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# OGLE COUNTY LIFE

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**PHS volleyball players awarded**

Polo High School volleyball players recently received team and conference awards. **Section B**

**WEATHER**

<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>TUESDAY</b>
HIGH LOW	HIGH LOW
28 14	32 15
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>THURSDAY</b>
HIGH LOW	HIGH LOW
33 23	39 24

**OBITUARIES**

- Dolores Shank
- Melvin Charles Messer
- Kimberly Ann Himes-Oudekerk

See page 4

**INSERTS**

- Felker Foods
- Humana
- Ace Hardware
- Menards
- Farm & Fleet
- Polo Foods
- Snyder Pharmacy

## RCH celebrates National Rural Health Day

‘It’s a day about focusing on the reasons why we do what we do’

BY JEFF HELFRICH  
MANAGING EDITOR

**ROCHELLE** — On Thursday, Nov. 21, Rochelle Community Hospital celebrated National Rural Health Day. Members of RCH’s Wellness Committee handed out gifts and healthy snacks to employees, who also took pictures and participated in a contest by providing responses on why rural health is important to them.

RCH Wellness Committee Members, including Marketing & Public Relations Specialist Kirby Heward, Chief Human Resources Officer Denise Bauer, Human Resources Generalist Lorena Hueramo, Human Resources Assistant Brenndon Garcia and Dietician Janelle Stein spoke with the Ogle County Life about the day.

“We decided to have our own celebration since we are rural and a small community hospital,” Heward said. “It’s a day about focusing on the



On Thursday, Nov. 21, Rochelle Community Hospital celebrated National Rural Health Day. Members of RCH’s Wellness Committee handed out gifts and healthy snacks to employees, who also took pictures and participated in a contest by providing responses on why rural health is important to them.

reasons why we do what we do and where we do it. Our presence here also is an infrastructure for the community as

well because we provide jobs as well as care and a lot of things that help the population thrive and continue to be sus-

tainable right here in Rochelle.” Garcia said being in a rural community means a more personal

connection with patients compared to larger hospitals.

See RCH page 11

## Kitchen Table selling building due to shortage of volunteers and resources, high need

Founder: ‘It will be tough for me to hand over the keys to this place’

BY JEFF HELFRICH  
MANAGING EDITOR

**ROCHELLE** — When asked about what it will be like for her to hand over the keys to the building that houses The Kitchen Table upon the closing of its coming sale, Carolyn Brown, the Rochelle non-profit’s founder, got tears in her eyes.

“It’s going to be hard,” Brown said. “But I can’t back out now. I already committed. The buyers came about, and we looked at our numbers and made the decision. And we’ve dealt with the aggravation and lots of different factors.”

The donation and volunteer-based eatery/community pay-what-you-can café will not operate this winter after Nov. 21.



The donation and volunteer-based eatery/community pay-what-you-can café will not operate this winter after Nov. 21. The building will soon be sold to a for-profit restaurant in need of a location. The non-profit proceeds from the sale will be donated to a local charity.

See KITCHEN TABLE page 10

# LOCAL NEWS

## Meridian School Board approves Plourde as new superintendent

**STILLMAN VALLEY** – The Meridian Community Unit School District #223 Board of Education named Dr. Michael Plourde as its next superintendent at its Nov. 25 meeting. Dr. Plourde will step into the position on July 1, 2025, leaving his current role as superintendent of Wilmont Union High School in Kenosha County, Wisconsin.

“I am deeply honored and excited to serve as superintendent of the Meridian Community Unit School District #223,” Plourde said. “It’s a dream job for me. The district’s mission, vision, and core values align closely with my beliefs. My leadership style is rooted in honesty, transparency and integrity,

and I aim to be a superintendent who listens and puts students first in all decisions.”

Dr. Plourde brings over 12 years of experience in educational leadership. Prior to his position in Wilmont, he worked in the Northern Illinois region as principal of Willowbrook Middle School and Principal of Rock Cut Elementary. In these roles, he managed district operations, executed strategic plans and developed collaborative practices to support student achievement. Dr. Plourde earned both his Doctor of Leadership in Educational Administration and Master of Arts in Educational Leadership degrees from Aurora University, and

he holds a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education from Northern Michigan University. His background in community-centered initiatives and focus on continuous improvement are expected to ensure a smooth leadership transition and continued support for student success.

John Smith, president of the Meridian CUSD #223 Board of Education, expressed the board’s enthusiasm.

“Through a thorough and rigorous interview process which included input from various stakeholder groups, Dr. Plourde consistently stood out as the top candidate,” Smith said. “His extensive experience in education,

innovative problem-solving skills, participation in strategic planning, and commitment to both personal and professional growth made him the unanimous choice to lead our district. We are confident that Dr. Plourde’s leadership will help guide Meridian CUSD #223 to continued excellence and success.”

The district recently received “Gold Achievement of Excellence in Education” from the internationally recognized performance-driven organization, The Partnership for Excellence and four of its employees received the 2024 Those Who Excel Award for their commitment to academic excellence.



Dr. Michael Plourde

## Oregon CUSD 220 officials present at Education Conference in Chicago

**CHICAGO** – Oregon CUSD 220 Superintendent Dr. P.J. Caposey and Assistant Superintendent Adam Larsen were featured speakers at the Illinois Association of School Administrators Joint Annual Conference in Chicago the weekend of Nov. 23-24, hosted by the Illinois Association of School Boards and School Business Officials. The annual conference is the premier gathering of school leaders in Illinois, bringing together thousands of school board

members, administrators, and education professionals to address critical issues, share innovative practices, and advance public education. Selection to present at the conference is both an honor and a testament to the impactful work happening in districts statewide.

This year, Oregon CUSD 220 was proud to showcase its leadership in three presentations, contributing to the professional dialogue shaping education across Illinois.

“Using My Data Dashboard to Understand Summative Designations” Larsen and Dr. Alan Clemens of Northern Illinois University guided district and school leaders on leveraging the state developed MyData Dashboard. This tool helps educators understand school accountability metrics, identify improvement opportunities, and make data-driven decisions based on student performance indicators.

“Creating Peak Team Performance Through Self-Awareness and Personal Growth” Caposey and Dr. Bryan Wills explored how self-awareness enhances



Dr. P.J. Caposey



Adam Larsen



Dr. Bryan Wills

team performance. Using the Enneagram Personality Profile, they will provide practical strategies for fostering high-functioning teams and improving team dynamics.

“Creating an Effective Continuous Cycle for Improvement”

Caposey shared insights into implementing systematic processes like the Baldrige Framework to align strategic planning with annual goals. The session offered actionable strategies for districts aiming to sustain meaningful progress.

“Our district’s partici-

pation in this year’s Joint Annual Conference reflects the innovative practices and commitment to excellence that define Oregon CUSD 220,” Caposey said. “We’re proud to share our strategies and learn alongside some of the best education leaders in the state.”

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RUMMAGE SALE  
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BAZAAR**  
**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7TH**  
**9-2**

## Chesney to host IPASS on Demand Event in Freeport

**FREEPORT** — Following an incredibly successful IPASS on Demand event in Rockton earlier this month, State Senator Andrew Chesney (R-Freeport) is bringing a mobile team from the Illinois Tollway to Freeport for an IPASS event on Dec. 2.

“The Tollway is transi-

tioning away from plastic transponders and are replacing them with new sticker technology,” Chesney said. “Rather than having my constituents complete this transaction at the DMV or elsewhere where there may be a fee, I am bringing a mobile team into the 45th District for quick, easy,

and free service.”

Officials from the Illinois Tollway will be on hand to help people transfer over to the new sticker technology and ensure people can make the switch without disruption to their IPASS account activity. Along with providing this service, the tollway officials can help people with questions they may have about their IPASS account and with ‘Pay by Plate’ issues. Please note that those who attend should jot down their license plate number to ensure quick service.

IPASS on Demand: Monday, Dec. 2. 3-7 p.m. Highland Community College, Conference Center. 2998 W. Pearl City Road,

Freeport. Co-Host: Stephenson County Board Chairman Scott Helms.

Once activated, the sticker tag can be used on the Illinois tollway and on E-Z Pass roadways in other states within 24 hours of activation. There is no deposit required for the sticker and the \$10 transponder deposit that was paid when a transponder was purchased will be transferred to the new account when it is activated. Balances on current transponders will also be transferred over to the sticker account.

For additional information about these free events, please contact Lori at [lyates@sgop.ilga.gov](mailto:lyates@sgop.ilga.gov).

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# LOCAL NEWS



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

Oregon CUSD 220 celebrated Veterans Day with two heartfelt programs, one at the elementary level and one for the junior/senior high school, totaling 90 minutes of tributes to the brave men and women who have served our country.

## Oregon CUSD 220 honors veterans with assembly

OREGON — Oregon CUSD 220 celebrated Veterans Day with two heartfelt programs, one at the elementary level and one for the junior/senior high school, totaling 90 minutes of tributes to the brave men and women who have served our country. Together, the programs honored over 90 veterans, recognizing their service and sacrifices in front of a grateful community.

The assemblies featured student performances of patriotic songs, inspiring guest speakers, and creative expressions of gratitude, highlighting the district's commitment

to honoring our nation's heroes. The events left a lasting impression on students, staff, and veterans alike, reflecting the power of education and community in celebrating those who have protected our freedoms.

The programs also resonated beyond the district, with a video of the event going semi-viral and garnering over 42,000 views on Facebook. Watch the video here: [https://fb.watch/v\\_VAa34IXt/](https://fb.watch/v_VAa34IXt/).

"I am incredibly proud to be part of a district that works so hard to honor our veterans," Superintendent PJ Caposey said. "These

assemblies reflect the values we strive to instill in our students and our collective gratitude for those who have served. It was an honor to celebrate alongside our community."

The assemblies were made possible through the efforts of many dedicated individuals and groups across the district. Special thanks are extended to:

Miles Beske, Dy Mowry, Andy Eckardt, Stacey Glendenning, Justine Davis, and Zach Hall for organizing the event and the leading the assemblies.

Mark Tremble, Andy Eckardt, Miles Beske, and

Zach Hall for performing the National Anthem as part of a barbershop quartet.

Leland Howard for creating a powerful slideshow.

Chelsea Eden, Seth McMillan, and the FFA for organizing a delicious breakfast for veterans.

Olivia Kincaide and the Art 3/4 students for crafting beautiful artwork displayed in the lobby.

Custodial staff for ensuring the space was set up and ready for the events.

A team of educators, including Tanya Bocker, Kristen Boyer, Chelsey Diehl, Liz Garncarz, Sa-

mantha Goldman, Katie Groharing, Lita Johnson, Dawn Merrill, Bridget Rasner, Tiffany Rufer, Mariah Withers, and Tegan Zshornak, for their invaluable contributions.

Mrs. Handschuh and Ms. Doll, along with K-4 classroom teachers, for facilitating the stunning student artwork that adorned the assemblies.

The district also recognizes the efforts of Linda Connelly, Sasha Priller, Julie Davis, and Caitlin Bunch, who ensured the safe and orderly arrival of OES students at the Blackhawk Center, and Lisa Rogers, who managed the sound system for the OES

musical performances. Additionally, a heartfelt thanks to Kelly Pace for helping with refreshments, and warmly welcoming veterans as they arrived, and to the OES administration for their unwavering support in making the assemblies possible.

Oregon CUSD 220 is deeply grateful to all those who contributed to these meaningful events. Together, the district demonstrated the power of community, education, and gratitude in honoring our veterans.

For more information about Oregon CUSD 220 and its programs, please contact Caposey at [pcaposey@ocusd.net](mailto:pcaposey@ocusd.net).

## IASB Member Boards vote at Annual Delegate Assembly

CHICAGO—The Illinois Association of School Boards held its annual Delegate Assembly on Nov. 23, in conjunction with the Joint Annual Conference in Chicago. Member boards of education voted on resolutions submitted by the membership. Adopted resolutions establish the advocacy priorities and legislative direction of the Association. 429 delegates were present to vote.

Representatives from IASB member school boards considered topics of dual language learning, charter school funding,

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) accountability, and more. The assembly also elected President Mark Harms (Flanagan-Cornell USD 74) and Vice President Tracie Sayre (Triopia CUSD 27) to their second terms in office.

Six resolutions were approved via delegate vote;

A measure that would support the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy as attainment of world language requirements passed.

A resolution that would support applying the standards of the Evidence-Based Funding for-

mula to state-authorized charter schools passed.

A measure that would advocate for TIF process reforms passed.

A proposal to support creation of a statewide database for the Employment History Review requirement of Faith's Law passed.

A resolution that would support the option of a unified health plan for school districts to participate in, through the Illinois Department of Central Management Services passed.

An amendment to an existing position state-

ment on Election Day school closures, that school districts should not be mandated to close on Election Day if none of the buildings used by students within the district serve as polling places passed.

The Delegate Assembly voted to not reconsider three appealed proposals: One that would support legislation towards requiring a policy regarding the use of student-owned wireless communications devices; one supporting developing a state-funded Office of Inspector General to investigate

allegations of waste, fraud, or other, against local public schools; and another supporting a requirement that school board candidates have a criminal background check before they submit their petition.

An amendment to the IASB Constitution, clarifying parliamentary procedure, was adopted.

The Delegate Assembly also received the president's report from Harms and a report to the membership by IASB Executive Director Kimberly Small, J.D. IASB

Treasurer Marc Tepper (Kildeer-Countryside CCSD 96) provided the Association's financial report.

During the IASB Resolutions Process, each resolution is proposed from the membership and reviewed by a 21-member Resolutions Committee. Its recommendations are brought before the Delegate Assembly for discussion and vote. A FAQ on the process and the 2024 Resolutions Committee Report are available on the IASB Advocacy website.

## PAG to present 'Christmas Eve in Chaos' Jan. 10-12

MT. MORRIS — This winter, the Performing Arts Guild of Mt. Morris will present a dessert theatre, *Christmas Eve in Chaos*.

*Christmas Eve in Chaos* is a festive, side-splitting radio play that captures the spirit of holiday mishaps.

Carol (Trudy Whalen), the ultimate holiday enthusiast, is determined to make Rick's home the brightest on the block. But when her

elaborate light display causes a massive neighborhood blackout, her dreams of a perfect Christmas quickly turn into a holiday disaster.

Linda (Priscilla Osborne), Rick's sensible wife, finds herself caught in the chaos, trying to keep peace amid the escalating mishaps. Meanwhile, Rick (Mark Tremble) provides sarcastic commentary, and Uncle Frank (Larry Ubben)

is convinced it's all part of a government conspiracy. The family must figure out how to restore power before the entire neighborhood turns on them.

As they scramble in the dark, things take an unexpected turn when Santa (Jeff Bold) himself crash-lands his sleigh in their backyard. The reindeer are scattered, Santa is flustered, and Carol sees it

asher chance to save Christmas. With Rick reluctantly dragged along, Linda trying to keep everyone grounded, and Uncle Frank still on high alert, the family sets off on a chaotic reindeer hunt through the snowy streets.

From runaway reindeer to inflatable snowmen, *Christmas Eve in Chaos* delivers laugh after laugh as the family's holiday woes spiral out of control.

This heartwarming comedy is perfect for anyone who needs a post-holiday pick-me-up and a reminder that even the most chaotic Christmas can bring joy.

This delightful comedy will be held on Friday through Sunday, Jan. 10-12 at the Allure of Pinecrest Grove Theater, 500 Evergreen Lane, Mt. Morris. Friday and Saturday shows are at 7 p.m., with a Sunday

matinee at 2 p.m. Get your tickets now! Tickets are \$16, with a \$2 discount for students. Dessert (included in the price) will be served at Intermission. Reservations are encouraged. For information, call 815.734.2103 or order online at [www.performingartsguild.com](http://www.performingartsguild.com).

Due to scheduling conflicts, this show will replace the previously scheduled play, *A Christmas Story*.

## Brandt participates in music ensemble at Central College in Iowa

PELLA, Iowa — Mai-son Brandt, of Oregon, Class of 2028, is a Central College A Capella choir member, singing in the bass section.

Central College of Pella, Iowa, is a private college known for its active student body, academic rigor and athletics success.

Our students learn collaboratively with supportive educators who share a commitment to intellectual engagement, personal growth, career readiness and civic involvement. Founded in 1853 and shaped by its Christian heritage, the college of 1,100 students participates

in NCAA Division III athletics and is a member

of the American Rivers Conference. Central is an

active part of the Greater Des Moines region and just

minutes from Lake Red Rock, Iowa's largest lake.

## County Regional Planning Commission meeting canceled

OREGON — Due to a lack of business, the regular monthly meeting of the Ogle County Regional Planning Commission scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 19 has been cancelled. The next meeting

of the Regional Planning Commission is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 23, 2025, at 6 p.m. at the Old Ogle County Court House, First Floor Conference Room #100, 105 S. Fifth St., Oregon.

### Annual Holiday Rummage Sale

**Saturday, Dec. 7th**  
8:00 to 1:00

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# LOCAL NEWS

## Obituaries

### Dolores Shank

**ROCKFORD** — Dolores Martha Shank, 96, of Rockford, passed away on Sunday, Nov. 24 at Wesley Willows Senior Community, culminating what was a very rich and full life.

Dolores, the youngest of five siblings, was born on Dec. 29, 1927 in Mt. Morris, the daughter of George and Wilhelmina Crocker.

She excelled in school and graduated from Mt. Morris High School as valedictorian of the Class of 1945. She was very active at MMHS, serving on various student organizations and participating on the cheerleading squad.

On May 8, 1948, Dolores married her high school sweetheart, Richard "Dick" Shank, and the two remained in Mt. Morris to start their careers and family.

Dolores started working at Citizen State Bank in downtown Mt. Morris during her senior year of high school, and then went on to enjoy 25 years as a dedicated employee at the financial institution. In 1973, she took the position of secretary at Mt. Morris High School, working faithfully in the main office for 13 years until her retirement in 1986.

A few years later when her husband, Dick, retired, the couple relocated to Cambridge, Wisconsin, and also spent winters in Clearwater, Florida. Cambridge held a special place in their hearts as they spent many summer vacations at Lake Ripley with friends and family.

In 2002, Dolores and Dick, relocated to Rockford, living full-time in the Cloisters. After 60 years of marriage, Dick passed away in 2008, but Dolores spent several more years at the Cloisters until moving to Wesley Willows in the past few years.

