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VOL. 88 • NO. 45

YOUR FREE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 2, 2022



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Stephenson County HCE International Director, Judy Shippee, stands with Mary Julius who presented the program on the country of Italy at the International Meeting last month.

Stephenson County Association for Home and Community Education annual meeting

The 98th annual meeting of the Stephenson County Association for Home and Community Education (AHCE) *Aspire to Inspire* was held on Oct. 12, 2022, at the Farm Bureau in Freeport. The AHCE State President, Angela Hicks, spoke at the meeting and installed county board members.

The Mock Orange Unit

was recognized as the Unit of the Year. AHCE members Carla Meyer, Silver Creek, and Janice Fryer, Mock Orange received Homemaker of the Year awards. There were many members who had been in AHCE for 15 to 55 years and Shirley Schade-waldt from the Pearl City Unit was recognized as a 65-year-member.

The International Meeting was held immediately following the noon luncheon. Mary Julius presented the program on the country of Italy.

AHCE units are located throughout Stephenson County. For more information on SCAHCE, please contact Diana Ethridge at 815-275-0680.

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Panthers defeat Chicago Richards, move on to round two of Illinois State high school football playoffs

By Trenten Scheidegger
CORRESPONDENT

The Lena-Winslow Panthers picked up their tenth win on the gridiron in 2022 as they defeated the Chicago Richards Warriors in round one of the Illinois Class 1A football playoffs. It's the eleventh consecutive postseason game the Panthers have come out victorious in. Their last postseason loss came all the way back in November of 2018. Excluding the void COVID year, Le-Win has dominated every postseason since. Head Coach, Ric Arand, and the Panthers are hoping for another deep postseason run in 2022, and that got off to a good start last Friday.

Chicago Richards finished the regular season with an overall record of 5-4. They had little opportunity of knocking off the 9-0 Panthers on Le-Win's home field and that was evident from the start. It took only 12 seconds of gameplay for the Panthers to get on the scoreboard. Le-Win's Nick Inden took the opening kickoff 72 yards to the endzone, giving Le-Win a lead before their offense had

even touched the field. The offense's first play was the two-point conversion attempt, which came out successful as Gage Dunker plunged into the endzone.

With the 8-0 lead and hardly any time off the clock, Arand's Panthers didn't look back. Just a few minutes later they were doubling their lead as Gunar Lobdell ran into the endzone from six yards out. Drew Streckwald connected with Jace Flynn for the two-point conversion, and the Panthers had a 16-0 lead with just under ten minutes left in the opening quarter.

The lead grew even more when Dunker got his first touchdown of the day with eight minutes and thirty seconds left in the first. Dunker ran into the endzone from 12 yards out and Lobdell capped the drive off with a successful two-point attempt.

Chicago Richards found themselves backed up on their ensuing drive. So much so, that it gave the Panthers another opportunity to put points on the board. Inden had already got the special teams on the board, and the

offense had done their work. This time, Henry Engel got the defense on the board with a tackle in the endzone for a safety. The defensive score gave the Panthers a 26-0 lead with over seven minutes left in the first.

The Panthers weren't done there, however. Just moments later, Wes Offerman trucked into the endzone from one yard out. Lobdell added the two-point conversion and before you could blink, the Panthers held a 34-0 lead.

With such an impressive lead, the Panthers were able to coast to a dominant round one victory. A win is nice but coming out victorious and healthy is that much sweeter. The Panthers were able to do that and get a number of guys some postseason experience in the process.

In the second quarter, Le-Win's Weston Lartz reached the endzone on a five-yard run. Blake Duncan tallied the two-point conversion, giving Le-Win a 42-0 lead with over seven minutes left until halftime. That 42-point lead

See PLAYOFFS, Page 6

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Obituary

GLENN M. HOCKMAN

Glenn M. Hockman Jr. age 78 of McConnell died on Oct. 24, 2022, at Ascension St. Joseph Center in Freeport, Illinois. He was born on May 4, 1944, in Winslow to Glenn and Nora (Hurst) Hockman Sr. On June 6, 1965, he and Cheryl Ferguson were married at Red Oak Methodist Church.



guson, two sisters; Shirley Schade-waldt and L a V o n n e McWorthy and special friend Fran Ploessl and her family.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his wife, a sister, a niece, two brothers-in-law, a sister-in-law and a grandson, Austin.

Funeral services were held at 11 a.m. on Thursday, Oct. 27, at the Leamon Funeral Home in Lena, IL. Visitation was from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m. on Thursday, Oct. 27, at the Leamon Funeral Home in Freeport, IL. Pastor Roger Bronkema officiated the services. Luncheon was held at Orangeville United Methodist Church in Orangeville, IL following the burial. A memorial has been established in his memory.

The family wishes to extend a special thank you to FHN and Cara Hoffmaster, NP.

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

Prior to his retirement in 1999, he worked at Kelly Springfield Tire Company for 34 years. He enjoyed his children, grandchildren, camping, fishing, gardening, dancing, and the Green Bay Packers, Wisconsin Badgers, and Atlanta Braves. He spent many hours in his shop as he was an excellent woodworker. Glenn was also the president of the McConnell Historical Society.

Glenn is survived by his children Jeffrey (Gina) Hockman of Freeport, IL and Julie Edler of Orangeville, IL, grandchildren; Evan (Paige) Edler, Morgan Hockman, Grace Edler, Cheyenne Hockman, and Hannah (Daniel) Moreno, great-grandchildren; Brantley, Jagger, Wyatt, Madison, Mathayus, Leonidas, and Vaeda, his brother-in-law Gary (Pamela) Fer-

County set to receive \$20,780 to supplement food and shelter programs

The monies awarded to Stephenson County are used to supplement existing services that provide emergency food and shelter services in Stephenson County. The selection was made by a National Board which is chaired by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and consists of representatives from United Way of America, The Salvation Army; American Red Cross; United Jewish Communities; Catholic Charities, USA; and National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

The local board, which is comprised of representatives from Stephenson County, is now charged to distribute funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in high-need areas in our communities. The local board is seeking applications from qualified service organizations

(please see list of qualifications below) serving Stephenson County. Those interested in applying can visit United Way of Northwest Illinois' website or contact our office to receive an application.

Stephenson County has distributed Emergency Food and Shelter funds previously to Freeport Area Church Cooperative, Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency Senior Citizen Services, Hearts That Care, VOICES of Stephenson County, Lena Ministerial Food Services and many others. Areas that are eligible to receive funds include organizations with existing programs: served meals, other food, mass shelter (on-site), other shelter, supplies/equipment, and utilities assistance

Eligibility to receive funds

Under the terms of the grant from the National Board, local

organizations chosen to receive funds must:

- 1) Be private voluntary nonprofits or units of government (if private voluntary organization, must have a volunteer board)
- 2) Have an accounting system
- 3) Practice nondiscrimination
- 4) Have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter programs

How to apply:

Public or private voluntary organizations interested in applying for Emergency Food and Shelter Program Funds can visit www.uwni.org/efsp or contact the United Way of Northwest Illinois, Inc. at (815) 232-5184 for an application. Grant request applications are due by at the United Way office, 524 West Stephenson Street, Freeport, Nov. 15, 2022, by 4 p.m.

