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Citizens State Bank

VOL. 87 • NO. 2

YOUR FREE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 6, 2021



SUBMITTED PHOTO *The Scoop Today*

The Valley of Eden Bird Sanctuary, a Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation property, offers many opportunities for winter recreation, including cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, sledding and bird watching.

Enjoy nature or get a workout at bird sanctuary

Valley of Eden offers trails, sledding, bird-watching opportunities

By Mary Hookham
CORRESPONDENT

Visiting the Valley of Eden bird sanctuary just outside Stockton provides outdoor enthusiasts with a wonderful place to experience the magic of nature year-round. The sanctuary offers many ways for visitors to relax and enjoy the outdoors.

"This is a very special place," said Steve Barg, executive director of the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation.

Nature lovers have more to enjoy at the Valley of Eden than just rare birds. Family sledding is now available at the sanctuary as well as several miles of groomed cross-country ski trails that are suitable for both skate skiing and traditional diagonal stride track skiing. Winter sports enthusiasts also enjoy snowshoeing around the sanctuary.

"The gentle slopes allow for a

good workout whether skiing, snowshoeing or hiking," Barg said.

Bird watching varies from season to season, Barg said. In the winter, visitors might see short-eared owls. These are endangered in Illinois and are found primarily in grasslands and marshlands instead of in forests. They hunt during the daytime and fly very low over the ground. Snowy owls are also fairly common at the sanctuary.

Throughout the other seasons, visitors buy valid Illinois fishing licenses to go fishing in Rush Creek. Hiking on the sanctuary's 10 miles of trails is also a very popular outdoor activity.

"The stunning beauty of the preserve is the main attraction for visitors and keeps them coming back,"

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Pandemic, social unrest, statehouse scandals top the stories of 2020

CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

It was a year like no other, and one most Americans would just as soon forget, but 2020 is sure to last in the history books as one of the most tumultuous in modern history.

It was a year when face masks and hand sanitizer became ubiquitous items of everyday life and when major sporting events that many Americans use to mark the passage of time were canceled or delayed.

It was also a year marked by racial and social unrest following the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and other Black Americans at the hands of police. And it was a year of economic catastrophe that brought about some of the highest unemployment rates the nation has seen.

For Illinois, the year seemed to begin on a hopeful note. The state was running a budget surplus for the first time in many years. By February, unemployment had fallen to an all-time low.

But things were about to change amid a backdrop of pandemic and government corruption scandals that rocked the foundation of power of the nation's longest-serving state legislative leader.

COVID-19 pandemic

On Jan. 24, a Chicago woman who had just returned home from Wuhan, China, where the COVID-19 pandemic originated, tested positive for the disease. A few days later, her husband tested positive as well, marking the first known instance of person-to-person spread in the U.S.

On March 9, Gov. JB Pritzker declared a statewide disaster and quickly began invoking his emergency powers with a series of executive orders including closure of K-12 schools to in-person learning and a statewide stay-at-home order that

brought much of the state's economy to a grinding halt.

By year's end, COVID-19 had claimed the lives of more than 16,000 Illinoisans as the rapid distribution of a pair of vaccines marked new hope that the "beginning of the end" of the pandemic was near.

Madigan scandal

After more than three decades as one of the most powerful men in the state, Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan faced an uncertain political future as 2020 neared its end.

His future as speaker and Democratic Party of Illinois chairman was first put in doubt on July 17 when

officials at utility giant Commonwealth Edison admitted in court to a yearslong bribery scheme in which they sought to buy favor with Madigan — the latest in a series of bombshell investigatory revelations that have centered on Democratic state politicians since 2019.

The case sparked an internal House investigation in which Republicans sought to oust him from office, but that effort was thwarted when Democrats on the investigating committee — all Madigan loyalists — voted against recommending a disciplinary charge.

See STORIES, Page 5



JUSTIN L. FOWLER/THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER *The Scoop Today*

House Speaker Michael Madigan, D-Chicago, speaks with House Republican Leader Jim Durkin, R-Western Springs, during debate on SB 264, the state budget for the new fiscal year starting in July, during an extended session of the Illinois House of Representatives on May 23 at the Bank of Springfield Center in Springfield. After more than three decades as one of the most powerful men in the state, Madigan faced an uncertain political future as 2020 neared its end.

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 • *Bible Study Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.*



FROM LENA'S KITCHEN



The not so skinny cook

I hope you all had a good New Year's celebration. It was probably quiet and low key. I felt that I wanted 2020 to be over. I am not sure what 2021 will bring, but we are tough people and will keep going.

We did get our first big snow of the season. The TV station kept saying that Freeport got 8 inches; everyone in Lena and west of here thought it was more like 10 or 11. No matter how much it was, there was a lot and it was hard to move. One of the big problems in my neighborhood is where to put it. Perhaps this one is the last snow of the season.

This week's column features some great belly-warming soups, a crisp winter salad and some good sweets.

Perfect Winter Salad

This salad is a great winter favorite. The crisp apples, onions, cranberries and nuts provide the crunch to an ordinary lettuce salad. The dressing is also interesting with the maple syrup.

1/4 C. mayonnaise
1/4 C. maple syrup
3 T. white wine vinegar
2 T. finely chopped green onions
2 t. sugar
1/2 C. canola oil
2 pkgs. spring mix salad greens
2 medium tart apples, thinly sliced
1 C. dried cranberries
1 C. pecan halves
1/4 C. thinly sliced red onion

In a small bowl, mix first five ingredients; gradually whisk in oil until blended. Refrigerate, covered, until serving (at least one hour). To serve, place remaining ingredients in a large bowl; toss with dressing.

Chicken Potpie Chowder

This chowder is hearty and warm for a cold winter night. It has everything you need for a dinner — meat, potatoes and vegetables. The cream cheese makes it extra creamy as it melts its way into the sauce. Enjoy this warm winter treat.

1/2 C. dry white wine or chicken broth
4 chicken bouillon cubes
12 oz. boneless and skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch pieces
2 medium red potatoes, cut into 1/2 inch pieces
2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
1 medium onion, chopped
3/4 t. dried thyme
Salt and pepper to taste
1/2 C. half-and-half
2 T. cornstarch
4 oz. cream cheese, cut into small pieces
1 1/2 C. frozen peas and carrots, thawed
1 C. frozen corn, thawed

Chopped bacon and parsley for garnish

In a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker, whisk together wine, bouillon and 4 C. water. Add chicken, potatoes, garlic, onion, thyme, 1/4 t. salt and 1/2 t. pepper and toss to combine. Cook, covered, until chicken is cooked through and potatoes are tender, three to four hours on high or five to six hours on low.

