

The Performing Arts Guild Presents

# Christmas Eve

In Chaos

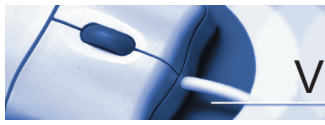
2025 Performance Dates:  
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See our article on pg. 10

# OGLE COUNTY LIFE

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**MONDAY**  
Jan. 6, 2025

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### Giving Tuesday funds raised







Local businesses took part in the RACF's Giving Tuesday **Page 2**



### OHS takes fifth at Abe's Rumble

The OHS wrestling team took fifth out of 60 schools at Abe's Rumble in Springfield. **Section B**

### WEATHER

 <b>MONDAY</b> HIGH LOW <b>26 15</b>	 <b>TUESDAY</b> HIGH LOW <b>22 12</b>
 <b>WEDNESDAY</b> HIGH LOW <b>14 8</b>	 <b>THURSDAY</b> HIGH LOW <b>15 3</b>
 <b>FRIDAY</b> HIGH LOW <b>20 9</b>	 <b>SATURDAY</b> HIGH LOW <b>27 8</b>

### OBITUARIES

- Gene N. Miller
- Joseph E. Farris
- Raymond C. Meiners
- Judith Ann Freedlund
- Robert 'Bob' W. Johnson
- James M. Hildebrand
- Theodore (Ted) G. Incontro

See pages 3-4

### INSERTS

- Felker Foods
- Lifeline
- Polo Fresh Food
- Menards
- Snyder Pharmacy

## YEAR IN REVIEW 2024

## A look back at some of the top Ogle County Life stories of the past year

**January Monday, Jan. 15**  
**POLO** — Ogle County livestock farmer Brian Duncan of Polo was elected the new president of the Illinois Farm Bureau during the organization's annual meeting in Chicago, Dec. 2-4.

Duncan, who replaces the retiring Richard Guebert Jr., previously served as the vice president of the IFB since 2017. He also served as president of the Ogle County Farm Bureau (OCFB) from 2004-2017, and on the American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) Swine Advisory Committee 2003-2006, National Pork Producers Council Price Discovery Task Force, Ogle County Pork Producers board of directors and the IFB Young Leaders Committee from 1990-1994. He was the IFB Discussion Meet winner in 1990 and Young Leader Achievement Award winner in 1999.

"It's an incredible honor to have the trust of the delegates and members to serve in this position," Duncan said. "We as an organization stand on the shoulders of giants. The people who founded this organization and have led throughout the years have left big shoes to fill. I'm excited about the challenges and the opportunities that will no doubt come before us in agriculture and as an organization."

**Monday, Jan. 29**  
**ROCHELLE** — Kennay Farms Distilling in Rochelle has collaborated with The DeLong Company and its Grown Climate Smart program to showcase the use of sustainable grain in its spirits.

The distillery that now resides in the renovated former space of the Hub Theater has been using certified sustainable grains



Ogle County livestock farmer Brian Duncan of Polo was elected the new president of the Illinois Farm Bureau during the organization's annual meeting in Chicago, Dec. 2-4, 2023. (COURTESY PHOTO)

since its inception, and the Kennay family farm has been certified sustainable for the past eight years. The collaboration with the Grown Climate Smart program will see a logo placed on Kennay Farms Distilling bottles to differentiate them on the market and give consumers a chance to champion sustainable products.

The DeLong Co. is a sixth-generation, family-owned agribusiness with headquarters in Clinton, Wisconsin and many grain facilities in Illinois. Grown Climate Smart is a \$40 million program funded by the USDA's \$3.1 billion Climate-Smart Commodities grant that was awarded to The DeLong Co.

The Grown Climate Smart program works with farmers on promoting and incentivizing sustainable farming practices such as cover crops, reduced or no-till, nutrient management plans and windbreaks. Throughout 2023 it enrolled over 160 growers throughout 11 states and sent out over \$6.5 million worth of incentives directly to farmers doing sustainable practices.

The second part of The DeLong Co.'s grant work will involve building and developing a market that

commands a premium for products made with sustainably-grown and produced grain, such as the spirits sold by Kennay Farms Distilling.

**February Monday, Feb. 5**  
**OREGON** — Gov. JB Pritzker announced Jan. 30 that two Ogle County entities received grant funding through the Open Space and Land Acquisition Development grant program. Nearly \$55 million in state grants were awarded for 111 local park projects throughout Illinois to help communities acquire land and develop recreational opportunities.

Both the Village of Mt. Morris and the Oregon Park District were recipients in Ogle County.

The Oregon Park District is the recipient of \$600,000 in OSLAD grant funding from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The Oregon Park District is excited to utilize these funds to improve the existing recreation amenities at Oregon Park East, OPD Superintendent of Recreation Tina Ketter said.

Plans for improvements began in 2019 with development of a park master plan. The process included solicitation of community input,

inventory assessment, valuation of expected trends and a needs assessment. The final document was utilized to submit the grant application for the 2023 OSLAD program. The grant submitted in 2023 focused on the inland side of Park East.

Improvements to the inland side include a new playground, basketball court, nine-hole disc golf course, a quarter-mile paved trail that will also connect to the Lowden Trail project, ADA improvements, expanded parking lot and interpretive signage. Additionally, the district plans to add lighting to the existing baseball field and replace the field fencing and complete drainage improvements.

"Receipt of the OSLAD funds allows us to complete the necessary recreation improvements with reduced impact on the park district budget. The improvements will be a welcome addition for our residents, and we look forward to completion occurring simultaneously with construction of the ITEP trail," Erin Folk, Oregon Park District executive director, said.

See YEAR IN REVIEW pg 5

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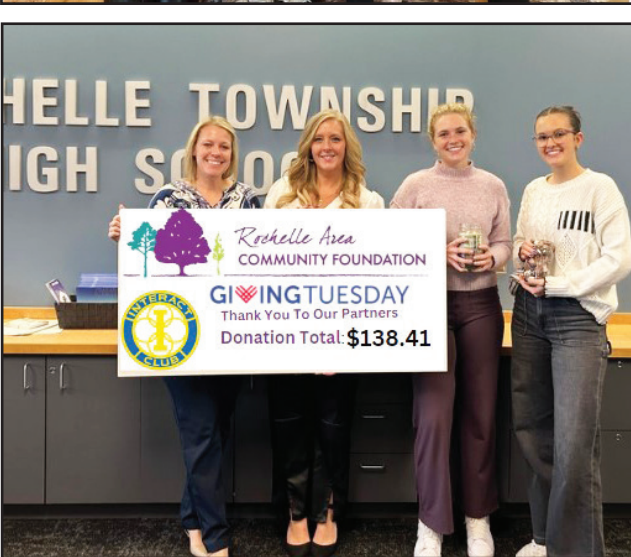
This season is a time of joy, reflection, and gratitude. We are incredibly thankful for the trust and support you show us throughout the year.

**Byron Bank**

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# LOCAL NEWS



The Rochelle Area Community Foundation (RACF) is thrilled to announce the resounding success of this year's Giving Tuesday campaign, which raised an impressive \$13,900 — well surpassing the \$10,000 goal.

## RACF thanks partners and donors for record-breaking Giving Tuesday

ROCHELLE — The Rochelle Area Community Foundation (RACF) is thrilled to announce

the resounding success of this year's Giving Tuesday campaign, which raised an impressive \$13,900 — well surpassing the \$10,000 goal. This achievement was made possible through the extraordinary generosity of individual donors and the steadfast support of our community partners. The RACF extends heartfelt gratitude to its partners, including Central Bank, Holcomb Bank, Stillman Bank, First State Bank, Midwestern Clothing Company, EarlyAct-St. Paul School, InterAct-RTHS, the City of Rochelle, Rock Valley Credit Union, and Maplehurst. Their commitment and contributions played an integral role in helping us exceed our fundraising goal, further strengthening RACF's ability to support local nonprofits through endowment funds. "The success of this year's Giving Tuesday

is a testament to the power of collaboration," Emily Anaya, executive director of RACF, said. "It's inspiring to see businesses, schools, and individuals come together to invest in the future of our community. These funds will directly support local nonprofit organizations and initiatives that make Rochelle and the surrounding area a better place for everyone." Ashley Jackson, RACF board president, emphasized the impact of this community-wide effort: "Giving Tuesday reminds us of the incredible generosity that exists here in Rochelle. It's not just about the dollars raised; it's about the message we send when we come together to make a difference. We are deeply grateful to our partners and donors for helping us far exceed our goal this year." This year's campaign highlights the vital role RACF plays in fostering collaboration and addressing the needs of the Rochelle community. From matching gifts and fundraising events to the dedication of youth-led groups like EarlyAct-St. Paul School and InterAct-RTHS, every contribution made a difference. Donations raised will support a number of funds held at RACF, ensuring ongoing support for local nonprofits through its yearly competitive grant process. For more information about RACF's mission and impact or to explore partnership opportunities, please visit [www.rochellefoundation.org](http://www.rochellefoundation.org) or contact Anaya at [director@rochellefoundation.org](mailto:director@rochellefoundation.org).



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**JOE CONTARINO**  
(815) 978-8677

1112 Burlington Way, Davis Junction



\$284,615 [dickersonnieman.com/202402914](http://dickersonnieman.com/202402914)

**NEW CONSTRUCTION IN DAVIS JUNCTION!** Ogle Crossing community. 3 bedroom open concept great room ranch plan 1580 SQFT. Kitchen has island with breakfast bar, white cabinets, quartz countertops with stainless range, dishwasher, and microwave. Primary bedroom with private bath, walk-in closet, 1st floor laundry room. Concrete patio, 3 car garage and full basement.

**JOE CONTARINO**  
(815) 978-8677



**DOROTHY BOWERS**  
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**LYRAH AUSTIN-BUSHNELL**  
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**TIFFANY CRAVATTA**  
(815) 988-4388



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(815) 871-4004



**DANA DAUB**  
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**KAYLA HESLOP**  
(815) 222-9771



**SEAN HOSSEINI**  
(815) 200-8490



**MAYDELL LESSEN**  
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**CHRIS SNYDER**  
(815) 494-7857



**TANYA VINCER**  
(815) 703-6118



# LOCAL NEWS

## Obituaries

### Joseph E. Farris

**BYRON** — Joseph E. Farris (99) died January 1, 2025 at Serenity House after a 2 year battle with liver cancer. He was born the 8<sup>th</sup> child of Lebanese immigrants, John and Cuffa Farris, on March 22, 1925 in Pittsburg, KS. He joined the Marines upon graduating from High School and spent 3 years in WWII, 4 years in the reserves serving 13 months during the Korean Conflict. He married Joann Lapp in Rockford, IL on March 25, 1950. They shared the next 74 years together building a wonderful life and family. He retired from the National Lock Company in 1978 after 30 years. Throughout his life he enjoyed family get togethers in Byron and Farris Family Reunions held all over the US. He loved being outside tending his yard and their

vegetable garden, working around the house, and playing any card game. He was a devoted fan of the Chicago Bears and Cubs and taught his sons to be fans too so they could share the pain.

Jospeh was preceded in death by his parents, 4 brothers and 4 sisters and their spouses.

He is survived by his wife Joann; sons William (Sandra), John (Kathleen), Michael (Jeanne), Matthew (Hee Suk) and Jason; grandchildren Samantha Beran, Henry Farris, Nicholas Farris, Joseph Farris, Olivia Farris, Gillian Farris, and Tatianna Salisbury; great-grandchildren Charlie and Quinn Farris, Lauren, Ryan and Kyle Beran and Oscar Farris; and many beloved nieces and nephews. Also survived by his constant companion, his dog Sophie.



In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to Serenity Hospice and Home of Oregon, IL and United Church of Byron, IL so they may continue to serve our communities.

A funeral service will be held at 11:30 AM on Wednesday, January 8, 2025 at the United Church of Byron, 701 W 2nd St, Byron, IL. Visitation will be held prior to the service from 10:00 AM until 11:30 AM at the church.

To leave an online condolence visit [www.farrell-hollandgale.com](http://www.farrell-hollandgale.com)

## OGLE COUNTY SHERIFF'S REPORT

**OREGON** — On Dec. 16 at approximately 2:36 a.m. deputies responded to the 6,700 block of North River Road in reference to a single-vehicle accident. After further investigation Jacob Hanners, 228, of Rockford, was cited for improper lane usage, failure to report an accident involving property damage, and operating an uninsured motor vehicle. Hanners was released on a notice to appear.

On Dec. 17 at approximately 9:53 p.m. deputies responded to a hit and run in the 300 block of Monroe Center. Deputies located the offending vehicle in the 400 block of West Street. After investigation, deputies placed Stacey M. Lozzio, 43, of DeKalb under arrest for driving under the influence of alcohol, driving under the influence of alcohol 0.08 or more, improper lane usage, and leaving the scene/property damage. Lozzio was transported to the Ogle County Jail and issued citations. Lozzio was released on a notice to appear and given a future court date.

On Dec. 18 at approximately 4:18 p.m. deputies investigated the report of a vehicle taken without permission from the Lee County Landfill. The vehicle was located at a residence in the 400 block of North Hannah Avenue. After further investigation Jared Babler, 27, of Mt. Morris, was placed under arrest for driving while license revoked and possession of a stolen motor vehicle. Babler was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was processed and released on a notice to appear.

On Dec. 19 at approximately 3:15 p.m. deputies and the Byron Police Department assisted U.S. Federal Marshals with an arrest warrant at 818 Fieldcrest Drive in Byron. Cole Jordan, 31, of Byron was arrested on an outstanding felony warrant for possession of a controlled substance from Arkansas and also an Ogle County warrant for failure to appear on a retail theft charge.

On Dec. 20 at approximately 11:23 p.m., Deputies responded to 3747 W. Illinois Route 64, Lot 31 (Mount Morris Estates) for reports of a domestic disturbance. After further investigation, Timothy D. Rosquist, age 63 of Mount Morris, and Genesis A. Swartz, age 21 of Mount Morris, were arrested for

Domestic Battery. Timothy and Genesis were transported to the Ogle County Jail and detained pending a court appearance before a judge. All subjects are presumed innocent.

On Dec. 21, at approximately 10:15 p.m., Ogle County Deputies conducted a warrant service at Junction Liquors (5657 N. Junction Way, Davis Junction). Deputies located and took into custody Joseph A. Myers, age 27 of Davis Junction, for an active 2023 Ogle County arrest warrant for DUI. Myers was taken into custody without incident and transported to the Ogle County Jail and held in lieu of bond.

On Dec. 21, at approximately 3:12 a.m., Ogle County Deputies responded to the 11500 block of East Holcomb Road for the report of a car in the ditch. Upon arrival, Deputies located a female asleep in the driver seat. After an investigation, Deputies arrested Katie J. Smith, age 44 of Holcomb, for Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol. Deputies took Smith into custody without incident and transported her to the Ogle County Jail where she was booked and released on a Notice to Appear. Smith was additionally charged with DUI-Alcohol >.08 and cited for Failure to Reduce Speed/Too Fast for Conditions. Smith is set to appear in court in late January. All subjects are presumed innocent.

On Dec. 20 at approximately 4:03 p.m., Deputies responded to a Domestic Battery that had occurred in the 500 block of South Garfield Street in Leaf River. After investigation, Deputies placed Nathan Webster, age 18 of Leaf River under arrest for Domestic Battery. Webster was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was held pending a court appearance in front of a judge.

On Dec. 22, at approximately 3:46 p.m., Deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 5,000 block of North Illinois Route 2. After investigation, Deputies placed Colton Miller, age 32 of Galesburg under arrest for Driving While License Suspended. Miller was additionally issued citations for operating a vehicle with suspended registration and operating an uninsured vehicle. Miller was released on a Notice to Appear and

given a future court date at the scene. All suspects are presumed innocent.

On Dec. 22, at approximately 8:58 a.m. Deputies responded to 15602 E. Lindenwood Road in reference to a Domestic Battery. After investigation, Deputies placed Blaine Henley, age 43 of Lindenwood under arrest for Domestic Battery. Henley was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was held pending a court appearance in front of a judge. All suspects are presumed innocent.

On Dec. 21 at approximately 4:04 p.m., Deputies conducted a traffic stop just into Lee County on Lost Nation Road. After investigation, Deputies placed James Rodriguez, age 54 of Dixon under arrest for Driving While License Revoked and a Lee County FTA Contempt of Court warrant. Rodriguez was issued citations for expired registration, operating an uninsured vehicle, improper use of registration, and speeding 15-20 mph over the speed limit. Rodriguez was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was released on a notice to appear on the Driving While License Revoked arrest and given a future court date. Rodriguez was held in lieu of bond for the Lee County warrant. All suspects are presumed innocent.

On Dec. 21, at approximately 3:08 p.m., Deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 1,000 block of N. Route 251. After an investigation, Deputies arrested Helena Ghadosh, age 28, of Rockford, for driving while license suspended and an active FTA warrant out of Whiteside County. Ghadosh was transported to the Ogle County Jail, where she was held in lieu of her warrant. Ghadosh was given a notice to appear for her driving while license charge. All suspects are presumed innocent.

On Dec. 23 at approximately 10:06 p.m., Deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 1200 block of East IL 38. After further investigation, Deputies arrested Jarret B Speck, age 26, of Loves Park, for Driving While License Suspended. Speck was also cited for Speeding 26-34 mph over the limit. Speck was given a Notice to Appear for the Driving While License Suspended and released on scene. All suspects are presumed innocent.

## Oregon Woman's Club brings Christmas to Hope House client

**OREGON** — On Dec. 9, members of the Oregon Woman's Club brought presents for a client family of Hope House of Dixon. They gave presents of clothing, books, toys, and personal items to the family as part of Hope House's annual Adopt-a-Family program. The program makes Christmas possible for families in crisis who otherwise would not be able to provide gifts for each other.

