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LOCAL NEWS... LOCAL VIEWS

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LOTS hosts public meetings on potential plans for bus route, microtransit in Rochelle

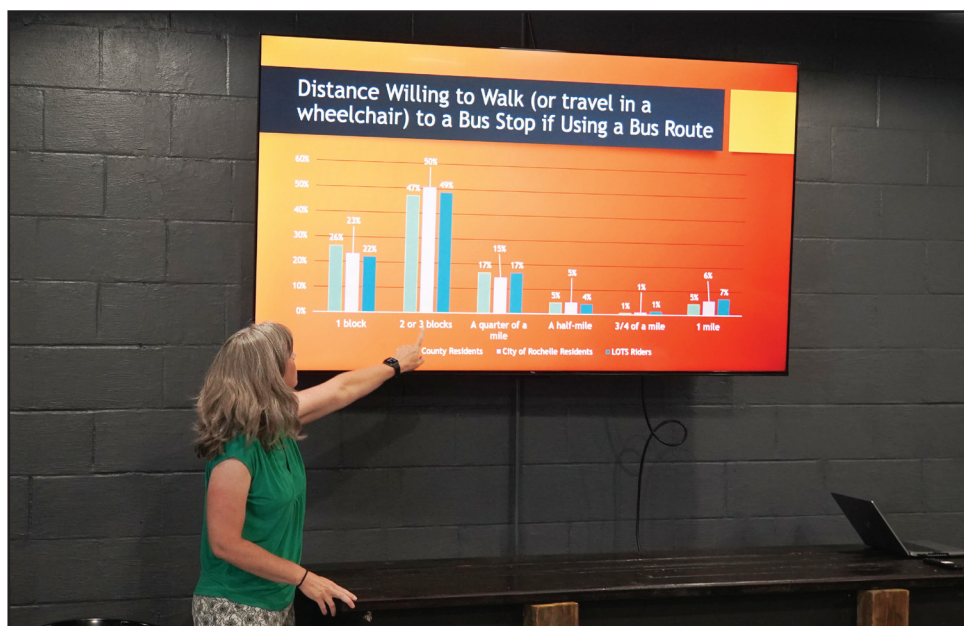
Potential route includes Walmart, RCH, The REC and more

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — On Thursday, the Lee-Ogle Transportation System hosted two public meetings in Rochelle concerning its plans for public transit in Rochelle, including a potential deviated fixed bus route and a microtransit service alternative.

Residents and community stakeholders were invited to attend the meeting. The first meeting Thursday was attended by representatives from LOTS, the Hub City Senior Center, the City of Rochelle, and the Rochelle Christian Food Pantry. LOTS has been conducting a study since early this year on the feasibility of fixed-route bus services in Rochelle and Dixon. The meetings and the study are being carried out by public transportation consultants RLS & Associates.

LOTS and RLS & Associates aim to evaluate options for fixed-route bus service to enhance access to workplaces, medical care, education, shopping, recreation, and more for



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

On Thursday, the Lee-Ogle Transportation System hosted two public meetings in Rochelle concerning its plans for public transit in Rochelle, including a potential deviated fixed bus route and a microtransit service alternative.

residents in Rochelle. The project team is eager to hear from a diverse range of stakeholders, including senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, transit riders and non-riders, students, and anyone who values transportation as a vital community resource.

RLS & Associates Consultant Christy Campoll and Associate Zach Kincaide discussed a preliminary route that's been

put together on Thursday. The route would begin in the downtown area near the city's parking lots off North Main Street and would proceed to the areas of Rochelle Community Hospital, Walmart, The REC Center, the Rochelle Christian Food Pantry, Willis Avenue near new apartment developments, to Rochelle Foods, and back to its start. The route would take around 45

minutes to an hour. The plans are not finalized. The eight-month study will be wrapped up in August and a final report will be made.

"This would be like a standard city bus route where the bus arrives at each stop every hour and provides access to destinations around the city," Campoll said. "We do think a route is feasible."

See LOTS page 3



City looking to add more art downtown

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — The City of Rochelle recently circulated a request for proposals from area artists for future art installations in public spaces in the community.

The RFP came as a result of the city commissioning a mural on the back of the Hub City Furniture building which now overlooks the city's parking lots east of Lincoln Highway. That mural was painted by Mat and Mandey Steder and was the city's first. The city has since contemplated the idea of adding more art throughout the community.

The RFP left the potential location for artworks up to artists, allowing city-owned or private property.

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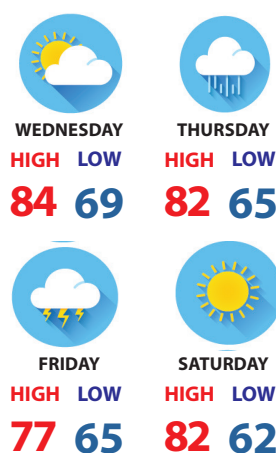


Wright earns Headset Hero

RPD Dispatcher Abby Wright was presented by Chief Pete Pavia with the Headset Hero Award.

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WEATHER



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OBITUARIES

• MARGARET ELLEN
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LOCAL NEWS

CITY: Rochelle officials discuss adding future artworks

From page 1

The city received one submission from the RFP before its deadline and two proposals after the deadline.

For the addition of future artworks in the city, a committee has been established including City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh, City Community Development Director Michelle Pease and representatives from local businesses and organizations.

The city has an interview planned in July with the artist that submitted their proposal by the deadline, Pease said.

“He’s an artist from Chicago that does murals all over in small commu-

nities, so we’re excited to see where that goes,” Pease said. “That proposal was just different visions of what Rochelle is. It’d maybe be a skydiver, a Hub or a train. His proposal was almost like a postcard. He said he’d be open to anything. I’m always of the mind to keep it neutral so it’s something everyone can enjoy.”

The budget for this year’s art installation is about \$10,000, Fiegenschuh said. A future mural or art installation will likely be smaller than the Steders’ mural and if the budget allows, there may be more than one mural or installation.

Pease said the timeline and budget for the project

will be discussed with the artist at the July meeting. She hopes to have the art installation done by Oct. 1.

Potential locations for a mural include the side of Midwestern Clothing Company on 4th Avenue where the city has potential plans for an urban park next door. The city has also discussed the wall on the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Lincoln Highway where it plans to demolish the former bank drive up property and construct a parking lot.

“We’ve also thought about something on the 7th Street curve where our planting area is on the northside that we could put something there that would have a mural that people could stop and take pictures in front of,” Pease said. “We’re open to anywhere. If there are business owners that are interested, please call us. The VFW is interested in potentially doing a patriotic mural on its building. We’re open to anything.”

Pease called the recent mural east of Lincoln Highway painted by the Steders “a feather in the city’s cap.” Since it was finished, it’s acted as a backdrop for events in the area and high schoolers attending Prom have



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

For the addition of future artworks in the city, a committee has been established including City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh, City Community Development Director Michelle Pease and representatives from local businesses and organizations.

taken pictures in front of it.

