

# Armstrong to return to Sublette

**By BRANDON LaCHANCE**  
*Amboy News Editor*

**SUBLETTE**—During the 1990s and the early 2000s, Max Armstrong spent many second weekends of March at the Sublette Farm Toy & Antique Tractor Show.

Although he has been to the show in the last 10 years, it has been a few.

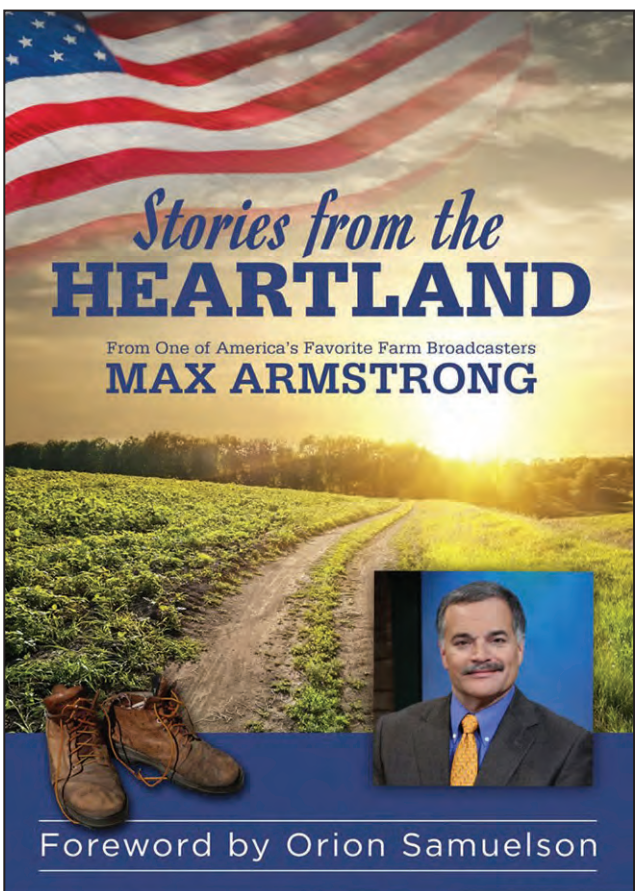
This year, the man who broadcasted for WGN radio and TV for 31 years and is on the 18<sup>th</sup> season of This Week in Agri Business, broadcasted on RFD TV each weekend in Rockford as well as small to medium markets all over the country, will be at the toy and tractor show.

“It’s such a great community. I’ve been privileged to know the folks there through the years. I’ve been to the farm toy show quite a few times,” said Armstrong, who has been in agricultural broadcasting for almost 50 years. “My antique tractors have been there, too, as part of the display. It’s always neat to be there and meet folks who not only love the farm toys, but the tractors, too.”

“There are people with an agricultural background and there are people who come to the show who make their living in other walks of life. The hospitality and the kindness in Sublette are unmatched.”

Armstrong has made his living behind a mic, but before his broadcasting days, he grew up on a tractor. He remembers those memories fondly every time he returns to Sublette.

“I grew up on a farm in southern Indiana. I grew up driving an old tractor, which I still own today,” Armstrong said. “The tractor and I have been together for over 70 years. The International Harvester Super H, made in 1953 in Rock Island, was delivered to a

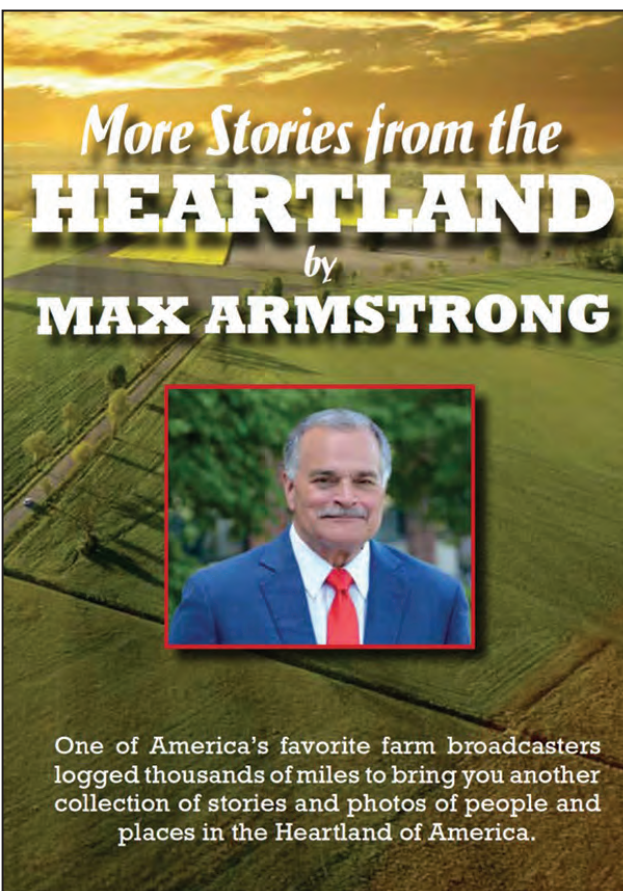


dealership in the town I was delivered in during the same summer.

“There is a real connection with folks who grew up on a tractor to the first tractor they drove. We all remember the experience of what it was like the first time. It brings back memories.”

Armstrong is returning for two reasons.

One of them is to promote and sign some autograph copies of his newest book “More Stories from the



Heartland” which came out in 2023 after his first book “Stories from the Heartland” was released in 2016.

“They talk about people I’ve met along the way and individuals I’ve covered as a farm broadcaster,” Armstrong said. “The stories range widely from politicians to actors to broadcasters and to individual farmers as well.”

See **Armstrong** page A2

# History won’t let Borell forget his 1963 John Deere 4020

**BRANDONLaCHANCE**  
*Amboy News Editor*

**SUBLETTE** – Albert Borell isn’t going to be at the Sublette Farm Toy & Antique Tractor Show in its entirety on Saturday and Sunday.

However, he and Borell Farms LTD will be represented non-stop at the show by a piece of equipment that has been part of Borell’s life, almost from the beginning.

It just happens to be the featured tractor of this year’s show since it’s celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the John Deere 4020.

“I have the first John Deere 4020 unloaded in Mendota. It came in late August 1963,” said Borell, 84, a lifelong farmer. “We still use it. We don’t do a lot of field work with it. I’m in the



cattle business, so we use it to haul silage and hay. It’s still being used. It has over 25,000 hours on it.”

Borell Farms, located

halfway between Lee Center and Shaw Station with an Amboy address, doesn’t actually house the 4020.

Instead, it is stored in the shed it was originally brought home to in 1963. The memories don’t stop there for Borell.

# OSF HealthCare to build new inpatient hospital in Ottawa

**OTTAWA**—As part of an ongoing commitment to transform, preserve and sustain evolving health care along the entire I-80 corridor, OSF HealthCare plans to build a new inpatient hospital in Ottawa, Ill.

OSF HealthCare intends to file a Certificate of Need (CON) application with the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board to build a new inpatient hospital facility to replace the current one in Ottawa. The new hospital will be built across the street, south of East Norris Drive (Route 6), on a vacant 31-acre plot of OSF-owned land.

See **OSF** page A2

# A Tribute to the fallen of World War I

*Editor’s note: The Amboy News will be publishing a series of articles on Lee County veterans who served during World War I. These heroes are part of Amboy’s history and it is our honor to publish these articles so you can learn about their service to our country. This article was researched by Jack Mead and Tom Dempsey, and written by Dempsey.*

## S2c Harry Watts Strawbridge

Reynolds Township Co. H, 3rd Battalion, 4th Regiment, U.S. Navy

Following the Spanish-American War in 1898, the U.S. Navy leadership noticed something remarkable: Many of the sailors who conducted themselves with distinction on the high seas during war time were farm boys who grew up landlocked in the Midwest – never before exposed to the oceans. In the years to follow, the Navy created the Great Lakes Naval



Training Center in the middle of the country located 30 miles north of Chicago on Lake Michigan – a decision that would alter the life of a young farm boy named Harry Watts Strawbridge and thousands of other young men from the heartland.

On Jan. 31, 1891, Harry was born in Spring Valley, Illinois. His parents, Harry and Alice, were farmers who moved to Lee County residing in Reynolds Township. When America entered the World War in 1917, Harry Registered for the draft and by De-



cember of that year, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy entering the Great Lakes Naval Training Center near Chicago.

When he arrived at Great Lakes, the base had 39 permanent buildings on 165 acres with about 1,500 sailors. In preparation for war, the Navy constructed hundreds of tents to house the thousands of young men who would be joining Harry for training. In early 1918, Harry completed his training with the rank of Seaman Second Class and was assigned guard duty at the Northwestern Depot.

During the summer months, Harry must have heard stories of the deadly flu virus that was sweeping the country leaving a

trail of death behind it. Due to wartime expansion, the population at his naval base had reached 45,000 with sailors living in cramped barracks and tents. On September 7th, after some Boston sailors were transferred to Great Lakes, the influenza wave arrived at camp. The medical facilities were soon overwhelmed as nurses worked 16 hour shifts to provide care. In the years after the war, one duty nurse described the scene: “Morticians worked day and night as well”, she remembered. “The base quickly ran out of caskets and was reduced to using makeshift wooden boxes, but even this did not solve the larger problem—the

trucks that carried away the dead could not keep up, and the morgue was left with bodies stacked one on top of the other... packed almost to the ceiling.”

On Sept. 27, 1918, the war ended for Seaman Harry Watts Strawbridge when he fell ill and died in that gruesome ward among hundreds of his fellow sailors. By November, when it was finally contained, 941 sailors at Great Lakes had died of the flu. His remains were returned home for the funeral on October 3rd. Harry is buried in the Steward Cemetery where a modest gravestone reminds us forever of his sacrifice.

