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On behalf of our Holcomb Bank employees & Board of Directors, we would like to wish a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays & Happy New Year to all! May 2025 be filled with health & happiness!

Friday, Dec. 13

Christmas in the Grove

Stop by The First National Bank in Amboy at our Franklin Grove Lobby, 108 N Elm St, 5-7 PM. We'll be serving up cream puffs, hot chocolate, and good cheer!

Saturday, Dec. 14

Amboy's Hometown Christmas

Visit The First National Bank in Amboy at our Amboy Lobby, 220 E Main St, 4-6 PM. Grab a hot chocolate with all the goodies from our hot chocolate bar! Kids can enjoy a craft ornament kit in our craft area.

The First National Bank in Amboy
Amboy • Dixon • Franklin Grove • Monroe Center
815-857-3625 • fnbamboy.com

Wishing You a Happy Holiday Season!

This season is a time of joy, reflection, and gratitude. We are incredibly thankful for the trust and support you show us throughout the year.

OHS wrestlers win Byron tourney

The Oregon High School wrestling team won the Byron F/S Invitational. **Section B**

OGLE COUNTY LIFE

ROCK VALLEY SHOPPER

MONDAY
Dec. 16, 2024

VOLUME 36, ISSUE 40

FREE

Visit www.oglecountylife.com

Ogle County's most widely read weekly newspaper!

Deininger earns IPA honor

Principal Dr. Heidi Deininger earned an IPA award. **Page 2**

WEATHER

<p>MONDAY HIGH LOW 46 36</p>	<p>TUESDAY HIGH LOW 38 25</p>
<p>WEDNESDAY HIGH LOW 33 22</p>	<p>THURSDAY HIGH LOW 35 19</p>

OBITUARIES

- Geraldine Ruth O'Hare Glendenning
- Charles 'Charlie' R. Poper Sr.
- Denis David Anderson
- Lorretta Alma Jean Sigler
- Gerald 'Jerry' D. Knodle
- Virginia Lee Heckerdorn
- Kevin Lee Himes

See pages 3-5

Family of Rochelle man who passed away in October in Alabama seeking answers

John Combs was working as a lineman following Hurricane Helene

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE—Being a lineman was John Combs' dream. After getting into underground utility work, Combs decided he wanted to become a lineman. Before he went to Ohio to American Line Builders Apprentice Training School, he wanted to practice. His father, Chris Combs, recalls how his son climbed a pole at Diamond G Ranch many times before he went off to school. A memorial sign with John's name now adorns that same pole. The Rochelle man passed away at age 24 on Oct. 4 after being struck by a train in Montgomery, Alabama. John was in the south at that time working as a lineman helping with Hurricane Helene recovery efforts in the days beforehand. "That was his dream,"

Chris Combs said. "He was hardworking. He was always in a hurry to grow up. It was almost like he knew his life was going to be short. He never wanted to waste time."

John's passing is shrouded in uncertainty due to missing details from the days that led up to it. And the details that are available don't seem in character for him, Chris Combs said in an interview with the Rochelle News-Leader and Ogle County Life on Dec. 4.

On Sept. 24, John Combs flew to Louisville, Kentucky before driving to Savannah, Georgia to begin storm recovery work, which he did for about a week. On Oct. 2, he was taken to the hospital due to being disoriented, pale and sweaty, Chris Combs said.

"He called me at that time and said, 'I can't put my thoughts together. I really don't know why I'm here or what's going on,'" Chris Combs said. "And then shortly after that he took the IV out of his arm, put his clothes on and walked out of the hospital. And then I guess he started to not feel good again and he went back and he said he didn't remember ever leaving the hospital. And through this whole thing, I'm getting reports of him just being nonrespondent and confused."

John traveled to the Atlanta International Airport on Oct. 3 to fly home. His bag made the trip home, but John did not. Within minutes of getting on the flight, he was removed from the boarding process and airport, Chris Combs said.

"We're told he gave a speech and said, 'You probably all know me

by now, But my name is John Combs. I'm from Rochelle, Illinois. My whole life has been a lie. I'm no good at anything I do,'" Chris Combs said.

The next day, John's location was pinged in Montgomery, Alabama by his brother, Patrick.

See COMBS page 8

(COURTESY PHOTO)

John Combs took care of cattle growing up. He spent a lot of time at Diamond G Ranch and got involved with horses and working on farms. He built motorcycles and worked on cars and trucks.

Shining Star CAC sees overwhelming response to holiday season pajama drive

'I think... it shows how much the community does care about kids'

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

DIXON—Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center recently wrapped up its holiday season pajama drive that saw an overwhelming response from the community.

The Dixon-based nonprofit organization serves Ogle and Lee counties and works with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and law enforcement when there are issues of physical and sexual abuse of children. Shining Star has its own location where children can be interviewed in a warm environment by trained staff. It also provides counseling, court advocacy, community resources and more.

The pajama drive ran from September through early December and the community helped Shining Star to provide new, cozy pajamas to local child abuse survivors. Shining Star Executive Director Jessica Cash said her organization saw the need through the work it does with kids and families.

"We hear from a lot of families that regular clothes are so expensive that they can't afford pajamas," Cash said. "We thought this would be a fun way to be able to get kids pajamas and give them something comfortable to sleep in. We received about seven times as many donations as we expected. We're going to give them out when kids come for forensic interviews. We're going to give them to kids we've seen over the past few months and kids that come in over the next year. We have plenty of pajamas to share with all of them. One thing we always stress to parents is the importance of sleep to kids' mental health."

See SHINING STAR page 7

Helping kids when they need it most

(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center recently wrapped up its holiday season pajama drive that saw an overwhelming response from the community.

LOCAL NEWS

OJSHS's Deininger named IPA High School Principal of the Year for region

OREGON – Oregon Community Unit School District 220 proudly announces that Dr. Heidi Deininger, principal of Oregon Junior/Senior High School, has been named the Illinois Principals Association (IPA) Northwest Region High School Principal of the Year. This prestigious honor recognizes Dr. Deininger's outstanding leadership and her unwavering dedication to the students, staff, and community of OJSHS.

Dr. Deininger's selection as the NW Region representative reflects her transformative leadership. During her tenure, Oregon Junior/Senior High School has achieved notable academic growth and expanded opportunities for students, including a significant increase in Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual Credit offerings, equipping students for success beyond high school.

Key highlights of Dr. Deininger's tenure include:

AP Expansion: The number of AP courses has more than doubled under

her leadership. New additions include AP Studio Art (2023-24), AP Pre-Calculus (2023-24), AP Biology (2019-2020), AP Statistics (2020-21), and AP Language and Composition (2024-25).

College Readiness: OJSHS students benefit from a robust Dual Credit program in partnership with local colleges, allowing them to earn college credits while still in high school.

Academic Excellence: Oregon Junior/Senior High School consistently

ranks among the top-performing schools in Ogle County across multiple grade levels.

As the IPA NW Region High School Principal of the Year, she will represent the region at the statewide level, competing for Illinois High School Principal of the Year. Dr. Deininger will be recognized at next year's Illinois Principals Association Conference, featured on the IPA website and newsletter, and celebrated at an upcoming Oregon CUSD 220 Board of Education meeting,

where she will receive a framed certificate from the IPA Board.

Superintendent PJ Caposey expressed his admiration, stating, "Dr. Deininger's leadership has not only elevated our school's academic standards but has also fostered an environment where students and staff thrive. This recognition is well-deserved, and we are thrilled to see her contributions honored at this level."

Please join Oregon CUSD 220 in congratulating Dr. Deininger on this



Dr. Heidi Deininger

outstanding achievement and in celebrating her dedication to excellence in education.

Monroe Township Fire announces daytime staffing to enhance fire and EMS coverage

MONROE CENTER – Monroe Township Fire Chief Scott Jaeger recently announced a significant operational enhancement for the Monroe Township Fire Protection District. Beginning Jan. 6, 2025, the station will implement daytime staffing for fire and EMS incidents during the hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Monday,

Wednesday, and Friday, with plans to expand to seven-day coverage in the future.

This strategic move aims to improve emergency response times and better serve residents during peak activity hours. The new staffing model addresses the challenges posed by an increasing number of calls for

service during working hours when many of our paid-on-call members are unavailable due to their career commitments. The following are the first daytime employees of the Monroe Township Fire Protection District: Deputy Chief Richard Wilson, Tiffany Zielinski, Niki Ritacco, Tyler Gorsegner and Tyler Kilcullen.

These team members will be responsible for daily station activities and will immediately respond to emergencies as needed.

To further enhance community safety and wellness, the district will also launch the following initiatives:

Be Alarmed! Smoke Detector Installation Program – Providing residents with complimentary smoke detectors and installations by partnering with the Illinois Fire Safety Alliance and the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

In-home blood pressure checks – Offering convenient health screenings for residents on the dates crews are at the station.

File of Life – setting up medical information in a standard location within the resident's home. This aids the EMS crews in collecting important information during emergencies that family members have a hard time recalling/locating for the EMS crews.

To learn more or schedule these services, please contact Wilson via email at Deputychief@mtfpd.net.

The Monroe Town-



Tyler Gorsegner



Tyler Kilcullen



Niki Ritacco



Richard Wilson



Tiffany Zielinski

ship Fire Protection District transitioned from an all-volunteer fire department to a paid-on-call model approximately 15 years ago. This latest operational upgrade underscores the district's dedication to evolving with the community's needs and ensuring dependable, prompt emergency services.

"This change is about preparedness and provid-

ing our residents with the peace of mind that comes with knowing help is readily available," Jaeger said. "We're excited to take this next step in better serving our community."

For further updates, follow the Monroe Township Fire Protection District on Facebook, Monroe Township Fire Protection District.

HAPPY RETIREMENT!

We extend our congratulations to
Karen Stevens
as she retires after almost 20 years with Stillman Bank & 50 years in banking!



Karen is a lifelong banker, having spent 50 years in the financial services industry. Karen currently serves as Credit Operations Officer, responsible for consumer, commercial, and agricultural loan processing. After almost 20 years of service, she will be retiring at the end of the year.

If you would like to send well wishes to Karen, please feel free to drop off a card at any of our locations or mail to
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Stillman Valley, IL 61084

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\$189,900 dickersonnieman.com/202406763

EXPANSIVE TRI-LEVEL IN THE HEART OF OREGON! This 5 bed, 3 full bath tri-level is located in a mature subdivision just outside of the city limits. Ample updates. Newer appliances, new roof, new bedroom flooring, updated LL full bath, 2 primary bedrooms, and so much more. The dining room slider goes directly out to a sitting area on the deck with pergola and mounted TV. Attached 2.5 car garage.

TIFFANY CRAVATTA
(815) 988-4388

240 S. West Street, Byron



PENDING!

\$460,000 dickersonnieman.com/202405991

RIVERFRONT PROPERTY IN BYRON! This custom 4 bed, 4.5 bath ranch features over 5,000 SF of well maintained living space. Gleaming hardwood floors throughout ML. Kitchen boasts deep cabinets, appliance garage, SS appliances, butler pantry w/wet bar & granite counter top. GR with access to porch overlooking river. Master suite w/ 2 walk-in closets, private bath, & balcony access.

JAVEN RANDS
(779) 207-5256

3040 Broadway, Rockford



PENDING!

\$114,900 dickersonnieman.com/202405432

EXPANSIVE ALL BRICK BEAUTY IN THE HEART OF ROCKFORD! This 2 bedroom home has a walk-up attic and partially finished basement with endless possibilities. Could potentially be 5 full bedrooms or an apartment for separate living. The basement has a partial kitchen and functioning wood burner to heat the house. Large open space, beautiful hardwood floors. MUST SEE!

TIFFANY CRAVATTA
(815) 988-4388



DOROTHY BOWERS
(815) 985-3264



LYRAH AUSTIN-BUSHNELL
(815) 218-0059



TIFFANY CRAVATTA
(815) 988-4388



RANDY CRIDDLE
(815) 871-4004



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KAYLA HESLOP
(815) 222-9771



SEAN HOSSEINI
(815) 200-8490



MAYDELL LESSEN
(815) 622-4619



CHRIS SNYDER
(815) 494-7857



TANYA VINCER
(815) 703-6118

LOCAL NEWS

Obituaries

Geraldine Ruth O'Hare Glendenning

STILLMANVALLEY —Geraldine Ruth O'Hare Glendenning leaves her thoughts....

On Wednesday, December 4, 2024, I heard my name and followed the voice of my Shepherd. I was born on February 29, 1940, to Ruth and Arthur O'Hare of Polo, Illinois. My youth was spent in the town of Polo. I attended one of the last one-room school-houses and graduated from Polo High School. I obtained my beautician's license, worked in Rockford and married Floyd Glendenning, a Stillman Valley farm boy, on March 23, 1962. I settled beside this charming young man and supported him in our wonderful farming life. My Floyd and I shared 43 wonderful years together! From that union, my three children were born to me, each on a Sunday.

Entrusted to me are my two beloved sons, Todd and Brett, and my precious daughter, Corinne. They brought the love of their lives into our family and enlarged my heart by gift-ing me with twelve grand-children. To Julie, Beth and Pete: in you, I attained the role that brought me to the very heart of Christ, That of a Mother-in-Law. My beloved grandchildren are Jessica, Jade, Paige, Austin, Ben, Hope, Tatum, Camille, Lauren, Will, and Tristan. You know you have been prayed for your entire lifetime by your Grandmother - held high and in sight of the

Throne. In my later years, I have been blessed with ten great-grandchildren whose visits and hugs fill my heart with joy. Evan, Harper, Hayden, Henry, Lyla, James, Charles, Ira, Owen and Annie. May this family I leave behind always be a blessing and a light to the world as I pass this torch now to you.

I now join those who have gone before me - my Floyd, my precious granddaughter Kayla and my sweet daughter-in-law Julie; my brother Tom; brother-in-law Bruce; cousin Rae; my parents; and my beloved Grandma. Aunties Jo and Maggie, and Sweet Rosalind and Les. I look forward to our eternity together. Thank you for impacting my life with your wonderful heritage.

I leave behind my three beloved children, Todd, Brett and Corinne, their spouses, eleven grandchil-dren and ten great-grand-children. In addition, my sister, Patricia and many nephews and nieces whose tender loving care made a difference in my life.

I write this not to glorify or make known my accomplishments on this earth, for all I ever cared about were the titles of Daughter, Sister, Wife, Mother, Aunt, Grandmother, and friend. Through my death, I ask that the mystery of my creation and being His child be glorified. My life has been the absolute, most amazing proof that Christ has lived, walked,



talked and loved through the smallness of man known such as myself.

The family would like to extend their heartfelt thanks for the love, care, and visits from dear friends over the years on Rote Road. We are especially grateful for the unwavering devotion of Dawn, our mother's loyal friend and caregiver for the past 14 years. With Dawn's support, Mom was able to continue enjoying the activities she cherished most, and for that, we will be forever thankful.

Cremation has taken place, and a private burial service will be held at the Mouth of Stillman Ceme-tery. A Memorial Service to honor a life filled with love and purpose will take place at 10:00 am on Sat-urday, February 15, 2025, at Kishwaukee Community Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Stillman Valley, Illinois, with a time of fel-lowship and refreshments to follow. In place of flowers, the family has es-tablished a memorial fund for the Mouth of Stillman Cemetery and the Rockford Rescue Mission. Visit www.farrellhollandgale.com to leave a condolence or memory of Geraldine.

Kevin Lee Himes

BYRON — Kevin Lee Himes, age 67, of Byron passed away suddenly at Swedish American Hospital on December 9, 2024. He was born in Rockford on April 15, 1957 the son of Rolland and Lois (Palmer) Himes.

Kevin was a life long resident of Byron, IL. He drove semi-trucks for many years; even hauling over the road. Kevin was a heavy equipment oper-ator/engineer for over 20 years. His latest job for the past few years was working for Wyiatt Ackerson Landscaping doing lawncare work. He loved the work but especially loved Wyiatt who he considered his son. Kevin loved his hors-es which he won many awards for showing them. He enjoyed being on the river on his pontoon boat. Kevin loved drinking his beer especially with his best friend and cousin

Chris Palmer. He never missed a family gathering as family meant every-thing to him. He loved his family just as much as they loved him and he will truly be missed by them all.

Survived by his sister Cindy Himes of Still-man Valley; brother Ron (Rhonda) Himes of Ros-coe; special nieces, Erin Matheson of Orlando, FL and Melissa (Chris) Kreamske of Lake Charles, LA; longtime girlfriend, Kelly Ackerson and her children Wiatt, Richard, and Shianne; and many other nieces, nephews, cousins, and aunts who he loved with all his heart.

Preceded in death by his parents, Rolland E. and Lois L. Himes, sis-ter, Kimberly A. Himes, grandparents Evelene and Hank Palmer and Mary and Clay Himes.

Rest in peace Kev. You were always there for me.



You were my rock. Love you forever, Cindy.

A memorial service celebrating his well lived life will be held at Farrell Holland Gale Funeral Home in Byron at 2:00 PM on Saturday, Decem-ber 21, 2024 with Pastor Randy Snider officiating. Visitation will be held from 12:00 – 2:00 PM prior to the service. As requested by Kevin there will be no luncheon fol-lowing as he wants every-one to go to 2nd Chances in Byron and have a beer for him.

Memorials are estab-lished in his name.

DIRECTORY OF AREA HUMAN SERVICES

Alcohol Abuse Counseling & Recovery

A.A. Hotline **800-452-7990**
Sinnissippi Centers, Inc.
Oregon **732-3157**
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
200 W Washington, Oregon **732-1301**

Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County

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

Mental Health

Family Counseling Services **962-5585**
Sinnissippi Centers, Inc.
Oregon **732-3157**
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
24-hour hotline **636-9811**
412 W Washington, Oregon **732-0000**

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
907 Pines Rd, Oregon **562-6976**
510 Lincoln Hwy, Rochelle **562-6976**
Serenity Hospice and Home **732-2499**



SV National Honor Society holds Thanksgiving food drive

The Stillman Valley National Honor Society recently held a Thanksgiving food drive. Students at the school were challenged to bring in nonperishable food items for a school challenge and NHS members collected food and monetary donations at local stores. Members delivered boxes of food and a donation of over \$400 to the Bread of Life Food Pantry in Stillman Valley. Thank you to all that helped make the drive a success. (Courtesy photo)

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LOCAL NEWS

Obituaries

Denis David Anderson

ROCKFORD — It is with great sorrow that the family of Denis David Anderson, 81, of Loves Park shares that he passed away at his home on Thursday, November 21, 2024, following a brief but valiant battle with cancer.

Denis was born May 13, 1943, in San Antonio, TX, the son of Walter C. and Alice Genniel (Carpenter) Anderson. Following his father's stint in the Army Air Corps at Kelly Field, the young family returned home to Northern Illinois, eventually settling on the family farm just west of Oregon, IL. Denis grew up on the farm. He was a voracious reader, pushed himself in academics, and explored fine arts, culture, and classical music and jazz as opportunities presented themselves. He attended Oregon schools, graduated as Salutatorian of Oregon Community High School Class of 1961. He then went on to the University of Illinois for both undergraduate and graduate work, attaining his degree as Doctor of Dental Surgery.

