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Vol. 101 • No. 68

LOCAL NEWS... LOCAL VIEWS WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2020 \$1

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Ogle County Extension's Ag in the Classroom coordinator awarded. See page 2

WEATHER

WEDNESDAY
HIGH LOW
49 14

THURSDAY
HIGH LOW
15 3

FRIDAY
HIGH LOW
18 14

SATURDAY
HIGH LOW
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OBITUARIES

• NONE TODAY

INSERTS

• ALDI

INSIDE

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Tax levy approved

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE—Rochelle School District 212 Board of Education members approved the district's 2020 fiscal year tax levy during the monthly meeting at Rochelle Township High School on Monday. The tax levy will increase by roughly 5 percent from the 2019 fiscal year tax levy.

Principal Chris Lewis presented board members with attendance data for remote and in-person learners at RTHS over November and December. Remote learners missed no classes 62 percent of the time in November and 46 percent of the time in December. Remote learners missed one class 74 percent of the time in November and 67 percent in December. Remote learners who missed two or more classes were at 85 percent for November and 81 percent for December.

Lewis said students conducting the hybrid in-person learning model were in school 85 percent of the time during November and 86 percent of the time in December. Those same students attended classes online 73 percent of the time in November and 65 percent in December.

Park board approves obligation bonds, levy

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE—The Flagg-Rochelle Community Park District Board of Commissioners approved two ordinances regarding \$1.075 million in General Obligation Park Bonds

and \$758,243 for the 2020 fiscal year tax levy during the December meeting at Rochelle City Hall on Monday.

Commissioners also approved the district's municipal advisory agreement with Raymond James as well as two payments to Sjostrom & Sons amounting \$108,063.83 and \$107,913.75

for continued work at the Spring Lake facilities. Executive Director Jackee Ohlinger said that construction crews began demolishing the north wall of the Spring Lake Pool in early December.

See PARK page 4

The show must go on

Students presenting "A Christmas Carol" on radio Dec. 24-25

IMPROVISATION became more than a creativity-growing exercise for Rochelle Township High School theater director Amy Creuziger.

Due to coronavirus social distancing restrictions, Creuziger has had to improvise to keep the performance season. She has produced a show without info meetings or improv sessions or table reads. Her cast and crew has done all of those things, never meeting face to face or performing for the applause of a live audience.

"We began by reading Charlotte's Web together and then decided for a 'performance experience' we would work on something we could submit to radio; something that might draw an audience," Creuziger said. "Only meeting twice each week, I would have liked more rehearsal time. (I love rehearsing.) The students were self-motivated and recorded on their own. I've gathered their solo work, ideas and suggestions and put it together."

Collaboration and technology made possible the production that airs Christmas Eve.

"A Christmas Carol," a radio play based on the



Ariel Zuercher (left) and Grace Yates are two Rochelle Township High School students who will be part of the radio presentation of "A Christmas Carol."

novella by Charles Dickens, will be performed by the RTHS Theater Department on Superhits 93.5 FM at 6 p.m. Dec. 24 and again at midnight on Christmas morning.

Creuziger assures you will enjoy this performance complete with student-created music and sounds, as well as Christmas standards performed by students.

Freshman Liam Wise composed the Marley's Theme underscore and then teamed up with Kaitlyn Spencer, Mire-

lla Vazquez and Ms. Creuziger to create the foley effects (recorded live). Compiled with some pre-recorded sound effects, the foley effects team provides anything from the howling wind and footsteps to squeaky doors and rattling chains.

Rounding out the team is the cast which includes: Mikayla Preston as Ebenezer Scrooge, Ava Coglianese as the Narrator and Topper Cruz as a Host and a Lady. Swartz plays Jacob Marley, Bob Cratchit and Benjamin.

Bella Nauman is Frances and Mrs. Cratchit. Ariel Zuercher will be the Spirit of Christmas Past and Merchant 2. Gracie Yates is the Spirit of Christmas Present and a Party Guest. Ashley portrays Scrooge's sister Fan and the Boy. Jennifer Heinrich will be Fezziwig. Rachael Swinson is Belinda Cratchit and Merchant 1. And last, but not least is Victoria Sheehy as Tiny Tim.

"I still prefer live productions," Creuziger said, "but this was exciting —

to experience an audio production."

Creuziger's husband, Russ Konstans, was the sound editor.

"He is familiar with a couple different programs, I believe he used Audacity and Wevideo," Creuziger said. "I designed with the students what and where the sounds would be and my husband and I added and revised when necessary."

She described Wise's song, Marley's Theme as "having layered sounds; a scary mood created by Liam.

He built it electronically on Soundtrap. I believe it is one of the programs band director Shaun Schaefer shared with students. It has an electronic sound. Like all the music in the show, it is underscore, under dialogue."

Creuziger said until we know what's possible for the spring production, her drama company will continue to Zoom meet through the winter for acting and tech workshops.

Workshops will include visits from professional actors, and RTHS alum who are studying theatre in college.

