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VOLUME 35, ISSUE 42

MONDAY
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WEATHER

MONDAY	TUESDAY
HIGH LOW	HIGH LOW
35 21	39 24
WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
HIGH LOW	HIGH LOW
35 21	33 22
FRIDAY	SATURDAY
HIGH LOW	HIGH LOW
36 24	35 19

RCH hosts 2023 Holiday Drive Thru Dinner for those in need

'Helping the community in more ways than just its health is part of our strategic plan'

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — On Wednesday, Dec. 20, Rochelle Community Hospital hosted its annual Holiday Drive Thru Dinner for anyone in need in the community. The dinner was free and received just under 200 orders, RCH Marketing, Foundation & Organizational Development Manager Michelle LaPage said.

The menu included a choice of ham or turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, a vegetable medley, a dinner roll and cheesecake. The hospital's food and nutrition department, volunteers and the RCH Foundation made the dinner possible. The event is in its fourth year, LaPage said.

"We just wanted to do something to give back to the community," LaPage said. "That includes our seniors in need and anyone else that might need a holiday dinner. I know during Thanksgiving sometimes the VFW gives out meals and so we wanted to reach out and do one of our own."

The event's maximum meal number was 200, and LaPage said the fact that that number was nearly met showed the need in the community. Several organizations put in large orders to the event for those they serve including Lincoln Manor, HOPE of Ogle County, Rochelle Rescue Mission and the catholic church.

"The dietary staff puts all the labor into it and then we have our volunteers upstairs handing out meals on the day we do it," LaPage said. "The dietary staff



is down there with an assembly line putting together all the meals. They always do a really great job. It just falls in line with our mission and vision of supporting the community. All of our departments do that in some way or another."

Helping the community in more ways than just its health is part of RCH's strategic plan, LaPage said.

"Food insecurity is definitely something that's rising in this community," LaPage said. "There's a lot of need on our local food pantries and this is just another way to help out with that. The community is definitely appreciative."



★★★★★ Year in Review ★★★★★

A look back at some of the top Ogle County LIFE stories of the past year

January

Monday, Jan. 2

BYRON — On Dec. 20, the Byron Park District Board of Commissioners and Executive Director Paul Zepezauer recognized Board Commissioner Judd Griffith for 10 years of service. Commissioner Griffith began his tenure with the district in 2012. Over the past 10 years, the district has continued to expand services within the community and implemented new recreational programming for its residents.

"Commissioner Griffith's dedication to the Byron community and parks and recreation contributes to the ongoing success of the district," Board President Jeff Wilmarth said. "The Byron Park District is proud to recognize Commissioner Griffith and thankful for his service."

Monday, Jan. 9

PASADENA, Calif. — Dixon's Joy Holden and Chèrie Van Woz Arch, Oregon's Lorretta



Oregon's Lorretta Sigler celebrated the start of the New Year by "pushing petals" in preparation for the annual Tournament of Roses Parade. (Courtesy photo)

Sigler and Franklin Grove's Samantha Dopke wanted to ring in 2023 by doing something special, so they decided to participate in one of America's time-honored New Year's traditions. No, they were not making a toast in Times Square while the glass ball descended just before midnight on New Year's Eve. Instead, they are in southern

California celebrating the start of the New Year by "pushing petals" in preparation for the annual Tournament of Roses Parade.

The Illinois residents belong to the Petal Pushers, an elite corps of volunteers who travel from all over the country to gather in Pasadena, California each year. These volunteers spend the week between Christmas and New Year's attaching thousands of roses, carnations, lilies, mums, and other flowers, as well as natural materials such as seeds, coffee beans and leaves, to create the majestic beauty and splendor of the floral floats that rode down Pasadena's Colorado Boulevard during the Rose Parade on Jan. 2.

"This is my second time participating," Holden said. "I was here in 2015 and knew I needed to come back again. It is incredible to see all the ways that organic materials are used to create these floats."

See section B page 6

OBITUARIES

- Jarod Lehrke
- Pamela Lenz
- Claudia Rosenkrans
- Paul Wooden

See page A4

INSERTS

- Felker Foods
- Byron County Market
- Polo Fresh Food
- Menards
- Farm & Fleet
- Menards Bag insert

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LOCAL NEWS

Stillman Bank's annual Christmas drive collects 1,006 pounds of food

STILLMAN VALLEY – In the spirit of giving back this holiday season, Stillman Bank held a food drive to benefit area families this Christmas. 1,006 pounds of non-perishable food items were collected during the two-week event. Now in its 14th year, this annual food drive has collected over 14,000 pounds of food since its inception in 2008.

The Christmas Food Drive kicked off at all Stillman Bank locations on Friday, Nov. 24 and continued through Friday, Dec. 8. Donations will be made just in time for Christmas to several area food pantries including: Bread of Life pantry in Stillman Valley, Lifeline Food & Self-Help Project in Oregon, Old Stone Church Food Pantry in Rockton, People Helping People in Byron, Rochelle Christian Food Pantry in Rochelle, and Rock River Valley Pantry in Rockford.

Thank you to everyone who stopped by Stillman Bank to contribute to this great cause. For more information on Stillman Bank or to find out more about Stillman's products and services, please contact visit www.stillmanbank.com.

Stillman Bank is an independently-owned community



bank founded in 1882. The bank has approximately \$580 million in assets and

operates full-service banking offices in Byron, Oregon, Rochelle, Rockford, Roscoe/Rockton and Stillman Valley.

BEST awarded \$452,000 in state grant funds

OGLE COUNTY — The Business Employment Skills Team (BEST) recently applied and was awarded \$452,000 of Supplemental State Funding Allocation to incorporate four projects in Northwest Central Illinois. These funds will be utilized to place computers and job search resources in area

shelters and social service agencies for those that cannot travel to the workforce center or other BEST facility. In addition, funds will sponsor a spring youth career exploration event, Work in the Real World, where youth will learn about occupations and related training across industry sectors from

participating companies. Plans are also in the works to host a rural professional development conference that will be centered on workforce professionals, educators and business that have common needs to help assist today and tomorrow's workforce. Finally, \$200,000 of the award will be utilized

to provide paid work experience to area residents that may not meet workforce development eligibility requirements. These opportunities will be for both youth and adults and will give them up to 10 weeks paid work experience. The intent of the work experience is to provide an opportunity that leads to permanent paid employment. For more information on how to participate in the work experience opportunity, residents and companies can text or call 815-780-0871 or email info@best-inc.org.

BEST is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Eligibility based on federal guidelines. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to persons with disabilities. BEST, Inc. is an affiliate of NCI Works!

Farm transition and succession planning seminar set

MT. MORRIS, ILL. - Farm transition and succession planning will be the topic of a Feb. 29 seminar offered by local county Farm Bureaus. "Empowering Farm Families to Achieve Succession Planning Success" will be hosted by Dr. Ron Hanson and take place at the White Pines Lodge in Mt. Morris from 6 - 9:30 p.m.

"Communication is the most important part of succession planning, but it's also the most difficult," said Ron Kern, the manager of the Ogle County Farm Bureau. "Professor Hanson is an esteemed teacher and expert in this area, and his presentation will provide a tremendous value to our members."

Dr. Hanson will share insights on business management, common mistakes, decision-making processes,

and more during the event, enabling farm families to seamlessly carry forward their family farming legacy.

A professor emeritus at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Dr. Hanson has earned 31 university and national award recognitions in a 46-year teaching and advising career. He is an Illinois native and holds degrees from both Western Illinois University and the University of Illinois.

The event is sponsored by Farm Bureau Young Leader committees in the participating counties. Farm Bureau Young Leaders promote agriculture and professional development through leadership, education, legislation and networking. While Farm Bureau provides continuing education opportunities to them, the county Young Leader committees are paying that forward by sponsoring this seminar for all Farm Bureau members in their counties.

A \$50 registration includes dinner and is open through Feb. 15 to members of the Carroll, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson and Winnebago-Boone County Farm Bureaus. To register or learn more, call the Ogle County Farm Bureau at 815-732-2231 or email cfb@ogle.comcastbiz.net.

2024
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LOCAL NEWS



COUNTRY Financial Team Members Jozi Burke, Cindy Hendrickson, Ashley Strehlow and Jeanette Linker (inset) with members of the Polo Fire Protection District (Joe Buhlig, Denise Clothier, Sabrina Stock, Peyton Knight, April Rivers, Brent Shipman, James Ports, DJ Sanders and Chuck Clothier).

COUNTRY Financial supports Polo Fire with donation

Linker donates \$1,500 to help department with equipment and other needs

POLO – COUNTRY Financial Representative Jeanette Linker is proud to support the Polo Fire Protection District with a donation of \$1,500. The funds will be used to support the purchase of equipment and other needs. Linker awarded the donation in a recent check presentation.

“Our firefighters do so much to protect all of us. The least we can do is to support them with the tools they need for their lifesaving work,” Linker said.

COUNTRY Financial has donated more than \$5 million since 2020 to organizations and programs that support first responders, active-duty service members and veterans, supporting the company’s vision to “enrich lives in the communities we serve.” The Operation Helping Heroes program was created in 2015 to support non-profit events and programs that benefit active-duty service members, veterans, and their families. Later, the program expanded to include first responders and teachers.

Beginning Charcuterie Board Class offered Jan. 24

OREGON — Nothing says elegant entertaining that will dress up your table or impress your friends like a stunning charcuterie board. Join us on January 24th at Jen’s Artisan Breads, 105 W Brayton (old middle school) Mt. Morris for an enjoyable evening of interactive charcuterie board instruction, deli-

cious bites and tips and tricks to make everyday meats, cheeses and snacks into an extraordinary culinary delight. Jen Koertner from Jen’s Artisan Breads will be the instructor and walk you through step by step instructions on how to build a gourmet charcuterie board. You will fill your board with fruit,

nuts, meats, veggies and cheeses all provided as part of the class.

Tickets

The cost is \$30 person which includes your own charcuterie board to take home after the class.

The evening begins at 6:30 p.m. at Jen’s Artisan Breads. Class size is limited to the

first 30 who enroll.

To reserve your spot either call the Ogle County Farm Bureau at 732-2231 or email at cfb@ogle.comcast-biz.net

Free children’s podiatry clinic is Jan. 23

DIXON — Illinois Elks Children’s Care Corporation in cooperation with Northwest District Elks Lodges will sponsor a free children’s podiatry assessment clinic on Tuesday, Jan. 23 at Yeager Podiatry located at 841 N. Galena Ave. Suite 300 in Dixon with Dr. David Yeager as the clinician in charge.

The clinic starts at 8 a.m. and is by appointment only. To make an appointment call the Illinois Elks Children’s Care office at 1-800-272-0074 between the hours of 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. There are no charges for any services at this clinic.

No medical referral is necessary for the clinic but physicians are welcome to refer patients to the clinic for a specific reason or second opinion. School nurses are welcome to refer children and families to the clinic.

The Elks Organization has been working with physically challenged children since 1928 and this is one of the 15 clinic locations throughout Illinois. The clinic is an ideal time to have a child reviewed for bone and joint development. If your child has feet pointing inward or outward or complains of foot pain they can be seen at this clinic. There is no charge for any diagnostic services at this clinic. The Elks will provide financial assistance to the best of their ability for children needing further treatment or specialty equipment when the family lacks sufficient resources to do so. In the past, the Elks have purchased therapy services, corrective shoes, braces, wheelchairs and augmentative communication devices to help children overcome a variety of physical challenges.

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LOCAL NEWS

Obituaries

Pamela Lenz

MT. MORRIS - Pamela J. Lenz, age 77, passed away December 18, 2023 at Serenity Hospice and Home, Oregon, Illinois after a courageous battle with cancer. She was born September 7, 1946 to Cecil F. and A. Rosemary (Sanford) McLane at Perry Memorial Hospital in Princeton, IL.



Pamela graduated from Princeton High School in 1964. After high school, she went to work at Josten's. She married Danny Nevitt (deceased) in May of 1969. They had three children. She married Robert Lenz on September 7, 1991 on her 45th birthday.

While married to Danny and living in Tiskilwa, Illinois, she babysat many children. She loved taking care of children. After marrying Bob and moving to Mt. Morris, she took up babysitting again. That was her favorite job. She especially liked taking care of her granddaughter Alexis. She also enjoyed gardening, collecting dolls, doing crafts, crocheting, sewing, taking care of her plants, traveling, taking care of her pet birds, feeding the squirrels, and teaching cake decorating.

She is predeceased by: her parents Cecil McLane and Rosemary McLane; grandparents Clarence and Ruby McLane and Cory and Alpha Kiser; and infant sister Andora.

She is survived by her husband Robert "Bob" Lenz; her children: Shawn (Nicole) Nevitt of Katy, Texas; Dana (Bradley) Spilinek of North Pole, Alaska; and Sara (Steve) Morris of Mt. Morris; three brothers: Keith (Evelyn) McLane; Kevin (Annette) McLane; and Dennis (Cheryl) McLane; and sisters: Stephanie Farrell; and Jeanette (James) Reeder. Also survived by her grandchildren: Daniel (Megan) Nevitt; Hunter Nevitt; Sophia Spilinek; Alexis Morris; Kelsi Morris; Tiffany (Brandon) Keene; Joshua Lenz; and great-grandson Dominic Keene, as well as numerous cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends.

At Pamela's request, there will be a private graveside service at a later date. A memorial fund is established for the Serenity Hospice and Home in Oregon, IL and may be directed to her family. Visit farrellhollandgale.com to leave a condolence or memory of Pamela.

Jarod Lehrke

OREGON — Jarod Michael Lehrke, age 24, gained his angel wings after a sudden, unexpected seizure in his home in Freeport, IL. He was born August 25, 1999 in Rockford, IL, the third child of Jeff and Kate (Noirfalise) Lehrke.



Jarod worked for Stewart Security in Freeport, IL, as an unarmed security patrol officer. He also worked for JC WiFi in Freeport, IL as a tower and home wifi antenna installer. Jarod was active in the Boy Scouts of America all of his life. He earned the rank of an Eagle Scout on December 15, 2014 with 7 palms through the Oregon Boy Scout Troop 52 of Oregon, IL.

Jarod is a member of the Order of The Arrow by sealing his Brotherhood. He spent several years on Camp Staff at Camp Lowden BSA, Oregon, IL. Jarod graduated from Newman Central Catholic High School, Sterling IL, in 2017. While at Sterling Newman, he ran cross country, participated in the choir and was in the school musical "The Music Man".

He is survived by his parents Jeff & Kate Lehrke, brother Joshua, sister Kyla & Josh Adams and nephew Dexter, all of Oregon; maternal grandmother Verva Thomas of

Oregon; paternal grandmother Jeri Lehrke of Mt. Morris; Aunt Janet & Phil Platz of Oregon; cousins Stephen Braden and Julie & Tim Border of Mt. Morris; cousins Sarah Melvin and Andrew Melvin; maternal uncle, Larry & Corina Noirfalise, Jr. of Queen Creek, Arizona; along with great aunts, great uncles, and cousins.

He was predeceased by his paternal grandfather Jerry Lehrke and maternal grandfather Dick Thomas. Jarod's family wish to acknowledge Dillon Gallentine, Jarod's roommate, for all he has done. Thank you will never be enough. You will always be remembered.

Visitation will be held from 5:00 - 7:00 PM Wednesday evening, January 24th at the Farrell Holland Gale Funeral Home, Oregon, IL followed by a 7:00 PM Rosary Service. A funeral mass to be held 11:00 AM on Thursday, January 25th at Saint Patrick's Church in Dixon, IL.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial fund has been established in Jarod's name for the Scouts BSA Troop 52 of Oregon, IL and may be directed to his parents. Visit farrellhollandgale.com to leave a condolence or memory of Jarod.

Claudia Rosenkrans

OREGON— Claudia Rosenkrans, born March 7, 1961, to Melvin Sr. and Joan Burger, passed away peacefully in her home on December 24, 2023.

She spent her childhood in Monroe Center, IL, graduating from Stillman Valley High School in 1979. Throughout her adult life, she devoted herself to a career in banking and retail, serving the Ogle County community. She had a passion for ceramics, plants, homegrown vegetables, and yearly tomato canning for Midwestern-style home cooking.

Claudia is survived by her children: Nicole (Eric) Carter of Monroe Center, IL, Tyler Rosenkrans (Angela Ahearn) of Gallatin, TN, Shawn Rosenkrans (Ally Miller) of Sycamore, IL; the father of her children, Ken Rosenkrans of Rochelle, IL; grandchildren Austin and



Colton Carter; siblings, Rick (Laura) Burger, Robin Burger, Dean Burger, Mel (Deb) Burger; her chosen sisters, Lori Scandroli and Cathryn Denear; her beloved wiener dog, Hunter; and numerous nieces, nephews, and friends.

Claudia is preceded in death by her parents, Melvin Sr. and Joan Burger, and her sister-in-law Shelley Burger.

A celebration of life will be held at the VFW in Rochelle, IL on Saturday, January 13, 2024, from 1pm-4pm.

The family extends their gratitude to Serenity Hospice & Home for the compassionate care and support they provided during her final days. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests donations to cover memorial expenses, with any excess funds being donated to Serenity Hospice & Home.

Paul Wooden

POLO — Paul M. Wooden, 77, of Polo, passed away Sunday, December 24, 2023, at Polo Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center.

Paul was born June 20, 1946, in Princeton, Illinois, the son of Gilbert and Berniece (Howell) Wooden. On January 19, 1986 in Princeton, IL, he was united in marriage to Marcia (Standley) Lilley.

