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VOL. 86 • NO. 52

YOUR FREE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 18, 2024



LENA WINSLOW FACEBOOK PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

## Le-Win students lend a helping hand

Lena-Winslow Junior High student leaders Aubrey Lobdell, Jaxyn Mau, Lukas Price, and Brynn Kuhlmeier load Mr. Greg Andrews' car up with canned goods they collected throughout the month. The items collected were donated to the Lena Food Pantry. The pantry is currently very low on food and supplies. Donations are accepted on Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

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# Whispering Pines Reindeer Ranch & Tree Farm delivers holiday glee

By Celeste Huttes  
ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU  
PARTNERS

Every morning, Randy and Beth Espe watch reindeer frolic outside their kitchen window as they sip their morning coffee—a delightful daily ritual they have fondly dubbed the “rodeo.”

Santa himself would envy their view.

“When they go out into the pasture, they get giddy because it’s cool, and that’s their playtime,” Randy says of the reindeer. “They run, they jump, they kick, they spin. It’s pretty amazing to see.”

And so, the day begins at Whispering Pines Reindeer Ranch & Tree Farm in Shabbona, where the Espe family’s labor of love grew into a beloved holiday tradition for countless families.

## Reining in holiday cheer

What might seem an unlikely retirement gig comes as a slight surprise to those who know Randy well.

“People would bring me abandoned and orphaned animals when I was young,” Randy says. “We raised a lot of raccoons, a pet fox, a little bit of everything. I always dreamed about raising white-tailed deer at some point. But reindeer turned out to be a better choice because they are domesticated. You can snap a halter on them and walk them around on a lead rope—and you can just sit and love on them.”

His dream of deer became a reality after Beth retired from Northern Illinois University and Randy wrapped up a 40-year career in the seed business. As they started a second act in life, the couple set aside 18 acres to grow the small Christmas tree operation they began

years earlier on the family farm.

As Randy researched ways to promote Christmas trees, he discovered Hardy’s Reindeer Ranch in Rantoul. He visited owner Mark Hardy for some tips and promptly fell in love with reindeer.

“In hindsight, I wish I had listened better to Mark,” Randy says. “He told me to take all the money I was going to spend on Christmas trees and buy another reindeer or two. Reindeer have turned into our major focus, and they are actually less work than the Christmas trees.”

Before buying any reindeer of their own, the Espes joined the Reindeer Owners and Breeders Association (ROBA) and the Reindeer Farmers Association (RFA) to learn how to responsibly breed and care for reindeer. By 2018, they felt ready to welcome their first four reindeer from Alaska. Today, their herd numbers more than a dozen.

## Arctic adaptability

A close but more laid-back cousin to the caribou, reindeer represent a distinct subspecies and longtime friends to humans.

“The Laplanders domesticated reindeer thousands of years ago,” says Randy, referring to the Sami people of the northern regions of Scandinavia. “Reindeer are to the Laplanders what the buffalo was to the American Indian.”

Far from their native lands in the Arctic and mountainous regions of eastern Europe, Siberia and Scandinavia, reindeer living in Illinois require special care. According to Randy, ticks and heat present the biggest challenges.

Reindeer delight in frigid winter weather. During



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Whispering Pines Reindeer Ranch & Tree Farm owner Randy Espe brings holiday glee to seasonal events with his reindeer. The ranch and tree farm is located in Shabbona, and is owned and operated by Randy and his wife, Beth.

warmer months, the reindeer typically stay in the barn throughout the day, emerging at dawn and dusk to graze in cooler temperatures.

Those amazing antlers—grown by both males and females—also present a serious safety hazard for reindeer. Sprawling like a tree canopy, the antlers can easily become wedged in a fence or gate.

“Reindeer antlers go in all different directions,” Randy says. “It’s one of the bigger challenges of working with them. We’ve done everything we can to make our fencing safer and try to eliminate places they can get caught.”

Randy notes the steep learning curve involved with raising a nonnative animal and the importance of joining organizations like RFA and ROBA to learn from others’ experiences.

“A lot of products you might typically use for farm animals are not labeled for reindeer,” Randy says. “We medicate them like sheep, feed them like a cow because they’re ruminant, and treat their hair and skin like a horse because they’re sensitive.”

## Magical moments

The Espes have also learned reindeer have a mag-

ic all their own. With their friendly natures and impressive appearance, the Espes’ reindeer often outshine Santa at the many holiday events they attend.

“The reindeer always create a lot of excitement,” Randy says. “Kids just get giddy, and their eyes light up. It’s heartwarming to see how much happiness they bring.”

Every Thanksgiving weekend, the Espes open their ranch to the public for a holiday experience, complete with Santa, reindeer and countless Christmas trees. Eight varieties of evergreen trees grow at Whispering Pines Reindeer Ranch &

Tree Farm, and 2024 marks the first year you can cut your own.

You will also find the Espe family and their reindeer at holiday festivals, Christmas parades and tree-lighting ceremonies across northern and central Illinois throughout the holiday season. To further delight young visitors, Randy and Beth’s three daughters dress up as elves.

Beth recalls a young boy named Fritz who was only mildly excited to see Santa and his reindeer. He told Beth he was really there to see the elf, Ginger Bells, because he follows her on TikTok and thought she was “awesome.”

“Ginger Bells is my daughter, Allie, and she’s very into her role,” Beth says. “Seeing those smiles and hearing those laughs and giggles—it’s the best thing ever.”

From watching their reindeer prance in the pasture to seeing faces light up at the sight of them, the Espes are living their dream.

“Reindeer are such playful and magnificent animals. When they run and jump in the pasture, it looks like they’re learning to fly,” Randy says. “We are blessed to get to see that every day. Reindeer have become part of who we are. And the way they make people feel is magical.”

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

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# Fram Bureau makes a visit to Little Learners Academy

The Farm Bureau staff visited Little Learners Academy preschool in Elizabeth to talk about tree farms. The lesson included reading the book, "Christmas Tree Farm" by Ann Purnell. The story includes how trees need to be tended to all year long and preparing them for sale. The Grandpa in the story opens a Christmas Tree store the day after Thanksgiving and awaits customers to pick out

just the perfect Christmas tree.

After the story, students made DIY birdfeeders. Supplies needed to make the bird feeders include pinecones, peanut butter, bird seed, and string. Spread peanut butter on the pinecone then sprinkle the seeds on the sticky peanut butter. Tie a string on the pinecone and pick a place outdoors to hang it and let the birds enjoy.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Everett Hoftender and Coleson Gabel work at spreading peanut butter on pinecones.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Kinley Smith shows her completed bird feeder.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

## Little Blackhawks

Pictured are Stockton Elementary's Little Blackhawks for the week. These students were recognized for following the Blackhawk Way.

## News briefs

### Lena American Legion Auxiliary

Junior members of the American Legion Auxiliary will meet Dec. 21 at 10 a.m. at the American Legion Home. They will be doing a fun project and a service project. Guests are welcome to attend. Andrea Karnatz and Dawn Spinhirne will be in charge of the social hour.

### Hats Women's socks

Donations can be brought to the Lena American Legion Home on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. at 316 W. Main St., Lena. Donations are greatly appreciated. This list is immediate needs, however other items will always be accepted. Please call 815-369-4684 with any questions.

### Current needs for the Stephenson County VA Pantry

- Dish Soap
- Laundry Soap
- Paper Towels
- Soups
- Mac & Cheese
- Cans of fruit and vegetables.
- Dry panty foods
- Mittens

### Freeport Salvation Army

The Freeport Salvation Army is in need of bell ringers to ring the bell from now until Dec. 24. If able to ring the Red Kettle Bell, go to registertoring.com or contact Sue Gronner, Red Kettle Coordinator at 815-541-1949.

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# OPINION

## Slices of life

# Contemplating the topic of hate



By **JILL PERTLER**  
Columnist

“When hate feels easy, be very wary, lest your hate becomes greater than the one who is hated. Because it is at that point you turn the corner toward evil.”

Today, I've been contemplating hate.

It's a definite switch for me. I prefer to focus on love, because love is so much more important and impactful and life-changing. When you truly embrace love, there is no room for hate.

But the recent political activities have brought up strong feelings in many people and some of those involve hate. I've listened to the news. I've heard people vent in real time. I've read posts on social media. And, sadly, there is much hate circulating the airwaves.

It's made me wonder and ponder the topic.

I don't purport to have all the answers. In this column, as in many others, I'm only answering for myself and from my perspective. I hope to encourage thought, discussion and awareness, but I certainly don't have any of the answers, much less all of them. What I do have are questions.

My first: Is hate ever justified?

I think not. Stay with me

here.

But what about serial killers? What about parents who horribly abuse their children? What about sadists and sociopaths? What about elder abuse? What about schoolyard bullies? What about leaders who use their power in inhumane ways? Isn't that worth our hate?

I think not.

We can have many negative emotions about the actions taken by very bad people, but those emotions do not need to lead to hate.

Hate is a very strong word when it comes to describe feelings toward other people.

We can hate Brussels sprouts. We can hate a rainy Saturday when we had plans to go to the beach. We can hate cancer. We can hate the

death of a loved one.

But hating another person—even if they do unquestionably bad things? I think not.

Here's the thing: we can hate the actions—the bad things—without hating the person. I know I may be splitting hairs, but I don't think it's in our capacity to hate others. It goes against our DNA. Hate is counterintuitive to what we are meant to be. We are meant to be inclusive. To be brothers and sisters. To be family. To love.

Hate is contrary to love. The two cannot co-exist. And we simply cannot live without love.

I remember the Broadway musical, “Wicked.” It is the backstory to “The Wizard of Oz” and tells of the origins

of the Wicked Witch of the West. As a child I feared her. She was mean and vengeful. She was threatening and combative. She was scary.

She demonstrated no meaningful attributes, because that is what the 1939 movie showed us. But upon seeing the history in “Wicked,” the viewer came to understand the witch who was labeled wicked. Her story illustrated why she became who she was and in knowing that it was much more difficult to see her in the light of all the negative adjectives listed above.

It became more difficult to hate her.

I think that might be the case with most people we deem hate-worthy. We don't know them or their history.

I'm not making excuses

for inexcusable behavior, but I am saying that people—each of us—live out our own history, and while behaviors might be inexcusable and hateful, people themselves are not.

We may have to put them in prison for the rest of their life. We may have to relegate them to whatever justice suits their actions. We may renounce their actions and mourn with the people they hurt. We may never get over the impact they made on our lives.

But we need not hate.

Hate brings about such negativity to the person experiencing it. Hate hurts the person doing the hating, much more than it hurts the hated.

See HATE, Page 12

### NOTICE OF PROPOSED PROPERTY TAX INCREASE FOR Lena-Winslow CUSD #202

I. A public hearing to approve a proposed property tax levy increase for Lena-Winslow CUSD #202 Stephenson and JoDaviess Counties, Illinois for 2024 will be held on December 18, 2024 at 517 Fremont St., Lena, IL 61048 at 7:00.

Any person desiring to appear at the public hearing and present testimony to the taxing district may contact Tom Chiles at [chilest@le-win.net](mailto:chilest@le-win.net).

II. The corporate and special purpose property taxes extended or abated for 2023 were \$6,158,677

The proposed corporate and special purposed property taxes to be levied for 2024 are \$6,466,073. This represents a 4.99% increase over the previous year

III. The property taxes extended for debt services and public building commission leases for 2023 were \$341,109

The estimated property taxes to be levied for debt service and public building commission leases for 2024 are \$341,109

IV. The total property taxes extended or abated for 2023 were \$6,499,786

The estimated total property taxes to be levied for 2024 are \$6,807,182. This represents a 4.73% increase over the previous year

(Published in The Shopper's Guide Dec. 18, 2024)

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## Weekly connection

# A Christmas surprise

I got a wonderful early Christmas present the other day and it wasn't a new tool or flannel shirt. It wasn't a new pair of sweatpants or a box of mixed nuts. No, it was a different sort of gift that gave my heart a huge blessing. Allow me to explain. Since my newspaper article runs in both my present and past communities, I thought it would be fun to write about what happened last week. It was almost thirty-five years ago that my wife and I packed up and left the South Wayne, Wisconsin community for a career over in the Clinton, Wisconsin community. We both had become teachers, and Clinton was the place where we landed when I got my first full-time teaching job. We taught, coached, and raised our family in Clinton, pouring ourselves into that wonderful community for twenty-seven years. We even helped start a church and then I was the pastor for twenty of those years. We both taught and coached so



By **SCOTT CERNEK**  
Columnist

many kids that it became hard to keep all the names and years straight. They say you remember your early years and your most recent years as a teacher, but you tend to get the middle years a little scrambled. Anyway, after we left Clinton and returned to our home area about seven years ago, we both got involved in teaching and coaching again at our alma mater Black Hawk School in South Wayne. Here's where the cool part begins. About a week ago we noticed that the girls' basketball teams of Black Hawk and Clinton were going to be playing a non-conference game in South Wayne. We knew we had to go to watch the game and to see if anyone we knew would be there.