See SHOW page 3

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LOCAL NEWS

County Ag in the Classroom coordinator receives award

OREGON — Melinda Charbonneau, Ag in the Classroom coordinator for Ogle and Carroll counties, was recognized by the Illinois Leadership Council for Agricultural Education for outstanding effort, dedication, and support for quality education programs in agriculture. Charbonneau received an Advocacy Award in recognition of the agricultural programming she provides for youth in kindergarten through eighth grades.

Charbonneau's passion resonates in her presentation as she brings hands-on learning into the classroom showing students where their food and fiber originates. She is always looking for new ways to keep students engaged and interested in agriculture. With this being Charbonneau's 13th year in the position, she has switched from in person presentations to ag bags filled with supplies and lessons, live at the farm events, and virtual programs.

Ag in the Classroom is a program that helps students gain a greater awareness of the role of agriculture in the economy and society. Students learn that thousands of farm products are in the world around them — on their plate, in the clothes they wear, in the medicine that makes them well, and in earth-friendly fuels and



Melinda Charbonneau, Ag in the Classroom coordinator for Ogle and Carroll counties, was recognized by the Illinois Leadership Council for Agricultural Education for outstanding effort, dedication, and support for quality education programs in agriculture.

plastics.

Ag in the Classroom is offered through the University of Illinois Extension-Ogle County in

partnership with Ogle County Farm Bureau, Carroll County Farm Bureau, Ogle County Soil & Water, and Carroll County

Soil & Water. For more information about the program, call the Ogle County Extension Office at 815-732-2191.



Gracie Spartz

Coloring contest winners announced

ROCHELLE — Stillman Bank recently held its annual Christmas Coloring Contest for kids up to 10 years old. This year's picture was of a gingerbread character with candy surrounding it. The winners received their very own gingerbread house kit.

For ages 5 and under, the winners were: Alex Horner (Byron), Matthew Pierce (Oregon), Kashlyn Kane (Rochelle), Dan and Jett Davis (Rockford), Delilah Slabaugh (Roscoe) and Ashley Harbaugh (Stillman Valley).

For ages 6 through 10, the winners were: Lucy Punsalan (Byron), Ashlynn Eeli (Oregon), Gracie Spartz (Rochelle), Kaylie Wheelock (Rockford), Blake Williams (Roscoe) and Ashlynn Farris (Stillman Valley).

Thank you to everyone who stopped by Stillman Bank to enter the coloring contest. More than 140 entries were received



Kashlyn Kane

and each child received a small prize for their participation.

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LOCAL NEWS

SHOW: "A Christmas Carol" a treat for the senses

From page 1

As you listen to "A Christmas Carol," either at 6 p.m. Christmas Eve or midnight Christmas Day, we want to give credit where credit is due:

Liam Wise plays the cello for "Greensleeves" for the Fezziwig scene. Notice he does not use the bow, but instead plucks the strings or "pizzicato."

Mikayla Preston (Ebenezer Scrooge) plays all the flute parts for "Greensleeves" in the Benjamin scene, as well as on "Oh Christmas Tree" for the Cratchit family scenes.

Heidi Cruz plays guitar, "In the Bleak Midwinter" under Ava Coglianese's narration. Paul Swartz plays the drumming effect for The Ghost of the Christmas Yet To Come character. Preston plays piano for the Fan (Scrooge's sister) scene in the past "Greensleeves."

To round out the show, we've included additional underscore

of royalty-free music such as Hark the Herald Angels Sing, We Wish You A Merry Christmas, Oh Come, Oh Come Emmanuel, and The Wassail Song.

Four freshmen are in the cast of the Christmas Eve production of "A Christmas Carol" which will air on Superhits 93.5 FM at 6 p.m. and again at midnight Christmas Day.

Bear in mind, these kids who are 1) learning remotely and haven't necessarily met their teachers face to face; 2) may or may not have ever been in the auditorium or stood on stage; 3) have never met Director Amy Creuziger or their castmates.

Like everything else about this school year, freshman Rachael Swinson said, "Sure, being a part of this production was weird, but I was grateful to have something to do."

"A Christmas Carol" will be Rachael's 13th show. She began in the second grade and she has performed with



Liam Wise (left) composed and teamed with Foley Artists Kaitlyn Spencer and Mirella Vazquez (middle, right).



the Byron Civic Theater, Studio Rockford and CTPYTP. Among her shows: "Into the Woods Jr.," by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine which featured favorite characters — Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack (and his beanstalk) and the Witch.

"Frozen Jr." was another favorite, based on the 2018 Broadway musical. Rachael brought Elsa to life, onstage.

"I was really excited to begin high school at RTHS and get involved in theater there," she said. "I've done radio commercials and

(during the shelter in place) I got into animation. For that I had to do my own voiceover work because no one else was around. Recording my lines for "A Christmas Carol" on my laptop and sending them to Ms. Creuziger to cut in with the others' was easy."

While they rehearsed virtually twice a week, Creuziger said, "The actors never heard the FX or underscore, so they needed to create or imagine the mood without the assistance of sound," she said.

"When making a radio show, it is our job to use sound to create a picture for the audience. We

discussed how to use the voice without the benefit of gesture and facial expression to tell the story. Those playing multiple roles, were challenged to place their voice differently to sound like a different person."

Since the sixth grade Swinson has been writing.

