

Index

Local News.....A2

Community Calendar.....A3

Church Dir./News.....A4

Business Dir./News.....A5

Opinion.....A6

Entertainment.....A7

Classifieds.....A8

Community Matters.....A9

Local/State News..A10-A12

Sports.....A13

Inserts

Woody's True Value

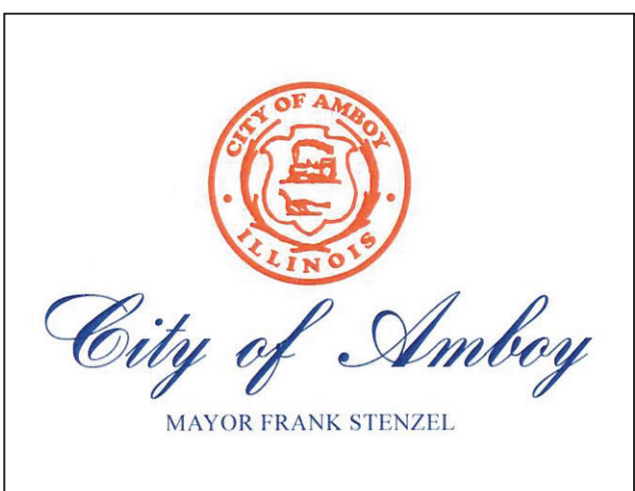
March, February City of Amboy meetings look into future growth, improvements

BRANDONLaCHANCE
Amboy News Editor

AMBOY—The Amboy City Council has been just as busy the last two months in the cold as it will be during the summer hot months.

During the meeting on March 17 at the Amboy Community Building, there were a lot of conversations and interest on topics which could improve the city, its buildings, and resident options.

“We want to do some ceiling work at the Community Building, probably replace it and the sound system in the future,” Amboy Mayor Frank Stenzel said. “The Maintenance Department took care of



a few sewer issues, and we’ll look to once again do the summer treatment we did last year at our sewer pond. The new airline we installed has helped the aeration as the monthly chemicals helped control

the solid waste.

“We agreed to a bid of \$65,159.50 for a culvert at the intersection of Provost Street and East Avenue. We will share the cost and the work with Lee County. We have to replace the

existing culvert because the bottom is out. We have to dig it out to fix it. The culvert helps with the creek because it gets a lot of water.”

The council discussed hiring Jeff Bryant Sr., former Amboy Fire Protection District Chief, to help the City of Amboy write grants.

Since Amboy has a grant writer, Bryant Sr. will assist in a coordinator position for law enforcement, museum, generator for the Community Building, park, and downtown revitalization projects.

“I never thought I’d be writing grants or coordinating them as long as I have,” Bryant Sr. said.

“When I first started, I thought it was going to be a two- or three-year thing. Since 2000, I helped bring in about \$22 million for the Amboy Protection District.

“Working with the city and trying to help bring in some money for the community is a good project. It will keep me busy. I still work at Dinges Fire Company and I did three grant writing workshops last week (last week in March) in Iowa, Huntley, and Rockford. I’m going to Minnesota, Colorado, and Florida this summer to do more grant workshops for Dinges.”

See City page A5

Gabby Barrett is coming to the State Fair

Du QUOIN – Gabby Barrett will take the stage at the Du Quoin State Fair Grandstand to close out the 2025 Fair on Monday, Sept. 1.

Barrett’s debut single “I Hope” ruled the Billboard Hot Country Songs chart for a record-breaking 27 weeks, making her the youngest artist with a No. 1 debut on country radio in over two decades.

“If you haven’t had the chance to yet, now is the time to see Gabby Barrett perform,” said Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture Jerry Costello II. “We’re lucky to bring such an unstoppable force in country music to the Du Quoin State Fair Grandstand stage.”

Surpassing three billion global career streams, Barrett has stacked major accolades like Billboard Women in Music 2022’s Rising Star Award, 2021 CMT Artists of the Year, and the iHeartRadio Titanium Award.

Beginning the next chapter after a record-setting career launch and the start of her family, her current single “Glory Days” soaks up a moment of simple perfection that mirrors her real life.

“We couldn’t be more excited to have Gabby Barrett perform in Du Quoin,” said Du Quoin State Fair Manager Luke Davison. “Our Grandstand lineup features something for everyone - from music to car and harness racing. We’re ready for the best 11 days of summer.”

Duane Dickison took over as Amboy Fire Chief in November

BRANDONLaCHANCE
Amboy News Editor

AMBOY – Lifelong firefighter Duane Dickison halfway reached one of his career goals in September 2024 when he was named interim fire chief of the Amboy Fire Protection District.

Not knowing if he’d be able to be a full-time chief with other endeavors, passions, and spending winters in Florida, Dickison had conversations with the fire board, and they eventually came to a decision at the November 11 board meeting.

Dickison is the newest Amboy Fire Protection District fire chief.

Career goal reached.

“The board and myself worked out a schedule that works for both of us. I would normally be in Florida for most of the summer. I still spend time there; it’s just a shorter time. It’s working quite well,” said Dickison. “It made me proud and I appreciate the confidence the fire board has in me to name me the fire chief.”

“In just about five months as the chief, I’ve learned there is a large learning curve. We’re getting there. I’m working out the kinks. We’ve had some setbacks due to machines breaking, but other than that, it’s going pretty well.”

Dickison has been with the Amboy Fire Protection District for 17 years. He has been a firefighter for 35 years in total as he was in Rock Falls for 15 years and was a chemical plant



firefighter for five years.

So far, there hasn’t been any overly pressing matters and he is adapting, picking up tips on the job.

“We took over Harmon, which is all new for us and is the only real big change,” Dickison said. “The expansion has added to the learning curve. But we’re pretty much running the way we were before Chief Bryant Sr. retired.”

When Dickison was promoted, so were Jason Ramos to assistant chief and Nathan Shaw as administrative assistant.

Scott Wittenauer remains an assistant chief, while Ken Hartman and Shaw are Dickison’s two captains.

Along with fire and EMT duties, Dickison is focused on recruiting.

The Amboy district has approximately 35 members while there are none in Harmon. With the addition of Harmon, Amboy

partners with the Sublette Fire Department in part of Auto Aid, and it covers ambulance zones in West Brooklyn and Ohio.

“It’s not just in Amboy, numbers are down for firefighters and EMTs nationwide. We have three EMTs in class now in Freeport,” Dickison said. “We would love to have more because we’re short staffed. Even if you don’t want to enter a burning building, there are other jobs such as pumping, cleanup, and many others. Any public help is greatly appreciated.

“Amboy will pay for all of your training whether you’re going to class for basic or advanced firefighting, EMT or both. If you go full-time somewhere, you’d have those classes completed because a lot of stations want you to have the certifications. It would help you out if you’re trying to get a full-time job somewhere else.”



Soybeans planted in cereal rye cover crop. Planting cover crops can reduce soil erosion, break up compacted soil, provide a habitat for beneficial insects and wildlife, and prevent latent fertilizer from leaching into rivers and streams.

Photo courtesy of Jennifer Jones of Illinois Extension

Illinois governor moves to slash cover crop funds despite demand

JENNIFER BAMBERG
Investigate Midwest
SPRINGFIELD —

When Steve Stierwalt studied agriculture at the University of Illinois in the 1970s, soil health wasn’t commonly taught or discussed. Faculty often told their young farming students to put all their faith in commercial fertilizers.

But over his 40 years as a corn and soybean farmer in Champaign County, Stierwalt said soil erosion, which can cause fertilizer and manure runoff to end up in nearby rivers and streams, has become an increasingly serious problem.

“When we plowed, we plowed pretty much everything,” except for a row near the fence line, Stierwalt said. “The grass near the fence row kept

getting taller, it seemed to me. I came to understand that it wasn’t the fence row getting taller, it was the soil in the fields that was getting shorter.”

In the early 2010s, Stierwalt started experimenting with cover crops, which can help hold soil in place and reduce runoff pollution.

“This valuable resource that we take for granted, we were letting it get away,” Stierwalt said. “We have some of the best soil in the world here, and we have to protect it.”

Six years ago, Illinois became the second state in the nation to offer subsidies to farmers for planting cover crops in the fall, an effort to reverse its status as one of the worst states for agriculture runoff.

See Crops page A10



Chicago Fire actor David Eigenberg stopped by Sublette

Actor David Eigenberg, center, known as Lieutenant/Captain Christopher Hermann on NBC’s hit show **Chicago Fire** visited the Sublette Fire Department on Sunday, Feb. 9. Eigenberg, who also played a role on HBO’s **Sex and the City**, met Sublette Assistant Fire Chief Nick Dinges during a flashover training at the University of Illinois. The two stayed in contact over the years and when Dinges reached out to see if Eigenberg would be interested in stopping into the Sublette and Dixon Rural fire stations to help motivate young fire fighters, he didn’t hesitate to say yes. “It was pretty cool to have Dave come here. I gave a heads up to our instructors and they were just as amped up. He’s a recognizable figure and people wanted to see him. Firefighter’s wives and children came to meet him.” After dinner, Eigenberg gave a speech to the young cadets about being humble servant leaders and the importance of volunteering in a small town.

Photo contributed

LOCAL NEWS

Health Science Pathway Endorsement Symposium at Sauk Valley CC

DIXON – The Regional Office of Education #47 and Sauk Valley Community College are hosting the Health Science Pathway Endorsement Symposium from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Friday, April 4 at SVCC.

This event will inspire high school students pursuing healthcare careers and celebrate pathway student achievements.

Illinois faces a critical shortage of healthcare professionals, particularly in rural areas, impacting access to essential services. Many counties in northwestern Illinois are designated as Health Professional Shortage Areas in primary care, dental care, and mental health, according to HRSA.

The demand for nurses, emergency responders, dental providers, home health aides, and long-term care professionals continues to grow, with workforce

gaps straining rural healthcare systems (National Rural Health Association).

To address these shortages, ROE 47, SVCC, and local healthcare providers are working together to build a strong pipeline for future healthcare professionals through pathway endorsement programs. These programs provide students with early exposure, hands-on experience, college credit, and foundational skills needed for careers in healthcare.

Student attendees will gain insights from professionals in nursing, emergency response, radiology, sonography, home health, respiratory, and physical therapy. They will also engage in hands-on labs in SVCC’s state-of-the-art healthcare facilities, explore careers through interactive breakout sessions and a college fair, network with local healthcare professionals and fellow students,

celebrate students who have earned healthcare-related endorsements.

This event is made possible through the generous support of CGH Medical Center, OSF St. Katharine Medical Center, and SVCC.

The collaborative efforts of numerous school districts, including Dixon USD #170, Rock Falls THSD #301, Morrison CUSD #6, River Bend CUSD #2, Amboy CUSD #272, Sterling CUSD #5, Ashton Franklin Center CUSD #275, Forrestville Valley #221, Byron CUSD #226, Rochelle CUSD #231, Oregon CUSD #220, Polo CUSD #222, Newman Central Catholic High School and Eastland CUSD #308 underscore the shared commitment to addressing the provider shortage and building stronger, healthier communities.

Amboy High School Report Janet Crownhart, Principal

On our early-out days, Amboy High School students engage in activities focusing on community, college, and career readiness.

This year, on Monday, May 5, the AHS faculty and staff are organizing a city-wide Community Service Day.

If you have projects that need assistance—whether at a business, home, or public area—our students would love to help.

Please contact AHS Principal Janet Crownhart in the high school office to be added to the list for student volunteers. Another option to reach Crownhart is to call 815-857-3632

Thank you for supporting our students as they give back to the community.

Dixon Arts Coalition announces 2026 mural opportunity

DIXON – The Dixon Arts Coalition is bringing a new mural opportunity to artists to showcase their work and assist in providing a vibrant arts and culture scene in Dixon.

The location is the Water Department building on East River Street.

Submission is due by August 31, 2025 and selections will be made and artists will be notified by October 31, 2025.

The time to complete the mural will be from June 1 to August 31, 2026 and the proposed reveal is Labor Day, September 7, 2026.

The payment plan is 50 percent of the budget will be provided within 15 days of the contract signing. The remaining 50 percent will be provided with the completion of the mural.

The Dixon Arts Coalition is facilitated by Discover Dixon and is made up of members who represent different art organizations in the community.



The coalition meets every two months, aiming to generate projects and promote efforts to enhance the arts and culture community in Dixon, utilizing the arts and culture funds in the city budget.

