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VOL. 87 • NO. 52 YOUR **FREE** HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER WEDNESDAY, DEC. 22, 2021

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Fourth grade students peruse the books purchased by the Pearl City Boulevard Bash Committee. Each student got to take home a book of their choosing.

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Pearl City Elementary enjoys Bash Book Day thanks to the Boulevard Bash Committee

The Pearl City elementary students enjoyed their first "Bash Book Day". The Pearl City Boulevard Bash committee made a very generous donation to allow each student to take home a book of their choice, several times throughout the year. The funds that made the "Book Bash Day" possible came from the annual Boulevard Bash that takes place every summer in Pearl City on Homecoming Boulevard.

Every student was able to visit the Elementary Library where Mrs. Kuberski, the Elementary School Librarian, had hundreds of books displayed. "The kids were so excited to receive their books this week. They loved the options that were available to them as they looked through the endless displays of new books", stated Debbie Kuberski. Mrs. Kuberski also gave a quick explanation about how the Boulevard Bash Committee has raised in excess of $100,000 and all they do to help the community of Pearl City.

The Pearl City School District would like to say a huge thank you to the Boulevard Bash Committee and all of the people who attended the Bash this past summer. Their donation truly touched every student from the Preschool/Day Care to the 6th grade and has left a lasting impression in the lives of our students.

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Obituaries

MARILYN E. SCHLICHTING

Marilyn E. Schlichting, age 85, passed away on Tuesday, Dec. 14, 2021, in Freeport, Illinois. She was born on Jun. 13, 1936, to Ralph and Vivian (Heidenreich) Westaby in Freeport. She married Roger Schlichting on Dec. 4, 1955, in Stockton, Illinois. Together they raised a family while working the family farm. Once the kids were older, Marilyn found employment at The Cove in Apple Canyon Lake as a hostess and waitress. She loved getting together with her friends to play cards, shopping, garage sales, and bowling. She always enjoyed being with others.

Marilyn is survived by her husband, Roger Schlichting, from Apple River; 3 children: Renee (Richard) Carmody of Freeport, Andrew (Cindy) Schlichting of Freeburg, IL, Lisa Loeffler of Brunswick, Maryland; brother: Wayne (Carol) Westaby of Lena, IL; Her legacy includes her grandchildren Aidan and Evan Schlichting, and Mason, Harrison, Maggie, and Mary Loeffler; and several nieces and nephews. Marilyn was a friend and mother to many and loved by all.

She is preceded in death by her parents, and daughter, Roxanne Rae, at birth.

A funeral service will be held at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 29, 2021, at the Bartell-Leamon Funeral Home in Warren, IL with a visitation to be held from 11 a.m. until the time of service.

A private family burial will be held at Shephard of the Hill Cemetery in Schapville, IL.

Officiating the services will be Pastor Roger Bronkema.

Cremation rites have been accorded. Social distancing and Covid protocols will be followed. A memorial has been established in her name.

Condolences may be sent to the family at www.leamonfh.com.

ORE "BUD" HEATH

Ore "Bud" R. Heath, age 93, of Stockton, IL passed away Monday, Dec. 13, 2021 at home surrounded by his family. He was born Apr. 11, 1928 in Colesburg, KY to the late William Lively and Mabel (Jackson) Heath. Bud married Virginia Kaney on Mar. 18, 1950. Virginia passed away Jan. 1, 1994. Bud later married Lila (Haeft) Bertholf on Aug. 19, 1995.

Bud was a lifelong farmer, milking cows and taking care of his horses. Bud was a strong man with the independence that is common among farmers. No one told him what to do except for the weather and his livestock. He was also Road Commissioner for 20 years for Berreman Township. His defining characteristic was his sense of humor. He was known to make a joke or smart aleck remark. Bud enjoyed stock car racing, fishing, hunting and woodworking. He built a replica of the Willow Church. He could also fix almost anything.

Bud is survived by his wife, Lila Heath; his daughters, Pam Robb, Pauline (Richard) Craig, Carol (Randy) Stabenow and Kathleen (Keith) Maurer; his sons, Alan (Cynthia) Heath and Dale (Diane) Heath; his stepdaughters Tina Bertholf, Justine Young and Stephanie (Neal) Johnson; his 19 grandchildren; 15 great grandchildren; and his brother, Jim Heath. He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Virginia; his 2 sisters and 1 brother.

A private family service will be held. Interment will take place at Chapel Hill Memorial Gardens in Freeport. A memorial fund has been established. Condolences may be shared at www.hermannfuneralhome.com.

RON CROSS

Ron Cross, age 68, passed away on Thursday, December 9, 2021, at home. He was born on December 10, 1952, in Monroe WI to Claire T. and Helen (Rupnow) Cross. Ron graduated from Lena-Winslow High School with the Class of 1970 and furthered his education at Highland Community College and Northern Illinois University.

Following college he found employment with Ingersoll Machine Tool in Rockford, IL and remained a loyal employee until the time of his passing. While at Ingersoll he worked on several major projects.

He is survived by several cousins and a host of friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents and brother Robin.

Visitation was held Friday December 17, 2021, from 10:00-11:00 at Leamon Funeral Home in Lena.

Funeral Service was held following the visitation on Friday, Dec. 17, 2021, at 11:00 a.m. at Leamon Funeral Home in Lena.

Officiating will be Pastor Miho Yasukawa

Internment will be held at Salem-Shippee Cemetery in McConnell.

A memorial has been established for the McConnell Historical Society. Please send all memorials to Leamon Funeral Home: 210 West Main Street Lena, IL 61048

Condolences can be sent to the family at leamonfh.com

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RVPNEWS.COM

New law provides for licensure path of certified professional midwives in Illinois

Sets qualifications and educational standards; goes into effect in October 2022

By Beth Hundsdorfer
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Colleen Marotta has delivered hundreds of babies.

Marotta, 43, of Arlington Heights, became a nurse in 2001. Ten years later, she became a certified professional midwife, or CPM. When Marotta was a CPM the law barred her from delivering babies in Illinois, forcing her to drive to Wisconsin to deliver babies there.

Last week, Gov. JB Pritzker signed a bill that allows the certification and licensure of certified professional midwives in Illinois. The new law sets qualification and educational standards for CPMs. It is effective on Oct. 1, 2022.

"With the legislation I sign today, the lifesaving and life-giving work midwives perform will be legally recognized here in Illinois. It's a victory decades in the making and one that recognizes the full worth and value of midwives in reproductive care," Pritzker said. "Most importantly, it ensures safe home births for every mother who chooses to deliver out-of-hospital—another step forward advancing health equity in communities across our state."

The 2020 report to the General Assembly by the Illinois Task Force on Infant and Maternal Mortality Among African Americans stated that the pregnancy-related mortality rate in Illinois is 23 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, a severe maternal morbidity rate of 51.4 per 10,000 births, and an infant mortality rate of 6.5 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. In all of these categories, African American mothers and infants die or are injured at significantly higher rates than their white counterparts.

In addition to attending at-home births, CPMs provide supervision, prenatal and post-natal care and advice to a pregnant woman during a low-risk pregnancy, labor and post-partum, as well as providing normal newborn care.

"Although our work is far from done, this is a good step that will reduce child and maternal mortality in Illinois," state Rep. Mary E. Flowers, D-Chicago, said. "This moment is years in the making and I look forward to continuing to work with the governor and my colleagues in the General Assembly to improve maternal health outcomes for low-income women."

The COVID-19 pandemic has led more expecting mothers to turn to home births attended by midwives, instead of traditional hospital births, Marotta said.

"It provides autonomy, choice and support for the mother," Marotta said. "As well as having whomever the mother, whomever they want in their labor space."

In order to be licensed as a midwife, a candidate must be a certified professional midwife registered with the North American Registry of Midwives. In addition, the candidate must complete a midwifery education program accredited by the Midwife Education and Accreditation Council.

Illinois is the 37th state in the U.S. to recognize certified professional midwives.

The bill took nine months to "birth," Rep. Robyn Gabel, D-Evanston, said.

"Midwives are trained to do home births, but they haven't been able to get the certifications they need to do that in this state," Gabel said. "Not only will having a formal process for certifying midwives make home births safer for mothers and babies, but it will also give new and expecting parents more options at such a critical time in their lives."

Marotta earned her master's degree and went on to become a certified nurse midwife around 2014 so she could handle more complicated cases and deliver in Illinois.

Marotta, the mother of four, gave birth to her children at home. She works for Midwives Care, LLC in New Lenox, a practice that serves rural and suburban populations. As CPMs become more prevalent, Marotta said she thinks that more women will choose at-home births.

"I think that there is an empowering feeling that a woman has having their baby at home," she said. "This experience and having loved ones around brings the family closer together because they shared that experience."

Dear Lena,

People have told us that Ben Mayer was the George Bailey of Lena, and that makes us (his family) feel incredibly proud. They did have a lot in common. They were both very nice, kind, and thoughtful men who were deeply committed to their hometown and the quality of life of the people who lived there.

Ben sincerely liked helping people and served his community to the best of his ability. He loved working with others on service projects, and he had fun doing it. One of the things he liked best about community service, he said, was the opportunity to work with and get to know lots of great people.

Ben was a man who would greet you with a warm, ready smile and a glimmer in his eye because he was genuinely glad to see you. His engaging smile, hug or hearty handshake, kind words, positivity, humor, and laughter were widely known. A lot of people will remember Ben not just for his community service and his time at the Lena State Bank, but also for being the kind of person he was.

The community of Lena has honored him with incredibly thoughtful, long-term tributes to keep his memory and spirit of community alive. Ben's name is engraved on a beautiful park bench next to a lovely display in Volunteer Park. His name is on signs at the entrances/exits of the road running through Lions Park. They read "Ben Mayer Memorial Pkwy."

As Ben's family, we are forever grateful for these tributes and would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Lena Lions Club, Lena State Bank, Le-Aqua-Na Sportsman's Club, the Lena Park District, and all the individuals who helped to make these tributes possible.

Thank you, too, for the outpouring of sympathy, support, love, and friendship we have received since his passing, and for your contributions to the Ben Mayer Educational Fund for students in the Lena-Winslow School District. Ben was right - he really did get to know lots of great people.

Sincerely,
Gail, Rhonda, DeDe , Kelsey Ryan, and families

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The family of Brad Simmons
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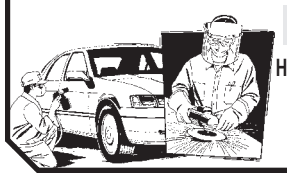
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Obituaries

DUANE LAW

Duane Bryant "Shorty" Law was known as being a family-man and steadfast friend to many. He loved the farming life and cared deeply for those around him, always showing generosity in the way he lived his life. Duane, age 94, passed away on Friday, Dec. 10, 2021 in Allure of Mt. Carroll Nursing Center, Mt. Carroll, IL. Duane was born Aug. 27, 1927 on a farm in Woodland Township, the son of Wilbert and Della (Spencer) Law. He was raised in farming as the family moved around Carroll County, attending the Paynter Country School near Milledgeville and graduating from Savanna High School with the Class of 1946. In these moves, he made great friends (like Pat McCue), not shying away from mischief but always having good clean fun. These were friends that he kept for a lifetime. He attended a dance at the Mt. Carroll High School, and it is there that he set eyes on and began a relationship with the love of his life, Dorothy Johnson. After High School, Duane enlisted in the US Army, serving in Italy and receiving an honorable discharge in 1948. On Nov. 25, 1948, Duane and Dorothy were married at the Argo Fay United Methodist Church. They raised three children--Donna, Brad, and Tresa--and celebrated 52 years of marriage until Dorothy's passing in 2001.

Duane farmed near Mt. Carroll for 56 years, retiring in 2003. While the kids were young, the family enjoyed going to the Mississippi River every Sunday and later to Lake Carroll. Duane enjoyed dancing with Dorothy, hunting, fishing, boating, water skiing, swimming, and playing cards with the grandchildren at family events. He was an avid Bears fan, and his choice of tractors was the Case IH.

Duane was a member of the Hickory Grove United Methodist Church, Jacobstown Community Club, 4 C's Club, The Savanna Moose Lodge, and the couples card club (always playing Pitch).

Duane will be dearly missed by two daughters, Donna (David) Bielema of Mt. Carroll and Tresa (Larry Randecker) Wilkinson of Stockton; his son, Brad (Sharon) Law of Mt. Carroll; seven grandchildren, Michael (Kristen) Bielema, Jason Bielema, Tonia (Ryan) Blair, Travis Wilkinson, Matthew Bielema, Cory Law and Tanner (Rachel Bicksler) Wilkinson; four great grandchildren, Rachael and Ethan Bielema and Carter and Rowan Blair; his loving brother, Lyle (Lois) Law of Mt. Carroll; and many nieces and nephews.

Duane was preceded in death by his wife Dorothy, his parents, his brother Gervace, and special friend Wilma Knapp. A funeral service was held at 1 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 17, at the Law Jones Funeral Home in Mt. Carroll with Pastor Sun-Ah Kang of the Hickory Grove United Methodist Church officiating. Burial will be in Oak Hill Cemetery, Mt. Carroll. Visitation was held from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 16 and one hour prior to the service at the funeral home.

VELDA KROHMER

Velda Mae Krohmer, 88, died at Freeport Memorial Hospital on Dec. 11, 2021, following a short illness. Velda was born at home on April 22, 1933, in Elizabeth, IL to Helmer and Myrtle (Bahr) Albrecht. She attended Hickory Grove Country School and Elizabeth High School, graduating with the class of 1951. After high school, Velda attended the Rockford School of Business and worked as a secretary at the Elizabeth Schools for 10 years. Velda married Ted Krohmer on Mar. 1, 1957, and over the next 30 years, they farmed and raised four children. Along with farming, Velda served as secretary of the Woodbine Mutual Fire Insurance Company for 37 years and later worked at the Elizabeth Food Center for 17 years. She was a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, where she served on the church council, ladies guild, and altar guild. Velda enjoyed a range of hobbies but most enjoyed spending time with her family, friends and neighbors, attending any gathering or celebration she was able to. She was known for sending cards and handwritten notes for all occasions and sharing baked goods from all the new recipes she loved to try.

Those left to cherish her memories are her children, Janie Krohmer of Verona, WI, John Krohmer (Donna Tigges) of Elizabeth, Joanne (Dave) Nold of Rockford and Jodi Joung of Winnetka. She had seven grandchildren and two step-grandchildren, Kurt (Rachael) Krohmer, Kate (Neil Jochman) Krohmer, Morgan Peterson, Julia Berlage, Grace Berlage, Stephanie Nold, Julianne (Kyle) Spencer, Jacob Joung and Cora Joung, and three step-great-grandchildren, Reece Liscom, Aiden Spencer and Emerson Spencer. Her godchildren included Mary Ambrosia, Rhonda Bonvillain, Carol Elliott, Pat Klein and Dan Roberts. Other special family and friends are the Joe Ambrosia family and Doris Trader family.

Velda is survived by a sister, Mary Ellen Rife of Maumee, OH, and sisters-in-law, Leona Trost of Galena and Connie Mueller of Monroe, WI. Velda was preceded in death by her husband and her parents; a sister, Jeanette Graves, a brother, Stan Albrecht; and brothers-in-law, Jack Graves, Don Rife, Wayne Krohmer, Wayne Trost and Gus Mueller.

