

Federal cuts affecting Mendota Food Pantry

MACFP director Tracy Cooper asks, ‘How am I going to do this?’

By BRANDON LaCHANCE
Staff writer

MENDOTA—The nationally known program cuts of the Trump Administration are officially felt in Mendota.

One of the programs no longer available is Illinois Eats through the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement, which was shut down March 4 due to uncertainty surrounding federal funding.

The Mendota Area Christian Food Pantry used the Illinois Eats program to receive 120 pounds of meat per month.

“When I first found out, I went into panic mode. I was angry about the whole situation,” said MACFP Executive Director Tracy Cooper. “I went into my office and started crying, asking myself, ‘How am I going to do this? Where am I going to get the extra meat from?’”

“Since the program has been stopped, we no longer receive the ground beef and ground pork. This leaves us to find another source. We try to give 3-5 pounds of meat a month to each client.



The Mendota Area Christian Food Pantry is feeling the impact of program funding cuts from the Trump Administration. (Reporter photo by Brandon LaChance)

We’re struggling to get the resources or a plan to what we do next.

“Through Illinois Eats, the state was getting the meat at a discount from Illinois farmers. They’d buy the meat from the farmers and give to food pantries. The last time we were there, we were able to get the meat.

But they said once it’s gone, that’s it. They’re not going to get anymore meat from the farmers.”

Cooper would receive the beef and pork from the Midwest Food Bank in Bloomington.

With this no longer being an option, she may have to turn to another location she

purchases food from in part of the USDA program, which may also be ending.

“At this time, we’re still able to buy meat from River Bend Food Bank in Davenport, Iowa, but it’s not always on the order form,” Cooper

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Electronics recycling event set April 12 in Ottawa

OTTAWA – A free electronics recycling event is scheduled for Saturday, April 12 from 8 a.m.-noon at the LaSalle County Government Center, 707 E. Etna Road, Ottawa.

Pre-registration is required by going online at www.lasallerecycling.as.me (preferred method) or by calling 815-630-4308 from 8 a.m.-4p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m.-noon Friday.

Accepted items included: cable and satellite receivers, cameras, cash registers, cred-



it card readers, cell phones and accessories, chargers, circuit boards, computer servers, computers and computer parts, copiers/printers/scanners/fax machines/type-writers, DVD/VHS players, external drives, ferrous and

non-ferrous metals, ink and toner cartridges, laptops/tablets/eReaders, mice and keyboards, microwaves, all types of monitors, MP3/iPods/etc., networking equipment (modems, switches, routers, hubs), phones and telecom equipment, projectors, rechargeable batteries (lithium ion, Ni-Cd, lead acid, Ni-Mh), stereos/radios/speakers, all types of televisions, uninterrupted power supplies, video game consoles, wire/cables/Christmas lights.

Non-accepted items in-

clude: loose alkaline batteries (accepted while contained in electronic devices), liquid containing items, freon containing items (AC units, dehumidifiers), white goods (refrigerators, freezers), thermostats, light bulbs.

There is a limit of two televisions per vehicle. Registration is not open to businesses. Oversized loads may be refused.

For more information not regarding registration, contact the LaSalle County Land Use Department at 815-434-8666.

Railroad camera gives a live look at Mendota throughout the world

Steel Highway Railcams broadcasts Mendota Depot 24/7 on YouTube

By BRANDON LaCHANCE
Staff writer

MENDOTA – Mendota has a lot to offer, but sometimes we don’t realize what the city offers.

As in any other municipality, residents could overlook or forget how important something in the town is. For instance, in Mendota, Lake Mendota seems normal and just another “thing” to us, but others don’t have a big lake offering fishing, scenery for Prom photo backdrops, a pavilion, a park, a walking path, and a long list of other benefits.

The same can be said about the train station and railway in Mendota. To some, the train is loud and stops traffic. To others, the train station has been vital

“It brings in rail fans and it shows people we have a nice community. Hopefully people who are watching, when they plan their summer trips, will add Mendota to their stops in the Midwest.”

—Bryon Walters, president, Mendota Historical Society

for everything Mendota has been, is, and will be in the future.

The Mendota Museum & Historical Society has found a way to show the importance of the Mendota railroad, not only to local residents but nationwide, as it has been part of Steel Highway Railcams on YouTube since January.

“It’s really neat for people who like to watch trains. It’s also useful for meteorologists,” said Bryon Walters, who is the president of the

society. “They use the railcams for what is called truth in forecasting. The radar may show there is green overhead and precipitation, but they look at the live cameras and they can see the air is dry and it’s not reaching the ground right now. They can also see if it’s foggy, and how foggy it is.

“I think it brings awareness to a lot of Mendota residents that we’re an Amtrak community. It brings in rail fans and it shows people

we have a nice community. Hopefully people who are watching, when they plan their summer trips, will add Mendota to their stops in the Midwest. Then they would come into town, probably patronize our restaurants, visit some stores, and maybe stay the night at a hotel.”

Steel Highway Railcams was created by Tom Hogan, who is from Iowa. To be part of the railcam network, the Mendota Museum & Historical Society had to pay to rebuild the south switch tower, located behind El Ray Taco and in front of Setchell Insurance Agency, and run electrical wiring through the tower for the camera.

See Camera, Page A5

District 280 Board waives registration & participation fees

Summer School to be offered at MHS

MENDOTA – The Mendota High School Board of Education met on March 17 for its regularly scheduled meeting.

PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

During Joe Masini’s Principal’s Report, his request that the school’s membership in the Illinois High School Association be renewed for the 2025-2026 school year was approved.

Masini presented on the 31 students who have requested early graduation for December of 2025. The board discussed and reviewed that this is a significant increase in the number of early graduates. They also discussed any additional opportunities that seniors could obtain at MHS in their spring semester. After discussion, the requests were approved.

Summer School will be offered again in IVCC Speech, Summer Driver’s Education, summer band, and credit retrieval in English, Math, and Science. The board approved the following summer school staff: Driver’s Education—Aaron Sester, Brock Zinke, Tom O’Neill and Mary Stephentich; Math/Science—Kevin Wohrley; English—Dan Beck; Paraprofessional/ELL Support—Marisela Cervantes; Summer School/Edmentum Administrator—Beck.

Commendations were provided to James Younger and the students of the spring play for their performance.

Masini made another request for all parents of MHS students to participate in the IL Five Essentials Survey. The survey link is available online at www.mendotahs.org or in email and letters mailed home to parents.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Superintendent Dr. Denise Aughenbaugh gave the District and Business reports. The board reviewed and approved the Cardiac Emergency Response Plan. The board also thanked school nurse Sheri McConville on her efforts to coordinate the plan.

The board discussed and approved the 2025-2026 fees and cafeteria prices. The board is very mindful of the expenses parents have to educate and support their high school students. Therefore, the board again waived all registration and participation fees at Mendota High School for the 2025-2026 school year. The board wants to encourage all students to participate in extracurricular activities, and those fees are also waived.

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Mendota Museum & Historical Society President Bryon Walters checks out the live broadcast of the Mendota train station and railway on the Steel Highways Railcams YouTube channel. (Reporter photo by Brandon LaChance)



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LOCAL AND AREA

Blackstone School Report

Stacy Kelly, Principal

There was a lot of green throughout the school on March 17 for our St. Patrick's Day spirit day! Students from Mrs. Reuter and Miss Wilhelm's classes had the task of creating a leprechaun trap. The students did an amazing job in designing some very creative traps to try to catch the leprechaun on St. Patrick's Day while they were gone for the weekend. They came back to school on Monday morning to find nothing but a mess that the leprechaun had left. They had a lot of fun with this project!

We held our March Paw Pride assembly this past Wednesday. Students who earned golden tickets for great behavior during the past month went into a drawing to participate in a game and to win prizes. The students enjoyed a St. Patrick's Day themed game where they had to go around the gym and collect gold coins (balloons) in their pot. We then drew 20 names out of the kindergarten and first grade buckets. The students chosen were very excited to have the opportunity to pick a prize. We're very proud of all of our students who earned golden tickets this past month.

Our motto at Blackstone is “Kindness Begins With Me.” For the month of March, our students were given a kindness paper to take home to complete kind deeds for others. For each kind deed completed, the students colored in a gold coin in their pot of gold. Students who completed the board were able to add their name to our March kindness wall and they received a fun treat. We had many students complete the kindness challenge and we are proud of them for showing so much kindness to others.

The students nominated for the principal award this past week included Yolanie Ramirez, Theo Knowlton, Rubi Baltazar, Joel Castro, Margaret Bend, Xavier Dean, Aaron Hernandez and Dante Barrera. The winners were Audrey Dewey, Azalayah Pratt, Julie Taliani and Bella Frey. Congratulations to all of you!

Looking ahead at the calendar, don't forget that District #289 will have spring break on April 14-21.

“The Miracle Worker” comes to Stage 212

LaSALLE – Spring brings “The Miracle Worker,” to Stage 212 in LaSalle. William Gibson’s powerful and poignant Tony Award-winning drama explores the volatile relationship between spirited Annie Sullivan and her student, deaf, blind and mute Helen Keller.

“The Miracle Worker” will be presented April 4-6 and 11-13 at Stage 212, 700 First St., LaSalle. Friday and Saturday performances begin at 7:30 p.m. Sunday matinees begin at 2 p.m. Tickets will be available to the general public for \$17 each beginning March 24, and may be purchased by visiting the box office Monday 4-6 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m.-noon, or by calling 815-224-3025 during those hours. Tickets may also be purchased online by visiting stage212.org.

Having lost her sight and hearing at the age of 19 months, young Helen is trapped in a secret, silent world, unable to communicate. She is violent and spoiled, treated by her family as subhuman. Only Annie sees a

mind and spirit waiting to be rescued from Helen's dark, tortured silence.

Appearing in the cast are Andie Kerestes as Annie Sullivan, Piper Mitchell as Helen Keller, Gary Talsky as Captain Keller, Brooke Shinberg as Kate Keller, Isaac Alvarado as James Keller, Karen Lesman as Aunt Ev, Lisa Gifford as Viney, Piper Forrest as Martha, Emilia Farrier as Mary, Scott Harl as Doctor/Farmhand and Larry Kelsey as Anagnos.

Production staff includes producer April Ruiz, director Ellen Marincic, stage manager Caryn Brown, costumers Vicky Bickel, Teresa Verduzco and Ellen Marincic, set construction crew Scot Smigel, Gary Talsky and an anonymous angel, sound designer/operator Kyle Foley, lighting designer/operator Yvette Lucas and stagehands Rosie Brown and Mary Craven.

"The Miracle Worker" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com.

Welcome to the Chamber



Rising M Chiropractic

Maddie Eager, center, welcomed the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce to her new center, Rising M Chiropractic, located at 105 E. Ottawa St. in Troy Grove, for a ribbon cutting. Eager, a Mendota native who graduated from Marquette Academy (Ottawa) in 2019 and Palmer College of Chiropractic (Davenport, Iowa) in 2024, has been adjusting since 2021. In the photo, left to right, MACC Ambassadors Lee Stocking, Dessa Collings, Kim Craven, Eager, MACC President/CEO Sam Setchell, Ambassador Erin Lauer, and Ambassador Christin Atherton. (Reporter photo by Brandon LaChance)

St. John's offers to unite all during Lent

MENDOTA – What better way to celebrate Lent than together.

St. John's Lutheran Church, located at 607 10th Ave. in Mendota, is hosting a Men's Lent Dinner at 6 p.m. Thursday, March 27.

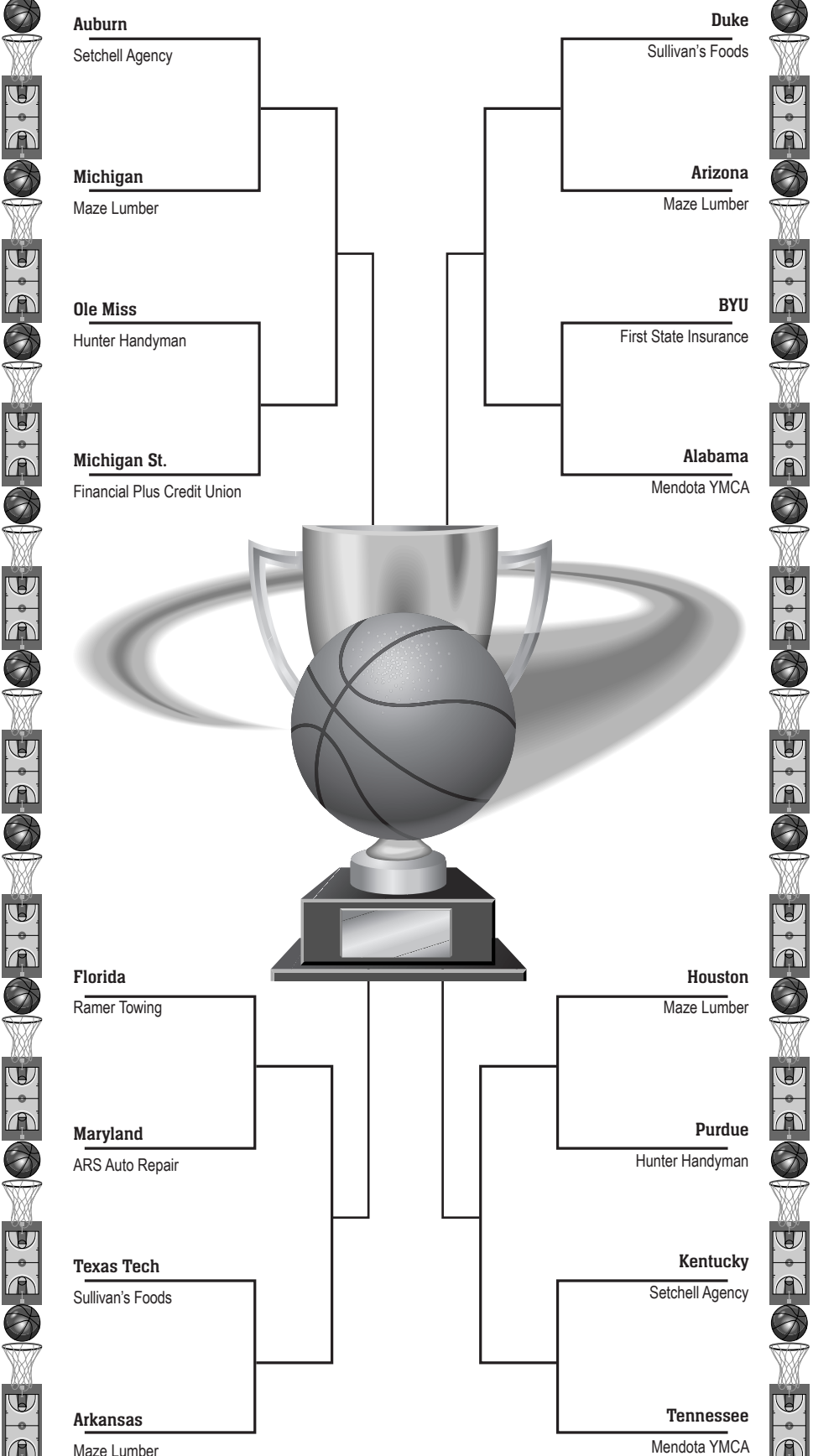
The meal including seasoned butterfly pork chops, baked beans, coleslaw, and pie, doesn't have a fee, but a free will donation and funds from a pie auction will benefit the Mendota Area Senior Services and the Mendota Area Christian Food Pantry.

Besides gathering and fundraising, an objective of the dinner is disciplining the generations, engaging the youth.

St. John's invites you to join other Christian men from area congregations for fellowship, conversation, and of course, eating. Men are encouraged to invite youth or young adults to join them as St. John's wants faith to reach the youth.

The meal and program are sponsored by Mendota Ministry Association and Thivent.

Who's Left in the Mendota Reporter NCAA Contest?