Northwest Illinois Daily Drawing October winners

The Northwest Illinois Daily (a cooperative fundraiser) announces the first winners in the eighth year of the Daily Drawing. The Daily Drawing is a drawing for 365 daily cash prizes from Oct. 1, 2022 to Sept. 30, 2023 to those donating for a ticket. Over \$21,000 is paid out to ticket holders during the drawing year. Cash prizes vary between \$50 and \$250. A ticket may win multiple times as each ticket remains in the drawing each day for the entire year, no matter how often it may be drawn.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| \$250 – Jim Oleson | \$50 – Melanie McCalley |
| \$50 – Wanda Honerbaum | \$50 – Karen Hunt |
| \$50 – Amanda Haas | \$50 – John Horkay |
| \$50 – Trey Ertmer | \$150 – Melanie McCalley |
| \$50 – Jeff Wienen | \$50 – Sharon Eckstein |
| \$50 – Wells Offenheiser | \$50 – Rick Koehler |
| | \$50 – Judi Sedivy |
| | \$50 – Brad Werner |
| | \$50 – Donald Olszewski |
| | \$50 – Amy Brinkmeier |
| | \$50 – Cindy Brown |
| | \$50 – Aaron Hicks |
| | \$50 – Marc DeMotta |
| | \$50 – Karen Travis |
| | \$50 – Bernadette Spurr |
| | \$50 – Janice Kehl |
| | \$50 – Daniel Beyer |
| | \$50 – Pat Widolff |
| | \$50 – Owen Kempel |
| | \$50 – Jack Stayner |
| | \$50 – Mary Hartzell |
| | \$50 – Ruth Bussan |
| | \$50 – Kristine Haas |
| | \$50 – Reese Raisbeck |
| | \$150 – Sharon Westenfelder |

News briefs

Lena American Legion Auxiliary

The Lena American Legion Auxiliary will be holding a Craft Fair on Saturday, Nov. 5, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Lena American Legion Home, 316 W. Main St., Lena, IL. The proceeds from this event will be used to help replace the lighting at the veteran's memorial in Lena. A lunch stand will also be available.

The November meeting will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 9, at the Lena American Legion Home at 6:30 p.m. Tray favors will be made for hospitalized veterans and clothing donations will be collected. Gently used coats, gloves, and hats are needed. Dues will also be collected. New members are always welcome. Karen Sirgany will oversee the social hour.

The Clothes Closet

The Clothes Closet will be open Saturday, Nov. 5 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. for free shopping. It is located at Yellow Creek Church of the Brethren 12602 W. Dublin Rd. Pearl City, IL. Call Pastor Boughton at 815-238-1137 for additional information.

Majestic Skyscape Art Gallery

Majestic Skyscape Art Gallery of 16164 Carter Rd, Lanark, Illinois 61046, will be participate in the Scenic Art Loop's monthly art tour and will feature many kinds of eclectic art.

Stop in Nov. 4 through 6 to view the art displayed and to meet the artists. Hours are Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Local Girl Scouts receive \$2,000 grant from GSUSA

Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois (GSNI) received a generous \$2,000 grant from Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) on July 14, 2022. Funds from this grant will be used to help Girl Scouts prepare for and finance their travel experiences to destinations around the world.

GSNI is grateful to GSUSA as they work to advance the Girl Scout Mission where future community leaders have a space all their own, where their interests, their experience, and their leadership—today and tomorrow—is the top priority.



Church news

St. John's Lutheran

St. John's Lutheran Church in Pearl City will be having the November Grace Meal on Nov. 20. The menu includes fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, cranberry sauce, mixed vegetables, sweet potatoes, and dessert.

All meals will be curbside pick-up with reservations due by 5 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 18 to the church office. Call 815-443-2215 to reserve a meal. Curbside pickup is available Sunday, Nov. 20

from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Join St. John's Lutheran Church every Sunday, at 9 a.m. for Worship, Sunday School and Communion. Worship is led by Pastor Shellie Knight. Join the fun for monthly dominoes on Nov. 1 at 9 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran Church is located at 229 S First St., Pearl City, IL. 815-443-2215. Worship Services are currently in-person and livestreamed on Facebook Live by visiting www.StJohnsPearlCity.org.

Thank You to those who sent donations for new lights at the Veterans Memorial.

Lena Legion Post 577 Commander, Tim Schoeny

Due to the election, the Lena American Legion Post 577 will have their monthly meeting on Nov. 7. New members are welcome.

your source for on-line news:
RVPNEWS.COM

OPEN HOUSE

Join us to celebrate Merlyn Barker's 90th Birthday on Nov. 13 from 1 - 3 p.m. at McConnell UM Church (211 N. Hulbert Rd., McConnell, IL)

Merlyn hauled milk, made cheese, farmed and drove a bus for over 30 years. He retired at 75. Hosted by his 4 daughters. No gifts, your presence is enough.

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OPINION

Slices of life

Exploring love

"We've been infected with this idea that love is an emotion only felt between two people. But love is a universal energy." —A.R. Lucas



By **JILL PERTLER**
Columnist

Today, let's explore the topic of love.

I think when we look back at life—at the end of it all—what we'll remember most is love. And, as was referenced above, not just the romantic love we've experienced, but ALL of it, every bit of it. Love is all around us, every second of every day, if we are open and aware. Receiving as well as giving. I know that may sound corny, but it's truth (with a capital T).

Love fuels the soul. It makes the heart beat a little faster. It makes us catch our breath and causes our lips to curl upward. It improves our mood and makes life worth living. Love comes in many forms. It can be spectacular and it can be everyday – and everything in-between.

Noticing the beauty of dewy water droplets on blades of grass in the morning is love.

A mama duck leading a trail of her ducklings across the path is love.

Feeling the positive energy in a smile from a stranger is love.

A sunrise. A sunset. A full moon. A starry night. All love when seen and felt from the heart.

The same can be said for helping a turtle cross the road. Feeding birds in the winter. Rescuing a spider from your kitchen and bringing it outside.

Love isn't complicated. It's superbly simple when pure and done right. When done from within - from the heart.

Many of us live under the misconception that love

comes from without—from other people, from the world at large. I don't believe this to be true. Real love comes from within. It starts there, grows there and blooms there.

Once you embrace the love from within - truly embrace and accept it. Once you open yourself fully to it and understand its importance to your well-being and joy, then you can appreciate and enjoy the love all around you. You will be more open to accepting love because you are fully encompassed on spreading your own.

As you sow your seeds and spread and grow this love outward, it returns to you exponentially, because you can't give love without receiving it in return. That's just how the universe operates. You benefit just as much from the love you give as from the love you receive—maybe even more so.

That's the magic in it. I think of the concept of love like an ice cream sundae. It starts with a scoop of ice cream at its core. It wouldn't be a sundae without the ice cream. This is the love that comes from within.

Love from the world at large—people, animals, hobbies, passions, nature—is the whipped cream, hot fudge, sprinkles and other toppings. They enhance the sundae but without the ice cream, you are left with a bowl of condiments. They

See LOVE, Page 9



Weekly connection

Working to raise good families

I wrote an article several years ago about the changing landscape of the family farm and its effect on the family. I wrote how it was sad to see the number of empty barns that speckled the countryside, and I lamented the fact that the times of families working together on small family farms was no longer as much of a reality as it once was. In fact, years earlier when I was a senior in high school in 1980, I wrote a research paper on this same topic. I wrote how the family farm was about to change from individual farmers along with their spouses and kids operating their own manageable farm to large corporate farm businesses taking over the industry. In those days we were about to



By **SCOTT CERNEK**
Columnist

lose an important element of society, the family farm along with its structure and stability that was going to have a profound effect on rural America.

Sure enough, throughout the 80's and 90's this transformation took place and today we don't see many small family farms at all except for the Amish and Mennonite communities that still exist as a kind of throw-back society. The Amish farms take us

back to the times of our great grandparents. We get a glimpse of the early 1900's and the use of real horsepower and steel wheeled implements. Whereas the Mennonite farms seem to go back to the times of the 70's and 80's when the farms were operated by individual families using small tractors and more modern but much smaller implements than we see today.