Denis's lifetime of service began soon after. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy as a Lieutenant, and also held the rank of Sergeant when assigned to Marine battalions. He was stationed at Coronado Naval Base; San Diego, CA; Camp Hanson, Kin, Okinawa; and a remote Marine Camp in Japan during the Vietnam conflict serving as a dentist. He continued to serve in the Reserves for several years thereafter.

After his time in the Navy, Denis returned to Northern Illinois to join Dr. Wilson at his dental practice in Rochelle, IL before opening his own dental practice. During the years he practiced dentistry, he forged a dedicated and talented team of hygienists, dental assistants, and office staff who became a close "work family" with Denis serving patients in Rochelle and the surrounding

region over the decades. The team began with Jill Shaneberg, who came aboard just weeks after the "young new dentist" arrived in town, and Jill continued as a valued leader on the office team for decades. Dr. Anderson and his staff were held in high regard for their care and professionalism. Denis continued to study to increase his understanding of best practice and excellence in the art of dentistry, attending continuing education at The Pankey Institute for the duration of his career. He also was a member and former president of the Winnebago County Dental Society. He retired after serving his patients and community after 45 years.

His two sons, Stephen Andrew Anderson and Nicholas David Anderson, were born during the first few years after Denis moved to Rochelle. Denis exhibited a great deal of courage and fortitude, leaning on his faith, when he experienced the great tragedy of the death of his young son, Nicholas, who succumbed to cystic fibrosis at the age of 15 months in July, 1978.

Denis found great joy and a lifetime of happiness when he met and married his true love, Barbara Hurtt LaFayette. They wed on August 5, 1994, and enjoyed a wonderful life, blending their families together. They celebrated their 30th anniversary in August of 2024.

He was a long time active member of Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Rockford, serving on many committees, including the Vestry, and a long time member of the church choir. He was a Rotarian and participated with many civic groups and charitable organizations.

Denis lived a life of service dedicated to his country, his community, and his family. He was loved by many — known for his generosity, kindness, and good nature, and



also known as "Smiley" in high school and for his unassuming humility. He was grateful to his last day.

Denis is survived by: beloved wife, Barbara; son, Stephen (Taryn) Anderson of Oak Lawn, IL; Stepdaughters: Amy (Thomas) MacAdam of Colorado Springs, CO; Adriana (Michael) Plocinski of Batavia, IL; Stepson: Garrett (Amber) LaFayette of Cottage Grove, WI. Sisters: Eve (James) Leather of Stillman Valley, IL; and Beth Anderson-Hall of Oregon, IL. Grandchildren: Nicholas Anthony. Step Grandchildren: Quinn MacAdam; Jake (Megan) MacAdam; Charlie (Annie) MacAdam; Marina MacAdam; Elena MacAdam; Adele LaFayette; Aurelie LaFayette; Tyler Plocinski; Lucas Plocinski; Colton Plocinski. Step Great Grandchildren: Brecken MacAdam; Shiloh MacAdam. Niece: Andee Leather. Nephews: Mark Leather; Zach Hall. Denis became a surrogate father and beloved mentor to Zach during his formative years. Predeceased by his parents; son: Nicholas D. Anderson; niece: Kristine Leather Paris; and mother of Stephen and Nicolas: Patricia Whitby Anderson.

A Funeral Service will be on Saturday, November 30, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. at Emmanuel Episcopal Church, 412 North Church Street, Rockford, IL 61103. A visitation will be prior to the service starting at 10:00 a.m. Private family burial will be held. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to St. Brides Episcopal Church, Oregon, IL or Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Rockford, IL.

Virginia Lee Heckendorn

OREGON — Virginia Lee Heckendorn, age 85, passed on December 4, 2024 in her home in Oregon, IL. Virginia was born to Hans and Bodil Balle on November 5, 1939 in Rockford, IL. She grew up in Byron, IL and graduated from Byron High School. Later she went on to hair dresser school and established a successful beauty salon in Byron, which she maintained until her retirement. She married James Heckendorn January 27, 1991 in Oregon, IL.

She was an accomplished roller skater in her youth and enjoyed cooking and making elaborate quilts. Virginia was a beautiful woman, inside and out. She had a vivacious and loving personality that made sharing her company a joy. She is survived by her son, Jeffrey Cates, grandsons Soren and Eric Cates, and step-daughter Lynda Gernat. She was preceded in death by her parents Hans and Bodil Balle, her son Gregory Cates, her sister, Janet Weeks and her hus-

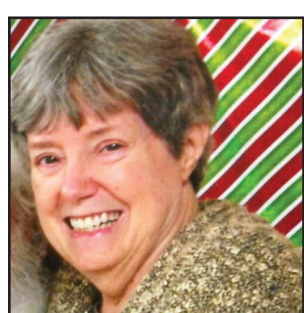


band James Heckendorn. Visitation will be held at the Farrell-Holland-Gale Funeral Home in Byron, IL on December 14th from 1 to 3 pm. Memorials may be made to the Leukemia Research Foundation.

Lorretta Alma Jean Sigler

OREGON — Lorretta Alma Jean Sigler, age 81, passed away on December 5, 2024, at Serenity Hospice and Home in Oregon, IL. She was born in St. Louis, MO on December 27, 1942. She married the love of her life, William "Bill" Sigler, Sr. in Farmington, MO on August 5, 1961, and they built a beautiful life together until he passed away on November 17, 2020. Lorretta was a woman of faith and loved being an involved member of Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church in Dixon. Her family was her entire world, and she loved being a mother, grandmother and great grandmother. She had a caring heart and was a caretaker for her daughter Tammy until her passing on April 4, 2020. Caring for Tammy helped her find her passion for people with special needs and she spent many hours volunteering and working for The Village of Progress and the Special Olympics

in the Chicago area. She was a friend to everyone and enjoyed her time with her Village Retirement Luncheon Group. In her spare time, she would spend hours reading and enjoying her family. She is preceded in death by her parents, Melvin and Florence (Hutchinson) Bone, husband William Sigler, Sr, daughter, Tammy Rae Sigler, and siblings, George Bone, Barbara Blevins, Jane Bates and Shirley Verdin. She is survived and missed by her children, Gwendolyn (Rob) Zimmerman of Oregon and William (Julie) Sigler, Jr. of Milwaukee; grandchildren, Candice Smidt, Michael (Samantha) Smidt, and Lindsey (Samuel) Gendusa all of Oregon; great grandsons, Dean Anthony Gendusa, Logan Michael Gendusa, and Parker William Smidt; brothers, Jim (Eileen) Bone of WA and Billy Hutchinson of Farmington, MO; cousin, Phillip (Barbara) Bone of



Farmington, MO; special friends, Samantha Dopke, Joy Holden, and Donna Mattison; and many other loved ones and friends. A celebration of her well lived life will be held at 11:00 AM on Saturday, December 14, 2024, at Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church in Dixon, IL with Pastor Andermann officiating. Visitation will be held prior to the service beginning at 10:00 AM. Burial will be at Daysville Cemetery in Oregon. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in Lorretta's name may be made to Village of Progress Attendants' Grant. To leave an online condolence please visit www.farrellholland-gale.com

Gerald 'Jerry' D. Knodle

MT. MORRIS — Gerald "Jerry" D. Knodle, age 91, passed away suddenly on Tuesday December 10, 2024 in KSB Hospital, Dixon, IL. Jerry was born on March 8, 1933 in Rockford, IL the son of Harold M. & Mamie P. (Henderson) Knodle. He graduated from Mt. Morris High School class of 1951. Jerry received his BS degree from Northern Illinois University. He served in the US Navy from 1952 to 1956.

Jerry married Anne Belrose on June 14, 1959 in First Methodist Church, Aurora, IL.

Jerry worked in public relations for Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Illinois for 16 years, and he also worked for Lederle Laboratories and Rockford Anesthesiology. He was the past Master and Secretary for the Samuel H. Davis Masonic Lodge for 50 years, American Legion, and he was a village trustee, served on board of the Mt. Morris Fire and

Ambulance, and presently serving on the Mt. Morris Library Board. He was a member of the Mt. Morris Disciples United Methodist, where he held many positions of leadership and was a long time member of the choir. He loved gardening, traveling, and spending time with family.

He loved his Wednesday coffee at the Senior Center. He was a Chicago sports fan through and through.

Jerry is survived by his Wife: Anne, Mt. Morris, IL; children: Kris (John) Mueller, Stillman Valley, IL, Jeff Knodle, Hoffman Estates, IL, Kara (Rodd) Rosenthal, Colgate, WI; 9 grandchildren: Jeremy (Jodi) Mueller, Shaun (Laura) Mueller, Robert Mueller, Andy Knodle, Justin Knodle, Stephen Knodle, Amy Knodle, Stuart Rosenthal, and Emma Rosenthal; 4 great grandchildren: Trevor, Carter, Rowan, and Silas Mueller; sister in law: Darlene Knodle; cousins, and several nieces and nephews.



Jerry is preceded in death by his parents; brother: Richard D. Knodle; granddaughter: Jennifer Mueller.

Memorial services will be held on Saturday December 14, 2024 at 11:00 A.M. in Disciples United Methodist Church, Mt. Morris with Pastor Marcia Peddicord officiating. Burial of cremains will be held in Plainview Cemetery, Mt. Morris, IL. A visitation will be held on Saturday December 14, 2024 from 10:00 A.M. until service time.

Memorials to Mt. Morris Senior Center, Mt. Morris Fire Foundation, NFP, and /or Mt. Morris Disciples United Methodist Church.

Locals graduate from UW-Milwaukee

MILWAUKEE, Wis. — Two students from the area are among the 1,340 prospective candidates for degree attending University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

commencement exercises Sunday, Dec. 15 in Milwaukee.

They include Byron's Madelyn Vavra (School of Rehabilitation

Science & Technology, Master of Science) and Davis Junction's Carolyn Ptaszek (School of Rehabilitation Science & Technology, Master of Science).

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LOCAL NEWS

Obituaries

Charles ‘Charlie’ R. Poper Sr.

POLO — Charles “Charlie” R. Poper Sr., 82, of Polo, passed away Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at his home surrounded by family.

Charlie was born, October 24, 1942, in Dekalb, IL, the son of Richard W. and Shirley A. (Clausen) Poper. On November 2, 1968 in Polo, he married Ms. Linda Reed. Charlie was a veteran of the US Army and retired from

Woods Equipment in Oregon, IL after over 38 years. He loved his family dearly and his granddaughter Lindee was the light of his life. Charlie enjoyed watching the Chicago Bears, playing golf, making and regripping golf clubs or playing cards with his friends.

Survivors include his wife Linda; son Charles (Lisa Cassens) Poper Jr. of Polo, IL; granddaugh-

ter Lindee Poper of Polo, IL; sisters Shirley Kay Miller of Oregon, IL and Janis Poper of Tampa, FL; Nieces and Nephews.

He was preceded in death by a sister Ann Lansing and brother John Poper.

At the families request cremation rites have been accorded.

Visit www.polofamily-funeralhome.com to send condolences.

OGLE COUNTY SHERIFF’S REPORT

OREGON — On Dec. 2 at approximately 12:39 a.m. deputies initiated a traffic stop in the 7,000 block of South Lowell Park Road. After further investigation Brian Cash, 61, of Oregon, was placed under arrest for driving while license suspended, possession of a controlled substance - cocaine, possession with intent to deliver a controlled substance, and possession of drug paraphernalia. Cash was also cited for illegal transportation of alcohol. Cash was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was released on a notice to appear.

as a Lee County warrant for larceny, and an Jackson County, Missouri warrant for damage to property/business. Both Lowery and Morris were transported to the Ogle County Jail. Lowery was released on a notice to appear. Morris was released on a notice to appear on his Ogle County charge, and detained on the Lee County and Jackson County, Missouri warrant.

gation, deputies placed Dalton Haenitsch, 29, of Polo under arrest for an active Whiteside County warrant for obstructing a court order and an active Lee County warrant for contempt of court. Haenitsch was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was held in lieu of bond.

On Dec. 3 at approximately 6:26 a.m. deputies responded to the area of Illinois Route 251 and East Twombly Road for a two-vehicle accident with injuries. After a brief investigation, deputies discovered that Stephen D. King, 34, of Hillcrest, was stopped on Illinois Route 251 in his gray Hyundai passenger car, attempting to turn onto East Twombly road, when Garret M. Hegland, 30, of Rochelle, struck the rear bumper of King’s vehicle in his black Nissan Sentra. King was transported to Rochelle Community Hospital by Rochelle EMS for suspected minor injuries. Hegland was issued a citation for failure to reduce speed to avoid an accident.

On Dec. 4 at approximately 6:40 p.m. deputies conducted a warrant service in the 11,000 block of East Lincoln Lane in Rochelle. After a brief investigation, deputies arrested Matthew C. Bearrows, 44, of Rochelle, on an outstanding Ogle County warrant for failure to appear - aggravated battery to a peace officer. Bearrows was transported to the Ogle County Jail and held in lieu of bond.

On Dec. 7 at approximately 8:32 a.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 200 block of South Illinois Route 2. After investigation, deputies placed Kurtis Crabb, 31, of Rockford under arrest for driving while license revoked. Crabb was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was released on a notice to appear and given a future court date.

On Dec. 4 at approximately 6:20 a.m. deputies responded to a two-vehicle accident at the intersection of Illinois Route 52 and Freeport Road. It was initially reported with unknown injuries. After an investigation by deputies it was determined that a maroon Chevrolet Impala being driven by Eli D. Smith, 22, of DuRand, was southbound on Freeport Road and failed to yield right of way to a White GMC pick-up that was eastbound on Illinois Route 52 and being driven by Michael A. Hinrichs, 66, of Lanark. The Impala entered the roadway and struck the GMC. Smith was cited for failure to yield the right of way at an intersection. All individuals involved in the incident refused medical attention at the scene.

On Dec. 5 at 3:07 p.m. the Ogle County Sheriff’s Office responded to a rural Rochelle address in regard to a domestic disturbance. Upon arrival, an investigation was completed and Jacob A. Fore, 24, of Rochelle, was arrested for domestic battery. He was transported to the Ogle County Jail and detained pending a court appearance.

On Dec. 7 at approximately 5:55 p.m. deputies responded to the intersection of North German Church Road and East Pleasant Grove Road for a two-vehicle accident. After a brief investigation, deputies discovered that Joshua D. Eddy, 48, of Rockford, was driving eastbound on East Pleasant Grove Road. Eddy disregarded the stop sign on East Pleasant Grove Road and struck the northbound on North German Church Road pickup truck on the driver’s side. The pickup truck was driven by Jacob R. Kass, 25, of Ashton. Eddy was transported by Oregon EMS to KSB Hospital for suspected minor injuries. Eddy was issued citations for failure to reduce speed to avoid an accident, disregarding an official traffic control device and operating a motor vehicle without insurance.

On Dec. 4 at 9:12 a.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 8,000 block of South Illinois Route 2. As a result, deputies arrested Kimberly B. Lowery, 39, of Morrison for driving while license revoked. Lowery was additionally issued citations for operating an uninsured motor vehicle and operating a motor vehicle with a suspended registration. A passenger, Tyler A. Morris, 26, of Rock Falls, was arrested for possession of methamphetamine less than five grams, as well

On Dec. 5 at 4:41 p.m. deputies were notified of a two-vehicle crash at South Woodlawn Road and East Gillis Road. One vehicle, a silver Buick, was reportedly in the west ditch on its side. After a brief investigation, it was learned that the silver Buick, driven by Virginia Kettleleson, 99, of Esmond, was traveling northbound on South Woodlawn Road. A tan GMC Sierra, driven by Nolan Hansen, 23, of Rochelle was traveling westbound on East Gillis Road. Hansen stopped at the stop sign, then proceeded into the intersection, striking the silver Buick in the passenger side. Kettleleson was transported via Superior Helicopter to a local hospital. Hansen was uninjured and was cited for failure to obey a stop sign. The Ogle County Sheriff’s Office was assisted by Rochelle EMS/Fire, Creston Fire and Superior Helicopter.

On Dec. 8 at approximately 3:16 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 5,000 block of South Freeport Road. After investigation, deputies placed Jamie Boolman, 34, of Peoria under arrest for driving while license suspended. Boolman was additionally issued a citation for improper container/driver. Boolman was released on a notice to appear at the scene.

OREGON POLICE REPORT

Nov. 23
At 5:08 p.m., Oregon Police issued Kimberly D. Hannold, 58, Oregon, a city citation for the ordinance violation of allowing a dog to run at large. This violation occurred in the 200 block of South 1st Street.

avoid an accident.

At 9:07 p.m., Oregon Police investigated a two-vehicle traffic crash at the intersection of Illinois Route 2 and Pines Road involving a 2004 Mazda driven by Damian R. Jacobson, 24, Oregon, and a 2022 Ford driven by Karen J. Lyles, 58, Ashton. No citations were issued.

Oregon Super Value. Disch was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was processed and released with a notice to appear.

Nov. 24
At 1 p.m., Oregon Police issued Ramses G. Tello, 26, Oregon, a citation for operating a vehicle when registration is suspended for non-insurance. This violation occurred in the 600 block of North 4th Street.

Nov. 26
At 3:30 a.m., Oregon Police issued several city citations in the 200 block of North 2nd Street to Robert D. VanDyke, 43, Oregon, for violating the unlawful burning ordinance and for violating the trash/rubbish/junk ordinance; and Megan C. Moorehead, 31, Oregon, for violating the unlawful burning ordinance and for violating the trash/rubbish/junk ordinance.

Nov. 30
At 10:34 a.m., Oregon Police issued Mary A. Sjurset, 55, Oregon, a citation for operating an uninsured motor vehicle. This violation occurred in the 300 block of South 4th Street.

Nov. 25
At 11:02 a.m., Oregon Police responded to a disturbance in the 300 block of South 2nd Street resulting in the arrest of Clayton D. Carpenter, 25, Oregon, for domestic battery. Carpenter was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was left in the custody of the corrections officers.

Nov. 27
At 12:40 p.m., Oregon Police issued Robert D. VanDyke, 43, Oregon, a city citation for the offense of violating the trash/rubbish/junk ordinance. This violation occurred in Kiwanis Park, the 200 block of North 2nd Street.

Dec. 1
At 6:13 a.m., Oregon Police arrested Sidney H. Spates, 45, Rockford, for two outstanding warrants, one for Rockford PD for domestic battery and one for failure to appear on an assault out of Lee County. Spates was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was left in the corrections officers’ custody.

At 5:25 p.m., Oregon Police investigated a two-vehicle traffic crash at the intersection of Madison and S. 3rd Streets involving a 2018 Jeep driven by a 16-year-old of Oregon, and a 2012 Dodge driven by Gianna J. Fulton, 66, Oregon. The juvenile was issued a citation for failure to reduce speed to

Nov. 28
At 4:30 p.m., Oregon Police arrested Loren D. Disch, 56, Oregon, for retail theft that occurred on Monday, Nov. 25 at the

At 2:19 p.m., Oregon Police issued Micheline Feza, 42, Rockford, a citation for operating an uninsured motor vehicle. This violation occurred in the 100 block of South 4th Street.

Five verbal warnings were issued during Nov. 23-Dec. 1.

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

Neon Tiger’s Queen of Hearts raffle jackpot reaches \$7,015 in Byron

BYRON – Neon Tiger is excited to announce that the Queen of Hearts Raffle jackpot has reached \$7,015! The weekly raffle drawing is held every Thursday night at 8 p.m. and the stakes continue to grow with each passing week.