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LOCAL AND AREA



John Ourth Award winners
Four students from Mendota Elementary District 289 were honored by their principals as this year's winners of the Illinois Principals' Association John Ourth Award at a breakfast and awards ceremony at Streator High School on Feb. 20. Seated are Lincoln School fourth graders Jaxson Ohlendorf, left, and Joree Brown, and standing are Northbrook Middle School eighth graders Lumen Setchell, left, and Ava Mahaffey. This award is presented to two outgoing students who represent good citizenship, outstanding student performance and leadership qualities. (Photo contributed)

Starved Rock Pop Singers to perform April 5 in Ottawa

OTTAWA – The Starved Rock Pop Singers will present an unforgettable evening of music on Saturday, April 5 at 7 p.m. at Ottawa Central Intermediate School, 711 E McKinley Road, on the south side of Ottawa just east of Kroger's.

Thanks to generous

sponsors Thrivent Financial and Ottawa Special Events Committee, this event is free for all to enjoy. Bring your friends and family for a night filled with incredible performances by local talents of Pop music from the '60s, '70s, '80's and beyond.

Kishwaukee College goes live on Ellucian Colleague SaaS Student Information System and ERP

MALTA – Ellucian, the leading higher education technology solutions provider announced that Kishwaukee College (Kish) has gone live with Colleague SaaS, a cloud-based Student Information System (SIS) and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) suite leveraging an AI-powered platform that delivers solutions for comprehensive student, human resources, and finance management. Integrated across departments and systems, the new platform scales resources to drive student success. As an Ellucian customer for nearly 20 years, Kish's migration to Colleague SaaS unlocks improved user experiences and optimizes workflows for its community of 4,000+ students and 320+ staff in Northern Illinois.

"We are thrilled to see Kishwaukee College now running their operations in the cloud with Colleague SaaS," said Mike Wulff, Chief Product and Technology Officer, Ellucian. "This migration marks a significant milestone in Kish's digital transformation journey,

enabling the College to serve its students more effectively. This modernization streamlines the College's technology operations and empowers the institution to innovate and adapt as the higher education landscape evolves."

The successful implementation of Colleague SaaS aligns with Kishwaukee College's strategic plan, supporting initiatives to drive student success, institutional effectiveness, and resource management. By centralizing resources and integrating systems, the new ERP and SIS enhance student lifecycle management from admissions to graduation by creating more efficient processing and user experiences for staff. This transformation positions the College for the future, ensuring continued excellence and advancing its mission to improve lives through equitable, student-centered education.

"The power of Colleague SaaS has been transformative for our institution," said Robert McGarry,

Executive Director of Campus Operations and Technology, Kishwaukee College. "The smooth implementation process ensured we could seamlessly transition to the new system without disrupting our operations. This platform empowers our faculty and staff with intuitive tools and centralized information, allowing us to support our students better and remain responsive to the priorities of our community."

"Congratulations to Kishwaukee College, a remarkably impactful and mission-driven community college, on successfully going live with Colleague SaaS," said Kelly Rogan, Chief Operating Officer, Ellucian. "This achievement highlights the strong collaboration between Ellucian and Kishwaukee teams. With this new SaaS SIS and ERP, the College is well-prepared to support their students now and in the future."

For more information on Ellucian solutions, visit ellucian.com/solutions/all-products.

U.S. Army band playing at NIU April 6

DeKALB – The United States Army Field Band and Soldiers' Chorus will perform a free concert, Sunday, April 6 at 7 p.m. in Boutell Memorial Concert Hall in the NIU Music Building.

Tickets can be reserved at ArmyFieldBand.com/tickets.

The theme of the concert is Sea to Shining Sea.

The United States Army Field Band from Washington, D.C., is the official touring musical representative of the U.S. Army. Their mission is to connect with Americans, share Army stories, and honor veterans as the musical ambassadors of the Army. These active-duty soldiers tour nationally and internationally, performing for live audiences in large concert venues, while reaching hundreds of millions of enthusiastic followers on-

line. Through performances in communities across the United States, The U.S. Army Field Band fosters a positive relationship with the American people, supports diplomatic efforts around the world and inspires future generations to serve.

Sea to Shining Sea

From coast to coast, come along for a musical celebration as The U.S. Army Field Band presents, Sea to Shining Sea. Pack up the family van and hit the road behind those famous tour buses as the Concert Band and Soldiers' Chorus tell enduring stories of veterans, friendships, and the amazingly picturesque, and maybe sometimes bizarrely quirky, places that make America a road-tripper's dream.

Tickets can be reserved at ArmyFieldBand.com/tickets.

OSF Saint Elizabeth-Ottawa recognized by Chartis as a Top 100 Rural & Community Hospital

OTTAWA – OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center in Ottawa has been named among the 2025 Top 100 Rural & Community Hospitals by The Chartis Center for Rural Health. Chartis' annual Top 100 award program honors outstanding performance among the nation's rural hospitals based on the results of the Chartis Rural Hospital Performance INDEX®.

"This award recognizes our Mission Partners' commitment to serving the region with the greatest care and love," says Dawn Trompeter, president of OSF Saint Elizabeth. "Our Mission Partners strive each day to provide com-

passionate high-quality care, and we are proud of the work we do in the communities we serve."

"The Top 100 Rural & Community Hospitals award program elevates the very best performers and helps create a roadmap for those seeking to improve financial and operational performance while continuing to care for the communities they serve," says Michael Topchik, executive director, The Chartis Center for Rural Health. "This is our 10th year recognizing the Top 100 Rural & Community Hospitals and we're thrilled to be able to celebrate this milestone with this year's winners."



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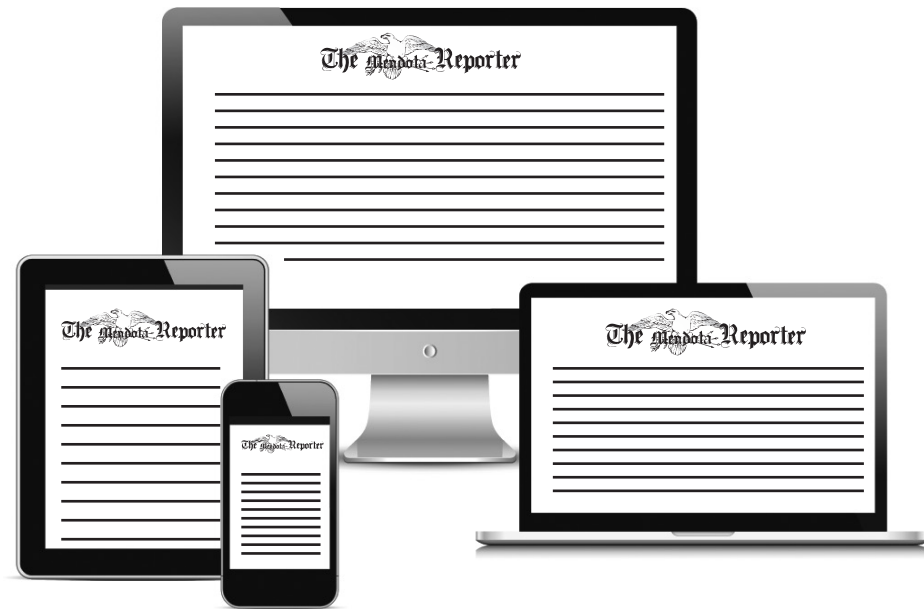
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OBITUARIES

Karen S. McStoots

WESTBROOKLYN—Karen Sue McStoots, 71, of West Brooklyn, formerly of Mendota, passed away March 21, 2025, at home with her loving family by her side.

Visitation will be Wednesday, March 26 from 3-6 p.m. at Wasmer Funeral Home. Cremation rites will be accorded after services, and burial will be at a later date.

Karen grew up in Mendota, with her mom and four siblings after her father passed away when she was very young. She attended Holy Cross for grade school and graduated Mendota High School in 1971. She started her career at Wayside Press/RR Donnelley in 1978 and worked there until their closure in 2012, when she retired. In July of 1979 she married Glen McStoots.

Karen will be dearly missed by her husband, Glen of West Brooklyn; two daughters, Cindy (Brian) Schultz of Mendota and Teresa Lobbins of Oglesby; son, Jason (Cassey) McStoots of Mendota; stepson, Glen Ray McStoots of Portales, N.M.; stepdaughter, Dawn Holt of St. Mary's, Iowa; two grandsons, Adam (Brittany Hirsch) Schultz of Mendota and Evan Schultz of Metairie, La.; two great-grandchildren, Aiden and Lainey Schultz; several step-grand and great-grandchildren; sister, Pat Smith of Mendota; two brothers, Bill Dean and Mike (Wanda) Dean, both of Mendota; and several loving nieces and nephews.

Karen was preceded in death by her parents, William and Mary Dean; sister, Sandy Gordon; and two brothers-in-law, Les Gordon and Rolly Smith.

You would likely find her enjoying the sun whenever she could. Karen loved spending time in their garage with countless friends enjoying many, many Beer Thirties. She always looked forward to her winter stays in Fort Walton Beach, Fla., with her sister Pat and Rolly. Karen made many friends and memories down there that she loved to talk about. Karen loved her year around adventures with what we loved calling the 3 Musketeers, which include Pat and her "favorite" niece Julie Smith. She also loved spending time with her grandsons, Adam and Evan. Grandma Karen looked forward to her visits from great-grandson Aiden. He always made her smile, and he always required knuckles, a kiss and a bye before he would leave. We were happy she was able to meet one-week-old Lainey and gave her smile of approval.

Memorials may be directed to OSF Hospice. Condolences may be left at wasmerfuneralhome.com.



Mary A. Keeling

MENDOTA—Mary A. Keeling, 68, of Mendota, passed away at home on March 19, 2025.

Services will be private. Cremation rites have been accorded. Wasmer Funeral Home is privileged to assist the family.

Mary was born Aug. 22, 1956, in Mendota, to Delbert and Patricia (Myers) Brown. She graduated Mendota High School in 1975. Mary married the love of her life, Kenneth Keeling in Ottawa on Feb. 15, 1985.

She will be missed by her three sons, Albert Schrader Jr. of Colorado Springs, Colo., Ken Keeling of Wausau, Wis., and Keith Keeling of Minnesota; four daughters, Peggy (Michael) Dilbeck of Mendota, Catina (Tim Firkus) Holstein of Birnamwood, Wis., Christina Keeling of Albany, Wis., and Catrina Keeling of Wausau, Wis.; 28 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; two brothers, John (Kendra) Brown of Mendota and Delbert Brown Jr. of Peoria; aunt Wilma Jacobs of Mendota; four nieces; two nephews; sister-in-law, Shelly Brown; and two very special lifelong friends, Claire Danner and Linda DeWaele.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband on May 9, 2019; daughter, Nancy Schrader; sister, Pam Sittler; brother, Michael Brown; and two granddaughters. Mary was a wonderful mom and an exceptional grandma and aunt. Many will remember her for delivering their News-Tribune papers.

Memorials may be directed to the family. Condolences may be left at wasmerfuneralhome.com.



Wilma J. Jacobs

MENDOTA—On Saturday, March 22, 2025, Wilma Jean Jacobs, 90, our loving mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and great-great grandmother passed, away at OSF Saint Elizabeth Medical Center in Peru.

Visitation will be Thursday, March 27, from 11 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. with funeral services following at 12:30 p.m. at Horner-Merritt Funeral Home, Mendota. Burial will follow at Restland Cemetery, Mendota.

Wilma was born Oct. 3, 1934, in Wayne County, Ill., to Curtis and Blanche Brown. She moved to Mendota in 1944. She attended Mendota Grade School and Mendota High School.

She was a loving wife for 36 years to Richard (Dick) Jacobs Sr. They were married on Oct. 17, 1952. Her husband passed away on July 16, 1988. Together they raised four children, Richard (Rick) (Karen) Jacobs Jr. of Montello Wis., Terry (Wanda) Jacobs of Pearland, Texas, Sandra (Tom) Sondgeroth of Mendota, and Connie (Rick) Zimmer of El Mirage, Ariz.

Survivors include her children; her grandchildren, Staci (Kenny) Shrimplin, Candee (Nick) Lawrence, Kelsey (C.J.) Greer, Jessica Sondgeroth, Janelle Spiegelhalter, Joshua Sondgeroth, Stephanie Jones and Tonya Jones; 12 great-grandchildren, Ragen Leopold, Karli Forbes, Kenzi Shrimplin, Zaden and Brenley Greer, Clara and Ellie Spiegelhalter, Bodhi Tillman, Abigail and Jacob Orndorff, Nicholas Egerstaffer, Isabella Jones; two great-great-grandchildren, Jensen and Eliza Leopold; her sister-in-law, Lois Ridge; special friend, Shirley Jackson; special nieces, Becky (Tommy) Valdez, Wanda (Larry) Booth; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband; brothers, William (Stanley), Delbert, Paul and Jesse Brown; sisters Leona Ellis and Helen Anderson; her grandson, Chad Sondgeroth; and several nieces and nephews.

Wilma worked at The Kitch, Casey's, and retired in 2000 from HCC, Inc. after 26 years. She was very involved with her children's activities throughout their youth, being a Room Mother, Bluebird Leader, and Cub Scout Leader. She and her husband enjoyed attending their children's activities, never missing their sporting events, band concerts and school programs. She was a lifelong member of Mendota Elks Club.

She enjoyed boating, camping, shopping and spending time with her family. She loved to host all of the family holidays and gatherings. Family was very important in her life.

In lieu of flowers, memorials in Wilma's memory may be directed to Mendota Area Senior Services. She will be forever loved and missed. We know she will be forever reunited with the love of her life. We will always cherish her memory.

Please visit www.horner-merritt.com.

Harold M. Svendsen

EARLVILLE—"Swede" Harold Mervyn Svendsen, 88, of Earlville, passed away Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at his home.

Cremation care has been provided by Torman Funeral Home, Paw Paw. Memorial visitation will be from 2-5 p.m. Saturday, March 29, 2025, at the Rollo Congregational United Church of Christ. The family invites you to wear Cubs and John Deere gear. A private family funeral service will be held on Sunday at the church.

He was born May 29, 1936, in Sandwich, to Mervyn and Lois (Wold) Svendsen. He married Judith L. Rider on Aug. 24, 1958. He met Judith L. Rider in January 1958 at the Bub Dance in Triumph. They spent 66 wonderful years together.

Swede is survived by his children, Jeff (Joetta) Svendsen of West Brooklyn, Char (Dean) Hawbaker of Mt. Dora, Fla., Larry (Carol) Svendsen of Shabbona, and Stacy Richardson of Earlville; grandchildren, Ashley (Ron) Hawbaker, Jessica (Brent) Olson, Lucas Svendsen, Lindsay Svendsen, J. Adam (Alyssa) Svendsen, Kaylie (Jake) Pratt, and Joel Svendsen; great-grandchildren, Alexis, Madyson, Kora, and Benjamin; brother, Charles (Anna) Svendsen; sister, Patricia Schou; sisters-in-law, Barb Klatt and Paula Rider; and several nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, Swede is preceded in death by his wife, Judith; son-in-law, Ray Richardson; sisters-in-law, Helen Algieri and Peggy Fassig; brothers-in-law, William "Bill" Rider, Jerry Klatt, Duane Fassig and Howard Schou.

Swede was the last class to graduate from Rollo High School, where he served as senior class president in a class with six graduates. He was part of the Rollo Eagles basketball team that won the Green River Valley Conference Championships. He was also a member of the Rollo and Shabbona FFA as well as the Rollo 4-H, where he showed Herefords. He held the Rollo High School basketball record for most points scored in a game.

Swede proudly served in the US Navy from 1955-1961. He was a farmer his whole life. Even when he retired from farming, he could still be found in a tractor as recently as fall 2024. He raised livestock, including chickens, pigs and cattle. He also worked as a seed salesman for Asgrow. Swede was very community-minded and it showed. He served as a trustee for the Paw Paw Fire Department, eventually retiring from the board after 33 years. He served on the Paw Paw Township Cemetery Board and was a past Paw Paw Township precinct committeeman. He was a member and past director of the DeKalb County Corn Growers and DeKalb County Farm Bureau member. He was a part of the DeKalb County Barn Tour in 2018. Swede was a member of the Mendota Elks Lodge #1212 as well as a member of the Ancient Free & Accepted Masons of Illinois. He was a member of the Rollo Congregational United Church of Christ for 75 years. He even formed the church's first men's softball league in Rollo.

