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VOL. 89 • NO. 51

YOUR FREE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 13, 2023



TRENTEN SCHEIDEGGER PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Hornets off to a great start

On Wednesday, Dec. 6 the Scales Mount Hornets matched up against the Pecatonica Indians. The back-and-forth game was a match to see. While the Hornets couldn't keep up their six-game winning streak, they played a good game and reflected on how to improve as the season continues. Pictured are players Derrick Distler and Seth Birkett playing defense on a Pecatonica shooter.

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What to know about Illinois' assault weapons ban

Which guns are banned, how to file disclosures and what happens next

By Andrew Adams
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Gun owners face a Jan. 1 deadline to register their assault weapons with the state under Illinois' assault weapons law. But between lawsuits and ongoing policymaking, the exact guns, accessories and ammunition covered under the Protect Illinois Communities Act remain unclear to many gun rights advocates, who point out that the ban includes some of the most popular models in the country.

The assault weapons ban went into effect when Gov. JB Pritzker signed it in Jan-

uary 2023, immediately prohibiting the sale in Illinois of a long list of weapons and attachments. But Illinoisans who own assault weapons — a term that is itself contentious among gun advocates — can keep them, so long as they purchased them before the law went into effect and register them with the Illinois State Police before the end of this year.

At the end of November, with four weeks before the deadline, nearly 4,900 individuals had filed disclosures with ISP. Owners of now-banned firearms, accessories and ammunition face

criminal penalties if they fail to file that disclosure paperwork.

Which guns and accessories are affected?

Illinois' assault weapons ban is wide-ranging and affects a variety of firearms and accessories, most notably weapons based on the design of the AR-15. The law classifies more than 170 different models of firearm as assault weapons. The statute also lists several general types of weapons under its definition of assault weapon, including AK-type and AR-15-type rifles. It also lists AK-type, AR-type, MAC-type, Thompson-type and Uzi-type pistols. The act restricts IZHMASH Saiga 12-type shotguns. Rifles that shoot .50 caliber rounds are also regulated by the act.

But much of the confusion surrounding the law centers on the fact that it also restricts features that would classify an otherwise acceptable gun as an "assault weapon." These include thumbhole, folding, telescoping and detachable stocks, pistol grips on rifles, flash suppressors, grenade launchers, barrel shrouds that allow users to hold the barrel without being burned, and the capacity to accept ammunition belts.

Accessories that would give an otherwise unregulated firearm one or more of these features are regulated as "assault weapon attachments," and they also require a disclosure with state police. Pistols are also restricted if they have a threaded barrel, a second grip, the capacity to accept magazines outside of the grip and shoulder stocks.

Revolving cylinder shotguns are restricted as well as semiautomatic shotguns that have the capacity to accept a detachable magazine or a fixed magazine with more than five rounds.

Importantly, any firearm that has been modified with aftermarket accessories to achieve the same effect as the state's definition of "assault weapon" would still fall under the ban. This means that a collection of parts that could convert a firearm into an assault weapon—for example, an unregulated pistol and conversion kit—would be considered an assault weapon, even if the kit is unassembled.

The law also bans .50 caliber BMG rounds. While common, these are not the only type of .50 caliber ammunition. Owners of this

type of ammunition must file a disclosure with state police.

Ammunition feeding devices are also regulated by the act, but in a slightly less strict fashion than weapons. The law bans "large capacity" magazines, which it defines as being 15 or more rounds for pistols and 10 or more rounds for rifles. While banned, owners of large capacity magazines do not need to file a disclosure.

Affected gun owners must file an affidavit or face criminal penalties

Owners of weapons regulated under the act can legally keep assault weapons, now-banned accessories and .50 caliber rifles, if they owned the weapon or accessory prior to Jan. 10, 2023, when the law went into effect, and they register them with ISP. Some people, notably law enforcement officers, are exempt from the disclosure requirement.

People required to file this paperwork, called an "endorsement affidavit," can do so at the state police Firearms Services Bureau website. This is the same online portal used for concealed carry licenses and Firearm Owners Identification cards. These affidavits must be submitted electronically and submitting false information would be considered perjury. These online disclosures require the maker, model, serial number and caliber of the gun. For accessories, a description and part number are required. A date of purchase is required if that information is available.

If a gun owner moves to Illinois from a state where they legally owned firearms or accessories banned under Illinois' law, they must file an endorsement affidavit with the state police within 60 days of moving to Illinois.

This applies to owners of assault weapon attachments, even if they do not own an assault weapon. Local law enforcement agencies and the state police are responsible for enforcing the assault weapons ban in the same manner they currently enforce other regulations, such as the rules around FOID cards.

Penalties for violating the law vary. Carrying or possessing an assault weapon is a Class A misdemeanor. This is generally punishable by up to a year in jail or a fine of up to \$2,500. Manufacturing, selling, delivering and purchasing those weapons, however, is a Class 3 felony.

These are generally punishable with five to 10 years in prison and fines of up to \$25,000.

A second or subsequent possession charge is considered a Class 2 felony, which is generally punishable by three to seven years in prison and a fine of up to \$25,000. Manufacturing, possessing, selling or importing assault weapon accessories and kits is also considered a Class 2 felony. Specific cases may vary in their sentencing.

While the law bans the sale and possession of large-capacity magazines, owners do not need to file a disclosure if they had these magazines prior to Jan. 10, 2023.

For a brief period of six days this spring, an injunction temporarily halted enforcement of the assault weapons ban. Anyone who purchased a regulated weapon after Jan. 10, 2023, including during that window, is in violation of the law.

How many banned guns are there in Illinois?

As of Dec. 4, nearly 4,900 people had filed disclosures in accordance with the state's assault weapons ban. They collectively filed about 9,300 weapons disclosures, about 4,800 accessory disclosures and 87 ammunition disclosures.

Estimating how many people own the types of guns outlined by the state's assault weapons ban is nearly impossible, due to limited data collection requirements and inconsistent definitions of terms like "assault weapon" and "AR-15-style rifle." That said, some estimates do exist.

A survey conducted by Ipsos, a large market research firm, found that last year, one in five gun owners in the United States owned an AR-15 or similar gun. Estimates for gun ownership more broadly in Illinois vary, with research suggesting between 25 and 30 percent of the households in the state own

a gun. Older data suggests closer to 20 percent.

Taken together, those statistics suggest that around hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans will be impacted by the state's assault weapons ban. Despite this uncertainty, the prevalence of these guns is one of the issues at the heart of the ongoing legal battle over the constitutionality of the law.

Arguments in the federal cases that could invalidate or uphold the law have repeatedly turned to whether the guns are in "common use." Under recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings, guns in common use are generally protected under Second Amendment's right to bear arms.

State officials still settling rules, implementation

As with many state laws, Illinois' assault weapons ban has been the subject of administrative rulemaking, the process whereby the state agency responsible for implementing the law lays out the rules by which it will do so.

The state police have proposed rules that are now under consideration by an oversight committee of lawmakers. The rulemaking on the subject has been closely watched and has spun off into a series of dedicated hearings hosted by ISP to gather public input on how to execute the law.

One of the central issues at the heart of these hearings has been how precisely ISP will interpret some of the vaguer aspects of the law. This includes a final decision about exactly which items must be registered.

The law is also the subject of ongoing litigation. Several federal cases challenging the constitutionality of the law could be decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. Earlier this month, a three-judge panel on the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals issued a 2-1 opinion allowing the law to remain in effect while the cases continue.

Obituary

DELLA MARTIN

Della "Polly" M. Martin, age 90 of Freeport, IL, passed away on Thursday, Dec. 7, 2023, at Ascension St. Joseph Nursing Home. She was born June 28, 1933; the daughter of the late Earl and Viola (Bonner) Barnhart. She was a 1951 graduate of Mt. Morris High School. Della married Jim Holder on Aug. 16, 1952. She later married Burnham "Bun" Martin on April 9, 1965; he passed Sept. 5, 2011.

She began working at Structo. She later worked for Newell Co and owned her own resale shop. Following that, she worked for Eaton Enterprises and later volunteered at Contact. Della was a member of the Freeport Church of the Brethren. She enjoyed crocheting, baking, decorating, and reading. She also loved gardening and tending to flowers. Della loved entertaining around the holidays, especially at Christmas time. Most of all she loved spending time with her family.

She is survived by her children from her first marriage: Stephen (Pamela) Holder of Freeport, Holly (Norman) (Hornich) of Freeport, Linda (Ruth) Hofmaster of Freeport, and Valerie (Greg) Stocks of Apple River, IL. Her step-children: Shelby Martin, Kathleen Shaw, Carol (Michael) Chacamaty, John (Sue) Martin, and Gregg (Connie) Martin, and Russ (Heather)



Martin all of Virginia. Grandchildren: Sarah (Charles) Williams, Allison (Todd) Slama, Julie (Brian)

Alderman, Lisa McDonald, Connie (Joe) Witte, Rachel Meyers, Ed Meyers, Katie Meyers, Geoff (Liz) Stocks, and Bridgette Stocks. Step-grandchildren: Jason (Erica), Adam (Amy), Carie, Rich Jr. (Carrie), Amanda, and Stephanie (Wes). Numerous great grandchildren. Brother, Kenny (Sue) Barnhart of Texas. Sisters, Donna "Duffy" Reuter of Freeport, Karen (Jerry) Donahue of Carterville, IL. Sister-in-law, Kathleen Barnhart of South Carolina and brother-in-law, Dennis (Nancy) Martin of New York. As well as numerous nieces, nephews,

She was preceded in death by her parents; first husband, Jim Holder; second husband, Bun Martin; grandson, Adam Holder; brother, Rick Barnhart; sister, Doris "Snooky" Snapp; brothers-in-law, Bob Snapp, Bob Lizer, Carl Reuter, Donald "Russ" Martin.

Cremation rites have been accorded. Her family is planning a celebration of life at a later date. Condolences may be shared at www.walkermortuary.com.

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Veterans' Pantry in need of items

Items listed below are needed for the Veterans' Pantry in Freeport. The support of the community has been tremendous, and the pantry as well as the veterans are so grateful. Items may be brought to the American Legion Home at 314 W Main Street on Saturdays from 10 to 11 a.m. Please call 815-369-4684 to make other arrangements. The current needs for the Veterans Pantry in Freeport are bodywash (especially for men), paper towels, men's jeans (size 26, 28, 33 and 34), women's jeans (size small), and canned goods.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Little Blackhawks

Pictured are this week's Little Blackhawks. These students have been recognized by their teachers for their great behavior and excellent work. Congratulations for continuing to do great things at school!

Farm Forward: Turning last season's challenges into next season's triumphs

Join University of Illinois Extension Crop Sciences Educator Kathryn Seebruck for the first year of her series "Farm Forward: Turning Last Season's Challenges into Next Season's Triumphs". This monthly series aims to address the needs of row crop producers and will be rotated between Jo Daviess and Stephenson counties.

"No two growing seasons are the same; however, lessons learned from previous seasons can be applied in those that follow. This series aims to facilitate discussion of last season's challenges, uncertainties, and successes

and how those insights can be applied in the upcoming growing season," states Seebruck.

The series will kick off with "Pest Control Following a Drought" on Thursday, Jan. 18 at 10 a.m. at the Stephenson County Extension Office located in the Community Services Building (Bldg. R) at Highland Community College, 2998 W. Pearl City Rd, Freeport, IL 61032. This series is being offered free of charge, but pre-registration is requested by the day before each program. To register or for more information, please contact the U of I Extension

Office at 815-235-4125 or visit us online at go.illinois.edu/jsw.

The 2023 growing season was relatively dry, resulting in low disease pressure and high weed pressure. In this session, we will discuss how last season's conditions will affect this year's pest pressures as well as pest management practices to take into consideration.

Additional sessions include "What 2023 Taught us

About Fertility" on Feb. 15 at the Jo Daviess County Extension Office and "Planting for a Strong Start" on March 14 at the Stephenson County Extension Office.

If in need of reasonable accommodation to attend this program, please contact the U of I Extension Office at 815-235-4125. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet individual needs.

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OPINION



Slices of life

Being invited



By **JILL PERTLER**
Columnist

For much of my life, I've been the inviter. I enjoyed planning and inviting people to those plans.

But in the last few years, I haven't invited much of anyone anywhere. I didn't have the heart for it. I lacked momentum and (to be honest) I felt broken so I took on a rather new role.

I found myself waiting to be invited.

Not at first. At first, I didn't want to be invited anywhere. I couldn't plan or commit from today to tomorrow. I couldn't plant or commit from 5-6 p.m. It felt too big. Too overwhelming. Because it was, at the time.

But in the last few months, that's changed. My attitude has changed and I've been going places - quite literally.

Lunch and shopping with a new acquaintance. A Friday night out. An exercise class with friends. A Chinese restaurant on a holiday weekend.

Yep. I'm going places.

And it may not seem like much, but to me it is everything, or at the very least it is something. Something significant.

In all this getting out, I realized I rather like it, and I give thanks for all my new friends who have opened this window for me.

In a sense, you've brought me back to life and it's pretty awesome.

In that, I realize it feels good to be invited. It's nice.

But I'm afraid I've emanated the "don't talk to me" vibe for more than a little while. Too long, but that is what grief will do to you.

I'm sure there are people who might have invited me ... then, thought twice about it. Because maybe they assumed I wasn't ready. Or, maybe my grief was so palpable it made others uncomfortable.

Who wants to go out to dinner with someone who cries before the main course is served?

It wasn't that bad (always) but I did go through a very tough, a very dark period

and I realize I wouldn't have wanted to be around me either—at least not for long stretches. Thing is, I didn't have much of a choice. I was my dinner date seven out of seven, whether I liked it or not.

