

THE GAZETTE-DEMOCRAT

The Talk And Cobden Review • Serving Union County Since 1849

Thursday, January 23, 2025

Anna, Illinois

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News Notes

Items of interest from throughout the Union County area, from social media and beyond...



Old Man Winter has left his calling card in a lot of places during January.

Surprise...and speaking of Old Man Winter...the Union County area received a light dusting of snow Tuesday morning.

The Friends of Stinson Memorial Public Library are planning a winter book sale. Dates are set for Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 7-9, at Stinson Memorial Public Library in Anna.

The Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation and the Tri-State Food Bank plan to hold a mobile food distribution Friday, Jan. 24, on Shawnee Community College's main campus near Ullin. The event is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. and will continue until noon or while supplies last.

Shawnee Community College's cosmetology program plans to offer an eight-week advanced esthetics course this spring for licensed cosmetologists and estheticians. Classes are planned on Mondays from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. starting March 17 and continuing through May 5.

Cast members have been announced for the upcoming production of "Little Shop of Horrors" at Shawnee Community College. Performances are scheduled April 10-12.

Cobden High School's re-scheduled homecoming basketball game, coronation and dance are planned Saturday, Feb. 8.

Anna School District 37 has announced members of the Anna Indians 5th and 6th grade cheerleading squad: Payton Miller, Jaelyn Khurana, Molly Ballard, Lexi Sanders, Kenslie Ford, Maya Wheeler, Eva Colboth and Ella Colboth.

Dental Safari Company is scheduled to be at Davie School/Anna Junior High School Feb. 20 and Lincoln School in Anna Feb. 21. Dental care will be available to students of all ages.

Weather service also shares overview of Jan. 10 heavy snow event

Frigid temperatures bring cold weather advisories

Bitterly cold temperatures and subzero wind chills this week accompanied the latest round of impactful winter weather to occur in the region in January.

Arctic cold followed an ice storm and heavy snow which occurred earlier in the month.

Cold Weather Advisories

The National Weather Service's Weather Prediction Center in College Park, Md., advised on Sunday that Arctic air would bring dangerously cold conditions to much of the nation.

"This will be the coldest air of the Winter season thus far, and in many cases the coldest in several years," the center posted on its website.

The National Weather Service office in Paducah issued cold weather advisories for parts of Southern Illinois,

Southeast Missouri and Western Kentucky.

An advisory initially was in effect from 6 p.m. Sunday through noon Monday. Very cold wind chills as low as 10 below zero were expected.

The advisory subsequently was extended on Tuesday until 3 p.m. and then again from 9 p.m. Tuesday until 6 a.m. Wednesday.

The forecast was calling for a high temperature near 14 degrees on Tuesday in the Anna area. Wind chill values as low as 3 degrees below zero were possible.

A low around 7, with wind chill values as low as 2 degrees below zero, was in the forecast for Tuesday night.

A high near 31 degrees was in the forecast for Wednesday. Wind chill values as low as 1 degree below zero were in the

forecast.

The weather service warned that under such frigid conditions, frostbite and hypothermia would occur if unprotected skin was exposed to the extreme cold temperatures. Wind chill values could lead to hypothermia with prolonged exposure.

Local weather observer Dana Cross recorded low temperatures of 8 degrees on Jan. 19, 4 on Jan. 20 and 7 on Jan. 21. Wind chill values each day were in the single digits.

Milder temperatures were in the forecast for Thursday (today), Friday and Sunday, with highs in the 30s and 40s.

Heavy Snow Event

The weather service office also posted an overview of the heavy snow event which occurred on Jan. 10 in the region.

Snow impacted the entire



Snow, ice along road in Union County
Snow and ice covered the landscape along Skyline Drive near Alto Pass on Sunday afternoon, Jan. 12.

region during the early morning and late afternoon hours on Jan. 10.

The initial round brought a period of light to moderate snow, followed by a heavier burst of snow with wrap

around moisture associated with an area of low pressure.

Temperatures remained near to below freezing, allowing for snow to quickly accumulate on all surfaces.