Swede had numerous hobbies. He was an avid gardener and sweet corn grower. He loved to fish, play cards, and was a John Deere enthusiast. Swede loved local sports and especially enjoyed going to the games of his grandkids and great-grandkids. The highlight for him was when his great-granddaughter, Madyson, broke the Earlville High School girls' basketball record for most career points, surpassing even Swede's highest game points from his playing days in Rollo. He loved trips with the grandchildren to Cubs Opening Day and Cubs Convention. He would attend many Cubs and White Sox games with Adam, Kora, and Jeff. He is a five-year lung cancer survivor. He enjoyed his Wednesday social hour with his friend Wayne. Swede was a frequent flyer of the Beaver Den in Paw Paw and the BP in Earlville. Thank you to the staff of both establishments for always taking care of him.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be directed to the Paw Paw Fire Department for the Paw Paw EMT program. Please visit www.TormanFuneralHome.com to sign the online guest book.

DEATH NOTICES

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LOCAL AND AREA

Pantry

Continued from Page A1

said. “It’s not a sure thing we can get 120 pounds of beef or pork every month. Plus, we’d have to buy it instead of getting it for free.

“Also, we’re not sure if we’re going to still get the USDA funds, which we use to purchase from River Bend. There hasn’t been a confirmation yet of whether or not that program will continue. The USDA program is through TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program), which are both federally funded.”

MACFP, which serves an average of 170 clients (individual or family) per month, currently receives between 3,000-5,000 pounds of food per month through the USDA program at River Bend Food Bank.

The items received could be anything from milk, noodles, potatoes, canned goods, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, and more, as the order form never looks the same month to month.

“It would be a huge price problem for us,” Cooper said. “If you think about buying 3,000-5,000 pounds a food every month that you weren’t buying before, it will definitely hurt us financially. I don’t know how long we would be able to do it.

“At this point, we’re not making any cuts to what our clients receive. They’ll get exactly what they were getting before. They get a nice cart-full of food estimated at \$150-175.”

Donations, whether food items or monetary, are accepted at the Mendota Area Christian Food Pantry located at 710 Sixth Ave., Mendota. The pantry is open 8-11 a.m. Tuesday-Friday.

Camera

Continued from Page A1

There is one camera in the tower set in one position for the 24-hour, seven-days-a-week live broadcast.

“We’ve had families tell us stories of their little children, when they hear a train, telling their parents to hurry up and put it on YouTube, so they can watch the train come into town,” Walters said. “That’s pretty cool. I live five miles out of town and I hear the whistles. I may pop on my YouTube to see what kind of train is going through town. From a distance, I can tell if it’s an Amtrak train or a BNSF freight train from hearing the horn.

“You can see Eighth Street traffic really well. At the end of the day, you can see school buses. I can see the American flag and it shows how windy it is. This time of the year, from day to day, you can slowly see the grass becoming greener.

“We like it for the Mendota Depot. It’s an asset. We feel it benefits the town also. Mendota can be seen from anywhere in the country thanks to YouTube. We’ve read the comment boxes and people have said, ‘We have to check out the town.’ We get on there and further promote Mendota by telling them about our three museums and Lake Mendota. We tell them there are things to do.”

Steel Highway Railcams also offers a highlight video called “24 Hours of Mendota,” which can be found on the YouTube page. The feature shows all the trains traveling through Mendota in a 24-hour period presented in a condensed 80-minute video. As of March 14, the latest video was from Feb. 8.

As many as 60 people have watched the Mendota railcam and more can do so by subscribing, liking, and selecting the Mendota camera on Steel Highway Railcams on YouTube.

District 280

Continued from Page A1

The board reviewed cafeteria prices and approved to the following: student lunch at \$3.75, student breakfast at \$2.35, milk at 60 cents, and adult (staff) lunch at \$4.50. All of the Ala Carte lunch prices are established during the school year with the cafeteria director.

The board reviewed and approved the 2025-2026 Consolidated District Plan that is due to the Illinois State Board of Education. The CDP allows grantees to address the federal formula grant requirements with the planning document. It encompasses School and District Improvement, Multilingual/Language Development, Special Education, and Title Grant Funds.

The board reviewed the natural gas renewal presented by Land’s Energy Service. The board approved a one-year natural gas contract with Constellation.

The board reviewed and discussed the request for Fiscal Year 2026 bus purchases. The board tabled the request of a 2024 54-passenger bus purchase at \$109,500 and the purchase of a buy-out option for a leased bus at \$82,500. The board discussed the anticipated state funding. The anticipated mandatory categorical payments to school districts are expected to see a reduction in regular transportation, special education transportation and private facility transportation. The board anticipates these revenue reductions and agreed to wait on new bus decisions.

The ENGIE Phase IV Board Resolution and Amendment 7 was reviewed and approved. The scope of work includes replacing existing vinyl commercial tile, carpet and vinyl base at the MHS building. The flooring preparation will use the epoxy mitigation system. The flooring solution will include a moisture mitigation base layer that includes three additional layers of epoxy flooring systems and wear and non-slip additives. The carpet tile solution will also include the moisture mitigation strategy.

ENGIE will also remedy the masonry repair items identified in the 10-year Health and Life Safety Re-

port. They will repair cracks in concrete floors, concrete CMU blocks and major joints, provide efflorescence cleaning and treatment, recaulk precast panel joints, install backer rod and sealant, repair exterior step cracks, replace window and door sealant, and also remedy the fire protection repair items identified in the report.

The 10-year Health Life Safety items were identified from the completed ISBE approved survey completed on Dec. 15, 2023. The board approved the total implementation cost of \$2,141,040. The timeline for work should allow for on-site work commencement on or before June 4, 2025. The goal is to have ROE Certification of Occupancy on Aug. 8, 2025.

PERSONNEL ITEMS

The board entered a closed/executive session, and upon return to open session, handled several personnel action items. The board approved the retirement request of math teacher, Kate Guglielmetti, at the conclusion of the 2027-2028 school year. The board accepted the resignation of Lisa Schroeder as boys’ basketball cheerleading coach. The board renewed the 2025-2026 contract of Kate Hagenbuch as Speech Language Pathologist (SLP).

The board renewed the 2025-2026 contracts for the following: Todd Doyle as Special Education/504/Homebound Administrator, Nicole Cromwell as Assistant Principal, Brock Zinke as Athletic Director. The board approved the certified teachers’ non-tenure renewals for Brenda Carbajal, Kyle Lopez, Nick Myers, Angela Priestley, Bryson Prusator, Tom O’Neill, Dave Roden, James Younger, Cody Zinke and Liz Zinke, and granted tenure to Kyra Koskotas. The board thanked all of these teachers for their prior and continued service to MHS.

Approval was given to hire football coaches Cody Zinke, Bryson Prusator, Cesar Arteaga and Patrick Cassidy, and approved volunteer coaches Kurt Bruno, Jake Guerrero, Mike Davis, Jeff Barrett, Brett Chaon, Todd O’Sadnick and Jeff Prusator.

The next regular meeting of the District 280 Board is Tuesday, April 22.

Easter Egg Hunts coming up

MENDOTA – The Mendota YMCA is hopping into spring by hosting two Easter Egg Hunts this year.

The first of the egg hunts is the Sensory Friendly Egg Hunt in partnership with the Mendota Area Chamber of Commerce. This hunt is for those that are sensitive to over stimulation. All ages are welcome. It will be held on Saturday April 12. There will be 500 eggs with candy, and three golden eggs to be

found for bigger prizes. The Sensory Friend Easter Egg Hunt begins at 11:30 a.m. at the Mendota YMCA after the Chamber of Commerce Egg Hop.

The YMCA will be holding the second egg hunt of the season with its 4th Annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 19, at Veteran’s Park, downtown Mendota. The egg hunt is split up into three age groups that have their own designated times.

The schedule is as follows:

- 10-10:30 a.m. – Ages 18 months to 4 years
- 10:30-11 a.m. – Ages 5 to 7 years
- 11-11:30 a.m. – Ages 8 to 10 years

There will be 1500 eggs with candy in them that will be split up between the three age groups. There will also be three golden eggs per age group to be found for bigger prizes. The event is free and open to the public.

Paw Paw School Board addresses concern about building safety-security

PAW PAW – The Paw Paw School Board met in regular session on March 18.

A concerned parent inquired about the safety-security of the school building. How many entrance fobs are out, and how are they accounted for?

Superintendent DuBois explained that the only persons who have access to the fobs are District employees, organizations that have agreements with the district, and law enforcement.

Possession of the fobs are recorded and followed. If any people need access to the school beyond school hours, an application must be filled out. That fob would be programmed to only allow entrance during the time they have applied for and received approval.

Plans for altering the main entrance are being considered in the school’s five-year plan. Currently there is an intercom and camera at the main entrance. Visitors must be buzzed in at the main entrance. All the entrances are locked, and cameras are located at each entrance. When someone requests access through the main entrance, a staff member confirms their identity and purpose before allowing them to enter the building.

Fees for the 2025-2026 school year were announced. The State of Illinois requires a 10¢ increase in the cost of the school lunch each year. For the coming school year, K-5 lunches will be \$2.60. junior high \$2.85,

and adults \$3.25. Breakfast is also available and provided at a cost of \$2. There will be no change to the cost for breakfast. About 30 students currently eat breakfast at school.

There will be no increase in the cost of registration.

The fee for student handbooks will be removed as all students now use Chromebooks. There will be two new fees added for next school year – a \$30 technology fee for Chromebooks and a \$15 charge for the replacement of a lost Chromebook charger.

The cost of participating in an extracurricular sport is set by the hosting school when co-oping takes place (currently track is the only sport being co-opted)

The resignation of Coordinator of Student Services Dan Garza has been accepted

There will be a community forum on Wednesday, April 2 at 6:30 p.m. for a State of the District report.

A bid for mowing of the school property has been accepted from Kern Lawn Services.

The area that the portable classrooms previously occupied will now be asphalted for parking of the school buses. The school received a matching grant from the State of Illinois for paving the space where 50 percent of the cost is covered through the grant.

The school play, “How to Get Away With a Murder Mystery,” will be Thursday, April 10 and Friday, April 11 at 6 p.m. both evenings.

Life Line Screening event planned in Mendota

MENDOTA – Residents living in and around the Mendota can learn about their risk for cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, diabetes, and other chronic, serious conditions with affordable screenings by Life Line Screening. Mendota Moose Lodge 714 will host this community event on Tuesday, April 15. The site is located at 211 E.

12th St., Mendota.

Screenings can check for:

- The level of plaque buildup in your arteries, related to risk for cardiovascular disease, stroke and overall vascular health.
- HDL and LDL Cholesterol levels
- Diabetes risk
- Kidney and thyroid function, and more

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The Mendota Reporter

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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.

Letters

Nightengales could use porch, volunteers

Dear Editor: While we're at it, aren't there any youth groups out there – Boys/Girls Club, church teen group, Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts who would volunteer to spend a couple hours after school sorting through and helping to organize the donations?

Karen Vlasaty, Paw Paw

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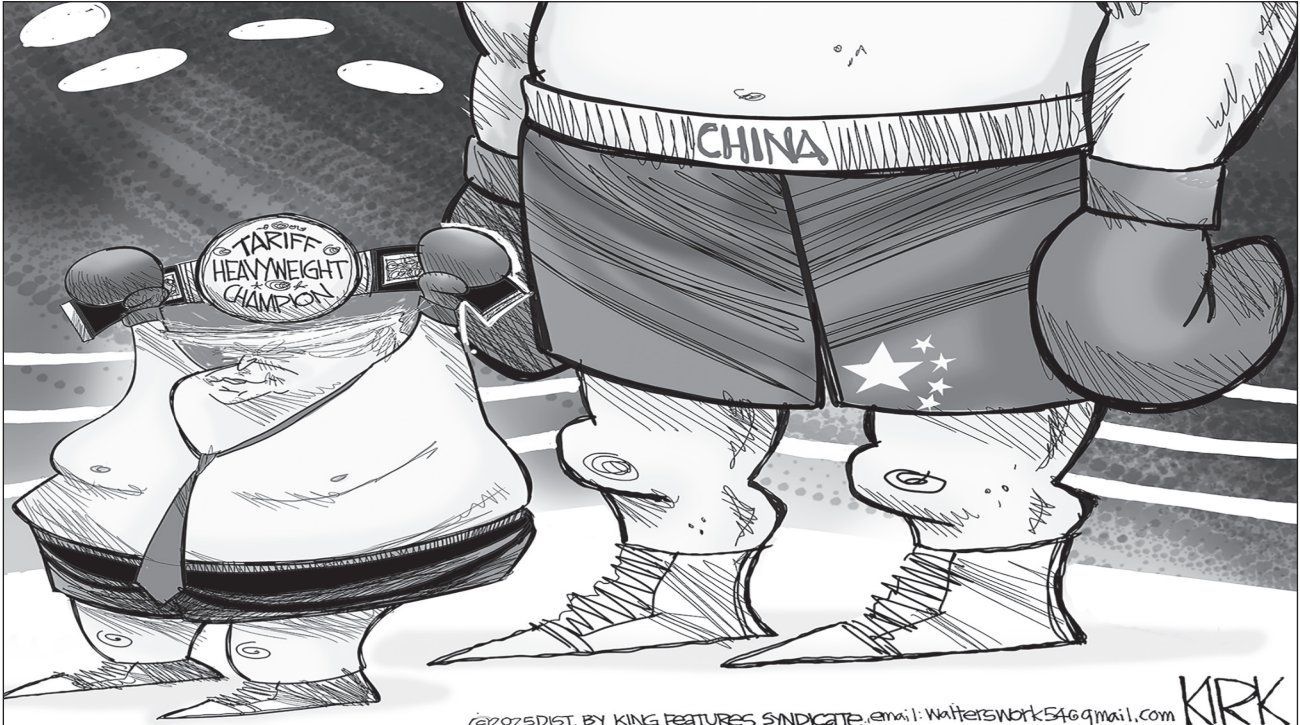
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Dealing with slot machines – 1934

(The following is from Jessica Nashold's Backtracks and Sidetracks column, reprinted from March 24, 1999.)

By Jessica Nashold

Alderman Ted Henning had a busy morning on March 22, 1934. The previous evening he had checked the location of all slot machines in town. Now, “vested with the power he had as alderman,” he placed tags on 14 machines. These machines were not to be moved until picked up and taken to the city building. There they would be opened and the money turned over to the city treasurer.

It had been rumored that CWA workers had been depositing their salaries in the slot machines instead of feeding their families.

The lure of winning something for nothing is too great.

It was estimated that the amount taken out of Mendota by way of slot machines was running into thousands of dollars each month. Henning had been asked by many Mendotans to “do something about it.”

He decided this was the time.

The city purchased pipe and hydrants to be used in a CWA project, which would connect all the dead ends in the water system. Two shifts were hired, each shift to work three days each week. This complied with the limitation of 24 hours per week per worker. In this way more men were given an opportunity to earn something each week.

The salary is 30 cents per hour.

Father L.J. Wissing and the Mendota Ministerial Association urged that businesses be closed Good Friday afternoon and 77 merchants agreed to close between noon and 3 p.m. Services would be held at St. Mary's and at the Presbyterian church.

It is hoped businessmen and the public in general will attend.

At St. John's Lutheran Church, there was a Good Friday morning service in German and an evening service in English.