In a bowl, whisk together half-and-half and cornstarch. Stir into chowder along with cream cheese, peas and carrots and corn. Turn slow cooker to high and cook until vegetables are heated through and chowder thickens slightly, five minutes. Serve topped with crispy bacon and parsley.

Hearty Southern Vegetable Soup

If you are wanting a meal without meat, this vegetable soup will do the trick. If you aren't into vegetable broth, (it is really easy to find in most grocery stores) you could use beef broth (vegetarians will not like you!). Serve with a salad and bread, and you once again have a complete dinner meal.

1 T. canola oil
2 C. chopped red onion
1/4 C. minced garlic
3 T. tomato paste
1 can (28 oz.) diced tomatoes
3 C. vegetable broth
2 C. 1/2 inch cubed red potatoes
4 C. frozen mixed vegetables
1 T. honey
2 t. chopped fresh thyme or 3/4 t. dried thyme
1 1/2 t. salt
1 1/4 t. pepper

In a large soup pot or Dutch oven, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion and garlic; cook, stirring frequently, until vegetables are softened, four to five minutes. Add tomato paste; cook, stirring constantly, for two minutes. Add tomatoes, broth and potatoes; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover and simmer, stirring occasionally, until potatoes are just tender, 10 to 12 minutes. Stir in honey, thyme, salt and pepper. Serve with crackers or crusty bread.

Broccoli and Crab Bisque

A church friend has this crab bisque soup that is both creamy and

delicious. Use half-and-half for the cream or substitute with evaporated milk. (The evaporated milk makes it less rich and less calories but not as good.) You also can substitute shrimp for crab if you want. Be sure you clean and de-vein the shrimp (remove tails too); I don't think cooked shrimp would be as good because it can get rubbery. Serve with a salad and crusty bread. It is delicious.

1 C. onions, sliced
1 C. fresh mushrooms, sliced
1 C. chopped broccoli, fresh or frozen
1 garlic clove, minced
1/4 C. butter, melted
1/4 C. flour
1/4 t. dried thyme
Pepper to taste
1 bay leaf
3 C. chicken broth
1 C. cream
3/4 C. shredded Swiss cheese
1 pkg. (6 oz.) frozen crab meat, thawed and drained

In 3-quart heavy pot with a tablespoon of canola oil, combine onions, mushrooms, broccoli and garlic; cook until tender, about three to four minutes. In a bowl, blend melted butter with flour; add thyme, pepper and bay leaf; add to mushroom and onion mixture. Add chicken broth and cream. Whisk until thickened and bubbly. Remove bay leaf. Add cheese and stir until cheese is melted. Add crab meat and heat through.

Lacy Oatmeal Cookies

These cookies are light and airy; the ingredients are few, but the taste is great. Many people don't like oatmeal cookies because people put in chocolate or white chips, cranberries or nuts. These are just plain oatmeal cookies. Enjoy them with a cup of coffee or tea or a cold glass of milk; cocoa works well also.

1 C. quick-cooking oats
1/4 C. flour
1 1/2 t. baking powder
1/2 t. salt
1 C. sugar
1/2 C. butter, softened
1 egg
1 t. vanilla

Stir together oats, flour, baking powder and salt in a bowl. In a mixing bowl, beat together sugar and butter and mix on high speed until fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. Mix in oat mixture just until combined.

Cover and chill one hour. Position the rack in center of oven and preheat to 325. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper.

Using a leveled measuring teaspoon, portion and shape dough into about 48 (1 t.) balls; arrange 3 inches apart on prepared baking sheets. Bake one pan at a time until edges are golden and centers are just starting to set, about 16 minutes. Cool completely on pans. Remove carefully with a spatula. Cookies can be stored in an airtight container for three days or frozen up to three months.

Chewy Brownie Cookies

If you have a yearning for chocolate cookies, this recipe has cocoa and chocolate chips in it. The brown sugar gives it a slight molasses flavor. They are good ones to dunk too. My mother was a lover of Crisco shortening for cookies. She would have loved this recipe.

2/3 C. shortening
1 1/2 C. packed brown sugar
1 T. water
1 t. vanilla
2 eggs
1 1/2 C. flour
1/3 C. baking cocoa
1/2 t. salt
1/4 t. baking soda
2 C. semisweet chocolate chips
1/3 C. chopped pecans

In a large mixing bowl, cream shortening, sugar, water and vanilla.

Beat in the eggs. In a separate bowl, combine flour, cocoa, salt and baking soda; gradually add to creamed mixture and beat just until blended. Stir in chocolate chips and nuts. Drop by rounded teaspoonfuls 2 inches apart onto an ungreased baking sheet. Bake at 375 for seven to nine minutes; do not over bake. Cool two minutes before removing to wire racks.

Final thoughts

So we began another 365 days. Last year at this time we knew the election would be contentious because the last two years have been. However, we never dreamed that we would be in our homes forever, our kids would be learning online, our churches would be broadcasting via Facebook, there would be no sports for months and months and our lives would be at risk. Sometimes it is a good thing that we can't see into the future.

We have lost loved ones to this epidemic, lost loved ones and couldn't celebrate their lives and give each other comfort, celebrated holidays without any celebrations, wore masks in public and couldn't do any shopping except for necessities. We planted gardens, learned to can, taught others to can, baked and cooked like mad and played board games a hundred times. People did walk, ride bikes more and go

See KITCHEN, Page 8



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State COVID numbers stabilize slightly

More than 125,000 vaccines given

By Sarah Mansur
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

As Illinois' COVID-19 hospitalization and case numbers have stabilized since the second-wave highs last month, the governor's office announced 126,211 vaccinations were administered throughout the state, including Chicago, as of last week.

The state has delivered 108,225 vaccine doses of Pfizer and 161,400 doses of Moderna to hospitals throughout the state, not including Chicago, according to Gov. JB Pritzker's spokesperson.

On Dec. 30, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported 7,374 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Illinois, and 178 additional deaths caused by the virus.

The state's death toll has reached 16,357 among 955,380 cases and more than 13 million test results reported since the beginning of the pandemic.

As of early last week, 4,244 in Illinois were hospitalized with COVID-19, a slight decrease, leaving roughly 28 percent of hospital beds available statewide.

Of those, 882 COVID-19 patients were in the ICU, a decrease of 22, and 496 patients with COVID-19 were on ventilators, a decrease of 10 from the day prior. That left about 22 percent of ICU beds available statewide, and about 72 percent of ventilators available statewide.

The preliminary seven-day statewide case positivity rate from Dec. 23 to Dec. 29 was 7.6 percent, which is two-tenths of a percentage point higher than the seven-day average case positivity rate reported Dec. 29.