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Union County CEO program accepting applications

The Union County CEO program is accepting online applications for incoming high school juniors and seniors for the upcoming school year who are interested in participating in the 2025-2026 Union County CEO (Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) program.

The two-credit hour course, open to all Union County students, offers a unique opportunity to learn leadership, entrepreneurship and professional skills in a real-world business setting.

Entering its 10th year, the program is capped at approximately 15 students to foster meaningful relationships among students and with local business leaders.

The CEO class is not just for future business majors... it's a hands-on experience in leadership and personal growth.

What CEO Offers

The CEO program exposes

students to business practices, connects them with leaders in their community and allows them to practice communication, problem-solving and networking in a variety of settings.

This experience enhances soft skills that are valuable for many types of future careers.

Ultimately, the program guides each student through starting and running their own functioning small business

while cultivating essential communication skills and building an expansive, long-lasting network of community members and business owners.

The CEO class does not

meet in a classroom, but in over 50 businesses located in Union County. The opportunity for the students to actually see the businesses and talk with people running those

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Recruitment event in Cobden

A Union County CEO program recruitment event was held Wednesday, Jan. 15, at Cobden High School. Students in the current Union County CEO class led a presentation to Cobden students. Photo provided.

Underground Railroad exhibit on display in Anna

The PAST organization of Union County and the Shawnee Hills Arts Council hosting a showing of an exhibit titled "Journey to Freedom: Illinois' Underground Railroad."

The exhibit is on display through Feb. 23 at the Shawnee Hills Arts Council at 123 W. Davie St. in Anna.

The "Journey to Freedom: Illinois' Underground Railroad" walk-through exhibit consists of picture/story panels that tell the known history of the Underground Railroad in Illinois.

The display has been created professionally by the Looking for Lincoln organization in Springfield and is booked in eight Illinois communities during 2025.

Anna is the third community to host the exhibit, which has made stops in Springfield and Macomb. "Journey to Freedom" also is scheduled to be displayed in Pontiac, Decatur, Freeport, Marshall, Lerna and again in Springfield.

Organizers said prior to the opening of the exhibit in Anna said Union County is very fortunate to have "Journey to Freedom" on loan through the annual Civil War Weekend, which is planned in February at the Shawnee Hills Arts Council in Anna.

Opening Event Held Friday

An opening event for the

exhibit was held Friday night, Jan. 17, at the Shawnee Hills Arts Council.

Looking for Lincoln speaker Heather Feezor gave an overview of the exhibit, which included a talk and the showing of a video which highlighted a sometimes forgotten chapter in the history of Illinois.

There is no written record of the Underground Railroad operating in Union County. However, those involved

with the display at the arts council said the likelihood is very probable that the Underground Railroad did operate in Union County, given the county's location just north of Cairo.

Exhibit Schedule

Days and hours scheduled for viewing the exhibit include Saturdays and Sundays, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., and Thursdays and Fridays, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

School groups are encour-

aged to visit. For more information, contact Linda at 618-697-1870 or Lee Hackney at 904-625-1109.

"Courageous Effort"

When "Journey to Freedom" was unveiled in September of 2024 in Springfield, Looking for Lincoln shared on its website (lookingforlincoln.org) that "many Illinois communities and residents were part of the courageous effort to assist freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad."

Many of those communities and residents are featured in the traveling exhibit which is on display in Anna.

The exhibit tells stories about freedom seekers, conductors and communities in Illinois that were part of the journey to freedom on the Underground Railroad as never told before.

"We are so honored to share this new exhibit with the community," said Sarah Watson,

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Opening event held for 'Journey to Freedom'

An exhibit titled "Journey To Freedom: Illinois' Underground Railroad" is on display through Feb. 23 at the Shawnee Hills Arts Council in Anna. An event was held Friday night, Jan. 17, to mark the opening of the exhibit, which is being presented locally by the Shawnee Hills Arts Council and the PAST organization of Union County.



PreK-12 spending in Illinois

State Board of Education requests nearly \$11.4 billion

By Peter Hancock
Capitol News Illinois
SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois State Board of Education voted Wednesday, Jan. 15, to approve a budget request for the upcoming fiscal year of nearly \$11.4 billion, a 4.6 percent increase over this year’s budget, despite projections that the state will face a substantial revenue shortfall next year.

