

LOCAL NEWS

SCHOOL continued from page A1—

AJHS 6th grader, Jake Dinges, and his teacher, Yvonne Vicks, attended the board meeting and gave an informative presentation on various aspects of the program.

- Full congratulated Jasper Oury for being the school-wide winner of the rock/paper/scissors competition.
- Faculty/staff and students watched a bus evacuation video on Jan. 8 during WIN. The video counts towards the annual bus evacuation drill required by the state.
- The classroom/grade level spelling bee has started, organized this year by Ashley Platz. The winner of the school spelling bee will be eligible to compete in the regional spelling bee.
- AJHS Student Council is running a "Penny Drive" this month to raise money for PADS (homeless shelter) in Dixon.

Principal Joyce Schamberger, Central Elementary School Improvement

- The Problem Solving Team met with grade level teams to discuss struggling students.
- The grade level teams re-trained Central students on the expectations for PBIS by watching a video made by Central's former 4th grade students.
- Student of the Month awards will be handed out on Jan. 25. Students will be reminded to continue reading their library books and taking tests to earn points.

School Activities

- The Book-It activity for the month of January will be on Jan. 29 with a dress up activity planned by the specials team. Students who have met their reading goals for the

month will be able to participate by dressing up as their favorite Scooby Doo character.

- Central PTC met on Jan. 11. Plans are underway for the annual Pancake Breakfast. This will be done as a carry out meal/breakfast.
- Central School will celebrate the 100th day of school on Jan. 28. Students will be able to dress up like the 70s and/or 80s and will have to stop, drop and dance when it's announced over the PA system.
- Schamberger thanked the Lee County Health Department for delivery of a washer and dryer, which were received at no cost to the district due to a grant from LCHD.
- Schamberger congratulated Mrs. Hussey and Mrs. Burke for applying and obtaining \$250 grants from The Maggie & Amos Foundation.

- Schamberger expressed her appreciation to Amie Wiseman for posting photos of Central's faculty and staff on the district website.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Building construction update - Temporary portable heat is allowing work to continue. Nichols said they were hoping to pour the gym floor on Jan. 25 and the locker room area was poured on Jan. 22. Electricians, plumbers, masons are also still working.
- Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) policy revisions were approved.
- Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) resolution was approved.

The next regular board meeting will take place at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 18 at Central School. All meetings are open to the public.

HEALTH continued from page A1—

We also ask if you qualify based on your profession, please check with your employer before registering, because we are currently coordinating with many employers for all their staff who want the vaccine.

We thank the community for its continued support. We will get through this together.

Stop The Spread

The Unified Command Team would like to remind our community that COVID-19 remains in our area and continues to be a real threat. Some people who have tested positive have had no symptoms or mild symptoms. Others have felt miserable or even been hospitalized. Although there are individuals considered at a higher risk for complications due to COVID-19, some otherwise healthy people have also become very sick. The more the virus spreads & the more cases we have

locally, the risk of very ill or hospitalized individuals increases.

Please, for yourself and others, follow the state and federal recommendations. It's easy to remember as the 3 W's: Wash your hands; Watch your distance; and Wear your mask.

Also, we'd like to mention the process of contact tracing. If your local health department tries to contact you, please answer or return their call. Some people may feel distrustful or afraid of the term "contact tracing." This is actually a strategy used for many years in public health to reduce the spread of infectious disease. Contact tracing is a critical piece of our mitigation efforts against COVID-19. More information can be found at this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/contact-tracing.html>

What to do if you think you have or have been exposed to COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals with symptoms SHOULD NOT GO to health care facilities such as hospitals, clinics, and urgent care centers without CALLING FIRST. Instead, they can seek care by using one of the following options:

Testing:

Anyone with COVID-19 like symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, chills, sudden loss of taste and or smell and fever) OR who have a risk factor, such as contact with someone confirmed to have COVID-19, a compromised immune system or a serious chronic medical condition can get a test, even without a doctor's order.

Call the KSB Hotline Monday-Friday, 9-5

at 285-7777 to determine eligibility for testing. Residents can go to the following websites for additional information:

Go to KSB, LCHD, IDPH, or CDC websites. Lee County Health Department provides regular updates on its Facebook page.

- <https://www.ksbhospital.com/coronavirus-outbreak-covid-19/>
- <http://www.lchd.com>
- <http://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- For businesses: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>
- Facebook: Lee County IL Health Department

WINTER continued from page A1—

"Customers can be assured that the reliability and resiliency of Nicor Gas' distribution system will allow the safe and continued delivery of affordable natural gas, no matter the weather," said John O. Hudson III, president and CEO of Nicor Gas. "And with proper weatherization and safety precautions, homes and businesses can enjoy the reliable warmth of natural gas while saving money."

Little changes can add up to big savings with these weatherization tips:

Regularly replace air and furnace filters; most filters should be cleaned or replaced every 60-90 days. A clean filter will allow the system to run more efficiently.

Open window coverings during the day to allow sunlight to heat your home naturally, and close curtains at night to reduce the chill from cold windows.

Keep furniture, drapes, stuffed animals and other objects away from heating sources.

Adjust timer controls and programmable thermostats. Some older thermostats may not have an internal clock and need to be adjusted manually.

Customers can request up to two free home weatherization kits from the Nicor Gas Energy Efficiency Program. Kits include outlets and light switch foam gaskets to help prevent drafts from exterior walls, weatherstripping and rope caulk for windows and doors, as well as a self-adhesive door sweep to prevent cold air from leaking in underneath.

Customers can also request a free energy assessment in addition to energy-saving products by visiting nicorgas.com/ways-to-save.



Granny Rose - Pebbles

Pebbles was rescued along with her kittens. She was relieved to have some help. Pebbles is thought to be about 1 1/2 years old so she is young and playful. She is very pretty with her gray tabby and white coloring. Pebbles probably won't nicely share a home with another cat and she definitely dislikes dogs. Come meet Pebbles. To see Pebbles, call Granny Rose Animal Shelter at 815-288-PETS(7387) or visit www.grannyrose.org.

Photo contributed

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PHASE 4 continued from page A1—

Metrics for moving from a higher to lower tier are as follows:

Moving from Tier 1 to Phase 4

- o Test positivity rate = 6.5% for three consecutive days (7-day average); AND
- o Staffed ICU bed availability = 20% for three consecutive days (7-day average); AND
- o No sustained increase in COVID patients in hospital (7-day average for 7 of 10 days)

Information about mitigation and resurgence metrics can be found on the IDPH website at <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics>.

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LOCAL NEWS

TEEN TURF

Thank Yous

We are blessed to have the following folks assist us: Sandy Morrissey and Dennis Donna for their monetary donation; Les and Betty Shaw for delivering food items from the Amboy Fire Department; Laurie and Dan Nauman for the chips; Someone who dropped off the toys in the hallway; Cindy and Michael Phillips for the Valentine items; Eileen and Irene Ramsdell for the beautiful cupcakes and meat, cheese, and bread; Kim and Mike Stram for the snacks and Donna Wellman for her yummy treats. As always we are blessed to have the following assist us after school: Shannon, Fran, Donna, Will, Robert, Jarrett, Brooklyn, and Kaylee. We couldn't do it without our volunteers.

Teen Turf

We are now open; however it is not like any year before. Students had to pre-register before coming and we are limited on space due to Illinois State guidelines. Please do not send a child without speaking to Eileen Piper at 815-440-8195

Final Word

Lord, as I prepare my heart and mind for changing my behavior, I ask that your divine will be clear to me. Help me to make this change, a Holy change as I look to You for all of my strength and guidance. Allow your way of life rule in my thoughts and actions. Thank you for being there for me in this! Amen.

