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VOL. 87 • NO. 16

YOUR FREE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2025



LENA AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY FACEBOOK PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Lena American Legion Auxiliary honors local veterans

The Lena American Legion Auxiliary hosted the tenth annual Woman Veterans Brunch on Saturday, March 29, 2025, at the American Legion Home. The annual brunch honored area women veterans for their service, with over 20 veterans attending.

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Obituaries

THOMAS PURPLE

Thomas Purple Sr., a beloved husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and friend, passed away peacefully surrounded by his family on April 2, 2025. Born on July 6, 1939, in Jasonville, Indiana, Thomas was a pillar of strength and kindness, leaving an indelible mark on everyone who had the privilege of knowing him.



marked by dedication, innovation, and a deep sense of responsibility. He began his educational career in 1961, teaching seventh and eighth-grade language arts at Spartan Senior Grade School in the Sipp-Rolling Acres School District. After a couple of years, he left to work for Bennett Publishing as a regional sales representative. However, the desire to teach was great, and he again found himself in the classroom back at Spartan Senior Grade School while furthering his education and obtaining a master's degree at Bradley, where he became interested in school administration. In 1967, he accepted the position of Superintendent and Principal of Riverview Grade School near Spring Bay, Illinois. At the age of 28, he was the youngest school superintendent in Illinois. He later moved on to the Pearl City School District in 1976 where he remained for nine years then to other school districts in northern Illinois as their superintendent. He gained notoriety for being an expert in school finance and saving his school districts from economic failures. In 1993, Thomas officially retired from being a school superintendent; however, with his experience in school administration and finance, he took on several intermittent positions with other school districts until 1999, when he finally decided to stay retired.

Early Life and Education

Thomas grew up in Sparland and Peoria Heights, where he developed a love for learning and a passion for country life. He attended Woodruff High School, where he excelled academically and was active in the band, playing the tuba and sousaphone. His commitment to education led him to Bradley University, where he earned a degree in History and English.

Career and Achievements

Thomas's career was

marked by dedication, innovation, and a deep sense of responsibility. He began his educational career in 1961, teaching seventh and eighth-grade language arts at Spartan Senior Grade School in the Sipp-Rolling Acres School District. After a couple of years, he left to work for Bennett Publishing as a regional sales representative.

However, the desire to teach was great, and he again found himself in the classroom back at Spartan Senior Grade School while furthering his education and obtaining a master's degree at Bradley, where he became interested in school administration. In 1967, he accepted the position of Superintendent and Principal of Riverview Grade School near Spring Bay, Illinois. At the age of 28, he was the youngest school

superintendent in Illinois. He later moved on to the Pearl City School District in 1976 where he remained for nine years then to other school districts in northern Illinois as their superintendent. He gained notoriety for being an expert in school finance and saving his school districts from economic failures. In 1993, Thomas officially retired from being a school superintendent; however, with his experience in school administration and finance, he took on several intermittent positions with other school districts until 1999, when he finally decided to stay retired.

Family and Personal Life

Thomas met the love of his life, Phyllis Schaffer, while they attended Woodruff High School, and they shared a beautiful marriage filled with love, laughter, and mutual respect. Together, they raised three children, instilling in them the values of hard work, compassion, and perseverance. Thomas was a devoted

father who cherished family time, whether it was through family vacations, weekend cookouts on the farm, or simply sharing stories around the dinner table. Phyllis passed away in 2022 after 63 years of marriage.

Hobbies and Interests

Outside of his professional life, Thomas had a wide range of interests and hobbies. He loved country life and enjoyed living on his hobby farms, raising horses and other farm animals. He loved Civil War history and studying President Abraham Lincoln. He also loved to travel domestically and internationally. His passion for farm life was something he shared with his children, creating countless cherished memories.

During his retirement Thomas and Phyllis traveled extensively and became snowbirds and spent the winters in Florida.

Community Involvement

Thomas was deeply involved in his community, always eager to lend a helping hand and make a difference. He was an active member of the Methodist Church in Stockton, Illinois, and other civic organizations throughout his life and where they lived.

Legacy and Remembrance

Thomas's legacy is one of love, integrity, and unwavering dedication. He leaves behind a rich tapestry of memories, each one a testament to his character and the profound impact he had on those around him. His family and friends will forever cherish the moments they shared with him and strive to honor his memory by living out the values he embodied.

Survived By

Thomas is survived by his children, sons Thomas Jr. (Tina) of Cape Coral Florida, Steven (Brenda) of Pearl City, and daughter Christina (Pat-

rick) Southwick of Byron. He was a loving and proud grandfather to Tyler (Andrea) Volkers, Brandie (Nick) Mowell, Ashley (Andrew) Gronewold, Ryan (Kaleb) Southwick, Amy (Nick) Mullens, Jeffrey (Sara) Purple, Jacquelyn (Samuel) Entrenza, and thirteen great-grandchildren, and their exchange student Yuko Sugata from Japan. He is also survived by his youngest brother, James (Ellen) of Collegedale, TN.

Gratitude

The family would also like to thank the staff at Winn Prairie and Serenity Hospice for the care they so lovingly provided.

Funeral Arrangements

A funeral service will be held on Saturday, April 12, 2025, at 11 a.m. at Zion Community Church, 10100 W. Sabin Church Rd, Pearl City, Illinois with a visitation beginning at 9 a.m. Burial will take place at Highland Cemetery in Pearl City.

NORMAN MCKINSTREY

Norman Dale McKinstry, age 85, of Lena, IL passed away after a battle with a brief illness on Monday, March 31, 2025. He was born on June 17, 1939, in Lena, IL to Leo and Sylvia (Trost) McKinstry. He attended college for a couple years studying engineering until he joined the workforce as a mechanical and project engineer. Throughout his career he worked for Ingersoll, Forte, Publishers Equipment, and Barns as a project engineer. He was always very proud of the career he had. He enjoyed golfing, bowling and racing at the Freeport Raceway Park. He was a member of the Baltic Lodge in Rockford. Norman was a wonderful handyman and was constantly fixing things around his house and helping others.



children, Michele (Ron) Vick of Warren, IL and Michael McKinstry of Lena, IL; 4 grandchildren, Kaden McKinstry, Cody McKinstry, Ryan (Carrie) Vick and Rachel (Otman) Elaroussi; 5 great grandchildren; 1 sister, Shirley (Bob) Hodgson of Gratiot, WI; and several nieces and nephews. Norman is preceded in death by his parents and brother Don McKinstry.

A Celebration of Life will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 26, 2025, at the Evangelical Free Church of Lena with a visitation from 10 a.m. until time of service. Cremation rites have been accorded. A memorial has been established in his memory. Condolences may be sent to the family at www.leamonfh.com.

ROBERT STUFFLEBEAM

Robert "Bob" J. Stufflebeam, 82, of Lena, IL formerly of Chicago, IL and Port Richey, FL passed away peacefully on Friday, March 21, 2025, at Allure of Pinecrest in Mt. Morris, IL. He was born on April 17, 1942, in Chicago, IL to Robert E. and Virginia (Meyers) Stufflebeam. Bob was a truck driver for many years, he started his trucking career off at Beaver Transportation. In 1985 he decided to buy his own truck and start his own business until 1989, when he retired due to medical reasons.