It couldn't have been a more enjoyable night. Right away when we got there and looked over the rosters, I recognized all the girls from Clinton because they were all my elementary PE students that I had taught just a few years prior. The big difference was they had all grown up a couple feet

or more since then. The game was a hard-fought battle between the two teams with Black Hawk winning. After the game we had some great conversations with the parents of the players who were mostly all my students from my earliest years teaching in Clinton. It was like a big family reunion with lots of laughs and a few hugs to boot. The biggest blessing of all was when all the Clinton girls came out of the locker room after the game and gathered around. We were laughing and talking and they all had fond memories of me as their elementary PE teacher. I've always said there isn't a better job than being an elementary PE teacher. Everyday feels like Christmas because being an elementary PE teacher is like being Santa Claus. You're everybody's hero. I've only known a couple kids in over thirty years of teaching who didn't like elementary PE.

The other day one of my students here at Black Hawk asked me why I still wanted to be a teacher when I was already a grandpa. I told her that it's because I just love kids even if they're not my own. I love teasing them, giving them fist bumps, but mostly watching them grow and change and learn the art of respecting others

See SURPRISE, Page 13



# Church news

## Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

All are invited to worship at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 118 E. Mason St. Lena, IL on Sunday, Dec. 22 for Worship Service at 9:30 a.m. This will be the Fourth Sunday of Advent. This week's gospel reading is from the Gospel Luke 1:39-45.

On Tuesday, Dec. 24 a Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service will be held at 7 p.m. Holy Communion will be celebrated in worship.

A Christmas Day Worship will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Dec. 25. Holy Communion will not be served. Come join in with fellowship and song.

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

## St. John's Lutheran Church

St. John's Lutheran Church, Pearl City, will celebrate fourth

Sunday of Advent at worship on Sunday, Dec. 22 at 9 a.m. We will also be having two candlelight services on Christmas Eve at 5 p.m. and 9 p.m. Join on Facebook if you can't make it in person.

Everyone is welcome to come to St. John's to come play cards and dominoes in Luther Hall on Thursday, Dec. 19 at 1 p.m. to play dominoes in Luther Hall on Tuesday, Jan. 7.

All kids in grades K-5 are welcome to come to St. John's in Pearl City on Wednesday, Dec. 18 from 3:15 p.m. to 5 p.m. to be a part of the Kids Klub. Kids Klub is a monthly adventure supported by the Pearl City area churches and offers a safe and supportive environment where children can hear bible stories, do crafts, play games, and enjoy delicious snacks. All children in the Pearl City community are welcome to come. For more information or to register your child, please contact Pastor Roger Bronkema at [rbronkema18@gmail.com](mailto:rbronkema18@gmail.com) or call 815-291-6261.

We will not be having our December Grace Meal on Dec. 15 as originally planned. Instead, we will be hosting the

Pearl City Community Christmas meal on Dec. 25. The meal will include ham and all the fixing along with dessert. You have the option of eating at St. John's or picking up the meal and taking it home. Reservations are due by Thursday, Dec. 19. The meal is funded through donations from Pearl City community businesses and will be prepared and served by members of St. John's Church of Pearl City, the Pearl City United Methodist Church, and Zion Community Church. If you would like to donate to this meal, reach out to the St. John's church office.

The next Men's Breakfast will be on Wednesday, Jan. 8 at 7:30 a.m. at the Beltline Restaurant in Freeport.

The Healthy Wolves group will be packing backpacks on Monday, Dec. 16 at 3:15 p.m. If you are interested in donating to this ministry, reach out to the church office for more information.

St. John's Lutheran Church of Pearl City is an ELCA parish and is located at 229 First

St. in Pearl City. We are handicapped accessible. If you need to contact the pastor or church, you may call 815-443-2215 for information.

## Calvary Church of Stockton

During Christmas week we will hold the annual Christmas Eve Candle lighting Service at 7 p.m. on Dec. 24. This will be a special service with music selections from the Cantata sung by the Calvary Choir. The service will end as the lights are dimmed throughout the sanctuary with the only light being the candles each person is holding while the congregation sings "Silent Night, Holy Night."

Anyone in the community is invited to join us each Sunday. Sunday School begins at 8:45 a.m. with the Worship Service starting at 10 a.m. The Youth will be meeting on Saturday, Dec. 21 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

## Salem United Church of Christ

We welcome you to join us for our service led by Pas-

tor Christopher Ham at Salem United Church of Christ, 8491 West Salem Road, Lena, Illinois, every Sunday at 10 a.m. Sunday School for children five years and older is held during church service, and nursery is available for children under five years.

Craftroom will be held on Dec. 18 from 4 p.m. until 7 p.m. in the lower level of the church. This space is handicap accessible, and all are welcome to join. During this event, we

enjoy snacks, crafting and good company. There is plenty of space to spread out a large project, or to work on something small.

Family Movie Night will be on Dec. 20 at 6pm, featuring Dr. Seuss' The Grinch. The movie will play in the main sanctuary. Snacks and cocoa will be available, make sure to bring pillows and blankets to get cozy. This event is free and

See CHURCHES, Page 6

## McConnell Community Church

**FREE FAMILY CHRISTMAS MOVIE NIGHT**  
Friday, Dec. 20  
6:30 p.m. in the church gym  
Featuring Disney's Toy Story  
Wear comfy clothes. Popcorn and drinks provided




**Advent Worship**  
Sunday, Dec. 22  
8:45 a.m.

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**  
Tuesday, Dec. 24  
7:00 p.m.


211 N. Hulbert Rd, McConnell, IL

## Joy to the World!

Schapville Zion Presbyterian Church  
635 E. Schapville Road  
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[www.schapvillezion.org](http://www.schapvillezion.org)



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




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**TUESDAY, DEC. 24**  
Christmas Eve Worship  
at 3:30 and 5:30 p.m.

◆◆◆

**WEDNESDAY, DEC. 25**  
Christmas Day Worship with Holy Communion at 9:30 a.m.

◆◆◆

**TUESDAY, DEC. 31**  
New Year's Eve Worship with Holy Communion at 5:30 p.m.

◆◆◆

You may watch any of our services on YouTube by going to either our St. John's website: [www.stjohnslena.org](http://www.stjohnslena.org) or going to our Facebook page.

◆◆◆

**REGULAR WEEKEND SCHEDULE**  
Worship: Saturday 5:30 p.m.  
Sunday 8 and 10:30 a.m.  
Sunday Children's Ministry & Adult Bible Classes 9:15 a.m.

◆◆◆

Rev. Jason Shaw, Pastor  
David Offermann, Director of Family Life Ministries  
Michelle Rothschadl, Parish Assistant  
Sid Kemmis, Lay Minister  
Chris Winter, Ministry Assistant

# Warriors win sixth consecutive matchup

By Trenten Scheidegger  
CORRESPONDENT

The Warren Warriors opened the 2024-2025 Illinois High School boys basketball season with a disappointing 78-41 loss against a good Dakota squad. That wasn't a sign of things to come for the Warriors, however. After picking up a big victory over the Durand Bulldogs last week, the Warriors improved their record to 6-1 on the year.

Durand came into the matchup amid some offensive struggles. They held an overall record of just 2-4 and they were riding a two-game losing streak. They scored just a combined 73 points in those two losses.

Those struggles continued to show when the Bulldogs made the trip to face off with the Warriors on Warren's home court. Offensively, Durand put up just five points in the first quarter. All five of which came from just one player, Ethan Rager.

Warren had three separate players who individually outscore the Bulldogs in the opening quarter. Beau Podnar had a trio of early baskets giving him six points in the quarter. Treyton Pafford quickly exploded

for 13 points, including a pair of first quarter three-pointers. Jordan Kohl hit a pair of threes of his own, giving him six points in the quarter.

Just eight minutes into play, the Warriors were in strong command of this NUIC matchup. Five different Warriors scored in a first quarter that saw Warren jump out to a 30-5 advantage. With the big lead, Warren's offense let up just a little bit in the second. They still combined for 14 points, 13 of which came from the duo of Podnar and Pafford.

Defensively the Warriors continued to hound the Bulldogs. Durand's only success came from Rager, who managed to score a trio of baskets inside. By the halftime break, Warren had already jumped out to a 44-15 lead.

Durand's opening quarter was disappointing, but the third quarter may have been worse. Although Warren would open the second half with just 16 points, Durand put up just four points themselves. They didn't come from the leading scorer, Rager, who was held scoreless in the third. Meanwhile, Pafford put up another seven points as Warren expanded their

lead to 60-19.

With Warren well in control, the Warriors watched the clock tick out on their sixth victory of the young season. Pafford had a dominant night, putting up 28 points, 26 of which came in the first three quarters. Podnar was next up with 14, and Kohl was the third Warrior in double figures with 10. Bryce VanRaalte added eight as Warren picked up a 70-30 victory.

VanRaalte made his presence felt in this matchup in many other ways. The junior led the Warriors with four steals and four blocks. He also had seven rebounds, which tied Kohl for second on the team. Pafford also led the team in assists with six, and rebounds with eight. Podnar and Alex Niemann both had three steals as the Warren defense gave Durand fits all night.

After the Holiday break, Warren returns with a road game on Jan. 4, as they travel to take on the Amboy Clippers at 1 p.m. They return home on Jan. 7 to play host to the Stockton Blackhawks at 7 p.m. Two days later, the Warriors travel to take on the Scales Mound Hornets on Jan. 9 at 7:15 p.m.

# Around the Northern Hills

This past weekend I traveled into Chicago with our Jo Daviess County delegates to the Illinois Farm Bureau annual meeting. The delegates from across the state worked hard to determine the changes and additions to Illinois Farm Bureau's policy. This is what is so great about farm bureau, it is truly a grassroots effort.



By **ANNETTE EGGERS**  
Jo Daviess  
County Farm  
Bureau

## Family Farm signs

It's 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

The value of all Christmas trees harvested was \$399 million. Illinois' crop was worth 7.6 million.

## IAA Foundation scholarships

The IAA Foundation just announced the lineup for the 2025 IAA Foundation Scholarships. This includes 120 scholarships totaling \$210,251. We have had several winners from Jo Daviess County in the past, so I encourage anyone interested to apply. The link will be live for the IAA Foundation website until Jan. 1.

# Affordable health screenings coming to Stockton

Residents living in and around Stockton can learn about their risk for cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, diabetes, and other chronic, serious conditions with affordable screenings by Life Line Screening. Calvary Church of Stockton will host this community event on Jan. 14, 2025. The site is located at 315 W Maple Ave in Stockton.

Screenings can check for the level of plaque buildup in your arteries, related to risk

for cardiovascular disease, stroke and overall vascular health, HDL and LDL Cholesterol levels, diabetes risk, kidney and thyroid function, and more. Screenings are affordable and convenient. Free parking is also available.

Special package pricing starts at \$159, but consultants can create a package that is right for you based age and risk factors. Call 1-877-237-1287 or visit our website at [www.lifelinescreening.com](http://www.lifelinescreening.com). Pre-registration is required.

# happy holidays

## Brandon's Hardware & Rental



Merry Christmas!  
May all your Christmas wishes come true!

145 W. Railroad St. • Lena  
815-369-5542

409524

## Churches (Continued from page 5)

open to the public. For more information on any Salem related items, you can contact 815-369-4511 or [ruth.dake@gmail.com](mailto:ruth.dake@gmail.com).

### St. John's Lutheran Church in Pearl City

St. John's Lutheran Church in Pearl City will be hosting a free community Christmas meal on Wednesday, Dec. 25 with the help of First United Methodist Church and Zion Community Church. People

will have the option of dining in Luther Hall or picking up a meal curbside at the church (229 S. 1st Street). Dine in and pick-ups will be between 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Reservations are due in the church office by Tuesday, Dec. 19 and can be made by calling 815-443-2215. The menu for the meal will be ham, mashed potatoes and gravy, green bean casserole, cinnamon applesauce salad, Hawaiian rolls, and a dessert pudding.

Wishing You Every Happiness At Christmas

May peace, love, joy and good fortune, visit your home this holiday season. We really appreciate your visiting us this past year.

**RADERS INSURANCE AGENCY**

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240 W. Main St., Suite A  
Lena, IL 61048  
(815) 369-4225

Nick and Maya

448225

Wishing you a very happy holiday season and the very best for the new year! Thank you for your business!

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Todd, Chad, Ben, Nate, Mitchell, Braden & Jamie

**815-443-2323**

SANTA'S Workshop

409995

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QUALITY FOOTWEAR FOR YOU

Wishing You a Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year

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410099

**Edler Plumbing**

You know who is on the way and he is bringing bundles of warm wishes!

Have a Jolly Good Season!