On March 21-22, 1934, Westerman's took over the State Theatre for a style show. The stage was decorated in orange and green and a 15-foot runway extended from the stage across the first few rows of seats. The models were Mary Louise Clark, Faith Setchell, Darlene Welsch, Margaret Riegel, Doris Van Ry

Backtracks & Sidetracks

and the Zapf twins, Carolyn and Catherine. All the garments modeled were from Westerman's and shoes were from Miller & Jones. The models stepped through frames designed as covers of Vogue and Harper's Bazaar magazines. Music was by John Runyon's orchestra from Paw Paw.

Fashion note: hemlines in 1934 were about 10" from the floor.

A shipment of 6,000 cases (144,000 cans) of Peter Pan corn was taken by truck to Chicago for distribution among A & P groceries there. It took nine trucks to handle the order. J.P. Hoffman, manager of the Inderrieden plant, said this brought the total cases sold to 28,000. The number of cases remaining from the 1933 pack was 20,000.

Farmers signed up to plant 1,000 acres of sweet corn for Inderrieden in 1934. Only 200 more acres could be accommodated. The contracted price was \$7.50 per ton.

It may be more, but not any less.

Attention was directed to the benefit of using corn stalks as feed for cattle after the ears had been harvested.

MHS debaters qualified to enter state competition at Macomb on April 5, 1934. Theodore Nelson was coach. Upholding the affirmative were Eleanor Gross, Mark Huss, Melvin Schmitz, Jack Westerman and Everett Moore. The negative team used Edwin Stamberger, Edward Baker, John Eichorn and Karl Sams.

On a farm near Van Orin, owned by Joseph L. Zolper of Mendota, the government leased 94 acres for an emergency landing field. A beacon light was to be installed and a house built for the manager. The light was to be operated each night as well as a light on a second beacon north of Mendota. The field was designated No. 34.

Just one of many emergency landing fields for the accommodation of aeroplane pilots.

Arlene Scheidenhelm was in charge

of girls' physical education at MHS in 1934. She organized a girls' basketball tournament in which teams from each class played the other teams twice, for a total of six games. The captains were: freshman, Wilma Welsch; sophomore, Lucille Lasswell; junior, Evangeline Delhotal; senior, Helen Bankes.

A Mendota Rifle & Pistol Club was organized in Mendota with George D. Smith as president. They had a rifle range in the basement of the Chamberlin dry goods store at 715 Washington St. Smith looked forward to competition with teams from rifle clubs in nearby towns. Another goal was to provide marksmanship instruction for youths of the community.

When the Mendota Softball Association decided to use a 12" ball in the 1934 season, it was determined Puritan Park would not be a suitable place for the games. Consideration was given to some Faber lots that were in receivership, but the grounds committee preferred Kakusha Park.

Lloyd Cotton and Fred Politsch took over operation of the gas station at the Chevrolet garage on Washington Street, west of the library.

It will be open 24 hours a day.

The Reporter investigated a strange looking car on the tracks near the depot. It was equipped with magnetic needles, which became agitated when passing over a defect in a rail. A daub of yellow paint marked the spot and the section foreman would then replace the defective rail.

The defective rail detector thus stops many railroad accidents.

Frank Westgate received a letter from a relative who had in his possession an Illinois map purchased by his grandfather in the Troy Grove area about 1835. The map showed only two places in LaSalle County, Ottawa and Shippingsport on the Illinois River. It listed the population of the state as 157,575, including 746 slaves. The relative wrote that he had never heard his grandparents mention slaves, and surmised that –

Likely they were on the end of the state next to Kentucky or Missouri.

Teslas aren't fascist vehicles

By Rich Lowry

It's a trope to say that Donald Trump's opposition has been shell-shocked and rudderless in the wake of his election victory and his fast start out of the gate.

Not to fear, though. The Left has hit on its next big project -- an intifada against the country's largest maker of electric cars.

The progressive fear and loathing of Elon Musk now may be greater than that directed at Donald Trump. Since protestors don't have ready access to SpaceX's rockets or to Starlink's satellites -- absent finding a way to launch their own rival satellite network into space -- they're waging war on Tesla. The heretofore trendsetting, eco-conscious vehicle for the affluent is now a hate object, a so-called “swastika,” the equivalent of a Volkswagen in 1930s Germany.

Everyone has a right to peacefully protest, of course, and to refuse to buy whatever products they wish. But when the Left engages in direct action, it's always a sign you should take steps to protect your property and person.

Teslas have been set on fire, spray-painted and otherwise damaged. Charging stations have been burned and dealerships vandalized. Shots were fired at a Tesla showroom in Portland, Oregon. A woman in Colorado who attacked a Tesla dealership, including with a Molotov cocktail, was subsequently arrested near the location with more makeshift bombs in her car.

A Tesla charging station in South Carolina was also Molotov-cocktailed. The vandal spraypainted “LONG LIVE UKRAINE” on the ground. In Ukraine, they prepared Molotov cocktails to blunt the advance of Russian tanks closing in on Kyiv; in America, progressive activists use them to stick it to an entrepreneur whose politics they don't like.

Of course, Teslas have been painted with swastikas, as if a streamlined federal government is an indicator of incipient fascism. As always, the Left is bizarrely incapable of distinguishing between libertarianism -- Musk wants more freedom and less government -- and totalitarianism.

On the merits, the contrast between Musk and his ene-

mies is a good one for him: He is the creator; they are the destroyers. That doesn't mean that the protests and mayhem aren't having an effect; Tesla sales had already been dropping, and the “Tesla Takedown” is likely to accelerate the trend.

Part of the point is intimidation. The agitation is meant to exact a price on Musk for DOGE and get him to abandon the effort, as well as to make Tesla's workers and the company's consumers afraid. No one wants to buy an expensive vehicle and then become a political target or have their car vandalized.

Much mockery was directed at President Trump for touting the wonders of Teslas at a White House event, but the president was trying to counteract a campaign of harassment and vengeance directed at one of his top advisers, whom he believes is doing good and necessary work. Asked by a reporter if he'd consider the anti-Tesla violence domestic terrorism, Trump said, “Yes,” and rightly so.

The Code of Federal Regulations defines terrorism as “the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.” Part of the definition of domestic terrorism according to the Patriot Act is acts “dangerous to human life” intended “to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion.”

Musk enjoys being a provocateur. Yet, when he or his supporters talk of burning things down, they mean it metaphorically. His witless and inflamed enemies, on the other hand, are willing to literally burn things down. It is darkly amusing to see people for whom electric cars are necessary to saving the planet attack the most successful EV brand in the country and take out the kind of charging stations that President Biden labored so mightily and futilely to build.

The Left still doesn't have an answer to Donald Trump, but they've sure found a cudgel against one of American industry's most innovative products.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

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ENTERTAINMENT

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Menagerie
4 Embedded spies
9 "Frontline" ailer
12 Year in Spain
13 Empathic words
14 Land in la mer
15 Unfortunate soul
17 "Wham!"
18 Ga. neighbor
19 Tabloid subjects
21 Cal — (baseball's "Iron Man")
24 Scored 100 on
25 Buckeyes' sch.
26 Crater edge
28 Succinct
31 Shakespeare title starter
33 LAPD alert
35 Peruse
36 Sasha's sister
38 With it, once
40 Summer mo.
41 Norms (Abbr.)
43 In a morose way
45 Concludes by
47 Tank filler
48 Zodiac cat
49 Precinct canine

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57				58						59		

- 54 Fiddle stick
55 Ten — (long odds)
56 Flying saucer
57 New England cape
58 Trudges
59 Apply cream
5 South Pacific region
6 Restroom, for short
7 Writer Jong
8 Choose
9 Fantasy
10 Shapeless mass
11 Stitches
16 '60s Atty. General
20 Lusty look
21 Meander
22 Actress
23 Earns
27 Speedometer stat
29 Biblical king
30 Jittery
32 Poses
34 Imploring
37 Conforms
39 Locales
42 Pub seat
44 Employ
45 Exile isle
46 Inert gas
50 Brit's restroom
51 Flop
52 One — kind
53 Sailor

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Strange But True

By Lucie Winborne

* Africa is the only continent with land in all four of Earth's hemispheres.
* Programmer Terry Davis, who suffered with schizophrenia, spent a decade working on an operating system to "talk to God."
* The highest golf course in the world is the Tuctu Golf Club in Morococha, Peru, sitting 14,335 feet above sea level at its lowest point.
* Vladimir Putin's grandfather worked as a chef for Rasputin, Lenin, and Stalin.
* Bluetooth technology was named after 10th-century King Harald Bluetooth, who united Denmark and Norway, just like technology united computers and cellphones.
* Colonel Sanders got fired from a dozen jobs, was a lawyer who once assaulted his own client in court, started a restaurant that went out of business, and found himself broke at the age of 65. That's when he started KFC.
* The Mayans drilled holes in their teeth to insert semiprecious stones.
* North Korea's 105-story Ryugyong Hotel, nicknamed "The Hotel of Doom," is one of the world's tallest unoccupied building.
* Iceland has an official book-buying season that runs from September through December. More than half of all the books sold in the country are purchased during the month before Christmas.
* Australian compass termites construct their mounds on a north-south axis.
* According to a study of 79,777 patients, violent criminals had a much lower level of cholesterol than nonviolent individuals.
* Linonophobia is a fear of string.
* Hasbro has a "Monopoly Speed Die" and an official rulebook for "extreme" Monopoly variants.

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Solution time: 22 mins.

Answers

King Crossword

Couch Theater

"I'm Still Here" (PG-13) -- To finish out the last of this year's award season darlings, this Brazilian political-biographical film was nominated for Best Picture at the Oscars, and its leading actress Fernanda Torres ("Love Me Forever or Never") took home a Best Actress award at the Golden Globes. Torres plays wife and mother Eunice Paiva, who deals with the sudden disappearance of her politician husband, Rueben. Relentless to uncover what truly happened to her husband, Eunice stops at nothing to bring the truth to light, turning an apparent tragedy into a revolutionary moment to stand against a dictatorship. Out now to rent. (Apple TV+)

"Running Point" (TV-MA) -- This sports-comedy series led by Kate Hudson ("Glass Onion: Knives Out") was such a success after its February release that it has already been renewed for a second season by Netflix. After her older brother, Cam (Justin Theroux), steps down as the president of their family business following a car accident, Isla (Hudson) is appointed as the new president of the Los Angeles Waves basketball team. Although she has the help of two other brothers, Ness and Sandy, Isla feels severely unprepared for her new position as a "reformed party girl." Can she prove that she's got what it takes to lead her team to a championship? Find out for yourself--all 10 episodes are available to binge! (Netflix)

"Holland" (R) -- Following the heels of her "Babygirl" campaign that unfortunately fell under the

radar during award season, Nicole Kidman stars in this new mystery thriller, opposite Matthew Macfadyen ("Succession"). Kidman and Macfadyen play the Vandergroots, who appear to be your usual suburbanites raising a child in the midwestern town of Holland, Michigan. But as Nancy's (Kidman) picture-perfect life begins to wrinkle due to a suspicion about her husband living a double life, she enlists the help of her friend, Dave (Gael Garcia Bernal), to get to the bottom of the situation. Rachel Sennott ("Saturday Night") and Lennon Parham ("Minx") co-star in "Holland," premiering March 27. (Amazon Prime Video)

"The Parenting" (R) -- This campy horror film out now has such an incredible ensemble cast that one would expect it to be a sleeper hit, but its cringey plot and dialogue can only take these actors' performances so far. Nik Dodani ("Murphy Brown") and Brandon Flynn ("13 Reasons Why") respectively play Rohan and Josh, a young couple who plan a getaway to a country house so that they can introduce each other to their parents. Thinking that awkward moments with the in-laws will be the worst of their problems, Rohan and Josh are shocked to find out that their rental is, in fact, haunted by a 400-year-old evil entity. The film is only saved by comedic moments with Brian Cox ("Succession"), Edie Falco ("Bupkis"), Lisa Kudrow ("No Good Deed"), Parker Posey ("The White Lotus"), and Dean Norris ("Carry On").

FLASHBACK

- Who was the first to record "Delta Dawn"?
 - Name the singer who wrote and released "Blowin' in the Wind."
 - Belinda Jo Carlisle was lead singer for which band?
 - Who wrote and released "Bad Medicine"?
 - Name the song that contains this lyric: "Your lips on mine are soft as dew, Your kiss is so divine, Your eyes are like the skies of blue, And stars that brightly shine."
- Answers**
- No, it wasn't Tanya Tucker, although hers was the best known, nor was it Helen Reddy, although she topped the charts with her cover of the song. The first to release the song was Bette Midler on her debut album in 1971.
 - Bob Dylan, in 1962. The song didn't get much attention when it first came out, but it ended up as No. 14 on the Rolling Stone list of 500 greatest songs of all time and went into the Grammy Hall of Fame.
 - The all-female The Go-Go's, organized in 1978.
 - Bon Jovi, in 1988.
 - "So Many Ways," by Brook Benton, in 1959. Benton had three songs top the R&B charts that year.

Celebrity Extra

By Dana Jackson

Q: Is it true that Lucy Hale was almost Hannah Montana? Can she sing? -- **K.W.**

A: Yes, Lucy Hale, who is best known for her role on the teen drama series "Pretty Little Liars," is a vocalist as well as an actress. She won "American Juniors," a children's spin-off of "American Idol," and she's also released several singles over the years.

She also submitted a taped audition for the lead role in the Disney series "Hannah Montana," but the role eventually went to Miley Cyrus. She did, however, end up guest-starring on another teen sitcom "Drake & Josh."

Hale says despite losing out on the role that made Cyrus a star, she is grateful for the experience of auditioning, since it made her want to become an actress.

Q: I was upset to learn that "FBI: International" has been canceled. Is there a chance that Jesse Soffer could return

to "Chicago P.D." now? I hope so. -- **N.E.**

A: CBS recently announced the cancellation of not only "FBI: International" but another spin-off, "FBI: Most Wanted." While the "FBI" franchise might not be as popular as NBC's "Chicago," it's still a popular commodity for the network, which is why they're launching a new spin-off to fill the void of both procedurals.

According to Screen Rant, "FBI: CIA" will involve the two named agencies cooperating together to prevent acts of domestic terrorism" with two main characters -- one from each agency. It will mostly be set in New York City. While it's not officially greenlit for the fall schedule, "FBI: CIA" is expected to be premiering then. In fact, the show will first air this spring as a "back-door pilot" during "FBI," which is the original flagship series that started it all. "FBI" is currently in its seventh season on CBS and airs on Tuesday nights at 8 p.m. ET.

As far as the cast of the new spin-off, no one has been announced, but fans are hopeful that some of their favorite cast members from both "International" and "Most Wanted"

will pop up permanently or in guest appearances.

Yes, it's possible Soffer could return to "Chicago P.D." in the role he played for 10 seasons. He chose to leave in 2022 to take on new acting challenges, which led him to "FBI: International." Perhaps he'll take a break before his next project, wherever it shall be.

Q: What's the latest on Ted Lasso returning? Is it officially coming back for another season? -- **T.W.**

A: Yes, Jason Sudeikis, who plays the titular role of the eternally optimistic football coach, has made it official! "Ted Lasso" will be back on Apple TV+ for a fourth season. The announcement arrives a full two years since the airing of what was presumed to be the series finale. The actor recently announced on the Kelce Brothers' "New Heights" podcast that Ted would be coaching a women's football team this time.

As far as casting news, the only returnees we know for certain in this early stage of development are Sudeikis, Hannah Waddingham (Rebecca), Brett Goldstein (Roy), and Jeremy Swift (Higgins).

Hollywood

By Tony Rizzo

HOLLYWOOD -- Leonardo DiCaprio has been absent from big screens since "Killers of the Flower Moon," which was an artistic success but a box-office disappointment. However, 50-year-old DiCaprio has just completed "One Battle After Another," opposite Oscar winners Regina Hall, Sean Penn, and Benicio del Toro. It's scheduled to open on Aug. 8.

Brad Pitt wrapped the American sports action drama "F1," featuring the Formula One World Championship, and it opens on June 27. Pitt then jumped right into the action-adventure film "Heart of the Beast," which is about a former Army Special Forces soldier and his retired combat dog who fight for survival after crashing deep in the Alaskan Wilderness. Pitt still doing action/survival films at 61 says a lot about the gene pool that he came from.