How it works: Participants purchase tickets for a chance to win the weekly drawing. Each ticket has a number that corresponds to one of the 54 playing cards in the Queen of Hearts deck. On Thursday evenings, one lucky winner is drawn, and if their ticket matches the Queen of Hearts, they’ll win the jackpot. If the Queen of Hearts has not been drawn, the jackpot will continue to grow, making each drawing even more exciting.

Hearts Raffle drawing, and don’t miss your chance to win the \$7,015 jackpot while supporting Walter Lawson’s Children’s Home.

The Queen of Hearts Raffle is a fun, exciting opportunity for the community to try their luck, while also supporting a great cause. Tickets are available for purchase at just five tickets for \$5 and are on sale any time prior to the drawing. Every ticket purchase helps support Walter Lawson’s Children’s Home, a local organization dedicated to providing a loving and supportive environment for children in need.

Get your tickets now! Tickets are available at Neon Tiger, and buyers can purchase as many tickets as they wish. The more tickets you buy, the greater your chance of winning and helping out a great cause. Join us every Thursday at 8 p.m. for the Queen of

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit Neon Tiger at 120 N. Union St, Byron, IL 61010 - <https://neontiger815.com/> or contact 815.234.5555.

About Walter Lawson’s Children’s Home: Walter Lawson’s Children’s Home is dedicated to providing a safe, nurturing, and loving environment for children in need. The home offers care and support for children who have experienced hardship, and works to create a brighter future for them. For more information about Walter Lawson’s Children’s Home, visit <https://www.wlch.org/>



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VIEWPOINT

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

Published every Monday
Jeff Helfrich, Managing Editor

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MOMENTS IN TIME

* On Dec. 30, 1988, President Ronald Reagan and President-elect George Bush were subpoenaed to testify at the trial of Oliver North, a former White House aide implicated in the Iran-Contra affair, in which arms were secretly sold to Iran while profits from the sale were diverted to guerrillas attempting to topple the Nicaraguan government.

* On Dec. 31, 1781, America's first bank, the Bank of North America, received its charter from the Confederation Congress. It opened in Philadelphia on Jan. 7, 1782.

* On Jan. 1, 2008, Sidney Crosby of the Pittsburgh Penguins won the NHL's inaugural Winter Classic, the first regular-season game played outdoors in

the U.S. in the league's history, at New York's Ralph Wilson Stadium.

* On Jan. 4, 1964, Mary Sullivan was raped and strangled to death in her Boston apartment, after which her killer, Albert DeSalvo (aka the Boston Strangler) left a card reading "Happy New Year's" against her foot. Sullivan would turn out to be the final victim of DeSalvo's notorious crime spree, in which he assaulted and murdered a total of 13 women between 1962 and 1964. Under a deal with prosecutors, he wasn't charged with or convicted of those crimes, but received a life sentence for a series of other assaults, and was stabbed to death by an unidentified fellow inmate in 1973.

Yuletide greetings: A pardon in a pear tree

THE President has pardoned his son unconditionally despite several statements that he never would. This is an example of inversion of the truth (lying) despite claims of being truthful. A presidential pardon expunges a conviction for a federal crime and wipes the slate clean. It represents legal forgiveness, restores the criminal's right to vote or run for office, and ends any additional punishment related to the crime. This power to pardon criminals is delineated under Article II, Section 2, Clause 1 of the U.S. Constitution.

The President's son was convicted by a jury of a firearm violation, pleaded guilty to tax evasion, and was awaiting sentencing, which could be several years in jail. Legal experts are amazed at this unusually broad example of executive clemency. The pardon document reads "ROBERT HUNTER BIDEN, A Full and Unconditional Pardon. For those offenses against the United States which he has committed or may have committed or taken part in during the period from Jan. 1, 2014, through Dec. 1, 2024, including but not limited to all offenses charged or prosecuted." The President's son is pardoned for any federal crime "he committed or may have committed." The interesting words in the pardon document are "may have committed." Normally, a presidential pardon deals with a specific crime. What other federal crimes has the President's son committed that we do not know about? It does not matter what he did. He has been pardoned.

The date of Jan. 1, 2014, is a clue. In 2014, the President's son joined the board of a Ukrainian

energy company called Burisma Holdings. He was paid as much as \$1.2 million per year (BBC.com/news) despite having no experience in energy. At that time, Victor Shokin, the Ukrainian prosecutor, began looking into the dealings of the President's son for evidence of corruption. The President demanded that Mr. Shokin be removed from the investigation, and the Ukrainian parliament removed him in 2016. (BBC.com/news) This has spurred a probe by the Republicans into the dealings of the Biden family with foreign entities, which may violate the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA). If the Biden family has received payments from foreign governments, they are required to register as an "agent of a foreign principal," which they have not done.

If the President's son had not been pardoned on such a wide scope, additional legal proceedings could occur, such as for FARA violations, and become public. Certain family revelations in those documents may be embarrassing and indicate possibly illegal activities on the part of other family members. Pundits believe this pardon is more beneficial to the President and is a form of covering his backside. The President is not out of the woods yet. The President's son may be called before Congress to testify on what he knows. Since he has immunity, he can't plead the fifth. He would be under oath, so he can't lie. Otherwise, he would be charged with perjury, which is not covered by the pardon. If things go south for the President's son during the hearing, all he can do is use the Watergate defense: "I can't recall."



Chuck Roberts

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.

Primaries and mandates for unpopular presidents

WE can expect every winner of a presidential election to claim a mandate—a command from the American people to carry out his or her policies. Joe Biden believed so when he pushed a mass of liberal laws through Congress in 2021. Donald Trump likewise insists that he now embodies the will of the people.

Mr. Biden won by four percentage points, Mr. Trump by less than two—hardly a full-throated endorsement for either of them. The back-and-forth about questionable mandates obscures a more important question about the way we select our presidents. How we respond—or fail to respond—will matter more to our future than the personalities and issues at the front of today's politics.

Voters in this election had a choice between two presidents. One was Donald Trump, whose average approval rating during his first term was, according to Gallup, Inc., 41%. That's the lowest of any president since Gallup began taking such data in the 1940s.

His opponent was Joe Biden, as represented by Kamala Harris in the aftermath of his withdrawal. Mr. Biden's average approval rating at the end of October was, at 43%, only slightly higher than Mr. Trump's,

and also historically low.

Never in the history of public opinion polling have the American people had to choose between two such unpopular contenders for the presidency. Only a candidate like Biden/Harris could have lost to Donald Trump. Only one like Donald Trump could have come so close to losing against Biden/Harris.

Political scientists Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt offer an explanation for this dilemma in their book, "How Democracies Die." They reveal that political reforms and court rulings since the 1970s have weakened the "gatekeepers" in both political parties. These are the professionals who had in the past maintained party discipline and kept weak candidates and extremists off the ballot.

The gate was now open to well-funded opportunists within and outside the parties to take control. Dante Chinni, at nbcnews.com on May 10, 2016, explained how this played out when Donald Trump took over the Republican Party in 2016. "...a close look at the numbers," he said, "provides a lot of evidence that Trump didn't win the party over so much as his supporters overran the primary process."

A key number in this analysis is 42. That's the per-

cent of the vote that gave the nomination to Mr. Trump—well short of a majority. He won nevertheless for two reasons.

The first is that the establishment vote was split among several candidates, allowing Mr. Trump to win with less than a majority. Mr. Trump's other ace was, according to Mr. Chinni, a flood of newcomers to that year's primary. They overwhelmed the traditional

vote and enabled Mr. Trump to seize control of a radically-changed Republican Party.

The Democratic Party establishment prevented a similar takeover by avowed socialist Bernie Sanders in the 2020 primary, as told in

reports from publications like pbs.org and Politico in March of that year. Alarmed party leaders pressured the rest of the field to drop out and support Joe Biden, who went on to win the primary and the election. It was a victory of sorts for the establishment, but one that produced a weak candidate, due to the underlying defects in the primary election system for both parties.

The potential for week or extremist candidates to take control is one of them. Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt compare it to the way Adolf Hitler in Germany, Benito



Lowell Harp

AFB's analysis of farm labor

FARM labor is a big topic in the U.S., primarily in states that grow fruits and vegetables. Without that labor food does not get to your table and if it does it's more expensive.

Let's look at American Farm Bureaus analysis of the issue.

Farmers who use the H-2A program were focused on USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service's Farm Labor report, released on Nov. 20, as it offers a glimpse into their future operational expenses.

Each year, the Department of Labor (DOL) uses the "field and livestock workers' combined" wage rate reported in the November Farm Labor report (based on the Farm Labor Survey or FLS) to establish most H-2A workers' minimum wage, known as the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR). This year, the combined field and livestock worker wage rate nationally is \$18.12, up 3.2% from the 2023 release. Regional wages increased an average of 4.5%, but this reflects wide ranges of change across the country. The new wages become official when DOL publishes them in the Federal Register in December. But this wage increase isn't the only hurdle H-2A users will have to clear in 2025.

The FLS collects data twice a year—every month in California—through voluntary farm surveys in every state except Alaska. These surveys collect employment and wage data for 1 week each quarter—in January, April, July and October. The November FLS reports the annual average combined field and livestock wage for 15 regions and three states—California, Florida and Hawaii. The combined field and livestock wage in the FLS includes six Standard Occupation Classifications (SOCs)—graders and sorters; agricultural equipment operators; farm-

workers: crop, nursery, and greenhouse; farmworkers: farm, ranch, and aquacultural animals; packers and packagers; and agricultural workers, all others. Over 96% of H-2A workers fall into these SOCs. The remaining employment contracts that include any job requirements outside of these SOCs, including five of the top 10 fiscal year 2024 H-2A occupations, and any Alaskan employers will update their AEWR when the respective state's May 2024 Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics is released in early April 2025.

The national average combined field and livestock worker wage released in this report had the lowest growth rate since 2018, but no employers pay the national wage, as they pay the regional wage for their state. On average, AEWRs will rise 4.5% from 2024, but where an employer is located will have big impacts on their wage change. Regional wages vary substantially, ranging from \$14.83 in the Delta region—Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas—to \$20.08 in Hawaii.

Eleven of the 15 regions will see an increase in wages larger than the national growth rate. The Southeast—South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama—and Florida can expect a 10% increase in 2025, over \$1.40 more per hour. In comparison, nonfarm wages rose only 4% from October 2023 to 2024. Florida began raising its state minimum wage \$1 per hour each year in 2020 until it reaches \$15 per hour in 2026 which may be contributing to spikes in farm wages.

California's wage increased only 1% this year, a relief after averaging an increase of 7.3% each year for the last five years. After five years with the highest AEWR, California will fall to second with an hourly wage of \$19.97, following

only Hawaii, where farmers will be required to pay \$20.08 per hour, up 7.2% from 2024. However, California is the third-largest employer of H-2A workers with 37,511 certified workers, while Hawaii had only 251 positions certified in the same year.

Interestingly, the Lakes region—Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota—had a decrease in the combined field and livestock wage rate in 2024. It is possible that declining response rates in the Lakes region have affected the data collection. Michigan has also seen decreases in the number of H-2A employers in their state in fiscal year 2024. This may indicate that higher paying employers, including those utilizing H-2A, are exiting the program in response to rising production expenses, including labor. It is also possible that shrinking net farm incomes have reduced the ability of farmers to offer incentive pay, such as a piece rate. Since the FLS collects gross wages that include bonus compensation, a decrease in incentive pay would lead to an overall wage decrease. While the FLS results are typically copied and pasted into the new AEWR announcement, DOL has the authority to establish other wages. So, H-2A employers in the Lake region will have to wait until December to see if their minimum wage rates will follow the survey down.

The timeline to implement the new 2025 AEWR will vary depending on where the employer is located. DOL finalized a new Farmworker Protection Rule in April 2024 that, in addition to many other provisions, removed the traditional 14-day implementation period for employers to begin paying the new AEWR. Seventeen states—Georgia, Kansas, South Carolina, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Missouri,

Mussolini in Italy, and Hugo Chavez in Venezuela rose to power. Unite America, at uniteamerica.org, explains in detail how the primary system locks most citizens out of the nominating process and produces candidates that don't represent the average American. We can expect more weak, unpopular, and unethical presidents in the future if we don't find a better way.

Professors Levitsky and Ziblatt advocate a return to the old system, with party bosses weeding out undesirable candidates. Unite America, on the other hand, favors open primaries that involve all voters from the start. It also advocates rank-choice balloting, which discourages extremism and polarization.

We'll have to look beyond the candidates and issues of the day if we hope to have better choices in the future. The primary system is where everything starts in our elections. It's the institution most in need of reform if we hope to preserve our democratic form of government.

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

Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas sued DOL over the rulemaking, and as of August 26, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia granted a temporary halt of the rule in the filing states. Rather than pausing implementation of the rules across the country, DOL now has different requirements for employers in just those 17 states. While 48% of H-2A workers are employed in the states who filed for an injunction, for most states, this is the first year that employers will be required to immediately begin paying the new AEWR upon certification in December. Navigating the divided DOL guidelines and having to immediately alter business operations to accommodate new wages has added to the administrative burdens of employing H-2A workers.

Fruit and vegetable farmers, the largest users of H-2A, spend 38% of their farm expenses on labor, and that share will continue to grow if wages grow as they have in recent years. Rising farmworker wages are a considerable challenge to American specialty crop producers competing with farmers in other countries who can hire at a fraction of the cost.

DOL's methodology of directly using the average wage rates from the FLS as the minimum H2A wage has raised concerns among users of the program, especially since it does not account for the substantial additional costs of transportation and housing, as well as the direct and indirect administrative costs of using the program.

Nevertheless, H-2A workers have become vital to American food production as the domestic workforce continues to move away from agricultural labor.

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

LOCAL NEWS

SHINING STAR: Holiday season pajama drive sees tremendous results

From page 1

“If they’re not sleeping and there’s trauma, there can be impacts at school and the rest of life. We thought this was another way to help them get a good night’s sleep.”

As of Dec. 4, Shining Star received 793 pairs of pajamas. It expected to receive about 100, Cash said. The pajama drive is in its first year and was the first time the nonprofit requested a specific item over the holidays. The drive saw response from both counties, including donations from churches, dozens of individuals, law enforcement and prosecutors, banks and other community organizations.

Cash said she believes about 70 percent of the children Shining Star services deal with clothing issues.

“They don’t have appropriate clothing for the weather or clothes that fit and parents have to make do with what they can find with secondhand or thrifting,” Cash said. “We are fortunate Serenity Hospice & Home helps us with their Angel Treasures stores they have in both counties. If we have a family with an immediate need they get us clothes. We thought this was an excellent way to help families out. Pajamas are expensive. And you have to meet the other needs of your kids and kids grow and change sizes.”

Cash called the community’s support of the drive “amazingly overwhelming”, especially amid tough economic times and high prices in stores. She said Shining Star is fortunate to service two counties locally that support it so well.

“I think the biggest thing is, it shows how much the community does care about kids,” Cash said. “That’s part of what we’ve really been working on over the past year, is awareness of adults needing to look out for kids and be their voice. Every agency always wants money, but this is people being able to give something tangible that they know will go directly to a child and help them. It just makes a difference. This is probably the most support we’ve gotten on any event or drive we’ve done in the past few years. It’s been amazing.”

After so much response was seen to the pajama drive in recent months, Shining Star decided to give out pajamas early to children who came for interviews and counseling.

“Kids would see the box and the pajamas and their eyes would light up,” Cash said. “They come out of that room and most of them are feeling a little bit lighter because they’ve been able to get all of that out and tell somebody. And then you hand them something as simple as a pair of pajamas and their whole face just lights up and they’re excited. It just makes you realize even though they’re simple things, they can really brighten a day when a child just had to talk about something traumatic.”

Shining Star CAC’s current wish list also includes bottled water, juice boxes, individual snack care packages (crackers, chips, fruit snacks, etc.), card games, art supplies (crayons, sketch pads, coloring books, markers, canvas, paint), Play Dough, forever stamps, fleece blankets, new stuffed animals and board games. Monetary donations are always accepted at www.shiningstarcac.org.

Holiday safety

Amid the holiday season, Cash also discussed safety with children in the coming weeks during family gatherings, a busy time with events, and children out of school spending extra time with family and friends.

Parents are advised to review body safety rules with children before gatherings and tell kids it’s OK to not physically greet visiting family and friends if they don’t want to. Parents should ask children if anyone they’ll be seeing makes them uncomfortable for any reason. Kids can establish a safe word with parents so they can get their attention in situations where they feel unsafe.

Other holiday safety tips include supervising children while playing around the house and keeping doors open, reviewing the gatherings afterwards with children to make sure they felt safe, taking time to step away when losing patience with children amid stressful times, and monitoring children’s time on electronics for online predators while they have more time out of school to use them.



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

As of Dec. 4, Shining Star received 793 pairs of pajamas. It expected to receive about 100, Cash said. The pajama drive is in its first year and was the first time the nonprofit requested a specific item over the holidays.

St. Paul Lutheran Church to host Blue Christmas program

ROCHELLE — St. Paul Lutheran Church located at 1415 10th Ave., Rochelle, will offering a Blue Christmas program on Saturday, Dec. 21 at 3 p.m. It is being held on the day which historically is the longest night of the year. Please feel free to attend. It will be a quiet, musical and prayerful program.

The event is aimed at people dealing with grief amid the holidays. The church also provided information on managing grief.

“Somehow, (during the holidays) persons feel pushed into hiding, covering over, or denying the reality of sadness, fear and tension... Perhaps what is needed most is simply a more honest embracing of ourselves, others, and the realities of life.” -Dr. Wayne A. Van Kampen

The following are a few points to consider when navigating a path to respond to the holiday season.

Believe it’s okay to not “be of good cheer.” Try not to berate yourself if feeling down or not being part of the general merriment. This may help not to put added stress on yourself. Feel the pain. Reach out to others who share the pain.

Let go of unrealistic expectations for a celebration that’s Christmas-card perfect. One does not have to fulfill others’ expectations for Christmas New Years celebrations. It is okay to scale back on decorating, sending out cards, baking or visiting. It is more important to ask yourself what do I feel like doing? Can I skip it this year? Why or why not? Can someone do it for me? Or help me get it done? If I feel a need to do it, why do I need to do it? Can anything make a task or obligation easier?

Focus on activities and gatherings that are meaningful to you. Seek a deeper reason for the season. Find comfort and joy by connecting with others at a level or frequency that is agreeable to you. Take care of yourself by centering yourself and avoiding unhealthy behaviors. Share the pain, memorial the loss.

Take a little holiday from holidays. Remember that is okay to change or skip some traditions. It is okay to create new traditions too.

Plan ahead or maybe plan to not plan ahead. Your approach will allow you to either carefully plan for the day or allow the day to flow on its own. Look at Christmas in a thoughtful solitude remembering time.

Set time for you to reflect on memories, music and prayer. Let the meaning of Christmas resonate. Let love guide you and let yourself be as a child, learning and exploring the world.

Your loss has meaning. The first year or any year which follows a death of a loved one leaves a hole. “Tears can be a gentle and loving way of ministering to yourself. Tears should be honored as tender drops of remembrance.” -Lon Nungesser



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

St. Paul Lutheran Church located at 1415 10th Ave., Rochelle, will offering a Blue Christmas program on Saturday, Dec. 21 at 3 p.m.