**Merry Christmas**

Jerry Edler - Owner • Lena 815-369-4847  
License #058-112368

409069

# Letters To Santa

## River Ridge Second Grade Santa Letters

Dear Santa,  
I am 8 yrs old and my name is Callie. How meny elvs do you have? I have ben nice this yer because I help my mom. I will leave you cookies and careits for renders. I would like lion toys and sum books please.  
Love,  
Callie Butcher

Dear Santa,  
My name is Bexley and I'm 7 yrs old. Is Rudolf good and nise to the uther randeer? I have ben nise this yer. I help my mom bring in the grosher-ees. I will leve you a cooky and milk. I will be happy with whatever you give me.  
Love,  
Bexley Ambrosia

Dear Santa,  
My name is Scout and I am 7 years old. What is the elfs favret tois to make and who is the noddyst reindeer? I was nice this yer because I help with my pets. I will try to leave you cookes. For Chrstimas I would like close please.  
Love,  
Scout Brown

Dear Santa,  
I am Christian. I'm eight. Who is the naughtyist kid in the world? I've been kind because I stay out of the way of things. I will give you cokies and carits. I would like a pet lizard please.  
Sincerely,  
Christian Gunkel

Dear Santa,  
My name is Owen and my age is 7 yrs old. Santa who is the noteist rain dere? I have been nise by leting everyone in front of me. I will leve you som carits for your dere. Please cood I have a Lego set, a robot almost as tal as my brother and a litle toy of the Grinch?  
Love,  
Owen Offenheiser

Dear Santa,  
My name is Addison. I am 7 years old. How do you get your magec? How long for you to get from the North Pole to Galena? I ben nice by taking kar of my dog. I will leave you food for the reindeer on my porch. What I would like for Christmas is a elf pet fox. Merry Christmas!  
Love,  
Addison Veitch

Dear Santa,  
My name is Kamber and I'm 7 years old. Who is the

naughtiest randeer? I have been nice because I set up the tabel. I will leave you cuckees and milke. I would like books please and thank you.  
Love,  
Kamber Rodda

Dear Santa,  
My name is Alana and I am 7 years old. How long does it take to get to Illinoio from the North Pole? I have been nice because I have played with my friends. I will leave you suger cookeis. I would like an elf for Christmas please. And some candy canes please. Merrey Christ-mas!  
Love,  
Alana Smedley

Dear Santa,  
My name is Jackson and I am 7 years old. Who is your naughty reindeer? I have been nice because I help my Nana put the table. I will leave you a Gingerbred house. I would like a ring with a lightning bolt on it.  
From,  
Jackson Deininger

Dear Santa,  
My name is Liam. My age is 7 years old. Do you tell the elfs what to do? I have been nice wen I dun dishes. I will leave you a donut. Santa plees can I have a snowbord

and a foal? From,  
Liam Kibler

Dear Santa,  
My names Zephyr and I'm 8 years old! Is your real name Santa? I've bin nice becaus I helped my sister feel better! I will leave you some giant monster cookies and some carrets for your rain dears and milk. For Christmas I want a Freddy Fazbear plush and candy please and thank you!  
Love,  
Zephyr Penoyer

Dear Santa,  
My name is Jayce and my age is 7. How menny randeer do you have? I have ben nice because I take in the garbigie. I will trey to leve coockees for you. I want a tank for a green tree frog plese and thank you.  
From, Jayce Weist

Dear Santa,  
My name is Everett and I'm 7. Can I have a elf? Wich is the naughtyist randeer? I am nice because I help un-pack the groshrese. I will leave you cookes and milk and carots to eat. I want a geco wall crawler, xbox, and a elf please.  
From,  
Everett Schuler

Dear Santa,  
I am Macy Potter and I am 7 years old. Who is your naughtyst raindeer? I have been very nise Santa because I change Maddies dipper. I will leave you ginger bread cookies. I would like a pet turtle please.  
Love,  
Macy Potter

Dear Santa,  
My name is Dawson and I am 7 years old. How much kids do you give presents? I have been nice because I do chores. I will leave out our good cookies. I would want some Lego sets please and thank you.  
Love,  
Dawson Bingham

Dear Santa,  
My name is Evie and I am 7. How is your year going? I hav ben nice. I don't want anything else but a bike, friends, family and teachers. Sorry Santa, I don't have cookies.  
Love,  
Evie Marks



**LORAN MUTUAL**  
SINCE 1879

Wishing you a very  
**Merry Christmas**  
From you hometown Mutual Insurance Company

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448774

Wishing you every happiness this Holiday Season!

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448709

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from

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Scales Mound • 815-845-2262

448716

**Pro Source**  
Electric and Automation Inc.  
Lena • 815-369-4165

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

409520

Have a Merry Christmas!

Woodbine Service Garage  
815-858-3803

448710

**SANTA'S SHOPPING WISH LIST**

Freedom, joy, a jar of harmony.  
Would you believe  
Santa found them all in aisle three?  
Eggnog, Yule logs.  
There are plenty in store.  
Goodwill, understanding.  
Good thing we ordered more!

Best wishes to you, our friends.  
May your good times never end!

**HARTZELL'S IGA**  
Warren, IL

409511

# Stephenson County Farm Bureau news

By Victoria Hansen

"Planting a Vision" was the theme of this year's Illinois Farm Bureau Annual Meeting that took place Dec. 7 through Dec. 9. As I began to reflect on this past annual meeting, I started to think of the local visions we have planted in each county.

Since 2005 Farmers in Carroll County have donated corn to the Young Leader Harvest for All Program. Since the first year the committee has donated over \$780,000 to local pantries. The first group planted a crop that continues to be harvested 20 years later. The Young Leader Committee was recognized for these efforts in Chicago.

Over eight years ago, Stephenson County Farm Bureau's Young Leaders and past Manager, Bruce Johnson, had an idea to host a Farm-to-Farm Run in rural Winslow. Thus, the Farm-to-Farm 5K/10K Run was born, raising money for Agriculture in the Classroom in Stephenson County. This event has changed over the years but continues to follow the original vision of supporting agriculture education in our county.

I'm not sure either of these groups had imagined that their visions would turn into two incredibly successful events that support those programs in their respective county, but I am beyond grateful they did.

To see photos and learn more about our time at Annual meeting visit the Carroll County Farm Bureau Facebook page, Stephenson County Farm Bureau Facebook page, and the Illinois Farm Bureau Facebook page.

### Holiday office hours

Stephenson County Farm Bureau will close at 4:30 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 23 and remain closed until Thursday, Jan. 2 at 8 a.m. Carroll County Farm Bureau will close at 12 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 24 and remain closed until 9 a.m., Thursday, Jan. 2. If in need of immediate assistance during this time, please call 815-353-9655 and ask for Victoria.

### From Farm to Wick

Start the new year on a fun note by participating in a fun soy candle workshop. Both Stephenson and Carroll County Farm Bureaus will be hosting these fun two-hour programs. Each program will begin at 6:30 p.m. and end at 8:30 p.m. They will be held on Jan. 21, 2025, at the Stephenson County Farm Bureau, 210 West Spring Street Freeport, IL, and again on Feb. 6, 2025, at Carroll County Farm Bureau, 811 S Clay Street Mt. Carroll, IL.

To learn more about pricing and registration details please call the county Farm Bureau that you plan to participate at. Carroll County

Farm Bureau, 815-244-3001 and Stephenson County Farm Bureau 815-232-3186.

### Scholarships available

Both Carroll and Stephenson County Farm Bureau Scholarships will be available on Jan. 1, 2025. Visit our county websites, [www.carrollcfb.org](http://www.carrollcfb.org) and [www.stephensoncfb.org](http://www.stephensoncfb.org) to apply.

### Internship application deadline coming soon

Applications are due on Jan. 8, 2025. Applications can be found on the Stephenson County Farm Bureau Facebook page or website, [www.stephensoncfb.org](http://www.stephensoncfb.org).

# Stephenson County awarded \$20,594

United Way of Northwest Illinois announced that Stephenson County has been awarded \$20,594 in Federal funds made available under the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, (Pub. L. No. 118-47).

Stephenson County is set to receive \$20,594 to supplement emergency food and shelter programs through Phase 42 of the EFSP Allocations. The monies awarded to Stephenson County are used to supplement existing

services that provide emergency food and shelter services in Stephenson County.

The selection was made by a National Board which is chaired by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and consists of representatives from United Way Worldwide, The Salvation Army; American Red Cross; United Jewish Communities; Catholic Charities, USA; and National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

The local board, chaired by United Way of Northwest Illinois and which is comprised of representatives from Stephenson County, is now charged to distribute funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in high-need areas in our communities. The local board is seeking applications from qualified service organizations serving Stephenson County. Those interested in applying can visit United Way of Northwest Illinois' website or contact our office to receive an application.

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

Under the terms of the grant

from the National Board, local organizations chosen to receive funds must:

- 1) Have a Unique Entity Identifier Number
  - 2) Be private voluntary no profits or units of government (If private voluntary organization, must have a volunteer board)
  - 3) Have an accounting system- Be able to accept payment electronically
  - 4) Practice nondiscrimination
  - 5) Be updated on all reports to the EFSP National Board with no compliance issues outstanding
  - 6) Have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter programs
- How to apply: Public or private voluntary organizations interested in applying for Emergency Food and Shelter Program Funds can visit [www.uwni.org/efsp](http://www.uwni.org/efsp) or contact the United Way of Northwest Illinois, Inc. at 815-232-5184 for an application. Grant request applications are due at the United Way office, 524 West Stephenson Street, Freeport, Jan. 13, 2025, by 4 p.m.

# Operation Christmas Child volunteers send Christmas joy to children overseas

Area volunteers are celebrating the collection of gift-filled shoeboxes that will send a message of joy to children around the world. Thousands of volunteers contributed to Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse, by packing shoeboxes filled with fun toys, school supplies, and personal care items.

The global Christmas project will deliver these gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 100 countries, including many who are suffering from war, poverty, disease and disaster. Each shoebox is an opportunity to share the message of the Gospel and bring hope to children in need around the world.

Although drop-off locations have closed for the season, there is still time to share hope and love with children overseas by packing a gift-filled shoebox online. Shoeboxes built online go to some of the hardest-to-reach areas in the world. Those who prefer the convenience of online shopping can browse [samaritanspurse.org/buildonline](http://samaritanspurse.org/buildonline) to select gifts matched to a child's specific age and gender, then finish packing the virtual shoebox by adding a photo and personal note of encouragement. For more information on how to participate in Operation Christmas Child visit [samaritanspurse.org/occ](http://samaritanspurse.org/occ).

*Ring in Good Cheer!*



*The Holiday season is upon us, and we hope it is filled with much joy and happiness!*

**Coach's**  
EST. 2004  
Golf and Grill

Lena  
815  
369-2222

*Happy Holidays to all our friends who visited us throughout the year.*

448571

**Merry Christmas from G & H Painting**



**Thanks for your business - Adam & Brent**

409505

**Let There Be Light This Christmas**



*May this holy time shine with peace, and bring forth happiness to you and your family.*

**Schultz Cleroy Garage**  
815-235-4092

409522

**Merry CHRISTMAS**  
*Happy New Year*

*Stateline Insurance Services Inc.*



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Warren, IL  
815-745-2148

204 Samuelson Dr.  
Orangeville, IL  
815-789-3366

465386



# Letters To Santa

## Stockton Elementary

Dear Santa,  
My name is Logan. I am 6 years old. This year I have been nice. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is rip yopen presents. Why are evs so shrt? Why is Rootof the only reindeer with a red nose? For Christmas this year, I would really like hotwels and tracks. And please bring me a ise and fir mostro truck because thae are fun.  
Love, Logan

Dear Santa,  
My name is Calix. I am 6 years old. This year I have been nice. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is eat food. Do you say ho, ho, ho all the time? How do you get the presents? For Christmas this year, I would really like Sunny and Melon merch exept for the hat and magic and science kits. And please bring me a new computer because if you don't give me the computer then Dexter wont be able to play Roblox.  
Love, Calix

Dear Santa,  
My name is Maci. I am 6 years old. This year I have been nice. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is

et cande. Hou od r u? For Christmas this year, I would really like pant and art supplies. And please bring my mom a new puppy because she can play with it.  
Love, Maci

Dear Santa,  
My name is Eli. I am a junior and 16 years old. I was one of the high school students that helped the first graders write their Santa Letters and I thought it would be fun to do as well. This year I have been nice. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is eat food and sleep in. How do you go so fast? How old are you? For Christmas this year, I would really like shoes and gift cards. And please bring my sister a new pet because she is nice.  
Love, Eli

Dear Santa,  
My name is A'Kai. I am 6 years old. This year I have been nice. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is eat cookies and drink milk. How old are you? For Christmas this year, I would really like a big stuffed penguin and a soccer ball. And please bring my brother a new football because he was good.  
Love, A'Kai

Dear Santa,  
My name is Bo. I am 6 years old. This year I have been nice. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is stack prezits. Are you mazik? How old are you? For Christmas this year, I would really like a PS7 and a Nintendo Swich. And please bring my fish a new sweder because it's cold.  
Love, Bo

Dear Santa,  
My name is Griffin. I am 7 years old. This year I have been nice. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is opan presints. Why do you never diye? How old are you? For Christmas this year, I would really like WWE and woter frogs. And please bring my Brixin a new Nintendo because he is nice.  
Love, Griffin

Dear Santa,  
My name is Daniel. This year I have been nice. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is play in the snow. Why do you give presins to nice kids? How do you git the presins? For Christmas this year, I would really like tranes and mor woodn ralwae. And please bring my dog Bay a new ball because she never ate food off the cour.  
Love, Daniel

Dear Santa,  
My name is Lyanna. I am 7 years old. This year I have been nice, naughty, and doing my best. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is Christmas decorations. Do you like the grich? For Christmas this year, I would really like a pet dog and a baby brother to be ok. And please bring my brother a new outfit because I love him.  
Love, Lyanna

Dear Santa,  
My name is Jessie. I am 6 years old. This year I have been nice, naught, and doing my best. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is opin my presins. How do rand-er fly? How do the randers ete? Wiy do we not touch the elf? For Christmas this year, I would really like a mak up kit and noow shoos. And please bring my bruthr a new XBOX because it macks him happy.  
Love, Jessie