The city parking lot the mural overlooks will soon be the site of other improvements including running electrical lines underground, reconstructing the parking lot, and the addition of a public restrooms, storage and stage structure.

“That mural spruced the whole area up,” Fiegenschuh said. “As our downtown improvement project moves forward, that mural is only going to add to the experience down there. I’m glad we did it, and I think it’s another reason the

mayor and council have been supportive of doing more murals. It was such a positive project and totally exceeded my expectations. Mat and Mandey are very talented. It was our first mural and the amount of positive comments and their artistic ability and commitment to the community made it a great focal point. When we get all that work done down there and the power lines removed and we can have a structure for events down there, it will be even more of a focal point for the community.”

Pease said that the addition of murals has become more common in towns around the area lately. Fiegenschuh said they bring positivity to the community and he’d like to see more of them.

“Public art is a very good thing,” Fiegenschuh said. “It brings people together. I find it to be aesthetically pleasing and it makes me feel good. It brings people to the community to take pictures and see. It adds aesthetic beauty to your community and shows that we take pride in our town. It would be great to have more of them.”

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ROYAL SCOOP: Ceremony held for ice cream shop

From page 1

The Nuyens moved to Creston about three years ago and looked at investing in real estate and businesses in the local area. That’s how they got started

with Zig Zag Antiques & More before buying the space that Royal Scoop now occupies.

“We wanted something more,” Jon Nuyen said. “We looked around and wanted to do something to

give back to the community that it doesn’t have. We thought about ice cream. I guess it was a good choice. It’s unfolding now. With the help of the city and chamber and everybody, we’re doing it. It’s been

an uphill battle, but it happened pretty quick. We’d like to thank everyone for being supportive of us. We’ll be here for you to give something back to the community. Just like it’s given us.”

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RNLHOUSE

LOCAL NEWS

LOTS: Public meetings held to discuss potential routes in Rochelle

From page 1

“We’re bringing plans to the community so LOTS can implement the service and get ready to launch it and start work in the community about the availability of the service.”

LOTS currently provides an advanced reservation-based, shared-ride public transportation system in Lee and Ogle counties, operating Monday-Friday 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. The in-town fare is \$2 (\$1 for seniors, veterans and those with disabilities). The out-of-town fee is capped at \$10 or \$5 for the discounted categories. That service would remain and the fixed route would be in addition to it.

“That service is more for rural areas where there’s not a whole lot of population,” Campoll said. “With a fixed-route bus, we’re able to do something that’s more convenient and cost effective in a denser area. People can just walk to a bus stop rather than calling for a ride. We think this would be a good option for residents of the city and we’re excited to move forward.”

Also discussed Thursday was the idea of an additional microtransit shuttle bus service to go to different employers in the city’s industrial park area. That would be a future expansion to the route

and a shuttle bus would take riders from a nearby stop on the main route to employers.

An expanded microtransit alternative to the fixed bus route is also under consideration for the future that would make stops in all of Rochelle available, with named locations including downtown, RCH, Walmart, the industrial park, the airport, MightyVine, and the railroad park.

Campoll said the microtransit alternative would be more expensive to operate than a fixed bus route and could involve three vehicles operating in a similar manner to Uber. That concept would be a larger undertaking and expansion of a bus route concept.

For the fixed bus route, LOTS would work with the city to install bus stop signs, Campoll said. Aspects of the work that remain under consideration at this point include the size of buses, funding from the Department of Transportation, the cost to ride, and hours.

Potential hours mentioned by Campoll Thursday included from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday, and possible service on Saturdays.

The next steps in the process will be to get more community input on routes and schedules,

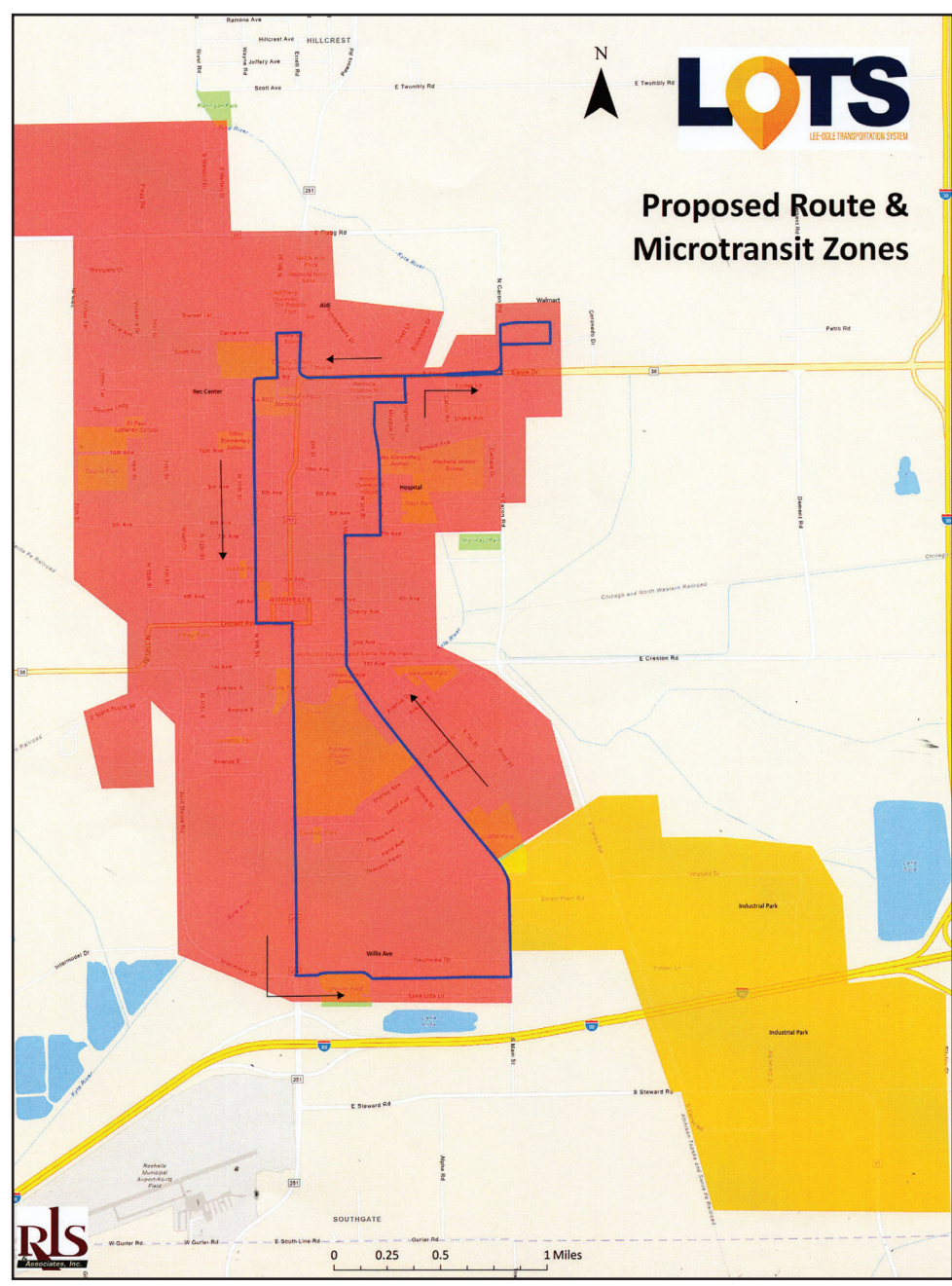
budgeting, and making a five-year plan.