**RECYCLE!  
RECYCLE!  
RECYCLE!  
RECYCLE!**

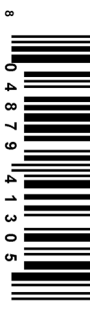


## Obituaries

Ruth Ann Payne  
Jeremy Hobbs

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# LOCAL NEWS

## AHS March Student of the Month: Brennan Blaine

AMBOY — Brennan Blaine, son of Brian and Amanda Blaine, has been named The First National Bank in Amboy Student of the Month for March.

GPA: 3.98  
Memberships and Involvement: National Honors Society Secretary, tutoring fellow students, Basketball team for two years, and Football team for four years,

Captain of football team for two years,  
Awards and Honors: Illinois State Scholar, 3x Academic all-conference, 3x first team all-conference in football, 3x first team all-state in football

Best Memories of AHS: My favorite memory from AHS was winning the State championship in football for the first time in 40 years and how exciting it was for the town.

Future Plans: Takeover Multigenerational family farm, Get CDL also.

The Amboy Student of the Month is chosen by Amboy High School faculty and a scholarship is awarded by The First National Bank in Amboy.



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The Lee County Republicans are encouraging you to exercise your right to get out and vote.  
Early voting is now open for the Primary Election Monday through Friday 8:15 am to 4:15pm and Saturday, March 16th from 9am to noon at the Old Lee County Courthouse at 112 E Second St in Dixon. Election Day is March 19th. If you don't know your voting location, check with your county clerk. So take action and get out and vote Republican!  
This add was brought to you and paid for by the Lee County Republicans.

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## Artists call for the 75th Phidian Art Show

DIXON — The Phidian Art Club of Dixon, IL, has called for artists to register for its annual Phidian Art Show. The Phidian Art Club presents its annual art show at The Next Picture Show art gallery at 113 W. First St., in Dixon.

The exhibit of original artwork is on display on the gallery walls from Apr. 5-26. The show's reception and awards ceremony will occur 6-8 p.m. Friday, April 5. This year's judge is Tim Harrison of Milwaukee, WI.

The show is open to the public during regular gallery hours, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. Local artists will vie for over \$3,500 in cash awards. The public can choose a "People's Choice Award" by voting for their favorite entry from Apr. 5-19, after which it will be announced.

"The Phidian Art Show is eagerly anticipated by artists and patrons," remarks Robin Canode, art show committee member. "Artists can pick up an entry form at The Next Picture Show art gallery or download the form located on the 'Art Applications' page on The Next Picture Show's website."

Artwork will be received

at The Next Picture Show, 2-6 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, April 1-3, daily. The entry fee is \$15 for one artwork and \$25 for two artworks with a two-artwork limit. Artwork is displayed at The Next Picture Show through Apr. 26. Entry forms are available in-person at The Next Picture Show at 113 W. First St., Dixon or by download on the gallery's website.

Artists must live within 35 miles of Dixon and be 17 or older. Only two-dimensional paintings or drawings in any medium will be accepted. Artwork must be original, not produced under the direction of an instructor, no more than five years old, and never have been entered in a previous Phidian Show. Photography, crafts, sculptures, digital art, or three-dimensional work is not eligible for this show. All work must be ready for hanging by wire, no larger than 48" in width or exceeding 25 lbs.

For more information, guidelines, and entry forms, please contact Robin Canode at 815-718-3709 or email her at robin.canode52@gmail.

## Armstrong from page A1

"In 'More Stories from the Heartland', there is a story about me meeting John Deere's great-great-grandson. We were doing a broadcast three or four years ago in the Quad Cities and someone said you should meet a friend of mine. It ended up being Alexander Hewitt, who's dad was the last family member in the lineage to actually run John Deere."

The other reason Armstrong can't wait for the toy and tractor show is the people.

He has some catching up to do.

"It'll be neat to see some of those toy dealers. Some of those guys come back year after year after year," Armstrong said. "Some of those dealers make sure it's always on their circuit of toy shows. I've been involved in some farm toy projects over the years. Some 20 years ago, we did a box set of my tractors. It was made by Scale Models out of Iowa. We sold those to benefit FFA and 4-H organizations. It was the first time that two 1/16 scale tractors had been boxed together."

"The royalty money that would have come to me, I gave to FFA and 4-H. We contributed close to \$20,000 to each organization."

## OSF

from page A1

The current OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center was built in the early 1970s and is at the end of its useful life with infrastructure challenges necessitating this decision.

"Over the past decade, OSF HealthCare has sustained and grown quality health care services in and around Ottawa," says August Querciagrossa, CEO of the Western Region for OSF HealthCare. "When the new hospital is built, it will be reimagined as levels and types of services offered are realigned throughout the I-80 corridor. Our intent across all our I-80 communities is to ensure current and future generations have access to care locally."

OSF HealthCare expects to submit the application to the Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board by the end of March with approval for the new facility anticipated by the end of 2024. A tentative opening date is expected in late 2027.

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## LOCAL NEWS

## TEEN TURF

## Thank You's

We are always grateful to those that help us in our endeavor to help the community: Pankhurst Memorial Library for the bookcase and Amboy City workers for delivering it; Donald Duck for the snacks; Jim and Jean Travi for the monetary donation; Monetary donation from Cyber grants Galauner; Pine View for the drinks and snacks and Brenda for delivering them; Barb and George Spataro for the new various items and hot dogs; Elaine Powers for the puzzles; Laura Miller Hudson for the battery charger; Robin and Jerry Vanloo for the clothes and toys; Nate and Tiffany Hummell for the costumes and kitchen set and Scott Strub for delivering it; Gina and Andy McCoy for the clothes; Doris Latta for the cookies; Tim and Maureen Oester for the cookies; Colleen and Glenn Robison for treats; Colton for the donation; Alice and Leroy Dukes for the various items; Anonymous monetary donation for the fish fry; Hetta Grasser and Laurie Nauman for the Thrivent money; Don and Julie Kessel for the juice boxes and Nichole Ohlendorf for the monetary donation for the fish fry.

We are indebted to our afterschool volunteers: Bonny, Sandy P, Sandy D, Mary, Amber, Brian, Karen, Candy, Kathy Donna, Shannon, and our Impact Volunteers.

We could not make the decisions or hold events without our Board members: Brian, Barb, Mark, Shelli, Amber, Madison. Of course, our treasurer, Roxy

## St. Patrick's Day Dance

We had a great turn out for our St. Patrick's Day dance. We had over seventy kids and a lot of them dressed in green to celebrate. Congratulations to Selena and Kylee for winning the candy guess jar. Thank you to Michele Cheshire and family for putting those together. We played "Find the pot of gold game." Congratulations to Kayden (Laura Hubbell made the amazing art piece held by Kayden), and all the others during the prize walk. They won some fabulous prizes. We finished with limbo and had some great winners Noah and Jaxon. As always, we cannot do this without the following chaperones and want to thank them properly: Miriam, Wayne, Trisha, Brian, Alexis, Shelli, Mark, Sandy, Laura, Shannon, Clara, Char, Trina, Patricia, Amber, Will, Sid, and Christine. As always thank you to Mr. and Mrs. Piper for having the vision and sustaining Teen Turf for this long. It would not be here without them.

## Drive-Thru Fish Fry

We are having our Teen Turf Fish Fry this Friday, March 15, 2024, from 4 - 7 p.m. Tickets are \$12 each and can be purchased during the Drive-thru event or are available at the building. You can see any of our board members for tickets as well: Brian Wedekind, Mark Grossman, Barb Harrison, Shelli Bump, Amber Horner, and Madison Thomas. Any questions, call us at 815-857-4800.

## Needs

Kleenex and Toilet Paper

## Final Note

Dear God, we are grateful for this wonderful gift of our lives that you have blessed us with. It is ripe with chances and choices we can make with it. The many things we can learn. The

awe-inspiring sights we can see. The delightful sounds we can hear. The different people we can meet. There are many beautiful things in this life you have given, along with its many paths We can travel. We are alive with the will to think and act, and we thank you for such a blessing. Amen.

## AMBOY POLICE

## SUSPENDED REGISTRATION

Aaron M. Hubbel, 28, of Amboy, was issued a traffic citation after being charged with operating a vehicle with suspended registration at 4:25 p.m., Monday, March 4.

## Music degrees available in Lee County

**FREEPORT** – Stateline Music Foundation of Freeport is offering scholarship aid awards for high school seniors graduating in 2024 who will enroll in a music major curriculum in a junior college or a four-year college or university and who reside, attend high school, or are home-schooled in one of the following counties: Jo Daviess, Carroll, Stephenson, Winnebago, Boone, Ogle, DeKalb, Whiteside, or Lee in Illinois.

Auditions will be held April 20, 2024, in the Fine Arts Building at Highland Community College in Freeport. Application blanks and repertoire requirements are available by contacting Kenneth Drake at keosdrake@gmail.com.



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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**DIXON**-The Lee County Health Department will have Immunization Clinics for Children and Adults by appointment only. Call 815-284-3371 to make an appointment or for information on other services available. You may also visit the website at [www.lchd.com](http://www.lchd.com) for a list of services available.

**AMBOY**- You are invited to join fellow senior citizens for a free exercise program at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 960 US Highway 52, Amboy. Sessions are held Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10 a.m. Chairs are provided for an approximate 30-minute workout. For more information, call Chris at 815-857-3963.

**AMBOY**- Fall/Winter cleanup up will begin on March 15, at St. Patrick's Cemetery in Amboy. Spring items are allowed.

**AMBOY**-The Amboy Township meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 13, at the township building, 106 S. Prospect.

**LEE CENTER TWP**-The Lee Center Township meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 14, at the Township Building, 2202 Shaw Rd., Amboy.

