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LOCAL NEWS... LOCAL VIEWS WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2025 \$1.25

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**Koritz served with Air Force**

Rochelle's Thomas F. Koritz made the ultimate sacrifice during his service with the Air Force. **See Section 2**

**WEATHER**

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**OBITUARIES**

• CHARLES O. THORSEN

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- RUNNINGS
- OLLIE'S

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## Driver transported to RCH after vehicle went into Lake Sule

Bystander called in incident; divers deployed to check for more passengers

BY JEFF HELFRICH  
MANAGING EDITOR

**ROCHELLE** — A female patient was transported to Rochelle Community Hospital for treatment after driving her car into Lake Sule early Sunday morning, Rochelle Fire Department Chief Dave Sawlsville said Monday.

First responders were called to the scene near Wiscold Drive in Rochelle at 2:16 a.m. Sunday morning for a report of a vehicle that had driven into the lake. A witness at the park near the lake reported that a vehicle pulled up to the boat ramp, backed up, and then accelerated forwards into the lake. The car then floated and drifted to the south and the driver exited the vehicle and was able to swim to shore.

"The Rochelle Police Department and our personnel arrived on scene and administered aid and watched the car sink," Sawlsville said. "Our divers and Oregon's dive team located the car and made sure there was no one else in it and secured it for it to be towed out of the water by Maggio's Towing. The witness said the driver opened the door in eight



A female patient was transported to Rochelle Community Hospital for treatment after driving her car into Lake Sule early Sunday morning, Rochelle Fire Department Chief Dave Sawlsville said Monday.

feet of water and swam to shore and climbed out of the water on their own. We didn't know whether there were other people in the car, which is why we sent our dive team out there. The driver was not clear about potential other passengers."

Sawlsville said the sunken vehicle was found 30 feet from where it went into the lake.

Water rescue teams from Oregon Fire and RFD utilized boats and sonar to find it and battled

cold, windy and dark conditions. "You have to plan for the worst-case scenario," Sawlsville said, "We had to be thorough to make sure there was nobody else. There's nothing out there in that area to block the wind. Temperatures were in the 30s. It's very difficult to see. Something like that is super dangerous for our dive team."

Officials were on scene at Lake Sule until about 6:15 a.m. when

the vehicle was removed from the water. Along with RFD, RPD and Oregon Fire, response was also seen from the Ogle-Lee Fire Protection District, the Ogle County Sheriff's Office and an ambulance from Ashton Fire. Lynn-Scott Rock Fire sent an ambulance to cover Rochelle's fire station.

"We were thankful to have the mutual aid help," Sawlsville said.

See LAKE SULE page 3

## Liquor N Wine presents \$2,500 donation to RACF

'It builds our portfolio and it helps us grant that money right back into the community'

BY JEFF HELFRICH  
MANAGING EDITOR

**ROCHELLE** — On Thursday, April 3, the owners of Liquor N Wine in Rochelle presented a \$2,500 donation to the Rochelle Area Community Foundation (RACF). The donation is part of a 10-year pledge Liquor N Wine made three years ago to donate a total of \$25,000 to RACF's endowment fund, which is unrestricted funding that supports various causes.

The donation was accepted on April 3 by RACF Executive Director Emily Anaya and members of the foundation's board.

"After 10 years, they will have donated \$25,000," Anaya said. "Taking that money and putting it back into the community through our largest endowment provides the biggest impact. It builds our portfolio and it helps us grant that money right back into the community. Liquor N Wine also



On Thursday, April 3, the owners of Liquor N Wine in Rochelle presented a \$2,500 donation to the Rochelle Area Community Foundation (RACF).

does a rounding up program. Any time someone makes a purchase, they'll be asked to round up their change to the next dollar to support RACF. It's just another creative way that they were able to give to RACF."

RACF offers an opportunity for individuals, families and businesses to leave a legacy for future generations and is a public, charitable organization designed to attract gifts that will be shared with Rochelle-area nonprofit organizations for the benefit of the community. It supports the areas of Chana, Creston, Esmond, Kings, Lindenwood, Rochelle and Steward.

See RACF DONATION page 2



Back in late February, the City of Rochelle announced its receipt of the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 10th year in a row.

## City receives GFOA Excellence in Financial Reporting award for 10th straight year

BY JEFF HELFRICH  
MANAGING EDITOR

**ROCHELLE** — Back in late February, the City of Rochelle announced its receipt of the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 10th year in a row.

The city congratulated its finance department team on Feb. 25, which includes Finance Director Chris Cardott, Jessica Rogers and Mark Boehm. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a "significant accomplishment" by a government and its management.

See GFOA AWARD page 2

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# LOCAL NEWS

## GFOA AWARD: ‘It’s a real testament to our audit and budget practices’

From page 1

The city’s report was judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program, which includes demonstrating a constructive “spirit of full disclosure” to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the report.

“Chris and her team do a fantastic job,” City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh said. “That award shows consistency in our audit process and shows that not only are our financials in good shape, but we follow basic standardized procedures and we make any type of changes that auditors recommend. It’s a real testament to our audit and budget practices and the work that our finance department does.”

The recent award the city received was for its 2023 financials. The city submits for the award six months after each fiscal year ends and the approval process takes several months. Cardott said work is currently underway on submitting its 2024 budget

application for the award. The city submits an application for the award on an annual basis and Cardott said that after 10 years, receiving notification of receipt of the award still feels special because of the transparency it shows.

“It goes beyond what is needed for an annual audit,” Cardott said. “It has features in it like an introductory section. It has the organization structure, a list of officials and a transmittal letter. The transmittal letter is several pages and it is signed by myself and the city manager. It’s a profile of the city and has its mission, vision, goals, initiatives, and factors affecting financial condition. It condenses the numbers result in the audit into words so people can understand. At the end, there’s a statistical section and it has several different categories that now reflect 10 years of historical data. That’s important information so we can see where we’ve been and where we’re going to go in the future.”

Cardott said reaching the 10-year mark was a



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

The city congratulated its finance department team on Feb. 25, which includes Finance Director Chris Cardott, Jessica Rogers and Mark Boehm.

goal for the city to be able to use that 10-year data tool that will continue on if the city continues to receive the award. The application the city submits for it acts as a snapshot of its financial position in a year, how it’s grown and changed, and its

commitment to financial transparency.

The city’s receipt of the award over 10 years has spanned two different city managers, changes to the makeup of the city council and different department heads and staff members.

Cardott and Fiegenschuh believe that shows consistency.

“I think that’s a testament to the leadership shown by Chris, past city managers, mayors and council members and staff that we continue to receive

this award even though we’ve had a lot of turnover in leadership roles in 10 years,” Fiegenschuh said. “It shows the consistency of our finance team and that we continue to follow best practices when it comes to budgeting and auditing.”

## RACF DONATION: Liquor N Wine gives \$2,500 as part of 10-year pledge

From page 1

RACF is in its 20th year of existence. It will hold its annual Community Needs grant award event on Wednesday, April 30 at the Lincoln Arts Center at 108 S. Main St. from 4-7 p.m. The free event will be catered by Flight Deck Bar & Grill.

“After this year’s granting program, we’ll have given well over \$1.3

million back into the community over 20 years,” Anaya said. “All of that money has stayed local.”

Anaya said RACF has supported over 29 different nonprofits in recent years. It’s also seen growth in new organizations applying for grants. Donating to the RACF endowment fund results in a community-wide impact, but any donor can give to any of RACF’s

dedicated funds, which can be found and donated to at RACF’s website at [rochellefoundation.org](http://rochellefoundation.org). Each of RACF’s dedicated funds grant out each year.

Amid uncertain economic times, the community’s commitment to RACF has remained “very strong,” Anaya said.

“Many times in economic uncertainty, people turn to philanthropy to

help and that’s what our donors are doing,” Anaya said. “They’re helping and helping us remain stable as a community. They’re helping our nonprofits. When it’s a more scary time economically, they turn to the community foundation to know that money is going to go back out to the community and go into the places of greatest need first. That’s what we do through our grants.”

If businesses or individuals are interested in giving back like Liquor N Wine has, they can reach out to RACF, which offers numerous ways to contribute including yearly commitments or a one-time commitment, and employee payroll deduction.

“There are lots of different ways that we can get creative,” Anaya said. “Those interested in giv-

ing can reach out to the foundation and we talk about their philanthropic goals and what kind of impact they want to have and we can set up whatever works best. We’re truly grateful to organizations and businesses like Liquor N Wine. This is a big donation for us. To have 10 years of that shows their commitment to this community and their trust in RACF.”

## OCSWMD releases information on its operations

**OREGON** — The Ogle County Solid Waste Management Department (OCSWMD) has long been the information source locally for all things waste-related, such as reuse options, recycling, composting, proper final disposal options, and solid waste enforcement issues. A very common question

relates to recycling and its’ viability, and whether materials are even recycled at all.

Common household recyclables include aluminum and steel food and beverage cans, paper, cardboard, paperboard, paper cartons, junk mail, gift cards and plain wrap, magazines, newsprint,

unbroken glass bottles and jars, and plastic bottles, jugs, and tubs, numbered 1-5. Items should generally be clean and dry for proper recycling, and loose, not in plastic shopping or garbage bags.

Here in Ogle County, as well as the region, most collected recyclables are dropped off at a regional landfill, where empty waste-hauling trucks are loaded with the recyclables and transferred to regional material reuse facilities (MRF’s). Most of these MRF’s are either in the suburbs of Chicago or in southern Wisconsin.

Recently OCSWMD staff had the opportunity to travel to a MRF in Plainfield, Illinois, which is the site of a new multi-million dollar sorting process and a main destination for our region’s recyclables. OCSWMD staff met with the MRF operators, and toured the facility, from drop-off at the tipping floor to stacked bales of alumi-

num, steel, cardboard, and plastic, which are sold to brokers to re-enter the economic mainstream.

This state-of-the-art MRF included initial sorting, removal of garbage from the recycling, glass separation, magnetic separators, eddy current for aluminum separation, robotic and AI technology to separate certain plastics, and catch-alls for paper and cardboard that was separated from the other materials. Some bales of material were put back through the process a second time for additional purity of the commodity.

It is very important to remember that not everything placed into a recycling container gets recycled. If it does not match the description above then it generally will not be recycled in this process. Certain items were pulled out at the MRF, and included electronics, batteries (these should never be included in household

recycling), toys, furniture, holiday décor, fuel cylinders, scrap metal, Styrofoam, lots and lost of plastic bags and films, and many other items.

Here in Ogle County, almost all municipalities have curbside pick-up of your recyclables. Accepted materials in these programs generally match the description above. If you live outside of a town or village curbside pick-up is not available. One waste hauling truck will collect all of your garbage and recyclables and it will head for the landfill. There are three drop-off points for recyclables in Ogle County if you do not have curbside service. These are located at the Waste Management Orchard Hills Landfill (8290 Hwy. 251, Davis Junction), Ogle County Farm Bureau (421 W. Pines Road, Oregon), and Byron Forest Preserve Maintenance Facility (6845 N. German Church Road, Byron).