Campoll and Kincade detailed statistics found from the community survey that received over 200 responses Thursday. 61 percent of respondents said they drive themselves, 26 percent said a friend or family member drives them, 19 percent said they use LOTS, six percent said they walk or use a wheelchair, three percent said they use a service for seniors or people with disabilities, two percent use a bike, and two percent responded other.

Thirty eight percent of Rochelle resident respondents said they’d use a bus route regularly, 36 percent said they’d use it occasionally, and 18 percent said they know someone who would use it.

Eighty three percent of Rochelle resident respondents said they’d use a bus route for shopping/errands, 68 percent said they’d use it for medical appointments, 65 percent said they’d use it for work, 25 percent said they’d use it for youth/after school activities, 22 percent said they’d use it for K-12 school, 18 percent said they’d use it for college/post-secondary education, 16 percent said they’d use it for childcare and 11 percent said other.

For distance they’d be willing to walk or travel in a wheelchair to a bus stop,



(COURTESY PHOTO)

LOTS currently provides an advanced reservation-based, shared-ride public transportation system in Lee and Ogle counties, operating Monday-Friday 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

23 percent of Rochelle residents said one block, 50 percent said two or three

blocks, 15 percent said a quarter of a mile, five percent said a half mile,

one percent said a quarter of a mile, and six percent said one mile.

Kish President Dr. Laurie Borowicz wins Gary W. Davis Ethical Leadership Award

LOMBARD — Dr. Laurie Borowicz, president of Kishwaukee College, was recognized as the recipient of the 2024 Gary W. Davis Ethical Leadership Award by the Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA) at the ICCTA Annual Convention on Friday, June 7, in Lombard.

The Gary W. Davis Ethical Leadership Award honors individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the pursuit and support of ethical leadership and decision-making in their fields of work and volunteer service. Dr. Borowicz, who has served as Kish’s president since 2016, was nominated for the award by the College’s Senior Leadership Team and the Kish Board of Trustees.

“I am honored to be the recipient of the Gary W. Davis Ethical Leadership

Award. Gary exemplified great leadership during his 18-year tenure with ICCTA. Being nominated by my executive team and the Board of Kishwaukee College for this award is quite humbling,” Dr. Borowicz said.

As president, Dr. Borowicz has focused on improving campus culture through transparency, equitable initiatives, and data-driven decision-making, including adopting the College’s Civility Statement, creating the Annual Data Book, and eliminating student fees to improve cost transparency.

“As college leaders, our focus is to make the best decisions for our students. Dr. Borowicz has not wavered from this principle despite many difficult decisions over her years of service,” said Bob Johnson, Kishwaukee College Board chair. “Dr. Borowicz has provided fair

and honest leadership while positioning the College for future success and has shown a steadfast devotion to creating a welcoming environment for the entire Kish community.”

The Kish Board recognized Dr. Borowicz for her award during their Tuesday meeting. During the meeting, Dr. Borowicz stated the College will continue to focus on respectful and ethical leadership and acknowledged the many collaborators who have helped make these initiatives a reality at Kish.

“Leading organizations, especially institutions of higher education, is complex. There are many we serve — students, faculty and staff, boards, business and community leaders, donors, legislators, and taxpayers. I accept this award on behalf of those who work with and beside me, those who have listened and sup-



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Dr. Laurie Borowicz, president of Kishwaukee College, was named the recipient of the 2024 Gary W. Davis Ethical Leadership Award at the Illinois Community College Trustees Association Annual Banquet in Lombard. Pictured (left to right) are Dr. Robert Hammon, board vice-chair; Kathleen Spears, board secretary; Dr. Borowicz; and Bob Johnson, board chair.

ported me along the way, and my colleagues who do this incredible work every day to make lives better for

others,” Dr. Borowicz said. To learn more about Kishwaukee College’s commitment to ethical

leadership, including diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, visit kish.edu/diversity.

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Thor
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ON THE FARM

Jonamac Orchard succeeds over insect, weather challenges

By **PHYLLIS COULTER**
FARMWEEK

MALTA — Two wagonloads of specialty growers were guided through rows of apples at Jonamac Orchard and learned how this year’s crop was saved from frost damage.

The U-pick orchard, part of a 105-acre family-owned farm in DeKalb County, consists of more than 20,000 trees growing more than 30 varieties of apples.

Spychal and McArtor family members shared some apple-growing challenges and triumphs June 6 at the Summer Horticulture Field Day organized by the Illinois State Horticultural Society.

When temperatures at the DeKalb County farm drop to 29 degrees for an hour, the orchard can lose 10% of the apple crop, said Mike Spychal, one of Jonamac’s owners.

And if the temperature falls to 25 degrees, crop loss can grow to 90%.

Raising the temperature by 4 degrees matters. “It’s the difference between having a season or not,” Spychal said.

The orchard invested in two frost machines—basically a helicopter blade on a tall tower—and used them twice this year. Each

cost \$40,000. But saving the crop required more than machines alone; manual labor was also needed.

Workers place barrels with wood from pruning trees among the rows of apple trees that create heat for the frost machines to distribute. The team must light 180 fires throughout the orchard, often about midnight.

And frost isn’t the only challenge for the orchard.

Jenna Spychal, Mike’s wife, and the granddaughter of founders Jerry and Mary Lynn McArtor, is leading the orchard’s fight against codling moths, whose larvae can tunnel fruit and produce “wormy” apples.

“It’s the first time we tried mating disruption,” she said. She demonstrated how she puts the disrupter on the trees with a long pole, tree by tree.

The Jonamac team also uses a trap system. By monitoring the traps, they also know when the threshold has been reached to spray, said Kaci Athey, University of Illinois entomologist and assistant professor.

While the family could control frost damage, trees in one part of the orchard showed signs of winter damage, several to the point of dying.



Jenna Spychal demonstrates how she installs a codling moth mating disruptor to apple trees at the Illinois State Horticultural Society’s summer field day at Jonamac Orchards in Malta on June 6.

Mohammad Babadoost, a plant pathologist and U of I professor, said he has seen more winter damage problems in central and northern Illinois in the past several years.

When the tree’s vascular system suffers from

winter damage, the tree is more susceptible to fungi, he said.