But time can be our enemy and our friend—sometimes both at once. Often both at once. Time has provided a gap between now and my loss and that gap has given me space to breath, to reflect and perhaps, even, to live.

To accept invitations. To look forward to them. To participate with joy and happy anticipation.

Thank you, to all you you, who have invited me to participate in life again. It is more, so much more, than appreciated.

Now I want to take it a step further.

I don't want to, need to, wait for an invitation (although it will always be nice).

I want to invite. I want to plan. I want to be the person who includes others.

To have fun. To plan the fun. To be the origin of the fun.

So look out, all of you who have looked out for me! I'm on the invitation warpath. I am to repay your kindness with walks, dinner out, plans for next weekend and maybe even a home cooked meal.

I can't wait to be on the other end of the invitation. On the other end of giving. It still feels a little scary, but it also feels good. To move forward. To plan. To invite.

Who knew such a little realization could feel so big?

Jill Pertler is an award-winning syndicated columnist, published playwright and author. Don't miss a slice; follow the Slices of Life page on Facebook.

Weekly connection

A warm barn on Christmas Eve

There really isn't anything quite as nice as a barn full of contented dairy cows in the winter time when it is snowy and cold outside. One of the most pleasing experiences on the dairy farm growing up was to see the cows lying down in their stanchions at the end of the evening milking all comfy and cozy. Their bellies were full of green leafy alfalfa hay, and one by one they would lie down and begin chewing their cud. Their jaws would move in a funny way side to side as they calmly and rhythmically



By **SCOTT CERNEK**
Columnist

began this post meal ritual. A cow won't chew their cud unless they are relaxed, and there was something very mesmerizing and calming about watching them perform this amazing action.

Every night before shutting

off the lights and going in for supper, we workers would take a minute or two and enjoy this picture of tranquility. If we were lucky of the ninety-six cows in the barn, all but about four or five would be lying down. And once in a great while all ninety-six would be lying down at the same after milking. When that happened it truly was a sight to behold. It was uncommon for a dairy farmer to have high blood pressure when that was the last thing they saw before ending their day and taking that long stroll back to the house with the farm dog, belly full of warm milk, walking alongside.

Legend has it that on Christmas Eve at midnight the farm animals talk to each other. We always made sure all the animals were bedded down with lots of fresh straw on Christmas Eve so that they would have good things to say to each other about their owners. Once my brother and I went out at midnight very very quietly and snuck into the haymow and listened. The cows must have

heard us because all they did was chew their cud and let out a few low moos.

Having been in the delivery room for our four children, I often wonder how Mary and Joseph were able to deliver baby Jesus out in a stable. Actually, scholars think that it was probably in a small cave where Jesus was born. He was laid in a manger the Bible says, so there must have been some animals kept in the cave. I can't imagine that it could have been as cozy as a warm dairy barn, but it was a shelter from the elements. The King of kings didn't need a fancy royal castle to enter our world. In fact, God sent His son to the earth in the most humble way possible, so that we would understand what His character was all about. Jesus said unless we humble ourselves as little children, and receive His forgiveness, we cannot know God. In a world where we strive to prove to everyone how great we are, God

See CONNECTION, Page 5

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Rock Valley Publishing is seeking freelance reporters and photographers to produce local news and photos for your hometown newspaper. Weekly stories and photos needed for Jo Daviess and Stephenson Counties. Writing and reporting experience a plus. Work from home as an independent contractor with no in-office requirement.

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The Scoop and Shopper's Guide

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Rock Valley Publishing encourages readers to reach out to the community by writing a letter to the editor.

Letters are limited to 500 words.

Authors must include their first and last name, the city or village in which they reside, and a phone number and email address where they can be

reached in case of questions.

Send letters to: scoopshopper@rvpublishing.com

Letter-writers will be limited to one letter per month except for locally elected officials, or individuals specifically associated with local village governments or entities such

as school districts, park districts or library districts.

No letters directed to a third party will be accepted for publication.

We reserve the right to edit a letter for reasons of clarity, space restrictions and libel.

AARP Illinois issues statement about Peoples Gas emergency motion

The following statement was issued by AARP Illinois State Director Philippe Largent following the emergency motion filed by Peoples Gas asking the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) to increase part of its Nov. 16 rate case ruling:

"On behalf of our 1.7 million members and all older adults across the state, AARP Illinois filed a response opposing Peoples Gas' motion. The ICC's decision, which will save Peoples Gas customers millions of dollars on their utility bills, is a monumental win for utility customers, including older adults on fixed incomes who were already struggling to keep up with rising utility bills.

"We vehemently oppose

Peoples Gas' attempt to undermine the authority and thorough analysis of the ICC's decision by trying to add an additional \$134 million in spending. AARP Illinois always supports safe, reliable and affordable energy delivery to customers, and we firmly uphold the ICC's consideration of these factors in their analysis. The excessive spending proposed, and once again requested, by Peoples Gas is a troubling display of corporate interests taking precedence over the needs and concerns of Chicago residents.

"As a formal intervenor on behalf of Illinois residents 50-plus, AARP Illinois has opposed the rate increases that benefited Peoples Gas' bottom line on the

backs of its customers from the beginning. Over the past year, we've heard from thousands of older adults, including 15,000 who signed AARP Illinois' petition, about how this increase would harm them, forcing them to make impossible choices between heating their homes, buying groceries or paying for prescriptions.

"We commend the ICC for adopting our position and also answering the pleas of thousands of older adults, putting their needs ahead of corporate greed. AARP Illinois will continue, as it has always done, to fight on behalf of ratepayers who deserve to have their voices prioritized in utility rate decisions that will affect their quality of life."

• Connection

(Continued from page 4)

says to slow down, and take a closer look at what matters to Him. Jesus had no place to lay His head, no home to call his own. He never owned anything when He walked this earth, and yet He created the entire universe. I shared an illustration on Sunday with our church that involves a long long rope that encir-

cles the earth a million times. This rope represents our life. And on the end of that rope are two short inches representing our earthly lifetime and the rest of the rope representing our lifetime for all of eternity. Why do we work so hard in those two inches to impress and achieve what the world calls success when

we have all of eternity ahead of us to enjoy the riches of God's heaven. We live like the two inches is all we have. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." This Christmas I want to consider anew the humble birth of our Savior. Until next week, God bless.

Church news

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

All are invited to worship at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 118 E. Mason St. Lena, IL for Sunday worship on Dec. 17 at 9:30 a.m. This will be the third Sunday of the Advent Season. Holy Communion will be celebrated in worship. The reading will be from John 1:6-8, 19-28. Chime practice will be at 10:45 a.m. and choir practice will be at 11 a.m.

On Wednesday, Dec. 20 Peace Corps Quilting group will meet from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. No quilting experience is necessary.

Due to recent vandalism at area churches Good Shepherd will be locked whenever there are not any scheduled activities. If you need to be in the church for any reason, please call the church office at 815-369-5552, Monday-Wednesday 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

All services will be recorded and available on the church's Facebook page and website. Please visit <http://goodshepherdlena.org/> or and Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/GSLCLenaIL> for more information. Please contact the church office at 815-369-5552 with any questions.

Salem United Church of Christ

All are welcome to join for Advent service led by Pastor Christopher Ham at Salem United Church of Christ, 8491 West Salem Road, Lena, Illinois, on Sunday, Dec. 17, 2023, at 10 a.m. The Adult Sunday School will be held prior to service starting at 9 a.m. on the lower level of the church. Children's Sunday School is held during church service at 10 a.m.

The Wednesday Breakfast Bunch will meet Wednesday, Dec. 20 at 8 a.m. at the Riverside Family Restaurant 7, 1669 Willard Drive, Freeport, IL. Everyone is welcome to join.

On Thursday, Dec. 14 at 6 p.m. we will be hosting a Movie Night to watch Polar Express. The show will start shortly after 6 p.m. and will take place in the sanctuary of the church. Please bring blankets and pillows to create a cozy experience. There will be a concession stand in the narthex with candy, popcorn, and drinks including hot chocolate! These goodies are complimentary, but if you would like to provide a donation it is greatly appreciated and will be placed towards the Christmas fund at Salem.

On Wednesday, Dec. 20 from 3:30-7:30 p.m. we will be hosting a Christmas Cookie Decorating Day. Bring along premade cookies and decorating goodies like frosting and sprinkles, and we can work together in decorating cookies and arranging goodie bags to deliver to our church members that could use extra holiday cheer. If you have any members, or friends and family in mind that could use a goodie bag, please call Hilary Fiene at 815-275-2528, and we can ensure they get one for the holidays.

On Sunday, Dec. 24 at 7 p.m. will be the Christmas Eve service. Please join us for this service as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

If interested in getting more involved in the church community, check out the monthly gatherings. Men's Night is at 6:30 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month. During this time the men playing blankets and pillows to create a cozy experience. There will be a concession stand in the narthex with candy, popcorn, and drinks including hot chocolate! These goodies are complimentary, but if you would like to provide a donation it is greatly appreciated and will be placed towards the Christmas fund at Salem.

Dolly Parton Imagination Library officially launches statewide in Illinois

By Peter Hancock
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Illinois families with infants and toddlers now have access to free children's books that can be sent directly to their home, regardless of their income. Gov. JB Pritzker last week announced the official launch of the state's partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, a program founded by the country music legend in 1995 in her home county in east Tennessee. It now sends free books every month to nearly 3 million children in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and Ireland.

"Today, I couldn't be prouder to announce that the Imagination Library is working with the state of Illinois to begin our journey to provide every child under the age of five an opportunity to receive a free book delivered to them every single month," Pritzker said at an event at the Bloomington Public Library.

Pritzker first announced in June that the state had formed a partnership with the Dollywood Foundation, Parton's philanthropic organization, after Illinois lawmakers included \$1.6 million in this year's budget to fund the state's share of the program. Other funding comes from the Dollywood Foundation and local, county-based organizations.

Since then, about 44 local programs have been operating in the state, serving roughly 4 percent of eligible children. But Dollywood Foundation executive director Nora Briggs said the goal is to reach all of the estimated 755,000 children under age 5 in Illinois.

"We know that nothing is more basic,

more essential, more foundational to a child's success in life than the ability to read," Briggs said. "The research is clear. We cannot wait until kindergarten for children to have access or exposure to books. It must happen early. It must start in the home environment. And reading at home requires books."

People who are interested in enrolling their child in the program can find their local provider on the "check availability" tab located at imaginationlibrary.com. From there, applicants submit basic information including their address, their child's name and date of birth, and the parents' information.

Once a child's eligibility is approved, they will start receiving one book each month, addressed to them. Each child within an age group receives the same monthly book. Books on the distribution list are chosen by a panel of early childhood literacy experts who review potential titles for inclusion in the distribution list.

In addition to funding the Imagination Library program this year, lawmakers also approved Pritzker's "Smart Start Illinois" initiative that will provide \$250 million this year for early childhood programs, including expanded access to preschool, wage support for child care workers, early intervention programs, and home visiting programs.

"We're making our mark on every aspect of early childhood, and working with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library literacy efforts will begin now at the earliest ages," Pritzker said. "Illinois is well on its way to solidifying our status as the number one state in the nation to raise young children."




Calvary Church of Stockton

The Community Christmas Dinner Committee announces the 37th Annual Dinner sponsored by the churches and businesses in the Stockton community. It will be held on Monday, Dec. 25, 2023, at Calvary Church of Stockton at 12 p.m. The menu will be turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, rolls, green beans, red salad, and pies.

All are invited, especially those who will not be with family on Christmas Day. Deliveries can also be made to the immediate Stockton area and pickups will be available. Please inform the church if you need a delivery and give your name, address and phone number. Requests can also be made by calling Elaine Schlichting at 815-947-3795 or Calvary Church at 947-2414 on Christmas Day.

Joy to the World!

Schapville Zion Presbyterian Church
635 E. Schapville Road
Elizabeth, IL 61028
www.schapvillezion.org



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

448302

Scales Mound falls to Pecatonica in heated 1A matchup

By Trenten Scheidegger
CORRESPONDENT

The Scales Mound Hornets got off to an electric 6-0 start to their 2023-2024 boys basketball season. With victories over River Ridge, Dakota, and a pair of tough Wisconsin teams in Shullsburg and Belleville, the Hornets had already proven themselves early on.

The six-game winning streak set them up for what could possibly be their toughest test of the entire season, as the Hornets traveled to face off with the Pecatonica Indians on Wednesday, Dec. 6. The Hornets came into the matchup as the sixth ranked team in Illinois 1A, while the Indians were just ahead of them as the third ranked team. The Pecatonica and Scales Mound communities packed the Indians' gym, but even members of surrounding communities had to come watch this one.

The first quarter met everyone's expectations and then some. There were nine lead changes in the first quarter alone. Early on, it was Seth Birkett who had the hot hand for the Hornets. Scales Mound's first points of the game came by way of a Birkett three pointer. In the next possession, Birkett hit a tough layup to put the Hornets up 5-4.

After Pecatonica regained the lead, Max Wiene hit a physical shot of his own to give the Hornets a 7-6 lead. Then, Thomas Hereau hit his first bucket of the game as Scales Mound went up by three. A pair of Pecatonica threes would put Pecatonica back in the lead. That was the story of the first quarter. It was back and forth from start to finish, but the Indians eventually took an 18-15 lead into the second.

Early in quarter two, Kaden Deurr hit a jump shot to bring



Hornets shake hands with the Indians following their matchup.

