playing football at Rochelle set the standard for me, not only as an athlete but as a man. It's really prepared me for the next level of football and the next level of my life, which includes getting a good education... I've always loved sports and I think being around sports is something I'll enjoy for the rest of my life."

"Playing football at Rochelle set the standard for me, not only as an athlete but as a man. It's really prepared me for the next level of football and the next level of my life, which includes getting a good education... I've always loved sports and I think being around sports is something I'll enjoy for the rest of my life."

David Gerber



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

Senior David Gerber will continue his academics and his football career at Monmouth College next year.

Gerber spent two years with the Rochelle Hub varsity basketball team and one year with the Rochelle Hub varsity football team. After Rochelle's successful football season last fall, where the Hubs went 8-3 and reached the second round of the IHSA 5A Playoffs, Gerber was convinced to return for his senior season. While Gerber said he regretted not playing as a junior, he said he was grateful for the chance to help the team make another postseason run.

"The brotherhood we had was amazing," Gerber said. "We treated each other like brothers and everybody got along with each other. We always stuck up for each other and we all knew that we could trust each other, especially late in games when we needed to get things done."

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SPORTS

TRACK: Rochelle teams race at Sterling

From page 1

Junior Kylie Smith took fourth in the 400-meter dash with a personal-record time of 1:07.76 and Henkel took fourth in the long jump with a distance of 4.32 meters. Freshman Savanna Wilson placed fourth in the 800-meter run with a time of 3:05.61 and sixth in the high jump with a clearance of 1.22 meters.

Junior Kennedy Adamski finished fourth in the triple jump with a distance of 8.76 meters and senior Samantha Sanford took sixth in the shot put with a throw of 8.12 meters. Smith placed fourth in the 60-meter dash with a time of 8.95 seconds, while sophomore Zoe White finished sixth with a time of 8.97 seconds and freshman Ryelee Bogle took eighth

in 9.08 seconds.

Freshmen Kyrie Craig and Carmela Bright placed 10th and 11th in the 200-meter dash with respective times of 31.05 seconds and 31.06 seconds. Freshman Rose Luxton finished ninth in the 1600-meter run with a time of 6:55.58 and Rochelle's 800-meter relay team (Arline Villanueva, Miranda Dubek, Carmela

Bright and Rylee Jackson) took fourth in 2:07.55.

Rochelle's 1600-meter relay team (Kylie Smith, Christina Jones, Zoe White and Mary Chadwick) placed fourth with a time of 4:59.03 and Rochelle's 3200-meter relay team (Rose Luxton, Mary Chadwick, Savanna Wilson and Ailyn Miranda) placed fourth with a time of 13:07.96.



Senior Rylee Jackson sprints to the finish line during the 60-meter dash at the Warrior Invitational on Saturday. (PHOTO BY MARCY DELILLE)

Rochelle Wrestling Club



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Dominic Escatel wrestles during the 2023 Illinois Midget Championships in Bedford Park this past weekend.

Junior Hubs duel at Illinois Midget Championships

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

BEDFORD PARK — The Rochelle Wrestling Club sent two athletes to the 2023 Illinois Midget Championships at the Wintrust Sports Complex over the weekend. Nehe-miah Andronic and Dominic Escatel competed in the three-day tournament that ran from March 17-19.

Escatel competed in the Boys Midget 76 Division and went 1-2 over three bouts. Escatel opened the tournament with a 9-4 decision over Bolingbrook's Easton Breen to advance

into the second round, where Escatel conceded a fall against Yorkville's Robert Martino. Escatel faced off with Chan-nahon's Ryan Stuart in the consolation bracket, falling just short by 6-2 decision.

Andronic went 0-2 over two bouts in the Boys Midget 59 Division. Andronic faced Tribe Wrestling's Maddox Martinez in the first round of the championship bracket, conceding a fall before battling against Demolition Wrestling's Padraig Brady, losing by 9-3 decision.

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SPORTS

RTHS Track & Field

(PHOTOS BY MARCY DELILLE)



Rochelle Hub and Lady Hub athletes conclude indoor season at Warrior Invitational in Sterling

The Rochelle Hub and Lady Hub track and field teams competed at the Warrior Invitational on Saturday to close out the indoor portion of the spring season. Both teams will resume track and field action during the outdoor portion of the season, which begins in early April. Above are several action photos from the five-team meet at Westwood Sports Complex in Sterling.



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LEGAL NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE for Flagg Township
Public notice is hereby given to the legal voters, residents of Flagg Township in Ogle County and the State of Illinois, the Annual Town Meeting of said township will take place on April 11, 2023, being the second Tuesday of said month, at the hour of 6 o'clock p.m. in the boardroom of the Flagg Township office building, 303 W. Highway 38, Rochelle, IL. The Annual Town Meeting will conduct transaction of miscellaneous business of said township, and after a Moderator having been elected, will proceed to hear, and consider reports of officers and decide on such measures as may, in pursuance of law, come before the meeting.