The request includes a \$350 million increase in “Evidence-Based Funding,” the minimum annual increase called for under the 2017 law that focuses new education spending on the neediest districts. It also includes a \$142 million increase in what’s called “mandatory categorical” aid for expenses such as transportation and special education, and \$75 million in new funding

Red Hat Ladies welcome new Queen Mom



Kathy Jackson Milam
Little Egypt Red Hat Ladies welcomed their new Queen Mom, long-time member Kathy Jackson Milam, at their recent meeting at Pizza Hut in Anna.

The ladies meet on the third Wednesday of each month at 11 a.m. at a restaurant the hostess chooses.

They are asked to bring an exchange gift if they would like to be in the gift exchange.

The ladies dress in purple and red hats. On their birthday month, they switch and wear a purple hat and red clothes. If they are under 50 they wear a pink hat and lavender. On their birthday month they wear a lavender hat and pink clothes.

At the end of each meeting the ladies stand and sing “God Bless America” to honor God and their country that they love so much.

Everyone is welcome to come join them. Photographer Martha Ann Webb.

for early childhood education. “This year’s budget recommendation recognizes the tight fiscal projections faced by the state of Illinois, while continuing to invest in things that we know that are critical for school districts and that have a direct impact on student learning,” State Superintendent of Education Tony Sanders told the board.

Funding for PreK-12 education is one of the largest categories of spending in the entire state budget, accounting for about one-fifth of all General Revenue Fund spending. That money is used to help fund the budgets of more than 850 school districts, which serve an estimated 1.9 million students.

State funding, however, makes up only part of the total amount spent on public education. In 2021, the most recent year for which complete numbers are available, state funding made up only about 26 percent of total school spending while about 65 percent came from local sources such as property taxes and the rest came from federal sources.

Over the years, the state’s heavy reliance on local property taxes to fund public schools produced vast inequities among districts. The Evidence-Based Funding formula was intended to address that over time by establishing a “hold-harmless” mechanism by which no district would ever see its funding reduced, then directing new funding to the districts most in need.

The law created a formula for estimating the cost of providing an adequate education in each district based on certain factors such as total student enrollment, the number of students from low-income families and the number of students from non-English speaking backgrounds. The goal of the law is to bring all districts up to at least 90 percent of their

adequacy target.

Since the law went into effect, according to ISBE, nearly \$2.2 billion has been distributed to districts through the Evidence-Based Funding system and overall funding for the neediest districts, known as Tier 1 districts, has grown from 59.2 percent of their adequacy target to 73.4 percent.

Still, however, seven out of 10 students in Illinois attend a school in a district that is funded at less than 90 percent of its adequacy target. According to ISBE, bringing all districts up to 90 percent of adequacy would cost an additional \$2.6 billion.

In November, the Governor’s Office of Management and Budget reported that the annual increases in education funding called for under the Evidence-Based Funding law, combined with other rising costs and overall flat growth in revenue, would lead to a projected \$3.2 billion budget shortfall in the fiscal year ahead.

Gov. JB Pritzker will outline his plan for plugging that hole when he delivers his budget address to the General Assembly Feb. 19.

Sanders, however, said he remains confident Pritzker and lawmakers will find a way to balance the budget and still fund the agency’s budget request.

“While most of state government’s going to be looking at potential freezes, we are really pleased to see a governor and legislature that is committed to public education funding, even in tight fiscal times,” he said.

Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service that distributes state government coverage to hundreds of news outlets statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.



A-JCHS class of 1967 friends gather
Friends from the Anna-Jonesboro Community High School class of 1967 recently had lunch together at the Anna Pizza Hut. In the first row are Terry Wiseman, Emily Wiseman, Jean Wise, Marsha Ridenhour and Sharon Grissom. In the second row are Don Smith, Brenda Noble, Janet Smith, Linda Boyd, JoAn Dallas and Linda McCloud. Photographer Martha Ann Webb.