Bob was a part of the Lake Will Sportsman Club in Wilmington, IL where he would go to spend time camping, fishing, and trapshooting. He would also take trips to Lake Michigan to go Smelt Fishing. In his younger years, he would spend his summers at his family's farm near Springfield and he cherished his time there. Bob enjoyed



veggie gardening and just being outdoors. Some of his fondest memories are with his nieces and nephews.

He and Theresa enjoyed taking them camping and on adventures, one time they even went to Disney.

He is survived by his significant other of 42 years, Theresa Woodbury of Lena, IL; 3 siblings- Judith Traversa of Woodridge, IL, Ronald Stufflebeam of Wilmington, IL and Debra (Anthony) Neuhring of Holcombe, WI as well as many nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews, additional family members and friends. He is preceded in death by his parents and nephew, Robert Traversa.

No services will be held at this time. Cremation rites have been accorded. A memorial has been established in his memory.

JACQUELYN BRUEGGER

Jacquelyn "Jackie" Bruegger, age 88 of Lena, IL passed away on Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at the Lena Living Center. She was born on Oct. 23, 1936, the daughter of Clarence and Doris (Haase) Drake. She graduated from Monroe High School in 1953. On Nov. 1, 1953, Jacquelyn married Stanley Bruegger.

Jackie devoted her life to raising her children and caring for her family. She worked as a cook and spent time working at a clothing store. She had a deep love for animals and enjoyed spending time shopping, but her greatest joy came from the moments spent with her family.

Jackie is survived by her husband, Stanley; children, Shelley Comisi of Lansing, NY, and Todd (Rose) Bruegger of Ridott, IL; grandchild-



ren, Daniel (fiancé, Olivia Wheeler) Comisi, Stanley (Ashly) Bruegger and Neil (Bria) Bruegger;

great-grandchildren, Drake, and Ronan; and sister, Linda Drake of Evansville. She was preceded in death by her parents; and brother, Lyle Drake.

Funeral services will be held on Saturday, April 12, 2025, at 12 p.m. at Shriner Hager Gohlke Funeral Home with Reverend Steve Rios officiating. Burial will follow at Greenwood Cemetery. A visitation will be held from 10 a.m. until the time of service at the funeral home. Condolences may be sent to the family at: shgfuneralhome.net.

The family of Pete Korth would like to thank the surrounding communities for all the love and support shown to us while Pete was in the hospital and since his passing. We appreciate all the prayers, cards, food, memorial donations, or just stopping by to share a story with us. We thank you for your kindness during this time.

With gratitude,
Terry Korth
Rachel (Korth) and Bill Curnyn
Dr. Kyle and Marcie Korth
Emily (Korth) and Jordan Haarsma

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SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

A barge travels down the Mississippi River alongside the Great River Road near Grafton and the confluence of the Mighty Miss and Illinois River.

River system greatly affected by 'weather whiplash'

By Phyllis Coulter
FARMWEEK

Weather has changed over the past century when much of the river infrastructure was built, according to Madelynn Wuestenberg, Iowa State University Extension weather and climate specialist.

The Mississippi River Basin has received an increase in annual precipitation with more coming in heavy rainfall events. There has been a 25 percent increase in the amount of precipitation coming in heavy rainfall events in the 2000s alone, she said March 19 during the 2025 annual meeting of the Upper Mississippi, Illinois and Missouri Rivers Association.

More of the precipitation is coming in the winter and spring now with projections for precipitation to decrease in the summer months. "That's problematic when we rely on timely summer rains," Wuestenberg said of the effect on Midwest agriculture.

Bare grounds in the spring and winter make it more vulnerable to erosion when heavy moisture events occur, she said.

The intense rain events, of more than 2 inches a day, might be too much for the current river infrastructures that were designed for conditions of the past.

There are more "weather whiplash" situations with too much rain followed by too little, Wuestenberg said. She gave the example of severe flooding in northwest Iowa in the spring and drought in September last year.

She highlighted more than two dozen billion-dollar weather and climate disasters in the U.S. in 2024 with at least seven including parts of Illinois or Iowa.

The annual flood magnitude is increasing as are flood-related disasters along the Mississippi, she said.

"The infrastructure is not built for current climatic and weather systems," Wuestenberg said.

Recommendations from the U.S. Government Accountability Office to address the issues include:

- Updating climate information for planning;
- Integrating climate resilience into project-level benefit-cost analysis;
- Prioritizing projects that incorporate climate resilience;
- Conducting climate vulnerability assessments of existing infrastructure;
- Establishing a process for retrofitting existing infrastructure to account for climate change.

As for current conditions, the Mississippi flow is below its normal state and soil moisture is lower in northern Illinois than normal.

The March 20 U.S. Drought Monitor showed much of the Midwest in moderate drought, but not in southern Illinois where there had been more precipitation events this winter.

As far as the drought outlook, there doesn't seem to be too much of an issue in most of Illinois this spring.

Illinois was in a sliver of "near normal temperatures" and "near normal precipitation" in the latest spring outlook, Wuestenberg said.

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

News briefs

Stephenson County Home Show

The Greater Freeport Partnership, along with community sponsors, announces the return of the Stephenson County Home Show on April 12 at the Stephenson County Fairgrounds from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Dozens of local contractors, sub-contractors, and home enhancement providers will be on hand with displays of their products and services for homeowners, prospective homebuyers and others looking to improve their physical spaces. The home show is free for attendees.

Easter Egg Hunt

The Lena Park District will host two Easter Egg

Hunts on April 12 at Lions Park. Ages 2 to 10 are welcome to attend the event at 5 p.m. Ages 11 to 23 are welcome to attend for flashlight hunt at 7:30 p.m. Both events are free.

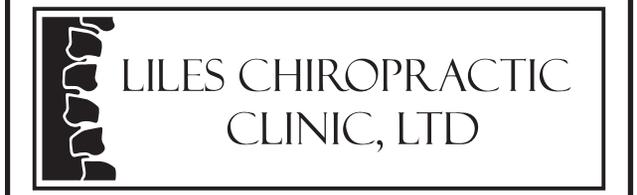
Blackhawk Unit of SCAHCE

The April meeting of the Blackhawk Unit of SCAHCE will be held on Thursday, April 17, 2025, at 1 p.m. at the Pearl City Library. Anita Costello will give the lesson of "Herbs and Spices". Roll call will be, "What is your favorite herb or spice?" Raffle items will be brought by Jo Wenzel and Anita Costella. The meeting is open to anyone who would like to join us.

Hunts on April 12 at Lions Park. Ages 2 to 10 are welcome to attend the event at 5 p.m. Ages 11 to 23 are welcome to attend for flashlight hunt at 7:30 p.m. Both events are free.

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OPINION



In my opinion Lawmakers must step up and address opioid crisis

Like everywhere across the U.S., Illinois continues to struggle with the opioid crisis, but rural communities like Johnson County face unique challenges in addressing this epidemic. Many residents in our community struggle to access basic health care services, and finding quality, affordable addiction treatment can be even more difficult. When one of our neighbors develops an opioid dependency and can't get the care they need, the ripple effects are felt throughout the community—impacting families, straining law enforcement, and stretching our limited local resources even thinner.