TRENTEN SCHEIDEGGER PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

the Hornets within one. The Scales Mound defense forced multiple turnovers, including back-to-back turnovers in the second. They were unable to take advantage of the opportunities on the offensive end, however. Despite the Indians racking up six turnovers early in the second, the Hornets were unable to string much together.

Eventually, Evan Cogan hit a free throw to tie the game at 18-18. Once again, Pecatonica had an answer as they drilled another three-pointer. Later, Cogan hit a fastbreak layup to put the Hornets up 22-21.

Things continued to be back and forth through the rest of the first half. At one point, Hereau put up six points in under two minutes, which put the Hornets up 26-25. In the closing moments, Derrick Distler hit a layup to bring the Hornets within one. A buzzer beater by Pecatonica would leave Scales Mound trailing 33-30 at the break.



Thomas Hereau attempts a free throw.

TRENTEN SCHEIDEGGER PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

The second half didn't go the Hornets' way. After keeping things close in the first half, the Indians quickly jumped out to a 45-35 lead in the third. The Hornets struggled mightily at the free throw line, missing nine attempts in the third quarter alone.

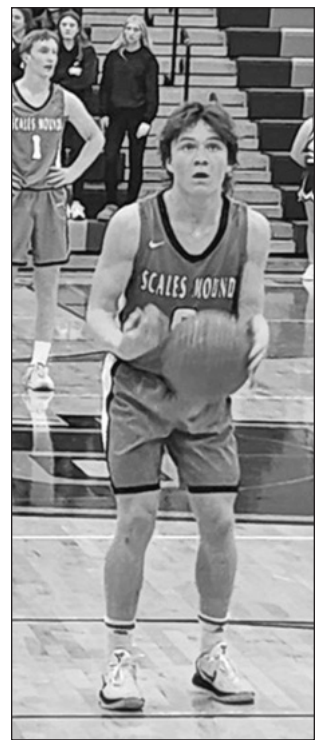
In the fourth quarter, Hereau began to attack the Pecatonica defense. A pair of pull up jumpers by Hereau cut the Pecatonica lead to single digits. It was too little, too late though, as Pecatonica managed to hold on for a 70-54 victory over Scales Mound.

Hereau led the way for the Hornets with 20 points in the loss. Following the game, Scales Mound Head Coach Erik Kudronowicz spoke about what the Hornets can take away from a matchup like this. "We have to knock those down," Kudronowicz shared when talking about the missed free throws in the third. "If you're going to win big games in December, there's things to work on. That's definitely something to work on, but when we get to February basketball, you have to knock down those free throws. That's how you survive and advance, so definitely some things to take away from this," the Scales Mound coach added.

One player that stood out all night for the Hornets was point guard Evan Cogan. Kudronowicz spoke about Cogan and what is an inspir-

ing story. "As a freshman, before the season even started, he tore his ACL in his right knee. Sophomore year, five games into his JV season, he tore his other ACL and was out for the season. Last year, he came back with two brand new ACLs and was just learning his way with the varsity. He worked hard in the weight-room, worked hard just learning his way. For him to take over this year as the leader of the team, I think he has done tremendous because of how he leads and how he attacks," Kudronowicz explained.

On Hereau, who is undoubtedly the number one option for Scales Mound, Kudronowicz had a lot to say. Hereau began to take over late in the game, but it was out of reach by then. The Scales Mound coach spoke about how Hereau is going to have to attack in those moments when the team needs a bucket. "That's the learning curve. Some of those first six games, that hasn't had to happen necessarily. I said that in a couple of the timeouts, and that's when you saw him start to take over. It's just the process of the season, I think you will see that the next time we play, he's going to be a little bit more aggressive earlier and maybe be a little bit more assertive in the offense and then start to distribute. We need that to happen if we are going to be better on the offensive side," Kudronowicz



Evan Cogan prepares to attempt a free throw.

explained.

Despite the loss, the Hornets and their head coach walked out feeling good about where they were. "First of all, the atmosphere. Second of all, it's the competition. You're playing Pec, I think them and us are arguably two of the best 1A teams in the entire north-central Illinois part. You went toe to toe with them pretty much,

See LOSS, Page 7



The Hornets meet during a timeout.

TRENTEN SCHEIDEGGER PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Notice of Proposed Property Tax increase for Oneco Township Cemetery Association (OTCA)

A public hearing to approve a proposed property tax levy increase for the Oneco Township Cemetery Association for 2023 will be held on December 20, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Oneco Township Garage.

Any person desiring to appear at the public hearing and present testimony to the taxing district may contact: James Setterstrom, Supervisor at P.O. Box 28 Orangeville, IL 61060, (815) 789-3104.

The total property taxes extended or abated for 2022 were \$381.91. This represented five percent (.05) of the 2021 levy of \$7629.78.

The total estimated property taxes to be levied for 2023 are \$7629.78. This represents a 2000 percent increase over the previous year, but a return to the 2021 levy amount.

(Published in The Shopper's Guide Dec. 13, 2023)

448270

Wildcats win four in a row before falling to Eastland

By Trenten Scheidegger
CORRESPONDENT

After getting off to a 1-2 start to the 2023-2024 boys basketball season, the River Ridge Wildcats caught fire. Four wins later and the Wildcats saw themselves sitting in a good spot at 5-2. This was perhaps a much better start than even the Wildcats themselves expected.

Ahead of the season, River Ridge head coach Jeremy Knauer stressed the importance of development throughout the year. Although Knauer acknowledged the team's potential, he also pointed out the fact they were returning with only one starter as George Winter is set to miss the year with a shoulder injury. Coming off a down year and losing one of your best players, the Wildcats were hoping to reach their full potential by the end of the year.

River Ridge may be ahead of the curve, however. After picking up victories over Polo, Black Hawk, Dakota, and Milledgeville, the Wildcats began to exceed their own expectations. That's not to say the Wildcats and Knauer didn't expect to win, but they've already proven themselves as a competitive varsity team.

Their winning streak be-

gan on Nov. 28 when they faced off with the Polo Marcos. This was a battle that came down to the wire as the momentum shifted back and forth. After going into halftime trailing 28-22, the Wildcats came out strong in the third quarter. There, they outscored Polo 23-7 in a game deciding moment. River Ridge went on to win by a score of 58-50.

Seth Nicholas led the way for River Ridge with 20 points on the night. Both Ethan Walters and Joe Winter finished with 10 points as the Wildcats had three players in double figures. Damon Dittmar was next up with eight. It was also a double-double performance for Nicholas who finished with 15 rebounds.

A few days later, the Wildcats hit the road as they traveled to face off with the Black Hawk Warriors of Wisconsin. It was a different format with Wisconsin teams playing two full halves, rather than four separate quarters. River Ridge still found a way to come out on top.

The Wildcats dominated the first half as the offense was firing. As a team, the Wildcats shot over 40 percent from the field. Dittmar led the way in scoring with 17 points, hitting eight of his 19 attempts. Most of those miss-

es came from three, however, as he hit just one of his eight attempts from range. Walters was next up as he finished with 13 points, while Nicholas had nine. Nicholas hit a pair of three pointers and led the way in rebounds with six.

River Ridge returned home on Dec. 5 when they played host to the Dakota Indians. At the time, Dakota held a record of 3-3. Just a couple weeks prior, the Wildcats fell to Dakota 52-47. The Indians would prove to be another tough test in the young season for the Wildcats.

Early on, River Ridge struggled offensively. By the end of the first, Dakota nearly doubled them up as the Indians held a 15-8 advantage. The Wildcats came out like a new team in the second. River Ridge outscored the Indians 19-4 in the second as they had another momentum shifting quarter. By the half, the Wildcats had already completed the comeback as they took a 27-19 lead into the break.

River Ridge outscored the Indians in both the third and fourth quarters as they went on to win by a score of 52-40. This time it was Winter who led the team in scoring with an incredibly efficient night. Winter hit eight of his 11 shots for 17 points, to go

along with a team-leading nine rebounds. Dittmar was next up with 16 points and six rebounds. Walters finished the day with eight points, while leading the team in assists with three.

On Dec. 6 the Wildcats would return home for as they played host to the Milledgeville Missiles. It was the fourth consecutive victory for River Ridge as they beat the Missiles 61-43. Many coaches stress the importance of the closing quarter of the first half and the opening quarter of the second half. River Ridge dominated those quarters, outscoring Dakota 46-31 in the second and third.

The Wildcats had four in double figures once again as Winter led the team in scoring with 19. Dittmar was next up with 12, while Walters had 11 and Nicholas had 10. It was another all-around performance for the Wildcats as they continue to score in a multitude of ways.

All good things must come to an end, however, and the Wildcats' streak did just that on Dec. 8. That day, River Ridge fell to Eastland 60-39 as their overall record dropped to 5-3 on the year. The Wildcats will look to keep their early success rolling on Dec. 14 when they play host to Belmont at 7 p.m.

Around the Northern Hills



Annette Eggers

What would Christmas be like without our country's strong agricultural base? The first thought that comes to mind is all of the great food that we celebrate holidays with, but without agriculture, Christmas would be different in many ways. Agricultural products touch our daily lives in every way. And that's never more evident than during the Christmas season. Most of us don't have a place to cut down our own Christmas tree.

The Christmas tree, if you have a traditional Christmas tree, goes back to a Christmas tree farmer.

It's a little easier to connect the dots between agriculture and the great food that we enjoy during the holidays. You get a ham or a turkey, it goes back to the farmer raising the turkeys or the hogs. When you bake, whether it be bread or cookies, whatever you use has an agricultural base and had to come from a farmer.

Ag producers also deserve a lot of credit for many of the gifts we give and receive at Christmas. That belt that you get as a gift, boots, or shoes goes back to the leather of a beef farmer. The shirts, pants, or dresses that you get go back to the farmer that raises cotton. Even some toys have roots in agriculture. So, whether it's that Christmas Day turkey your family is enjoying or the gifts we share with one another during this special time, it all relates back to agriculture.

Scholarships available

As we are nearing Christmas break for students, make sure that they are working on scholarships! The Jo Daviess County Farm Bureau Foundation has scholarships available. We again have two different scholarships for those students majoring in an agricultural related field. The first scholarship is geared specifically to Highland Community College Ag students. High School Seniors or those already enrolled at HCC can apply.

The second scholarship is a general scholarship for any post-secondary school. For this scholarship, the student needs to be currently in their first year of college. This scholarship is only available to Jo Daviess County Farm Bureau members and their children. You can find the application on our website at <https://jodaviesscfb.com/scholarships/>. Applications are due March 1.

Do you know a graduating senior or college student? The IAA Foundation just announced the lineup for the 2024 IAA Foundation Scholarships. This includes 95 scholarships totaling \$177,001. We have had several winners from Jo Daviess County in the past, so I would encourage anyone interested to mark Jan. 1 on their calendar so they don't miss this great opportunity. The link will be live for the IAA Foundation website until Jan. 1.

Stay connected

Thank you to all of our current fans who "like" us on Facebook. We appreciate all your support! We currently have more than 2,000 likes on Facebook, but we would like your help to get to keep growing. Please encourage your friends to like us so they can stay up to date on all of our events, activities, and member benefits. You will find information about our upcoming events as well be able to check out our recent posts. Check us out at www.facebook.com and share us with your friends. You can also follow us on Instagram. Search [jdcfarmbureau](https://www.instagram.com/jdcfarmbureau) to get connected with us.

Family Farm Signs

Its that time of year that we are all thinking of what to get that hard-to-buy-for person for Christmas. Why not get them a "This is a Family Farm" sign? The signs are 17.5" X 23" and cost \$30 and are available at the farm bureau office in Elizabeth.

Farm Fun Fact

In the 17th and 18th centuries in Germany, people used to hang their Christmas trees from the ceilings in their homes.

Warren woman entrepreneur defies odds to establish successful marketing venture

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic when businesses faced unprecedented challenges, 25-year-old Lydia Smith of Warren not only weathered the storm but emerged as the proud owner of Modern Social Creations, a thriving marketing business.

Modern Social Creations, owned by Smith, specializes in comprehensive social media management. However, the company's expertise extends far beyond, offering diverse tasks such as email campaigns, logo design, website development, creation of both physical and digital marketing materials, and creative consulting services.

During the peak of the pandemic when businesses worldwide dealt with closures, Smith made a bold decision to embark on an entrepreneurial journey. Despite the risks, she found a niche in the market and carved out a space

for her business to flourish. Central to Smith's approach is her commitment to fostering connections within the community and supporting the growth of small-to-medium-sized enterprises. She firmly believes in the philosophy that "the way to achieve your own success is to be willing to help somebody else get it first." This ideology has guided her throughout her business endeavors and continues to be a driving force behind Modern Social Creations.

Reflecting on her entrepreneurial journey Smith shared, "If it wasn't for the initial support I received when I first started my business, even on projects where I was paid as little as \$25 for a service I didn't even offer, I wouldn't be where I am today." Her gratitude towards those who believed in her during the early stages of her business is what motivated her to become where she is

today. Smith welcomes inquiries, encouraging individuals and businesses to reach out for Modern Social Creations marketing services. Smith can be reached at 815-821-1734 or via email at modernsocialcreations@gmail.com.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Warren welcomes Lydia Smith and her marketing company, Modern Social Creations, to the community. Smith specializes in comprehensive social media management while fostering a community connection with her clients.

• Loss (Continued from page 6)

other than nine missed free throws in the third quarter. There are things we can work on, so that's exactly what we are doing. We are going to take all of those negatives and turn those into positives. So, when we are in situations like that, against somebody else, maybe it's two weeks from now, maybe it's a month from now, maybe it's against Pec in the MLK tournament. Heck, maybe it's against Pec in the sectional round.

