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VOL. 87 • NO. 2

YOUR FREE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 1, 2025



ORANGEVILLE LADY BRONCOS BASKETBALL FACEBOOK PHOTO *Rock Valley Publishing*

## Orangeville Lady Broncos on a roll

The Orangeville girls basketball team is on fire this season. With three wins in a row, their record now sits at 15-2. In their most recent win on Saturday, Dec. 28 against Beloit, Orangeville hit a season high score of 77 points scored. Laney Cahoon scored 46 points and had six steals, Nadalee Doyle had 14 points, seven assists, and eight steals, and Lily Rodebaugh had 10 points and eight rebounds. In addition to an outstanding performance in the Beloit game, Cahoon has become the

first player in Orangeville basketball history to win 100 games as a varsity starter. Cahoon's career record stands at 100 wins and 15 losses.

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## Christmas program at St. Paul Lutheran Church

St. Paul Lutheran Church in Elizabeth enjoyed a Children's Christmas program on Sunday, Dec. 21 directed by Lisa Haas. The children told the story of the birth of our Savior Jesus in verse and celebrated in song, from the perspective of the animals (camels, donkeys, cows, sheep, dogs, doves, etc). Back row: Kollins Patterson, Aubrie Lehman, Brecklyn Ambrosia, Bexley Ambrosia, Faith Green (holding

Reece Green), Cyrus Lehman, Justice Murray, Alivia Klippert. Middle row: Weston Lehman, Everett Schuler, Dawson Bingham, Jake Green (holding Quinn Green), Tucker Schuler, Alexa Twombly (holding Alivia Twombly), Molly Haas, Paisley Brotzman. Front row: Brixen Ambrosia, Carter Bingham, Kiera Farster, Clara Melaas, Anicka Klippert.

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## Around the Northern Hills

We all know how important that agriculture is to our county, but did you know some of the statistics that go to support that? According to the Census of Agriculture, Jo Daviess County has 935 farms with an average farm size of 291 acres. Some of the statistics that stand out that helps make Jo Daviess County unique are listed below. Here's a few of the categories that Jo Daviess County ranks high in the state:

- 1st in the state for production of forages
- 2nd for production of oats
- 4th in the numbers of acres of corn for silage
- 2nd in the total number of cattle and calves
- 11th in the total number of sheep and lambs



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

16th in the number of horses and ponies

We all think of the cattle in the county, but did you find some surprising numbers listed? We must remember that there are a lot of things going on that we don't always think about.

### Join FB ACT text messaging

FB ACT – the Illinois Farm Bureau Agricultural Contact Team, is comprised of Farm Bureau members who are ready to respond to IFB action requests. When IFB issues an action request, it signals your voice is needed on a major action request or on a major legislative or regulatory issue facing Illinois farmers.

By signing up for FB ACT text messages, you will be notified the instant your voice is needed in Washington D.C., or Springfield. To sign up or renew your FB ACT text message subscription, please text the keyword "FARM" to 52883, and you will be ready to act for ag!

### Scholarships available

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 would encourage anyone interested to take advantage of the opportunity. The link will be live for the IAA Foundation website until Jan. 1, 2025.

### Farm Fun Fact

Sheep are the only source of lanolin, or grease that comes from wool before it has been washed. Lanolin is used in lotions and cosmetics.

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# Nearly 300 new Illinois laws take effect in 2025

*They include digital driver's licenses, salary transparency and health insurance changes*

By Ben Szalinski  
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Time to study up, Illinois. After the clock hit midnight on New Year's Day, 293 new state laws took effect.

Those include some of the defining bills of the 2024 legislative session and others that will change how people get IDs, evaluate job postings and even cancel gym memberships.

In addition to the laws taking effect on Jan. 1, the state's minimum wage will rise to \$15 to complete a ramp up initiated during Gov. JB Pritzker's first month in office in 2019.

## Digital driver's licenses

The secretary of state can begin creating a process to issue digital driver's licenses and state IDs beginning in the new year after Pritzker signed House Bill 4592. Residents will still be required to receive a physical ID and agencies or private entities will not be required to accept digital IDs in place of physical IDs.

Providing a phone to police to show a digital ID also doesn't give police consent to search a person's cell phone.

## Salary transparency

Employers with 15 or more employees must include information about benefits and the salary range on job postings, according to House Bill 3129. The law will also apply to businesses hiring for remote work positions in Illinois.

"When employers aren't transparent about pay, gender and racial wage gaps widen, costing women and people of color valuable compensation," Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton said in a news release. "Illinois' new Pay Transparency law is a resounding win for the working people who call our state home."

## 'Junk' health insurance

Short-term, limited duration health insurance plans will be illegal in Illinois beginning Jan. 1. The plans, often called "junk insurance" by critics, do not meet the minimum standards of the federal Affordable Care Act.

The ban outlined in House Bill 2499 was part of Pritzker's health insurance overhaul that lawmakers passed in the spring. It was aimed at reducing barriers to care for patients and making health care more affordable by expanding coverage requirements for insurance companies.

Short-term insurance plans are typically for people who have a lapse in health insurance coverage such as when they lose or change jobs, but

they are different from COBRA benefits, which most employers are required to offer under federal law. Supporters of the bill argued the plans are deceptive and stick consumers with huge out-of-pocket costs, but others said the plans provide consumers with an affordable option to fill a gap in coverage.

## Caregiver discrimination

House Bill 2161 adds family responsibilities to the list of categories protected from discrimination and retaliation in the workplace. The new law prevents employers from taking adverse action against employees because of their responsibilities as a caregiver for a family member, which could cause them to miss work.

Bill sponsor Rep. Will Guzzardi, D-Chicago, told a House committee in April that pregnant women are a good example of who the bill is designed to help. He said pregnant women shouldn't be passed up for a promotion or face other consequences at work in anticipation that they will be taking time off to care for their baby. Guzzardi stressed the bill does not protect employees who fail to meet job performance requirements.

## AI regulations

New laws governing artificial intelligence take effect Jan. 1. It will be illegal to generate child pornography using AI, according to House Bill 4623. Supporters of the bill, including the Illinois Attorney General's Office, said it is becoming more difficult to distinguish between real and AI-generated images. They said updating Illinois' child pornography laws was a necessary to step allow law enforcement to identify and prosecute child pornography cases.

House bill 4875 also adds new protections to prohibit using AI to recreate a person's voice, image or likeness for commercial purposes without the person's consent. Recording artists can seek damages for violations of the law.

## Politics and religion at work

Employees can't be required to sit through work meetings discussing religion or politics starting Jan. 1. Senate Bill 3649, an initiative of the Illinois AFL-CIO, creates new protections for employees who skip out on such meetings and prevents employers from retaliating against them.

The law does not prohibit

discussing religion or politics at work, but employees are not required to participate in the discussions if such activities are not part of their job. The law excludes non-profit and advocacy groups where politics or religion may be part of job.

## Coming later in 2025

Pritzker's signature health reform package goes into effect on Jan. 1, but most provisions don't have to be implemented until the beginning of 2026. House Bill 5395 bans "step therapy," which requires

patients to try and fail treatments preferred by insurance companies before they can receive the treatment recommended by their doctor.

It also bans insurance companies from requiring prior authorization for emergency in-patient mental health treatment, requires insurers to keep up-to-date lists of in-network providers and expands the power of the Illinois Department of Insurance to regulate premium rates.

Many hotels in Illinois will no longer be allowed to provide customers with

single-use plastic soap and shampoo beginning July 1 under Senate Bill 2960. The move is designed to cut down on waste from single-use products. The Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association supported the change. Hotels with fewer than 50 rooms have until 2026 to make the change.

## Other new laws

**NIL money:** Student athletes at NCAA universities can earn name, image and likeness money directly from their universities. House Bill 307 was an initiative of the

University of Illinois.

**Hearing aids:** Insurance providers must cover medically prescribed hearing aids for all people under House Bill 2443. Coverage was previously only required for those under 18.

**Gym memberships:** House Bill 4911 requires gyms and fitness centers to accept multiple ways for people to cancel their membership. Physical fitness locations also must now allow customers to cancel their membership by email

See LAWS, Page 15

## Warren boys split games before holiday break

By Trenten Scheidegger  
CORRESPONDENT

The Warren Warriors faced a couple of tough matchups to end the first half of the 2024-2025 boys basketball season. After getting off to an 8-1 start, the Warriors faced off with the Winnebago Indians and the Genoa-Kingston Cogs on Dec. 19 and Dec. 20. Those games were part of this year's Forreton Tournament.

Winnebago would prove to be a challenge for Warren. The Indians came into the game with an overall record of just 4-4, but they were riding a two-game winning streak. They were fresh off a 57-47 win over Lena-Winslow, which is one of just two losses on the year for Le-Win.

Warren suffered from a slow start when they played against the Indians on Dec. 19. That evening, the Warriors found themselves doubled up in the opening quarter. Treyton Pafford hit an early three-pointer to help his team keep pace, but they still went into the second trailing 14-7.

Those offensive struggles continued in the second quarter. Pafford hit another three, while Bryce VanRaalte had a pair of baskets. That was all they

could muster, however, as they were once again doubled up in the second. By halftime, Warren found themselves trailing 29-14.

Coming out of the break, Pafford gave his all to try and spark something for Warren. It was a valiant effort as a quick three-pointer led the way to a 13-point quarter for Pafford. It just didn't seem to get the rest of the offense going. Beau Podnar and Jordan Kohl each hit third quarter threes, but that was all Warren scored in the quarter.