"We try to do this every year," Oregon Woman's Club President Christa Young said. "We know it makes a difference for these women and children. It brings joy to them at a time that is hard for them, and it gives us joy as well to participate."



(COURTESY PHOTO)  
**Oregon Woman's Club members (left to right) Christa Young, Sandie Chasm, and Johanna Hahne presented gifts to Hope House's Adopt-a-Family program.**

## Brandt named to Central College Dean's List

**PELLA, Iowa** — Central College recognized 411 students named to the Fall 2024 dean's list,

among them was Maison Brandt of Oregon.

The honor is awarded to full-time students who

achieve a 3.5 GPA or higher on a 4.0 scale while taking 12 or more graded credit hours for the semester.

## DIRECTORY OF AREA HUMAN SERVICES

### Alcohol Abuse Counseling & Recovery

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

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

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

### Low Income Housing

<b>Ogle County Housing Authority</b>	
<b>200 W Washington, Oregon</b>	<b>732-1301</b>

### Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County

<b>P.O. Box 628</b>	
<b>Oregon, IL 61061</b>	<b>815-222-8869</b>

### Mental Health

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

### Senior Citizens Services

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

### Sexual Assault/Abuse

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

### Therapeutic

<b>Pegasus Special Riders</b>	<b>973-3177</b>
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### Veterans' Services

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

### Wellness Services

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



# LOCAL NEWS

## Obituaries

### Gene N. Miller

**LEAF RIVER** — Gene N. Miller, (73) born February 2, 1951 passed away on December 28, 2024. Son of George and Amelia Miller. Graduated in 1969 from Byron High School and Highland Community College. Gene was a lifelong farmer living with his family on the Centennial farm outside Leaf River.

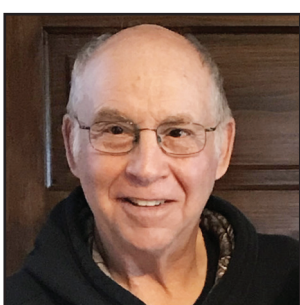
Gene met his young Elgin city girl through mutual friends. During their long-distance letter writing friendship he showed Vicki his love of farming, easily having her falling in love with him and the farm.

In addition to Gene's passion on the farm, he loved raising Hereford cattle with his kids. He

enjoyed being a 4-H leader and an Illinois Junior Hereford advisor with his wife for many years. Our family has made many lifelong friends while traveling through the states showing Hereford cattle as our "family vacation".

Gene served on the Byron School Board for many years, and he was so proud to be able to hand each of his children their diploma. Most recently he was a member of the Leaf River Township Board.

Gene is survived by his wife, Vicki of 45 years. Their children, Matthew (Erica) Miller, Bryan (Katie) Miller, and Amy (John) Kirchner. Beloved grandchildren and Papa to Coehen, Cylee, Caylen,



Addy, Kolt, Kya, Lexa, Hayden, Maci, Kane, and Kase.

A memorial gathering was held from 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM on Thursday, January 2, 2025 at Farrell Holland Gale Funeral Home in Byron. In lieu of flowers donations may be made the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research.

To leave an online condolence please visit [www.farrellhollandgale.com](http://www.farrellhollandgale.com)

### Raymond C. Meiners

**POLO** — Raymond C. Meiners, 92, of Polo, IL passed away December 30, 2024, at Alpine Fireside Health Center in Rockford.

Raymond was born, August 11, 1932, in Polo, IL, the son of John and Blanche (Ports) Meiners. On February 11, 1961 in Polo, he was united in marriage to Wanda Bailey.

Ray served in the US Army in his younger years then went to work for Kelly Springfield in Freeport, IL and Woods in Oregon, IL. He farmed in Polo on the family farm most of his life. Ray was a member of the American Legion Post #83 and Faith Unit-

ed Methodist Church of Polo. He enjoyed restoring farm tractors and playing accordion.

Survivors include sons Steven (Nancy) Meiners of Bloomington, IL and John (Kathy) Meiners of Davis, IL; grandchildren Zachary (Kaitlyn), Bradley, Robert (Rachel), Kayla, Kristina and Angela Meiners; great-grandson Everett.

He was preceded in death by wife Wanda and his Parents.

Funeral services will be Monday, January 6, 2025 at 10:30 a.m. at the Faith United Methodist Church in Polo, IL. Visitation will be one hour



prior from 9:30 a.m. until the start of service also at the church. Burial will be at Fairmount Cemetery in Polo, IL immediately following the services.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to the Polo FFA.

Visit [www.polofamily-funeralhome.com](http://www.polofamily-funeralhome.com) to send condolences.

### Theodore (Ted) G. Incontro

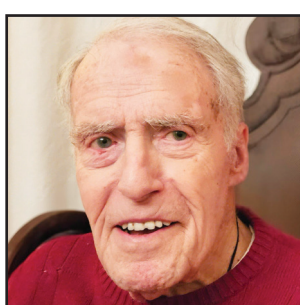
**MT. MORRIS** — Theodore (Ted) G. Incontro, age 99, passed away at Timber Ridge at Talus, in Issaquah, WA on Monday, December 9, 2024. He was born on October 25, 1925 in East Saint Louis, IL, the son of Louis & Thelma (nee, Turner) Incontro. He was a graduate of Mt. Morris High School, Mt. Morris, IL.

Ted married Jacquelyn (Jackie) Steed in 1952. She preceded him in death in 1991. He was also preceded in death by his long-term companion, Marilyn Muller. Ted had been a long-term resident of Mt. Morris, IL until his move in January 2022 to Issaquah, WA to be near his daughter Connie.

Ted was a WWII veteran and served in the 315<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing U.S. Army Air

Corp, 20<sup>th</sup> Air Force, XX1 Bomber Command in the Pacific Theater. Ted spent his career in the printing industry with much of his career employed by Kable Printing Company, Mt. Morris, IL. He was a long-time member of the Mt. Morris Disciples United Methodist Church, where he served on several committees over the years. He was active as a Boy Scout and a Boy Scout/Explorer leader for over 40 years. He was an avid fisherman and gardener.

Ted is survived by his daughter, Connie Incontro Peterson (Bellevue, WA), son, Steven (New York, NY), and a grandson, Nicholas Steed Peterson (Bellevue, WA). Ted is preceded in death by his parents, his brother, Wil-



liam (Bill) and his wife, Jackie.

A celebration of life will be held at a future date in Mt. Morris, IL.

The family asks that you do not send flowers, but to please send memorials to the Disciples United Methodist Church of Mt. Morris or the Mt. Morris Public Library.

The family also encourages donors to plant a tree in Ted's memory, through the Arbor Day Foundation, [arborday.org](http://arborday.org).

### Judith Ann Freedlund

**WINNEBAGO** — Judith Ann Freedlund, age 82, went to her heavenly home on December 26, 2024. She was born on November 30, 1942 in Rockford, IL the daughter of Wilbur and Helene (Ippen) Hoffmann. She graduated from Winnebago High School. She married Warren Freedlund on March 30, 1963 at Middle Creek Presbyterian Church near Winnebago.

Judy was an active member of Faith Center in Rockford. She was also a member of the Ladies Auxiliary of Gideons International. She was employed by Freedlund Bros. as the Manager of Dairy Infant Resources and fed calves, cats, dogs and men. She also worked for the Rockford Rescue Mission at their various resale shops for

10 years. Judy was known by others as an encourager and a good listener. She would often write notes to friends and family on their birthdays, anniversaries and other occasions. She was predeceased by her parents; her husband, Warren Freedlund, in August and her sister, Janice Painter. She is survived and missed by her children, Cathy (Allan) Levandowski of Winnebago and Robert (Isabel) Freedlund of Byron; brother James (Pam) Hoffmann of Winnebago; grandchildren Benjamin Levandowski, Abby (Tim) Fine, Anna Freedlund, Andrew Freedlund, Alex Freedlund, Donya (Ray) Sweeney, and Desi (Jesse) Warnke and numerous others who affectionately called her Grandma; 6 great



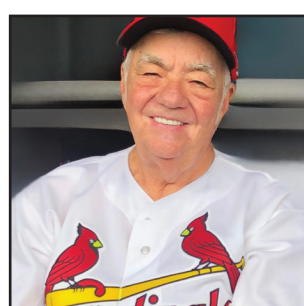
grandchildren and many special nieces and nephews.

Visitation will be held from 4:00 – 7:00 PM on Thursday, January 2, 2025 at Faith Center in Rockford. A funeral service will be held at 10:00 AM on Friday, January 3, 2025 at Faith Center. The burial will be held at 1:30 PM on Friday at Middle Creek Cemetery. Memorials are established for Faith Center in Rockford, IL and Serenity Hospice and Home in Oregon, IL.

### Robert 'Bob' W. Johnson

**BYRON** — Robert "Bob" W. Johnson, 77, passed away with his loving wife by his side on Wednesday, December 25, 2024, at Serenity Hospice and Home of Oregon, IL. Bob was born on July 10, 1947, in Mendota, IL, the son of John & Doris (Littlewood) Johnson. He was then lovingly raised by his grandparents William & Florence Littlewood. After graduating high school, he went on to join the United States Air Force as a medic between 1967 and 1971. After his honorable discharge from the Air Force, he met and married the love of his life Beverly Beck on January 23, 1971, in Rochelle, IL. They shared the next 53 years building a wonderful life and family together. He worked for 35 years at Sundstrand Aerospace of Rockford as a group supervisor, making many lifelong friends while there. Throughout

his life he enjoyed camping, fishing, being outdoors, golfing, riding motorcycles, listening to jazz and blues music, and taking care of the many dogs he owned over the years. Bob would spend time collecting coins, playing cards with friends every week and he would even go to the library twice a week to play Bridge. Above all else he had a true passion for woodworking. He made beautiful furniture for him and his family to enjoy, along with pens, bowls, toys, and many other things. He is preceded in death by his grandparents and parents. He is survived and missed dearly by his loving wife Beverly of Byron, IL; son Aaron (Dawn) Johnson of Loves Park, IL; daughter Nikki (Nate) Kunkel of Cary, IL; brothers Michael (Joyce) Johnson of Princeton, IL; Mark (Leanne) Johnson of Oregon, IL; sister Sandy



(Jeff) Hirter of Elgin, IL; grandchildren Latham, Olivia, Eli, Stephanie; and great-grandchildren Fiona and Lucy.

A visitation will take place on Saturday, January 4, 2025, between the hours of 1:00 PM & 3:00 PM at Farrell Holland Gale Funeral Home of Byron, IL. Cremation rites will take place prior to services. Memorials are established in his name and may be directed to Serenity Hospice and Home of Oregon, IL. To leave an online condolence or plant a tree in his memory please visit [www.farrellhollandgale.com](http://www.farrellhollandgale.com).

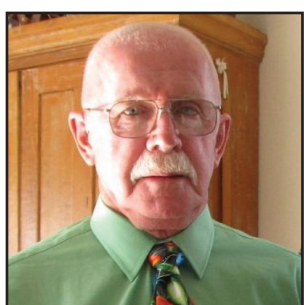
### James M. Hildebrand

**ESTERO, Fla.** - James Michael Hildebrand, age 79, died on Dec 26, 2024, at home in Estero, Florida. He was born March 4, 1945 to Warren and Ruth Spink Hildebrand in Rockford, IL. He spent most of his life in the Monroe Center/Byron Area. He attended Stillman Valley High School class of 1963. Mike, as he was known to family and friends, was a truck driver for 30 years. After retiring from the Teamsters Union, he operated the Concrete Curios Statuary Company.

It took Mike 41 years to find the love he was looking for. He married Janet Skelly McClenthen on July 3, 1986. He liked to say it was a package deal as he acquired 3 daughters, 2 sons-in-law, and 2 grandchildren. Mike and Janet retired in Estero,

FL in January of 2000. Mike enjoyed the summer visits in Illinois and kept in touch with his lifelong friends and family. He also enjoyed traveling all over the United States both as a truck driver and later as a tourist. After retirement, he had a woodworking shop in the garage and enjoyed making wooden toys for his grandchildren and the underprivileged children in Immokalee, FL. Mike designed many wooden models of semi-trucks. He was an avid reader of western mystery books.

Survivors include his wife, 3 step daughters, Colleen (Mike) Carter of Byron IL, Sandra (Allen) Myers of Bonita Springs, FL, Kelly McClenthen of Fort Myers, FL; 4 step-grandchildren, Michele (David) DeRos-



so of Byron, IL, Mikey (Wendy) Carter of Leaf River, IL, Daniel Drew of Fort Myers, FL, and Derek Drew of Fort Myers, FL; 2 step-great-grandsons, Logan Derosso and Nova Drew; A sister, Marcia Masterson of Monroe Center IL, a brother, Craig (Carole) Hildebrand of New Albany, MS; Nephew, Lee (Jodi) Masterson; 2 nieces, Wendy Klinger, and Shalla White, and several great nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his parents, a nephew, Steve Hildebrand, and special Aunts, Jean Hildebrand and Catherine Harms.

A Cremation will take place in Estero, Florida. A Visitation followed by burial will be held from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM on April 12 at Farrell- Holland-Gale Funeral Homes Byron, IL. To leave an online condolence please visit [www.farrellhollandgale.com](http://www.farrellhollandgale.com)

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# YEAR IN REVIEW



**Kenney Farms Distilling in Rochelle has collaborated with The DeLong Company and its Grown Climate Smart program to showcase the use of sustainable grain in its spirits. Gov. JB Pritzker announced Jan. 30 that two Ogle County entities received grant funding through the Open Space and Land Acquisition Development grant program. Ogle County Coroner Lou Finch (above right) did not seek re-election in the March 19 election. Finch served as coroner since 2004.**



(PHOTOS BY JEFF HELFRICH)

From page 1

**Monday, Feb. 12**  
**BYRON** — Byron Middle School saw a brief lockdown on Wednesday morning after a report of a person carrying an item resembling a gun case was made by a student, Ogle County Sheriff Brian VanVickle said.

At 7:55 a.m. Byron School District personnel, along with the Byron school resource officer, were made aware of a report of a person accessing the BMS Theater holding a long slender bag that resembled a gun case. Emergency procedures were followed to ensure the safety of students and staff. Additional units from the Ogle County Sheriff's Office and Byron Police Department responded to the scene. After an investigation, it was determined there was no weapon, and the individual entering the building was a park district employee bringing a banner (and case) into the theater for an upcoming show. The lockdown was lifted by 8:15 a.m.

A child on a school bus made the initial report and provided a description of the individual and vehicle. Once the school was locked down and secured, law enforcement met with school staff and reviewed footage from the area of the report and determined what the case was. The individual and vehicle had left the school by that point.

"To that student's credit, it very much looked like a weapon in a case," VanVickle said. "The takeaway here is that everybody did exactly what we train to do. The child saw something and said something to an adult and adults did what they needed to do and law enforcement responded appropriately. The kids were put into lockdown for their security and verified that it wasn't a credible threat to the kids. By 8:15 a.m. the lockdown was lifted and they continued on with the school day."

VanVickle called the law enforcement response to the incident "significant." Enough officers and deputies arrived at the school to be able to go to the other two schools in Byron to make sure they were secure and provide for the safety of those students.

**BYRON** — D&W Garage was awarded a \$25,000 grant through their partnership with Holcomb Bank to upgrade existing garage equipment.

"Small businesses are the heart of our local communities. When we learned of the Community First® Accelerate Grant for Small Businesses, we

saw an opportunity to make a big impact on a local business," Perry W. Byers, president/CEO, Holcomb Bank, said. "After reviewing the grant application and guidelines, we knew that D&W Garage would meet the necessary requirements and have the most potential of being selected."

"We are honored to be the recipient of this grant. Holcomb Bank has always gone above and beyond to make sure our needs are met not only personally, but also through our business. We plan to use this grant to help provide our customers with the best service in our small community," Michael and Jodi Girten (owners, D&W Garage), said.

This grant was one of 172 deserving businesses awarded a total of \$4.3 million in critical funding through FHLBank Chicago's Community First® Accelerate Grants for Small Business (Accelerate Grants) program. Small businesses are facing challenges with growing or enhancing their operations due to surging borrowing costs in a high-interest rate environment. In response to this need, FHLBank Chicago awarded Accelerate Grants for a second year to support a variety of purposes, including purchase or improvement of property, equipment, workforce development, and technology.

"Small businesses in our members' communities provide valuable products and services that contribute to local economies," Katie Naftzger, community investment officer, FHLBank Chicago, said. "Accelerate Grants provide an opportunity for our members to strengthen their partnerships with local small businesses, thereby supporting economic growth and job opportunities and strengthening the fabric of the rural, urban, and small-town communities served by our members."

**Monday, Feb. 19**  
**OREGON** — Ogle County Coroner Lou Finch will not be seeking re-election in the upcoming March 19 election. Finch has served as coroner since 2004.

"It was just time," Finch said of his decision to not seek re-election. "When I first ran, I always said, 'When you don't want to learn anything new and you're stuck in your ways, it's time to move on.' It's time. The office needs new blood. It was a learning experience from the beginning. I believe the office now is running perfectly for the citizens here in Ogle County."

Finch is a fourth-generation funeral director



(COURTESY PHOTO)

and owns and operates Finch Funeral & Crematory in Mt. Morris. He also served as an Ogle County Sheriff's Office deputy before he became coroner. The sheriff back in the early 2000s, Mel Messer, approached Finch with the idea of pursuing the office of coroner in 2004, and he decided to run. His experiences as a funeral director and in law enforcement lent themselves well to serving as a coroner, Finch said.

Coroner's offices investigate death in certain cases such as sudden or violent death, suspicious circumstances, when alcohol or drug addiction may have been a contributory cause, death without medical attendance by a licensed physician, and hospice cases.

Work includes attending scenes and declaring patients have passed, and the performance of autopsies.

"We investigate death," Finch said. "The best way to explain it is, we're kind of like a detective for the body. Sheriff's office and local police department detectives work the scene, and we're with the body. We work hand in hand."