I enjoy driving by an Amish or Mennonite farm these days

and getting a small look back into farming history. It's great to see a whole family working side by side just like we used to do when we were kids on our family farm. We always had huge gardens, small tractors and implements, and lots of hands-on work to do year around to make the whole thing productive and keep our family in shoes, clothes,

See FAMILIES, Page 9

Holiday Shopping Expo & Bake Sale
Saturday, Nov. 12
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Jane Addams Community Center
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- "Coats Share" drop off for Salvation Army
- Lions Food Stand

Expo sponsored by the Cedarville Lions Club

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EDITOR: Kathleen Cruger
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In my opinion

Choosing a Medicare plan: Three key benefits to consider

By Mona Clor

The Medicare Annual Election Period is officially under way, and individuals ages 65 or older may be eligible to select a healthcare plan for 2023.

Now to Dec. 7, people eligible for Medicare can review plans to find the best one for their health needs, as well as their wallets.

Although it may seem intimidating, it is important that eligible individuals start by identifying their top priorities—like convenience or quality of care—and then finding an accommodating plan.

While some people will opt for traditional Medicare, an alternative is Medicare Advan-

tage, which typically offers additional benefits, such as prescription coverage, fitness plans and routine checkups or cleanings. Additionally, home-based healthcare continues to be a service offered by many plans, which is something to consider as you choose your plan for 2023. Specifically, I encourage you to consider the following benefits when reviewing your options:

- In-home primary care. Did you know that you may be able to see your primary care provider in your home? House calls are back in popularity and companies, will send a provider and care team to your home—and offer telemedicine services—for both routine and

sick visits. The best part is that in-home visits typically last around 45 minutes, compared to a 15-minute office visit, allowing more time to review concerns with your doctor and allow them to treat all your health needs.

- Telemedicine services. A recent survey by AARP indicates that nearly one-out-of-three adults 50 and over are highly interested in using telemedicine for themselves or a loved one. Telemedicine not only offers the convenience of visiting with a healthcare provider from the comfort of your home but also provides safety from picking up germs and contamination from in-office appointments. Check to see if your Medicare Advantage plan covers telemedicine, including online counseling, prescription management and urgent care issues.

- Pharmacy mail order. For convenience, consider a plan that offers home delivery for your prescriptions. Often, mail-order programs allow beneficiaries to set up automatic refills for prescriptions to be delivered to their doorstep, ensuring you never run out of your medications. Many mail-order pharmacies offer 24/7 service which is helpful if you have questions about your medication outside of business hours.

For additional information on choosing the right Medicare plan for you or a loved one, visit the Medicare Plan Finder on Medicare.gov.

Mona Clor, M.D., is a family medicine physician with Heal Primary Care.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

In addition to traditional production costs associated with growing crops each season, farmers who choose to participate in carbon market opportunities incur additional costs. Farmers are paid between \$10 and \$40 per acre for carbon farming practices, amounts that don't come close to outweighing the cost to implement them.

U of I paper spotlights challenges, solutions to ag's role in carbon markets

By Timothy Eggert
FARMWEEK

More Illinois farmers might participate in carbon market opportunities if major reforms were made to improve contracts, stabilize demand for soil carbon sequestration and increase financial incentives, according to a new study published by University of Illinois researchers.

The paper, titled "The Achilles heels of carbon farming: Operational constraints on the next cash crop," spotlights challenges surrounding the adoption of storing carbon in soil on ag land in Illinois and offers some policy-based solutions.

It was written by members of the U of I's Center for the Economics of Sustainability and was supported by the Illinois Farm Bureau Board of Directors. Stakeholders ex-

pect the paper to ultimately spur additional research or influence future policy decisions.

"IFB has been very interested in exploring the topic of soil carbon sequestration and carbon markets, and we support market-based solutions to mitigating climate change," said Lauren Lurkins, IFB's director of environmental policy. "But the way those solutions are manifesting themselves in the countryside right now is not attractive or appealing to a majority of our farmer members."

What accounts for "arguably the largest barrier" to the development of carbon farming in Illinois is the dynamic around annual cash rental agreements and non-owner-operated farmland, according to the paper.

Specifically, if a tenant who

adopts a conservation practice on a piece of rented ground loses that lease the following year, then the carbon stored in the soil "is put at risk" and depends on the next tenant adopting similar practices to maintain the sequestration.

In addition to high upfront costs, tenant farmers are hesitant to adopt a conservation practice because the benefits of that practice—better soil health increases the land's value, for example—likely will be accessible by only a future tenant or the landowner, said Amy Ando, a professor in the U of I's College of Agricultural and Consumer Economics who led the study.

"If you're somebody who's just renting the land, you yourself don't have obvious incentives or even capabilities

See **MARKETS**, Page 10

Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency
PY23 ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
(LIHEAP)

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 through the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) to assist income-eligible households with their natural gas, propane, and electric heating bills.

The LIHEAP program began Sept. 1 for all income-eligible households. Applications will be taken on a first-come first-served basis through May 31, 2023, or until funding is exhausted. There will be no priority groups this program year. Households in need are encouraged to apply.

Due to funding limitations, there will be NO NEW enrollments in the PIPP program this year.

Applicants may apply for a Direct Vendor Payments (DVP) which provides a one-time benefit payment for income eligible homeowners and renters to gas or propane and electric vendors to help with home utility bills and for reconnection assistance. Households must be at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines listed below to receive a benefit from LIHEAP.

Income Guidelines:

Family Size	30 Day Income	Family Size	30 Day Income
1	\$2,265	6	\$6,198
2	\$3,052	7	\$6,985
3	\$3,838	8	\$7,324
4	\$4,625	9	\$7,484
5	\$5,412	10	\$7,643
		11	\$7,802

For more than 11 household members, please add \$590 for each additional person.

Please call the Freeport office at 815-232-3141 or 800-883-1111 to receive information on how to receive a pre-application packet. Completed pre-application packets and required documents listed below may be submitted for processing by mail, email, drop box or fax. Appointments will be made for those needing help with the packet.

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

- Proof of Social Security numbers (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) for all household members. Individuals without an SSN or ITIN can still apply and NICA 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.

LIHWAP water and sewer bill assistance funding is exhausted.

Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency
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E-Mail: calvaryum@yahoo.com

- *Sunday Worship – 10:00 a.m.*
- *Sunday School – 8:45 a.m.*
- Communion and Potluck every 1st Sunday
- Wednesday Night Bible Study - 6:30 p.m.
- Sat. Youth Group - 6 - 8 p.m.

You may find our facebook page and weekly messages by searching for "Calvary United Methodist Stockton Illinois on facebook.com You are welcome! Please visit us!