Tight global supply keeping ag fertilizer prices elevated

By Rhiannon Branch
FarmWeek

As farmers enter another year of predictably tight margins, it does not look like fertilizer prices will grant much relief to the balance sheet.

“The problem is we’re starting 2025 with nitrogen and phosphate values looking fairly firm on tight supply and demand,” Josh Linville, vice president of fertilizer at StoneX, told FarmWeek. “We’re worried about what that means for our prices going into the spring.”

Chinese exports and European production of urea are both falling, which means global prices could push higher.

“That should result in a situation where we have to start doing a lot of work to get the imports coming in that we very desperately need,” Linville said. “We’re going to have to move our price up quite a bit to make that relationship happen.”

He said prices for urea ammonium nitrate and anhydrous ammonia, which are more commonly used in Illinois, usually follow the urea market.

One fertilizer that is well supplied globally and therefore mildly priced is potash, but that could change after President Donald Trump takes office this month.

“We have to worry about

the threat of 25 percent tariffs against Canadian goods,” said Linville, who noted Canada is the world’s largest producer and exporter of potash. “These tariffs will have real effects on the farm side if they get implemented.”

Linville said Trump is known for using tariffs as an “economic weapon,” but for a commodity market like fertilizer the benefits aren’t likely to outweigh the consequences.

“A lot of times, the farmer of the country that implements the tariff is really the one that pays the price,” he said. “We are going to have to watch that because it could have an adverse effect on our pricing.”

On the other hand, Linville said the world “enjoyed a sense of peace” during Trump’s first term with fewer wars and global conflicts from 2016 to 2020, compared to recent years.

“On the flip side, I am very hopeful that if he can bring back a period of tranquility, we can see markets start to calm down, trade flows return back to normal and get prices back to historic norms,” he said.

Linville said as always it will be important for farmers to convey their fertilizer intentions to suppliers in 2025 so they can plan accordingly.

“I understand it’s easy to want to bury your head in the sand in these kinds of times, but we need to have more information flowing than less,” he said.

And despite a hefty delay to the fall 2024 fertilizer application season, Linville expects the number of spring applications to be about normal.

“It was probably one of the most unorthodox fall application seasons we’ve ever seen,” he said. “The first several weeks of November, hardly anybody across the Midwest turned a wheel.”

But he said the weather opened a window around Thanksgiving and Midwestern farmers took advantage of it.

“We surveyed the industry, and I think we hit about 90 percent of what our expected fall run was,” Linville said. “So that is fortunately keeping that horror story that we were talking about for springtime off the table.”

Fertilizer prices in Illinois averaged between \$650 and \$775 per ton for anhydrous ammonia as of Dec. 27, up an average of \$9.46 from the previous two weeks, according to the Illinois Production Cost Report. Prices ranged from \$679 to \$760 per ton for diammonium phosphate (up \$3.33), \$400 to \$525 for potash (down slightly) and \$525 to \$554 for urea (unchanged) as of the same date.

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.

County Line News

(Mill Creek and Upper Elco)

“Journey to Freedom”
The Shawnee Hills Arts Council (Anna Arts Center) is pleased to host an exhibit titled “Journey to Freedom: Illinois’ Underground Railroad.”

This exhibit will be open for viewing each week on Thursdays and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

The exhibit continues through Feb. 23. An opening event held on Jan. 17 was well attended.

The exhibit consists of story panels that recall Illinois’ role in the Underground Railroad with photographs, maps and stories about of some of its key people in our state.

Please take the time to stop and trace its journey from Cairo to Canada.

Mill Creek Village Board
The Mill Creek Village Board has decided that due to extremely cold temperatures this week, the monthly meeting will be postponed until Jan. 28 at 7 p.m.

Back Home
Shirley Harvel has made it home from her visit through the Christmas and New Year holidays with her daughter, Vickie Jacobs, and various family, in Sparta, Troy and Waterloo.

She enjoyed side trips to St. Charles, Mo., and other places, but was glad to get home... there’s no place like it.

Mill Creek Baptist Church
Mill Creek Baptist Church was finally able to hold services this week. The ice, and then snow events, made travel hazardous and the parking lot wasn’t fully cleared until the rain moved in Friday evening.