"Through Fanfiction, I have been at work adding characters, rewriting the TV show called 'Once Upon a Time'," she said.

Fanfiction or Fanfic is when someone takes either the story or characters (or both) of a certain piece of work, be it a novel, TV show,

or movie, and based on it creates their own story often posting it to the internet.

"I'm a creative type, a big writer and reader, so this time at home has allowed me to spend a lot of time doing what I love," she said.

In "A Christmas Carol," Swinson plays Belinda Cratchit as well as a merchant. Many of the cast members play multiple roles as well as perform the music.

Choose a comfy chair, snuggle under a blanket and enjoy the show Christmas Eve at 6 p.m. or midnight on Christmas morning, Superhits 93.5 FM.



Mikayla Preston, Heidi Cruz, Paul Swartz are part of "A Christmas Carol" radio play.

"I still prefer live productions but this was exciting — to experience an audio production."

Amy Creuziger

Greetings, Friends!

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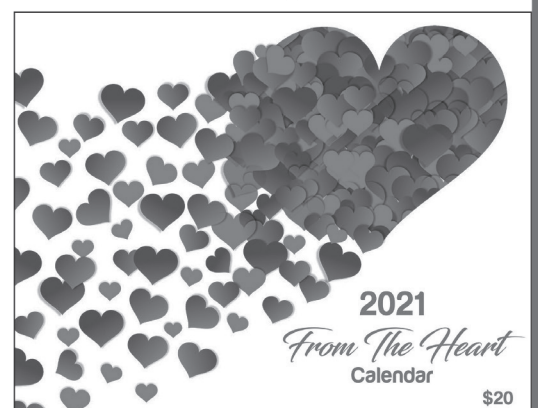
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LOCAL NEWS

Illinois, other states file lawsuit against Google, seek to join DOJ case

Lawsuit claims Google has illegal monopoly over search engines

BY RAYMOND TRONCOSO

CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS | REPORT FOR AMERICA/ RTRONCOSO@CAPITOLNEWS-ILLINOIS.COM

SPRINGFIELD — Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul joined 37 other attorneys general Thursday in filing a lawsuit against Google LLC, alleging the company illegally holds monopoly power.

The complaint was filed in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia and accuses Google of engaging in anticompetitive practices that led to customers having less choice, less online privacy and less protection for their private information. Alongside Illinois, 34 other states, the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico are named as plaintiffs in the filing.

“Close to 90 percent of all internet searches done in the United States use Google. No competing

search engine has more than 7 percent of the market, and, over the past decade, no new entrant in the general search market in the United States has accounted for more than 1 percent of internet searches in a given year,” the lawsuit reads, establishing Google’s status as a monopoly power in the search engine market.

The suit alleges Google maintains its monopoly through lucrative contracts with Apple and other companies to be the default search engine on the vast majority of smart devices and mobile phones.

Google then leverages this by putting advertising customers and results that benefit the company at the top of Google’s search results, rather than “general” or “organic” results, described in the suit as results from non-affiliated third-party websites that would normally appear first according to

Google’s algorithm, absent advertising partners.

As part of the suit, the coalition of attorneys general seek to join an existing case against Google from the U.S. Department of Justice that is currently pending in court.

A third anti-trust lawsuit was also filed against Google on Wednesday by a different group of 10 state attorneys general in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas

The cases are fairly similar, but the coalition’s lawsuit seeks to expand the DOJ’s complaint to include Google’s acquisition and stockpiling of personal data as an additional source of Google’s monopoly power that has created barriers to other competitors.

Attorney General Raoul joined another anti-trust lawsuit alongside 47 other attorneys general against Facebook last week.

PARK: Membership sales frozen until February

From page 1

Ohlinger also said crews have started working on both the upper and lower timber walls, which she said should be completed at the end of this week or the following Monday, Dec. 28. Ohlinger said that Tier 3 mitigations from the State of Illinois have been extended through Jan. 9, 2021, which will continue to limit capacity inside the recreation center at 802 Jones Road.

The REC

Ohlinger said that presale memberships for the recreation center have been frozen until February due to the Tier 3 mitigations. December and January REC Passes as well as other options are available online for purchase at <https://www.rochelleparkdistrict.org/rec-passes>.

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Joe Meadows

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Man arrested after fleeing to elude

On Dec. 18 at approximately 12 p.m., Ogle County deputies conducted a traffic stop on a black Dodge Neon in the 3,000 block of S. IL Route 251. It was learned the registration on the vehicle belonged to a Buick sedan. Upon completing an investigation, Dartyvious Sims, 24, of Rockford, was placed under arrest and charged with unlawful possession of a weapon as a felon, unlawful possession of a weapon in a vehicle, no FOID card, driving on a no valid license and driving while license suspended. Sims was also issued additional citations for expired registration, no valid registration, failure to provide a driver’s license, and no front registration plate. Sims was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was held in lieu of bond.

On Dec. 19 at 3:05 a.m., Ogle County Sheriff’s deputies, Rochelle Fire Department and Steward Fire Department were dispatched to a single vehicle roll over crash on Interstate 39 at Interstate 88. Investigation by Ogle County Sheriff’s deputies revealed that a vehicle driven by Lindsay Monroe, 33, of Rockford, was exiting Interstate 88 to northbound Interstate 39 when he lost control of the vehicle. As a result the vehicle overturned coming to rest on the north bound lanes of Interstate 39. Monroe was transported by Rochelle Fire Department ambulance to Rochelle Community Hospital for treatment of minor injuries.