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Pastor Chrissy Salser (815) 988-9450

E-Mail: clc600@mediacombb.net

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- *Worship times: Saturday, 5:30 p.m.*
- Sunday, 10 a.m.*
- *Sunday School: Sunday, 9 a.m.*

EBENEZER – SALEM UNITED

CHURCH OF CHRIST

P.O. Box 102, Pearl City, IL 61062

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See Facebook or call 815-291-1965

- *Sunday Worship: Currently 8:30 a.m.*
- (may vary)*

Services alternate monthly at 2 locations

- Nov. 6 & 13 services are at Salem UCC Church, Corner of Loran & Kent Roads
- Nov. 20 & 27 services are at Ebenezer-UCC Church, 5421 S. Stone Church Road

EVANGELICAL FREE

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720 N. Freedom Street, Lena, IL 61048

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Rev. Scott Wilson, Assoc. Pastor of Youth

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- *Sunday Morning Worship Service and Children's Church/Nursery – 10:00 a.m.*
- Awana Wednesdays at 6 p.m. (Sept. - April)
- Pastor's weekly sermons at www.lenafreechurch.org

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Pearl City, IL 61062 • (815) 443-2177

email: pearlcityumc@gmail.com

Website: pearlcityumc.org

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Pastor Doug Carroll (815) 541-3159

- *Sunday Worship – 8:00 a.m.*
- *Sunday School – during worship after the children's message*

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

309 S. Main Street, Elizabeth, IL 61028

email: firstumcfelizabath@gmail.com

Pastor Roger Bronkema 815-291-6261

email: rbronkema18@gmail.com

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and 5:00 p.m.

- Reconciliation Saturday – 3:30 - 4:15 p.m.

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410 West Lena Street, Lena, IL 61048

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Lady Panthers fall in regional championship

By Trenten Scheidegger
CORRESPONDENT

The Lena-Winslow volleyball squad capped off another impressive season as they reached the regional championship. In a year that saw the Panthers rack up 27 wins, it seemed Le-Win was destined for a long postseason run. That isn't always the case, however. Especially, when you find the number one and number three ranked class 1A teams playing in the same regional.

Despite Le-Win coming in as the third ranked class 1A team, they found themselves facing off with the number one ranked Galena Pirates in the regional championship. Galena came into the matchup with an overall record of 36-1. It was the first time the Panthers and Pirates would face off in 2022. Before Le-Win made it to the championship, they had to knock off a pair of op-

ponents in the earlier regional rounds.

On Tuesday, Oct. 25 the Panthers faced off with the Rockford Christian Life Eagles to begin postseason play. Despite being the regional host, the Eagles were doomed to an early exit on their homecourt as they were massive underdogs to the Panthers. That showed in the results as Le-Win posted one of their most dominant victories of the 2022 season. Le-Win had total control in the first set, winning by a score of 25-9. The Panthers were even more impressive in the second set as they earned the sweep with a 25-7 victory.

It was junior Grace Groezinger who led the way for the Panthers with seven kills on the night. Groezinger also had a team-leading three blocks and a pair of digs in the victory. A pair of fellow juniors were

right behind her as Kaidynce Lynch had four kills and Molly Amendt had three. Both Amendt and Isabelle Paulsen led the Panthers in digs with four. Both Lynch and Janessa Esser had three digs, while senior Maddie Young had two.

The very next day, the Panthers were back in action as they moved on to face off with the Dakota Indians in a round two matchup. The Panthers were plenty familiar with their new opponent as this was the fourth time Dakota and Le-Win had met up in 2022. It was Dakota who won the regular season series as they beat the Panthers in two of their three matchups earlier in the year.

The Panthers would have the last laugh, however. Not only did Le-Win get the victory in their final regular season matchup on Oct. 11, but they picked up the postseason vic-

tory, sending themselves into the regional championship. With the overall series tied at 2-2 for the season, it is safe to say the Panthers would trade the regular season series for the postseason victory every single time.

In fact, their postseason matchup appeared to be far more lopsided than the regular season series truly was. The Panthers controlled the first set all the way to a 25-15 victory. The second set played out in similar fashion as Le-Win picked up another 2-0 sweep with a 25-17 win over the Indians.

As usual, the Panthers were led by their juniors. Groezinger strung together a pair of exceptional performances as she once again led Le-Win with nine kills. Lynch was right behind her with eight kills, and Amendt was third on

the team with five kills of her own.

The Panthers really made a difference on the defensive side of the net. Le-Win combined for nine blocks as a team. Amendt dominated her way to a team-leading six blocks, while Eden Dietz had three. Lynch, Groezinger, and Alyssa Daughenbaugh each had a pair of blocks of their own as the Le-Win defense gave Dakota's offense fits all night long.

The victory sent the Panthers into the regional championship where they were set to face off with the Galena Pirates. The Panthers came into the championship riding high as they were feeling good about the pair of sweeps to start the postseason. Their confidence was exuberant as the Panthers came out strong in the first set. Le-Win would

take a 1-0 lead over the Pirates after winning the opening set 25-21.

Galena would respond in the following sets, however. The Pirates evened the series out with a 25-17 victory over the Panthers in the second. By that time, the momentum had swung completely in Galena's favor. The Lady Panthers fought hard in the second set, but Galena was ultimately too much as Le-Win fell by a score of 25-17.

Finishing the year 27-10, the Panthers have plenty to hang their hat on. With only one senior on the roster in Maddie Young, Le-Win will return nearly their entire arsenal in 2023. With Lynch, Groezinger, and Amendt returning for their senior campaigns, the Panthers will certainly be a team to watch out for next season.

• Playoffs (Continued from front page)

would hold until late in the third quarter, when the Panther defense got on the scoreboard again. This time it was Casey Klever's interception that got them there. Klever returned his interception 47 yards for the score, giving Le-Win a 48-0 lead.

The lone score the Panther defense allowed came late in the fourth quarter

when Chicago Richards scored on a 30-yard touchdown pass. All that did was ruin the shutout, as the Panthers could already smell the round one victory.

With the 48-6 win over the Warriors, the Panthers tallied their eleventh consecutive postseason win and punched their ticket for round two. The Panthers

will have the luxury of being on their home field again as they play host to the ROWVA-Williamsfield Cougars. The Cougars come into the matchup with an overall record of 6-4. They beat the Stark County Rebels 28-14 in their postseason opener.

The Panthers and Cougars are set to kickoff at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 5 in Lena.

Foster parenting and beyond: Ways to help kids in Illinois

By Andrew Chesney
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Northwest Illinois is home to amazing people who care about their neighbors. You step up to help when you see a need. Today I would like to highlight one of those needs. Across the state, there is a shortage of foster families to accommodate the thousands of children in the DCFS system waiting to be placed in a loving and stable home. If you are interested in learning about becoming a foster parent in Illinois or other ways you can


make a difference, my office can connect you with the resources you need.

Every year, thousands of foster families across Illinois provide a temporary safe haven for children at serious risk of abuse or neglect placed in DCFS care by local courts. DCFS strives to reunite children with their birth families and nearly half of all foster children are reunified with their families within 12 months. When reunification is not possible, as determined by the courts, DCFS works to

find children a permanent, loving home through adoption or guardianship.

To become a foster parent, you must be at least 21 years old. Prospective foster families are required to participate in a home inspection and social assessment, complete 27 hours of training focused on foster care and the needs of children who are in foster care; complete a criminal background check of all household members, be financially stable; and complete a health screening that includes verification that immunizations are up to date.

You can send your information to DCFS online for follow up and next steps to become a foster or adoptive parent, or call the toll-free hotline at 1-800-572-2390. Additional information, including how children are matched and more, can be found with other FAQs online at https://www2.illinois.gov/dcf/lovinghomes/fostercare/Documents/Foster_Parent_FAQ.pdf.



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Financial Advisor

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Illinois Department of Agriculture announces tax credit for Agritourism

The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) announced the Agritourism Liability Insurance Tax Credit program. This entitles entities or individuals who operate agritourism businesses in Illinois during 2022 and 2023 to apply for a tax credit equal to 100% of the liability insurance premiums paid by that individual or entity during the taxable year or \$1,000, whichever is less.

“As we continue to build back our state’s tourism industry in the wake of the

COVID-19 pandemic, this tax credit program will provide our agritourism businesses with the aid they need to sustain operations,” said Governor JB Pritzker.