In most public initiatives, there are enthusiasts, pragmatics, the middle, conservatives, and skeptics, and recycling is no different. We live in a consumer-driven economy and recycling alone will not solve our waste and recovery issues. Proper recycling is part of an overall process that includes source reduction, reuse, composting, right-to-repair, and then recycling.

For your home or work recycling, remember the guidelines mentioned above, or contact the OCSWMD at 815-732-4020 or via email at [solid-waste@oglecountyil.gov](mailto:solid-waste@oglecountyil.gov). The Ogle County website also has local recycling guidelines. You may also contact your village hall or waste hauler for more information about your local recycling program. Remember items should be clean, empty, dry, and loose to be sure your recyclables actually end up being properly recycled.



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# LOCAL NEWS

## LAKE SULE: Female driver transported to hospital after incident Sunday morning

From page 1

“We get quite a few water responses. That’s why we have and maintain those resources. We’ve helped in areas near the Rock River such as Oregon, Dixon and Rockford. The dive teams from the area all practice together for instances just like this one.”

Sawlsville said he was thankful there was a bystander at the park to call emergency personnel after seeing the vehicle enter the water.

“So many things could have gone worse,” Sawlsville said. “They were able to open the door of the car and get out before it sank. And then with how that area is, there’s so much noise from Interstate 39 and it can be disorienting and if they tried to swim in the direction of sound and light, it would have been the wrong direction to swim in. The driver was able to swim through the waves and crawl up on shore. Then you’re wet and on shore in the cold. It’s very lucky that the witness was there to see it. Because the driver wouldn’t have been able to call emergency services.”



(PHOTO BY JEFF HELFRICH)

First responders were called to the scene near Wiscold Drive in Rochelle at 2:16 a.m. Sunday morning for a report of a vehicle that had driven into the lake. A witness at the park near the lake reported that a vehicle pulled up to the boat ramp, backed up, and then accelerated forwards into the lake.

## Sold-out conference addresses cross-state forestry challenges, points to solutions

**DUBUQUE, Iowa** — Forest owners voted with their feet this year, selling out the 26th Tri-State Forest Stewardship Conference weeks before its March 1 event date. More than 300 participants packed the Grand River Conference Center in Dubuque.

The rise in attendance makes one thing clear: there is an urgency among private landowners who manage 80% of the region’s forests while facing challenges from invasive species, extreme weather events, and changing markets.

This year’s conference introduced a “Basics of Forestry” track that became an unexpected hit. Sessions on tree identification, working with foresters, and understanding

forest management plans drew standing-room-only crowds, highlighting the interest of new woodland owners looking for foundational knowledge through this event.

“One of the biggest strengths of the conference is its multi-state nature, both in the presenters and the audience,” says Christopher Evans, Extension forester with University of Illinois Extension. “Landowners from each state bring unique perspectives that enrich the entire community.”

The event buzzed with activity as dozens of exhibitors — from conservation nonprofits to timber businesses — engaged with attendees during breaks. Conversations spilled into hallways and continued through lunch

as participants swapped strategies for tackling common threats like oak regeneration challenges and emerging forest diseases.

Iowa State Extension Forester Billy Beck’s presentation regarding knowing your woodlands gave landowners practical tools to understand their woodland ecosystems at a deeper level. Meanwhile, University of Iowa’s Lara Noldner presented the keynote on cultural resource management and protecting archaeological sites in forested areas.

Sessions on invasive species management, generational land transfers, and wildlife habitat management all ran over their allotted times as questions from participants continued well beyond scheduled

endpoints.

Despite representing three states with varied forest types, attendees discovered their core challenges transcend state lines.

“Despite ecological differences across the region, similar broad issues affect all woodland owners,” says Kris Tiles, forestry and wildlife program manager with University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension. “Invasive species, extreme weather, changing markets, family transitions — these impact landowners regardless of whether they’re managing sugar maple or white oak.”

The day concluded with a forward-looking panel featuring forestry leaders from Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin discussing new cost-share opportunities and evolving programs



(COURTESY PHOTO)

Forest owners voted with their feet this year, selling out the 26th Tri-State Forest Stewardship Conference weeks before its March 1 event date. More than 300 participants packed the Grand River Conference Center in Dubuque.

available to private landowners.

The conference is co-hosted by University of Illinois Extension, Iowa State Extension, and University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension.

The 2026 Tri-State Forest Stewardship Conference will be hosted by Wisconsin next year, building on the momentum of this year’s success.

## County electronics recycling event is April 25

**OREGON** — The Ogle County Solid Waste Management Department (OCSWMD) will be hosting a residential electronics recycling event on Friday, April 25 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 909 Pines Road in Oregon.

This event is for Ogle County residents only and

a free permit is required in advance of the event. To obtain a free permit call 815-732-4020 or email [solidwaste@oglecountyil.gov](mailto:solidwaste@oglecountyil.gov) and provide your name, address, phone number and email address by 4 p.m. on Thursday, April 24.

Accepted items include all televisions and com-

puter monitors, computers, computer hardware and cables, laptops, tablets, cell phones, printers, FAX machines, scanners, shredders (no tubs), copiers, video gaming equipment, DVD/VCRs, cable/satellite boxes, stereo equipment, radios, digital clocks, cameras, calculators, phone

systems, holiday light strands, extension cords, rechargeable batteries, printer ink cartridges, CD/DVDs, and CFL bulbs. Microwave ovens accepted for \$5 per unit. Cash or check accepted.

Limit seven (7) large or bulky items per permit and one permit per coun-

ty household per month. Business or institutional electronic materials not accepted at these events. Business or institutional electronics are accepted by the OCSWMD via a separate program. Call the number above for more information and pricing for business electronic

recycling, and to make an appointment for drop off of the materials to be recycled.

For more information about this recycling event call the OCSWMD at the number above, visit [www.oglecountyil.gov](http://www.oglecountyil.gov), or on Facebook at Ogle County Solid Waste Management Dept.

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***Reflecting on the 10 years since the EF4 tornado  
tore through Ogle County***



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**“That’s what rural communities do, they check on each other. That’s what we continue to do.”**  
**Ogle County Sheriff Brian VanVickle**



# VanVickle reflects on EF4 tornado near Rochelle as 10-year anniversary approaches

By Jeff Helfrich  
 MANAGING EDITOR

ROCHELLE — One of Brian VanVickle’s most vivid memories from the 2015 EF4 tornado that hit rural Rochelle was a phone call with his mother. “She called me and said, ‘I think your house got hit,’” VanVickle said. “I said, ‘Yeah, it did.’ Because I had already talked to my brother in law. She was just trying to be a mom. I just told her everyone was OK, and that things can be replaced. I said I had to go to work and hung up the phone.”

April 9 is the 10-year anniversary of the tornado that brought 200 mile per hour winds that damaged 179 structures and demolished 30 homes near Rochelle. There were no fatalities in the local area and most injuries were minor. The tornado first touched down in Lee County west of Ashton before destroying most of its 30 homes in a subdivision northwest of Flag Center. The twister then cut a northeasterly path through Ogle County to the small DeKalb County village of Fairdale where two women were killed and most homes devastated.

VanVickle owned one of the homes that was destroyed near Rochelle and headed up most of the first responders that day.

“It’s still emotional to think about,” VanVickle said. “Those are the phone calls you remember. I remember my brother in law calling and saying both of our houses were gone. And then a couple days later on Saturday you remember all of the people that came out to help.”

The National Weather service had released information about potential severe weather in the area several days prior to the tornado, VanVickle said. Local officials were told that if the sun came out in the early afternoon, a bad storm would follow. That was the case, and VanVickle recalls ramping up preparations when warning signs started to show.

During the weeks before the tornado, the Ogle County Sheriff’s Office was preparing for one of its nuclear plant emergency drills. Those plans were put to use sooner than expected.

“That night I went to a meeting in Dixon,” VanVickle said. “We’re used to thunderstorms here, but the sky was coal black. The storm started near where we were in Dixon. Shortly after that, all of the information started to come in. We rolled our nuclear response plans with barricades and everything we do with that into the response to the tornado. We used all those preplans for the tornado that night. Our first priority on a night like that is life safety issues. It’s making sure the people that were injured received the support they needed.”

VanVickle said he was thankful there were no deaths and minimal injuries. He believes that can be attributed to warnings and messaging put out ahead of the storm with information from the National

Weather Service.

Recovery efforts took place in the days that followed the tornado. Relief groups came to the area including nongovernmental organizations like Samaritan’s Purse, which VanVickle thanked for having the community’s best interest at heart and trying to get people on the road to recovery.

VanVickle estimates he slept about eight hours total in the three days after the weather event. He recalls people coming to the site of his home to help with things he couldn’t, because he was busy with sheriff responsibilities.

“There was a big community outreach,” VanVickle said. “And it wasn’t just for my family. It was for everybody. I remember being at the old high school parking lot with 2,000 or however many volunteers there were that morning. Samaritan’s Purse helped with organizing that. Those weren’t just people from Rochelle or Ogle County. Those people were from all over the midwest. That meant a lot to us, the people coming out.”

As the area finds itself in storm season again this year, VanVickle said his office continues to be prepared for emergencies. He believes Ogle County has become a leader in emergency management for rural communities because of its past response to real world events and its regular nuclear plant drills.

Technology in storm preparation has made strides in the past 10 years, VanVickle said. The Ogle County Dispatch Center now has a dashboard with storm trackers and live radar. There is new development in public alert and warning systems where alarms can be sent to cell phones.

“We were prepared that day and as we move forward into storm season again, we’re even better prepared now with different and additional technology and resources,” VanVickle said. “When it strikes that close to home like it did that day, you don’t take those warnings lightly. You continue to try to make sure that everybody has the best information going forward.”

VanVickle was in office as sheriff for a total of four months before the tornado hit. He said he was fortunate to have been through drills beforehand and that his office had a veteran command staff in place with people that knew what their roles were in a disaster.

Stories of lost items from the area on April 9, 2015 are in no short supply. Items from rural Rochelle were found all the way on the shore of Lake Michigan.

“The craziest story we had was, when my son was little, my grandfather gave him a Boston Celtics jersey



Just four months into his tenure as Ogle County Sheriff, Brian VanVickle was tasked with leading the response to the EF4 tornado that hit rural Rochelle.

(2015 FILE PHOTOS)



for his birthday,” VanVickle said. “It was small and on a hanger. A girl from my daughter’s volleyball team found it after the tornado and it was still on the hanger. And it was clean as could be. That’s wild to me, having a piece of clothing still on a hanger and not dirty and found 45-50 miles away.”

VanVickle has multiple generations of family history in Rochelle. That meant when the tornado happened, he knew pretty much everyone that suffered losses. The good that came with that bad was that when he went to their door to check on those people, they saw a familiar face.

“We did that with everyone that was impacted,” VanVickle said. “We checked on them multiple times. That’s what you do. That’s what rural communities do, they check on each other. That’s what we continue to do. I think the biggest takeaway from it for me was that everybody was OK and things can be replaced. Just like what I told my mom when she called me after the tornado. At the end of the day, that’s always our goal, to make sure that everybody is safe. Houses can be replaced. Possessions can be bought again. But people can’t.”