By **JEREMY LLOYD**
Johnson County State's Attorney

As the state's attorney for Johnson County, I've got a front row seat to this crisis. Our law enforcement officers, who already work under immense pressure, are often the first responders to overdose calls. More of these cases than you can imagine can be traced back to a prescription opioid used to manage pain.

It's time for Illinois to ensure that safe and effective pain management options are available to every patient before they are ever put on a path toward opioid dependency, despite the best intentions of their providers.

One step toward tackling this crisis is passing Senate Bill 1238, legislation that would make it easier for residents in our state to access nonopioid pain treatment options. This bill would prevent health insurance companies from denying a patient coverage of a non-opioid in favor of an opioid drug, ensuring

patients can choose safer pain treatments options without financial or bureaucratic barriers.

SB 1238 also recognizes that not enough people know about the non-opioid options on the market, and patients can't choose a treatment option they don't know exists. To fix this, the legislation would allow the Illinois Department of Public Health to author and publish a pamphlet to educate the patients and providers about non-opioid pain treatments.

These policy changes are crucial for protecting Illinois residents from the devastating effects of opioid addiction. By making nonopioid alternatives more accessible and affordable, we can keep patients off the path to opioid addiction. This is not just a public health issue; it's a matter of public safety and fiscal responsibility.

Every overdose call strains emergency response resources, and every new case of opioid addiction adds to the long-term health care and law enforcement costs our state must bear.

SB 1238 is a common-sense proposal that puts patients first, prioritizes public safety, and helps break the cycle of opioid addiction before it begins. I urge the Illinois Legislature to pass this bill and take a critical

See **CRISIS**, Page 5

Weekly connection

A trip to Africa in love

Last week two men from our church and I took an amazing trip deep into the heart of Africa to visit a young man that had come into my life some thirty years ago. You see it was thirty years ago that my wife and I signed up with an organization that brought a little five-year-old African boy named Jimmy into our lives. We were at a concert with some friends from our church and during intermission some people came around with these little



By **SCOTT CERNEK**
Columnist

packets of information on children who were in great need in very poor parts of the world. We thought it would be a great idea to choose one of these children to support, and so we chose a little boy and signed up for the

program. We chose a little boy named Jimmy and agreed to send about thirty dollars a month to help Jimmy out. He lived in a country way down in Central Africa and every couple of months I would write him a letter and he would write back to me.

For years we sent letters back and forth through the organization that we signed up with and we learned all about his story of poverty and pain. A few months before we started supporting Jimmy, he had lost his dad

and siblings to a rebel group who was trying to overthrow the government at the time. They came into his village and his family was shot and killed. Jimmy fled with his mother to a safer part of the country and together they tried to put their lives back together. Several years later just before Jimmy graduated out of the program his mother died, and he was left as an orphan all alone in this world. Our heart went out to him

See **TRIP**, Page 5

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

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Around the Northern Hills

Thank you to everyone that came out to our recent "Burgers and Brews" event at Small Town Saloon in Elizabeth, IL. If you didn't get a chance to get there and sample the new Roots Lager, a collaboration between the Illinois Farm Bureau and Destihl Brewery, based out of Normal, IL, you still have a chance to do so. Roots Lager is going to be a regular drink item. Stop in at Small Town and try it out!



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

the programs that we offer. You can volunteer as much or as little as you like. I have several people that volunteer at one event during the year. Take the time to help educate the public about agriculture at one of our summer programs. For more information, contact me at the office at 815.858.2235.

Young Leaders Committee

Are you between the ages of 18 and 35 and have an interest in agriculture? Consider joining the Young Leaders Committee. We have

a great group of individuals that enjoy promoting agriculture and I would love to see more people join in. The next meeting is Sunday, April 27 at 6 p.m. here at the farm bureau office in Elizabeth. If you have any questions, call our office at 815.858.2235 or email jdcfbmgr@gmail.com.

Family Farm Signs

It's that time of year that we are all thinking of planting and sprucing things up around the farm. Why not add a "This is a Family Farm" sign to your landscape? The signs are 17.5" x 23" and cost \$30.

Farm Fun Fact

April is National Volunteer Month. Would you like to help promote agriculture? I've got some great opportunities for you!

National Volunteer Month

April is National Volunteer Month. I would like to take this time to thank all of the volunteers that take the time out of their busy schedules to help make our organization a strong one. Also, if you are looking for a volunteer opportunity, we are always looking for a variety of volunteers to help at some of



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

The Butcher family, Top Notchers 4-H club, volunteered their Saturday morning by participating in the Jo Daviess County 4-H Tree Planting event.

Music Art and Recreational Society of Stockton to host local concert

Music Art and Recreational Society of Stockton (MARSS) is proud to present Meghan Davis in concert on April 25, 2025, at 6 p.m. at the Stockton American Legion Hall located at 128 E. Front Avenue.

Davis is an area favorite guitar and vocal performer from Northwest Illinois. Her easy-listening solo acoustic shows provide an enjoyable, relaxing, and fun atmosphere that anyone will appreciate.

Her shows consist of current hits and music from the past 5 decades including classic rock, pop and a little bit of country. Davis features hits from a wide array of artists such as James Taylor, Carly Simon, The Eagles, Simon and Garfunkel, John Denver, Taylor Swift, Jackson Browne, Elton John, REO Speedwagon, Tom Petty, and many more. Admission is free, but a collection for future concerts will be taken.

• Trip (Continued from page 4)

and through social media we were able to keep in touch and help him through college where he earned a degree in pastoral studies and began volunteering his time and efforts with a church which had a school and an orphanage that they ran as well. His only means of income were whatever vegetables he could sell from his small garden and also whatever small gifts his church could give him on occasion.

For years this was how he survived. Finally, this December he sent me a message that he was taking a bride in March and would love it if I could come. I decided to see if there was any way I could go and see him. Sure enough I found a flight that was affordable and recruited some men to go along. Our church gave us a wonderful send-off and two weeks ago we took off on the adventure of a lifetime. I can't tell you how exciting it was to fly over the Sahara Desert and look down over millions of acres of sand and then a while later to look

down on millions of acres of jungle. Finally, after eight hours of flying across the Atlantic and eight more hours from Brussels to central Africa, we descended back to the earth and landed in a strange and distant land.

I have to say that the Holy Spirit was with us each step of the way and in the end, we were able to meet up with our long lost "adopted" son Jimmy. We spent the week traveling and visiting schools, orphans, churches and sharing many different kinds of gifts that we took along for the children we met. It was an eye-opening trip to say the least. The poverty is beyond belief in some places, but the kindness and gentleness of the vast majority of the African people we met was wonderful to experience. I have to admit there were times when things got a bit sketchy and fear started to creep in, but the Lord gave me the verse found in 2 Timothy 1:7. For I have not given you a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind. We felt the powerful presence of the

Holy Spirit often on our trip and back home again. Since we have arrived back home, I have shared Jimmy's and my story with several school classes and also at church. It is my desire that we become a truly thankful people who thank God for our great country and for the salvation that only comes through faith in Jesus Christ. It was a joy to meet many fellow believers who even though times are very difficult for them, the joy of the Lord was very evident in their lives. I find myself reflecting a great deal on what we experienced, and I'm driven to pray for those who have so much less than we have here in this great country. Until next week, God bless.

