



Bill Kobilsek, right, of the Police & Fire Commission, delivers the oath of office to Ben Daly, a new firefighter/paramedic with the Mendota Fire Department, at the Dec. 18 city council meeting. (Reporter photo)

Mendota City Council hires employees, adopts tax levy

By KIP CHEEK
Staff writer

MENDOTA – The Mendota City Council approved the city tax levy and hired several new employees at its Dec. 18 regular meeting.

Alderman Vicki Johnson presented the names of two people for recommendation to hire for the city. The council approved the employment of Ali Braboy as grant manager effective Jan. 2, 2024, and Maria Arteaga as project coordinator effective Jan. 22, 2024. Also, the council agreed to enter into a contract with the Mendota YMCA for a youth coordinator position.

Alderman Kyle Kim’s report included an ordinance approved by the council for ambulance and fire billing, after which, the council

agreed to the establishment of new ambulance and fire fees for the new year.

Alderman John Holland informed fellow council members that there was no change to the preliminary tax levy the council reviewed at the first meeting in November. With that said, the council approved the 2024 tax levy in the amount of \$2.274 million. Taxpayers in Mendota should see a slight decrease in the city portion of their next tax bill.

In other action from Holland’s report, the council approved amending the employee manual pertaining to vacation and sick days. The council renewed health, dental and vision insurance. Holland noted that the Blue Cross Blue Shield premium

actually decreased by .41 percent. Finally from Alderman Holland, the council approved holiday bonuses in the amount of \$100 Chamber Bucks for all full-time employees.

The meeting concluded with Bill Kobilsek of the Police & Fire Commission performing a swearing-in ceremony for new Mendota firefighter/paramedic Ben Daly to the Mendota Fire Department.

Daly was born in Washington, D.C., and has lived in Chicago the last four years. He attended Malcom X College for his paramedic degree and Prairie State College for his basic operations fire-

See Council, Page A5

State regulators again flex muscle in rejecting utilities’ grid plans and lessening rate hikes

By ANDREW ADAMS
Capitol News Illinois

CHICAGO – The Illinois Commerce Commission on Dec. 14 curtailed proposed rate hikes and rejected grid plans from two major electric utilities, mirroring a series of bombshell decisions rendered last month that cut increases for Illinois’ four largest gas utilities.

The ICC rejected the pair of plans from Commonwealth Edison and Ameren Illinois that were meant to illustrate how the companies would comply with the state’s landmark climate legislation, the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act.

Those plans would have laid out how the utilities plan to integrate with new renewable energy resources and meet decarbonization requirements while ensuring electric rates remain affordable for low-income communities.

In rejecting the plans, regulators limited the companies’ proposed rate increases, meaning that next year’s impending increases will be significantly smaller than the utilities’ requests.

ICC Chair Doug Scott said the plans had “significant shortcomings” and failed to meet the minimum standards set out by CEJA, including by failing to adequately address how the plans would benefit low-income communities. He also said the planning process lacked transparency among other criticisms.

The companies now have three months to file updated plans, which will begin a new review process at the ICC.

Consumer and environmental advocates praised the ICC’s decisions, saying they represent a continued, overdue shift toward tighter utility oversight.

See Rates, Page A5

Farm income to drop from its 2022 record

By TAMMIE SLOUP
FarmWeek

BLOOMINGTON – Farm income is forecast to shrink in 2023 after climbing to record highs in 2022.

USDA’s Economic Research Service released its Farm Sector Income Forecast Nov. 30, which estimated net farm income to fall by \$31.8 billion (17.4%) to \$151.1 billion in 2023.

Net farm income — a broad measure of profits — reached \$182 billion in 2022, increasing 30% from 2021.

In September, USDA estimated net farm income at \$141.3 billion. (Net farm income reflects income after expenses from production in the current year and is calculated by subtracting farm expenses from gross farm income).

The net farm income



reflects overall lower crop and livestock cash receipts, increased input costs, higher interest rates and declining government payments.

“When grouped by commodity specialization, all farm businesses’ specializations except cattle/calves, wheat and specialty crops are forecast to see lower average net cash income in 2023,” the report stated. “Farms specializing in dairy are expected to see the largest decline relative to 2022.”

See Farm, Page A5



Candy cane fundraiser for food pantry

The fourth graders at Lincoln Elementary sold and delivered candy canes at school the week of Dec. 8. This is an annual tradition with funds being donated to various nonprofit organizations and families in need over the years. This year they raised over \$1400 selling candy canes. All of the money was donated toward the building of the new Mendota Area Christian Food Pantry. All of the fourth graders gathered in the gymnasium with Oliver Davis presenting the check to Tracy Cooper, director of the food pantry. (Photo contributed)



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LOCAL AND AREA

Northbrook School November Students of the Month



Fifth grade: Aiden Skaggs, Olivia Jomant, Jaxson Villagegas, Bradley Betz, George Rhynedance, Kenyen Scott. (Photo contributed)



Sixth grade: Bryan Acevedo, Camilo Ramirez, Kendra Mullins, Evelyn Sims, Isaac Baltazar (Photo contributed)



Seventh grade: Eliana Eames, Eli Kaecker, Arian Chavez, Yuliza Magallanes. (Photo contributed)



Eighth grade: Riley Erlenborn, Daisy Mendez-Santana, Viktor Angulo, Karlee Organ. (Photo contributed)

Stage 212 to present off-season production, “Falsettos”, on Jan. 5-7

LaSALLE–Stage 212 hits a high note with its off-season 2024 production of William Finn and James Lapine’s “Falsettos,” the hilarious, heartbreaking and utterly unique musical about family, relationships, bar mitvahs, baseball and AIDS. When Marvin leaves his wife Trina and son Jason to be with his lover Whizzer, tempers flare, problems escalate and everyone learns to grow up.

“Falsettos” will be presented Jan. 5-7, 2024, at Stage 212, 700 First St., LaSalle. The Friday and Saturday performances begin at 7:30 p.m. The Sunday matinee begins at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$22 each, and may be purchased online by visiting stage212.org or by calling the box office at 815-224-3025 and leaving a message.

Appearing in the cast are Kevin J. Alleman as Marvin,

Thomas Bailey as Whizzer, Eric Masini as Mendel, Holly Malmassari as Jason, Ashley Hurst as Trina, Reilly Jaeger as Charlotte and Olivia Bergfeld as Cordelia.

Production staff includes director Reid Tomasson, assistant director Andrew Beer, producer Natalie Smigel, production assistant Ivy Soens, music director Megan Cullinan, stage manager Forrest A. Boes, costumer Tori

Duttlinger, prop coordinator Christin Mitchell, set builder Cory Tomasson, light operator Robert Malerk, spotlight operator Claire Brousseau, sound operator Fred Davis, stage crew Doug Alleman and Ella Johns, and orchestra members Mary Schallhorn, Paula Baker, Amber Backus and Leah Megli.

“Falsettos” contains strong adult language and themes, and may not be suitable for viewing by children. “Falsettos” is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals. www.concordtheatricals.com



November Lincoln School Reach Award Winners

The November recipients of the Reach Award at Lincoln School were recently announced. The winners are, front row, left to right, Renata Falcon, Mateo Gonzalez, Lylah Escatel Cervantes, Charles Smith, and Addilyn Swope. Middle row, left to right, Aribella Hernandez, Julian Rojas, Ashlynn Hash, Gage Cordella, and Alyson Perez Rodriguez. Back row, left to right, Kaleb Grim, Mayra Renteria, Brayden Piller, Jacklyn Silva, Briana Zendeli, and Victor Correa. (Photo contributed)

Do you know the answer?

LaSalle Public Library to host trivia night at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 12

LaSALLE–The LaSalle Public Library will be hosting a trivia night for all members of the public at 6:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 12. Teams of up to five members will work together to answer trivia in different categories, all somewhat related to libraries and literature, like Word Trivia, Famous Literary Characters, and Love Triangles.

The entry fee is a nonperishable donation per person, all of which will go to the Illinois Valley Food Pantry. Any mulligans can be purchased with nonperishable donations as well. Stage 212 in LaSalle donated a prize for giveaway.

This program is open to the public and suitable for all ages. Doors open at 6 p.m., with questions starting at 6:30 p.m. Space is limited. Pre-registration is required by emailing Robert Malerk at rmalerk@lasalle.lib.il.us.

The LaSalle Public Library is located at 305 Marquette St., LaSalle, and is ADA compliant and welcoming. For more information, please call the library at 815-223-2341.

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Christmas Day
7 am-3 pm

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& New Year's
Day
5 am-10 pm

Front: Rose and Larry Leffelman

Back: Mary Reglin, Julie Burkardt, Lexi Willey, Chris Klein, Riley Klein, Karli Althaus, Lisa Quest

Happy holidays, everyone! As another year comes and goes, we'd like to fill you in on a few of the things we've been doing over here at Leffelman & Associates. Between helping our local friends navigate life after some of the challenges this year's weather brought with tornadoes, hail, and high winds, or celebrating their new purchases of homes and autos, we have been BUSY. One of the biggest questions we've heard this year has been "why has our insurance premium grown so much?" This might be a strange place to explain it, but we feel the need to let you know what's really going on. Catastrophic weather and economic fallout from the pandemic have created challenges and stresses at a level never seen before in the insurance industry. Catastrophic weather events used to happen on the coasts or in other states. This year, just OUR local region sustained 5 large weather losses which forced the companies to file claims with their reinsurance companies. These events and inflation drive up the cost of reinsurance, which drives up the cost of your insurance policy. And this doesn't include the problem of increased costs of and the ability to get materials and parts, increased labor costs, and legal system abuse. All these things contribute to a reduced appetite for risk by the insurance companies, which makes insurance a hard thing to write! But we are working diligently to make sure that all our customers have insurance during this very difficult time. We've been getting quite a workout, but it's making us stronger! Whatever comes along, we do our best to take care of all our customers' insurance needs. Our product is financial security, and we are here to protect our customers. So this Christmas Card goes out to you with heartfelt prayers from all of us, that you and your families will have a warm and wonderful Christmas and a new year filled with health and happiness.

May the Christmas Spirit be with you and your family today & throughout the New Year!

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Happy Holidays

Left to Right: Celina Garza, Jamie Denault, Aubrey Stiennen, Alejandra Hernandez, Audrey Hollocker, Jennifer Truckenbrod and Rose Bonnell

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LOCAL AND AREA

‘It’s just time’

After 36 years, JC’s Headquarters is closing

By **BRANDON LaCHANCE**
Staff writer

MENDOTA—When Christy (Mott) Liesse graduated from LaMoille High School in 1981, she went straight to beauty school because she loved doing hair and the interaction she would have with people.

She became a professional hair stylist 41 years ago and became co-owner of JC’s Headquarters with Jeanne Rapp in 1987 (36 years ago).

After more than four decades in the industry and more than 30 years as a business owner, Liesse is making the tough decision to close JC’s Headquarters on Dec. 23.

“I’m going through some health issues. It’s nothing major but it’ll just take time. Right now, I have a herniated disc,” Liesse said. “I have pain in my shoulder, and it goes down to my arm and my hands. I really can’t function very well. Plus, I can’t stand for very long. I knew I couldn’t stand here and continue to cut hair because I need to sit down.

“The economy has changed. Prices have gone up, which has hurt us. It’s hard to keep raising the prices for your services, but you have to if the prices of things you need for the services goes up. Minimum wage has gone up. The price of utilities has risen. The price of our products is higher. It’s gotten to the point where you have to look at the numbers, profits and losses, and scrunch numbers.

“With my health and the economy, it’s just time.”

Jeanne (the Jin JC’s) retired in 2017, leaving Christy (the C) as a self-proprietor for the last six years.

Whether a co-owner, a solo owner, or a hair stylist, JC’s Headquarters has been a huge



The Mendota salon staple, JC’s Headquarters, is closing its doors for the final time on Dec. 23. Over the years, co-owners Jeanne Rapp (retired in 2017), Christy Liesse (self-proprietor for the last six years) and the staff have provided beauty care for many. The current staff of, left to right, Stacey Miller, Liesse, Maria Guzman, and Kayla Haines, are sad JC’s Headquarters is closing but are thankful for the cherished memories. (Reporter photo by Brandon LaChance)

part of her life.

“It’s never been just a business or a job. I truly enjoyed doing hair and creating relationships with my staff and clients,” Liesse said. “I really feel like this was more my calling than just a job. I feel it’s something God wanted me to do. I think that’s why I’ve hung in there and been in business for as long as I have. Through the salon we’ve done a lot through people’s joys, sorrows, weddings, deaths, pregnancies, good times, and bad times. We’ve been a family here.”

The family environment has been shared by numerous employees throughout the 36 years.

But also, the clients.

“No. 1, I think our customer service is a reason we have been in business for so long. No. 2, just offering everything that we offer,” Liesse said. “Also, we’ve been there for our clients, going the extra mile for them when they need it. They become our friends.

They trust with us with their hair as well as talking to us about their lives and families. A lot of times, we know their families without ever meeting them until we see them, unfortunately, at the funeral home. We feel like we know all about them because we’ve heard about them for so many years.

“You feel good when you leave a salon. It’s a place you can go where you may not feel so good when you go in, but you’ll feel good when you walk out. It lifts you up.”

JC’s Headquarters stopped selling gift cards a few months ago, but currently has special closing sales.

From Dec. 19-23, all products are 40 percent off except for Biofreeze remaining at 20 percent off and no special on toffee.

There is also an everything must go sale on furniture, displays, decorations, dryer chairs, manicure tables, pedicure table, styling chairs, and Belvedere backwash units from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Dec. 19-23

or by appointment.

Each product, chair, and client have a story to share.

“A funny ongoing story is with a gal who I still do her hair and I used to do her kids’ hair when they were young,” Liesse said. “They’re older now and they have kids and careers. The one son went on to be an editor in film and lives in Los Angeles. He would still come back every once in a while, and I’d cut his hair. When the original crew was still here, he told us that he was going to write a movie about us. He’d say, ‘I’m going to come back and film you for a movie.’ He loved coming in and talking to us.

“I have people who still come back after many years. I have people who will come for a haircut and tell me they used to sweep hair for me 20, 30, 40 years ago. We’ve always been here, so they’ll come into town, stop by, and say hello.”

Although the Mendota staple of JC’s Headquarters will be gone, Liesse’s love for cutting hair and making people smile will not.

After her current health issues are taken care of, she may return to a chair at some point somewhere. At the moment, she can’t, but if there is a time where she can, she will.

Until then, she takes pride in all the customers who walked in the doors of JC’s Headquarters.

“We have had a customer base from old to young. I have some clients who are in their late 90s,” Liesse said. “We’ve done first haircuts to haircuts at the funeral home. It’s always a privilege to go to the funeral home and do someone’s hair. I feel like it’s the one last thing I can do for them, make them look good.”