**Monday, Feb. 26**  
**ROCHELLE** — On Feb. 13, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held for the Rochelle Recovery Center at 242 May Mart Drive in Rochelle.

The Rochelle Recovery Center serves Ogle and DeKalb Counties as a Sauk Valley Voices of Recovery entity. It offers peer coaching, recovery meetings, a safe place for people who are on the verge of using, and recovery-related resources. The location opened in August 2023.

Sauk Valley Voices of Recovery is a recovery community based out of Dixon. For the past three years, it has covered Lee, Whiteside and Ogle coun-

ties and recently started coverage of addiction needs in DeKalb County. The Rochelle Recovery Center is also the hub for the Ogle-DeKalb counties recovery-oriented system of care (ROSC) council, which brings together a coalition of local stakeholders from hospitals, police departments, businesses and more to look at the area and its addiction needs to try to get it moving in a positive direction.

"We're just trying to make sure that everybody in the community is involved with the ROSC, anybody that has decision-making capability or that is a person of lived experience," Ogle/DeKalb ROSC Coordinator Heather Tomlinson said. "We want to make sure that everybody's voice is heard and that the people that can solve the problems for the people whose voices need to be heard are there to do that."

**March**  
**Monday, March 11**  
**OREGON** — The Ogle County Economic Development Corporation recently announced it has hired an executive director for the newly-formed organization, a March 6 press release said.

"Charlene Coulombe, CECD, EDFP, has been a phenomenal addition to our organization and we are looking forward to working with her to help spur economic development and sustainable growth in Ogle County," Randy Schoon, president of the OCEDC, said.

The OCEDC is a newly-formed organization that partners with Ogle County communities such as Byron, Mt. Morris, Oregon, Polo and Rochelle. The OCEDC hopes that other Ogle County communities and businesses will soon join its efforts.

"By working together, we are able to share resources in order to

develop and strengthen our communities from a regional level," OCEDC Vice President Darin DeHaan said. "From creating new job opportunities, to helping support our existing businesses, those will be the major focus areas of our organization."

Charlene comes to the OCEDC with over 35 years of experience serving in economic and business development. She understands the work that needs to be done to create a positive and diverse economic base in Ogle County.

**Monday, March 18**  
**BYRON** — At its March 6 meeting, the Byron City Council appointed and swore in Jeremy Boehle as the new Byron Police Department Chief. Boehle previously held the rank of sergeant within the department he has served for 26 years.

Boehle will replace Chief Todd Murray, who is retiring after nearly 24 years as chief and 39 years in law enforcement. The City of Byron conducted the hiring process in recent months and held an open forum in February for the community to meet with Boehle and Sycamore Police Department Deputy Chief Jeffrey Wig, who was also a candidate for the chief position.

"It was quite the process," Boehle said. "It's like nothing I've ever done before. My last time applying for something like this was for BPD when I was hired as a police officer. It's pretty cool to move up through the ranks. That doesn't happen quite often here. It's pretty cool to see that and I think it's a good indicator to the officers we have here, that you can move up through the ranks to the top."

**POLO** — On March 6, the City of Polo and Buffalo Township hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for their new joint

building at 118 N. Franklin Ave. that will replace Polo's City Hall, Polo Mayor Doug Knapp said.

The \$2.06 million project includes a construction cost of \$1.93 million and \$130,000 worth of engineering costs. The lot was purchased for \$5,000, and the Ogle County Economic Development Corporation contributed funds for site excavation and plot testing. The city and Buffalo Township will borrow \$1.25 million in bonds over 30 years for the project. The city put down \$500,000 on the project and Buffalo Township, which will have a percentage of the square footage, put down \$250,000.

The City of Polo has looked at a number of options in recent years for a new City Hall location as its current building has encountered issues such as a deteriorating roof and back wall, storage shortages, and public meeting space, bathroom and handicap accessibility limitations.

**Monday, March 25**  
**OGLE COUNTY** — Results from Tuesday's general primary election in Ogle County showed that Christie Cox of Polo (3,812 votes, 50.68 percent) defeated Chad Horner of Rochelle (3,709 votes, 49.32 percent) in the race for the Ogle County coroner's office.

Both ran as republicans and there was no democrat candidate for coroner. Lou Finch has served as Ogle County coroner for 20 years and did not seek re-election. Cox brings experience as a deputy coroner and funeral director. She owns Polo Family Funeral Home and has run it for 20 years. She started working in the coroner's office in the early 2000s and returned to it over a year ago.

See page 7



# VIEWPOINT

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

Published every Monday  
Jeff Helfrich, Managing Editor

The Ogle County Life is a division of  
News Media Corporation.

## MOMENTS IN TIME

\* On Jan. 20, 1973, Jerry Lee Lewis, aka "The Killer," made an appearance at the Grand Ole Opry, declaring, "I am a rock-and-rollin', country-and-western, rhythm-and-blues singin' [expletive deleted]!" before launching into his set, which notably included all the rock-and-roll classics he'd promised Opry officials not to play. Shunned by the pop music world following his controversial second marriage to his teenage cousin Myra Gale Brown, Lewis had staged a successful comeback with country music.

\* On Jan. 21, 1959, Carl Switzer, aka the cowlick-sporting, warbly-voiced Alfalfa of the beloved "Our Gang" film series, was fatally shot by Moses Stiltz during an altercation over a debt Switzer believed he was owed by Stiltz.

\* On Jan. 22, 1981, Annie Leibovitz's final portrait of John Lennon and Yoko Ono, for the cover of Rolling Stone magazine, hit newsstands, a month and a half after Lennon's assassination by Mark David Chapman.

\* On Jan. 23, 1984, Hulk Hogan defeated World Wrestling Federation champion Iron Sheik and earned his first WWF title at New York City's Madison Square Garden

when he also became the first wrestler to escape Sheik's signature move, the "camel clutch."

\* On Jan. 24, 1956, Look magazine published the confessions of J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant, who were acquitted in the previous year's abduction and murder of Emmett Till, a Black teen from Chicago. The men were reportedly paid \$4,000 for their participation in the article.

\* On Jan. 25, 1776, the Continental Congress approved the first national Revolutionary War memorial, honoring Brigadier General Richard Montgomery, who died during an assault in Quebec nearly a month earlier. The monument was crafted by King Louis XV's personal sculptor, Jean-Jacques Caffieri, after he was hired for the job by Benjamin Franklin.

\* On Jan. 26, 1961, about a week after his inauguration, President John F. Kennedy appointed orthopedist Janet Travell as his personal physician, making her the first woman in history to hold that post. Following Kennedy's assassination, she retained her position and became President Lyndon B. Johnson's personal doctor.

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## Letter: Remembering President Carter

DEAR editor,  
The first Presidential election I was old enough to vote in was 1976. Looking back, at that point, and for many years after, while I did vote, I didn't take that responsibility seriously. I didn't do any research or pay much attention to the platform of who I was voting for. In fairness, back then there was no internet or Google or an easy way to do that research. But, we were still recovering from a significant scandal — Watergate.

President Nixon was guilty of and ultimately resigned because of his attempts to orchestrate and then to cover up a break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters to try and gain intel that would help Nixon win the 1972 election. Looking back, this seems tame compared to 2020 and 2024, but that's for another letter.

Despite my lack of knowledge, I think I voted for the right person in 1976 — Jimmy Carter. He promised to always tell the truth and was genuinely a really nice person. He was only a one-term President but he was ahead of his time in many ways. For example, he had solar panels installed on the

White House that powered a water heater for their living quarters in an effort to kickstart the solar industry and clean energy.

The work he did after his presidency was incredibly impactful, not just in the United States, but in the world. He believed access to health care is a basic human right, and he worked hard for 40+ years to help the poorest people around the world gain that needed access. He is an example of what we all should aspire to.

I hope everyone takes some time in the next week to learn more about Jimmy Carter as we celebrate his life. We need more people like him in leadership positions in all levels of government. We need more people who genuinely like and respect other people, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, philosophy, and politics. We need more people who tell the truth, always. We need more people who believe it is an honor to serve their country and who are doing it because they believe they can make a difference, for all Americans, and for the rest of the world.

Rest in peace, President Jimmy Carter

Linda Pottinger  
Oregon

## 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.

## Mark February on your calendars

MARK February 6 on your girls basketball calendar. That is when Byron and Stillman Valley meet in round 2 of what promises to be a thrilling rematch of their championship game of the recently played KB tournament.

Stillman Valley beat Byron 45-40 to take the title at Dixon, this after finishing second to Rock Island Alleman last year. Like the rest of tourney action, it was defense taking center stage, as baskets were extremely difficult to come by.

In watching the state-ranked royalty (61-1 combined record) of SV vs Sterling and Byron vs Dixon in the semifinals, the team playing the toughest defense prevailed.

The Cardinals survived a first-half scoring drought and banging on the boards by physical Sterling to win 47-37. Aided by 3-point shooting, it was 10 straight SV points to take a 16-13 lead.

Going into the fourth quarter, it was a narrow 28-27 lead before the Cardinals poured it on the final stanza for the win over the No. 11 team in 3A.

On paper, Byron had a tougher task with undefeated Dixon, ranked No. 1 in the 3A Associated

Press poll. A combination of early Dixon foul trouble, Byron outthrusting the Duchesses for loose balls and forcing turnovers led to a 20-6 halftime lead.

So dominant were the Tigers on defense that Dixon did not make a field goal until the third quarter. For emphasis, that bears repeating.

Byron held to No. 1-ranked team in 3A to zero field goals in the first half.

Final score was 50-33, setting up the heavyweight 2A title match, while the 3A schools had to settle for the third-place game, which was won by Sterling 44-18. Not sure what Dixon did to merit a No. 1 ranking, but that will go by the wayside.

On a sidenote, Sterling played the No. 8 team in 1A (Pecatonica), the No. 3 in 2A and No. 1 in 3A at the KSB, which is the longest-running girls holiday tournament in the state at 46 years. Speaking of history, Sterling has the distinction of being the first-ever girls high-school basketball champion (1977) in Illinois.

No doubt, Stillman Valley will at least retain its No. 3 A.P. state ranking, while Byron has done

enough to move into the top 10 from No. 11.

Breese Central and Nashville, the top teams in 2A met Saturday and Breese won 33-29. A commonality between BC/Nashville and Byron/SV is geographically positioned in the same sub-sectionals.

With Byron and SV only 5 miles apart, that is usually going to be the case. Down south, Nashville and Breese are a bit farther apart at 30 miles. They must play pretty good basketball in Breese, as Breese Mater

Dei was school to knocked off Byron in the 2023 state championship.

The super-sectional complex that Byron and SV are in might be toughest in the state with defending state champ Peoria Notre Dame and highly-regarding Aurora Central Catholic, Rock Island Alleman and Sherard.

At the Rockford Boylan tournament, a stat of note was the 46 points scored by Laney Calhoon of Orangeville in a win over Beloit Memorial. She tallied 33 in the first half.

Even after graduating 6-foot-4 all-stater Whitney Sullivan (Cahoon's cousin), Orangeville is

ranked No. 5 in 1A. In defeating Beloit Memorial, it was a win by a school of 102 students against one of 1,700.

It is much more common for smaller schools to beat larger ones in girls basketball than in boys. Earlier this season, Stillman Valley put a 46-33 whipping on Orangeville.

Before returning home to check out the local girls B-Ball scene, I had the chance to watch my granddaughter play a grade-school basketball game in Utah.

Here is what stood out most to me - prior to the tip-off, the home coach addressed the fans and stressed the importance of sportsmanship. She said anyone verbally harassing an official would promptly be asked to leave the gym. If that person failed to comply, the game would end in a forfeit to the opposing team.

When the potential exists to be a source of embarrassment to your children or grandchildren, it is much easier to keep one's lip zipped. All were behaved throughout the contest.

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

## Cash rents may be decreasing

IT'S that time of year where I start fielding calls from landlords curious about what cash rent for farmland should be. There's no magic formula as coming to a cash rent is a negotiation. However when looking at the economic impact of grain farming last year I would caution those landlords that cash rents may be decreasing, particularly if you want to keep a good tenant on the farm. A mindset of less is more may be appropriate.

Let's look at AFBF economic outlook for agriculture and you will see what I mean.

USDA's December 2024 farm income forecast confirms just how tough a year it's been for American agriculture, with slightly revised projections offering little relief to farmers, who are losing nearly a quarter of their income in two years. Net farm income is now projected at \$140.7 billion for 2024, down \$6 billion (4.1%) from 2023 and \$41.2 billion (22.6%) from the \$181.9 billion peak in 2022. The December revision does little to alleviate concerns about the financial pressures farmers face heading into 2025, and the overall figure masks the dramatic decline in returns for crop farmers.

When adjusted for inflation, the drop in net farm income becomes more pronounced, with a projected decline of \$9.5 billion (6.3%) from 2023. Although the updated 2024 figure remains above the 20-year average, the metrics paint a challenging picture, particularly for crop producers, who face substantial revenue declines. While some sectors, most predominantly livestock, are seeing stronger receipts, the December forecast underscores that agriculture remains in the red.

Crop producers will continue to bear the brunt of the economic downturn.

Total crop receipts for 2024 are now projected to decline by \$25 billion (9.2%) from 2023 to \$246.2 billion. This marks the second straight year of significant declines in crop cash receipts, reflecting weaker global demand, falling prices and increased competition from international markets.

Corn receipts are expected to fall \$16.6 billion (20.8%). Soybean receipts are likewise forecast to fall \$6.9 billion (12.3%).

Livestock producers are faring comparatively better, with total receipts for animal and animal products expected to grow by \$21 billion (8.4%) to \$270.6 billion in 2024. Cattle and calf receipts, bolstered by higher prices, are projected to rise by \$7.3 billion (7.2%), exceeding earlier predictions. Milk receipts are expected to grow by \$5.3 billion (11.5%), also outpacing the 9.4% increase forecast in September. Pork producers are projected to see receipts increase modestly by \$1.5 billion (5.7%), driven by both higher prices and quantities sold.

Egg producers, who initially faced grim projections earlier in the year, continue to see significant gains, with receipts now expected to rise by \$7 billion (39.4%), reflecting higher prices and increased demand.

USDA's metric, Farm Business Average Net Cash Income by Commodity Specialization, offers valuable insights into the financial performance of farm businesses based on their primary commodity focus.

Farm businesses specializing in soybean production experienced a significant 44% decline in net cash income, while those focused on wheat saw a 43% decline, and corn-focused operations experienced a 42% decline. In stark contrast, farm businesses specializing in cattle and calves achieved a remarkable

154% increase, while those focused on poultry saw substantial growth, with net cash income rising by 31%. Income for dairies dropped starkly between 2022 and 2023 but rose dramatically in 2024 — up 19% over 2022. These trends illustrate the dramatic variability in financial outcomes across commodity sectors, influenced by shifts in market conditions, input costs and revenue streams over the observed timeframe.

Farmers are expected to spend slightly less on production in 2024, with total production expenses forecast to decline by \$8 billion (1.7%) to \$453.9 billion. Lower costs for feed, fertilizer and fuel contribute to this reduction, with feed expenses projected to fall \$10.5 billion (13.2%), fertilizer expenses down \$3 billion (8.4%) and fuel costs declining by \$2 billion (11.3%). Given low crop prices, drops in expenses most closely associated with crop production are not unexpected.

Rising costs in key categories like labor and interest continue to offset these savings. Labor expenses are expected to rise by \$3 billion (6.1%), while interest expenses climb \$1.8 billion (4.1%), reflecting higher debt levels and sustained high interest rates. These rising costs add to the financial strain on farmers, who are already grappling with shrinking margins and limited liquidity.

Despite declining net farm income, USDA projects farm sector equity — the difference between assets and debt — to rise by 5.2% to \$3.68 trillion in 2024, reflecting growth in real estate values. Total farm sector assets are expected to increase by 5.1% to \$4.22 trillion, with real estate comprising 84% of this total. Meanwhile, farm sector debt is forecast to climb 4.5% to a record \$542.5 billion, with

increases in both real estate and non-real estate debt. While solvency metrics such as the debt-to-asset ratio are expected to improve slightly, reduced liquidity — indicated by a 6.9% decline in working capital — points to ongoing financial strain, particularly as debt levels continue to grow.

USDA's December report underscores the volatility of the U.S. farm economy as farmers face their second consecutive year of declining income. Net farm income in 2024 remains nearly 25% below its 2022 peak, and the minimal upward revisions since September offer little reprieve from the financial pressures farmers are enduring.

Crop producers, in particular, face dramatic declines in cash receipts, with little hope for immediate relief as global supply chain disruptions continue and prices for key commodities remain depressed. Livestock producers enjoy higher prices at the moment, but gains in this sector are uneven. Rising production costs threaten to erode profitability across the board.

With government payments shrinking and the income safety net failing to keep pace with the realities of modern agriculture, farmers are left to navigate an increasingly precarious financial landscape. As policymakers continue overdue farm bill discussions, these figures serve as a reminder that the targeted reforms that could address our farmers' unique challenges remain stuck in the legislative process.

"The first lesson of economics is scarcity: there is never enough of anything to fully satisfy all those who want it. The first lesson of politics is to disregard the first lesson of economics."

-Thomas Sowell  
Ron Kern is the manager of the Ogle County Farm Bureau.



Andy Colbert



# YEAR IN REVIEW



(COURTESY PHOTO)



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

**D&W Garage (above left) was awarded a \$25,000 grant through their partnership with Holcomb Bank to upgrade existing garage equipment. On Feb. 13, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for the Rochelle Recovery Center (above right) at 242 May Mart Drive in Rochelle. The Rochelle Recovery Center serves Ogle and DeKalb Counties as a Sauk Valley Voices of Recovery entity. At its March 6 meeting, the Byron City Council appointed and swore in Jeremy Boehle as the new Byron Police Department Chief. Boehle previously held the rank of sergeant within the department he has served for 26 years (below).**

**From page 5**

**April Monday, April 8 FORRESTON** — House Minority Leader Tony McCombie spent time honoring a local business this month through her new program launched earlier this year to help promote the great business community in northwest Illinois.

