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Vol. 103 • No. 82

LOCAL NEWS... LOCAL VIEWS

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 7, 2024

\$1.25

Groundbreaking held for The Grove

New complex will include 30 units of family housing

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — On Friday, Feb. 2, a groundbreaking ceremony was held by the City of Rochelle and New Directions Housing Corporation at 405 Lake Lida Lane in Rochelle for The Grove, a new family housing complex.

NDHC President Rodger Brown said the three-story apartment complex will have 30 total units with 15 units each of two and three-bedroom housing. The two-bedroom units will be about 750 square feet and the three-bedroom units will be about 950 square feet. The development will also have a management office on site, an exercise facility, laundry facilities, a community room, library, and on-site parking. Rents are expected to range from \$500-1,000 a month.

"We expect it to take about 10-12 months for construction," Brown said. "The city has been awesome to work with. The whole staff has been wonderful. We had good experiences with the departments of community development, building,



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

On Friday, Feb. 2, a groundbreaking ceremony was held by the City of Rochelle and New Directions Housing Corporation at 405 Lake Lida Lane in Rochelle for The Grove, a new family housing complex.

and engineering. I wish more communities were like this. It's been fantastic. We're shooting to have it finished in December."

NDHC has housing developments all across the state including workforce housing, family housing and senior housing. Brown said his organization is seeing demand and waiting lists at all of its facilities, and that market studies show a housing shortage.

"There's a demand for

workforce housing and low-income housing," Brown said. "Those areas are just not being served. Most of the stuff being built nowadays is high-end and very expensive. In all the developments we've done, we get waiting lists. We've never had a problem filling them up."

Rochelle Mayor John Bearrows attended the groundbreaking and said the housing shortage is an issue in the city. He thanked NDHC and city

staff for their work on bringing the project to fruition.

"It takes a team of great players and we have great people in the right spots," Bearrows said. "I'm very proud of them and the work they do. As we always say when someone opens a new business in Rochelle, we say they can open it anywhere. The same thought stands true for this housing project."

See GROVE page 2



From The Heart gala raises record \$90,000

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — The 16th annual From the Heart Gala & Auction was held Saturday, Feb. 3 at the hangar at Flight Deck Bar & Grill in Rochelle. The event saw 311 people attend and raised a record \$90,000, breaking its previous mark of \$80,000 in 2023.

Proceeds raised at the event will equally benefit the eight area nonprofits that From the Heart works with: the Rochelle Area Community Foundation, HOPE of Ogle County, Rochelle Christian Food Pantry, Pegasus Special Riders, Hub City Senior Center, Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center, CASA and FOCUS House. Each nonprofit will receive \$11,250.

See GALA page 2

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Girls qualify for sectionals

Rochelle Lady Hub bowlers Kenzie Liezert and Cassidy Vincent qualified out of the IHSA Regional. See sports

WEATHER

WEDNESDAY HIGH 50 LOW 34
THURSDAY HIGH 56 LOW 41
FRIDAY HIGH 51 LOW 36
SATURDAY HIGH 39 LOW 32

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513 4th Ave.
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OBITUARIES

- ELDA MAE JORDAL
- BARBARA J. BYRD
- CHRIS L. HILDREDTH

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INSERTS

- BIG GAME GUIDE

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LOCAL NEWS



(PHOTOS BY KELLY HELFRICH)

The 16th annual From the Heart Gala & Auction was held Saturday, Feb. 3 at the hangar at Flight Deck Bar & Grill in Rochelle. The event saw 311 people attend and raised a record \$90,000, breaking its previous mark of \$80,000 in 2023. Proceeds raised at the event will equally benefit the eight area nonprofits that From the Heart works with: the Rochelle Area Community Foundation, HOPE of Ogle County, Rochelle Christian Food Pantry, Pegasus Special Riders, Hub City Senior Center, Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center, CASA and FOCUS House. Each nonprofit will receive \$11,250.

GALA: 16th Annual From the Heart event raises record \$90,000

From page 1

"The generosity of the community was just incredible," From the Heart President and Founder Dave Eckhardt said. "Everything we did, did the best it's ever done. All of our games and silent auction items did very well. The live auction way surpassed what we've done in the past. That's what made the event such a success, because we were able to raise \$90,000. The group just did a tremendous job. Every organization we support helped out and the From The Heart committee did a tremendous job. We're very fortunate."

From The Heart has hit the \$800,000 mark in funds raised since its inception. When the organization started, it benefited only two nonprofit groups along with the Rochelle Rotary Club. The goal at that time was to raise \$10,000 for each group.

From the Heart is now a 501c3 nonprofit and its own entity to raise money for its eight nonprofits.

"I can't say enough about the community and the generosity that it shows each and every year," Eckhardt said. "Our event wouldn't be what it is without all of the generosity of the people that show up. It's just amazing and it's so cool to see it all come together. It's beyond my wildest dreams. When we started this, our first year we just tried to raise \$30,000. And now we're making \$90,000. We never saw that coming. It's very neat."

Eckhardt said preparation for the gala is done over an entire year, and the first meeting for 2025 will be held this week. The day of the gala takes "a lot of work" starting in the morning. He thanked those that helped with the work.

The community is what

allows From the Heart to grow its fundraising efforts each year, Eckhardt said.

"I think we're able to grow the amount each year because people enjoy coming and helping the cause and they have fun," Eckhardt said. "It's all of that combined. It's a night out and it's in the winter time when people have been stuck in the house. It gives people a chance to get out and enjoy themselves and also contribute to all of our nonprofit groups."

With growing attendance numbers, the gala has started to reach capacity limits at its venue.

"When we started this, we never thought it'd go on for 16 years," Eckhardt said. "And we never thought we'd grow to what we are. We didn't see it having its own 501c3 designation. But we got to the point where we could do it. Now it's getting to



a point where we're just about at our capacity at our venue. How do we go to the next level? It's just a tremendous thing to be able to give more

to our nonprofits. All of these organizations need more money. It's just amazing that we're able to help them out as much as we are. There's so many

people that help with all of this and I can't thank them enough. Without them, this doesn't happen. It's very cool that we get to do what we do."

GROVE: Groundbreaking ceremony held for new family living complex

From page 1

"They could have built this anywhere, because there's shortages all across the nation. But they chose Rochelle and we're very thankful for that. We're looking forward to being a partner with them and working with them to facilitate the final ribbon cutting when the doors open. It's very important to us and our community and I can't say enough good things about it."

NDHC is a nonprofit and has built and rehabilitated more than 500 multi-family and single-family units since its inception in 1994. Its

purpose is to provide high-quality affordable housing to households who would otherwise be unable to afford safe and decent housing without undue hardship.

Brown said due to COVID-19 and issues that followed such as supply chain, workforce, and inflationary impacts, construction costs for the project have gone up "considerably" since it was first proposed. NDHC got extra financing from the state to help with that and had to come up with more capital of its own. The housing organization is currently seeing the same issues with three other developments.

The city's community development department played a significant role in attracting the housing development to Rochelle.

"We have developments all across the state from the Wisconsin border down towards St. Louis," Brown said. "When we first came out here, we met with city staff and they told us about all of the employment opportunities and businesses that were coming to town and the housing shortages here. And this is right off the interstate and it's in a good place for transportation. That led us here initially and working with the city staff since has been awesome."

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February 20th 8:30 a.m. for Non-Members

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K-8th Registration - Begins in March

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www.stpaulrochelle.org

LOCAL NEWS

SURGERY: Slattengren recovering through RCH cardiac rehab program

From page 1

“This is my fun job in retirement. I wanted to have something to do and get out and help people. I like to keep busy.”