PAG’s ‘Christmas Eve in Chaos’ scheduled for Jan. 10-12

MT. MORRIS — For those looking for a post-holiday pick-me-up, the Performing Arts Guild of Mt. Morris will present a dessert theatre, *Christmas Eve in Chaos*. This heart-warming comedy is a reminder that even the most chaotic Christmas can bring joy. *Christmas Eve in Chaos* delivers laugh after laugh as the family’s holiday woes spiral out of control.

Carol, an overzealous holiday decorator, accidentally causes a massive neighborhood blackout with her over-the-top light display. As the neighborhood plunges into darkness, the family scrambles to restore power while dealing with Uncle Frank’s government conspiracy theories and Rick’s sarcastic one-liners. Linda, Rick’s sensible wife, finds herself caught in the chaos, trying to keep peace amid the escalating mishaps.

Just when things couldn’t get worse, Santa crash-lands in their backyard and his reindeer scatter across town. With Carol eager to help and Rick reluctantly dragged along, the chaos intensifies as they embark on a wild reindeer hunt.

Through the mishaps, misunderstandings, and holiday madness, this laugh-out-loud play promises to brighten up the post-Christmas blues and remind us that sometimes, even chaos can be festive.

Christmas Eve in Chaos is an original play written and directed by Morgan McConnell. Dave Sheely is the assistant director. Producers are Jennifer Bakener and Pamela Ballard. Cast members are Jeff Bold, Morgan McConnell, Priscilla Osborne, Mark Tremble, Larry Ubben, Trudy Whalen and Dave Sheely with George Howe as the announcer.

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. and the Sunday matinee is at 2 p.m. 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 and click on tickets.

WinterFest 2025 set for Jan. 18 in Genoa

GENOA — The annual WinterFest, held at the Natural Resources Education Center (NREC) in Russell Woods Forest Preserve, will be Saturday, Jan. 18, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Russell Woods is located one mile west of Genoa on state route 72.

University of Illinois Extension and DeKalb County Forest Preserve offers this free event for families to get out, have fun, and explore an enjoyable destination. Illinois Extension staff and volunteers provide a variety of educational and recreational activities for the whole family. “This is a festival about the season of winter, so it doesn’t matter if we have snow,” said Illinois Extension Educator Peggy Anesi.

The morning will start indoors at the NREC’s bird-viewing window. Anesi will share tips and tricks for feeding and identifying our local winter birds. At 10 a.m., visitors can participate in a guided family hike through the forest preserve, followed by a presentation about becoming a citizen scientist at any age. From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., children can create a make-and-take craft, including a pinecone birdfeeder, and get their hands or face painted with a choice of nature designs. Other activities include the Wisdom Hunt Nature Trail and an outdoor digital scavenger hunt. At 1 p.m., Extension staff and volunteers will present a fun Winter Survival Game Show with prizes.

The Genoa Prairie Gems 4-H Club offers lunch items at a modest cost to support their club. There is no fee for the day, though the NREC graciously accepts donations to cover materials. It is a fantastic opportunity to bring family and friends for an activity or stay the entire day. For schedule: <https://go.illinois.edu/WinterFest25schedule>

Join us again for a day in the woods as we celebrate winter. For questions or reasonable accommodation to participate, please call Marian Termini, program coordinator, at 815-784-2000 or email mariantt@illinois.edu.

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LOCAL NEWS

COMBS: Rochelle family seeking answers after death of 24-year-old son

From page 1

The Combs family is still without answers on how he got there from Atlanta or why he traveled there. When Chris Combs called John to ask him where he was after realizing he wasn't on the flight to Chicago, John replied that he was "in the woods." "That's all he said," Chris Combs said. "All these conversations were really short and odd. I don't think there was ever any lengthy discussion about anything. I mean, this was what was all weird. It was simple words that were out of character for him. I wish now I had recordings of all those calls."

The Combs family then lost contact with John and filed a missing persons report and continued their search until Tuesday, Oct. 8 when local police told them he was hit by a train and had died the previous Friday.

John Combs' phone, wallet, and backpack were not recovered. With information from phone records and accounts, his brother and father pieced together that his final hours in the afternoon of Oct. 4 included stops in eastern Montgomery at a CVS Pharmacy, Burger King, Starbucks, a gas station and a Sunrise Extended Stay Hotel where he had a stay booked, but never checked in for. "We've never even

found out how he got from the Atlanta Airport to Montgomery," Chris Combs said. "I think he had been in Montgomery maybe once. I mean he talked about the history and stuff around there, but it's like he never visited anything of any interest or anything. He just found all the bad places in Montgomery. And I don't get how you can be that unlucky. It just doesn't make sense."

Since John's death, Chris and Patrick Combs have worked to find answers to make sense of his passing. They've spent time reaching out to entities including the Montgomery Police Department, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, the Atlanta International Airport, OSHA, and Red Rover Electric (John's employer). They've also spoken with media outlets and worked on social media raising awareness of John's story in hopes that someone with information will come forward. Those with information on John Combs' case are asked to call the Montgomery Police Department at 334-625-2532 or CrimeStoppers at 334-215-7867.

"It's tearing us apart," Chris Combs said. "We're just trying to get answers. The Montgomery Police Department has not been cooperative at all. They called me in on the Tuesday after John passed and wanted me to come in and



A memorial sign with John Combs' name now adorns a pole at Diamond G Ranch. The Rochelle man passed away at age 24 on Oct. 4 after being struck by a train in Montgomery, Alabama. John was in the south at that time working as a lineman helping with Hurricane Helene recovery efforts in the days beforehand.

identify him. And they'd had him since Friday and I'd reported him missing Saturday. I'm dealing with people from Savannah, Atlanta, Montgomery City and Montgomery County. It's been a full-time job for both of us. We're fighting to find answers and people are fighting us to keep us from finding the answers."

Chris Combs said the biggest question he'd like to have answered is what happened to John in Savannah that resulted in a hospital trip and strange behavior that led up until his passing. John Combs had no history of mental health or substance abuse issues, his father said. He wonders if John could have suffered a head injury or been electrocuted or came in contact with

something that altered his state of mind.

"Everything I heard from him and heard about him in his last days was completely out of character for him," Chris Combs said. "When he called me and he couldn't put his thoughts together, you could just tell something had happened to him. If he would have been driving home in one of their trucks and fell asleep and went off the road and something happened, I guess I could come to terms with it. But this, the more I find out, for every question I get answered, I've got two more questions."

John Combs had a successful spray foam business back home in Combs Complete Insulation. He was in the process



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

of building a home for himself. He and his father had recently discussed the coming winter and were looking at taking off on a motorcycle ride.

John took care of cattle growing up. He spent a lot of time at Diamond G Ranch and got involved with horses and working on farms. He built motorcycles and worked on cars and trucks.

"He always could figure things out," Chris Combs said. "He never had a fear of failure. He would approach a job, find out how to do it, and get it done. He would tear into a truck motor and fix it. It might be a multi-day process and something he had never done before, but he'd figure it out."

The things Chris Combs

will miss most about his son are, strangely enough, the things he complained about the most when his son was living with him. He'll miss John leaving hats all around the house and leaving his dirty clothes and bag in the middle of the living room after working during a storm.

"He liked flipping that switch and watching all the lights go on," Chris Combs said. "For him, that meant something. That he was helping other people out. It just doesn't seem fair. He was down there to help people. And nobody wants to help find out what happened. I just want to know what happened. I feel like if it'd been the other way around and it'd been me, he would already have this figured out."

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Dec. 16: State Sen. Andrew Chesney (R-Freepoint) is bringing a mobile team from the Illinois Tollway to Kirkland on Dec. 16 for an IPASS on Demand event. Successful events have already been held in Rockton, Freepoint, Machesney Park, and Elizabeth.

"The Tollway is transitioning 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. The event will take place from

3-7 p.m. at Resource Bank in Kirkland at 414 Main St. It will be cohosted by Kirkland Village President Ryan Block. 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. "These events

provide easy access for my constituents to make the switch," Chesney said. "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.

Jan. 6: The Leaf River United Methodist Church is hosting a Community Blood Drive on Monday, Jan. 6. Staff from the Rock River Valley Blood Center (RRVBC) will draw blood between 12:30 and 5:30 p.m.. If you are at least 17 years old (16 years old with pa-

rental consent), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in general good health, you should be eligible to donate blood. One in three people will need blood and you never know when you or someone you love might be the one. The Rock River Valley Blood Center is the only supplier of blood and related services to Beloit Health System, Edgerton Hospital and Health Services, FHN, OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center, Rochelle Community Hospital, Rockford Health System, Swedish American Health System and Swedish American Med-

ical Center — Belvidere. RRVBC needs to collect approximately 1,000 units each week to meet area patient needs. By hosting a blood drive, the Leaf River United Methodist Church is helping to save lives in our community. Join us in sharing the Gift of Life. For more information or to schedule an appointment contact Cheryl at cheryl_newcomer@yahoo.com or Laura at 815-276-5773. You can contact Rock River Valley Blood Center (RRVBC) at 815/965-8751, toll free at 877-RRVBC-99 or on the web at www.rrvbc.org.

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LOCAL NEWS

Mt. Morris Fire Protection District launches Holiday Safety Campaign

MT. MORRIS — Did you know an average of over 1,000 home fires a year started when Christmas trees or holiday decorations ignited? These fires caused an estimated annual average of 25 civilian deaths, 60 civilian injuries and \$30 million in direct property damage.

Again this holiday season the Mt. Morris Fire Protection District will be participating in the statewide safety program "Keep the Wreath Red". The program is very simple, a wreath has been placed on the front of the Mt. Morris Firehouse. The wreath is covered in red bulbs. If a fire occurs during the holiday season caused by holiday decorations, a bulb will be changed to white. So far Mt. Morris hasn't had to change a bulb to white since this program was started in 2004. If you follow some of the fire safety tips listed below the wreath will be kept red all season!

Holiday decorating safety tips:

Use caution with holiday decorations and whenever possible, choose those made with flame-resistant, flame-retardant or non-combustible materials.

Natural Christmas trees always involve some risk of fire. To minimize the risk, get a fresh tree and keep it watered at all times. Do not put the tree within three feet of a fireplace, space heater, radiator, or heat vent.

Decorate with children in mind. Do not put ornaments that have small parts or metal hooks, or look like food or candy, on the lower branches where small children can reach them. Trim protruding branches at or below a child's eye level.

Do not burn Christmas tree branches, treated wood, or wrapping paper in a home fireplace or woodstove.

Purchase only lights and electrical decorations

bearing the name of an independent testing lab, and follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation and maintenance.

Carefully inspect new and previously used light strings and replace damaged items before plugging lights in. Do not overload extension cords, instead use a rated power strip and do not run an electrical cord under a rug.

Check your strands of lights to determine the number of strands that may be connected. Connect no more than three strands of push-in type bulbs together. A maximum of 50 total bulbs of the larger screw-in type bulbs.

Always unplug lights before replacing light bulbs or fuses.

Don't mount lights in any way that can damage the cord's wire insulation (i.e., using clips, not nails).

Keep children and pets away from light strings and electrical decorations.

Turn off all light strings



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Again this holiday season the Mt. Morris Fire Protection District will be participating in the statewide safety program "Keep the Wreath Red".

and decorations before leaving the house or going to bed.

Keep candles away from decorations and other combustible materials and

never leave candles unattended. 41% of holiday fires are started by a candle. Most importantly do not use candles to decorate Christmas trees in any way.

Last but certainly not least, Test your smoke alarms, have one on each floor of your home and have a fire escape plan and practice it.

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LOCAL NEWS

Ogle County 4-H'ers honored for outstanding achievement

OREGON — Eighty-nine Ogle County 4-H'ers were honored for their achievements during the 2024 4-H year at club programs this fall. The 4-H Experience Award allows 4-H'ers to be recognized for their work in Project Learning, Participation, Community Service, and Leadership. Three levels can be earned: Bronze 4-H Clover Award, Silver 4-H Clover Award, and Gold 4-H Clover Award. All awards were distributed at the member's 4-H Club awards banquet.

BRONZE 4-H CLOVER AWARD WINNERS: These 4-H'ers completed at least one experience in each of the four dimensions. These include project learning, participation, community service, and leadership.

They include: Kerri-gan Becker, Pine Creek Valley. Adrien Booker, By-Y-Badgers. Delaney Byers, Summerhill Huskies. Aleeya Dykstra, Pine Creek Valley. Emily Harbaugh, Carefree. Hayden Harvey, Summerhill Huskies. Annaliese Koziol, Ogle County Clovers. Ed-nard Koziol, Ogle County Clovers. Leo Koziol, Ogle County Clovers. Nicolette Koziol, Ogle County Clovers. Zeb Yocum, Pine Creek Valley.

SILVER 4-H CLOVER AWARD WIN-

NERS: These 4-H'ers completed at least two experiences in each of the four dimensions. These include project learning, participation, community service, and leadership. Also, at least two of those experiences were at the county, regional, state, or national level.

They include: Kayden Barndt, Pine Creek Valley. Alex Booker, By-Y-Badgers. Hayden Capes, Hub Hickory Nuts. Bristol Clark, Ogle Jolly. Gregory Dorwaldt, Ogle County Clovers. Kamryn Feltz, Mighty Clovers. Trinity Feltz, Mighty Clovers. Tylar Groth, Summerhill Huskies. Jenna Heller, Grand Detour Greens. Jacob Hickman, By-Y-Badgers. Lauren Hickman, By-Y-Badgers. Kenzie Hongsermeier, Leaf River Busy Beavers. Lily Hongsermeier, Leaf River Busy Beavers. Grant Johnson, Leaf River Soaring Eagles. Elizabeth Kennedy, Hub Hickory Nuts. Kaylee King, Mighty Clovers. Mallory King, Mighty Clovers. Aubrey Kusnierz, Mighty Clovers. Madeline Kusnierz, Mighty Clovers. Haven Marks, Summerhill Huskies. Savannah Marks, Summerhill Huskies. Lucy Miller, Leaf River Soaring Eagles. Sophia Palmer, Mighty Clovers. Noah Richard-

son, Ogle County Clovers. Katelyn Rockwood, Pine Creek Valley. James Runte, Pine Creek Valley. Madisyn Ruthe, Mighty Clovers. Owen Smardo, Ogle County Clovers. Joshua Snow, Blackhawk Crossing. Heidi Westfall, Blackhawk Crossing. Addison Yordy, Leaf River Soaring Eagles.

GOLD 4-H CLOVER AWARD WINNERS: These 4-H'ers completed at least four experiences in each of the four dimensions. These include project learning, participation, community service, and leadership. Also, at least two of those experiences were at the state or national level.

They include: Kaitlyn Adams, Ogle Jolly. Nolan Adams, Ogle Jolly. Immanual Arellano, Blackhawk Crossing. David Bagwell, Leaf River Soaring Eagles. Nicholas Cassens, By-Y-Badgers. Harmony Coy, Blackhawk Crossing. Ali Danekas, Pine Creek Valley. Alayna Doane, Mighty Clovers. Bruce Gehrke, By-Y-Badgers. Colton Gehrke, By-Y-Badgers. Luke Gehrke, By-Y-Badgers. Shelby Harbaugh, Carefree. Andrew Hickman, By-Y-Badgers. Kodi Hubbard, Carefree. Kaden Lingbeck, Leaf River Soaring Eagles. Anna Marquardt,

Carefree. Allissa Martin, Carefree. Kailee Miller, Carefree. Kaeden Motszko, Leaf River Soaring Eagles. Alyse Rogers, Ogle Jolly. Braden Rogers, Ogle Jolly. Lydia Sherburne, Leaf River Soaring Eagles. Kathryn Snow, Blackhawk Crossing. David Wehler, Leaf River Soaring Eagles.

CLOVERBUDS are 4-H'ers between the ages of 5-7. The following Cloverbud members will also be recognized by their clubs: Camila Bonne, Ogle Jolly. Jude Bruns, Carefree. Evalynn Chapman, Summerhill Huskies. Jordi Collins, Ogle Jolly. Zaelia Daniels, Hub Hickory Nuts. William Dorwaldt, Ogle County Clovers. Rowen Eckerstrom, Ogle Jolly. Jack Feldhaus, By-Y-Badgers. Declan Franks, By-Y-Badgers. Briella Franks, By-Y-Badgers. Paisley Harbaugh, Carefree. Remington Harvey, Summerhill Huskies. Stella Hauch, Ogle Jolly. Julia Herring, Hub Hickory Nuts. Macklin Hubbard, Carefree. Emilia Janoski, Ogle Jolly. Zeke Janoski, Ogle Jolly. Ty Johnson, Ogle Jolly. Calvin Kloster, By-Y-Badgers. Jack Kusnierz, Mighty Clovers. Ainslee Logan, Carefree. Auden Logan, Carefree. Lillian Miller, Carefree. Emma



(COURTESY PHOTO)
Paisley Harbaugh, Carefree 4-H Cloverbud, was recognized.

Rasmussen, Ogle Jolly. Harper Rockwood, Pine Creek Valley. Liam Roose, Hub Hickory Nuts. Natalya Ruthe, Mighty Clovers. William Safraneck, By-Y-Badgers. Emma Schier, Carefree. Alana Smith, Summerhill Huskies. Allan Smith, Summerhill Huskies. Hewyt Westfall, Blackhawk Crossing. Hayley Windland, Hub Hickory Nuts. Reminton Zabran, Carefree.

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

State Rep. McCombie to host December office hours

OGLE COUNTY — House Minority Leader Tony McCombie (R-Savanna) is launching the upcoming round of mobile office hours in the 89th District. The Leader will round out the year with two op-

portunities for constituents to access the services her district office offers outside of her Savanna location.

“My office will help constituents navigate state agencies, answer questions on legislation, and address

state issues,” McCombie said. “It is a priority for me to continue to bring these opportunities to my constituents, which is why I look forward to continuing these mobile office hours events in the new year.”

The upcoming events will take place on Thursday, Dec. 19: 11-12:30 p.m. at the Mt. Morris Public Library, 105 S. McKendrie Ave. 1-2:30 p.m. at the Forrester Public Library, 204 1st Ave.

McCombie's Office has hosted these events throughout her tenure to help accommodate constituents in her district, which includes all of Carroll and Jo Daviess counties, as well as parts of

Stephenson, Winnebago, Boone, Ogle, and DeKalb counties.