Its prayer warriors, however, never stopped their vigil with new prayers being lifted for the families of Larry Hile-

By Suzan Harvel

man, Luke Sargent and Roger Tribout in their passing, as well as the many who have tragically lost their lives in various traffic incidents.

We lift up those in California as they battle fires and the losses those bring. We are also praying for those in our southern states who will soon be receiving some of our weather. I promise, we didn’t wish it on anyone.

We also added prayers for Allena Bates, Kaia Sadler, Griffin Sadler, Terry Andrew, Jonathan Crawley, Brad Vaughn, Brynn Rider, Gary Rider, Richard Harvel and John Fox for their health issues.

Stay Warm...
Stay warm everyone and, whenever you get the chance, go wash your vehicles before the chemicals eat it out from under you.

Union County Fixin’s

By Suzan Harvel
Granola Bars
by Carol Moore of Evans, Ga.

3 1/2 cups oats (not quick cook)
1 cup raisins
1 cup chopped nuts
2/3 cup butter, melted
1/2 cup light brown sugar
1/3 cup honey
1 egg
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon salt
Toast oats in ungreased shallow dish at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes. Combine with rest of ingredients and mix well. Press into a 15 by 10 jelly roll pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Cool. Cut into bars.

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"The Preaching Pen"

Lessons from Lot's Wife: Lesson 1

†

After the healing of the 10 lepers, Jesus spoke to the apostles about his second coming. In that preparation, he made mention of Lot’s wife. “Remember Lot’s wife, “Luke 17:32. Nearly 2,000 years after her fatal error, Christ reminded them of her, and after another 2,000 years it is good for us to remember her mistake.

Lesson 1: We must not focus on the world. Today, we have the same choice as Lot’s wife did, choose a Godly life or a worldly life. In Genesis 19:26, we read where she looked back then turned into a pillar of salt. Scriptures do not tell why she looked back, but her desire for Sodom shows her doubt and unbelief. Lot’s wife changed her focus from a spiritual direction to a worldly one. We see the apostle Peter making a similar error, Matthew 14:30.

But let us not forget to look at verse 31. Jesus stretched out his hand to Peter and caught him. We have that same advantage today. Faith requires “stepping away” from the world 1 John 2:15. Let us learn what Lot’s wife did not; forsake all for Jesus, Luke 14:31, and He will deliver us from evil.

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Ryan Thomsberry,
Anna Church of Christ

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Shawnee Mass Transit District Public Meeting

Shawnee Mass Transit District invites the public to provide feedback on our current services, suggest improvements, discuss routes, and more. Public comment sessions will be held at our depots in Metropolis, Anna, and Mounds on the dates listed below.

To ensure accessibility, we are offering free transportation on our existing routes to and from these meetings. To schedule a ride, please contact our dispatch center at 866-577-6278 at least 24 hours in advance. These sessions will take place from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM.

If you are unable to attend but have questions or feedback, you can send a letter to: 100 Smart Drive, Vienna, IL 62995 Attn: Executive Director

You may also email the Executive Director at mpietrowski@smtdil.com

February 11, 2025
Metropolis Depot, 5337 Industrial Park Drive, Metropolis IL 62960

February 12, 2025
Mounds Depot, 510 Beechwood Lane, Mounds IL 62964

February 13, 2025
Anna Depot, 120 Denny Drive, Anna IL 62906

Obituaries

Alisa Lynn Wachsnicht

Alisa Lynn Wachsnicht, 58, of Cobden, died Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2025, at Mercy Southeast Hospital.

She was born on July 20, 1966, in Union County, the daughter of William and Betty Williams Cast.

She married Rodney Wachsnicht on Dec. 28, 2007.