George Clooney's next film is the Netflix coming-of-age comedy "Jay Kelly," with Adam Sandler, Laura Dern, Billy Crudup, Riley

Keough, Jim Broadbent, Isla Fisher and Greta Gerwig.

As soon as Julia Roberts wrapped the thriller "After the Hunt" (due on Oct. 10), with Andrew Garfield and Chloe Sevigny, she jumped right into filming the thriller "Panic Carefully," with Elizabeth Olsen, Eddie Redmayne, Brian Tyree Henry, and Ben Chaplin.

Mark Wahlberg, who is approaching 54 years old, is still going full speed ahead. He shot "Flight Risk" in Las Vegas with Michelle Dockery and Topher Grace, which was directed by Mel Gibson (whose last film "Hacksaw Ridge" earned six Oscar nominations and won two statues). Wahlberg then headed down under to Sydney to shoot "Play Dirty," with Dermot Mulroney, Tony Shalhoub, and Keegan-Michael Key for Amazon MGM Studios.

He loved it so much that he stayed on to shoot another film -- the Amazon MGM action comedy "Balls Up," with Molly Shannon and Benjamin Bratt.

Is this the end of an era?

Founded in 1915, Technicolor was used by Walt Disney for "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (1937), by MGM for "The Wizard of Oz" (1939), and by David O. Selznick for "Gone with the Wind" (1939), to name a few classics. The company recently notified its customers and employees that they're facing "severe financial challenges" and are anticipating closings and layoffs. It may mean that the upcoming "Mission: Impossible -- The Final Reckoning" might be one of the last films ever in glorious Technicolor!

Dwayne Johnson must have been disappointed by his Christmas movie "Red One," with Chris Evans, Lucy Liu, Nick Kroll and J.K. Simmons. It only recouped \$185.9 million of its \$250 million cost. But the animated "Moana 2" must have cheered him up with its \$1.05 billion grosses. Next, he's got "The Smashing Machine" with Emily Blunt opening later this year and the live-action "Moana" due in July 2026. Guess his biggest challenge these days is wrestling with how to spend his estimated \$800 million net worth!

• Trivia Test •

- GEOGRAPHY: Mount Everest is part of which mountain range?
 - MOVIES: Which color film was the first to win an Academy Award for Best Picture?
 - ASTRONOMY: Which planet in our solar system is believed to be the windiest?
 - GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: Where is the U.S. Constitution stored?
 - ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a group of lemurs called?
 - TELEVISION: Which city is the setting for the dramatic series "The Wire"?
 - GEOLOGY: Which country has the most active volcanos?
 - LITERATURE: Which character in a Charles Dickens novel famously said, "Please, sir, I want some more"?
 - ART: Which Dutch artist is considered a master of light and shadow, creating dramatic effects in paintings?
 - SCIENCE: What is an ectothermic animal?
- Answers**
- The Himalayas.
 - "Gone With the Wind."
 - Neptune.
 - The National Archives.
 - A conspiracy.
 - Baltimore, Maryland.
 - Indonesia.
 - Title character in "Oliver Twist."
 - Rembrandt.
 - Cold-blooded.

Can you name the country that has the most active volcanos? Find the answer in Trivia Test!

Weekly SUDOKU

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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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4	7	2	3	6	7	1	9	5
6	8	5	7	2	4	3	1	8
7	1	3	4	5	6	8	9	2
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8	5	9	1	2	4	5	6	3
6	2	6	3	7	1	5	8	4
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Answer — Weekly SUDOKU —

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LOCAL AND AREA

EDUCATION BRIEFS

N. Salinas earns Dean's List honors
WORCESTER, Mass. — Natalia Salinas of Mendota was named to the College of the Holy Cross Fall 2024 Dean's List.

A member of the Class of 2028, Salinas was named to the Dean's List for outstanding academic achievement during the fall semester of the 2024-25 academic year.

To qualify, students must pass four or more letter-graded courses with no failing grades during the semester and earn a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

The College of the Holy Cross, in Worcester, Mass., is among the nation's leading liberal arts institutions. A highly selective, four-year, exclusively undergraduate college of 3,100 students, Holy Cross is renowned for offering a rigorous, personalized education in the Jesuit, Catholic tradition.

IVCC names Fall 2024 graduates

OGLESBY — Last fall, a total of 162 students earned 185 degrees and certificates from Illinois Valley Community College.

Graduates are listed by hometown with their degrees or certificates. They are eligible to participate in Spring College Commencement.

Earlville — Zackery Anderson, Truck Driver Training; Ryleigh Dixon, Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA); Morgan Kunkel, CNA; Jessica Ramey, AAS in Paramedic; Nevaeh Sansone, CNA

La Moille — Giovanni Gatza, Truck Driver Training

Mendota — William Bentley, Associate in Science; Stacey Cervantes, Associate in Arts; Mariah Figueroa, Phlebotomy; Martha Flores, CNA; Alexia Gross, Associate in Arts; Casandra Hernandez, CNA; Erica Hernandez, CNA; Nicholas Hochstatter, Industrial Electrician; Brandon Kunkel, Truck Driver Training; Abigail Kunz, Infant/Toddler Gateways Credential Level 2, ECE Gateways Credential Level 3; Deborah Lengsfeld, AAS in Early Childhood Education; Jose Magallanes-Carlos, Truck Driver Training Advanced Proficiency; Antonio Martinez, Associate in Science; Raul Perez, CNA; Karla Sandoval, CNA; Dagen Setchell, EMT; Kaleb Stewart, Truck Driver Training; Manuel Trejo, Truck Driver Training; Jessica Valdez, Associate in Science

Ohio — Brennan Blaine, Truck Driver Training

IVCC Presidential Honors list

OGLESBY — For the Fall 2024 semester, the following students were named to the Presidential Honors list at Illinois Valley Community College.

Students who have earned a grade point average of 3.75 to 4.0 in 12 or more semester hours, listed by hometown, are:

Compton — Jenah Sims; Christina Van Sickle; Earlville — Easton Fruit; Morgan Kunkel; Rocco Morsovillo; Morgan Myre; Darlene Sparks; Mendota — Hope Baratta; Kamdyn Becket; William Bentley; Joshua Figueroa; Alexia Gross; Abigail Kunz; Torren Martin; Hailey Minter; Derek Nanez; Cody Nettleton; Samantha O'Brien; Stacy Pavnica; Alysa Sharp; Ryan Stevenson; Grace Wasmer.

IVCC Academic Honors list

OGLESBY — For the Fall 2024 semester, the following students were named to the Academic Honors list at Illinois Valley Community College.

Students who earned a grade point average of 3.25 to 3.74 in six or more semester hours, listed by hometown, are:

Arlington — Dylan Hunter; Compton — Dessa Komitas; Tayla Schwaegerman; Earlville — Hailey Abbott; Zackery Anderson; Matthew Farrell; Madelynn Glade; Dalia Hernandez; Lidia Hernandez; Emma Jacobs; Macy Mahler; Bailey Miller; Samantha Young; La Moille — Isabella Fischer; Luke Flanagan; Giovanni Gatza; Brooke Motter; Sadie Quest;

Mendota — Edgar Arteaga; Owen Aughenbaugh; Jace Baird; Makenzie Bean; Shelby Boege; Lily Bokus; Kirby Bond; Jenny Brown; Andres Castaneda; Itzel Cervantes; Emma Clark; Ella Coss; Adam Davis; Flor Delao; Ava Eddy; Mariah Figueroa; Crystal Garcia; David Garcia; Vanessa Gomez-Rico; Rolando Gonzalez; Yanelly Guzman; Natalie Hanaman; Claire Hanson; Zoe Hanson; Charles Heiting; Erica Hernandez; Quin Holland; Maggie Kmetz-Korte; Cameron Kordick; Brandon Kunkel; Stacy Law; Samuel Matura; Anthony Melendez; Korinne Miers; Brittney Miers-Shiell; William Munson; Jesus Orozco; Owen Ossman; Raul Perez; Rafael Romero; Karla Sandoval; Dayanara Solis; Amy Sondgeroth; Kaleb Stewart; Jessica Valdez; Madison Younglove;

Ohio — Brennan Blaine; Michael Walker; Van Orin — Isabella Wittenauer; West Brooklyn — Kaley Siemer

HONOR ROLL

Northbrook Middle School

MENDOTA — Northbrook Middle School has named its high honor roll and honor roll students for Trimester 2.

Fifth Grade High Honors — Daniella Arteaga, Jessie Carr, Harrison Coss, Oliver Davis, Gabriella Diaz, Aubrey Dinges, Peter Dunfrund, Nina Escatel, Alexxa Figueroa, Nikki Figueroa, Addison Gaspar, Landon Kent, Krew Knaff, Bailee Lambert, Adelynn Landers, Jacob Lengsfeld, Daniela Magallanes, Aubrey Mathieu, Kennedy McCollom, Kennedy Mellott, Jacob Nunez Diaz, Ariel Pavnica, Lyla Pecher, Camden Phalen, Brayden Piller, Mayra Renteria, Jaclynn Ridge, Aleeah Smith, Connor Stevenson, Maddie Strait, Reese Ward, Alexander Wickstrom, Austin Wire, Briana Zendeli

Fifth Grade Honors — Omar Aranda, Emilio Arteaga, Rigoberto Arteaga III, John Bend, Lindsey Boege, Jude Borelli, Ruben Celis, Maddox Chaon, Victor Correa, Abel Diaz, Sophia Dunley, Ella Escatel, Dana Falcon Santoyo, Emilia Farrier, Mackenzie Fielder, Charlee Fordham, Tool Fromherz, Aubrey Gambrel, Julian Garcia, Trinita Garcia, Camila Garnica Avalos, Brody Gilkerson, Miles Gilkerson, Evelina Gonzalez, Faelan Hagy, Allen Hernandez, Kayden Hunt, Evan Komitas, Brogan Kreiser, Izaiah Lopez, Liliana Montoya, Jayvon Moss, Aria Olson, Gunner Owens, Freddy Perez, Evelyn Quintana, Molly Randa, Dylan Read, Israel Rivera, Jayden Saylor, Samuel Saylor, Tyler Skaggs, Julien Woods

Sixth Grade High Honors — Jake Allen, Cruz Arteaga, Daniela Arteaga, Julian Arteaga, Bradley Betz, Jaxx Bonnell, Emiliano Casas

Valle, Eliza Celis, Adam Cox, Kinsley Diaz, Brianna Escatel, Sophia Garcia, Elijah Godina, Sebastian Harzheim, Olivia Jomant, Collin Klecker, Kate Kleckner, Macy Mahaffey, Michelle Montes, Gianna Morano, Aaron Ortega, Marley Pelka, Isabella Ramos, Kamilah Raya, George Rhynedance VI, Nadia Rodriguez, Kenyon Scott, Kayli Seabloom, Lily Skjoldager, Brayden Thiele, Ruzdije Zendeli

Sixth Grade Honors — Antonio Arteaga II, Olympia Becker, Mason Fielder, Jayla Francis, Grayson Goodlow, Leonardo Leek, Colton Mikulik, Hunter Noles, Mara Ohlendorf, Tadeo Ortiz Manzo, Taylyn Piskie, Daniel Price, Arianna Quintana, Kaylynn Read, Emma Renoud, Alexander Rivera, Angel Rivera, Jace Schnaiter, Kayne Schneider, Drake Silva, Isabella Silva, Jaylah Sotelo, Ayden Stallings, Angie Vazquez, Jaxson Villegas

Seventh Grade High Honors — Isaac Baltazar, Karly Beetz, Bristol Bonnell, Kenna Brown, Kathleen Clark, Lila Coss, Taylor Erlenborn, Aliya Escatel, Bellalyn Escatel, Janelly Escatel, Samantha Foltyniewicz, Aubri Gonzalez, Gage Hanson, Albana Imeri, London Jones, Chloe Klein, Sebastian Magallanes, Dianely Mendez-Santana, Kendra Milus, Viridianna Perez, Hunter Piller, Maggie Price, Camilo Ramirez, Lyla Rodriguez, Evelyn Sims, Victor Solorzano, Adalynn Sondgeroth, Maycie Sproston, Gavin Stamberger, Harper Stamberger, Raelynn Sundberg, Elyse Waldron

Seventh Grade Honors — Kailani Akau-Witty, Isayana Arreola, Bentley Bejster, William Bromschenkel, Austin Brown, Jose Chavez Vidal, Caroline Correa,

Holden Coss, Aaron Covarrubias, Aliya Eames, Seriyah Elam, Jayden Figueroa, Kendal Fromherz, Emiliano Galido-Garcia, Olivia Gallagher, Alejandro Gonzalez, Dominic Gonzalez, Kayleigh Higgins, Herlinda Huizar, Skyler Kenny, Kathryn Loutsch, Eli Martinez, Elaina Ohlendorf, Jordan Olivarez, Charlyze Pena, Kayne Phillips, Parker Ramer, Nicolas Ramirez-Bautista, Brooklyn Russell, Santos Salinas, Henry Schroeder, Kennie Stremmlau, Armando Valdes, Carson Walzer, Wyatt Zimmerman

Eighth Grade High Honors — Mia Arteaga, Mallory Beck, Brianna Betz, Lila Bielema, Kylee Bonnell, Jacqueline Bryson, Arian Chavez, Aliya Delao, Gabriela Diaz, Eliana Eames, Isaac Espinoza, Ari Gambrel, Illan Garcia, Giana Godina, Valeria Gomez, Vania Gomez, Callum Indigo, Eli Kaecker, Ava Mahaffey, Valerie Manz, Allison McNutt, Alana Melendez, Olivia Perryman, Nora Rhynedance, Lumen Setchell, Liam Strait, Samantha Stremmlau, Gavin Tolley, Camila Vallejo, Emerson VanHorn, Maci Winn

Eighth Grade Honors — Aisaac Arteaga, Candie Arteaga, Rafael Arteaga, Sebastian Arteaga, Audrina Askin, Charles Beatty, Annalee Becerra, Bella Bute, Embr Castaneda, Sergio Correa, Leighton Davis, Gina Diaz, Aiden Fisher, Bradley Fultz, Aleeya Garcia, Felipe Gonzalez, Joshua Granados, Zaydn Law, Yuliza Magallanes, Analay Martinez, Azaria Morris, Jacob Nelson, Elizandro Orozco, Aileen Perez, Samuel Reyes, Ivory Rodriguez, Axel Ruiz, Alexis Saylor, Juliana Seabloom, Moxie Taylor, Laurali Thompson, Brayden Wilhelm



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buy & stay

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SOCIAL NEWS



Open house planned for Kelly's 90th

MENDOTA – An open house to celebrate the 90th birthday of Don Kelly will be held on Sunday, March 30 from 1-3 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church in Mendota. The church is located at 100 E. Sixth St. Everyone is welcome to attend to help Kelly mark this milestone birthday.

Historical Society to present Tutaj film on April 10

MENDOTA – The Mendota Historical Society's April program will be the screening of a film by historian Ray Tutaj, set for 6 p.m. Thursday, April 10. The film covers the creation of the nation's first land grant railroad, the Illinois Central. Tutaj explores how the Illinois Central Railroad was vital to the settlement and economic development of Illinois and the creation of Mendota in the middle years of the 19th century. Additionally, the film looks at the key roles played by major national figures like Abe Lincoln and Stephan Douglas. The Mendota Historical Society encourages attendance to learn more about something so important to not just Mendota but Illinois as a whole.

Tickets are \$10 each and can be reserved by visiting the Historical Society website at <https://mendotamuseums.org/programs/> or by calling 815-539-3373.