The seven-day statewide case positivity rate has remained below 8 percent for 11 consecutive days. From Nov. 7 to Dec. 7, that rate stayed above 10 percent, prompting Pritzker to implement Tier 3 mitigations throughout the state on Nov. 20.

Out of the state's 11 mitigation regions, only four regions — Regions 3, 4, 5 and 10 — have not met the conditions laid out by the Pritzker administration to return to Tier 2 mitigations, from Tier 3.

The other six regions have experienced a test positivity rate less than 12 percent for three consecutive days, had greater than 20 percent available intensive care unit and medical or surgical bed availability for three consecutive days, and saw a decline in the number of COVID-19 patients in the hospital in at least seven out of the last 10 days.

Although Tier 2 mitigations still prohibit indoor dining at restaurants or bars, a return to Tier 2 mitigations would lessen strict capacity limits at retail stores and other Illinois businesses, and allow casinos and video gambling terminals to reopen, for example.

When Pritzker was asked about returning to Tier 2 last week, he said has no immediate plans to lift the Tier 3 mitigations currently in effect statewide.

"The challenge that we have is, what we don't want to do is swing back and forth between mitigations and not having mitigations within days or a week or two of one another," Pritzker said. "We need to bring it down even further and for a longer period of time."

Capitol News Illinois is a non-profit, nonpartisan news service covering state government.

Obituaries

SCOTT THOMAS SCHAIBLE

Scott Thomas Schaible, 41, of rural Apple River passed away unexpectedly Dec. 26, 2020, at FHN Memorial Hospital, Freeport, Illinois.

He was born Oct. 5, 1979, son of Roger and Linda (Drigot) Schaible. During his early years, Scott enjoyed youth sports, scouting and helping on the family farm. He became a proud member of the Warren Warriors basketball teams and found joy being a part of band and chorus. After graduating from Warren High School in 1998, he joined his family as a fourth-generation family farmer.

Scott always said that all he ever wanted to do was farm. He took pride in keeping up with maintenance and repair of anything mechanical. Reading and doing research to enrich his understanding of how farm machinery worked helped him achieve his goals. His stewardship and love of this farm will be carried on.

Scott was an animal lover, big and small. He made time every day



to pamper barn cats that would pile onto his shoulders and lap. Cutting forage and rolling up bales of hay and cereal rye to feed cattle was something he looked forward to.

He loved eating fresh vegetables from the garden and made a habit of snitching ripe tomatoes off the vine before they reached the kitchen. Watching college basketball and football with a good cup of coffee in hand was a favorite too.

Scott took great pleasure in spending time in the woods, clearing brush, hunting morels and finding downed cedar trees that could be used for fence posts. He would always be the first one out searching for a new baby calf.

He is survived by his dad and

mom, Roger and Linda Schaible; brothers, Christopher (C.J.) and Ryan, all of Apple River; Aunt Susan (Steven) Shipman of Houston, Texas, along with numerous cousins.

He is preceded in death by his grandparents, Glenn and Helen Schaible and John and Florence Drigot; and uncle, Rodney Schaible.

Cremation rites have been accorded. A private family celebration of life will be held at a later date.

Leamon Funeral Homes is assisting the family.

To honor Scott's memory, a memorial may be made to Safe Haven Humane Society, Elizabeth, Illinois, or Bread of Life Food Pantry, Apple River, or to Caring Neighbors Food Pantry, Warren, Illinois.

Your family loves and misses you ... we know we will meet again.

"To love someone means to see him as God intended him."

— Fyodor Dostoevsky

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

MICHAEL G. SCHWITZ

Michael G. Schwitz, a longtime resident of Stockton, died on Christmas Day at FHN Memorial Hospital in Freeport. He was 64.

Born in Freeport on May 26, 1956, he is one of six children of Kathryn L. (Francis) Schwitz and the late Lyle R. Schwitz. Mike grew up in Stockton, graduating from Stockton High School. As a boy he developed a love for working with his hands, which stayed with him throughout his life. He liked to use his erector set and even once used the wires from his model train on the metal air register so he could create sparks and "weld."

While in high school, Mike went to work for Atwood Automotive, and continued to work there for over 40 years. He was a talented tool and die maker, and really enjoyed his work. Mike also served on the town council and was an emergency medical technician for Stockton Ambulance for a number of years.

At home, Mike enjoyed tinkering

around the house with any number of repair projects he had going. He would go over to his folks' house and help out with anything they needed done. He also assisted with the construction of the Stockton Veterans Memorial.

Outside of his work and home, Mike enjoyed traveling. He especially enjoyed trips to Florida in his younger years to visit his sister and brother-in-law. Maine was another place near to Mike's heart. He enjoyed sitting on the rocky coast watching the waves of the Atlantic crashing on the shore or sitting at the top of Cadillac Mountain watching the clouds float by.

Mike had a love of aviation and space exploration. He was fascinated with both and was very excited when he got a satellite dish and could finally get the NASA Channel. He never missed calling his family letting them know about a shuttle launch or something interesting happening in space.

He also enjoyed hunting, fishing and

playing a round of golf or two.

He will be deeply missed by those who loved him.

Mike was the beloved son of Kathryn Schwitz and the late Lyle Schwitz; husband of Cathleen (Scholbrock) Schwitz; loving brother of Marybeth (Tom) Linden of The Villages, Florida, Marsha Schwitz of Stockton, Mark (Soukheng) Schwitz of Cumming, Georgia, and the late Vicky and Robert Schwitz; proud uncle of Eric (Regina) Schwitz and daughter Olivia of Melrose, Massachusetts, Megan Schwitz of Stockton, Nicole Linden (Paul DiPalma) of Sarasota, Florida, Daniel (Aline) Linden of St. Petersburg, Florida and Nathan, Nolan and Chloe Schwitz of Cumming.

The funeral Mass for Mike will be private. Arrangements are under the care of Hermann Funeral Home, Stockton.

To leave a message of love and support for the family, please visit www.hermannfuneralhome.com.

HEATH R. EVELAND

Heath R. Eveland, 47, of Freeport, Illinois, passed away unexpectedly at his home on Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2020. Heath was born July 3, 1973, in Freeport to Richard and Darlene (Schrock) Eveland. He was currently employed by Snak-King as a first shift lead.

Heath enjoyed painting pictures, especially nature scenes. He loved his friends and family more than anything; he was the light to everyone that knew him, and the life of



the party. He enjoyed a good barbeque, listening to music and playing the drums. Heath had a fantastic sense of humor.

