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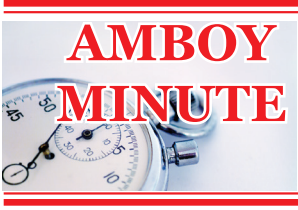
The Amboy News

Amboy, Illinois

Volume 171 - Number 8

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Madigan guilty of bribery as split verdict punctuates ex-speaker's fall

CHICAGO – Former Democratic Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan, the longest-serving legislative leader in U.S. history, has joined the list of Illinois political figures who've been convicted on public corruption charges after a federal jury Wednesday, Feb. 12 found him guilty on 10 of 23 counts.

But the jury, which deliberated for roughly 65 hours over two weeks following a marathon three months of evidence and testimony, was split in its verdict on Wednesday. Jurors acquitted the former speaker on seven other charges and ultimately deadlocked on six counts, on which U.S. District Judge John Blakey declared a mistrial.



Michael Madigan, former Democratic Illinois House Speaker, walks to the courthouse with his two daughters to receive a guilty verdict. Photo contributed

Madigan's co-defendant, veteran Springfield lobbyist Mike McClain, walked free after the jury deadlocked on those same charges. Prosecutors had alleged the

ex-speaker and McClain – his close friend dating back to the 1970s when they were young legislators in the Illinois House – ran a “criminal enterprise” meant

to preserve and enhance Madigan's political power, in addition to enriching them and their allies. But the jury did not return a verdict in the overarching racketeering charge against the two men. They also failed to agree on five other corruption counts concerning alleged bribery schemes involving telecom giant AT&T Illinois and a proposed apartment complex on state-owned land in Chicago's Chinatown neighborhood.

Jurors did find Madigan guilty on three separate bribery counts involving no-work contracts for the former speaker's allies at electric utility Commonwealth Edison. While the jury convicted Madigan on wire fraud

and Travel Act violation counts related to an alleged scheme to help get Chicago alderman-turned-FBI mole Danny Solis appointed to a lucrative state board position, jurors acquitted him of the bribery charge pertaining to the same alleged scheme.

Madigan exited the courthouse soon after the verdict, declining to comment to a reporter while still upstairs but shaking his hand and smiling before getting onto an elevator down to the lobby. The former speaker continued to ignore reporters' questions while he, his attorneys and two of his daughters walked across the street from the courthouse in the falling snow.

See **Madigan** page A3

“Tragedy...or Blessing?” asks the Busches

By Brandon LaChance
Amboy News Editor

WESTBROOKLYN—We all have a COVID-19 story to tell.

We remember where we were when the pandemic first hit the United States of America and how it affected our lives from March 2020 until...now.

Steve Busche wanted to tell the story of his and his wife Doreen Busche. The book, “Tragedy...or Blessing?” is about Doreen's near death experience, how Steve and other family members went through the time period, and how God was with them throughout.

“My aunt, Sandy Theis, kept telling me I needed to tell our story and then more family told me I should write a book,” Steve Busche said. “It took me almost a year to write. It was difficult to relive everything. It's still difficult to talk about. It's a memoir. It's about our faith and God's grace. Doreen is a miracle. People who don't believe in miracles, just come meet her.

“She shouldn't be here. When people read the book, people are going to ask, ‘How is she still alive?’ I had to give DNR (do not resuscitate) instructions. Talk about a crushing experience. She is my lifelong partner.

“I had no intention of



Bandit, the Dotson, center, was there for all of Doreen, left, and Steve Busche's struggle with COVID-19. Steve wrote “Tragedy...or Blessing?” to tell their story through the pandemic and how faith powered a recovery.

Brandon LaChance/Amboy News

publishing the book at all until several people read the book. They continuously told me to publish after they read. After I got some feedback, I thought we may have something here that could touch other people's lives.”

In August 2021, Doreen Busche was 59 and Steve Busche was 60.

The couple which has now been married for 18 years had heard about COVID-19, knew what it

was, and had no idea how it was about to change their lives.

“Back in August of 2021, we went to Disney World with one of our kids and their family. This was when there was still a lot of unknowns about COVID-19,” said Steve Busche, who proposed to Doreen when she was still in high school and the two were married after she graduated in May 1982.

See **Busche** page A9



Slots R Us Lounge, located at the southwest corner of Rt. 30 and Rt. 52 outside of Amboy, welcomes you to relax and have fun.

Brandon LaChance/Amboy News

Hang out, eat, drink, play at Slots R Us Lounge

By BRANDON LaCHANCE
Amboy News Editor

AMBOY – Gary and Lisa Mason grew up on Robbins Road.

The former neighbors began dating nine years ago and have been married for the last three years and own a house on Robbins Road.

When it came time for Gary to retire and close his painting business, which Lisa also worked at, the couple knew they had to find something else to do.

Slots R Us Lounge, located at 1573 Rt. 30 outside of Amboy (the southwest corner of Rt. 30 and Rt. 52), was born.

“We own an estate sale company

where we buy out estates. Our original plan was to bring stuff here to sell, like a thrift store,” Gary Mason said. “We were talking to a Lee County deputy, and he asked, ‘Have you ever thought about gaming? This would be a perfect corner.’ He owns one in Rock Falls and it is successful.

“We looked for properties for quite some time for the estate sale company. The right place just didn't come into play. We discussed this location for two years before we actually made a deal. When I was working on the building, getting it ready for the estate sale company, there was non-stop traffic.

See **Slots R Us** page A3

Trump gives Blagojevich full pardon from sentencing of 18 corruption counts

SPRINGFIELD – President Donald Trump on Monday, Feb. 10 granted a full pardon to former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich, who was convicted on 18 corruption counts, including for his attempt to sell President-elect Barack Obama's U.S. Senate seat in 2008 – and who holds the distinction of being the state's only impeached governor.

Trump's pardon comes five years after he commuted Blagojevich's 14-year prison sentence in February 2020, sending the disgraced ex-governor home from lockup in a low-security Colorado facility six years early.

Both in the leadup to commuting Blagojevich's sentence and on Monday, Trump used the former Democrat's criminal case as a way to discount the myriad investigations, indictments and convictions he's faced, even as a U.S. Supreme Court ruling last year granted him immunity from criminal liability for his official acts.

Signing the pardon in the Oval Office on

Monday evening, Trump falsely claimed Blagojevich was “set up by a lot of bad people – some of the same people that I had to deal with.”

The president then said he didn't know Blagojevich but added as an afterthought that “I believe he was on ‘The Apprentice,’” referring to the NBC reality TV show he hosted through 2015.

Blagojevich was “fired” on the fourth episode of “The Celebrity Apprentice” in 2010 during a media blitz the out-of-work governor went on after his indictment in an attempt to sell his narrative.

Blagojevich served six years as governor before his December 2008 arrest and his subsequent impeachment in January 2009.

Though his first trial ended in a hung jury on 23 of 24 counts, he was ultimately convicted in 2011 on charges ranging from shaking down a children's hospital executive and a racetrack owner for campaign dona-

tions to the attempted Senate seat sale, for which the governor held appointment power.

In a now-infamous wiretapped call after Obama's election to the White House, Blagojevich referred to his soon-to-be-vacated post in the Senate as “f—— golden,” telling an adviser that he didn't intend on “giving it up for f—— nothing.”

Blagojevich attempted to extract value from the appointment, including seeking campaign cash, high-paying jobs for both himself and his wife Patti, and an appointment to Obama's future presidential cabinet – or an ambassadorship.

Sixteen years later, Blagojevich may finally get that ambassadorship.

Trump is considering appointing Blagojevich as ambassador to his family's native Serbia, according to a report last week from POLITICO.

See **Blagojevich** page A5

LOCAL NEWS



Amboy High School Report Janet Crownhart, Principal

This week, students in anatomy were able to dissect a cow's heart. This will continue into next week, but it was a great way to celebrate Valentine's Day.

Mr. Browne's physical science classes were also busy putting together parallel series circuits. After

learning about them for the past couple of weeks, they are now using that learning to put them together to make lights turn on.

Special thanks to Allied Locke for hosting a tour for our agriculture students. About 25 students had the opportunity to walk through Allied Locke, see

what types of jobs they have available, talk to current employees, and see the work in progress.

In the photo on the left, left to right, Dominic Fonderoli, Kiera Karlson, and Bella Yanos showcase the cow heart they're dissecting. In the photo on the right, Amboy High School students tour Allied Locke.

CGH to host Nursing Lunch & Learn for new RN/LPN graduates

STERLING – Don't miss out on an exciting opportunity to grow, learn and network.

CGH Medical Center will host a Nursing Lunch & Learn for new RN/LPN graduates from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 20 in the CGH Ryberg Auditorium, 100 E. LeFevre Road, Sterling.

Guest speakers from CGH will

present information on their departments and open positions. Human Resources will be available to assist with questions about applications and will have computers available for same-day applications. Employment benefits at CGH include an excellent benefits package, sign-on bonuses for various positions, paid time off, continuing education support, and

more! Candidates that apply on the day of the event and are hired as a CGH team member will receive a gift.

For more information contact Dana Conkrite at (815) 564-4845 or email dana.conkrite@cghmc.com. For a complete listing of career opportunities, visit www.cghmc.com/careers.

Grow your gardening knowledge this spring in Dixon

DIXON – The 14th annual Ready, Set, Grow Gardening Workshop will be held on Saturday, March 29 at Sauk Valley Community College, 173 Rt. 2 in Dixon.

Doors open at 8:30 a.m. with the keynote presentation beginning at 9 a.m.

Join keynote speaker, experienced landscape designer, and horticulturalist, Kim Hartman, as she unveils the secrets to shade-loving plants, including fresh and exciting new options, to transform your garden into a stunning sanctuary.

Then, choose from en-

gaging breakout sessions on landscape design, living harmoniously with wildlife, growing Africa violets, exploring new vegetables and so much more.

This event is hosted by University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners from Carroll, Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside counties. Registration before March 15 is required and can be completed by mail or online at go.illinois.edu/RSG2025.

The cost to attend is \$25 and includes the keynote presentation, two breakout sessions, an optional greenhouse tour, and

resources to take home. There will also be ample time for networking with fellow gardeners.

If you will need an accommodation in order to participate, please call the Ogle County Extension Office at 815-732-2191. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your access needs.

About Extension: University of Illinois Extension develops educational programs, extends knowledge, and builds partnerships to support people, communities, and their environments as

part of the state's land-grant institution. Extension serves as the leading public outreach effort for University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences in all 102 Illinois counties through a network of 27 multi-county units and over 700 staff statewide. Extension's mission is responsive to eight strategic priorities — community, economy, environment, food and agriculture, health, partnerships, technology and discovery, and workforce excellence.

Camp Tuckabatchee partners with Starved Rock Country Community Foundation

OTTAWA – As it approaches its 100th anniversary, Camp Tuckabatchee has partnered with the Starved Rock Country Community Foundation to ensure its sustainability for generations.

The Camp Tuckabatchee Charitable Fund at SRCCF will support much-needed building and property maintenance on its 210-acres of wooded hills and creek valleys north of Ottawa.

"For generations, the camp has been enriching the lives of children through nature experiences in a technology-free environment.

For many campers it's the first time they experience trail hiking, canoeing, storytelling and campfire cooking," said SRCCF President Fran Brolley.

"We are honored to play a small role in helping secure the camp's future. However, with aging cabins, lodges, roads, and bridges in dire need of renovation, it faces significant challenges," Brolley said. "Public support is needed to preserve this beloved institution," he added. "By giving generously, donors will ensure 'Camp Tuck's' rich traditions endure."

