



ROCHELLE News-Leader

MIDWEEK EDITION | WWW.ROCHELLENEWS-LEADER.COM

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Vol. 105 • No. 70

LOCAL NEWS... LOCAL VIEWS WEDNESDAY, DEC. 25, 2024 \$1.25

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Builders Club makes donation

The RMS Builders Club donated to the Rochelle Christian Food Pantry.
Page 7

WEATHER

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
HIGH LOW	HIGH LOW
38 30	45 35

FRIDAY	SATURDAY
HIGH LOW	HIGH LOW
49 39	50 42

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OBITUARIES

• JOHN DAVID BELL

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INSERTS

NONE

INSIDE

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Rochelle Moose Lodge in danger of closing

Organization seeking member support

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — The Rochelle Moose Lodge at 311 N. Main St. celebrated its 95th birthday in May 2024, but Deb Bolin, its administrator, said Dec. 17 it's currently in danger of closing due to financial difficulties. The Rochelle Moose is a members-only club and is seeking support, patronage and donations from its current members, along with new members, to keep its doors open.

The Rochelle Moose took to its Facebook page on Dec. 16 and reached out to the community and said it has around \$3,000 worth of bills due in the middle of January including licenses, taxes and fees that it currently does not have the funds to pay. The Moose has seen "lower attendance" in recent months. It has approximately 430 members, but Bolin estimates only 50 members are active and attend functions at the Lodge and patronize it.

Membership dues to the Moose cost \$50 per year. Of that \$50, only



The Rochelle Moose is a members-only club and is seeking support, patronage and donations from its current members, along with new members, to keep its doors open.

about \$12 goes to the local Rochelle Lodge. The rest goes to Moose International for the causes of Mooseheart and Moosehaven. Mooseheart is a residential childcare facility for children and teens in need, from infancy through high school. Moosehaven is a private membership retirement facility for members.

"The \$12 we receive from dues is not enough to cover utilities and all other expenses," the Facebook post said. "We are asking every member to make a donation, no matter the size, to help save your lodge! The larger your donation the better for your lodge's financial situation. It would be awesome if every member would make a \$20 donation! But again any amount is greatly appreciated even if it is \$5."

Donations can be dropped off with the bartender at the Rochelle Moose or mailed to Rochelle Moose Family Center, 311 N. Main St., Rochelle, Illinois 61068.

See MOOSE LODGE page 3



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

On Thursday, Dec. 12, a ribbon cutting ceremony event was held for Rochelle Book Hub for its new membership to the Rochelle Chamber of Commerce.

Ribbon cutting held for Rochelle Book Hub

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — On Thursday, Dec. 12, a ribbon cutting ceremony event was held for Rochelle Book Hub for its new membership to the Rochelle Chamber of Commerce.

Rochelle Book Hub opened in July and is located inside Cypress House at 718 10th Ave. The business is owned by Jacklyn Mlejnek. The main focus of the shop is fiction books, but it carries all genres along with accessories.

Mlejnek had been interested in opening a bookstore in recent years and went to view the open space at Cypress House. She then put together a business plan and came to an agreement

for the space and opened it just six weeks later.

"I've always loved literature and I've been a big reader my entire life," Mlejnek said. "I do have another job, so opening a bookstore was kind of a spur of the moment decision. It was something I'd always had in the back of my head that I wanted to do. I told my husband I thought it was a possibility. He's been very supportive, along with my mom. It was a very short turnaround. [Cypress House Owner Krista Stewart] has been very supportive and I really appreciate having this spot and I've had a lot of support from the community. Thank you all for that, and thank you all for coming."

See BOOK HUB pg 3

City presents facade grant check to owner of Lincoln Mall

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — On Tuesday, Dec. 10, the City of Rochelle presented a facade grant check for \$4,537.50 to Rudy Hernandez, the owner of the Lincoln Mall building at 425 Lincoln Highway in Rochelle.

The facade grant program covers half the cost of any improvements made to business fronts in town with a limit of \$5,000. The improvements included new awnings in the front and back of the building. Hernandez was on hand to accept the check Tuesday along with his mother, Josie Mounts, who owns the building next door.



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

On Tuesday, Dec. 10, the City of Rochelle presented a facade grant check for \$4,537.50 to Rudy Hernandez, the owner of the Lincoln Mall building at 425 Lincoln Highway in Rochelle.

"Seeing the difference from how it used to be has been awesome," Hernandez said. "Everybody is excited. We chose the color to represent Rochelle and wanted to make sure we stay Hub proud here."

"The new awning is very inviting," Mounts said. "It gives us a fresh facelift and something new. We're trying to en-

courage and promote foot traffic and beautify Rochelle."

The Lincoln Mall building is utilized for both residential and commercial use. There are apartments on the top floor and business space

down below. Hernandez and Mounts have plans for their buildings in the future including redevelopment after they'll soon be working with an architectural firm. Hernandez thanked the city for its support of

small businesses and for showing citizens that it believes in their dreams.

"These grant funds were much needed," Hernandez said. "It helps us to make our visions come true. When you get support from the city,

you feel like you're part of the community. And you know that you're doing it for everybody here. We're all a team and we all want to see good things happen."

See GRANT page 4

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HUB NEWS January 2025

Happy
NEW YEAR

Thru Jan. 6
Jan. 6

Jan. 7
Jan. 9

Winter Break
No School -
Teacher Institute
Day

Classes Resume
FLEX Schedule
Release - 2:15PM

FAFSA Workshop
in LMC - 5pm-
6:30pm

Jan. 16

Jan. 20

Jan. 21

Jan. 23

Jan. 30

FLEX Schedule
Release - 2:15 PM

Dr. Martin Luther
King Jr. Day - No
School

RHTS Board
Meeting - 5:30PM

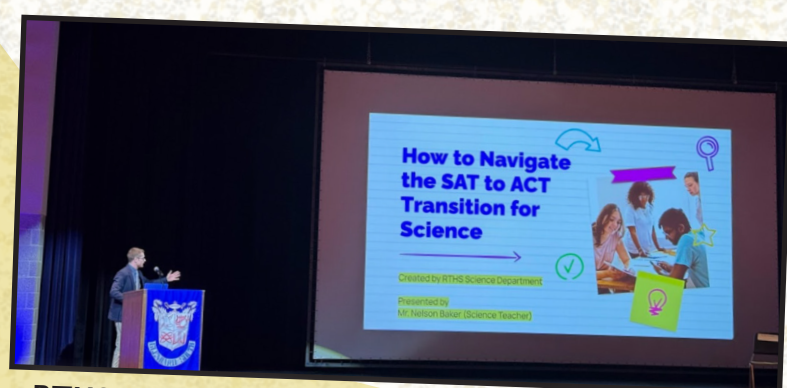
FLEX Schedule
Release - 2:15PM

FLEX Schedule
Release - 2:15PM

December was a busy month for students and teachers at RTHS!



The RTHS Music Department presented the 36th Annual Madrigal Dinner at Calvary Lighthouse Church. In addition to the two dinners, the department also performed a matinee show so the middle schools were able to come experience the show. Every performance was filled with a lively audience! Bravo to all performers involved!

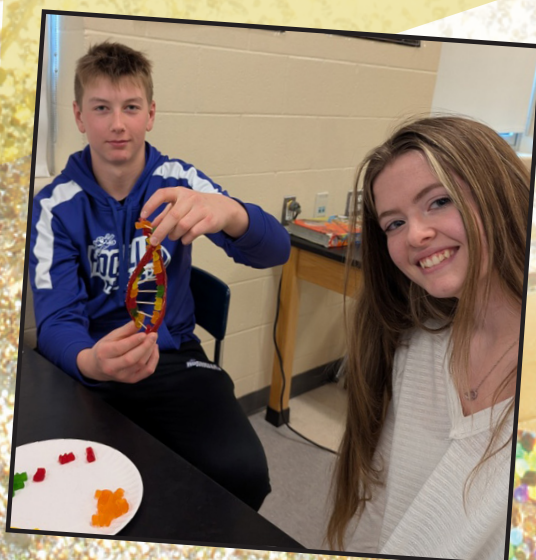


RTHS teacher Nelson Baker was a speaker at the recent SOAR (Supporting Opportunities & Access to Rigorous Coursework) Conference at Glenbard South High School. His topic was - How to Navigate the SAT to ACT Transition for Science.