This month, Leader McCombie visited Koeller Forrester Hardware as her second local business highlight of the year and presented them with a special certificate of recognition. The store came to life on Aug. 21, 2015, when it was purchased by Gary and Jane Koeller, who are long-time Forrester residents.

"Gary Koeller, who moved to Forrester in 1967, is a plumber and handy man, which makes the store a perfect fit. The family-run store is a staple in the community offering essential supplies and wisdom for any home projects, but it goes far beyond just that.

The store serves the community while also supporting other local businesses through their "County Corner" that highlights local entrepreneurs: from handmade soap to butchered meats. The store also contains local history from its past days as the old post office and bank. Portions of the building remain intact from that time — including the colorful ceiling in the main area.

**Monday, April 22 MT. MORRIS** — One occupant was treated for smoke inhalation on scene and no firefighters were injured after a third-alarm structure fire at a downtown Mt. Morris building Tuesday afternoon, Mt. Morris Fire Chief Rob Hough said.

First responders were called at approximately 1:32 p.m. Tuesday to the intersection of West Main Street and North Wesley Avenue in Mt. Morris for the report of a possible structure fire.

"I arrived on scene and saw heavy fire venting out of the front window of an occupancy on the corner," Hough said at around 5 p.m. Tuesday. "Companies then arrived on scene. With the wind, the age of the building and its construction, the fire grew rapidly. We escalated it to a third alarm mutual aid box alarm to bring in resources from the area. The fire is under control at this time. Everybody is accounted for and got out of the building."

The fire took place at the addresses of 1 and 3 N. Wesley Ave. The financial institution at 4 E. Main St. was evacuated as well as a precaution. The fire was brought under control

at 3:45 p.m. Fire spread into the 3 N. Wesley Ave. building due to no fire wall separating them. The fire was extinguished at 5 p.m. and most companies were released by 7 p.m.

**Monday, April 29 CHANA** — Four years ago, Chana Education Center Principal Terry Camplain wrote a letter giving his retirement notice. But he couldn't bring himself to submit it right away.

Camplain will retire at the end of the school year after 20 years as principal and 33 overall with the Ogle County Educational Cooperative. Before his time as principal, he was a school psychologist in Rochelle for 13 years.

"I sat on that letter for a long time," Camplain said. "It's the right decision for me, but it was still a difficult decision. I'm nervous about what's next for myself. But I'm looking forward to it. It's very bittersweet. In education, it's good for younger people to take over some things. I've been doing this a long time. Some younger mindsets coming in is going to be great."

Chana Education Center supports the academic, emotional and behavioral needs of students in Ogle and Lee counties. It houses two programs, one for K-12 students with emotional disabilities and another for 6-12 students in need of alternative general education.

**May Monday, May 27 ROCHELLE** — Last month in April, the Rochelle Christian Food Pantry served 645 families (2,177 individuals total), which broke a record for the most need the pantry has seen, RCFP Manager TyAnne Unger said. In April 2023 it served 498 families and in April 2022 it served 326 families.

The RCFP has seen numbers rise in recent years. The food pantry is open Tuesdays and Fridays from 1-3:30 p.m. People can either pick up boxes or come in and do their own shopping. On distribution days, cars are often lined up as early as 9 a.m. and occasionally distribution starts early to serve the large number of people in time.

"I think the need is going to continue to rise," Unger said. "The demand is crazy. We allow people to come twice a month and we're continuously having people come in and wanting to come a third time. Our rule is two times, but we'll pack a small emergency box to get them through. I think the economy is the reason so much need is being seen. Everything is so expensive now and prices



(COURTESY PHOTO)

are only going up. Usually we would get a lot of left-over food or past-date food from the grocery stores. Now they're ordering less food because people are buying less food because they can't afford it. It's just ridiculous. Bread used to be 25 cents and now you're lucky if you can find it for \$1.99."

**June Monday, June 17 LOST NATION** —

Three Ogle County Emergency Response Team members and one barricaded suspect were shot late Wednesday morning at a residence in Lost Nation in the rural Dixon area and survived after being transported to area hospitals, Ogle County Sheriff Brian VanVickle said in a press conference Wednesday afternoon.

The barricaded man was identified as Jonathon G. Gounaris in a Wednesday night press release. The names of the involved law enforcement officials have not been released. Two law enforcement officers were transported by ground to KSB Hospital in Dixon and were treated and released, VanVickle said later on in a phone interview. The third was flown to OSF St. Anthony Medical Center in Rockford and went into surgery and is expected to make a full recovery. Gounaris was in surgery at KSB Wednesday afternoon and VanVickle said he was unsure of his condition.

The Ogle County Emergency Response Team is made up of individuals from different agencies including the Ogle County Sheriff's Office, the Oregon Police Department and the Byron Police Department as well as SWAT medics from the Rochelle Fire Department.

At approximately 8:39 a.m. Wednesday, the Ogle County Sheriff's Office received information from a family member of the

suspect at 402 Wild Rice Lane in Lost Nation, who said that her son had threatened suicide and homicide. The Ogle County ERT was activated at 9:18 a.m. and a hostage negotiator arrived on scene and attempted to make contact with the individual.

"The information we got from the family member was that this was very likely going to be suicide by cop-like situation," VanVickle said. "There was nobody else in the residence. The family member that called was not at the residence. The suspect was in the residence by himself and we had that confirmed by the family member. We believed his intention was to harm police officers. That's the information the family member told us."

The first call to Gounaris' cell phone by the hostage negotiator was made at 10:40 a.m. and VanVickle said over 50 phone calls were made in various forms to the residence. All of them went unanswered, he said. Additional resources were provided into the home at 11:09 a.m. in an attempt to make contact with Gounaris with no success.

"At 11:51 a.m. due to the lack of communication, it was determined that our emergency response team would enter the house and determine the well-being of that individual," VanVickle said. "Immediately upon entering the house, our deputies received gunfire from inside the house."

ERT members then returned fire, incapacitating Gounaris, an Ogle County Sheriff's Office press release said.

**July Monday, July 1 OREGON** — June 17

marked a significant moment for Oregon Community Unit School District 220 (CUSD 220) as Dr. Tom Mahoney presided

over his final Board of Education (BOE) meeting as the superintendent of schools. After a dedicated 17-year tenure with the district, including 14 years as superintendent, Mahoney is stepping down to enjoy his retirement.

"Dr. Mahoney's impact on Oregon CUSD 220 has been profound, shaping the district with his visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to educational excellence," an OCUSD press release said. "His tenure is distinguished by numerous accomplishments, including the implementation of innovative educational programs, enhanced student support services, and strengthened community partnerships."

**OREGON** — In October of last year, the Ogle County Health Department received a CDC Addressing Conditions to Improve Population Health (ACTION) grant for \$500,000 each year from 2023-2026 to increase access and availability to healthy and nutritious foods, education for home-based food production, food pantries, and mini food centers (refrigerated and dry food).

The grant applies to the four-county area of Ogle, Lee, Whiteside and Carroll to combat food insecurity in food deserts. During the last two weeks of May, one mini food center was opened in each of those counties. They include a refrigerator, freezer and a dry pantry and are housed in shelters built by woodshop students at Oregon Junior Senior High School. The mini food centers are filled with food through grant funds each week for members of the community in need to help themselves to.

"It's been amazing so far," OCHD Grant Coordinator Joyce Lewis said. "People have left great feedback and are marking

down what they've been taking and if they're donating, which makes us able to report data back to the CDC. We've had people ask about donating eggs, meat and produce. It's fabulous to see communities coming together to take care of each other."

The mini food centers are located at Nash Recreation Center at 304 S. 5th St. in Oregon (Ogle County), Teen Turf at 235 W. Main St. in Amboy (Lee County), YWCA of Sauk Valley at 412 1st Ave. in Sterling (Whiteside County), and Davis Community Center at 631 S. East St. in Mt. Carroll (Carroll County).

**Monday, July 8 OREGON** — A Malta man was sentenced to natural life in the Illinois Department of Corrections on June 27 in Ogle County court following being found guilty of first-degree murder, intentional homicide of an unborn child and residential arson on March 25 in the case of a pregnant Mt. Morris woman that was killed in a house fire in November 2020, a June 27 press release from Ogle County State's Attorney Mike Rock said.

Matthew T. Plote, 36, was sentenced by Judge John B. Roe IV. The case was prosecuted by Rock and Assistant State Attorneys Heather Kruse and Allison Huntley.

On Nov. 25, 2020, Melissa Lamesch, 27, was found on the kitchen floor in her single-story home at 206 S. Hannah Avenue in Mt. Morris after the Ogle County 911 center received multiple calls at 4:29 p.m. for smoke coming from the residence. Firefighters found heavy smoke and heat as they entered the structure. Life-saving measures were attempted on Lamesch. She was pronounced deceased at the scene.







# YEAR IN REVIEW



(PHOTOS BY JEFF HELFRICH)

Those driving or walking into the heart of Oregon on West Illinois Route 64 (above left) now have a little stretch of nature to enjoy with the completion of a mural depicting a wildflower field at sunset along the southern wall of the Village Bakery building at 101 N. 3rd St. On Thursday, Aug. 29, a dedication ceremony was held at the recently-restored Veterans Memorial Fountain (above right) in Mt. Morris. No structures or standing corn was damaged after a 100-acre field fire was seen in Esmond in October (below), Rochelle Fire Department Firefighter/Paramedic Curt Helgren said.

From page 8

Along with RFD, responding departments included the Ogle-Lee Fire Protection District stations of Creston, Steward, Hillcrest and Flagg Center, Stillman Fire, Monroe Fire, Malta Fire, and Oregon Fire. Fire officials were also assisted by the Ogle County Sheriff's Office and local farmers.

## November Monday, Nov. 4 DAVIS JUNCTION

On Saturday, Oct. 26, Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for its next new home build at 117 Prairie Moon Drive in Davis Junction.

The home will be Habitat's 15th in the county since 2002, and will be its first build in Davis Junction. The home will be built primarily by Habitat construction volunteers and board members, and will help a partner family achieve the dream of homeownership. The plans, on display on Oct. 26, call for an 1,100 square foot three-bedroom ranch home.

"The lot was generously donated by the Village of Davis Junction and we're really fortunate on that," Habitat Executive Director Sheri Anspaugh said. "We have chosen our family. The mother is a woman named Kimberly and she has two daughters, one is a freshman and one is in eighth grade. They're over the moon with excitement about the opportunity to be homeowners. They'll help build the house with sweat equity and they'll carry a mortgage and it'll be affordable. We had a great turnout for the groundbreaking."

## Monday, Nov. 11 MT. MORRIS

The Rink at Pine Creek recently underwent renovations including im-

provements to its front facade with a mural and the expansion of its arcade, doubling it in size, Owner Rebecca Wilson said Oct. 29.

The front of the building was resided, and later painted by a mural artist. Outdoor renovations around the building will continue. 10 new games were added to the arcade and all games were changed to arcade cards, which will now accumulate tickets electronically. The arcade's prize redemption area has added larger and more exciting prizes, Wilson said. The Rink at Pine Creek has been in operation at the site as a roller rink for 76 years.

"We had our 75th birthday last year, so this year going into our 76th year we're trying to bring life into this place," Wilson said. "There's tons of people that are still coming out and skating, but we want to remind the community we're here. The front now reminds people that we're alive and well and tells people to come on inside. When winter starts to kick off, it's a good time to start looking for things to do indoors. We'll continue to put more resources back into the place and keep it fun and exciting for people."

## Monday, Nov. 25 ROCHELLE

In September, Ogle County attorney Russell Crull of Rochelle law firm Tess, Crull & Arnquist was appointed as an associate judge of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit. He will preside in Ogle County in courtroom 304 starting on Dec. 2.

Crull received his undergraduate degree in 2009 from Western Illinois University in Macomb and his Juris Doctor in 2013 from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb. After college, he worked for Sycamore law firm Klein,



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

Stoddard, Buck & Lewis. He joined Tess, Crull & Arnquist on July 1, 2014 and was named as a partner April 1, 2016.

"The practice of law has its ups and downs, but the biggest up is always being able to help people," Crull said of his recent appointment. "I thought it would be a position where I could help both sides and be fair and accurate in application of the law to both sides. I think it's a good step for me to help more people and to help our community."

**ROCHELLE** — In September, Rebecca Laudati was hired as the new executive director of HOPE of Ogle County. She replaces longtime Executive Director Ruth Carter, who recently retired.

The non-profit organization helps survivors of domestic abuse. HOPE of Ogle County provides safety planning, support, shelter and referrals while empowering survivors to build a safe and peaceful future. It offers counseling, assistance and resources to those

who are contending with the effects of abusive relationships. The non-profit is available 24/7 to listen and provide support and court advocacy services are available as well. HOPE has offices in Rochelle, Oregon and Polo.

Laudati brings 20 years of experience working in the domestic violence field. After starting with an internship at a shelter in Elgin, she began work at Mutual Ground in Aurora, which offers domestic violence and sexual violence services. There she worked a hotline, did counseling and led support groups, conducted prevention education, worked as a court advocate, managed a shelter, and oversaw programs. She also worked at Safe Passage in DeKalb County part-time facilitating partner abuse intervention programs and groups.

"It was a big move for me," Laudati said of taking the executive director position at HOPE. "But it's a big move to a smaller agency that's focused on domestic

violence. Where I came from it was both domestic and sexual violence. This just kind of gets me back to my roots of where it all started. It's exciting to be able to take everything I've learned throughout the years and run an agency."

## December Monday, Dec. 2 STILLMAN

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

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

esty, transparency and integrity, and I aim to be a superintendent who listens and puts students first in all decisions."

Dr. Plourde brings over 12 years of experience in educational leadership. Prior to his position in Wilmont, he worked in the Northern Illinois region as principal of Willowbrook Middle School and Principal of Rock Cut Elementary. In these roles, he managed district operations, executed strategic plans and developed collaborative practices to support student achievement. Dr. Plourde earned both his Doctor of Leadership in Educational Administration and Master of Arts in Educational Leadership degrees from Aurora University, and he holds a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education from Northern Michigan University. His background in community-centered initiatives and focus on continuous improvement are expected to ensure a smooth leadership transition and continued support for student success.



(PHOTOS BY JEFF HELFRICH)

In September, Rebecca Laudati (right) was hired as the new executive director of HOPE of Ogle County. She replaces longtime Executive Director Ruth Carter, who recently retired. The Rink at Pine Creek recently underwent renovations including improvements to its front facade with a mural and the expansion of its arcade, doubling it in size, Owner Rebecca Wilson said Oct. 29.



# LOCAL NEWS



**PAG's to present Christmas Eve in Chaos**  
The Performing Arts Guild will present Christmas Eve in Chaos to be held Jan. 10-12 at the Allure of Pinecrest Grove Theater. For ticket information call 815-734-2103 or order online at [performingartsguild.com](http://performingartsguild.com). Shown are performers Larry Ubben and Trudy Whalen, and Morgan McConnell. (Courtesy photos)

## PAG's 'Christmas Eve in Chaos' set 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 heartwarming 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 di-

rector. 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](http://www.performingartsguild.com) and click on tickets.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**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 parental 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 Hospi-

tal and Health Services, FHN, OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center, Rochelle Community Hospital, Rockford Health System, Swedish American Health System and Swedish American Medical 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](mailto: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](http://www.rrvbc.org). **Jan. 8:** Please join us on Wednesday, Jan. 8 for a career fair at CGH Medical Center! The event will be held from 4-7 p.m. in the Ryberg Auditorium, 100 E. Le Fevre Road, Sterling. Available positions include: Nursing, Radiology, Respiratory, PT, CNA, MA, Echo, Pharmacy, Plumber and more. Hiring managers will be present to meet with prospective candidates and conduct on-the-spot interviews. Human Resources will also be available to assist with questions about CGH's day-one benefits,

including paid time off, tuition and continuing education support, flexible scheduling, IMRF & DC retirement plans, sign on bonuses (available for some positions), and more! To see a current list of openings, or to apply, visit [www.cghmc.com/careers](http://www.cghmc.com/careers). **Jan. 21:** Illinois Elks Children's Care Corporation in cooperation with Northwest District Elks Lodges will sponsor a free children's podiatry assessment clinic on Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2025 at Morrison Podiatry located at 841 N. Galena Ave. Suite 300 Dixon with Dr. David Yeager as the clinician in charge. The clinic starts at 8 a.m. and

is by appointment only. To make an appointment call the Illinois Elks Children's Care office at 1-800-272-0074 between the hours of 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. There are no charges for any services at this clinic. No medical referral is necessary for the clinic but physicians are welcome to refer patients to the clinic for a specific reason or second opinion. School nurses are welcome to refer children and families to the clinic. The Elks Organization has been working with physically challenged children since 1928 and this is one of the 15 clinic locations throughout Illinois. The clinic is an ideal time to

have a child reviewed for bone and joint development. If your child has feet pointing inward or outward or complains of foot pain they can be seen at this clinic. There is no charge for any diagnostic services at this clinic. The Elks will provide financial assistance to the best of their ability for children needing further treatment or specialty equipment when the family lacks sufficient resources to do so. In the past, the Elks have purchased therapy services, corrective shoes, braces, wheelchairs and augmentative communication devices to help children overcome a variety of physical challenges.

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# LOCAL NEWS



**Meador, Roop recognized for popcorn sales**  
Polo Cub Scout LeRoy Meador sold the most popcorn in the district and received a \$100 gift card. Cub Scout Tinley Roop sold the third most popcorn in the district and received a \$50 gift card. Congratulations to them both and great job.  
(Courtesy photo)

## RACF announces 2025 president and new board members

**ROCHELLE** — The Rochelle Area Community Foundation (RACF) is proud to announce Jeff Fiegenschuh as its president for 2025. Jeff, who serves as the city manager for Rochelle, brings extensive leadership experience and a passion for community service to his new role. As president, he will lead the charge in advancing RACF's mission of addressing key initiatives that create the greatest impact for Rochelle and its surrounding communities.

