

Pet waste in downtown area remains an issue

City sells property on Welland Road

By KIP CHEEK
Staff writer

MENDOTA – The Mendota City Council discussed the problem of pet waste incidents, specifically of dog owners not properly picking up and disposing of their animals' waste in the downtown area, is getting out of hand. "We've got to do something," said Boelk.

Mayor David Boelk said the trouble with pet waste incidents, specifically of dog owners not properly picking up and disposing of their animals' waste in the downtown area, is getting out of hand. "We've got to do something," said Boelk.

Police Chief Greg Kellen said enforcement to the city ordinance pertaining to this issue is being done, with downtown security cameras catching the acts on video. "The last two incidents, we were able to identify the persons responsible and they were ticketed," explained Kellen. "The common courtesy is to get people to take care of their animals."

The city's Animals-Pet Waste Ordinance is as follows:

- The purpose of this section is to establish requirements for the proper disposal of pet solid waste in the City of Mendota so as to protect public health, safety and welfare, and to prescribe penalties for failure to comply.
- Requirement for disposal. All pet owners and keepers are required to



Pet waste stations are located throughout the downtown area.

immediately and properly dispose of their pet's solid waste deposited on any property, public or private, not owned or possessed by that person.

- Exemptions. Any owner or keeper who requires the use of a disability assistance animal shall be exempt from the provisions of this section while such animal is being used for that purpose.
- Violations and penalties. Any person(s) who is found to have violated the provisions of this section shall be subject to a fine of no less than \$25 and no more than \$75.

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MHS Interact Club packs meals for children

Food will find homes in the Republic of El Salvador in Central America

By BRANDON LaCHANCE
Staff writer

MENDOTA – There will be a touch of Mendota in the Republic of El Salvador soon, if not already.

The Mendota High School Interact Club brought 38 students to Feed My Starving Children in Aurora on Jan. 25 to help feed the impoverished republic.

"We drove a bus to Aurora and went to Feed My Starving Children. It's a non-profit, Christian organization that packs meals for malnourished children all over the world," said Interact Club's staff supervisor Alisa Stewart said. "One of the super cool things about our program and the support that we have is this particular trip was funded by donations from last year's tree planting project."

"There were funds for us to rent a bus to take the club members to Aurora to potentially or technically save lives."

Abigail Kunz, an MHS senior, is given the credit from Stewart for coming up with the food packing trip idea and the five-student member Interact Club Executive Board voted approval to make it official.

Kunz got the idea from St. John's Lutheran Church in Mendota, which had a food packing drive of its own.

"We packed 71 cases, which equates to over 15,000 meals, which has the potential to feed 42 children the nutrition they need for a year," said Kunz, who has been in Interact for the last two years along with senior



The Mendota High School Interact Club traveled to Aurora's non-profit organization, Feed My Starving Children, on Jan. 25. The 38 Interact members packed meals of rice and veggie packets and soy sauce, which will find homes in the Republic of El Salvador in Central America. (Photos contributed)

Makayla Lara and Isabelle Escatel. "Technically, we did all of that in an hour and a half."

"I love this. It's great to help people and potentially save lives. I will 100 percent continue to do this kind of thing and give back in any area I can. One of the younger girls came up to me and said, 'The guy said that 'God brought us all together to make a difference' and I just got chills. I'm so happy that we got to do this. This is one of my favorite things I've done in high school.' I thought it was super cute."

The meals the Interact Club packed consisted of rice and veggie packets and soy sauce. The recipients add water, bake, and the meal will serve six people.

Senior Garret Zinke soaked in the experience as he looked around and realized what he and his club were actually doing.

"I love the idea of helping people. I think it's cool to do something that most people often don't do in their lives," said Zinke, who recently joined Interact to become the 68th member of the MHS club. "We made a difference yesterday. It was amazing to have as many people as we did, and we came together to do something good. It shows the good in human nature."

Lara remembered how much fun she had planting trees, which was to help offset the usage of paper at MHS, and she was thrilled to be part of another good cause.

"It made me feel really great being able to help a lot of really young children. There shouldn't be any child in the world going hungry and starving," Lara said. "When we were packing the meals, I told myself, 'Yes, we are doing something really great for children.' When I found out it was El

Salvador, right now, it just made it that much greater of an experience.

"They don't have the money or the food to feed themselves. It makes me happy that we were able to help them."

Escatel, who also volunteers at Mendota Area Senior Services, understands how important events such as packing meals and singing Christmas songs can be to people.

And the best part is, it doesn't take much time.

Just kindness, consideration, and care.

"It only takes us a few hours to do the events that we've done. Christmas caroling only took an hour out of our day," Escatel said. "What we're doing can leave such a big impact on people. We made them happy and they had a good day."

"Simple things can make a big change."

Rural healthcare is changing across the country: How are local hospitals adapting?

By BRANDON LaCHANCE
Staff writer

MENDOTA – Let's face it, health care has changed across the country in the last few years.

COVID-19 is the main culprit.

Throw in staff shortages, cost increases, and new laws or concepts such as Rural Hospital Emergency Designation, and everything is different than what we once knew the healthcare system to be.

Fortunately, for the OSF Saint Paul Medical Center in Mendota and the Katherine Shaw Bethea Hospital (KSB) in Dixon, the changes haven't left permanent financial struggle or thoughts of closing.

"We're doing really good in Mendota as a critical access hospital. We've been able to maintain and optimize what we provide," said Dawn Trompeter, president of OSF Mendota and OSF Saint



Elizabeth Medical Center in Ottawa. "I'm very familiar with Rural Hospital Emergency Designation and what that entails. No, we will not be doing that at Saint Paul."

"We are very stable financially. Saint Paul is part of our integrated delivery system across OSF. It's very valuable, as we look at how we provide the continuum of care across all of our services, to have our critical access hospitals, such as Mendota, in place as is."

"We're not looking at Rural Hospital Emergency Designation at all."

Rural Emergency Hospital Designation, which went into effect on Jan. 1, was created by federal officials. Facilities who are under

"We're doing really good in Mendota as a critical access hospital. We've been able to maintain and optimize what we provide."

–Dawn Trompeter, president, OSF Mendota & Ottawa

the designation must provide 24/7 emergency medical services and observation care and have the option to provide additional outpatient medical services. However, inpatient services are not available at a Rural Hospital Emergency Designation.

"Rural Hospital Emergency Designation is not even on the radar because of the fact that our inpatient vol-

See Hospital, Page A5



Mendota native, Linda Troyan, is a first-time stage manager for "Steel Magnolias" being performed at Stage 212 on Feb. 10-12. (Reporter photos by Brandon LaChance)

Troyan has a passion for theatre

By BRANDON LaCHANCE
Staff writer

LaSALLE – Growing up in Mendota, Linda Troyan always had a passion for theatre.

When she was younger, the 1981 Mendota High School graduate volunteered for the Mendota Community Theatre and enjoyed being an usher or selling concessions.

Now, she's taking an even bigger role as she is a first-time stage manager for Stage 212's performance of

"Steel Magnolias." The first three shows were held Feb. 3-5 at Stage 212, located at 700 First St. in LaSalle, and three more shows are set for Feb. 10-12.

"I have always had an interest in theatre. I volunteered for the Mendota Community Theater and when I was in college, I took a couple of acting classes,"



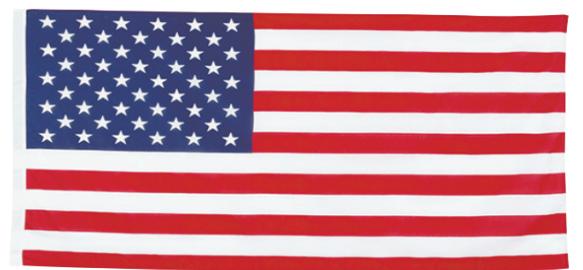
Troyan

said Troyan, who has lived in McNabb for the last 10 years and teaches at Allen Grade School in LaMoille. "My husband (Kenneth) and I lived in Peoria for many years and I wanted to be involved in theatre down there, but life got in the way and I didn't get involved in Peoria. "Recently, I was interested in Stage 212 because they had a star meeting, which

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LOCAL AND AREA

Watch out!

Nerf Battle invades Graves-Hume Public Library



library's supply for the game Capture the Block, where three teams (red, blue, and orange) waged war for four rounds lasting 45 minutes throughout the entire library.

Each team included a medic to rescue a teammate who had been wounded by a Nerf dart.

"It was epic," said Carolyn Ohlendorf, Youth Services Department Manager. "It's such a fun program for the kids. I love that we can utilize the library in a different way."

Next month, the library will host a Tween Iron Chef competition where each group of chefs will be given a bag of ingredients to create a delicious menu item.

"Our goal is to make the library fun. I want these kids to see that the library is a place to make friends and a safe environment to hang out," said Emily Kofoid, the director of the library. "I appreciate Carolyn for thinking outside of the box for programming ideas."

By BRANDON LaCHANCE

Staff writer

MENDOTA—Books, bookshelves, computers, windows, and human beings were not safe at the Graves-Hume Public Library on Jan. 30 as Nerf darts, and other ammunition, soared through the library and bounced off everything inside.

The third annual Tweens Nerf Battle featured 20 tweens (5th through 8th grade) bringing their own gear or using the



Mendota Fire Department's 150th Annual Card Party & Dance

The cards and dice returned to the table for the Mendota Police Department's 150th Annual Card Party & Dance on Saturday, Feb. 4 at the Mendota Moose Lodge after the event didn't take place for two years because of COVID-19. Fun was had by all as the Card Party started at 1 p.m. featuring Euchre, "500", and Pinochle. The Texas Hold'Em Deep Stack Tournament featured 40 players, who placed a \$100 ante to sit at one of the four tables. The Moose offered dinner options from 5-7 p.m., Vegas Night kicked off at 8 p.m. featuring card tables and a dice game, and Free Beer & Chicken played music from 8 p.m.-midnight. (Reporter photos by Brandon LaChance)

State Senator Stoller visits new territory in 37th District

By BRANDON LaCHANCE

Staff writer

MENDOTA – During his first term as the Illinois State Senator for the 37th District, Win Stoller got used to his designated territory.

When he was elected for a second term in November, this geography changed quite considerably as 60 percent of the current map is different than the previous.

"The state constitution requires that a new legislative map is drawn every 10 years. Unfortunately, in Illinois, we don't have a fair map process," said Stoller, a Republican who lives in Germantown Hills.

"The process now is that the majority party, in this case the Democrats, draw the map. They draw the map to pollical advantage. They jerrymander the maps into the weird shapes that we see. It makes it a little



confusing.

"The new 37th District goes further north than it did previously. It includes La Salle County, communities such as Mendota, Earlville, and Troy Grove. All of Lee County is on the 37th District map."

Stoller, who stopped by the Mendota Reporter on Jan. 31 for a meet and greet with his chief of staff, Dixie Zietlow,

has been a business owner for 25 years as he owns an office furniture dealership with 40 employees.

The senator has an accounting degree, a CPA, and an MBA from the University of Illinois.

With a business education and background, politics weren't really on his map.

"I really had no plans to get into politics. I was involved in the community. I've been involved for over 20 years in Rotary, more than 20 years on the Salvation Army Advisory Board in the Peoria area, and I'm also involved in the chamber of commerce.

"I told myself I needed to ask two people. I asked God and I asked my wife. Opportunities came my way to show me politics was where I was supposed to be, and my wife supported me."

Although it might not have

seemed like a perfect fit at first, the accounting and business background are becoming useful in his career as a politician.

"The biggest thing the state can do and should be doing is controlling its spending. Every dollar that we spend is a dollar that has been taxed," Stoller said. "We don't get any revenue outside of taxes and some fees. If we can control our spending, like other states have done including Iowa who recently lowered its tax rate and went to a lower flat tax than Illinois, that's the best thing we can do to help people who are struggling with high taxes and inflation."

He added, Wisconsin is in the process of doing the same thing as Iowa.

Stoller is currently working on 13 bills.

One of them affects him directly.

"The things we should be

talking about that no one is talking about is our pension problem. We have the largest pension debt of any state," Stoller said. "We have the highest property taxes. I'm introducing a bill during this General Assembly that will not allow legislatures to take a pension. Right now, we're offered a pension. I declined the pension because I think that's one of the biggest problems in our state. It's hard to reform a broken system if you have a financial stake in it. My bill would disallow any future legislature from being offered or having a state pension."

"I have bills concerning small hospitals. I have a bill that will take away gambling winnings. If you're out gambling and winning money, but you owe state debts, it garnishes a portion of your winnings to pay off money that you owe the

state. I think it makes a lot of sense if you're out gambling, but not paying your state debts."

Whether those bills will be passed or not is yet to be seen.

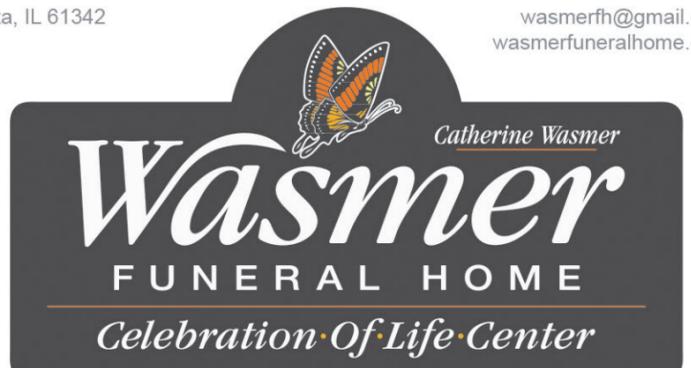
Whether they are or not, Stoller intends to keep his priorities the same.

"One of my goals, this session and every session, is to continue to be a voice for restrained government; to live within our means, to not place unnecessary burdens, restrictions, and mandates on people," Stoller said. "I want to be a voice for job growth and creating more opportunities."

"Unfortunately, more people are leaving our state than are coming to it. And that's all about opportunities. As a business owner myself, I want to make sure our incentive in this state are for job growth and not for export opportunities."

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LOCAL AND AREA

Blackstone School Report

Stacy Kelly, Principal

The second trimester midterm was on Feb 1. Students recently brought home midterm progress reports to update parents on academic progress thus far in the trimester. In addition, students brought home winter benchmarking assessment results. This benchmarking data will help us identify specific student needs. If parents have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your child's teacher.

Thank you to all of our families that turned in Nothing Bundt Cake orders for our final fundraiser of the year. The pick-up date will be Wednesday, Feb. 15. We will send out more detailed information very soon. We greatly appreciate the support!

The students nominated for the principal award this past week included Adriana Roberts, Elizabeth

Feurer, Cameron Brown, Samantha Guerrero, Damien Arteaga, Jonah Randolph, Natalia Chavez and Jack Humphries. The winners were Melanie Montes, Anthony Jefferson, Abrahm Garcia and Asirel McGee. Congratulations to all of you!

The kindergarten students started a new educational program this past week called Organ Wise Guys. The Organ Wise Guys pro-

gram is a fun, interactive way to engage students in nutritional education and physical activity. The program teaches students about healthy eating using characters based on human organs. This program is brought into our school from the University of Illinois Extension Office. Our students will receive these lessons once a week for the next six weeks. It's a great educational opportunity for our students.

The KIND KIDS of the month for January were recently announced. The students honored this past month included Lainey Ramer, Elizabeth Feuer, Raymon Roulston, Melanie Montes, Callan Jordan, Isaac Orozco, Salem Showen, Kennedy Piller, Ximena Salinas, Addilyn Hendricks, Jesus Palacios and Hayden Wheeler. We're so proud of all of the kind kids at Blackstone.

Warmer January temps nearly broke records

CHAMPAIGN – Illinois temperatures were above normal in January, preliminarily ranking the month as the sixth warmest on record, according to Illinois State Climatologist Trent Ford at the University of Illinois' Illinois State Water Survey.

The statewide average January temperature was 33.8 degrees, 7.1 degrees above the 1991–2020 average. The month's average temperatures ranged from the mid-20s in northwest Illinois to the low 40s in southern Illinois, between 5 and 12 degrees above normal.

Preliminary records showed that last month was the fifth warmest January on record in Peoria and Carbondale, the sixth warmest in Chicago, and the seventh warmest in Moline, Springfield, and St. Louis. The nighttime low January temperatures were particularly unusual. The average nighttime low temperature in Peoria in January was the third highest on record.

January brought wetter weather to most of the state.

January's total precipitation ranged from around 2 inches in west-central Illinois to over 7 inches in far southern Illinois. Most parts of northern and southern Illinois were between 0.5 and 2 inches wetter than normal, while much of central Illinois was near to 0.5 inches drier than normal last month.

The milder January temperatures kept heavy snow at bay for most of the month. January snowfall totals ranged from around 3 inches in southern and south-central Illinois to just under 12 inches in northeast Illinois. Only southern and parts of northeast Illinois had near to above normal snowfall, while the rest of the state had 1 to 6 inches below normal snowfall for the month.

The general lack of sizeable January snowfall added to November and December snow deficits. Season-to-date snowfall remains above normal in southern Illinois, but 3 to 13 inches below normal in central and northern Illinois.