Blackstone School Report

Stacy Kelly, Principal

The Blackstone music program was held on Dec. 11 at Mendota High School in the auditorium. Mrs. Kieffer and our students did a fantastic job preparing for this program. Thank you to all of the students, parents and families that came to watch. We had a packed house! The students did a beautiful job singing and we appreciate all that Mrs. Kieffer and the teachers did to put on this show. Thank you also to the parent volunteers who helped. In addition, thank you to Mendota High School for allowing us to use their auditorium and to their staff and students that helped.

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We enjoyed some holiday fun on our last couple of days before winter break. Santa and Mrs. Claus made a visit to Blackstone to see our students. They were so excited! Students also enjoyed fun holiday games and activities in their classrooms along with a movie/popcorn party. It was pajama day so that was fun for the students too. For lunch, the whole school enjoyed Rosati’s pizza and they frosted cookies. It was definitely a fun way to celebrate the holidays and kick off winter break.

□□□

Thank you to all of our students, their families and staff who supported our December kind deed. We were able to supply many items to the Illinois Valley PADS Shelter to help the homeless. Your kindness is appreciated!

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The students nominated for the principal award this past week included Cash Gliatta, Nathan Gonzales, Ana-leisa Arteaga, Diego Reveles, Jonah Carreon, Grayson Kent, Amelia Thurber and Abram Fenwick. The winners were Jakob Cockream, Tony Munoz, Leonel Orozco and Cian Sheppard. Congratulations to all of you!

□□□

Winter break is here! Students will be off of school beginning on Dec. 18 through Jan. 3. Students will return to school on Thursday, Jan. 4. The day we return is a spirit day. Students and staff are encouraged to wear neon or bright colors as we celebrate “Let’s Have a BRIGHT Start to the New Year!”

Merry Christmas and enjoy your time off of school!

Youth party at Stage 212 to bring in the new year

LaSALLE – Stage 212 is helping young people ring in the New Year in style with the “Siblings New Year’s Bash,” a child friendly party presented at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. on Sunday, Dec. 31 at the theater, 700 First St., LaSalle. The event will feature appearances by Mario and Luigi, Elsa and Anna, the PAW Patrol and much more. Following the performance, there will be a meet and greet photo opportunity with all characters.

Tickets for the event are now on sale for just \$10 each and may be purchased online at www.stage212.org or by calling the box office at 815-224-3025 and leaving a message. Tickets must be picked up at the door. All patrons age 1 year and up must have a ticket. All children must be properly chaperoned. Performances may be added as ticket sales demand.

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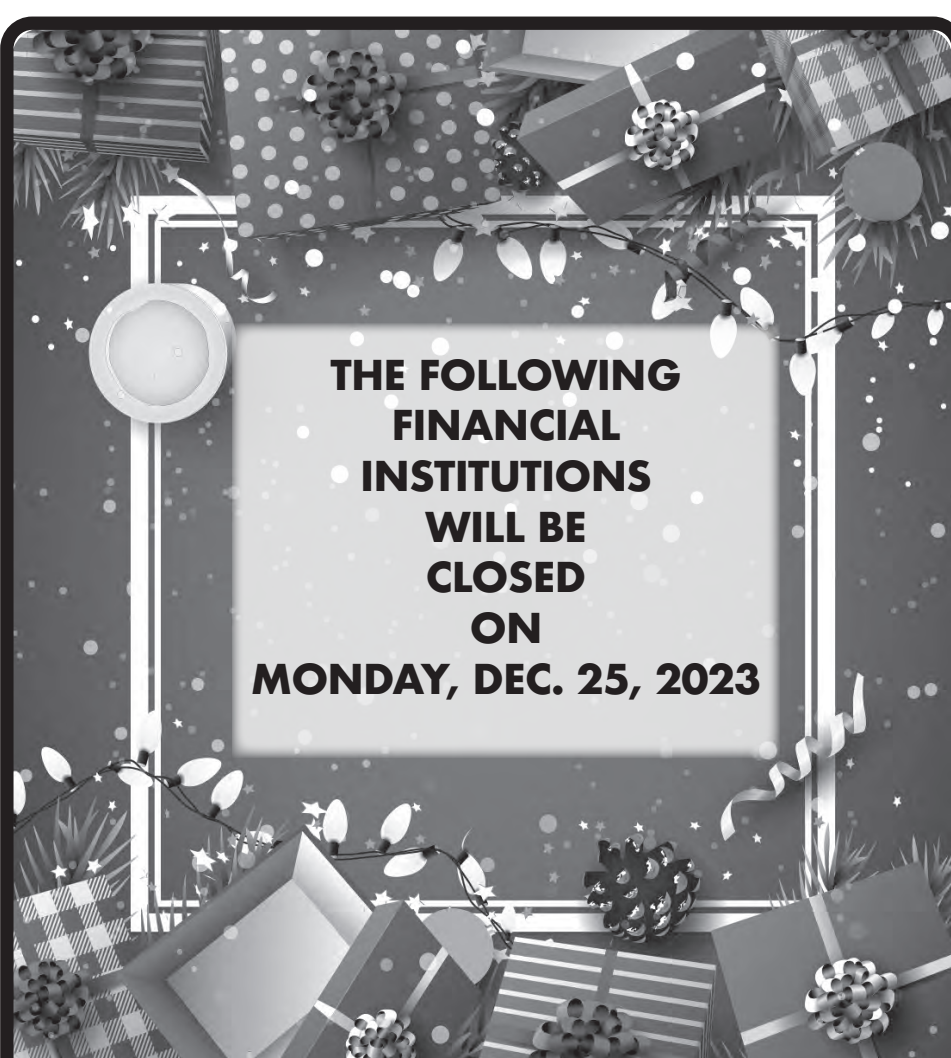
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OBITUARIES/LOCAL NEWS

Dale D. Billhorn

LaMOILLE – Dale Duane Billhorn, 91, of LaMoille, passed away Nov. 27, 2023, at his daughter's house in Princeton, with his six children at his side. Like any good Bureau County farmer, he waited until harvest was finished to leave the fields.

The family will provide further information regarding a memorial gathering in the spring at the "Home Place" outside of LaMoille.

Born June 28, 1932, to William and Bertha (Scriba) Billhorn, Dale attended high school at the old Allen School in LaMoille, where he participated in football and track. After high school, Dale entered the family business as a fourth-generation farmer and, in 1953, moved his young family to the Clarion "Home Place" farmstead that had first been deeded to his great-grandfather (Veit Billhorn) after immigration to the United States in 1852. Ultimately, in 1974, Dale purchased the Home Place and continued to farm there until 2016. Dale lived in Bureau County his entire 91 years, 70 years on the Clarion Home Place.

Dale is survived by his six children from his marriage to Doris (Lobach) in January of 1950, Mick Billhorn, Patricia Schultz (Les), and Janice Myers (Daniel), all of LaMoille, John Billhorn (Jill) and Jodi Hoare (Frank) of Chicago, Jackie Martin (Kevin) of Princeton, his sister Donna Zinke of Mendota, and his second wife, Carolee, of Oglesby.

Dale was preceded in death by his grandson Ryan Adkins, his sister Charlene Stamberger, and his son-in-law Frank Hoare.

The farm family built around Dale goes far and deep. Dale, known as "Pappa Dale" to the clan, enjoyed 18 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren.

In 2022, Dale was awarded the prestigious Illinois Department of Agriculture "Sesquicentennial Farm" award, given by the State of Illinois in recognition of 150 or more years of family farm ownership. The year 2023 marks the 171st year of family ownership of the Billhorn Clarion Township Home Place farm.

Over the course of his life, Dale was an avid race car fan and found success on many dirt and pavement tracks as an owner, driver and chief mechanic. As well as owning midget race cars and stock cars, in the early 1980s, Dale drove his own stock car at LaSalle Speedway as well as the Mendota and Princeton fairgrounds. The driving force in Dale's racing interest started in the 1940s when Dale met and became friends with Danny "the Greek" Kladis, a two-time Indianapolis 500 participant who, for more than five decades, took Dale under his arm and taught him the nuances of oval, open wheel race car competition.

Dale was residing with Jackie in Princeton at the time of his passing. In honoring Dale's wishes, the family asks that all memorials be directed to the family (Jackie Martin) for allocation to the Fresenius Kidney Care, where Dale received dialysis for the last seven years of his life, as well as the Clarion Lutheran Church outside of LaMoille, which served as the family's base for worship for many years.

Online condolences may be directed to www.norbergfh.com. Arrangements by Norberg Memorial Home, Inc. & Monuments.

DEATH NOTICES

The Mendota Reporter 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 \$100 to be billed to the arranging funeral home or prepaid with cash, check or credit card. Please submit obituaries or death notices to editor@mendotareporter.com.

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Artistic Memorials

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Shirley J. Till

MENDOTA – Shirley Jean Till, 96, of Mendota, passed away Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2023, at Allure of Mendota.

Private family only services were held at 11 a.m., Tuesday, Dec. 19, 2023, at the Merritt Funeral Home, Mendota with Rev. Mary Bohall officiating. Cremation rites were accorded after and private burial will be held at Restland Cemetery at a later date. Public visitation was held from 10 a.m. until time of services.

Shirley was born Nov. 14, 1927, in Toledo, Ohio, to Claire and Hester (Jones) Hall. She married Ray Till on April 8, 1949.

Shirley is survived by her daughter Nancy (Jerry) Spitz of LaMoille; her son James (Pat) Till of LaSalle; two granddaughters, Jenny Till and Kelly Moore; and two great-grandchildren, Hudson Moore and Penelope Moore.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband in 1999, grandson Justin Till and a brother Robert Hall.

Shirley was a homemaker and enjoyed spending her free time doing needlepoint, playing golf and bridge and traveling with her husband.

Memorials may be directed to the First United Methodist Church in Mendota. Online condolences may be left at www.merrittfh.com.

Janice N. Reiter

HAMPSHIRE – Janice N. Reiter, 81, of Hampshire, died Saturday, Dec. 9, 2023, at home surrounded by family.

Cremation is private at the Countryside Funeral Home and Crematory, 95 S. Gilbert St, South Elgin. Burial is at Warrenville Cemetery with her husband Donald at a later date.

She was born May 21, 1942, in Aurora.

She was the beloved wife of the late Donald; loving mom of Gay (Ken) Nechvatal, Donna (Dan) Drapalik, Mark (Phyllis) Reiter and Curt (Deb) Carlson; cherished grandma of Brett, Mike (Kim), Steve (Abigail), Scott (Megan), Tim, Caitlin (Garrett) and Hannah (Danny); dear great grandma of Lydia, Levi, Laklyn, Londyn, Emmitt and Eleanor; caring daughter of the late LeRoy and Edith Ward; kind sister of the late Thais, David, Ruth and Dolores and aunt to numerous nieces and nephews, great nieces and nephews and great-great nieces and nephews.

Janice enjoyed Mahjong, scrapbooking, reading and jigsaw puzzles but her biggest passion was always her family.

Online condolences at www.countrysidefuneralhomes.com.

In Loving Memory Don Schmidt

June 6, 1927 - December 24, 2018

It's been 5 years since the moment that you left us. When my heart was torn in two, one side filled with heartache, the other died with you. I often lie awake at night, when the world is fast asleep, and take a walk down memory lane, with tears upon my cheeks. Remembering you is easy, I do it every day, but missing you is heartache, that never goes away. I hold you tightly within my heart and that is where you'll stay.



Forever Loved and Sadly missed by
Velma, Nancy &
Dave, Karen &
Sonny, Becky &
Dan and Family.

See the latest obituaries on our website at mendotareporter.com

Elaine M. Swope

COMPTON – Elaine M. Swope, 92, of rural Compton, passed away peacefully on Dec. 16, 2023, at Allure of Mendota.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2023, at the Merritt Funeral Home, Mendota with Rev. Jeff Schlesinger officiating. Burial will be at Restland Cemetery, Mendota. Visitation will be held from 10 a.m. until time of services.

Elaine was born on June 20, 1931, in Mendota, the daughter of Frank and Margaret (Fouk) Kidd.

She is survived by a brother, Elwood (JoAnn) Kidd of Earlville; two daughters, Margo Ackland of Mt. Morris and Wendy Wenzel of Knoxville; six grandchildren, Ginger (Ryan) O'Rourke of Oregon, Ill., Melanie (Marty) Hey of Hoffman Estates, Brian Ackland of Schaumburg, Matt (April) Wenzel of Washington, Paul Wenzel of Peoria and Stacy Wenzel of Bloomington; and eight great grandchildren, Grey O'Rourke, Martin Hey III, Tristan Hey, Taylor Ackland, Blake Ackland, Jordan Ackland, Savannah Wenzel and Kaden Wenzel.

She is predeceased by her parents, husband, Elroy W. Swope in 2020, infant son Curtis and both sons-in-law, Bernard Ackland and John Wenzel.

Elaine began school in rural Triumph before her family moved to a farm outside of PawPaw, where she graduated high school in the class of 1949. She worked as a bookkeeper for Alexander Lumber Company in Compton, the grain elevator in Meridan and many years at the Mendota Lutheran Home. She also served as the secretary for the Compton PTA, was a Junior Girl Scout Leader, taught Sunday School and sewed quilts with the Immanuel Lutheran Church Ladies.

It was her request to have a combination celebration of life for both Elaine and Elroy Swope at the Mendota Elks Lodge immediately following the interment.

Memorials may be directed to St Jude's Children's Hospital or any children's charity of the donor's choice. Online condolences may be left at www.merrittfh.com.

Gladys Vietz

MENDOTA – Gladys Vietz, 92, of Mendota, went to be with the Lord on Dec. 16, 2023.

Graveside services will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, Dec. 22, 2023, at Dewey-Worsley Cemetery, Triumph with Father Jeff Windy officiating.

Gladys was born to Manuel and Delphina (Martinez) Jorge on March 22, 1931, in Ponce, Puerto Rico.

Gladys is survived by her husband of Mendota.

She was preceded in death by her parents.

In her life, Gladys came to America with her first stop being New York City. There, she worked as a secretary. She then made her way to Chicago and ended up in Oglesby. There, she met her husband Willis Vietz, as he was a salesman selling her Amway products. They then married on Dec. 14, 1974, and lived a long happy life together.

Memorials may be directed to Holy Cross Church. Online condolences may be left at www.merrittfh.com.



City Ordinance

Animals-Pet Waste Ordinance

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

Requirement for disposal. All pet owners and keepers are required to immediately and properly dispose of their pet's solid waste deposited on any

property, public or private, not owned or possessed by that person.