Jeff has dedicated his career to public service and is committed to giving back to the community he calls home. "I have been blessed in so many ways throughout my life," Fiegenschuh shared. "This is my opportunity to pay it forward and make a meaningful difference for our region. RACF plays an essential role in enhancing the quality of life in our community, and I am honored to serve as its president."

Emily Anaya, executive director of RACF, expressed her enthusiasm for Jeff's appointment. "Jeff has demonstrated unwavering dedication to Rochelle through his vision and commitment to community development align perfectly with the foundation's goals. We are thrilled to have him leading RACF into 2025 and beyond," Anaya said.

RACF would also like to extend its heartfelt gratitude to Ashley Jackson for her outstanding leadership as the 2024 board president. Ashley's dedication and commitment have been instrumental in driving the Foundation's mission forward. Her contributions have left a lasting impact, and we are deeply thankful for her service.

In addition to welcoming

Fiegenschuh as president, RACF is pleased to introduce three new board members who bring diverse expertise and a shared commitment to the community:

**Doug Jarvis:** A lifelong resident of Ashton, Doug has been involved in his family's farming and trucking business for over 40 years. He attended Ashton Schools, Sauk Valley Community College, and Western Illinois University. Doug has served on the Ashton School Board and the Bradford Township Board. With deep social and business ties to the Rochelle area, he is excited to contribute his experience to RACF.

**Kim Ewald:** Kim is a commercial & agricultural loan officer with Central Bank Illinois. She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin - Platteville and is a passionate advocate for agriculture and community service. As an active member of the Lee County Farm Bureau Young Leaders and the Lion's Club, Kim brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to the RACF board.

**Dani Foster:** Dani is an ER nurse who brings a unique perspective to the RACF board, with firsthand experience in health care and community well-being. Her dedication to serving others and her commitment to improving the lives of those in the Rochelle area make her a valuable addition to the team.

RACF looks forward to working with Jeff, the current board members, and the new board members as they focus on initiatives that create lasting change and strengthen the community. Together, they will continue to drive progress and ensure RACF remains a pillar of

support for nonprofits and residents in the region.

For more information about RACF's mission, programs, and initiatives, please visit [www.rochellefoundation.org](http://www.rochellefoundation.org).

About the Rochelle Area Community Foundation: The Rochelle Area Community Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in Rochelle and the surrounding areas. Through grants, partnerships, and donor contributions, RACF supports local nonprofits and initiatives that address the region's most pressing needs.

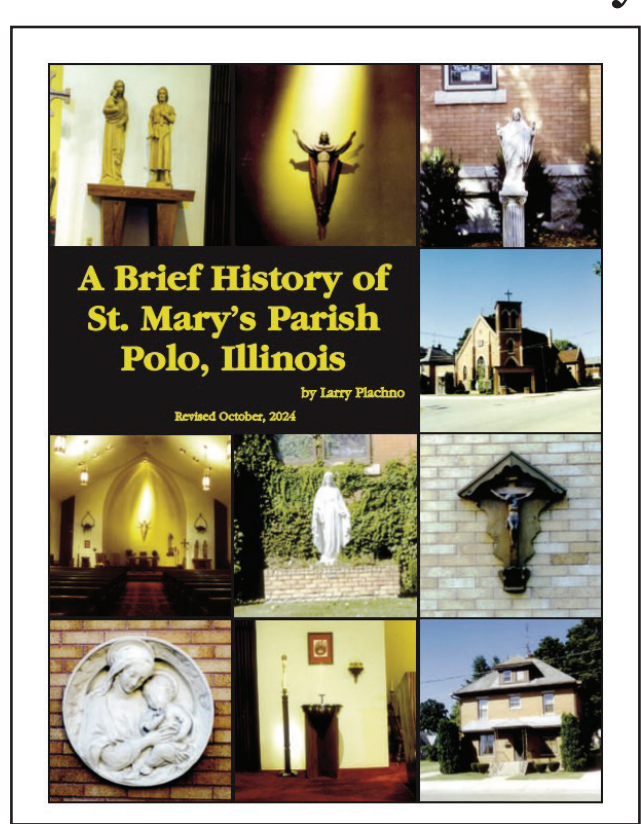
## Polo Parish History commemorates church anniversary

**POLO** — A history of St. Mary's Parish in Polo, Illinois was recently released. It starts with the early explorers in Illinois and brings the history of the parish up to the present day.

The history is the project of parishioner Larry Plachno who started work on it nearly 25 years ago and has been updating and revising the material for special events and when new pastors arrive. The reasons for the current revision include the recent arrival of Rev. Bernard Sehr as pastor and the forthcoming 125th anniversary of the dedication of the church on Jan. 7, 1900.

Plachno credits several groups and individuals for help in researching the material over the years. Included are Betty Obendorf and the Polo Historical Society as well as the Diocese of Rockford. In addition, several parishioners, pastors and others helped with obtaining information and photographs.

The dedication of the current church building took place in a special ceremony on Sunday, Jan. 7, 1900. The lot on the southwest corner of Franklin and Dixon Streets was purchased in 1897 and a building committee was established to plan the church and raise the necessary funds. Records indicate that the cost for purchasing the lot and



building the church amounted to approximately \$12,000, which was fully paid by the time of the dedication.

A noteworthy feature of the church are the 18 gothic memorial windows which are made of opalescent and cathedral glass.

The first Catholic Church in Polo was completed in 1856 and was the first church to be built in Polo and may have been the first Catholic Church in Ogle County. It was constructed on a lot donated by Polo founder Zenas Aplington in what is

(COURTESY PHOTO)

now the 600 block of north Franklin Street. Because of an increase in parish members, that original church was doubled in size in 1878. When the current church was built, the old church was sold and moved to the rear of the 100 block of East Mason Street where it survived for several decades as a hall, bakery and a storeroom for the grain elevator.

Copies of the parish history will be available at the Polo Historical Society and at the Polo Public Library for viewing.

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# LOCAL NEWS



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

Highland Community College's Agriculture faculty hosted hundreds of attendees at their third annual Northwest Illinois Agriculture Industry Expo held on campus Friday, Dec. 6, 2024.

## Highland grows Northwest Illinois Agriculture Industry Expo in 3rd year

**FREEMONT** – Highland Community College's Agriculture faculty hosted hundreds of attendees at their third annual Northwest Illinois Agriculture Industry Expo held on campus Friday, Dec. 6, 2024. Each year the event continues to expand in attendees and provided activities. HCC's three agriculture instructors coordinated the event, bringing together more than 250 people including high school students, current Highland ag students, and industry professionals from nearly 50 employers for learning and networking. Abigail Endress of Elliot, Trainor & Weller P.C. Attorneys at Law gave a keynote address to guests. "We are pleased to

see the continued participation from our regional agriculture employers, and we cannot thank them enough for their involvement," said Instructor Monica Pierce. "Year after year, they continue to show up to connect with our students. Many of our students leave the event feeling inspired and invigorated to continue moving on their career path. It really is a powerful event." Throughout the day, students engaged in hands-on activity stations led by industry experts, connected with employers over lunch, and participated in a career fair where they shared their résumés, explored future job opportunities and expanded their professional networks. Through these experi-

ences, students were able to make the connection between Highland Agriculture's degree programs and employment opportunities. This year, the program also shuttled participants out to the 55-acre Highland Community College Research Farm. The land is owned by the Highland Community College Foundation and operated by the Agriculture program. Students learned about the recently installed 13-acre subsurface irrigation system and the construction of a new Technology Center adjacent to the crop plots. The irrigation system and building construction will be completed and operational for the 2025 growing season. "I think adding the

Research Farm tour to the expo this year shows the students and our community that the Agriculture department is committed to providing unique opportunities for our students to explore the abundant career opportunities available in agriculture," said Instructor Justin Ebert. Industry partners participating in this year's event include Adkins Energy LLC, Agrisoar Solutions, A.I.M. (Agroecology + Innovation Matters), Baker Precision Planter Works, Carroll County Farm Bureau, Carroll Service Company, Carthage System Professional Swine Management, Casper's Calf Ranch, Channel Seed, Citizens State Bank, Compeer Financial, Corn Belt Ag Services LLC,

DEKALB Asgrow Seed, East Dubuque Nitrogen Fertilizers, Eastland Feed & Grain Inc., Equity Livestock Sales, First Farm Dairy Cooperative, Grade Solutions LLC, Greater Freeport Partnership, Illinois Agricultural Education (FCAE), Illinois Department of Agriculture, Jo Daviess County Farm Bureau, Jo Daviess Local Foods, Maplehurst Farms Inc., Midwestern BioAg, Midwest Groundcovers, Nutrien Ag Solutions, Parallel Ag, Pearl Valley Farms, PCE - Pearl City Elevator Inc., Prairie State Tractor, Rahn Family Farms, Rolling Hills Dairy Producers Cooperative, Sabrosura, Sloan Implement, Solutions Bank, Stephenson County Farm Bureau, Stephenson Service Compa-

ny, University of Illinois Extension – Jo Daviess/Stephenson/Winnebago County, USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rain and Hail, Vita Plus, Winnebago-Boone Farm Bureau and Winnebago County Soil & Water Conservation District. Highland Agriculture offers certificates and degree paths in Agribusiness, Animal Science, Crop Science Technology, Horticulture, Cannabis Studies, Commercial Application, Agricultural Education, Food Science, and Agricultural Production. For more information on the Agriculture program at Highland, visit [highland.edu/agriculture](http://highland.edu/agriculture).

## Davidson 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. Evan Davidson of Stillman Valley.

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 de-

gree 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.).

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**Oregon High School wrestling team finishes fifth out of 60 schools in 2024 Abe's Rumble tournament**

The Oregon High School varsity wrestling team placed fifth out of 60 schools in the 2024 Abe's Rumble dual tournament in Springfield from Dec. 27-28. Oregon started the pool round with a 55-20 win over Seneca and an 83-0 shutout against Robinson. The Hawks concluded the pool round with a 66-11 win over Deer Creek-Mackinaw and a 58-18 win over Sherrard. Oregon advanced into the championship bracket, where the Hawks beat Benton 42-33 before topping Olympia 44-33 to move into the quarterfinals. Despite a 61-12 loss against Coal City, Oregon finished the tournament in fifth place after a 46-31 win over LeRoy and a 34-31 win against Murphysboro. The Hawks went 8-1 over nine dual matches in the tournament. (Courtesy photo)

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**NEW LISTING**



**336 W Morgan Street Dixon \$110,000 Call Lori**

Welcome to your new home. This house sits at the end of Morgan Street. Vinyl siding and double pane windows add to the appeal of this home. The kitchen has a sweet breakfast nook. The dining room is the center of the home and opens up to the large living room. The house has 2 bedrooms and one full bathroom with a newer modular shower. The basement has a bright laundry room with washer and dryer staying. Direct vent water heater and gas forced air furnace. The back yard is fenced and leads into the large, detached garage. The garage has 2 overhead doors plus a large shop area for whatever your hobbies may be! Home is being sold in AS IS condition.



**745 N Ottawa Avenue Dixon **NEW** \$114,250 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!



**10 E Hitt Street Mt Morris \$399,000 Call Jennifer Rybicki**

Are you ready to jump into the restaurant business? Look no further, this turnkey operation could be yours!!! The Peppermill restaurant is selling both business and building after 30 successful years of operation. The current owners have built a strong customer base, friendly atmosphere at a great location. The Peppermill offers a bar on the left side of the business with over 20 bar stools, seating for over 100 guests in the building and adequate amount of parking. Current owners are willing to train and guide you to maximize your investment and produce a cash flowing business of your own. This sale includes all equipment and inventory for a smooth transition. Set up your showing today, don't miss out this great opportunity!



**5496 S Poplar Drive Oregon \$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!



**912 Main Street Ashton \$189,900 Call JD**

Turn-key bar downtown Ashton with a ton of potential. This 2600 sq foot property offers an array of features that makes it a desirable opportunity for owners/investors. Featuring a new roof in 2023, fenced in patio area, connected banquet room offering plenty of hospitality for events, and a spacious back room ready to build out for a kitchen space... opportunity is endless. Included with the property is an array of equipment, tables, chairs, signs, coolers, pool table, and more! Step right in and make it yours, today.



**123 E Third Street Byron \$194,900 Call Becky**

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



**29319 Freemont Road Milledgeville \$250,000 Call Carrie**

Endless country views from your welcoming 3.66 acre parcel featuring a 2 Story home with 3 bedrooms, 2 baths & detached 2+ car garage! Spacious kitchen with custom built center island, ample cabinetry, newly updated counters, sink & newer refrigerator. Enter the spacious dining room leading to the living room & den/office with the added convenience with the main floor bath & laundry. Upstairs you will find 3 bedrooms & recently remodeled bathroom with Onyx walk in shower & new vanity with Onyx countertop. Partial basement with built in shelving & ample storage. Step outside to your back patio & private back yard with playset that stays. Home updates include siding, furnace, C/A, GHW & washer/dryer that stay. Call today to view this great home!



**124 Sheridan Drive Loves Park \$1,025,000 Call Jamie**

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

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# SPORTS



### Byron High School varsity boys basketball team wins Forreston Holiday Tournament

The Byron High School varsity boys basketball team defeated Winnebago 55-53 on Friday, Dec. 20 to clinch its third consecutive Forreston Holiday Tournament title. Cason Newton scored a team-high 22 points for the Tigers, who edged Genoa-Kingston 63-62 on Thursday, Dec. 19 to advance to the finals. Byron started the tournament with a 54-42 win over Oregon on Monday, Dec. 16 and a 70-12 thumping against Ashton-Franklin Center on Saturday, Dec. 14. (Courtesy photo)



### Stillman Valley girls basketball team wins KSB Dixon Holiday Classic

The Stillman Valley High School varsity girls basketball team defeated Byron 45-40 to claim the championship during the 2024 KSB Dixon Holiday Classic from Dec. 26-28. Stillman Valley opened the tournament with a 69-24 win over Rockford Jefferson and a 74-66 win over Moline during the quarterfinals. Stillman Valley continued its run with a 47-37 win over Sterling in the semifinals before taking down Byron in the finals on Saturday, Dec. 28 for the title. The Cardinals, who moved to a perfect 15-0 on the season with the tournament victory, also saw standout guard Taylor Davidson surpass 2,000 career points. (Courtesy photo)



### Polo's Garcia earns USATF All-American honors with Dixon Distance Club

Polo eighth-grader Abram Garcia raced with the Dixon Distance Club during the 2024 USATF National Junior Olympic Championships at the Blue River Cross Country Course in Indiana on Dec. 14. Garcia finished in 14th place with a time of 12:54.3 in the 4,000-meter race for 13 and 14-year-old boys, earning All-American honors. Garcia finished third with a time of 13:37.9 at the 2024 Illinois Youth XC Championships at Deer Grove East on Nov. 10. The Polo standout then took third in the 2024 USATF Illinois Association All-Comers XC Championships at Proviso West High School on Nov. 16, clocking in with a time of 13:16.3. Garcia continued his strong month of racing at the 2024 USATF Region 7 Junior Olympic Championships on Nov. 23, when he finished fourth with a time of 13:31.5. (Courtesy photo)



### Byron's Newton, Oregon's Girton receive All-Tournament Team honors

Two Ogle County varsity boys basketball players earned All-Tournament Team honors during the 2024 Forreston Holiday Tournament. Byron's Cason Newton was a First-Team winner, while Oregon's Kade Girton was a Second-Team honoree. (Courtesy photo)

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# SPORTS/LOCAL NEWS



## Byron High School wrestling team takes second at 2024 Metamora Holiday Classic

The Byron High School varsity wrestling team took second out of 14 schools at the 2024 Metamora Holiday Classic on Saturday, Dec. 21. Placewinners for the Tigers included champions Jack Norris (120), Will Julian (157) and Jared Claunch (285) as well as runner-up finishers Brody Stien (165) and Jarett Ross (215). Additional medalists included Hunter King (4th - 132), Dylan Dach (4th - 138) and Issac Alvarez (4th - 175). (Courtesy photo)



## Oregon High School wrestling team finished second at Stillman Valley Holiday Tournament

The Oregon High School varsity wrestling team finished second out of 16 schools at the 2024 Stillman Valley Holiday Tournament on Saturday, Dec. 21. The Hawks crowned three champions including Josiah Perez (113), Isaiah Perez (120) and Briggs Sellers (285) as well as three runner-up finishers including Nelson Benesh (132), Ethan Mowry (157) and Andrew Young (175). Additional medalists included Jakob Moser (4th - 190), Landon Ege (5th - 126), Jackson Messenger (5th - 138), Jayden Berry (6th - 150) and Jakobi Donegan (6th - 165). (Courtesy photo)

### MT. MORRIS PUBLIC LIBRARY

#### Thank You Shell Gas Station and Community!

During the month of December our local Shell station collected donations for the library! With your help they collected over \$150 in donations and some books to fill our shelves. We would like to thank Shell for their continuous support of our library and our community through everything to do! THANK YOU!

#### Cookbook Club Tuesday, January 7th at 6pm!

Soup's On! Come in, choose your recipe, and bring your dish to pass at our next meeting! The month we have the choice of 2 great cookbooks all about SOUP! There are so many great and comforting recipes-you won't want to miss this! 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!

#### Lego Night! Thursday, January 16th 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!

#### T-Rexplorers Program on Saturday, January 18th at 2pm

Dinosaur Discoveries! Get kids excited about science and nature with a T-Rexplorers program! See dinosaur bones up close and get a glimpse of what it's like to go on a Paleontological dig with authentic dinosaur fossils from species like Triceratops and T-Rex. If you come in early, you can meet "Green Bean" the baby Triceratops from 1:45-2:00!