Dear Santa,  
My name is Scarlett. I am 6 years old. This year I have been nice, naughty, and doing my best. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is see my presints. How do your rand-er fly? How do you get your power? For Christmas this year, I would really like a sa-

dle and a manikin. And please bring my hamster a new saddle because I love horses.  
Love, Scarlett

Dear Santa,  
My name is Audra. I am 6 years old. This year I have been nice, naughty, and doing my best. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is eat cookes. How can the randers fly? How do the elfs halp Santa? For Christmas this year, I would really like a hamster and a rabit. And please bring my bruder a new football because he has ben nice to me.  
Love, Audra

Dear Santa,  
My name is Haley. I am 7 years old. This year I have been nice. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is make cookys. What is your favorit ranedere? What is your favorit elf? For Christmas this year, I would really like a camra and a skuishmelo. And please bring my sister a new jellycat because she loves cats.  
Love, Haley

Dear Santa,  
My name is Grayson. I am 6 years old. This year I have been nice and doing my best. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is spend time with family. How many elfs do you hav? How do you give so many gifts? For Christmas this year, I would really like nerf blasters and cars. And please bring my cat a new bed because my dogs ript it up.  
Love, Grayson

Dear Santa,  
My name is Madison. I am 6 years old. This year I have been naughty. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is opin presets. Where do you liv? Wut is your favorite coocke? For Christmas this year, I would really like a stuffid toy. And please bring my mom a bed because it is small.  
Love, Madison

Dear Santa,  
My name is Aleksandar. I am 7 years old. This year I have been doing my best. My

See LETTERS, Page 10

Merry Christmas  
from  
LINGLE DESIGN GROUP

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
Thank you for your business. We look forward to serving you next year.  
Buss Boyz Customs  
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815-369-2803  
www.bussboyzcustoms.com

Merry Christmas  
from  
All Of Us At  
Stephenson Service Company  
815-235-7400

It's Christmas Time in the City!  
We hope everyone enjoys the Holiday Season!  
Kempel Urish Construction, Inc.  
Tony 815-541-0570  
Jamie 815-541-0272

Spread the News  
It's Christmas!  
It's Christmas in the city, and in the country too. As the spirit of the season lights up the world and wraps us in it's glow, we want to express our appreciation to you, loyal friends and neighbors. We wish you the brightest holiday season ever and thanks for making our year extra special.  
Shoppes Guide  
The Scoop Today

# Letters (Continued from page 9)

favorite thing to do at Christmas time is going sledding. Are you rel? Do you have infinit presents? For Christmas this year, I would really like tractor and a soker cort. And please bring my dad a new tractor because he can wrk on the frm.  
Love, Aleksandar

Dear Santa,  
My name is Wade. I am 7 years old. This year I have been nice. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is mackeing coocees. How do you git in the fire plasis? How does yor slay fly? For Christmas this year, I would really like a milutaree set and ras kars. And please bring my bruthrs some toys because they are nis.  
Love, Wade

Dear Santa,  
My name is Miley. I am 6 years old. This year I have been doing my best. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is opin presents. Do you like sledding? Do you have a desk? For Christmas this year, I would really like hedfons and a desk. And please bring my Maya a new hedfons because she is rele nise.  
Love, Miley

Dear Santa,  
My name is Marshall. I am 6 years old. This year I have been nice, naughty, and doing my best. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is hanging wif my famule. Can I get a lago set? How od are you? For Christmas this year, I would really like a lago set and a box of mine figs. And please bring my dad a new presunt because he desrvs it.  
Love, Marshall

Dear Santa,  
My name is Oliver. I am 6 years old. This year I have been nice. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is play in the sno. How's Rudolf? For Christmas this year, I would really like a scrbrd and a football. And please bring my Coco a new yern ball because she dus not have one.  
Love, Oliver

Dear Santa,  
My name is Layne. I am 6 years old. This year I have been nice and naughty. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is go outside and play in the sno. How old are you? How is Roodoff? How old are your raiindeers? For Christmas this year, I would really like a baby puppy and a small do toy. And please bring my dog a new chew toy because my dog keeps runing the ones he already has.  
Love, Layne

Dear Santa,  
My name is Melody. I am 6 years old. This year I have been nice and doing my best. My favorite thing to do at Christmas time is Elf of the Shelf games. Wi dus Santa not get cold? For Christmas this year, I would really like a tablit and stufis. And please bring my mom a new little citin because I want a citin to play with.  
Love, Melody



# Highland celebrates first semester in new, donor-funded CNC/CAD lab

Years of work on manufacturing facilities at Highland Community College culminated with a Greater Freeport Partnership ribbon-cutting for the institution's new CNC lab on Dec. 12, 2024.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Highland has kicked off the last two semesters by more than doubling spaces for manufacturing programs. The refurbished CNC (computer numeric control) and CAD (computer-assisted design) learning lab was unveiled this fall, and the spring term began with a similar welding lab expansion.

**Highland Community College celebrates the opening of the institution's new CNC lab on Dec. 12, 2024. The redesigned lab incorporates a new CNC mill, two additional simulators, expanded inspection and tooling options, and advanced measurement with a donated coordinate measuring machine (CMM).**

"As part of our Strategic Plan, Highland has been focusing our creative energy and resources on a key concept we call 'Reimagine.' This CNC lab expansion encapsulates these efforts," said HCC President Chris Kuberski. "Our manufacturing programs were experiencing space limitations, and seat capacity was hindering our potential. This remodel project enabled us to reimagine vacant adjoining spaces."

community Programs. "We have given our faculty the tools they need to continue serving students and preparing them to make a difference in the workforce — whether as an entry level operator or an apprentice. Thank you to our partners like Honeywell, Danfoss, Carroll Industrial Molds and Anchor Harvey who have worked with us hand-in-hand for over three decades to meet the needs of the manufacturing community."

community, Highland, and most importantly, the students we serve," said Dan Dick, executive director of the Highland Foundation. "Your support is not just an act of generosity; it is an act of trust in the power of education and the promise of the mission of Highland."

extra course section to meet student demand. Here again today, this time in our new CNC lab, we are on pace and in place to do the same. I am sure you will continue to hear about the impact of this reimaged space."

The redesigned lab incorporates a new CNC mill, two additional simulators, expanded inspection and tooling options, and advanced measurement with a donated coordinate measuring machine (CMM). "Once the vision was cast and the funds were secured, many had their hands in the success of this project," said Scott Anderson, vice president of Business, Technology and Com-

Generous donors helped fund the recent growth in both CNC and welding — with the Highland Foundation rallying support through their recent Legacy Campaign. Thanks to these efforts, more than \$4.6 million in donations has cleared the way for multiple renovation projects across campus.

To capitalize on these investments in manufacturing, Highland joined with Rock Valley and McHenry colleges in securing a \$5.5 million federal grant through the Department of Labor this April. HCC's portion of this Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grant will infuse more than \$1 million over four years into serving more students entering the skilled trades through CNC and welding.

First-year student Emilee Seebeck, who is taking welding and CNC classes, hopes to make her family and future generations proud by graduating from Highland next year with new career options and higher earning potential. Her stepfather, a CNC machinist, taught her how to weld in their garage.

"To everyone who contributed to this project — whether through a gift, your time, or your advocacy — you have made a transformational difference in our

"Flashing back to just under a year ago on Dec. 14, 2023, we were in this building for the welding lab's ribbon-cutting," said Anderson. "Though we increased the size and capacity of that lab, we still had to add an

"I honestly thought I was going to come to college and not like it ... But when I got here, everybody was just so welcoming, and they made me feel welcome. If I had questions, they answered," said Seebeck. "I actually really am going to miss it next year when I graduate. It's going to be hard to say goodbye to all these amazing people. It's kind of like my second family."

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# Diane Reinhold recognized with State and National Awards for Excellence in Nutrition and Wellness Education

Diane Reinhold, Nutrition and Wellness Educator with the University of Illinois Extension, has recently been honored with multiple awards, both at the state and national levels, recognizing her contributions to nutrition and wellness education. With 11 years of service to Extension serving Jo Daviess, Stephenson and Winnebago Counties, Reinhold has proven herself as a respected leader in nutrition education.

At the 2024 Illinois Extension Association for Family and Consumer Sciences (IEAFCS) State Awards, Reinhold's efforts were celebrated

with two first-place awards and a second-place award for three different programs. These selected programs were then recognized once again at the 2024 National Extension Association for Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) National Awards, where she placed first in the central region with her *I MADE That!* publication series; second in the central region for her *Food Allergies in Schools* program; and third-place nationally, for the Florence Hall Award for the Community Seminar Series.

Reinhold's *I MADE that!* program consisted of ed-

ucational information geared towards youth in the kitchen. The publications included fun activities, cooking tips, healthy lifestyles, and encouraged participation in the Illinois 4-H program.

The *Food Allergies in Schools* program provides relevant, up-to-date information about food allergies and guidelines for implementing school nutrition policies as well as increasing the knowledge of nutrition staff who provide healthy school meals.

The Community Seminar Series provides education to University of Illinois graduate

students by mentorship from Extension Educators. The goal of this series is to improve graduate students' science communication skills.

"I am incredibly proud of Diane Reinhold for receiving state and national recognition of her work. Her dedication

and commitment to excellence has been a testament to the positive impact Extension has had in our local communities," remarks University of Illinois Extension County Director Margaret Larson.

Through her work with the University of Illinois Extension,

Reinhold offers a variety of educational programs focused on nutrition, wellness, food preservation and food safety. For more information about Diane Reinhold's programs or to inquire about upcoming events, visit [go.illinois.edu/jsw](http://go.illinois.edu/jsw).



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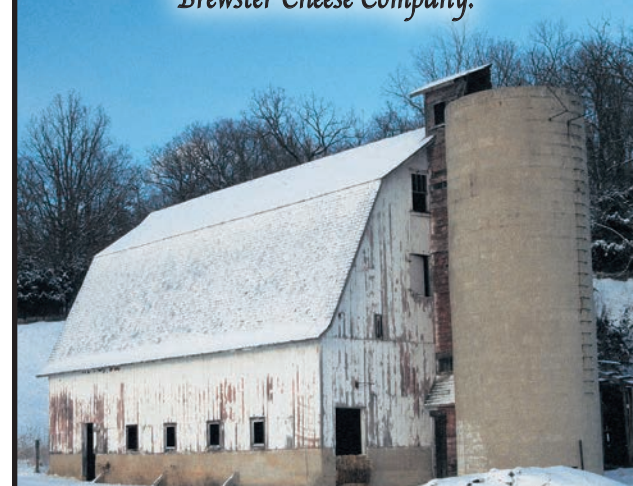


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# Panthers split games with Durand, Dakota

By Trenten Scheidegger  
CORRESPONDENT

The Lena-Winslow Panthers got off to a 3-0 start to the 2024-2025 boys basketball season. They didn't suffer their first loss until meeting up with a 7-1 Dakota Indians squad on Dec. 13. That wasn't before the Panthers picked up a big win over a fellow NUIC opponent in the Durand Bulldogs. Durand has gotten off to a bit of a slow start to the season, and the Panthers quickly exposed some of their weaknesses. Turnovers allowed the Panthers to establish a lead in the first half. Durand's offense managed to hang around with a few first quarter three-pointers, but Le-Win maintained their advantage.

Cobryn Lynch had the hot hand as a couple of three-pointers gave him eight points in the opening

quarter. Miles Mahon added six points with a trio of baskets. Altogether, the Panthers outscored Durand 24-17 in the first.

Mahon continued to attack the interior of Durand's defense in the second quarter. Mahon exploded for 10 points in the quarter, many of which came off fastbreak opportunities. Late in the half, Mahon hit Jaylen Rakowska for a deep three, which put the Panthers up big heading into the break. It was Rakowska's third three-pointer of the quarter. Mahon and Rakowska combined for 19 points in the quarter. The Panthers put up 27 as a team as they took a commanding 51-30 lead into halftime.

Le-Win was in a comfortable position to pick up their third win of the season at that point. Mahon continued to attack when he came

out the break. Another eight points in the third quarter helped Mahon get over the 20-point mark.

Durand made the score look closer than it was by outscoring Le-Win 17-7 in the fourth. Still, the Panthers picked up a convincing win with a final score of 74-57. Mahon led the way in scoring with 24 points. Rakowska was next up with fifteen, and Lynch had eight in the victory.

First year head coach, Mark Blakely, couldn't have asked for a much better start to his new gig. The team had three games and three victories, all by double-digit deficits. Blakely and the Panthers found themselves on the other end of the stick when they traveled to take on Dakota, however.

Coming into the matchup, Dakota already held an overall record of 6-1. They were

fresh off a blowout 51-18 victory over the Orangeville Broncos. Even after hosting the 3-0 Panthers, Dakota's only loss was to an undefeated Eastland Cougars squad.

Dakota started both halves with convincing opening quarters. In the first, they outscored Le-Win 17-12. Then again to start the second half, the Indians outscored the Panthers 22-17. The Panthers were able to keep pace in the closing quarters, but the deficit built in the first and third quarters proved to be the difference.

Le-Win had a strong duo performance from Rakowska and Aiden Wild. Rakowska led the team with 18 points off four three-pointers. Wild added 14 of his own. Koby Kearns finished with nine, all of which came from beyond the arc in the fourth quarter. Mahon also finished with nine as the Panthers fell by a final score of 66-55.

