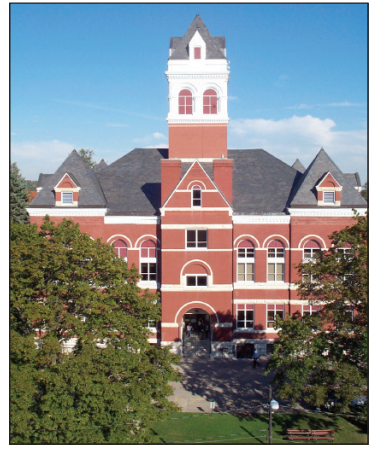




OHS wrestlers win regional

The Oregon High School wrestling team finished first in the IHSA 1A Byron Regional. **Section B**



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Students attend ILMEA festival


Oregon students recently attended the ILMEA All-State Festival. **Page 5**




Kindergartners celebrate

Oregon kindergartners recently celebrated their 101st day of school. **Page 3**


WEATHER




MONDAY
HIGH LOW
4 -5




TUESDAY
HIGH LOW
7 -11




WEDNESDAY
HIGH LOW
8 -3



THURSDAY
HIGH LOW
13 -3



FRIDAY
HIGH LOW
17 -3



SATURDAY
HIGH LOW
30 -1

OBITUARIES

- Jacquelyn 'Jackie' J. Gambrel
- Charlene Gaye Topping
- Marian L. Gross
- Gary L. Clark

See page 4

INSERTS

- Felker Foods
- Snyder Pharmacy
- Polo Fresh Food
- Menards
- Business Card Directory

RCH staff supports Heart Month with National Wear Red Day

Heart-safe promotions ongoing this month

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — On Friday, Feb. 7, Rochelle Community Hospital celebrated National Wear Red Day in support of National Heart Month in February with staff members sporting the color red to raise and spread awareness of the leading cause of death in the United States, heart disease.

RCH staff has also been provided with information and tools this month to help eradicate heart disease and stroke in millions of people all over the nation, RCH Marketing & Public Relations Specialist Kirby Heward said.

RCH staff received handouts with heart-healthy eating plans, heart health trackers of important numbers such as blood pressure and cholesterol, a heart smart quiz, and a heart-healthy block bingo card to promote heart-safe habits and activities.

On every Monday in February, RCH will host guided movement sessions for staff including standing/sitting yoga, feel-good stretching and brief meditation. Cafe 900 at RCH will be offering heart-healthy plates Monday-Friday during February.

“This year we’re trying to get more interaction with the community and staff thinking about heart health,” Heward said.

See HEART MONTH page 11



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

Willis Senior Lofts, a 60-unit senior housing development in Rochelle, will be completed in March or April and move-ins should start in April.

Willis Senior Lofts nearing completion

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE—Willis Senior Lofts, a 60-unit senior housing development at 410 Willis Ave. in Rochelle, will be completed in March or April and move-ins should start in April, Lincoln Avenue Communities (LAC) Vice President & Regional Project Partner Hume An said.

LAC is the developer of the project, its second new construction deal in Illinois.

Willis Senior Lofts is an Enterprise Green and Net Zero-certified senior housing development (55 and older). It will feature a double-volume community room opening up to an outdoor patio, a theater room, fitness center, community laundry rooms, an indoor dog washing room, a walking path, raised community garden, and bicycle parking.

See LOFTS page 8

Plastic bottle cap recycling program up to 27 installations

Past 5 years have seen benches, picnic tables and trash receptacles installed

BY JEFF HELFRICH
MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — A local plastic bottle cap recycling program has reached milestones of 5,434 pounds of caps collected and 27 items installed with the recycled caps, Dennis Swinton of Rochelle and Kiwanis Golden K said.

Swinton has been heading up the program for the past five years with youth clubs and donors in the community. The endeavor started with Rochelle Township High School Key Club students collecting bottle caps to honor a teacher.

“Everybody thinks it’s all about saving the world and keeping plastic out of the landfill,” Swinton said. “To us, it’s not all about that. To us, it’s getting the community involved and giving kids something to do. People come by my house and drop bottle caps off. We’re not saving the planet, but we’re keeping people involved and busy. It’s amazing how many little old ladies think that’s the greatest thing in the world to come by and donate some bottle caps. That’s what it’s all about.”

The program requires 200 pounds of donated bottle caps and a cost of \$328 to build a six-foot bench, 250 pounds of caps and \$391.50 to build a trash receptacle, 100 pounds of caps and \$208.40 to build a four-foot bench, 150 pounds of caps and \$208.50 to build a four-foot bench with arms, 175 pounds of caps and \$35.50 to build an eight-foot team bench, and 500 pounds of caps and \$639 for a six-foot adult picnic table.

So far the program has installed 12 six-foot benches, six four-foot benches, two four-foot benches with arms, two eight-foot team benches, three six-foot picnic tables and two trash receptacles.

See BOTTLE CAPS page 10



(COURTESY PHOTO)



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LOCAL NEWS

Addressing hunger with diverse food systems

BY HANNAH SPANGLER
 FARMWEEK

A diverse food system can help address nutritional deficits nationwide, but not everyone has access to the food needed for a balanced diet. “The reality is, the affordability of a diverse diet, for 45 million Americans is not a daily choice,” said Ertharin Cousin, former ambassador to the U.N. Agencies for Food and Agriculture. “That is the face of hunger in the United States of America.” Speaking at the From Food to Flowers: Everything Local Conference in Springfield, Cousin emphasized the importance of solutions to grow a diverse food system for all. These solutions need to

support farm income, local processing and ultimately feed communities. Creating more markets that allow farmers to produce a variety of products, and fostering communication between policymakers, researchers and the agriculture community are some ways Illinois is addressing hunger throughout the state. “The work the state has done is significant, but we can’t stop. This is just the beginning of what is necessary,” Cousin told conference attendees. Cousin stressed that without consumer demand, farmers can’t afford to grow and remain sustainable. Supporting diverse markets is crucial, and farm-to-school programs, which connect schools with local farmers to pro-

vide fresh, healthy food to students, are one of the markets that support farmers’ efforts toward a diverse food system. She also highlighted the importance of supporting farmers who implement practices to preserve soil health. Financial incentives for rotational crops and cover crops can help preserve the land for future generations. “We need to get farmers paid for how they produce, to catalyze the change in production methodologies, to catalyze and change for more mixed agriculture,” Cousin said. Grants are one method of support for specialty growers and other producers. Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) Director Jerry Costello II said that IDOA is committed to

farmers, the regional food system and food-insecure communities. The department is doing everything it can to ensure grant funding is available. In January, Gov. JB Pritzker announced \$14.7 million in funding for the Local Food Purchase Assistance Program (LFPA). This program sources fresh local food from farmers at a fair market value and helps deliver that food to food-insecure communities throughout the state. The increase in funding extends LFPA’s ability to transform the Illinois food system. “This program is making participants self-sustainable through the creation of new markets,” Costello said about LFPA during the Everything Local Conference. “This



(PHOTO BY HANNAH SPANGLER OF FARMWEEK)
 Ertharin Cousin (left), CEO of FSF Ventures and former ambassador to the UN Agencies for Food and Agriculture, speaks on how a diverse food system can help address nutritional deficits nationwide during the Everything Local Conference in Springfield.

is a one-of-a-kind program in the United States that supports underserved farmers.” This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.

ABATE Motorcycle Swap Meet scheduled for Feb. 23

DIXON — Twin Rivers chapter of ABATE is having their 17th annual motorcycle swap meet on Sunday, Feb. 23 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Dixon Elks Lodge at 1279 Franklin Grove

Road, Dixon, IL 61021 Admission is \$5 and free for 12 and under. Early birds are \$7. Vendors will be selling all makes and models of new and used parts, leathers and biker clothes, motorcycle photos and more. A new Harley Davidson raffle bike will be on display and raffle tickets will be available. Breakfast, lunch and refreshments will be available all day. Vendor space is available for \$25. To be a vendor or for more information call John at 815-440-6018. Proceeds from the event are used for education and the signs you may have seen that say “START SEEING MOTORCYCLES”

PAG scholarship applications now available

OREGON — Scholarship applications for the Performing Arts Guild are now available at the OHS guidance office or can be downloaded from the website at: www.performingartsguild.com. These scholarships are limited to individuals living in Mt Morris and Oregon or attending the Oregon School District #220. Applications are open to anyone interested in studying the arts. This includes, but is not limited to, performing, directing, teaching drama, music, visual arts, technical crafts, set design, etc. Scholarship application deadline is April 1, 2025. Scholarships will be awarded in May during the OHS Honors Night Assembly.

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LOCAL NEWS



Oregon kindergarten students celebrate 101st day of school

Oregon kindergarten students recently celebrated their 101st day of school. Inspired by the beloved Dalmatian theme, the young learners marked the occasion with fun, dog-themed activities that reinforced key learning concepts while sparking creativity and joy. From dressing up in black and white spots to engaging in Dalmatian-inspired math, reading, and art activities, the day was a perfect mix of education and excitement. (Courtesy photos)

Locals named to Highland CC Fall 2024 Dean's List

FREEPORT—Highland Community College proudly announces the dean's list for the fall 2024 semester. Students who have completed 12 credit hours or more during the semester and have a minimum 3.25 grade point average (GPA), based on a 4.0 scale, are included on the dean's list. The Highest Honors are awarded to students with a perfect 4.0 GPA. High Honors are given to students with a 3.5

to 3.99 GPA, and Honors students have earned a GPA between 3.25 and 3.49.

Highest honors: Baileyville: Belinda Diddens, Andrew Wells. Byron: Zachary Janovsky. For-

reston: Brooke Boettner, Elizabeth Shenberger. German Valley: Colleen Stone. Leaf River: Dausyn Heslop, Kaeden Motszko. Polo: Clea Arbogast.

High honors: Baileyville: Alexa Lancaster.

Byron: Hunter Bargren. Forreston: Brenna Hofmaster, Hans Howald, Grant Johnson, Owen Miller. German Valley: Ella Ingram, Kate Schluker. Leaf River: Bryonna Harson, Alexander

Milnes, Justin Myers. Lindenwood: Jessica Pasek. Polo: Kalen Spengler. Honors: Forreston: Hannah Harvey, Ava Miller. Oregon: Emma Molnar-Schlichtmann. Polo: Faith Ukena.

Rep. McCombie to host February office hours

SAVANNA — House Minority Leader Tony McCombie (R-Savanna) is launching the upcoming round of mobile office hours in the 89th District. The Leader is continuing her efforts to increase

access to the services her district office offers outside of her District office in Savanna.

"It is essential to ensure every constituent across northwest Illinois can reach the services

my district office offers," said Leader McCombie. "Holding routine office hours events is a priority, and I look forward to continuing these mobile office hours events throughout the year."

The upcoming events will take place on Friday, Feb. 28:

11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Pecatonica Public Library, 400 W. 11th St.

1:30-3 p.m. at the German Valley Fire Department, 600 Church St.

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

well as parts of Stephenson, Winnebago, Boone, Ogle, and DeKalb counties.

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

Local students named to the fall 2024 Dean's List at Aurora University

AURORA — Aurora University has named the following students to the Dean's List. The Dean's List recognizes full-time undergraduate students who have

earned a 3.6 grade-point average or higher.

Byron: Madisyn Byerley, Human-Animal Studies and Biology. Davis Junction: Austin

Abitua, Marketing. Rylee Reynolds, Social Work. Mt. Morris: Mia Ortega, Psychology. Oregon: Elizabeth Malach, Social Work.

Illinois Wesleyan announces Fall 2024 Dean's List

BLOOMINGTON — Illinois Wesleyan University's Dean's List for the fall semester of the 2024-25 academic year consisted of 827 students from 31 states and 28

countries.

To qualify for the Dean's List, students must earn a GPA of 3.50 or better during the semester, based on 4.0 for straight As.

Local honorees in-

cluded Jadyn Bothe of Oregon; Cody Buskohl, Cole Faivre and Cayden Webster of Polo; Emily Kerchner of Mt. Morris and Ellis Loeffelholz of Davis Junction.

UW-Eau Claire fall dean's list announced

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. — The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire extends congratulations to the students named to the fall 2024 dean's list.

Among them was Kahl Kotajarvi of Byron (Col-

lege of Arts and Sciences). To be eligible, a student must: Be in good academic standing. Have a minimum semester GPA of 3.7. Have completed at least 12 credits during the semester, with no incompletes, no courses

below the 100 level, no repeats and no Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory registrations (except in degree credit-bearing courses that are offered only on the S/U grading system in which a grade of S has been earned).

Sadler named to Nebraska Dean's List

LINCOLN, Neb. — More than 7,300 University of Nebraska-Lincoln students have been named

to the Deans' List for the fall semester of the 2024-25 academic year. Oregon: Peytyn Aliz-

abeth Sadler, freshman, Dean's List, College of Arts and Sciences, psychology.

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LOCAL NEWS

Obituaries

Jacquelyn 'Jackie' J. Gambrel

OREGON — Jacquelyn "Jackie" J. Gambrel, 99, long-time Oregon resident, died Sunday, February 9, 2025 at Wesley Willows, Rockford, following a long illness. Jackie was born November 22, 1925, in Oregon, Illinois at Dr. Warmolt's first hospital on the east side of Rock River. She was the only child of the late John "Jack" McGuire and Gladys (Claussen) McGuire. She spent her early years growing up on the McGuire farm and attending school in a one-room schoolhouse in Honey Creek east of Oregon before moving to Oregon in 6th grade. She graduated from Oregon High School in 1943. Jackie was the first in her family to attend college. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1947 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Education and a minor in Physiology. While at the University, she was initiated into Alpha Gamma Delta and was a member of that Panhellenic organization for over 80 years. During high school and college, Jackie spent her summers as a lifeguard and swimming instructor, first at the Oregon pool by the Oregon Coliseum and then as head lifeguard at Lake Louise in Byron, Illinois during the late 1940's. It was at Lake Louise in Byron that she met her future husband, Earl Gambrel. On August 5, 1948, she was united in marriage to Earl Junior Gambrel at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Oregon, Illinois. They were happily married for over 59 years until Earl's passing in 2007. In addition to being a devoted and loving wife, mother and grandmother, Jackie spent many years of her life from 1947 to 1991 as a educator. She started her teaching career

in 1947 at Oregon High School where she taught Physical Education from 1947 – 1951. In late 1951, she moved to Lake Charles, Louisiana where Earl was stationed at Lake Charles Air Force Base. While there, she taught PE for two years in the public school system. In 1953, Jackie and Earl were transferred, courtesy of the Air Force, to the Strategic Air Command Base outside London. During Earl's two-year tour of duty outside London, Jackie taught junior high students in the Air Force Dependents School. After returning to Oregon in 1955 and following a few years break when her daughter, Judith, was born, Jackie started teaching Physical Education at St. Mary's Elementary School in the 1960's. She taught Physical Education and then 5th grade at St. Mary's from 1964 until the school closed in 1971. She then returned to the Oregon Community Unit School District where she taught junior high students from 1971 until her retirement in 1991. Jackie loved all kinds of sports and continued swimming and playing golf for most of her life. She spent hours before and after retirement at the indoor Oregon pool doing laps early in the morning. Jackie and Earl were members of Oregon Golf Club for many years and they enjoyed playing golf well into their retirement. Jackie was also a dedicated volunteer for St. Mary's parish where she served on countless committees and in many roles including being Grand Regent of the Catholic Daughters and holding an office on the Parish Council. She was also on the Board of Life-Line Food and Self-Help Project in its earlier years, serving as Secretary. Jackie loved bridge, cooking,



working in the yard and traveling to near and far places with Earl. Most of all, she loved the time that she spent with her grandchildren, John and Laura. They were lucky to have many fun times with her learning to swim, making cookies and creating memories. Jackie is survived by daughter, Judith (Judy) and her husband Todd Flessner of Oak Park, California; two grandchildren, John Flessner of Marina del Rey, California, and Laura (Jeff) Stallman of San Luis Obispo, California; great-granddaughter, Brooke Stallman of San Luis Obispo, CA and numerous nieces and nephews. Funeral services will be held at 11:00 am, February 21, 2025 at Farrell-Holland-Gale Funeral Home, 110 South 7th Street, Oregon, Illinois. A visitation will be held at the funeral home on February 21st from 10:00 am – 11:00 am preceding the funeral service. Burial will be at St. Mary's Cemetery in Oregon. The family would like to thank the wonderful caregivers at Wesley Willows and Mercyhealth Hospice in Rockford for the professional and loving care that they provided to Jackie during the final years of her life. In lieu of flowers, memorial funds have been established in her name at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Oregon, Wesley Willows Good Samaritan Fund in Rockford and for LifeLine Food and Self-Help Project in Oregon.

Marian L. Gross

LEAF RIVER - Marian L. Gross, 97, a longtime resident of LaMoille, IL, passed away peacefully on Feb. 8, 2025 at Oregon Living and Rehab Center in Oregon, IL. She was born April 29, 1927, in Mendota, IL, to Carl and Mabel (Becket) Pohl. Marian graduated from Mendota High School in 1945. She married Howard Gross on Dec. 12, 1954 at St. John's Lutheran church in Mendota, IL. Before her marriage, she was employed at the Kitch-Inn and Goslin's drug store in Mendota.

After marriage, she was a homemaker and helped on the farm where she and Howard resided and raised their children. She enjoyed playing golf, was an avid reader, and liked doing crossword puzzles. She was also an excellent cook. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, Howard, two sisters, Elaine Zimmerlein and Betty Fassig, and son-in-law, Rex Nickelsen. She is survived by her son, Jim (Katherine) Gross of LaMoille, IL and her daughter, Lori (Jeff Pearson) Nickelsen of Leaf

River, IL. In accordance with Marian's wishes, there will be no services. Memorials may be made to the LaMoille Clarion Library or the donor's choice. The family would like to thank all those at Oregon Living and Rehab Center that gave Marian such wonderful care, and also Serenity Hospice for the wonderful care in the last few weeks of Marian's life. To leave an online condolence visit www.farrellhollandgale.com

Charlene Gaye Topping

BIRMINGHAM, Iowa — Charlene Gaye Topping 73, of Birmingham, passed away peacefully on Sunday, January 19, 2025, at Jefferson County Hospital in Fairfield. Born on July 19, 1951, in Dixon, Illinois, she was the cherished daughter of Wallace and Pearl Wells Stevens. Charlene's early years were spent in Mount Morris, Illinois, where she later graduated from Mount Morris High School. Charlene's life was marked by love and companionship. She entered into marriage with Allen Lee McNeeley on December 18, 1970, in Dixon, Illinois. To this union they had a daughter, Christi. The couple moved to Iowa in 1975, which became a significant chapter in her life. Allen passing on April 25, 1993. She found love again and married Dennis Topping on July 29, 1995, in Birmingham.