A funeral service was held at 11 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 18 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Elizabeth. Burial took place in Woodbine Cemetery, Woodbine. A visitation was held before the funeral, from 9:30 to 11 a.m., at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Elizabeth. Masks are recommended. Those unable to attend services in person were able to join the livestream at facebook.com/lawjonesfuneralhome

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to the family for a cause to be determined. Friends and family are invited to share in Velda's life at www.lawjonesfuneralhome.com.

DONNA MAE WOLFRAM

Donna Mae Wolfram, age 92 of Warren, Illinois passed away on Sunday Dec.12, 2021, at The Lena Living Center in Lena, IL. Donna was born on June 18, 1929, in Freeport, IL the daughter of Roy W. and Magdalena (Boelk) Stich. She came into this world together with her twin brother Donald William. She grew up and attended grade school in Nora, IL. She graduated from Warren High School in 1947.

Donna Married Wilfred T. Wolfram on Feb. 26, 1949, at St. Ann's Catholic Church in Warren, IL. They were blessed with four children Catherine, Michael, Teresa, and Denise.

Donna worked as a substitute postal clerk at Nora, IL. She substituted at the Nora and Warren Schools Cafeterias. She also worked as an Election Clerk for many years. Donna was an active member of St. Ann's Alter and Rosary Society, Nora Ladies Aid, and the Warren Birthday Club. She enjoyed sewing with her friends in her sewing circle. Donna was proud to have embroidered baby quilts for all her grandchildren and great grandchildren. She was an avid reader. Donna's life was guided by her faith, and she was devoted to her family. She enjoyed weekends at Lake Wisconsin and attending any school activity for her children and grandchildren.

Those left to cherish Donna's memory include her son: Michael (Sally) Wolfram of Gratiot, WI. Two daughters: Teresa (Tom) Gille of Shullsburg, WI and Denise (Kirk) Brinker of Baraboo, WI. Son-in-law Francis Fennell; 12 grandchildren Chris, Marissa (Nate), Danielle (Kyle), Casey (Brooke), Erin (Joe), Amber (Sean), Brock (Kerri), Brant (Andrea), Heather (Eric), Nick (Erica), Drew (Michelle) and Emily (Jake); 20 great-grandchildren with one more to be born before the end of December.

Donna was preceded in death by her parents Roy and Magdalena, her twin brother Donald, her husband Bill on June 21, 2004, and her daughter Catherine on Oct. 5, 2021.

Donna is dearly loved by her family and will be deeply missed by them all.

Funeral services will be held on Saturday Dec. 18, 2021, at 1 p.m. at St. Ann's Catholic Church in Warren, IL.

Visitation was held on Friday Dec. 17 from 4 p.m. until 8 p.m. at St. Ann's Catholic Church in Warren.

Officiating was Father Andrew Skorbutt. Burial was in St Ann's Cemetery. A memorial has been established in her name. Condolences may be sent to the family at www.leamonfh.com.

ROSEMARIE TERHARK

Rosemarie TerHark, 89, of Lena, IL. passed away Dec. 12, 2021, at Freeport Memorial Hospital. Rosie was born on June 21, 1932, in Chicago to Hans and Marie Petri, who were immigrants of Germany and Saxony. Her family moved to Lena in 1939. A graduate of Lena High School, she attended Highland Community College, and Wittenburg University in Ohio.

She married Lowell TerHark in Shannon in 1953. After Lowell's service in the army, they farmed with Lowell's father in Shannon for many years raising registered dairy cattle. Rose began news reporting for channel 23 in Rockford in 1969 until her retirement in 1994. She especially enjoyed reporting about local farm agriculture stories and tried to include positive, encouraging stories about "good things" happening in her community.

She served on many committees in the area. She loved music and played in the Freeport Concert Band. She taught horsemanship classes for HCC and was secretary for the State Saddle Horse Association. She was very interested in alternative energy and writing music and poetry. In 1998, she and Lowell moved to Lena, IL where they enjoyed retirement until Lowell's death in 2014.

Rose enjoyed spending time with friends and family and made elaborate holiday dinners. Most of all, she enjoyed her grandchildren and was a wonderful "Omie".

Rose is survived by her three children, Steven (Laurie) TerHark, Heidi (Cody) Calzavara, and Dan (Gabriela) TerHark, 7 grandchildren, and 3 great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband Lowell, her parents, and her stepbrother Hans (Edith) Petri.

Visitation was on Saturday, Dec. 18, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Leamon Funeral Home in Lena. The funeral service followed at 11 a.m. at Leamon Funeral Home in Lena. Officiating was Reverend Ric Bader. A memorial has been established in her name. Condolences may be sent to the family at www.leamonfh.com

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Obituary

DENNIS BROWN

Dennis Brown, age 77 of Lena, IL, passed away on Wednesday, Dec. 15, 2021, in Lena, IL. He was born on Feb. 11, 1944, to Robert and Gertrude (Bergemann) Brown. He attended the University of Missouri in Rolla where he received his Bachelor's in Engineering. He married Mary Nolan on Mar. 2, 1968, in Lena, IL. He worked around the United States as an engineer for many years until he and his wife moved back to Lena and purchased the Lena Shopper's Guide in 1976 which they owned and operated for 24 years. Dennis enjoyed fishing and hunting and took yearly fishing trips to Canada. He and his wife enjoyed going on cruises. He was a member of the Lena Fire Department, longtime member of the Lena Lions Club and the Le-Aqua-Na Sportsman's Club.

He is survived by his wife Mary of Lena, IL, 2 children- Laura (Ben) Pearson of Geneseo, IL and Steven (Kali) Brown of Stockton, IL; 4 grandchildren- David, Wes, Veronika and Vanessa; mother Gertrude Brown of Lena, IL; sister Diane (Dan) Paulsen of Lena, IL; 2 brothers-in-law- David (Fawn) Nolan, and Dennis Nolan both of Lena, IL.

He was preceded in death by his father Robert, father and mother-in-law Orville and Lucille Nolan, sister-in-law Sally Nolan.

Funeral services will be held on Monday, Dec. 27, 2021, at 12 p.m. at St. John's Lutheran Church in Lena, IL. Visitation will also be held at St. John's Lutheran Church from 10 a.m. until time of service. Officiating will be Rev. Rick Bader.

Burial will be at Lena Burial Park. A memorial has been established in his name. Condolences may be sent to the family at www.leamonfh.com.

The Elizabeth food pantry moves to new location

The Elizabeth food basket has completed its move to a wonderful new location at the back side of the "old Elizabeth school" 310 N. West St. With more room to move about, added freezer space and additional shelving, guests are welcome to come in and shop on the second Saturday of every month. The services are available to anyone in the River Ridge school district, Scales Mound Area and Schapville Area. The food basket is also an emergency resource for anyone in need due to natural disaster or personal tragedy. If you find yourself in a food shortage, please reach out for assistance.

The Scoop Today Shopper's Guide

"Committed to the communities we serve"

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Letters To Santa

Warren Elementary students write letters to Santa

Mrs. Wolff and Mrs. Jogerst second grade class

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a computer so I can play video games. If your elves are not too busy I would also like an Unspeakable shirt and hat.
From, Silas

Dear Santa,
What I would most like for Christmas this year is a hoverboard because I like to ride it with my sister. If your elves are not too busy I would also like an ipod because my sister and I love to play Roblox on hers.
From your friend, Ayla

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year are Pop-its because my brother has one and I really like popping them. If your elves are not too busy I would also like a big Squishmallow because they are really soft and squishy.
Love, Emersyn

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is an air track because it is very fun. If your elves are not too busy I would also like a phone because I can play games and watch Youtube on it.
Love, Brodey

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a toy Godzilla because I love the movie Godzilla. If your elves are not too busy I would also like another toy Godzilla and King Ghidorah.
Love, Tommy

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a watch because my mom won't give me one for my birthday. If your elves are not too busy I would also like a hoverboard too because mine broke because it was in water.
Love, Zayiah

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a Lego set with Minnie and Daisy because I like to build and I like Minnie and Daisy. If your elves are not too busy I would also like them to make me one game called Picky Kitty and Little Live Pets.
From your friend, Finely

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a computer so I can watch movies on it. If your elves are not too busy I would also like an iPhone 8. I would mostly use it to call my mom and dad and to play games.
Love, Blakely

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a watch because I can play games on it and call on it. I can call Augie. If your elves are not too busy I would also like a squish ball because I can squish it and I will also let other people play with it.
Love, Juniper

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a Nerf ball tank because I like to have a Nerf war with my big brother. If your elves are not too busy I would also like a phone so I can call my dad and mom.
From your friend, Paxton

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a Lego exploration ship because I can build upgraded ships. If your elves are not too busy I would also like a Britannic shirt and a Minecraft creeper plushy/stuffed animal.
From, Trevor

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a Lego set. I like to build Legos and build stuff. If your elves are not too busy I would also like to have a computer for a Christmas gift so I can play Roblox.
From your friend, Breckyn

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a LOL surprise remix doll because I love seeing LOL dolls in the store and I REALLY want one. If your elves are not too busy I would like a Barbie farm and I would also like new pajamas.
From your friend, Harper

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a phone because I love electronics. If your elves are not too busy I would like a Siren Head and a Siren Head video game because I love those.
From your friend, Lium

Mrs. Janecke's second grade class

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a black and white bunny that is fuzzy. If your elves are not too busy I would also like a new hair set because my other set is ruined.
Love, Falicity

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a Jurrasic World Toy because I really like dinosaurs. If your elves are not too busy I would also like a skateboard and a remote-control car because mine broke.
Your Friend, Gauge

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is an LOL Dream House because I love LOL dolls. I would also like a Barbie doll. I love dolls.
Bye, Addy

Dear Santa,
What I would most like for Christmas this year is a new phone case because mine is very old and I don't like mine. If your elves are not too busy I would also like some new makeup for my vanity and some books.
From your friend, Kennedy

Dear Santa,
This is my list: 1. A 3D Printer that can do multiple colors. 2. A Nintendo Switch (any color will do). 3. A Drone that can do flips and other moves (with camera).
From, Samuel B.

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a puppy because Milow really needs a friend. I would also like another chromebook because I do not have one.
From your friend, Catie

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a tablet with a charger because at nighttime I have nothing to do but watch TV or watch my brother. And he got me interested in Minecraft. If your elves are not too busy I would also like a toy tree house. I want a toy tree house to play with.
Love, Faith

See LETTERS, Page 5

409993

Friday,
December 24th
5:00 pm
McConnell United
Methodist Church
211 N. Hulbert Rd., McConnell, IL
We invite you to celebrate the birth of our Savior this Christmas Eve at our beautiful service filled with carols, readings and candlelight!
Come as a family and worship the King!

St. Jude's Novena

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved, and preserved throughout the world now and forever. Sacred heart of Jesus, pray for us,

St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us;

St. Jude, help of the hopeless, pray for us.

Say this prayer 9 times a day, by the 8th day your prayers will be answered. It has never been known to fail.

Publication must be promised.

Thank you, St. Jude.

406118

• Letters (Continued from page 4)

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a war game because it looks cool. If your elves are not too busy I would also like another war game. And a brown bunny.
From, Colbin

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a book because I like to read books.
If your elves are not too busy I would also like a drone and a skateboard.
From your friend, Mason

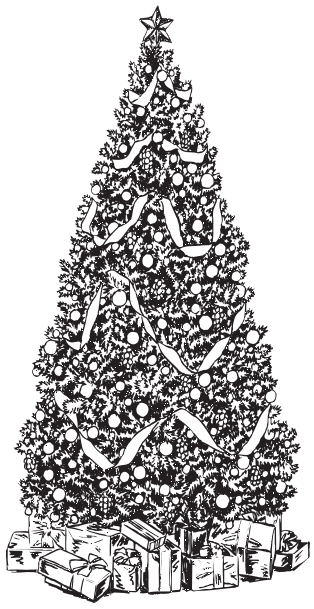
Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is an Apple iPhone because I can play games on it. If your elves are not too busy I would also like digits and sunglasses. This year I have been good!
Love, Mila

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a bounce house because I love to jump and lay when my brother can bounce me. If your elves are not too busy I would also like a toy house to play in and cook food. I would like a pony that can move.
From your friend, Annie

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is slime. I would like to play with it. If your elves are not too busy I would also like a laptop and an iPhone.
From your friend, Jackson

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a Gotta Go Flamingo because it's funny and cool. If your elves are not too busy I would also like a new hair Magic Tree House book and a Cat LOL doll.
Love, Eleanor

Dear Santa,
What I would MOST like for Christmas this year is a PS5 because I deserve it. I help do chores and take out the trash. If your elves are not too busy I would also like a skateboard because I am good at skating. I will leave a letter that says, Can I have one of your reindeer?
From your friend, Aric



EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF LENA
720 N. Freedom Street
Lena, IL • **815-369-5591**
Rev. Scott Wilson
Assoc. Pastor of Youth
Sunday Worship
10:00 a.m.
ABF 8:45 a.m.
Awana
Wednesdays at 6 p.m.
Listen to pastor's weekly sermon at www.lenafreechurch.org
409923

News briefs

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

All are invited to worship at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 118 E. Mason St. Lena on Sunday, Dec. 26 at 9:30 a.m. Christmas is not always merry. We also experience grief and loss. The last Sunday of 2021 Good Shepherd will gather for Blue Christmas worship. You may join the service in-person or via Facebook Live. We will read from Matthew 2:13-18, an angel of the Lord tells Joseph to take the mother and son in order to flee from violence. If you are looking for Christmas carols each day, check our YouTube channel for 12 Days of Christmas Carols.

We follow the state and CDC guidelines for gathering. For the safety for everyone it is encouraged to wear masks and practice social distancing inside the building.

On Wednesday, Dec. 29, Piece Corps Quilting group will meet from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. New members are always welcome, and no quilting experience is necessary.

All the services will be recorded and available on he church's Facebook page and website. Please visit the website (http://goodshepherdlena.org/) and Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/GSLCLenaIL) for information. If you have any questions, please contact the church office at 815-369-5552.

Willow United Methodist Church

Join Willow United Methodist Church for Christmas Eve in the country at 6:30 p.m. There will be scripture and plenty of singing including a candlelit "Silent Night". Pastor Cheryl Carroll will bring a short message. For further information call 815-443-2740.

Highland campus will be closed for the holidays

Highland Community College campus, including the conference center and Clarence Mitchell Library, will be closed for the holidays from Dec. 23, 2021 to Jan. 3, 2022. The campus reopens on Jan. 4.

Columbia College, located on the HCC campus, will also be closed from Dec. 23 to Jan. 2, 2022. The staff will be working remotely on Jan. 3, 2022. Offices will reopen on Jan. 4, 2022. Visit the YMCA website at freeportymca.org for hours during the season.

"Believers Basic" bible study

The Believers Basic bible study is an offering that covers the basic truths of Biblical Christianity in order to build believers into the Church God.

In celebration of Christmas, there will be no class on Dec. 26. Call Pastor Cliff at 716-229-9281 for information.

your source for on-line news:
RVPNEWS.COM

Joy to the World!
Schapville Zion Presbyterian Church
635 E. Schapville Road
Elizabeth, IL 61028
www.schapvillezion.org

Join us for
Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship
Friday,
Dec. 24
5:00 p.m.
409023

Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency announces the PY22 Energy Assistance Program

Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency, as administrator of the Home Energy Assistance Program in Stephenson and Jo Daviess Counties, is pleased to announce that funds are available to assist income-eligible households with their natural gas, propane, and electric bills, and LIHEAP eligible homeowners with furnace assistance.

