

District 280 Board hears report about electronic pass system

■ New camera system being installed at MHS

MENDOTA – The Mendota High School District 280 Board of Education handled numerous items of business at its Feb. 18 regular meeting.

School Resource Officer, Chad Hochstatter, and Assistant Principal, Nicole Cromwell, presented on an electronic pass system. SmartPass is a system that provides electronic passes for students and is provided by Raptor Tech. The data can provide the exact time passed out of a class, and it can utilize an electronic ID card system on students' Chromebooks. The system can also electronically monitor passes issued and limit the number of passes allowed at a time to a common location like a restroom. There is a free trial in late spring that the district can utilize to analyze the system.

Officer Hochstatter and Cromwell also updated the board on the transition to the new camera system. As the district replaces or adds new cameras, the quality of the 21 new cameras and software video is much im-



proved. They also shared the number of incident reports for the fall semester and the incorporation of ALOP mentors into the attendance and truancy improvements in the district. SRO Hochstatter has seen an increase in his incidents, and they are both positive and behavioral or truancy interactions.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Joe Masini provided the principal's report. He updated the board on the "Test Prep Tuesdays" during Period 8. Students receive a comprehensive test prep experience in addition to the rigorous classroom instruction. Freshmen, sophomores, and juniors will be tested on mandated ACT and Pre-ACT tests on April 9. The seniors are encouraged to focus on college and career plans on that date.

Masini also shared the expansion in Advanced Placement tests for the spring. Students will be taking AP testing in History, Spanish, Calculus, and Pre-Calculus. The update on Parent Teacher Student Conferences was provided. The Academic Honor Breakfast and Assembly for students who have

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Taking the Polar Plunge



The chill of victory!

Top, Mendota High School students Lucie Brandner, left, Kennedy Knaff, center, and Ella Martin, exit the chilly waters of Lake Mendota after becoming fully submerged during the Mendota Polar Plunge on Feb. 22. Right, St. Bede freshman Addison Raffety gets ready to take a backwards plunge. Above, Thomas Slater is about to go under. Individuals and also teams from area high schools and businesses took part in the event to raise money for Illinois Special Olympics. For 26 years, the Polar Plunge has become an iconic and exhilarating event, engaging communities all over the state on the importance of inclusion, and raising critical funds to support the life-changing programming of Special Olympics Illinois. (Reporter photos)

Mendota Chamber hosting Candidates Forum March 11

MENDOTA – The Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce will host a Candidates Forum on Tuesday, March 11. The event moderated by Mendota's own Charles Van Horn, News Director of 102.3 The Coyote & SuperHits 93.5, will take place at the Mendota Civic Center. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m. and the program will begin at 6 p.m.

First Ward Mendota Aldermanic, Fourth Ward Mendota Aldermanic and Mayoral candidates will be highlighted. Each candidate will answer previously submitted questions.

All candidates appearing on the April 1 ballot have been invited to attend this forum to give interested voters the chance to meet them.

Do you need a REAL ID? Maybe...maybe not

■ Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias clears up REAL ID confusion ahead of the May 7 deadline

SPRINGFIELD—Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias wants Illinoisans to make sure they know if they need a REAL ID ahead of the federal deadline, now less than three months away.

The Secretary of State's office is proactively raising awareness about the uses of REAL IDs and clarifying that they are not mandatory for driving a vehicle or required for valid identification or proof of citizenship.



Giannoulias

The primary reason for Illinoisans over the age of 18 to obtain a REAL ID is to fly domestically on a commercial aircraft or visit certain federal facilities, such as a military base or federal courthouse as of May 7. Individuals who have a valid U.S. passport and those under the age of 18 will not need a REAL ID.

The deadline for obtaining the REAL ID has been pushed back multiple times, most recently in 2022 when the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) cited the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, the DHS has not provided details on how

it plans to enforce the REAL ID Act once the deadline arrives, suggesting it will implement a "phased enforcement approach" over a two-year period, which could allow travelers to board flights with warnings about the requirement.

"Between implementation delays and a lack of clarity about enforcement procedures, the REAL ID initiative has led to a great deal of confusion and misinformation about what is required and how the federal government plans to implement it," Giannoulias said. "We do know that REAL IDs will not be mandatory for most tasks

other than flying, and our employees have been doing an outstanding job at handling this unprecedented demand."

Giannoulias launched the office's "Get Real Illinois" campaign last May to raise awareness about the requirements and deadline associated with the federal initiative. The campaign has leveraged partnerships across the state to boost enrollment through a series of REAL ID "pop-up" events throughout the past year.

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SHOP LOCAL



LOCAL AND AREA

Blackstone School Report

Stacy Kelly, Principal

Thank you to those parents that attended parent/teacher conferences on Feb. 18 and 19. We appreciate that you took time out of your busy schedules to come talk about your child's progress through the second trimester of school. Our goal was to meet with each child's parents to keep the communication open between home and school.

The students nominated for the principal award this past week included Stella Marez, Lorenzo Sanchez, Kyle Belcher, Noah Perez, Aspen Jensen, Eleanor Myers, Matias

Chapa Manzo and Tony Munoz. The winners were Kinzie Higdon, Elianna Valdes, Caden Benefiel and Dante Barrera. Congratulations to all of you!

Yearbook order forms recently went home with students. The PreK-4th grade yearbook is on sale for \$17 through Friday, Feb. 28. Students can return their order envelopes or yearbooks can be ordered online at www.inter-state.com/ order with the code of 91557Z. Please note that this order link and code is not for Northbrook students in grades 5-8.

They have a different code.

Friday, Feb. 28 is the end of the second trimester. Teachers will prepare report cards to update parents on student progress. Report cards will go home with all students on Thursday, March 6.

Don't forget that there is an early dismissal on Feb. 26. Kindergarten will dismiss at 11:20 and 1st grade at 11:30.



Colton Longmire of Mendota shows the hair that was once attached to his head but is now going to a great cause, the Wigs for Kids Foundation. (Photo contributed)

Longmire donates hair to Wigs for Kids

MENDOTA – Colton Longmire, a first-grade student at Blackstone School in Mendota, donated a foot of his hair to the Wigs for Kids Foundation on Feb. 15.

Longmire's mullet was kind of the 'trademark' for this special guy since forever. So, he was very much on the fence about cutting his hair... but he completely lit up at the opportunity to 'give his hair to another kid' who is experiencing hair loss stemming from chemotherapy, radiation therapy, alopecia, trichotillomania, burns, and other medical causes.

Colton is the son of William and Kailee (Pakenham) Longmire, who are proud of his brave self for cutting off and donating his hair.

If anyone sees Colton out and about, make sure to tell him that his hair cut rocks and that he rocks for donating a foot of hair to The Wigs for Kids Foundation.

Rep. Fritts named Secretary for House Republican Organization

DIXON — The House Republican Organization recently announced the new board for the upcoming 2026 election cycle. State Representative Brad Fritts (R-Dixon) was named Secretary.

"I am humbled and honored to be named Secretary of HRO," said Fritts. "I look forward to working alongside Leader McCombie, HRO Chair Elik, and the rest of the board as we recruit and support Republican candidates to bring balance back and common-sense governance to Illinois."

Other board members include:

- Amy Elik – Chair (111th District)
- Travis Weaver – Treasurer (93rd District)
- Brad Fritts – Secretary (74th District)
- Dennis Tipword (105th District)
- Mike Coffey (95th District)
- Patrick Sheehan (37th District)

"This new board is equipped with the experience and leadership we need to elect Republican House candidates and provide greater balance across the state," said McCombie. "Their collective expertise in campaigning, candidate recruitment, and party-building will strengthen our ability to promote Republican values and win elections."

The HRO board's mission is to support Republican House candidates statewide and to promote candidates who are committed to fiscal responsibility, government accountability, and economic growth for all Illinoisans.

For more information about State Representative Brad Fritts, visit his website at Fritts4Rep.com.

Over or Under:

We have a real spring season for two weeks?



Antojitos Gonzalez
Lorena and Gustavo Gonzalez cut the ribbon in front of their new restaurant, Antojitos Gonzalez, located at 606 6th St. in Mendota. The Earlville residents opened the restaurant and ice cream shop in October. (Photo contributed)



Nightengales donates to YMCA
On behalf of Nightengales Thrift Shop, Scarlett Abel, center, hands a check to the Mendota YMCA Assistant Manager Omar Espinoza, left, and Mendota YMCA Branch Manager Stephen Donnell. Nightengales donated \$1,500 to be used as needed for the YMCA kid's programs. (Photo contributed)

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LOCAL AND AREA

Registration now open for Stay with Me: Lenten Prayer for Disciples

All are welcome for this virtual prayer for the six Wednesdays of Lent

SPRINGFIELD – Women and men everywhere are invited to join the Dominican Sisters of Springfield for Stay with Me: Lenten Prayer for Disciples. The virtual sessions, scheduled for 7 p.m. Central Time on the Wednesdays of Lent starting March 5, will allow space for participants to attune their hearts and minds to the struggles of those Jesus most often accompanied during his life on Earth: widows, orphans, and persons cast out.

The title draws on Jesus' request in Matthew's gospel that the disciples accompany him to Gethsemane while he prays, just before his arrest.

Hosted by the Dominican Sisters' Vocation Office, participants can expect to:

- Hear reflections on the theme from Dominican sisters,
- Enjoy periods of silence and sharing, and
- Build a community of prayer and mutual support for

their Lenten practice.

"We welcome women who are discerning a call to religious life, of course," said Springfield Dominican Sister Denise Glazik, the congregation's vocation director. "And we hope that all women and men, wherever they are and whatever their circumstance, will find this a meaningful way station on their Lenten journey."

The liturgical season of Lent includes six weeks before Holy Week. It is a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving in preparation for the celebration of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The baptized are encouraged to use this time to prepare for the renewal of their baptismal promises. Parish communities may also be accompanying those who intend to join the Church. For them, Lent is considered a six-week retreat in preparation for their baptism or profession of faith. Customarily, then, these

new Catholics are welcomed into the church during the services on Holy Saturday, during the Triduum.

Stay with Me: Lenten Prayer for Disciples runs weekly March 5-April 9. Participants are welcome to join all six sessions, or choose a few according to their own schedule and needs. Register once for participation in any or all of the sessions at springfieldop.org/events.

The Dominican Sisters of Springfield were founded in 1873 and have served God and God's people in the United States, and in Peru, since 1965. The sisters, through their sponsored institutions and ministries educate leaders, provide pastoral care, and build relationships for the transformation and life of the world. To learn how you can join us in this mission, start at springfieldop.org/dominican-mission or call Sister Denise Glazik at 217-787-0481.

The 43rd Annual Sublette Farm Toy & Antique Tractor Show is...almost upon us

By **BRANDON LaCHANCE**
Staff writer

SUBLETTE – Whether rain, sleet, snow, or sun, the 43rd Annual Sublette Antique Tractor & Toy Show will take over the streets of the Village of Sublette from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday, March 15-16.

Anthony Morgan, the first-year president of the show's board of directors, anticipates a similar event to those of the past.

However, his fingers are crossed for the best possible weather.

"Last year was chilly, but there were thousands of people in and out of the buildings," said Morgan, who may be a new president but has been on the board since 2020. "Talking to the vendors, they said they did pretty well even though there wasn't a lot of people on the streets. They were in the buildings patronizing the vendors."

"Being the show is in March, you never know what the weather is going to bring.

It could rain. It could be sunny. There has been snow before and we had to clean up the roads before the show. It could be windy. It could be a nice day.

"You never know what you're going to get."

As usual, there will be local vendors and there will be vendors from the surrounding area and surrounding states.

Toys will be presented in five different buildings (Sublette Community Building, Ellice Dinges Center, Main Street Repair, Jacoby Building, and the Sublette Elevator) antique tractors will be outdoors as well as a semi-tractor display, and there will be a train display set up by Ethan Orzech at Orzech Auto Truck & Tow LLC, located at 301 N. Richmond St. in Sublette.

"There are people who have new stuff and a lot of the other vendors have the old, vintage models," Morgan said. "We have some who make grain bin setups and can make you whatever you

want while you're at the show. There are a lot of different displays.

"There are craft vendors, too, where people will have operator manuals and books, and those kinds of things."

This year, there are two featured tractor companies in the Oliver Farm Equipment Company (1929-1960) and Minneapolis-Moline (1929-1963).

Both companies were created separately by the same process, mergers of other companies as Oliver was constructed of four companies and Minneapolis-Moline was founded with three companies coming together.

Oliver and Minneapolis-Moline were both purchased by the White Motor Corporation in the 1960s.

"They don't make either tractor anymore. I've worked on both of them before. We have different companies on a rotation, and it was their turn," said Morgan, who grew up around International Harvester tractors but isn't

partial to any specific brand. "We put Oliver and Minneapolis-Moline together because both companies were formed around the same time, and then were bought by the same company."

"We have so many different manufactures and companies people collect, so every year we try to represent a different one. We move down the line and then recirculate them. People collect the tractors that their grandparents and parents farmed with, so it's sentimental."

The Sublette Antique Tractor & Toy Show will provide a free shuttle service to each of the buildings and there will be a Pedal Pull for kids.

Food will be offered through the entire show with two 4-H stands ran by the Sublette Indians and the Maytown Comets (Sublette Community Building and the Sublette Elevator), while the Firemen's Pancake Breakfast will be hosted by the Volunteer Fire Department from 7 a.m.-noon on Sunday.



The five buildings set up for vendors are rarely unoccupied by interested patrons during the annual Sublette Farm Toy & Antique Tractor Show. Anthony Morgan, new president of the show's board of directors, anticipates the same will be said during this year's 43rd annual show on Saturday and Sunday, March 15-16. Last year, the feature tractor company was John Deere. This year, there are two, Oliver Farm Equipment Company and Minneapolis-Moline. (Reporter file photo)

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OBITUARIES/LOCAL NEWS

Judy L. Baker

WALTHAM—Judy L. Baker, 74, of Waltham, passed away peacefully on Feb. 15, 2025, at Primrose Retirement Community, in Appleton, Wis., where she moved to be closer to her daughter.

As per her wishes, Judy will be cremated and buried alongside her husband. Mass of Christian burial was at 11 a.m. Friday, Feb. 21, at Queen of the Holy Rosary Shrine in La Salle with Rev. J.A. Small officiating. A memorial visitation was held from 9-10:45 a.m., Friday, Feb. 21, at the Hurst Funeral Home in La Salle. A private burial will be held at a later date.

Judy was born on May 10, 1950, in La Salle, to Peter G. and Margaret (Fillipeck) Sampo Sr. She graduated from LaSalle-Peru Township High School in 1969. Judy married Edwin C. Baker, on Nov. 14, 1970, and they moved to Waltham to live on the family farm.

Judy is survived by her mother, Margaret (Fillipeck) Sampo, of LaSalle; one daughter, Karen (Joseph) Burgoni III, of Appleton, Wis.; three sons, Jeffery (Deanna) Baker of Waltham, Brian (Christina Burleson) Baker of Waltham and Christopher Baker of Waltham; four grandchildren, granddaughters Mia Burgoni and Cassie Baker, and grandsons, Joe Baker and Rian Baker; two sisters, Sandy (Chris) Noll of Arlington and Christina (EJ) Gray of Ogleby; three brothers, Jerry (Shawn) Sampo of Conway, Tenn., Peter (Linda) Sampo, Jr., of LaSalle and Greg (Lisa) Sampo of Fairbury; and her beloved cat, Latte.