With questions about the office hours, please contact Leader McCombie's office at 815-291-8989.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES



Disciples United Methodist Church

Christmas Eve Service

4:30 pm

102 Maple Ave. | Mt. Morris
815-734-4853
www.disciplesumc.org

St. Mary Catholic Church

Christmas Services

Christmas Eve Mass:
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Midnight Mass:
12 Midnight
at Oregon

Christmas Mass:
9:00AM
at Oregon & Polo

Mary, Mother of God Vigil:
December 31, 2024
6:30PM
at Polo

Mary, Mother of God Mass:
January 1, 2025
8:30AM & 6:30PM
at Oregon

Two Locations

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Tony Kurzac

12/20/24



Oregon High School wrestling team finishes first at Byron F/S Invitational on Dec. 7

The Oregon High School wrestling team finished first in the Byron Fresh/Soph Invitational on Saturday, Dec. 7. Champions included Boone Alderks (126), Landon Ege (132), Jayden Berry (157), Jakobi Donegan (165), Jakob Moser (175) and Dawson Alcara (215). Jordan Lowe (106) finished second and two wrestlers including James Kunz (138) and Cole Suter (175) placed fourth. Tyshawn Gordy (106) took fifth and four wrestlers including Ian Tajiboy (138), Tyler Hendrickson (165), Kaimana Barcai (215) and Yovanni Carreno (285) finished sixth. (Courtesy photo)

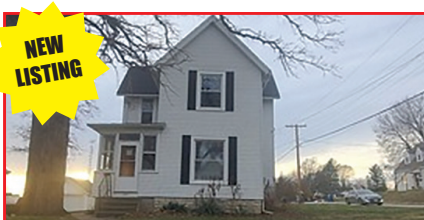


J.D. Gieson **November 2024** **Carla Benesh**
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24xx Jackson Street Pecatonica \$45,000 Call Rebecca
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to life. Nestled amidst picturesque surroundings, the property features mature trees for added privacy and charm. Whether you're dreaming of a spacious family home, a serene retreat, or an investment opportunity, the possibilities here are truly endless. Don't miss this rare opportunity to own a larger buildable lot in such a prime location. Act now to secure your piece of paradise in the Pecatonica School District!



745 N Ottawa Avenue Dixon \$119,900 Call Carla
Charming 2-Story Home on Spacious Corner Lot This beautifully updated 3-bedroom, 2-bath home offers both comfort and convenience in a prime location! Situated on a large corner lot, the property features a newer roof, updated LVT flooring, fresh carpet, and vinyl windows, ensuring a modern and low-maintenance living experience. The well-appointed main floor includes a bright and inviting living room, a spacious bedroom, and a large kitchen perfect for

family meals and gatherings. Upstairs, you'll find two additional bedrooms and a cozy family room, ideal for relaxation or entertainment. The detached 2-car garage provides ample storage and parking, while the location couldn't be more convenient. You're just minutes away from restaurants, shopping, city parks, and the scenic Rock River. Plus easy access to I-88. Whether you're enjoying time at home or exploring the surrounding area, this home is a perfect blend of functionality and style. Don't miss your chance to make this beautiful home yours!



206 Smith Drive Oregon NOW \$274,900 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.



481 S Red Oak Lane Chana \$24,000 Call Lori
Welcome to Red Oak Lane in the Big Timber Subdivision. Big Timber subdivision has only 1 road with low traffic. It is zoned for R-2 Single Family Residence and is fully surrounded by Agricultural Zoning. The lots in the subdivision

are greater than 1/2 acre and require a private well and septic system. The back and sides of the lot are lined with nice sized evergreen trees adding to the charm and appeal of the lot. A new house was built in this subdivision last year and you could be the next to enjoy the ambiance of this setting.

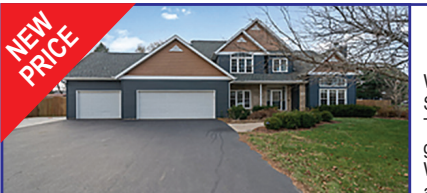


5496 S Poplar Drive Oregon NOW \$283,000 Call Taylor
Welcome to 5496 S Poplar Dr, a beautifully updated home in the peaceful countryside just outside Oregon, IL. This 3-bedroom, 2-bathroom property offers the perfect blend of rural serenity and convenient access to the nearby towns of Oregon and Dixon for shopping and dining. Recent updates include flooring and refinished cabinets in 2024, a new roof in 2023, windows replaced in 2017, a furnace in 2020, and an upgraded air conditioner in 2017, ensuring comfort and efficiency. The spacious yard provides a quiet retreat to enjoy nature, making this home a perfect escape from the busyness of life while remaining close to modern conveniences. Don't miss your chance to experience this ideal balance of comfort and location!



1103 Rock Falls Road Rock Falls \$295,000 Call JD
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4940 E Ashelford Drive Byron NOW \$409,000 Call Rebecca
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a dramatic foyer with soaring ceilings and an elegant staircase that sets the tone for the entire home. The open kitchen seamlessly flows into the inviting family room, creating a perfect space for gathering and relaxation. Upstairs, you'll find 4 large bedrooms, including a luxurious master suite with ample space to unwind. Enjoy the convenience of a spacious 3-car garage and make the most of the warm weather with your very own 27' above-ground pool-ideal for summer fun and relaxation. Driveway was expanded and redone in 2022. Added bonuses are the updated windows, siding, gutters and roof. This home truly offers it all-style, comfort, and room to grow. Don't miss out on this rare opportunity!



7913 Oak Street Dixon \$119,900 Call Carla
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SPORTS

OGLE COUNTY SPORTS ROUNDUP

Forreston boys basketball team defeats West Carroll

The Forreston High School varsity boys basketball team scored a 51-42 win against West Carroll on Tuesday, Dec. 3. Brendan Greenfield and Kendall Erdmann each finished with 16 points, while Connor Politsch added nine points and Jon Milnes totaled six points. Forreston's F/S team won 61-22 over West Carroll to start the season 1-0 as well.

Polo girls basketball team takes game against Oregon

The Polo High School varsity girls basketball team topped Oregon 44-38 on Thursday, Dec. 5. Cam Jones led the Lady Marcos with 15 points and eight assists, while Carlee Grobe scored eight points with five assists and Laynie Mandrell scored nine points with five rebounds. Aniyah Sarver led the Lady Hawks with 14 points and Sarah Eckardt added 11 points for Oregon.

Polo girls basketball team beats Ottawa Marquette

The Polo High School varsity girls basketball team picked up a 54-49 win against Ottawa Marquette on Saturday, Dec. 7. Cam Jones totaled 17 points, five assists and four rebounds for the Lady Marcos, while Laynie Mandrell compiled 11 points, eight rebounds and five assists. Carlee Grobe recorded 12 points and eight rebounds.

Forreston boys basketball team earns win over Blackhawk

The Forreston High School varsity boys basketball team won 64-35 against Blackhawk on Saturday, Dec. 7. Kendall Erdmann led the Cardinals with 17 points, while Brendan

Greenfield added 12 points and Connor Politsch totaled 11 points.

Forreston girls basketball team tops Milledgeville

The Forreston High School varsity girls basketball team secured a 44-27 win against Milledgeville on Saturday, Dec. 7. Bree Schneidnerman collected 13 points for the Lady Cardinals, while Hailee Vogt added 12 points.

Oregon boys basketball team wins game against Polo

The Oregon High School varsity boys basketball team picked up a 76-52 win against Polo on Friday, Dec. 6. Kade Girton led the Hawks with 20 points, while Keaton Salsbury scored 19 points and Cooper Johnson added 16 points. JT Stephenson turned in 23 points for the Marcos, who also received seven points from Jordan Reed and six points from Noah Dewey and Gage Zeigler.

Oregon wrestling team wins over Polo

The Oregon High School varsity wrestling team locked down a 60-15 win against Polo on Thursday, Dec. 5. Match winners for the Hawks included Tyshawn Gordy (106), Jordan Lowe (113), Landon Ege (126), Nelson Benesh (138), Levi Benton (150), Ethan Mowry (157), Jakob Moser (175) and Andrew Young (190). Match winners for the Marcos included Zandra Vock (120), Jaidyn McKinney (144) and Micah Stringini (165).

Polo wrestling team concedes loss against Fulton

The Polo High School varsity wrestling team fell 46-32 against Fulton on Thursday, Dec. 5. Match winners for the Marcos in-

cluded Tyler Moshure (132), Lucas Nelson (138), Jaidyn McKinney (144), Aubrey Herndon (144), Phineas Mullen (150), Micah Stringini (165) and Dylan Reimer (165).

Polo wrestlers place at Sterling Invitational

The Polo High School varsity wrestling team had four athletes place at the Sterling Invitational on Saturday, Dec. 7. Lucas Nelson finished first at 138 pounds, while Jaidyn McKinney took fourth at 144 pounds and Kaelyn McCarren took third at 150 pounds. Micah Stringini finished fourth at 165 pounds.

Polo girls basketball team wins over Durand

The Polo High School varsity girls basketball team picked up a 57-14 win against Durand on Monday, Dec. 9. Cam Jones finished with 12 points, three steals and six assists, while Carlee Grobe added 12 points and three rebounds. Leah Tobin totaled 10 points and four rebounds.

Polo wrestling team splits meet with Galena and Lancaster

The Polo High School varsity wrestling team defeated Galena 41-18 and conceded a 50-30 loss against Lancaster on Monday, Dec. 9. Match winners against Galena included Zandra Vock (120), Tyler Moshure (126), Lucas Nelson (138), Jaidyn McKinney (138), Kaelyn McCarren (150), Liam Setterstrom (157) and Ethan Dewey (175). Match winners against Lancaster included Tyler Moshure (132), Lucas Nelson (138), Jaidyn McKinney (144), Kaelyn McCarren (150) and Micah Stringini (165).

Polo boys basketball team defeats West Carroll

The Polo High School

varsity boys basketball team won 57-39 against West Carroll on Tuesday, Dec. 10. JT Stephenson led the Marcos with 21 points, while Gus Mumford added 14 points and Mercer Mumford chipped in nine points.

Oregon girls basketball team holds off Morrison

The Oregon High School varsity girls basketball team held off Morrison for a 41-33 win on Tuesday, Dec. 10. Aniyah Sarver led the Hawks with 13 points, while three players including Sarah Eckardt, Avery Kitzmiller and Shaylee Davis scored six points in the win.

Forreston boys basketball team loses against Winnebago

The Forreston High School varsity boys basketball team suffered a 70-45 loss against Winnebago on Tuesday, Dec. 10. Kendall Erdmann led the Cardinals with 10 points, while Darin Greenfield and Jakob Kobler each added seven points in the loss.

Oregon boys bowling team defeats Mendota

The Oregon Boys Bowling team raised their season record to 4-0 with a 3573-3305 win over Mendota at Town & Country Lanes, Mt Morris. The Hawks were led by Gavvin Surmo with a 679 series (207, 238, 234). Three other bowlers surpassed the 600-mark, RJ Keene with a 638 series, Caleb Ehrler with a 632 series and Matthew Stahl with a 631 series. In addition, Ethan Smice had a 532 series and Caleb Brooks a 461 series. Mendota was led by Alex Holland with a 707 series.

The Oregon JV raised their record to 3-0 with a 2646-2158 victory. Oregon JV was led by Zakk West with a 497 series.

Oregon boys bowling team wins in Sterling

The Oregon Boys bowling team traveled to Blackhawk Lanes in Sterling and came away with a 3421-3161 non-conference victory. In an overall balanced team effort the Hawks were led by Matthew Stahl with a 607 series (202, 214, 191), followed closely by Gavvin Surmo 599 series, Caleb Ehrler 578 series, Caleb Brooks 555 series, RJ Keene 549 series and Ethan Smice 533 series. The win raised Oregon's season record to 5-0.

The JV team lost a close 2647-2693 decision, dropping to 3-1 on the season. Oregon JV was led by Zakk West with a 505 series.

Oregon boys bowling team competes at Plainfield North Strikefest

The Oregon Boys bowling team competed in the Plainfield North Strikefest at Joliet Town & Country Lanes on Nov. 23, 2024. The Hawks started the day in 3rd place after the morning 3-game session but struggled in the first two games of the afternoon, before rebounding in the final game of the day to finish with a 5862 series good enough for 10th place.

Oregon boys bowling team rolls at NIBPA Invite

The Oregon Boys bowling team participated in the annual NIBPA invite for NIC-10 and NIBC conference schools on Friday, Nov 29 at 4 Season in Freeport. Oregon finished the 5-game team event with a score of 4685 and an 8th place finish in the 14-school event. Leading the way for the Hawks was 12th place finisher RJ Keene with a 1041 series (258, 174, 196, 193, 220). He was followed by Gavvin Surmo 979 series, Matthew Stahl 950 series, Ethan Smice 865 series and Caleb Ehrler with an 850 series.

Oregon entered 2 JV teams into the event with Oregon Red finishing in 4th place with a 4322 series and Oregon White in 9th place with a 4017 series in the 19-team field. The Hawks JV was led by 4th place medalist Aiden Currier with a 988 series, followed by 10th place finisher Ivan Hernandez with a 953 series.

Oregon boys bowling team wins over Biggsville West Central and Abingdon-Avon

The Oregon Boys bowling team hosted a double dual match with Biggsville West Central and Abingdon-Avon on Saturday, Nov 30th at Plum Hollow Family Center in Dixon. The Hawks started the day with a 3101-1473 victory over West Central. The 5-person 3-game format match saw Oregon record its highest game of season 1176 (235 average per bowler) highlighted by Matthew Stahl's 297 game and Gavvin Surmo's 257 game. In a complete team effort, the Hawks were led by Caleb Ehrler with a 702 series (234, 213, 255), followed by Gavvin Surmo with a 651 series, Matthew Stahl 645 series, RJ Keene 581 series and Ethan Smice with a 522 series.

In the second match Oregon defeated Abingdon-Avon 2848-2316. The Hawks were once again led by Caleb Ehrler with a 610 series (180, 239, 191), followed by Gavvin Surmo 605 series, Matthew Stahl 603 series, RJ Keene 545 series and Ethan Smice with a 485 series. The JV boys received forfeits in each match but did bowl and were led in both sessions by Nolan Page with a 578 series and a 626 series.

See SPORTS page 3

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LOCAL NEWS

OGLE COUNTY SPORTS ROUNDUP

From page 2

Oregon girls bowling team splits matches with Biggsville West Central and Abingdon-Avon

The Oregon Girls bowling team hosted Biggsville West Central and Abingdon-Avon on Saturday, Nov 30th at Plum Hollow Family Center, Dixon. In the season opening match Oregon defeated West Central 1779-1556. The Hawks were led by Sa-

vannah Nagy with a 437 series (132,170,135) followed by Katlyn Miller with a 396 series, Carli Bailey with a 366 series, Ahren Howey with a 330 series and Delilia Anaya with a 250 series. In the afternoon match Oregon lost a very close 2036-2076 decision to Abingdon-Avon, in a match which saw Abingdon jump out to a 177-pin lead after 2 games, only to close the gap to 40 pins at the end of the 3rd game. Oregon was led by

Savannah Nagy with a 522 series (188,147,187) followed by Carli Bailey 484 series, Katlyn Miller 403 series, Ahren Howey 319 series and Delilia Anaya 308 series. These matches marked the return of the Oregon girls team bowling after insufficient numbers to field a team last season.

Oregon girls bowling team defeats Rockford Lutheran

The Oregon girls bowling team opened Northern IL Bowling

Conference play with a 2023-1677 victory over Rockford Lutheran at Town & Country Lanes, Mt Morris. The Lady Hawks were led by Carli Bailey with a 466 series (119,166,181) and was followed by Katie Miller 429 series, Ahren Howey 428 series, Savannah Nagy 403 series and Delilia Anaya with a 297 series. After losing the first game by 32 pines, Oregon came back to win each of the final two games and take the series

for their first conference victory and raised their season record to 2-1.

Oregon boys bowling team wins over Rockford Lutheran

The Oregon Boys bowling team started its Northern IL Bowling Conference schedule with a 3494-2647 victory over Rockford Lutheran. Leading the Hawks was Varsity newcomer Wyatt Dunbar with a 642 series (225,150,267). He was followed by Matthew Stahl with a 595 series,

Ethan Smice 579 series, Gavvin Surmo 562 series, Caleb Ehrler 561 series and RJ Keene with a 555 series. Oregon won all 5 conference standings points on the way to their first conference win and an 8-0 season record.

The JV boys bowled and won by forfeit recording a 3422 series, just shy of the Varsity score. The JV was led by Caleb Brooks with a 622 series and Aiden Currier with a 621 series.

A solution to IHSA football disparity

THE furor over private school domination in the IHSA football championships has yet to die down. If anything, it's become more pronounced, even gaining national attention. Even the sports section of the USA Today newspaper featured an article on the subject. This ain't dying down folks.

Fortunately for all parties, I have a simple solution that addresses the disparity. Details to follow later in this column.

Before that, let's analyze how we got to this juncture, one of which showed up with a 283-76 scoring advantage by the privates in the six championship games against publics. None of the games were closer than three touchdowns. Talk about yawners.

Private schools have always been in factor in the 50-year history of the playoffs. Ironically, Catholic schools had a far greater enrollment in the past than they do now.

With fewer schools and less kids, why have they become more dominant in football the last decade or so?

Could it be that priorities of parents have dramatically shifted to one more focused on athletic success for the children?

It used to be that parents were content with a quality Christian education, of which Catholic schools are noted for. If the school had a good football team, that was an added plus, but not necessarily the sole reason for attending said school.

Be it football, basketball, volleyball, etc., parents nowadays have become more concerned with that part of the experience

than the educational component. If you have a kid that is a burgeoning talent, the temptation is to send him to a football factory such as Nazareth, Montini, Joliet Catholic, Mt. Carmel or Loyola.

This is a nationwide trend and before we cast blame on the Catholic schools, let's examine what is taking place in the rest of the country.

While covering the NIU-Central Michigan football game recently, I asked a press person from Michigan what it is like there. In a somewhat opposite scenario, he stated that public schools offer a liberal form of open enrollment.

In effect, it gives certain public schools a competitive advantage against other publics and privates. He felt it was detrimental to the sports scene, as prospective athletes are more apt to take their talent to better schools — a case of the rich getting richer and poor getting poorer.

Other than Illinois, the state I am most familiar with is Utah. The primary religion is Mormon, but there is no such thing as a Mormon high school.

All the kids go to public schools. That balances the slate substantially, especially with all the athleticism among Mormon football players of Polynesian descent.

Getting back to Illinois, it is important to understand the inner workings of the IHSA relative to a citizen uprising over the public-private controversy.

First of all, the organization is not a public

taxing body. A few years ago, some of the knuckleheads in Illinois state government thought they had authority over the IHSA and tried to meddle in their affairs.

Fortunately, the Illinois Supreme Court unanimously ruled in favor of the IHSA and told the politicians to mind their own business.

Any changes in IHSA policy must come from its member schools alone. It's entirely possible that administrators from the 800 high schools aren't up in arms about the football debate like us gridiron meatballs.

I noticed an online petition protesting the private school competitive advantage. Nice grassroots effort, but this isn't about effecting change in local government.



Andy Colbert

The IHSA doesn't care about what the public thinks as much as what their school principals have to say. Bottom line, the IHSA manages its own affairs without outside interference and strives to do the best possible job in appeasing all of its schools. It's an unenviable task and those staffers have my sympathies.

I also believe they do not want to separate the private and publics, as that would create disunity.

However, things have gotten out of hand and it is time for a radical move, hence my simple solution:

Since the Catholic schools brag about how tough their league is, let them have their own ultra-competitive state tournament among themselves (only 10 percent all football-playing schools in

the state).

So we don't have Mt. Carmel beating up on Sterling Newman, break it into three enrollment divisions. With 16-team brackets, it would finish the weekend before Thanksgiving, the same time as eight-man football does.