“It’s beyond a pathology problem. We need more research on why this is happening,” Babadoost said. “It’s complex.”

Mike Spychal said the

dead and dying trees will be removed and drainage improved in that area before replanting.

Babadoost praised the management of Jonamac Orchard. “This is one of the cleanest orchards, disease-wise, in Illinois,”

the pathologist said.

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

Summer presentations continue for Ogle Carroll Ag Literacy coordinator

OREGON—Agriculture in the Classroom is a statewide educational program with lessons offered to kindergarten through eighth grade. Its goal is to help students, teachers, and the public gain greater awareness of the role of agriculture in the economy and society. The program is presented at area organizations and

group meetings during the summer. Melinda Colbert, the Ag Literacy coordinator for Ogle and Carroll Counties, has presented at the Oregon Rotary and the Carroll County Farm Bureau’s Prime Time/4Cs Committee. Ag in the Classroom (AITC) is offered through University of Illinois Extension in Ogle

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

Melinda grew up on a farm in the Leaf River area, which included dairy and beef cows, sheep, and chickens. She graduated from For-

reston High School in 1993. After high school, she attended Lakeland College in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and graduated with a bachelor of science in secondary education and math.

After graduating from

college, Melinda was the program director for the Sheboygan Boys & Girls Club. She returned to Lakeland College as a hall director and summer camps and conferences director. Since returning to the Leaf River area,

Melinda has held several positions with the University of Illinois Extension in Ogle County, including 4-H community worker and fiscal secretary. Melinda has been the Ag Literacy coordinator since 2007.



(COURTESY PHOTO)

The Rotary Club of Oregon was pleased to have Melinda Colbert from Illinois Extension discussing Agriculture in the Classroom program. Left to right: Stan Eden, Julie Mann and Melinda Colbert.

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LOCAL VIEWS

Put me in coach: History of girls sports at RTHS

IN 1869 a curriculum was created allowing the Rochelle school to award high school degrees. The first graduating high school class of 1874 consisted of three students, Emma Stratford, May Parks and Kitty Parker. Three young ladies and zero young men. But this is the story of sport, more specifically girls' sports at Rochelle High School.

On Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024, I followed the progress of a little lady named Dempsey Atkinson at the Illinois State wrestling championships. Dempsey competed against other girls and fought her way to fifth place. Dempsey is the first female wrestler to qualify for the state championships and this is the second year she has made the trip. Boys have been wrestling since 1955 and have earned 17 medals at the state tournament. Girls (Dempsey) have been competing for two years against other girls and earned one medal. Dempsey has pinned five opponents at the state championships and now holds the Rochelle record for most pins in one season at the state tournament and most cumulative pins at the state tournament.

Boys have been par-

ticipating in high school sports for almost as long as there has been school. Boys were competing in organized track since 1897 and football from 1899. The young men were touted as heroes, and became small town legends for their exploits on the field of competition. For the gentler sex, the options were not as available. Fortunately, the young ladies of Rochelle High School were not willing to sit back and cheer for the boys.

The 1907 Tatler (school yearbook) refers to basketball as a "minor sport which has never aroused much interest in our school." "Nevertheless the girls of our high school have organized a team which in the past two seasons have played very well among themselves." Based on this we can infer that girls' athletics at Rochelle High School began in either 1905 or 1906. The one caveat was that the girls could only compete within the school. The Illinois High School Athletic Association, founded in 1900, had determined that member schools could not allow girls to compete against other schools. Another problem was that Rochelle High had

no gymnasium, the girls could play basketball but it was played outside and generally not on school property.

By 1918 Ms. Crawford had a steady hand on the ladies' sports and basketball was joined by volleyball, archery, hiking and other activities. The advancement of athletics was still slowed by the lack of a gymnasium. The Coliseum (today's Hub City Furniture) allowed use of their second floor for basketball but this was a limited space at best. In 1921 a new high school was constructed on Seventh Street. This building offered a gymnasium for the first time in high school sports. "The time is certainly approaching when the value of girls' athletics will be generally recognized. Girls, as well as boys, need to learn teamwork – the subordination of the individual for the good of the team: they need to learn to be "good sports," touted the 1921 Tatler. The addition of a gymnasium might not have opened the door for girls' sports, but it did open the door for women to begin taking physical

education classes. In 1924 girls began taking P.E.

The Girls Athletic Association (GAA) was introduced about 1924. Finally, it began to look like girls would have a path to organized competitive sports in high school. Not so fast. GAA merely helped to organize intra-mural competition. Girls were only allowed to compete within their own school. On the positive side, the school did develop a method by which girls could earn their "R". For the boys the standards had been set in 1911. Any boy who competed in four full halves of football or placed in an inter-scho-



Tom McDermott

lastic track meet qualified for a varsity "R". For the ladies the requirements were slightly more diverse: Faithful work, regular attendance, courtesy, and effort. Cleaning teeth twice a day, eight consecutive hours of sleep with open windows, beginning no later than 10:30, bathe twice weekly. Drink one glass of water upon rising, eating three regular meals each day, eating nothing between meals except fresh fruit, graham crackers, bread. Finally min-

imum percentages were set for shooting baskets, serving in volleyball, and throwing a softball. In the first year the girls could win their numeral (the last two numbers of the year they would graduate) if they acquired 150 points. The second year they would receive a stripe if they received another 150 points. Third year was a repeat of the second, earn 150 points and receive a second stripe. In their senior year a girl could finally receive her "R" but only if she was awarded another 150 points. To complicate the process, one could only be awarded 150 points in any one year and could not make up for missed years. The GAA did allow for one playday per year. On this one day the ladies were allowed to travel to another community and "play" games with students from another school. By 1970 GAA and the Illinois High School Athletic Association allowed for two play days in a year. Finally, the ladies had suffered long enough, they were ready to play, and arbitrary rules would no longer be accepted.

Title IX of the education amendment of 1972 opened the door for girls to participate in

inter-scholastic sports, and they were ready. The first girls sport was tennis in 1973. The first sport where girls could compete against girls from another school. The first year Rochelle girls' tennis sent five players to the Illinois State Championships. Once allowed to compete, the Lady Hubs have refused to step back. In 2009 Jen Jenkins became the first Rochelle female to win a state championship, seven more championships have followed. The Lady Hubs have earned 66 medals in state championships compared to 59 earned by the boys. The girls have brought home eight first-place medals in their 51 years of inter-scholastic competition compared to six first-place medals earned in the 127 they have been allowed to compete. Two Rochelle athletes have earned the honor to compete at the state championships all four years that they attended Rochelle High, both girls, Linn Beerman 1973-1977 and Megan Thiravong 2017-2020.

Put me in coach. I'm ready to play.

Tom McDermott is a Flagg Township Museum historian and Rochelle city councilman.

Local drug education makes a huge difference

IT seems as if every community, big or small, has been impacted by the problems associated with substance use and drug overdose. Within these communities, these problems extend into the family unit, with people becoming addicted and dying because of drugs.