Exemptions. Any owner or keeper who requires the use of a disability assistance animal shall be exempt from the provisions of this section while such animal is being used for that purpose.

Violations and penalties. Any person(s) who is found to have violated the provisions of this section shall be subject to a fine of no less than \$25 and no more than \$75.

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LAST WEEK'S ANSWER:
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Winner: No Winner

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LOCAL AND AREA

Farm

Continued from Page A1

Although this year's net farm income is expected to drop below last year's record high, it's still one of the best years on record for the farm sector, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said.

"In fact, net cash farm income for 2023 is 15% above average for the last two decades, and farm income over the 2021-2023 period represents the highest level of farm income in the last 50 years," Vilsack said in a statement.

U.S. agriculture exports have also seen the three highest years on record in 2021-2023, which is reflected in overall cash receipts, while 2024 is projected to be the fourth highest year on record despite potential declines, he added.

"Even so, the data shows a majority of farm households rely on off-farm jobs to make ends meet, indicating that the income is not evenly distributed across the farm spectrum," Vilsack said. "USDA will continue our efforts to bolster a complementary system that makes it possible for small- and mid-sized farms to benefit from more, new and better markets and climate smart agriculture opportunities so they can thrive."

Total production expenses are forecast to increase by \$14.9 billion (3.5%) in 2023 to \$443.4 billion. Interest expenses and livestock/poultry purchases are expected to see the largest increases in 2023 while spending on fertilizer/lime/soil conditioners, fuels/oils, and feed is expected to decline relative to 2022.

"A bright spot for farmers is that some production costs, including feed, fertilizer and pesticides, have declined," Vilsack said.

The forecast also reported direct government farm payments are forecast at \$12.1 billion in 2023, a \$3.5 billion (22.3%) decrease from 2022.

Farm sector equity is expected to increase by 6.9% (\$229.4 billion) in 2023 to \$3.57 trillion in nominal terms. Farm sector assets are forecast to increase 6.6% (\$254 billion) in 2023 to \$4.09 trillion following expected increases in the value of farm real estate assets.

Farm sector debt is forecast to increase 5% (\$24.6 billion) in 2023 to \$520.7 billion.

American Farm Bureau Federation Economist Daniel Munch noted in a recent Market Intel that farm income numbers for 2022 were not finalized until August 2023 and have been adjusted upward over \$20 billion in the eight months since the year ended. During this time, USDA is digesting new information and data as it becomes available, shifting calculations from estimates to actual values.

"This means there is still much variability in final 2023 net farm income," he wrote.

Read the full forecast online, bit.ly/4a0f4Wy.

(This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.)

Council

Continued from Page A1

fighter. For approximately the next month, he will be in training with the department before being placed on a shift.

The city will be testing again in the near future to hire two additional full-time personnel.

Mayor David Boelk wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The next regular meeting of the Mendota City Council will be Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.

LED speed signs going up in Sublette

□ Village is increasing its water usage rate by 12.5%

By **BRANDON LaCHANCE**
Staff writer

SUBLETTE—Three matters were finalized and a few more were discussed at the monthly Village of Sublette Board meeting on Dec. 11 at the Ellice Dinges Center.

After receiving a grant to purchase two LED speed signs, the board has agreed on what to order.

"We are ordering a battery powered and a solar powered LED speed sign. This will give us two LED signs to help slow down vehicles in town," said Sublette Village President John Stenzel. "The goal is to have them ordered and get them here to put in place by the spring. There isn't a big push for them at this time of the year because of weather and road conditions."

The board went to a vote on an increased water usage rate for Sublette.

A year ago, the water usage rate went from \$4.80 to \$5.40 per 1,000 gallons of water.

Although a trustee put an option of raising it to \$8-10, the board voted on \$6.08 per 1,000 gallons of water, which

is a 12.5 percent increase, the same as the year before.

The \$6.08 rate was approved with via a 3-1 vote.

Also finalized was the passing of the property tax levy for Sublette, which beats the due date of Dec. 19.

Stenzel is planning to meet with Willet, Hofmann & Associates' engineers to discuss the plans the Village of Sublette Board received on Dec. 11 and when work will begin for both the Richmond, Virginia, Reeve Street project and the issue of televising the storm tile under U.S. Rt. 52.

In his president's report, Stenzel discussed a water leak at 404 W. Virginia St., which was contracted to repair and discussion with Nicor to repair a storm line on East. Main Street and South U.S. Rt. 52, which the company put a gas line through a few years ago.

Review of the Sublette Christmas Walk on Dec. 2 was favorable as the turnout and functions were deemed as successful.

The next Village of Sublette Board meeting will take place at 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 8 at the Ellice Dinges Center.

IVCC offering abbreviated version of 'Get Set' program in January

OGLESBY—An abbreviated version of IVCC's popular and unique college readiness program, Get Set, will be offered in January as students prepare to begin spring semester classes.

Get Set Spring 24 will be a one-day instruction on college start-up essentials and time-management strategies that helps ease students into their college studies. Students get logged into campus technology programs, make sense of textbooks, class formats and schedules, and are introduced to useful resources.

The grant-funded course is free and open to new IVCC students enrolled in 2024, including newly-minted high school graduates and adults turning or returning to college. Enrollees agree to attend the session in person and meet with mentors as the semester progresses, and those who complete those requirements earn monetary incentives.

The class will meet from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 9. Students can reserve one of the 15 seats available

by enrolling by Jan. 5, 2024.

"We've seen the course build competence, confidence and connection. All three are a big deal in college success and retention," said Coordinator Tina Hardy.

The one-day schedule delivers "a quick shot of some of the most important college knowledge tips and strategies from the week-long session. In the past, we've seen big gains in computer/technology skills on Day One," Hardy said.

This year's schedule customizes the Get Set experience and involves the mentors more, Hardy said. It allows mentors to spend more time with students during the semester, delivering individual test-taking and note-taking strategies and other curriculum when students can apply them in class. Mentors help seal the student-college bond, she said.

College can overwhelm when students realize that expectations for them are different from high school, Hardy said. They're expected to be independent learners, manage their time, initi-

ate and complete tasks, and adapt to different technology. "And it's important to know what your support network looks like and how to access resources," she said.

Nearly 50 students from throughout the IVCC district have taken the course since it began in 2022. Graduates endorse the program, saying it prepared them for college, helped them to keep up strong GPAs, and gave them confidence to enroll the next semester.

Drew Knipper, an IVCC 21st Century Scholar and student government vice president, extolled Get Set's virtues before a group of prospective students recently. "It gave me the confidence to walk into school on the first day without worrying about how to access technology, who to ask questions or how to get help. Get Set pushed me to get involved. I believe anyone who has the opportunity to enroll in the class should!"

To learn more or register, visit <https://www.ivcc.edu/readyssetgo/> or call Hardy at 815-224-0284.

Celebrating 88 years of Social Security

By **Mike Weilt**

PERU—For 88 years, Social Security has provided income protection to millions of retirees, people with disabilities, dependents, and families that lose a wage earner. This year, we will administer more than \$1.3 trillion in benefits and payments to more than 70 million beneficiaries. In addition, we issue millions of Social Security numbers each year, maintain wage records, and more. We are proud to serve the American people every day.

To better serve you, we have prioritized our online customer experience. Our

website ssa.gov makes it easier for you to find what you need. More than 180 million people visit our website every year. Whether providing service in person or online, our goal is help you understand what you may qualify for and transition you to an application process.

We have also worked to make sure our programs, particularly Supplemental Security Income (SSI), remains accessible to the people who need it most. Last year, we launched an online tool that allows you or your representative to request an appointment to

file for SSI and protect your filing date. A Social Security employee will then schedule a full interview. Find more information about SSI at www.ssa.gov/ssi/.

We remain committed to helping maintain the well-being and protection of the people we serve. We strive to ensure that every person who is eligible for or receives benefits gets them timely and accurately.

Please share this information with your friends and loved ones who may need it.

(Weilt is the Social Security District Manager in Peru.)



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Rates

Continued from Page A1

"This is not business as usual," said Brad Klein, an attorney for the Environmental Law and Policy Center who argued in both cases. "This is really a very significant change in Illinois."

Klein also said the commission "sent a strong message" to utilities and other stakeholders that they would all be held accountable to the goals laid out in CEJA.

Other advocacy groups, such as Illinois PIRG, the Union of Concerned Scientists and AARP Illinois, also commended the decisions.

Sarah Moskowitz, head of the consumer advocacy group Citizens Utility Board, said she is "quite pleased" with the outcome.

CUB focused much of its arguments against the two cases on lowering the utilities' proposed return on equity, or profit rate.

While both companies requested a 10.5 percent return, the ICC approved an 8.905 percent return for ComEd and an 8.72 percent return for Ameren.

While pleased, Moskowitz noted she was also surprised by the ICC's recent decision making.

"I've never seen this kind of action from the commission before," Moskowitz said.

While the profit rates for the two companies are now set, pending any potential appeals, key factors for rate-setting remain subject to change, based on the companies' replacement grid plans.

"Billions of dollars continue to be on the line," Moskowitz said.

Commissioner and former Illinois AFL-CIO President Michael Carrigan dissented in the decision—a

rarity for the agency that mostly rules unanimously.

In a written dissent, Carrigan said while he did not believe the plans were compliant with the state's climate law, he thought that the commission could have modified, rather than rejected, the plans to bring them into compliance.

"Based on comments made from the bench, we can say at this time that we are very disappointed with the outcome as described," a ComEd spokesperson said in a statement released after the ICC announced its decision but before it issued its final order.

Ameren's Matthew Tome, the head of the company's regulatory affairs, was also "disappointed" by the decision and pushed back against the ICC's characterization of the company's grid plan.

"Ameren Illinois' plan was the result of a transparent two-year regulatory process with significant input from stakeholders, including the ICC's own expert staff," he said in a statement. "It meets the statutory requirements of the state's Climate and Equitable Jobs Act."

Tome went on to say that Ameren's now-rejected plan advanced the state's clean energy goals.

Representatives from both companies said they will review the full decision.

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OPINION



The Mendota Reporter

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Letters to the editor should be typed or hand-printed. They should also be brief. All letters must contain a name, address and telephone number. The editor reserves the right to publish, condense, revise or reject any submissions.


“It’s a Wonderful Life” holds its reputation

For long-time newspaper or magazine column readers or movie enthusiasts, this may seem like a familiar piece or something rehashed.

Kind of like every song, beat, or lyric on hip hop radio because everything is sampled, borrowed, or created by yesteryear.

Never the Last Chance

By Brandon LaChance



But sampling, paraphrasing, or paying dues to not be copywritten isn’t the mission here.

However, as in every column, movie, or song, there is a mission. Actually, two.

The first is, how in the world have I not seen “It’s a Wonderful Life” before November 2023?

The movie was directed and produced by Frank Capra in 1946, released Dec. 20, 1946, and stars Hollywood legends in James Stewart, Donna Reed, and Lionel Barrymore.

The classic Christmas flick was based on a short story “The Greatest Gift” published by Philip Van Doren Stern in 1943 and has loose ties to Charles Dickens’ A Christmas Carol (1843).

Those facts are well known or found in an easy Wikipedia search.

However, the Christmas spirit, the power of human morals, the realness of depression, how failure can twist the mind and make you different, how people touch or influence others without knowing, importance of family lineage, crisscrossing of reality and dreams, career paths changing or evolving over time, and the height a human being caring about people has over a personal endeavor mentality can only be found while watching the movie.

I can’t lie, I have lapses in movie viewing and may not see a 2023 hit or blockbuster until 2030. On the other hand, I’m kind of disappointed in myself it took 38 years before I sat down to view “It’s a Wonderful Life.”

Of course, I had heard about it. If you Google or internet search top Christmas movies, the film at hand is always mentioned and talked about heavily.

It’s not because the flick is 77 years old because personally, I enjoy silent films and other early Hollywood productions where acting ability, storytelling, and human emotion were valued higher than sound effects, graphics, and simply selling tickets, DVDs, or streams.

Maybe, it was just time and place, or the film gods wanted me to wait until I could fully grasp the awesomeness of the holiday creation.

This brings us to the second mission and where the rehashing of other writers writing about “It’s a Wonderful Life” may take place.

Is it the best Christmas movie of all-time?

For years, when people ask me what is my favorite holiday motion picture? I have said “Die Hard” or “Home Alone.”

Die Hard is usually just to rile friends and family as they put their life savings on the Bruce Willis action movie not being a Christmas movie but simply taking place in December. I’ll leave this conversation here as the debate is an entire column to itself.

Home Alone stems from my age as I was 5 years old when it came out in November 1990. I developed a similar thought process to Kevin McCallister, played by Macaulay Culkin, about wanting people to disappear.

Plus, what kid didn’t think it would be cool to set adult criminals on fire, smash an iron to their forehead, hear them scream as ornaments are cutting through their feet, or watch them fly in the air as they slip on the front steps you purposely made slicker than an ice rink?

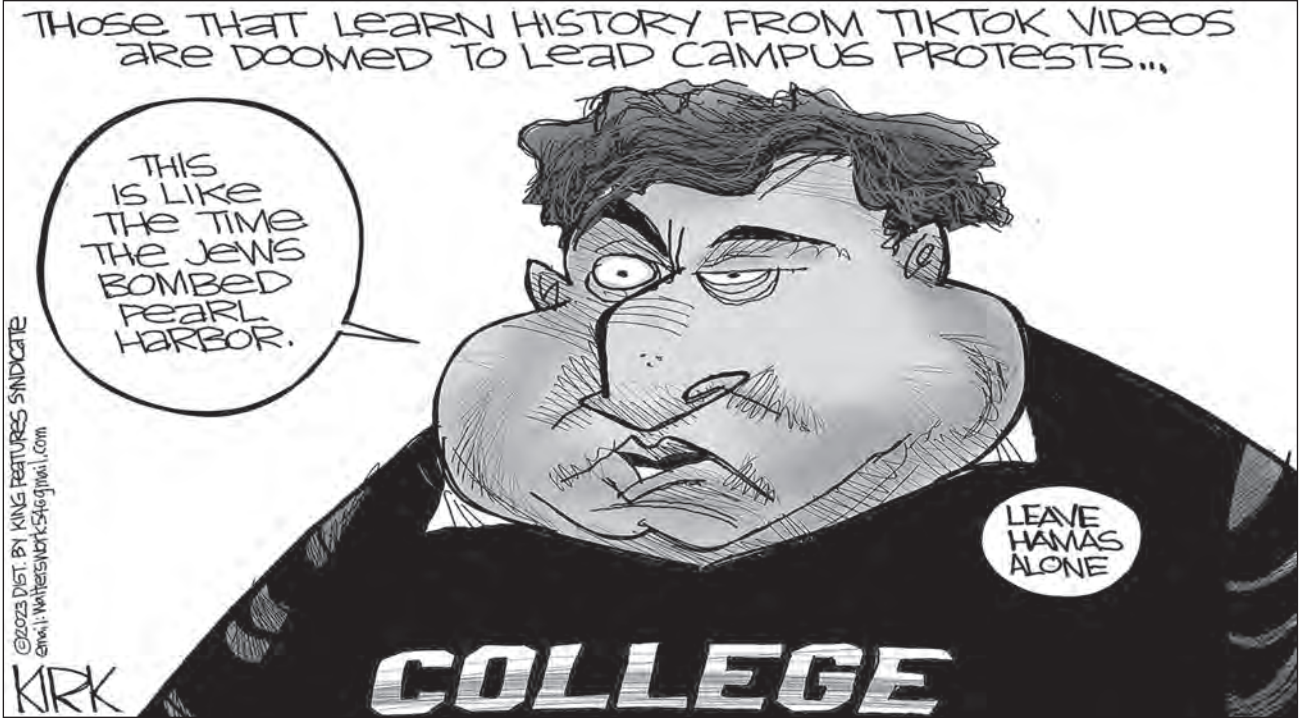
The adult in me who understands life a little better and the importance of human emotion and interaction may put “It’s a Wonderful Life” ahead of my two previous choices.