To contribute to the fund, visit <https://srccf.org/fund/camp-tuckabatchee-agency-charitable-fund>.

Established in 1927 as a Camp Fire Girls site, it transitioned to a boys and girls summer youth camp in the late 1980s.

Camp Tuckabatchee Board President Adrienne Pike said funding for the camp, a nonprofit 501(c)3, comes from donations, camp fees, rentals and fundraising events such as Haunted Camp and Comedy Night. A year-long series of events are being planned for its centennial celebration in 2027.



WACC January Student of the Month is Kiera Karlson

Kiera Karlson, a junior at Amboy High School, was named the January Student of the Month at Whiteside Area Career Center in Sterling. Karlson, the daughter of Chris and Cindy Karlson, is studying allied health at WACC.

Photo contributed

Pankhurst Memorial Library February programs

AMBOY – There are plenty of events happening at the Pankhurst Memorial Library in Amboy during the month of February.

From painting to reading to crocheting to being a mom or a child, there is something for you.

Here is what is on the February schedule for Pankhurst Memorial Library:

- Crochet Club** – 5:30-6:15 p.m. Feb. 19
- Book Club** – 5-6 p.m. Feb. 24
- Mommy & Me** – 10-10:45 a.m. every Tuesday
- Lego/Craft Club** – 11 a.m.-1 p.m. every Saturday

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LOCAL NEWS

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

AMBOY – You are invited to join fellow senior citizens for a free exercise program at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 960 US Highway 52, Amboy. Sessions are held Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10 a.m. Chairs are provided for an approximate 30-minute workout. For more information, call Chris at 815-857-3963.

AMBOY – The Amboy Lions Club meeting will be at 6 p.m. Monday, Feb. 24 at the Amboy Community Center, located at 280 W. Wasson Rd. The Lions Club meetings take place the second and fourth Monday of every month.

AMBOY – The City of Amboy committee meeting will be held at 6 p.m. Monday, March 3 at the Community Center, 280 W. Wasson Rd. The meetings take place the first Monday of every month.

SUBLETTE – The next Village of Sublette meeting is at 7 p.m. Monday, March. 10 at the Ellice Dinges Center at 202 S. West Street in Sublette.

EAST GROVE – East Grove Township is holding its next meeting at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 11 at the East Grove Township Hall.

AMBOY – The Board of Trustees of The Amboy Township will meet at 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 12 at the Amboy Township Building, located at 106 South Prospect St. in Amboy.

PAW PAW – The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Paw Paw will commence at 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 12 at the Paw Paw Village Hall.

LEE CENTER – The Lee Center Township meeting

Madigan continued from page A1 –

As the courtroom deputy read the jury's verdict Wednesday morning, the 82-year-old Madigan sat stone-faced at the head of his defense table in U.S. District Judge John Blakey's wood-paneled courtroom – the same spot he's spent nearly every weekday since early October when jury selection for the trial began.

McClain was similarly stoic while the verdict was read but appeared to get emotional after his family members got teary-eyed when it became clear the jury had deadlocked on the McClain-specific counts.

His attorney, Patrick Cotter, briefly addressed reporters on his way out of the courthouse, saying McClain – who was already convicted for his role in ComEd's Madigan-focused bribery scheme in 2023 – was walking out of court the same way he walked in: "as an innocent

man."

Asked if he was surprised by the verdict, McClain replied, "I was surprised when I was indicted."

"My head is spinning," he added before Cotter steered him out of the media gaggle.

The jury's decision comes four years since Madigan mostly stepped away from politics, having been forced to give up his speaker's gavel amid growing pressure from his own Democratic House caucus in January 2021 as a federal criminal investigation into his inner circle drew nearer. In the weeks that followed his demotion back to a mere state representative, the former speaker would also resign from the legislative seat he'd held for five decades and from his position as chair of the state's Democratic Party.

will be held at 8 p.m. Thursday, March 13.

AMBOY – The Amboy City Council will meet at 6 p.m. on Monday, March 17 at the Amboy Community Center, 290 W. Wasson Road. The council meets every third Monday each month.

AMBOY – The Amboy/Lee Center Multi-Township meeting will take place at 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 19 at the Amboy Township building, located at 106 South Prospect Ave.

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Fish Dinner



Friday March 21st 4:30pm-7:00pm

\$15.00/plate dine in or carry out

Buy tickets in advance from any AFD member or call 815-857-2325 to get tickets!

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All Editorial Deadline: noon Friday



Lisa Mason, left, and Gary Mason opened Slots R Us Lounge in October.
Brandon LaChance/Amboy News

Slots R Us continued from page A1

"We decided to look into what the deputy said. Also, it's two miles from our house. We could walk to Slots R Us if we wanted to."

Lisa immediately did the research.

When Slots R Us seemed to be a financial gain, the gaming lounge trumped the estate company to land the location.

"I looked up the numbers. Numbers don't lie. I went to Gary and said, 'We would be stupid not to open up gaming,'" Lisa Mason said. "Once he retired, we were looking for something for him to do because he isn't going to just stop doing everything. He needed to find something to do, and it wasn't the estates. Moving furniture up and down stairs wasn't a good idea.

"Slots R Us came at the right time and the right location."

The lounge was open during Amboy Depot Days 2024, but the six gaming machines and the full bar didn't open until October 4.

Slots R Us has a cozy feel with a TV for games and entertainment, iTunes, Maria's Pizzas, an outdoor bar, and bonfire pits. In the fall, the Masons had an event with 15 bouncy houses and they held a haunted attraction for Halloween where Teen Turf sold hot chocolate.

A permanent band stage is in the works as many events are planned for the spring, summer and beyond.

The Masons want Slots R Us Lounge to always be a happening place for games, food, drinks, enjoyment.

"A lot of people don't think they're going to see what they see when they walk in the door. People who saw the place before

we got it, are amazed," Gary Mason said. "The person who used to run auctions here is amazed at what we did here. We did a lot of the work ourselves, but we had to have an electrician do the electrical work and we had a licensed plumber. Everything had to be updated including the air conditioner, furnace, lighting, and wiring. This is a labor of love. We spent a lot of nights here.

"We've put a lot of time and money into the place already. It was a dive when we bought it. We basically had to start from scratch. The last business that was in the building was tractor consignments. They had sales here a couple of times a year and they used the building for storage. The feedback has been fantastic. I tell people this is an extension of my living room. I want them to be comfortable. This is not a rowdy place. It's a calm place. The numbers have been great and we're doing better than we anticipated. We can't ask for much more than that.

"The community has been outstanding for helping us out."

Lisa elaborates about the community being supportive.

"I had my goals set and we've already passed them," Lisa Mason said. "If it wasn't for our family and friends, we wouldn't be where we are with Slots R Us.

"They really helped us and have supported us. They have went over and beyond."

The open hours for Slots R Us Lounge are noon-11 p.m. Monday-Thursday, noon-1 a.m. Friday and Saturday, and noon-10 p.m. on Sundays.

Email news items
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OBITUARIES

OBITUARIES

Earl A. Kessel Oct. 10, 1958 - Feb. 12, 2025

AMBOY—Earl A. Kessel, 66, of Amboy, passed away on Wednesday Feb. 12, 2025 at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center in Peoria.

Cremation rites have been accorded with a celebration of life to be held at a later date. A memorial has been established to the family. Arrangements by the Mihm-Jones Funeral Home in Amboy. Condolences can be left at www.thejonesfh.com.

Kessel was born Oct. 10, 1958 in Amboy; the son of Donald and Vera Joan (Cook) Kessel. Earl worked for Consolidated Grain and

Barge for 21 years. Earl married Vicki Huyett July 28, 1984 at Shaw Station.

Earl A. Kessel is preceded in death by his parents. He is survived by his wife Vicki, children Corey Kessel of Amboy, Tiffany (Dominic) Carrico of Princeton, Ashley (Bryan) Busche of Manchester TN, five grandchildren, Chase Stewart, Oliver Carrico, Sawyer Carrico, Emerson Busche, Adalyn Busche, and one brother Don (Julie) Kessel of Sublette.

He was a proud father and “Papa” who was determined to defy the odds despite the challenges that



laid ahead of him. He lived a rich life well spent with family, fishing, welding, and tinkering in the garage. He was a caring neighbor and social being who never met a stranger.

Diana J. Hoyle Aug. 9, 1953 - Feb. 15, 2025

OREGON — Diana J. Hoyle, 71, of Dixon passed away on Saturday Feb. 15, 2025 at Serenity Hospice and Home in Oregon.

Cremation rites have been accorded with a memorial service to be held at 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 21, 2025 at the Mihm-Jones Funeral Home in Amboy. Visitation will be from 3-5 p.m. Friday Feb. 21, 2025 at the Mihm Jones Funeral Home in Amboy.

A memorial has been established to Sinnissippi Centers. Arrangements by the Mihm-Jones Funeral Home in Amboy. Condolences can be left at www.thejonesfh.com.

Hoyle was born on Aug. 9, 1953 in Dixon, the daughter of Wayne and

Betty (Jones) Hoyle. Diana was educated in drug and alcohol counseling, she was a typesetter, paralegal, and obtained her real estate license before attending the nursing program at Sauk Valley Community College and obtaining her LPN. Hoyle worked at several area Assisted Living Facilities. She was a big fan of Elvis Presley and Michael Jackson. Diana was a friend of Bill and had 38 years of sobriety.

Hoyle is preceded in death by her parents, brother Joseph Hoyle, two grandchildren Kelly Michelle, and Ryan Keith. She is survived by her children Melanie (Tom) Beilke of Dixon, Michelle (R.J.) Anderson of Amboy,



Ryan (Cassie) Hubbell of Dixon, Sherilyn Hoyle of Amboy, Sarah (Kraig) Elkins of Wichita Falls, Texas, 13 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, one sister Carol Biester of Rock Falls, two brothers Ron (Kalah) Hoyle of Malta, Doug Hoyle of Dixon, and many nieces and nephews.

Gloria E. Gabelmann March 11, 1959 - Feb. 17, 2025

AMBOY — Gloria E. Gabelmann, 65, of Amboy passed quietly at home Monday Feb. 17, 2025 after a 10-year battle with cancer.

Cremation rites have been accorded. Private memorial services will be held by family in Texas and Illinois at a later date. Arrangements by the Mihm-Jones Funeral Home in Amboy. Online condolences can left at www.thejonesfh.com

Gabelman was born March 11, 1959 in San Antonio, Texas, the daughter of Joe and Gloria (Somoano) Sanchez. She married Michael Gabelmann July 4, 2015 in Franklin Grove.

She moved to Illinois from Texas in 2013 to be with Mike. Gloria retired from Wahl Clipper in 2024, a job she loved, and a place where she made many friends. She enjoyed traveling, especially to Virginia every year for her wedding anniversary. Gloria also

liked riding the motorcycle, reading, crafting, music and going to the movies. Her smile would light up a room and make other people smile when they saw her.

Gabelmann was preceded in life by her parents and is survived by her husband Mike, children Rudy (Anne) Alcocer of San Antonio, Texas, Elizabeth (Chad Christofferson) Flores of San Antonio, Texas, Karli (Matt) Schmitt of Rock Falls, Lucas (Samantha O'Brien) Gabelmann of Mendota, four grandchildren Sierra, Destiny, Summer, Calysta, one great-grandson Mateo and step-granddaughter Brooklyn Gabelmann.

Gabelman is also survived by one sister Irene (Albert) Cantu of Oklahoma, her mother-in-law Norma Gabelamn, two brothers-in-law and two sisters-in-law, including Liz (Brian) Wilcox with whom she had a very special relationship.