**DIXON**- This is a survey class that will introduce you to all facets of training including obedience, rally, agility, and showmanship. It is also designed to help your dog become a more integral part of your family. Open to youth ages 8-18 beginning Saturday, Feb. 10 and running select Saturdays through August. The next meeting is March 16, at Granny Rose K-9 Enrichment Center, Dixon. Beginners will take place at 11 a.m. with advanced classes following at 1 p.m. The fee will be free for 4-H members and \$20 for non-4-H members. Register online by April 1 or until the classes or full at [go.illinois.edu/kidsk9](http://go.illinois.edu/kidsk9)

**AMBOY**-The Amboy American Legion will meet on Monday, March 18, at 6 p.m., at the Old NAPA Building, 399 N Metcalf, Amboy.

**AMBOY**-The City of Amboy Council will meet at 6 p.m. on Monday, March 18, at the Community Center, 280 W. Wasson Rd.

**DIXON**- Through 4-H Mindful Mechanics, teens age 13-19 are encouraged to build positive relationships by expressing care, concern, and gratitude for others, build beliefs in themselves, practice self-discipline, self-control, and self-reflection, and serve others. This workshop will be held March 18, 25, April 1 and 8, from 5 - 6 p.m., at Sauk Valley Community College. The overall program aims to promote mindful practices that lead to improvements in managing one's goals, developing a sense of self, time management, stress management, and emotional regulations. Supplies are included. Register online at [go.illinois.edu/CommunityEdSVCC](http://go.illinois.edu/CommunityEdSVCC).

**MENDOTA**- OSF HealthCare will host a community blood drive in March with ImpactLife. OSF Saint Paul Medical Center will host a blood drive on Friday, March 22, from noon to 5 p.m. in conference room C. ImpactLife is the only provider of blood and blood components to OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center, OSF HealthCare Saint Paul Medical Center, OSF HealthCare Saint Clare Medical Center, OSF Center for Health in Streator and the soon-to-open OSF Saint Elizabeth - Peru. To schedule an appointment for donation, call 800-747-5401 or schedule online at [www.bloodcenter.org](http://www.bloodcenter.org) or via the Blood Center's mobile app.

**DIXON**- Join the Master Gardeners of Carroll, Lee, Ogle and Whiteside counties for this one-day event offering participants information about horti-

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culture, backyard gardening, pest control and more. This event will be held from 8 a.m. – noon, on March 23, at the Loveland Community House, Dixon. Registration is online at [go.illinois.edu/readyssetgrow](http://go.illinois.edu/readyssetgrow).

**DIXON**- This is a survey class that will introduce you to all facets of training including obedience, rally, agility, and showmanship. It is also designed to help your dog become a more integral part of your family. Open to youth ages 8-18 beginning Saturday, Feb. 10 and running select Saturdays through August. The next meeting is March 23, at Granny Rose K-9 Enrichment Center, Dixon. Beginners will take place at 11 a.m. with advanced classes following at 1 p.m. The fee will be free for 4-H members and \$20 for non-4-H members. Register online by April 1 or until the classes or full at [go.illinois.edu/kidsk9](http://go.illinois.edu/kidsk9).

**AMBOY**- The Lee County Project Pool event will begin with registration at 8:30 a.m., on March 23, at the Lee County 4-H Center, Amboy. This morning workshop is designed to showcase some of the unique project options available in the 4-H program. Take advantage of this opportunity to explore something you have never considered before. Open to all youth ages 5-18; need not be a 4-H member to participate. Pre-registration is required by March 16. Registration fee is \$20 and can be done online at: [go.illinois.edu/projectpool](http://go.illinois.edu/projectpool).

**AMBOY**-The Amboy Lions Club will meet at 6 p.m. at the Community Center, 280 W. Wasson Rd., on Monday, March 25. Anyone interested in joining or wants more information on the Lions Club is invited to attend.

**CLIPPER KIDDIEZ**

This Week's Student of the Week is:  
**Oakley Herrmann**

**Student's Favorites:**

- Favorite Color – Blue
- Favorite Animal – Zebra
- Favorite Food – Apples
- Favorite Book – Lilly the Ladybug Day At The Park by Pamela Tobler
- Favorite Game – Hide and Seek
- Favorite Song – Any song from Disney Princess Movies

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# OBITUARIES/LOCAL NEWS

## OBITUARIES

### Ruth Ann Payne

#### Feb. 27, 2024

**SUGAR HILL, Ga.** — Ruth Ann Payne, of Sugar Hill, Ga., and formerly a resident of Schaumburg, IL for many years, passed away Feb. 27, 2024, after a long illness.

Mass of Christian Burial will be at 11 a.m., Thursday, March 21, 2024, at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, in Sublette, with Fr. Randy Fronek officiating. Inurnment will follow in St. Mary's Cemetery. Wasmer Funeral Home is privileged to assist the family.

Ruth Ann was born in Spring Valley in 1941 to Floyd "Tug" and Marcella "Sally" Pry, and grew up in the small town of Sublette. She graduated from Amboy High School, where she fell in love with her sweetheart, James Payne. Jim was a star athlete. They married and moved to Carthage, where Jim became a legendary football player for Carthage College, and where her

three children, Kent, Krista, and Angela were born. After the college years, Ruth Ann and Jim raised their family in the Chicago area. Ruth Ann worked as an administrative assistant to an Illinois congressman for many years. She later worked for, and retired from, the Illinois Department of Transportation. She was actively involved in the lives of her children and grandchildren, and rarely missed their activities. Ruth Ann was a very accomplished piano player and relished in the family singing around her while playing, especially during the holidays. Ruth Ann took tremendous pride in her home. The furnishings and yard décor were stunningly designed and cared for, and the subject of great compliment. She loved her grandchildren and great grandchildren. She loved to travel and went on numerous trips with her children and their



families.

Ruth Ann will be dearly missed by her, son, Kent (Sherry) Payne of Batavia; two daughters, Krista (Steve) Feldman, of Foster City, Calif., and Angela (Adam) Gallien, of Sugar Hill, Ga.; five grandchildren, six great-grandchildren; and brother, Stan (Darlene) Pry, of Port St. Lucie, Fla.

Memorials may be directed to donor's choice. Condolences may be left at wasmerfuneralhome.com.

### Jeremey J. Hobbs

#### March 21, 1971 - March 9, 2024

**AMBOY** — Jeremey J. Hobbs, 52, of Amboy, passed away on Saturday, March 9, 2024 at KSB Hospital in Dixon.

He was born on March 21, 1971, in Dixon, the son of Walter and Roberta (Eller) Hobbs. Jeremey worked at Mendota Hills Camp Ground and then Green River Oaks for the past 26 years. He also helped farmers and have done some well drilling.

Jeremey married Jodi McGuire on Aug. 18, 2012 in Oregon.

He is preceded in death by his parents; three brothers, Walter Hobbs Jr. Rodney Hobbs, Michael

Hobbs; one sister, Martha Hobbs; and three nephews, Jesse Levan, Travis Levan, and Troy Roof-McGuire.

Jeremey is survived by his wife, Jodi; children, Ashley Hobbs, of Mendota, Nicholas Hobbs, of Walnut; step sons, Tony Forristall, of Dixon, Greg Forristall, of Dixon; and two sisters, Malvina (Bill) Levan, of Amboy, and Monica (Mike) Acuff, of LaMoille.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m., on Saturday, March 16, 2024, at the Mihm-Jones Funeral Home in Amboy. Burial will follow at St. Patrick Cemetery in Amboy. Vis-



itation will be from 5 – 8 p.m., on Friday, March 15, 2024, at the Mihm-Jones Funeral Home in Amboy.

A memorial has been established.

Arrangements by the Mihm-Jones Funeral Home in Amboy.

Condolences can be left at [www.thejonesfh.com](http://www.thejonesfh.com).

## BBB Alert: Don't let spring break scammers leave you broke

**ROCKFORD**—Travel experts predict that more people will travel than in 2019 for the first time since before COVID struck. That's sure to mean that with spring break approaching, families and college students will take advantage of the opportunity to board planes, trains, and automobiles for exciting getaways.

The Better Business Bureau warns, however, that it is also an opportunity for scammers to offer fraudulent vacation rentals, scam third-party booking sites, and phony travel agencies designed to appeal to consumers looking for great vacation discounts.

Dennis Horton, director of the Rockford Regional Office of the Better Business Bureau, says, "Now is the time to be cautious. Consumers not doing their due diligence when making their spring break travel plans and finalizing payments can fall directly into the hands of con artists."

Scammers often take advantage of consumer habits and capitalize on trending internet searches, enticing potential victims with great deals to popular destinations or all-inclusive packages. While these scams happen year-round, now is the peak time.

Horton notes, "Since the beginning of the year, 97 Travel, Vacation, and Timeshare-related scam reports have been filed in BBB Scamtracker. Losses reported total nearly \$140,000 so far."

The Federal Trade Commission re-

ports nationwide that in 2022, there were 65,000 reports of travel scams. Travelers lost more than \$105 million.

To protect yourself, Horton advises, "Begin planning early so you are not rushing to make last-minute arrangements. Scammers capitalize on consumers in a hurry and may not have the time to verify they are booking with a legitimate location or business. Always verify a company is legit and check for customer complaints or reviews on BBB.org."

The most reported travel scams are:

Vacation rental con.

• These con artists lure in vacationers with the promise of low fees and great amenities. The "owner" creates a false sense of urgency – such as telling potential clients that another vacationer is interested in the rental – to get payment upfront before doing sufficient research or questioning the ad's legitimacy.

"Free" vacation scams.

• When a cruise or travel company advertises a vacation as "free," it does not necessarily mean the trip is without cost or restrictions. Watch out for add-on fees for air transportation, port charges, taxes, tips, and other undisclosed fees.

Hotel scams.

• When staying in a hotel, beware of scammers who use various techniques to obtain credit card information, including fake front desk calls, "free" wi-fi connections and fake food delivery.

## Exploring Creativity: Lee County Project Pool introduces youth to 4-H project areas

**AMBOY, Ill.**— University of Illinois Extension is proud to announce the much-anticipated Lee County Project Pool 2024, scheduled for March 23, 2024, at the Lee County 4-H Center. This event aims to engage youth aged 5-18 in a fun-filled exploration of various activities, showcasing unique project options available in the 4-H program.