She was preceded in death by her father, Peter G Sampo, Sr., and her husband, Edwin C Baker.

Judy retired from OSF St. Elizabeth Medical Center in 2016 after a long career as part of the Building Operations Department supporting many areas of the hospital. She earned her Certified Nursing Assistant Certification and worked as a CNA at Heritage Woods of Ottawa alongside her employment at the hospital.

Judy was a member of the LaSalle VFW and CWV Auxiliaries and New Windsor Sportsman's Club, Victoria. She was raised Catholic as a member of the Queen of the Holy Rosary Church.

Judy was a force of nature, always looking for her next adventure. She loved to spend time with her family and friends, enjoyed baking, shopping, and traveling (especially trips to Las Vegas or a Casino Riverboat with her parents on a Sunday afternoon). She loved to stay active whether she was "mall walking," playing volleyball, bike riding or taking care of the farm and its many animals - she stayed busy. She enjoyed sipping her coffee all day long. She was always there for anyone in their time of need and was the center of our universe.

Online condolences may be viewed and remembrances shared at www.hurstfuneralhomes.com.

DEATH NOTICES

The Mendota Reporter will print DEATH NOTICES (approximately 50 words including name, age, date of death, time/date of services) free of charge. OBITUARIES will be printed at a cost of \$100 to be billed to the arranging funeral home or prepaid with cash, check or credit card. Please submit obituaries or death notices to editor@mendotareporter.com.

**See the latest obituaries
at mendotareporter.com**

Elaine V. Theiss

RIVERSIDE, Calif. — Elaine Violet Theiss, 92, passed away peacefully at home on Feb. 11, 2025, in Riverside, Calif.

A Celebration of Life ceremony will be at 11 a.m. Tuesday, March 14, 2025, at the Acheson & Graham Garden of Prayer Mortuary in Riverside, Calif. Interment will be at Saint Mary's Cemetery, Sublette, at a later date.

Elaine was born in Sublette and graduated from Mendota High School in 1950. After her marriage to Gilbert Leslie Theiss in 1951, they lived on the farm near Sublette Village, Lee County. They moved to Riverside in 1962 with their five children, Leslie Allen, Diane Marie, Michele Renee, Denise Ruth, and Carol Elaine.

She is survived by her five loving children, Leslie (Rose/deceased) Theiss, Diane (Jim) Meehan, Michele (Dennis) Trost, Denise (Mark) Schoelen, and Carol (Steven) Wallace. She has six grandchildren, four great grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

Elaine was preceded in death by her parents, Leroy W. Stein and Marie E. (Heiden) Stein, and her loving husband, Gilbert Leslie Theiss.

Elaine and Gilbert built their present home in the County of Riverside with the help of family. Elaine worked for the Riverside Unified School District in Food Services. Elaine was an animal lover. She loved and enjoyed riding her horses, as well as spending time with her numerous dogs and cats. When she could no longer ride, she continued her passion with two miniature horses, Sugar and Zoey, giving them a good home and apple treats. Elaine spent many hours working outdoors in her flower garden and helping many of her neighbors.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions to Mary S. Roberts Pet Adoption Center. You can visit their website at www.petsadoption.org and click on support us and find tribute gift.



Harold Nurnberg Jr.

MENDOTA — Harold "Punk" Nurnberg Jr., 88, of Mendota, passed away on Friday, Feb. 21, 2025.

Visitation will be from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 1, 2025, at the Horner-Merritt Funeral Home, Mendota. A prayer service will be held at noon at the funeral home before processing to Restland Cemetery in Mendota for a graveside service with military rites.

Harold was born in Mendota to Harold Sr. and Marie (Kaufman) Nurnberg and had five siblings.

Harold will always be remembered and missed greatly by his children, Missy Rutishauser, Greg (Michelle) Nurnberg and Marci (Jim) Parrilli; grandchildren, Connor, Marissa, Brady, Lexi, Jake, Anthony, Alyssa; one great-grandchild, Nayeli; siblings, Sue Nurnberg, John (Sharon) Nurnberg, Jim Nurnberg and their families, as well as many nieces, nephews, extended family, and close friends.

Harold is preceded in death by his loving son, Steve Nurnberg; parents, Harold Sr. and Marie Nurnberg; brother, Ron Nurnberg; sister, Karen "Kay" Tomfohrde; sisters-in-law, Carol Nurnberg and Nancy Nurnberg; brother-in-law, Charlie Tomfohrde; nephew, Joe Nurnberg; and niece, Lynne Weierke.

He grew up helping his dad on the farm just north of Mendota. After graduating from Mendota High School in 1955, Harold joined the U.S. Army and was stationed in Okinawa, Japan in 1960. He then went on and became an operator with Local 150 International Union of Operating Engineers for over 50 years until retirement.

He was an avid toy tractor collector and passionate about antiques. He enjoyed spending time with his kids and grandkids and was always on the go. He was a member of Mendota Elks Lodge, Mendota Moose Lodge and Mendota VFW Post 4079.

In lieu of flowers, the family respectfully request that memorials be made to Mendota Area Senior Services. Please visit www.horner-merritt.com to sign the online guest book.



Helen J. Burright

MENDOTA—Helen Joyce (Dierwechter) Burright, 99, of Mendota, passed into eternal rest on Feb. 17, 2025, at Stonecroft Village.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, March 8, 2025, at First Presbyterian Church, 1003 Fifth St., Mendota, with Rev. Dr. Susan Presley officiating. Visitation will be prior to the service at 10 a.m. Burial will follow next to her husband at Restland Cemetery in Mendota.

Joyce was born Dec. 19, 1925, on the family farm near Troy Grove to parents Henry A. and Helen (Stewart) Dierwechter. She graduated from Mendota High School in 1943 and from Iowa State University in 1947 with a degree in Dietetics. While she was at Iowa State, she met Leon C. Burright. They were married on Nov. 27, 1948, at the First Presbyterian Church in Mendota. He preceded her in death on July 19, 1992.

She is survived by her son, James of Rockford; daughters, Peggy (Bob) Etheridge of Peru and Mary (Mark) Stoskopf of Wilton, Iowa; daughter-in-law, Rhonda Burright of Rockford; grandchildren and (great-grandchildren) Allison (Charles) MacMurchy, Amber (Todd) Bollman, Jenilyn (Brian) Roether (Reuben and Cora), Sarah (Brandon) Devore (Kendra and



Avery), Will (Jenn) Etheridge (Eleanor, Lillian, and Andrew), Emily (John) Noss (Ada and Mabel), Brian Stoskopf, Jessica Burright and Joshua Burright; step-grandson, Jeffrey Manning; step-granddaughter, Julie (Lee) Manning-Glovier; step-great-grandchildren, Breanna Manning, Samantha Parr and Colton Parr; step-great-great-grandson, Jayden Hale; cousin, Herschel Stewart; sister-in-law, Nancy Burright; and several nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband; parents; son, John; daughters-in-law, Linda Burright and Lucy Burright; and brother, Henry Stewart Dierwechter.

After Joyce and Leon were married, they moved to her family farm. There she raised their four children. She later moved to Mendota and lived at Stonecroft Village the last 15 years of her life. She was a lifelong member of First Presbyterian Church, where she served as an Elder, Deacon and Clerk of Session. She was a past-president of the Presbyterian Woman's Association. She was a member of the Mendota Women's Club, where she served as president, and of the University of Illinois Home Extension, where she was awarded "Homemaker of the Year". She enjoyed playing cards and especially volunteering in any way that she could. In her later years, she traveled to many locales worldwide, including Dubai, the Holy Lands, Europe, England, Panama, Alaska and Hawaii.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made in her name to Mendota Area Senior Services (MASS) or a charity of your choice. Please visit www.horner-merritt.com.

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LOCAL AND AREA

Peer connection: IVCC launches its new Peer Mentor program

OGLESBY – The two newest additions to IVCC’s mental health team look like students – because they are.

Peers are likely to encounter Danica Scoma and Bhawna as classmates, hanging out with friends between classes, or at activities. The pair has also been hosting several activities recently to promote good mental health and an awareness of IVCC’s new Peer Mentor program.

“That relatability is the Peer Mentor program’s strength,” said Dr. Jessica Swenson, who developed programs now operating at IVCC and two other colleges.

“The biggest connection to a student is another student. Students can look across the table at someone going through the same thing they are,” said Swenson, the founder and executive director of Transformative Growth, IVCC’s mental health counseling partner.

Scoma and Bhawna say they are good listeners who share their classmates’ insecurities and frustrations but also can share some survival techniques.

Scoma said she wanted to be part of the program because “I liked the idea of something informal. I could relate easier to a peer if I had a problem and was nervous to go to an adult staff member. We try to be friendly and non-judgmental, and everything is confidential. I try to help them realize what’s going on with them and what they can do.”

Scoma’s effervescent personality has become familiar on campus, but a few years ago she worried about fitting in at her high school. “I wanted to make connections, but I didn’t know who to go to. Then something clicked and I wanted to get involved so I didn’t leave high school disappointed that I hadn’t been involved.”

She also shares another concern familiar to her peers. “I have so many ideas about what I want to do, and it’s hard to pick one for the rest of my life.” She would like to roll all her interests in language, art, travel and social work into a career.

As an international student who is oceans away from her family in India, Bhawna is balancing work, study and life on her own and can relate to other students’ challenges. “I experience a different country and a different culture, and I try to keep an open mind and think outside the box.”

The agriculture student also relies on things that



Bhawna, left, and Danica Scoma are IVCC’s first peer mentors, one of the peer programs appearing at colleges across the state to expand mental health services and choices. (Photo contributed)

make her happy, like cooking or music or introspection, and hopes to share her faith that a new day can bring a new page in life and a new start.

“I can help the people I meet stay calm, which allows us to make better decisions,” Bhawna said. “I’m a good listener. Sometimes you need a person to just listen and nothing else.”

Swenson agrees that some students prefer “just walk in and talk” to the intensity of a clinical therapy session. Peer programs expand mental health services and choices but are not intended to be a substitute for clinical therapy or medical care when that is called for.

“There are so many things that a peer can help with and that we give them the tools to do,” she said.

Peer mentors are supervised by and meet regularly with professionals who remain on call to the mentors and available for referrals. Mentors undergo 60 hours of training before they ever meet with students, during which they role-play encounters and learn to set boundaries.

“They are trained to understand what the role is and what it is not. A peer mentor can be a really weird position, because it’s not a friend, either. They are not junior therapists. They don’t diagnose or give advice or do testing,” Swenson said.

Recommended by Dean of Student Success Crystal Credi, IVCC candidates un-

derwent job interviews and passed background checks. Credi said, “Bhawna and Danica are truly approachable and relate to students. Their personalities are different, yet complementary. They have made a noticeable impact in a short time.”

Peer-to-peer counseling is not a new concept and has been used in alcohol and drug rehab, veterans’ groups and other organizations for decades. “There is a need for individual mental health services and for a community response that helps a whole bunch of people, not just one. You can’t do one without the other,” Swenson said.

Swenson developed her first community peer program in 2016 tailored to a college veterans group that wanted to adapt to college after their military experiences, but did not need the same guidance typically given to incoming freshmen.

“To expand access to mental health services, Illinois and other states want colleges to develop peer programs,” she said. Some states have even begun to extend mental health services to younger children too.

Scoma and Bhawna are available on campus five days a week. They accept walk-ins during office hours at the Counseling Center on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays or at their office inside the Adult Education Center, Room CTC 220, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. They can be reached at ivccpeers@transformativegrowth.org.

REAL ID

Continued from Page A1

Giannoulas’ office has experienced an uptick in REAL ID issuances with 628,279 issued in 2022, 864,240 in 2023 and 1.1 million in 2024. In January of 2025, the office issued 128,000 REAL IDs, a record for a single month.

Currently, just 3.4 million Illinois residents with a driver’s license or state ID – or about 30 percent – hold a REAL ID driver’s license or ID.

Giannoulas also stressed that Illinoisans who need a REAL ID should make an appointment at a DMV to avoid longer lines closer to the deadline or wait until after May 7 to apply if they do not have immediate travel plans.

For Illinoisans with flight plans after May 7, 2025, it is recommended they submit their REAL ID application at least 30 days prior to the flight. A temporary driver’s license or state ID will not be accepted as a REAL ID-compliant form of identification.

Individuals applying for a REAL ID must do so in-person at an Illinois DMV and are required to present:

- A U.S. birth certificate, U.S. passport, Naturalization Certificate, Report of Birth Abroad or a Certificate of Citizenship. If you are not a U.S. citizen, an employment authorization document, a permanent resident card or a foreign passport with an approved I-94 form is also acceptable. If you’ve changed your name, you’ll need to provide name change documents.
- Proof of a full Social Security number (SSN). Examples include: a Social Security card, a W-2 or a pay stub with your full SSN.
- Two current residency documents that list your full name. Examples include: a utility bill, rental agreement, deed/title or a bank statement.
- Proof of your signature. Examples include: a signed credit or debit card, canceled check, or current state driver’s license or state ID.

Illinois residents can go online to access an interactive checklist to make sure they have the documents they need before heading to a DMV.

Some Illinois DMVs require an appointment, so residents are encouraged to plan ahead and visit www.ilso.gov if they need to schedule one.

District 280

Continued from Page A1

earned the honor roll for one, three, five, and seven semesters will be March 19. Invited families are encouraged to respond with their breakfast attendance by March 12.

Masini presented the Athletic Committee personnel recommendations. The following volunteer coaches were approved by the board: Softball–Steve Gibertini, Aaron Eddy, Kassidy Barkman; Girls’ Track–Brock Sondgeroth, Kyle Lopez; Baseball–Josh Randolph, Steve Freeman, Bryson Prusator, Brian Blumhorst; and Boys’ Tennis–Tom Corrigan.

Principal Masini also presented on the request for a Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) club. The FCA is an International Sports ministry that began in 1954, and it is now in 115 countries. Participation is voluntary. The volunteer school sponsors are Patti Blumhorst and Jared Ortega. The board approved the voluntary club at MHS.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

During Superintendent Dr. Denise Aughenbaugh’s report, the board approved the Memorandum of Understanding between the Mendota Police Department to re-hire School Resource Officer Chad Hochstatter for the 2025-2026 school year. The district’s salary commitment is \$58,414.54. The board thanked the City of Mendota and Officer Hochstatter for this partnership.

The board reviewed and approved the updated District Expenditure/Risk Management Plan. The board considered, discussed, and approved the IL Department of Transportation Serious Safety Hazard Finding Report on School Safety Busing. After board approval, the Serious Safety Hazard Finding report is submitted to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) for their consideration and finding.

HEALTH LIFE SAFETY OPTIONS

The board held a discussion and consideration of the Engie Phase IV Health Life Safety Options. If the board approves the Phase IV plan at the March 17 board meeting, then the timeline will begin to

assure the buildings are ready for students and a partial certificate of occupancy by Aug. 12. The final completion of the Phase IV project would be December 2025.

The design-build format includes a guaranteed maximum price to the district. The 10-Year Health Life Safety inspection requires the district complete all Priority A code items within one calendar year. There were Priority A items required by the state of Illinois in the agriculture and vocational building, stadium area, and main high school building. The most significant issues cited to be resolved included moisture infiltration, VCT tiles shifting, VCT tiles cracking at intervals, masonry step cracking, CMU block cracking, cosmetic cracking, and failing caulk on pre-cast concrete panels.