For more details go to, <https://www.discoverdixon.com/arts-coalition>, or call 815-284-3361.

**It's
spring
time,
baby**

Thank you,
I want to thank everyone
who attended my 90th
Birthday Party and the
ones that remembered me
who weren't able to attend.
You all are a "Blessing" to
me and I want to say God
Bless you!

Love,
Janice White

Rep. Fritts hosts Rx drop-off drive

DIXON – State Representative Bradley Fritts (R-Dixon) will be hosting a prescription drug drop-off event from 9-11 a.m. Saturday, April 12 at the parking lot of the Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce, located at 211 Locust Street in Sterling.

“In partnership with the Sterling Police Department and Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce, join us for a prescription drop-off drive to make our community safer,” said Rep. Fritts. “I encourage all constituents to attend and utilize this opportunity

to safely discard unwanted or expired medications.”

Participants should remain in their vehicles and follow the marked lanes when entering and exiting the parking lot for safety reasons.

Accepted medications include tablets, capsules, patches, vaping devices and cartridges (lithium batteries removed), and pet medications. Restricted items include liquids, syringes, and needles.

For more information about Representative Fritts, visit RepFritts.com.

Applications sought for DCCMS Ambassador Scholarship

DIXON – Applications continue to be accepted for the DCCMS Ambassador Scholarship.

Scholarships in the amount of \$1,000, are available to Dixon residents who attend DHS, Newman HS, Faith Christian, or are homeschooled.

The DCCMS Ambassador Scholarship can be applied to an accredited trades program, or 2 or 4-year College/University attendance for Fall 2025.

Scholarships will be awarded on the basis of financial need, essay response, school and community involvement, personal recommendations, and academic achievement. Sauk Scholars are not eligible. All scholarship funds must be applied to tuition, room/board fees, or textbooks/media for classes. Payment will be made

in two installments during the recipient’s freshman year at college/university.

The deadline for submission is Friday, May 9, 2025.

Click on “Scholarship” at the top of the Discover Dixon website for more information and to apply today.

Please direct any questions to Amber Schmidt at 815-284-3361 or amber.schmidt@dixonnow.com. All scholarships awarded, scholarship applications, and the Dixon Chamber of Commerce & Main Street Scholarship Program, are subject to further review by the Dixon Chamber of Commerce & Main Street at any time. Scholarships are non-renewable. Failure to complete your course requirements may result in forfeiture of any unpaid scholarship funds.

Easter Sunday Brunch!

Reservations Recommended

Sunday, April 20
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
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Children age 10 and under \$10.00

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Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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Pankhurst Memorial Library April programs

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

Book Club –
5-6 p.m. April 3, 21

Diamond Painting –
4-6 p.m. April 14, 28

Crochet Club –
5:15-6:15 p.m. April 16, 30

Mommy & Me –
10-10:45 a.m. every Tuesday

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LOCAL NEWS

TEEN TURF

Thank You’s

We are always grateful to those that help us in our endeavor to help the community; Thank you Donna Wellman for homemade cookies; Eileen & Irene Ramsdell for the homemade cupcakes, and sandwich supplies; Martha Henley for homemade cookies; Amboy Food & Liquor for supplies and food.

Upcoming Events:

Friday April 11, Fish Fry
Sunday May 4, Draw Down

Homework Club

We have applications ready in the Teen Turf hallway and at each of the schools. You can drop the applications off into our mailbox in the hall, to us in person, or into the school office. If you have a 3rd grader or above, they may be able to attend. They will ride the bus, have a hot meal, a fun place to play, and of course complete homework.

Volunteers

We welcome all volunteers for our after-school program, which runs normally Monday through Thursday from 3:15 to 5 p.m. Volunteers help serve lunch, supervise kids, and help with various homework tasks. If interested, please call us at 815-857-4800. You can volunteer whatever time you have. We even have volunteers come in the morning to help with other prep tasks.

Donations

We always feel so thankful and blessed for what our community does for us. Please bring donations inside the building during the day while we are here. If you have a large donation, drop off, please do not leave it outdoors. We would like you to call Teen Turf to set up a time to drop it off, as we do not want items to go unseen and to sit out in the elements. Thank you for thinking of us and we appreciate your support!!

Final Note:

“Each day provides its own gifts.”

Adult Prom returns May 10 to Dixon

DIXON – After many years, the Adult Prom is making its grand return to the Post House Ballroom from 6-11 p.m. Saturday, May 10 in Dixon.

This special event will bring the community together for an unforgettable evening of food, dancing, and nostalgia—all while supporting a great cause.

Guests can look forward to a night filled with delicious appetizers, dancing to timeless hits, a grand march, a silent auction featuring various items, and the crowning of a new Prom King & Queen.

Voting for Prom King and Queen will be monetary, with all proceeds

directly benefiting the Lee County Council on Aging. Funds raised will help support essential programs and services for local seniors.

“This is a wonderful opportunity for the community to come together, have fun, and support our seniors,” Executive Director at the Lee County Council on Aging, Suise Welch, said. “We are thrilled to bring back this beloved event and look forward to a fantastic evening.”

Tickets and event details will be available soon. For more information, please contact the Lee County Council on Aging at 815-288-9236 or visit the Facebook page.

Movie Matinee showing “Rachel Carson” at PC Library

GRANVILLE—The Putnam County Public Library District plans to host a Movie Matinee screening of the documentary “Rachel Carson” at 1 p.m. Tuesday, April 8 at the Granville branch, located at 214 S. McCoy St. in Granville.

The film is 1 hour, 54 minutes and is rated PG. It is made possible

through public performance rights by Kanopy.

Following the conclusion of the film, an ambassador with SciStarter, an online database for Citizen Science projects, will share related information and resources.

For more information, please call the Library at 815-339-2038.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

MAYTOWNSHIP—Tentative budget and appropriation ordinance for the May Township Road District for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2025 and ending March 31, 2026 will be on file and conveniently available to public inspection at the clerk’s residence, Lisa Bickett, by appointment from 3-6 p.m. Sunday, April 6.

AMBOY – The City of Amboy committee meeting will be held at 6 p.m. Monday, April 7 at the Community Center, 280 W. Wasson Rd. The meetings take place the first Monday of every month.

AMBOY – The Amboy Lions Club meeting will be at 6 p.m. Monday, April 7 at the Amboy Community Center, located at 280 W. Wasson Rd. The Lions Club meetings take place the second and fourth Monday of every month.

AMBOY – The Board of Trustees of The Amboy Township will meet at 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 26 for the annual town meeting and the regular monthly township meeting at the Amboy Township Building, located at 106 South Prospect St. in Amboy.

SUBLETTE – The annual town meeting for the residents of Sublette will take place at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 8 at the Sublette Township Building.

EAST GROVE – East Grove Township is holding its next meeting at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 8 at the East Grove Township Hall.

LEE CENTER – The Lee Center Township annual budget hearing and audit meeting, as well as the annual town meeting, will be held at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 8 at the Lee Center Township Building, located at 2202 Shaw Road in Amboy. Final actions on budget and ordinances will be taken at the public hearing.

MAY TOWNSHIP – The annual May Township town meeting will take place at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 8 at the township maintenance building for the transaction of the miscellaneous business of the township, and after a moderator has been elected, will proceed to hear and consider reports of officers, and decide on such measures as may, in pursuance of law, come before the meeting. The monthly meeting for April will follow the annual meeting.

PAW PAW – The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Paw Paw will commence at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 9 at the Paw Paw Village Hall.

EAST GROVE – Tentative budgets and appropriation ordinances for the East Grove Township, for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2025 and ending March 31, 2026 will be on file and conveniently available for public inspection at the East Grove Twp. Building. There will be a hearing on the budgets and appropriation ordinances at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 9 at the East Grove Twp. Building. The final action on these ordinances will be taken at the public hearing.

AMBOY POLICE

FAILURE TO APPEAR

Alexander J. Cooter, 18, of Amboy, turned himself in at the Amboy Police Department as he was wanted on a Lee County warrant for failure to appear in court for charges of domestic battery and violation of order or protection. Cooter was taken to the Lee County Jail.

Email news items to
Amboy News Editor
Brandon LaChance
at
blachance@mendotareporter.com

SUBLETTE – The next Village of Sublette meeting is at 7 p.m. Monday, April 14 at the Ellice Dinges Center at 202 S. West Street in Sublette.

AMBOY – The Amboy City Council will meet at 6 p.m. on Monday, April 21 at the Amboy Community Center, 290 W. Wasson Road. The council meets every third Monday each month.

PAW PAW – The annual end of the year meeting for the Village of Paw Paw will take place at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 23 at the Paw Paw Village Hall.

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LOCAL/STATE NEWS

Illinois EPA, Illinois Sustainable Technology Center release new recycling report

SPRINGFIELD—The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center (ISTC) have announced the completion of a new report, Illinois Materials Management and Recycling Opportunities. Following the Materials Management Advisory Committee’s (MMAC) report to the General Assembly in 2021, the Illinois EPA commissioned the ISTC at the University of Illinois to conduct a 2-year study of large volume recyclables that would provide information regarding recycling and diversion efforts in Illinois as well as barriers and opportunities for further diversion.

The list of materials covered in this study includes organics, textiles, plastics, metal, and glass. The report discusses generation of the materials, their impacts on landfills and recycling, the existing infrastructure and end markets for each, and more information about the materials. ISTC supplemented materials management research with written and verbal stakeholder engagement

in several stages of the project, which included listening sessions for each material category.

“Illinois EPA appreciates all who participated in the MMAC’s efforts and in the outreach conducted by the ISTC as part of their study,” said Illinois EPA Acting Director James Jennings. “We believe this report provides additional information to further the on-going work being done to expand recycling in Illinois.”

The report findings can be utilized to understand more about the recycling industry, existing policy, goals, and funding opportunities in Illinois and other states. A statewide recycling needs assessment will begin this year to help further the information gained through the MMAC’s report to the General Assembly and this Illinois Materials Management and Recycling Opportunities report.

The report can be downloaded from <https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/> or <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/waste-management/materials-management/materials-management-advisory-committee.html>.

Senator Arellano, Jr. releases statement on investigation into Mabley

DIXON – State Senator Li Arellano, Jr (R-Dixon) has released the below statement following the Illinois Department of Justice’s announcement of investigations into the Mabley Developmental Center.

“I am aware of the DOJ’s investigations into the Mabley Developmental Center, as well as other centers across our state,” Arellano said. “I have also had the recent opportunity to hear concerns from involved family members and citizens, and those conversations will continue. “My hope is that through the federal inves-

tigation, issues will be brought to light and real solutions will be put in place to benefit both the staff and the resident population. As we move through budget negotiation season at the statehouse, I will continue to advocate for funding to support our developmentally disabled community.

“The residents at Mabley, their families, and caretakers deserve the best when it comes to caring for our state’s most vulnerable residents. I will be monitoring this situation closely as I advocate for positive change for this community.”

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

CHICAGO – Join the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Prevent Child Abuse Illinois, Hospital Sisters Health System, the Poshard Foundation for Abused Children, elected officials, child welfare stakeholders and more for a month-long observance to share child abuse and neglect prevention awareness messages and promote prevention efforts during Child Abuse Prevention Month in April.

This year’s theme, Powered by Hope, Strengthened by Prevention, is a call to action to commit to a future where every child grows up safe, loved and full of hope.

“This year’s theme goes hand-in-hand with our department’s vision: for every child and youth to grow

and thrive in a family,” said Illinois DCFS Director Heidi E. Mueller. “We know that when parents are supported, their families are stronger and safer – and we also know that children do better when they are able to remain at home safely. In 2024 we served 4,034 families through our family preservation programs, enabling them to stay together.

“DCFS also connected parents to counseling, substance abuse recovery, mental health, Family Advocacy Centers and other services so 5,374 children could return home. By working together with our community partners and connecting families to the services and programs that meet their unique needs DCFS continues to strengthen

and support families.”

Prevent Child Abuse Illinois Executive Director Tarra Winters is also excited about this year’s theme.

“This year’s theme, Powered by Hope, Strengthened by Prevention, emphasizes the importance of prevention efforts that support families, strengthen communities and ensure every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential,” said Winters. “By investing in prevention, we not only protect children, but also provide families with the strength and resilience to overcome challenges. When families thrive, communities thrive. It is through prevention that we can ensure a bright future for generations to come.”