The traditional Thanksgiving weekend would still be reserved for public schools with 32-team brackets and the same eight classes. With the privates gone, it would allow for more teams to make the final 256-school cut.

A downfall is two weekends to complete all the title games, but the IHSA has plenty of experience in that from multiple weekends of the boys and girls state basketball tournaments.

Definitely keep the public title games at Illinois State University, but consideration may be given to moving the privates to a smaller venue closer to Chicago, where many of their schools are based. The reason for a smaller site is that private school fan bases are usually less than what is found in public schools.

With only three private championship games, they could all be played on Saturday, eliminating the need to miss school on Friday.

Yes, I am contradicting myself in that the IHSA does not consider input from outsiders. But, as a columnist, I would be neglecting my duties if I did not attempt to offer a solution to what ails Illinois high school football championships.

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

BERTOLET MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Mitten Tree

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

Drop-In Winter Craft Night

Monday, December 16th from 5-7PM: Our annual winter craft night is back! Kids & Teens: Drop in to the library to make seasonal crafts to take home.

Take-A-Break BINGO

Monday, December 23rd at 2:00PM: Need a break from wrapping presents? Join us for a fun-filled time of free game play and fun prizes. You can even regift your prize if you forgot about getting Great Aunt Susan's 3rd Cousin Twice Removed a gift. Wrapping not included ;)

Stories With Stacey

Thursdays at 10:00AM: December 19th will be our last Stories With Stacey in 2024. Keep an eye out for our return in January!

December Book of the Month

In Midnight at the Christmas Bookshop by Jenny Colgan, venture back to Edinburgh to Carmen and her bookshop. Christmas is fast approaching and she's been kicked out of her sister's house, boyfriend is thousands of miles away, and a film crew has overrun the store. On top of that, the store owner has an impossible Christmas wish and

Carmen must figure out a way to save the shop. Pick up your copy today at the circulation desk.

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

Have you finished your A to Z Reading Challenge? Bring your list into the library for a prize and to be entered into the Grand Prize Drawing to be held in early January!

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 ziploc-type seals and paper/sticker labels. Thank you for your cooperation.

NEW RELEASES

Adult Books

A Choice Considered by Tracie Peterson

The Mirror by Nora Roberts

Stuart Woods' Golden Hour by Brett Battles


Chapter Books

The Ice King by Lane Walker

Picture Books

Monster Needs a Christmas Tree by Paul Czajak

Not-A-Box City by Antoinette Portis



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LOCAL NEWS

MT. MORRIS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Lego Night!
Thursday, December 19th at 6pm. Bring the family out for some awesome brick building! We will pull out #AlltheLegos for this night and kids can build whatever they can imagine. Then, they can put a name to their creation and keep it on our display for all to enjoy until the next Lego night!

Christmas Decoration Exchange
Until Friday, December 20th. 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!

Mobile Office Hours for State Representative Tony McCombie
Friday, December 20th from 11am-12:30pm. Connie Marney (District Director to Representative McCombie) will come to the Mount Morris Library for an hour and be available to discuss any concerns and questions

any person visiting may have. Ms. Marney will be available on Friday, December 20th from 11am-12:30pm. There will not be a formal presentation. Just one on one conversations with those that choose to stop by!

Cookie Decorating!
Saturday, December 21st from 11am-1pm. School's out and that means it's a great time to visit the library and give those kids something to do! Stop by on Saturday, December 21st between 11:00am-1:00pm to decorate cookies!!! We will have premade cut-out cookies and all the frosting and sprinkles needed to make a gorgeous cookie! Kids will get to take their cookie home with them to eat-or leave out for Santa!

Holiday Take-N-Make
Saturday, December 21st and December 28th. Need a little something extra to keep those kids busy while home for the holiday break? Stop by the library to grab kits to go and create crafts at home. Holiday kits will be available starting Saturday, December 21st and New Year's kits will be available starting Saturday, December 28th.

Kits are free and available to everyone in the community!

Cookbook Club
Tuesday, January 7th 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.

Ink with a Friend
Monday, January 13th at 5pm. We will be offering a card-making class from local crafter, Liz Gullett. She will be here on Monday, January 13th 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 you register. Registration is limited so call the library or stop by to save your spot before January 6th!

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 Show-

ings
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 treasures 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, 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 or call 815-734-4927.

Memorial Gifts
Give a gift that lasts, brings joy to many, and doubles 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

AREA CHURCH DIRECTORY

BYRON

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

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

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226 E. 2nd St, Byron, IL 61010 - Phone 815-234-7431 - Fr. Richard Rosinski.
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www.saintmaryinbyron.org secretary@saintmaryinbyron.org

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A Member of the United Church of Christ
701 W. Second Street; PO Box 927, Byron IL 61010, 815-234-8777
Email: ucb@comcast.net
Website: unitedchurchofbyron.org
Pastor: Rev. Tyler Spellious
Youth Ministry Coordinator: Richard Simpson
Sunday Schedule & Worship opportunities:
Service of Meditation & Prayer: 8:15am-8:45am
Adult Sunday School Hour: 9am
Kids Sunday School: (for ages 3 thru 5th grade) during the 10:30 worship
Coffee & fellowship time: 10:00am - 10:30am
Main Worship: 10:30am
Spark Youth Group (for ages 6th grade thru 12th grade) - Sundays, 5pm-7pm
For complete ministry schedule and other activities, please check our website or Facebook page or contact the church office.
Whoever you are or wherever you are on your journey, you are welcome here!

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

CHANA

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

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815-535-6990 9:30am Church Service
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Dixon IL 61021

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9:30 Church Service. Nursery available, 11:00 Sunday school for all ages.
Nursery available
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815-738-2205 leafriverbc@gmail.com

LINDENWOOD

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

LINDENWOOD UNION CHURCH
101 N Galena St, P.O. box 67, Lindenwood IL
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KINGS

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

MOUNT MORRIS

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102 N. Maple Ave., Mt. Morris, IL 61054
815-734-4853 secretary@disciplesumc.org
www.disciplesumc.org
Pastor Marcia Paddicord

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

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

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

MOUNT MORRIS OREGON

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East Oregon Chapel Church of God
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EOCCOGministries@gmail.com 107 N Daysville Rd. Oregon, IL Phone: 815-732-2960
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We look forward to meeting you!

EBENEZER REFORMED CHURCH
2997 N. German Church Rd., 815-732-6313
3 miles east of Oregon on Rt. #64 then 2 miles north on German Church Rd. • Rev. Josiah Youngquist
www.EBENEZERREFORMED.com • Sunday school 9:00 a.m. Worship 10:00 a.m.

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

LITTLE PRAIRIE MENNONITE CHURCH
1831 S Harmony Rd. Oregon, IL 61061
Worship Services: 10:00 AM Sunday Morning, 7:00 PM 1st & 3rd Sunday Evening, 7:30 PM 2nd & 4th Wednesday Evenings of the Month.
Pastor: Norman Reinford 779-861-3700

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

OREGON FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
505 Hill St. Oregon, IL 61061 Phone: 732-2642
Pastor: David Snow "A Christ-centered, Bible-believing, family-oriented ministry."
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.; Sunday Morning Service 10:45 a.m.; Sunday Afternoon Service 1:15 p.m.; Wednesday Night Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

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

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

ST. BRIDE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
1000 Highway 64, West (Hwy 64 W & Mongon Drive on Liberty Hill), Oregon 97321-7211 - Office: Rev. Eldred George
Webpage: saintbrides.org • E-mail: saint.bride.church@gmail.com
Worship Services: Sunday 10 am Holy Communion with Hymns
Christian Education Available

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

POLO

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

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

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

STILLMAN VALLEY

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

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

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

WINNEBAGO

MIDDLE CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
12473 Montague Road, Winnebago, IL 61088
Located West of Tower Road on Montague Rd.
Sunday: Worship Service at 10:30 am.
Pastor Phil Thompson
Phone: 815-335-2609. Email: middlecreekchurch@gmail.com



LOCAL NEWS

OREGON PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Library will be closed on Tuesday, December 24th, Wednesday, December 25th, Tuesday, December 31st and Wednesday, January 1st.

Preschool Story Time (18 months – 6 years). Story Time is taking a break, but will reconvene on Monday, January 25 at 10am. Stories, crafts and friends to share books... all at your Library! Registration is required, visit www.oregonpubliclibrary.com or call (815) 732-2724.

Book Clubs

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 6 pm 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. The 2WBC meets Wednesday, January 8, at 12:30 to discuss *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville.

Holiday Movie Binge Boxes - Registration continues

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 Li-

brary Card holder.

StoryWalk I Spy Contest

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

December Distraction - It's Back!

Now 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 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 details.

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

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.

Little Women: The Musical

Friday, December 20 to Sunday, December 22- An At Home Experience (in collaboration with 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. Register

at: https://bit.ly/ILP_LittleWomen

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

Craft Swap

Saturday, January 25th from 10am-3pm. What is a craft swap? "It's when you gather up all the craft supplies, materials, tools, and accessories that have been hanging out in your craft room collecting dust for a while and give them away to someone who will actually use them. You know that phrase "one person's trash is another's treasure?" That definitely applies to crafting. You may have been hanging onto the same scrapbook paper and ribbons for three years, but someone might be able to use it. So, collect your items, bring them to the Library January 23, after 5 pm or anytime Friday,

January 24. Then, come back and "shop" the swap on Saturday from 10am-3pm. If you'd like any items back after the swap that were not taken, please label with your name and phone number.

Functional Fitness

Wednesdays at 9:30am. In this class, we use exercises based on whole-body movements to restore 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.

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 com-

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

Passport Services

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

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.

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 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.

Did you know

That the Byron Library has a large collection of LPs available to check out? Vinyl records have grown in popularity again, and the library has a wide selection of records to choose from. If you don't

have a player at home to listen to them on, don't worry! The Byron Library also has a portable turntable available for checkout in our "Library of Things"!

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 Prais-

ieCat app to your phone or mobile device and log in with your library card number and PIN! You'll be able to view your checkouts and holds, renew renewable materials, and search the library catalog. There's even a digital copy of your library card!

Curbside Delivery

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

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

to pass and join in New Year's Eve fun as we ring in the noon year at 12:00. All ages are welcome for this low-key celebration.

Sponsor a Chair!

We are in the process of replacing our worn-out chairs and can use your help. For \$50.00 per chair, you can sponsor one of the new chairs we are hoping to purchase. Stop by the center during open hours (9am to 1 pm) and talk with Melissa. All help is appreciated!

ROCK RIVER CENTER ACTIVITIES

Rock River Center Activities

Rock River Center is a resource center located at 810 S. 10th 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, home-maker service, heating assistance or other things. Visit us at www.rockrivercenter.org and like us on Facebook.

Activities with Mary

Tues., December 17. Amish Xmas Tea Party: 1:00 – 1:45. Drumming: 1:45 – 2:30. Advanced Registration requested.

OJH BAND AND CHOIR CHRISTMAS

DATE: Wed., December 18. TIME: 10:30 – 11:15 A.M. Registration requested by Dec. 16.

Crocheting & Knitting Club

FORRESTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Hat and Mitten Tree

Our hat and mitten tree is up and ready for your donations of new or gently used hats, gloves, mittens, or scarves. Items received will be given to area organizations for distribution. Thank you!

Winter Book Sale

December 2nd - 21st. It's time again for our

December 19 -- 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Apple & Android Phone Lab Hour

December 19 - 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Registration Required.

RRC Christmas/New Year Holiday Hours

Rock River Center will close as follows for the Christmas holiday: 12:00 Noon on Tuesday, December 24, 2024 through Wednesday, January 1, 2025. No activities/programs, services, or transportation will take place during this time. We will reopen at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, January 2, 2025. Please schedule rides needed on January 2nd and January 3rd before our Christmas Holiday.

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. Income limits for 2025 Program Year: Family Size - 30-day gross income. 1 - \$2,510. 2 - \$3,407. 3 - \$4,303. For more details, call Tri-County office at 800-323-5434.

shopping with us!

Community Room

Looking for a place to hold your event? Our community room (with a small kitchenette) is available for meetings, parties, showers, family reunions, and more. Please call the library at (815) 938-2624 for additional information.

Stay Connected Wherever You Go!

www.oglecountylife.com

LOCAL NEWS

JULIA HULL DISTRICT LIBRARY

Storytime at the Library

Join us in person at the library for songs, stories and crafts! Ages 2-5. Wednesdays at 10 a.m. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

Holiday Pajama Party

'Twas the night before, the night before... And your little ones are filled with pent-up holiday energy! Join us at the library for games and crafts with a fun festive theme. Pajamas encouraged. Monday, Dec. 23, 6:30 p.m. Ages 5-9. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

Toddler Time: Winter Sensory Bins

Indulge your little one's curiosity with a hands-on event just for them. Join us for some tactile play using a variety of sensory bins with a wintery twist! Friday, January 3, 10 a.m. Ages 1-4. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

Puzzle Palooza!

Because... we just fit!

Teams of 2-4 will face off to see who can assemble the same 500-piece jigsaw puzzle in 90 minutes! Prizes will be given to first, second and third-place finishers. Space is limited. Register your team early by calling the library at 815-645-8611. Saturday, Jan. 4, 2 p.m.

Tween Scene: Taste Test: Chip Challenge

How many flavors of potato chips can you identify? We'll quiz your expertise in this blind test to see whose taste buds reign supreme...before we vote on our favorite. Ages 10-13. Tuesday, January 7, 6 p.m. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

Meet your Cricut

"Help! Santa brought me a Cricut and I haven't even taken it out of the box!" Never fear, your Crafty Librarians are here! This class will introduce you to the very basics of using a Cricut: how to set it up, how to use Cricut Design Space, how to install



Last week, families worked together to search for clues to solve puzzles and win prizes at Julia Hull District Library's annual holiday festival.



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

a blade and must have vs. nice to have accessories and materials. Thursday, January 9, 6 p.m. Adults only. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

Yong Critics Book Club

Join us for a discussion and hands-on craft/activ-

ity all about the book *The Power of Her Pen* by Lesa Cline-Ransom. Tuesday, January 21, 6 p.m. Ages 7-9. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

European Travel 2025 Updates

Thinking about planning a European vacation

this year? The rules for European travel are about to change. Join frequent fliers, Joanna and Wayne, as they share the scoop on Europe's new ETIAS program requiring US travelers to obtain travel visas. Plus, we'll cover other important EU trav-

el news and trends for 2025. Monday, January 27, 6 p.m. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

Library Holiday Hours

The library will be closed December 24, 25, and 31 and January 1 for the holidays.

Weekly Brain Busters

King Crossword

ACROSS
1 Nuisance
5 Emmy winner Alan
9 Blond shade
12 Actor Epps
13 — -do-well
14 Female rabbit
15 Biscuit type
17 Poetic tribute
18 Big bargains
19 Himalayan land
21 Baseball's Cobb
22 Meager
24 Boxing arbiters
27 Hasten
28 Flintstones' pet
31 Capote nickname
32 Very long time
33 Itinerary word
34 Long tale
36 Boring routine
37 Superman's alias
38 Alphabetized list
40 Yours truly
41 Lauder of cosmetics
43 Tyke
47 Marseilles monarch
48 Relating to the intellect

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

51 Calendar abbr.

52 Sandwich treat

53 Exploits

54 Away from WSW

55 Canine cry

56 Section

DOWN

1 Seed holders

2 Send forth

3 Stuffing herb

4 Goodies

5 Picnic interlopers

6 Maui memento

7 "Lion" star Patel

8 Stadium

9 Like some parents

10 Fizzy drink

11 Cad

16 Devious

20 Conclusion

22 Crazy Horse, for one

23 Penny

24 ACLU concerns

25 Time line period

26 Escapee

27 Roll call reply

29 French diarist Anais

30 Feedbag tidbit

35 Hydrocarbon suffix

37 Didn't lag

39 Shill

40 French pronoun

41 Sea eagle

42 Any time now

43 L-Q bridge

44 Tower city

45 Always

46 Try out

49 Raw rock

50 Solidify

MAGIC MAZE • NIGHT —

MQNKHDA XURPMJGD

ATNX TVSQNKIFDNH

BEFORECHRISTMAS

AXV I I E T Q O M J H W M S

F C A Y H S L E W U L K R H E

P N L J S S I W D H O C F C N

D B Z X V T G V A A O I R T D

Q O M K I H H F D R H T O A N

B Z Y W V T T B U L C S R W I

Q O N L K I D N A T S H O F L

D C A Z X W V U S R Q G O N B

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally

Unlisted clue hint: BIRD THAT GIVES A HOOT

- Before Christmas

Blindness

Club

Crawler
- Gown

Hawk

Light

School
- Shade

Shift

Shirt

Stand
- Stick

Vision

Watchman

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Weekly SUDOKU

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦

♦ Moderate

♦♦ Challenging

♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1 Boy's legs are longer. 2. Tree is moved. 3. Stocking is shorter. 4. Woman's leg is longer. 5. Belt is shorter. 6. Robe collar is different.

Solution time: 25 mins.