Therapy Dog, Holly,

#### to Read with Kids Monday, January 27th

We have an exciting opportunity at the Mount Morris Library with Holly, a local therapy dog. Holly will be here the 4th Monday of each month from 5pm until 6:30pm for 15-minute time slots. You can register a child for a time slot using the link in our Facebook Events page! This program is free for anyone, but you must register to let Holly know you will be coming to visit!

#### Book Donations Welcome

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

#### Display Case Showings

We have Christmas in our cases! Stop by to see our beautiful nativity set and the lovely winter

scene 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 HEARINGAIDS, 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.



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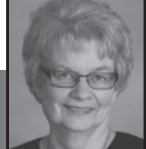
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# LOCAL NEWS

## 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.

**LEGO Club: Monday, January 6th at**

## BYRON PUBLIC LIBRARY

**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

**5:00PM:** As you get back in the groove after the holidays, don't forget we have LEGO Club on the first Monday of the month at 5pm.

**Stories With Stacey: Thursdays at 10:00AM:** We hope you had fun this fall at Stories With Stacey. We will take a few weeks off and look forward to seeing you again on January 9th!

**January Book of the Month:** In Eleanor Oliphant is Completely

Fine by Gail Honeyman, Eleanor Oliphant is a socially awkward person who avoids contact with other people as much as possible and speaks what is on her mind. When she meets Raymond and together they help Sammy, she comes to realize that she doesn't have to be isolated from other people. A heartwarming story of rescue from isolation. Stop by the circulation desk to pick up a copy today.

**January Take & Make Craft:** Kick off the new year by picking up a craft to work on at home. There is a variety to choose from this month.

**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 zip-*

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

**NEW RELEASES:**

**Adult Books**

The Wildes by Louis Bayard

A Truth Revealed by Tracie Peterson

Trial By Fire by Danielle Steel

**Picture Books**

What James Likes Best by Amy Schwartz

**DVDs**

If Reagan

## MT. MORRIS SENIOR CENTER

The following events are happening at the Mt. Morris Senior & Community Center!

Friday January 3<sup>rd</sup> at 11:00 am we will have diamond painting. Paintings are available

for purchase.

Our Computer Lab is open! Hours are 9 am to 1 pm and on Friday,

January 10<sup>th</sup> we will be providing a computer class on Email Basics. Join us at 10: 00 am if

interested.

Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup> we will have a potluck at noon with a presentation

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!

# United Church of Byron offering weekly yoga on Wednesdays

**BYRON** — Need to improve your flexibility, balance, strength and improve your overall well-being? Have to work around a stiff back or shoulder, an aching

knee or hip? Try YOGA WITH BEVERLEE once a week on Wednesday mornings, 9 to 10:30 am, in the Fellowship Hall at the United Church of

Byron, located at 701 West Second Street in Byron.

Beverlee provides a rigorous, yet gentle workout that works around any physical lim-

itations with supportive props and instruction. A session costs \$14. First session is free.

We have all the props to get you started. Just wear comfortable cloth-

ing, park in the northeast parking lot, and enter at the back door near the courtyard with the bell. A sign on the door, "Yoga Today", and a small group inside will

welcome you, no matter your level of experience or capability.

For more information or questions, please call the church office at 815-234-8777.

## 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.

#### CORNERSTONE FAMILY CHURCH

205 N. Peru St., Byron 815-234-8737 cornerstonefamilychurch.org

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

Numerous Small Groups Available for All Ages throughout the week.

Please call our Church Office or visit our website for more details.

Office Hours: 8:00am -4:30pm Mondays-Thursdays

#### BYRON ST. MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

226 E. 2nd St, Byron, IL 61010 • Phone 815-234-7431 • Fr. Richard Rosinski.

Weekday Masses: Tuesday - Friday 7:30am, Weekend Masses: Sat. 5:00 pm, Sun. 8:00 am and 9:30 am; Reconciliation: Fri. 8:00 am - 8:30 am; Sat. 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm or by app. Eucharist Adoration Fri. 8-9am

[www.saintmaryinbyron.org](http://www.saintmaryinbyron.org) secretary@saintmaryinbyron.org

#### UNITED CHURCH OF BYRON

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](mailto:ucb@comcast.net)

Website: [unitedchurchofbyron.org](http://unitedchurchofbyron.org)

Pastor: Rev. Tyler Spellious

Youth Ministry Coordinator: Richard Simpson

Sunday Schedule and 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!

#### BEACON HILL ASSEMBLY OF GOD

"Building Faith for Life"

6467 N. German Church Rd., Byron, IL - Ph. (815) 246-2685 - [beaconhillbyron.org](http://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: [chanoumc@gmail.com](mailto:chanoumc@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.

### DIXON

#### LOST LAKE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

Pastor Bob Clardie 8:30am Sunday School 815-535-6990 9:30am Church Service 90 W. Flagg Road www.lostlakechurch.org Dixon IL 61021

### FORRESTON

#### FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

402 2nd Avenue, Forreston, IL 61030, Phone 815-938-3203 Pastor Scott Ralston Sunday Worship 9:00 am; Sunday School 10:00 am

#### FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

402 First Ave., Forreston, IL Phone: 815-938-2380

Worship at 9:00 a.m. (childcare provided) with coffee and fellowship immediately following. Sunday School Age 3-Adult, 10:15 am.

God is Good, All the Time, All the Time, God is Good!

### ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor Karen Tews

West Grove Rd. At Columbine Rd.

Worship Service 10:30 am. Communion is served every Sunday.

"Singing the Song of Christian Faith in Worship, Service, Learning, Outreach and Welcome" in a beautiful rural setting.

Everyone is cordially invited to be with us.

### LEAF RIVER

#### ADELINE ZION EVANGELICAL CHURCH

9106 Cedar St. in Adeline, Leaf River, IL 61047 • Ph:815-541-4863 Sunday Services: Sunday School 9:00 am, Worship Service 10:15 am VISITORS WELCOME

#### LEAF RIVER BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Billy Hardy

**Sunday Morning:** 9:30am Bible Classes for all ages

10:30am Worship Service with nursery available. Live stream available at [leafriver.church/live-now](http://leafriver.church/live-now)

6941 N. Mt. Morris Rd., Leaf River, IL 61047

815-738-2205

[leafriverbc@gmail.com](mailto:leafriverbc@gmail.com)

[leafriver.church](http://leafriver.church)

### LINDENWOOD

#### IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH - LCMS

[immanuel-lindenwood.org](http://immanuel-lindenwood.org) (for sermons, events, etc.)

16060 E. Lindenwood Road, Lindenwood, IL 61049

815-393-4500 • [office@immanuel-lindenwood.org](mailto: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](mailto:pastor@immanuel-lindenwood.org)

#### LINDENWOOD UNION CHURCH

101 N Galena st, P.O box 67, Lindenwood IL

Regular worship service Sundays at 10:00am with fellowship following. Tuesdays 10:00 am Sr Exercise! Lunch afterwards. Thursdays 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm Library time. Snacks and coffee.

Everyone is welcome!

### KINGS

#### ELIM REFORMED CHURCH

140 S. Church Road, Kings, IL 61068 • Pastor Marv Jacobs

Phone 815-562-6811 E-mail: [goelimchurch@gmail.com](mailto:goelimchurch@gmail.com)

Website: [www.goelimchurch.org](http://www.goelimchurch.org)

Sunday morning worship 10:00 am

### MOUNT MORRIS

#### DISCIPLES UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

"By God's grace in Christ, we LIVE, LOVE, and SERVE"

All are welcome here!

9:30 a.m. - Sunday Worship with Communion open to all, followed by fellowship hour

10:45 a.m. Sunday School (Sep. - May)

102 N. Maple Ave., Mt. Morris, IL 61054

815-734-4853 [secretary@disciplesumc.org](mailto:secretary@disciplesumc.org)

[www.disciplesumc.org](http://www.disciplesumc.org)

Pastor Marcia Peddicord

#### EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF MT. MORRIS

102 S. Seminary Ave., Mt. Morris, IL 61054 815-734-4942 [www.efcm.org](http://www.efcm.org)

Senior Pastor: Bruce McKanna. 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](mailto:mtmorriscob@gmail.com)

#### MT. MORRIS TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

308 E. Brayton Rd. Mt. Morris, IL Phone: 734-6354 Rev. Josh Ehler

**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

### OREGON

#### EAST OREGON CHAPEL CHURCH OF GOD

East Oregon Chapel Church of God

The Sharing is Caring Church

[ECCOGministries@gmail.com](mailto:ECCOGministries@gmail.com) 107 N Daysville Rd. Oregon, IL Phone: 815-732-2960

### MOUNT MORRIS

Sunday School 9:30 a.m. with Sunday Worship following at 10:30 a.m. Breakfast is served every fifth Sunday beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday evenings both Adults & Youth (during the school year) meet weekly beginning at 6:30 p.m.

In the event that Oregon Schools are not in session the Youth group does not meet on Wednesdays.

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](http://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](mailto:lighthouseUMC@yahoo.com)

Worship at 11:00 a.m. Holy Communion celebrated the first Sunday of each of month. Lighthouse will lite 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](http://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](http://Riverstonecc.com) or on Facebook at [facebook.com/RiverStoneChristianChurch](http://facebook.com/RiverStoneChristianChurch)

#### ST. BRIDE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

1000 Highway 64, West (Hwy 64 W & Mongan Drive on Liberty Hill), Oregon 97123-7211 - Office: Rev. Eldred George

Webpage: [saintbrides.org](http://saintbrides.org) • E-mail: [saint.bride.church@gmail.com](mailto: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: [stpaulnalcaregonil.weebly.com](http://stpaulnalcaregonil.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](http://PoloOpenBible.org)

#### CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CHURCH ~ POLO CAMPUS

Meeting Sundays @ 10AM Service

205 N. Jefferson Avenue, Polo ~ 815.837.5255

[polo@crossroadscn.com](http://polo@crossroadscn.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.crossroadscn.com](http://www.crossroadscn.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.thebrickchurch.org](http://www.thebrickchurch.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](http://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 Norris

103 S Maple St, Stillman Valley, IL

815-645-8872 | [www.valleyevcov.org](http://www.valleyevcov.org)

Sunday Morning 9am "Gather" for learning & conversation, 10:15am Worship both onsite and online at [facebook.com/VECCFSV](http://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

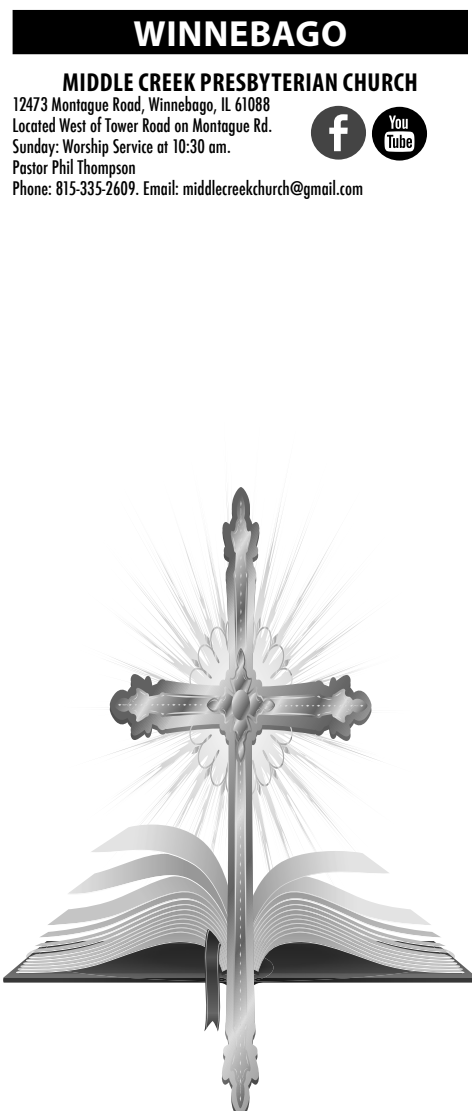
12473 Montague Road, Winnebago, IL 61088

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](mailto:middlecreekchurch@gmail.com)





# LOCAL NEWS

## JULIA HULL DISTRICT LIBRARY



Last week at Julia Hull District Storytime, young library patrons joined Miss Kelly for a holiday pajama party with festive games, stories and crafts.

### 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.

### Fun Day Monday: Winter Animal Art

The weather outside may be frightful, but the art we're making is delightful! We'll craft beautiful masterpieces featuring winter animals, and inspired by mosaics and stained glass. Monday, Jan. 20, 1 p.m. Ages 5-9. 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 travel news and trends for 2025. Monday, Jan. 27, 6 p.m. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

### Community Blood Drive

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Milton and Helene, the American Red Cross is facing an urgent blood shortage. We're stepping up to help by hosting a blood drive. Be a hero in our community—donate blood and make a difference for those in need! Your contribution can save lives. Friday, Jan. 31 from 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. Register by calling the library at 815-645-8611 or online at <http://www.redcross-blood.org/>.

### Tween Scene: Lunar New Year Celebration

Come celebrate the Year



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

of the Snake! We'll learn about Chinese New Year through snacks, games and crafts. Tuesday, Feb. 4, 6 p.m. Ages 10-13. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

### Toddler Time: Jumbo Blocks

Indulge your little one's curiosity with a hands-on event just for them. Join us for some imaginative play with oversized jumbo blocks? Friday, Feb. 7, 10 a.m. Ages 1-4. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

### Costume Character Storytime: Duck!

It's Monday and school's out for the day! Join us for storytime and craft featuring the popular books from the "Click Clack" ... series by Doreen Cronin. We'll read books, sing songs and have a great time. Duck will join us for fun and photos. Monday, Feb. 17, 1 p.m. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

### Introduction to Ancestry & Genealogy Basics

Are you a newbie to genealogy research? This class is intended for you. Join us for a very basic introduction to family

history and using Ancestry Library Edition. Tuesday, Feb. 25, 6 p.m. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

### Trivia Night at the Library Fundraiser

Gather a team and join us at your favorite library in the Valley to help Friends of the Library raise funds to support library programs and services. Teams of 4-6 players for variety trivia in rounds. Friday, Feb. 28, 7 p.m. \$10/ player. Advanced registration is required. Call the library for more details and to register: 815-645-8611.

## OREGON PUBLIC LIBRARY

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

Story Time is back on Monday, January 6 at 10 a.m. Stories, crafts and friends to share books...all at your Library! Registration is required, visit [www.oregonpubliclibrary.com](http://www.oregonpubliclibrary.com) or call (815) 732-2724.

### Book Clubs

Cocktails and Crime will meet on January 19, also stop by the Library to find out what book, what time and where it will meet. Books on Tap Book Club 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. The 2WBC meets Wednesday, January 8, at 12:30 to discuss Moby Dick by Herman Melville. The Afternoon Book Club meets Wednesday, January 15 at 1 pm to discuss The Children's Blizzard by Melanie Benjamin. Is This Just Fantasy? Book Club will meet January 21 at 6pm to discuss A Study in Drowning by Ava Reid.

### Chicago Pizza: Past, Present & Future with Steve Dolinsky- Thursday, January 9 at 7 pm

Famed *Food Guy* reporter at NBC 5 (Chicago), Steve Dolinsky has won 13 James Beard Awards for his TV, radio and podcast work. Steve is also the producer and host of Pizza City, a bi-monthly podcast featuring some of the nation's greatest pizza makers. In 2022, he launched Pizza City Fest in Chicago. Now in four cities, the events

bring together 40 of the region's best pizzerias baking live on electric and wood-fired ovens. Steve is also the author of two pizza books. Join him to dish on The Ultimate Chicago Pizza Guide: A History of Squares & Slices in the Windy City, his comprehensive guide to the styles, locales and people that make the Windy City a prime destination for slices and pies.

Steve grew up in a kosher home in St. Cloud, Minnesota and it wasn't until he was a teenager that he began to fall in love with food. After graduating from the University of Wisconsin, and moving to Chicago to work as a reporter for CLTV, Steve caught his big break in 1995 when the station launched Good Eating, a weekly program that mirrored the Tribune's food section. After eight years, Steve moved to ABC 7, Chicago's #1 news station, where he produced two original reports every week under the moniker, The Hungry Hound. Since 2014, Steve has hosted The Feed Podcast with Chicago chef/ restaurateur Rick Bayless, a podcast covering the world of food from their professional perspectives. He is also a judge on Iron Chef America and has served as one of the 27 Regional Academy Chairs for the World's 50 Best Restaurants for the past 13 years. Steve lives and works in Chicago, Illinois. Register at: [https://bit.ly/ILP\\_Steve](https://bit.ly/ILP_Steve)

### veDolinsky

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. To request accommodations, please email [illinoislibrariespresent@gmail.com](mailto:illinoislibrariespresent@gmail.com)

### Try It Tuesday – Tuesday, January 14 at 1:30pm or 5:30 pm (Choose your time slot)

Frosted Luminaries! Let's bring some relaxing light to our homes this winter season. This is an adult only class, 18 and up. Registration required, please call (815) 732-2724 or visit [www.oregonpubliclibrary.com](http://www.oregonpubliclibrary.com).

### Ink with A Friend Monthly Card Club-Monday, January 20th at 6:00pm

Sending personal cards to your friends and family is a way to let them know you care and are thinking about them. All designs include beautiful colored cardstock, gorgeous designer series paper, detailed stamped images, die cut pieces, matching ink, ribbon, and embellishments. All cards come with matching envelopes.

Whether you're a new card maker or a seasoned pro, our kits are suited to every skill level. Don't wait! Sign up today to reserve your spot. Oregon Patrons only. Registration required (815) 732-2724 or [www.oregonpubliclibrary.com](http://www.oregonpubliclibrary.com)

### 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](http://www.oregonpubliclibrary.com).

### Knit & Crochet-Mondays at 1:00pm

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

### New- Photo Printer at the library!

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

### Community Seed Library

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

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

The OWG is a gathering of writers or writer-wannabes who meet to support

each other and further their own writing. The purpose of the group is to help and encourage you in your writing. If you need brainstorming ideas, 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- The Snow Thief by Alice Hemming. At the StoryWalk is Arctic Song by Miriam Moss.