Heading into the fourth, the Warriors trailed 47-33. Winnebago's offense was too much as they were never able to erase the gap. Warren eventually fell by a final score of 64-47. Pafford led all scorers with 23 points. Podnar was the only other Warren player in double figures as he finished with 10.

The good news for Warren is that they didn't have to wait long for an opportunity to bounce back. They returned to Forreton to face off with the Genoa-Kingston Cogs the very next day. The Cogs came into the game with a record of 5-5 themselves. They were fresh off a brutal 63-62 loss to the Byron Tigers.

This time around, the Warriors were

sure to get off to a quick start. Pafford helped to get things going with a pair of first quarter threes. He was equally successful from inside as a trio of baskets helped him put up 12 points in the opening quarter.

Podnar came out hot as well. He hit his own three on his way to six first quarter points. Kohl added his own three as the Warriors combined for four threes in the first. By the end of the first, Warren had jumped out to a 26-15 advantage. It was a much-needed offensive performance after the slow first half just a day prior.

The Warriors managed to coast their way to victory in the second half. Pafford had an excellent performance as he finished the day with 27 points. VanRaalte was a consistent force all night long as he finished with 18 points. It was also a double-double performance as VanRaalte finished with 13 rebounds. Podnar added 15 as Warren went on to win 77-56. Pafford earned a First Team Forreton Holiday Tournament selection for his efforts.

Warren is back in action on Jan. 7 when they play host to the Stockton Blackhawks. That game tips off at 7 p.m.

Best wishes for a prosperous new year



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# OPINION



## Slices of life

# Old should be a badge of honor



By **JILL PERTLER**  
Columnist

Old things are often valued. An old house is called mid-century modern. Old cheese is aged. Old furniture is antique. Old dishes are Depression glass. Old cars are classic.

And we all know wine only gets better with age.

But old people?

They are just old. (Or seniors, at best.)

So why do we attribute favorable terms to old things, but not people?

The word itself is pretty simple. Just three letters. One syllable. A vowel and two consonants. It can't get any easier than that, can it?

But, old is so much more than a three-letter word. The older you get, the more you realize: old is a concept. It defies definition because its definition changes with time.

At least this was my hypothesis, which I took to the streets—or more aptly, random acquaintances, friends and family.

I don't think anyone wants to get old. Young is the preferred adjective. So much so that we go to great lengths to hold onto young and hold off old.

We allow ourselves to be Botoxed, tummy tucked, suctioned, peeled, filled, dyed and lifted - all in the name of holding onto the concept of young.

We count our age in numbers, and I was interested if there was a number that defines old. I asked people from age 4 to 84 what age they thought constituted old and as expected, answers varied greatly.

In general, it seems that old is roughly 20 years beyond the number that indicates your current age.

When you are four, old is 17. At age 6 it is 32. My daughter, who happens to be 32 believes old is 80. My son, age 26 says, it is age 70.

My oldest respondent, age 84, believes old begins at 100. He is a friend I met playing wallyball and his goal is to continue playing until he's 91. I should be so lucky. (And sure hope he is as well.)

So, based on my very scientific surveys, old begins anywhere between 17 and 100.

I wasn't surprised that people had varying ideas of the age of old. I was surprised at their thoughtful responses to the overall question. It was almost like they'd thought about the topic previously.

Like they'd pondered growing old on their own, without any prompting. (Sarcastic tone optional.)

In general, these contemplative and philosophical folks had similar thoughts:

Old may be defined, on the outside, by the age of your skin and your bones, but that isn't what makes a person old in the true sense of the word. A person can be old in years, but young at heart. People can be old on the outside, but interesting and relevant and fun on the inside and those three things elevate them beyond old.

And the older the respondent, the more they'd thought about the question. And, the more hesitant they were to put a numerical value on the term.

I guess that makes sense. It also makes sense that the closer we get to the cultural definition of "old" the more our own definition changes. No one wants to be old, even those people who many of us believe have clearly reached this milestone.

And that's kind of sad. Old should be a badge of honor. It should be a milestone we seek to attain. It should be a cause for celebration.

It should be mid-century modern in the human sense. It should be antique and classic. It should be something to celebrate because when you reach the stage of old you have made it!

You have lived longer than most people. You are still walking, breathing and fighting the good fight. You have kept on keeping on. You have beat the odds.

And that is to be celebrated. Some people might think you are old. They might even tell you so.

Let them. They don't know what they're missing.

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

## Weekly connection

# Sweeter as the years go by

Some years ago, my wife and I left our home area in southwest Wisconsin, and we moved over to southeast Wisconsin to pursue our careers as teachers and to raise our family. I had been almost certain that dairy and grain farming was going to be my life's career, but we decided to give teaching and coaching a try first. When a boy grows up around dairy cattle, tractors and field work it just seems like the path he will follow on the road of life. In my case athletics had been such a big



By **SCOTT CERNEK**  
Columnist

part of my life that I wanted to give coaching a try before I returned to the farm for good. The first couple years off the farm were pretty tough as we bought a cheap house right in town and began our new life. We already had two very

young children and soon a third child was on the way. I was always used to a few hundred acres to romp and play on so it was very difficult living in town. To scratch the farming itch, I tilled up a patch of soil and planted a good-sized garden right in the back yard. I also built a couple rabbit cages and began raising a few rabbits and we drove back to the home farm as many weekends as possible to try and remain connected to the family operation that my dad and a couple brothers were involved in.

I remember telling the Lord that I would give this teaching career five years and then evaluate hoping beyond hope that I could get back to the farm. Well five years went by, and we now had four kids and the oldest was starting school. We had a found a good church family and our football teams were competing at a much higher level. To go along with all that I had also become the head baseball coach, so we decided to give it another five years. My wife promised me that after five more years, she would be fine with whatever I chose. Each year brought more personal growth and opportunities to influence the lives of young people that I wouldn't have had on the farm. Our kids were getting more and more involved with sports and other school and church activities, so we continued on even enjoying a few summer

trips along the way. However, the farm was always on my mind and close to my heart, but no matter how hard I tried to find a small farmette type place to do a little farming while I taught, it just didn't materialize. The prices were way too high and my responsibilities in coaching just wouldn't allow it anyway.

Finally, when all my hopes of ever being able to get back to the farm seemed lost, the opportunity presented itself to own a small farm. I was offered the chance to buy my brothers small herd of dairy cattle and take over his dairy. Now, usually fifty-five-year-old teachers don't retire from teaching and start milking cows, but it was the only way for me to make owning a farm happen, so I jumped at the opportunity. The Lord gave me the strength to milk those cows and pastor a church as well for five years before I was able to sell the cows and move a few head of beef onto the place. Now I'm back to teaching half days, raising a small beef herd, and continue pastoring as well. God has blessed and He has been good to allow me to experience the desires of my heart. I love Psalm 37:4 which reads; Delight thyself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. God is faithful to His promises even if it may take a little longer than we think it should. Until next week, Happy New Year and God bless!

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# Getting outside on the Pecatonica Prairie Trail

By Greg Vassmer  
CONTRIBUTOR

With the dark of winter, I have less chance to be outdoors, less light in the day. For me, it is the time to finally work on all the things I put off in summer when I was riding my bike. For others, winter is exactly the season to be outdoors. In our area, there is a single recreational opportunity satisfying both.

Starting at Liberty Park in Rockford and following the Chicago and North Western (C&NW) right-of-way all the way to Freeport is a nearly 30 mile stretch of path and trail known as the Pecatonica Prairie Trail. For much of the way, the trail is part of the Grand Illinois Trail, a 575 mile bike trail forming a loop around northern Illinois which is itself a part of the 3,700 mile coast-to-coast Great American Rail Trail.

With the ebb and flow of interested people and money, the Pecatonica Prairie Trail has developed in fits and starts over the years, but for the past 50 years it has hosted runners, hikers, cross-country skiers and cyclists.

The nation's first rail-trail is the well-known Elroy-Sparta trail in central Wisconsin. Opened in 1967, it started a trend at the end of the 1960s to create non-motorized recreational corridors along the increasing miles of abandoned railroad right-of-way. The trail was part of that boom, becoming a hiking path in the mid-1970s when Commonwealth Edison (ComEd) bought the old C&NW right-of-way in 1972. Late in 1975, the non-profit Pecatonica Prairie Path organization began making improvements to the bridges as well as adding picnic tables along the route.

For the most part the trail does not pass near roads or houses, so remnants of various prairie types, wetlands, and the Pecatonica River itself are found along the path, increasing the attraction. By the late 1990s, ComEd leased the use of the route to Winnebago and Stephenson counties with restrictions, including the requirement that no motorized traffic be allowed with exception to their own. To manage the path, a group of five found-

ing government organizations established a commission to meet, manage and promote the path, and upgrade it to a multiuse trail. These founding five – the City of Freeport, Stephenson County, Freeport Park District, Rock-

ford Park District, and Winnebago County – meet quarterly to

further trail plans, gather public input, and manage money allocated to them. Other area government agencies in the towns of Winnebago and Pecatonica are closely aligned with the Commission.

Presently, the trail surface is a mix of 10-foot wide pavement or crushed rock with stretches of grassy path. It begins with a nature trail section leading out of Liberty Park in Rockford. This section is part of current Rockford Park District grant proposals intended to pay for engineering studies needed before construction. The next and most developed section runs from Meridian Road to the Winnebago County line west of the Winnebago County Fairgrounds in Pecatonica and through the towns of Winnebago and Pecatonica. This is the longest rideable section for bicyclists. In this section, you can find the small engineering marvel of the Route 20 underpass built in 2009. It adjoins a parking lot and access point for snowmobile trails, crossing the farmlands north and south of the trail.