Joanna G. Patrick
Flagg Township Clerk
AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF FLAGG TOWNSHIP
Tuesday, April 11, 2023, Flagg Township Board Room, 6:00 pm
1. Meeting Called to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Nominate Moderator
4. Approve Minutes
5. Report on all funds
6. Motion in order for the Township Board to be given the authority to transfer funds from one budgeted account to another within the same fund without overdraw-ing the account from which transferred.
7. Motion for the Supervisor to be given the power to sue and defend any township suit
8. Other business
9. Set time of the next Annual Meeting
10. Adjourn
No. 0318
(March 22, 2023)

PUBLIC NOTICE
On Monday, April 17, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. a joint meeting of the following school districts: (Amboy, Ashton/Franklin Center, Creston, Eswood, Forrestville Valley, Kings, Meridian, Oregon, Polo, Rochelle Elementary, Rochelle Township High School, and Steward) will take place at the Ogle County Educational Cooperative office, 417 N. Colfax, Byron, Illinois. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss each district's plans for providing special education services to students with disabilities who attend private, or parochial schools or are home-schooled within one of the local public school districts for 2023-2024 school year. If you are a parent of a private, parochial or home-schooled student who has been or may be identified with a disability and you reside within the boundaries of one of the named local public school districts you are urged to attend. To register please call Tammy Moser at the OCEC office 815-234-2722 ext. 1017. If you have further questions pertaining to this meeting, please contact Matt Zilm, Director of the OCEC at 815-234-2722 No. 0319
(March 22, 2023)

PUBLIC NOTICE
Public Notice is hereby given that on March 20, 2023 a certificate was filed in the Ogle County Clerk's Office setting forth the names and post office address of all of the persons owning, conducting and transacting the business known as: Alpha Studios, 409 Lincoln Highway, Rochelle, IL 61069
Dated March 20, 2023
Laura J. Cook, Ogle County Clerk
No. 0321
(March 22, 29 and April 5, 2023)

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For bidding, registration, terms and conditions please log on to bearrows.hibid.com and click on the Leffelman Automotive Auction.
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HELLO SPRING

Tips for an effective spring cleaning process

SPRING is a season of renewal. When the flowers are blooming and the trees are budding and the weather is pleasantly warm, people often feel inspired to make changes around their homes. Work may begin with culling belongings and organizing essentials.

There is debate regarding where the practice of "spring cleaning" originated. Some researchers link it to certain religious groups. It has long been an ancient Jewish custom to thoroughly clean a house in preparation for the springtime feast of Passover.

The house is scoured to remove any yeast bread, or chametz, from the home. Similarly, members of the Greek Orthodox church celebrate "Clean Week," which is a week of cleaning before Lent. In Iranian culture, families spend days cleaning prior to the Persian New Year, which begins on the spring equinox.

Spring cleaning also has some secular roots. For instance, in the 1800s,

Londoners routinely cleared their homes of grime and soot that accumulated over the winter.

Spring cleaning is still a ritual for many today. As people embark on their plans to tidy up, these tips can help them along.

Who hasn't started one project only to be distracted into moving along to another room? This often occurs when people discover something out of place in one space and then move that item where it belongs, only to find a new cleaning task at hand in that space.

Inefficiency can make you give up on spring cleaning prematurely. Agree to address one room/task a day. Keep a basket or box handy to store errant items until you move on to the next room.

Prepare all of the cleaning supplies in advance. Put together a tool kit of sorts with the equipment you need, including mops, brooms, rags, cleansers, and the like. Organization can keep you on course.

Some people clean because they are stressed



or angry, others do so to avoid other tasks. Keep personality in mind when establishing a cleaning schedule.

For example, clean at night if you're a night owl, or wait until you are feeling antsy before embarking on a "calm down

cleaning."

Some tasks need to get done to prepare for the spring and summer season. These may include cleaning the grill and sorting through outdoor furniture and decor.

Spring cleaning may involve readying the pool

for another year of use, or cleaning out rain gutters to prepare for spring storms. Tackle time-dependent tasks first and then move on to others that are less time-sensitive.

Some people like to devote full weekends to spring cleaning, but that

can be overwhelming for others. Breaking down cleaning tasks into 15- to 30-minute intervals each day can make the job more tolerable.

Spring cleaning season has arrived, and certain tips can make the job more efficient and manageable.

Spring activities for families to enjoy together

SPRING is one of the most popular seasons of the year. After several months of chilly temperatures in many regions, spring provides a welcome reprieve from the cold.

Moderate temperatures makes it much more comfortable and inviting to venture outdoors, particularly for families with children who might not adapt to the cold as well as adults. The following are some family-friendly activities that make the most of spring renewal.

If there's a botanical garden nearby, a visit in spring is a great time to soak in the beauty of nature. That's because an abundance of flowers bloom during the spring, meaning a garden will be in peak form. Visitors can

meander through rows of rose bushes or tour the labyrinth of trimmed hedges. Beautiful, flowering cherry trees, with their delicate pink or white petals, also are sights to behold in spring.

Visiting a garden is one thing, creating one at home is another. In addition to planning a vegetable garden to enjoy tasty pickings throughout summer, you can devote some property to flowers that will attract wildlife. Check with a garden center about which flowers and plants attract butterflies and other beneficial insects. Many garden centers sell butterfly and hummingbird mixes to attract wildlife.

Flowers are not the only thing on display come the spring. Many animals, including birds, are born

this time of year. Baby animals are not only adorable, they can be entertaining to watch grow.

Families can spend time viewing the animals that visit their yards or surrounding parks, being careful to keep their distance. Adults may be quite protective of their young, so it's better to watch from the lens of a camera or with

binoculars.

Always resist the urge to help a baby animal who seems like it was abandoned. The parent may be a short distance away gathering food or trying to avoid drawing attention to the young to deter predators.

A bright, warm day is an ideal time to enjoy the open water. Spring is a

season when many marinas reopen and avid boaters put their vessels back into the water. You also can venture into streams or lakes aboard kayaks or canoes, getting exercise and seeing the scenery in the process. Bring a fishing pole along and cast it into the water for a few hours of recreation.

Enhance the garden or

decor around the home by making wind chimes or other percussion items that can create beautiful music when spring breezes blow. Commercially available kits are sold, but wind chimes also can be made from items like bamboo or even strung shells.

These are just a few family-friendly activities to enjoy this spring.



THINK SPRING



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