Dolores was a member of Holy Family Church. She had very strong faith and is now reunited with her husband, parents, siblings and other family and friends in Heaven.

For many years she was an active member of the

Mt. Morris Junior Women's Club and the Ogle County Home Extension. She enjoyed cooking, reading, Red Hat Club activities, card games, ballroom dancing, Big Band music, and especially the Christmas season.

She made sure that family Christmas get-togethers were special occasions and always insisted on personally shopping for gifts and stocking stuffers for all her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren up until the last few years.

Dolores was a big sports fan with a strong competitive streak and spent many hours following and supporting the athletic activities of her husband, children and grandchildren. She was very proud of their accomplishments, often recounting details from her kids' games that took place decades ago.

She split her allegiance between the Cincinnati Reds and Chicago Cubs, and was still complaining about their recent woes to family members just a couple of weeks ago.

Dolores always stayed active and on the go. In addition to bowling in leagues for years in Mt. Morris and Cambridge, she and Dick spent many nights out dancing and they enjoyed their regular potluck dinner and card parties with close friends.

Despite slowing down in the past couple of years, Dolores was still volunteering at the Wesley Willows gift shop just a few months ago, and in 2023 she was thrilled and honored to ride in the Mt. Morris Fourth of July parade as the MMHS Alumni Facebook Page representative.

Her memories were vivid and lasting and she often shared from her past, including life growing up in Mt. Morris during the Great Depression in the 1930s, World War II in the 1940s, polio scares of the 1950s and major political events of the 1960s.

Dolores' life spanned quite a unique time period as she witnessed and experienced so much in



her glorious 96 years. Recently, she would occasionally lament that all of her classmates, siblings and most of her close friends had passed, but her fond memories kept her zest for life solid. She will be greatly missed by her family, but her loving spirit will live on in their hearts and minds.

Dolores is survived by one daughter, Deanna (John) Martin, of Sycamore; three sons, Doug (Julie) Shank, of Huntley, Rick Shank, of Mt. Morris, and John (Maria) Shank of Nokomis, Florida; seven grandchildren, Micki Shank, Ryan (Kelly) Martin, Josy (Korey) Weyers, Megan (Matt) Mecum, Jonathan (Sara) Ritchie, Benjamin (Morgan) Shank and Brady (Gabrielle Ellstrom) Shank; nine great-grandchildren, Brad and Josh Mecum, Bryce Martin, Owen, Ethan and Aiden Weyers, Ella and Otto Ritchie and Isla Conley-Shank.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Dick; her parents; three sisters, Rosalie Garrison, Dorothy Winebrenner and Ruth Blecker; one brother, Leo Crocker; and nephews, Norman Garrison and Casey Crocker.

Visitation will be held on Saturday, Nov. 30 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at Farrell Holland Gale Funeral Home in Oregon, located at 110 S. Seventh St., Oregon, IL 61061. A funeral Mass will follow at noon in St. Mary Catholic Church in Oregon, with Rev. Bernard Sehr officiating.

Burial will be at St. Mary Catholic Cemetery on Pines Road in Oregon. Memorials may be made to St. Croix Hospice or the Mt. Morris Let Freedom Ring Committee.

Swift, 38, Polo, was arrested for an in-state warrant and driving while license suspended and cited for operating an uninsured motor vehicle. He was released on a notice to appear.

On Nov. 8, Mark Arand, 32, Dubuque, Iowa was cited for speeding 42 in a 30 miles per hour zone.

On Nov. 13, Franciso Roling, 38, Rockford, was arrested for no valid driver's license. He was released on a notice to appear.

On Nov. 14 at 6 p.m.

Logan James Linker, 21, Byron, was arrested for an in-state warrant and cited for expired registration and operating an uninsured motor vehicle. He was released on a notice to appear.

On Nov. 22 at 1 p.m. Larry D. Parson, 55, Polo was arrested for driving while license revoked and cited for suspended registration. He was released on a notice to appear.

All individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty.

### Kimberly Ann Himes-Oudekerk

**ROCKFORD** — Kimberly Ann Himes-Oudekerk, 62, of Rockford, IL, passed away in her home surrounded by her loving family, on Thursday, November 21st 2024, after battling a year and 1/2 long illness, she gave up her fight and she was pronounced at 12:04 PM. She was born on October 20th, 1962 and grew up in Byron, IL, where she attended high school and graduated in 1980. After she pursued her degree from Chicago Business College, Kim was employed as a legal secretary at Ray A. Ferguson & Associates Ltd. of Rockford, IL, where she dedicated almost 30 years. She is known by all for her compassion, generous heart and loving spirit. Kim and her husband Tim Oudekerk built their lives for over 43 years and achieved many accomplishments together. They were each other's one and only, his whole life, guiding light and North Star. Kim was an avid reader and enjoyed spending time with her family and friends. She especially loved listening to Tim & Donnie's jam sessions. She was their #1 fan. Kim also loved

playing and watching Tim play darts. She was a daughter, sister, wife, stepmother, aunt, cousin, step grandma, great aunt, professional, friend, neighbor, and saint. She is survived by brother Ron (Rhonda) Himes of Rockford, sister Cindy Himes of Stillman Valley, brother Kevin Himes of Byron, sister Terry (Kenry) Oudekerk-Oppold of Freeport, Gail Bond of Freeport, Carolyn Oudekerk of Poynette, WI, brother Tony (Bonnie) Oudekerk, stepdaughter Christine (Luke) Satterlee, grandchildren Charlie Elise and Finlay Von, and many nieces, nephews, and cousins including Erin Matheson of Orlando, Melissa (Chris) Kremske of Louisiana. Anyone that's met Kimmy knows personally how loving and gracious she was. As a parting wish the family asks that if she's touch your life in some way or ever helped you, that you pay the gratitude forward. She will be dearly missed by us all, as our hearts are broken. Her legacy will be that she saved Tim's and everyone's lives more than once and never had an enemy. The star that



burns the brightest fades the fastest. Thank you God for sending her to us, until we meet again. ... A visitation will be held on Wednesday, November 27, 2024 at Farrell Holland Gale Funeral Home of Byron, IL between the hours of 9:00 AM & 11:00 AM.

A Funeral Service in her honor will begin immediately following the visitation at the Byron Funeral Home at 11:00 AM with Pastor Randy Snider presiding. Kimmy will then be laid to rest near her mother at Byron Township Cemetery of Byron, IL.

Finally the family would like to invite all to attend a luncheon immediately following the Cemetery services, details to be announced soon. Please visit [www.farrell-hollandgale.com](http://www.farrell-hollandgale.com) to plant a tree or send condolences.

### Melvin Charles Messer

**ROCHELLE** — Melvin Charles Messer, age 86 passed away at Manor Court in Rochelle on Friday, November 22, 2024 with his family at his side. He was born on December 11, 1937 in Rochelle, IL the son of Leo and Vivian (Landis) Messer. Mel married Judith Nelson on February 9, 1969.

Mel retired after serving as the Ogle County Sheriff for 16 years, and 41 years, 3 months of total law enforcement service. He was proud of graduating from the Northwestern University School of Police Staff and Command and the FBI Leda Crime Scene and Criminal Investigations. The list of his awards, accomplishments and involvement in law enforcement is long.

Mel enjoyed traveling the country with his wife including attending the National Sheriff's Association Conferences and visiting their close

friends in Florida. He enjoyed spending time with his family, attending his grandchildren's numerous sporting events, meeting for coffee with friends at McDonalds and breakfast at Grubsteakers. An old western movie or any police show was always on his t.v.

Preceded in death by his parents, and brother Ron Messer. Survived by his wife, Judith Messer, 3 children: Robert (Susan) Messer and William (Sue) Messer both with his former wife, Betty Glosser; and James (Lesley) Messer all of Rochelle; Grandchildren: Brad (Melissa) Messer, Steve (Stephanie) Messer, Jake (Amanda) Messer, Paul (Heather) Helser, Shannon (Adrian) Montelongo, Chris Messer, Grant Messer and Anna Messer. Great grandchildren: Devin Montelongo, Blake Helser, Danny Montelongo,



Noah Messer, Zack Helser, Emily Montelongo, Owen Messer, Crew Messer, Ava Helser, Sofi Messer, Ellery Messer, Tesa Messer, Kase Messer and Jude Messer and 5 Great-Great Grandchildren.

Visitation will be from 4 - 6:45 PM on Tuesday, November 26, 2024 at the Unger Horner Funeral Home, 400 N 6th St., Rochelle. Funeral service will follow at 7:00 PM on Tuesday with Pastor Joy Alsop officiating. Private family burial will be at Ashton Cemetery. Memorials can be made out to Illinois Sheriff's Association.

### POLO POLICE REPORT

**POLO** — On Oct. 30 at, Pedro Cruz, 26, Wheat- ing, was cited for transportation of open container of alcohol.

On Oct. 31, Christopher L. Cash, 36, Colorado Springs, Colorado was cited for driving while license suspended and suspended registration. He was released on a notice to appear.

On Oct. 31, Armando, Luna Moreno, 42, Sterling, was cited for expired registration.

On Nov. 3, Andrew J.

### FSB Shannon Polo Lake Carroll announces promotion of Manthei

**SHANNON** — Robin Wilhelms Saar, president and CEO of First State Bank Shannon-Polo-Lake Carroll, has announced the

promotion of Ariana Manthei to the role of senior compliance officer—BSA/AML/OFAC.

With her expertise,

dedication, and strong leadership skills, Ari is exceptionally qualified to assume this important role.

At First State Bank Shannon Polo Lake Carroll, our commitment to delivering excellent customer service goes hand-in-hand with maintaining strict adherence to compliance and regulatory standards—an essential foundation for our success.

Please join us in congratulating Ari on this well-deserved promotion!

### ADVERTISING DISCLAIMER

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# LOCAL NEWS



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

Above at left is Mrs. Kelly Gale (holding the check) and Mrs. Becky Barton. Above at right is an MJHS student introducing her veteran. Below are MJHS seventh grade students at Stillman Run Monument.

## Meridian Junior High School hosts Veterans Day event

**STILLMAN VALLEY** — Meridian Junior High School celebrated Veterans Day on Monday, Nov. 11. During the day, the students attended various activities: wrote holiday messages to be sent to SVHS alumni serving in the different branches (Stillman RED), painted popsicle sticks to make a giant flag, walked to the Stillman Run Monument, they completed a one-mile walk for Dark Horse Lodge Trek for Troops, and listened to Sgt. Adam Frisbie and Petty Officer 3rd Class Brad Dewey. They started the day with an assembly where they were able to listen to the seventh/eighth grade band, 6-8th grade chorus, and Taps that was performed by Ms. Risner and Mr. DeLaRosa.

Students were also able to invite veterans to the assembly and introduced them to all MJHS students and staff. Student Council also sponsored a breakfast before the assembly began. The school also held a Dress for Dark Horse Lodge fundraiser earlier in the school year. Students from MJHS and staff had a week of dress-up days in which they would donate \$1 each day that they dressed up. That week MJHS students and staff raised \$333. Dark Horse Lodge is located in Tennessee - please look them up on Facebook or darkhorselodge.org. MJHS students and staff would like to thank all veterans for their service to our country. In addition, a special note of appreciation for



Mrs. Becky Barton for organizing this excellent opportunity for our students. During the assembly, MJHS students

and faculty honored Mrs. Kelly Gale, a retired MJHS teacher, for all of her work supporting veterans. Through these

activities, MJHS students gained a deeper appreciation for veterans and the immense sacrifices they have made. The

entire MJHS community extends its gratitude to all veterans for their service and contributions to our country.

## New vehicle helps Highland bring medical services to rural communities

**FREEMONT** — Highland Community College's Nursing and Allied Health program is hitting the road. A mobile medical unit, unveiled today, will bring care to those who need it most in Northwest Illinois. Set up to function as a health care clinic on wheels, the specialized vehicle provides new avenues of student instruction and community services to residents of Stephenson, Ogle, Jo Daviess and Carroll counties. The college hosted nearly a hundred guests at a ribbon-cutting for the mobile medical unit. "To our knowledge, no other community college in Illinois has a mobile medical unit like this one," said HCC President Chris Kuberski. "This unit creates a unique learning experience for our students while also serving the health care needs of the communities across our Northwest Illinois district." Beyond being a high-tech learning tool for current Nursing and Allied Health students, the vehicle will meet prospective

students where they are for such services as sports physicals at local high schools. Perhaps most critically, the mobile medical unit will help fill gaps in the area's health-care deserts. "We are excited about the opportunity to build stronger, healthier connections within our community. This unit will not only be an asset for health care, but also a symbol of partnership, compassion and a shared responsibility to care for one another," said Alicia Kepner, Highland's coordinator of Nursing and Allied Health. "We can provide essential check-ups, health screenings and vaccinations for those who may not otherwise have access to these services — whether they live in a rural area, face financial barriers or have limited transportation options." HCC's nursing program funded the mobile medical unit with a \$300,000 grant from the Department of Health and Human Services. Former Congresswoman Cheri Bustos assisted Highland with pursuing this opportunity during her time as the U.S. representative from Illinois's 17th congressional district. "This was not an 'I alone can do it' situation," said Bustos, who helped Highland secure the grant through a Community Project Funding Request. "You partnered. You worked together. You told our congressional office how this wasn't just a Highland Community College project — this was a community project. ... For me, that was enough to say, 'Let's make this happen.'" Additional elected officials at the event included State Sen. Andrew Chesney and State Rep. Tony McCombie, as well as Outreach Representative Shaneka Young, on behalf of U.S. Rep. Eric Sorensen. The Greater Freeport Partnership conducted this morning's ribbon-cutting, and the project has been supported by multiple community organizations, some of which include Freeport Health Network, Sisters of St. Mary Health, the Stephenson County Health Department and

the Salvation Army. "The mobile medical unit allows our instructors and students to collaborate with these organizations — exposing students to a variety of settings in their education and ensuring they are prepared to care for those in our community after graduation," said Dr. Stephanie Eymann, HCC's dean of Nursing and Allied Health. "Through this project, we hope to continue those partnerships while providing a unique and innovative educational outlet for HCC students to serve some of our most vulnerable neighbors." To learn more about Nursing and Allied Health at Highland Community College, visit [highland.edu](http://highland.edu).

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(COURTESY PHOTO)

Highland Community College's Nursing and Allied Health program is hitting the road. A mobile medical unit, unveiled today, will bring care to those who need it most in Northwest Illinois.

### NOTICE OF PROPOSED TAX INCREASE FOR OREGON PARK DISTRICT.

I. A public hearing to approve a proposed property tax levy increase for Oregon Park District for 2024 will be held on Tuesday, December 10, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at the Nash Recreation Center, 304 S. 5th Street, Oregon, Illinois.

Any person desiring to appear at the public hearing and present testimony to the taxing district may contact Haley Mizner, Secretary to the Board, 304 S. 5th Street, Oregon, Illinois 61061 (815) 732-3101 or [boardsecretary@oregonpark.org](mailto:boardsecretary@oregonpark.org).

II. The corporate and special purpose property taxes extended for 2023 were \$1,427,938.94.

The proposed corporate and special purpose property taxes to be levied for 2024 are \$1,522,230.00. This represents a 6.60% increase over the previous year.

III. The property taxes extended for debt service and public building commission leases for 2023 were \$1,562,155.57.

The estimated property taxes to be levied for debt service and public building commission leases for 2024 are \$1,587,401.00. This represents a 1.62% increase over the previous year.

IV. The total property taxes extended for 2023 were \$2,990,094.51.

The estimated total property taxes to be levied for 2024 are \$3,109,631.00. This represents a 4.00% increase over the previous year.

# VIEWPOINT

Published every Monday  
Jeff Helfrich, Managing Editor

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

The Ogle County Life is a division of  
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## MOMENTS IN TIME

\* On Dec. 18, 1966, Dr. Seuss's popular book "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" was made into an animated TV special narrated by well-known horror movie star Boris Karloff, who also provided the voice of the titular character, and shown for the first time on CBS.

\* On Dec. 19, 1942, American fighter pilot Eddie Rickenbacker was pulled out of the Pacific Ocean after being lost at sea for 22 days. He and six other men would have starved to death if they hadn't caught and eaten a seagull. Rickenbacker was on a special mission in the South Pacific when he went missing.

\* On Dec. 20, 1990, the Population Crisis Committee declared Lagos, Nigeria the worst city in the world in which to live, with the top-ranked cities listed as

Montreal, Melbourne and Seattle-Tacoma. Half of Lagos' homes lacked water and electricity, and only one person in 100 owned a telephone. The city also had a density of 5.8 persons per dwelling.

\* On Dec. 21, 2007, Britain's former prime minister Tony Blair left the Anglican Church to become a Roman Catholic. The cardinal who led the service to welcome him said he was "very glad" to do so, but controversy remained on whether the conversion was in pursuit of the European Union presidency.

\* On Dec. 23, 1954, Dr. Joseph E. Murray and several other surgeons performed the first truly successful human kidney transplant, between identical twin brothers, at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts.

## Challenges for the new administration

**T**HE new administration faces many challenges to repair the damage to the country caused by the policies of the past administration. It is easy to spill milk, but it takes time to clean it up.

The first priority is for all cabinet appointees and others requiring consent from the Senate to be approved. The president-elect's choices appear to share his philosophy of significant change to the government bureaucracy (the deep state). The left-leaning media have immediately jumped on the fear-mongering train in an attempt to stop these appointments before any hearings are even convened. The media's scrutiny, soon to be performed on these nominees, will far exceed that given to Biden Administration nominees. It should be remembered that these appointees reflect the desires of the American people who voted for sweeping change.

and leaders of sanctuary states (Pritzker of Illinois) cranking out hatred and pledges of noncooperation. Some say it will be very costly to deport all the illegal aliens. Providing housing, food, transportation, medical services, and education for illegal aliens has already been shown to be very expensive. It will be even more expensive to continue to provide these services for all illegal aliens to remain in the country. Unless they have a work permit, illegal aliens are not allowed to work, and it is a violation of federal law to hire and house illegal aliens (8 U.S. Code § 1324).