U. OF I. EXTENSION NEWS

Find Your Spark in 4-H

Youth will have the opportunity to find their spark and explore the 4-H program during a six-week series of hands-on activities offered by University of Illinois Extension. Sessions will be held online and will begin at 4 p.m. Tuesdays, Feb. 23 to March 30.

Youth will receive a packet of sup-

plies and instructions for six different activities, designed to explore 4-H project areas in health, cultural awareness, creative arts, child development, animal science and horticulture. Each week, participants will also join an online zoom session to discuss their activities and interact with other participants.

One may register online by Feb. 11 at go.illinois.edu/4HFindYourSpark or by calling Whiteside County Extension Office at 815-632-3611.

The supply fee is \$5 for all six sessions and youth ages eight to 12 may attend one or more sessions.

Supply kits will be mailed prior to each session.

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 City of Amboy committee meetings will be held at 6 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 1, at the Community Center, 280 W. Wasson Rd.

DIXON-The American Red Cross will hold a Blood Drive from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 6, at the National Guard Building, 412 W. Everett. Call the Red

Cross at 800-733-2767 or visit RedCrossBlood.org to make an appointment to donate. Download the Blood Donor App.

SUBLETTE-The Sublette Village Board will meet at 7 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 8, at the Ellice Dinges Center, 202 S. West St.

MAY TOWNSHIP-The May Township meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 10, at the township maintenance building.

STERLING-The American Red Cross will hold a Blood Drive from 9 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 11, at Sterling Bethel Reform

Church, 230 E. 23rd St. Call the Red Cross at 800-733-2767 or visit RedCrossBlood.org to make an appointment to donate. Download the Blood Donor App.

LEE CENTER TWP-The Lee Center Township meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 11, at the township building, 2202 Shaw Rd., Amboy.

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Iowa State University announces fall 2020 Dean's List

AMES, Iowa — More than 11,000 Iowa State University students have been recognized for outstanding academic achievement by being named to the fall semester 2020 Dean's List. Students named to the Dean's List must have earned a grade point average of at least 3.50 on a 4.00 scale while carrying a minimum of 12 credit hours of graded course work. Students listed below are from your area.

Dixon

Nicholas Dean Engle, 2, Pre-Business

Steward

Kayla Renee McCormick, 2, Accounting
Austin Suddeth, 3, Agricultural Business

Sublette

Ashley Renee Althaus, 2, Agricultural Systems Technology
Natalie Diana Vaessen, 3, Event Management

NIU announces fall 2020 Dean's List

DEKALB — Northern Illinois University announces its fall 2020 Dean's List students. To earn this distinction, students must meet a minimum semester grade point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale in the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology or a minimum of 3.75 on a 4.0 scale in the colleges of Business, Education, Health and Human Sciences, Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Visual and Performing Arts. Students from your area who achieved this honor include:

Amboy

Jordan Hochstatter, Political Sci-Public Law-B.S., Amboy High School

Tyler Stewart, Undecided E&ET, Amboy High School

Ashton

Samantha Smith, Environmental Studies - B.S., Ashton Franklin Center HS

Emalie Vogeler, Art Studio-Design & Media Arts, Ashton Franklin Center HS

Compton

Joseph Gehant, Electrical Engineering, Mendota Township High School

Dixon

Katie Fredericks, Business Administration - B.S., Amboy High School

Franklin Grove

Paige Hilliker, SPED-LBSI with PEL, Ashton Franklin Center High School

Paw Paw

Julia Hoelzer, Human Resource Management, Paw Paw

High School

Joshua Mateja, Pre-Computer Science, Paw Paw High School

Alexandra Soto, Health Sciences-General, Paw Paw High School

Steward

Hailey Herrmann, Public Health Administration, Indian Creek High School

Sublette

Emma Lindenmeyer, Physical Education, Amboy High School

West Brooklyn

Jessie Dooley, Communicative Disorders, Mendota Township High School

NIU December 2020 Graduation List

DEKALB — More than 1,300 students received their degrees from Northern Illinois University in December. Included among the graduates were the following students from your area:

Dixon

Dani Bally, Bachelor of Arts in English
Danielle Eychaner, Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art Studio and Design - Design and Media Arts

Jacob Fane, Bachelor of Science in Accountancy
Anna Henson, Bachelor of General Studies in General Emphasis

Dominic Marchetti, Bachelor of Science in Educ in Elementary Education: Elementary Mathematics Education

Mason Rhodenbaugh, Bachelor of Science in Finance
Brooke Terranova, Master of Arts in Teaching in Elementary Education

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OBITUARIES/LOCAL NEWS

OBITUARIES

Thomas E. Latta

Aug. 29, 1954 - Jan. 19, 2021

AMBOY — Thomas E. Latta, 66, of Amboy, died Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2021 at his home.

He was born Aug. 29, 1954 in Sterling the son of Donald and Fredleen (Ferguson) Latta.

Tom was a graduate of the Amboy High School class of 1973. He worked at Allied Locke Ind. for 35 years and was Supervisor of the Sprocket Department.

He loved to go camping and fishing in Wisconsin every summer. He was very involved with the children in our community. He helped run the Amboy Summer Baseball Program for 15 years. He coached baseball and umpired games. He helped with the Amboy Kids Wrestling Program, coached kids soccer and also coached the Amboy High School Girls Fresh-soph Basketball team with Ron Bender for two years.

He loved spending time with family and friends, always making you laugh.

Tom married his high school sweetheart, Rose Ann Slater, on July 20, 1974 at St.

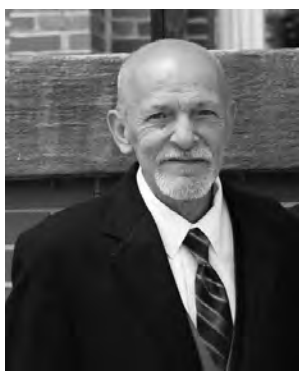
Flannen Catholic Church in Harmon and they were blessed with three sons.

He is survived by his wife, Rose Ann; sons, Jeff (Annalise) Latta, of Everett, Wash., Tim (Elizabeth) Latta, of Amboy, Mark (Lisa) Latta, of Mill Creek, Wash.; seven grandchildren, Jordyn, Ashlie, Kamdyn, Adisyn, Isaac, Lauren and Owen; one nephew, Jason Latta, one niece, Lisa (Tom) Moravec; his aunt Carolyn Ledford, of Sterling; sisters in law, Marnie Slater, and

Christine (Ron) Heide, both of Sterling, Colleen Slater and Lisa (Kim) Buckingham, both of Rock Falls; and many other nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Tom was preceded in death by his parents and only brother, Wayne Latta in 1981; two great nephews, Justin and James Larson; his mother in law and father in law, Russell and Josephine Slater; three brothers in law Rick, Mike and Eddie Slater; one sister in law Karla Cathey; along with several aunts, uncles and cousins.

The family would like to



thank Dr Kurt Crowe, his nurse Carol and the staff in their Amboy office along with Hospice of the Rock River Valley and their staff for all of their help guiding us through this journey.

Due to Covid a private family service were held Friday morning at the Mihm-Jones Funeral Home in Amboy with Rev. Richard Kramer officiating. Cremation rites will follow with burial of cremains at a later date at Coloma Twp. Cemetery in Rock Falls.

A memorial has been established.

Condolences can be sent online at www.thejonesfh.com.

