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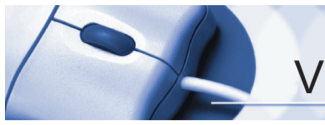


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Morrissey begins as BHS SRO

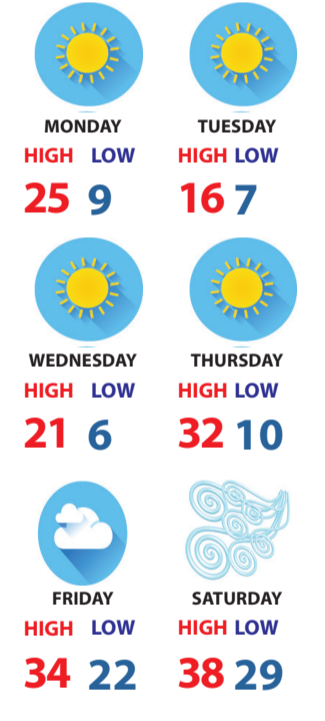
Spencer Morrissey is the new Byron High School SRO. **Page 7**



Marcos earn tourney honors

Three Polo High School girls basketball players earned All-Tournament recognition. **Section B**

WEATHER



OBITUARIES

- Berniece Martindale
- Chad Alan Hinkelmann
- Gary Leland Rhodes
- Kenneth (Kenny) Aaron Durham
- Erin Beth (Hahne) Ivancich
- Carrie L. Glendenning
- Lester 'Rae' Rothermel
- Betty Jane Shimkus Pierce

See pages 3-4, 7

INSERTS

- Felker Foods
- Polo Fresh Food
- Menards
- Farm & Fleet
- Runnings

Oregon Fire Protection District announces expansion project

Existing station to nearly double in size

OREGON — The trustees of the Oregon Fire Protection District have announced plans for a \$4.1 million renovation and expansion of the current fire station on Washington Street, located next to the river. This project, slated to begin in late spring pending city approval and financing, will significantly enhance the district's capabilities without requiring any additional property tax levy.

Originally built in 1984 by Charles Mongan for an all-volunteer fire department, the current station has seen a decline in volunteers over time. In 2014, the district began providing ambulance services, transitioning to a combination department of paid full-time and volunteer staff. The district presently employs nine full-time members, working in three shifts with three members per shift. These shifts follow a 24-hour on, 48-hour off schedule. The station was not designed with living space, so the district has converted main floor office space into sleeping rooms.

Over the last 40 years, fire apparatus has increased in both height and length, and the current space does not meet the needs of modern apparatus. Two separate buildings are used to house

equipment. The new addition will consolidate these into one, increasing efficiency and decreasing response times when seconds count, which can make a difference in saving lives and property.

To consolidate resources, the district sold the unused Chana Fire Station, generously donated by the Canfield Family, and plans to sell the old ambulance building on Madison Street, generously donated by Oregon Ambulance Services. These donations have served the district well over the years, but the time has come to expand and consolidate all equipment into one station from which the district responds to all emergency calls. The yearly call volume exceeds 1,200, mostly ambulance calls, which averages three per day. This high demand necessitates the expansion to accommodate two Advanced Life Support ambulances and provide housing for the full-time firefighter/paramedics.

The expansion will nearly double the size of the existing station and feature an engineered metal frame structure with a brick front designed to seamlessly integrate with the current building.

See **EXPANSION** page 2



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

The City of Rochelle hopes to see a data center development within the city limits in coming years, City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh said Dec. 18.

Rochelle hopes to see data center development in coming years

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — The City of Rochelle hopes to see a data center development within the city limits in coming years, City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh said Dec. 18.

A data center is a building, a dedicated space within a building, or a group of buildings used to house computer systems and associated components, such as telecom-

munications and storage systems. DeKalb recently saw the addition of a 2.3 million square feet, over \$1 billion Meta (Facebook) data center. Land near the Byron Nuclear Plant was also recently rezoned to industrial use with eyes on a data center development. The City of Rochelle could be another site of a data center in the future, Fiegenschuh said.

See **DATA CENTER** page 8

Small Business Bingo event raises \$3,540

\$36,540 has been distributed to nonprofits since fundraiser's inception

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — Small Business Bingo raised \$3,540 to be split between nonprofits Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County and the Hub City Senior Center at its final event of this season on Thursday, Jan. 2 at the Chicagoland Skydiving Center hangar in Rochelle, Event Organizer and AP Massage Therapy Owner Ashley Patrick said.

"Despite the snow, we still had a really good turnout," Patrick said. "We had over 200 people, which has been typical for us. It was helpful that the senior center provided its shuttle bus to help people get from their cars to the front door. It meant a lot to me to see the turnout. I was honestly nervous about how many people we'd see. People have had the holidays going on and have their kids home and some went back to work on Thursday. It shows how much people want to support this. It makes my heart so full."

Small Business Bingo was started in 2023 by Patrick, who came up with the idea of bingo nights in the community with prizes donated by local businesses to raise money for area nonprofits. The fundraiser raised \$18,853 for area nonprofits in 2023 with its inaugural four events. Its other events this year on April 4, Nov. 7 and Dec. 5 raised \$4,105, \$5,555, and \$3,820 respectively.

Other nonprofits that have benefited so far this year include the Rochelle Area Community Foundation,



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Small Business Bingo raised \$3,540 to be split between nonprofits Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County and the Hub City Senior Center at its final event of this season on Thursday, Jan. 2 at the Chicagoland Skydiving Center hangar in Rochelle, Event Organizer and AP Massage Therapy Owner Ashley Patrick said.

The Kitchen Table, HOPE of Ogle County, High School Education Foundation, Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center, Focus House, and the Rochelle Township

See **BINGO EVENT** page 5

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LOCAL NEWS

EXPANSION: OFPD announces \$4.1 million project to grow existing station

From page 1

Key elements of the project include four additional apparatus bays, a new office area, and living and sleeping quarters for the dedicated firefighter/paramedics.

Volunteers remain vital contributors to the Oregon Fire Protection District team, and the Oregon Fire Protection District encourages interested individuals to apply.

This project requires Oregon City Council approval of a variance from Oregon City Code 32.20.110, which pertains to the River Front Commercial District newly adopted in 2016. Under this code, the current use (fire station) and the proposed addition to the structure will be considered non-conforming in the event of a major reconstruction of the station.

Therefore, the district will seek a variance for special use as well as allowance of a non-conforming ad-



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Key elements of the project include four additional apparatus bays, a new office area, and living and sleeping quarters for the dedicated firefighter/paramedics.

dition.

A public hearing will be conducted in front of the Oregon Planning Com-

mission for the special use permit and variance application and will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Jan. 21, 2025,

at Oregon City Hall.

The Trustees governing the Oregon Fire Protection District are President Ste-

ven Carr, Treasurer Lora Stevens McKee, and Secretary Rich Rhoads. These trustees are appointed by

the Ogle County Board and serve three-year terms. The Oregon Fire Protection Chief is Michael Knoup.

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LOCAL NEWS

Obituaries

Berniece Martindale

STILLMAN VALLEY – Berniece Martindale, 99, passed away peacefully on January 4, 2025, with her daughter by her side. She was born the 5th daughter of Russell Vane Ketchum and Ida Blanche (Harden) Ketchum, on November 8, 1925, in Waterloo, Iowa. Her family moved to Rockford, IL when she was an early teen. Berniece and her red hair caught the eye of Vernon F. Martindale and they married November 1, 1942. They enjoyed 56 years together until his passing on January 11, 1999. Together they raised 6 sons and 1 daughter in Rockford, moving to Stillman Valley in 1976. She was a member of The Red Brick Church for over 40 years. She served for many years on the funeral committee. She enjoyed many hobbies, crocheting, embroidery and sewing. Many were gifted with embroidered kitchen towels or pillowcases over the years. She worked for her sister, Ethel, doing machine embroidery at A-1 Lettering Shoppe. She loved learning to play her piano, a gift from her husband. You had to sneak in if you wanted to hear her play. She said she played for her own enjoyment not for an audience. She was a Jenny Lind volunteer at Swedish

American Hospital and after Vernon passed, she did volunteer work at Neighbors in Byron, and at the Rockford Rescue Mission thrift store.

Berniece and Vernon enjoyed spending summer vacations traveling. Packing up their trailer to go camping and see the country. She enjoyed many trips to visit her son Brad in California, her son Brian's family in Minnesota and her niece Judy in Florida. She was especially thankful to have been able to travel to Israel with a group from church in 2000.

Over the years Berniece took care of many family pets. For the last 16 years she cared for her beloved cat, Oreo. She was so happy to be able to have him live with her at Hawthorne Inn assisted living in Rochelle, where he made many friends.

Her home was always open for family members that needed her help.

Berniece is survived by her sons Timothy Sr., Davis, Mark, Rock City, Brian (Lynn) Princeton, MN, daughter Melanie (Thomas) Lichty, Monroe Center. Daughters-in-law Beverly, Rockford, and Elizabeth, Cherry Valley. Grandchildren Deborah Otto, Michael (Susie), Jeffrey (Linda), Timothy Jr., Stephen, Brad Jr., Lindsey (Kris) Anderson,



Brian Jr., Sarah, Morgan Lichty, Lincoln (Noel) Lichty. Great Grandchildren Phillip, Bailey, Tia, Breanna (Aaron), Jackson, Joshua, Tyler, Payton, Miles, Noah, Alison, Brian III, Jada, James, Randy, Grayson, Sylvan, Bonnie. Great-Great Grandchildren Oliver, Mya, Jax, Sawyer.

She was predeceased by her husband, Vernon F, sons Vernon T., Louis, Brad Sr., Daughter-in-law Sue, Grandson Rob, her parents and sisters Adella, Ethel, Claire, Florence, Lois.

Memorials to Serenity Hospice and Home, Oregon, IL or The Red Brick Church in Stillman Valley, IL.

Funeral services to be held at 11:00 AM on Friday, January 10, 2025 at the North Church, 102 West Street, Monroe Center, IL. Visitation will be held prior to the service beginning at 10:00 AM. Private burial at Sunset Memorial Garden Cemetery.

To leave an online condolence please visit www.farrellhollandgale.com

Chad Alan Hinkelmann

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. — Chad Alan Hinkelmann, age 44 of Murfreesboro died Saturday January 4, 2025. He was born in Sterling, IL and had grown up in Byron, IL and was a member of Good Shepard Lutheran Church in Rock Falls, IL.

Chad was a graduate Wyoming Technical Institute in Laramie, WY. He had worked for Arby's in management. Chad was an avid fan of his niece's playing softball.

Chad is survived by his

parents, Ronald and Linda Hinkelmann; brother, Brett Nathan Hinkelmann and wife Katie; nieces, Avery and Emily Hinkelmann; aunt, Beth Krug.

In lieu of flowers please send gifts to the Chad Alan Hinkelmann memory fund at Grace Lutheran Church.

Visitation will be Saturday January 11th 12 Noon until 2:00 PM at Grace Lutheran Church. A celebration of life service to follow at 2:00 PM at Grace Lutheran Church, 811 E Clark Blvd, Mur-



freesboro, TN 37130, with refreshments served after the service. Woodfin Memorial Chapel is in charge of cremation arrangements. www.woodfinchapel.com

Illinois State Police Troop 1 announces monthly activity for December

STERLING – Illinois State Police Troop 1 Captain Joseph Blanchette has announced enforcement figures and activity for December.

Illinois State Police Troop 1 Troopers issued 655 citations, 521 written warnings, and made 16 criminal arrests during the

month of December. Troopers issued 239 citations for speeding, 16 citations for distracted driving violations and 25 citations for occupant restraint violations. Troopers investigated 79 traffic crashes, assisted 225 motorists, and conducted 299 commercial motor vehicle inspections, of

which 32 were placed out of service for safety reasons. There were 12 arrests for driving under the influence.

Troop 1, which encompasses Boone, Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside and Winnebago counties, investigated no fatal crashes in December.

Gary Leland Rhodes

STILLMAN VALLEY – Gary Leland Rhodes, age 81, went home to be with the Lord, surrounded by his family, Monday, January 6, 2025 at the Serenity Hospice and Home in Oregon, IL. He was born January 14, 1943, in Oregon, IL the son of Clair F. and Emma S. (VanBriesen) Rhodes.

Gary graduated from Rochelle High School in 1961 where he participated in football, basketball, and track. He attended Western Illinois University. Gary married Constance (Connie) Mayo on March 21, 1964 at the Lindenwood Union Church in Lindenwood, Illinois. He worked for Stillman Bank for over 50 years and served as President, CEO, and Chairman of the Board before retiring in 2018. During his tenure the bank grew from 1 facility in Stillman Valley, to 6 facilities in Ogle and Winnebago county.

He supported and worked with many community organizations. One that was very special to him was serving as the Capital Campaign Chairman for the construction

of Ogle County Hospice and Home in Oregon, IL, seeing to completion. He was a longtime member of the Red Brick Church in Stillman Valley, IL where he served in many capacities. His biggest joy in life was spending time with his family. Gary's devotion and love for his wife, children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren was his greatest privilege.

He was an outdoorsman who liked hunting, fishing, and boating with his family. He was predeceased by his parents Clair and Emma Rhodes, and his brothers Rodney and Franklin Rhodes.

He is survived by Connie, his loving wife of 60 years, his daughter Kimberly (Kevin) Glendenning, and son Matthew (Sharon) Rhodes all of Stillman Valley; his sisters Madelyn (John) Adams and Nancy Dawn Rhodes both of Rockford; grandchildren: Bailey (James) Stark of Wheaton, IL; Brena (Chris) Ingersol of Indianapolis, Indiana; Ashley and Jacob Rhodes; great grandchildren Emma Stark and Roman Ingersol, and several



nieces and nephews.

Gary and his family were blessed to have very special care givers, Jeelyn, Meshiel, Mary Jane, Cynthia, and Liza. Funeral service will be held at 11:00 AM, Saturday, January 11, 2025 at the Red Brick Church, 207 West Roosevelt Road, Stillman Valley, IL, with Rev. Chris Brauns Pastor of the church officiating. Visitation will be held Friday evening from 5-7 pm at the Brick Center adjacent to the Red Brick Church. Burial will be at Stillman Cemetery.

A memorial fund is established in Gary's name for Serenity Hospice and Home in Oregon, IL, Red Brick Church in Stillman Valley, IL, and the Stillman Valley Fire Protection District. Visit www.farrellhollandgale.com to leave a condolence or memory of Gary.

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The Serenity Shed Grief Services 732-2499

Senior Citizens Services

Hub City Senior Center 562-5050
Mt Morris Senior & Community Center 734-6335
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510 Lincoln Hwy, Rochelle 562-6976
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LOCAL NEWS

Obituaries

Kenneth (Kenny) Aaron Durham

OGDEN, Utah — Kenneth (Kenny) Aaron Durham 77 of Ogden Utah went to be with the Lord on December 30, 2024 after a brief illness. He spent his final days with family by his bedside and many calls and Facetime videos from those he loved. Everyone rejoiced in the moments he was alert and able to tell stories and share memories. Kenny had stated to many of his family members that he was looking forward to his reunion in heaven with those he had been missing. Kenny was born on October 11, 1947 and raised in Chana, IL by his parents Hershel and Ruby Durham. He was the 5th child in the family. His family included 4 sisters: Beverly (Chuck) Kearns, Della (Neil) Haase, Priscilla (Doug) Davis, and Linda (Gene) Atherton. Kenny farmed with his dad and also became a tradesman and hung dry-wall for many years. He was a talented bowler and would take anyone on in a pool game because he knew he was quite skilled and would probably win. Kenny loved the outdoors and spent much of his

life in the Pacific Northwest before moving to the mountainous area of Ogden, Utah. In addition to loving nature, Kenny was also known for his sense of humor. He would often try to make people laugh and always tried to look at the bright side of things even when faced with obstacles. Kenny even made a little joke and winked during his final moments in this lifetime.

Kenny married Terri on June 23, 1994. They lived a life of adventure. They moved from Vancouver, Washington, to Reno, Nevada and finally settled in Ogden, Utah where they enjoyed a life together surrounded by their community of friends. Kenny is survived by his wife Terri and his 6 children: Danae (Danny) White, Mark Durham, Teresa Frase, Hershel (Christina) Durham, Victoria (Keith) Heckelmann, Jenny K (James) Erickson as well as many grandchildren and great grandchildren. He was predeceased by his parents, his sister Linda Atherton, his children Blaine and Erin, his former spouse Janet, as well



as three nephews: Terry Warner, Brent Haase and Greg Haase. At Kenny's request, there will be no formal funeral services, but cremation rites have been performed and he will have his ashes spread on his favorite places as well as remain with his family. Many times, he would tell his family about his life in Chana and his fond memories. If anyone would like to remember Kenny Durham, they could make donations to the Chana Methodist Church at 606 N. Main Street Chana, IL 61015. This is the church he was raised in and called home for many years. Cards for condolences can be sent to his wife, Terri Durham 3158 Lincoln Ave, Apt 307, Ogden, Utah, 84401. Condolences may be shared at: www.aaron-smortuary.com.