BBB’s 2025 resolutions to empower, fight scams

ROCKFORD – The Better Business Bureau (BBB) is urging families to start the New Year with resolutions to combat scams.

“Con artists are trying to steal your hard-earned money, but there are many ways you can thwart their success,” says Dennis Horton, Senior Director BBB Rockford Regional Of-

fice. “Now is the time to develop an action plan to make fraudsters fail. Sit down with your family and friends and go over these proactive steps to identify scams and avoid financial disaster.”

The loss of money, personal information, and perseverance of scammers continue with online purchase scams as the riskiest of scams.

BBB recommends adding a few precautionary steps to the New Year’s resolution list and the weight loss and financial goals to help make the upcoming days and months fraud-free.

Resolve to be cautious with email. Be wary of unsolicited emails from a person or a company. Remember, scammers can make emails look like

they are from a legitimate business, government agency, or reputable organization (even BBB!). Never click on links or open attachments in unsolicited emails.

I resolve never to send money to strangers. If you haven’t met a person face-to-face, don’t send them money. This is especially true if the person asks you to transfer funds using a pre-paid debit card or CashApp. Money sent to strangers in this way is untraceable, and once it is sent, there’s no getting it back. Scammers will try to trick you into panicking – so before making a move, think the situation through. Don’t fall for it!



Senior Dining Menu
April 7-April 11
8 oz. of low-fat milk served with each meal

Monday – Baked chix breast, mashed potatoes/gravy, steamed peas, applesauce, whole grain dinner roll

Tuesday – Meatloaf, brown gravy, California blended veggies, cheesy potatoes, diced pears, whole grain wheat bread

Wednesday – Baked pork chop, mashed potatoes/gravy, green beans, whole grain dinner roll, cherry crisp

Thursday – Italian sausage on whole grain hot dog bun, Italian blended veggies, seasoned potato wedges, apricots

Friday – (A) Fish patty w/tartar on whole grain wheat bun, hash browns, peas, diced peaches; (B) Turkey/minestrone


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Your Guide To Local Houses of Worship

<p>St. Patrick Church Fr. John Gow 32 N Jones, Amboy 815-857-2315 • www.stpatrickamboy.org Masses: Tuesdays-Friday Daily Mass at 8 a.m. Confessions: Wednesday 5:30 p.m., Saturday 3-3:45 p.m. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: 8:30 a.m.- noon on Fridays after 8 a.m. mass</p>	<p>First Congregational United Church of Christ of Lee Center Pastor Jack M. Briggs 1140 Inlet Road, Lee Center www.LeeCenter-UCC.org Phone 815-732-7032 Family Worship - 10:30 a.m.</p>	<p>First Baptist Church Pastor Rocky Fritz 24 N. Mason Avenue Church Phone 857-2682 www.fbcamboy.com Sunday School for all ages - 9:30 a.m. Morning Service - 10:30 a.m. Evening Service - 6 p.m. Wed. prayer meeting & Bible Study 6:30 p.m. King's Kids program from 6:30-8 p.m. Friday Reformers Unanimous addictions program from 7-9 p.m.</p>	<p>Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church Rev. Randy Fronек Locust Street, Sublette Phone 815-849-5412 Saturday Mass - 4:00 p.m. Sunday Mass -10:30 a.m. Wednesday - 8:00 a.m. Thursday - 8:30 a.m.</p>
<p>St. Mary Church Fr. John Gow 912 Walton Rd., Walton 815-857-2670 Mass: Saturday, 5:30 pm</p>	<p>Grace Fellowship Church Amboy-Sublette Pastor Kyle Kelly 500 W. Main Street, Sublette Sunday School 8:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. www.graceisforyou.com</p>	<p>St. Mary's Church – West Brooklyn Rev. Randy Fronек Mass - Tuesday & Thursday - 7:30 a.m. Saturday – 5:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Refuge Church Pastor John Kalebaugh Mendota Hills Campground • 642 Rt. 52 Amboy, IL 61310 • 815-849-5930 10 a.m. Sunday, potluck follows</p>
<p>St. Flannen Church Fr. John Gow 213 S Second St., Harmon 815-857-2670 Mass: Sunday, 8:30 am</p>	<p>East Grove Union Church 449 Reuter Road, Amboy, IL Phone 815-440-5321 ½ Mile East of Route 26 at Union Rd Sun., 9:00 am, Morning Worship Youth Church, Ages 3 – Grade 4 10:15 am Sunday School, Age 3 – Adult Come as you are and join us on the journey!</p>	<p>St. Patrick Church - Maytown Rev. Randy Fronек Mass – Friday - 8 a.m. Sunday - 8 a.m.</p>	<p>Harmon United Methodist Church Pastor Leanne Keate 202 N. Grove, Harmon Phone 359-7302 Worship - 8:30 a.m.</p>
<p>United First Church of Amboy Pastor Mark Glenn East Main & Jefferson 815-440-0745 Sunday Worship - 10:00 a.m. Bible Study Wednesday 6:00 p.m.</p>		<p>Immanuel Lutheran Church Interim Minister Douglas Wood S.A.M. 960 U.S. Route 52 Phone 857-2225 960 U.S. Route 52 Phone: 815-857-2225 Sunday Worship - 9:00 a.m. - Fellowship - 10:00 a.m.</p>	

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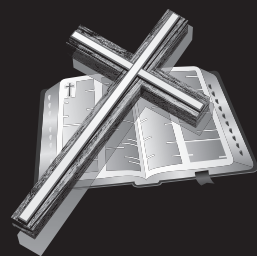
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LOCAL/STATE NEWS

Amboy Junior High School announces third quarter Honor Roll students

AMBOY – Believe it or not, the third quarter of the 2024-25 school year has already come and gone.

Tons of Amboy Junior High School students in fifth through eighth grade made the most of the quarter and were rewarded by making the Honor Roll.

Here is who made highest honors, high honors, and honors.

Eighth grade
Highest honors: Mallory Bodmer, Owen Dallam, Isabelle Klein, Ade-lynn Kreiser, Scarlett Payne, Charlie Schoenholz, Norah Shearer, Cooper Welch, Hannah Whitman, Jaron Wittenauer, Parker Zimmerman.

High honors: Mackenzie Alletto, Jacie Blaine, Addison Bump, Sophya Fonderoli, Mason Morris, Camryn Noble, Sydney Noble, Kinsley Pogue, Anthony Sus, Parker Williams.

Honors: Erika Decker, Leah Dempsey, Ian Hassler, Joivvee Hirsch, Brynleigh Payne, Natalie Skryzpa, Shawn Thompson.

Seventh grade
Highest honors: Leah Bonnell, Ma-son Heath, Amelia Kant, Teagan Moore, Blake Mumm, Amelia Nichols, Mason Payne, Caidie Phelps, Madison Phillips, Kylee Zellhofer.

High honors: Payton Angermeier, Cooper Fox, Vanessa Gross, Tinley Helms, Jaxon Hudson, Rylen Koch, Abel Mumm, Maxwell Patterson, Thomas Payne, Nolan Scully, Kylie Vaupel, Alexis White, Kendyll Whitney, Bailey Wittenauer.

Honors: Bricen Davis, Annabelle Lef-felman, Eli Lewis, Liam McBride, Jack McCoy, Hunter Roberts, Alivia Schultz, Jacob Wittenauer, Zoey Zambrano.

Sixth grade
Highest honors: Leah Bodmer, Gunner Christoffersen, Kensley Helm, Greyson Henkel, Kaiya Kaleel, Al-ice Klein, Levi McLaughlin, Taylir McNinch, Emersyn Miller, Makayla Phillips, Gillian Schneider, Cozette Schoenholz, Grace Zambrano.

High honors: Mackenna Alletto, Ali Althaus, Michael Dallam, Lilly Dolan, Averie Fallor, Brison Fenwick, Emerson Gross, Julius Jones, Noah Lopez, Jamison Meyer, Emily Meyers, Reagan Miller, Eyan O'Malley, Zoie Petersen, Casey Stampler, Myla Zambrano, Clayton Zimmerman.

Honors: Blake Atkinson, Ethan Farst-er, Cam Florschuetz, Silas Grennan, Kyz-in Gries, Thomas Keene, Chandler Reber.

Fifth grade
Highest honors: August Boyle, Everly

Boyle, Mila Burke, Annelise Considine, Charlotte Cook, Eli Kaleel, Paisley Kant, Emersyn Moore, Summer Nantz, Rudra Patel, Taiden Payne, Jackson Scully, Ruth Shearer, Roman Spinelli.

High honors: Ariyah Bellows, Evelyn Buckley, Evalyn Bump, Abel Camire, Liam Carter, Kainan Con-sidine, Jace Davis, JioVanny Fonder-oli, Ellie Henkel, Savannah Hufford, Aubreyanne Kimball, Timothy Marsh, Brysen Moore, Griffin Ohlendorf, Abigail Parker, Evelyn Payne, Ma-die Ritter, DeShawn Robinson, Brookly Rutherford, Audree Schaefer, Owen Schaeffer, Harper Shoemaker, Ava Unzueta, Everett Walter, Aurora Wil-hite, Emery Williams, Jace Williams, Catherine Wittenauer.

Honors: Tuc Bergfeld, Jazlynn Cam-piran, Caitlyn Hummel, Adisyn Latta, Oliver Machen, Kaylee Williams.

City continued from page A1

“I’m just doing something I love to do, help people and the community.”

Alderman Bill Bontz and Stenzel met with the offices of United States Congressman Darin LaHood (R-Peoria) and Illinois State Representative Li Arellano Jr. (R-Dixon) concerning which way to go with grants and getting a few ideas.

Stenzel said the city has been close to receiving federal grants but haven’t been awarded any. He said the politicians gave them some good information as the city needs to beef up its application. LaHood and Arellano Jr. gave ideas on how to do so.

Along with grant writing and coordinating and his responsibilities with Dinges Fire Company, Bryant Sr. is hoping to push change in the process of how board of directors are formed within a fire district.

“I’m trying to work on elections. All the townships, library boards, school boards vote for officers,” said Bryant Sr., who retired from the Amboy district in Sep-tember 2024. The fire boards are one of the few taxing bodies where a majority of them are not elected. In Illinois, if you’re a fire protection district, you’re either a three-man appoint board or a five-man elected board.

“I’m trying to push legislation where fire boards should be elected just like school boards, library boards, and village boards. That way, if you lived in the city and municipality, you’d have a say on the direction of the fire protection district.”

Spring Cleanup, which was successful a year ago, returns for three days next month, April 23-26 as dump-sters will be provided to help take care of extra trash.

Surf Internet, fiber-optic internet, started its instal-lation process and estimate three-months before its finished.

“Surf Internet’s Jennifer Alvarez spoke with us in February. They wanted to bring their fiber internet into town and make it available to all Amboy residents. It would give all of our consumers another choice. We didn’t vote on anything since it was just an informa-tional conversation in February, but the council gave Surf its blessing.

“We met with them after the February meeting to discuss the contract, and we decided to move forward. I think it’s going to be a good thing for us.”

Also at the March meeting, Alderman Greg Noble thanked Dave Stenzel, the mayor’s brother, for his 43-years of service with the Amboy Park Board as he is retiring.

February meeting
The meeting held February 17 also featured many idealistic ways for Amboy to move forward.

Jerry Beck, of Chana, who is the Pine Rock Township Supervisor spoke to the council about Illinois Funds, a program ran by the Illinois State Treasurer, Michael W. Frerichs, which could bring

in daily interest revenue.

“We have our money invested, but this would be another way to invest the city money safely while earning interest,” Stenzel said. “We didn’t do any-thing with this either except listen. We’re looking into it. We may put some of the city money into it and see how it fits in with our investments.”

Cindy Phillips, who runs the summer music pro-gram downtown, asked if anyone would like to help her during the summer shows.

Phillips is looking for some-one to help make sure things run well and step in if she needs has other engagements. Prairie State Tractor took two, year-old lawn mowers from the City of Amboy and replaced them with two brand new mowers for \$3,500.

“It’s a no-brainer. It’s a good program. They can sell the used ones and we get brand new mowers,” Stenzel said. “We’ve been part of this program for the last couple of years. The mowers take care of all of our parks and land we need to take care of.”

The Motor Fuel Tax spending for 2025 was approved. Park Lane, the S. East Ave. Alley, the Amboy Fire Department Alley, and Southeast Ave. by the bandstand will be resurfaced with a hot mix (trucks) for an estimated \$93,897.61.