That's why you play those games early. I guarantee if the roles were reversed, Coach Heisler would be saying the same things," Kudronowicz shared.

For the Hornets, they will be just fine. With a long season ahead, they have plenty of time to work out the kinks, and they remain one of the top teams in Illinois 1A. On Dec. 16 the Hornets will continue their run when they play host to the Fulton Steamers at 3 p.m.

Stephenson County Farm Bureau news

By Victoria Hansen

Over the weekend of Dec. 2-5 one of my favorite Farm Bureau events happened. It was the 2023 Illinois Farm Bureau Annual Meeting. I have always enjoyed this event even when I was just a kid watching older cousins participate in Discussion Meet. This year was no different. Members from both Carroll and Stephenson Counties

traveled to the Palmer House in Chicago for this year's event.

Those who attended the conference participated in micro talks, general sessions, Young Leader awards program and even a concert where Lonestar performed. Farm Bureau delegates voted on the policies that will make up our policy book for the upcoming year. Additionally, Il-

linois Farm Bureau members elected a new President, Brian Duncan of Ogle County and a new Vice President, Evan Hultine, of Bureau County. Members celebrated and thanked retiring Illinois Farm Bureau President Richard Guebert. Visit the Facebook pages of Illinois Farm Bureau, Carroll County Farm Bureau, or Stephenson County Farm Bureau to see pictures.

Carroll County Farm Bureau offers Members Health Screenings/Blood Draw:

On Friday, Jan. 19 from 6 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. at the Carroll County Farm Bureau office you're invited to take part in a preventative health screening with a three-panel blood draw for \$100 for the basic package, a fraction of what you would likely pay out of pocket at a doctor's office. The Preventative Health Screening package for \$100 includes Full blood draw, CMP, CBC & Lipid panels, Cholesterol blood sugar, protein counts, electrolytes, liver enzymes, blood cell counts and much more! Blood Pressure checks will also be given. Participants will receive the results within three weeks. The blood draw is on par with standard draw at doctors' office. Appointments are required and must be scheduled in advance. To schedule please call Thrive Wellness at 309-550-9172.

Stephenson County Dairy Industry Leaders Recognized for service

The Illinois Milk Producers Association, during its 2023 annual awards program, recognized two farmers who showcased leadership, stewardship and excellence in the dairy industry.

Robert Miller of Stephenson County is the recipient of the 2023 Dairy Industry Service Award. This award recognizes an Illinois individual who has shown exemplary service and benefit to the state's dairy industry. Miller grew up on his family's rural dairy farm in Quebec, Canada, the youngest of nine children. He fondly remembers exhibiting cattle with his dad and landing first place in the Canadian national 4-H dairy judging competition. With few opportunities locally to put his skills to use, in 1954 Miller, at the age of 22, moved to Antioch, Illinois, to work at Ravenglen Farm, thus beginning a long career in the Illinois dairy industry. Miller worked at various prestigious farms in the "milkshed" of Chicago before taking a job with the Northern Illinois Breeding Cooperative. He started as an A.I. manager and was later promoted to the NIBCo promotions manager, where he simultaneously photographed cattle throughout the country. During this time, he and his wife, Kaye, raised five children and began renting a farm. During his photography travels and on one special trip back to Canada, Miller purchased a cow named Roxy that would change his life forever. Roxy went on to score Ex 97, make 200,000 lbs. of milk in her lifetime, be named Queen of the Breed (twice), International Cow of

the Century, named number one in the Top 10 Cows of the Century and have more than 1,500 excellent female descendants in an unbroken maternal line.

As a result of his work with Roxy, Miller became interested in embryo transfer. In the 1980s, Miller and his colleagues pioneered new technologies in non-surgical embryos transfer, making it more practical and widely available. Miller was active in the Holstein Association and created the Breeder's Majority Group to promote a return to more balanced breeding. In 2006, he purchased a new farm in Orangeville, Ill. and began passing his knowledge onto the next generation. He remains a fixture ringside at Holstein shows and conventions.

The 2023 Dairy Sustainability Award recognizes an Illinois dairy farm or dairy farmer who has made outstanding contributions toward innovative technologies and best management practices to improve environmental stewardship and economic viability. This year's award recognizes the Harre family of Wilra Farms in Nashville, Washington County. Wilra Farms is a fifth-generation family farm founded in 1874 and operated by the Harre Partners: Doug, Curt, Clint, Nick, Lucas and Matt. The families all work together to create a sustainable and enjoyable experience, not only for the workers, but for the cows as well. The family recently updated their operation by installing a 44-cow Waikato rotary milking parlor which grants them the ability to increase their herd size to 550. The new parlor allows for a productive and streamlined process by reducing labor and improving efficiencies. An additional upgrade to their facility to improve cow comfort and increase milk production is an all-seasons hybrid ventilated freestall barn. The barn uses a programmable logic controller to control fan speeds, curtain movements and sprinkler times based on temperature-humidity indices. The hybrid nature of the barn allows it to operate via natural ventilation outside of the summer months to save on electricity. Keeping the cows clean and comfortable in a relaxed environment is a focus for the Harre family. That's why manure removal is also important. The dairy has a three-stage lagoon system which recycles water, sand, and manure from the barn flush to be used for future flushes, bedding and crop nutrients. These examples are just an overview of why the Harre family is so deserving of the sustainability award.

For additional information,

contact the Illinois Milk Producers Association by calling 309-557-3703, or emailing contact@illinoismilk.org.

Illinois Farm Bureau Members Elect New President, Vice President and Board Members

Illinois Farm Bureau® (IFB) announced today the election of Brian Duncan a grain and livestock farmer from Polo, Ogle County, as the organization's 16th president, and Evan Hultine, a grain farmer from Princeton, Bureau County, as vice president. They will each serve a two-year term at the helm of the organization. Four new members were also elected to serve two-year terms on the IFB Board of Directors.

IFB is a nonprofit, membership organization directed by farmers who join through their county Farm Bureau. IFB's 329 voting delegates elected these new leaders during the organization's annual meeting in Chicago. "This organization stands on the shoulders of giants – our farmer members – who have come before and plotted a course for this organization," said Duncan. "I look forward to navigating and charting that course along with them, our county Farm Bureaus and our board of directors into the next chapter. It is an incredible privilege to work alongside the team we have at IFB."

In his capacity as IFB president, Duncan is also president of COUNTRY Financial, Illinois Agricultural Service Company and chair of the IAA Foundation.

Previously, Duncan served as IFB vice president. He also served as president of the Ogle County Farm Bureau (CFB) from 2004-2017, and on the American Farm Bureau Federation's (AFBF) Swine Advisory Committee 2003-2006, National Pork Producers Council Price Discovery Task Force, Ogle County Pork Producers board of directors and the IFB Young Leaders Committee from 1990-1994. He was the IFB Discussion Meet winner in 1990 and Young Leader Achievement Award winner in 1999.

Duncan is a graduate of Sauk Valley Community College and an active member of Forrester Grove Presbyterian Church. He and his wife, Kelly, raise corn, soybeans, wheat, pigs and cattle on their farm near Polo; they have four children. Their son, Levi, and daughters, Sarah and Emma, are all part of the farming operation. Their youngest daughter, Molly, is a technician and crew leader for the Nature Conservancy Nachusa grasslands near Rochelle.

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JESSICA TESSENDORF PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

A Christmas wish

Children tell Santa and Ms. Claus what they want for Christmas at the Breakfast with Santa event held at the Lena Fire Department.



JESSICA TESSENDORF PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Families enjoy breakfast as part of the holiday event.

Panthers battle back in late 2023-2024 season opener

By Trenten Scheidegger
CORRESPONDENT

Every year there are teams that get a late start to their 2023-2024 winter sports seasons. When a fall sport has a deep postseason run, practices and games for the early winter schedule are often delayed or canceled. If there is anyone who should be plenty experienced in getting a late start to their year, it's the Lena-Winslow boys basketball team.

With the football team maxing out their games in each of the last three seasons, the Panthers are used to getting a late start to their annual boys basketball seasons. The same was true this year when Le-Win didn't play their first game until Monday, Dec. 4. Not only was it their first game, but it came against a solid Durand Bulldogs team that was off to a 4-2 start on the year. With the game being played in Durand, the Bulldogs had six games of experience and home court advantage on their side.

It didn't take long for both offenses to pick up, but it was clear the Bulldogs were more comfortable early on. In the first quarter, Durand sunk five three-pointers on their way to an early advantage. Cobryn Lynch and Cohen Goeke each hit first quarter threes for the Panthers as well. Lynch had five points in the opening quarter as he helped the Panthers keep pace as they went into the second trailing 19-15.

The second quarter remained fairly even. Durand went to work down low with their post players, while the Panthers got to the free throw line. Lynch added another four pointers in the second quarter, while Jaylen Rakowska added four of his own, including a pair of free throws. Eventually, the Panthers went into halftime tied with Durand at 29-29.

In the second half, it looked like the Bulldogs were going

to pull away. Le-Win had a sloppy third quarter as multiple turnovers led to a big run for Durand. Coming out of the break, a couple of big three pointers led to a 13-4 run for Durand. It wasn't until later in the third when Quinn Rodebaugh hit a tough putback, that they cut into the Durand lead. The Panthers built some late momentum with a Gage Dunker layup and an exciting block from Rakowska. Still, at the end of three, the Panthers found themselves trailing 47-38.

At one point, the Panthers were down by 10 points. In the third quarter, Durand appeared to take all the momentum as it looked like their experience was going to prevail in this one. The fourth quarter featured another massive shift in momentum, however.

To start the fourth, Michael Mowery sunk a three-pointer that would bring the Panthers within six. The Panther defense began to stand out as they kept the Bulldogs off the board for the first five minutes of the quarter. It was just enough time for their offense to get going as Rakowska eventually drilled a corner three to cut the lead to 48-44. On the next possession, Mason Spidahl got physical down low as he put up a pair of tough layups to tie the game 48-48 with just thirty seconds left.

A foul on the other end would allow Durand to go up 50-48 with just 12 seconds on the clock. Those final 12 seconds felt like an eternity, but the Panthers found themselves with a chance to inbound the ball on Durand's end with just two seconds remaining. They gave it to the hot hand as Rakowska caught the pass on the right side of the paint. While spinning and all in one motion, Rakowska went off the glass, tying the game 50-50 with a buzzer beater shot.

The overtime period was all



TRENTEN SCHEIDEGGER PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Coach Benson and the team discuss strategies during a timeout.

Le-Win. The Panthers got to the line six times in the extra period, hitting six of their 11 attempts. Mowery, Rodebaugh, and Rakowska each had three points in the overtime period as the Panthers pulled away with a 62-55 comeback victory.

The Panthers were led by Rakowska and Spidahl, who each finished the game with 13 points. Eight of Rakowska's points came in the fourth quarter or later. Lynch was next up with 11, while Rodebaugh had nine.

Following the victory, Le-Win head coach Kyle Benson spoke about his thoughts on the team's performance. "The first game went about the way you might expect it to go. Some pretty good stuff, and some not so good stuff. We showed some mental toughness during the comeback in the fourth quarter, and did some really nice things in the 1-3-1 zone to create some turnovers. Durand

See PANTHERS, Page 10



TRENTEN SCHEIDEGGER PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Lena Winslow celebrates a victory over Durand in the season opener.



TRENTEN SCHEIDEGGER PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Jaylen Rakowska lines up his free throw attempt.



TRENTEN SCHEIDEGGER PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Jake Schumacher attempts a free throw.

•Panthers (Continued from page 9)

is a very good team, so we felt good about getting a win in their place. It won't be easy when we see them again in January," Benson said.

Benson also spoke about some of the guys who stepped up in the comeback effort. "Mason and Jaylen gave us a big spark in the fourth quarter at both ends of the floor. They are both capable of doing that, as are many other members on the team. We are a relatively inexperienced group, so it was encouraging to see us find a way

to win in a tough environment," Benson shared.

The Panthers went on to have another tough road battle the very next day as they traveled to face off with the Fulton Steamers. Le-Win found themselves trailing early on and they were never able to complete the comeback like they did the night prior. Rakowska and Lynch both led the team with 11 points, while Koby Kearns finished with seven. Ultimately, the Panthers fell 38-34, dropping their early record to 1-1.

•News (Continued from page 8)

Hultine has served as Bureau CFB president since 2017. He previously served as Bureau CFB Young Leader chair, IFB Young Leader Committee member 2013-2016, IFB Young Leader chair 2016-2017 and AFBF Issues Advisory Committee member 2017-2021. He is a recipient of the 2022 IFB Young Leader Achievement Award. In 2023, he placed third in the AFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers Achievement Award competition. He holds a bachelor's degree in horticulture from University of Illinois.

Hultine is a sixth-generation farmer in Princeton, where he grows corn, soybeans and seed corn. "For just as our crops flourish with proper care, so does an organization thrive when it nurtures and invests in its members," Hultine said during his candidate speech to the delegate body. "Whether you know it or not, you've been investing in me for many years now. Now you're cashing in on your investment in me to see the policies, the values and the vision that resonate with each of you and to create the Illinois Farm Bureau that you want to be a partner with."