However, community drug education and prevention programs can be a first line of defense. There is hope for the younger generations as they have more access to prevention and education resources to help them make informed decisions. In addition, more information is available for parents to equip them with the tools to help their kids understand the dangers and risks associat-

ed with drugs and alcohol.

Substance use prevention, education, and support resources are offered across Illinois. For example, there is the Illinois Helpline for anyone struggling with substance use or their loved ones. Call (833) 234 6343 or Text HELP to 833234.

The Illinois Department of Human Services operates a drug overdose prevention program that provides naloxone and other support.

Prevention First is a non-profit that promotes healthy behaviors and prevents drug and alcohol misuse. It offers many resources for youth and adults, including training and assistance programs. Project OZ also offers many support programs,

but one aspect is substance use and suicide prevention.

Prevention and education information is valuable in helping individuals and communities understand the risks of excessive alcohol use and illicit drug use. This can be especially valuable during Fourth of July celebrations. Binge drinking around Independence Day is typical, and it is known as one of the heaviest drinking holidays of the year. In social settings, it becomes easy to consume too much alcohol.

According to drug abuse statistics, Illinois may have a significant un-

derage drinking problem. Roughly 20.5% of Illinois adults over 18 binge drink at least once per month. Annually, there is an average of 5,151 deaths in the state attributed to excessive alcohol use.



Jody Boulay

Parents also play an essential role when providing drug education. They can take the initiative to create an inclusive and supportive environment with their children. This can equip them with the tools they need to make knowledgeable decisions surrounding alcohol and drug use.

Teens and adults all use drugs and alcohol for different reasons. Much of their use is linked to

peer pressure, whether from peers, in a social setting, or in the case of someone they look up to who they see drinking or using drugs.

Stress is also a common factor, and alcohol or drugs seem like an easy escape from the problems of life.

Additionally, environment and family history are contributing factors. Children, for example, who grow up in households with heavy drinking and recreational drug use are more likely to experiment with drugs.

Any parents wondering what to do should consider starting the conversation about alcohol and drug use early. It is also essential to be calm, loving, and supportive. Seek out spe-

cialized resources, such as those offered by county or non-profit organizations providing prevention and education.

Additionally, parents want to focus on making it safe for their children to tell them anything and never end the conversation, keeping it going regardless of age.

Local drug education resources are here to help with the goal of helping people of all ages make knowledgeable decisions about drugs and alcohol.

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.

How to contact government officials

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

IL Sen. Win Stoller
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Springfield, IL 62706
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Tom McDermott	tmcdermott@rochelleil.us
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Steve Buita	sbuita@d231.rochelle.net
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Stephanie White	swhite@d231.rochelle.net
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Jennifer Thompson	jthompson@d231.rochelle.net

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*Tom Huddleston	tom.huddleston@rthsd212.org
Bill Ravnaas	bill.ravnaas@rthsd212.org
Jeff Tilton	jeff.tilton@rthsd212.org
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Brent Ohlinger	brent.ohlinger@rthsd212.org
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Dale Wells	dwells@rochelleparkdistrict.org
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Jodie Hart	jhart@rochelleparkdistrict.org
Joe Lenkaitis	jlenkaitis@rochelleparkdistrict.org
Kristi Gonzales	kgonzales@rochelleparkdistrict.org

Ogle County Board Dist. 3

Austin Gillis	agillis@oglecounty.org
Dan Miller	dmiller@oglecounty.org
Joseph Simms	jsimms@oglecounty.org

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Mike Kerns	ac.kerns@comcast.net
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Mark Hibshman	
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Hillcrest Village Board

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Dan Potter	dpotter@hillcrestil.us
Tim Ball	tball@hillcrestil.us
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Eileen Braski	ebraski@hillcrestil.us
Joe Thompson	jthompson@hillcrestil.us

Flagg Township

Sue Messer	flaggtwp@rochelle.net
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Kelly Johnson	kellyjohnson0927@yahoo.com
Lanning Nicoloff	nicoloff118@comcast.net
Sheri Klindera	alwayslefty2@gmail.com
Susan Sevedge	nit1prl22@yahoo.com
Darci Waltrip	doobs12@comcast.net

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

(COURTESY PHOTO)



RPD's Wright presented Headset Hero Award

Rochelle Police Department Chief Pete Pavia awarded RPD Dispatcher Abby Wright with the Headset Hero Award on June 25 for being the calm voice during a critical incident that happened earlier this year. "Thank you Abby for your hard work and dedication to the Rochelle Police Department and to the citizens of Rochelle," an RPD Facebook post said. "We appreciate you."

Esmond's Johnson earns honors at Highland CC

FREEPORT—Highland Community College proudly announces the dean's list for the spring 2024 semester. Students who have completed 12 credit hours or more during the semester and have a minimum 3.25 grade point average (GPA), based on a 4.0 scale, are included on the dean's list. The Highest Honors are awarded to students with a perfect 4.0 GPA. High Honors are given to students with a 3.5 to 3.99 GPA, and Honors students have earned a GPA between 3.25 and 3.49.

Esmond's Sara Johnson achieved the Honors classification at the school.



- June 7 - Jace Whitehead, Rochelle, \$25
- June 8 - Don Romes, Rochelle, \$25
- June 9 - Lucas Kammerer, Dixon, \$50
- June 10 - RACF, Rochelle, \$25
- June 11 - Dorothy Bowers, Byron, \$25
- June 12 - Lane and Sheryl Albrecht, Lake Mills, WI, \$25
- June 13 - Marisol Esparza, Rochelle, \$25
- June 14 - Logan Frye, Steward, \$25
- June 15 - Christine Roberts, Lindenwood, \$25
- June 16 - Kishwaukee College Foundation, \$500
- June 17 - Jacquelyn Ackert, Dixon, \$25
- June 18 - Moncerat Rocha, Rochelle, \$25
- June 19 - Merrick Jacobs, Glendale, Arizona, \$25
- June 20 - From the Heart, \$25
- June 21 - From the Heart, \$25
- June 22 - Sherrie Welles, Rochelle, \$25
- June 23 - Megan Ryan, Glendale, Arizona, \$50
- June 24 - Timothy Moreland, Rochelle, \$25
- June 25 - Adeline Aubry, Whitefish Bay, WI, \$25
- June 26 - Angela Wyckoff, Davis Junction, \$25
- June 27 - RACF, \$25
- June 28 - First State Bank, \$25
- June 29 - Michael Fonfara, Rochelle, \$25
- June 30 - Kyle Elliott, Lakeside, California, \$50
- July 1 - Danielle Elston, Rochelle, \$25
- July 2 - Marshall Basler, Rochelle, \$25
- July 3 - Max Etheridge, Rochelle, \$25