Overall, the statewide average total January precipitation was 2.72 inches,

0.41 inches above the 1991–2020 average.

Outlooks

February marks the last month of winter, and likely the last chance for significant snowfall, especially in central and southern Illinois. Climate Prediction Center outlooks for February lean to warmer and wetter than normal conditions, as the atmosphere hangs on to the signal of a quickly weakening La Niña. Odds of wetter than normal conditions are particularly high in far southern Illinois, a region that experienced a very wet February last year.

Meanwhile, outlooks for the three-month period between February and April are also leaning to likely wetter than normal statewide, but with equal chances of above or below normal temperatures. The consistent signal of wetter than normal conditions for the end of winter and start of spring would continue making up for precipitation deficits from last fall. It also means we'll need to keep our eye on the potential for excessive wetness and flooding this spring.



Lincoln R.E.A.C.H. Award

Lincoln School has named its January R.E.A.C.H. Award recipients. Front row, left to right, are Kenyen Scott, Logan Jones, Madilyn Hayward, Gage Cordella, Ariana Arteaga and Gulianna Salinas. Middle row, Harrison Coss, Lyla Pecher, Julien Woods, Ariel Pavnica, Daniella Arteaga and Kayleane Barrett-Galloway. Back row, Kamiah Raya, Elijah Godina, Paul Perez, Collin Kleckner and Aiden Skaggs. (Photo contributed)

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OBITUARIES/LOCAL NEWS

Gerald L. Walter Sr.

MENDOTA – Gerald L. Walter Sr., 93, of Mendota, passed away at his home on Feb. 1, 2023.

There will be no public services per Jerry's request, and burial will be private. Cremation rites have been accorded. Wasmer Funeral Home is privileged to assist the family.

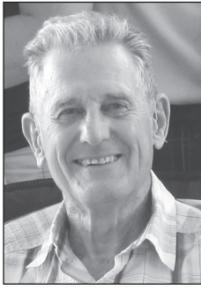
Jerry was born July 7, 1929 in Mendota to Lawrence J. and Gertrude F. (Hoffman) Walter. He graduated Mendota High School in 1947. Jerry proudly served in the United States Air Force during the Korean War. He married Thais Ward on Aug. 23, 1952 at Zion United Methodist Church in Mendota.

Jerry is survived by four daughters, Darice Childs of Mendota, Karen (Ken) Tillman of Earlville, Susan (Jim) Krenz of Mendota and Nancy (Karl) Hulin of Belle Fourche, S.D.; son, Gerald Jr. (Teri Schroetlin) Walter of Ottawa; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; and a sister, Margo Hayman of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

He was preceded in death by his wife Thais on Aug. 19, 2022, his parents, and four brothers, Neil Walter, Richard Walter, Roland Walter and Allen Walter.

After spending nine years in Santa Monica, Calif., and several years in Carol Stream, Jerry returned to Mendota to partner with his brother Rollie at Walter Brothers Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling, where he remained until his retirement in 1994. Jerry served the communities he lived in many capacities. While living in Carol Stream he was the Park District Commissioner for five years and in recognition of his contributions a park was named for him. While in Mendota he belonged to Mendota V.F.W. Post #4079, Mendota Lions Club, was a 50-year member of the Mendota Elks Lodge #1212, was a three-year Past Commander of American Legion Post #540, and regularly volunteered with the Mendota Area Christian Food Pantry.

Memorials may be directed to American Legion Post #540, Nightengale's Thrift Shop or the Mendota Area Christian Food Pantry. Condolences may be left at wasmerfuneralhome.com.



Illinois' COVID-19 disaster proclamation to end in May

State emergency orders will end in tandem with national public health emergency

By HANNAH MEISEL
Capitol news Illinois

SPRINGFIELD—Exactly 38 months after the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, Illinois will no longer be under a disaster proclamation as of May 11, Gov. JB Pritzker announced.

That's the same day President Joe Biden will end the national public health emergency, which just passed the three-year mark recently.

Pritzker had declared a public health emergency two days before the WHO's pandemic determination and has renewed his disaster proclamation every 30 days since then.

The repeated proclamations gave the governor authority for COVID-related actions such as closing schools, issuing stay-at-home orders and mandating masks and vaccines. But they were a source of consternation for Pritzker's political opponents.

The governor had slowly rolled back his COVID-19 mandates over the past year, including an action in October when he reversed the requirement for vaccines, testing and masks in health care settings.

But Illinois is still one of seven states with some sort of COVID-related

emergency proclamation on its books.

These disaster declarations have allowed those states – including Republican-run Texas – to continue benefiting from COVID-era bumps in federal reimbursements for programs like Medicaid, additional benefits for those on food stamps and the ability to quickly deploy emergency workers to respond to areas in need, like hospitals with severely short staffing.

"Our state's disaster proclamation and executive orders enabled us to use every resource at our disposal from building up testing capacity and expanding our health care workforce to supporting our vaccine rollout and mutual aid efforts," Pritzker said in a statement.

Pritzker said 1.4 million children in Illinois received nutrition support under the additional Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits. He also pointed to the expansion of telehealth during the pandemic under his disaster proclamation, which has largely been adapted into state law after it proved popular with doctors and patients alike.

"Let me be clear: COVID-19 has not disappeared," Pritzker said in the statement. "It is still a real and present

danger to people with compromised immune systems—and I urge all Illinoisans to get vaccinated or get their booster shots if they have not done so already."

Opponents to Pritzker's repeated issuance of disaster proclamations insisted the governor was limited to the 30 days laid out in state law, but legal challenges to that effect ultimately failed after months of litigation.

The governor's disaster proclamation also allowed for the activation of the State Emergency Operations Center, which brokered cooperation between the leaders of different state agencies in response to COVID-19.

In a message to Congress, Biden wrote that waiting until May to end the national public health emergency will avert "wide-ranging chaos and uncertainty throughout the health care system" than if it faced the "abrupt end" sought by the Republican-controlled House.

(Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service covering state government. It is distributed to more than 400 newspapers statewide, as well as hundreds of radio and TV stations. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.)

OSF HealthCare Foundation offers loan assistance program

OTTAWA – OSF HealthCare Foundation offers a loan assistance program to help support the educational journeys of those pursuing careers in the healthcare field, offering up to \$5,000 annually to its recipients.

The program is open to individuals who have been accepted into a medical field of study, including graduating high school seniors planning to attend a college of higher education or current college students enrolled in an accredited college or university whose primary residence is in LaSalle County or a surrounding community in the I-80 service area. Employees of OSF HealthCare in the I-80 service area seeking a degree in a patient care health

field may also apply.

"In exchange for tuition assistance, award recipients will be asked to invest their skills into the community by returning to work within the hospital or one of our local clinics," stated Cherie Reynolds, director of development for OSF HealthCare Foundation. "By directing our resources for educational assistance more strategically, we help to ensure that caregivers are available in the future."

The loan application is available at osfhealthcare.org/saint-elizabeth/giving/educational-assistance/ or contact OSF Saint Elizabeth Human Resources department at (815) 431-5318. The application deadline is June 15, 2023.

IRS reminds taxpayers: Choose a tax professional carefully

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Internal Revenue Service reminds taxpayers to choose a tax return preparer with care. Even though most tax return preparers provide honest, quality service, some may cause harm through fraud, identity theft and other scams.

When hiring an individual or firm to prepare a tax return, filers need to understand who they're choosing and what important questions to ask.

A taxpayer's needs will determine which kind of preparer is best for them. Whether taxpayers regularly use a tax professional to help them file a tax return or have decided to work with one for the first time, choosing a tax professional carefully is important. Taxpayers are ultimately responsible for all the information on their income tax return, regardless of who prepares the return.

When choosing a tax professional, the IRS urges taxpayers to visit IRS.gov. The Choosing a Tax Professional page on IRS.gov has information about tax return preparer credentials and qualifications. The IRS Directory of Federal Tax Return Preparers with Credentials and Select Qualifications can help identify

many preparers by type of credential or qualification.

Warning signs

By law, anyone who is paid to prepare or assists in preparing federal tax returns must have a valid Preparer Tax Identification Number. Paid preparers must sign and include their PTIN on any tax return they prepare.

Not signing a return is a red flag that the paid preparer may be looking to make a quick profit by promising a big refund or charging fees based on the size of the refund. Taxpayers should avoid these unethical "ghost" tax return preparers.

A ghost preparer is someone who doesn't sign tax returns they prepare. Unscrupulous ghost preparers often print the return and have the taxpayer sign and mail it to the IRS. For electronically filed returns, a ghost preparer will prepare the tax return but refuse to digitally sign it as the paid preparer.

Tips for selecting a tax return preparer

Here are a few tips to consider when choosing a tax return preparer:

- Look for a preparer who's available year-round. If questions come up about a tax return, taxpayers may need to contact the preparer after the filing

season is over.

- Review the preparer's history. Check the Better Business Bureau website for information about the preparer. Look for disciplinary actions and the license status for credentialed preparers. For CPAs, check the State Board of Accountancy's website, and for attorneys check with the State Bar Association. For enrolled agents go to IRS.gov and search for "verify enrolled agent status" or check the IRS Directory of Federal Tax Return Preparers.

- Ask about service fees. Taxpayers should avoid tax return preparers who base their fees on a percentage of the refund or who offer to deposit all or part of the refund into their own financial accounts. Bewary of tax return preparers who claim they can get larger refunds than their competitors.

- Ensure their preparer offers IRS e-file. The IRS issues most refunds in fewer than 21 days for taxpayers who file electronically and choose direct deposit.

- Provide records and receipts. Good preparers ask to see these documents. They'll also ask questions to determine the client's total income, deductions, tax credits and other items. Do not hire a preparer who

e-files a tax return using a pay stub instead of a Form W-2. This is against IRS e-file rules.

- Understand the preparer's credentials and qualifications. Attorneys, CPAs and enrolled agents can represent any client before the IRS in any situation. Annual Filing Season Program participants may represent taxpayers in limited situations if they prepared and signed the tax return.

- Never sign a blank or incomplete return. Taxpayers are responsible for filing a complete and correct tax return.

- Review the tax return before signing it. Be sure to ask questions if something is not clear or appears inaccurate. Any refund should go directly to the taxpayer – not into the preparer's bank account. Review the routing and bank account number on the completed return and make sure it's accurate.

Taxpayers can report preparer misconduct to the IRS using Form 14157, Complaint: Tax Return Preparer. If a taxpayer suspects a tax return preparer filed or changed their tax return without their consent, they should file Form 14157-A, Tax Return Preparer Fraud or Misconduct Affidavit.

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LOCAL AND AREA

Pet

Continued from Page A1

In addition to the ordinance, the city has taken steps to help deal with this issue by installing signs and bags on light poles in the downtown area asking dog owners to clean up their pet waste. However, there have been documented incidents of pet waste on the sidewalk within a few feet of the waste disposal bags.

ALDERMANIC REPORTS

Alderman Leo Hochstatter presented two ordinances dealing with the sale of city property in TIF zones, which were approved by the council. The property is at 2100 Welland Road and 2000 Welland Road and each are approximately two acres.

Also during Hochstatter's report, the council approved a recommendation from the Revolving Loan Committee to loan \$45,000 to Craig Truckenbrod for a new motorcycle repair business, Cycle Therapy, located at 1213 Meriden St., the former Cross Body Shop building. The loan is for 15 years at 5 percent interest.

OTHER ITEMS

Fire Chief Dennis Rutishauser informed the council that the department has received two grants through LaSalle County. One is in the amount of \$110,000 for three powerload systems and one power cot for the ambulance, and the other is for approximately \$20,000 for a LUCAS device chest compression system.

The next regular meeting of the Mendota City Council will be Tuesday, Feb. 21 at 5:30 p.m.

Troyan

Continued from Page A1

they call their volunteers stars. I went to the meeting, filled out an application of what I would like to do, and one of the things that I said I would like to do is work backstage."

When the Stage 212 staff looked at her application, Troyan was asked if she would like to be a stage manager.

She had never done it before, but when the director, Scott Smigel, officially offered her the position, Troyan said "Sure" and accepted the new challenge.

"One of the main things I do is assist the director, Joey Santos. I make sure that I queue the lights and the sound," Troyan said. "I make sure myself and the crew have the correct props are on and off of the stage. We make sure that the actresses are where they are supposed to be at the right time.

"It's almost anything. Anything that pops up or happens with the show, it's my job to take care of it."

Troyan's first time as a first-time stage manager was in the record books when "Steel Magnolias" hit the stage Feb. 3-5.

She was on the walkie-talkie. She was on stage picking up and setting props. She was discussing scenes and movements with actresses. She was managing the stage.

"I love it. The people are great. The crew is great. The cast is awesome," said Troyan, who has seen the movie "Steel Magnolias" a couple of times. "Everybody has been really good to me. Being a first-time stage manager, they've been really helpful. I'm really enjoying it.

"Steel Magnolias is an awesome movie and play. I can relate to the ladies. They're a group of friends, they have a good time, and they lean on each other and rely on each other."

When asked if she would be a stage manager again, it didn't take long for Troyan to answer.

"Oh yes. My intent is to continue to be involved as much as possible."

Hospital

Continued from Page A1

ume is what we need in order to sustain our business," said Kevin Marx, who is the director of business development and the hospital spokesman at KSB. "It would really have to change dramatically before we would want to consider discontinuation of the emergency business or the inpatient business.

"To some degree, rural hospitals are not unlike hospitals across the country, particularly community hospitals that were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which essentially reduced our volume of patients early on. One of the key factors, in terms of now, is how quickly has the patient base recovered.

"I think that most hospitals share the experience that we're having. We're probably back around 95 percent of our patient base. We're not fully back to the same patient numbers as before the pandemic. In rural settings, it's more of a significant issue perhaps than urban hospitals because you have similar costs in terms of facilities, equipment, staff, and you need to have a critical mass of patients in order to spread that cost over."

During a recent Telemedicine Program webinar, chief executive officer of the National Rural Health Association, Alan Morgan, gave numbers and comments about the state of rural health. Morgan stated, since 2005, 180 rural hospitals have closed across the U.S.

The Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform estimated more than 600 rural hospitals (30 percent of all rural hospitals in the country) are at risk of permanently closing their doors.

St. Margaret's Health in Peru (formerly Illinois Valley Community Hospital) terminated its emergency room physician coverage and all health services.

According to a press release, the service was terminated because the current provider of physicians terminated their contract effective at 7 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 28 and St. Margaret's could not find, nor financially support, a new ER provider.

It was also mentioned there wasn't enough staff to operate St. Margaret's in Spring Valley and Peru.

"Closings are extremely unfortunate, and they vary by location. Illinois Valley and Spring Valley are a different scenario when you have two hospitals five miles apart," Marx said. "It doesn't scare us at KSB, but it catches your attention, in terms of, making sure that you're making those adjustments that are necessary in order to meet the new way that patients are looking for care. We're a good 25 miles, or more than that, to the next hospital from us with the exception of Sterling, but they have their own population base.

"We're looking at it to see what we need to do to adjust or to try and compensate for the post-pandemic changes, but still fulfill our mission of providing health services to Lee County and southern Ogle County. To that end, the best solution is to make sure that we're being responsive to our local community's needs and encouraging the folks who've relied on us in the past to continue to choose us going forward."

Saint Paul hasn't had any alarms of closing or significant changes.

Trompeter added Mendota has partnered with St. Margaret's before and is helping where it can.

"We have seen some increase in clients with the closing, but even prior to the closing, we've always worked together with St. Margaret's Health, and previously when it was IVCH," Trompeter said. "During COVID, if there was a shortage of beds or if they

didn't have staffing, we worked with them and were able to help them. The other things that we may see, that we've already prepared for, is an increase of emergency department or prompt care visits with St. Margaret's closing. We're already ready to accommodate that.

"We are very transparent. We have metrics that we share with our leaders and mission partners on a monthly basis, if not more in weekly huddles. We always update the Community Council with where we are at and what we're doing.

"No, I haven't seen anyone worried about us closing. No one is worried in our community, from us, or from any of our mission partners or Community Council members. We have to be transparent with that because we wouldn't want anyone shocked. We have to work together and collaborate with everyone involved."

In response to St. Margaret's closing its Peru location, State Representative Brad Fritts (R-Dixon) released this statement about the closing and the state of rural health care.

"The news of St. Margaret's Hospital closing took me and many others by surprise. It is my understanding that the state has been a more than fair partner in the process to keep this rural facility open. Therefore, this sudden closure is very disappointing.

"I strongly urge the administration at St. Margaret's to re-evaluate their decision to close this facility, leaving many out of a job and many more without care. The impacts of this closure, especially of the obstetric facilities, will negatively impact women and growing families from numerous communities in the area.

"Nowhere, and especially not in Illinois, should women have to drive over an hour to ensure they can safely give birth in a hospital."

OSF Saint Paul Medical Center honored for excellence in quality care

MENDOTA – The Illinois Critical Care Access Hospital Network (ICAHN) recently recognized OSF HealthCare Saint Paul Medical Center, Mendota, for its ongoing commitment to exceptional quality of care, during a ceremony as part of ICAHN's annual conference.