IFB Board Directors Elected

New IFB Board directors are LuAnn Matejcek of Will County, Rick Edwards III of Adams County, Paul Beisiegel of St. Clair County and John Howard of Jefferson County. Matejcek will represent District 5, which includes Cook, DuPage, Will, Kendall, and Grundy counties. She has served on the Will CFB board of directors since 2019. She has also served as Will CFB secretary and a delegate to IAA. She is a county Farm Bureau certified director and a member of the Order of Eastern Star. Matejcek farms alongside her husband, Steve; brother-in-law, Mark; and children, Stephanie and Shane, in Homer Glen. They raise corn, soybeans, hay, cattle, hogs and chickens. She holds a bachelor's degree in physical education from George Williams College. Ed-

wards III will represent District 9, which includes Hancock, McDonough, Adams, Schuyler and Brown counties. He has served on the Adams CFB board of directors since 2009, including as president 2013-2019. Edwards farms in Quincy, where he grows corn, soybeans and alfalfa hay. He also helps his brothers, David and Greg Edwards, on their dairy farm. He holds a master's degree in education and a bachelor's degree in agriculture education, both from the University of Illinois. Beisiegel will represent District 16, which includes Clinton, Monroe, Perry, Randolph, St. Clair and Clinton counties. He has served as St. Clair CFB president since 2014, vice president 2009-2014, and has held a position on the board of directors since 1998. Beisiegel farms alongside his father and two brothers in Freeburg, where they grow corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa hay. He holds a bachelor's degree from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, and an associate degree from Bellevue Area College. Howard will represent District 17, which includes Edwards, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Wabash, Wayne and White counties. He has served as Jefferson CFB president since 2021. He also served as president from 2016-2018 and vice president 2013-2015 and 2019-2021. Howard grows corn, soybeans, wheat and sorghum in addition to raising cattle alongside his wife, Nancy, and their children in Texico. He holds an associate degree from Rend Lake College.

About Illinois Farm Bureau

The Illinois Farm Bureau is a member of the American Farm Bureau Federation, a national organization of farmers and ranchers. Founded in 1916, IFB is a non-profit, membership organization directed by farmers who join through their county Farm Bureau. IFB has a total membership of more than 364,452 and a farmer membership of 75,959. IFB represents three out of four Illinois farmers.

Lady Wolves split games with Pecatonica, Durand

By Trenten Scheidegger
CORRESPONDENT

The Pearl City Wolves got off to a rough start in their 2023-2024 girls basketballs season. After getting off to an 0-5 start, they picked up their first win of the season in a 48-38 victory over North Boone. Despite dropping their next matchup in a 47-13 loss to Amboy, the Wolves refused to let another losing skid happen as they quickly bounced back against the Forreston Cardinals.

They did so on the road with the Wolves traveling to face off with the Cardinals on Nov. 29. At the time, the Wolves were just 1-6, while the Cardinals were winless on the year. It was a low-scoring affair, but Pearl City came out on top with a score of 29-20.

The Wolves have shown improvement recently. After starting the year 0-4, Pearl City went 3-2 over their next five games played. That includes a tough matchup with the Pecatonica Indians and a victory

over the Durand Bulldogs.

On Dec. 5 the Wolves hit the road to Pecatonica to face off with the Indians. Pecatonica is one of the top teams in the NUIC, and they continued to show that in their matchup with the Wolves.

Early on, Pecatonica jumped out to a huge advantage as the Wolves found themselves trailing 19-3. With just two points in the second quarter, the deficit grew even larger as Pearl City went into the break trailing 25-5.

In the end, the Wolves fell to a very tough Pecatonica squad by a score of 45-22. Despite the loss, the Wolves saw some positives in the second half. Fallyn Endress, who went scoreless in the third, put up seven points in the fourth. Endress led the team in total scoring with 12, including a pair of three pointers. Danica Stager and Ava Bremmer each had four in the loss.

Facing the possibility of a losing streak again, the Wolves were faced with another tough

matchup as they played host to a 4-3 Durand Bulldogs team. Early on, the Bulldogs proved to be a solid opponent for the Wolves. A big second half for Pearl City would prove to be the difference in this one, however.

From the jump, it was a low-scoring game. The first quarter featured just four total points. Bremmer scored Pearl City's two points with a pair of free throws. The Wolves' offense would pick up in the second quarter.

Pearl City found success at the line in the first, and that continued in the second. Endress, Stager, and Kendra Kuhlemeier each got to the line in the second, where they hit three of their six attempts. Stager and Kady Miller each hit baskets in the quarter as well. Despite the slow start, both offenses came out and put up 11 in the second as the Wolves and Bulldogs went into the break tied 13-13.

The Wolves had one of their best performances of the

year in the third quarter. Endress, who had just one point in the first half, went off for 13 points in the quarter. Endress hit a pair of three pointers, including one late in the quarter. Stager also picked up momentum with a trio of baskets as the Wolves combined for 22 points in the third. Durand didn't have the offense to keep up as the Wolves took a 36-18 lead into the fourth.

At that point, the clock was the only thing standing between the Wolves and their second victory. Endress and Stager put the finishing touches on as Pearl City defended their home court with a 42-33 victory. Endress led the team in scoring with 16, but Stager was right behind her with 15. Bremmer added four in the victory.

The victory improved Pearl City's record to 3-7 on the year. They were 3-2 over their last five, however, as they prepared to play part in their own Pearl City Tournament, from Dec. 9 to Dec. 14.



SYDNEY ROGERS PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Community support and generosity are bright this holiday season

The Veterans' Assistance Commission of Stephenson County (VACSC) would like to send a huge thank you to all the organizations, churches, and community groups for their generous donations. The VACSC is extremely thankful for the variety of much needed items that have been donated. A special thanks goes to Lena Lions members Bill Creighton and Gary Meyers for their time to deliver those items to the VACSC Footlocker. Pictured are (left to right) Bill Creighton, Linda Book, Gary Meyers, and Deb Holmes as they organize donations.

Livestock Fencing Webinar to be held in January

The Livestock Production and Principles for Beginners Webinar Series returns in 2024. This monthly series, first launched in 2023, addresses the needs of those who are getting started, exploring the concept of, or even assists those currently raising livestock. With a focus on helping those who are brand new to livestock, 4-H families may be interested in these

sessions. "For those starting their livestock journey, we know that it can be challenging finding the right resources and getting the right answers," states Grant McCarty, Local Foods and Small Farms Educator. "These webinar series presented by U of I Extension experts aim to cover essential and relevant topics that producers can put into place the

upcoming season, gaining confidence in their livestock production."

These sessions will all be held via the Zoom platform and begin at 6 p.m. on their respective nights. There will be a \$15 fee to attend the whole series or a \$5 fee per session. Pre-registration is required by the day before each session to receive the Zoom link to attend. To register or for more infor-

mation, please visit us online atgo.illinois.edu/jsw or call the University of Illinois Extension-Stephenson County at 815-235-4125.

The series will kick off with "A Fence Is a Fence, Right?" presented by Extension Educator Stanley Solomon on Jan. 11. Fencing requirements differ by livestock species, age, disposition, and location. Solomon will discuss fencing types

and designs to meet the needs of your livestock operation. Topics will include minimum requirements to keep animals contained, internal vs. external fences, fence material options, subdivision fence placement, and meeting legal requirements for fencing.

Additional sessions will include Equine Pasture Management (Feb. 1), Selling Meat in Illinois (Feb.

29), and Sheep and Goat Internal Parasite Management (March 14).

If in need of a reasonable accommodation to participate in any of these programs, please contact the University of Illinois Extension-Stephenson County at 815-235-4125. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet individual needs.



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FHN OB Team recognized for outstanding commitment to care

The Illinois Perinatal Quality Collaborative (ILPQC) has recognized the FHN Women's Health team at FHN Memorial Hospital in Freeport for the team's outstanding efforts to provide equitable quality care to all mothers and babies.

"Of the 74 participating hospitals in Illinois, just 24 managed to meet all the rigorous criteria for this recognition so far. Also, FHN was one of just eight in the state to be recognized at the ILPQC Annual Conference for having a parent partner involved in their teams committee," said FHN Women's Health Service Line Director Linn Carter, MSN, APN/CNS-BC, NEA-BC.

FHN's team hosts quarterly community breakfasts for past patients as a way to receive feedback on what is going well and potential improvements to assure respectful care is given at all times.

"Congratulations to our Women's Healthcare team for their unwavering commitment to improving the lives of women and infants throughout our community," said FHN President and CEO Mark Gridley, MBA, FACHE. "We're incredibly proud to have them as part of our healthcare family."

To earn this recognition, FHN Women's Health team goes above and beyond for all of its patients by screening for social determinants of health (SDOH), economic and social conditions that affect individuals access to healthcare both prenatally and again when admitted to the hospital for delivery. They also screen for access of care for pregnant moms, collect valuable demographic data, and screen for available resources. They also prioritize staff and provider education to stay up-to-date with the latest healthcare practices.

The FHN OB team scored exceptionally high marks for respectful care upon discharge, showing the team's dedication to providing the best possible experience for their patients throughout their healthcare journey.

The FHN OB team is one of the first women's healthcare teams in the state to participate in the Illinois Perinatal Quality Collaborative (ILPQC) Equity and Safe Sleep of Infants (ESSI) Initiative. Being part of Wave 1 ensures FHN is a leader in expanding team members' knowledge and community involvement in safe sleep for our families.

For more information on the FHN Women's Healthcare team and OB team, visit www.fhn.org/womens-health.asp.

While Highland has been offering quality Welding training courses for decades, this shift to a bigger facility reflects the college's commitment to meeting regional workforce demands. The new lab, at 4,800 square feet, is more than double the size of the college's original 1,900-square-foot space. The college has installed all-new equipment in this higher-capacity area, including machines, an exhaust system, safety curtains and gas lines directly plumbed into each workstation, which enhances safety.

The college is also committed to instruction, and regularly sends faculty to training to advance their skills. The college will continue working with its Advisory Committee, local manufacturers, and the Plumbers and Pipefitters union to determine and evaluate Welding program offerings and changes.

Program leadership also regularly pursues new partnerships and resources to support Welding at the federal level. The college recently successfully completed a five-year contract with the Federal Bureau of Prisons to offer screened cohorts from Thomson the opportunity to complete Welding certificates. The college is currently pursuing a Department of Labor grant, in the hopes of investing in advanced technologies and supporting more students from groups traditionally underrepresented in the field.

For more on the Welding program, email scott.anderson@highland.edu or todd.vacek@highland.edu.

Highland expands Welding program focus with new, larger lab space

Highland Community College will unveil a new Welding lab with special events on Thursday, Dec. 14 at the Dorothy and RC Clock Technology Center, 2998 W. Pearl City Road, Freeport, Ill.

Join supporters of the college for an open house at 11 a.m. in the new Welding lab. This public event will be preceded by an invitation-only ribbon-cutting ceremony for Highland supporters who helped make the reimaged lab space possible through private donations to the college's Foundation.

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SSM Health Monroe volunteer services scholarship applications now available

SSM Health Monroe Volunteer Services is once again offering scholarships for students seeking a career in the healthcare field. The deadline for application submission is Feb. 29, 2024.

The first scholarship is for high school seniors. Two \$500 scholarships will be awarded to Monroe High School seniors and two \$500 scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors from communities with SSM Health Monroe Clinic Medical Group

sites – Albany, Brodhead, New Glarus, Durand, Freeport and Lena – or who live within an area serviced by a clinic or who have a parent that is employed by SSM Health.

The second scholarship is for continued education students. Five \$1,500 scholarships will be awarded to area college students. Applicants must have completed at least one year of advanced study (beyond high school) in a health-related field and be a resident of

a community with a SSM Health Monroe Clinic Medical Group location or who live within an area serviced by a clinic or child of a SSM Health employee.

Requirements for both types of scholarships are the individual must be pursuing a degree or certificate in a healthcare related field, have a GPA of 3.25 or higher with an emphasis on science and math, and all applications must be typed. In no specific order, recipients will be selected based on

citizenship, need and school & outside activities.

Students who have received a \$500 scholarship in the past are eligible to apply for the advance study scholarship. However, an individual may only receive each scholarship once.

Applications are available at www.ssmhealth.com/donate/volunteer/scholarships. For more information, please contact SSM Health Monroe Volunteer Services at 608-324-1569.

Freeport man arrested for home invasion

On Dec. 1, 2023, at 4 a.m., Officers of the Freeport Police Department responded to an apartment in the 600 block of N. Walnut Avenue regarding a battery that was in progress inside of the apartment. When

Officers arrived, they made contact with a female and a male who was identified as 44-year-old Freeport resident Anthony L. Evans. During the course of the investigation, Officers learned neither Evans nor

the female resided at the apartment on Walnut Avenue. The female was visiting a person who resided at the apartment and Evans came to the apartment looking for the female. Evans kicked in the door to the

apartment and was able to gain entry. Once inside of the apartment, Evans struck the female causing bodily harm.

The Stephenson County State's Attorney approved felony charges for Evans, Home Invasion, Domestic Battery with a Prior Conviction and Criminal Trespass to a Residence. Evans is currently in the custody of the Stephenson County Jail where he will be held pending the outcome of a detention hearing.

The public is reminded that the defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial, at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Juvenile in possession of a stolen firearm

On Dec. 1, 2023, a Detective with the Freeport Police Department received information stating a 13-year-old juvenile was in possession of a semi-automatic firearm which had been stolen during the commission of a burglary from a motor vehicle that occurred on Nov. 12, 2023, in the 300 block of W. Evelyn Street. Officers were able to make contact with the juvenile and were able to locate the stolen firearm inside of a residence in the 1100 block of S Locust Av.