Erin Beth (Hahne) Ivancich

ROSCOE — Erin Beth (Hahne) Ivancich, age 50, died on Wednesday, January 1, 2025. She was born March 30, 1974 in Belvidere, Illinois the daughter of Gary D. and Johanna (Schreiber) Hahne. Erin graduated from Byron High School in 1992, as the Salutatorian of her class. She obtained her Bachelor's of Arts Degree Magna Cum Laude from Loyola University in Chicago in 1997. Later in life she also obtained her Bachelor's in Nursing Degree Cum Laude from OSF in Rockford in 2021.

Erin worked over 15 years as a Chief Operating Officer for Goldie B. Floberg in Rockton, IL, and the past 3 years she worked as an RN in the Critical Care Unit for OSF Hospital in Rockford, IL. Erin married Rajko Ivancich on June 22, 2013. She was predeceased by her father Gary Hahne, her brother Jason Hahne, and her maternal and paternal grandparents. and her beloved dog Lizzie. She is survived by her mother Johanna Hahne of Oregon, IL, her nephew Devan Hahne of Roscoe, Aunt and Cousins, and the Ivancich family.

Erin was a beautiful soul with many hands and talents. She was always on-the-ready to help those in need. She blended seamlessly into the Ivancich family and loved learning the Serbian traditions, and special holidays. She was a self-taught master of baking, turning out decorated cookies and cakes for family and other special occasions. Erin also had the greenest of thumbs. She maintained a beautiful garden full of gorgeous flowers and vegetables, and took pride in sharing the fruits of her labor with her family, friends, and people she loved. She was a self-taught knitter, and really enjoyed to make projects for other people. She was also an avid fisher. She loved being out on the water with her husband and her beloved Lizzie.

Erin was the type of person to pursue her passions relentlessly. She recently renewed her interest in travel. She and her mother Johanna had just returned from a beautiful trip to Maine, Quebec, and Nova Scotia. She had a wonderful time going to Peggy's Cove in Nova Scotia, and enjoying their delicious mussel dinner. She was also very passionate about her career and education.



She had recently within the last few years went back to school to pursue an even higher education and career. She was dedicated to serve and help those in need, and had an enormous heart for others.

Her focus in life was helping others, while also creating and maintaining a beautiful life for herself. Erin was a one-of-a-kind soul. She was beautiful, intelligent, passionate, and loving. Private Graveside Services for Erin and Rajko Ivancich were held at the Willow Brook Cemetery in Roscoe, Illinois with Pastor Michael Hoffman and Pastor Nathan Massie co-officiating.

In Erin's memory, memorials may be sent to Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County, P.O. Box 628, Oregon, IL 61061 and Winnebago County Animal Services/Adoptions, 4517 N. Main St., Rockford, IL 61103

Carrie L. Glendenning

BYRON — Carrie L. Glendenning, devoted mother and wife, age 61, passed away at UW Swedish American Hospital on January 2, 2025. She was born in Rockford on June 23, 1963 the daughter of Larry and Sharon (Malm) Cottrell.

She worked for many years for Rockford Cardinal Glass but her main focus in life was being a mother. She married Todd Glendenning on September 8, 2018 and they built a beautiful life together, their children meshing together perfectly. Carrie was a woman of faith and in her younger years enjoyed attending First Lutheran Church in Pecatonica and recently enjoyed going to Monroe Center Community Church with her husband. She loved spending time at the family cabin up north. Carrie was someone who enjoyed being outdoors, especially tending to her

flower garden. She had a huge heart and always put others first, taking care of anyone who needed it. More than anything, Carrie adored her family. She loved being an involved mother making sure to support her kids in all their endeavors. Recently, she enjoyed being a nana and spending time watching her grandchildren. She is truly going to be missed by anyone who was lucky enough to have known her. She is preceded in death by her father. She is survived and missed by her husband, Todd Glendenning of Byron; mother, Sharon Cottrell of New Milford; children: Sierra Revell of Pecatonica; Jenna Revell of Pecatonica; Jessica (Matt) DeVries of Stillman Valley; Paige (Reed Sohner) Glendenning of Rockford; Benjamin (Tara) Glendenning of Stillman Valley; and Marianna Austhiem (Jørgen Person) of Norway;



siblings, Tracy (Lenny) Luek of Janesville and Kevin (Mandi) Cottrell of Belvidere; 8 grandchildren and many other loved ones and friends. A private graveside service will be held at the Mouth of Stillman Cemetery. A celebration of Carrie's life will be held on Saturday, March 1st at noon at the Monroe Center Community Church in Monroe Center, IL with Rev. Bob Mellon officiating. In lieu of flowers donations may be directed to two charities that were close to her heart: Rockford Rescue Mission or Alzheimer's Association.

Lester 'Rae' Rothermel

MACHESNEY PARK — Lester "Rae" Rothermel, age 94, of Machesney Park passed away peacefully with his family by his side on Sunday December 29th, 2024.

Rae was the son of Lester and Celia (Rae) Rothermel, born on July 1st, 1930 in Adeline, Illinois. As a young boy, he moved to Polo, Illinois, where he stayed until age 90. Rae graduated from Polo Community High School in 1948, where he was an active member of the basketball team. His love for sports, particularly basketball, was a defining part of his youth and continued to shape his approach to life—valuing teamwork, discipline, and a strong work ethic.

On December 31, 1955, Rae married Mary Lynn Buck, with whom he shared three children. Later, on May 23, 1987, he married Sandi Berg, and together they raised two sons. Rae was a dedicated farmer whose love for the land and his family knew no bounds. From sunrise to sunset, he worked tirelessly, nurturing both his crops and the large family he cherished deeply. His passion for farming extended far beyond his own fields, taking him across the United States to various farming conventions where

he sought knowledge and shared his experiences with others. Rae's commitment to growth—whether in the soil or in the lives of his loved ones—was unwavering. He also had a great love for raising hogs, a part of his farming life that he took great pride in. Despite his long hours and demanding work, Rae always made sure to be there for his family, sharing his wisdom, love, and sense of humor.

Rae is survived by his daughters, Vicky (Bob) Bray of Altamont, IL, and Nancy (Pat) Gilmour of Galesburg (formerly of Mt. Morris); sons, Brian (Karen Bentele) Rothermel of Machesney Park, Cody (Kristin) Rothermel of Rock Falls, IL, and Jason (Kim) Berg of Monroe, WI; brother-in-law, Dan Hartman; grandchildren, Timothy (Claire) Gilmour, Danni Gilmour, JR (Kiley) Bray, Erin (Josh) Moffit, Rachel (Brent) Wagner, Michael Rothermel, Ian Berg, and Barrett Berg; and seven wonderful great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Sandi Rothermel; father Lester Rothermel; Mother Celia Rothermel; sisters, Calista Hartman and Phyllis Ruter; brothers, Delmar Rothermel, Darrell Rothermel, Alan Rothermel,



and Harlan Rothermel; and granddaughter, Samantha Gilmour.

A celebration of Rae's life will be Friday, January 17, 2025 at the Polo Family Funeral Home, 110 E. Dixon St. beginning at 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. There will be a family and friends sharing time from 11:30 a.m. until the conclusion of the service at 12:00 p.m. Rae will be buried in a private family service in Haldane Cemetery.

Rae's legacy is one of hard work, love, and a deep connection to the earth and the people he held dear. He will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and all who had the privilege of knowing him.

We would like to extend a special thank you to the TLC Living Community staff who took care of Rae as if he was family. In lieu of flowers, please direct memorials to the Polo FFA. Visit www.polofamilyfuneralhome.com to send condolences.

RCH implements visitor restrictions amid respiratory illness increase

ROCHELLE — Due to the increase of respiratory illness in the area, and in an effort to better care for all patients, visitors,

and employees; Rochelle Community Hospital is implementing visitor restrictions for the month of January. RCH ask that

you respectfully adhere to these restrictions so that it may properly decrease the presence of infection in our facility. The hospital also asks anyone experiencing any respiratory symptoms to wear a face mask upon entering the premises. -No one under the age of 16 is allowed to visit patients. -Two visitors per patient at a time on the Medical/Surgical floor. -One visitor per patient at a time in the Emergency Rooms and waiting areas.

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LOCAL NEWS

BINGO EVENT: Small business fundraiser generates over \$3,500

From page 1

A food drive was also held at one event for the Rochelle Christian Food Pantry, along with a toy drive for the Community Action Network. Small Business Bingo has helped 10 nonprofits this year after helping five last year.

The events include bingo for \$15 and raffles along with food and drinks available from the Flight Deck Bar & Grill. Patrick thanked the Flight Deck staff for being accommodating of the large crowds and for serving everyone.

"The first event had 175 people and the events that followed were over 200 and 300," Patrick said. "There have been hundreds of donated bingo and raffle prizes from local businesses. Almost all of them have been local. That's huge in my mind. Small businesses are asked for so much, and the fact that so many people have still helped has been incredible. People just step up. We've had great

volunteers. We have people help out and call bingo for us. Everyone has been really supportive and that's uplifting for me."

Small Business Bingo has distributed a total of \$36,540 to local nonprofits since its inception in 2023, Patrick said.

"I feel like things escalated quickly and continued to grow," Patrick said. "It's just been wonderful for me to have this experience. I feel like I've achieved my goal to fill a need and keep people involved and I've gotten to know these nonprofits. It's been very eye opening to see what you can do when you put your mind to something and the community comes together."

Patrick said the events will return in the future in some form, as she'll now work to gather community feedback on what people would like to see before planning another event.

"I plan to revisit it in the future, maybe in the fall," Patrick said. "I will



Small Business Bingo has distributed a total of \$36,540 to local nonprofits since its inception in 2023, Event Organizer Ashley Patrick said.

(COURTESY PHOTO)

look at it and see what we want to do, whether that's bingo again or something else. We may change gears

and do something different or stick with bingo. I want to keep things moving in a positive direction. I want to

get feedback from people and see what they think. We'll look at what we do next. I want to keep do-

ing something accessible, affordable and simple for people to help those in need."

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VIEWPOINT

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

Published every Monday
Jeff Helfrich, Managing Editor

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MOMENTS IN TIME

* On Jan. 27, 1906, Norwegian speed skater Rudolf Gundersen set an impressive world record in a 500-meter speed skating event in Davos, Switzerland, completing the distance in just 44.8 seconds.

* On Jan. 28, 1917, a maid named Carmelita Torres objected to the chemical delousing frequently given to Mexicans crossing into the U.S. by initially refusing to leave the trolley carrying her and other immigrant workers, then hurling whatever she and her fellow riders could find at American authorities in what became known as the Bath Riots, which lasted through the following day.

* On Jan. 29, 1958, one of Hollywood's most enduring marriages began in Las Vegas, Nevada, when actors Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward tied the knot. The union lasted until Newman's death from lung cancer in 2008, at the age of 83.

* On Jan. 30, 1835, Andrew Jackson experienced the dubious distinction of being the first American president to be the victim of an assassination attempt. He clubbed the attacker, Richard Lawrence, several times with his cane and escaped angry but unscathed, thanks to both of Lawrence's guns misfiring, and Lawrence spent the rest of his days in a mental institution.

* On Jan. 31, 1945, Private Eddie Slovik was shot and killed by a 12-man firing squad in eastern France, making him the first American soldier since the Civil War to be executed for desertion.

* On Feb. 1, 2003, the Space Shuttle Columbia broke up while entering Earth's atmosphere over Texas, killing all seven crew members. Strangely, worms used in a study by the crew, that were stored in a canister aboard the

shuttle, did survive.

* On Feb. 2, 1897, inventor and businessman Alfred Cralle, a porter at the Markell Brothers drugstore in Pittsburgh, patented the first ice cream scoop, which he called the "ice-cream mold and disher." The Pittsburgh Press reported that the scoop could serve up "40 to 50 dishes of ice cream in a minute," while avoiding "the soiling of the hands." Cralle was the first Black man in Pittsburgh to receive his own patent.

* On Jan. 29, 1845, Edgar Allan Poe's poem "The Raven" was published in The Evening Mirror in New York. The eerie work, which earned its author the sum of \$9, was both panned and praised by critics and parodied soon after its publication, but remains one of the most popular poems in literary history.

* On Jan. 30, 1862, the first American ironclad warship, the USS Monitor, was launched into the East River. Construction of the vessel was inspired by talk of the Confederate Navy's building an impenetrable ironclad that could break the Union's blockade of the port city of Hampton Roads, Virginia.

* On Jan. 31, 1747, the first clinic for treatment of venereal diseases opened at London Lock Hospital. Unfortunately, its cure methods were ineffectual, with mercury (and its highly debilitating side effects) being the most common.

* On Feb. 1, 1587, England's Queen Elizabeth I signed the death warrant for her cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots, after Mary was found guilty of being "not only accessory and privy to the conspiracy, but also an imaginer and compass of her majesty's destruction." In her final days, Elizabeth admitted to regret about the order.

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Visions of the past — and the War in Ukraine

A vision of the past haunts those who argue against U.S. support for Ukraine in its war with Russia. It directs our attention to America's experiences in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq, and warns against entanglements in far-away military conflicts. We must indeed avoid the mistakes of those ill-conceived ventures.

A different vision is, however, a better fit for the situation in Ukraine, and its solution.

It takes us back to Europe in the 1930s. One word — appeasement — has ever since stood for the tragic events of that time. Many historians and political analysts — Christine Adams (time.com on April 16, 2024) for example — have detailed the similarities with today's crisis in Ukraine.

Germany Chancellor Adolf Hitler was pursuing an intensive build-up of military power and territorial expansion. He turned his attention to neighboring Czechoslovakia in 1938, claiming that a large section of that country, called the Sudetenland, had been unjustly taken from Germany after its defeat in World War I. The Czechs resisted Hitler's demand to give it up but, without support from Britain and France, would suffer defeat in a war against its powerful neighbor.

British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain

believed that Hitler had a point about the Sudetenland, and took him at his word that this would be his last demand. Mr. Chamberlain, along with his reluctant partner, France, signed a treaty in Munich, Germany on Sept. 30, 1938, surrendering the Sudetenland to Germany. The Czechoslovakians had no choice but to accept the loss of a big chunk of their territory.

The following March, Hitler broke his promise, and occupied the rest of the country. In September, he took the next step by invading Poland, again using the excuse that he was protecting Germans living in a foreign country. It was clear by then that Hitler had to be stopped, and World War II was on.



Lowell Harp

unjustly taken from Russia at the end of the Cold War. Mr. Trump has responded, like Prime Minister Chamberlain at Munich, that Ukraine should give up some of its territory in exchange for peace with Russia, and he's criticized our policy of military aid to Ukraine.

The lesson from appeasement in 1930s Europe is that giving in to an aggressor can lead to a bigger, more expensive, more dangerous, and bloodier conflict further down the line. Germany, Italy, and Japan were intent on overpowering the Western Democracies and creating a new authoritarian world order in the 1930s. This time it's Russia, along with China and Iran, and there's little reason to think

President Putin will stop if he wins in Ukraine.

The potential benefits from supporting Ukraine far outweigh the cost. The 1.5% of the federal budget that we're spending is a tiny fraction of the massive losses of machinery and lives that Russia is suffering at the hands of the Ukrainians, according to Congress's House Committee on Foreign Affairs (foreignaffairs.house.gov on Nov. 15, 2023). The damage extends to its economy, which is finally beginning to weaken under the strain of maintaining the war.

Britain's and France's appeasement of Hitler has gone down in history as a case study in the futility of giving in to an aggressor in return for a promise not to do it again.

The similarities to today's conflict over Ukraine begin with Russian President Putin's claim of victimhood by the West, and the sympathetic ear he finds in some American politicians, including Donald Trump and his vice president. The Russian President, echoing Hitler's claim about Czechoslovakia, says that Ukraine was

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Mary Glantz, with the United States Institute of Peace (usip.org, 3-11-24) reports that analysts say Russia is unlikely to be able to produce military equipment at the current rate beyond this year. Meanwhile, Russian power and influence around the world is declining as the war swallows up its military and economic resources, as reported by Amy Knight at the Wall Street Journal on Dec. 17, 2024. Uncomfortable silence has replaced active support for the war among Russian citizens, according to Vadim Shtepa at the Eurasia Daily Monitor on Sept. 10, 2024.