Illinois Valley Library Road Trip to kick off April 6

MENDOTA – Load up for the second annual Illinois Valley Library Road Trip. And don't forget Aunt Edna or Cousin Eddie. As the weather warms, you and the family may start itching to escape your home. If you can't afford a trip to the Grand Canyon, don't want to lose Dinky in Colorado, or sneak Aunt Edna into a backyard in Phoenix, head to your home library. Starting Sunday, April 6, libraries across LaSalle, Bureau, and Putnam counties are participating in a Library Road Trip with a National Lampoon's Family Vacation theme. Everyone is invited to visit their home library, pick up a passport,

and hit the road with their favorite music and snacks! Once you get to another library, have your passport stamped at the circulation desk, and take a look around! Every library has a specialty collection for everyone to see and experience all Illinois Valley libraries. Have your passport stamped at as many libraries as you're comfortable visiting and return to your home library to turn in your passport. Your passport and stamps will get you a chance to win a prize from your home library in May. The road trip will run from April 6 to May 10. Not all libraries have the same hours or rules, so participants are encouraged to call or visit their

website or Facebook page before heading out for your day's trip. Did you know you can use your library card at all area libraries? You can also return items at any area library and the item will return to where it came from through a delivery system provided by Reaching Across Illinois Libraries. Additionally, if a library doesn't have what you're looking for, another local library may, or it can be ordered from one of the 139 other libraries that are members of the PrairieCat consortia. You can have your items delivered to your home library or your library of choice. Participating libraries include:

Earlville Public Library, Graves Hume Public Library (Mendota), Ladd Public Library, LaMoille-Claremont Public Library, LaSalle Public Library, Marseilles Public Library, Oglesby Public Library, Ohio Public Library, Paw Paw Public Library, Peru Public Library, Princeton Public Library, Putnam County Public Libraries (all branches), Raymond A. Sapp Memorial Library (Wyanet), Reddick Public Library, Richard A. Mautino Public Library (Spring Valley), Selby Township Library, Streator Public Library, Tiskilwa Public Library, Utica Public Library and Walnut Public Library.

Illinois State Regent visits local DAR chapter

MENDOTA – The Fort du Rocher Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution held a special meeting March 23 at the First United Methodist Church, Mendota. Special guest, Illinois State Regent Christina Bannon, presented a program on leadership. Her state regent project is Working Together, Making a Difference Grant Program. She said a good leaders improve the traits they are lacking, always educate themselves, believe in their abilities, focus on doing things of greater value, hold themselves accountable, are great contributors, manage pressure, demonstrate mutual respect and are role models. Poor leaders have no vision, lack integrity, over think (blow things out of proportion), think they have all the answers, do not broaden their perspective, have a lack of love, their team is not comfortable, overworking team around them, have lack of resources, value the results more than the people, fail to delegate, are slow to act and adjust, and don't pay attention to the needs of the community.

To become good leaders a person needs to have courage, treat members as unique individuals, give their team a purpose, prioritize and plan, not be afraid to ask questions



Illinois State Regent Christina Bannon, center, welcomed by Fort Du Rocher Vice Regent Beverly Richardson, left, and Regent Donna Jungnickel at the local DAR chapter's meeting on March 23. (Photo contributed)

and listen to their team.

The next chapter meeting will be at 10 a.m. Saturday, April 12 at the LaSalle Public Library. The program will be on spring gardening tips. The

Fort du Rocher web page may be viewed at <http://www.fortdurocherchaptersdar.com>. Any woman over 18 years of age whose lineage traces back to a Revolutionary

War patriot, who wishes to learn more about Daughters of the American Revolution is invited to attend the next meeting or go online to www.dar.org.

"Hello, Dolly!" coming to IVCC

OGLESBY – Tickets for IVCC's Theatre Department production of "Hello, Dolly!" are now on sale. To reserve seats, visit the IVCC Theatre's Virtual Box Office at www.ivcc.edu/theatre. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$15 for students in high school and younger. Admission is free to IVCC employees and students. "Hello, Dolly!" will be performed April 3 through April 13. Performances begin at 7:30 p.m. on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturday, April 5. Sunday matinees begin at 2 p.m. There is no performance on Saturday, April 12, because IVCC celebrates its 100th anniversary with a gala finale that evening. The production stars guest artist and professional actress Tamra Challacombe as Dolly, and the large cast includes community members and students. The show is directed and choreographed by Don Grant Zellmer and produced and costumed by Dr. David Kuester, with technical direction by Chad Brokaw. The production marks Kuester and Zellmer's last before they retire this year.

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THE BACK PAGE

POLICE BLOTTER

DRIVING WHILE LICENSE SUSPENDED
Connor J. Carreon, 31, of 1309 Guiles Ave., Mendota, was charged with driving while license suspended after a traffic stop at Route 251 and North 40th Road at 10:15 a.m. March 23. The subject was released with a LaSalle County court date.

DOMESTIC BATTERY
Dennis Figueroa, 43, of 1304 Jefferson St., Mendota, was charged with domestic battery after police officers responded to the report of a disturbance in the 1300 block of Jefferson Street at 1:30 p.m. March 23. The subject was transported to the LaSalle County jail to appear before a judge.

IN MEMORIAM

In Loving Memory of JERRY HILD SR., who passed away six years ago, March 31, 2019

He never looked for praises, he was never one to boast, he just went on quietly working for the ones he loved the most. His dreams were seldom spoken his wants were very few, and more of the time his worries went unspoken too. He was there... a firm foundation through all our storms in life, a sturdy hand to hold on to in times of stress and strife. A true friend we could turn to when times were good or bad, one of our greatest blessings, the man that we called Dad.

Sadly missed,
By Your Family

Illinois officials address effects of USDA funding freeze

By **KEVIN BESSLER**
The Center Square

SPRINGFIELD — Some Illinois agricultural programs have come to a halt as a result of a funding freeze from the federal government.

"The last two months have created instability in agriculture and agricultural markets like we haven't experienced since the COVID period of operation," said Illinois Department of Agriculture Director Jerry Costello.

Costello's testimony in Springfield focused on several agreements between USDA and his agency, including the Local Food Purchase Assistance Program.

He said the purpose of the LFPA Program is to "maintain and improve food and agricultural supply chain resiliency." The cooperative agreements between USDA and states allow states "to procure and distribute local and regional foods and beverages that are healthy and nutritious, and meet the needs of the population."

"LFPA was designed to support both ends of the food chain, farmers

and those they feed," said Costello. "Cutting the funding leaves farmers on the hook for expenses they incurred believing they would be reimbursed and leaves our most vulnerable, food-insecure communities without meat, fresh produce and other nutritious donations they were promised."

Illinois Department of Natural Resources Director Natalie Phelps Finnie says the pause on federal grants has created chaos, and will affect many Illinoisans in many ways, including rural fire departments.

"Residents rely on our volunteer fire departments to not only put out house fires, but also respond to car crashes, reach hikers who have been injured at Shawnee National Forest, rescue boaters on the Ohio River or recover a victim of drowning," said Finnie.

The United States Department of Agriculture said in an email that it had notified states, territories and tribes that the money for fiscal year 2025 is no longer available and those agreements will be terminated following 60-day notification.



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Carol Ann Smith, RN

Love, Joey



GARAGE SALE TIME!



It's a great time to have a Garage Sale. If you're planning to get together some of the items you no longer use around your home and set up your own sale, be sure you follow some important basic steps!

1. WHAT TO SELL

Anything that still has usability and some value.

2. HOW TO PRICE

Decide the price of each item and then tag that item.

3. LENGTH OF SALE

Sales from Thursday through Saturday seem best.

4. HOW TO SET IT UP

Make it easy for buyers to view the items and have a central place with sufficient change for them to pay.

5. HOW TO ADVERTISE

The most effective place to reach more people is in The Mendota Reporter. We will be happy to assist you in placing your sale ad.

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**MONDAY, 10 AM -
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* On a week with a holiday, deadlines may change. Please call to verify.

The Mendota Reporter

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SPORTS

You only have one pick, which national sporting event is it?

As new music isn't my vibe and I can sing or rap along with most songs because it feels like I've heard every track ever made, many times, I've deep dove into podcasts over the last few years.

Although I first started listening to people talk about sports, music, movies, historic events, historic people, and crime



Not the Last Chance

By Brandon LaChance

in the mid-2000s, I've spent the last four or five years listening to at least one show a day.

One of my favorites is The Dan Patrick Show.

Every episode, Dan and the Danettes (Paul, Fritz,

Seton, Marvin) which were coined the Danettes by Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame member and current NBA broadcaster Reggie Miller) have a poll question or sometimes numerous ones during their three-hour program aired Monday through Friday.

A week or so ago, they asked a hypothetical, "If you could only go to one national sporting event, which one would it be?"

Some of the options brought up were the NFL Super Bowl, MLB World Series, NBA Finals, PGA Masters, a tennis event such as the Australian Open, French Open, U.S. Open, or Wimbledon, the NCAA CTP football championship, or the NCAA men's basketball Final Four.

If I remember right, Patrick and one of the Danettes said the Super Bowl and the other three said the NCAA Final Four. I agree with Paul, Seton, and Marvin, I'm going to the Final Four.

At one point in life I would have said the NBA Finals. At a different point, I would have said the Super Bowl.

At one exact, distinct point, I would have said the World Series.

I never would choose the Masters, anything tennis, or college football.

But with NBA basketball being boring as players chuck up 3-pointers while the rest of the team stands around, the Super Bowl contains either the team who avoided injuries or spent the most money, the culmination of the baseball season is all about which owner spent the most money, and college basketball always being awesome, my obvious answer is the Final Four.

Sure, there were years the Final Four or the NCAA Championship wasn't the best, but all of them have intrigue. Add brackets and trying to take jellybeans from friends, family, and co-workers and it's the winning solution for the best sports event of the year.

Just to make sure my answer was legit, I went through the web archives of each sport's (NBA, MLB, NFL, and NCAA hoops) big event since I was in junior high in the late 1990s until now, which is when I've really, really paid attention to who was/is winning what.

I took tallies of what championship games or series I didn't watch and which ones I remember.

World Series came in last. From 1997 until now, I've only watched 13 World Series and I remember huge moments, whether at the plate, on the mound, or media circus from about eight of them.

Of course, the White Sox in 2005 (the one exact moment I referenced before), the Cubs in 2016, and the Cardinals in 2006 (I was attending Southern Illinois University, closer to St. Louis than Chicago, and watched with a Cardinals fan at an establishment with 100s more Cardinal fans), are three of the eight.

I went a little further back with the Super Bowl since I watched the Dallas Cowboys win ships with my uncle (a huge Cowboys' fan to this very day) when I was a little kid.

From 1993 until now, I've only missed two of NFL's last game of the year, 2010 when the New Orleans Saints beat the Indianapolis Colts and 2018 when the Philadelphia Eagles beat the New England Patriots.

I remember where I was at and big moments of all of the Super Bowls I did watch.

Being the NBA has been my favorite association since I became a sports fan, thank you Michael Jordan and 1990s basketball, I thought the league would win my little research adventure.

I watched bits and pieces of the Bulls win in 1992 and 1993, at the age of six and seven, but with the blend of my memory into all of the clips I've watched over the years, I couldn't tell you what is my brain and what is YouTube and ESPN.

However, I remember all of the second Bulls' three-peat as I still have scars from the floor in front of the TV as I was glued.

There was a promotion along the way to the couch, a chair, dorm room or dorm lounge seating, and then my own furniture as I witnessed every NBA Finals from 1996 until 2018 when I became sick of the Golden State Warriors and the Cleveland Cavaliers, who played in four straight finals.

Since then, 2019-2024, I've watched at least two games from each finals.

I wish I would have gotten a chance to see John Wooden's UCLA Bruins win NCAA championships, or Bob Knight's Indiana Hoosiers, or the North Carolina's win on Jordan's big shot, or Patrick Ewing in Georgetown, or the mighty Duke teams in the early 1990s.

However, since Mateen Cleaves, with a bum ankle, led the Michigan State Spartans to the ship in 2000, I have participated in either viewership numbers, filling out brackets, or bandwagoning teams after SIU or Illinois is eliminated, every single year.

Watching Carmelo Anthony and the Syracuse Orange with the championship trophy as I was a junior in high school, I thought he was going to be better than LeBron James. I thank a friend for getting me a signed photo of "Melo" playing in the 2003 big game.

Through Illinois' awesome run to the ship my freshman year in college, the back-to-back Florida wins, Bill Self rallying Kansas, John Calipari doing the same for Kentucky, Rick Pitino sharing his magic with Louisville, Jay Wright and Villanova in 2018, Bill Self and the Jayhawks reclaiming in 2022, and the back-to-back University of Connecticut celebrations...I've been there for it all.

Honestly, in the last 15 years, I don't think I've missed a single Sweet 16 contest. If I didn't have it on the TV, I listened to it since I'm always trying to improve on my radio broadcasting skills by listening to the professionals.

Going through my mental schemas of games and sports moments was awesome. And it's cool the NCAA men's basketball Final Four is my go-to, always, no matter who is in the last three games of the season.

Your turn to answer the question.

If you could only go to one national sporting event, which one would it be?

Two big innings propel MHS past Amboy in softball opener

AMBOY – Mendota opened the 2025 softball season with a 12-10 triumph over Amboy on March 17 at Amboy.

The Lady Trojans broke on top in the first inning when Charlee Dankenbring delivered a single to drive in Emily Diaz. Amboy answered with three runs in the bottom of the first to take a brief 3-1 lead.

Mendota grabbed the lead for good when it sent 12 batters to the plate and half of them scored in the second. The Lady Trojans had RBI singles by Leah Henkel and Diaz in the

frame, while Ava Eddy, Addison Perryman and Sydney Tolley each drew bases loaded walks to force in three more runs, and Talia White was hit by a pitch with the bases jammed to plate another run.

Amboy crept closer with single tallies in the third and fourth innings, but the Lady Trojans batted around again in the fifth and scored five runs. Cassie Gonzalez, Henkel, Diaz, Dankenbring and Perryman all had singles in the inning, with Diaz and Perryman driving in two

runs apiece and Henkel plating one run.

As it turned out, Mendota needed all the runs it scored after Amboy pushed across five runs over the final two frames.

The Lady Trojans picked up 11 hits in the contest with Dankenbring collecting three singles and Henkel and Diaz getting two each.

Eddy went the distance in the circle to get the win. She allowed nine hits, three earned runs, walked seven and struck out eight. Leighton Gullely paced Amboy with three hits.



Junior Varsity Softball

Members of the 2025 Mendota High School junior varsity softball team, front row, left to right, are Abby Magallanes, Grace Schlesinger, Kenzi Fultz and Karissa Freeman. Middle row, Alexis Nave, Gisselle Gonzalez and Leah Schwemlein. Back row, Ari Figueroa, Karson Doyle, coach Toni Zimmerman and Haley Diaz. Not pictured: Alyna Guerra, Emily Diaz.

Amboy late-inning rally sinks Trojans

AMBOY – Mendota gave up a big lead in the late innings and fell to Amboy, 7-6, in the varsity baseball season opener on March 17 at Amboy.

The Trojans grabbed a 5-0 lead after four innings, scoring once in the first and two times in the second and fourth frames. Amboy got on the board with a single tally in the bottom of the fifth and Mendota added a run in the top of the sixth to regain its

five-run advantage.

Mendota's seemingly comfortable lead disappeared in the bottom of the sixth when Amboy plated six runs to move on top, 7-6. The Clippers held Mendota scoreless in the top of the seventh to preserve the comeback victory.

Mendota outit the Clippers, 8-4. Braiden Freeman (two singles) and Esten Otero (single, double) had two hits apiece to pace the Trojan

offense. Freeman drove in two runs, while Brody Hartt and Jack Gillespie had one RBI apiece.

Freeman got the start on the hill for Mendota and didn't allow a hit in his 3 2/3 innings of work. He walked three and struck out nine. Evan McPheeters came on in relief and permitted three runs over two innings, while Otero was tagged with the loss, giving up four hits and four runs.

Elam wins triple jump at Sycamore Indoor meet

SYCAMORE – Mendota's girls' track team participated in the Gary Egler Girls' Invitational on March 18 at Sycamore.