Congratulations to Shelby for winning the December-If You Take a Mouse to the Movies-Story Walk I Spy Contest!

## OCSWMD releases Christmas tree recycling information

**OREGON** — The holiday season is in full swing but soon it will be time for the décor to be put away and your Christmas tree will be taken down as well. The Ogle County Solid Waste Management Department (OCSWMD) is once again coordinating Christmas tree recycling in Ogle County. Starting Dec. 26 live trees can be dropped off at the fol-

lowing locations. These trees will be ground up into usable mulch instead of going to a landfill. Mulch will be available at no cost for pick-up at most locations. Please remove all decorations, lights, garland, and water stand. If using a tree bag for transport, please remove tree from bag and keep the bag for use next year. Only trees are accepted at these drop-

off points, wreaths or other designs with metal frames are unable to be mulched and are not accepted.

The drop-off locations are as follows and will be in operation from Dec. 26 to Jan. 17, 2025:

Byron: Byron boat launch lot, East Blackhawk Drive (Illinois Route 2)  
Forreston: 407 N. Locust St.

Leaf River: 208 Railroad St. (near water treatment plant)

Monroe Center: Lichty's Landscaping, 309 Pacific St. (south of railroad tracks)  
Mt. Morris/ Oregon: Oregon Park District Maintenance Dept., 507 Hill St.

Polo: Southwest corner, East Colden Street and South Green Avenue.  
Rochelle: The city will

chip trees at the curb the first two weeks of January, non-resident drop-off at Atwood Park, 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue & 20<sup>th</sup> Street.

In some areas, local high school FFA groups from Byron, Forreston, Oregon, and Polo high schools will be collecting trees at the curb on Saturday, Jan. 11, 2025. Please have your tree at the curb by 8 a.m. for this service.

As with the drop-off, remove all decorations and please do not place the tree in a bag. The areas where this service is provided are: Adeline, Baileyville, Byron, Forreston, German Valley, Mt. Morris, Oregon, and Polo.

For more information about this program, please contact the OCSWMD at 815-732-4020 or visit [www.oglecountyil.gov](http://www.oglecountyil.gov).



# LOCAL NEWS

## Farm Bureau scholarship applications available

**OGLE COUNTY** — The Ogle County Farm Bureau is pleased to announce that applications for their 2025 Scholarship Program will be available beginning January 5th to graduating high school seniors, or those enrolled at an accredited university. Farm Bureau members may pick up or have applications mailed. Applications can also be downloaded from the Ogle County Farm Bureau website at [www.oglefb.org](http://www.oglefb.org). This year the organization will award nine total scholarships each in the amount of \$2000. The Don Bybee Memorial Scholarship is jointly funded by the Bybee fam-

ily and the Ogle County Farm Bureau. Mr. Bybee served for many years as a director on the Ogle County Farm Bureau Board and offering this scholarship recognizes his passion for offering opportunities for Ogle County youth to advance their education. Also available is a scholarship funded jointly by the Ogle County Pork Producers Association and the Farm Bureau. The Mark Detig Memorial Scholarship will be awarded annually. Mr. Detig served as past president and director on the pork producers association board of directors and was involved in 4-H youth activities in Ogle County.

These scholarships are in addition to the Del Flessner Memorial Scholarship, honoring the former manager of the Ogle County Farm Bureau; and two \$1000 General Farm Bureau Scholarships. George R LeFevre Memorial Scholarship is a scholarship funded by the Jeff and Joyce Tremble Family and the Farm Bureau. It recognizes Mr. LeFevre for his lifetime of service to agriculture and youth education in Ogle County. It will be awarded to a recipient studying in a field of agriculture. Mary R LeFevre Memorial Scholarship is a scholarship funded by the Jeff and Joyce Trem-

ble Family and the Farm Bureau. It recognizes Mrs. LeFevre for her dedicated service in the healthcare profession and involvement with youth education. It will be awarded to a recipient studying in a healthcare related field. The Susan Youngs scholarship honors her for her years of dedication serving the agriculture community in Ogle County. It will be awarded to a recipient majoring in an agriculture related field of study. Two general Farm Bureau scholarships will also be awarded to winning recipients, along with an Ag Technology Scholarship will be awarded. It will be awarded to stu-

dents studying in an ag technology field similar to diesel mechanics, crop technician or similar fields of study. Eligible applicants must meet the following criteria: must be a high school graduate; must be an Ogle County Farm Bureau member or dependent of a member; must be accepted at an accredited university or college and pursue an agricultural or agricultural-related field of study; must be a resident of Illinois; and must demonstrate a financial need. Applicants can be graduating high school seniors or students currently enrolled in an accredited

college or university. Applicants successfully completed and submitted will be judged on criteria including: academic performance, demonstrated interest in agriculture, financial need and character/personality. Those interested in receiving a scholarship application should contact the Ogle County Farm Bureau at 732-2231; or stop by their office at 421 W Pines Rd, in Oregon, IL. Applications can also be downloaded by visiting our website at [www.oglefb.org](http://www.oglefb.org). All applications and accompanying materials must be received no later than April 1, 2025.

## Affordable health screenings coming to Mt. Morris

**MT. MORRIS**—Residents living in and around the Mt. Morris can learn about their risk for cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, diabetes, and other chronic, serious

conditions with affordable screenings by Life Line Screening. Allure of Pinecrest Grove will host this community event on Jan. 20. The site is located at 500 Evergreen Lane

in Mt. Morris. Screenings can check for: The level of plaque buildup in your arteries, related to risk for cardiovascular disease,

stroke and overall vascular health; HDL and LDL Cholesterol levels; Diabetes risk; kidney and thyroid function, and more. Screenings are afford-

able and convenient. Free parking is also available. Special package pricing starts at \$159, but consultants will work with you to create a package that is right

for you based on your age and risk factors. Call 1-877-237-1287 or visit our website at [www.lifelinescreening.com](http://www.lifelinescreening.com). Pre-registration is required.

## Weekly Brain Busters

### King Crossword

**ACROSS**

1 Screen star Lamarr

5 Abrupt turn

8 Wild party

12 Half a sextet

13 Equi-

14 Tennis great Arthur

15 Crystal-tapping sound

16 Solicit

18 Funnel-shaped bloom

20 Herrings' cousins

21 Squealer

22 Chemical suffix

23 Montana city

26 Scare badly

30 Buckeyes' sch.

31 Tibetan bovine

32 "Ulalume" writer

33 Dress store section

36 Broadway duds

38 Cat doc

39 Life story

40 Madonna role

43 "Cutie," e.g.

47 Peevish

49 Actor Jannings

12

15

18

23

30

33

40

47

50

53

50 "No —!" ("Sure thing!")

51 Quibble

52 Sandwich option

53 "Auld Lang —"

54 Away from SSW

55 Ladies of Spain (Abbr.)

**DOWN**

1 URL opener

2 Toledo's lake

3 Force

4 Dairy case buy

5 "Hush!"

6 On the Aegean, say

7 Inherited

8 Tub user

9 China setting

10 Not barefoot

11 Coop group

17 "— It Romantic?"

19 Scot's refusal

22 "A spider!"

23 Jazzy style

24 Exploit

25 Boy king

26 Mas' mates

27 Wall St. debut

28 Dandy guy

29 "You bet!"

31 However

34 ICU hookup

35 Pond duck

36 In shape

37 Hermits

39 Davis of "Jezebel"

40 Actor Omar

41 Quite

42 Lay — the line

43 Nabokov novel

44 Love god

45 "— 18" (Uris novel)

46 Right angles

48 Raggedy doll

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### MAGIC MAZE

P Z X V G N I L I O F S Q O M

K I G E H C A Y V W A U S Q P

N L G N I T T E S J C H H F E

C D **W A T E R L I N E** S F A Y

X R V U T L S Q P N B U A M E

K A G N I B O R T S E R L J Y

H P F N N E G N I K A B L C E

B I I Z G N I R U O T N O C O

G N I L P P I T S Y X A U V L

G G E S A E R C T U C F T U A

T R Q G N I T H G I L H G I H

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

Unlisted clue hint: OVEN COOKING

Contouring	Fallout	Highlighting	Stippling
Cut crease	Fan brush	Hitting pan	Strobing
Draping	Foiling	Overlining	Waterline
Face beat	Halo eye	Setting	

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### MAKEUP TERMS

### Weekly SUDOKU

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

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. Tail is moved. 2. Window is different. 3. Fingers are not showing. 4. Ear is larger. 5. Blinds are added. 6. Laces are added to shoe.

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### King Crossword

Solution time: 23 mins.

Answers

King Crossword

MAKEUP TERMS

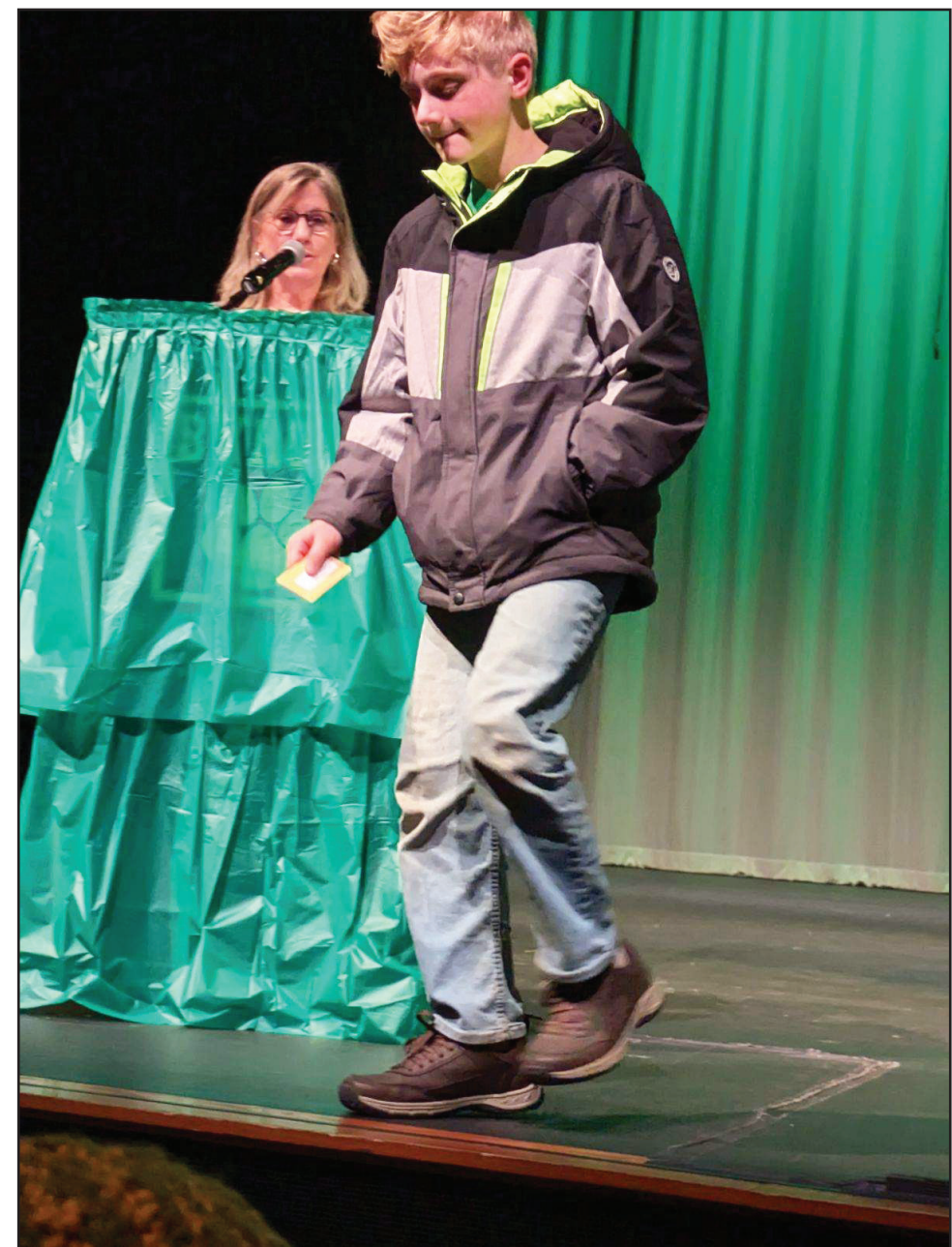
4	2	8	5	1	9	6	7	3
5	7	9	3	8	6	2	1	4
6	3	1	4	2	7	8	5	9
3	1	6	9	5	2	7	4	8
7	9	4	8	6	3	1	2	5
8	5	2	1	7	4	3	9	6
1	8	7	6	4	5	9	3	2
2	4	3	7	9	8	5	6	1
9	6	5	2	3	1	4	8	7

Answer

Weekly SUDOKU



# LOCAL NEWS



At the recent 4-H Achievement Day Awards, many 4-H club members did a great job. The Leaf River Soaring Eagles 4-H Club had many members honored. President Kaden Lingbeck, Vice President Grant Johnson, Secretary David Wehler, Treasurer Kaeden Motszko and Historian Kaden Lingbeck were all honored with the Outstanding Club Officer Achievement Awards.

## Leaf River Soaring Eagles celebrate Achievement Day

**LEAF RIVER** — At the recent 4-H Achievement Day Awards, many 4-H club members did a great job. The Leaf River Soaring Eagles 4-H Club had many members honored.

President Kaden Lingbeck, Vice President Grant Johnson, Secretary David

Wehler, Treasurer Kaeden Motszko and Historian Kaden Lingbeck were all honored with the Outstanding Club Officer Achievement Awards. Johnson and Lydia Sherburne received acknowledgement for being Ogle County 4-H Ambassadors. Four members received

the Ogle County Top 30 Awards; David Bagwell for Robotics, Johnson for Poultry, Sherburne and Wehler for Food and Nutrition. Gold County Project Honor winners were Bagwell in Robotics, Lingbeck in Poultry, Sherburne and Wehler in Food and Nutrition. Silver

County Project Honor winners were Johnson in Poultry and Motszko in College and Career Readiness. Silver Club 4-H Clover Award winners were Johnson and Lucy Miller. Gold Club 4-H Clover Award winners were Bagwell, Lingbeck, Motszko, Sherburne and

Wehler. The club also had two Junior Leader recognitions for Bagwell and Sherburne. The Leaf River Soaring Eagles 4-H club received the State Club Award for Community Service. These 4-H members as well as those in the other club all worked hard this past year.

We look forward to seeing what they will all do this year. Great job everyone! If you are looking for a fun outside of school activity, consider a 4-H club. For more information on the Leaf River Soaring Eagles 4-H Club, please contact Nickie Lingbeck at (815) 275-2492.

## OES recognized among 2025 Best Elementary Schools

**OREGON** — Oregon Elementary School has been ranked among the 2025 Best Elementary Schools rankings by U.S. News & World Report.

The rankings include more than 79,000 public elementary and middle schools across the country. Schools are ranked at the state and district level, with Best Charter Schools ranked

as a stand-alone category. This is the first time OES has ever earned this recognition.

“Our staff has worked tremendously hard the past several years at improving outcomes for students and providing a quality experience for all stakeholders. I am proud of the work we have done to earn this recognition and am committed to

continuing to strive for excellence in all that we do,” OES Principal Ryan Huels said.

The methodology focuses on state assessments of students who were proficient or above proficient in mathematics and reading/language arts while accounting for student backgrounds, achievement in core subjects, and how well schools are

educating their students. Student-teacher ratios are applied to break ties in the overall score.

The 2025 Best Elementary and Best Middle Schools rankings are based on publicly available data from the U.S. Department of Education. For district-level rankings, at least two of the top performing schools must rank in the

top 75% of the overall elementary or middle school rankings to qualify for district-level recognition. “Schools play a vital role in our communities. Parents want to ensure that the schools their child attends provide a high-quality learning environment,” LaMont Jones, managing editor for education at U.S. News. “The 2025 Best Elemen-

tary and Middle Schools rankings not only offer accessible data but it also provides a valuable insight into how well elementary and middle schools are supporting and preparing students for high school.”