Russia is increasingly vulnerable as the war drags on, but, if it can outlast the West and win in Ukraine, the consequences will extend around the world and into the future. It would encourage Russia to take the next step in its quest for dominance in Europe. China would likely interpret it as a green light for its threat to invade Taiwan, with the possibility of a world war to follow.

The next move is up to us, and the world is watching.

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

Consider this: The word 'weaponize'

WHAT does the word "weaponize" mean? If it is being said that a person or entity is being tried before a court for breaking a law, does that mean that the said law is being weaponized against them? Does this make it wrong? If so, does that mean we cannot have any laws? I say no because laws are weapons against people or entities doing something that will hurt the public. It's why they exist.

note when explaining this harm. Information to substantiate the following bills signed by President Biden can be found at www.cnn.com/2022/01/20/politics/biden-laws-passed-priorities-to-get-done-executive-orders/index.html.

Do they mean that the infrastructure work being done due to the "Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act" is harmful. That replacing roads and bridges is a bad thing? But every mile of road, every bridge, every building, every runway, everything planned in this package benefits the people and corporations in these United States. Is that the harm being done?

citizens, right?

The three bills mentioned above were passed during President Biden's first year in office. There are many more good solid bills that helped US citizens during the pandemic and beyond. Just type in your browser "laws passed in the Biden presidency". If not these bills and others, then what makes you afraid of the current presidency?

Lastly, and most importantly, I am writing this on Jan. 5, 2025, and we have a count of electoral votes coming tomorrow. Will everything be done according to our Constitution? If everything goes smooth and President Elect Trump is declared the 47th President of the United States, then no. You may ask, though, how could this be? The people did elect him in our November election. Why would he not be chosen?

Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability."

Currently, each Representative and each Senator has taken their oath to the Constitution. Those attending the electoral count can object to the count by citing Section 3 of the 14th Amendment. If enough object, the two Houses of Congress will meet separately to determine if the objection(s) stand or not. If they stand, then anything can happen.

Essentially, if there is an objection due to Section 3, it means that President Elect Trump could not run for the office because of the occurrences on Jan. 6, 2021. Some will point out that the words "engaged" and "given aid or comfort" cannot be applied to President Trump's actions.

So, all this rhetoric being used while attaching the word 'weaponize' to it, mainly against President Biden but also against President Elect Trump, is just that, talk. Take, for instance, the quote by Tom Hebert, *National Review*, Dec. 13, 2024. "As with other areas of the law, the Biden-Harris administration routinely **weaponized** antitrust enforcement to pick economic winners and losers." You can also find this quote online at www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/weaponize.

Was the "American Rescue Plan" a harmful thing? Is providing stimulus payments, adding a boost to jobless benefits, and the expansion of the child tax credit the wrong thing to do? And this wasn't done just on an impulse, but instead to help us all through the COVID-19 crises. Should we not help everyone in this country as we try to better our odds and dig ourselves out of a 100-year pandemic?

How about the 'Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act' banning imports from China's Xinjiang region? This law bans imports unless an importer can prove the goods were not made with forced labor in the region of the country accused of human rights violations over its treatment of Muslim-majority Uyghurs. But maybe we should not worry about our money going to areas in the world where human rights violations occur? After all, they are not American

It all has to do with the words "according to our United States Constitution". Section 3 of the 14th Amendment to that document states as follows:

"No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But

When looking at the word "engaged", what would you call the rally itself? What would you call President Trump wanting to allow the crowd at his rally to bear arms? What would you call the comment by the President that he would be with them on the march to Congress?

As for the words "given aid or comfort", again you must look at the rally itself and the ability for the crowd to gather. The arms also come to play in determining the intent of these words. Marching with them, if he had the chance, would be considered comfort, wouldn't it? Finally, as people began to ask him to do something about the insurrection taking place, wouldn't that be considered "giving aid or comfort" if he failed to do so?

We'll find out where our Constitution stands on Jan. 7, 2025.



Reed Harris

But isn't this what we must do if a corporation is violating antitrust law? And if they are violating laws, doesn't that give them an advantage over others in the same field of pursuit? There still must be a trial to determine what has happened. If they have violated laws, does this mean they will automatically be losers in the field of pursuit? I sure don't think so, do you?

I talked with many people who voted for Trump last November and said they did it because they were afraid of Biden and Harris. That they were doing harm against this country. Yet they had little to

How about the 'Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act' banning imports from China's Xinjiang region? This law bans imports unless an importer can prove the goods were not made with forced labor in the region of the country accused of human rights violations over its treatment of Muslim-majority Uyghurs. But maybe we should not worry about our money going to areas in the world where human rights violations occur? After all, they are not American

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We'll find out where our Constitution stands on Jan. 7, 2025.

Letter: Goodfellows thank those who donated

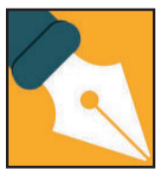
DEAR editor, The Mt. Morris Goodfellows would like to thank the many individuals, organizations, and businesses that chose to support our efforts by making a donation to help those in our community who, for some reason, could use a little assistance or community support.

We realize budgets are stretched tight for everyone which makes all of your heartfelt donations especially appreciated this

year. It is that generous support of our community that has kept the work of the Goodfellows alive and well in Mt. Morris for over 70 years. This holiday season we were able to touch the lives of 120 families/households. That is amazing, and we thank you for making that possible.

Best wishes in 2025 from the Mt. Morris Goodfellows.

Charlie Beard and Jerry Griffin



LIFE letters' policy

Concise letters are most likely to be chosen for publication, but the use of any material is at the discretion of management. All letters must be signed or they will not be considered for publication. During election times, no letters written by the candidates endorsing themselves will be considered for publication. Editing may be necessary for space, clarity or to avoid obscenity or libel, but ideas will not be altered. Writers are urged to use discretion and refrain from sarcasm or personal attacks. Criticism of individuals or organizations that is not broached tactfully will jeopardize the publication of a letter. Letters will be published in the order that they are received, unless there is a time factor involved, space permitting.

LOCAL NEWS

Obituaries

Betty Jane Shimkus Pierce

STILLMAN VALLEY — Betty Jane Shimkus Pierce passed away peacefully with her two sons by her side on January 5, 2025. Betty was born on July 27, 1946, to Bryon & Lucille Shimkus, in Rockford Ill. Betty was the only child of Bryon & Lucille. She did however have 1 half-brother, Carl Greer Jr & 1 half-sister Pat Clark. She attended and graduated from East High school, Rockford, as well as Rockford Cosmetology in 1964. While attending East high school, she met her husband, Don Pierce. They were married on September 12, 1964, and had 2 children, John & Steve, as well as 6 grandchildren. Don and Betty were married for 59 years, until Don's passing in May of 2023. Betty was a devoted wife, loving mother and grandmother. Betty worked for Stillman Valley Insurance agency for 10 years and then Resource Insurance in Malta / Sycamore till her retirement.

Betty was a very outgoing person. She truly enjoyed being around people. Betty was a bowler for many years. She had a high game of 223. She tried her hand at golf. She walked 3 miles every day. Betty also participated in the weekly church sale. She played cards and board games on a weekly basis with her girlfriends. Betty was a member of the Stillman Valley Book club and attended Davis Junction Methodist church. Mom had this gift of speaking whatever was on her mind. She would express whatever she was thinking, even if it made you cringe sometimes. She got this trait from her father, Bryon who also was not afraid to say what he was thinking. I often wished I had this trait, as there is a certain freedom that comes with that. She also was a person who was literally never in a bad mood. She was always happy to see us. Betty was predeceased by her husband, Don, Parents Bryon & Lucille



Shimkus. Betty leaves to cherish her memory, John (Staci) Pierce, Steve (Lisa) Pierce, grandchildren Alexandria Pierce, Grant Pierce, Brent Pierce, Brett Pierce, Cameron (Lisa) Wills, Drew (Ancil) Philip. The family would like to thank the team at Oregon Living & Rehabilitation Center for the kindness, compassion and loving care shown towards our mother. Also, thanks to Serenity Hospice for support and guidance thru this difficult process. Memorials to Oregon Serenity House, Oregon Illinois. Funeral to be held on Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2025 at Advantage Funeral, Rockford, Ill, with visitation at 10:00am, funeral at 11:00am.



Morrissey starts first day as BPD SRO
Officer Spencer Morrissey started his first day as the new school resource officer (SRO) for the Byron School District Jan. 7. Officer Morrissey has been a part of the Byron Police Department since 2019, as a patrolman, a sergeant, a member of the Ogle County ERT team, field training officer and now the SRO. He looks forward to protecting the students and staff of this community. (Courtesy photo)

2025 Grand Detour Township meeting dates set

GRAND DETOUR — All Grand Detour Township meetings will be held at the Grand Detour Town Hall on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. with the exception of the April meeting that will be held

immediately following the annual meeting that is held the second Tuesday in April. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Connie Ross, town clerk, at 815-973-0988. Meeting dates are as

follows: Jan. 8, 2025; Feb. 12, 2025; March 12, 2025; April 8, 2025 (following annual township meeting); May 14, 2025; June 11, 2025; July 9, 2025; Aug. 13, 2025; Sept. 10, 2025; Oct. 8, 2025; Nov. 12, 2025 and Dec. 10, 2025.



BPD's Henderson promoted to sergeant

On Dec. 18, 2024, Officer Garrett Henderson was promoted and sworn in to sergeant of the Byron Police Department at the city council meeting. Sgt. Henderson has been with the Byron Police Department for seven years, looks forward to his new role as sergeant, and serving the community. Shown is Chief Jeremy Boehle and Henderson, along with the whole Byron Police Department staff; from left to right: Recruit Hunter Ilkow, Officer Dalton Powell, Officer Spencer Morrissey, Boehle, Henderson, Officer Michael Curtis, Officer Tyler Hankins, Officer Tanner Schrock, and Administrative Assistant Amy King. (Courtesy photo)



RVCU named '2025 Best Places To Work For In America' by Best Companies Group

LOVESPARK—Rock Valley Credit Union (RVCU), a local and independent financial institution that offers personal solutions for individual and family banking needs has been named by Best Companies Group as a recipient of a Best Companies Group's America's Best Workplaces in 2025 Award. The awards are held in partnership with BridgeTower Media. Best Companies Group's America's Best Workplaces Awards identify, recognize and honor the best places of employment across the United States. It is a celebration of excellence in company culture that honors numerous employers and ranks the Top 10 workplaces in small, medium and large business categories. RVCU is just one of 27 in the small companies category (15-49

employees) to be recognized this year. Winners were previously recognized by Best Companies Group in at least one other data-driven recognition program. Earlier this year, RVCU was recognized by Best Companies Group as a "2024 Best Places to Work For in Illinois" organization. "Receiving this national recognition reflects the heart of who we are—a team committed to building an exceptional culture where people can do their best work, along with a strong dedication to our employees' growth, well-being, and success. This achievement would not be possible without our team members, who make Rock Valley Credit Union such a remarkable place to work every day," RVCU president and CEO

Darlyne Keller said. Best Companies Group managed the overall registration and survey process and also analyzed the data and used their expertise to determine the final rankings. The rankings were determined using Best Companies Group's algorithm. The algorithm used data from each nominated company's workplace policies, practices and demographics, as well as data from an employee survey that measured the employee experience. The overall scores determined which workplaces were recognized and which were ranked in the top of their category. You can find the full rankings here. "These workplaces are America's best—not because we say so, but because their people do,"

said Jaime Raul Zepeda, executive vice president of Best Companies Group + COLOR Magazine. "At Best Companies Group, we're excited to certify this honor and celebrate these standout employers with millions of business leaders who trust BridgeTower Media for the pulse on exceptional companies across the country." **About Rock Valley Credit Union** Rock Valley Credit Union is a not-for-profit financial institution owned and operated by its members since 1968. Its field of membership includes Winnebago, Boone, Ogle, DeKalb, Lee and Stephenson Counties, Illinois, and Green, Rock and Walworth Counties, Wisconsin. RVCU prides itself in customized services for each of its 16,000+

members and is dedicated to supporting more than 30 community events and organizations each year. RVCU is headquartered in Loves Park, with additional locations in Rochelle and Machesney Park. For more information, visit rockvalleycreditunion.org. **About Best Companies Group** Since 2004, Best Companies Group has been dedicated to identifying and celebrating top workplaces. With expertise in employee engagement, they've helped over 10,000 organizations enhance the employee experience, boosting engagement, productivity, innovation and retention. A leader in engagement insights, Best Companies Group ranks thousands of companies annually using rigorous, research-based meth-

odology. Their services include Ph.D.-designed engagement surveys, actionable insights, exclusive benchmarks and accessible consulting. Learn more at bestcompaniesgroup.com. **About BridgeTower Media** BridgeTower Media is the authoritative voice for insights and marketing solutions across 40-plus brands in five key sectors across the United States. It is the leading provider of B2B information, research, events and marketing solutions across more than 25 U.S. markets and industries. Business executives rely on BridgeTower Media for the latest industry news, intelligence and events in a timely and consistent manner. For more information, visit BridgeTowerMedia.com.

Phosphorus and potassium management discussion is Jan. 29

FREEPORT — Optimizing Corn Response to Nitrogen through Phosphorus and Potassium Management will be discussed at the Northwest Illinois Agronomy Summit, hosted by the University of Illinois Extension, on Jan. 29. Dr. John Jones, assistant professor of Agronomy and Soil Fertility Extension Specialist in the Department of Crop Sciences at the University of Illinois, will lead this insightful discussion.

Dr. Jones will explore how the efficient use of soil and fertilizer nitrogen by corn plants is influenced by both controllable and uncontrollable factors. By managing soil-test levels of phosphorus and potassium, farmers can enhance corn nitrogen fertilizer use efficiency, improve economic returns from N, P, and K fertilization, and support overall nitrogen cycling in corn-soybean rotations. This presentation will high-

light recent research on the interaction between soil-test nutrient levels and nitrogen use and will delve into ongoing studies focused on soil fertility and nutrient losses in Northern Illinois. Other topics to be covered at the event include *What we Know Today About Biologicals in Illinois Row Crops, Corn and Soybean Management Considerations for 2025, Highland Community College Agriculture*

Research Update, and Resistance, Mitigations, and Metribuzin: Aspects of Weed Management in 2025. The Northwest Illinois Agronomy Summit will take place at the Highland Community College Student Conference Center in Freeport on Wednesday, Jan. 29, from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. To register, or for more information visit: go.illinois.edu/JSW or call U of I Extension at (815) 235-4125.

Thanks

"Thank you for the cards, phone calls and visits. They were greatly appreciated. Also a big thank you to the Oregon Fire Department, they are always there when needed."

~ Marian Heng

LOCAL NEWS

DATA CENTER: Fiegenschuh discusses potential for future development in Rochelle

From page 1

“We are working on a development agreement with some folks for a potential data center now,” Fiegenschuh said. “We’re going back and forth on the language of the agreement. I do think we have the potential within the next year to have an agreement signed to begin moving forward with the process of bringing a data center to town. It takes infrastructure to attract something like that. We didn’t recruit these developers. They’re coming to us.”

The City of Rochelle owns its own electric utility in Rochelle Municipal Utilities. RMU Superintendent of Electric Operations Blake Toliver said serving a data center would “significantly increase” RMU’s power distribution and consumption. It would have to go into the market and purchase more power, but selling more energy would mean more revenue to go back into RMU infrastructure improvements.

Fiegenschuh said the city’s ability to come to an agreement with a data center to locate in Rochelle would depend on the project’s size. RMU’s current distribution only would allow so much new load. The city manager said RMU could serve a data center up to 100 or 150 megawatts in the next few years. Some developers have inquired with the city asking for much more power than that.

The addition of a larger data center would require ComEd to upsize its transmission lines into the community, which could



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

A data center is a building, a dedicated space within a building, or a group of buildings used to house computer systems and associated components, such as telecommunications and storage systems. The City of Rochelle could be another site of a data center in the future, City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh said.

take years.

“Data centers now aren’t just about storing Facebook,” Fiegenschuh said. “They’re about things like cryptocurrency mining and artificial intelligence. They’re using more and more power. Some data centers are looking at on-site generation like small modular nuclear. We’d love to have data centers here. We get calls all the time about it. But at the end of the day, it’s about whether we have the infrastructure in place to serve this type of load. If Rochelle got one, it would be smaller and stair step over time up to a larger one.”