The Lady Trojans placed seventh in the team standings with 32 points. Genoa-Kingston (88) took first place.

Mariyah Elam had Mendota's lone first-place finish by sailing 34-0 in the triple jump.

The Lady Trojans had a pair of second-place efforts – Elam in the 55-meter hurdles (9.49) and Aby Buettner in the long jump (17-7). Elam was fourth in the long jump at 16-7.

Mendota's 4x160-meter relay team crossed the finish line in fifth place with a time of 1:34.14. Runners were Buettner, Kate Strouss, Christianah Brown and Elam.

In junior varsity action, the Lady Trojans took fourth place in two events. Eden Pecher ran a time of 11.44 in the 55-meter hurdles and Klaire Knaff had a distance of 13-4 in the long jump.

Mendota boys face tough teams in Sycamore meet

SYCAMORE – The Mendota boys' track team went up against some stiff competition in the Gary Egler Boys' Invitational on March 19 at Sycamore. The host school won the meet with 107 points, while Rochelle also reached the century mark with 100 points. Mendota scored 11 points.

Sebastian Carlos had the best finish for the Trojans, placing second in the 800-meter run with a time of 2:07.36.

The 4x400-meter relay team took fifth place with a clocking of 4:01.51. Competitors for the Trojans were Carlos, Hector Gonzalez, Robert Botello and Anthony Kelson.

Kelson also raced in the 1600-meter run and was sixth in 5:00.82.

In junior varsity competition, Gavin Stevenson turned in Mendota's best finish with a third-place effort in the 3200-meter run (11:41.24).

Orion defeats girls' soccer

ORION – The Mendota girls' soccer team opened the 2025 season with a 7-1 loss at Orion on March 22.

Noemi Arteaga scored the lone goal for the Lady Trojans.

BOWLING

Wednesday Night Men's League

Standings as of March 12 – 1. Novak Farms 30-18; 2. Black Brothers 27-21; 3. Maybe Next Week 23.5-24.5; 4. O'Donnell Excavating 23-25; 5. Man On! 23-25; 6. First State Bank 17.5-30.5

High team game (scratch) – Man On! 1039, Black Brothers 1010, O'Donnell Excavating 1008

High team game (hdcp) – First State Bank 1228, Black Brothers 1210, Maybe Next Week 1209

High team series (scratch) – Man On! 3055, Black Brothers 2903, O'Donnell Excavating 2881

High team series (hdcp) – First State Bank 3547, Man On! 3529, Black Brothers 3503

High individual game (scratch) – Drake O'Donnell 276, Tim Dessing 257, Tyler Schmitt 255

High individual game (hdcp) – Drake O'Donnell 289, Tim Dessing 287, Mark Wixom 277

High individual series (scratch) – Drake O'Donnell 676, Chris Eller 667, Tim Dessing 658

High individual series (hdcp) – Adam Martin 765, Dave Manning 756, Mark Wixom 752

Elks 9

Youth League

Standings as of March 15 – 1. Team 4 40-20; 2. Team 1 28-32; 3. Team 3 26-34; 4. Team 2 23-37

Elks 11

Youth League

Standings as of March 15 – 1. Team 4 40-20; 2. Team 1 39-21; 3. Team 2 26-34; 4. Team 3 14-46

High team game (scratch) – Team 4 285, Team 3 244, Team 2 196

High team game (hdcp) – Team 4 612, Team 3 594, Team 2 587

High team series (scratch) – Team 4 806, Team 3 609, Team 1 562

High team series (hdcp) – Team 4 1787, Team 2 1723, Team 3 1659

Boys' high game (scratch) – Jaxon Stamberger 113, Michael Eames 85, Henry Schoepf 70

Boys' high game (hdcp) – Jaxon Stamberger 219, Henry Schoepf 207, Michael Eames 203

Boys' high series (scratch) – Jaxon Stamberger 322, Michael Eames 223, Henry Schoepf 172

Boys' high series (hdcp) – Jaxon Stamberger 640, Henry Schoepf 583, Michael Eames 577

Girls' high game (scratch) – Grace Piskie 100, Lainey Ramer 72, Addyson Fahr 51

Girls' high game (hdcp) – Grace Piskie 214, Lainey Ramer 187, Addyson Fahr 182

Girls' high series (scratch) – Grace Piskie 221, Lainey Ramer 210, Addyson Fahr 130

Girls' high series (hdcp) – Grace Piskie 563, Lainey Ramer 555, Addyson Fahr 523

High team game (scratch) – Team 4 430, Team 1 397, Team 2 298

High team game (hdcp) – Team 1 707, Team 4 675, Team 2 619

High team series (scratch) – Team 4 1232, Team 1 1057, Team 2 790

High team series (hdcp) – Team 1 1987, Team 4 1967, Team 2 1753

Boys' high game (scratch) – Parker Ramer 183, Billy Bromenschenkel 166, Jaxen Daley 164

Boys' high game (hdcp) – Jaxen Daley 268, Billy Bromenschenkel 268, Bentley Bejster 243

Boys' high series (scratch) – Parker Ramer 507, Bentley Bejster 382, Billy Bromenschenkel 376

Boys' high series (hdcp) – Billy Bromenschenkel 682, Jaxen Daley 675, Bentley Bejster 667

Girls' high game (scratch) – Catherine Moench 132, Eliana Eames 113

Girls' high game (hdcp) – Eliana Eames 217, Catherine Moench 212

Girls' high series (scratch) – Catherine Moench 336, Eliana Eames 295

Girls' high series (hdcp) – Eliana Eames 607, Catherine Moench 576

Monday Night Mixed League

Standings as of March 17 – 1.

Bad Kats 40-25; 2. Ramer Inc. 37-28; 3. The Struggle is Real 36.5-28.5; 4. Split Happens 29-36; 5. Leagal Beagles 28.5-36.5; 6. CM Farm 23-42

High team game (scratch) – Ramer Inc. 742, Split Happens 715, Leagal Beagles 692

High team game (hdcp) – The Struggle is Real 1009, Ramer Inc. 995, CM Farm 992

High team series (scratch) – Split Happens 2075, Ramer Inc. 2042, Leagal Beagles 1904

High team series (hdcp) – CM Farm 2837, Ramer Inc. 2801, The Struggle is Real 2780

Men's high game (scratch) – Matt Ramer 213, Ron Westphal 212, Aaron Holocker 201

Men's high game (hdcp) – Ron Westphal 268, Aaron Holocker 265, Brendan Ramer 261

Men's high series (scratch) – Matt Ramer 578, Ron Westphal 564, Brendan Ramer 528

Men's high series (hdcp) – Ron Westphal 732, Brendan Ramer 732, Bob Moench Jr. 714

Women's high game (scratch) – Emily Thomas 206, Jessica Robinson 205, Gail Sessler 202

Women's high game (hdcp) – Sarah Westphal 276, Stephanie Ramer 272, Audrey Holocker 266

Women's high series (scratch) – Jessica Robinson 586, Gail Sessler 516, Emily Thomas 509

Women's high series (hdcp) – Debbie Berger 781, Audrey Holocker 748, Jessica Robinson 733

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

IDNR offers fishing tips for Illinois anglers

There is a strong connection between successful anglers, various fishing techniques, and knowledge about the fish species. The more you know about your favorite fish's behavior, foraging habits, and seasonal habitats, the better angler you will be.

For specific tips on your favorite sport fish, look under the Sport Fish of Illinois page on the Illinois Department of Natural Resources website.

Here are some of our favorite fishing tips:

- Obtain a map or chart of your destination and determine what type of fishable habitats are in the area and where. Learning about fish habitat and how best to fish each different type is part of the challenge of thinking like a fish.

- Prevent unnecessary noise, especially in a boat.

- Use the appropriate line and size of hooks for your target catch.

- Check out your line occasionally but feeling the last 2-3 feet for kinks, nicks, or frays. If there is a problem

spot, feed out some new line, cut off the bad line, and attach the lure.

- Keep your hooks sharp.

- Wear polarized sunglasses. This reduces glare and allows you to better see fish and your lure in the water.

- Keep an angler diary. Keeping track of what equipment you used under what conditions for both your successes and failures is a great way to review and learn.

- Set the hook. Make sure your fish is hooked before you start reeling and be sure to keep a steady pressure on the fish. Keep the rod tip up and out of the water.

- Make sure to use your drag and regularly check that it is working properly.

- Learn how to fish lures effectively. This takes practice. Learning the techniques for fishing with a jerkbait, a jig, a topwater lure, as well as becoming proficient at pitching or flipping, will improve your success on the water. There are many online videos and article in fishing magazines to help hone your skills.

Know your fish habitat

Fish need cover, either to seek protection from predators or to hide in so they can ambush prey. Here are some tips about what to look for when you get to your fishing destination:

Docks — Floating and permanent docks provide excellent fish habitat. The shade on the underside of docks offers fish a refuge to conceal themselves from predators. In turn, predators often lurk nearby, ambushing unsuspecting victims. Algal growth on dock posts and the docks themselves draw small baitfish that feed on the algae and in turn draw in larger fish that consume them.

Rocks — Many lakes and rivers in Illinois have man-made rock piles along stretches of shoreline to prevent erosion. This rocky habitat extends into the water, and the crevices provide excellent hiding places for small fish. Bigger fish roam the edges of the rocks looking for other fish and insects to feed on.

Wood — Branches, limbs, or even whole trees that fall into the water are tremendous fish

habitat. The more complex the better. Little fish can dart in and out of the protection of small twigs protruding from branches, and bigger fish can conceal themselves amidst the tangled branches to ambush prey. In fact, wood cover provides such good habitat for fish that the IDNR will often purposefully sink old Christmas trees into lakes to add more habitat in areas that may be lacking.

Weeds — Aquatic vegetation (commonly referred to as weeds) serves many purposes, including providing structures for microscopic invertebrates to feed on, forming the base of the food web in many waterbodies. Like the above habitat types, as small fish are attracted to the protection and potential food source aquatic vegetation offers, bigger fish are in turn attracted to the abundance of small baitfish. Some lakes may have a seeming overabundance of aquatic vegetation, in which case it's prudent to look for any irregularities such as other habitat types nearby or pockets without vegetation.

How time outdoors can benefit mental health

Nature beckons billions of people to get outside every day. Natural settings are not called "the great outdoors" for nothing, and nature enthusiasts may insist there's nothing better than a day in the elements.

Such a sentiment may be more accurate than the most ardent outdoorsman realizes. In fact, the American Psychological Association notes that extensive research supports the notion that nature provides myriad physical and psychological benefits.



- Nature can help with attention. A 2019 study published in the journal *Current Directions in Psychological Science* found that exposure to natural environments improves working memory, cognitive flexibility and attentional control. On the flip side, the study found that exposure to urban environments can be linked to attention deficits. Such findings echo conclusions from an experimental study conducted in 2015 by researchers in Australia. That study engaged students in a dull task to compromise their attention. Midway through the task, which involved pressing a computer key when certain numbers flashed on a screen, some students were asked to look out at a flowering green while others were directed to gaze at a concrete rooftop. Students who looked at the green made notably fewer mistakes with the computer screen task than those who looked at the concrete rooftop.

- Nature can increase happiness. Some findings suggest time spent in nature also can lead to increases in happiness. A 2019 study published in the journal *Science Advances* found that contact with nature is associated with increases in happiness and subjective well-being. The researchers also found that contact with nature is associated with an increased sense of meaning and purpose in life.

- Time outdoors may lower children's risk for mental health disorders later in life. Researchers in Denmark used satellite data to assess more than 900,000 individuals born between 1985 and 2003. The researchers discovered that children who lived in neighborhoods with more green space had a lower risk of various psychiatric disorders later in life. Risk for depression, mood disorders, schizophrenia, eating disorders, and substance use disorder were found to be lower among children who grew up with greater access to green space than children who had the lowest levels of green space exposure.

Few things might be more welcoming than the great outdoors, particularly when the weather is warm. Taking advantage of access to nature can pay some surprising dividends that even the most seasoned outdoorsman might not be aware of.

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1886: The Apache warrior, Geronimo, surrenders to the U.S. Army.

1964: The Good Friday earthquake hits Alaska with a magnitude of 9.2.

Book FACT:

This famous author is celebrated each March for his many contributions to children's literature.

Answer: Dr. Seuss

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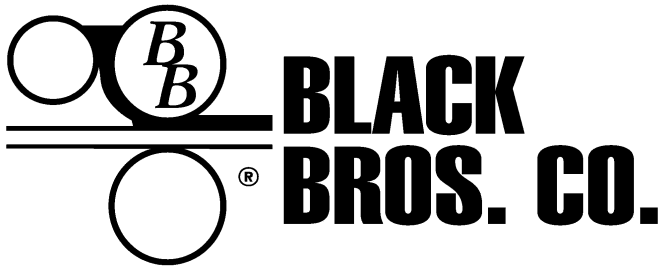
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Answer: Child reading book

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RELIGION

Pursuing holiness: You can be everything God created you to be!

We live in a very casual society today, and it's easy to carry this attitude over into our walk with God. Many are not as serious as they should be—allowing things in their lives that they really wouldn't want to be there if they thought Jesus was going to come back tomorrow. But God's Word is clear about what He expects of us.

Hebrews 12:14 (AMPC) says, "Strive to live in peace with everybody and pursue that consecration and holiness without which no one will [ever] see the Lord."

Does that mean that if

you're not living a perfect life, you're not going to heaven? No, of course not. It's what Jesus did on the cross—not our own efforts—that freely gives us God's favor. But if we don't live consecrated and holy lives here on Earth, we won't experience the abundant life Jesus died to give us (John 10:10), and we won't represent Him in a way that makes others hungry for a relationship with Him.

Pursue is the operative word in Hebrews 12:14. To pursue something means you crave and go after it with all of your

heart. So, this scripture is saying that if we are not pursuing holiness, we will not see the Lord. It has to do with how serious—or committed—we are in our walk with God.

If you have a deep personal, intimate relationship with God, you will want to change for the better. You won't be satisfied continuing to live the way that you were before Jesus, because the Holy Spirit lives in you—in your heart—and His job is to be your Comforter, Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener and Standby (John 14:16 AMPC). "He will guide you into all the Truth" (John 16:13 AMPC), and as He does, you'll begin to see things in your life that need to change so you can be closer to God and become all that He created you to be.

I remember how my life really started to change after I got serious about my relationship with God and began studying the Bible. It's so wonderful to live with peace and joy and to have healthy relationships with my family and friends! It's made me want to continue spending every day trying to become a better person with His help.

God loves you, and He has an amazing plan for your life. The question is do you crave God with all of your heart and strength, or is He on the sidelines of your life while you continue living the way you want



to live, regardless of what He wants? That's not the way to be happy and have the best life that God wants you to have.

Now, we all need Jesus because we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). The word "sin" means to miss the mark—or God's standard—for us. But it also means to "miss" a reward. To miss the mark means you forfeit reward. It doesn't mean you won't go to heaven, because your behavior isn't what gets you into heaven. But you won't enjoy the journey of your life here on Earth because you won't have God's wisdom and peace. And there will be rewards in heaven that you won't want to miss out on either.

Have you noticed that you can catch the flu from somebody but you can't catch good health from them? Just like a healthy lifestyle is something we have to choose for ourselves, so is holiness. However, you can catch un-holiness by hanging out all the time with wrong people, willingly and repeatedly being exposed to sin. People who will-

ingly live sinful lifestyles all week long but go to church on Sundays are not pursuing holiness.

God has a purpose for us, and that is to be a light in a dark world—to show others the love of God and what it means to live for Him. People can't see Christ in our hearts; they see what we do. That means we must make good choices even when everyone else is making a lousy choice. I'm not talking about putting on a religious attitude that is judgmental and critical of others. I'm talking about knowing who we are in Christ and living the life He showed us to live, over and over, until those who don't know God begin to want what we have.