There was no need to panic, and really no time to, for the Panthers. The following afternoon, Le-Win began play in this year's Forrester Holiday Tournament by facing off with the River Ridge Wildcats.

## Le-Win Stadium Committee reveals stainless-steel placard details for donor recognition

Just in time for the holidays, the Lena-Winslow Stadium Committee has released placard recognition plans for Stadium Project gifts. Stainless-steel placards, displayed at the facility, will represent a lasting tribute to proud Panther supporters in recognition of gifts of \$500 or more.

"We want to celebrate the folks who are helping us build the new stadium in a meaningful way," said Dr. Thomas Chiles, Superintendent. "Whether donating personally, on behalf of your organization or as a gift to your family, the stainless-steel placards will be a lasting symbol of your contribution to Le-Win Athletics. It would be a great way to honor the ultimate Panther fan in your life."

To learn more about the Stadium Project or view placard sizes and tiers:

Website: [lwstadiumproject.com](http://lwstadiumproject.com)

Facebook: "Lena-Winslow Stadium Project"

Email: [donate@lwstadiumproject.com](mailto:donate@lwstadiumproject.com)

Donations can be dropped off at Community Bank in Lena or mailed to Community Bank PO Box 189 Lena, IL 61048 (checks payable to Le-Win Stadium Fund).

## •Hate (Continued from page 4)

Hate does not heal. It does not inspire. It does not illicit compassion. It does not foster kindness. It does no good.

Instead it eats one from the inside out. Hate is black and bleak where there could be light and love.

So, go ahead, hate broccoli

or the smell of mothballs, but reject hate against other humans. It does them no good. But more importantly, it does you no good. Compassion, on the other hand goes a long way to accomplishing something.

Something beautiful. And loving and lovely.

And that, my friends, is my wish for you. Today and every day.

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.

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# Lena SONS of the American Legion Christmas celebration

Nearly 50 people attended the Lena SONS of The American Legion annual Christmas party. Attendees enjoyed pizzas, Christmas cookies, and beverages provided by the SONS. A raffle with 16 \$25 Sullivan's gift cards were awarded.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

## • Surprise (Continued from page 4)

and themselves. It's just a blessing to be a part of so many lives over the years in two different but similar communities. I remember as plain as day when I got the call to go to Clinton to teach back in 1990 and I remember when I got the call to start again in 2021 at Black Hawk. In Proverbs 3:5-6 we read; trust in the Lord with all your

heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths. I have to say God has been so good to us to direct our paths right into the lives of so many young people and their families over the years. It has been a joy. Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas! Until next week, God bless.



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# Letters To Santa

## Mrs. Merboth's 1st Grade Class

Dear Santa,  
How do you make toys?  
How do you get in my house?  
Please bring my mom a calendar. My dad could like warm boots. Kashton wants tractors and cows. Kamden would like some tractors. Destiny would like a raccoon stuffie. Please bring me some

figdets. Also bring me some Stitch stuff and a L.O.L doll. I have tried to be good all year!  
Your Friend, Kylynne

Dear Santa,  
How do your reindeer fly?  
What do your elves look like?  
Please bring my brother a toy motorcycle. Please bring my sister, Payton, a phone. Please bring my mom a dish bowl. Please bring my sister, Elana, a new phone. Please bring me

a hoverboard, phone, and real cute puppy. I have tried to be good all year!  
Your Friend, Kayslee

Dear Santa,  
Where does your magic come from? Who is your favorite reindeer? Please bring my mom a kitten. Please bring my dad a PS5. Please bring my sister a bike. Please bring my brother a kid powered wheel toy. Please bring

me a PS5. I would like a monitor and a T.V. to go with the PS5. I have tried to be good all year!  
Your Friend, Lennon

Dear Santa,  
Where do you get your magic from? How do you make your toys? Please bring my brother a Dolphin's puzzle. Please bring my mom flowers. Please bring my dad beef jerky. Please bring me a hoverboard. I would also like a Christmas puzzle and Christmas lights for my room. I have tried to be good all year long!  
Your Friend, Natalie

Dear Santa,  
How do you get through the chimney? Who is your favorite reindeer? Please bring my mom a cat. Please bring my brother, Gannon, a stuffed animal giraffe. Please bring my sister, Pyper, a new phone. Please bring my baby sister blocks. Please bring my sister, Myah, a Barbie to play with. Please bring my dad 3 PS5s. Please bring me a PS5, a power wheel, and a 4 wheeler. I have tried to be good all year!

Your Friend, Cain  
Dear Santa,  
Where does your magic come from? How do you make the toys? Please bring

my mom a sparkly necklace. My dad would like a new T.V. Oakley wants a hoverboard. Remi, Lily, and Kylor would like a fun game. Please bring me a phone. I also want a tablet and computer. I have tried to be good all year!

Your Friend, Emberlynn  
Dear Santa,  
Where does your magic come from? How do you get in my house? Please bring my mom a phone bag. My dad would like a huge blanket for the barn. Oliver wants his own farm supplies. Camryn want a hoverboard. Bryce would like some makeup. Please bring me an iPad with a Stitch case. I also want a Stitch backpack and Stitch makeup. I have tried to be good all year!

Your Friend, Bryce  
Dear Santa,  
How do you make toys? For Christmas I want Mikey Mouse toys. I also want Little people toys. Please bring Archer some Thomas toys. I have tried to be good all year!

Your Friend, Penny  
Dear Santa,  
First, what do the elves look like? What is your favorite cookie? Next, can you bring my dad some fishing hooks? My mom wants an Apple iPad. Blane would like chew toys. Then, could you please bring me an iPad, a drum set, and a Nintendo Switch. Last, I have tried to be good all year! Merry Christmas!  
Your Friend, Bently



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# Letters To Santa

Dear Santa,  
First, who is your favorite reindeer? What is your favorite cookie? Next, can you bring my mom a statue of a baby elephant? My dad wants Twinkies. Roy would like action figures. Then, would you please bring me an Elf on the Shelf, and a drum set. Last, I have tried to be good all year! Merry Christmas!  
Your Friend, Madalyn

Dear Santa,  
First, why is Buddy the Elf so big? How do the reindeer fly? Next, can you bring Ellie a Pokemon ball? My mom wants some jewelry. Then, could you please bring me a Captain America nerf gun, Pokemon balls, and a watch. Last, I have tried to be good all year! Merry Christmas!  
Your Friend, Micah

Dear Santa,  
Who is your favorite reindeer? How do you get your magic? My brother would like a toy car. My mom wants some books. Dad would like a new job. One thing I would like is a pair of clip-on earrings. I would also like a Barbie dream house that I can fit in. I have tried to be good all year!  
Your Friend, Everly

Dear Santa,  
How do you make a corn planter? How do you make a toy silage bagger? My dad would like a combine. My mom wants a new vacuum. My sister would like a doll house. One thing I would like is a pedal combine. I would like a pedal grain cart. I have tried to be good all year!  
Your Friend, Jackson

Dear Santa,  
Who is your favorite elf? What is your favorite cookie? My brother would like a snowmobile. My dad wants a corn planter. Mom would like for me to listen. One thing I would like is a Steelers necklace. I would also like a snow globe. I have tried to be good all year!  
Your Friend, Thatcher

Dear Santa,  
How do you get your magic? How do you get down the chimney? My mom would like a back rest. My dad wants his kids to listen. My sister would like a Barbie. One thing I would like is a whistle. I would also like a Lego set. I have tried to be good all year!  
Your Friend, Deacon

## Mr. Allen's Kindergarten class

Dear Santa,  
I would like a nerf gun, a phone and a racecar that is a lego set. I am being half good.  
Your friend,  
Dylan Slater

Dear Santa,  
How do you fly for so long in the dark? You're the best. You're super nice. I would like new shoes and new roller skates for Christmas. Merry Christmas! HO HO HO!  
Your friend,  
Olivia Dussing

Dear Santa,  
Why did my elf poop on my toothbrush? Please tell Jingle not to do it again. It was very very random and gross. I would like money for Christmas.  
Your friend,  
Stone Milan

Dear Santa,  
I would like a wallet and a PS5 for Christmas. I've been

nice this year and good for my dad.  
Your friend,  
Quincy Ellis III

Dear Santa,  
Do you make Barbie dolls and a Barbie doll slide? Are you going to deliver my Barbie? Do you make a life pet box? My elf, little Evan, almost rode over the people on Caleb's tractor. Thank you for delivering the presents.  
Your friend,  
Lidia Pasch

Dear Santa,  
How do you fly? How do you reindeer eat food? How do you read your list?  
Your friend,  
Zoey Thompson

Dear Santa,  
Does my elf fly? I would like a super web slinger and a drum set for Christmas.  
Your friend,  
Ben Liebenstein

Dear Santa,  
How do you fit down a chimney? I am five years old. I would like a Santa Jack and

some Peter Pan toys for Christmas. I would also like a Grinch blow up for Christmas.  
Your friend,  
Henry Caswell

Dear Santa,  
I would like a doll house and a toy car for Christmas. Can you bring me an elf on the shelf? Merry Christmas, Santa.  
Your friend,  
Esmee Villanueva

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I would like a Barbie doll house for Christmas. Merry Christmas!  
Your friend,  
Ariella Kuhlemeyer

Dear Santa,  
I have a Santa dress at home. I also have a key and a carrot for your reindeer. I want you to come to my house and drop the presents off under the tree in my sister's room. I would like a doll and a doll house for Christmas.  
Your friend,  
Adrianna Silva Villegas

Dear Santa,  
How do you come out of a

chimney? How does my elf fly? My elf put tissue paper on my Christmas tree. I did not like that. I would like a drum and a XBOX for Christmas. Bye.  
Your friend,  
William Johnson

Dear Santa,  
I think I have been a good girl this year. I would like a nail shop for my babies this Christmas. Can you bring me an elf this year? Merry Christmas!  
Your friend,  
Kamryn Heimerdinger Baake

Dear Santa,  
How do your elves make presents? My elf has been bad this year. I would like a purple boots for Christmas.  
Your friend,  
Gracie Endress

Dear Santa,  
I would like a princess for Christmas. I would like McDonalds I really like your elves! I have been doing a really good job in school.  
Your friend,  
Harlow Sandrick

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*Christmas Greetings from The Village of Lena*  
Thank you to the following who helped put up the Lena Downtown Nativity Scene and Christmas decorations:  
**Village of Lena:**  
Brandt Esling  
Ben Cheeney  
Andy Martin  
Kevin Warner  
**Lena Park District:**  
Dan Brinkmeier  
Vince Decker  
Larry Lott  
**Volunteers:**  
Dan Erner  
Bill Crichton  
Gary Meyers  
Bill Engel  
Larry Friese  
Jim Cox  
Ryan Buss  
**AND ALL OTHER VOLUNTEERS!!!**

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"COUNTRY Financial" is the marketing name for the COUNTRY Financial family of affiliated companies (collectively, "COUNTRY"), which include COUNTRY Life Insurance Company, COUNTRY Mutual Insurance Company, and their respective subsidiaries, located in Bloomington, Illinois.  
0723-175MM\_28988-December 7, 2023  
**COUNTRY FINANCIAL**

# Letters To Santa

## Mrs. Bunker's Kindergarten class

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I have tried to be good this year. I would like a sonic for Christmas. I would like a big present.  
Merry Christmas, Ian

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I have tried to be good this year. I would like a Christmas tree this year. I would like Sonic. How are the reindeer?  
Merry Christmas, Emily

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I have tried to be good this year. How are the reindeer? I would like Minecraft Lego sets and a Rescue set. I will leave you cookies.  
Merry Christmas, Linkin

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I have tried to be good this year. How are the reindeer and Mrs. Claus?  
I would like a standing scooter. I would like real makeup and a pink kitchen set. I would like light up roller shoes. I will leave you cookies.  
Merry Christmas, Clairissa

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I have tried to be good this year. I would like a John Deere chainsaw. I would

also like a new John Deere weed eater and lawn mower. I will leave you cookies and milk.  
Merry Christmas, Brantley

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I have tried to be good this year. How are the reindeer? I would like a Playdoh bike and car. I would like a kitchen set and food for Ainsleigh and I. I will leave you cookies and milk. I love you Santa!  
Dylan

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I have tried to be good this year. How are you? I want an elf stuffy and a pink mushroom stuffy. I also would like a makeup salon and Elsa. I would like playdoh and cookie cutters. I also want a Christmas tree that is white for my room. I will leave you cookies and Diet Coke.  
Merry Christmas, Harra

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I have tried to be good this year. How are the reindeer? I would like rainbow colored new shoes. I want a new tablet. I would also like some playdoh. I will leave you Christmas tree cookies and milk.  
Merry Christmas, Cadence

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I have tried to be good this year. How are you?