The juvenile was taken to the Police Department, where he was processed and released to a family member. The juvenile will be subject to juvenile court proceedings. The public is reminded that the defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial, at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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State health plan declares racism a public health crisis

Advocacy groups say 'Healthy Illinois 2028' is missing key areas of focus

By Dilpreet Raju
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

A new state health report pinpoints racism as a public health crisis while also noting Illinois needs to improve in the areas of maternal and infant health, mental health and substance use disorders. The broad goals are laid out in a draft of the State Health Improvement Plan, which will be finalized and presented to the Illinois General Assembly next year. The SHIP is part of Healthy Illinois 2028, a five-year plan outlining the major public health crises the state hopes to address. After two years of assessment and planning, Healthy Illinois 2028 prioritized five major public health issues:

- Racism as a public health crisis.
- Maternal and infant health.
- Mental health and substance use disorders.
- Chronic disease.
- COVID-19 and emerging diseases.

The report found these issues consistently overlap and are all exacerbated by a lack of access to health care and wraparound services, the infrastructure of public health systems and racial inequities. "It is essential to emphasize that disparities in health outcomes according to race/ethnicity have nothing to do with

biology and everything to do with inequitable distributions of money, power and resources," the report stated.

Several members of the public registered concern at virtual hearings last week about what was missing from the draft plan — including care plans for migrants and concrete actions to slow a rising number of overdose deaths in Illinois. Public health advocates asked for the inclusion of data-driven responses. Previous SHIPs have included measurable goals including reducing rates of suicide and opioid overdose deaths, both of which have increased over the last decade, according to the Centers for Disease Control's National Center for Health Statistics. But Jennifer Epstein, deputy director of the Illinois Department of Public Health Office of Policy, Planning and Statistics emphasized to Capitol News Illinois that the report is still in draft form, and that specific metrics will be added to the plan during 2024.

Racism's effect on health care

The draft improvement plan for the first time makes a point of listing racism as an overarching public health crisis in Illinois. "Racism is both a cross-cutting issue and a standalone priority because it is at the root of many, if not all health issues," Illinois Public Health Institute senior program manager Janece Gough said at the hearings.

IPHI was one of the entities that contributed to the draft under the guidance of the Illinois Department of Public Health and the State Board of

Health. The report was also co-authored by staff from the University of Illinois Chicago's Policy, Practice and Prevention Research Center. Gough said continued stigma and discrimination from health care providers are among the barriers to equitable health care. The plan aims to address inequities by forming an appointed advisory committee on racism in health care and building a more diverse health care workforce. This type of racism happens when health care workers hold racial biases against patients, whether intentional or not.

IPHI director Laurie Call said public health infrastructure needs serious strengthening to be ready for emerging threats, as evidenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Climate change—and its health effects caused by air, water and land pollution—are included in those emerging threats, she said. "We know that as climate change is expected to worsen, this will have many health consequences," she said.

Call said eight local entities in Illinois—such as the Chicago Department of Public Health, the Peoria City/County Health Department and a Champaign school board—have already issued a formal declaration of racism as a public health crisis. According to the American Public Health Association, 19 other states have declared racism a public health crisis,

including Michigan and Wisconsin. During a recent hearing, Angela McLemore, who worked for years in hospital administration and now serves as executive assistant to state Sen. Mattie Hunter, D-Chicago, said she was supportive of the plan's goals, but she emphasized the state will need to dedicate resources to make them a reality. "I like what I have seen," McLemore said. "In order to make the goals and objectives happen, you have to spend a lot more time on implementation, planning and we need to attach the money, manpower and materials necessary for each plan." Funding was a key concern for multiple other public commenters, including Creola Hampton, president of Black Leadership Advocacy Coalition for Healthcare Equity, or BLACHE, pronounced "black." BLACHE currently has 19 organizations in its network from the west side of Chicago down to East St. Louis.

"The unfortunate dilemma is the Illinois Department of Public Health funding is so highly racially inequitable that it perpetuates racism being a public health issue," Hampton said. Hampton argued that when it comes to combating HIV and AIDS, by which Black communities have been hit the hardest, there has been little funding sent to "African American-led organizations that have the enhanced cultural competency" and "the maximum degree of effectiveness." "The state is going to be leading saying that racism is a public health issue," she said. "Then the state has to be actively involved and making sure that there is equitable funding going to African American-led organizations to do the work that needs to be done to negate the inequity of health." In response to media questions, IDPH spokesperson Jim Leach said the agency aims to partner with Black-led organizations around the state to reduce the "historic

and present-day disparities" found with HIV. "More than half of the HIV testing and risk reduction services delivered with IDPH grant funds were provided to clients who identified as Black/African American," Leach told Capitol News Illinois in an email.

Healthy Illinois 2028 lists an infrastructure recommendation to "de-silo funding and eliminate inequitable funding."

Requested additions

Though reducing overdose mortality was outlined as a priority goal in the previous SHIP, overdose deaths have continued to climb in Illinois. The IDPH Opioid Data Dashboard recorded 3,261 opioid-involved overdose deaths in 2022—a new record for the state. The SHIP draft lists broad objectives including reducing the number of emergency department visits and

See CRISIS, Page 24

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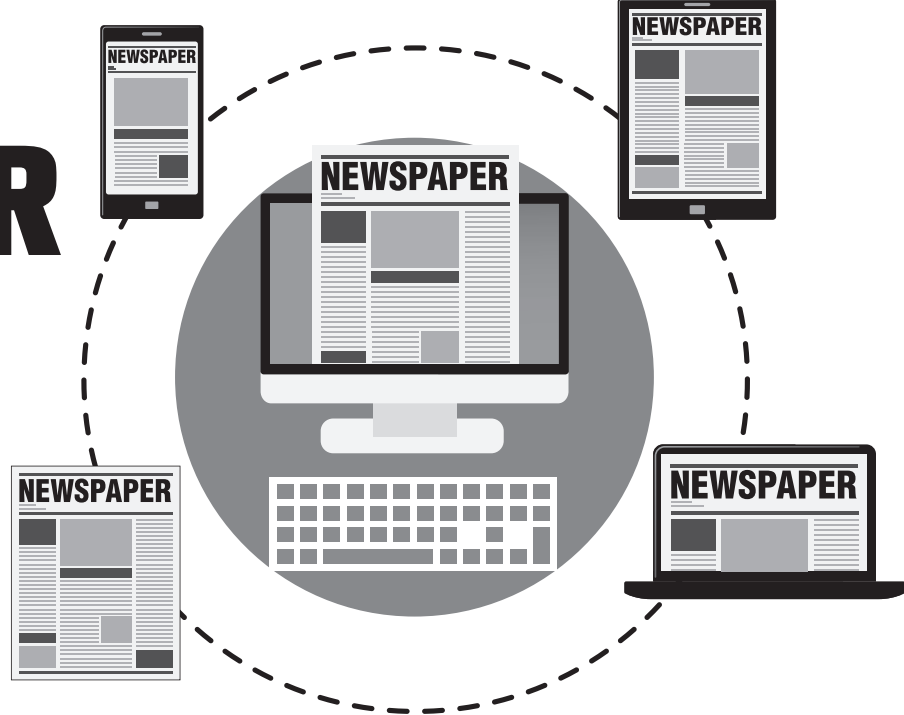
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Illinois Supreme Court: FOID records exempt from public disclosure

Individuals can obtain their own records through other means

By Peter Hancock
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS
The Illinois Supreme Court ruled Nov. 30 that people may obtain records about their own Firearm Owners Identification cards, but they may not use the state's Freedom of Information Act to do so.
In a 7-0 ruling, the court said the Illinois State Police acted properly when it denied FOIA requests from individuals who sought copies of letters explaining why their FOID cards had been denied or revoked. But the court also

said those individuals could have obtained those records through other means.
"ISP does not dispute this point but simply maintains, as we have found, that FOIA is not the proper means for obtaining the requested information," Justice Joy Cunningham wrote for the court.
The case revolved around a 2011 amendment to the Freedom of Information Act that exempts from public disclosure the names and information of people who have applied for or received FOID cards or concealed carry per-

mits.
According to briefs filed with the court, state lawmakers passed that amendment after the Associated Press filed a blanket FOIA request seeking the names of all FOID cardholders in the state, along with the expiration dates of their cards.
The Nov. 30 ruling involved two unrelated cases from Madison County in which Sandra Hart and Kenneth Burgess Sr. sought copies of documents related to their FOID cards, including records explaining why their

cards had been revoked.
Thomas Maag, an attorney who argued the cases at the Supreme Court, said in an interview Thursday that both individuals claimed they had lost the original documents and that they sought copies so they could appeal the revocations.
In both cases, ISP denied the requests, citing the exemption in the Freedom of Information Act. But in both cases, the Madison County Circuit Court sided with the applicants and ordered ISP to hand over the requested

information. In 2022, the 5th District Court of Appeals upheld those decisions, saying the FOIA exemption was never intended to prevent individuals from obtaining records pertaining to themselves.
Both the trial court and the appellate court pointed to the use of plural language in the 2011 amendment that prohibits the release of "names" and information of "people" who have applied for or received permits. They argued the use of plural words indicated lawmakers did not intend to

prevent people from accessing their own information.
But the Supreme Court rejected that analysis, saying the use of the plural words "does not, in itself, mean that a request for one's own information" would be permissible under the 2011 amendment.
The court's ruling noted that the individuals could have obtained their FOID card applications and revocation letters through the Firearm Services Bureau, which is the division of ISP that processes FOID cards.

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FROM LENA'S KITCHEN



The not so skinny cook

What a beautiful December day I am looking at as I get ready to send in my column. I know it will cool off, but the sun is shining, and it is almost sweater weather. This week we have a few more holiday recipes. Have a great week cooking.

Marinated Mozzarella

If you are looking for an unusual appetizer, this mozzarella tidbit is one a lot of people love. It is easy to make; the fresh mozzarella cubed is

best.

- 1/3 C. olive oil
- 1 T. chopped oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes
- 1 T. minced fresh parsley
- 1 t. red pepper flakes, crushed
- 1 t. dried basil
- 1 t. minced chives
- 1/4 t. garlic powder
- 1 lb. cubed mozzarella cheese

In a large bowl combine all ingredients but cheese; add cheese cubes and stir to coat. Cover and refrigerate at least 30 minutes. Place in serving bowl with toothpicks to serve.

Holiday Apple Salad

If you are looking for a festive Christmas salad this one is easy to prepare and good to eat. The candied pecans add the crunch. The dried fruit and crunchy apples give it great flavor, and the dressing

is just right. I recommend using Granny Smith or Honey Crisp apples and a mixture of red and green leaf lettuce.

Candied Pecans

- 1/2 C. brown sugar
- 1/4 t. cinnamon
- 1/4 t. kosher salt
- 2 T. water
- 1 C. pecans

Salad

- 6 C. mixed greens
- 1/2 C. Crumbled blue cheese
- 1/2 C. dried cranberries
- 2 apples, thinly sliced

Dressing

- 2 T. apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 shallot, thinly chopped
- 1/2 T. Dijon mustard
- 1/3 C. extra virgin olive oil

Candy pecans: In a skillet over medium heat, combine brown sugar, cinnamon, salt, and water. Stir, letting sugar dissolve, then add pecans and toss until totally coated. Let simmer five minutes until sticky, then remove from

heat and let cool on a parchment-lined baking sheet in a single layer. Pecans you don't use for the salad can be stored in an airtight container up to one week.

In a large bowl, combine greens, crumbled blue cheese, and dried cranberries. Refrigerate until ready to dress and serve. Dressing: in a bowl or glass jar, whisk together apple cider vinegar, shallot, Dijon, and olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Drizzle salad dressing over salad and combine; sprinkle with pecans. Serve immediately.

Sour Cream Noodles

This easy and tasty side will go well with poultry or with pork. Try it instead of rice or potatoes.

- 1 pkg. (10 oz.) fine egg noodles
- 1 1/4 C. 4% cottage cheese
- 1 1/4 C. sour cream
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 T. Worcestershire sauce
- 1/8 t. garlic salt
- 2 T. grated Parmesan cheese
- Paprika

Preheat oven to 350. Cook noodles according to package directions; drain. Transfer to a large bowl. Add the cottage cheese, sour cream, onion, Worcestershire sauce and garlic salt. Spoon into a greased 2-qt. baking dish. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake, uncovered, until top is lightly browned, 35 to 40 minutes. Sprinkle with paprika to serve.

Creamy Onion Pork Chops

This recipe is great for a Sunday dinner or for company. It is easy to put together and Lena Maid Meats pork chops are the best.

- 6 bone-in pork loin chops (about 8 oz. each)
- 1/2 t. pepper
- 1/8 t. salt
- 1 1/4 C. 2% milk
- 1 can cream of onion soup
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup

- 2/3 C. chicken broth
- 1 envelop ranch salad dressing mix
- 3 T. cornstarch
- 2 T. water
- Parsley for garnish

Sprinkle chops with pepper and salt; transfer to a 4 quart slow cooker. In a large bowl, combine the milk, soups, broth and dressing mix; pour over pork chops. Cover and cook on low for 8 to 10 hours or until pork is tender. Remove pork to a serving platter and keep warm. Skim fat from cooking juices; transfer to a large saucepan. Bring liquid to a boil. Combine cornstarch and water until smooth. Gradually add mixture to pan. Bring to a boil and stir for 2 minutes until thickened. Serve with pork or in a separate gravy bowl. Garnish pork with parsley. The sour cream noodles go great with this meat.

Homemade Kit Kat Bars

Try these easy candy bars for your cookie plate. It makes a great change from fudge, and it is easy to make.

- 75 club crackers
- 1 C. butter
- 2 C. graham cracker crumbs
- 1 C. packed brown sugar
- 1/2 C. whole milk
- 1/3 C. sugar
- 2/3 C. creamy peanut butter
- 1/2 C. semisweet chocolate morsels
- 1/2 C. butterscotch-flavored morsels

Line an ungreased 9 x 13 pan with 1 layer of crackers,

cutting to fit if necessary; set aside. In a large saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add cracker crumbs, brown sugar, milk, and sugar. Bring to a boil, and boil for five minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and pour half of the butter mixture evenly over the crackers. Place another single layer of crackers evenly over butter mixture, cutting to fit if necessary. Pour remaining butter mixture evenly over crackers. Top evenly with remaining crackers.