Paul and Marcia lived in Polo for over 30 years. Paul was a member of the Polo Lions Club, Boy Scout Leader and a Cub Scout Leader. He was an auctioneer, drove school bus and limos locally and drove semi on long hauls. Paul enjoyed making banana bread, gardening and working with plants. He worked on his family farm, hosted foreign exchange students and loved to work with his



hands.

Survivors include wife Marcia; daughter Julie (RJ) Lindaas of Polo and step-daughter Pamela (Todd) Schertz of Tiskilwa, IL; sons Hank Wooden of Polo, John (Denise) Wooden of Milledgeville, IL, James Wooden of Union Grove, WI; step-son Patrick (Gaylynn) Lilley of Princeton, Paul (Gloria) Lilley of California; 14 Grandchildren, 11 Great Grandchildren

He was preceded in death by his Parents; infant daughter Donna; brothers Raymond, Dennis, David and Leslie Wooden.

Services will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers memorials may be directed in his name.

Visit www.polofamilyfuneralhome.com to send condolences.

Waste management department's tree recycling program set

OREGON — The Ogle County Solid Waste Management Department (OCSWMD) will once again partner with units of local government and certain high school Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapters to conduct the annual Christmas tree collection and recycling program. Since the program began in 1999, there have been over 16,550 trees collected, with trees averaging around 50 pounds each, that equates

to approximately 414 tons of trees which were all turned into usable mulch.

Cities and villages that have drop-off points include:

Oregon: Park District Maintenance Dept., 507 Hill St.; Byron: Byron boat launch lot, East Blackhawk Drive (Illinois Route 2); Forreston: 407 N. Locust St.; Leaf River: 208 Railroad St.; Rochelle: Atwood Park, 10th Avenue and 20th Street.; Monroe Center: Lichty's Landscaping, 309 Pacific St.; Polo: Southwest corner of East Colden Street and South Green Avenue.

On Saturday, Jan. 13,

2024, local FFA chapters will provide curbside pick-up for trees. Remove all decorations, lights, plastic bags and place your tree at your curb by 8 a.m. This pick-up service will be offered in Byron, Forreston, Leaf River, Mount Morris, Oregon and Polo. For Rochelle residents, the Rochelle Street Department will mulch trees at the curb during the first two weeks of January, weather permitting.

All trees should be free of light strands, garland and other decorations, no wreaths or other designs with wire backings, no artificial trees.

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90

On January 4th GOD will have given Donna Jean Wallgren 90 years on this earth he created. In those 90 years she has been blessed with 4 children Karen Heller, Connie Karper, Marlin Wallgren, Norman Wallgren, 7 grand children, and 13 great grandchildren.

If you would like to shower her with birthday wishes please send to: P.O.Box 86 Mt Morris, IL 61054

90

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Any arrests listed in this paper are merely charges and the defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law. Please note that all police reports received from the Oregon Police, Byron Police, Polo Police, Mt. Morris Police, the Ogle County Sheriff's Department and the Illinois State Police, will be printed without exception. Requests to omit particular reports will not be considered or honored at any time.

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The Ogle County Life/ Rock Valley Shopper

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VFW
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1310 W. Washington St., Oregon, IL
815-732-6851

VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

NEW WINTER HOURS

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Monday - Thursday 4 - 8PM
Friday 4 - 9PM

Public is Welcome!

Public is Welcome!

VFW EVENTS

Monday Lighting @ 5:30pm
Wednesday Bingo @ 5:30pm
Thursday Trivia Night @ 5:30pm

Fridays @ 7pm 1st Fridays, Karaoke, Live music (different Fridays)

Every Friday our Fish, Chicken, Shrimp Dinners

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LOCAL NEWS

Stacie Kemp appointed president & CEO of Sinnissippi Centers

'I feel very passionate about being a strong community partner'

DIXON—Behavioral healthcare leader Stacie Kemp, MSW, LCSW, has been named president & CEO of Sinnissippi Centers, a community-based behavioral healthcare center that provides quality care to Illinois residents of Carroll, Lee, Ogle, Whiteside and Stephenson Counties.

Since September of 2023, Kemp has been acting as Sinnissippi's interim president & CEO. Previously, she served as vice president and chief operating officer and was part of a leadership team that guided the organization's growth from an \$8 million to a \$22 million agency in eight years.

Kemp's career in the nonprofit sector spans 25 years in behavioral health and social services. Born and raised in Carroll County, she feels passionate about serving the needs of individuals and communities in northwest Illinois.

Larry Prindaville, chairperson of Sinnissippi's Board of Directors, states, "Following a nationwide search, Sinnissippi's Board of Directors is pleased to

announce that the best and most qualified candidate to become the agency's next president & CEO was already on board and effectively leading the organization. We are confident that under Stacie's continued leadership, Sinnissippi's trajectory of excellence will continue to mark the agency as a behavioral health resource of choice for many thousands of individuals and families throughout the area."

Early in her career, Kemp was a Ccinician at Sinnissippi Centers' Mt. Carroll office and rejoined the agency in 2015 as vice president and chief clinical officer. Prior to returning to Sinnissippi, Kemp served in various social service leadership roles in the Milwaukee area, including as director of performance and quality improvement and IT business collaboration for Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan.

"I am honored to be selected by the board as the next president & CEO for Sinnissippi Centers," Kemp said. "I feel very passionate about being a

strong community partner and about making sure the behavioral health needs of our communities are addressed, and I also feel strongly about equally supporting the employees of Sinnissippi and being a quality employer in northwest Illinois."

In addition to her leadership roles at Sinnissippi, Kemp has been serving on the Community Behavioral Healthcare Association (CBHA) Board for the last six years, including as its chair, and was recently elected to co-chair the Public Policy Committee, which guides the CBHA legislative and advocacy direction for behavioral health in the state of Illinois.

Kemp is active in her community through the Girl Scouts and as a former board member of the Dixon Family YMCA. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Knox College and a master of social work degree from Washington University in St. Louis.

She will assume her responsibilities as president & CEO of Sinnissippi Centers on Jan. 1, 2024.



PAG donates show proceeds to Mt. Morris Fire Foundation

The Performing Arts Guild in collaboration with Aireloom Music Studio present the net proceeds from their recent performance of A Winter Medley to the Mt. Morris Fire Foundation. Many thanks to everyone who made a donation for the new fire house. From left to right: Performing Arts Guild Members Karen Urish, Pam Ballard, Jeff Bold and Mary Cheatwood, and Mt. Morris Fire Foundation Members Ed Baker, Sue Druschel, Mark Lewis, and Mt. Morris Fire Chief Rob Hough.

Agronomy summit slated for Jan. 31

FREEPORT—Producers faced another challenging crop growing season this year with dry weather and added weed pressure.

"The short yet intense periods of drought this year, although mitigated by timely rainfall, made for an interesting growing season," Kathryn Seebuck, U of I Extension crops educator, said "It taught us a lot about the importance of setting the crop up for success in defense against these types of adverse conditions."

To address these growing season challenges and more, the University of Illinois Extension is pleased to announce the annual Northwest Illinois Agronomy Summit that will be held at Highland Community College Conference Center in Freeport on Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024, with the program running from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The theme for this year's conference is Updates in Nutrient, Weed, and Soil Health Management, with University of Illinois and University of Wisconsin-Madison specialists discussing strategies for weed, nutrient management,

and plans to build soil health.

Topics for the day include Practical Nitrogen Management for Corn, presented by Giovani Preza Fontes, field crops agronomist, U of I Extension. Connor Sible, a postdoctoral research associate with the Crop Physiology Department at the University of Illinois, will present Understanding Biologicals for Row Crops. Navigating the Inevitability of Herbicide Resistance will be delivered by Kathryn Seebuck, crops educator, U of I Extension. Dan Smith, southwest regional specialist, Nutrient and Pest Management Program, University of Wisconsin-Madison, will discuss Building Soil Health in Northern Climates. Highland Community College Agriculture Instructor Justin Ebert will be on hand to talk about the Highland Community College research plots and the results from this past growing season.

To register or for more information about the Northwest Illinois Agronomy Summit, visit us online at go.illinois.edu/jsw or call U of I Extension at (815) 986-4357. Registration is required to attend. Registration cost is \$25.



Volunteers and city staff decorate Oregon

Volunteers and city staff members have been hard at work in the City of Oregon decorating the town for the holidays. "The City of Oregon would like to extend its thanks to Chris Madden and crew from HA International, Merlin's Greenhouse and Flowers, the City of Oregon Public Works Department, and Chamber of Commerce volunteers for their great work decorating the town for the holidays," a city press release said. "We're so thankful for all of your combined efforts." Pictured is the Oregon Public Works Department, Devin DeHaan, Josiah Flanagan, Corey Fry, Madden and part of the decorating team from HA International.



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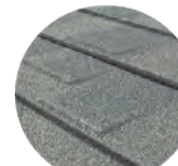
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OGLE COUNTY COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH BOARD (708)



Funding mental health services to the residents of Ogle County since 1969.

The services being rendered by our non-profit funded agencies are effective, efficient and comprehensive. In every case, the agencies are licensed, certified and accredited by all appropriate regulatory bodies; meeting or exceeding all standards.

The goal of these services is to provide cost effective care that will frequently lead to greater independence and productivity.

Our county's funded agencies have and continue to wisely use our mental health dollars for the betterment of those county residents in need. We remain grateful for the kind and generous support of Ogle County taxpayers and pledge our continued vigilance in the monitoring of our county's mental health services.

EASTERSEALS

Serving Chicagoland and Greater Rockford
730 N. Church St. Rockford, IL 61103
Phone: 815-965-5069 Fax: 815-965-6021
Email: KKurtz@eastersealschicago.org

Mission Statement: In response to our communities, Easterseals provides comprehensive services for individuals with disabilities or other special needs and their families to improve the quality of life and maximize independence.

Target population: We serve children (birth through twenty-one) with disabilities and other special needs and their families.

Program Purpose: Easterseals purpose is to change the way the world defines and views disabilities by making profound, positive differences in people's lives every day.

Services Provided: Family Support Services assists parents of children with disabilities with information and referral, consultation, respite services, sibling workshops, parent/professional trainings, social activities, and mom/caretaker retreats. The program provides resources and contacts with other families that allow parents to build the information and support networks they need to facilitate the development of their children.

Autism Therapeutic School: Our school offers a private school setting for students whose primary disability is autism. In addition to following a student's IEP, we offer art classes, vocational training, occupational therapy, speech therapy, behavior interventions, and social stories. The goal is to transition the students back into their home school environment. 8301 Mitchell Road, Machesney Park, IL 61115 815-623-4800.

SERVICIOS HISPANOS
815-570-3111

HOPE OF OGLE COUNTY

P.O. Box 131, Rochelle, IL 61068
24/7 Hotline: 815-562-8890
Phone: 815-562-4323
Fax: 815-562-5756
Oregon: Crisis: 815-732-7796
E-mail: hopeogle.admin@hopedv.org
www.hopedv.org

Mission Statement: To advocate on behalf of domestic violence victims and their children in a welcoming environment. Caring professionals provide safety planning, support, shelter, and referrals while empowering survivors to build a safe and peaceful future.

Target Population: Victims and survivors of domestic abuse and their children.

Program Purpose: To provide safety, counselling and support for victims and survivors of domestic abuse and their children.

Services Provided: HOPE provides a 24-hour hotline, support groups, individual and family counseling, temporary shelter, resources and referrals, advocacy, court advocacy, medical advocacy, and Latinx and rural outreach services. All services are free and available in Spanish. Counseling and outreach services are available in Rochelle, Oregon, and Polo. HOPE provides prevention education to students, and community presentations about domestic abuse, strangulation prevention, and HOPE services.

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occmh708bd@gmail.com
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Joe Simms – OCB Liaison
Judy Tatlock
Justine Messenger – Sec.

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF ILLINOIS

1261 IL Rt. 38, Nachusa, IL 61057
Phone: 815-284-7796
Fax: 815-284-6162
www.LSSI.org

Mission Statement: Responding to the Gospel, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) brings healing, justice and wholeness to people and communities.

Target Population: LSSI provides critical programs for the state's most vulnerable residents, including services for youth, adolescents, and adults.

Program Purpose: The LSSI Programs strive to preserve, unify and stabilize individuals and families through foster care and youth service programs. LSSI also provides treatment services to those experiencing mental health and substance abuse. Other programs are focused on prevention of substance abuse and violence.

Services Provided: LSSI provides a wide range of services through multiple programs and sites. Services available locally include foster care, mental health services, alcohol and drug treatment, substance abuse and violence prevention, affordable senior housing, and residential programs for people with developmental disabilities.

ROCKFORD SEXUAL ASSAULT COUNSELING

412 W. Washington, Oregon, IL 61061
815-732-0000
815-636-9811 (24 hrs.)
Rockfordsexualassaultcounseling.org

Mission Statement: Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling, Inc. (RSAC) responds to the needs of victims of sexual assault/abuse and their families/significant others through emergency services, emotional support, counseling, referral, advocacy, and education, and promotes awareness and understanding of sexual assault. The focus of RSAC is to provide services to survivors of sexual assault/abuse and to educate the community to reduce the risk of sexual violence.

Target Population: Survivors of sexual assault and abuse, age 3-adult, and their significant others. Prevention education programming for all community members.

Program Purpose: The goal of Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling is to make comprehensive services available to all survivors of sexual violence so that they may heal from the trauma. In addition, we provide educational programs to increase awareness, knowledge and skills.

Services Provided: Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling provides 24-hour crisis intervention, medical and legal advocacy, counseling, prevention education and professional training. All services are confidential, free and available in Spanish.

SERENITY HOSPICE AND HOME

P.O. Box 462, 1658 Illinois Rte. 2 South,
Oregon, IL 61061
Phone: 815-732-2499
e-mail:
hospice@serenityhospiceandhome.org
www.serenityhospiceandhome.org

Mission Statement: Believing in the dignity of life, Serenity Hospice and Home offers care to the terminally ill and their families. This care encompasses the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of the family unit with emphasis on the desires of the patient and family. Serenity Hospice and Home believes that living continues until the moment of death and our focus is on promoting optimal living through this final journey of life.

Target Population: Individual residents of Ogle County who need care and support through a terminal illness and those grieving the loss of a loved one.

Program Purpose: To provide support and assistance throughout all stages of loss and grief; to alleviate needless suffering; and to help people find the new path for their life. Good interventions will afford clients healthy lifestyle choices, good outcomes and tools to lead productive, healthy lives.

Services Provided: Our services include but are not limited to: Evaluation and assessment of needs, group interactive meetings, individual sessions, literature and information available for educational purposes, and programs and in-services directed toward different life situations and ages.

SHINING STAR CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER

215 E First St. – Suite 110
Dixon, IL 61021
815-284-1891
Fax: 888-901-3617
E-mail: jcash@shiningstarcac.org
www.shiningstarcac.com

Mission Statement: The mission of Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center (SSCAC) is to transform victims of child abuse into survivors. The purpose is to reduce the trauma of child abuse through identification, offender accountability, advocacy, counseling, and education on the path to

eliminating child abuse.

Target Population: Children who have been affected by child maltreatment and their non-offending caregivers.

Services Provided: Services are provided and needs met through forensic interviews, specialized medical exams, case management, mental health services, advocacy and support, referral for other victim services, and court updates. The Counseling program is designed to reduce trauma and the anxiety associated with child maltreatment, while providing clients with the tools to implement appropriate, healthy coping skills. SSCAC is accredited with the National Children's Alliance.

SINNISSIPPI CENTERS, INC.

100 Jefferson Street, Oregon, IL 61061
Phone: 815-732-3157
1321 North 7th Street, Rochelle, IL 61068
Phone: 815-562-3801
24-hour, toll-free number: 1-800-242-7642
www.sinnissippi.com

Mission Statement: It is the mission of Sinnissippi Centers, Inc. to provide Quality, Coordinated, and Responsive behavioral healthcare services to individuals, families and communities.

Target Population: Children, adolescents, adults, and families of Ogle County who have a behavioral healthcare need, including:

- Alcohol or drug problem
- Mental health, emotional, or family concerns

Program Purpose: The professional staff of Sinnissippi Centers is dedicated to strengthening and enhancing lives through a commitment to building healthy individuals, families and communities. The goal of Sinnissippi Centers is to provide the highest quality of care through individualized treatment and support services, which are available at two convenient locations in Ogle County - Oregon and Rochelle.

Services Provided: Individual and group treatment for abuse of alcohol and other drugs, (Intensive Outpatient, Outpatient, Aftercare); day treatment for individuals with a mental illness; screening and assessment (including after hour evaluations); family and youth services; divorcing parents program; domestic violence intervention programming; specialized groups (including Anger Management); prevention and therapy services in schools; psychiatric services; intensive community-based treatment; residential treatment for serious mental illness; recovery home services for addictions.

VILLAGE OF PROGRESS, INC.

P.O. Box 418, 710 S. 13th St, Oregon, IL 61061
Phone: 815-732-2126 Fax: 815-732-3228
e-mail: bbrooks@villageofprogress.org
www.villageofprogress.org

Mission Statement: Village of Progress, Inc. will assist Ogle County adults with disabilities to reach their potential in all environments.

Target Population: Individuals ages 16 or older who are residents of Ogle County and have a developmental disability (mental retardation, epilepsy, cerebral palsy, autism). Approximately 15% of those enrolled are not developmentally disabled but have one or more other disabilities.

Program Purpose: To provide a day training environment that will promote greater independence in all aspects of the recipient's life.

Our 28,000 square foot complex is located on twelve acres of land in Oregon. We take pride in the fact that 55% to 60% of our annual operating budget comes as a result of contributions and the work we perform for the business community by way of our janitorial service and industrial subcontracts. We maintain the highest status for accreditation and licensing from all appropriate regulatory bodies.