A bit more wild but rideable section extends west beyond the Winnebago County line to Farwell Bridge Road. Beyond that, through the town of Ridott up to the Route 20 bypass around Freeport, the trail is really a nature hike. This last stretch has some of the most interesting features: an original C&NW railroad bridge crossing the Pecatonica River and the bridge footings for the Rockford and Freeport Interurban Railway, whose grade can be seen at many points along the trail. The bridge is closed now, but some people still take the risk of crossing.

Finally, near the bridge you pass the ghost town of Nevada, founded in the 1850s and all but gone by 1910, thanks to cholera and some mysterious circumstances.

Once across the Freeport bypass and a short stretch of quiet road riding, the developed trail picks up again just before Route 75 and is well developed through Freeport all the way to Tutty's Crossing. Once there, you have access to the Jane Addams Trail and points north all the way to Madison, Wis. There is parking at several points along the trail; some are simply at the roadside but also at trailheads in Winnebago at Benton Street and at Hoisington Road, in Pecatonica at Pecatonica Road and at Sumner Park, in Ridott at Lincoln Park, and in Freeport at Tutty's Crossing.

There are also several parks along the way or nearby. Memorial Park in Winnebago, Blassingham and Sumner Parks in Pecatonica, the Pecatonica Wetlands Forest Preserve, and Atten's Landing on Farwell Bridge Road. The wetlands are the largest of these with 1,047 acres of oxbow ponds, marshes, nesting eagles and forest. There are several hiking trails. Along the trail, small remnant prairies have provided seed stock for other area prairie restorations. Please be careful when on the natural sections of the trail as the surfaces have varying widths, exposed ballast rock, and sometimes tall overgrowth.

The Pecatonica Prairie Trail is a dynamic place. You could encounter the local high school track team doing a workout, dogsled mushers training their dogs, cross-country skiers, hikers with full backpacks training for a trip out west, a periodic ComEd contractor, joggers, and – of course – bicycles. One time there was even a helicopter-mounted giant chainsaw trimming the trees. So even with winter upon us, as



PHOTOS COURTESY GREG VASSMER Rock Valley Publishing

The Pecatonica Prairie Trail is a great place for bicyclists. The trail follows the C&NW right-of-way and is around 30 miles.



The trail crosses many different types of landscape and, for much of the way, is also part of the 575 mile bike trail Grand Illinois Trail, which is itself a part of the 3,700 mile coast-to-coast Great American Rail Trail.

the trail is open year-round, the Pecatonica Prairie Trail is a peaceful place to be outdoors.

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\* Annual Percentage Yield (APY) effective 12/20/24. CDs offered by Edward Jones are bank-issued and FDIC-insured up to \$250,000 (principal and interest accrued but not yet paid) per depositor, per insured depository institution, for each account ownership category. Please visit [www.fdic.gov](http://www.fdic.gov) or contact your financial advisor for additional information. Subject to availability and price change. CD values are subject to interest rate risk such that when interest rates rise, the prices of CDs can decrease. If CDs are sold prior to maturity, the investor can lose principal value. FDIC insurance does not cover losses in market value. Early withdrawal may not be permitted. Yields quoted are net of all commissions. CDs require the distribution of interest and do not allow interest to compound. CDs offered through Edward Jones are issued by banks and thrifts nationwide. All CDs sold by Edward Jones are registered with the Depository Trust Corp. (DTC).

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# Daily Drawing December winners

The Northwest Illinois Daily Drawing is a cooperative fundraiser with a drawing for 365 daily cash prizes from Oct. 1, 2024, to Sept. 30, 2025, to those donating for a ticket. Over \$22,500 is paid out to ticket holders during the drawing year. Cash prizes vary between \$50 and \$500. A ticket may win multiple times as each ticket remains in the drawing each day for the entire year, no matter how often it may be drawn.

Sponsoring organizations from Jo Daviess, Carroll & Stephenson County include: Caring Community of Elizabeth, East Dubuque Music Boosters, Eastland Music Boosters, Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce, Galena Key Club, Hanover Alumni Association, Hanover Chamber of Commerce, Hope Wins, Lena-Winslow Education Foundation, Midwest Medical Center Auxiliary Foundation, Pearl City Athletic Boosters, Philanthropic Educational Organization-Chapter OH, River Ridge Drama Club, Scales Round Travelers, Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge, Stockton Girls Basketball, Warren Athletic Boosters and West Carroll Sports Boosters.

## The December winners are:

- \$50 – Justin Rolwes, Elizabeth
- \$50 – Ron Redington, Galena
- \$50 – Mary Wild, Elizabeth

- \$50 – Sue Milligan, Bloomington
- \$50 – Purrfection Animal Rescue, Galena
- \$50 – Brynn Fry, Elizabeth
- \$50 – Ethan Petta, Pearl City
- \$50 – Tushar Patel, Lanark
- \$50 – Joanne MacFadden, Apple River
- \$50 – Jeanie Lutz, Pearl City
- \$50 – Lois Petsche, Stockton
- \$50 – Karlene Saunders, Warren
- \$50 – Owen Kempel, Winslow
- \$50 – Gina Kennedy, Hanover
- \$50 – Mary Stayner, Stockton
- \$50 – Colleen Raders, Lena
- \$50 – Trish Krug, Elizabeth
- \$50 – Connie Hill, Lena
- \$50 – Kim Falk, Savanna
- \$50 – Karrie Sabinson, Warren
- \$50 – Debbie Mann, Lanark
- \$50 – Nicole Sheffey, Pearl City
- \$50 – Kara Hofmaster, Pearl City
- \$150 – Josh Noordhoff, Shannon
- \$500 – Jerilyn Strohecker, Lena
- \$50 – Connie Kampmeier, Stockton
- \$50 – Tami Remmers, Chadwick
- \$50 – Dan Stevens, Lena
- \$50 – Mike Harris, Galena
- \$50 – Becky Roethe, Shannon
- \$150 – Carol Kucan-Gaffin, Bradenton, FL



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

## Girl Scouts cookie program

Following the theme of Embrace Possibilities, local Girl Scouts will kick-off the 2025 Girl Scout Cookie Program on Friday, Jan. 3. Young entrepreneurs will take cookie orders in person and offer online opportunities through their Digital Cookie sites for customers to order cookies for shipping, in-person Girl Scout delivery, and donations to the military and community organizations.

## Freeport police reports

### Felony possession of a firearm arrest

On Dec. 26, 2024, at 12:43 p.m., Officers with the Free-

port Police Department conducted a search warrant at a residence in the 200 block of W. Avon Street. During a search of the residence, a loaded 20-gauge sawed-off shotgun was seized.

The resident, 31-year-old Ryan Davis, was arrested and transported to the Police

Department where he was processed. Felony charges of Unlawful Possession of a Modified Shotgun, Possession of a Weapon by a Felon and Possession of a Firearm Without Requisite FOID were approved by the Stephenson County State's Attorney. Davis is being held at the Ste-

phenson County Jail pending the outcome of a detention hearing.

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

## Church news

### St. John's Lutheran Church

St. John's Lutheran Church, Pearl City, will celebrate the Second Sunday of Christmas at worship on Sunday, Jan. 5 at 9 a.m.

Everyone is welcome to come play dominoes in Luther Hall on Tuesday, Jan. 7 and dominoes on Thursday, Jan. 23 at 1 p.m.

All kids in grades K-5 are welcome to come to St. John's in Pearl City on Wednesday, Jan. 15 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 Bronke-

ma at rbronkema18@gmail.com or call 815-291-6261.

We would like to thank all the donors for the Pearl City Community Christmas meal. Donors included the Pearl City Hornets 4-H Club, Fischler Excavating, State Bank of Pearl City, Spahn & Rose, Pearl City Elevator, Pearl City Lions Club, Little John's Tap, Lena Vet Clinic, Home-town Motors, IES Drilling, Visel Construction, PC Collision Center, Kempel/Urish Construction, GT Auto Plaza, Solutions Bank of Kent, Johnson Appraisals, J&N Garage Doors, Rusty Liebenstein, Firehouse Seeds, F/S Stephenson Services, Scott & Marlyse Johnson, and Sullivans of Stockton. Thank you to all who left donations when getting meals and all the community members who helped prepare and serve the meals!

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 Thursday, Jan. 9 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.

### Salem United Church of Christ

We invite you to join us for service led by Pastor Christopher Ham at Salem United Church of Christ, 8491 West Salem Road, Lena, IL, 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.



## Illinois Newspapers keeping you informed

To know more, read public notices  
in today's newspaper or go to

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# Our Area Churches Welcome You

## APPLE RIVER UMC

102 E. Baldwin St., P.O. Box 188,  
Apple River, IL 61001

**Pastor Libby Rutherford (815) 990-1428  
Church (815) 594-2223**

- **Sunday Worship – 9 a.m.**
- Bible Study - Every Monday 9 a.m.
- Friendly Folks - Casual Attire - Join Us!*

## CALVARY CHURCH OF STOCKTON

315 W. Maple St., Stockton, IL 61085  
815-947-2414

**Pastor Scott Hess**  
E-Mail: [calvarychurchofstockton@yahoo.com](mailto:calvarychurchofstockton@yahoo.com)

- **Sunday Worship – 10:00 a.m.**
- **Sunday School – 8:45 a.m.**
- Communion and Potluck every 1st Sunday (except no potlucks during summer)
- Monday Group Prayer - 6 p.m.
- Wednesday Night Bible Study - 6:30 p.m.
- Every other Sat. Youth Group - 6 - 8 p.m.
- You may find our facebook page and weekly messages by searching for "Calvary Church of Stockton on facebook.com"

You are welcome! Please visit us!

## CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH ELCA STOCKTON

600 N. Main St., Stockton

**Pastor Chrissy Salser (815) 988-9450**  
E-Mail: [cle600@mediacombb.net](mailto:cle600@mediacombb.net)

- Find us on Facebook at [ChristOnMainSt](https://www.facebook.com/ChristOnMainSt)
- **Worship times: Saturday, 5:30 p.m.  
Sunday, 10 a.m.**
- **Sunday School: Sunday, 9 a.m.**

## EBENEZER – SALEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

P.O. Box 102, Pearl City, IL 61062  
See Facebook or call 815-291-1965

- **Sunday Worship: Currently 8:30 a.m.**
- January services are at Salem UCC Church  
Corner of Loran & Kent Roads

## EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF LENA

720 N. Freedom Street, Lena, IL 61048  
815-369-5591

**Pastor Casey Dwyer, Pastor**

- Adult bible study and Children's Sunday School - 8:45 a.m.
- **Sunday Morning Worship Service and Children's Church/Nursery – 10:00 a.m.**
- Awana Wednesdays at 6 p.m. (Sept. - April)
- Pastor's weekly sermons at [www.lenafreechurch.org](http://www.lenafreechurch.org)

## FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

309 S. Main Street, Elizabeth, IL 61028  
email: [firstumcofelizabeth@gmail.com](mailto:firstumcofelizabeth@gmail.com)

- **Pastor Donna Hoffman 608-293-0163**  
email: [dhoffman8@gmail.com](mailto:dhoffman8@gmail.com)
- **Sunday Worship - 8:30 a.m.**
- Women's Faith Group - 1st Tuesday monthly - 9:30 a.m.

*We are handicapped accessible*

Find us on Facebook at

[www.facebook.com/fumcelizabeth](http://www.facebook.com/fumcelizabeth)

## GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH

118 East Mason Street, Lena, IL 61048  
**Pastor Thomas Mosbo (815) 369-5552**

- **Sunday Worship – 9:30 a.m.**
- **Sunday School – 10:45 a.m. (Sept. - May)**
- Piece Corps Quilters – Wednesdays at 8:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

## GRACE BIBLE CHURCH OF WOODBINE

1904 S. Vel Tera Road, Elizabeth, IL 61028

- Pastor Michael Burdett (815) 858-3843**
- **Sunday Worship – 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.**
- **Sunday School – 9:30 a.m.**
- Prayer meeting – Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.
- Sunday services broadcasted at 11:30 a.m. on Radio WCCI 100.3 FM

## HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC CHURCH

223 E. Front Avenue, Stockton, IL 61085

- Father Mike Morrissey (815) 947-2545**
- **Saturday Evening Mass – 4:30 p.m.**
- **Sunday Mass – 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.**
- Reconciliation Saturday – 3:30 - 4:15 p.m.

## LENA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

118 West Mason Street, Lena, IL 61048

- Pastor Melwyn Alagodi (815) 369-5291**
- **Sunday Worship – 9:00 a.m.**
- **Sunday School – 10:30 a.m.**
- **Daily Dial-A-Devotion 815-369-4411**

## MARTINTOWN COMMUNITY CHURCH

W8996 Lena St., Martintown, WI 53522  
(1 mile north of Winslow, IL)

**Pastor Kevin Cernek • 608-558-0974**

- **Sunday Worship – 8 & 10:30 a.m.**
- *Worship inside or watch from the parking lot on the jumbotron*
- **Sunday School for all ages – 9:30 a.m.**
- **Sunday Youth - 6 p.m.**
- **Tuesday Bible Study - 10:30 a.m.**
- **Thursday Prayer & Bible Study - 6 p.m.**

## MCCONNELL COMMUNITY CHURCH

211 Hulbert Rd. P.O. Box 97,  
McConnell, IL 61050  
815-868-2324

Email: [mcconnellcmtychurch@yahoo.com](mailto:mcconnellcmtychurch@yahoo.com)

**Pastor Jordan Cernek**  
• **Sunday Worship – 8:45 a.m.**

- Fellowship hour after every service
- Find us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/mcconnellcommunitychurch.com](http://www.facebook.com/mcconnellcommunitychurch.com)
- *\* We are handicapped accessible*

## NEW VINE COMMUNITY CHURCH

621 W. Lena St., Lena, IL 61048  
(Coach's Gymnasium)

**Pastor Doug Carroll 815-541-4112**

- **Sunday Worship – 9:00 a.m. with fellowship following**
- **Communion first Sunday of each month**
- Bible Study Groups available [newvinelena.com](http://newvinelena.com)
- Facebook: New Vine Community Church of Lena, IL
- *\* We are handicapped accessible*

## PROVIDENCE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

15010 W. Howardsville Road  
Lena, IL 61048  
217-357-3723

**Pastors Robert Webb & Rob Webb**

- **Sunday Worship** - each 3rd Sunday - 10:30 a.m.
- Potluck lunch following service

## SALEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

8491 West Salem Road, Lena, IL 61048  
(Turn on Salem Road at Eleroy Rest Stop)

- Pastor Christopher Ham (815) 369-4511**
- **Sunday Worship – 10:00 a.m.**
- **Adult Sunday School - 9 a.m. (before service)**
- **Children's Sunday School - 10 a.m. (during service)**

*\*We are handicapped accessible*

Watch our services or see our upcoming events on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/OldStoneChurchWithTheLightedCross/>

## SCHAPVILLE ZION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

635 East Schapville Road,  
Elizabeth, IL 61028

**Pastor Dottie Morizzo**

(815) 845-2272  
Cell (815) 238-0670

[www.schapvillezion.org](http://www.schapvillezion.org)

- **Sunday Worship Service – 10:00 a.m.**
- **Sunday School – 10:00 a.m.**
- Bible Study Classes Available

## SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS LUTHERAN CHURCH

536 E. Schapville Road,  
Scales Mound, IL 61054

**Church number (815) 845-2061**

**Rev. James Mehlretter**

Website: [www.shepherdofhill.com](http://www.shepherdofhill.com)

- **Sunday Worship – 8:00 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.**
- **Sunday School (Sept. – May) – 8:45 a.m.**
- Holy Communion is celebrated weekly.

## ST. ANN CATHOLIC CHURCH

608 East Railroad, Warren, IL 61087

**Father Andrew Hernandez (815) 745-2312**

- **Sunday Mass – 8:00 a.m.**
- Reconciliation Sunday – 7:30 - 7:50 a.m.

## ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod  
625 Country Lane Drive, Lena, IL 61048

**Rev. Jason Shaw (815) 369-4035**

- **Saturday Evening Worship – 5:30 p.m.**
- **Sunday Worship – 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.**
- Blast Program at 9:00 a.m.
- High School & Adult Sunday School at 9:15 a.m.

## ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

229 S. First St., Pearl City, IL 61062  
[www.stjohnspearlcity.org](http://www.stjohnspearlcity.org)  
815-443-2215

- **Sunday Morning Worship – 9:00 a.m.**
- Christian Education for all Ages - 10:15 a.m.
- Handicapped Accessible

## ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

8315 S. Massbach Road, Elizabeth, IL 61028

**Pastor David Russell**

**Church: 815-589-3367**

- **Sunday Worship – 10:00 a.m.**
- "Celebrating 165 Years of Faith"

## ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH

105 West Webster, Apple River, IL 61001

**Father Andrew Hernandez (815) 745-2312**

- **Saturday Mass – 6:00 p.m.**
- Reconciliation Saturday – 5:30 – 5:50 p.m.

## ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH

410 West Lena Street, Lena, IL 61048

**Father Andrew Hernandez (815) 369-2810**

- **Saturday Mass – 4:00 p.m.**
- **Sunday Mass – 10:00 a.m.**
- Reconciliation Saturday – 3:30 – 3:50 p.m.

## ST. PAUL'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH (Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod)

411 W. Catlin St., P.O. Box 506  
Elizabeth, IL 61028

**Pastor Mike Nesbit - Cell: 815-858-5621**

**Church: 815-858-3334**

[www.stpauelizababeth.org](http://www.stpauelizababeth.org)

All services are available to watch online@

Facebook: St. Paul Lutheran Church, Elizabeth, IL

YouTube channel: Pastor Mike Nesbit

- **Sunday Worship – 9:00 a.m.**
- **Adult Bible Study - Sunday 10:30 a.m.**
- Super Sunday on the first Sunday of the month, with Sunday School from 10 - 11:30 a.m.

Worship services will be held outside during the summer. Please bring a lawn chair. ALL ARE WELCOME.

## ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH - KENT

The Little Church with a Big Heart

1334 Sunnyside Road, Kent, IL 61044  
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- **Sunday Worship – 9:30 a.m.**
- **Holy Communion every Sunday**
- Women Meet at 9 a.m. on the 2nd Sunday
- Chair Lift to Sanctuary

## WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Corner of Hudson & Benton St.,  
Stockton, IL 61085

**Pastor Melwyn Alagodi (815) 947-2541**

- **Sunday Worship – 11 a.m.**
- Adult Bible Studies Available
- Communion Every 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday
- Find us on website [StocktonWUMC.org](http://StocktonWUMC.org) or Facebook-Stockton Wesley United Methodist Church
- *\* Handicapped Accessible*

## WINSLOW GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

197 Carver Street, Winslow, IL 61089

**Pastor Robert Patin (815) 230-1862**  
**608-669-5770**

- **Sunday Worship – 10:45 a.m.**
- **Sunday School – 9:45 a.m.**

## ZION COMMUNITY CHURCH

10100 W. Sabin Church Rd.,  
Pearl City, IL 61062

**Pastor Wayne Fischer • 815-266-6260**

**Pastor Chip Sohl • 815-541-1425**

- **Sunday Worship Service – 9:00 a.m.**
- **Children's Church - during church service**
- **Prayer Shawl Knitting Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.**
- **Bible Study Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.**



# Come worship with us!



# Cahoon's record setting performance leads Orangeville at Boylan Tournament

By Trenten Scheidegger  
CORRESPONDENT

The Holiday season is all about giving, and Laney Cahoon was handing out baskets left and right at this year's Boylan Tournament. Cahoon and the Broncos went 3-1 in the tournament, improving their overall record to 15-2

on the year.