Kinzinger reflects on dark day at Capitol

BY RUSSELL HODGES
Special to the Amboy News

WASHINGTON, D.C. — United States Congressman Adam Kinzinger heard flash bang grenades exploding outside his office in Washington D.C. as large numbers of insurrectionists stormed the U.S. Capitol building on Jan. 6.

The Republican, who is in his fifth term representing Illinois' 16th District, had a feeling the events that took place that day could take an ugly turn. The day started as expected, with Kinzinger and his congressional colleagues entering the House chamber around 1 p.m. for a Joint Session to certify the results of the 2020 election, which saw Democratic President-elect Joe Biden defeat Republican President Donald Trump.

When Kinzinger returned to his office, he began seeing tensions flare on social media, with some people on Twitter directing comments specifically toward him. After speaking to his wife on the phone, Kinzinger sensed that actions outside the Capitol were turning for the worse.

"I could see a little of the crowd, but I felt a real dark and evil sense coming over the place," Kinzinger said. "I'm not one of those guys who feels that all of the time, but that's the best

way I could describe it. When I heard the Capitol alarm, which I've only heard twice in my 10 years, and I heard the panic from the narrator's voice that we needed to shelter in place, I knew things were going to get pretty bad, so I locked myself in my office and told my staff not to come in."

Kinzinger, who said he expressed his concerns about how events could transpire on Jan. 6 to House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, added he typically carries a weapon on him everywhere but the Capitol building. That changed on Jan. 6, with Kinzinger deciding to bring his weapon into the Capitol because he felt he may have needed to defend himself if tensions escalated.

"I have profound sadness for that day," Kinzinger said. "I think we realized how fragile democracy is. The vast majority of people out there had no intention of doing this, but the whole narrative of why everybody was out there was because of misinformation and the idea the election was stolen in the face of any proof. I could go along with that narrative because it's an easy political decision, but I also know the deep ramifications of making that decision."

The insurrection at the Capitol building resulted in the House of Representatives impeaching Trump for the second time in his presidency, something that hasn't happened to any other president in American history. It was also the most bipartisan impeachment in history, with 10 Republicans, including Kinzinger, who represents over 700,000 Illinoisans in the 16th Congressional District, voting to impeach Trump this past week for inciting insurrection.

"I voted for the president during the election, but as we got past the election, I saw the massive increase in misinformation," Kinzinger said. "I predicted multiple times that there'd be violence on Jan. 6. When Jan. 6 happened, I matched the president's words during his speech and the president's accusations of a stolen election and I couldn't come to any conclusion other than what happened at the Capitol was an insurrection

and the president played a significant role."

Kinzinger noted that the No. 2, No. 3 and No. 4 persons in the presidential line of succession (Vice President Mike Pence, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and Senate President Pro Tempore Chuck Grassley) were under attack as a result of the Jan. 6 insurrection. Kinzinger also noted how Trump's action on Twitter and his refusal to mobilize the military on Jan. 6 played a role in his vote to impeach the president, who was ultimately impeached with a 232-197 vote.

"I know it's not an easy political decision, but on things like this, I've made it clear to myself and the people I represent that my ultimate oath is to the people of the district and the Constitution," Kinzinger emphasized. "The first impact of what happened on Jan. 6 to me was the recognition of how fragile our democracy is. Our democracy survived that day, but we saw how close it came to not. The second impact was knowing this would be one of the things our history books write about [Trump]. From second-hand accounts, the president knows that and he's sad about that."

With the House voting to impeach Trump the Senate will begin a trial to debate and decide whether or not Trump should be convicted. Two-thirds of the Senate must vote in favor in order to convict Trump, who was acquitted after his first impeachment. Kinzinger said he hopes to see a fair trial that fully analyzes what happened during the Jan. 6 events.

"I'd like to see our senators make decisions based on merits and not on politics," Kinzinger said. "I actually think there's a decent chance enough senators will vote to convict, which would prevent him from running again. I think it's an important step, and I don't know if that's what will happen, but over time, I think it would be seen as the right thing to do and I think the longer time passes until the Senate trial starts, it's probably more likely there will be enough senators."

See **KINZINGER** page A5

Amboy News Obituary Policy
The Amboy News will print DEATH NOTICES (approximately 50 words including name, age, date of death, time/date of services) free of charge. OBITUARIES will be printed at a cost of \$25 to be billed to the arranging funeral home or prepaid with cash, check or credit card. Please submit obituaries or death notices to tgreenfield@amboynews.com.

Start your education, launch your career with Kish's Google IT Support program

MALTA — Working with computers has been a longtime hobby for Noah Forsberg, but he wanted to turn it into a career.

"Since I was about 13 (years old), I've been building my own computers," he said. "It's something I have always wanted to do."

Forsberg, a Sycamore resident, has had plenty of self-taught experience, but he needed an entry point into the information technology industry — something that showed professional credentials. Now, one six-credit hour program at Kishwaukee College has him on a path to a job in IT and further education.

Kishwaukee College's Google IT Support Professional Certificate prepares students for an entry-level position in the fast-growing IT industry. The six-credit hour program requires no prerequisites to take. The curriculum was developed by Google professionals to better meet their growing employment

demands.

"It was developed by Google so it's really good fundamentals," Forsberg said. "It's a great skills overview."

Students learn about IT support staff, configuring software and accounts, networking security, and troubleshooting. Upon completion, students earn the Google IT Support Professional Certificate and Kishwaukee College's IT Support Certificate.

"For me, personally, it has really worked out," Forsberg said. "Immediately after this, I'm hoping to find a nice entry-level job. I'll still be going to Kish, but also looking for work."

Students who have recently completed the certificate are currently working at businesses in the field while continuing their education. Kishwaukee College works closely with area employers to provide apprenticeships where students earn while they learn. Through the Illinois Cooperative Work Study Program, employers have the opportunity to

receive 50% reimbursement of wages for students working in a field related to their academic program.

Students can also use the course as a building block for further education. Zachary King of DeKalb plans on applying the class as a launchpad into an associate degree and possibly more.

"I'm planning to get more into computer programming," he said. "I wanted to learn more about these types of things for more education."

The program is currently conducted entirely online, with in-person support available. Another semester is fast approaching and seating is limited for the class, which can launch a student into the IT workforce.

"For someone looking to just get started, this is definitely something you should do," Forsberg said.

For more information on the Google IT Certificate at Kish, or additional short-term training programs available, visit www.kish.edu/shortterm.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Your Guide To Local Houses of Worship

St. Patrick Church

Fr. John Gow
32 N Jones, Amboy
815-857-2315 • www.stpatrickamboy.org
New Mass Times Begin Sept. 1st
Masses: Tuesday – Friday Daily Mass 8 am
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

St. Mary Church

Fr. John Gow
912 Walton Rd., Walton
815-857-2670
New Mass Times Begin Sept. 1st
Mass: Saturday, 5:30 pm

St. Flannen Church

Fr. John Gow
213 S Second St., Harmon
815-857-2670
New Mass Times Begin Sept. 1st
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
First Sunday night of each month, 6:00p.m.
First Sunday Family Film Night
Fourth Saturday of each month, 6:00p.m.
"Fun & Fellowship Game Night
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Come as you are and join us on the journey!

First Baptist Church

Pastor Rocky Fritz
24 N. Mason Avenue
Church Phone 857-2682
www.fbcamboy.com
Sunday School for all ages - 9:30 a.m.
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 addictions 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 Fronек
West Brooklyn
Tuesday & Thursday - 7:30 a.m.
Saturday - 5:30 p.m.