It is definitely a classic and has well deserved the reputation of being one of the better or best Christmas movies of all time, even 77 years later.

Here’s the however...

However, thinking Kevin was the coolest kid in the world or John McClane (Bruce Willis) was the biggest bad*** throughout my entire life cannot just evaporate within the 131 minutes of “It’s a Wonderful Life.”

James Stewart and his generosity, caring, and extraordinary family and people skills will have to settle for Top 5.



Kiwanis treats Mendota athletes – 1923

(The following is from Jessica Nashold’s *Backtracks & Sidetracks* column reprinted from Dec. 16, 1998.)

By Jessica Nashold

Seventy-five years ago, on Dec. 17, 1923, Mendota Kiwanis entertained letterman of the Mendota Township High School football team at its noon meeting in the Depot Hotel dining room. Guest speaker that day was George Huff, athletic director at the University of Illinois, a post he had held for 25 years. A Mendota Kiwanis member, A.W. Bush, had been one of Huff’s teammates on the first-ever football squad the U. of I., while Huff was still a student there.

There were two stars of the grid-iron in the days when football was in its infancy.

Huff gave details of those early games. The team wore neatly knitted caps, tight-fitting white canvas trousers and tennis shoes. Only one man on that first team had ever played in or seen a football game.

When playing against the University of Chicago, Huff said spectators sometimes “took a hand” in helping their men if the score was “not on the right side.” If a visiting team was too far ahead, spectators would mob them before they could leave the field. But times had changed.

Now visiting teams are treated more like guests.

Coach Clarence Jack was introduced as “without doubt the best coach Mendota has ever had.” The season record for 1923 had been 5-3-3. In seven of those 11 games, the opponents didn’t score. Jack asked a few of his “best men” to stand and “outstanding end” Woods, “swift and heady” halfback Witte, tackle Brown and Allen Scheidenhelm, captain-elect for 1924 were applauded. Captain Massey of the 1923 season just concluded said he hoped the 1924 team would make an even better record.

Following the Kiwanis meeting, Principal R.E. Beebe invited Huff to address the MTHS students. His message to them was that engaging in athletics leads to keener minds.

Red blood is coursing through the veins.

He advised students to “win without boasting and lose without making excuses.”

Burglars invaded the Denison drug store. A brake shoe from the railroad yard was used to shatter a window. Gold pencils and fountain pens, valued

Backtracks & Sidetracks

at \$250-\$300, were taken.

Blood was lost while the thieves were moving about the store.

Work began on remodeling the upper flows of the building adjoining Hotel Faber on the north. When completed, the Faber would have 80 rooms. The Hotel Faber Café was leased to C.C. Hayes, a restaurateur with 30 years’ experience. He pledged attention to the local trade as well as the traveling public.

Regular dinners will be served for 40 cents.

The Coss Grocery on Main Street advertised a closing out sale, as did Schwarz Furniture Store. Schwarz would retain his undertaking service.

The new roadhouse built by the Burlington in the east end yards was not quite completed. However –

They want to move in while the weather is fairly good.

The new roadhouse had seven stalls. A master mechanic’s office would be placed nearby as well as a bunkhouse.

The United Cigar Store changed hands as George McCormick sold to Mendotan James McDonald and William Neilson of Reddick. They planned to install a soda fountain.

The United Cigar Store has a large trade.

T.E. Cavanagh and C.L. Ray become partners in a grain commission firm on Main Street. That building as well as the former Coss Grocery building were among those later demolished to create the First State Bank parking lot.

Walker’s dry goods store furnished McCall patterns to sewing classes at MTHS, offering prizes for garments made from them by the girls. In the advanced class, winners were Esther Kreis and Marie Eckert. Beginners would compete later.

Mr. Walker is to be congratulated on his interest in the work of the young ladies.

Featured at the Strand on Dec. 18-20, 1923, was “Human Wreckage,” Mrs. Wallace Reid’s “great anti-narcotic photoplay.” It reveals distribution of dope among school children and “will rock the entire world to depths of its false security.”

Manager Bossen should have crowded houses at each showing.

Renumbering of houses and businesses in Mendota was required by Jan. 1, 1924. In December 1923, bids were sought on 400 street signs. Porcelain was specified with three-inch white letters on a four-inch blue background.

Restland Floral had a window display indicating that orders placed by 9:30 in the morning could be delivered “even 1,000 miles away,” by noon, thanks to wire service. The display included “a telegraph instrument” and a wire presumably extending from Restland Floral in Mendota “to some distant city.” The display was the work of Edwin Hoeger, an employee of Bernard Katzwinkel, proprietor of the flower shop. Master’s Wall Paper & Paint is present occupant of the old Restland Floral location.

A man struck by a car was pulled from beneath it on Main Street. The driver said he hadn’t seen him, but the man struck “hailed off and landed a terrific wallop to the driver’s head, knocking him to the pavement.” The driver got to his feet and drove away.

Possibly the men figured the scores were evened.

Newspapers sent through the mail were prohibited from making any mention of lotteries, games of chance or guessing contests. This eliminated publicity on drawings for prizes, sponsored by Mendota merchants and also on chances being sold on an auto to be raffled at the Bureau County Fair.

Mendota Auto Co. remained open until 9 p.m. during the first two weeks of December 1923 to display a wide range of Fords: Runabouts, Touring Cars, Coupes, Fordor and Tudor Sedans. The Tudor with “bucket seat” for driver, had just been introduced.

It was reported that Ford had 9,448 dealers in the United States and 3,800 dealers in foreign countries, plus thousands of authorized service stations.

It is the greatest retail sales organization ever known.

The dumbest betrayal of an ally

By Rich Lowry

It’s possible that Congress can’t find a way, despite the support of bipartisan majorities, to continue funding Ukraine in its fight against Vladimir Putin’s Russia.

This would have to rank, not necessarily as the worst, but perhaps the stupidest, most senseless abandonment of a U.S. ally ever. We’ve pulled the rug out from under allied countries desperately fighting to save themselves from communist gulags and killing fields (Indochina), thrown away hard-won military gains (Iraq), deserted vulnerable translators and other allies on the ground (Afghanistan), but these betrayals came after long, costly conflicts.

Ukraine hasn’t been long or, by any reasonable standard, particularly costly. The roughly \$100 billion we’ve spent so far is a fraction of the defense budget and, one would think, the kind of money we’re willing to spend to check a hostile power’s revanchist designs in Europe.

To dump Ukraine now would be completely gratuitous.

Congress kneecapped our allies in Indochina -- and our air campaign to prevent complete Communist victory -- by cutting off all military operations in 1973. This made for a dishonorable and disastrous end to the war, but it had been a long time coming.

We were in Vietnam for roughly a dozen years. We suffered more than 58,000 fatalities, and the war cost about \$170 billion, or something like \$1 trillion in today’s terms. It deranged our politics and led to protests in the streets, creating a constant sense of crisis.

There is no crisis over Ukraine funding, besides support for it sagging somewhat. (A Reuters poll found that 46% of people supported sending arms to Ukraine in May, whereas only 41% supported it in October.)

President Barack Obama paved the way for the rise of ISIS when he pulled forces out of Iraq in 2011 after we had imposed a semblance of order at great cost in blood and treasure. But we’d been in Iraq since 2003, in a war premised on WMDs that didn’t exist. A lightning-fast victory transformed into a grinding war of counterinsurgency. We

lost 4,400 men and women.

Not one U.S. service-member has died in Ukraine.

President Joe Biden pulled out of Afghanistan in 2021, a decision that nearly instantly handed the country over to the Taliban. We’d been in the country for 20 years, though, without an end in sight and without being able to set up a self-sustaining Afghan government or military.

The current iteration of the Ukraine conflict has been going on since February 2022.

In Ukraine, we have a committed and capable ally that is fighting hard without the direct assistance of U.S. troops. It is battling an unambiguous enemy of the West whose leader is open about his anti-Americanism. Russia’s military has been significantly degraded by Ukraine’s resistance. The support we are giving Kyiv is taxing our supplies of weapons, yes, but it is also being used to catalyze a long overdue revitalization of the U.S. defense industrial base.

This doesn’t add up to a picture that demands the immediate cessation of U.S. aid. Americans are famously impatient; still, we have to have more staying power than a little less than two years. It’s true that the Ukraine counteroffensive has been a disappointment, yet the Russians remain bottled up in the Eastern part of the country, again without direct Western involvement in combat.

The critics say there’s no plan for victory. It’s true that Ukraine is unlikely ever to vanquish the Russian threat once and for all, and the best that can probably be hoped for is an eventual armistice. Sometimes geopolitics doesn’t offer neat, easy solutions. Does Israel have a plan for total victory against Islamic extremism -- not just Hamas, but Hezbollah, Iran and other enemies? Does South Korea have a plan to finally defeat North Korea?

That the answer is “no” doesn’t make these allies less worthy of support. The same is true of Ukraine. To cut it off now wouldn’t be a crime, but an incredibly self-defeating blunder.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

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John Hessenberger, 1406 Hillcrest Drive,815-539-9934

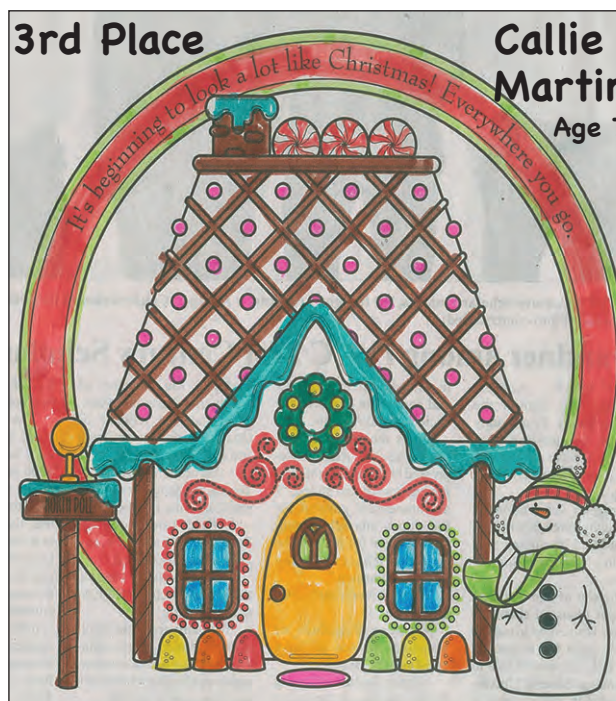
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Leo Hochstatter, 1102 S. Park Ave.,630-841-1315

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Jay Miller, 702 First Ave.,757-412-9374

FOURTH WARD ALDERMEN
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Vicki Johnson, 206 Ninth St.,815-866-5558

LOCAL AND AREA

The Mendota Reporter Coloring Contest Winners



Triumph United Methodist Church to hold public Christmas Eve candlelight service

TRIUMPH – The public is invited to join Pastor Sandy Smith and the congregation of the Triumph United Methodist Church for a traditional Christmas Eve candlelight service at 3 p.m. Sunday Dec. 24.

“Retelling the Story” is the theme for this year’s program. This music-filled service will blend many familiar carols

with scripture texts that relate to that particular carol.

This program is held in the afternoon to benefit those persons that do not drive after dark or have to travel to be with family later in the evening.

A free will offering will be taken and all proceeds will benefit the Mendota Christian Food Pantry. Everyone is welcome.



There's No Place Like Home for the Holidays

Thank you for making us feel so welcome here. We can't think of anywhere else we'd rather be at Christmastime and all year. Merry Christmas, everyone!



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THE BACK PAGE

POLICE BLOTTER

DRIVING WHILE LICENSE SUSPENDED
Cristian C. Lopez, 28, of 180 U.S. Route 52, Mendota, was charged with driving while license suspended after a traffic stop at 13th Avenue and U.S. Route 52 at 8:53 p.m. Dec. 13. The subject was released with a LaSalle County court date.

WARRANT ARREST
Austin J. Swank, 26, of St. Petersburg, Fla., was arrested at 10:53 p.m. Dec. 13 on a LaSalle County warrant

for failure to appear/driving while license suspended. The subject posted bond and was released with a LaSalle County court date.

DRIVING WHILE LICENSE SUSPENDED
Michael B. Henderson, 33, of 104 Second Ave., Mendota, was charged with driving while license suspended after a traffic stop at First Avenue and Eighth Street at 6:29 p.m. Dec. 15. The subject was released with a LaSalle County court date.



• **Winter Weather Ordinances** •

MENDOTA – During winter weather conditions, the Mendota Police Department reminds residents to obey the following ordinances:

- Ordinance 41.38 – Parking After Snowfall
It shall be unlawful to park any vehicle on any public street in the city at any time after a snowfall of two inches or more has occurred, unless the snow has ceased and has been plowed off or otherwise removed from the street.
Any person, firm, partnership, corporation or association found violating the provisions of this ordinance shall be subject to a fine of \$25 for each violation of this ordinance and may be subject to towing said vehicle away. The cost of said towing shall be the obligation and expense of those violating this Section.
- Ordinance 6.21 – Depositing Snow in Streets
No person within the city shall remove any snow from his private property or from offstreet parking lots or right of way parking into any of the city streets or alleys. This Section does not apply to removal of snow from sidewalks. This Section is specifically directed to, but not limited to gasoline stations, medical and dental clinics, or any other business or corporation which has private parking on the property or in those areas where the berm of the city has been dedicated or given over for parking facilities.
The above ordinances are in place to assist the city of Mendota with snow removal from the city streets.