Cahoon had a couple of record-breaking games along the way. The first of which came at the perfect time, as the Broncos were looking to bounce back from a 46-39 loss to open the tournament. That loss came against the host team in the Boylan Cath-

olic Titans.

When Cahoon and the Broncos returned on Dec. 27, they did so with a chip on their shoulders. In the first game of the day, Orangeville took on Sycamore in a hard fought victory. The Broncos held a slim 14-12 lead at the end of the first, but they

would pull away after that.

That was thanks in large to Cahoon's dominant performance. If there was any question about what Cahoon was capable of after losing Whitney Sullivan, she has answered them. In the second quarter alone, Cahoon racked up 17 points. That includes going three-for-three at the free throw line. By the break, Cahoon already had 24 points. She nearly matched Sycamore's entire offense as they had just 26 points as a team at the half.

The senior continued to lead the way coming out of the break. Cahoon put up

another 13 points in the third quarter, including a three-point shot. Sycamore scored 13 points as a team as the Broncos took a 54-39 lead into the final quarter.

Orangeville put the finishing touches on a 61-49 victory as it was celebration time for Cahoon and her teammates. Cahoon had a career-high 39 points, which led all scorers. Nadalee Doyle and Kylie Blakely each finished with seven points in the victory.

In their second game of the day, the Broncos took an early lead over Fox Lake Grant and never looked back. After Cahoon scored 13 first

quarter points, the Broncos held a quick 23-7 advantage. Kaylynn O'Haver added a first quarter three to help extend that lead. Orangeville went on to win that game by a final score of 59-31. Cahoon led all scorers with 29 points. Doyle added seven in what was the fourteenth victory of Orangeville's season.

Records are meant to be broken, and some last longer than others. Cahoon's career high 39 points couldn't make it through the weekend. The Orangeville senior returned for one final Boylan Tournament breakout performance on Saturday, Dec. 28. That day, the Broncos took on Beloit Memorial in a matchup that came down to the wire.

It was a high-scoring affair, but it was Cahoon who was doing most of the scoring. Fifteen points in the opening quarter helped the Broncos get things going. That was just the start. In the second quarter, Cahoon put up 18 points as she already approached her career-high with 33 points in the first half alone. After that, it wasn't a matter of if she was going to do it again, but a matter of when.

By the end of the third quarter, Cahoon had already put up 40 points. It was a weekend to be remembered for the senior as she went on to finish with 46 points. Two record breaking games and a trio of victories were the Broncos' gifts to their community.

Now sitting at 15-2, the Broncos prepare to host the Galena Pirates on the night of Jan. 6. Galena got off to a 6-6 start this season.

*May You Have a Healthy and Prosperous New Year*



Nick Raab & Maya Curtis

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# Senior Resource Center helps local seniors save during Medicare Open Enrollment

The Senior Resource Center (SRC) is proud to announce the tremendous success of its Medicare Open Enrollment Assistance Program. During this year's enrollment period, Oct. 15 through Dec. 7, the SRC provided personalized assistance to 408 older adults, helping them navigate the complexities of Medicare and select the plans best suited to their needs or make changes to their coverage for the following year.

Thanks to this vital program, local seniors achieved total savings of nearly \$193,000 on their healthcare costs. That averages to \$473 savings per person! This remarkable achievement underscores the program's importance in empowering older adults to make informed decisions while easing the financial burden of healthcare.

"Our goal has always been to serve as a trusted resource for our senior community," said Anna Bell, Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) Coordinator. "The cost savings we've helped generate this year prove how essential these services are for older adults and their families."

Medicare Open Enrollment is a critical time for seniors to review their healthcare coverage, compare options, and make necessary changes. Many older adults face challenges understanding the available plans, which is where the Senior Resource Center steps in to provide expert guidance and support.

The SRC's program is made possible through the dedication of its knowledgeable staff and volunteers. "We are deeply grateful for the trust our seniors place in us and for the continued support from the community that allows us to deliver these impactful services," added

Amanda Faivre, Executive Director.

For more information about the Medicare Open Enrollment Assistance Program

or other services offered by the Senior Resource Center, please visit Senior Resource Center | or call 815-235-9777.



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# FROM LENA'S KITCHEN



The not so skinny cook

It is time to think about January and the change in cooking. This week will feature some appetizers for parties in both January and February as well as uses for the leftovers from Christmas. Have a great week cooking!

## The Best Hot Crab Dip

I have made a lot of crab dips for appetizers. I came across this one that a famous chef says is the best. I have never used the Old Bay seasoning before, but it makes sense to use it. If you want a really good crab dip, use the lump crab meat and not the

imitation.

- 2 pkg. (8 oz. each) cream cheese, softened
- 1/3 C. sour cream
- 1/3 C. mayonnaise
- 1/4 C. ketchup
- 2 t. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 lemon zested and juiced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 t. Old Bay seafood seasoning
- 2 t. paprika
- 1 t. hot sauce
- 1 t. pepper
- 1/4 t. cayenne pepper
- 8 oz. shredded white cheddar cheese, divided
- 1/2 C. sliced green onions
- 1 lb. lump crab meat

Preheat oven to 450. Stir cream cheese, sour cream, mayo, ketchup, Worcestershire sauce, garlic, lemon zest, lemon juice, Old Bay, paprika, hot sauce, pepper, cayenne, and 4 oz. shredded cheddar cheese together in a bowl until well combined. Season with salt.

Add green onions and crab meat to the bowl, fold in gently with a spatula until even-

ly mixed. Transfer to a deep pie dish sprayed with cooking spray. Top with remaining shredded cheese and a shake of cayenne. Bake in the oven until dip is piping hot, about 20 minutes. Let rest 10 minutes before serving. Serve with butter crackers or pita chips.

## Fried Blue Cheese Stuffed Olives

Stuffed olives are the "in" appetizer this year. These have the added dimension of deep frying. You can buy all kinds of stuffed olives in most grocery stores now.

- 1/4 C. flour
  - 1 egg, beaten
  - 1/2 C. breadcrumbs
  - 1 t. minced fresh rosemary
  - 1/2 t. red pepper flakes
  - 1/4 t. garlic powder
  - Pepper
  - 2 jars (9.5 oz.) blue cheese stuffed olives, drained and patted dry
  - Canola oil for frying
- Put the flour in a shallow

dish. Pour the beaten egg into another shallow dish. Mix the breadcrumbs with the rosemary, red pepper flakes, garlic powder and several shakes of black pepper in a third dish. Working in batches, coat the olives first in the flour, then dip in the egg, and then dip in the breadcrumb mixture, turning to coat. Set aside on a plate. Heat 1/2 inch of oil in a large saucepan over medium heat until a deep fry thermometer registers 375. Fry the olives in batches until golden, about 1 minute. Check oil temperature in between batches. Place on a paper towel to drain. Put on serving platter and stick a toothpick in each olive.

## Easy Egg Rolls

Need a quick and easy appetizer for January entertaining? This recipe uses some interesting additions for a Chinese favorite.

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 pkg. (14 oz.) coleslaw mix
- 2 T. soy sauce
- 1/2 t. garlic powder
- 1/4 t. ground ginger
- 1/8 t. onion powder
- 1 T. flour
- 28 wonton wrappers
- Canola oil

In a large skillet, cook beef over medium heat until no longer pink, 5 to 7 minutes, breaking into crumbles; drain and cool slightly. In a bowl, combine beef, coleslaw mix, soy sauce, garlic powder, ginger and onion powder. In a small bowl, combine flour and enough water to make a paste. With 1 corner of an egg roll wrapper facing you, place a 1/4 C. filling just before center of wrapper. Cover remaining wrappers with a damp paper towel until ready to fill. Fold bottom corner over filling; moisten remaining wrapper edges with flour paste. Fold side corners toward center over filling. Roll up tightly, pressing at tip to seal. Repeat with remaining wontons. In an electric skillet or deep fat fryer, heat oil to 375. Fry egg rolls, a few at a time, until golden brown, 3 to 4 minutes, turning occasionally. Drain on paper towels before placing on a serving tray.

## Ham Chowder

Need to find a use for that Christmas ham leftover meat? This is a great soup that is hearty and tasty. As the weather gets colder, it makes for a great weeknight meal or a weekend treat.

- 10 bacon strips, diced
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 C. diced carrots
- 3 T. flour
- 3 C. milk
- 1 1/2 C. water
- 1/2 C. cubed potatoes

- 1 can (15 1/4 oz.) whole kernel corn, drained
- 2 t. chicken bouillon granules
- Pepper to taste
- 3 C. shredded cheddar cheese
- 2 C. cubed fully cooked ham

Parsley for garnish  
In a Dutch oven, cook the bacon over medium heat until crisp. Using a slotted spoon, remove the bacon to a paper towel to drain. In the drippings, sauté onion and carrots until tender. Stir in flour until blended. Gradually add milk and water. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Add the potatoes, corn, bouillon and pepper. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered for 20 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Add the cheese and ham; heat until cheese is melted. Stir in bacon. Serve with parsley garnish.