The fire department is going to share the cost with the city.

When your child or grandchild make the Honor Roll, what kind of reward do they receive, or no reward?

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Opinion

Remembering when boxing was great; R.I.P. George Foreman

Some people will remember scraping, digging, and clawing for all the coins they could possibly find in their couch, car seats, pockets of a jacket they haven't worn in a few months, a season, or at the bottom of their wallets, purses, and backpacks.

Then you'd ask your friends to chip in. Not for groceries, not for rent, not for gas, not to pay a bill, but...to watch a boxing match.

Before PPV, Joe Frazier and Muhammad Ali (especially "The Fight of the Century" on March 8, 1971, and the "Thrilla in Manila" on October 1, 1975) were must-sees.

I'm disappointed I didn't come around until 1985, but very thankful I've been able to watch all the classic fight replays on ESPN and YouTube.

The list of awesome fights in the 70s, 80s, 90s, and 2000s is long, very long.

From "Marvelous" Marvin Hagler vs. Thomas "Hitman" Hearns on April 15, 1985, to Diego Corrales vs. Jose Luis Castillo on May 7, 2005, which I donated plasma for two months while a freshman at Southern Illinois University to purchase, to "Sugar" Ray Leonard vs. Roberto "Hands of Stone" Duran, to Leonard vs. Hearns, to Arturo Gatti vs. Mickey Ward, which I saved money from my newspaper route and begged my mother to let me have the TV for a few hours on May 18, 2002, to countless fights involving Mike Tyson and Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Actually, in the pay-per-view era of boxing, the Top 10 bought matches include either Tyson or "Money" Mayweather.

Manny Pacquiao vs. Mayweather on May 2, 2015, which I watched at the Gopher Hole (formerly Dillys, but now R.I.P.) with a bunch of friends was the most purchased with 4.6 million buys. Mayweather vs. UFC star Connor McGregor recorded 4.3 million buys on August 26, 2017, which I stood shoulder to shoulder, backs to chests at Mr. Salsas in Oglesby to view.

Column

By Brandon LaChance



Mayweather vs. Oscar De La Hoya on May 5, 2007 (more plasma donating while in college) brought in a third-place 2.44 million. Mayweather and Canelo Alvarez (10 friends and I chipped in for) are fourth at 2.2 million views on September 14, 2013.

Then Mike Tyson vs. Evander Holyfield II (June 28, 1997), Tyson vs. Lewis (2002), Tyson vs. Roy Jones Jr. (2020), Tyson vs. Holyfield I (1996), and Tyson vs. Peter McNeely are five-nine, before Mayweather and Miguel Cotto take 10th on the list for their May 5, 2012 fight.

I put all of these in this column to show two things.

First, boxing "back in the day" drew because it was actually boxing, and you knew it was going to be a great fight. There was no doubt you were either going to say a dramatic knockout or a warrior vs. warrior fight to the finish.

Now, we buy the pay-per-views or stream hoping we will get the same electrifying punch power of Tyson or the crafty footwork of Mayweather but are left wanting after dropping more and more jellybeans for each fight.

To be honest, you can't even call most of them fights anymore. They're publicity stunts to bring in money. And

we buy hoping Jake Paul vs. Tyson or Mayweather vs. McGregor (not even a boxer) are going to be classics.

And they turn out to be duds in terms of a worthy contest and more of a tribute, thank you for your previous time in the boxing ring, and thank you customers for being customers and helping us pay the boxers millions.

This brings me to my second point, all of the great ones, have left us.

The passing of George Foreman, famous for "The Rumble in the Jungle" against Ali and winning the heavyweight title for the second time at the age of 45 against Michael Moorer on November 5, 1994, hit home and made me think of all of my boxing memories.

At one time, my top sports list went basketball, boxing, football, baseball. My big three included boxing because of the former greats and the current greats in the 1990s and 2000s.

Foreman, who passed away Friday, March 21 was definitely one of them.

He now joins Ali, Frazier, Leon Spinks, Hagler, Trevor Berbick, Corrales, Vernon Forrest, Tommy Morrison and Ken Norton, on the list of boxing champions (1970s until now) who are no longer with us.

Although he hadn't been in the ring since the 1990s and at 76, he wasn't in the public eye anymore, he still carried the nostalgic presence of a golden era of boxing.

While Foreman rests in peace, hopefully this isn't the next step of boxing (the sport, not the spectacle) falling further into isolation as a has-been sport or resting in peace itself.



ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

100 years ago
April 3, 1925

The house on one of the John M. Egan's farms occupied by B.F. McConaughy, located about a mile and a quarter northeast of Amboy, was totally destroyed by fire with a loss of approximately \$10,000.

75 years ago
April 6, 1950

Amboy's Volunteer Firemen were called to the E.C. Lane home on West Main Street in Amboy when the chimney burned out and sparks set fire to the roof, burning a hole through the roof. Fire dropped into the attic and did a great deal of damage.

Amboy Central School was represented by Delores Noble and Delmar Kentner in the IESA Literary, Music and Art contest held in Peru. Noble won in her colored chalk landscaping and Kentner finished second in Orations with his speech, "Listen, America, Listen."

Sgt. Cecil H. Simon, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Simon of Amboy, is now serving as radio operator in the U.S. Air Force in Greenland.

50 years ago
April 3, 1975

Keith Davison, although just over two-years old, has been in four hospitals, undergone surgery five times, and will have to undergo more surgery before he is five. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dewey Davison, brought him home for Children's Health Center, Minneapolis, Minn. He had been a patient there for a month and submitted to two stages of corrective surgery for a birth defect, exstrophy of the urinary bladder.

As part of Gov. Dan Walker's Accelerated Building Program, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency offered \$10,500 to Amboy to do basic planning for upgrading the community's existing sewage treatment plant. Also as part of the program, Paw Paw was offered \$4,200 for basic planning for upgrading its sewage plant.

Banquet frozen meals of chicken, turkey, Salisbury steak, meat loaf, and chicken dumplings are 49 cents each at Super Valu. Also, Hills Bros 2-pound can of coffee for \$1.69, and family size Downy fabric softener for \$1.99.

25 years ago
March 29, 2000

Amboy's Don Wyzgowski has been inducted into the Illinois High School Coaches Association Hall of Fame. Wyzgowski is being inducted for his long career as a high school football coach. He started coaching in Amboy in 1874 before finishing off his career in 1991. At Amboy, he posted an 111-69 record, qualified for the state tournament six times (1979, 1980, 1984-987), made it to the championship game in 1979 and 1980, and won an IHSA Class 2A State Championship in 1984 with an undefeated 13-0 mark.

Dixon attorney Linda Giesen handily won the Democratic nomination for Lee County State's Attorney by nearly a 2-to-1 margin over political newcomer John Jones. The official results showed Giesen garnered 1,197 votes to Jones' 634 votes.

Derek Schlesinger, son of Gale and Jeanne Schlesinger formerly of Sublette, ended his senior season at Linn-Mar H.S. Cedar Rapids, Iowa at the team's award banquet. Schlesinger was named the team's MVP as he led the conference with 20.9 points per game. He was chosen as an honorable mention for the Iowa Class 4A All-State Team.

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Established In 1854
The Amboy News
The Depot Museum