Toliver said bringing a smaller data center in

soon would not be a hard feat for RMU because it currently has energy available. Due to power needs, some developers of larger data centers are building as close to power sources as possible.

With industrial electric load growth in mind, the city is currently in the easement acquisition phase of a new electrical substation project on the west side of town on Illinois Route 38. The project will include 10 miles of transmission line between the new substation and others at Ritchie Road and Twombly Road. The project will cost north of \$20 million.

Toliver said the completion of the substation

and power purchases would have to take place to make a data center happen. He said for a data center with a 50 megawatt need, RMU could be ready to service it within three years. Something like a 150 megawatt facility would require a transmission upgrade and could take 4-5 years.

“That’s because we have to communicate with ComEd and do another interconnection into the bulk electric system,” Toliver said. “Those things take time and have a lot of moving parts. If a data center moved in here with an under 50 megawatt expectation, we could start work on that tomorrow because we

have the power available in our territory to do that.”

If the city were to come to an agreement with a data center to come to Rochelle, that agreement would include guarantees to financially back up the large purchases of power the city would make to supply one.

A data center would also be a customer of RMU’s other utilities. Toliver and Fiegenschuh said data centers are large users of water and fiber. That would yield increases to RMU’s utility revenues overall. The city transfers 5.5 percent of its revenues from utilities to supplement its general fund, which helps it to do things like hire police

officers, firefighters, and public works employees.

“A data center would be beneficial to RMU and the city as a whole,” Fiegenschuh said. “It would generate property taxes which help support our school system. Any economic development is good, but a place like a data center really does offer a huge economic opportunity and benefit to the city and other taxing districts. I think the best approach for the city and RMU if we’re willing to hear offers from data centers would be to start small and work our way up. What I’d like about a data center is I’d love to be one of the largest utilities in the state of Illinois.”

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Jan. 7: Serenity Hospice & Home’s Young Widows Group will meet on Tuesday, Jan. 7, from 5-6 p.m. at The Serenity Home, 1658 S. Illinois Route 2, Oregon. This group is for ages 60 and under. Please call our office at 815-732-4111 by noon to register.

Jan. 10, 17: Serenity Hospice & Home’s Di-

amond Art will meet on Friday, Jan. 10 and 17, from 9-11 a.m. at The Serenity Shed, 131 N 3rd St., Oregon. Please bring your own supplies. Please call 815-732-4111 to register.

Jan. 15: Serenity Hospice & Home’s Men’s Coffee Group will meet on Wednesday, Jan. 15, at

Sunrise, 116 N. 4th St. Oregon, from 9-10 a.m. This group is for all bereaved men in the community. Please call our office at 815-732-4111 to register.

Jan. 16: Serenity Hospice & Home’s Bereavement Book Club will meet on Thursday, Jan. 16, from 5-6 p.m. at The Serenity Home, 1658 S.

Illinois Route 2, Oregon. Please call Dana or Cathy at 815-732-4111 to find out the book for the month and to sign up for the group. The group size is limited.

Feb. 1: The 13th annual February Finds antique market will be held Saturday, Feb. 1 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Mount Morris Moose Lodge 1551 Family

Center, 485 E. Hitt St., Mt. Morris. Admission for this event is \$4 person with children 12 and under free. 20 plus dealers will feature items such as retro decor, primitives, glassware, vintage items, pottery, artwork, old toys, local advertising, furniture, linens, jewelry, vintage clothing, record albums, older holiday col-

lectibles, and much more. Bobbi’s Country Catering will have a selection of yummy baked goods available for sale. The Moose Lodge will have food and drinks available for purchase throughout the day. Plan on attending the market, browsing the booths full of great things you’re sure to find a treasure.

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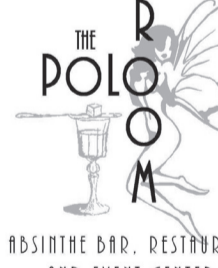


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LOCAL NEWS



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

State Sen. Win Stoller (R-Germantown Hills) was honored on the Senate Floor Jan. 7 following the passage of Senate Resolution 1348, which commended him for his two terms of service and congratulated him on his retirement from the Illinois General Assembly.

Stoller honored for his service in the Illinois Senate

SPRINGFIELD — State Sen. Win Stoller (R-Germantown Hills) was honored on the Senate Floor Jan. 7 following the passage of Senate Resolution 1348, which commended him for his two terms of service and congratulated him on his retirement from the Illinois General Assembly.

“It’s been an honor of my life to work with my colleagues in the State Senate to make Illinois a better place to live. I wish them all success as they continue this important work.” Stoller said.

Senate members on both sides of the aisle took time to honor Senator Stoller through several

floor speeches recognizing him for his financial and business background, his humbleness and dedication to his faith.

“One of the highlights of this role was being able to meet so many people, from all walks of life, throughout the 37th District. One thing we have an abundance of in Illinois,

is good people.”

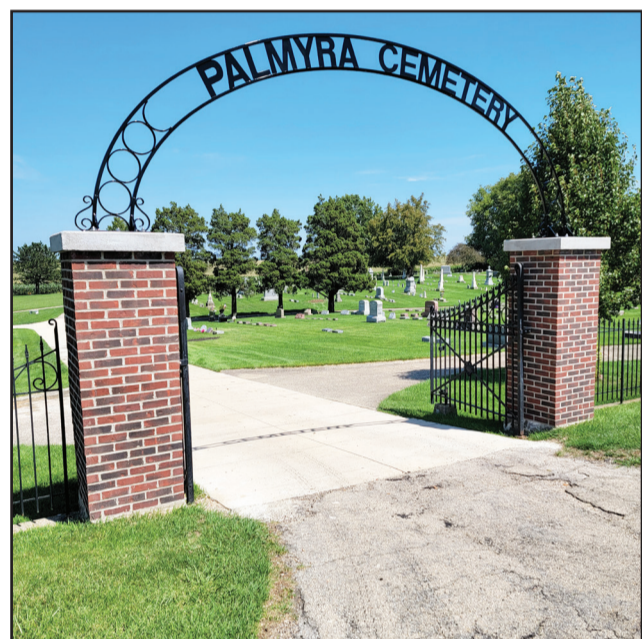
Senator Stoller was recognized for his legislative achievements including the passage of his innovative State and Local Tax (SALT) workaround bill, which provided significant relief to Illinois small businesses at no cost to the State of Illinois. He

also served as the key negotiator for the Senate Republicans on solving the \$4.5 billion deficit in the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund.

Stoller, who serves as CEO of Widmer Interiors in Peoria, plans to continue his community service in various roles in the Peoria area.

“It gives me comfort to know, as I leave this role that it will be in good hands with my successor, Li Arellano. I’m confident Li will do great things for the 37th District,” concluded Senator Stoller.

Arellano was sworn in to represent the 37th Senate District on Jan. 8.



Wreaths Across America places over 700 wreaths, fundraising ongoing

As part of the national Wreaths Across America program, the Rochelle Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution placed over 700 wreaths on Veterans’ graves at Daysville, Lawncridge, St. Patrick’s, Trinity, and Woodlawn cemeteries on Dec. 14 & 15. The Rochelle Chapter has added a sixth cemetery - Palmyra in Dixon, for 2025. The Wreaths across America organization is providing a two-for-one matching campaign for any wreaths ordered before 11 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 17, 2025. These wreaths will be placed this coming December. Forms are available at the Rochelle VFW and online at <https://wreathsassamerica.org/IL0136P> Be sure to include the IL0136P at the end of the web address to sponsor wreaths at the cemeteries in our area supported by the Rochelle Chapter. (Courtesy photos)

County residential electronics recycling collection event is Jan. 31

OREGON — The Ogle County Solid Waste Management Department (OCSWMD) will be hosting a residential electronics recycling event on Friday, Jan. 31 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 909 Pines Road in Oregon.

This event is for Ogle County residents only and a free permit is required in advance of the event. To obtain a free permit call 815-732-4020 or email solidwaste@oglecounty-il.gov and provide your name, address, phone number and email address by 4 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 30.

Accepted items include all residential televisions

and computer monitors, computers, computer hardware and cables, laptops, tablets, cell phones, printers, FAX machines, scanners, shredders (no tubs), copiers, video gaming equipment, DVD/VCRs, cable/satellite boxes, stereo equipment, radios, digital clocks, cameras, calculators, phone systems, holiday light strands, extension cords, rechargeable batteries, printer ink cartridges, CD/DVDs, and CFL bulbs. Microwave ovens accepted for \$5 per unit. Cash or check accepted.

Limit seven (7) large or bulky items per permit and one permit per coun-

ty household per month. Business or institutional electronic materials not accepted at these events. Business or institutional electronics are accepted by the OCSWMD via a separate program. Call the number above for more information and pricing for business electronic recycling, and to make an appointment for drop off of the materials to be recycled.

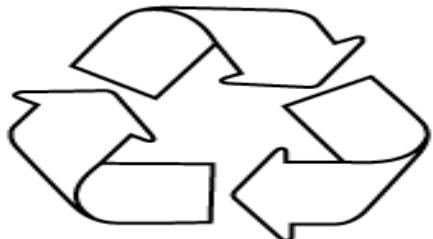
For more information about this recycling event call the OCSWMD at the number above, visit www.oglecountyil.gov, or on Facebook at Ogle County Solid Waste Management Dept.



Polo Lions donate to Lions of Illinois Foundation

On Thursday morning, Jan. 2, Polo Lions Member Tom Suits delivered 148 eyeglasses, 12 pairs of lenses, 15 hearing aids, and 10 cell phones to the Lions of Illinois Foundation office in Sycamore. The photo includes Lion Robert Scarborough who works at the foundation office. (Courtesy photo)

Recycle



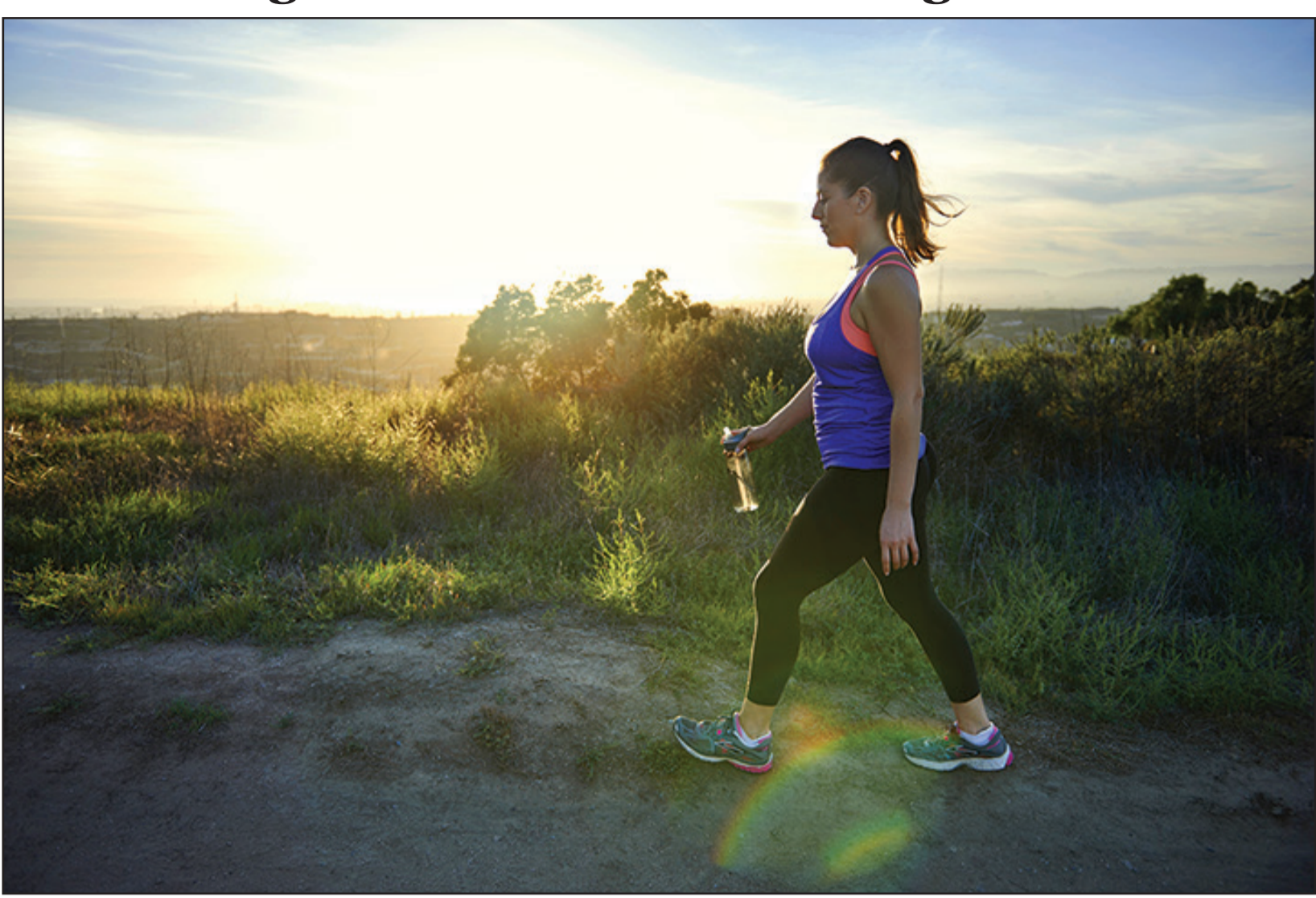
HEALTH & FITNESS

3 short-term fitness goals that can lead to long-term success

As New Year's Day 2024 approached, millions of individuals were preparing to make changes they hoped would improve their fitness. In a Forbes Health/One Poll survey of 1,000 adults in the months leading up to the start of 2024, nearly half (48 percent) of respondents indicated improving their physical fitness would be a top priority over the course of the new year.

Fitness-based resolutions are popular every year, but people who aspire to make such changes recognize how difficult it can be to achieve them. In fact, the Forbes Health/One Poll survey found that roughly 44 percent of respondents indicated their resolutions flamed out at the two- or three-month marker. Though there's no one-size-fits-all strategy for sticking with and ultimately achieving a resolution, identifying short-term goals that can help people stay motivated can lead to long-term progress. Individuals who want to improve their physical fitness can consider these three short-term goals and use them as measuring sticks as they pursue more long-term objectives.

1. **Aspire for incremental weight loss.** Weight loss goals were the fourth most popular New Year's resolution for 2024 among participants in the Forbes Health/One Poll survey. Though that survey sep-



arated fitness goals from weight loss goals, the two are certainly linked. Individuals who aspire to lose 10 pounds undoubtedly recognize that such a goal cannot be achieved overnight, so why not aspire to lose small amounts of weight at predetermined intervals? For example, if the end goal is losing 10 lbs., aim to lose two pounds by the end of January. Incremental progress can motivate individuals

to stay the course and ultimately propel them toward achieving a more substantial, long-term goal.

2. **Exercise for a predetermined number of days each week.** Another way to gradually build toward achieving long-term fitness goals is to establish monthly minimum exercise sessions. Individuals accustomed to a sedentary lifestyle can resolve to exercise three

days per week in the first month of their resolution, and then increase that by a day in the second month. A consistent schedule when designing this goal is imperative, which is why it can make more sense to plan for three days per week as opposed to 12 days per month.

3. **Resolve to walk a mile per day.** Walking is an accessible cardiovascular activity that can have a profound effect on overall

health. Walking also can help condition sedentary individuals' bodies for more strenuous activity, which is a transition many people aspire to make when setting long-term fitness goals. A daily one-mile walk won't require a significant commitment of time, but it can help acclimate the body to routine exercise. As the effects of a daily walk begin to take hold, individuals may find it easier to engage in

more strenuous physical activities, making this an ideal stepping stone on the way to achieving long-term fitness goals.

Short-term goals can help people remain motivated as they pursue more substantial goals that take longer to achieve. Such an approach can be especially useful for individuals resolving to improve their physical fitness at the start of a new year.

Kids and healthy eating: Gobble up these body-friendly food practices

DESPIKE being pint-sized people, children can have some very big personalities and opinions. Parents know that kids have strong feelings on everything from the clothes they wear to the foods they eat.

Although not all children are inherently picky eaters, most go through phases of picky eating during their childhood development, particularly when they are toddlers. The UCSF Benioff Children's Hospitals also says some children naturally are more sensitive to certain tastes, smells and textures, which could make certain foods less desirable to youngsters. Others may mimic their parents' picky food tendencies. A child who has strong aversions to trying new foods can make it hard to plan meals, especially ones that include nutritious fare.