The event will run from 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM and will offer participants the

opportunity to delve into diverse creative endeavors. With a registration fee of \$20.00, attendees can choose from three engaging sessions, each featuring different hands-on activities led by experienced instructors.

"Project Pool is a fantastic opportunity for young individuals to discover and develop their creativity," said Katie McBride, event organizer. "We encourage youth from all backgrounds to join us,

regardless of whether they are currently 4-H members or not. This is a chance to explore something new and exciting!"

Pre-registration is required at [go.illinois.edu/projectpool](http://go.illinois.edu/projectpool) by March 16 to secure a spot in the preferred sessions. Questions can be answered by contacting Katie McBride at [kmcbr2@illinois.edu](mailto:kmcbr2@illinois.edu). Don't miss out on this opportunity to unleash your creativity and have a blast with arts and crafts!

Send news items to  
Amboy News Editor Brandon LaChance  
at  
Email news items to [blachance@mendotareporter.com](mailto:blachance@mendotareporter.com)

# CHURCH DIRECTORY

## Your Guide To Local Houses of Worship

**St. Patrick Church**  
Fr. John Gow  
32 N Jones, Amboy  
815-857-2315 • [www.stpatrickamboy.org](http://www.stpatrickamboy.org)  
Masses: Monday - Thursday Daily Mass 8 am  
Saturday 4 pm • Sunday 7 am & 10:30 am  
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:  
Friday, 4-6 pm with Confessions and  
Mass at 6 pm

**St. Mary Church**  
Fr. John Gow  
912 Walton Rd., Walton  
815-857-2670  
Mass: Saturday, 5:30 pm

**St. Flannen Church**  
Fr. John Gow  
213 S Second St., Harmon  
815-857-2670  
Mass: Sunday, 8:30 am

**United First Church of Amboy**  
Pastor Mark Glenn  
East Main & Jefferson  
815-440-0745  
Sunday Worship - 10:00 a.m.  
Bible Study Wednesday 6:00 p.m.

**First Congregational United Church of Christ of Lee Center**  
Pastor Jack M. Briggs  
1140 Inlet Road, Lee Center  
[www.LeeCenter-UCC.org](http://www.LeeCenter-UCC.org)  
Phone 815-732-7032  
Family Worship - 10:30 a.m.

**Grace Fellowship Church**  
Amboy-Sublette  
Pastor Kyle Kelly  
500 W. Main Street, Sublette  
Sunday School 8:30 a.m.  
Worship 10:30 a.m.  
[www.graceisforyou.com](http://www.graceisforyou.com)

**East Grove Union Church**  
449 Reuter Road,  
Amboy, IL  
Phone 815-440-5321  
½ Mile East of Route 26 at Union Rd  
Sun., 9:00 am, Morning Worship  
Youth Church, Ages 3 – Grade 4  
10:15 am Sunday School, Age 3 – Adult  
Come as you are and join us on the journey!

**First Baptist Church**  
Pastor Rocky Fritz  
24 N. Mason Avenue  
Church Phone 857-2682  
[www.fbcamboy.com](http://www.fbcamboy.com)  
Sunday School for all ages - 9:30 a.m.  
Morning Service - 10:30 a.m.  
Evening Service - 6 p.m.  
Wed. prayer meeting & Bible Study 6:30 p.m.  
King's Kids program from 6:30-8 p.m. Friday  
Reformers Unanimous addictions program  
from 7-9 p.m.

**St. Mary's Church – West Brooklyn**  
Rev. Randy Fronek  
Mass - Tuesday & Thursday - 7:30 a.m.  
Saturday – 5:30 p.m.

**St. Patrick Church - Maytown**  
Rev. Randy Fronek  
Mass – Friday - 8 a.m.  
Sunday - 8 a.m.

**Immanuel Lutheran Church**  
Interim Minister Douglas Wood S.A.M.  
960 U.S. Route 52  
Phone 857-2225  
960 U.S. Route 52  
Phone: 815-857-2225  
Sunday Worship - 9:00 a.m. -  
Fellowship - 10:00 a.m.

**Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church**  
Rev. Randy Fronek  
Locust Street, Sublette  
Phone 815-849-5412  
Saturday Mass - 4:00 p.m.  
Sunday Mass -10:30 a.m.  
Wednesday - 8:00 a.m.  
Thursday - 8:30 a.m.

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

**Harmon United Methodist Church**  
Pastor Leanne Keate  
202 N. Grove, Harmon  
Phone 359-7302  
Worship - 8:30 a.m.

*The Following  
Community  
Businesses  
Sponsor Area  
Church News:*

Sensient Flavors, LLC.  
815-857-3691

First National Bank  
in Amboy  
Member F.D.I.C.  
815- 857-3625

Mihm-Jones Funeral  
Home  
815-857-2611

Vaessen Brothers  
Chevrolet  
815-849-5232

KSB Medical Center  
815-857-3044

The Amboy News  
815-857-2311





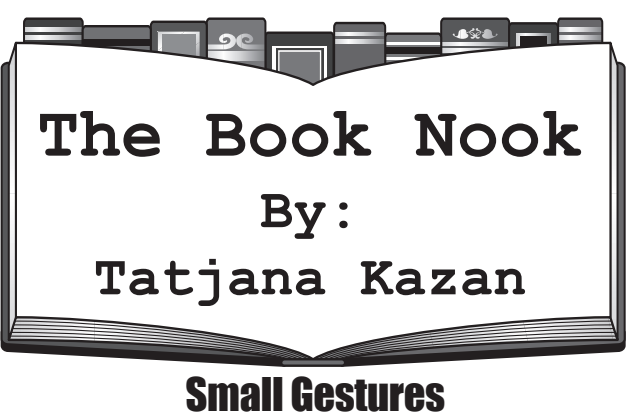


## Hope springs eternal

Even our rarest of plants sometimes find a way...



Jim "Mazie" Long



Although "Animal, Vegetable, Miracle" by Barbara Kingsolver was published in 2007, it is even more relevant today. Kingsolver and her husband and two daughters left their life in Tucson and moved to southwestern Virginia where they owned a farm in an Appalachian valley. They would work the farm and, with the exceptions of grains, oil, and spices, live on homegrown food or go without for a full calendar year, starting in March. "Six eyes, all beloved to me, stared unblinking as I crossed the exotics off our shopping list, one by one," Kingsolver reports, as she crossed off cucumbers. "If many of us would view this style of eating as deprivation, that's only because we've grown accustomed to the botanically outrageous condition of having everything, always." She makes a great case that "restraint equals indulgence."

What distinguishes "Animal, Vegetable, Miracle" from other sustainable agriculture books is Kingsolver's warm, neighborly style (it was a "chance to experience the rediscovery of community through food") that is also really funny. Thus, when they had to protect seedlings in March from a cold snap, they brought the plants inside "until our kitchen looks like the gullet and tonsils of a Chia Pet whale." Consistently pragmatic, she knows there is no morally pure way to eat, but simply a succession of trade-offs that we must sort out until we find something that allows us to

sleep at night. Vegans, she adds, will have to count the fossil fuels they squander in order to keep themselves in bananas and tofu. She learned her pragmatism growing up in a farming community in postwar Kentucky tobacco country and when she "sallied out into a world where, to my surprise, farmer was widely presumed synonymous with heehaw, and tobacco was the new smallpox."

In a wonderful episode, Kingsolver must teach her turkeys parenting skills. 99.9% of turkeys are the product of a turkey baster, that is, they are conceived by artificial insemination. Once the eggs are laid, they are immediately rolled into incubators and warmed into life with large electric lights. Consequently, all maternal instinct has been bred out of America's turkeys, which now either ignore their eggs or stamp on them and eat the yolky mess. By reintroducing the mothering instinct into her flock through natural selection, Kingsolver ensures that the breed remains viable "independently of all that expensive and fallible technology."

Kingsolver argues that "For much of U.S. history, rural regions have been treated essentially as colonial property of the cities." Now we must fight "the monster serial killer called Global Warming." We must do our part, large or small, and she adds, "It's the worst of bad manners and self-protection, I think, in anervously cynical society to ridicule the small gesture."

**Editor Note:** Our March 27 edition will carry the last in this series. Today's article recounts the author's lifelong appreciation for the beauty and fragility of our local natural treasures.

Lee County is home to many rare wild plants. Over the years I have found over 100 plants that are considered rare in Illinois. Lee County also has several wild plants that are not found anywhere else in Illinois. But it is always a surprise to find any kind of orchid. Orchids have a habit of suddenly appearing where they were never seen before. They can just as easily disappear from an area where they once grew. An orchid can live in the ground with the help of fungi for many years without ever producing a leaf or flower.

**The Ragged Orchid** (*Habenaria lacera*) looks like a smaller version of the White Fringed Orchid, usually about a foot tall, with greener fringed flowers.

**The Frog Orchid**

(*Habenaria viridis*) has flowers so green that they are difficult to see among the foliage. I have found this orchid in moist sandy prairies and in Bur Oak woods.

**The Tubercled Orchid** (*Habenaria flava* var. *herbiola*) is over a foot and a half tall and has many greenish flowers. I have seen this orchid only in one location.

**The Wood Orchid** (*Habenaria clavellata*) is the smallest species. It has fewer flowers, but they are white and easy to see among the vegetation. I have found this orchid in only two locations.

It used to be that on a June evening I could walk a mile from my door and visit with two of the rare orchids of America. They were the **White Lady's Slipper** and the **Prairie White Fringed Orchid**. Both were species of calcareous meadows and both were rapidly disappearing in America. They grew beside a railroad. In 1951, I made the following notes: "In this meadow I found today eleven

colonies and several new stems and flowers of the Lady Slipper. Growing with them were seven White Fringed Orchids. They grew about three feet tall and had an abundance of flowers."