As part of the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Program (MBQIP), OSF HealthCare Saint Paul Medical Center and other critical access hospitals were asked to voluntarily participate in four defined domains of quality outcomes. These four domains include: Patient Safety/Inpatient; Patient Engagement; Care Transitions; and Outpatient Measures.

"Often, in rural hospitals, having a devoted staff member to abstract and submit this data can be both time-consuming and burdensome," said Laura Fischer, ICAHN Flex Grant Project Manager. "This hospital realizes how important quality of care and an engaged staff is for its patients. From its top leadership on throughout the facility, each strives for continued quality on a daily basis, and that is what we are celebrating today."

OSF HealthCare Saint Paul Medical Center was recognized for being in the top 10% of all critical access hospitals in the country for outpatient and care transitions quality measures.

"We are very proud of our team for achieving

this level of excellence in health quality," said Dawn Trompeter, president of OSF HealthCare Saint Paul Medical Center. "This is truly a team effort that recognizes our dedication to delivering a healthcare experience of which our patients and staff can be proud."

The Medicare Beneficiary Quality Improvement Program began in 2011 as a way for critical access hospitals to demonstrate the quality of care that they provide. This program has continued to evolve, adding new measures and removing outdated ones. In 2016, the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy deemed it necessary for critical access hospitals to participate in at least one measure of one domain to receive Flex funding opportunities. Each year, the FORHP has increased the level at which the hospital must participate to remain Flex fund eligible.

The Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network (ICAHN), located in Princeton, is a network of 58 small rural Illinois hospitals dedicated to strengthening the operations of its member hospitals through collaboration. The organization is composed of Illinois hospitals who have earned critical access hospital designation by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. ICAHN is recognized nationally for its work with rural healthcare and administers several state, federal, and private healthcare programs.

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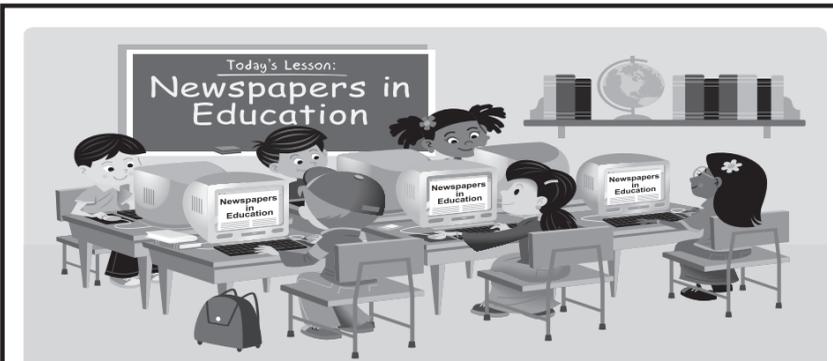
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Taxes: Tract 1 & 2 part of PIN 12-15-200-002 \$ 7908.22 (Tract 1 & 2 currently one parcel)
Tract 3- PIN 12-23-100-003 \$4,317.06

Soils: The predominant soils are Osco silt loam, Sable silty clay loam, Muscatine silt loam, Sable silt loam, Catlin silt loam and Buckhart silt loam. For inspection or further information visit our website www.mcconvilleauction.com or contact the auctioneers.

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OPINION

The Mendota Reporter

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Hoodwinked & bamboozled

By Scott Reeder

Hoodwinked, fooled, deceived, misled, bamboozled. Those are just a few words to describe what a teenager allegedly did to a community journalist with 40 years of experience.

In the small town of Eldridge, Iowa, just north of the Quad-Cities, lives a young woman named Madison Russo. Scott Campbell, the longtime editor of the North Scott Press heard that the 19-year-old received a \$500 grant from a local group that helped people with pancreatic cancer.

Campbell decided to write a feature story.

"I just texted her cold and I said, 'Hey, Maddie, this is Scott Campbell. I heard about your diagnosis. Would you be interested in telling your story?'" And she sent me a text back within two minutes: "You betcha. No problem at all." So, we set up an interview for the next morning. ... She had set up a GoFundMe page. I saw a couple social media postings that she'd posted."

She claimed to have Stage II pancreatic cancer and acute lymphoblastic leukemia, Campbell said. "She said she had gone through 15 rounds of chemo and 90 rounds of radiation," Campbell said. "I asked for some pictures and she texted some photos. In none of 'em did she look sick at all. I didn't have any reason to doubt her. I thought maybe they were older pictures. She just told me she'd been through hell. And then right at the end of the conversation she dropped this bombshell: 'By the way, I just found out today that I've got a football size tumor in my lower back.' And I said, 'Oh, crap. That's crazy.'"

Crazy. Yeah, that's one word for it.

But despite her year of "hell" she said she was able to finish her first year of college at St. Ambrose University and maintain a 4.0 grade point average, land a plum internship at Deere & Co., continue to play golf - and run six miles a day.

My mother died of breast cancer, my brother succumbed to liver cancer and my father beat the odds and survived Stage III esophageal cancer. None of them were going for runs - and none of them ever had tumors the size of footballs.

And the photos I have of their withered forms are so painful to look at, some family members have asked that I never share them - the memories they conjure are just too painful.

But in the photo Russo sent the North Scott Press she looks pretty as a prom queen. Her skin has a healthy glow, and she has a full head of hair.

Campbell said he chatted with Russo over the phone - but never met with her in person. No news happens in the newsroom. You have to leave your desk and talk to people. Please note, I said "people" as in the plural of person.

Campbell's story quoted one person: Russo. He said he reached out to her mother, but she never got back to him. He didn't try to interview the physicians that Russo said were treating her. He also didn't seek out her professors or co-workers.

When I was in journalism school, turning in a one-source story constituted a failing grade. As an editor, I angered reporters when I refused to publish stories with a single source. But Campbell was the newspaper's editor. Who was there to tell him "no?"

Well, there was his wife.

"I came home and told my wife about it. She was kinda skeptical. She goes, 'Really? I'm really connected in the community and I haven't heard about this cancer story - that she (said) she'd been through for the last eight months.'"

But Campbell proceeded to publish a tear-jerker and donations poured in. Russo raised \$37,300 from 439 donors on GoFundMe and went to Chicago for a pancreatic-cancer gala.

A couple months later, folks with medical experience started calling the newspaper - and the police. They said the story didn't add up.

Russo's medical records, obtained by subpoena, show that none of the medical facilities in the Quad-City region have diagnosed Russo with any kind of tumor or cancer.

She was arrested on theft charges Jan. 11 while in class at St. Ambrose. And police said they seized her 2023 Kia Sportage, a paper bag with medical supplies, bank records, an IV pole with a feeding pump filled with cotton balls, two boxes of dressing, a wig, cash and pills for nausea in the name of a relative.

The community was angry. Donors were hurt. And a newspaper looked bad.

The NSP is one of the best community newspapers I've encountered. None the less, the role it played in this matter is an embarrassment - not just to the newspaper but to journalists everywhere.

Some folks find it off-putting when reporters are suspicious and seek verification. Too bad; that's our job.

How could a journalist have avoided this predicament? Here are a few thoughts: interview the subject in-person, be skeptical, ask tough questions, seek documentation of the person's claims, talk to more than one source - and listen to your spouse.

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



Memorable pageant in MHS gym - 1953

(The following is from Jessica Nashold's *Backtracks & Sidetracks* column reprinted from Feb. 12, 2003.)

By Jessica Nashold

It was exactly 50 years ago today, Feb. 12, 1953, that a cast of 500 Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Camp Fire Girls and Blue Birds gathered in the Mendota High School gym to present a pageant. George Likeness had prepared the script for "Youth of the Nation," and William Ashley was narrator. The 21 Scout and Camp Fire leaders involved met at the Public Service building on Feb. 5 to receive their assignments. As a result, the youngsters appeared, performed and departed like clockwork. Near the end of the pageant, six Cub Scouts and six Blue Birds fanned out among the spectators who filled the bleachers, collecting donations for the south wing project at Mendota Community Hospital. They presented what they had collected to Harry Fahler, director of the south wing fund drive, and Horace Hume, president of the hospital board.

\$151 was collected.

A community survey was conducted throughout the community on Sunday afternoon, Feb. 22, 1953. Leo Classon, assisted by the Rev. Kenneth Sollitt, and William Leiser, directed captains from Mendota's six precincts as they gathered completed questionnaires with on number of children of preschool age, number of retired persons and potential labor pool.

The captains were -

Precinct 1 - Charles Bader, William Leiser

Precinct 2 - Willard Merritt, Vernon Setchell

Precinct 3 - Elmer Feik, Forrest Fahler

Precinct 4 - Oden Jordal, J.B. Booth

Precinct 5 - Kenneth Sollitt, Raymond Hensel

Precinct 6 - B. Harry Reck, Harold Dean

Those completing questionnaires were assured the information was being regarded as confidential insofar as individuals were concerned. They would be kept on file as the Chamber

Backtracks & Sidetracks

of Commerce office, and only totals in the various categories would be used. Although 95 workers had signed up to go house-to-house on Feb. 22, about 75 more were needed.

The survey was sponsored by the Mendota Kiwanis Club.

As the Kanteen was prepared to celebrate its 10th anniversary on Feb. 28, 1953, it was voted to test Sunday evening hours. The hours would be 8:30-10 p.m. After a six-week trial, the hours would either become permanent or be dropped. A two-part history of the Kanteen was published in the Feb. 12 and Feb. 19, 1953 issues of *The Mendota Reporter*.

Board members of the Mendota elementary and high schools and of the Troy Grove and Ophir districts met the evening of Feb. 9, 1953, in the high school cafeteria. Principal speaker was a representative of the State Board of Vocational Agriculture. Expansion and modernization of the Vo-Ag course at Mendota High was in the planning stage. A modern farm shop was contemplated. Slides of farm shops already in operation elsewhere in the state were shown.

Judge B. Harry Reck gave some background material. He said that in 1918, the agriculture department at Mendota Township High School had been "tops in the state." Since that time, the use of power equipment had replaced horse farming. Local farmers wanted a source of instruction to keep pace with machine age developments. Although Reck did not advocate using tax dollars to achieve this end, he did point out that Mendota's school taxes were the lowest in the state.

**Grade School - .376
High School - .374**

Dr. Edgar C. Cook died Feb. 10, 1953, at the age of 63. He was the fourth generation of Cooks to practice in Mendota, having been preceded by his father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Because a large number of babies had been brought into the world by Dr. Cook, a Dr. Cook's Babies Fund was established in his memory. Headed by a Dr. Cook baby, Doris Van Ry Goebel, mother of three Dr. Cook babies, the fund started with a nucleus of 18, only two days after his death. By July, contributions had risen to \$406, and there would be more. The fund was earmarked for the south wing being completed at Mendota Community Hospital.

C.J. Bader retired from management of the Federal North-Iowa Grain Co. Starting in 1908 with a country grain elevator, he joined Federal North-Iowa when they purchased the elevator in 1928. Herman Kutter Jr. took over as manage on Feb. 1, 1953.

John L. Dennis was added to the MTHS faculty in February 1953, as instructor in speech, debate and drama. His appointment followed the resignation of James Koeller. Wasting no time, just days after his arrival, Dennis accompanied Mendota debaters to Augustana College for an invitational debate tournament, Feb. 6-7, 1953. The Mendota debaters were Doris Kramer, Alberta Weiss, Alice Burkhart, Jane Vogelsang, Tom Driver and Kenneth Emerick.

The State Theatre featured a rare 2 p.m. cartoon show on Feb. 12, 1953. The evening feature on Feb. 12-13 was "Valentino," starring Eleanor Parker and Anthony Dexter. "Valentino" was in Technicolor.

On Feb. 5, 1953, 13 Past Exalted Rulers of the Mendota Elks were captured in a single group photo: Arthur Sauer, Harold Sonntag, Dan C. Haskell, Robert C. Sonntag, Dr. D.H. Mosher, Harry F. Schaller, F.C. Lenihan, R.W. Lipke, Robert Ellingen, Charles F. Hendrick, Ben J. Zolper, Harold S. Bansau and Earl F. Lewis.

Memphis is not about racism

By Rich Lowry

There's nothing white supremacy can't do.

It is supposedly so pervasive and powerful that it can cause Black men to sign up to serve as police officers in a majority Black city and severely beat a Black arrestee.

It is to the contemporary left what capital was to Marx, sex was to Freud, and gravity was to Newton.

It is the King Charles head of American public life, a matter of obsession that comes up in debates and contexts where it has no possible relevance.

An opinion piece at CNN by former Obama official Van Jones was headlined, "The police who killed Tyre Nichols were Black. But they might still have been driven by racism."

A piece at *The New York Times* on Memphis related the view that it "is the system and the tactics that foster racism and violence," not "the specific racial identities of officers."

This argument gets points for novelty but none for plausibility. The Memphis officers who brutalized Tyre Nichols may be guilty of many things -- incompetence, malice, criminal wrongdoing -- but white supremacy is unlikely to be one of them.

Presumably these officers don't all hate their parents, children, neighbors, and colleagues as unworthy, racially inferior people who deserve no protection under our laws.

Maybe it's only as police officers that these men become unwitting tools of white supremacy? This makes no sense, either. The Atlantic noted in an article last year that FBI data showed Memphis to be the most violent metropolitan jurisdiction in the United States in 2020. According to *The New York Times*, Memphis had nearly 350 murders in 2021, when New York City -- 13 times larger -- had about 480.

Of course, these murders disproportionately affect young Black men. Isn't this just how a white supremacist would like it -- overwhelmingly Black neighborhoods under siege as Black men kill other Black men? Why would white supremacy want to interfere with this dynamic by deploying police units to try to quell the disorder?

Indeed, the false consciousness in Memphis must run

deep. Cerelyn Davis, the city's first African American woman police chief, created the just-disbanded special police unit implicated in the Nichols beating. Understandably, she thought it was very important to get a handle on rising homicides and dangerous reckless driving, but, unbeknownst to her, she was just serving the man.

The obsession with white supremacy is perverse and insulting on several levels. It implies that if urban neighborhoods are under-policed and dangerous, that is their natural state, whereas if they are robustly policed to try to make them safer -- a worthy project that tends to be supported by people of all races -- that is somehow an inherently "white" initiative.

It suggests that good African American, Hispanic and Asian cops are dupes, puppets on the string of nefarious white people using them to perpetuate white rule. And, finally, if taken seriously, it would vitiate the agency of the cops involved in the abuse of Tyre Nichols. How can they fully take the blame if an ineradicable, unavoidable force was ultimately responsible for their behavior?

The explanation for what happened in Memphis is more straightforward than any of this. Police are given considerable authority, and human beings -- of all races and creeds, in all times and places -- have a natural tendency to abuse authority unless constrained by institutions, norms and accountability.

If you are unwilling to believe that the cops in this case were self-loathing Black men, then their behavior becomes a function of poor training and supervision, abysmal decision-making, anger in the moment, free-floating cruelty, or some combination of these things.

The left elevates race above all the other factors that might play into a police encounter gone horribly wrong because the racial interpretation allows it to make a broader critique of American society and force wide-ranging political and social changes.

This is a very useful narrative, which is why it is loath to give it up even in an incident involving Black cops.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

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SOCIAL/LOCAL NEWS

Gerrard Fine Arts Scholarship created at IVCC

OGLESBY – Glen Gerrard of Oglesby has created Illinois Valley Community College Foundation scholarships for students who display exceptional talent in art and theatre.

An artist, actor and set designer, Gerrard appeared in and worked behind the scenes for IVCC theatre productions in the late 1960s. Long before there was a theatre, he learned set design through on the job training and building scale models.

In April 1970, just a month before his IVCC graduation, he was drafted and was unable to graduate. While in the service, he worked in the 5th Army Headquarters where he also performed in Cactus Flower for Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., Special Services.

Upon his return to the Illinois Valley, Gerrard was a comprehensive art major at Illinois State University, and received his bachelor's degree in 1974. He has remained committed to art-work and his paintings and pastel drawings have won several awards.

"Being at IVCC was one of the most pivotal times of my life," he says. "I didn't do well when the college was still housed at LP, but being at the new temporary campus made all the difference."

Also contributing to The Gerrard Fine Arts Scholarship fund will be his sister Bonnie Kolowski, a retired teacher and principal in Omaha. Bonnie attended



IVCC Dean of Humanities, Fine Arts and Social Sciences Lirim Neziroski, left, President Jerry Corcoran, Glen Gerrard and Executive Director of Community Relations and Development Fran Brolley. Gerrard has created Illinois Valley Community College Foundation scholarships for students who display exceptional talent in art and theatre. (Photo contributed)

IVCC from 1963 to 1965 and is grateful to then LPO Junior College for providing the foundation for her career in education.

"We both feel the groundwork we built at IVCC was among the best things that happened to us," said Gerrard, "and we wanted to do something lasting here in our family name."

The Gerrard Fine Arts Scholarship fund will honor their parents Charles and Cora Gerrard on behalf of their brothers and sisters. Charles quit school at age 11 to help support his family by driving a delivery wagon for the Jonesville Mine Company Store. He would later work 47 years at Westlox.