• Crisis

(Continued from page 4)

step toward combating the opioid crisis in our state. Illinoisans deserve better than a system that prioritizes opioids over safer, nonaddictive treatments. I urge our state lawmakers to pass this bill.

Plant a tree; help the planet

The River Ridge CUSD is now home to 25 new oak trees with the help of the Jo Daviess County 4-H program and Jo Daviess County Soil and Water Conservation District. Together, these volunteers participated in the 4-H Green Communities Tree Program, which addresses the decline of native oak trees throughout Illinois.

"The loss of our oak trees is a global issue, and it is important that our youth see the difference they can make locally by simply showing up and giving their time! When Mindy Pratt at the Soil and

Water Conservation District reached out to express their interest, we started the planning process. Mindy found our location, and our 4-Hers and volunteers planted the trees," says Angela Miller, 4-H Program Coordinator. "It is exciting to know that our 4-H members who go to school here, those who visit, and those who will someday send their own children to River Ridge School will remember that they helped plant those trees."

Throughout the spring of 2025, youth in 49 counties participating in the 4-H

Green Communities Tree Programs are planting groupings of 25 oak trees on public properties in their county for 1225 newly planted trees across Illinois with help from Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

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Church news

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

All are invited to worship at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 118 E. Mason St. Lena, IL. Join on Sunday, April 13, 2025, for Worship Service at 9:30 a.m. This week's gospel reading is from the Gospel Luke 22:14-23:56.

On Wednesday, April 16 the Peace Corps Quilting group will meet from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. All are welcome to join and no quilting experience necessary.

On April 17, 2025, Good Shepherd will hold Maundy Thursday Service 7 p.m. Holy Communion will be celebrated in this service.

All the services will be recorded and be available on church's Facebook page

and website. Please visit our website and (<http://goodshepherdlena.org/>)and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/GSLCLenaIL>) for information. Please contact the church office at 815-369-5552 with any questions.

St. John's Lutheran Church

St. John's Lutheran Church, Pearl City will celebrate Palm Sunday on Sunday, April 13 at 9 a.m.

Everyone is welcome to come to St. John's to play dominoes in Luther Hall on Tuesday, May 6 at 9 a.m. The next Men's Breakfast will be on Wednesday, May 7 at 7:30 a.m. at the Beltline Restaurant in Freeport.

On Sunday, May 4 St. John's members and friends

can go out for lunch at the Legends on Route 26 north of Freeport at 12 p.m. Please sign up on the bulletin board. Members and friends are welcome to attend.

The April Grace Meal will be on Sunday, April 27 instead of April 20. It will be a community meal served by St. John's, Faith United Methodist Church, and Zion Church. The menu will be ham, mashed potatoes and gravy, peas and carrots, applesauce, and cherry cobbler. Reservations are due in the church office by Thursday, April 24. Meals can be picked up at the church on April 27 between 11 a.m. and 12 p.m., or you can choose to dine in Luther Hall at St. John's between 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. If you are interested in donating to this ministry,

reach out to the church office for more information.

The Healthy Wolves group will be packing backpacks on Thursday, April 3 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.

Evangelical Free Church of Lena

Join each Wednesday at 1 p.m. at the Evangelical Free Church of Lena to celebrate the Lenten season with music. The schedule includes:

April 9: Gone Fishin'
April 16: DELTA II
The Evangelical Free Church of Lena is sponsoring three opportunities to attend an Easter Egg Hunt for the children in the community.
April 18: 10 a.m. at 493 Lions Drive
April 18: 10:30 a.m. at 503 Locust Street,
April 19: 10:30 a.m. at Polhill Park

Calvary Church

The last Joint Lenten Service will be on Palm Sunday evening, April 13. The Calvary Praise Team, "Finding Grace" will be giving a program at 6 p.m. Refreshments will follow at 7 p.m. on Fellowship Hall.

A special Maundy Thursday service will be held on

April 17 and a Good Friday Service on April 18. All are invited to any of these services.

Lena United Methodist Church

The Lena United Methodist Church is having a Rummage Sale on April 10, 11, 12. The hours are Thursday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday (\$2 bag day) from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. The sale will be held in Fellowship Hall.



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Wildcat baseball bounces back as winners of three straight

By Trenten Scheidegger
CORRESPONDENT

It took a little while for the River Ridge-Scales Mound Wildcats to shake the rust off for the 2025 baseball season. The Wildcats opened the season with four consecutive losses, including two 10-0 losses in back-to-back games. Hitting and pitching were both major struggles for the Wildcats, but they really struggled defensively. The team had already racked up 16 errors after just three games of play this season. Their first game without an error didn't come until March 29, but even that resulted in a 5-8 loss to Brimfield. RR-SM had just five hits in the loss.

Finally, the Wildcats broke into the win column on their second game of that day. A 6-1 win over Astoria gave RR-SM their first win of the season. Everything came together as they played a clean game of defense, scored six runs, and had a lights out pitching performance from Joe Winter. In seven innings, Winter struck out 12, while allowing just three hits.

RR-SM looked even better when they took a 4-2 lead over the Pearl City Wolves in their next game. The Wildcats' sloppy defense came back to bite them as some late errors allowed the Wolves to regain the lead. Despite leading for a majority of the game, RR-SM lost to Pearl City 5-7.

The Wildcats appear to have gotten over the hump in their recent games. On Friday, April 4, RR-SM picked up their second win of the season with a 10-0 victory over the Orangeville Broncos. It took just five innings for the Wildcats to beat the Broncos as they took advantage of the mercy rule. Damon Dittmar got the win on the mound, striking out six and allowing just one hit in his five innings of work.

Winter led the way offensively. In his three at bats, Winter finished with two hits, one run scored, and two runs batted in. Aiden Soppe finished the day going one for three with three RBI. Sam Rife, Mason Smith, and Camden Flack each finished the day with an RBI as well.

Orangeville has struggled through the early parts of the 2025 season, but that didn't take anything away from the Wildcats putting together a complete performance. It meant even less when the Wildcats went on to beat a 6-1 South Beloit squad in their very next game.

The Wildcats had to overcome some adversity in order to win this one. Additionally,

they would have to find a way to win with a return of their defensive woes. The Wildcats had five errors against South Beloit. Despite that, the offense managed to combine for nine hits, five walks, and 11 runs.

The Wildcats needed all 11 of those runs, but they wound up being too much for South Beloit. RR-SM won the game by a score of 11-6, improving their record to 3-5 on the season. Winter had another big game at the plate, going two for four with two runs scored and three RBI. Sawyer Fry went one for three with two RBI on the day. Fry was also the winning pitcher, as he allowed 12 hits and three earned runs, while striking out six in seven innings of work.

The Wildcats won their third consecutive game when they took on the Indian Creek Timberwolves for their final game on April 5. The Timberwolves are another team that has struggled this season as they came into the match-up with an overall record of 0-9.

The Wildcats went on to win the game by a score of 10-3. They did so led by Smith's three-hit performance. Smith went three for four with two runs scored and two RBI in the game. Smith was the only Wildcat to register more than one hit in the victory.

