

# Year in Review

The Mendota Reporter

Wednesday, Dec. 29, 2021

## J A N U A R Y

Jan. 6, 2021

All means of snow removal, from a City of Mendota plow to a small snow blower, have been used in the last week as the area saw 2020 go out and 2021 come in with the first measurable snowfalls of the winter season. A mixture of snow and ice put down three to four inches of precipitation during the final week of last year, and then back-to-back snowfalls of about two inches each welcomed in the new year.

The Mendota City Council handled several items of business at its first meeting of the new year on Jan. 4. The main topic of conversation was whether or not to increase the rent for Mendota Area Senior Services, which occupies part of the Mendota Civic Center. The city currently charges MASS \$250 per month. The city is proposing

to raise the monthly rent to \$450. MASS is asking that the monthly charge go up \$50 per month in each of the next four years. No action was taken.

It was a year like no other, and one most Americans would just as soon forget, but 2020 is sure to last in the history books as one of the most tumultuous in modern history. It was a year when face masks and hand sanitizer became ubiquitous items of everyday life and when major sporting events that many Americans use to mark the passage of time were canceled or delayed. It was also a year marked by racial and social unrest following the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and other Black Americans at the hands of police. And it was a year of economic catastrophe that brought about some of the highest unemployment rates the nation has seen.

When a new year begins in Illinois, there typically are dozens if not hundreds of new laws going into effect. Not this year. Like so many other things in 2020, the legislative spring session was stunted by COVID-19. Once the global pandemic reached Illinois in March, the General Assembly would meet for only four more days — wrapping up the odd session during masked and socially distanced gatherings at the Capitol and Bank of Springfield Center. The fall veto session was scrapped altogether. As a result, only three new laws will take effect on Jan. 1, 2021.

**DEATHS** – William “Bill” H. Blomberg, 88, of Cedarville, Dec. 23, 2020;



All means of snow removal, from a City of Mendota plow to a small snow blower, have been used in the last week as the area saw 2020 go out and 2021 come in with the first measurable snowfalls of the winter season.

Frances J. Fisher, 83, of Canton, Dec. 29, 2020; Joyce E. (Brown) Hoffman, 86, of LaMoille, Jan. 1, 2021; Harold L. Planthaber, 81, of Princeton, Jan. 3, 2021.

**BIRTHS** – Mr. and Mrs. Adam King (Megan Russell) of Ohio, girl, Jan. 1, 2021.

Jan. 13, 2021

While many people yearn for the sunshine and warmth of spring and summer, the winter season offers up a beautiful array of scenery that elicits the wonderful spectacle of the change of seasons. Lake Mendota allows the geese to saunter about on the ice while still being able to seek refuge on the small bit of still unfrozen water. Snow and ice cling to the branches of trees to offer up a picture postcard

winter wonderland. Icicles hang like stalactites off of a Mendota building. And the snowfall is a perfect ingredient to put artistic talents to work.

Statewide Tier 3 COVID-19 mitigations could be lifted within the week. Starting Jan. 15, exactly one incubation period from New Year’s Day, any region that has met requirements for a reduction of mitigations will be able to move out of the Tier 3 mitigation plan, Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced.

The grant program for small businesses owners in Illinois who suffered losses during the pandemic has run out of money. Illinois’ Business Interruption Grant program was the largest state program of its kind, but only about 20 percent, or 8,974

applicants, received a grant.

Scammers are always finding new ways to steal your money and personal information by exploiting your fears. The most effective way to defeat scammers is to know how to identify scams and to ignore suspicious calls and emails.

**DEATHS** – Mary C. Sondgeroth, 67, of Princeton, Jan. 4, 2021; Morris Anderson, 92, of Lakeland, Fla., formerly of LaMoille, Dec. 14, 2020; Barbara J. Dalton, 75, of Mendota, Jan. 5, 2021; Cynthia “Cindy” Ann Knowlton, 62, of Dixon, Jan. 4, 2021; Laura Jane (Novotny) Prendergast, 99, of Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif., formerly of Princeton and Arlington, Jan. 3, 2021; Thomas L. Smith, 59, of LaMoille, Jan. 9, 2021; Wanda J. Burton, 57,

of Compton, Jan. 8, 2021.

**BIRTHS** – Michael and Ashlyn (Kennedy) Uhen of Milwaukee, Wis., boy, Dec. 23, 2020; Dr. and Mrs. Marshall (Farrell) Lowers of Portland, Ore., girl, Dec. 18, 2020; Mr. and Mrs. Jabczynski (Roberts), boy, Jan. 7, 2021.

Jan. 20, 2021

Nine of 11 regions in the state’s COVID-19 mitigation plan have seen mitigations lifted in the past week, with two moving all the way back to Phase 4 restrictions. The announcement came as hospitalizations and positivity rates continued to decline and the state launched a contracting effort to increase hospital staffing, adjusting the available bed metrics that determine mitigation levels.

A new full-time member was welcomed to the Mendota Fire Department at the regular meeting of the Mendota City Council on Jan. 18. Brady Rutishauser was sworn in as a full-time firefighter/paramedic by Paula Daley of the Police & Fire Commission. He is the son of the current fire chief, Dennis Rutishauser.

The Internal Revenue Service announced that the nation’s tax season will start on Friday, Feb. 12, 2021, when the tax agency will begin accepting and processing 2020 tax year returns. The Feb. 12 start date for individual tax return filers allows the IRS time to do additional programming and testing of IRS systems following the Dec. 27 tax law changes that provided a second round of Economic Impact Payments and other benefits.

**DEATHS** – Ricardo Sarabia, 33, of Mendota, Jan. 9, 2021; Rufino Tovar, 90, of Mendota, Jan. 14, 2021; Robert W. Sondgeroth, 90, of Mendota, Jan. 14, 2021; David J. Galloway, 68, of Mendota, Jan. 10, 2021; Marliss Jean “Molly J” Ventura, 42, of Mendota, Jan. 15, 2021.

**Jan. 27, 2021**

Dr. Kimberly K. Archer recently received the honor of a lifetime when she was selected by “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band to compose a fanfare to be played during the Jan. 20 inauguration ceremony of President Joseph R. Biden. Archer, who was born in Mendota in 1973, is currently a Professor of Music Composition at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. She was tasked with creating a three-minute

fanfare, which she titled “Fanfare Politeia.”

All high school sports – including the higher-risk football, basketball and wrestling – may now be played in five regions of Illinois as the state continues to loosen restrictions amid the pandemic. That includes Region 2 in north-central Illinois, of which LaSalle, Bureau and Lee counties are a part.

Burning through those online gift cards will go incrementally faster in 2021 depending on how high local sales taxes are in your local Illinois municipality. That’s because of a 2019 law that took effect with the new year.

**DEATHS** – Don Clark, 85, of Sublette, Jan. 19, 2021; Thomas Judson Smith, 83, of Mendota, Jan. 21, 2021; Kaine Michael James Pizano-Olson, 20,

of Mendota, Jan. 20, 2021; Janelle Marie Geiger, 44, of LaMoille, Jan. 19, 2021; Marion Helen Schammel, 80, of LaMoille, Jan. 19, 2021; Leroy M. Haub, 92, of DeKalb, Jan. 19, 2021; Leslie “Les” Arthur Rep-pin, 62, of Oglesby, Jan. 20, 2021; Clifford “Cliff” Louis Sondgeroth, 88, of Mendota, Jan. 22, 2021; Jessica Lyn Albert, 51, of Avancer Home, Genoa, Jan. 23, 2021; James H. Hesenberger, 81, of Mendota, Jan. 23, 2021; Floyd “Ed” Royer, 73, of Rock Falls, Jan. 22, 2021.



# FEBRUARY

**Feb. 3, 2021**

The Mendota City Council handled several items of business at its Feb. 1 regular meeting. In aldermanic reports, Jim Fitzpatrick presented a resolution for funding the city’s portion of the 13th Avenue resurfacing project. The council approved an expenditure of \$17,000 to repair the sidewalks so they comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act. The Illinois Department of Transportation is hoping to start the process of resurfacing Route 251 throughout the city sometime this year. The agreement between IDOT and the city will be null and void if the project is not awarded by June 1, 2023.

With the start of the Illinois High School Association boys’ and girls’ basketball seasons this week, each school will have to follow guidelines determined by the Illinois Department of Public Health and the IHSA.

Each school may also determine their own policies that are not mandated by either the IDPH or the IHSA.

The snowy January continued over the past week when a storm dumped between four and five inches on top of what was already on the ground in the Mendota area. The heavy, wet snow provided ideal conditions for snowman-building, including one sporting an Illinois Fighting Illini stocking hat on Monroe Street.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) announced that \$43,361,000 in expedited federal funding has been made available to IEMA for costs related to the state’s COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan under the federal disaster declaration of Jan. 20.

**DEATHS** – Winifred A. “Winnie” Lovgren, 90, of Ohio, Jan. 27, 2021; Lynn J. Schmidt, 66, of Mendota, Jan. 29, 2021; Nathan Milton Eich, 72, of the Illinois Veteran’s Home, LaSalle, formerly of Mendota, Jan. 27, 2021; Cynthia (Phalen) Schlesinger, 61, of Earlville, Jan. 23, 2021.

**BIRTHS** – Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Currier (Erica Arteaga) of Mendota, boy, Jan. 23, 2021; Mr. and Mrs. Adam Holdenrid (Elaina Ambler) of Mendota, boy, Jan. 25, 2021; Aaron Walter and Samantha Kohr, boy, Jan. 26, 2021; Mr. and Mrs. Eric Pawlowski (Ashley Smith) of Mendota, girl, Jan. 30, 2021.

**Feb. 10, 2021**

The Family and Consumer Science department is undergoing an upgrade at Mendota High School. Thanks to MHS teacher Melissa Sallee, students enrolled in Nutrition and Culinary

Arts are being challenged to better understand the rights and responsibilities they have not only as consumers but also as the owners of their own bodies. Sallee believes that Family and Consumer Science (FCS) is especially important in offering students knowledge about nutrition as well as providing them a perfect opportunity to utilize what they have learned in other subject areas such as biology, chemistry, history, math, psychology, economics and physical education.

The state will soon start ramping up the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines as part of its effort to further limit the spread of the disease. In addition to receiving increased shipments of vaccine from the federal government, the Illinois Department of Public Health announced that it plans to redirect 97,000 excess doses of vaccine from the federal Pharmacy Partnership program, which is in charge of administering vaccines to residents and staff at nursing homes, to make them available to people eligible under Phase 1B of the vaccination program.

Whether it is high taxes, crime, cold winters or a combination of all three, Illinoisans continue to leave the state for greener pastures. A total of 80,000 people left Illinois last year, the seventh consecutive year the state has sustained a net population loss. In the last decade, Illinois has recorded the second largest population loss among U.S. states with West Virginia leading the way.