The program began September 1, 2021 for all income-eligible households. Applications will be taken on a first-come first-served basis through May 31, 2022. There will be no priority groups this program year. All households in need are encouraged to apply. Propane customers are encouraged to apply when the program opens in September to take advantage of lower propane prices.

Applicants may apply for a DVP payment or the PIPP program. The Direct Vendor Payment (DVP) provides a one-time benefit payment for income eligible households to gas or propane and electric utilities and for reconnection assistance.

Applicants with ComEd and /or Nicor Gas as utility providers may have the option of choosing the Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) instead of the DVP. The PIPP program is a bill payment program that assists eligible customers by paying a monthly state benefit while the customer pays a monthly payment based on a percentage of their household income. PIPP applications will be taken on a first-come first served basis until March 31, 2022 or until NICAA has reached maximum capacity of households for the program.

Please call the office at 815-232-3141 or 800-883-1111 between 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. to receive an application packet. Completed application packets and documents must be submitted by mail, email, drop box, or fax. Limited appointments for special needs may be made, depending on current conditions.

Income Guidelines:

Family Size	30 Day Income	Family Size	30 Day Income
1	$2,147	6	$5,930
2	$2,903	7	$6,590
3	$3,660	8	$6,737
4	$4,417	9	$6,883
5	$5,173	10	$7,029
		11	$7,285

For more than 11 household members, add $568 for each one.

**** To submit an application, you MUST submit ALL of the required documents. ****

- Proof of Social Security numbers or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) for all household members. Individuals without an SSN or ITIN can still apply and NICAA will advise
- Proof of all gross income for all household members for 30 days prior and including the application date such as pay check stubs, SSA/SSI/SSD income, pension/retirement statements, unemployment reports, child support,TANF/AABD/Township GA assistance, self- employment reports and proof of zero income.
- Complete current heat and electric bills issued within the last 30 days.
- Copy of current lease if any utilities are included in the rent payment

Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency
27 S. State Ave., Suite 102, Freeport, IL 61032
815-232-3141 or 800-883-1111 • www.nicaa.org
407934

Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency (NICAA)
27 S. State Ave., Suite 102, Freeport, IL 61032
CSBG Employment Transportation Assistance Program

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, through the Community Services Block Grant has funds available through NICAA for residents of Stephenson and Jo Daviess Counties to **provide assistance with payment of registration fees and/or insurance for the client's vehicle to eligible clients who are employed or going to school to improve employability.**

In order to be eligible for this assistance, the applicant's household income must be equal to or less than the following chart:

Income Guidelines

Family size	30 Day Income	Family Size	30 day income
1	$2,147.00	6	$5,930.00
2	$2,903.00	7	$6,590.00
3	$3,660.00	8	$6,737.00
4	$4,417.00	9	$6,883.00
5	$5,173.00	10	$7,029.00
		11	$7,285.00

For more than 11 household members add $568 for each.

The following documents will be required to determine eligibility:
- Social security cards for all household members
- Proof of 30 day income for all household members
- Proof of address (lease and utility bills)
- Proof of employment or school attendance
- Proof of applicant's ownership of vehicle
- Applicant's valid driver's license
- Proof of insurance on vehicle

Client Steps to apply for assistance:
1. Contact the CSBG intake worker to explain their need for transportation assistance and to request an application packet to apply.
2. Ensure all of the necessary documentation is provided to the intake worker to determine eligibility.
3. Provide insurance quote and registration documentation.
4. Provide copies of paychecks for 30 days following assistance to document continued employment.
5. Provide attendance sheet, midterm, or final grades to document continued school attendance.

COVID-19 mitigation procedures are in place so in-person appointments are not being scheduled at this time. We are taking applications for NICAA programs by phone, mail, email, and fax. Please call the office at 815-232-3141 or 800-883-1111 from 8:00 to 3:30 Monday through Friday for more information on applying.

Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency
27 S. State Ave., Suite 102, Freeport, IL 61032
Phone: 815-232-3141 or 800-883-1111 Website: nicaa.org
407937

What Christmas Means To Me

'What Christmas Means to Me', writings by Warren Elementary students

Tanner T

Christmas means celebrating Jesus' birthday. Our family spends time together and opens presents. We love to go outside and have a snowball fight. Afterwards, we come inside and drink hot chocolate and watch a movie.

Owen K.

Christmas means spending time with my family. Also, my favorite activities are playing with my cousins. My family normally goes to my grandma Sabinson's house. When we are done opening presents, we eat something. I hope you have a good Christmas!

Isabel V.

Christmas means that I love to spend time with my family and cousins. I love to play and spend time with Carleton, AJ, Abbey, Zander, Dylan, Tyler, and my aunts Brandy, Missy and Margaret. I play in the snow, and I throw snowballs at them. On Christmas Eve, I go to my grandma Donnas and then on Christmas I go with my grandma Tammy. My favorite part of Christmas is opening up the presents.

Journee M.

Christmas means watching the Polar Express together while we are drinking hot cocoa. We love playing all the board games we have while we are snuggled up in our blankets. Our family closes all the blinds and closes our living room doors. Then we watch the Polar Express in the dark all snuggled up. I can't wait until Christmas!

Christian W.

Christmas means playing outside and having a snowball fight with my family. My family and I like to have a gingerbread competition. We decorate our Christmas tree together. My favorite movie is Nightmare Before Christmas. My favorite part of Christmas is opening presents.

Piper B.

Christmas means to spend the last day of Christmas with my elf. I also love surprising my parents by building a big snowman. I can't wait to open my presents. Our family loves to see me so surprised when I open my presents.

Madison S.

Christmas means spending time with family. I like playing games like Monopoly. My favorite part of Christmas is family and gift giving and getting. I love Christmas so much. I love getting to play with all my toys.

Gavin M.

Christmas is special to my family because we celebrate Jesus' birthday. I like to pray when I go to bed. We open Christmas presents and have dinner and cake but mostly pie. Then when we go to our grandpa's and grandma's, we eat dinner and then we open presents. When we go home Santa will bring presents or he will be late and bring them in the morning.

Madalyn W.

Christmas means spending time with my family. How I spend time with my family is to play the game Life. It is my family's favorite game. We love to go to my grandma's house for Christmas and after we spend the night, the next day we come home and have our Christmas at home. We eat smoked beef my dad makes, and we have corn. I like to decorate the tree.

Alyssa A.

Christmas means making a gingerbread house with Dad and putting on and eating the candy. Also, we have a snowball fight with the family. Our family loves eating Christmas cake which tastes like vanilla ice cream. Our traditions are singing songs and dancing at the community building with my family. I can't wait for Christmas to come.

Genevieve S.

Christmas means playing in the plow lights when my dad dumps snow on me and my brother. One of our favorite traditions is having a whole day to bake cookies with my family and playing Christmas music and dancing. I love to go sledding with my mom, dad, and Gaige and we have races. We always watch Home Alone and go to Grandma's house on Christmas Eve. I can't wait for Christmas.

Max B.

Christmas means spending time with my family and having good food on Christmas Eve. My favorite activity is to go sledding with my cousin Nik. I like to look at Christmas lights in Warren. We go to my grandma's house to spend time with our relatives. I can't wait until this Christmas.

Gabe M.

Christmas means spending time with my family which is the most important thing about Christmas. On Christmas, we watch Christmas Story and listen to Christmas music. We go to grandma's on Dec. 26th and eat turkey, jello, dessert, and our family gathers there. My cousins and I play white elephant and exchange gifts.

Asher M.

Christmas means building snowmen with your brothers and sisters. It also means baking cookies with your family to leave out for Santa.

Blaine T.

What Christmas means to me is that you go outside and sled in the snow. I like watching Christmas movies with my family. On Christmas morning it is the best. I love spending time with family!

Arianna E.

Christmas means having fun with my family. It also means having a feast. I cannot wait for Christmas Day!

Jazmyn B.

Christmas means to me building a snowman with my family. Another thing is opening presents with family on Christmas morning. It also means baking cookies with my family in the afternoon. I cannot wait until Christmas.

Augustus T.

Christmas means building snowmen and making snow angles. It also means building gingerbread houses with your family. Another thing is having Christmas dinner with family.

Brooklyn H.

Christmas means to me buying gifts for people that care about me! Christmas is where I play in the snow. Christmas to me is drinking hot chocolate with my family. Finally, spending time with my family and giving people gifts is nice to do!

Braylyn M.

What Christmas means to me is making cookies with my grandma. I jump on my icy trampoline and sometimes make little igloos. Christmas means baking pumpkin pies with my mom. I also have fun when my dad brings the snowmobile out. It is very loud but fun!

Lakota L.

Christmas means to me writing letters to Santa. It is also about making cookies for Santa. Another thing Christmas means is playing with my siblings in the snow. The last thing is I like to shake my presents.

Randey W.

Christmas means building a snowman with my family on a snowy day. Another thing is drinking hot chocolate on cold days. It also means baking Christmas cookies for my family and then eating them. We like to watch Christmas movies!

Easton C.

Christmas means having a fun time with our families. Christmas also means building snowmen with your family members. I also think Christmas means buying gifts for your family. What do you think Christmas means?

Chyanne H.

Christmas means to me drinking hot chocolate and eating cookies. I also build igloos, snowmen, and snowwomen with my brothers. When it is Christmas we open presents!

Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency

PY22 LIHEAP Emergency Furnace Program

Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency has funding from the Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO) for the LIHEAP Emergency Furnace Assistance Program for income eligible households of Stephenson and Jo Daviess Counties who are **homeowners** and whose **existing** heating system is not operational (fails to operate, fails to produce adequate heat, operates in an unsafe manner) or has been red-tagged by their utility.

The purpose of the LIHEAP Furnace program is to restore heat to the household and is available from September 1, 2021 through April 30, 2022 or until funds are exhausted.

All income eligible homeowners may apply for emergency furnace assistance. The household must have active service with both primary and secondary heating utilities. Households with disconnected utilities are not eligible for this assistance.

To qualify for the LIHEAP Emergency Furnace Program, the household must first apply and be approved for LIHEAP or PIPP assistance. Please call the office at 815-232-3141 or 800-883-1111 between 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. to receive an application packet. All completed application packets and documents must be submitted by mail, email, drop-box, or fax. Limited appointments may be made for special needs, depending on current conditions.

Income Guidelines:

Family Size	30 Day Income	Family Size	30 Day Income
1	$2,147	6	$5,930
2	$2,903	7	$6,590
3	$3,660	8	$6,737
4	$4,417	9	$6,883
5	$5,173	10	$7,029
		11	$7,285

For each additional person add $568

**** The following documents will be required to apply for assistance. ****

- Social Security Cards for all members of the household.
- Proof of all gross income for all household members for 30 days prior and including the application date such as pay check stubs, SSA/SSI/SSD income, pension/retirement statements, child support, unemployment reports, TANF/AABD/Township GA assistance notices, self employment reports, and proof of zero income.
- Complete current heat and electric bills issued within the last 30 days.
- Copy of real estate tax bill
- Copy of warranty deed, contract for deed, or quit claim deed (all of these must be stamped and registered with the county clerk); **or** Copy of current mortgage statement; **or** Copy of the original title if your home is a mobile home.

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407935

Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency

Housing Stability/ Homeless Prevention Program/Rental Mortgage/Water Assistance

Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency has funding through DCEO CSBG Program and DHS Homeless Prevention Program to assist families in Stephenson and Jo Daviess Counties who are past due on their rent, mortgage, and/or water payments and are in danger of becoming homeless or are homeless due to a recent financial crisis affecting their ability to pay housing costs including COVID-19 related conditions.

Have you experienced one of the following crisis conditions:

- **COVID-19 related loss of employment or reduction in work hours**
- Loss of Employment or substantial reduction in work hours
- Current Medical Disability or Emergency
- Loss or Delay of some form of Public Benefit
- Natural Disaster
- Change in Household Composition
- Illegal Action by a Landlord
- Displacement by a Government or Private Action
- Some other condition beyond your control which constitutes a financial hardship

You may be eligible for assistance if you:

- Can provide documentation of your financial crisis condition

Documents that are required to apply:

- Proof of Social Security numbers for all members of the household
- Proof of all income for all members of the household for the 30 days prior to the application date
- 2020 income tax return
- Current Benefit letter for household members receiving SSA, SSI or SSD income
- Copies of your current utility bills (electric, gas/propane, water)
- Current Lease or Mortgage with contact information
- Eviction Notice or Past Due Letter from landlord, mortgage, and/or water company
- Third Party Documentation of financial hardship condition

Please call our office at 815-232-3141 or 800-883-1111 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday for information on how to apply.

COVID-19 mitigation procedures are still in place so in-person appointments and outreach appointments are not being scheduled at this time. We are in the office and taking applications for NICAA program assistance by phone, mail, email, and fax.

Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency
27 S. State Ave., Suite 102, Freeport, IL 61032
815-232-3141 • www.nicaa.org

407936

Letters To Santa

Orangeville Elementary first graders write letters to Santa

Dear Santa,
How are your reindeer? I would like a skateboard.
Your friend, Oliver

Dear Santa,
I would like a firetruck, Powerwheel, a couch and Xbox. I also want a fake microwave and PopIt.
Your friend, Chase

Dear Santa,
I hope you are doing well. What are your favorite cookies? How can you fly all around the world? I would like an Xbox 1.
Your friend, Eli

Dear Santa,
How are the reindeer? I will like a big jar of big pop-its.
Your friend, Nova

Dear Santa,
Do you need help at the North Pole? What are your favorite cookies? I would like Nerf guns.
Your friend, Zander

Dear Santa,
What are your elves' names? Reindeer names? I would like a Minecraft, robot and Pop-it.
Your friend, Barrett

Dear Santa,
I hope you are doing well. How are the reindeer? What are your elves' names? I would like a pop-it. I would like a grocery store.
Your friend, Delaney

Dear Santa,
Can I go to the North Pole? What is your favorite cookie? Should I put out white milk or chocolate milk? I want a Pokemon for Christmas.
Your friend, Maddox

Dear Santa,
How are your elves doing and reindeer doing? Santa I would like two things, please and thank you. A batman toy and a toy dog.
Your friend, Axel

Dear Santa,
How are your elves? My sister wants a Barbie mermaid. My cat wants a toy. I want an Xbox 61 and a Nerf gun. I want a Huggie-Wuggie, Minecraft and 1,000,000,000 Pop-its.
Your friend, Xander

Dear Santa,
How are the reindeer doing? What is your favorite kind of cookie? Merry Christmas Santa! May I have a good Christmas? How is Mrs. Claus? I would like a little Barbie and I would like a Grinch book.
Your friend, Rowan

Dear Santa,
I hope you are doing good. I would like a real phone, please! I would like a Pop-it, please! How are your reindeer doing? How are your elves doing?
Your friend, Cora

Dear Santa,
Are you happy? I like you! You are good. Do you like hot cocoa? How is Mrs. Claus doing? I want an Xbox 61, 4-wheeler, Huggie-Wuggie and Nerf gun.
Your friend, Mason

Dear Santa,
How are your reindeer? I would like a puppy. What cookies do you like? I want a reindeer and 100 Pop-Its.
Your friend, Khloe

Dear Santa,
Do you like to play Pokemon cards? Are you my brother? Can I have Pokemon cards, please? Can I have a PC for my dad?
Your friend, Bryant

Dear Santa,
How are you doing at the North Pole? How are the reindeer? How is Mrs. Claus? How are you Santa Claus? What I want for Christmas is a 4-wheeler.
Your friend, Reema

Dear Santa,
How are you doing? What are your favorite cookies? Can you send me a picture of one of your reindeer? I would like football shoulder pads, football jersey and cleats.
Your friend, Gavin

Dear Santa,
I hope you are doing well. What are your favorite cookies? What are your elves' names? I would like a pogo stick, please. I would like a trampoline with a pull on it, please. Can I please have a real reindeer?
Your friend, Kori

Dear Santa,
How are your reindeer? What cookies do you want? Chocolate chip? Can I have Pop-its, please, Santa?
Your friend, Ariella

Dear Santa,
Can I please have a skateboard for Christmas? Can you give me a picture of the reindeer, Santa? Can you please give me a Pop-it? I want 10 of the Pop-its.
Your friend, Lola

Dear Santa,
How are your reindeer? How are you? How are your elves? I would like a Pokemon binder, please. I would like a Pokemon book, please. May I please have 8 Pokemon Pop-its?
Your friend, Joseph

Dear Santa,
How are you doing? What have you been doing lately? Can you take me to the North Pole? I would like a Nerf gun, 4-wheeler, and snowboard.
Your friend, Brantley

Dear Santa,
How are you doing? How are your reindeer? Am I good? Yes or no? I would like a 4-wheeler. What cookies should we put under the tree?
Your friend, Levi

Dear Santa,
How are your reindeer doing? Are they behaving good or not? I want a Pop-it. Can I please have a 4-wheeler?
Your friend, Remi

Dear Santa,
Can I have a puppy, RC car and Pop-it? How are your reindeer?
Your friend, Carson

Dear Santa,
I have been good. I want a new blanket, a small Minnie Mouse table, and two dolls please. I will leave you cookies and milk for you and carrots and ranch for the reindeer. How are you so quiet? I hope you have a Merry Christmas. Please tell your reindeer I said hi!
Your friend, Adalyn

Davis Rockets, Open Bible take first place in Community Festival of Trees

A tree from the Davis Rockets 4-H group, *4-H Around the World*, took the judges' top prize in this year's FHN Community Festival of Trees. The club will receive a $500 prize from FHN. *He Counts the Stars and Calls Them All By Name* from the Open Bible Elementary Learning Center topped this year's People's Choice voting; the group will receive $500.