The repairs include the following flooring needs: demo flooring, floor preparation to fill saw cuts with joint filler and install moisture mitigation system and install new flooring. The repairs include the following base masonry solutions: repair cracks and mortar, lowering of existing door and frame in existing mezzanine, fire block tops of walls, repair exterior wall step cracks, grind out mortar, install stitch tie bars, tuck point in joints, micro repair cracks in CMU blocks, pre-cast concrete panel repairs, and efflorescence clean-up on CMU block wall. There are also health life safety insulation issues to resolve on hot water piping, duct insulation, and piping. The board reviewed flooring choices and additional optional masonry items.

PERSONNEL ITEMS

Following an executive closed session, the board took the following action:

- Hired Shannon Beetz as an assistant volleyball coach for the 2025-2026 school year.
- Approved the retirement request for English teacher, Jennifer Masini, effective at the conclusion of the 2027-2028 school year.
- Accepted the resignation of Steve Villegas as an assistant football coach.

The next regular meeting of the District 280 Board will be Monday, March 17 at 6 p.m.

IVCC offers college prep test classes

OGLESBY – Illinois Valley Community College’s Continuing Education Office offers classes in March and April for college-bound high school students planning to take standardized college admissions tests.

The class de-mystifies college admissions testing such as the American College Testing (ACT) or Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and relieves anxiety about the upcoming exams. Participants will take practice tests and review questions as well as learn test-taking skills, answering strategies, exam pacing and the scoring system.

Each class meets for two sessions. An ACT class will meet March 1 from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. and March 29 from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The class ID is 21713. SAT Test Prep will meet March 29 from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. and April 5 from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The class ID is 21597. The cost of each class is \$135.

To register, call the IVCC Continuing Education Center 815-224-0427 or go to www.ivcc.edu/enroll and use keyword “test prep.”

MENDOTA HIGH SCHOOL BOOSTER CLUB PRESENTS

THE WINDY CITY DUELING PIANOS

SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 2025

THE MENDOTA MOOSE LODGE

DOORS OPEN AT 6PM, SHOW 7PM-10PM

TICKETS ARE \$30 AND ARE AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE FROM ANY BOOSTER CLUB MEMBER OR CONTACT ERIN STROUSS AT (815) 866-8057

LIGHT APPETIZERS

CASH BAR & FOOD TRUCK AVAILABLE

SILENT AUCTION & 50/50

MUST BE 21 OR OLDER

Sip-n-Shop

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Saturday, March 22, 2025

9am - 1pm

SPRING CRAFT & VENDOR SHOW

LOCATION: Mendota Civic Center

1901 TOM MERWIN DRIVE, MENDOTA, IL


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For your classic car - Restored or Unrestored

Mercedes, Porsche, Jaguar, Corvettes, Vintage Cars, Foreign & Domestic, Restored & Unrestored, Hot Rods, Mopars & Vintage Motorcycles

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OPINION



The Mendota Reporter

Award-winning Newspaper IPA/NINA
Ill. Press Assoc./No. Ill. Newspaper Assoc.

Kip Cheek, Managing Editor
Brandon LaChance, News Reporter
Jennifer Robinson, Office Manager
Brent Hatch, Account Executive

Opinions expressed on this page are those of the writer or artist. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Reporter management or staff.

Letters to the editor should be typed or hand-printed. They should also be brief. All letters must contain a name, address and telephone number. The editor reserves the right to publish, condense, revise or reject any submissions.

What song have you heard the most?

This is kind of a broad, rhetorical question because how many of you have tallied how many times you have heard a song?

If you have, kudos, you're crazy, but kudos. Yes, we have streaming services which count for us now, but hopefully you listen to music outside of Spotify, Amazon,

Never the Last Chance

By Brandon LaChance



Apple, YouTube, and all of the other services. And there are millions of us who had plenty of listening years before streaming was even a thing.

You can call us old; I call us genuine.

Genuine in terms of we have vinyl collections, we used 8-tracks (before my time, but as this column shows, I understand and appreciate), we rolled tape back into cassettes, and we lugged around briefcases full of CDs. We paid our dues.

Plus, the older generations who did all these things are paying for your devices or streaming services. We're connected to everything.

Anyway, anyway, back to the question... What song have you heard the most?

When someone asked me this a month ago, I smiled, and immediately said, "The National Anthem."

I didn't take a break. I didn't think. I answered without hesitation.

Thinking of topped pushed to songs, we don't think of those we don't usually push play for in our car or whatever is connected to our headphones. But, those are the ones we have probably listened to the most.

Other songs which could compete are "Happy Birthday," "Hokie Pokie," "I'll Be There for You" the Friends theme song by The Rembrandts, "Ghostbusters" by Ray Parker Jr. or songs others play on a jukebox all the time that when you're at home, you're sick of listening to, such as "Don't Stop Believin'" by Journey, "Sweet Caroline" by Neil Diamond, or if you're a wrestling fan, the John Cena anthem, "The Time is Now," the NWO (New World Order) Theme Song, or the tunes we heard before we saw Hulk Hogan, Macho Man, Bret Hart, Stone Cold Steve Austin, The Rock, Kurt Angle, and the list could go on and on and on.

We don't think about how many times we heard the songs that we're not physically pushing the button.

"The Star-Spangled Banner," otherwise known as the National Anthem of the United States of America is played before every big event, sports or non-sports, in every village, town, city in each of the 50 states.

NFL Super Bowl, you'll hear the National Anthem, and you'll probably place jelly beans on a prop bet.

MLB World Series, NBA Finals, NHL Stanley Cup, you'll hear "Bombs bursting in air" before each game, no matter how many contests are in a series.

You have kids in junior high or high school sports, almost every game does not start without the song, unless you're in a tournament or have bad audio equipment.

It's also played before government meetings and military parades.

If you think about it, "The Star-Spangled Banner," may be the song you've listened to the most.

Letters

Schools need phone-free policy

Dear Editor:

I am a parent of children in our public schools. I strongly believe Mendota schools should implement a phone-free policy. Governor Pritzker has already proposed a statewide cell phone ban in Illinois schools, and our district should lead the way in adopting this change before it is inevitably mandated by the state legislature.

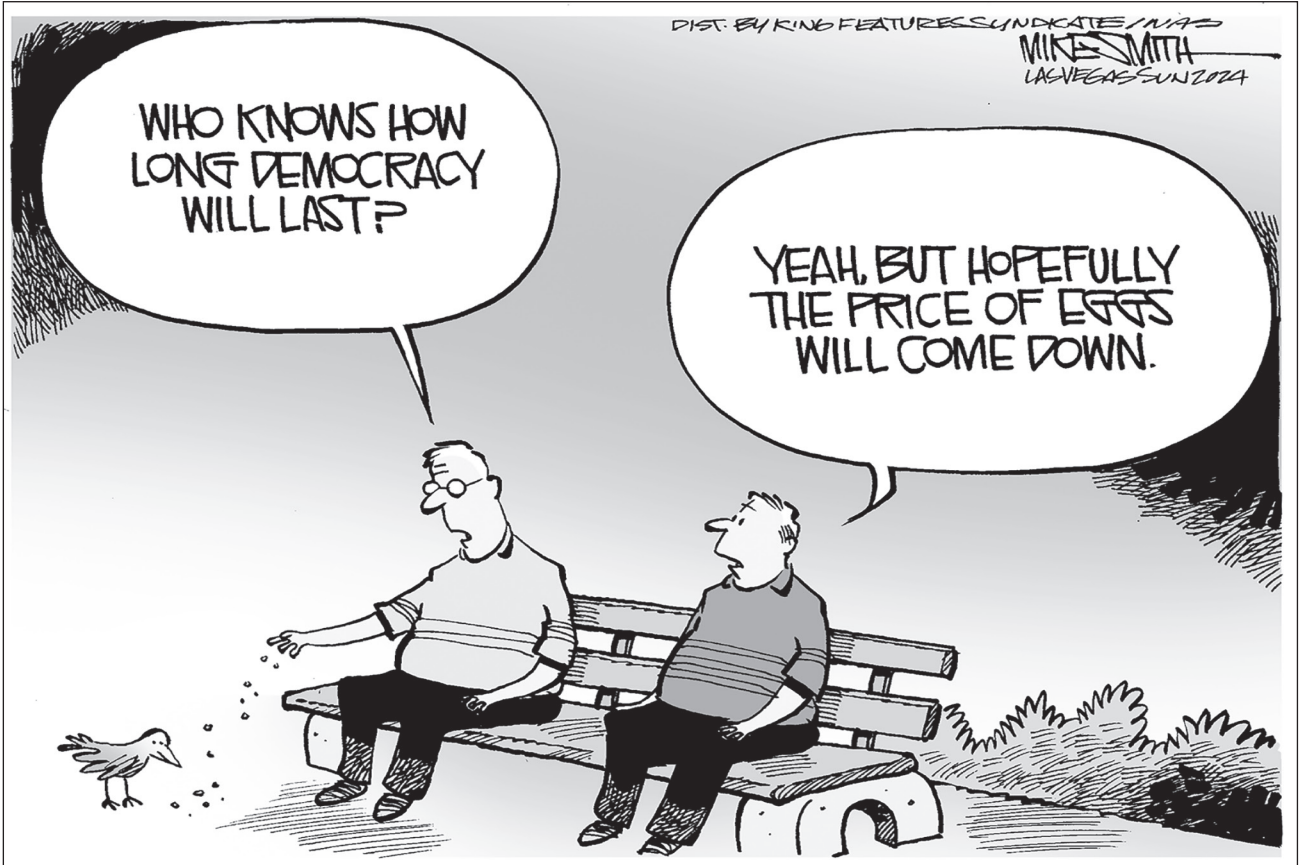
As someone who works in technology, building applications alongside designers and engineers, I've seen how social media and smartphones are designed to capture attention and foster addiction. Research by Jonathan Haidt in "The Anxious Generation" shows that since smartphones became ubiquitous, teen depression and anxiety have skyrocketed. Gallup data reveals teens now spend nearly nine hours a day on screens, much of it on platforms like TikTok and Instagram. Even students admit that phones are a distraction that negatively impacts their learning and mental health.

Eight states have already implemented statewide school phone bans, and at least 15 others are consid-

ering similar restrictions. Schools that have adopted these policies report improved student engagement, better behavior, and stronger social connections. Implementing this policy would be simple and cost nothing—students could leave devices at home or store them during school hours. Exceptions could be made for medical needs and extracurricular activities. While some may worry about contact with their child during emergencies, Mendota is a very small community where news travels fast, and school offices remain the best way to reach students quickly.

We are at a crucial moment for our children's future. The evidence is clear: excessive mobile device and social media use is harming their mental health, academic performance, and social development. With so many states moving in this direction, Mendota has the chance to lead, creating a focused, healthier learning environment. Let's give our kids their fullest opportunity to engage, learn, and be present.

Justin Bend,
Mendota



A sidewalk report for 1901

(The following is from Jessica Nashold's *Backtracks & Sidetracks* column reprinted from Feb. 28, 2001.)

By Jessica Nashold

To answer questions about Mendota's sidewalks outside the business district, J.L. Nisley, superintendent of streets, released figures, which appeared in The Sun & Mendota Bulletin on March 1, 1901. At that time there were 6 1/2 miles of cement walk on residential streets, 8,899 lineal feet of brick walks and 9 1/2 miles of wooden walks. The cement walks, plus intersections and alley crossings, had cost \$19,772.55 since 1895. Costs for cement walks in front of town lots were shared by the property owners and city.

Brick walks had cost \$4,988.88. No figures were quoted for the cost of wooden walks.

Mark Ruggles, publisher of the Sun-Bulletin, let it be known that he would accompany his mother, Mrs. Ruggles-Corbus, to Florida for a time. It was his intention to send letters for publication while away.

The CB&Q announced its intention to close Burlington Park. This had been a popular destination for summer vacation activities, especially Saturday "half days." But the bottom line was not sufficient to keep it open.

The public doesn't pay enough.

The park of 60 acres, which had cost \$12,000 and to which the CB&Q had added improvements amounting to an additional \$15,000, was now offered for sale.

Lawrence Prescott filed a petition to deliver "rural free mail" in the Mendota district. This would make it possible for farmers to receive and send mail without coming to town.

We hope the petition will be granted.

Edgar Higgins, a Mendota boy, joined Dr. Rucker's Kobak Wonders, a medicine show, which had played at the Mendota Opera House. The boy had a good voice and also danced.

Backtracks & Sidetracks

At Peoria he was called back several times.

William Lange, who had been severely scalded in the Henning brewery explosion, was undergoing surgery to replace his eyelids in the Illinois Eye & Ear Infirmary on West Adams Street in Chicago.

Though the eyelids were ruined his sight was saved.

Operations by Dr. Oscar Dodd had been started in 1900. The remains of the ruined lids had been removed and a series of skin grafts taken from his arm. The work was expected to take "a couple more months."

C.W. Best, a former Mendotan, presented a concert at the Opera House on Feb. 22, 1901. It was sponsored by the Mendota Y.M.C.A. Best, a talented pianist, now located in Chicago, brought with him a soprano, a violinist and two women who gave readings. Tickets were 35 cents, school children 25 cents.

The A.O.U.W. (Ancient Order of Union Workers), Mendota Lodge 273, held its ninth annual masquerade at the Opera House on Feb. 18, 1901. Costume prize for Best Woman went to Kate Walter, for Best Man to Frank Schmitt. Music was by the Apollo Orchestra.

It was remarked that in early days, Indians had driven thousands of buffalo over Buffalo Rock near Ottawa. The resulting large piles of bones were, as recently as the 1870s, gathered up and shipped east. It was believed that the last buffalo ever killed in this area was brought down in 1837 by Samuel Adams of Troy Grove.

Three leopard cubs, weighing about 40 pounds each, arrived at the Adams

Express office in Mendota. They were consigned to D.D. Coglin of LaMoille. He and a farmer named Fetzer, who lived southwest of Mendota, were planning to take a circus on the road in the spring. Headquarters were in LaMoille and the animals were being kept in a former shoe factory, which had been abandoned.

The leopards are just old enough to get sassy.

A proposed corn stalk factory in LaSalle did not materialize. An immense pile of stalks, hundreds of tons, remained near the proposed site. It had been there three years, with no developments. The stalks were supposed to have been compressed into bricks for packing armor plate on warships.

Carry Nation was scheduled to be tried for "joint smashing" in the March 1901 court in Wichita, Kan. The Sun-Bulletin reproduced some sketches published in Chicago while she visited there. She was shown making an appearance at the Cook County jail, making a speech in city hall and reaching through an open carriage window to shake someone's hand.

August Kolanczik of Ohio, Ill., and Fred Brown of LaMoille, engaged in a shooting match. Kolanczik with 47 out of 50 was the winner. Brown hit 43. **SIDETRACK** — Kolanczik later moved to Mendota and brought credit to our town with his marksmanship.

In Nebraska it was said jackrabbits were being shipped to England as Belgian hares.

In its March 1, 1901, issue, the Sun-Bulletin commented on the importance of that day for farmers. It was the day tenant farmers would settle their accounts with landlords and if they were making a change, they would move to the places they would occupy in the coming season. The prospect in 1901 was for a "fine and successful year." **We hope it will prove so to everyone.**

Europe deserves its humiliation

By Rich Lowry

Europe has been warned, and warned again. Still, it has been reduced to a near-fainting fit -- and, in the case of one German official, actual tears -- over the Trump administration's tough words about its deficient military spending and U.S. moves to begin negotiating on its own with Russia over the Ukraine war.