**DEATHS** – James “JT” Blackburn, 81, of Franklin Grove, Feb. 6, 2021; Dennis “Denny” Glenn Shaver, 72, of Peru, Feb. 2, 2021; Margaret L. (Whitlock) Skaggs, 92, of Earlville, Feb. 4, 2021; Randall K. Stouffer,

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Stonecroft Village Retirement Community in Mendota had its COVID-19 vaccination day on Feb. 12. A member of the staff at CVS Pharmacy administers the vaccination to Barb Gehant, who dressed in red for this wonderful vaccination day.

71, of Mendota, Feb. 2, 2021; Dennis “Denny” E. Weiler, 72, of Compton, Feb. 2, 2021; Robert “Bob” Floyd Hagemann, 88, of Mendota, Feb. 7, 2021; Patricia Lynn “Trish” De Jonghe, 56, of Mendota, formerly of Earlville, Leland and Hinckley, Feb. 5, 2021.

### Feb. 17, 2021

A new police officer was sworn in and met the Mendota City Council at the council’s regular meeting on Feb. 15. Brandon Hornung was administered the oath of office by Dave McNally of the Police & Fire Commission. Hornung joins the Mendota Police Department as a part-time officer. He is a 2005 graduate of Mendota High School.

Stonecroft Village Retirement Community in Mendota had its COVID-19 vaccination day on Feb.

12. A member of the staff at CVS Pharmacy administered the vaccination to Barb Gehant, who dressed in red for this wonderful vaccination day. Everyone at Stonecroft Villlage was thrilled the day finally arrived.

Vaccine operations and eligibility are expanding across the state as Illinois’ seven-day rolling COVID-19 positivity rate dropped below 3 percent on Feb. 15, the lowest it has been since July 21.

Former state Sen. Paul Schimpf, who spent four years representing the 58th District and was the Republican Party’s candidate for attorney general in 2014, announced Feb. 15 he will run for governor in 2022.

Gov. JB Pritzker’s office says he will propose a budget with no tax increases for the upcoming fiscal year,

and the deficit is now projected at about \$2.5 billion less than previously thought.

The snow art sculptors on Wisconsin Avenue in Mendota that showed their creations back in mid-January were back at it again after a series of snowfalls in mid-February gave them more art supplies to work with. Snowstorms have been occurring on a rather frequent basis in these parts and have more recently been accompanied by arctic blasts that have plunged temperatures into the single digits for highs during the day and below zero at night. The cold wave is beginning to show signs of departing with a long stretch of above-freezing daytime highs forecast to begin Sunday and continue through the end of the month.

**DEATHS** – Terry L. Politsch, 80, of Sublette,

Feb. 10, 2021; Vicki Ann Setchell, 74, of Mendota, Feb. 11, 2021; Audrey J. Fitzgerald, 71, of Utica/Troy Grove, Feb. 11, 2021; Martin D. Eddy, 57, of West Brooklyn, Feb. 7, 2021; Larry A. Stamberger, 75, a resident of Dove Hill Care Center and Villas in Hamilton, Texas, formerly of Mendota, Jan. 17, 2021; Patricia “Pat” A. (Panneck) Sondgeroth, 61, of Orlando, Fla., formerly of Peru, Feb. 7, 2021.

### Feb. 24, 2021

Mendota High School’s resource officer, Chad Hochstatter, has been approved for another year. Reporting at the Feb. 18 Board of Education meeting, Superintendent Jeff Prusator said the administration is unanimous in their desire to keep the position, which costs the school \$44,290, adding that

From **ARS AUTO REPAIR** 307 Plaza Dr., Mendota, IL 61342

Greeting Created By Camden Age 9 Grade 4<sup>th</sup> School HCS Mendota

Happy New Years

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Greeting Created By Holden Coss Age 9 Grade 4<sup>th</sup> School Lincoln

the City of Mendota is also interested in continuing the agreement.

Children enjoyed heading down the Lake Mendota hill on their snow sleds on Feb. 21. The days of sledding may be winding down as daytime temperatures above the freezing mark are forecast for the foreseeable future, which will make a dent in the snow pack.

Gov. JB Pritzker signed a criminal justice omnibus bill on Feb. 22 backed by the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus, abolishing cash bail, overhauling police certification and reforming use-of-force standards among numerous other provisions.

Gov. JB Pritzker announced that he expects the state to receive up to 500,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses from the federal government this week. The state has administered over

2.2 million doses of the vaccine and is currently receiving close to 300,000 doses per week from the federal government.

**DEATHS** – Luis Castaneda, 94, of Mendota, Feb. 15, 2021; Robyn H. Bomstad, 64, of Earlville, Feb. 15, 2021; Peggy P. Schlichtemeier, 71, of Sedona, Ariz., Feb. 11, 2021; Anita C. Cenkar, 92, of Mendota, Feb. 21, 2021; Marilyn Faber, 86, of Countryside, Feb. 1, 2021; Lawrence “Larry” E. Wujek, 72, of Mendota, Feb. 20, 2021.



# M A R C H

## March 3, 2021

The Mendota City Council awarded a bid and handled several other items of business at its March 1 regular meeting. Alderman Jim Fitzpatrick announced that four bids were received for disinfection improve-

ments to the city's waste water treatment plant. The low bid from Whittaker Construction of Earlville was accepted in the amount of \$507,150.

Two Republican lawmakers on March 1 unveiled legislation to strengthen internal policies at state-run veterans homes in the case of a disease outbreak, such as the COVID-19 outbreak at the LaSalle Veterans' Home that resulted in 36 resident deaths since the pandemic began. Senate Bill 2251 would require the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs and Illinois Department of Public Health to conduct an on-site visit at a veterans home where an outbreak has occurred no later than the following business day after the home staff or administrator was notified.

This winter, Special Olympics Illinois invites you to “be bold and get cold” at home for the athletes of Special Olympics Illinois. This year's event will be

a Law Enforcement Torch Run Polar Plunge At Home. All proceeds collected by plungers benefit the more than 23,000 traditional athletes and 13,000 Young Athletes of Special Olympics Illinois.

Gov. JB Pritzker said the state expects to be receiving up to 100,000 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine daily by mid-March, up from the approximately 60,000 it is currently receiving on average.

**DEATHS** – Gerald “Jerry” Reeser, 81, of Rochelle, Feb. 25, 2021; Dean M. Cannon, 65, of Sherwood, Ore., Feb. 21, 2021; James Raymond Smith, 69, of LaMoille, Feb. 22, 2021; Desiree Ann (Van Ryswyk) Czerniuk, 63, of Mendota, Feb. 24, 2021; Eileen Y. Swanlund, 87, of Normal, formerly of LaMoille, Feb. 26, 2021; Eugene “Gene” A. Leffelman, 78, of Sublette, March 1, 2021; C. W. Dickey, 81, of Somonauk, formerly of Mendota, Feb. 26, 2021.

## March 10, 2021

City of Mendota workers Kevin McPheeters and Nick Stremlau fixed a water main leak in the 700 block of Illinois Avenue on March 3. The leak occurred in the stretch of Illinois Avenue that was redone last summer and fall.

More than 3 million COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered statewide as of March 5, and Gov. JB Pritzker announced a new \$10 million public awareness campaign aimed at encouraging residents to get vaccinated. While the governor expressed optimism amid the improving vaccination picture and declining rate of transmission in the state, he said misinformation and hesitancy to receive the vaccine pose potential problems as availability continues to increase.

A new survey of Illinois school districts shows most are continuing to have trouble filling open teaching positions with qualified teachers and even more



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Greeting Created By

Age

Grade

School



Sublette residents Nick Wilson, center, and Curtis Ryan Kessel, right, are presented with plaques by Sublette Fire Chief Kevin Schultz for their efforts in rescuing a child from a house fire in Sublette on March 14.

are having difficulty hiring substitute teachers. It's a problem that has existed in the state for many years and one that experts attribute to a variety of factors, such as low pay and the difficulty in attracting new teachers to work in certain parts of the state.

**DEATHS** – Marjorie Black Carroll, 96, of Mendota, March 3, 2021; Eleanora Dinges, 101, of Yorkville, formerly of Mendota, March 7, 2021; Glenn E. Truckenbrod, 82, of Mendota, March 3, 2021; Donald "Squeak" R. Bates, 70, of Mendota, March 2, 2021; Gladys Margaret Rosa (Truckenbrod) Brantner, 99, of Mendota, March 1, 2021; Larry Keith Young, 62, of Plano, March 4, 2021.

**March 17, 2021**

On March 14 at 12:07 p.m., the Sublette and Am-

boy Fire & EMS Departments were dispatched to 704 W. Santee St. in Sublette for a house fire with a burn victim. Prior to arrival of the first engine company, Sublette residents and neighbors, Curtis Ryan Kessel and Nick Wilson saw a young child in a window on the second story of the house. As they approached the house, the father was exiting the residence with another child so Kessel and Wilson jumped into action. Kessel scaled the back fence and climbed to the second story window, grabbed the child by the ankle and lowered the child down to Wilson, saving the child's life before the window was enveloped in smoke and flames.

Mendota High School students will have a few less COVID-19 restrictions in the coming days. Reporting

at the March 18 District 280 Board of Education meeting, Superintendent Jeff Prusator said the rules for social distancing, cafeteria service and temperature checks have all been relaxed by the state.

The Mendota City Council approved several ordinances and requests at its March 15 regular meeting. Also, the council approved a resolution for the annual Sweet Corn Festival street closures in compliance with the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be no toy or craft vendors at the 39th annual Sublette Farm Toy and Antique Tractor Show. The event will be held on Sunday, March 21 as a tractor show only.

Another change to Gov. J.B. Pritzker's COVID-19 reopening plan is expected

this week, but it won't be the full reopening initially laid out in May 2020.

**DEATHS** – Gerald W. Leffelman, 88, of Sublette, March 12, 2021; Charles E. Cherry, 77, of LaMoille, March 8, 2021; Kenneth Jacob Henkel, 74, of Mendota, March 9, 2021; Donna Jean Gilmore, 86, of Paw Paw, Feb. 22, 2021.

**March 24, 2021**

An open house and recruitment event at the Sublette Fire Department on March 21 honored two local heroes, and offered a glimpse into how the department handles a car accident with entrapment, ending in a surprise marriage proposal. The warm spring weather brought out a large crowd to the fire department. The event started with a presentation by Sublette Fire Chief Kevin Schultz to Sublette

residents Curtis Ryan Kessel and Nick Wilson for their heroic efforts in saving a young girl from a burning house on March 14.

All Illinoisans 16 years of age and older outside of Chicago will be eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations beginning April 12, and last week the state announced a "metric-based" phase-in to greater reopening. The so-called "bridge phase" to reopening can begin when 70 percent of seniors 65 years of age and older have received at least their first dose of the vaccine, according to the governor. As of March 22, that number stood at 64 percent.

