

The Amboy News

The Depot Museum

Amboy, Illinois

Volume 166 - Number 30

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\$1.00

MASKS AT SCHOOL: What should Amboy students expect when returning to classes this fall?

BY BONNIE MORRIS

Editor

AMBOY – With school starting in less than a month, will masks be required in school buildings and how will that decision be made?

Those questions were posed by Amboy parent Brett Kreiser during the July 15 Amboy School Board meeting. Kreiser, who spoke via Zoom, said he was most interested to know how the decision was being made and was less concerned about what the final decision would be.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, local schools have paid close attention to the spread of the virus within the community and kept the safety of students and staff foremost in mind when making decisions. Amboy Superintendent Joshua Nichols explained that the school district considers guidance from various sources including the CDC, the Illinois Department of Public Health and Illinois State Board of Education as well as the Lee County Health Department. In addition, Nichols said he has spoken with the school district's attorney and their insurance provider to get input regarding safety measures for the coming school year.

"Based on the current CDC recommendations, fully vaccinated people do not have to wear masks or quarantine after being exposed," Nichols said. "Unvaccinated people should still wear masks."

One exception to the current mask rule is on busses. When riding a bus, everyone is still required to wear a mask, Nichols noted. Even though Illinois has already adopted the CDC standards, he said schools are waiting to see exactly what that means and he expects to have more information in the coming weeks.

See SCHOOL page A2

Amboy Education Foundation fundraisers back on track

BY MARK BECKER

Amboy Education Foundation

Before we bring you up to speed on upcoming events, the Amboy Education Foundation wants to thank everyone that participated in any way to the success of our first Virtual Voyage On-line Auction.

The idea of an on-line auction was new to us, but with the uncertainty of social gatherings and our desire to keep the programming level consistent to the students and staff we ventured in this new arena. We remain in awe of the generosity of those that donated amazing items and delicious baked goods. Of course the generosity of the area businesses, community and alumni did not stop there as many people registered for the on-line auction and aggressively bid the many items available.

See AEF page A2



LEE COUNTY 4-HERS DISPLAY THEIR HARDWORK

The Lee County 4-H Fair was back in action last weekend after going virtually in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic. 4-Hers from around Lee County displayed their projects for judging and for the general public to admire, and grooming and prepared the livestock for judging.

Mary Mays/Amboy News



IL ROUTE 52 CONSTRUCTION

Work continued last week on IL Route 52 with the southbound lane getting freshly paved. Please be aware of the construction and crew as you travel on IL Route 52.

Mary Mays/Amboy News



CLIPPER HIGHLIGHTS

This week's column features "The Voice of the Clippers" Steve Marco

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Kenneth J. Novak

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Snyders



DONATION TO HONOR FLIGHT

Shauna Sheridan, Assistant Universal Supervisor at the First National Bank of Amboy's North Branch at Joe Drive, presented a donation to Jim Travi, a volunteer for the Honor Flight of the Quad Cities, last Tuesday. The donation is one of many made by the employees of First National Bank in Amboy with funds generated by the Casual Friday Program. Employees at all the branches in Amboy, Dixon, Franklin Grove and Monroe Center participate in the program and a variety of charities benefit from it throughout the year. Sheridan said she requested to do the presentation for the Honor Flight donation because she has numerous family members that have served or are serving in the military. Travi said there are two flights scheduled for 2021 and Lee County veterans will travel to Washington D. C. in the spring of 2022. Anyone wanting to know more about the Honor Flights and how to be part of one, regardless of where they live, should visit www.honorflightqc.org.

Mary Mays/Amboy News



Amboy News file photo

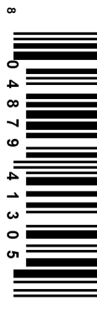
Annual tractor drive planned for Aug. 4

SUBLETTE — The 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.

Cost of the ride is \$20 per person which includes the ride, refreshments, lunch and a picnic supper at 5 p.m. at the park in Sublette.

Local Cup and Cake will be open at 6 a.m. so participants may purchase coffee before the ride.

For more information, please contact Don Dinges at 815-713-5675.



LOCAL NEWS

SCHOOL continued from page A1

Nichols also reminded everyone that even once decisions are made, the safety protocol guidelines are subject to change at any time. Currently, there is a nationwide rise in COVID cases, which could affect the decisions made by some school districts based on the number of cases in their local communities. "Fortunately, in Amboy our case count is low right now," he said. "Also, our school buildings can manage the recommended three feet of distance but other school districts may not have the space to do that."

Nichols encouraged anyone with questions or concerns to contact him.

OTHER BUSINESS

Nichols reported that work is continuing to move forward on the building project. He noted that they have made plans if there are any additional delays in the shipment of items for the new school. "A lot of things are here and are still being installed, but we have plans if certain items do not arrive in time for the start of school," he said.

Nichols thanked AHS Principal Janet Crownhart for bringing in high school students to help move items from the old junior high to the new building and also move unneeded items out of the high school for disposal, which counted as community service hours for the students.

Board member Katie Pratt reported that Margaret Vaessen, Illinois FFA state reporter, recently presented a plaque in appreciation for the support she received during her years at AHS. "As an FFA state officer, she thanked us for helping her and for providing a strong FFA program that allowed her to progress," Pratt said. "She is very grateful for that."

The board approved Jendy Solutions for installation of the Verkada surveillance camera and license at the new

junior high. This will be the final step in having all three Amboy schools on one system, which will be accessible to local law enforcement.

The board approved S-Net Communications to provide a Cloudphone system, which Nichols said will provide savings for the district and is a better system than the current one.

PERSONNEL

Following closed session, the board accepted the resignations of Kelsi Eyster as English and Language Arts teacher

at Amboy Junior High School and of Eduardo Escatel as Spanish teacher at Amboy High School.

They hired Elizabeth Sunday as a first grade teacher at Central School for the 2021-22 school year; Sarah Herkert as 240-day custodian at Amboy Junior High, effective Aug. 1; and extra-curricular positions for the 2021-22 school year.

The next regular board meeting will take place at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 19 at Central School. All meetings are open to the public.

AEF continued from page A1

We exceeded our goal by earning \$14,915. This revenue as well as the next two events will help finance the \$27,000 allocated to the Amboy School District for the upcoming school year. We could not do this without your support.

What's next? Mark your calendars for the 26th Annual Lyle Reuter Golf Outing. It is scheduled for Friday, Aug. 6 at Shady Oaks Country Club. Are you feeling lucky? Vaessen Brothers Chevrolet will have a 2022 Chevrolet Equinox on display near the 17th green for someone to win. All you have to do is hit a Hole-in-One on this hole. Lunch, dinner and golf is only \$70. Interested in putting a team together or sponsoring a hole? Please contact Kelly Klein at 815-501-2502.

Have you heard the rumor? The Depot Day Dash has changed its name. It is now known as the Sylvan Shuffle 5K Run/Walk in honor of a founding member and longtime president of the Amboy Education Foundation, Sylvan Leffelman. Sylvan helped the AEF grow from an entity with just a few thousand dollars in private donations to a Non-profit agency that has allocated hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Amboy School District. Sylvan and his wife Virginia passed away this past year. This is just a small gesture to acknowledge

a person/family that had given selflessly to this community for many years. This event will take place on Saturday, Aug. 28. Online registration can be accessed through the Amboy High School website or at RunSignup.com. Is your family the fastest in the area? Put together a family team of 5-10 runners and sign up for the Family Challenge. Maybe you and your kin can maintain bragging rights as the fastest family in the area. If you have any questions or prefer not to register online, please contact Mark Becker at 815-973-5732.

We are always looking for new members. Our meetings are normally the first Thursday of every month at 7 a.m. and last approximately 45 minutes. We have had to be flexible with our meeting locations during the pandemic and as businesses recover and return to normal. Hopefully, we will soon be able to return to our longtime partner and meeting location, the Amboy Family Restaurant. Please feel free to contact Mark Becker if you are interested in joining or possibly volunteering for events.

Thank you again to everyone for your support. We believe these funds make a difference in the level of education the students of Amboy receive.

White awards more than \$1.4 million in grants

SPRINGFIELD — Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White has awarded over \$1.4 million in FY21 School District Library Grant Program awards to 649 public school districts. More

than 1.5 million Illinois students served by school library media programs will benefit from the grants.

Locally, Amboy CUSD was awarded \$850. "As a former public school

teacher and administrator, I know our school libraries are very important in helping students learn and prepare themselves for the future," White said. "Illinois was the first state to implement

a school district grant program, and I'm pleased that we can continue to provide school libraries with some of the financial resources they need to produce well educated students."

Public Act 102-0039 provided for an increased school library grant rate of \$.885 per student, with a minimum grant award of \$850. The School District Library Grant Program is used to acquire fiction and/or non-fiction books, educational CDs and DVDs, and library subscriptions to electronic resources, as well as to improve technology by purchasing new computers or improving wi-fi connectivity.

Information about the grant program can be found at: <http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/grants/schoolpercap-grant.html>.

Sylvan Shuffle 5K RUN/WALK

Formerly the Depot Days Dash

Saturday, August 28

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All proceeds to benefit the students of Amboy, CUSD 272.



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LOCAL NEWS

TEEN TURF

Upcoming Events

School supplies give away-please contact us if you need supplies for K-8th grade either by Facebook messenger or at the building 815-857-4800. Please tell us the name and their upcoming grade. We will be giving them away in August.

Summer Program

We have concluded our summer program and the kids earned a trip to Hurricane Harbor on Aug. 5 and dinner afterwards. They did a super job and the community should be proud of them.

Thank You's

Official Thank you's for the fair breakfast will be addressed in next week's paper. We are blessed by the following people who donated: Sandra Morrissey and Dennis Donna for their monetary donation; Gabby Ketchum for cupcakes; Di Shaffer for the tea; Carl and Dorine Ackert for hamburger buns; Tammy, Scott, and Brooklyn Strub for the straws; Sunset Inn Restaurant for the cans and Mark Grossman for delivering them; Alice and Leroy Dukes for the pizza. Breadsticks, and juice for lunch; Larry Piper for taking cans; everyone who donates cans; Donna Wellman for the cookies, and Thomas family for the 4-H dinner.

Needs

None at this time. Thank you to all those that have donated.

Final Word

Prayer for Peace. Lord, make us an instrument of Thy peace; where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. Amen.

OSF HealthCare to require all mission partners be vaccinated against COVID-19

ROCKFORD — OSF HealthCare continues to follow the science on COVID-19 vaccines and assess the pandemic situation overall. Based on this information and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), they have thoughtfully made the decision to require all Mission Partners (employees) to be vaccinated against COVID-19 by the end of September of this year.

"We did not make this decision lightly," said Mike Cruz, M.D., chief operating officer, OSF HealthCare. "As health care providers, it is our ethical obligation to be vigilant about the safety of our patients. Vaccinations are credited with the decline in COVID-19 hospitalizations and cases across the country and throughout our Ministry, and we firmly believe that vaccination against COVID-19 is the best way to keep our patients and Mission Partners safe."

"OSF has been consistent in recommending vaccinations as our best shot to move forward to end this pandemic that has taken so much from so many, but we need everyone on board to make a deep and lasting impact," remarked Shelley Nguyen, vice president of workforce management, OSF HealthCare. "Our communities we serve and our patients depend on us to create a safe, healthy environment. We owe that same commitment to our Mission Partners."

This decision is consistent with existing OSF vaccination policies that require Mission Partners to get a flu shot every year and stay current with other vaccinations like measles, mumps, rubella and whooping cough. Exemptions are available for religious conscience or medical reasons and must be formally requested, documented and approved. Any Mission Partner who does not qualify for an exemption and who chooses not to receive the COVID-19 vaccine may be subject to our disciplinary processes which could result in loss of employment.