## Swiss Scalloped Potatoes with Ham

Do you still have some ham left over? This different scalloped potato recipe could be a great way to serve it. The use of Swiss cheese instead of cheddar gives it a different flavor.

- 4 1/2 lbs. russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/4 inch slices
- 3 (8 oz.) containers of sour cream
- 12 oz. processed Swiss cheese slices, cut into thin strips (24 slices)
- 1/2 lb. ham, chopped
- 3 T. minced chives
- Salt
- Pepper
- 1/4 C. grated Parmesan cheese

In large pot of salted boiling water, cook potatoes until almost tender, 6 to 8 minutes; drain well and cool slightly. Preheat oven to 350. In large bowl, combine the sour cream, Swiss cheese, ham and 3 T. chives, season with salt and pepper. Add potatoes and toss to combine.

Coat a 9 x 13 baking dish with cooking spray. Pour potato and cheese mixture into pan. Sprinkle top with Parmesan. Bake until bubbly and top begins to brown, about 30 minutes. Top with additional chives.

## White Chocolate Chex Mix

Need a snack for the New Year? This chex mix is both sweet and salty. It will be a great addition to any get together.

- 5 C. Cheerios
- 5 C. Corn Chex
- 2 C. salted peanuts
- 1 lb. chocolate M & M's
- 1 pkg. (10 oz.) mini pretzels

2 pkg. (12 oz. each) white baking chips  
3 T. canola oil  
In a large bowl, combine the cheerios, corn chex, peanuts, M&Ms and pretzels. Set aside. In a microwave safe bowl, heat white baking chips and oil at 70% power for 1 minute, stirring once. Microwave on High for 5 seconds and stir until smooth. Pour white chocolate mixture over cereal mixture and mix well. Spread onto 3 waxed paper lined baking sheets. Cool and break apart. Store in an airtight container.

## Red Velvet Thumbprint Cookies

These are not your traditional thumbprint cookies. They are chocolate and have the red color for any holiday. They would make a great Valentine cookie too!

- 1 1/2 C. flour
- 2 T. unsweetened cocoa powder
- 3/4 t. baking powder
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1 stick salted butter, softened
- 1/2 C. packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 C. sugar, plus more for rolling
- 1 egg
- 2 t. vanilla
- 2 t. red gel food coloring
- 1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
- 1 C. powdered sugar
- 1 t. vanilla

Whisk together the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt in a medium bowl; set aside. Combine the butter, brown sugar, and sugar in a large bowl and beat with a mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. Add the egg and vanilla and beat until combined. Add the food coloring and beat until fully incorporated. Reduce the mixer speed to low and gradually beat in the flour mixture until combined. Refrigerate the dough until firm, about 20 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 350. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Roll tablespoonfuls of the dough into balls. Pour some granulated sugar onto a plate and roll the dough balls in the sugar. Arrange on the prepared baking sheets, about 2 inches apart. Make an indentation in the center of each ball with your thumb. Refrigerate until firm, about 20 minutes. Bake the cookies, rotating the pans halfway through, until set and the bottoms are light golden brown, 12 to 14 minutes. Let cool 5 minutes on the pans, then remove the cookies to racks to cool completely.

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# IN\*CI\*DENTAL\*LY

## Why is liquid sugar so bad for you?

In last week's column I addressed the many harmful ways a high sugar diet can harm your oral, physical, and mental health. If you wish to cut back on the sugars in your diet, the most effective starting point might be changing what you drink.



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

Most of the added sugars in our modern diet come from sodas, sports drinks, energy drinks, smoothies, fruit juices, and sweetened coffees and teas. While all added sugars can increase your risk of oral disease, type 2 diabetes and obesity, high fructose corn syrup (which is a mixture of fructose and glucose) may be the most harmful. Sugar-sweetened drinks, especially sodas, tend to contain large amounts of high fructose corn syrup.

Since these liquids tend to lack other nutrients (like fiber, protein, and fats) that would slow the digestion of sugar and delay its absorption into the blood, liquid sugars have a shorter gastric emptying time than solid foods. In other words, they move out of the stomach into the small intestine much faster. That forces your body to metabolize large quantities of sugar all at once. This initiates a chain of negative health effects.

Rapidly absorbed glucose from liquid sugars can quickly spike blood sugar. Since the hormone insulin is responsible for transporting glucose from your bloodstream into your cells, the body's insulin production

will surge in response. If you continually consume liquid sugars, over time these spikes in blood sugar will cause your cells to become less sensitive or resistant to the effects of insulin. When this happens, your pancreas must make even more insulin to remove the glucose from your bloodstream. This condition is known as insulin resistance. Sustained high glucose levels and high insulin levels lead to blood vessel damage and the development of type 2 diabetes.

While glucose can be metabolized by every cell in your body, fructose can only be metabolized by one organ — your liver. At the same time glucose is causing a spike in your blood sugar, fructose is rapidly absorbed into your bloodstream through the small intestine and travels directly to your liver via the portal vein. When your liver becomes overloaded with these spikes of fructose, it turns the excess fructose into fat, leading to increased fat storage, particularly around the abdominal area. Some of the fat is released into the blood as triglycerides, while part of it remains in

your liver, contributing to nonalcoholic liver disease.

Rapid dumping of fructose into the small intestine also overwhelms the gut's ability to absorb it, resulting in excess fructose making its way to the colon where it can feed microbes, resulting in bacterial overgrowth.

Ghrelin is a hormone that helps to regulate hunger, appetite, and Metabolism. Your body releases ghrelin to let your brain know that it is time to eat. Once you eat, this stimulates a decrease in ghrelin. While fats, fiber and proteins in solid food leave you feeling full, liquid sugars do not. Despite all the extra calories in sugary drinks, fructose does not trigger the ghrelin to decrease, so you eat more. To compound this, sugary drinks have powerful effects on your brain's reward system, which may lead to addiction. Taking all of this into consideration, it is easy to understand while people who drink liquid sugar are more likely to be overweight.

I would like to caution you not to consider diet soda or sparking/carbonated water as a healthier alternative to sugary liquids. These beverages are highly acidic and can negatively impact your dental, digestive and overall health. To begin, the acids in carbonated beverages can erode tooth enamel. They can also decrease saliva production and irritate the oral tissues, leading to periodontal

disease.

Sparkling water's bubbles and carbonation may also contribute to acid reflux or heartburn. While artificial sweeteners are usually well-tolerated when consumed in moderation, some research indicates they may have adverse health effects when consumed in large amounts. They may also affect the gut microbiome and intestinal absorption of nutrients,

The brain reacts to artificial sweeteners as if they are sugar, triggering the pancreas to produce insulin to transport it into cells. The absence of sugar not only disrupts this metabolic process, but may make it difficult for your brain to understand the relationship between sweetness levels and calorie intake. Disrupting hunger and satiation cues and promoting excess belly fat contributes to both weight gain and an elevated Body Mass Index.

Research further reveals a link between diet soda consumption and high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease and stroke.

Adequate hydration is essential to your health and plays a crucial role in weight management. While many people chose to drink diet carbonated beverages to lose weight, it actually increases your chances of becoming obese. Maintaining hydration by drinking fluoridated tap water not only supports your oral health, but weight loss and overall health as well.

## Avian flu mortality events in waterfowl throughout Illinois being monitored

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is monitoring a large event of waterfowl mortality at numerous locations throughout Illinois. Test results received so far indicate highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is the cause.

The public is reminded to not handle or attempt to capture waterfowl or other wild birds displaying signs of illness.

IDNR will continue to monitor for HPAI mortality events throughout the state during the seasonal bird migration. Members of the public are encouraged to report concentrations of five or more deceased birds found at one location to IDNR district wildlife biologists by going online.

Due to risk of infection to other animals, dogs and other pets should be kept away from the carcasses of birds that

may have died from HPAI. If carcasses need to be disposed of, IDNR recommends following guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). IDNR is unable to assist with carcass removal from non-IDNR properties in most situations.

Local animal control agencies should also take similar precautions and follow the guidelines above in disposing of dead birds. In addition, IDPH recommends:

- Do not send dying or dead birds to veterinarians, wildlife refuges, etc., for testing. Instead, notify your local health department or alert IDNR wildlife biologists in cases of five or more deceased birds found in one location.
- People can get on antiviral medications after exposures to prevent illness.
- If the public develops any symptoms of the "flu" – fever,

cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing, body aches, headaches, eye redness, vomiting or diarrhea – after exposure to sick or dead birds, please notify the local health department immediately. Upon seeking medical attention, please let any health care facility know of your exposure.

- Treatment must be started within two days of illness for it to be most effective, so the public is urged to not delay seeking care.

"While avian influenza generally poses a low risk to the population, it is essential to take the necessary steps to avoid exposure, and to seek treatment quickly if you are exposed," said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. "We encourage all Illinoisans to follow the advice of the experts at IDNR in order to avoid contact with sick birds, and to take any potential exposure seriously.

The Scoop Today & Shopper's Guide

### Service Corner

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See AVIAN FLU, Page 15



# LEGAL NOTICES

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:

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).