Known for her dedication and hard work, Charlene spent her adult life cleaning houses, a profession through which she formed lasting bonds, often considering those she worked for as part of her extended family. In 1988, she expanded her working life to include a position at the Libertyville Quick Stop, and later, she served in the dietary

department at Jefferson County Hospital.

Charlene's life was enriched by her passion for her family and hobbies. She delighted in spending time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren and was renowned for her exceptional candy-making skills, often regarded as one of the best in the area. Her crocheted baby blankets were a gift of warmth and comfort to many newborns. An avid reader, Charlene also enjoyed attending children's sporting events and cherished the moments spent visiting with family and friends. Her commitment to her community was evident through her service on the board of the Libertyville Community Center.

Her memory will be lovingly remembered by her devoted husband of nearly 30 years, Dennis Topping; her daughter, Christi Kurtz (Jeff) of Libertyville; her grandchildren, Brittany Calvert (Cole) of Donnellson and Kylie Kurtz (Travis Mook) of Prairie City; her great-grandchildren, Keeley, Baylor, and Thea Calvert and Robert, Lexi and Wilder Mook; two sisters, Angie Burke (Stan) and Brenda Sklavanitis (Jim) all of Mount Morris, IL and numerous extended relatives and friends. Char-



lene was preceded in death by her parents, her first husband Allen, her mother-in-law Irene Topping, brother-in-law Wesley Topping, and sister-in-law Earnestine Topping. A memorial service to honor and celebrate Charlene's life will be held on Saturday, January 25, 2025, at 11:00 AM at Cranston Family Funeral Home in Fairfield, with Pastor Phil Campbell officiating. Following the service, a celebration of her life will continue at the Walton Club in Fairfield, starting at 1:00 PM to 4:00 P.M.. The burial of her cremains will take place at a later date in Maple Hill Cemetery in Birmingham. Memorials in Charlene's honor to the American Cancer Society or the Libertyville Community Center may be left at the funeral home, Walton Club or mailed to the family at 14796 Hwy 1, Birmingham, IA 52535. Friends may leave online condolences at www.cranstonfamilyfuneralhome.com

Gary L. Clark

CHANA — Gary L. Clark, 74, passed away at Serenity Hospice and Home of Oregon, IL, on Monday, February 10, 2025. He was born on February 5, 1951, in Rochelle, IL, the son of Harold & Caroline (Schabacker) Clark. Gary started working for FDL Swift as a butcher. After leaving Swift he went on to farming for over 20 years before working in the Labor Union in Rockford. He finally spent over 20 years in service of his community as the Road Commissioner of Pine Rock Township. During his lifetime he had many passions like his car, fishing, hunting, and especially his gardening. His truest passion however was always his family. He lived for his kids, grandkids, great-grandkids, they were his world he loved them very deeply. He is preceded in death by his

parents, daughter Wendy Jo Martin and son Jeff Suddeth. Gary is survived and missed dearly by his loving family including his son Ryan (Amy) Clark of Chana, IL; grandchildren Lindsey (David) Lantz, Nathan (Marissa) Clark, Madyson (Dillen Reynolds) Clark, Angus Clark, Cody Clark; great-grandchildren Natalie Jo Lantz, Hux Clark, and future great-grandson; siblings Gayla Clubb of Monroe Center, IL; Stewart (Stephanie) Kessen of Globe, AZ; Joanna (William) Newman of Claypool, AZ; Lois (Steve) Delhot of Rochelle, IL; Sarah (Robert) Tarlton of Phoenix, AZ; special aunts Joyce Schabacker & Florence Fruin.

A visitation has been scheduled for Thursday, February 13, 2025, between the hours of 4:00 PM and 7:00 PM at Farrell Holland Gale Funeral Home of Or-



gon, IL. A funeral service honoring Gary is planned for the following day, Friday, February 14, 2025, at 11:00 AM with Pastor David Rogula presiding at Farrell Holland Gale Funeral Home of Oregon, IL. Cremation rites will take place following the services. In lieu of flowers the family asks you please donate to either the Make-A-Wish foundation or Serenity Hospice and Home of Oregon, IL. To leave an online condolence or plant a tree in his memory please visit www.farrellhollandgale.com

UW-Platteville announces Dean's List

PLATTEVILLE, Wis. — The University of Wisconsin-Platteville announces its Dean's List, honoring those full-time students who earned a grade-point average of 3.75 and above in the fall

2024 semester. Students from this area on the Dean's List include: Byron: Taryn Dolan, Forensic Investgtn BS, Main. Nate Dyck, Criminal Justice BS, Main. Logan Lagerhausen, Ag Business

BS, Main. Ethan Palzkill, Finance BBA, Main. Forreston: Jenna Greenfield, Finance BBA, Main. Monroe Center: Anna Hagemann, Soil & Crop Science BS, Main. Oregon: Lily Gillingham, Elementary Education BS, Main.

UW-Platteville announces Chancellor's List

PLATTEVILLE, Wis. — The University of Wisconsin-Platteville announced its Chancellor's List, honoring those with a perfect 4.0 grade-point average for the fall 2024 semester.

Students from this area who earned the 4.0 grade-point average include: Monroe Center: Anna Hagemann, Soil & Crop Science BS, Main. Oregon: Lily Gillingham, Elementary Education BS, Main.

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The Ogle County Life/ Rock Valley Shopper

USPS (004-083) ISSN (1045-3059)

Published every Monday by Rochelle Newspapers, Inc. at 211 Hwy. 38 East, Rochelle, IL 61068-1183. Subscriptions in our service area are free on a requester basis. Periodicals Postage Rates paid at Rochelle, IL 61068. Postmaster send address changes to the Ogle County Life/ Rock Valley Shopper, P.O. Box 175, Rochelle, IL 61068-9801. The circulation department is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. If you have carrier delivery and your paper fails to arrive by 7 p.m. on Monday, telephone our office at 732-2156, if your paper fails to arrive by mail telephone our circulation office at 562-4171, ext. 112. For subscriptions, call the LIFE office at 815-732-2156.

VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

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LOCAL NEWS

Oregon High School students take the stage at ILMEA All-State

PEORIA – Seven talented students from Oregon High School participated in the Illinois Music Education Association (ILMEA) All-State Festival this past weekend, joining top musicians from across the state for an unforgettable experience. The festival, held at the Peoria Civic Center, spanned three days of intensive rehearsals, culminating in a final concert that showcased the students' hard work and dedication.

Freshman David Eckardt described the weekend as "one of the best experiences of [his] life," while senior Alease McLain reflected on the profound impact of her director's guidance, noting how they were encouraged to "sing the music and not just the notes and text on the page."

Beyond the student experience, Oregon High School music educators Mr. Hall and Mr. Eckardt participated in professional development sessions, joining music teachers from across Illinois to explore innovative teaching methods. Mr. Eckardt even attended a specialized clinic on Tai Chi and Conducting, highlighting the intersection of movement and musical leadership.



From left to right: David Eckardt, Sarah Eckardt, Elliot Peeling, Isaac Ebert, Alease McLain, Sebastian Wright, and Alexya Tran.

The ILMEA All-State Festival is considered one

of the most prestigious musical events for high school students in Illinois,

offering an unparalleled opportunity to collaborate with top musicians and

instructors. The OHS music department takes immense pride in its stu-

dents' participation and eagerly anticipates this event each year.

RRVBC urges community to donate amid critical shortage

ROCKFORD – The Rock River Valley Blood Center (RRVBC) is experiencing a critical shortage of O-negative blood and platelets and urgently needs community support to replenish supplies. Several factors have contributed to

the shortage, including extremely high usage to several O-negative patients, low platelet collections last week, delays in testing due to weather disruptions, and a temporary transition to paper-based donor recruitment after a software upgrade.

Key details: Critical Blood & Platelet Shortage: Platelet collections were significantly low last week, and several O-negative patients with extremely high usage caused blood supplies to be dangerously low. Delays in Testing: Due

to severe weather in the South, testing of blood donations were delayed for three days. Recruitment Software Transition: RRVBC is currently using paper lists for donor outreach, and online scheduling for donations is unavailable until the end of

January. RRVBC urges eligible donors to visit one of its centers or blood drives to help meet the immediate need. Every donation is crucial to ensuring that patients in local hospitals receive the life-saving blood

they depend on. First-time donors should bring a photo ID. Whole blood donations can be given every 56 days. To schedule an appointment or get information about blood drives near you, call 815-965-8751. Walk-ins are welcome.

2024 fall semester dean's list honorees announced at Iowa

IOWA CITY, Iowa — More than 8,700 students at the University of Iowa were named to the dean's list for the 2024 fall semester including the locals below.

Stillman Valley: Bailey Thede of Baileyville. Elle Baker of Byron. Guidelines for inclusion on the list are: Degree seeking undergraduate students in the Carver College of Medicine, College of

Liberal Arts and Sciences, the College of Education, the College of Engineering, the College of Public Health, the Tippie College of Business, and University College who achieved a grade-point average (GPA) of 3.50 or higher on

12 semester hours or more of UI graded coursework during a given semester or summer session and who have no semester hours of "I" (incomplete) or "O" (no grade reported) during the same semester are recognized by inclusion

on the dean's list for that semester. Undergraduate students in the Roy J. and Lucille A. Carver College of Medicine may qualify for the dean's list with fewer than 12 semester hours of graded credit, if deemed

appropriate by the college. College of Nursing students participating in clinical courses who have a total of 12 semester hours of earned credit, with eight semester hours of graded credit with a GPA of 3.50 or higher.

Iowa State University announces fall 2024 Dean's List

AMES, Iowa — More than 11,500 Iowa State University students have been recognized for outstanding academic achievement by being named to the fall semester 2024 Dean's List. Students named to the Dean's List

must earn a grade point average of at least 3.50 on a 4.00 scale while carrying a minimum of 12 credit hours of graded course work. The following students are from the local area: Byron: Eric Detig,

Senior, Management, B.S. Shannon McHale, Junior, English, B.A. Reece Pruett, Junior, Industrial Design Undergraduate Pre-Major. Holland Reynolds, Junior, Aerospace Engineering, B.S. Davis Junction: Car-

son Engelkes, Senior, Accounting, B.S. Lindenwood: Jack Richardson, Senior, Agricultural Studies, B.S. Monroe Center: Adam Goelitz, Senior, Aerospace Engineering, B.S. Mt. Morris: Andrew

McKanna, Sophomore, Industrial Design Undergraduate Pre-Major. Oregon: Valerie Nyderek, Junior, Environmental Science, B.S. (AGLS). Polo: Molly Blum, Junior, Agronomy, B.S. Nicole Boelens, Senior, English,

B.A. Harper Clark, Senior, Microbiology, B.S. Abigail Gorzny, Event Management, B.S. Lane Hopkins, Junior, Mechanical Engineering, B.S. Stillman Valley: Jenna Shelburne, Senior, Kinesiology and Health, B.S.

Oregon's Sallee named to Milwaukee School of Engineering Dean's List

MILWAUKEE, Wis. — Milwaukee School of Engineering congratulates students named to the 2024 Fall Semester

Dean's List: Kennedy Sallee of Oregon. Sallee is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Finance.

Milwaukee School of Engineering (www.msoc.edu) is the university of choice for those seeking an inclusive community

of experiential learners driven to solve the complex challenges of today and tomorrow. The university was founded in 1903.

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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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Letter: Government debt: Should we be concerned?

DEAR editor,
You or someone in your family may have or had debt: to buy a car, residence (mortgage) or to pay medical expenses not paid by insurance. Companies will lend to you only if your credit rating is good; worse your credit rating, higher interest rate you are charged. Governments have debt too. Legislators often pass legislation to give voters what they want, but do not pass legislation to provide taxation to cover expense. Where does needed remaining money come from? Government borrows it. This works nifty for legislators, because by time voters realize what they have done (if they ever do), legislators may have been reelected, retired, and live in house near water where they can watch their grandchildren play in surf.
Among states, California's debt is highest, but debt of Illinois is high also. "State and local government debt in Illinois for fiscal year of 2024: Illinois' state debt stood at about \$69.79 billion" (Statistica Jan. 7, 2025). This amounts to \$5,491 per person (population 12,710,158, (US Census Bureau, *QuickFacts: Illinois* July 1, 2024). Although some improvement in Illinois finances has occurred in last several years, prospect for coming years does not look good. (Capitol News Illinois, *Pritzker's Budget*, Nov. 4, 2024). Illinois debt, high as is, is chicken feed compared to debt of Federal Government: over \$36 trillion (www.usdebtclock.org, and watch it rise!). This amounts to about \$105,000 per person in US (Worldmeter, Feb. 8, 2025: United States Population, 346,549,989). "Over the last decade, the U.S. has almost doubled its outstanding debt" (CBS News, *US Interest Payments*, March 1, 2024). "This astronomical figure continues to raise concerns about its long-term sustainability. As U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell has pointed out, U.S. debt is growing faster than the economy, making it unsustainable in the long term." (The Conversation, *U.S. National Debt* Nov. 21, 2024). These huge interest payments cause our country to have less to spend on infrastructure, job training, research, medical care, social security, commercial investment and defense.
Government debt continually comes due, is paid, then new debts sold to replace it. (This is like vehicles on a stretch of road at one moment: some come, some leave, but number on stretch remains about same.) If debt buyers become nervous about ability of government to repay debt (decreased credit worthiness), they would demand higher interest to buy it. In this way interest payments by government would rise higher, causing even more load on government's ability to pay and raising interest rates nationally, which would further decrease economic activity. Result: recession or, worse, depression.
[Republican] Speaker Johnson: *National debt is biggest threat facing US* (NewsNation, Jan. 28, 2025). I agree, with possible exception of current cabal in Washington D.C.
Henry Tideman
Oregon

"Under Democratic presidents, Donald Trump repeatedly demanded Republicans in Congress use the federal debt ceiling as leverage for their political demands. Now, as he prepares to return to the White House, Trump is calling for the elimination of the cap on government borrowing." (Michigan Independent, *Trump says* Jan. 7, 2025).
"Congressional Republicans' plan for a massive extension of the Trump-era tax cuts comes with a hefty price tag: up to \$5.5 trillion over the next decade if extensions of certain business provisions are also included. The majority of these benefits would flow to wealthy individuals and businesses, leaving everyone else with a token tax cut and saddling the nation with a massive increase in the national debt." (Institute of Taxation and Economic Policy, *Congress Could* Jan. 17, 2025). This quotation is opinionated, but is it wrong?
"No matter how committed Donald Trump and his oligarch cronies are to a tax cut, the laws of arithmetic cannot be repealed. If only a handful of Republican lawmakers keep their promise not to increase the US budget deficit, there is no way that the incoming administration can enact its economic agenda and keep the government running." (Project Syndicate, *Trump is on a Collision* Jan. 6, 2025).
"Donald Trump has big plans for the economy — and a big debt problem that will be a hurdle to delivering on them.
"Trump has bold ideas on tax cuts, tariffs and other programs, but high interest rates and the price of repaying the federal government's existing debt could limit what he's able to do.
"Not only is the federal debt at roughly \$36 trillion, but the spike in inflation after the coronavirus pandemic has pushed up the government's borrowing costs such that debt service next year will easily exceed spending on national security.
"The higher cost of servicing the debt gives Trump less room to maneuver with the federal budget as he seeks income tax cuts. It's also a political challenge because higher interest rates have made it costlier for many Americans to buy a home or new automobile. And the issue of high costs helped Trump reclaim the presidency in November's election.
"It's clear the current amount of debt is putting upward pressure on interest rates, including mortgage rates for instance," said Shai Akabas, executive director of the economic policy program at the Bipartisan Policy Center. The cost of housing and groceries is going to be increasingly felt by households in a way that is going to adversely affect our economic prospects in the future." (Associated Press, *The Rising Price* Nov. 24, 2024).
In closing, legislators in Washington D.C. have brought to us burden of this huge debt and they watch it as it continues to grow, weakening our country for many years to come; more precisely: permanently.

* On March 3, 1877, Rutherford B. Hayes was sworn in as the 19th president of the United States in the Red Room of the White House. Two days later, he was again inaugurated, but this time in a public ceremony.
* On March 4, 2004, Mianne Bagger, a golfer

MOMENTS IN TIME

from Denmark, earned a place in sports history at the Women's Australian Open as the first transgender athlete to compete in a professional golf tournament, noting to reporters that it took a while to overcome the anxiety associated with the feat: "I don't know where my swing was. ... I was pretty numb the first seven holes. I couldn't really feel much below my shoulders."
* On March 7, 2002, the defense rested in the trial of Andrea Yates, a 37-year-old Texas woman who murdered her five young children by

drowning them in a bathtub. Less than a week later she was convicted and sentenced to life in prison, but the conviction was later reversed on the grounds of insanity. In 2006, she was committed to a state mental hospital in Texas, where she remains today.

OCFB's Kern: The facts on bird flu

THERE'S plenty of talk in the media these days about Avian Influenza or the "bird flu." Let's get consumers some real information and let's get farmers up to speed on what to do if there is an infectious situation on their farm.

Q. Can I get avian influenza from eating poultry or eggs?

A. No. Poultry and eggs that are properly prepared and cooked are safe to eat. Proper food safety practices are important every day. In addition to proper processing, proper handling and cooking of poultry provides protection from viruses and bacteria, including avian influenza. As we remind consumers each and every day, there are four basic food safety steps to follow: CLEAN, SEPARATE, COOK, and CHILL.

Q. How can USDA assure consumers that avian influenza infected meat will not enter the food supply?

A. The chance of infected poultry entering the food chain is extremely low. As part of the USDA highly pathogenic avian influenza response plan, infected birds do not enter the food supply. Additionally, USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service inspection program personnel are assigned to every federally inspected meat, poultry and egg product plant in America. All poultry products for public consumption are inspected for signs of disease both before and after slaughter. The "inspected for wholesomeness by the U.S. Department of Agriculture" seal ensures the poultry is free from visible signs of disease.

Q. Does proper food

handling prevent avian influenza?

A. Avian influenza is not transmissible by eating properly prepared poultry, so properly prepared and cooked poultry and eggs are safe to eat. The chance of infected poultry or eggs entering the food chain is extremely low because of the rapid onset of symptoms in poultry as well as the safeguards USDA has in place, which include testing of flocks, and Federal inspection programs. USDA works to educate the public about safe food handling practices in response to numerous questions from the public about the human risk associated with avian influenza.