OSF HealthCare employs nearly 24,000 Mission Partners in 150 locations throughout the state of Illinois and in Michigan.

Email calendar items to mmays@amboynews.com

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

DIXON-The Lee County Health Department will have Immunization Clinics for Children and Adults by appointment only. Call 815-284-3371 to make an appointment or for information on other services available. You may also visit the website at www.lchd.com for a list of services available.

AMBOY-The Amboy Farmer's Market will be held from 8 a.m. until noon on Friday, July 30, in the Depot Museum parking lot. No market during Depot Days. Vendors are welcome. Call Alice Dukes with questions at 815-857-4015.

AMBOY-The Summer Concert Series will continue at 7 p.m. on Saturday, July 31, with Brother Sister Act at the downtown bandstand. Bring a chair and a friend and enjoy this free concert.

AMBOY-The City of Amboy committee meetings will be held at 6 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 2, at the Community Center, 280 W. Wasson Rd.

SUBLETTE-The Annual Sublette One Day Tractor Ride will be held on Wednesday, Aug. 4. Participants will depart Sublette Centennial Park at 8 a.m. or Amboy City Park at 9 a.m. For more information, call Don Dinges at 815-713-5675.

FRANKLIN GROVE-The Dixon Park District and Franklin Creek Grist Mill will partner together for Movies

in the Park to present "The Lion King" at 8:15 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 7, at Franklin Creek Grist Mill, 1893 Twist Rd. Bring a chair, food, blanket and friends.

AMBOY-The Amboy Fire Protection District Board will meet at 8 a.m. on Monday, Aug. 9, at the Fire Station.

AMBOY-The Amboy Lions Club will meet at 6 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 9, at the Community Center, 280 W. Wasson Rd.

SUBLETTE-The Sublette Village Board will meet at 7 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 9, at the Ellice Dinges Center, 202 S. West St.

EAST GROVE TWP.-The East Grove Township Board Meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 10, at the East Grove Township Hall.

AMBOY-The Amboy Township meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 11, at the township building, 106 S. Prospect.

MAY TWP.-The May Township meeting will be held at 7:30 on Wednesday, Aug. 11, at the township maintenance building.

MENDOTA-The 74th Annual Sweet Corn Festival will be held Thursday – Sunday, Aug. 12 – 15 in and around the downtown area. Visit www.sweetcornfestival.com for a full schedule

of events.

AMBOY-Depot Days will be held Thursday – Sun-

day, Aug. 26 – 29. Special section in the Aug. 18 issue of the Amboy News with full schedule.

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U. OF I. EXTENSION NEWS

A research team from the University of Illinois is looking for participants for the WITS Wellness Research Study. Any person 50 years and older who has not been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or dementia is eligible. Participants can receive up to \$60 for their participation in the study.

The study will include 12 weekly health and wellness sessions at various locations across the state. The sessions will be fun, with interactive discussions and pen and paper activities on topics such as healthy eating, managing stress, improving sleep, and more. "This is a great opportunity to attend fun and engaging health sessions while helping Extension test and shape future programming," says Chelsey Byers, Family Life Educator, University of Illinois Extension.

Participants will take part in either a Fall 2021 session or a Spring 2022 session. Findings from the study will be used to improve future program offerings from University of Illinois Extension.

If you wish to participate in the study, please visit go.illinois.edu/witswellness. If an accommodation is needed to participate in the program, please contact Extension at 217-333-7672. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow enough time to meet access needs.



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The Amboy News

The Depot Museum

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Letters Policy: The Amboy News encourages letters from readers on current issues. Letters should be brief and must be signed, with a street address and daytime telephone number for verification purposes. The newspaper reserves the right to publish, edit, condense, revise or reject any submissions.

OBITUARIES/LOCAL NEWS

OBITUARIES

Kenneth J. Novak

Dec. 5, 1947 - July 18, 2021

DIXON — Kenneth J. Novak, of Dixon, aka "Krazy Ken the Farmer's Friend," died fighting stage III esophageal cancer at the age of 73 on Sunday, July 18, 2021 at KSB Hospital in Dixon.

He was born on Dec. 5, 1947 in Lorain, Ohio, the son of John and Margaret (Dugovich) Novak.

Everywhere he went, he made people laugh, often in yellow pants. From his days in Lorain, Ohio as part of the "Snakes," to Dayton University where he was nicknamed, "Pigpen," to Amboy, Illinois where he led the Lion's Club and the Depot Days Parade, to the streets of Dixon, where he danced front and center in a Flash Mob, Ken was full of fun.

He lived life to its fullest, valuing education, hard work, and giving to the underdog. He graduated from the University of Dayton (Go Flyers!) with his Bachelor's degree and from Northern Illinois University with his Master's Degree.

In 1971, he moved from Ohio to work at Nachusa Lutheran Home. He then went to work at Allied Locke where he learned he could "sell like Hell!" In 1986, he decided to make a career change to be his own boss. Ken owned and operated C&N Supply

in Dixon since 1986 and FarmChains.com since 2008. He would not have been so successful without the help of Jane Swinton, who put up with him at work for 21 years.

Ken was a dedicated husband and father. He and his wife, Carol, were married on April 20th, 1978. In their 39 years together, they were foster parents, raised five children, and traveled the world. He was preceded in death by Carol in 2017, and his parents.

Ken was generous with his time and money and enjoyed taking his family out for a meal, to a waterpark, or cooking out on his Big Green Egg. He is survived by his children, Michele (Chris) Podkolski, of Sterling, Christine (Bill) Wengelewski, of Rochelle, Amanda (Doug) Hicks, of Dixon, Carissa Novak, of Dixon, and Clarence Novak, of Aurora. Kenneth is also survived by nine grandchildren, Nicole (Josh), Megan, Brian, Ben, Liam, Austin, Abby, Lily and Andrew; and one brother, Rick (Elaine) Novak of Mansfield, Ohio.

Ken was a faithful member of the Franklin Grove Church of the Brethren, where he served as Moderator and made delicious pancakes. He was president of the Am-



boy Lions Club and received the Lions Club Humanitarian International Award. Kenny will be dearly missed by his downtown Dixon friends including those from Shop Talk, Rosbrook Studios, and the Crystal Cork where he was always the life of the party.

Visitation was held from 4-7 p.m., on Thursday, July 22, 2021, at the Jones Funeral Home in Dixon. Funeral Services was held at 10 a.m., on Friday, July 23, 2021, at the Franklin Grove Church of the Brethren. Burial followed at Emmert Cemetery in Dixon. A memorial will be established to Dixon Park District and Dixon Main Street.

Arrangements by the Jones Funeral Home in Dixon.

Online condolences can be left at www.thejonesfh.com.

Scammers hitting millions of people waiting for passports

ROCKFORD — Passports Scams are rising with the State Department having significant processing backlogs. Reporting wait time for both new and renewal routine passport applications can be up to 18 weeks. Even the wait time for "expedited passports" takes up to 3 months and includes a \$60 fee. Currently, there is an estimated backlog of between a million and a half to 2 million applications.

Dennis Horton director of the Rockford Regional Office of the Better Business Bureau says, "Scammers, posing as Passport expeditors are stepping in and convincing their victims for a higher fee they can get quickly get through the processing time, including the initial internal intake of the applications, and mailing. Along with money losses in these scams, passports contain critical personal information that unlocks identity theft for years to come."

Scammers also love to play on people in an emotional and stressful situation,

and with American travelers who do not currently have valid US passports under pressure to possible cancel their trips and not be able to travel overseas this summer due to extensive wait times, creates a perfect situation for scammers to jump in with a fast but fraudulent solution.

BBB Tips to protect against Passport Scams:

- Watch for spoofers pretending to be a government agency. It's extremely easy for making phone calls, e-mails, texts, and even phony websites to look like their coming from a real agency.

- Never trust an unsolicited phone call or email pretending to be the State Department or Passport Agency asking for personal information or payment of fees.

- Always check out any company with BBB.ORG before you do business with them.

- Any form of unusual forms of payments like gift cards, wire transfers, even bitcoin are "Tip off's to the Rip off."

• If you have lost money or encountered a scam, please report it to the BBB Scamtracker and help protect other consumers and your community.

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OSFM reminds Illinoisans to observe safety practices in and around water

SPRINGFIELD — As the summer heat continues in Illinois, pools are a favorite destination for many to cool off. It's important to follow all posted rules and pay at-

tention to any children when around bodies of water. The number of pools installed in backyards drastically increased last year due to the pandemic. Installing a pool means adults need to be extra vigilant to protect any children who have access to the water.

According to the American Red Cross, 69 percent of young children who are found drowned or submerged in swimming pools were not expected to be in or at the pool. On average, 379 fatal child drownings occurred per year between 2015 and 2017. Children younger than five

years old accounted for 75 percent of these drownings, 56 percent of which were attributed to a lapse in adult supervision.

Here are some simple steps to keep children safer in and around the water:

- Install a four-sided fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate around all pools and spas. Always check to make sure the gate is locked or closed when leaving the pool or spa!

- Keep the pool and deck clear of floats, balls and toys after you leave the pool.

- Always ensure kids swim with a buddy.

- Designate an adult Water Watcher to supervise children at all times around the water. Stay off your phone, put your book down, and pay attention to whoever is in or around the water!

- Never leave a child unattended in or near water.

- Learn how to swim and teach your child how to swim.

- Learn how to perform CPR on children and adults.

THANK YOU to everyone who sent cards for my birthday.

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Pat Stenzel



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Saturday 4 pm • Sunday 7:30 am & 10 am

Confessions: Saturday, 3-3:45 pm

Wednesday, 5:30-6:15 pm

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

Friday, 8am-5 pm

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Fr. John Gow

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815-857-2670

Mass: Saturday, 5:30 pm

St. Flannen Church

Fr. John Gow

213 S Second St., Harmon

815-857-2670

Mass: Sunday, 9 am

United First Church of Amboy

Pastor Mark Glenn

East Main & Jefferson

815-440-0745

Sunday Worship - 10:00 a.m.

Bible Study Wednesday 6:00 p.m.

First Congregational United Church of

Christ of Lee Center

Pastor Jack M. Briggs

1140 Inlet Road, Lee Center

www.LeeCenter-UCC.org

Phone 815-732-7032

Family Worship - 10:30 a.m.

Grace Fellowship Church

Amboy-Sublette

Pastor Brian McWethy

500 W. Main Street, Sublette

Sunday School 8:30 a.m.

Worship 10:30 a.m.

www.graceisforyou.com

East Grove Union Church

Pastor Richard Wulf, 815-440-5321

449 Reuter Road, Amboy

Phone 815-376-6661

1/2 Mile East of Route 26 on Union Rd.

Sun., 9:00 a.m. Morning Service

Youth Church, ages 3-Grade 4

10:15 a.m. Sunday School, Ages 3 - Adult

6:00 p.m. Evening Service

Wed., 6:00 p.m. Prayer & Bible Study

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Morning Service - 10:30 a.m.

Evening Service - 6 p.m.

Wed. prayer meeting & Bible Study 6:30 p.m.

King's Kids program from 6:30-8 p.m. Friday

Reformers Unanimous additions program

from 7-9 p.m.

St. James Evangelical

Congregational Church

Robert Dunbar, Pastor

US Route 52 & Red Brick Rd., Dixon

815-288-2447

Sunday 10:45 a.m. Worship

9:45 a.m. Sunday School

Ladies Bible Study, Wed. 9 a.m.

St. Mary's Church

Rev. Randy Fronek

West Brooklyn

Tuesday & Thursday - 7:30 a.m.

Saturday - 5:30 p.m.

St. Patrick Church

Rev. Randy Fronek - Maytown

Mass - Fri. 8 a.m., Sun, 8 a.m.