Getting kids to eat more healthy foods and be

excited about them could take some time and effort. Parents can try some of these strategies to change kids' perceptions about healthy eating.

Take the lead

Parents can model healthy eating behavior every time they sit down to a meal. Research suggests parents' eating behaviors significantly influence their children's food preferences and dietary habits. Given their influence, adults should choose healthy foods often enough so that the process becomes habit for the entire household.

Make it a team effort

Children may refuse foods because it gives them a modicum of control in a world where adults seem to be making all the decisions. When children are included in meal planning and shopping, they are more likely to eat foods that are healthy. While the bulk of foods should be healthy ones, a few treats or special ingredients can



be thrown in every so often.

Create family meal expectations

Routines are essential to children's well-being. By eating together as a

family and serving meals and snacks around the same time each day, kids will thrive knowing what is coming next. Mealtime is a good time to talk about healthy eating habits and table manners as well, says the Cleveland Clinic. Parents can model how half of the plate should be made up of vegetables and some fruit.

Respect eating quirks

One child may only eat broccoli if it is dunked in ketchup. Another might only embrace a turkey sandwich if it is cut into triangles. Parents should pick their battles regarding food. Parents should go with the flow if kids are eating right, even if their choices are a little unorthodox.

Make it a game

Incorporate some fun into meals by encouraging children to come up with funny names for their foods, however ridiculous they may be. Make competitions of healthy eating by seeing who can eat the most vegetables during the week and earn a prize. Kids likely



will respond better to these positive choices rather than ultimatums about foods they "have" to eat.

Healthy eating may not come easily to all children,

especially if they are picky eaters. Some patience and flexibility on the part of parents can help kids become more excited about healthy food choices.

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HEALTH & FITNESS

Can certain foods lower cancer risk?

CANCER is a prolific group of diseases that can affect any area of the body. Although many cancers can be successfully treated, cancer avoidance is undeniably preferable. There is no way to completely pre-

vent a cancer diagnosis, but certain foods may help to reduce your risk for the disease. According to MD Anderson Cancer Center, cancer-fighting foods are plant-based items that are rich in phytochemicals, which also

are called phytonutrients. UC Davis Nutrition Department says phytochemicals are bioactive compounds found in vegetables, cereal grains and plant-based beverages like tea.

See page 12

Chiropractic care offers benefits for headache and migraine relief

CHIROPRACTIC care offers significant benefits for individuals suffering from headaches and migraines by addressing their root causes, rather than just masking the symptoms. One of the primary ways chiropractic care helps is by improving spinal alignment, particularly in the cervical spine (neck). Misalignments in this area can lead to muscle tension, nerve irritation, and reduced blood flow, which are often triggers for tension headaches and migraines.

Chiropractors use spinal adjustments to restore proper alignment, alleviate pressure on nerves, and reduce muscle tightness. This can provide relief from chronic headaches, tension-type headaches, and even migraines. Regular chiropractic care also helps improve posture, which can reduce the strain on the neck and shoulders that may contribute to headache symptoms.



Dr. Garrett Webb

In addition to spinal adjustments, chiropractors may offer lifestyle recommendations, such as posture corrections and ergonomic advice, to prevent future headaches. They may also suggest exercises to strengthen the muscles supporting the neck and

shoulders, further reducing headache triggers.

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Dr. Garrett Webb

- Dr. Webb was born and raised in Dixon, IL.
- He wrestled at Life University in Marietta, Georgia, and graduated from Palmer College of Chiropractic in Davenport, Iowa, in 2020.
- Dr. Webb has been an associate chiropractor for the past four years in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.
- His wife's name is Kelsie, and they have a boy named Cason and a dog named Daisy.
- His hobbies include camping, hunting, golf, and boating. He enjoys spending time with friends and family.



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From page 11

Researchers have found phytochemicals can protect humans from environmental toxins and metabolic

processes that can lead to chronic diseases, such as cancer and heart disease. Polyphenols are good examples of phytochemicals. Health experts recom-

mend packing every meal with healthy and nutritious foods that include plenty of vegetables, whole grains, fruits, and beans. MDACC recommends filling at least two-thirds of a plate with these healthy options. When revamping diets to help reduce cancer risk, these heavy hitters should be included:

- Berries
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cauliflower
- Edamame
- Eggs or egg substitute
- Green or white tea
- Grapes
- Leafy greens
- Lean chicken
- Lentils and other legumes/beans
- Oatmeal
- Quinoa
- Sweet potatoes
- Tomatoes
- Whole grains, including brown rice



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Polo High School varsity girls basketball players earn All-Tournament Team honors

Polo High School varsity girls basketball players Cam Jones, Carlee Grobe and Laynie Mandrell received All-Tournament Team honors from the 2024 Polo Holiday Tournament held this past month. Polo took third in the tournament after a 67-21 win over Milledgeville. (Courtesy photo)

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Matt Bouback, Jenny Kirchner, Boone Lockard, Jessica Lowry, Jamie Pendergrass, Jen R, Stephanie Wendt

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NEW LISTING

000 N River Road (52 Acres) Oregon \$520,000 Call Carla

Rare Offering on the Rock River! 52 acres +/- mol offers loads of opportunities with 2 separate building sites, Over 1,231 ft of Rock River Frontage! This wooded, rolling beautiful land that is ideal for hunting, recreation and so much more! Zoned Ag. Conveniently located between Byron and Oregon on the east side of the river. Your own private paradise awaits your recreational activities. Close to I-39, I-88 Call today for your private showing or additional information.

NEW PRICE

215 Main Street Leaf River NOW \$88,000 Call Jennifer Rybicki

Welcome to this spacious 3 bedroom, 1 bath house located in Leaf River. This home offers 2,000 square feet of living space and a fenced yard, perfect for your pets. The main floor has an additional room that could be utilized as a bedroom/nursery or guest space. Relax and unwind on the spacious three-seasons porch, ideal for enjoying peaceful mornings or entertaining friends. The property also includes a detached one-car garage for added convenience. Situated in the highly desirable Pecatonica School District, this home is a hidden gem ready for your personal touch. Don't miss out-schedule a showing today!

NEW LISTING

433 Jefferson Street Pecatonica \$69,000 Call Rebecca

Charming Home in the Pecatonica School District Nestled on a quiet street, this cozy home offers the perfect blend of comfort and potential. Featuring 2+ bedrooms, this property is ideal for those seeking flexible living spaces. The main floor boasts an eat-in kitchen with plenty of room for family meals, beautiful hardwood floors, and a full bathroom with a convenient stackable laundry unit. There's also the potential to create a main-floor bedroom with a large closet, adding extra versatility to the layout. Upstairs, you'll find two additional bedrooms, with one serving as a pass-through to the other-perfect for a home office, nursery, or guest space. Relax and unwind on the spacious three-seasons porch, ideal for enjoying peaceful mornings or entertaining friends. The property also includes a detached one-car garage for added convenience. Situated in the highly desirable Pecatonica School District, this home is a hidden gem ready for your personal touch. Don't miss out-schedule a showing today!

NEW PRICE

108 N School Street Chana NOW \$129,000 Call Jessica

Charming 4-Bedroom Home with Spacious Yard in Chana, IL Nestled in the peaceful, private town of Chana, IL, this charming 4-bedroom, 2-full-bath home offers over 2,000 square feet of comfortable living space. The large, well-maintained yard is perfect for outdoor activities, gardening, and relaxation, complete with a handy garden shed for extra storage. Inside, you'll find a cozy living room featuring a wood-burning fireplace, ideal for chilly nights, as well as central air and a furnace for year-round comfort. With its small-town appeal and generous space, this property is a must-see for anyone looking for a quiet retreat just outside the hustle and bustle of the larger towns.

NEW LISTING

Svoboda Woods Lots Oregon \$27,000- \$50,000 Call Rebecca

PRIVATE & SECLUDED LOTS! Come home to peaceful surroundings with your own buildable lot in Svoboda Woods. These lot are enhanced by beautiful & mature wooded surroundings. Making it an exceptional location for your dream home. You will enjoy having country charm with city convenience with historic, downtown Oregon, schools & parks just blocks away from your front door. City water/sewer available. Buy now so you can enjoy the Spring in your NEW HOME! City of Oregon offers reduced impact fees.

NEW PRICE

1103 E Rock Falls Road Rock Falls NOW \$280,000 Call JD

Prime Investment Opportunity on Route 30! This turn-key, 9-unit rental property in Rock Falls offers 8 fully furnished studio apartments plus a one-bedroom unit. Located near I-88, it provides easy access for travelers and tenants. No long-term leases- conducted as week to week stays. Utilities and Internet are all included for ultimate convenience. Ideal for investors seeking high occupancy potential in a well-connected location!

NEW LISTING

906 W 12th Street Sterling \$91,900 Call JD

Charming and inviting, 3-bed 1.5-bath, 1.5-story home sits on an oversized lot offering endless possibilities for outdoor enjoyment or future expansion. Highlights include convenient main floor laundry, a full basement providing ample storage space, and a 2-car detached garage. Freshly painted throughout, with new carpet ready to be installed upstairs, this home is move-in ready and easy to maintain. Whether you're looking for your next home or a smart investment, this property is full of potential and priced to sell. Don't miss your chance!

Rebecca Hazzard 815-980-7947, Carla Benesh 815-985-6235, Lori Peterson 815-973-2180, JD Gieson 815-677-1873, Boone Lockard 815-970-3306, Carrie Rowland 815-677-8656, Jenny Kirchner 815-440-2145, Jen 815-509-5832, Taylor Miller 815-731-8943

Merri Cruz 815-980-7947, Casey Cline 217-840-8855, Jamie Pendergrass 815-243-4310, Ashley Patterson 815-291-6308, Erin Spence 815-262-5355, Stephanie Wendt 815-985-2053, Jenn Goley 630-732-6858, Becky Adams 815-509-5837, Matt Bouback 815-509-5827, Jessica Lowry 815-315-2617

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

815-732-9100

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SPORTS/LOCAL NEWS

Looking towards the basketball postseason

FRESH off their success on the football field, the Pecatonica boys are lighting up the basketball courts. Ranked No. 1 in 1A, the Indians have rolled to an 11-0 record and have only been tested once (56-54 win over 2A Normal U-High).

To better prepare for the state tournament, Pec has scheduled larger suburban schools such as Aurora Marmion, Naperville Nequa Valley and Burbank St. Laurence. They will also be tested by undefeated Rockford Christian and Forrester Holiday Tournament champ Byron.

After disposing of highly-ranked Eastland by 30 points, it remains to be seen if anyone around here in 1A can contest the Indians. Thus, their scheduling strategy should pay dividends.

If Pec can make it downstate, it will be the first time in school history they will contend for a state title in any sport. Last year, Aurora Christian deprived them of that chance by edging them 68-66 at the super-sectional.

Aurora (10-4) is in the same super-sectional again, as is Yorkville Christian (12-4). Those records may be misleading as they play bigger schools.

But, first Pec has to get out of the regional or sectional. Former Oregon coach Quinn Virgil told a while ago that even good teams need some luck to win all six post-season games to make state.

Say your team has an off night and an underdog catches fire, for example like Polo did against Dakota, very good teams have been shown the door in the playoffs. Or, it could be by the narrowest of margins, like the loss to AC last year.

Lost in all this hoopla was the recent announcement of Durand-Pecatonica joining the Big Northern conference for football and soccer only. With a combined enrollment of 450, Du-Pec is right on par with what Oregon, Byron and Winnebago have.

Competitively, they have knocked off Genoa-Kingston, Oregon and SV in the playoffs. They even took traditional power Wilmington to the limit in the 3A quarterfinals.

Another plus is geographic location, with Pec being relatively close to everyone else. Instead of an unwieldy number of nine football teams in the NUIC, a more

manageable eight-team league results. It appears everyone benefits. Well, maybe not everyone.

Rochelle was hoping the Big Northern would consider them for membership for all sports. Like Pec, they had a major selling point in geographic location.

A drawback was an enrollment of 868, which is about 100 more than what largest school Dixon has. Dixon still catches some flak for being larger than everyone else in the BNC, so you could imagine how Rochelle would be perceived.

Projected enrollment for Rochelle has it going under 800, but that is relative, as other schools are also declining in students.

However, other than football, BNC schools have a winning percentage in boys and girls sports over Rochelle. But, the prowess shown by the Hubs on the gridiron against much larger teams certainly doomed any chance of getting that coveted BNC invitation.

I know folks in Rochelle have grown weary of innumerable trips down Interstate 39 for conference games against schools like Morris, Ottawa and LaSalle-Peru. That's not such a big deal in football, but in all the other sports with weekend games, the travel is a pain.

Too bad Rochelle couldn't be added as a non-football member.

How about the big win in bowling by Oregon's Gavvin Surmo in the Dixon Toughman Tournament. Going against three teams (Harlem, Hononegah, Dixon) that placed in the top 12 downstate last year, Surmo placed first in an event featuring three games of traditional team bowling before going to 15 games in a Baker format.

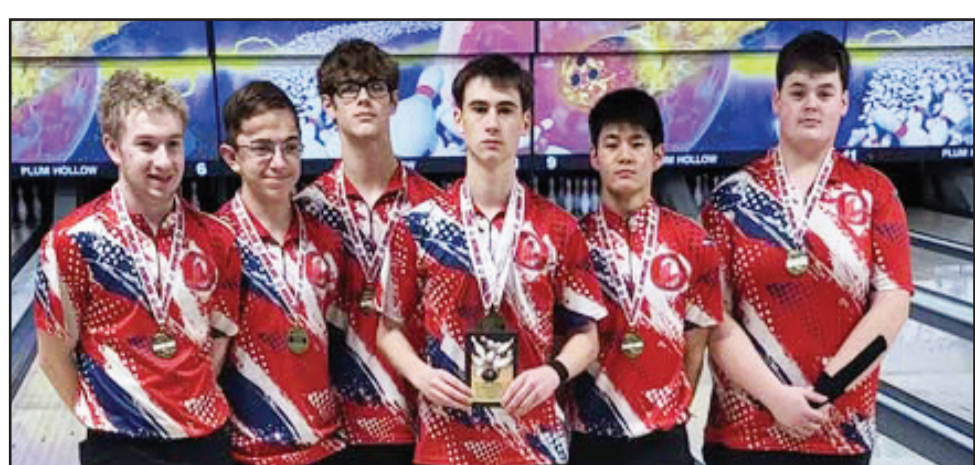
No matter what the format is, if you can beat the best from long-time state powers Harlem and Hono, that's saying something. Two years ago as a sophomore, Surmo qualified for state and looks on target for a return trip his senior year.

Harlem totaled a 6,637, followed by Oregon (6,423), Dixon (6,311) and Hononegah (6,160) in the 16-team field. That bodes well for the Hawks' chances of making it downstate as a team in a one-class system.

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



Andy Colbert



Oregon boys bowling team takes second at Dixon tournament
 The Oregon boys bowling team competed at the Dixon Toughman Invitational at Plum Hollow Family Center, Dixon. In a field with the No. 1 ranked team in the state Harlem, No. 8 ranked Hononegah, 18th ranked Freeport and Honorable Mention Dixon, Oregon came out in second place on the day. Oregon was led by Individual Tournament Champion Gavvin Surmo with a 739 series (219,277,243), followed by Ethan Smice with a 625 series, Caleb Brooks with a 585 series, Matthew Stahl with a 572 series and RJ Keene with a 539 series. A special mention goes to junior Caleb Ehrler, who after he was inserted into the baker lineup, rolled off four strikes in a row to ignite the Hawks' early afternoon charge.
 (Courtesy photo)

OGLE COUNTY SPORTS ROUNDUP

Oregon girls basketball team falls against Rockford Christian

The Oregon High School varsity girls basketball team fell 50-25 against Rockford Christian on Friday, Jan. 3 to move to 7-8 on the season. Aniyah Sarver led the Hawks with seven points.

Polo girls basketball team edged out by Genoa-Kingston

The Polo High School varsity girls basketball team was edged out by Genoa-Kingston in a 43-41 loss on Friday, Jan. 3. Cam Jones finished with 11 points and four rebounds, while Katelyn Rockwood added eight points and seven rebounds. Leah Tobin finished with seven points and 10 rebounds for the Marcos.

Polo girls basketball team suffers loss to Dakota

The Polo High School varsity girls basketball team suffered a 37-31 loss to Dakota on Saturday, Jan. 4. Cam Jones finished with 12 points, five assists and four blocks, while Carlee Grobe added 10 points and six rebounds for the Marcos.