Q. What does proper food handling mean?

A. Proper handling and cooking of poultry provides protection against all avian influenza.

Q. What does proper food handling mean?

A. Proper handling and cooking of poultry provides protection against all avian influenza viruses, as it does against other viruses and bacteria, including Salmonella and E. coli. Safe food handling and preparation is important at all times. USDA continually

reminds consumers to practice safe food handling and preparation every day. Cooking poultry, eggs, and other poultry products to the proper temperature and preventing cross-contamination between raw and cooked food is the key to safety. You should: Wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw poultry and eggs; Pre-

vent cross-contamination by keeping raw poultry and eggs away from other foods; After cutting raw meat, wash cutting board, knife, and countertops with hot, soapy water; Sanitize cutting boards by using a solution of one tablespoon chlorine bleach in one gallon of water; and USDA Questions and Answers: Food Safety and Avian Influenza April 2015; Use a food thermometer to ensure poultry has reached the safe internal temperature of at least 165 °F to kill food-borne germs that might be present, including the avian influenza viruses.

Q. Where can I get more information about safe food handling?

A. Consumers with questions about the safe storage, handling, or preparation of meat, poultry, and egg products, can call the USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline at: 1-888-MPHotline, that's 1-888-674-6854. The hotline is available in English and Spanish and can be reached from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Eastern Time) Monday through Friday. Also, "Ask Karen" is the FSIS virtual representative available 24 hours a day to answer your questions at www.fsis.usda.gov

For Farmers:
What types of birds are affected by bird flu?
Bird flu most commonly affects waterfowl like ducks, geese, and swans, but can also infect other birds like chickens, turkeys, quail, guinea fowl, pheasants, pea fowl, and partridges. Some pet birds like parrots and finches can also be susceptible.
How can poultry get



Ron Kern

Letter: Antisemitism Awareness Act

DEAR editor,
The guys attending the usual morning coffee gathering are positively giddy. They envision better times ahead as President Trump swings the wrecking ball at most of what they take issue with: high taxes, woke agencies created by Democrats, including DEI hiring practice, the Federal

Board of Education, and everything else they deem liberal-leaning policy.

I also have some of those same concerns. However, whether President Trump's actions will deliver the hoped-for results is questionable. Most of the president's actions and rhetoric, especially his latest Gaza

plan, seem designed to distract attention from things that would otherwise be more scrutinized and may not be acceptable if given more thought, such as laws violating the First Amendment and other constitutional rights.

The Antisemitism Awareness Act is a bill (for

now) to counter criticism of Israel on college campuses. The House has passed it by a large margin, and I suspect the Democrats will also when it comes up for a vote. Regardless of how one feels about antisemitism, this bill is the camel's nose under the tent.

Richard Rowland
Polio

Letter: Thanks to OFD

DEAR editor,
I would like to send out a tremendous thank you to the Oregon Fire Department and Paramedics Dan Groenhagen and Dan Welle who came to my aid several

months back when I had a serious medical emergency. Your prompt care and expertise were certainly crucial to a successful recovery. Your compassion and professionalism are second to none. So, on behalf of Hendrickson

family, we are truly grateful. And of course, we are grateful to my nephew Tyler who applied the first tourniquet.

Anthony W. Hendrickson
Oregon

LIFE letters' policy

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

LOCAL NEWS

MT. MORRIS POLICE REPORT

MT. MORRIS — On Dec. 19 at approximately 9 p.m. Mt. Morris Police located a wanted subject in the 10 block of East Front Street. Samara A. Goff, 47, Mt. Morris, was arrested on an Ogle County warrant for failure to appear. Goff was transported to the Ogle County Jail.

On Dec. 28 at approximately 7:50 p.m. Mt. Morris Police conducted a traffic stop in the 100 block of East Hitt Street. After an investigation, Elliott M.J.

Butler, 25, Mt. Morris, was arrested and charged with unlawful possession of cannabis, more than 30 grams but less than 100 grams, in motor vehicle. Butler was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he was released with a notice to appear.

On Dec. 31 at approximately 2:05 a.m. Mt. Morris Police conducted a traffic stop in the 200 block of East Main Street. The driver, Giuliana K. Gates, 27, Chicago, was

arrested for no valid driver's license and issued an additional citation for operating an uninsured motor vehicle. Gates was transported to the Ogle County Jail where she was given a notice to appear.

On Jan. 3 at approximately 7:45 p.m. Mt. Morris Police made contact with a wanted subject at Dollar General in Mt. Morris. Timothy D. Rosquist, 63, Mt. Morris, was arrested and taken into custody on an Ogle

County warrant. Rosquist was transported to the Ogle County Jail.

On Jan. 4 at approximately 8 p.m. Mt. Morris Police met with a wanted subject in the 10 block of West Lincoln Street. Clinton D. Cleveland, 53, Mt. Morris, was arrested on an Ogle County warrant for failure to appear. Cleveland was transported to the Ogle County Jail.

On Jan. 8 at approximately 6:45 p.m. Mt. Morris Police made con-

tact with a wanted subject in the 4,000 block of West Illinois Route 64. Megan C. Moorehead, 31, Mt. Morris, was taken into custody on an Ogle County warrant. Moorehead was transported to the Ogle County Jail.

On Jan. 12 at approximately 4:25 a.m. Mt. Morris Police conducted a traffic stop in the 10 block of North Fletcher Street. The driver, Chase P. Prehn, 25, Oregon, was issued a citation for

expired registration.

On Jan. 17 at approximately 8:10 a.m. Mt. Morris Police conducted a traffic stop in the 2,000 block of North Leaf River Road. The driver, Marissa D. Boebel, 32, Leaf River, was issued a citation for operating an uninsured motor vehicle. Boebel was given a future court date.

These charges are merely an accusation, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

Domestic disturbance causes brief soft lockdown of Oregon schools

OREGON — On Feb. 6 at approximately 1:10 p.m. officers from the Oregon Police Department responded to a residence in the 800 block of Madison Street for a reported do-

mestic disturbance in which a weapon was allegedly mentioned, an OPD press release said.

During the incident, a male subject reportedly left the residence and was pos-

sibly walking in the area. As a precautionary measure, the Oregon School District was notified and placed on a soft lockdown while officers worked to locate the individual.

The male subject was later found at a location north of the Oregon city limits. Following a thorough investigation, officers determined that there was no weapon and that no charges

would be filed against either party involved. It was also confirmed that at no time were any citizens, students, or staff of the Oregon School District in immediate danger.

The Oregon Police Department extends its gratitude to the Ogle County Sheriff's Office and the Mt. Morris Police Department for their quick response and assistance in this matter.

USDA posts interim climate-smart agriculture guidelines

BY TAMMIE SLOUP
FARMWEEK

USDA published an interim rule establishing guidelines for climate-smart crops used as biofuel feedstocks, as well as a Feedstock Carbon Intensity Calculator.

Announced Jan. 15, the 83-page interim rule establishes guidelines for quantifying reporting and verifying the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with the production of biofuel feedstock commodity crops grown in the United States.

The rule includes three primary feedstock crops: field corn, soy and sorghum. It also covers climate-smart agriculture (CSA) practices that could reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions or sequester carbon.

Notably, the interim rule allows for adoption of CSA practices both individually or in combination, providing farmers the flexibility to adopt the CSA practices that make sense for their operation.

“(The rule) reinforces the important role climate-smart agriculture plays in our rural economy, including in fueling clean transportation solutions, as well as the importance of providing pathways for unbundled, science-based accounting of the carbon benefits of

climate-smart practices that help farmers earn more for what they grow,” said John Podesta, White House senior adviser for international climate policy.

The covered CSA practices include reduced till, no-till, cover crops, and specified nutrient management practices, such as nitrification inhibitors, no fall application of nitrogen, and split in-season application of nitrogen.

Farmers can calculate farm-specific carbon intensity (CI) scores in line with the standards of the interim rule using the USDA Feedstock Carbon Intensity Calculator (USDA FD-CIC), which is a sub portion of the Greenhouse Gases, Regulated Emissions, and Energy Use in Technologies (GREET) model. The calculator was published in its beta version with USDA collecting feedback before it's finalized.

Data that must be input into the calculator, which can be found at bit.ly/4jfkjq2, includes farm location, crop type, yield, acreage and information on CSA measures on covered crops.

“Establishing quantification and verification standards for climate-smart practices helps to ensure that the net GHG emissions reductions from these prac-

tices are real, thereby improving credibility and confidence, which could facilitate market opportunities for U.S. farmers growing biofuel feedstocks,” according to a USDA news release.

The interim rule includes guidelines on the following:

Biofuel feedstock crops and entities in the biofuel supply chain

Quantification of farm-level crop-specific carbon intensity

Chain of custody standards for entities in the biofuel supply chain, including traceability and recordkeeping standards

Auditing and verification requirements

Climate-smart agriculture practice standards for the biofuel feedstock crops included under the rule.

The interim rule establishes voluntary guidelines that may inform the development of requirements for programs that incentivize low-carbon feedstocks. On Jan. 10, the U.S. Treasury Department announced its intent to propose rules for the Clean Fuel Production Credit, often referred to as 45Z, with plans to utilize USDA's proposed interim rules for climate-smart agriculture.

USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack told reporters the Trump administration has additional work to do on



(PHOTO BY CATRINA RAWSON/FARMWEEK)

USDA published an interim rule establishing guidelines for climate-smart crops used as biofuel feedstocks, as well as a Feedstock Carbon Intensity Calculator.

45Z, and the expectation is they follow through on the guidance. He added that the incoming administration can use USDA's new guidelines and calculator in finalizing tax credit rules.

The interim rule also lays out verification requirements, including accredited third-party verifiers auditing a sample of the farms supplying reduced CI crops. All entities from the first point of aggregation to the biofuel refiner must hire a third-party veri-

fier to conduct an audit annually.

In the case of markets for transportation biofuel feedstocks, this traceability and verification system could allow entities such as farmers, elevators, other intermediary storage facilities and biorefineries to sell products with environmental attributes such as reduced emissions.

“In some cases, selling a product with an environmental attribute could enable these entities to earn a premium price

for growing, handling and otherwise helping to move reduced-CI biofuel feedstock through the supply chain,” according to the rule.

USDA is opening a public comment period for 60 days. Read the interim rule at bit.ly/3DX-DeWb.

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

McCombie introduces legislation to support young women in STEM education

SAVANNA — Illinois House Minority Leader Tony McCombie (R-Savanna) has filed a package of new legislation to fund initiatives encouraging young women to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and math through mentorships and scholarships. STEM is the acronym used to refer to the four distinct but related technical disciplines in education.

Leader McCombie's legislation includes:

HB 2801 - Directs the Illinois State Board

of Education to create a resource for K-12 STEM teachers to inform young women pursuing STEM careers about externship/volunteer opportunities with Illinois organizations in STEM.

HB 2802 - Allows girls in STEM classes to have one school day long absence per school year to pursue STEM externships if approved by school administration.

HB 2806 - Adds women to the list of demographics eligible for the STEM higher education scholar-

ship program (currently only racial minorities are eligible).

“Opportunities for girls and young women in science, technology, engineering and math fields in Illinois are boundless, but we can do a much better job of connecting these students with every available resource they need to succeed,” said McCombie.

According to data from the National Science Foundation, 39% of STEM graduates in 2021 from Illinois universities

were women. While that percentage represented the highest composition of female STEM graduates in state history, there remains significant room for improvement statewide. Leader McCombie's legislation aims to accelerate the number of young women graduating with a degree in a STEM field by increasing opportunities for them both inside and outside the classroom.

“My legislation will help keep Illinois at the forefront of STEM education and give young

women from every part of our state the opportunities they need to earn their degree and embark on a fulfilling career in fields critical to Illinois' economy,” continued Mc-

Combie.

For questions or more information, contact Leader McCombie's district office at 815-291-8989 or email McCombie@ilhousegop.org.



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LOCAL NEWS

LOFTS: 60-unit housing development on Rochelle's south side to serve those 55 and older

From page 1

The four-story building is equipped with an elevator and other accessible design features making it well-tailored to the needs of seniors.

Fifteen of the 60 units at Willis Senior Lofts will be reserved for those making at or below 30 percent of the area median income (AMI). The remaining 45 units will be available to those at or below 60 percent of AMI.

"Willis Senior Lofts will provide a wide spectrum of affordability to our prospective residents," An said.

The project broke ground in November 2023. An said the build went "relatively smoothly and on schedule."

"We initially had issues obtaining electrical gear equipment, but we were eventually able to get it in time," An said. "Inflation was definitely an issue. We saw year-on-year increases of 25-30 percent, but that occurred prior to closing on financing and beginning construction. Thankfully, the main funder of the

development, The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA), stepped up and provided the requisite funding to fill the gap created by high inflation."

Willis Senior Lofts has launched a website at www.willisseniorlofts.com and has kicked off leasing and accepting applications for spring move-ins.

In Ogle County, the 65+ age group has increased by 20 percent in the past 10 years. Willis Senior Lofts will be the first affordable senior housing development in Rochelle. It will be an all-electric building "designed and constructed to a very high standard of environmental sustainability," An said.

"We are thrilled to bring such an important resource to Rochelle and Ogle County," An said. "The demand for affordable senior housing in Rochelle is very high. There are thousands of people in and around Rochelle that would qualify to live in Willis Senior Lofts, and we have only

60 units available. There is sufficient demand for many more similar developments to meet the unmet demand for this type of housing."

KMG Prestige Regional Vice President Jason Washington is overseeing the leasing and operations for Willis Senior Lofts. He said the development has seen "a steady influx" of inquiries and he envisions a future waiting list as interest continues to rise in the units.

"This trend indicates not only a strong demand for senior housing in our area but also reflects the community's appreciation for well-designed living spaces that cater to the needs of seniors 55+ in Rochelle," Washington said. "We remain committed to fostering a welcoming environment and are actively engaging with prospective residents to ensure they have all the information they need about making Willis Senior Lofts their home."

Local access to senior housing is becoming "in-



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

The four-story building is equipped with an elevator and other accessible design features making it well-tailored to the needs of seniors.

creasingly critical" as the population ages, Washington said. Many seniors seek independent, affordable and accessible living environments that cater to their unique needs.

With advancements in healthcare, seniors are living longer and often require housing that accommodates their daily and active lifestyles. The demand for

independent senior living is rising quickly, Washington said.

"Moreover, affordable senior housing is vital for ensuring that our senior residents 55+ can maintain their independence while still having access to necessary support services," Washington said. "By addressing these needs, we can create a more inclusive

and supportive community for our senior population in Rochelle."

The first set of move-ins at Willis Senior Lofts is set for March/April 2025. Inquiries to obtain a rental application and leasing information can be sent to: WillisSeniorLofts@kmgprestige.com and you may also contact the organization at 1-815-529-3914.



Curators of the Ogle County Historical Society recently presented two different examples of research demonstrating a wide variety of work in local historical preservation.

Ruby Nash Museum Program presented at Oregon Depot

OREGON — Curators of the Ogle County Historical Society recently presented two different examples of research demonstrating a wide variety of work in local historical preservation.

First was the Nightingale Doll House mystery requested by the Oregon Library. A handmade dollhouse of definite Swedish design had been unrecognized for some decades. A small front plaque "To honor Elizabeth D. Palmer by Harry C. Palmer", was a beginning clue. Working backward from the man's found obituary, it was learned that the woman's middle initial "D" was her maiden name — Dickerson. She was in fact, the daughter

of a man named James Spencer Dickerson. In a history by her brother Willard, he described the founding of Eagle's Nest Art Colony. In it, he recorded that their father James S. Dickerson, of the U of Chicago, introduced his friend Wallace Heckman, also of the U of Chicago, to sculptor Lorado Taft. This meeting sealed the 1898 origin of Taft's land lease for summer artists in Oregon.

But the Nightingale Dollhouse questioned back to a well-known children's book titled The Nightingale House and by whom this same Elizabeth Palmer was author. She lived in St. Paul, Minnesota, was the designer of the dollhouse

and owned a children's store there called Kindermart. Her book has the same cover image as the mystery dollhouse in the Oregon Library attic.

Interior rooms have hand woven rugs, Swedish rose painting and Jenny Lind wooden furniture, all in authentic Swedish design. Elizabeth Palmer traveled across the country for her book promotion and the Nightingale Dollhouse traveled with her. For the curious, the famous singer Jenny Lind, known as the Swedish Nightingale, also has a role in this story... More information on how this Elizabeth D. Palmer story, her book, and the dollhouse returned to Oregon,

can be found at OCHS and the next Gazette.

Next, a mapping project using GIS techniques was presented by Kris Gilbert, OCHS technology curator. (GIS is a computer-based tool that maps and analyzes the Earth's events and existing features. It combines location data with descriptive information accurately and much faster than older manual mapping methods.) Kris is a dedicated cemetery preservationist and presented to the depot group a new map of Riverview Cemetery. Using GIS, she mapped all the known recorded graves as well as walking the cemetery to create the most accurate record to date.

Most significant in this public map is that grave sites can be searchable by typing in surnames by computer. All known burials are seen by markers and when activated, the burial name at that site is seen on the screen. Another screen will identify all military sites. This now provides a template for flag placements, DAR ceremonies and more exact genealogy. The oldest surnames in this early Oregon cemetery are disappearing even faster as the gravestones degrade from acid rain and the elements.

Mowing and maintenance of these oldest cemeteries is very challenging for those who volunteer to care for them, serve as

trustees and struggle to find funds for their existence. A humorous but effective solution has become the recent use of commercial goat herds that are placed within fences that can be moved from one area to another. Kris described how this had worked at the landlocked Brooklyn cemetery on north River Road. A long abandoned, weed and bramble filled 1.3-acre site, the goats proved to be a solution at last without the previous backbreaking work done by boy scouts and many volunteers.

Later Edgar Ferrer, history docent, gave tours of the Ruby Nash Museum to attendees at the OCHS Depot program.

(COURTESY PHOTOS)

Illinois Extension to host Poverty Simulation in Oregon

OREGON — Understanding poverty requires more than empathy — it requires experience. On Friday, Feb. 28, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Illinois Extension will host a Poverty Simulation at the Rock River Center in Oregon. This free event, which includes lunch, offers participants a powerful opportunity to step into the

shoes of individuals facing the daily challenges of living on a limited budget.