Immanuel Lutheran Church

Pastor Barb Otten

960 U.S. Route 52

Phone 857-2225

Sun. Worship - 9:00 a.m. Fellowship - 10:00 a.m.

Sunday School - 9:40-10:15 a.m.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church

Rev. Randy Fronek

Locust Street, Sublette

Phone 815-849-5412

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Sunday Mass - 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday - 8:00 a.m.

Thursday - 8:30 a.m.

Refuge Church

Pastor John Kalebaugh

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10 a.m. Sunday, potluck follows

Harmon United Methodist Church

Pastor Leanne Keate

202 N. Grove, Harmon

Phone 359-7302

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815-857-3044

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SOCIAL NEWS

The Book Nook

By:

Tatjana Kazan

Saving A Legendary Owl

This disheveled mass of wood-chip brown regarded us warily with electric-yellow eyes. We were uncertain at first which bird, actually, we'd come across. It was clearly an owl, but bigger than any I'd seen, about the size of an eagle but fluffier and more portly, with

enormous ear tufts. Backlit by the hazy gray of a winter sky, it seemed almost too big and too comical to be a real bird, as if someone had hastily glued fistfuls of feathers to a yearling bear, then propped the dazed beast in the tree."

This was Jonathan Slaght's first sighting of the Blakiston's fish owl. It happened in 2000 when he was in the Peace Corps in the Russian province of Primorye, "a remote corner of the world, not far from where Russia, China, and North Korea meet in a tangle of mountains and barbed wire." Twenty years later, Slaght published "Owls of the Eastern Ice: A Quest to Find and Save the World's Largest Owl." It is a beautifully written adventure story of a group of scientists in search of the elusive fish owl in -30 temperatures in wild Russian forests some 650 miles north of Vladivostok. The goal was to find, capture, tag and attach transmitters to the owls to map their terrain in order to create a viable conservation area.

The men crossed Primorye in a sturdy Russian truck in February and March because it was the only time when they could follow owl tracks in the snow or find a feather. Roads and rivers were still frozen over and nests were visible in the

bare trees. But not always because fish owls build their nests in huge chimney or side cavities in gigantic trees two- three hundred years old. Also the female starts incubating in early March. Since she cannot leave the nest because the egg would freeze instantly, she must withstand powerful snow storms and depend entirely on the male for the salmon and trout he catches in the rivers.

Slaght's encounters with Russians were often humorous, but they were more interested in the Russian scientists because they brought news of the outside world. One of the many surprises was that when they finally caught a male fish owl, it was docile because it has no natural predators. However, some females put up vicious fights. They discovered that the owls live in valleys along rivers. To preserve these habitats, the logging company agreed to close off all roads to poachers and hunters once they were no longer used. Slaght, who speaks fluent Russian, describes hermits and zealots, and of course the ravishing landscape. "What an enthralling place, I thought, where humans, Amur tigers, and Blakiston's fish owls move past one another in a matter of hours."

Wittenauer family reunion planned for Aug. 8 in Amboy

AMBOY — Here we go. Roger and Sandy Wittenauer are hosting this year's Wittenauer family reunion (and have since 2004). They realized the value and importance of family gatherings and how the annual reunion serves that purpose. The many members of the Wittenauer family need to keep in touch as it shrinks and grows from year to year. Roger and Sandy will continue to plan an annual reunion and hope to see you there.

This will be the 17th annual gathering (as we had to call off the 2020 one). Roger and Sandy have secured the Centennial Shelter at Amboy City Park for Sunday, Aug. 8. Please bring two dishes to pass, your own table service and drinks of your choice. Lemonade will be provided. Plenty of reminiscing and sharing can be expected along with updating the Wittenauer Family Tree. Easting starts right round noon.

Bring a relative, friend or guest. There's always plenty of food and friendship for all who come. If anyone cares to bring entertainment or games, please feel free to jump right in and do it. After all, this is your reunion.

Let's see if you are the one who has come the farthest this year, or you're our newest family member. Don't miss this. We're all family...no matter what.

Have a story idea?

Email George at

ghowe@amboynews.com

Lyle Grobe and the Rhythm Ramblers play the Mt. Morris Jamboree July 30

MT. MORRIS — The Mt. Morris Jamboree is again pleased and proud to announce the return to our band shell stage of local legend Lyle Grobe and the Rhythm Ramblers on July 30, at 7 p.m. This band, who's appeared during all eight Friday Concert seasons, always has the crowds line-dancing on the grass to toe-tapping while sitting in lawn chairs and on the new benches.

Lyle Grobe has been performing for many years starting in the early 1950s with two brothers, Harry and Richard Hackbarth. They appeared at many shows in the Lee County area for years. They began moving into the Ogle County area in the late 50s at venues such as Castle Rock Bar on Route 2 in Oregon. Lyle then went a different direction later on where he was a radio announcer for WIXN which is now River Country 101.7. He then began an era in his life of being a night club owner when he owned and managed Skyline Lounge in Dixon. During this time some of the current Rhythm Ramblers joined him. Many years have come and gone and Lyle still, with the love of music, keeps the band going by having weekly band rehearsals in his garage both summer and winter. Many a musician has stopped and "picked" a tune or two.

The drummer in the band has been with Lyle since the Skyline days also. Dennis Milby comes from Sterling. Dennis does a great job on drums and also does a lot of back-up singing with Lyle during performances. Dennis throughout the years has also been in other bands playing around the Sterling area.

Lisa Allen-Grobe comes from Sterling IL and has been with the band for several years. She brings to the stage the songs of Patsy Cline, Dolly Parton and other Women of Country Music.

Newest member of the band is Lisa's husband, Paul Grobe playing bass guitar.

Jim Miller returns to the band after playing with them back in the '70s, bringing prodigious talent to the Ramblers with excellent keyboard, harmonica, banjo and singing skills. When he's not gigging with the Ramblers, Jim can be heard presenting solo and duet shows at various venues in the area.

Bob Fredricks joins the Ramblers again, bringing that sweet sound of the pedal steel guitar to the band. Bob's been in many country bands along the way and his connection to Lyle goes all the way back to the Skyline days.

Diane Palmer usually joins the crew for these shows and sings beautiful lead and harmony vocals.

The local PEO (Providing Educational Opportunities for Women) Chapter CU will be serving Italian meatball sandwiches, hot dogs, chips, coleslaw, bar cookies, soda pop and water for the show, starting at 6 pm.

The Encore Art Gallery on the first floor of Old Sandstone next door will feature the final night of the Regional Artist's Showcase, presenting the works of seven different Artists from around the region open from 6:30 - 9 p.m. Encore's Artist in Residence, Annie Timmer will be hosting kids art activities near the Freedom Bell just to the north of the Band Shell during the concert. Local small business vendors will often be joining us on the Campus, including Ken's Black Pearl Coffee and Grandpa's Ice Cream truck. Come join the fun on our beautiful, historic Campus in the center of Mt. Morris, two blocks south of IL Route 64 on Wesley Ave. and be ready to dance the night away and enjoy a free live Classic Country show.

Please help us pray for a beautiful summer evening so that we can be on the Campus, but in the event of inclement weather, our rain location will be Pinecrest Grove Community Center, 500 Evergreen Lane, seven blocks south of IL Route 64 off McKendrie St.

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Opinion

Rutherford contends trade embargo reason Cubans are going hungry

As demonstrators in Havana marched through the streets this month waving U.S. flags, George Ryan sat in his Kankakee home, watched the reports on television and remembered another controversy regarding the Stars and Stripes and Cuba.

In 1999, George Ryan became the first U.S. governor to visit that communist nation.

"The Cubans wanted to play the national anthem and display the U.S. flag when we got off the plane. But it didn't happen because our State Department contacted the Cubans and demanded that they not do it," he said during a telephone interview this week.

The U.S. Government has had an embargo against Cuba for about 60 years. It was established in response to the Cuban government seizing property owned by U.S. businesses. And for most of the last six decades the United States has not had formal diplomatic relations with Cuba.

President Barack Obama reestablished diplomatic relations in 2015. But most of the last 60 years, the U.S. has gone through ritualized exercises to show their displeasure with the communist regime such as not allowing the U.S. flag to be flown or the national anthem to be played to welcome visiting dignitaries.

Ryan, who served as Illinois governor from 1999 to 2003, instigated the trip to Cuba despite opposition from the State Department. As part of the negotiations between the state and federal government the official reason for the trip was transformed from a trade mission to a humanitarian outreach.

Today, Ryan, who is 87, has plenty of interest in the democracy demonstrations taking place in Cuba -- but not much optimism.

"I'm afraid they are just going to lock a whole bunch of people up in jail and really crack down on the demonstrators. I'd like to see change happen in Cuba but as long as those who were associated with the Castros (Fidel and his brother Raul) are still in charge, I don't think it will happen."

Guest Column

By Scott Reeder



Ryan has been a harsh critic of Fidel Castro and his successors. But Ryan has also demanded that the U.S. trade embargo with the island nation come to an end.

"I'm convinced that the people of Illinois can be of tremendous help to the people of Cuba," he said in 1999. "I believe our strengths in agriculture and education and medical research, as well as our state's strong humanitarian record, will be able to ease some of the burden that's felt daily by the families in Cuba."

During his visit Ryan toured hospitals, laboratories and farms.

"So much of what we saw was completely fake," he said. "We went into a classroom with a microscope on every desk. Our Cuban hosts would have us believe this was state-of-the-art. But the microscopes were quite old and were covered with plastic. When we went to the farm,

the barns were still dripping with whitewash."

Ryan, a Republican, said in recent weeks the sight of ordinary Cubans waving American flags and demanding political freedom was inspiring.

"I'm proud seeing our flag flying in the streets of Havana," he said. Shortly after his 1999 visit to Cuba, Ryan called for making Cuba the 51st U.S. state.

A legacy of the 1999 humanitarian outreach was that cultural and athletic exchanges were established between Illinois and Cuba.

Then-state-Sen. Dan Rutherford led the first exchange when he brought a group of Illinois junior high and high school softball and baseball players to Cuba in 2001. Since then, he has established a travel business that takes Americans on tours of Cuba.

"Up until the pandemic began, I was traveling to Cuba about every six weeks. I have many friends in Cuba -- waiters and waitress, drivers -- who I'm in regular contact with. I don't think most Cubans want radical political change, they want economic reforms. The reasons these demonstrations

are taking place is because there has been a shortage of food, medicine and energy," the Pontiac Republican said.

Rutherford views the recent demonstrations differently than the former governor.

"I think it is all fake," he said. "The former person in the White House talked a lot about 'fake news' and I think different factions in the United States are playing up different things for their own agenda. The Cubans I talk to are more interested in economic issues rather than radical political change. The pandemic shut down the tourism industry from Europe and elsewhere in Cuba and because of that there is not enough to eat."