Cora left LP High School after her sophomore year to

help support her family by working at Bent's Department Store in downtown Oglesby.

Glen was the youngest of eight Gerrard children and became interested in art at a very early age.

"Our parents were very creative. They encouraged all of us to learn all we can and to never stop learning."

Today, Gerrard still designs sets, now in 3D on the computer. He is a member of the Stage 212 board and is currently creating the 212 digital Visual Archives. He is the author of the popular Facebook page "Oglesby Days," and for the past six years has volunteered as a docent at Westlox Museum where many of his father's woodcarvings and

his mother's needlework are displayed.

Gerrard's life in theatre includes playing Ebenezer Scrooge in A Christmas Carol touring across six states and appearing in three separate productions of I Do! I Do! He was a foster parent for 10 years and formerly worked for La Salle County Detention Home and Youth Service Bureau.

In 2018, he won the "Spirit of the Theatre Award" from River Valley Players in Henry for his timeless commitment to the craft. In 2019, he was honored with the Omni Arts Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to the arts in Illinois.

His voluminous artwork, acting and set design resume includes Sound of Music, Inherit the Wind, Detective Story, Cabaret, Something's Afoot, West Side Story, Grease, A Chorus Line, On Golden Pond, Man of La Mancha, and many others.

"There is so much exceptional talent in the halls of IVCC struggling to get through, and they could use a hand up. I am hoping this will encourage them to be creative thinkers who can excel in whatever art form they choose," Gerrard said.

Creating the scholarship accomplishes another of Gerrard's long-held dreams.

"I have been hoping to do this for years," he said. "I've been a very fortunate man and I just want pay it forward while I'm still around to enjoy it."



F. Buettner

Card shower planned for F. Buettner's 90th birthday

MENDOTA – Florence Grothen Buettner will celebrate her 90th birthday on Friday, Feb. 17.

Those wishing to recognize this special occasion may shower her with cards. Cards can be sent to her at 1665 William Way, Mendota, IL 61342.

DAR group to recognize Good Citizen winners at its Feb. 11 meeting

MENDOTA – Fort du Rocher Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution will hold its February meeting at the Presbyterian Church in Mendota on Saturday, Feb. 11 at 10 a.m.

Good Citizen winners from Earlville High School, La Salle-Peru High School and Mendota High School will be recognized and awarded certificates and pins. The winner will receive a monetary award.

A Continental breakfast will be served. Guests are welcome to attend. If you have an interest in becoming a member, please feel free to attend or contact Linda Byrd at 815-228-7730. Any woman over the age of 18 with lineage to a patriot of the Revolutionary War is eligible to join. Lineage help is available.

Eligible taxpayers should take advantage of Earned Income Tax Credit

CHICAGO – With thousands of Illinoisans failing to take advantage of savings offered by the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and state Earned Income Credit (EIC) each tax season, Governor JB Pritzker is reminding qualifying taxpayers to claim these valuable benefits.

"My administration's first focus will always be supporting Illinois' working families—and that means putting money back into the pockets of those who need it most," said Pritzker. "With tax season well underway, I encourage all eligible Illinoisans to take advantage of our state Earned Income Credit and federal Earned Income Tax Credit."

To be eligible for tax year 2022 (tax returns filed in 2023), taxpayers must have received "earned income" in 2022, meet certain income and residency qualifications, and file a tax return even if they do not owe any tax or are not

required to file. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) recommends that all workers who earned \$59,187 or less last year, learn about EITC eligibility and use the EITC Assistant to see if they meet qualifications.

Taxpayers eligible for the federal EITC also automatically qualify for the Illinois EIC, which is a refundable tax credit worth up to 18 percent of their federal claim. Despite that, in 2022, more than 70,000 Illinoisans claimed a federal EITC credit without also claiming the state EIC, leaving over \$25.3 million unclaimed.

"We continue to work with Governor Pritzker and his office to coordinate outreach efforts to increase state participation by targeting taxpayers who qualified for federal EITC credit but failed to claim the state EIC credit on their Illinois returns," Illinois Department of Revenue Director David Harris

said. "We urge all working taxpayers to check their eligibility status as this can change each year and be sure to claim both the state and federal credits to maximize savings."

For the 2022 tax year, the earned income credit ranges from \$560 to \$6,935, depending on the number of children claimed on the return. However, taxpayers do not have to have a child to claim the credit. Last year, 25 million eligible workers and families received \$63 billion through the federal EITC. Taxpayers receiving earned income in the last three years that did not claim these benefits can still apply by filing amended returns.

To determine an Illinois EIC amount, taxpayers can follow the instructions for Schedule IL-E/EIC. For more information on determining a federal credit, taxpayers can visit the IRS website at www.irs.gov.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Hollywood

By Tony Rizzo
HOLLYWOOD -- Sounds like "Magic Mike's Last Dance," opening Feb. 23, will be unlike the first two "Magic Mike" films. Channing Tatum, now pushing 43, will be dancing, but so far, no word if the other male dancers (Joe Manganiello, Matt Bomer and Adam Rodriguez) from the first two films, will be back. The film was shot in London and also stars Salma Hayek Pinault.

What's more interesting is the fact that Tatum has acquired the rights to the Patrick Swayze and Demi Moore 1990 film "Ghost," which won Oscars for Whoopi Goldberg as Best Supporting Actress and for Bruce Joel Rubin's screenplay. The film cost \$23 million and grossed \$505.7 million.

Tatum plans to rework the story and will not have Goldberg -- good luck with that. Tatum, who has started making pottery, said, "Now I know why they put [pottery-making] in 'Ghost.' This whole process is very, very sexual." Pottery ... what? ***

On the heels of the unsuccessful Whitney Houston biopic "I Wanna Dance With Somebody" (with a budget of \$45 million, it has only grossed \$56.4, which doesn't cover publicity costs) comes word of a planned Michael Jackson biopic from Lionsgate and Graham King, who produced the Queen biopic "Bohemian Rhapsody."

The film, called "Michael," will cover Jackson's childhood, leading up to his 13 Grammy wins and finishing with his demise in 2009 at the age of 50. Could it be a coincidence that this project was announced three days after the death of Jackson's former wife, Lisa Marie Presley? ***

Graham King is also planning a biopic of the Bee Gees. ***

How long is "long enough" for someone accused during the #MeToo movement to stop being ostracized? In October 2017, actor Anthony Rapp alleged Kevin Spacey made sexual advances toward him when he was 14 and when Spacey was 26.

In 2020, Rapp sued Spacey for sexual assault, sexual battery and intentional infliction of emotional dis-

stress. Fifteen others came forward as well, expressing similar abuse they suffered. So, in 2017, Spacey was completely cut out of "All the Money in the World," and his scenes were reshot with Christopher Plummer instead.

Not being able to work in the U.S., Spacey went to London and was given a supporting role in "The Man Who Drew God," directed by Franco Nero. Vanessa Redgrave, cast before Spacey, dropped out of the film, even though her husband (Nero) was directing.

Spacey then returned to California for the film, "Peter Five Eight," with Rebecca De Mornay, where he plays a serial killer in the film. He was also recently cast in the docu-drama "Once Upon a Time in Croatia."

But here's the topper ... Italy's National Museum of Cinema in Turin presented him with their highest honor, the Stella Della Mole Award for Lifetime Achievement. Looks like it's been long enough ...

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Celebrity Extra

By Dana Jackson
Q: Will there ever be another season of "Lucifer"? If not, is the lead actor going to be in anything else? I really enjoyed him. -- *P.J.*



Ellis

A: "Lucifer," starring Tom Ellis, was picked up by Netflix after it was canceled by Fox after three seasons. It was wildly popular on the streaming service and ended up surviving three more seasons, but a seventh is not in the works.

Ellis has two upcoming projects on Hulu. The first is "Washington Black," with Sterling K. Brown ("This Is Us"), which is a limited series about a young boy living on a 19th century sugar plantation. Ellis will play an eccentric inventor. He also just signed on for another upcoming series on Hulu with Emma Roberts ("American Horror Story"), a romantic comedy titled "Second Wife."

Q: Whatever happened to romantic comedies? I miss the movies that starred Meg Ryan, Julia Roberts or Sandra Bullock with a leading man. -- *A.L.*

A: Your best bet for romantic movies are during the months of February and December, but they're mostly on television. However, with the recent box-office success of "Ticket to Paradise," which starred Julia Roberts and George Clooney, you could be seeing more rom-coms at the local moviehouse.

This month, on the small screen, there are several movies that might appeal to you, such as "Sweeter Than Chocolate," which premiered on the Hallmark Channel on Feb. 4. It's about a local chocolatier rumored to have the recipe for true love, and it stars Eloise Mumford ("Chicago Fire") and Dan Jeannotte ("The Bold Type"). Over on Netflix, Reese Witherspoon and Ashton Kutcher star in "Your Place or Mine," which focuses on two friends who swap homes for a week. Currently, on Amazon Prime Video, you can stream Jennifer Lopez and Josh Duhamel's "Shotgun Wedding," which isn't your typical lighthearted rom-com -- it's also an action thriller.

As for Meg Ryan, she's returning to her roots in her upcoming film "What Happens Later," in which she not only stars but also directs. Ryan plays Willa to David

Duchovny's ("The X-Files") Bill; they're former lovers who meet for the first time in years while stranded overnight at the same airport. An official release date hasn't been announced, but expect to see it in theaters sometime this year. ***

Q: My nephew wants to work in the film industry, but doesn't want to move too far from family. I told him that many shows are filmed in Georgia. Where can we find a list of them? -- *P.A.*

A: Yes, it used to be that you had to live in Los Angeles, New York or Chicago if you wanted to work in the television and film industry. Now, a few more geographical options are available, like Vancouver, Canada, and Atlanta. Prolific writer and producer Tyler Perry even opened his own studio lot in Atlanta, helping to contribute to the billions of dollars in revenue that the entertainment industry has brought to the state. Other shows that film in Georgia include Netflix's "Stranger Things," AMC's "Fear the Walking Dead" and ABC's "Will Trent."

A good resource is the website www.georgia.org/industries/film-entertainment/georgia-film-tv-production.

Couch Theater

"Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" (PG-13) -- The sequel to "Black Panther" (2018) hit theaters in the U.S. last November, two years after the tragic and shocking death of Chadwick Boseman, who played the titular character. Since Marvel Studios chose to retire the character of King T'Challa with Boseman's death, the sequel starts with the king succumbing to an illness. One year after his death, Wakanda is now being threatened by nations around the world attempting to steal their vibranium -- their most precious element, which they refuse to share. This creates great tension for the citizens of Wakanda, as they're still in the process of building their country back up after the loss of their Black Panther. Angela Bassett recently earned a Golden Globe for her portrayal of Queen Ramonda, as well as an Oscar nomination. This makes Bassett the first Marvel actor to receive a nomination from the Academy. "Wakanda Forever" is

out now. (Disney+)

"Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile" (PG) -- Eighteen months after magician Hector P. Valenti (Javier Bardem) loses his New York home and leaves his singing crocodile, Lyle, in the attic, the Primm family moves in. Josh, the Primms' son, discovers Lyle in the attic and easily starts to befriend the crocodile, who can sing beautifully but can't speak. Mr. and Mrs. Primm aren't the happiest to find out about the talented, yet large reptile living in their new home, but Lyle seems to bring out the best in the Primms and starts to become a member of their family. A film adaptation of the children's story by Bernard Waber, this goofy musical-comedy has lots of feel-good vibes that no doubt made it a success in the box office last year. Popstar Shawn Mendes stars as Lyle in the film, out now on streaming. (Netflix)

"Somebody I Used to Know" (R) -- On Feb. 10, the second directorial

project from Dave Franco ("21 Jump Street" and "Neighbors") reaches Prime Video. Franco's wife, Alison Brie ("Community"), stars as Ally, a workaholic who decides to make a trip back to her hometown. While at a bar, Ally runs into her ex-boyfriend, Sean (Jay Ellis), and the two reconnect and make up for lost time. Almost as if she's retracing the steps of her past, Ally starts to wonder if she made the right decision by leaving her hometown all those years ago. Even after she accidentally crashes Sean's engagement dinner to his fiancée, Cassidy, Ally feels a pull to stay, as Cassidy reminds her of herself when she was younger. Kiersey Clemons, Danny Pudi and Haley Joel Osment also star in this heartfelt romantic comedy about trying to find newfound freedom well into adulthood. (Prime Video)

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• Trivia Test •

1. ART: Where is the Prado Museum located?
2. GEOGRAPHY: What is the only country that the Equator and the Tropic of Capricorn pass through?
3. LANGUAGE: What does the Latin phrase "tempus fugit" mean?
4. MATH: What is another name for the division sign?
5. MUSIC: How long did it take singer Bob Dylan to write the big hit "Blowin' in the Wind"?
6. ANIMAL KINGDOM: How many times on average does a ruby-throated hummingbird flap its wings in one second?
7. MOVIES: Which movie features the line, "Keep the change, ya filthy animal"?
8. LITERATURE: Which nov-

el features four children named Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy? 9. TELEVISION: What is Joey's famous line in the sitcom "Friends"?

10. ANATOMY: What is a common name for the pinna in human anatomy?
- Answers
1. Madrid, Spain.
 2. Brazil.
 3. Time flies.
 4. Obelus.
 5. 10 minutes, according to Dylan.
 6. About 50 times.
 7. "Home Alone."
 8. "The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe."
 9. "How you doin'?"
 10. Outer ear.
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King Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1 Nigger neighbor
 - 5 Existed
 - 8 Close
 - 12 Timber wolf
 - 13 Rocker Rose
 - 14 -- Christian Andersen
 - 15 Modern taxi rival
 - 16 Museum-funding org.
 - 17 Verdi opera
 - 18 Anne who married Henry VIII
 - 20 Funhouse feature
 - 22 Extinct bird
 - 23 Documentarian Burns
 - 24 Island near Java
 - 27 Gymnast's move
 - 32 Brit. record label
 - 33 Continent north of Afr.
 - 34 Bar cubes
 - 35 Olympic skating gold medalist Tara
 - 38 Grand tale
 - 39 "Today" rival, briefly
 - 40 "Fresh Air" airtel
 - 42 Honeydews
 - 45 Jerry of the
 - 47 Grateful Dead
 - 49 Golf bag item
 - 50 Frazier foe
 - 52 "Heavens!"
 - 53 Spanish ayes
 - 54 Charged bit
 - 55 Mature
 - 56 Try out
 - 57 Schlep
 - 58 Get lippy
 - shepherd
 - 4 Moolah
 - 5 Hopefuls
 - 6 Chopping tool
 - 7 Bridge coup
 - 8 "Doctor Zhivago" star
 - 9 Tress holder
 - 10 Nullify
 - 11 Despot
 - 19 "Hey!"
 - 21 Annoy
 - 24 -- canto
 - 25 Parisian pal
 - 26 Makeup kit item
 - 28 Arctic seabird
 - 29 Shrinking in fear
 - 30 Here, in Dijon
 - 31 Chest muscle
 - 36 "Leave that to me!"
 - 37 Indian bread
 - 38 Goofs
 - 41 Ma's mate
 - 42 Fine spray
 - 43 Canal of song
 - 44 Go yachting
 - 46 -- Pet
 - 47 Rapsallions
 - 48 Pro votes
 - 51 Singer Rawls

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦

- ♦ Moderate
- ♦♦ Challenging
- ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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1	6	3	4	2	7	8	2	9	5
2	7	4	7	4	6	1	5	8	3
3	5	8	5	8	5	8	6	6	2
4	7	3	7	3	7	3	7	3	7
5	8	5	8	5	8	5	8	5	8
6	2	5	1	4	7	7	4	7	4
7	4	5	1	1	6	2	2	2	8
8	1	9	6	3	2	2	2	2	8
9	8	1	6	3	3	6	3	6	3
10	3	8	2	2	7	6	3	9	8
11	4	5	1	4	1	4	1	4	1
12	7	8	7	8	7	8	7	8	7

Answer

Weekly SUDOKU

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Strange But True

By Lucie Winborne

* A Calvin and Hobbes comic from 1992 referred to the start of the universe as the "Horrendous Space Kablooie" because they thought "The Big Bang" was too boring.

* When a man noticed that his food supply was mysteriously diminishing he set up a webcam, only to discover that a woman had been living in one of his closets -- for a year!

* The cable car is the only moving National Historic Monument in the world.

* During Spain's colonial period, the builders of Filipino churches used millions of egg whites in the mortar to make the structures more durable. This also accounts for why Filipino desserts often use lots of eggs: Many of the recipes were developed to use up all those leftover yolks.

* In 2013, Belgium created five limited edition stamps that smelled and tasted like chocolate.

* A service operated in several Chinese cities that we'd like to see replicated in America is that of "jam busting." Drivers stuck in traffic snarl who urgently need to be somewhere make a phone call and two people show up on a motorbike. While one stays with the driver's car, the other transports the frustrated driver to their destination.

* According to the American Kennel Club, dogs will fake a sneeze for play and communication purposes.

* Iceland has the largest population of green-eyed people in the world.