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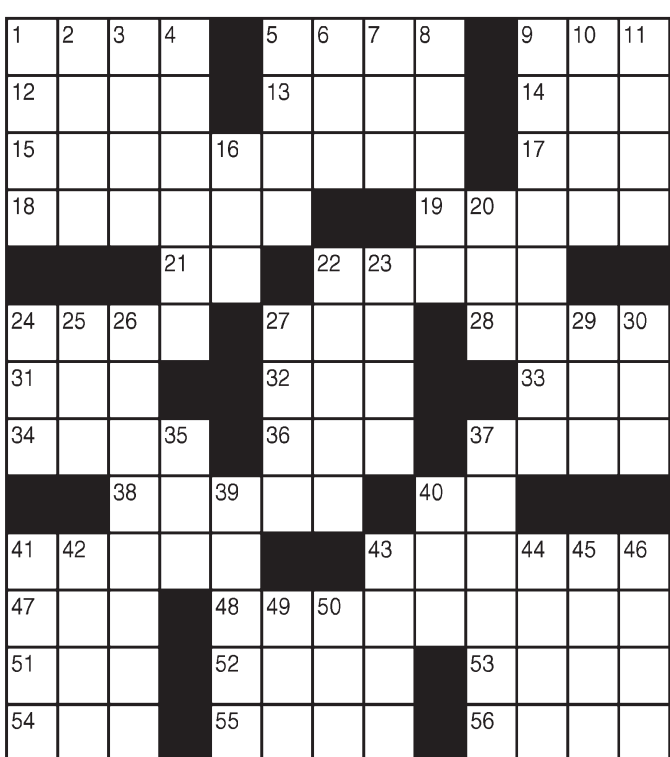


Coffee Break

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Old Italian money
- 5 Profs' degrees
- 9 "The Matrix" role
- 12 Caspian Sea feeder
- 13 Mine, in Montreal
- 14 Cleric's garment
- 15 When sports events start
- 17 Avril follower
- 18 Whine
- 19 Representative
- 21 Chicago transport
- 22 Sanctioned by Islamic law
- 24 Pottery oven
- 27 Nourished
- 28 Hotel furniture
- 31 JFK info
- 32 Genetic letters
- 33 "Mayday!"
- 34 Jewels
- 36 Weaponize
- 37 D-Day carriers
- 38 Boredom
- 40 Little — Peep
- 41 Move laterally
- 43 Least possible
- 47 Actor Ferrigno



- 48 Followed
- 51 Catchall abbr.
- 52 Actress Sedgwick
- 53 Bailiwick
- 54 Cowboys quarterback Prescott
- 55 Peevish fit
- 56 School session
- 5 Sandbox toy
- 6 "Let me think ..."
- 7 Female hare
- 8 Twine fiber
- 9 Anonymous
- 10 Flair
- 11 Life story?
- 16 Website contact no.
- 20 Talk on and on
- 22 Artist Matisse
- 23 Eden evictee
- 24 Beer barrel
- 25 Mineral suffix
- 26 Politico with limited power
- 27 Lady of the haus
- 29 Speck
- 30 Sound from a hot wok
- 35 NBC show since 1975
- 37 Yogurt variety
- 39 Violin parts
- 40 "Don't — stranger!"
- 41 "Citizen Kane" prop
- 42 Greek vowel
- 43 Accomplishment
- 44 French 101 verb
- 45 Crystal gazer
- 46 Streetcar
- 49 Writer Rand
- 50 Hosp. scan

DOWN

- 1 Schleps
- 2 Pakistan neighbor
- 3 "Bohemian Rhapsody" star Malek
- 4 Football team

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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: Z equals S

TQJP ZQHSSL RBMJRHP MJHZRZ
SJR RCSJRQJE HPF RHDG
PCPZRCV, B TCWDF ZHL
RQJL'EJ LHGGBPS BR WV.

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

Answer

Weekly SUDOKU

D	A	V	A	K	O	C	K	
T	E	R	A	K	A	V	A	
R	E	T	E	R	C	A	O	
S	I	D	E	F	E	S	T	
O	B		I	U	N	N	E	
S	T	S		M	A	S		
S	O	S		A	N	A		
S	E	D	S	F	E	D		
N	T		A	L	E			
G	A	V	E					
M	A	I		S	E	S		
A	M	E	I	M	E	S		
L	A	M	A	O	I			
N	E	P	H	S				

Solution time: 25 mins.

Answer

King Crossword

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nonstop, I would say
they're yakkking it up.

answer
CryptoQuip

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SPORTS



FINISHING STRONG
RTHS alum Bella Lodico concluded her collegiate softball career on a high note.
See page 2 for more details

Rochelle Little League

All-Stars win district title

Junior League baseball team wins Illinois District 19 Championship tourney

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCK FALLS — Rochelle Little League's Junior League Baseball All-Stars won the Illinois Little League District 19 Championship tournament at Dillon Park in Rock Falls this past week. Rochelle rallied off three consecutive wins to clinch the title, defeating Rock Falls before scoring two victories against Freeport. The Junior League All-Stars include Luke Chadwick, Riley Smith, Sebastian Albertson, Eli Schweitzer, Dayton Mellor, Nolan Zick, Joey Chadwick, Brayden Harley, Jasper Macklin, John Williams, Edwin Cervantes, Elijah Good, Kolton Cragin and Zachary Johnson. The Junior League All-Stars are coached by Mike McGill, Mike Medina and Jaime Huerta.



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Freeport 1
Rochelle opened the tournament with a 10-6 loss against Freeport on Monday evening. Eli Schweitzer and Dayton Mellor each went 2-for-3, while Edwin Cervantes went 1-for-2 with an RBI. Freeport took a 1-0 lead in the top of the second inning,

The Junior League All-Stars include Luke Chadwick, Riley Smith, Sebastian Albertson, Eli Schweitzer, Dayton Mellor, Nolan Zick, Joey Chadwick, Brayden Harley, Jasper Macklin, John Williams, Edwin Cervantes, Elijah Good, Kolton Cragin and Zachary Johnson. The All-Stars are coached by Mike McGill, Jaime Huerta and Mike Medina.

scoring on a wild pitch before adding three runs on an error, an RBI single and a balk in the top of the third inning. Rochelle scratched its first run in the bottom of the third inning, where Edwin Cervantes hit an RBI groundout to score Brayden Harley. Rochelle rallied for two more runs in the bottom of the fifth inning, where Joey Chadwick drew a bases-loaded walk and Brayden Harley grounded into a fielder's choice. Leading 4-3, Freeport exploded for five runs in the top of the sixth inning. Rochelle's fourth and final run came after John Williams scored on a wild pitch in the bottom of the sixth inning. Freeport closed the game with one run in the top of the seventh inning.