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SOMETHING TO SAY?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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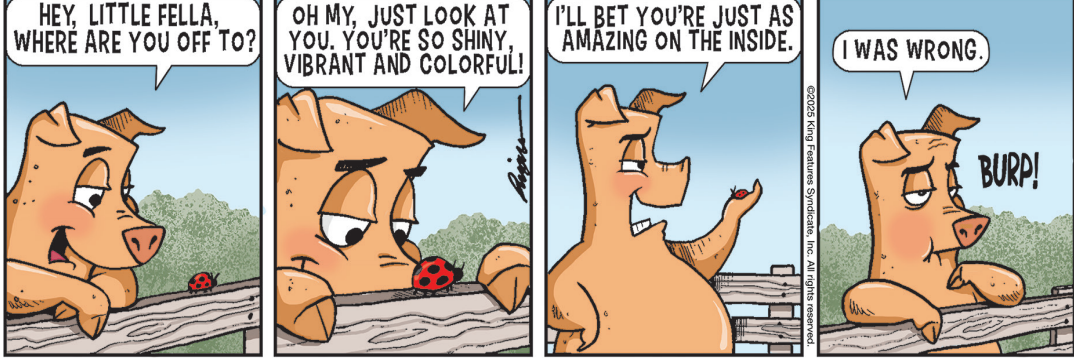
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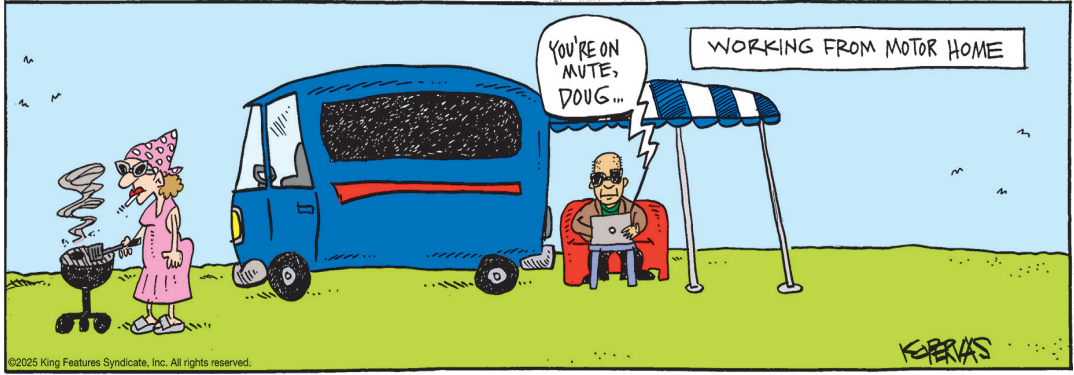
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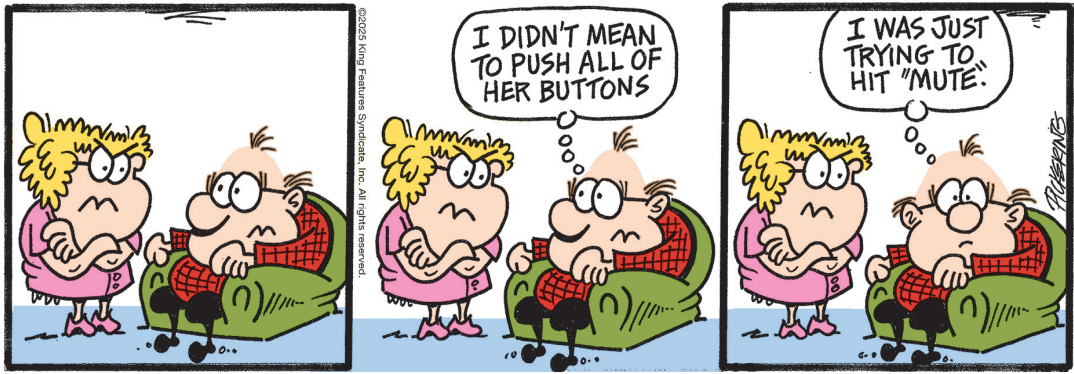
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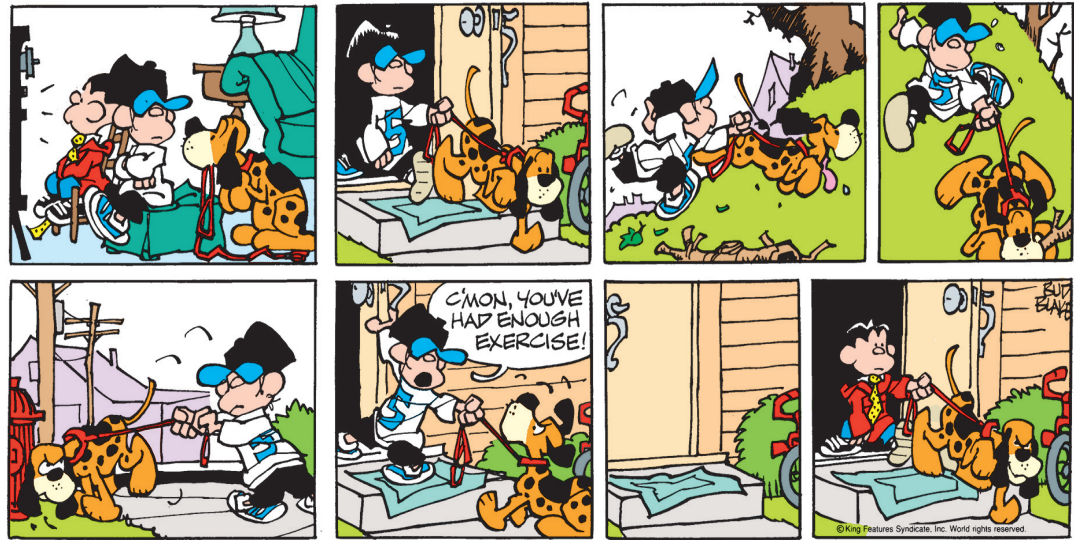
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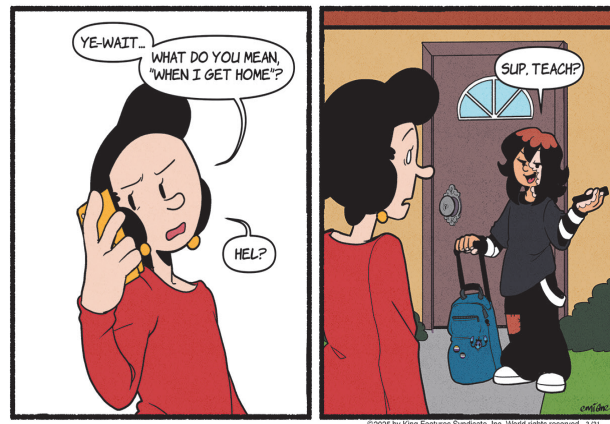
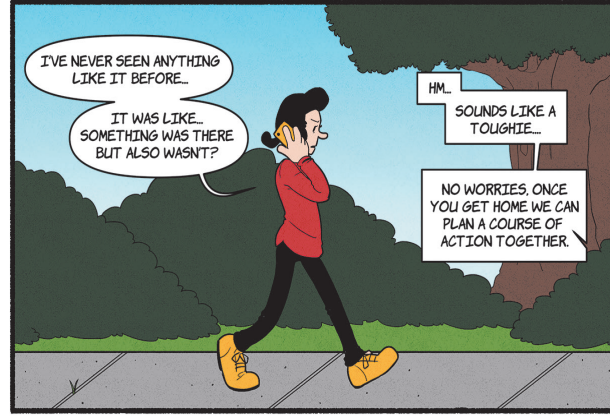
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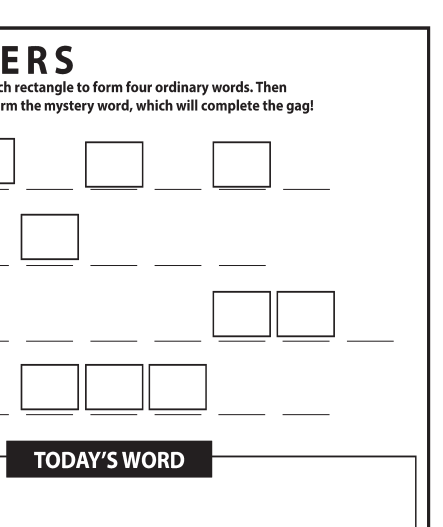
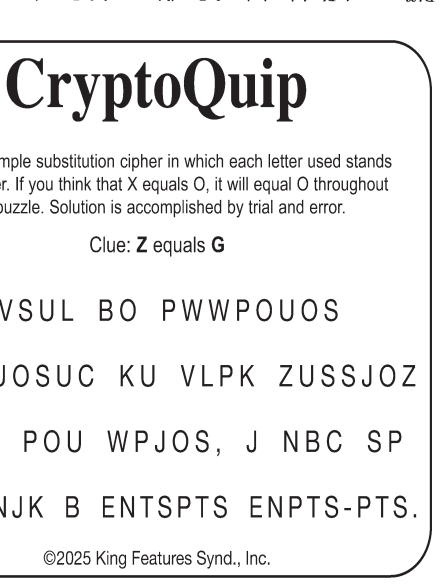
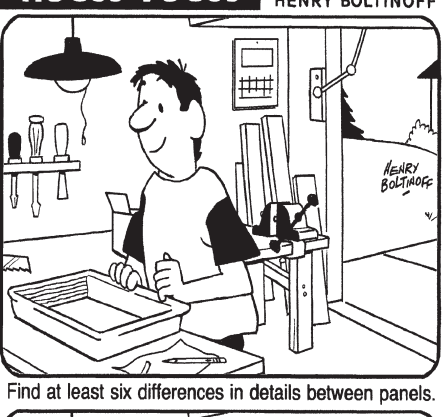
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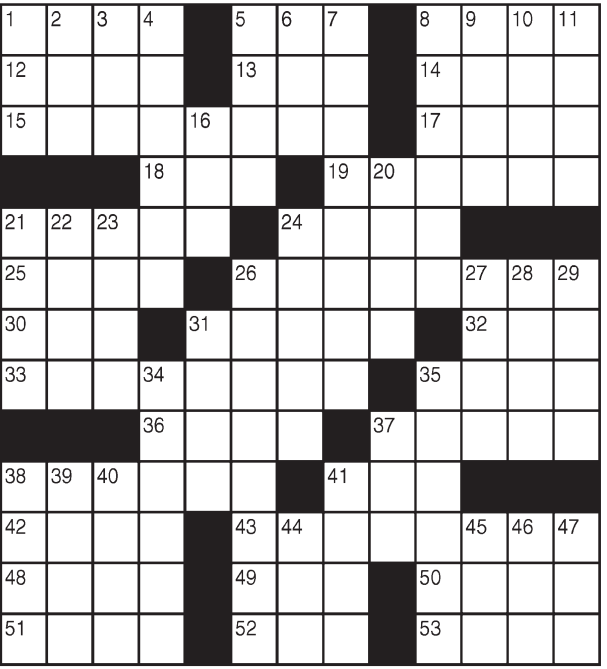


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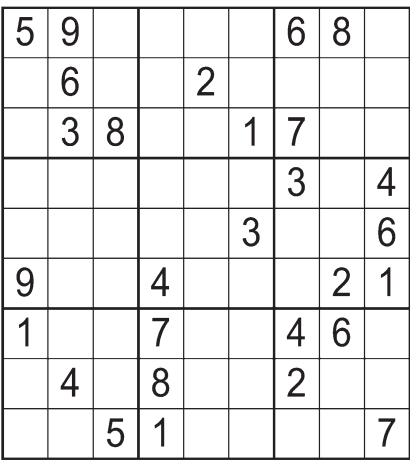
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- 14 Ancient Dead Sea land
- 15 Fierceness
- 17 Milan money, once
- 18 PC alternative
- 19 Sheryl Sandberg best seller
- 21 Grating
- 24 Harangue
- 25 "Rhyme Pays" rapper
- 26 With passion
- 30 Monk's title
- 31 Piquant
- 32 Tic-tac-toe win
- 33 Hit song by ABBA
- 35 Friend
- 36 Curved lines
- 37 Jiggly dessert
- 38 Rum cocktail
- 41 Pear-shaped fruit
- 42 Spumante source
- 43 Agitates
- 48 Actor Schreiber



- 49 Colorful card game
- 50 Sleek, in car lingo
- 51 Salinger girl
- 52 Journey part
- 53 Must have
- 8 Trattoria desserts
- 9 Valhalla VIP
- 10 Sushi wrapper
- 11 Fed. agents
- 16 Low isle
- 20 Jealousy
- 21 Jazz phrase
- 22 Estate measure
- 23 Burn something
- 24 Tears apart
- 26 Imaginary
- 27 Toy store buy
- 28 Lounge
- 29 Cellist Ma
- 31 Actress Reid
- 34 Indigenous
- 35 Sea off Greece
- 37 Comic Carrey
- 38 Like ganders
- 39 Unrepaired
- 40 Detail
- 41 Toad's kin
- 44 Away from WSW
- 45 Formerly called
- 46 Three, in Rome
- 47 Turf

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Weekly SUDOKU



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.

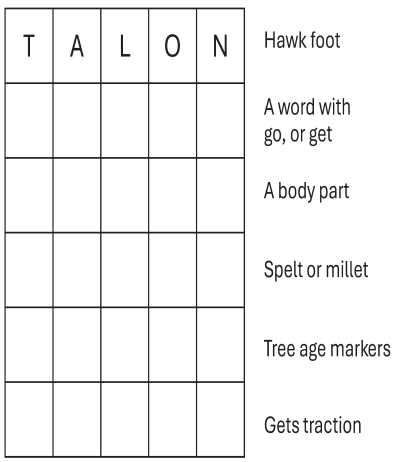
DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦

- ♦ Moderate
- ♦♦ Challenging
- ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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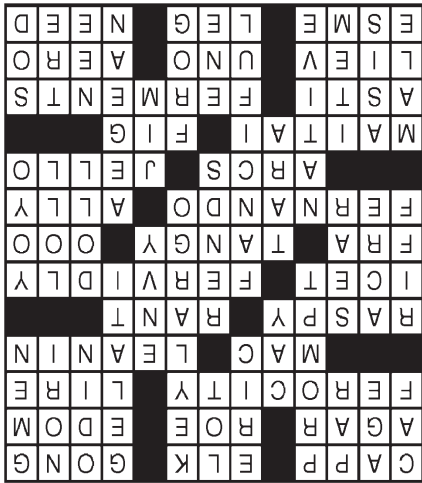
Hang On



Solve each row by replacing one letter from the answer above or below and scrambling to make a new word. When complete, the top and bottom words will have no letters in common.

FiveSpot is a trademark of Michael McLinden

02505



Solution time: 23 mins.

Answers

King Crossword

Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

- 1. TELEVISION: In the sitcom "Modern Family," Gloria is from which country?
- 2. LITERATURE: Which author wrote "The Kite Thief" and "A Thousand Splendid Suns"?
- 3. GEOGRAPHY: What is the deepest lake in the world?
- 4. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Which first lady's nickname was Lady Bird?
- 5. ASTRONOMY: How many stars make up the Big Dipper?
- 6. MOVIES: Which famous Hollywood couple played lead roles in the film version of "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf"?
- 7. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a group of skunks called?
- 8. GEOMETRY: How many sides does a decagon have?
- 9. ART: Which American artist focused on women and children in her paintings?
- 10. ANATOMY: What substance gives skin its color?

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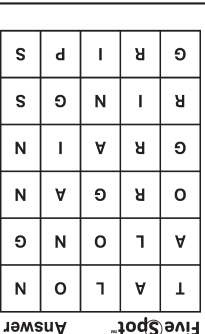
- 10. Melanin
- 9. Mary Cassatt
- 8. 10
- 7. A surfel
- 6. Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor
- 5. Seven
- 4. Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson, wife of President Lyndon Johnson
- 3. Lake Baikal, Russia
- 2. Khaled Hosseini
- 1. Colombia

TREASURER

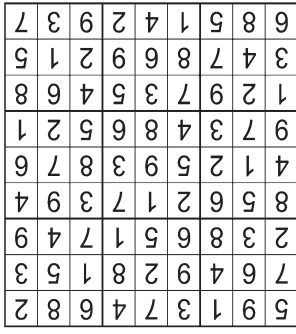
Today's Word

- 3. Closure; 4. Pretty
- 1. Assure 2. Merge

SCRAMBLERS



Answer



Answer

Weekly SUDOKU

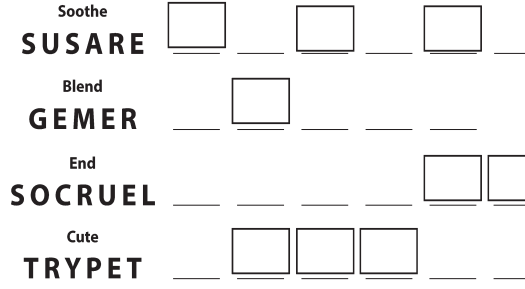
give him a shout-out.

After an opponent prevented me from getting even one point, I had to

Cryptoquip

SCRAMBLERS

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



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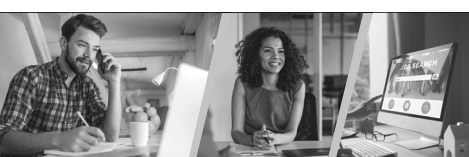
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The daytime deliveries would be two or three days per week (including weekends) and consist of approximately 4-5 hours per shift depending on the route usually 10-15 hours per week.