She is survived by her husband, Rodney Wachsnicht of Cobden; fur babies Bella and Duke; brother, Gary (Andrea) Cast of North Carolina; nieces Briana Cast and Kayla Fleming; great-nieces and nephew, Ella, Mia, Makennah and Everett; aunt Gladys Cast of Alto Pass; cousins Pamela Cast of Charleston, Mo., Beau, Aden and Brayden Cast, Ellen Williams of Anna, Tammy O’Daniell of Colp, Buddy Cast of Cobden and Leslie (Rick) Miller of Fruitland, Mo.; father-in-law Aurelio Hernandez of Murphysboro; sister-in-law Anna Hernandez of Murphysboro; niece Kaitlyn Hernandez of Murphysboro; many other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; an uncle, Bud



Cast; and her mother-in-law, Linda Hernandez.

She worked as a DSP at numerous CILA homes in the area for over 30 years. She adored her babies, Bella and Duke, and loved spending time with them. She enjoyed fishing and going for a drive in the country with her husband Rodney. She will be dearly missed by all her friends and family.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

To view the obituary and to leave online condolences for the family, visit www.rendlemanhilemanfh.com.

Rendleman & Hileman Funeral Home in Cobden is in charge of arrangements.

Larry Leon Hileman

Larry Leon Hileman, 81, of Anna, died Friday, Jan. 10, 2025, at Deaconess Illinois Union County Hospital in Anna.

He was born on June 28, 1943, in Union County, the son of Don W. and Alberta Sronce Hileman.

He married Nancy Ann Sullivan on Aug. 6, 1967.

Mr. Hileman is survived by his wife, Nancy Hileman; sons Larry Don Hileman, Roderick Lynn Hileman and Paul Don Hileman; grandchildren Kelsey Ann Hileman, Sophia Hileman, Amanda Kubitz, Nathan Kubitz, Tiffany Hileman and Samuel Hileman; numerous great-grandchildren; siblings Harold Gene Hileman and Betty Lou Beggs; nieces, nephews and other relatives. He was preceded in death by his parents.

He was a caring and giving person. He was a farmer and equipment operator. He loved to drive tractors and enjoyed fishing. He was a very knowledgeable man who could work on and fix anything.

Funeral services for Larry Hileman were at 1 p.m. Thurs-



day, Jan. 16, at Rendleman & Hileman Funeral Home in Anna, with Pastor Darrell Coleson officiating. Interment followed in the Anna Cemetery.

Memorials can be made to Rendleman & Hileman Funeral Home to assist the family with final expenses.

To visit his memorial page and to leave online condolences for his family, visit the Rendleman & Hileman Funeral Home website at rendlemanhilemanfh.com.

Rendleman & Hileman Funeral Home in Anna was in charge of arrangements.

Rendleman & Hileman Funeral Home in Cobden is in charge of arrangements.

Mary Elizabeth McRaven

Mary Elizabeth McRaven, 72, of rural Belknap, died at 10:10 p.m. Friday, Jan. 10, 2025, at her home.

She was born on March 13, 1952, in Orange, Texas. She was the daughter of Jack and Florence Elizabeth Clarkson Phillips.

On Sept. 22, 1979, Mary was united in marriage to Don McRaven in Fallon, Nev. He survives.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by her five children, Sandra Diane Choiniski of De Soto, Amanda McRaven of Anna, Bettina (Zebulon) Bowles of Ozark, Angela Strong of Goreville and Anthony Shane McRaven of Nashville, Tenn.; 10 grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. She was also anticipating the upcoming birth of a great-grandchild.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her brother, David Phillips.

She was employed for 14 years as the activities director at Hillview Health Care Center in Vienna.

She enjoyed a number of activities and pastimes, including sewing, crafting and music. She also enjoyed the outdoors, horseback riding and camping. She cared for her beloved canine companions and especially loved



“Abbie.”

She was a member of Bethany Baptist Church near Cypress.

Mary’s family will host a celebration of her life on Saturday, Jan. 25, at 10 a.m. at Bethany Baptist Church, 555 Bethany Church Rd., Cypress. Pastor Jay Franklin and Chaplain Brent Easton will officiate.

Those attending the service are invited to gather at the church at 9:30 a.m. Saturday.

Memorials can be made to St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, Tenn. 38105-1905 or online at www.stjude.org.

To share a memory or to leave an online message of condolence for her family, visit www.baileyfh.com.

Bailey Funeral Home in Vienna in Vienna is in charge of arrangements.