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## RFD's Sawlsville on 2015 tornado response:

# 'It was absolutely crazy the way that call evolved'



## Current RFD chief was lieutenant on duty, responded to Flagg Center and Grubsteakers

By Jeff Helfrich  
MANAGING EDITOR

**ROCHELLE** — After hearing a report that a tornado had hit northwest of Rochelle on April 9, 2015, then-Rochelle Fire Department Dave Sawlsville left the RFD fire station with a crew heading towards that area. While on Illinois Route 251, they saw it for themselves.

"When we got to Flagg Road I could see the tornado north of town moving to the east," Sawlsville, now RFD's chief, said. "You could see it clear as a bell. And we were sitting at the intersection watching it and it wasn't even raining on us. We went west on Flagg Road towards the area that was hit. That was when we saw the devastation. Houses were leveled."

RFD personnel arrived on scene prepared to administer care to anyone in need. Amid all of the destruction, they found no fires, gas leaks or injuries in the areas of Skare Court and Cherry Hill.

One individual had to be helped from a basement in Cherry Hill, but there was no house above it to free them from. Only a ladder was required. The EF4 tornado damaged 179 structures in Ogle County and destroyed 20-30 homes in rural Rochelle after winds reached over 200 miles per hour.

"It was absolutely crazy the way that call evolved," Sawlsville said. "Nobody was missing. With that kind of devastation you expect to see injuries, and there was just nothing."

RFD and Ogle-Lee Fire Protection District personnel were then called to Grubsteakers restaurant at 14698 Illinois Route 64 for a report of people trapped in its basement after the

tornado hit the building.

One individual was found injured outside at that location and transported to an area hospital. 12 people were trapped in the basement for nearly 90 minutes before RFD, OLFPD and Lynn-Scott-Rock Fire Protection District personnel freed them.

"The building had substantial damage but the floor joists held," Sawlsville said. "They were just trapped. There were no other injuries. We cleared the basement doorway and 12 people walked out of that structure. As you're approaching the scene and that restaurant is gone, you think, 'Oh my God.' You wonder if it's going to be a building collapse with search and rescue and what it's going to take to move the debris. You have to figure out what you're actually dealing with. We could have needed big cranes. But all we needed was a chainsaw. You walk around the building three times and know what you need to do to help people. The owner of the restaurant herded all the customers outside and into the basement through an exterior door."

Sawlsville said that with immediate limited resources and after seeing the large tornado making its way east earlier on, the ride down Flagg Road towards the damaged area was a long one.

"Because we didn't know what was waiting for us when we got there," Sawlsville said. "Am I going to have five houses on fire or people laying in the street? We didn't know. We didn't know what we'd need. We wanted to get it right whether it was for fires or injuries or both. It took us two minutes to get there and see. But it felt like 20 minutes. We very quickly realized that what we needed was just ac-

countability of all of the people."

Sawlsville attributes the lack of injuries on April 9, 2015 to people taking weather warnings seriously and getting to safe places in their homes. He said the community members impacted made sure their neighbors knew the seriousness of the situation.

The RFD chief is thankful that people were prepared and that the tornado didn't then shift towards more densely-populated areas.

"It was a sight to behold," Sawlsville said. "It's one of those 'Could have been' things. There are schools and mobile home communities that could have been in the path. The tornado covered a lot of farm ground and an occasional farm house. If you have to have an EF4, you want it to stay out in rural areas. We were incredibly fortunate."

After helping people at Grubsteakers, first responders cleared farmhouses and structures in the path of the tornado. Neighboring fire departments then started to arrive in the area to strengthen the response. After nobody else was found to be missing or injured, debris removal became the next task.

The next morning yielded mutual aid task forces, volunteers from relief organizations Samaritan's Purse and The Red Cross, community members and area contractors to help with cleanup.

"The debris removal was very organized and methodical and there was a lot of volunteer help," Sawlsville said. "We got our arms around where to send people if they wanted to make donations. We didn't anticipate 1,800 volunteers showing up. That was awesome. You have to support that effort



with things like portable restrooms and food. We had a command center at the Flagg Center fire station and had incoming fire departments report there. Local restaurants sent so much food out there for first responders, which was awesome to see. There's a tremendous amount of resources out there to help. You just have to tap into them and be able to support them."

Sawlsville said he believes the emergency response system worked well in response to the tornado. The experience gave area first responders a chance to learn for potential future events like it.

RFD's chief says he now feels more prepared for spring storms due to that experience, with improved warning technology and the community now knowing from experience to take them

seriously. 10 years later, Sawlsville still marvels at the outpouring of support from the community following the tornado.

"It was awesome to see," Sawlsville said. "And not just in big ways, but in so many small ways. Local contractors showed up with heavy equipment to clear large debris. Ordinary citizens showed up with their work gloves to pick up debris and were raking people's lawns. Samaritan's Purse was a great organization and showed up with hundreds of people. Within four days, other than the buildings that were gone, you would not have known a tornado had hit. It just looked like a subdivision that was under construction. It was a sight to see."

Outside of his capacity with RFD, Sawlsville does disaster response work around the country.

He's seen firsthand how disasters like tornadoes, hurricanes and wildland fires are becoming more severe. He wants the community to understand what that means.

"I would encourage people to be aware of their surroundings and what's going on with the weather," Sawlsville said. "We're seeing crazy events that we've never seen before. And I believe they're only going to continue to get worse. It's probably time to have more of those preparatory conversations. Tell your kids when those sirens go off, it's time to go. That day, we were all hands on deck and maxed out in terms of capabilities. Our goal is always to help people, but there's only so much we can do right off the bat. Whatever you can do to prepare and help yourself can give us a good start."



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# Former RACF executive director reflects on fundraising work following 2015 EF4 tornado

By Jeff Helfrich  
MANAGING EDITOR

**ROCHELLE** — Following an April 9, 2015 EF4 tornado that damaged 179 structures in Ogle County and destroyed 20-30 homes in rural Rochelle after winds reached over 200 miles per hour, then-Rochelle Area Community Foundation Executive Director Kim Montgomery knew someone had to step up to assist with the fundraising work that was going to take place.

“Everyone was in shock,” Montgomery said. “I knew people were going to want to make contributions to help those affected. I called our RACF board chairman about responding to it and getting involved. The board was in favor of stepping up as an organization that would accept contributions to support the people affected by the tornado. I think we held that money and distributed it actively for about a year. We didn’t immediately see who was going to do that for people here. So we decided to step up.”

In the year that followed the tornado, RACF opened a fund for the long-term recovery and collected \$542,823.83. Donations came in from individuals locally and across the country and many organizations in the state.

The Rochelle Area Community Foundation raises funds for various dedicated

“It was absolutely amazing what took place and how the community pulled together.”



community causes and provides caretaker services for the funds. It was established in 2005 for donors big and small.

“Raising that kind of money and doing it in that way was different for us,” Montgomery said. “RACF typically handles specific funds that are invested and not given right away. There wasn’t another local organization that was ready and able to help like RACF was. It was daunting to step into that role. We were all volunteers when we were working on all of that. I learned a lot. I was very thankful to do it and that we had so many other organizations and people to help. We all just put our heads down and worked.”

The fundraising and organization work became more than RACF expected with donations flooding in. Montgomery said the Rochelle nonprofit sought guidance from the Council on Foundations and other community foundations in Illinois that had done similar work helping with disasters.

The funds were dispersed using a Red Cross system where affected residents did interviews on the losses they suffered that resulted in reports. RACF established committees of community members that resourced items besides money that were needed and reviewed cases of those affected and assigned funding for them.

All of the funding distribution was done anonymously to ensure fairness.

“It was a complicated process, but we were lucky to have the resources we had,” Montgomery said. “In the end it worked out well and we wouldn’t have done it any other way. Because it was anonymous, we didn’t know who was getting the money. It was all confidential. But we could all see the rebuilding and recovery. I just felt good that we were able to help.

My role was just to help with making sure things were organized and that we were keeping records and I helped to lead the committees that worked on it.”

Montgomery called the donations that came in for the relief fund “overwhelming.” Large amounts of mail were seen and donations small and large came from all over the United States and outside the country.

“Money came from people that didn’t even know anyone in Rochelle or anything about the city,” Montgomery said. “I was blown away by the generosity. And we obviously had some big donors locally and so many people helped out from here.”

RACF held onto the remaining funds until two years passed and used what was left over to establish a fund for future disaster relief. Montgomery called the experience as a whole and seeing the community come together “absolutely amazing.”

Montgomery was part-time in her position at RACF. After working her regular 20 hours a week, she continued to volunteer on the tornado disaster relief project along with the board members and other community volunteers that helped with it. She estimates she worked 12-14-hour days for seven days a week for about six months on the project. Montgomery retired from RACF in 2021.

“It’s up there in terms of things I’m proudest of from my time at RACF,” Montgomery said. “In terms of impact, it’s the most impactful work we did. That experience and my entire experience with RACF as a whole made me feel really good about Rochelle. The people’s generosity and the way they pulled together to try to help others and make them feel whole again was heartwarming. Rochelle is a great community and its leadership was fabulous and great to work with.”





Natural disasters

## Prepare for the unexpected!

### Has a weather event caused a power outage?

FIND OUT HOW TO STAY SAFE

From violent winds and thunderstorms to ice storms and tornadoes, power outages are common when Mother Nature gets out of control. What should you do when such a situation arises? Here are a few things to always keep in mind.

First, unplug all your appliances, tools and electronic devices to avoid a power surge when the power comes back on. Also, turn off all the lights except one inside and one outside your home. This way, you'll know when the power outage is over.

If you use candles for lighting, place them in stable candleholders, away from items that could catch fire. And above all, don't leave them unattended.

Never use outdoor appliances, such as charcoal or propane barbecues or camp stoves, indoors for heating or cooking. These devices can cause potentially fatal carbon monoxide poisoning if not adequately vented.



If the power outage lasts a long time and happens in winter, you must leave your home and take essential items, such as medication, identity papers, money and clothing. Contact your municipality to find out about temporary accommodation.

Wind is a powerful force that can be both beneficial and damaging. While it helps pollinate plants, generate energy and propel sailboats, excessive wind can also lead to significant destruction and put your safety at risk. Here are a few practical tips on protecting yourself during tornadoes and other violent windstorms.

#### INDOORS

When indoors during a windstorm:

- Stay away from windows and doors, as they could suddenly burst open.
- Take refuge in a small, closed room, like a bathroom, on the ground floor of your home. Better yet, go to the basement or get under a solid piece of furniture.
- Use the stairs rather than the elevators if you're in a building.

#### OUTDOORS

When outside during a windstorm:

- If possible, enter a building with a solid roof. Avoid large buildings where the roof could collapse, such as churches or barns.
- If you find yourself in an open area, look for a deeper spot, like a ditch. Lie flat on your stomach and hold onto your head to protect it.
- Stay away from bodies of water, as the wind could create large waves.

If your local authority informs you that you must evacuate your home, follow the instructions without hesitation. After all, your safety is at stake!