The annual 8th Grade Curriculum Night was held in December! Thank you to all the families who attended and to staff and students for showcasing various organizations.

Mr. Smith's Biology classes spent the day making 3D models of DNA to help understand the structure and function of such an important molecule in living things!



Congratulations



Xitlali Brizuela

Full Scholarship to
Denison University

Xitlali Brizuela recently received a full four-year scholarship to Denison University through QuestBridge National College Match Scholarship. Mr. Pointer recommended her for this scholarship in August and she has spent the last four months working relentlessly to obtain it. Out of 25,500 applicants, QuestBridge selected 7,288 Finalists to be considered for the QuestBridge National College Match Scholarship. This year, Quest Bridge's 52 college partners matched with 2,627 Finalists, who are recognized as Match Scholarship Recipients. Match Scholarship Recipients are admitted early to QuestBridge college partners with full four-year scholarships provided by the colleges and universities, ensuring for these students and their families that an education at a top college is affordable. The Match Scholarship is made up of a generous financial aid package provided by the college partner that covers the full cost of attendance, including tuition, housing and food, books and supplies, and travel expenses. The Match Scholarship does not include loans or a parental contribution.

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Please Note: All loans offered by ISL Education Lending are subject to credit approval. Before applying for a private loan, we encourage you to first complete the FAFSA, or Free Application for Federal Student Aid. You should also work with your college financial aid office to explore and exhaust all sources of student financial aid before seeking a private student loan.

*Northern Illinois Federal Credit Union is compensated by ISL Education Lending for the referral of student loan customers.

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LOCAL NEWS

MOOSE LODGE: ‘It’s stressful... I’m constantly trying to think of what else I can do’

From page 1

Checks can be made payable to Rochelle Moose marked “Save Your Lodge Fund”. The Rochelle Moose can be reached at 815-562-4286.

“We’re a nonprofit,” Bolin said. “But that doesn’t stop the bills from coming in and we still have to pay taxes. Since we’re members only, we don’t have a lot of people coming through here and spending money. We’re struggling. That’s why we’re hoping to get some support from our current members and new members. We started doing regular bingo nights, and that didn’t pan out like we thought. People don’t have the money to spare. They’re just not coming out like they used to. We used to pack this place on a Friday night. I know the economy plays into it. I know we’re not the only place that’s struggling.”

Nonmembers can go into the Moose as guests of a member three times before deciding if they want to join. Purchases have to be made at The Moose by a member. The Lodge serves food on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and sometimes Saturdays, and is open every day of the year besides Christmas. Bolin said The Moose prides

itself on cheap food and drink prices for members. Moose Treasurer Pat Maronde said opening The Moose to the public to increase revenue is not an option, because it would jeopardize the local lodge’s status with Moose International.

Bolin said the Moose needs to see an increase in funds by mid-January. “If our needs aren’t met, this place is in danger of closing,” Bolin said. “It’s stressful. I don’t sleep. I’m constantly trying to think of what else I can do. I’ve even given my own money to try to keep up here. We give as much as we can. I’m worried. I try to bring things in here for raffles, but what we’ve been doing so far hasn’t been working out.”

Along with supporting Mooseheart and Moosehaven, The Rochelle Moose also recognizes local veterans with a dinner each year, hosts Girl Scouts meetings each week, and participates in Lincoln Highway Heritage Festival events each year and brings the Mooseheart kids to it at the local lodge’s expense.

Bolin called the support the Moose does see from its small group of involved members “amazing.” The Lodge recently received some donations after its



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

The Rochelle Moose took to its Facebook page and reached out to the community and said it has around \$3,000 worth of bills due in the middle of January including licenses, taxes and fees that it currently does not have the funds to pay. The Moose has seen “lower attendance” in recent months.

board detailed the financial issues in its newsletter.

“We have a long way to go,” Maronde said. “But we’re getting there. Things like that have helped. We’ve seen our members aging out over the years. I think that’s part of this situation. And the younger ones just don’t have any idea what the Moose is all about.”

The Moose has seen

some younger members join recently. Children of members are welcome at the lodge. The Moose recently had a day with Santa and gave gifts to children and grandchildren of members.

Bolin and Maronde said that The Moose has been a community cornerstone for 95 years and they’d like to see it continue that way and reach the 100-

year mark in Rochelle.

“We’re open every day, except for Christmas,” Bolin said. “I come down here on Thanksgivings. One of our members told me once that this may be the only place that somebody has to go on days like that. We might be a haven for somebody that has nobody and nothing on Thanksgiving. That

means a lot to me. That’s what we strive to do. This can be a haven. This is a friendly place that makes people feel at home and comfortable. We strive to be a place where people can come and be happy. People depend on it. This is where their friends are and where they can talk to people. Closing would leave people without a place to go.”

BOOK HUB: Ribbon cutting ceremony held on Thursday, Dec. 12

From page 1

The ribbon cutting event was hosted by the Rochelle Chamber of Commerce. Speakers on Dec. 12 included Mlejnek, Chamber Executive Director Tricia Herrera, and City Councilwoman Kate Shaw-Dickey.

Herrera said the chamber is always excited to celebrate with new businesses.

“Frequently at the chamber, people call and tell us what we need in Rochelle,” Herrera said. “One we hear frequently is a book store. There’s a lot of people that, even

in this digital age, want that book in their hands to pick up and read. We’re really excited to have you join us here in Rochelle. I want to thank Krista Stewart and Cypress House. They do such a great job of encouraging, fostering and giving opportunities

to other businesses in Rochelle. We’re always excited about those partnerships.”

Shaw-Dickey’s remarks focused on how supportive Rochelle’s small business community is.

“Rochelle is such a special

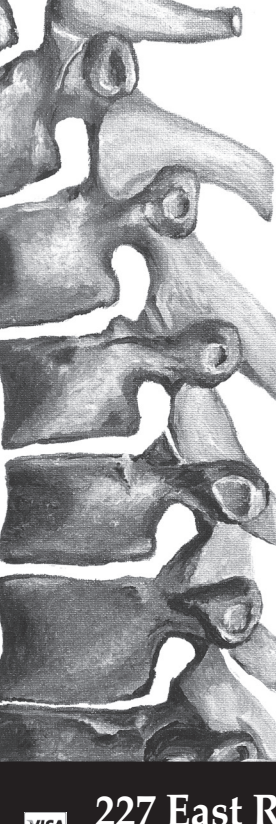
place,” Shaw-Dickey said. “We have an amazing chamber that supports our businesses. More importantly, we have businesses that support other businesses. I think that’s one of the best things. There’s enough success for everybody

and I love that people like to collaborate here. I think it really makes Rochelle an amazing place to open and run a business and live. On behalf of the city, we’re thrilled to have you. We’re so excited for your new business and this joint venture.”



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

The ribbon cutting event was hosted by the Rochelle Chamber of Commerce. Speakers on Dec. 12 included Mlejnek, Chamber Executive Director Tricia Herrera, and City Councilwoman Kate Shaw-Dickey.



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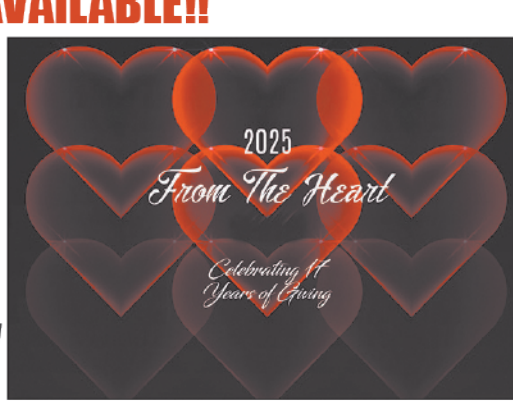
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(Please Print)

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OBITUARIES

Kishwaukee College Foundation program enhancements benefit educational needs

MALTA — The Kishwaukee College Foundation awarded \$99,978 in program enhancement funds to Kishwaukee College departments for the 2024-2025 academic year. The Foundation has various program enhancement funds established by the generosity of donors for specific purposes. Funds support many needs, including educational support for instructors, new equipment, and student testing services.