Sunday Special:
1/4 Chicken Special,
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Monday: Margaritas - \$5

Tuesday: 50% off tacos

Wednesday: 1/4 Fried Chicken with French Fries & Coleslaw - \$8

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No Expiration Date

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12 Days of Giving

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November 18th is the kick off day for the Mendota Chamber's 2023 12 days of Giving Christmas Shop Local Promotion.

For every \$10 spent in a participating business, you will receive one sticker. In order to qualify for the 12 Days of Giving prizes, you must turn in a full card and each card must have stickers from at least FIVE OF THE PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES.

Double Stickers will be handed out during the Mendota Christmas event on Saturday, Dec. 2nd. Be sure to stop by the Mendota Chamber information booth downtown during the event for a special Mendota Chamber Shop Local Sticker.

Bring in your full cards to the Mendota Chamber Office at 800 Washington St. before Dec. 8th. You may also drop off your full card in the city's drop box on Illinois Avenue.

The 12 Days of Giving drawings will begin on Dec. 8 and be held every day, except Sundays, through Dec. 21. There will be 1 winner each day. The daily prizes will include merchandise and gift cards from our participating businesses.

On Dec. 21, the Chamber will draw for the grand prize. All daily winners will be added back into the Dec. 21 drawing. The Grand Prize will include merchandise and gift cards from our participating businesses.

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SPORTS

Trojans edge Hall in league opener

❑ Sycamore surge sinks Mendota

Mendota and Hall both had the three-ball working, but one more for the Trojans than the Red Devils proved to be the difference in a 52-49 Mendota victory in a varsity boys' basketball Three Rivers Conference contest on Dec. 12 at the MHS gym. It was the opening league game of the season for the Trojans, who with the victory, avenged an eight-point loss to Hall from the Seneca Tournament in November.

The Trojans pumped in 20 total field goals, with nine coming from three-point land. Hall had 18 field goals, with eight coming from long distance.

Mendota used three treys in the first quarter to open up a 15-8 lead after the first eight-minute session. Cale Strauss connected on a pair of threes and Aden Tillman had one. Hall drilled three three-pointers in the second period to climb back to within a 25-23 count at the break. Izaiah Nanez had two trifectas in the second for Mendota.

The Trojans knocked down three more shots from beyond the arc in the third stanza to up their lead to four (42-38) with one quarter to

play. Cam Kelly got in on the long-range bombing with a pair of three-balls for Mendota, while Nanez added another.

Hall outscored the Trojans, 11-10, in the final frame, but Mendota hung on for the win.

Mendota placed three players in double-digit scoring, led by Nanez with 15 points. Tillman was next with 12 points and Strouss helped out with 11.

Mendota ventured outside the conference for a match-up at Sycamore and the Trojans dropped a 52-43 decision on Dec. 13. MHS has a 5-6 overall record.

The Trojans led throughout much of the first half, taking a 16-15 advantage to intermission. But Sycamore came out blazing in the third period, pumping in 28 points compared to 10 for Mendota to take a 43-26 lead into the fourth quarter.

Mendota outscored the Spartans, 17-9, in the final frame, but it wasn't enough to overcome the deficit.

Nanez paced Trojan scorers with 10 points, while Kelly and Braiden Freeman added six points apiece.

MENDOTA 52, HALL 49				
Hall (49)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Bacidore	4	1-1	0	10
Guerrini	1	0-0	0	2
Bryant	2	0-0	2	5
C. Bickett	1	0-0	0	2
Jablonski	1	0-0	0	2
Curran	2	3-4	2	7
West	4	0-1	0	11
Dye	3	1-2	2	10
Totals	18	5-8	6	49

Mendota (52)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Strouss	4	1-2	2	11
Bryant	2	0-0	2	6
Nanez	6	0-1	2	15
Freeman	0	2-2	1	2
Tillman	5	0-0	2	12
Aughenbaugh	1	0-0	1	2
Baird	2	0-0	1	4
Dewey	0	0-0	1	0
Totals	20	3-5	12	52

SCORE BY QUARTERS				
Hall	8	23	38	49
Mendota	15	25	42	52
Three-point goals: Mendota - Strouss 2, Kelly 2, Nanez 3, Tillman 2; Hall - Bacidore 1, Bryant 1, West 3, Dye 3				

SYCAMORE 52, MENDOTA 43				
Mendota (43)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Strouss	2	0-0	4	5
Aughenbaugh	1	0-1	0	2
Baird	2	1-4	1	5
Kelly	1	4-4	3	6
Dewey	2	0-2	4	4
Nanez	4	1-1	1	10
Freeman	1	4-4	2	6
Tillman	2	0-0	1	5
Totals	15	10-16	16	43

Sycamore (52)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Wyzard	0	4-6	4	4
Picolotti	3	1-2	1	7
Shipley	1	0-0	2	2
Larry	4	1-2	2	9
York	5	4-4	2	15
Garcia	2	1-1	1	5
Lewis	4	0-0	2	10
Bumpus	0	0-0	3	0
Chami	0	0-0	3	0
Totals	19	11-15	20	52

SCORE BY QUARTERS				
Mendota	9	16	26	43
Sycamore	4	15	43	52
Three-point goals: Mendota - Strouss 1, Nanez 1, Tillman 1; Sycamore - York 1, Lewis 2				

Lady Trojans entered in Amboy Holiday Tourney

AMBOY – The Mendota girls' basketball teams will compete in the Amboy Holiday Tournament set for Dec. 26-29. There are six teams in the varsity tournament and four teams in the freshman-sophomore tournament.

The varsity squad is in the Red Pool along with Newman and Hiawatha. The Black Pool consists of Amboy, Hall and Somonauk.

Teams in the freshman-sophomore pool are Amboy, Mendota, Somonauk and Hall. They will play a round robin format.

Amboy Girls' Holiday Tournament

Tuesday, Dec. 26

Noon – Mendota vs. Hall (FS)
1:30 p.m. – Amboy FS vs. Somonauk (FS)
3 p.m. – Hall vs. Somonauk (V)
4:30 p.m. – Newman vs. Hiawatha (V)
6 p.m. – Amboy vs. Mendota (V)

Wednesday, Dec. 27

Noon – Mendota vs. Somonauk (FS)
1:30 p.m. – Amboy vs. Hall (FS)
3 p.m. Hiawatha vs. Mendota (V)
4:30 p.m. – Newman vs. Somonauk (V)
6 p.m. – Amboy vs. Hall (V)

Thursday, Dec. 28

Noon – Amboy vs. Mendota (FS)
1:30 p.m. – Hall vs. Somonauk (FS)
3 p.m. – Hiawatha vs. Hall (V)
4:30 p.m. – Newman vs. Mendota (V)
6 p.m. – Amboy vs. Somonauk (V)

Friday, Dec. 29

3 p.m. – Red Pool #3 vs. Black Pool #3
4:30 p.m. – Red Pool #2 vs. Black Pool #2
6 p.m. – Red Pool #1 vs. Black Pool #1



Amellia Bromenschenkel, left, has started the 2023-24 Purdue University Fort Wayne season in fine fashion even with a tough loss to No. 5-ranked University of Iowa and Caitlin Clark, right, the consensus 2024 WNBA Draft first pick. The 2020 Mendota High School graduate, now a PUFW senior, was named the Horizon League Player of the Week on Nov. 27. (Photo contributed)

Bromenschenkel flourishing at Purdue-FW

❑ Named Horizon League Player of Week; plays against Iowa's Caitlin Clark

By **BRANDON LaCHANCE**
Staff writer

MENDOTA – In Mendota the name Amellia Bromenschenkel is well known in the basketball, sports world.

The 2020 Mendota High School graduate left a semester early and dove into NCAA Division I basketball with Purdue University Fort Wayne.

Although she has a COVID-19 year remaining for a fifth year of eligibility in the 2024-25 season, the Mastodon senior is playing some of her best ball to date and is making a name for herself across the nation, not just Mendota or Illinois.

"I have a COVID-19 year left, so I'll be coming back for a fifth year, but with this being my official senior year, I just wanted to put my name out there and make sure I'm giving it my all during my last two seasons," said Bromenschenkel, who was Horizon League Third Team for the 2022-23 season. "Last year, I made a jump from the previous year, and I just wanted to keep that flowing. I wanted to improve in everything, so I worked pretty hard in the offseason to make sure I get something above third team this year. And hopefully our team will

go further in the postseason and have more success than we did last year.

"College basketball is a lot quicker than high school, so you have to be ready for your shot at all times. When you're younger, you don't have the confidence that it takes to fire your shot at any point in a game. What's really changed for me is improving my confidence and taking it to the next level by being ready whenever my team needs me.

"We get the opportunity to play schools in the power five conferences. It's really cool to be here and to play against great competition."

Purdue University Fort Wayne is 7-4 with a .636 winning percentage overall and is 2-0 in the Horizon League.

Bromenschenkel has started all 11 of the Mastodons' games and is averaging team highs of 31.8 minutes, 13.7 points, and 6.7 rebounds. She also leading

the squad with nine blocks. She is shooting 49.5 percent from the field, 46.2 from the 3-point line, and 85 percent from the free throw line and has 25 assists, 11 steals, and 22 turnovers this season.

The Mastodons saw tough competition from the beginning as they played the University of Michigan on Nov. 6 (80-61 loss).

Bromenschenkel scored 12 points and had six rebounds against the Wolverines and has continued to put up solid numbers as she had 16 points and nine rebounds in a 124-14 win against Great Lakes Christian on Nov. 11, and six points and six rebounds in a 70-64 overtime win over Southern Illinois University on Nov. 15.

PUFW entered the Gulf Coast Showcase in November where they faced Caitlin Clark, who is viewed as the WNBA's No. 1 draft pick in 2024, and No. 5-ranked team in the country, University of Iowa, on Nov. 24. Bromenschenkel recorded 16 points and six rebounds in the 98-59 loss to the Hawkeyes.

The Mastodons bounced back with two wins in the showcase as they defeated Delaware 88-74 on Nov. 25 (Bromenschenkel had 27 points and four rebounds) and Western Kentucky 90-77 on Nov. 26 (13 points and six rebounds).

For her efforts, Bromenschenkel was named the Horizon League Player of the Week on Nov. 27.

"Playing big schools like Michigan and Iowa, they always have solid players no matter if it's an off year for them or not," Bromenschenkel said. "We try to come into those games and try to prove ourselves and get our name out there being we're a smaller school. We haven't been great in our conference the last couple years and we want to improve."

See Purdue-FW, Page B2

Trojans, L-P to hook up in Plano Christmas Classic

PLANO – The Mendota Trojans will participate in the 60th annual Plano Varsity Christmas Classic on Dec. 27-30.

There are 16 teams in the tournament with seeds awarded to the top eight teams. Unseeded Mendota will begin tournament action against No. 3 seed LaSalle-Peru on Wednesday, Dec. 27 at 3:30 p.m. If the Trojans win their first-round game, they will advance to the winner's bracket to play either Aurora Marmion or Oregon at 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 28. A first-round loss will bump Mendota to the loser's bracket for a 12:30 p.m. contest on Dec. 28.

The tournament will continue with eight games on Dec. 29 and the finals on Dec. 30.

Kaneland is the top seed in the tournament, followed by Burlington Central, LaSalle-Peru, Northridge Prep, Streator, Marmion, Morris and Hinckley-Big Rock.

Plano Varsity Christmas Classic

Wednesday, Dec. 27

- 1 - #5 Streator vs. Yorkville Christian – 9 a.m.
- 2 - #4 Northridge Prep vs. Newark – 10:30 a.m.
- 3 - #8 Hinckley-Big Rock vs. Ottawa – 12:30 p.m.
- 4 - #1 Kaneland vs. Sandwich – 2 p.m.
- 5 - #3 LaSalle-Peru vs. Mendota – 3:30 p.m.
- 6 - #6 Marmion vs. Oregon – 5:30 p.m.
- 7 - #7 Morris vs. Plano – 7 p.m.
- 8 - #2 Burlington Central vs. Lisle – 8:30 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 28

- 9 – Loser 3 vs. Loser 4 – 9 a.m.
- 10 – Loser 1 vs. Loser 2 – 10:30 a.m.
- 11 – Loser 5 vs. Loser 6 – 12:30 p.m.
- 12 – Loser 7 vs. Loser 8 – 2 p.m.
- 13 – Winner 1 vs. Winner 2 – 3:30 p.m.
- 14 – Winner 3 vs. Winner 4 – 5:30 p.m.
- 15 – Winner 5 vs. Winner 6 – 7 p.m.
- 16 – Winner 7 vs. Winner 8 – 8:30 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 29

- 17 – Loser 11 vs. Loser 12 – 9 a.m.
- 18 – Loser 9 vs. Loser 10 – 10:30 a.m.
- 19 – Winner 9 vs. Winner 10 – 12:30 p.m.
- 20 – Winner 11 vs. Winner 12 – 2 p.m.
- 21 – Loser 13 vs. Loser 14 – 3:30 p.m.
- 22 – Loser 15 vs. Loser 16 – 5:30 p.m.
- 23 – Winner 13 vs. Winner 14 – 7 p.m.
- 24 – Winner 15 vs. Winner 16 – 8:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 30

- 25 – Loser 17 vs. Loser 18 – 9 a.m. (15th place)
- 26 – Winner 17 vs. Winner 18 – 10:30 a.m. (13th place)
- 27 – Loser 19 vs. Loser 20 – 12:15 p.m. (11th place)
- 28 – Loser 21 vs. Loser 22 – 1:45 p.m. (7th place)
- 29 – Winner 19 vs. Winner 20 – 3:15 p.m. (9th place, cons.)
- 30 – Winner 21 vs. Winner 22 – 5 p.m. (5th place)
- 31 – Loser 23 vs. Loser 24 – 6:30 p.m. (3rd place)
- 32 – Winner 23 vs. Winner 24 – 8 p.m. (1st place)

LaSALLE-PERU 59, MENDOTA 14					MENDOTA 44, EARLVILLE 31				
LaSalle-Peru (59)					Mendota (44)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP		FG	FT	Reb	TP
Duttlinger	6	1-1	0	14	Eddy	1	1-7	3	16
Aguirre	1	0-0	1	3	Garcia	2	0-0	2	4
Arbans	1	2-2	2	4	Frey	2	2-4	3	7
Urbanski	1	0-0	0	2	Knaff	2	0-0	2	4
Pode	3	1-1	3	7	Coss	2	0-0	1	4
Sines	4	1-2	3	9	Sondgeroth	0	0-2	0	0
Shetterly	1	0-0	0	2	Martin	3	1-5	11	7
Ruppert	2	5-7	0	9	Denault	1	0-0	3	2
Garman	3	2-2	0	9	Wasmer	0	0-0	3	0
Totals	22	12-15	9	59	Totals	18	4-18	28	44

Mendota (14)					Earlville (31)				
	FG	FT	Reb	TP		FG	FT	Fls	TP
Eddy	0	0-0	1	0	B. Miller	1	1-2	1	3
Garcia	1	0-0	0	2	Olson	3	4-14	5	11
Frey	0	0-0	1	0	J. Miller	0	1-5	3	1
Knaff	3	0-0	2	6	Hall	1	0-0	1	2
Coss	1	0-0	4	2	Dixon	6	0-0	1	12
Denault	2	0-0	1	4	Scherer	1	0-0	4	2
Wasmer	0	0-0	9	0	Totals	12	6-21	15	31
Totals	7	0-0	18	14					

SCORE BY QUARTERS					SCORE BY QUARTERS				
LaSalle-Peru	21	35	51	59	Mendota	5	12	30	44
Mendota	0	4	10	14	Earlville	13	23	27	31
Three-point goals: LaSalle-Peru - Duttlinger 1, Aguirre 1, Garman 1					Three-point goals: Mendota - Frey 1; Earlville - Olson 1				

MHS girls rally past Earlville

Mendota struggled in a loss to LaSalle-Peru and captured a come-from-behind victory over Earlville in varsity girls' basketball action last week.