On Dec. 19, Ogle County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Johnny Tate, 52, of Rockford, for driving while license revoked. Tate was arrested by Ogle County Sheriff’s deputies on Interstate 39 near Illinois Route 64 after being stopped for speeding. Tate was released on a I-bond and will appear in Ogle County court at a later date.

On Dec. 20 at approximately 1:16 a.m., deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 4000 block of S. Lowell Park Road. After an investigation, Andrew L. Stowell, 28, of Dixon, was

arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol. Stowell was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was held in lieu of bond. Stowell was also cited for speeding and open container of alcohol.

On Dec. 20 at approximately 11:24 p.m., deputies attempted to stop a vehicle traveling westbound on Illinois Route 72 from Pecatonica Road. The vehicle had also fled from Dixon Police Department, Oregon City Police, Mount Morris Police, Forrester Police, and Ogle County Deputies earlier in the evening. The vehicle fled into Forrester and stopped at Main St. and First Avenue, where the driver, later identified as Stephen A. Muhleback, 25, of Rockford, exited the vehicle and fled from deputies on foot. A short time later, deputies located and arrested Muhleback for aggravated fleeing to elude, reckless driving, resisting or obstructing a peace officer, and driving while license suspended. Muhleback was also cited for speeding, improper traffic lane usage, disobeying a traffic control device, no registration, no insurance, and equipment violation. Muhleback was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was held with no bond.

On Dec. 20, the Ogle County Sheriff’s Office arrested Juan Sanchez, 30, of Rockford, for driving while license suspended. Sanchez was arrested by deputies on Interstate 39 near Rochelle after being stopped for speeding. Sanchez was released on an I-Bond and will appear in Ogle County Court at a later date.

On Dec. 20 at approximately 1:16 a.m., Ogle County Sheriff’s deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 4000 block of S. Lowell Park Road. After investigation, Ogle County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Andrew Stowell, 28, of Dixon, for driving under the influence of alcohol. Stowell was also issued citations for speeding and transport alcohol by driver. Stowell was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was released to correctional staff and held in lieu of bond.

Driver cited for speeding

On Dec. 17, Rochelle Police cited Nathan Campbell, 32, Davis Junction, for speeding. He posted a promise to comply.

On Dec. 17, Rochelle Police cited Grant D. Zickur, 22, Rochelle, for speeding. He posted a promise to comply.

On Dec. 17, Rochelle Police cited Kevin Santiago-Sanchez, 37, Rockford, for battery. He posted a promise to comply.

Report policy

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

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



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LOCAL NEWS

Kishwaukee College seats new student trustee

MALTA — Sophomore Ahmed Elfaki was seated as the new student trustee on the Kishwaukee College Board of Trustees at the December meeting. Elfaki will finish the term of outgoing Student Trustee Dakota Montavon.

"My fellow trustees and I are confident Ahmed can carry forward the dedicated work Dakota provided as a voice of the student body," said Board Chairman Bob Johnson.

Elfaki's journey to Kishwaukee College started after his family sought refuge from Sudan, where Elfaki was born and raised.

"My family and I moved to the United States to seek asylum in the summer of 2016 after conditions in Sudan became unsuitable for a good living," he said. "We were interested in moving to the United States because there are a lot of opportunities for a better life."

Elfaki graduated from Sycamore High School in 2019 and said he chose Kishwaukee College for its affordability and strong foundational education. He is studying engineering science and noted an interest in taking advantage of the college's transfer program with

Northern Illinois University upon graduating.

Elfaki is currently a member of the Black Student Union, Diversity Officer of the Student Government Association, and a member of the Diversity Committee. He previously was a member of the LatinX organization and played on the men's soccer team.

"I hope to make the student's life at Kish more engaging and unchallenging," he said. "My number one goal is to increase student involvement at Kishwaukee College and to be the accurate voice to the students and actively

pursue their needs."

The Illinois Community College Act provides that each Illinois Community College shall elect one student to the board for a one-year term.

Montavon, a DeKalb native, will graduate this December. He said he is proud he was able to serve as a representative for the students of Kishwaukee College.

"I've learned that there are a lot of important matters that go into running a community college, but it's incredibly important not to lose sight of the student's experience and how to improve it," Montavon said.

One initiative Montavon said he would like to see continued was the work with the College's food pantry, Kody's Cupboard, and sees room for growth to better help meet student needs.

During his time at Kish, Montavon was involved with the English Honor Society Club, Phi Theta Kappa, National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS) and the Performing Arts Club on campus. He also served as a peer mentor for TRIO student support services.

For more information on Kishwaukee College, visit kish.edu.



Dakota Montavon (pictured) served as the Kishwaukee College Student Trustee until graduating this fall. His term will be completed by new Student Trustee Ahmed Elfaki.

Celebrate the Birth of Christ this Christmas Season.

Merry Christmas to all!