St. Patrick Church

Rev. Randy Fronек - 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 Fronек
Locust Street, Sublette
Phone 815-849-5412
Saturday Mass - 4:00 p.m.
Sunday Mass - 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday - 8:00 a.m.
Thursday - 8:30 a.m.

Refuge Church

Pastor John Kalebaugh
Mendota Hills Campground • 642 Rt. 52
Amboy, IL 61310 • 815-849-5930
10 a.m. Sunday, potluck follows

Harmon United Methodist Church

Pastor Leanne Keate
202 N. Grove, Harmon
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**Vaessen Brothers
Chevrolet**
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KSB Medical Center
815-857-3044

The Amboy News
815-857-2311



SOCIAL NEWS

From The Heart online auction begins

ROCHELLE—The Rochelle Rotary Club's annual From the Heart online auction has begun.

Those organizing the From The Heart annual gala are broken hearted over not being able to hold our in person Gala in 2021, but our charities still need us.

That's why From The Heart is asking that you give from your heart this year. The gala, which is normally held on first Saturday of February at the Flight Deck Bar and Grille in Rochelle, raises more than \$46,000 for seven local non-profit groups that provide valuable family services in and around the Rochelle region.

This year, the From The Heart Committee has decided to host a Virtual Event in 2021 on the From The Heart Facebook page and an online auction at <https://bearrows.hibid.com>.

The online auction features items that would normally have appeared on our silent auction tables during the in-person gala. There is something for everyone on the online auction.

On the auction block are 26 centerpieces created by Rochelle florists Colonial Flowers and Cypress House. The person who is the highest bidder and wins each centerpiece will also be entered into a separate drawing for the Centerpiece Necklace which is a 4 Kt White Gold Diamond Fashion Necklace .95ct., exclusively designed by Busch Jewelers in Rockford, and valued at \$3,000. The drawing for the Centerpiece Necklace will take place during our Virtual Event at 7 p.m., on Saturday, Feb. 6 on the From The Heart Facebook page.

Another item on the auction block features an incredible opportunity for the serious Elvis collector. You can have the change to own 10 black and white photographs, enlarged from the original negatives from the front row of Elvis in concert in LaCrosse, Wis., on May 14, 1956. This is part of a limited 1000 numbered and signed editions. These are unique, highly desirable, museum quality heirloom portfolio. Photographer Vinje Dahl was just 15 years old

and in the audience during the concert. The negatives of the photographs ended up in a box of high school memorabilia, and were rediscovered back in the late 1990s. The collection was retailed at \$2,500.

For the sports fans, the auction will feature a Chicago Bears framed photo montage of Dick Butkus and Gale Sayers, autographed by both players.

Also up for bids is a framed photo montage of former Chicago Cub Ryne Sandberg, featuring his autograph.

The auction will also feature two pieces of jewelry from Busch Jewelers in Rockford. The first is a Ladies 10kt White Gold Dancing Shimmering Diamond Pendant .90ctw, retailed at \$2,400. The second is a Ladies 10 kt Yellow Gold Diamond Fashion Heart Pendant .95ctw, retailed at \$1,500.

Another item up for auction is free ice cream throughout 2021 from Grandma Rosie's Woodfire and Ice.

There will be a Mac Sport Utility Wagon filled with white wine, and a Mac Sport Utility Wagon filled with red wine on the auction.

Also featured on the auction will be a Yeti Tundra 65 Cooler filled with craft beer.

This is just a taste of the auction items up for grabs. Visit <https://bearrows.hibid.com> to see the full list of items available.

From The Heart is still accepting tickets for its Virtual Event. For \$100 per ticket, you will have an entry into a drawing to win one of five Virtual Event Prizes: 1/2 Hog and Processing; 1/4 Beef and Processing; LG UHD 75 Inch TV; Apple Watch Series 6; and a KitchenAid 5 Quart Bowl Lift Stand Mixer. Plus you will receive a \$25 voucher for the Flight Deck. Additional chances to win one of the five prizes are available for \$20 each, once the initial \$100 ticket is purchased.

Please mail your Virtual Ticket payment to From The Heart, PO Box 202, Rochelle, IL 61068. For more information, call Dave at 815-562-2220. Online ticket may be purchased at <http://fromtheheartrochelle.org>.

The Book Nook

By:

Tatjana Kazan

The Love of Our Neighbor

The title of Sigrid Nunez's novel "What Are You Going Through?" comes from French philosopher Simone Weil: "The love of our neighbor in all its fullness simply means being able to say, 'What are you going through?'" The unnamed narrator is a writer in late middle age with a sharp wit who tells stories that are full of sadness yet never grim.

She introduces us to a friend she has known since college, the kind of beautiful, brilliant woman who commands the room. She calls her "an intellectual vamp." Despite the odds, her friend has recovered from cancer. "I don't have to leave the party just yet." She jokes about her disagreeable daughter that there are "enough bones of contention" between them "to make a whole skeleton."

Several stories follow, including that of a charming rescue cat who relates being lost and found. Another story is of a woman the narrator occasionally chats with at the gym, who despite diligent effort shows no improvement. It is the plight of the aging, once beautiful woman no one recognizes anymore. She has become "an ordinary, undesirable person with a common, forgettable face."

In another story, an elderly neighbor woman lives in fear of being cheated by robocallers, yet can't resist picking up the phone. The narrator visits her as a kindness to the woman's son, but hates listening to her rants: "Was it really possible that Americans would elect to the highest office in the land, to the most powerful position on earth, a person so manifestly unfit, so brazenly immoral and corrupt, a person who lied with every breath and was a complete incompetent to boot?" She is talking about Hillary Clinton. She does not appreciate it when the narrator remarks that Sean Hannity looks like Lou Costello.

The heart of this elegant, wise novel is the college friend's revelation that she is dying of cancer. "I will not go out in mortifying anguish," she insists and complains that "the only way people seem able to deal with this disease is to make it a hero narrative. Survivors are heroes. Some of the worst comes from the cancer support community - think of your cancer as a gift, an opportunity for spiritual growth, think of cancer as a step in the journey to becoming your best self." She asks the narrator to help her die. "A whole other feeling floods me when she reveals that she is in possession of a euthanasia drug." The narrator agrees to go away with her and stay until she is ready to take the euthanasia pills that will end her life. At a New England Airbnb their superficial friendship turns into genuine love. "Our need for speech kept diminishing."

Email news items to
tgreenfield@amboynews.com

KINZINGER continued from page A4

Now that the Biden administration has begun, Kinzinger said he hopes to see congressional leaders on both sides return to a more normal sense of diplomacy.

"I want to see an attempt to calm down rhetoric and get back to professional disagreements," Kinzinger said. "I'll disagree with the Biden administration on a lot of things, but I'll do so in a way I think is reflective of the great past of how we do politics and not necessarily the present. Hopefully there are areas where we can work together. One area would be actually getting an infrastructure bill done. I'm willing to work with the administration when

I can and when I have to oppose the administration, I'll do so in a professional

and upright manner. I'm not going to adapt to the politics of personal destruction,

conspiracies and stoking division."

Latta named December Student of the Month

AMBOY—Caden Latta, from Amboy High School, was recently named November Student of the Month for outstanding effort and performance in Digital Media Arts at Whiteside Area Career Center in Sterling.

Caden is the son of Brad and Sue Latta. He is a senior at Amboy High School.



Caden Latta

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Opinion

Trying to communicate in an approachable manner

Joe Biden has advised his aides to avoid academic or elitist language when sharing ideas, but what stands out is how he told them to do it.

According to the New York Times, here is what he had to say: "Pick up your phone, call your mother, read her what you just told me. If she understands, we can keep talking."