“From spooky hayrides and corn mazes this Halloween season to educational exhibits and guided tours, it is our longstanding agricultural tradition that attracts visitors from around the nation and world. Thanks to the leadership and hard work of the IDOA, our agribusiness partners will have the support

they need to show more and more people what makes Illinois, Illinois.

“Agritourism provides Illinoisans and visitors with unique experiences while connecting the public with hands-on agricultural experiences,” said IDOA Director Jerry Costello. “We want to thank the Illinois Department of Revenue for assisting agribusinesses in the state of Illinois.

“Illinois Farm Bureau and Illinois Specialty Growers Association hope this new

program will alleviate some of the burden of high liability insurance costs for agritourism businesses,” said Raghela Scavuzzo, Illinois Farm Bureau Associate Director of Food Systems Development. “We are confident this credit will incentivize them to continue doing business and will stimulate new agribusinesses in the state.”

“Agritourism operation” means an individual or entity that carries out agricultural activities on agricultural property and allows members

of the general public, for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes, to view or enjoy those activities. “Agricultural property” means property that is used in whole or in part for production agriculture.

“Agritourism activities” include, but are not limited to, the following: historic, cultural, and on-site educational programs; guided and self-guided tours, including school tours; animal exhibitions or petting zoos; agricultural crop mazes, such as corn or flower mazes;

harvest-your-own or U-pick operations; horseback or pony rides; and hayrides, carriage rides, or sleigh rides.

The deadline to apply for the 2022 tax year is February 28, 2023.

Visit <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Assistance/Pages/Agritourism-Tax-Credit-Place.aspx> or illinoisagritourismcredit.com for more information or to apply for the tax credit. For more information or questions, please contact AGR.AgritourismTax@illinois.gov.

Schools, students still recovering from pandemic learning loss, state report card shows

By Peter Hancock
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Student test scores continued to fall last year but new data shows Illinois’ students are on the path to recovering from the learning loss that occurred during the pandemic.

Numbers from standardized tests administered last spring show steep declines in the percentage of students who met or exceeded state standards in English language arts and math compared to 2019, the last year tests were administered before the pandemic.

Those numbers were reported in the latest state report card, which the Illinois State Board of Education released last week.

In addition to test results, the report card includes information on a wide range of education metrics such as graduation rates, class sizes and teacher qualifications. It offers statewide data as well as data on each district and school building.

But while proficiency rates were down across the board, State Superintendent Carmen Ayala said the amount of growth students are showing from one year to the next is improving, suggesting that strategies being used help students catch up in their academics are working.

ISBE devised a new metric this year to track growth rates. It involves measuring a student’s year-over-year change in scores in a particular subject and comparing that growth to a student in a prior year—in this case, 2019—who started off with the same score. This year’s report card suggests students in 2022 showed greater growth than their academic peers in 2019.

“Now, proficiency rates are still not back to pre-pandemic levels, but this accelerated rate of growth tells us we are on the right track,” Ayala said during a media briefing on the report card.

Overall, only 27.4 percent of third graders in Illinois met or exceeded state standards in reading, down from 36.4 per-

cent in 2019.

That’s considered an important metric because third grade reading skills are a strong indicator of future success in school. A 2010 study by the Annie E. Casey Foundation found that students who are not proficient in reading by third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school than those who are proficient.

Typical questions on a third grade reading test would ask students to define a word such as “impatient” or “overwhelmed” as it’s used in a short story or article.

Likewise, eighth grade math proficiency is considered crucial to future success in what are called the STEM fields—science, technology, engineering and math.

Typical questions on an eighth grade math test would ask students to calculate how many gallons of paint are needed to cover a patio of certain dimensions or use the Pythagorean theorem to calculate the length of a trip between three cities.

Last year, only 23.1 percent of Illinois eighth graders scored proficient in math, down from 32.6 percent in 2019.

One positive sign in math performance was an increase in the percentage of eighth graders who completed Algebra I—29.9 percent, compared to 28.8 percent the prior year—although it was still lower than the 30.6 percent reported in 2019.

“This metric is critically important because taking Algebra I by eighth grade is the gateway to STEM in college,” Ayala said. “If a student does not

take Algebra I by eighth grade, then following the normal math course sequence ... that student will not make it to calculus by the end of high school. And calculus is frequently a prerequisite for STEM majors in college.”

Although the overall percentage of students scoring at or above grade level may seem low, Ayala said that Illinois has some of the most rigorous standards for proficiency in the nation. The report card also noted that the four-year graduation rate in 2022 was 87.3 percent, the highest rate in 12 years, and that 64 percent of Illinois’ 2020 graduates enrolled in a post-secondary program within 12 months of graduating.

The college enrollment rate was down significantly from the 75 percent recorded for the class of 2016. State officials said that has been a nationwide trend that was exacerbated by the pandemic.

The standardized tests are required by state and federal law. Like most states, however, Illinois received a federal waiver from the requirement in 2020, when school buildings were closed due to the pandemic, and the participation rate in

2021 was far below normal. State officials cautioned against using either of those two years as a point of comparison on most metrics.

Achievement gaps

The report card showed academic declines across all racial and ethnic groups in both English language arts and math, but there were still large gaps between those groups.

For example, across all grades, preliminary data showed 39.4 percent of white students scored proficient in English language arts compared to 12.1 percent of Black students and 18.4 percent of Hispanic students. Asian students had the highest proficiency rate by far, at 58.6 percent.

In math, 35.6 percent of white students scored proficient compared to 6.8 percent of Black students, 13.5 percent of Hispanic students and 60.2 percent of Asian students.

One area where achievement gaps appeared to be closing, however, was high school graduation rates. The four-year graduation rate among Black students rose more than 1.5 percentage points, to 79.5 per-

cent, while the graduation rate for Hispanic students rose 1.4 points, to 85 percent.

That was a major factor in the state’s overall growth in graduation rates because the rate for white students dropped half a point, to 90.4 percent.

There were also increases across the board in the percentage of ninth graders who were on track to graduate, and for Black and Hispanic students, those rates were above pre-pandemic levels.

“We know that the number one strategy to increase graduation rates is to intervene early with students who are not on track to graduate,” Ayala said. “The rate of ninth graders on track to graduate has bounced back to pre-pandemic levels after dipping in 2021.”

National trends

The Illinois report card came out the same week the U.S. Department of Education released results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP exams, often referred to as

“the nation’s report card,” and many of the trends seen in Illinois were consistent with national trends.

NAEP is administered to a representative sample of fourth and eighth grade students across the nation. In 2022, the majority of states saw average scores decline in both reading and math compared to 2019. There was also an increase in the percentage of students scoring below the NAEP “basic” level.

Illinois fared better than many states on the NAEP exam in that there was no significant difference between average scores in 2019 and 2022 for both subjects and grade levels, with scores above the national average.

“This is the nation’s gold standard report card, and this demonstrates that our investments in learning recovery serve as a national model because they are working,” Ayala said. “Now, we have much work to do, but this is an important indication that our students are on track.”

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FROM LENA'S KITCHEN



The not so skinny cook

Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Roll out the crescent dough and separate by the triangles. Cut each triangle in half to create smaller same shape triangles. Starting at the bigger end of each triangle, lay a small square of cheese, topped with a sausage, then roll up on itself. Lay on the baking sheet. Continue until all 30 pigs in a blanket are on your baking sheet. In a small bowl, combine the melted butter, ranch pack seasoning, and parmesan. Brush the rolled-up pigs in a blanket with the butter. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes or until the dough is browned and cooked through.