CGH recognizes DAISY Award winner Crystal Fiegenschuh, RN for Compassionate Care

STERLING — Crystal Fiegenschuh, a registered nurse in the CGH Critical Care Unit, was recently recognized as a recipient of the prestigious DAISY Award for extraordinary nurses.

An international program, the award is presented to nurses around the world who go above and beyond for their patients and demonstrate extraordinary compassionate care.

“My husband has always hated, therefore avoided, anything to do with doctors and hospitals until he became critically ill and was admitted to the CCU in September 2024,” said Megan Hummel, RN, DAISY Award Coordinator, as she read the award nomination. “Since English is his second language, he can become frustrated with all the questions if not given time to respond. The angel, Crystal, changed all that for him and for me during his stay. She was able to make a connection with him and gave him attentive, kind,



very thorough care.

“He cannot stop praising her, even after one week of discharge. Crystal is a Godsend for patients like my husband, and she kept me informed as well. Thank you is not enough. Thank to all the nurses like Crystal, he will willingly return for the care he needs in the future.”

The DAISY Award - an acronym for “Diseases Attacking the Immune System” - was established by the DAISY Foundation in California in memory

of J. Patrick Barnes, who died at age 33 of an autoimmune disease. During his hospitalization, they deeply appreciated the care and compassion shown to Patrick and his entire family.

When he died, they felt compelled to say “thank you” to nurses in a very public way. The DAISY Award continues to recognize and celebrate the outstanding professionalism and compassion that nurses bring to patients and their families every day.

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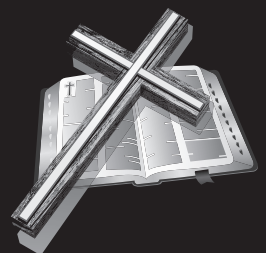
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SOCIAL NEWS



THE PASTOR'S PEN

Rest, take a vacation

By Pastor John Kalebaugh
The Refuge Church

My wife and I recently went on a wonderful vacation to the Caribbean Island of St. Martin. The vacation truly was a blessing in which we give God (and many people) our “thanks” for making it all possible for us to get away. But the waiting process leading up to the trip really started to get hard as we are doing all the last-minute preparation like deciding what clothes to pack and arranging people to regularly check on our house while we are away. Beside the family who were checking on our house and feeding our cats, there was also family members who took us to the airport and picked us up when we got home. While on the island we stayed with the friends who invited us to enjoy their timeshare with them.

Other friends blessed us with the use of their airplane miles while others blessed us financially to help cover our expenses (mostly groceries) while on the island. Truly, the whole trip was a blessing from start to finish that was almost entirely free. There was only a little that we are actually required to do in order to experience all of this, yet that little bit was of the utmost importance. We had to prepare in advance for the trip and then we had to actually go on the trip in order to experience the blessing which was freely given to us. Which reminds me of some verses found in Hebrews, “There remains therefore a rest for the people of God,” and “Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.” (4:9; 4:1).

Jesus Christ did something truly amazing for us that we could in no way do for ourselves. He died a sacrificial death on the cross for our sins. And He has also prepared an amazing, beyond description place which will be waiting for all of us, who freely accept His gift of love and salvation. And just as He has now entered into His rest, He also invites all of us to “enter into His rest.” I shared all of the things about our amazing vacation blessing not to “rub it in,” but to somehow illustrate this text about the amazing gift which was freely given to all of us with faith in Christ. We really do not deserve such a wonderful blessing, but God did it for us because He loves each and every one of us with a love beyond human imagination. But it’s true. And He loves you that much! What an amazing God we serve.

Blagojevich continued from page A1

When he signed the pardon Monday, Trump denied considering Blagojevich for ambassador, but then said it wasn’t out of the cards. “No, but I would (appoint Blagojevich),” Trump said. “He’s now cleaner than anybody in this room.” Since his release from prison in 2020, Blagojevich has called himself a “Trumpocrat,” disavowing his former political party and tying himself closely to Trump. At last summer’s Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, the ex-governor spoke at a “Serbs for Trump” gathering. In a news conference outside of his home on Chicago’s Northwest Side Monday evening, Blagojevich declined to comment on the potential appointment. He was otherwise unrepentant as ever, railing against what he called the “weaponization of prosecutors for political purposes.” Blagojevich maintained that what the FBI caught on wiretapped calls was merely a “routine political deal” – an argument mirrored by attorneys for the ex-governor’s political nemesis, former Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan, who is currently awaiting a verdict in his own corruption trial. Blagojevich declined to comment on Madigan’s case, instead delivering a variation on the same message he’s had since his arrest. “I want to say to the people of Illinois two things,” he said. “No. 1: I never raised your taxes. No. 2: I didn’t do it.” Both Republicans and Democrats were critical of Trump’s commutation decision in 2020, though elected officials were slow to react Monday evening. In a social media post on X, Senate Minority Leader John Curran, R-Downers Grove, said he disagreed with Trump’s decision. “Illinois taxpayers have and continue to be burdened with the cost of public corruption, and this pardon sends the wrong message,” Curran wrote. Illinois’ senior Democratic U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin’s X account posted “In a state with more than its fair share of public corruption, the Blagojevich chapter still looms as one of the worst.” “America and Serbia deserve better,” the post said. Blagojevich was formally disbarred a few months after his release from prison – a move he decried Monday night, calling the Illinois’ attorney disciplinary board “sons of b——.” He also again claimed he had no plans to return to politics, despite having sued in 2021 for the ability to once again run for state or local office in Illinois. But a federal judge last year quoted Dr. Seuss in dismissing the ex-governor’s motion, writing that Blagojevich’s lawsuit wasn’t even filed in the right venue to review the Illinois Senate’s unanimous 2009 vote barring him from ever again holding office in Illinois.

IDPH launches new data dashboard on violent deaths, firearm injuries

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has launched a new dashboard detailing information about all violent deaths and firearm-related injuries in the state. The new dashboard is presented in two parts: Illinois Firearm Injury Rates and Illinois Violent Deaths. It is intended to provide detailed information at the county level about these incidents, including the types of incidents (e.g., homicide, suicide, etc.), weapon type and where victims reside, broken down by county. The goal of the dashboard is to inform data-driven prevention and intervention efforts to reduce violent deaths and firearm injuries in Illinois. “Firearm violence is a public health crisis that requires public health solutions,” said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. “Modernizing how we gather and use data is critical to finding holistic solutions that address firearm violence in a comprehensive way. IDPH is proud to partner with the Joyce Foundation and Understory to build this leading-edge dashboard that gathers comprehensive data about both violent deaths and firearm-related injuries. We look forward to partnering with our statewide and local leaders to use this dashboard to create data-driven policies and plans that make our communities safer and healthier.” The dashboard development was funded through the generous support of The Joyce Foundation, a Chicago-based private, nonpartisan philanthropic organization that invests in public policies and strategies to advance racial equity and economic mobility in Illinois and other states in the Great Lakes Region. The dashboard was designed by Understory Consulting, a research and policy consulting firm that works on issues related to human rights, social justice and equity. Data for the dashboard are sourced from two public health surveillance systems funded by the CDC. The violent death and circumstances data are contributed by the Illinois Violent Death Reporting System (IVDRS) which is operated by Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine. IDPH syndromic surveillance provides the emergency department (ED) visit data with data quality support funded, in part, by CDC’s AVERT (Advancing Violence Epidemiology in Real-Time) grant. IVDRS contributes data on violent deaths in Illinois going back to 2015 and includes data on victim and suspect demographics, circumstances leading up to and including the fatal injury, and toxicology and autopsy results. Syndromic surveillance contributes data from hospital ED visits, covering 185 acute-care hospitals around the state and includes non-fatal firearm injury rates per 100,000 ED visits, and break down aggregated data by age-range, sex, race/ethnicity, and county. Data from counties with fewer than 10 firearms injuries per 100,000 ED visits is suppressed to protect the anonymity of patients.

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Opinion

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances ~ The First Amendment

Rearranging the list of places we don't like to go

We all have our lists of places we don't like to go. Mine includes the grocery store, the Department of Motor Vehicles (better muttered as DMV), the dentist, the hospital, the barbershop (I mean, it's pointless), and the pet store.

However, probably at the top of my list, and yours too, is the services after someone passes away. Usually scheduled over multiple days, a wake, a visitation, a funeral, and the family grieving time surrounding the official events.

Who likes death?

Who likes seeing someone you've had in your life for a considerable amount of time or your entire life laying in a coffin or represented by an object?

Who likes seeing their living loved ones cry or in a miserable state?

The reason none of these questions are on the TV game show Family Feud is because they would be answered the same way by all 100 surveyed people. No one wants to see this things or be a part of the ceremonies.

Unfortunately, we don't have a choice.

We have to honor the fallen the best

way we can and make sure everyone knows how awesome they were and what they will always mean to their family and friends. We have to comfort those who are mourning even if we're mourning ourselves.

This may sound funny, crazy, idealistic, or irrational, or all at the same time, but I remember telling my grandfather, while we were at a funeral when I was a teenager, 'I think we treat deaths like jumping someone.'

I'll never forget his facial expression when I first said this or how I felt really small like I said something stupid. Then I explained.

When someone dies, a family or a group of people who come together for the person, join together in mourning. The camaraderie, the union of those around you lets you know you're not alone, there are people around you to talk to, and usually there is someone trying to make you smile, rub your back, or give you a hug in support.

You might not get a hug when you're part of a physical attack, but in the same fashion as a group coming together to support through loss, those involved in a jumping band together to show support for someone who has been wronged, are assisting in getting something back which was stolen, or are sending an important message.

People were there to help in a significant enough circumstance which caused a situation.

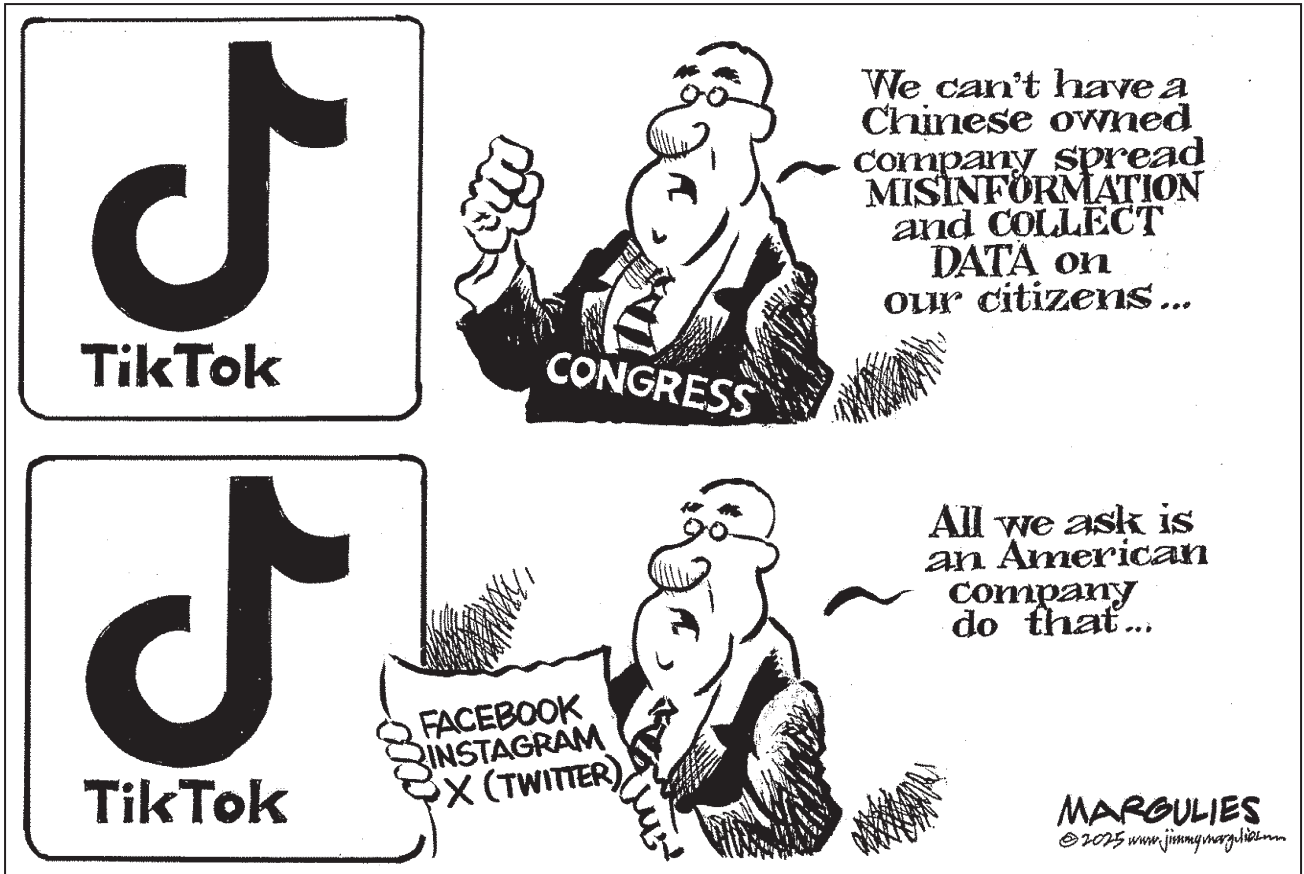
My grandfather looked away for a second and then his gaze came back to my figuratively shrunken stature and said, 'You may have a point. I wouldn't tell it to anyone else, but I understand.'