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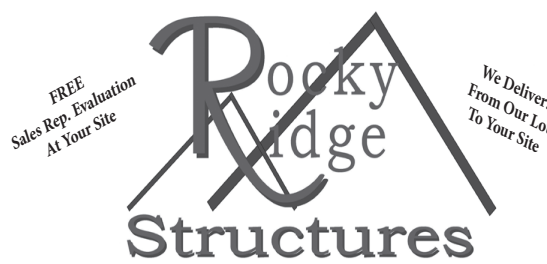
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The Rochelle News-Leader

LOCAL VIEWS

Guest column

Believe in the possibility of miracles

Do miracles really happen?

It's a question you'll hear uttered at hospice bedsides, in Sunday School classrooms and pondered by many while awaiting slumber late at night.

As humans, we long for the inexplicable, something that transcends our daily existence. And yet, we all harbor doubts.

The ultimate miracle for Christians is the Christ child, God in human form lying in a manger.

This week as we celebrate Christmas, our thoughts turn to the Bethlehem star, angels bearing messages and heavenly hosts rejoicing.

It's a time I find myself reflecting on miracles I've witnessed.

Seventeen years ago, my father was diagnosed with stage-three esophageal cancer. The prognosis was bleak. Doctors told him he had a 5 percent chance of living one year – with treatment.

He underwent chemotherapy, radiation and surgery. We prayed for his doctors. We prayed for my father. We asked for a divine healing.

But during surgery, his vocal chords were inadvertently damaged. For months afterward, he couldn't speak above a raspy whisper. Doctors told him to expect that to be his new normal.

One day, my wife and I called my parents to announce that we were expecting our first child. On hearing the news, my Dad exclaimed, "That's great."

His voice was suddenly normal. And it remained so for the rest of his life. And the cancer? He lived another 13 years and remained cancer free, dying at age 83.

I've experienced other miracles as well.

When I was a 20-year-old college student, I worked a summer at a camp in Colo-

rado and was assigned to mentor a 14-year-old boy. He just drove me nuts, every day. He wouldn't shut up. He had opinions on everything and, boy, did he love to argue.

During that summer, I learned a lot about prayer. The camp pastor, Gil Wesley, spoke to the staff, who were mostly college students, about spiritual intimacy and our desire to someday marry.

After our lesson, we hiked into the mountains and prayed by ourselves. I picked a hill overlooking a vast mountain valley, pitched a tent, built a fire and prayed that someday I would find a woman to share my life with.

Shortly before I finished working at the camp that summer, I gave the boy I was mentoring a copy of the New Testament. I wished him well and wondered for years whatever became of him.

Seventeen years later, I was engaged to marry a beautiful woman I met in Springfield and we decided to vacation in Colorado. On the trip we had a major argument, which was entirely my fault.

We decided to stop at the camp where I had worked nearly two decades earlier. After introducing my fiancé, Joan, to the directors of the camp, we were asked, "When are you two getting married?"

Joan gave me a look and I mumbled we haven't figured that out yet. Then they asked, "Where are you getting married?" I shifted uncomfortably from foot to foot and said, "Well, we don't know."

Danny, one of the directors, said, "You ought to get married in our chapel." I responded that I didn't know they had one. He laughed and said they had built it after I had left. He

then turned and pointed to a church sitting atop the once barren hilltop where I had camped and prayed 17 years before.

I then asked if they knew whatever happened to that 14-year-old I had mentored. They looked

at me and exclaimed in unison, "John Stultz?" They then explained he had just graduated from seminary and had joined the camp as its chaplain.

No sooner, had they said this when the door to a neighboring building opened and a 32-year-old man came out and gawked at me. He then turned, ran into

his office and came out carrying a worn Bible.

"Scott Reeder, you were the first person to ever give me a Bible," he said as he hurried toward us. Later he said, "If you guys get married here, yours will be the first wedding I'll have officiated."

A few months later, we did return to that

once barren hilltop to exchange vows. We've been married now, almost 18 years and have three daughters.

Yes, I believe in miracles.

Scott Reeder is a veteran statehouse journalist and a freelance reporter. ScottReeder1965@gmail.com.



Scott Reeder

Letter to the Editor

Extends wishes for safe holiday season

Dear Editor,
During this season of reflection and gratitude, we are truly thankful for the collaboration, commitment and support that have been given to Rochelle Community Hospital as we have all battled the COVID-19 pandemic since March.

Rochelle is a very close-knit community that

rallies together in time of need as shown through all the various donations and words of encouragement we have received. We are truly humbled by the overwhelming response of unity and support we have been given through this pandemic by so many of you.

The staff at Rochelle Community Hospital are

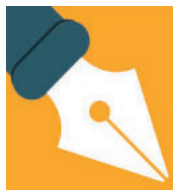
truly the heart of our organization and I am extremely proud and grateful for their dedication day in and day out with the continual changes in responding to COVID-19.

As are most of you, we are ready to put 2020 behind us shortly. We appreciate the trust you have put in us to provide quality care for you and your loved ones. We look forward to caring for you

in 2021.