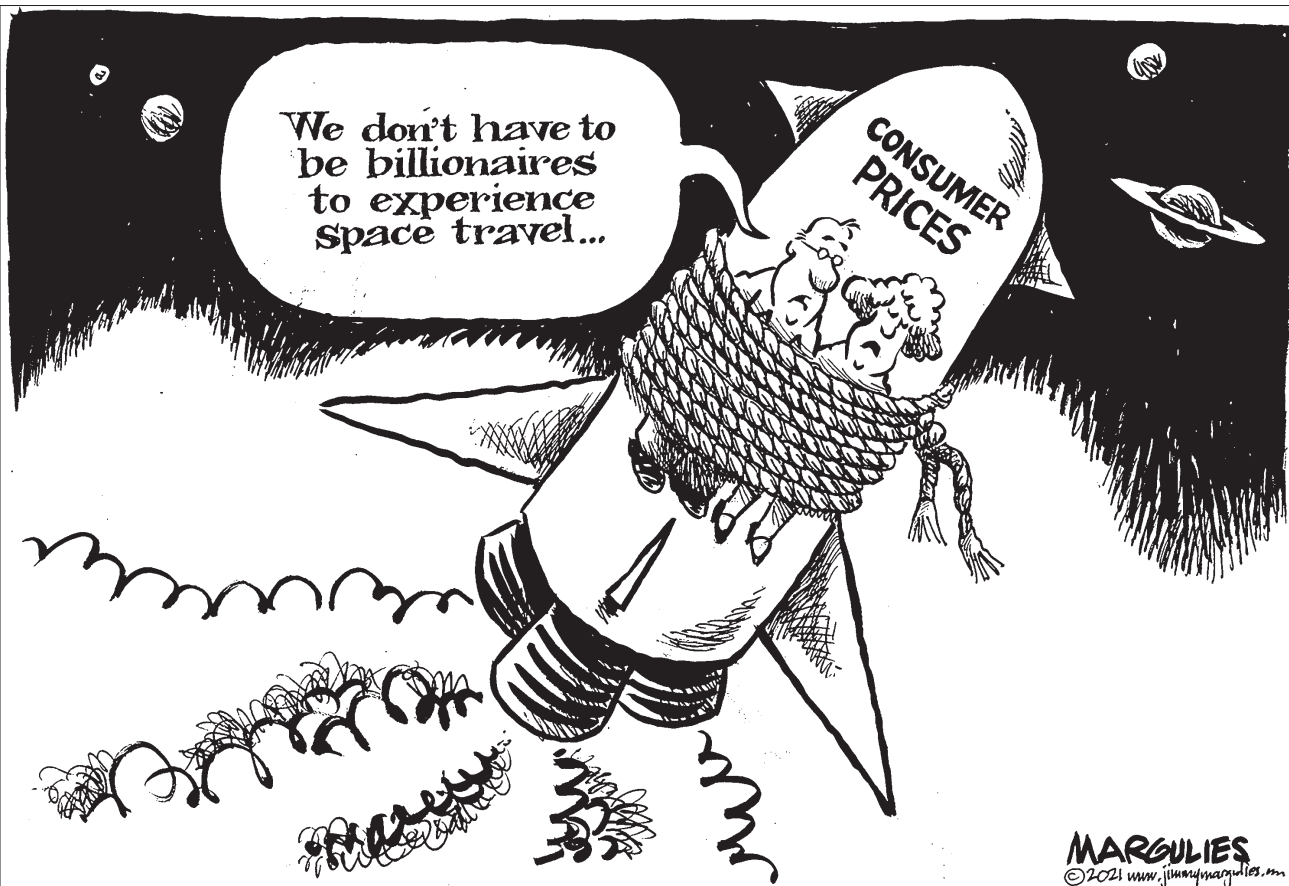
Although the trade embargo allows for Cuba to buy food and medicine from the United States, Rutherford contends it is the reason Cubans are going hungry.

"Since American tourists aren't allowed in Cuba and Cubans living in the United States can't send money back to their relatives and because the U.S. won't buy Cuban goods, Cuba lacks the hard currency to buy food and medicine from overseas."

Rutherford said an odd dichotomy is that Cuba has a well-educated, literate population. And it has the best physicians in Latin America. And, yet, basic items such as aspirin can't be found in the nation's pharmacies.

"I think if economic reforms come to Cuba, political reforms will follow," Rutherford said. "It's time for the trade embargo to come to an end -- it's only hurting ordinary Cubans."

Scott Reeder is a veteran statehouse journalist. He works as a freelance reporter in the Springfield area. He can be reached by email at Scottreeder1965@gmail.com.



On This Day in History

100 Years Ago July 29, 1921

Dr. H.C. Barth, G.M. Finch, J.A. Edwards, F.H. Dishong and Ben Flint attended the races in Ottawa Wednesday.

Mrs. Philip Flach and daughter Phillippi are guests at the W.H. Wellman home in Lee Center.

Mr. and Mrs. G.B. Fluehr and son George motored here from Freeport and spent Sunday at the B.F. Reinboth home.

Mr. and Mrs. A.A. Carmichael and Mrs. Charles Davis were Freeport visitors Tuesday.

75 Years Ago Aug. 1, 1946

Mr. and Mrs. James Dominetta and son Dick, returned Monday from a trip to Benld, and the Ozark Mountains.

Mrs. Charles Wallace and son Charles Allen of Dixon spent Monday at the Byron Treadwell home.

Miss Mary Clare Dieter, student nurse at St. John's Hospital, St. Louis, Mo., spent several days last week visiting Amboy and Walton relatives.

50 Years Ago July 29, 1971

Eight young ladies have been entered in the Amboy Miss Flame Contest which will be held Aug. 14. An-

nounced contestants, their age, parents and sponsor were listed Tuesday by Chairman Powers as follows:

Becky Welty, 17, daughter of Mrs. Doris Welty, Amboy Evening Woman's Club

Patty Dewey, 17, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Dewey, Poths-Lavelle Post No. 453, American Legion

Mary Gehant, 18, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Otto Gehant, Mapleside Manor

Carol Nelson, 16, daughter of Mrs. Margaret Nelson, Flamettes

Kathy Hinrichs, 16, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gene Hinrichs, Amboy Public Hospital Auxiliary

Janelle F. Cardot, 16, daughter of Mrs. Clara Car-

dot, Shaw Oil Company

Peg Duffy, 17, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Francis Duffy, Lee County Locker Service

Mary Schultz, 16, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Schultz, Dickinson Hardware.

25 Years Ago July 25, 1996

When Katie Dallam graduated from Franklin Center High School in May, she planned to continue her education this fall at Truman University, majoring in agriculture journalism. That was before she attended the State FFA Convention in Springfield June 4-6. It was there that she was Dallam

was elected by the delegate body to be Illinois State FFA Reporter -- a full-time position -- for the 1996-97 school year.

The city of Amboy street sweeper was refurbished at a cost of less than \$12,000 and is expected to provide many years of continued service to the city.

Adam Lusz and Jason Bonnell hold the Gold Emblem Award presented to the Amboy FFA chapter at the State Convention June 4-6, 1996, for their outstanding program activities for the 1995-96 school year. It is the highest award a chapter can receive.



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The Amboy News

Publisher
Kip Cheek
kcheek@mendotareporter.com

General Manager/Advertising
Tonja Greenfield
tgreenfield@amboynews.com

Editor
Bonnie Morris
bmorris@mendotareporter.com

Office Manager/Circulation/Commercial Printing
Mary Mays
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The limit is 300 words. Letters exceeding this will either be edited to fit or not published. The deadline for letters is noon on Friday.

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All letters must bear the handwritten signature of the writer and include address and phone number or e-mail address for verification purposes. Neither the street address nor phone number will be printed. Letters should be typed or legibly handwritten, and no anonymous letters will be published.

Any comments of public officials should be limited to issues related strictly to their position or actions made in office, as personal attacks will not be published. Letters involving private disputes between the writer and a business or individual will not be published.

Political endorsements will be published, however letters from candidates endorsing themselves will not be printed.

Letters may be dropped at the Amboy News office, 245 E. Main Street, mailed to the Amboy News at PO Box 162, Amboy, IL 61310, or emailed to tgreenfield@amboynews.com

The Amboy News reserves the right to edit or reject any letter to the editor for any reason, and letters chosen for publication do not necessarily reflect the views of this newspaper, its management and or ownership.

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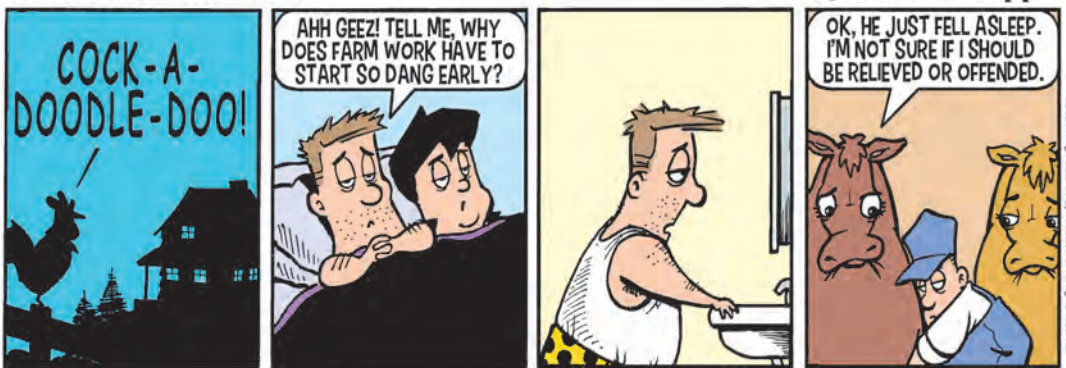
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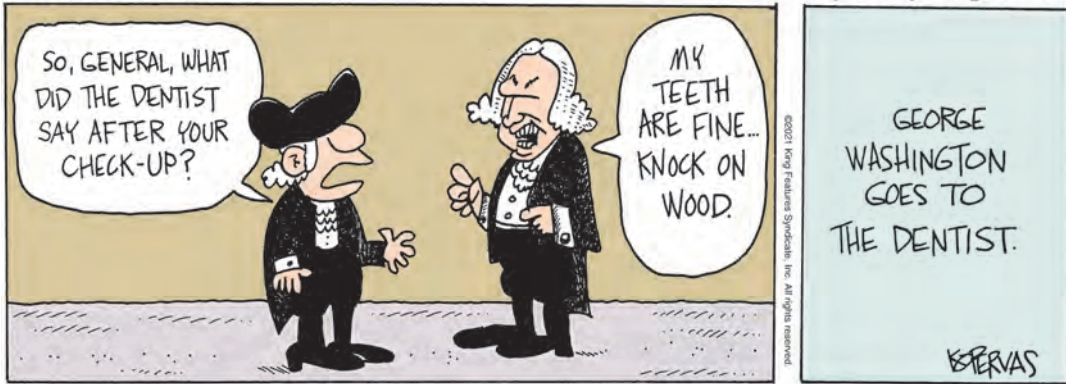
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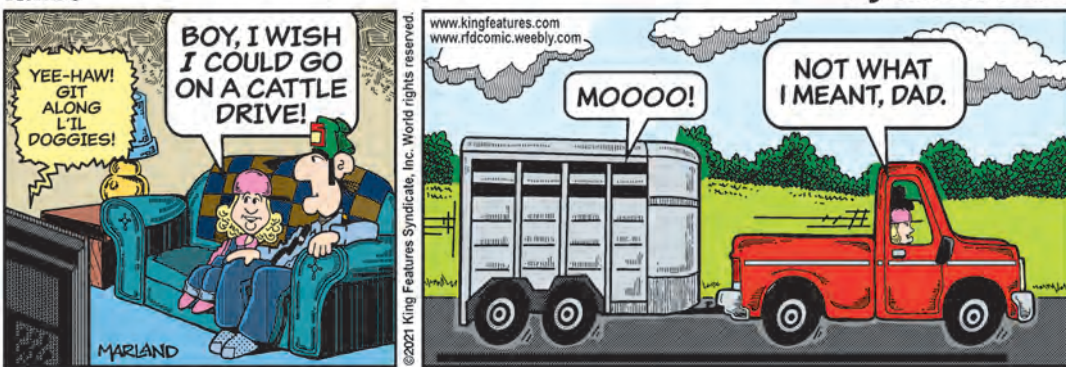
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R.F.D.