I was returned to my normal size and we now nod at each other in understanding at any similar event or life happening.

As we get older, we understand the importance of the services. The coming together of family and loved ones. The support of group grieving rather than individual because at the heart of a wake, visitation, and/or funeral,

Column

By Brandon LaChance



ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

100 years ago
Feb. 20, 1925

Amboy Superintendent of Schools Thomas Brew will resign his position June 1 when his present contract terminates. Mr. Brew is leaving Amboy after eight years of faithful work as superintendent to attend the University of Chicago and obtain his master's degree in education.

Fred C. Jewett, who for many years has been associated with his father F.N. Jewett in the barbershop here left for Ashton, where he will take up his new position as assistant to H.L. Goodrow, district manager of the Peoria Life Insurance Company. He will take over the office in Ashton formerly occupied by Mr. Goodrow who will now work out of Chicago.

A.S. Berry, formerly of Amboy and for the last year and a half a resident of Ottawa, purchased the W.L. Long stock of groceries at Sublette from A.W. Miller, Mr. Long's successor. Mr. Berry intends to offer the goods at a large sale in the near future.

75 years ago
Feb. 23, 1950

Harry Bishop, cashier of the Farmers State Bank in Sublette, has purchased the residence on South Mason Avenue, now occupied by

the D.J. McKeowns, from Mrs. O.H. Stegmann of Fort Lauderdale, Fla. The Bishops expect to move to Amboy in April.

Wayne Fagan went to Chicago Sunday to attend the convention of National Retail Clothiers and Furnishers, which was held in the Palmer House.

50 years ago
Feb. 20, 1975

Mike Blackburn of Amboy High School was listed in the final ratings of small schools in the Rockford Morning Star Northern Illinois - Southern Wisconsin wrestling ratings. In the 155-pound weight class, Blackburn was second with 19 wins, one loss and 76 total points.

Darlene Noble, chairwoman of the March of Dimes for 1975, has announced a total of \$637.51 collected in the drive just recently completed in the Amboy area.

Revenge was sweet for the Amboy frosh-soph team as it upset No. 1-ranked Hononegah in overtime at home. The game ended 36-36 and two free throws by Brian Dempsey with 11 seconds to go in overtime gave the victory to coach Don Wyzgowski's club.

Don's Super Valu offers ground beef at .69 cents per pound, boneless top round steak at \$1.49 per pound, Texas grapefruit .8 cents each, orange-

es at .59 cents each, and California navel oranges eight for \$1.

25 years ago
Feb. 17, 2000

Illinois Department of Transportation will open bids for various road and bridge improvement projects located in the tri-county area. A project in Lee County will be four miles of intermittent bituminous resurfacing on Illinois Route 26 between U.S. Route 30 and the Lee/Bureau County line. The roads in the rest area on the road will also be resurfaced.

The Lee County Farm Service Agency in Amboy announce a new program called the Oilseed Program, which was authorized \$475 million by Congress for farmers and ranchers that raise oilseeds as a crop.

Lee County Sheriff Tim Bivins announced that the Illinois Sheriff's Association will be awarding 122 scholarships throughout the state of Illinois to students wishing to pursue higher education during the 2000-01 academic year.

And then there was one. Only Brandon Horner was able to advance from the Byron Wrestling Sectional of the four Amboy Clippers who competed. Horner, a 140-pound grappler with a 32-3 record, will now venture to the state finals at Assembly Hall in Champaign.

they're really meant for the people who are still alive.

The gatherings are meant to comfort those who have lost someone important. They are meant to build a grief foundation and help the living move forward without their loved one.

If you look on Facebook, at a post remembering someone or stating a passing, a majority of the comments read, "Sorry for your loss," "Keep your head up," "My thoughts are with you," and other similar passages.

This is the virtual summary of what happens at the services.

It's about being there for those who need you.

So, although services will always be on my list of places I don't want to go to because the words visitation, wake, or funeral have a negative cogitation, I'll always be there when I'm supposed to be.

I can get around the grocery store by drive thru, Uber Eats, carry out, Door Dash, having someone else go, or not eating. We can now do almost all car and driving matters online. It may be cheaper to knock all of my teeth out and get dentures rather than the routine check ups and the non-routine dentist chair visits. Going to the hospital can be replaced with Tylenol, Ibuprofen, or just dealing with pain. Saving a trip to the barbershop can be remedied by shaving your head and I'll enter any pet store with an old fashioned clothes pin on my nose.

However, I don't want to arrange, get out of, or side-swipe being there for those I love when someone they love or someone we love passes away.

I'm going to rearrange my list.

The Amboy News

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SOMETHING TO SAY?

The Amboy News encourages responsible letters to the editor on subjects of interest to our readers. Editing may be necessary for space, clarity or to avoid obscenity or libel, but ideas will not be altered.

The limit is 300 words. Letters exceeding this will either be edited to fit or not published. The deadline for letters is noon on Friday.

Letter writers may only have two letters published per month, and the letters will be published on non-consecutive weeks. Letters are printed on a space-available basis.

All letters must bear the handwritten signature of the writer and include address and phone number or e-mail address for verification purposes. Neither the street address nor phone number will be printed. Letters should be typed or legibly handwritten, and no anonymous letters will be published.

Any comments of public officials should be limited to issues related strictly to their position or actions made in office, as personal attacks will not be published. Letters involving private disputes between the writer and a business or individual will not be published.

Political endorsements will be published, however letters from candidates endorsing themselves will not be printed.

Letters may be dropped at the Amboy News office, 703 Illinois Ave., Mendota, IL 61342, mailed to the Amboy News at PO Box 300, Mendota, IL 61342, or emailed to blachance@mendotareporter.com.

The Amboy News reserves the right to edit or reject any letter to the editor for any reason, and letters chosen for publication do not necessarily reflect the views of this newspaper, its management and or ownership.

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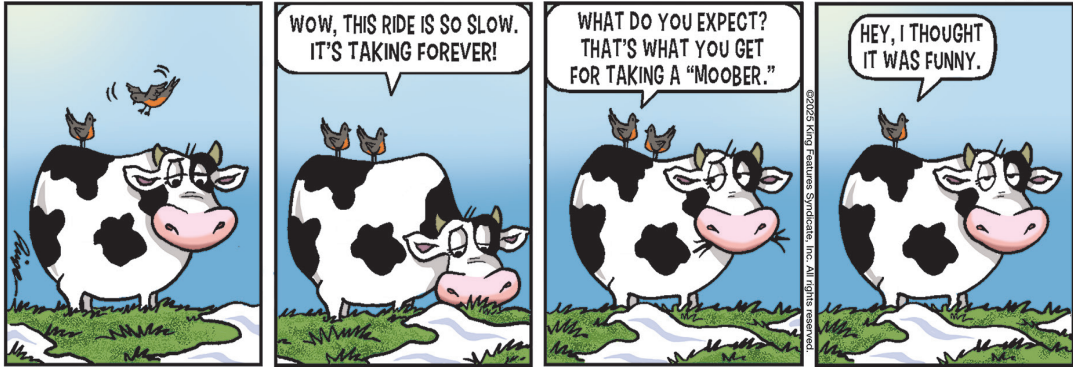
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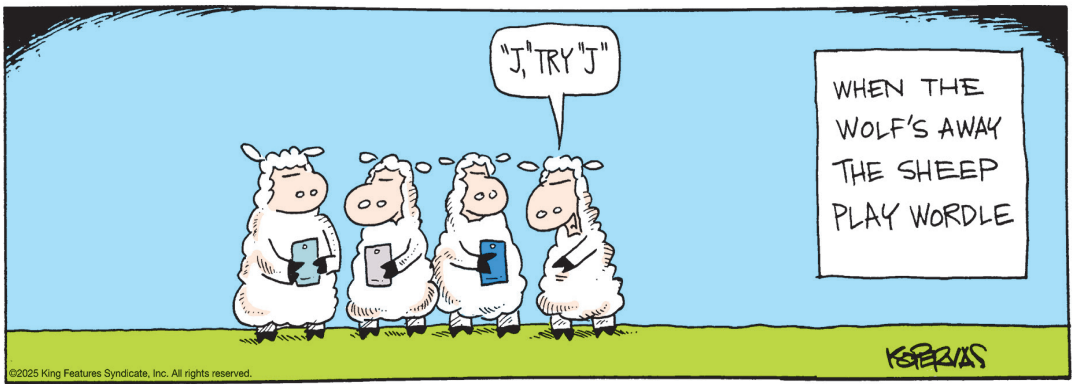
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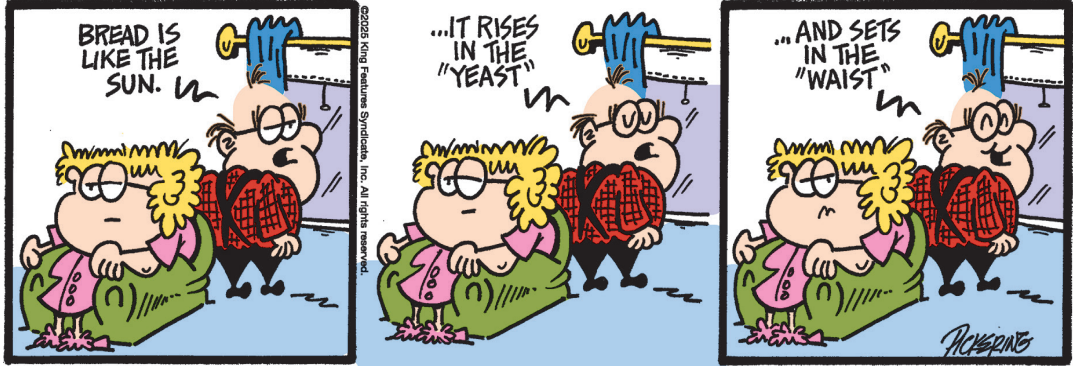
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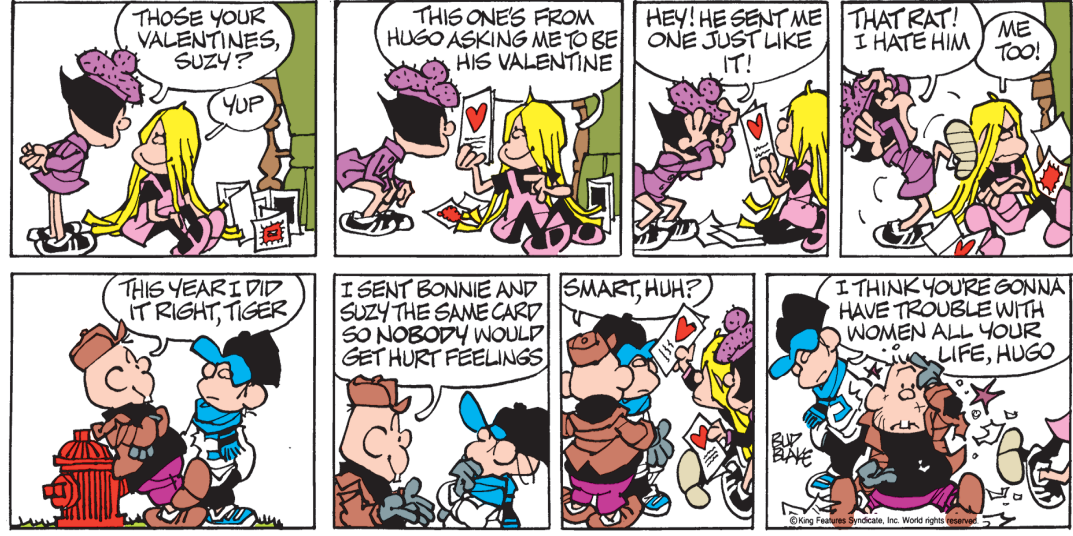
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by Jeff Pickering



TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



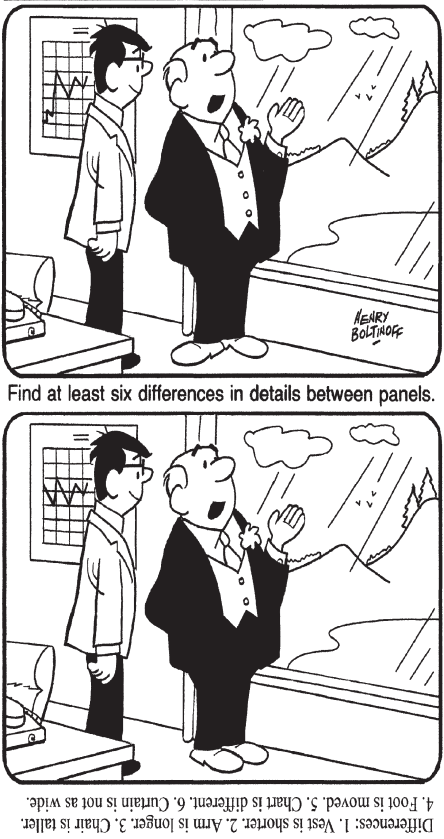
OLIVE

By Emi Burdge



HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



CryptoQuip

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

Clue: R equals T

JERJVK RTPL RVER SOXYBGLW

E HBWR XU SOLULOOLG

FLREHHBJ OBPCBPC WXTPGW:

"FK UEYXOBRL RBPCW."

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SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Trifle LABBED

Bash LAMING

Despise AHOTEL

Strut CRANED

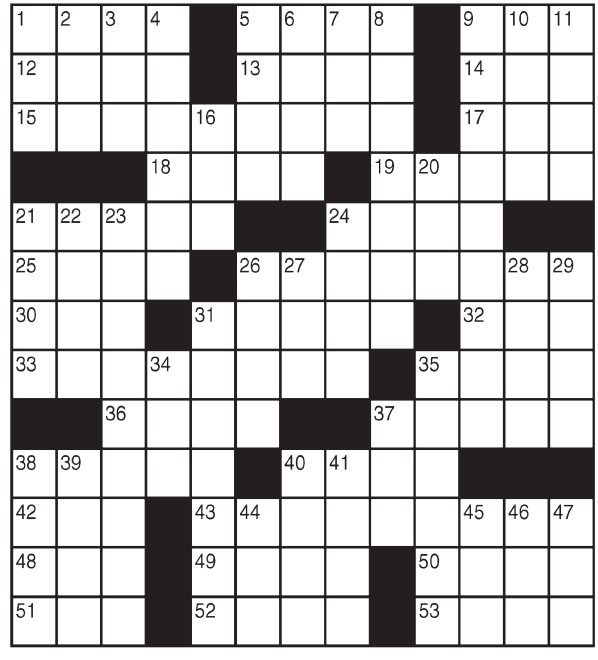
TODAY'S WORD

February 17, 2025 Posting Date

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Actress Hatcher
- 5 Slender viper
- 12 — Bator
- 13 Director Wertmuller
- 14 Cutesy- — Beau
- 17 "Nova" aier
- 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 Panto 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
- 9 Collar, as a suspect
- 10 Japanese noodles
- 11 Ritz
- 16 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 Oft-pierced body part
- 46 Petty peeve
- 47 ER workers

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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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WORD LADDERS

Can you go from BRACE to GRAPE in 6 words? Change one letter for each rung in the ladder.

BRACE

GRAPE

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Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

- GEOGRAPHY: What is the highest mountain in Canada?
- TELEVISION: Who is the host of the long-running reality series "Survivor"?
- LITERATURE: Which animals represent the Communist Party in "Animal Farm"?
- U.S. STATES: Which state is the birthplace of the singer Elvis?
- ASTRONOMY: How long does it take the moon to orbit the Earth?
- MOVIES: What is the score Elle receives on her law school admission test in "Legally Blonde"?
- AD SLOGANS: Which product's slogan is "Is It In You"?
- LANGUAGE: What is an eraser called in the United Kingdom?
- SCIENCE: What are the four primary precious metals?
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: Valentine's Day arose from which Roman ritual?

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CELLMATE

Today's Word

3. Loathe; 4. Dancer

1. Dabble 2. Malign; solution

SCRAMBLERS

CRATE, GRATE, GRAPE

BRACE, BRAVE, CRAVE

Answer

WORD LADDER

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

Answer

Weekly SUDOKU

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

Answer

Solution time: 23 mins.

Answers

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101 LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT LEE COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN THE ESTATE OF JERILYN KAEIN, Deceased.
No. 2024 PR 49
CLAIM NOTICE
Notice is given of the death of JERILYN KAEIN, of 610 N. Metcalf, Amboy, IL 61310 on 9/26/2024. Letters of Office were issued on November 19, 2024, by the 15th Judicial Circuit Court of Lee County to the representative and Independent Administrator, Jason Kaelin, 610 N. Metcalf, Amboy, IL 61310.

The attorney for the representative of the estate is Robert J. Thompson, 119 West First Street, Ste. 200, P.O. Box 1016, Dixon, Illinois 61021.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court at the Lee County Services building, 309 South Galena Avenue, Dixon, IL 61021, or with the Representative at the address above within six (6) months from the first publication of this Claim Notice, or within three (3) months from the date of mailing or delivery of specific notice to known creditors, whichever is later. Any known claim not

filed within that time period is barred. Copies of claims filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the estate legal representative and/or to the attorney within ten (10) days after the claim has been filed.

BY: J A S O N KAEIN, Representative/Administrator
Robert J. Thompson
119 West First Street, Ste. 200
P.O. Box 1016
Dixon, IL 61021
(815) 284-7705 phone
(815) 284-7707 facsimile
bobthompsonlaw@gmail.com
No. 0202
(Feb. 19, 26 and Mar. 5, 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.

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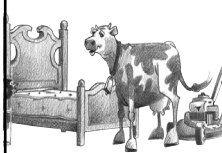
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2020 Chevy Traverse LT AWD, Leather, 93K Miles, Silver.....	\$21,900	2017 Chevy 1500 Crew Cab LTZ 4x4 6.2L V8, 76K Miles, Maroon.....	\$28,900
2019 Chevy Traverse Premier AWD, Loaded, 1 - owner, 66K Miles, White.....	\$25,900	2015 Chevy 2500 Crew Cab LTZ 4x4 Z71 Longbox, 6.0L gas, 77K Miles, Red.....	\$33,900
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LOCAL/STATE NEWS

Illinois health officials taking bird flu precautions despite assessing no ‘active risk’ to humans

By **JADE AUBREY**
Capitol News Illinois

The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention says the risk of an outbreak of the bird flu in humans is low, although Illinois’ health department is preparing for the possibility.

On Friday, the Trump administration reportedly laid off 1,300 probationary employees of the CDC, which has led nationwide efforts to contain the bird flu. The layoff would affect 10% of the federal agency’s workforce.

This comes after the administration paused federal health agencies’ communications with the public on Jan. 21 for over a week. The pause prohibited the CDC from publishing their weekly Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, which included one of the three reports on the bird flu scheduled to be published the week of Jan. 21.

The CDC has been monitoring and responding to cases of infection since the first outbreak of a mutated strain of the virus in commercial poultry in the U.S. in February 2022 – though it’s unclear how recent leadership changes and staffing cuts will affect this monitoring.

New U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has indicated he will follow President Donald Trump’s lead on downsizing federal departments, meaning cuts to critical agencies that regulate public health and investigate new diseases could limit their ability to respond to a public health crisis.

While federal policy changes create uncertainty, the director of the Illinois Department of Public Health said this week said the virus is “not an active risk” to humans in Illinois because no human-to-human spread has been recorded. But the state has taken steps to limit its spread among animals.

No known human-to-human spread

Bird flu is the term being used for H5N1 avian influenza, the disease caused by infection with avian influenza Type A viruses. It naturally occurs in wild aquatic bird populations, but has spread to domestic poultry and other bird and animal species in the U.S.

It typically doesn’t infect humans. However, recent human infections have occurred after close or prolonged unprotected contact with infected sick or dead birds and other mammals. Currently, there are 68 reported cases of human infections,

with one associated death. However, 41 of those 68 cases were transmitted from infected dairy cows.

According to IDPH, a person can be infected by breathing in the virus or touching something that has the virus on it and then touching their mouth, eyes, or nose.

So far, no human-to-human transmission of the bird flu has been recorded. IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra said this could change if a person with the bird flu contracts another strain of influenza, like the seasonal flu. The two infections could mutate and create a new virus that humans might not have immunity to, and human-to-human infections would likely begin. If that happens, then the worry of a pandemic would come into play.

“And that’s why, both through our statements currently and the national CDC’s statements, we’re continuing to maintain that the risk to humans right now remains low,” Vohra said in an interview. “Our responsibility is protecting the health of our residents here in Illinois, with our partners in Ag and DNR (the departments of agriculture and natural resources), and doing everything that we can and using the tools at our disposal in preparation, in case we have a human case or see human-to-human transmission emerge.”

People infected may be asymptomatic or experience mild flu-like symptoms such as eye redness, fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue, and shortness of breath to severe symptoms such as pneumonia. Less common symptoms of diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and seizures have been reported.

CDC data shows 909 human cases of bird flu have been reported worldwide since 1997, and the about half of them died. But not all cases of infection are likely to be reported or even noticed, as sometimes the virus doesn’t present any symptoms – meaning a true mortality rate is difficult to quantify.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture issued a 30-day suspension on the display or sale of poultry at swap meets, exhibitions, flea markets, and auction markets on Tuesday in attempts to reduce the spread of the virus.