The FHN Community Festival of Trees brings organizations from across the area to decorate holiday trees, with cash prizes awarded by a panel of judges and the public. The Community Festival of Trees is on display free of charge at the Freeport Public Library (100 E. Douglas Street in Freeport) through Thursday, Dec. 13. The trees also may be viewed online on FHN's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/FHNhealth.

Ghosts of Christmas Past by the Friends of the Masonic (Paranormal Tours and Investigations) took second place in the judges' competition, winning $300. The judges' voting for third place ended in a tie: *It Is Important to Remember We All Have Magic Inside of Us* from the Lincoln-Douglas fourth grade and *NAHS* from the Freeport High School National Art Honor Society will both receive $150.

The Lincoln-Douglas fourth grade is the only group to win twice this year, taking second prize in the People's Choice category with *It Is Important to Remember We All Have Magic Inside of Us*. The group will receive $200 for this win.

'Twas the Night of Bethlehem from Liberty Village of Freeport earned third place in the People's Choice competition. The group will receive $100.

For more information on any of this year's Festival of Trees events, visit www.fhn.org/festivaloftrees.

With Warm Wishes
We wish bright, holiday wishes to all of our customers and friends throughout this joyous season.
Merry Christmas
from Dennis, James, Logan V., Phil, Logan H. and Randy
NAPA
Stockton Auto Supply
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With Warm Wishes For A
BLESSED CHRISTMAS
Our family
Wishes you and yours
an abundance of love,
peace and harmony
this holiday season.
Your loyal patronage has
already given us
reason to rejoice.
Steve and Donna
Vanderheyden Furniture & Flooring
409516

Noel! Noel!
With a resounding thanks to all our dear customers.
From All of Us at
Scales Mound Sinclair
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You're Always Welcome!
Thank you for the privilege of serving you.
Merry Christmas
Stock Holders Saloon
Apple River, IL
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409504
SEASON'S GREETINGS & MANY THANKS
It's been a pleasure serving you this past year.
SULLIVAN'S FOODS & STAFF
STOCKTON

Season's Greetings To All
As we enjoy the symbols of the season, the tree, the decorations, the music and more, we would like to add our best wishes for a joyous holiday.
Werhane Enterprises, Ltd.
509 E. Main • Lena
815-369-4574
409066

Incidentally; Picture perfect holiday smiles

By
DR. STEPHEN PETRAS
Illinois Licensed General Dentist

December is a month of holidays and holidays mean pictures with family, co-workers and friends. While some people look forward to these holiday photos, people who are self-conscious or embarrassed by their teeth may dread them.

A healthy bright smile serves you both personally and professionally. Numerous surveys show that the first thing people notice when meeting someone is their smile. This is especially true on dating sites where a healthy smile is perceived as an indicator of good hygiene. Participants reported they are more likely to swipe left on a profile picture when the person has a closed mouth smile or pout. Applicants with a big bright smile are seen as more confident, outgoing, attractive, and approachable.

Smiling is good for you. When your smile muscles are activated, it releases endorphins that decrease stress, lower blood pressure and makes you feel better. When someone sees you smile, they tend to smile. Those endorphins make them feel good and they tend to associate feeling good with you.

If you are not comfortable with or embarrassed by your smile, make an appointment with your dentist. While dentistry offers a variety of solutions to help you achieve a healthy bright smile, the following hints can help you smile your brightest in those upcoming holiday photos.

As I wrote last week, holidays parties tend to be all about overindulging, in food, sweets and beverages. Keep in mind that anything that can stain your tablecloth or tongue is going to be staining your teeth. This includes wine, hard, bright colored and sticky candies, dark sauces (tomato, teriyaki, curry and cranberry) dark fruits and fruit pies. Late nights getting ready for visitors and events often lead to an increase in consumption of caffeinated sodas, energy drinks, coffee and tea (which can stain your teeth even more than black coffee). Busy schedules and holiday treats also lend themselves to constant snacking. To help decrease staining, limit holiday treats to mealtime, drink less stain-producing beverages and don't let your teeth bathe in them for prolonged periods of time. Use a straw when possible and don't "nurse" a soda or energy drink but get it over with. Many people think red wine is better than white wine for teeth, but both wreak havoc on your smile. Enjoy your holiday wine in moderation and don't let either sit on your teeth. Rinse your mouth with water after these stain-producing beverages and snacks, and drink fluoridated tap water throughout the day. When eating dark sauces, make sure to include raw carrots, celery, nuts, cheese, pears and/or apples in your meal to help reduce the staining. While it's ideal to brush thirty minutes after a meal, this is not always possible. Rinse food debris out of your mouth with tap water and then chew on sugarless cinnamon gum to neutralize acids and freshen your breath.

Don't let your oral hygiene lapse in the flurry of all these activities. In fact, upping your hygiene game is only going to help make your smile something to be proud of as you share those holiday pictures.

Region 1 local health departments and hospitals urge public to take steps to address the high hospital patient volumes

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases are rising at an alarming rate in the Northern Illinois Rockford Region, Region 1, and an increasing number of patients with COVID-19 are being admitted to local hospitals. Hospital bed availability has reached a critically low level, demand on hospital resources is high, and most of the local hospitals have experienced long wait times in their Emergency Departments.

With the identification of COVID-19 variants (Delta and Omicron) that spread more easily and the increasing COVID-19 cases in our region, the nine county local health departments and the eleven hospitals in Region 1 jointly seek the support and action of the community to address the high patient volumes.

The public is urged to use the emergency department for emergencies only. Contact your primary care provider or go to a walk-in clinic for non-emergency needs.

Please show compassion towards staff who are working hard amid this crisis. Additionally, get vaccinated for COVID-19 and flu. If eligible, get your COVID-19 booster shot.

COVID-19 vaccines are available for everyone 5 and older. The flu vaccine is available for everyone 6 months and older. Flu and COVID-19 vaccines can be given at the same time.

To find a vaccine provider, go to vaccines.gov, call 1-800-232-0233 or text your ZIP code to 738829.

If you test positive for COVID-19, ask about monoclonal antibodies which can reduce the severity of the disease.

For more information go to visit https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/. For general question about COVID-19, call the IDPH hotline at 1-800-889-3931

A
Day of Celebration

In words and in actions
Each in your way,
May you celebrate the meaning
Of this Christmas Day

Wishing you a Merry Christmas

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Merry Christmas

from
All Of Us At
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Wishing you a very happy holiday season and the very best for the new year! Thank you for your business!
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Todd, Chad, Ben, Nate, Mitchell, Braden & Jamie
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Merry Christmas
from
D.N.W. Building & Remodeling
Lena
815-369-2175
Darin, Tammy, Nick, Dee, Collyns, Bowman, Cass and Zach
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JOYOUS NOEL

For friends old and new, may the new year bring health, success and happiness.
LILES CHIROPRACTIC CLINIC, Ltd.
238 West Main Street • Lena, Illinois • 815-369-4974
409769

Illinois ag student seeks kidney donor

By Tammie Sloup
FARMWEEK

Lance Moritz has known for most of his life he would need a kidney transplant.

Born with tuberous sclerosis, which causes benign tumors to grow on organs, the 19-year-old who farms with his family in Streator, Ill., is used to being in and out of hospitals for various surgeries, including pancreatic, spine and brain surgeries.

Doctors have monitored Moritz's kidney function since he was 7 following renal bypass surgery to restore blood flow to one kidney. About a month ago, his family learned Moritz's kidneys were functioning at only 10-12 percent.

Dialysis will help, but the time had come—Moritz moved from being on the inactive transplant list to the active transplant list, meaning doctors are actively searching for a kidney from a deceased donor.

With 100,000 people on that same list, the wait could be years.

Now, the Illinois Valley Community College student is asking the public to consider donating a kidney. He made his plea on Facebook, sharing his story:

"My medical history has been a challenge over the past 19 years of my life, but it has also made me a stronger person. My passion is in the agriculture industry, and my favorite places are when I am outside, working in the shop, and operating equipment to work ground and plant fields," he wrote. "These are traits and skills I want to be able to pass onto my children when the time comes. I want to be able to be there for my family and lend the help when needed. But sadly, if I can't receive a kidney the time may not come. If I am on dialysis waiting, I can't do these hobbies I love."

Students with Taylorville School District's Tommy TV created a video shared on multiple platforms, while Lance's community college published a story picked up by local media.

As word spread, Lance's mother, Mary, said she learned several people volunteered to be tested through OSF Transplant Services.

Unfortunately, there wasn't a match.

Lance, an agronomy major who plans to continue working on the family farm and assist with the family's local trucking business upon graduation, struggled with school early on, but with his family's support, tutors and school programs that allowed him flexibility due to medical absences, he's now enjoying college. With the ongoing pandemic coupled with his health issues, Lance participates in his in-person classes via Zoom.

His parents, Illinois Farm Bureau members Mary and Jeff Moritz, didn't want to exclude Lance from activities due to his health problems.

"We decided not to let him live in a bubble," Mary said, adding Lance played football and baseball, joined the swim team and 4H. "He couldn't wait to get to FFA."

Winning several state awards and being named twice a National FFA finalist, the fourth-generation La Salle County farmer is an accomplished FFA member who's excited just to be planting or harvesting corn and soybeans on his family's 2,600 acres or chatting with his dad about the farm's seeding and fertilizer plans. The city of Streator acknowledged Lance's FFA accomplishments by erecting several signs with his name and awards.

From his toddler years, Lance has been drawn to farming; same for his 12-year-old sister Jenna, who loves showing her 4-H pigs.

"Ever since I was young, just being out there, riding in the equipment was always my favorite place to be. When I got to be 14 or 15, I was running equipment and now I get turned loose to work 120 acres, and I get a list of things to do," he said.

Missing some family gatherings and time out in the field is difficult, but Lance remains optimistic.

"Yes, (my health has) affected things, ... but on the farm side of things, if I'm not able to be there to do something, at least I can be there sometimes," he said, adding he's grateful to start dialysis in the coming weeks. Doctors recently inserted a catheter so Lance can undergo at-home dialysis at night while he's sleeping, versus visiting a center several times a week.

Fortunately, Lance never experienced the more common symptoms of tuberous sclerosis—severe development delays and multiple seizures a day.

Lance acknowledged how frightening donating a kidney can be, especially to a stranger.

"But it can be rewarding in many ways also. You will get to live with the thought that you gave someone else a second chance in life, and you were there to help build their future for a great healthy life," he wrote on Facebook. "I have been dealt these odd cards since the day I was born, but I haven't let them stop me."

Agronomy Summit slated for January

The University of Illinois Extension is pleased to announce the fourth annual Northwest Illinois Agronomy Summit that will be held at the Stephenson County Farm Bureau Building, 210 W. Spring Street, Freeport, IL on Friday, Jan. 14, 2022, with the program running from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. The theme for this year's conference is *Updates in Crop Management* with University of Illinois and University of Wisconsin-Madison specialists discussing strategies for weed, pest, disease, and nutrient management.

Registration is required to attend the Northwest Illinois Agronomy Summit and can be completed at go.illinois.edu/jsw or by calling the U of I Extension at (815) 235-4125. Registration cost is $5 per person.

All current COVID-19 guidelines recommended by IDPH and the CDC will be followed and the event is subject to change in order to follow the most up to date guidance.

If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this program, please contact the Extension Office, early requests are strongly encouraged to allow enough time for meeting your needs.

Highland express registration set for January

Students who are getting started on their academic careers, coming back from a gap semester, or have not registered for the spring 2022 semester can attend Express Registration on Wednesday, Jan. 5 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Student Conference Center (Building H), 2998 W. Pearl City Rd., Freeport, Ill.

Thursday, Jan. 6 is the payment deadline for spring semester classes.

Highland has something for everyone from fast-tracked certificates to degrees to be able to transfer to a four-year institution. All of these options come with affordable tuition and many other scholastics and financial resources for those who qualify.

"Why pay university sky-high prices when you can attend smaller classroom settings with several flexible options from highly qualified instructors," said Jeremy Bradt, Director of Enrollment and Records. "At Highland, the classes are the same high-quality education and Highland has a vast array of transfer agreements to take advantage of and occupational programs that have some great connections to the community."

Highland Community College classes start on Jan. 18. For a complete listing of spring semester classes, view the searchable schedule at highland.edu/schedule. To learn more about registering, course offerings, or Highland, call 815-599-3573.

Commercials: The good, the bad and the bizarre

By **MIKE SANDROLINI**
Columnist

For a while during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic last year, every advertisement—whether on traditional TV or radio, streaming online or on social media—sounded the same.

We continually heard the familiar catch phrases "Now more than ever" … "In these difficult times" … "In these challenging times … "During these uncertain times" … "In these unprecedented times" … "We're here for you."

And never forget: "We're all in this together."

A part of me keeps wondering if some pharmaceutical company has a vaccine in the works to treat us for a variant known as: Commercials Obviously Void of Intelligent Dialogue (or COVID).

But as we know, commercials can be annoying with or without the familiar COVID cliches.

While keeping my fingers crossed that we can return to some degree of normalcy as we approach 2022 (the Delta and Omicron variants notwithstanding) it's a given that most commercials will continue to be anything but normal.