Slattengren said being an RCH cardiac rehab patient is comforting for her, because she already knew everyone she’d be working with. Doing her rehab locally helped her meet her goals she wanted to achieve. When the time came for her to start cardiac rehab, Slattengren asked to do it in Rochelle.

“It means everything to me to have access to all of these services for my heart here where I live,” Slattengren said. “All of the doctors here that I’ve met and heard about from friends are really great doctors. They really go out of their way to make the patient feel important here.”

Amid American Heart Month, Slattengren hopes that those with symptoms and health concerns like she had will seek medical care before their condition worsens.

“I would tell someone who isn’t feeling right like I was to make an appointment and have it checked out right away,” Slattengren said. “Don’t think that you can just ignore it or hope that it will go away.

If you’re not feeling up to par, you really need to go see a doctor. Even if nothing ends up being wrong, or if it is something, it will just ease your mind. Even though I found out I had to have triple bypass surgery, I at least knew what I was dealing with and I could prepare.”

RCH Cardiac Rehab RN Ellee Myers urged members of the community to be cognizant of their health, not just during Heart Month. She wants people to use RCH as the local resource it is to change their lifestyles. Using RCH’s fitness center and dietician service can save residents trips to Rockford or other neighboring towns.

Myers has seen first hand how RCH’s Cardiac Rehab program can help patients improve their lives in recovery from heart attacks and illnesses.

“It’s seeing somebody who couldn’t walk through the parking lot at a grocery store without getting winded get to spending 15 minutes on an elliptical working up a sweat and thinking it’s a good thing,” Myers said. “That is so fulfilling as a healthcare worker to see that improvement. It’s everyday life changes. After being here, people can walk through parking lots, breathe again, and play with their grandchildren



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

Katherine Slattengren said being an RCH cardiac rehab patient is comforting for her, because she already knew everyone she’d be working with. Doing her rehab locally helped her meet her goals she wanted to achieve.

when they couldn’t before. That’s really nice to see. Almost every single one of our patients starts to get that endurance back so they can just live.”

RCH Emergency Department Technician Jeremy Mumm spends most of his time in ER treating patients, but also picks up shifts on occasion in the cardiac rehab program. There, he’s able to see patients on the road to

recovery.

“It’s kind of cool if I take care of a heart attack patient in the ER and then months later, I fill in shifts here and I can see their progress,” Mumm said. “I’m a one-to-one person. When someone has a cardiac event here, we get them taken care of and shipped out to higher care as fast as we can. When I work in cardiac rehab, I work one-to-one and get to know them a little bit better

and see their progress. I see them at their worst when they’re first coming in and then I get to see them grow here and help them graduate through the program and be healthier and get their heart stronger.”

RCH Cardiopulmonary Manager Jacqui Ranken said cardiac rehab program graduates are offered a free month of membership to the hospital’s fitness center to continue healthy living

habits.

“We want them to continue their routine and continue to stay healthy,” Ranken said. “I like to think that our prices here are reasonable, for seniors especially, to use the facility. That’s always great to see them continue to come in. We get to see them and see how they’re doing. We make forever relationships with our cardiac rehab patients.”

(COURTESY PHOTOS)



Ogle County Fair Board recognizes volunteer and elects directors for three-year terms

At the November annual meeting of the Ogle County Fair Board, David Ognibene was recognized as their Volunteer of the year. During the fair, David stayed on the grounds and made himself available 24/7. He helped with garbage, maintaining the restrooms, and anything else he was asked to do. In the photo Tom Simpson is congratulating David. Also at the annual meeting three director positions were elected for three-year terms. Tom Simpson and Nate Magnuson will continue serving the board and new to the board is Jake Hubbard. In the photo from left to right are Hubbard, Simpson, 2023 Miss Ogle County Queen Lauren Carlson and Magnuson.

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LOCAL NEWS

OBITUARIES

Elda Mae Jordal

ROCHELLE — Elda Mae Jordal, 96, died on Friday, February 2, 2024, peacefully at home surrounded by her family. She was born on September 17, 1927, in Orchard Farm, MO, the daughter of Erich and Elenora (Hagemann) Arndt. Following her mother's unexpected passing in 1928, her father was married to Viola Barklage in 1929. The family resided in St. Charles, MO, later adding Robert (brother) and JoAnn (sister). The family later moved to Malta, IL in 1937, where the children would attend school. In 1948, she married her high school sweetheart, Ernest Jordal Jr.; ultimately blessed with 61 years of marriage.

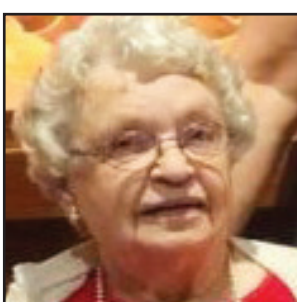
Elda Mae went to NISTC for 2 years, ultimately finishing her Bachelor's Degree in 1967 after a pause to have her children. She earned a Master's Degree in Education in 1973 at NIU. She taught Kindergarten in Creston for 20 years, plus special education. She finished her teaching career with four years in third grade, retiring in 1988. Prior to and after her contract teaching, she was a substitute teacher for the surrounding area.

She was known for her singing voice and soloed through the years at many weddings, band concerts, and funerals. She was a soprano soloist for every choir or chorus she ever joined. She was a pianist for many groups both at Immanuel Lutheran

Church in Dekalb, IL and St. Paul Lutheran Church in Rochelle, IL, where she was a devoted member for 49 years. She gave up the violin after college. Elda Mae was an active member of the O.K. Club and Ester Naomi Circle at St. Paul. She was blessed to take her most memorable trip to Bethlehem in 2008 with other church members. Elda Mae even lended her talents to a production of "Wizard of Oz" as Aunt Em at the bandshell in Atwood Park.

She thoroughly enjoyed having her family together, one could always see the pride and joy when she was able to enjoy her family. She loved to play fun songs, especially at Christmas, on the piano and sing songs with family, teach the little ones how to play piano or help them to work on their homework, such as spelling or penmanship. In addition to serving her church, her family and music, she enjoyed reading, traveling, gardening and puzzles.

Elda Mae is survived by three children, David (Debra) Jordal of Chana, IL, Judy Reizer of Rochelle, and Margaret (Bradley) Smith of Bakersfield CA; five grandchildren, Angela (Jose) Riviera-Rosa, FL, Renee Preston of Rochelle, Matthew (Leah) Jordal of Ashton, Megan Jordal of Chana, and Michael Jordal (Emma Ernst) of Rochelle; four step-grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; sister, JoAnn Nordeen; sis-



ters-in-law, Marilyn Arndt and Nancy White; brother-in-law, Arthur Byro Jr.; and numerous nieces and nephews.

In addition to her parents, Elda Mae is preceded in death by her husband, Ernest, in 2009; brother, Robert Arndt; sister-in-law, Janice Byro, brother-in-law, Kermit Nordeen, and sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Donna and Bill Cochran; her great-grandson, the beloved Henry Jordal, aged 6; and many cousins.

The funeral service will take place at 11:30 A.M. Saturday, February 10, 2024, at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Rochelle with Pastor Michael Wolff officiating. Visitation will be from 9:30 until the time of the service at the church. Cremation care will be provided after the funeral and interment will take place in Malta Cemetery at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in Elda Mae's memory may be directed to St. Paul Lutheran Church, Serenity Hospice and Home, or the Alzheimer's Association.