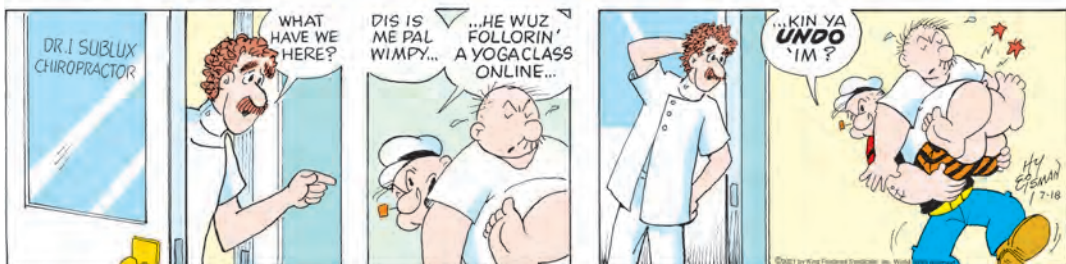
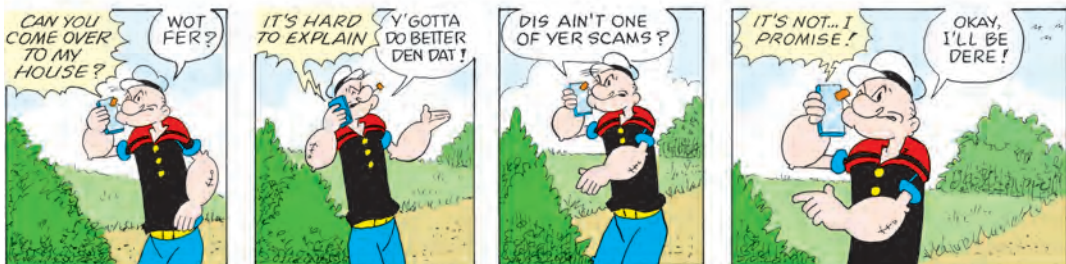
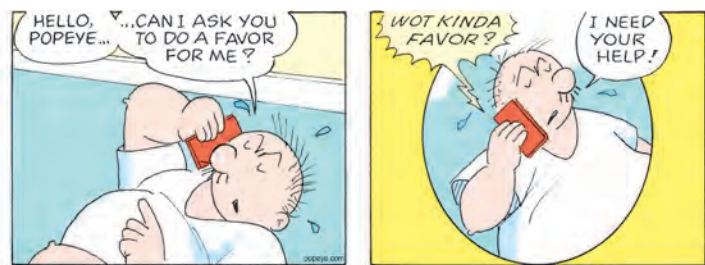
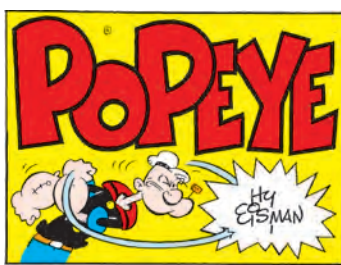


by Mike Marland

The Spats



by Jeff Pickering



Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



LAFF-A-DAY



"Well, what I'd like to know is, what's holding up the delivery?"

SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Awry
WAKES
Somber
MOOSER
Root
BRUTE
Dismay
LAMAR

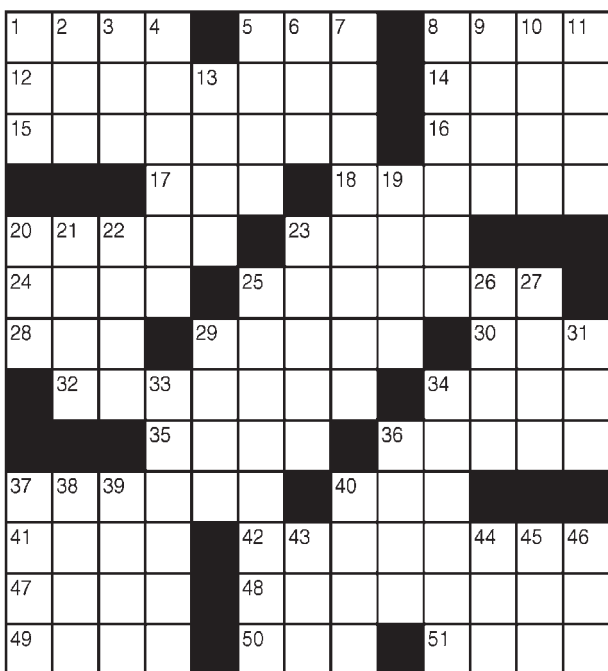
TODAY'S WORD

Announcing Mrs. John Weebly, to a cup of caviar.

ACROSS

- 1 Mattress option
- 5 NASCAR advertiser
- 8 Wild guess
- 12 Supervisor
- 14 "Yes —?"
- 15 Accidentally
- 16 Late July babies
- 17 Since Jan. 1
- 18 12-year-olds, e.g.
- 20 Bjorn Borg, for one
- 23 Salon request
- 24 Actress Elisabeth
- 25 Act of contrition
- 28 Knight's address
- 29 Persnickety
- 30 Fez, e.g.
- 32 Woo
- 34 City district
- 35 BMW rival
- 36 Follows
- 37 Mississippi city
- 40 Venus, to Serena
- 41 Mine, in Montreal
- 42 Astaire specialty
- 47 Scepters
- 48 Valuable volume

King Crossword



- 49 Make a sweater
- 50 "Rah!"
- 51 Not busy
- 10 Soon, poetically
- 11 Employer
- 13 Fill fully
- 19 Fay of "King Kong"
- 20 Snake's warning
- 21 Spinning sound
- 22 Modern money
- 23 Joe of "GoodFellas"
- 25 Talking heads' opinions
- 26 Spiced tea
- 27 British noble
- 29 Ersatz
- 31 Pro Bowl stats
- 33 Zedong follower
- 34 Sushi condiment
- 36 Ocean motion
- 37 Fir coat
- 38 "— a roll!"
- 39 California city
- 40 Agile
- 43 Motorist's org.
- 44 Silent assent
- 45 Army rank (Abbr.)
- 46 Scrape (out)

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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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Trivia test

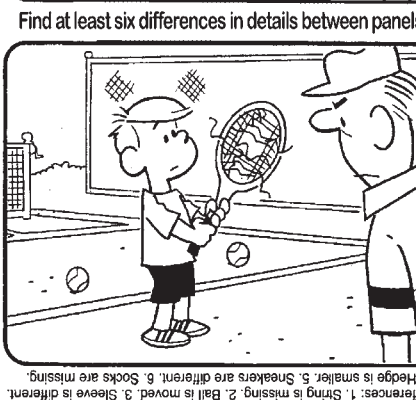
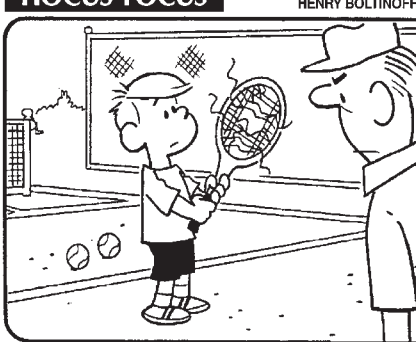
by Fifi Rodriguez

1. LITERATURE: In which novel did the character Sherlock Holmes first appear?
2. GEOGRAPHY: Where is Area 51 located in the United States?
3. SCIENCE: How long does it take for light from the sun to reach Earth?
4. ENTERTAINERS: Which actor and comedian's original name was Joseph Levitch?
5. GAMES: What is the sum of all numbers on a roulette wheel?
6. AD SLOGANS: What product was advertised with the slogan "Let your fingers do the walking ...?"
7. FOOD & DRINK: What grain is used to make sake?
8. U.S. STATES: Which state has used the slogan "Heart of Dixie" on its license plates?
9. MYTHOLOGY: Who was the Greek god of time?
10. GAMES: How many players are on each side in a polo game?

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINGOFF



Differences: 1. String is missing 2. Ball is moved 3. Sleeve is different 4. Hedge is smaller 5. Sneakers are different 6. Socks are missing

BORROW

Today's Word

1. Askew 2. Morose;
3. Tubery 4. Alarm

SCRAMBLERS

CryptoQuip

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

Clue: L equals O

QO WEDKIA: ELJ'Z CLFE FLLUA

ICWJVA WMLTJE DAJEKJV

QWICKJAU.

ZCAO WMA ILKJKDLMLTU.

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King Crossword

Answers

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

Answer

Weekly SUDOKU

My advice: Don't hold loose answer
They are colinorous machines.

Classified Marketplace

FREE!

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)



AMBOY • SUBLETTE • WEST BROOKLYN • LEE CENTER • PAW PAW • LAMOILLE

PUBLIC NOTICE
AGENDA
LEE COUNTY
BUDGET HEARING
FOR
SOCIAL SERVICES
FOR SENIOR
CITIZENS
7:00 P.M., TUESDAY,
AUGUST 3, 2020
THIRD FLOOR
BOARDROOM
112 E. SECOND
STREET, OLD
LEE COUNTY
COURTHOUSE
DIXON, ILLINOIS
61021

Lee County will hold a public hearing at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 3, 2021, in the Old Lee County Courthouse Boardroom – 3rd floor, 112 East Second Street, Dixon, Illinois, for the purpose of hearing written and oral comments concerning the use of funds providing social services for senior citizens. This meeting can be attended via Zoom video conferencing. The Zoom meeting information will be posted to the Lee County website.

All interested citizens, groups, senior citizens, and organizations

representing the interests of senior citizens are encouraged to attend and to submit comments.

Any organization requesting consideration for funds should submit the Application for Request form (found on the Lee County website at leecountyil.com) along with a summary of the programs and/or services provided, a current fiscal year budget and audit, and the rationale for request to the Lee County Chairman's office at 112 East Second Street, Dixon, Illinois 61021, on or before July 27, 2021. Arlan McClain, Chair Lee County Finance Committee
Paula Meyer
Lee County Treasurer
No. 0701 (July 14, 28)

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.

WANTED

FREON WANTED: We pay \$\$\$ for cylinders and cans. R12 R500 R11 R113 R114. Convenient. Certified Professionals. Call 312-291-9169 or visit RefrigerantFinders.com

105 BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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

113 FINANCIAL

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

119 ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

127 SERVICES AND REPAIRS

JNJ JUMPERS Indoor/Outdoor Bounce House Rentals Available Year Round. Please Call 815-784-4256 For Availability or Visit us on Facebook.

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 it's care.

203 HELP WANTED

HOUSEKEEPER WANTED BI-Weekly. Please Contact 815-561-0021. (08-08-21)

NEWSPAPER CARRIERS Wanted. (Rochelle) Several Routes Open. Call 815-561-2112 For More Information.

ASHTON - Bartenders and Waitresses Needed. Apply in Person at Ralphie and Lulu's. 812 Main Street in Ashton or call 815-453-2103. (TFN)

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,

511 STORAGE UNITS

Amboy & Sublette
10 x 20 inside storage & outside storage for semi-trucks/trailers, boats, campers, etc
Call 815-857-2252
08172016

301 ANTIQUES

I'm interested in looking! Call 815-562-2928 or email dickharms@hotmail.com

307 MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE

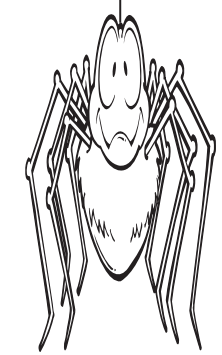
SECTIONAL Blue/Green/Aqua Color. Good Condition. \$100, Call 815-562-6777. (08-01-21)

PIANO \$100 (May Need Tuning) 815-562-6777. (08-01-21)

405 HOUSES FOR SALE

ALL REAL ESTATE advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preferences, limitation or discrimination. We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

ADVERTISE WITH US



Not sure why business is slow?



is not just a saying in business.

Advertise today and let your business be in sight and in the minds of your customers.