We continue to have some beautiful fall weather. The fields are being harvested at a record pace because there has been only a little rain. If you drive down the road, you can see the dust from the fields as they are frantically getting in this year's harvest. Be careful when driving and watch for farm machinery.

I write this column before Halloween but am gearing up for my many trick-or-treaters. I will have a full report next week. This week continues to feature fall recipes that you can try out on the people that you have eating at your house. Enjoy this week's fall cooking.

Pigs in a Blanket with Cheese Parmesan Ranch Butter

This appetizer will be a favorite at your next party. It would be a great appetizer for the holidays. It uses crescent rolls and ranch seasoning along with the little smoky hot dogs. Easy and fun is the recipe for this great party starter.

- 2 cans crescent rolls
- 30 little smoky hot dogs
- 8 slices sharp cheddar cheese, sliced and cut into fourths
- 4 T. butter, melted
- 1/2 a packet of dry Hidden Valley Ranch dressing
- 1 T. parmesan cheese, grated

Preheat the oven to 425.

Farmhouse Apple Coleslaw

My mother was a great one for adding fruit to coleslaw. Our family favorite was pineapple, but come fall when apples were in season, apples became the fruit addiction. The apples provide a great crunch to the coleslaw. If you are not a raisin lover, omit them. I would use golden raisins if adding the raisins.

- 4 C. shredded cabbage
- 1 large apple, chopped
- 3/4 C. raisins
- 1/2 C. chopped celery
- 1/4 C. chopped onion
- 1/4 C. mayonnaise
- 2 T. lemon juice
- 1 T. sugar
- 1 T. olive oil
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1/8 t. pepper

In a serving bowl, combine the cabbage, apple, raisins, celery, and onion. In a small bowl, combine the remaining ingredients. Pour over cabbage mixture and toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before serving.

Roasted Acorn Squash with Honey

I found another great acorn squash recipe to share with you. The honey makes it really special. This particular way to cook the squash is pretty easy and uses ingredients most people have in their refrigerators and cupboards.

- 2 medium acorn squash, halved lengthwise and seeded
- 2 T. unsalted butter, softened
- 1/4 C. firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
- 2 T. honey, plus more for drizzling
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1/4 t. pepper

Preheat oven to 425. Carefully trim about 1/8 inch off bottom of each squash half so squash will sit flat; place cut side up on a large rimmed baking sheet lined with foil. Using a sharp knife, carefully score flesh of squash. Rub with butter and sprinkle with brown sugar. Bake until tender and golden brown, about 55 minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes. Leave oven on. Pour off any liquid from center of each squash half. In a small bowl, stir together the cream cheese and honey. Spoon cheese mixture into center of each squash. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake until cheese is heated through, about 10 minutes. Drizzle with honey.

Florentine Spaghetti Bake

This dish is a perfect weeknight meal. It will come together quickly and has pasta and vegetable all in one. Use your own spaghetti sauce or a good one from the grocery store. If you don't want it as spicy, use regular pork sausage.

- 8 oz. uncooked spaghetti
- 1 lb. Italian sausage
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 jar (24 oz.) pasta sauce
- 1 can (4 oz.) mushrooms

- stems and pieces, drained
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 2 C. 4% cottage cheese
- 1 pkg. (10 oz.) frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- 1/4 C. grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 t. seasoned salt
- 1/4 t. pepper
- 2 C. shredded mozzarella

Preheat oven to 375. Cook pasta according to package directions. In a skillet over medium heat, cook sausage and onion, crumbling meat, until sausage is no longer pink. Add garlic; cook 1 minute longer. Drain. Stir in pasta sauce and mushrooms. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and cook until heated through, about 15 minutes.

Drain pasta. Combine in a bowl the beaten egg, cottage cheese, spinach, Parmesan, salt, and pepper. Spread 1 C. sausage mixture in a greased 9 x 13 baking dish. Top with spaghetti and remaining sausage mixture. Layer with egg mixture and mozzarella cheese. Cover and bake 45 minutes. Uncover and bake until lightly browned and heated through, about 15 minutes longer. Let stand 15 minutes before cutting.

Chicken and Dumplings Casserole

If you are looking for an easy weeknight supper, this casserole will feed your family pretty quickly. You can use canned chicken or rotisserie chicken to make it even easier. If you want to make your own dumplings instead of using the canned biscuits that will work to.

- 2 T. unsalted butter
- 1 T. oil
- 1/2 C. chopped onion
- 1 C. chopped celery
- 1 C. chopped carrot
- 1 T. flour
- 3 C. chicken broth
- 1 C. heavy whipping cream
- 1 T. chopped fresh sage or 1 t. dried
- 1 T. chopped fresh parsley or 1 t. dried

- 3 C. shredded cooked chicken
- 1/2 C. panko breadcrumbs
- 1 can of Pillsbury butter-milk Grands biscuits, cutting each biscuit into thirds

Garnish with fresh parsley. Preheat the oven to 275. Spray a 9 x 13 baking dish with cooking spray. In a large saucepan, melt butter with oil over medium heat. Add onion, celery, and carrot. Cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 6 minutes. Stir in flour; cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes. Gradually stir in broth and cream until smooth; bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes. Stir in sage and parsley.

Spread chicken in an even layer in prepared pan. Pour cream mixture over chicken. Drop biscuits over the top of the chicken. Sprinkle with breadcrumbs. Bake until biscuits are slightly browned, and filling is bubbly, about 25 to 30 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes before serving. Garnish with parsley.

Caramel Apple Cupcakes

These are yummy apple cupcakes. The caramel frosting makes them extra delicious and the applesauce makes them really moist. Enjoy these apple creations.

- Cupcakes**
- 1 stick salted butter, room temperature
- 1/4 C. sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 T. vanilla
- 1 C. applesauce
- 2 C. flour
- 1 1/2 t. baking powder
- 1 t. salt
- 1/2 t. baking soda
- 1/4 t. ginger
- 1/4 t. grated nutmeg

- Frosting**
- 1 1/2 sticks salted butter at room temperature
- 3 C. powdered sugar, sifted, plus more if needed
- 3 T. apple cider, plus more as needed
- 1/4 C. caramel sauce

Caramel sauce for drizzling. Preheat the oven to 350. Line a 12-cup muffin tin with paper liners. Beat the butter and sugar in a large bowl with a mixer on medium speed, scraping down the sides as needed, until well combined, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the eggs and vanilla and beat again, scraping until smooth, about 1 minute. Add the applesauce and mix until combined. In a separate bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, salt, baking soda, ginger, and nutmeg until light and fluffy. Add to the butter mixture and mix on low speed until just combined. Divide the butter among the muffin cups, filling each about three-quarters full; gently tap the pan on the countertop to remove an air bubbles. Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center of a cupcake comes out clean, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes in the pan, then carefully remove the cupcakes to a rack to cool completely.

Frosting: Beat the butter in a large bowl with a mixer on medium speed until completely smooth, 2 to 3 minutes. With the mixer on low speed, add the powdered sugar in 3 batches, alternating with the cider, scraping down the bowl frequently. The frosting should be smooth, thick, and creamy. Add the caramel and beat on medium speed until fully incorporated, about 2 more minutes. Adjust the consistency by beating in more cider or powdered sugar as needed. Spread frosting on the cupcakes. Drizzle with caramel sauce.