The Illinois Department of Public Health announced that more groups of people will be eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccinations ahead of April 12 when everyone over age 16 will

become eligible.

The Treasury Department and Internal Revenue Service announced that the federal income tax filing due date for individuals for the 2020 tax year will be automatically extended from April 15, 2021, to May 17, 2021.

**DEATHS** – Marcia J. Baker, 74, of Mendota, March 21, 2021; Elverta M. "Verdie" Eller, 94, of Amboy, March 17, 2021.

**BIRTHS** – Michael Brandner and Autumn Karpinski, girl, March 5, 2021.

**March 31, 2021**

The Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce will be holding the 2020 Sweet Corn Festival Queen Pageant on Saturday, April 3 at 6 p.m. at the Mendota Civic Center. This will not be a public event. Parents of the

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2022

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Greeting Created By Age Grade School

candidates will be allowed to attend and Studstill Media will be live-streaming the event. There will be four contestants in the pageant – Cassidy Barkman, Anna Bokus, Bianca Espinoza and Theran Schmitt.

At a special Mendota City Council meeting on March 22, it was announced that the city has come to an agreement with Del Monte Foods to take ownership of approximately 77 acres of Del Monte land plus retention ponds. And the best part of the deal is that Del Monte is paying the city \$3,950,000 to do so.

The Illinois Education Association, one of the largest teacher unions in the state, last week released its third annual state of education report examining attitudes toward public education in Illinois. The poll, conducted by Normington

Petts and Next Generation Strategies, surveyed 1,000 different Illinois adults of varying backgrounds and regions of the state by phone or online. One of the main takeaways from the poll, according to IEA, was that nearly 8 in 10 adults believe the COVID-19 pandemic has made teaching and learning more difficult.

On Sunday, March 28, at approximately 2:34 p.m., Mendota Police investigated an incident of vehicular endangerment in the 100 block of 13th Avenue, Mendota. As a result of the investigation, authorities learned that a rock was thrown from the overpass (railroad viaduct) striking a vehicle and shattering a window on the vehicle. The rock made entry into the interior passenger compartment of the vehicle. No injuries were sustained and the

Mendota Police Department is investigating the matter at this time.

**DEATHS** – Wesley Jay Shaver, 34, of Mendota, March 20, 2021; Jack Everett Baughman, 94, of Mendota, March 26, 2021; Ramon E. “Bud” Archer, 87, of Mendota, March 25, 2021.

**BIRTHS** - Andrew Koyak and Katherine Koyak of Peru, girl, March 22, 2021.



## A P R I L

### April 7, 2021

Anna Bokus was selected the Queen of the 2020 Sweet Corn Festival at the pageant on April 3 at the Mendota Civic Center. She is the daughter of Mike and Kaela Bokus of Mendota and was sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Council #2090. She is currently attending Loyola University in Chicago where she is majoring in biology on the pre-med track.

Mendota Police Department officer Joshua Sarver was sworn in to the position of sergeant at the Mendota City Council meeting on April 5. Sarver has been a member of the department for four years. He will be assigned to the afternoon watch. Also, Sarver will be the department’s new K-9 handler and will soon attend training with his new K-9 officer in Iowa.

As economic uncertainty continues to linger one year into the COVID-19 pandemic, housing advocates across the state are planning next steps to protect tenants and landlords and create additional affordable housing opportunities. Over the past several weeks, the General Assembly has considered various bills on the subject, including emergency rental assistance, lifting the state



**Anna Bokus was selected the Queen of the 2020 Sweet Corn Festival at the pageant on April 3 at the Mendota Civic Center.**

### April 14, 2021

ban on rent control, and subsidizing future affordable housing construction in the state.

State education officials made their case for a funding increase above and beyond what Gov. JB Pritzker has recommended, arguing that schools need the additional money to overcome the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic has had on student learning.

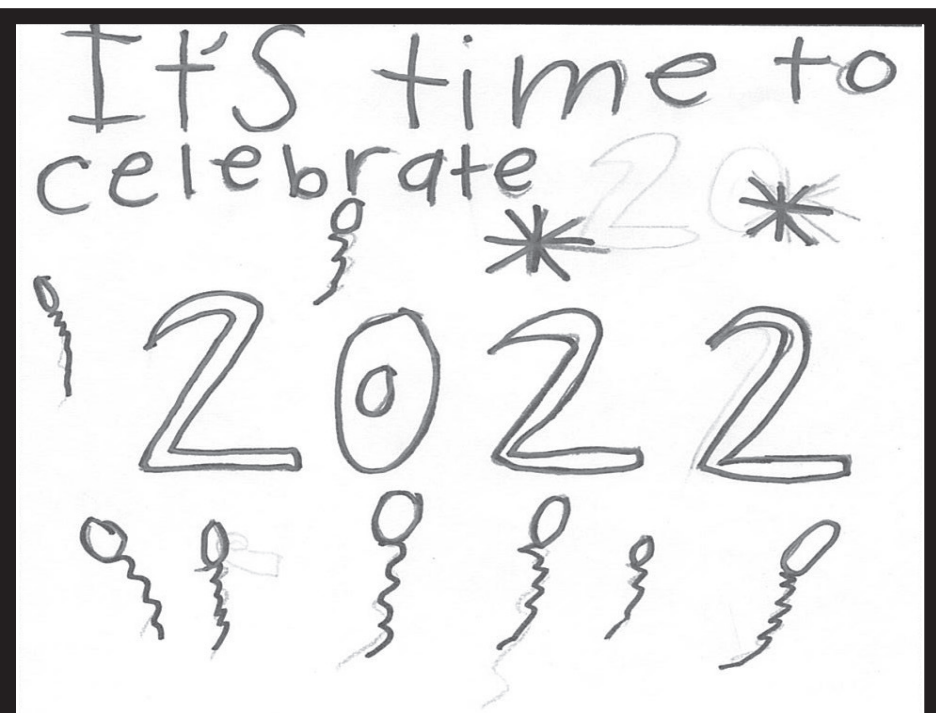
Gov. JB Pritzker signed into law a measure that expands vote-by-mail and curbside voting for all future elections.

**DEATHS** – Salvatore Frank Cutrano IV, 46, of Mendota, March 28, 2021; Katherine E. Swanson, 93, of Ottawa, April 2, 2021; Geraldine Margaret “Geri” Sondgeroth, 85, of Mendota, April 1, 2021; Ashley R. Heiting, 31, of Mendota and Rock River Gardens, Sterling, March 31, 2021.

Area voters had only a handful of contested races to decide in the April 6 Consolidated Election. In Mendota Elementary School District 289, two candidates unseated long-time incumbents Tim Pohl and Sean Pappas. Elected to take over their positions were Holli Rapp with 554 votes and Amanda Coss with 429 votes. Pohl had 412 votes, Elizabeth Zinke picked up 317 votes and Pappas collected 278 votes.

Bernie Anderson, regional manager, Community Affairs, with Nicor Gas, has given an update on the progress of the environmental cleanup activities at the Mendota former manufactured gas plant (MGP) located at 501 Ninth Ave. Anderson said the project is on schedule for completion by year-end.

The Illinois Supreme Court issued an order cre-



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Age

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School

ating stronger safeguards for tenants seeking relief under the governor's eviction moratorium. The court's revised order makes clear that landlords challenging a tenant's eviction moratorium protections have to state the legal and factual basis for such a challenge.

Gov. JB Pritzker said that all Illinois residents age 16 and older are now eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine as of April 12, as vaccine supply – but also virus transmission rates and hospitalizations—continues to increase.

**DEATHS** – Norma J. Bushman, 78, of Maytown, April 12, 2021; Marjorie J. Nance, 87, of Mendota, Nov. 27, 2020; Cathy Ann (Baker) Jacobs, 69, of Princeton, formerly of Waltham, April 11, 2021.

**April 21, 2021**

Mendota High School is holding Homecoming Week activities April 19-23. The theme for this year is "Teen Beach Movie." Leilani Landeros was named the Homecoming Queen and Derek Nanez was chosen the King. This year's Mini Queen is Eli Zinke, daughter of Brock and Liz Zinke, and the Mini King is Waylon Beck, son of Dan and Beth Beck. The sophomore class won first place in the Hall Decorating Contest. This year's Trojan Hero is Mr. Dan Beck, English instructor.

Yes, there will be a prom this year at Mendota High School. Although it will not be a traditional prom, the District 280 Board of Education approved a proposal from the Prom Committee to plan for an altered version of the event that follows all COVID guidelines for safety. Prom is scheduled to take place on Saturday, May 22.

principal Denise Aughenbaugh is pleased to announce that 13 students from the MHS graduating class of 2021 have been recognized as Illinois State Scholars.

A city treasurer was appointed and several new employees were hired at the April 19 meeting of the Mendota City Council. Since no one ran for the vacant position as Mendota city treasurer in the April 6 election, Mayor David Boelk was tasked with appointing a new treasurer and his recommendation of Heath Davis was approved by the council.

Nearly one quarter of the state's population is fully vaccinated against COVID-19, according to data released April 16 by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

**DEATHS** – Douglas A. Sterchi, 86, of LaMoille, April 13, 2021; Larry Noles, 62 of Mendota, April 16, 2021; Sidney M. Truckenbrod, 77, of Menomonee Falls, Wis., April 14, 2021; Carl A. Kerchner, 90, of Mendota, April 18, 2021.

**April 28, 2021**

A house fire destroyed an attached garage and did heavy damage to a Mendota residence at 1507 Indiana Ave. on April 26.

The Mendota Police Department is investigating a reported shooting that occurred on April 24. According to a police department report, officers responded to the report of a drive-by shooting incident in the vicinity of First Avenue and Fourth Street shortly before 7 p.m. on Saturday, April 24.

Tom Armstrong and his wife, Heike, admired the blooming daffodils that align Illinois Avenue in downtown Mendota. Last fall, Steve Lauer and Jim Lauer, in partnership

with the city of Mendota, planted 5,000 daffodil bulbs in dedication to Tom Armstrong's father, Jim, who was a long-time and dedicated member of the Mendota Garden Club. The daffodils will bloom in three different stages from early to late spring, giving them a longer bloom time.

The values of Illinois' agricultural lands are increasing, as is optimism. Appraisers first noticed the uptick late last year with Class A land when lands with few imperfections began selling for record prices.

Leaders from the state's tourism and hospitality industry asked legislators for additional support and reopening guidance during a recent committee hearing as the state plans next steps for its COVID-19 economic recovery.

**DEATHS** – Judith Marie (Simkins) Stiel, 80, of Mendota, April 21, 2021; Carol Ann Tastad, 75, of Machesney Park, formerly of Mendota, April 21, 2021; Arnold Larsen, 90, of Mendota, April 21, 2021; Della M. Hamburg, 89, of Mendota, April 19, 2021; Patricia "Pat" A. (Panneck) Sondgeroth, 61, of Orlando, Fla., formerly of Peru, Feb. 7, 2021.