The Lady Trojans hosted L-P on Dec. 14 and the visitors cruised to a 59-14 win.

Mendota was outscored, 21-0, in the first quarter and then managed only two baskets in the second period as L-P built up a 35-4 halftime advantage. The count stood at 51-10 after three quarters.

"I actually thought our energy was up, but we just struggled bad to hit shots

and L-P didn't," said Mendota coach John Hansen.

Kennedy Knaff led Mendota scorers with six points, while Grace Wasmer hauled down nine rebounds.

After another slow start, Mendota heated up in the second half and pulled away for a 44-31 triumph over Earlville on Dec. 16 at Earlville.

The Red Raiders grabbed a 13-5 lead after the opening stanza and took a 23-12 halftime advantage, but the tables were turned in the second half, when Mendota outscored the home team, 32-8, to post the double-digit victory.

The second half comeback for Mendota was keyed by Ava Eddy, who

poured in 10 of her team's 18 third-quarter points. That included connecting on a pair of shots from beyond the three-point arc. Earlville was limited to four points in each of the second-half quarters.

"We struggled to convert early and were a little scrambly on defense," noted Hansen. "But we exploded in the third quarter. We turned our pressure up and turned steals into buckets."

The Lady Trojans (3-9) had a whopping 31 steals in the contest, with Eddy and Ella Martin getting 11 apiece. Eddy was Mendota's lone double figure scorer with 16 points, while Martin and Bria Frey added seven points each. Martin led with 11 rebounds and Crystal Garcia handed out four assists.



Eddy

SPORTS

Soph boys get third seed in Plano Christmas Classic

PLANO—The Mendota Trojans will participate in the 13th annual Plano Sophomore Christmas Classic to be held Dec. 27-30.

There are 16 teams in the sophomore tournament with seeds awarded to the top eight teams. Third-seeded Mendota will begin tournament action against Aurora Central Catholic on Wednesday, Dec. 27 at 11:30 a.m. If the Trojans win their first-round game, they will advance to the winner's bracket to play either Plano or

Hinckley-Big Rock at 3:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 28. A first-round loss will send Mendota to the loser's bracket for a 9 a.m. game on Dec. 28.

The tournament will continue with eight games on Friday, Dec. 29 and the finals on Saturday, Dec. 30.

Northridge Prep landed the tournament's top seed, while Morris was seeded second. Seeded in the top eight after Mendota were Burlington Central, Yorkville Christian, Plano, Aurora Marmion and Kaneland.

Purdue-FW

Continued from Page B1

"It was a great opportunity to play Iowa. Pretty much everyone in college basketball wants a chance to play Iowa and take on Caitlin Clark. It was super cool to be able to be there with an extremely packed stadium and experience everything that had to offer. Clark is extremely talented and one of the best players in the country. It was cool to see how we matched up against her. It was cool to play against her and get a few photos with her.

"Iowa wasn't our best game. We really bounced back with the wins over Delaware and Western Kentucky. We had a long talk with the coaches and the players after the Iowa loss and wanted to prove who we are. We weren't expecting to do great in the tournament because we were the smaller name, but I think we really proved ourselves to our opponents, the people who ran the tournament, and the Horizon League.

"It was a great opportunity for us to show how far we've come."

PUFW won its first two Horizon League games, 84-66 over Oakland on Nov. 13

and 71-60 against Wright State on Dec. 3, before a non-conference 57-46 win over Bellarmine on Dec. 6 and non-conferences loses to St. Thomas (64-59) on Dec. 9 and to Western Michigan (78-76) on Dec. 17.

Only 11 games in, Bromenschenkel is excited for the rest of the season as she stays focused on improving her play and the Mastodons recognition.

"Since Maria Marchesano (third-year head coach) came in, it's been a rebuild. I think now that we're in the third year of the rebuild, it's finally clicking," Bromenschenkel said. "Our offense is really solid, and everyone is used to playing together. We've brought on some new key pieces with transfers and freshman, and I feel they've really stepped into their roles well.

"We have a lot of girls that are older who are ready to take it to the next level. My age group, which is three of us starters, have been playing together for the last three years. We have a transfer who has been here for two years. And the fifth starter has also been here as long as I have. We've been together for a while and know how to play with each other."



Eagle runner

Dagen Setchell, seated center, signs to run cross country at Illinois Valley Community College next fall. Looking on are his parents, Justin and Kira Setchell, seated, IVCC coach Matt Baker, back left, and Mendota High School coach Kevin Wohrley. Next fall will be the second season for cross country at IVCC. (Reporter photo)



Consolation Champions

The Northbrook Middle School eighth grade boys' basketball team won the consolation championship of the Serena Tournament on Dec. 8-9. Members of team, front row, left to right, are Abel Nanez, Cesar Hernandez, Oscar Castenada and Kevin Herrera. Middle row, Cooper Beetz, Esten Otero and Daniel Guerrero. Back row, Viktor Angulo, Ashtyn Stamberger, Levi Ossman, Tomas Corrigan, Cannon Chaon and coach Troy Bauer. (Photo contributed)

Serrano takes 2nd in Stillman Valley Invite

STILLMAN VALLEY – Mendota wrestlers competed in the Stillman Valley Invitational on Dec. 16.

In varsity action, the Trojans' Angil Serrano earned second-place honors in the 285-pound weight class. At 157 pounds, Corbin Furar placed sixth.

In the junior varsity tournament, four Mendota wrestlers placed in the top four. Taking third place were Adrian Arteaga at 106 pounds, Cole Kleckner at 138 pounds and Madrick Musgrove at 215 pounds. Gavin Stevenson finished fourth at 113 pounds.

MHS sophs clip Hall, beaten by Sycamore

The Mendota sophomore boys' basketball team split a pair of games last week, winning a tight Three Rivers Conference contest over Hall and dropping a nonconference decision to Sycamore.

Against Hall, the Trojans held on for a 40-39 thriller over the Red Devils on Dec. 12 at the MHS gym. Mendota had just beaten Hall by 34 points in five days prior in the Colmone Classic.

Hall jumped out to a 14-8 lead after the opening stanza, but Mendota fought back to outscore the visitors, 10-2, in the second period to seize an 18-16 halftime lead. The Trojans stretched the margin to seven (32-25) heading to the fourth where they had to hold on for the victory.

Alex Beetz pumped in 14 points to pace Mendota in scoring. Brody Hartt and Ramiro Palacios collected seven points apiece, while Johan Cortez tallied six.

Sycamore and Mendota hooked up in another close game before the Spartans pulled away in the fourth quarter to post a 40-31 win on Dec. 13 at Sycamore.

Mendota owned a 15-11 halftime margin, but Sycamore rallied to grab a 23-22 advantage with one quarter to play. In the final frame, the Spartans erupted for 17 points compared to nine for the Trojans.

Dane Doyle topped the Trojan scoring chart with 11 points, while Alex Beetz chipped in with seven markers.

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SPORTS

BOWLING

Monday Night Mixed League

Standings as of Dec. 12
 — 1. Split Happens 35-25;
 2. Bad Kats 35-25; 3. CM
 Farm 33-27; 4. Ramer Inc.
 29-31; 5. Sports-N-Stuff
 27-33; 6. Leagal Beagles
 21-39

High team game
 (scratch) — Split Happens
 806, Ramer Inc. 732, CM
 Farm 696

High team game (hdcp)
 — Split Happens 2205,
 CM Farm 1967, Ramer
 Inc. 1941

High team series
 (scratch) — Split Happens
 1046, Ramer Inc. 1029,
 CM Farm 961

High team series (hdcp)
 — Split Happens 2925,

Ramer Inc. 2832, CM
 Farm 2762

Men's high game
 (scratch) — Luke Ross 245,
 Matt Ramer 234, Charlie
 Betz 225

Men's high game
 (hdcp) — Charlie Betz
 292, Raul Diaz Jr. 285,
 Matt Ramer 266

Men's high series
 (scratch) — Luke Ross
 642, Matt Ramer 630,
 Raul Diaz Jr. 598

Men's high series
 (hdcp) — Raul Diaz Jr.
 784, Matt Ramer 726, Ed
 Roulston 709

Women's high game
 (scratch) — Dria Kuntz
 236, Emily Thomas 220,
 Jessica Robinson 215

Women's high game

(hdcp) — Dria Kuntz 301,
 Emily Thomas 281, Jessi-
 ca Robinson 278

Women's high series
 (scratch) — Dria Kuntz
 571, Jessica Robinson
 562, Gail Sessler 535

Women's high series
 (hdcp) — Audrey Holocker
 766, Dria Kuntz 766, Jes-
 sica Robinson 751

Wednesday Night Men's League

Standings as of Dec.
 13 — 1. O'Donnell Exca-
 vating 33-15; 2. Novak
 Farms 26-22; 3. Mendota
 Monument 25-23; 4. JJ&L
 Carpentry 24-24; 5. First
 State Bank 20-28; 6. Black
 Bros. 16-32

High team game

(scratch) — Mendota Mon-
 ument 999, Novak Farms
 982, Black Bros. 969

High team game (hdcp)
 — Black Bros. 1134,
 O'Donnell Excavating
 1126, Novak Farms 1104

High team series
 (scratch) — Mendota Mon-
 ument 2843, Novak Farms
 2727, Black Bros. 2688

High team series (hdcp)
 — O'Donnell Excavating
 3184, Black Bros. 3183,
 Novak Farms 3113

High individual game
 (scratch) — Joe Dimmig
 247, Jake Lohmeier 247,
 Kasen Novak 239

High individual series
 (scratch) — Chris Eller 671,
 Joe Dimmig 664, Tyler
 Schmitt 641

Youth goose hunt sign-up underway through Dec. 31

SPRINGFIELD — Youth between the ages of 10 and 17 who would like to participate in the annual Central Illinois Youth Goose Hunt sponsored by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources can register now for the event, which is scheduled for Jan. 15, 2024.

Registration opens Dec. 1 and closes Dec. 31. To partici-
 pate, youth hunters must go online to the Illinois Department
 of Natural Resources website and follow the instructions.

The hunt will be hosted at private waterfowl hunting
 clubs near Canton in Fulton County, and hunters selected to
 participate will be pre-assigned to hunting locations.

A lottery drawing involving all youth hunters who register
 will be conducted, and those who are selected will be notified
 by email. First-time applicants will be given priority over
 previous participants.

The hunt is open to youth ages 10 to 17 at the time of the
 event. All applicants must possess a valid Illinois hunting
 or sportsman's license, have a Harvest Information Program
 (HIP) registration number, and have a 20 gauge or larger
 shotgun. Youth hunt participants must be accompanied by a
 parent or guardian who must possess a valid firearm owner's
 identification (FOID) card.

Questions about registration and the hunt itself can be
 directed to 217-785-8060.

LaMoille H.S. boys' basketball

Dec. 13 @ LaMoille

Streator Woodland 63,
 LaMoille 42

Stats: Tyler Billhorn
 17 points, 12 rebounds;
 Brayden Klein 11 points; Josh
 Martin 11 rebounds

Dec. 15 @ LaMoille

Somonauk 69, LaMoille
 49

Stats: Klein 14 points, 6
 rebounds; Billhorn 10 points,
 12 rebounds

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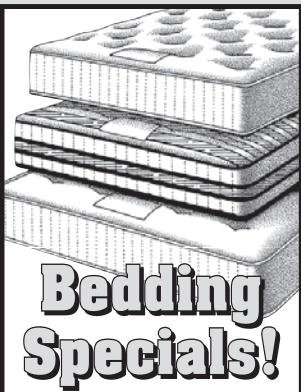
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LOCAL AND AREA



Reporter donation to MASS

Jamie Stanford, left, of The Mendota Reporter, presents a check for \$242 to Rayanne Sester, executive director of Mendota Area Senior Services, as a donation from proceeds received and a matching donation from The Mendota Reporter for its Fall Savings Spectacular subscription special held in October.

IVCC extends tuition deadline for spring semester to Jan. 3

OGLESBY – The spring semester tuition payment deadline has been extended to Jan. 3, 2024, at Illinois Valley Community College, giving students nearly three additional weeks to make financial arrangements.

“We are extending the payment deadline as a way to assist students with creating payment plans and paying for their classes,” said IVCC President Dr. Tracy Morris. “The students who set up

their payment plans early will benefit from lower payments spread out over longer periods and those who need the extra time to arrange for payments will have that option as well. Our team is committed to assisting students as they

plan for the spring semester.”

Spring 2024 payment is due no later than 7 p.m. Jan. 3. Questions can be directed to the Cashier Department at (815) 224-0213 or the Financial Aid Department at (815) 224-0438.

Capital Development Board to hold meeting at IVCC

OGLESBY – The Illinois Capital Development Board, the agency that oversees construction and renovation of state agency and university buildings, will host a meeting for construction-related firms at Illinois Valley Community College in January.

The in-person outreach meeting will be 10 a.m. to noon on Jan. 11, 2024, in IVCC’s Community Technology Center Room CTC 124-125.

All qualified firms that are contractors, subcontractors, engineers, architects, sup-

pliers and professional services are invited to learn about CDB’s bidding process, pre-qualification process, diversity requirements and construction opportunities.

The CDB oversees renovation and rehabilitation projects at more than 8,770 state-owned buildings and strives to ensure that the state’s diverse communities are reflected throughout those efforts.