In response, French President Emmanuel Macron called an emergency summit of European leaders, which his advisers insisted wasn't an emergency summit at all, but merely a rapidly assembled informal meeting.

Whatever the nomenclature, there are signs that Europe is beginning to get the memo -- or, more precisely, beginning to read a memo that it's been sent repeatedly for years and buried somewhere under piles of documents celebrating its own so-called soft power.

Back in 2011, Europe received a stern talking to from a bumptious U.S. official who insisted that it faced "a dim if not dismal future" and that NATO was headed for "irrelevance."

This rude American was none other than President Barack Obama's defense secretary, Robert Gates. As a holdover from the George W. Bush administration, Gates was a figure with unassailable bipartisan credentials, and yet sounded a little like Vice President J.D. Vance and Trump's defense secretary Pete Hegseth.

"The blunt reality," Gates said in his speech, "is that there will be dwindling appetite and patience in the U.S. Congress -- and in the American body politic writ large -- to expend increasingly precious funds on behalf of nations that are apparently unwilling to devote the necessary resources or make the necessary changes to be serious and capable partners in their own defense."

In the form of the second Trump administration, the patience has dwindled to almost nothing.

Serious countries need serious militaries, and a military alliance like NATO depends on the capabilities of its member countries. This is so obvious it should go without saying, but it's been an inconvenient truth for a Europe that has preferred

to spend on everything else while relying on the might of the United States for security and power projection.

NATO countries vowed that they'd spend at least 2% of GDP on defense back in 2014, and yet only 23 of 32 NATO members have reached the threshold. Poland and the Baltic states are among the top spenders, while France and Germany barely make 2%, and Canada and Italy are beneath it.

The trend has been upward but nowhere near adequate. According to The New York Times, "There is consensus among officials and analysts that Europe lacks crucial elements of defense like integrated air and missile defense, long-range precision artillery and missiles, satellites, and air-to-air refueling tankers."

Is that all?

Trump is calling for 5% of the GDP for NATO members, which has all the hallmarks of a tactic to get Europe as high as possible even if they don't reach this benchmark (the U.S. itself spends about 3.4%). NATO is planning to make 3% or 3.5% its goal later this year.

President Trump and his team prefer vinegar to honey in making their case around the world. It may be needlessly abrasive, but there's no doubt that it gets people's attention. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte told member countries to stop "complaining" and come up with concrete, positive ideas, while Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, said "Europe's security is at a turning point" and Europe needs "an urgency mindset" and "a surge of defense."

Even if Trump were less insistent about spending and had warmer feelings about the alliance, the fact is that the United States may at some point be consumed with responding to a crisis in the Pacific, and Europe will have to be prepared to defend its backyard regardless.

If Europe won't spend more for the sake of its own security or the good of the alliance, it should -- when its embarrassing panic subsidies -- at least do it out of self-respect.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.
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LOCAL AND AREA



Junior High Band Festival
Dozens of young musicians from around the area gathered on one stage in IVCC’s Cultural Centre for the 2025 Junior High Band Festival on Feb. 15. Before students performed in concert as a large ensemble for the first time, they spent time rehearsing and in break-out sessions with school music directors who shared tips on instrument care and breathing techniques. The concert was conducted by Phil Whaley, who directs the IVCC Wind Ensemble. (Photo contributed)

HONOR ROLL

St. Bede Academy

PERU—Melissa Bosnich, principal of St. Bede Academy in Peru, has announced St. Bede’s honor roll for the first semester of the 2024-2025 school year.

Freshmen - Hope Antkowiak, Maks Baker, Landon Balestri, Alicia Barreras, Jackson Bogatitus, Gabriel Bunch, Isabella Camacho, Ty Carls, Tzu-Tao Chang, Kylie Coons, Ayla Coventry, Jameson Daley, David De La Torre, Nicholas Del Pilar, Olivia DePue, Sadie Dugosh, Quinn Entrican, Luke Fess, Bear Fitzpatrick, Gavin Fivek, Hannah Fritz, Leah Griggs, Haozhe Guo, Yitong Han, Nicolette Hanck, Mason Haskell, Connor Holly, Jieming Huang, Yizhe Huang, Jacob Inman, Areesah Joop, Payden Kelly, Sadie Leffelman, Kijah Lucas, Jyzel Martin, Gaby Martinez, Parker McClain, Valeria Mendez, Morgan Mercer, Johnathan Michael, Yoltzin Morales Sanchez, Max Moreno, Teagan Mul-lane, Maksymilian Nied-zwiedz, Lien Phan, Allyn Phillips, Brock Pikul, Nelle Potthoff, Olivia Raef, Addison Raffety, Graham Ross, Finley Rue, Mary Simon-etta, Rayna Skinner, Elsie Soliman, Josephine Trujillo, Elida Untz, Preston Vasquez, Hanna Waszkowiak, Yitong Xue and Ryan Zusefin

Sophomores - Faith Ankiewicz, Yesenia Avila, Demian Baker, Caleb Barto, Chloe Brandt, Sean Brayton, Brody Burris, Calen Cass,

Geno Dinges, Kate Duncan, Jaylynn Finley, Kyra Finley, Grace Gahan, Eden Galvan, Daniel Garcia, Cecilia Giacalone, Raudel Hermosillo Jr., Brennen Hirst, Emma Huffaker, Yejun Jang, Lila Koehler, Ella Lamboley, Chenxuan Lin, Landon Marquez, Lucy Maus, Emma Mavity, Stuart McGunnigal, Stephanie Ni, Niko Pappas-Anniballi, Chase Riva, Olivia Ross, Ranbir Saini, Alaina Schulz, Ishvir Singh, Mackenzie Stanbary, Bryce Stuepfert, Alexander Tillman, Alec Tomsha, Judith Torres, Maleigha Trench, Ariana Villava and Kerstin Williams

Juniors - Margaret Arkins, Alp Arslan, Ava Balestri, Genavyve Barnes, Landon Boggio, Lily Bos-nich, Noah Buck, August Burr, Drew Carboni, Caden Carls, Chuanyang Chen, Anna Cyrocki, Emerald De La Torre, Jose De La Torre, Simona Desai, Ha-oxuan Du, Madeline Fabish, Gino Ferrari, Harrison Fess, Christopher Gedraitis, Ash-ton Gonzales, Mae Hagen-buch, Brody Hahn, Weston Heersink, Aiden Hermes, Zachary Husser, Isaac Kang, Bokyoung Kim, Wanyu Liu, Breanna Martinez, Lili Mc-Clain, Ruby Michels, Ella Mudge, Thanh Nguyen, Sophia Ni, Jillian Pinter, Trajan Raffety, Xiangyi Ren, Carson Riva, Chipper Rossi, Sara Ruiz, Alyssa Savitch, Emma Slingsby, Lillian So-liman, Ryan Soliman, Shujie

Song, William Sramek, Devin Steil, Miranda Torres, Julian Villava, Peiwen Wu, Xindi Wu, Hongsheng Yang, Ayla Yeske, Yannis Yong, Kian Zeller, Ruihan Zhang and Yijing Zhang

Seniors - Teer Ao, Haid-en Ator, Andrea Brandner, Adriana Buchanan, Qiyu Chen, Ziheng Chen, Garrett Connelly, Jordan Coventry, Trayger Davis, Alondra De-lao, Lorelei Denny, Madalyn Dittmar, Ashlyn Ehm, Bailey Engels, Yibo Fan, Grady Gillan, Phillip Gray, Mirella Haskell, Halden Hueneburg, Elizabeth Huffaker, Kathleen Hunter, Tyler Jordan, Yuno Kawai, Maci Kelly, Sadie Koehler, Jaxon Kozak, Lin Le, Violet Lopez, Haohongze Ma, Haiqing Mao, Gavin Marquez, Jack Maschmann, Quinn McClain, Victoria Mendez, Jake Migliorini, Grace Millington, Adeline Mitchell, Mason Moreno, Aidan Mullane, Kaden Nau-man, Ryan Nawa, Alivia Payne, Logan Pineda, Mason Ross, Analia Salas, Emma Smudzinski, Zixuan Song, Alan Spencer, Nhi Ton, Mina Trandinh, Arthur van den Berg, Samantha Wagner, Tyler Walsh, Abraham Wies-brock, Kefei Wu, Solomon Zhang and Jinhao Zhao

Veteran stage performer selected to lead IVCC’s spring musical cast

❑ “Hello, Dolly!” performances set for April 3-13

OGLESBY – Illinois Valley Community Col-lege’s Spring musical will feature a special guest per-forming the title role.

P e o - r i a - a r e a dancer, choreog-r a p h e r and direc-tor Tamra Challa-combe will star as Dolly Levi in “Hello, Dolly!” Challacombe has operat-ed dance studios, worked for the Peoria Ballet and appeared onstage in pro-ductions at Peoria-area community theaters. She also appeared on stage at Zellmer’s Dinner Theatre in Farmington, where she became friends with Don Grant Zellmer, IVCC’s di-rector/choreographer.

The play will be per-formed April 3-13, with performances on Thursday,



Challacombe

Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. Online ticket sales begin Monday, March 3, and a link to the online box office will be avail-able at the IVCC Theatre website: <https://www.ivcc.edu/theatre>.

Challacombe is no stranger to “Hello, Dolly!” having performed in the role of Minnie Fay, a hat shop as-sistant. “Minnie Fay was my first featured role ever and I have had the opportunity to play her twice. Now, I’m very excited to play Dolly!”

“In a way, she is already a ‘Dolly,’” Zellmersaid. “I’m so very happy to be able to work with Tamra again – all these years after we first performed together. She is the consummate profes-sional triple-threat, warm and wonderful, and no one is a stranger for very long. I think everyone involved is going to not only enjoy working with a guest artist,

but learn a lot and have a ball doing it!”

Challacombe heads a cast of IVCC students and community members that features other familiar faces and much new talent. They include Greg Tullis as Horace Vandergelder; Jake Jakielski as Cornelius Hackl; Gennar Piccolo as Barnaby Tucker; Rebecca Eltrevoog as Irene Molloy and Ali Rimmele as Minnie Fay.

Rounding out the cast are Kelly Johnson as Ernestina; Seth Edwards as Ermen-garde; Xavier Barham as Ambrose Kemper, and Doug Bartlet as Rudolph Reisenweber.

Forming the company are Tyler Bienemann, McK-enzie Bruce, Azlyn Buch-man, Ethan Darrow, Lucas Fraga, Eva Horwath, Matt Masters, Katie Monaghan, Ellie Radtke, Jacob Roller, Reid Rynke, Michael Shaw, Alex Stafford and Nikki Walsh.

SRCCF to present “Mardi Gras Carnivale” March 1 in LaSalle

LaSALLE – Tickets are still available but selling fast for the Starved Rock Country Community Foun-dation’s first “Mardi Gras Carnivale” at Senica’s Oak Ridge Golf Club Saturday, March 1.

T h e 5:30 to 10 p.m. Satur-day event will feature guests adorned in Venetian masks, white ties and tails, feather boas, and purple, green and gold beads.

The evening will also include a stilt-walker/magician, face painter, New Orleans-style food, music by BOOMINDJ Services, and a contest where participants roll giant dice for prizes.

The banquet hall will be transformed with glitz and glitter into a French Quarter-like setting by Thee Ultimate Party’s Tony Einhaus.



Spencer, emcee

The live auction by Marty McConville of Mc-Conville Auctioneering includes a night in Ottawa’s historic Gen. Wallace home, a weekend at Pear Tree Lane Farmhouse in Princeton, a holiday weekend in New York City, a barbecue for 50 by Tony’s Butt Shack, a vacation on the Caribbean Island of St. Maarten, a Tuscan villa for six, and much more.

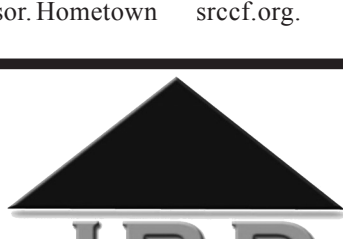
Food stations include Tony’s Butt Shack, Lou’s LaGrotto, Senica’s Oak Ridge, Thee Ultimate Party, a Jeremiah Joe coffee bar and desserts donated by the SRCCF board.

The 2015 SRCCF found-ing Board of Directors is the \$10,000 presenting sponsor and Ethel McConnell’s Donor Advised Fund is a \$5,000 sponsor. Hometown

National Bank of La Salle and Advantech of Ottawa are each \$3,000 dining sponsors.

Other sponsors include: Financial Plus Credit Union; Wheatland Title Company; Shaw Media; Starved Rock Media; NRG Media; Shaw Local Radio; Erin Stuedemann, realtor, Coldwell Banker Real Es-tate Group; attorney David Kaleel of Mendota; First State Bank of Mendota; and Eureka Savings Bank. Ma-jor donations were received from SRCCF founders Pamela and Chuck Beckett and Matt and Kristi Carroll of Mendota.

For information, visit srcf.org or contact SRC- CF Director of Operations Janice Corrigan at (815) 252-2906, ext. 2 or janice@srcf.org.



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HOME IMPROVEMENT



There's no shortage of small projects that can change the look and feel of a home. Many of these undertakings can be achieved with a modest investment.

Small renovations that can make a big impact

Homeowners may think they have to tear down walls or build room extensions to transform their homes with renovation projects. But small projects can yield impressive results, and that's something homeowners working with limited budgets can keep in mind.

There's no shortage of small projects that can change the look and feel of a home. Many of these undertakings can be achieved with a modest investment.

• **Front door replacement:** A new front door instantly improves curb appeal and can make a home more secure and energy-efficient. Painting the existing front door is an even smaller project that still offers appeal.

• **Lighting addition:** Whether a homeowner enlarges a window or adds skylights, natural light can produce incredible results. Investing in new lighting can feel like expanding a space without pushing out walls.

• **Kitchen and bath fixture**

upgrades: Faucets and door pulls are used every day. Swapping existing fixtures for something a little more modern can unify spaces and provide subtle changes that enhance these popular spaces.

• **Wood floor restoration:** Scuffing and scratches can adversely affect the pristine look of a natural wood floor. Homeowners can polish a floor to restore its shine. A professional service will sand down and refinish older floors at a fraction of the cost of a new floor installation.

• **Exterior lighting:** Lighting isn't just important inside. A welcoming glow in the yard is awe-inspiring. There are many energy-efficient lighting options, including ones that do not need to be hard-wired to the circuitry inside the home.

• **Staircase renovation:** Coordinate the staircase to the style in the home with a decorative carpet runner. A secure runner is attractive and can help reduce slipping

down the stairs. Tighten shaky railings or replace them while upgrading the stair treads.

• **Interior paint:** Change the color of walls, doors, cabinets, or even furniture with paint. All homeowners need is a paint color that inspires them and a little bit of time.

• **Replace outlet covers:** Upgrade outlet covers with screwless options. Screwless plates for outlets and light switches can make walls look more sleek.

• **Entry organizer installation:** Banish clutter from the home by catching it at the door. An entry organizer with spaces for shoes, coats, backpacks, and shopping bags can be eye-catching and functional.

• **Carpets cleaning:** Soiled carpets can look drab and dingy. Homeowners can rent carpet-cleaning machines or hire services to revitalize carpets with a deep cleaning.

Small changes around a home can create a big impact without breaking the bank.