The next priority is to eliminate many unproductive regulations that add difficulty to operating a business or living in the United States. Regulations such as requirements for more electric vehicles, mandates for severe emission standards for gas-powered vehicles, diversity equity inclusion (DEI) requirements, climate change programs (Green New Deal), coal-fired power plant requirements, home & multifamily dwelling construction restrictions, etc., have contributed to the current inflation and shortages.

These are just a few critical changes the new administration should address upon inauguration. There are only two years until the next Congressional election, where the party in power often loses control of Congress, so that any delay would be detrimental to accomplishing the president-elect's agenda. The Democrats always march in lockstep as ordered by their leaders.

The Republicans, not so much. Infighting and other disagreements tend to hamper the passing of vitally-needed legislation in a timely manner, even when they control both houses. With the mandate bestowed upon the president-elect, many hope the Republican-led Congress will be united like the Democrats. Don't bet on it.



**Chuck Roberts**

## Consider this: 'Me' vs. 'Us'

**A** little less than two weeks ago, we held our elections. Although some of those elected to their terms were not those I would have chosen, I am pleased that so many of us, who were registered, showed up at the polls. In Ogle County, 76.6 percent, more than three quarters of those registered, voted. Thank you for performing your civic duty to this great country of ours!

To those that feel they were not represented in this election, and who may be anxious about the future, I can only say that they should keep informed and involved with what happens in the future. Make sure your voice is heard, on social media, in letters to the editor of your newspaper, and, as much as possible, in your everyday conversations. Remember, arguments are not conversations, and do not end up with positive change.

I do hope that those things I have been writing about in the past several months do not become reality. I would love to be proven wrong about them. But, as I mentioned before, we must keep informed and involved always. In

elections of the past decade or so, many of those that have been elected seem to be looking out for themselves and leaving us to fend for ourselves. This is not democracy. Therefore, we must be vigilant in our research of our candidates, of the votes of our elected officials, and the outcomes of those votes.

Whether we like it or not, to keep our democracy, this vigilance must continue. We cannot sit back and let social media, mainstream media, or any other kind of media tell us what to think, say, or do. We can, however, use all these forms of information to compare, and review, then perform our due diligence and come to our own conclusions. Any other way is just following the herd.

That is not what we, or our forefathers want. We are independent and, therefore, free.

One thing I have noticed about this election is that there have been few, if any, voters saying the election was rigged, or stolen. There is now a consensus that this was a free and fair election. There have

been no extreme changes made to our election systems in the past four years. The only changes I have seen are the states trying to purge voting rolls and add restrictions to voting. Even President-Elect Trump, I believe, has not said a word about it. It is interesting how things can change from one election to another.

All in all, our election systems have been doing the job they have set out to do. Every time. As an Election Judge, I do my very best every election to make sure our elections are fair and represented. At least in Ogle County, our Judges have performed their due diligence and brought to our voters the best election processes possible according to the county and the State of Illinois.

To those of us who are still anxious and fearful for our future, please hang in there. Remember what I said previously and keep informing yourself in your free time. If you are still wondering about our democratic state, consider that we have been in this democracy for 248 years.

We have been through many kinds of attacks on it. We have kept steadfast every time. Sometimes, there were attacks that ended unrealized. Sometimes the attacks did not have real backing and fell apart. A few have been very aggressive, but we have withstood them and still have our democracy.

Even though we have been a "me" society at various times in the past, we usually end up an "us" society. After all, most of us help our neighbors up when they fall, right? Most of us are there helping our children, and their children succeed, right? Many of us donate time and money to victims of storms, earthquakes, incursions, fires, and other disasters, right? This is called an "us" society. Sharing, loving, helping, and caring are not "me" things. So, when it comes to government, we should make a stand, decision, or other effort in the very same way.

We are the oldest, most powerful, most giving democracy on earth. Let it be for the "us" because if we do it for the "me" we are doomed to be the newest, least powerful, most undemocratic nation on earth.



**Reed Harris**

## Workbook for disaster preparedness

**Y**OU can always expect the unexpected. The question is have you planned for it? Through the work of folks at Penn State University they have developed a workbook farmers can use for disaster preparedness and response of their farms. Here a look at how it can help.

The ReadyAG© : Disaster and Defense Preparedness for Production Agriculture workbook is designed to help farm and ranch owners plan for and manage disasters that can occur on their operation such as power outages, drought, flood, severe snow or ice storms, but also catastrophic events, for example tornadoes, hurricanes, fires, disease outbreaks, and other events, including acts of terrorism or a nuclear accident.

We encourage you to review this workbook with family members, employees, and with emergency personnel in your community. The intent of ReadyAG© is to help farmers and ranchers become better prepared for disasters, so they can continue to be viable even in the face of disastrous events. The ReadyAG© preparedness process directs farmers and ranchers to take a critical look at their agricultural operation, guiding them to determine areas that need improvement, thus helping them to become better prepared for any event that could dis-

rupt their operation. The ReadyAG© workbook contains questions for farmers and ranchers to consider and answer about various segments of their agricultural operation that may be vulnerable or at risk for disasters.

The preparedness and planning GENERAL worksheets are divided into four sections. The majority of functions on your operation will fit into these major areas. Your operation may be unique and include additional areas of concern. We encourage you to identify any additional or unique functions within your agricultural enterprise and address the vulnerability and risk associated with those production and management functions that are not included in this workbook.

All producers should complete the GENERAL section, and the commodity section that represents your operation.

FACILITIES and MATERIALS. This section represents the structures, equipment, supplies, and other real property associated with your farming enterprise. All buildings, fields, orchards, animal areas, plant nursery area, feed storage and handling equipment, vehicles, equipment, supplies, product handling, and storage areas would be included in this section. The variety of supplies,

materials, raw ingredients, feed, feed additives, fertilizer, pesticides, medicines, water, and other items and areas required for normal function of your agriculture business should be included in this section.

PEOPLE. This section includes anyone who has access, provides some service or function for you, works for you, or otherwise moves onto and from your agricultural enterprise. Included would be all employees, family members, service personnel, salespersons, delivery people, veterinarians, consultants, Extension Educators, customers, the general public, and invited and uninvited visitors.

PLANNING and PRACTICE. This section represents what takes place at your location. It includes the day-to-day activities, the routine function, and those activities that occur only at certain times such as harvest, or shipment of animals to another facility or to market. The activities of your business and the management for production practices are included such as use of footbaths for animals or visitors, use of quarantine areas, limited access to facilities, and the development and use of other security practices. REVIEW and UPDATE. This section includes the items and practices that you should periodically

check, review and update. Included would be insurance, how product and people move on your operation, locks, doors, gates, lights, security cameras, electronic monitoring equipment, gauges, inventories of pesticides, medicines, chemicals and other hazardous materials, worker protection standards training, pesticide training, first aid training, lists of critical contacts and phone numbers, emergency response plans, and other important functions and areas of concern that should be evaluated on a regular basis.

By taking a critical look at each of these areas, you can determine the areas and functions that need improvement to help you become better prepared for any event that could disrupt your operation. The intent is to help you become better prepared for all disasters, so you can continue to be a viable even in the face of disastrous events. The investment of time and resources to plan is significantly less than the costs of a disaster on those who are not prepared. Although it is not possible to plan for all possible scenarios, the plans and activities that you develop will help to reduce your level of risk and, therefore, improve your sustainability.

You can download the workbook at <http://ready-ag.psu.edu/>

Ron Kern is the manager of the Ogle County Farm Bureau.



**Ron Kern**

## LIFE letters' policy

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

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

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

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

# LOCAL NEWS

## 90<sup>th</sup> Horst Reunion held Aug. 11 in Mt. Morris

**MT. MORRIS** — In picture perfect weather on Sunday, Aug. 11, 2024, 80 people, descendants and their families of George Horst Sr. (1824-1914) and his wife, Anna Margaretha Appel Horst (1828-1881), gathered at the home of John and Beth Chase (Cedar Creek Vines, northwest of Mt. Morris) for the 90th Horst Reunion.

Since the early 1930s, Horst families have convened each August with a reunion picnic at relatives' homes, village or city parks, state parks and forest preserves.

This year's reunion was held a mile and a half from where the Horsts established their homestead 162 years ago to farm and raise their four children: Anna Elizabeth Horst Diehl, Konrad and George Horst Jr., and Helena (Lena) Horst Borneman.

The day proved to be a refreshing, uplifting time-out for all. Children were entertained with a variety of lawn games.

Extended family members, separated by time or distance, had the opportunity to connect/reconnect, celebrate family events, and create new memories. Cedar Creek Vines showcased five red and three white wines during informal wine tasting. Flavorful pulled pork sandwiches and dressing, provided by Nelson Family Farms, a fifth-generation family farm (north and west of Mt. Morris), were served in combination with a bountiful potluck of casseroles, salads, fresh garden vegetables, seasonal fruits and scrumptious homemade pies, cakes, cookies and desserts. The traditional afternoon reunion treat, ice cream, was also served.

Photos were taken. A collection of Horst memorabilia and a genealogy chart, stretching 14 feet long, were displayed. Five generations of Horsts were present. Attendees traveled from Colorado, Kansas City, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Michigan to meet and greet their cousins. Following a brief business meeting conducted by reunion president and secretary, Dave and Cindy Link (Leaf River), awards were presented to the youngest, most cherished, and furthest traveled. Everyone was entered into drawings for a 90th Anniversary Horst Reunion quilt and table runner hand quilted and donated by Barb Johnson (Leaf River) and her daughters: Cindy Link (Leaf River), Peggy Feide (Rockford), Pam Wrasse (Baileyville), Carol Anderson (Davis Junction) and granddaughter, Madison Schelling (Oregon). Leona Nelson (Mt. Morris) presented a family history. She described the push/pull factors that brought Germans to America during the Civil War. German farms had been divided over generations to the point they were too small to make a living. Economic hardships, shortage of land, and limited political rights drove dissatisfied German immigrants from their native homes.

Family and friends in America wrote letters home encouraging others to join them in the land of opportunity. Leona asked listeners to take into account how treacherous the journey was for the entire family. Their initial overseas journey, then several days or more of overland travel by rail and wagon, and finally homesteading brought continuous anxieties and fears, followed by decades of hardships and arduous, backbreaking work on their farm. The family lived strong religious faith: "For nothing will be impossible with God." (Luke 1:37). George Sr., his wife, and their four children were born in Sellenrod, Hessen-Darmstadt, Germany. George Sr. followed his brother and sister who had immigrated to America through Baltimore, Maryland in 1861 with their nine-year-old nephew, Konrad Horst, George Sr.'s eldest son. The family of five began their overseas emigration from the port of Bremen, Germany in June 1862. They traveled in steerage on an older cargo sailing ship with children ages 13, 7, and 2. Overcrowded steerage allowed only a few square feet per passenger. The ship was dirty; there was little food and poor ventilation; rats and lice were the norm. The voyage required six weeks at sea to travel nearly 4,200 nautical miles. Passengers endured rough seas from high winds and feared running out of water and food. They arrived at Castle Garden Emigrant Depot in lower Manhattan on July 19, 1862. Their ship was moored in the bay until an immigration landing agent arrived. After a thorough review of the ship's passenger manifest, noting who had died on the trip and who was then ill, immigrants and their luggage were ferried across the bay to the Castle Garden (Kessel Garten) Emigrant Depot. All were examined by a medical officer to ascertain if any sick might have passed the health authorities at quarantine. They were taken to a waiting area, the Castle Garden Rotunda, which had a capacity of between 2,000 to 4,000. During processing, officials recorded all necessary information pertaining to each immigrant such as name, nationality, former residence and intended destination. At the depot, immigrants could safely buy railroad tickets without fear of being defrauded. Restaurants, bread stands, and washrooms were available. Immigrants could lodge at licensed Castle Garden boarding houses for periods varying from one day to several weeks. The family came by rail to Chicago. They completed their journey either by train, most likely the Galeana-Chicago Union Railroad with stops in Rockford and Freeport, or by wagon. They claimed their homestead on the present Apple Road near Coon Creek in Mt. Morris Township.

There was no government assistance for immigrants. They brought little with them. Having arrived in northern Illinois in late July, their land had not been cleared. There were no crops to harvest. The first priority was to build a log cabin; they heated with wood in a cabin without insulation. Cooperation between neighbors helped them through the first winter and beyond. The land was cleared in winter with little thought of conservation. Trees were chopped down with felling axes. A

team of oxen dragged the trees into piles which were burned. Farming in America was vastly different than Germany. For the first few years they farmed at a subsistence level. The language barrier necessitated relying on their own ethnic community for business activities, school, church, and social life. They spoke German at home with family, friends, and neighbors. They assimilated into American life at the rate they learned English. Their Lutheran religion was never neglected. Ministers were brought from Wartburg Seminary in Iowa to teach catechism students. Church services, first held in homes, then the school, and later in a church at West Grove, were conducted in German. There was no piano or organ; hymnals were scarce; hymns were led by one or two musically inclined male song leaders. George Horst Sr. was one of the founders of the German Lutheran Church at West Grove where he remained an active member until his death.

The family faithfully observed the Sabbath. After attending church each Sunday they gathered at home on Sunday afternoons to read the Bible. German family Bibles continue to pass through the generations. The regional German dialect that migrated with the Horsts was preserved in homes for over two generations.

As the Horsts became established within the Mt. Morris community, they were recognized as kind, humble, honest, hard-working, highly respected citizens. George Horst Sr.'s obituary describes him as "a man of sterling character who enjoyed a high degree of respect from all with whom he came in contact. He was a man of unusually industrious habits, and although coming to this community poor in purse, his good management and natural thrift brought him ample competency for his declining years. He was a truly good man and a kindly-hearted neighbor." (Mt. Morris Index, Oct. 28, 1914)

Today, as one travels northwest of Mt. Morris, Horst descendants continue farming on land purchased, cleared, and farmed by their ancestors. To quote Thomas Hardy (1840-1928): "I am the family face; flesh perishes, I live on."



(PHOTO COURTESY OF DEB TONEY)

**In picture perfect weather on Sunday, Aug. 11, 2024, 80 people, descendants and their families of George Horst Sr. (1824-1914) and his wife, Anna Margaretha Appel Horst (1828-1881), gathered at the home of John and Beth Chase (Cedar Creek Vines, northwest of Mt. Morris) for the 90th Horst Reunion. Shown are those that attended the reunion.**

residence and intended destination. At the depot, immigrants could safely buy railroad tickets without fear of being defrauded. Restaurants, bread stands, and washrooms were available. Immigrants could lodge at licensed Castle Garden boarding houses for periods varying from one day to several weeks.

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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**Dec. 3, 5:** The Forreston High School Servant Leaders, in cooperation with Darlene Book, Texas Disaster Relief, and North Carolina Canton Fire Department are hosting a Christmas Book & Toy Drive for children in North Carolina who suffered great loss from the recent hurricanes. Help us spread Christmas cheer to

our neighbors to the south! Servant Leaders will be collecting donations during the girls basketball game on Tuesday, Dec. 3 and the boys basketball game on Thursday, Dec. 5. Donations can also be dropped off at the FJSHS office during school hours. The sleigh will be loaded after the start of the varsity game

on Dec. 5. All donations will go to children in need. Thank you for your support and your generosity!  
**Dec. 7:** The annual Candlelight Christmas Event at the Chana United Methodist Church will be held on Saturday, Dec. 7 at the Chana UMC. This year the event will be held at 4 p.m. Please note the time

change. The program will feature singer and song writer, Dan Holmes. Dan has performed in over 150 churches in seven states and has done several European tours. His music will be both Christian and seasonal in nature bringing a gentle Christian message of hope. Following the program a dessert/snack buffet will be

held in the candlelit social hall. There is no admission charge - a love offering will be taken for the presenter. A door prize drawing will be held at the close of the program and table favors will be available for all in the dining room. All are welcome to attend. Please call the church office at 815-732-7683, Carole Sutton

at 815-595-4559, or Pat Klopping at 815-453-2345 by Dec. 4 if you plan to attend and have not been previously contacted.  
**Dec. 7:** Come enjoy the fun, free breakfast with Santa on Dec. 7 from 9-11 a.m. at the Mt. Morris Moose Lodge 1551 located at 101 Moose Drive, Mt. Morris, IL 61054.

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# LOCAL NEWS

## OGLE COUNTY SHERIFF'S REPORT

**OREGON** — On Nov. 19 at approximately 12:31 p.m. deputies responded to the 1,500 block of North Mulford Road, Rochelle, in response to a personal injury accident. After an investigation, it was learned that a gray-colored Toyota driven by Jesse Morales, 44, of Cherry Valley, attempted to overtake a blue-colored Chevrolet hauling a farm implement driven by Scott H Bohne, 34, of Sycamore. The Toyota struck the Chevrolet as the Chevrolet attempted to enter a private drive. Morales was transported to the area hospital for non-life-threatening injuries. Morales was cited for improper passing. Bohne was cited for no slow-moving vehicle placard. Deputies were assisted at the scene by Rochelle Fire and EMS.

On Nov. 20 at 10:35 a.m. the Ogle County Special Operations unit conducted a traffic stop on Interstate 88 westbound at marker 75. After an

investigation, the driver, Steven Rockwood, 72, of Dixon, was arrested on a Lee County warrant for delivery of methamphetamine. The passenger, John Lance, 58, of Dixon, was arrested for possession of a controlled substance (methamphetamine) and possession of drug paraphernalia. Rockwood was released from the scene with a future court date in Lee County. Lance was transported to the Ogle County jail to be processed and was released on a notice to appear.

On Nov. 20 at approximately 9:56 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop at the intersection of Brayton Avenue and Reynolds Road in Mt. Morris. As a result, deputies arrested Brenna M. Gapinski, 31, of Dixon on an outstanding Lee County warrant for contempt of court. Gapinski was transported to the Ogle County Jail in lieu of bond. Gapinski was

issued a verbal warning for improper lane usage.

On Nov. 21 at 9:29 a.m. deputies were dispatched to the 400 block of Wayne Road (Hillcrest) for a report of a domestic problem. As a result, deputies arrested Melanie E. Marr, 35, of Rochelle for domestic battery. Marr was transported to the Ogle County Jail pending an appearance before a judge.

On Nov. 22 at approximately 1:35 a.m. deputies initiate a traffic stop near the intersection of Washington Street and Third Street in Oregon. After further investigation Chelsey Weems, 23, of Polo, was placed under arrest for driving under the influence of alcohol. Weems was also cited for loud exhaust and illegal transportation of alcohol. Weems was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was released on a notice to appear.