I would like a toy wolf, tiger and dinosaur. I want a play doh set.  
Merry Christmas, Dalen

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I have tried to be good this year. I will leave you cookies and milk. I would like a unicorn. Can you bring my brother, some tractors and dinosaurs?  
Merry Christmas, Hazel

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I have tried to be good this year. I will leave you cookies and milk. How are you and the reindeer? I want new baby Yoda things. I also want games for my brothers and I to play.  
Merry Christmas, Logan

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I have tried to be good this year. How is Mrs. Claus? I would like a Nintendo Switch. I would also like some markers. I would also like legos.  
Merry Christmas and I will leave you a treat!  
Olivia

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I have tried to be good this year. I would like pink super kitties and a deer stuffed animal.  
Merry Christmas, Rilynn

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I have tried to be good this year. How are the reindeer? I would like a Santa stuffed animal. Merry Christmas and I will leave you cookies and milk.  
Kashton

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I have tried to be good this year. How are the reindeer? I would like Spiderman for Christmas. I would also like transformers.  
I will leave you cookies and milk and carrots for the reindeer.  
Merry Christmas, Mack

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I have tried to be good this year. How are the reindeer and Mrs. Claus? I will leave you cookies and milk.  
Merry Christmas, Cruz

## Mrs. Hanson's First Grade Class

Dear Santa,  
How are yor deer? I am doing hrd werk. Can I please have toys and a stuffed unicorn?  
Merry Christmas!  
From, Maci

Dear Santa,  
I have some reindeer food for Rudolph. I am being good at school. I want football geer and a xbox and intendoswish.

Have a happy holiday!  
From, Jonathon

Dear Santa,  
Is Rudolph doing good? I am doing good and have been a good boy. Can I please have Cookeez Makery Freezy Cakez, Mr Beast Lab Panther, and a new Disney Mini Brands Advent Calendar. I hope you have a Merry Christmas!  
Love, Axel

Dear Santa,  
Is dashr fine? I am gonu loos mi to front teeth. Can I please have a stuff Pekachoo. I hope you have the best Christmas!!!  
From, Kenny

Dear Santa,  
How are your reindeer and Rudolph douing? I hope they are good. I am working hard at school. Can I pleas have a hula hoop and a reading nook? I hope you and Mrs. Clause are having a nice Christmas.  
From, Clara

Dear Santa,  
How are you gus doing? I love first grade. Can I please have a puppy, Ken doll, and lego set? I hope you have a holly jolly Christmas!  
From, Izabella

Dear Santa,  
How are the reindeer doing? I have been good this year. Can

I please have a cat? I hope you have a Merry Christmas!  
From, Indigo

Dear Santa,  
Is miye elf working hard? I have been eoff at scool. I want a puppee and Christmas toys and stuff unicorn. I hope you have a Merry Christmas!  
Love, Adeline

Dear Santa,  
How are the elves doing? I lost my three teeth. Can I please have a Iphone sixteen? I hope you and Mrs. Claus have a Merry Christmas!  
From, Ira

Dear Santa,  
Santa how is Rudolph doing? Santa I am doing good. Santa can I please have lego ni-jogo? I hope you have a Merry Christmas!  
From, Ayden

Dear Santa,  
Dus Rudolphs nose glo? Can I have a huverbord that I can sit on and five nites at freddy axin figrs? I hope you have a Mare Crismas!  
Luv, Ryan

Dear Santa,  
What is yor favrit game? I like to woch tve. Can I please have pokemon kards? I hope you have a Merry Christmas.  
Love, Mason

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# Letters To Santa

## Mrs. Kempel's First Grade class

Dear Santa,  
First, why do the elves that come to our house not have pointy ears? My mom wants an ornament that opens. My dad wants a new cow. My brothers Tate and Tysen both want football cards. Please bring me football cards too. I have tried to be good all year.  
Love,  
Tripp Tessoroff

Dear Santa,  
First, how do you watch us? Who polishes Rudolph's nose? My mom wants a sweater and my dad wants a new wallet. Oliver wants a hunting gun. Camryn wants a hoverboard. Bryn wants a Stitch backpack. Please bring me a t.v. I have tried to be good all year.  
Love,  
Bryce Plager

Dear Santa,  
Why does Rudolph have a red nose? Do your reindeer talk? My mom wants another kid. My dad wants a new dump truck. Ella wants a new boyfriend. Olivia wants a new volleyball. Sawyer wants a Packers jersey. Blake wants a Go Noodle stream. Please bring me a t.v with NFL games on it. I have tried to be good all year.  
Love,  
Tate Williams

Dear Santa,  
First, how do the elves know if I am behaving? How do you get into a house without a chimney? Next, can you please bring my mom a pair of Uggs? My dad would like a blackstone grill. Crew wants a hoverboard. Then, please bring me a digital pet and a makeup kit. Last, I have tried to be good all year! Thank you!  
Love,  
Collins Kempel

Dear Santa,  
How do you polish Rudolph's nose? When do you wash the sleigh? Please bring Cora a doll. Dad would like to feel better before Christmas day. My mom wants a recipe box. Aubrianna wants more time on her phone. Please bring me Tiger football cards. I would also like a Rudolph stuffy and an electric 4-wheeler with a red helmet. I have tried to be good all year.  
Your Friend,  
Hudson Pickard

Dear Santa,  
How do you make an electric dirt bike? When does the elf come? Please bring my mom a new blanket. My dad

wants a new pocket knife. Kiptin wants a drone. Deklan wants Dolphin football cards. Adeline wants more makeup. Please bring me a jet boat. I also want a drone and a helicopter boat. I have tried to be good all year.

Your Friend,  
Kezlin Pickard

Dear Santa,  
First, where did your elves come from? How do elves fly? Next, can you bring Lidia a Gabby's dollhouse? My mom wants a back massager and work scrubs. My dad wants work clothes. Then, please bring me a digital pet. Last, I have tried to be good all year! Thank you!

Love,  
Caleb Pasch

Dear Santa,  
How do you make electric guitars? How do you make a toy dog? My mom wants joy and love. My dad wants joy and love too. I would like a big Bluey blanket with Bingo and dad and mom on it. Now, I want a toy dog. I have tried to be good all year.

Love, Annie Merboth

Dear Santa,  
First, what does the North Pole look like? Who polishes Rudolph's nose? Next, can you bring my dad a H runner? Jaxyn would like kinetic sand. Ayden wants a Rashee Rice jersey. My mom would like a cake pan. Please bring me MJ and Jared Goff jerseys. Last, I have tried to be good all year!  
Love, Tristan Hayes

Dear Santa,  
How do you make dinosaur toys? How do you wrap the presents? Please bring Zoey a barbie. Mom would like a tablet. Dad would like a tablet. I would like a toy dinosaur. I have tried to be good all year.

Your Friend,  
Bodhi Thompson

Dear Santa,  
How do you make toys? How does Mrs. Clause make blankets? My mom wants silver stones. My oldest sister wants puzzles. My sister would like a tin full of Pokemon cards. My youngest sister wants baby shark pillows. I would like Bakugauns. I would also like a football. I have tried to be a good friend all year!

Your Friend,  
Bradley Peterson

Dear Santa,  
How do you fly your sleigh? My mom would like cleaning supplies. My dad would like tools. Would you please bring me a remote control car? I have tried to be good all year!

Your Friend,  
Iker Solis Coronel

## Mrs. Robinson's Second Grade class

Dear Santa,  
I have been nice. I share my stuff with my brother sometimes. I help my moms take food in the house. My family would like some gifts. My brother would want a VR. My moms want new movies. I want \$100. I would like some gifts, too please. I want Fortnite gift cards, Pokemon packs, and Fortnite packs. Do elves move when when we are awake? Merry Christmas, Santa!  
Love, Cooper

Dear Santa,  
I have been nice. I filled the dog's water bowl and did my chores. My family would like some gifts. My family wants a new house. I want some gifts too please. I want a Quest 3. How do the reindeer fly? THANK YOU! Don't eat too many cookies!  
With love,  
River

Dear Santa,  
I have been nice. I feed my kitten Tiggy. I help my mom put away the groceries. My family would like some gifts. Dad wants new shoes. Mom would like calf blankets, and Elmer wants toy tractors. I would like some gifts, too please. A PS4 and controllers. How do the reindeer fly? Thank you!  
Love, Nora

Dear Santa,  
I have been nice. I feed Mocha everyday. I help my sister clean her room. My family would like some gifts. Izzi wants a chicken Barbie. Dad would like shorts or socks. Mom wants new hair clips and Adler would like a Lego robot. I would like some gifts too please. I would like a giving bag. I want a light pink and dark purple shirt too. I have one question. When is your birthday? Thank you, Santa!  
With love, Charlotte

Dear Santa,  
I was nice this year. Sometimes I played with my sis-

ter. I helped my sister back up when she fell. My sister would like a glass animal. My dad would like a new work computer. My mom would like Pokemon cards. I would like a new computer. I would like a new phone. Lastly, I want Robux. How do your reindeer fly? Where do you like? What do you eat? Merry Christmas!  
Love, Paxton

Dear Santa,  
I was nice this year. I helped my brother draw. I let my brother have turns with the remote. My baby brother wants a new pacifier. My mom would like a new dishwasher. My dad would like a new frying pan. I would like Dogman toys. I would also like a TY Beanie Baby Bat, Ozzy. Lastly, I want Foxy Figures. How do you make chimneys appear? How fast can your reindeer fly? How much wrapping paper do you have?  
Love,  
Amalia

**See ROBINSON, Page 23**

**Happy Holidays!**

**Bob's Handyman Service**

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

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0724-111MM\_07764-December 13, 2024



**With Warm Wishes**

We wish bright, holiday wishes to all of our customers and friends throughout this joyous season.

**Merry Christmas**

Stockton Auto Supply  
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*We Wish You A Merry Christmas*

from  
**Lanark Dental Clinic**  
**815-493-2244**

Dr. & Mrs. Dennis Walters, Kris, Linsey, Colleen, Dawn, Melanie, Haley, Stephanie and Amy

**STATELINE CONSIGNMENT AUCTION**

**December 27<sup>th</sup> & December 28<sup>th</sup> 2024 – Auction Starts at 8:00 AM**

**Auction Location: 101 E Murray Street Browntown, WI 53522**

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# LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COUNTY OF Stephenson - Freeport, ILLINOIS Carrington Mortgage Services LLC Plaintiff

vs. Kerri Lynn Gerke; et. al. Defendant

23 FC 60 CALENDAR 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 January 15, 2025, at the hour 1:30 p.m., Security First Title Company, 205 West Stephenson Street, Freeport, IL 61032, sell for cash, the following described mortgaged real estate:

THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED PROPERTY IS LOCATED IN STEPHENSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS. LOT 1 IN BLOCK 7 OF WELTY HEIGHTS SUBDIVISION, ALSO BEGINNING AT A POINT ON THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF LOT 1, BLOCK 7 OF WELTY HEIGHTS SUBDIVISION, THENCE WEST ALONG THE NORTHERLY BOUNDARY OF SAID LOT 1, BLOCK 7 A DISTANCE OF 120 FEET TO THE NORTH EAST CORNER OF LOT 14, BLOCK 7 OF WELTY HEIGHTS SUBDIVISION, THENCE NORTH AT RIGHT ANGLES, A DISTANCE OF 25 FEET, THENCE EAST AT RIGHT ANGLES A DISTANCE OF 120 FEET, THENCE SOUTH AT RIGHT ANGLES A DISTANCE OF 25 FEET TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING, THE SAME BEING THE SOUTH EAST QUARTER OF BELMARSER STREET.

P.L.N. 18-18-01-206-005. Commonly known as 1440 S. Burchard Avenue, Freeport, IL 61032.

The real estate is: 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: At sale, the bidder

must have 10% down by certified funds, balance within 24 hours, by certified funds. No refunds. The property will NOT be open for inspection. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.

For information call Sales Department at Plaintiff's Attorney, Codilis & Associates, P.C., 15W030 North Frontage Road, Suite 100, Burr Ridge, IL 60527. (630) 794-5300. 14-23-07033 IJSC INTERCOUNTY JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION intercountyjudicialsales.com I3256825

(Published in The Shopper's Guide Dec. 11, 18 & 25, 2024)

465305

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COUNTY OF Stephenson - Freeport, ILLINOIS Fifth Third Bank N.A. Plaintiff

vs. Deborah L. Roush; et. al. Defendant

24 FC 25 CALENDAR 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 January 15, 2025, at the hour 1:30 p.m., Security First Title Company, 205 West Stephenson Street, Freeport, IL 61032, sell to the highest bidder for cash, the following described mortgaged real estate:

LOT 13 OF HOLSTE'S SUBDIVISION OF PART OF THE NORTH HALF OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 29, TOWNSHIP 27 NORTH, RANGE 8 EAST OF THE FOURTH PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, AS SURVEYED AND PLATTED BY W.H. BUTTERFIELD, PUBLIC SURVEYOR, AUGUST 17, 1896, SITUATED IN LANCASTER TOWNSHIP, STEPHENSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS, DESCRIBED AS

FOLLOWS: COMMENCING 16 CHAINS NORTH AND 33 FEET EAST OF THE WEST QUARTER

SECTION CORNER OF SECTION 29, IN TOWNSHIP 27 NORTH, OF RANGE 8 EAST OF THE FOURTH PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, AND RUNNING THENCE NORTH 92 LINKS; THENCE EAST 10 CHAINS 90 LINKS TO THE RIGHT-OF-WAY OF THE CHICAGO, MILWAUKEE & ST. PAUL RAILWAY COMPANY; THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG SAID RIGHT-OF-WAY 1 CHAIN 3 LINKS; THENCE WEST 10 CHAINS 43 LINKS TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING.