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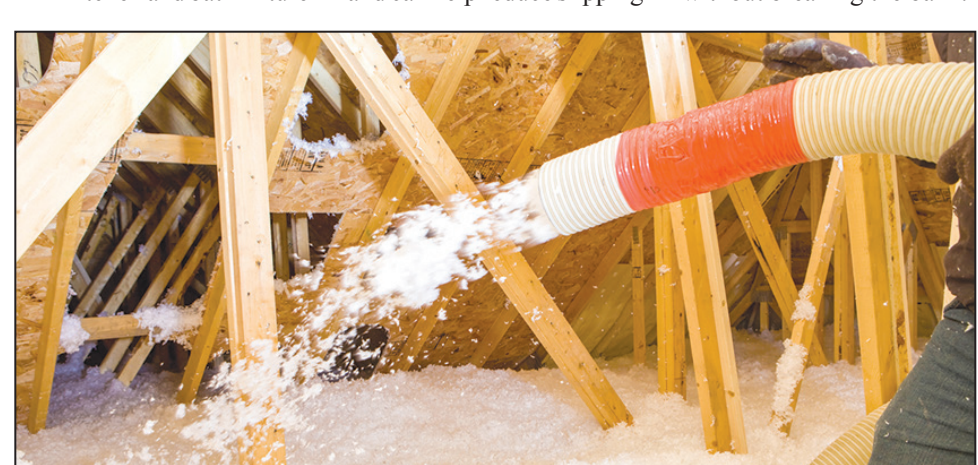
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Planning home improvements? Start at the top

(BPT) - At first glance, the value of some home improvements can be hard to see - particularly when the improvements are in the attic. While a gleaming kitchen backsplash, an expansive patio deck or luxury spa bath are all pleasing to the eye, the value of other home improvements may best be appreciated through improved indoor comfort. Installed in the attic area, insulation and ductwork are two examples of often overlooked upgrades that can impact comfort as well as energy savings. Case in point: EPA estimates that homeowners can save up to 15% on heating and cooling costs (or an average of 11% on total energy costs) by air sealing their homes and adding insulation in attics, floors over crawl spaces, and accessible basement rim joists.

Installing adequate levels of attic insulation and repairing or replacing attic ductwork can help address the root cause of problems such as increased dust, hot/cold rooms or high energy bills. But as the attic area is infrequently accessed, how do you know if a problem exists? Let's start with insulation. Simply confirming its presence in the attic is not enough. Following are some signs that your home's attic may need additional insulation:

- * Hot or cold ceilings, walls or rooms
- * Uneven temperatures in a home that cause HVAC systems to run more frequently
- * High heating or cooling bills compared

to similarly sized homes in the area

A sufficient amount of attic insulation, typically measured in inches, is necessary to help protect against warm air moving into colder parts of the building envelope. A qualified HVAC technician should be able to evaluate your attic and help you understand how much energy you could conserve by insulating to a specified thickness.

Leaks and poor connections in attic ductwork can also lead to problems in other parts of the home. According to ENERGY STAR about 20% of the air that moves through the duct system is lost due to leaks, holes and poorly connected ducts. ENERGY STAR also notes that tightly sealed and well-insulated ducts found in qualified homes can reduce annual utility bills by \$120 or more. Following are some indicators of a problem with a home's attic ductwork:

- * Spikes in energy bills
- * Rooms that are too hot or too cold
- * Rooms that have a musty odor
- * Heating or cooling equipment that cycles on/off more frequently as the system works harder to heat/cool spaces due to lost air
- * Increased levels of dust

Ready to get a start on your home improvements? Don't lose sight of opportunities in the attic to boost comfort and energy savings.

Savings may vary. Find out why at EnergyStar.gov.

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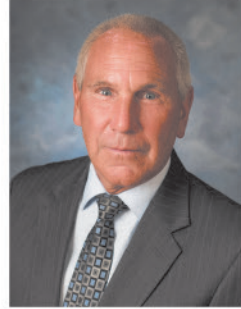


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Did you know?

Formal dining rooms were once a must-have in homes, but that popularity has waned in recent decades. Dining rooms were the spaces to host holiday dinners or family birthday parties. Slowly but surely, dining rooms became obsolete in modern homes that favored open-concept layouts. And in those homes that had formal dining areas, the need for home office spaces or playrooms for children saw many dining rooms repurposed. According to the National Association of Home Builders, 43 percent of millennials prefer the look and feel of an open-concept layout and casual dinner parties. However, even though dining rooms may no longer be de rigueur, designers are noticing an increase in clients requesting formal dining spaces, according to a report in Southern Living. Perhaps it's a matter of open-concept fatigue. After spending a year or more during the height of the pandemic at home with few to no barriers between rooms, homeowners may be looking for homes that carve out niches for specific tasks (and privacy) once more. It may not be long until homes come back to including more traditional layouts with separate dining spaces to make hosting a little more intimate.

HOME IMPROVEMENT



Homeowners mulling a basement conversion project can learn the basics of the project as they try to determine if such renovations are right for them.

The basics of basement conversion projects

Space is a sought-after commodity in real estate. Buyers prioritize numerous variables when searching for a new home, and square footage is often near the top of their lists.

The real estate market has been highly competitive in recent years, and home prices have remained high as a result. That reality has prompted some current homeowners who feel they have outgrown their homes to look for ways to increase the usable space in their existing properties. Basement conversions are one way to add more space. Homeowners mulling a basement conversion project can learn the basics of the project as they try to determine if such renovations are right for them.

• Basement conversion projects can be costly. Though the final cost of a conversion project can vary widely depending on the condition and accessibility of the existing space, estimates range from around \$45,000 to as much as \$150,000. The home renovation experts at Angi.com note that the average price for excavation is \$37,000. Of course, homeowners who are simply hoping to repurpose an existing basement likely won't need to pay for excavation. Accessibility is another notable variable that can affect the final cost. If the current space is a crawl space, potentially costly structural changes may be necessary to ensure contractors and eventually residents can access the area. Basements that are already easily accessible won't require such expenditures.

• Ventilation is a must. Finished basements must be adequately ventilated so moisture can be controlled. Without sufficient ventilation, the damp conditions common in many basements can foster the growth of mold. The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America notes that inhaled mold spores can trigger allergic reactions in

some people, potentially leading to runny nose, postnasal drip, red and watery eyes, and itchy eyes, nose, ears, and mouth, among other symptoms. Waterproofing systems and adequate ventilation can prevent mold growth in a basement, and these should be integral components of the design.

• Permits are part of the process. Basement conversions are considered major projects, and thus typically require homeowners and contractors to secure permits before any work is done. Permits may be necessary at various stages of the project. Homeowners who ignore laws regarding permits will have trouble selling their homes down the road, as it can be difficult if not impossible to secure a certificate of occupancy if renovations were made without securing the proper permits. In addition, securing necessary permits for each phase of the project can ensure final approval of the project. If permits are not secured along the way, local officials may insist work be redone to adhere to local laws, which can make the project even more costly.

• Basement conversions take time. The time a project takes will depend on the condition of the space at the start of the project and various details unique to each conversion. However, various contractors indicate projects take about two to three months once they begin. That timeline does not include the pre-project process of finding a contractor, soliciting design plans or preparing the rest of the home for such a significant and lengthy undertaking.

Basement conversion projects can add significant square footage to a home. Recognition of what such projects entail can help homeowners decide if this is the best way for them to increase livable space in their homes.



4 things to know about kitchen renovations

Kitchens are often described as the most popular room in a home, and that's not mere conjecture. A 2022 survey from House Digest asked participants to identify the room they consider most important in their homes, and roughly 41 percent chose the kitchen.

Residents tend to congregate in kitchens in the morning and then again in the evening when meals are prepared and, in homes without formal dining rooms, eaten. With so much time spent in the kitchen, it's no wonder that the 2022 U.S. Houzz & Home Study: Renovation Trends found kitchens to be the most popular interior room to upgrade. With so many people interested in kitchen renovations, the following are four things homeowners should know about these popular improvement projects.

1. Expect to spend some money. Most home improvement projects require a significant financial investment, but kitchen renovations are among the more expensive undertakings. The overall cost of a project will depend on a host of variables unique to each home, including homeowners' preferences, but HomeAdvisor estimated the average kitchen remodel in 2023 cost between \$14,611 and \$41,432. Homeowners considering an upscale kitchen remodel may receive six figure estimates for such projects.

2. Expect a good return on investment. If sticker shock settles in when receiving an initial kitchen remodel estimate, perhaps it can help homeowners to know that such a project may provide a strong return on investment (ROI). According to Remodeling magazine's "2024 Cost vs. Value Report," a minor kitchen remodel provides a 96 percent ROI. A major kitchen remodel mid-range (49 percent) and a major

kitchen remodel upscale (38 percent) did not provide as notable a ROI.

3. Expect the project to take some time. Kitchens are large rooms with a lot of components, so renovating these spaces can take some time. Estimates vary depending on the size of the room, the scale of the remodel and the materials chosen, but Angi reports a kitchen remodel for most homes takes six weeks to four months. That's a sizable window, and it reflects the likelihood that unforeseen issues like supply chain interruptions or the discovery of mold will arise at some point during the renovation. Though it's impossible to determine precisely how long a project will take before it begins, homeowners renovating their kitchens may want to

plan for the project to take two months if not longer.

4. Expect to use your kitchen during the renovation. If the timeline of a renovation is scary, homeowners should know they will likely be able to use their kitchen even after the project begins. Though the room might not remain a popular gathering space once the work starts, Angi notes kitchens are typically out of commission for around six weeks during a renovation. That still requires some pre-planning in relation to meals, but it also suggests homeowners won't be without a kitchen for months on end.

Kitchen renovations are popular projects. Homeowners who know what to expect before such projects commence can make it through a renovation more smoothly.



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THE BACK PAGE

POLICE BLOTTER

DRIVING WHILE LICENSE SUSPENDED
Beatriz Garibay De Cuevas, 55, of 406 First Ave., Mendota, was charged with driving while license suspended after a traffic stop at U.S. 34 and Steve Bowne Drive at 10:39 p.m. Feb. 17. The subject was released with a LaSalle County court date.

DRIVING WHILE LICENSE SUSPENDED
Jason Jones, 35, of 601 15th St., Mendota, was charged with driving while license suspended after a traffic stop at 14th Street and Lincoln Avenue at 6:46 a.m. Feb. 18. The subject was released with a LaSalle County court date.

DRIVING WHILE LICENSE SUSPENDED
Alexander L. Krager, 29, of 301 ½ Fourth Ave., Mendota, was charged with driving while license suspended after a traffic stop at First Avenue and Second Street at 5:11 p.m. Feb. 19. The subject was released with a LaSalle County court date.

DRIVING WHILE LICENSE SUSPENDED
Richard D. Scott, 44, of 500 Fourth St., Mendota, was charged with driving while license suspended after a traffic stop at Main and Chicago streets at 3:18 p.m. Feb. 24. The subject was released with a LaSalle County court date.

DOMESTIC BATTERY
Isabel G. Knowles, 18, of 207 13th Ave., Mendota, was charged with domestic battery after police officers were called to the 200 block of 13th Avenue for the report of a disturbance at 5:14 p.m. Feb. 24. The subject was transported to the LaSalle County jail to appear before a judge.

IN MEMORIAM

In Loving Memory of JERRY HILD JR., Who passed away 26 years ago, Feb. 24, 1999

My dear brother since, you have been gone, you're no longer here to share the bond we had together, a bond of love and care. Yet somehow something tells me you are watching over me, now that from worldly cares you are finally free. I miss you very much and my tears I cannot hide yet within my heart, I feel you are always by my side. Ever since you went away life has never been the same, yet it comforts me to know that one day we'll meet again.

**Sadly missed by,
Your Family**

MFD: Keep hydrants clear

MENDOTA – The Mendota Fire Department would like to ask residents of Mendota that during snow removal efforts to keep fire hydrants free from obstruction of snow. As you blade, shovel or push snow off your driveways and sidewalks, take time to clear away the snow from around fire hydrants.

During a fire, seconds count. The extra minute removing snow from around fire hydrants may save you or your neighbor's home. If you are unable to clear the snow from around hydrants yourself, call the City Clerk's office at (815) 539-7459.

Also, keep your house numbers readily visible. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

IVCC Board candidates to participate in public forum

OGLESBY – Candidates for the IVCC Board of Trustees will participate in a public forum on Wednesday, March 5, at noon in the Dr. Mary Margaret Weeg Cultural Centre.

The forum is open to students, employees, and the public. Questions will be submitted by the audience on index cards and the student moderators will select the questions. Candidates will have three minutes for opening and closing remarks and two minutes each to answer questions.

Three candidates, Bill Hunt, Marlene Moshage, and Todd Volker, are seeking two seats on the Board in the April 1, 2025, consolidated election. Two incumbents decided not to seek re-election for the six-year terms.

The forum is sponsored by IVCC's Student Government Association, College Democrats, College Republicans, Hispanic Leadership Team, Socrates Cafe, Project Success Leadership Team, and Rotaract Club.



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SPORTS



Mendota's Dane Doyle leans in for a shot while Aurora Central Catholic's Liam Schwartz moves in to apply defense during the Trojans' first game of the Princeton Class 2A Regional on Feb. 24 at the MHS gym. (Reporter photo)

Mendota claims Three Rivers title

Conference crown is the first for a Trojan team since 1995-96 season

Steve Wasmer experienced what it was like to win a conference championship way back in the 1995-96 season when the Trojans claimed the NCIC crown with a 10-1 record. Mendota has not won a conference title since then – until now.

Twenty-nine years later, Wasmer gets to experience the feeling of being on top of the Three Rivers Conference as the coach of the Trojans after they earned a 69-56 victory over Kewanee in the conference finale on Feb. 18 at Kewanee. The win gave Mendota a final league mark of 9-1 while second-place Princeton finished at 8-2.

"I'm proud of the guys for putting in the work," said Wasmer "It's an extremely coachable group of kids that also have a lot of talent. That's a great combination to have as a coach. It takes consistent effort to win the conference,

and we have been consistent with our effort night in and night out."

The Trojans assumed control of the game from the outset, taking a 20-12 lead after the first quarter and owning a 32-22 halftime advantage. Mendota started to pull away in the third period when it outscored Kewanee, 19-15.

Cole Tillman, who had a season-high 28 points to pace the Trojans, scored 10 points in the third quarter and 10 more in fourth. Dane Doyle was next in point production with 11 markers, hitting three shots from beyond the arc. Cam Kelly

chipped in with eight tallies.

"We told them on the bus ride home after the game that the last time Mendota won the conference was when I was in school, and they couldn't believe it, especially because they think I'm 60 years old," added Wasmer.

(Final Three Rivers Conference standings: Mendota 9-1, Princeton 8-2, Newman 5-5, Kewanee 3-7, Erie-Prophetstown 3-7, Hall 2-8)

Mendota closed out the regular season with a 59-36 triumph over Putnam County on Feb. 20 at Granville. It was a slow start for the

Trojans as they fell behind 9-8 after the first quarter. Mendota's offense heated up in the second period when it poured in 17 points and the defense limited Putnam County to six to allow the Trojans to take a 25-15 lead to the locker room. The count was 38-25 after three periods and then Mendota had its best quarter of the game in the fourth, scoring 21 points.

The Trojans had a balanced scoring attack, led by Drew Becker's 11 points. Cole Tillman and Braiden Freeman supplied 10 points apiece, while Johan Cortez added nine tallies.