On Nov. 22 at approximately 3:32 p.m. deputies were dispatched to

the 9000 block of North Blaine Road in reference to a domestic disturbance. After an investigation, deputies arrested Brian Ostrihonsky, 71, of Leaf River, for domestic battery. Ostrihonsky was transported to the Ogle County Jail, where he will be held pending an appearance before a judge.

On Nov. 22 at approximately 12:45 p.m. deputies responded to the 100 block of Azalea Avenue, Davis Junction, for a domestic altercation. After a brief investigation, Jessie M. Cardenas, 23, of Rockford, was placed under arrest for domestic battery, possession of drug paraphernalia, and possession of controlled substance. Paul W. Turner III, 34, of Texas, was placed under arrest for felony criminal damage to property, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of a controlled substance and an outstanding DeKalb County warrant. Cardenas and Turner

were transported to Ogle County Jail. Cardenas remains in jail pending an appearance before a judge. Turner was held on the DeKalb County warrant. Turner was given a notice to appear for the felony criminal damage to property, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of controlled substance.

On Nov. 23 at approximately 1:37 a.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 7,000 block of Lowell Park Road. After further investigation, Eric Bryer, 48, of Mt. Morris, was placed under arrest for driving while license revoked. Bryer was also charged with unlawful use of weapon, aggravated unlawful use of weapon, unlawful use of weapon by a felon, possession of a firearm without a FOID, possession of ammunition without a FOID, and operating an uninsured motor vehicle. Bryer was transported to the Ogle County Jail pending an

appearance before a judge.

On Nov. 24 at 6:35 pm. deputies conducted a warrant service in the 100 block of Transit Street, Creston. After a brief investigation, deputies arrested Christian Stanbery, 22, of Rochelle, for two outstanding Ogle County warrants, failure to appear aggravated driving under the influence and driving under the influence. Stanbery was transported to the Ogle County Jail and held pending an appearance before a judge.

On Nov. 24 at approximately 11 p.m. deputies responded to the 800 block of Walnut Avenue in Forreston. After a brief investigation deputies arrested Michael A. Magdziak, 47, of Forreston for battery and criminal damage to property. Magdziak was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was given a notice to appear for a future court date.

All individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty.

## BYRON POLICE REPORT

**Nov. 6**

At 2:02 p.m. Byron Police Department issued citations to Jiaer L. Grayson, 29, of Rockford for operating a motor vehicle while registration is suspended and operating a vehicle with no proof of valid insurance. This violation occurred in the 7,000 block of North River Road.

**Nov. 7**

At 3:15 p.m. Byron Police Department issued a citation to Carmen Silva Guzman, 36, of Byron for failure to stop at a stop sign. This violation occurred at 400 North Maple Street.

At 9:12 p.m. Byron Police Department issued

a citation to Luis Mendoza-Gil, 44, of Bolingbrook for speeding, going 53 in a 30 miles per hour zone. This violation occurred in the 700 block of West Blackhawk.

**Nov. 9**

At 5:07 p.m. Byron Police Department issued a citation to Jordan A. Pontnack, 30, of Byron for operating a motor vehicle while registration suspended. This violation occurred at the intersection of East Blackhawk Drive and Luther Drive.

**Nov. 11**

At 3:27 p.m. Byron Police Department issued a citation to a 17-year-old male of Byron for speeding, going 51 in a 30

miles per hour zone. This violation occurred in the 700 block of North Colfax.

**Nov. 12**

At 6:53 a.m. Byron Police Department issued a citation to Clyde H. Castle, 58, of Rockford for speeding, going 52 in a 35 miles per hour zone. This violation occurred in the 8,000 block of North Barker Road.

**Nov. 13**

At 11:11 a.m. Byron Police Department issued citations to Gregory D. Kendrick Jr., 36, of Sterling for operating a vehicle without valid proof of insurance and operating a vehicle with a suspended driver's license. This violation occurred at the 100

block of Lincoln Street.

At 5:40 p.m. Byron Police Department issued a citation to Zachary R. Anderson, 38, of Rockford for disobeying a traffic control device. This violation occurred at Walnut Street and Merchant Street.

**Nov. 14**

At 2:10 p.m. Byron Police Department issued a citation to Joel G. Helms, 54, of Roscoe for operating a vehicle while driver's license is suspended. Helms was arrested and transported to Ogle County Jail where he was fingerprinted and released with a notice to appear. This violation occurred at the 700 block of West Blackhawk.

At 4:21 p.m. Byron Police Department responded to a domestic at the 900 block of West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Scott C. Crain was arrested for criminal damage to property, criminal trespassing to residence, disorderly conduct, violation of bail bond, and possession of cannabis. Crain was transported to the Ogle County Jail.

**Nov. 15**

At 7:07 p.m. Byron Police Department issued a citation to Curtis G. Rucker, 28, of Leaf River for operating a vehicle without proof of valid insurance. This violation occurred

at the 600 block of West Blackhawk.

**Nov. 16**

At 12:11 a.m. Byron Police Department issued citations to Bryan C. Banbry, 18, of Sycamore for disobeying a traffic control device and operating an uninsured motor vehicle. This violation occurred at Walnut and Blackhawk.

At 6:26 a.m. Byron Police Department responded to a single-vehicle accident at the 6,800 block of North German Church Road involving a 2017 Honda, driven by Patrick Simpson, 35, of Winnebago. There were no injuries or citations issued.

At 9:15 a.m. Byron Police Department issued citations to Taylor Ann J. Kurtweg, 30, of Rockford for operating a vehicle while registration is suspended and operating a vehicle with no valid driver's license. Kurtweg was transported to Ogle County Jail where she was processed and released with a notice to appear.

At 4:29 p.m. Byron Police Department responded to a hit and run at the 200 block of West Blackhawk, involving a 2018 Ford, driven by Betty Jo Bussie, 89, of Beloit, Wisconsin and a 2009 Cadillac, driven by Cynthia A. Dalgard, 54,

of Byron. No injuries and no citations were issued.

**Nov. 17**

At 9:58 a.m. Byron Police Department issued citations to Issac V. Alvarez, 41, of Byron for operating a vehicle with a suspended registration and operating a vehicle with no valid driver's license. Alvarez was transported to Ogle County Jail where he was processed and released with a notice to appear. This violation occurred at North River Road and German Church Road.

**Nov. 18**

At 3:48 a.m. Byron Police Department issued a citation to Braddley J. Richards, 49, of Beloit, Wisconsin for disobeying a traffic control device. This violation occurred at Union and River.

At 11 a.m. Byron Police Department issued citations to Salam M. Kadhim, 64, of Rockford for operating a vehicle with a suspended registration and operating a vehicle with no proof of valid insurance. This violation occurred at the 500 block of East Blackhawk.

Please note: Any arrests listed below are merely accusations and the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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OCLHOUSE

## Local organizations receive CFNIL grants

**ROCKFORD** — The Community Foundation of Northern Illinois (CFNIL) is feeling extra thankful as we announce the recipients of Community Grants for the 2024 program cycle: \$1.73 million granted to 88 organizations in support of projects, programs, and events benefiting the people of Boone, Ogle, Stephenson, and Winnebago Counties.

The grants were awarded in eight focus areas: Arts & Humanities; Basic Needs & Compassionate Support; Career Pathways; Complementary Education; Equity, Dignity, & Respect; Health; Sustainable Communities; and Youth & Families. From the stage to the classroom, from the doctor's office to the riverfront, and at all points in between, the projects funded by Community Grants help build a more vibrant region.

The full report on 2024 Community Grants Program grantmaking can be found online at <https://canva.cfnil.org/cgr2024>. This report details each of the 95 awards made this cycle and the work that each grantee

will undertake as a result.

Local recipients included:

Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois - Girls Health and Wellness Project - Health - \$9,775.00.

Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County - Ensuring Volunteer Job Safety: Phase II - Sustainable Communities - \$3,100.00.

Northern Illinois University - Strengthening Regional Work-Based Learning and Launching an Education Research Collaborative - Career Pathways - \$55,000.00.

Oregon CUSD 220 - Summer Elementary Math Camp - Complementary Education - \$46,000.00

Serenity Hospice and Home - Music Therapy for Terminally Ill Patients - Basic Needs & Compassionate Support - \$15,000.00.

The Arc of Winnebago, Boone & Ogle Counties - Project Art - Arts & Humanities - \$7,235.32.

United Way of Northwest Illinois - Dolly Parton Imagination Library book mailing program - Complementary Education -

\$17,388.00.

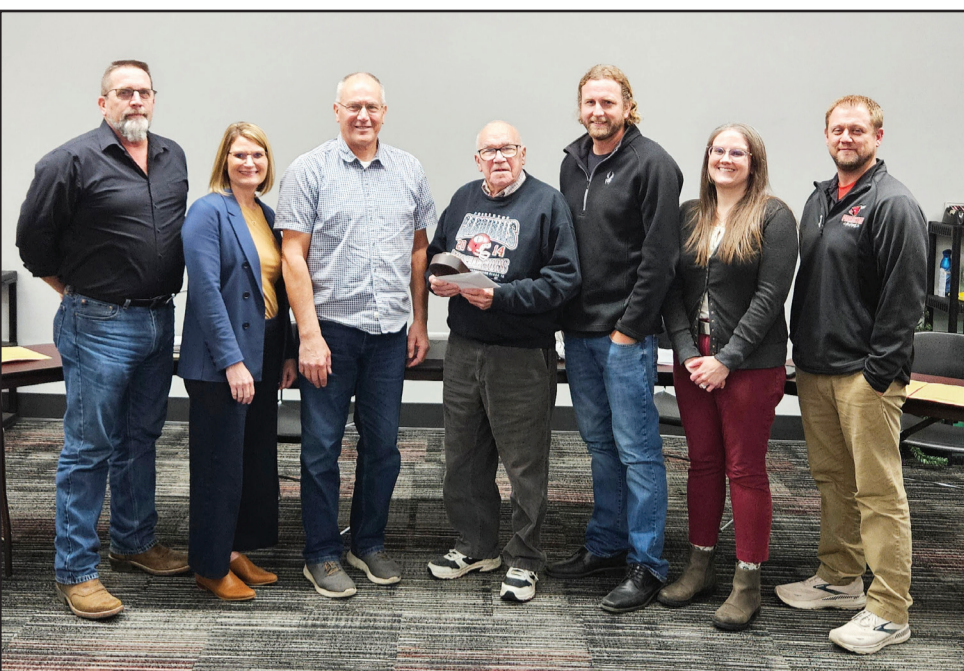
Village of Mt. Morris - 2025 Mt. Morris Jamboree Free Concerts - Arts & Humanities - \$5,750.00.

"The people of Northern Illinois are exceptionally generous and committed to ensuring future generations will have every opportunity to live healthy, productive, and rewarding lives," said Dan Ross, CFNIL president. "We are inspired by our non-profit partners whose work makes that vision possible, not just in the future, but today. This work and its growing, ongoing impact would not be possible without the generosity of thousands of donors, the commitment of hundreds of volunteers, and the exceptional efforts of these grantees."

The 2024 Community Grants Program cycle continues CFNIL's 71-year commitment to investment in Northern Illinois through grantmaking. Learn more about Community Grants and other grantmaking programs of the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois at <http://cfnil.org/grants>.



# LOCAL NEWS



The Forrestville Valley School District Board of Education (Bob Gronewold, Superintendent Sheri Smith, Chip Braker, Don Cook, Shaun Gallagher, Dr. April Moore, and Dr. Craig Pauls) is pictured at left. Cook and his family are pictured at right.



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

## Forrestville Valley School District Board honors Don Cook for 21 years of service

**FORRESTON** — On Wednesday, Nov. 20, the Forrestville Valley School District Board of Education recognized Member Don Cook for 21 years of service to the district.

Mr. Cook began his service in 1999. During this 21 years on the Board of Education, Mr. Cook was involved in numerous projects, improvements, and events. Some of these include: Forreston Junior Senior High School science lab renovations,

addition of secondary STEM courses and Project Lead the Way Engineering Pathway, 1:1 technology implementation for FJSHS and Forreston Grade School, full day kindergarten and preschool within district attendance centers, the construction of Cardinal Field Complex, addition of Dual Credit and Advanced Placement classes, to include College Now, and numerous additional facility improvements.

During his tenure as a member of the Board of Education, Mr. Cook attended several trainings and served in multiple board positions including board secretary and on the Forrestville Valley Education Foundation Board.

Superintendent Sheri Smith states, “The district appreciates the 21 years of service of Mr. Cook and the many opportunities he has provided to the students and staff at Forrestville Valley. His goal

when starting on the board was to improve facilities to maximize resources for our students. He should be very proud of all he has accomplished in this area. Mr. Cook will be missed, and we wish him only the very best.”

Board President Chip Braker said, “Don has

served the children and families of the Forrestville Valley school district faithfully and unselfishly for more than 21 years. He has stayed true to our mission of doing what’s best for kids while being a responsible steward of our resources. I am truly grateful for his service,

and on behalf of the Forrestville Valley Board of Education we wish both he and Judy the very best.”

The Forrestville Valley School District and Board of Education will miss Mr. Cook and thank him for his many years of service.

## Forrestville Valley School District seeking board member

**FORRESTON** — The Forrestville Valley School District #221 is seeking applicants for the position of board member. The term of office will be from Jan. 15, 2025, until the election of April 2027. Applicants must be a United States citizen, at least 18 years of

age, a resident of Illinois and the Forrestville Valley School District for at least one year, a registered voter, and may come from any congressional township in the district. Application forms are available on the district website at [www.fvdistrict221.org](http://www.fvdistrict221.org), at the

District Office located at 601 E. Main St., Forreston, IL 61030 or by calling the District Office at (815) 938-2036. Application deadline is Friday, Jan. 3, 2025. Interviews will be held on Jan. 15, 2025, beginning at approximately 5:30 p.m.



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Jerry Tice was accompanied last month by, from left to right, Larry Wallace on dobro, Tim Laurence on banjo, Mike Bratt on bass, and John Lindblade on guitar.

## First Fridays Open Mic is Dec. 6

**OREGON** — The First Fridays Open Mic presents its monthly show at the Oregon VFW this Dec. 6. This indoor event attracts many talented performers, but musicians and singers of all skill levels find acceptance from its supportive

audience. The show starts at 6:30 p.m. Admission is free, although a jar is available for donations. Performers can sign up for time slots on a first-come-first-serve basis, so it’s best to arrive by 6 p.m. or earlier. Interested parties who have

questions can contact Jerry Tice, at 815-449-2660.

The VFW is located at 1310 W. Washington St. in Oregon. It provides ample parking, along with the availability of a restaurant and bar within the building. A fish fry runs from 4- 8 p.m.

## Cookie Walk and Bake Sale is Dec. 7

**BYRON** — Stock up on Christmas Cookies and other baked goods by attending the Cookie Walk and Bake Sale, to be held on Saturday, Dec. 7 at 9 a.m. at the United Church of Byron in the Fern Calvert Fellowship Hall.

The UCB Fellowship of the United Church of Byron is sponsoring their 19th Cookie Walk, where cookies and candies will be sold by at \$10 per pound from 9 a.m. to noon. There will also be hot beverages and goodies to sample.

The church is located at 701 W. Second St. and is handicapped accessible. For further information, please call the church at 815-234-8777. Our website is [www.unitedchurchofbyron.org](http://www.unitedchurchofbyron.org) or you can also find us on Facebook.

## Juntos Family Experience set for Dec. 4

**ROCKFORD** — University of Illinois Extension and Rock Valley College are hosting a Hispanic 4-H Juntos Family Experience for high school students and their families. Mark your calendar for Wednesday, Dec. 4, from 5:30-7 p.m. at Rock Valley College, Main Campus

Stenstrom Center, at 3301 N. Mulford Road in Rockford. This event is presented primarily in Spanish and includes presentations on admissions, financial aid, dual credit opportunities, and a panel of Latino university students to discuss their college experience. Everyone is welcome.

If you have questions or need reasonable accommodations to participate in programming, contact Kathy Dombek at the DeKalb County Extension office at 815-758-8194. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your needs.

## DIRECTORY OF AREA HUMAN SERVICES

### Alcohol Abuse Counseling & Recovery

- A.A. Hotline 800-452-7990
- Sinnissippi Centers, Inc. 732-3157
- Oregon 562-3801
- Rochelle 562-3801

### Domestic Abuse Agency and 24-Hour Shelter and Helpline

- HOPE of Ogle County 562-8890 or 732-7796
- Confidential counseling services, court advocacy, Latina advocacy and shelter programs

### Low Income Housing

- Ogle County Housing Authority 732-1301
- 200 W Washington, Oregon

### Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County

- P.O. Box 628 815-222-8869
- Oregon, IL 61061

### Mental Health

- Family Counseling Services 962-5585
- Sinnissippi Centers, Inc. 732-3157
- Oregon 562-3801
- Rochelle 562-3801
- The Serenity Shed Grief Services 732-2499

### Senior Citizens Services

- Hub City Senior Center 562-5050
- Mt Morris Senior & Community Center 734-6335
- Polo Senior Center 946-3818
- Rock River Center 732-3252
- Oregon, IL 800-541-5479

### Sexual Assault/Abuse

- Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling 636-9811
- 24-hour hotline 732-0000
- 412 W Washington, Oregon

### Therapeutic

- Pegasus Special Riders 973-3177

### Veterans' Services

- Ogle County Veteran's Assistance 815-255-9181
- Veteran's Crisis Line 988 then press 1
- Rock River Center 732-3252
- Serenity Hospice and Home 732-2499
- Medical Transportation 677-6515

### Wellness Services

- Ogle County Health Dept 562-6976
- 907 Pines Rd, Oregon 562-6976
- 510 Lincoln Hwy, Rochelle 732-2499
- Serenity Hospice and Home 732-2499

# LOCAL NEWS

## KITCHEN TABLE: Local organization plans to host community dinners on occasion

From page 1

The building will soon be sold to a for-profit restaurant in need of a location. The non-profit proceeds from the sale will be donated to a local charity. The Kitchen Table will remain as an organization, and plans to host community dinners at the soon-to-be-sold 7034 S. Klondike Road location on occasion and possibly at other venues likely starting next May.