Please visit www.ung-erhomer.com to sign the online guest book.

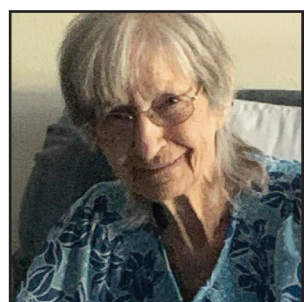
Barbara J. Byrd

ROCHELLE — Barbara J. Byrd, 87, of Rochelle died February 5, 2024 at the Rochelle Community Hospital. She was born on May 6, 1936 in Sycamore to Maurice and Violet (Welch) Kempton. She married Hershel D. "Jack" Byrd on December 24, 1953. Barbara worked at Turner Brass and AO Smith for several years.

She and her husband moved to Steward, IL in 1979 where the owned and operated the Steward

Inn, until retiring in 1992. Barbara is survived by numerous nieces and nephews and great nieces and great nephews; two god sons, Elisha (Anita) Byrd and William Byrd; two sisters-in-law, Marsha and Dean; one brother-in-law, Ernie (Stacy) and several siblings.

She is preceded in death by her parents; her husband in 2005; and two infant children. Her visitation will be on Friday, February 9th from 11:00 AM - 12:45 PM at the Butala Funeral Home,



1405 DeKalb Ave., Sycamore, IL. A graveside service will be at 1:00 PM on Friday at the Elmwood Cemetery in Sycamore. To sign the online guest book, go to www.Butala-FuneralHomes.com

OGLE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

OREGON — On Feb. 2 at approximately 2:39 p.m. deputies responded to the intersection of Freeport Road and Illinois Route 52 for the report of a two-vehicle accident between a truck and a semi. Upon further investigation it was learned the pickup truck drove through the stop sign and impacted with the semi. Driver of the pickup truck, Joseph Emmerson, age 52 of Rockford, was cited for disregarding a stop sign. No injuries were sustained from the accident. Ogle County Deputies were assisted by Polo EMS, Ogle County Emergency Management, and Polo Police Department.

On Feb. 3 at approximately 9:53 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 6,000 block of North Illinois Route 2. After investigation, deputies placed Philip Asbell, 38, of Byron, under arrest for driving while license revoked and an active Ogle County failure to appear driving under the influence warrant. Asbell was additionally issued citations for an inoperable registration light

and operating an uninsured vehicle. Asbell was transported to the Ogle County Jail, where he was released on a notice to appear for the traffic violations and held in lieu of bond on the warrant.

On Feb. 4 at approximately 12:51 a.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 1,000 block of South Chana Road. After investigation, deputies placed Kelsey Osborne, 33, of Chana, under arrest for driving under the influence of alcohol. Osborne was additionally issued citations for failure to signal and failure to obey a stop sign. Osborne was transported to the Ogle County Jail where she was released on a notice to appear.

On Feb. 4 at approximately 2:49 p.m. deputies initiated a traffic stop at Illinois Route 251 and Flagg Road in Rochelle. After further investigation deputies arrested Misael Ocampo-Nolasco, 46, of Rochelle, for driving while license revoked. Misael was released on a notice to appear with a future court date given.

On Feb. 4 at approxi-

mately 11:20 p.m. deputies initiated a traffic stop on Interstate 39 at mile marker 108 northbound. After further investigation deputies arrested Adrian Piceno, 36, of Rockford, for driving while license suspended. Adrian was released on a notice to appear with a future court date given.

On Feb. 4 at approximately 3:20 p.m. deputies responded to 213 N. Prairie St. in Creston in reference to an unwanted subject. After a brief investigation, Matthew L. Hurst, 39, of Rochelle, was placed under arrest for two Ogle County failure to appear warrants. Hurst was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he awaited an appearance before a judge.

On Feb. 5 at approximately 6:36 a.m. Katie Hintzsche, 36, of Mt. Morris turned herself in on an outstanding failure to appear Ogle County warrant. Hintzsche appeared in court was released on a recognition bond. Hintzsche will return to court on Feb. 26.

All individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty.

ROCHELLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

ROCHELLE — On Feb. 2, Brandon S. Bergsman, 36, of Rochelle was arrested on an outstanding DeKalb County warrant. He was released on a notice to appear with a Feb. 13 court date.

On Feb. 2, Kassandra D. Crisp, 32, of Rochelle was

cited for no valid registration. She signed a promise to comply and was given a March 1 Rochelle court date.

On Feb. 2, Uriah L. Maack, 45, of Malta was cited for speeding 50 miles per hour in a 30 miles per hour zone. He signed a promise to comply and was given a March 1 Rochelle court date.

On Feb. 2, Hector Deleon III, 18, of Rochelle was cited for speeding 67 miles per hour in a 40 miles per hour zone. He signed a promise to comply and was given a March 1 Rochelle court date.

On Feb. 2, Nicholas R. Tuligowski, 27, of Rochelle was cited for disobeying a stop sign. He

signed a promise to comply and was given a March 1 Rochelle court date.

On Feb. 2 at 4:34 p.m. Diego E. Cacique, 19, of Rochelle was cited for failure to yield from private drive. He signed a promise to comply and was given a March 1 Rochelle court date.

On Feb. 3, Patricia Mandujano, 41, of Rochelle was arrested for retail theft. She was released on a notice to appear with a March 8 Ogle County court date.

On Feb. 3 at 1:15 p.m. Kristi L. Sanz, 52, of Rodgers, Minnesota was cited for disobeying a traffic control device. She signed a promise to comply and was given a March 15 Rochelle court date.

Chris A. Hildredth

ROCHELLE — Chris A. Hildredth, 59, of Rochelle passed away Feb. 2, 2024. He was born Jan. 20, 1965. A private family service will be held at a later date.

Seeking RTHS Class of 1994 grads

ROCHELLE — People from the Rochelle Township High School graduating class of 1994 are being sought out to inform them about an upcoming class reunion. If you have contact information about any of the

following people please email Elicia Hulmes (Sage) at lish8@usa.net. Thank you.

Adam Campbell, Ryan Daugherty, Sarah Davis, Amber Ericksen, Jason Fawcett, David Floyd, Jennifer Headley, Kathy

Hernandez, Jennifer Joseph, Patrick Kessen, Amy Lieving (Seebach), Jeremiah O'Rorke, Chanda Ramsey (Von Heimburg), Hannah Ruehlman, Amy Rush, Scott Stecker, Nathan Trujillo, and Lisa VanDyke.

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USPS (467-820) ISSN (1075-2811)
 Published every Wednesday and Sunday by Rochelle Newspapers Inc. at 211 E. State Route 38, Rochelle, IL 61068. Periodical postage paid at Rochelle, IL 61068. Postmaster send address changes to the Rochelle News-Leader, P.O. Box 46, Rochelle, IL 61068. Subscription rates are \$139.99 per year by mail in Ogle County. Outside county rate is \$149.99 per year. No mail delivery in newspaper-carrier serviced areas. The circulation department is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. If you are a carrier subscriber and your paper does not arrive, contact Kelly White at 561-2112.

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BY TAMMIE SLOUP
FARMWEEK

FARMING continues to be a family business, with 97% of U.S. farms family-owned and accounting for 90% of farm production.

While most U.S. farms are small family farms (gross cash farm income less than \$350,000), these farms operate on 46% of U.S. agricultural land and account for 19% of the total value of production.