Trojans cruise in regional opener

Mendota takes down ACC, 50-29

MENDOTA – Post-season basketball is under way and the Mendota Trojans cleared their first hurdle with a 50-29 verdict over Aurora Central Catholic in a quarterfinal round game of the Princeton Class 2A Regional on Feb. 24 at the MHS gym.

The win moves the Trojans (22-8) to the semifinals where they will face conference rival Princeton (18-12) on Wednesday, Feb. 26 at Prouty Gym in Princeton. Tip time is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. The first semifinal game on Wednesday will be between top-seeded Seneca and Sandwich, who defeated Hall, 59-53, on Monday. Tip-off is at 6 p.m. The two semifinal round winners will battle for the regional championship at 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 28.

It was a slow start for Mendota and Aurora Central Catholic as they combined for 12 points and a 6-6 tie after the opening stanza.

The game began to turn in the Trojans' favor early in the second period as they scored the first eight points to grab a 14-6 lead. A conventional three-point play by Cole Tillman finished off an 18-4 second quarter for Mendota as it carried a 24-10 lead to the locker room.

"We struggled a little bit to get going but it was nice to see that little run to start the second quarter to create some separation," said Mendota coach Steve Wasmer.

The Chargers got as close as 11 (26-15) with 5:43 left in the third period before a 10-0 Mendota run later in the frame opened the gap to 41-18. Cole Tillman and Drew Becker started the scor-

ing binge with consecutive hoops followed by a Johan Cortez free throw. Cam Kelly connected on a three-ball, his second of the third quarter and third of the game, and Dane Doyle converted a hoop to complete the flurry. Aurora Central Catholic (4-28) got a free throw from John Reinbold to finish the third quarter scoring.

The Trojans tallied the first nine points of the fourth quarter capped off by an Evan McPheeters three-pointer to make it 50-19 for a 30-point plus margin to kick in the running clock over the final 5:19 of the game.

"As has been the case all season, our guys played really hard with a lot of energy, especially on defense," said Wasmer. "We were all over the ball and made it difficult for Aurora Central to find many clean shots."

Cole Tillman topped Trojan scorers with 17 points, while Kelly finished with 12.

MENDOTA 50, AURORA CC 29				
Aurora Central Catholic (29)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Czerak	4	1-2	2	11
Pena	1	0-0	2	3
Corral	1	0-0	1	2
Torrance	1	0-0	0	3
Schwartz	2	0-2	3	5
Reinbold	0	1-2	0	1
Galer	1	0-2	3	2
Swiatek	0	2-2	0	2
Totals	10	4-10	11	29

Mendota (50)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP
C. Tillman	8	1-1	1	17
Kelly	4	1-2	2	12
A. Tillman	2	0-0	0	5
Freeman	1	2-2	0	4
Doyle	2	0-0	2	4
A. Beetz	0	0-0	3	0
Cortez	0	1-2	1	1
McPheeters	1	0-0	1	3
Becker	2	0-0	3	4
Totals	20	5-7	13	50

SCORE BY QUARTERS				
Aurora CC	6	10	19	29
Mendota	6	24	41	50
Three-point goals: Mendota - Kelly 3, A. Tillman 1, McPheeters 1; Aurora Central Catholic - Czerak 2, Pena 1, Torrance 1, Schwartz 1				

Trojan boxscores

MENDOTA 69, KEWANEE 56				
Mendota (69)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP
C. Tillman	14	0-0	1	28
Kelly	3	2-2	2	8
A. Tillman	2	0-0	4	5
Freeman	3	0-0	0	6
Doyle	4	0-0	0	11
A. Beetz	1	0-0	1	2
Cortez	1	0-0	1	2
Becker	2	2-4	1	7
Fitzgerald	0	0-0	1	0
Totals	30	4-6	11	69

Kewanee (56)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Jordan	1	0-0	0	2
Welgat	1	0-0	2	2
Lewis	1	1-2	1	3
Kidd	3	0-0	0	7
King	2	0-0	0	4
Klein	1	0-0	0	3
Reed	4	4-7	3	13
Conley	3	1-2	0	7
Campbell	2	0-0	1	4
Thomas	1	0-0	0	2
Peed	1	0-0	0	2
Ellerbrook	2	0-0	0	4
Sturtevent	1	0-0	0	3
Totals	23	6-11	7	56

SCORE BY QUARTERS				
Mendota	20	32	51	69
Kewanee	12	22	37	56
Three-point goals: Mendota - A. Tillman 1, Becker 1, Doyle 3; Kewanee - Kidd 1, Klein 1, Reed 1, Sturtevent 1				

MENDOTA 59, PUTNAM CO. 36				
Mendota (59)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP
C. Tillman	4	2-2	1	10
Kelly	1	0-0	1	2
A. Tillman	2	0-0	0	5
Freeman	4	2-2	0	10
Doyle	2	1-1	2	5
A. Beetz	2	1-1	3	5
Cortez	4	1-1	1	9
K. Beetz	1	0-0	0	2
McPheeters	0	0-0	2	0
Becker	4	1-2	0	11
Fitzgerald	0	0-0	1	0
Totals	24	8-9	11	59

Putnam County (36)				
	FG	FT	Fls	TP
Furar	2	0-0	1	6
Stunkel	1	0-0	0	2
Main	4	1-1	2	9
Carlson	1	0-0	1	2
Weisbrock	0	0-4	0	0
Zuniga	1	0-0	1	2
Mattingly	2	0-0	0	4
Bickerman	3	0-0	0	7
Castro	2	0-0	1	4
Totals	16	1-5	6	36

SCORE BY QUARTERS				
Mendota	8	25	38	59
Putnam Co.	9	15	25	36
Three-point goals: Mendota - A. Tillman 1, Becker 2; Putnam County - Furar 2, Bickerman 1				



Mendota's Braiden Freeman rises up for a shot over the defensive pressure of Aurora Central Catholic's Peter Galer in the opening round of the regional on Feb. 24 at the MHS gym. (Reporter photo)



Mendota's Cole Tillman splits the defense of Aurora Central Catholic's Liam Schwartz, left, and Luke Torrance during first round regional tournament action on Feb. 24 at the MHS gym. (Reporter photo)

SPORTS

JV Trojans win final 2 games; finish at 18-9

The Mendota junior varsity boys' basketball team concluded Three Rivers Conference play with a 64-51 win at Kewanee on Feb. 18. The Trojans ended up in second place in the league with a 7-3 mark, one game behind champion Kewanee. Mendota handed Kewanee its only two conference losses this season.

The Trojans trailed 14-12 after the first quarter but came back to tie the game at 27-all at halftime as Cayden Taliani knocked down three three-pointers in the second period. Mendota started to pull away in the third quarter, outscoring the home team, 19-13, to carry a 46-40 advantage to the fourth. Taliani dropped in two more shots from beyond the

arc in the third and Drew Becker scored eight points in the quarter, including six of six from the free throw line.

Mendota tallied 19 points in the fourth compared to 11 for Kewanee. Becker added nine markers in the final frame.

Three Trojans connected for double digits in scoring, led by Becker with 25 points. Carter Wujek was next with 17 points, while Taliani ended with 15.

Mendota wrapped up the season with a 49-43 victory over Putnam County on Feb. 20 at Granville.

The Trojans ended the campaign with an 18-9 overall record.

LaMoille H.S boys' hoops

Feb. 18 vs. Stillman Valley
Stillman Valley 68, LaMoille 26
Stats: Tyler Billhorn 10 points, 7 rebounds; Brayden Klein 9 points; Tate Sundberg 4 assists
(Brayden Klein was honored before the varsity game for becoming only the ninth player in LaMoille High School varsity boys' basketball history to reach 1,000 career points.)

Feb. 19 @ Newark
Newark 67, LaMoille 32
Stats: Klein 15 points; Billhorn 12 points, 12 rebounds, 4 assists

Amboy Class 1A Regional Tournament Feb. 24 @ Forreston
Forreston 68, LaMoille 35
Stats: Klein 20 points, 3 assists; Billhorn 13 points, 8 rebounds, 3 assists; Braden Fischer 4 rebounds
(LaMoille final record: 7 wins, 25 losses)

Support your favorite player or team!!

Final deer harvest totals given for '24-25 Illinois hunting season

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.

BOWLING

Wednesday Night Men's League

Standings as of Feb. 12

– 1. Black Brothers 21-11; 2. Novak Farms 18-14; 3. O'Donnell Excavating 17-15; 4. Man On! 14-18; 5. Maybe Next Week 13.5-18.5; 6. First State Bank 12.5-19.5

High team game (scratch) – O'Donnell Excavating 1084, Novak Farms 1033, Man On! 983

High team game (hdcp) – Novak Farms 1286, O'Donnell Excavating 1265, Black Brothers 1182

High team series (scratch) – Novak Farms 2974, O'Donnell Excavating 2897, Man On! 2890

High team series (hdcp) – Novak Farms 3733, Black Brothers 3508, O'Donnell Excavating 3440

High individual game (scratch) – Drake O'Donnell 269, Matt Novak 258, Kasen Novak 256

High individual game (hdcp) – Kasen Novak 296, Matt Novak 290, Scott Novak 286

High individual series (scratch) – Drake O'Donnell 700, Scott Novak 681, Matt Novak 672

High individual series (hdcp) – Scott Novak 810, Kasen Novak 780, Matt Novak 768

Elks 9 Youth League

Standings as of Feb. 15

– 1. Team 4 28-16; 2. Team 1 26-18; 3. Team 3 18-26; 4. Team 2 13-31

High team game (scratch) – Team 3 281, Team 1 268, Team 4 254

High team game (hdcp) – Team 3 624, Team 1 621, Team 2 619

High team series (scratch) – Team 1 794, Team 4 741, Team 3 732

High team series (hdcp) – Team 1 1853, Team 2 1780, Team 3 1761

Boys' high game (scratch) – Landyn Welch 102, Grayson

Kent 99, Michael Eames 85

Boys' high game (hdcp) – Grayson Kent 215, Henry Schoepf 214, Landyn Welch 211

Boys' high series (scratch) – Landyn Welch 270, Grayson Kent 254, Michael Eames 234

Boys' high series (hdcp) – Henry Schoepf 608, Grayson Kent 602, Landyn Welch 597

Girls' high game (scratch) – Grace Piskie 111, Brooklyn Bejster 106, Lainey Ramer 93

Girls' high game (hdcp) – Grace Piskie 223, Addyson Fahr 222, Brooklyn Bejster 216

Girls' high series (scratch) – Brooklyn Bejster 271, Addyson Fahr 262, Lainey Ramer 261

Girls' high series (hdcp) – Addyson Fahr 652, Brooklyn Bejster 601, Lainey Ramer 600

Elks 11 Youth League

Standings as of Feb. 15

– 1. Team 4 29-15; 2. Team 1 29-15; 3. Team 2 23-21; 4. Team 3 7-37

High team game (scratch) – Team 4 355, Team 1 320, Team 2 283

High team game (hdcp) – Team 1 633, Team 3 631, Team 4 603

High team series (scratch) – Team 4 998, Team 1 906, Team 2 786

High team series (hdcp) – Team 1 1845, Team 3 1833, Team 4 1742

Boys' high game (scratch) – Parker Ramer 161, Bentley Bejster 135, Jaxen Daley 117

Boys' high game (hdcp) – Bentley Bejster 231, Jaxen Daley 222, Billy Bromenschenkel 214

Boys' high series (scratch) – Parker Ramer 413, Bentley Bejster 370, Jaxen Daley & Billy Bromenschenkel 309

Boys' high series (hdcp) – Bentley Bejster 658, Jaxen Daley 624, Billy Bromenschenkel 618

Girls' high game (scratch) – Eliana Eames 92, Olivia Frank 83

Girls' high game (hdcp) – Olivia Frank 222, Eliana Eames 192

Girls' high series (scratch) – Eliana Eames 232, Olivia Frank 218

Girls' high series (hdcp) – Olivia Frank 635, Eliana Eames 532

Monday Night Mixed League

Standings as of Feb. 17

The Struggle is Real 30.5-14.5; 2. Bad Kats 26-19; 3. Leagal Beagles 21.5-23.5; 4. Ramer Inc. 21-24; 5. CM Farm 18-27; 6. Split Happens 17-28

High team game (scratch) – Split Happens 807, Ramer Inc. 708, Leagal Beagles 700

High team game (hdcp) – Split Happens 1027, Leagal Beagles 979, Ramer Inc. 968

High team series (scratch) – Split Happens 2184, Ramer Inc. 2028, Leagal Beagles 1978

High team series (hdcp) – Split Happens 2844, Leagal Beagles 2815, Ramer Inc. 2808

Men's high game (scratch) – Matt Ramer 277, Mike Smith 255, Raul Diaz Jr. 221

Men's high game (hdcp) – Matt Ramer 299, Mike Smith 298, Raul Diaz Jr. 286

Men's high series (scratch) – Matt Ramer 705, Mike Smith 628, Ron Westphal 575

Men's high series (hdcp) – Matt Ramer 771, Mike Smith 757, Ron Westphal 752

Women's high game (scratch) – Jessica Robinson 220, Emily Thomas 213, Gail Sessler 192

Women's high game (hdcp) – Jessica Robinson 271, Connie Yost 256, Emily Thomas & Hannah Westphal 256

Women's high series (scratch) – Jessica Robinson 578, Emily Thomas 546, Gail Sessler 545

Women's high series (hdcp) – Connie Yost 747, Jessica Robinson 731, Hannah Westphal 706



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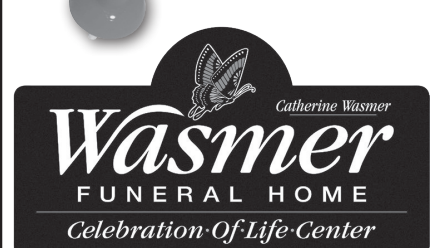
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LOCAL AND AREA



According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths.

OSFM urges immediate fire safety action following recent deadly fires

SPRINGFIELD — The OSFM is urging Illinois residents to review and practice their fire escape plans while testing and inspection smoke alarms following a wave of recent deadly home fires. Sadly, since Feb. 14, there have been eight deadly fires claiming the lives of 10 people in Illinois. So far in 2025, Illinois has seen 16 fatal fires resulting in 19 fire related fatalities.

“During the winter months we see an increase in home fires caused by heating deceives or malfunctioning heating equipment,” said Illinois State Fire Marshal James A. Rivera. “This is why it is so important for people to test and inspect all smoke alarms monthly, review and practice their fire escape plans, and follow manufactures instructions on all home heating devices.”

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths. Fire departments responded to an estimated average of 44,210 fires involving heating equipment per year from 2016-2020, accounting for 13% of all reported home fires during this time, and these fires resulted in annual losses of 480 civilian deaths. Space heaters were the type of heating equipment responsible for the largest shares of losses in home heating equipment fires, accounting for one-third of the fires, but nearly nine out of five of the injuries in home fires caused by heating equipment. Half of the home heating fire deaths were caused by having heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing mattresses or bedding. Nearly half of all home heating fires occurred in December, January, and February.

Here are some other tips to keep in mind when it comes to winter heating safety:



Test smoke and CO alarms at least once a month and be familiar with the sounds they make.

- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional and change furnace filters frequently.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters, or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturers’ instructions.
- Keep interior and exterior air vents clear of blockages or obstructions.
- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, like a furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Purchase units with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over or you forget to shut it off.
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop

- sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before being placed into a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- Create a three-foot “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- Test smoke and CO alarms at least once a month and be familiar with the sounds they make.
- Never use an oven or range to heat your home.
- Remember to turn off portable or space heaters when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Install carbon monoxide and smoke detectors on each floor of your home and within 15 feet of each sleeping area.
- CO detectors have a limited life span; check the manufacturer’s instructions for information on replacement.