It's surprising advice coming from a man married to a woman with a doctorate, who is also a mom. Mothers can speak in elitist or academic language just as much as anyone else.

Without really trying, Biden is engaging in sexist behavior.

Now, I'll be the first to admit that in the pantheon of chauvinist sins, Biden's advice pales in comparison to some of the daily utterances of his predecessor.

But such advice diminishes presidential discourse. The language is being dumbed down so that it no longer uplifts, but condescends.

Imagine if Abraham Lincoln took this approach with the Gettysburg Address.

"Four score and seven," would become "87 years." I guess they mean the same thing but the poetry and majesty of the words have been stripped away.

Biden's "Read it to your mother," advice has been issued by journalism professors and editors to young reporters for generations. The idea is to get people to write the way ordinary people talk.

Guest Column

By Scott Reeder



One editor I worked with switched it around and would say, "Is this something you would say to your dad?"

Decades ago, that editor didn't like my use of the word "linchpin" in one of my stories. I'd quoted someone saying a particular clause was the "linchpin" of the U.S. Constitution.

She said, "You wouldn't say a sentence with 'linchpin' in it to your dad would you?"

My response, "Well, yeah, I would."

With a flick of the wrist she replied, "Well, your dad is really well educated. Come up with a different word."

My Dad was a farmer. We used linchpins every day to hook wagons and other farm implements to tractors. It was part of my agrarian lexicon. (Farm vocabulary.)

But I figured I'd dug a deep enough hole for myself that day and didn't need to add that

to my argument.

This desire to write like the common Joe or Jane is rooted in a desire of politicians and news outlets to be approachable and down-to-earth.

But like anything, it can be taken to an extreme.

Instead of using a word like "infrastructure," I've advised young reporters to use words like "roads," "bridges" or "sewers." The only COLA allowed in the newsrooms where I've worked came out of the pop machines. We used phrases like "pay raise" or "fatter paycheck" rather than "cost of living adjustment."

I hate letting jargon infiltrate (seep in) my news stories.

Back when I was a rookie reporter in Galveston, Texas, and I was writing a story about corporal punishment (spanking) in schools, the school superintendent (Big Cheese) said the word "paddle" was too harsh a word for the device used to whack kids' backsides.

So, I rechristened it "an instrument of flagellation." My editor glowered (gave me a bad look) and changed it back to "paddle."

She made a point of informing me that reporters shouldn't let know-it-all sources dictate what words we use.

There was another time when I was an intern at the Galesburg Register-Mail that I really took this advice to heart. I wanted to rewrite obituaries and change "cremate" to "incinerate."

The editor said in this instance funeral-home jargon was just fine, thank you very much.

I roll my eyes when folks talk about the "media elite" or the "political elite." I've spent most of my professional career around politicians and journalists. I know how they write. I know how they talk.

Both groups have a host (a whole bunch) of faults. But more than any other group they try to communicate in an approachable manner.

It's difficult to fault them for their efforts.

But it's quite natural to wish life were as simple as the language they use.

Scott Reeder is a veteran statehouse journalist and a freelance reporter. He can be reached by email at ScottReeder1965@gmail.com.



On This Day in History

100 Years Ago Jan. 28, 1921

Mr. J.A. Ditsch of Mendota has leased the bowling alleys under the store of the Colson Clothing Co., and opened them up last night.

That there will be a special city election called for the very near future to vote bonds for the purchase of an up-to-date fire truck seems to be assured. The matter will definitely be settled at the regular meeting of the council next Tuesday night.

Miss Wilhelmina Machen is now employed as clerk in the Snow White Bakery.

Miss Merle Wasson, T.N., came down from Freeport Monday and spent the day with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. A.P. Wasson.

75 Years Ago Jan. 24, 1946

Mrs. Beatrice Lingner of Davenport, Iowa, is visiting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Matt Deitelhoff.

J.R. Tait and son Joe of Aurora spent Saturday here with the former's mother, Mrs. Mary Tait.

Rev. and Mrs. Adam Baum and two children of Berwyn were guests Monday at the home of Miss Pearl Dishong.

Mrs. Marshall Stoner of Shannon is visiting here with her daughter, Mrs. Sheldon Zeigler.

50 Years Ago Jan. 28, 1971

Two representatives of the Peace Corps will come to Amboy High School for an assembly Wednesday afternoon, Feb. 3, to accept a \$1,000 check from the student body. The money was raised during the calendar year of 1970 by the entire student body.

Dances, food sales and other projects were used in the fund raising.

Acting Postmaster D.J. Keho announced that public finance windows at the Amboy Post Office will be closed on Saturdays, starting Feb. 13, 1971. Manned windows providing stamps, money orders, registry, parcel post, information and other services will be closed.

The AHS varsity wrestlers added another star to their crown as they swept to a sound victory in the Polo Quadrangular Wrestling match Saturday.

25 Years Ago Jan. 15, 1996

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) recently announced the 1996-97 Illinois State Scholars. Of this year's scholars, five are students at Amboy High School. They are Jeffrey Cassidy, son of Mr. and Mrs. Roger Cassidy; Kelly Malach, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Malach; Gregory Mini, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Mini; Kari Politsch, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gary Politsch; and Lindsay Shaw, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Les Shaw.

Playing Sterling Newman is always important. Playing Sterling Newman for the Three River Conference race is also big. The Amboy Clippers went to Sterling minus their starting center, Andy Bell, and Doug Hicks, their first forward off the bench. Bell was out with a pulled muscle, and Hicks had oral surgery earlier this week. Besides that, Gordon Porter and Matt Henkel were not at full strength due to sickness. Newman scored on a broken play with 3.4 seconds left and came away with a 63-61 victory.



Established in 1854

The Amboy News

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SOMETHING TO SAY?

The Amboy News encourages responsible letters to the editor on subjects of interest to our readers. Editing may be necessary for space, clarity or to avoid obscenity or libel, but ideas will not be altered.

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.

Letter writers may only have two letters published per month, and the letters will be published on non-consecutive weeks. Letters are printed on a space-available basis.

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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The Amboy News is in no way responsible for errors in copy furnished by the Customer. Adjustment or republication in the next available issue will be made for that amount of space involved in errors resulting from failure of the Amboy News to correct errors plainly noted on proof. Customers shall notify the Amboy News of errors in time for correction before the second insertion.

The Amboy News shall not be liable to the Customer for any loss that results from the incorrect publication of its advertising. The Customer agrees to assume responsibility for all errors in copy proofread by Customer when the advertisement printed corresponds to the returned proof.

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SPORTS

Clipper Highlights: #64 Joe Nauman

I am so excited for this week's Clipper highlight. Not only is he a great family friend and fellow Clipper, but also a fellow Aurora Spartan. I am so honored to announce this week's Clipper Highlight, #64, Joe Nauman.

Joe was a 1984 graduate of Amboy High School and a two year, two-way, Varsity starter at Offensive Guard and Linebacker.

All of these highlights and interviews have been incredibly special to me. The stories, the memories, the great character all of these highlights have means so much to me as a former Clipper and lifelong Clipper fan. My conversation with Joe is one of those moments in life I will never forget. Amboy Clipper football was the focal point, but the depth goes far beyond our history between the hash marks. Joe has all the intangibles that all past highlights possess: speed, athleticism, toughness, football intelligence, and an incredible work ethic. What sets Joe apart from most of us, making him part of an elite Clipper group, is his ferocious intensity for the game, his devout love for the Amboy community, and above all his pride, to not only be a Clipper, but pride in where he is from...Amboy.