* Modern negligence law resulted from a 1932 Scottish court case, Donoghue v. Stevenson, aka the "Snail in the Bottle" case, in which Mrs. May Donoghue sued beer manufacturer Mr. David Stevenson after she drank a bottle of ginger beer with a dead snail in it and became ill.

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King Crossword
 Solution time: 25 mins.
 Answers

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

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BRIDAL GUIDE



Responsibilities of various members of a wedding party

Participating in a wedding party is an honor. Couples invite many people to their weddings, and the select few asked to be in the party are typically those individuals with whom the couples shares a strong and special bond.

The role of the wedding party is not merely symbolic. Though it's up to the happy couple to determine how involved they want their wedding party to be, individuals asked to be in the party should know that their acceptance of these roles carries with it a certain level of responsibility.

Maid of Honor

The maid of honor may bear the most responsibility of any wedding party member. Maids of honor typically help with the planning of the wedding, offering advice and opinions on everything from the bride's gown to the bridesmaid dresses and anything else a couple might need help with. If the bride asks, the maid of honor may be asked to organize dress fittings and attend them as well. A maid of honor typically plays an active, and often the lead, role in planning the bachelorette party. Come the day of the wedding, the maid of honor helps the bride prepare and may organize the bridesmaids to ensure everyone stays on schedule. A maid of honor typically toasts the happy couple during the reception as well.

Best Man

Like the maid of honor, the best man has some extra responsibilities before the wedding and during the festivities. A best man may organize tux fittings, plan the bachelor party, help make



Individuals asked to be in the party should know that their acceptance of these roles carries with it a certain level of responsibility.

arrangements if the groom requests help, and be asked to hold the rings on the day of the ceremony. A best man toast is common during the reception, and some grooms ask their best men to distribute tips to vendors at the end of the night.

Bridesmaids

Bridesmaids often help the maid of honor plan the bachelorette party, and they also help to organize the bridal shower if the bride chooses to have one. Bridesmaids can offer input on wedding planning, particularly if they're already married, though that is not necessarily required. Bridesmaids also can help relieve stress on the bride by being as agreeable as possible when scheduling dress fittings.

Groomsmen

Groomsmen help to plan the bachelor party and may be asked to provide some support prior to the ceremony.

ny. For example, on the day of the wedding, groomsmen may be asked to show guests, particularly elderly friends and family of the couple, to their seats. Like their bridesmaid counterparts, groomsmen can be especially helpful by doing what's asked of them without resistance. Arriving on time to tuxedo fittings and offering insight when they think it might help are some simple ways groomsmen can pitch in.

Flower Girl/Ring Bearer

Often reserved for children, the roles of flower girls and ring bearers only require some simple participation during the ceremony. Flower girls drop petals as they precede down the aisle ahead of the wedding party, while the ring bearer carries the ring down the aisle. If these roles will be filled by especially young children, couples may choose to have them walk down the aisle together.

Parents of the couple

Parents of the bride and groom typically play supportive roles but may be asked to give speeches during the rehearsal dinner or the reception. The father of the bride typically walks her down the aisle, while the mother will likely spend the day of the ceremony at the bride's side as they get ready. Parents of the groom do not have any traditional responsibilities, though the groom and his mother customarily share a mother/son dance during the reception.

Couples need not feel compelled to assign bridal party members these duties if they don't feel comfortable doing so. However, sharing some of the responsibilities of wedding planning can help couples enjoy the process more and keep party members engaged.

Popular and lasting wedding traditions

Weddings are steeped in tradition. Some of those traditions may be exclusive to particular families, but many others are embraced by families of various backgrounds.

Couples needn't feel beholden to popular wedding traditions, but some may feel that these customs make their weddings more fun and serve as a great way to connect their ceremonies with those of their parents, grandparents and possibly even their ancestors.

Old, new, borrowed, blue

The rhyme "something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue" is likely familiar to people about to get married. This traditional rhyme has existed for centuries and refers to items a bride should wear and keep with her on her wedding day. The old alludes to a bride's past, the new refers to her future, the borrowed is intended to be something borrowed from a married couple or bride, and the blue is a symbol of purity, love and fidelity. These items are traditionally given to the bride-to-be by family members or female friends who are already married.

Bridal veil

It's now up to brides if they want to wear a veil on their wedding day, but it was once a tradition all brides adhered to. Some trace the tradition back to ancient Greece, while others suggest the tradition began in the days of the Roman Empire. Veils were believed to shield brides from evil spirits on her wedding day, thus paving the way for a healthy and happy future. Many brides still wear veils today, though likely due more to their aesthetic appeal than out of a belief that the veil will ward off evil spirits. Some brides still use veils to cover their face as they walk up the aisle, while others flip the veil over their heads.

Gifting knives

Perhaps one of the lesser known superstitions surrounding weddings, giving knives as a wedding gift is a no-no for some people. The origins of this superstition are uncertain, but people who abide by this tradition feel that knives are symbolic of a broken relationship. That would likely come as a surprise to the many engaged couples who have a set of knives on their wedding registries.

Carrying the bride over the threshold

Historians trace this tradition, which Hollywood has undoubtedly helped to keep alive, all the way back to medieval Europe. Also inspired by a bride's perceived vulnerability to evil spirits, the tradition of a groom carrying his bride over the threshold into their new home was believed to keep the spirits from entering the home through the soles of the bride's feet.

Breaking glass

Couples break glass for different reasons on their wedding days. Within the Jewish faith, one member of the couple will stomp on a carefully wrapped glass to serve as a reminder of the destruction of the Jewish temples and to inspire reflection among those in attendance. Italian newlyweds also may smash glass, but they'll do it with a little more gusto. Local tradition in Italy dictated that, at the end of the wedding, the newly married couple would smash a wine glass. Folklore suggests that the number of pieces the glass breaks into indicates how many years the couple will stay together.

Tradition is part and parcel of many weddings. Some traditions are more solemn than others, but all can add something meaningful, dramatic and even a little fun to the ceremony.

How to tame those wedding-related jitters

Nerves are to be expected when getting married. It is exciting to be engaged and realize you have met that special someone with whom you want to share the rest of your life. But anxiety may creep in as the big day draws closer.

A lot of planning goes into a wedding, and often the pressure that comes with trying to create the perfect day can overshadow feelings of love and excitement. That is when wedding jitters may crop up. Couples must recognize they're not alone if they feel a little uneasy as their wedding day draws closer. However, there are ways you can address and tame jitters both before and during the wedding.

Step away from wedding-related tasks

Chances are you have spent months with the wedding on your brain. In fact, it likely has consumed your daily life. Take a day or two to do something unrelated to

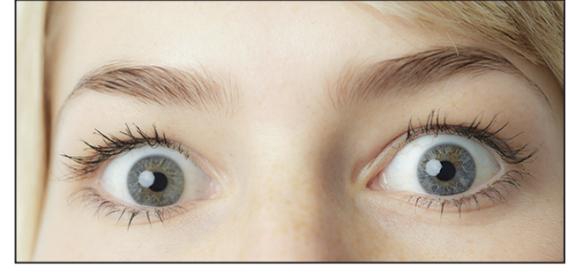
the wedding, whether you're alone, with friends or with your future spouse. Attend a fun event, go out to dinner, queue up several movies for a night in, or take a small trip. Keep wedding details out of the picture while you're enjoying yourself.

Forget about being perfect

Wedding jitters often stem from being nervous about everything going to plan. You may put undue pressure on yourself to ensure everything is perfect. But perfection is impossible, and the sooner you accept that a thing or two will likely not work out, the less stressed you may feel. You'll be surrounded by family and friends who will help you roll with the punches, whether that's a torn hemline or a missing buffet item. Guests are here to celebrate you, not pass judgment.

Discuss large changes to come

Some couples feel jittery because they haven't



spoken about all of the changes ahead. These can include relocation, merging of finances and whether or not children are in your future, among other things. Stress can be tamed if you take a break from wedding planning and discuss these important topics.

Learn relaxation techniques

Learning to relax is important when dealing with anxiety. There are many different relaxation techniques to explore. Some include meditation, yoga, deep-tissue massage, exercise, or immersing yourself in a peaceful spot

outdoors. Some people turn to reading or other hobbies to relax. Do not look to alcohol or medication as an outlet to alleviate stress.

Talk to someone

If anxiety about the wedding is eating you up, consider speaking with a professional therapist or even a close friend or family member. Sometimes a new perspective is all you need to calm the jitters.

Nervousness when planning a wedding is understandable. However, couples can take steps to tame jitters so they enjoy all that goes into tying the knot.

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THE BACK PAGE

CARDS OF THANKS

The family of Al Jansen would like to thank all those that expressed their sympathies upon his passing. Your thoughtfulness, kindness and support during this difficult time will always be remembered.

**Cheryl Jansen
CJ and Kip Runyon
Greg and Sarah Jansen
Gabe and Amy
Grzeskiewicz**

POLICE BLOTTER

WARRANT ARREST

Roberto R. Silva, 24, of 604 Fourth Ave., Mendota, was arrested at 4:23 p.m. Feb. 1 on a valid DeKalb County warrant for failure to appear/unlawful possession of a controlled substance. The subject posted bond and was released with a DeKalb County court date.

NO VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE

James J. Sundberg, 54, of 842 N. 40th Road, Mendota, was charged with no valid driver's license after a traffic stop at Sixth Street and Second Avenue at 10:13 p.m. Feb. 2. The subject was released with a LaSalle County court date.

NO VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE

Jeremy L. Henry, 34, of 717 Illinois Ave., Mendota, was charged with no valid driver's license after a traffic stop at Sixth Street and Second Avenue at 1:15 p.m. Feb. 3. The subject was released with a LaSalle County court date.

DRIVING WHILE LICENSE SUSPENDED

Alec J. Jansen, 29, of Peru, was charged with driving while license suspended after a traffic stop at Illinois Avenue and Monroe Street at 7:01 p.m. Feb. 3. The subject was released with a LaSalle County court date.

NO VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE

Jakai J. Perry, 19, of 205 Sandra Ave., Apt. E3, Mendota, was charged with no valid driver's license at 10:17 p.m. Feb. 5 after an investigation by the Mendota Police Department. The subject was released with a LaSalle County court date.

DRIVING WHILE LICENSE SUSPENDED

Eric L. Brown, 42, of 1907 S. 13th Ave., Mendota, was charged with driving while license suspended after a traffic stop at U.S. 34 and First Avenue at 3:05 p.m. Feb. 6. The subject was released with a LaSalle County court date.

Prohibited Parking Ordinance

MENDOTA—The City of Mendota reminds citizens that Chapter 41.49 of the Mendota Municipal Code in regard to Prohibited Parking reads as follows:

- Parking is prohibited along both sides of First Avenue for the entire length of the avenue.
- Parking is prohibited on the east side of Sixth Avenue from Second Street to Fifth Street.
- Parking is prohibited on the east side of Main Street from Sixth Street to Washington Street.
- Parking is prohibited on the south side of Washington Street from Pennsylvania Avenue to Iowa Street.
- Parking is prohibited on both sides (north and south) of Washington Street from Iowa Street to U.S. Route 251.

Staying warm and safe this winter starts with heating equipment and carbon monoxide safety

SPRINGFIELD - Illinoisans will be turning up their thermostats to stay warm for the rest of the winter season, which brings an increased risk for home fires and carbon monoxide incidents. Unlike smoke, carbon monoxide is a colorless and odorless gas only detectable by special devices and CO alarms. The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) encourages residents to have their furnaces checked, change furnace filters, and make sure carbon monoxide (CO) and smoke detectors are functioning properly.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), heating is the second leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries, and the third leading cause of home fire deaths. Local fire departments across the country responded to an estimated average of 48,530 fires involving heating equipment per year in 2014-2018, accounting for 14% of all reported home fires during this time. These fires resulted in annual losses of 500 civilian deaths, 1,350 civilian injuries, and \$1.1 billion in direct property damage. Most home heating fire deaths (81%) involved stationary or portable space heaters. The leading factor contributing to home heating fires (25%) was failure to clean, principally from solid-fueled heating equipment, primarily chimneys. Half of the home heating fire deaths were caused by having heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing mattresses or bedding. Nearly half of all home heating fires occurred in December, January, and February.

“Carbon Dioxide is a colorless and odorless gas, so it’s very important to have working alarms in your home, which could save your life,” said Acting Illinois State Fire Marshal Dale Simpson.

“Retailers across the state sell numerous brands of alarms, with some being a combination CO/ smoke alarms, that provide dual protection. It’s also important to check and test these alarms monthly and replace any broken or expired alarms with sealed 10-year battery alarms.”

In 2021 according to National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS), Illinois Fire Department responded to 19,859 calls about carbon monoxide and were able to determine a CO leak at 9,478 of those locations.

Symptoms of CO poisoning are very similar to the flu and include headache, fatigue, shortness of breath, nausea, and dizziness. Other signs of possible CO presence include condensation on walls and windows, house pets becoming sluggish and chronic odors from malfunctioning appliances. If you suspect you may be experiencing these symptoms, smell natural gas leaking in your home, or if your CO alarm activates, if you can evacuate the building, do so immediately. Only open windows on your way out if they are easily accessible. If someone is unable to leave the building, or is unconscious, open doors and windows to the outside in the area the person is located and stay as near to the open window or door as possible until first responders arrive. Turn on any exhaust fans that may be present. Once you evacuate, call 9-1-1 from outside your home or a neighbor’s house.

Space heaters lead to countless fires due to improper use during the winter months. It’s important to plug space heaters directly into wall outlets and not extension cords. Keep space heaters at least three feet from curtains, clothing, furniture, or bedding. Purchase units

with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over or you forget to shut it off.

Here are some other tips to keep in mind when it comes to winter heating safety:

- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional, and change furnace filters frequently.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters, or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturers’ instructions.
- Keep interior and exterior air vents clear of blockages or obstructions.
- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, like a furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before being placed into a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- Create a three-foot “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- Test smoke and CO alarms at least once a month and be familiar with the sounds they make.
- Never use an oven or range to heat your home.
- Remember to turn off portable or space heaters when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Install carbon monoxide and smoke detectors on each floor of your home and within 15 feet of each sleeping area.
- CO detectors have a limited life span; check the manufacturer’s instructions for information on replacement.

Sheriff urges sober driving during Super Bowl weekend

LEE COUNTY – Super Bowl weekend is here, and the Lee County Sheriff’s Office is reminding football fans and partygoers that designated drivers are the best defense against the dangers of impaired driving. If your Super Bowl celebration involves alcohol or cannabis, plan for a ride home with a sober driver. If you’re hosting the party, take care of the designated drivers. Fans don’t let fans drive drunk.

Whether you’re attending a party, hosting a gathering, or going out to a bar, keep safety at the forefront of your day and night. When it’s time to leave, make sure your designated driver is sober. If you’re walking, ask a sober friend to walk home with you.

Follow these simple tips for a safe celebration:

- Drunk or high, it doesn’t matter. It is never okay to drive impaired. Designate a sober driver or plan to use public transportation or a ride service to get home safely.
- If you see an impaired driver on the road, contact law enforcement.
- Have a friend who is about to drive impaired? Take the keys away and plan to get your friend home safely.
- Always buckle up!

The Illinois “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over” campaign is administered and funded by the Illinois Department of Transportation with federal highway safety funds managed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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SPORTS

Mendota's Serrano takes 3rd in regional; qualifies for Oregon wrestling sectional

PLANO – One Mendota wrestler will move on to the next level of competition after the Trojans participated in the Plano Class 1A Regional Wrestling Tournament on Feb. 4.

Sophomore Angil Serrano earned a berth in the sectional by finishing in third place in the 285-pound weight class. The top three wrestlers in each weight division qualify for the sectional.

Serrano wrestled three matches, winning two of them. He started off by pinning Garrett Tunnell of Yorkville Christian at the 1:39 mark of the opening period. Serrano dropped his next match, 11-2, to Jaylen Torres of Wheaton St. Francis, but he met up with Tunnell again in the third-place bout and posted a pin in 3:31 to capture third-place honors.

Eight other Trojans took to the mat in the regional. Rhett Watson was the

only other MHS grappler to win a match, claiming one win in three bouts at 145 pounds. Mendota matmen dropping both of their matches were Gavin Evans at 132 pounds, Corbin Furar at 138 pounds, Jose Hermsillo at 152 pounds, Dean Gilbert at 160 pounds, JP Belmonte at 182 pounds, Reese Lane at 195 pounds and Albert Harris at 220 pounds.

Serrano will compete in the Oregon Class 1A Sectional on Friday, Feb. 10 and Saturday, Feb. 11 for a chance to advance to the state tournament. The top four wrestlers in each weight class will earn a berth to state.