The meadow was characterized by an abundance of Saxifrage and Alum Root. There were several Pussy Willows and Golden Alexanders growing in the area. I would visit this meadow often, in June, for decades. About 1977, the railroad was torn up and all the brush was sprayed and killed. Shortly after, the orchids began to die off and soon they too, were gone. The area was plowed in 1991. And it is growing corn today. But I recently made a discovery.

**The Prairie White Fringed Orchid** (*Habenaria leucophaea*) has numerous white flowers near the top of the plant. The lip is divided into three parts and all three are fringed. I saw this orchid again for the first time in many years, just

this summer. (This was in June, 1998. – Editor).

We are lucky to still be able to see these rare plants growing wild, when they have been completely extinguished in many parts of the state.

**Editor's Note:** James Brady Long was born in Amboy on June 12, 1926. Known by many as "Mazie", he grew up in Amboy, served in the army during World War II, then studied forestry at the Michigan College of Mining and Technology. His studies in botany and forest protection continued as he ventured into farming here. A beloved story-teller, his farm became a place of learning and adventure for relatives and friends. In his later years, he contributed a series of local nature articles to The Amboy News. Upon his death in 2000, his many hand-written drafts were gathered and initially curated by Brenda Boyle. The present, renewed series draws from those drafts, both unpublished and previously published.

## From The Heart Calendar winners

February 2024

**From The Heart Calendar Winners**

Feb. 1 – RACF, Rochelle, \$50  
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, \$50  
Feb. 7 – Judith Koelzer, Friena, Texas, \$25  
Feb. 8 – Nancy Meyers, Rochelle, \$25  
Feb. 9 – Kaylee Fowler, Rochelle, \$25  
Feb. 10 – Justin Adolph, Rochelle, \$25  
Feb. 11 – First State Bank, Rochelle, \$50  
Feb. 12 – John Gonzales, Rochelle, \$25  
Feb. 13 – Kathleen Lutz, Rochelle, \$25  
Feb. 14 – Ariana and Antonio Welle, Oregon, \$250  
Feb. 15 – From the Heart, \$25

Feb. 16 – Shining Star, Dixon, \$25  
Feb. 17 – Michelle Ocampo, Rochelle, \$25  
Feb. 18 – RACF, \$50  
Feb. 19 – RACF, \$25  
Feb. 20 – Crystal Crom, Cloquet, Minnesota, \$25  
Feb. 21 – From the Heart, \$25  
Feb. 22 – Crystal Hueramo, Rochelle, \$25  
Feb. 23 – Christa Seebach, Rochelle, \$25  
Feb. 24 – Gus and Armande Vasilopolous, Rochelle, \$25  
Feb. 25 – Noel Allison, Rochelle, \$50  
Feb. 26 – Maplehurst Farms, \$25  
Feb. 27 – Cynthia Lopez, Rochelle, \$25  
Feb. 28 – Marcy Bruhn, Rochelle, \$25  
Feb. 29 – Jake Meyers, Rochelle, \$25

Checks to winners will be mailed out at the end of each month.

## Illinois Extension's commitment to family life education grows with staffer in northwestern region

**STERLING** — The lifelong well-being of every Illinois resident is central to the Illinois Extension mission. In northwestern Illinois, a new educator has joined the statewide effort to provide programming that promotes positive health practices.

Kara Schweitzer is the new family life educator serving Carroll, Lee, Whiteside counties, and other areas of Northwest Illinois. She is passionate about providing educational programs and experiences to promote well-being for individuals and families throughout their lifespan.

Kara's interests include healthy aging, brain health, stress management, caregiving, and mindfulness.

County Director Karla Belzer notes that "Family life educators play a critical role in educating individuals and families about health and wellness across the life span. Helping people make better decisions that impact their overall well-being creates healthier individuals, families, and communities. Kara's expertise and experience will undoubtedly enhance family life educational programming in our communities."

Kara earned a bache-

lor's degree in psychology from Saint Mary's College in 2014 and a master's degree in therapeutic recreation from The University of Iowa in 2016. She has maintained the certified therapeutic recreation specialist credential from the National Council of Therapeutic Recreation Certification since 2016. She has also maintained the certified dementia practitioner credential from the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners since 2020.

Before joining Extension, Kara worked as a recreational therapist in

several healthcare and human service settings in Illinois and Indiana, including skilled nursing and memory care, inpatient and outpatient behavioral healthcare, and community special recreation. She has extensive experience developing and implementing educational and experiential programs for children through older adults to promote mental, emotional, social, and physical well-being.

In her free time, Kara enjoys spending time with her family and her dog, traveling, being in nature, crafting, and swimming.

## Area students ranks among Top 2% at Iowa Sate University

**AMES, Iowa** – The following area students are ranked among the Top 2% of students in their college at Iowa State University.

HOMETOWN, STATE; NAME, CLASS YEAR, COLLEGE(S)  
DIXON, IL  
Nicholas Engle, Senior, Ivy College of Business

## Drink Milk

**LIFESCAPE**  
COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC.

**Senior Dining Menu**  
Mar. 18-22  
8 oz. of low-fat milk served with each meal

**Monday** – Salisbury steak, mashed potato/gravy, green beans, wgr dinner roll, mandarin oranges  
**Tuesday** – Sweet/sour chicken, fluffy rice, stir fry veggies, wgr dinner roll, apricots  
**Wednesday** – Meatball sub on wgr roll, peas and carrots, seasoned potato wedges, diced peaches  
**Thursday** – A). Turkey burger wgr wheat bun, sweet potato fries, broccoli, fruit cocktail B). Tuna salad/chicken rice  
**Friday** – Crispy cod, peas, potato wedges, chilled applesauce, wgr wheat bun/tartar

Meals served Mon.-Fri. at 11:30 am  
Call 800-779-1189 to make reservations 24 hours in advance  
**Amboy Community Center**  
280 W. Wasson Road

United Way  
A United Way Agency

**ERBES Realty LLC**

101 N. Pennsylvania Ave., Sublette \$350,000  
Calling all Investors! One of a kind-Turn Key! Located on a busy highway! This is a restaurant/bar with Pizza delivery and eat in dining. Seating is 41 with bar. On site parking with parking across the road. This property is near WoodHaven Lakes and four other camp grounds near by. Fenced in area with 2 picnic tables for entertaining, 2 bathrooms, storage above bar, A cash register, pizza oven, 42" charbroiled, 2 burner top gas stove top, 3 door commercial refrigerator, 1 freezer, 1-3 door freezer, 3 upright freezers, 2 chest freezers, all utensil, pots and pans, dishes, silverware, plates, beer, wine and water glasses, 6 tables, 24 chairs, 17 bar stools, 2 high chairs, 3 TVs, 1 in game room has no sound, salt & pepper shakers, ketchup containers, 2 microwaves, and signage are included in the price. (Liquor inventory left will be sold at closing separate). Owner is willing to consult for 30 days to insure a smooth transition for the new owner, leave the same phone number and share recipes. Ask agent to See items not staying. Call today for your personal showing.

**LORI ERBES, GRI**  
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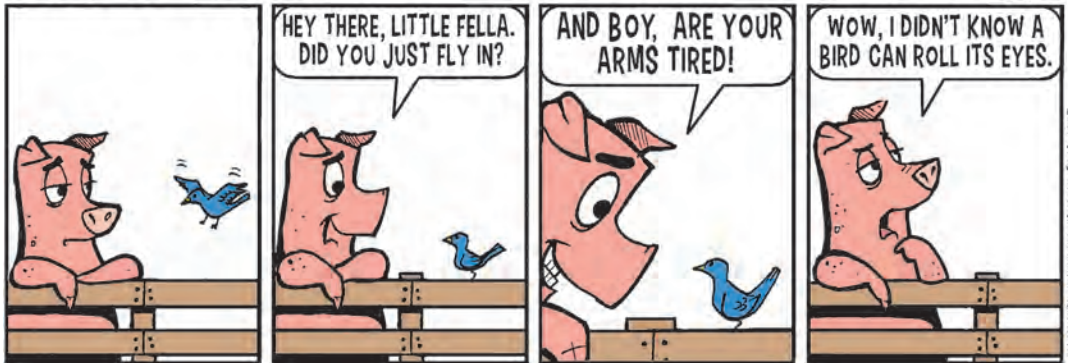
**815-535-6295**  
www.Erbes-Realty.com



# LOCAL NEWS

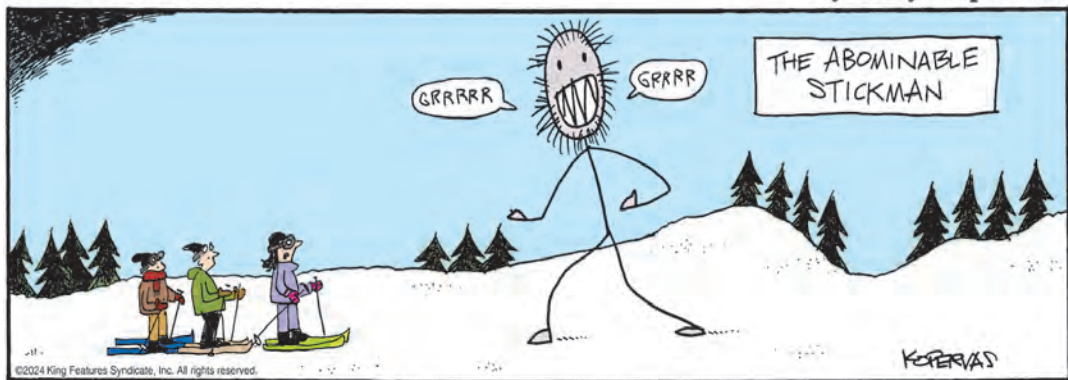
## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



## Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



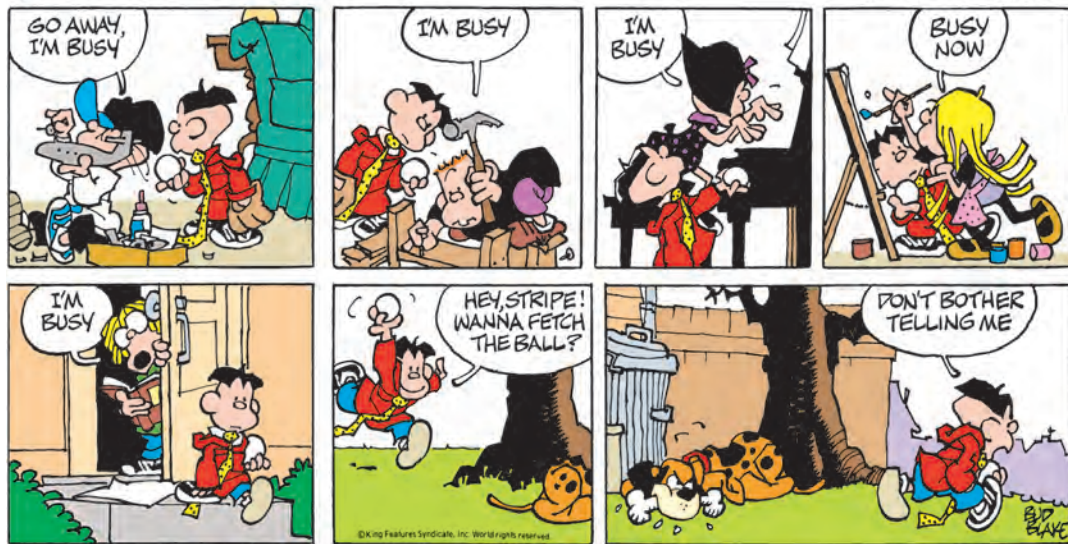
## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



## TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



## OLIVE



## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTHOFF



## Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



## CryptoQuip

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

Clue: Q equals P

CFNJG RYGZTCTGJ CFRC  
YRSG R QRJCND'J BTIG YNDG  
QBGRJRZC, T BTSG CN ERBB  
CFGY QDGREFGD ENYINDCJ.

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## SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Stomp  
**CHARM**     
Irksome  
**SKYPE**    
Book  
**MOTE**    
Bleak  
**ROBEMS**

## TODAY'S WORD

March 11, 2024 Posting Date

## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Egg on
- 5 Science room
- 8 Arm bone
- 12 Actress Gilpin
- 13 Hosp. area
- 14 Wedding cake layer
- 15 Bridge position
- 16 Not "agin"
- 17 "Snap out —!"
- 18 Monet or Debussy
- 20 Wards off
- 22 " — Poetica"
- 23 Be sick
- 24 Healthy
- 27 Embeds
- 32 Comic Philips
- 33 Menagerie
- 34 Trio after M
- 35 Fish lover's deli order
- 38 Group of quail
- 39 Transcript no.
- 40 Parched
- 42 Oracle setting
- 45 "Brigadoon" lyricist
- 49 Buffalo's county
- 50 Miss Piggy's pronoun
- 52 French waterway
- 53 — Romeo

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				58			

- 54 Canine greeting
- 55 Summit
- 56 Ogler's look
- 57 " — -haw!" (cowgirl's cry)
- 58 Monopoly card
- 8 Perfect place
- 9 Game show aid
- 10 Astronaut Armstrong
- 11 Sciences' partner
- 19 AMA member
- 21 Hearing thing
- 24 Drenched
- 25 Ostrich's kin
- 26 Palmist's prediction
- 28 Neither mate
- 29 Hit song by OneRepublic
- 30 Calendar abbr.
- 31 Covert agent
- 36 Seem
- 37 Taunting laugh
- 38 Secondary route
- 41 Concerning
- 42 Bargain
- 43 Perry's creator
- 44 Noncommittal answer
- 46 Pleasing
- 47 Salinger girl
- 48 Marsh plant
- 51 Tram load

### DOWN

- 1 Detail, briefly
- 2 Bell sound
- 3 — Major
- 4 Ceremony
- 5 Not enlarged or reduced
- 6 Tennis feat
- 7 "Ironsides" star

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## Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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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## WORD LADDERS

Can you go from STAKE to PRONE in 6 words? Change one letter for each rung in the ladder.

STAKE

PRONE

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## Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

- TELEVISION: Which TV sitcom featured a father figure named Philip Banks?
- LANGUAGE: How many letters are in the Greek alphabet?
- MOVIES: Which movie features the line, "To be honest, when I found out the patriarchy wasn't just about horses, I lost interest"?
- SCIENCE: How long is an eon?
- GEOGRAPHY: In which country is most of the Kalahari Desert located?
- MUSIC: Which singer once was called the Material Girl?
- FOOD & DRINK: What is injera?
- ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a group of cockroaches called?
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: Which large U.S. city is nicknamed Emerald City?
- GAMES: How many blocks are in a Jenga tower?

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- 10. 54.
- 9. Seattle, Washington.
- 8. An intrusion.
- 7. Fermented flatbread.
- 6. Madonna.
- 5. Botswana, Africa.
- 4. 1 billion years.
- 3. "Barbie."
- 2. 24.
- 1. "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air."

Answers

## MATCHBOOK

Today's Word

- 3. Tame
- 4. Sombre
- 1. March
- 2. Pesky

## SCRAMBLERS

SHONE, PHONE, PRONE

STAKE, STOK, STONE

Answer

## WORD LADDER

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

Answer

## Weekly SUDOKU

Solution time: 25 mins.

Answers

## King Crossword

CryptoQuip

Those amenities that make a pastor's life more pleasant, I like to call them preacher comforts.



# SPORTS/LOCAL NEWS

## Loftus still runs hard on cross country courses

**BRANDONLaCHANCE**  
*Amboy News Editor*

**AMBOY** – Just in case you were wondering, Brock Loftus has not stopped running since he graduated from the Amboy in 2021.

In fact, he may run more.

The Heartland Community College sophomore finished the fall cross country season 17th in the nation at the NJCAA Division II level, while the Hawks took second, only trailed Lansing by five points for the win, at the NJCAA National Championship Nov. 11, 2023, at Huntsville, Ala.

“We had a great season. We finished second place as a team and I finished All-American individually,” said Loftus. “Last year as a freshman, we finished second as well at the championships in Tallahassee, Fla. It was a good race, really hot. I ran there and didn’t



have the greatest race.

“Going into my sophomore year, I said, ‘This is going to be our year to do it.’ We had a lot of adversity this season. Our best runner broke his foot the first week of the season and we lost him for the rest of the year. That was a huge blow. We knew everyone had to step up big. Although the ratings didn’t have us very high, our brotherhood knew what we could do.

“When we were at nationals, we knew it was our time. We thought we were more ready than anyone. We didn’t care what anyone thought we could or couldn’t do. We went out there without our best runner and finished second by five points.”

Loftus, who finished 26th individually to lead

the Amboy Clippers to a 22nd-place finish at the 2021 IHSA Class 1A State Meet as a senior, is thrilled with his first two years of college running.

Although others thought he was making a bad choice, he knows his selection of Heartland was on the money.

“I remember when I was leaving high school and people asked me why I was going to junior college or to Heartland,” Loftus said. “If you look at Heartland, it is unreal how good we are. I don’t think people understand, we beat Division I programs all the time. We raced the University of Iowa’s B-Team my freshman year and we tied them. Yes, it’s a B-Team, but they’re freshman and sophomores, and so were we. That’s a Big Ten Conference school. Yeah, we’re a junior college, but the talent here is unreal.

“I was intimidated

when I first got here because I knew what kind of program Heartland is.”

Loftus added the amount of talent at Heartland and all junior college programs is mind blowing.

Like Rodney Dangerfield, Loftus feels the junior college rank doesn’t get enough respect.

“Everyone is so hungry,” Loftus said. “Everyone wants to get to the next level, so everyone is hungry and competing the best they can. It’s very competitive.”

At the NJCAA National Championship, Loftus ran a 25:44.90 for 17th place and was one of three Hawks to be named All-American as Ben Huey, sophomore, was 13th in 25:31.40, and Matt Padilla, freshman, was 14th in 25:34.

“I’m so proud of being an All-American. I have had a very eventful college experience, so

to be All-American, it’s the most pride I’ve ever felt in life to be honest,” Loftus said. “I really just love the sport. Growing up, I played every sport there is. Every sport I’ve loved because I love being an athlete, but running is so much fun because there is the team aspect and the individual aspect. It’s fun to have goals and to see yourself improve. Ok, I had this time, let’s see if I can make this time.

“The thing I found with my running, the harder I work, I tend to have more success. It’s so fun for me.”

Loftus was thankful for the people who reached out to him after his All-American season including his family, friends, and two of his inspirations to continue running, former Amboy cross country coach Bob Halberg and Amboy cross country alumnus Thomas Stamberger.

## Kishwaukee College celebrated Career and Technical Education Month in February

February is Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month, and Kishwaukee College joined community colleges across the state to celebrate its role in preparing the workforce for in-demand jobs. CTE programs offered at community colleges provide students with hands-on training and real-world experience in multiple industries, including health sciences, manufacturing, technology and more.

Kish adapts its CTE programs to meet local workforce demands. Kish’s programs offer flexible

scheduling, work-based learning and stackable credentials that provide a pathway from education to employment. The College models its courses based on community needs, providing students with the opportunity to pursue in-demand careers. In 2023, 70% of Kish CTE graduates were employed in a related field, and 93.6% of graduates were employed within the state of Illinois, according to technical graduate surveys.

CTE programs at Kish and Illinois community colleges offer a cost-effective way for individuals

to pursue career goals at a fraction of the tuition of four-year institutions.

“Illinois community colleges are a leading workforce developer in the state and are continuing to expand access and opportunities to dozens of good paying careers,” said Brian Durham, Executive Director of the Illinois Community College Board. “CTE programs at community colleges are an essential part of our state’s workforce development strategy, and we are proud to be a part of preparing the next generation of workers.”