Whenever Joe is asked where he lives, he tells people where he currently resides but always follows with, "but I am from Amboy." Joe is the definition of never forgetting where you come from.

Joe and his 1984 classmates grew up at the dawn of Amboy Clipper football greatness. His 8th grade and Freshman years were spent watching the great State Runner-Up teams. With wide eyes and dreams of gridiron glory, Joe watched and learned from all the greats on both those Clipper teams. After two seasons (Joe's Sophomore and Junior seasons) of not making the playoffs, Joe and the classes of 1984 and 1985 were ready to reset the ship's course.

"That offseason before senior year we all worked

so hard, on and off the field," Joe stated.

Joe's senior season began with two hard fought victories over non-conference foes, Spring Valley Hall and Mendota. Improving and lengthening the margin of victory in the next seven games of the regular season, resulted in another Clipper 9-0 campaign. There was one known fact about the 1983, 2A, IHSA State Playoffs and that was, all roads led through either Amboy or Ottawa Marquette. Due to an unfortunate draw, based on geographic location, #2 ranked Amboy would host #1 ranked Ottawa Marquette in the first round on a Wednesday night. For those that played or were there to watch that game know the 1983 State Championship was played on that misty, 64 degree night in Amboy. The Clippers lost in heartbreak and agonizing defeat.

"I'll never forget that feeling and my brother Tom lifting me off the field, telling me it will all be ok," Joe shared.

Joe also stated, "I remember in the High School cafeteria after that game, it seemed like the whole community was there to console us and thank us even though we came up short."

What still sticks with Joe, alike all of us except the 1984 State Champions, is the disappointment in letting down our fellow teammates and community by not bringing the State trophy home. What Joe made me realize, is what lifted us all up after that feeling of disappointment, is the unwavering support of our Amboy community.

Joe concluded, "It is the closest thing to Texas High School football you'll ever experience. Four or five rows deep around a dirt track, in all weather elements, supporting every Clipper team."

Joe earned 1st Team All Conference and All Area honors at both Offensive Guard and Linebacker at the end of the 1983 season. Joe continued his football career at Rock Valley College where he was a Team Captain and

Clipper Highlights

By Spencer Morrissey



All Conference Linebacker. Joe went on to Aurora University where he earned defensive MVP honors and led the team in tackles in the 1987 and 1988 seasons. Joe was also an Honorable Mention All-American at Aurora. Joe was inducted into the Aurora University Hall of Fame in 1998. As a 2013 graduate of Aurora University, stories of Joe's Spartan glory were still shared amongst my Spartan teams. His collegiate career concluded with a pro day tryout with the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Throughout Joe's incredible football journey, he never lost sight of where he came from. It pained Joe to have to put on a different color uniform, but he always kept his home in his heart. Joe would wear a red and black bandanna on his ankle for each game as a Spartan to show he never lost sight of his Clipper teammates, coaches, and community.

Joe's friend and former teammate, Robert Morrissey, shared the following of Joe.

"Joe was always intense when he was on the football field. It was his playground and if you were unfortunate to be on the opposite side of the line, I think he considered those others as his toy," Morrissey said. "He was always a huge leader on the team. From freshman season through senior and like any great Amboy Clipper leader he always had your back. If you were on your back from a tackle, he was usually one of first to help you up. If he

thought you received a cheap shot, he never hesitated, and well I think he may have received some hefty flags in coming to your defense. Playing both ways especially as Guard on offense he still never tired out and was so athletic, being strong and very quick it was always nice to run halfback dives behind him because no matter the size of the guy across him he always out-manned him and blew a hole up so big you could have walked through, whistling Dixie untouched. He was fun to grow up with. I can remember Joe from Kindergarten in Mrs Mool's class at the old St Anne's school. That's when we started a long friendship. There was a story he actually just texted me about a couple weekends ago and asked me a question about a time I stayed over at his place one weekend and of course that time was just like it happened yesterday. Some great memories come flashing back. Joe wore his Amboy Football heart on his sleeve and when we lost that first round playoff game vs Ottawa Marquette that Wednesday night it was devastating for all of us but maybe more so for Joe. He had a stellar Amboy career playing both ways all four years I believe. We had a hell of a team our senior year and had very high hopes for our dream of a State Championship that started our 8th grade year watching the 79 football season team go to state. With the Juniors having the squad they had, I truly believe it was one of the finest. But Joe I think took that loss and learned and grew from it and I know he had a great career at Aurora and then in coaching as well as his professional career. So, congrats to Joe, this highlight of him is well deserved."

Joe has been a son of



#64 Joe Nauman

the great game of football since his Freshman year of High School. Joe was a defensive line coach at Aurora University for six seasons. What's most impressive is that Joe has been a volunteer defensive line coach at Yorkville High School for the past 17 seasons. "Some of my favorite Friday nights as a coach were the great conversations, I got to have with my brother Dennis after coaching each of our high school teams. My best ideas, best education, and best learning opportunities came from those 11:30 p.m. conversations," Joe shared.

Knowing both Joe and Dennis' love and knowledge of football, I would have given anything to hear just one of those conversations.

To Joe, Amboy Clipper Football is what you do, its who you are, and it's principles prepare you for a life of success. Being a Clipper is about acting on all you've learned from those before you, never settling for anything short of success, and wanting that success to be continued and adopted by

upcoming generations, both on and off the field.

So, to my good friend, fellow Spartan and Clipper, "Bonecrusher," #64 Joe Nauman, thank you for your contributions to Amboy Football.

Thank you for being among the very best to wear the Clipper Red. Your level of intensity, love for your teammates, and tremendous pride in your hometown are unmatched. It's been an honor to have worn the same Clipper and Spartan uniform as you. 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.

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THE FARMER'S REPORT



No-till practices in vulnerable areas significantly reduce soil erosion

By Marianne Stein

URBANA — Soil erosion is a major challenge in agricultural production. It affects soil quality and carries nutrient sediments that pollute waterways. While soil erosion is a naturally occurring process, agricultural activities such as conventional tilling exacerbate it. Farmers implementing no-till practices can significantly reduce soil erosion rates, a new University of Illinois study shows.

Completely shifting to no-till would reduce soil loss and sediment yield by more than 70%, says Sanghyun Lee, doctoral student in the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering at U of I and lead author on the study, published in Journal of Environmental Management.

But even a partial change in tilling practices could have significant results, he adds.

"If we focus on the most vulnerable area in terms of soil erosion, then only 40% no-till shows almost the same reduction as 100% no-till implementation," Lee says.

The study used physical data and computer modeling to estimate soil erosion in the Drummer Creek watershed, which is part of the Upper Sangamon River watershed in Central Illinois. The area's main crops are corn and soybeans, and tillage is a predominant agricultural practice.

"The rate of soil erosion is increased and accelerated by unsustainable agricultural production. One of the main reasons is conventional tillage in the field," Lee says. "Our model provides a tool to estimate the impacts of tilling on soil erosion across the watershed."

Lee and co-authors Maria Chu, Jorge Guzman, and Alejandra Botero-Acosta developed the modeling framework, coupling a hydrological model (MIKE SHE) with the Water Erosion Prediction Project (WEPP) to examine the impacts of no-till practice in the watershed. The WEPP model provided the sediment sources from the agricultural fields under different tillage practices and the hydrologic model simulated sediment transport across the watershed.

The researchers included historical data on climate, soil properties, sediment sample data, and other relevant measures, then used the coupled model to predict how different management practices affect soil erosion rates.