To register for the session, go to <https://bit.ly/3RomLhW>. For more information, contact Jesse Martinez with the CDB at jmartinez@illinois.gov.

Broadband assessment project launches in NC Illinois

OTTAWA – North Central Illinois Council of Governments (NCICG) has partnered with TPMA and BHC to develop a Broadband Recovery Plan for the seven counties of Bureau, Grundy, LaSalle, Livingston, Marshall, Putnam, and Stark. The project aims to position the region to leverage future broadband development for economic growth, and will include an economic scan of the region, a stakeholder engagement process, and a broadband network design to empower municipalities to improve connectivity.

“We are excited to be working on this broadband planning project for the region. The project goal is to improve broadband connectivity and equity for our residents, businesses, schools, healthcare, municipalities, and emergency services. In today’s world broadband access affects every aspect of our daily lives and is as vital as other utilities such as sewer, water, gas, and electricity,” said Kevin Lindeman, NCICG Executive Director.

NCICG is utilizing consulting firm TPMA to conduct the assessment. TPMA has partnered with engineering firm BHC to deliver a comprehensive strategy with recommendations pertaining to both infrastructure and economic growth. A survey effort by the University of Illinois Extension in partnership with NCICG will run concurrently with the broadband assessment effort and will also inform recommendations.

“TPMA is thrilled to be working in this region to advance broadband connectivity and, in turn, economic resilience,” said Zachary Rice, Senior Consultant at TPMA. “The COVID-19 Pandemic emphasized the need for rapid investment in broadband infrastructure and digital equity programming in communities nationwide. This work is essential both to remain economically competitive and to maintain quality of life.”

The project is scheduled to run through March, with on-site stakeholder engagement scheduled for late January.



Dictionary distribution

Roger Anderson, representing the Mendota Rotary Club, visited the third graders at Holy Cross School to deliver a dictionary to each student. Each year, the organization gives every third grader in the community their own dictionary. Students receiving their dictionary, front row, left to right, are Kyle Henkel, Ty Schwingle, Adan Delao, Daniel Escatel, Kohen Piller, Cecilia Ortiz, Savy Richey and Peter Konopka. Back row, Connor Reppin, Jase Reppin, Roger Anderson of Rotary Club, Brooks Pawlowski, Madi Hayward, Morgan Happ, Alexia Lerma, Ella Wujek, Shay Full and Frank Hochstatter. (Photo contributed)

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THE FARMER'S REPORT

Not the 1980s, but watch farm income in coming years

□ Farmers, ag lenders may have challenging environment

By TAMMIE SLOUP
FarmWeek

The unknowns facing the agriculture sector are much greater today than in the past few years, and possibly decade.

The good news is farmers' balance sheets are generally stronger, largely due to the flow of government funding and low interest rates throughout the pandemic, coupled with commodity prices.

"What I'm seeing is the rearview mirror shows us that we came through from a period of really challenging times for ag bankers and for the ag sector, to a point where balance sheets are really cleaned up," said Jim LaPierre, FDIC regional director. "But ... I think all of us are looking at 2024 and thinking it's probably not going to be quite as good as 2023 and not quite as good as 2022."

Farmers and ag lenders are likely in store for a more challenging environment, LaPierre said during the Agricultural Bankers Conference in Oklahoma City. The conference session focused on the evolving agricultural landscape, looking through the rearview mirror and windshield.

The previous low interest rate environment was an anomaly, said Sam Miller, an agribusiness advisor.

"The good news is the ag sector is in the best liquidity and solvency position it's been in in decades," Miller said.

A number of risks will challenge farmers in the coming year, including trade disputes, higher interest rates and inflation, Miller said.

But it's certainly not comparable to the 1980s, the panelists agreed. Miller noted risk management tools are the best they've ever been.

"If you look at the marginal sales of most ag commodities, it's an export market, and that's going to be something to keep an eye on. And global unrest is a challenge in that regard."

—Sam Miller, agribusiness advisor

According to the Center for Farm Financial Management (Finpack) at the University of Minnesota, which examines financial data from 3,500 farms in 11 states, crop and cattle farmers are more likely to finish 2023 in the black while dairy and hog producers are expected to report financial losses.

The median income for crop farmers within Finpack is estimated to decrease from \$385,000 in 2022 to \$171,000 in 2023.

Chris Peacock, Agcor CEO, focused on the generational shift now occurring. "And in the not-too-distant future, not just on the farm, will be one of the largest transfers of wealth," he said.

Every day in the U.S., 10,000 people turn 65, and \$38 trillion of wealth is going to exchange hands between now and 2035, noted moderator David Kohl, professor emeritus, agricultural finance and small business management entrepreneurship at Virginia Tech.

Miller said he's carefully watching the global economy.

"If you look at the marginal sales of most ag commodities, it's an export market, and that's going to be something to keep an eye on," he said. "And global unrest is a challenge in that regard."

The panelists also zeroed in on weather impacts on the ag sector, specifically, transportation challenges

related to weather, including low river levels on the Mississippi and Amazon, as well as the Panama Canal.

Supply and demand also are key components, and what lies ahead for biodiesel and renewable diesel, and whether ethanol will qualify as a green fuel.

"That's something I'm looking for down the windshield," Miller said.

"I think that is, frankly, positive, it's a good green shoot for agriculture," he said. "If you look at why soybean prices are where they are, it's because of renewable and biodiesel trade policy."

From a regulator's perspective, LaPierre advised ag bankers to continue to be diligent in the way they're managing their portfolios.

"It's easy when corn is \$7 as a lender to say, 'I can probably not require that financial statement,' or 'I could probably let some things go.' And I would encourage you not to do that for two reasons: One, that's not good for your institution to have those exceptions. ... It's also not good from your borrower's perspective. They should expect you're always going to be diligent, disciplined in the way you're underwriting your credit," LaPierre said.

(This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.)



The top five wheat yield entries surpass 140 bushels

By DANIEL GRANT
FarmWeek

How good of a season was it for wheat in Illinois this year?

Fayette County farmer Danny Rubin submitted an impressive entry of 144.49 bushels per acre in the Illinois Wheat Association's (IWA) state yield contest, but he didn't know if it was good enough to take the top prize.

And, while it was close, with the top five entries all above 140 bushels, Rubin's yield in fact turned out to be the winner of the 2023 contest. The top entries were unveiled at IWA's Summer Wheat Forum in Sparta in late summer.

"Actually, I was surprised. I knew there was a lot of good wheat around," Rubin told FarmWeek after learning he won the contest.

Rubin, a past IWA president, planted Pioneer 25R76 variety at a seeding rate of 1.7 million per acre to produce the spectacular crop. It had a test weight of 62.4.

"The dry weather in June was pretty ideal (for wheat)," he said. "There wasn't much disease, and the test weights were really good."

Second place in the contest went to Triple P Farms in Effingham County with a yield of 142.84 bushels using FS Inspire FS603 variety, while Kurt Sudholt, Clinton County, took third place with a yield of 141.88 bushels using FS Inspire FS624.

Marvin Beer, St. Clair County (141.6 bushels), and Chris Howell, Monroe County (141.23), who both planted AgriMAXX varieties, rounded out the top five entries in the contest, respectively.

"We always try to find ways to improve and do better," Rubin said. "The (IWA) yield contest is good for members to help them (learn from each other) and on their own operations to improve and do better."

IWA received 20 entries for this year's wheat yield contest from 10 counties. A dozen of the harvest forms were returned and all of them surpassed 101 bushels per acre.

Keys to success for 2024

Looking ahead, Rubin said keys to producing a good wheat crop starts with variety

selection and establishing a good seed bed. He also uses fungicides, and foliar feeds the crop nutrients throughout the season.

"We try to keep the plants healthy and growing throughout the season," he said. "We do a lot of extra (management) things and it all adds up to make a big difference. It's not any single thing we do (that propels yields to new heights)."

IWA hosted a panel of industry experts at the forum who offered tips to wheat growers for the upcoming season.

Ryan Hasty, western area agronomy manager for South Central FS, said variety selection and planting populations are key.

"Things have changed a lot when it comes to seeding rates," Hasty said. "We used to be comfortable with 1.3 million to 1.5 million (seeds per acre). In recent years that's changed dramatically."

The agronomist now recommends farmers target 1.8 million to 1.9 million seeds per acre when shooting for high yields.

The reason for the increase is a focus on producing as many main stems as possible in the wheat stand.

"We don't want to count on tillers for the final yield," Hasty said. "We should focus on the main stem, that's where most of the yield is at. That's where (higher) seeding rates are working well for us."

Mark Miller, plant manager of Mennel Milling in Mount Olive, also recommends farmers be nimble in their wheat marketing plans and take advantage of on-farm drying capacity to harvest the crop a little earlier than usual when possible.

"Mills will give you, generally speaking, the best price," he said. "But I think we could see the river (terminals) bidding up wheat the next few weeks to fill barges."

Wheat prices have been quite volatile this summer trading from highs in the mid-\$7 range to below \$6 per bushel in Illinois.

(This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.)

Annual Conservation Cropping Seminar scheduled for January 31 in Springfield

SPRINGFIELD – Attention Illinois farmers. The annual Conservation Cropping Seminar will be taking place Jan. 31, 2024, with both virtual and in-person options. The event will be held from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. with the in-person attendees meeting at the Illinois Department of Ag Building in Springfield.

The in-person event costs only \$25 (lunch included) and the virtual tickets are only \$15. Soil & water CEUs will be available.

This event is an excellent way to learn more on how to

improve soil health, cover crops, adopt new technologies, improve root health, manage nutrients, and hear the latest on agronomic research. There will be a question & answer session with an Illinois farmer panel, as well as helpful resources to access.

Topics & speakers for this year include:

- Alternative Farming Methods – Greg Thoren-Stockton, Ill., farmer
- Next Generation of Digital Agriculture: Digital De-commodification, Smart Tillage, and AI – Dr. Lars Dyrud-Earth Optics
- Struggles with Stratification – Marion Calmer-Calmer Corn Heads
- Banded Systems Management – To the Root of High Yield – Chris Perkins-Banded Ag, LLC
- Farmer Panel

This event is organized and made possible with the involvement and support of the Illinois Department of Agriculture, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District, Doug Hanson, Randy McElroy, and local Soil & Water Conservation Districts. Look for newspaper stories, ads, tweets, Facebook posts, and other reminders!

Don't miss this opportunity to learn from the experts and network with other conservation-minded attendees. Register by Jan. 24 at <https://www.ccswd.com/conservation-cropping-seminars> to learn more and reserve your spot. In-person spots are limited so sign-up today.



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LOCAL AND AREA

Christmas cheers

The Northbrook Middle School seventh and eighth grade cheer-leading team represented the school and Mendota while performing at the ‘A Mendota Christmas’ event on Dec. 2. Left to right, are Mia Barringer, Mia Arteaga, Lila Bielema, Delilah Karahalios, Savannah Lenert, Karlee Organ, Rylee Woods, Laurali Thompson, Aliya Delao, Jacqueline Bryson and Livi Perryman. (Photo contributed)



CELEBRATING OUR SAVIOR AT CHRISTMAS

Early Christmas Eve Service at Triumph Church



The public is invited to join Pastor Sandy Smith and the congregation of the Triumph United Methodist Church for a traditional Christmas Eve candlelight service on Sunday, December 24 at 3 p.m.

This music filled service is held in the afternoon to benefit those persons that do not drive after dark or have to travel to be with family later in the evening. A free will offering will be taken, and all proceeds will benefit the Mendota Christian Food Pantry. Everyone is welcome.

Holy Cross Catholic Church

1010 Jefferson St. • Mendota



And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly hosts with the angels, praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests.”

A Light will shine on us this day, the Lord is born for us.

2023 Christmas and Holy Day Mass Schedule

Sunday, December 24	Monday, December 25, Christmas Day
4:00 pm St. Theresa	8:00 am St. Theresa
4:00 pm Holy Cross	9:00 am Sts. Peter & Paul
5:30 pm Holy Cross	10:30 am Holy Cross
12:00 midnight Holy Cross	12:00 pm Holy Cross - Spanish



Monday, January 1

8:00 am	St. Theresa
9:00 am	Holy Cross
11:00 am	Holy Cross - Spanish



Fr. Peter Pilon, Pastor
Fr. Jeff Windy, Parochial Vicar
Phone (815) 538-6151

12132023




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Family Friendly Services
Candlelight Communion

Christmas Eve
Sunday Service at 9 a.m.
Candlelight Service at 3 p.m.
www.zionchurchumc.com



Please join us for

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

Sunday, December 24, 5 PM

In-person or from the comfort of your home.

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Worship With us This Christmas Season!

December 24 Christmas Eve Services

9am Advent Worship Services
4:30 PM Christmas Eve Worship Services

St. John's Lutheran Church

607 Tenth Ave. Mendota
815-539-5626 * www.stjohnsmendota.org

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12132023



In Celebration of Our Saviors' Birth & New Year

Christmas Eve
Sunday, December 24
7:00 p.m. at Immanuel
9:00 p.m. at First, Lee
Candlelight Service with Holy Communion

Christmas Day
Monday, December 25
10:00 a.m. at Immanuel
Worship with Holy Communion (no worship at First, Lee)



Immanuel Lutheran Church
398 Church Road
Compton, Illinois
815-539-6567

Pastor Jeff Schlesinger

www.ilccompton.org

12132023



Christmas Services Schedule

ENTERTAINMENT

Celebrity Extra

By Dana Jackson

Q: I was sorry to hear about the death of Ryan O'Neal. "Paper Moon" is one of my all-time favorite movies. How is his daughter Tatum doing? -- **H.G.**

A: Tatum O'Neal wrote in her 2004 autobiography, "A Paper Life," that she and her father did not speak for two decades. According to Entertainment Weekly, they started to repair their relationship in the months before his longtime love, Farrah Fawcett, died after her cancer battle in 2009. The father and daughter duo, who starred in the classic film "Paper Moon," reunited on-screen in 2011 for their own reality show, "Ryan & Tatum: The O'Neals."

Their bond continued to grow until his passing on Dec. 8 at the age of 82. In a statement to People magazine, Tatum stated that her dad "meant the world to me. ... I'll miss him forever, and I feel very lucky that we ended on such good terms."

Q: I know most of the new shows are starting later this season, but when is my favorite, "Station 19," returning? -- **K.L.**

A: "Station 19" is a spin-off of "Grey's Anatomy," one of the longest-lasting drama series ever, but unfortunately "Station's" time is coming to an end, as ABC recently announced that the upcoming seventh season will be its last. The show boasts six cast members who have been there since the beginning -- Jaina Lee Ortiz (Andy), Jason George (Ben), Grey Damon (Jack), Barrett Doss (Vic), Jay Hayden (Travis) and Danielle Savre (Maya).