Pritzker vows to address the high cost of prescription drugs in Illinois

By KEVIN BESSLER

The Center Square

SPRINGFIELD — Illinois lawmakers continue to push for more regulatory control of pharmacy benefit managers, or PBMs.

PBMs act as third-party “middlemen” who negotiate the price pharmacies and insurance companies pay for prescription drugs from the manufacturers. Their role is supposed to involve negotiating the cost of drugs to save patients money, but critics contend they are actually driving costs up.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports between January 2022 and January 2023, more than 4,200 drugs saw a price increase on average of more than 15%.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker recently took part in a roundtable discussion on the topic of PBMs and called for the passage of the Prescription Drug Affordability Act.

“It is going to take aim at the common ways that PBMs game the system to profit at the

expense of Illinois families and employers,” said Pritzker. “Many of those employers that are really deeply, negatively affected are small and medium-sized businesses.”

If passed into law, the legislation would create an independent Prescription Drug Affordability Board. The board could set upper limits on what people would pay for their medications.

There has been a national movement for more PBM regulation. The Trump administration is taking steps to meet with pharmaceutical companies to examine PBMs and discuss reforms to possibly eliminate PBMs.

Conner Rose with the Pharmaceutical Care Management Association said a study by the Federal Trade Commission looked favorable on PBMs.

“Specifically, PBM ownership of mail order pharmacies, which the study demonstrated that PBM ownership of mail order pharmacies actually do provide value to consumers in the form of lower drug costs,” said Rose during a committee hearing last year.

Some drug manufacturers contend that it’s expensive to develop new drugs and run the required clinical trials.

Community Calendar

MARCH 2025

OCT. 1, 2024 - SEPT. 30, 2025

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Mendota Civic Center

For more info call

(815) 539-7700 or 539-9673

Our goal for Fiscal Year 2025 is \$1000. Please help us reach our goal. Drop off cans at the northeast back door of the Civic Center.

MAR. 2025

SENIOR LUNCHES

Sponsored by M.A.S.S.

11:30 AM

Monday - Friday

Feik Senior Parlor –

Mendota Civic Center

For more info call

(815) 539-7700 or 539-9673

Meal Cost - \$4.00

Monthly menus are available on our website & Facebook page. Lunches are from OSF St. Paul Medical Center. Must register 24 hours in advance.

MAR. 2025

WAFFLE WEDNESDAY

Sponsored by M.A.S.S.

TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED

Feik Senior Parlor –

Mendota Civic Center

For more info call

(815) 539-7700 or 539-9673

MAR. 3, 6, 10, 13, 17, 20, 24, 27 & 31

EXERCISE CLASS

Sponsored by M.A.S.S.

8 AM

Feik Lounge –

Mendota Civic Center

For more info call

(815) 539-7700 or 539-9673

Exercise at your own pace with an exercise video.

MAR. 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31

TOPS CLUB

Sponsored by M.A.S.S.

10 AM

Mendota Civic Center

For more info call

(815) 539-7700 or 539-9673

Anyone welcome.

MAR. 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31

DOMINOES

Sponsored by M.A.S.S.

1 PM

Feik Lounge –

Mendota Civic Center

For more info call

(815) 539-7700 or 539-9673

All are welcome to join in the fun.

MAR. 3

GIRL TALK WITH THE EXPERTS.

SPONSORED BY MENDOTA'S

EXPRESSIONS SALON

Sponsored by Graves-Hume

Public Library

6 PM

1401 W Main St, Mendota

For more info call

(815) 538-5142

Ages: Girls in Grades 4th-8th. Join nurse Amanda Atherton and bilingual nurse Marci Lemus to discuss what to expect as a preteen and talk with the experts about proper skincare. Registration is required.

MAR. 4, 11, 18 & 25

Wii BOWLING

Sponsored by M.A.S.S.

10:30 AM

Feik Senior Parlor –

Mendota Civic Center

For more info call

(815) 539-7700

All welcome to come and enjoy the fun!

MAR. 4, 11, 18 & 25

EUCHRE

Sponsored by M.A.S.S.

12 PM (Noon)

Feik Senior Parlor –

Mendota Civic Center

For more info call

(815) 539-7700 or 539-9673

All are welcome!

MAR. 5, 12, 19 & 26

BEGINNING CROCHET CLASS

Sponsored by M.A.S.S.

1 PM - 2 PM

Feik Senior Parlor –

Mendota Civic Center

For more info call

(815) 539-7700 or 539-9673

New class being offered. Barbie Crochet will be here to teach crochet from beginners to advanced. Bring your own crochet hooks and yarn.

MAR. 5

GREEN EGGS AND HAM

Sponsored by Graves-Hume

Public Library

4 PM

1401 W Main St, Mendota

For more info call

(815) 538-5142

Ages: 3 years old to Kindergarten. Join us for books and crafting.

MAR. 6 & 20

HEARING SCREENINGS

Sponsored by Civic Center & M.A.S.S.

9:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Mendota Civic Center

For more info call

(815) 539-7700 or 539-9673

Hearing aid batteries available at

M.A.S.S. to purchase. Bring in old

batteries to recycle.

MAR. 6, 13, 20 & 27

POKENO

Sponsored by M.A.S.S.

12 PM (Noon)

Feik Senior Parlor –

Mendota Civic Center

For more info call

(815) 539-7700 or 539-9673

This game is a combination of Bingo & Poker.

Pennies are used, so bring your penny jar. Call

M.A.S.S. for more information @815-539-7700

MAR. 6, 13, 20 & 27

NEEDLE CRAFT CLUB

Sponsored by M.A.S.S.

1 PM

Feik Lounge –

Mendota Civic Center

For more info call

(815) 539-7700 or 539-9673

Bring your needlework or crafts to work on or just come for the friendship.

MAR. 6

LEGO CLUB

Sponsored by Graves-Hume

Public Library

4 PM

1401 W Main St, Mendota

For more info call

(815) 538-5142

Ages: 1st - 8th Grades. Come build LEGOs with friends.

MAR. 6

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Sponsored by Graves-Hume

Public Library

6 PM

1401 W Main St, Mendota

For more info call

(815) 538-5142

Ages: Birth to two years old (siblings welcome).

Join us for books, songs, and play.

MAR. 7, 14, 21 & 28

BINGOCIZE

Sponsored by M.A.S.S.

10 AM

Feik Lounge –

Mendota Civic Center

For more info call

(815) 539-7700 or 539-9673

Open to anyone in the community.

MAR. 7

COMMUNITY BINGO

Sponsored by M.A.S.S.

1 PM

Feik Lounge –

Mendota Civic Center

For more info call

(815) 538-7700 or 539-9673

Anyone 18 and older welcome to join the fun!

MAR. 7, 14, 21 & 28

BINGO

Sponsored by M.A.S.S.

1 PM

Feik Lounge –

Mendota Civic Center

For more info call

(815) 539-7700 or 539-9673

MAR. 8

ALL ACOUSTIC BLUEGRASS,

GOSPEL COUNTRY MUSIC JAM

Sponsored by Northern IL Bluegrass

Association (NIBA) & Ophir Community

Building (OCB)

6 - 10 PM

Ophir Community Building,

3907 E 750th Rd, Triumph, IL

For more info call

(815) 488-9154 - Jay Allen

FREE

Donations accepted for music and concessions.

MAR. 10

CREATE ART FOR THE YOUTH

DEPARTMENT

Sponsored by Graves-Hume

Public Library

6 PM

1401 W Main St, Mendota

For more info call

(815) 538-5142

Ages: All ages. Help us create art for the Youth

Services Department. Design an umbrella for

all to see! Supplies will be provided.

MAR. 11 & 25

BLOOD PRESSURE / BLOOD

SUGAR CHECKS

Sponsored by M.A.S.S.

11 AM - 12 PM

Feik Senior Parlor –

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MAR. 12

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

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Public Library

11 AM

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Ages: Birth to two years old (siblings welcome).

Join us for books, songs, and play.

NIE FUN PAGE



What's the Difference?

Find the four difference between pictures.

A



B



Answers: 1. Missing tooth 2. Smile on tooth is bigger
3. Missing toothbrush 4. Missing controls on machine

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



1775: The British East India Company factory on Balam-bangan Island is destroyed by pirates.

1909: Kinemacolor, the first successful color motion picture process, is first shown to the public.

1995: Barings Bank in England collapses after a broker loses billions.

Body FACT:



Children are born with 20 of these, which will increase to 32 as they age.

Answer: Teeth

NEW WORD

TARTAR

a hard deposit that forms on the teeth

How they say that in...

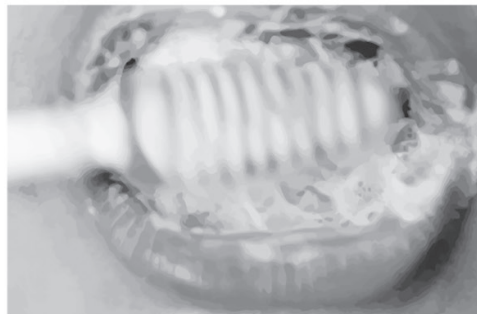
- English:** Dental
- Spanish:** Dental
- Italian:** Dentale
- French:** Dentaire
- German:** Zahn

Did You KNOW?

It is important to visit the dentist at least twice per year for a thorough dental cleaning and examination of the mouth.



Get the PICTURE?



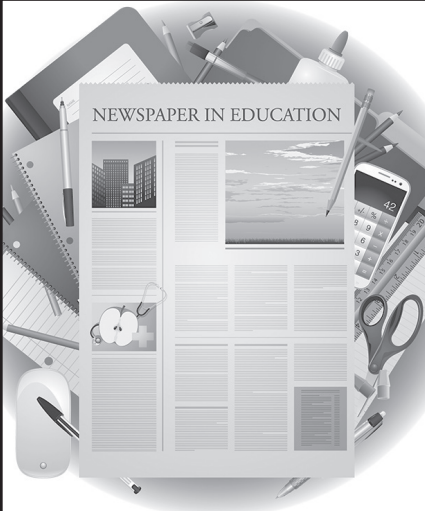
Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Brushing teeth

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ENTERTAINMENT

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Doubtfire or Dalloway
4 Pesky insect
8 Blaze
12 "Alley —"
13 Verdi heroine
14 Booty
15 Sugar suffix
16 Some online essays
18 Doppler device
20 "Diamonds" singer
21 Brzezinski of MSNBC
24 Group character
28 Coin that keeps turning up
32 Stitched
33 Artist Yoko
34 "— luck!"
36 Actor Stephen
37 Euro fraction
39 Pub game
41 Cognizant
43 "No seats" signs
44 Olympics chant
46 Loan shark's crime
50 Ginsberg and Kerouac, for two
55 — Maria

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15				16				17				
18				19				20				
			21		22	23		24		25	26	27
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50	51	52				53	54			55		
56					57					58		
59					60					61		

- 56 Eyebrow shape
57 Microwave, slangily
58 Request
59 Citi Field team
60 Love god
61 "— a Rebel"
DOWN
1 Heath
2 Activist Parks
3 Raced
4 Angel with a trumpet
5 Zero
6 Commotion
7 Labels
8 Parade attractions
9 Cyclades island
10 Decay
11 UFO engineers
17 Diner dessert
19 Sound booster
22 Handle
23 Poker payments
25 Medal earner
26 Actor Clive
27 Hitch
28 — Raton, Fla.
29 From the start
30 Lady of Spain
31 Belgian river
35 Stirs up
38 "We hold these — to be ..."
40 Letter addenda, for short
42 Sixth sense
45 Top-notch
47 Beehive State
48 Get up
49 Tibetan herd
50 "Kapow!"
51 Before
52 Play segment
53 Where Lux. is
54 Ring decision

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Strange But True

By Lucie Winborne

* The Climbing Gourami is a fish that can climb out of water, breathe oxygen and even walk for short distances.

* India has 454 living languages and 16 official ones.

* During her 1982 restoration, the Statue of Liberty's head was accidentally installed 2 feet off-center.

* General George S. Patton believed he was reincarnated from either a military leader from Napoleon's army or a Roman legionary, claiming to have seen combat multiple times in previous lives, and also believed that after he died he would return to again lead armies onto the battlefield.

* Only deceased people can appear on American currency.

* When put under a microscope, tears produced by grief, hope or onions were unique in form from each other.

* North Korea accidentally hit one of its own cities during a 2017 failed missile test.

* In 1916, a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution would have put all acts of war to a national vote. Anyone voting "yes" would have to register as a volunteer for army service.

* Dynamite was originally going to be called "Nobel's Safety Powder."

* Singer James Brown was such a strict bandleader that he had signals arranged with his manager to let him know if a musician made a mistake during concerts. After a performance, band members' errors were deducted from their paychecks.

* Ostriches are the only birds with a bladder.

* In 1872, sitting president Ulysses S. Grant was pulled over and fined \$20 for exceeding the Washington speed limit ... on a horse.

* Aristotle believed that plants had souls.

S	E	H		S	O	H	E	S	T	E	M
X	S	V		E	X	N	N	H	C	O	V
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V	E	H		S	T	A	L	O	L	O	N
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			V	I	S		H	V			
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J	O	O			V	G	I	V			
E	R	I			F	I					

Solution time: 24 mins.

Answers

— King Crossword —

Couch Theater

"A Complete Unknown" (R) -- Hollywood's golden boy Timothee Chalamet ("Dune: Part Two") transforms into singer-songwriter Bob Dylan in this biopic, which will be available to rent starting Feb. 25. The film begins in 1961, when an unknown 19-year-old Bob Dylan makes his trek to New York from Minnesota and becomes part of the emerging folk music scene. On his way to becoming the artist we now know today, Dylan meets a handful of musicians like his idol Woody Guthrie (Scoot McNairy), Pete Seeger (Edward Norton), and Joan Baez (Monica Barbaro), who all play significant roles in his development as an artist. While the film barely made up its budget at the box office despite Chalamet's ingenious marketing tactics, it received eight Academy Award and three Golden Globe nominations. (Amazon Prime Video)

"The Brutalist" (R) -- This A24 film led by Adrien Brody ("Asteroid City") was also a critical darling, snagging 10 Academy Award nominations and giving Brody another shot to land a Best Actor award. The epic period drama follows the heartbreaking story of Hungarian-Jewish Holocaust survivor Laszlo Toth (Brody), who immigrates to the United States after surviving the Buchenwald concentration camp and being separated from his wife and daughter. While he was a respected architect in Europe, Laszlo's first years in the U.S. are anything but respectable, until a wealthy client hires him for a luxu-

rious construction project. Now with the promise of the American Dream and a chance to be reunited with his family, Laszlo assumes that his struggles have finally been rewarded...but they've only just begun. Out now to rent. (Apple TV+)

"The 31st Screen Actors Guild Awards" (TV-14) -- While the Golden Globes and Oscars are buzzy and glamorous, the SAG Award ceremony gives off a more laidback tone, and they also allow the lesser-known names in the award season space to receive recognition for their work during the past year. For the second time, actress Kristen Bell ("Nobody Wants This") hosted the ceremony, which is out now to stream if you couldn't catch it live. The casts of "Wicked" and "Shogun" received the most nominations for film and television, respectively, and Jane Fonda was this year's Life Achievement Award recipient. (Netflix)

"Matthew Perry: A Hollywood Tragedy" (TV-MA) -- Best known as Chandler Bing from the iconic TV series "Friends," Matthew Perry shocked the world when he was found dead at only 54 inside of his Los Angeles home on Oct. 28, 2023. Since Perry was always open about his struggle with drug addiction, many suspected that an overdose was at play. It was later confirmed to be from a high dose of ketamine that was obtained illegally from two doctors. This documentary, out on Feb. 25, discusses the final days leading up to his tragic death, while also explaining his incredible rise to fame. (Peacock)

FLASHBACK

- Name the artist who had a hit with "Love to Love You Baby."
 - A few artists released "Killing Me Softly with His Song." Name the one who first made it a hit.
 - "Woman, Woman" was the debut single for which group?
 - Who wrote and released "Leaving on a Jet Plane"?
 - Name the song that contains this lyric: "When the world is ready to fall on your little shoulders, And when you're feeling lonely and small, You need somebody there to hold you."
- Answers**
- Donna Summer, in 1975. The song ended up on the list of 500 Songs That Shaped Rock and Roll.
 - Roberta Flack, in 1973. She won a Grammy for Record of the Year with the song. The previous year she'd won the same award for "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face."
 - Gary Puckett & the Union Gap, in 1967.
 - John Denver, in 1969. His version, however, did not chart. It was the cover by Peter, Paul & Mary that made the song famous.
 - "You're Only Lonely," by J.D. Souther, in 1979.