Services Provided: Services include, but are not limited to: Evaluation & Assessment; Job Training; Supported Employment; Job Placement & Follow-up; Language, Physical & Occupational Therapy; Skills for Daily Living; Recreational & Social Experiences; Special Olympics; Health Maintenance; Daily Lunch Service; and Transportation.

*A stronger tomorrow is worth the time today.
Assistance found within.*



LOCAL NEWS

Fernandez named October 2023 Student of the Month at Polo Community High School

Polo senior participates in football, wrestling, Spanish Club

POLO — De'Angelo Fernandez was recently named the October Student of the Month at Polo Community High School and received a scholarship from the Polo Schools Foundation for his efforts.

Fernandez's extracurricular activities include football, wrestling, track, FCCLA, Varsity Club and Spanish Club. After high school, he hopes to attend a college and play football or get into the trades.

Upon winning the award, Fernandez filled out a list of questions about his school experience.



What does it take to be a successful high school student?

Just get your work done and have fun.

What is your life's philosophy?

Work hard when no one is looking to perform good when everyone is looking.

What class do you find really engaging and why?

Economics with Blayne Kappes because we have lots of open discussions in that class and also some made up debates such as if polo should build a huge water park or not. Plus its a fun time sitting next to Nathaniel Yingling.

What are your career and post-graduation plans?

I plan on either going to Aurora University and playing football or attend Sauk Valley Community College and make some money.

What are your two favorite extracurricular, volunteer or community activities you participate in?

My favorite extracurricular activity is football because it's always a fun time and keeps me connected to my friends and coaches. I've also learned a lot of responsibility from the sport and hard work.

Also track because I enjoy the practices getting better at the sport and also with the experience of winning state for the 4x100 will stick with me forever.

Please share a moment, group event or activity at school that was meaningful or memorable.

The state championship prep rally was a really memorable experience for me

What is your hope for the future?

To have a successful career in whatever I chose, to just have fun and live a good life.

Meridian CUSD #223 recognized as a Best-in-Class employer

STILLMAN VALLEY — U.S. organizations are ranked based on answers to how we support our employees' physical, emotional, career and financial well-being. Meridian CUSD #223 stood out as an organization committed to our people and strategic approach to benefits, HR, and compensation, which inclusively engages and motivates our employees. The annual survey by Gallagher evaluates organizations across various industries to identify those that excel in providing comprehensive and innovative employee benefits strategies. This recognition reflects Meridian CUSD 223's commitment to fostering a

workplace that prioritizes employee well-being and satisfaction.

"We continue to work to make sure that we're creating an environment where our students can thrive. We know that to do that, we need environments where our staff can be their best and I am incredibly proud of this recognition. It represents the collective hard work of every individual who calls Meridian CUSD 223 their place of work.", Dr. Joe Mullikin, assistant superintendent of schools, said.

Meridian CUSD #223 takes a proactive and structured approach to planning, developing and implementing comprehensive benefits and HR programs. Supporting

our workforce builds our overall organizational strength and resilience.

This recognition adds to the already received awards in the past 12 months, such as:

Highland ST Math Advocate School

Stillman Valley High School U.S. News Best High Schools—eight years in a row

Meridian Junior High School U.S. News Best Middle Schools

Highland Elementary School – Lighthouse School Status

Monroe Center Elementary School – Lighthouse School Status

School Board Governance Recognition

Great Places to Work Certified



Ogle County 4-H Ambassadors and Oregon Avalanche players donated winter gear to Lifeline Food and Self-Help Project in Oregon.

Community donations make Winter Gear Drive a success

OREGON — The first "Spread the Warmth- Winter Gear Drive" was successful, thanks to generous donations. Ogle County 4-H and the Oregon Avalanche Softball Organization thoughtfully collaborated throughout the last month to help keep the community warm this winter. Lifeline Food Pantry and Self-Help is "grateful" for the community's support. Donations were accepted for new or gently used winter gear of all sizes. Area businesses also contributed to the drive. Compeer Financial donated over \$700 of new socks to benefit the pantry. The pantry is inside Conover Square Mall in Oregon and can always take donations of food and clothing.

4-H is an informal youth education program conducted by University of Illinois Extension. U of I Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. If you need reasonable accommodations to participate in 4-H, contact the Ogle County Extension staff at 815-732-2191.



Stillman Bank donates to SV Firefighter's Association

Stillman Bank Executive Vice President & COO David Mecklenburg (right) recently presented the Stillman Valley Firefighter's Association with a \$500 donation. Accepting the donation on behalf of the Firefighter's Association was Stillman Fire Protection District Fire Chief Chad Hoefle (left). Thank you, Stillman Fire Protection District, for all you do for our community!

DIRECTORY OF AREA HUMAN SERVICES

<u>Alcohol Abuse Counseling & Recovery</u>	
A.A. Hotline	800-452-7990
Sinnissippi Centers, Inc.	
Oregon	732-3157
Rochelle	562-3801
<u>Domestic Abuse Agency and 24-Hour Shelter and Helpline</u>	
HOPE of Ogle County	562-8890 or 732-7796
Counseling Services, Court Advocacy, Latina Advocacy, and Shelter programs	
<u>Education</u>	
University of Illinois Extension-Ogle County	
421 W Pines Rd, Oregon 61061	732-2191
<u>Low Income Housing</u>	
Ogle County Housing Authority	
200 W Washington, Oregon	732-1301
<u>Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County</u>	
P.) Box 628	
Oregon, IL 61061	732-6855
<u>Mental Health</u>	
Family Counseling Services	962-5585
Sinnissippi Centers, Inc.	
Oregon	732-3157
Rochelle	562-3801
The Serenity Shed Grief Services	732-2499
<u>Senior Citizens Services</u>	
Hub City Senior Center	562-5050
Mt Morris Senior Center	734-6335
Polo Senior Center	946-3818
Rock River Center	732-3252
Oregon, IL	800-541-5479
<u>Sexual Assault/Abuse</u>	
Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling	
24-hour hotline	636-9811
412 W Washington, Oregon	732-0000
<u>Therapeutic</u>	
Pegasus Special Riders	973-3177
<u>Veterans' Services</u>	
Rock River Center	732-3252
Serenity Hospice and Home	732-2499
Medical Transportation	677-6515
<u>Wellness Services</u>	
Ogle County Health Dept	
907 Pines Rd, Oregon	562-6976
510 Lincoln Hwy, Rochelle	562-6976
Serenity Hospice and Home	732-2499

LOCAL NEWS

OGLE COUNTY SHERIFF

Woman cited for driving while license suspended, speeding

OREGON — On Dec. 19 at approximately 3:04 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 17,000 block of East Illinois Route 64. After an investigation, deputies cited Nicole Mason, 41, of Oregon for driving while license suspended and speeding. Mason was released on a notice to appear with a future court date.

On Dec. 18 and 19, deputies responded to the Grand Detour area for multiple calls of trespass to residence/property. During the course of the investigation, it was learned that Tiffany Adcock, 44, homeless, had entered into one home, as well as onto the property of other residences. Adcock left the area prior to deputies arriving. She was located on Dec. 19 when she was again attempting to enter multiple residences. None of the property owners wished to pursue charges. Adcock was taken into custody on an outstanding Ogle County warrant for failure to appear on a minor traffic violation. She was transported to the Ogle County Jail and held in lieu of bond.

On Dec. 20 at approximately 6:30 a.m. deputies responded to a one-vehicle accident with minor injuries in the 6,000 block of North Mt. Morris Road. Mt. Morris Fire and EMS also responded to the accident. After an investigation it was determined that a Dodge Ram pickup being driven by Eric Bocker, 49, of Leaf River, was southbound on Mt. Morris Road when his vehicle struck a

farm animal that had gotten loose and was in the roadway. Bocker was treated on scene for a minor injury and released.

On Dec. 20 at approximately 9:53 p.m. deputies initiated a traffic stop near the intersection of Illinois Route 38 and North Pointe Drive in Rochelle. After further investigation Johnathon McDonald, 43, of DeKalb, was placed under arrest for no valid driver's license. McDonald was also cited for operating an uninsured motor vehicle. McDonald was released on a notice to appear.

On Dec. 20 at approximately 2:53 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop on North Illinois Route 251 near Mowers Road. After a brief investigation, deputies arrested Ezekiel R Newton, 22, of Dixon for driving while license suspended. Newton was also cited for operating a vehicle with a suspended registration. Newton was released on a notice to appear.

On Dec. 21 at approximately 9:35 a.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop on a car in the 6,000 block of East Illinois Route 64 for speeding. After a brief investigation it was learned the driver, 28-year-old Romeo Lewis of Schaumburg, had a suspended Illinois driver's license. Lewis was given citations for speeding and driving while license suspended. Lewis was released at the scene with a notice to appear in Ogle County Court at a later date.

On Dec. 21 at approximately 7:28 a.m. deputies responded to 1,000 North Moore Road regarding suspicious activity. After a brief investigation, deputies arrested Kayla Martin, 31, of Springfield, for an active Ogle County Warrant for possession of methamphetamine. Martin was additionally charged with obstructing justice (class four felony) for providing false information and for driving while license suspended. Martin was transported to the Ogle County Jail and must appear before a judge regarding the warrant. Martin was released on a notice to appear on all other charges.

On Dec. 22 at approximately 2:19 a.m. deputies responded to the 200 block of East Hillcrest Drive, Byron, in response to a 911 hang up. After an investigation, Charles L Macias, 49, of Rockford, was placed under arrest for an outstanding warrant for unlawful use of a weapon – no FOID, which was issued by the Rockford Police Department. Macias was transported to the Ogle County Jail.

On Dec. 22 at approximately 4:50 a.m. deputies responded to the 200 block of Main Street in Holcomb in reference to a check welfare. After investigation, deputies placed Jennifer Nash, 50, of Holcomb under arrest for an Ogle County contempt of court traffic offense warrant. Nash was transported to the Ogle County Jail where she was held in lieu of bond.

All individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty.



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LOCAL NEWS



Residents of Howard Johnston Plaza in Oregon make Christmas cards

Residents of Howard Johnston Plaza in Oregon made over 100 Christmas cards for others. Cards were painted, drawn, stamped, colored, collaged and even had embossed tinfoil added to them. Residents Leslie Ballard, Dawn Feary, Annette Cobel, Gina Fahls, Hope Huffstader, Kathe Wilson, Kristie Knaak, and aides Lisa and Melissa created one-of-a-kind cards. Receiving cards for Oregon Rehab and Living are Pam Morris and Aspen Goza. Kathy Groenhagen accepted the cards for Serenity Hospice patients in the area.



Polo Lions Club holds Christmas Dinner

During Polo's Christmas Festival on Saturday, Dec. 2, the Polo Lions Club held their Christmas Dinner at the Polo Fire Station. The dinner was ham, baked potato, green beans, macaroni salad, roll and a cookie for dessert. The people that stayed at the fire station to eat had good conversations and laughter was heard. Thank you to the community for supporting the Polo Lions by donating towards the meal it is greatly appreciated. Thank you to these volunteers for helping: Ellen Ebert, Taryn Zell, Mekhi McGlown, Owen Walberg and Mazie Mandrell. Thank you to all the Lions members that helped set up Saturday morning and those Lions members that were at the dinner: Mark Ebert for being in charge of the fundraiser, Ron Chamberlain, Nate White, Jim Adams, Irene Boelkens, Winton Bocker, Mark Bocker, Henry Bocker, Tom Walberg, Josh Gorzny, Aaron Miller and Jon Mandrell. It was a good night.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

JAN. 7
Disciples United Methodist Church will hold its potato bar events in the first Sunday of each month through April. Dates are as follows: Jan. 7, Feb. 4, March 3, and April 7. Events will take place from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. No registration is needed. Donations are

accepted. Proceeds will be used towards the missions of the church. The events will take place at 102 Maple Ave. in Mt. Morris. 815-734-4853 Disciplesumc.org
JAN. 10
Serenity Hospice and Home will be hosting a free six-week class entitled, "Understanding Your Grief"

based on the book by Dr. Alan Wolfelt. Each participant will receive a book. This class starts Jan. 10 and ends on Feb. 14. The group will meet Wednesdays at The Serenity Shed (131 N. 3rd St. in downtown Oregon) from 2:30-4 p.m. Call Cathy or Denise at 815-732-2499 for more information or to register.

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VIEWPOINT

"Congress shall make no law . . .
abridging the freedom of speech or of the press"

Published every Monday
Tonja Greenfield, General Manager
Jeff Helfrich, Managing Editor

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Nonunion workers just as important

Dear Editor,

I am writing this letter in response to the recent article published, "Union workers make the holiday happen".

Nonunion workers make the holidays happen just as much, if not more than union workers. I feel that the article truly demonstrates unions' desires to create division and tension. The article praises unions within Illinois, and I find it interesting that unions require Illinois law to highly favor them in order to even be voted into these companies. In my previous careers, I've had multiple opportunities to join different unions and thank God I never did. The dishonesty, over-promising, and under-delivering is a huge turn off to me.

Currently, I am a non-union, high school educated, truck driver that delivers fuel to convenience stores and truck stops, providing the means for people in all walks of life to perform their daily functions and travel for the holidays. I am compensated very fairly and receive a good amount of paid time off, even without a union. In all my travels, I have never even heard of a fuel hauler in a union. My wife works for a large trucking company with over 10,000 non-union drivers that deliver necessary resources and products for the holidays. Both my daughters work for a global aircraft

parts manufacturer—in a non-union shop—that provides product for military and commercial planes, allowing everyone to travel across the country and globe to see family and friends for the holidays. Should I even mention all the airplanes that are delivering your Christmas packages?

I am also confused by the inconsistencies in the article. In the first part of the article in regard to union workers, it is stated "There are no days off or holidays for them." Firstly, that would be illegal according to the One Day Rest in Seven Act. Secondly, the article later states "...state law and even the Illinois Constitution provide workers' rights to...holiday pay and paid leave..." So do union workers get days off or not?

My overall point is that to say that union workers make the holidays happen is an over exaggeration, and even offensive to nonunion workers doing the same job. Nonunion workers outnumber union workers by a large margin. Union workers do help make the holidays possible, but so do non-union workers. Do we not deserve a thank you just because we are not in a union? Let's all be fair and honest, it's better for everyone.

Thank you for your time,

Mike Ballard

Questions where our priorities have gone

Dear Editor,

On December 21st, I had a brief, unplanned, local hospital stay. Looking for the Gideon Bible I expected to be by my bed, I asked the nurse where it was. One was finally brought to me but it must have been someone's personal bible. Here's the mystery: Where are the ones provided by the Gideon International? I did not get a

satisfactory answer, even when I asked the assistant chaplain. This was a very disappointing situation to me because I haven't stayed in a hospital in 40 years, when I gave birth to my youngest child. So I had no idea where they were and why they were not there.

I'm writing this to enlighten others and to be a voice for those who fought and died for our freedoms. Our country was founded by God-fearing men who prayed and had faith. My money still says "In God We Trust" and our Pledge of Allegiance states we are one nation, under God. Are we anymore?

This country we love has changed so much. What happened to it? Everything is upside

down, misdirected, and people are confused and hurting. We, as people, have turned away from our creator. Where are our priorities? Somehow, our Godly principals have been replaced by political agendas and "wokeness" dark voices are loud and bold. They call for guiltless abortions, green agendas and getting rid of the second amendment.

These are not the answers to our problems. If you are a believer and want a better future for your children and grandchildren, the answer is simple - be bold and be a light for this dark world. Speak up for what's right and good. History will always repeat itself. Let's learn from it and not keep God confined to the walls of a church.

We are still in the Holy Christmas Season. It's not decorations, expensive presents, and stress. It's a time of love, hope, and joy. This is only found in our Lord and Savior. Lift your voice, be bold, ask questions, and get motivated. Have the faith of a mustard seed - we can move mountains.

In His Love,

Rita M. Bozzi

New Year's resolutions

2023 is now in the rear-view mirror. I'm looking forward to 2024 because for some reason, with no scientific basis, I believe the number 24 to be my lucky number. In 365 more days I'll be able to tell you if that proves true or not.

If not, then I'll have to pick a new number. Most likely something under 30, because at my age I don't want to stretch my luck.

So as we head off into the future I quote from a Bob Seger song... "There I go, turn the page."

And so I guess it is tradition after these 67 of my years on earth to again contemplate my New Year's resolution. Notice I said resolution, not resolutions plural. I've finally decided that I feel bad enough after breaking the first one, there's no need to keep piling onto my misery.

But this year I'm not going it alone. I decided to see what other folks were promising and try to differentiate one I could accommodate. So here's the list I've compiled. Who knows, maybe you will find one that works for you.

I will drink one less cup of coffee... a year.

I will not waste my money on a gym membership.

I will eat more candy.

I will go to the gym every month, and watch other people

exercise.

I will attend a health lecture and take a bag of chips to eat during the break.

I will step on the scale and give myself a high-five no matter what the numbers say.

I will eat chocolate every day for the health benefits.

I will run every day from my bed to the refrigerator before breakfast.

I will buy stupid things that make me happy.

I will start checking daring and dangerous things off my bucket list.

I will get a tattoo I will regret.

I will shave my head on one side.

I will dye my hair a crazy color.

I will go to a rock climbing facility and watch other people fall.

I will not go skydiving.

I will audition for a reality show that I have no interest in.

I'll make all of my friends set New Year's resolutions and hold them to it.

I resolve to be just a little bit nicer to people who do exactly what I want.