Feb. 4 - Plano Regional

132 pounds-Gavin Evans – Kelly (Lisle) pinned Evans, 1:22; Jones (Wheaton Academy) pinned Evans, 4:48

138 pounds-Corbin Furar – Kazmierczak (Wheaton Academy) pinned Furar, 1:52; Gilford (Plano) dec. Furar, 12-0

145 pounds-Rhett Watson – Torza (Yorkville Christian) pinned Watson, 3:31; Watson pinned Tremme (Lisle),

1:12; Kern (Sandwich) pinned Watson, 1:27

152 pounds-Jose Hermsillo – Wallace (Mooseheart) pinned Hermsillo, 3:23; Ronning (Plano) technical fall Hermsillo, 19-3

160 pounds-Dean Gilbert – Lehman (Sandwich) pinned Gilbert, 2:33; Skonieczny (Lisle) pinned Gilbert, 2:24

182 pounds-JP Belmonte – Johantik (Wheaton Academy) pinned Belmonte, 1:33; Anderson (Sandwich) pinned Belmonte, 0:55

195 pounds-Reese Lane – Garcia (Sandwich) pinned Lane, 0:23; DeSouza (Wheaton Academy) pinned Lane, 1:51

220 pounds-Albert Harris – Mehochko (Yorkville Christian) pinned Harris, 0:40; Hassan (Lisle) dec. Harris, 17-6

285 pounds-Angil Serrano – Serrano pinned Tunnell (Yorkville Christian), 1:39; Torres (Wheaton St. Francis) dec. Serrano, 11-2; Serrano pinned Tunnell (Yorkville Christian), 3:31



Serrano

Trojans suffer two Three Rivers losses

□ Newman, Princeton prevail over MHS

Mendota dropped Three Rivers Conference contests to Sterling Newman and Princeton in varsity boys' basketball action last week. The Trojans' records stand at 8-21 overall and 2-8 in league play.

Newman posted a 64-48 triumph over the Trojans on Jan. 31 at Sterling.

The Comets took control early, owning a 13-6 advantage after the opening stanza. Newman was able to stretch the margin to double digits at halftime (35-20) with a 22-point second quarter. The teams nearly played an even second half with the Comets scoring one more point than the Trojans.

Rafael Romero topped the Mendota scoring chart with 16 points. The only other double-figure scorer was freshman Aden Tillman, who pumped in four three-pointers for 12 tallies. Izaiah Nanez chipped in with seven markers.

The state's Class 2A second-ranked Tigers showed why they hold that lofty position with a 76-47 triumph over the Trojans on Feb. 3 at Prouty Gym in Princeton.

Princeton zoomed out to a 20-8 first-quarter lead behind a nine-point uprising by Grady Thompson. Kolton Monroe's 10 points keyed a 26-point outburst by the Tigers in the second period as they took a 46-24 advantage to intermission. The count stood at 64-39 with three quarters in the books.

Romero and Nanez provided 15 and 11 points, respectively, for the Trojans. Nanez connected on three shots from beyond the three-

point arc. Thompson and Teegan Davis led Princeton with 21 points apiece.

NEWMAN 64, MENDOTA 48

	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Mendota (48)				
C. Strouss	1	1-1	2	3
Guzman	1	0-0	1	2
Romero	6	4-4	3	16
Nanez	2	2-2	0	7
R. Strouss	0	0-2	1	0
Stamberger	1	0-0	2	4
Aughenbaugh	2	0-0	0	4
Dewey	1	0-0	2	2
Tillman	4	0-0	1	12
Totals	18	7-9	12	48

Sterling Newman (64)

	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Sterling Newman (64)				
Batten	2	0-0	1	6
Padilla	1	0-0	2	3
Britt	4	8-8	1	18
Garman	1	0-1	2	3
McBride	1	0-0	1	3
Hanrahan	0	0-0	1	0
Simpson	9	3-5	2	21
Boesen	3	0-0	1	6
Jungerman	2	0-0	1	4
Totals	23	11-14	12	64

SCORE BY QUARTERS

Mendota	6	20	33	48
Newman	13	35	48	64

Three-point goals: Mendota - Nanez 1, Tillman 4; Newman - Batten 2, Padilla 1, Britt 2, Garman 1, McBride 1

PRINCETON 76, MENDOTA 47

	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Mendota (47)				
C. Strouss	2	0-0	3	6
Guzman	1	0-0	0	2
Romero	7	1-4	3	15
Nanez	4	0-0	1	11
R. Strouss	1	0-0	2	2
Aughenbaugh	2	0-0	1	5
Dewey	1	0-0	1	2
Rocha	0	1-2	1	1
Tillman	1	0-0	0	3
Totals	19	2-6	12	47

Princeton (76)

	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Princeton (76)				
Davis	9	0-0	1	21
Lawson	2	0-1	0	4
Koning	1	0-0	1	2
Byers	0	0-2	0	0
Phillips	2	1-1	0	5
Thompson	8	2-2	2	21
Patterson	1	0-0	0	3
Rosario	1	0-0	0	2
LaPorte	0	2-2	1	2
Monroe	7	1-2	3	16
Williams	0	0-0	2	0
Totals	31	6-10	12	76

SCORE BY QUARTERS

Mendota	8	24	39	47
Princeton	20	46	64	76

Three-point goals: Mendota - C. Strouss 2, Aughenbaugh 1, Nanez 3, Tillman 1; Princeton - Davis 3, Thompson 3, Patterson 1, Monroe 1



Mendota's Gracie Zinke snags a rebound away from Kewanee's Mya Dearing (No. 10) and Avery Yepsen while Naitzy Garcia of Mendota also gets in on the action on Feb. 2 at the MHS gym. (Reporter photo)

MHS girls lose big lead, beaten by Kewanee

MENDOTA – Mendota let a double-digit lead slip away in the second half and dropped a 51-45 decision to Kewanee in Three Rivers Conference girls' basketball action on Feb. 2 at the MHS gym. The Lady Trojans are 5-23 overall and concluded league play with a 2-10 mark.

The two teams played a nearly even first quarter, with Kewanee holding a narrow 13-12 lead heading to the second period. In that eight-minute span, the Lady Trojans outscored Kewanee, 15-4, to take a 27-17 advantage to intermission.

Kewanee came out of the break and scored the first three points of the third quarter, while Mendota went scoreless for nearly three

minutes before Reanna Brant sank a free throw to make it 28-20. The Lady Trojans took their biggest lead of the game when Naitzy Garcia scored on a drive to the hoop to make it 32-21 with 4:31 left in the third.

Kewanee chipped away at the deficit over the next three minutes before it grabbed its first lead since early in the second period when it reeled off nine straight points to move in front 38-35 with under a minute left in the quarter. Hannah Tiska started the rally with back-to-back threes and then Avery Yepsen drained a trey of her own to put the Boiler Girls in front. But Mendota managed to regain the advantage heading to the fourth on a steal and a layup by Katie Jenner and a

rebound basket by Brant at the buzzer.

Kewanee tallied the first four points of the fourth to seize a 42-39 lead, and it was able to hold off Mendota over the remainder of the contest. The Lady Trojans were as close as two points (47-45) with 1:04 left, but the Boiler Girls scored the final four points of the game. Mendota managed only six fourth-quarter points, all by Brant.

Brant finished with 21 points, 19 rebounds and four blocked shots. Jenner added 10 points and three steals, while Grace Wasmer collected 10 rebounds and dished out three assists.

Kewanee claimed a 28-18 win in the sophomore game.

Ava Eddy led Mendota with six points, while Crystal Garcia and Cassie Gonzalez had four points apiece.

KEWANEE 51, MENDOTA 45

	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Kewanee (51)				
Dearing	1	2-4	3	4
Miller	2	0-0	1	5
Yepsen	1	2-2	0	5
Tiska	7	2-3	4	22
Duarte	1	0-0	4	2
Stevens	5	2-2	1	13
Totals	17	8-11	13	51

Mendota (45)

	FG	FT	Reb	TP
Mendota (45)				
Jenner	4	0-2	0	10
Zinke	0	0-0	2	0
Wasmer	1	1-2	10	3
Brant	8	5-11	19	21
Garcia	1	1-3	5	3
Reel	3	0-0	1	6
Gonzalez	1	0-0	1	2
Totals	18	7-18	38	45

SCORE BY QUARTERS

Kewanee	13	17	38	51
Mendota	12	27	39	45

Three-point goals: Mendota - Jenner 2; Kewanee - Miller 1, Yepsen 1, Tiska 6, Stevens 1



Mendota's Katie Jenner drives in for a layup while being guarded by Kewanee's Aaliyah Duarte on Feb. 2 at the MHS gym. (Reporter photo)

Sophs split 2 games

Mendota jumped out to a huge first-quarter lead and coasted to a 61-35 win over Sterling Newman in a sophomore boys' Three Rivers Conference contest on Jan. 31 at Sterling.

The Trojans exploded for 20 points in the opening stanza compared to just three for Newman. Domenic Richey keyed the uprising with 11 of the team's 20 points. Mendota led 38-15 at the half and 53-28 heading to the fourth frame.

Three Trojans hit double figures in scoring, led by Aden Tillman and Braiden Freeman with 17 points apiece. Richey finished with 15 tallies.

Princeton put together a strong fourth quarter to down the Trojans, 58-50, on Feb. 3 at Princeton.

Mendota trailed 27-21 at the half, but clawed back to tie the score at 37-37 heading to the fourth period. In that final stanza, Princeton poured in 21 points compared to 12 for the Trojans (15-11, 6-4).

Richey connected on three triples on his way to a game-high 18 points. Dane Doyle also hit double-digits with 11 points for the Trojans, while Tillman dropped in nine markers with three three-pointers.



Mendota's Karly Reel puts up a shot over Kewanee's Mya Dearing. (Reporter photo)

Girls to battle Sandwich in regional opener

AURORA – The Mendota Lady Trojans have been assigned to the Aurora (Rosary) Class 2A Girls' Regional Basketball Tournament.

Mendota will play one of two play-in games on Saturday, Feb. 11. The Lady Trojans will travel to Sandwich for a 5 p.m. tip.

The winner of the Mendota-Sandwich game will advance to the semifinal-round to take on West Chicago (Wheaton Academy) at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 14 at Aurora Rosary. The championship game is Thursday, Feb. 16.

The winner of the Aurora (Rosary) Regional will move on to the Winnebago Sectional to battle the survivor of the Savanna (West Carroll) Regional on Tuesday, Feb. 21. The

other sectional participants will come from the Byron and Marengo regionals.

Aurora (Rosary) Class 2A

Girls' Regional Basketball Tournament

Saturday, Feb. 11

1 – (9) Somonauk [Coop] at (8) Aurora (Rosary) – 1 p.m.

2 – (11) Mendota at (7) Sandwich – 5 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 14

3 – (1) Woodstock (Marian) vs. Winner Game 1 – 6 p.m.

4 – (4) West Chicago (Wheaton Academy) vs. Winner Game 2 – 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 16

5 – Winner Game 3 vs. Winner Game 4 – 7 p.m. (championship)

Lady Trojan bowlers close out season in Dixon Regional

DIXON – The Mendota girls' bowling team had its season come to a close in the Dixon Girls' Regional Bowling Tournament on Feb. 4.

The Lady Trojans had a team total of 4045 pins. The top four teams advancing teams were LaSalle-Peru (5804), Dixon (5141), St. Bede (5083) and Kewanee (5039).

Six girls bowled for Mendota. Lauren Holland turned in the high series with an 889. She rolled games of 102, 141, 171, 145, 158 and 172. Next was Karli Miars with an 879 series. Her game totals were 147, 186, 125, 139, 168 and 114.

Talya Schwaegerman finished with an 840 series (114,

156, 125, 149, 130, 166) and Isabelle Escatel had an 830 (138, 147, 148, 138, 148, 111). Also participating for Mendota were Brisa Nunez (88, 103, 111 - 302) and Mia Raya (92, 118, 95 - 305).

Olivia Weber of LaSalle-Peru was the overall individual champion with a 1384 series.

LOCAL AND AREA

School environment matters: MHS Dist. 280 administers Illinois 5Essentials Survey to improve student learning

MENDOTA – Mendota Township High School will join the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) in the 11th statewide survey of school climate and learning conditions. The survey provides a unique opportunity for students, teachers and parents to have a voice in improving their schools. From Jan. 11 through March 11, students and teachers will be asked to take a 25-minute research-based survey to help identify strengths and weaknesses in their school's learning environment. The parent survey supplement will also be administered during the same survey window. These surveys will serve as an opportunity for schools to reflect on progress since the last statewide implementation.

"We encourage all our teachers, students, and parents to make their voices heard to impact change in our school district. We especially ask parents to share their feedback because they can provide useful insights that might otherwise go unnoticed," said Dr. Denise Aughenbaugh, Principal.

The Illinois 5Essentials Survey provides a comprehensive picture of a school's organizational culture in an individualized report measuring five "essentials" critical for school success:

- Effective Leaders
- Collaborative Teachers
- Involved Families
- Supportive Environment
- Ambitious Instruction

Twenty years of research at the University of Chicago in more than 400 schools has shown that schools that were strong on at least three of the 5Essentials were 10 times more likely to make substantial gains in improving student reading and math than schools that were weak on three or more of the Essentials. Those differences remained true even after controlling for student and school characteristics, including poverty, race, gender, and neighborhood characteristics. Strength on components within the Essentials also correlated with increased teacher retention, student attendance, college enrollment, and high school graduation.

Generated from a rigorous analysis of student and teacher survey responses, 5Essentials Reports demonstrate that what students and teachers say about their schools can serve as important indicators for school success. In the inaugural 2012-2013 statewide Illinois 5Essentials Survey, 87 percent of all schools in the state met the 50-percent participation threshold

to receive a 5Essentials Report, with participation from more than 70 percent of all teachers and eligible 6th through 12th graders across Illinois. Starting in 2018-19, 4th and 5th grade students were also included in the 5Essentials survey administration.

All district schools, including alternative schools that fall under the district's domain, are required to participate in a school learning conditions survey every year. Starting in school year 2018-19, the survey was required annually. The survey was deemed an important component to balanced accountability under the state's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan by stakeholders, which resulted in state legislative changes requiring the survey annually.

Recent legislation (105 ILCS 5/2-3.153) allows school districts the option to select an alternative to the 5Essentials from a pre-approved pool for the 2020-21 administration. Selection of an alternative required school board and local union approval and was at the district's own expense. Details on survey alternatives can be found on the State Board's website: [https://www.isbe.net/Pages/5Essentials-Survey.aspx]

Mendota Township High School has consistently participated in the statewide 5Essentials Survey and is opting to administer the survey to teachers and students again this year to continue tracking and informing progress.

Principals and superintendents will receive their 5Essentials Reports in May 2023. Survey results will also be reported publicly on the 5Essentials reporting site in Spring 2023 and on the State School Report Card website in Fall 2023. An optional parent survey supplement is again available to all schools as a supplement to the 5Essentials Survey for teachers and students—results from the parent survey supplement will be included only in the individual school 5Essentials Reports. Since 2013-14, the Illinois 5Essentials Survey has been normed using the 2012-13 statewide results so that all schools can demonstrate progress over time.

On behalf of the Illinois State Board of Education, UChicago Impact is providing Illinois 5Essentials to schools statewide. Teachers, students, and parents may complete the Illinois 5Essentials Survey online. For more information visit: www.5-essentials.org/illinois.

Replacing Illinois institution as secretary of state, Alexi Giannoulias makes modernization push

By NIKASCHOONOVER
Capitol News Illinois

SPRINGFIELD – For newly sworn-in Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias, customer service is the central mission as he assumes the state's second-largest constitutional office, replacing the man who had held it for nearly a quarter century.

"Modernization and bringing new technology is going to be at the forefront of everything we do," Giannoulias said in an interview with Capitol News Illinois at the end of his second week in office. "This office is rooted in customer service, and my goal is to provide the best customer service possible."

With over 4,000 employees divided among 20 departments, the secretary of state's office deals more with the public directly than any other constitutional office. Most well-known for overseeing driver's licenses and vehicle registrations, the office is also responsible for supporting the state's libraries, keeping an organ and tissue donation registry and maintaining the 20-building Capitol Complex among other tasks.

Last week, Giannoulias released his team's transition report, a guiding document compiled by 124 individuals who served on nine separate subcommittees.

The report outlined priority areas for the office, including improving driver services facilities, ethics and office policies, and technology enhancements. The report was also informed by ideas and suggestions submitted by more than 800 Illinoisans through RevUpIllinois, a website run through the secretary of state's office that allows residents to submit a survey on the office's performance.

"We had some great suggestions, some were ideas we hadn't thought of. Some were complaints that gave us a good idea of what we need to focus on, so they were critical," Giannoulias said. "And I would encourage people to continue to send us their ideas."

Late last year, Giannoulias asked state Rep. Dan Brady, R-Bloomington, to serve on his transition team. Although it may be seen as fairly unusual for a defeated opponent to participate in this process, Brady said he was "pleasantly surprised" by the offer.

"I appreciate the opportunity to continue service

in that way, using my expertise and experience and suggesting some of the things I talked about along the campaign trail," Brady said. "It was an opportunity of sharing knowledges and experiences that hopefully will be helpful."

For both Giannoulias and Brady, this move says a lot about the office's capability for bipartisanship. In many ways it's also a testament to the legacy of outgoing secretary Jesse White, who had held the office since 1999 until his retirement at the age of 88 this year.