### What to do in a flood

When facing flash floods, torrential rain or a burst dam, it's crucial to react appropriately to ensure your safety and protect your property. Here's a checklist of what to do before, during and after a flood.

**PREVENTIVE MEASURES**  
 Tip the odds in your favour by following these recommendations:

- If you have a basement, caulk around the windows.
- Ensure your eavestroughs direct water as far away from your property as possible.
- Install a sump pump and floor drains with non-return valves. Make sure to test them regularly.

If the situation is imminent or has just begun:

- Place sandbags and polyethylene membranes in front of entrances and openings if your municipality recommends.
- Turn off basement heaters.
- Turn off propane valves, if applicable.
- Block the sewer lines if you don't have a valve.
- Elevate your belongings in the basement, including electronics, furniture and important documents. Move toxic products, like insecticides, to the upper floors of your home.
- Switch off the electricity supply if, and only if, the area is completely dry.
- Follow the authorities' instructions, especially if they order you to evacuate your home. In this case, leave your home calmly and take your emergency kit, which includes everything you need for 72 hours.



**UNSUSPECTED DANGERS**  
 It's also important to be aware of specific actions that should be avoided during a flood. For example, crossing a flooded area on foot is extremely dangerous, as you could fall and be swept away by the current.

The same warning applies to travelling by car. The water may be deeper and the current more powerful than you think. If your car breaks down in a place where the water level is rising rapidly, don't hesitate to abandon it and flee the scene.

**SAFE RETURN**  
 If a flood has damaged your property and you had to evacuate, you mustn't return until you've obtained permission from the civil authorities. If necessary, you should also contact a qualified electrician. Once you have permission to return, assess the damage by taking photos and videos. After that, contact your insurer and hire a disaster clean-up company to help with the cleanup process.

Remember these tips if you're ever in this type of situation.

### Tornadoes, hurricanes and violent winds: practical advice



**DID YOU KNOW?**  
Cars and mobile homes are not safe places to take refuge in the event of a tornado or other violent wind event.



# LOCAL VIEWS

## Lincoln Highway: A square deal

THERE are many times in a person's life when they wonder if their children, or grandchildren, are listening to them. A short while back I picked up my granddaughter, Kathryn Grace, after school and, as is our habit, we picked up an after-school drink at a local drive thru. I asked Kathryn if she was ready to head home and she stunned me with her reply, "No, let's cut a square and relax." Cutting a square was a major part of my high school life. In the 1960s and 1970s we even walked squares. During high school one could walk the second-floor square or the first-floor square. After school, if you had a car you could drive the square. Although the route changed periodically one portion was constant: From Illinois Route 38 at the north end, south on Lincoln Highway to Lincoln Avenue, west on Lincoln Avenue to Sixth Street to Fourth Avenue, east on Fourth Avenue to Lincoln Highway. Lincoln Highway north to the turnaround point of the day. In my day in the 1960s and 1970s the turn-around was A&W Root Beer (sorry

Joe Dearth), later McDonald's, and then Arby's. In my mother's time they "Cruised the loop" which included Illinois Route 38, Lincoln Highway, Lincoln Avenue, and Seventh Street, a rectangle that went through the downtown and circled back past the high school. The purpose of the square was simple. There were no cell phones and once you left your house there was no way to contact your friends. Today this is called an information desert. Cutting the square filled the void. You drove the square until you spotted one of your friends, or a lost soul on foot, and then met them at the National Bank Parking lot. Friends were picked up, girls were met, and plans were made. The square was possibly the most important mile of the first coast-to-coast highway. It was in 1912 that Carl Fisher, owner of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, came up with the idea of a shore-to-shore, cross country, hard surface roadway. In large cities and some smaller communities there were some brick streets and others

permanent surfaces. Once you left the boundaries of the cities the majority were ungraded dirt paths. Carl had upgraded his racetrack from dirt to brick and was amazed at the improvement for the drivers. The raceway is still known as "The Brickyard." By 1913 the Lincoln Highway Association was founded with the following mission, "Immediately promote and procure the establishment of a continuous improved highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific, open to lawful traffic of all descriptions without toll charges and to be of concrete wherever practicable." The initial hope was to have the project funded by auto-makers but the reception was mixed. Henry Ford was not interested, he was afraid that if industry paid for the initial project the public would never be willing to pay for the upkeep. Frank Seiberling, president of Goodyear Tire, and Henry Joy, president of Packard Motor Car

Company, stood squarely (get it) behind the idea. Henry Joy pressed to have the project named Lincoln Highway, he felt that naming the project after President Lincoln would garner a patriotic response and improve donations. Henry Joy agreed to take the lead and became president of the Lincoln Highway Association. When corporate sponsorship fell short, federal and local government sponsorship came into play. The 1916 Federal Highway Act provided some matching funds for construction. Everyone seemed willing to contribute something but many would only participate in paying if the route went through their state, county, or community. The Lincoln Highway Association fought the good fight, they decided on the route and did their best to stay with the plan. State councils were formed, district and county councils were organized, and local or community consuls were appointed. Rochelle Street Commissioner M.L. Pick-

le led the local response. To stimulate interest it was decided to create "seedling miles" replacing one-mile sections of dirt road with graded, concrete road. Malta, Illinois was one of the first (1914) "seedling miles" and a small section has been preserved near the cemetery west of the community. From 1913 through 1935 Lincoln Highway grew and improved, through 13 states covering more than 3,000 miles. The road was officially opened in 1923 but not completely paved until 1935. Before she was a household name, Emily Post chose to make a name for herself by driving the Lincoln Highway from New York to California. This was in 1915, and even though the highway had been improved it was a long way from complete. Emily made it to Rochelle and was faced with a "sea of mud." Emily stayed a few days at the Collier Hotel before loading her car onto a west bound train, finishing her trip to California by rail. By 1925 the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads declared that there could be no named trails

of highways so Lincoln Highway became known as U.S. 1, U.S. 30, U.S. 40, and U.S. 50. Not to be outdone one the final stages of the Lincoln Highway was the installation of the famous Lincoln Highway markers. On September 1, 1928 the Boy Scouts of America began installing concrete markers at approximately one-mile intervals along the entire route of the highway. These 220-pound, concrete markers featured a bronze medallion with Abraham Lincoln's profile and direction arrows were installed with the declaration, "THIS HIGHWAY DEDICATED TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN." Two of these markers can be seen at the Flagg Township Museum. Cutting a square has largely faded from the scene, young faces are almost surgically attached to their cell phones. But one day in 2024, a high school student brightened her grandfather's day with a simple statement, "No, let's cut a square and relax." Tom McDermott is a Flagg Township Museum historian and Rochelle city councilman.



Tom McDermott

## Lowell Harp: Politics as psychotherapy

Psychotherapy isn't the same thing as politics. I'm convinced, though, that politicians and political parties need to respect some of its basic principles, if they want to earn and keep the support of the people. Psychotherapy wasn't a core part of my 30-year career as a school psychologist, but, about 40 years ago, I practiced therapy on a limited basis within and outside of my job with the schools. That modest level of involvement lasted for only a few years and I don't claim the expertise of a career therapist. It did nevertheless provide a set of principles that I've found to be valuable in my work as a school psychologist, my personal life, and my column.

My approach to working with individuals and families back then was centered around the idea of resistance. Maybe a less judgmental word for it would be homeostasis, which comes from the field of biology. It's the tendency of all living things to resist outside pressures that threaten to change their internal workings. Heat regulation is one example: the way our bodies work to stay between 97 and 99 degrees Fahrenheit in resistance to fluctuating temperatures on the outside. Homeostasis or resistance also happens when someone comes to a therapist for help—or, for that matter, when a political party tries to help a nation move toward change. A problem behavior may be causing distress, but a person wouldn't keep doing

it if it didn't serve some purpose, consciously or otherwise. A person—or a nation—will resist change until he's convinced, at a conscious and unconscious level, that it's safe to do so. My approach to therapy was grounded in an acknowledgement that the client's resistance was more powerful than I was. It had homeostasis on its side and veto power over any changes that I might recommend. I tried to enter the client's mental model of the world, the beliefs and fears that were the source of his resistance to change, and to operate within it. I recall a story about famed hypnotherapist Milton Erickson that's a beautiful example of entering the client's world view. He was the director of a mental institution at the time. One of the residents, who insist-

ed that he was Jesus Christ, refused to participate in the institution's therapeutic woodworking shop. The staff asked Dr. Erickson to talk to him, and he quickly overcame the client's resistance by saying, "I hear you're a carpenter." The resident could hardly disagree and willingly participated in the workshop. The key to overcoming resistance in a client, a voter, or a nation is to enter their world-view. We'll then discover a positive intention, however misguided it may seem, underlying their resistance. Phobias are an obvious example—they seem to protect the person from being exposed to situations that he sees as threatening. My goal as a therapist was to find the positive intention behind the cli-

ent's resistance, to show appreciation for its efforts to protect him, and to reassure him that I wouldn't introduce any changes until he was ready for them. A therapist who admits to powerlessness against a person's resistance can then become powerful as its ally, working from within to find a solution. A political party must likewise respect a voter's or a nation's resistance to change, recognize the positive intent behind it, and create solutions that are responsive to it. The history of both political parties is one of disregarding the importance of homeostasis and resistance; failing to work from within the world-view of persuadable voters; overinterpreting supposed mandates; enacting policies that the public wasn't ready to accept; and then suffering

defeat at the next election. The Democratic Party came to an end of this cycle last November. The Republican Party is now at stage one, as it enacts one unpopular policy after another under the delusion that it has a mandate. The Democratic and Republican parties must enter the world-view and adopt the language of the majority of the nation, instead of speaking to their MAGA and Progressive bases, if they hope to escape that cycle and become authentic voices of the American people. Lowell Harp is a retired school psychologist who served school districts in Ogle County. His column runs monthly in The Ogle County Life. For previous articles, you can follow him on Facebook at <http://fb.me/lowellharp>.

### How to contact government officials

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**IL Sen. Li Arellano Jr.**  
Stratton Office Bldg  
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# COMMUNITY

## Local Girl Scout Council opens new Maker Space in Stillman Valley

**STILLMAN VALLEY** – Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois (GSNI) will open its new Maker Space on Sunday, April 13, on the grounds of the organization's Camp McCormick in Stillman Valley. There will be an official ribbon cutting, tours of the space, and opportunities for registered guests to create special Maker Space souvenirs. The new space includes materials and machines for creating with robotics, engineering, engraving, textiles, paper craft, metal, glass, tile, and video making.

The Stillman Valley location marks the organization's second Maker Space with the first being located on the grounds of GSNI's Camp Dean in Big Rock, Illinois. Both Maker Spaces were the focus of Girl Scout Kaitlin Liu's Gold Award project. The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest award a Girl Scout can earn. Liu applied for and received an In Youth We Trust grant

from the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois as starter funding for the Camp McCormick Maker Space. She then successfully led a team to create spaces where Girl Scouts could increase their STEM knowledge and build lifelong skill sets.