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

(Published in The Shopper's Guide Dec. 18, 24, 2024 & Jan. 1, 2025) 465715

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COUNTY OF STEPHENSON - Freeport, ILLINOIS Nationstar Mortgage LLC Plaintiff

vs. Krystle L. Schulz; Jeffry S. Schulz; Unknown Owners and NonRecord Claimants Defendant

24 FC 24 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 29, 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:

LOTS THREE (3), FIVE (5), SIX (6) AND SEVEN (7) IN BLOCK THIRTY (30) IN THE VILLAGE OF DAKOTA, STEPHENSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS. EXCEPT THAT PART THAT LIES WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE RAILROAD. SITUATED IN STEPHENSON COUNTY IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS.

P.I.N. 14-09-36-136-003. Commonly known as 110 West South Street, Dakota, IL 61018.

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, The Wirbicki

Law Group LLC, 33 West Monroe Street, Suite 1540, Chicago, Illinois 60603. (312) 360-9455. W24-0212

INTERCOUNTY JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION intercountyjudicialsales.com I3257633

(Published in The Shopper's Guide Dec. 25, 2024, Jan. 1 & 8, 2025) 465921

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

WISCONSIN BANK & TRUST, a Division of HTLF Bank, Plaintiff,

vs. DYLAN SEVERSON a/k/a DYLAN THOMAS SEVERSON; BRITTNEY AUKOFER a/k/a BRITTANY AUKOFER a/k/a BRITTANY MICHELLE AUKOFER; UNKNOWN OWNERS and NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS, Defendants.

Case No. 2024 FC 20 NOTICE OF SALE

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above-cause on August 16, 2024, an agent of the Stephenson County Sheriff's Office will at 9:30 a.m. on January 16, 2025, at the Stephenson County Courthouse, 15 N. Galena Avenue, Freeport, Illinois 61032, sell at public auction to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

Part of the Northeast Quarter (1/4) of the Southeast Quarter (1/4) of Section 28, Township 29 North, Range 8 East of the Fourth Principal Meridian, more particularly described as follows: Beginning at a point on the East line of the Southeast Quarter (1/4) of said Section 28, said point being North 00 degrees 37 minutes 30 seconds East, a distance of 1592.78 feet from a Railroad Spike at the Southeast corner thereof; thence North 89 degrees 06 minutes 19 seconds West, a distance of 361.48 feet to an iron rod; thence North 00 degrees 42

minutes 04 seconds West, a distance of 349.73 feet to an iron rod; thence North 89 degrees 53 minutes 13 seconds East, a distance of 215.12 feet to an iron rod; thence North 02 degrees 05 minutes 33 seconds East, a distance of 77.67 feet to an iron rod; thence North 89 degrees 32 minutes 12 seconds East, a distance of 152.51 feet to the East line of the Southeast Quarter (1/4) of Section 28; thence South 00 degrees 37 minutes 30 seconds West, along said East line, a distance of 434.65 feet to the Point of Beginning; situated in the Township of Oneco, County of Stephenson and State of Illinois.

Commonly known as: 12382 North Afolkey Road, Orangeville, Illinois 61060

Permanent Index Number: Part of 16-04-28-400-003 (New tax code for 2023: 16-04-28-400-005)

The property is residential property.

The judgment amount was \$159,879.90 together with interest thereon at the statutory rate plus additional costs, including publication costs, court costs, attorneys' fees and expenses of sale.

Sale Terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the auction; the balance, 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 representations as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the Court.

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

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

Persons wishing information regarding the real estate may contact:

Jamie Rommelfaenger Heartland Financial USA, Inc. 655 S. Taylor Drive Sheboygan, WI 53081 (920) 208-4883

Dated this 16th day of December, 2024.

RENO & ZAHM LLP By: /s/ Ryan T. Straw Ryan T. Straw,

Attorney for Wisconsin Bank & Trust, a Division of HTLF Bank, Plaintiff

RENO & ZAHM LLP Ryan T. Straw (#6297723) 2902 McFarland Road, Suite 400 Rockford, IL 61107 (815) 987-4050 rts@renozahm.com

(Published in The Shopper's Guide Dec. 25, 2024, Jan. 1 & 8, 2025) 465929

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.

CASE 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 Continued on next page



# Illinois' minimum wage increases, completing six-year transition

## 2019 law was Pritzker's first major legislative victory

By Ben Szalinski  
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

The minimum wage in Illinois increased to \$15 an hour on Jan. 1, completing a six-year transition period since the increase was approved in 2019.

Beginning New Year's Day, Illinois workers making minimum wage will see wages rise by \$1 and tipped workers will see their paychecks bump to \$9 an hour. Youth workers under 18 who work fewer than 650 hours a year will have a \$13 minimum wage.

The final increase, ending a six-year ramp which began with the minimum wage rising from \$8.25 to \$9.25 on Jan. 1, 2020, puts a bow on Gov. JB Pritzker's first major legislative victory. He signed the wage increase in February

2019 about a month after being sworn in for his first term, checking off a top campaign promise.

"Since day one of my administration, I've made it my mission to build an economy that works for everyone and raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour fulfills that promise to our working families," Pritzker said in a statement. "This increase honors the workers who power our state and ensures they can better support their families, bringing us closer to a stronger, more equitable economy for all."

Illinois will be one of 10 states with a minimum wage of \$15 or greater, according to the National Employment Law Project. Twenty-two other states are also increasing their wages on Jan. 1.

The minimum wage increase is one of many economic changes that have happened since 2019, including effects of the pandemic, Illinois Chamber of Commerce CEO Lou Sandoval told Cap-

itol News Illinois. He said those have caused businesses to adjust their operations in a variety of ways, such as increasing automation.

"I think you're starting to see businesses pivot in terms of how they're adjusting," Sandoval said. "You're seeing this at the national chains." Some restaurants, for example, are "moving away from larger sit-down areas into grab-and-go."

Illinois job growth has been slow since October 2019, according to a November report by the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability. The state has seen a net increase of 28,700 jobs from October 2019 through October 2024. That's a growth rate of 0.5 percent, compared to the national rate of 4.9 percent.

The rate of new job postings by businesses at the beginning of the year will shed some light on how the jump to \$15 on Jan. 1 is impacting business operations, Sandoval said.

To help small businesses with the change, the state provides a tax credit through 2027 to businesses with 50 or fewer employees for wages paid to minimum-wage workers.

The 2019 minimum wage law marked the first increase since the wage hit \$8.25 in 2010. Senate Majority Leader Kimberly Lightford, D-Westchester, introduced a bill to raise it to \$15 an hour in 2017 that was passed by the General Assembly and vetoed by Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner. Lightford sponsored the initiative again in 2019.

"As a state, we have helped countless workers make ends meet, reduce financial stress, and provide a more solid foundation for their futures," Lightford said in a statement. "The \$15 minimum wage is a testament to our commitment to economic justice and our belief that everyone who works full time deserves a living wage."

The value of a \$15 minimum wage, however, has

changed since lawmakers acted in 2019. A person making \$8.25 in February 2019 would need to earn \$10.30 today to have the same buying power after inflation, according to the Consumer Price Index. A \$15 hourly wage today has the buying power that \$12.02 had in February 2019. A person would need to make an \$18.72 wage today to have the same buying power that \$15 had in February 2019. Top Democrats didn't say if they will push for new increases.

"As a Senator of 25 years, history has shown my commitment of fighting to ensure workers are paid a living wage. That commitment still holds strong today," Lightford said in an email statement.

Pritzker said he supports ideas that will help workers make more money, but didn't commit to supporting any plan to raise the minimum wage further when pressed about it at a news conference Dec. 11.

"We always are thinking about how do you balance the need for higher wages with the needs that businesses have to hire people and do it affordably. But I think we did it the right way when we did it back in 2019," Pritzker said.

The new \$15 wage equates

to a 40-hour-per-week annual salary of \$31,200 before taxes. That equals the federal government's poverty level for a four-person household. The poverty level is \$15,060 in a single-person household.

But according to calculations in a national project by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, \$15 hourly still doesn't equate to a "living" wage in Illinois, based on U.S. Census Bureau cost of living and other cost estimates provided by federal agencies adjusted for inflation.

A single adult with no children needs a \$22.86 hourly salary to make a living wage in Illinois, while a two-parent household with two working adults and three children would each need to earn \$31.69. In a two-parent household with one working adult and one child, the worker needs \$36.49 to make a living wage, according to the MIT project.

Inflation is making it hard for workers to benefit from wage increases, Sandoval said, adding rising wages also cause businesses to raise prices.

"They might get the wage increase on one side, but their cost of living goes up accordingly," Sandoval said.

## Reinhold recognized with awards for 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.



Diane Reinhold

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 educational 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).

### About Extension

Illinois Extension leads public outreach for University of Illinois by translating research into action plans that allow Illinois families, businesses, and community leaders to solve problems, make informed decisions and adapt to changes and opportunities.

## LEGAL NOTICE

Continued from previous page  
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  
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Dec. 18, 25, 2024  
& Jan. 1, 2025)

465676

## Lainey and Mavrick among top baby names at SSM Health Monroe Hospital in 2024

Monroe area families welcomed 433 bundles of joy into the world at SSM Health Monroe Hospital in 2024. When looking at the most common names given to these sweet new family members, parents most chose Lainey, Eleanor and Lydia for girls. For boys,

the most top names were Mavrick, Oliver, Michael, Jordan, Elias and Caleb. Emma and Colt topped the hospital's list of popular baby names in 2023.

While SSM Health Monroe Hospital's Family Birth team is busy caring for families year-round, December

saw the highest number of birthdays, with 44 little ones joining the world. February was a close second with 43 little ones joining the world.