White praised both candidates in the general election, noting he had worked with both of them on policy proposals. The retired secretary also had crossover appeal with voters as the perennial lead vote-getter on the statewide ticket throughout his career.

"I think, in general, people are sick and tired of people who just hate the other party and won't work with them and I pride myself on always working with anyone who has good ideas, whether they're Democrat or Republican," Giannoulias said.

Brady said some of his ideas that made it into the final report included partnering with community colleges to lease space for DMV facilities that already have modern infrastructure capabilities, expanding remote services and cross-training employees to help with both driver and vehicle services.

One of Giannoulias' top priorities for the office is making driver service facilities among the most "customer centric and accessible in the country."

"And this means implementing our aggressive modernization plan using technology to overhaul and improve customer service and to help reduce wait times," Giannoulias said.

The driver facilities and road safety subcommittee outlined several suggestions in the report. They include creating an online scheduling service for driver's licenses and vehicle registrations, and an electronic document upload and approval service. The report also suggests implementing optional digital license plates, electronic vehicle registration and insurance documentation.

Giannoulias also noted modernization will "play a role in every single department," not just for driver

services. This includes making the lobbyist registration database more accessible, improving accessibility for e-books and online educational resources in libraries, and further streamlining technology services.

Brady chaired the organ and tissue donation subcommittee, given his experience as McLean County coroner. He also served on the board of Gift of Hope, a non-profit for organ and tissue donation services.

"It's been a passion of mine and I want to see those numbers increase from the standpoint of registration and how do we do more, not just in the facilities, but across the state," he said.

Some of the report's suggestions to increase donor registration numbers include automating the donor process to ease registration burdens, training secretary of state staff on organ donation so they can better inform the public, and working with the coroner and medical offices to improve the process.

On Giannoulias' first day in office, he signed an executive order aimed at improving ethics and transparency in the office, a promise he made during his inaugural speech.

The order outlines six provisions, including a review of state vehicles to ensure they are only used for business-related functions, strengthening the office's sexual harassment policy and prohibiting secretary of state employees from contributing to the office's political fund.

Now, Giannoulias says it's all about implementing these suggestions.

"We will have digital IDs and digital driver's license and E-title system, we're going to do all that," Giannoulias said. "But right now we have to modernize the current process as is, to make sure people aren't waiting in line, to make sure a piece of paper doesn't touch nine hands before it gets back to a customer."

(Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service covering state government. It is distributed to more than 400 newspapers statewide, as well as hundreds of radio and TV stations. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.)

Kish College sets Visit Day for prospective students Feb. 20

MALTA – Kishwaukee College will host Visit Day on Monday, Feb. 20, at the College for prospective students and their families.

"It's important to find the college or career path that's right for you, and we want you to have all the information you need to make that decision," said Graciela Horta, Coordinator of Student Outreach at Kish. "By attending our Visit Day, you will find Kish has great academic programs, support services, career development, flexible class offerings and more — all at an affordable cost."

Visit Day will have two sessions for students to choose from. The morning session will be from 9 a.m.-noon and focus on students looking to pursue a transfer degree. The afternoon session will be from 1-4 p.m. and focus on students pursuing career technology or allied health programs. Both sessions will offer campus tours and an information fair. The sessions will also cover getting started at Kish, financial aid and scholarships, student involvement, and athletics.

For more information on Visit Day or to register, visit kish.edu/visitday.



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Class 2A Regional**

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Mendota Game 2 Sat, Feb. 11 @ Sandwich @ 5PM Sandwich	Winner Game 2	Game 4 Tues, Feb. 14 @ 7:30PM West Chicago (Wheaton Academy)	Winner Game 4
		Game 5 Thurs., Feb. 16 @ 7PM Championship	

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ARS AUTO REPAIR, INC. 307 Plaza Drive (815) 538-2412	CITY OF MENDOTA • MAYOR DAVID BOELK • (815) 539-7459 Go Trojans!	GOOD LUCK!	

LOCAL AND AREA

Get rid of guilt once and for all

Are you bugged by a guilty conscience...carrying around baggage from a certain mistake or decision that produces feelings of regret or even self-loathing?

We've all said or done things that we wish we could take back. And while it's completely natural to grieve over a bad decision or mistake you have made, it is not God's plan for you to live with guilt and condemnation. Jesus came to set you free

from that kind of life (see John 3:16-17; Romans 8:1).

As believers in Christ, God forgives our sins completely. Psalm 103:12 says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (NIV).

That's how amazing God's love is! And when you trust God's promise of forgiveness, any burden of guilt that you have will be lifted from your shoulders.

It may sound too good to be true, but it really is that easy.

Breaking the Habit of Guilt

I had a terrible problem with guilt for many years of my life. I grew up in an angry, unstable, abusive atmosphere, which caused me to become a negative, angry, judgmental adult who didn't like myself or anybody else for that matter. As a result, I often behaved in ways that I regretted later, especially in my relationships.

Through the years, guilt became so ingrained in me that I just didn't feel right if I didn't feel wrong. And I carried those negative feelings with me right into the early years of my ministry. For example, whenever I went to God in prayer, I would automatically focus on two things—my problems and my mistakes.

I'll never forget the morning God spoke to my heart and said, "Joyce, are you going to spend time with Me today or are you going to keep focusing on your sins?" At that moment, I realized God wasn't mad at me; He loved me. And He was encouraging me to drop the dead weight of my guilt.

God Does Not Expect Perfection

Many people struggle with guilt because they think God expects more of them than what they can deliver. Some people even think He expects perfection, but that couldn't be further from the truth.

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ENJOYING EVERYDAY LIFE

with

Joyce Meyer

God's Word says in Romans 3:23, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." We are all in need of salvation through Jesus Christ.

The Bible also says that "where sin increased, grace increased all the more" (Romans 5:20). This verse isn't saying you should live a sloppy life and sin as much as you want; it means when you fall short of perfection in any area of your life, you will always have another chance to get back up, brush yourself off and try again with God's help.

What God Really Expects from Us

The apostle Paul explains what God requires of us in Philippians 3:12-14, which says, "Not that I have already obtained [righteousness], or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

God simply expects us to grow, and we can't do that if we're stuck in guilt. In Christ, we can forget about

what lies behind us—the things we cannot change—and press on, doing our best in the present moment.

One thing that has helped me get over my guilt trips (which I used to take on a daily basis) is realizing they are totally, completely useless. They didn't help me behave any better. Actually, all they did was break the heart of God and make me act worse.

I have come to realize that the only way to make progress is to forget what is behind.

Race at Your Own Pace

We will never be perfect in this life and God knows that. He is full of mercy and He doesn't want you to get up each day and worry about what you did yesterday or what you might do wrong today. God wants you to trust His love for you and receive His forgiveness so you can move forward, completely guilt free.

Jesus said, "...Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete" (John 16:24). When you ask God for His forgiveness, don't just stop there. Take a moment and receive His forgiveness. Say out loud, "God, I receive Your forgiveness. Thank You for giving me a fresh start. Because of what You have done for me, I am filled

with joy."

You don't have to waste any more time focusing on your mistakes and weaknesses. Spend time with God and learn from His Word. If you do that, you will grow, grow, grow.

Remember, God loves you and He is always cheering you on to victory.

For more on this topic, order Joyce's four-teaching resource The Fearsome Four. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting www.joycemeyer.org.

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 140 books, including BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND and LOVING PEOPLE WHO ARE HARD TO LOVE (FaithWords). She hosts the Enjoying Everyday Life radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit www.joycemeyer.org.

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

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SUNDAY SCHEDULE:

9 a.m. Sunday School & Fellowship
9:30 a.m. Worship

In-person & on Facebook at:
Mendota First United
Methodist Church

Feb. 12 - 9 a.m. Sunday School; 9:30 a.m.
Worship

Feb. 14 - 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Prayer Walking;
11 a.m.-3 p.m. LEASE preschool screenings

ZION UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

808 Jefferson St.

Pastor Jeff Brace

jbrace8459@gmail.com

Church office (815) 538-2186

Facebook: Mendota Zion United
Methodist Church

SUNDAY SCHEDULE:

Sunday Worship 9 a.m.

Sunday School for Preschool - 6th grade
in fellowship hall during worship service
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during Sunday services)

TUESDAY - Prayer group 6 p.m.

FRIDAY - Youth group 6 p.m.

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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE



O God, You are my God;
Early will I seek You;
My soul thirsts for You;
My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land
Where there is no water.
So I have looked for You in the
sanctuary, to see Your power
and Your glory.

PSALM 63:1,2

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Feb. 11 - 10 a.m. DAR meeting

Feb. 12 - 9 a.m. Second Sunday

breakfast; 10 a.m. Worship

11 a.m. Fellowship

Feb. 14 - 6:30 p.m. Session

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Church Builders 12:30 p.m.

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10:30 a.m. Worship at First

Feb. 8 - 4 p.m. Video Worship Task Force
at First

Feb. 10 - 9:30 a.m. Bible study

Feb. 12 - HOILP Souper Bowl Soup
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SUNDAY SERVICE - 10 a.m.
WEDNESDAY NIGHT - 6:30 p.m.

BIBLE TRIVIA by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Eliab (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
 2. From Genesis 21, who was commander of Abimelech's army? Benaiah, Omri, Sisera, Phichol
 3. Saul consulted a medium wanting to talk to whose spirit? Goliath, Moses, Samuel, Solomon
 4. Which natural disaster occurred only once in the Bible? Windstorm, Flood, Drought, Earthquake
 5. Who was known as the "Weeping Prophet"? Jeremiah, Nathan, Elisha, Daniel
 6. Who was the mate of Rachel? Ananias, Boaz, Jacob, Isaac
- ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Phichol, 3) Samuel, 4) Flood, 5) Jeremiah, 6) Jacob

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101 LEGAL NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE SENIOR HOMESTEAD & OWNER OCCUPIED EXEMPTIONS NEW APPLICANTS

This Notice is for persons filing for the Homestead Exemption for the first time. All senior citizens who are or will be 65 years old during 2023 and who own and reside in their own home, are eligible for the \$5,000 Senior Homestead Exemption on the 2024 real estate tax bill. A copy of the deed and the owner's driver's license (and any other persons on the deed driver's license(s)) are needed for the application. The signature on this form must be notarized.

EXISTING SENIOR HOMESTEADS

Renewal forms for existing Homesteads were mailed out in early February 2023. All recipients should read the form, answer all questions completely and return them to the Township Assessor's Office. (See address below.) If needed, one of our staff members can help you fill out the form.

ASSESSMENT FREEZE

Renewal forms for the Assessment Freeze Exemption are included in the mailing with the regular Senior Homestead Exemption. Your total gross household income must be \$65,000 or less. This exemption freezes your assessed valuation, not your taxes. Forms must be filled out, signed, notarized, and returned to the respective township offices. Staff members can assist you with all of this. If your income is between \$55,000 & \$65,000 or shows a loss, we will need a copy of your 2022 form 1040 and the loss schedule.

NEW HOMEOWNERS

If you bought a new home, this past year and were living in it by January 1, 2023, you will need to fill out an owner occupied exemption form with your local assessor. Your signature on this form must be notarized.

VETERANS

Exemptions for Veterans were created by House Bill 664-one for disabled veterans and one for returning servicemen. Forms are available at our office.

DISABLED PERSONS

An exemption created by House Bill 664 allows a \$2,000 exemption for a Class II disabled person. Forms are available at our office.

The Mendota Township Assessor's Office is located at the Mendota Township Offices at 602 S. Main St. Office hours are Monday, Tuesday, & Wednesday, 9am-12pm & 1:30pm to 3 pm or by appointment. Completed forms may be mailed to Mendota Township Assessor, PO Box 465, Mendota, IL 61342. Staff members can make home visits for homebound individuals. Bilingual assistance is available by appointment. If you have any questions, call the office at 815-539-3201.

ALL NEW APPLICANTS

All New Exemption Applications & All Assessment Freeze Forms must be Notarized. There are (2) Notaries in the Mendota Township Assessor's Office.

OWNER-OCCUPIED EXEMPTION

New Home Owners have to file an Owner-Occupied Exemption Form to get this Exemption. These forms are available at

the Mendota Township Assessor's Office. This form has to be notarized.

CHANGE OF MAILING ADDRESS

If the tax bill is to be mailed to a different address, a Change of Address Form must be filled out. These are available at the Mendota Township Assessor's Office. This form must be Notarized.

Susan Hochstatter
Mendota Township Assessor
No. 0108
(Jan. 25, Feb. 1 and 8, 2023)

2023 NOTICE OF ELECTION OF DIRECTORS TO ALL OWNERS AND OCCUPIERS OF LANDS LYING WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE LASALLE COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT:

Notice is hereby given that an Election will be held on the 16th day of February 2023 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. at the USDA Service Center, 1691 N 31st Rd, Ottawa, IL. Two (2) Directors will be elected to serve the LaSalle County Soil and Water Conservation District of the State of Illinois.

All persons, firms or corporations who hold legal title or are in legal possession of any land lying within the boundaries of the said district are eligible to vote at said election, whether as lessee, renter, tenant or otherwise. Only such persons, firms or corporations are eligible to vote. Ken Dau Chairman LaSalle County Soil and Water Conservation District No. 0110 (Jan. 25 and Feb. 8, 2023)

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT LA SALLE COUNTY, ILLINOIS

ESTATE OF Patricia A. Pellow, Deceased
Case No. 2023-PR-10

CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of Patricia A. Pellow of Mendota, Illinois. Letters of Office as Independent Executors were issued on January 12, 2023 to Jason W. Pankoke of 102 14th Avenue, Mendota, IL 61342 and Lance A. Pellow of 2349 N. Whistle Vale Dr. SW, Byron Center, MI 41315 whose attorney is Guilfoyle & Stevenson, LLP, 1316 Meriden Street, Mendota, IL 61342. Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Circuit Clerk, Probate Division, LaSalle County Courthouse, Ottawa, IL 61350, or with the representative, or both, on or before July 31, 2023. If a claim notice is mailed or delivered personally to a creditor of the decedent, the creditor's claim may be filed on or before the date stated in the notice, if later than the date shown above. Any claim not filed within the time allowed is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the Representative and to the Attorney within ten days after it has been filed. No. 0112 (Jan. 25, Feb. 1 and Feb. 8, 2023)

NOTICE OF SALE OF TIMESHARE ESTATE OR ESTATES UNDER SECTION 10 OF THE TIMESHARE LIEN AND SECURITY INTEREST ACT

By virtue of Section 10 of the Timeshare Lien

and Security Interest Act, 770 ILCS 103/1 et. Seq., and in execution of certain mortgages on the timeshare estates given by the owners of the timeshare estates set forth below for breach of the conditions of said mortgages and for the purpose of foreclosing, the same will be sold at public auction starting at 11 o'clock a.m. on Tuesday, February 28, 2023, at the east entrance of Etna Road Government Complex, LaSalle County, Illinois, 707 Etna Road, Ottawa, IL 61350, being all and singular the premises described in said mortgages.

Each timeshare estate is a 1.923% and/or 0.9615% undivided interest (each, a "Unit") as tenant-in-common at Fox River Resort, a vacation ownership project in LaSalle County, Illinois, as per the recorded plat(s) thereof and according to the Amended and Restated Declaration of Restrictions, Covenants and Conditions recorded under File No. R2000-31258 and any Supplemental Declarations recorded in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, LaSalle County, Illinois, as supplemented and amended from time to time (the "Declaration"), together with the exclusive right to occupy the Unit during the designated Use Period Number(s), as said Use Period is defined in the Declaration, upon and subject to all of the terms, restrictions, covenants, conditions and provisions in the Declaration.