Please continue to be safe throughout the holidays and enjoy the simple pleasures of the season. On behalf of the staff at Rochelle Community Hospital, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Gregg Olson,
Chief Executive Officer
Rochelle Community Hospital



How to contact government officials

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20515
(202) 225-3635

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(217) 782-0180

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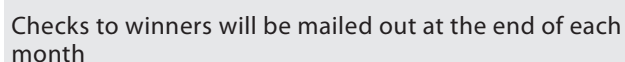
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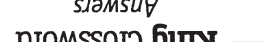
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The Kitchen Table among grant awardees

The 2020-21 Community Grants Program cycle continues CFNIL's 67-year commitment to investment in northern Illinois through grantmaking. This work and its growing, ongoing impact would not be possible without the generosity of thousands of donors, the commitment of hundreds of volunteers, and the exceptional efforts of grantees. Learn more about the work of the community grants and other grantmaking programs of the Community Foundation at <http://cfnil.org/grants>.



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STATE NEWS

Bills would allow lawmakers to meet, vote remotely

Williams, Martwick sponsor bills filed Monday

BY PETER HANCOCK
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS/PHAN-
COCK@CAPITOLNEWSILLINOIS.COM

SPRINGFIELD — Two lawmakers have introduced legislation that would allow the General Assembly to meet and vote remotely during a pandemic or other emergency that makes in-person meetings dangerous.

Rep. Ann Williams and Sen. Robert Martwick, both Chicago Democrats, filed the legislation Monday, saying the current inability to conduct business remotely has hindered lawmakers' ability to respond to the health crisis.

"In March, we had no idea a pandemic would sweep the globe, bringing life as we know it to a halt," Williams said in a news release. "While we were able to meet for a few days in May to conduct urgent business, we continue to face a crisis of epic proportions — both on the public health front and in terms of our budget situation — that requires legislative attention."

"The governor has emergency powers to secure the health of our state," Martwick said. "However, it is the Legislature's responsibility to enact the long-term policies,



State Rep. Ann Williams (left) and Sen. Robert Martwick, both Chicago Democrats, filed legislation Monday that would allow the General Assembly to meet and vote remotely during a pandemic or other emergency that makes in-person meetings dangerous.

in accordance with the needs of our unique and diverse constituencies, which will chart the path forward as we recover from this pandemic."

Business in the General Assembly halted in March, around the same time Gov. JB Pritzker declared a statewide disaster. Lawmakers held a brief special session in May, mainly to pass a budget and a few other urgent pieces of legislation, but they canceled their usual fall veto session and have not conducted any official business since May 24.

During that special session, the Senate enacted a procedural

rule that allows its committees to meet remotely, but only for informational meetings. They are not allowed to take recorded votes. The only committee that has taken official action since May has been the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules, which has held monthly in-person meetings in Springfield.

A bill that would have allowed lawmakers to meet and vote on legislation failed by a single vote in the House in May.

Under the proposed legislation, remote sessions and committee meetings would be allowed "in times of pestilence or an emergency resulting from a domestic or foreign terrorist attack" if the speaker of the House and Senate president issue a joint proclamation. The bill also contains a provision requiring the meetings be accessible to the public to view.

The bill is House Bill 5868. As of Monday afternoon, the Senate version had not been assigned a bill number.

Second wave of COVID-19 shows signs of abating

Rates trending downward

BY PETER HANCOCK
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS/PHANCOCK@
CAPITOLNEWSILLINOIS.COM

SPRINGFIELD — Four weeks after the Thanksgiving Day weekend, the so-called "surge upon a surge" in COVID-19 cases has not materialized and, in fact, infection rates and hospitalizations from the disease have continued to decline.

The Illinois Department of Public Health reported Monday that 4,699 new confirmed and probable cases of the disease had been recorded over the previous 24 hours out of 86,454 tests performed. That brought the seven-day rolling average case positivity rate down to 7.5 percent, the lowest it has been since Oct. 31 and the second consecutive day that number has been below 8 percent.

As of Sunday night, 4,460 people in Illinois were being hospitalized with the disease, including 981 patients in intensive care units, with 546 of those patients on ventilators.

For the seven-day period that ended Sunday, the average number of people being hospitalized

was 575 per day, an 8 percent decline from the previous week. The average daily ICU count, 1,023, was down 17 percent from the prior week, while average daily ventilator use, at 575, was down 8 percent.

IDPH also reported Monday that 98 individuals had died of the disease over the previous 24 hours, bringing the total number of fatalities in Illinois since the pandemic began to 15,299 out of 905,069 recorded cases and 12.5 million tests performed.

For the seven-day period that ended Sunday, the disease claimed an average 130 lives per day, down from the previous week's average of 149.

Data for each of the state's 11 mitigation regions lag behind the statewide data. As of Friday, Dec. 18, Region 3, which includes Springfield and several surrounding counties, had the lowest case positivity rate at 8 percent. Region 5, which includes 20 counties in southern Illinois, had the highest rate, at 12.2 percent.

Case positivity rates in other regions ranged from 9.1 percent in Region 6, to 11.9 percent in Region 7, which includes Will and Kankakee counties.

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12/20/2020

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12/20/2020

NIU Football



Huskies sign 22 new players for 2021 roster

Five in-state recruits commit to NIU

DEKALB—Northern Illinois University Head Football Coach Thomas Hammock announced the signing of 22 student-athletes to National Letters of Intent for 2021 on Wednesday, National Signing Day for college football programs across the country.