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# SPORTS/LOCAL NEWS

## Lady Clippers return eight varsity players; Win first game of the season against Mendota

By **BRANDON LaCHANCE**

*Amboy News Editor*

**AMBOY** – Young and talented was the headline for the Amboy softball team’s preview story a year ago.

The same can be said about the 2024 Lady Clippers as the roster reads two seniors, four juniors, 10 sophomores, and three freshmen.

“We have two seniors coming back in Addison Shaw and Madison O’Malley and we only lost one senior, Jersey Thomas, from last year,” said softball coach Kelly Whitman. “We have our core group coming back. Our pitchers have been working hard in the offseason. We’ve had a couple of girls playing almost all-year long.

“We’re hoping to improve. We lost six or seven games last year by one run. If you take a couple of those, you’re record looks a whole lot better. We’re hoping to push a few more runs across home plate this year.”

Eight of those players on roster are returning varsity members including sophomore pitchers Ellie McLaughlin and Alyvia Whelchel.

McLaughlin has started this season off in the right direction as she was the winning pitcher in a 16-4 victory over Mendota in the first game of the season on Monday, March 11. She gave up four runs and four hits, while striking out five and walking three.

At the moment, the two pitchers are the only ones locked in to their position for the majority of the season. Junior Tyrah Vaessen played shortstop last season and could be asked to stay at the No. 6 location; however, her versatility could move her around the field as well.

“It’s just a matter of plugging them in. We’re trying to figure out what is the best look,” Whitman said. “We’ve moved around a few players here and there just to see where everyone fits just right and what lineup will be the strongest. Where they’re at on the field might not be their first choice, but hopefully they understand it’s about what’s best for the team.”

Whitman is excited about two LaMoille imports in sophomore Taylor Wamhoff and assistant coach Scott Hitzler, who previously coached at Bureau Valley.

With a new player, more assistance, and nicer weather, Whitman believes win can pile up or at least record a higher mark than six, which is the number of games the Lady Clippers have won in each of its last two seasons.

“Being able to be outside has been wonderful. For our outfielders to see an actual live fly ball instead of in the gym is nice,” Whitman said. “We’ve been trying to do more live hitting this year to get our bats where they need to be.

“Fielding, we’re going to keep plugging away on defense. Hopefully, we’ll be able to make a few more of those plates that we didn’t make last year.”



Sophomore Ellie McLaughlin winds up to throw a pitch in the first game of the 2024 season at Mendota. McLaughlin struck out five, walked three, and allowed four runs, and four hits in a 16-4 Lady Clipper victory. Kip Cheek/Amboy News

## Amboy baseball ready to take the next step with key pieces of 12-win team back on the field

**BRANDON LaCHANCE**

*Amboy News Editor*

**AMBOY** – Winning became a little more prevalent last season for the Amboy baseball team.

They won eight more games than last year and are ready to take its 12-11, 7-3 (Northwest Upstate Illini Conference) to the next level.

“This year we have some key returners back with the team. We lost a couple of seniors, but I think the guys replacing them will fill those roles well,” said coach Chris Tidmore, who has held the reign of the team for the last six years and has been with the club for nine. “We have our sights set pretty high this season.”

“We feel pretty confident this year with our lineup, 1-9, that we’re going to be able to

put some runs on the board and hopefully pitching will hold up for us, too.”

Juniors Quinn Leffelman and Brody Christoffersen played a big part in last year’s success and will be asked to step up even more. Sophomore Rylan McNinch will also be in the catcher rotation.

Both players are pitchers. When they’re not on the mound, they’ll be behind the plate catching.

Senior Landon Montavon is going to be looked for to put up quality numbers and senior leadership. The same is said about senior Landon Whelchel, the Clippers’ lead-off batter.

While Tidmore knows his team can pitch, hit, and play defense, his first talking point when asked about the team’s strengths is the

comradery.

“This year, it’s our team chemistry. In the past couple of years, there have been some times where chemistry hasn’t always been the best,” Tidmore said. “I think this group is such a close-knit group. They hang out outside of practice. They’re always together. I think that is going to translate big time for us on the field.

“Offensively, I think our numbers are going to dramatically improve from the last few years.”

Another aspect about this team is they know how to win as a large chunk of the names on the roster were also on the roster of the Amboy football team which won the Illinois 8-Man Football Association State Championship.

“We’ve been talking to

them since the football team won the championship,” Tidmore said. “We’re hoping to build off of the success of football and translate it into baseball. We have a lot of football players on the team. They know what it’s like to win.”

Positivity and potential circulates the dugout and Tidmore along with his assistants Bryson Prusator, Tyson Powers, Mitchell McLaughlin, Hunter Zimmerly, and Kevin England, hope it will carry to the field.

Especially in the NUIC where the Clippers only lost three games a season ago.

“I think a lot of the schools in our conference graduated some key seniors,” Tidmore said. “I think out of all of the pieces we did lose, we have enough, probably more so than

other schools, to withstand the graduations with some talent coming from underneath.”



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## Amboy Community Unit School District #272

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AHS Girls Track @ IWU Shirk Center, Bloomington-4 pm  
AJHS Scholastic Bowl (H) Dixon Reagan-4 pm

### Tuesday, March 19

AJHS Drama Club Practice- Auditorium-3:20-5 pm  
AHS Fresh/Soph Baseball (H) Pecatonica-4:30 pm  
AHS Softball @ Pecatonica-4:30 pm  
AHS Varsity Baseball @ Pecatonica-4:30 pm  
School Board Meeting-AJHS Cafeteria-6:30 pm

### Wednesday, March 20

AJHS Drama Club Practice- Auditorium-3:20-5 pm  
AHS Art Club-3:30-4:30 pm

### Thursday, March 21

AJHS Drama Club Practice- Auditorium-3:20-5 pm  
AHS Fresh/Soph Baseball (H) Oregon-4:30 pm  
AHS Varsity Baseball @ Oregon-4:30 pm  
AJHS Scholastic Bowl (H) Bureau Valley-4 pm

### Friday, March 22

AJHS Drama Club Practice- Auditorium-3:20-5 pm  
AHS Fresh/Soph Girls & Boys Track @ Westwood-4:30 pm

### Saturday, March 23

AHS Varsity Baseball @ Orangeville-1 pm  
AHS Varsity/JV DH Softball @ Dakota-1 pm

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AKRON  
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# Ag Outlook



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**Wednesday, March 13, 2024**





# AG OUTLOOK '24

## Illinois Farm Bureau President believes full repeal of California's Prop 12 is urgently needed

By **BRIAN DUNCAN**  
Illinois Farm Bureau President

A lot has changed on our Ogle County farm since I first started helping my dad take care of the pigs over 50 years ago. Gone are the open sheds and large pens for our pigs of multiple sizes and ages — pens where they were exposed to the weather as well as disease.

On my farm and others around Illinois, outdoor facilities have been replaced with protective indoor, climate-controlled housing with modern waste management systems providing a cleaner, safer environment for animals and caretakers.

Behind every pig stands a person. Livestock farmers spend countless hours in all conditions, ensuring the security and well-being of their animals.

We adopt scientifically backed, veterinary-approved, animal care and husbandry practices with the best interest of the animals and those of us who

care for them in mind.

Like other producers, I am troubled that people without animal care experience or expertise can dictate the practices that must be used on livestock farms.

In 2018, a proportionately small number of Californians passed a ballot initiative, known as Proposition 12, restricting the sale of eggs, veal and certain cuts of pork that were produced in a manner that did not meet the standards outlined in the initiative. Consequently, uncooked or unblended pork products must come from animals who are the offspring of sows given 24 square feet of floor space upon reaching reproductive age.

Various vet-approved solutions are used for housing breeding females in modern pork production, including grouping sows. Yet Prop 12's arbitrary requirement of 24 square feet per sow can increase the opportunity for the animal to engage in aggres-



**Brian Duncan**  
Illinois Farm Bureau President

sive and sometimes violent behavior, risking injuries to themselves, their pen mates and their caretakers.

American Farm Bureau Federation, along with the National Pork Producers Council, challenged the law's constitutionality as a violation of the Interstate Commerce Clause. We were greatly disappointed last summer when the U.S. Supreme Court, in a narrowly split decision, declared the initiative to be constitutional.

With the law's enactment on Jan. 1, pig farmers are now uncertain if they will make massive infrastructure investments to comply with California's arbitrary animal welfare standards, which could be subject to change with future ballot initiatives. Ultimately, Proposition 12 not only violates the principles of interstate commerce but also undermines food access and affordability.

Nobody understands these concerns better than USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack.

Vilsack told U.S. House Ag Committee members during a recent hearing that "there's nothing preventing any state from doing what California did (with Prop 12)," and if Congress doesn't "take this seriously, we're going to have chaos in the marketplace."

That "chaos" from Prop 12 will hit fixed- and low-income consumers the hardest, as the law is expected to severely reduce the affordability of high-quality protein. In fact, prices for certain pork products in California have risen as much as 41% since Prop 12's implementation, according to a USDA study.

State regulations like Prop 12 shouldn't dictate commerce or agriculture production in other states. Prop 12 endangers the financial health of livestock producers, and smaller farms especially might be forced out of business due to high compliance renovation costs and lack of long-term incentives. This could lead to more consolidation in the industry.

Processors also face challenges due to uncertain demand and higher costs to trace and segregate products for Prop 12 compliance.

But California's market is too big to ignore. Nearly 15% of the pork consumed in this country is eaten in California. And future demand prospects could be significant there as well.

Proposition 12 also serves as a template that ultimately could be used to regulate all sectors of agriculture. Standards could be placed around labor rate, crop inputs used, or certain production methods that could ultimately create chaos in the agriculture space. The risk of disruption increases if more states adopt individual agricultural standards creating an unworkable patchwork of regulations.