# MAY

**May 5, 2021**

The Mendota City Council approved fiscal year 2021-22 budgets at its May 3 regular meeting. The General Fund budget revenue is anticipated to be \$6,575,815 and expenses are proposed to be \$6,673,465 for a deficit of \$97,650. City attorney Mike Guilfoyle said the city and Del Monte have closed on the deal for the city to take over approximately 77 acres of Del Monte property, which includes ponds. Del

Monte paid the city \$3.95 million for the deal.

The Mendota Museum & Historical Society and the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce are sponsoring a photography contest, "Capture Our Town." Entries are now being accepted through July 6.

Some Republicans in the General Assembly, including House Minority Leader Jim Durkin, are calling for a criminal investigation into the COVID-19 related deaths at the state-run LaSalle Veterans' Home.

A truck pulling a trailer carrying an end loader got stuck at the Fourth Avenue viaduct on April 28. The truck made it through, but the height of the end loader sitting on the trailer was too much to clear the viaduct, which has a limit of 9 feet. On the other side of the viaduct, workers from Ramer

Towing attempted to resolve the sticky situation. The viaduct was closed to traffic for several hours.

**DEATHS** – Marian Margaret Ayers, 93, of LaMoille, April 27, 2021; Richard A. Budach, 85, of Indianapolis, April 9, 2021; Ernest "Jack" C. Jacobs, Jr., 94, of Bellevue, Iowa, formerly of Mendota, April 3, 2021; Joan R. Dennison, 88, of Mendota, April 29, 2021.

**BIRTHS** – Bryce Wenzel and Carly Dean, boy, April 4, 2021; Mr. and Mrs. Keith Vogl (Emily Schwingle) of LaSalle, girl, April 4, 2021; Mr. and Mrs. Clay Kasperski (Ashton Shaw) of Hennepin, boy, April 10, 2021; Chad DePauw and Nicole Walker of Princeton, girl, April 26, 2021.

**May 12, 2021**

Scaffolding is in place and work has started on

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Greeting Created By Garvin Stamberger 9 Age 4 Grade Lincoln School

restoration of the stained glass windows at Mendota First Presbyterian Church. But to fund the costly project, as well as repairs to the building's chimney, the church had to ask for help. Thanks to support from church members, businesses and the community, they received enough donations to fund both projects. First Presbyterian Pastor Susan Presley said she was overwhelmed with the response they received to their request.

Northbrook Middle School will hold its eighth grade graduation ceremony on Thursday, May 20 at 6 p.m. at the Northbrook track (formerly Mendota High School football field). The rain date is May 21. Each graduating student will receive six tickets for family members and friends to attend. Seating will be in

the bleachers and on the field and track.

Gov. JB Pritzker said that Illinois will enter the "bridge" phase to full reopening on Friday, May 14. And barring any reversal of current trends, Phase 5, or full reopening, will begin on June 11.

Citing an "improved" economic outlook, Gov. JB Pritzker announced his support to increase evidence-based education funding in the state by \$350 million in fiscal year 2022, which begins July 1.

**DEATHS** – Frances J. Brown, 93, of Mendota, formerly of Peoria, May 6, 2021; Melvin E. Stewart, 82, of Sublette, May 6, 2021; Joyce Ann Adney, 85, of Mendota, May 7, 2021.

**May 19, 2021**  
Graves-Hume Public Library, along with support

from Friends of the Library, has started a Pollinator Pocket garden. The garden near the entrance to the library now has native plants that help support pollinators. The garden is based on the Pocket Garden idea from the University of Illinois Extension. The fifth graders in Laura Doyle's class at Holy Cross School in Mendota helped plant and water the garden on May 14.

Gov. JB Pritzker issued a new executive order May 17 that allows fully vaccinated residents to not wear masks inside and outdoors. The updated rules for mask wearing are nearly identical to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's updated guidance, which was released last week.

The Mendota Memorial Day program will be held Monday, May 31 at 10:30 a.m. at Restland Cemetery

Memorial Gardens.

Good news was recently announced for Illinois students graduating in the Class of 2021. Reporting at the May 17 Mendota High School District 280 Board of Education meeting, Principal Denise Aughenbaugh said the state's transition last week to the Bridge Phase of reopening will allow 60 percent capacity seating in the stadium. Mendota High School will be able to distribute nine tickets per graduate, which is very close to the number of tickets normally issued for ceremonies held in the gym. The outdoor graduation is scheduled for Saturday, May 29 at 1 p.m.

**DEATHS** – Michael James Bates, 57, of LaMoille, May 16, 2021.

**May 26, 2021**  
Northbrook Middle School held its eighth-grade

graduation ceremony on May 20 at the middle school track. Each graduating student received six tickets for family members and friends to attend. Seating was in the bleachers and on the field and track. It was a step toward a more normal ceremony than the one in 2020 when graduates rode in family vehicles through the Northbrook front driveway and received their diplomas through vehicle windows.

The Illinois State Board of Education unanimously passed a resolution last week calling on all public schools to return to in-person learning during the upcoming school year. The resolution doesn't institute any mandates or requirements for Illinois schools to follow, but shows unified support from ISBE for an upcoming decision

by State Superintendent Carmen Ayala.

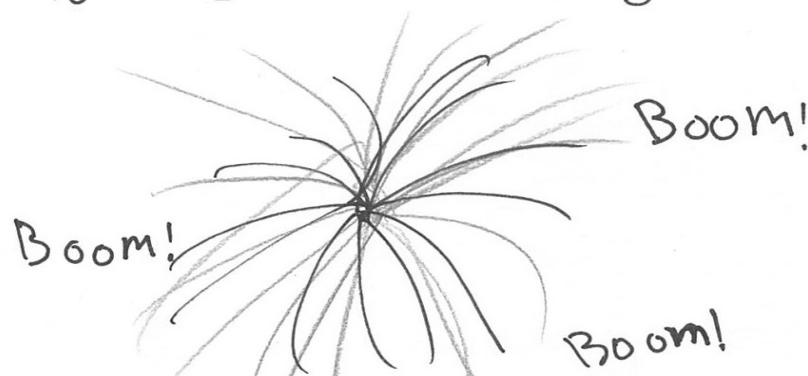
Gov. JB Pritzker recently announced the release of a six-year, \$20.7 billion construction plan to improve roads and bridges throughout the state, an annual process which the Illinois Department of Transportation oversees to target infrastructure spending.

Illinois budget officials said that revenues are flowing into state coffers at a faster pace than previously estimated.

**DEATHS** – Everett W. Olmstead, 83, of Earlville, April 18, 2020; Wilma J. Olmstead, 81, of Earlville, May 14, 2021; Matt Henkel, 42, of Byron, formerly of Sublette and Amboy, May 19, 2021.

**BIRTHS** – Troy Bauer and Gloria Bauer, girl, May 9, 2021.

It's going to be a new year



Boom!  
Boom!  
Boom!


A New Year 2022

From **The City of Mendota**

From all of us at

**Kennie Stremelan** 9 4th Lincoln  
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## JUNE

### June 2, 2021

In a school year filled with uncertainty from day-to-day, 110 Mendota High School seniors persevered and made it to the end—graduation day. Those seniors were rewarded when they walked up the ramp and across the makeshift stage to accept their diplomas during the commencement ceremony on a coolish sun-

splashed May 29 day at the MHS sports stadium.

After a one-year absence because of the pandemic, the Mendota Memorial Day service returned on May 31 and a large crowd showed up at Restland Memorial Gardens to pay their respects to our wartime heroes. The Veterans' Memorial Council, The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4079, its Auxiliary and American Legion Post 540 participated in the program, the purpose of which is to honor and remember all veterans resting on domestic or foreign soil for their commitment and unselfish contribution to our present way of life with liberty and freedom for all.

Gov. JB Pritzker announced the state will plan to "phase out" its moratorium on pandemic-related evictions by August and launched a new program to

provide assistance to renters and homeowners financially impacted by COVID-19.

**DEATHS** – Donna M. Cooper, 81, of Mendota, May 22, 2021.

### June 9, 2021

A major roadway in Mendota is getting a makeover and a new police officer in training will soon join the force, it was learned at the June 7 regular meeting of the Mendota City Council. Alderman Jim Fitzpatrick said the Illinois Department of Transportation will resurface Illinois Route 251 this summer. Police Chief Greg Kellen informed the council that Officer Josh Sarver is currently in a four-week training in Iowa with the department's newest member, K-9 Johnny, a German Shepherd, who will be on duty after the training period is completed.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Conservation Police are investigating the circumstances of a fatal incident involving a kayak operator that occurred on the Vermilion River in Oglesby on Tuesday, June 1. LaSalle County Coroner Richard Ploch identified the victim as Ralph W. Frey, 61, of Mendota.

The state's COVID-19 metrics continued to improve June 7 ahead of the planned statewide reopening on Friday, June 11. Gov. JB Pritzker's office confirmed last week that Phase 5 will begin Friday, essentially lifting all of the COVID-19 capacity restrictions that have been in place for over one year.

**DEATHS** – Ralph W. Frey, 61, of Mendota, June 1, 2021; Nancy E. Schrader, 45, of Mendota, June 2, 2021.

**BIRTHS** – Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Grote (Ashley Sudaj) of Peru, girl, May 29, 2021.

### June 16, 2021

**COUNTRY** Financial and the Illinois High School Association have teamed up this school year to recognize teachers throughout the state for their contributions to their school and students through a "Teacher Spotlight" social media campaign. Keegan Hill, a Mendota High School faculty member in the Special Education Department and a coach, will be featured in the "Teacher Spotlight" the week of June 14-19. Hill was selected from a field of deserving candidates for his service to MHS.

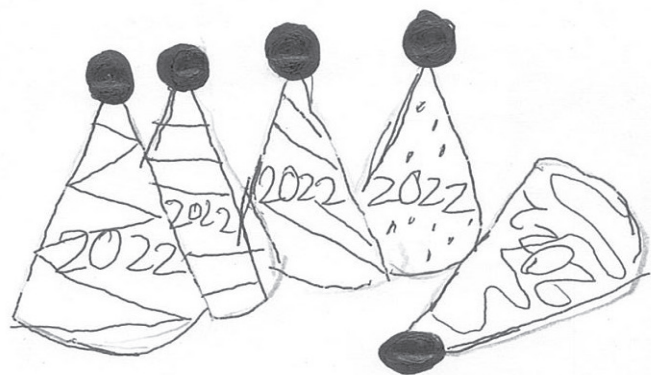
Illinois is now in Phase 5 of the COVID-19 reopening plan, meaning businesses and organizations can

resume normal activity, although some limited restrictions will remain in place. Under Phase 5 guidelines, capacity limits are being lifted for both indoor and outdoor activities while people who have been fully vaccinated are no longer required to wear face coverings in most settings and businesses are no longer required to enforce mask mandates or maintain social distancing rules, although they may continue to do so if they choose.