Rosetta ‘Joann’ Colyer Toler

Joann Toler will be remembered for her vibrant personality, optimism, love of community, music, fashion sense and beauty. Never without her lipstick, she made the world a brighter place, every day.

With heartfelt sadness, we share the news of Rosetta “Joann” Colyer Toler’s passing on January 16, 2025, at the age of 90. Joann departed this world peacefully at Mercy Hospital in Cape Girardeau, Mo., surrounded by the love and comfort of her family and friends.

Joann was born on September 10, 1934, in McClure, Ill., the daughter of John and Lena Colyer. She spent her childhood in the close-knit community of McClure where she attended the local school and formed lifelong connections.

After graduating from high school, Joann enrolled in business college in Cape Girardeau, laying the foundation for her role in the Shawnee Community Unit School District No. 84.

After a short but memorable chapter as a “Blue Bell Jingle Girl,” the musical commercials promoting Blue Bell bologna, Joann took the position as the secretary to the Superintendent’s office at Shawnee schools. She was in this position for more than 40 years. For her, Shawnee was more than just a local school district, it was a community whose values helped shape her approach to life, and where she forged long-lasting friendships.

When Joann wasn’t working in the Superintendent’s office, she shared her love of music as a member of the Shawnee Trio, performing across the region alongside her dearest friends: Deloris Burchyett (mother of world-famous opera singer Christine Brewer), June Morgan, Mary Jones and Kerry Baugher. For Joann, music wasn’t just a pastime, in important ways, it was the essence of her life. Music allowed her to develop her talent to create real beauty and bring joy to others. She credited her long, healthy, and happy life to the harmony and happiness that music brought to her soul.

One of the greatest joys of Joann’s life, and a role she deeply cherished, was being “Aunt Joann.” It was in this beloved capacity that her vibrant spirit truly shone, bringing endless laughter, warmth, and treasured memories to all who were lucky enough to call her their aunt.

In 1975, Joann married Ray Toler. They shared 17 wonderful years of marriage until Ray’s passing in 1992. Ray’s children, Diane (Norman) Dale, Donna (Tony) Gowin and David (Barbara) Toler, remained an important part of Joann’s life even after Ray’s death. Joann frequently participated in Toler family holiday events, and Ray’s family consistently made it a priority to attend every celebration honoring Joann.

After retiring, Joann embraced an active and fulfilling life in Cape Girardeau. She became a dedicated member of the Optimist Club, let her vibrant personality shine as a Bingo caller at the Senior



Center, and found spiritual connection at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Joann Toler is survived by her daughter, Robyn Walker; her son-in-law, Frank Christensen; and her sister-in-law, Shirley (Clyde) Colyer.

She is also survived by her nieces and nephews: Barbara (Joe) Smith, Glenda (James Robert) Sheffer, Jeanette Colyer, Karen Brust, Linda (Al) Behm, Debbie (Hollis) Bond, Myra Jo (Steve) Quisenberry, Gayla Jean (Art) Long, James Scott Kaufman, Teresa (Gary) Livesay, Tony (Pauline) Hale, Jeffery (Laila) Colyer, Lana (Lee) Piner, Alan Abercrombie and Beth (Mike) Eftink.

Joann was preceded in death by her husband, Ray Toler; her parents, John and Lena Mainer Colyer; and her siblings: Lawana (Robert) Burchyett, Eugenia (Lowell) Hale, John Lee (Elsa) Colyer, Marjorie Colyer, Lena (Everd) Hill, Mary C. (John) Abercrombie, Reva (James) Kaufman and Clyde Colyer.

She was also preceded in death by her nieces and nephews: Shelby (Shannon) Hollingsworth, Erma (Shannon) Hollingsworth, Lindell (Rose) Hill, Kay (Ron) Brown and John L. Colyer Jr.

“Aunt Joann” was cherished by countless grandnieces, grandnephews, great-grandnieces and great-grandnephews, all of whom were inspired by her vibrant and fun-loving spirit. She adored each of them deeply, leaving behind a legacy of joy, love and cherished memories in their hearts.