Heath is survived by his son, Forrest (Kasie) Eveland of Orangeville, Illinois; parents, Richard and Darlene Eveland of Sci-

oto Mills, Illinois; sister, Cheyenne (fiancé Seth Shelly) Eveland of Lena, Illinois; niece, Aspen (Kyle Hubb) Sandy; nephews, Eli Sandy and Isaac Shelly; a great-nephew, Fletcher Hubb; and his beloved dog, Brittany.

He was preceded in death by his maternal and paternal grandparents.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

Cremation rites have been accorded. A memorial has been established in his name.

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

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EDITOR: Jenny Sharp

Advertising Sales: Cyndee Stiefel: lenaads@rvpublishing.com

Office Manager: Laurie Tanley

To Contact The Scoop Today & Shopper's Guide:

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Email: News/Letters to the Editor: scoopshopper@rvpublishing.com

Ads: ads@rvpublishing.com

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• Stories (Continued from front page)

Madigan himself has not been charged criminally and has denied any wrongdoing.

But at least 19 members of the House Democratic caucus have said they will not vote to re-elect him as speaker, which would mean he is well short of the 60 votes needed to win another term. No one else has yet emerged as a viable contender for the office, however, so it is unclear what will happen when lawmakers reconvene in Springfield in January to choose a speaker for the 102nd General Assembly.

Leadership changes

While there is some uncertainty about whether Madigan will serve as speaker next year, a leadership change would make House Republican Leader Jim Durkin the General Assembly's most tenured leader.

Durkin, who hails from Western Springs, has been House minority leader since 2013. That caucus indicated it will back him again in January after a brief challenge from Rep. Tony McCombie, from Savanah, who eventually backed Durkin.

While 2020 began with a leadership change on the Democratic side in the Senate, it ended with a change in Republican leadership in that chamber.

After former Senate President John Cullerton announced plans to retire in 2019 after 11 years, Sens. Kimberly Lightford, from Maywood, and Don Harmon, from Oak Park, emerged as top contenders to fill the remainder of Cullerton's two-year term. Ultimately, Harmon secured majority support from the Democratic caucus and was elected on Jan. 19 following several hours of behind-the-scenes negotiations. Harmon's fellow Democrats indicated earlier this month they would back him for another two-year term come January.

Senate Minority Leader Bill Brady, from Bloomington, announced in early November his plans to step down from Republican leadership in the Senate after three years, and members of the caucus chose Sen. Dan McConchie, from Hawthorn Woods, as his replacement. McConchie has served in the chamber since 2016.

The new year will also see challenges emerge for governor and other state constitutional officers, as candidates have already begun to announce their intentions for a state-wide run.

Looking ahead

Despite the pandemic, Illinois voters went to the polls in record numbers in 2020, opting for Dem-

ocrat Joseph Biden over incumbent Donald Trump by a 58-41 percent margin.

Nearly 6.1 million ballots were cast in the November election — the largest number recorded in Illinois — after state lawmakers passed a measure greatly expanding access to mail balloting for the 2020 general election in response to the pandemic.

Democrats lost one seat in the state House to hold a 73-45 supermajority but gained a seat in the state Senate to hold a 41-18 supermajority.

Republicans scored some big wins by defeating Gov. JB Pritzker's proposed constitutional amendment to allow a graduated income tax and by ousting Supreme Court Justice Thomas Kilbride, setting up a GOP effort to take a one-seat majority on the high court in 2022.

Legislatively in 2021, Pritzker and the General Assembly are facing a \$3.9 billion revenue shortfall, due largely to the financial impact of COVID-19 and the failure of the graduated income tax, and they are bracing for difficult choices to cut spending, raise revenue or some combination of both.

Pritzker has proposed \$700 million in spending cuts as a "first step" to address the budget holes. His administration also announced plans to borrow \$2 billion through a federal program to cover revenue losses and unforeseen COVID-19 expenses for the current fiscal year, but other difficult budget decisions loom in 2021.



BEN ORNER/CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS *The Scoop Today/Shopper's Guide*

Protesters outside the Bank of Springfield Center in the capital's downtown call for Illinois to reopen sooner than the timeline provided in Gov. JB Pritzker's Restore Illinois plan. Members of the state House met inside the arena for the first of a four-day special session May 20.

The state's two main storylines of 2020 — scandal and pandemic — have also contributed to the derailing of a potential massive overhaul of the state's energy landscape. The Clean Energy Jobs Act and other energy reforms could be near the top of the agenda when lawmakers return for a 2021 session as well.

Black Caucus agenda

Initiatives of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus will also be at the top of the state government agenda in 2021 following a tumultuous 2020.

The agenda, aimed at ending sys-

temic racism in Illinois, comes amid the backdrop of massive protests against police brutality and racial inequality, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic that disproportionately infected and killed Black and Latino Americans.

The agenda is split among four pillars of policy: criminal justice reform, violence and police accountability; education and workforce development; economic access, equity and opportunity; and health care and human services.

From September to October, the Black Caucus held more than 100 hours of hearings to inform potential legislation, some of which caucus leader Kimberly Lightford said will be brought forth for January's lame duck session before the swearing-in of new lawmakers.

The effort was partially in response to prolonged social unrest following the May 25 death of George Floyd, who died after a Minneapolis Police officer knelt on his neck for more than minutes. Protests began the next day in Minneapolis and quickly spread to cities across the country.



JUSTIN L. FOWLER/THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER *The Scoop Today/Shopper's Guide*

Senate President Don Harmon, D-Oak Park, walks through the Senate chamber May 20 at the Capitol in Springfield during a four-day span that closed the spring legislative session. Harmon was elected as the 39th president of the Illinois Senate on Jan. 19 after hours of behind-the-scenes negotiations. Harmon succeeded John Cullerton, a Chicago Democrat who surprised his colleagues in November 2019 by announcing his plans to step down. Cullerton resigned his Senate seat shortly after Harmon was sworn in.

That unrest led Gov. Pritzker to deploy the Illinois National Guard to Chicago on May 31 after a week-end of large-scale protests devolved into violence in some areas.

Meanwhile, Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx drew national attention for dropping charges for minor and nonviolent offenses for hundreds of protesters, and President Trump engaged in high-profile disputes of rhetoric with Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and Pritzker over the deployment of federal authorities to Illinois to clamp down on protests. While widescale intervention was avoided, some federal officers were deployed to aid ongoing law enforcement efforts to combat gun and drug crimes.

Ultimately, the protests which lasted from May until early November became the largest in U.S. history with an estimated 15 million to 26 million participants across the country, with more protests taking place worldwide.


Marijuana licensing

In 2019, the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act legalized the sale and use of recreational marijuana in Illinois, and in legalization's first year, sales were expected to reach \$1 billion, yielding more than \$100 million in state and local tax revenue.