Volunteers from Collins Aerospace donated many hours to the opening of the Camp McCormick Maker Space. Collins employees tackled various assembly projects, from furniture to bins, while also lending their expertise to painting and organizing tasks. GSNI's Chief of Property and Program Officer Jason Jones says, "Their collective efforts have significantly propelled the readiness of the space, ensuring a vibrant and well-equipped environment to explore and create. We are very grateful for such support and hope many children will benefit from the space this year and future years to come!"



(COURTESY PHOTO)  
**Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois (GSNI) will open its new Maker Space on Sunday, April 13.**

Camp McCormick's Maker Space was also generously funded by grants from Collins Aerospace and Nicor Gas. Many private individuals

also gave financial gifts. Materials, machines, and supplies to stock the space were crowdsourced from anonymous individuals via Amazon Wishlist.

## Salinas named to Dean's List at Palmer College of Chiropractic

**DAVENPORT, Iowa** —The following students were named to the 2024 fall trimester Dean's List

at Palmer College of Chiropractic's Main Campus in Davenport, Iowa. Britney Salinas of Lin-

denwood. Palmer College of Chiropractic, the first and largest college in the chi-

ropractic profession, has campuses in Davenport, Iowa, and Port Orange, Florida.

### BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

April 10 Johnny Gonzales	April 12 Charles Peterman	April 19 Pastor Angelo Bonacquisti	April 26 Evan Jones
April 11 Bev Wiginton Jan Kissick Christine Doering Chris & Christine Doering (anniversary)	April 16 Marissa Seldal James Doering	April 21 Emma Waters	April 30 Nora Bridgeman Oakley Gonzales
	April 18 Millie Danekas	April 24 Jose Tlapa Lainie Arnold	May 1 Jamey King

**Call 815-561-2151 to submit names for birthdays and anniversaries**



## Coffee Break

### King Crossword

**ACROSS**  
1 Mediocre  
5 Church seat  
8 Greenish blue  
12 Tora —, Afghanistan  
13 Noshed  
14 PETA concerns  
15 Slight criticisms  
17 Pear-shaped fruits  
18 Step  
19 Hot dish holder  
21 Oodles  
24 Log chopper  
25 Mandatory coll. courses  
28 Calendar entry (Abbr.)  
30 Zodiac animal  
33 Chit  
34 Concepts  
35 Swelled head  
36 Singer  
37 Proscribes  
38 Eve's mate  
39 Born  
41 Entryway  
43 Dress designation  
46 Ignited again  
50 Shake — (hurry)  
51 Dropouts

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15					16				17			
18							19	20				
			21		22	23		24				
25	26	27			28		29			30	31	32
33				34						35		
36				37					38			
		39	40			41		42				
43	44				45			46		47	48	49
50					51	52	53					
54					55				56			
57					58				59			

**DOWN**  
1 Cookouts, briefly  
2 LummoX  
3 Met solo  
4 Customs  
5 Bud  
6 Bordeaux summer  
7 Left on a map  
8 Tack on  
9 Trembled  
10 Desire  
11 Celeb's aide  
16 Buddy  
20 "Phooey!"  
22 Zilch  
23 Shell out  
25 Estuary  
26 A gazillion years  
27 Groups of five  
29 El —, Texas  
31 Turkish title

32 Oft-tattooed word  
34 "A likely story!"  
38 "Queen of Soul" Franklin  
40 Skating figure  
42 Scrap  
43 Italian cheese, for short  
44 Sci-fi race  
45 Iso-  
47 Boxer Spinks  
48 Press  
49 Recipe amts.  
52 Web address  
53 Squid squirt

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### Weekly SUDOKU

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

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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### CryptoQuip

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

Clue: J equals C

HNFC DOA JSDDMAKSF  
JVNNFAI SH OA EWD INYF VPJO  
HNPM DN CVNY OPH ESHDWVA:  
"MNSK NF DOA VSFCA."

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

Answer

S	N	N	A	H	K	I	L	K	S	I	M
P	O	O	H	N	R	U	R	H	T	O	R
S	R	S	I	T	E	R	S	I	T	E	R
P	E	T	I	T	E	R	E	L	I	T	E
R	O	O	D	O	E	N	E	E	E	E	E
O	A	D	A	M	B	A	N	S	I	N	A
G	O	A	M	I	D	E	A	S	I	O	I
A	M	A	P	P	T	R	A	V	E	R	A
S	T	A	I	R	E	T	A	N	S	O	I
S	T	A	I	R	E	T	A	N	S	O	I
S	T	A	I	R	E	T	A	N	S	O	I
S	T	A	I	R	E	T	A	N	S	O	I
S	T	A	I	R	E	T	A	N	S	O	I
S	T	A	I	R	E	T	A	N	S	O	I

Answer  
Solution time: 24 mins.

King Crossword  
Weekly SUDOKU  
CryptoQuip





WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2025

ROCHELLE NEWS-LEADER • SECTION 2 • PAGE 1

# SPORTS



**LADY HUBS FACE G-K**

The Rochelle Lady Hub soccer team faced Genoa-Kingston on the road Friday.

See page 3 for more details

**RTHS Baseball**

## Hub bats fuel win at Belvidere

Metzger finishes 4 for 5 as Rochelle records 14 hits in 11-10 victory on Friday

BY RUSSELL HODGES  
SPORTS EDITOR

**BELVIDERE** — Senior Brandyn Metzger delivered four hits and three RBIs to lead the Rochelle Hub baseball team in an offensive nonconference varsity battle against Belvidere on Friday.

Rochelle rallied back from a two-run deficit, scoring seven runs over the final two innings and holding off a late surge from the Bucs to secure an 11-10 victory. Metzger hit four singles and scored two runs for the Hubs (2-0, 0-0 Interstate 8). Sophomore Andrew Huerta went 3 for 5 with one double and one RBI for the Hubs, who finished with 14 hits in the victory.

“It’s a great confidence builder,” said Metzger, whose Hubs are 2-0 to start a season for the first time in over nine years. “We haven’t started off with a win in either of the last two years I’ve been on varsity. Starting off with two of them is great... I went up trying to do a job. I went up and tried to get on base or bring somebody in and hit the ball where somebody isn’t. We were ready and we were locked in. Everybody did their jobs and everybody was ready to go.”

Rochelle struck first, tallying three runs in the top of the first inning. Senior Ethan Goodwin put the Hubs on the scoreboard,

lacing an RBI double into left-center to bring home sophomore Brody Bruns, who sparked the three-run frame with a one-out double. Metzger followed with a two-out RBI single up the middle before scoring on a Belvidere error two batters later.

Metzger’s big day at the dish continued in the top of the third inning, where the senior second baseman reached on an RBI infield single to the right side and gave Rochelle a 4-0 lead. The Bucs answered in the bottom half of the third inning, scoring two runs on RBI singles from Frankie Freeman and Paul Stark. Belvidere took the lead in the bottom of the fifth inning, capitalizing on five base hits and a trio of Rochelle errors to surge ahead of the Hubs 6-4.

Facing a two-run deficit, Rochelle responded with four runs in the top of the sixth inning, taking advantage of three base hits and a flurry of Belvidere fielding errors. Trailing 6-5 after Goodwin’s RBI groundout to first base, the Hubs tied the game when Metzger connected on his fourth single of the game, ripping an RBI single up the middle. Huerta followed with a big at-bat for the Hubs, smacking an RBI double to center with two outs to make the score 8-6 Rochelle.

“This is a really good group,” said Metzger, one



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

Senior Ethan Goodwin digs in at the plate during the Rochelle Hub baseball game against Belvidere on Friday. Goodwin finished with two hits as the Hubs defeated the Bucs 11-10 in nonconference action.

of two third-year varsity players on this year’s roster. “We’re all friends and we all like to mess with each other. We’re like brothers and we have some young guys, but they haven’t skipped a beat and they play just like us. They know what they’re doing and they do it well... We’re hitting the ball well,

better than I thought we would, and we’re fielding well. We made a few errors, but those are easily fixable.”

RBI singles from Bruns and senior Carson Lewis fueled a three-run surge in the top of the seventh inning that gave Rochelle a five-run lead entering the bottom half of the frame.

The Bucs nearly rallied to tie the game in the bottom of the seventh, opening the frame with four consecutive walks and drawing five total walks. Belvidere placed the tying runner on second base, but a flyout to right field ended the threat and locked down the victory for the Hubs.

Bruns started on the mound for the Hubs, throwing four innings and striking out five batters while holding Belvidere to two earned runs on three hits. Goodwin, who collected two hits and two RBIs, recorded the final three outs on the bump, striking out two batters with one walk.

**RTHS Girls Basketball**

## Lady Hub senior Darby commits to Kishwaukee College

Four-year varsity player earned All-Interstate 8 honors during 2024-25 season

BY RUSSELL HODGES  
SPORTS EDITOR

**ROCHELLE** — As a middle-schooler, Kendyl Darby kept a series of charts near her bedroom. These charts included a list of the goals she hoped to accomplish during her basketball career at Rochelle Township High School. Now a senior, Darby is both a top-10 scorer and rebounder for the Lady Hubs and intends to continue her academics and athletics at Kishwaukee College.

“I think Kish is a good fit for me,” Darby said. “I was up in the air about whether or not I wanted to play basketball and their coach contacted me about playing. I’m already friends with some of the girls on the team and I thought it would be fun for us to get the team back together. I’m really excited to keep playing. I’ve played basketball for so long that, when I wasn’t thinking about playing, it was weird to me that it was going to be all gone. I’m excited to keep playing.”

Darby played four years of varsity basketball for the Lady Hubs,

averaging 11.2 points, 6.7 rebounds and 1.5 steals per game during her senior season. Darby, who currently ranks ninth all-time with 942 points and third all-time with 641 rebounds at RTHS, earned All-Interstate 8 honors this year and was named Rochelle’s Most Valuable Player for the 2024-25 season.

“My leadership skills have gotten a lot better and I’ve become a lot more confident,” Darby said. “I’m not scared to take the ball to the basket and I’m not scared to do the things I need to do to win. It’s been a roller coaster and there’s been a lot of adjusting to different coaches, so I don’t think it’ll be a big deal to adjust to another new coach since I think I’m pretty coachable.”

A multi-sport athlete at RTHS, Darby played volleyball for two years and tennis for two years. Darby, who aspires to become an ultrasound technician, will reunite with two former RTHS teammates in Kara Martinez and Loretta Atkinson, who currently play basketball for the Kishwaukee College women’s team.



(PHOTO BY RUSSELL HODGES)

Senior Kendyl Darby has committed to continuing her academics and her basketball career at Kishwaukee College next year. Darby earned All-Interstate 8 honors during her senior season.

“Kendyl had a great career at RTHS,” head coach Jon Gehm said. “It has been a lot of fun to watch her grow as a player and individual since she

was in middle school. I thought she made a huge jump from her junior year to senior year and I can’t wait to see her play at the next level.”

An Academic All-Interstate 8 honoree this year, Darby started all 29 games for the Lady Hubs and led the team in double-doubles during the 2024-25 season.