To be sure, there are entertaining commercials on the airwaves and in cyberspace—I've listed two examples here. Yet the majority fall under two categories: the bad and the bizarre.

So, without further ado:

The good

First American Bank—My idea of a good commercial is one that doesn't make you rush to either turn it off or hit the mute button. First American Bank's long-running spots featuring Grandma—who's from Lithuania and has a heavy accent—and her grandson Dickie (who has since given way to Dickie Jr.) fit the bill.

Let's just say Grandma doesn't have particularly good command of the English language, but her entrepreneurial spirit is admirable. Whenever she comes up with a new idea how to make a buck, she runs it past Dickie.

Grandma's tendency to butcher English lingo often leaves Dickie perplexed, but he eventually gets behind Grandma's latest business venture and always steers her to calling First American Bank for a loan to start her business.

Big Lou Term Provider Insurance—Take note, Progressive Insurance and Liberty Mutual (both mentioned later). This is how you sell insurance. You have a fellow with whom you share some things in common—Big Lou. Big Lou is taking many of the same prescription medications you and I are for a host of ailments.

"Diabetes, high blood pressure, anxiety meds; everyone's on them. If you're a 50-year-old male, maybe a bit porky, and you may even have type 2 diabetes, a million dollars of term insurance may cost you about 200 bucks a month. Call Big Lou at Term Provider. Remember: Big Lou is like you; he's on meds, too."

The bad

Progressive Insurance and Flo—While I appreciate Flo's bubbly enthusiasm over the years hawking Progressive Insurance, her commercial segments have gone the way of the dinosaur. If State Farm can give khaki pants Jake the boot—and by golly, if Dos Equis can send my role model, The Most Interesting Man in the World, on a one-way trip to Mars—why not Flo?

GMC "I love it" holiday commercial—I'm surprised GMC decided to roll out this annoying spot once again for the 2021 holiday season, yet it has. In case you're one of the fortunate few who hasn't seen it, a loving, thoughtful (and apparently filthy rich) husband decides to surprise his wife with his-and-hers GMC vehicles—a red Yukon for her and a blue Sierra for him.

Or so he thought. Instead, wifey makes a bee-line for the blue Sierra. "I love it," she gushes. As hubby tries to explain the Red Yukon is for her, she looks back, gives him "the look" and repeats, "I love it." End of discussion.

Here's hoping there's a sequel next year showing him taking the smart key fob from her, keeping the Sierra she wanted, driving the Yukon back to the dealership and handing her a lump of coal.

The bizarre

Liberty Mutual Insurance—How those in charge of marketing and advertising at Liberty Mutual managed to get higher-ups to sign off on a gangly emu (LiMu) with a sidekick named Doug (whose moustache is a cross between Ron Burgundy's and Tom Selleck's) in an effort to drum up more business is beyond me.

In another line of commercials that are equally as perplexing as the adventures of LiMu Emu and Doug, Liberty-Liberty-Liberty utilizes the Statue of Liberty as a backdrop for individuals such as a Zoltar fortune teller, a girl jumping rope, a young entrepreneur dressed as a smartphone, and lately, a fellow seated next to an Afghan Hound whose long hair resembles that of his dog (later, he's scratching his ear in sync with the dog)—all to drive home the point that you can customize your car insurance.

Pepto-Bismol Liquicaps—If you've seen this ad (or heard it on the radio), you know what I'm talking about. If not, take a minute to Google: "Pepto-Bismol Liquicaps commercial" and view it online, or on your phone.

Let's put it this way: If I'm experiencing either nausea, heartburn, indigestion, an upset stomach or diarrhea during a commercial flight, the last thing I want to see is three flight attendants (one sporting a pink tie) walking down the aisle and turning my gastrointestinal issues into a Broadway musical.

Next time you fly, I strongly recommend reserving a coach seat as far in the back of the plane as possible so that creepy guy wearing the pink tie doesn't serenade you.

One Man's Opinion

How much free stuff can I get?

By **JIM SACIA**
Former State Representative

I love to read. More than reading, I love to write. Arguably, my greatest love is my family. I love working on or tinkering with engines and mechanical stuff.

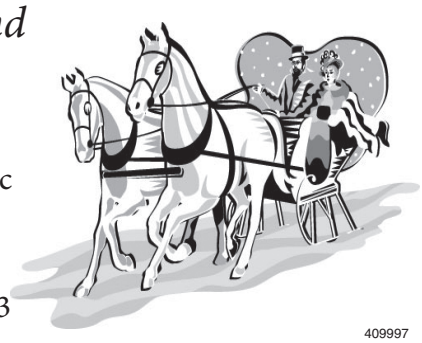
My computer skills are nearly non-existent. Obviously, therefore, I write out everything in "cursive" or as we called it in my high school days "longhand". Thankfully, my legislative assistant, Sally, during my State Representative years, could read my very poor penmanship and transcribed all my writing of weekly articles as well as anything needing to be sent out. Now my bride of 51 years, Jenny, does my transcribing.

This very morning, Sunday, Dec. 5, pedaling my stationary bike and reading one of my favorite authors, Veterinarian and former Montana state representative, Krayton Kerns, his penned words slapped me up-side the head. "America has become a nation where a citizen of need is held in higher esteem than one of production. The greater your achievements, the more evil you are portrayed. An entire political movement is powered by promising the population gifts from the production class". He goes on, "When producers could no longer meet the demands for things, politicians began gifting from the labors of workers not yet born and rulers have promised 13.3 trillion dollars more in gifts than they had in Santa's bag. We must change this mindset. God endowed America with the rights to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. When you are an American, achievement has no limits and I am sorry if that offends you".

See OPINION, Page 15

Tis The Season

Have a very Merry Christmas with Family and Friends!



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Dan, Kathy
& Danielle
Lena
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WISHING YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS!

WURSTERS SALES & SERVICE, LLC
AARON & TOM

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409999

SEASON'S GREETINGS & MANY THANKS

It's been a pleasure serving you this past year.

SULLIVAN'S FOODS & STAFF
LENA

MERRY CHRISTMAS

from

RICK'S SALES & SERVICE

815-492-2102

410003

Season's Greetings

from

Stockton Auto Body

Rich, Penny, Lindsay & Andy

409523

Have A Story Book Christmas

We appreciate our many patrons who celebrate reading as we do. A warm and festive season to all!

The Board & Staff of
LENA LIBRARY
300 W. Mason, Lena, IL 61048
815-369-3180

409771

New year comes with new laws

With the New Year comes a host of new laws that affect many aspects of Illinoisans' lives, according to State Sen. Brian Stewart (R-Freeport).

In all, 285 new laws will take effect Jan. 1. Many others bills were passed during 2021 but include effective dates further out into the future in 2022, 2023, or beyond.

Stewart says these new laws cover a wide variety of subject areas. Some of the more notable laws that residents should be aware of taking effect on Jan. 1, 2022, include:

Minimum Wage

Illinois employers are bracing for another increase in the minimum wage as they continue to get back on their feet following forced closures during the pandemic. On Jan. 1, the minimum wage increases to $12-per-hour, and will continue to increase on Jan. 1 each year until it hits $15-per-hour on Jan. 1, 2025.

FOID

Significant changes to FOID system

This year, the Legislature passed comprehensive changes to the state's FOID system. Proponents call the reforms important public-safety improvements, while opponents, including most Senate Republicans, felt it was yet another attack on law-abiding gun owners and a gateway to mandating fingerprints. As signed into law, the new FOID law:

Encourages but does not require fingerprinting. Those who agree to fingerprinting are granted a streamlined process for renewal of FOID Cards and CCL licenses.

Allows for the Illinois State Police to issue a combined FOID Card and concealed carry license to qualified applicants.

Requires the Illinois State Police to establish a public database of all firearms that have been reported stolen to be checked prior to the transfer of any firearm to prevent the inadvertent transfer of stolen firearms.

Tasks a new Violent Crime Intelligence Task Force to conduct enforcement operations against those with revoked FOID Cards.

In addition to the above provisions, which take effect on Jan. 1, the following additional provisions take effect on Jan. 1, 2024:

Requires person-to-person firearm transfers to be subject to National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) checks at a federal licensed firearms dealer or through online validation by the Illinois State Police using NICS.

Requires Federal Firearms Licensures (FFL) to keep the record of a transfer for 20 years. On the demand of a peace officer, transferees have to identify the FFL dealer maintaining the transfer record. The penalty for not doing so is a Class A misdemeanor.

Requires that those who receive a firearm in a private transfer must provide a record of the transfer to a licensed firearm dealer within 10 days. The dealer in turn must keep the record for 20 years and may charge up to $25 for keeping it. The recipient of the firearm must be able to provide the name of the firearm dealer maintaining the record for that particular firearm upon demand by law enforcement. Failure to do so is a Class A misdemeanor.

Public Safety

Omnibus criminal justice reforms take effect

In the middle of the night during a January 2021 lame-duck session of the General Assembly, Democrats pushed through a 764-page criminal justice reform bill that makes major changes to how law enforcement officers do their jobs. Provisions of the bill, which include several elements opposed by law enforcement and victims' advocacy groups, take effect at different times.

One provision of the law taking effect at the beginning of the New Year includes the start of the phase-in requirement that all law enforcement officers in the state wear body cameras by 2025. Counties and cities with populations of 500,000 or more (City of Chicago; Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, and Will counties) will have to meet this requirement by Jan. 1, 2022, and then smaller departments will be phased in over the next few years.

Provisions of the bill with later effective dates include:

Effective Jan. 1, 2023:

Abolishes monetary bail and gives broad discretion to judges to determine detention.

Forbids arrest for resisting arrest/obstructing unless there is an underlying offense. Note: passage of a trailer bill – Public Act 102-0028 – separated resisting from obstructing so that you can arrest someone for obstructing without an underlying offense.

Prohibits an officer from making a custodial arrest for Class B misdemeanors, which includes property trespassers and peeping toms. Instead, all an officer can do is issue the offender a citation but can no longer remove the person from private or public property.

Adding email and social media posts to stalking/ no contact orders

To close a loophole some predators were using to reach targeted victims, the Legislature has taken steps to strengthen the Stalking/ No-Contact Order Act. As of Jan. 1, a person who is prohibited through a no-contact order from contacting another individual by phone or in person can also be restrained from sending email, texts, or social media posts.

Strengthening penalties against child predators

Legislators also closed a loophole that allowed family members found to be in possession of child pornography to escape jail time. Through an amendment to the Code of Corrections, child pornography laws are strengthened by making possession of child pornography when the child is a household or family member of the defendant a non-probational offense. Previously, this category of offenders could receive a sentence of probation for their pornography conviction.

Education

Optional college admissions testing

Beginning Jan. 1, all of Illinois' public universities and community colleges must offer a "test-optional" policy as part of its undergraduate admissions process. This means that students can choose whether or not they will submit SAT, ACT or other test scores as part of their applications for college. The law only affects admissions processes for the state's public institutions of higher learning.

Mental health excused absences for Illinois public schools

When students return to school in January, they will have up to five excused absence days available to them that can be used for mental or behavioral health. Students will not have to provide a medical note when using these days, and they must be given the opportunity to make up any missed school work assigned during the mental or behavioral health absence.

Agricultural Sciences as an official class to meet state requirements

For high school students, courses in agricultural sciences will now count toward the three-year minimum of science classes required for admission into a public university in Illinois. Classes in agricultural sciences can also now be taken in lieu of the current two-year requirement of a foreign language for admittance into a public university.

Outlining the costs of college

Through a new comprehensive report that must now be completed by all public universities in Illinois, when a student declares or changes a major of study, the public university the student attends must provide that student with a report that includes the following:

The estimated cost of his or her education associated with pursuing a degree in that major;

The average monthly student loan payment over a period of 20 years based on the estimated cost of his or her education;

The average job placement rate within 12 months after graduation for a graduate who holds a degree in that major;

The average entry-level wage or salary for an occupation related to that major; and

The average wage or salary five years after entry into an occupation related to that major.

Veterans

Free Gold Star license plates for survivors

As of Jan. 1, the State of Illinois will be offering free Gold Star license plates for a surviving widow, widower, or parent of a person who served in the U.S. Armed Forces and lost his or her life while in wartime service. Previously, a $151 registration fee was charged for these specialty plates.

State flags for next of kin

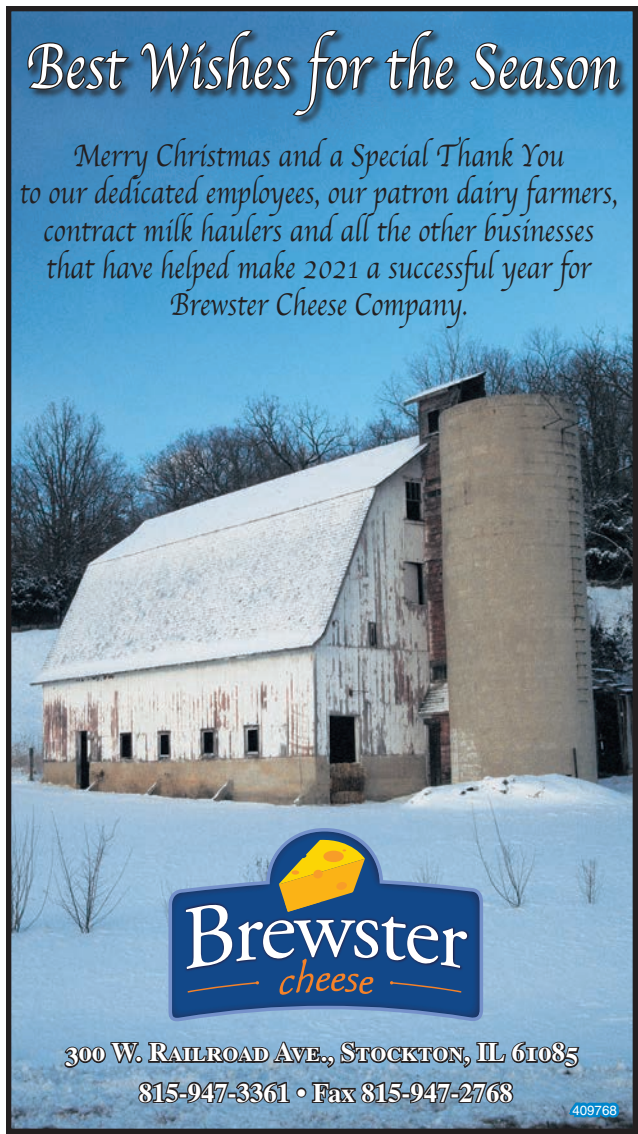
In an effort to show appreciation of the life and service of Illinoisans who answered the call to serve in the Armed Forces, upon the death of an Illinois serviceman/woman, a member of the Illinois National Guard will present a State of Illinois flag to the next of kin.

Public Health

Repackaging unused prescription medications

Beginning in January, those who struggle to afford their prescription medications can take advantage of a new program that makes their medicines more affordable. Through the new Illinois Drug Reuse Opportunity Program Act, individuals may now donate their unused prescription medications back to participating pharmacies, which could then repackage them and make them available to patients in need. Pharmacies may charge a nominal handling fee.

See LAWS, Page 14



Lena Library news

The library staff would like to wish all our patrons a Merry Christmas and a Happy, and healthy, New Year! The Story Hour and After School groups had fun celebrating Christmas this past week.