During the interactive simulation, participants will navigate real-life scenarios that families in poverty encounter, such as securing housing, feeding their families, and accessing essential services — all while managing financial constraints. The

experience highlights the tough decisions and obstacles low-income individuals face, fostering a deeper understanding of poverty's impact on families and communities. Whether you're working with clients from diverse backgrounds or simply seeking to broaden your perspective, this life-changing experience

offers a unique opportunity to delve into the daily struggles of those living in poverty.

"Poverty is not a game, and addressing its challenges requires more than awareness — it demands firsthand understanding," said Karla Belzer, Illinois Extension county director for Carroll, Lee, and Whiteside counties. "This

simulation is a valuable tool for professionals, community members, and anyone interested in gaining a new perspective on the struggles of those in need."

The event is open to the public, and registration is required by Feb. 21. To sign up, visit go.illinois.edu/CLWpoveity or contact 815-632-3611. If

you will need an accommodation to participate, please call 815-632-3611. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your access needs. Join us for this eye-opening experience and gain a greater awareness of the challenges faced by low-income families in our communities.

Tri-State Forestry Conference scheduled for March 1 in Dubuque, Iowa

DUBUQUE, Iowa — The Tri-State Forest Stewardship Conference has a 25+ year tradition of providing great information and resources to forest landowners in the Illinois/Iowa/Wisconsin tri-state area. It has been one of the largest conferences for forest landowners in the Midwest.

The 2025 Tri-State Forest Stewardship Conference will be held March 1 at

the Grand River Center in Dubuque, Iowa from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. This conference is sponsored by Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin Extension Services. This year's keynote speaker is Lara Noldner from the University of Iowa. Lara will discuss managing cultural resource and protecting Archeological sites. New this year to the conference is a Basics of Forestry tract,

that gives great information to landowners that are just getting started in forest management or anyone looking for a refresher. This tract includes sessions on Tree Identification, working with a forester, knowing your woods, and understanding forest management plans. Other topics at the conference include invasive species, wildlife, using chainsaws, forest health,

pruning, generational land transfers, and more.

The day will end with a discussion with Forestry leaders from each state on programs, cost-share opportunities, and new initiatives available to landowners.

The Tri-State Forest Stewardship Conference is designed specifically for forest landowners in the Midwest, but forestry professionals, consultants,

volunteers, Master Naturalists, and students are all encouraged to attend. The conference is scheduled for Saturday, March 1, 2025, and will be held at the Grand River Center, 500 Bell St., Dubuque, Iowa. Check in will be from 8-9 a.m. that morning. The conference begins promptly at 9 a.m.

Preregistration is required to guarantee a seat and lunch. To register

visit us online at <https://go.illinois.edu/TriStateForestry> or by calling the Extension Office at (815) 858-2273. Registration, including lunch, is \$55 on or before Feb. 21 and \$65 afterwards.

If you need reasonable accommodation to participate in this program, please contact the local Extension Office at (815) 858-2273.

LOCAL NEWS



On Saturday, Feb. 8 at the Faith United Methodist Church in Polo the Polo Cub Scout Pack 337 held its Blue & Gold Party. The pack had refreshments for everyone that attended.

Polo Cub Scout Pack 337 holds Blue & Gold Party

POLO — On Saturday, Feb. 8 at the Faith United Methodist Church in Polo the Polo Cub Scout Pack 337 held its Blue & Gold Party. The pack had refreshments for everyone that attended. Thank you to the family members that

came and supported the scouts. The scouts received the badges they earned. Ryder earned Council Fire, Running with the Pack and Safety in Numbers. Cadence earned Bear Strong, Chef Tech, Critter Care, Paws for Action, Roaring

Laughter and Standing Tall. Rorie earned Bear Strong, Paws for Action and Standing Tall. Wesley earned My Family, My Safety and Stronger, Faster, Higher. Tinley earned Citizenship, First Aid and personal Fitness. Robyn earned Fun on



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

the Run, King of the Jungle and Lion's Roar. Emersyn earned Team Tiger and Tiger's Roar. Jaxon earned Fish On, Team Tiger, Tigers in the Water, Tigers in the Wild and Tiger's Roar. LeRoy earned Floats and Boats, Rolling Tigers, Team

Tiger, Tiger Bites, Tiger-if- fic and Tiger's Roar. Keaton Earned Council Fire, Running with the Pack and Safety in Numbers. Lincoln earned Council Fire, Running with the Pack and Safety in Numbers. Keep up the great work scouts.

A very big thank you to the leaders and volunteers: Heather Roop, Courtney Meador, Lindy Diehl, Kayla Lee, James Meador, Shawn Lindsey, Justin Diehl, Keenan Blakeslee and to Aaron Roe who was not present.

Pegasus Special Riders Golf Play Day is June 20

DIXON — Pegasus Special Riders will host its Golf Play Day on Friday, June 20 at Lost Nation Golf Course at 9631 S. Lost Nation Road, Dixon, IL 61021. The fundraiser will help Pegasus provide support to individuals with emotional, mental and physical challenges through equine-assisted activities.

For sponsorship opportunities and registration information, contact Pegasus at admin@pegasusspecialriders.org or text 815-973-3177.

Exclusive hole sponsor \$200 (two available): (\$50 discount if purchased with team entry). Larger company signage at hole of your choice. invited to set up a table and or tent at the hole to promote your organization and/or play a game.

Hole sponsor: \$150 (16 available) (\$25 discount if purchased with team entry). Small company tee signage at a nonexclusive hole. Invited to set up a table and/or tent at the hole to promote your organization and/or play a game.

Cart sponsor: \$50 Com-

pany name will appear on a golf cart on the day of the event.

Donate an item for the silent auction or promotional items for golfers.

Golf team entry: Spaces will fill quickly. Please register early to save your space!

Team entry (four players): \$400 includes 18 holes, golf cart, lunch meal ticket and drink ticket.

For those playing, once payment is received, you'll get notified of acceptance.

First come, first serve. First to pay gets to play.

IDNR announces 2024-2025 deer season harvest totals

SPRINGFIELD — Hunters in Illinois harvested a preliminary total of 170,758 deer during all 2024-2025 archery and firearm seasons, which concluded Jan. 19.

The preliminary total for 2024-2025 compares with a total harvest of 160,313 deer for all seasons in 2023-2024.

During the 2024-2025 deer seasons, hunters took 46.27% females and 53.72% males. Final harvest totals by season and county can be found in the annual deer harvest report, which will be published later this spring.

Totals from specific seasons:

Archery deer hunters took a preliminary total of 73,598 deer during the season that began Oct. 1 and concluded Jan. 19. The total archery harvest during the 2023-2024

season was 71,226 deer.

Youth deer hunters harvested a preliminary total of 4,057 deer during the three-day Illinois youth deer season Oct. 12-14, compared to 4,576 in 2023.

Firearm season hunters took a preliminary total of 82,496 deer during the firearm season Nov. 22-24 and Dec. 5-8. This compares to a harvest of 76,494 deer taken during the 2024 firearm season.

Muzzleloader hunters harvested a preliminary total of 2,832 deer during the muzzleloader-only season Dec. 13-15, compared with a harvest of 3,378 deer during the 2023 muzzleloader season.

Late-winter seasons: The 2024-2025 late-winter antlerless-only and special chronic wasting disease (CWD)

deer seasons concluded Jan. 19 with a combined preliminary harvest total for both seasons of 7,775 deer. Season dates for the seven-day late-winter and CWD seasons were Dec. 26-29 and Jan. 17-19. During the same seasons in 2023-2024, a total of 4,639 deer were taken.

Eighteen northern Illinois counties were open to the special CWD season, which is used to assist in slowing the spread of chronic wasting disease in the Illinois deer herd. And 27 counties were open for the late-winter antlerless season in 2024-2025 compared to 23 counties in 2023-2024. Counties that are at or below their individual deer population goal for two consecutive years may be removed from the late-winter season.

Country Crossroads Quilt Guild to meet Feb. 17

FORRESTON — For our program on Monday, Feb. 17, Country Crossroads Quilt Guild will present "That Special Ruler". Four of our members will be demonstrating and showing specialty rulers and things they have made with them. This promises to be a very interesting program. Come and enjoy. Visitors are welcome; for visitors there is a fee of

\$5 at the door. Membership dues are \$20 per year.

Save the date! CCQG will present our Quilt Show "Garden of Quilts" on April 11 & 12. Jane Addams Community Center, 430 W. Washington St., Cedarville. Hours for the show are Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Admission \$5.

Guild meetings are held at the Forreston Grove

Church, 7246 Freeport 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. For more information call Program Committee Chair Kay Walker, 815-275-2904, or Guild President Jennifer Newcomer, 708-774-3279.

Polo's Faivre named to Dean's List at Drake University

DES MOINES, Iowa — The following local students have been named to the Dean's List at Drake

University: Polo: Anna Faivre, Pharmacy & Health Sciences.

To be eligible for the

Dean's List, students must have earned a GPA of 3.5 or higher during the Fall 2024 semester at Drake.

DIRECTORY OF AREA HUMAN SERVICES

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A.A. Hotline 800-452-7990

Sinnissippi Centers, Inc.

Oregon 732-3157

Rochelle 562-3801

Domestic Abuse Agency and 24-Hour Shelter and Helpline

HOPE of Ogle County 562-8890 or 732-7796

Confidential counseling services, court advocacy, Latina advocacy and shelter programs

Low Income Housing

Ogle County Housing Authority
1001 Pines Rd, Suite A, Oregon 732-1301

Habitat for Humanity of Ogle County

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

Mental Health

Family Counseling Services 962-5585

Sinnissippi Centers, Inc.

Oregon 732-3157

Rochelle 562-3801

The Serenity Shed Grief Services 732-2499

Senior Citizens Services

Hub City Senior Center 562-5050

Mt Morris Senior & Community Center 734-6335

Polo Senior Center 946-3818

Rock River Center 732-3252

Oregon, IL 800-541-5479

Sexual Assault/Abuse

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

Therapeutic

Pegasus Special Riders 973-3177

Veterans' Services

Ogle County Veteran's Assistance 815-255-9181

Veteran's Crisis Line 988 then press 1

Rock River Center 732-3252

Serenity Hospice and Home 732-2499

Medical Transportation 677-6515

Wellness Services

Ogle County Health Dept
907 Pines Rd, Oregon 562-6976

510 Lincoln Hwy, Rochelle 562-6976

Serenity Hospice and Home 732-2499

LOCAL NEWS



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

Locations of installations include the bike path near RTHS, Kings Elementary School, Creston Elementary School, Rochelle Middle School, Railfan Park, the dog park at VFW Park, Central Elementary School, Sweeney Park, Tilton Elementary School, Focus House, Liberty Village, the city's park on the 7th Street curve, the Hub City Senior Center, the VFW Post and Lincoln Manor. Kiwanis sponsors the Builders Clubs at Rochelle Middle School and at elementary schools in Kings and Creston.

BOTTLE CAPS: Over 5,400 pounds collected for recycling project

From page 1

Locations of installations include the bike path near RTHS, Kings Elementary School, Creston Elementary School, Rochelle Middle School, Railfan Park, the dog park at VFW Park, Central Elementary School, Sweeney Park, Tilton Elementary School, Focus House, Liberty Village, the city's park on the 7th Street curve, the Hub City Senior Center, the VFW Post and Lincoln Manor. Kiwanis sponsors the Builders Clubs at Rochelle Middle School and

at elementary schools in Kings and Creston. Swinton decided to ask them if they wanted to participate in collecting bottle caps in exchange for a bench at their school. They did, and benches followed. Swinton has said the project had grown into more than what he originally expected. At his home on School Avenue, he leaves a place outside for residents to donate bottle caps. He's built relationships with bottle cap donors all over the community and has received monetary

donations towards the cash cost of the benches as well. "We get help with the monetary portion of it," Swinton said. "I had a woman pull into my driveway and ask about it and she gave me a check for \$300. She donated it anonymously. I've had several situations like that since. It's just unbelievable." Students at the grade schools collect the caps and bring them in bags. And then members of the RTHS Key Club and Focus House students

sort them and fill a bag and weigh them and tag it and get it ready. The caps are taken to Green Tree Plastics in Evansville, Indiana. A brass plate has been donated for each installation by Marvin Quinn of Quinn's Jewelry Store. The Kiwanis Golden K club then brings the new unassembled benches back to Rochelle before they're assembled, delivered and installed. Acceptable caps for the program include those from disposable drink bottles, many plas-

tic food and hygiene item caps and lids, spray paint caps, and pill bottle caps. Caps or lids with recycle numbers 2, 4 and 5 are accepted. Items that can't be accepted by the program include any metal or cardboard, drink bottles, grocery bags, dirty or cut lids, K-cups, plastic toys, or any plastic with recycle numbers 1, 3, 6 or 7 on them. Swinton said he thought the endeavor would end with the first bench until The Key Club wanted to continue it and

the Builders Clubs wanted to get involved. The program grew from there and will continue to grow. "I just got a call from a group in Rockford that wants me to come up and do a program so they can get started," Swinton said. "They've been bringing bottle caps from Rockford down here. We've gotten bottle caps and a check from Morris and people from the suburbs. We'll see some more benches around here. We'll be working with the Rochelle Rotary Club on some raised flower beds."

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Feb. 18: Serenity Hospice and Home will be offering a new support group in the evenings for anyone in the community grieving the loss of a loved one. This support group is free of charge to attend and will meet on the third Tuesday of each month. This first group will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 18 from 5-6 p.m. at Serenity Hospice & Home, located in Oregon at 1658 S. Illinois Route 2. Please call Dana or Cathy at 815-732-4111 to register.

Feb. 24: The Ogle County Historical Society will have their monthly meeting on

Monday, Feb. 24 at 6:30 p.m. We are seeking new members and volunteers. Everyone is welcome. Come to the carriage house annex building located behind (east of) the Nash House Museum at 111 N. Sixth St. in Oregon.

Feb. 25, 28: Serenity Hospice and Home is sponsoring an upcoming volunteer training class on Tuesday, Feb. 25, and Friday, Feb. 28, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Serenity Home at 1658 S. Illinois Route 2 in Oregon. Volunteers with Serenity are essential to helping provide quality hospice and palliative care to pa-

tients throughout the nine northern Illinois counties Serenity serves. Volunteers provide both direct patient care in addition to many non-patient-related service opportunities. Dedicated volunteers provide office work, receptionist duties, gardening, errands, baking, help at fundraising events, and more. Those interested in any area of volunteering are encouraged to attend. Work together to provide overflowing comfort, dignity, and respect at the end of life. Serenity is a five-star rated nonprofit hospice and palliative care organization that

has been serving the area for over 40 years. For more information or to register for the class, please contact Stephanie at 815-732-2499 or email at volunteer@serenityhospiceandhome.org.

March 1: Emmanuel Lutheran Church will be hosting their pancake and homemade sausage supper on Saturday, March 1 from 4:30-7 p.m. The church is located in Paynes Point at 764 Stillman Road, Oregon. There will also be a bake sale. Adults \$10. Kids 5-11 \$5. Kids four and under eat free. Proceeds from the pancake supper benefit local charities. The bake

sale supports Lustgarten Foundation (pancreatic cancer).

March 1: The 40th Annual Polo Farm Toy Show. Is Saturday, March 1 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Polo Centennial Grade School at 308 S. Pleasant Ave., Polo. The event is sponsored by the Polo Lions Club. There will be approximately 100 dealer tables and a 50-50 drawing. You do not need to be present to win (Contact Ryan Shetler 815-499-0176). Handicap accessible. The cafeteria open with food served by the Polo FFA. Adult admission - \$3. Children

under 12 get in free. For dealer information call: Irene Short-Boelkens 815-499-2711.

March 22-23: Oregon, IL, Women's Club supports the local community with its 73rd Annual Antique and Vintage Show with over 40 dealers from the Midwest Saturday, March 22, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, March 23 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Ample free parking, homemade concessions, handicap accessible. Antique appraisals on Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. - \$5 per item. Blackhawk Center, 1101 W. Jefferson St., Oregon. Entry \$8 per person.

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Call Chris Grimm today to be included in our Community Calendar!

LOCAL NEWS

HEART MONTH: RCH employees participate in National Wear Red Day

From page 1

"It's a way to spark their interest in heart wellness. Getting this much support from staff always makes it more exciting. When you see people show up and they're smiling and willing to be in a picture, it just shows that we're in it to win it."

Heward said she believes National Wear Red Day and activities for the month help with staff engagement and promoting a healthy community at RCH.

"When people are engaged in extra things with their job, they're more likely to be more engaged with their work," Heward said. "If we can create things to keep them interested and happy to be here while they're here, we want to do that."

Heart services at RCH include its cardiac rehabilitation department, where people can recover from heart incidents or after surgeries. RCH's cardiac

rehab personnel help patients make sure they're heart healthy and build up their stamina. That same area houses RCH's Health-Works Fitness Center, which operates as a gym and offers membership.

"And we have our physicians here in the Family Healthcare Center and our people in multispecialty," Heward said. "RCH brings all those facets of health and wellness together, not just people coming here that are sick."

Cafe 900 has always offered a heart-healthy plate on occasion, but will offer it every single weekday in February for lunch.

"That's great," Heward said. "I like to see the different things they come up with for people to try. They've even added in some plant-based options. It helps to open up people's minds and gets them to try different things which can elicit a different lifestyle. That plays into prevention and the health of our community, patients and staff."



Heart services at RCH include its cardiac rehabilitation department, where people can recover from heart incidents or after surgeries. (PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

Illinois Gives Tax Credit Act provides benefits for taxpayers, nonprofits

ROCKFORD — Illinois taxpayers have a new way to decrease tax liability while increasing their charitable impact, thanks to the newly enacted Illinois Gives Tax Credit Act (Illinois Gives). Approved by the State of Illinois in 2024 and in effect as of Jan. 1, 2025, Illinois Gives provides a 25% state income tax credit for gifts made to eligible endowments at Qualified Community Foundations (QCF).

Illinois Gives provides three-fold benefit:
For Taxpayers: individuals and businesses

alike can reduce their personal state income tax liability, while maximizing the impact of their generosity. *Additional federal tax savings may apply for individuals who itemize on their federal return!*

For Nonprofits: endowed funds provide a stable, reliable, and growing source of support, whether via direct designation or competitive grant processes at QCFs.

For Communities: contributions must be made to funds that support programs and projects that directly impact Illinois residents and improve local communities.

The Illinois Gives program was designed to inspire generosity in every corner of the state and promote equitable distribution of the credits to donors of many levels. Up to \$100,000 in credit can be issued per taxpayer per calendar year. Of the \$5,000,000 in credits available annually, 25% are reserved for contributions of \$25,000 or less. No single QCF can receive more than 15%

of the total credits. The Illinois Gives Tax Credit Act will sunset after five years if not renewed or extended.