The Wildcats face a difficult rematch on Monday April 14. That evening, they play host to the Lena-Winslow Panthers. Le-Win was one of the teams that handed RR-SM a 10-0 loss earlier in the year. If the Wildcats can bring their improved defense, they should put up a better fight against the Panthers.

Pearl City baseball snaps three-game losing streak

By Trenten Scheidegger
CORRESPONDENT

The Pearl City Wolves have gotten off to a bit of a slow start for the 2025 baseball season. After a 14-0 loss to Aurora Christian on March 29, the Wolves were losers of three straight. That also dropped their overall record to just 2-5 at the time. Additionally, Pearl City would have to wait almost five days before getting another opportunity to play.

The Wolves finally did get that opportunity on April 3 when they traveled to take on the River Ridge-Scales Mound (RR-SM) Wildcats. RR-SM has had their own struggles to start the season. Prior to their game with the Wolves, the Wildcats held an overall record of just 1-4. Since then, RR-SM has turned things around, improving their record to 4-5. That wasn't until after the Wolves handed them their fifth loss of the season.

The Wolves took the first lead of the game, thanks to a first inning double by Brycen Voegeli. With a line drive to left, Voegeli drove in Sawyer Williams to put Pearl City up 1-0. RR-SM would respond with a run of their own in the bottom half.

Despite taking the first lead, the Wolves quickly found themselves trailing the Wildcats. Parker Allen started the game on the mound for the Wolves, and the Wildcat bats managed to get the best

of him. After allowing runs in the first two innings, Allen saw two more runs cross after allowing a double, a walk, and two singles in the third. Allen finished his day with three innings pitched with eight hits and four runs allowed, while striking out three.

Pearl City went to Brandon Hille in the fourth inning. After Myles Freedlund hit a leadoff single to open the top of the fourth, it looked like the Wolves were going to help Allen out. Three quick outs later, the Wolves were back on defense, where they chose to give Hille a chance to pitch.

Hille immediately changed the game. He struck out a pair of Wildcats in his first inning, quickly getting the Wolves back in the dugout. Pearl City's bats weren't quite awake yet, but Hille managed to keep the Wildcats off the scoreboard for just long enough.

Entering the top of the sixth, Pearl City still faced a 4-2 deficit. Voegeli proved to be a rally starter on that day, and that's just what he did in that inning. A single up the middle was just the spark the Wolves needed. Hille then followed up with a single of his own, putting two runners on with no outs. Will Birchen and B Liebenstein then had back-to-back hits, driving in a pair of runs and tying the game at 4-4.

With the Pearl City bats hot, Hille

made quick work of the Wildcats in the bottom half. The Wolves then picked up right where they left things off as they put up three more runs in the top of the seventh.

In the end, it was Allen who redeemed his slow start on the mound. Entering the top of the seventh with the game tied, Allen roped a line drive to left field for a double to lead off the inning. Eventually, Voegeli drove in Allen on a sacrifice fly, giving the Wolves a 5-4 lead.

Later on, with two outs, Liebenstein hit their second double of the inning, driving in Williams and Freedlund to put the team up 7-4.

The Wildcats made things interesting with a run in the bottom half, but Pearl City eventually won the game by a final score of 7-5. Hille got the win on the mound, tossing four innings with four strikeouts and one earned run off three hits allowed.

Liebenstein led the way at the plate, going two for four with three RBI. Allen went three for four with two runs scored. Voegeli was two for three with one run scored and two RBI. Clayton Downs, Hille, and Freedlund all had two-hit performances as the Wolves combined for 14 hits in the win.

On Thursday, April 10 the Wolves play host to the Orangeville Broncos. That game is set to begin at 4:30 p.m.

EPC Drama Department presents Disney's 'The Little Mermaid'

The Eastland Pearl City (EPC) Drama Department is thrilled to announce its upcoming production of Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, with performances on Friday, April 4 at 7 p.m., Saturday, April 5 at 7 p.m., and Sunday, April 6 at 2 p.m. This highly anticipated musical will take audiences on a magical journey under the sea and onto land with Ariel, played by Caylie Schubert, and Prince Eric, played by Dylan Rominski. They will be joined by Emma Lagos as the villainous Ursula, Shelby Groezinger as the lovable Flounder, Etana Yang as the quirky Scuttle, and Callie

Blevins as the ever-charismatic Sebastian. This is just the top of the list for all the talented performers in this production.

Doors will open 30 minutes before each performance. Tickets are priced at \$12 for adults and \$10 for students, with free admission for children under 3. Tickets will be available for purchase starting March 21 from cast and crew members or at the door on the day of the performance.

This production showcases an incredible array of talent from both Eastland and Pearl City junior high and high schools. With a talented sup-

porting cast, dazzling costumes, and beloved songs, this production promises to be a fantastic experience for audiences of all ages. Come be part of the ad-

venture as we bring Disney's *The Little Mermaid* to life. For more information, please contact Mrs. Jamie Graf at jgraf@pcwolves.net.

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470101

Pearl City softball wins back to back road matchups

By Trenten Scheidegger
CORRESPONDENT

After dropping three consecutive matchups and having a few off days, the Pearl City Wolves returned to the softball field with a couple of road victories last week. In the last weekend of March, the Wolves lost both games of a double

header. With that, they ended the month on a three-game skid, and they would have to wait a few days before getting back to taction.

The Wolves finally got the opportunity to play on April 3, when they traveled to take on the Scales Mound-River Ridge (SM-RR) Hornets. SM-RR

came into the matchup with a record of 3-4, while the Wolves were just ahead of them at 4-4. The game got off to a good start for Pearl City. An early error by the Hornets' center fielder extended the top of the first inning. Eventually, Isabella Smith scored the first run of the game when she took advantage of a passed ball. Just three pitches later, Kendra Kuhlemeier lifted a ball to center field for a sacrifice fly. Jorja Johnson came into score, putting the Wolves up 2-0 in the first.

Not only did Pearl City get off to a hot start offensively, but their pitching and defense showed up as well. Pearl City's starting pitcher, Mackenzie Lotz, opened the bottom of the first with a three-pitch strikeout. That set the tone for the day, as Lotz went on to finish the game with 10 strikeouts.

Lotz' had a clean perfor-

mance up until the sixth inning. SM-RR finally got on the board after they led off the bottom of the sixth with a double. After a walk and another hit, the Hornets managed to tie the game at 2-2. Pearl City's offense had also hit a bit of a slump. After scoring two runs in the first inning, the Wolves went scoreless through the next five innings. The Hornets' production in the bottom of the sixth brought the Wolves back to life in the top of the seventh.

It was a two-out rally, but the Wolves managed to get the job done. Kuhlemeier led the inning off with a single up the middle, but the next two at bats resulted in a pop out and a ground out. Lotz then helped herself out as she ripped a double to right field, driving in Jayelle Spahr and putting the Wolves up 3-2. Elizabeth Dinderman then followed up with an RBI single, giving her

team some late insurance as they went into the final half inning.

After Lotz helped give the Wolves the lead, she put an end to the game in the bottom half. The Hornets didn't go down without a fight, however. With a single and a double, SM-RR managed to bring themselves within one. Lotz eventually got the third and final out with a pop fly to left, and the Wolves won the game 4-3.