My New Year's resolution is to stop hanging with people who ask me about my New Year's resolution.

Buy new clothes big enough to account for next year's holidays.

My New Year's resolutions are to stop making lists, be more confident, and learn to count.



Ron Kern

What's Behind Democracy's Peril—And How to Respond

AMERICANS believe that democracy is in danger—83% said so in an NPR/PBS Newshour/Marist poll in December of 2022. 45% of the participants felt that the threat came from Democrats. 49% blamed the Republicans.

Democracy's peril is, as these results show, closely tied in our minds to the tribal warfare that surrounds us. It can be hard to step back from the battles and look for underlying causes. When we do, we find that forces beyond anyone's control are at work.

The roots of today's divisions run deep into history, all the way back to the revival of city life a thousand years ago. Professor Dorsy Armstrong, in her Great Courses lecture titled, "The Medieval World," tells us that at that time "we see medieval townspeople becoming less and less like their rural counterparts."

Peasants who abandoned the countryside and moved into cities became business people and skilled workers, grew in wealth, attended schools and universities, and came into contact with other ways of life. New ideas began to percolate. Time-honored rules and traditions began to weaken.

The traditional values and beliefs of rural communities have been in retreat ever since, as cities have grown ever larger. Today's battles between conservatives wanting to preserve traditions and liberals wanting to replace them is the latest chapter in that long history.

Steven Pinker, in his book, "Enlightenment Now," cites public opinion polls that reveal the growth of liberal ideas in eleven advanced nations. They show that each generation since the early 20th century has been more liberal than the one before about race, homosexuality, and feminism.

A recent research article by Davide Luca and his co-authors (Sage Journals, 2-2-23) ties this trend, and the widening chasm between liberals and conservatives, to the growth of cities around the world. Their paper documents the obvious—"marked and significant urban-rural differences in progressive values, defined as tolerant attitudes to immigration, gender rights and family life."

There's some truth in the conservative story that blames liberal elites for these changes. A language analysis conducted by the Economist Magazine and reported in their December 16 edition, for example, revealed a strong and growing liberal slant in

news reporting. But something other than an elitist conspiracy is driving liberalism's dominance of education and journalism. It's a river that runs beyond anyone's control, a force of nature that drives people who live in cities away from traditional ideas and values.

Mr. Luca and his co-authors make the important point that liberal ideas arising from the cities can produce a backlash when they come on too fast and when people are living with economic, political, or social insecurity. Both are happening in America and other economically advanced countries today. People feel the ground shifting beneath them.

Our democratic system struggles to perform as it should amidst the desperation, divisiveness, extremism, and—above all—mutual distrust that accompanies this era of rapid change and insecurity. The fears that Americans have for democracy's survival are well-founded. Taking a stand against leaders and groups that undermine it is a civic duty.

But it's just as important to look into the machinery of our democratic system—the nuts, bolts, cogs, gears, and all the rest—to make sure it's in good repair and able to handle the stresses that the times are placing on it. A representative democracy must be capable of responding to the needs and hopes of its people, if it's to survive. It must, in other words, allow them to feel that they are indeed being represented.

I've identified, in past articles, institutions that fail to meet that test in our rapidly urbanizing and evolving society. Our system of primary elections is the most relevant example as we enter this election season. Others, such as gerrymandered election districts, the Electoral College, unequal representation in the Senate, and the filibuster, also need urgent attention.

We may not be able to end the social and political divisions that arise from the growth of cities, but we can ensure that our institutions are up to that challenge. The noise and passions of day-to-day party politics make it hard to focus on this issue, but nothing is more critical to the survival of democracy.

Lowell Harp is a retired school psychologist who served school districts in Ogle County. His column runs monthly in *The Ogle County Life*. For previous articles, you can follow him on Facebook at <http://fb.me/lowellharp>.



Lowell Harp

LIFE letters' policy

Concise letters are most likely to be chosen for publication, but the use of any material is at the discretion of management. All letters must be signed or they will not be considered for publication.

During election times, no letters written by the candidates endorsing themselves will be considered for publication.

Editing may be necessary for space, clarity or to avoid obscenity or libel, but ideas will not be altered. Writers are urged to use discretion and refrain from sarcasm or personal attacks.

Criticism of individuals or organizations that is not broached tactfully will jeopardize the publication of a letter. Letters will be published in the order that they are received, unless there is a time factor involved, space permitting.

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LOCAL NEWS



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Stillman Valley High School 2023 October Students of the Month named

Stillman Valley High School Students of the Month for October 2023 were recently named. Pictured from left to right are: SVHS Vice Principal Jeff Voltz, Ethan Waugh (ninth grade), Taylor Grobe (10th grade), Brandon McReynolds (11th grade), Matthew Perri (12th grade), Stillman Bank Retail Office Manager Kelly Carlos, and Stillman Bank Executive Vice President and COO David Mecklenburg. Each of the students received a gift card for their achievement.

Oregon kindergarten class visits Pinecrest Community

OREGON – Students from Mrs. Huels’ Oregon Elementary School kindergarten class took a heartwarming journey Oct. 17 to visit Pinecrest Community, a senior living facility in Mt. Morris. The students will visit the senior living community every other Tuesday throughout the school year to participate in engaging activities and companionship with the senior residents as part of “The Generations Project” at OES.

“The Generations Project” is an opportunity for the young learners to experience the joy of giving back while building genuine connections within the community. The initiative aims to instill essential values of compassion, empathy and respect for seniors while fostering a strong sense of



community engagement. “We are thrilled to witness the heartwarming connections already forming between our kindergartners and the residents at Pinecrest Community,” Ryan Huels, principal of OES, said. “This is the first year we are doing the Generations Project as a way for our kindergartners to understand the importance of compassion and caring for our elderly community members. These interactions bring companionship to the residents and enforces the power of empathy and kindness with our students.”

continue throughout the year, with visits planned regularly. These visits not only provide opportunities for the young students to learn valuable life lessons but also bring companionship and immeasurable joy to the senior residents at Pinecrest Community.



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AREA SPORTS SCORES

Oregon boys bowling defeats Rockford Lutheran

The Oregon boys bowling team hosted Rockford Lutheran at Town & Country Lanes, Mt. Morris on Dec. 21 and came away with a 3,563-2,375 victory. Oregon was led by a duo of Matthew Stahl (686 series - 215, 224, 247) and Gavvin Surmo (681 series - 215, 200, 266). They were followed by RJ Keene's 594 series, Codey Dunbar's 556 series, Caleb Ehrler's 535 series and Brady Davis' 511 series. The win raised the season record to 13-2.

The JV boys continued their strong showing by totaling 867 pins more than Lutheran's varsity with a 3,242 series on their way to a forfeit victory. The JV was led by Ethan Smice with a 588 series (241 high game) followed by Zakk West with a 560 series - and the high individual game of the day with a 275 series. The JV is now 13-0 on the season.

The good scores continued on to the JV2 with Ivan Hernandez rolling a 575 series with a 244 individual game.



Forreton's Badertscher signs with Southwest Minnesota State University for track

Sydni Badertscher, daughter of Eric and Sherri Badertscher, recently signed a letter of intent to participate on the track team at Southwest Minnesota State University. Sydni has been on the track team for four years at Forreton High School. Sydni has earned all-conference track honors in 2021 and 2022. She also qualified for state in 2022 and 2023, placing fifth in shot put in 2022 and eighth in shot put in 2023. The administration, coaches and student athletes of Forreton Junior/Senior High School wish Sydni congratulations and best wishes for a successful academic and athletic career at Southwest Minnesota State University.



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SPORTS/LOCAL NEWS

A look at the Forreston Holiday Tournament

THE Forreston Holiday Tournament has quietly come and gone, with Byron easily claiming a repeat title. What stood out about the four Ogle County teams that competed?

As I watched Byron ring up a huge lead in the semis against River Ridge, it looked like the football team steamrolling someone. With how well the Tigers pass the ball, there was even a slight hint of the Globetrotters.

"We do a great job of sharing the ball off transition," coach Matt Huels said. "It's a great group to coach."

Defensively, they use multiple schemes that throw off opponents. It's a smart, experienced bunch that is basketball ready. The big test will be mixing it up with Rockford Christian, Lutheran and Rock Falls for BNC supremacy.

Having three-year varsity players Ryan Tucker and Carson Buser add further credence. Tucker looked to be the class of the tourney.

Oregon took fourth and did it with a bunch of sophomores. At one point, I counted four of them on the floor.

The only senior is all-tourney selection Jameson Caposey, the smoothest of the Hawks. Collectively, the team plays hard, but will be prone to mistakes.

That's part of the youthful lineup that needs to develop mental discipline. At least they are deeper than in years past and have speed.

After upsetting Winnebago, 11-seeded Polo lost by one point to Oregon, finishing in seventh place. So far, the Marcos have proved capable of playing with anyone.

"We've had the lead in the second half of

every game we've played," coach Matt Messer said. "But, we have to find a way not to have lulls."

What would help is having another scorer or someone or something to put the team over the edge. One reason Polo has been in every game is by playing hard defense.

Forreston is even younger than Oregon, with freshmen and sophomores making key contributions. The future looks bright with talent and size at the eighth-grade level.

"Help is on the way, but we're struggling with such a young team and also being outsized," coach Jake Groom said. "It's been tough year and I hope the young kids don't get discouraged."

Coming in as the last seed of the tournament, the Cardinals won their last two games to place 13th.

Winnebago won the consolation bracket, but weren't the same Indian team of the past. Veteran coach Joe Murphy realizes numbers have been very low in both football and basketball from the senior class.

"I think we'll be okay. There are good numbers in the other classes," said Murphy, while doing old-school coaching duties of ankle taping prior to the consolation final, a 48-34 win over Milledgeville.

Admittedly, this year's version of the tournament was quite weak. Pecatonica left for the Eastland Tournament, which had always been a week later.

That bye will be taken by Genoa-Kingston next year, one of four teams that had been on a waiting list to get in. Another gap that needed to

be filled was Orangeville and Aquin co-opting in basketball instead of competing separately.

Ashton-Franklin Center was a new addition, finishing last. With Aquin's enrollment precariously shrinking, this once-proud athletic program may not make it back to a stand-alone team in football or basketball.

Maybe a bigger issue for Aquin is the viability of the school as a whole. Parochial schools throughout Illinois have been struggling for several decades and closures are often the result.

In chatting with Forreston AD Kyle Zick, the tournament remains healthy, but attendance is down about 50 percent from 10 years ago. It's not just Forreston, but all over Illinois that interest in basketball has declined.

That hurts the bottom line, when the gate and concessions are considered. A goal for Forreston is to break even after expenses. For example, the cost for officiating is \$6,600 alone. Money well spent, though.

To help defray the expenses, teams are charged an entrant fee and are guaranteed four games in a 16-team bracket. However, there was a time that entrance was free and teams even shared in the profits.

Still, the tourney remains universally popular among contending teams. A key factor is Forreston's complimentary food offerings for coaches and referees. Vikki Anderson used to handle that responsibility and has since turned the reins over to Kim Hay.

"They both have done a great job and it is a big selling point to coaches and refs," Zick said.

Andy Colbert is a longtime Ogle County resident with years of experience covering sports and more for multiple area publications.



Andy Colbert

OREGON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Story Time (18 months-6 yrs.) Mondays, 10 am- New Session begins Monday, January 8th

Story Time is on Mondays at 10 am with stories, activities, and fun! Go online or call to register.

Find A Character Ticket!- Begins January 8

What is a Character Ticket? A character Ticket represents an image of a character from that specific book. Character Tickets will be hidden in various books in the children/youth book collection. After you check out a book and find a character ticket in the book, you may adopt that character doll and take it home. Open to Oregon Public Library cardholders only. May adopt only once.

Cricut Design Space 101

Wednesday, January 10th at 6:00pm

This class will teach you the basics of creating in Cricut Design Space. Registration required, please call (815) 732-2724 or visit www.oregonpubliclibrary.com.

Illinois Library Presents

Thursday, January 11th at 7:00pm- Speculating about Our AI Future with Cory Doctorow, Ken Liu, and Martha Wells

Join us for a panel discussion featuring three best-selling science fiction writers, Cory Doctorow, Ken Liu, and Martha Wells. They will discuss the promise, perils, and possible impacts that AI will have on our future, as well as AI in contemporary and future science fiction writing. This event

is virtual, register at bit.ly/ILP_DoctorowLiuWells. Registration required. This event is made possible by Illinois Libraries Present (ILP), a statewide collaboration among public libraries offering premier events. ILP is funded in part by a grant awarded by the Illinois State Library, a department of the Office of Secretary of State, using funds provided by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services, under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).

Winter Blues Bundle

BEGINNING JANUARY 15th through February 15th

Register for a winter blues bundle beginning January 10th. Not sure what to read, do, or need something to keep you busy during these cold winter months? Winter Blues Bundle! Each bundle will have a hand-picked book, magazine, DVD and some fun activities. Complete the registration form online at www.oregonpubliclibrary.com or stop in the library to complete one. Oregon Library patrons only.

Lego Club

New Day, New Time! Tuesday, January 23, Lego Club, 6-7 pm (2nd grade & up)

The club is designed to provide an enjoyable activity (FUN) that stimulates and develops spatial intelligence. Registration required

Book Clubs

The 2WBC Book Club meets January 10, at 12:30 pm to discuss The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho. Cocktails & Crimes will meet Sunday, January 14th at 2:00pm. Pick

up your book to find out where and what! The Afternoon Book Club meets Wednesday, January 17 at 1 pm to discuss Have You Seen Luis Velez? by Catherine Ryan Hyde. Is This Just Fantasy? Book Club will meet Tuesday, January 30 at 6 pm at the Library to discuss The Stardust Thief by Chelsea Abdullah. Books on Tap Book Club meets Thursday, January 25 at 6 pm at Cork & Tap to discuss Mad Honey by Jodi Picoult.

Yoga- Wednesdays, 9:30 am Functional Yin-Yasa - This class is a hybrid of yang (active yoga) with yin (passive yoga). We will use fundamental yoga postures combined with functional movements to build strength and warmth followed by passive, long held poses to help with flexibility and mobility of the joints and soft tissues. A yoga mat and blocks will be useful props for this class! All levels welcome." Oregon Library Patrons only. Registration required, this class fills quickly. Please call (815) 732-2724 or visit www.oregonpubliclibrary.com.

New Face to the Library Catalog Service Online

You may have noticed that searching the library catalog seems a little different. This is because the Library has officially changed over from Encore to the new Vega Discover interface. Users no longer are able to create or save lists in Encore. All lists and any reading history associated with your account are now in Vega. Please note: your reading history will only be available if you already opted into that previ-

ously through Encore. If you did not opt in earlier and would like to see your reading history going forward, you are in luck. You can still opt in through your profile in Vega. Click your name in the top right corner to access your profile. The reading history opt-in checkbox is the last item in your patron profile. Questions? Just call the Library at 815-732-2724.

Oregon Writers Group

meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 10:00am

The OWG is a gathering of writers or writer-wannabes who meet to support each other and further their own writing. The purpose of the group is to help and encourage you in your writing. If you need brainstorming ideas, we can help suggest ideas or aid with the creative process.

Passport Services

The Oregon Public Library offers Passport Application Processing. Patrons seeking Passport Services should call the Library prior to their visit to ensure that an official processor is available at that time and for a checklist of items, you will need for the appointment.

OPLD Dial-A-Story & Oregon Public Library StoryWalk

@Oregon Park West

Call 815-732-2724, follow the prompts and presto...a story! Current story-Over and Under the Snow by Kate Messner.

New story at the StoryWalk is Annie & the Wild Animals by Jan Brett.



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LOCAL NEWS

BYRON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Did you know

That the library has a variety of rooms available for the public to reserve? Whether it's a private area for studying or a large room for a baby shower or birthday party, the Byron Library has a room to suit just about every need. There is no charge for non-profit use of our rooms; for-profit reservations will be charged \$25 per hour. To reserve a room, you can visit Byron.evanced.info/spaces, or call the library at 815-234-5107.

Creative Studio

Our Creative Studio is open on Sunday afternoons and two evenings a week, so stop by for monthly crafts and to use our maker space equipment! Crafts out on the tables are free of charge, while some other projects will incur a cost depending on materials. Middle school and high school youth can use some of the materials while with an adult, or during Teen Time. Creative Studio hours: Sunday 1 - 5:00 pm, Monday 9:00 am-1:00 pm & 5 - 8:00 pm, Tuesday 9 am - 1:00 pm & 5 - 8:00 pm, Wednesday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, Thursday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, Friday & Saturday closed.

Winter Blood Drive with RRVBC

Tuesday, Jan. 2. 1 - 6:00 pm. Join us as we host a community blood drive in partnership with the Rock River Valley Blood Center. Register for an appointment by calling the library at 815-234-5107 or visiting https://donor.rrvbc.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/55448. Walk-ins are also welcome! Prospective donors must be at least 17 years old (16 with parental consent) and weigh at least 110 lbs. It is recommended that donors eat a meal within 3-4 hours before donating and drink plenty of fluids.

Check out Our Mobile App

Did you know that there is an easy way to use the library from your phone? Just download the PrairieCat app to your phone or mobile device and log in with your library card number and PIN! You'll be able to view your checkouts and holds, renew renewable materials, and search the library catalog. There's even a digital copy of your library card!

Curbside Delivery

The library is open for browsing, but patrons can still use our curbside service! Place your holds online at byronlibrary.org or call us at 815-234-5107. Not sure what you want? Call us for help! We will call or email you with a confirmation when your holds are ready to be picked up. Call us when you arrive at the library, and we will bring your items out to you, already checked out. A receipt with your due dates will be included with your items.