Rock Falls
Rochelle cruised over Rock Falls 16-1 on Wednesday evening to remain in the tournament.
See TITLE page 3

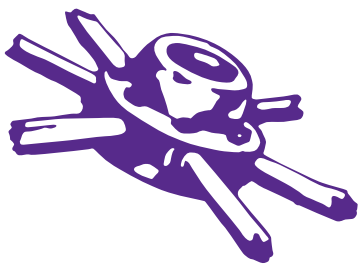
(COURTESY PHOTO)

Rochelle Little League

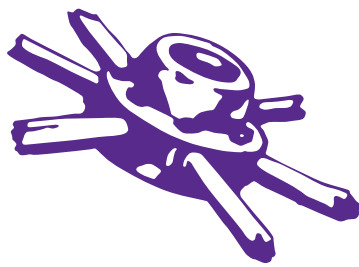


Jeff Perry wins Minor League Boys Division title for 2024 Rochelle Little League season

Jeff Perry won the Minor League Boys Division title for the 2024 Rochelle Little League season. The team includes Elliot Huff, Wells Millard, Logan Whiting, Cyrus Sullivan, Owen Gittleston, Andrew Erickson, Jarren McKinney, Brenner Dixon, Kanoa White, Michael Montelongo and Isaac Rosebrock. The team is coached by Jimmy Huff, Adam Erickson and Devin Montelongo.



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HUB SPOTLIGHT

Lodico leads the way at Benedictine University

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

FORMER Rochelle softball stand-out Bella Lodico set a series of goals for herself after completing her sophomore season at Benedictine University. After transferring in from Judson University, where she played her freshman season, Lodico primarily pitched as a reliever with the Benedictine University softball team, finishing 2-0 with a 3.72 ERA over 16 appearances.

Motivated to achieve her goals, which included becoming a starting pitcher for Benedictine this season, Lodico worked over the offseason to improve her command and develop her pitching arsenal. The result was a career-defining season for Lodico, who successfully earned a starting role for the Benedictine softball team, which finished with a 25-17 overall record in 2024.

“My goal was to prove myself because I came in as a transfer and didn’t get a lot of playing time last season,” Lodico said. “I had opportunities during the fall to prove myself and I worked really hard over the offseason to show that I could be a starter... I definitely had more control than I did last year. I had the same velocity, but I was more consistent with my control and I showed the coaches that I was capable of staying in games because I could throw strikes consistently.”

Lodico set career marks in several statistical categories during her junior season this spring. The former Lady Hub softball standout fired 143.1 innings over 30 appearances, which included 22 starts, 15 complete games and four shutouts. Lodico went 16-9 while recording a career-best 2.95 ERA and striking out 105 batters with 26 walks. The talented left-hander also improved on the defensive end, raising her fielding percentage from .833 last season to .907 this season.

“My natural movement is more of a curveball and I was able to jam a lot of hitters inside because I’m left-handed,” Lodico said. “I utilized my curveball and my changeup a lot more this season because having those offspeed pitches later in games was really helpful when hitters were catching up to my fastball. I worked a lot over the offseason on those pitches because my coaches knew I’d have to utilize more pitches since I would be seen more during the game.”

Lodico led the Benedictine pitching staff in nearly every statistical category this season. The RTHS alum shined in Northern Athletic Collegiate Conference (NACC) play, where she ranked sixth in ERA (2.26), third in wins (16), third in innings (139.1) and second in strikeouts (102). Lodico was named the NACC Student-Athlete of the Week during the week of April 28, going 4-0 with a 2.41 ERA and 20 strikeouts to help the Benedictine team complete a 6-0 week.



(PHOTO COURTESY OF BENEDICTINE UNIVERSITY)

Former Rochelle softball standout Bella Lodico went 16-9 with a 2.95 ERA during her junior season at Benedictine University.

“I remember that day because I wasn’t on social media a lot since I was busy with work and practice,” Lodico said. “It was really because I felt like all of the hard work I put in over the offseason paid off... I saw a lot of growth in myself, particularly with how I reacted to certain situations in life. Going from being a four-year starter in high school to playing in college was difficult for me to understand, but if I wasn’t going to play, I wanted to be the best in the dugout as I could. Once I got more playing time, I wanted to continue being a leader in the dugout.”

Among Lodico’s season highlights was a 10-inning outing against Concordia Wisconsin on March 29, when Lodico conceded just two runs and struck out four batters in a 3-2 victory. Lodico struck out a season-high 12 batters on 142 pitches and allowed just three runs in a 4-3 win against Marian on April 27. Lodico concluded her two-year softball career at Benedictine with a 3.33 ERA as well as 18 wins and 131 strikeouts over 181 innings in the circle.

“I never really believed people when they said that time flies until I played my last game,” Lodico said. “My motivation this year was to cherish my time with the team because I knew I wouldn’t have an opportunity like this again. I played as hard as I could and I tried to be the best leader I could be. I learned how to take things as I go and to never take anything for granted.”

Perhaps more impressive than her performance on the softball field were her efforts in the classroom. Although she was technically a junior during the 2023-24 school year, Lodico completed her collegiate studies in just three years, graduating this spring with her bachelor’s degree in psychology with a minor in social work. Lodico, who’s interning with a youth family services program in Carol Stream this summer, said she hopes to obtain her master’s degree in the next few years and pursue a career with the Department of Children and Family Services.

</

SPORTS

TITLE: Junior League All-Stars advance to state tournament

From page 1

Rochelle scored 10 runs in the top of the first inning, where Jasper Macklin smacked a two-run single and both Edwin Cervantes and Elijah Good followed with RBI singles of their own.

Rochelle added five more runs in the top of the second inning, where John Williams slapped a two-run single and Elijah Good belted an RBI double to right field. Brayden Harley's sacrifice fly in the top of the third inning allowed Luke Chadwick to score and give Rochelle a 16-0 lead. Rock Falls tal-

lied one run in the bottom of the fourth inning before the game ended by run rule.

John Williams pitched the final three innings for Rochelle, striking out six batters and allowing only one run on one hit. Sebastian Albertson fired a scoreless first inning with one strikeout.

Freeport 2

Rochelle defeated Freeport 7-4 in its first rematch on Thursday evening, forcing a second game later in the night to decide the district champion. Edwin Cervantes went 3-for-3 with three RBIs, while Dayton Mellor went 2-for-3 and

pitched three and one-third innings with three strikeouts. Sebastian Albertson fired the final three and two-thirds innings to seal Rochelle's victory.

Rochelle broke a scoreless tie in the top of the fourth inning, tallying six runs to take a commanding 6-0 lead. Dayton Mellor scored on a wild pitch before Riley Smith reached on an error and John Williams hit an RBI groundout for two more runs. Eli Schweitzerscored on a wild pitch and Edwin Cervantes sent a two-run single into left field to cap off the six-run frame.

Freeport answered with

three runs on one hit and two walks in the bottom of the fourth inning. A wild pitch led to another Freeport run in the bottom of the fifth inning, but Rochelle added a much needed insurance run in the top of the seventh inning, where Edwin Cervantes laced an RBI single to second base that allowed Jasper Macklin to cross home plate.