Credits are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis to taxpayers who create an account with the Illinois Department of Revenue. Donors are encouraged to talk with their local Qualified Community Foundation and discuss ways to maximize the benefits of Illinois Gives. "We are thrilled to have achieved Qualified Community Foundation status and stand ready to

partner with donors in our mutual goal of benefiting the people and places of Northern Illinois," said Dan Ross, CFNIL President. "Illinois Gives is truly a win-win-win for taxpayers, nonprofits, and the communities of Illinois; it's wonderful to have a new tool to inspire and promote philanthropy in our region."

Learn more about how to take advantage of Illinois Gives and connect with your local Qualified Community Foundation, the Community Foundation of Northern

Illinois, at <https://cfnil.org/illinoisgives>

About the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois (CFNIL): The Community Foundation of Northern Illinois has served Northern Illinois since 1953. CFNIL works to inspire endowment and promote philanthropy for the current and future needs of the people of Northern Illinois. Learn more about their work and commitment to philanthropy and effective grantmaking at <https://cfnil.org>

United Way of Ogle County announces opening of 2025 Community Grant applications

OGLE COUNTY – United Way of Ogle County (UWOC) is excited to announce that applications for the 2025 Community Grants are now open. Local nonprofit organizations are invited to apply for funding to support programs that address critical community needs and improve the lives of Ogle County residents.

Grant focus areas: UWOC is committed to funding initiatives that

align with its mission to create lasting change in the community. Priority will be given to programs that focus on:

Education – Supporting early childhood development, literacy programs, after-school initiatives, and workforce readiness.

Health & Wellness – Promoting mental and physical health, food security, substance abuse prevention, and healthcare

access.

Financial Stability – Providing financial education, job training, housing assistance, and other resources to help individuals achieve self-sufficiency.

Basic Needs & Crisis Support – Addressing urgent needs such as emergency shelter, disaster relief, and essential services for vulnerable populations.

Eligible applicants must be 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations serving Ogle County. Funds must be used exclusively for programs benefiting local residents. Applications will be accepted from Feb. 4-28, 2025. Organizations can apply and read through more details online at www.uwogle.org.

Questions can be directed to Ashley Richter at arichter@uwleeco.org or by calling (815) 284-3339.

Rep. Fritts appointed to 6 committees for 104th General Assembly

SPRINGFIELD – On Jan. 28, State Rep. Brad Fritts (R-Dixon) was appointed to serve on six committees for the 104th General Assembly: Appropriations: Personnel & Pensions Committee, Energy and Environment

Committee, Judiciary – Civil Committee, Labor and Commerce Committee, Transportation: Rail Systems, Roads, and Bridges Committee, and Transportation: Vehicles and Safety Committee.

House Republican Leader

er Tony McCombie made committee appointments today as legislators returned to Springfield for their first full week of the 104th General Assembly.

"I am honored to be appointed to serve on six committees for the upcoming

General Assembly," Rep. Fritts said. "These committees will allow me to continue fighting for better public policy to ensure fiscal responsibility, protect our communities, and support the hardworking men and women of Illinois."

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Jeff Helfrich

Managing Editor



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(COURTESY PHOTO)

The Oregon High School varsity wrestling team scored 251 points to win the IHSA 1A Byron Regional on Saturday, Feb. 8. The Hawks landed four champions and 12 sectional qualifiers during the tournament. Oregon had three runner-ups and five third-place finishers.

Oregon Hawk wrestlers win IHSA 1A Byron Regional

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

BYRON—The Oregon High School varsity wrestling team scored 251 points to win the IHSA 1A Byron Regional on Saturday, Feb. 8. The Hawks landed four champions and 12 sectional qualifiers during the tournament. Oregon had three runner-ups and five third-place finishers.

Isaiah Perez (35-7) won the title at 120 pounds, recording a fall over West Carroll's Jack McIntyre and a 6-5 decision against Byron's Jackson Norris. Preston LaBay (27-5) won the title at 126 pounds, notching falls over Lena-Winslow's Hunter Burris and Winnebago's Chase Whitehead. Nelson Benesh (38-6) won the title at 132 pounds, earning back-to-back falls

against Byron's Hunter King and Lena-Winslow's Sam Sikora to clinch the crown.

Levi Benton (19-4) won the title at 138 pounds, recording falls over Galena's Alfredo Jimenez, Winnebago's Aiden McGlinn and Lena-Winslow's Mauricio Glass to seal the title. Josiah Perez (36-5) took second at 113 pounds, reaching the final round after a fall

over Byron's AJ Kiddell. Andrew Young (25-6) took second at 175 pounds, advancing to the finals after a fall over Genoa-Kingston's Ayden Lucio and a 12-0 major decision over Galena's Dameron Polton.

Seth Rote (13-11) took second at 190 pounds and made the finals behind back-to-back falls over Genoa-Kingston's Andrew Rocha and Byron's Dalton

Norris. Briggs Sellers (31-15) placed third at 285 pounds, scoring a 7-2 decision against Winnebago's Josh Cowman in his final bout to clinch a sectional bid. Ethan Mowry (28-12) placed third at 157 pounds, notching a fall over West Carroll's Cole Herrell in the third-place match to punch his ticket to the sectional meet.

Jayden Berry (21-16)

placed third at 150 pounds, recording a fall over Lena-Winslow's Reece Demeter to advance to the sectional tournament. Jackson Messenger (32-14) placed third at 144 pounds, pinning Dakota's Harlan Kinney to clinch a sectional tournament berth. Jordan Lowe (26-15) placed third at 106 pounds, pinning Lena-Winslow's Carson Hill for a sectional bid.



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FFA WEEK

USMCA dispute decision a win for Illinois corn farmers

BY TAMMIE SLOUP
FARMWEEK

The United States' victory in its dispute over Mexico's decree to ban genetically modified corn imports is good news for Illinois corn growers.

United States Trade Representative Katherine Tai announced the U.S. prevailed in its dispute under the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) challenging certain Mexican biotechnology measures concerning genetically engineered (GE) corn. The USMCA panel agreed with the U.S. on all seven legal claims, finding that Mexico's measures are not based on science and undermine the market access that Mexico agreed to provide in the USMCA.

"The panel's ruling reaffirms the United States' longstanding concerns about Mexico's biotechnology policies and their detrimental impact on U.S. agricultural exports," Tai said. "It underscores the importance of science-based trade policies that allow American farmers and agricultural

producers to compete fairly and leverage their innovation to address climate change and enhance productivity. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Mexican government to ensure a level playing field and provide access to safe, affordable and sustainable agricultural products on both sides of the border."

The dispute challenged two sets of measures reflected in Mexico's February 2023 presidential corn decree, including an immediate ban on the use of GE corn in dough and tortillas, and an instruction to Mexican government agencies to gradually eliminate the use of GE corn for other food uses and in animal feed. The U.S. established the panel in August 2023.

Illinois Farm Bureau President Brian Duncan called the decision an "important victory."

"It was a strong ruling on behalf of U.S. corn growers and a vital export market that we need to remain open," Duncan told RFD Radio. "It's also a victory for rules-based trade."

IL Corn Growers Association (ICGA) President and Waterloo farmer Garrett Hawkins said the panel's decision is positive news for Illinois corn farmers and Mexican corn importers.

"As the largest corn export state in the union, Illinois corn farmers are proponents of free trade agreements and of making free trade agreements work," Hawkins said in a statement. "ICGA and the National Corn Growers Association had a significant role in fighting this unscientific Mexican government overreach and urging the U.S. Trade Representative to challenge the ban that would limit Mexican buyers' choices and reduce U.S. market access. We are so happy to see the ruling issued in our favor and look forward to building our trade relationship with our top export customer for all types of corn."

From January through October 2024, the United States exported \$4.8 billion of corn to Mexico — the United States' largest export market for the grain.

The panel issued its



(PHOTO BY CATRINA RAWSON OF FARMWEEK)

A bountiful harvest resulted in this corn pile in Amboy (Lee County) last fall. Illinois exports more corn than any other U.S. state, so growers here recently welcomed a key decision concerning trade with Mexico.

final report on Dec. 20. Under USMCA rules, Mexico has 45 days from the date of the final report to comply with the panel's findings.

The panel, in its report, wrote that while Mexico is seeking to address genuine

concerns in good faith, such concerns should be "channeled into an appropriate risk assessment process, measures based on scientific principles and in dialogue among all USMCA parties to facilitate a constructive

path forward."

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

Limited supply, strong demand fuels ag land market

OMAHA, NEB. — There are more motivated land buyers in today's market than there are willing sellers, according to Farmers National Company.

Despite the pressures created by lower net farm income, declining commodity markets, higher interest rates and increased input costs, land values have remained quite stable across the Midwest. While most university and industry land value reports published at year's end reflect a flat or slight downward trend compared to production expenses, the stability in those values reveals the resiliency of the land market and its ability to maintain the high values set over the past five years.

"There are many factors for buyer motivation, but much of it can

be explained by mindset translating to demand," said Paul Schadegg, senior vice president of real estate operations at Farmers National Company. "Farm operators continue to be the primary buyers of ag land. Their mindset or motivation revolves around reinvesting in their farm enterprise, expanding operations, and utilizing today's farm equipment fully. Location of land offered for sale also plays a large role in their decision making, as often this land has not changed hands for generations and once sold, may not be sold again."

Considering the average age of today's farmers, most have experienced the rise and fall of farm cycles and, along with it, the long-term appreciation of land value. They fully understand what an excep-

tional value land presents as an asset to their farm operation and investment asset, Schadegg said.

"We anticipate that operating farmers will continue to be the primary land buyer as we move into 2025. Changes in the ag economy will determine if the percentage moves up or down," he added.

Land investors make up the second largest segment of ag land buyers. Investors include individuals, groups, and land investment funds. Schadegg said that this group's mindset is business-oriented.

"There is virtually no emotional motivation, as buying decisions are based on return on investment or anticipated appreciation of land value. The motivation lies in expanding the portfolio, opportunities in productive regions,

and improving ROIs in declining land markets. Many land investors have not experienced the rise and fall of agriculture cycles but fully appreciate the long-term value of land. As pressures on the ag economy increase, investors stand ready to bid on land that fits their investment criteria."

Across the industry, land listings are down, on average, 25% from the active and accelerating value market experienced between 2020-2023. The principle of supply and demand fits into the current land market, as many landowners understand the long-term appreciation of land value while providing an annual return on that investment. Schadegg said that the result of this thought is to retain ownership, further reducing

the amount of land offered for sale.

"Motivated buyers remain in the current land market both as farm operators and land investors ready to deploy available cash to further their operations or portfolios," he added.

Farmers National Company has experienced an active fall selling season, marketing \$223 million of land value for clients across the Midwest in the past three months. FNC conducted 123 sales through public auction methods. Real estate activity moving into the first quarter of 2025 remains brisk, with an above-average level of auctions and traditional listings being negotiated.

"Optimism remains moving into 2025, and with positive signals for the ag economy, opportunity will exist for those involved in agriculture production," Schadegg noted.

East-Central Region: Illinois, Wisconsin

Land sale values are more localized than ever and have increased slightly in most territories in this area, according to Nate

Zimmer, area sales manager for the east-central region.

"Many farms are still being sold at historically strong levels; however, record-breaking sales aren't as predominant as a few years ago. We've seen several auction 'no-sales' the past few months, which is a sign that seller and buyer expectations are not aligning as previously," Zimmer said. "The real estate market has always been about location; however, the location factor and the strength of possible buyers nearby means more than ever."

"When there are questions about the local buyer pool or overall farm quality, the method of sale is increasingly becoming the private treaty listing route as opposed to public auction. The current sentiment of most brokers in our area is that 2025 will bring about a tendency for land values to stabilize or decrease some. Farmer profitability looks to be down in 2025, and their profit margins directly affect land values as farmers are still the primary buyers of land," Zimmer added.

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SPORTS



(COURTESY PHOTO)

The Byron High School wrestling team finished fourth with 161 points during the 2025 Oregon OSF Fresh/Soph Tournament on Saturday, Feb. 1.

Byron Tiger wrestlers finish fourth at Oregon OSF Invitational

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

OREGON — The Byron High School wrestling team finished fourth with 161 points during the 2025 Oregon OSF Fresh/Soph Tournament on Saturday, Feb. 1. The Tigers landed two champions and one runner-up finisher during the tournament. Byron also had two third-place finishers.

Hunter King (19-17) won the title at 132 pounds, earning three falls and one decision. King recorded falls over Burlington Central's Matthew Malkani, Rock Island's Lowson Jabbah and Mendota's Trayvon Rucker before scoring an 8-5 decision over Mendota's Komen Denault. Anthony Materazzo Jr. (10-6) won the title at 285 pounds, recording back-to-back falls against

Marengo's Cesar Garcia and Mendota's Germain Serrano. Cael O'Horo (20-18) took second at 150 pounds, earning a fall over Burlington Central's Ezekiel Squyres and a 9-0 major decision against Rock Island's Parker Stannke. Dylan Dach (24-15) placed third at 138 pounds and Wyatt Stacy (11-5) placed third at 175 pounds. Case Behn (6-5) took fourth at 190 pounds.



Oregon boys bowling team finishes 12th at IHSA State Championship

The Oregon High School varsity boys bowling team finished 12th during the 2025 IHSA State Championship at St. Clair Bowl in O'Fallon from Jan. 31 through Feb. 1. The Hawks landed with a final count of 11,414 pins. Gavin Surmo took 31st individually with a 12-game series score of 2,513 (209.42 average), while RJ Keene rolled a 2,347 series (195.58 average) and Ethan Smice added a 2,318 series (193.17 average). Matthew Stahl totaled 1,664 pins, while Aiden Currier chipped in 1,422 pins. Caleb Brooks, Caleb Ehrlar and Nolan Page combined for 1,150 pins to round out the Oregon lineup. (Courtesy photo)



Byron Coop boys swimming and diving team wins Northern Illinois Independent Invitational

The Byron High School Coop varsity boys swimming and diving team finished first with 66.5 points during the 2025 Northern Illinois Independent Invitational on Saturday, Feb. 8. Byron recorded six first-place event finishes and seven second-place event finishes in the meet. The Tigers will gear up for the IHSA Byron Sectional, which will be held on Saturday, Feb. 22. (Courtesy photo)



(COURTESY PHOTO)

The Oregon High School wrestling team took second with 187.5 points during the 2025 Oregon OSF Fresh/Soph Tournament on Saturday, Feb. 1.

Oregon Hawks take second at Oregon OSF Invitational

BY RUSSELL HODGES
SPORTS EDITOR

OREGON — The Oregon High School wrestling team finished second with 187.5 points during the 2025 Oregon OSF Fresh/Soph Tournament on Saturday, Feb. 1. The Hawks crowned the four champions as well as one runner-up finisher and one third-place finisher during the tournament.

Isaiah Perez (37-6) won the title at 120 pounds, earning three falls and one technical fall over four matches. Perez opened the tournament with a fall over Hampshire's Ryan Beaverly and a 17-2 technical fall over Riverdale's Triton Pulfrey. Perez clinched the championship with back-to-back falls against West Carroll's

Jack McIntyre and North Boone's Gabe Marella.

Levi Benton (19-2) won the title at 138 pounds, recording three falls and one technical fall. Benton scored a fall over Princeton's Corbin Brown and a 16-0 technical fall over Polo's Axel Harson in the first two rounds. Benton sealed his championship with a fall over Burlington Central's Berry Yildirim in the semifinals and a fall over Rock Island's Jayson Fry in the finals.

Jayden Berry (28-14) won the title at 150 pounds, taking all three of his matches by fall. Berry defeated Byron's Briggs Barton, Erie's Korbin Logue and Byron's Cael O'Horo for the crown.

Jakob Moser (17-11)

won the title at 175 pounds, compiling two falls, one technical fall and one decision. Moser pinned Lena-Winslow's Franklin Levertov before scoring a 22-7 technical fall over Winnebago's Tommy Woodman in the quarterfinals. Moser clinched the title with a fall over Byron's Wyatt Stacy and a 4-2 decision against Dixon's Blake Dingley in the final round.

Hunter Skoli (7-14) finished second in the 150-B Division, while Boone Alderks (27-5) finished third at 120 pounds and Ian Tajiboy Kilkan placed fourth in the 138-B Division. Tyshawn Gordy (10-11) and Charles Collins (5-10) each recorded fifth-place tournament finishes.

Colbert: Enjoying the ride to the post season

It was a smorgasbord of basketball for me the past weekend with two girls games sandwiched around the boys championship game of the Little Ten conference. To cap it off, a trip was made to Steward on Monday to watch grade school girls.

My only regret was missing Oregon's first regional title since 2008 in wrestling. We'll catch up with them at the sectional this weekend at the Blackhawk Center.

It was a glorious finish to the Big Northern girls basketball season with Byron, Dixon and Stillman Valley all sharing the league title with identical 8-1 records. All finished the year state ranked and worthy of the honor of being at the top of the BNC.

Bottom line — Byron and Stillman Valley are as good in 2A as what can possibly be found a few scant miles apart. That proximity helped contribute to a jam-packed gym in Byron for last Thursday's game between the two. It was more crowded for that game than the Byron-Pec boys game the week

before.

I remember in 2017 watching the highly-regarded Lombard Montini girls come to Byron for what turned out to be a very close game in which the underdog Tigers almost pulled off the upset. That game had a similar vibe and crowd size. FYI — the Tigers went on to win a state title, destroying every team in its wake.

It was a good crowd at Stillman Valley for the Dixon game, but nowhere near the intensity found between Byron and Stillman. What was similar at both places were low scoring, four-point differentials and tenacity on defense. It didn't matter if you were Taylor Davidson or Macy Groharing. Everyone had to grind for points.

Walking to the parking lot after the Dixon game, I struck up a conversation with one of the Stillman fans and learned he was there to watch his granddaughter play. To me, that is special.

First, not everyone has grandchildren. Secondly, though we still love them,

sometimes the grandkids don't turn out the way we hoped. Finally, it's a rare occurrence that your grandchildren happen to be on a team with a real shot to make it downstate.

A few years ago, I never would have given this much thought. But, as someone with granddaughters playing sports now, my perspective has suddenly changed.

To all the moms, dads, aunts, uncles, grandparents and siblings of Byron and Stillman players, enjoy this ride to the post season and be thankful for the journey more than the final destination, because unfortunately, one team won't be going any further than the sectional.

On to Somonauk, site of the oldest-running basketball tournament in the state of Illinois at 106 years — the Little 10 conference tourney. That's 106 straight years.