P.I.N. 07-14-29-100-003. Commonly known as 593 North Henderson Road, Freeport, IL 61032.

The real estate is: 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: At sale, the bidder must have 10% down by certified funds, balance within 24 hours, by certified funds. No refunds. The property will NOT be open for inspection. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.

For information call Sales Department at Plaintiff's Attorney, Codilis & Associates, P.C., 15W030 North Frontage Road, Suite 100, Burr Ridge, IL 60527. (630) 794-5300. 14-24-03263 IJSC INTERCOUNTY JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION intercountyjudicialsales.com I3256826

(Published in The Shopper's Guide Dec. 11, 18 & 25, 2024)

465308

STATE OF ILLINOIS IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT STEPHENSON COUNTY-IN PROBATE

In Re the Matter of the Estate of: ALVIN J. KERR, Deceased.

No. 24-PR-81 NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION - CLAIMS

Notice is given of the death of Alvin J. Kerr of Freeport, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued on December 3, 2024, to:

Steven P. Kerr 6902 Spruce St. Finleyville, PA 15332

as independent Administrator of the Estate of Alvin J. Kerr, whose attorney is

Anthony V. Coon Attorney At Law 10 N. Galena Ave., Ste.210 Freeport, Illinois 61032

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

Claims against the estate may be filed in the office of the Clerk of the Court at the Stephenson County Courthouse, 15 N. Galena Avenue, Freeport, Illinois 61032, or with the representative, or both, on or before June 13, 2025, and any claim not filed on or before said date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

Date: 12/3/24 Steven P. Kerr, Administrator

By: Anthony V. Coon Anthony V. Coon, Attorney At Law

Anthony V. Coon, #6269568 Attorney at Law 10 N. Galena Ave., Ste. 210 Freeport, IL 61032 815-235-2212 Fax 815-232-5500 tonycoonlaw@aol.com

(Published in The Shopper's Guide Dec. 11, 18 & 25, 2024)

465350

STATE OF ILLINOIS IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COUNTY OF STEPHENSON PROBATE DIVISION

In the Matter of the Estate of: GEORGE CHARLES LERCH, Deceased.

No. 2024-PR-47 CLAIM NOTICE NOTICE is given of

the death of GEORGE CHARLES LERCH; Letters of Office were issued on August 26, 2024 to Charles Dawson who is the legal representative of the Estate. The attorney for the Estate is Thomas G. Ruud, 318 N. 1st St., Rockford, IL 61107.

Claims against the Estate may be filed on or before July 19, 2025, that date being at least Six (6) months from the date of first publication, or within three (3) months from the date of mailing or delivery of notice to creditors, if mailing or delivery is required by 755 ILCS 5/18-3 of the Illinois Probate Act, 1975 as amended, whichever date is later. Any claim not filed by the requisite date as stated above shall be barred.

Claims against the Estate may be filed in the office of the Stephenson County Circuit Clerk - Probate Division at the Stephenson County Courthouse, 5 N. Galena Ave. 2nd Floor Freeport, Illinois 61032. Copies of claims filed with the Stephenson County Circuit Clerk's Office - Probate Division must be mailed or delivered to the Estate's attorney within ten (10) days after the date of filing.

Dated: December 9, 2024 /s/ Charles Dawson, Executor

Prepared by: Thomas G. Ruud #6188190 Thomas G. Ruud & Associates, P.C.

Attorney for the Estate 318 N. 1st St. Rockford, IL 61107 (815) 961-9100 Tom@TRuudlaw.com (Published in The Shopper's Guide Dec. 18, 25, 2024 & Jan. 1, 2025)

465676

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT STEPHENSON COUNTY - FREEPORT, ILLINOIS Mortgage Assets Management, LLC f/k/a Reverse Mortgage Solutions, Inc.

PLAINTIFF Vs. Judith Eikstadt; et. al. DEFENDANTS

No. 2022FC73 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 03/21/2023, the Sheriff of Stephenson County, Illinois will on January 23, 2025 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 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:

LOTS 160 AND 161 OF SAXBY HEIGHTS ADDITION TO THE CITY OF FREEPORT, ILLINOIS, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED AUGUST 16, 1910, IN BOOK C OF PLATS ON PAGE 47; SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF STEPHENSON AND STATE OF ILLINOIS

PIN 18-13-36-310-010 Improved with Single Family Home COMMONLY KNOWN AS:

1331 W Logan Street Freeport, IL 61032

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).

Continued on next page

# LEGAL NOTICES

Continued from previous page

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.

**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 14-22-08449. I3257236

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# FROM LENA'S KITCHEN



The not so skinny cook

I am writing this column in the coldest weather so far. Thank goodness the heat is working, and the wind didn't blow any electrical lines down. I am grateful for the small things in life. This week features some more Christmas goodies. Try something different and see if you like them! Have a good week cooking.

## Appetizer Wreath

This appetizer wreath is very pretty on a table full of appetizers. It is easy to make because the base is crescent rolls. You can add other vegetables on top if you want. Radishes, green peppers, shredded Brussels sprouts would make for great additions.

- 2 tubes (8 oz/ each) refrigerated crescent rolls
- 1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 C. sour cream
- 1 t. dill
- 1/8 t. garlic powder
- 1/2 C. chopped broccoli florets
- 1/2 C. finely chopped red pepper
- 1 C. finely chopped celery
- Celery leaves

Remove crescent dough from packaging. Do not unroll. Cut each tube into 8 slices. Arrange in a 11-inch circle on an ungreased 14-inch pizza pan. Bake at 375 for 15 to 20 minutes until golden brown. Cool for 5 minutes before carefully removing to a serving platter; cool completely.

In a small bowl, beat the cream cheese, sour cream, dill, and garlic powder until smooth; spread on wreath; top with broccoli, red pepper, chopped celery and celery leaves. Place a bowl of stuffed olives in the center.

## Perfect Winter Salad

This winter salad uses spring mixture bagged lettuce. The dressing is a little savory and sweet. The pecan halves, apples, and dried cherries give it a little crunch.

- 1/4 C. mayonnaise
- 1/4 C. maple syrup
- 3 T. white wine vinegar
- 2 T. minced green onions
- 2 t. sugar
- 1/2 C. canola oil
- 2 pkg. (5 oz. each) spring mix salad greens
- 2 medium apples, thinly

- sliced
- 1 C. dried cherries
- 1 C. pecan halves
- 1/4 C. thinly sliced red onion

In a small bowl, mix the mayo, syrup, vinegar, onions and sugar together; whisk in oil until blended. Refrigerate, covered until serving. Place remaining ingredients in a large glass salad bowl; toss with dressing.

## Amish Chicken and Noodles

Some people like a different side for Christmas. This noodle casserole will fill the bill. I think you could also make it after Christmas and use cooked turkey.

- 3 C. cooked chicken, cut into pieces
- 2 T. chicken bouillon granules
- 2 T. butter
- 5 bay leaves
- 1 pkg. (12 oz.) frozen egg noodles
- 3/4 t. salt
- 1/2 t. pepper
- Parsley, chopped

Place 4 C. water in a stockpot. Stir in granules, butter, and bay leaves. Slowly bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 1/2 hour. Remove bay leaf. Add noodles and cook for 12 to 15 minutes until noodles are tender and liquid is absorbed. Stir in chicken, salt and pepper. Garnish with parsley.

## Beefy Wild Rice Soup

I make a great wild rice soup, but it takes a lot of time and energy. This one is an easy and quick one to put on the table on a cold night. My wild rice soup uses chicken; this one is full of beef.

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1/2 t. Italian seasoning
- 6 C. water, divided
- 1 C. uncooked wild rice
- 2 t. beef bouillon granules
- 1/2 t. pepper
- 1/4 t. hot pepper sauce
- 3 cans cream of mushroom soup

1 can (14 oz.) mushrooms stem and pieces, drained

In a Dutch oven, cook beef and Italian seasoning over medium-high heat until meat is no longer pink; drain. Add 2 C. water, onions, celery, rice, bouillon, pepper, and hot pepper sauce; bring to a boil. Reduce heat and cover; simmer for 45 minutes; stir in the soup and mushrooms. Add remaining water. Stir and cover; simmer for 30 minutes.

## Baked Swiss Chicken

If you are looking for an easy dinner for a supper on a cold night, this chicken recipe

has all the elements of easy and fast. It only takes an hour, and you can serve it with rice or mashed potatoes.

- 6 boneless skinless chicken breast halves (6 oz. each)
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1/2 C. chicken broth
- 6 slices Swiss cheese
- 1 C. crushed seasoned croutons

Preheat oven to 350. Place chicken in a greased 9x13 baking dish. In a small bowl, combine soup and broth; pour over chicken. Top with cheese and sprinkle with croutons. Bake, uncovered, until a thermometer inserted in chicken reads 165, about 35 to 40 minutes. Serve with rice or garlic mashed potatoes.

## Christmas Wreath Cookies

These pretty Christmas cookies are a no-bake recipe. You do have to be organized with all the ingredients and utensils ready to go. They are great on a cookie tray and use corn flakes rather than rice crispies.

- 20 large marshmallows
- 2 T. butter
- Green food coloring
- 3 C. cornflakes
- Red M&Ms, minis (about 2 T.)

Place marshmallows and butter in a microwave safe bowl; microwave, uncovered, on high until butter is melted and marshmallows are puffed, about 45 seconds. Tint with green food coloring; stir in cornflakes. On a waxed paper-lined baking sheet, divide mixture into 8 portions. With buttered hands, working quickly, shape each portion into a 3-inch wreath. Decorate immediately with red candies, pressing to adhere. Let stand until set.

## Lemon Snowflakes

These lemon cookies are a great addition to a cookie tray and are easy to make. You use a cake mix and Cool Whip and only two other ingredients.

- 1 pkg. lemon cake mix
- 2 1/4 C. Cool Whip
- 1 egg, room temperature
- Powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 350. In a large bowl, combine the cake mix, Cool Whip and eggs until well blended. Batter will be very sticky. Drop by tablespoonfuls into powdered sugar; roll lightly to coat. Place on ungreased baking sheets. Bake until lightly browned and tops are cracked, 10 to 12 minutes. Remove to wire racks to cool.

## Turtle Candy

A lot of people love turtle candy. This recipe is one which uses a candy thermometer, so if you aren't into using one, you might want to skip this recipe. However, I suggest you try it because the end result is as good as a Fannie May Turtle!

- 1 lb. pecan halves, toasted
- 2 cans (14 oz.) sweetened condensed milk
- 3/4 C. light corn syrup
- 1/2 C. sugar
- 1/3 C. packed brown sugar
- 1/4 C. butter, cubed
- 1 1/2 t. vanilla
- 1 lb. milk chocolate candy coating, chopped
- Sea salt

On waxed paper lined baking sheets, arrange pecans in small clusters of 4 to 5 pecans each. For the caramel: In a small saucepan, combine the milk, corn syrup, and sugars. Cook and stir over medium heat until a candy thermometer reads 238 (soft ball stage). Remove from the heat. Stir in butter and vanilla. Working quickly, spoon caramel onto pecan clusters. Let stand until set. In a microwave bowl, melt candy coating; stir until smooth. Spoon over caramel. If desired, sprinkle with sea salt.

## Mint Brownies

These chewy mint brownies are a great chocolate addition to a cookie plate. You can use spearmint extract if you are not a peppermint fan. They do take a little planning to make because of all the layers.

- 4 oz. unsweetened baking chocolate
- 2 C. butter
- 4 eggs
- 2 C. sugar
- 1 t. vanilla
- 1 1/4 C. flour
- 1/2 t. baking powder
- Mint Frosting:
- 2 C. powdered sugar
- 4 T. butter, softened
- 1 1/2 t. peppermint extract
- 1 to 2 T. milk
- 4 drops green food coloring

Glaze:  
6 oz. semisweet chocolate chips  
5 T. butter

Preheat oven to 350. Grease a 9x13 baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Chop the butter and baking chocolate into chunks and place together in a microwave safe bowl. Microwave on low power in 30 second intervals, stirring in between, until melted. In a large bowl, beat together the eggs, sugar and vanilla. Slowly add the melted chocolate while stirring. In a separate small bowl, combine the flour and

baking powder. Stir in the flour into the chocolate batter, just until combined. Do not over mix. Pour batter into greased pan and bake for 20 to 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Remove from oven and allow to cool completely.

Frosting: Combine all frosting ingredients and beat until light and fluffy. Add more milk if you want it thinner. Spread the frosting evenly over the cooled brownies. Refrigerate while you make the glaze.

Glaze: Place chocolate chips and butter in a microwave safe bowl. Microwave on low power in 10 second intervals, stirring in between until melted and smooth. Allow to cool for about 5 to 10 minutes. Spread evenly over the frosted brownies. Return to fridge to allow the chocolate to harden. Allow the bars to sit at room temperature for 10 minutes before cutting into squares.

## Final Thoughts

Christmas is fast as approaching as each day passes. The Lena Hometown Christmas Parade was fabulous. Each year it gets bigger. The vision of the Lena Business and Professional Association 11 years ago was a dream that has come to fruition. Thank you to those early members who went out on a limb to make this such a special event.

Lots of people were in Lena last Saturday, and the town was decked out. The Lions Club delivered beautiful poinsettias to people in town who are shut ins and struggling with problems. They are beautiful, and I was lucky enough to be remembered. They are a fantastic group that does so much for our community.