In January, Illinois saw a relative increase in infection; Kakadoodle, a family-run farm in suburban Chicago, lost 3,000 chickens to the bird flu. The Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago

lost an infected flamingo and seal, while infections were reported in a wild goose in Tazewell County and a captive hawk in DuPage County.

Bird flu’s evolution

The 2022 outbreak of the virus sparked new monitoring immediately raised concerns because there were more than 378.5 million egg-laying chickens in the United States. The USDA said the bird flu is quickly taking over entire flocks when even one bird is infected, leaving farmers with no choice but to put whole flocks down. This is directly contributing to the recent increase in price and scarcity of eggs, which reached a record high in January.

According to the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, a little more than 23 million birds have been infected in the last 30 days as of Jan. 15, including 159 commercial flocks. Infections in small mammals and birds were first reported in late 2022. The first multistate outbreak of the infection in dairy cows was reported in March 2024 as the virus mutated, creating a new strain and showing its adaptability to living in different animal breeds. Soon after that, the first case of human infection was reported.

“We’ve been fortunate, currently, to have no human cases of the bird flu here in Illinois, and no cases of dairy cattle that have been positive,” Vohra said. “And one of the things that has been reassuring is that we have not had any human-to-human transmission nationally.”

Following the Trump administration’s communications pause, the CDC on Thursday published a report on the bird flu, which revealed the results of blood tests taken last September from 150 U.S.-based veterinarians who work with cattle. It found that three of the veterinarians tested positive for the virus without experiencing symptoms. Two of the infected veterinarians practiced in states with known infections in cattle, but the other infected veterinarians practiced in Georgia and South Carolina, two states with no known infection in cattle.

The report called for “the possible benefit of systematic surveillance for rapid identification of HPAI A(H5) virus in dairy cattle, milk, and humans who are exposed to cattle.”

Learning from COVID-19

Vohra said IDPH is implementing safety measures it learned from the

COVID-19 pandemic. He said the agency is working with local health departments and creating protocols for testing, treatment, quarantine, and isolation, as well as making sure health providers are stocked with the proper protective equipment, preventative medicine like Tamiflu, and rapid tests they would need if human transmission begin to occur in Illinois.

The department also recently improved testing to be able to individually identify strains of the bird flu. If a person tests positive for the bird flu on a rapid test currently used, the tests do not show a distinction between the seasonal flu and the bird flu. The department now has the capability to run advance testing on certain samples, such as those with known bird flu exposures or critically ill people with other flu diagnoses, to help identify bird flu in short order. Vohra said a positive result on the advanced tests would show which strain of the bird flu they’re infected with.

Because infections are detected at higher rates in the fall and spring seasons as birds migrate and spread the virus faster, state agencies have issued several guides for the general public on how deal with cases of the bird flu.

Tips include avoiding contact with any bird displaying signs of illness, keeping dogs, cats and other pets away from carcasses of birds, and thoroughly cooking game meat to an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

To be most effective, treatment must be started within two days of the infection. IDPH urges anyone who starts to experience symptoms after contact with a sick or dead bird to immediately talk to a health care provider.

If working with or handling poultry, members of the public are encouraged to visit the USDA’s “Defend the Flock” program for tips on biosecurity practices.

Editor’s note: The description of IDPH’s new bird flu testing capabilities has been corrected to more accurately describe how the new advanced testing process works.

Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service that distributes state government coverage to hundreds of news outlets statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.

Busche continued from page A1

“No one really knew anything. Everyone had a different take. We went on the vacation anyway because we had been planning it for two years and we delayed, delayed, delayed. Two weeks after we got back, I got sick first. I felt like I got hit by a semi truck. Doreen got sick three days later.

“When she came home from work, we didn’t have the TV on or anything. All you could hear in our home was our clock. It was unbearable because of how we felt. She eventually called someone and when she was leaving our number on a voicemail she was leaving the wrong number. I got scared. We ended up calling an ambulance to take her to the hospital.”

“Tragedy...or Blessing?” is a tale, a memoir, Doreen isn’t super excited she was the main star. However, she is more than happy to be alive for her husband to write the story.

“I remember going to work. I had my head on my desk and I told my boss I needed to go get tested for COVID-19,” Doreen said. “I don’t remember anything after really, from the first few days I had COVID-19 in August until about Thanksgiving. I was in a drug-induced coma and I didn’t wake up until around Thanksgiving. I didn’t know what was going on. When I was in the hospital I didn’t know anything and couldn’t do anything. I lost 80-90 pounds, mostly muscle, from August to December 2021. I came home on New Year’s Eve.

“I couldn’t stand up. I could hardly hold my cell phone. I couldn’t talk. I had a ventilator and a trach. He went back to work February 14, 2022. From January to April, we had a nurse and physical therapist come to our home. They got my legs stretched out and got me using a walker.”

When she left the hospital to come back home, she was on oxygen for 10 months and a lung specialist said she would either have to have a lung transplant or be on oxygen for the rest of her life.

Although Doreen did not have a transplant and is seen in public without an oxygen machine, the former farmer’s insurance saleswoman in Dixon is now retired for disability as her lungs are only at 60 percent.

The star actress didn’t read her husband’s book for quite some time.

When she did, she couldn’t help but get emotional. “I didn’t read it until two years to the day that I got sick. I couldn’t,” Doreen said. “I was so afraid because I didn’t know anything that happened to me when I was sick. I was afraid I would feel everything again. I cried when I read it.”

Steve cries when he reads the two-page submission Doreen added to the memoir.

For the couple who began in the Schaumburg, Roselle area, lived in Amboy for 10 years, and has been in West Brooklyn for the last 18, it’s a powerful story they didn’t

want to live through but are thankful to share.

“Every word in this book came straight out of my heart. If you want to know who I am, who we are, it’s all in the book,” Steve Busche said. “I’m a very private person. I don’t do social media. To write this book where anyone can read it, is a little scary for me. I think writing this book is part of God’s plan.”

“Tragedy...or Blessing?” was released on November 10, 2024 and can be purchased on amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com, or through the QR code. It is \$18.99 for paperback and \$28.99 for hard cover.



Use this QR code to purchase Steve Busche’s book, “Tragedy...or Blessing?” The book costs \$18.99 for paperback and \$28.99 for hard cover.

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LOCAL/STATE NEWS

Kish College Foundation announces spring 2025 scholarship recipients

MALTA – The Kishwaukee College Foundation is pleased to announce the student scholarship recipients for the Spring 2025 semester. The Foundation awarded 354 scholarship awards totaling \$335,355.

Scholarship funds are made possible through generous gifts from community members, local businesses and industry, and area agencies and associations. Students are selected on a competitive basis according to each scholarship's specific requirements.

Kishwaukee College students received the following awards:

AG Communications Endowment — Damian Nava-Barrientos of Rochelle, Anna Varner of Rochelle

Albert & Frances Besserman Endowment — Avery Coyle of Loves Park, Thomas Koziol of Rochelle

Arden Perry & Kathryn Cornell Scholarship — Brandon Foley of Genoa, Jaelyn Wallace of Genoa

Beulah & Roberta Hackett Endowment — Katherine Anderson of DeKalb, Dominique Bauer of DeKalb, Maya Beard of DeKalb, Madolyn Bellah of Kirkland, Monica Hernandez of DeKalb, Alexis Olson of Earlville, Caprice Pinkard of DeKalb, Tashara Stevenson of DeKalb

Bud & Kay Stocking Rochelle Rotary Service Above Self Endowment — Analeigh McKinney of Rochelle

Charles & Mary Roberts Memorial Endowment — Lars Carlson of Kirkland, Maximus Julian of Sycamore, Paul Kamulegeya of Chicago, Emily Mendoza Aguilera of Genoa, Anita Mensah of DeKalb, Hailey Michaels of Sycamore, Brianna Nieves of Cortland, Erica Prange of Lindenwood, Amayrani Ramirez of DeKalb, Rebecca Seldal of Malta, Reese Tomlinson of Genoa, Maylen Vazquez of Kingston

Charles & Mary Roberts Memorial Endowment for Nursing — Monica Hernandez of DeKalb, Leslie Hernandez of DeKalb, Tracee Nelson of Byron, Madison Rollins of Sycamore, Rita Walsh of Rochelle

Chris & Katherine Boulos Foundation — Josue Aburto of DeKalb, Alora Ager of DeKalb, Colin Bafia of Sycamore, Emily Baldwin of Sycamore, Jose Barradas Lopez of DeKalb, Kalyn Brackemyer of Cortland, Alyssa Childress of Kingston, Dionna Clark of DeKalb, Riley Collins of DeKalb, Vincent Cortes of DeKalb, Rocio Cuautle of Sycamore, Ashley Davila of DeKalb, Paulo Diaz Lopez of Sycamore, Gabriela Diaz Lopez of Sycamore, Cara Fant of Sycamore, Anna Fell of DeKalb, Alexandra Gamez of DeKalb, Leticia Garcia of DeKalb, Elizabeth Garlisch of Cortland, Grace Gineman of Sycamore, Hanitzi Gonzalez of Cortland, Sherleen Gonzalez of DeKalb, Diego Gonzalez Zabala of Sycamore, Trinity Harms of DeKalb, Amixam Hernandez of DeKalb, Leslie Hernandez of DeKalb, Seth Hess of DeKalb, Audrey Heth of Sycamore, Davion Hines of Cortland, Jacob Hull of Sycamore, Grace Hunt of Cortland, Brooke Jackson of Sycamore, Jasmine Kemp of Cortland, Hayley King of Sycamore, Andrew Kirchmann of Sycamore, Adam Lake of DeKalb, Boston Leifheit of Sycamore, Anna Lochbaum of Sycamore, Paige Lojko of Sycamore, Jennifer Arendt of DeKalb, Tyler Maciejewski of DeKalb, Ella Mathison of DeKalb, Raven Meeks of DeKalb, Hailey Michaels of Sycamore, Krystal Mora of Sycamore, Bernardo Munoz of DeKalb,



The Kishwaukee College Foundation announced the Spring 2025 scholarship recipients. Pictured are Spring 2025 scholarship recipients.