WEST BROOKLYN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING APRIL 30, 2022 ORDINANCE 21-01

An Ordinance setting for the budget and making appropriations of sums of money for all necessary expenditures of the West Brooklyn Fire Protection District of Lee County, Illinois for corporate and ambulance purposes beginning May 1, 2021, and ending April 30, 2022.

WHEREAS, there has been prepared in tentative from a Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the West Brooklyn Fire Protection District of Lee County, Illinois for the fiscal year ending April 30, 2022 and the Secretary of said Fire Protection district has made said Tentative Budget and Appropriation Ordinance conveniently available for public inspection for at least thirty (30) days prior to final action thereof; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held as to such Budget and Appropriation Ordinance on the 14th day of July, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. notice of which hearing was given by publication as required by law, and all other legal requirements have been complied with;

NOW BE IT ORDAINED BY THE PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE WEST BROOKLYN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT:

SECTION 1: The fiscal year of this Fire Protection District be and the same is hereby fixed and declared to be from May 1, 2021 to April 30, 2022

SECTION 2: That the following Corporate Fire Fund budget containing an estimate of the cash expected to be received by said Fire Protection District during such fiscal year from all sources, and a statement of the estimate cash expected to be on hand at the end of such year, be and the same is hereby adopted as the budget of said fire protection district for the said fiscal year and shall be in full force and effect from and after this date.

GENERAL COOPERATE FIRE FUND
Beginning cash on Hand May 1, 2021

\$98,604	
ESTIMATED RECEIPTS CORPORATE FUND	
Property Tax Corporate Fire Fund	\$ 69,968
Replacement Tax	3,500
2% Fire Insurance Tax	814
Interest Revenue	893
Insurance Refunds	1,700
Contributions	
Other Income	
Total Receipts Corporation	\$76,875

SECTION 3: That the following sums of money by and the same are hereby appropriated for the general corporate fire fund purposes of said West Brooklyn Fire Protection District herein specified, for the fiscal year ending April 30, 2022:

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES CORPORATE FIRE FUND	
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES:	
a. Trustee salaries (1/2 of \$2,400)	\$1,200
b. Legal services (1/2 of \$2,500)	1,250
c. Bookkeeping services (1/2 of \$2,000)	1,000
d. Social Security and Medicare	250
e. Liability Insurance (1/2 of \$10,000)	5,000
f. Workers Compensation Insurance (1/2 of \$4,000)	2,000
g. Compilation/Financial Report (1/2 of \$1,750)	875
h. Publishing and Printing	1,200
i. Office and Postage	250
j. Dues, Memberships and Fees	350
k. Miscellaneous	5,000
l. Transfers Out	2,500

PUBLIC SAFETY EXPENSES:	
m. Volunteer Fire Department (1/2 of \$6,000)	\$3,000
n. Emergency Services Training	300
o. Repairs and Fuel	4,500
p. Utilities and Telephone (1/2 of \$4,000)	2,000
q. Material and Supplies (1/2 of \$5,000)	2,500
r. Capital Equipment Outlay	30,000
s. Debt Retirement (Tanker payment 7 of 20)	12,500
t. Building Maintenance and Repair (Reserve)	30,000
u. New Equipment	
Total Estimated Expenses General Fund	\$105,675
TOTAL ESTIMATED CASH ON HAND MAY 1, 2022	
SECTION 4: That the following Ambulance Fund budget, containing an estimate of cash expected to be received by said Fire Protection District during such fiscal year from all sources, and a statement of the estimate cash expected to be on hand at the end of such year, be and the same is hereby adopted as the budget of said Fire Protection District for the said fiscal year and shall be in full force and effect from and after this date.	
Beginning cash on Hand May 1, 2021	\$11,988

ESTIMATED RECEIPTS CORPORATE FUND	
Property Tax Ambulance Fund	\$57,143
Insurance Refunds	1,700
Interest Income	120
Other Income	
Transfers In	2,500
Total Receipts Corporation	\$61,463

SECTION 5: That the following sums of money be and the same are hereby appropriated for the General Ambulance Fund purposes of said West Brooklyn Fire Protection District herein specified, for the fiscal year ending April 30, 2022:

ESTIMATED EXPENSES AMBULANCE FUND:	
v. Intergovernmental agreements	\$25,500
w. Liability Insurance (1/2 of \$10,000)	5,000
x. Worker's Compensation Insurance (1/2 \$4,000)	2,000
y. Trustee Salaries (1/2 of \$2,400)	1,200
z. Legal Services (1/2 of \$2,500)	1,250
aa. Bookkeeping Services (1/2 of \$2,000)	1,000
ab. Compilation/Financial Report (1/2 of \$1,750)	875
ac. Volunteer Fire Department (1/2 of \$6,000)	3,000
ad. Rescue per call fees	1,000
ae. Utilities and Telephone (1/2 of \$4,000)	2,000
af. Materials and Supplies (1/2 of \$5,000)	2,500
ag. Repairs and Fuel	4,500
ah. Capital Equipment Outlay	10,000
ai. Building Maintenance repair (reserve)	5,000
aj. Transfer out	0
Total Estimated Expenses Ambulance Fund	\$64,825
TOTAL ESTIMATED CASH ON HAND MAY 1, 2022	\$8,626

SECTION 7: That the funds derived from sources other than the 2021 tax levy (payable 2022) may be allocated by the Board of Trustees to such appropriation and in such amounts, respectively, as said board may determine, within the limits of said appropriations, respectively and pursuant to statute.

SECTION 8: That the unexpended balance as to any item appropriated may be allocated to the payment of a deficiency as to any other item of appropriation.

SECTION 9: That if any part of this ordinance shall be determined to be invalid, the determination shall not affect the validity of the remainder of this ordinance.

SECTION 10: That this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect upon its passage by the trustees and publication in accordance with state statute.

Approved: July 14, 2021

WEST BROOKLYN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

ATTEST:

Douglas Pettenger
Douglas Pettenger, President/Trustee

Joseph Weinzierl
Joseph Weinzierl, Trustee/Treasurer

601 VEHICLES FOR SALE

2018 Chevy 1500 Crew Cab



2018 Chevy 1500 Crew Cab LT Z71 4x4, Silver, 64K Miles, GM Certified, 1-Owner, Local Trade, Leather, Heated Seats & Much More!

\$39,500

	CERTIFIED PRE-OWNED	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6-Year/100,000-Mile Powertrain Limited Warranty• 24/7 Roadside Assistance• 172-Point Vehicle Inspection and Reconditioning Process• 3-Day/150-Mile Customer Satisfaction Guarantee
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2-Year/24,000-Mile Standard CPO Maintenance Plan• 12-Month/12,000-Mile Bumper-to-Bumper Warranty		

2020 Chevy Equinox AWD, LT, Midnight Edition, 2.0L, Leather, Sunroof, Nav Tow Pkg., 27K miles, Black.....\$29,500	2017 Chevy 3500 Crew Cab LT 4x4, Leather, Z71, Gas, 72K miles, Gray.....\$46,900
2018 1500 Chevy Crew Cab 4x4 LT, 64K miles, Silver.....\$39,500	2017 Chevy 1500 Crew Cab LTZ 4x4, 51K miles, Silver.....\$40,900
2018 Buick Enclave Premium FWD, Maroon.....\$35,500	2016 Chevy 1500 Crew Cab LT, 4x4, 66K miles, Red\$34,900

QUALITY USED CARS, TRUCKS, SUV'S & VANS

2016 Chevy 1500 Crew Cab, LTZ, 4x4, 79K miles, Gray\$35,900	2015 Chevy Equinox, FWD, LT, 97K miles, Maroon\$14,500
2016 Chevy Malibu Lmt'd., LTZ, Sunroof, NAV, 128K miles, black.....\$13,900	2013 Chevy Traverse FWD 2LT, Cloth, 1 owner, 75K miles, Silver.....\$15,500
2015 Chevy Equinox, FWD, 2LT, White.....\$14,900	

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FIND NEW ROADS



SPORTS

Clipper Highlights: Steve Marco

This week we have a bit of a change of pace. This week's Clipper is different from all other past highlights as he is not a graduate of Amboy High School or former member of our program. However, his contributions to Clipper Football are just as equal and important as any of the previously highlighted Clippers. It's an honor to announce this week's Clipper Highlight, "The Voice of the Clippers," Steve Marco.

Steve has been the play-by-play broadcaster on RiverCountry 101.7 for the Clippers for over 25 years. In the late 1980's, Steve and, the other voice of the Clippers, Frank Stenzel, took over as the play-by-play personalities. Steve made the transition from calling Dixon athletics to Amboy. Frank would transition from Team Scout to join Steve as the color commentator. Steve and Frank were now the successors of former Clipper Broadcasters, Jim Braida and Dave Garland.

For most of us, we know Steve and Frank as the pinnacle of High School Football radio broadcasters. As kids we would grow up listening and dreaming of them one day calling our names or numbers over the air. For former alumni who came before them, you all would listen intently as Steve and Frank made you feel as if you were in the game.

I had the great opportunity to speak to Frank prior to this article. Frank has been retired from the booth since (roughly) the 2010 season.

He shared the following on his time with Steve, "I really enjoyed my time with Steve in the booth. I knew Steve's enthusiasm and passion for

broadcasting would match well with my knowledge of the game. Steve always was prepared. He knew every opponent we faced as if he had scouted them himself. I had so much fun over those years calling games with him. He is a true professional and boy he can sure call a game."

Both Frank and Steve shared the origin of the term "ClipperBall." Frank came up with the word up in the booth and the two began saying it during timeouts and halftime breaks at first. The term came out more and more since it was first used and now is exclusive to our program and listening area. It gives me chills to this day to hear the promo for ClipperBall every spring and summer.

Since Frank retired his headset, two former Clippers and one former Clipper Coach have helped fill the huge shoes left behind.

Wes Morrissey and Hunter Varga both shared their admiration and gratitude for Steve's role to Clipper Football.

Morrissey said, "As a kid I grew up listening to Steve and Frank call Clipper games. When you're a Clipper, no matter what age, you always looked forward to Friday nights. When Steve called games I played in, I used to get the recordings from my dad and listen to his play by play for fun. One day, Coach Smith was out of town so Steve asked if I'd fill in. I'm telling you, that guy is more passionate about 'ClipperBall' than some guys I played with."

Varga said, "Growing up in my Junior Tackle days, nothing meant it was time for Friday night lights than hearing Steve Marco on the radio. Growing up whether

Clipper Highlights

By Spencer Morrissey



you were going to the game or staying back because it was away, Steve Marco was going to be listened to. We hung onto every word he said about the Clippers, good or bad. 'It's not just football, it's Clipper ball,' was a phrase everyone said in the Fall and everyone knew what you were talking about when you said it. From our dads listening to the game while standing at the fence of The Harbor or listening to it on Saturday morning to see what they had to say about the night before. Steve added that extra spark to the magic of Friday nights in Amboy. I had the pleasure to be in the booth with Steve last season and experience him first hand and I must say it was a blast to see him in action and see his passion for Amboy Football. I am very much looking forward to being with Steve in the booth this season for some much needed ClipperBall."

Speaking with Steve prior to this highlight, one would not be able to tell he has never strapped up in the Clipper red. His statements and tales of the hundreds of Clipper games are as filled with pride as the most decorated of us

Clippers.

I asked Steve of the evolution of Clipper Football broadcasts over the years and what has changed. Steve's answer speaks directly to what Clipper Football is to so many.

Steve shared, "I love small school football. I love being a part of a community so supportive of all its athletic teams especially its Football Team. Everyone in Amboy is bought into football season almost as if the community is built around football. It's been more of a constant than an evolution and I'm so happy to be a part of it. From the top down, School Administration, Coaches, Fans, Players, everyone, the pride, tradition, and support is unmatched."