There's plenty of room for those numbers to grow, as at the start of 2020 the state had issued only 30 licenses for recreational dispensaries to firms that were already licensed as medical dispensaries.


Despite the promise that 75 new licenses would be awarded to social equity applicants in an effort to diversify the industry, the pandemic and a number of lawsuits delayed the process. While no additional licenses were awarded in 2020, the state won a lawsuit in November that could allow the program to move forward in 2021.

Capitol News Illinois is a non-profit, nonpartisan news service covering state government.



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SUBMITTED PHOTOS *The Scoop Today*

Collecting for the community

Left, Kylie Hiher sorts donations for the recent food drive organized by the River Ridge FFA Chapter. District students from elementary to high school were encouraged to bring in nonperishable food items to donate to those in need. Overall, the drive netted 388 items and a \$100 cash donation. The items were split between the Elizabeth Food Basket and the Hanover Food Pantry. Above, FFA member Cora Dittmar transports items collected in the drive.

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Letter to the editor

Sponsors make Christmas dinner a success

On behalf of the 2020 Christmas Dinner Committee, a very heartfelt thank you to the following friends and businesses who sponsored the 2020 Pearl City Community Christmas Day Dinner: State Bank of Pearl City, Fischer Excavating, Pearl City Hornets 4-H Club, Pearl City Elevator, Culver's (Freeport), Cub Foods and Spahn & Rose Lumber Co.

Special appreciation to all the individuals who also volunteered their time or donated to the Christmas Day Dinner. More than 260 meals were distributed on Christmas Day.

*Christmas Dinner Committee
Pearl City*

Thank you to all who sent cards to Thelma in celebration of her 105th birthday and to everyone who sent expressions of sympathy and prayers at the time of her passing. Many thanks also to Lena Living Center, FHN Hospice and Leamon Funeral Home for your care and compassion. We appreciate your kindness and caring.

The Thelma Holmes Duft family

562/86



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Free business workshops set

The Galena Area Chamber of Commerce and Northwest Illinois Economic Development are launching a new series of workshops, the Business Education Network, this month.

A workshop with guest speakers will be held at 8:30 a.m. the fourth Thursday of the month, with topics ranging from disaster planning to finances to customer experience.

The series of workshops is available for free to any business in Jo Daviess or Carroll counties. The first few meetings will be held via Zoom.

"The Business Education Network offers an opportunity to safeguard your business model from the ground up," Galena chamber Director Angela Devere said in a news release. "The workshops and training are an investment in the future of your business."

"Discover Recovery for Small Businesses: Fires, Illness and More" will be featured Jan. 28 and Feb. 25. "Talent Recruitment and Retention" will be featured March 25.

To register for the workshops, go online to <https://bit.ly/nwilnetwork>.

In brief

Forensics students take home gold medal

Members of the Highland Community College forensics team recently captured a gold medal for the overall sweepstakes at the Region IV Affiliated Forensics League Tournament in Elgin.

In addition, McKenna Peart of Scales Mound earned a silver medal

for her presentation in informative speaking.

"We aren't going to rest on our laurels," said Harry Bodell, speech instructor and director of forensics at Highland. "We are excited to continue working toward an even more successful spring semester as we approach our state and national competitions."

Enrollment open for USDA land conservation program

The USDA has opened the signup period for the general Conservation Reserve Program through Feb. 12.

The competitive program provides annual rental payments for land devoted to conservation purposes, according to a USDA news release.

"CRP and the many focused programs that come under it... are some of the most critical tools to help producers better manage their operations while conserving natural resources,"

the news release states. "CRP has proven to protect the nation's valuable resources."

Farmers may enroll in CRP for the first time or opt to continue participation for another term during the winter signup period.

Producers may apply by contacting their local county Farm Service Agency office. In Jo Daviess County, the office is located at 225 N. Main St. in Elizabeth; call 815-858-3418.

Solar tax credit gets extension

The government spending and COVID-19 relief bill signed recently by President Trump includes an extension on a federal tax credit for solar installations.

The Dec. 27 measure includes a 26% federal investment tax credit for residential solar installations, according to a news release from Stateline Solar in Lena. Previously, the tax credit was scheduled to drop to 22% on Jan. 1 and then drop to 0% in 2022.

"This clean energy package included in the omnibus bill is being broadly praised by the renewable energy industry," the release said. "Since

coming into law initially in 2006, the ITC is credited for growing the U.S. solar industry by more than 10,000 percent."

In the last 10 years, the average annual growth of solar energy has increased more than 50%.

"This extension will allow us to continue to bring the state-line area clean energy independence," Ethan Fiene, Stateline Solar CEO, said in the release.

The local solar installation company serves more than 150 customers in Stephenson, Jo Daviess and Winnebago counties.

Nurse practitioner joins Monroe Clinic

Officials at Monroe Clinic recently welcomed Melissa Anderson, a new primary care nurse practitioner.

Melissa is a South Wayne, Wisconsin, native who received her doctor of nursing practice from Clarke University in Dubuque, Iowa. She is licensed by the American Nurses Credentialing Center as a family nurse practitioner.

Anderson will provide comprehensive primary care to all members of the family — men, women and children.



Melissa Anderson

Veterans home resident tests positive for Legionnaires' disease

State health officials investigate

By Sarah Mansur
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

A resident at the state-run veterans home in Quincy has tested positive for both COVID-19 and Legionnaires' disease, according to a news release from the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs and the Illinois Department of Public Health announced the agencies are investigating the case of Legionnaires' disease in a single resident, who tested positive for COVID-19 on Nov. 30 and showed pneumonia symptoms on Dec. 16, according to the news re-lease.

The Illinois Veterans Home at Quincy was notified on Dec. 22 of the resident's positive test for Legionnaires' disease, which is a severe pneumonia caused by the inhalation of waterborne bacteria.

No other residents have tested positive for Legionnaires' disease, according to an IDVA spokesperson.

The positive resident lives in Hammond Hall, which had not previously reported the presence of Legionella, the type of bacteria that causes Legionnaires' disease. Hammond Hall

is one of six residential halls at the Quincy facility in Adams County.

After the positive Legionnaire's test was reported on Dec. 22, Quincy facility staff and officials with the Adams County Health Department spoke by phone with representatives from the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Dr. Avery Hart, who is a medical consultant for the IDVA homes on be-half of IDPH, according to the news re-lease.

"On the call, the CDC asked for clean-out and flushing logs which are part of the water management plan for the facility. All actions by the Illinois Veterans' Home in Quincy are consistent with the water management plan following CDC protocols," according to the IDVA news release. "IDPH infectious disease staff are working with the facility to collect information and further investigate the resident's illness."