Due to the writers' and actors' strikes in Hollywood, which have fortunately ended, the fall TV season was pushed to 2024 and will air much fewer episodes. "Station 19" will premiere its final season on March 14 at 10 p.m. ET., the first of just 10 episodes.

Q: What happened to the show "Big Sky"? A friend told me it was canceled. This surprises me. I thought it was great and was looking forward to more. -- **B.F.**

A: "Big Sky" was a very promising series created by David E. Kelley. If that name sounds familiar, it's because Kelley has created

and/or produced many highly successful shows like "L.A. Law," "Ally McBeal," "The Practice," "Big Little Lies" and "The Lincoln Lawyer." In between these notable hits have been some misses ("Big Shot" for one). "Big Sky," however, probably sits somewhere in the middle. It lasted only three seasons, but with its beautiful scenery (set in Montana) and compelling storyline, it seemed to have the makings of a hit.

It starred Katheryn Winnick ("Vikings"), Kylie Bunbury ("Pitch") and Dedee Pfeiffer ("Cybill"). Pfeiffer is actually the sister of Kelley's wife, actress Michelle Pfeiffer. When the show wasn't generating its desired ratings, the name of it was changed to "Big Sky: Deadly Trails," and two stars were added to the cast -- Reba McEntire ("The Voice") and Jensen Ackles ("Supernatural"). Alas, it wasn't enough, and the series was canceled back in May.

Send me your questions at NewCelebrityExtra@gmail.com, or write me at KFWS, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

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Hollywood

By Tony Rizzo

HOLLYWOOD -- Legendary actor and director Clint Eastwood (93 years young) is directing his 41st film, "Juror No. 2," which is about a murder trial juror realizing that he's at fault for the victim's death. It stars Nicholas Hoult, Toni Collette, Kiefer Sutherland, Leslie Bibb and Chris Messina.

I first met Clint at a CBS press reveal for his show "Rawhide" in 1959. In 1964, I ran into him at his New York hotel, and he was worried that a Western he'd just made in Italy would flop here because he didn't utter one word of dialogue. I assured him that with his good looks, he didn't need dialogue, and "A Fistful of Dollars" was a smash hit.

In 1968, when Carol Channing won a Golden Globe, she entered the press room saying, "This is my first award for my very first film!" "But Miss Channing," I said, "your first film was 'The First Traveling Saleslady' with Ginger Rogers!" At first, she asked, "Where is his badge? Does he belong here?" Then

she continued, "Well, RKO went out of business and couldn't release it!" "But I saw it on TV last week," I assured her.

"Is he still here? Where is his badge?" She proclaimed. "Well, actually, my leading man in that is the No. 1 box-office star today ... Clint Eastwood!"



Dan Levy

Rob Reiner is reviving his 1984 classic "This Is Spinal Tap," with Christopher Guest, Michael McKean, Harry Shearer and Reiner himself returning. In 2016, Shearer sued StudioCanal and Vivendi for \$125 million due to a breach of contract, asserting that he and other co-stars only received \$179 for the sales of merchandise and music over three decades.

In 2018, Guest, McKean and Reiner joined the lawsuit, increasing it to \$400 million in damages. The two studios tried to get the case dismissed, but a judge ruled that they

could pursue the fraud claim against Vivendi. In 2019, the music rights were returned to Shearer, Guest and McKean, and in 2020, a settlement was reached for an undisclosed amount. With that settled, no wonder it took until this year to get the ball rolling on the sequel.

Four-time Emmy-winning actor/producer/writer-director Dan Levy ("Schitt's Creek") co-starred in Disney's "Haunted Mansion" and is now producing/directing/writing/starring in Netflix's "Good Grief," with Ruth Negga, Himesh Patel and Luke Evans. It shoots in London and follows a man struggling with the deaths of his husband and mother. He travels to Paris with his two best friends for a weekend getaway.

Levy, at 40, just received the second-highest honor in Canada by being named a Member of the Order of Canada. From motel grief in "Schitt's Creek" to "Good Grief" ... oh my lord!

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Couch Theater

"Killers of the Flower Moon" (R) -- Director Martin Scorsese's latest release (and 26th feature film) is now available to rent or purchase, following its box-office run of \$154.5 million. With an exemplary cast made up of Leonardo DiCaprio, Robert De Niro, Lily Gladstone, Brendan Fraser and more, this crime drama unpacks a series of targeted murders that occurred in the Osage Nation during the early 20th century. After finding oil in their land, the Osage tribe gains significant wealth that unknowingly draws in a pack of human parasites. Facilitated by a lack of interest from the local government, Osage members begin to die off seemingly without explanation. The film is based on a non-fiction book written by David Grann. (Apple TV+)

"Maestro" (R) -- For the first time since "A Star Is Born," Bradley Cooper had to juggle his acting/directing/writing hats for this biopic about the American composer Leonard Bernstein and his wife, Felicia Montalegre. The triple threat donned a prosthetic nose for his

portrayal of the composer, opposite Carey Mulligan ("Promising Young Woman") as Felicia. The film follows Bernstein from 1943, when he was 25 and working as an assistant conductor, well into his old age in 1987 after years of composing successes such as "West Side Story." Amid his triumphant public accomplishments, Bernstein tucks away his hidden attraction to men, forcing himself to live a stifling double life. Directors Steven Spielberg and Martin Scorsese served as producers for the film, out on Dec. 20. (Netflix)

"Asteroid City" (PG-13) -- Grossing \$54 million worldwide, Wes Anderson's latest comedy drama features an ensemble cast of great Hollywood names like Scarlett Johansson, Tom Hanks, Margot Robbie, Steve Carell and more. Ever the witty and unconventional writer, Anderson tells two stories in one, the first being a fictional play called "Asteroid City," which sets up how the film is told and framed. The second plotline, interspersed between the play's scenes, follows the behind-

the-scenes events about the playwright, Conrad Earp, and how his creation came to be. Anderson's directing style is right on brand, as always, with a beautiful pastel aesthetic and a clever visual design that feels akin to watching theatre. Out now. (Amazon Prime Video)

"Such Brave Girls" (NR) -- This comedic British sitcom centers on a single mother named Deb and her two daughters, Josie and Billie, played by two real-life sisters. Created by up-and-coming writer Kat Sadler, who stars as Josie, the series is described as a family sitcom about trauma. Through very punchy dialogue, it takes an honest and hilarious approach in showing the crunchy and awkward moments between family members that many people can relate to. The show seems similar to another British show, Phoebe Waller-Bridge's "Fleabag," which also touches on family trauma and finding a place in the world after a shaky upbringing. (Hulu)

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Strange But True

By Lucie Winborne

* We should all be so lucky as to have vision like that of the mantis shrimp: Not only do its eyes possess four times as many color receptors as a human's, it can see UV, visible and polarized light as well.

* The rise in global temperatures has led to flowers emitting less scent.

* Lightning hasn't brought down an airplane since 1963, thanks to engineering that allows a bolt's electric charge to run through and out of the aircraft.

* Spinraza, a drug prescribed for spinal muscular dystrophy, has a list price of \$750,000.

* By 2018, more than 100 people living in the U.S. owed at least \$1 million in federal student loans.

* A one-euro breakfast featured at an IKEA store in the Netherlands proved so popular that it had to be canceled after it attracted too many customers and even led to highway traffic jams.

* Kellogg's All-Bran cereal is actually 87% bran.

* Heading for the gym in the new year? Be sure to take some hand sanitizer! A report found that a typical gym's free weights boast 362 times as much bacteria as a toilet seat.

* During the Cold War, President Ronald Reagan and Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev agreed to put aside their political differences if Earth was ever invaded by aliens from outer space.

* Nicaraguan Catholics who abstain from meat during Lent include iguanas and armadillos in their diet.

* In 1978, Equatorial Guinea's President Francisco Macias Nguema, widely considered one of history's most brutal, possibly even insane dictators, tempted fate by changing his country's national motto to "There is no other God than Macias Nguema."

* More than four tons of old American paper money is mulched into compost every day.

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G	N	V	H	E	X	I	S	I	V	A	F
G	N	T	V	T	O	B	E	I	A	F	
E	N	O	I	S	T	I	W	N	E	M	
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N	O	T	O	S	E	J	V	T	I	P	
S	O	B	I	E	M	E	S	T	T	E	
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W	A	S	D	I	V	O	B	A	R	V	

Solution time: 22 mins.
Answers
King Crossword

Trivia Test

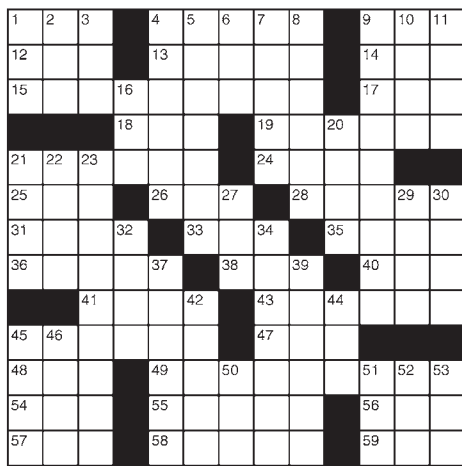
1. **FOOD & DRINK:** What is ciabatta?
2. **TELEVISION:** What is the name of the 1980s cop drama series starring actor William Shatner?
3. **HISTORY:** In which year did the Gulf oil spill occur?
4. **LITERATURE:** Who wrote the classic holiday novella "The Cricket on the Hearth"?
5. **INVENTIONS:** Who invented penicillin?
6. **GEOGRAPHY:** Monaco is bordered on three sides by which European country?
7. **U.S. STATES:** Which state's nickname is "The Land of Enchantment"?
8. **MOVIES:** What is the

- name of the police chief in the movie "Jaws"?
9. **GENERAL KNOWLEDGE:** What does the J.D. stand for in a law degree?
 10. **MUSIC:** Which singer had a breakout hit with "I Kissed a Girl"?
- Answers
1. An Italian bread.
 2. "T.J. Hooker."
 3. 2010.
 4. Charles Dickens.
 5. Alexander Fleming.
 6. France.
 7. New Mexico.
 8. Martin Brody.
 9. Juris Doctor.
 10. Katy Perry.
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King Crossword

ACROSS

1. TiVo precursor
4. Wide
9. America's uncle
12. Consume
13. Heart line
14. La-la lead-in
15. Gym machine
17. And so on (Abbr.)
18. Nabokov novel
19. Bowling lanes
21. Packs tightly
24. Go yachting
25. Yale grad
26. Author Umberto
28. Aegean island
31. Building wings
33. Farm female
35. Steakhouse order
36. Rice recipe
38. PC key
40. Chaney of horror films
41. First lady of scat
43. Bistro furniture
45. Telepathic
47. Sushi choice
48. Hostel
49. Heavy burden
54. Memo letters
55. Deadly virus



56. Schlep
57. Air safety org.
58. Philly hoopster
59. Director Lee

DOWN

1. Animal doc
2. Train unit
3. Hwy.
4. Villain
5. Woo
6. "... -- quit!"
7. World record?
8. Texas city
9. Sheet metal producer
10. Bohemian
11. Apple computers
16. Small batteries
20. Tale teller
21. Army transport
22. "That's -- need to know"
23. 1,000-year spans
27. Have debts
29. Bassoon's kin
30. Taxpayer IDs
32. Pretzel topper
34. Getty of "The Golden Girls"
37. Fireplace flickerers
39. Salad type
42. Suspect's excuse
44. Crunchy sandwich
45. Peeve
46. "May It Be" singer
50. Bagel topper
51. Slangy suffix
52. Sister
53. Silly Putty container

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

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

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No: 2023-JA-64
TO: Joseph McDonald, Unknown Fathers, other interested parties, and to All Whom It May Concern:

Take notice that on the 11th day of December, 2023 a petition was filed under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 by Vicki L. Denny, in the Circuit Court of LaSalle County entitled 'In the interest of Michael Stanley, a minor', and that in the Criminal Justice Center Courtroom 223 at Ottawa on the 17th day of January, 2024, at the hour of 8:30 a.m., or as soon thereafter as this cause may be heard, an Adjudicatory Hearing will be held upon the petition to have the child declared a ward of the court under that Act. The Court has authority in this proceeding to take from you the custody and guardianship of the minor, to terminate your parental rights and to appoint a guardian with power to consent to adoption. You may lose all parental rights to your child. If the petition requests the termination of your parental rights and the appointment of a guardian with power to consent to adoption, you may lose all parental rights to the child.

you at all stages of these proceedings. If you are financially unable to afford a private attorney, the court will appoint an attorney for you.

Unless you appear you will not be entitled to further written notices or publication notices of the proceedings in this case, including the filing of an amended petition or a motion to terminate parental rights.

Now, unless you appear at the hearing and show cause against the petition, the allegations of the petition may stand admitted as against you and an order or judgment entered. Dated December 12, 2023
Greg Vaccaro, Clerk
No. 1203
(Dec. 20, 2023)

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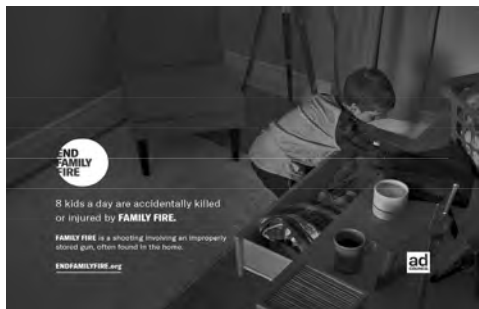
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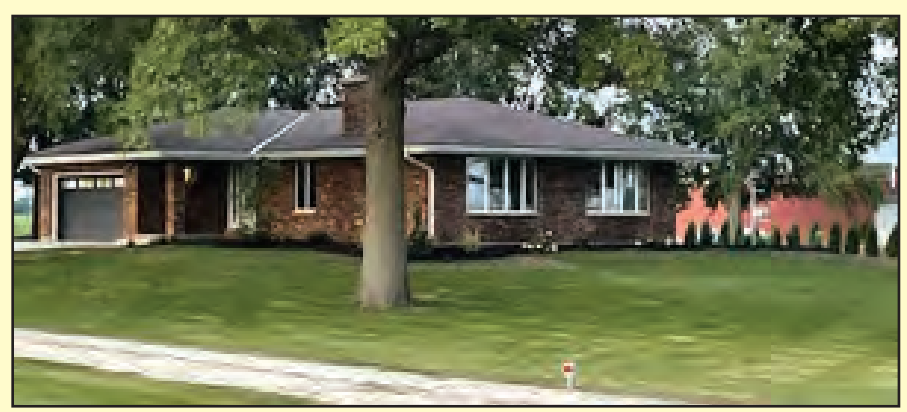
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