The following program enhancement funds have been awarded this year:

Evelina Jose Cichy Fund

Honoring Evelina Cichy and her many years of service at Kishwaukee College, the fund helps pay for fees associated with Illinois High School Diploma tests.

John & Barbara Dant Memorial Fund

The fund provides financial support for the needs of the math and English departments. This year, funds support faculty professional development, outstanding student awards and resource software.

Jobe-Lewis Fund

Suzanne K. Lewis established the fund to honor her mother, Doris V. Lewis, who obtained a nursing degree. Suzanne wished to honor her mother by helping support others who chose the nursing field. This year, the fund supports staff professional development and new program supplies.

Jenkins Presidential Endowment

The fund supports and enhances the activities of the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society.

Yvonne A. Johnson Endowment for Community Education

This fund benefits the programmatic needs of the



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Kishwaukee College students utilize laboratory equipment during a science class.

Fine Arts, Communications, Science and Horticulture programs. This year, funds support the Horticulture program through technology supplies for plant identification and labeling for plant sales.

Leifheit Literacy Endowment

The Leifheit Literacy Endowment supports the adult and family literacy programs at Kishwaukee College. It provides students with testing supplies and support to obtain their Illinois High School Diploma.

Library Endowment Fund

This fund supports the operations of the Kishwaukee College Library. This year, the fund helped purchase display materials and diversity promotional posters.

Lifelong Learning Endowment

Honoring the retirement of Judy Krajewski, former Dean of Community Education & Services, this fund was established to ensure a legacy of lifelong learning for future generations by increasing access to community education opportunities through scholarships in non-credit courses.

Matteson Horticulture Fund

The fund supports the

programmatic needs of the Horticulture Department. This year, funds helped purchase portable drafting tables.

Terry & Sherrie Martin Health & Science Endowment

The fund was born out of a deep commitment to education and strong faith in the values of Kishwaukee College. The endowment supports program enhancements for the Allied Health or Science programs. This year, the endowment helps cover costs for staff attendance at national conferences, technology for the Radiologic Technology program, and student retention activities.

Terry & Sherrie Martin PTK Endowment

The endowment supports the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Hallmark Award, a student scholarship. Terry Martin was a long-time advisor of Kish's PTK chapter.

Robert L. "Smitty" Smith Assistantship

The assistantship fund was established to honor Robert L. Smith, a highly regarded faculty member in the science department during Kishwaukee College's early years from 1968 to 1975. The fund supports student assistantships in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) departments. Students assist faculty in research projects and lab development.

For more information, contact the Kishwaukee College Foundation at 815-825-9803 or visit kish.edu/foundationfunds.

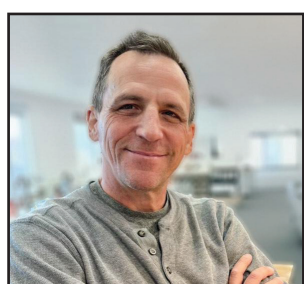
John David Bell

CHAMPAIGN — Surrounded by the love of his family, John David Bell, of Mahomet, IL, passed away on December 19, 2024, after sharing that, "Today is my day," to go with the Lord. John passed peacefully in his sleep late that evening at Northwestern Medicine Prentice Hospital, Chicago.

John was born on February 24, 1969, in Rochelle, IL. He is survived by his beloved wife, Jody Bell (née Rendziak), and his precious children, Audra Faith Rendziak Bell (16 yrs.), Wyatt Henry Bell (14 yrs.), and Evan Eugene Bell (10

yrs.). John is also survived by his parents, Donald and Loretta Bell (née Long); cherished siblings Robert Bell (Michelle) and Linda (née Bell) Keilman (Cory); nieces Karly Keilman, Kayla Keilman, Emily Pascarella; nephews Ethan Bell, David (Alexis) Pascarella and Daniel Pascarella; sister-in-law Amy Rendziak as well as numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins.

John's services are scheduled for Saturday, December 28, 2024, at Mattis Avenue Free Methodist Church (1913 S. Mattis Ave, Champaign).



Visitation will be from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. The funeral service will begin at 11:30 at the church, with Pastor Chadwick Anderson officiating. Interment will follow at Riverside Cemetery in Mahomet, IL.

Full obituary can be viewed at www.owensfuneralhomes.com.



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

The facade grant program covers half the cost of any improvements made to business fronts in town with a limit of \$5,000. The improvements included new awnings in the front and back of the building. Rudy Hernandez was on hand to accept the check Tuesday along with his mother, Josie Mounts.

GRANT: City presents check for over \$4,000 to owner of Lincoln Mall in Rochelle

From page 1

City Community Development Director Michelle Pease said the facade grant project gives the city the opportunity to help continue improvements downtown. The new purple awning can serve as a landmark in the area for people to meet at, she said.

Pease thanked the mayor and city council for their support of the program and local businesses for investing in the community.

The city budgets \$30,000 each year for facade grants. The one to the Lincoln Mall building was its final grant of 2024. The program is headed up by City Community

Development Specialist Michelle Knight.

"This is probably one of the most enjoyable projects we do," Knight said. "We like seeing the changes. It's fun to go around town and look and see what's been done over the years and the improvements that have been made."

Rochelle Police Department announces holiday enforcement campaign

ROCHELLE — The holidays are a time for caring and sharing, which is why the Rochelle Police Department is partnering with the Illinois Department of Transportation to spread the word about the dangers of impaired driving with a "Driver Sober or Get Pulled Over" and "Drive High. Get a DUI."

enforcement campaign. From Dec. 13 through Jan. 2, Law enforcement across Illinois will show zero tolerance for alcohol- and drug-impaired driving to keep our roads safe and help ensure a happy holiday season.

"If you'll be celebrating with festive drinks or other impairing substances, make a plan for a safe ride home before you leave for the party," Deputy Chief Phil Frankenberry said. "Driving impaired is simply unacceptable. That's why we make zero exceptions and arrest all impaired drivers. There are no excuses."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Fatality Analysis Reporting System, in the United States in 2021, a total of 13,384 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes involving an alcohol-impaired driver. On average, more than 10,000 people were killed in alco-

hol-related crashes each year from 2017 to 2021, with one person killed in a drunk-driving crash approximately every 45 minutes. These fatalities are preventable, and drivers must remember that driving impaired — by alcohol, cannabis, or any other substance, whether legal or not — is potentially deadly and illegal behavior.

The Rochelle Police Department recommends these safe alternatives to drinking and driving:

Designate a sober driver or plan to use public transportation or a ride-sharing service.

If you see an impaired driver on the road, pull over and contact the Rochelle Police Department.

Have a friend who is about to drive impaired? Take their keys and make arrangements to get them home safely. They'll thank you later. Remember to buckle up!

The holiday enforcement campaign is administered by IDOT with federal highway safety funds managed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Report policy

Any arrests listed in this paper are merely charges and the defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law. Please note that all police reports received from the

Rochelle Police, the Ogle County Sheriff's Department and the Illinois State Police, will be printed without exception. Requests to omit particular reports will not be considered or honored at any time.

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PRIME TIME

The importance of wellness exams after age 50

SENIORS are a growing and increasingly prosperous demographic. As the senior population increases, a greater emphasis must be placed on keeping aging individuals healthy. Wellness checks are important at any age, but they bear even more significance as individuals grow older.

Age brings with it many things, including experience and wisdom. But age also brings an increased risk for health problems. Aging men and women are vulnerable to chronic conditions like heart disease, COPD, cancer, and arthritis. It's noteworthy that many chronic health conditions fail to produce any symptoms until they have progressed to a point where treatment is difficult.

Annual wellness exams can help older adults take charge of their health and stay as healthy as possible. It's possible for a person to preserve his or her health (and possibly life) through check-ups and easy tests. Here are some common screenings and health recommendations that come up in the prime of one's life.

- **Colorectal cancer screening:** A colon cancer screening is recommended for everyone at age 45. Colon cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States, and risk increases at age 45. Although people seldom look forward to a colonoscopy and the required prep, putting



off this test due to a little discomfort may result in missing colon cancer at its earliest stage when it is most treatable.

- **Cholesterol screening:** This simple blood test can help evaluate the risk for heart disease. High cholesterol can contribute to the buildup of plaque in the arteries, making them narrower and less flexible, according to Sharecare, Inc.