On Dec. 28, an IDVA spokesperson said the resident who tested positive for Legionnaires' disease and COVID-19 is responding well to treatment.

The last legionella test at Hammond Hall was conducted Oct. 27 and was negative, according to the

IDVA release.

The last case of Legionnaires' disease was reported at the Quincy facility on Dec. 21, 2019, in Fifer Hall, ac-cording to the release. An outbreak of Legionnaires' disease between 2015 and 2018 killed 13 residents at Quincy.

The single incident of Legionnaires' disease at the Quincy home comes as the facility also faces an outbreak of COVID-19.

As of Dec. 26, the Quincy facility has reported five resident deaths related to COVID-19, 123 total positive cases among residents and 143 total positive cases among employees since the pandemic began.

The state-run veterans homes at Manteno and LaSalle have also reported COVID-19 outbreaks, prompting Gov. JB Pritzker to send members of the Illinois National Guard to assist staff with administrative tasks at all three veterans homes experiencing out-breaks.

As of Dec. 26, the Manteno facility has reported a total of 19 resident coronavirus-related deaths. Since the out-break began, Manteno has reported 69 positive cases among residents and 69 positive cases among employees.

See VETERANS, Page 12

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**STATE OF ILLINOIS
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IN PROBATE**

In Re the Matter of
the Estate of:
Marjorie A. Heilman

No. 2020 P 114

**NOTICE FOR
PUBLICATION - CLAIMS**

Notice is given of the death of Marjorie A. Heilman, of Freeport, Illinois. An Order was entered 12-8-2020, admitting the Will of the decedent and dated 10/27/2017, issuing Letters of Office as described herein and requiring the representative to file an inventory within 60 days. Letters of Office were issued on 12-8-2020, to: Amber Nicole Bell, as independent Executor of the Estate of Marjorie A. Heilman, whose attorney is

Darin R. Doak, Esq.,
Attorney for Estate of
Marjorie A. Heilman
1203 Navaho Drive
Brentwood, TN 37027
615-540-1950 (evenings)
815-235-9678
(office, cell, text mssg)
darin@darindoaklaw.com

The estate will be administered without Court supervision unless, under Section 28.4 of the Probate Act (755 ILCS 5/28-4), any interested person terminates independent administration at any time by mailing or delivering a Petition To Terminate to the Clerk.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the office of the Clerk of the Court at the Stephenson County Courthouse, 15 N. Galena Avenue, Freeport, Illinois 61032, or with the representative, or both, on or before 05/08/2021, and any claim not filed on or before said date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

Darin R. Doak, Esq.,
Attorney for Estate of
Marjorie A. Heilman
1203 Navaho Drive
Brentwood, TN. 37027
615-540-1950 (evenings)
815-235-9678 (office, cell,
text mssg)
darin@darindoaklaw.com
(Published in The Shopper's
Guide Dec. 23, 30, 2020
& Jan. 6, 2021)

387492

Three new laws take effect

Minimum wage bumps to \$11

By Sarah Mansur
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS
When a new year begins in Illinois, there typically are dozens if not hundreds of new laws going into effect.

Not this year. Like so many other things in 2020, the legislative spring session was stunted by COVID-19. Once the global pandemic reached Illinois in March, the General Assembly would meet for only four more days — wrapping up the odd session during masked and socially distanced gatherings at the Capitol and Bank of Springfield Center. The fall veto session was scrapped altogether.

As a result, only three new laws took effect on Jan. 1. Here's a look at them, as well as the next increase in the minimum wage:

Insulin costs cap

Senate Bill 667 (Public Act 101-0625) amends the Illinois Insurance Code to cap out-of-pocket insulin costs at \$100 per month for all patients using a state regulated insurance plan, regardless of the amount of insulin or type of covered prescription insulin drug used to fill the insured patient's prescription.

Roughly 1.3 million adults in Illinois, or 12.5 percent of the population, have diabetes, according to the legislation.

SB 667 also provides that the Illinois Department of Insurance, along with the Department of Human Services and the Department of Healthcare and Family Services, must create a public insulin pricing report that includes a summary of insulin pricing practices and public



STOCK PHOTO The Scoop Today/Shopper's Guide

A new Illinois law that went into effect Jan. 1 caps out-of-pocket insulin costs at \$100 per month for all patients using a state-regulated insurance plan, regardless of the amount of insulin or type of covered prescription insulin drug used to fill the insured patient's prescription.

policy recommendations to control and prevent the overpricing of insulin prescriptions.

Sen. Andy Manar, D-Bunker Hill, chief sponsor of the Senate bill, said in a statement that the legislation shows Illinoisans don't have to accept costly prescriptions as the status quo.

"We can change the fact that prescription medication costs more in the United States than any place in the world. This legislation passed because people spoke up and told their story. This historic legislation doesn't become law without them and their effort," Manar said in the statement.

Use of DNA in missing person cases

House Bill 2708 (Public Act 101-0266) amends the Missing Persons Identification Act to allow law enforcement agencies to obtain a DNA sample of a missing person or a DNA reference sample from family members' DNA, once a missing person report is made.

The law also provides that law enforcement cannot retain DNA samples from family members or the missing person after the person has been located.

It also adds the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, a national information clearinghouse for missing persons, to the list of laboratories that law enforcement agencies can work with when trying to find a missing person.

Sen. Tony Munoz, D-Chicago, who was one of the bill's sponsors, said in a news release that using the national system will hopefully help law enforcement find missing people sooner.

"Successfully finding a missing person requires law enforcement to move fast, and we want to make sure they have every tool available to do

their job," Munoz said in the release.

Keeping victims' addresses confidential

House Bill 2818 (Public Act 101-0270) amends the Address Confidentiality for Victims of Domestic Violence Act by including survivors of sexual assault and stalking in the Illinois Address Confidentiality Program (ACP), which offers survivors protection from their abusers by allowing them to acquire and use a substitute address instead of their real address.

HB 2818 allows survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking who fear for their safety to apply to the ACP through the Attorney General's Office. The ACP forwards all first-class mail and provides survivors with a substitute address for public records and documents, such as driver's licenses and state-issued identification cards.

The bill also changes the name of the law, from the Address Confidentiality for Victims of Domestic Violence Act to the Address Confidentiality for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking Act.

In a written statement, Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul said ACP is an important added layer of protection and peace of mind for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

"I am committed to ensuring that survivors have access to the resources and support needed to aid their recoveries, and I encourage survivors to participate in this program that can help protect them from the individuals who perpetrated crimes against them," Raoul said in the statement.

See LAWS, Page 9

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•Kitchen (Continued from page 3)

to parks. It was the only safe way to interact with people.