Statistics like these are outlined in USDA's 2023 America's Farms and Ranches at a Glance report released Dec. 12. The annual report dives into U.S. farm characteristics using data collected from 19,100 farms in 2022.

The survey was conducted by the National Agricultural Statistics Service and Economic Research Service (ERS).

Large-scale family farms (gross cash farm income of \$1 million or more) accounted for 52% of the total value of production and 25% of agricultural land in 2022. Midsize family farms (farm income between \$350,000 and \$999,999) accounted for 21% of agricultural land and 19% of the total value of production.

"We can see large-scale family farms dominate the production of most commodities, including beef, hogs, cash grains and soybeans, cotton, dairy and specialty crops, and the remaining commodities, poultry and eggs and hay, small family farms and mid-sized family farms dominate the production," co-author and ERS

Agricultural Economist Katherine Lacy said during a webinar.

Nonfamily farms accounted for the remaining 3% of farms, and 16% had a farm income of \$1 million or more.

Most small family farms have an operating profit margin (OPM), or share of gross income that is profit, of less than 10%, indicating potentially more financial vulnerability, while most midsize, large and very large family farms reported OPMs above 10% in 2022.

"Compared with 2021, the percentage of small family farms in the low-risk zone increased or remained the same in 2022," according to the report. "All other farm types showed a decline in the percentage of farms in the low-risk zone in 2022 relative to 2021."

"This could be due in part to the large increase in prices received compared to the smaller increase in input costs in 2022, resulting in record-high net farm income," according to the report. "However, these returns were not equally distributed across all commodities."

Farm households, in general, were not considered low income or low wealth. In 2022, median farm household income (including both farm and off-farm income sources) exceeded that for all U.S. households but was lower than the median income of all U.S. households with self-employment income.

As in previous years, the median total income of all U.S. family farm households (\$95,418) was greater in 2022 than the



(PHOTO BY CATRINA RAWSON)

Farming continues to be a family business, with 97% of U.S. farms family-owned and accounting for 90% of farm production.

median income of all U.S. households (\$74,580). The median total household income for all family farms in 2022 increased from \$92,239 in 2021.

"About 84% of all U.S. farm households earn the majority of their total household income from off-farm sources and often use off-farm income to cover some portion of farm expenses," the report states. "As farm size increases, the percentage of households relying on off-farm income decreases."

And while self-employment and wage/salary jobs are the primary sources of off-farm income for farm households, unearned off-farm income sources (public and private pensions, interest and dividend payments, asset sales, Social Security payments, and other income sources) provide a significant share of off-farm income relative to total off-farm income."

Overall, 13% of farms participated in federal crop insurance in 2022, with participation varying by commodity. About 62% of row crop farms purchased federal crop insurance. In contrast, 9% of farms growing specialty crops purchased federal crop insurance.

Small family farms received 78% of all payments from USDA's Conservation Reserve Program, which removes environmentally sensitive cropland from production and increasingly enrolls grasslands in support of grazing operations. In contrast, 62% of all Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) working-land program payments were received by midsize family farms, large-scale family farms, and nonfamily farms. These programs include NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Pro-

gram and Conservation Stewardship Program, both of which incentivize adopting certain agricultural production practices.

Overall, 25% of all farms reported receiving some type of government payment in 2022, a decline from 34% in 2021 and 40% in 2020. The decline is largely due to the tapering of COVID-19-related assistance payments, according to the report.

The report also contains two new sections: usage of credit by lender type and farm size, and the differences in farm operations by race and ethnicity of the operators.

With credit usage, about 26% of all U.S. farms held any debt in 2022, and the majority of farms with debt used one lender. Over half of these farms reported loans owed to a commercial bank, compared to 8 to 10% with loans serviced by USDA, Farm Service

Agency, and 31 to 43% with loans serviced by the Farm Credit System.

Among socially disadvantaged farms, non-Hispanic Black farms differ most compared to non-Hispanic White farms in terms of size, specialization and financial outcomes. Non-Hispanic Black farms are more likely to specialize in cattle production and be classified as intermediate rather than residence or commercial farms. They also are more likely to have an operating profit margin in the high- or medium-risk zones and are less likely to report the use of debt.

To read the full report, visit bit.ly/41dLk3.

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

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LOCAL VIEWS

GUEST COLUMN

Agriculture needs a stable workforce in 2024

FINDING and affording labor are among the top challenges Illinois farmers, suppliers and processors tell me they face in 2024.

From locating qualified truck drivers to haul grain, to sourcing enough hands to pick vegetables or manage livestock, the shortage of links in the transportation and agricultural supply chains continues to undermine food access and threaten the financial health of farms in Illinois and nationwide.

I spotlighted last spring in a FarmWeek column the shortage of available local labor to fill valuable agricultural jobs. This shortfall has existed in rural communities for years, was amplified during the COVID pandemic and continues to grow.

This reality has ultimately led more farmers to depend on immigrant workers, with producers turning to options like the H-2A temporary agricultural program, the

H-2B temporary non-agricultural worker program or the trade national visa program for skilled workers classified as nonimmigrants.

Those who have navigated the H-2A program know just how cumbersome and expensive the program has become, chiefly due to its unsustainable and unpredictable wage increases and misguided rulemaking.

Illinois farmers can expect more of the same this upcoming growing season, as the state's Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) is set to increase 6% from 2023. Nationwide, farmers planning to use H-2A workers in 2024 will have to raise wages in some states up to 15%, according to calculations by American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF).

Contributing to this increase are eight new rules advanced by the U.S. Department of Labor in 2023. One rule, finalized in March, impacts how a state's AEWR is calcu-

lated. Specifically, the rule disaggregates wage rates by job function and derives the new rates from non-farm data, which does not reflect market wages for ag employees. Ag employers will be required to pay the rates, regardless of their inaccuracies or what percentage of an employee's contract they devote to certain tasks.

This new rulemaking alone is estimated to add double-digit increases in labor costs, according to AFBF.

In fact, this is the sixth straight year of elevated wage growth for H-2A workers, with the rate of hourly wage growth outpacing all other private employees. H-2A employers will also face additional program costs stemming from required housing and transportation for workers.

For smaller farming

operations, many of which are interested in hiring just one or two temporary workers, the complexity of the process and the cost of complying with new requirements will be especially detrimental.

I have met with Midwest state Farm Bureau presidents and the AFBF Board of Directors to discuss all the difficulties

farmers are facing with labor and with the H-2A program, specifically.

One of the biggest challenges in trying to find solutions in this space is that legislative and regulatory remedies soon become entangled in the broader discussion of immigration reform. Congress in past years has tried and failed to advance many pieces of legislation around immigration. The Dignity Act of 2023 was the latest attempt.

This type of broad legislation eventually becomes the home for

divisive political issues like employer liability protection and private right of action, the annual number of visas allowed, visa holder touchback requirements and expedited immigration processes. These kinds of polarizing issues make passage of any legislation difficult.

In light of this, AFBF board members decided farm needs were urgent enough to prioritize two immediate legislative solutions: a freeze of wages at 2023 levels for three years and a rollback of the DOL's AEWR methodology that was enacted in March.

AFBF President Zippy Duvall sent a letter in December, calling on congressional leaders to look for any opportunity to enact these legislative priorities. Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) has followed up with our congressional delegation expressing both the urgency of the problem and the critical need for solutions.

Illinois farmers are

committed to paying a fair wage, but they cannot pay well beyond the means of their farm incomes, which are forecast to fall this year.

Along with completing the vital work of the 2023 farm bill, IFB is also committed to working with elected officials from both parties in 2024 to find meaningful ways to modernize guestworker programs and stabilize our workforce.