Visit the Byron Library Facebook page, or subscribe to our newsletters at byronlibrary.org, to keep up to date on library news and programs! Be sure to also check out the Byron Library and Byron Library Teen Instagram pages!

BERTOLET MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Holiday Hours: Bertolet Memorial Library will be closed Monday, January 1st.

Mitten Tree

Mittens to wear; Hats for their hair; Scarves for their neck; Gloves too? Check. Our annual Mitten Tree is now on display through the end of December. Please help decorate our Mitten Tree with thick, warm mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves for all ages. Items will be distributed through New Life Community Center in January.

YOUTH PROGRAMS:

Grinch BINGO: Tuesday, January 2nd, 4:00 PM Last week, the Grinch learned that Christmas is more than gifts and decorations. This week, celebrate those friendships by bringing your friends to Bertolet Memorial Library for a seasonal edition of Grinch BINGO!

Tweens & Teens A to Z Reading Challenge: Join us in the new year with a new reading challenge. The goal is to read 26 books, each book starting with a different letter of the alphabet by December 31, 2024. The challenge is open to 5th graders thru adults. Be sure to keep your reading log up to date as there will be chances to earn prizes along the way. Stop at the circulation desk to register.

Stories with Stacey: Thursdays at 10:00 AM Join Miss Stacey for fun stories for your toddlers and pre-schoolers! No Stories on December 28th or on January 4th.

ADULT PROGRAMS:

Grinch BINGO: Tuesday, January 2nd, 4:00 PM Last week, the Grinch learned that Christmas is more than gifts and decorations. This week, celebrate those friendships by bringing your friends to Bertolet Memorial Library for a seasonal edition of Grinch BINGO!

A to Z Reading Challenge: Join us in the new year with a new reading challenge. The goal is to read 26 books, each book starting with a different letter of the alphabet by December 31, 2024. The challenge is open to 5th graders thru adults. Be sure to keep your reading log up to date as there will be chances to earn prizes along the way. Stop at the circulation desk to register.

January Book of the Month: The novel *A Quiet Life* by Ethan Joella is set in a quiet suburb of Pennsylvania where Chuck Ayers, Ella Burke, and Kirsten Bonato are all dealing with major losses. They each are going through the motions of life, while not enjoying life. As their lives intersect, they start to realize how to best move forward and handle loss

and grief. Stop by the circulation desk to pick up your copy. py.

January Take & Make Craft: Stop by the circulation desk and pick up a craft to make at home. You get to pick from different craft options this month. Limited quantities available.

Create-a-Card: We will formally resume in the spring, but supplies will be available year round for independent access.

Plastic Recycling: We ask that you make sure plastic is clean with no debris in the donation. *No animal feed bags are allowed* Also please remove any ziploc-type seals and paper/sticker labels. Thank you for your cooperation.

NEW RELEASES:

Adult Books

Sisters Under the Rising Sun by Heather Morris

The Banned Bookshop of Maggie Banks by Shauna Robinson

The Legacy of Longdale Manor by Carrie Turansky

Picture Books

Bluey: Barky Boats

Colors On the Farm by Elizabeth Morgan

DVD

The Miracle Club

MT. MORRIS LIBRARY

Library Closings

Mount Morris Library will be closed on Monday, 1/1, to celebrate the New Year! Happy Holidays to Everyone!

Fly Tying Classes

Come to Mount Morris Library and learn how to tie both feather and hair dressed hooks! We are now taking sign-ups for this multi-day class! Classes will be Saturdays at 10:30am. There will be a total of 8 classes with each one focused on a different type of hook. Classes begin January 6 and run through February 24th. Just in time for the season! Sign up soon-deadline for sign-ups is Thursday, Jan. 4th.

Story Time!

We will be reading books and the children will create a craft this Wednesday, 1/3. Story time is every Wednesday @11:15, bring your little ones to enjoy stories and a craft at the Mount Morris Library!

Take-n-Make

Stop by any time starting Tuesday 1/2 to grab another new craft kit for winter! This is a great craft for any age and you can take it home to make it when you are ready! Available while supplies last!

New Year Scavenger Hunt

Come into the library for the year's first week to learn about how other countries around the world celebrate the New Year! Find all 20 clues to answer the questions and win a prize! Scavenger hunt will be open all week, Jan 2-6. This activity is open to all ages, children under 7 will need an adult to help.

School's Out!

Stop by the library daily for activities for the kids! We will have a variety of different craft projects, activities, and coloring sheets. Not to mention our assortment of games and toys that can keep them occupied! Let us help find an interesting book or movie to take home, too!

Lego Club

Lego night is the third Thursday of each month. Stop by on January 18th, from 6 - 7pm! Bring a friend and build some fun with Lego bricks! All children and parents are invited every third Thursday of the month. Children under 8 need to bring a parent with them.

Axis360 is changing to BOUNDLESS

Your library's Axis 360 digital service has been upgraded to Boundless. The library can provide you with information about the transition to Boundless. All your user info and history, including holds position, book-marks, notes, and other saved data will be seamlessly transitioned to the new Boundless platform.

Adult Book Club

The January book is available! Everyone is welcome to join this book club group! Copies of the book are available at the library. Meeting will be held at the library on January 29th at 3:30pm.

Cookbook Club Next Meeting!

Join us as we explore The Cookbook Club! Wonderful recipes combined with friendship creates something both beautiful and delicious! Stop by to choose your recipe from this month's book and bring your dish to pass at our next meeting! Join us on January 9th this month, 6pm at The Senior Center for another exciting meal!

Ink with a Friend: Card Making at the Library

What a great time it is to make some lovely home-made cards to send to family and friends! We will be offering a card-making class from local crafter, Liz Gullett. She will be here on Thursday, January 11th from 5-7! You will get all the materials to make two beautiful cards to take home. Stop by to see the samples, fees are by donation. Registration is limited so call the library or stop by to save your spot before January 4th!

Display Case Showings

We have a new display just for the holidays! Stop by to see the gorgeous holiday showcase of a wintery town and a beautiful creche! We are always looking for collectors or artists who are willing to share their treasures in our display cases. If you are interested, please call, 815-734-4927.

Explore More Illinois

Explore More Illinois is easy to use with your library card. Visit the library's website to browse attractions. You can find the information on our website, www.mtmorris-il.org under the resources page.

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LOCAL NEWS

JULIA HULL DISTRICT LIBRARY STILLMAN VALLEY

Storytime at the Library

Join us at the library, every Wednesday at 10 a.m., for songs, stories and crafts! Ages 2-5. Space is limited: call to register: 815-645-8611.

Winter Reading Challenge: Read on the Quiet Side

Embrace the solitude of the season with our Winter Reading Challenge! When you take a "Read on the Quiet Side, you can win big in one, two, or THREE ways...just for doing the thing you love to do. So, grab a book and put your feet up: you deserve it! To get started: download the Beanstack app! This year's Winter Reading Challenge begins Jan. 1, 2024.

Introduction to Ancestry and Genealogy Basics

Are you a newbie to genealogy research? This class is intended for you. Join us for a very basic introduction to family history and using Ancestry Library Edition. Monday, Jan. 15 at 6 p.m. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

Teen Crafternoon: Collage Art

Let your stress and winter blues drift away as you rip, snip and crumple paper to make your own unique collage. Chat with friends and enjoy snacks while you craft. Thursday, Jan. 18, 3 p.m. Ages 13-18. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

Costume Character Storytime: The Pigeon

Get ready to party with the coolest bird in town, PIGEON, from the bestselling series by Mo Willems! We'll dive into his hilarious books, croon some catchy tunes and cut up a crafty masterpiece. Plus, Pigeon himself will make an appearance for snaps and giggles! Saturday, Jan. 27, 10 a.m. All Ages. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

Tween Scene: Mardi Gras Celebration

Come celebrate Mardi Gras and let the good times roll with themed snacks, games and craft. Tuesday, Feb. 6, 6 p.m. Ages 10-12. Registration

required: 815-645-8611.

Toddler Time: Play Dough

Indulge your little one's curiosity with a hands-on event just for them. We'll roll, cut, shape and build using everyone's favorite sculpting material: play dough! Don't worry parent's: it's taste-safe. Friday, Feb. 9, 10 a.m. All materials supplied. Ages 1-4. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

Teen Taste-Test Challenge: Jelly Belly

How well do you know your jelly beans? We'll quiz your expertise in this blind test to see who's taste buds reign supreme. While sampling these wacky flavors we'll also vote on our favorite. Thursday, Feb. 15, 3 p.m. Ages 13-18. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

Trivia Night at the Library Fund-raiser

Gather a team and join us at your favorite library in the Valley to help FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY raise funds to support library programs and services! Advanced registration is required. Teams of 4-6 players. \$10 per person. Pay at the door. Friday, Feb. 23, 7 p.m. For more details stop by the library or call: 815-645-8611.



Last week, during a special pajama storytime at Julia Hull District Library, young patrons listened to a holiday story, played festive games and created hand-made ornaments.



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624 Luther Drive, Byron IL 61010 815-234-5277
Pastor: Janet Wold
Sunday Worship Service held at 9:00 am. A recording of each Sunday's worship service is available on our Facebook page and our website later in the day. Communion is served every Sunday. Sunday School for ages 3 through Adult is held at 10:00 am September through May. Confirmation studies for 7th and 8th grade students are held each Sunday morning at 10:00 am. Monday afternoon Bible Study is held at 1:30 pm via Zoom. In person Bible Studies are held Tuesday evening at 7:00 pm and Wednesday afternoon at 1:30 pm. Book Club and The GATHERING meet monthly; quilters meet twice monthly. Visit our website <http://www.AllSaintsByron.org> or call the church office for further information.

CORNERSTONE FAMILY CHURCH

205 N. Peru St., Byron 815-234-8737 cornerstonefam.org
Sr. Pastor: Erik Ness, NextGen/ Family Pastor: Collin Nicholls
Children's Ministry Director: Katie Dodd
Worship Service on Sundays at 10am with Children's Worship Service and Nursery Available
Sr High Youth Ministry Sundays at 6:00pm, Jr High Youth Ministry Wednesdays at 6:30pm
Numerous Small Groups Available for All Ages throughout the week.
Please call our Church Office or visit our website for more details.
Office Hours: 8:00am - 4:30pm Mondays-Thursdays

BYRON ST. MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

226 E. 2nd St, Byron, IL 61010 - Phone 815-234-7431 - Fr. Richard Rosinski.
Weekday Masses: Tuesday - Friday 7:30am, Weekend Masses: Sat. 5:00 pm, Sun. 8:00 am and 9:30 am, Reconciliation: Fri. 8:00 am - 8:30 am; Sat. 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm or by app. Eucharist Adoration Fri. 8-9pm
www.saintmaryinbyron.org secretary@saintmaryinbyron.org

SHEPHERD EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

NEW LOCATION! Jarrett Prairie Center 7993 N. River Rd., Byron Phone 963-5216 Rev. Michael Axmark, Pastor. Discover Time 9:30 a.m., Fellowship 10:15 a.m., Worship 10:30 a.m.
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 838, Byron, IL 61010

UNITED CHURCH OF BYRON

A Member of the United Church of Christ
701 W. Second Street; PO Box 927, Byron IL 61010, 815-234-8777
Email: ucb@comcast.net
Website: unitedchurchofbyron.org
Pastor: Rev. Tyler Spellious
Youth Ministry Coordinator: Richard Simpson
Sunday Schedule & Worship opportunities:
Service of Meditation & Prayer: 8:15am - 8:45am
Adult Sunday School Hour: 9am
Kids Sunday School: (for ages 3 thru 5th grade) 9:30 - 10:15am
Coffee & fellowship time: 9:30am - 10:30am
Main Worship: 10:30am
Spark Youth Group (for ages 6th grade thru 12th grade) - Sundays, 5pm-7pm
For complete ministry schedule and other activities, please check our website or Facebook page or contact the church office.
Whoever you are or wherever you are on your journey, you are welcome here!

BEACON HILL ASSEMBLY OF GOD

"Building Faith for Life"
6467 N. German Church Rd., Byron, IL - Ph. (815) 246-2685 - beaconhillbyron.org
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 448, Byron, IL 61010
Pastor: Gary Cortese
Service Times: Sundays at 10AM; Wednesday night Faith-Lift at 6:30PM
Find us on Facebook/Beacon Hill Assembly of God

CHANA

CHANA UNITED METHODIST

Pastor Josh Brown, 606 Main Street, Chana, IL 61015. Church office 815-732-7683. (E-mail address: chanamc@gmail.com Adult & Children's Education 9:00 a.m. Worship Service 10:30 a.m. Holy Communion celebrated the first Sunday of each month. At Chana Church you will find Open Hearts-Open Minds-Open Doors.

DAVIS JUNCTION

DAVIS JUNCTION UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Open Minds, Open Hearts, Open Doors • "God's Heart in Our Community" Located in town on Rt. 72 • Our Pastor is Rev. Keith Kelsey-Powell
Sunday Services: Worship 10:30am, Children's time during Worship Service.
Fellowship following the Worship Service each Sunday. Communion the first Sunday of the month. Potluck luncheon following Worship every 4th Sunday, except in the summer months of June, July and August. Various small groups meet throughout the month. For more information about the small groups please call 298-2310. AA meets Wednesdays at 5:30pm and Saturdays at 9am. For more information please visit our website WWW.DJUMC.ORG

DIXON

LOST LAKE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

Pastor Bob Clardie 8:30am Sunday School
815-535-6990 9:30am Church Service
90 W. Flagg Road www.lostlakechurch.org
Dixon IL 61021

FORRESTON

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

402 2nd Avenue, Forreston, IL 61030, Phone 815-938-3203 Pastor Scott Ralston
Sunday Worship 9:00 am; Sunday School 10:00 am

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

402 First Ave., Forreston, IL Phone: 815-938-2380
Pastor Sung-Eun Kim
OPEN HEARTS, OPEN MINDS, OPEN DOORS
Worship at 9:00 a.m. (childcare provided) with coffee and fellowship immediately following. Sunday School Age 3-Adult, 10:15 am.
AA meets Mondays, 8:00 AM. Monthly United Methodist Women's meetings. God is Good, All the Time, All the Time, God is Good!

ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor Karen Tews
West Grove Rd. At Columbine Rd.
Worship Service 10:30 am. Communion is served every Sunday.
"Singing the Song of Christian Faith in Worship, Service, Learning, Outreach and Welcome" in a beautiful rural setting.
Everyone is cordially invited to be with us.

LEAF RIVER

ADELINE ZION EVANGELICAL CHURCH

9106 Cedar St. in Adeline, Leaf River, IL 61047 • Ph:815-541-4863 Sunday Services: Sunday School 9:00 am, Worship Service 10:15 am
VISITORS WELCOME

LEAF RIVER BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Billy Hardy
Live Sermon Streaming: Sundays at 10:00 AM at www.facebook.com/LEAFRIVERBC/
Archived Sermons on our YouTube channel: Leaf River Baptist Church (Until further notice)
9:30 Church Service. Nursery available, 11:00 Sunday school for all ages. Nursery available
6941 N Mt Morris Rd, Leaf River, IL 61047
815-738-2205 leafriverbc@gmail.com

LINDENWOOD

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH - LCMS

immanuel-lindenwood.org (for sermons, events, etc.)
16060 E. Lindenwood Road, Lindenwood, IL 61049
815-393-4500 • office@immanuel-lindenwood.org
Sunday Mornings: Divine Service @ 9am; Food & Fellowship @ 10am; Sunday School and Adult Bible Study @ 10:30am
Food Bank: 1st and 3rd Saturdays, 9am-12pm
Pastor: Rev. Dr. Matthew Rosebrack
pastor@immanuel-lindenwood.org

LINDENWOOD UNION CHURCH

101 N Galena st, P.O box 67, Lindenwood IL 815-985-7054
Regular worship service Sundays at 10:00am with fellowship following. Tuesdays 10:00 am Sr Exercise! Lunch afterwards. Thursdays 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm Library time. Snacks and coffee. For more information call 815-985-7054. Everyone is welcome!

KINGS

ELIM REFORMED CHURCH

140 S. Church Road, Kings, IL 61068 • Pastor Mary Jacobs
Phone 815-562-6811 E-mail: goelinchurch@gmail.com
Website: www.goelinchurch.org
Sunday morning worship 10:00 am

MOUNT MORRIS

DISCIPLES UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

"By God's grace in Christ, we LIVE, LOVE, and SERVE"
All are welcome here!
9:30 a.m. - Sunday Worship with Communion open to all, followed by fellowship hour
10:45 a.m. Sunday School (Sep. - May)
102 N. Maple Ave., Mt. Morris, IL 61054
815-734-4853 secretary@disciplesumc.org
www.disciplesumc.org
Pastor Marcia Peddicard

EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF MT. MORRIS

102 S. Seminary Ave., Mt. Morris, IL 61054 815-734-4942 www.efcmm.org
Senior Pastor: Bruce McKanna. Sunday Schedule: 8:30 a.m. Sunday School for all ages. 9:30 a.m. Coffee Fellowship. 10:00 a.m. Morning Worship with Childcare and Children's Church.