FRANCIS JAMES BEAUPRE AND HEATHER EVE BEAUPRE, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, PO BOX 5635, DE PERE, WI, 54115, according to the Mortgage dated May 14, 2016 and recorded under File No. 2017 11115, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on July 27, 2017, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0438 Frequency Annual, Use Period Number(s) 02, Phase 7 FRANCIS JAMES BEAUPRE AND HEATHER EVE BEAUPRE, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 707 EDGE POINT CT, DE PERE, WI, 54115, according to the Mortgage dated May 14, 2016 and recorded under File No. 2017 11115, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on July 27, 2017, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0438 Frequency Annual, Use Period Number(s) 02, Phase 7 JASAPATH H DAYSON AND ANNA LIZA B DAYSON, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 8152 KNOX AVE APT 2, SKOKIE, IL, 60076, according to the Mortgage dated July 24, 2016 and recorded under File No. 2017 08142, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on June 08, 2017, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0054 Frequency Odd, Use Period Number(s) 36, Phase 1 EDGAR ALAN FUENTES, A MARRIED MAN, 565 S HOLLOWAY RD, ROMEVILLE, IL, 60446, according to the Mortgage dated May

02, 2017 and recorded under File No. 2017 16526, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on October 18, 2017, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0439 Frequency Annual, Use Period Number(s) 22, Phase 7 JAMES P HOWARD AND JANET L HOWARD, HUSBAND AND WIFE, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 128 E MILL ST, KEWANEE, IL, 61443, according to the Mortgage dated March 28, 2017 and recorded under File No. 2017 16045, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on October 12, 2017, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0021 Frequency Odd, Use Period Number(s) 47, Phase 1 VALENTINA M KERFOOT AND KENNETH W KERFOOT, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 1039 WILLOW LN, BATAVIA, IL, 60510, according to the Mortgage dated December 20, 2015 and recorded under File No. 2016 08649, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on June 22, 2016, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0391, Use Period Number(s) 14, Phase 6 GARY G KOESLER AND NAOMI F KOESLER, HIS WIFE AND ANY UNKNOWN HEIRS AND LEGATEES, TRACY A KOESLER, A SINGLE MAN, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 2066 WILLIAM DR, MONTGOMERY, IL, 60538, according to the Mortgage dated November 05, 2015 and recorded under File No. 2016 09283, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on June 30, 2016, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0375, Use Period Number(s) 14, Phase 3 GARY G KOESLER AND NAOMI F KOESLER, HIS WIFE AND ANY UNKNOWN HEIRS AND LEGATEES, TRACY A KOESLER, A SINGLE MAN, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 1650 BRIDLE POST DR, AURORA, IL, 60506, according to the Mortgage dated November 05, 2015 and recorded under File No. 2016 09283, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on June 30, 2016, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0375, Use Period Number(s) 14, Phase 3 GARY G KOESLER AND NAOMI F KOESLER, HIS WIFE AND ANY UNKNOWN HEIRS AND LEGATEES, TRACY A KOESLER, A SINGLE MAN, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 400 E RANDOLPH ST APT 3726, CHICAGO, IL, 60601, according to the Mortgage dated November 05, 2015 and recorded under File No. 2016 09283, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on June 30, 2016, are the owners

of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0375, Use Period Number(s) 14, Phase 3 BARNETT S KOLTON, A SINGLE MAN AND ANY UNKNOWN HEIRS AND LEGATEES, 9395 LANDINGS LN UNIT 404, DES PLAINES, IL, 60016, according to the Mortgage dated June 16, 2016 and recorded under File No. 2016 14941, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on October 05, 2016, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0052 Frequency Annual, Use Period Number(s) 11, Phase 1 JENNIFER E MAGANA AND RAPHAEL JEFFRIE AKA RAPHAEL JEFFRIE SR, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 1126 KAREN DR, JOLIET, IL, 60431, according to the Mortgage dated April 01, 2016 and recorded under File No. 2016 10901, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on July 29, 2016, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0206, Use Period Number(s) 16, Phase 4 JENNIFER E MAGANA AND RAPHAEL JEFFRIE AKA RAPHAEL JEFFRIE SR, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 125 SAINT JOSEPH AVE, JOLIET, IL, 60436, according to the Mortgage dated April 01, 2016 and recorded under File No. 2016 10901, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on July 29, 2016, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0206, Use Period Number(s) 16, Phase 4 JAMES J MOORE AND ELLA WARD MOORE AND ANY UNKNOWN HEIRS AND LEGATEES, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 5248 W CONGRESS PKWY APT 2, CHICAGO, IL, 60644, according to the Mortgage dated May 14, 2016 and recorded under File No. 2016 14445, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on September 28, 2016, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0284 Frequency Annual, Use Period Number(s) 38, Phase 4 WALTER J RAMOS, A SINGLE MAN AND LAURA PATRICIA NARANJO ESPINOZA, A SINGLE WOMAN, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 1406 BALTZ DR, JOLIET, IL, 60431, according to the Mortgage dated May 07, 2016 and recorded under File No. 2017 15943, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on October 11, 2017, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0010 Frequency Annual, Use Period Number(s) 31, Phase 1 WILLIE RICHARDSON AND DEBORAH RICHARDSON, TRUSTEES OF THE TRUST AGREEMENT OF WILLIE RICHARDSON AND DEBORAH RICHARDSON, DATED 12/14/2019, 359 DANIELLE RD, MATTESON, IL, 60443, according to the Mortgage dated June 26, 2016 and

recorded under File No. 2017 12075, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on August 09, 2017, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0375 Frequency Annual, Use Period Number(s) 52, Phase 3 VERONICA E RODRIGUEZ AND BACNI JAIR RODRIGUEZ-NUNEZ, WIFE AND HUSBAND, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 5527 W 24TH ST APT 1, CICERO, IL, 60804, according to the Mortgage dated January 14, 2017 and recorded under File No. 2017 14783, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on September 22, 2017, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0060 Frequency Annual, Use Period Number(s) 34, Phase 1 VERONICA E RODRIGUEZ AND BACNI JAIR RODRIGUEZ-NUNEZ, WIFE AND HUSBAND, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 2657 S KEELER AVE APT 1, CHICAGO, IL, 60623, according to the Mortgage dated January 14, 2017 and recorded under File No. 2017 14783, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on September 22, 2017, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0060 Frequency Annual, Use Period Number(s) 34, Phase 1 DANIELA ROJO AND DANIEL PANTOJA, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 2632 S AVERS AVE, CHICAGO, IL, 60623, according to the Mortgage dated July 17, 2016 and recorded under File No. 2017 13314, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on August 30, 2017, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0437 Frequency Annual, Use Period Number(s) 31, Phase 7 MICHAEL A SAULSBERRY AND JODY L GLEMZA, HUSBAND AND WIFE, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 408 LOCUST ST, NORTH AURORA, IL, 60542, according to the Mortgage dated May 29, 2017 and recorded under File No. 2017 17569, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on November 01, 2017, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0440 Frequency Annual, Use Period Number(s) 05, Phase 7 MICHAEL A SAULSBERRY AND JODY L GLEMZA, HUSBAND AND WIFE, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 1317 DURANT RD, BRANDON, FL, 33511, according to the Mortgage dated May 29, 2017 and recorded under File No. 2017 17569, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on November 01, 2017, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0440 Frequency Annual, Use Period Number(s) 05, Phase 7 MICHELLE LEIGH TAYLOR AND BRANDON RAY TAYLOR,

WIFE AND HUSBAND, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 12107 PALM HARBORWAY, BUDA, TX, 78610, according to the Mortgage dated February 28, 2016 and recorded under File No. 2017 16496, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on October 18, 2017, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0436 Frequency Annual, Use Period Number(s) 27, Phase 7 RYAN MARC P VIDAL AND JENALYN M MARQUEZ, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 1807 W ARGYLE ST APT 104, CHICAGO, IL, 60640, according to the Mortgage dated April 28, 2016 and recorded under File No. 2017 11787, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on August 04, 2017, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0439 Frequency Annual, Use Period Number(s) 01, Phase 7 NAZERINA T WILLIAMS AND KERRY L WILLIAMS, WIFE AND HUSBAND, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH FULL RIGHTS OF SURVIVORSHIP, 5402 N 41ST ST, MILWAUKEE, WI, 53209, according to the Mortgage dated May 08, 2016 and recorded under File No. 2018 02493, in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for LaSalle County, Illinois, on March 02, 2018, are the owners of the timeshare estate to be foreclosed, more particularly described as, Unit No. 0088 Frequency Odd, Use Period Number(s) 35, Phase 2 TERMS OF SALE: At the time and location noted above, the timeshare estates listed above will be sold at public auction to the highest bidder for cash. Purchase price shall be paid in full at the time of sale by cash or certified and immediately available funds. In the event the holder of the mortgages or its authorized agent is the purchaser of one or more of the timeshare estates, the holder of the mortgages or its authorized agent may offset against the purchase price of the timeshare estate(s) an amount equal to all or a portion of the amount due under the mortgage(s) (and thus, credit bid). Other terms may be announced at the public auction. Holiday Inn Club Vacations Incorporated A Delaware corporation By Deborah A. Quirk Its: Agent No. 0201 (Feb. 8, 15 and 22, 2023)

for the purpose of increasing the Working Cash Fund of the District, and it is the intention of the Board to avail of the provisions of Article 20 of the School Code of the State of Illinois, and all laws amendatory thereof and supplementary thereto, and to issue said bonds for the purpose of increasing said Working Cash Fund. Said Working Cash Fund is to be maintained in accordance with the provisions of said Article and shall be used for the purpose of enabling the District to have in its treasury at all time sufficient money to meet demands thereon for expenditures for corporate purposes. A petition may be filed with the Secretary of the Board (the "Secretary") within thirty (30) days after the date of publication of this notice, signed by not less than 603 voters of the District, said number of voters being equal to ten percent (10%) of the registered voters of the District, requesting that the proposition to issue said bonds as authorized by the provisions of said Article 20 be submitted to the voters of the District. If such petition is filed with the Secretary within thirty (30) days after the date of publication of this notice, an election on the proposition to issue said bonds shall be held on the 19th day of March, 2024. The Circuit Court may declare that an emergency referendum should be held prior to said election date pursuant to the provisions of Section 2A-1.4 of the Election Code of the State of Illinois, as amended. If no such petition is filed within said thirty (30) day period, then the District shall thereafter be authorized to issue said bonds for the purpose hereinabove provided. By order of the Board of Education of Community Consolidated School District Number 289, LaSalle, Lee and Bureau Counties, Illinois. Dated this 19th day of January, 2023. Holli Rapp, Secretary, Board of Education, Community Consolidated School District Number 289, LaSalle, Lee and Bureau Counties, Illinois Theresa Komitas, President, Board of Education, Community Consolidated School District Number 289, LaSalle, Lee and Bureau Counties, Illinois No. 0202 (Feb. 8, 2023)

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CONCERNING THE INTENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER 289, LASALLE, LEE AND BUREAU COUNTIES, ILLINOIS

TO SELL NOT TO EXCEED \$3,100,000 WORKING CASH FUND BONDS

Public Notice is Hereby Given that Community Consolidated School District Number 289, LaSalle, Lee and Bureau Counties, Illinois (the "District"), will hold a public hearing on the 21st day of February, 2023, at 6:30 o'clock P.M. The hearing will be held in the District 289 Education Center Boardroom, 1806 Guiles Avenue, Mendota, Illinois. The purpose of the hearing will be to receive public comments on the proposal to sell bonds of the District in the amount of not to exceed \$3,100,000 for the purpose of in-

NOTICE OF INTENTION OF COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER 289 LASALLE, LEE AND BUREAU COUNTIES, ILLINOIS

TO ISSUE NOT TO EXCEED \$3,100,000 WORKING CASH FUND BONDS

Public Notice is hereby given that on the 19th day of January, 2023, the Board of Education (the "Board") of Community Consolidated School District Number 289, LaSalle, Lee and Bureau Counties, Illinois (the "District"), adopted a resolution declaring its intention and determination to issue bonds in the aggregate amount of not to exceed \$3,100,000

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Sell your household items for free.
Total value of item must be \$200 or less. (15 words
- one week - 7 publications - price must be listed)



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creasing the working cash fund of the District.

By order of the President of the Board of Education of Community Consolidated School District Number 289, LaSalle, Lee and Bureau Counties, Illinois. Dated the 19th day of January, 2023.

Holli Rapp
Secretary, Board of Education,
Community Consolidated School District Number 289, LaSalle, Lee and Bureau Counties, Illinois
No. 0203
(Feb. 8, 2023)

REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS TO ACQUIRE CITY OWNED REAL ESTATE BY THE CITY OF MENDOTA, ILLINOIS

The City of Mendota (hereinafter the "City") owns a tract of real estate within the corporate boundaries of the City and within the boundary of the City of Mendota Tax Increment Financing District 2022 (hereinafter the "TIF District").

The Illinois Tax Increment Allocation Redevelopment Act (hereinafter the "TIF Act") authorizes the conveyance of municipal owned real estate in a manner and at such price as the municipality determines is reasonable and necessary to achieve the objectives of the TIF Redevelopment Plan and Project (65 ILCS 5/11-74.4-4).

The TIF Act further provides that said conveyance must be made after approval of an ordinance by the corporate authorities and after public disclosure of the terms of such disposition and all bids and proposals received in response to the City's Request for Proposals.

Therefore, it is authorized by the Mayor and City Council, of the City of Mendota as follows:

tions regarding this matter shall be directed to Emily McConville at 815-539-7459.

4. The City retains the right to select any Proposal received in accordance with the requirements of the TIF Act, to negotiate changes to any Proposal received, to waive any requirements or formalities, and further to reject any or all Proposals received.

Legal Description
Part of Lots 2 and 3 of Mendota Business Park in the City of Mendota, in LaSalle County, Illinois, being a part of the Northeast Quarter and Southeast Quarter of Section 26, Township 36 North, Range 1 East of the Third Principal Meridian, according to the Plat thereof recorded April 9, 2002 as Document No. 2002-10593, being more particularly described as follows and bearing used herein are for description purposes only:

Beginning at the Southwest corner of Lot 1 in said Mendota Business Park; thence South 3 degrees 40 minutes 34 seconds East 361.50 feet along the Southwesterly extension of the West line of said Lot 1; thence South 88 degrees 34 minutes 46 seconds West 241.00 feet parallel with the South line of said Lot 1; thence North 3 degrees 40 minutes 34 seconds West 361.5 feet parallel with the West line of said Lot 1 to the Westerly extension of the South line of said Lot 1; thence North 88 degrees 34 minutes 46 seconds East 241 feet along said Westerly extension to the Point of Beginning, containing 2 acres, more or less, subject to easements, setbacks, protective covenants and restrictions of the aforesaid Mendota Business Park Plat and also subject to any unrecorded easements and all easements of record.

Emily J. McConville,
City Clerk
February 8, 2023
No. 0204
(Feb. 8, 2023)

ed in acquiring such real estate.

2. Any party that is interested in acquiring such real estate shall submit a sealed proposal for said acquisition to: City Clerk, 800 Washington Street, Mendota, IL 61342, on or before 4:00 P.M. on February 24th, 2023. The City may award a Proposal at a City Council Meeting on March 6th, 2023 or at a later meeting.

3. Proposals shall contain the offered price and proposed terms of acquisition. The City will require that the property to be acquired for a use that includes a commercial enterprise on the ground floor. Proposals should contain:

a. Description of planned use(s);
b. Timeline of construction period;
c. Proposed site plan/design as prepared by a professional engineer/architect;
d. Exterior construction material description;
e. Estimated date of completion of improvements;
f. Estimated fair-market value of property upon completion;
g. Estimated opening date of commercial enterprise;

Proposals shall be submitted to Emily McConville, City Clerk, at City Hall, 800 Washington St, Mendota, IL 61342 during regular business hours. Any questions regarding this matter shall be directed to Emily McConville at 815-539-7459.

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1. The City intends to convey the following described real estate, generally described as 2 acres in Lots 2 and 3 of the Mendota Business Park. The City is hereby accepting Requests for Proposals from any party interested in acquiring such real estate.

2. Any party that is interested in acquiring such real estate shall submit a sealed proposal for said acquisition to: City Clerk, 800 Washington Street, Mendota, IL 61342, on or before 4:00 P.M. on February 24th, 2023. The City may award a Proposal at a City Council Meeting on March 6th, 2023 or at a later meeting.

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e. Estimated date of completion of improvements;
f. Estimated fair-market value of property upon completion;
g. Estimated opening date of commercial enterprise;

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1. The City intends to convey the following described real estate, generally described as 2 acres in Lots 1 and 2 of the Mendota Business Park. The City is hereby accepting Requests for Proposals from any party interest-

REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS TO ACQUIRE CITY OWNED REAL ESTATE BY THE CITY OF MENDOTA, ILLINOIS

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Total value of item must be \$200 or less. (15 words
- one week - 7 publications - price must be listed)



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101 LEGAL NOTICE

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

105 BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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

113 FINANCIAL

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

119 ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

201 DOMESTIC/CHILD CARE

NO INDIVIDUAL, unless licensed or holding a permit as a childcare facility, may cause to be published any advertisement soliciting a child care service. A childcare facility that is licensed or operating under a permit issued by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services may publish advertisements of the services for which it is specifically licensed or issued a permit. Your Hometown Newspaper strongly urges any parent or guardian to verify the validity of the license of any facility before placing a child in its care.

301 ANTIQUES

WANTED TO BUY: Vintage Metal and Wood Signs, Milk Bottles & Local Advertising, Oak Icebox, Iron Door Stop and Antique Lighting... Call Dick Harms at 815-562-2928 or email dickharms@hotmail.com

ANTIQUES WANTED: I pay cash for antiques; furniture, glassware, pottery & crocks, tin & iron toys, sterling silver, decoys. If it's antique, I'm interested in looking! Call 815-562-2928 or email dickharms@hotmail.com

307 MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE

BUNDLED Newspaper -\$3 per Bundle. End Roll- Cost Depends on Weight of Roll. Available Monday-Friday 815-562-4171 (8AM-NOON ONLY) Rochelle News Leader.

SPLIT firewood for sale. Contact 779-251-0254. (02-13-23)

309 PETS AND SUPPLIES

Free Kittens to good homes. Call 815-503-1881. (02-15-23)

405 HOUSES FOR SALE

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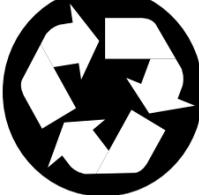
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mendotaseniors1978@yahoo.com
Mendota Area Senior Services
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MLS#11674514
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