Forrester boys basketball team defeats Fulton and Riverdale

The Forrester High School varsity boys basketball team defeated Fulton 60-40 on Saturday, Dec. 27. Kendall Erdmann led the Cardinals with 30 points, while Brendan Greenfield added 11 points in the win. Forrester followed its win over Fulton with a 61-56 victory against Riverdale that same day. Brendan Greenfield totaled a team-high 19 points, while Kendall Erdmann added 14 points and Jon Milnes chipped in 11 points.

Forrester boys basketball team beats Kewanee

The Forrester High School varsity boys basketball team beat Kewanee 61-50 on Monday, Dec. 30. Kendall Erdmann led the Cardinals with 25 points and Jon Milnes added 16 points and eight rebounds in the win. Brendan Greenfield totaled 15 points and 14 rebounds.

Forrester boys basketball team blows out Ashton-Franklin Center

The Forrester High School varsity boys basketball team blew out Ashton-Franklin Center 78-41 on Thursday, Jan. 2. Joey Kober led the Cardinals with 20 points, while Brendan Greenfield added 18 points, nine rebounds and seven assists. Kendall Erdmann totaled eight points and five assists.

Forrester boys basketball team falls against Eastland

The Forrester High School varsity boys basketball team fell 60-45 against Eastland on Saturday, Jan. 4. Kendall Erdmann scored 14 points and Connor Politsch added 12 points to lead the Cardinals in the loss. Brendan Greenfield chipped in eight points.

Oregon girls basketball team handed

loss from Winnebago

The Oregon High School varsity girls basketball team was handed a 44-29 loss from Winnebago on Tuesday, Jan. 7. Sarah Eckardt led the Hawks with 11 points, while Aniyah Sarver added nine points in the loss.

Forrester boys basketball team dominates Polo

The Forrester High School varsity boys basketball team dominated Polo for a 71-37 victory on Tuesday, Jan. 7. Kendall Erdmann led all scorers with 32 points and four assists, while Brendan Greenfield added 18 points and 12 rebounds on the Forrester side. Mercer Mumford led the Marcos with 10 points.

Polo wrestling team tops Stillman Valley and Somonauk

The Polo High School varsity wrestling team topped Stillman Valley 42-24 and Somonauk 48-12 on Tuesday, Jan. 7. Winners against Stillman Valley were Zandra Vock (120), Lucas Nelson (132), Jaidyn McKinney (144), Kaelyn McCarren (157), Ethan Dewey (175), Shawn Patton (190) and Landyn Burnett (215). Winners against Somonauk were Zandra Vock (120), Lucas Nelson (132), Jaidyn McKinney (144), Tyler Webster (150), Kaelyn McCarren (157), Micah Stringini (165), Ethan Dewey (175) and Shawn Patton (190).

Oregon boys bowling team takes down South Beloit

The Oregon Boys and Girls bowling teams entertained South Beloit at Town & Country Lanes. The Oregon boys had previously traveled to South Beloit on Dec. 9 and lost a 13 pin decision to the Sobos, but this time the Hawks rolled their 2nd highest series of the season, winning each game and series 3748-3591. In a solid overall performance, the Hawks were led by Gavvin Surmo with a 696 series (207,257,232), followed by RJ Keene 626 series, Caleb Brooks 624 series, Matthew Stahl 610 series, Ethan Smice 609 series and Caleb Ehrler 583 series. The win raised Oregon's season record to 13-1.

The JV boys raised their record to 12-1 with a 3119-2559 victory. The JV was led by Aiden Currier with a 608 series. The Oregon girls competed as individuals and was led by Savannah Nagy with a 191 high game and 442 series. She was followed by Katlyn Miller 409 series and Carli Bailey 358 series.

Oregon boys bowling team finishes second at Belvidere Buc Invitational

The Oregon Boys bowling team participated in the 21-team Belvidere Buc Invitational at The Cherry Bowl, Rockford and just missed pulling off the biggest upset in history by finishing 2nd to the #1 ranked Harlem Huskies by 13 pins 6393-6380.

Oregon took the lead after Game 3 in the morning and did not relinquish it until

the 300th and final frame of the day, when the final Harlem bowler covered a spare to seal the victory. It was a day which saw two Hawks have career high tournaments including 3rd place overall finishing senior Ethan Smice 1356 series and 10th Place medalist senior Caleb Brooks 1303 series. Oregon was led by 2nd Place overall finisher senior Gavvin Surmo with a 1375 series.

In what was the best overall 6-game performance of the season, Oregon also had contributions from senior RJ Keene 1212 series, senior Matthew Stahl 738 4-game series and junior Caleb Ehrler 396 2-game series. The JV also participated and saw 2 medalists of their own, 7th place finisher Junior Aiden Currier 1131 series and 8th place finisher senior Nolan Page 1131 series. The team finished in 6th place overall.

FORRESTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Toddler/Preschool Storytime

Wednesdays at 10:00 am. Join us every Wednesday, when school is in session, at 10:00 am for stories, games, and crafts. This program is a great opportunity for children and caregivers to discover the joy of sharing stories and making new friends in a relaxed setting. We hope you'll join us!

Community Room

Looking for a place to hold your event? Our community room (with a small kitchen)

MT. MORRIS SENIOR CENTER

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

Email Basics

Friday, January 10th we will be providing a computer class on Email Basics. Join us at 10:00 am if interested. Our computer lab is open Mon - Fri 9 am - 1 pm.

Potluck

Tuesday, January 14th we will have a potluck at noon with a presentation of our

enette) is available for meetings, parties, showers, family reunions, and more. Please call the library at (815)938-2624 for additional information.

Soft Plastic Recycling

We are collecting film-type plastic for recycling. This includes plastic bags, zipper type baggies (with the zip portion removed), cereal/snack bags, bubble wrap, and other soft plastic. Please make sure bags are free from debris and remove all paper/sticker labels. Thank you!

recent trip to New Orleans. Bring a dish to pass and see what The Center trips are like!

Tacos & Trivia

Join us Thursday, January 14th at 6:00 pm for Tacos & Trivia! Bring a team of 6 players and test your trivia skills!

Diamond Painting

Friday, December 17th is Diamond Painting at 11:00 am. Paintings are available for purchase. No previous skill required.

PATRIOT BARBER SHOP

Veteran Owned and Operated

"Old Fart"
Tuesday Special!

\$10
Haircuts
(62 yrs. and Older)

Regular Haircuts

\$12

Beard Trims

\$5

Walk-in Basis Only

Hours:
Tuesday-Friday 8AM to 5PM
(Lunch Break from 12PM to 1:30PM)

**** New Hours Starting February! Monday thru Friday 8AM to 5PM ****

**115 N. 4th Street,
Oregon, IL
815-732-7700**

Start or Continue Your Career at Steward Elementary School as a Classroom Para-Educator

Full-Time Position Throughout the School Year

Steward Elementary School (District 220) is seeking a Classroom Student Aide starting immediately. The Classroom Para-Educator must be certified in IL and registered through the Lee-Ogle-Whiteside ROE. Focus will be on academically supporting a primary-grade student with special needs, including the development of peer and social-emotional skills. District will provide additional training. Full time position for entire school year. Starting pay contingent upon experience and credentials.
 Position Starts Immediately.

Apply online at <http://www.stewardschool220.org/>
Call Steven Simpson, Supt./Principal at 815-396-2413 for more information.

Steward Elementary is an Award-Winning School & Recognized as an Outstanding Workplace in This Area!

LOCAL NEWS

OREGON PUBLIC LIBRARY

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

Book Clubs
Cocktails and Crime will meet on January 19, so 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 6 pm to discuss *A Study in Drowning* by Ava Reid.

Try It Tuesday
Tuesday, January 14 at 1:30pm or 5:30pm (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.

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

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.

Love and Laughs with Michelle Buteau

Tuesday, January 23 at 7 pm. Join comedian, actress, and producer Michelle Buteau in conversation with Greta Johnsen. Michelle is the creator/writer/star of the Netflix series *Survival of the Thickest*, inspired by her autobiographical book of essays of the same name. She is also the host of two popular reality competition shows - *The Circle* and *Barbecue Showdown*, and hosts the popular podcast, *Adulting*. In 2024, she starred in *Babes* alongside fellow comedian/actress Ilana Glazer.

Born in New Jersey to Caribbean parents, Michelle brings her unique perspective and big personality to stage and screen. Her one-hour comedy special, *Welcome to Buteaupia*, won the Critics Choice Award for Best Comedy Special. Her new special, *A Buteau-ful Mind*, drops on Netflix December 31.

Greta Johnsen is an interviewer, podcast host, and book person. She is loved as co-host of HBO's *Official Game of Thrones Podcast* and hosted WBEZ's *Nerdette* podcast for eleven years.

She can also be heard on podcasts like *Pop Culture Happy Hour* and *City Cast*.

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Register at: bit.ly/ILP_MichelleButeau

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

Functional Fitness
Wednesdays at 9:30am. In this class, we use exercises based on whole-body movements to restore posture, improve body mechanics, build strength and endurance, and fine-tune balancing skills. We start with a slow warm-up

followed by core exercises – then explore how to utilize these tools based on real situations in daily life. Bring your yoga mat! All levels are welcome. - OREGON PATRONS ONLY - Registration required, this class fills quickly. Please call (815) 732-2724 or visit www.oregonpubliclibrary.com.

Knit & Crochet

Mondays at 1:00pm. This group meets every Monday at 1pm and is open to anyone. From beginner to expert, all skill level are welcome to join. Bring any hand craft and work on it while socializing. Need help getting started with your knitting project, stop in on a Monday. Registration is requested, visit <http://www.oregonpubliclibrary.com> or call (815) 732-2724.

New Photo Printer at the library!

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

Community Seed Library

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

Oregon Writers Group

Meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 10:00am.

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

BYRON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Thank You
Thank you to everyone who came out and donated blood at the library's blood drive on January 2! With your help we collected 29 units of blood. The holidays are always a slow time for blood donations, and those 29 units will go a long way to helping save lives!

Calling All Dog Lovers!

Thursday, Jan. 23, 6-7:00 pm. Join Melodee Hoffman from BONAFIED (bring out natural abilities found in every dog) as she raises awareness about rescuing, adopting and fostering dogs. During

this program, you will learn the steps regarding how and where to adopt a dog of any age and breed, as well as training tips and continuing care after adoption. Baskets with dog essentials will be raffled off during this program. The grand prize giveaway is a free one on one training session for you and your pal with Melodee! Whether you are a new dog owner, or you've spent years with your furry friend, Melodee will share her doggy wisdom to enhance the relationship between you and your canine companion. Please call

815-234-5107 to register.

Did you know

That the Byron Library has a large collection of LPs available to check out? Vinyl records have grown in popularity again, and the library has a wide selection of records to choose from. If you don't have a player at home to listen to them on, don't worry! The Byron Library also has a portable turntable available for checkout in our "Library of Things"!

Creative Studio

Our Creative Studio is open on Sunday afternoons and two evenings a week, so stop by for monthly

crafts and to use our maker space equipment! Crafts out on the tables are free of charge, while some other projects will incur a cost depending on materials. Middle school and high school youth can use some of the materials while with an adult, or during Teen Time. Creative Studio hours: Sunday 1-5:00 pm, Monday 9:00 am-1:00 pm & 5-8:00 pm, Tuesday 9 am - 1:00 pm & 5-8:00 pm, Wednesday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, Thursday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, Friday & Saturday closed.

Check out Our Mobile App

Did you know that there is an easy way to use the library from your phone? Just download the PrairieCat app to your phone or mobile device and log in with your library card number and PIN! You'll be able to view your checkouts and holds, renew renewable materials, and search the library catalog. There's even a digital copy of your library card!

Curbside Delivery

The library is open for browsing, but patrons can still use our curbside service! Place your holds online at byronlibrary.org or call us at 815-234-

5107. Not sure what you want? Call us for help! We will call or email you with a confirmation when your holds are ready to be picked up. Call us when you arrive at the library, and we will bring your items out to you, already checked out. A receipt with your due dates will be included with your items.

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

Local Girl Scouts receive \$9,775 grant from CFNIL

NORTHERN ILLINOIS – Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois (GSNI) received a generous \$9,775 grant from the Community

Foundation of Northern Illinois. Funds from this grant will be used to support Youth Mental Health First Aide Training for volun-

teers who interact with Girl Scout members. In addition to volunteer training, Girl Scout members will learn about five different pillars


of health and wellness and embark on a wellness journey that will serve them their entire life.

GSNI would like to

thank the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois for joining in the Girl Scout Mission where our future community leaders

have a space all their own, where their interests, their experience, and their leadership—today and tomorrow—is the top priority!

Tails PET OF THE WEEK
Humane Society
815.758.2457
www.tailshumanesociety.org



Suzzy

14 pounds of love, laughter, and adorableness....that's what you get if you adopt me, Suzzy! I came from a tough situation and little is known about my background. I've met another small dog here and though we didn't play, we hung out together without a problem. I enjoy going for walks and, while a wee bit shy at first, enjoy spending time with people who care about me. I might be staying in a quieter spot here at Tails so if you don't spot me in the main dog area, ASK to meet me. I want the safety and stability of a family with all of my heart!

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LOCAL NEWS

JULIA HULL DISTRICT LIBRARY



Last Saturday, at Julia Hull District Library, puzzle enthusiasts faced-off to see which team could complete the same 500-piece jigsaw puzzle in 90 minutes. Prizes went to first, second and third-place finishers.



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

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.redcrossblood.org/>.

Tween Scene: Lunar New Year Celebration

Come celebrate the Year

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 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.

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 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
 Website: unitedchurchofbyron.org
 Pastor: Rev. Tyler Spillious
 Youth Ministry Coordinator: Richard Simpson
 Sunday Schedule & Worship opportunities:
 Service of Meditation & Prayer: 8:15am- 8:45am
 Adult Sunday School Hour: 9am
 Kids Sunday School: (for ages 3 thru 5th grade) during the 10:30 worship
 Coffee & fellowship time: 10:00am - 10:30am
 Main Worship: 10:30am
 Spark Youth Group (for ages 6th grade thru 12th grade) - Sundays, 5pm-7pm
 For complete ministry schedule and other activities, please check our website or Facebook page or contact the church office.
 Whoever you are or wherever you are on your journey, you are welcome here!

BEACON HILL ASSEMBLY OF GOD

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

CHANA

CHANA UNITED METHODIST

Pastor Josh Brown, 606 Main Street, Chana, IL 61015. Church office 815-732-7683. (E-mail address: 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 leafriverchurch.org/live-now
 6941 N. Mt. Morris Rd., Leaf River, IL 61047
 815-738-2205
leafriverbc@gmail.com
leafriverchurch.org

LINDENWOOD

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH – LCMS

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

LINDENWOOD UNION CHURCH

101 N Galena st, P.O box 67, Lindenwood IL
 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
 Website: www.goelimchurch.org
 Sunday morning worship 10:00 am

MOUNT MORRIS

SUSCIPLES 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
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
 Senior Pastor: Bruce McKenna. Sunday Schedule: 8:30 a.m. Sunday School for all ages. 9:30 a.m. Coffee Fellowship. 10:00 a.m. Morning Worship with Childcare and Children's Church.

MT. MORRIS CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

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

MT. MORRIS TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

308 E. Brayton Rd. Mt. Morris, IL Phone: 734-6354 Rev. Josh 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
 EOCCOGministries@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 • Sunday school 9:00 a.m. Worship 10:00 a.m.

LIGHTHOUSE UNITED METHODIST

Pastor Dave Rogula 4962 S. Daysville Rd., Oregon, IL 61061 lighthouseUMC@yahoo.com
 Worship at 11:00 a.m. Holy Communion celebrated the first Sunday of each 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
 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 donutnuts in our cafe! Online worship is also available via Facebook.
 We believe in sharing Communion every Sunday as an act of worship.
 RiverKids Service @ 10:45 AM for nursery-6th grade ~ provides a safe and fun environment where kids can learn about who God is and who they are because of Him.
 Encounter Youth Ministry for kids in 7th-12th grade meets on Sunday afternoons.
 Please see our Facebook page for scheduled dates and times.
 For complete ministry info and events, visit us online at Riverstonecc.com or on Facebook at facebook.com/RiverStoneChristianChurch

ST. BRIDE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

1000 Highway 64, West (Hwy 64 W & Mongon Drive on Liberty Hill), Oregon
 732-7211 - Office Rev. Eldred George
 Webpage: saintbrides.org • E-mail: saint.bride.church@gmail.com
Worship Services: Sunday 10 am Holy Communion with Hymns
 Christian Education Available

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH, NALC

114 S. 5th St. Oregon, IL Phone: (815) 732-2367
 Website: stpaullnalc.org/onil.weebly.com
 10:15 a.m. Fellowship/Education hours
 11:30 a.m. Worship

POLO

CHURCH OF THE OPEN BIBLE

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

CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CHURCH ~ POLO CAMPUS

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

FAITH DISCOVERY CHURCH

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

STILLMAN VALLEY

RED BRICK CHURCH OF STILLMAN VALLEY

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

KISHWAUKEE COMMUNITY EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

VALLEY EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH

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

WINNEBAGO

MIDDLE CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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



LOCAL NEWS

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!**

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

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 winter in the library! 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

users can access and reserve passes from any of our attractions on the Mount Morris Library website, mtmorris-il.org, under the resources page. Visit the website to browse attractions.