Remember that we have many places to shop in our little town, so don't forget to get your presents here. I hope you have kept warm during the last week; we are to have more seasonal temperatures for a while. Enjoy the beautiful lights in your town!

We are searching for recipes for Christmas cookies and candies, so send some favorites our way. We also will be looking for some holiday recipes as well as some soup recipes. If you find some recipes to share, you can contact us by email at [scoopshopper@rvpublishing.com](mailto:scoopshopper@rvpublishing.com) or by mail at From Lena's Kitchens, *The Shopper's Guide* at Rock Valley Publishing, 1102 Ann St., Delavan, WI 53115. Have a great week.

# PantherHawk wrestling picks up conference wins over Amboy, Morrison

By Trenten Scheidegger  
CORRESPONDENT

The Le-Win-Stockton PantherHawks wrestling squad picked up a pair of impressive NUIC victories when they traveled to Amboy last week. On Dec. 12, the PantherHawks were set to compete against both the Amboy Clippers and the Morrison Mustangs. The PantherHawks were fresh off a two-win day just two days prior. On Dec. 10, Le-Win-Stockton traveled to Oregon to face off with the Hawks and the Erie Panthers. There, the PantherHawks beat Erie by a score of 58-12.

Their matchup against Oregon wasn't so easy. Initially, the PantherHawks found themselves trailing the Hawks by a score of 35-0. Le-Win-Stockton fought

their way back for an epic 41-35 victory. That impressive team win set the tone for the PantherHawks' next matchup.

Le-Win-Stockton rarely trailed against Amboy, who had low numbers for the day. Amboy took six forfeit losses in the 132, 157, 165, 175, 190, and 285 pound weight classes. There was little opportunity for Amboy to find success with so many forfeits, but they still had a strong performance in the lower weight classes.

Carson Hill and Anthony Laino were the only PantherHawks to take a loss against the Clippers. Hill wrestled at 113, while Laino wrestled at 120. Hill fell by pin fall, while Laino lost by Major Decision.

Things got better for the Pantherhawks as they moved

into heavier weight classes. David Prater picked up a victory by pinfall at the 126 class. Mauricio Glass won a close one with a 9-6 decision at the 138 class. Arrison Bauer dominated his way to a technical fall at the 144 class, and Reece Demeter picked up a pin fall victory at the 150 class. Finally, Jeremiah Luke picked up another technical fall victory in the 215 class. Le-Win-Stockton easily beat Amboy by a final score of 61-10. Their matchups against Morrison played out in a similar, although closer fashion.

Le-Win-Stockton picked up another three victories by forfeit in the 132, 144, and 215 pound weight classes. The PantherHawks also took a forfeit loss of their own in the 106 weight class. Despite that, the PantherHawks

handled business when it came to wrestling on the mat.

Five separate victories by pinfall came from Glass, Mark Detwiler at 157, Eli Larson at 175, Oliver McPeck at 190, and Luke Kempel at 285. Additionally, Bauer and John Mensendike both picked up victories by Major Decision. Mensendike did so in the 165 weight class, with a score of 12-2.

All in all, the PantherHawks went on to beat Morrison by a final score of 56-22. After doing so, Le-Win-Stockton went on to compete at the Glenbard North Quad over the weekend. There, they faced off with some tough competition. They lost to Lincoln-Way West 60-10 and Glenbard North 40-35. They beat Plainfield South by a score of 68-12.

## Freeport Police Department plans traffic enforcement for holiday season

With the holiday season just around the corner, the Freeport Police Department has joined forces with the Illinois Department of Transportation for the "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" and "Drive High, Get a DUI" enforcement campaign to ensure that festive gatherings don't end in tragedy. From Dec. 13 through Jan. 2, law enforcement agencies across Illinois will adopt a zero-tolerance policy for impaired driving to keep our roads safe.

"This season, let's make safety our shared priority," said Lt. JoLynn Marcum. "If you plan to drink or use impairing substances, plan ahead for a sober ride home. Driving impaired isn't just dangerous – it's unacceptable. We'll be out in full force, and no excuses will be accepted."

The Freeport Police Department urges everyone to take the following simple steps to prevent impaired driving:

- Plan ahead:** Designate a sober driver, use public transportation or arrange for a ride-sharing service.
- Report dangers:** If you spot an impaired driver, pull over safely and contact the Freeport Police Department.
- Be a hero:** Stop a friend from driving impaired by taking their keys and helping them get home safely.
- Buckle up:** It's your best defense against impaired drivers.

Make this holiday season memorable for all the right reasons. Celebrate responsibly and help ensure everyone gets home safely. This campaign is made possible through federal highway safety funds from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration administered by IDOT.



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Applications can be picked up at  
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To have an application emailed, please call 815-369-4016

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled  
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# REAL ESTATE NOTICES

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North Henderson Road, Freeport, IL 61032.

The real estate is: 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: At sale, the bidder must have 10% down by certified funds, balance within 24 hours, by certified funds. No refunds. The property will NOT be open for inspection. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.

For information call Sales Department at Plaintiff's Attorney, Codilis & Associates, P.C., 15W030 North Frontage Road, Suite 100, Burr Ridge, IL 60527. (630) 794-5300. 14-24-03263 IJSC INTERCOUNTY JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION intercountyjudicialsales.com I3256826

(Published in The Shopper's Guide Dec. 11, 18 & 25, 2024) 465309

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT STEPHENSON COUNTY - FREEPORT, ILLINOIS Mortgage Assets Management, LLC f/k/a Reverse Mortgage Solutions, Inc. PLAINTIFF Vs. Judith Eikstadt; et. al. DEFENDANTS

No. 2022FC73 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 03/21/2023, the Sheriff of Stephenson County, Illinois will on January 23, 2025 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:

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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).

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# IN\*CI\*DENTAL\*LY

## High sugar diet wreaks havoc on oral, physical, and mental health



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

Oral disease, heart disease, obesity, insulin resistance, leptin resistance, metabolic disease, type two diabetes, and nonalcoholic fatty liver disease are just several of the health issues associated with a high sugar diet. But recent research has now unveiled two additional consequences - accelerated ageing and an increased risk of developing dementia.

Recent research has been examining distinctions between chronological age and biological or epigenetic age. Since one year is the same amount of time for everyone, our chronological age equates to how many birthdays you have celebrated. Your epigenetic age refers to the impact that behavioral and environmental factors have on the health or age of your body at the cellular level. While it is intuitive that a healthy diet would slow the body's biological "clock," and a diet high in sugar would accelerate aging, this research is helping to define how that process works and what damage may be reversible.

A diet that is high in sugar specifically plays a role in altering epigenetic switches which accelerates the cellular aging of your skin by a process called glycation, where sugar molecules attach to proteins in your body, creating harmful radicals/compounds

called Advanced Glycation End Products (AGEs). As AGEs accumulate, they damage the proteins which make up collagen and elastin. While healthy collagen and elastin keep skin firm and elastic, AGEs make your collagen and elastin stiff, dry, and brittle. Your skin contains three primary types of collagen. Type I is the weakest and Type III is the strongest. Glycation degrades Type III collagen into Type I, thereby diminishing your skin's structural strength and stability. The result is further sagging and wrinkles.

In addition to damaging your skin's essential proteins, AGEs deactivate your body's natural antioxidant enzymes, which normally would help protect your skin against damage from pollution, blue light and UV rays and other harmful exposures.

AGEs cause chronic inflammation and inflammation-related diseases in your body. Inflammation in your gut can lead to increased gut permeability, also known as

"leaky gut." This is because a high sugar intake changes the types and amounts of different bacteria in your gut, leading to overgrowth of inflammation-causing bacteria. This inflammation, in turn, may alter gut mucosa and tissue integrity, increasing permeability of the intestinal wall. A high sugar diet stimulates the liver to make more triglycerides (a type of fat), which increases the production of very low-density lipoproteins (VLDL) in the liver to the point that it spills over into the blood. Excess sugar also increases blood concentrations of LDL, a type of "bad" cholesterol, which causes inflammation and a buildup of plaque in your blood vessels, putting you at risk for a heart attack or stroke.

The incidence of type 2 diabetes resulting from a high sugar diet is rising. Research examining the factors that exacerbate dementia have identified type 2 diabetes as one of the most detrimental factors contributing to the decline in cognitive functioning. Knowing that Dementia, which robs our ability to remember, think, and make decisions on their own, is associated with a high sugar diet, is yet another incentive to choose a diet that will improve your oral, physical, and mental health.

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▼ Tell us what's happening in the photo

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PHOTOS MAY ALSO APPEAR ON OUR WEB SITE. [rvpnews.com](http://rvpnews.com)

This is your chance to promote your organization or special event!



# Letters To Santa

## •Robinson (Continued from page 17)

Dear Santa,  
I was nice and naughty this year. I will try not to slide down the stairs. I helped my mom put up the decorations for Christmas. My dad would like a new grill. My mom would like two new candles. My brother would like some laser guns. My sister would like a real makeup salon. I would like a lot of Dogman books. I would also like a PS5 with a TV. Lastly, I want a lot of Cat Kid books. How fast can your reindeer fly? What time will you be at my house by? I hope you have a good Christmas!

Love your friend, Jaxon

Dear Santa,  
This year I have tried to be nice. I helped Garrett wash the dishes. Please bring my mom some new clothes. My dad would like a Milwaukee tool kit. Sloan wants a new binky. For Christmas I would like a PS4. Please bring me a Bakugon Battle Arena and Fortnite V-Bucks. When do you fly your sleigh? Would you rather have a cookie or a muffin? Have a Merry Christmas!

With love, Mavrick

Dear Santa,  
This year I have been nice. I helped my friends spell some words. Please bring my mom an Ariat purse. My dad would like a new dirt bike. For Christmas I want a real kitten. I would also like a real diamond and a real puppy. Do all the elves work together? When do you and Mrs. Clause work? Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Love, Adalyn

Dear Santa,  
This year I have been nice. I helped my friends pick up the shed at recess. Please bring my dad a new phone.

My mom would like a new pair of blue shoes. Esmee wants a Barbie Dream House. For Christmas I would like a new hoverboard. I would also like a PS5. Is Rudolph real? What is your favorite cookie? Happy Christmas!

Love, Jordan

Dear Santa,  
I have been naughty and nice. I hit my chicken because it was trying to attack my puppy. We went to Lindy's house and I gave my stickers to her grandkids. My brother would like an automatic drill. Emma would like a booster pack for Pokemon. Mom would like York Peppermint Patties. My dad would like a go-cart frame. Bogey would like a Busy Bone. I would like a jewelry box because I have too much jewelry. I want a bracelet kit because I need to make more bracelets for Mrs. D. I want a sticker book

because I ran out of stickers from my last book. How do you get down the chimney if you don't have a chimney? Where do your elves come from? What is your favorite type of cookie?

Love, Charlee



# Freeport police report

## Possession of a stolen vehicle and possession of methamphetamine arrests

On Dec. 10, 2024, at 12:27 p.m., officers with the Freeport Police Department responded to a license plate reader camera hit on a stolen vehicle within the City of Freeport. A short while later, Officers located a silver 2019 Jeep Cherokee parked in the alley north of the 500 block of W. Galena Avenue. The Jeep had previously been reported stolen through the Whiteside County Sheriff's Office.

During the course of the investigation, Officers arrested 25-year-old Rodney Swan of Sterling, Illinois for Possession of a Stolen Vehicle. Kevin Bass, a 68-year-old Sterling, Illinois resident, was



Rodney Swan



Kevin Bass

also arrested for Possession of Less Than 5 Grams of Methamphetamine. Both Swan and Bass were transported to the Freeport Police Department where they were processed and released under the provisions of the Pre-Trial Fairness Act.

The public is reminded that the defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial, at which the govern-

ment has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Officers of the Freeport Police Department are investigating a shots fired incident that occurred in the 1000 block of S. Kunkle Blvd on Dec. 4, 2024 at 2 a.m. During the course of the investigation, Officers discovered that an apartment in the 1000 block of S. Kunkle Blvd had been struck by a projectile.

The investigation into this incident is ongoing at this time. The Freeport Police Department is asking anyone who may have information about this incident to contact either the Freeport Police Department at 815-235-8222, Stateline Area Crime Stoppers at 866-TIPSNOW, or through texting at Tip411.

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# Merry Christmas

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From everyone at Pat Brown Realty, we would like to say thank you for your continued loyalty and faith in us. May your holiday be blessed with the love and warmth of family and friends. From the entire team, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

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Front Row: Tammy Renz, Peter Zito, Ben Wooden, Bobbie Schubert  
Not pictured: Brynn Calow, Cameron Kent



**Apple River personnel:** Back Row: Brenda Story, Kindra Hamilton, Shelley Thompson  
Front Row: Scott Sigafus  
Not Pictured: Jacob Underwood, John Heimann, Hunter Kopp



**Scales Mound personnel:**  
Back Row: Crystal Erdenberger, Goldie Foley, Kristy Allen  
Front Row: Alyssa Wentz, Shari Altfillisch  
Not Pictured: Laura Grindy



**Hanover personnel:**  
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Front Row: Dawn Callahan, Crystal Geerts  
Not Pictured: Jason Thomasson



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Front Row: Troy Pafford, Jason Thomasson



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