The very next day, the Wolves were back on the road as they traveled to take on the Guilford Vikings. Guilford has struggled early in the 2025 season. They came into Friday's matchup with a record of 1-4.

Pearl City made sure those struggles continued. The Wolves racked up 18 hits against the Vikings, led by a four-hit performance by Anna Dampman. Dampman finished the day with four RBI and three runs scored as she

proved to be a tough out.

Johnson and Kuhlemeier were next up as they each finished with three hits. Johnson went three for five with three runs scored and five RBI. Kuhlemeier was three for four with three runs scored and two RBI.

Guilford also had eight errors in the game, which allowed things to get even further out of hand. In just four innings of play, Pearl City beat the Vikings by a score of 25-2. Kuhlemeier pitched all four innings, allowing just one hit and striking out a pair.

With the win, the Wolves improved to 6-4 on the young season. Their next two games feature some tough matchups as they take on the Orangeville Broncos in back-to-back meetings. The Wolves are set to play host to the Broncos on Thursday, April 10. Orangeville has gotten off to a 6-1 start this year.

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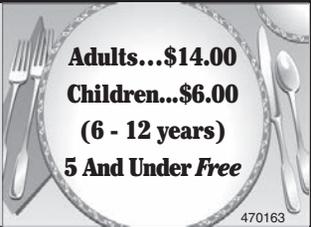
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Ages 0 - 10 years old



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Luke 22:69



Luke 22-23

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- 7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Worship
Holy Communion
Stripping of the Altar
- 7:00 p.m. Good Friday Tenebrae Worship
Singing is Acapella
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Holy Week and Easter



Palm Sunday - April 13
Worship at 10:00 am
McConnell Community Church

Good Friday - April 18
Tenebrae Service at 7:00 pm
McConnell Community Church

Easter Sunday - April 20
Breakfast at 8:15 am
Worship Service at 9:00 am
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452579

Stephenson and Carroll County Farm Bureau news

By Victoria Hansen

For the past 20 years the Carroll County Farm Bureau Young Leaders have been committed to reducing food insecurity within Carroll County. On Jan. 24, 2025, Carroll County Young Leaders collected donated corn that was then sold to Eastland Feed and Grain.

In addition to corn donations, the Young Leaders accepted monetary donations. This year the group raised \$33,353.76. Each food pantry received a donation of \$8,383.44 along with 110 pounds of ground beef. This program wouldn't be possible without the support of our generous donors.

These donors include: Kevin & Diann Adolph, Kurt Alexander, Larry Alexander, Harold Andresen, Aaron & Melinda Appel, Randal Appel, Badtke Farms, Gerald & Diann Cassens, D & R Stoner Farms, Daehler Farms, Durward Farms, Eastland Feed and Grain, Sheldon & Julie Ebersole, Faulk-

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tevant Grain Farms, Rod & Gerald Fink, Tom Fink Family, Vos Farms, Bill Weber, White Oak Agri, Brian & Sharon Witt, Witt AG Solutions, Brad, Brett & Ben Woessner, and Ray & Melissa Woessner.

Carroll County Office Hours

The Carroll County Farm Bureau is open Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. If you need additional assistance or to meet outside of this timeframe, please contact Manager Victoria Hansen at 815-244-3001 or by email at carrollcfb@gmail.com.

Trip Spotlight Warrens Cranberry Festival

Join the Carroll and Stephenson County Farm Bureaus as we travel to Warrens, Wisconsin for the Annual Warrens Cranberry Festival. This Festival features over 3 miles of shopping and over 1,200 vendors. This trip will take place on Friday,

Sept. 26.

Trip Schedule:
6:30 a.m.: Depart Carroll County Farm Bureau
7 a.m.: Depart Freeport Walmart
10 a.m.: Arrive at Cranberry Festival
4 p.m.: Depart Festival
5:30p.m.: Dinner on the way home
6:30 p.m. Depart for Freeport Walmart

8 p.m.: Arrive at Freeport Walmart
8:30 p.m.: Arrive at Carroll County Farm Bureau
The trip cost includes transportation, all groceries and water on the bus. The Farm Bureau member price is \$80 and non-member price \$100. Reserve your spot by calling the county you plan to be picked up at Carroll 815-244-3001 or Stephen-

son 815-232-3186.

Plat Book reminders

Stephenson County Farm Bureau has 2025 plat books. Each book is \$35 for active Farm Bureau members and \$55 for non-members. Carroll County Farm Bureau has 2024 Plat Books. Carroll County Plat books are \$35 for members and \$55 for non-members.

Lena Historical Society Dinner and Program Fundraiser

On Thursday, April 24 the Lena Historical society will host their annual dinner fundraiser at the Lena Community Center. The dinner will feature a catered dinner, silent auction and 50/50 raffle. Doors will open at 6 p.m. with dinner served at 6:30 p.m. Reservations are required by April 10. Donation for the dinner and program are \$40 a person. Tickets are available at Engel's

Repair and Lena Mercantile or by calling Cindy Drye at 815-369-4030. The Lena Community Center is located at 497 Lions Drive, Lena, IL.

Alan Wenzel, well-known local speaker, will tell the story of Lake Le-Aqua-Nancy from inception to completion. A native of the Lena- Winslow area, Alan is a retired Speech Communications/film instructor at Highland Community

College where he taught for over 39 years.

After over 20 years of discussion by area sportsmen's club for a man-made recreational lake in Stephenson County Lake Le-Aqua-Nancy became a reality in 1958. The state consists of 715 acres and has been a popular destination for campers, fishermen, hikers, swimmers and cross country skiers.

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Highland agriculture students attend National PAS Conference in Wyoming

Nine Highland Community College students headed out west for their spring break to compete at the 2025 National Professional Agriculture Student (PAS) Conference held March 17-20, 2025, at Sheridan College in Sheridan, Wyo.

"The trip started with a flight to Bozeman, Mont., where students enjoyed sightseeing and shopping. After a few hours in a rental van to reach the conference, our students got down to business and spent the next three days competing with 500 other college students from across the country," said Justin Ebert, Highland Ag Club and PAS Advisor.

Students participated in nine different competition areas, which concluded with an outstanding showing in the college quiz bowl. They celebrated with more sightseeing in the mountains and a steak dinner, followed by a safe return flight to Illinois.

Ebert said, "I am very proud of all the work the students put into their preparation for the competitions. The trip allowed them to network with other college students, refine their leadership and communication skills and explore the beauty of the American west."