Solutions to worker shortages in the U.S. agricultural supply chain are needed to not only ensure farms remain economically sustainable, but more importantly maintain food security, and, ultimately, our national security.

Brian Duncan of Polo and Ogle County is the Illinois Farm Bureau president. This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.



Brian Duncan

Managing dating while in recovery from addiction

BEING in recovery, especially in the early stages, has its ups and downs. Dating is not necessarily a top priority for everyone, but it's nice to have companionship.

Days like Valentine's Day can bring up negative emotions and feelings; for some, there is a longing to pursue a romantic relationship while in recovery.

Generally, most health professionals recommend that people in early recovery from substance abuse wait about one year before pursuing a new relationship. Yet this general rule is not set in stone, as every

circumstance is completely unique.

There are risks and benefits to being in a relationship while in recovery, and if you are at a crossroads, there are practical tips and advice you can consider. This can potentially help avoid relapse or a risky situation.

Overdose risks are significant in Illinois, and many of them occur because of relapse. Since 2013, synthetic opioid overdose deaths increased by 2,736%, and heroin overdose deaths increased by 80%.

Consider some of the following advice to help you out in your deci-

sion-making.

Initially, you'll want to assess your personal readiness for dating in sobriety. This may involve some self-reflection about whether you want to pursue relationships or not. Looking inward helps you determine your emotional stability and self-awareness to begin a healthy relationship.

Additionally, you will want to evaluate your motives for dating. This will ensure they align with a genuine connection you are seeking and not simply fill a void.

Before entering the dating world, it's a good idea to be confident in your sobriety, have a strong support network, and even a relapse prevention plan.

Consider some of the following tips to help you out.

Set clear boundaries and communicate your sobriety and preferences openly when you feel comfortable. This could be done at any stage, but

generally based on your comfort level with the person you are engaging with. It's generally wise to go alcohol-free or choose

mocktails or alcohol-free drinks. It is challenging to select alcohol-free venues, as most places serve alcohol in some capacity. Ideally, you are choosing people who respect your choices and boundaries.

Use your support system or consider sober dating apps, which are plentiful in today's tech age. There are generally numerous sober communities you can lean on and meet like-minded people.

Finally, prioritize your self-care and do not lose focus on your sobriety. As cliché as this sounds, there is someone for everybody. Remember, the right

partner will respect your commitment to sobriety.

Do not let Valentine's Day bring you down for any reason, and don't feel obligated to pursue relationships to fill a void. Everything happens in time, which means there is ample opportunity to pursue meaningful friendships and better relationships with family.

Jody Boulay is a mother of two with a passion for helping others. She currently works as a Community Outreach Coordinator for DRS to help spread awareness of the dangers of drugs and alcohol.



Jody Boulay

Rochelle News Leader — New political letter policy

THE Rochelle News-Leader is implementing a new political letter policy.

We will now be accepting election letters endorsing or advocating for or against a ballot measure, party or candidate as paid advertising announcement. The fee is \$25 minimum for a 200-word letter and 10

cents a word for additional words over 250. Like other letters to the editor, the writer's name, address and phone number are required. Phone numbers and exact addresses are not published. We have the right to reject letters which don't meet publishing standards and will determine if the letter qualifies as a paid

endorsement. Paid letters will be identified with a label and may or may not appear on the opinion/letters page.

Most newspapers that have adopted this approach cite one main reason: Political campaigns for years have used newspaper opinion pages for what amounts to free advertising. As these

letter-writing campaigns become more widespread and sophisticated - some campaigns even pay people to write letters to the editor - newspapers are flooded with requests to publish them, especially in the run-up to elections.

Will we still publish letters complaining about the county board or school

board? Yes. But if you want others to vote for or against a candidate, or for or against an issue on the ballot, you will need to pay a fee. Not a large fee - \$25 for up to 200 words.

Some key dates to keep in mind for political endorsement letters:

The primary election is Tuesday, March 19, 2024.

The last batch of letters that endorse candidates for this election will be printed in the Wednesday, March 13, 2024 issue of The Rochelle News-Leader must be received by noon on Monday, March 11, 2024.

To submit a letter, email Managing Editor Jeff Helfrich at jhelfrich@rochellenews-leader.com.

How to contact government officials

U.S. Con. Darin LaHood
1424 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C.
20515
(202) 225-6201

IL Sen. Win Stoller
Stratton Office Bldg
Springfield, IL 62706
(217) 782-1942

IL Rep. Bradley Fritts
Stratton Office Bldg
Springfield, IL 62706
(217) 782-0535

Have a letter you want to submit to us? Send it to news@rochellenews-leader.com

KEEPING YOU IN TOUCH WITH YOUR LOCAL LEADERS

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Reid Elliot	
Jennifer Payton	

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Rochelle News-Leader encourages responsible letters to the editor on subjects of interest to our readers. Editing may be necessary for space, clarity or to avoid obscenity or libel, but ideas will not be altered. All letters must bear the handwritten signature of the writer and include address and phone number or e-mail address for verification purposes. Neither the street address nor phone number will be printed. Letters should be typed

or legibly handwritten, and no anonymous letters will be published. Any letters from boards or organizations must include at least one name of an individual. Any criticism of public officials should be limited to issues related strictly to their position or actions made in office, as personal attacks will not be published. Letters involving private disputes between the writer and a business will not be published. Political endorsements will be published,

however letters from candidates endorsing themselves will not be printed. Letters may be dropped at the News-Leader office (211 IL Route 38 East), mailed to the News-Leader (P.O. Box 46, Rochelle, IL 61068) or e-mailed (news@rochellenews-leader.com.) The News-Leader reserves the right to edit or reject any letter to the editor for any reason, and letters chosen for publication do not necessarily reflect the views of this newspaper.

COMMUNITY

Nominate faculty, staff for the 2024 Kishwaukee College Awards of Excellence

MALTA—Kishwaukee College is currently accepting nominations for the 2024 Awards of Excellence. The Kishwaukee College Board of Trustees sponsors the annual program, which recognizes outstanding employees for their contributions to the mission of Kishwaukee College.

Community members, students and employees are encouraged to submit entries highlighting the dedicated efforts of Kish faculty and staff.

All full-time employees, part-time employees and adjunct faculty members (other than cabinet-level administrators) are eligible to be nominated for an award. The five award categories are Full-Time Faculty, Part-Time Faculty, Support Staff, Professional Staff and Part-Time Staff. Kish has held the awards annually since 1990.

Nominations will be accepted until 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 15. To submit a nomination form or learn more about the Awards of Excellence, visit kish.edu/excellence.

Kishwaukee College announces Fall 2023 Part-Time Student Honors List

MALTA—Kishwaukee College has announced the students named to the Fall 2023 Part-Time Student Honors List. To be eligible for this honor, a student must have completed a minimum of six (but less than 12) semester hours of college-level courses at Kish with a grade point average of 3.5 or higher. The following students have been named to the Kishwaukee College Fall 2023 Part-Time Student Honors List:

Ashton — Jennah Asbury, Kelsie Bell, and Ryan Sage.

Esmond — Patrick Vannetten, and Miriam Wagenaar.

Kings — Michelle McCandless.