As someone who appreciates small town Americana, that seemed

the place for me to be on Friday night, though I didn't have any rooting interest in title game contestants Shabbona-Waterman and Hinckley-Big Rock.

Like the Byron-SV girls game, it was a packed gym. A sign on the wall indicated capacity of 1,226. It wasn't just fans from Shabbona/Waterman and HBR, but fans from all over the conference in attendance.

These little towns like Leland, Newark, Sereena and Earlville know and support each other. There were three games played at Somonauk that night and I learned that each head coach from those schools all played in the championship game of the Little Ten tournament.

It's family down there in the farmland between south of DeKalb. With conferences all over Illinois in a state of flux, it neat to see the Little Ten still holding their own over a 100 years later.



Andy Colbert

I'm glad I made the 60-mile trip because once I arrived, I felt like I had over 1,000 mutual friends. Besides, it wasn't too far from Hinckley, where the Harlem Globetrotters played their very first game in 1927, seven years after the Little Ten was formed.

Another tidbit from Hinckley-Big Rock is that former boys coach, Bob Barnett of Oregon fame, has taken on coaching the girls this year. Barnett led the Hawks to the super-sectional in 1979, the furthest Oregon ever went in the post season.

My final jaunt was this past Monday to watch Kings and Steward girls play basketball. These grade schools feed into Rochelle Township High School and a part of a long-standing conference (Meridian) with other feeder schools like Creston, Eswood and St. Paul Lutheran School.

Having never seen a game played in the Meridian conference, I had to do it at least once before I died to satisfy my

curiosity of what these rural grade school games are like.

Another reason for going was for my mom and I see family friend Don Romes coach his great granddaughter, something rarely ever done. Don was coaching football and basketball at Rochelle when I was there in the 1970s and is still going at it at age 86.

In fact, his first coaching gig out of college was in 1960 at Belle Plaine, Iowa and has been at many other schools in Iowa and Illinois since then. Tell me one other person with that kind of longevity.

It was another familiar face leading the Kings Comets in Jason Hickman, a former basketball player at Oregon. Romes had Steward clicking like on all cylinders and overwhelmed the visitors.

None-the-less, it was a joyful experience for both winning and losing teams and isn't that how it should be?

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

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SPORTS

Byron knocks off undefeated Stillman Valley

BY ANDY COLBERT
CORRESPONDENT

BYRON – Trailing 40-38 to Byron in the final seconds, it only seemed appropriate that Stillman Valley turned the ball over without getting a shot off. That was their downfall in a 42-38 loss to the Tigers in front of a capacity crowd in Byron.

“Defensively, we did a great job,” Stillman Valley coach Bobby Mellon said. “Holding them to 42 is something. But, we struggled with the turnovers.”

Going against a tenacious 1-3-1 zone, the Cardinals had difficulty moving the ball around and finished with 20 turnovers. After grabbing an 11-10 first quarter lead, Stillman Valley had four TOs on its first five possessions of the second quarter.

“With the way Byron was disrupting our offense, it got away from us that moment,” Mellon said.

Juniors Macy Groharing and Malia Morton (18 points each) led the charge for Byron, as the Tigers took a 26-17 halftime lead.

“They are two of the best in 2A,” Byron coach Eric Yerly said. “But, everybody knows what drives us – defense. It’s all about habits.”

That stingy defense held Cardinal all-stater Taylor Davidson to seven points. That was all part of Yerly’s game plan.

“I have a lot of respect for Taylor,” Yerly said. “To stop her, you have to give up something.”

That something was sophomore Dailene Wade, who led all scorers with 19 points, primarily in the paint. With Davidson in an 18-minute scoring drought, Wade responded with 16 points over that time frame.

“This was one of those games when Taylor struggled to have ball go in,” Mellon said.

Behind 28-17, the Cardinals needed someone to make a play and senior Amelia Dunseth came through a critical three-pointer. That started an 11-point run, with Davidson capping it off with two free throws to tie the game at 28-28 with 2:15 left in the third quarter.

“Time and time again this season, Amelia has come through for us,” Mellon said.

Byron was hurt by a cold spell of 10 straight missed shots in that stretch and finished 12-for-45 shooting. One advantage for the Tigers were getting second-chance baskets.

“There’s no way we should have allowed them to out-rebound us in the first half,” said Mellon, who team had an edge in height.

One such play on Byron’s first possession of the fourth quarter, with Aubrie Fuller beating everyone for the loose carom and finding Groharing for a three-pointer. That put Byron up 32-28. Later in the quarter, it was Morton draining a three on a second chance.

Still, Byron could not put the visitors away, coming up short on five possessions while trying to slow the game down. With 30 seconds left, consecutive baskets by Davidson and Wade cut the lead to 39-38, as the Cardinal ended at 37 percent from the field.

Intentionally fouled, Groharing made one of two free throws, with the Cardinals grabbing the rebound. That opportunity to tie or win the game soon unraveled with the untimely turnover.

Coming in as one of the last two unbeaten teams (Huntley 27-0) in the state, Stillman Valley fell to 27-1.

Byron, whose only losses were 45-40 to Stillman Valley in the championship game of the Dixon KSB tournament and 47-36 to Dixon in BNC, improved to 25-2.

“What a great atmosphere,” Yerly said. “The last time it was like this was when Montini came here a few years ago. People got their money’s worth tonight.”

Another factor under consideration for both Mellon and Yerly is this probably won’t be the last match up between the 2A powers, with a sectional final in Rock Falls a definite possibility.

“We hated to lose a game like this, but our goal is the post season,” Mellon said.

OGLE COUNTY SPORTS ROUNDUP

Polo girls basketball team scores win over Fulton

The Polo High School varsity girls basketball team scored a 44-33 win over Fulton on Thursday, Feb. 6. Katelyn Rockwood finished with six points and 15 rebounds, while Cam Jones led the Lady Marcos with 26 points, five rebounds, three assists and four steals.

Oregon girls basketball team takes down North Boone

The Oregon High School varsity girls basketball team took down North Boone 43-29 on Thursday, Feb. 6. Sarah Eckardt and Aniyah Sarver each scored 12 points to lead the Hawks, while Ella Dannhorn added seven points in the win.

Oregon girls basketball team overwhelms Rock Falls

The Oregon High School varsity girls basketball team overwhelmed Rock Falls for a 54-20 win on Saturday, Feb. 8. Noelle Girton scored 12 points to lead the Hawks, while Sarah Eckardt and

Anyah Sarver each added 10 points and Addison Rufer totaled nine points.

Polo wrestling team competes at IHSA 2A Dixon Regional

The Polo High School varsity wrestling team competed in the IHSA 2A Dixon Regional on Saturday, Feb. 8. Lucas Nelson qualified for sectionals after finishing second at 132 pounds.

Polo girls basketball team outlasts Hinckley-Big Rock

The Polo High School varsity girls basketball team outlasted Hinckley-Big Rock 67-64 on Saturday, Feb. 8. Cam Jones nearly posted a triple-double, scoring 37 points while adding 11 rebounds and eight assists to lead the Lady Marcos. Laynie Mandrell added 11 points, five rebounds and four assists, while Leah Tobin totaled 11 points and 10 rebounds. Katelyn Rockwood posted 10 rebounds in the win.

Forreston boys basketball team wins over Morrison

The Forreston High School varsity boys basketball team won 70-49 over Morrison on Saturday, Feb. 8. Kendall Erdmann scored 26 points and eclipsed 1,000 career points for the Cardinals, while Mickey Probst added 28 points. Brendan Greenfield chipped in seven points, 11 rebounds and seven assists in the win.

Polo boys basketball team edges out Orangeville

The Polo High School varsity boys basketball team edged out Orangeville 55-52 on Saturday, Feb. 8. Gus Mumford led the Marcos with 29 points, while JT Stephenson added 11 points.

Oregon girls basketball team nets win against Durand

The Oregon High School varsity girls basketball team brought home a 58-31 win against Durand on Monday, Feb. 10. Aniyah Sarver led the Hawks with 18 points, while Sarah Eckardt totaled seven points. Alease McLain and Addi Rufer each chipped in six points and Noelle Girton scored eight points for the Hawks.

AREA CHURCH DIRECTORY

BYRON

ALL SAINTS LUTHERAN CHURCH
624 Luther Drive, Byron IL 61010 815-234-5277
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Sunday Worship Service held at 9:00 a.m. 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 a.m. September through May. Confirmation studies for 7th and 8th grade students are held each Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. 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@gmail.com
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
Revive Jr High and Sr High Youth Ministries Meet Sundays at 6:30pm
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Office Hours: 8:00am -4:30pm Mondays-Thursdays

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Website: unitedchurchofbyron.org
Pastor: Rev. Tyler Spellious
Youth Ministry Coordinator: Richard Simpson
Sunday Schedule & Worship opportunities:
Service of Meditation & Prayer: 8:15am- 8:45am
Adult Sunday School Hour: 9am
Kids Sunday School: (for ages 3 thru 5th grade) during the 10:30 worship
Coffee & fellowship time: 10:00am - 10:30am
Main Worship: 10:30am
Spark Youth Group (for ages 6th grade thru 12th grade) - Sundays, 5pm-7pm
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CHANA UNITED METHODIST
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(E-mail address: chanauum@gmail.com) Adult & Children's Education 9:00 a.m.
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Dixon IL 61021

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www.kishchurch.org
Sunday Schedule: Discipleship Hour 9:00 AM, Coffee Fellowship 11:15 AM
Gathered Worship 10:00 AM
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Sunday: Worship Service at 10:30 am.
Pastor Phil Thompson
Phone: 815-335-2609. Email: middlecreekchurch@gmail.com



SPORTS/LOCAL NEWS

Stillman Valley bounces back with win over Dixon

BY ANDY COLBERT
CORRESPONDENT

STILLMAN VALLEY – With Stillman Valley’s 38-34 win over Dixon, it’s a 3-way tie for first place in the Big Northern conference for girls basketball. Those two, along with Byron, all finished with one loss in league play. Stillman Valley (28-1) was in a much more celebratory mood than Dixon (25-5) following Saturday’s game, posing for team pictures and the like on its home court. “Any game with Dixon, is a grind it out affair,” Stillman Valley coach Bobby

Mellon said. “Even though we struggled to hit shots, we moved the ball around better than we did against Byron (a 42-38 loss).” In the tightly-officiated contest with several offensive fouls, points were at a premium. After six early points by all-stater Taylor Davidson, the Cardinals were shut out on its next seven possessions, but still led 6-5 after the first quarter. It remained a one-point differential at half, 15-14 in favor of the Cardinals, but a diamond-and-one defense on Davidson slowed her down. Coming out after halftime, Dixon grabbed its largest lead of

the game, 18-15 on baskets by Reese Dambman and Hallie Williamson. On the next possession, the six-foot Williamson was called for her fourth foul and sat for the rest of the third quarter. That is where Stillman Valley made its run. Freshman Lillian Green grabbed on offensive rebound and scored to give the Cardinals the lead for good 20-19. Davidson then made an off-balance shot in traffic and followed that up with a lay-up off a steal for a 26-19 lead. Dixon stopped the run with a pair of free throws, but the Duchesses trailed

29-21 going into the fourth quarter. “We missed Hallie,” Dixon coach Luke Ravlin said. “Losing her was a key point of the game.” Williamson came back at the start of the fourth quarter and Dixon slowly made a comeback. A three by Dambman after seven empty possessions pulled Dixon within 29-24. Stillman Valley also went scoreless on seven possessions in the same time frame. It was Davidson, though, that got her team untracked with a pair of baskets on trap-breaking lay-ups for a 33-24 lead. “I was down on myself

after Byron,” Davidson said. “I read a book to-day on self-confidence. It was about visualizing and turning negatives into positives.” She scored a third straight time, but it was wiped out for an offensive foul, her fourth of the game with 1:45 left. Seconds later, Williamson bombed a three to close the lead to 33-29. With Stillman Valley effectively moving the ball against the pressure defense and traps, the Duchesses were forced to foul. Green went to the line on three straight possessions and shot 5-for-6 to seal the victory.

“I like how our team played with me out of the mix, especially when I was face-guarded,” Davidson said. Green finished with 13 points and sophomore Dailene Wade had seven to spark the third-quarter push, all under the basket in Williamson’s absence. Statistically, both teams shot 35 percent from the field. Dixon held a 31-19 rebounding edge, but had 12 turnovers compared to only 8 for Stillman Valley, who had 20 against Byron. The biggest difference was in free throwing shooting. Stillman Valley was 10-for-13 and Dixon 5-for-13.

Central men’s golf team eyes strong season led by freshmen including Byron’s Brandt

PELLA, Iowa — Central College Coach Mel Blasi returns for his eighth season despite losing six seniors, a youth movement has excited him. The Dutch bring in six freshmen while also returning five seniors, five juniors, and two sophomores. “It’s an exciting time to regroup and give players an opportunity, and our freshmen have made a positive impact right away,” Blasi said. “Four of our top six scorers in the fall were freshmen. We also have a mix of upperclassmen leadership to help prepare us for the spring season.”

ican Rivers Conference championships is Kayden Pendergrass (senior, Mount Vernon). Pendergrass had a 79.8 18-hole average last year and in the fall, he lowered it to a 77.4 scoring average. “Pendergrass has been the hardest worker on the team for the last three years and his hard work has paid off,” Blasi said. “He has really turned the corner and improved to be a top player on the team.” The team had five competitions in the fall before having the meat of their schedule in the spring. In the fall the Dutch traveled to Lexington, Kentucky and compete in the Transylvania Fall Invitational

facing tough competition. The team’s best finish in the fall was at the Sand Creek Intercollegiate Invitational in Newton, Kansas where it finished fourth out of 10 and shot 318-308-313-935. “The Transylvania Invitational had some of the best teams, so we were able to see where we were right away,” said Blasi. “All of our tournaments were on nice golf courses and the competition level was strong. With a freshman dominated group the finishes weren’t where we would like, but the experience gained from these tournaments was well worth it, and we had some great performances.” Freshman Maison Brandt (Byron) was eye opening in

the fall season firing a 70-76-146 to lead Central in his first career event at Transylvania. “Brandt played well he was one shot off the lead after the first round,” Blasi said. “He was our stroke average leader in the fall, and he is a great putter. I’ll look for him to be one of our best players.” In the spring, Central starts its season in Texas when it participates in the FST Pinecrest Invitational on March 10-11. They also play in the Illinois Wesleyan Invitational April 4-5, Knox Invitational April 12-13, and the Bobby King Invitational hosted by Gustavus Adolphus University (Minn.) April 18-19. The American Rivers Championships are

on April 27-29. “Our schedule is challenging so we will have to be at our best to finish towards the top,” said Blasi. “Our young guys understand how hard they have to work, and I am happy with the experiences they have learned to get ready for the spring season.” Blasi believes ball striking is a strength of this team and returning junior Blake Wynn (Milan, Ill., Sherrard HS) leads the team. “Wynn is our best ball striker, he is starting to find his confidence and he was on the brink of the top five the past few seasons but is now solidly in,” Blasi said. Other key freshmen who have started off well are

Crew Klingner (Williamsburg), Bautista Valeiras (Naples, Fla., Gulf Coast HS) and Carter Yurgae (West Des Moines, Dowling Catholic HS). “Klingner can be one of our best players,” Blasi said. “Valeiras and Yurgae both had strong fall seasons.” Despite the young team Blasi has high expectations for the squad this season. “Our goal is to win the conference and get the automatic bid into the NCAA tournament, and I believe we have the talent to achieve that goal. Three-time defending A-R-C champion Luther College will be strong competition, but our young group has the chance to pull it off,” Blasi said.”

OREGON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Did You Know? “Eagles Nest Tree”, the hand-forged, black iron railing located on the center of the steps leading into the Library, was installed in August 1978. The creator of the project was Neil Anderson, a blacksmith and graduate from Northern Illinois University who was an Ogle County Artist in Residence commissioned through the Highland Area Arts Council in Freeport under a federally funded CETA grant. While in residence, Neil did blacksmithing and iron forging demonstrations and workshops at schools, clubs, and organizations.

Ogle County Mini Food Center Pantry A donation box for the local Ogle County Mini Food Center Pantry is currently located in the Library’s northwest lobby entrance. A list of acceptable food items is posted along with more information about the food center which is located at Conover Square.

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

Book Clubs Is This Just Fantasy? Book Club will meet February 18 at 6pm at the Library to discuss The Book of Doors by Gareth Brown. The Afternoon Book Club meets Wednesday, February 19, at 1 pm to discuss Fellowship Point by

Alice Elliott Dark. Books on Tap Book Club will meet on February 27 at 6 pm at Cork & Tap to discuss Margo’s Got Money Troubles by Ruffi Thorpe. The 2WBC meets Wednesday, March 12, at 12:30 to discuss The Help by Kathryn Stockett. Cocktails and Crime will meet in March, so stop by the Library to find out what book, when, what time and where it will meet.

Winter Blues Bundle Jan 31- Feb 24. Winter got you down? Well get ready to think Spring! Our Winter Blues Bundle Boxes are back! Each box will have your chosen reading materials hand-picked by our librarians, along with snacks and an activity. Oregon Patrons ONLY, 1 box per household. Forms may be picked up at the library or go to Oregon Public Library website to fill out a form.

Ink with A Friend Monthly Card Club Monday, February 17 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

Lego Club Monday, February 17 pm at 1 pm (2nd grade & up) (No School). Get together and spend some recreational time building! There will be a limited number of vintage kit instructions available, so if you make it, you can take it! (First come, first serve) The club is designed to provide an enjoyable activity (FUN) that stimulates and develops spatial intelligence. Registration is required.

Slowing Down with Amy Tan Wednesday, February 19, 7 PM. National Humanities Medal winner and bestselling author of *The Joy Luck Club*, Amy Tan joins us to share on her body of work and reflect on the wonder of slowing down and savoring the quiet moments. Her connection to nature is captured in her latest, *The Backyard Bird Chronicles*, a collection of sketches and essays which debuted at #1 on both the *New York Times* and the Indie bestseller list. Born in the U.S. to immigrant parents from China, Tan’s first bestselling novel, *The Joy Luck Club*, offered a look at the immigration experience from the perspective of mothers and daughters. Other New York Times best-sellers followed, including *The Kitchen God’s Wife*, *The Hundred Secret Senses*, *The Bonesetter’s Daughter*, *Saving Fish*

from Drowning, and *The Valley of Amazement*. Tan is also the author of two children’s books, a memoir, and other works. In keeping with her love of science and childhood love of doodling, she recently took up nature journal sketching. When she found herself overwhelmed by our increasingly divisive culture, she turned to nature and the world of bird life outside her own window. Register at: https://bit.ly/ILP_AmyTan

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).