Taxes for drivers filling up at the pump in Illinois are going up again July 1, an annual increase one analyst says politicians made to take them off the hook from having to vote for tax increases in the future.

**DEATHS** – Marjorie "Marge" A. Sondgeroth, 91, of Mendota, June 11, 2021; Marilyn Lee King,

New Year New Memories  
Let's Party



From



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School



From



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Kendra 9 4 Lincoln  
Greeting Created By Mullins Age Grade School

80, of Peru, formerly of Mendota, June 5, 2021; Joseph "Joey" W. Hendricks, Jr., 53, of Mendota, June 7, 2021; Sandra "Sandy" A. (Dean) Gordon, 71, of Mendota, June 13, 2021; Lonnie Wayne Bunfill, 70, of Sherwood, Ore., May 8, 2021; Carolyn A. "Nan" Montavon, 72, of Dixon, June 9, 2021; Salvador "Pancho" Tinajero, 58, of Mendota, June 8, 2021.

### June 23, 2021

The use of E-Learning days will continue at Mendota High School following approval by the District 280 Board of Education. During a public hearing, which preceded the June 21 board meeting, Superintendent Jeff Prusator explained that E-Learning days were allowed by the state prior to the pandemic. They may be used in place of snow/emerg-

ency days when schools are closed and are different than Remote Learning.

The Mendota City Council acted on several requests and heard about bid openings for the street maintenance program at its June 21 regular meeting. Two requests from the Knights of Columbus were approved, as were requests from the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce and First United Methodist Church.

Any vaccinated Illinoisan will be automatically entered into a lottery for \$10 million in prizes without having to take any extra steps to enter. Gov. JB Pritzker announced the "all in for the win" vaccine lottery at an event in Chicago.

The day that marks the anniversary of the day in 1865 when some of the last enslaved Americans learned that they had been freed is

now an official state holiday in Illinois. Gov. JB Pritzker signed House Bill 3922 into law, designating June 19 as Juneteenth National Freedom Day in Illinois.

**DEATHS** – Marvin "Marv" Buchanan, 65, of Mendota, June 19, 2021.

### June 30, 2021

The Mendota Area Christian Food Pantry is now open for inside distribution of food, and clients are again able to choose their own items. Tracy Cooper, executive director, said the food pantry is excited to be open again but they are still keeping safety in mind. For now, there is a limit on the number of people who can be inside at one time.

The state's budget that begins this week includes taxpayer funds to "jumpstart" segments of the economy held back by Gov.

J.B. Pritzker's economic restrictions during the pandemic. But some say other areas didn't get enough funding. Democrats say the \$42 billion state budget that begins July 1 is balanced and doesn't increase taxes.

The Mendota Museum & Historical Society and the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce are sponsoring a photography contest, "Capture Our Town." Entries are accepted through July 6.

Long lines have been forming at driver services facilities around Illinois. It is recommended that motorists who are able to take care of driver services online choose that option.

**DEATHS**—Judith "Judy" May (Warren) Brown, 82, of Geneva and Bigfork, Mont., and formerly of Oak Park, June 24, 2021; June M. Bonnell, 74, of LaMoille, June 27, 2021.

**MARRIAGES** – Jennifer M. Griffith and Mark L. Robinson, of Mendota, June 13, 2021.

The 2021 Mendota Sweet Corn Festival Mini King and Queen will be selected on Saturday, Aug. 14. The Pageant begins at 10 a.m.

The Illinois economy showed strong signs of recovery during the first quarter of 2021 as businesses continued to reopen from the pandemic and direct government payments flowed to businesses and individual consumers.

Distribution of the \$89,979,243.47 collected to date for the July installment of the LaSalle County real estate taxes was completed on July 2, according to James L. Spelich, LaSalle County Treasurer.

Illinois received its first credit rating upgrade in 23 years on June 29 when Moody's Investors Services raised the state's rating one notch, citing "material improvement in the state's finances."

**DEATHS** – Dennis G. Piller, 73, of Mendota, June 27, 2021; Erwin Henry Grosshans, 105, June 27, 2021; Dorothy Mae (Jones) Moorehead, 89, of Paw Paw, June 29, 2021; Martin R. Weber, 68, of Sycamore, Nov. 12, 2020; Helen E. Bothe, 88, of Dixon, June 26, 2021; Luz Espinoza, 80, of Mendota, July 4, 2021; Enequina Correa, 95, of Mendota, July 2, 2021; Merle E. Hamer, 67, of Mendota, July 1, 2021; Charles A. "Charlie" Dumas, 80, of Mendota, formerly of Woodhaven and Chicago, July 2, 2021.

**BIRTHS** – Mr. and Mrs. Adam Sparks (Jillian Ganschow) of Orlando, Fla., boy, June 13, 2021.

### July 14, 2021

The Mendota City Council awarded a street maintenance bid and met the newest member of the Mendota Police Department at the council's regular meeting on July 6. Police Chief Greg Kellen introduced a

new member of the police force – Johnny the K-9 officer. Johnny's handler is Officer Josh Sarver. Johnny and Officer Sarver recently completed a four-week training session in Iowa.

In most cases, it would be easy to say that someone that lived well into their 90s had lived a complete and accomplished life. For Dr. Robert "Doc" Krenz Sr., there is no doubt that the contributions he made and achievements he attained were enough to fill up two lifetimes. Krenz, affectionately known as just "Doc," passed away on July 6 with his loving family by his side, 10 days shy of his 98th birthday.

Selecting the Queen to reign over the festivities of Mendota's 74th Annual Sweet Corn Festival will not be an easy task. There are 12 beautiful young ladies to choose from.

**DEATHS** – David Lee Hof, 84, of Mendota, July 8, 2021; Senior Airman Joshua Vernon LeRette, 24, formerly of West Brooklyn, June 30, 2021; Iva Sharon (Wilson) Underwood, 82, of Bethel Springs, Tenn., formerly of Compton, July 8, 2021; Dr. Robert J. "Doc" Krenz Sr., 97, of Mendota, July 6, 2021; Michael R. Burkart, 68, of Amboy, July 6, 2021; Susan Ann Deming, 55, March 23, 2021; Mary Sue Montooth, 99, of Mendota, formerly of Earlville, July 4, 2021; Kathryn F. Stevens, 94, of Loveland, Colo., formerly of Bureau County, June 18, 2021.

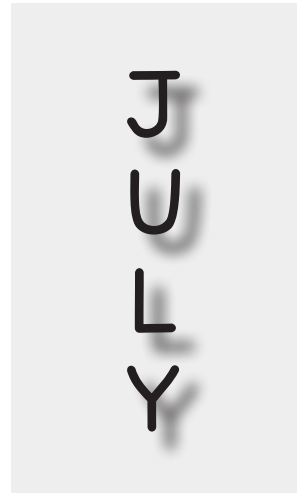
**BIRTHS** – Nathaniel and Tiffany (Kathol) Hitchins of Seward, Neb., boy, July 1, 2021; Austin Bernardoni and Kaitlin Bernardoni of Tonica, girl, June 25, 2021; Connor Corbel and Cheyenne Boone of Granville, girl, July 3, 2021.

### July 21, 2021

A new executive director, Tom Henson, was recently

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### July 7, 2021

The Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce is seeking candidates for the upcoming Sweet Corn Festival Mini Royalty Pageant. Plano Molding Company of Mendota will be sponsoring the Sweet Corn Festival Mini King & Queen Pageant. Advanced registration is necessary for the pageant.

hired by the Mendota Museum & Historical Society. Henson took over the position in April following the retirement of longtime director Dar Wujek. An Illinois Valley native who now lives in LaSalle, Henson has spent the past few months immersed in Mendota history and hopes to share the museums' abundance of local artifacts with as many people as possible.

Twelve young women are busily preparing for this year's Sweet Corn Festival Queen Pageant. Pre-pageant and intermission entertainment will feature the music of "We The Least," a local Mendota fan favorite.

With the state-imposed moratorium on residential evictions set to expire Aug. 1, the Illinois Supreme Court announced a plan on July 15 that provides an additional one-month "tri-

age" period for tenants and landlords in certain cases to seek rental assistance.

**DEATHS** – Norma Lee Matson, 96, of Van Orin, July 16, 2021; Eric D. Al-lensworth, 58, of Compton, July 11, 2021; Teresa Hynes, 85, of Mendota, June 15, 2021.

**BIRTHS** – Ted and Emily Leffelmann of LaMoille, boy, May 28, 2021; Mr. and Mrs. LeFevre (Lauer), boy, July 12, 2021.

**July 28, 2021**

The Mendota City Council heard about a proposed project to add more artwork to the city and accepted a bid for the summer street maintenance program at its July 19 regular meeting. Chris Coughlin of North Central Illinois ARTworks in Peru and Michelle Wade of Triple Service Plumbing, Heating, Cooling and

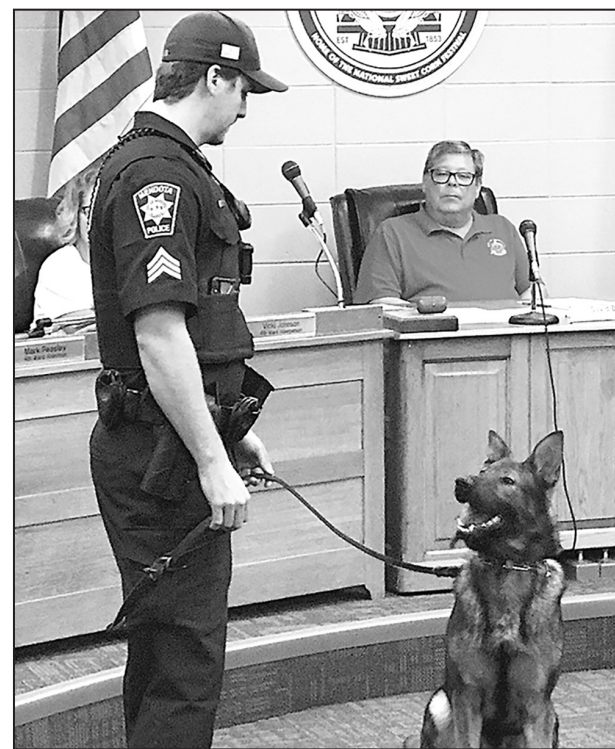
Electric in Mendota spoke to the council about the possibility of bringing a historic mural to downtown Mendota.

Preparations are in full swing for this year's Sweet Corn Festival Queen Pageant. Twelve contestants will grace the stage when the pageant takes place at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 13 on the First State stage on U.S. 34 in downtown Mendota.

Democratic Gov. JB Pritzker announced he will seek a second term, joined once again by Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton as a running mate.

Sublette's annual one-day tractor drive will be held on Wednesday, Aug. 4. Line-up will be held at Sublette Centennial Park with tractors departing the park at 8 a.m. Participants may also start from Amboy City Park at 9 a.m.