Rochelle — Kendal Ansteth, Vanessa Avolio, Kyleigh Boehle, Alex Burnette, Tatnai Carcasses Suarez, Marili Cervantes, Allison Cole, Hunter Dalen, Martin Garcia, Ester Gomero Tamayo, Katrina Hada, Tiffany Hardcastle, Julissa Hernandez, Graciela Hernandez, Jaderi Ibarra, Ellie Kinn, Lindsey Lidren, Michelle Lopez, Kaden Lovett, Ceceilia Martinez, Jaime Martinez, Kaylee May, Alexander McBride, David Menez, Monique Murray, Sarah O'Connor, Michelle Ocampo, Kaitlynn Ost, Troy Papke, Nathan Sergeant, Jason Sims, Cierra Thomas, Sandra Torres, Autumn True, Humberto Valdez, Alexavier Villatoro, Morgan West, and Asher Wiegartz.

THE KITCHEN TABLE MENU

7034 S. Klondike Road | Rochelle, IL 61068 | 815-561-9074

If you would like to volunteer with us, please email us at kitchentablerochelle@gmail.com

February 8 – (Thursday) – BBQ Baby Back Ribs, Pasta Salad, Baked Potatoes

February 13 – (Tuesday) – CLOSED

February 15 – (Thursday) – (Served by Lineage) – Bone In or Boneless Pork Chops, Cilantro Rice, Roasted Veggies, Dinner Rolls

February 20 – (Tuesday) – CLOSED

February 22 – (Thursday) – Chicken Fritters with Mashed Potatoes, Country Gravy, Green Beans, Corn

February 27 – (Tuesday) – CLOSED

February 29 – (Thursday) – Spaghetti with Meat Sauce, Salad, Bosco Sticks

KIDS MENU: Chicken Nuggets w/ Fries OR Hot Dogs with Chips

****All menus are subject to change. If you would like to check before coming out, please call us at 815-561-9074 www.KitchenTableRochelle.org**

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Feb. 7 Lydia Sherburne Alex Bonilla	Feb. 12 Jennifer Toppett	Feb. 20 Christian Losoya	Feb. 27 Beth Bolhous
Feb. 8 Kaiyah Hayward	Feb. 13 Gabby Villalobos	Feb. 21 Kris Oleson Anna Sexton	Feb. 28 Lucas Donoho
Feb. 10 Gene & Judy Messer (anniversary)	Feb. 16 Larry Baker	Feb. 22 Jessica South Lucy Hazlip	March 2 Addison Perkins
Feb. 11 Paige Donoho Samantha Donoho Darrell Bolhous	Feb. 18 Sam & Jessica South (anniversary)	Feb. 26 Natalie Powell	March 5 Briggs Bridgeman
	Feb. 19 Sven Norris Joachim Lopez		March 6 Nicole King

Call 815-561-2151 to submit names for birthdays and anniversaries



2024 From The Heart Calendar

Celebrating 16 Years of Giving

\$20

Jan. 12 - Molly Sly, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 13 - Rochelle Area Community Foundation, \$25

Jan. 14 - Rochelle Area Community Foundation, \$50

Jan. 15 - Karen Anderson, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 16 - Tina Graber, Palatine, \$25

Jan. 17 - Connie Manning, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 18 - Jordan Blume, Oregon, \$25

Jan. 19 - Tim Isley, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 20 - Debbie Belmonte, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 21 - Shane Huber, Rochelle, \$50

Jan. 22 - Focus House, \$25

Jan. 23 - Amy Hayden, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 24 - Kyle Aldridge, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 25 - Hayat Taour, Oregon, \$25

Jan. 26 - Ashley Bick, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 27 - Titus Williamson, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 28 - Aubrey Headon, Rochelle, \$50

Jan. 29 - Mike Scott, Forreston, \$25

Jan. 30 - Joe Williams, Rochelle, \$25

Jan. 31 - From the Heart, Rochelle, \$25

Feb. 1 - Rochelle Area Community Foundation, \$25

Feb. 2 - Melody Worthington, Rochelle, \$25

Feb. 3 - Sofie Meyers, Rochelle, \$250

Feb. 4 - Mercedes Barrientos, Rochelle, \$50

Feb. 5 - Allison Wagner-Huntley, Byron, \$25

Feb. 6 - From the Heart, \$25

Feb. 7 - Judith Koelzer, Friena, Texas, \$25

Coffee Break

King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Pt. of a sentence

5 Skirt edge

8 Some Gls

12 Nest setting

13 Commotion

14 Inter —

15 Admin. aide

16 Prepared

18 Fake fireplace fixture

20 Baker Street sleuth

21 Competent

23 Roman 151

24 Started

28 Editor Wintour

31 Prior night

32 Wrap up by

34 Martini ingredient

35 Painter

37 Coexisted

39 Chinese chairman

41 "Not so fast!"

42 Pub game fodder

45 Honor

49 Matured

51 Jazzy James

52 Robert of "The Sopranos"

53 Census stat

54 Winter fall

55 Suffix with song or gab

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13			14			
15				16			17			
18				19		20				
21			22		23					
24	25	26				27		28	29	30
31			32			33		34		
35			36		37			38		
39		40		41						
42	43			44		45		46	47	48
49					50			51		
52				53				54		
55				56				57		

56 Chic, to

57 Catches some rays

10 Funny — (2003 Derby winner)

11 Utters

17 Sinbad's bird

19 Slender

22 Fund

24 Jewel

25 Eggs

26 Little home wreckers?

27 Amassed

29 Diarist Anais

30 "Life of Pi" director Lee

33 New Mexico resort

36 Frolic

38 Most recent

40 Tin Man's need

42 Pre-weekend yell

43 Actor's quest

44 Driver of "Logan Lucky"

46 Sicilian peak

47 Thames town

48 Gulleets

50 Conceit

DOWN

1 Men-only

2 — Major

3 Porgy's love

4 Air travel fatigue

5 Negotiating a price

6 Tokyo, once

7 Closet invader

8 Spanish dish

9 Pink wading bird

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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CryptoQuip

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

Clue: Y equals O

HIQ MY YU WMYSV VNLUT WHX

ZFIWT QCY LYSFXH'V ZNHX

BKYBIK CYTVT:

"BWKWTNVIT FYTV."

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Answer

Weekly SUDOKU

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Solution time: 22 mins.

Answers

King Crossword


New book about ticks and fleas who couldn't find proper hosts: "Parasites Lost."


answer


CryptoQuip





9 Biggest Benefits Of Shopping Rochelle First


- 


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- 


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- 


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- 

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

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- 

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.
- 

One word: Jobs. When you do business of any kind in Rochelle, 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.



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SPORTS



ROYALS TAKE THE COURT

The RMS girls basketball teams continued conference action this past week.

See page 3 for more details

RTHS Wrestling



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

The Rochelle Hub varsity wrestling team won the IHSA 2A Rochelle Regional on Saturday, clinching a bid in the IHSA Dual Team Sectional at Rochelle later this month. The team also advanced 10 individuals to the IHSA 2A Sycamore Sectional, which will be held from Feb. 9-10.

Hubs take home the title

Rochelle matmen win IHSA 2A Regional Championship Saturday afternoon

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE — The Rochelle Hub varsity wrestling team crowned four individual champions and brought home the team title during Saturday's IHSA 2A Rochelle Regional. It's Rochelle's first regional championship as a team

since the 2017-18 season, when the Hubs defeated Ottawa at the dual-team sectional and brought home the fourth-place trophy at the dual-team state meet.

Sophomore Freddie Hernandez (28-12) was the first Rochelle athlete to secure a regional crown on Saturday. The No. 1 seed in the 106-pound bracket,

Hernandez took a first-round bye into the semifinals, where the sophomore scored a 27-second fall over Rockford East's Tyler Gentry. Hernandez battled Sycamore's Charlie Olson for the regional championship, recording three takedowns and an escape to emerge with a 7-2 decision and his first regional title.