Brown and Kitchen Table Board Member Bob Alder said the organization came to the decision to sell due to a shortage of resources and volunteers, and overwhelming need. The nonprofit can no longer pay its bills and get the food it needs. Volunteers have dwindled to a group of six people, who are often performing multiple duties at once.

"That just isn't enough," Brown said. "On our most recent serving night, we served 144 meals in two hours. We're lucky if we take in \$300 on a night like that. We have bills just like any other restaurant has. We're taking in \$1,200-1,300 a month but our bills cost us around \$2,200 a month at a bare minimum. We've struggled for help since day one. We do have a nice core group, but we're all doing double duty."

The Kitchen Table's building was purchased Feb. 19, 2013 and opened June 30, 2016 after renovations were done. It was created as a place where people could enjoy a home-cooked meal on a pay-what-you-can basis, and as a reciprocal space where volunteering could earn food, fostering a

sense of community.

After the nonprofit saw lines out the door of people waiting for tables to open up, seating space was expanded after a visit from TV's Mike Rowe, who donated what is now the Rone Pavilion at the location. That extra seating space hasn't been needed since the COVID-19 pandemic, with more pickup and delivery orders being requested since 2020. Brown and Alder believe a shift in society has made The Kitchen Table's original mission harder to carry out.

The Kitchen Table saw a \$50,000 drop in donations from 2022 to 2023, and it started to have to utilize its reserve funds when it cut serving nights from two nights to one per week in 2024.

"We used to have so much fun when we started in 2016," Brown said. "We enjoyed it. I looked forward to it. We had a blast making food and we were lucky if we served 30 people when we first opened. I always said if it ever became like work, we shouldn't be doing it. And I said if it ever got to where it wasn't supporting itself, we'd stop."

The Kitchen Table's leadership is looking forward to relieving itself of the building's expenses to allow it to operate in the future, and possibly looking to find a better and more productive way to serve the community.

The nonprofit has served over 100,000 meals since opening the location, sometimes as many as 18,000 meals a year.

"We know there's still a need there and we can still help with that," Brown said. "We can still do din-



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

The Kitchen Table will remain as an organization, and plans to host community dinners at the soon-to-be-sold 7034 S. Klondike Road location on occasion and possibly at other venues likely starting next May.

ners here. We can still go to churches and do dinners. We can pick up and do a dinner anywhere. We just have to get back to where we enjoy it and everybody understands what the concept is behind it. We're just trying to find a different way to be productive that's less stressful. And even if we do a dinner a month, there's always other ways to help people that need it. I feel recently it hasn't been as productive as we intended it to be and what we were in the beginning."

Rowe's visit to The Kitchen Table is among Brown's fondest memories since 2016. She often

thinks about what path the nonprofit would be on if COVID-19 hadn't occurred. Rowe was scheduled to make a second visit before the shutdowns took place in 2020.

Alder's memories of The Kitchen Table stretch all the way back to the first night he came in for dinner after being new to town. He met new friends at sat and ate with them each Thursday. He recalls meeting Brown's daughter, who had a newborn son who he would look after to give her some time to eat.

"Being able to help and community was what this

was about," Alder said. "Now I'm so busy on the nights when we work that I don't get to talk to anybody anymore. I'm sad it's closing and that we had to go down this road. Based on serving 100,000 meals, you can't tell me there isn't someone in the community we've served that can't come out and work one day a year. If every one of those worked just one day a year, we could be open seven days a week."

Brown and Alder admitted that dealing with changes in societal dynamics and long hours of short-staffed work

have caused them to lose some faith in their cause in recent years. They're looking forward to a new, different endeavor for The Kitchen Table.

"It's not supposed to feel like work," Brown said. "We thought feeding people would be good enough to get volunteers, but it's not. And when you feel like you're begging for help, that's a problem. We can only stretch ourselves so far. I think it's time to figure out a different way to do things and do them in a better fashion. We have to get back to the purpose of why we started this place."

# Stranger Danger

School has started, and with all of activities going on, there is no better time to discuss the danger of strangers with your kids. Telling them not to talk to strangers is not enough. You want to make sure they know what a stranger is and how to deal with them.

Here are some safety tips to include in your discussion.



- Do not mistake a friendly face for someone you know. Anyone you do not know is a stranger, regardless how nice they seem or what they have to offer. Just because the person has a cute dog or tons of candy does not mean you can trust them. Ask for identification from anyone in uniform.
- Do not walk to school or play outside alone, if you can help it. Strangers are less likely to approach groups of kids.
- Do not go places where strangers could be lurking, such as empty playgrounds or abandoned buildings. Stay in busy areas.
- Do not let your guard down. Always be on the lookout for strangers.
- Do not make contact with strangers. Be quiet and take their questions and pleas for help to an adult you know and trust.
- Do not panic should a stranger approach. Run to a reliable adult and let them know what is going on, whether a teacher in the parking lot, a clerk in a store or a neighbor down the street. If possible, take down the stranger's license plate number. Should the stranger grab you, do whatever it takes to get away from them and attract the attention of any reliable adults that may be around.
- Do not keep any incidents with strangers to yourself. Let your parents know as soon as possible so they can contact the police.

Tailor your discussion to your kids' ages and use role-playing to help them understand the gravity of the situation. Their safety is at stake!

# LOCAL NEWS

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## RCH: Hospital celebrates National Rural Health Day

*From page 1*

Hueramo said she feels blessed to work at a rural hospital and takes pride in helping the community to stay healthy.

Along with caring for its patients in the area, RCH also acts as a large employer.

“Rural health to me means being here for the community,” Bauer said. “Particularly taking care of our patients, but it’s also a home for all of the employees. We try to provide the best place we can and be an employer of choice to keep our physicians and employees here. We have great providers and employees and we want to offer a good place to work for them to stay here and take care of friends and family. That’s what rural health is about.”

The services RCH provides relieve patients of having to travel out of town or the area to get healthcare. Heward touted the hospital’s services and technology that it offers to the community and Bauer said it’s convenient for aging patients.

“Access is really important,” Stein said. “While working in the multispecialty clinic, I see the specialists that come from Rockford and all over and how many patients come here because they can stay local versus going to those larger towns where it could be intimidating to drive to if they’re not familiar with the area or if the weather is bad.”

While some other rural hospitals are currently dealing with financial is-



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

**RCH Wellness Committee Members, including Marketing & Public Relations Specialist Kirby Heward, Chief Human Resources Officer Denise Bauer, Human Resources Generalist Lorena Hueramo, Human Resources Assistant Brenndon Garcia and Dietician Janelle Stein spoke with the Ogle County Life about the day.**

sues and filling open positions, Bauer said that isn’t the case at RCH, which operates independently and is not owned by a large healthcare company.

During COVID-19, RCH did deal with the shortage of healthcare workers and had as many as 67 openings at one time. It is down to 19 open positions currently.

“A big part of what we’re trying to sell is our culture,” Bauer said. “Right now, I don’t think we’re feeling what other rural hospitals may be feeling with finances and growth. We’re always working towards growth and looking at how we can continue to improve the hospital and bring more state-of-the-art equipment here. We have that and our providers are tip top.”

Stein believes “one of the best things” about RCH is the intimate environment and relationships that come as a result of it. She enjoys seeing receptionists greet most patients by name and believes those relationships with patients allow for more holistic

care because healthcare providers know more of patients’ stories.

Heward and Hueramo said those relationships are valuable for staff as well.

“A lot of employees that we hire come from big organizations and that’s the number one thing they say they’re looking for, is a place where they feel at home where they’re not just a number,” Hueramo said. “They want to be known by their name and they want to be valued and known by the leaders and their coworkers.”

Bauer said RCH’s size and operations allow for shorter waiting and scheduling times. The RCH Wellness Committee said it takes pride in working at a rural hospital as some others like it have seen difficulties in recent years.

“A lot of hospitals have been taken over by larger organizations,” Bauer said. “We’re still independent. Here it’s still about family caring for family and friends taking care of friends. It just breeds healthier people.”



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# MIRACLE ON SECOND STREET

## 'A Christmas Story' themed Scavenger Hunt set for Dec. 6

**BYRON** — The Byron Chamber of Commerce and Byron Bank would like to invite the community and local businesses to participate in A Christmas Story Scavenger Hunt at Miracle on 2nd Street, Dec. 6, 2024, 6pm-8:30pm. We recommend participating businesses to offer a discount, coupon, or goody of their choice to the participants from the Scavenger Hunt.

**How the game works:**  
The game starts with Byron Bank at Miracle on 2nd Street.

24 businesses may participate. This will be a first come, first served basis. It is \$50 for each business to participate. This \$50 includes the A Christmas Story character or object to find, marker, business name on printed materials related to the game, a sponsorship for Miracle on 2nd Street, and game participants entering

your business. A Christmas Story Character will be provided to each participating business to identify the participating business. The business will "hide" their character for the participants to "find". We recommend each business provide a discount, coupon, or goody of their choice to participants.

Businesses will be featured on a stamp card, Facebook, email blast and press.

Each participant will have a card. Participants will pick up a card at Byron Bank or your business. They will come in, find the character, present the card to an employee (or ask for a card), and the employee will then mark the card on their business logo or name.

The participants will turn in their cards by Dec. 6 at 8:30 to qualify for the cash prize. Cards



that are completely full of stamps will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win \$100 cash prize and five opportunities to win \$20 cash prizes.

Participants must return the cards to Byron Bank, in Byron, no later than 8:30 on Dec. 6, 2024.

The winners will be drawn and awarded on

Dec. 9 at 2 p.m. by Byron Bank and the Byron Chamber of Commerce.

Please contact the chamber office at 234-5500 or office@byron-

chamber.com, for an opportunity to participate in this communal game. Entry fees are due to the Chamber office by Nov. 25.



## Classic holiday films the whole family can enjoy

**C**ELEBRANTS owe the joy of the holiday season to various components. Decor and gift-giving go a long way toward making December a joyous time of year. Holiday films also do their part to make the season so special. Many people have their own favorite holiday films, and the following are some that can engage viewers who are young

or simply young at heart.

**"A Christmas Story"**  
Released in 1983, this warmly nostalgic, humorous film is a perennial favorite among families. It follows the story of Ralphie, who has his heart set on a very specific Christmas present: a Red Rider BB gun. Amidst wintry exploits and family drama, the true spirit of Christmas manages to shine through in this beloved film.

Some of the subject matter can be off-color, and there are some bullying scenes. So this is a movie best watched with children who are mature enough to make it through without being scared.

**"Little Women"**

Based on the Louisa May Alcott novel of the same name, the 1994 telling of this classic follows the March sisters, who confront finan-

cial difficulties, romance and family tragedies in mid-nineteenth century Massachusetts. While it's not a traditional Christmas movie, the importance of spending time with family around Christmastime is a core theme in this coming-of-age tale.

**"Klaus"**

Perhaps not as well-known as other animated holiday flicks, "Klaus," released in 2019, has a

personality all its own. Postman Jesper, who is not making the grade at the postal academy, is sent to work in a frozen town in the North, where he discovers a reclusive toy maker named Klaus. The unlikely duo ultimately team up to make and deliver toys and bring smiles to children's faces.

**"Meet Me In St. Louis"**

Starring the irreplaceable Judy Garland, this movie musical focuses on four sisters who are awaiting the 1904 World's Fair in their hometown, but learn that their father has accepted a new job and the family must move to New York beforehand. A Christmas miracle occurs and all is right in the end. Garland sings a memorable version of "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" in the film, solidifying this as a holiday classic.

**"The Santa Clause"**

This Disney film came out in 1994 and remains

a family favorite. When divorced dad Scott (Tim Allen) accidentally kills a man in a Santa suit, he magically becomes the next Santa. He must learn to cope with the ways the transformation to the man in red interrupts his normal life, eventually giving over to the magic of Christmas.

**"Emmet Otter's Jug-Band Christmas"**

Though this 1977 Jim Henson production is a television special and not a full-length feature film, Generation X likely remembers the heartfelt tale of a poor otter family who sacrifice prized possessions to have what's needed to enter a talent contest. The goal is to win the prize money to buy special Christmas presents. Audiences get to enjoy narration by Kermit the Frog.

Films are a popular component that help to make the holiday season so special.

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### Polo High School volleyball players take home awards at team banquet

The Polo High School volleyball team held its season-ending awards banquet. Varsity - Most Kills: Bridget Call; Highest Hitting %: Reese Mekeel; Most Assists: Camrynn Jones; Most Digs: Bridget Call; Most Aces: Camrynn Jones; Highest Serving %: Camrynn Jones; Most Blocks: Laynie Mandrell; MVP: Bridget Call; Marco Award: Laynie Mandrell; Most Improved: Reese Mekeel; All Conference - Camrynn Jones 2nd Team, Reese Mekeel 2nd Team, Bridget Call Honorable Mention. JV - Most Kills: Reese Mekeel; Most Assists: Brylee Laskowski; Most Digs: Hadley Hillison; Most Aces: Mylo Willis; Highest Serving %: Brylee Laskowski; Most Blocks: Macie Mandrell; MVP: Reese Mekeel; Marco Award: Macie Mandrell; Most Improved: Sam Gray. (Courtesy photos)

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**4 E Lincoln Street Mt Morris \$34,900 Call Becky**  
Handyman's special! This spacious 2 story home in the heart of Mt. Morris has lots of potential with its 3 BR, 1.5 BA (not completely finished) 2 story home. Living room has a fireplace and unique glass block wall with a tucked away office on the opposite side with has a separate entrance to front porch. Kitchen has some updates with its newer white cabinets, granite, garbage disposal and newer dishwasher, electric stove and microwave. Cute little breakfast nook built in. 1st floor laundry room updated. Back enclosed porch has heat. 2 car garage. Double lot. Sold AS-IS, no FHA/VA, cash offers preferred.



**409 W Brayton Road Mt Morris NOW \$195,000 Call Lori**  
Masonry church building, very well maintained, with 22,780 square feet more or less available for purchase. 3 level building with the main level at street grade at the front, the lower level at street grade to the rear. Full kitchen in the lower level plus a large room 40 by 74 with additional stage area. Bathrooms on each level. Functional building with large spaces including an 84 x 40 sanctuary and typical classroom and office size spaces. Metal roof and modernized, zoned hot water heating system. Multiple stairways between levels. The building's layout will accommodate multiple uses and users.



**200 N Cherry Street Kings NOW \$25,000 Call Rebecca**  
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**523 W Blackhawk Drive Byron NOW \$598,000 Call Becky**  
Calling Investors!!! Great investment opportunity with two means of income - Successful existing restaurant with a 3 year lease plus a 5 unit apartment building (long term renters) - great cash flow. Restaurant has been remodeled & kitchen updated. Apartments have 2 bedroom & laundry in each. Lots of paved parking for both the restaurant and apartments. Great central location on the state highway and in the busy business area with a traffic count of 10,600 daily. (business not included - only building and apartments) Outdoor covered patio not included in the sale.



**123 E 3rd Street Byron NOW \$194,900 Call Becky**  
Spacious 4 BR 2 story near the heart of Byron! Every room in this home is extremely large and boasts lots of character with the original oversized 8" woodwork, hardwood flooring, and 5 panel doors. Kitchen had a complete remodel 5 years ago with the tall cherry color cabinets, granite countertops island with seating for 3, pantry, coffee bar, farm style sink. Dining room has crown molding, side door to front porch, transom windows over doorways, and full size pocket door to LR. Bathroom on main level was updated '24 and included new shower, vanity & toilet. LR has two large picture windows and another pocket door to foyer. Curved open staircase to the 4 upper bedrooms and a large remodeled (7 yrs ago) bathroom with a walking tile shower, claw foot tub, heat lamp and large vanity with granite. This home sits on .37 acres and is unique with its double wrap around L-shaped porches both up and down. Fenced yard (picnic tables stay), single garage w/opener plus an additional 2 car garage off alley. 14' round pool stays roof 10 years, water softener. Located in the outstanding Byron school district!



**102 E Hitt Street Mt Morris NOW \$175,000 Call Rebecca**  
OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS! Updated building located in the TIF District and close to downtown Mt Morris. Unlimited possibilities at this prime corner with a drive thru. With an average daily traffic count of over 4,000, visibility is high at this prime location. Updates include: central air, freshly painted exterior and updated bathrooms. There are two bathrooms as well as an office area that also has wash sinks. Open concept space making this a blank canvas for your ideas. Large parking lots for patrons is also an added benefit.



**124 Sheridan Drive Loves Park \$1,025,000 Call Jamie**  
8 Units for Sale! Are you looking for a turnkey addition to add to your current portfolio or are you looking to get into the Long Term Rental Business? All of the hard work has been done! Many updates/renovations have been done to each property. Included in this portfolio is (2) 4 Bedroom Single Family Homes. (4) 3 Bedroom Single Family Homes. (2) 2 Bedroom Single Family Homes. All properties are located in Rockford, Loves Park and Machesney Park. Gross Rental Income \$11,250. Additional Income information and complete listing details available upon request.



**206 Smith Drive Oregon \$292,900 Call Stephanie**  
Discover modern living in this 3 bedroom 2 bath ranch home, boasting 1430 square feet of comfort and style. Built in 2018, this gem is nestled in the sought after Stone Gate Subdivision. Step inside to an open floor plan featuring vaulted ceilings and an inviting living room adorned with hickory hardwood flooring and gas fireplace. You will love the master suite offering a spacious walk-in closet. There are 2 nice sized secondary bedrooms offering ample space for family, guests or a home office. Built with 2x6 construction, this home features partial exposure in the lower level and is rough in for a third bathroom, providing ample potential for future expansion. Home is complete with a 3 car garage, 12x12 deck, outdoor firepit and retaining wall. Stay connected and in control with the smart home package and fiber internet, and convenient city water/sewer and natural gas utilities. Don't miss the chance to make this exceptional property your new home.



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# LOCAL NEWS/SPORTS

## OGLE COUNTY SPORTS ROUNDUP

### Oregon girls basketball team hosts Oregon Tipoff Tournament

The Oregon High School varsity girls basketball team defeated West Carroll 49-30 to open the Oregon Tipoff Tournament on Wednesday, Nov. 20. Aniyah Sarver led the Hawks with 30 points, while Madelyn Wendt and Sarah Eckardt combined to score nine points in the win.