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4. TO GENERATE INTEREST. When a product or service is advertised several times, it's bound to pique consumer interest. What do you have to lose?

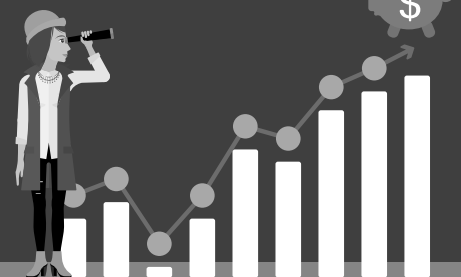
5. TO ESTABLISH YOUR CREDIBILITY. Frequent

advertising strengthens your brand image and ensures consumers take your business seriously.

6. TO BE REMEMBERED. Repetition is the key to ensuring your message reaches your target audience. It's much the same as learning a new skill. After all, memory has a way of fading.

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LOCAL/STATE NEWS

Pritzker Administration announces cannabis sales exceed \$2 billion annually

CHICAGO — As the State of Illinois celebrates the fifth anniversary of the legalization of adult use cannabis in Illinois, the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) announced 2024 marked the fourth consecutive year of record-setting sales.

Overall, dispensaries report that more than \$2 billion of cannabis product was sold in 2024, a 2.5% increase from last year. The \$2 billion of product includes a record-setting \$1.722 billion in adult use cannabis sales in 2024, with medical cannabis sales exceeding \$285 million.

Sales taxes collected at Illinois cannabis dispensaries totaled more than \$490 million in 2024, per the Illinois Department of Revenue.

"The numbers are clear: five years after we legalized adult use cannabis in Illinois, we're seeing the economic impact of a thriving cannabis industry," said Governor JB Pritzker. "With \$2 billion in record-setting sales and \$490 million generated in tax revenue, our first-in-the-nation equity-focused cannabis industry is the result of my administration's policies, which prioritized repairing the damage done by the failed War on Drugs, creating more good-paying jobs, and building a safe, equitable, and prosperous business sector—making Illinois by far the national leader in diverse ownership for this industry."

Governor Pritzker continued, "While I am pleased with the continued success of cannabis sales and revenues in Illinois, the market is being undermined by the proliferation of the unregulated intoxicating hemp market. Licensed cannabis businesses comply with strict state regulations, pay significant taxes, and undergo rigorous

product testing. This unchecked market not only undercuts legal operators but also puts consumers at risk by flooding the industry with untested, potentially unsafe products."

"The continued success of adult use cannabis sales highlights how equity-focused policies can create meaningful change," said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. "These sales allow us to reinvest in communities disproportionately impacted by the war on drugs, fostering growth and creating pathways to a more inclusive and prosperous Illinois."

In total, a record-setting 56,318,082 cannabis items were sold to customers in 2024, which shattered the previous record set in 2023 by more than 13%. This includes 48,953,392 items sold in Illinois adult use cannabis dispensaries, which represents another record total.

Additionally, adult use cannabis sales to Illinois residents totaled \$1,337,640,019.91, an increase of almost 10% from the previous record set in 2023. More than \$385 million of adult use cannabis product was also purchased by out-of-state residents. IDFPR's complete adult use cannabis monthly sales tracker may be found online here, with additional data available on the Illinois Cannabis Regulation Oversight Office website.

"As additional dispensaries open their doors, that increased competition leads to increased availability of product and better prices for consumers - just as we anticipated," said Cannabis Regulation Oversight Officer Erin Johnson. "We look forward to the continued growth and success of Illinois' cannabis industry, leading to further economic development and public awareness and support for responsible consumption."

Crops continued from page A1

Demand for the Fall Cover for Spring Savings program — which offers a \$5 per acre discount on the following year's crop insurance premiums — has outpaced state funding every year since.

However, despite the program's popularity and calls from environmentalists and farmers for its funding to increase, Gov. JB Pritzker has proposed a 31% funding cut.

Pritzker, a Democrat, recently proposed an overall \$2 billion increase to next year's state budget. But he also recommended cuts to several programs, including reducing the cover crop insurance credit budget from \$960,000 to \$660,000.

Pritzker's office did not comment but the governor referenced program cuts in a recent address.

"I have made difficult decisions — including to programs I have championed, which is hard for me," Pritzker said during his State of the State and budget address in February.

Two state lawmakers introduced bills this legislative session to increase the program's annual funding to \$6.1 million. They say it's crucial to support the practice, which will benefit communities in Illinois and beyond.

The bills did not clear a recent committee deadline. However, lawmakers can still negotiate funding for the program as they continue to work to pass a budget by the end of May.

Illinois is one of the leading states for farm fertilizer runoff and one of the top contributors to the Gulf of Mexico's dead zone, a barren area of around 4,500 square miles of coastal waters deadly to fish, shrimp and other marine life. It costs the region's fishing and tourism industry millions annually.

Runoff from Illinois farms has only worsened, according to a 2023 state study. From 2017-21, average nitrate-nitrogen loads increased by 4.8%, and total phosphorus loads increased by 35%, compared to the 1980-1996 baseline.

Nutrient levels were highest between 2016 and 2020 before declining slightly. The improvement was attributed to regulatory permits on wastewater treatment plants, which also pollute waterways.

However, nitrate levels remain well above the state's reduction goals.

Less than 6% of Illinois farmland uses cover crops. The soil in Illinois is famously fertile and much of the land is flat. The soil isn't highly erodible like soil on a slope or a hill might be. But when fields are left bare after harvest, the soil can easily blow away in the wind or wash away in storms, depositing fertilizers and chemicals into waterways.

Cover crops, which include winter wheat, crimson clover, cereal rye, oats or radish, are planted after harvest and before winter. The crops can reduce soil erosion, break up compacted soil, provide a habitat for beneficial insects and wildlife, and prevent latent fertilizer from leaching into rivers and streams.

Since the Fall Cover for Spring Savings program began in 2019, the Illinois Department of Agriculture has received more applications than the program can fund.

This year, the program sold out in two hours. Under current funding levels, only 200,000 acres are available, which advocates say is too small.

"At the rate conservation is being invested in right now for agriculture, it would take 200 years to hit the goals under the Nutrient Reduction Strategy. And that's assuming ... there would be new adopters," said Eliot Clay, executive director of the statewide Association of Soil and Water Conservation District.

The Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (NLRs) is a statewide, multi-agency effort to reduce the amount of nutrients in Illinois waterways and the Gulf of Mexico. The policy working group's latest report, produced in 2023, found that to meet just half of its goals of reducing runoff, nearly all of Illinois' corn and soybean farmers would need to adopt cover crops.

"It doesn't mean the state won't meet the goal," a spokesperson for the NLRs team at University of Illinois Extension said in an emailed statement to Investigate Midwest. "There is quite a bit of variability of riverine nutrient loads at watershed scales for nitrogen and phosphorus."

However, the spokesperson added that more research, data acquisition, and planning are needed at watershed scales.

Out of the state's 26.3 million acres of farmland, an estimated 3% to 6% grew cover crops in 2022, according to USDA data.

Kristopher Reynolds, Midwest director for American Farmland Trust and a fifth-generation farmer in Nokomis, said Illinois needs to see cover crop adoption of at least 15% and more state and federal incentives are needed.

The Gulf Hypoxia Task Force, a federally funded program through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, has provided additional funding to supplement the cover crop program. However, the Trump administration's freeze of some federal grants might put those funds at risk.

Earlier this year, the Illinois Department of Agriculture was awarded a \$25 million grant from the EPA to support conservation practices for the next three years.

"We don't know the status (of the grant)," said Jerry Costello II, director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture, while speaking to the House Appropriations Committee on March 12. "Last that we've heard, things looked good. But that's been a while."

"We've got two and a half months left in this process in Illinois, right?" added Costello, citing the time the state has to finalize its 2026 budget, which begins in July 2025. "Two and a half months plus or minus. So surely we'll have some guidance ... we certainly hope so."

Because of the sheer scale of the agriculture industry, government regulations requiring conservation practices can be difficult to carry out, said Clay, the executive director of the Soil and Water Conservation District.

Farmland covers 75% of the entire state of Illinois, and even if all farmers employed precision sensors to track runoff points, it would cost billions, Clay said.

There would also need to be an army of workers to track and enforce regulations.

However, "industry self-regulating usually doesn't work, and it hasn't worked in ag, because that's basically what they've been doing for the most part," Clay said. What's needed, he added, is more public-private partnerships.

Stierwalt, the farmer in Champaign County, helped develop STAR, or Saving Tomorrow's Agricultural Resources, which gives farmers a five-star score based on their conservation practices.

The state adopted the framework in 2023 to support the state's nutrient loss reduction goals.

Stierwalt said the goal is to get companies to purchase agricultural commodities based on the rating system.

If the public and industries that rely on agricultural goods for ethanol or food products want sustainably raised crops, then the farmers will grow them, he said.

Cover crop barriers include both cost and culture. Cover crops have long-term benefits but can be expensive and require extra work. Crop yields may even decrease during the first few years.

Cover crops cost roughly \$35 to \$40 an acre, and farmers don't make a direct profit from it. The crops are planted in the fall and aren't harvested. Instead, as the plants die and decompose, they provide nutrients back into the soil for the new commodity crop. Some farmers terminate the crops with chemical herbicides.

But the \$5 an acre from the Fall Cover for Spring Savings program acts as an incentive for doing the right thing, which will pay off later, said Ed Dubrick, a small pasture poultry farmer in Cissna Park who also farms vegetables with his wife.

"It's an investment because you know you're doing right by the environment," Dubrick said. "You know you're doing right by your land, and long term, you're going to build your soil health, and that will impact your bottom line."

There are also cultural barriers to planting cover crops. Row crop farmers often pride themselves on tidy, neat rows, and cover cropping and no-till can leave fields looking messy.

Walter Lynn, a retired certified public accountant and farmer in Springfield, said farmers sometimes only cover crop fields that are out of sight from their neighbors or the road because they're afraid they'll be judged.

At a recent soil health conference in Omaha, Lynn said he met a farmer who believes he can't openly discuss his practices with his equipment dealer, saying, "There's a vulnerability that ag doesn't deal well with." But at the conference, Lynn said the farmer found a welcoming atmosphere: "It's so good to come to this space at this meeting ... I feel like I'm a member of the cover crop witness protection."

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LOCAL/STATE NEWS

Kish College to begin “all-in” tuition in summer 2025

MALTA – Kishwaukee College will include all fees and textbooks in the cost of tuition starting in the Summer 2025 semester.

The College began eliminating fees in 2024 and will now focus on removing textbook fees. The new textbook initiative provides students with all required physical or digital textbooks as part of the cost of tuition.

Students will see one charge on their financial statements, which includes tuition, fees and required textbooks.

“The advertised cost of tuition is what students will pay to attend Kish. Cost transparency is important as students and families plan for the true cost of attending college. It also contributes to student success, as they will have the required books they need for their classes on



day one without having to pay separately for books,” said Dr. Laurie Borowicz, President of Kishwaukee College.

At the March Kishwaukee College Board of Trustees meeting, the Board approved an \$8 per credit hour increase to the base-rate tuition to

cover the costs of all required textbooks, digital books and access codes. Students can opt out of receiving their textbooks through Kishwaukee College. When opting out, students receive a refund for the \$8 per credit hour cost.

Students who pay for

textbooks through tuition rather than independently buying them can save hundreds of dollars per semester. For example, an Associate in Arts student taking 15 credit hours in a semester can expect to save approximately \$165.

Studies have shown that student success im-

proves when textbooks are more affordable, and students can access course materials immediately. A 2023 survey by the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois showed 69% of Illinois college students said textbook costs caused them not to buy required materials for class.

“Kishwaukee College has made it a multi-year goal to examine and improve textbook affordability for our students. Affordability and access have been shown to improve student success while increasing savings for students and their families,” said Bob Johnson, Chair of the Board of Trustees.

The “all-in” tuition program is made possible in part by the Kishwaukee College Foundation. On average, the Kish Nursing program’s textbook

costs are much higher than materials for other classes and programs. Due to the generosity of donors interested in the Nursing program, the Foundation Board has approved funding the additional textbook costs next year.