"It means a lot to me because I feel like I improved a lot from last year," Hernandez said. "I've been working hard and we've put in a lot of hard work as a team. I've been practicing hard in the room and we have good coaches. My practice partner Keagan [Albers] has been pushing me. I love this sport and I'm

excited for more wrestling. I love this team and we've been through a lot."

Junior Xavier Villalobos (37-1) was next to grab a regional title for the Hubs (23-6, 5-0 Interstate 8). Villalobos cruised through the 126-pound bracket on Saturday, receiving a first-round bye before using 43 seconds to notch a fall over

Rockford East's Rafael Esquer Santana. Villalobos had no issues in the finals, scoring a 19-3 technical fall over Woodstock's Taqi Baker. Villalobos compiled six takedowns and added two three-point near falls in his regional championship win.

See TITLE page 6

RTHS Girls Bowling

Lady Hubs finish fifth at IHSA Rockford East Regional

Vincent and Liezert earn at-large sectional qualifying berths Saturday evening

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCKFORD—Senior bowler Kenzie Liezert fired five strikes over her first six frames to roll a season-best 212 in the fifth game of the IHSA Rockford East Regional at Don Carter Lanes on Saturday. It was a new career-best score for Liezert, who showed consistency throughout the tournament and finished with a 1,069 series to qualify for the IHSA Sycamore Sectional.

"I threw a lot of strikes and I picked up my spares," Liezert said. "I was picking up my spares in my previous games, but I wasn't getting as many strikes. I started the 212 game with three strikes and that really boosted myself up. I was really proud of myself because there were a lot of things I wanted to accomplish during the time we were bowling. I was really proud of how our team did, especially considering the teams we were up against. We all bowled really well."

Liezert was one of two individuals on the Rochelle Lady Hub varsity bowling team who earned at-large

qualifying berths for the sectional tournament, which will be held at Mardi Gras Lanes on Saturday, Feb. 10. Junior Cassidy Vincent fired an 1,167 series to finish seventh overall and lead the Lady Hubs (10-6, 6-4 Interstate 8) to fifth place out of 13 teams in the regional meet. Vincent will be making her third sectional appearance, while Liezert will be making her second.

"It was one of my biggest goals during the high school season and for it to be my third year too, it made me really happy," Vincent said. "I was really confident all day and I was comfortable. I was able to read the lanes for most of the day and I was really good about pacing myself. That helped me keep my numbers higher for most of the day. I'm a lot less sheltered now and I know what to expect. I know the competition will be better and I can control my emotions a lot better."

Liezert opened the tournament with a 549 series over the first three games, rolling consecutive scores of 178, 197 and 174. The senior, who helped the Lady Hubs reach sectionals as a

team last season, bowed out with a 520 series over the final three games, which included scores of 158, 212 and 150. Rochelle concluded the regional tournament with a final score of 5,062.

"Having a positive attitude really helped me," Liezert said. "Everybody was in a good mood and I was in a good mood, so that definitely helped me stay up. I also had good energy, which helped me because I tend to get extremely tired throughout the tournament... I'm looking forward to the experience because we made it as a team last season and it's just Cassidy and I this time, so it'll be interesting to see how everything is set up. I'm also excited to meet new people."

Vincent bowled a 612 series over her first three games, throwing back-to-back scores of 212 and 215 before cooling off with a 185. The junior cracked open a series-best 234 in the fourth round and concluded the tournament with scores of 151 and 170 to seal a sectional bid.

Senior Anahi Alanis finished 32nd overall with a



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Rochelle Lady Hub varsity bowlers Makenzie Liezert (left) and Cassidy Vincent (right) qualified out of the IHSA Rockford East Regional on Saturday. The two will compete in the IHSA Sycamore Sectional on Saturday, Feb. 10.

978 series and a high score of 182, while sophomore Kylie McCullough took

33rd overall with a 975 series and a high score of 189. Senior Faith Adams

rounded out the Rochelle lineup with an 863 series and a 174 high score.



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**Brandin
Kirk**

Year: Freshman

Sport: Wrestling

Q: How many years have you been playing this sport?

A: 10 years.

Q: What do you enjoy most about this sport?

A: Being able to be around friends.

Q: What is your favorite school subject and why?

A: Math because I'm really good at it and I like it.

Q: Who is your favorite athlete and why?

A: Travis Kelce because he's a very funny guy, he's good at the sport he plays and he works hard.

Q: Who is your biggest role model and why?

A: My dad because he's very good at his work and I want to work where he works.

Q: What is your dream job and why?

A: To work at Intren because my dad works there and I like electrical work.

Q: Where would your dream vacation be and why?

A: I want to go to Italy.

Q: What is your favorite thing about being a student-athlete at RTHS?

A: I get to be coached by some of the best coaches out there and I get to play with some of the best athletes out there.

**Josh
Lassiter**

Year: Freshman

Sport: Wrestling



Q: How many years have you been playing this sport?

A: This is my seventh year.

Q: What do you enjoy most about this sport?

A: Competing with my teammates.

Q: What is your favorite school subject and why?

A: Lunch because it's easy.

Q: Who is your favorite athlete and why?

A: LeBron James because he inspires me.

Q: Who is your biggest role

model and why?

A: Bobby Tourdot because he pushes me.

Q: What is your dream job and why?

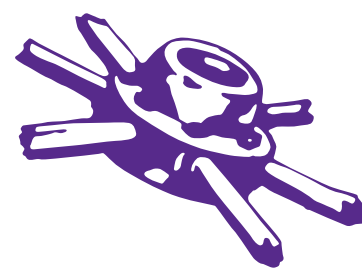
A: To be a coach so I can keep wrestling.

Q: Where would your dream vacation be and why?

A: The Bahamas because I think it's nice there.

Q: What is your favorite thing about being a student-athlete at RTHS?

A: The team is my favorite part.



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SPORTS

RMS Girls Basketball

(PHOTOS BY ROBIN RETHWILL)



Seventh and eighth-graders take the court in North Central Junior Conference action

The Rochelle Middle School Lady Royal basketball teams took the court this past week for games against Belvidere South and Burlington Central. The seventh-graders cruised over Belvidere South 41-1 and the eighth-graders fell against Burlington Central 39-21. Above, Kaliyah Cathina (left) grabs a rebound and Madison Ludwig (right) dribbles around a defender. Below, Elise Hardcastle (left), Chloe Escatel (center) and Alivia Law (right) all put shots up.

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ASHTON NEWS

(COURTESY PHOTOS)



Ashton-Franklin Center Elementary School participates in Global School Play Day

On Feb. 1, students at Ashton-Franklin Center Elementary School participated in Global School Play Day today where they played for one hour. Students were allowed to bring anything they wished to play with without batteries or electricity. Students played without screens or structure for the hour, and the exercise aids in social, emotional, communication, cognitive, creative and physical needs.

Lee County Farm Bureau Foundation scholarships offered

AMBOY — Applications for the Lee County Farm Bureau Foundation Scholarships are now available on the Lee County Farm Bureau Foundation website, www.lcfbfoundation.org. Applicants must be a Lee County Farm Bureau member or dependent of a Lee County Farm Bureau member in good standing and be pursuing a major in an agricultural or agricultural-related field of study in his or her college curriculum (ac-

credited college, university or community college) for fall 2024.