Try It Tuesday Tuesday, March 18 at 1:30pm or 5:30 pm (Choose your time slot). Spring Glass Magnets. Let’s welcome spring with these decorative magnets. This is an adult only class, 18 and up. Registration required, please call (815) 732-2724 or visit www.oregonpubliclibrary.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 1 pm and is open to anyone. From beginner to expert, all skill level are welcome to join. Bring any hand craft and work on it while socializing. Need help getting started with your knitting project, stop in on a Monday. Registration is requested, visit <http://www.oregonpubliclibrary.com> or call (815) 732-2724.

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 from computer, USB drive or SD card. It will not print directly from a phone. Call for more info.

Community Seed Library Harvesting your garden? Have extra seeds? Donate them to the community seed library. 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- Stacey Speaks Up by Stacey Abrams. At the StoryWalk is Valentine Mice by Bethany Roberts.

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.

Mexican Train Dominoes Wednesdays - 9:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Michigan Rummy Wednesdays – 12:30 – 3:15 p.m.

Transferring Files - CTC February 19 - 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Registration Required.

Crocheting & Knit-

ting Thursday, Feb. 20 - 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Fraud Protection by Stillman Bank February 24 – 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. Advance Registration Requested.

Veteran’s Assistance Your Veteran’s Service Officer will now be serving you at: 1001 Pines Road, Oregon, Illinois on 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 assists them with applications and other benefits available to them.

SUPPORT GROUPS @ ROCK RIVER CENTER

CANCER SUPPORT

GROUP Meets: 4 t h Wednesday in February, May, August & November. Time: 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. 24 Hour Advance Registration Required.

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP Meets: 3RD Tuesday of month. Time: 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

DIABETIC SUPPORT GROUP

Meets: 1st Wednesday of the month. Time: 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

LOW VISION GROUP Meets: 2nd and 4th Tuesday of month. Time: 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

For more information on any of our Support Groups, call Rock River Center at 815-732-3252 or 1-800-541-5479.

LOCAL NEWS

BERTOLET MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Food For February
Bertolet Memorial Library will be collecting non-perishable food items as well as toiletries to fill the pantry shelves at RVC. Bring your unexpired items to the library this month to help keep the little pantry stocked at the River Valley Complex!

BINGO is Back!
All ages are welcome to join us at the library for BINGO on Monday, February 17th at 2:00PM. Free game play and fun prizes!

BYRON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Rogue Town Q&A with Local Author Vito Colucci, Jr.
Thursday, Feb. 20. 6–7:00 pm. By popular demand, local author Vito Colucci, Jr. is back! Don't miss the chance to dive deep into the fascinating world of this Pulitzer Prize winning book, *Rogue Town*. *Rogue Town* is Vito's first-hand account of the true story of Stamford, Connecticut, a city that from 1965 through 1985 was under the stranglehold of organized crime and run by corrupt officials. This story served as a catalyst for Ronald Reagan as he established the President's commission on organized

Spice of the Month!
This month's spice is basil. Pick up a spice kit today to learn more about basil, some recipes showcasing basil's flavor, and a sample of the spice.

Stories With Stacey
Thursdays at 10:00AM: Join Miss Stacey as she continues to teach us about animals through books and crafts!

February Book of the Month
In *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn, Nick and Amy

Dunne's wedding anniversary is going to be one to remember this year. Amy disappears that morning and Nick is the prime suspect. He is being elusive in answering questions the police are asking. Is Nick a part of Amy's disappearance? Or worse? Pick up your copy today at the circulation desk. Reading or listening on the Boundless app? Let us know what you think of this month's book!

February Take & Make Craft

Make a special love bug for your special person in February. Kit contains most materials to make the craft and are available at the circulation desk.

Community Puzzle
We've got a new winter themed puzzle out for you to help complete. Put in one piece or five; you can even do it all if you have time!

Coloring Pages
Don't forget we have new coloring pages each week available for you to choose from. Enjoy a

relaxing evening at home as the weather turns to fall.

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

Plastic Recycling
We ask that you make sure plastic is clean with no debris in the donation. *No animal feed bags are allowed* Also please remove any ziploc-type seals and paper/sticker labels. Thank you for your cooperation.

NEW RELEASES
Adult Books
The Housekeeper's Secret by Iona Grey
We All Live Here by JoJo Moyes
Chapter Book
After the Wallpaper Music by Jean Mills
Picture Book
Pete the Cat's Groovy Guide to Love by James Dean
DVD
Falling In Love On Niagara/ A Whitewater Romance

crime. Join us for an exclusive question-and-answer session and discover what makes *Rogue Town* a must-read. Copies of the book will be available for purchase at this program (\$20.00 cash or check). Please call 815-234-5107 to register.

Paradise Playhouse Presents: Lucy! The Musical
Tuesday, Mar. 11. 1–2:00 pm. Join Jillann Gabrielle from Paradise Playhouse as she presents *Lucy!* An original solo musical based on the life of Lucille Ball. *Lucy!* takes her from her shaky family beginnings in upstate New York, through

Broadway, and finally to Hollywood. Eventually she meets and marries Desi Arnaz along the way - their volatile but passionate marriage, her reign as Queen of the Bs, and finally to her zenith as the Lucy character on TV. It also portrays her eventual successful marriage to actor/comedian/producer Gary Morton. You get to peer into the deep recesses of Lucy's mind and emotions, her struggles and her triumphs. Exhaustively researched, brilliantly written, and radiantly performed, this original solo musical is one you don't want to miss! Please call 815-234-5107 to register.

Creative Studio
Our Creative Studio is open on Sunday afternoons and two evenings a week, so stop by for monthly crafts and to use our maker space equipment! Crafts out on the tables are free of charge, while some other projects will incur a cost depending on materials. Middle school and high school youth can use some of the materials while with an adult, or during Teen Time. Creative Studio hours: Sunday 1–5:00 pm, Monday 9:00 am–1:00 pm & 5–8:00 pm, Tuesday 9 am–1:00 pm & 5–8:00 pm, Wednesday 9:00 am–1:00 pm, Thursday 9:00 am–1:00 pm, Friday

& Saturday closed.

Check out Our Mobile App
Did you know that there is an easy way to use the library from your phone? Just download the 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!

Weekly Brain Busters

King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Actress Hatcher

5 Slender

9 Venomous viper

12 — Bator

13 Director Wertmuller

14 Cutesy- —

15 Beau

17 "Nova" ailer

18 Oodles

19 Media mogul Winfrey

21 Brother of Moses

24 Concerning

25 Large amount

26 Novelty dance at a wedding

30 Pampering, for short

31 Sri —

32 Tokyo's historic name

33 Quarantines

35 L-Q bridge

36 Baseball legend Willie

37 Mission man

38 Arizona city

40 Pants part

42 Flamenco cheer

43 Exceed

48 — -Manuel Miranda

49 Clump of grass

50 Locks

51 Young bloke

52 Summers in Paris

53 Sciences' partner

DOWN

1 Vat

2 "Xanadu" band

3 Comic Romano

4 Cash received

5 Skirt feature

6 Fibs

7 Hostel

8 "Vogue" singer

9 Collar, as a suspect

10 Japanese noodles

11 Ritz

12 Director Howard

20 Snoop

21 Sparkling Italian wine

22 Shakespeare title starter

23 Advise

24 Pen fluids

26 Cave creatures

27 French article

28 Air freshener target

29 Vatican VIP

31 Infant's outfit

34 Napkin's perch

35 Green tea variety

37 — de deux

38 Bridge fee

39 Director Kazan

40 Ump's ruling

41 Tolkien creatures

44 Trench

45 Off-pierced body part

46 Petty peeve

47 ER workers

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MAGIC MAZE

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

Beat	Grade	Side	The mountain
Cast	Hill	Stairs	Tick
Field	Loading	State	Town
Gradable	Scale	Surge	

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Vest is shorter. 2. Arm is longer. 3. Chair is taller. 4. Foot is moved. 5. Chart is different. 6. Curtain is not as wide.

Weekly SUDOKU

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

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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Weekly SUDOKU

Answers

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

Answer

King Crossword

Answers

UP — OR DOWN —

Across: 1. Hatcher, 5. Slender, 9. Viper, 12. Bator, 13. Wertmuller, 14. Cutesy, 15. Beau, 17. Ailer, 18. Oodles, 19. Winfrey, 21. Moses, 24. Concerning, 25. Amount, 26. Novelty, 30. Pampering, 31. Sri, 32. Tokyo, 33. Quarantines, 35. L-Q, 36. Willie, 37. Mission, 38. Arizona, 40. Pants, 42. Flamenco, 43. Exceed, 48. Manuel, 49. Grass, 50. Locks, 51. Bloke, 52. Summers, 53. Sciences, 1. Vat, 2. Xanadu, 3. Comic, 4. Cash, 5. Skirt, 6. Fibs, 7. Hostel, 8. Vogue, 9. Collar, 10. Japanese, 11. Ritz, 12. Director, 20. Snoop, 21. Sparkling, 22. Shakespeare, 23. Advise, 24. Pen, 26. Cave, 27. French, 28. Air, 29. Vatican, 31. Infant, 34. Napkin, 35. Green, 37. De, 38. Bridge, 39. Director, 40. Ump, 41. Tolkien, 44. Trench, 45. Off, 46. Petty, 47. ER.

LOCAL NEWS

JULIA HULL DISTRICT LIBRARY

Period Product Drive
Did you know that 1 in 5 people who menstruate struggle to afford period products? This February, we're collecting products to help fight period poverty in Ogle County. You can help us make a difference by donating pads, tampons and pantyliners to the collection box in the library lobby. Donations will be distributed to women's shelters and food pantries throughout Ogle County. Feb. 1 – Feb. 28.

Introduction to Ancestry & Genealogy Basics
Are you a newbie to genealogy research? This class is intended for you. Join us for a very basic introduction to family history and using Ancestry Library Edition. Tuesday, Feb. 25, 6 p.m. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

Trivia Night at the Library Fundraiser
Gather a team and join us at your favorite library in the Valley to help Friends of the Library raise funds to support library programs and services. Teams of 4-6

players for variety trivia in rounds. Friday, Feb. 28, 7 p.m. \$10/player. Advanced registration is required. Call the library for more details and to register: 815-645-8611.

Puzzle Palooza
Because...we just fit! Teams of 2-4 will face off to see who can assemble the same 500-piece jigsaw puzzle in 90 minutes. Prizes will be given to first, second and third-place finishers. Saturday, March 1, 2 p.m. Space is limited. Register your team early by calling the library at 815-645-8611.

Tween Scene: Spring Break Trip: San Antonio
Grab your suitcase, we're headed on a quick getaway to San Antonio, TX! We'll enjoy games, crafts, and snacks inspired by this big city with a small-town vibe. Tuesday, March 4, 6 p.m. Ages 10-13. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

Cricut Lab: Design Space Functions: Advanced
Master your Cricut projects with all Design Space



Last week, at Julia Hull District Library, Toddlers (ages 1-4) enjoyed imaginative play with oversized jumbo blocks.

has to offer. Experienced Cricut users will learn to create custom designs using the layers, panel, and discover how and when to use special Design Space functions. Thursday, March 6, 6 p.m. BYO Cricut Explore or Maker, mat, cord and device with Cricut App installed. Adults only. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

Toddler Time: Color Hunt
Indulge your little one's curiosity with a hands-on event just for them! This month our terrific toddlers will go on a hunt throughout the library for every color of the rainbow. Friday, March 7, 10 a.m. Ages 1-4. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

Roadside Attractions



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

with Leslie Goddard
Have you ever slept in a wigwam? Or taken a selfie with Paul Bunyan? Ever stepped inside an alligator's mouth? Since Americans took to the highways for long-distance travel in the 1920s, entrepreneurs have been dreaming up unusual structures to attract passing motorists. Although the

heyday passed with the arrival of interstate highways, thousands of quirky roadside attractions remain. Join Pop culture historian Leslie Goddard, Ph. D. to explore these unique structures and what they tell us about the history of road travel. Monday, March 31, 6:30 p.m. Registration required: 815-645-8611.

OGLE COUNTY SHERIFF'S REPORT

OREGON — At 10:37 a.m. deputies were advised of a violation of an order of protection from the offender being Seth Seidelman, 39, of Oregon. After an investigation, sheriff's deputies located Seidelman in the 100 block of North Fourth Street in Oregon. Seidelman was placed under arrest for violation of an order of protection. Seidelman was transported to the Ogle County Jail and held until his appearance before a judge.

On Feb. 4 at approximately 7:08 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop on Sterling Road near the intersection of Freeport Road in rural Polo. After an investigation, Thomas W. Foat, 42, of Sterling, was placed under arrest for possession of 100-500 grams of cannabis. Foat was also cited for improper turn signal. Foat was transported to Ogle County, where he was processed and released on a notice to appear.

On Feb. 4 at approximately 6:03 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 300 block of Madison Street in Oregon. After a brief investigation, deputies placed Diane Dirickson, 43, of Rockford under

arrest for possession of a controlled substance. Dirickson was transported to the Ogle County Jail where she was issued citations for possession of cannabis by driver, expired registration, and operating an uninsured motor vehicle. Dirickson was given a notice to appear with a future court date.

On Feb. 5 at approximately 2:08 a.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 2,000 block of South Illinois Route 2. After an investigation, deputies placed Trista D. Williams, 49, of Rockford under arrest for an outstanding Lee County warrant. Williams was transported to the Ogle County Jail where she was held in lieu of bond.

On Feb. 6 at approximately 5:54 a.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in near the intersection of Illinois Route 2 and Kennedy Hill Road. After investigation, deputies placed Fred Sebushare, 62, of Rockford under arrest for driving while license suspended. Sebushare was additionally issued citations for operating an uninsured vehicle and operating a vehicle with a suspended registration. Sebushare was released on a

notice to appear at the scene and given a future court date.

On Feb. 6 at approximately 3:24 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 1,000 block of North Illinois Route 2. After investigation, deputies placed Shannon Tompkins, 41, of Oregon under arrest for driving while license suspended. Tompkins was additionally issued a citation for use of an electronic communication device. Tompkins was released on a notice to appear at the scene and given a future court date.

On Feb. 6 at 10:04 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop at Illinois Route 251 and Big Mound Road. After a brief investigation, deputies arrested Larry Barnes III, 35, of Rochelle, for driving while license revoked and an outstanding Lee County warrant. Barnes was transported to the Ogle County Jail and held in lieu of bond.

On Feb. 7 at approximately 6:54 p.m. deputies assisted a motorist in the 17,000 block of East Illinois Route 38. After a brief investigation, deputies arrested Ashley Ann Martinez, 30, of Rochelle for possession of drug paraphernalia. Martinez was transported to the

Ogle County Jail where she was given a notice to appear with a future court date.

On Feb. 7 at approximately 3:56 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the area of 100 E. Washington St., Oregon. After a brief investigation, Deshawn Green, 43, of Rockford, was arrested for driving while license revoked and an active Winnebago County warrant. Green and the passenger, Ashley Paddie, 34, of Oregon, were both additionally charged with unlawful use of a weapon and unlawful use of a weapon by a felon. Green and Paddie were transported to the Ogle County Jail where they will be held pending an appearance before a Judge.

On Feb. 8 at approximately 6:39 p.m. deputies responded to the area of West Haldane Road and North Summer Hill Road for a single-vehicle crash. After an investigation, it was learned a black Chevrolet, driven by a 17-year-old juvenile, was westbound on West Haldane Road when it went through the T-intersection and struck the ditch embankment along North Summer Hill Road. One 19-year-old occupant

of the vehicle was transported to an area hospital for non-life-threatening injuries. The driver was cited for failure to reduce speed to avoid an accident, violation of a graduated driver's license by having more than one passenger under 20 years old, and use of an electronic communication device on a roadway. Deputies were assisted at the scene by Polo EMS.

On Feb. 8 at approximately 8:21 p.m. deputies responded to the area of West Mud Creek Road and West Cliff Road for a single-vehicle crash. After an investigation, it was learned a maroon Saturn SUV was traveling eastbound on Mud Creek Road before traveling in the north ditch and attempting to reenter the roadway before striking a group of trees just south of Cliff Road. The driver was identified as John K. Green, 44, of Byron. Green was placed under arrest for driving under the influence and transported to the Ogle County Jail, where he was released on a notice to appear. Green was additionally cited for improper lane usage and failure to reduce speed. Deputies were

assisted on scene by Mt. Morris and Oregon Fire/EMS personnel.

On Feb. 9 at approximately 6:24 p.m. deputies conducted a warrant service in the 300 block of South 2nd Street in Rochelle. After an investigation, deputies arrested Devin B. Phillips, 23, of Rochelle for an outstanding warrant for aggravated domestic battery. Phillips was transported to the Ogle County Jail where he is being held in lieu of bond.

On Feb. 10 at approximately 9:47 p.m. deputies conducted a traffic stop in the 12,000 block of North Illinois Route 26. After a brief investigation, Christopher J. Daacon II, 57, of Freeport, was arrested for aggravated driving while license revoked, resisting/obstructing a peace officer and possession of drug paraphernalia. Daacon was transported to the Ogle County Jail, where he was released on a notice to appear. Daacon was also issued citations for operating an uninsured motor vehicle, driving while license revoked and no rear plate light.

All individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty in the court of law.

MT. MORRIS SENIOR CENTER

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

Games with Jared

Join us on Tuesday, Feb. 18 at 10:30 am for Games with Jared and Wednesday, February 19th at 10:30 am for Bingo and Birthday lunch.

Trivia & Tacos
Thursday, February 20th at 6:00 pm is our Trivia & Tacos. Get a group together and join us! Only \$2.00 each

to play Trivia and donation for the taco dinner. Prizes to the winning team.

Diamond Painting
Diamond Painting on

Friday, February 21st at 11:00 am. No prior skill involved and paintings are for sale.

Word Basics

Tuesday, Feb. 25 at 10:00 am there will be a Microsoft Word Basics class in our new Computer Lab. Call The center to sign up!