Photo contributed

Kevin Munoz of Genoa, Brianna Nieves of Cortland, Erika Nunez of DeKalb, Bryce Olson of DeKalb, Naomy Ortiz of DeKalb, Javier Padron of DeKalb, Chance Perry of DeKalb, Kelli Petit of Sycamore, Brody Pfund of Maple Park, Alex Prince of Malta, Justine Pringle of Cortland, Amayrani Ramirez of DeKalb, Jessaca Ritchason of Sycamore, Stacy Romero of DeKalb, Charles Roots of Sycamore, Ellie Rothenbach of Sycamore, David Sandoval Castro of DeKalb, Lane Schumacher of DeKalb, Rebecca Seldal of Malta, Lizbeth Serna Valdes of DeKalb, Keisha Simms of Sycamore, Noah Stanik of Sycamore, Kayshia Stevenson of DeKalb, Donald Stiles of DeKalb, Brandi Stover of Genoa, Brynn Taylor of Clare, Haley Von Schnase of Sycamore, Anna Walzer of DeKalb, Milena Zak of Sycamore

ComEd Endowment — Jonathan Hartline of Pecatonica

Compeer Financial Scholarship — Gillian Taylor of Sycamore, Allyson Yoakum of Sycamore

Dean & Betty Burgemeister Endowment — Dominique Bauer of DeKalb, Nicole Braasch of DeKalb, Nickolas Hoffman of Mount Morris, Melissa Huneke of DeKalb, Tasha Kimble of Cortland, Alexis Olson of Earlville, Caprice Pinkard of DeKalb, Carly Summers of Esmond, Elizabeth Taylor of Rockford

DeKalb Area Garden Club Endowment — Christina Fisher of Kingston

DeKalb Fire Fighters Local 1236 Memorial Scholarship — Katie Maier of Sycamore

Desa Henn Memorial Scholarship — Hayley Basler of Kirkland, Gennelle Romero of Cortland

Diane McNeilly Education Endowment — Annaleigh McKinney of Rochelle, Avery Salsbury of Oregon

Donald C. Mack Scholarship — Crystal Larrabee of DeKalb

Doris V. & Suzanne K. Lewis Memorial Endowment — Maya Beard of DeKalb, Nickolas Hoffman of Mount Morris

Earl & Jeanne Pritchard Horticulture Scholarship — Alora Ager of DeKalb

Eleanor Anglin Price Scholarship — Kimberly Hansen of Sycamore

Emma Anderson Scholarship — Alora Ager of DeKalb, Colin Bafia of Sycamore, Ayden Boatman of Sycamore,

Cara Fant of Sycamore, Anna Fell of DeKalb, Sherleen Gonzalez of DeKalb, Diego Gonzalez Zabala of Sycamore, Seth Hess of DeKalb, Grace Hunt of Cortland, Brooke Jackson of Sycamore, Hayley King of Sycamore, Andrew Kirchmann of Sycamore, Anna Lochbaum of Sycamore, Elijah Luxton of Rochelle, Kara Martinez of Rochelle, Emily Mendoza Aguilera of Genoa, Mya Mlodzianowski of Kirkland, Baldemar Nambo of Rochelle, Bryce Olson of DeKalb, Naomy Ortiz of DeKalb, Jayson Quintero Romero of Cortland, Ellie Rothenbach of Sycamore, Kendall Sachs of Rochelle, Lizbeth Serna Valdes of DeKalb, AddieRae Sipes of Sycamore, Kylie Smith of Rochelle, Ryese Taylor of Sycamore, Danica Ward of Creston, Sophia Zaccard of Genoa

Enbridge Energy Company Pipeline Industry Awareness Scholarship — Amir Boulware of Sycamore, Lucas Darmstadt of Cortland, Jacob Hull of Sycamore

Harold C. Flanagan Memorial Endowment — Lars Carlson of Kirkland

Heartland Bank Community Enhancement Scholarship — Maya Beard of DeKalb, Nicole Jazo of DeKalb

Howard & Martha Mullins Memorial Endowment for Nursing — Edwin Medina of DeKalb

Ine Achilles Scholarship for Horticulture — Abigail Stoffa of DeKalb

James Salomone Fuerst Endowment — Emily Mendoza Aguilera of Genoa, Erika Nunez of DeKalb

Jeanne M. Henderson Memorial Endowment — Baldemar Nambo of Rochelle, Miguel Villegas of Amboy

Jeremy Davis Memorial Endowment — Julias Ferguson of Crete

Jesus Romero Hispanic Endowment — Vincent Cortes of DeKalb, Emily Mendoza Aguilera of Genoa, Vianka Mercado of DeKalb

Joyce A. Nicklas Memorial Scholarship — Katherine Anderson of DeKalb, Madolyn Bellah of Kirkland, Elizabeth Taylor of Rockford

Kenneth & Susan Doubler Scholarship Fund — Haley Von Schnase of Sycamore

Kishwaukee College Alumni Association Scholarship — Woodfin Billingsly of Cortland, Grace Gineman of Sycamore, Hailey Michaels of Sycamore

Kishwaukee College Board of Trustees Scholarship — Aiyanna Washington of Rochelle

Kishwaukee College Employee Give Scholarship — Elizabeth Garlisch of Cortland, Grace Gineman of Sycamore, Alexis Huerta of Rochelle, Hailey Michaels of Sycamore, Damian Nava-Barrientos of Rochelle, Erika Nunez of DeKalb, Kelli Petit of Sycamore, Avery Salsbury of Oregon, Minerva Sandoval of DeKalb, Marisa Whaley of Rochelle

Kishwaukee College Engineering Scholarship — Kealey Morton of DeKalb, Jessie Saenz of DeKalb

LaVerne "Dutch" Johnson Memorial Fund — Taylor Fry of Genoa, Nickolas Hoffman of Mount Morris, Jacob Hull of Sycamore, Lenna Hulthen of Lee, Elijah Luxton of Rochelle, Brody Pfund of Maple Park, Maria Rios of Sycamore, Rebecca Seldal of Malta, Abigail Stoffa of DeKalb, Anna Varner of Rochelle, Allyson Yoakum of Sycamore

Law Enforcement Lifelong Learning Scholarship — Damen Harrington of Rochelle

Leah Wach Memorial Endowment — Paige Lojko of Sycamore

Les & Deanie Springmire Endowment — Tanisha Jones-Robinson of DeKalb

Mark Joseph Bussone Memorial Endowment — Daniel Mancilla of Aurora, Alexander Torres of Rochelle

Mathew J. Rood DPT Scholarship —

Jack Anderson of Chana, Dustin Wielen-ga of Waterman

Michael Bennett & Janette Maley Art Scholarship — Kenya Calin of DeKalb

Nancy D. Castle Scholarship — Gabriela Diaz Lopez of Sycamore, Leslie Hernandez of DeKalb, Jessica Marin of Rochelle, Daniel Villagran of DeKalb

Nancy Heal Memorial Altrusa Scholarship — Tasha Kimble of Cortland

OC Creative Scholarship — Cassandra Kerley of Genoa

O'Meara & Schaeffer Nursing Endowment — Tania Smith of DeKalb

Pat Humo Nursing Scholarship — Nia Burrows of DeKalb

Paul J. Smith Memorial Endowment — Lars Carlson of Kirkland

Pay It Forward Scholarship — Donna Engh of Sycamore

Philip H. Nye Scholarship — Avery Salsbury of Oregon

Richard Akers Memorial Endowment — Josue Aburto of DeKalb

Robert & Doris Boey Endowment — Maya Beard of DeKalb, Maximus Julian of Sycamore

Robert & Norma Wildenradt Endowment — Lars Carlson of Kirkland, Christina Fisher of Kingston, Tyler Maciejewski of DeKalb, Brody Pfund of Maple Park, Abigail Stoffa of DeKalb

Rockford Garden Club Scholarship — Ethan Taylor of Rockford

Rollan Bonneau Memorial Endowment — Daniel Leverton of DeKalb

Ronald S. Sweet Endowment — Brian Cuevas of Mendota, Tyshawn Kennedy of DeKalb

Rowland & Lucile Matteson Endowment — Marcia Curran of Geneva, Michael Littlejohn of Cortland, Kimberly Rotella of Shabbona, Abigail Stoffa of DeKalb, Ethan Taylor of Rockford, Avie Truran of Kirkland, Francis Vowels of Rochelle

Ruth Ashelford Pollock Horticulture Fund — Marcia Curran of Geneva, Crystal Larrabee of DeKalb, Michael Littlejohn of Cortland, Michelle McCandless of Kings, Pamela Porter of DeKalb, Maria Rios of Sycamore, Kimberly Rotella of Shabbona, Ethan Taylor of Rockford, Avie Truran of Kirkland, Miguel Villegas of Amboy, Francis Vowels of Rochelle

Ruth Ashelford Pollock Nursing Fund — David Andrade of DeKalb, Nia Burrows of DeKalb, Adelina Halilaj of DeKalb, Victoria Harkless of DeKalb, Melissa Huneke of DeKalb, Nicole Jazo of DeKalb, Allyson Kapka of DeKalb, Michele Lidren of Rochelle, Aimee Marsh of Sycamore, Kara Robers of Sycamore, Madison Rollins of Sycamore, Jessica Schroeder Waterman of Cortland, Annalee Sutherland of DeKalb, Krystal Torres of DeKalb, Vanessa Villa of DeKalb, Morgan Widick of West Chicago

Ruth I. Hall Nursing Endowment — Asucena Alvares of Dixon, Edlyn Arellano of DeKalb, Cassidi Calfa of Sycamore, Ilanie Castorena of DeKalb, Carly Coffman of Kingston, Foluke Esan of Sycamore, Courtney Felder of DeKalb, Amanda Gamauf of Cortland, Ananda Harrell of Freeport, Kassandra Kirk of Rochelle, Katie Maier of Sycamore, Aimee Marsh of Sycamore, Andrew Prescod of Paw Paw, Kara Robers of Sycamore, Sherlyn Rojas of Rochelle, Alicia Salgado of Belvidere, Laura Torres of Oregon, Krystal Torres of DeKalb, Ariyana Turks of DeKalb, Cecilia Vargas of Rochelle

Stephen P. Irving Family Scholarship — Nicole Jazo of DeKalb, Catlin Kersten of DeKalb, Katie Maier of Sycamore, Jessaca Ritchason of Sycamore

Stoltz-Caruthers Family Scholarship — Pamela Davis of Creston

Sycamore Hospital Physicians Nursing Endowment — Kylie Mapes of Sycamore

The Founder's Endowment — Danica Ward of Creston

Tom & Nancy Roberts Endowment — Stefan Filipovic of Sycamore, Lauren Ponto of Chana

Velta Smith Nursing Endowment — Leticia Garcia of DeKalb, Tania Smith of DeKalb

Vernon & Dorothy Smith Memorial Scholarship — Abel Huerta of Rochelle, Jessica Marin of Rochelle, Cecilia Vargas of Rochelle, Marisa Whaley of Rochelle

Veronica M. Ream Endowment — Amixam Hernandez of DeKalb

Wayne McIlrath Family Scholarship — Amanda Gamauf of Cortland, Brittany Johnson of Sycamore, Tasha Kimble of Cortland, Larry McCoy of Sycamore, Erica Prange of Lindenwood, Nathalia Salgado of Cortland, Dominique Vaulx of DeKalb

William & Emiline Rood Family Scholarship — Taylor Gaston of Shabbona, Reese McRoberts of Waterman



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LOCAL NEWS

Lady Clippers enter postseason at 23-7; on six-game winning streak

AMBOY – The old cliché says a basketball team wants to be clicking on all cylinders at the end of the season rather than the beginning.

For the Amboy girls hoopers, they’ve been clicking all year. However, entering the postseason with a 23-7 record, on a six-game winning streak, and have won 14 of their last 15 contests, all cylinders are at maximum basketball pressure.

The first game of the IHSA Class 1A St. Bede Regional for the No. 2-seeded Lady Clippers is the semifinal against No. 10 Putnam County Tuesday, Feb. 18, which is after press time.

If Amboy wins, they’ll play in the regional championship against the winner of the No. 3 Marquette/No. 5 St. Bede seminal also played on Tuesday.

Before the postseason started, the Lady Clippers kept the winning alive with victories against Fulton, Morrison, and Earlville.

Amboy outscored Fulton by four points in the fourth quarter to win their game, 34-31,

on Monday, Feb. 10.

Senior Addison Pertell led the scoring with 10 points, while senior Tyrah Vaessen had six, juniors Jillian Anderson and Bella Yanos (led the team with 10 rebounds) had five each, junior Ellie McLaughlin and sophomore Alexa McKendry scored three each, and senior Emily Sachs pitched in two.

In a 46-39 victory over Morrison on Tuesday, Feb. 11, Pertell had a game high 18 points, Anderson added 15, Sachs and Yanos pitched in six each, and Vaessen had one point. Sachs had a team-high seven rebounds and Vaessen led with three assists.

In the regular season finale, the Lady Clippers defeated Earlville 54-21 for win No. 23.