In a small saucepan, combine peanut butter, chocolate morsels and butterscotch morsels. Melt over medium-low heat, stirring constantly. Spread evenly over top of crackers. Cover and chill for at least one hour. Cut into bars, store in refrigerator.

Apricot Sheet Cookies

If you are looking for an alternative to cookies for your Christmas platter, these apricot bars (even though they say cookies in the name) will be a great addition.

- 1/2 C. butter, softened
- 1/2 C. all-vegetable shortening
- 1 C. sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 2 C. flour
- 1 t. vanilla
- 1 C. apricot preserves

Confectioners' sugar for dusting
Preheat oven to 350. Spray a 9 x9 baking pan with cooking spray. In a large bowl, beat butter and shortening at medium speed with an electric mixer until creamy. Add sugar and beat until creamy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.

See KITCHEN, Page 19

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•Kitchen (Continued from page 18)

Gradually beat in flour until combined. Beat in vanilla. Reserve one cup of batter. Spread remaining batter evenly into prepared pan. Gently spread preserves evenly over batter. Drop remaining batter by tablespoons over preserves. Bake for 30-35 minutes or until golden brown. Let cool for 30 minutes and cut into bars to serve. Garnish with confectioners' sugar.

to the cookie platter is both easy to make and easy to serve.
 ¾ C. unsalted butter, cubed
 1½ C. packed light brown sugar
 2 large eggs
 ¼ t. vanilla
 2¼ C. flour
 1½ t. baking powder
 ¼ t. salt
 1/8 t. cinnamon
 ½ C. dried cranberries
 6 oz. white baking chocolate, coarsely chopped
Frosting:
 1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream

White Chocolate Cranberry Blondies
 Another fruit bar to add

cheese, softened
 1 C. powdered sugar
 1 T. grated orange peel, optional
 6 oz. white baking chocolate, melted
 ½ C. dried cranberries
 Preheat the oven to 350. In a large microwave-safe bowl, microwave butter until melted; stir in brown sugar. Cool slightly.
 Beat in the eggs, one at a time, add vanilla. In another bowl, whisk flour, baking powder, salt and cinnamon; stir into butter mixture. Stir in the cranberries and

chopped chocolate (batter will be thick). Spread into a greased 9 x 13 pan.
 Bake until golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean (do not overbake), 18-21 minutes. Cool blondies completely on a wire rack.
 For the frosting, beat cream cheese, powdered sugar, and if desired orange peel until smooth. Gradually beat in half of the melted white chocolate; spread over blondies. Sprinkle with cranberries; drizzle with remaining melted chocolate.

Cut into triangles. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.
Final Thoughts
 What a wonderful Christmas Parade! The whole evening was a great night for families to stroll Main, see Santa, play games, eat, and shop. Thank you to the LBPA for a wonderful start to December.
 We are getting down to the wire before Christmas is upon us. Remember to shop at all our local shops for your Christmas presents.

We have gifts galore, flowers, food, clothing, crafts, and gift certificates. You don't have to go far to get some great gift ideas. Support our local businesses because they support us.
 We will continue to offer seasonal recipes the month of December. If you have some favorite Christmas recipes you would like to share, you can contact us in person, by mail at From Lena's Kitchens, *The Shopper's Guide* at 240 W. Main St. or email us at scoopshopper@rvpublishing.com.



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LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

The following self-storage Cube contents containing household and other good will be sold for cash by CubeSmart Asset Management, LLC as Agent for Owner #4409, 555 W. South Street Freeport, IL 61032 to satisfy a lien on December 21, 2023 at approx. 1:00 p.m. at www.storage-treasures.com. Cube 1059 Stephen Calvillo; Cube 1324 Kristian Crawford; Cube 1433 Leah Ryan

(Published in The Shopper's Guide Dec. 6 & 13, 2023) 447489

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT STEPHENSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS PLATINUM HOME MORTGAGE CORPORATION Plaintiff, -v.- KIMBERLY SMITH Defendant

2022 FC 44

NOTICE OF SALE PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on January 12, 2023, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 1:00 PM on January 11, 2024, at the Stephenson County Courthouse, 15 N. Galena Ave. (West Door), FREEPORT, IL, 61032, sell at a public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

THE SOUTH HALF OF LOT 5 AND ALL OF LOT 6 IN BLOCK 2, DEMETER HEIGHTS SUBDIVISION IN FLORENCE TOWNSHIP; SITUATED IN THE CITY OF FREEPORT, STEPHENSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

Commonly known as 1331 S DEMETER DRIVE, FREEPORT, IL 61032

Property Index No. 18-18-01-202-004

The real estate is improved with a single family residence.

The judgment amount was \$76,648.25.

Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close

of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, in certified funds/or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

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

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

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

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

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

conducts foreclosure sales.

For information, contact CHAD LEWIS, ROBERTSON ANSCHUTZ SCHNEID CRANE & PARTNERS, PLLC Plaintiff's Attorneys, 205 N. MICHIGAN SUITE 810, CHICAGO, IL, 60601 (561) 241-6901. Please refer to file number 22-045386.

THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION

One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-4650 (312) 236-3456

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

CHAD LEWIS ROBERTSON ANSCHUTZ SCHNEID CRANE & PARTNERS, PLLC 205 N. MICHIGAN SUITE 810 CHICAGO IL, 60601 561-241-6901 E-Mail: ILMAIL@RASLG.COM Attorney File No. 22-045386 Attorney ARDC No. 6306439 Case Number: 2022 FC 44 TJSC#: 43-4388

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

Case # 2022 FC 44 I3234308

(Published in The Shopper's Guide Dec. 6, 13 & 20, 2023) 448083

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT STEPHENSON COUNTY - FREEPORT, ILLINOIS U.S. Bank National Association PLAINTIFF Vs. Carol Keister; et. al. DEFENDANTS

No. 2023FC24 **NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on 09/26/2023, the Sheriff of Stephenson County, Illinois will on January 25,

2024 at the hour of 9:30 AM at Stephenson County Courthouse 15 North Galena Avenue 1st Floor, West door of courthouse Freeport, IL 61032, or in a place otherwise designated at the time of sale, County of Stephenson and State of Illinois, sell at public auction to the highest bidder for cash, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

LOT 1 AND 2 IN BLOCK 27 OF WRIGHT AND LORD'S ADDITION TO THE TOWN (NOW VILLAGE) OF DAVIS; SITUATED IN THE VILLAGE OF DAVIS, STEPHENSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

PIN 06-10-13-378-004 Improved with Residential

COMMONLY KNOWN AS:

611 East Snyder Street Davis, IL 61019

Sale terms: 10% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the auction; The balance, including the Judicial sale fee for Abandoned Residential Property Municipality Relief Fund, which is calculated at the rate of \$1 for each \$1,000 or fraction thereof of the amount paid by the purchaser not to exceed \$300, in certified funds, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

If the property is a condominium and the foreclosure takes place after 1/1/2007, purchasers other than the mortgagees will be required to pay any assessment and legal fees due under The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4).

If the property is located in a common interest community, purchasers other than mortgagees will be required to pay any assessment and legal fees due under the Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1).

If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser

at the sale shall be entitled only to a return of the deposit paid. The Purchaser shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagee, the Mortgagee or the Mortgagee's attorney.

Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser shall receive a Certificate of Sale, which will entitle the purchaser to a Deed to the real estate after Confirmation of the sale. The successful purchaser has the sole responsibility/expense of evicting any tenants or other individuals presently in possession of the subject premises.

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

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

For information: Examine the court file or contact Plaintiff's attorney: Codilis & Associates, P.C., 15W030 North Frontage Road, Suite 100, Burr Ridge, IL 60527, (630) 794-9876. Please refer to file number 14-23-01863. I3234500

(Published in The Shopper's Guide Dec. 13, 20 & 27, 2023) 448257

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COUNTY OF JO DAVIESS - GALENA, ILLINOIS NATIONSTAR MORTGAGE LLC, Plaintiff,

vs. UNKNOWN HEIRS OF IDA MAE NORTON, CFNA RECEIVABLES (TX), LLC SUCCESSOR IN INTEREST TO THE ASSOCIATED FINANCIAL SERVICES OF IOWA, SHERI HORNUNG, KELLY ASHFORD, ROBERT NORTON, TIM MILLER AS SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE,

UNKNOWN TENANTS, UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS, Defendants,

22 FC 78

PUBLIC NOTICE IS hereby given that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure entered in the above entitled cause Intercountry Judicial Sales Corporation will on Wednesday, January 17, 2024, at the hour of 10:00 a.m. in the Office of James J. Nack, 106 North Main Street, Galena, Illinois 61036, sell to the highest bidder for cash, the following described mortgaged real estate:

COMMENCED AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER (SW 1/4) OF SAID SECTION 9; THENCE EAST ON THE NORTH LINE OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER (SW 1/4) OF SAID SECTION 9, A DISTANCE OF 2088.31 FEET; THENCE SOUTHERLY, AT AN ANGLE OF 85 DEGREES - 25 MINUTES - 28 SECONDS AS MEASURED COUNTER-CLOCKWISE FROM THE LAST DESCRIBED COURSE, A DISTANCE OF 348.66 FEET TO A POINT IN A TOWNSHIP ROAD; THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ON SAID TOWNSHIP ROAD, AT AN ANGLE OF 187 DEGREES - 52 MINUTES - 10 SECONDS AS MEASURED CLOCKWISE FROM THE LAST DESCRIBED COURSE, A DISTANCE OF 756.94 FEET; THENCE CONTINUING SOUTHWESTERLY ON SAID TOWNSHIP ROAD, AT AN ANGLE OF 203 DEGREES - 48 MINUTES - 35 SECONDS AS MEASURED CLOCKWISE FROM THE LAST DESCRIBED COURSE, A DISTANCE OF 715.90 FEET TO A POINT IN THE CENTERLINE OF SAID TOWNSHIP ROAD; THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ON THE CENTERLINE OF SAID TOWNSHIP ROAD, AT AN ANGLE OF 174 DEGREES - 41 MINUTES - 10 SECONDS AS MEASURED CLOCKWISE FROM THE LAST DESCRIBED COURSE, A DISTANCE OF 399.05

Continued on next page

The Power of your smile



By **DR. STEPHEN PETRAS**
Illinois Licensed General Dentist

The holiday season is upon us and celebrations with family, friends and colleagues are beginning to populate our calendars. Unfortunately, thanks to the increased number of times we now see our smiles on screen during Zoom and Google Chat meetings, many people have become much more sensitive about their smiles. Unfortunately, their efforts to hide their teeth often include a reluctance to smile. Since one of the greatest joys of the holiday season is seeing our family's smiles, I hope today's column helps you to understand how the act of smiling promotes your health.

Although the simple act of smiling may not seem to be of any consequence, smiling provides profound social, psychological, and physical benefits. There is a reason we say smiling is contagious.

Smiling is a universal means of communicating that initiates a response to smile back, sending a positive message regardless of culture or language barriers.

Research shows that smiling is a critical factor in social interactions. Smiling makes you seem more approachable, confident, empathetic, and trustworthy. This holds true in both your professional and personal interactions. Human Resource departments say a confident smile translates as a leadership skill which can help to motivate and inspire productivity and a positive culture. Conversely,

never smiling during a job interview will create a negative impression. Dating websites continue to report that the number one factor in whether a user swipes left, or right is a great smile.

Smiling also promotes your physical and psychological well-being. When you smile your body releases both endorphins and dopamine, stimulates the production of neuropeptides in the brain, and reduces levels of stress hormones. All these changes work synergistically to decrease stress, anxiety, blood pressure, heart rate and the perception of discomfort or pain. These physiological benefits strengthen your immune system and promote mental well-being. It is therefore no surprise that people who smile often live longer and enjoy a more positive outlook on life.

When you are in a stressful

situation, remember to smile. It will not only help you to relax and feel more confident, but it will help the people that you are dealing with to feel more at ease and open to communication.

You may spend considerable effort to avoid smiling to hide your teeth, but this does not serve you well. It is important to like or feel comfortable with your smile, so you can reap the many benefits that smiling provides. If you have any questions or concerns about your smile, please share this with your dentist. If you do not have a provider, call to schedule a consultation with a dentist. Whether it is fear of the unknown, fear of going to a dentist, or worry that "it is only a cosmetic issue" that is holding you back, he or she can help you to understand the options you have to obtain the confidence to smile again.