Darby averaged 7.2 points and 5.7 rebounds during her junior year, when she played in 30 games and helped the Lady Hubs to 13 wins.





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### HUB SPOTLIGHT



**Edwin  
Cervantes**  
*Year: Freshman*  
*Sport: Baseball*

**Q: How many years have you been playing this sport?**

*A: 3-4 years.*

**Q: What do you enjoy most about this sport?**

*A: Hitting because it's fun.*

**Q: What is your favorite school subject and why?**

*A: English because Mr. Swartz is funny.*

**Q: Who is your favorite athlete and why?**

*A: Trentin Neale, he's my idol.*

**Q: Who is your biggest role model and why?**

*A: Mr. Mehrings because he's super athletic.*

**Q: What is your dream job and why?**

*A: To be a doctor because they get paid good and they save lives.*

**Q: Where would your dream vacation be and why?**

*A: China because it looks like a cool place to travel to.*

**Q: What is your favorite thing about being a student-athlete at RTHS?**

*A: I like the program and the coaches.*



**Gavin  
Thompson**  
*Year: Freshman*  
*Sport: Baseball*

**Q: How many years have you been playing this sport?**

*A: Four years.*

**Q: What do you enjoy most about this sport?**

*A: Stealing bases.*

**Q: What is your favorite school subject and why?**

*A: Lunch, I'm always hungry.*

**Q: Who is your favorite athlete and why?**

*A: Trevor Bauer.*

**Q: Who is your biggest role model and why?**

*A: My brother because he got me interested in the sport.*

**Q: What is your dream job and why?**

*A: To be a chef because I like food.*

**Q: Where would your dream vacation be and why?**

*A: Japan because it's beautiful there and I want to try the food.*

**Q: What is your favorite thing about being a student-athlete at RTHS?**

*A: The coaches.*

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# SPORTS

## RTHS Girls Soccer

(PHOTOS BY MARCY DELILLE)



### Rochelle Lady Hubs take on Genoa-Kingston in nonconference varsity action Friday evening

The Rochelle Lady Hub varsity soccer team faced Genoa-Kingston in a nonconference road match on Friday evening. Senior midfielder Emma Kennay scored one first-half goal and junior goalkeeper Rafaela Cannan recorded six saves for the Lady Hubs, who fell to the Cogs 4-1. Rochelle (3-3, 0-0 Interstate 8) returned home for a conference match against Sycamore on Monday evening. Above, senior Emma Kennay (left) battles with Genoa-Kingston's Ally Poegel for the ball and senior Makayla Lara (right) boots a free kick with her left foot. Below, sophomore Cali Zies (left) tracks down the ball and freshman Natalie Foster (right) meets Genoa-Kingston's Mariana Osorio for possession of the ball.

## 1st Annual Brandon Dodrill Memorial Tournament set for April 12

### Brandon Dodrill Memorial Foundation supports RTHS boys, girls bowling teams

**ROCHELLE** — The 1st Annual Brandon Dodrill Memorial Tournament will be held at Mardi Gras Lanes in DeKalb on Saturday, April 12 at 7 p.m. The entry fee will be \$50 per person and there are 80 slots available. The fundraiser will include ball raffles, drink specials and a 50/50 raffle.

Funds raised from the tournament will support the Brandon Dodrill Memorial Foundation, which raises money to support the Rochelle Township High School bowling program. Bowlers will bowl four games of nine-pin no-tap and results will be total pin fall with handicap. All games will be capped at

300 and handicap will be based off 90% of 200, but may not exceed 50 pins per game. Handicap will be based off highest average of the 2023-24 bowling season (21 games).

If bowlers do not have 21 games, a composite average will be used. If there's no composite average for the 2023-24

season, bowlers will use a highest average from the 2022-23 season. If there is no average, men will use 170 and women will use 150. It's each bowler's responsibility to ensure the proper average verification. Tournament directors will have the final decision.

Youth are allowed to

bowl. Winnings will be deposited into their SMART accounts. Anyone under 18 years of age must have a parent sign a form. Forms will be available on site. Payout for the tournament will be a 1:5 spots paid out. The \$50 entry fee includes \$15 toward lineage, \$10 toward the foundation and \$25 toward the prize fund.

A scratch division will be available for \$20 and all money collected will be paid back. Brackets and side pots will be available. There will be ball and jersey raffles. For questions or additional information, contact the foundation via email at [info@brandondodrillmemorialfoundation.org](mailto:info@brandondodrillmemorialfoundation.org).

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# SPORTS

## RTHS Softball



(PHOTOS BY RUSSELL HODGES)

The Rochelle Lady Hub softball team battled Belvidere in a nonconference varsity game on Friday evening. Above, sophomore Jaclynn Lira (left) loads up for a swing and senior Lauren Dyer (right) fires a pitch from the circle. Below, sophomore Briel Metzger takes a lead from first base.

## Lady Hubs avoid shutout in road loss to Belvidere

Dyer strikes out five, Rodriguez earns RBI as Rochelle falls to Bucs 11-1 on Friday

BY RUSSELL HODGES  
SPORTS EDITOR

**BELVIDERE** — A sacrifice fly from freshman Audrina Rodriguez allowed the Rochelle Lady Hub softball team to avoid the shutout during its non-conference game against Belvidere on Friday.

Rochelle took the first lead of the game, but a three-run first inning and a five-run fifth inning enabled the Bucs to beat the Lady Hubs 11-1 in five innings. Sophomore Emma Heller and senior Lauren Dyer each recorded base hits for the Lady Hubs (3-4, 0-0 Interstate 8), who will begin conference play with a home game against

LaSalle-Peru this week. Belvidere took a 3-1 lead in the bottom of the first inning, where Cadence Trevino smacked a game-tying RBI single to left field before Brianna Guerra cleared the bases with a two-run single. Zoe Gehrke, who scored on a wild pitch to give the Bucs a 4-1 lead in the third inning, drove another Belvidere run home on an RBI groundout in the bottom of the fourth inning, where Zoey-Lynn Pereira sparked the two-run frame with an RBI double that scored Jasi Ortiz.

Leading 6-1, Belvidere clinched its win with five runs in the bottom of the fifth inning. The Bucs

opened the frame with back-to-back singles before Trevino doubled to center for her second RBI of the evening. A bases-loaded walk and a wild pitch led to two more runs for the Bucs, who ended the game on a two-run double to left from Pereira. Pereira led Belvidere with three RBIs.

Guerra pitched all five innings for the Bucs, striking out seven batters and holding the Lady Hub offense to four walks and two hits. Dyer threw four and one-third innings for the Rochelle side, striking out five batters. Sophomore Phelisy Lopez reached base twice, drawing two walks.



## NIU Football

## Huskies hold first practice in pads of the spring

NIU coaches emphasizing physicality and technique as spring ball progresses

**DEKALB** — The Northern Illinois University football team wrapped up its first three spring practices Tuesday morning (April 1) with the team's first workout in full pads — "real football" — as NIU head coach Thomas Hammock calls it. NIU practiced for two hours, much of it in 11-on-11 situations, in the Chessick Practice Center.

Hammock, who enters his seventh season at the helm of the NIU program in 2025, has emphasized physicality and technique to a roster that features just five returning starters on offense and defense, 34 players who redshirted a year ago and 16 newcomers. On the first day in full pads, Hammock saw physicality, especially from the Huskie defense.

"Our defensive line is still very, very physical," Hammock said. "They can change the line of scrimmage and make it very uncomfortable. We still have a lot of work to do, a lot of moving parts. Our defense is doing a nice job changing looks and making it difficult."

Newcomer Jasper Beeler earned one of the turnovers during Tuesday's workout with an interception as the defense, understandably, came out fired up. While NIU does not tackle to the ground during practices, the intensity level was raised. NIU ranked fourth in the country in total defense and fifth in fewest passing yards allowed and was in the Top 20 in most other defensive categories.

"I think the defense has done a nice job enhancing some things, trying to find a way to create more pressure and finding more



(PHOTO COURTESY OF NIU ATHLETICS)

The Northern Illinois University football team wrapped up its first three spring practices Tuesday morning (April 1) with the team's first workout in full pads — "real football" — as NIU head coach Thomas Hammock calls it. NIU practiced for two hours, much of it in 11-on-11 situations, in the Chessick Practice Center.

creative ways to take the ball away, which they've done to their credit," Hammock said. "We have a lot of new guys on the back end of our defense and those guys have stepped right in."

In terms of leadership on the defensive side, Hammock pointed to the two returning starters in the Williams' — defensive ends Jalonnie and Roy (no relation) — as well as senior safety Muhammed Jammeh. While just two starters return, players like Jammeh, Jacob Finley and Cyrus McGarrell are all veterans with a significant number of snaps as Huskies.

"Defensively, Jalonnie, Roy and Muhammed have stepped up and are doing a nice job [as leaders]," Hammock said. "They've been in the program a while,

they understand how we do things. They understand the expectations and they're trying to make sure they do a good job of reinforcing that. Offensively, Evan Malcore and Abiathar Curry on the offense line, along with the quarterbacks, are stepping up as leaders."

After two days spending a lot of time on the passing game without pads, more time was devoted to the run Tuesday with a deep roster of young running backs showcasing their abilities early. Hammock said the learning curve for the offense is a little steeper with the installation of a new offense this spring.

"Offensively, it's all new, so it's going to be a new look offense with different concepts," Hammock said.

"I think our passing game will be greatly improved because it's not so predicated on people, it's more predicated on scheme, so we can be in a bunch of different personnel groupings and execute the same plays."

One of the most noticeable groups of newcomers through the first three workouts have been the wide receivers, where transfers Gary Givens, Akim Lanieux and DeAree Rogers have all made plays alongside returnees Dane Pardridge, La'Don Bryant, George Dimopoulos and tight end Grayson Barnes.

"I really like the competition at wide receiver," Hammock said. "I think those new guys have come in and shown what they're about. From a consistency standpoint, they're making

plays, making contested catches which is important."

While a lot of concepts and players were introduced to the offense during the offseason, running the plays against a defense provides a new challenge.

"We've had a nice plan all offseason of how to install our offense, but now it's going against a defense," Hammock said. "Those plays look great on air, but now you have to go against a defensive front, an alignment, people moving, people communicating. Now it's the process of watching the tape and learning the technique that it takes to execute the plays at a high level."

The annual Spring Showcase is set for Saturday, April 26 at Huskie Stadium beginning at Noon.

Season ticket prices for the Huskies' six 2025 home games begin at as little as \$110 each for a general admission ticket. With the purchase of the Huskie 4-Pack (four or more tickets), pay \$110 each for a reserved seat in sections A, B or F on the West Side. Reserved west side seating begins at \$152 with discounts available for NIU alumni, NIU faculty/staff, DeKalb County residents, seniors (62+) and members of the Varsity Club (former student-athletes).

Renew or purchase tickets for the 2025 NIU Football season now online at [NIUHuskies.com/tickets](http://NIUHuskies.com/tickets). For more information, call the NIU Ticket Office at 815-753-PACK (7225) weekdays between 9 a.m.-5 p.m. or email [huskietickets@niu.edu](mailto:huskietickets@niu.edu).