The Lee County Farm Bureau Foundation scholarship(s) for area high school seniors, will be in the amount of \$1,500. The number of scholarships awarded will be determined based on number of qualified applicants and upon the availability of funds.

The Larry J. Green Memorial scholarship will be one (1) scholarship in the

amount of \$1,500 to a high school senior.

The Gentry Family Agriculture Scholarship will be one (1) scholarship in the amount of \$1,500 to a high school senior.

The Lee County Farm Bureau Foundation will also offer one (1) \$1,500 scholarship to a current undergraduate student.

The Sylvan & Virginia Leffelman "Leave a Legacy" Scholarship will be one (1) \$1,000 scholarship

to a student seeking post-secondary education including Trade School.

The Lee County Farm Bureau Foundation has also established a scholarship, ranging from \$500-1,000 to a student attending Sauk Valley Community College and participating in their new ag program.

The Lee County Farm Bureau Foundation also offers a Veterinary Scholarship which will award up to \$2,500 for students enroll-

ing in their third or fourth year in veterinary School concentrating in large animal studies.

The mission of the Lee County Farm Bureau Foundation is to fund and encourage ag related educational opportunities to the youth of Lee County through programs including scholarships, Books by the Bushel, and Ag in the Classroom. Complete details on eligibility for consideration and criteria for awarding the

scholarship are detailed in the scholarship application. To obtain an application visit the Lee County Farm Bureau Foundation's website, www.lcfbfoundation.org, or if you have any questions, please contact the Lee County Farm Bureau office by phone, (815) 857-3531 or by email, leecfb@comcast.net.

Applications are due to the Lee County Farm Bureau office by no later than Feb. 15.

AFC Lady Raider basketball team scores four victories

ASHTON — The Ashton-Franklin Center varsity girls basketball team played a nail-biter against Hinckley-Big Rock on Friday, Jan. 26, winning 39-35. Brianna Gonnerman led the Lady Raiders with 16 points, while Alexis Schwarz and Taylor Jahn each added 11 points in the victory.

The Ashton-Franklin Center varsity girls basketball team fell just short against Orangeville on Tuesday, Jan. 30, conceding a 48-42 loss despite seven different Lady Raider players scoring points. Brianna Gonnerman led the team with 12 points, while Reese Polk and Cameryn Winter-

land each tallied six points. Alexis Schwarz, Taylor Jahn and Claire Freeman each finished with five points, while Audree Dorn rounded out the lineup with three points.

The Ashton-Franklin Center varsity girls basketball team cruised for a 61-12 win over Milledgeville on

Wednesday, Jan. 31. Taylor Jahn exploded for 30 points in the victory, while Brianna Gonnerman added 12 points and Audree Dorn chipped in five points. Cameryn Winterland also scored five points and Jersey Sprague totaled four points for the Lady Raiders.

The Ashton-Franklin

Center varsity girls basketball team coasted for a 49-15 win over Earlville on Thursday, Feb. 1. Brianna Gonnerman led the Lady Raiders with 16 points, while Taylor Jahn added 11 points and Alexis Schwarz totaled 10 points. Cameryn Winterland scored eight points.

The Ashton-Franklin Center varsity girls basketball team outlasted Amboy for a 32-27 win on Saturday, Feb. 4. Taylor Jahn and Cameryn Winterland each scored nine points for the Lady Raiders, while Brianna Gonnerman added eight points in the win over the Clippers.

Rueff named to Elmhurst University's fall 2023 dean's list

ELMHURST — Over 950 Elmhurst University students were named to the fall 2023 dean's list, including Olivia Rueff of Franklin Grove. The dean's list is composed of students who during the term concerned, attained a grade-point average of 3.75 or higher (out of a possible 4.0).

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Notice is given of the death of MARJORIE E. COLLINS of Polo, Ogle County, Illinois.
Letters of Office were issued on November 2nd 2023 to JEFFREY COLLINS whose address is 16994 West Canada Road, Polo, IL 61064, and whose attorney is DAVID D. TESS of Tess, Crull & Arnquist, LLC, P.O. Box 68, Rochelle, Ogle County, Illinois 61068. Claims against the Estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of the Ogle County Courthouse, Oregon, IL 61061, or with the representative, or both, within six (6) months from the date of the first publication of this claim notice and any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the Attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.
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SPORTS



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

The Rochelle Hub varsity wrestling team saw 10 athletes earn medals during the IHSA 2A Rochelle Regional on Saturday. Above from left to right are Deegan Schabacker, Freddie Hernandez, Brock Metzger, Keagan Albers, Kaiden Morris, Xavier Villalobos, Grant Gensler, Tommy Tourdot, Brenden Voight and Roman Villalobos.

TITLE: Rochelle wrestlers win IHSA 2A Regional on Saturday afternoon

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“It’s a big deal for us and we’ve been preaching all year that we’re looking forward to making a run to the team state meet and doing something great,” Villalobos said. “It feels good to prove ourselves as we look to accomplish that goal. My keys were on offense and keeping the pace up. I was able to get my opponents moving to where I was able to be successful. I’m looking forward to more time in the room with this team. These guys and this community are like family.”

Junior Grant Gensler (34-5) brought home Rochelle’s third regional title of the afternoon, rolling through the 165-pound bracket after a first-round bye and two victories. Gensler earned a fall over Sycamore’s Adam Carrick in the semifinal round and held off Rockford East’s Malachi Cannon for a 5-0 decision in the finals, scoring four first-period points to emerge victorious.

“It means a lot because we’ve worked hard to get this done and we were able to come out and execute,” Gensler said. “We’ve been drilling hard in the room and my drilling partner Brenden [Voight] has been great. Our coaches have also been giving me extra help when they can. I’m excited for some good competition

at the dual-team sectional and it should be good fun.”

Junior Kaiden Morris (35-3) rounded out Rochelle’s regional champions with a first-place finish in the 215-pound weight class on Saturday. Morris took a first-round bye into the semifinals, where he worked for a second-period fall against Rockford East’s Orion Losiniecki. Morris faced Sycamore’s Gable Carrick in the finals, using a big first period to emerge with a 10-2 major decision. Morris held a 6-0 lead after a takedown and two two-point near falls in the first period.

“My goals coming in were to win individually and as a team,” Morris said. “Getting those goals feels great and it sets us up for the next few weeks. I worked with coach [Tyler] Baker a few times in practice this week and I’ve been dealing with a little bit of a knee injury, but I was able to push the pace in my matches and confidence was a big thing for me. I’m excited for the dual team sectional because it’s something new and we aren’t really sure what to expect.”

Rochelle scored 190.5 points to finish first out of eight schools in the regional tournament. The Hubs advanced 10 individuals to the IHSA 2A Sycamore Sectional, which will be held from Feb. 9-10 at



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

The Rochelle Hub varsity wrestling team crowned four individual champions on Saturday. Above from left to right are Freddie Hernandez, Kaiden Morris, Grant Gensler and Xavier Villalobos.

Sycamore High School. Rochelle ended Saturday’s regional tournament with three second-place medalists including sophomore 132-pounder Deegan Schabacker (17-17), sophomore 144-pounder Brenden Voight (28-7) and senior 190-pounder Brock Metzger (30-4).

The Hubs also qualified three third-place medalists including sophomore 113-pounder Keagan Albers (22-17), senior 120-pounder Tommy Tourdot (27-5) and sophomore 175-pounder Roman Villalobos (28-15). Freshman 138-pounder Josh Lassiter (15-18) and freshman 150-pounder Angel Hernandez (9-21) each went 1-2 over three bouts.



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