You learned who was safe from your "pod" of people and prayed a lot. But we are now in a new year. We are all hoping that things will get better; maybe we will never have our old lives back, but maybe times will be better. As the English poet Alexander Pope said, "Hope springs eternal!"

So in this first full week of January, look to the stars and count your blessings. Stay healthy and safe.

If you have found any winter soup and sandwich recipes you think we would like, contact us in person, by mail at From Lena's Kitchens, Shopper's Guide, 240 W. Main St., Lena, IL 61048 or email us at scoopshopper@rvpublishing.com

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Take steps to prevent, combat osteoporosis

By Dr. Stephen Petras
CONTRIBUTOR

Osteoporosis is a skeletal disorder characterized by inadequate bone mass. This puts your bones at high risk for fractures. While osteoporosis can occur in all age levels, it is most often seen in menopausal women, patients undergoing cancer treatments and people with medical conditions such as Pagets disease, diabetes, (particularly type 1), rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, inflammatory bowel disease, kidney, liver or celiac disease and longtime use of corticosteroids.

According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, this disease is responsible for an estimated 2 million broken bones per year. That's two million reasons to prevent it. While some causes of osteoporosis are out of your hands (gender, age, and ethnicity for example) there are many things that you can do to promote bone health.

Optimal bone health begins in childhood and may be the most important determinant of lifelong skeletal health. To promote your child's skeletal health, start with a nutritious diet rich in calcium and vitamins. Do not rely on vitamin supplements to replace a poor diet. Sadly, the three to five glasses of milk a day that we consumed as children are now

likely to be juice drinks or soft drinks. Carbonated beverages are particularly harmful to developing bone mass. (And let's not forget all the harm that sugar and acid is doing to their teeth.)

Regular physical activity early in life contributes to optimal bone mass. Excessive time in front of the television, computer or other devices can lead to a lifetime of musculo-skeletal problems.

Adults who wish to avoid osteoporosis or minimize its impact if they have been diagnosed, also need to eat a nutritious diet high in calcium and vitamin D. Avoid calcium supplements, as too much can lead to kidney stones and cardiac issues. If you do not get enough sun, you may need a vitamin D supplement. You also need to stay active. Exercise and activities that promote balance and good posture are beneficial for your bones, but walking, running, jumping, dancing and weightlifting seem particularly helpful. As smoking and excess alcohol consumption contribute to bone

loss, you will need to avoid these.

Osteoporosis and the medications used to treat it can have a significant impact on your oral health and dental bones. When possible, it is best to see your dentist before you begin these medications so he/she can create a treatment plan that will help you maintain optimal oral health. Even if you do not have teeth and wear dentures, weak bones or loss of bone due to osteoporosis can result in ill-fitting dentures and damage to the oral tissues. In addition, depending on the type, amount and how the medication is administered, as well as how long you have been on it, you may be at risk for dental complications. Taking certain medications along with osteoporosis medications puts you at an even higher risk. All this information factors into your individual treatment plan.

Dr. Stephen Petras is an Illinois-licensed general dentist at the Stockton Dental Center.

♥ Monroe Clinic delivered 417 babies ♥

Most Popular Girl's Names: Teagan/Teigan/Taegan/Charlotte

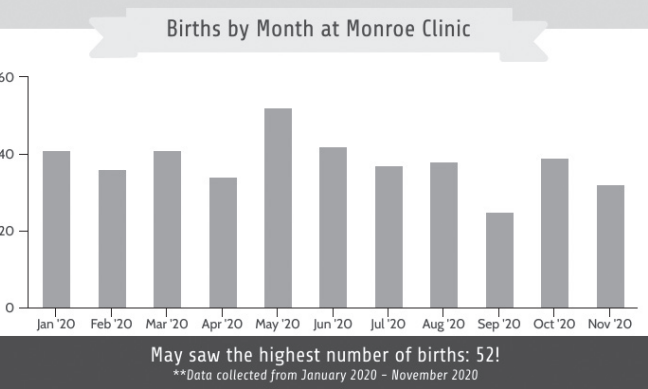
Most Popular Boy's Names: Easton/Jackson

Number of Girls born in 2020: 203

Number of Boys born in 2020: 214

Tallest: 23 inches Biggest: 10.21 lbs.

Smallest: 17.5 inches Littlest: 3.97 lbs.



SUBMITTED IMAGE The Scoop Today/Shopper's Guide

Top baby names noted

More than 415 babies were delivered by Monroe Clinic providers between Jan. 1, 2020, and Nov. 30, 2020. The most popular baby names are shown above. Tying for the second-most popular girls names were Avery, Elise/Elyse, Everleigh/Everly/Everlee and Paislee/Paisley. For boys, Lucas/Luke, Logan and Cameron/Kameron were tied for the second-most popular names.

• Laws (Continued from page 8)

Minimum wage increase

The minimum wage in Illinois rose from \$10 per hour to \$11 per hour on Jan. 1.

The Illinois General Assembly passed increases to the minimum wage in 2019 with legislation that raises the minimum wage \$1 every

year until it reaches \$15 per hour in 2025.

In 2020, wage earners saw their hourly wage increase from \$8.25 to \$9.25 on Jan. 1, and to \$10 on July 1.

"We want to make sure that workers earning minimum wage are aware that the \$1 increase should be reflect-

ed in their paychecks for any time they work after the first of the year," Michael Kleinik, director of the Illinois Department of Labor, said in a news release. "While we fully expect employers will pay the new wage, we also want workers to be aware of the change."

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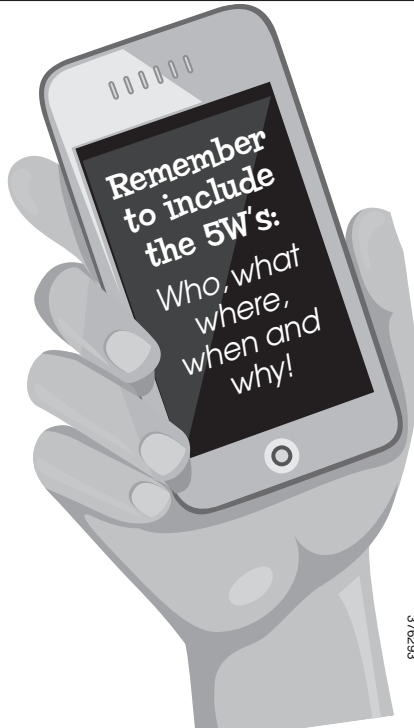
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Sanctuary (Continued from front page)

said Barg. "So does the wide variety of rare and endangered bird species for the novice and avid bird watchers.

"The wide-open panoramic views are a rare treat in the driftless landscape of northwest Illinois."