We must remember that whatever God tells us to do, He always gives us the ability, by His grace and with His help, to do it. What sense would it make for God to tell us to live holy lives if He didn't give us a seed of holiness on the inside of us? So, when I teach on holiness, my hope is that it provokes you to get closer to God and not settle for anything

less than His best for you. And He wants you to show others the love of Christ as much as you possibly can, wherever it's needed.

For more on this topic, order Joyce's three-part teaching resource Say Goodbye to Guilt. 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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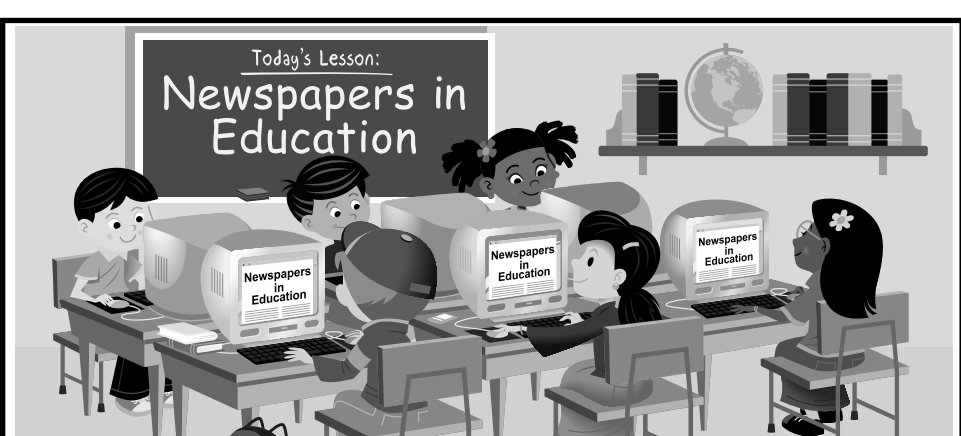
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THE FARMER’S REPORT



Scientists discover diabetes breakthrough in cow’s milk

By HANNAH SPANGLER
FarmWeek

A brown bovine from southern Brazil has made history as the first transgenic cow capable of producing human insulin in her milk.

The advancement, led by researchers from the University of Illinois and the Universidade de São Paulo in Brazil, could eventually eliminate drug scarcity and high costs for people with diabetes. The project, which began in 1992, is now the longest-ongoing genetically modified livestock project for agriculture.

Matt Wheeler, professor in the Department of Animal Sciences at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, said an efficient system to collect and purify insulin products — and Food and Drug Administration approval — are still needed before transgenic cows could supply insulin for the world’s diabetics.

But Wheeler is confident that day is coming. “I could see a future where a 100-head herd, equivalent to a small Illinois or Wisconsin dairy, could produce all the insulin needed for the country,” he said.

In Brazil, Wheeler’s colleagues inserted a segment of human DNA coding for proinsulin, the protein precursor of the active form of insulin, into the cell nuclei of 10 cow embryos. The embryos were implanted in normal cow uteruses. One transgenic calf was born. When the calf matured, lactation was induced and the team found the calf had the ability to produce human proinsulin, which could be processed into bioactive human insulin.

Wheeler said the team was also able to target mammary gland tissue to harness the power of protein and contain insulin in the milk alone.

“Mother Nature designed the mammary gland as a factory to make protein really, really efficiently,” he said. “We can take advantage of that system to produce a protein that can help hundreds of millions of people worldwide.”

Researchers can’t confidently say how much insulin could be made during a typical lactation. However, Wheeler said that if a cow could produce one gram of insulin per liter of milk, the average Holstein produces 40 to 50 liters per day. That’s a significant amount of insulin, he said, especially if just 0.0347 milligrams is a typical unit of insulin.

“That means each gram is equivalent to 28,818 units of insulin,” Wheeler said. “And that’s just one liter. Holsteins can produce 50 liters per day. You can do the math.”

The next step is to reclone the cow and carry out full lactation cycles as well as biological safety testing. Wheeler said the goal is to produce a herd of transgenic cows for insulin production.

“With regard to mass producing insulin in milk, you’d need specialized, high-health-status facilities for the cattle, but it’s nothing too out of the ordinary for our well-established dairy industry,” he said. “We know what we are doing with our cows.”

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

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Terminations have negative effect on local USDA offices, rural communities

By KALEE OLSON
*Policy Manager
Center for Rural Affairs*

In recent weeks, action taken by the federal administration has left many individuals wondering about the status of a small-town staple—the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) county office.

In February, the Trump administration laid off USDA staff across the nation by sending unexpected termination notices to probationary employees. This resulted in a loss of dozens of staff that directly serve farmers, ranchers, small business owners, and rural community members. On March 11, after a ruling by the Merit Systems Protection Board, USDA issued a 45-day stay on terminated employees, returning them to paid status. However, questions remain about what the future holds beyond the 45-day mark.

USDA staff at the local and state levels provide valuable services to the communities they serve. Natural Resources Conservation Service staff help producers implement farming and ranching practices that build soil health and protect water quality. Farm Service Agency staff process farm loans and disaster assistance. Rural Development staff assist with rural housing and energy projects.

Cuts to these staff mean that many producers and rural community members will face delays in accessing important services or not receive essential services at all. In addition, layoffs mean that remaining employees are left with more work, culminating in the slower processing of grant applications and loans.

The ramifications of laying off state- and county-level federal employees extend beyond the agency itself. These employees are most often

members of the rural communities they serve, spending their income and making personal investments in local businesses, education, and community development.

Local USDA employees deserve better, including respect in their employment and a stable working environment. Congress must act to protect jobs that serve and employ rural people. While these positions may be expendable in the eyes of the administration, the services they provide are invaluable to the communities they serve.

Established in 1973, the Center for Rural Affairs is a private, nonprofit organization working to strengthen small businesses, family farms and ranches, and rural communities through action oriented programs addressing social, economic, and environmental issues.



Kathy Keylor picks a cucumber on her property in Cass County. (Photo by Jeff Adkins/©Journal Communications)

Home sweet business: Home kitchen and cottage food businesses flourish in Illinois

By CARRIE MUEHLING
Illinois Farm Bureau Partners

Home baking and food preservation have seen a resurgence in recent years. Aspiring business owners often research the steps for taking their enjoyable hobby to the next level. Learn more about the rules and regulations behind certified home kitchens and cottage foods and meet two entrepreneurs whose version of “working from home” involves cooking, preserving and baking.

Kathy’s Kitchen

Daryl and Kathy Keylor are celebrating 30 years making and selling pickles and salsas, as well as jams and jellies through their business, Kathy’s Kitchen. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration inspects their certified kitchen, and they can sell their products wholesale.

“As our business grew, we discovered there really are only 24 hours in a day,” Kathy says. “We grow as much of our produce as we can. We have about 10 acres, and I pick between 5,000 and 6,000 pounds of cucumbers every year.”

Daryl raises the fruits and vegetables they need on their property in Cass County while handling the warehouse and deliveries. What the Keylors don’t

grow, they source from other local farmers. Kathy says she’s been preserving food for 60 years, and feedback from customers still makes it worthwhile.

“People will say: ‘These are the best pickles I’ve eaten since my grandma made them!’ And I tell them ‘I probably use her recipe,’” she says. “Many of the original pickle recipes we started with haven’t changed one bit. They really are ‘old-fashioned’ good.”

Commercial Home Kitchens vs. Cottage Foods

When the Keylors started Kathy’s Kitchen in 1994, they would have been the perfect candidates for a cottage foods business, but that designation didn’t exist at the time. Instead, farmer entrepreneurs were required to license their business as a commercial kitchen and faced expensive costs. However, since 2012 Illinois has protected these entrepreneurs and their customers under the Illinois Cottage Food Operation Law and other regulations.

The law, which has been amended and expanded in recent years, provides guidelines for food prepared in a home without inspection for sale to the public, for products not listed as prohibited.

“This allows people to

start a small business that could grow into a commercial operation or stay in the cottage food realm and not have that obligation of a big debt,” says Mary Liz Wright, nutrition and wellness educator with the University of Illinois Extension in Clark, Crawford and Edgar counties.

Wright says becoming a certified commercial kitchen, such as Kathy’s, often requires expensive remodeling, including sinks for food preparation and cleanup as well as stainless steel appliances.

Cottage foods operators are exempt from many of these regulations, but they do have to register in the county where they live. The first cottage foods businesses could sell only at farmers markets. Now the only requirement is direct sales to consumers. Online sales are permitted but only within Illinois.

“There can’t be any other stop along the way. That’s a traceability thing from a food safety standpoint,” says Wright, who notes there are strict labeling requirements for home kitchen businesses.

The Illinois Department of Public Health’s Farmers Market Food Safety Guide and Illinois Cottage Food Training, offered online by the University of Illinois Extension, are valuable re-

sources for Illinois vendors, both for home kitchen and cottage food owners.

Gather Bakery

Eric and Deanna Keilty began their bakery business about eight years ago in Arizona. In 2021, they relocated to Illinois and started Gather Bakery out of their home in Rockford.

Because regulations vary from state to state, Deanna Keilty notes they were able to sell wholesale to coffee shops and food trucks in Arizona, but not in Illinois without a commercial kitchen.

Still, they’ve found a growing customer base through farmers markets in Rockford and Chicago’s western suburbs.

The Keilys source ingredients like fruits for pastries, jams and marmalades as locally as possible. A short-term goal is a brick-and-mortar store where people can gather while enjoying baked goods in a local space.

“We’re lucky enough to bring a smile to other people’s faces,” Keilty says, adding it is rewarding to bake things for others to enjoy.

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

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THE FARMER'S REPORT



Alex and Matt Klein, Klein's Quality Produce, and Ben Jaffe, Earthlore Farm, swap stories about their experiences with IL-EATS. (Photo by Hannah Spangler of FarmWeek)

Farmers reflect on year one of IL-EATS

By HANNAH SPANGLER
FarmWeek

Farms are growing while providing fresh, local food to underserved communities through the Illinois Equitable Access Towards Sustainable Systems (IL-EATS) grant program.

Participants in IL-EATS reflected on the impact of the program's first year on Jan. 29 during a breakout session at the Everything Local Conference. Farmers, business owners and other stakeholders shared their success stories and provided input to shape the future of IL-EATS.

"This program is allowing farmers to do really great things," Makala Bach, University of Illinois outreach associate, told FarmWeek. "Even though, for now, this is a limited-funding program, if it's doing anything, it is catalyzing a lot of relationships and an interconnection of the food system that we haven't seen in Illinois."

Funded by the USDA's Local Food Purchasing Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA), IL-EATS aims to boost statewide food systems. Reflecting on the first year, Bach noted that the program has achieved this goal and more, including building relationships between farmers and food banks, helping producers enter larger wholesale markets and providing consistency and opportunity to producers by offering them fair market value.

In 2024, 176 Illinois farmers from 83 counties sold their products to IL-EATS lead agencies. According to Bach, 58% of these farmers have been farming for less than 10 years, and 63% reported their farms are growing.

"Magic happens when you buy local food for the prices you should be buying food for," Bach.

Several farmers and businesses benefiting from the program shared their stories:

Wayne Sirles, Rendleman Orchards
Rendelman Orchards in Alto Pass (Union County) already had an established farm before IL-EATS. Sirles, the orchard's president, told FarmWeek that the program is "the gravy" because of the prices IL-EATS pays producers.

"We already have a packing facility, we've already been labeling, so we really didn't have to do anything different," he said. "It's just another outlet to sell our product at an

extraordinary price."

Matt and Alex Klein, Klein's Quality Produce

The Kleins had to make some changes at their business in Elgin (Kane County) before joining IL-EATS. Owner Matt Klein said it required more labor to pack and label their produce for IL-EATS, but the prices they received helped them invest in the extra labor needed to adjust their system.

"Instead of just bulk packing our green beans after washing, now we have to bag them, weigh each and label it," said Alex Klein, Matt Klein's son and partner in the family business.

Matt Klein added that their lead agency, Rooted for Good, has made their IL-EATS experience extremely positive. The Kleins know how much produce Rooted for Good will need from them every month.

Ben Jaffe, Earthlore Farm
Jaffe grows fresh produce such as lettuce, squash and basil on his small family farm in Iroquois County.

He shared there were some challenges early on when IL-EATS was still trying to work out some logistics. The lead agency the farm was connected with was not able to purchase all the lettuce Jaffe was trying to sell. Now, he has multiple agencies to sell to through IL-EATS, preventing this issue from recurring.

"At the end of the day, IL-EATS gives us a win-win situation," Jaffe said.

Kerry and Ashley Kehrert, Mulberry Creek Meats

"This has all just kind of been a whirlwind," Ashley Kehrert said of their jump into IL-EATS.

Before IL-EATS, the Kehrerts sold live animals or custom shares to family and friends in the Clinton County area. Now, they have expanded into a larger market, launched the Mulberry Creek Meats Brand and obtained their meat broker license.

"This has given us the opportunity to start selling individual products and individual cuts of meat," Kerry Kehrert said. "That is something we definitely would not have done without this program."

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

ISA now accepting FY26 project proposals

BLOOMINGTON – The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) is developing budgets and accepting proposals for FY26, which strategically align with the organization's focus areas: market development, soybean production, and marketing communications. The fiscal year runs from Sept. 1, 2025, through Aug. 31, 2026.

Proposals will be assessed on their ability to provide a return on ISA's mission to uphold the interests of Illinois soybean producers through promotion, advocacy, research and education. They will also be evaluated on their effectiveness in addressing the needs of Illinois soybean producers and overall alignment with ISA's strategic plan.

ISA's strategic plan also helps set association priorities, boost operations, and ensures that all farmer Directors, employees, and stakeholders work toward common objectives and targets. The following objectives from the ISA committee areas open for RFPs are:

Market Development
The Market Development Committee promotes Illinois soy as the preferred choice for U.S. and global customers, and supports advancements in infrastructure. Market Development's fundamental areas of focus are:

- Building the reputation of U.S. and Illinois-grown soy (protein/oil) among international buyers with market growth potential.
- Growing domestic markets for Illinois soy in the feed, food, fiber and fuel industries.
- Promoting the Illinois competitive advantage in infrastructure to stakeholders across the value chain and supporting programs and policies to maintain and improve that advantage.

- Communicating the benefits of soy as a healthy source of protein and fat



in food and feed products.

- Identifying and prioritizing the development and promotion of high-value, soy-based individual products.

- Working with strategic partners to increase soy-based fuel usage in major markets, including diesel fleets, equipment, marine and aviation.

Soybean Production

The Soybean Production Committee is cross-functional in agronomic research, education and outreach, creating opportunities for Illinois soybean farmers to increase on-farm profitability and manage crop production risks. The Soybean Production committee is committed to the following:

- Building partnerships with public and private entities to augment ISA's agronomic research and education programs.

- Establishing basic and applied research priorities that address regionally specific production opportunities, challenges, and economic factors.

- Demonstrating soybean system agronomics focused on soil and water quality, agricultural resource resiliency and land stewardship.

- Continuing to expand the ISA agronomic network by raising awareness and establishing trust among farmers through ongoing outreach and research education.

Marketing Communications

- Support the work of ISA focus areas including

Soybean Production, Market Development, and Government Relations.

- Employ tools and resources to equip ISA's in-house Marketing Communications staff to create impactful messaging to amplify and multiply the voice of Illinois soybean farmers and build trust, create value, and address critical issues with our target audience on behalf of Illinois' 43,000 soybean farmers.

- Secure ISA as an authority on behalf of IL farmers with accurate, relevant, and timely content and grow ISA's influence with audiences across multiple message platforms on and offline.

- Ensure success is measurable through meaningful key performance indicators, identifiable units of measure, or specific outcomes.

- Engage feedback and reactions from grower audiences to best understand the mindset of Illinois soybean farmers, their level of understanding and awareness of general ISA support, and the most up-to-date demographics.

Completed proposals should be submitted no later than May 1, 2025.

More details on the ISA proposal process can be viewed www.ilsoy.org.

All inquiries regarding the FY26 Project Proposal process should be directed to rpf@ilsoy.org.



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