*Birth totals, information and most popular names are collected from Dec. 1, 2023, to Nov. 30, 2024 to represent a full calendar year.*

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## help wanted

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Email: vicki@southernlakesnewspapers.com  
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444841

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## real estate

### Other Real Estate

**PUBLISHER'S NOTICE** All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial/ status or national origin, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination. Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination call HUD toll-free at 1-900-669-9777. The toll-free tele phone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275. EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

To place an ad in our Real Estate Section  
Call (815) 369-4112

### Part Time Help Wanted

**CLERK POSITION TOWN OF** Spring Grove, Green County, Wisconsin. This newly appointed position will be effective April 15, 2025. Attendance at all scheduled Town Board meetings is required. The Clerk will provide statutory support and assistance to the Town Board, by performing tasks including, but not limited to: accounting tasks, property tax preparation, administration of elections, licensing, preparing minutes and agendas, record keeping. Strong computer skills are critical and should include proficiency in Microsoft Office (Excel and Word) and Google Docs. Experience with accounting software and website maintenance is necessary. Candidates should be comfortable with using and learning new technology, and be willing to attend training workshops. This position requires strong attention to detail, the ability to multitask, and the capacity to work independently. The position is approximately 20 hours per week. The level of responsibility and hours will vary, especially during elections and property tax preparation. Wages will be determined based on qualifications and experience. The deadline for applications is January 15, 2025 at noon. Please submit a resume, cover letter and three (3) references to: tsgrve.clerk@gmail.com or mail to: Town of Spring Grove Clerk Position, N2475 County Road GG, Brodhead, WI 53520.

## for sale

### Announcements

CLASSIFIED IN-COLUMN ADS cannot be credited or refunded after the ad has been placed. Ads canceled before deadline will be removed from the paper as a service to our customers, but no credit or refund will be issued to your account.

**DISCLAIMER NOTICE** This publication does not knowingly accept fraudulent or deceptive advertising. Readers are cautioned to thoroughly investigate all ads, especially those asking for money in advance.

### Burial Needs

**7 CEMETERY PLOTS** Willing to sell as a group or individually. Located at Roselawn Memory Gardens 3045 WI-67, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. This is a private sale. Contact Randy, the seller at randy@slpublishers.com.

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### Campers and RVs

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### Sports/Classic Cars

**1952 CHEVY PICKUP** Solid Nevada truck, runs great. \$19,750. (262) 949-6997.

### Sport Utilities

**2008 JEEP LIBERTY 4X4 125k.** New battery, exhaust, water pump, AC compressor & brakes all around. AZ car. New low price \$5,600. Call 262-716-6180.

### Trucks & Trailers

**2002 FORD F-250 SUPER DUTY** V-10, with 8' Western Plow, 37k miles, excellent cond., no rust, \$28,000. 262-497-3162.



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# ISP Troop 1 enforcement results for November

## Monthly activity for November

Illinois State Police (ISP) Troop 1 has announced the enforcement figures and activity for November.

ISP Troop 1 troopers issued 1,469 citations, 1,000 written warnings, and made 37 criminal arrests during the month of November. Troopers issued 595 citations for speeding, 78 citations for distracted driving violations and 127 citations for occupant restraint violations.

Troopers investigated 130 traffic crashes, assisted 245 motorists, and conducted 383 commercial motor vehicle inspections, of which 48 were placed out of service for safety reasons. There were 20

arrests for driving under the influence.

Troop 1, which encompasses Boone, Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside and Winnebago counties, investigated no fatal crashes in November.

## Occupant Restraint Enforcement Patrols

ISP Troop 1 has announced the results of Occupant Restraint Enforcement Patrols (OREP) held in Lee and Stephenson counties during November.

These OREPs provided extra patrol coverage for the ISP so officers could focus on saving lives by making sure all vehicle occupants were buckled up.

- Safety Belt Citations: 44
- Child Restraint Citations: 1
- Total Citations: 101
- Total Written Warnings: 10

Most motorists know safety belts save lives, but some ignore their safety and that of their families by neglecting to use safety belts and child restraint devices. These patrols reinforce the occupant protection message by focusing

on those who ignore the law. Lives can be saved if people simply "buckle up!"

## Special Traffic Enforcement Patrols

ISP Troop 1 has announced the results of Special Traffic Enforcement Patrols (STEP) in Lee, Stephenson, Whiteside, and Winnebago counties during November.

These STEPs allowed the ISP to provide increased en-

forcement for impaired driving, occupant restraint, speeding, and distracted driving violations during the National "Click It or Ticket" Campaign.

- Occupant Restraint Violations: 18
- Driving Under the Influence and Drug/Alcohol-Related Citations: 6
- Speeding Citations and Warnings: 91
- Distracted Driving Cita-

tions and Warnings: 3  
 • Total Citations: 219  
 • Total Written Warnings: 11  
 Driving the posted speed limit, sober, not distracted, and buckled up will save your life and the lives of many others.

All enforcement projects listed in this article are funded through the Illinois Department of Transportation.

## • Avian flu (Continued from page 11)

In addition to detections in wild birds, Illinois and other states across the United States have seen detections in poultry.

"The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) encourages poultry owners to be aware of the risk, increase biosecurity measure and

prevent contact with wild birds," said Dr. Mark Ernst, IDOA state veterinarian. "In addition, we encourage poultry owners to report unusually large mortalities in their flocks and to be aware of IDPH's recommendations regarding exposure to sick birds."

## • Kitchen (Continued from page 10)

Beat the cream cheese, vanilla, and powdered sugar in a large bowl with mixer on medium speed until combined. Pipe or spoon about a teaspoon of the frosting into the indentation of each cookie. Store in the refrigerator.

forward for Bears fans once again. I am ready to be done with college football too. Can there be another bowl game? I am a big college basketball fan, so the games will go full speed ahead in the next month or two. I hope you all have a healthy and happy New Year!

## Final Thoughts

It is time to think about getting rid of all the Christmas decorations that it took weeks to get up. The house will look bare. I have friends who love this time when everything has been put away. I will miss the lights twinkling at night.

Winter sports are in full swing. If you are a Green Bay Packer fan, you are looking forward to playoffs. There is not so much looking

We are searching for recipes for the New Year, so send some favorites our way. We also will be looking for some party recipes as well as some soup recipes. If you find some recipes to share, you can contact us by email at 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.

## • Laws (Continued from page 3)

or online. Customers will also be allowed to submit written notice for canceling their membership by mail.

**Subscription renewals:** Businesses that offer a free trial or promotional period for their product or service must notify customers at least three days before the subscription automatically renews at a

paid rate under Senate Bill 2764. The law only applies to subscriptions longer than 15 days.

**Crime victim DNA:** DNA evidence collected from a person who is the victim of a crime to aid a criminal investigation cannot be entered into a DNA database, according to House Bill 1168.

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:

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).

If the property is located in a common interest community, purchasers other than mortgag-

ees 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

(Published in The Shopper's Guide Dec. 18, 25, 2024 & Jan. 1, 2025) 465716

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COUNTY OF Stephenson - Freeport, ILLINOIS Nationstar Mortgage LLC Plaintiff vs. Krystle L. Schulz; Jeffrey S. Schulz; Unknown Owners and NonRecord Claimants Defendant

24 FC 24 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

29, 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:

P.I.N. 14-09-36-136-003. Commonly known as 110 West South Street, Dakota, IL 61018.

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, The Wirbicki Law Group LLC, 33 West Monroe Street, Suite 1540, Chicago, Illinois 60603. (312) 360-9455. W24-0212 INTERCOUNTY JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION intercountyjudicialsales.com I3257633

(Published in The Shopper's Guide Dec. 25, 2024, Jan. 1 & 8, 2025) 465922

STATE OF ILLINOIS IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COUNTY OF STEPHENSON WISCONSIN BANK & TRUST, a Division of HTLF Bank, Plaintiff,

vs. DYLAN SEVERSON a/k/a DYLAN THOMAS SEVERSON; BRITTNEY AUKOFRER a/k/a BRITTANY AUKOFRER a/k/a BRITTANY MICHELLE AUKOFRER; UNKNOWN OWNERS and NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS, Defendants.

Case No. 2024 FC 20 NOTICE OF SALE

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above-cause on August 16, 2024, an agent of the Stephenson County Sheriff's Office will at 9:30 a.m. on January 16, 2025, at the Stephenson County Courthouse, 15 N. Galena Avenue, Freeport, Illinois 61032, sell at public auction to the high-

est bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

Commonly known as: 12382 North Afolkey Road, Orangeville, Illinois 61060

Permanent Index Number: Part of 16-04-28-400-003 (New tax code for 2023: 16-04-28-400-005)

The property is residential property.

The judgment amount was \$159,879.90 together with interest thereon at the statutory rate plus additional costs, including publication costs, court costs, attorneys' fees and expenses of sale.

Sale Terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the auction; the balance, 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 representations as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the Court.

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

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

Persons wishing information regarding the real estate may contact:

Jamie Rommelfaenger Heartland Financial USA, Inc. 655 S. Taylor Drive Sheboygan, WI 53081 (920) 208-4883

Dated this 16th day of December, 2024.

RENO & ZAHM LLP By: /s/ Ryan T. Straw Ryan T. Straw, Attorney for Wisconsin Bank & Trust, a Division of HTLF Bank, Plaintiff

RENO & ZAHM LLP Ryan T. Straw (#6297723) 2902 McFarland Road, Suite 400 Rockford, IL 61107 (815) 987-4050

Published in The Shopper's Guide Dec. 25, 2024, Jan. 1 & 8, 2025) 465936

To advertise in The Scoop Today/ Shopper's Guide Contact Cyndee Stiefel at lenaads@rvpublishing.com



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