Congratulations to the following Highland Community College students:
Taylor Robinson, Lena, Ill.
 National Champion: Agriculture Education Teaching Demonstration



(Pictured L-R): Advisor Justin Ebert, Hannah Beran (Dixon), Faith Ukena (Polo), Ty Spahn (Hanover), Taylor Robinson (Lena), Lauren Witte (Freeport), Madison Simms (Monroe Center), Rebekah Visel (Lena), Aaliyah Whitney (Pearl City), and Ali Danekas (Polo) represented Highland's Agriculture program at the 2025 National Professional Agriculture Student (PAS) Conference.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| National Champion: Agriculture Education Career Progress Project | view | Whitney-10th, Ukena -13th, Spahn -18th |
| Lauren Witte, Freeport, Ill. | Aaliyah Whitney, Pearl City, Ill. | Equine Team-9th Place |
| National Runner-Up: Agriculture Education Career Planning Project | 5th Place: Livestock and Dairy Interview | Visel -11th, Robinson -31st, Simms -39th |
| 5th Place: Ag Promotion and Marketing Project | 6th Place: Agribusiness Career Progress Project | Highland Community College Agriculture would like to thank the administration, board, Foundation, Anthony Musso, Zachary Green, Hannah Slamp, parents, and the community for supporting both preparation for the conference and the trip itself. |
| Rebekah Visel, Lena, Ill. | Sheep/Goat Team - 5th Place | |
| 4th Place: Animal Systems Career Planning Project | Witte -7th, Danekas -12th, Beran -16th | |
| 11th Place: Ag Sales Inter- | Dairy Team - 6th Place | |



(Pictured L-R): Highland students Ty Spahn, Rebekah Visel, Faith Ukena, Lauren Witte, Taylor Robinson, Hannah, Ali Madison, and Aaliyah Whitney sight-see in Custer-Gallatin National Forest.

LEGAL NOTICES

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

In Re the Matter of the
Estate of:
Janet S. Lindenman,
Deceased.

No.25-PR-27
NOTICE FOR
PUBLICATION -
CLAIMS

Notice is given of the
death of Janet S.Linden-
man of Freeport, Illinois.
Letters of Office were is-
sued on March 17, 2025,
to:

Laura M. Hartney
1930 W. Church
Freeport, IL 61032
as independent
Administrator of the Estate
of Janet S. Lindenman,
whose attorney is
Anthony V. Coon
Attorney At law

10 N. Galena Ave., Ste.210
Freeport, Illinois 61032

The estate will be ad-
ministered without Court
supervision unless, under
Section 28.4 of the Probate
Act (755 ILCS 5/28-4), any
interested person termi-
nates independent admini-
stration at any time by mail-
ing or delivering a Petition
To Terminate to the Clerk.

Claims against the estate
may be filed in the office
of the Clerk of the Court
at the Stephenson County
Courthouse, 15 N. Ga-
lena Avenue, Freeport, Il-
linois 61032, or with the
representative, or both, on
or before September 26,
2025, and any claim not
filed on or before said date
is barred. Copies of a claim
filed with the Clerk must
be mailed or delivered to
the representative and to
the attorney within ten (10)
days after it has been filed.

Date: March 18, 2025.

Laura M. Hartney,
Administrator
By: Anthony V. Coon
Anthony V. Coon,
Attorney At Law

Anthony V. Coon,
#6269568
Attorney at Law
10 N. Galena Ave.,
Ste. 210

Freeport, IL 61032
815-235-2212
Fax 815-232-5500
tonycoonlaw@aol.com

(Published in
The Shopper's Guide
March 26, April 2, 9, 2025)

469495

•Kitchen (Continued from page 11)

Shrimp Scampi Spaghetti

If you are still looking for
a fish Friday entrée, this easy

spaghetti and shrimp dish will
be a good one to make for super-
per. The spinach and tomatoes
add vegetables to the meal, so

you just need some good bread.
8 oz. spaghetti
1 T. olive oil
1 r. butter

1 medium onion, sliced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 lb. large shrimp, peeled
and deveined
1 C. grape tomatoes
1 C. white wine
3 T. lemon juice
½ t. salt
½ t. pepper
2 C. baby spinach
½ C. grated Parmesan
cheese

3 T. sugar
¼ C. butter, melted
Filling
1 pkg. (10 oz.) frozen rasp-
berries, thawed
¼ C. cold water
1 envelope unflavored gel-
atin
1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese
softened
½ C. sugar
1 C. heavy whipping cream,
whipped

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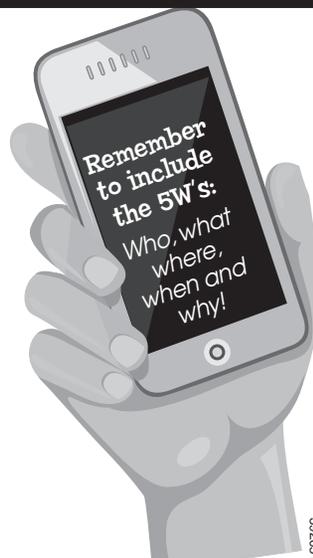
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paper coming:

In a large pot of salted boil-
ing water, cook pasta according
to package directs for al dente;
reserve 1 C. cooking liquid.
Drain pasta and set aside.

In a large skillet, heat oil and
melt butter over medium. Add
onion and garlic; cook until
softened, 2 to 3 minutes. Add
shrimp and tomatoes; cook,
turning until shrimp is golden
and tomatoes begin to collapse,
4 to 6 minutes. Add wine, and
cook, stirring for 1 minute. Stir
in lemon juice. Sprinkle with
salt and pepper. Remove from
heat. Add pasta, spinach and
Parmesan; toss adding cooking
liquid, ¼ C. at a time if need-
ed to thin sauce, until spinach
is wilted, about 2 minutes. If
desired serve with lemon.

Raspberry Cake

If you need a quick and
easy spring dessert, this cake
will be a good one for a
brunch table or just to have as
a great sweet addition.

1 white cake mix
1 pkg. (3 oz.) raspberry
Jell-O
4 eggs, room temperature
½ C. canola oil
¼ C. hot water
1 pkg. (10 oz.) sweet-
ened raspberries, thawed,
undrained

Frosting

1 carton (12 oz.) Cool
Whip, thawed
1 pkg. (10 oz.) frozen rasp-
berries, thawed, undrained
Fresh raspberries for gar-
nish

Preheat oven to 350. In a
large mixing bowl, combine
the cake mix, Jell-O, eggs, oil
and water; beat on low speed
for 30 seconds. Beat on me-
dium for 2 minutes. Stir in
raspberries.

Pour into a greased 9x13
baking pan. Bake until a
toothpick inserted in the cen-
ter comes out clean, 30 to 40
minutes. Cool completely.

Frosting: In a large bowl,
fold whipped topping into
raspberries. Spread over
cake; refrigerate for 2 hours
before serving. Garnish with
fresh raspberries.

Raspberry Cream Cheese Dessert

This is an elegant spring
dessert. It is made in a spring-
form pan, so it is beautiful
when taken out of the pan.
The raspberries give just
enough sweet to the cream
cheese.

1 C. graham cracker crumbs

In a large pot of salted boil-
ing water, cook pasta according
to package directs for al dente;
reserve 1 C. cooking liquid.
Drain pasta and set aside.

In a large bowl, combine
the graham cracker crumbs,
3 T. sugar and melted butter.
Press into the bottom of a
9-inch spring form pan. Bake
at 350 for 10 minutes. Cool.

Drain raspberries, reserving
the juice. Set berries aside. In
a small saucepan, combine the
juice, cold water and gelatin.
Let stand for 5 minutes. Cook
and stir over low heat until
gelatin is dissolved. Remove
from the heat; cool for 10 min-
utes.