Answers

King Crossword

BEFORECHRISTMAS

NIGHT

Answer

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
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Classified Marketplace

BUY OR SELL
Place A Classified Ad



OGLE COUNTY • OGLE COUNTY • OGLE COUNTY • OGLE COUNTY

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)

NOTICE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

STS Hydropower, LLC
Project No. 2446-052
NOTICE OF APPLICANT ACCEPTED FOR FILING, SOLICITING MOTIONS TO INTERVENE AND PROTESTS, READY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS, AND SOLICITING COMMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS, TERMS AND CONDITIONS, AND FISHWAY PRESCRIPTIONS
(December 4, 2024)
Take notice that the following hydroelectric application has been filed with the Commission and is available for public inspection.
a. Type of Application: New Major License
b. Project No.: 2446-052
c. Date filed: August 30, 2022
d. Applicant: STS Hydropower, LLC (STS Hydropower)
e. Name of Project: Dixon Hydroelectric Project (Dixon Project)
f. Location: On the Rock River near the City of Dixon in Lee and Ogle Counties, Illinois.
g. Filed Pursuant to: Federal Power Act 16 U.S.C. §§ 791 (a) - 825(r)
h. Applicant Contact: Mr. David Fox, Senior Director of Regulatory Affairs, Eagle Creek RE Management, LLC, 7315 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1100W, Bethesda, Maryland 20814, (240) 724-8765, david.fox@eaglecreekre.com
i. FERC Contact: Laura Washington (202) 502-6072, Laura.Washington@ferc.gov
j. Deadline for filing motions to intervene and protests, comments, recommendations, terms and conditions, and fishway prescriptions: 60 days from the issuance date of this notice; reply comments are due 105 days from the issuance date of this notice.
The Commission strongly encourages electronic filing. Please file motions to intervene and protests, comments, recommendations, terms and conditions, and fishway

prescriptions using the Commission's eFiling system at <http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/efiling.asp>. Commenters can submit brief comments up to 6,000 characters, without prior registration, using the eComment system at <http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/ecomment.asp>. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support at FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov, (866) 208-3676 (toll free), or (202) 502-8659 (TTY). In lieu of electronic filing, you may submit a paper copy. Submissions sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be addressed to: Debbie-Anne A. Reese, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street NE, Room 1A, Washington, DC 20426. Submissions sent via any other carrier must be addressed to: Debbie-Anne A. Reese, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 12225 Wilkins Avenue, Rockville, Maryland 20852. All filings must clearly identify the project name and docket number on the first page: Dixon Hydroelectric Project (P-2446-052). The Commission's Rules of Practice require all intervenors filing documents with the Commission to serve a copy of that document on each person on the official service list for the project. Further, if an intervenor files comments or documents relating to the merits of an issue that may affect the responsibilities of a particular resource agency, they must also serve a copy of the document on that resource agency.
k. This application has been accepted for filing and is now ready for environmental analysis.
l. The Dixon Hydroelectric Project consists of the following existing facilities: (1) a 305.9-acre reservoir with a gross storage capacity of 1,530 acre-feet at a maximum reservoir surface elevation of 647.08 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929 (NGVD 29); (2) a 130-foot-wide by 18-foot-deep forebay located immediately upstream of the powerhouse; (3) a succession of dam structures including, from left to right looking downstream: (i) a 250-foot-long powerhouse integral with the dam equipped with 200-foot-wide by 15-foot-high trash racks with 5-inch clear spacing, (ii) a 114-foot-long by 24-foot-high forebay wall set perpendicular to the dam that ties the powerhouse and fender wall to the dam, (iii) a 286-foot-long fender wall located upstream of the project forebay extending from the upstream end of the fender wall to the south riverbank, and (iv) a 610-foot-long north overflow dam extending from the forebay wall to the north riverbank, topped with 16-inch flashboards; (4) five vertical-shaft turbine-generating units, each with a maximum hydraulic capacity of 1,100 cubic feet per second, for a total installed capacity of 3,200 kilowatts; (5) a 30-foot-long, 34.5-kilovolt (kV) transmission line conveying project power to the point of interconnection via two 2.3-kV transformers; and (6) appurtenant facilities.
The Dixon Project includes one project recreation facility, the Dixon canoe portage. The Dixon Project is currently operated in a run-of-river mode and generates an annual average of approximately 14,995 megawatt-hours. STS Hy-

dropower proposes to continue operating the project as a run-of-river facility and does not propose any new construction. STS Hydropower proposes modifications to the current project boundary. The proposed project boundary would include STS Hydropower-owned lands that include project facilities. The proposed project boundary has been modified to: (1) extend 400 feet downstream to include all STS Hydropower-owned lands that include the tailrace fishing area; (2) remove lands that are over elevation 647.04 feet NGVD 29 that are not necessary for project operation; and (3) remove several archeological sites that are not impounded by the project dam. The current project boundary encompasses 2583.17 acres, which includes 806.67 acres of project lands and 1,776.5 acres of sub-merged land. The proposed project boundary would include approximately 399.14 acres, 84.84 acres of which is land and 314.3 acres of which is inundated. m. A copy of the application can be viewed on the Commission's website at <http://www.ferc.gov> using the "eLibrary" link. Enter the docket number excluding the last three digits in the docket number field to access the document (i.e., P-2446). For assistance, contact FERC Online Support.
n. Anyone may submit comments, a protest, or a motion to intervene in accordance with the requirements of Rules of Practice and Procedure, 18 CFR §§ 385.210, .211, and .214. In determining the appropriate action to take, the Commission will consider all protests or other comments filed, but only those who file a motion to intervene in accordance with the Commission's Rules may become a party to the proceeding. Any comments, protests, or motions to intervene must be received on or before the specified comment date for the particular application. All filings must (1) bear in all capital letters the title "PROTEST", "MOTION TO INTERVENE", "COMMENTS," "REPLY COMMENTS," "RECOMMENDATIONS," "TERMS AND CONDITIONS," or "FISHWAY PRESCRIPTIONS"; (2) set forth in the heading the name of the applicant and the project number of the application to which the filing responds; (3) furnish the name, address, and telephone number of the person protesting or intervening; and (4) otherwise comply with the requirements of 18 CFR §§ 385.2001 through 385.2005. All comments, recommendations, terms and conditions or prescriptions must set forth their evidentiary basis and otherwise comply with the requirements of 18 CFR § 4.34(b). Agencies may obtain copies of the application directly from the applicant. A copy of any protest or motion to intervene must be served upon each representative of the applicant specified in the particular application. A copy of all other filings in reference to this application must be accompanied by proof of service on all persons listed in the service list prepared by the Commission in this proceeding, in accordance with 18 CFR §§ 4.34(b) and 385.2010. The Commission's Office of Public Participation (OPP) supports meaningful public engagement and participation in Commission

proceedings. OPP can help members of the public, including landowners, environmental justice communities, Tribal members and others, access publicly available information and navigate Commission processes. For public inquiries and assistance with making filings such as interventions, comments, or requests for rehearing, the public is encouraged to contact OPP at (202) 502-6595 or OPP@ferc.gov. You may also register online at <https://ferconline.ferc.gov/FERConline.aspx> to be notified via email of new filings and issuances related to this or other pending projects. For assistance, contact FERC Online Support.
o. The license applicant must file no later than 60 days following the date of issuance of this notice: (1) a copy of the water quality certification; (2) a copy of the request for certification, including proof of the date on which the certifying agency received the request; or (3) evidence of waiver of water quality certification.
p. Procedural schedule: The application will be processed according to the following schedule. Revisions to the schedule will be made as appropriate.
Milestone
Deadline for filing comments, recommendations, terms and conditions, and prescriptions
Target Date
February 2025
Milestone
Deadline for filing reply comments
Target Date
March 2025
q. Final amendments to the application must be filed with the Commission no later than 30 days from the issuance date of this notice.
Debbie-Anne A. Reese, Secretary.
No. 1215
(December 16, 2024)

NOTICE ORDINANCE NO. 2024-4 A SPILLER PAYS ORDINANCE FOR THE MONROE TOWNSHIP FIRE AND AMBULANCE PROTECTION DISTRICT, OGLE COUNTY, ILLINOIS

WHEREAS, the Monroe Township Fire and Ambulance Protection District ("MTFPD") is a fire protection district duly organized under the laws of the State of Illinois; and, WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees (the "Board") of the MTFPD has full power pursuant to Section 6 of the Fire Protection District Act to pass all necessary ordinances, and rules and regulations for the proper management and conduct of the business of the Board for carrying into effect the objects for which the District was formed (70 ILCS 705/6); and, WHEREAS, the Board desires to create an Ordinance that addresses the financial responsibilities of persons or entities that cause hazardous materials to be spilled in the district, requiring emergency response by MTFPD personnel. NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of the MTFPD as follows: **SECTION 1: DEFINITIONS:** As used in this Ordinance, the following terms shall have the following meanings: **COSTS:** All expenses incurred by MTFPD for any removal or remedial action. **FACILITY:** Any building, structure, installation, equipment, pipe or pipeline including but not limited to any pipe into a sewer or

publicly owned treatment works, well, pond, lagoon, impoundment, ditch, landfill, storage container, tank, motor vehicle, truck trailer, rolling stock or aircraft. Also, any site or area where a hazardous material has been deposited, stored, disposed of, abandoned, placed, or otherwise come to be located. **HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:** Any material, substance or mixture of materials or substances which are toxic, flammable, corrosive, explosive, carcinogenic or radioactive including, but not limited to natural gas and/or, any substance or material which is designated a hazardous material pursuant to the "Hazardous Materials Transportation Act" (49 U.S.C. §5101 et seq.) in a quantity and form which may pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health, property or the environment when improperly released, treated, stored, transported, disposed of, or otherwise managed. **MUTUAL AID:** Any action taken by or pursuant to an inter-governmental agreement. **PERSON** Any individual, business, firm, partnership, corporation, association, trust, estate, joint venture or other legal entity, or their legal representative, agent or assign. **RELEASE:** Any spilling, leaking, pumping, pouring, emitting, emptying, discharging, injecting, leaching, dumping or disposing of a hazardous material into or on any land, air, water well, stream, sewer or pipe so that such hazardous material or any constituent thereof may enter the environment. **REMEDIAL ACTION:** Any action consistent with permanent, remedy taken instead of, or in addition to, removal actions in the event of a release or threatened release of a hazardous material into the environment, to prevent or minimize the release of hazardous materials so that they do not migrate to cause a substantial present or potential hazard to human health, property or the environment. The term includes, but is not limited to, such actions at the location of the release as storage, confinement, perimeter protection using dikes, trenches, or ditches, clay cover, neutralization, cleanup of released hazardous materials, recycling or reuse, diversion, destruction, segregation of reactive wastes, repair or replacement of leaking containers, collection of leachate and runoff, onsite treatment or incineration, provision of alternate water supplies, and any monitoring reasonably required to assure that such actions protect the public health and welfare and the environment. **REMOVAL:** The cleanup or removal of released hazardous materials from the environment, such actions as may be necessary or appropriate to monitor, assess, and evaluate the release or threat of release of hazardous materials, the disposal of removed material, or the taking of such action as may be necessary to prevent, minimize, or mitigate damage to the public health or welfare of the environment. The term includes, but is not limited to, security fencing, provision of alternative water supplies, and temporary evacuation of threatened individuals. **RESPONSE:** Any removal or remedial action. **SECTION 2: PROHIB-**

ITED ACTS: No person shall cause, threaten or allow the release of hazardous materials into the environment unless such release is in accordance with an appropriate permit granted by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency or other State or Federal agency having primary jurisdiction over the release and such release is in such place and manner as will not create a substantial present or potential hazard to human health, property or the environment. **SECTION 3: RESPONSE AUTHORITY:** A. The Fire Chief or his authorized representative shall have authority to respond to any release or threatened release of hazardous materials within the district or affecting the public water supply, wells or sewage treatment works located within the district. This authority includes, but is not limited to, remedial action and removal. B. The Fire Chief shall have primary authority to respond to any release or threatened release of hazardous materials as described above. The Fire Chief shall report any release or threatened release of hazardous materials to all appropriate Federal, State and local public health, safety and emergency agencies within twenty-four (24) hours of any substantial release of hazardous materials. The Fire Chief shall relinquish his response authority at such time, if any, as the Federal, State or local public health, safety or emergency agency having primary jurisdiction over the release or threatened release has assumed responsibility for response to the release or threatened release. C. The Fire Chief, during such time as response authority is vested in him, shall be authorized to utilize all District personnel and equipment and he may, in his sole discretion, take such remedial or removal action as he may deem necessary or appropriate to respond to the release or threatened release of hazardous material including the use of material and in accordance with any Mutual Aid Box Alarm System ("MABAS") agreements. D. All responding personnel shall cooperate with and operate under the direction of the Fire Chief or other person then exercising response authority under this Ordinance until such time as the person exercising such response authority has determined that the response is complete or responsibility for response is assumed by the Federal, State or local public health, safety or emergency agency having primary jurisdiction over the release or threatened release. E. The person exercising response authority under this Ordinance shall coordinate and/or cooperate with other Federal, State or local public health, safety or emergency agencies involved in response to the release or threatened release of hazardous materials. **SECTION 4: LIABILITY FOR COSTS:** Notwithstanding any other provision or rule of law, and subject only to the defenses set forth in this Ordinance, the following persons shall be jointly and severally liable for all costs of removal and remedial action incurred by MTFPD as a result of a release or threatened release of a hazardous material: A. The owner and operator of a facility or vessel from which there is a release or substantial threat of release of a hazardous material.

B. Any person who, at the time of disposal, transport, storage or treatment of a hazardous material, owned or operated the facility or vessel used for such disposal, transport, treatment or storage from which there was a release or substantial threat of a release of any such hazardous material. C. Any person who by contract, agreement, or otherwise has arranged with another party or entity for transport, storage, disposal or treatment of hazardous materials owned, controlled or possessed by such person at a facility owned or operated by another party or entity from which facility there is a release or substantial threat of a release of such hazardous materials. D. Any person who accepts or accepted any hazardous materials for transport to disposal, storage or treatment facilities or sites from which there is a release or a substantial threat of release of such hazardous substances. **SECTION 5: DEFENSES:** There shall be no liability under this Ordinance for a person otherwise liable who can establish by a preponderance of the evidence that the release or substantial threat of release of a hazardous material and the damages resulting therefrom were caused solely by: A. An act of nature over which he or she had no control; B. An act of war; or C. Any combination of the foregoing. **SECTION 6: COSTS AND PENALTIES:** A. Any person who is liable for the release or threatened release of a hazardous material who fails without sufficient cause to pay for or provide removal or remedial action upon or in accordance with a notice and request of MTFPD, or in accordance with any order of any court having jurisdiction on the matter, shall be liable to MTFPD for any costs incurred as a result of such failure to provide or take such removal or remedial action taken in accordance with the Ordinance, and all attorneys fees and related legal costs incurred in connection therewith. B. In addition, any such person shall be guilty of a violation of this Ordinance and shall be fined not less than one hundred dollars (\$100.00) or more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) for each offense. A separate offense shall be deemed committed for each day on which a violation occurs or continues. Where such violation is found to be the result of willful and/or wanton conduct or gross negligence, or the person committing such violation attempts to evade responsibility hereunder by leaving the scene of the occurrence or by other means, that person shall be subject to a fine as provided for above or a fine in an amount equal to three times the costs, including attorneys' fees and legal costs, for which it is liable under Paragraph A, whichever is greater. C. Charges for removal or remedial action when rendered by MTFPD or any agency in accordance with any mutual aid agreement shall be as follows: 1- The cost of vehicles as determined by the responding agency, but in no case less than \$250.00 per hour per vehicle; and 2- The cost of all personnel including any over time cost to MTFPD or to any responding agency, incurred as a result of

the removal or remedial action, but in no case less than \$70.00 per hour; and 3- The cost of all materials and equipment used, expended, depleted, destroyed or removed from service in accordance with federal, state or local ordinance as a result of the mitigation or containment operations or at the request of MTFPD or any responding agency; and 4- The costs of service and/or goods provided by a private or public entity which are used, expended, depleted or destroyed as a result of the response. **Section 7:** This Ordinance shall supersede any ordinances or motions or parts of ordinances or motions in conflict with any part herein, and any such ordinances or motions or parts of such ordinances are hereby repealed. **Section 8:** If any section, paragraph or provisions of the Ordinance shall be held invalid or unenforceable for any reason, such invalidity or unenforceability shall not affect any of the remaining provisions of this Ordinance. **Section 9:** It is found and determined that all formal actions of this Board concerning and relating to the adoption of this Ordinance were adopted in open meetings of this Board, and that all deliberations of this Board and any of its committees that resulted in such formal actions were in accordance with all legal requirements by Illinois Law. **Section 10:** This Ordinance, after the adoption thereof, shall be published in The Ogle County Life, a newspaper of general circulation within said District within thirty (30) days after its passage and shall take effect ten (10) days after it is so published as provided by law (70 ILCS 705/7). Adopted and approved on this 5th day of December 2024 with 3 Ayes, 0 Nays, and 1 absent. BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MONROE TOWNSHIP FIRE AND AMBULANCE PROTECTION DISTRICT
No. 1216
(December 16, 2024)

NOTICE IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OGLE COUNTY, ILLINOIS

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, Plaintiff, V. CASEY'S RETAIL COMPANY, an Iowa Corporation; EILEEN J. ANDERSON, KEITH E. ANDERSON; UNKNOWN OWNERS, and NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS, Defendants. Case No. 2024ED 1 Parcel No. 2092003 2092003TE JURY DEMAND **NOTICE BY PUBLICATION.** Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants That this case has been commenced in this Court against you and other defendants, praying for the acquisition for the use of the people of the State of Illinois for highway purposes, the premises described as follows, to-wit: See Exhibits "A" and "B," attached hereto and made a part hereof. NOW, THEREFORE, UNLESS YOU file your answer or otherwise file your appearance in this case in the Office of the Clerk of this Court: Clerk of the Circuit Court Ogle County Courthouse 105 S. 5th Street Oregon, Illinois

Classified Marketplace

BUY OR SELL
Place A Classified Ad



OGLE COUNTY • OGLE COUNTY • OGLE COUNTY • OGLE COUNTY

61061
on or before February 7, 2024, A DEFAULT MAY BE ENTERED AGAINST YOU AT ANY TIME AFTER THAT DAY AND A JUDGMENT MAY BE ENTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRAYER OF SAID COMPLAINT.

Prepared by:
Emily R. Vivian, ARDC #6290977
Special Assistant Attorney General

Ehrmann Gehlbach Badger & Considine, LLC

114 E. Everett Street, Suite 300
Dixon, IL 61021
(815) 288-4949
(815) 288-3068 (FAX)
vivian@egbclaw.com
EXHIBIT A

Owner Casey's Retail Company, an Iowa corporation
Route FAP 316 (IL 26) & FAP 549 (IL 72)
County Ogle
Job No. R-92-009-20
Parcel No. 2092003
P.I.N. No. 02-33-207-017
Section (2,3,4)RS-7 & 115SW
Station 376+00
Station 376+11
LAND

That part of the Illinois Central Railroad Company f/k/a Illinois Central Gulf Railroad, abandoned Amboy District in the Northeast Quarter of Section 33, Township 25 North, Range 8 East of the Fourth Principal Meridian, Ogle County, State of Illinois, with bearings and grid distances referenced to the Illinois State Plane Coordinate System, West Zone NAO 83 (2011 ADJ), with a combined factor of 0.99993535, described as follows:

Commencing at the northwest corner of Lot 1 0 in Block 7 in the Town of Forreston commonly known as Neal's Addition, being a subdivision of part of the Northeast Quarter of Section 33, Township 25 North, Range 8 East of the Fourth Principal Meridian, according to the plat thereof recorded January 25, 1855 in Book A of Misc., Pages 108-109 in the Recorder's Office of Ogle County; thence South 84 degrees 36 minutes 25 seconds West on the westerly extension of the northerly line of said Lot 1 0, a distance of 50.09 feet to the existing westerly right of way line of a public road designated North Oak Avenue; thence South 25 degrees 32 minutes 07 seconds East on said existing westerly right of way line. 24.91 feet to the Point of Beginning.

From said Point of Beginning: thence continuing South 25 degrees 32 minutes 07 seconds East on said existing westerly right of way line. 24.91 feet to the Point of Beginning.

From said Point of Beginning: thence continuing South 25 degrees 32 minutes 07 seconds East on said existing westerly right of way line. 15.49 feet to the existing northerly right of way line of a public road designated Illinois Route 72; thence South 64 degrees 09 minutes 50 seconds West on said existing northerly right of way line. 11.23 feet; thence North 21 degrees 45 minutes 27 seconds East, 9.67 feet; thence North 00 degrees 52 minutes 26 seconds West. 9.89 feet to the Point of Beginning, containing 69 square feet. more or less (area based on ground distances).

EXHIBIT B
Owner Casey's Retail Company, an Iowa corporation

Route FAP 316 (IL 26) & FAP 549 (IL 72)
County Ogle
Job No. R-92-009-20
Parcel No. 2092003TE
P.I.N. No. 02-33-207-017

Section (2,3,4)RS-7 & 115SW
Station 375+75
Station 376+11
EASEMENT

Jeff Winterland, Road Commissioner Pine Rock Township

That part of the Illinois Central Railroad Company f/k/a Illinois Central Gulf Railroad, abandoned Amboy District in the Northeast Quarter of Section 33, Township 25 North, Range 8 East of the Fourth Principal Meridian, Ogle County, State of Illinois, with bearings and grid distances referenced to the Illinois State Plane Coordinate System, West Zone NAO 83 (2011 ADJ), with a combined factor of 0.99993535, described as follows:

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From said Point of Beginning: thence continuing South 25 degrees 32 minutes 07 seconds East on said existing westerly right of way line. 14.91 feet to the Point of Beginning, containing 197 square feet. more or less (area based on ground distances).
No. 1217
(Dec. 16, 23 and 30, 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.