The 410-acre property was purchased in the early 1990s by Nancy Hamill Winter, a board member at the time on the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation board. She was interested in converting the land to a wildlife habitat and did so

over the next two decades or so. The sloped, tillable acres are now a grassland habitat and there are more than 10,000 newly planted hardwood trees.

"Within a few years, the newly created grasslands, newly planted forest and existing upland oak woods began to attract a wide variety of nesting bird species, many of them having been in population decline in Illinois since the 1960s," said Barg.

Birds like bobolinks, eastern and

western meadowlarks and Henslow's sparrows returned and nested. Other rare birds, like the northern harrier and short-eared owl, regularly visit to hunt prey especially in the winter.

The sanctuary, 5559 E. Rush Creek Road, is open dawn to dusk daily except for a few deer firearm hunting weekends in late November through January. For more information, visit <http://jdcf.org/properties/valley-of-eden-bird-sanctuary/>.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS *The Scoop Today/Shopper's Guide*

Above, panoramic views are part of the beauty at Valley of Eden bird sanctuary just outside Stockton. Right, new directional signs along the trails help visitors plan a cross-country skiing or snow shoeing route. The sanctuary, open for free daily from dawn to dusk, also offers a sledding hill.



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The Pearl City Park District is hiring a Maintenance/Program Director.

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What Christmas Means To Me

Editor's note: The following "What Christmas Means to Me" writing by Warren Elementary School third-graders was inadvertently left out of the Dec. 23 season's greetings section.

Heidi Sigafus' third grade

I think Christmas means making cookies, decorating the tree, and watching movies. I like spending time with my family and having fun. Opening presents, Santa Claus and snuggling with mama and my brother and sister is very special. I like visiting Mimi, Luckey and Paula and saying merry Christmas to the relatives who are no longer here like Bebe and Athena.
Palmer

Christmas means decorating the tree, giving gifts to people, baking cookies for Santa and having fun. I like getting presents and giving presents to people. It is fun to play in the snow with my family. When we dec-

orate the tree we get new ornaments and hang them on the tree. On Christmas we get up early to see our presents that Santa gave us. We also see our stockings and have a lot of fun!
Grace

Christmas means making cookies with my sister, grandma and my mom. I like to wrap presents with my mom and sister. I also like to watch sports with my family. I play with my cousins and sister on Christmas Day.
Zane

Christmas means a lot to me because family gets together. I like the true meaning of Christmas. I like to decorate the Christmas tree. I also love to snuggle inside!
Lily

Christmas means spending time with my family, making cookies for Santa and watching Christmas movies. My sister and I hang up ornaments, give presents and have a

good time. My family and I have a big feast with potatoes, ham, gravy and more. We make wish lists and sometimes we get what we want and sometimes we don't. I think Christmas is the best holiday ever!
Leighton

Christmas means to me snuggling with my family and watching Christmas movies. I like baking cookies with my family. Christmas means giving and spending time with my family. I enjoy opening presents and finding my elf. That is fun! I like to eat cookies too!
Emma

Karissa Spiller's third grade

Christmas means eating food and getting stuffed, playing laser tag with family and meeting up with family. I love opening presents and having hot chocolate with everyone. Maisey and I build snowmen with silly faces. I can't wait for Christmas!
Cole

Christmas means happiness at home, eating lots of food and opening presents. I get to spend Christmas at Dad's, Grandma Laura's and with my mom, sisters and brother. We open presents on Christmas morning and get to spend all day playing with them.
Livi

Christmas means to me loving, caring and spending time with my family. I like to play in the snow with Riley. I like to open presents with family. Christmas means having fun with Riley in the snow making snow tunnels.
Calvin

Christmas means family, love and togetherness. Some people think Christmas means just presents. To some people, it can and it does but it never has to me. To me, it has always been about family and now it's different. So, now I can't see all my family. We spend time together on

Christmas Eve and have a lot of foods and drinks. We open presents with my cousins and do a lot. After that, we would all go to church and light candles but before everything, we would play board games. It would be a lot of fun.
Maya

Extension offers webinar series focused on growing fruit

"Fruits on Friday," a series of webinars offered by the University of Illinois Extension, will begin this month.

The webinars will focus on the basics of fruit production for some of the most commonly grown fruits in northwest Illinois.

"Each week, a different fruit will be discussed and give you the information you need to determine if it's right for you, general practices you may need to be doing before and during the growing season and suggestions of seasonal management and variety selection," according to an Extension news release.

The webinars are designed for those who want to plant in the 2021 growing season and for those who have been growing fruit for some years.

"Fruits on Friday" will be held from noon to 1 p.m. The schedule and topics include:

- Jan. 15, apple and pear
- Jan. 22, stone fruits (peach, cherry and others)
- Jan. 29, grapes
- Feb. 5, strawberry

To register for Fruits on Friday, go online to go.illinois.edu/jsw or call 815-235-4125. Registration is \$5 per webinar or \$15 for the entire series.

Parenting program will shift to Regional Office of Education

The Parent Enrichment Program at FHN Family Counseling Center is transitioning to the Regional Office of Education as of Jan. 1. The program, which is free and available to eligible families prenatally and with children up to age 5 in Stephenson and Jo Daviess counties, works with parents to help them give their children the best possible start in life through education in a variety of areas such as child development, nutrition, discipline and more.

"This grant-funded program has been a joint effort between FHN and the Regional Office of Education for many years," Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer/Chief Nursing Officer Kathryn J. Martinez said in a news release. "In reviewing its primary purpose together, both organizations concluded that it is actually best suited to be integrated within the educational offerings of the Regional Office of Education while allowing FHN to focus on our core competency of

clinical care through such services as those offered through the Family Counseling Center and the new Dr. Ravi and Mrs. Minu Vyas Crisis Stabilization Center there."

Aaron Mercier, regional superintendent of ROE#8, concurred that the PEP is well-designed to integrate into the other services offered by the Regional Office of Education.

"Parent educators in the program not only provide parents with information on child development but can also connect them to resources in the community that may be needed to ensure that area children have the best home environment to support their in-school education," Mercier said in the release. "We can help parents identify their children's strengths and abilities as well as addressing any areas of concern."

Staff of the program at FHN will be offered the opportunity to transition to the Regional Office of Education with the program.

• Veterans (Continued from page 7)

As of Dec. 27, the LaSalle facility has reported 34 resident deaths related to COVID-19 since Nov. 1. Since the start of the pandemic, 108 residents at LaSalle have tested positive and 105 employees have tested positive.

Three legislative committees are investigating the administration's response to the LaSalle outbreak, and the Illinois Department of Human Services' acting inspector general has also announced an investigation into the deaths at LaSalle.

A BIG "THANK YOU"

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