Oregon returned to the floor with a 40-25 loss against Lena-Winslow on Thursday, Nov. 21. Aniyah Sarver scored six points, Madelyn Wendt added five points and Shaylee Davis chipped in five points for the Hawks in the loss.

Oregon fell 69-40 against Rockford Christian in its first game on Saturday, Nov. 23. Aniyah Sarver scored nine points, Sarah Eckardt recorded seven points and Madelyn Wendt added six points for the Hawks in the loss.

Oregon finished in eighth place for the tournament after a 46-36 loss against Amboy in its second game on Saturday. Aniyah Sarver scored 14 points, while Sarah Eckardt added seven points and Avery Kitzmiller chipped in six points. Shaylee Davis totaled five points.

### Forreston girls basketball team falls against Orangeville

The Forreston High

School varsity girls basketball team lost 61-15 against Orangeville on Thursday, Nov. 21. Hailee Vogt led the Cardinals with six points in the game.

### Polo girls basketball team beats Pearl City

The Polo High School varsity girls basketball team scored a 44-24 win against Pearl City on Thursday, Nov. 21. Carlee Grobe led the Lady Marcos with 16 points and nine rebounds, while Leah Tobin added 12 points and Cam Jones added seven points, five rebounds and five assists.

### Oregon boys basketball team opens season at Oregon Thanksgiving Tournament

The Oregon High School varsity boys basketball team opened its season with a 73-62 loss against Sterling Newman during the opening round of the Oregon Thanksgiving Tournament on Monday, Nov. 25. Kade Girton led the Hawks with 25 points, while Benny Olalde added eight points. Keaton Salsbury and Cooper Johnson each totaled six points.

### Oregon girls basketball team defeats Mendota

The Oregon High School varsity girls basketball team won 52-40 over Mendota on Tuesday, Nov. 26. Ella Dannhorn scored 21 points, while Avery Kitzmiller added 11

points and Noelle Girton chipped in six points for the Hawks (2-3).

### Polo girls basketball team falls against Pocatonia

The Polo High School varsity girls basketball team conceded a 60-31 loss against Pocatonia on Tuesday, Nov. 26. Leah Tobin totaled 10 points, seven rebounds and four blocks, while Carlee Grobe and Cam Jones each scored six points for the Lady Marcos. Grobe recorded six rebounds and Jones finished with two assists and two steals.

### Polo varsity wrestling team wins over Woodstock North and Genoa-Kingston

The Polo High School varsity wrestling team defeated Woodstock North 54-5 and Genoa-Kingston 42-36 on Tuesday, Nov. 26. Polo wrestlers with wins against Genoa-Kingston included Lucas Nelson (132), Jaidyn McKinney (138), Christian Ryia (144), Tyler Webster (157), Micah Stringini (165), Ethan Dewey (175) and Shawn Patton (190).

Polo wrestlers with wins against Woodstock North included Lucas Nelson (132), Jaidyn McKinney (138), Christian Ryia (144), Kaelyn McCarran (150), Logan Burmister (150), James Bacon (157), Micah Stringini (165), Ethan Dewey (175) and Shawn Patton (190).

# Previewing IHSA football championships

A big weekend of high school sports coming up with the IHSA football championships and boys holiday basketball tournaments.

Like the girls last week, it will be chance to see how the boys roundballers match up. Sure, they play summer games, but that isn't quite as structured as an actual high school schedule.

Since football is in its 14<sup>th</sup> week, there shouldn't be too many surprises. In many cases, it is the same old suspects making title game appearances.

Other than national power East St. Louis likely winning 6A, it is possible the remaining seven classes could be won by private schools, including Belleville Althoff in 1A.

That is whom Lena-Winslow will face in its fourth straight championship game appearance. Going against a team that some are calling the best ever seen in 1A, this will be the Le-Win's most difficult playoff game ever.

Althoff's top running back Pierre Hill rushed for 319 yards in a 58-19 victory over a very good Camp Point Central, the same team that beat L-W last year.

How good is Hill? He received a scholarship from the top team in college football, No. 1-ranked Oregon. Two more players from Althoff have D-I offers, besides plenty of other talent.

If anyone can give 13-0 Althoff a game, it would be Le-Win, who have romped over everyone this year. If Le-Win can pull off the upset, this will catapult them to an even higher level of the stratosphere in small-school grid prominence. It was back-to-back titles for Amboy in eight-man football, with a convincing win over Milledgeville. Almost as impressive was over 2,000 fans tuned into the video stream of the game.

A large crowd was also present at Monmouth College, with the NUIC proudly on display. Officials from

the eight-man association continue to do the right thing by offering the championship Friday night.

It may be colder than a Saturday afternoon contest, but it draws a lot more attention statewide when nobody else in the IHSA is playing during that time frame.

Some naysayers continue to knock Amboy for not playing 11-man ball. I wholeheartedly disagree.

To keep eight-man competitive, more teams like Amboy are needed. What it not needed is 50-0 blowouts, so many of which are already occurring.

As long as Amboy and other prospective candidates meet the I8FA enrollment criteria, bring them on. Also, the more teams that get involved, the less travel.

On the volleyball front, kudos to the NUIC with Stockton placing second in the 1A state tournament. In 18 years of the four-class system, the conference has made the final four at state 14 times, including last year's title by Galena. Record wise, this was another tremendous season with eight league teams with 24 or more wins.

Jaiden Schneiderman of Forreston also distinguished herself by finishing as No. 10 all-time in the state with 1,655 kills. That is not just 1A, but all four classes. In 2018, Katie Erdmann had 567 kills to stand at No. 16 all time.

Matt Trowbridge of the Rockford Register Star, the top sports writer in this area, had an interesting article about the competitive imbalance in the NIC-10 conference. In it, he mentions how the Rockford public schools (Guilford, Auburn, East, Jefferson) and lower enrollment Belvidere and Freeport are having problems fielding teams.

With an average enrollment of 1,500, there was a time when all the schools had freshmen, jayvee and varsity teams,

with roster cuts not being uncommon. That has all changed, with kids choosing not to go out for sports as much.

There has become such a culture of losing that prospective athletes opt of out participating and the outlook remains bleak. Two sports that the RPS do well in are basketball and soccer, both of which do not require much in the way of equipment, mainly just a ball.

They are also a draw for minority students, unlike others that don't have the same pull.

Bear in mind, the NIC-10 has been one of the most stable conferences in the state for decades and its members have a big plus of limited travel, with Belvidere to Freeport the longest distance at 42 miles.

None-the-less, Rockford has changed over the decades, with 75 percent of its public students low-income. That's makes a difference in how competitive a school can be.

Some states have even begun to consider basing their classifications for state tournaments on this criteria rather than actual enrollment.

Trowbridge cites a 104-1 record Boylan, Harlem and Hononegah had in football against the other school several years ago.

Since then, Belvidere North, which became a school in 2007, has made inroads. However, that came at the expense of Belvidere, who have been floundering with low participation numbers since then. The reason North was started was because of population growth that was occurring all over 20 years ago.

The NIC-10 has experimented with coops in some sports, but bussing low-income kids to practices/games and getting them home is more difficult than what it is experienced in area rural school districts.

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



Andy Colbert

## ROCK RIVER CENTER ACTIVITIES

Rock River Center is a resource center located at 810 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Oregon. Our activities and trips are open to all ages. Call our office @ 815-732-3252 for assistance with Benefit Access Application for a license plate discount, Medicare, housing, homemaker service, heating assistance or other things. Visit us at [www.rockrivercenter.org](http://www.rockrivercenter.org) and like us on Facebook.

### DECEMBER YOGA

Dates: December 6, 13, and 20.  
Yoga: Friday, from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.  
Chair Yoga: Friday, from 11:15 – 12:00 Noon  
Cost: \$5 per class  
CRAFT GROUP on Dec. 2  
9:00 – 10:00 A.M.  
Project: Homemade Gift Tags Part 1: Christmas/Holiday gift tags

Crocheting & Knitting Club on Dec. 5  
9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

BUNCO on Dec. 9  
10:00 - 11:15 a.m.

MORNING MUG CLUB on Dec. 10  
9:00 – 10:30 A.M.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATION on Wed., Dec. 11

LUNCH 12:00 – 1:15 P.M.

MENU: Vegetable lasagna salad, cranberry relish, bread and dessert

DINNER MUSIC: Provided by Bev and Chuck Kearns

FOLLOWED BY: Performance by the OHS Madrigals

REGISTRATION: Deadline to register is Friday, Dec. 6 with \$10.00 pre-payment.

HEATING ASSISTANCE  
Colder weather is just around the corner and we all will be experiencing higher utility bills as we

need to turn on the heat in our homes. There are Utility Assistance Programs available to help pay for heating utility bills.

LIHEAP  
For the 2024-2025 LIHEAP program year, applications will be processed as follows.

Seniors (at least one household member is age 60 or older),

Disabled (at least one household member receives disability benefits)

Families with at least one child under 6 years old

Households that are disconnected from their utilities, have a disconnection notice, or have less than 25% in their propane tank.

All other income-eligible households can apply.

For more details, call Tri-County office at 800-323-5434.

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# LOCAL NEWS

## OREGON PUBLIC LIBRARY

### Preschool Story Time (18 months – 6 years)

Story Time is on Mondays at 10 am. Stories, crafts and friends to share books...all at your Library! Registration is required, visit [www.oregonpubliclibrary.com](http://www.oregonpubliclibrary.com) or call (815) 732-2724.

### Book Clubs

The 2WBC meets Wednesday, December 11 at 12:30 to discuss *The Godfather* by Mario Puzo. The Afternoon Book Club meets Wednesday, December 18 at 1 pm to discuss *Once Upon a Wardrobe* by Patti Callahan. Cocktails and Crime will meet not meet in December, but there are two books available which will both be discussed in January. Books on Tap Book Club will not meet in December, but will meet on January 23 at Cork & Tap to discuss *The House Maid* by Freida McFadden and *Maybe Next Time* by Cesca Major. Is This Just Fantasy? Book Club will meet December 17 to discuss *The Poppy War* by R. F. Kuang.

### Holiday Movie Binge Boxes- Registration has begun

Holiday Movie Night Binge Boxes are back! Inside each box are DVDs hand-picked for you by our librarians plus a festive treat and activity. Call (815) 732-2724 or visit our website to complete your registration for your box before December 19th. Once your box is ready, you will be notified to pick it up at the Library. Must be an Oregon Library Card holder.

### StoryWalk I Spy Contest- December 2 through December 20th (Oregon Library cardholders only)

Come by the Library and pick up an entry form, walk the Story Walk at Oregon Park West and answer the questions about the story. Once completed, turn in the entry form no later than December 20th.

### BYRON PUBLIC LIBRARY

#### Special Hours

In observance of the Christmas holiday, the Byron Public Library will be closed Tuesday, Dec. 24 through Wednesday, December 25. We will be open for our regular hours on Thursday, Dec. 26. We wish all of our patrons a safe and happy holiday!

#### Did you know

That you can now order 3D print projects from the Byron Library? The library's Creative Studio is home to two 3D printers that are available for

### BERTOLET MEMORIAL LIBRARY

#### White Christmas: Double the Fun!

Monday, December 2nd at 10:30AM: Enjoy watching this Christmas classic movie with us. Then be sure to return on... Wednesday, December 11th at 10:30AM: The 1954 movie *White Christmas* was a hit even before it debuted; how was it remained a perennial classic up through the present day? What creative forces banded together to bring Irving Berlin, Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney, Vera-Ellen, Mary Wickes,

### FORRESTON LIBRARY

#### Cookies, Crafts and Chats with Santa

Saturday, December 7th, 9:00 am to Noon. Santa's coming to the library! Be sure to bring your child's Christmas list and your camera to get those precious pictures

20. Individual with the most correct answers will receive a gift card from an Oregon business.

#### December Distraction- It's Back!

Friday, December 6 through Friday, December 20th, when Oregon Public Library District cardholders check out reading material, they may receive a scratch-off ticket for every 3 reading material items for a chance to win some readable prizes. Scratch off your ticket and see if you win! Winning ticket holders may select one of the prize packages that are now on display at the Library. Ask one of our librarians for more info.

#### The Magic of Raina Telgemeier- Tuesday, December 10th at 7 pm

Join us for a night with critically acclaimed comic artist, Raina Telgemeier! Raina is the author and illustrator of the graphic novels *Smile*, *Drama*, *Sisters*, *Ghosts*, and *Guts*, all #1 New York Times bestsellers. She also adapted and illustrated four graphic novel versions of Ann M. Martin's *Baby-Sitters Club* series, and has contributed short stories to many anthologies. New in 2024, *The Cartoonists Club*—a one-of-a-kind graphic novel from Raina and Scott McCloud. Raina's accolades include six Eisner Awards, a Boston Globe-Horn Book Honor, a Stonewall Honor, and many Best-of and Notables lists. Raina grew up in San Francisco, then moved to New York City, where she earned an illustration degree at the School of Visual Arts. Raina currently lives and works in San Francisco, CA. Children's Librarian Genevieve Grove will join Raina in conversation. Register at: [bit.ly/ILP\\_RainaTelgemeier](http://bit.ly/ILP_RainaTelgemeier)

This event is made possible by Illinois Libraries Present (ILP), a statewide collaboration among public libraries

### BYRON PUBLIC LIBRARY

making 3D prints for learning and entertainment purposes. 3D prints cost \$.10 per gram PLA, and will be available for pickup within 7-10 business days. Please visit <https://www.byronlibrary.org/3d-printing/> for more information on how to submit your 3D print idea.

#### Christmas Movie Showing: The Angel of Pennsylvania Avenue

Wednesday, Dec. 4. 1 - 3:00 pm. Get into the holiday spirit by watching the Christmas movie *The Angel of Pennsylvania Avenue* (rated PG). Please call 815-234-5107 to register.

#### Creative Studio

Our Creative Studio is open on Sunday afternoons and two evenings a week, so stop by for monthly crafts and to use our maker space equipment! Crafts out on the tables are free of charge, while some other projects will incur a cost depending on materials. Middle school and high school youth can use some of the materials while with

### FORRESTON LIBRARY

#### Cookies, Crafts and Chats with Santa

Saturday, December 7th, 9:00 am to Noon. Santa's coming to the library! Be sure to bring your child's Christmas list and your camera to get those precious pictures

offering premier events. ILP is funded in part by a grant awarded by the Illinois State Library, a department of the Office of Secretary of State, using funds provided by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services, under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).

#### Craft with Corks- Tuesday, December 10 at 6 pm (4th grade through adults)

Create a one of a kind item using old wine corks. Bring your own corks or use supplies that are provided. Registration required (815) 732-2724 or [www.oregonpubliclibrary.com](http://www.oregonpubliclibrary.com)

#### Ink with A Friend Monthly Card Club-Monday, December 16th at 6:00pm

Sending personal cards to your friends and family is a way to let them know you care and are thinking about them. All designs include beautiful colored cardstock, gorgeous designer series paper, detailed stamped images, die cut pieces, matching ink, ribbon, and embellishments. All cards come with matching envelopes. Whether you're a new card maker or a seasoned pro, our kits are suited to every skill level. Don't wait! Sign up today to reserve your spot. Oregon Patrons only. Registration required (815) 732-2724 or [www.oregonpubliclibrary.com](http://www.oregonpubliclibrary.com)

#### Try It Tuesday - Tuesday, December 17 at 1:30pm or 5:30 pm (Choose your time slot)

Salt Shaker Snowman! ALL supplies provided. This is an adult only class, 18 and up. Registration required, please call (815) 732-2724 or visit [www.oregonpubliclibrary.com](http://www.oregonpubliclibrary.com).

#### Little Women: The Musical - Friday, December 20 to Sunday, December 22- An At Home Experience (in collaboration with

*The Angel of Pennsylvania Avenue* (rated PG). Please call 815-234-5107 to register.

#### Creative Studio

Our Creative Studio is open on Sunday afternoons and two evenings a week, so stop by for monthly crafts and to use our maker space equipment! Crafts out on the tables are free of charge, while some other projects will incur a cost depending on materials. Middle school and high school youth can use some of the materials while with

an adult, or during Teen Time. Creative Studio hours: Sunday 1 - 5:00 pm, Monday 9:00 am-1:00 pm & 5 - 8:00 pm, Tuesday 9 am - 1:00 pm & 5 - 8:00 pm, Wednesday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, Thursday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, Friday & Saturday closed.

#### Check out Our Mobile App

Did you know that there is an easy way to use the library from your phone? Just download the Prairie-Cat app to your phone or mobile device and log in

#### December Craft

Welcome in winter with this adorable snowman that can hang anywhere in your house the whole season. Stop by the circulation desk and pick up your kit today.

#### A to Z Reading Challenge

X,Y,Z are all we have left in our A to Z Reading Challenge. Are you feeling challenged finding an "X" title? Stop in for suggestions and browse our display or X,Y,Z titles to get you through the end of the year and through your Reading Challenge list!

#### Toddler/Preschool Storytime

Wednesdays at 10:00 am. Join us every Wednesday, when school is in session, at 10:00 am for

### BroadwayHD)

Louisa May Alcott's classic story of four sisters growing up in 19th-century Massachusetts made its London premiere in this acclaimed production at Park Theatre. Originally presented on Broadway in 2005 starring Sutton Foster, Lydia White and Savannah Stevenson lead a talented cast in this beloved tale of family, self-discovery, and hope.

Little Women at Park Theatre is directed by Bronagh Lagan with set and costume design by Nik Corral, musical direction by Leo Munby, orchestrations by Andy Collyer, choreography by Sarah Golding, lighting design by Ben M. Rogers, sound design by Paul Gavin and casting by Jane Deitch. It is produced by Katy Lipson for Aria Entertainment, Hope Mill Theatre and Knockhardy Productions, in association with Park Theatre, and co-produced by Bonnie Comley and Stewart F. Lane. Little Women has a book by Allan Knee (Finding Neverland, The Astonishing Times of Timothy Cratchit), lyrics by Mindi Dickstein, and music by Grammy Award-winner Jason Howland. ILP is committed to inclusion and accessibility.

#### Lego Club - Monday, December 23 pm at 1 pm (2nd grade & up) (No School)

Get together and spend some recreational time building! There will be a limited number of vintage kit instructions available, so if you make it, you can take it! (First come, first serve) The club is designed to provide an enjoyable activity (FUN) that stimulates and develops spatial intelligence. Registration is required.