- **Mammogram:** Most

health organizations recommend annual mammogram screenings from age 40 until menopause. Then it may be possible to have a mammogram every other year for those who are at average risk. It is important for women to discuss mammogram frequency with their doctors, particularly if there is a family history of breast cancer.

- **Diabetes:** ChenMed says diabetes may be more common in older adults, so

regular screenings for this illness can enable early diagnosis and management.

- **Testicular cancer screening:** This test generally is not recommended without symptoms. Some organizations suggest men with a family history or other risk factors consider performing self-examinations.

- **Vaccination needs:** Doctors can alert patients to recommended vaccinations during wellness

exams. Seniors should receive an annual flu shot and updated COVID-19 vaccination as available. Pneumococcal vaccine can protect against pneumococcal disease that can lead to pneumonia, meningitis and bloodstream infections. Adults over 50 also should receive a vaccination for shingles, which can occur in older age in those who have previously experienced chickenpox.

There are additional advantages to routine health checkups. Doctors can inquire about fitness routines, stress, sleep, and diet to see if patients are within the guidelines for healthy living.

Older age may make a person wiser, but the risk for various health issues and certain diseases increases with age. Routine health check-ups can keep doctors and patients on the same page.

Financial strategies to consider as retirement draws near

FREEDOM is often cited as a benefit of retirement. Many professionals look forward to the day when they retire and have more free time and the freedom to spend that time however they choose. Of course, the opportunity to spend retirement how one sees fit typically requires considerable financial freedom.

Financial planning for retirement is often emphasized to young professionals beginning their careers. But it's equally important that people on the cusp of retirement continue to look for ways to protect and grow their wealth. As retirement draws near, professionals can consider these strategies to ensure they have the financial freedom to make their golden years shine even brighter.

- **Plan to grow your wealth in retirement.** It's widely assumed that retirees need less income after calling it a career because the need to save for retirement is no longer present. However, some expenses, including health care, may rise in retirement, which underscores the need to continue growing your wealth. Cost-of-living also will increase over the course of your retirement years, which highlights the need to keep growing wealth in retirement. It can be tricky to protect your existing retirement savings as you approach the end of your career while also growing that wealth, so it is best to work with a financial planner to navigate that situation.

- **Maintain a mix with your investments.** A model from the Schwab Center for Financial Research indicated that a hypothetical retiree with a \$2 million portfolio in year one of retirement will have slightly

less than \$1 million left 30 years later if her portfolio maintains a mix of 60 percent stocks and 40 percent bonds and cash. The model found that a second hypothetical investor with the same size portfolio in year one of retirement will run out of funds prior to year 29 if his portfolio is 20 percent stocks and 80 percent bonds and cash. Though conventional wisdom suggests limiting risk as retirement nears and eliminating it entirely upon retiring, modern retirees are living longer and may therefore need to maintain a mix of investments to ensure they don't outlive their money.

- **Make the maximum allowable contributions.** Many aging professionals may not have saved as much for retirement as they might have hoped to upon starting their careers decades ago. In fact, a 2024 survey from Prudential Financial found that many 55-year-olds have fallen far short of establishing the level of financial security they will need in retirement. The Prudential survey found that 55-year-



olds had a median retirement savings of less than \$50,000, a number that falls considerably short of the recommended goal of having eight times one's annual income saved by this age. If that situation sounds familiar for professionals nearing retirement

age, then now is the time to begin catching up. Make the maximum allowable contributions to a 401(k)

plan (\$23,000 in 2024) and/or an IRA (\$7,000). In addition, the Internal Revenue Service notes

that IRA catch-up contributions remained \$1,000 for individuals age 50 and over in 2024.



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07262023

LOCAL VIEWS

McDermott: Four brides for four brothers

THERE are close families, and there are really close families. This is a story of the closest family I have had the honor of finding. John Countryman and his bride, Nancy, lived in Herkimer County, New York. On a nearby farm lived the family of Felix and Leah Wagner, also in Herkimer County. As was common in the early 1800s both families were fairly large, the Countrymans had seven children and the Wagners had 12.

Norman Countryman was born in 1831 and Elizabeth Wagner was born in 1832. These two grew up near each other and in 1854 the two were married. The young couple began their family and farmed in the Herkimer area for 13 years. It was around 1867 that the couple took their family to the train in Fort Plain, New York and began the trip west to Ogle County. Norman and Elizabeth took up farming in the Lindenwood area. Upon retirement from farming

Norman had a home built in Rochelle at 627 Seventh St. The couple celebrated their golden anniversary, 50 years, in 1904 and enjoyed their family until 1911 when Norman died. In 1924 Elizabeth also passed and the two were joined at Lawnridge Cemetery.

Harvey Countryman was born in 1833 and Laura Wagner was born in 1841. Harvey was older than Laura by eight years but that did not stop love from growing. In February of 1861 the couple were joined in marriage, this was the second Countryman brother to marry a Wagner sister. Harvey and his wife Laura also took the train from Fort Plain to the Village of Lane (Rochelle). They traveled to Lynnville County and began making a living through farming. Harvey and Laura had four children and built a life and future for their family. In 1885 Harvey and Laura built their home at 622 N. Seventh St. where it still stands. The couple celebrated their golden

anniversary in 1911 and remained together until March of 1914 when Laura passed away. It was in April of 1914 that Harvey died, possibly of a broken heart, and Joined Laura at Lawnridge Cemetery.

Alvin Countryman was born in 1835 and Jennie Wagner was born in 1843. Both lived with their parents in Herkimer County. You may start to notice a trend here so it should be no surprise that in 1863 Alvin and Jennie became man and wife. Alvin and Jennie were the last of the Countryman clan to move to the Lindenwood area and the last to settle in Rochelle. The couple had four children and built their final home at 603 Eighth St. Alvin and Jennie celebrated their golden anniversary in 1913, which made them the third Countryman-Wagner duo to hit this impressive mark. Once again only death could temporarily sepa-

rate one of these couples. Alvin passed in 1916 and Jennie lived on her own until 1931, when she joined Alvin at Lawnridge Cemetery.

Three brothers marrying three sisters is unusual, but it only takes a glance at the title of this piece to realize that we have not yet reached the end of the story. John E. Countryman was the youngest of the Countryman boys to fall for a Wagner girl. John was born 1844, still in Herkimer County. It was Rosa Wagner that stole his heart, Rose was born in 1845. The couple fell in love and met with the preacher



Tom McDermott

in 1865 to be the fourth, and final Countryman to marry a Wagner. John and his family followed the beaten path from New York to Ogle County in 1867. John and Rosa purchased 240 acres of land near Lindenwood in 1869 and by 1884 the couple acquired another 80 acres.

This was the anchor that held John and Rosa to the Lindenwood community. John and Rosa reached their Golden anniversary in 1915. When Rosa passed in 1916 she was interred at Lindenwood Cemetery. John passed in 1934 he joined Rosa and they remain together to this day.

Not every Countryman married a Wagner, Levi and William found brides in other families and made their own lives in different directions. They did not come to the Rochelle area so they sadly fall out of the range of this story. This does not reduce the value or impact of these families, it simply reduces their impact on our community.

The Countryman and Wagner families contributed greatly to the area. John served on several boards in the Lindenwood area, he was a strong supporter of women's suffrage, the right to vote, and prohibition. Harvey and John joined together in 1881 to form an agricultural implement company

in Rochelle. The Countryman family owned and operated a creamery near Lindenwood for many years. Harvey's daughter Grace married Arthur Phelps and they owned the Phelps Hardware Store which was later sold to the Moore brothers and became Moore's Hardware. John's daughter Alice married Arthur Lazier and they went on to form Lazier Seeds in Rochelle. Alvin's daughter Minnie married Aaron Guest and their son Arthur was the father of David Guest, a local attorney.

Four brothers married four sisters and lived together through more than 100 years of wedded life. Three of them lived out their lives within one block of each other. Three are buried within feet of each other. All four shared more than a physical closeness, they shared the closeness that can only be found in the love of a family.

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

Walters: Where will your bucket list take you?

DO you always vacation at the same place? Would you like to explore new destinations but aren't sure where to start? Let me help by asking a few questions to create your own travel bucket list and maybe find some new favorite places!