“Obviously, it’s a great day to be a Huskie, and we’re certainly excited about this class,” Hammock said. “We were able to add some pieces to the puzzle that will allow us to continue to develop

the depth and talent of our program. This class has athleticism, is filled with very competitive players and a lot of guys that played multiple sports. These are high academic achieving young men that are going to represent the university well. That’s a big part of what we’re looking for, guys that will do the right thing on and off the field.”

The Huskies’ 22-man all freshman class hails from 11 different states and Canada, topped by the five Illinois products who elected to remain in the region and play for NIU. NIU signed three players from Georgia and two each from Kansas, Wisconsin, Nebraska and Iowa. In addition to adding to its Midwest base with one player each from Michigan and Indiana, NIU will welcome players from Massachusetts, New Jersey and Texas in 2021. Defensive back Cyrus McGarrell comes to NIU from Windsor, Ontario, Canada after playing his senior season of football at Clearwater Academy International in Florida.

Hammock said the Huskies are able to cast a wide net due to the relationships his coaching staff has developed across the country.

“We have a lot of connections and prior relationships in different areas among our staff, and they’ve done a phenomenal job,” Hammock said. “We have a process in recruiting. We’re not a mass offer operation, this year we [only] offered 91 guys to sign this class. For us, it’s about relationships. We are going to spend the necessary amount of time with the student-athletes we’re recruiting and their families where they feel comfortable with us.”

Without the ability to see student-athletes in person or to have them on campus beginning in March due to the pandemic, having those prior relationships was more important than ever, Hammock said.

“This was a different year for a lot of different reasons for recruiting,” Hammock said. “I think we got lucky in that we were able to get over 300 kids and families on campus back in January, as we worked ahead in the recruiting process for 2021.

“Obviously, it’s a great day to be a Huskie, and we’re certainly excited about this class. We were able to add some pieces to the puzzle that will allow us to continue to develop the depth and talent of our program.”

Thomas Hammock

We were able to take advantage of those weekends and it paid dividends when things got shut down. We were able to continue to develop relationships and that gave us a chance to add to our class slowly but surely. I think it all came together nicely.”

NIU signed 12 defensive and 10 offensive players, with the defensive group split evenly among linebackers, defensive backs – specifically cornerbacks – and defensive linemen. The Huskies added four offensive linemen, two wide receivers and two running backs as well as one quarterback and one tight end.

“Roster management is something that we look at daily,” Hammock said. “We want to have balance and depth throughout the program. We’re going to attack the areas we need to improve on. The way the class fell out this year with what we took last year fit us perfectly.”

Four members of the 2021 signing class – quarterback Ethan Hampton (Elburn/Aurora Christian HS), tight end Blake Kossin (Daviburg, Michigan/Clarkston HS), offensive lineman Pete Nygra (North Indianapolis, Indiana/Brownsburg HS) and McGarrell – are slated to enroll at NIU in January and join the team for the offseason workout program and 2021 spring practices.

Healthy Hand Hygiene Habits

Protect yourself against COVID-19 and other diarrheal and respiratory illnesses, and help prevent the spread of germs to others, by following these simple hand hygiene guidelines:

1. Wash your hands with soap and warm water, lathering for at least 20 seconds.
2. If soap is unavailable, use a hand sanitizer containing at least 60 percent alcohol to clean your hands.

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- Before and after exposure to someone who is sick
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Information resource: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

ROCHELLE News-Leader

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HUB SPOTLIGHT



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

Senior Keith Holland eyes his target on the lanes. Holland will look to step his game up for the Rochelle Hub varsity bowling team this coming season.

Hub senior Holland shooting for 200 average

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

FOR Rochelle Township High School senior bowler Keith Holland, one score can make all the difference on the lanes. Holland will be entering his fourth season with the Hub bowling team this winter, and he said improving his consistency will be the ultimate key to his success.

A two-sport student-athlete who also plays for the Hub football team, Holland went out for bowling during his freshman year. Holland rotated between the varsity and JV teams during his freshman and sophomore seasons, helping Rochelle record nine victories and one IHSA Sectional berth during that span. Once the only underclassman on the varsity team, Holland will look to use his experience to become a leader and a high scorer for the Hubs this coming year.

"I like bowling because one game can

change everything," Holland said. "I was only a fill-in player during my freshman and sophomore seasons but I became a full-time starter during my junior season. I want to continue being a starter for the varsity team for my senior season."

Holland finished his freshman season with 171 as his high score. That number shot up during his sophomore season, when he recorded multiple 200 games including a 237 at the LaSalle-Peru Cavalier Classic. Although Holland left the team early in his junior season, he said his goal is to average 200 pins per game when he returns for his senior season this coming year.

"I want to average 200 and to do this I need to practice more," Holland said. "I wasn't very consistent with my shots during my freshman and sophomore years but I became more consistent during my junior year. I thought I did well in knowing when to change balls during meets, listening to my coaches during practice and always showing up to practice."