103 AUCTIONS

AUCTION
Weekly New Old Stock Tool Liquidation #16 Bidding Open NOW, Ending December 21st, 5PM
10307 South Michigan Ave Chicago, IL 60605, old stock tool liquidation brands like Starrett, Scherr Tumico, Klein, Rigid, Dewalt, Milwaukee, Makita, Machine & Regular shop tools and many more! See link on our auction calendar page for terms and conditions. www.taylorauction.net
Mark Taylor IL#237
Questions Zach 618-944-0086.

105 BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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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

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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

203 HELP WANTED

(815) 509-5652
No. 1218
(December 15, 2024)

NOTICE IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OGLE COUNTY, ILLINOIS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: MARY A. WEBB, deceased.

NO. 2024-PR-57
CLAIM NOTICE
NOTICE IS GIVEN of the death of Mary A. Webb of Mt. Morris, Illinois. Letters of office were issued on December 5, 2024, to Dawn Marie Manser of Mt. Morris, Illinois, whose attorney is David A. Smith, of Smith, Birkholz & Morrow, P.C. at 129 South Fourth Street, P. O. Box 10, Oregon, Illinois, 61061-0010.

CLAIMS against the estate may be filed in the office of the Clerk of the Court at Ogle County Judicial Center, 106 South 5th Street, Oregon, Illinois, 61061, or with the representative, or both, within 6 months from the first publication of this Notice, or within three months from the date of mailing or delivery of Notice to creditors, if mailing or delivery is required by Section 18-3 of the Illinois Probate Act, 1975, as amended, whichever date is later. Any claim not filed within that period is barred.

Copies of claims filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the estate legal representative and to the attorney within 10 days after the claim has been filed.

Dawn Marie Manser Independent Executor
No. 1219
(Dec. 16, 23 and 30, 2024)

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10307 South Michigan Ave Chicago, IL 60605, old stock tool liquidation brands like Starrett, Scherr Tumico, Klein, Rigid, Dewalt, Milwaukee, Makita, Machine & Regular shop tools and many more! See link on our auction calendar page for terms and conditions. www.taylorauction.net
Mark Taylor IL#237
Questions Zach 618-944-0086.

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203 HELP WANTED

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103 AUCTIONS

ANNUAL NEW YEARS ANTIQUE ONLINE AUCTION
hacksauction.hibid.com

AUCTION PREVIEW: SAT., DEC. 21ST, 2024—9 A.M. TO 2 P.M.

AUCTION OPENS: SAT., DEC. 21ST @ 8 A.M.

HACK'S ANTIQUE AUCTION CENTER - 400 W. THIRD ST, PECATONICA
Featuring The Richard A. Sunko Estate; Early Antique Phonographs & Horns (20+); Cylinder & Disc Records; Adv.; Clocks; Lighting; Automotive; Military; Historical Books; Lion Model Train Collection; Vintage Toys; Perdew Crow Decoys; Country Store, Primitives; Americana, Folk Art; Weather Vanes; Cast Iron; Old Tool Collection; Gurley Brass Survey Transits; Native American Arrowheads & Artifacts; Sterling Silver Flatware; Many Other Fines Antiques & Collectibles. **Great Selection!**

Hack's
Greg & Swan Hachmeister, Auctioneers
Pecatonica, IL 815-239-1436
www.hacksauction.com
I.A.F.L. #44000128

PERSONAL PROPERTY AUCTION
1126 WHITE ROCK DRIVE, DIXON, IL 61021
Thursday, December 19th 8AM to Sunday, December 22nd 5PM
This is an Online Auction.

Please visit <https://aandtauctionservices.hibid.com/> for full sale viewing beginning 12/18/2024. Pictures will be uploaded prior to that date as they are available.

Personal Property: Household items; good selection of furniture—outdoor, indoor, and patio; lamps; decorative items; glassware & knick-knacks—many nature themed; records & VHS tapes; kitchen items; garage items—hand tools, power tools, and more; outdoor equipment—kayaks and canoe; boating items and accessories; Husqvarna riding mower; case riding mowers (older); snowblower; and much, much more! Large selection of very nice items.

Item Viewing: Items will be available for online viewing @ 8am on 12/18/2024. If you wish for more information on an item or an appointment to view an item, please contact A & T Auction Services directly.

Pick-Up: will be held on Monday, December 23rd from 12:00pm-7:00pm at the sale site listed above. Pick-up details will be shared with all winning bidders at the conclusion of the auction.

Terms & Conditions: This is an absolute sale. There will be a 10% Buyer's Premium added to all items sold. Items can be purchased with cash, GOOD check, or credit card. There will be a 3.5% fee added to any credit card transaction.

Follow A & T Auction Services on Facebook for more information!
Travis Cunningham,
Auctioneer IL Lic. # 441.002600
A & T Auction Services, LLC
atauctionservices@gmail.com
815-297-4595

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

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

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

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

601 VEHICLES FOR SALE

For Sale - Compton - 2012 Cadillac SRX - 112,856 Miles - All New Brakes, Rotors & Linings Tires, Like New - Call 815-757-8840 - (OCL 122324)

A&T Auction Services, LLC
Travis Cunningham
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Located in Forreston, IL

Lenny Bryson
Sales Of All Kinds
815-946-4120

Hack's Auction & Realty Service, Inc.
Auctions - Real Estate Appraisals
Online Auctions
Now Available
Pecatonica, IL
815-239-1436
Hacksauction.com

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Sales of All Kinds
5936 S. Watertown Rd.
Ashton, IL
847-878-1491

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203 HELP WANTED

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Classified Marketplace

BUY OR SELL
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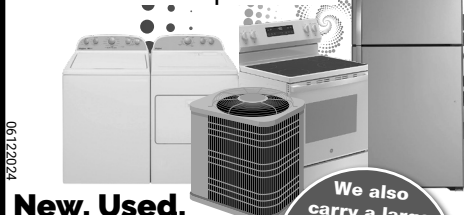


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307 MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE

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.

309 PETS AND SUPPLIES

2 Male Puppies for sale 11 wks \$350
1/4 St Bernard
1/4 New Foundland
1/2 Grt Pyrenees
Will be big dogs

Great family or farm dogs
Good with children, cats and animals
Wormed twice and 2 sets of shots
Parents & older sister on site
One colored 1 like Snoopy, 1 light saint

Polo-Forreston area
For pictures and info call or text Ted
at 815-973-4733

PIA#53

409 LOTS AND ACREAGE

Land For Sale

4.89 Acres of wooded hunting ground
Just north of Freeport
Not Buildable

Lots of deer, turkey, and squirrels

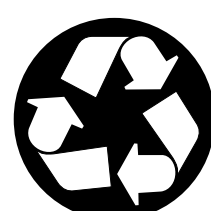
2 elevated wooden stands
Next to Jane Adams bike trail and Canoe launch on Pecatonica River
\$35,000

Call John for more details
at 815-277-6642

PIA#51

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'



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AUCTION SECTION

Deadlines
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Call 815-732-2156



Six out of 10 Americans rely on a local newspaper for advertising information about local businesses.
*Source: America's Newspapers

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

Your First & Foremost Local Advertising Solution



Let us help you promote your business.
Call 815.561.2125 or email cgrimm@oglecountylife.com!

62%

of consumers plan to *shop more at local businesses*
according to Intuit Inc.

It's Flexible.

With a variety of ad shapes, sizes, and niche sections, choose from several options to meet your goals and budget!

It's Trusted.

Newspapers still rank highest among all media for consumer engagement and trust.

Here's why local newspaper advertising pays:

It's Cost-Effective.

Newspaper advertising reaches a large number of potential consumers.

It Has Staying Power.

A print newspaper ad doesn't disappear, meaning your audience will see it when they have time to focus.

It Reaches the Right Audience.

Newspapers reach an affluent and engaged local audience.

It Gets Results.

Newspaper ads increase marketing ROI by three times on average, according to a study from Newsworks.



With Our Thanks,
Happy Holidays!

The greatest gifts are the people who bring warmth to our hearts and smiles to our faces. Thank you for brightening our days with your visits. We hope the holiday season and the coming year deliver all of the wonderful things you deserve. **Best wishes from all of us!**

Ogle County Life



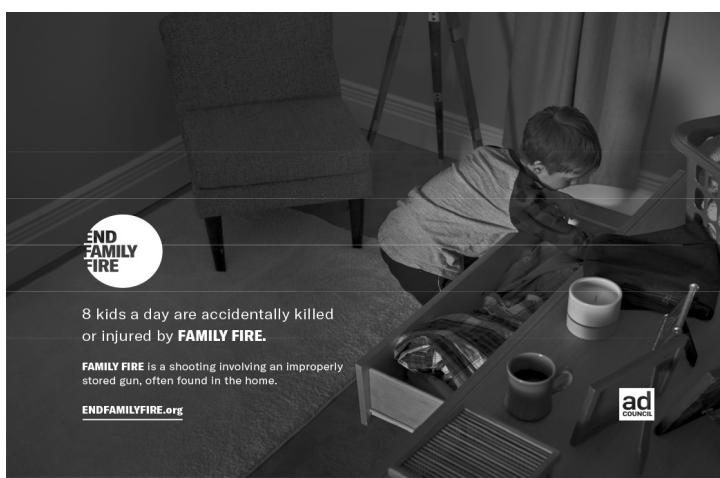
Targeted Local Advertising

Reach an engaged and affluent local audience when you promote your business here. This is a neighborhood-by-neighborhood guide to local shopping, dining, events and more, making it a highly effective place for your business to advertise directly to the consumer.



To learn more about advertising, contact one of our helpful ad consultants today.
815-732-2156

OGLE COUNTY
LIFE
ROCK VALLEY SHOPPER



END FAMILY FIRE

8 kids a day are accidentally killed or injured by FAMILY FIRE.

FAMILY FIRE is a shooting involving an improperly stored gun, often found in the home.

ENDFAMILYFIRE.org

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BUZZED DRIVING IS DRUNK DRIVING

NHTSA ad COUNCIL

LOCAL NEWS

FSB Shannon-Polo-Lake Carroll announces promotions, new hire

SHANNON — Robin Wilhelms Saar, president and CEO of First State Bank Shannon-Polo-Lake Carroll, has announced the promotion of Allyson Roling to relationship banker specializing in lending. Over the past year, Allyson has diligently trained in consumer and mortgage lending, demonstrating an exceptional commitment to professional growth and excellence.

Her dedication to providing outstanding customer service and building lasting relationships with clients has set her apart as a true asset to our FSB

team. Known for her kindness, warmth, and genuine care for others, Allyson consistently goes above and beyond to ensure that every customer feels valued and supported. Her ability to listen, understand, and meet the unique needs of our customers reflects her passion for making a positive difference in their lives.

Meighan
Robin Wilhelms Saar, president and CEO of First State Bank Shannon-Polo-Lake Carroll, has announced the promotion of Mike Meighan to operations specialist.

Mike's excellent customer service skills, and operations knowledge makes him exceptionally well-suited for this role. In this position, Mike will focus on bookkeeping functions, operations duties, and customer service. His strong public relations skills will be used to develop new business as well as strengthen business relationships with existing customers through various bank products and services, including bank on-line offerings and new technology products.

Kurschner
Robin Wilhelms Saar,



Allyson Roling
president and CEO of First State Bank Shannon-Polo-Lake Carroll, has announced an addition to FSB Polo: Tess Kurschner - relationship banker.



Mike Meighan
CSR team as a relationship banker. Tess will be learning all aspects of customer service including imaging and bookkeeping duties. Tess comes to us with a great passion for the commu-



Tess Kurschner
nity, strong community relationships and the skill set needed to excel in the banking industry. In her free time Tess enjoys reading and writing and spending time with her cats, my dog, and family!



(COURTESY PHOTOS)
The Julia Hull District Library, which won Most Creative & Original Tree, had a "See the Word. Visit your local library!" theme. Stillman Fire Association: The Stillman Fire Association, themed "Spread Christmas Cheer by being fire safe this year" won Overall Appearance. USPS (Stillman Valley Post Office): USPS (Stillman Valley Post Office) won for Best Use of Theme for their Christmas package delivery themed tree. Girl Scout Service Unit 313: Girl Scout Service Unit 313 was chosen as the People's Choice winner for their Girl Scout themed tree.

Stillman Bank announces winners of 13th annual tree decorating contest

STILLMAN VALLEY — Stillman Bank held its 13th annual Tree Decorating Contest in conjunction with the Cardinal Community Christmas event in downtown Stillman Valley on Sunday, Dec. 1. There were 28 groups that participated, including local schools, businesses, and commu-

nity organizations. Each year, cash prizes are awarded in four categories: Creative/Original Tree, Best Use of Theme, Overall Appearance, and People's Choice. Local community members judged the trees for the first three categories and winners were announced at the Tree Lighting Cer-

emony that evening. Congratulations to the winners! Julia Hull District Library won Creative/Original Tree with their "See the World. Visit your local library!" theme. Stillman Fire Association won Overall Appearance with their "Spread Christmas Cheer by being fire safe

this year" tree. Finally, the USPS (Stillman Valley Post Office) walked away with Best Use of Theme for their Christmas package delivery themed tree. To determine the People's Choice winner, attendees at the event do-

nated their loose change for their favorite tree. Nearly \$100 was raised and all funds were given to the Bread of Life food pantry in Stillman Valley. Girl Scout Service Unit 313 won People's Choice with their Girl Scout

themed tree. The trees will remain on display at the corner of Main and Maple streets in downtown Stillman Valley through New Year's Eve. Thank you to all who participated in the contest!

Saturday, December 21st

Maxson's Merry Christmas Party

Full Menu, Employee Pricing for ALL

11:00 am - 8:00 pm

20% off

Fabulous Christmas Buffet

Reservations Available!

\$32 Adults • \$30 Seniors 60 and Over

\$25 Children 6-12

Kids 5 & Under FREE

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

2 Seatings Available Starting at 11:00 am & 1:00 pm

For More Holiday Information go to Facebook Maxsons Riverboat & Restaurant

Maxsons

Restaurant & Riverboat

1469 N. IL Rt 2

Oregon IL

815-732-6761

Maxsons.net

Hours:

Friday: 11am-2pm Lunch

4:30pm-8pm Dinner

Fish Fry 4:30pm-8pm

Saturday: 11a-2pm Lunch

4:30pm-8pm Dinner

Prime Rib Special 4:30pm-8pm

Sunday: 10am-12 Noon

Breakfast /12 Noon-2pm Lunch

Open Any Day for Large Parties

Closed Monday after Christmas and New Years.

The First National Bank in Amboy

Home Equity Specials!

Put the equity that you have built in your home to use!

Contact one of our lenders today!

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Holiday Hours:
Tuesday, Dec. 24th • 9am - 1pm
Closed Wednesday, Dec. 25th
Closed Dec. 30th & Jan. 1st
Open Jan. 2nd!



BEST FLORAL SERVICES
BEST GARDEN / NURSERY CENTER
BEST GIFTS

Market Cuts
VEGETABLE TRAY
Large, 50oz
16.99

Merry Christmas

USDA Choice BONE-IN BEEF RIBEYE ROAST
10.99/lb

Prices Effective: Wednesday, December 18 thru Wednesday, December 25, 2024
CHRISTMAS EVE STORES CLOSE AT 5PM | CHRISTMAS DAY STORE HOURS ARE 8AM-NOON

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

Frito-Lay LAY'S POTATO CHIPS OR DORITOS
Select Varieties
5-8 oz
BUY 1 GET 1 FREE!

General Mills CHEX CEREAL
Select Varieties
12-14 oz
2/\$6

Land O Lakes BUTTER
Select Varieties
8-16 oz
4.49

Hillshire Farm LITTLE SMOKIES
Select Varieties
12-14 oz
2/\$7

Johnsonville PRE-SLICED SUMMER SAUSAGE
Original or Jalapeño Cheddar, 10 oz
4.49

Philadelphia CREAM CHEESE
Original or 1/3rd Less Fat, 8 oz
2.49

Pillsbury FLOUR
Select Varieties
5 lb
3.99

USDA Choice BONELESS BEEF NEW YORK STRIP HALF ROAST
8.99/lb

Best Choice SHRIMP RING
10 oz
4.99

Birds Eye VEGETABLES
Select Varieties
10-10.8 oz
5/\$5

Welch's SPARKLING JUICE
Select Varieties
25.4 oz
3.99

Cake of the Week
SANTA FACE CAKE
Chocolate or White Layer
8 inch round
7.99

CHRISTMAS DIP FEST
Spinach or Dill Dip
5.99/lb

POTATOES
Yukon Gold or Red
5 lb bag
3.49

Hot Wheels HOLIDAY BASIC CARS
Select Varieties
1 ct
5/\$5

Holiday Heat at Home DINNERS

Lasagna Family Dinner
Serves 6-8
\$64.99

Family Ham Dinner
Serves 8
\$139.99

Order by December 20, 2024!
Available for pick-up COLD on Monday, December 23 or Tuesday, December 24 anytime during store business hours.

Bump Up Sides \$12 for three 1 pound sides

SULLIVAN'S FOODS
GIFT CARDS AVAILABLE AT SERVICE DESK!

2.49/lb
Cook's BONE-IN SMOKED WHOLE HAM

4.99/lb
MEAT MASTERS ILLINOIS STATE CHAMPION BONELESS OFF THE BONE SMOKED HAM

2.49/lb
Cook's SMOKED SHANK PORTION HAM

1.99/lb
Frick's PREMIUM BUTT PORTION HAM

2.19/lb
Frick's PREMIUM SHANK PORTION HAM

4.99/lb
Kentucky Legend BONELESS SMOKED WHOLE HAM

4.89/lb
Kentucky Legend BONELESS WHOLE HAM

2.00 OFF
Kentucky Legend HALF HAM

3.00 OFF
Kentucky Legend WHOLE HAM

FRESH MEAT

2.49/lb
US Govt Inspected BONELESS CENTER CUT PORK LOIN ROAST

2.19/lb
US Govt Inspected BONE-IN CENTER CUT PORK ROAST

3.99/lb
Sullivan's Signature Seasoned HAM LOAF

1.49/lb
US Govt Inspected BONELESS CHICKEN

2.88/lb
Sullivan's Signature PORK BREAKFAST OR ITALIAN SAUSAGE OR GROUND PORK

3.99/lb
Sullivan's Signature Extra Lean FRESH GROUND BEEF CHUCK 3 lb or more

4.99/lb
Corned Beef Angus Hearty Brand BONELESS EYE OF ROUND ROAST TIED TOGETHER WITH A CENTER CUT BONELESS PORK LOIN ROAST

5.99/lb
Sullivan's Signature MEAT & EAT PULLED PORK

Scan QR Code to view entire ad

Available at all 11 Sullivan's Foods including: 101 E HWY 64, MT. MORRIS 815.734.6868 | OPEN 6:30A TO 9P 7 DAYS A WEEK

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