What kind of destination appeals to you? Do you enjoy the beach, nature, or cityscapes? Are you comfortable traveling abroad, or would you prefer to stay within your country? If going abroad, would a language barrier be a concern? This can be a big factor in choosing where to go. Beaches can be found all over the world, and some are off the beaten path and less crowded. Smaller, lesser-known national parks can also offer beautiful, secluded settings. And cities—

both big and small—offer unique experiences, with great food, culture, and entertainment.

What activities do you enjoy? Do you prefer adventure, or are you more interested in museums and historical sites? Do you enjoy the theater, or are you drawn to nightlife? Maybe you're interested in sporting events, concerts, hiking, or shopping? Some places close during low season or at certain times of day, while others come alive at night. Many attractions and museums now require reservations months in advance. Consider: if you can't visit a specific site, would it affect your overall experience?

What type of travel suits you best? Road trips, cruises, guided tours, independent travel, train travel, or rental cars—each option has its

own perks. Would you be comfortable taking a train in a foreign country or driving on the opposite side of the road? Costs and experience can play a big role in what's most comfortable for you. Find the travel style that matches your comfort level and will help you reach your desired destinations.

What accommodations do you prefer? Do you like large, all-inclusive resorts, or do you lean toward small, cozy B&Bs? Are you comfortable renting a house and cooking your own meals, or do you prefer the amenities of a hotel? Maybe you enjoy camping, or maybe you want a luxury hotel experience.

Who will you travel with? If it's a romantic

getaway, you might want something more intimate. If you're bringing kids, you may want activities to keep them entertained. A girls' trip might include shopping, while a guys' weekend could focus on sports. Are you planning a family reunion?

What's your ideal weather? Are you looking for warmth in winter, or are you a fan of skiing? Maybe you enjoy the cool, crisp mornings and evenings of spring and fall. Or perhaps you don't mind the weather as much and prefer traveling during the low season to avoid crowds.

What's your budget? This is often a deciding factor. Can you find discounted tickets to your destination? Could you

use points for flights or hotels? Is there a sale on your favorite cruise line?

Hopefully, these questions help you find exciting new places to explore. Now, here's a bit about my own travel preferences. I love cities with plenty of museums, cultural activities, and shows. I also enjoy visiting Roman ruins and spending time in nature. I prefer small, independent hotels or bed-and-breakfasts over large hotels, and while I don't mind renting a car, I prefer traveling by train when I can. I usually travel with my husband or adult children, and I avoid summer heat, opting instead for the milder weather of spring and fall. I'm a budget traveler, so my trips often depend on where I can find a great deal. My last two trips—to Ireland and Spain—were chosen

because of excellent airfare deals.

Some places I never tire of visiting? I could return to England and Italy every year and still discover something new. My absolute favorites are Bath (I'm a Jane Austen fan, I love the Roman bath there) and Verona (for its coliseum, Renaissance buildings, and Italian food). A few places I'd like to visit? Returning to North Dakota, exploring Malta, and seeing the fall colors in New England.

What about you? Where will your bucket list take you?

Silene Walters is a CPA, the owner of Walters Accounting Inc in Stillman Valley. When she is not preparing taxes she travels with her husband George and shares her experiences on <https://www.facebook.com/dreamoftraveling>

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Washington, D.C.
20515
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

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

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

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

COMMUNITY



Rochelle Middle School Builders Club donates to RCFP
The Rochelle Middle School Builders Club recently donated \$575 to the Rochelle Christian Food Pantry. The club raised money from their dance that they hosted on Nov. 22. The students were excited to give back to the Rochelle community. (Courtesy photo)

H5N1 (Bird Flu) confirmed in Ogle County

ROCHELLE – The Ogle County Health Department (OCHD) has confirmed the first bird that tested positive with H5N1 virus in Rochelle. H5N1 avian influenza (bird flu) refers to the disease caused by infection with avian influenza Type A viruses. These viruses naturally spread among wild aquatic birds worldwide and can infect domestic poultry and other bird and animal species. Bird flu viruses do not normally infect humans. However, sporadic human infections with bird flu viruses have occurred. Ogle County Health

Department would like to remind the public not to harvest or handle wild birds that are obviously sick or found dead. For people who may need to dispose of dead birds found on their property, please follow the below instructions from IDPH:
Don't use bare hands to pick up any dead bird or animal.
Use disposable water-proof gloves and/or an inverted plastic bag to pick up the dead bird(s). Double the plastic bag with the bird(s) inside and dispose in the trash where it cannot be accessed by children or

animals.
Consider wearing a rain-coat or disposable plastic trash bag over your clothes.
Safety goggles and an N95 mask (available in retail stores) can be used to protect your eyes, nose, and mouth.
After handling a bird, avoid touching your face with glove or unwashed hands.
After the bird(s) are disposed of, take gloves off first and put into plastic bag for disposal.
Wash hands with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.

Remove mask and goggles.
Throw away any disposable equipment after use (mask, gloves) and disinfect other equipment (like safety goggles) according to manufacturer's specifications.
Wash clothes in washing machine with detergent and use the hot water cycle.
If you have had close contact with potentially infected birds, please contact us at 815-562-6976 for further guidance.
More information can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/media/pdfs/2024/07/Bird-Flu-Exposure-Handout.pdf>

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Dec. 25 Maribel Ortiz	Dec. 29 Kelsey Rogers
Dec. 26 Annette Sulser	Dec. 31 Jamey & Nicole King (anniversary) Ruth Allen Hayleigh Jones
Dec. 28 Chris Prosser	

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

2024 From The Heart Calendar

Celebrating 16 Years of Giving

\$20

Nov. 29 - RACF, \$25

Nov. 30 - Arely Hickey, Rochelle, \$25

Dec. 1 - Marshall Basler, Rochelle, \$50

Dec. 2 - Focus House, \$25

Dec. 3 - Lacreata Konaw-Konan, DeKalb, \$25

Dec. 4 - HOPE of Ogle County, \$25

Dec. 5 - From the Heart, \$25

Dec. 6 - Martha Phillips, Rochelle, \$25

Dec. 7 - Dwayne Rangel, Rochelle, \$25

Dec. 8 - Jane Quitno, Rochelle, \$25

Dec. 9 - Celeste Canfield, Rochelle, \$25

Dec. 10 - Calvin Jacobs, Rochelle, \$25

Dec. 11 - Cindy Kentner, Byron, \$25

Dec. 12 - Kayla McGrach, Rochelle, \$25

Dec. 13 - Jessica Mueller, Rochelle, \$25

Dec. 14 - Charles Bigelow, Davis Junction, \$25

Dec. 15 - Steve Meiners, Dixon, \$50

Dec. 16 - Ella Gilbert, Rochelle, \$25

Dec. 17 - Luna Berkeley, Rochelle, \$25

Dec. 18 - Marisa Whaley, Rochelle, \$25

Dec. 19 - Mike Golt, Rochelle, \$25

Dec. 20 - Ken Moss, Dixon, \$25

Dec. 21 - RACF, \$25

Dec. 22 - Julie Laws, Rochelle, \$50

Dec. 23 - John Conley, Rochelle, \$25

Dec. 24 - Margaret Taylor, Rochelle, \$25

Dec. 25 - From the Heart, \$1,000

QUEEN FOR THE CAUSE

NEXT DRAWING IS JAN. 9

CURRENT WEEKLY PRIZE: \$250

CURRENT JACKPOT: \$15,806

Coffee Break

King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Airport screening org.