Steve recalled several successful Clipper campaigns he was so honored to have been a part of. "One thing I would have loved is to call a State Championship game for the Clippers. There were some really exciting years that we came really close," Steve shared.

To put things into perspective, Steve and Frank were selected to be the Grand Marshals in the 2008 Homecoming Parade. Also, they were often featured in the skit of each participating class on skit night. One of the most impressive facts is the National attention they brought to Amboy Football. People from California to Florida would tune into ClipperBall on Friday nights.

The local celebrity status isn't the reason Steve does it. He simply loves the Amboy Community and Amboy Football.

Steve concluded, "This has been such a huge part of my life. I am so proud to be a part of Amboy Football. I'm so proud to be a part of the tradition and above all, the great people."

I speak for many when I say, I will always consider Steve a Clipper.

So, to "The Voice of the Clippers," Steve Marco, thank you for your contributions to Clipper Football. Your passion and intensity for our program continues to show, inspire, and promote Clipper Nation. But above all, thank you for always being a constant in reminding us, "it's not just football, it's



Steve Marco

ClipperBall." Sail on! Spencer Morrissey, is a former resident of Amboy and 2009 graduate of Amboy High School. In April 2020, he created a private Facebook group specifically for Amboy Clipper Football Alumni. To have played Amboy football for any period of time, 1 year or all 4 years, is the only membership requirement. The group features photos, stories, and memories of past Clippers and Clipper teams. The best feature of the group is every Friday, he highlights a former player.

Educational Briefs

Wheaton College (IL) Congratulates May 2021 Graduate Audrey Rod

WHEATON — College congratulates May 2021 graduate Audrey Jean Rod. Rod, of Amboy, graduated magna cum laude with a BA in Elementary Education and a minor in Music.

Wheaton College graduates join a worldwide network of 45,000 alumni. Learn more at alumni.wheaton.edu.

Wheaton College (Wheaton, Ill.) is a coeducational Christian liberal arts college noted for its rigorous academics, integration of faith and learning, and consistent ranking among the top liberal arts colleges in the country. For more information, visit wheaton.edu.

UW-Platteville announces spring 2021 graduates

PLATTEVILLE, Wis. - The University of Wisconsin-Platteville awarded diplomas to nearly 900 students from its three campuses for the spring of 2021. Because of COVID-19, no ceremonies were held, but will be rescheduled at a later date.

UW-Platteville is located in Southwest Wisconsin and has branch campuses in Richland Center and Baraboo. In 2020, UW-Platteville was named the best public institution in Wisconsin for annual return on investment for the fifth consecutive year by Payscale. For more information on the university, visit www.uwplatt.edu.

Students from this area who graduated, with their hometown and major include:

Amboy

Brady Hulin, Soil & Crop Science

Ashton

Lexi Meurer, Agricultural Education

Dixon

Caleb Ardis, Civil Engineering

Jacob Heiderscheit, Industrial Technology Management

Courtney Rogers, Agricultural Business

Joshua Wiseman, Criminal Justice

Paw Paw

Julia Penman, Elementary Education

Vaessen has been named to the Iowa State University spring 2021 College of Human Sciences dean's list

AMES, Iowa — Natalie Vaessen, of Sublette, has been named to the spring 2021 dean's list in the College of Human Sciences at Iowa State University. The dean's list honors students who have earned a grade point average of 3.5 or higher.

Iowa State University is one of the nation's most student-centered public research universities and is recognized among the top 50 public universities in the nation by U.S. News and World Report. With hundreds of student clubs and organizations, thousands of internship and co-op opportunities, and more than 80 learning communities, the university offers a student experience rich in academic and social diversity. Students from all 50 states and more than 100 countries choose to come to Ames, Iowa, to study with world-class scholars and hone their leadership skills.

Learn more at www.iastate.edu.

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119 N. Elm St. in Franklin Grove

Harvest Fest Fun Saturday, Aug. 7

Beer Tent at the Big Rig Show, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Beer Garden downtown

• 5 - 7 p.m. Buzzed by Sonset • 8 - 10 p.m. Whitlocked and Loaded

Music and fun until 11:30 p.m.

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trucks
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07212021

ERBES

Realty

MLC

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MLS

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THE FARMER'S REPORT

Rethinking methane: Animal ag viewed as part of climate solution

By DANIEL GRANT
FarmWeek

Animal agriculture and meat consumption aren't near the threat to climate change and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as often portrayed.

In fact, the highly publicized and often criticized gas emitted by animal ag, methane, possesses qualities that could help lead the way to climate neutrality, according to Frank Mitloehner, professor and air quality specialist in the department of animal sciences at the University of California-Davis.

"I think there are some issues around climate change not accurately portrayed," Mitloehner said. "Many feel methane is the Achilles' heel of animal ag. We're about to change the narrative."

Mitloehner discussed the subject in early June in an address aimed at "Rethinking Methane" during the World Pork Expo in Des Moines.

A key point to the professor's analysis centers on atmospheric removal of methane through a chemical reaction called oxidation.

While roughly 560 teragrams (trillion grams) of methane enter the atmosphere annually, the majority, 550 teragrams, are removed via natural processes.

Meanwhile, methane has a relatively short lifespan (10 years) compared to 110 years for nitrous oxide and 1,000 years for carbon dioxide. All three greenhouse gases store solar heat when in the atmosphere.

"Methane is different than other greenhouse gases," Mitloehner said. "It's not only produced, but it's naturally destroyed. This is a fact that's often ignored."

"I'm not saying methane isn't a problem," he continued. "But, it has an atmospheric removal process you need to be aware of."

Methane is known as a flow gas due to the fact it's destroyed in the atmosphere at the same rate of emission. Carbon dioxide, by comparison, is a stock gas, meaning every time a person burns fossil fuel it remains in the atmosphere for a long period of time.

The professor also noted methane is produced through the atmosphere and via photosynthesis of plants. So, when livestock consume plants, do they technically emit new additional carbon



into the atmosphere?

"They're not producing new carbon," Mitloehner said. "It's recycled carbon (from plants) that was in the atmosphere in the form of CO2 (carbon dioxide)."

"All the climate agreements want to keep warming from increasing," he noted. "If an industry keeps warming constant, it would satisfy the Paris Climate Accord. In fact, we're doing that today (in animal ag)."

Looking ahead, methane can actually help counter the effect of other GHGs.

"We should work on techniques and technologies to further reduce methane," Mitloehner said. "It will lessen the effect of other gases and help lead to climate neutrality."

California implemented aggressive emissions reduction strategies on farms and reduced GHG emissions by 2.2 million tons in the dairy sector since 2015, according to the air quality specialist.

The hog industry continues on a similar path of success as it doubled pork production in the U.S. in the past 50 years while using 76% less land, 25% less water and 7% less energy, according to Jen Sorenson, president of the National Pork Producers Council.

"U.S. pork producers have a great story to tell," she said. "And we're not done. We support incentives to further reduce emissions."

The pork industry lowered its carbon footprint by 7.7% in recent decades and, as of 2019, accounted for just 0.4% of total GHG emissions.

To learn more about Mitloehner's research on climate change and the role of animal ag, search and watch his videos on YouTube "Rethinking Methane" and "Eating Less Meat Won't Save the Planet. Here's Why."

(This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association.)



Event attendees hear from Shay Foulk, a farm and ag business consultant, and Austin Omer, Illinois Farm Bureau associate director of natural resource policy, about the species of plants in the cover crop plot. (Photo by Raelynn Parmely, Illinois Farm Bureau environmental program manager)

Cover crops: The proof is in the soil

By CHRISTOPHER HEIMERMAN
For Illinois Press Association

MAGNOLIA — When asked what he farms on his land south of Toluca, Bill Leigh answered with a deadpan expression.

"Soil," he said.

Leigh cracked a smile and said, like most Illinois farmers, he raises corn and soybeans. But there was a lot of honesty in that joke. Cover crops and soil health are what drew about 50 other farmers to a Nutrient Stewardship Field Day put on by the Marshall-Putnam Farm Bureau recently at Mark Monier's farm. It was the third of nine such events this summer being conducted by Illinois Farm Bureau and numerous partners.

Shay Foulk is a farmer and farm and ag business consultant who serves on the Marshall-Putnam Farm Bureau Board of Directors. He gave a tour of 11 cover crops he planted and curated on his father-in-law's property in the spring. The planting site is one of several that will be monitored, including frequent soil testing, during a multi-year cover crop project along the Illinois River. The crops include oats, radish, cereal rye, turnip, buckwheat, winter peas, rapeseed/canola, barley, alfalfa, triticale, and wheat.

But before the crowd stepped out from under the tent provided by the IFB and into the sun, Stacy Zuber, the soil health specialist for the Illinois Natural Resources Conservation Service, showed the proof of cover crops' effectiveness is already in the pudding. ... er, soil.

In one hand, she took a chunk of soil from a conventionally tilled corn and soybean field. In the other she took a

handful of soil fostered by the NRCS' tenets of soil health: maximizing living roots and biodiversity, minimizing disturbance, and maximizing soil cover.

She dropped them into two massive plastic measuring tubes filled with water, and explained that the traditional soil had little to no aggregation and, as a result, crucial nutrients couldn't pass through its pores.

As she spoke, the tubes were already doing a fine job explaining the difference, as the water holding the traditional soil turned a nearly opaque brown.

"This blocky mass is not good for us," she said, explaining that soil without aggregation and pores will cause pooling and form a crust on the surface, which leads to erosion and nutrient loss.

Zuber described soil as a vital, living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals and humans, thanks to its billions of bacteria, fungi and other organisms.

So how do farmers get aggregate-rich, healthy soil that results in better yields, while also taking care of Mother Earth?

"It's so important that we feed our microbes a diverse diet from our cover crops," Zuber said. "If you have corn and soybeans over two years, that's all you're getting. Certain microbes want certain foods."

Andrew Margenot, an assistant professor in the Department of Crop Sciences at the University of Illinois' College of ACES, followed Zuber's act by breaking down cover crops' three roles — pump, drill and shield — and said while some check all three boxes, some are specialists. For instance, radishes make terrific drills, as they break up soil compaction to improve aeration and wa-

ter infiltration. When Margenot brought up interseeding, such as multiple species of clover with the long-standing staple cereal rye, Steve Vogel, who owns and operates a fifth-generation no-till farm in Woodford County, said he's seen synergy in such combinations that result in better growth all around.

But Mark Read, who has retired from farming but still manages several properties and serves as president of the Illinois Soybean Association's District 5, said an attempt to plant cover crops on cornfields using a plane was a failed project. He said he's heard from several farmers who faced the same frustration after investing their money and time.

"You only need a couple of failures before you get rid of it," Read said, adding that he's gone back to just winter cereal rye.

Margenot said anyone who wanted to further discuss cover crops, soil and water quality, nightcrawlers, pig manure, or anything really, should talk with him after the event wrapped up.

"I'll be here all day," he said. "These discussions are exactly what need to be happening."

Lauren Lurkins, director of environmental policy at Illinois Farm Bureau, was happy with the robust dialogue among presenters and attendees at the field day.

She was equally overjoyed with the turnout, considering that spring events, hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic, were restricted to 35 registrants.

(This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association.)

SIU to test electricity as a weed killer

CARBONDALE — Southern Illinois University Carbondale is collaborating on a project testing the use of electricity to control weeds in agricultural settings.

Karla Gage, associate professor of weed science and plant biology, is working with researchers Mandy Bish and Kevin Bradley from the University of Missouri on testing The Annihilator 6R30 Weed Zapper, a patented, electric weed control unit mounted to a tractor. The multistate project is funded by the North Central Soybean Research Program with support from the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council, who purchased the implement, and includes researchers from Iowa State University, University of Nebraska, Kansas State University and Purdue University.