MT. MORRIS CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

409 W. Brayton Road, Mt. Morris, IL 61045 Phone 815-734-4573
Pastor: Rodney Caldwell. Sunday Worship 9:30 a.m. followed by fellowship time and Sunday School. Worship service available online, call for details.
Email: mtmorriscob@gmail.com

MT. MORRIS TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

308 E. Brayton Rd. Mt. Morris, IL Phone: 734-6354 Rev. Josh Ehler
Worship Services: Saturday 5:30 PM; Worship Sunday 9:30 AM. Sunday Church School - follows Worship Service (Sept.-May) Chime Choir
Wednesday 6:00 PM

LITTLE PRAIRIE MENNONITE CHURCH

409 W Brayton Rd. Mt. Morris, IL 61054 (Church of the Brethren Basement Entrance) Worship Services: 10:00 AM Sunday Morning, 7:00 PM 1st & 3rd Sunday Evening, 7:30 PM 2nd & 4th Wednesday Evenings of the Month.
Pastor: Norman Reinford 779-861-3700

OREGON

EAST OREGON CHAPEL CHURCH OF GOD

East Oregon Chapel Church of God
The Sharing is Caring Church
Pastor Jesse Allen EOCCGministries@gmail.com 107 N Daysville Rd. Oregon, IL Phone: 815-732-2960
Sunday School 9:30 a.m. with Sunday Worship following at 10:30 a.m.
Breakfast is served every fifth Sunday beginning at 9:30 a.m.
Wednesday evenings both Adults (all year) & Youth (during the school year) meet weekly beginning at 6:30 p.m.
In the event that Oregon Schools are not in session the Youth group does not meet on Wednesdays.
Thursday morning Women's Bible study meets at 10:30 a.m.
We look forward to meeting you!

EBENEZER REFORMED CHURCH

2997 N. German Church Rd., 815-732-6133
3 miles east of Oregon on Rt. #64 then 2 miles north on German Church Rd. • Rev. Josiah Youngquist
www.EBENEZERREFORMED.com • Sunday school 9:00 a.m. Worship 10:00 a.m.

LIGHTHOUSE UNITED METHODIST

Pastor Dave Rogula 4962 S. Daysville Rd., Oregon, IL 61061 lighthouseUMC@yahoo.com
Worship at 11:00 a.m. Holy Communion celebrated the first Sunday of each month. Lighthouse will live up your life!

OREGON CHURCH OF GOD

860 W. Oregon Trail Road Oregon, IL Phone: 732-6847 or 732-2604 Pastor Michael Hoffman; Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; Morning worship, 10:30 a.m.; Wednesday activities: Adult, Children, and Youth Groups 7 p.m. At the church.

OREGON FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

505 Hill St. Oregon, IL 61061 Phone: 732-2642
Pastor: David Snow "A Christ-centered, Bible-believing, family-oriented ministry."
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.; Sunday Morning Service 10:30 a.m.; Sunday Evening Service 6:00 p.m.; Wednesday Night Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

OREGON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

200 S. 4th Street, Oregon, IL 61061 | 815-732-2994 | www.oregonumc.org
Pastor Rev Megan Smick
9:00 am Adult & Youth Bible Study
10 am Worship & Children's Sunday School
In-person or live on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/OregonUMC>
5:30 pm Wednesday Night Meal
All are welcome!

RIVERSTONE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

609 S. 10th Street, Oregon, IL 61061
Pastor Craig Arnold "812-236-1213
Sunday Service @ 10:45 AM "contemporary style worship with coffee and doughnuts in our cafe! Online worship is also available via Facebook.
We believe in sharing Communion every Sunday as an act of worship.
RiverKids Service @ 10:45 AM for nursery-6th grade "provides a safe and fun environment where kids can learn about who God is and who they are because of Him.
Encounter Youth Ministry for kids in 7th-12th grade meets on Sunday afternoons. Please see our Facebook page for scheduled dates and times.
For complete ministry info and events, visit us online at RiverStoneCC.com or on Facebook at facebook.com/RiverStoneChristianChurch

ST. BRIDE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

1000 Highway 64, West (Hwy 64 W & Mongan Drive on Liberty Hill), Oregon • 732-7211 - Office: Rev. Eldred George
Webpage: saintbrides.org • E-mail: saint.bride.church@gmail.com •
Worship Services: Sunday 10 am Holy Communion with Hymns
Christian Education Available

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH, NALC

114 S. 5th St. Oregon, IL Phone: (815) 732-2367
Website: spaulnalcoregonil.weebly.com
10:15 a.m. Fellowship/Education hours
11:30 a.m. Worship

POLO

ST. MARY CHURCH

Rectory/Office: 211 North Franklin Ave., Polo, IL 61064
PHONE: 815-946-2535 • Rev. Joseph P. Naill
Masses: Sun 10:30am, Tuesday Mass 8 a.m.
Sacrament of Reconciliation: First Sunday of each month after 10:30 mass
OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
www.stmarypolo.org

CHURCH OF THE OPEN BIBLE

302 S. Franklin Ave., Polo, Illinois • 815-946-2848 • Luke N. Schier, Pastor
Sunday Worship: 9:30am We include our children in our Sunday Worship Experience. "THE GRAND Kids Class" Ages 3-10 are then dismissed right after Praise & Worship. Blended Services. "Passion for God" "Compassion for People" Visit our website: PoloOpenBible.org

CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CHURCH ~ POLO CAMPUS

Meeting Sundays @ 10AM Service
205 N. Jefferson Avenue, Polo ~ 815.837.5255
polo@crossroadsnscn.com
We offer contemporary worship and relevant Bible teaching through engaging messages and powerful video. Join us after services for coffee, snacks & fellowship. Kidzlink Children's Ministry (nursery-5th grade) ~ during 10AM service
Cave Youth Group (6th-12th grade) ~ Wed. 6:30PM - June 1st.
Visit our website: www.crossroadsnscn.com

FAITH DISCOVERY CHURCH

801 W. Oregon St., Polo • 815-946-3588 • Jeremy Heller, Pastor
Sunday School 9:00 a.m., Worship Service 10:00 a.m., Nursery Available, Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 p.m. We are an independent non-denominational Christian church. Visitors are always welcome.

FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

702 E. Dixon Street, Polo, IL 61064 • Tel:815-946-3212
Sunday School for all ages 9am followed by Worship at 10am
Pastor Brian LeBaron
Website: www.faithumcpolo.com • facebook.com/Faithumcpolo

STILLMAN VALLEY

RED BRICK CHURCH OF STILLMAN VALLEY

Pastor Rev. Dr. Chris Brouns | Associate Pastor David Bogner
207 W Roosevelt Road (Rte 72), Stillman Valley.
815-645-2526 | www.theredbrickchurch.org
Sunday: Worship at 9:00 and 10:30 am. Sunday School at 9:00 am.
Wednesday: AWANA (Sept - April) from 6:00 to 7:30 pm.
Men, women, youth Bible Studies throughout the year.
See website for all activities or contact the church office.

KISHWAUKEE COMMUNITY EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

8195 Kishwaukee Road, Stillman Valley, IL 61084 / 815-965-1940
Rev. Nick Garner, Pastor
www.kishchurch.org
Sunday Schedule: Discipleship Hour 9:00 AM, Coffee Fellowship 11:15 AM
Gathered Worship 10:00 AM
For complete ministry schedule check out our website or call the church office.

VALLEY EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH

Lead Pastor Barry Norris
103 S Maple St, Stillman Valley, IL
815-645-8872 | www.valleycov.org
Sunday Morning 9am "Gather" for learning & conversation, 10:15am Worship both onsite and online at facebook.com/VECCFSV
Home of Valley Covenant Preschool 815-645-8882 Director Jill Huber
Bible Studies, Youth Group, Bread of Life Food Pantry
Please visit website for more information or contact the church office M-F 9am-2pm

GRACE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH DAVIS JUNCTION

Pastor Brad Pittman www.graceisforyou.com
10479 E. High Rd., Stillman Valley, IL 61084 • 815-973-1369
Worship Service: Saturday at 5pm

WINNEBAGO

MIDDLE CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

12473 Montague Road, Winnebago, IL 61088
Located West of Tower Road on Montague Rd.
Sunday: Worship Service at 9:30 am.
Office Hours: Mon., Tues., Thurs. & Friday 9am-2pm.
Phone: 815-335-2609. Email: middlecreekchurch@gmail.com

Year in Review

A look back at some of the top Ogle County LIFE stories of the past year

From page A1

Monday, Jan. 23

FORRESTON—Forreston High School Principal Travis Heinz is pleased to announce that five students have been recognized as 2023 Illinois State Scholars.



Forreston High School is honored to recognize the following students as Illinois State Scholars from the 2023 graduating class: Brooke Boettner daughter of Nathan and Amanda Boettner, Owen Greenfield son of Jeff and Erin Greenfield, Johnathen Kobler son of Jason and Debbie Kobler, Alexander Milnes son of Jeremy and Allison Milnes, and Brock Smith son of Brent and Sheri Smith.

This prestigious award is given annually by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) which is recognizing 16,770 high school students from 690 high schools as this year's State Scholars. Illinois State Scholars possess strong academic potential and are chosen based on a combination of exemplary ACT or SAT test scores and six semester class rank.

February

Monday, Feb. 6

OREGON — Oregon Community Unit School District 220's mission statement is "to educate students to be lifelong learners who are productive, responsible citizens."

"In that pursuit, we don't just look at academics," District Superintendent Tom Mahoney said. "We also look at student involvement and activities that connect kids to school to achieve better and thrive. We look at service and how our kids can learn to serve our community and others. We look at leadership and how we develop that and provide opportunities for students to grow. In all of these things, we hear them and think, 'That's Kim.' She is a mission-driven teacher."

The "Kim" Mahoney was referring to is Oregon Junior Senior High School Spanish Teacher Kim Radostits. At a press conference Wednesday, Jan. 25, Radostits, known to students as "Ms. Rad", was named one of five finalists for 2023 National Teacher of the Year by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Radostits was recently named 2022 Illinois Teacher of the Year.

Monday, Feb. 13

DIXON — Maxwell Principal Mark Baldin and Dr. Karl Sievers, a retired Oklahoma professor who teaches him remotely. DeForest's parents, David and Carla, own DeForest Dental in Oregon and spent time over the years driving him to lessons and performances in DeKalb, Rockford, Chicago and more. Carla put 398,000 miles on one of the family vehicles.

DeForest wanted a trumpet for his seventh birthday. Eleven years later, the Dixon teen is now applying to prestigious music schools including the likes of The Juilliard School in New York and The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. He joined the Rockford Youth Symphony Orchestra at age nine and the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra when he was a freshman in high school.

"Starting to play trumpet at seven is a lot younger than most," DeForest said. "I was told, 'Ah, he'll try to play it for maybe a month or two and he'll quit.' I was young at the time when I auditioned for CYSO and many in it were juniors and seniors. Some were sophomores and there's a few freshmen in it now. But it's weird looking back now that I was once them. They're very little. I toured with CYSO around Europe to Leipzig, Berlin, Prague and Vienna. I had a blast doing that."

DeForest has been a finalist each year at the National Trumpet Competition. He's also a part of community orchestras at Northern Illinois University, where he's taken trumpet lessons since he was eight, along with the Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra in DeKalb. DeForest credits his trumpet trajectory to the support of his teachers, including his first, Jim Green, who was the only one that would take him on at the young age of seven. DeForest has also learned under NIU Professor Dr. Mark Ponzio, RYSO Conductor Linc Smelser, RYSO

Principal Mark Baldin and Dr. Karl Sievers, a retired Oklahoma professor who teaches him remotely. DeForest's parents, David and Carla, own DeForest Dental in Oregon and spent time over the years driving him to lessons and performances in DeKalb, Rockford, Chicago and more. Carla put 398,000 miles on one of the family vehicles.

"The most difficult part was that Maxwell spent an extensive amount of time in the car," Carla said. "But he enjoyed playing. It was the car rides he didn't like. He enjoys the music aspect of it, even though he might not want to get up for an early audition or recital. He comes home sometimes at 11 p.m. or midnight because the rehearsal in Chicago went to 10 p.m. This is why we do all of that, because he is auditioning at the best schools in the world and he's got a chance."

Monday, Feb. 20
OREGON — The Oregon Park District was one of four park districts in Illinois to be recognized on Jan. 27 as an Exceptional Workplace by the Illinois Park and Recreation Association at the IPRA annual business meeting. The Exceptional Workplace award is administered by IPRA to recognize agencies that show a commitment to the well-being of their employees. Agencies undergo a voluntary evaluation process to demonstrate they have met guidelines to provide employees with the oppor-

Principal Mark Baldin and Dr. Karl Sievers, a retired Oklahoma professor who teaches him remotely. DeForest's parents, David and Carla, own DeForest Dental in Oregon and spent time over the years driving him to lessons and performances in DeKalb, Rockford, Chicago and more. Carla put 398,000 miles on one of the family vehicles.

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STILLMAN VALLEY — The Illinois State Board of Education has announced its 2023 Those Who Excel and Teacher of the Year awardees and would like to extend their sincere congratulations to Dr. Joe Mullikin on receiving the Award of Excellence in the administration category. Dr. Mullikin is currently the principal of Highland Elementary in the Meridian 223 School District.

"I am incredibly honored to have been recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education," Mullikin said. "Receiving an Award of Excellence is a high honor and I am proud to be a Cardinal and look forward to continuing to support our district in its path toward meeting our vision and mission."

Dr. Mullikin started his teaching career in the Meridian 223 School District as a student teacher. He returned to teach four years as a science teacher at Stillman Valley High School. He began as principal of Highland for the 2017-2018 school year. He has been selected as the next superintendent of Meridian 223 School District and has begun working in the position of principal and assistant superintendent before transitioning into the MCUSD 223 Superintendent in the summer of 2024.

Monday, Feb. 20
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On Wednesday, Feb. 15, Forrestville Valley CUSD 221 and the Northwest Division of the Illinois Principals Association announced the winner of the Assistant Principal of the Year. This year's winner was Mr. Kyle Zick, the assistant principal/activities director, as well as assistant coach for Forreston High School's football team. (Courtesy photo)

tunity for a well-balanced life from the inside out. The Exceptional Workplace criteria includes staff wellness programs, continuing education, team building, community involvement, risk management, professionalism and much more. "The Oregon Park District is proud to receive the Exceptional Workplace Award," Oregon Park District Executive Director Erin Folk said. "Oregon is a great place to live, work and play for our patrons and the same applies to our employees. We are fortunate to be able to provide an acceptable work-life balance for all employees."

STILLMAN VALLEY — Heather Alderks, Stillman Valley High School athletic and activities director, has received word that she was nominated and has won Athletic Director of the Year by the Illinois Athletic Director Association.

"When learning I received this award, I was instantly humbled in knowing all the great people I work with in the Meridian School District," Alderks said. "These types of awards are given to an individual but behind that individual is a great support network in making every extra-curricular program and event possible for our students. From our Athletic/Activities Department Assistant Paula Broski to the great coaches who serve our students year in and year out, to the building and grounds staff, and custodial staff who work countless hours to make events happen, the people behind the scenes of the work being done is what has allowed me to be recognized and I am very grateful for them. I am honored to receive this award knowing I work with great people every day."

March

Monday, March 6

CHAMPAIGN — Wrestlers from Ogle County high schools recently competed at the IHSAA State Tournament Feb. 16-18 in Champaign.

Byron competitors included Kyle Jones (182-pound junior, placed third) and Jared Claunch (220-pound sophomore, state qualifier). Polo competitors included Josiah Perez (106-pound freshman, state qualifier) and Wyatt Doty (132-pound

senior, placed fourth). Rochelle all-state qualifiers included Tommy Tourdot (113-pound junior), Xavier Villalobos (120-pound sophomore), Joseph Nadig (126-pound sophomore), Brock Metzger (182-pound junior), Kaiden Morris (220-pound sophomore) and Dempsey Atkinson (145-pound sophomore, girls qualifier). Stillman Valley competitors included Aiden Livingston (145-pound senior, placed fifth), Jack Seacrist (152-pound senior, placed sixth) and Andrew Forcier (182-pound senior, placed fifth).

Monday, March 13

PEORIA — The Byron Tigers girls basketball team finished as runner up at the IHSAA Class 2A State Championship after falling to Mater Dei 46-62 on March 4. Byron finished with a 34-3 record overall and became the fourth team in school history to win a trophy at the state tournament.

Byron advanced to the final with a 55-43 win over Butler on March 2.

FORRESTON — On Wednesday, Feb. 15, Forrestville Valley CUSD 221 and the Northwest Division of the Illinois Principals Association announced the winner of the Assistant Principal of the Year. This year's winner was Mr. Kyle Zick, the assistant principal/activities director, as well as assistant coach for Forreston High School's football team.

During his tenure, Mr. Zick has developed positive relationships with all of the staff, students and community members of Forrestville Valley, while holding his students and himself to the highest expectations. He has demonstrated a

tremendous ability to make connections with students from all areas, making sure to provide multiple opportunities for students to get involved in extracurricular activities. His experience and leadership has helped Forreston High School continue to be a leader in the region for academic and extracurricular achievement. Through his leadership, Mr. Zick continues to push FJSHS students to pursue their dreams and goals no matter what the obstacles and has been a great role model on how to continue to strive for success.

Monday, March 20

BYRON — At the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, Byron Middle School agriculture teacher Maggie Folk started a veterinary science unit for her eighth graders.

As part of the unit, Folk brought in her two dogs, Brady and Woody, to help students learn how to restrain animals and take vital signs including heart and respiration rates. The dogs have not left BMS since and were approved by the school board and administration to stick around due to their positive impact on the school environment.

"The dogs just became part of the school community," Folks said. "They're out in the hallway in the mornings greeting everyone and the teachers come in and see them. It just creates this start for the day that's really nice. And the students liked the vet science unit so much that I ended up offering it for seventh and sixth graders. The dogs spent all year in school. They just started joining us on a daily basis, despite not always being involved in the curriculum."