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to holiday decorating. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 18 = I)

- A. **16 18 25 23 26 4**
Clue: Metallic strips
- B. **8 24 25 7 4 26 23**
Clue: Wax illumination
- C. **4 18 14 17 16 23**
Clue: Strings of bulbs
- D. **1 11 26 24 16 17**
Clue: Evergreen door or wall hanging

Answers: A. metal B. candles C. lights D. wreath

LEGAL NOTICES

Continued from previous page
FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE HEREINAFTER DESCRIBED TRACT OF LAND; THENCE NORTHEASTERLY ON THE LAST DESCRIBED COURSE, A DISTANCE OF 221.11 FEET; THENCE WESTERLY, AT AN ANGLE OF 64 DEGREES - 41 MINUTES - 44 SECONDS AS MEASURED CLOCKWISE FROM THE LAST DESCRIBED COURSE, A DISTANCE OF 217.92 FEET; THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY, AT AN ANGLE OF 58 DEGREES - 18 MINUTES - 31 SECONDS AS MEASURED CLOCKWISE FROM THE LAST DESCRIBED COURSE, A DISTANCE OF 234.92 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, JO DAVIESS COUNTY, ILLINOIS. THE ABOVE DESCRIBED PROPERTY LOCATED IN A PART OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER (SE 1/4) OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER (SW 1/4) OF SECTION 9, TOWNSHIP 28 NORTH, RANGE 1 EAST OF THE FOURTH PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, CONSISTING OF THREE TRACTS OF LAND, BOUNDED AND DESCRIBED ABOVE. AND BEING THE SAME PROPERTY CONVEYED FROM ELMER HARWICK, A MARRIED PERSON, THE GRANTOR(S), TO ROBERT WILLIAM NORTON, SR. AND IDA MAE NORTON, HIS WIFE, AS JOINT TENANTS WITH RIGHT OF SUR-

VIVORSHIP AND NOT AS TENANTS IN COMMON, THE GRANTEE(S) BY VIRTUE OF DEED DATED 08/14/1973, AND RECORDED 08/14/1973, IN BOOK 193 AT PAGE 792; RE-RECORDED 10/09/1973, IN BOOK 194 AT PAGE 152 AMONG THE AFORESAID LAND RECORDS.

P.I.N. 13-000-038-33.

Commonly known as 9792 W. BUCKHILL RD. A/K/A 9798 W. BUCKHILL RD. GALENA, IL 61036.

The improvement on the property consists of a single family residence. If the subject mortgaged real estate is a unit of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Condominium Property Act.

Sale terms: 10% down by certified funds, balance within 24 hours, by certified funds. No refunds. The property will NOT be open for inspection.

For information call Mr. Ira T. Nevel at Plaintiff's Attorney, Law Offices of Ira T. Nevel, 175 North Franklin Street, Chicago, Illinois 60606. (312) 357-1125. File Number 22-03577 IJSC INTERCOUNTY JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION intercountyjudicialsales.com 13234418

(Published in The Scoop Today Dec. 13, 20 & 27, 2023)

Answers

PUZZLE 1

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

PUZZLE 2

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

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	A	P	E		A	D	P		A	C	T	
	W	A	X		P	A	L		P	A	C	
S	T	I	C	H		P	R	O		P	S	H
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R	E	G	A	L	I	A			P	A	R	A
F	I	N	E	S	S	E			D	E	L	E
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D C W R C M E H W S S Y C E C N M E A S
 N G N R H Y E W R N I N H U D C G P H P
 A L B E D A L N G O M B R H G U O B A S
 L R S K B P B T D W D H I L F N U K C L
 R I H C E C A R O M N I S E E R W D U L
 A R A A U U T D G A N O T T O T O F F E
 G R T R F K A I T N L D M N T D D I P B
 N F N C U D L I Y E W N A A E N N R O T
 A S A T A G F I A B T K S M L A K E U S
 G L S U O E N W H P H B T G T T G P W W
 S E Y N D O I D L G T W R W S S Y L I T
 W I D E C O R A T E U F E W I S E A C R
 D G L U H W R E A T H C E D M T L C Y L
 Y H Y M U L I N I C I R H P T K A E O N
 W M D P O I N S E T T I A M E N O R A H
 O E P W E G S L B W R R I W W D K D I L
 D C F A A N G E L Y A L P S I D K K E L
 N Y L L O H O R N A M E N T S F W P E A
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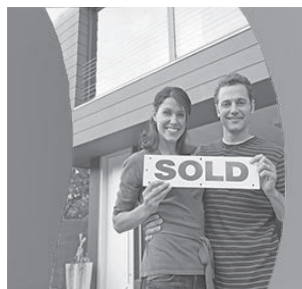
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REAL ESTATE NOTICES

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT STEPHENSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS PLATINUM HOME MORTGAGE CORPORATION Plaintiff, -v.- KIMBERLY SMITH Defendant

2022 FC 44 NOTICE OF SALE PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on January 12, 2023, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 1:00 PM on January 11, 2024, at the Stephenson County Courthouse, 15 N. Galena Ave. (West Door), FREEPORT, IL, 61032, sell at a public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate: Commonly known as 1331 S DEMETER DRIVE, FREEPORT, IL 61032 Property Index No. 18-18-01-202-004 The real estate is improved with a single family residence. The judgment amount was \$76,648.25. Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, in certified funds/or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

For information, contact CHAD LEWIS, ROBERTSON ANSCHUTZ SCHNEID CRANE & PARTNERS, PLLC Plaintiff's Attorneys, 205 N. MICHIGAN SUITE 810, CHICAGO, IL, 60601 (561) 241-6901. Please refer to file number 22-045386. THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-4650 (312) 236-SALE You can also visit The Judicial Sales Corporation at www.tjsc.com for a 7 day status report of pending sales. CHAD LEWIS ROBERTSON ANSCHUTZ SCHNEID CRANE & PARTNERS, PLLC 205 N. MICHIGAN SUITE 810 CHICAGO IL, 60601 E-Mail: ILMAIL@RASLG.COM Attorney File No. 22-045386 Attorney ARDC No. 6306439 Case Number: 2022 FC 44 TJSIC#: 43-4388 NOTE: Pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, you are advised that Plaintiff's attorney is deemed to be a debt collector attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. Case # 2022 FC 44 I3234308 (Published in The Shopper's Guide Dec. 6, 13 & 20, 2023) 448084

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT STEPHENSON COUNTY - FREEPORT, ILLINOIS U.S. Bank National Association PLAINTIFF Vs.

Carol Keister; et. al. DEFENDANTS No. 2023FC24 NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on 09/26/2023, the Sheriff of Stephenson County, Illinois will on January 25, 2024 at the hour of 9:30 AM at Stephenson County Courthouse 15 North Galena Avenue 1st Floor, West door of courthouse Freeport, IL 61032, or in a place otherwise designated at the time of sale, County of Stephenson and State of Illinois, sell at public auction to the highest bidder for cash, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

Pin 06-10-13-378-004 Improved with Residential COMMONLY KNOWN AS: 611 East Snyder Street Davis, IL 61019 Sale terms: 10% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the auction; The balance, including the Judicial sale fee for

Abandoned Residential Property Municipality Relief Fund, which is calculated at the rate of \$1 for each \$1,000 or fraction thereof of the amount paid by the purchaser not to exceed \$300, in certified funds, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

If the property is a condominium and the foreclosure takes place after 1/1/2007, purchasers other than the mortgagees will be required to pay any assessment and legal fees due under The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4).

If the property is located in a common interest community, purchasers other than mortgagees will be required to pay any assessment and legal fees due under the Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1). If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled only to a return of the deposit paid. The Purchaser shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee or the Mortgagee's attorney.

Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser shall receive a Certificate of Sale, which will entitle the purchaser to a Deed to the real estate after Confirmation of the sale. The successful purchaser has the sole responsibility/expense of evicting any tenants or other individuals presently in possession of the subject premises.

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

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

For information: Examine the court file or contact Plaintiff's attorney: Codilis & Associates, P.C., 15W030 North Frontage Road, Suite 100, Burr Ridge, IL 60527, (630) 794-9876. Please refer to file number 14-23-01863. I3234500 (Published in The Shopper's Guide Dec. 13, 20 & 27, 2023) 448260

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COUNTY OF JO DAVIESS - GALENA, ILLINOIS NATIONSTAR MORTGAGE LLC, Plaintiff, vs. UNKNOWN HEIRS OF IDA MAE NORTON, CFNA RECEIVABLES (TX), LLC SUCCESSOR IN INTEREST TO

THE ASSOCIATED FINANCIAL SERVICES OF IOWA, SHERI HORNING, KELLY ASHFORD, ROBERT NORTON, TIM MILLER AS SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE, UNKNOWN TENANTS, UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS, Defendants, 22 FC 78

NOTICE OF SALE PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure entered in the above entitled cause Intercounty Judicial Sales Corporation will on Wednesday, January 17, 2024, at the hour of 10:00 a.m. in the Office of James J. Nack, 106 North Main Street, Galena, Illinois 61036, sell to the highest bidder for cash, the following described mortgaged real estate: P.I.N. 13-000-038-33. Commonly known as 9792 W. BUCKHILL RD. A/K/A 9798 W. BUCKHILL RD. GALENA, IL 61036. The improvement on the property consists of a single family residence. If the subject mortgaged real estate is a unit of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit other than a mort-

gagagee shall pay the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Condominium Property Act. Sale terms: 10% down by certified funds, balance within 24 hours, by certified funds. No refunds. The property will NOT be open for inspection. For information call Mr. Ira T. Nevel at Plaintiff's Attorney, Law Offices of Ira T. Nevel, 175 North Franklin Street, Chicago, Illinois 60606. (312) 357-1125. File Number 22-03577 IJSC INTERCOUNTY JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION intercountyjudicialsales.com I3234418 (Published in The Scoop Today Dec. 13, 20 & 27, 2023) 448264

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U.S., Brazil in 'tug-of-war' over soybean exports

By Daniel Grant
FARMWEEK

With a majority of soybeans in the bin (76 percent) so far this harvest, the U.S. is in position to boost exports in the months ahead. But competition remains strong in South America, where farmers are sitting on ample stocks and planting the 2023-24 crop. "There are more old-crop soybeans in Brazil than there's ever been," Aaron Edwards, commodity risk adviser for Roach Ag, told the RFD Radio Network. "But there's also more demand in Brazil than in

the past. "The real question is do new-crop U.S. soybeans get the China business or do old-crop Brazilian beans get the China business?" he said. "It's a pretty strong tug-of-war."

U.S. soybean export inspections for the week ending Oct. 20 jumped from 2.04 million tons to 2.46 million as China purchased a majority of shipments for the week. Overall, USDA estimates U.S. soybean exports could decline 35 million bushels this year to 1.76 billion due to increased competition from

South America.

However, U.S. soybean crush is expected to increase 10 million bushels to 2.3 billion driven by higher soy meal exports and domestic demand for soy oil. "Personally, I think we could get a friendly demand story for U.S. bean exports," Roach said. "As of now, that's a neck-and-neck race."

One factor that could tilt the competition in favor of the U.S. near-term involves weather challenges as Brazilian farmers plant the 2023-24 soybean crop. The challenges

could tempt Brazilian soybean users to hold more of the old crop rather than export it. Planting progress ranges from 20 percent complete in parts of Brazil up to 60 percent complete in Mato Grosso, Brazil's top soy producing state responsible for nearly one-third of output, as of the last week of October.

"Some of it will need to be replanted (in Brazil)," Edwards said. "In the south, some of it got flooded out and, in the north, it was too dry to get some out of the ground."

The weather extremes oc-

curing during planting in South America are part of a shift from a La Nina pattern to El Nino.

"We've had three years in a row of La Nina and now we're in year one of El Nino," Edwards said. "El Nino tends to produce more rain in the south and less rain to the north (in South America)." Brazilian farmers are expected to plant a record 112 million acres of soybeans for 2023-24, up 2.5 percent from the past season, while cutting corn plantings by 5 percent to 52 million acres, according to

the National Supply Company in Brazil.

If realized, Brazilian bean production could reach a record 5.95 billion bushels in the year ahead while corn output could slip 9.5 percent to 4.7 billion bushels. Brazilian corn exports subsequently could decline by 27 percent in the year ahead.

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.

• Crisis (Continued from page 13)

increasing access to health care and wraparound services. It also sets a goal to "Increase funding to support the infrastructure development of the mental health and substance use disorder system."

Absent from the report is any mention of licensed overdose prevention sites, something many addiction researchers and advocates for those with substance use disorders support. "We really don't have time to lose," Chelsea Laliberte Barnes, co-founder of the Illinois

Harm Reduction and Recovery Coalition, told the panel last week.

Overdose prevention sites, which are places where people who use drugs can get clean equipment and drug samples tested, present one major evidence-based strategy to reduce overdose deaths. Illinois has none but the issue was brought forward each of the past two legislative sessions by Rep. La Shawn Ford, D-Chicago. New York is the only state with licensed overdose prevention centers, both of

which are in New York City.

In countries with overdose prevention sites, like Canada, Australia and several European countries, no deaths have been reported at any of these centers "We've seen how much these types of interventions save money, they reduce costs from emergency services. They provide a direct link for people to access health care services, job training, food," Laliberte Barnes said. "I would just like to really advocate for the addition of overdose prevention sites as

a strategy for the plan over the next five years." She said overdoses are still rising "statewide—rural, urban, suburban, you name it."

The draft report also doesn't contain a plan of care for recent migrant populations that have arrived in Illinois in the last 15 months largely from the southern U.S. border. As of Dec. 6, more than 27,000 asylum seekers have arrived in Chicago, with a majority arriving via buses from Texas at the direction of Gov. Greg Abbott, according to the

city's new arrivals dashboard.

Without proper medical attention and paperwork, the number of asylum seekers places a particular strain on public schools that need to address their physical and mental health needs.

Betzua Rubio, a nurse at Eli Whitney Elementary in Chicago's Little Village, told the panel she was concerned for migrant children who are without paperwork such as immunization records. "We are seeing the lack of implementation for medical pro-

viders to adequately provide medical orders," including "asthma action plans, allergy action plans," Rubio said at the hearings.

Rubio estimated that more than 100 migrant students have been enrolled at Eli Whitney and described her work as a bilingual school nurse as "nonstop." "We have been bringing administration vans for those children, but this is all work that we're doing individually," Rubio told Capitol News Illinois. "We're not getting any help."

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