#### Functional Fitness - Wednesdays at 9:30am

In this class, we use exercises based on whole-body movements to re-

store posture, improve body mechanics, build strength and endurance, and fine-tune balancing skills. We start with a slow warm-up followed by core exercises - then explore how to utilize these tools based on real situations in daily life. Bring your yoga mat! All levels are welcome. - OREGON PATRONS ONLY - Registration required, this class fills quickly. Please call (815) 732-2724 or visit [www.oregonpubliclibrary.com](http://www.oregonpubliclibrary.com).

#### Knit & Crochet is BACK!! Mondays at 1:00pm

This group meets every Monday at 1 pm and is open to anyone. From beginner to expert, all skill level are welcome to join. Bring any hand craft and work on it while socializing. Need help getting started with your knitting project, stop in on a Monday. Registration is requested, visit <http://www.oregonpubliclibrary.com> or call (815) 732-2724.

#### New-Photo Printer at the library!

The library now has a photo printer capable of printing 4 x 6, 5x7, 8x10, and 8.5 x 11. Stop in on a Tuesday from 9am to 4pm and see what it can print for you!

#### Community Seed Library

Harvesting your garden? Have extra seeds? Donate them to the community seed library. We have seed envelopes for you to fill for our collection. Seeds are FREE for anyone.

#### Oregon Writers Group - meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 10:00am

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

#### Coloring Pages

Don't forget we have new coloring pages each week available for you to choose from. Enjoy a relaxing evening at home as the weather turns to fall.

#### Card Making

Card Making supplies are always available for you to create with. Call ahead for room availability.

#### Plastic Recycling

We ask that you make sure plastic is clean with no debris in the donation. \*No animal feed bags are allowed\* Also please remove any zip-loc-type seals and paper/

we can help suggest ideas or aid with the creative process.

#### New Resource at the Library! EBSCO Databases has arrived!

Do you want to know more about arts and crafts, car repair, starting a business, or planning an estate? Maybe you need to prep for the GED or study for college-entrance exams. Have you ever wished you could research academic topics from home? Oregon Public Library patrons can now find full-text e-resource materials on a variety of topics. Follow the links from our website to access the new EBSCO databases from the library, or login remotely from home with your Oregon Public Library Card. What interests you?

#### Passport Services

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

#### Find A Character Ticket!

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

#### OPLD Dial-A-Story & Oregon Public Library StoryWalk @ Oregon Park West

Call 815-732-2724, follow the prompts and presto...a story! Current story- *Winter's Gift* by Jane Monroe Donovan At the StoryWalk is *If You Take a Mouse to the Movies* by Laura Numeroff.

confirmation when your holds are ready to be picked up. Call us when you arrive at the library, and we will bring your items out to you, already checked out. A receipt with your due dates will be included with your items.

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

#### Curbside Delivery

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*The River King* by Lane Walker

#### Picture Book

*Trust* by Mike Berenstain

#### DVDs

*Inside Out 2* Twisters

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# LOCAL NEWS

## MT. MORRIS PUBLIC LIBRARY

**Cookbook Club Tuesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6pm!**

Come in, choose your recipe, and bring your dish to pass at our next meeting! Meetings held potluck style at the Senior Center at 6pm.

**Mt. Morris Holiday Festivities, Saturday December 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am**

Mount Morris festivities will be starting on December 7<sup>th</sup> with breakfast at the Senior Center! Afterward, bring the kids over to the library to make some holiday crafts to take home! We will have stations set up so that you can drop-in to make one or all of the crafts! Happy Holidays!

**Christmas Decoration Exchange**

Come in the library if you need some decorations this year! We will have a table set up as a donation and pick-up for any and all holiday decorations. Donations of trinkets, baubles, ornaments, tchotchkes, knickknacks, etc. will be accepted or exchanged for new homes. Donations should be in good shape and working order. Thank You!

**Ink with a Friend: Card Making at the Library**

Christmas will be here before we know it and what a great time to make some lovely home-made cards to send to family and friends. We will be offering a card-making class from local crafter, Liz Gullett. She will be here on Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 5pm! You will get all the materials to make two beautiful cards to take home. Stop by to see the samples, \$5 fee when



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

you register. Registration is limited so call the library or stop by to save your spot before December 2<sup>nd</sup>!

**Book Donations Welcome**

Our book sale was such a great success due to all of your wonderful donations! We are accepting donations again for the next book sale! If you have any media you no longer need or want bring them to the Mount Morris Library! We cannot accept textbooks, encyclopedias, Reader's Digest Condensed books, VHS tapes, or audio cassettes.

**Display Case Showings**

We have Christmas in our cases! Stop by to see our beautiful nativity set and the lovely American Girl dolls who are all ready for Santa! We are always looking for collectors or artists who are willing to share their trea-

asures in our display cases. If you are interested, please call, 815-734-4927.

**Explore More Illinois**

Explore More Illinois users can access and reserve passes from any of our attractions on the Mount Morris Library website, [mtmorris-il.org](http://mtmorris-il.org), under the resources page. Visit the website to browse attractions.

**Lions Club Glasses and Hearing Aids Collections**

Donation boxes for eyeglass recycling are available at the library. When the boxes are full, they are picked up by local Lions members and dropped off at collection depots. These recycled eyeglasses are given to people in need, with the help of various medical missionaries, in Central and South America and around the world.

When the eyeglasses arrive in these countries, doctors and technicians conduct eye exams and provide a free pair of prescription eyeglasses that are as close as possible to that person's sight needs. When donating HEARING AIDS, please be sure to place them in a small box or hard-covered case so they do not get crushed or damaged.

**Adult Programming**

We would love to hear from you. Do you have any program ideas? Do evenings or weekends work better? Do you have a program you would like to share/lead? Contact Mary Cheatwood at the library through email at [mmlib@mtmorris-il.org](mailto:mmlib@mtmorris-il.org) or call 815-734-4927.

**Memorial Gifts**

Give a gift that lasts, brings joy to many, and dou-

bles in value. Your memorial gift to the library is matched by the Mt. Morris Library Foundation, doubling your generosity! Many thanks to all who gave memorial gifts in 2023.

**Newspaper Available!**

We will now be receiving the Dixon Telegraph daily! We receive the Ogle County Life, Sauk Valley, and Mt. Morris Times. If you want to keep up with the local news-stop on by!

**Curbside Service is available!**

We want to remind everyone that you still have the option of having your materials delivered to your vehicle. If you have holds waiting for you, call us to tell us you are on your way, and we will bring them out to your vehicle when you arrive. Call us if you need more information.

**Additional Services Offered**

We make copies (\$0.25 per black and white page). We fax (\$2 for the first page and \$0.50 each additional page). We can scan a document and send it to email (\$2 per document). You can use a computer without a library card for \$1.00. Resume software is available on our computers. Come visit us and let us help you!

**Library Board Meetings**

Monthly board meetings are the third Wednesday of the month at 7pm at the library unless otherwise noted. The public is welcome to attend.

The Mount Morris Public Library is located at 105 S. McKendrie Ave. Mt. Morris IL 61054 – 815-734-4927 Fax-815-734-6035 [www.mtmorris-il.org](http://www.mtmorris-il.org)



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

Above at left is co-op watch award winner Aylivia Danekas with presenter Stan Eden. At right are Blackhawk Crossing 4-H Club won Club of the Year. Members pictured left to right: Hunter Kremske, Eli Lotz, Harmony Coy, Adelaide Zimmerman, Raiden Zimmerman, and Immanuel Arellano.

## Ogle County 4-H Achievement Celebration winners named

**OREGON** — Ogle County's top 4-H members and clubs were honored for outstanding achievement at a special program held Sunday, Nov. 17, in the Byron Civic Theatre.

Top county honors went to 4-H teens Aylivia Danekas, Polo, and Nicholas Cassens, Byron. Danekas, Pine Creek Valley 4-H Club, and Cassens, By-Y-Badgers 4-H Club, were the recipients of the Co-op Watch Awards sponsored by Ogle County Farm Bureau and its affiliates. Watches are awarded yearly to the two 4-H'ers with the most impressive records of long-term leadership and service at the club level and beyond.

Bruce Gehrke, Byron, received a \$50 cash award sponsored by the Ogle

County 4-H Foundation. The Foundation Award is presented annually to a single 4-H'er who has shown leadership skills and a willingness to help with 4-H activities. It has also served as a positive example to younger members.

Four youths were challenged to greater leadership and service as the "I Dare You" Leadership Award recipients. New owners of William Danforth's inspiring book, "I Dare You," these youth were selected based on their previous leadership, citizenship, and project work. Winners included: Alayna Doane, Mighty Clovers 4-H Club; Colton Gehrke, By-Y-Badgers 4-H Club; Shelby Harbaugh, Carefree 4-H Club;

and Addison Yordy, Leaf River Busy Beavers 4-H Club.

Other special award winners included:

Outstanding Club President: Aylivia Danekas, Pine Creek Valley and Kaden Lingbeck, Leaf River Soaring Eagles.

Outstanding Club Vice-President: Courtney Bushman, Pine Creek Valley and Grant Johnson, Leaf River Soaring Eagles.

Outstanding Club Secretaries: Haven Marks, Summerhill Huskies and David Wehler, Leaf River Soaring Eagles.

Outstanding Club Treasurers: Isabelle Blumhoff, Pine Creek Valley and Kaeden Motszko, Leaf River Soaring Eagles.

Outstanding Club Historians: Aubrey Kusnierz,

Mighty Clovers and Kaden Lingbeck, Leaf River Soaring Eagles.

Outstanding Club Reporter: Shelby Harbaugh, Carefree.

Ogle County Club Recreation Chairperson: Kayden Barndt, Pine Creek Valley.

Outstanding Club Junior Leaders: Aylivia Danekas, Pine Creek Valley.

Electricity Achievement Award: Cora Herring, Hub Hickory Nuts.

Illinois Holstein-Friesian Association Award: Shelby Harbaugh, Carefree.

Several awards were distributed to community clubs throughout the county for outstanding community service, educational programming, and promotional efforts.

Additionally, one club's leadership team was recognized for their outstanding efforts to work together to effectively meet the needs of and coordinate the work of their club. Congratulations go to all the following club winners:

Window Display Promotion Award: First Place – By-Y-Badgers 4-H Club (Byron). Second Place – Leaf River Soaring Eagles 4-H Club (Leaf River). Third Place – Mighty Clovers 4-H Club (Monroe Center).

Ogle County 4-H Club-of-the-Year: First Place – Blackhawk Crossing 4-H Club (Oregon). Second Place – Mighty Clovers 4-H Club (Stillman Valley). Third Place – Ogle County Clovers 4-H Club (Rochelle).

Top Leader Team Award: Carefree 4-H Club (Oregon): Amanda Harbaugh, Annette Martin, and Wacey Sassaman.

Alumni Award: Sara Blume.

Hall of Fame: Annette Martin.

4-H is an informal youth education program of University of Illinois Extension. For more information or to get involved, call 815/732-2191 or visit us online at <https://extension.illinois.edu/bdo>. This is the best time of year to join!

If you need reasonable accommodations to participate in programming, contact the Ogle County Extension office at 815-732-2191. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your needs.

## Chesney to host IPASS on Demand event in Machesney Park on Dec. 3

**MACHESNEY PARK** — State Sen. Andrew Chesney (R-Freeport) is bringing a mobile team from the Illinois Tollway to Machesney Park on Dec. 3 for an IPASS on Demand event.

"The Tollway is transitioning away from plastic transponders and are replacing them with new

sticker technology," said Chesney. "Rather than having my constituents complete this transaction at the DMV or elsewhere where there may be a fee, I am bringing a mobile team into the 45th District for quick, easy, and free service."

Officials from the Illinois Tollway will be on

hand to help people transfer over to the new sticker technology and ensure people can make the switch without disruption to their IPASS account activity. Along with providing this service, the tollway officials can help people with questions they may have about their IPASS account and with 'Pay by Plate' issues.

Please note that those who attend should jot down their license plate number to ensure quick service.

Once activated, the sticker tag can be used on the Illinois tollway and on E-Z Pass roadways in other states within 24 hours of activation. There is no deposit required for the sticker and the \$10 transponder

deposit that was paid when a transponder was purchased will be transferred to the new account when it is activated. Balances on current transponders will also be transferred over to the sticker account.

Additional IPASS events are scheduled for Dec. 9 in Elizabeth at the Village Hall, and Dec. 16 in Kirk-

land at Resource One Bank.

"These events provide easy access for my constituents to make the switch," added Chesney. "I would encourage motorists to attend the event closest to their home."

For additional information about these free events, please contact Lori at [lyates@sgop.ilga.gov](mailto:lyates@sgop.ilga.gov).

# LOCAL NEWS

## Who to call in a farm crisis? Plenty of resources available

BY PHYLLIS COULTER  
FARMWEEK

**T**HE stress of an illness, injury or tight farm finances is daunting, but there are resources to help.

The resources for farmers in crisis webinar offered by the University of Illinois Agricultural Safety and Health Program and farmdoc on Oct. 15 highlighted a few such services.

### Farm Rescue

Based on the principle of farmers helping farmers, Bill Gross, a UPS pilot who grew up in rural North Dakota, created Farm Rescue, a nonprofit organization.

Today, 600 volunteers in 49 states come to help farmers with equipment or labor in nine Corn Belt states, including Illinois, when a crisis arises, said Terry Johnston, farm rescue development officer.

The injury, illness or death of a farmer, a sick child, a family member

getting cancer treatment or a natural disaster are reasons to call for help, he said.

To nominate someone, to get help or to inquire about volunteering, visit the website farmrescue.org.

### AgrAbility

AgrAbility helps enhance the quality of life for farmers and ranchers with injuries or disabilities, said Haley Jones, Illinois AgrAbility program coordinator with the Illinois Extension. The program helps farmers safely do their work and reduces barriers to continuing with their livelihood.

Farmers or seasonal workers suffering from circumstances as varied as arthritis, a spinal cord injury, a chronic condition, hearing loss, respiratory impairment or an amputation, can qualify for free services.

On request, AgrAbility staff conducts a free on-the-farm assessment and recommends equipment

or assistive devices or provides education to help.

The National AgrAbility Toolbox, a public website, has information on 1,000 tools and devices at [agrability.org/toolbox](http://agrability.org/toolbox).

### Helplines and hotlines

Josie Rudolphi, a University of Illinois occupational and environmental health professor, said resources are available to farmers in a crisis by email, texting or telephone.

The suicide and crisis lifeline at 988 is a hotline. "It is a huge relief that it is a three-digit number now," she said of the easier-to-remember number. People can text, call or chat 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Concern Line, a helpline started by Iowa University Extension during a farm crisis, offers legal, financial and disaster resources at 800-447-1985.

The Farm Aid Farmer Hotline has specific



(PHOTO BY CATRINA RAWSON OF FARMWEEK)

**The stress of an illness, injury or tight farm finances is daunting, but there are resources to help.**

hours of 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. The caller is assigned a specific case worker to help them over time. The contact number is 800-327-6243.

The Illinois Mental Health Voucher Program for Ag Producers allows ag producers and their

families to get free help from a certified mental health professional through the Illinois Extension program. Email Kacie Hulshof for information at [khulshof@illinois.edu](mailto:khulshof@illinois.edu).

This story was distributed through a coop-

erative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit [FarmWeekNow.com](http://FarmWeekNow.com).

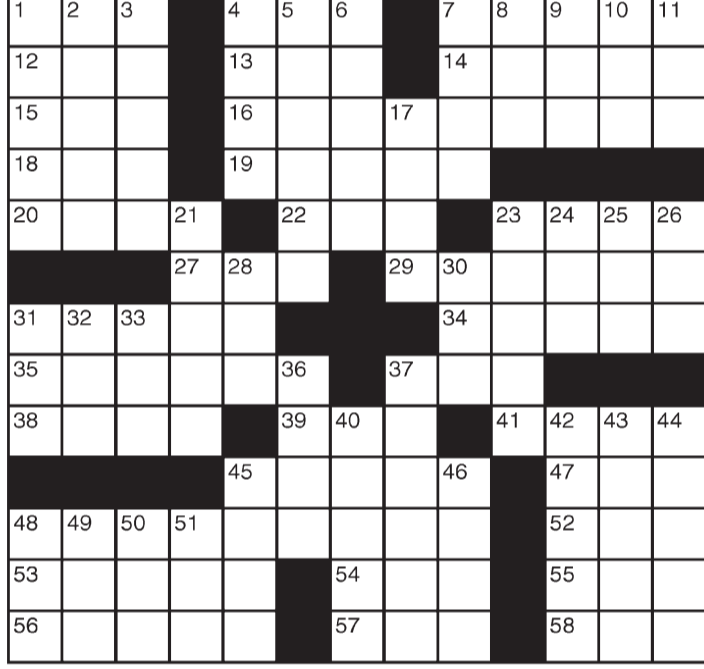
The stress of an illness, injury or tight farm finances is daunting, but there are resources to help.