Freeport 3

Rochelle outlasted Freeport 9-8 in the district championship game late Thursday evening. Brayden Harley went 2-for-4 with three RBIs,

while Joey Chadwick and Kolton Cragin each scored two runs. Eli Schweitzer pitched five innings as the starter, striking out six batters.

Freeport held a 2-0 lead after a double and three singles in the top of the second inning. Rochelle surged ahead after tallying three runs in the bottom of the second inning, where Jasper Macklin grounded into a fielder's choice and Edwin Cervantes reached on an error before stealing home to put Rochelle ahead 3-2. Rochelle extended its lead with four runs on three singles, including an RBI single

from Brayden Harley, in the bottom of the third inning.

Kolton Cragin walked and scored on a wild pitch in the bottom of the fifth inning, giving Rochelle an 8-2 lead over Freeport, who answered with five runs on two doubles and one single in the top of the sixth inning. Freeport forced the game into extra innings after tying the score in the top of the seventh inning. Rochelle walked off in the bottom of the eighth inning, where two walks led to an RBI single from Brayden Harley, who slapped a hard grounder up the middle.

Rochelle Little League

(PHOTOS BY RUSSELL HODGES)



Rookie League teams take the field at May School and Rochelle Middle School diamonds

Rochelle Little League's Coed Rookie League enjoyed a successful 2024 season at the May School and Rochelle Middle School fields this summer. The Rookie League fielded eight teams this season including Weichert Realtors, Asplundh, Helfrich Trucking, Pickin Station, AM Kerns Construction, A1 Hot Body Detailing, Homemade Cakery and Bladescapes. A total of 79 kids participated in the Rookie League during the 2024 season.

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ASHTON NEWS



AFC FFA awarded honors at state convention
Ashton-Franklin Center FFA members attended the 96th Illinois State FFA Convention June 11-13. The chapter was recognized as a Bronze Chapter in the National Chapter Award, first in the section in Harvest for All, and as a \$3,000 Foundation Chapter. Taylor Jahn received her State FFA Degree and Lane Koning and Zane Murphy were recognized for their American FFA Degree, which they will be receiving in the fall.



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(COURTESY PHOTO)
Lee County Sheriff Clay Whelan is excited to announce the release of a custom smartphone application.

Lee County Sheriff's Office announces smartphone app

DIXON — Lee County Sheriff Clay Whelan is excited to announce the release of a custom smartphone application. The app will serve as an innovative way for the Sheriff's Office to connect with Lee County residents and visitors, providing information quickly and efficiently to anyone with a smartphone.

The Lee County Sheriff's Office app was developed by The SheriffApp.com, a brand of OCV, LLC., which specializes in mobile app development for sheriff's offices and public safety organizations across the country. The app offers quick access to items of public interest and is easy to use. In just a few clicks, users can access features such as:

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"Over 80 percent of people in the United States own and use smartphones as their primary means of communication," OCV Partner and CRO Kevin Cummings said. "Mobile apps offer agencies a better way to alert, inform and prepare the public. Apps allow public safety agencies the ability to reach and serve their citizens where they are: their smartphones."

The app is now available to download for free in the App Store and Google Play by searching "Lee County Sheriff, IL".

(COURTESY PHOTO)
Rep. Fritts visits Lee County Health Department
The Lee County Health Department welcomed Rep. Bradley Fritts (R-Dixon) to its office June 18. LCHD employees had the opportunity to talk to him about the many programs and services it offers, show him around the facility and introduce him to many staff members.

Rep. Fritts Announces July summer tour events

DIXON — State Rep. Bradley Fritts (R-Dixon) has officially announced his 2024 Summer Tour scheduled events for July.

The tour consists of traveling office hours and coffee & conversation events from June 5 to Aug. 30. Coffee & conversation events will all be held at locally-owned coffee shops and restaurants.

The events scheduled for July include the following:

- Traveling Office Hours**
July 25 at the Creston-Dement Library, located at 107 S. Main St. in Creston, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- Coffee & Conversation**
July 10 at the Garden View Family Restaurant, located at 118 W. Mason St. in Polo, from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. This event is being held in partnership with House Republican Leader Tony McCombie.
- July 17 at the Sunrise Family Restaurant, located at 1181 N. 7th St. in Rochelle, from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

To view the full Summer Tour schedule, visit RepFritts.com/SummerTour.

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11/1/2024 by applying to the County Clerk of Ogle County, Illinois at the Office of the County Clerk in Oregon, Illinois. For further information contact the County Clerk. ADDRESS: 105 S. 5th Street, Suite 104, Oregon, IL 61061. TELEPHONE: (815)-732-1110. Oakwood Real Estate LLC, Purchaser or Assignee. Dated: July 2, 2024. No. 0707 (July 3, 10 and 17, 2024)

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SPORTS

Rochelle Little League



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Rochelle Little League's Junior League Softball All-Stars competed in the Illinois Little League District 19 Championship tournament at the Westwood Sports Complex in Sterling this past week. The Rochelle team includes Alexa Soto, Amada Ortiz, Anjali Plescias, Brittany Plescias, Ella Behrens, Jamie Riddell, Jehan Jaradat, Kylee Misch, Makayla Waters, Nadiyah Ortiz, Neveah Lira and Preslee Sanders. The team is coached by Kevin Behrens and Lori Behrens.

Junior League Softball All-Stars battle at district tournament

Rochelle finishes 0-2 with losses against Freeport and Sterling at Westwood

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

STERLING — Rochelle Little League's Junior League Softball All-Stars competed in the Illinois Little League District 19 Championship tournament at the Westwood Sports Complex in

Sterling this past week.

Rochelle faced Freeport in the opening round on Monday evening, falling 13-9 to move into the losers bracket. Rochelle battled Sterling on Wednesday evening, falling 13-2 to bow out of the tournament.

The team includes Alexa Soto, Amada Ortiz, Anjali

Plescias, Brittany Plescias, Ella Behrens, Jamie Riddell, Jehan Jaradat, Kylee Misch, Makayla Waters, Nadiyah Ortiz, Neveah Lira and Preslee Sanders. The team is coached by Kevin Behrens and Lori Behrens.

Freeport

Ella Behrens went 3-for-

3 with two runs scored in Rochelle's loss against Freeport on Monday. Nadiyah Ortiz went 2-for-3 with one RBI, while Jamie Riddell went 1-for-3 with two RBIs and Preslee Sanders went 1-for-3 with an RBI. Anjali Plescias scored three runs in the loss.

Ella Behrens pitched

four and one-third innings and struck out six batters to lead Rochelle in the circle on Monday evening. Brittany Plescias threw one and two-thirds innings with two strikeouts for the Rochelle side.

Sterling

Brittany Plescias struck

out five batters to lead Rochelle in the pitcher's circle during Wednesday's loss against Sterling. Makayla Waters finished with one hit and one run, while Preslee Sanders went 1-for-2 with one RBI. Ella Behrens scored one run to aid the Rochelle offense in the loss to Sterling.



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