**DEATHS** – Ken "Artie" Archer, 71, formerly of Mendota, July 22, 2021; Mardelle Jean Larson, 79, of Tulsa, Okla., July 16, 2021; Mary Lou Reppin, 86, of Mendota, July 20, 2021; Catherine Elizabeth Radtke, 95, of Mendota, July 23, 2021; Stephen Downie, 75, of Burseson, Texas, July 10, 2021; Doratheia Lena Robinson, 91, of Mendota, July 17, 2021; Kathleen "Kathy" Ann Sondgeroth, 68, of Peru, formerly of LaMoille, July 23, 2021; Marie Dean Booth Gowin, 84, of Duncan, Okla., formerly of Mendota, July 23, 2021; Dorothy W. Stouffer, 97, of LaMoille, July 25, 2021.



Officer Josh Sarver introduces Johnny to the City Council on July 6. Johnny is the new K-9 officer for the Mendota Police Department.



From **Mendota Child Development Center**  
1304 Division St., Mendota, IL 61342  
815-538-3333

Abbrielle Rodriguez *Chism* 9 4 Lincoln  
Greeting Created By Age Grade School

Welcome to 2022

Welcome to 2022

From **State Farm** Kurt Bruno, Agent  
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# AUGUST

### Aug. 4, 2021

A project that could see the “reincarnation” of the former Union Depot Train Station is underway in Mendota. An announcement for the “Raise the Depot”

project was made during a special event on Aug. 2 at the Breaking the Prairie and Union Depot Railroad museums. “Raise the Depot” would be the latest public art installation for the Silo Pathways Countryside Public Art Tour.

A sign for the “Mendota Gold” mural was unveiled during a ceremony on Aug. 2 to announce another Silo Pathways Countryside Public Art Tour project proposed for Mendota. The sign contains information about the creation of “Mendota Gold” and other facts.

The Mendota City Council acted on zoning variance requests and announced the upcoming sale of property at its Aug. 2 regular meeting.

Practices continue for the 11 candidates in this year’s Sweet Corn Festival Queen Pageant. The young ladies are getting ready for

the big night when they take the First State Bank stage on U.S. 34 in downtown Mendota to see who will wear the crown for 2021. The festivities are set for 7:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 13.

**DEATHS** – Salvador Escatel Arteaga, 85, of Mendota, July 28, 2021; Marie (Dean) Booth Rodgers Gowin, 84, of Duncan, Okla., July 23, 2021; Pamela Funfsinn, 70, of Mendota, July 26, 2021; Robert “Bob” P. Rasgaitis, 57, of Harvard, July 20, 2021.

### Aug. 11, 2021

The winners of the first “Capturing Our Town” photography contest have been announced by the Mendota Museum & Historical Society and the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce, sponsors of the contest: Winter Wonderland – Donnetta Holtz; Down on

the Farm – Beth Stratton; Iconic Structures – Ruth Dunlap; On the Tracks – Gerry Holtz; In the Good Ol’ Summertime – Michelle Piller; Fall – Kirby Hayward; School Days – Donnetta Holtz; Miscellaneous Novelty-Anything Goes – Trevor Lengsfeld.

The excitement is building and the identity of the 2021 Sweet Corn Festival Queen will soon be revealed as the contestants are making their final preparations for the pageant to be held on Friday, Aug. 13 at 7:30 p.m. The event will take place on the First State Bank stage on U.S. 34 in downtown Mendota.

Masks will be required at all Illinois long-term care facilities, day cares and Pre-K-12 schools, Gov. JB Pritzker announced last week amid a nationwide surge of COVID-19.

**DEATHS** – Janet Marie Denk, 79, of Mendota, Aug. 7, 2021; Joanne Brown-Oberheide, 78, formerly of LaMoille, Aug. 6, 2021.

**BIRTHS** – Cole Jilderda and Libbie Wamhoff of Tiskilwa, boy, July 29, 2021; Victor Muro and Jamie Urbino of Mendota, girl, Aug. 2, 2021.

### Aug. 18, 2021

After a one-year absence due to the pandemic, Mendota’s 74th Annual Sweet Corn Festival returned this year under sunny, blue skies. But for Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Shelby Weide who oversaw the four-day event for the first time, the lead up to opening day was anything but smooth sailing. On Wednesday, Aug. 11, one day before the start of the festival, Mendota was hit by a major storm that caused damage in all areas of town and knocked out power for many residents



**Perris Stachlewitz, seated, was selected as the Queen of the 74th annual Mendota Sweet Corn Festival at the pageant on Aug. 13. Natalie Orozco, left, and Olivia Eddy were chosen as attendants.**

and businesses including the Chamber office downtown.

Perris Stachlewitz was selected as the Queen of the 74th annual Mendota Sweet Corn Festival at the pageant on Aug. 13. Natalie Orozco and Olivia Eddy were chosen as attendants.

The Mendota City Council approved several TIF-related ordinances and amended an ordinance concerning bee hives at its Aug. 16 regular meeting. A committee meeting was held earlier in August, at which time it was decided to amend the municipal code to allow bee hives with certain restrictions.

Nearly every county in Illinois lost population over the past decade, mirroring a national trend of greater concentrations of people

leaving rural areas and moving to larger metropolitan areas.

### Aug. 25, 2021

Growing up in Mendota, Perris Stachlewitz had dreamed of being in the Sweet Corn Festival Queen Pageant one day, but she never expected to win the crown. Now that she has won the role of 2021 Queen, Stachlewitz looks forward to sharing her love for Mendota and plans to serve her community in a variety of new ways.

Brian Dallam and Anthony Welty are playing the long game when it comes to their hopyard. Luckily, the cousins love a challenge. Since hop farms are relatively new to Illinois, their growing venture that started

2022

From all of us at  
**The City of Mendota**

Linda                      10                      4                      Holy Cross  
Greeting Created By                      Age                      Grade                      School

with an idea in 2016 and led to construction of a 1-acre chopyard in Amboy the following year was a risk.

A capacity crowd packed into the Illinois State Board of Education room last week as many more stood outside the building to protest the state's new indoor mask mandate in all public and nonpublic schools.

**DEATHS** – Patricia A. (Frizol) Bieser, 94, of Mendota, Aug. 17, 2021; David Francis Fitzgerald, 64, of Mendota, Aug. 21, 2021; Bruce Alan Smith, 75, of Mendota, Oct. 25, 2020; Frederic F. Topel, 83, of Mendota, Aug. 11, 2021; Darlene H. Spriet, 92, of Mendota, Aug. 18, 2021.

**BIRTHS** – Tyler Gibson and Alex Easley, boy, Aug. 6, 2021; Mr. and Mrs. Jones (Guinea), girl, Aug. 10, 2021; Mr. and Mrs. Cody Phalen (Ashley Piskie) of Mendota, boy, Aug. 12, 2021.

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**Sept. 1, 2021**

The statewide mask mandate indoors is back, and educators and health care professionals will be required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Gov. JB Pritzker announced last week amid an ongoing surge in the pandemic that first arrived in Illinois in March 2020. As of Aug. 30, people are required to wear masks indoors, Pritzker announced.

The body of Rhonda Politsch, 62, of Sublette was found in a cornfield near Ottawa on Saturday, Aug. 28 after being reported missing around 10 p.m. the night before. Ottawa Police were informed that a woman, later identified as Politsch, had her dog run away from her and into a cornfield earlier in the day in the area of Farm and Fleet in Ottawa.

**DEATHS** – Cassandra Marie Martin, 37, of Earlville, Aug. 12, 2021; Allen Lee Bickett, 75, of Earlville, Aug. 24, 2021; Benjamin T. Hochstatter III, 74, of Davenport, Iowa, Aug. 10, 2021; James “Roy” Hensley Jr., 77, of LaSalle, Aug. 25, 2021; Lauren “Bud” McLaughlin, 100, of Troy Grove, Aug. 30, 2021; Rhonda Politsch, 62, of Sublette, Aug. 29, 2021; Gary D. Bankes, 82, of Ladd, Aug. 26, 2021.

**BIRTHS** – Mr. and Mrs. Paul Bernhardt (Tanya Oertel) of Lacon, boy, Aug. 21, 2021.

**Sept. 8, 2021**

Flames shot from the engine of a car as members of the Mendota Fire Department sprang into action during the demolition derby at the Tri-County Fair in Mendota on Sept. 5. The driver was able to escape unharmed. The demolition derby put the finishing touches on another fair held during Labor Day weekend. As the pandemic rages

on, support for one another and community has never been more critical. In another act of kindness among many during the past 17 months, Kurt Bruno State Farm Insurance has donated 600 reusable State Farm water bottles to Northbrook, Lincoln and Blackstone schools in Mendota. All of the water bottles are customizable so each student can be assigned to their own bottle.

Look for a typical winter in Illinois if the Farmers’ Almanac’s winter prediction holds true. The Farmers’ Almanac predicts a cold and snowy January for Illinois, but a much quieter month of February.

Democrats in the General Assembly pushed through a new set of legislative maps during a one-day special session on Aug. 31, although the process they used sparked the ire of Republicans and voting rights advocates alike.

**DEATHS** – Sherry L. Volkert, 71, of Mendota, Sept. 3, 2021; Janice “Jan” M. Silfies, 82, of LaMoille, Sept. 1, 2021; Dawn M. Woolard, 49, of West Brooklyn, Aug. 30, 2021; Donald “Don” Arthur Buck, 85, of Red Oak, N.C., Aug. 27, 2021.

**Sept. 15, 2021**

There will be two opportunities for children to Trick or Treat in Mendota this year as set by the Mendota City Council. The first will be on Friday, Oct. 29 from 3-5 p.m. at participating Mendota businesses throughout the community. The second date will be on Halloween, Sunday, Oct. 31, from 5-7 p.m.

Several new pet waste stations are in place at Lake Mendota and Lake Kakusha thanks to the efforts of Jeany Donovan and her fiancé Tyke Lopez. The young couple had spent many happy hours playing at the park with their beloved

dog, Daisy Mae, but they noticed that people were not very good about picking up after their dogs. After Daisy Mae passed away this year, Donovan knew she wanted to do something special in her dog’s memory and came up with the idea of pet waste stations.

Classic cars and trucks lined Main Street in Sublette during the Sublette Country Car Show on Sept. 11. The show featured Kaiser-Frazer, Hudson-Nash and Willys Overland vehicles, while many more makes and models of cars, trucks and motorcycles were included in the show. Food was available during the five-hour event and a 50/50 drawing was held. Activities continued in Sublette the next day with the Pullin’ in the Park Truck & Tractor Pull, which also included fun and games for children.