The library is starting the new year off with a little excitement by bringing back the Book Discussion group. It is similar to a book club, but members read any book of their choosing and then come and discuss it with other members. It is a great way to learn of new authors and topics. The first meeting will be Jan. 19 at 10 a.m. Call the library or visit the Facebook page for more information.

There are still free books available. Bring a bag or box and fill it with as many free books as you would like.

New fiction books include The Becoming- Nora Roberts, Flying Angels-Danielle Steel, The Christmas Promise-Richard Paul Evans, The Midnight Lock-Jeffery Deaver, and Wish You Were Here-Jodi Picoult. New non-fiction titles include The Real Anthony Fauci-Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Take advantage of the online catalog by visiting search.prairiecat.info. Ask a librarian for more information on how to use the PrairieCat catalog.

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Store Hours: M-F 8-3; Sat 8-1
409015

SUBMITTED PHOTO *Rock Valley Publishing*

A Sweet Christmas treat

"Sweetie Me" candy store owner, Ralph Pehl, and three patrons recently spread the Christmas spirit of giving. Several children hid dollar bills throughout the candy store for other children to later find. They were able to enjoy a sweet Christmas treat thanks to their generosity.

your source for on-line news:
RVPNEWS.COM

Pearl City Lego League qualifies for state championship

On Saturday, Dec. 11, the Pearl City Technowolves Lego League team headed to Rockford Christian for their Cargo Connect season qualifying tournament. In a 30-minute segment with judges, the team presented a skit explaining their innovation "Smart Straps" and explained design ideas for the robot that the team built. Focusing on the core values set forth by US First, these 5th through 8th-graders shared how they worked as a team, innovated, and cooperated to solve problems. In addition, during three separate "robot runs" on the mission table, the programmed Spike robot manipulated Lego obstacles to earn points in 2 ½ minutes. Later in the evening during a remote ceremony, tournament directors announced awards, and the team earned the Robot Design Award and, using a combination of scores throughout the day, the team qualified to move on to the State Championship in January.

SUBMITTED PHOTO *Rock Valley Publishing*

The Pearl City Technowolves impressed judges with their robot and "Smart Straps" invention. Members of the team include Xander Krolow, Scarlett Snyder, Mackenzie Lotz, Brogan Keltner, Hannah Dinderman, Kennedy Solt, Miles Corbin, and Ayden Hayes. The team qualified for the state championship that will take place in January.

SUBMITTED PHOTO *Rock Valley Publishing*

Book Bash

Pearl City Elementary receives their first books from a very generous donation from the Pearl City Boulevard Bash Committee and funds raised last summer.

SUBMITTED PHOTO *Rock Valley Publishing*

Lena-Winslow FFA takes fourth place

On Saturday, Dec. 11 Lena-Winslow FFA traveled to the State Dairy Foods CDE at Parkland Community College in Champaign, IL. Students identified cheese types, dairy and non-dairy products, and scored for milk off of flavoring. They tested milk samples for mastitis and completed a team problem and exam covering dairy marketing and distribution. Lena-Winslow took 4th overall and had three students finish in the Top Half Individually. Ava Fiedler placed 16th, Conor Dezell placed 21st, and Mika Schoger Placed 35 out of 108 students. Pictured left to right are Madalyn Schierloh, Kegan DeZell, Ava Fiedler, Mika Schoger, and Conor DeZell.

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Sen. Stewart: New law attacks parental rights

A new law repealing parental notification of abortion in Illinois is a direct attack on the rights of parents and will leave countless young girls vulnerable at a time when they desperately need support and guidance, according to State Sen. Brian Stewart (R-Freeport).

Signed into law by Gov. JB Pritzker on Dec. 17, House Bill 370 was passed by a 32-22 Senate vote on Oct. 26 and by a 62-51-3 House of Representatives vote on Oct. 27. The new law has an effective date of June 1, 2022.

The Parental Notice of Abortion Act of 1995 had required that parents of minors be notified before their child received an abortion procedure. This Act had stipulated that a parent be informed of the procedure, but did not require them to provide consent.

Stewart issued the following statement after the Governor signed House Bill 370 into law:

"This Governor and other Democrat leaders think they know what is best for our children. The Governor and his supporters continue their overreach into the lives and homes of Illinois families. They must instead trust the parents, grandparents, foster parents and guardians who have raised these children. They continue to think they have the right to interfere in things as personal as medical decisions for minor children."

State Sen. Brian Stewart (R-Freeport).

•Laws (Continued from page 11)

Consumer Protection
Providing for free early cancellation of service contracts in the event of a death

When a family member passes away, survivors should not be saddled with cancellation fees for the lost loved one's utilities. As of Jan. 1, providers of telephone, cellular phone, television, Internet, energy, medical alert system, and water services are prohibited from charging a fee for termination or early cancellation of a service contract.

Let the kids be kids

While many felt it should not have required legislative intervention, members of the General Assembly passed a law this year that prohibits the Illinois Department of Public Health and local health departments from regulating lemonade or non-alcoholic drink stands operated by kids younger than the age of 16. The need for the law stemmed from an instance where a lemonade stand was shut down because the child had not obtained the required permit for the stand.

And don't forget about the controversial bills that will also take effect in 2022:

Significant changes made to sex education in schools

This year, the Legislature passed a controversial bill limiting local control over sex education by implementing sweeping new state standards. The bill, passed by Democrats and signed into law by Gov. JB Pritzker, requires public schools that teach sex education to align their sex-education courses with the so-called National Sex Education Standards – standards formulated by out-of-state advocacy groups. These standards are now a baseline for sex education throughout the state. Sex-education courses must also provide information about local sources for additional information and confidential services related to reproductive health. The revamped sex-education classes may be taught from kindergarten through 12th grade.

No later than Aug. 1, 2022, the State Board of Education must develop and provide resource materials that can be used in the new sex-education classes. Schools may choose their own curriculum as long as it aligns with the standards outlined above.

Discrimination in the workforce allowed through carve-out in HCRCA

Despite unprecedented opposition from everyday Illinoisans who urged the General Assembly not to make exceptions within the Health Care Right of Conscience Act (HCRCA), starting June 1, 2022, Illinoisans will see a diminishment of protections against health-related discrimination in the workplace.

The HCRCA, originally enacted with bipartisan majorities, provides vital protections to Illinoisans and prohibits any form of discrimination against individuals who refuse to take part in any medical services or procedures that are contrary to their religious beliefs, morals, or convictions. A partisan carve-out was passed in the General Assembly by Democrats this year which now means these protections do not apply to COVID-19 vaccines or testing. Through the new law, people now can be discriminated against, punished, and even lose their jobs if they do not agree to mandatory vaccinations, even if individuals agree to regular testing.

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COUNTRY FINANCIAL
I would like to join my entire staff in wishing everyone a very Happy Holiday season.

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Slices of life

Prime delivery and the heroes therein

By **JILL PERTLER**
Columnist

I was an early proponent of online shopping. I lived in a rural community without much access to retail, so it was a natural fit. I even experimented with grocery purchases when it was a new and novel thing. I wrote about the crazy packaging practices of my delivery orders back in 2017. Yes, I was that cutting edge.

I didn't make online grocery shopping a habit. I preferred to pick out my toilet paper in person.

Then COVID hit in early 2020 and all our worlds—and shopping habits—changed, perhaps forever.

E-commerce had already established itself in our daily lives, but COVID cemented it there. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, e-commerce sales jumped nearly 32% in 2020, making it not only cemented but set in stone, for many good reasons.

Why carry heavy bags of groceries when you can have them delivered to your doorstep? TVs, furniture, clothing, tennis shoes, garden implements, snow blowers, generators and ceiling fixtures – all available with the click of a mouse.

And you can do it all in your pajamas (or sans pajamas, if that's how you roll. Wink.)

You don't have to wear a mask or worry about hand sanitizer. All with better prices and better selection.

It's, in a word, convenience. For me. For you. But not for everyone.

Not for the good folks bearing the burden of this societal shift: the people delivering the goods.

I propose an ode to the delivery people who now tote our toilet paper and canned goods. Those who haul furniture boxes and those labeled, "Fragile, this side up." Their days are made up of long hours, barking dogs and too many addresses.

They deliver long past dark, even though dark comes too soon right now. I've witnessed it firsthand. They wear the company uniform and a smile and they get the job done, all so we can order toilet paper and have it delivered free with two day shipping, even on weekends. Even on Sundays. Since when do we need our laundry detergent or area rugs delivered on a Sunday? Since now, supposedly.

These good people work without the benefit of tips (at least that I know of). I hope they get incentives and bonuses, but I'm not sure. They deserve all three. I'm not sure how often people let them know they are appreciated and their work is valued, but we should. Shame on us if we don't. In that vein, I have one message for them:

Thank you.

Thank you for all you do. Thank you for working early in the morning and late into the evening just to make sure my new bedroom pillows arrive on time. Thank you for making sure I get my granola, pesto sauce and cat treats well within the estimated delivery window.

Thank you for making our lives easier, during the pandemic and probably after, if an after ever comes. Thank you for carrying the heaviest packages inside my door because it would be hard for me to do that by myself. Thank you for providing a rescue to many during a difficult time for us all.

Thank you isn't enough, really, but it's all I have, and it's delivered from the heart. I see what you're doing. I see how hard you work. I see the long hours that are required of you. I see that you may be taken for granted and I'm sorry for that. I see how much you benefit us all from simply "doing your job." I see, and I hope others do as well.

Thank you.

Jill Pertler is an award-winning syndicated columnist, published playwright and author. She invites readers to follow the Slices of Life page on Facebook.

Opinion

(Continued from page 10)

Krayton penned that article in 2010… today many more trillions of dollars are promised than do exist. Is the pursuit of happiness and achievement or is it how much free stuff can I get? The answer of course is up to you.

To me, no one said it better than Poet Rabindragnath Tagore. I have used it before, but here is the perfect summation. "I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy".

I so applaud NBA star Enes Kanter Freedom. Upon becoming an American citizen last week, he added "Freedom" to his name to share his pride and love of his new citizenship. He has repeatedly condemned human rights violations in China and his native Turkey. He says adding "Freedom" to his name reflects his fight for freedom throughout his life, which we Americans take so for granted.

For the honor of being among the 4.5% of the world's population to live in this country, a country where millions are trying to get in, I personally thank God every day for allowing me to be a part of this great experiment. Accordingly, I sense a need to do all that I can to be an achiever and give back all that I can.

Christmas Greetings from
The Village of Lena

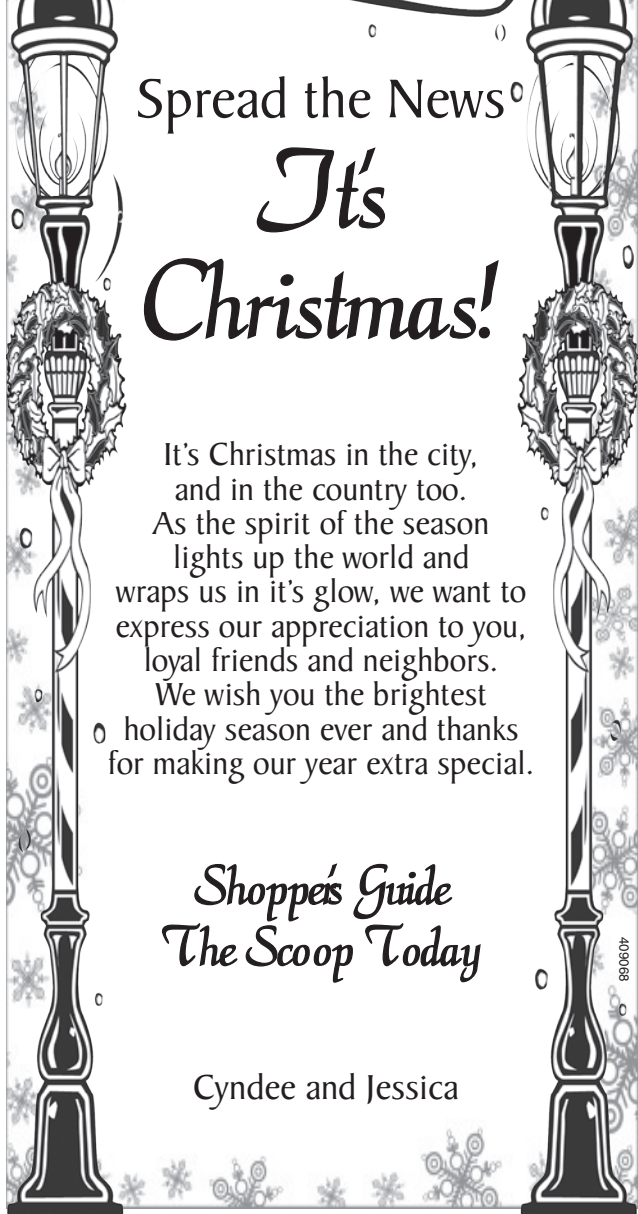
Thank you to the following who helped put up the Lena Downtown Nativity Scene and Christmas decorations:

Village of Lena:
Rick Dikkers
Brandt Esling

Lena Park District:
Andy Martin
Vince Decker
Annie Carter

Volunteers:
Don Strohecker
Jerry Fox
Duane Babcock
Jim Noller
Jim Raders
Bill Engel
Larry Friese
Gary Meyers
Jim Cox

A special THANK YOU to Cheryl King for cleaning and re-painting the Nativity Scene figures
409494



Shop holiday gifts from local Illinois farms this season

By Kay Shipman
FARMWEEK

With shoppers worried about supply chains and shipping delays, holiday foods and gifts from the farm have never been timelier.

"Everybody is worried about finding gifts and supply chain disruptions. The perfect solution is finding somebody making a gift locally and shopping at a farm nearby for a unique gift," said Dar Knipe, co-founder of MarketMaker, an interactive database.

Farmers and growers are using different options to help shoppers check off items on their gift lists, according to Raghela Scavuzzo, Illinois Farm Bureau associate director of food systems development.

Cross promotions that combine products from different farms proved popular during the pandemic and continue this year, Scavuzzo said. "We're seeing that cheese, honey and nuts go together," she added.

For example, Champaign's Prairie Fruits Farm and Creamery is offering gift baskets of the farm's artisan cheeses along with an assortment of regional food products.

By joining group promotion and events, farms share the work of attracting customers and increasing brand recognition. Scavuzzo pointed out many communities and local chambers of commerce are promoting local holiday shopping and may include local farm stands. She suggested another idea is a farm pop-up shop located in a local business during the holidays.

Through MarketMaker, online shopping with participating farmers is easy at il.foodmarketmaker.com, Knipe said. The database allows buyers to search for growers by ZIP codes, place, point of interest and type of commerce, such as online stores. Those wanting in-person experience will find business hours, product attributes and other information. "Part of the fun is finding a farm close by that you didn't know existed," Knipe said.

State-sponsored promotions and events give other opportunities

The Illinois Department of Agriculture's Illinois Product Holiday Market featured local foods and goods Dec. 4-5 near the governor's mansion in Springfield. While the 2021 event just ended, Scavuzzo suggested interested farmers contact the department's marketing bureau about 2022 holiday promotions.

And several farms are among 20 businesses highlighted in the Illinois Office of Tourism's new "Illinois-Made Holiday Gift Guide" found at enjoyillinois.com/illinois-made/2021-holiday-gift-guide. For example, Union County's Shawnee Hills Lavender is promoted for hand-blended, lavender teas made by Doug and Charlotte Clover.

Launched in 2016, the Illinois Made program, which includes the holiday gift guide, promotes unique experiences throughout the state. The program now features more than 200 businesses.