"Farmers may prefer tilling because wet climate conditions cause compacted soil," Lee says. "However, soil erosion removes topsoil, which contains lots of nutrients, and this may reduce yield in the long term. Soil erosion also affects water quality, both locally over time and at a distance.

"Therefore, farmers need to weigh the benefits of tilling with the consequences of soil erosion and choose the best management strategies."

The modeling framework can help identify the most vulnerable areas, so producers can implement sustainable management practices where it matters most, Lee notes.

(The Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering is in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences and The Grainger College of Engineering, University of Illinois.)



Sarah Frey, the founder of Frey Farms in southern Illinois, speaks during the Illinois Specialty Crop Conference. Frey was "Pumpkin Queen of America" in a New York Times story. (Credit: Illinois Farm Bureau)

'Pumpkin Queen' nearly left the family business before buying it

By CHRISTOPHER HEIMERMAN

For Illinois Press Association

BLOOMINGTON — Sarah Frey sees and appreciates the irony when she looks out at her once-small family farm that became a big player in the specialty crops industry.

"This place I'd spent my entire life trying to escape from, in 2020, it became my escape," said Frey, the founder of Frey Farms in southern Illinois and "Pumpkin Queen of America" in the words of the New York Times.

Frey was the keynote speaker at the annual Illinois Specialty Crop Conference, put on virtually by the Illinois Specialty Growers Association. She described to the audience how long before the COVID-19 pandemic saw people fleeing the congestion of cities, as a teenager she dreamt of stepping into a high-rise and ascending the elevator to her office.

But before her long-planned exodus, she reflected on years of working the earth with her parents and her four older brothers.

All of 19 years old, she decided to change course and buy the family farm.

"My inspiration to go into business wasn't the business side of things," she said. "It was about having a place in the world to build a strong foundation. The sun was setting, and I stood on the ground where I'm talking to

"So when you look at a piece of ugly fruit, what do you do with it? You make juice. To me, life is no different. Optimism is the secret to everything, waking up every day and looking for the good."

—Sarah Frey

all of you today, and I made the decision I would stay and create a life here."

And what a life it is.

Frey Farms, headquartered in Keenes, has facilities in eight states. Fruits and vegetables grown on its 12,000-plus acres are distributed throughout the country through Frey's Homegrown label. It employs more than 500 seasonal workers — in addition to her brothers.

"They invested a lot of time into my personal development as a child — challenging me to do things I might not have done," Frey said.

You know, like write a book about her journey. "The Growing Season: How I Built a New Life — and Saved an American Farm," has been optioned for a series on ABC.

"So when we will be able to see your story on TV?" Reghela Scavuzzo, the executive director of Illinois Specialty Growers Association, asked during the session.

"That's the million-dollar question," Frey said, laughing before saying more details will be coming soon.

Frey said she got her nickname from the Times because she started out predominantly growing pumpkins — according to her bio,

Frey Farms still sells more pumpkins than any other American producer — but that in addition to growing cantaloupe, sweet corn and squash, the company's biggest crop is watermelon. The team "follows the sun," she said, every year starting in Florida and making its way to the Midwest.

In 2014, she launched a line of juices through Sarah's Homegrown Tsamma Watermelon Juice, which now distributes to more than 2,000 retail locations.

A core mission of Frey Farms is to end food waste in the fresh produce industry.

"So when you look at a piece of ugly fruit, what do you do with it?" she said. "You make juice. To me, life is no different. Optimism is the secret to everything, waking up every day and looking for the good."

The market is ripe for more specialty crop sales, she said.

"No one really thinks about the Midwest as a fruit-and-vegetable-producing region," she said. "But consumers are hungry for and demanding fresh produce in season. They're the ones that make the voting decisions. They vote with their dollars, in what they're going to buy."

Frey said to keep talent

in the specialty produce industry, you have to hook kids when they're young — so they don't, say, flee for the big city and never return to the family business.

"Exposure is very important to young people," she said. "So much of it starts with education and programs to get kids involved with."

Frey commends her local school district building a greenhouse, providing a path for not just children growing up on a farm but also students who simply live in rural America.

"I remember visiting the greenhouse for the first time, and it was amazing to see the joy and the pride students were taking in growing plants for their plant sale," she said.

She said a key to success in the industry is starting early, and that learning finances is just as important as learning how to work the land.

"We want to go out, work with our hands, to build, grow and create," she said. "We don't want to be bogged down by spreadsheets and financial statements. But it's important to understand the business side of things. It doesn't matter whether you're living on 40 acres or 40,000 acres."

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THE FARMER'S REPORT



Applications being accepted for Wetland Reserve Easements

CHAMPAIGN —Ivan Dozier, State Conservationist, announced the application period for the 2021 Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP-WRE). USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) helps provide long-term protection of Illinois' farmland, wetlands and grasslands through ACEP.

"The first application cut-off date has been established," Dozier explains. "Right now we're accepting applications for Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE). Applications that are received and meet program eligibility by Feb. 5, 2021 will be considered for the 2021 program."

For ACEP-WRE in FY21, Illinois was allocated \$4.5 million. NRCS may establish a second application funding cutoff opportunity later this year if all funds are not used in the first application cutoff or if more funds become available. Dozier reminds farmers and landowners they can apply for ACEP—and all conservation programs—at any time, as sign-up is continuous and applications can be submitted any time.

NRCS offers two types of easements through ACEP: Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) and Wetland

Reserve Easements (WRE). NRCS will establish an application cutoff for ALE at a later date. NRCS is still finalizing ranking criteria for fiscal year 2021. The Geographic Area Rate Caps (GARCs) are DRAFT but available for applicants to view. The GARCs establish the rate per acre that NRCS pays to landowners for the ACEP-WRE easement.

The purpose of the Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) is to help landowners enhance and protect habitat for wetland wildlife on their lands, reduce impacts from flooding, recharge groundwater, provide outdoor recreation, and increase habitat for migratory waterfowl.

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance directly to private landowners to restore, protect and enhance wetlands through the purchase of these easements, and eligible landowners can choose to enroll in either a permanent easement or a 30-year easement. To apply for a wetlands easement through ACEP - WRE, visit NRCS at your local USDA Service Center.

Find more information about ACEP and other NRCS conservation programs in Illinois online at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/il/programs/>.



2021 Cover Crop Program application period ends

SPRINGFIELD — The second year of the Illinois Department of Agriculture's (IDOA) Fall Covers for Spring Savings Program ended with 768 applications requesting over 185,000 acres submitted to IDOA.

The discount program opened the application period at 12:01 a.m. Dec. 15 and saw the acreage limit met within its first 24-hours. In 2019, over 500 applications requesting over 133,000 acres were received. Consistent with last year's program, qualified applicants will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

"We were expecting great interest after a successful first year, but to meet our 50,000-acre allotment so quickly was astonishing," said Jerry Costello II, IDOA Acting Director. "It shows there's a great interest out there for cover crops and IDOA is committed to promoting conservation farming in Illinois."

All Fall Cover for Spring Savings acres that were applied for are still being certified with the United States Department of Agriculture Risk Management Agency (USDA-RMA) crop insurance program. The certification process is currently underway and applicants will receive an email in the next 30 days to notify them of whether they will receive a premium discount.

The program is applicable for acreage in Illinois planted to cover crops in the fall of

Getting farm to table faster

Ag leaders, nonprofits address food insecurity in Illinois

By CHRISTOPHER HEIMERMAN
For Illinois Press Association

BLOOMINGTON — It takes a lot of moving parts to connect fresh produce with the communities that need it most.