**DEATHS** – Kenneth R. Purvis, 76, of Sublette, Sept. 9, 2021; Raymond L. Edwards, 83, of Compton, Aug. 10, 2021; Jose Guadalupe Perez, 49, of Mendota, Sept. 5, 2021; Joan J. (Maurer) Eiberger, 87, of Peru, Sept. 10, 2021; Norma Lee (Dutton) Kessinger, 87, of Mendota, Sept. 7, 2021; Nancy A. Stevens, 82, of Mendota, Sept. 9, 2021; Richard Harold Bettner, 86, of Salt Springs, Fla., formerly of Paw Paw, Sept. 8, 2021; Michael “Mike” Walzer, 76, of Chandler, Ariz., formerly of Streator, Sept. 2, 2021.

**BIRTHS** – Mr. and Mrs. Dickey (Muler), girl, Aug. 24, 2021.

**Sept. 22, 2021**

Homecoming Week activities will take place Sept. 27 through Oct. 2 at Mendota High School. Reporting at the Sept. 20

District 280 Board of Education meeting, Principal Denise Aughenbaugh said they are trying to keep homecoming as traditional as possible and still follow COVID protocols.

Homecoming Week 2021 is scheduled for Sept. 27 to Oct. 2 at Mendota High School. This year’s theme is “Olympic Games in Trojan Town.”

Traffic control signs will go up at a Mendota intersection and several requests were approved by the Mendota City Council at its Sept. 20 regular meeting. In Aldermanic reports, Vicki Johnson said that a traffic study was done at the intersection of Fifth Avenue and Seventh Street and it was determined that yield signs are warranted northbound and southbound on Fifth Avenue at Seventh Street. The placement of

**HAPPY NEW YEAR**

2022

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Taylor	10	4th	Lincoln
Greeting Created By	Age	Grade	School

yield signs was approved by the council.

**DEATHS** – Donald “Don” Becker, 84, formerly of Mendota, Sept. 10, 2021; Paul A. Ortega, 68, of Mendota, Sept. 19, 2021; Morry L. Schlegel, 79, of LaMoille, Sept. 14, 2021; Shirley Ruth (Fritsch) Bauer, 97, of Earlville, Sept. 12, 2021; Laura Jane (Novotny) Prendergast, 99, formerly of Princeton and Arlington, Jan. 3, 2021; Howard Duane Bonnell, 74, of Amboy, Sept. 17, 2021

### Sept. 29, 2021

Every year, it’s a struggle to choose someone who fully embodies the qualities of a Trojan Hero. After the year we have had, the 2021 Trojan Hero was no question. It is with great pleasure that Mendota High School announces this year’s Trojan Hero, Mrs. Sheri McConville, the District 280 nurse. KayLee Barkman, daughter of Dave and Michelle Barkman, was chosen Queen and Omar Gonzalez, son of Maria Magallanes and Pedro Gonzalez, was chosen King.

The Mendota City Council approved a resolution in support of a Safe Routes to School (SRST) grant application. The application is to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) for federal grant funds to construct sidewalk and required roadway improvements along Eighth Street from Lincoln Elementary to Sixth Avenue (U.S. Route 34).

**DEATHS** – June E. Kofoed, 89, of Mendota, Sept. 24, 2021; Katherine Alan Louise (Kittle) Cross, 66, of Auburn, Wash., Aug. 6, 2021; Glen Robert Boykin, Sr., 88, of Hampton, Va., formerly of Mendota, Sept. 26, 2021.



# OCTOBER

### Oct. 6, 2021

An abandoned, overgrown butterfly garden area at Mendota High School has received new life thanks to a Service Learning Project started by social studies teachers, Jason Artman and Aaron Sester. Artman, who has received in-depth training as an Illinois Civics Instructional Coach, and Sester, who has also had extra training in civics education, joined forces to offer service learning in their classrooms.

The 2021 Mendota High School Homecoming King and Queen, Omar Gonzalez and KayLee Barkman, rode in the parade through downtown Mendota on Oct. 1. The King, Queen and Attendants were announced at a school assembly on Sept. 27 to kick off the Homecoming Week festivities, and then the week culminated with the Homecoming Dance on Oct. 2 in the back parking lot of the high school.

Illinois community colleges have a multi-billion dollar impact on the state’s economy and will be “integral in making a recovery from the pandemic an equi-

table one,” according to a new report from the Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies.

Leaves are starting to fall and the city of Mendota is gearing up for its annual leaf vacuum program, it was announced at the Oct. 4 regular meeting of the Mendota City Council. Alderman Jim Fitzpatrick reported that the leaf vacuum program will begin on Monday, Oct. 18.

**DEATHS** – Joan Elizabeth Ecklund, 91, of LaMoille, Sept. 27, 2021; Mary Kay Evans, 79, of Mendota, Sept. 30, 2021; Nancy V. (Ferguson) Robinson, 78, of Glenview, Sept. 28, 2021; Traci Ann Given, 49, of Mendota, Oct. 2, 2021.

### Oct. 13, 2021

Mendota High School will present its Fall play, “Little Women,” on Saturday, Oct. 23 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, Oct. 24 at 2:30 p.m. in the MHS auditorium.

The Re-Imagine Mendota Fall Festival will be held on Saturday, Oct. 16 from 5:30-10 p.m. in the 700 block of Illinois Avenue in downtown Mendota.

A stretch of dry weather allowed area farmers to make a significant dent in the harvest process, but periods of rain over the last weekend and into this week have put a temporary halt to harvest season.

A new report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) shows that COVID-19 vaccinations may have helped prevent roughly 13,000 new COVID-19 infections and 2,100 deaths among seniors in Illinois during the first five months of 2021.

**DEATHS** – Stanley LeRoy Pohl, 72, a resident of Wynne, Ark., formerly of Mendota, Oct. 2, 2021; Shirley Jean Lage, 80, of Greencastle, Ind., Oct. 7, 2021; Sally Ann Smith, 79, of Somonauk, formerly of



**Mendota fans cheer on the Trojans as they celebrate after securing the Chillicothe Class 1A Sectional soccer championship on Oct. 23. The Trojan posted a 3-2 win over Quincy Notre Dame to advance to the supersectional.**

North Aurora, Oct. 1, 2021.

**BIRTHS** – Ryan and Jubentina (Escatel) Smith of Mendota, girl, Oct. 8, 2021.

### Oct. 20, 2021

The preliminary numbers for this year’s EAV are up by over 5 percent across LaSalle, Bureau and Lee counties. This welcome news was delivered by Superintendent Jeff Prusator at the Mendota High School District 280 Board of Education meeting on Oct. 18.

The Mendota City Council heard a report about city parks and learned the police department will be getting new uniforms at the Oct. 18 regular council meeting. Police Chief Greg Kellen asked for and received the city council’s support in purchasing new uniforms for the department. The cost for the entire department will be \$22,000. Mendota resident Cody Phalen gave a presentation to the council about a survey he conducted in regard to the city parks.

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for approximately 70 million Americans will increase 5.9

percent in 2022, the Social Security Administration announced.

**DEATHS** – Walter Raymond Finley, 94, of Scottsdale, Ariz., Oct. 1, 2021; Richard “Dick” Archer, 92, formerly of Compton, Oct. 10, 2021; Dale Denault, 91, of Mendota, Oct. 13, 2021; James “Jim” A. Deihl, 75, of LaMoille, Oct. 15, 2021; Raymond J. Michel, 77, of Naperville, Oct. 15, 2021; Roberta Jean Northcutt, 93, of Mendota, Oct. 16, 2021; Roxie F. Schultz, 80, of Peru, formerly of Mendota, Oct. 16, 2021; Lyle Eugene Littlewood, 87, of The Gardens in Virginia Beach, Va., Oct. 6, 2021.

### Oct. 27, 2021

Mendota fans cheered on the Trojans as they celebrated after securing the Chillicothe Class 1A Sectional soccer championship on Oct. 23. The Trojan posted a 3-2 win over Quincy Notre Dame to advance to the supersectional.

Children in costume are invited to trick-or-treat at Mendota businesses and shops on Friday, Oct. 29 at participating businesses located throughout the

town. Business owners will be passing out treats from 3-5 p.m.

The 77th annual Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce Meeting & Dinner will be held on Friday, Nov. 5 at the Mendota Civic Center. Hors d’oeuvres will be served at 6 p.m. followed by dinner and the awards presentation at 7 p.m.

Gov. JB Pritzker announced an executive order Oct. 22 that will add day care personnel to the list of professions that must either be vaccinated against COVID-19 or submit to weekly testing. The governor’s office said it expects the order to affect 55,000 individuals in the state, although many of them may have already received a vaccine.

**DEATHS** – Louise A. Sheridan, 94, formerly of Mendota, Oct. 24, 2021; Julie A. Bonnell, 61, of Mendota, Oct. 19, 2021; Jack C. Robison, 76, of Mendota, Oct. 19, 2021; Sandra Joy (Thryselius) Simmons, 78, of Mendota, Oct. 17, 2021.

**BIRTHS** – Josh and Jennifer (Foulk) Bast of San Antonio, Texas, boy, Oct. 16, 2021.

# NOVEMBER

## Nov. 3, 2021

The Mendota City Council acted on an employee resignation and heard about ending dates for city services at its Nov. 1 regular meeting. Toby Fitzgerald, chief operator at the city sewer plant, resigned effective Nov. 14. The leaf vacuum program will end for the season on Nov. 29 and the city incinerator-burn pit will close for the season the same day.

The Mendota Veterans Day program will be held on Thursday, Nov. 11 at Veterans Park in downtown Mendota. The event will begin at 10:45 a.m. with music provided by the Mendota High School band and the program will start promptly at 11 a.m.

Veterans and the public will be welcomed to The Hume-Carnegie Museum on Washington Street in

Mendota for an open house to honor all veterans on Sunday, Nov. 14 from 1-3 p.m.

Despite cold and rainy conditions, a large contingent of trick-or-treaters still ventured out to businesses in downtown Mendota and other parts of town to pick up some of their favorite treats on Oct. 29. Several other trick-or-treat opportunities were made available to the children that day, before the Mendota-wide Halloween trick-or-treat time on Oct. 31, which saw improved weather conditions.

**DEATHS** – Ronald E. Michalec, 85, of Mendota, Oct. 28, 2021.

## Nov. 10, 2021

Despite entering mid-November, Autumn colors are holding on in the Mendota area, like those hugging the banks of the Little Vermilion River running through

the Snyder's Grove Nature Area southeast of Mendota. Above-average temperatures that have encompassed the region recently will give way to below-average readings as Winter creeps ever-closer.

The city of Mendota Water Department will conduct its annual fire hydrant flushing activities Nov. 8-24. The work will be performed between the hours of 6:30 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in significant drops in enrollment, academic performance and the likelihood of graduating high school on time, according to the latest school report card released recently by the Illinois State Board of Education.

One day after the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Steve Lauer, left, accepts the Hume Outstanding Service Award from Jenn Masini, Chair of the Board of the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce on Nov. 5.