To be considered for the Illinois Made program, farms and businesses must demonstrate characteristics that make Illinois unique. Criteria details are available at enjoyillinois.com/illinois-made/illinois-made-criteria.

In Union County, a unique local product gift box was made by high school students participating in the Union County CEO entrepreneurship program. Students assembled and sold more than 200 boxes that included local foods and agricultural products, said Union County Farm Bureau Manager Stephanie Rhodes. The county Farm Bureau office offers meeting space for the class.

See GIFTS, Page 23

SUBMITTED PHOTO *Rock Valley Publishing*

Students from the Union County CEO entrepreneurship program assemble boxes with local foods and agricultural products to sell during the holiday season.

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

Level: Intermediate

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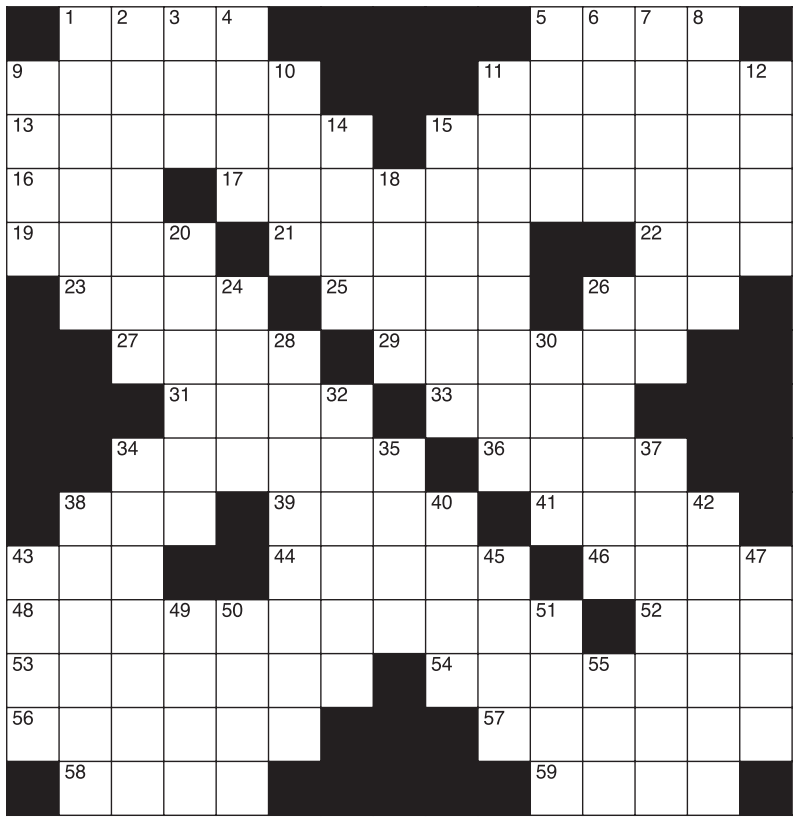
	3						6	
	2		1	3				
			4		6		3	
9						2		
4					2	7		
	7		8					
					4			1

Level: Advanced

SUDOKU
Fun by the Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test! **Here's How It Works:** Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Answers on page 20



CLUES ACROSS
1. Breathe noisily
5. __ Nui, Easter Island
9. Reddish browns
11. Simple shoes
13. Produce alcohol illegally
15. Home to famed golf tournament
16. Tax collector
17. Famous people
19. Urban area
21. Units of syllable weight
22. Pituitary hormone (abbr.)
23. Dismounted
25. Actor Damon
26. Vietnamese offensive
27. Retail term
29. Netted
31. Partner to carrots
33. Witnesses
34. Caulked
36. Satisfy
38. R&B performer __ Lo
39. Monetary units of Macao
41. Give advice, explain
43. Possesses
44. Turn back
46. Gentlemen
48. One who fertilizes
52. Italian monk title (prefix)
53. Parties
54. Type of horse
56. Cuts in half
57. Raises
58. Expresses contempt or disgust
59. Ancient Italian-Greek colony

CLUES DOWN
1. Illinois city
2. One of the original disciples chosen by Christ
3. Young form of a louse
4. Type of powder
5. Finger millet
6. Share a common boundary
7. Assumed as a fact
8. Provide clear evidence of
9. Invests in little enterprises
10. A way to be
11. Monies given in support
12. Fashion accessory
14. Steal
15. Becomes less intense
18. Geological times
20. Hooray!
24. Monetary unit
26. Male reproductive organs
28. Earnings
30. Close by
32. Small integers
34. Fixed in place
35. Used to treat Parkinson's disease
37. Large, imposing building
38. A rooflike shelter
40. Stiff, hairlike structure
42. Print errors
43. To show disapproval
45. Body of traditions
47. Without
49. __ Clapton, musician
50. Dangerous illegal drug
51. Infrequent
55. Sound unit

Answers on page 20

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State recognizes one-year anniversary of first COVID-19 vaccinations

More than 18 million doses later, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is recognizing the one-year anniversary of the first COVID-19 vaccines administered in Illinois.

On Dec. 15, 2020, roughly 450 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine were administered to health care workers after being delivered to the state the day before.

IDPH and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency have partnered with communities to host more than 5,600 vaccination clinics around the state, including 1,400 youth-school clinics and approximately 1,900 equity-based clinics. Another 870 events have already been scheduled.

"One year and 18 million doses later, the COVID-19 vaccine has saved countless lives across Illinois," said Gov. JB Pritzker. "I am incredibly grateful for the scientists, researchers and public health professionals who made this historic effort possible, allowing us to reunite with loved ones, return to small businesses, and engage with our communities once again. As we recognize the progress we've made, I urge all eligible Illinoisans to receive their vaccine or booster and protect themselves and their families this holiday season."

"We have come a long way from the first doses of COVID-19 vaccine administered a year ago today, and we must continue our fight against this pandemic," said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. "Since that first day, we've seen one COVID-19 vaccine fully approved, the age for those eligible to receive a vaccine expanded to everyone 5 years and older, and booster doses for everyone 16 years and older. I urge anyone who is hesitant about the COVID-19 vaccine to look at the successful history of these safe and effective vaccines."

"A year ago, I remember feeling fortunate to be one of the first in the state to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and I was thankful and appreciative of all the work that went into developing it," said OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Emergency Services Medical Director Dr. Victor Chan. "The last year has been challenging for everyone and even now, marking the one-year anniversary of having the vaccine available, it's still a reminder that we can't let our guard down. The vast majority of patients we see that are being admitted to the hospital are, unfortunately, unvaccinated. I encourage everyone who is able to get vaccinated or receive a booster dose. If you have questions, please talk to a health care provider."

While the vaccination rate has slowed, approximately 71 percent of all Illinoisans have received at least one dose, 63 percent are fully vaccinated, and more than 30 percent have received a booster dose according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Organizations wanting to host a clinic in their community can apply online at https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccinationclinics.html. Vaccines are also offered at five of the state Community-Based Testing Sites across Illinois. To find other vaccination locations near you go to vaccines.gov.

Lawmakers push for nursing home reforms this spring

Nursing home industry group still pushing back on payment changes

By Peter Hancock
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Several Illinois lawmakers said last week they are determined to pass a bill in the spring that would overhaul the way nursing homes are paid through the state's Medicaid program to address critical staffing shortages, but the state's largest nursing home industry group is still pushing back against the proposed changes.

"We need to have something happen this spring, for the sake of the most vulnerable in our state," Rep. Anna Moeller, D-Elgin, said during a committee hearing last week. "And the point of these hearings is to bring that to light to bring the reality of what people are living through to light."

Illinois has many of the most understaffed nursing homes in the nation. According to a report by the state Department of Healthcare and Family Services, Illinois consistently ranks last among states in staffing, as measured using the national Staff Time and Resource Intensity Verification, or STRIVE Project, with 47 of the 100 most understaffed facilities in the country.

Mark Cooper, a nursing home resident who declined to identify the facility where he lives, told the committee about the conditions he deals with daily.

"Lately in this particular home, especially in the last year, after apparently this nursing home was bought up by some other owners, there have been filthy conditions, food on the floor, excrement in shower stalls, residents being offered half-filled bowls of Froot Loops as the morning cold cereal option," he said. "Resident-called lights going on are unanswered for a half hour or more."

Illinois Medicaid Administrator Kelly Cunningham noted the state has increased funding for nursing homes three times in the past several years for the purpose of increasing staffing, but the shortages persist, particularly with certified nursing assistants, or CNAs.

"Because Medicaid is the single largest purchaser of CNA services, we are in a unique position to influence the purchase of this critical service," she said. "It's clear that we need to directly link any new funding to this industry to staffing and quality care improvements in order to bring about the change we're seeking to give all nursing home residents the quality of life that they deserve."

Last week's hearing was a joint meeting of four House committees that deal with health care issues. They are considering a proposal by DHFS to overhaul the way nursing homes are reimbursed by increasing funding and tying payments directly to staffing levels and performance measures.

DHFS Deputy Director Andy Allison said the plan calls for roughly a $400 million increase in Medicaid nursing home funding that would be tied to reaching certain staffing benchmarks, increasing wages for CNAs and achieving higher quality standards.

That would be funded through an increase in the nursing home assessment tax, which generates a pool of money that is used to draw down additional federal Medicaid reimbursements.

"For a facility that's 100 percent Medicaid, we would come darn close to fully paying for the increased hiring. It was designed in that way," he said.

But the plan is still facing stiff resistance from the state's largest nursing home industry group, the Health Care Council of Illinois.

HCCI Executive Director Matt Pickering told the committee that if the agency's proposed new payment system were enacted, 130 nursing facilities in Illinois would see an overall cut in revenues, with as many as 50 being pushed to the point of insolvency. Those 50 facilities, he said, serve more than 5,000 residents, mainly in rural and minority communities.

Pickering said the nursing home industry in Illinois is already facing financial strains, much of which he blamed on the state's privatized Medicaid system in which for-profit insurance companies, known as managed care organizations, are in charge of reimbursing providers and managing each patient's care.

"These challenges have coalesced into what we've called the perfect storm for our industry," he said. "Compounding our financial burdens are the managed care organizations that routinely deny reimbursements to providers who treat low-income patients."

Allison, however, noted in his testimony that the 50 facilities identified by HCCI were all earning high profits before the COVID-19 pandemic and were "exceptionally low staffed, even in comparison to other for-profit homes."

"The foremost issue for these homes is whether they can staff up," he said. "So we looked at the cost of staffing up, and even if we were to assign, for example, what likely is an overstated cost of $29 an hour for the additional hours of nurse staffing that would be required in these homes to get them up to minimal levels as a group, even with those costs under the proposed reforms, in aggregate, these homes would still earn a profit."

Meanwhile, Rep. Moeller said she argued that it is time for the state to stop funding nursing facilities that provide substandard levels of care.

"I don't want to continue to subsidize these homes where … fellow nursing home residents have to take care of other residents because there aren't enough CNAs or nurses on staff," she said. "We are paying hundreds of millions of dollars to subsidize these homes that that are providing that level of care. That's obscene. So something needs to change."

Rep. Deb Conroy, D-Villa Park, noted that the committees have been working on nursing home payment reform for several months and at one point this fall had what many believed was an "agreed bill" that all of the stakeholders could accept. She said she believes it's time for the General Assembly to act.

"Might I suggest that the agreed-upon legislation that we had a few months ago be filed, and then those who have issues or would like to see changes, file amendments," she said. "That way, everyone can see clearly where the issues are. I think it's important because this has become such a contentious issue. I think it's very important that all of our colleagues understand exactly what is going on."

Lawmakers return to Springfield Jan. 4 for what is scheduled to be an abbreviated 2022 session. They hope to wrap up their business by April 8.

GET ORGANIZED WORD SEARCH

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

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

Answers on page 20

ALPHABETIZE
ASSIGNMENTS
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SHELVING
SORT
SYSTEM

CRYPTO FUN

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to food service.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 2 = **E**)

A. **25 14 21 4 2 12**
Clue: Places to sit

B. **12 2 10 6 2 10**
Clue: Waiter or waitress

C. **10 2 12 25 14 24 10 14 8 25**
Clue: Food establishment

D. **21 22 4 4**
Clue: Tab

Answers: A. tables B. server C. restaurant D. bill

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The Scoop Today & Shopper's Guide

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LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 15TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT JO DAVIESS COUNTY - GALENA, ILLINOIS
DUPACO COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION
Plaintiff,
-v.-
HANNAH GIVLER et al
Defendant
2021CH34
NOTICE OF SALE

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on November 10, 2021, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 1:30 PM on January 18, 2022, at the office of Vincent Roth Toepfer & Leinen PC, 11406 U.S. Route 20 W, Galena, IL, 61036, sell at a public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

LOT 6 IN EAGLE RIDGE UNIT NO. 27 OF BRANIGAR'S THE GALENA TERRITORY ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED IN JO DAVIESS COUNTY, ILLINOIS. SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF JO DAVIESS AND STATE OF ILLINOIS.

Commonly known as 11 WEDGEWOOD DRIVE, GALENA, IL 61036

Property Index No. 08-427-006-00

The real estate is improved with a single family residence.

Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, including the Judicial Sale fee for the Abandoned Residential Property Municipality Relief Fund, which is calculated on residential real estate at the rate of $1 for each $1,000 or fraction thereof of the amount paid by the purchaser not to exceed $300, in certified funds/or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. No fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser will receive a Certificate of Sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.

The property will NOT be open for inspection and plaintiff makes no representation as to the condition of the property. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.

If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4). If this property is a condominium unit which is part of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1).

IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW.

You will need a photo identification issued by a government agency (driver's license, passport, etc.) in order to gain entry into our building and the foreclosure sale room in Cook County and the same identification for sales held at other county venues where The Judicial Sales Corporation conducts foreclosure sales.

For information, examine the court file, CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C. Plaintiff's Attorneys, 15W030 NORTH FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 100, BURR RIDGE, IL, 60527 (630) 794-9876
THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION
One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-4650 (312) 236-SALE

You can also visit The Judicial Sales Corporation at www.tjsc.com for a 7 day status report of pending sales.
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BURR RIDGE IL, 60527
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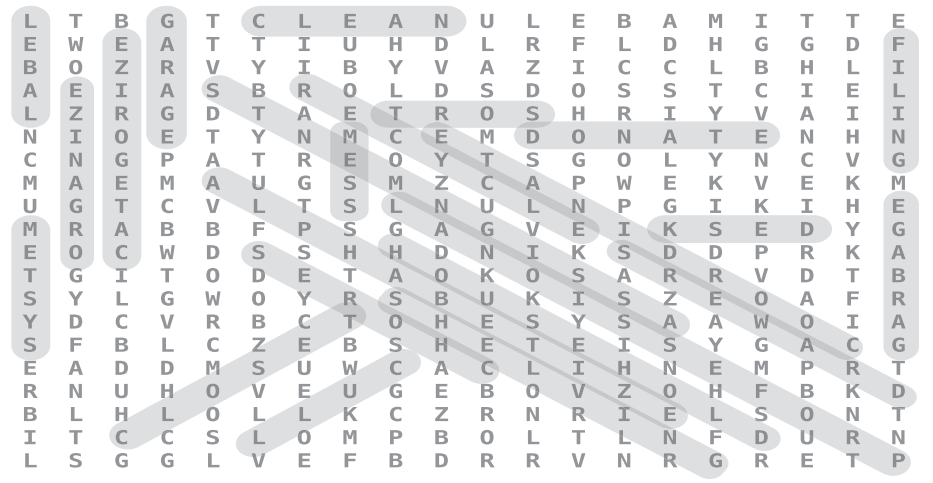
E-Mail: pleadings@il.cslegal.com
Attorney File No. 14-21-02165
Attorney ARDC No. 00468002
Case Number: 2021CH34
TJSC#: 41-3229

NOTE: Pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, you are advised that Plaintiff's attorney is deemed to be a debt collector attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose.
Case # 2021CH34
I3183887

(Published in
The Scoop Today
Dec. 22 & 29, 2021
and Jan. 5, 2022)
410021

Answers



PUZZLE 1

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

PUZZLE 2

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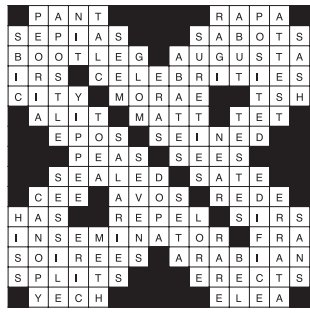

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FROM LENA'S KITCHEN

The not so skinny cook

I guess the jig is up because there are no more weeks until Christmas. This week's paper winds the Thanksgiving and Christmas season up. There are a few recipes you can make for Christmas or New Year's Eve. Enjoy your holiday cooking.