## Weekly Brain Busters

### King Crossword

#### ACROSS

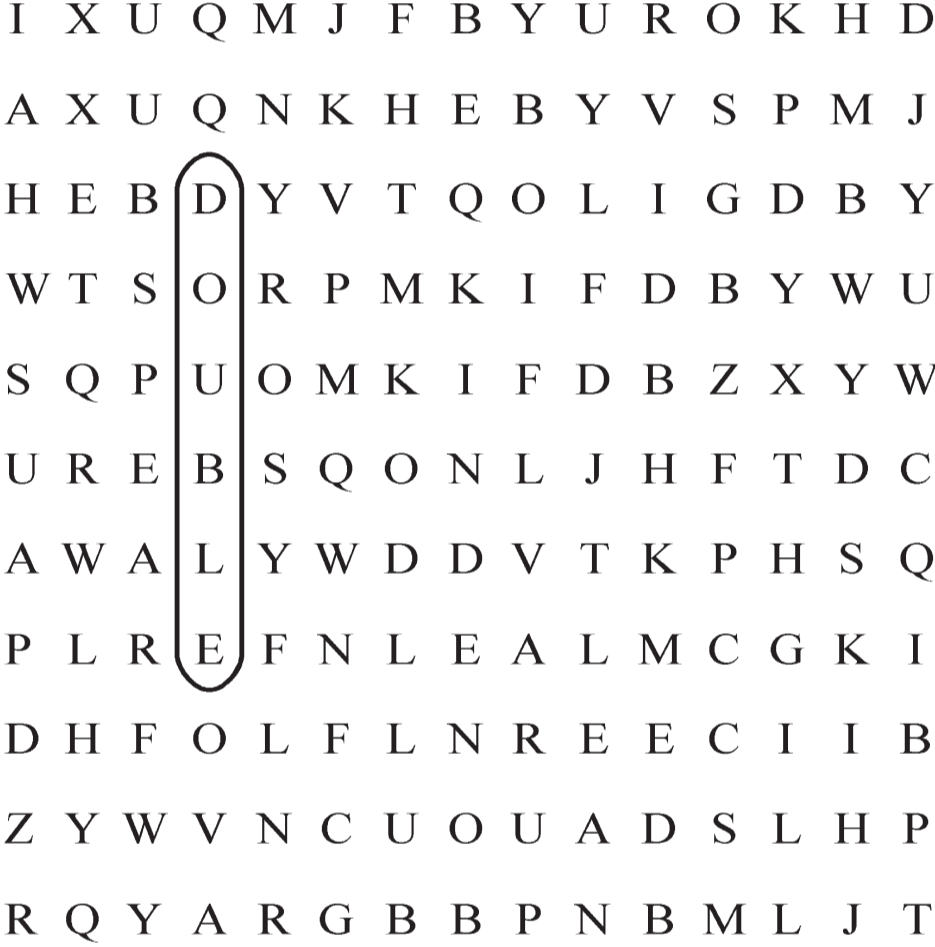
- 1 "Kapow!"
- 4 British ref. work
- 7 Holler
- 12 Director Spike
- 13 Chemical suffix
- 14 Fall sign
- 15 Nest egg acronym
- 16 Large, luxurious car
- 18 Brooch
- 19 Range
- 20 Collections
- 22 — tear (ragging)
- 23 First lady of scat
- 27 Earth Day mo.
- 29 Transparent
- 31 Dolphins' home
- 34 Traces of smoke
- 35 Agile
- 37 Obtained
- 38 Bygone Peruvian
- 39 Flamenco cheer
- 41 Vacillate
- 45 Quick trip
- 47 Shoe width
- 48 Pungent cheese
- 52 Aachen article



- 53 Sports figures?
- 54 Zsa Zsa's sister
- 55 Speck
- 56 Dunkable treat
- 57 River blocker
- 58 Actor Brynner
- 7 Pivot
- 8 That guy's
- 9 Kimono sash
- 10 Samovar
- 11 — kwon do
- 17 Ellipse
- 21 Ballroom dance
- 23 Radiates
- 24 Vinyl records
- 25 Back talk
- 26 Billboards
- 28 Picnic dessert
- 30 — Jima
- 31 Roman 1051
- 32 "There's no — team!"
- 33 "Better Call Saul" network
- 36 Bellow
- 37 Swiss metropolis
- 40 Sledded in the Winter Olympics
- 42 Like a neglected garden
- 43 Vowel group
- 44 Streisand title role
- 45 Equitable
- 46 Streetcar
- 48 Leary's drug
- 49 Jurist Lance
- 50 Fortify
- 51 A/C meas.

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### MAGIC MAZE ● — HEADED



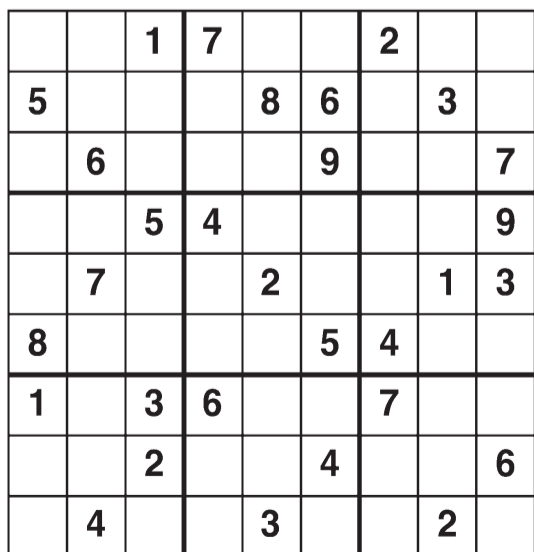
Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: A MALE BOVINE

- Bald
- Clear
- Gray
- Spear
- Bare
- Dead
- Light
- Thick
- Bone
- Double
- Pig
- Wrong
- Buffle
- Empty
- Red

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## Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle



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.

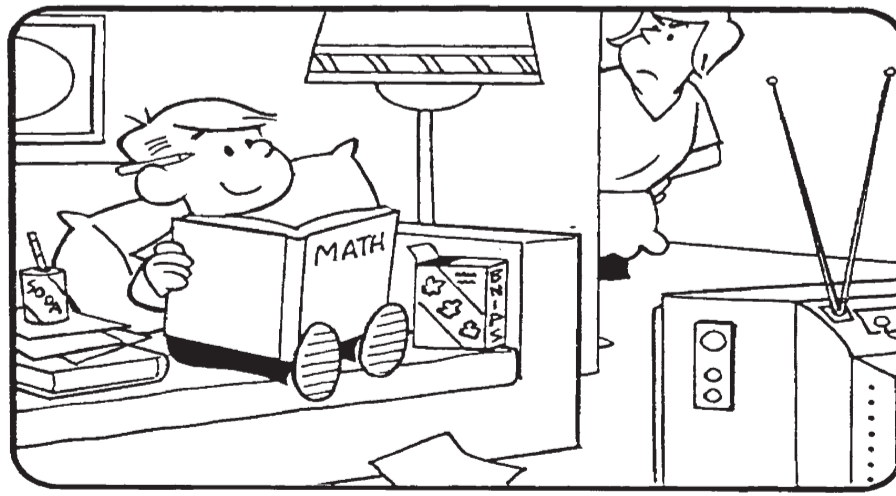
### DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆

- ◆ Moderate
- ◆◆ Challenging
- ◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

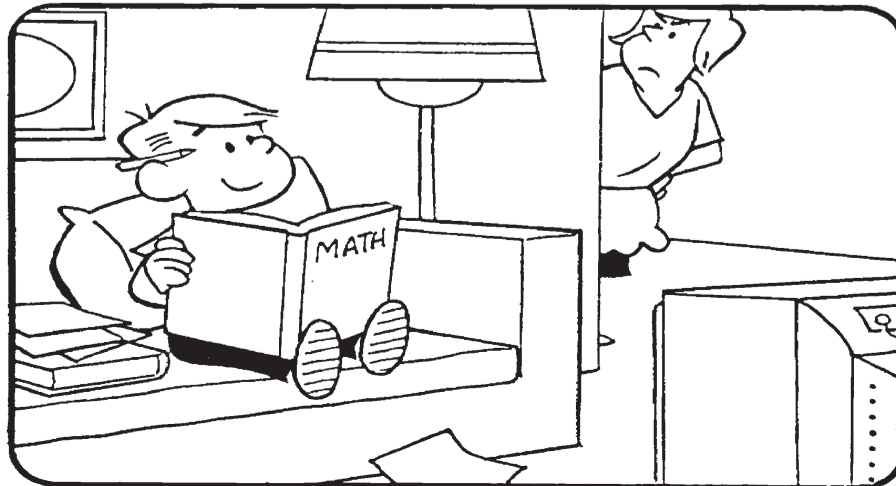
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## HOCUS-FOCUS

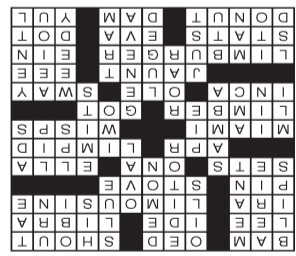
BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



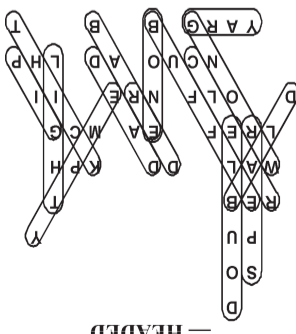
Differences: 1. Can is missing. 2. Pillow is smaller. 3. Lamp shade is different. 4. Box is missing. 5. TV controls are missing. 6. Antenna is missing.



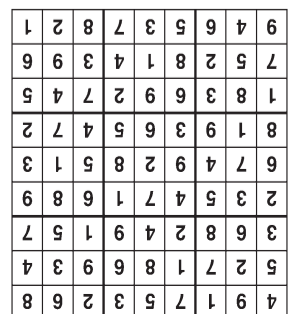
Solution time: 26 mins.

Answers

King Crossword



HEADED



Answer

Weekly SUDOKU



# 9 Biggest Benefits Of Shopping Ogle County First

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

OGLE COUNTY  
**LIFE**  
ROCK VALLEY SHOPPER

# Classified Marketplace

**BUY OR SELL**  
Place A Classified Ad



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**101 LEGAL NOTICE**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Ogle County Educational Cooperative (OCEC) maintains temporary student records on students with disabilities who have received special education services while attending the public schools in Ogle County. These records are maintained at the OCEC central office in Byron. This notice is intended only for those individuals having birth dates during the period of 2000, 2001, and 2002 who have received special education services. OCEC advises as follows: Any temporary student records maintained regarding your special education services will be destroyed effective January 31, 2025. These records may be of assistance to former students and they may request the actual student records, rather than the records being destroyed. Individuals wishing to obtain their temporary records must request such no later than January 15, 2025 at the OCEC offices at 417 N. Colfax St., Byron, IL 61010. The OCEC will continue to maintain electronic permanent records of former students. By Matt Zilm, Director No. 1204 (Dec. 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2024)

**101 LEGAL NOTICE**

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

**105 BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES**

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

**113 FINANCIAL**

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

**119 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

**201 DOMESTIC/CHILD CARE**

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

validity of the license of any facility before placing a child in its care.

**203 HELP WANTED**

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

**301 ANTIQUES**

**ANTIQUES WANTED:** I pay cash for antiques; furniture, glassware, pottery & crocks, tin & iron toys, sterling silver, decoys. If it's antique, I'm interested in looking! Call 815-562-2928 or email dickharms@hotmail.com

**307 MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE**

**BUNDLED Newspaper** -\$3 per Bundle. End Roll- Cost Depends on Weight of Roll. Available Monday-Friday 815-562-4171 (8AM-NOON ONLY) Rochelle News Leader.

**SPLIT Firewood For Sale.** Contact 779-251-0254

**405 HOUSES FOR SALE**

**ALL REAL ESTATE** advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preferences, limitation or discrimination. We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are hereby informed that dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

**501 APARTMENTS FOR RENT**

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

**1 Bedroom Upper Apartment for Rent**  
Stillman Valley, IL  
\$800/Month & NO PETS  
815-988-5831

**511 STORAGE UNITS**

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

**103 AUCTIONS**

**HACKS THANKSGIVING ANTIQUE ONLINE AUCTION BIDDING OPENS:**  
**Wed., Nov. 27th @ 8 A.M.**  
**CLOSES: Sun., Dec. 8th @ 5 P.M.**  
**HACK'S ANTIQUE CENTER II, 440 W. THIRD ST., PECATONICA, IL**  
Featuring Nice Selection Stoneware; Art Pottery; Antiques & Collectibles; Primitives; Railroad Lanterns; Farm Primitives; Native American Rugs-Blankets-Pottery; Advertisement; Artwork; Local Dairy Bottles; Large Christmas Santa Collection; German Feather Tree; Vintage Costume Jewelry; Textiles; Glassware; Musical Instruments; **Much, Much More!**  
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**307 MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE**

**New Milford Refrigeration**  
6331 11th Street | Rockford  
New, Used, Scratch & Dent  
Refrigerators  
Freezers  
Washers/Dryers  
Stoves  
Air Conditioners  
Dehumidifiers  
**815-262-3900**  
We also carry a large selection of refurbished appliances with a warranty.

**Small Business Shopping**  
Dec. 2024  
Turn to Our Shop Local section  
For all your Holiday needs!  
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[ENDFAMILYFIRE.org](http://ENDFAMILYFIRE.org)

ad COUNCIL

Quitting smoking was hard. **Screening for lung cancer is easy.**

If you love them enough to suck the snot out of their nose at 4 a.m., then surely you'll check to make sure they're in the right car seat.

If you smoked, you may still be at risk, but early detection could save your life. Get [SavedByTheScan.org](http://SavedByTheScan.org)

NHTSA.gov/TheRightSeat NHTSA ad

American Lung Association ad COUNCIL

Six out of 10 Americans rely on a local newspaper for advertising information about local businesses.\*

Ask us about the best ways to promote your business to more local homeowners!

\* Source: America's Newspapers



### Math Blocks

Fill in the missing blocks with numbers between 0-20.  
The numbers in each row add up to the totals on the right.  
The numbers in each column add up to the totals on the bottom.

2	14		24
	5		22
6		15	22
18	20	30	

5	1	9
7	5	10
8	14	2

Solution

### Get Scrambled

Unscramble the words to determine the phrase.  
**HRTWO A RYATP**

Answer: Throw a party

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

DECEMBER 6

**1492:** After exploring Cuba for gold, Christopher Columbus lands on an island he names Hispaniola.

**1790:** The U.S. Congress moves from New York City to Philadelphia.

**2006:** NASA reveals photos that suggest liquid water is present on Mars.

### How they say that in...

**English:** Surprise  
**Spanish:** Sorprender  
**Italian:** Sorprendere  
**French:** Surprendre  
**German:** Jmdn eiskalt erwischen

### Get the PICTURE?

Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Photo

### Fun FACT:

This popular party decoration was created in 1824 by Michael Faraday during experiments with various gases.

Answer: Balloon

### NEW WORD

**BASH**  
a party or social event

### CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to senior safety. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 4 = I)

**A. 8 10 17 9 5 12**  
Clue: Caution

**B. 8 9 26 4 22 24 8**  
Clue: Older adults

**C. 10 11 4 26 11**  
Clue: Growing older

**D. 19 22 7 4 17 12**  
Clue: Change or adapt

Answers: A. safety B. seniors C. aging D. modify

### WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to seniors.

**ELHHAT**

--	--	--	--	--	--

Answer: Health

### GUESS WHO?

I am a singer/rapper born in Tennessee on December 4, 1984. As a youth, I got into trouble often and was arrested several times. However, I turned my life around with the help of my music career, which started by selling mixtapes out of my car. I'm now a CMT Music Awards winner for Male Video of the Year.

Answer: Jelly Roll (Jason DeFord)

### SENIOR SAFETY WORD SEARCH

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

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

- ### WORDS
- ASSISTIVE
  - BATHROOM
  - CAREGIVER
  - CHAIR
  - CHORES
  - CUSTODIAL
  - DIRECTIVE
  - FALLING
  - GRAB BARS
  - GUARDIAN
  - HAZARDS
  - HOMEBOUND
  - HOME HEALTH AIDE
  - INDEPENDENCE
  - LIGHTING
  - MEALS
  - MEMORY
  - MOBILITY
  - MONITORED
  - NONSKID
  - REHABILITATION
  - SAFETY
  - SKILLED
  - SLIP



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# LOCAL NEWS

## United States sets ethanol exports record

BY TAMMIE SLOUP  
FARMWEEK

ALREADY the world's top ethanol producer, the U.S. exported a record 1.75 billion gallons from September 2023 to August 2024 — an increase of 43% from the previous marketing year.

And as more countries begin to shift to cleaner energy policies, that trend is expected to continue.

Leading the ethanol demand was Canada, importing 655 million gallons, followed by the United Kingdom at 227 million gallons, India at 171 million gallons, the Netherlands at 97 million gallons and Colombia with 123 million gallons. This total does not include the 140.5 million gallons shipped to Japan in the form of ethyl tert-butyl ether.

"We applaud U.S. farmers and producers for their outstanding efforts in increasing exports this marketing year, and especially to ethanol producers who continue their trajectory of outstanding growth to meet global market demands," said Ryan LeGrand, U.S. Grains Council (USGC) president and CEO.

"While we are all taking time to celebrate the good news from the GIAF (grains in all forms) report, USGC staff members are already well into their work to make marketing year 2024-25 even better for the U.S. agricultural industry and we look forward to continuing to develop markets, enable trade and improve lives

on behalf of U.S. producers."

While the U.S. agricultural trade deficit is expected to balloon to a record \$42.5 billion in fiscal year 2025, ethanol exports remain a bright spot. Export volumes are expected to edge up to a record 2 billion gallons, with a value reaching \$4.3 billion, according to USDA's quarterly trade outlook.

U.S. ethanol is generally more price competitive with Brazilian product, the world's second largest supplier, helping to boost global U.S. sales. U.S. industry continues to supply all imports to Canada, which has become the world's largest ethanol importer. U.S. industry is the top foreign supplier to the EU and the United Kingdom, currently the world's second and third largest ethanol importers. Other important markets, such as India, Colombia, South Korea, the Philippines, Mexico and Peru, are seeing strong-to-record U.S. sales.

The window of arbitrage for U.S. sales to Brazil has remained mostly closed this year due to the 18% tariff on U.S. ethanol imports. And USDA recently announced Brazil has denied requests to remove its tariff on ethanol imports. In a statement, USDA said it's the second time the Tariff Changes Committee of the Chamber of Foreign Trade rejected requests to reduce the ethanol tariff since its implementation.

**Update on small refinery exemptions**



(PHOTO BY CATRINA RAWSON OF FARMWEEK)

The U.S. exported a record 1.75 billion gallons from September 2023 to August 2024, which is an increase of 43% from the previous marketing year.

Both the Renewable Fuels Association and Growth Energy applauded the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision that it will hear arguments for moving small refinery exemption cases to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The Fifth Circuit was an improper venue to

hear challenges on small refinery exemptions under the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) because the Fifth Circuit opinion set up a clear split with several other circuit courts on the question of venue, the organizations wrote in a statement.

"The refining community's abuse of small

refinery exemptions destroys demand for biofuels nationwide, which negatively impacts farmers and bioethanol producers regardless of where they operate," according to the statement. "The economic and environmental impact of this abuse does not recognize state lines. The decision in this case should

strengthen the RFS by giving biofuel producers and their farm partners the certainty they deserve."

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



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