Lions Club Glasses and Hearing Aids Collections

Donation boxes for eyeglass recycling are available at the library. When the boxes are full, they are picked up by local Lions members and dropped off at collection depots. These recycled eyeglasses are given to people in need, with the help of various medical missionaries, in Central and South America and around the world. When the eyeglasses arrive in these countries, doctors and technicians conduct eye exams and provide a free pair of prescription eyeglasses that are as close as possible to that person's sight needs. When donating HEARING AIDS, please be sure to place them in a small box or hard-covered case so they do not get crushed

or damaged.

Adult Programming

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

Memorial Gifts

Give a gift that lasts, brings joy to many, and doubles in value. Your memorial gift to the library is matched by the Mt. Morris Library Foundation, doubling your generosity! Many thanks to all who gave memorial gifts in 2023.

Newspaper Available!

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

Curbside Service is available!

We want to remind everyone that you still have the option of having your materials delivered

to your vehicle. If you have holds waiting for you, call us to tell us you are on your way, and we will bring them out to your vehicle when you arrive. Call us if you need more information.

Additional Services Offered

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

Library Board Meetings

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

The Mount Morris Public Library is located at 105 S. McKendrie Ave. Mt. Morris IL 61054 – 815-734-4927 Fax-815-734-6035 www.mtmorris-il.org

BERTOLET MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Game Day

Monday, January 20th, 12:00PM: We've got some new (to us) card games for you, and we'd love to have you join us for a fun school-free afternoon of Piles, Uno Dos, Spot It, and Taco, Cat, Goat, Cheese, Pizza.

Brand New Program

Spice of the Month! Each month we will showcase a spice. Some may be common spices and others may

be lesser known. A fact sheet, recipes, and a sample of the spice will be included. January's spice is black pepper and kits are available at the circulation desk.

Stories With Stacey

Thursdays at 10:00AM: We hope you had fun this fall at Stories With Stacey. We took a few weeks off and now look forward to seeing you beginning 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.

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

NEW RELEASES

Adult Books

Between the Sound and Sea by Amanda Cox
Until Our Time Comes by Nicole M Miller

Chapter Books

The Search For Big Lou by Lane Walker
Saving and Spending by Sloane Wilden

Picture Books

You Are Not a Cat! by Sharon G Flake

DVDs

Bad Boys Ride or Die

ROCK RIVER CENTER ACTIVITIES

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

and like us on Facebook.

'Paint & Sip'

DATE: Thurs. January 9, 2025. TIME: 10:00 – 11:00 A.M. Class size limited.

IMPORTANCE OF BPMANAGEMENT on Jan. 13

10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Registration Requested by January 9.

Morning Mug Club

January 14 – 9:00 –

10:30 a.m.

CTC Lab Hour

January 16 - 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Registration Required.

Veteran's Assistance

Your Veteran's Service Officer will now be serving you at: 1001 Pines Road, Oregon, Illinois Fridays from 9:00 am – 3:00 p.m. By Appointment Only. To schedule your appointment, please call: 815-633-

8266 or 217-836-6575. The Veteran's Service Officer serves Veterans of all ages and assist them with applications and other benefits available to them.

HEATING ASSISTANCE

Colder weather is just around the corner and we all will be experiencing higher utility bills as we need to turn on the heat in our homes. There are Util-

ity Assistance Programs available to help pay for heating utility bills.

LIHEAP

For the 2024-2025 LIHEAP program year, applications will be processed as follows. Seniors (at least one household member is age 60 or older), Disabled (at least one household member receives disability benefits), Families with at least one child under 6

years old, Households that are disconnected from their utilities, have a disconnection notice, or have less than 25% in their propane tank. All other income-eligible households can apply. Income limits for 2025 Program Year: Family Size - 30-day gross income. 1 - \$2,510. 2 - \$3,407. 3 - \$4,303. For more details, call Tri-County office at 800-323-5434.



Leaf River Soaring Eagles decorate tree for contest
The Leaf River Soaring Eagles 4-H Club entered a Christmas tree into the Leaf River Bertolet building tree decorating contest. The tree is covered with animals, tractors and 4-H-themed ornaments. Each member contributed their own decorations to the tree. The tree will be open to be viewed by the public on Saturday, Dec. 14 at the Leaf River Lions' Christmas breakfast at the Bertolet Building in Leaf River. Pictured with the tree are Kaden Lingbeck, Makhya Burris, Hazel Friday, Lydia Sherburne, Finn Slattery, Gianni Racanelli, David Bagwell and Kolton Motszko. (Courtesy photo)



Horst named Ogle County Fair Volunteer of the Year
At its annual meeting on Saturday, Nov. 9, Ogle County Fair Board President Tom Simpson, presented the Volunteer of the Year award to Lukas Horst. Lukas was at the fair all week helping with anything we asked of him. The board would also like to thank everyone who supported and volunteered with the Ogle County Fair this year. The Ogle County Fair Association is a Tax Exempt 501c-3 Non-Profit Organization that is totally run by volunteers, so it would not be possible to operate without your help, support, and donations. Please mark your calendar to attend or volunteer at next year's fair Wednesday, July 30-Sunday, Aug. 3. Watch our website and Facebook pages for more information as it becomes available. Also, if you need space for an event, our fairgrounds are rentable. (Courtesy photo)

Country Crossroads Quilt Guild meeting is Jan. 20

FORRESTON — For our program on Monday, Jan. 20, Country Crossroads Quilt Guild members will be introducing our 2025 Guild Officers. It's a get to know them better as several are new to the Guild. Members are asked to bring questions for this "Get to Know You" session. It is a great opportunity for anyone interested in joining our Guild to meet

these Quilters and hear what might be in store for this next year. Our major focus in 2025 will be our upcoming Quilt Show, April 11 & 12. Please consider joining us at 7p.m.; a guest fee is charged for \$5. The program will be followed by a business meeting and Show 'n Tell.

Guild meetings are held at the Forreston Grove Church, 7246 Freepport Road; Forreston, on the third Monday of each month (except December) at 7 p.m., doors open at 6 p.m. to provide ample time to meet and greet members before the meeting. Membership dues are \$20 per year. For more information call Program Committee Chair Kay Walker, 815-275-2904, or Guild President Jennifer Newcomer, 708-774-3279.

LOCAL NEWS

Illinois Soybean Association to host Regional Workshops on EPA Herbicide Strategy

BLOOMINGTON — In January 2025 the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA), in coordination with local partners including the University of Illinois Extension and local county Illinois Farm Bureaus, will host a series of five regional Herbicide Strategy workshops. These educational workshops will be designed to update farmers about changes in pesticide policy, help them understand the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Herbicide Strategy, and provide concrete steps they can take to prepare their farm operations. Herbicide Strategy Workshops will be held: Dekalb County Farm Bureau Office - Jan. 20. Illinois Soybean Association

Office - Jan. 21. UIUC Crop Science Research Education Center - Jan. 22. Madison County Farm Bureau Office - Jan. 27. Will County Farm Bureau Office - Jan. 28. Workshops will take place from 11:00 a.m. to noon. Anyone from the agricultural community is welcome to attend; a free lunch will be provided following the workshop. Those interested in attending should visit: <https://www.ilsoy.org/latest-epa-herbicide-strategy-workshop-youre-invited/> or email Gracie Sheets (gracie.scheets@ilsoy.org) with any questions. In August 2024, the EPA finalized its herbicide strategy, introducing significant changes to

herbicide labeling nationally. The plan includes increased record-keeping and planning requirements for farmers to document pesticide runoff and drift mitigation measures for every field. These policy changes stem from a 2011 lawsuit filed by the Center for Biological Diversity, which argued that the EPA was not meeting its Endangered Species Act (ESA) obligations when labeling pesticides. Known as the "megasuit" in the pesticide policy world, this case impacts all agricultural pesticide uses. In settling the case, the EPA committed to a comprehensive rewrite of U.S. pesticide policy, affecting farmers nationwide.

Moving forward, the EPA's final Herbicide Strategy introduces several new requirements for Illinois farmers to mitigate the impact of agricultural herbicides on endangered species. Farmers must implement measures to limit herbicide runoff and drift, including adopting practices like cover crops, no-till farming, and creating drift buffers up to 320 feet. To prevent pesticide runoff, herbicides will have "mitigation point requirements" that farmers need to meet. Points can be earned through existing field conditions or by adopting additional mitigation measures. Large drift buffers will be required on many

Illinois farm fields. To reduce buffer sizes and maximize productive farmland, farmers will need to consider mitigation measures such as increasing droplet size, lowering boom height, planting windbreaks or hedgerows, or reducing the treated acres. ISA's Herbicide Strategy Workshops were created to pair Illinois farmers with policy experts to discuss these changes, equip farmers with tools and updates, and outline possible pathways for navigating these new requirements. The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) checkoff and membership programs represent more than 43,000 soybean farmers in Illinois. The checkoff

funds market development, soybean production and government relations efforts, while the membership program, Illinois Soybean Growers (ISG) and the Illinois Soybean Growers PAC actively advocates for positive and impactful legislation for farmers at local, state and national levels. ISA upholds the interests of Illinois soybean farmer through promotion, advocacy, research and education with the vision of becoming a trusted partner of Illinois soybean farmers to ensure their profitability now and for future generations. For more information, visit the website www.ilsoy.org and www.ilsoygrowers.com.

House Minority Leader to take district-wide tour

SAVANNA — After being sworn into office for the 104th General Assembly in the Illinois House of Representatives, House Minority Leader Tony McCombie (R-Savanna) is returning to her 89th District to meet with constituents across northwest Illinois. Her district-wide

tour will begin on Jan. 13, taking her on multiple stops throughout her district, which covers primarily Carroll and Jo Daviess Counties as well as portions of: Boone, DeKalb, Ogle, Stephenson, and Winnebago. "I can think of no better way to kick off the new

year and new term than engaging with residents, businesses, and organizations at home in northwest Illinois," said McCombie. "As the voice for thousands in Springfield this engagement is essential to best represent my district and your priorities in the statehouse."

The district-wide tour will include the following stops: Monday, Jan. 13: Elizabeth Town Hall Event at Elizabeth Village Hall, 200 E. Myrtle St., from 4-5 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 15: Pearl City Mobile Office Hours at Pearl City Li-

brary, 221 S. Main St., from 10-11:30 a.m. Lena Mobile Office Hours at Lena Library, 300 W. Mason St., from 2:30-4 p.m. Friday, Jan. 17. Winnebago Mobile Office Hours at Winnebago Public Library, 210 N. Elida St., from 2-3:30 p.m.

Residents in the 89th District are encouraged to attend any one of the above events to meet their State Representative, ask questions, and hear legislative updates. With questions about the above events, residents can contact Leader McCombie's Office at 815-291-8989.

Weekly Brain Busters

King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Kitten's cry
4 Bit of advice
7 Prop for Sherlock
8 Vice President Burr
10 Ancient Greek region
11 Future ferns
13 Mental agility Rds.
16 Pitchers
18 Stickum
19 Unpaid TV ads
20 Close
21 Revue segments
23 Lover's meeting
25 Smack a baseball
26 1982 sci-fi film
27 Signing need
28 "— of One's Own"
30 1959 Kingston Trio hit
33 Burger King, for one
36 Kilt pattern
37 Lubricated
38 Canary snacks

DOWN

1 Short skirts
2 Grand tale
3 Least strong
4 Piglike mammal
5 Golf clubs
6 Beans go-with
7 Sulk
8 Campfire leftovers

39 Hosp. scans
40 Triage ctrs.
41 Salty expanse

9 Stallion sounds
10 Mensa stats
12 Animal's nose
14 "Jabberwocky" starter
15 Inherited
19 Peach center
20 Wd. from Roget
21 Hard work
22 Sunflower State
23 Walked (on)

24 Date movies, for short
25 Beach lotion letters
26 Animated figures
28 Pursuing
29 Highways
30 Sasha's sister
31 Alliances
32 Moreover
34 Sloth's home
35 Employ

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MAGIC MAZE ● — DROP

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

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally. Unlisted clue hint: DROP FROM THE EYE

- Back
- Chocolate
- Cough
- Dew
- Eye
- Gum
- Hear a pin
- Helicopter
- Lemon
- Mail
- Market
- Parachute
- Peppermint
- Rain
- Voltage

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Weekly SUDOKU

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

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.

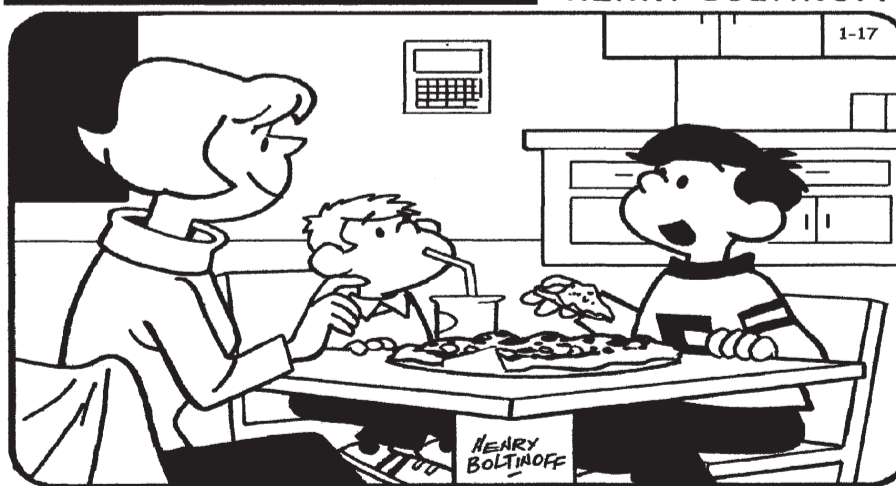
DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆

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

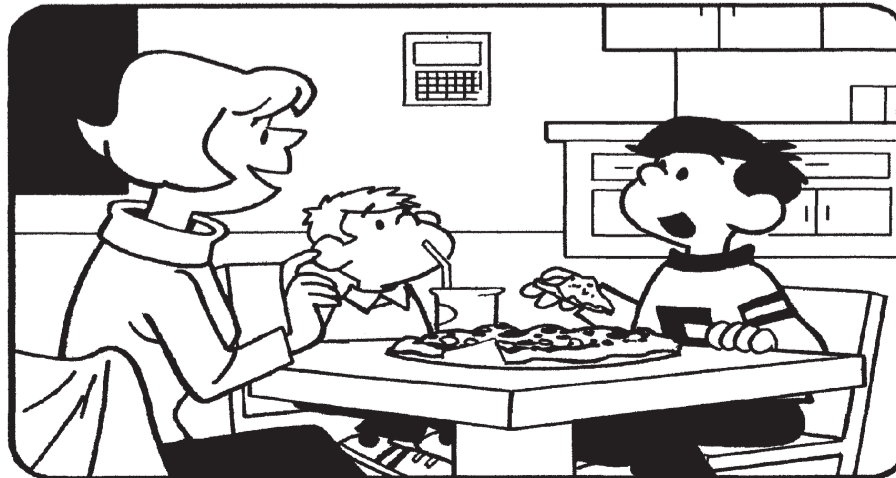
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Fingers are not showing. 2. Counter is not as wide. 3. Hand is moved. 4. Mouth is open. 5. Straw is different. 6. Table is thicker.

King Crossword
Answers
Solution time: 24 mins.