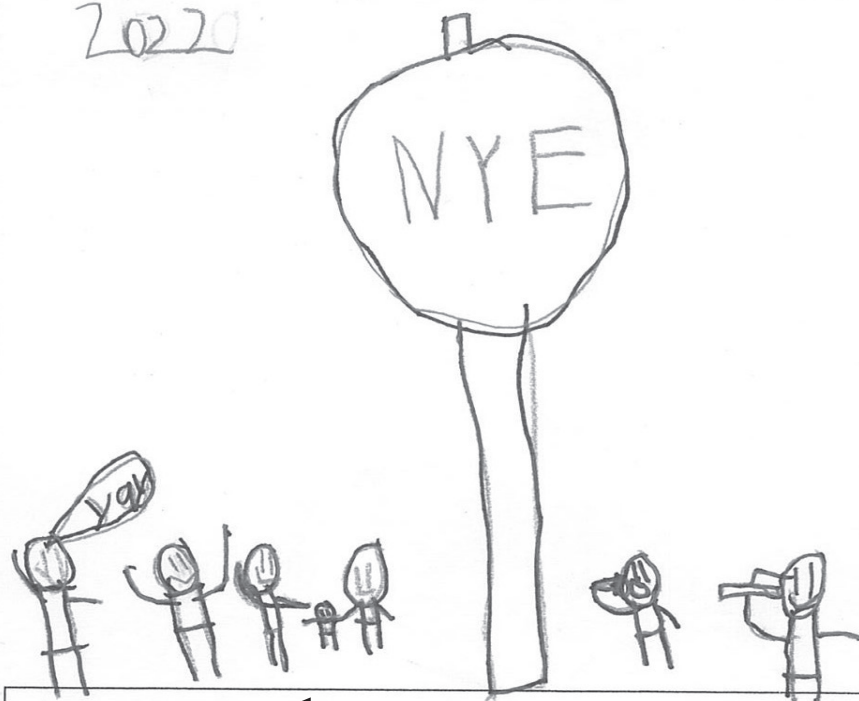
Out with the old and in with the new. Its time for 2022!



From **SPORTS-N-STUFF**  
804 Washington Street • Mendota

Greeting Created By Molly Wilson Age 9 Grade 4<sup>th</sup> School Holy Cross

2022



From **FIRST STATE BANK** Member **FDIC**  
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Greeting Created By Bentley Bejster Age 9 Grade 4 School Lincoln

recommended that children between the ages of 5 and 11 receive the COVID-19 vaccine manufactured by Pfizer and BioNTech, the Illinois Department of Public Health adopted the same recommendations.

**DEATHS** – Shirley K. Johnson, 85, of Mendota, Nov. 8, 2021; Elizabeth “Liz” (Bulfer) Kuehl, 83, formerly of Sublette, July 8, 2021; Judy L. Washburn, 71, of LaMoille, Nov. 3, 2021; James Alphonse Jones, 75, of West Brooklyn, Nov. 1, 2021; Todd A. Brown, 57, of LaSalle, Nov. 6, 2021.

#### Nov. 17, 2021

Children from Mrs. Kieffer’s fourth grade class at Lincoln School sang a patriotic song during the Veterans Day program on Nov. 11 at Veterans Park in Mendota. Despite cold and windy conditions, a large crowd assembled in the park for this special occasion. The purpose of the program is to honor and remember all Veterans, both alive and deceased, for their commitment and contribution to our present way of life, and the benefits of liberty and freedom on both domestic and foreign soil.

The general public now will have a quicker and highly efficient way of getting a COVID-19 test thanks to Mendota High School partnering with SHIELD Illinois, and the Illinois Department of Public Health. SHIELD Illinois utilizes the covidSHIELD saliva-based RT-PCR test that is easy to administer, highly accurate and delivers results in 24 hours or less.

Steve Lauer was chosen as the winner of the 2021 Horace Hume Outstanding Service Award by the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce. The announcement was made during the Chamber’s annual dinner held at the Mendota Civic

Center on Nov. 5.

Jamie Bromenschenkel was nominated for and selected as the 2021 Tom Merwin Gold Star Employee Award winner presented at the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner on Nov. 5 at the Mendota Civic Center. The award is sponsored jointly by the Chamber and The Mendota Reporter.

**DEATHS** – Jose Luis “El Mister” Gonzalez, 70, of Mendota, Nov. 11, 2021; Patricia Ann (Hansen) Hogan, 88, of Mendota and Exton, Pa., Oct. 30, 2021; Leon Charles Full, 80, of Monroe, Wis., formerly of Amboy, Nov. 7, 2021; Brad J. Dobrich, 51, of Mendota, Nov. 10, 2021; Virginia “Ginny” Price, 79, of Hartsburg, Nov. 6, 2021.

#### Nov. 24, 2021

The fundraising campaign for the “Raise the Depot” art installation project is in full swing in Mendota. “Raise the Depot” is a public art installation for the Silo Pathways Countryside Public Art Tour. A three-dimensional, 127-foot wide by 50-foot tall mural depicting the historic Union Depot Train Station as it was in downtown Mendota in the 1900s is being proposed and commissioned by Gabe and Michelle Wade in appreciation of the station’s historic significance and stunning turn-of-the century architecture. The mural will be placed on the south side of the Triple Service Inc. building at the corner of Illinois Avenue and Monroe Street in downtown Mendota. The goal is \$143,000.

The holidays are quickly approaching and Mendota will be getting into the spirit of the season when it hosts “A Mendota Christmas” on Saturday, Dec. 4 in downtown Mendota. The event is sponsored by the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce.

Gov. JB Pritzker recently signed into law a tax incentives package that state lawmakers hope will help Illinois become a manufacturing hub for the budding electric vehicle industry. The Reimagining Electric Vehicles in Illinois, or REV Act, passed the General Assembly with near-unanimous bipartisan support during the recently concluded fall session. It provides tax credits for income tax withheld for EV manufacturers and costs to train new or retained employees.

Thanksgiving dinner is expected to cost 14% more this year, with higher turkey prices pulling up that percentage.

**DEATHS** – Catherine M. Taylor, 99, of Mendota, Nov. 19, 2021; David Gene Ultch, 75, of Mendota, Nov. 15, 2021; Jeffrey L. Simpson, 59, of Paw Paw, Nov. 16, 2021; Beverly Jean Serr, 86, of Waco, Texas, formerly of LaMoille, Nov. 17, 2021.

#### Dec. 1, 2021

The holidays are quickly approaching and Mendota will be getting into the spirit of the season when it hosts “A Mendota Christmas” on Saturday, Dec. 4 in downtown Mendota. The event is sponsored by the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce.

The Illinois unemployment rate fell two-tenths of a percentage point in October to 6 percent as employers added 40,900 jobs during the month, the Illinois Department of Employment Security and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics said.

**DEATHS** – Laurel A. Mitchell, 72, of Mendota, Nov. 26, 2021; Julienne Beth Nichols, 56, of LaMoille, Nov. 20, 2021; Patricia “Pat” J. Miranda, 70, of Paw Paw, Nov. 23, 2021; Mayra F. Gonzalez, 41, of Rochelle, formerly of Mendota, Nov. 28, 2021; Robert P. Kurtz, 83, of Mendota, Nov. 20, 2021.

#### Dec. 8, 2021

Santa Claus gave the ‘thumb’s up’ after Elle Zinke of Mendota told him what she wants for Christmas during Santa’s stop at ‘A Mendota Christmas’ on Dec. 4. Many other activities were held during the day to get people in the spirit of the season.

The Mendota City Council heard preliminary figures on the city’s tax levy and were informed of a new broadband option being offered to Mendota at its Dec. 6 regular meeting.

The application portal is now open for another \$297 million of rental assistance for Illinoisans who lost income due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A consumer watchdog group is crying foul over the recent approval for a rate hike for the power company Commonwealth Edison.

**DEATHS** – Paul A. Boening, 81, of Mendota, Dec. 2, 2021; Judith E. Poisel, 81, of Mendota, Dec. 4, 2021; Rev. Harold L. Koonce, 92, of Mendota, Dec. 3, 2021; Jarrod W. Moore, 46, of Amboy, Nov. 26, 2021; Victor R. Burkey, 63, of Hiles, Wis., Nov. 27, 2021; Michael J. Carlson, 72, of Mendota, Dec. 6, 2021.

#### Dec. 15, 2021

Due to rising numbers of COVID-positive individuals and quarantined close contacts, all Mendota students will begin their Winter Break a few days early. Mendota High School District 280 and Mendota Elementary District 289 will have Friday, Dec. 17 as their last day in 2021, meaning no school next week as originally planned. Mendota High School will not be having final exams for the first semester, as they were scheduled for next week.

Mendota High School Principal Denise Aughenbaugh is pleased to announce that 12 students from the Mendota Township High School graduating class of 2022 have been recognized as Illinois State Scholars.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker signed four bills last week that range from requiring restaurants to include milk with kids’ meals with calorie limits, to half-staff flag protocols.

Traffic deaths in the U.S. reached a 15-year-high this year and advocates say the trend is moving in the wrong direction. More than 20,000 people died in crashes during the first six months of 2021, a nearly 20% rise from the year prior. According to Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, impaired driving plays a big role in many of those incidents.

**DEATHS** – Kenneth L. Stockley, 94, of Earlville,

Dec. 10, 2021; Pamala Herdklotz, 77, of Rockford, formerly of Triumph, Dec. 3, 2021.

**BIRTHS** – Jacob and Page (Holland) Leonard of Mendota, boy, Nov. 19, 2021.

#### Dec. 22, 2021

Mendota High School has announced the winners of the 2021-22 DAR and SAR Good Citizens program, sponsored by the Illini Chapter of NSDAR. Alex Stremlau was chosen to receive the DAR award and Andrew Stamberger was the recipient of the SAR award. These awards are open to all seniors. The recipients are nominated by fellow senior classmates and the faculty at MHS. Criteria for the DAR and SAR awards include dependability, cooperation, leadership and patriotism.

Illinois Education Association (IEA) President Kathi Griffin is calling on school districts that are not adhering to Illinois school safety laws to immediately comply.

The unemployment rate in Illinois fell three-tenths of a point in November to 5.7 percent as employers added 19,500 payroll jobs to the economy.

**DEATHS** – Frederick E. Wehmeyer, 81, of DeKalb, Dec. 9, 2021; Nicholas Vito Lonero III, 63, of Mendota, Dec. 15, 2021; Marcella “Sally” Chandler, 88, of Mendota, Dec. 15, 2021; Mary E. McCauley, 88, of Mendota, Dec. 17, 2021; Matthew J. Waudo, 33, of Mendota, Dec. 12, 2021; Barbara J. O’Leary, 90, of Shullsburg, Wis., Dec. 14, 2021; Matthew “Matt” C. Untz, 50, of Mendota, Dec. 16, 2021; Norma Hansen, 90, whose parents were formerly of LaMoille, Dec. 12, 2021; Andrew F. Swanson, 63, of Mendota, Dec. 15, 2021.

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