I support any farmer's decision to comply with Prop 12 but advise caution with the uncertainty of further regulatory changes, such as Massachusetts' Question 3.

A full repeal of Prop 12 is urgently needed.

The Supreme Court has called on Congress for a legislative solution. Farm Bureau continues to advocate for one as well.

Illinois Farm Bureau, Illinois Pork Producers Association and state commodity group partners recently sent a letter to the Illinois congressional delegation outlining concerns with Prop 12 and calling for a legislative fix in the next farm bill.

Most vital to addressing Prop 12 is continued collaboration, bipartisan relationships and speaking as the unified voice of Illinois agriculture. Illinois producers can trust there's a grassroots organization committed to protecting the economic well-being of their businesses, just as consumers can trust the family farmer behind every pig.

(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.)



## Ag education programs growing in Illinois

**HANNAH SPANGLER**  
FarmWeek

A grant program has helped increase number of agriculture teachers and agriculture education programs in the state.

In 2014, there were 320 agriculture programs with 386 teachers. That number grew to 386 agriculture programs with 547 teachers in the 2023-24 school year, according to data from Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education (FCAE).

"To me, it tells a story about being able to reach more students in more places to learn about agriculture," said Jesse Faber, agriculture teacher and FFA adviser for Pontiac Township High School.

Faber has been teaching agriculture for 18 years and is finishing a doctorate program in ag education. His dissertation focuses on the recruitment and retention of teachers in Illinois. He told FarmWeek, "The number of teachers and programs has been escalating over the last seven years. Right in the middle of that, the Three Circle FFA and SAE Grant started."

Through this grant program, which began in 2017, full-time ag teachers can receive pay for 400 hours outside of their usual teaching obligations. The teacher's school district pays 50% using the grant dollars and the other half is often covered by the school district or community partners.

"The most valuable piece is to be able to embed agriculture in a student's education so we can connect with young people in this industry that I love and help them become more educated consumers," Faber said. "It is crucial to allow FFA programs to grow because every student can have a place in it. I encourage everyone to support your local agriculture program."

FCAE state coordinator, Jennifer Waters, contributes ag program growth to the Three Circle Grant and an ag teacher's ability to fill home economics, industrial arts and science teacher roles.

"We have these teaching vacancies happening,

but the grant is what sweetens the pot," she said. "We can say to the district not only are we going to help you by picking up these classes that you couldn't find someone for, but we're also able to give a stipend to help pay this teacher for their extended time."

Adding ag teachers and giving them compensation for the extra time in their jobs has had an impact on student participation. "Now the teacher is getting paid to do the extra, so they are going to other events and other activities. Student participation is growing because of this," Waters said.

The Illinois 2023 Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Education Report showed an increase of almost 10,000 students since the implementation of the Three Circle Grant.

"With the increase in agriculture programs offered, there are teaching roles that do not get filled," Waters said.

"In most cases, we're able to work with school districts so the next year we can fill the position," she said. "But I will say the Three Circle Grant has helped with retaining the teachers we have."

Faber said, "We're very thankful to FCAE for what they've done. They are wonderful researchers who are building bridges and opening up ag programs."

To fill teaching vacancies, a selection of teachers are coming from the ag industry with non-traditional licenses. FCAE offers teacher training in addition to first-year ag teachers conferences to help these teachers grow their knowledge.

FCAE provides further support to ag teachers through workshops, grant application assistance and overall advocacy. Additionally, FCAE has created a Chicago land program adviser position to further develop agriculture programs in urban areas.

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# LOCAL NEWS

## U of I establishes one of the largest research fields in the U.S.A.

By HANNAH SPANGLER  
FarmWeek

CHAMPAIGN – One of the largest tile-drained test plots in the country will be located at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) thanks to a massive investment from the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Studies (ACES).

This new research field, the Alma Mater Plots, will sit on approximately 55 acres and host 64 test plots with 16 treatments and four replicates.

“The overall goal is to understand long-term agriculture practices on crop productivity. Not just the yields, but why are crops producing the way they do,” said Andrew Margenot, ACES crop sciences associate professor.

College of ACES Dean Germán Bollero told FarmWeek, “The decision to support the Alma Mater Plots aligns with our land-grant mission. By investing in the Alma Mater Plots, we are addressing the practical needs of many farmers managing tiled ground.”

UIUC is home to the Morrow Plots, the second oldest experimental test field in the country and the oldest in the Americas.

Established in 1876, studies on these plots spurred innovations in crop rotation and land use practices over the past 150 years.

Although the Morrow Plots will still be studied, Margenot said, “The questions of today are different than the past. We want to look at modern practices and questions that build on the Morrow Plots.”

The Alma Mater Plots will be over 70 times the size of the Morrow Plots. Additionally, each plot will be center-tiled and have a buffer tile. The center tile will monitor the amount of water draining from the field and the nutrients that are flowing out with the water. This will be used to understand the management practices conducted on the overlying soil.

Margenot said an important factor of this experimental design is the buffer tile.

“To be certain the nutrients coming out of a tile are just from the treatment on the soil that overlays that tile, you have to have some way to tell that only that treatment is draining,” he said. “The buffer tile runs through the border of two plots and basically sucks up any overflow that would contaminate the treatment in the plot of interest.”



The Alma Mater Plots will include 64 test plots with 16 treatments and four replicants. (Photo courtesy of Andrew Margenot)

Once the plots are set up, the plan is to not touch them for 150 years.

“We will modify the rotations, the grades and fertilize the Alma Mater Plots, but the overall gist of the treatment will hopefully stay intact, as it has for the Morrow Plots,” Margenot said.

With UIUC’s location near

the start of the Embarras River, the Alma Mater Plots will help researchers study the effects of farming on water quality.

Bollero and Margenot see the plots becoming a living lab, where quality data can be collected to inform agronomic practices and agricultural policy. “We envision the plots becoming a focal point

for hands-on education, research and collaboration,” Bollero said. “This initiative reflects our commitment to not only preserving the legacy of the Morrow Plots but also paving the way for the next 150 years.”

To establish treatments and what should be studied, Margenot and his team are asking stakeholders of Illinois agriculture for their input.

“What we don’t want is a bunch of professors like myself in their office, putting out treatments and then have people say the experiment isn’t as meaningful as it could have been with their feedback,” he said.

This summer, Margenot will lead a tour with focus groups and workshops to gain input from Illinois farmers and commodity board leaders. He also welcomes input via email, [margenot@illinois.edu](mailto:margenot@illinois.edu). There is no official website yet, but Margenot said the public should “keep an eye out with more information coming in late summer to early fall.”

(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](http://FarmWeekNow.com).)

## Time traveling with soil: Researching Illinois’ centennial soil archive

By ERIN M. HENKEL  
FarmWeek

A soil sample from 1861 in Perry County was collected as part of the Illinois Geological Survey and provided researchers with information about Illinois geology, landscape and mineral resources. In 1899, researchers started mapping soil types to 3-foot depth and characterizing the distinct soil layers.

The archive of the soil samples was kept in a dark pole-barn near the Morrow plots on the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus until Andrew Margenot and his team of about 40 research personnel discovered the barn’s soils and started recovering and curating the soil archives.

Margenot is an Illinois Extension specialist and associate professor in the Department of Crop Sciences and has been working in conjunction with the Illinois Farm Bureau and Illinois Nutrient Research and Education Council, to resample the locations to identify how soils have changed over time in Illinois.

“We can learn a lot about what has changed over time and that can go as far back as 120 years or so,” Margenot said. “That’s important because we don’t really know how soils changed more than a couple of decades ago, in general, and over a small area like typically one field trial. To do this over a state and going back over 100 years is a huge deal.”



Andrew Margenot is an Illinois Extension specialist who has been working with the Illinois Farm Bureau and Illinois Nutrient Research and Education Council to recover and curate soil archives to identify how soils have changed statewide over time. (Photo courtesy of Andrew Margenot)

Margenot said the project builds on the lifetimes of researchers and soil scientists who have gone into the effort of collecting soil samples. He said because the soil samples were kept with details such as location, year and day of collection, researchers today can resample the soils and see how the soils have changed over a longer period than most soil archives that span only a few decades.

He also said while there

might be “simplicity” in terms of crop rotation in the state, biochemistry and how water, soils and air interact are complex.

“Soils change at a rate that we cannot see as individual humans and it is called generational blindness,” Margenot said. “But if you took

your great-grandfather and showed him soil now, he would be able to see things that you think are normal. To be able to measure these changes, you have to be able to go back in time.”

He said until scientists invent a time machine, the best way to “go back in time” is by using the

archive built by previous researchers. He also said due to the size of Illinois, the collection of samples is especially unique.

“The state of Illinois is the size of some entire countries in Europe and to understand soil changes you have to look at it on a large spatial scale,” he said. “This archive is one of the oldest in the world, but it’s also unlike the other ones in the world — it’s the largest by orders of magnitude. That’s really important.”

Margenot asked farmers and landowners to look at the map of locations needing to be resampled and see if they know the landowner. They would need access to the land to collect six to 12 cores, 1.5 inches in diameter, to 3-foot depth and would provide the farmer with a read-out of soil information at the field level. Any information at field level is protected and anonymized.

“There’s very basic questions we can answer on fertility that have direct implications for economic use of fertilizer inputs,” Margenot said. “Can we improve the recommendations and how to apply depending on your soil

type? I think we can.”

He said understanding the changes in the soil over time could also help farmers understand micronutrient needs such as zinc or boron.

Another benefit for farmers is understanding their soil’s potential for carbon sequestration as they navigate the carbon credit markets and determine whether they should enter into a carbon agreement.

Margenot said IFB “has been a great partner,” helping the team to work with landowners and farmers.

“They’ve been supportive of putting us out in front of farmer crowds and they have also been supporting policy communication that I think is essential for this project,” he said.

Margenot said IFB is helping connect the research team with policymakers at the state and federal level to explain the importance of soil changes and phosphorus losses.

(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](http://FarmWeekNow.com).)

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