# SPORTS

## RTHS Boys Tennis



(PHOTOS BY RUSSELL HODGES)

The Rochelle Hub tennis team hosted a nonconference match against Belvidere North on Monday evening. At left, junior Mark Green tracks the ball down for a forehand shot. At right, junior Philip Winters prepares for a backhand shot. Below, sophomore Amor Lara hits a return shot with his forehand.

## Winters nets singles victory against Belvidere North

### Hub junior earns three-set win as Rochelle falls to Blue Thunder 4-1 on Monday

BY RUSSELL HODGES  
SPORTS EDITOR

**ROCHELLE**—Junior Philip Winters overcame a first-set defeat and persevered through a third-set super tiebreaker to earn the Rochelle Hub tennis team's lone match point during Monday evening's nonconference varsity match against the Belvidere North Blue Thunder.

Winters dominated the second set with consistent forehands and strong net play, carrying his momentum into the super tiebreaker, where the Hub netter outlasted Belvidere North's Jared Delgado to secure a

3-6, 6-1, 10-8 victory at the No. 2 singles court. The win allowed Rochelle to avoid the shutout, as the Blue Thunder swept all three doubles points and took one singles match to defeat the Hubs 4-1. Rochelle (1-1, 0-0 Interstate 8) will host Sycamore on Tuesday.

The Hubs trailed 1-0 after a loss at the No. 1 doubles court, where junior Caleb Mortensen and sophomore Noah McKinney fell 1-6, 1-6 defeat against Ryan Wolfram and Ben Leake. Action then turned to the No. 2 doubles court, where sophomore Derek Swartz and freshman David Eckardt played a promising

first set in a 3-6, 1-6 loss to Jaxson Orozco and Cade Parrovecchio.

Both singles matches went to three sets, with junior Mark Green recording a second-set shutout during his No. 1 singles match against Jayden Curtis. The clean set wasn't enough, however, as Curtis took the third-set tiebreaker to hand Green a 3-6, 6-0, 4-10 loss and clinch the win for the Blue Thunder. Junior Parker Slattengren and sophomore Amor Lara went three sets with Seth Williamson and Owen Crawford at No. 3 doubles, falling just short in a 2-6, 7-6(4), 6-10 defeat.



(PHOTOS BY RUSSELL HODGES)

## RTHS Girls Soccer



### Rochelle Lady Hubs kick off Interstate 8 Conference schedule with home loss against Sycamore

The Rochelle Lady Hub varsity soccer team opened Interstate 8 Conference action with a 9-0 home loss against Sycamore on Monday evening. Rochelle (3-4, 0-1 Interstate 8) will continue conference play on Wednesday, when the Lady Hubs hit the road for a match against Kaneland. Above, freshman Zoe Norberto (left) attempts to kick the ball away from Sycamore's Izzie Segreti and freshman Evelyn Garcia (right) tracks down Sycamore's Hailey Clawson.

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# Honoring our American Hero

## Rochelle's Koritz made ultimate sacrifice in U.S. Air Force in 1991

BY JEFF HELFRICH  
MANAGING EDITOR

**ROCHELLE**—Major Thomas F. Koritz of the United States Air Force was born and raised in Rochelle.

Koritz played football and was part of the National Honor Society at Rochelle Township High School, where he graduated from in 1971. He graduated from the University of Illinois with a bachelor's degree in science in 1975 and went on to attend the U of I College of Medicine in Rockford and graduated in 1979. He did a one-year medical residency in the Quad Cities.

Koritz always had a desire to fly jets. He decided at the age of 26 to apply for and attend Air Force officer candidate school in San Antonio, Texas before starting undergraduate pilot training at Columbus Air Force Base in Mississippi. He started out flying T-37s and progressed to T-38s and that training lasted about a year.

Koritz graduated first in his class, which meant he was

given the opportunity to choose his aircraft. He chose the F-15, which was top of the line at the time. Next came Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico for two months of more detailed fighter jet training. After another 5-6 month F-15 training course at Luke Air Force Base near Phoenix, Arizona, Koritz was assigned to the 94th Squadron at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia around 1981-1982.

At that point, Koritz started flying as a pilot and was not using his medical degree in the military. After three years in the 94th, the Air Force approached him about a special pilot-physician program. Koritz became the pilot physician for the F-15. He spent two more years at Langley in the 27th Squadron.

He then went to San Antonio, Texas and did a medical residency in aerospace medicine for two years. Around 1989-1990, the Air Force came out with air-to-ground F-15s and wanted to put Koritz in that weapons system to explore the user interface. He went to Luke AFB again for F-15 air-to-ground and he was assigned to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina in the 334th Squadron. He spent a year in North Carolina.

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 prompted a building up of military assets by the U.S. and its NATO coalition forces. Koritz' F-15 was shot down over Basra, Iraq on Jan. 17, 1991 during the Persian Gulf War on a mission to bomb a refinery. He and his partner were hit by anti-aircraft artillery and didn't survive. He was listed as missing in action until March 15 of that year.

"The Iraqis returned his remains to coalition forces once the ceasefire took place," Koritz' brother, Tim, said. "His remains were flown to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware and his identity was confirmed. I was active at the time in the Air Force at Holloman Air Force Base as a flight surgeon and I accompanied my brother's remains home. Then we had his funeral. He's buried in Lawnridge Cemetery. They had a fly by at his funeral by four F-15Es in the missing man formation. The Honor Guard from an Illinois Air Force base attended."

Tim Koritz said he believes the reason his brother



Major Thomas F. Koritz of the United States Air Force was born and raised in Rochelle. Koritz played football and was part of the National Honor Society at Rochelle Township High School, where he graduated from in 1971. He decided at the age of 26 to apply for and attend Air Force officer candidate school in San Antonio, Texas before starting undergraduate pilot training at Columbus Air Force Base in Mississippi.

chose to enlist in the Air Force after medical school was his love for aviation. When Tim and Tom were little, they were both fascinated by flight. Every time a plane would fly over, they would look up. Tom Koritz got familiar with flying at the Rochelle Municipal Airport and obtained his private pilot's license at U of I.

Tim Koritz remembers his older brother as a motivated man of the people.

"He was my best friend," Tim Koritz said. "I was his kid brother. I always wanted to do whatever he was doing. He

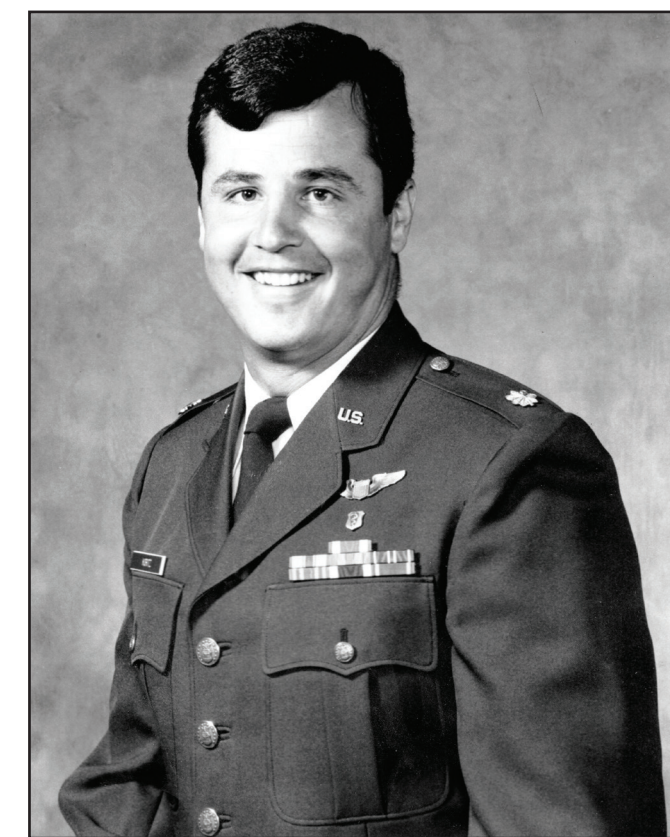


protected me and took me under his wing. He was a very decent person. He was very honest, and he was everyone's friend. He respected people and treated everybody well. He was highly motivated to be able to do both of the things he did in obtaining a medical degree and flying an F-15. F-15 pilots were the cream of the crop at the time, probably the top 10 percent. He was highly respected."

Military service runs in the Koritz family. Tom and Tim's father served in the Navy in World War II. Tom's son, Jon, is a full-time Air National Guard pilot. Tim Koritz

said service came naturally to them.

"I believe that part of being a citizen in the greatest country in the world is a responsibility to protect and defend the U.S.," Tim Koritz said. "We're happy and proud to serve in my family. My brother paid the ultimate price. That has to be respected. It was painful for us when it happened. But we understood he was doing what he wanted to do. And it was an important mission for humanity, to combat atrocious behavior and aggression by Iraq. There's sacrifices that have to be made."



(COURTESY PHOTOS)

After Tom's passing, the Rochelle Municipal Airport was renamed Koritz Field in his honor on July 4, 1991.

"Collectively, the people of Rochelle have been fantastic about supporting our family and appreciating what Tom did," Tim Koritz said. "There's a statue plaque at the airport dedicated to him. He has a display at City Hall. Everyone has been supportive and appreciative. I think people are proud to have had a kid from their town become an American Hero."

*Honoring Our American Hero is a series that prints twice a month in the News-Leader. If you know an American Hero you would like to have featured, contact Jeff Helfrich at [jhelfrich@rochellenews-leader.com](mailto:jhelfrich@rochellenews-leader.com) or call 815-561-2151.*

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## 101 LEGAL NOTICE

**NOTICE**  
A Mini Storage, LLC, A storage facility located at 117 Quarry Road Rochelle, IL hereby announces that the possessions of the following lessees will be disposed of by means of auction on April 17th 2025, at 9:00 AM. Disposal of personal property shall conform to the terms of the certified notice previously mailed to the lessee. The contents of the units can be previewed online at [www.bid13.com](http://www.bid13.com) The preview and sale will take place at each individual unit listed below; in the order they appear.  
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**NOTICE**  
Public notice is hereby given that the proposed Combined Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance of the FLAGG-ROCHELLE COMMUNITY PARK DISTRICT, Ogle County, Illinois, for the fiscal year beginning May 1, 2024, and ending April 30, 2025, will be available for public inspection at the Flagg-Rochelle Community Park District Office, 802 Jones Road, Rochelle, IL. Notice is further given that a public hearing on the adoption of said proposed Combined Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance will be held at The REC Center, 802 Jones Road, Rochelle, IL, on

Monday, April 21, 2025 at 6:15pm FLAGG-ROCHELLE COMMUNITY PARK DISTRICT By /s/ BT Carmichael, Secretary No. 0403  
(April 9, 2025)

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OGLE COUNTY, ILLINOIS**  
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF MIRDZA KALNINS, Deceased.  
NO. 2025PR27