You need farmers growing quality food. Funding to pay them. Food banks, pantries and food marts in place to store and distribute. And don't overlook one of the biggest roadblocks: transportation to get the food from farm to kitchen table.

"Transportation is a critical, critical issue, in terms of time and cost," Steve Miller, an at-large board member of Illinois Specialty Growers Association, said recently during a virtual session at the annual Illinois Specialty Crop Conference.

Here's the rub, though: To assure that food is fresh when it arrives, the fewer literal moving parts the better.

"If produce comes in from a producer on Thursday or Friday, then sits in a warehouse over the week, it doesn't get to the families until Monday or Tuesday," said Dan Kenney, the founder of DeKalb County Community Gardens, who attended the virtual conference.

In DeKalb, nonprofits have finally cut out the middle man.

'Night and day' difference in DeKalb County

Enter Klein's Farms in Elgin, just on the other side of the DeKalb County line. Since late last spring, the farm has been selling produce directly to nonprofits in the county at wholesale prices.

"The quality is night and day," said Joey Moore, who runs the Barb Food Mart that's served the DeKalb School District 428 community since 2012. "When they're out picking produce that morning, it's the highest quality."

"And there's the nutritional value," Kenney added. "Once you harvest something, it starts losing its nutritional value right away."

Even before Klein's partnered with DCCG and the Food Mart, DeKalb County was light years ahead of other parts of the state in terms of getting food from farm to table as quickly as possible.

Kenney founded DCCG a couple of months after Barb Food Mart launched in 2012. DCCG has since produced more than 200,000 pounds of food, according to its website. In 2017, it launched its Grow Mobile refrigerated truck program. In January alone, two trucks will make 11 distribution stops around



Joey Moore, director of the Barb Food Mart, stocks the pantry housed at Huntley Middle School in DeKalb. (IPA photo by Christopher Heimerman)

the county.

The end result? Rather than receiving produce that's sat on shelves at food pantries, or been donated by grocers who can no longer sell it, families in need in DeKalb are getting farm-fresh produce.

"The message it sends out to people attending food pantries is that they deserve fresh, high-quality food," said Heather Edwards, DCCG's associate director who has overseen the launch of the Genoa Area Community Food Hub in the northern reaches of the county. "We all deserve that. Nobody should feel that they get a lesser quality than they deserve. It's about their dignity."

Moore said it's common for food donated by grocers to be inedible — "I've gotten salad that's basically soup," she said — and that the only reason it gets donated is so the businesses can write it off.

Food security is in relatively good shape in DeKalb County because a lot of work has gone into it.

DCCG has more than 70 partners and sponsors. A food security council made up of growers, food pantries, the health department, even hospital staff have resumed meeting on a monthly basis. That community buy-in keeps all the key prongs — funding, infrastructure and transportation — running in concert.

Kenney has been working with Steve Ericson, executive director of Feeding Illinois, an association of food banks throughout the state, for a few years, and hopes to help other regions emulate DeKalb's success.

According to data on Feeding Illinois' website, about one in 10 Illinois residents struggles with hunger, including one in every eight children, and it would cost more than \$630 million to meet the statewide food need.

Farmers sound off during session

Ericson and Shantanu Pai, an assistant sustainability re-

searcher with the University of Illinois' Prairie Research Institute, hosted the virtual convention session. They, along with the growers association and Illinois Farm Bureau are carrying out a six-step process that will culminate with launching pilot programs throughout the state that address food insecurity.

The study is funded by a U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm to Food Bank grant. Ericson said it's imperative to find funding mechanisms beyond communities' contributions.

"We have a tendency to always go back to donations," Ericson said. "I've been around this long enough to know we're not going to end food insecurity on donations."

He and Pai hope to get at least 10 percent of the state's 3,000 specialty growers to fill out a survey and share what incentives and programs have helped get fresh food into the hands of people in need.

"People don't often write about what they've tried that hasn't worked," Pai said. "We'd really like to know what people have tried in the past, and what simply didn't work."

While he awaits survey results, a few farmers sounded off during the session.

Nicoele Arseneau, who along with Bill Belluso owns and operates 3 Winds Farm in Kankakee, said the area is

poverty-stricken and small farms want to donate their surplus, but the local food bank won't take perishable items because it has nowhere to store them.

Ericson immediately intervened.

"You and I need to talk," he said, before sharing his contact information with her.

Louise Meyer, an Illinois Herb Association board member, piggy-backed on Miller's concerns with transportation. She said her business, Amrita Naturals in Elburn, actually got out of the vegetable business.

"We had plenty of organic produce, but the transportation cost — we were left to do that," she said. "We were donating it, but we didn't see how we could afford to transport it."

She said Illinois is a bit behind the 8-ball, that the food needed in the north — Chicagoland in particular — is predominantly grown in southern Illinois.

"Can you even get it there while it's edible, especially during the summer?" she said.

She said when she worked on the East Coast, things ran smoothly and electronically. Farmers were reimbursed at the point of pickup.

Kenney said the Ohio government budgets \$15 million a year for food grown by local farmers.

"If Illinois could ever get out of debt, that's something we could work toward," he said.

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“A cold wind was blowing from the north, and it made the trees rustle like living things.”
— George R.R. Martin

Sale Prices Valid Jan. 27-Feb. 2 – Limited Quantities – While Supplies Last

PRODUCE & WEEKLY SPECIALS

Bolthous Baby Carrots

1 lb bag



99¢

ea.

Baby Bella Mushrooms

8 oz container



\$1.79

ea.

Green Giant Potatoes

10 lb bag



\$3.99

ea.

Clementines

2 lb bag



\$3.99

ea.

Hass Avocados



99¢

ea.

Cabo Fresh Guacamole

12 oz



\$2.99

ea.

Red or Green Grapes



\$1.99

lb.

Naval California Oranges

4 lb bag



\$3.99

ea.

HOT BUYS

Lay's Chip

5-8 oz excludes Party or Family Size



Reg. Price \$3.79 ea.

Prairie Fresh Pork Tenderloin Fillet

18 oz



\$4.99

ea.

Beef Chuck Roast

AMBOY DELI



Reg. Price \$6.99 lb.

New York Strip Steaks

AMBOY DELI



Reg. Price \$12.99 lb.

Cod Fillets

AMBOY DELI



Reg. Price \$6.99 lb.

Creamette Pasta

Assorted 16 oz



Reg. Price \$1.79 ea.

WEEKLY SPECIALS

Food Club Frozen Vegetable Blend

16 oz

\$1.69

ea.

Reg. Price \$2.09 ea.



Food Club Peanuts

16 oz

\$2.29

ea.

Reg. Price \$2.79 ea.



Food Club Honey Bear

12 oz

\$2.49

ea.

Reg. Price \$4.19 ea.



Food Club Chunk Cheese

8 oz

\$2.49

ea.

Reg. Price \$2.79 ea.



Prego Pasta Sauce

14-24 oz

\$1.99

ea.

Reg. Price \$2.99 ea.



Quaker Instant Oatmeal

11-15 oz

\$2.99

ea.

Reg. Price \$3.99 ea.



V-8 Juice

Assorted 46 oz

\$2.29

ea.

Reg. Price \$3.19 ea.



Hidden Valley Salad Dressings

16 oz

\$3.49

ea.

Reg. Price \$3.99 ea.



Taco Bell Sauce

7.5-8 oz

99¢

ea.

Reg. Price \$1.99 ea.



Azteca Tortilla

8-12 oz

99¢

ea.

Reg. Price \$1.79-2.09 ea.



Swanson Broth or Stock

32 oz

\$1.89

ea.

Reg. Price \$2.79 ea.