Another initiative making the “all-in” model possible is the use of Open Educational Resources (OERs) — free teaching and learning materials for instructors and students — to reduce the cost of textbooks. Since 2018, the College has tripled the number of courses utilizing OERs, saving students almost \$1 million in textbook costs. This initial work has significantly impacted the College’s ability to offer the “all-in” tuition model.

Learn more about the textbook changes at kish.edu/textbooks.

IDOA launches ‘Illinois Grown’ to boost statewide agriculture producers

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois Grown, a new program from the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA), will make it easier to support local farmers and businesses.

The Illinois Grown logo will soon appear on products across the state, signaling that items are either grown in Illinois or contain at least one ingredient sourced from the state.

The program is designed to connect consumers with products grown or produced in Illinois. The Illinois Grown logo helps consumers identify local products, supporting the state’s agricultural industry and economy.

“The Illinois Grown initiative is not just about food – it’s about supporting local communities,” said IDOA Director Jerry Costello II. “Consumers who buy Illinois Grown products can feel good knowing their money is going directly to Illinois farmers and producers.”

The program also encourages consumers to pledge to spend \$10 of their weekly grocery budget on Illinois Grown items, reinvesting millions into the local economy.

For Illinois farmers, food companies, and other agricultural businesses, the Illinois Grown logo provides a new opportunity to highlight their commitment to local sourcing.

Benefits to producers include:

- More Visibility: With the Illinois Grown logo, producers get exposure through the state’s mar-

keting campaigns and promotional efforts.

- Targeted Reach: The program helps businesses connect with consumers who prioritize local and sustainable sourcing.

- No Extra Cost: Producers can take advantage of the state’s advertising initiatives without additional fees, boosting their return on investment.

Retailers can get involved in the Illinois Grown program by signing up to showcase Illinois Grown products in their stores. Participating businesses will receive free in-store display materials to help promote the initiative. This is a great opportunity for retailers to engage customers with locally sourced products and highlight their commitment to supporting Illinois farmers and producers.

Consumers can show their support by taking the Illinois Grown pledge, committing to spend at least \$10 a week on locally produced items. As a thank you, those who take the pledge will receive a free reusable bag or sticker. The pledge can be completed online at <https://agr.illinois.gov/assistance/logoprograms/pledge.html>.

The Illinois Grown program is an easy way for consumers to make a difference in their communities. By simply choosing local products, they can contribute to a stronger, more sustainable economy.

For more information, visit www.illinoisgrown.org.



Guest florist Julie Poeltler assists a Kish floral student with a sympathy arrangement design. Poeltler conducted a lecture and demonstration as part of the Artist in Residence (AIR) program offered by the American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD).

Floral expert works with Kish’s Artist in Residence program

MALTA – The Kishwaukee College Horticulture program hosted Iowa Master Florist (IMF) Julie Poeltler as part of the Artist in Residence (AIR) program offered through the American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD).

Poeltler AIFD, Professional Floral Communicators International (PFCI), IMF presented a floral design demonstration for Associate Professor of Horticulture Janet Gallagher’s floral students and Kish’s Student American Institute of Floral Designers (SAIFD) Floral Club members. The presentation gave students hands-on

expertise in creating sympathy arrangements for caskets, urns and other pieces. Poeltler also demonstrated her experience in working with funeral homes and grieving families.

The AIR program is offered through the AIFD to bring together industry professionals and floral design students at colleges and universities that host student AIFD chapters like Kish. Kish’s horticulture program provides educational opportunities to students both past and present, including former student Emmy Kuhn, who now works as a full-time florist at Kar-Fre Flowers in

Sycamore.

“I reached out to see if I could attend the event and get more professional experience. We get to learn about and make an urn piece,” Kuhn said.

Poeltler was inducted into the AIFD in 1994 and has owned Julie’s Fountain of Flowers in Lone Tree, Iowa, for the past 42 years. Her professional experience includes creating designs for the Tournament of Roses Parade, the Academy Awards and multiple U.S. presidential inaugurations.

Learn more about Kish’s Horticulture program at kish.edu/horticulture.

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LOCAL/STATE NEWS


COLIN & BRAD
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FROM TV'S "WHOSE LINE IS IT ANYWAY?"

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ASKING FOR TROUBLE

OCTOBER 25, 2025
CORONADO THEATRE



mills

“Whose Line is it Anyway?” duo to take the stage in Rockford

ROCKFORD – Get ready for an evening of sidesplitting laughter as Colin Mochrie and Brad Sherwood, the dynamic duo from TV’s “Whose Line is it Anyway?,” take the stage in a one-night-only uproarious live show, Colin Mochrie & Brad Sherwood: Asking for Trouble on October 25, 2025 at the Coronado Theatre.

Known by TV audiences for their work on The CW Network program, Colin and Brad take the stage live and improvise new material every night from audience suggestions and participation-- transforming the audience’s

suggestions into an unpredictable evening of non-stop comedy gold.

No script? No problem! “Asking For Trouble” is a wild rollercoaster ride of hilarity, where two improv legends prove they are still the best in the business.

Get ready for a night of non-stop laughter that the whole family can enjoy.

Tickets are available at Ticketmaster.com, by phone at 815-968-5222, or in-person at the Coronado Theatre box office (noon-4 p.m. Monday-Friday) or the BMO Center box office (10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday).

Learn more at colinandbradshow.com.

Turnpike Troubadours to perform at Illinois State Fair on Aug. 17

SPRINGFIELD—Tahlequah, Oklahoma kings of Red Dirt music Turnpike Troubadours will perform at the Illinois State Fair Grandstand on Sunday, August 17.

After releasing five genre-defining albums and building a fiercely loyal fanbase, Turnpike Troubadours took a three-year hiatus beginning in 2019 to find clarity amidst the noise of a red-hot career. After the break, the band returned more popular and stronger than ever with their sixth studio album, *A Cat in the Rain*.

“Turnpike Troubadours perform a unique kind of music that we are happy to have at the Illinois State Fair,” said Illinois Department of Agriculture Director Jerry Costello II. “This band will feel right at home here in central Illinois.”

Turnpike Troubadours have racked up 1.5 billion

streams globally and are selling out arenas and headlining festivals.

“We are excited to bring the Turnpike Troubadours to the Grandstand Concert Series,” said Illinois State Fair Manager Rebecca Clark. “Whether you’ve followed them for years or just discovered their latest album, this Oklahoma group is better than ever — one of the most beloved groups in Americana music.”

Tickets are on sale at Ticketmaster.com. Tier 3 tickets are \$55, Tier 2 is \$60, Tier 1 is \$70, Track is \$70, and the Blue Ribbon Zone is \$125. A \$30 pre-show party ticket is offered as an additional upgrade for all paid concerts.

Stay up to date with all the latest news and announcements from the Illinois State Fair by connecting with us via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

PC Library hosting screening of “Free for All: The Public Library”

GRANVILLE – The Putnam County Public Library District will host a film screening of “Free for All: The Public Library” at 5 p.m. Thursday, April 10 at the Granville branch in celebration of National Library Week.

The film, brought to the Granville branch in partnership with Independent Lens and WTVP, tells the story of the quiet revolutionaries who made a simple idea happen. From pioneering women

behind the Free Library Movement to today’s librarians who service the people despite working in a contentious age of closures, funding cuts, and book bans, meet those who created a civic institution where everything is free, and the doors are open to all.

The Granville Library is located at 214 S. McCoy Street, Granville. For more information, please call the library at 815-339-2038.

“Say Yes” to organ, eye, tissue donation during National Donate Life Month

ITASCA—Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network is urging residents in the northern three quarters of Illinois and northwest Indiana to “Say Yes!” to registering as organ and tissue donors during National Donate Life Month in April.

More than 104,000 adults and children in the U.S.—including more than 5,000 in Illinois and Indiana—are waiting for a life-saving organ transplant, with a new person added to the national transplant waitlist every 7.5 minutes.

The need is critical. 95% of people in the United States support donation, yet fewer than 60% are registered organ, eye and tissue donors. Illinois and northwest Indiana residents can learn more about organ, eye and tissue donation and register their decision at giftofhope.org. Residents can also register through the Illinois Secretary of State’s Life Goes On website, the Donate Life Indiana donor registry, or in person at a state driver’s services facility.

Throughout April, hundreds of advocates including hospitals, coroners, funeral directors, ambassadors, municipalities and other community partners throughout Illinois and northwest Indiana will join Gift of Hope to organize events in support of organ and tissue donation, commemorate donors and their families and offer hope to the thousands of adults and children waiting for a second chance at life.

In public display of support for donation and to bring attention to the critical need for people to register as donors, the following landmarks across Illinois will “Light It Up Purple” this month:

- Murray Baker Bridge in Peoria, Ill., April 1
- Rockford City Hall in Rockford, Ill., April 4
- Morgan Street Bridge in Rockford, Ill., April 4
- Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens in Rockford, Ill., April 4

- Navy Pier Centennial Ferris Wheel in Chicago, Ill., April 5
- Willis Tower in Chicago, Ill., April 5 - 6

“This National Donate Life Month, we are proud of the joint effort of our community, partners and advocates to encourage everyone who isn’t registered as a donor to learn more about donation, register as a donor and talk to their family about their decision,” said Harry Wilkins, MD, President/CEO of Gift of Hope. “Together, we can bring hope and healing to the more than 104,000 people waiting for a life-saving organ transplant.”

Almost everyone has the opportunity to save lives through donation. One individual can save up to eight lives as an organ donor, heal more than 75 people in need of skin grafts, bone or tendon grafts or other donated tissue, and help restore sight for two people.

Bert Kreischer gives you Permission to Party at BMO Center

ROCKFORD – Bert Kreischer is returning to the BMO Center at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 18 in Rockford.

Tickets are available for purchase at Ticketmaster.com, by calling 815-968-5222, or in person at the BMO Center box office (10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday and 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday) or the Coronado Theatre box office (10 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday-Friday).

Bert Kreischer’s career has evolved from Rolling Stone Magazine’s “Number One Partier in the Nation” to one of the top grossing stand-up comics in the business, movie star, leading podcaster and entrepreneur. According to Forbes, Kreischer has been hailed as, “one of the best storytellers of his generation, seamlessly and sincerely sharing anecdotes about his fam-



ily and fatherhood while proving that there’s a way to take his party-boy antics into middle-age.” In 2024, Kreischer had the #6 highest grossing comedy tour worldwide, a huge accomplishment as he only toured 6 months, from January to June.

Following a 140-city

international arena tour, Kreischer shot his 6th stand-up special in his hometown of Tampa, FL and all six shows sold out within a day. Kreischer will release his newly awaited special, *Lucky*, on Netflix on March 18th, 2025.

In March of 2023, Kreischer premiered his

highly anticipated Netflix stand-up special, *Razzle Dazzle*, the follow up to his previous stand-up specials; *Hey Big Boy* (Netflix), *Secret Time* (Netflix), *The Machine* (Showtime/Netflix) and *Comfortably Dumb* (Showtime).

Razzle Dazzle was a hit for the streamer, garnering critical praise and reaching their top 10 most watched list with over 8.3 million global views in its debut. Also in 2023, Kreischer starred in and produced the Sony Pictures film, *The Machine*, based on his signature stand-up set recounting his true experience with Russian mobsters while on a booze-soaked college trip. After a theatrical release, *The Machine* immediately launched Netflix’s Global Top 10 Films list upon its premiere on-platform later that year.

Dept. of Aging seeks nominations for Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) is seeking nominations for the 2025 induction class of the Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame, which honors the accomplishments of Illinois residents aged 65 and older.

“Whether it’s the teacher who goes the extra mile for their students or the neighbor who’s always ready to lend a hand, our seniors are the backbone of our communities — embodying kindness, generosity, and ingenuity,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Each year, my administration is proud to honor four older adults for their contributions in community service, education, arts, and labor by inducting them into the Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame. I encourage everyone to take this opportunity to nominate the older adults in their lives whose impact deserves to be recognized and celebrated.”

Each year, four older adults are inducted into the Hall of Fame for their work in the arts, sports, and

entertainment; community service; education; or the labor force. Anyone may nominate an older adult for consideration.

To be eligible for nomination to the Hall of Fame, nominees must be:

- At least 65 years old at the time of nomination; and
- A current Illinois resident or a previous resident of Illinois for most of their life.

Posthumous nominations are also accepted, provided the nominee was 65 or older and living in Illinois at the time of death.