Final Thoughts

I finally got to visit an apple orchard last week. I guess I am one of the few people who has never been to a famous apple orchard. I have always taught school and worked on Saturdays (and some Sundays too), and I have never had the "orchard experience". I can now check it off my bucket list. It was eye opening and a

See KITCHEN, Page 10

FREELANCE REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS NEEDED

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Cornerstone Credit Union to host eighth annual WREX Freeport Food Drive

Cornerstone Credit Union will host the eighth annual WREX Freeport Food Drive at their facility on W Meadows Drive in Freeport on Friday, Nov. 4, 2022, from 6 a.m. until 7 p.m. WREX-TV Channel 13 will broadcast live throughout the day including their morning, noon, and evening news shows. This local effort began in 2014 when WREX became aware

that some food pantries were at risk of closing their doors due to lack of food through the Freeport Area Church Cooperative. Those Freeport pantries were able to keep their doors open because of the community's response to the food drive, and now it's an annual event.

Cornerstone has been proud to host this effort since 2017, as the need continues. People

are invited to bring their donations of in-date non-perishable food items and toiletries to the main office in Freeport at 550 West Meadows Drive on Nov. 4. The credit union hopes to match and even surpass past donations of over two tons of food and thousands in monetary donations. The Freeport Area Church Cooperative will be taking the donations for distribution to those in need.

FHN Casino VINO celebrates good friends, good wine, and a great cause

Tickets are now available for the FHN Festival of Trees Casino VINO, back in-person at 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 18 at Grand River Hall in Freeport.

Casino VINO attendees will sample a variety of wines from local vineyards and hors d'oeuvres and charcuterie while they enjoy casino-style gaming, contests, silent auction shopping, and more. A full bar, as well as

an array of non-alcoholic beverages will also be available.

"We are so excited to be planning an in-person Gala this year," said FHN President and CEO Mark Gridley, MBA, FACHE. "All proceeds from this year's event will be designated to the year-end campaign to purchase new hospital beds for FHN Memorial Hospital in Freeport."

FHN Foundation Director Al Evon has announced a special matching gift: "A very generous donor has pledged a \$250,000 matching gift, so every dollar spent on tickets, drinks, gifts, and fun at Casino VINO will, like all gifts to the year-end campaign, be doubled."

Casino VINO tickets are \$75, available now at www.fhn.org/gala2022.

Love (Continued from page 3)

can't stand alone. Without the base of ice cream, they fall flat.

The same goes for your ability to love others if you don't first love yourself.

We talk of unconditional love. When my husband first left this earth, I reflected on our great love story and made it my goal to love even better and more fully in the future. I wanted to love other people unconditionally.

But I've changed my mind—or at least my choice of words. I've come to the conclusion that the term unconditional love is sort of an unnecessary phrase and perhaps even repetitive.

All love should be

unconditional. Putting conditions on love negates it. It makes it less than love. Love, felt truly, madly, deeply from the heart is infinite and without conditions. It is love—plain and simple. Miraculous. Wonder-filled and wonderful. Infinite, expanding, without beginning or end. Love traverses time and thought. It is bigger than any of us as individuals, yet it lives individually within each of us. It encompasses us all. It is both within and without.

It just is. Now and forever. Beyond the end of "time" as we perceive it.

And that thought, I think, is unconditionally beautiful

and even (if you'll forgive me) lovely.

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

Families (Continued from page 3)

and food. There was something about working together that drew us close as a family. Everybody had their own chores each day and the hard work gave everyone a feeling of great satisfaction. When the kids grew up, they found a farm nearby and started their own family farm. It made for strong communities all across rural America.

Today, many of the small farm homesteads we see across the countryside that once were full of livestock and a bustle of activity are now just empty crumbling buildings with very little activity. The big corporate farmers roll onto their fields and make a couple hours work of what used to be weeks and weeks of fall harvest by an entire family working together. When I was in Ag class

years ago, we learned about progress and productivity and how competition drives the industry. Well, it's done the driving that's for sure and

now the family structure has paid the price just as many predicted it would. The young people grow up and move to bigger cities where there are exciting things to do and see and the average age of the American farmer keeps getting older and older each passing year. In 1978 the average age of the principal operator on the farm was 50.3 years of age. In 1992 it rose to 53.3. In 2007 it was 57.1. In 2012 it climbed to 58.3 and today the average age of the principal operator on the farm in the United States is 59.4.

It's not that I'm against large farmers. I know their progress and production help to feed the world like never before, but it's just a shame that we had to lose a wonderful way of life in the process. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy that a good leader in the church must be able to manage his won family well and see that his children obey him, and he

must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. I Timothy 3:4. It used to be easier to make this happen in the family when everyone was working together on the farm. Now it's much more difficult.

After I left the farm myself to become a teacher, my wife and I had to find things to get our family involved in that would teach them respect, hard work and teamwork. Our kids played and I coached every sport I could, and we worked together as a family every chance we could doing community and church activities. God was good to us, and our kids are raising their own families today to work together and love the Lord with all their hearts. Even though we don't all have farms to teach our children the lessons of life, we can still make it happen with a little creativity and a lot of prayer.

Until next week, God bless.

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AUCTIONEER'S NOTE: This auction has something for everyone. There will be a select online bidding catalog for this auction but hundreds of uncataloged lots to bid on live in-person, so be sure to come on out and enjoy this auction! Catalog will be uploaded to www.kitsonauctions.hibid.com.

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Markets (Continued from page 4)

to make long-term commitments to what happens on that land," Ando said.

Further complicating owner-operators' participation in carbon farming programs are multi-year contracts that don't take into account the temporal aspect of storing carbon in the soil on working ag lands.

Contracts are often unclear, for instance, about an owner-operator's obligation to the contract, the "ownership" of the stored soil carbon if

the land enrolled in the practice is sold and the duration of sequestration. Potential solutions include developing and implementing standardized, explicit contract terms that do not require long-term commitments but aim for rewarding soil carbon storage on both intermediate and permanent scales, Ando said.

Also underpinning the contract issues is a shared uncertainty by farmers toward "the long-term viability of de-

mand" for soil carbon storage in a voluntary market, according to the paper.

Because no public policy like a cap-and-trade greenhouse-gas emissions program for industrial emitters exists, demand for carbon sequestration in soil is voluntary and mostly limited to corporations seeking credits to meet environmental performance targets or consumers looking to offset their carbon-intensive activities.

The lack of national standards for defining and verifying carbon offsets and the market's constant change also

contribute to farmers' doubts about participating in a program that could be replaced by a better system, Ando said.

She added that USDA or another federal agency developing standards or certification rules "could potentially increase confidence in these contracts and increase the value of them."

A final issue and solution to carbon farming involves the financial incentive for farmers who implement a practice.

Farmers are paid between \$10 and \$40 per acre for carbon farming practices, amounts that don't come

close to outweighing the cost to implement them.

Increasing those totals and developing a scale where payments are based on storage duration—bigger payments for longer sequestration periods—would result in more participation, the paper suggests.

Ando and the researchers also point to the inability to "stack" payments for multiple environmental services, like both installing buffer strips to reduce runoff and practicing no-till to sequester carbon in soil on the same piece of land.

"If a farmer does one thing

and it reduces nutrient runoff in waterways and it also reduces greenhouse gas emissions, why not get paid for both of those services?" Ando said. "And if you only can get paid for one, then really the benefits to society are larger than what the farmer is getting paid. So, figuring out a good way to do stacking could be very helpful."

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.

PUBLIC NOTICE PEARL CITY PARK DISTRICT

The Pearl City Park District has the following vacancies for the upcoming Consolidated Election on April 4, 2023

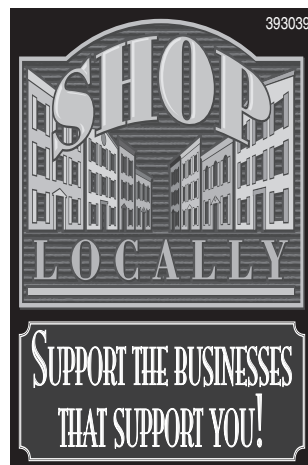
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Candidates may obtain petition packets by calling Kris Visel, the Park District's secretary, at 815-297-3817

The Park District petition must be filed with Kris Visel no earlier than Monday, Dec. 12, and no later than Monday, Dec. 19.