4 Out of control

8 Appear ominously

12 Pioneering ISP

13 Kid's plea

14 "The Music Man" setting

15 Oafs

17 Daniel Craig role

18 "Homeland" star Danes

19 Devious

21 ER workers

22 Persuades

26 Track races

29 Wee dollop

30 Goat's plaint

31 Symphonic gp.

32 Sleep acronym

33 Dick Tracy's love

34 Consumed

35 Chignon

36 Walking sticks

37 Persian king

39 Mined-over matter

40 Ordinal suffix

41 Blue hue

45 Hoodlum

48 Defeats cleverly

50 Mexican money

DOWN

1 Body powder

2 Satan's purchase

3 — mater

4 Squirrel's stash

5 High points

6 Low digit

7 Big-screen airtir of stadium smooches

8 Tripoli's land

9 Tic-tac-toe win

10 Possess

11 Irate

16 Wharton's "House of —"

20 Arcing tennis shot

23 Marvel superheroes

24 Lighten

25 Get lippy

26 Deception

27 Deco artist

28 Computer brand

29 Lion's home

32 Exit in haste

33 Cardio-boxing routine

35 Wager

36 Seals and — (soft rock duo)

38 Noble gas

39 Group of eight

42 Chopping tools

43 Jeans maker

44 Romanov ruler

45 Transcript no.

46 British ref. work

47 Sugary suffix

49 Swiss canton

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Weekly SUDOKU

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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CryptoQuip

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

Clue: R equals T

ZVOMRAN BUYUQUVM UM
CGUZG SDVSHD JHCJNQ
BAJSD RGDYQDHYDQ UM HVMF
QVORG JQUJM FJAXDMRQ:
J QJAU QRJRD.

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King Crossword

Solution time: 26 mins.

Answers

Weekly SUDOKU

Answers

Country division in which people always drape themselves in long South Asian garments: a sari state.

Country division in which people always drape themselves in long South Asian garments: a sari state.



Rochelle's Arreguin has served 16 years

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — Kyle Arreguin of Rochelle served active duty in the United States Navy from 2008-2010 and has served in the Navy Reserves ever since.

Arreguin entered his senior year at Rochelle Township High School weighing 285 pounds. In an effort to motivate himself to get healthier and find direction, he made a choice to enlist. He chose the Navy because nobody in his family had ever served in that branch before.

"It gave me the push I needed," Arreguin said. "By the time I left for boot camp I needed to weigh 170 pounds. I weighed in at 169.8. I'll never forget that number. I lost 125 pounds."

Arreguin attended boot camp at Great Lakes and started on Oct. 1, 2008. His service contract called for two years of active service and two years of mandatory time in the reserves. Arreguin originally planned to be a hospital corpsman (Navy medic), but ended up as an undesignated airman and attended undesignated air school in Pensacola, Florida for 2-3 months and graduated from that. It was there that he learned air department work.

Arreguin went to his first ship in early 2009, the USS Peleliu in San Diego, California. He spent time working on the flight deck and went on short trips out to sea.

"I had some fun doing that," Arreguin said. "I did some time on the flight deck, which was one of the most motivating jobs I've ever been a part of. The jets and helicopters are landing and you're chalking and chaining and telling them when to take off and land. That was amazing. After that I started working more in the hangar bay. I did that until August 2010 when my time in active duty was coming to an end. I tried my best to stay. I had a meeting with the commanding officer of the ship about it. There wasn't anything he could do to help me stay, but the fact that he tried meant a lot. I got out of active duty and drove from San Diego back to Illinois."

The 14 years after that have seen Arreguin serving in a number of different Navy Reserve units and duties. He was first called into a unit called Expeditionary Maintenance for Guam, and went out to the USS Emory S. Land for two weeks for two years in a row and worked on that ship. He later made E-4 rank and later made E-5 and has been at that rank for four years.

Arreguin has worked on different ships and submarines. After three years with the Guam unit, we went to another unit that resulted in two deployments to Spain, where he would help to bring ships into pier or shuttle personnel to and from larger boats on smaller boats.

"We'd have to meet the ship as it was moving and hook up a rope ladder," Arreguin said. "That was insane at times. I helped with maintenance on those boats. I became my unit's sponsor, which made me responsible for bringing new people into the unit and teaching them what they need to know."

After that, Arreguin joined a unit that deploys to Japan. After his first deployment was canceled due to COVID-19 in 2020, he did make the trip in 2022. The opportunity to go to Japan was one of the reasons Arreguin originally joined the Navy. 13 years later, he got his wish.

At the end of 2022 and 2023, Arreguin was deployed to Germany for a month, where he worked with people coming back from deployments to transition back into civilian life. From September 2023 to March 2024 he was in Washington state and part of a group that escorted ships and submarines in and out of the harbor.

"I'm currently back in the Guam unit and getting ready to go back at the end of February," Arreguin said. "I'm at 16 years in the reserves now. I plan on hitting the 20-year mark. I'm hoping to get into another unit that goes to Japan. I've chosen to stay in because it's life experience that I never



Kyle Arreguin of Rochelle served active duty in the United States Navy from 2008-2010 and has served in the Navy Reserves ever since. In an effort to motivate himself to get healthier and find direction, he made a choice to enlist. He chose the Navy because nobody in his family had ever served in that branch before.

would have gotten otherwise. If I'd never joined the Navy, I never would have gone to Spain, Japan, Guam or Germany."

Arreguin's most memorable experiences in the military have included making friends and his deployment to Japan. When he got to his first ship, he quickly found people with similar interests when he thought he wouldn't.

"Japan was another unique experience for me," Arreguin said. "It's a reason I joined the military. I was able to step foot in a place that I worked 13 years to get to. I had three weeks there and I made every second count when I wasn't working. I got through 70-80 percent of my bucket list out there. I loved walking around and experiencing the culture. I loved doing

that in Spain and Germany too. For me, it's been all about the friends I've met and the culture I've experienced."

Arreguin moved to Rochelle when he was very young and has lived in town ever since. His service taught him to appreciate different parts of the world and how far from home he was. He's attended Veterans Day events in the community, including the Veterans Day Breakfast at RTHS. He's been able to meet local veterans young and old.

"Being a younger veteran and currently active in the reserves at events around town is humbling for me," Arreguin said. "I've had some difficulties in the military, but in this community I've met veterans who actually fought in the



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American Hero

Years in U.S. Navy Reserves



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

Reserves ever since. Arreguin entered his senior year at Rochelle Township High School weighing 285 pounds. In an

service. I've had a positive roll of the dice for the most part. I've met people that got a more negative roll of the dice and have seen things a lot worse than I have. I've met people that were in the Vietnam War and Desert Storm and World War II. I recently joined the American Legion Post in Rochelle. They're struggling for numbers right now and I'm going to help them with some of their social media. When people think of veterans, they typically think of older people. But when you're around veterans old and young, there's a generational camaraderie there. We all have something in common."

Arreguin's service has helped him to pass that value on to his children, including his 16-year-old stepson that is looking

at joining the military himself.

"As a veteran, you can have an interesting influence on the next generation," Arreguin said. "He's seen me go through so much with the Navy. He's made the military part of his plan and is trying to navigate it and not make the same mistakes I did. He's learned values and discipline. I feel like what he's going to do will set a foundation for the rest of his life. And I get to help with that."

Honoring Our American Hero is a series that will print twice a month in the News-Leader. If you know an American Hero you would like to have featured, contact Jeff Helfrich at jhelfrich@rochellenews-leader.com or call 815-561-2151.



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SPORTS

RTHS Girls Basketball



(PHOTOS BY RUSSELL HODGES)

The Rochelle Lady Hub varsity basketball team hosted an Interstate 8 Conference game against Kaneland on Friday evening. Above, seniors Abby Metzger (left) and Kendyl Darby (right) work in the low post. Below, junior Carmela Bright drives around Kaneland defender Sophia Rosati.

Kaneland's zone pressure overwhelms Lady Hubs

Darby, Dickey finish in double figures as Knights top Rochelle 69-35 on Friday

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE — The Rochelle Lady Hubs struggled to crack Kaneland's 1-2-1-1 diamond press during their Interstate 8 Conference varsity basketball game against the Knights on Friday night.

Rochelle hung tough during the opening quarter, overcoming a trio of 3-pointers from Kaneland standout Kendra Brown, who led all scorers with 27 points in the game. But the Knights took the game over in the second quarter, where their zone press generated a large number of turnovers that resulted in easy layups to balloon the Kaneland lead. The result was a snowball effect for the Lady Hubs, who saw a single-digit deficit turn into a lopsided 69-35 loss to the Knights.

"We teach our girls that

we'll give up the contested 15-footers off the dribble, but [Brown]'s able to make those consistently and that makes her really difficult to guard," head coach Jon Gehm said. "She was shooting from 8 feet behind the 3-point line and that's not something we see very often. She's able to do it pretty consistently and it's impressive to see what she can do."