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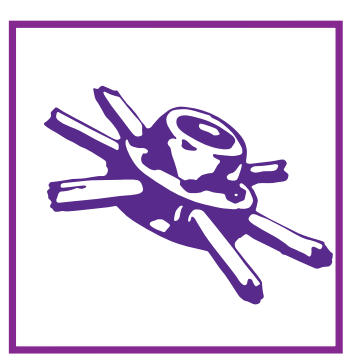
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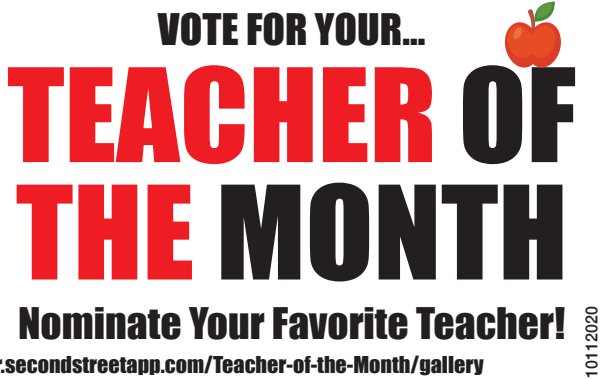
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SPORTS



RTHS senior Keith Holland returning to Hub bowling team this coming season.

See page 2 for more details

RTHS Wrestling

Next heavyweight up

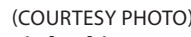
Hub sophomore Cook ready to take on varsity role with Rochelle team

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

HUB wrestler Jaden Cook worked with former Rochelle heavyweight Zack Capes in the mat room during every practice this past season. Cook was a freshman while Capes was a senior, but the 285-pounders pushed each other and simultaneously sharpened each other's skills.

That experience will bode well for Cook as he prepares to take over Rochelle's starting heavyweight spot in the varsity lineup during his sophomore season this coming year. Cook has already been tested in the ring, winning the Interstate 8 Conference JV Championship and placing second at the Rockford East Freshman Invitational in the 285-pound weight class.

Cook said Capes, who medaled in second place at 285 pounds during the Interstate 8 Conference Varsity Championships this past season, was a great mentor for him during his freshman season. Cook said his conditioning will be an important factor in his success.



Rochelle sophomore Jaden Cook pins an opponent during the wrestling season this past year. The 285-pound heavyweight is looking to step up for the varsity team when the Hubs return to action this coming year.

"I thought I learned a lot from Zack and my coaches," Cook said. "They taught me a lot and I felt that I did well in trying new things on the mat this past season. I need to improve my conditioning and I want to be the best in

the conference. I want to show my coaches that my hard work in practice has been helping me perform better on the mat.”

Cook was in seventh grade when he took up wrestling for the first time. His football coaches

told him that wrestling would be a great way to improve his skills, and the more time Cook spent wrestling, the more he began enjoying the sport. Cook could be the future for Rochelle at the heavyweight class, and he said

he's more motivated than ever to score points for his team.

“What I enjoy most about wrestling is that you can’t blame anybody but yourself when you lose a match,” Cook said. “I felt that my role last season

was to learn from the older guys and show up to practice every day ready to work hard. I'm the only person in my weight class right now, and I know my role is going to be getting my team on the scoreboard so we can win."

RTHS Football

Wells working to expand role with Hub offense

Junior tight end eager to catch more passes, set better blocks

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLEtight end Ethan Wells felt that he became more comfortable within the Hub offense as the varsity football season progressed this past season. One of several sophomores who had their numbers called on the varsity level, Wells will be looking to increase his role in run blocking and pass catching when the Hubs eventually take the field this coming year.

Wells will benefit from a strong connection with quarterback Josh Lloyd, who Wells has been teammates with since middle school. While he hopes to catch more passes next season, Wells said he's ready to help his team do whatever it takes to win and qualify for the playoffs.

“Coach [Kyle] Kissack emphasizes consistency in everything we do,” Wells said. “I hope we dip into the passing game more,

but if the running game carries us into the post-season, that's all that matters... I hope to improve on my blocking because we are a run-heavy team and I want to be trusted to hold a block while we run the ball toward my side of the field. I also want to sharpen up my routes for whenever we decide to pass the ball. I'm hoping the connection that Josh and I have built throughout the years will transition over to the varsity level next year."

Wells said he wasn't expecting to be pulled up to the varsity team this past season, but he said he prided himself on his ability to stick with the team and handle any defenders who came his way. The 6-foot-3, 205-pound tight end was often split out to draw defensive backs away from the football, paving the way for Rochelle's signature rushing attack. After adjusting to the speed of the varsity level this past season, Wells said he's ready to step up



Junior Ethan Wells splits outside for the Rochelle offense during varsity action this past season. Wells said he's working to improve his run blocking and pass catching abilities in preparation for his junior year.

for the Hubs next year.

"It was a huge change of pace from the freshman and JV games I was used to," Wells said. "I definitely became more

comfortable at my position and I thought I improved greatly. I hope to be a lot more consistent than I was last year. My role last year was to do the best

I could with whatever I was thrown. I hope to be a crucial part of the offensive line and an important piece of our passing game next year. I think that we

should definitely make the playoffs. We had an outstanding record with our senior class when we played JV together this past season.”