**CLAIM NOTICE**  
Notice is given of the death of MIRDZA KALNINS, of Mount Morris, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued on April 3, 2025, to LILY A. WELP, whose address is 421 S. McKendrie Ave., Mt. Morris, IL 61054, and whose attorneys are Fearer, Nye & Chadwick, 420 4th Avenue, PO Box 117,

Rochelle, IL 61068. Claims against the Estate may be filed in the office of the Circuit Clerk of the Court at Ogle County Courthouse, Oregon, IL 61061, or with the representative, or both, no later than October 9, 2025, and any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.  
FEARER, NYE & CHADWICK, Attorneys for LILY A. WELP, Executor of the Estate of MIRDZA KALNINS, deceased No. 0407  
(April 9, 16, and 23, 2025)

**STATE OF ILLINOIS IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COUNTY OF OGLE**  
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: JACKIE D. KERNS,

Deceased.  
NO. 2025-PR-26  
**CLAIM NOTICE**  
NOTICE IS GIVEN of the death of JACKIE D. KERNS, of Creston, Ogle County, Illinois. Letters of Office as Co-Executors were issued on April 3, 2025, to TERESA A. KUEHL whose address is 6422 S. Beck Road, Box 173 Creston, Ogle County, Illinois; SANDRA K. HOTT whose address is 24175 S. First Street, Sycamore, DeKalb County, Illinois; and MICHAEL D. KERNS, whose address is Box 198, Creston, Ogle County, Illinois, and whose attorneys are Hewitt & Wagner, 1124 Lincoln Highway, Rochelle, Ogle County, Illinois, 61068. Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Ogle County, Oregon, Illinois, or with the representative, or both, no later than six (6) months from the date of the first

publication of this claim notice and any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.  
Hewitt & Wagner Attorneys at Law  
For the Executors of the Estate of Jackie D. Kerns, deceased No. 0408  
(April 9, 16, and 23, 2025)

## 101 LEGAL NOTICE

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

## 105 BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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

## 113 FINANCIAL

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

## 119 ANNOUNCEMENTS

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## 127 SERVICES AND REPAIRS

Furman's Lawn Care & Tree Service. 26 Years of Experience. Fully Insured. Weekly Mowing, Spring Clean Up & More. Call Jeremy 815-761-9619 (RNL04162025)

## 201 DOMESTIC/CHILD CARE

NO INDIVIDUAL, unless licensed or holding a permit as a childcare facility, may cause to be published any advertisement soliciting a child care service. A childcare facility that is licensed or operating under a permit issued by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services may publish advertisements of the services for which it is specifically licensed or issued a permit. Your Hometown Newspaper strongly urges any parent or guardian to verify the validity of the license of any facility before placing a child in its care.

## 301 ANTIQUES

**ANTIQUES WANTED:**  
I pay cash for antiques; furniture, glassware, pottery & crocks, tin & iron toys, sterling silver, decoys. If it's antique, I'm interested in looking! Call

815-562-2928 or email [dickharms@hotmail.com](mailto:dickharms@hotmail.com)

## 307 MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE

**BUNDLED Newspaper**  
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**SPLIT Firewood For Sale.** Contact 779-251-0254

## 405 HOUSES FOR SALE

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

**OPENING BID LIVE**  
Advertise in our  
AUCTION SECTION  
Deadlines Wednesday at 5 p.m. Call 815-562-4171

## 103 AUCTIONS

### REAL ESTATE AUCTION Thursday April 24th, 2025 @ 5:00 PM

**Auction Held On Site – Live Only**

(Home will be open at 3 PM on the day of the auction for viewing or by appointment with the Auction Co..)

This two-story single-family home has approx. 1360 sq ft. There are 3 bedrooms in total, with one being on the first floor. There is a full bath upstairs along with the two bedrooms. Many updates have been done including the roof, Vinyl clad windows, furnace, and hot water heater. All appliances stay with the home including the washer & dryer. The home is in need of some minor finishing touches, and it is a very solid home. If you are looking for a project that has tons of potential, look no further, this is a home with "good bones". This property is located at **628 S. Wood Street – Rochelle IL 61068**

**Terms:** The property will be offered in its as-is condition without any contingencies. \$5000.00 down the day of the auction, with the balance due on or before May 23rd, 2025. There is a 1% buyers premium added to the sale price. Contact Auctioneer John Bearrows for more information at 815-739-9150.

**Helen L. Wheeler Estate – Owner**

Attorney for the Estate – Paul Chadwick – Fearer, Nye & Chadwick – Rochelle IL

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**AUCTIONEERS:**  
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**815-262-3900**

## 203 HELP WANTED



**START AN EXCITING NEW JOB WITH THE ROCHELLE NEWS-LEADER!**

### Multimedia Sales Consultant

If you have an outgoing personality, an energetic get-it-done approach, and enjoy helping clients build their business, then you may be a perfect fit for a sales position with the Rochelle News-Leader. This is a full-time position.

As a multimedia sales consultant, you will service current accounts and also cultivate new clients in the Rochelle/DeKalb region of northern Illinois, helping them market their products and services through a variety of highly visible, popular and effective local media vehicles.

If you have a passion to get out of the office on a regular basis to help clients grow their audience and reach new customers, then we would like to talk to you.

Applicants should possess excellent communication and organizational skills with a positive personality and team-player approach. Previous media sales or related marketing experience is a plus, including print, digital and social media advertising.

The sky is the limit on earning potential and career development in this position. We offer a competitive base salary plus commission.

Qualified applicants should mail or e-mail their resume to the following address:

**Multimedia Sales Position**  
**Rochelle News-Leader**  
**ATTN: Will McMacken**  
**P.O. Box 46, Rochelle, IL 61068**  
or email to [bmcmacken@newsmediacorp.com](mailto:bmcmacken@newsmediacorp.com)

**ROCHELLE News-Leader**  
RNLHOUSE

## ROCHELLE News-Leader Part-time local delivery driver

The Rochelle News-Leader has an opening for a part-time newspaper bundle delivery driver who would load and deliver bundles to the post office, store racks and machines.

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.

Applicants must be at least 18 years old, possess a valid driver's license, proof of insurance and a safe driving record. Drivers will use company vehicles when delivering, and will be trained on the respective routes.

Candidates must be able to load, unload and carry multiple bundles of 5 to 10 pounds each. Driver applicants must be reliable, personable and have a general knowledge of area streets and roads.

This position is perfect for someone looking to supplement their income or retirement.

**Interested individuals must fill out an application in person at the Rochelle News-Leader office at 211 Hwy. 38 E., Rochelle. No phone calls please.**

03262023

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\* Source: America's Newspapers

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# AFC NEWS



On April, John Baylor from OnToCollege visited Ashton-Franklin Center High School freshman, sophomores and juniors to review for the upcoming ACT and PACT.

## Baylor visits with AFC students for test prep

**ASHTON** —On April, John Baylor from OnToCollege visited Ashton-Franklin Center High School freshman, sophomores and juniors to review for the upcoming

ACT and PACT. AFC students utilize OnToCollege ACT, PACT, and IAR test prep courses in the classroom and CCR/WIN each week. Baylor is a familiar face in many of the videos

that accompany test prep lessons. “AFC is grateful that John took the time to invest in our students,” a district Facebook post said. “John’s contrarian

techniques have inspired students for more than two decades—improving scores, scholarships, and college choices. Used by more than 800 high schools in 27 states, OnTo-

College’s online Courses routinely increase an entire high school’s ACT® Test score average 1-3 points and SAT® Test score average 50-150 points. In 2020, John be-

came an ACT® Certified Educator™, reinforcing OnToCollege’s commitment to provide the most engaging and effective test prep to students in Nebraska and beyond.”

## LCFB works to advance legislative priorities at GALC

**SPRINGFIELD** – Illinois Farm Bureau members learned how to put democracy to work through advocacy during the organization’s annual Governmental Affairs Leadership Conference (GALC), held on Feb. 18 in Springfield. Local, state political leaders and legislators met with Farm Bureau leaders from across the state, including 12 members of the Lee County Farm Bureau, to discuss IFB’s 2025 legislative priorities.

The event culminated in a legislative reception elected officials, who met with IFB members.

“As an organization, the most powerful thing we can do is connect our members with lawmakers,” IFB President Brian Duncan said. “Our members consistently make an impact on

policy by giving legislators a true, boots-on-the-ground expert in agriculture.”

The annual conference, themed “Democracy at Work,” highlighted that good government takes continuous effort of engaging with legislators, regulatory agencies and fellow citizens. The event also shared IFB’s national and state legislative priorities and provided insights from nationally recognized speakers.

This year’s keynote speaker was Reince Priebus, former White House chief of staff (2017). He discussed behind the scenes stories from the campaign to the White House and provided a candid look at the inner workings of the new administration. The afternoon keynote speaker was Nathan Gonzalez,

editor and publisher of Inside Elections, a newsletter providing nonpartisan analysis of U.S. Senate, House and gubernatorial campaigns, presidential politics and political developments. Gonzalez offered an examination of the current condition of electoral politics

Breakout sessions featured experts on topics including a national legislative update, underground safety, livestock, policy development, renewable fuels and more.

GALC is the annual central event around IFB’s longstanding efforts to connect members and legislators. IFB’s Adopt-A-Legislator program, which is more than 20 years old now, fosters long-term personal relationships between urban legislators

and farmers across the state. IFB’s annual Leaders to Washington trip connects farmers with national legislators. Lee County Farm Bureau has built a strong connection with its Adopted Legisla-

tor Representative Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz of the 17<sup>th</sup> District.

“Every year, our members demonstrate both depth of knowledge on key ag topics and a desire to grow and absorb the lat-

est information on emerging issues,” said Duncan. “That’s what makes GALC successful, and that’s why so many key legislators go out of their way to meet and partner with our members.”



Pictured left to right: Jenna Meurer, Ashleigh Erbes (manager), Adam Henkel (president), Leonard Sheaffer, Don Meyer (district director), Matt Schoenholz, Matt Englehart, Brandon Heiman, Jim Schielein, Jay Long, Emily Pratt, and Addison Hopkins.

## COMMUNITY MATTERS



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611 Western Ave., Ashton  
815-453-7461

**ASHTON-FRANKLIN CENTER**  
LEARN • GROW • THRIVE

**AFC CUSD #275**  
**Go, Raiders!**

Ashton-Franklin Center Jr/Sr High School  
611 Western Ave., Ashton, IL 61006  
815-453-7461 | Malinda Hurt, Principal

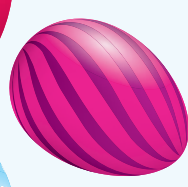
**Learn ★ Grow ★ Thrive**

Ashton-Franklin Center Elementary School  
217 South Elm, Franklin Grove, IL 61031  
815-456-2325 | Jenah Burkitt, Principal





# ROCHELLE News-Leader



## Easter Ham

# GIVEAWAY!



### RULES

1. No purchase necessary, enter at as many participating businesses as you wish.
  2. One winner per family only.
  3. Official entry blanks and copies of official entry blanks only.
  4. All entries must be received by 9 am on Thursday, April 10.
- Winners will be notified by the participating businesses and also listed in the Rochelle News-Leader on Sunday, April 13.

*Good Luck!*

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