Pertell’s offensive production continued as she recorded a game high 15 points. Vaessen and Anderson tallied 11 each, Sachs had nine, senior Kenley Wilson knocked in three, Yanos and McLaughlin pitched in two each, and senior Gloria Parker added one point.

Amboy hosts boys basketball regional Feb. 24, 26, 28

AMBOY – The Amboy Clippers will stay home and host the Amboy Class 1A Boys’ Regional Basketball Tournament to be contested Feb. 24, 26, 28.

There will be four play-in games held at the sites of the higher seeds to begin the regional action on Monday, Feb. 24. The Clippers will be home to take on Kirkland Hiawatha. Tip-off time is 6 p.m. The winner of that game will move on to face either DePue or Annawan at 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 26 in the semifinals.

The other semifinal game will be between the winners of the LaMoille-Forreston and Ashton-Franklin Center-St. Bede games.

The semifinal round winners will battle for the regional title at 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 28.

Amboy’s champion will advance to the Pecatonica Sectional to meet the winner of the Galena Regional at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 4. The other sectional participants will come from the West Carroll and Durand regionals.

Amboy Class 1A Boys’ Regional Basketball Tournament
Monday, Feb. 24

1 – (16) DePue at (2) Annawan - TBA

2 – (11) Kirkland (Hiawatha) at (9) Amboy [Coop] – 6 p.m.

3 – (14) LaMoille at (3) Forreston – 6 p.m.

4 – (12) Ashton (A.-Franklin Center) at (7) Peru (St. Bede) - TBA

Wednesday, Feb. 26

5 – Winner Game 1 vs. Winner Game 2 – 6 p.m.

6 – Winner Game 3 vs. Winner Game 4 – 7:30 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 28

7 – Winner Game 5 vs. Winner Game 6 – 7 p.m. (championship)

Jose Lopez wrestles his way to state

OREGON – Amboy sophomore Jose Lopez is headed to the biggest wrestling meet of the year, the IHSA State Tournament, after advancing from the IHSA Class 1A Oregon Sectional over the two-day event Feb. 14-15.

Lopez, 28-15 on the season, finished fourth in the 150-pound bracket in Oregon with three victories and two losses.

In his first match, Lopez won by a 6-3 decision over Chase Siguenza of Wheaton St. Francis. He kept the winning trend in the championship bracket quarterfinal with a 7-6 decision victory over Riverdale’s Kolton Kruse.

Lopez lost in a semifinal by a fall (2:40) to Stillman Valley’s Henry Hildreth but bounced back with a consolation bracket semifinal victory over Richmond-Burton’s Dalton Youngs via a 6-5 decision.

With the win over Youngs, Lopez had already qualified for state by being a top four wrestler in his bracket, but for placing sake, Lopez dueled in the third-place match against Kewanee’s Ben Taylor. Lopez lost by major decision, 10-0.

Lopez’s next mission is the IHSA State Tournament, which kicks off Thursday, Feb. 20 and runs through Saturday, Feb. 22 at the State Farm Center in Champaign on the University of Illinois campus.

“I’m immensely proud of Jose for qualifying for the state tournament. He has been working hard in the practice room all season and weightlifting with Coach (Joe) Flanagan after practice as well,” said Amboy wrestling coach Michael Olson. “Jose is wrestling up a weight class this year, and that can be difficult, but he met the challenge and defeated some really tough kids at the sectional.

“I look forward to seeing how far Jose will advance not only this season but in years to come. If he keeps up the hard work, I foresee him bringing home state medals in the future.”

The Clippers had five wrestlers compete at the Oregon Sectional.

Freshman Aden Spinelli, 106 pounds, finished his season with a 31-9 record as he made it to the consolation bracket’s third round. Spinelli received a bye in the first round, lost by a 12-6 decision to Cael Wright of Morrison in a championship bracket quarterfinal, pinned Sebastian Lara of Lisle in 3:43 for a consolation Round 2 victory, and fell to Nate Lower of Rockridge via a 13-3 major decision in the third round.

Senior Josh McKendry (22-14) took to the mats at 138 pounds as he lost his first match by a 7-5 decision to Mauricio Glass of Lena-Winslow, received a bye in the first round of the consolation bracket, and lost in the second round to Levi Benton of Oregon by pinfall at 4:31.

Caiden Heath, AHS sophomore, finished the season with under 10 losses (36-9). At 144 pounds at Oregon, he was pinned in the first round at 5:34 by West Carroll’s Connor Knop, received a bye in the first round of the consolation bracket, and lost to Thomas Sowards, of Rockridge via a 16-1 technical fall in the second round.

Junior Evan Flanagan (28-14) wrestled at 215 pounds with a first-round loss to Aiden Fisher of Orion by fall (1:32), received a bye in the first round of the consolation bracket, and lost by a 6-0 decision to Jeremy Johanki of Wheaton Academy.

The wrestling season isn’t over for the Amboy freshmen and sophomores as they are in the Illinois Wrestling Coaches and Officials Association State Frosh-Soph Tournament. The regional is March 2 in Morrison, sectional is March 9 in Sterling, and the finals are March 15-16 at the Bank of Springfield Center in Springfield.

Boys hoops drop games to Bureau Valley, Forreston

AMBOY – Basketball is called a winter sport for a reason as the Amboy boys basketball team is fighting through a cold stretch and has had canceled games due to the weather.

The contest against Fulton, scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 12, was canceled due to frigid temperatures.

Game 26 of the Clippers season was Friday, Feb. 14 as Amboy traveled to Manlius to play Bureau Valley in a non-conference game. The Clippers fell 63-46 despite a 24-point effort from senior guard Eddie Jones.

Junior Ezra Parker added 12, sophomore Colt McCoy put in six, and both junior Rylan McNinch and freshman Bryson Deery had two each.

On Monday, Feb. 17, Amboy hosted Northwest Upstate Illini Conference South Division foe Forreston.

Jones once again finished in double-digit scoring, 13 points, but the Clippers couldn’t hang with the Cardinals in a 60-34 loss.

Also scoring for Amboy were McCoy (eight), senior Tyler Huggins (three), Parker (three), Deery (two), senior Quinn Leffelman (two), and McNinch (one).

Amboy is now 10-17 overall and 3-6 NUIC South with two regular season games remaining on the regular season schedule before the IHSA Class 1A Amboy Regional begins.

No. 9-seeded Amboy will play No. 11 Hiawatha in a quarterfinal at 6 p.m. Monday, Feb. 24.

IVVOA Clinic

MENDOTA – The Illinois Valley Volleyball Officials Association is hosting an IHSA Level 1 Clinic on Sunday, Feb. 23 at Mendota High School, 2300 W. Main St. in Mendota.


Registration for the clinic is from 11-11:45 a.m. with the clinic starting at noon.

The clinic is \$50 for members of IVVOA, which includes association fees for the 2025-26 season, and \$40 for non-IVVOA members.

Whether you need the clinic to please IHSA requirements, you want to sharpen your skills, or you want to check out the IVVOA to register, come check out the clinic on Feb. 23.

Happy Here!

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Amboy Community Unit School District #272

Feb. 24 AHS Boys Basketball Regionals (H) TBA AJHS Scholastic Bowl (H) St. Mary’s, Dixon-4:00 pm AHS Scholastic Bowl @ Fulton-4:30 pm AJHS Girls Basketball (H) Montmorency-6th-5:00/5th-6:00	Feb. 26 AHS Art Club-Art Room-3:30-4:30 pm AJHS Scholastic Bowl @ St. Mary’s, Sterling-4:00 pm
Feb. 25 AJHS Girls Basketball (H) Sauk Valley Catholic-6th-5:00/5th-6:00 AJHS Girls Basketball @ Sauk Valley Catholic-8th-5:00/7th-6:00	Feb. 27 AJHS Girls Basketball @ Montmorency-8th-5:00/7th-6:00
March 1 AJHS 5th/6th Girls Basketball (H) RRVC Tournament-TBA	

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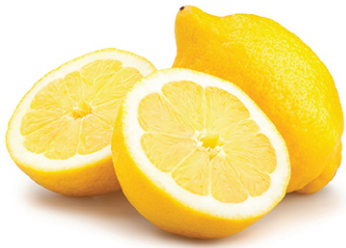
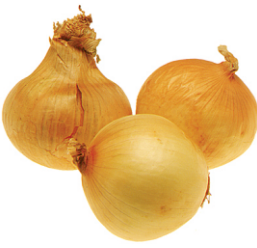


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Choice Beef Top Sirloin Steak  \$7.99/lb. Reg. Price \$10.99/lb.	Choice Beef Chuck Roast  \$5.99/lb. Reg. Price \$6.99/lb.	Pork-Bone In Park Chops  \$2.99/lb. Reg. Price \$3.49/lb.	~ Deli Special ~ Sub Large Anchor Club Ham, Turkey Bacon  \$8.99/ea. Reg. Price \$11.99/lb.
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<div><div>Food Club Bacon</div><div>16 oz</div><div></div><div><div>\$4.99 ea.</div><div>Reg. Price \$5.99/ea.</div></div></div>	<div><div>Bob Evans Pork Sausage</div><div>16 oz Roll</div><div></div><div><div>\$3.99 ea.</div><div>Reg. Price \$5.39/ea.</div></div></div>	<div><div>Food Club Orange Juice</div><div>52 oz</div><div></div><div><div>\$3.49 ea.</div><div>Reg. Price \$4.39/ea.</div></div></div>	<div><div>Coffee Mate Creamer</div><div>28 or 32 oz</div><div></div><div><div>\$3.99 ea.</div><div>Reg. Price \$5.19/ea.</div></div><div><div>HOT DEAL</div></div></div>	
<div><div>JJ's Bakery Pie</div><div>4 oz</div><div></div><div><div>4/\$3 ea.</div><div>Reg. Price \$1.29/ea.</div></div></div>	<div><div>Rosina Meatballs</div><div>18 to 26 oz</div><div></div><div><div>\$6.99 ea.</div><div>Reg. Price \$9.39/ea.</div></div></div>	<div><div>Eggo</div><div>8.4 to 14.8 oz select</div><div></div><div><div>\$2.99 ea.</div><div>Reg. Price \$3.69/ea.</div></div></div>	<div><div>Banquet Pot Pie</div><div>7 oz</div><div></div><div><div>2/\$3 ea.</div><div>Reg. Price \$1.69/ea.</div></div></div>	<div><div>Food Club Spring Water</div><div>24 pk</div><div></div><div><div>\$2.99 ea.</div><div>Reg. Price \$3.99/ea.</div></div><div><div>HOT DEAL</div></div></div>
<div><div>Hostess Donuts</div><div>9.5 to 11.25 oz</div><div></div><div><div>\$2.49 ea.</div><div>Reg. Price \$3.59/ea.</div></div></div>	<div><div>Kraft Macaroni & Cheese</div><div>5.5 to 7.3 oz</div><div></div><div><div>4/\$5 ea.</div><div>Reg. Price \$2.09/ea.</div></div></div>	<div><div>Food Club Beans</div><div>15.5 oz</div><div></div><div><div>2/\$2 ea</div><div>Reg. Price \$1.29/ea.</div></div></div>	<div><div>Food Club Apple Sauce</div><div>6 pk</div><div></div><div><div>\$1.99 ea.</div><div>Reg. Price \$2.59/ea.</div></div></div>	<div><div>Crav'n Flavor Potato Chips</div><div>7.75 to 8.5</div><div></div><div><div>2/\$4 ea</div><div>Reg. Price \$2.99/ea.</div></div></div>

Sale goes through Feb 19th - Feb 25th