Link to report - <https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/illinois/oregon-elementary-school-208519>



**Polo Lions Club offers grocery delivery**  
On Wednesday, Jan. 1, Polo Lions member Randy Ocken and his wife Nancy load their car with groceries to deliver to three people. This service is provided by the Polo Lions Club free of charge and done every Wednesday. Happy New Year from the Polo Lions Club. (Courtesy photos)





# 9 Biggest Benefits Of Shopping Ogle County First

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

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

**3 Seeking health care in your hometown brings the comforts of receiving qualified care from people you know and trust.**

Whether it be a trip to the dentist, regular health care screenings, a visit to a specialist or an emergency, you need not travel. It's all right here.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

OGLE COUNTY  
**LIFE**  
ROCK VALLEY SHOPPER



# Classified Marketplace

BUY OR SELL  
 Place A Classified Ad



OGLE COUNTY • OGLE COUNTY • OGLE COUNTY • OGLE COUNTY

## 101 LEGAL NOTICE

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 Sealed bids will be received by the Ogle County Highway Department, Oregon, Illinois until 2:00 P.M., January 10, 2025, for the purchase of the following new equipment:  
 1) One (1) Gooseneck Lowboy Trailer.  
 2) Two (2) Tandem Axle Dump Trucks with 13' body.  
 Specifications for the new equipment are available at the Ogle County Highway Department, 1989 South IL Rt. 2, Oregon, IL between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 3:30 P.M. Monday - Friday. Also available online at [www.oglecountyil.gov](http://www.oglecountyil.gov). Call 815-732-2851 with questions. The Road and Bridge Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids.  
 No. 1223  
 (Dec. 23, 30, 2024 and Jan. 6, 2025)

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**  
 STATE OF ILLINOIS )  
 ) SS  
 COUNTY OF OGLE )  
 Public Notice is hereby given to all persons in Buffalo Township that a Public Hearing will be held Thursday, January 30, 2025 at 6:00 P.M. at the Old Ogle County Courthouse, Third Floor County Board Room #317, 105 S. Fifth St., Oregon, IL, to consider the request filed December 17, 2024 of OneEnergy Development, LLC, %Eric Udelhofen, VP Development, 10 N. Livingston St., Ste. 201, Madison, WI for a Special Use Permit in the AG-1 Agricultural District to allow the construction & operation of a 2MWac community solar facility (Lupine Solar 2) on the property described as follows and being leased by the petitioners:  
 Part of the West Half (W1/2) of the Northwest Quarter (NW1/4) of Section 22 Buffalo Township 23N, R8E of the 4th P.M., Ogle County, IL, 16.13 acres of the 75.05 acre site, more or less  
 Property Identification Number: Part of 14-22-100-006  
 Common Location: 3200 block of S. Union Rd.  
 All persons in attendance at the hearing shall have an opportunity to be heard. Any person who also wishes to appear as an interested party with the right to cross-examine others at the hearing must complete and file an appearance form with the Ogle County

Planning & Zoning Department no later than five (5) business days before the date of the hearing. The application for this special use is on file with detailed description and available for examination at the Planning & Zoning Department, 911 Pines Rd., Oregon, Illinois or at the following URL: [http://www.oglecounty.org/departments/planning\\_and\\_zoning/zoning\\_board\\_of\\_appeals.php](http://www.oglecounty.org/departments/planning_and_zoning/zoning_board_of_appeals.php).  
**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**  
 RANDY OCKEN, Chairman  
 Dated at Oregon, Illinois this 17th day of December 2024  
 No. 0104  
 (January 6, 2025)

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**  
 STATE OF ILLINOIS )  
 ) SS  
 COUNTY OF OGLE )  
 Public Notice is hereby given to all persons in White Rock Township that a Public Hearing will be held Thursday, January 30, 2025 at 6:00 P.M. at the Old Ogle County Courthouse, Third Floor County Board Room #317, 105 S. Fifth St., Oregon, IL, to consider the request filed December 17, 2024 of Kabbage Patch LLC, %Keith Kehl, 236 Kober Dr., Lebanon, KY (Seller); and Emaar Real Estate, LLC, % Farruh Amonov, 707B Davis Rd., Suite 201, Elgin, IL (Buyer) for a Special Use Permit in the B-1 Business District to allow the operation of a truck & trailer repair, maintenance, mechanic shop, parking and related ancillary uses incidental thereto. The proposed site is described as follows, owned by Kabbage Patch, LLC and being purchased by Emaar Real Estate, LLC:  
 Part of the Southwest Quarter (SW1/4) of the Southeast Quarter (SE1/4) of Section 24 in White Rock Township 41North, Range 1 East of the 4th P.M., Ogle County, IL, 4.90 acres, more or less  
 Property Identification Number(s): 18-24-400-004, -005, & -006  
 Common Location: 14742 E. IL Rte. 64 (former Timberman Tree Service site)  
 All persons in attendance at the hearing shall have an opportunity to be heard. Any person who also wishes to appear as an interested party with the right to cross-examine others at the hearing must complete and file an appearance form with the Ogle County Planning & Zoning Department no later than five (5) business days before the date of the hearing. The application for this special use is on file with detailed description and available for examination at the Planning & Zoning

Department, 911 Pines Rd., Oregon, Illinois or at the following URL: [http://www.oglecounty.org/departments/planning\\_and\\_zoning/zoning\\_board\\_of\\_appeals.php](http://www.oglecounty.org/departments/planning_and_zoning/zoning_board_of_appeals.php).  
**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**  
 RANDY OCKEN, Chairman  
 Dated at Oregon, Illinois this 17th day of December 2024  
 No. 0105  
 (January 6, 2025)

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**  
 STATE OF ILLINOIS )  
 ) SS  
 COUNTY OF OGLE )  
 Public Notice is hereby given to all persons in Maryland Township that a Public Hearing will be held Thursday, January 30, 2025 at 6:00 P.M. at the Old Ogle County Courthouse, Third Floor County Board Room #317, 105 S. Fifth St., Oregon, IL, to consider the request filed December 13, 2024 of Kevin Gordon, 6903 W. White Eagle Rd., Leaf River, IL (Seller); and Nikolas & Merri Cruz, 11852 W. Canada Rd., Polo, IL (Purchaser) for a Special Use Permit in the AG-1 Agricultural District to allow the operation of a recreational tent/RV campground and full service restaurant at an existing cabin campground site. The proposed site is described as follows, owned by Kevin Gordon and being purchased by Nikolas & Merri Cruz:  
 Part of the Southwest Quarter (SW1/4) of the Southwest Quarter (SW1/4) of Section 21; and part of the North Half (N1/2) of the Southeast Quarter (SE1/4) of Section 20 in Maryland Township 25 North, Range 9 East of the 4th P.M., Ogle County, IL, 9.28 acres, more or less  
 Property Identification Number(s): Part of 03-21-300-010 and part of 03-20-400-001  
 Common Location: 6903 W. White Eagle Rd. aka Camp Kupugani/Camp White Eagle  
 All persons in attendance at the hearing shall have an opportunity to be heard. Any person who also wishes to appear as an interested party with the right to cross-examine others at the hearing must complete and file an appearance form with the Ogle County Planning & Zoning Department no later than five (5) business days before the date of the hearing. The application for this special use is on file with detailed description and available for examination at the Planning & Zoning Department, 911 Pines Rd., Oregon, Illinois or at the following URL: [http://www.oglecounty.org/departments/planning\\_and\\_zoning/zoning\\_board\\_of\\_appeals.php](http://www.oglecounty.org/departments/planning_and_zoning/zoning_board_of_appeals.php).  
**ZONING BOARD OF**

**APPEALS**  
 RANDY OCKEN, Chairman  
 Dated at Oregon, Illinois this 13th day of December 2024  
 No. 0106  
 (January 6, 2025)

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 STATE OF ILLINOIS,  
 CIRCUIT COURT,  
 OGLE COUNTY  
 Request of Michael Jan Schmerse  
 Case No. 2024MR40  
 Filed December 12, 2024  
 There will be a court date on my Request to change my name from Michael Jan Schmerse to the new name of Michael Jon Thomas  
 The court date will be held on February 19, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. at 106 5th St., Oregon, Ogle County, in Courtroom #304.  
 No. 0107  
 (Jan. 6, 13 and 20, 2025)

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 Public Notice is hereby given that on December 17, 2024 a certificate was filed in the Ogle County Clerk's Office setting forth the names and post office address of all of the persons owning, conducting and transacting the business known as:  
 Shortmeadow Bugs and Bones  
 12795 N Kennedy Hill Rd  
 Byron, IL 61010  
 Dated December 17, 2024  
 Laura J. Cook, Ogle County Clerk  
 No. 0108  
 (Jan. 6, 13 and 20, 2025)

## 101 LEGAL NOTICE

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

## 105 BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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

## 113 FINANCIAL

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

## 119 ANNOUNCEMENTS

"This publication does not knowingly accept

fraudulent or deceptive advertising. Readers are cautioned to thoroughly investigate all ads, especially those asking for money in advance."

## 201 DOMESTIC/CHILD CARE

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

## 203 HELP WANTED

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

## 301 ANTIQUES

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



Want breaking news wherever you are?  
 Like us on facebook.



# 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**

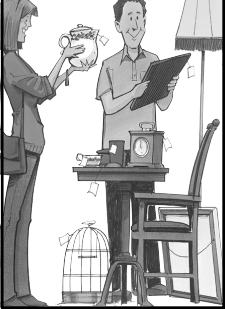


Advertise in our



## AUCTION SECTION

Deadlines Wednesday at 5 p.m.  
 Call 815-732-2156



## 103 AUCTIONS

**Ogle & Carroll County, IL**  
**FARMLAND AUCTION**  
*Tuesday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 10:30 A.M*  
 Sale online and onsite at: **Mill Wheel**  
 337 N Main Ave  
 Milledgeville, IL 61051

**388.48 Surveyed Acres Selling in 4 parcels- NO COMBINATIONS**  
**OPEN TENANCY FOR 2025**  
**Section 22 Brookville Township, Ogle County, IL**  
 Parcel A 25.971 Surveyed Acres  
 Parcel B 155.372 Surveyed Acres  
**Section 33 Lima Township, Carroll County, IL**  
 Parcel C 131.089 Surveyed Acres  
 Parcel D 76.048 Surveyed Acres

For complete listing of survey, sale bill, maps, tax info, and terms & conditions, etc. visit [www.lennybrysonauctioneer.com](http://www.lennybrysonauctioneer.com)  
 Online Bidding through [www.Equipmentfacts.com](http://www.Equipmentfacts.com)  
 Must register 2 days prior to land auction.

**For Information Contact:**  
 Lenny Bryson - Auctioneer  
 Ph) 815-946-4120

**Owner, Carol Martz Estate**  
 Jeff & Jerry Martz, Co-Executors  
  
**Attorney, Robert Eden**  
 (Ph) 815- 235-9749

**AUCTIONEER DIRECTORY**  
  
**A&T Auction Services, LLC**  
 Travis Cunningham  
 (815) 297-4595  
 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](http://Hacksauction.com)

**Remmer Schuetz Auction Service**  
 Sales of All Kinds  
 5936 S. Watertown Rd.  
**Ashton, IL**  
**847-878-1491**

**PUBLIC AUCTION**



# Classified Marketplace

BUY OR SELL  
Place A Classified Ad



OGLE COUNTY • OGLE COUNTY • OGLE COUNTY • OGLE COUNTY

**203**  
HELP WANTED

Byron School District Job Opening  
**Maintenance Worker**



Please see Job Posting in the school website  
For more details about the position  
[www.byron226.org](http://www.byron226.org)

Click on the Menu Button  
Under the "About Us" Section:  
Click on Employment Opportunities  
Fill out application/See job duties

12/23/2024

**307**  
MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE

**New Milford Refrigeration**  
6331 11th Street | Rockford



**New, Used, Scratch & Dent**  
Refrigerators  
Freezers  
Washers/Dryers  
Stoves  
Air Conditioners  
Dehumidifiers

We also carry a large selection of refurbished appliances with a warranty.

**815-262-3900**

**501**  
APARTMENTS FOR RENT

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



**oglecountylife.com**

**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'

**GET HIRED**

Full-Time & Part-Time  
Openings Available Now  
Check out the Help Wanted  
section of the Classifieds



**Start earning now!**

**203**  
HELP WANTED

**ROCHELLE News-Leader**

**Part-time local delivery driver**

The Rochelle News-Leader has an opening for a part-time newspaper bundle delivery driver who would load and deliver bundles to the post office, store racks and machines.

The daytime deliveries would be two or three days per week (including weekends) and consist of approximately 4-5 hours per shift depending on the route usually 10-15 hours per week.

Applicants must be at least 18 years old, possess a valid driver's license, proof of insurance and a safe driving record. Drivers will use company vehicles when delivering, and will be trained on the respective routes.

Candidates must be able to load, unload and carry multiple bundles of 5 to 10 pounds each. Driver applicants must be reliable, personable and have a general knowledge of area streets and roads.

This position is perfect for someone looking to supplement their income or retirement.

**Interested individuals must fill out an application in person at the Rochelle News-Leader office at 211 Hwy. 38 E., Rochelle.**

**No phone calls please.**

03/26/2023

**505**  
BUSINESS PROPERTY FOR RENT

**BUSINESS PROPERTY FOR RENT**



Launch your dream business! Prime shopping center space available in Rochelle, DeKalb, Freeport. Free store build-out and free rent for qualified tenants. Limited time offer. Don't miss out!

**Call Now: 305-748-9812**

**AM I OKAY TO DRIVE?**

**BUZZED DRIVING IS DRUNK DRIVING**

NHTSA ad COUNCIL

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



If you smoked, you may still be at risk, but early detection could save your life.  
Get **SavedByTheScan.org**


American Lung Association ad COUNCIL

Out of Sight,  
Out of Mind...

**STAY TOP OF MIND**  
With Local Consumers

It's a Smart Investment

Stay Top of Mind and Save With Our Monthly and Annual Ad Contract Specials!



**Advertise With Us**

OGLE COUNTY **LIFE**  
ROCK VALLEY SHOPPER

**815.561.2125**

Here's why consistent advertising with us is a great way to build top of mind awareness:

**IT'S TIME TO ADVERTISE**

Nearly **70%** of U.S. adults read newspapers each month.

Print newspaper ads inspire action.

**7 out of 10 newspaper readers report taking action after seeing an ad in a circular.**



**Your First & Foremost Local Advertising Solution**



**62%**  
of consumers plan to *shop more at local businesses* according to Intuit Inc.

**Let us help you promote your business.**  
Call 815.561.2125 or email [cgrimm@oglecountylife.com](mailto:cgrimm@oglecountylife.com)!

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.

**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.



# SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY BY SUPPORTING THESE LOCAL BUSINESSES



**Ogle County**  
Community Unity  
Shop • Play • Stay

## Stillman BANK

608 W. Blackhawk Dr., Byron  
815.234.5626  
1445 IL Route 2 North, Oregon  
815.732.7956  
101 East Main St., Stillman Valley  
815.645.2266  
stillmanbank.com

## RE/MAX of Rock Valley

606 E Washington St., Oregon, IL | 114 E Everett St., Dixon, IL

**815-732-9100**

[RockValleyProperties.com](http://RockValleyProperties.com)

Each office is independently owned & operated.

### BAR/GAMING/ENTERTAINMENT

#### Oregon VFW Post 8739 & Mess Hall

1310 W. Washington St., Oregon  
815.732.6851  
[facebook.com/oregonvfwpost8739](https://facebook.com/oregonvfwpost8739)

### BLACKTOP & SEALCOATING

#### King Blacktop

3499 N. Tower Rd., Byron  
815.234.4171  
[kingblacktop.com](http://kingblacktop.com)

### CONSIGNMENT/RESALE SHOPPING

#### Angel Treasures Resale Shop

201 IL Route 64, Mt. Morris, IL  
815.734.0504

#### ReRuns

120 W. 2nd St., Byron  
815.406.8060  
[rerunsbyron.com](http://rerunsbyron.com)

### FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS/SERVICES

#### Central Illinois Loans

310 Eagle Dr  
815.561.4035  
[centralillinoisloans.com](http://centralillinoisloans.com)

#### Stillman Bank

608 W. Blackhawk Dr., Byron  
815.234.5626  
1445 IL Route 2 North, Oregon  
815.732.7956  
101 East Main St., Stillman Valley  
815.645.2266  
stillmanbank.com

### GARDEN CENTER

#### Hidden Timber Gardens

462 S. Chana Rd., Chana  
815.751.4162  
[hiddentimbergardens.com](http://hiddentimbergardens.com)

### HEALTH SERVICES

#### Rochelle Community Hospital

900 N. 2nd St., Rochelle  
815.562.2181  
[rochellehospital.com](http://rochellehospital.com)

### HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE SERVICES

#### Serenity Hospice and Home

1658 S. IL Route 2, Oregon, IL  
[Serenityhospiceandhome.org](http://Serenityhospiceandhome.org)

### MENTAL HEALTH/COUNSELING SERVICES

#### Sinnissippi Centers

100 Jefferson St., Oregon  
815.732.3157  
1321 N. 7th St., Rochelle  
815.562.3801  
[sinnissippi.org](http://sinnissippi.org)

### PARKS & RECREATION

#### Byron Forest Preserve

7993 N. River Rd., Byron  
815.234.8535  
[byronforestpreserve.com](http://byronforestpreserve.com)

#### The Serenity Shed

131 N. 3rd St., Oregon, IL  
815.732.2499

### TITLE COMPANY

#### Rock River Title

412 W. Washington St., Oregon  
815.732.5291  
[rockrivertitle.com](http://rockrivertitle.com)

### REAL ESTATE AGENCY

#### RE/MAX of Rock Valley

606 E. Washington St., Oregon  
815.732.9100  
[rockvalleyproperties.com](http://rockvalleyproperties.com)

### SENIOR SERVICES

#### Rock River Center

810 S. 10th St., Oregon  
815.732.3252  
[rockrivercenter.com](http://rockrivercenter.com)

Support  
Your  
Community



900 N. 2nd St., Rochelle, IL  
815-562-2181  
[www.rochellehospital.com](http://www.rochellehospital.com)



ROCK RIVER  
TITLE

412 W. Washington St., Oregon  
815.732.5291  
[www.rockrivertitle.com](http://www.rockrivertitle.com)



Byron  
Forest Preserve  
District

7993 N. River Rd., Byron  
815.234.8535  
[www.byronforestpreserve.com](http://www.byronforestpreserve.com)



Relax. Discover. Get Away.

6712 West Pines Road  
Mount Morris, IL 61054  
(815) 655-2400  
[visitwhitepines.com](http://visitwhitepines.com)



*Serenity*  
HOSPICE & HOME

Hospice and Palliative Care



Non-Profit Organization  
Serving Nine IL Counties



*The Serenity Shed*  
BUILDING A NEW NORMAL

815-732-2499

1658 S. IL Route 2 • Oregon, IL  
[Serenityhospiceandhome.org](http://Serenityhospiceandhome.org)



HIDDEN TIMBER GARDENS

PREMIUM PLANTS & TREES

462 S. Chana Rd., Chana, IL  
Just North of Route 64 • 815-751-4162



[hiddentimbergardens.com](http://hiddentimbergardens.com)

November 29<sup>th</sup> through December 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Wednesday-Sunday 9am-5pm  
We are closed December 23<sup>rd</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup>.