To guarantee consideration for the 2025 induction class, nominations must be submitted on or before June 2, 2025. Nominators of new Hall of Fame inductees are expected to participate in an award ceremony honoring their nominee and highlighting their accomplishments.

“The Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame honors outstanding older adults who have made and continue to make significant contributions

to their communities,” said IDoA Acting Director Mary Killough. “If you know someone who fits this criteria, please nominate them to be recognized and celebrated.”

Completed nomination forms may be submitted electronically or returned via U.S. mail, fax, or email. For more information or to submit a nomination, please visit <https://ilaging.illinois.gov/resources/news-publicationsandreports/halloffame.html>.

About IDoA: IDoA serves and advocates for older Illinoisans and their caregivers by administering quality and culturally appropriate programs that promote partnerships and encourage independence, dignity, and quality of life. For information about the Department’s programs and services for older adults and persons with disabilities, visit <https://ilaging.illinois.gov/> or contact the Senior HelpLine toll-free at 1-800-252-8966, between 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday.

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New investigation reveals over 4,000 investment scam reports

ROCKFORD – Since 2020, investment scam reports to BBB Scam Tracker totaled more than 4,000, reaching a three-year high in 2023. Scammers blended aspects of various scams, including romance and cryptocurrency, to trick targets into handing over large sums of money.

Dennis Horton, director of the Rockford Regional Office of the BBB says, “Reports to Better Business Bureau show that investment scams often

take the form of long-term confidence scams, where fraudsters pursue romantic and platonic relationships to gain the trust of their targets. That has caused losses to rise, with the median report increasing from \$1,000 in 2021 to almost \$6,000 this year.”

The BBB today released “INVESTMENT SCAMS: Crypto and Romance Schemes on the rise.” The investigation examines patterns of reports, reviews the amount

of money lost and shares stories from those caught up in the scams so the public can avoid them.

Key findings:

- Investment scammers target people throughout North America, eyeing targets with existing investments and retirement accounts.
- Fraudsters use the dense and sometimes misunderstood world of cryptocurrency to evade suspicion and lure in people.
- These scams can go

on for months at a time before being detected, allowing scammers to steal thousands of dollars.

- These scams largely originate in Southeast Asia due to organized crime, but a growing response to fraud in this region has led fraudsters to move their scam operations to other countries.
- Many low-level scammers are victims of forced labor, complicating the problem of prosecuting those involved.

SPORTS

Amboy softball plays four of five scheduled games in Week 1 of the 2025 season

AMBOY – The 2025 IHSA softball season started quickly for Amboy with five games scheduled in the first week.

The Lady Clippers had their first game of the season the first day IHSA allowed game play, Monday, March 17, as they hosted Mendota.

Amboy fell 12-10 despite efforts from starting pitcher, junior Alyvia Whelchel, who took the loss with nine strike outs, nine hits, and eighth walks.

At the plate, sophomore Leighton Gulley was 4-of-5 with three singles and a double, senior Tyrah Vaessen was 1-of-3 with a double, and juniors Ellie McLaughlin and Brittlyn Whitman, sophomore Lili Leffelman, and freshman Gabby Miller each recorded a hit.

Amboy traveled to Oregon the next day, Tuesday, March 18, where they lost by one run, 7-6.

The Lady Clippers were trailing 1-0 in the first two innings until they had two runners cross home in the third to take a 2-1 advantage. Oregon tied the game with a run in the bottom of the third.

Amboy scored two and Oregon added one in the fifth to give the red and white a 4-3 edge.

Oregon made a charge with three runs in the sixth, but Amboy scored two in the top of the seventh to tie the game 6-6.

The deciding factor was a Lady Hawk walk-off in the top of the seventh.

Whelchel was the losing pitcher on seven strikeouts, six hits, and three walks.

Junior Kiera Karlson was 2-4 at the plate with a double, a single, and two RBI. The Lady Clippers had four other batters connect for a hit as Vaessen and junior Peyton Payne hit doubles, and Miller and Whelchel recorded singles.

Wednesday’s game at home against Newark was postponed due to weather.

On Friday, March 21, the Lady Clippers suffered a 9-3 defeat to Bureau Valley at Manlius.

Junior Ellie McLaughlin took the loss in the circle after striking out seven and allowing 11 hits.

At the plate, Vaessen was 2-of-4 with two doubles, Karlson hit a home run to help her finish 2-of-3 as she also hit a single, McLaughlin was 2-of-3 with two singles, and each of Whitman, Miller, Gulley, and Payne had a single.

Rounding up the five-game schedule to kick start the 2025 season was a home game against Pecatonica on Monday, March 24, in which, Amboy recorded its first win of the season, 15-5 in six innings.

The Lady Clippers (1-3) saw a perfect at-bat percentage from Whitman as she was 3-of-3 with three singles and an RBI. Vaessen was 2-of-4 with two singles and an RBI, Karlson was 2-of-4 with a double, a single, and two RBI, and McLaughlin was 1-of-3 with a double and three RBI.

McLaughlin was the winning pitcher with five strike outs, two walks, and eight allowed hits.

Clippers start season with win over Mendota; baseball team wins three of first four games

AMBOY—Sophomore pitcher Tanner Welch and the Amboy baseball team’s offense will not forget the first game of the 2025 season.

Trailing 6-1 going into the bottom of the sixth inning against Mendota on Monday, March 17 (the first day of the IHSA season), the Clippers made some noise.

With two outs, seniors Carson Barlow and Dillon Merriman were hit by pitches to put runners on first and second. Freshman Bryson Deery followed by reaching first on an error to load the bases for Amboy.

Welch was walk to cut the deficit to 6-2 and keep the bases loaded. Freshman Landon Carter singled to left field scoring Deery and Merriman to cut the Trojan lead to 6-4.

Junior Rylan McNinch kept the clutch hitting going with a double bringing in Welch and Carter to tie the game at 6-6.

Senior Quinn Leffelman did the last of the damage and gave the Clippers the go-ahead, eventually winning run, 7-6, with a single scoring McNinch.

“We played a pretty solid game for our first one of the season,” first-year Amboy baseball coach Cade Sharp said. “Both of our pitchers threw the ball well on the mound. McNinch, Carter, and Leffelman all collected a hit and at least one RBI.

“The guys never gave up and never let the score get them out of the game.”

Welch came in for relief for starting pitcher Eddie Jones in the third inning and earned the victory on three hits, one strikeout, one walk, one run (zero earned runs) in 3.1 innings of work.

Jones record six hits allowed, five runs (four earned), three strikeouts, and two walks in 3.2 innings pitched.

The Clippers suffered their first loss of the season on Friday, March 21 against Bureau Valley at Manlius. The Storm won 9-3 after scoring five runs in the first inning.

Senior Brody Christoffersen was the losing pitcher allowing six runs on eight hits, two strikeouts, and three walks in two innings. Carter came in for three innings of work with seven hits, three runs, three strikeouts, and three walks.

Christoffersen, Merriman, Deery, and Carter each recorded a hit for Amboy, while Christoffersen and Deery each drove in a run.

It didn’t take the Clippers long to return to winning ways, as they beat Pearl City, 9-8, on Saturday, March 22 at Amboy.

Amboy had a five-run lead in the fifth inning and held its ground to give Barlow the victory on the mound.

McNinch was the starter, tallying seven hits and three runs allowed with three strikeouts and two walks in four innings. Jones threw one inning of no-run baseball on zero hits and two strikeouts before Barlow closed out the game.

McNinch also led the Clippers at the plate with a 3-of-4 performance. Christoffersen, Leffelman, Merriman, and Deery each drove in a run. Senior Caleb Shugars was 2-of-4.

The Clippers were patient with the bat, recording 10 walks.

On Monday, March 24, Amboy defeated Durand/Pecatonica, 18-2, at home with the help of a 12-run third inning.

Jones earned the victory on the mound as the starter gave up two hits and two runs (zero earned) with nine strikeouts and one walk in four innings.

Christoffersen finished with three RBI for Amboy (3-1), while he, as well as, Barlow, Jones, Shugars, Leffelman, and Carter each tallied a hit.

Lady Clips fall to Lady Cru, 6-3

OTTAWA – Senior Tyrah Vaessen and junior Kiera Karlson had the same box score at the plate as each went 2-of-4 with a double and a single on Thursday, March 27 against Marquette at Ottawa.

However, it wasn’t enough for an Amboy softball team victory, as the Lady Clippers fell 6-3. Amboy trailed 6-1 until it scored two runs in the top of the sixth inning.

Also hitting the ball for the Lady Clippers (1-4) were juniors Payton Payne and Brittlyn Whitman, and freshman Gabby Miller as each of them recorded a single.

The losing pitcher for Amboy was junior Ellie McLaughlin who allowed seven hits while striking out nine and walking one.

Amboy High School

ATHLETES OF THE WEEK

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Softball

Ellie McLaughlin

Boys Track

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April 8 AHS Varsity Baseball @ AFC-4:30 pm AHS Softball @ AFC-4:30 pm AHS Fresh/Soph Baseball (H) AFC-4:30 pm AHS Boys Track (H) Kewanee/ Forreston-4:00 pm	April 11 AJHS Musical-AHS Auditorium
April 9 AHS Art Club-Art Room-3:30-4:30 pm	April 12 AJHS Musical-AHS Auditorium AHS Girls & Boys Track @ Mendota-9:30 am AHS Baseball @ River Ridge-Varsity-11:00/FS-1:00 AHS Varsity Softball (H) Durand-10:00 am
April 10 AJHS Track @ Bureau Valley HS-4:00 pm AHS Softball (H) AFC-4:30 pm	

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Cuties Clementines 3 Lb Bag  \$4.99 ea	Whole White Mushrooms 16 Oz Pkg  \$3.99 ea	Yellow Onions 3 Lb Bag  \$2.49 ea	Bolthouse Farms Carrots 2 Lb Bag  \$1.99 ea	Mann's Sugar Snap Peas 8 Oz Pkg  \$2.99 ea

HOT BUYS

USDA Choice Angus T-Bone Steak  \$11.99 lb Reg. Price \$14.99 lb HOT DEALS	USDA Choice New York Strip Steak  \$11.99 lb Reg. Price \$13.99 lb HOT DEALS	Pork Tenderloin  \$2.99 lb Reg. Price \$3.99 lb	Deli Special - Any Large Sub With Bag Of Chips  \$7.99 ea Reg. Price \$10.99 ea HOT DEALS
Deli Special - Large Meatzilla Pizza  \$8.99 ea Reg. Price \$15.99 ea HOT DEALS	Niagara Water 24 Pkg  2/\$6 Reg. Price \$3.99 ea HOT DEALS	Cheetos or Fritos 7 to 13 oz  2/\$9 Reg. Price \$5.99 ea	7Up Products 2 Ltr Bottles  2/\$5 Reg. Price \$2.99 ea HOT DEALS

WEEKLY SPECIALS

Johnsonville Brats Select Variety 12 to 14 oz  \$4.49 ea Reg. Price \$4.99 ea	Rosina Meatballs 18 to 26 oz  \$6.99 ea Reg. Price \$7.99 ea	Food Club Cinnamon Rolls 8 ct  2/\$5 Reg. Price \$2.99 ea	Food Club Biscuits 8 ct  2/\$4 Reg. Price \$2.59 ea
Daisy Sour Cream 24 oz  \$3.99 ea Reg. Price \$4.39 ea	Dunkin' Ground Coffee 10 to 12 oz  \$8.99 ea Reg. Price \$10.69 ea	Kraft or Velveeta Mac & Cheese 4 Pk Cup  \$4.99 ea Reg. Price \$6.29 ea	Heinz Ketchup 20 oz  \$3.49 ea Reg. Price \$3.99 ea
Betty Crocker Cake Mix Or Frusting 12 or 16 oz  \$1.99 ea Reg. Price \$2.79 ea	Kool-Aid 10 ct  2/\$6 Reg. Price \$4.69 ea	Crav'n Flavor Snack Crackers 7.5 to 13.7 oz  2/\$5 Reg. Price \$2.99 ea	Food Club Peanut Butter 16 oz  \$1.99 ea Reg. Price \$2.79 ea
Cap'n Crunch Cereal 10.3 to 12.6 oz \$4.99 ea Reg. Price \$5.39 ea	Powerade 8 Pk Assorted \$5.99 ea Reg. Price \$6.99 ea		

Sale Priced Valid April 2nd - April 8th