Brown was a beneficiary of Kaneland's stout zone defense, as the senior guard finished four of the team's 11 second-quarter field goals to help the Knights turn a 19-13 lead after one quarter to a 39-21 halftime advantage. Kaneland's defensive pressure thwarted a somewhat promising start for the Lady Hubs, who saw junior Jaydin Dickey and senior Abby Metzger each knock down 3-pointers in the first quarter to spark the Rochelle of-

fense. Dickey finished with 12 points.

"I thought our rotations and our pressure in the first half were pretty good," Gehm said. "What did us in were the turnovers, which led to easy opportunities for them, but Kaneland also shot the ball really well and we have to give them credit for that. We had some good rotations, but they moved the ball from side to side and that's what good teams do against good zones or any good defense. They created open opportunities for shots and they took advantage of them."

Senior Kendyl Darby provided a spark for the Lady Hubs in the third quarter, grabbing multiple offensive rebounds and putting home a trio of field goals underneath the basket. Darby scored a team-high 14 points for Rochelle, whose turnover issues continued throughout



the second half. Kaneland led 61-32 after three quarters and forced a running clock early in the fourth quarter.

"We talked about how we need to protect the basketball

and value the basketball," Gehm said. "We didn't do that and there were a lot of little things that we didn't do. Either we were going over the top too much instead of

using ball fakes, we were staring each other down or not meeting the pass. Those are things we have to clean up in practice and we need to do it fast."

HUBS: Rochelle wrestlers score Senior Night victory over Sycamore

From page 14

But on a night where the Hubs honored their eight senior wrestlers, it was a senior who helped Rochelle keep its lead late in the match. Xavier

Villalobos was that senior, using only 59 seconds to score two takedowns and a fall against Sycamore's Thomas Lind at 132 pounds. Lassiter's fall over Sandfox at 144 pounds clinched the win

for the Hubs, who will travel east to the suburbs and wrestle four matches at the Oak Forest Mega Duals on Saturday.

"Josh was able to keep his composure and turn the tide," Vruno said. "He got

off his back and secured the pin, which is huge, and I'm hoping that he can build off of this and continue to get the job done in big moments... The room is going through some sickness right now,

Josh included, and he had to wrestle for what could be a conference title. This win is a huge confidence booster for us as we go into winter break and as we look to keep getting better."

The seniors who were honored Thursday night are Dempsey Atkinson, Xavier Villalobos, Grant Gensler, Matthew Lynn, Kaiden Morris, Jordan Bly, Parker Campos and Matieyko Rodriguez.

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ASHTON NEWS



Ashton-Franklin Center Elementary School holds December awards assembly

Ashton-Franklin Center Elementary School recently held its December awards assembly. Awards included Students of the Month, Rockin' Raiders, PurposeFull People, Artist of the Month, Good Sports Awards, Musicians of the Month, Bookworms of the Month, Attendance Awards, First Quarter Superior Honors, First Quarter High Honors, and First Quarter Honorable Mention. (Courtesy photos)

More than 82,000 deer harvested during Illinois firearm deer season

OGLE COUNTY — Hunters in Illinois took a preliminary total of 82,496 deer during the seven-day 2024 Illinois firearm deer season that concluded Dec. 8. Comparatively, hunters harvested 76,494 deer dur-

ing the 2023 firearm season. The preliminary harvest for the second segment of the 2024 firearm season Dec. 5-8 was 27,835 compared with 22,883 deer harvested during the second part of the 2023 season.

The preliminary harvest for the first segment of this year's firearm season Nov. 22-24 was 54,661 deer. Remaining 2024-2025 deer hunting opportunities in Illinois include: Late-winter antlerless-only and

chronic wasting disease (CWD) season, in designated counties only, Dec. 26-29 and Jan. 17-19. Archery deer season continues through Jan. 19. More information about deer hunting in Illinois can be found online.

Ogle County saw 418 deer harvested in the first 2024 season and 275 deer harvested in the second 2024 season, for a total of 693 for the year. 662 total deer were harvested in Ogle County in 2023.

Lee County saw 424 deer harvested in the first 2024 season and 231 deer harvested in the second 2024 season, for a total of 655 for the year. 548 total deer were harvested in Lee County in 2023.

McPheron named to Rockford University Fall 2024 Dean's List

ROCKFORD — The following students at Rockford University were named to the Dean's List for the Fall 2024 semester, earning at least a 3.5 GPA with no grades below "C" and having completed

all requirements for the semester. Mitchell McPheron of Ashton. Rockford University is a private four-year, co-educational institution founded in 1847 offering

undergraduate and graduate degrees in traditional liberal arts and professional fields. The University offers more than 80 majors, minors and concentrations, including the bachelor's degree completion program

for a B.S. in Management Studies. Through its Graduate Studies department, degrees are extended to include the Master of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT), and

Master of Education in Urban Education, (M.Ed.). Rockford University is home to one of only 11 Phi Beta Kappa (PBK) chapters in Illinois, the most prestigious honor society in the United States. Named by

The Princeton Review as a Best Midwestern College and is a U.S. News & World Report Best Midwest Regional University, Rockford University currently serves approximately 1,250 full-and-part-time students.

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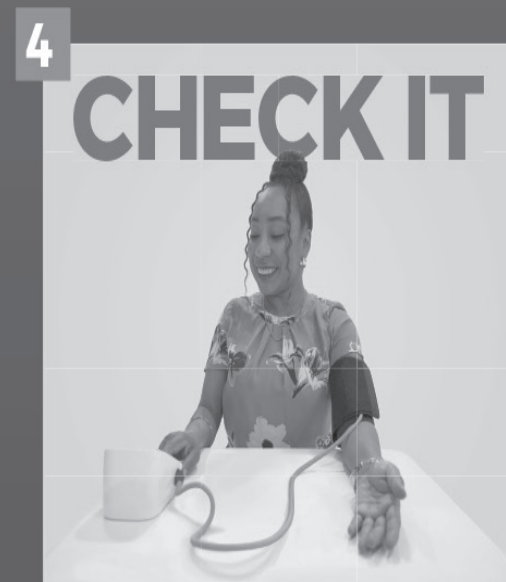
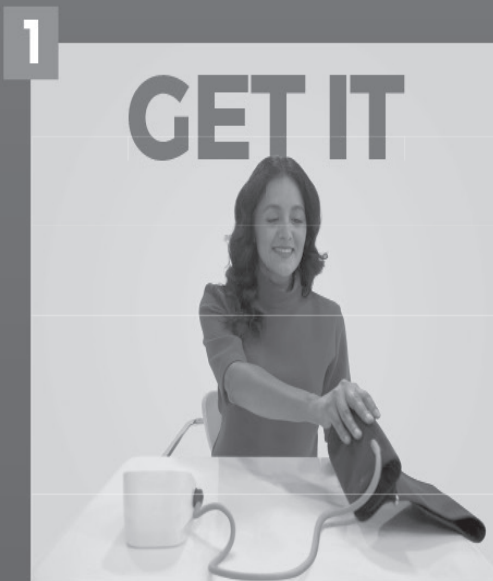
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HUB SPOTLIGHT



**Nathan
Rosas**

Year: Freshman

Sport: Basketball

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

A: Two years.

Q: What do you enjoy most about this sport?

A: The community and the intense games, especially when it's a comeback win.

Q: What is your favorite school subject and why?

A: Math because when you do it right, everything connects and makes sense.

Q: Who is your favorite athlete and why?

A: Zlatan Ibrahimovic because of his mentality.

Q: Who is your biggest role model and why?

A: My grandpa because he chased the bag and he's always there for his friends and family.

Q: What is your dream job and why?

A: Anything that requires traveling.

Q: Where would your dream vacation be and why?

A: The Philippines.

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

A: Having something to do after school.



**Jax
Sullivan**

Year: Freshman

Sport: Basketball

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

A: I have been playing basketball for four years.

Q: What do you enjoy most about this sport?

A: What I enjoy most is how you can do your own thing and how everyone can score.

Q: What is your favorite school subject and why?

A: Conditioning because there's no written work and we do things instead of sitting down in class.

Q: Who is your favorite athlete and why?

A: Kyrie Irving because he's good at ball handling and making shots.

Q: Who is your biggest role model and why?

A: My parents because they are always there for me and they do so much for me and my family.

Q: What is your dream job and why?