Shrimp and Cheese Phyllo Triangles

These little appetizers are great for a Christmas table or a New Year's Eve celebration. You can find the phyllo dough at Sullivan's or most grocery stores.

½ lb. peeled and deveined cooked shrimp, chopped
1 pkg. (8 ox.) cream cheese, softened
1 C. shredded fontina cheese
2 T. minced green onion
2 t. minced fresh dill
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1½ (16 oz.) lb. frozen phyllo dough, thawed
1½ C. butter, melted

In a medium bowl, stir together the shrimp, cream cheese, Fontina cheese, green onion, dill, and egg. On a clean, flat surface, unroll phyllo dough. Stack dough and cut lengthwise into quarters. Cover phyllo with plastic wrap to prevent from drying out.

Stack 4 strips, brushing with melted butter between strips. Spoon about 1 teaspoon of the shrimp mixture onto one end of prepared strips. Fold 1 corner of the short edge over the mixture, leaving a 1-inch border. Continue folding side to side to the end of the strips, forming a triangle. Repeat the procedure with remaining phyllo, butter and shrimp mixture.

Preheat the oven to 400. Place the triangles, seam side down, on baking sheets. Bake for 12-15 minutes or until golden brown. Serve warm.

Holiday Cranberry Salad

This salad is light and delicious. It pairs with just about any meat as a wonderful side. It is easy and pretty too.

2 pkg. (3 oz. each) raspberry gelatin
2 C. boiling water, divided
1 can (14 oz.) whole berry cranberry sauce
2 T. lemon juice
1 C. heavy whipping cream
1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
½ C. chopped pecans

In a small bowl, dissolve gelatin in 1 C. boiling water; in another bowl, combine cranberry sauce and remaining water; add gelatin mixture and lemon juice. Pour into a 9 x 13 glass dish coated with cooking spray; refrigerate until firm, about an hour.

In a large bowl, beat cream until stiff peaks form. In another bowl, beat cream cheese until smooth. Stir in ½ C. whipped cream; fold into remaining whipped cream. Spread over gelatin mixture; sprinkle with pecans. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

Balsamic Brussels Sprouts

I have been telling you that Brussels sprouts are the new "in" vegetable. It has bumped cauliflower and kale down a few notches. The little cabbages are on sale at the grocery stores in the last few weeks. If you have never had them "dressed up", try them. They taste a lot different than the old boiled little cabbages.

1 T. olive oil
3 T. Balsamic vinegar
1 T. honey
½ t. salt
¼ t. pepper
1 lb. Brussels sprouts, halved lengthwise

Preheat the oven to 425. In a large mixing bowl, whisk well to combine the olive oil, balsamic vinegar, honey, salt and pepper until smooth. Set aside 1 T. of the mixture for later. Add the Brussels sprouts into the large bowl and toss to coat with sauce. Transfer Brussels sprouts into a half sheet baking pan sprayed with cooking spray. Make sure they are spread out into one layer. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes until sprouts are tender and caramelized. Place in a serving dish, and drizzle the left over balsamic and honey sauce over the top. You can top with pomegranate seeds or chopped almonds.

Roasted Cornish Hens

I really like to make these little game hens for company. They are fun and easy to make and are very tasty. I usually put a wild rice stuffing in them, but bread stuffing is good too. Unless you have really big eaters, you need a half of a hen for one person. There is a lot of meat on these little buggers!

4 thawed Cornish hens with necks inside cavity removed
4 T. melted unsalted butter
Salt and pepper

Preheat the oven to 375. Rinse the hens and remove any pin feathers. (I run cold water through the birds). Place the birds on paper towels to dry. Generously salt and pepper the birds on the outside and inside. I rub the seasoning into the skin. Place the birds breast side up in a shallow glass baking dish. (Here is where you place bread stuffing or the wild rice stuffing recipe listed below. If you are not stuffing the birds, I place cut up onion and celery in the cavity.) Pour the melted butter over the top brushing the legs and wings to make sure they are covered. Roast the birds for one hour brushing them with melted butter two times during the hour. Use an instant read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh until it reads 165 and the juices run clear. Tent with aluminum foil and let rest for 10 minutes. When serving, cut the birds in two down the breastbone and place on a serving plate.

Wild Rice Casserole

This is a great casserole by itself or as a stuffing for chicken or turkey. You can make it a day ahead and freeze leftovers.

1 pkg. Uncle Ben's Fast Cook Wild Rice w/Seasoning
6 slices of bacon, cut up and fried
1 small pkg. fresh mushrooms sliced
1 C. chopped celery
¾ C. chopped onions
1 Can chicken broth
½ C. Half-and-Half
Butter
Flour
Seasonings

Prepare the rice according to package directions. In a medium fry pan, sauté the celery and onions in 2-3 T. butter. Season with salt and pepper, garlic powder, and parsley to taste. Add to prepared rice. Sauté the mushrooms in 2-3 T. of butter. Add to the prepared rice. Melt ½ stick of butter in fry pan. Add ¼ cup flour and cook 2-3 minutes. Add the chicken broth and whisk until all flour is absorbed and mixture is thickened. Remove from stove top and whisk in half-and-half. Stir into rice mixture. Put in a greased casserole and drizzle with butter. Bake 30 minutes at 350.

Dort Maaske's Dream Bar Recipe

I am always pleasantly surprised when I am contacted by former students who love to cook. I got an email from Jeff Maaske in Tennessee about his mother's dream bar recipe that they always had at Christmas. It is now a family favorite for his family. Dort was a great cook. I heard stories from her coworkers at the bank about how she would bring things to share. I remember these cookies because when Dort's husband, Larry, was a fellow teacher and later my principal, one of the favorite things Dort did was make a giant cookie tray at Christmas. I don't know how we did it, but it was wiped out by the end of the day! Thanks, Jeff, for sharing your mom's recipe with us and giving us some wonderful memories.

½ C. butter plus 1 T.
1 C. crushed graham crackers (1 sleeve)
1 T. sugar
1 pkg. (6 oz.) semi-sweet chocolate chips
1 pkg. (6 oz.) butterscotch chips
1 C. sweetened coconut
1 can sweetened condensed milk

See KITCHEN, Page 23

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Rock Valley Publishing

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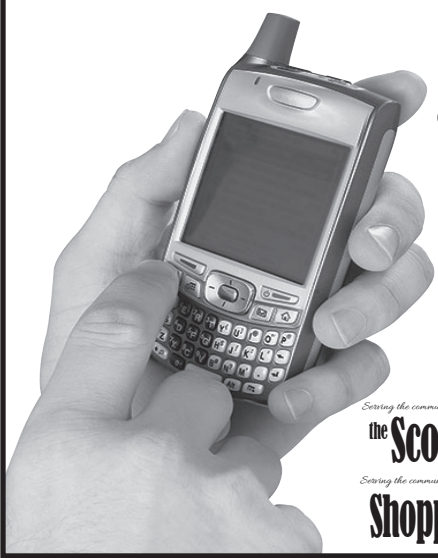

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332805

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Each winter, backyard and commercial fruit tree growers face the inevitable task of pruning their fruit trees.

"This pruning period of mid-Dec. to Mar. 1 is crucial for the tree to produce great fruit next summer," states Grant McCarty, Local Foods and Small Farms Educator for Jo Daviess, Stephenson, and Winnebago counties. "It's also a task that growers can be hesitant to do as they may fear they are making the wrong cut or possibly damaging the tree."

To help residents this winter, University of Illinois Extension will be offering its popular "Intro to Fruit Tree Pruning" class on three different dates, two of the programs will be in person and one will be offered as a Zoom webinar. The in-person programs are Tuesday, Feb. 1 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Elizabeth Community Building, HWY 20 W. Elizabeth, IL, and Tuesday, Feb. 8 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Freeport Public Library, 100 E. Douglas Street, Freeport, IL. The Zoom webinar will be offered on Friday, February 11 from 3 to 5 p.m.

Participants will learn the basics of pruning, which tools to use, and strategies to consider for their trees. Cost for the class is $5. For more information and to register, please visit go.illinois.edu/jsw or call 815-235-4125.

•Kitchen

(Continued from page 21)

Melt butter in a 9 x 13 pan in a 175 oven. Combine the crushed graham crackers and sugar. Sprinkle over the butter. Add the chocolate chips, butterscotch chips, coconut, and nuts in layers over the graham crackers. Pour condensed milk over all the ingredients. Bake at 350 for 30 minutes. Cool completely before cutting.

Pecan Pie Thumbprints

A lot of people like to make thumbprint cookies at Christmas time. This recipe is a little different than the regular frosting or jelly filling in the "print." Enjoy this different kind of thumbprint cookies.

1 C. butter, softened
½ C. sugar
2 eggs, separated
½ C. dark corn syrup
2½ C. flour

Filling:

¼ C. powdered sugar
3 T. butter
2 T. dark corn syrup
¼ C. plus 2 T. finely chopped pecans

In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg yolks and corn syrup. Gradually beat in flour. Refrigerate, covered, 30 minutes, or until firm enough to roll.

Filling: in a small saucepan, combine powdered sugar, butter and corn syrup. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and stir in pecans. Remove from the pan and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 375. Shape dough into 1-inch balls; place 2 inches apart on parchment paper lined baking sheets. In a small bowl, whisk the egg whites and brush over the top.

Bake 5 minutes. Remove from oven. Gently press an indentation in the center of each cookie with the end of a wooden spoon handle. Fill each with a scant ½ teaspoon of the pecan mixture. Bake 4-5 minutes longer or until the edges are light brown.

Cool on pans 5 minutes. Remove to wire racks to cool.

Final Thoughts

This last week brings a flurry of activities trying to get ready for the big weekend. It will be nice to safely go to church if you want, safely be at small family gathers, and enjoy decorations and lights. The Breakfast with Santa was a hit, and people have been doing last minute shopping. My cheese boxes are on their way, we had a wonderful Christmas with my nephew and his fiancée, so I don't have to worry about getting presents to Hawaii. I have been struggling with my arthritis, so I am happy to have help from some friends to finish shopping. Next year we will be looking for some winter soups, casseroles, and winter desserts. I will not be writing a column next week, so I hope to rejoin you in two weeks.

If you would like to share, contact us in person, by mail at From Lena's Kitchens, *Shopper's Guide* at 240 W. Main St. or email us at scoopshopper@rvpublishing.com.

In leaving our time together today, I would like to share with you my traditional Christmas message that I received many years ago from a dear friend. It has certainly been true this year for our family. "Every time a hand reaches out to help another… that is Christmas. Every time someone puts anger aside and strives for understanding… that is Christmas. Every time people forget their differences and realize their love for each other…that is Christmas. May this Christmas bring us closer to the spirit of human understanding, closer to the blessing of peace." May the blessings of Christmas be on all of you as we celebrate the birth of the Christ child and the promise of eternal life. Merry Christmas from Lena's Kitchen and the not so skinny cook.

Chris Folmar
Financial Advisor

640 W. South St, #4
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•Gifts

(Continued from page 16)

Several local farms sell products and/or help sponsor the students' group gift box project, Rhodes said, adding this marked the second-year local product boxes were sold.

For farms whose seasonal products aren't available during the holidays, gift cards could be an option. Consider simple paper gift certificates to allow a future purchase or the gift recipient to select a flavor, style or aroma of his or her choice.

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

REAL ESTATE NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 15TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT
JO DAVIESS COUNTY - GALENA, ILLINOIS
DUPACO COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION
Plaintiff,
-v.-
HANNAH GIVLER et al
Defendant
2021CH34
NOTICE OF SALE

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on November 10, 2021, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 1:30 PM on January 18, 2022, at the office of Vincent Roth Toepfer & Leinen PC, 11406 U.S. Route 20 W, Galena, IL, 61036, sell at a public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

Commonly known as 11 WEDGEWOOD DRIVE, GALENA, IL 61036

Property Index No. 08-427-006-00

The real estate is improved with a single family residence.

Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, including the Judicial Sale fee for the Abandoned Residential Property Municipality Relief Fund, which is calculated on residential real estate at the rate of $1 for each $1,000 or fraction thereof of the amount paid by the purchaser not to exceed $300, in certified funds/or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. No fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser will receive a Certificate of Sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.

The property will NOT be open for inspection and plaintiff makes no representation as to the condition of the property. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.

If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4). If this property is a condominium unit which is part of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1).

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You will need a photo identification issued by a government agency (driver's license, passport, etc.) in order to gain entry into our building and the foreclosure sale room in Cook County and the same identification for sales held at other county venues where The Judicial Sales Corporation conducts foreclosure sales.

For information, examine the court file, CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C. Plaintiff's Attorneys, 15W030 NORTH FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 100, BURR RIDGE, IL, 60527 (630) 794-9876
THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION
One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-4650
(312) 236-SALE

You can also visit The Judicial Sales Corporation at www.tjsc.com for a 7 day status report of pending sales.

CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C.
15W030 NORTH FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 100
BURR RIDGE IL, 60527
630-794-5300
E-Mail: pleadings@il.cslegal.com
Attorney File No. 14-21-02165
Attorney ARDC No. 00468002
Case Number: 2021CH34
TJSC#: 41-3229

NOTE: Pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, you are advised that Plaintiff's attorney is deemed to be a debt collector attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose.

Case # 2021CH34
I3183887

(Published in The Scoop Today Dec. 22 & 29, 2021 and Jan. 5, 2022)

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MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM ALL OF US!

Warren personnel: Back Row: Lori Langfield, Janan McNett, Mary Anne Hoftender, Donna Ernst, Janette Leehan, Laurie Busch, Bobbie Schubert, Martha Dillon

Front Row: Ben Wooden, Tammy Renz, Peter Zito

Not Pictured: Val Stocks, Lindsay Kent, Brynn Bohnsack, Bryana Wulfekuhle

Apple River personnel: Back Row: Scott Sigafus, Kindra Hamilton, Shelley Thompson, Brenda Story

Front Row: Jacob Underwood, Dawn Freese

Not pictured: John Heimann

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Susan Schultz,
Laura Hesselbacher,
Sandy Frank

Not pictured:
Laura Grindey

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Mary Ohms,
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Jason Thomasson

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