With certain weeds becoming increasingly resistant to traditional herbicide

management, farmers and agriculture researchers are taking another look at the practice of electrocuting weeds, which railroad companies used as long ago as the 1890s. Those companies, however, eventually turned to fire and eventually to herbicides, once those became available.

"Herbicide resistance is especially problematic in agriculture, and there are over 20 species in the North Central soybean production region that are confirmed as resistant to at least one herbicide site of action," Gage said. "Growers are looking for new weed control tools to use."

Two of the most problematic species in Illinois and the extended soybean production region are Palmer amaranth (*Amaranthus palmeri*) and waterhemp (*Amaranthus tuberculatus*), Gage said.

While electricity is one alternative, another option SIU researchers are exploring is called harvest weed seed control. In that method, weed seeds are managed or destroyed before they go back into the soil seedbank to germinate the following season.

SIU researchers also are exploring the use of inter-row cultivation and other non-chemical weed control methods. Keeping in line with the proposal's exploration of non-chemical weed control methods, SIU will be looking at a comparison treatment of inter-row cultivation to remove weeds.

"This will be done alone and in combination with the Weed Zapper," Gage said. "Electrocution has again become a potential tool."

In the case of The Annihilator 6R30 Weed Zapper, the equipment researchers are testing, two or more tool

bars are mounted to a tractor, with each containing an electrode. The bars contact weeds that have grown above the soybean crop canopy and electrocute them. Just 65 to 130 milliseconds of the proper amount of current can cause them to die.

Research with the Annihilator 6R30 Weed Zapper began in Missouri in 2020 with focus on weeds common to Missouri soybean producers. But many questions remain with the method and how effective it will be across geographies and weed species. The influence of a plant's specific biology — factors such as its leaf orientation, cuticle thickness and the location of its growing points — will likely impact effectiveness.

"All this may have an impact on the feasibility and effectiveness of electrocution," Gage said. "The study seeks to answer many of these questions."

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THE FARMER'S REPORT



An aerial shot from the virtual tour shows the 2,000-acre Hunter Haven Farms in Pearl City. (Photo courtesy of Illinois Farm Bureau)

'Cows are very social animals': Tech, humane treatment of herd focus of virtual dairy tour

By CHRISTOPHER HEIMERMAN
For Illinois Press Association

PEARL CITY—It's good to be a dairy cow at Hunter Haven Farms.

That was made abundantly clear during a virtual tour hosted earlier in July by the Illinois Milk Producers Association and University of Illinois Dairy Extension.

The emphasis of the tour, given by farmer Scott Brenner, was technology. In a moment we'll get to the methane biodigester that puts the 2,000-acre operation on the cutting edge.

But humane treatment of the herd is a key factor in the nearly 100 pounds of milk per day the farm gets from each of its 900-plus cows. Participant Mike Hutjens, a professor emeritus at U of I who was raised on a 313-acre dairy farm near Green Bay, Wis., asked Brenner what, exactly, he monitors on his farm.

"You can tell a lot about how a cow is feeling by just looking at her," Brenner said. "Are her ears up? How do her eyes look? Is her udder full?"

He said the simple act of keeping heifers, animals who have never given birth before, and cows, animals who have already given birth, separate reaps big dividends.

"Cows are very social animals," he said. "They have a pecking order, just like people."

Brenner said it's crucial to consistently crunch the numbers to know exactly how many heifers you need to maximize the operation, and to leverage the data and control the size of the herd and minimize the number of animals that get sold into feedlot operations.

"We're trying to get the numbers right, so there aren't many animals who don't make the team," Brenner said.

On the subject of efficiency, the farm uses an elaborate, anaerobic digester that ... well ... digests methane from manure and turns it into energy used on the farm.

Brenner spends all of 10 minutes a day with the biodigester. He compared its digesting process to that of a cow, and said its performance hinges on what the cows are eating.

"It's a flow system like a cow, and the digester has to be treated like a cow," he said. "If cows slug [down] feed and get a gut ache, that thing will get a gut ache. If you treat it as a piece of equipment, you're going to be frustrated with it."

To really drive home the comparison, the digester uses a boiler and heat coils to heat water to 101 degrees — the same



Scott Brenner, farmer at Hunter Haven Farms in Pearl City, is shown in front of the dairy farm's biodigester during a virtual tour hosted recently by the Illinois Milk Producers Association and the University of Illinois Dairy Extension. (Photo courtesy of Illinois Farm Bureau)

temperature of a healthy cow.

In addition to producing natural gas, the digester produces biodegradable, comfortable bedding for the cows, which is added every morning to the stalls. The farm sells tons of additional bedding to a neighboring dairy farm.

Exploring new solutions

The farm could explore integrating solar panels into the operation someday, but Brenner said a project proposed would cost nearly a million dollars. The farm is instead investing its resources in air flow to keep the cows comfortable and, in turn, productive. It's invested in massive tunnel fans on the end of the dairy barn, and more fans are being installed inside, with the goal of getting steady air flow up to between 7 and 9 mph.

"For us, air flow, and the animals' comfort, that's what it's all about," Brenner said. "We don't have an endless supply of money. Everybody's looking at solar, but we made this system fit us. We'll let the solar thing work its way out for us. It might be something we can get involved with, but I don't know."

The farm finds plenty of other ways to be a good steward. Brenner and the team are constantly tinkering with their cover crops, although seeding rye in the fall, right after the harvest, is a standby.

The farm's soil contains a lot of clay, and its rolling topography means a great deal of erosion.

"We've learned a lot in the past three or four years about what cover crops work, and what won't. What works one year might not work the next. It's a very

fickle thing," Brenner said. "Anything we can do to help with soil replacement is very important to us."

Being agile with decision-making and being willing to scrap aspects of the operation are crucial to a farm's longevity.

"Maybe you just need to tear the whole thing down and build it again. We've done that here," Brenner said, citing the farm's overhaul of its breeding program, which included shipping excess heifers to a farm in southwest Kansas.

"If you'd told me I'd have cows in Johnson City, Kansas, I would have told you you're crazy," he said.

The Kansas farm features a dirt lot and a concrete feed pad, which conditions in northwest Illinois don't accommodate.

"Just because it's the way things have been done the past 25 years doesn't mean it's right," Brenner said. "You just need to take a holistic approach. There's never anything that's off the table."

Whether determining economic benchmarks or discussing succession plans, open, honest, and proactive conversations are vital.

"There are some hard questions that need to be asked and answered, and some of those conversations aren't very fun," Brenner said. "There's give and take, just like anything, but if everybody has the same goal in the end, you can make it work."

(This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association.)

USDA is seeking new partnerships to safeguard, restore wetland ecosystems

CHAMPAIGN — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will invest up to \$17 million for conservation partners to help protect and restore critical wetlands on agricultural lands through the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership (WREP). USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is prioritizing proposals that focus on assisting historically underserved producers conserving wetlands. Proposals from partners are due Aug. 15, 2021. Restored wetlands help to improve water quality downstream, enhance wildlife habitat, reduce impacts from flooding and provide recreational benefits.

"Our goal is to support agricultural producers in their efforts to conserve natural resources on their land," said Ivan Dozier, State Conservationist in Illinois. "Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnerships help partners and producers work together to protect wetland ecosystems on working lands."

Through WREP projects, eligible conservation partners protect, restore and enhance high-priority wetlands on agriculture lands. WREP enables effective integration of wetland

restoration on working agricultural landscapes, providing meaningful benefits to farmers and ranchers who enroll in the program and to the communities where the wetlands exist. Eligible partners include state and local governments and non-government organizations. WREP partners are required to contribute a financial or technical assistance fund match.

WREP funding is for fiscal year 2022, which begins Oct. 1, 2021.

How to Apply

Partners interested in applying should contact their NRCS state office for more information. Proposals are due by Aug. 15, 2021.

More Information

Funding will be provided through the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership (WREP), part of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), a Farm Bill conservation program. Through WREP, states, local units of governments, and non-governmental collaborate with NRCS through cooperative and partnership agreements. These partners work with private landowners who voluntarily enroll eligible land into easements to protect, restore and enhance wetlands on their properties.

Kish debuts Ag Workshop Series

MALTA — Kishwaukee College's Community Education program has launched a new Agriculture Workshop Series that highlights various aspects of farming and food production.

The new series features several different classes this summer that will teach participants self-sustaining farming practices, which can be turned into entrepreneurial opportunities. Local experts will explore topics such as vegetable gardening, raising sheep, beekeeping and more. All courses will take place virtually.

"Food and farming offer a lot of opportunities for our local community," said LaCretia Konan, Dean of Workforce & Community Education. "These courses allow anyone with an interest in agriculture to take initiative and create a positive impact for themselves and their environment."

The following courses will be available in the coming weeks:

Start Your Edible Garden — Learn how to grow fruits and vegetables in your own backyard. Landscape designer and gardener Katie Powell-Lee will teach the instructor-led courses, which begin Aug. 18, Sept. 15 or Oct. 13. Additionally, a self-paced course can be started at any time. The cost is \$126. Hobby Farming: Raising

Sheep — Learn the basics of raising sheep on a small-scale farm from instructor Nicole Spezio-DePaz. The class takes place 6-7 pm Tuesday, Aug. 3, via Zoom. The cost is \$8 per person.

Why Homegrown and Handmade — Instructor Deborah Niemann will demonstrate the benefits of having a garden, milking goats and cooking from scratch. The class takes place 6-7 pm Tuesday, Aug. 17, via Zoom. The cost is \$8 per person.

Hobby Farming: Goat Milk Soap — Jill Franke of Tin Shed Farm in Sycamore will teach the benefits of using and making your own goat milk soap. The class takes place 6-7 pm Wednesday, Aug. 18, via Zoom. The cost is \$8 per person.

The Bees and Me — Local expert Larry Krengel will provide insights on beekeeping and how to start your own colony. The class takes place 7-8 pm Wednesday, Aug. 18 via Zoom. The cost is \$8 per person.

For more information on Kishwaukee College's Agriculture Workshop Series, or to register, visit www.kish.edu/agworkshops or contact Melissa Gallagher, Director of Short-Term Training & Continuing Education, at 815-825-9466 or mgallagher1@kish.edu. Additional classes may be added to the series.

Illinois teams become advocates for food access, security

SPRINGFIELD — What does it mean to be hungry? Illinois 4-H teens are challenging experts in the fields of food access, food security, and food justice to learn how to advocate for others in their communities.

In May, 105 youth at the Illinois 4-H Food Action Summit worked with University of Illinois researchers, non-profit professionals, food advocates, and civic leaders in workshops designed to empower young people to strengthen their leadership and work to create food security

in their communities. The day-long Summit provided both educational workshops and networking opportunities.

"We hope youth walked away from this conference with an expanded vision of what is possible in the world of food systems both academically and professionally," says Mark Becker, University of Illinois Extension 4-H youth development specialist in food systems. "We hope the Summit sparked ideas and empowered youth to act in their communities." Presenters and attendees

came from across the country, as well as Puerto Rico and Brazil.

"It was very rewarding to see the youth working and taking action," says Flavio Rocha, Portuguese/English teacher at Campus Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil, and summit presenter. "They are so young and already worried about their communities, which was very inspiring."

Time was also devoted to providing youth with professional networking opportunities, both with presenters and with their peers.

"It was rewarding to connect virtually, and it really gave youth the feeling of you are not alone," says Rocha. "Even if we are distant, there is this bond that teens all over the world are doing something similar to what we are doing here. Discussing and sharing ideas was so valuable."

This yearly event is part of ongoing food advocacy work done through Illinois 4-H.

COMPEER Financial provided financial support for this event, through its gifts to the Illinois 4-H Foundation.

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