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Heather Alderks, Stillman Valley High School athletic and activities director, received word in February that she was nominated and has won Athletic Director of the Year by the Illinois Athletic Director Association. (Courtesy photo)

Established 1913



2024

AS WE TURN THE PAGE ON ANOTHER YEAR, WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING TO SERVE OUR COMMUNITY. AND BE YOUR PARTNER IN HEALTHCARE. HERE'S TO HEALTH!

900 N SECOND ST
ROCHELLE, IL 61068
815-562-2181
ROCHELLEHOSPITAL.COM



Year in Review



A look back at some of the top Ogle County LIFE stories of the past year



Kade Boatman of the Byron FFA placed first and is this year's FFA State Champion in livestock judging. (Courtesy photo)

BMS Principal Mike Sand gave his approval for the dogs to be involved at the school and the handbook allows for animals to be present for educational purposes. In the past, Folk has also brought horses to the school for learning and students have brought their cattle and raised meat chickens as part of the ag program.

"That's what ag is about," Folk said. "We learn everything and then apply it in whatever topic we're learning. It was kind of a natural progression that when we do a small animal unit, we should have live small animals. It just makes students' experiences much more authentic."

April

Monday, April 3

OREGON — Bowling is one of those sports that's been part of the fabric of our country since it was first introduced by German immigrants living in New York in the late 19th century. At one time or another, we've all hung out at the local bowling alley with friends. Or, bowled in a league, had a birthday party, participated in a candlelight event for charity, and maybe even met a spouse on a first date.

Most of us don't have the time nor dedication to become really good, so when we lace up the required shoes and hit the lanes, if we roll a couple of strikes along the way, it makes the experience that much more enjoyable. Now imagine throwing a perfect 300 game and doing it back to back. Josh Grove of Oregon accomplished that rare feat on March 12 competing in the Northern Illinois 700 club tournament held at the Mardi Gras Lanes in DeKalb. This was the 43rd time that he accomplished perfection in his career.

Grove could sense the first time that he stepped up to the dotted line, his reliable Brunswick Melee Jab Blood Red ball in hand, that good fortune awaited him.

"I was feeling really good, everything seemed to be working as far as my mechanics go," Grove said. "I'm kind of a perfectionist with my technique. My grip, arm swing and release felt in rhythm. After my first few strikes I knew that I was in the zone."

Monday, April 24

OREGON — Steve Pennock's final board meeting as an Oregon Park Board commissioner was held on April 11 and concluded 32 years of service to the Oregon community. Pennock was first elected to the Board of Commissioners in 1991. He was sworn in on May 9, 1991 and was elected as board president during the same meeting. Pennock would go on to be re-elected as board president each year until 2022.

Under Pennock's leadership, the district has expanded park district services and pursued improvements for the betterment of parks and recreation in Oregon. During Pennock's time as board president, the district has acquired and developed seven new park sites creating an additional 75 acres in open space for public use.

In 1997, the Oregon Park District opened the Blackhawk Center for both the park district and school district. Pennock was one of the driving forces behind successful completion of this multi-sport facility, now utilized solely by OCUSD and creating openings for additional practice and game space. The Blackhawk Center also provides Oregon High School an opportunity to host IHSA regional and sectional events in volleyball, basketball and wrestling bringing thousands of visitors to Oregon annually.

In 2007, he was awarded the Mike Cassidy Commissioner Community Service Award by the Illinois Association of Park Districts. The award is named after Mike Cassidy, a commissioner of the Freeport Park District for more than 35 years who devoted his life to serving his community. Pennock was an advocate for the district, pursuing grant funding and supported the district in obtaining millions of dollars in funding from the Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Department of Economic Opportunity, GameTime Recreation and several others.

May

Monday, May 8

BYRON — Kade Boatman of the Byron FFA placed first and is this year's FFA State Champion in livestock judging. The team placed third overall with Kendall Boatman eighth, Bruce Gehrke 28th and Kaydon VanBriesen 30th. Also competing in state horticulture judging were Elizabeth Dyck 16th and Lauren Carlson 22nd out of 173 state competitors. In livestock judging students have to select animals based on market qualities and breeding soundness. They also had to keep or cull three sets of animals based on EPDs (expected progeny difference) which are genetic measurements of heritability for particular genes. Contestants also had to give a quality and yield grade to a set of five slaughter cattle. There were 586 students competing in

two divisions, the Byron FFA Team qualified for the top reasons division. For this, students also had to present three oral reasons to professional industry judges. They had to explain why they selected or ranked the livestock the way they did and defend their selections. Kade will be recognized in June at the State FFA Convention for his accomplishment.

Monday, May 15

SPRINGFIELD — Dr. Thomas Mahoney, superintendent of Oregon CUSD #220, has been named the 2023 Superintendent of Distinction by his colleagues in the Northwest Region of the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA).

Mahoney was honored at an awards luncheon May 3 in Springfield. State Superintendent Dr. Tony Sanders was the featured speaker, where 21 IASA regional Superintendents of Distinction were recognized.

"I'm honored to receive this distinction, and I would like to thank the Oregon staff for their support and dedication to the education and growth of all our students," Mahoney, who has been an educator for 32 years and superintendent of Oregon CUSD #220 for 13 years, said. "While this award is named the Superintendent of Distinction, it is really a reflection of the work our board and staff do on a regular basis."

Those nominating Mahoney noted Oregon CUSD #220's academic growth during his tenure. In 2018, the district implemented a new vertically-aligned K-12 curriculum, common formative assessments and benchmarks.



Forreton-Polo's 400-meter relay team had a record time at the IHSA 1A track & field championships to claim a state title. (Courtesy photo)

QUEENS, N.Y. — Jess Pearson, a Stillman Valley resident, and her three dogs traveled to the Billie Jean Tennis Center in Queens, New York to compete in the prestigious Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show.

Shown by their professional handlers, all three dogs received awards amongst the top dogs in their breeds of over 50 golden retrievers, 30 Boston terriers and 20 pugs.

Pearson's dogs include Stetson (Boston terrier), Abby (pug) and Gretchen (golden retriever).

The Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show is often referred to as the "Super Bowl of dog shows," where the nation's top dogs compete over several days in one location, and is the second longest run sporting event.

Monday, May 22

OREGON — On Friday, May 12, a grand reopening and ribbon cutting event was held at Pegasus Special Riders in Oregon following the structure completion of its arena.

The facilities at Pegasus Special Riders sustained storm damage twice last year, halting its operations. The nonprofit, located at 6668 S. Carthage Road near Oregon, has been operating since 1997. It's a therapeutic riding program for children and adults with special needs. Volunteers perform all of the required duties, such as working with the riders, caring for the horses and facilities, raising funds and providing the necessary administrative support.

The damage on Aug. 28, 2022 included the facility's loafing shed for its horses and severe damage to a storage building. Back on March 5, 2022, a windstorm severely damaged the main arena building. High winds tore off about 120 feet of canopy, twisted the steel frame and the large front door was blown off and landed inside of the arena.

Pegasus Special Riders has been unable to perform



Jess Pearson, a Stillman Valley resident, and her three dogs traveled to the Billie Jean Tennis Center in Queens, New York to compete in the prestigious Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. (Courtesy photo)

any rides since the storm damage and was dealing with pandemic restrictions before that. The nonprofit worked on cleanup, construction and dealt with insurance providers over the past year. The damage in March was over \$300,000.

June

Monday, June 5

CHARLESTON — The odds were stacked against Forreton-Polo's 400-meter relay team at the IHSA 1A track & field championships.

Coming into Saturday's finals, they had finished second in their preliminary heat. For that matter, they had lost to Lena-Winslow the week before at the sectional and before that at the NUIC meet.

With 10 state medals since 2010, the highly-regarded program had sprint relays just as talented, but the best finish was a third place (400 relay) in 2021. Also, in the past, there were individuals faster than anyone in this year's group.

However, in front of thousands of fans at O'Brien Stadium at Eastern Illinois University, the 400-relay of De'Angelo Fernandez (Polo), McKeon Crase (Forreton), Noah Dewey (Polo) and Michael Taylor (Forreton) stunned the rest of field with a school-record time of 42.91 to claim a state championship.

"Not one person would have had us winning," F-P coach Tony Hardin said. "All those teams they beat - Catlin Salt Fork, Decatur St, Teresa, Madison, Le-Win - had history and heritage. And, then to do it coming out of the eighth lane."

Monday, June 26

OREGON — At its monthly meeting Tuesday, the Ogle County Board unanimously approved an ordinance amending the number of authorized patrol deputies for the Ogle County Sheriff's Office from 20 to 23 to allow for a full-time drug interdiction unit.

Sixty-one percent funding of salary and benefits for the three additional deputy sheriff positions has been obtained for three years through the federal COPS grant, with county matching funds of 39 percent obtained through the salary budgeted line and a one-time payment of \$80,000 from the opioid lawsuit monies received by the county. The total cost of the expansion will be \$621,602, and the county share of that will be about \$55,000 a year.

At the end of the three-year grant, the additional three patrol deputy positions will be reevaluated by both the sheriff and the county board for permanent staffing of those positions. The ordinance approved Tuesday said there is a "critical need" for a full-time drug interdiction unit in the county and the work has been being done on a part-time basis.

Ogle County Sheriff Brian VanVickle said the COPS grant application was submitted nearly two years ago and said it was an extremely competitive grant process.

"Our Department of Justice representative was shocked that we had it and had received that grant," VanVickle said. "Now is a good time for that to be implemented. We have a number of changes coming within the office over the next few years, so if this program doesn't work out, then they could be reabsorbed. My hope is at the end of the three years, I come back to the board and



On Sunday, June 25, a house dedication and blessing was hosted by Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County for its latest completed build at 110 S. 9th St. Ashlie Minton, a mother of four, was chosen as the homeowner and helped build the home along with volunteers and her family. (Photo by Jeff Helfrich)

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Year in Review



A look back at some of the top Ogle County LIFE stories of the past year

say, 'Look what we've done and we need to continue this and keep the numbers at 23 and move forward.'"

July

Monday, July 10

ROCHELLE — On Sunday, June 25, a house dedication and blessing was hosted by Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County for its latest completed build at 110 S. 9th St. Ashlie Minton, a mother of four, was chosen as the homeowner and helped build the home along with volunteers and her family.

The new home is the county organization's 13th overall and third build in Rochelle. Work on the site began in early October.

"In November, we stood here at our ground-breaking and hoped to get the basement covered and closed in before a bad winter came," Habitat Board President Gail Tuttle said. "Instead, we got a deck in, the walls up and the roof on and God was great in giving us great weather so we could get that done. This allowed the interior work to continue throughout the winter and lo and behold, we stand here on June 25 dedicating the house finished. This house can be lived in today."

Monday, July 24

OREGON — The Coliseum Museum of Art, Antiques and Americana (CMAAA) Foundation held a grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony Friday, July 14 in downtown Oregon. Several hundred guests wandered in and out of the six beautifully-constructed galleries where they were treated to a variety of exhibits in both 2 and 3D which included acrylic, ceramics, charcoal, china glass, mixed media, oil, pen, pastel, photography, sculpture, water color and wood.

A two-piece band "New Shoes" serenaded the visitors with soft sounds while two tables of delectable hors d'oeuvres and desserts were available for the choosing provided by Jen's Artisan Breads. Ogle County Brewery offered libations, which most art lovers enjoyed sipping on a red or white while possibly deciding to purchase a creation with well over 100 to choose from.

A video presentation highlighted the rich history of the building which was built in 1922 and officially opened in January of 1923. Through the years, the structure has been used for everything from suppers to basketball games, roller skating and flower shows. Oregon Mayor Ken Williams was the first to welcome the crowd and said that this has been a long time coming.

"It's been six years since talks first began about this project," Williams said. "The private foundation had a vision and presented it to the city and now you look around and see it come to life. It's a proud moment."

August

Monday, Aug. 14

OREGON — Oregon celebrated a grand opening on Saturday, Aug. 5 at Bad Ash Cigars, now located in downtown Oregon at 110 N. 4th St., Oregon. Visitors enjoyed fine cigars while touring the newly-renovated lounge and getting a sneak peek at Ogle County Brewery's new distribution center in the same building behind the lounge.

Owners Barry Skinner, Joshua Skinner, Brian Wynn, family, friends and city officials were in attendance.

"We'd like to thank everyone who stopped in today to show their support," the ownership group said. "We look forward to several upcoming occasions to get together."

Monday, Aug. 28

OREGON — On Aug. 17, a meeting was held by the Ogle County Economic Development Corporation, where the newly-established organization officially announced that it is open for business.

The OCEDC is incorporated as a not-for-profit, representing all of Ogle County, its communities, employers and citizens. The OCEDC's vision statement is "Ogle County, Illinois: An economic destination for growth and prosperity." Since 2019,



Oregon celebrated a grand opening on Saturday, Aug. 5 at Bad Ash Cigars, now located in downtown Oregon at 110 N. 4th St., Oregon. Visitors enjoyed fine cigars while touring the newly-renovated lounge and getting a sneak peek at Ogle County Brewery's new distribution center in the same building behind the lounge. (Courtesy photo)

more than a dozen communities, utility companies, state and regional economic agencies have come together to make the OCEDC a reality.

The OCEDC is made up of various officials from municipalities and the county. New officers elected at the July 20 meeting are Randy Schoon - president (Polo), Darin DeHaan - vice president (Oregon), Paula Diehl - secretary (Mt. Morris) and John Rickard - treasurer (Byron). Each officer represents a community that has pledged startup funds for the new organization. Ogle County and the City of Rochelle have also pledged.

"The key message is that Ogle County as a whole is now coming together for this effort," DeHaan said. "I think it's something we've always needed. The foundation is in place and I think we're going to see some good things happening for all of our communities."

September

Monday, Sept. 18

STILLMAN VALLEY — On Sept. 12, the Meridian School District had the distinct honor of welcoming one of its own back to the grounds as Mitchell Hendrickson, a proud alum of Stillman Valley High School, returned with the 37th Helicopter Squadron of the United States Air Force.

Capt. Hendrickson and his squadron were on a cross-country flight from Wyoming to the east coast, which allowed him the opportunity to stop through his hometown. During his visit, Capt. Hendrickson landed at SVHS and was able to engage with students from sixth through 12th grade in allowing students to see his helicopter up close, along with answering questions.

His time allowed him to perform a fly over of Highland Elementary and Monroe Center Grade School.

"This opportunity to welcome back Capt. Hendrickson to his hometown speaks volumes of our vision of small town values and world class results," District Superintendent PJ Caposey said. "We are incredibly honored to have been afforded the opportunity."

Hendrickson graduated from SVHS in 2010 and has since embarked on a distinguished career in the United States Air Force. His dedication and commitment to serving our nation has led him to the 37th Helicopter Squadron. His visit to the Meridian School District aimed to inspire and educate the next generation of leaders.

October

Monday, Oct. 2

BYRON — The Chicago Bears have officially named Head Coach Jeff Boyer of Byron High School in Byron as the Chicago Bears High School Coach of the Week and quarterback/defensive back Eddie Jenkins Jr. of Chicago Hope Academy in Chicago, Ill., as the Chicago Bears High School All-Star for



The Chicago Bears officially named Head Coach Jeff Boyer of Byron High School in Byron as the Chicago Bears High School Coach of the Week for week four. (Courtesy photo)

week four.

These recognitions are part of the Coach of the Week and High School All-Stars award programs, which are brought to you by Athletico Physical Therapy. In support of these initiatives, the Bears will make a \$2,000 donation to the Byron football program and direct a \$500 donation to the youth football program of Jenkins' choice.

On Sept. 15, Boyer guided his team (4-0), to a 69-0 home conference victory against the North Boone Vikings (2-2) on Friday night. The victory not only preserved the Tigers' undefeated record, but also solidified their first place standing in the Big Northern Conference.

Monday, Oct. 9

OREGON — On a warm, sunny picturesque fall Saturday afternoon Sept. 30, the long-anticipated ribbon cutting ceremony took place for the new Sarah Phelps Community Plaza. Government officials, civic leaders and local organizations gathered at the site of the old Harvest Bank Drive-Up located at Fifth and Washington Streets in Oregon.

The property was originally purchased five years ago and phase one of the project was to create public washrooms and move the John Phelps kitchen from the west end of town from the old Phelps farmstead to the other end of the property. The kitchen building is part of a brick shed that dates back to the 1860s.

Phelps is given credit for establishing the City of Oregon, where he built a Saw Mill by the Rock River on Pine Creek, and along the way erected the first double log cabin in 1836 and frame house in 1838. According to records, Phelps stated that his wife Sarah was a very exemplary woman, and her kindness of disposition endeared her to many.



On a warm, sunny picturesque fall Saturday afternoon Sept. 30, the long-anticipated ribbon cutting ceremony took place for the new Sarah Phelps Community Plaza. Government officials, civic leaders and local organizations gathered at the site of the old Harvest Bank Drive-Up located at Fifth and Washington Streets in Oregon. (Photo by George Howe)

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★★★★★ *Year in Review* ★★★★★

A look back at some of the top Ogle County LIFE stories of the past year

A combination of donated funds, including \$7,500 from the Illinois Realtor’s Association, grants and ARPA funding totaling approximately \$60,000 helped complete the project that had a price tag of around \$80,000.

Monday, Oct. 30

KINGS — On Oct. 24, the committee that put together a reunion of Kings School alumni presented a donation of nearly \$4,000 worth of classroom materials and funds to current teachers at Kings Elementary School.