Celebrity Extra

By Dana Jackson

Q: What ever happened to the character of Daphne who was so central to the first season of "Bridgerton"? Is she ever coming back? -- *A.W.*

A: Phoebe Dyvenor, who starred in the first season of "Bridgerton" as Daphne and continued into season two, chose not to sign a new contract once her obligation was fulfilled. Her character was glaringly absent in the third season at the wedding ceremonies of her siblings, but the show chose not to explain the whereabouts of her character.

Season four of the series will focus on Benedict Bridgerton's (Luke Thompson) pursuit of Sophie Baeck (Yerin Ha) with a storyline that is "a bit of a twist on 'Cinderella,'" according to Netflix's companion website Tudum. The story is from "An Offer from a Gentleman," which is the third novel of author Julia Quinn's "Bridgerton" series.

Filming isn't expected to wrap until April 2025. Netflix



Dyvenor

did release a sneak peek of the upcoming season, but a release date hasn't been announced.

Q: I'm excited that Heidi Klum is returning to "Project Runway," but what about Tim Gunn? I want to see them both together onscreen again. -- *Y.B.*

A: The fashion design competitive reality series "Project Runway" is returning, but it'll be on a different network -- Freeform. When it premiered on Bravo in 2004, Tim Gunn and Heidi Klum hosted the show together. The two left the series in 2017 to start another show on Amazon Prime Video called "Making the Cut." They said the bigger budget allowed them to have more creative freedom, but it lasted for just three seasons.

This past January, it was announced that Klum was returning to "Project Runway" at its new network home, Freeform. Shockingly, Gunn wasn't asked back. He told People magazine that Klum reached out to him to ask if he was interested in returning. He said, "Of course," but was never given an offer from Freeform. His agent contacted the producers, who said,

"We don't want him." Gunn, understandably, is hurt, and his fans are outraged. He doesn't blame Klum, though, saying, "I have her back, and I'm with her in spirit always."

The new "Project Runway" will debut later this year, but the judges and premiere date have yet to be announced.

Q: Is there really going to be a "Legally Blonde" series? Will Reese Witherspoon star in it? -- *K.S.*

A: Yes, there is a "Legally Blonde" project in the development stages at Amazon MGM Studios. Reese Witherspoon's production company Hello Sunshine is behind the project, but it's not known what kind of on-screen presence, if any, she'll have since originating the role of Elle Woods in 2001. The series is actually a prequel, and another actress will play young Elle. Lexi Minetree ("The Murdaugh Murders") recently secured the role.

There were plans for a "Legally Blonde 3" starring Witherspoon, but it's been delayed since 2022. No word on whether it will see the light of day or if they'll just focus on the prequel series.

Hollywood

By Tony Rizzo

HOLLYWOOD -- Fans of former Superman Henry Cavill are desperate for him to be the next James Bond, judging from their efforts to mislead people with a bogus trailer of him as 007 on social media! The trailer co-stars (thanks to AI technology) "Barbie" herself, Margot Robbie, in certain action scenes. It flooded social media, and many believed it was real.

Barbara Broccoli, who inherited the franchise from her father, Cubby Broccoli, in 1996, will probably go for a younger actor than the 41-year-old Cavill, who didn't fare well as a CIA agent in "The Man From U.N.C.L.E." (2015). The spy film only grossed \$110 million against its \$75 million cost. His exposure as a ruthless, burly CIA assassin who was bested by Tom Cruise in "Mission: Impossible -- Fallout" (made \$791.7 million) may be hard for 007 fans to forget.

Aaron Taylor-Johnson, 34, is most often mentioned as the front runner to play

Bond. Cavill's more preoccupied these days with the baby girl he and girlfriend, Natalie Viscuso (vice president of Vertigo Entertainment), welcomed in January. He began filming "Voltron," a sci-fi action film based on the animated series of the same name. It began shooting in December in Queensland, Australia, with Sterling K. Brown and Rita Ora.

Meanwhile, Margot Robbie is in the United Kingdom shooting a reboot of the 1939 MGM classic "Wuthering Heights." She stars as Catherine Earnshaw (who was originally played by Merle Oberon, opposite Laurence Olivier's Heathcliff). Robbie's version of Catherine will star opposite Jacob Elordi's Heathcliff for a February 2026 release.

There are unanswered questions surrounding Jesse Palmer's hasty exit as the host of "The Bachelor/Bachelorette." Officially, he'll still host "The Golden Bachelor/Bachelorette," while continuing to host the Food Network's "Spring Baking Champion-

ship." The big question is...in light of Chris Harrison's hasty exit (who Palmer replaced), why is Palmer leaving a \$7- to \$8-million-dollar gig, which included "Bachelor in Paradise," to work for the Food Network?

Palmer wed Brazilian photographer Emely Fardo in 2020, and they have a daughter, Ella, who was born in January 2024. So, it's been suggested that he's scaling down to concentrate on fatherhood! His replacement will be 29-year-old season 21 contestant Devin Strader (head of F1 Freight Consultants), who was engaged to Jenn Tran but broke it off before the finale aired. He claimed that he no longer loved her, regretted getting engaged, and felt like something was off with their relationship.

Will Bachelor Nation forgive Strader for breaking it off with Tran? Does he have enough class to replace Palmer? Maybe he'd be more suited to host "Teen Bachelor" or "Teen Bachelor in Paradise!"

• Trivia Test •

- TELEVISION: The show "Happy Days" is a spinoff of which older sitcom?
 - LITERATURE: Which author created the character Hercule Poirot?
 - U.S. PRESIDENTS: Where is Barack Obama's presidential library located?
 - GEOGRAPHY: What river forms part of the border between the United States and Mexico?
 - ASTRONOMY: Which planet in our solar system has the strongest gravitational field?
 - U.S. STATES: Which four states intersect at the Four Corners monument?
 - SCIENCE: What is anemophily?
 - MOVIES: How much does an Oscar award trophy weigh?
 - WEATHER: What is a haboob?
 - MEASUREMENTS: How many millimeters are in a meter?
- Answers**
- "Love, American Style."
 - Agatha Christie.
 - Chicago, Illinois.
 - The Rio Grande.
 - Jupiter.
 - Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Colorado.
 - Pollination by the wind.
 - 8.5 pounds.
 - An intense dust storm.
 - 1,000.
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Weekly SUDOKU

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

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

Answer

— Weekly SUDOKU —

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RELIGION

Are you content with your life?

It seems there are very few people who are consistently content with life. It's more common to be up and down mentally and emotionally, depending on what our circumstances are. So, I want to ask you: How content are you? Are you consistently enjoying your life?

God loves us and has a good plan for our lives. Jeremiah 29:11 says His thoughts and plans for us are "for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome" (AMPC). And John 10:10 says Jesus "came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to

the full, till it overflows)" (AMPC).

It was such a revelation for me when I realized that God wants me to enjoy my life now, and not just barely get by, hanging on until I get to heaven. It was also a life-changing revelation when I understood that my joy and contentment don't have to be based on my circumstances. In Christ, I can learn "how to be content (satisfied to the point where I am not disturbed or disquieted) in whatever state I am" (Philippians 4:11 AMPC).

Being content doesn't mean you never want change or to have any-

thing else in your life. It means you can be satisfied to wait with a good attitude for whatever God chooses to do in your life. It means that even when you want something to happen, you still trust God enough to believe that if He doesn't give you what you want, He has your best interest at heart. And you'll find that what He gives you is better than what you thought you wanted to begin with.

The world is full of problems, and we all have times when things don't go the way we planned. It's so wonderful when we get to the point that we can be happy even when we don't get our way!

I've learned that since the world probably isn't going to change, then I need to change my approach to circumstances—my attitude and my expectations. And it was a great breakthrough for me when I discovered that God wants me to have great expectations of Him. He wants me to put all of my hope in Him and exercise my faith in Him to do great things in my life.

Ephesians 3:20 says that God's power that is working in us "is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think [infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams]" (AMPC). I love these words: superabundantly, far over and



above ALL that we dare to ask or think!

It's so important for us to put our expectations in the right place—in God. We serve an awesome God, and I want to encourage you to ask Him to do great things in you and through you.

What are you asking God to do for you? Do you believe He loves you unconditionally and He has great plans for you? Do you trust Him to take care of your needs and that everything He asks you to do is for your good?

We need to resist thinking that God can't do anything for us because of our weaknesses and faults. He isn't expecting us to be perfect; He wants us to have faith in Him.

God wants us to put all of our hope and all of our expectation in Him. He wants us to trust Him to do what's best for us in the way He chooses to do it. He wants us to give Him the credit for the good things He does in our lives.

Sometimes we are discontent and disappointed because we think we're

expecting something from God but in reality, we're expecting someone else to give it to us. For example, we pray for a raise or promotion and if we don't get it, we become mad at our boss. Or we ask God to make our children behave better or help our spouse to be more sensitive and thoughtful. But when they don't do what we want, we get mad at them.

We need to look to God to provide what we need and what we want. This means we trust Him, no matter what other people do or what circumstances look like. It's not wrong to put realistic expectations in the people we have relationships with, but no one is perfect, and people will disappoint us sometimes. We can get rid of a lot of disappointment and discontentment by learning how to put our hope and expectation in God first and foremost.

God cares about everything about you and everything that concerns you. He wants to be good to you and He will never disappoint you. Give Him all of your heart and put all of your hope and

expectation in Him. You can have true contentment and satisfaction in Christ!

For more on this topic, order Joyce's four-part teaching resource Contentment and Satisfaction. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting www.joycemeyer.org.

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 150 books, including BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND and OVERCOMING EVERY PROBLEM (FaithWords). She hosts the Enjoying Everyday Life program, which is broadcast to millions in over 110 languages. For more information, visit www.joycemeyer.org.

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6:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., noon (Spanish)
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9 a.m. Sunday School
9:30 a.m. Worship

In-person & on Facebook at:
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March 5 - 6:30 p.m. Ash Wednesday
services at St. John's

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SUNDAY SCHEDULE:
Sunday Worship 9 a.m.

Sunday School for Preschool - 6th grade
in fellowship hall during worship service
(Parking lot worship available on 90.9 FM
during Sunday services)

TUESDAY - Prayer group 7 p.m.



If I Can

By William Arthur Ward

If I can write one verse of truth today
Or give my fellow man a song to sing;
If I can push one needless cloud away
And help men live as children
of the King:
If I can lend someone a helping hand
Or warm a place where friendship
needs to be;
If I can build a bridge where
fences stand
And light a lamp that other men
might see;
If I can open doors of hope this day
By letting someone know that
others care;
If I can speak in words that seem
to say:
I know the heavy burdens that
you bear.
If I can guide a pilgrim on his way
Or pause to bid him stay for food
and rest;
If I can do these, Father, this I pray:
"O let me do them with my very best."

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Pastor Elise Rothfusz
E-mail: office@stjohnsmendota.org

Website:
www.stjohnsmendota.org

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and online via YouTube
Find us on Facebook

NOTE: Please contact your
individual church regarding
online services or for other
church-related information.



THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

An evil man seeks only rebellion; therefore a cruel messenger
will be sent against him.

Let a man meet a bear
robbed of her cubs,
rather than a fool in his folly.

PROVERBS 17: 11, 12

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Children's Sunday School following
children's message
Fellowship 11 a.m.
Available on Facebook Live
Facebook page
www.facebook.com/fpcmendota

Feb. 27 - 10 a.m. "Fill My Cup"
Feb. 28 - Newsletter folding

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"He is the Head of the Body, the
Church . . . That in everything He
might have the supremacy." Col. 1:18

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Wayne Shuman
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Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.
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SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE
8:30 a.m. Worship at Immanuel
9:30 a.m. Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Worship at First

Feb. 27 - 10 a.m. Filming of readers
at Immanuel; 6:30 p.m. Filming of
singers at First
March 1 - 8-11 a.m. Volunteer at
N.I.C.E. in Lee; 10 a.m. Church farm
work day at Immanuel

Online "devotional service" videos continue
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SUNDAY SCHOOL - 9 a.m.
SUNDAY SERVICE - 10 a.m.
WEDNESDAY NIGHT - 6:30 p.m.

BIBLE TRIVIA by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Acts (KJV) in
the Old or New Testament or
neither?
2. In 1 Kings 20, who besieged
and made war against Samaria
after gathering his forces? Ben-
Hadad, Menahem, Rezin, Omri
3. What king asked for the help
of a woman who was a medium?
Jehu, Amaziah, Saul, Neco
4. From 1 Samuel 19, whose life
was saved when his wife put an
image of a man into his bed?
Samson, David, Amon, Cyrus
5. Who was the father of Elkanah?
Jeremiah, Philip, Esau, Jeroham
6. From Esther 1, how many days
did Ahasuerus' feast last? 2, 4, 7,
10
ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Ben-Hadad,
3) Saul, 4) David, 5) Jeroham, 6)
Seven

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~~~~~

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NOTICE
Wednesday, April 2, 2025 at 9:00 am, a meeting conducted by Mendota Community Consolidated School District #289 will take place at the District #289 Educational Center Boardroom, 1806 Guiles Ave, Mendota, IL 61342. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the district's plans for providing special education services to students with disabilities who will attend private schools and home schools within the district for the 2025-2026 school year. If you are a parent of a home school or a non-public student who has been or may be identified with a disability and you reside within the boundaries of Mendota District #289, you are urged to attend. If you have further questions pertaining to this meeting, please contact Mr. K. Bradley Cox, Superintendent, at 815-539-7631. No. 0208 (February 26, 2025)

101
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National Institute on Retirement Security, 2016.

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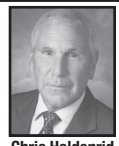
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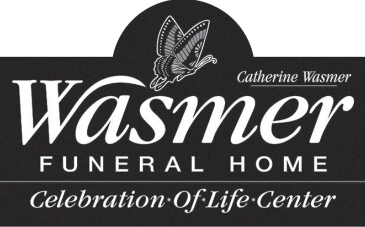
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