In a small bowl, beat cream
cheese and sugar until smooth.
Add berries and gelatin mix-
ture; beat on low until thor-
oughly blended. Chill until
partially set. Watch carefully,
as mixture will set up quickly.
Gently fold in whipped cream.
Spoon onto the crust. Chill for
6 hours or overnight. Just be-
fore serving, run knife around
the edge of pan to loosen. Re-
move side of pan. Place on a
plate or cake stand. Top with
fresh raspberries and mint
leaves.

Final Thoughts

The Spring weather hasn't
yet decided it wants to stay
around. This week we finally
get back into the 60s, so maybe
the cold has left us. We did get
some much-needed rain, but
we need a lot more. Soon we
will be looking at getting ready
for Easter festivities. There is
still some Lenten Music on
Wednesday at Lena Evangelical
Free and Soup and Lenten
service at the Pearl City Meth-
odist Church. I know there are
Easter Egg hunts for the kids
coming up too! Have a great
week.

Don't forget the Lena Area
Historical Society's Annual
Dinner and Raffle. It is April
24 at the Lena Community
Center. The speaker is Alan
Wenzel, and he will present
the history of The Lena State
Park and how it came to be.
The price of the dinner is \$40
the tickets can be purchased at
Engel's, the Lena Mercantile,
or Cindy's Beauty Shop. Res-
ervations are due April 10.

We are looking for some
Easter recipes. If you find
some recipes to share, you can
contact us by email or by mail
at From Lena's Kitchens, *The
Shopper's Guide* at Rock Val-
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454287

• Internships

(Continued from page 13)

“We need to find champions in our local districts and give those champions resources to be able to better expand opportunities to our students and give them more apprenticeship opportunities,” he said.

Illinois’ efforts have been bolstered since 2019 by the Illinois Works Jobs Programs Act, which was included in Illinois’ \$45 billion infrastructure plan passed during Gov. JB Pritzker’s first year in office. It includes three key programs: An apprenticeship initiative that provides trades and construction opportunities; a pre-apprenticeship program that supports underrepresented talents in construction; and a bid credit program that encour-

ages contractors to hire more apprentices from more diverse backgrounds.

The SkillsUSA Illinois study noted progress but also ongoing challenges. It found Illinois saw a roughly 28 percent increase in new apprentices from 2019 to 2024, growing from 6,475 to 9,041 apprentices over these five years.

Female participation, however, only accounted for 14 percent of new apprentices last year, though that figure represents a doubling from 7 percent in 2019. Though the population of female apprentices is growing, women still have the lowest rates of participation in construction as well as installation, maintenance and re-

pair, the two largest occupation categories over the past five years, according to the study. The number of new non-white apprentices also grew from 26 percent in 2019 to 46 percent in 2024.

Minority participants also have a greater presence in lower-paying occupations like health care support, transportation and food preparation, the study found. Last year, 88 percent of health care support entrants were non-white. Eighty percent of all health care support entrants for 2024 were women.

The apprenticeship study also found roughly 40 percent of students at surveyed schools participated in internships,

though the majority of them worked in unpaid roles, which can “disadvantage underrepresented groups, further exacerbating inequities,” according to the report.

Hill said unpaid apprenticeships or internships can hinder students’ ability to pursue trades as a lifelong career, specifically those who are heads of household income earners.

“We’re asking them to give up the ability to have a paid wage to take an unpaid internship, and that is something that we have systematically got to get away from in the state of Illinois and across the country,” said Hill. “We cannot connect students to job opportunities if we’re not showing them the

benefits of having a job—having a salary or having a livable wage.”

Organizations like the Illinois AFL-CIO and Illinois Building Trades Unions are working to increase female participation in apprenticeship programs and create pathways for long-term success in the trades.

These organizations have built sections within them dedicated to provide training, mentorship and advocacy for women pursuing careers in construction – dedicated to increasing female representation in the trades. Despite making up nearly half of the workforce, women hold less than 5 percent of construction and building trade jobs, according to the Illinois AFL-CIO.

One way to close this gap is by exposing students, especially young women, to career opportunities in the trades early on in their schooling, according to Marisa Richards, director of outreach and engagement at Painters District Council No. 30, which covers nine local unions in the northern half of Illinois. Many unions are working to bridge this divide by partnering with high schools and middle schools to introduce students to various skilled trades before they enter the workforce.

“The big push right now is also pre-apprenticeship—giving younger students, or people looking for a career change, the chance to test out different construction trades,” Richards said.

One major initiative toward these goals is the second annual “Tradeswomen Take Over Springfield,” an event advocating for policies that expand access for women in the trades. During the first week of March, which also marked national Women in Construction Week and the start of Women’s History Month, more than 200 tradeswomen gathered at the Illinois Capitol

The event, which coincided with SkillsUSA Illinois’ 2025 AMPLIFY Conference, brought together labor leaders, policymakers and industry professionals to address these challenges. Speakers included the Illinois AFL-CIO President Tim Drea, legislators and a lineup of tradeswomen leaders sharing their experiences and advocating for systemic change.

The tradeswomen also traveled to Springfield to lobby for House Resolution 161, which was non-binding but would technically express the official opinion and will of the Illinois House. It seeks to “affirm that the diversity of Illinois is its strength and that the workforce on publicly funded projects must reflect our state with work sites composed of those from diverse backgrounds, gender identities, races and experiences.”

The resolution, introduced by state Rep. Elizabeth “Lisa” Hernández, D-Cicero, who serves as chair of the Democratic Party of Illinois, also takes shots at President Donald Trump. It cites recent executive orders that “aim to reverse hard-won progress to diversity the workforce and will further entrench systemic occupational segregation, robbing women of economic security.”

HR 161 also claims the Trump administration has weakened entities like the National Labor Relations Board and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission so those agencies can no longer “ensure safe, respectful and harassment-free work sites that uphold workers’ rights.”

The resolution, which is awaiting a hearing in the House Labor and Commerce committee, is sponsored exclusively by Democrats, including House Speaker Emanuel “Chris” Welch, D-Hillside, who signed on as a chief co-sponsor last month.

The proposed resolution also mentions that 64 percent of U.S. student loan debt is held by women, a fact that makes “apprenticeships a vital career pathway to economic stability as apprentices earn while they learn.”

The push for more funding and support for CTE programs goes hand in hand with broader efforts to ensure equitable access to the skilled trades, particularly for women.

Tiffany Beard, a technology education teacher and SkillsUSA advisor at Morton High School near Peoria, said she’s thankful SkillsUSA provides students and teachers alike a pathway to advocate for more exposure and support for a career path in trades.

“The empowerment that students have in an organization like this is astounding. They grow so much from being in a position where they feel like their thoughts, their ideas and their voice matter,” she said. “It’s the best choice I’ve ever made.”

Passionate trades students like Kinleigh Brummett also see the importance of skills-based learning during the two-day AMPLIFY conference.

An audio/video production program student at the Capital Area Career Center in Springfield, Brummett said besides technical skills, students also learn workplace and personal skills like dressing professionally or speaking actively at job interviews through the SkillsUSA framework.

“That helps us in the future, not only in SkillsUSA and school, but also to help future jobs and things like that,” Brummett said. “That’s why we’re here today ... to find funding and more support for schools like this.”

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