The Kings School alumni picnic was held Aug. 27 and celebrated over 140 years of educating students. It was open to all current and former Kings School students or staff and their families. The event was held at the school and included food, memories and memorabilia from the school’s history. Over 300 people attended and a donation account for the event was set up at Holcomb Bank. Leftover funds were planned to go to current Kings teachers and students, and that donation was given Oct. 24.

“It started with an idea last fall,” Reunion Committee Member Dawn Hayenga Somers said. “Somebody said, ‘You know, we should get together.’ It was going to be just a few of us. To be quite honest, my brother turned 80 in March and I looked at him and thought that there’s a lot of older people who aren’t going to be around a whole lot longer that went to school at Kings and it’s time we get them together. I’m into history and I’m writing up the history of White Rock and I’ve been writing the history of the school. It goes back almost 145 years. It was time we did something before we’re too old to do anything. We started meeting in February and we met monthly and the little seed of an idea grew into 300 people showing up. We had over \$6,000 in donations. By the time we got everything for the reunion paid for, we had almost \$4,000 left.”

November

Monday, Nov. 6

BYRON — There are institutions in neighborhoods that define a community, providing comfort growing up along with nostalgic walks down memory lane. Sam’s Drive-In by Byron has been such a place since it was first opened by original owner Sam Morrison in 1966, first as a Dog n’ Suds and later Sam’s Drive-In in 1975.

Come into town driving, biking or walking in either direction on Illinois Route 2, Sam’s was an instant eye catcher with its 50s-style drive-in restaurant complete with car-hop speaker stations for placing orders, and a classic 1957 Chevy Bel Air perched high above on a 30-foot pole outside. The car hop stations were in regular use up until COVID-19 hit and everything moved inside.

For the last 18 years the business has been owned and operated by Shirlee Aldrich and family. On Oct. 8 they closed the doors for the last time, which wasn’t an easy decision for Aldrich. “Generations of families have come in over the years first as kids and now with their families,” Aldrich said. “It was absolutely special to create those friendships. I will definitely miss my regulars that came in daily or weekly. It was the hardest part about being done this season.”

Monday, Nov. 27

OREGON — On Saturday Nov. 18, the Oregon Depot Commission held their monthly program entitled “Those were the days” at the historic Oregon Train Depot Museum. A large crowd was in attendance to listened to guest speaker and Oregon’s native son Larry Young talk of his days as a Major League Baseball umpire and fond memories of growing up in the community. A large crowd filed in, taking up most of the seats, including Young’s classmates and childhood friends.

Young is a 1972 graduate of Oregon High School and knew at the tender age of 13 while officiating baseball games on the sandlot fields in town that he had

found his career calling.

“As early as I started, I immediately knew that this was something that I wanted to pursue,” Young said. “The more games that I did at the higher levels made me really determined to see it through.”

December

Monday Dec. 4

BLOOMINGTON – Last season was crushing for the Byron football team. After winning the IHSA Class 3A state championship in 2021, the Tigers wanted to win back-to-back, but fell to IC Catholic in a semifinal.

This year, the Tigers were set on not letting the sour taste of defeat return. “Going into the game you could see how locked in and excited everyone was since the loss last year to IC Catholic,” Byron senior running back Ashton Henkel said. “We got up every day and were in the weight room at 5 a.m. even if we were in a different sport. It showed off in the state championship.

“This senior group is resilient, and we just didn’t want a loss like last year to happen again. A week later, we were in the weight room, on the field, and got to work.”

The weight room, the remembrance of defeat, comradery between the upperclassmen and underclassmen, and the coaching strategy fueled Byron to a 69-7 victory over Mt. Carmel in the 2023 IHSA Class 3A State Championship on Friday, Nov. 24 at Illinois State University in Bloomington.

During the title triumph, Byron set state records.

The Tigers (14-0) scored the most points in a 3A title game (69), recorded the largest point differential in the history of all classes of Illinois state championship games (62), recorded the most points scored in a season (823), had the most rushing touchdowns in a season (109), and the largest point differential in IHSA history in a season (scored 823 and allowed 94 for a difference of 729).



Wrestlers from Ogle County high schools recently competed at the IHSA State Tournament Feb. 16-18 in Champaign, including Stillman Valley’s Aiden Livingston. (Photo by Jodi Jones)



Byron scored a 69-7 victory over Mt. Carmel in the 2023 IHSA Class 3A State Championship on Friday, Nov. 24 at Illinois State University in Bloomington. (Photo by Tonja Greenfield)

**To all of our readers, Thank You for making 2023 a wonderful year!
We are looking forward to bringing you more great news stories in 2024!**

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2024

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101 LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OGLE COUNTY, ILLINOIS
COMMUNITY STATE BANK OF ROCK FALLS, Plaintiff, v. JOSEPH D. SMITH, UNKNOWN OWNERS, and NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS, Defendants.))) Property Address: 11773 W. Henry Road, Polo, Illinois 61064 2023FC80
NOTICE BY PUBLICATION

Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants That this case has been commenced in this Court against you and other defendants, praying for the foreclosure of a certain Mortgage conveying the premises described as follows, to-wit: Part of the West Half (1/2) of the Northwest Quarter (1/4) of Section 27, Township 23 North, Range 8 East of the Fourth Principal Meridian, Ogle County, Illinois, described as follows: Beginning at the Northeast corner of said West Half (1/2) of the Northwest Quarter (1/4) of Section 27, and running thence South 1 degree 24 minutes 58 seconds West (assumed bearing) on the East line of said West Half (1/2) of the Northwest Quarter (1/4) of Section 27, a distance of 300feet; thence South 89 degrees 17 minutes 23 seconds West, parallel with the North line of said Northwest Quarter (1/4) of Section 27, a distance of 300.00 feet to the North line of said Northwest Quarter (1/4) of Section 27; thence North 89 degrees 17 minutes 23 seconds East on said North line, a distance of 150.00 feet to the Point of Beginning; situated in the Township of Buffalo, County of Ogle and State of Illinois. PIN: 14-27-100-002
COMMONLY KNOWN AS: 11773 W. Henry Road, Polo, Illinois 61064 and which said Mortgage was made by: Joseph D. Smith, Mortgagor, to Community State Bank of Rock Falls, as Mortgagee, and recorded in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds of Ogle County, Illinois, as Document No. 201906492 and for other relief; that summons was duly issued out of said Court against you as provided by law and that the said suit is now

pending.
NOW, THEREFORE, UNLESS YOU file your answer or otherwise file your appearance in this case in the Office of the Clerk of this Court: Clerk of the Circuit Court Ogle County Courthouse 106 S. 5th Street Oregon, Illinois 61061 On or before January 22, 2024, A DEFAULT MAY BE ENTERED AGAINST YOU AT ANY TIME AFTER THAT DAY AND A JUDGEMENT MAY BE ENTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRAYER OF SAID COMPLAINT.
Dated: 12/15/2023
Kimberly A. Stahl, Clerk of the Circuit Court Ogle County, Illinois Courtney E Kennedy (6322625)
Ehrmann Gehlbach Badger & Considine, LLC
Attorneys for Plaintiff 114 E. Everett Street, Suite 300 Dixon, IL 61021 (815) 288-4949 (815) 288-3068 (FAX) kennedy@egbclaw.com
NOTE: This law firm is deemed to be a debt collector.
No. 1225 (Dec. 25, 2023 and Jan. 1 and 8, 2024)

PUBLIC NOTICE
Public Notice is hereby given that on December 15, 2023 a certificate was filed in the Ogle County Clerk's Office setting forth the names and post office address of all of the persons owning, conducting and transacting the business known as: C&M Services 5955 N. Hales Corner Road Stillman Valley, IL 61084
Dated: December 15, 2023
Laura J. Cook, Ogle County Clerk
No. 1228 (Dec. 25, 2023 and Jan. 1 and 8, 2024)

PUBLIC NOTICE
STATE OF ILLINOIS, CIRCUIT COURT OGLE COUNTY
PUBLICATION NOTICE OF COURT DATE FOR REQUEST FOR NAME CHANGE (ADULT)
Case Number 2023MR43
Request of: Emily Michelle Rasmussen
There will be a court date on my Request to change my name from Emily Michelle Rasmussen to the new name of Levi Gold Rasmussen.
The court date will be held on Feb. 7, 2024 at 9:00 am at 106 S 5th St., Oregon, Ogle County, in Courtroom #304.

No. 1230 (Dec. 25, 2023 and Jan. 1 and 8, 2024)
PUBLIC NOTICE
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS STATE OF ILLINOIS) SS COUNTY OF OGLE)
Public Notice is hereby given to all persons in Oregon-Nashua Township that a Public Hearing will be held Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 6:00 P.M. in the Ogle County Courthouse, Third Floor County Board Room #317, 105 S. Fifth St., Oregon, IL, to consider the request filed December 7, 2023 of Jerry & Debra Russell, 371 N. Daysville Rd., Oregon, IL for a Variation in the AG-1 Agricultural District to allow an open, unenclosed car port to be constructed zero (0) feet from a side property line in lieu of 10 feet as required by the Ogle County Amendatory Ordinance on property described as follows and owned by the petitioners:
Part of G.L. 3 of the Northwest Quarter (NW1/4) of Fractional Section 2 Oregon-Nashua Township 23 North, Range 10 East of the 4th P.M., Ogle County, IL, 0.92 acres, more or less
Property Identification Number: 16-02-102-003
Common Location: 371 N. Daysville Rd.
All persons in attendance at the hearing shall have an opportunity to be heard. Any person who also wishes to appear as an interested party with the right to cross-examine others at the hearing must complete and file an appearance form with the Ogle County Planning & Zoning Department no later than five (5) business days before the date of the hearing. The application for this variation is on file with detailed description and available for examination at the Planning & Zoning Department, 911 Pines Rd., Oregon, Illinois or at the following URL: http://www.oglecounty.org/departments/planning_and_zoning/zoning_board_of_appeals.php.
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS RANDY OCKEN, Chairman
Dated at Oregon, Illinois this 7th day of December 2023 #04-23VAR No. 0101 (Jan. 1, 2024)

PUBLIC NOTICE
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS STATE OF ILLINOIS) SS COUNTY OF OGLE)
Public Notice is hereby given to all persons in Oregon-Nashua Township that a Public Hearing will be held Thursday, January 25, 2024 at 6:00 P.M. in the Ogle County Courthouse, Third Floor County Board Room #317, 105 S. Fifth St., Oregon, IL, to consider the request filed December 11, 2023 of Summit Farmland IV, LLP, % Eric Peterson, 10640 County Hwy D20, Alden, IA; and Michael & Malia Snodgrass, 6953 N. Alpine Dr., Byron, IL, for an Amendment to the Zoning District to rezone from AG-1 Agricultural District to R-1 Rural Residential District on property described as follows; owned by Summit Farmland IV, LLP, and being purchased by Michael & Malia Snodgrass:
Part of the Southwest Quarter (SW1/4) of the Southeast Quarter (SE1/4) of Section 5 Oregon-Nashua Township 23N, R10E of the 4th P.M., Ogle County, IL, 10.0 acres, more or less of a 135.58 acre parcel
Property Identification Number: Part of 16-05-400-004
Common Location(s): 1100 Block of W. Pines Rd.
All persons in attendance at the hearing shall have an opportunity to be heard. Any person who also wishes to appear as an interested party with the right to cross-examine others at the hearing must complete and file an appearance form with the Ogle County Planning & Zoning Department no later than five (5) business days before the date of the hearing. The application for this map amendment is on file with detailed description and available for examination at the Planning & Zoning Department, 911 Pines Rd., Oregon, Illinois or at the following URL: http://www.oglecounty.org/departments/planning_and_zoning/zoning_board_of_appeals.php.
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS RANDY OCKEN, Chairman
Dated at Oregon, Illinois this 11th day of December 2023 #06-23AM No. 0102 (Jan. 1, 2024)

NOTICE ADVERTISEMENT FOR BID
FOR: PrairieView Golf Club Patio Renovation
Byron Forest Preserve District

7993 North River Drive
Byron, Illinois 61010
The Byron Forest Preserve District will receive sealed bids until 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 18th, 2024 for patio renovation work at PrairieView Golf Club located at 6734 N German Church Road, Byron, IL 61010. The general prevailing rate of wages in the locality shall be paid for each craft or type of worker or mechanic needed to execute the contract or perform the work for this project. Bid Package documents, drawings and specifications shall be available after Noon on Thursday, January 4th, 2024 from the Jarrett Prairie Center (Admin Office) located at 7993 N. River Road, Byron, IL or available online at www.byronforestpreserve.com/about-us/bid-notices/. The above bids will be opened and read publicly at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 18th, 2024, at the Byron Forest Preserve District offices. The Byron Forest Preserve District reserves the right to waive irregularities and reject any or all Bids. Bidders are invited to attend a pre-bid site meeting on Tuesday, January 9th, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. at PrairieView Golf Club Clubhouse. The meeting is non-mandatory, but recommended. Rejection of Bids: The right is reserved to accept any bid or any part or parts therefore or to reject any and all bids. Todd A. Tucker Executive Director Byron Forest Preserve District No. 0103 (January 1, 2024)

501 APARTMENTS FOR RENT
OREGON/MT. MORRIS
Newer 1, 2 & 3 BR APTS. Water, sewer, garbage inc. w/most units. HOUSES some w/garages, all in like new condition. Starting at \$425/mo. 815-734-4348 815-590-2302

511 STORAGE UNITS
K&P SELF STORAGE
1563 Kysor Drive, Byron (next to D&W Garage) 815-247-8518
OUTSIDE STORAGE NOW AVAILABLE
Storage Unit Sizes: 5' x 10' 10' x 10' 10' x 15' 10' x 20' 10' x 30'

201 DOMESTIC/CHILD CARE
NO INDIVIDUAL, unless licensed or holding a permit as a childcare facility, may cause to be published any advertisement soliciting a child care service. A childcare facility that is licensed or operating under a permit issued by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services may publish advertisements of the services for which it is specifically licensed or issued a permit. Your Hometown Newspaper strongly urges any parent or guardian to verify the validity of the license of any facility before placing a child in its care.

203 HELP WANTED
Help Wanted, full time live in housekeeper to help with cleaning, laundry, cooking and helping with my 54 year-old daughter. Room and board included with pay options. 779-251-0161(RNLO1032024)

Class-A CDL Drivers Wanted
\$500 Sign on bonus
Earn up to \$33/per hour
Local Trucking Company seeking full time, year-round driver to haul grain.
815-938-3644
Please leave message. 09052022

301 ANTIQUES
WANTED TO BUY: Vintage Metal and Wood Signs, Milk Bottles & Local Advertising, Oak Icebox, Iron Door Stop and Antique Lighting... Call Dick Harms at 815-562-2928 or email dickharms@hotmail.com

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

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

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127 SERVICES AND REPAIRS
FURMAN'S Lawn Care and Tree Work.

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307 MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE
BUNDLED Newspaper -\$3 per Bundle. End Roll- Cost Depends on Weight of Roll. Available Monday-Friday 815-562-4171 (8AM-NOON ONLY) Rochelle News Leader.
SPLIT Firewood For Sale. Contact 779-251-0254
Grass Hay \$5 per Bale, Small Bales average 60 lbs, 200 Available. Hay has been kept off of the ground & in a dry loft since cutting. Bruce 815-234-3099 (RNLO1032024)

405 HOUSES FOR SALE
ALL REAL ESTATE advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based

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PUBLIC AUCTION

Byron School Transportation Open Positions

• Bus Drivers

Call Barb at x 4400
815-234-5491 or apply online:
www.byron226.org
Click the 'About Us' tab, then Employment Opportunities tab

Not sure why business is slow?

is not just a saying in business.

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



9 Biggest Benefits Of Shopping Ogle County First

1 Youth programs, schools and non-profit groups look to our businesses first when fundraising. These community-minded businesses donate faithfully to local youth sports programs, community clubs, nonprofit groups and churches – just to name a few. Shouldn't we look to those same businesses first when we need goods and services? Of course we should!

2 High rate of return. For every \$100 spent in independently owned stores, \$68 returns to the community through payroll, taxes and other expenditures. Online orders return absolutely nothing to Ogle County, IL.

3 Seeking health care in your hometown brings the comforts of receiving qualified care from people you know and trust. Whether it be a trip to the dentist, regular health care screenings, a visit to a specialist or an emergency, you need not travel. It's all right here.

4 Banking with people who know you is a luxury found only in hometowns. You don't have to show your ID every time you go in. You can get a loan from people who know you and understand your needs, whether it be money for your first car or to help your business grow. Local banks believe in the value of community members helping one another.

5 No one wants to have to make an insurance claim, but it's painless when your agent is your neighbor. You don't have to convince them that there was a hail storm, or that the wind nearly took your roof off. They know because they live

here. Which do you want when you've had a bad day: A face-to-face meeting with your local agent, or a machine answering the phone at that big national insurer that advertises on TV?

6 Time is money. It's simple math (especially when you figure in gas mileage.) Shopping locally can actually save you both time and money!

7 Customer service after the sale is invaluable. Local retailers not only take responsibility for the product they sold, they will often fix it or replace it – no questions asked. Appliances, furniture, computers and electronics sometimes have glitches. Would you rather box yours up, send it to who knows where, and wait six to eight weeks, or just go back to the nice guy that helped you when you bought it?

8 Keeping it local encourages community growth. By choosing to do business locally, you help maintain Rochelle's diversity, charm and appeal; which attracts new community members.

9 One word: Jobs. When you do business of any kind in Ogle County, it creates and maintains jobs for others in our area. A healthy employment rate is the cornerstone of all economies. How can you help the economy recover? Start at home.

OGLE COUNTY
LIFE
ROCK VALLEY SHOPPER