Drop
Answers

Weekly SUDOKU
Answer

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



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
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)

PUBLIC NOTICE

K & P Self Storage
1563 Kysor Dr.
Byron, IL 61010
Pursuant to the Landlord's Lien Provision, in paragraph #11 in the rental agreement between KCH Enterprises DBA K & P Self Storage, Landlord, and Denise Hamilton - unit #57. These items will be held in possession for ten (10) days, at which time they will be disposed of unless tenant pays the landlord in full, in accordance with the Self Storage Facilities Act. Must be paid in full by January 23.
No. 0110
(Jan. 13 and 20, 2025)

NOTICE

INVITATION FOR BIDS

The Village of Davis Junction will receive bids for a public infrastructure and subdivision development contract until 10:00 o'clock A.M. on the 6th day of February 2025 at Davis Junction Village Hall, located at 106 North Elm Street, Davis Junction, Illinois 61020, at which time and place all bids will be publicly opened and read aloud.
The proposed work for which the Village of Davis Junction is soliciting bids consists of one contract, "Rebuild Downtowns and Main Streets Capital Grant Gateway Subdivision Infrastructure Improvements", and includes the following:
"Construction of infrastructure for the Gateway Subdivision. Work shall include earth excavation and embankment construction, construction of hot-mix asphalt roadways, construction of combination concrete curb and gutter, construction of storm sewers and related structures, construction of sanitary sewers and related structures, construction of water mains and related appurtenances, construction of street lighting and related electrical appurtenances, and the associated erosion control and site restoration."
The contract documents, including Drawings and Specifications, and form of contract and bonds for performance and payment, are on file at the office of the Village

Clerk, 106 North Elm Street, Davis Junction, Illinois 61020 and at the office of the ENGINEER, Willett, Hofmann & Associates, Inc., 57 Airport Drive, Rockford, Illinois 61109.
Copies of the Contract Documents, including Project Manual and the Construction Drawings, shall be obtained electronically in PDF format from the Willett, Hofmann & Associates, Inc. website at www.willetthofmann.com. Contractors shall click on "Bid Login" on the homepage of the website and follow the instructions. The eBid-Doc# (project number) is 9485051 for this project.
A certified check or bank draft, payable to the order of the Village of Davis Junction, Illinois, negotiable U.S. Government Bonds (at par value) or a satisfactory Bid Bond executed by the Bidder and an acceptable surety in an amount equal to five percent (5%) of the total bid shall be submitted with each bid.
Attention is called to the fact that not less than the minimum salaries and wages as set forth in the Contract Documents must be paid on this project, and that the CONTRACTOR must ensure that employees and applicants for employment are not discriminated against because of their race, color, religion, sex or national origin.
This project is being funded with a Rebuild Illinois grant which includes the following grant requirements. Bidder must comply with the requirement of the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) Act for Minorities, Females, and Persons with Disabilities (30 ILCS 575) and the BEP Utilization Plan. The BEP Act establishes the goal for contracting businesses that have been certified vendors to perform the anticipated direct subcontracting opportunities for this project. Bidder must comply with the Illinois Works Jobs Program Act ILCS559/20-1 et seq. which requires the contractor to hire apprentices to work at least 10% of the total hours worked in each prevailing wage classification. Bidder must also comply with the Employment of IL Workers on Public Works Act 30 ILCS 570/0.02 et seq. which requires 90% of the workforce to be IL residents during periods of high unemployment.
A non-mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting will be held at 10:00 o'clock A.M. on the 22nd of January 2025, at Davis Junction Village Hall, located at 106 North Elm Street, Davis Junction, Illinois 61020. The meeting will be for answering questions and providing guidelines for the Bidders regarding the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) and the specific BEP requirements for the project.
The Village of Davis Junction is an equal opportunity employer. The Village of Davis Junction does not discriminate on the basis of handicapped status in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities.
The Village of Davis Junction reserves the right to reject any or all bids or to waive any informality in the bidding. Bids may be held by the Village of Davis Junction for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days from the date of the opening of bids for the purpose of reviewing the bids and investigating the qualifications of bidders, prior to award-

ing the Contract.
BY ORDER OF
VILLAGE OF DAVIS JUNCTION, ILLINOIS
By: Sandie Maahs, Village Clerk
DATE: January 13, 2025
No. 0112
(January 13, 2025)

NOTICE OF ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

To All Owners And Occupiers Of Lands Lying Within The Boundaries Of The Ogle County Soil And Water Conservation District:
Notice is hereby given that an Election will be held on the 18th day of February 2025 at 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the USDA Service Center, 213 W. Pines Road, Oregon, IL. Two (2) Directors will be elected to serve the Ogle County Soil and Water Conservation District of the State of Illinois.
All persons, firms or corporations who hold legal title or are in legal possession of any land lying within the boundaries of the said district are eligible to vote at said election, whether as lessee, renter, tenant or otherwise.
Only such persons, firms or corporations are eligible to vote.
Marcia Heuer, Chairperson
Ogle County Soil and Water Conservation District
DATE: 8th day of January 2025.
No. 0113
(Jan. 13 and Feb. 3, 2025)

203 HELP WANTED

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,

decays. If it's antique, I'm interested in looking! Call 815-562-2928 or email dickharms@hotmail.com



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.

03262023

Byron School District #226

Job Openings

Apply:
Go to www.byron226.org
Click on the MENU button
On the left under the About Us tab
Click on Employment Opportunities

Positions

- HS Lunchroom Supervisor - 2.5 hours per day
- Full-time 2nd Shift Custodian
- Full-time Maintenance Worker

01132025

103 AUCTIONS

RAY & MARY REED ESTATE AUCTION #1
3638 W. CEDAR STREET, DIXON, IL 61021
Thursday, January 16th 8AM to Sunday, January 19th 5PM
This is an Online Auction.

Please visit <https://aandtauctionservices.hibid.com/> for full sale viewing beginning 1/15/2025. Pictures will be uploaded prior to that date as they are available.

Personal Property: Household & kitchen items; Lots of various glassware—collectibles, knick-knacks, china, & more; household furniture—beds, tables, leather couch & armchair, and more; John Deere Memorabilia; Local memorabilia (Dixon/Grand Detour/Oregon, IL); various antiques, including toys; Instruments—guitars, mandolin, bass, many harmonicas, and accessories; owl figurines; jewelry; various collectible money; much, much more! This is the first sale of a multi-sale estate.

Item Viewing: Items will be available for online viewing @ 8am on 1/15/2025. If you wish for more information on an item or an appointment to view an item, please contact A & T Auction Services directly.

Pick-Up: will be held on Thursday, January 23rd from 4:30pm-7:00pm at the sale site listed above.

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

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

Ogle & Carroll County, IL

FARMLAND AUCTION

Tuesday, February 4th, 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
Online Bidding through 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

The Opening Bid LIVE

Advertise in our

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

AUCTIONEER DIRECTORY

A&T Auction Services, LLC
Travis Cunningham
(815) 297-4595
Located in Forreston, IL

Lenny Bryson
Sales Of All Kinds
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DOLLARS & SENSE



Financial strategies to consider as retirement draws near

FREEDOM is often cited as a benefit of retirement. Many professionals look forward to the day when they retire and have more free time and the freedom to spend that time however they choose. Of course, the opportunity to spend retirement how one sees fit typically requires considerable financial freedom. Financial planning for retirement is often emphasized to young professionals beginning their careers. But it's equally important that people on the cusp of retirement continue to look for ways to protect and grow their wealth. As retirement draws near, professionals can consider these strategies to ensure they have the financial freedom to make their golden years shine even brighter.

- Plan to grow your wealth in retirement. It's widely assumed that retirees need less income after calling it a career because the need to save for retirement is no longer present. However, some expenses, including health care, may rise in retirement, which underscores the need to continue growing your wealth. Cost-of-living also will increase over the course of your retirement years, which highlights the need to keep growing wealth in retirement. It can be tricky to protect your existing retirement savings as you approach the end of your career while also growing that wealth, so it is best to work with a financial planner to navigate that situation.
- Maintain a mix with your investments. A model from the Schwab Center for Financial Research indicated that a hypothetical retiree with a \$2 million portfolio in year one of retirement will have slightly less than \$1 million left 30 years later if her portfolio maintains

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

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

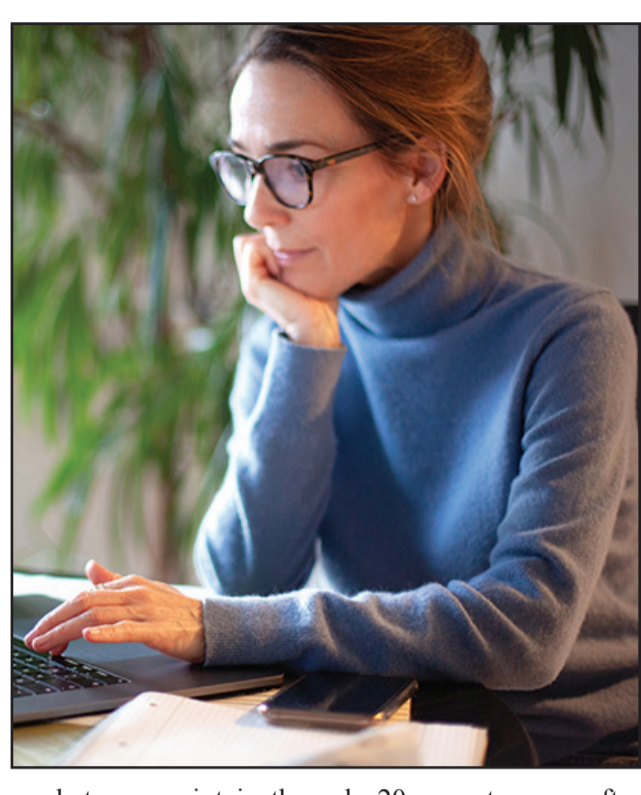
in retirement. The Prudential survey found that 55-year-olds had a median retirement savings of less than \$50,000, a number that falls considerably short of the recommended goal of having eight times one's annual income saved by this age. If that situation sounds familiar for professionals nearing retirement age, then now is the time to begin catching up. Make the maximum allowable contributions to a 401(k) plan (\$23,000 in 2024) and/or an IRA (\$7,000). In addition, the Internal Revenue Service notes that IRA catch-up contributions remained \$1,000 for individuals age 50 and over in 2024.

Retirement can provide a sense of freedom professionals have worked hard to achieve over the course of their careers. Some simple strategies can help professionals on the cusp of retirement achieve the financial freedom they'll need to enjoy their golden years to the fullest extent.

Tips to manage your portfolio in turbulent times

SEASONED investors recognize that risk is inherent to investing in the stock market. Numerous variables affect market performance, and those factors can make investing feel like a roller coaster ride. The stock market has certainly experienced its share of ups and downs in recent years, and that turbulence has led to some sleepless nights for investors. Investors concerned about unpredictable market fluctuations and the effects of such turbulence on their portfolios can keep these strategies in mind as they look to protect their investments.

- Determine how much risk you're comfortable with. Investopedia defines risk tolerance as the degree of risk investors are willing to endure given the volatility in the value of an investment. Certain types of investments, such as stocks and exchange-traded funds (ETFs), are associated with a higher risk tolerance, while bonds have long been recommended to individuals who are uncomfortable taking on too much risk. Conventional financial wisdom suggests individuals assume less risk as they age and get closer to retirement, but investors also can reevaluate their risk tolerance during turbulent times. If an up-and-down market is leading to sleepless nights, it might be time to assume less risk, regardless of an investor's age. Investors who are comfortable assuming risk in a turbulent



- market can maintain the status quo or even assume greater risk in the hopes of reaping greater rewards.
- Consider a rebalance. Investors rebalance their portfolios to make themselves less vulnerable to market fluctuations and to ensure they're not sinking money into underperforming stocks and funds. A balanced mix of risky and steady investments can help investors grow their money and rest easier in the knowledge that all of their eggs are not in one basket, and that they're doing all they can to avoid bad investments.
- Don't sweat the small stuff. The investment experts at John Hancock® note that bear markets, which is the term used to describe a market that falls 20 percent or more from its peak, historically do not last as long as bull markets. A bull market occurs when stocks increase

by 20 percent or more after a decline. Younger investors who are not nearing retirement age should not lose too much sleep when a turbulent market takes a downturn, as the dip likely won't last long nor affect their long-term financial stability. Older investors concerned by market losses also can rest easy if they choose less risky investments the closer they get to retirement. Many funds are now based on investors' targeted retirement dates, and such vehicles automatically rebalance portfolios as investors age, making it easier to get through dips in market performance no matter an investor's age. Investing during turbulent times can try investors' patience. But a handful of strategies can help investors protect their financial futures even during times of great market fluctuation.

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LOCAL NEWS



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Following the theme of Embrace Possibilities, local Girl Scouts will kick-off the 2025 Girl Scout Cookie Program on Friday, Jan. 3.

Local Girl Scouts embrace possibilities with 2025 Girl Scout Cookie Program

NORTHERN ILLINOIS — Following the theme of Embrace Possibilities, local Girl Scouts will kick-off the 2025 Girl Scout Cookie Program on Friday, Jan. 3. Young entrepreneurs will take cookie orders in person and offer online opportunities through their Digital Cookie sites for customers to order cookies for shipping, in-person Girl Scout delivery, and donations to the military and community organizations. The 2025 Girl Scout Cookie lineup includes refreshing Thin Mints® (vegan!), caramel-y Samoas®, peanut butter-stuffed Tag-alongs®, crunchy Do-si-dos®, buttery Trefoils®, sweet S'mores®, toffee-chipped Toffee-tastics® (gluten free, too!), and the caramel and brownie-inspired Adventurefuls™. Due to rising costs of materials, production, and overall inflation, for the 2025 Cookie Program, Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois will join many Girl Scouts councils nationwide, including all neighboring councils, with an updated price of \$6 per cookie package.

At the close of the 2025 cookie season, the beloved Girl Scout S'mores cookie flavor will be retired! If customers would like to have Girl Scout Cookies—especially this last season for Girl Scout S'mores—they should tell the Girl Scout in their lives to send them an email from their personalized website as soon as possible. Don't know a Girl Scout? Connect with local cookie entrepreneurs at www.girlscoutsni.org/buycookies, and they'll add you to their customer list! Girl Scouts do more than sell delicious treats—they're entrepreneurial powerhouses creating a more equitable future for themselves and the world. Every box of cookies sold provides invaluable experiences for Girl Scouts such as service projects, troop travel, and summer camp. During Girl Scout Cookie season, each entrepreneur sets out to sell delicious cookies while also building entrepreneurial and business skills imperative for leadership and future success. All net revenues raised—100 percent of it—stays within the northern

Illinois area. Nearly 700,000 Girl Scouts participate in the Girl Scout Cookie Program, which provides vital entrepreneurial skills that build courage, confidence, and character. As a result, they obtain limitless barrier-breaking futures outside the box with transferable life skills. Girl Scouts can also earn badges and awards to develop valuable business skills including Cookie Business badges, Financial Literacy badges, Cookie Entrepreneur Family pins, and Entrepreneur badges. Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois uses cookie earnings to power amazing experiences through their programming, while Girl Scouts and their troops decide how to invest in community projects, personal enrichment opportunities, and more. Skills learned through the cookie program also influence later success as data shows more than half (57 percent) of Girl Scout alumni in business say the cookie program was beneficial to skills they possess today, such as money management, goal-setting, and public speaking!

LaHood sworn into 119th Congress

WASHINGTON D.C. — On Jan. 3, Congressman Darin LaHood (R-IL-16) issued the following statement after taking the oath of office to represent Illinois' 16th Congressional District. This will be Rep. LaHood's fifth full term in Congress, following his first election in 2015.



(COURTESY PHOTO)

"I am humbled and honored to represent Illinois' 16th Congressional District in the 119th Congress. I will continue to provide high-quality constituent services and advocate for conservative Midwestern values. I look forward to working with all my colleagues in Congress and President Trump to deliver

on the promises made to the American people. "I was proud to continue my support for Mike Johnson as Speaker of the House. Together, we will strengthen our economy, secure our border, restore

American energy independence, and return to American peace through strength. I look forward to representing the people of central and northwestern Illinois for another two years!"



Leaf River Soaring Eagles 4-H Club celebrate Christmas

On Dec. 16, the Leaf River Soaring Eagles 4-H Club celebrated Christmas. They had a potluck dinner that everyone enjoyed. They made homemade ornaments, played pin the nose on the reindeer and guessed the number of candies in the jars. For their present exchange the club members played musical chairs to see what present each would receive. The picture shows the musical chair players, Hazel Friday, Finn Slattery, Lucy Miller, Makhya Burris, Kaden Lingbeck, David Wehler, Henry Hodson, David Bagwell and Kolton Motszko. Everyone had a lot of fun. The Leaf River Soaring Eagles meet the second Monday of every month at the River Valley Complex, 605 Main St., Leaf River. For more information on the club, please contact Nickie Lingbeck at (815) 275-2492. (Courtesy photo)

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