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101 LEGAL NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice is hereby given that on January 30, 2025 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:

F2F
3920 E IL RT 64
Oregon, IL 61061

Dated January 30, 2025
Laura J. Cook, Ogle County Clerk
No. 0204
(Feb. 10, 17 and 24, 2025)

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

In the Matter of the Estate of)))

JOHN HENRY LOUIS COMBS, deceased

No. 2025PR1

CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of JOHN HENRY LOUIS COMBS. Letters of office were issued on February 3, 2025, to CHRISTOPHER M. COMBS whose address is 10250 E. IL Route 38, Rochelle, IL 61068 as administrator, whose attorney is TOBIN, RAMON & BARBER, 530 South State Street; Suite 200, Belvidere, Illinois 61008-3711. Claims against the estate may be filed on or before August 11, 2025 that date being at least six (6) months from the date of first publication, or within three (3) months from the date of mailing or delivery of Notice to creditors, if mailing or delivery is required by 755 ILCS 5/18-3, whichever date is later. Any claim not filed by the requisite date stated above shall be barred.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Ogle County Circuit Clerk -- Probate Division at the Ogle County Courthouse, at 106 S. 5th Street, #300, Oregon, IL 61061, or with the estate legal representative, or both.

Copies of claims filed with the Circuit Clerk's Office -Probate Division, must be mailed or delivered to the estate legal representative and to her attorney within ten days after it has been filed.

DATED: February 5, 2025

CHRISTOPHER M. COMBS,

Administrators

Natalie Hyser Barber

ARDC# 6301826

Tobin, Ramon & Barber

Attorneys for Petitioner

530 South State Street;

Suite 200 Belvidere, Illinois 61008-3711

(815) 544-0316

patti@tobinramon.com

No. 0210

(Feb. 10, 17 and 24, 2025)

NOTICE Byron Township Regular Monthly Meeting Schedule for 2025

All regular monthly meetings of the Byron Township Board of Trustees begin at 7:00pm, the second Thursday of every month, except for in April. In April the Annual Town Hall Meeting will be on Tuesday April 8, 2025 at 7:00pm. The April regular meeting of the Board of Trustees will be 10 minutes after the adjournment of the Annual Town Hall Meeting. To follow are the dates of the regular monthly meetings of the Byron Township Board of Trustees in calendar year 2025 and the first meeting in January 2026.

January 9, 2025 - Regular Meeting

February 13, 2025 - Regular Meeting

March 13, 2025 - Regular Meeting

April 8, 2025 - Annual Town Meeting followed by Regular Meeting

May 8, 2025 - Regular Meeting

June 12, 2025 - Regular Meeting

July 10, 2025 - Regular Meeting

August 14, 2025 - Regular Meeting

September 11, 2025 - Regular Meeting

October 9, 2025 - Regular Meeting

November 13, 2025 - Regular Meeting

December 11, 2025 - Regular Meeting

January 8, 2026 - Regular Meeting

The semi-annual meetings of the Planning Commission of the Byron Township are the first Tuesday of April and September.

No. 0211

(Feb. 17, 2025)

PUBLIC NOTICE

Sealed bids will be received by the Ogle County Highway Department, Oregon, Illinois, until 2:00 P.M.

March 7, 2025 for the following Sections:

1. 25-00000-04-GM 2025 County Striping

2. 25-00000-01-GM County Patching Materials

3. 25-XX000-00-GM Township Patching Materials

4. 25-15000-01-GM Monroe Township Paving

5. 25-26000-01-GM Oregon-Nashua Township Paving

6. 25-06000-01-GM Flagg Township Paving

7. 23-06144-00-BR Skare Rd Culvert in Flagg Twp.

Proposals are available at the Ogle County Highway Department, 1989 South IL Rt. 2, Oregon, IL between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 3:30 P.M. Monday - Friday. The Road and Bridge Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids.

No. 0212

(Feb. 17 and 24, 2025)

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF:

HARRY F. EICHHORST, deceased.

NO. 2025-PR-7

CLAIM NOTICE

NOTICE IS GIVEN OF the death of HARRY F. EICHHORST of Chana, Illinois. Letters of office were issued on February 6, 2025, to DIANE M. EICHHORST of Oregon, Illinois, whose attorney is David A. Smith, of Smith Law Group, P.C. at 129 South Fourth Street, P. O. Box 10, Oregon, Illinois, 61061-0010.

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

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

Diane M. Eichhorst Independent Administrator

No. 0213

(Feb. 17, 24 and March 3, 2025)

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: PATRICIA A. JONES, deceased.

NO. 2025-PR-6

CLAIM NOTICE

NOTICE IS GIVEN OF the death of PATRICIA A. JONES of Oregon, Illinois. Letters of office were issued on February 6, 2025, to DUANE L. JONES of Oregon, I 11 inoi s, and TINA M. TYPER of Leaf River, Illinois, whose attorney is David A. Smith, of Smith Law Group, P.C. at 129 South Fourth Street, P. O. Box 10, Oregon, Illinois, 61061-0010.

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

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

Duane L. Jones Tina M. Typer Independent Administrators

No. 0214

(Feb. 17, 24 and March 3, 2025)

101 LEGAL NOTICE

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

105 BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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

113 FINANCIAL

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

119 ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

201 DOMESTIC/CHILD CARE

NO INDIVIDUAL, unless licensed or holding a permit as a childcare facility, may cause to be published any advertisement soliciting a child care service. A childcare facility that is licensed or operating under a permit issued by the Illinois Department of Children and Family

Services may publish advertisements of the services for which it is specifically licensed or issued a permit. Your Hometown Newspaper strongly urges any parent or guardian to verify the validity of the license of any facility before placing a child in its care.

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

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203 HELP WANTED

NOW HIRING VILLAGE CLERK

The Village of Leaf River is accepting applications for the position of Village Clerk.

Details: **Interested parties should be proficient in Word and Excel and have a minimum of Three (3) years' office experience. This position is currently 60 hours per month**

For information, please contact Tena L. Krueger at 815-275-0771 or the numbers below.

Please send resumes to:
Village of Leaf River
PO Box 278
Leaf River IL 61047
Attn: Village Clerk

Village of Leaf River 605 Main Street,
PO Box 278,
Leaf River, IL 61047
villageofleafriver@gmail.com
Phone 815 738 2340 Fax 815 738 2344

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LOCAL NEWS

Tight global supply keeping fertilizer prices elevated

BY RHIANNON BRANCH
FARMWEEK

As farmers enter another year of predictably tight margins, it does not look like fertilizer prices will grant much relief to the balance sheet.

"The problem is we're starting 2025 with nitrogen and phosphate values looking fairly firm on tight supply and demand," Josh Linville, vice president of fertilizer at StoneX, told FarmWeek. "We're worried about what that means for our prices going into the spring."

Chinese exports and European production of urea are both falling, which means global prices could push higher.

"That should result in a situation where we have to start doing a lot of work to get the imports coming in that we very desperately need," Linville said. "We're going to have to move our price up quite a bit to make that relationship happen."

He said prices for urea ammonium nitrate and anhydrous ammonia, which are more commonly used in Illinois, usually follow the urea market.

One fertilizer that is well supplied globally and therefore mildly priced is potash, but that could change after President

Donald Trump takes office this month.

"We have to worry about the threat of 25% tariffs against Canadian goods," said Linville, who noted Canada is the world's largest producer and exporter of potash. "These tariffs will have real effects on the farm side if they get implemented."

Linville said Trump is known for using tariffs as an "economic weapon," but for a commodity market like fertilizer the benefits aren't likely to outweigh the consequences.

"A lot of times, the farmer of the country that implements the tariff is really the one that pays the price," he said. "We are going to have to watch that because it could have an adverse effect on our pricing."

On the other hand, Linville said the world "enjoyed a sense of peace" during Trump's first term with fewer wars and global conflicts from 2016 to 2020, compared to recent years.

"On the flip side, I am very hopeful that if he can bring back a period of tranquility, we can see markets start to calm down, trade flows return back to normal and get prices back to historic norms," he said.



(PHOTO BY ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU)

Declining production of urea in China and Europe could pressure prices for fertilizer, including anhydrous ammonia, in the U.S. in the months ahead.

Linville said as always it will be important for farmers to convey their fertilizer intentions to suppliers in 2025 so they can plan accordingly.

"I understand it's easy to want to bury your head in the sand in these kinds of times, but we need to have more information flowing than less," he said.

And despite a hefty delay to the fall 2024 fertilizer application season, Linville expects the num-

ber of spring applications to be about normal.

"It was probably one of the most unorthodox fall application seasons we've ever seen," he said. "The first several weeks of November, hardly anybody across the Midwest turned a wheel."

But he said the weather opened a window around Thanksgiving and Midwestern farmers took advantage of it.

"We surveyed the in-

dustry, and I think we hit about 90% of what our expected fall run was," Linville said. "So that is fortunately keeping that horror story that we were talking about for springtime off the table."

Fertilizer prices in Illinois averaged between \$650 and \$775 per ton for anhydrous ammonia as of Dec. 27, up an average of \$9.46 from the previous two weeks, according to the Illinois Production

Cost Report. Prices ranged from \$679 to \$760 per ton for diammonium phosphate (up \$3.33), \$400 to \$525 for potash (down slightly) and \$525 to \$554 for urea (unchanged) as of the same date.

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

NASA invests in U of I doctoral student's grassland research

BY HANNAH SPANGLER
FARMWEEK

A University of Illinois doctoral candidate received a \$150,000 investment from NASA to create a detailed grassland map using remote sensing.

Wendy Dorman, the recipient of the prestigious three-year research grant, plans to map grassland habitats across Illinois — where 99% of the prairies have vanished.

Her goals include finding out which habitat features are most important for endangered birds to maximize best practices to protect them in the small amount of grassland available.

"I've been really frustrated by the lack of available data to use when trying to understand what's happening to birds," Dorman said, adding that current research is not at the level needed for making management decisions and conducting effective modeling.

Dorman will use remote sensing, which involves using satellite imagery to collect information, to produce a high-quality map of the cold and warm season grasses in grasslands across the state.

She believes this will help provide targeted

support to individual bird species based on their survival needs.

"It's important for conservation and for management and wildlife or other environmental reasons that we have a good idea of where grasslands are and what their qualities are," said Mike Ward, U of I professor in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences (NRES).

The research can also benefit farmers enrolling in conservation programs and help enhance habitats for birds like quail and pheasants, Ward explained. The detailed maps can show where to place grasslands to maximize agricultural and new environmental benefits.

Ward told FarmWeek that the use of remote sensing in grasslands is a lot like the use of precision technology in agriculture. They are working with small amounts of grassland and using technology to optimize conservation practices.

"A strategic placement of habitat can go a long way," he said. "Right now, it's kind of overwhelming to have so much information and so much data. But as we go on, all this information will keep on coming in and we'll be able to do a better job of



(PHOTO BY CATRINA RAWSON/FARMWEEK)

A University of Illinois doctoral student plans to map the grassland habitat across Illinois.

managing our resources."

Research has already started on a small scale, and Dorman and her team are preparing to ramp things up. This semester, she will work with students from natural resources and environmental sciences,

computer science and physics to bring together the different disciplines needed for the project.

She hopes to have preliminary results around March or April before moving into fieldwork throughout the spring and summer. The fieldwork

will help compare satellite data with real-life observations.

"You need to actually physically go into the field and see what is on the ground," Dorman said. "We don't just trust the models that we produce, we compare them against

what's actually in the field."

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

Byron Masons to hold Spaghetti Dinner March 1

BYRON — "Mom, you're great. We are going to take you out for dinner!" What better way to enjoy a winter's evening than to attend Byron Lodge #274 A.F. & A.M. Spaghetti Dinner. The 3rd Annual Spaghetti Dinner will be

held Saturday, March 1 from 5-8 p.m. at the Masonic Temple on North Illinois Route 2 and Ashelford Drive (4771 Ashelford Drive). The Masons will serve spaghetti and meatballs, mostaccioli, salad, garlic bread and beverages.

Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$8 for children 10 and under, and may be purchased from any Mason or at the door. Proceeds will go toward the Lodge's philanthropic endeavors and Lodge maintenance.

Byron Masonic Lodge

is the oldest continuous organization in Byron having been formally constituted Oct. 21, 1858. The Lodge is celebrating its 167th anniversary this year. The Byron Lodge supports the community through donations to such

organizations as Masonic Charities Fund, Byron High School Academic Bowl, People Helping People (Byron Food Pantry), and Ogle County Hospice, among others. Thus, the members of Byron Lodge #274 not only serve the

community by setting a good example as citizens, but also improve the lives of future generations and care for the elderly.

For further information contact Sean Hosseini Michael Thomas at 815-509-1456.

4-C Teddy Bear Picnic is March 6 at Flag-Rochelle Public Library

ROCHELLE — 4-C Community Coordinated Child Care family enrichment program invites the community to its Teddy Bear Picnic event on

Thursday, March 6 at the Flag-Rochelle Public Library at 619 4th Ave. from 10:30-11:30 a.m. downstairs.

Join 4-C for crafts, stories

and songs. Dress up a teddy bear or bring your favorite. Snacks will be provided. Funding provided by the Illinois State Board of Education and

United Way.

4-C offers a play and learn group from 10:30-11:30 a.m. on the first and third Thursday of the month. The events

are free for families with children ages birth to five years. The events always take place at the Flag-Rochelle Public Library at 619 4th Ave.

downstairs. Join 4-C for story time, music, singing, dancing and crafts. For more information, contact Starr at 815-859-6716.



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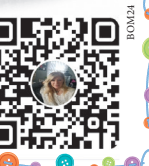
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Check our website & facebook
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LOCAL NEWS

NICI announces new name: Nicor Illinois Community Investment

CHICAGO — Northern Illinois Community Initiatives, one of the foundations supported by Nicor Gas, is proud to announce its new name as Nicor Illinois Community Investment (NICI). NICI was formed with contributions from Nicor Gas and its parent Southern Company Gas in 2021 to directly support economic impact in under-resourced communities in Northern Illinois. NICI's new name signifies the growing impact of the foundation since its inception, retaining the signature logo and shorthand acronym that are familiar to its partners, while more closely collaborating with Nicor Gas in economic and community development across Northern Illinois. NICI fosters year-over-year growth by helping nonprofits, small businesses, entrepreneurs and community organizations establish

strong foundations for continued success. The change to Nicor Illinois Community Investment represents NICI's dedication to enduring, substantial contributions — an impact that NICI seeks not just to initiate, but sustain. "Since our inception, NICI's investments in small business and community resilience across Northern Illinois cultivates economic opportunity that has otherwise been inaccessible to communities like South Suburban Chicago, Rockford and Joliet — communities that have seen opportunities and resources lessen and shift throughout recent decades," says Tovah McCord, executive director. "NICI provides the building blocks for these communities to thrive." Each year, NICI commits \$1 million through \$100,000 grants for high-impact community

projects and other programs that support small businesses, entrepreneurs and other critical support for communities in need of targeted assistance. NICI's impact addresses three main areas: Economic mobility through programs designed to empower individuals and improve financial stability, commercial development through investments in local businesses that strengthen community infrastructure and small business support through resources and funding for small businesses, particularly those led by women and minority entrepreneurs. "For 160 years, Nicor Gas has been an essential part of the Northern Illinois community, supporting its development and understanding its unique needs," says Wendell Dallas, president and CEO of Nicor Gas and NICI board chair. "The name change reflects

the alignment of NICI's philanthropic goals and the needs of Nicor Gas customers. We are excited about the lasting, positive impact that will result from this collaboration." NICI's investment strategy is informed by insights from local leaders and community members, ensuring that its initiatives meet the evolving needs of Northern Illinois communities. NICI's programs remain flexible and responsive to the unique challenges and goals of each community it serves. Through collaboration with Nicor Gas and Southern Company Gas, Nicor Illinois Community Investment will continue building on its achievements, scaling its impact to support a more economically resilient and equitable Illinois. NICI looks forward to sharing more of the foundation's exciting plans for 2025 and outlook for

the future of the communities it serves. Learn more about Nicor Illinois Community Investment, read about the foundation's impact and stay up to date with NICI's growth at www.nici-il.org. **About Nicor Illinois Community Investment** Nicor Illinois Community Investment is a foundation established by Nicor Gas in 2021 to deepen its commitment to underserved communities. NICI invests in organizations that are doing transformative work that fosters economic mobility of historically marginalized groups. Through our grant portfolio and small business program, we strive to be a dedicated champion of economic opportunity. NICI takes a place-based approach to ensure funding goes where it is needed most. We provide multi-year commitments to our prioritized com-

munities and seek to collaborate with local stakeholders to leverage our impact. **About Nicor Gas** Nicor Gas is one of four natural gas distribution companies of Southern Company Gas, a wholly owned subsidiary of Southern Company (NYSE: SO), and serves 2.3 million customers in more than 650 communities across northern Illinois. Ranked as a Crain's 2024 Best Place to Work in Chicago and Most Trusted Utility Brand by Escalent, Nicor Gas is fueling customer choice, innovation, economic growth and a sustainable energy future. Nicor Gas is committed to a goal of net zero emissions from its operations by 2050, and we are working to keep bills as low as possible as we continue providing access to safe and reliable natural gas. For more information, visit nicorgas.com.

County Residential Electronics Recycling Collection Event is Feb. 28

OREGON — The Ogle County Solid Waste Management Department (OCSWMD) will be hosting a residential electronics recycling event on Friday, Feb. 28 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@oglecountyil.gov and provide your name, address, phone number and email address by 4 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 27. Accepted items in-

clude all 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 large or bulky items per permit

and one permit per county 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 elec-

tronic 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.

Local Oregon students named to Loras College Dean's list for Fall 2024

DUBUQUE, Iowa — The following Loras College students were recognized for academic achievement during the

recent semester by Dr. Donna Heald, Loras College provost and academic dean. To be eligible, a student must earn a mini-

mum grade-point average of 3.50 for the term and be a full-time student taking at least 12 graded credits (pass/fail courses are ex-

cluded). The Dean's List is compiled at the completion of each semester. Freshman — Anthony C. Bauer. Freshman —

Alexis E. Ebert. Senior — Andrew T. Herbst. Furthermore, while excelling in their academic pursuits, Anthony and

Andrew are members of the wrestling team, while Alexis contributes her talents to the volleyball team.



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2.59



Kretschmar Brand BLACK FOREST HAM
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6.99 lb



Deli Made DEVILED EGG POTATO SALAD

4.99 lb



Deli Fresh Daily Menu

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8 PIECE FRIED CHICKEN **\$8.99**

TUESDAY **\$4.59**
CHICKEN POT PIE

WEDNESDAY **\$5.55**
5 LEGS, 5 THIGHS FRIED CHICKEN

THURSDAY **\$6.99**
1/2 BUCKET SPAGHETTI

FRIDAY
1 PIECE COD DINNER W/ COLE SLAW & POTATO SALAD **\$5.99**

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