426867



Kitchen (Continued from page 8)

lot of fun. I got to sample apples, lots of other good stuff, and get a taffy apple. I am one of the few people on earth who doesn't really get into apple cider donuts. I hope that doesn't make me un-American! Would I go again? You bet! We are fortunate to have apple orchards in our area that raise beautiful apples.

Football playoffs have started in the area, so that means all eyes are on Friday or Saturday games. It also

means that basketball practice has started in some schools, and even junior high boys games have begun. We don't have much time left before this year ends. The dreaded time change comes at the end of this week's publication. The leaves have reached their peak in our area and are falling to the ground in buckets. I had my furnace checked and filtered, and now am ready to pay the bills for heating. Winterization is in full swing. I

am gearing up for some good fall recipes.

If you are doing some fall cooking and if you have some good vegetable, apple, or pumpkin recipes for the season, send them our way. Or if you have enjoyed this column for many years, let me know that too. You can 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.

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Applications can be picked up at Village Hall in Lena (122 E Main St, Lena, IL). To have an application emailed, please call 815-369-4016. All applications must be turned in to Village Hall by Wednesday, Nov. 16, at 4:30 p.m.

The Village of Lena is an equal opportunity employer.

Pearl City Park District Recreation Director

The Pearl City Park District has an opening for a Recreation Director to oversee and grow the park's programs. The ideal candidate will be a self-starter interested in growing with the park and growing the park's reach in the community. We are looking for someone who is energetic and engaging as well as detailed and imaginative.

The duties include but are not limited to: Managing reservations for rentals of our facilities, Working with the coordinators of our various leagues and activities to manage schedules, taking payments, and other related tasks, Working with other community groups to increase the park's offerings, General cleaning of park facilities, Reporting to maintenance staff any items that need to be repaired, Purchase and manage supplies for the park, Monitor the park's FOB access and security camera systems, Attend park board meetings and provide monthly reports

A qualified candidate will have the following attributes: Self-motivated/self-starter, Basic level abilities with office computing and software, Good people skills, particularly dealing with the public as well as with children, Be excited to create new programs and opportunities for our taxpayers to enjoy our parks, Basic mechanical and maintenance abilities a plus

This is a part-time position with full-time potential. The right candidate will earn more hours by creating more events, programs, and activities for the park. This is an ideal position for someone who loves being involved in their community and loves the opportunity to grow with a job.

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Pearl City Junior High and High School Honor Roll Awards

Highest Honor Roll

Seniors: Addison Bremmer, Aliya Fischer, Brea Musser, Nicholas Polizzi

Juniors: Kyle Niehaus, Ethan Petta

Sophomores: Natalie Greene

Freshmen: Tana Gravert, Xander Krolow

8th Grade: Eli Bremmer, Clayton Downs, Tristan Ertmer, Mackenzie Lotz, Leo Petta, Scarlett Snyder

7th Grade: Kassidy Dorty, Brogan Keltner, Porter Krolow, Dustin Martens, Marlee

McPeek, Nola Milam, Camdyn Smith

High Honor Roll

Seniors: Emma Boyer, Nathan Brinkmeier, Aiden Dampman, Jonathan Dinderman, Blane Foulker, Jordan Johnson, Cade Monks, Tanner Perdue, Laine Rosenstiel

Juniors: Jesus Bernal Zetina, Jayden Downs, Lexton Endress, Logan Freier, Marie Meyer, Miranda Posey, Alex Spahr

Sophomores: Ethan Bremmer, Kylie Campbell, Paige

Hille, Marley Joseph, Jaxsyn Kempel, Brinkley Knoup, Kendra Kuhlemeier, Paige McClaran, Taytum Mullen, Alonna Posey, Sylvia Schnoor, Adeline Smith, Talia Stewart, Lucas Tichler

Freshmen: William Birchen, Gracie Ditsworth, Teigan Dyson, Roy Hackbert, Brandon Hille, Makenzie Ihus, Kip Martens, Nakiya Pickard, Oscar Ugalde-Sanchez, Maya Youtzy

8th Grade: Parker Allen, Donna Baker, Keira Ellis, Brissia Garcia, Sherlyn Her-

andez, Braxton Kubatzke, Braylon Liebenstein, Brynlee McPeek, Mya Miller, Danica Stager, Brycen Voegeli, Lincoln Voss, Sawyer Williams

7th Grade: Braylen Bingham, Morgan Campbell, Hannah Dinderman, Colton Gronewold, Deaken Hofmaster, Samuel Howe, Spencer Manthei, Sandra Martens, Isaac Pickard, Kennedy Solt, Jayelle Spahr, Airyonna Willson

Honor Roll

Seniors: McKenzie Ev-

ans, Rozlynn Feld, Brooklyn Schreck, Seth Townsend

Juniors: Lisa Baker, Ava Bremmer, Kyleigh Gentz, Weston Gronewold, Dustin Kluck, Jacob Lieb, Rayce Mullen, Lakota Scace

Sophomores: Brady Boyer, Ayden Bratley, Kadyne Brennan, Jackson Corbin, Anna Dampman, Fallyn Endress, Myles Freedlund, Jorja Johnson, Zinnia Larson, Sydny Lower, Tomas Molto Romero, Jacob Runkle, Jared Runkle

Freshmen: Lacey Beigh-

tol, Maya Boyer, Kameron Downs, Lane Kempel, Eden Schubert

8th Grade: Brian Ayala, Lila Gerber, Chet Haas Jr, Tanner Hiestler, Jocelynn Kubatzke, Camden Miller, Nevaeh Stultz, Austin Veer

7th Grade: Alan Birchen, Jayden Bremmer, Lucas Bremmer, Nathan Buss, Miles Corbin, Brodie Dahm, Lillionna Duncan, Jesse Halverson, Bridget Hoffman, Maliani Munoz, Gemma Musser, Alexander Reed, Wade Sheffey, Easton Turrell, Elley Voss

Fatal hit and run accident in Freeport

On Saturday, Oct. 22, at approximately 2:58 p.m., officers of the Freeport Police Department responded to the 600 block of W. Stephenson Street in response to an elderly female injured in the parking lot of Fitness Lifestyles. Upon arrival, officers found the victim, identified as Mary Lamm

aged 83 of Freeport, had been struck by a vehicle leaving the parking lot. Mary Lamm was then transported to Freeport Memorial Hospital where she succumbed to her injuries.

On Thursday, Oct. 27, an arrest warrant was issued for Regina Green, aged 64 of Freeport, for the fatal hit and

run that occurred on Oct. 22. Regina Green turned herself in at the Freeport Police Department shortly after the warrant was issued. Green has been charged with failure to report an accident involving death and operating an uninsured motor vehicle. Green was booked and released on bond.

Winnebago man found dead in Seward

On Oct. 25, at 7:14 a.m., the Winnebago County Sheriff's Deputies along with several area Fire Departments were dispatched to 16100 3rd Street in Seward in reference to a male that was unresponsive on an overhead conveyor on top of the 81-foot

corn bin. Fire personnel provided medical attention to the 63-year-old male, later identified as Brian Lovett. Attempts to revive the male were unsuccessful. No foul play is suspected. No further information is available at this time.

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