A: To be a barber or play in the NBA because they are both fun.

Q: Where would your dream vacation be and why?

A: Hawaii because I like to swim.

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

A: We have practice everyday so I get to play basketball and be with my friends.

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SPORTS



GIRLS PLAY KANELAND

The Rochelle Lady Hub basketball team hosted Kaneland on Friday evening.

See page 10 for more details

RTHS Wrestling

Hubs celebrate seniors with win

Lassiter's match-clinching pin seals 42-33 victory over Sycamore on Thursday

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE — Sophomore Josh Lassiter emerged from the brink of defeat to deliver what could be a season-defining victory for the Rochelle Hub varsity wrestlers on Thursday evening.

Entering the circle against Sycamore's Logan Sandfox with the Hubs holding a slim lead in team points, Lassiter needed to win the 144-pound bout in order to clinch Rochelle's dual victory over the Spartans. After a scoreless first period, Lassiter took the lead with an escape to start the second period, but a takedown attempt led to a disastrous situation for the sophomore, who found himself fighting for his life on his back as the Sycamore bench erupted with cheers.

The near fall had Lassiter within inches of defeat, but with the bout and the dual victory on the line, Lassiter somehow wiggled out from underneath Sandfox's grasp and flipped the match on the Sycamore wrestler, squeezing his headlock as the Rochelle bench and crowd exploded with applause. With one whistle and a slap of the mat, Lassiter secured the second-period pin and sealed Rochelle's 42-33 win over the Spartans. It's a crucial victory for the Hubs (10-2, 2-0 Interstate 8) in a match that may ultimately



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

The Rochelle Hub wrestling team honored its eight seniors before Thursday's varsity match against Sycamore. Above from left to right are Parker Campos, Grant Gensler, Kaiden Morris, Jordan Bly, Matthew Lynn, Xavier Villalobos, Dempsey Atkinson and Matieyko Rodriguez.

decide first and second in the Interstate 8 this year.

"I had to do everything I could to keep their team from winning," Lassiter said. "I really wanted to win that match. It was a little more intense than a normal match and there were definitely some nerves, but the person who wanted to win was out there tonight and that was me... We're a bunch of hard workers and every single day, we get in the practice room and we work hard."

Wrestling on their Senior Night, the Hubs jumped

out to a 15-0 lead over the first three bouts. Junior Frank Nasca scored a key third-period takedown to secure an 8-3 decision over Cole Kleiser at 150 pounds, while junior Brenden Voight dominated the first period before earning a second-period fall over Dylan Curtis at 157 pounds. Senior Grant Gensler kept the Hubs going at 165 pounds, notching two takedowns and a second-period fall against Doug Gemberling.

"It's like the Bears and the Packers," head coach Alphonso Vruno said when

asked about the Rochelle-Sycamore wrestling rivalry that has sparked in recent years. "We have this dual circled on our schedule. We knew that it was going to be close and we knew that emotions were going to run wild, but our kids kept their composure and they were able to get the job done tonight."

Sycamore picked up its first win of the night at 175 pounds, where Cooper Bodere recorded a first-period fall over Rochelle senior Matthew Lynn. The Hubs responded with victories at

190 and 215 pounds, where junior Roman Villalobos earned a fall over Adam Carrick and senior Kaiden Morris securing a pin near the end of the second period of his match against Clyde Nott.

Trailing 27-6, Sycamore emerged with much-needed win after Collin Hughes pinned sophomore Adam Cobos to be the victor at 285 pounds. Carson West took a forfeit for the Spartans at 106 pounds, setting the stage for a competitive match at 113 pounds, where Hub junior Freddie Hernandez used two

early takedowns to outlast Sycamore's Sawyer Davis for a 7-0 decision.

Sycamore sparked a late rally after picking up wins at 120 pounds and 126 pounds, where Michael Olson earned a 10-2 major decision over freshman Aidan Lopez and Tyler Lockhart compiled two near falls during an 18-2 technical fall over junior Keagan Albers. The Spartans also won at 138 pounds, where Jayden Dohogne pinned Rochelle junior Deegan Schabacker.

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RTHS Boys Bowling

Hubs send off seniors with home victory over Streator

Frye, Beckman honored as Rochelle earns Senior Night win on Thursday evening

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

ROCHELLE — The Rochelle Hubs celebrated their seniors with a decisive nonconference win during their varsity bowling match against Streator at T-Byrd Lanes on Thursday evening.

Junior Declan McGee threw a team-high and match-high 623 series for the Hubs, who took down the Bulldogs 3,203-2,728 in their final home dual meet of the season. Rochelle (7-9, 4-4 Interstate 8) opened the meet with its Senior Night ceremony and recognized two seniors, Logan Frye and Christopher Beckman, for their contributions to the boys bowling program.

"Logan's been a four-year member of the team and he's improved every year," head coach Jim Lyles said. "Logan really works hard at his game and I'm looking forward to seeing what he does in college. Chris comes to practice every day and does his thing. Chris is a really good kid."

Rochelle took the early lead in the match on Thursday, defeating Streator 1,084-971 in the first

game. Junior Levi Waddle rolled a series-best 226 to lead the charge, while freshman Josef Alanis fired a 216 and McGee followed with a 201 on the Rochelle side. The Hubs surged ahead in the series with a 1,077-850 win during the second game, where Alanis spun a series-best 235 and McGee shined with a series-best 239 to anchor the Rochelle bowlers.

"We struggled early in the season, but we're getting better," Lyles said. "We've talked during practice all season long that our goals are to be bowling our best at the conference and regional meets. Everything we do up to there helps us get ready for those tournaments. All of our kids get along well and they cheer each other on. They root for each other and they listen well."

Rochelle clinched the nonconference sweep with a 1,042-895 victory in the third game, where junior Caleb Mortensen rolled a series-best 204 and Frye threw a series-best 216 to finish with a 546 series score. Alanis totaled a 589 series and Waddle ended the evening

with a 558 series for the Hubs.

Ottawa

Senior Logan Frye threw a 575 series to lead the Rochelle Hubs during their Interstate 8 Conference varsity bowling match against Ottawa on Wednesday evening.

Juniors Caleb Mortensen and Levi Waddle added series scores of 543 and 527 for the Hubs, who snapped a brief conference losing streak with a 3,033-2,917 victory over the Pirates at Dettore's Town Lanes.

The Hubs took a commanding series lead after a 1,026-831 win in the first game, where Waddle rolled a 188 and Frye shot a 184 for the Rochelle side. Ottawa turned the tide in the second game, where the Pirates won 1,149-1,058 behind a 262 from Cash Fowler and 200-plus games from Bentley Thumm and Corwin Diaz. Frye launched a series-best 235 in the second game.

Both teams struggled in the third game, which Rochelle claimed 949-937 to seal the conference win. Mortensen ended his series with a 209 for



(COURTESY PHOTO)

The Rochelle Hub bowling team honored seniors Logan Frye and Christopher Beckman, along with their families, before Thursday's match against Streator.

the Hubs, who have now concluded their Interstate 8 schedule. The next Interstate 8 event will be the conference tournament, which will be held at T-Byrd Lanes on Jan. 13.

LaSalle-Peru

Senior Logan Frye rolled a team-high 647 series to lead the Rochelle Hubs during their Interstate 8 Conference varsity bowling match against LaSalle-Peru on Monday evening.

Rochelle took one game

from the Cavaliers, who claimed the first and third games as well as the series to beat the Hubs 3,194-3,035. Junior Levi Waddle finished with a 519 series and freshman Josef Alanis added a 512 series for the Hubs (5-9, 3-4 Interstate 8).

LaSalle-Peru emerged with the series lead after winning the opening game 1,075-948. Marquis Lorenzi bowled a 219 and Aiden McCray spun a 214 to lead the Cavaliers, while Waddle fired a series-best

205 on the Rochelle side. The Hubs battled back in the second game, winning 1,147-1,010 behind a series-best 279 from Frye and a 188 from junior Caleb Mortensen.

While Rochelle gained a 10-pin lead entering the third game, LaSalle-Peru took the final game 1,109-941 to clinch the series victory. McCray rolled a 202 to finish with a team-high 597 series for the Cavaliers, while Frye shot a 188 and Alanis totaled a 179 on the Rochelle side.