Joann’s visitation and brunch will be from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 26, at Ford & Sons Sprigg Street Chapel in Cape Girardeau.

Her celebration of life will be at 12 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 26, at the funeral home, with Bishop Clifton Gentry and the Rev. Steven Smith officiating.

The burial will be at Lindsey Cemetery in McClure following the service.

Ford & Sons Funeral Home in Cape Girardeau is in charge of arrangements.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to one of the below:

Shawnee CUSD No. 84, c/o District Office, 3365 State Route 3 North, Wolf Lake, Ill. 62998.

Lindsey Cemetery, c/o Treasurer Pat Baldwin, 34422 Grapevine Trail, McClure, Ill. 62957.

The family would like to express its heartfelt gratitude to the doctors, nurses and staff at Mercy Hospital for their kindness, professionalism and support during this difficult time.

Bill Chaney

Bill Chaney, 58, of Anna, and formerly of Atwood, Tenn., and Joliet, died Friday, Jan. 10, 2025, at Saint Francis Medical Center in Cape Girardeau.

He was born on Nov. 5, 1966, in Chicago, the son of Billy Roger and Betty Lou Skeens Chaney.

Mr. Chaney was a proud Teamster. He loved to ride his Harley, listening to music and singing. He was a social butterfly and enjoyed all of his friends.

Survivors include his life partner, Sandy Wood; sisters Vickie Flores, Jule Ernest, Tammy Berry, Trena Stough, Tiffany James and Joy Belder; brothers Jamie Chaney and Jason Chaney; children Josh Brkoric, Jimmy Stover and Breeanne Hohenwater; bonus children Kenneth Joe Dowdy Jr., Tiffany Lampley, Joshua Dowdy, John Dowdy and Valley Dowdy; and many grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Billy Roger and Barb Chaney and J.D.



Taylor and Betty Lou (Skeens) Taylor.

Funeral services were at 1 p.m. Friday, Jan. 17, at Crain Funeral Home in Anna-Jonesboro, with Pastor Lupe Lopez officiating.

Interment followed the funeral service at the Anna City Cemetery. Memorials can be made to the family.

To view the obituary or to leave an online condolence for the family, visit www.crainonline.com.

Crain Funeral Home in Anna-Jonesboro was in charge of arrangements.

News from

Anna First Baptist Church

Anna First Baptist Church met for worship on Sunday, Jan. 19.

Pastor Lupe led the opening prayer and greeted everyone in the sanctuary.

Prayers were said over the prayer list.

Cissi Cuthbertson did the call to worship, which was on evangelism and missions.

The worship team led in the singing of “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands,” “I Believe” and “Goodness of God.”

Pastor Lupe continued his sermons on the Book of Revelation in the New Testament.

The message shared that the Book of Revelation, written by the Apostle John, “is a profound and symbolic work that reveals God’s ultimate plan for humanity and the culmination of history.

“Addressed to seven churches in Asia Minor, it provides both encouragement and warning to believers facing persecution.

“Central to the message is the triumph of Jesus Christ

over evil, ensuring hope and victory for the faithful. Its vivid imagery and prophetic visions underscore the sovereignty of God and the promise of a new heaven and earth for His people.”

Sunday School meets at 9 a.m. each Sunday morning.

The church’s worship service starts at 10:15 a.m. on Sunday.

The church has a prayer time at 6 p.m. on Wednesday. The church has a youth program which meets at 6 p.m. on Wednesday.

The church has a bus which runs for all of its programs and services. Information is available by calling the church’s office during the day.

First Baptist Church is located at 409 Morgan St. in Anna. The church’s phone number is 833-5416.

The church’s Facebook page is [Facebook.com/AnnaFirstBaptistChurch](https://www.facebook.com/AnnaFirstBaptistChurch). The church’s email address is fbcanna409@gmail.com. The church can be found on YouTube at Anna First Live Stream.

Rural Health welcomes scholarship applications

Rural Health Inc. is funding and administering eight healthcare scholarship opportunities.

A \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a high school senior at each of the following schools: Anna-Jonesboro, Cobden, Dongola, Goreville, Joppa, Massac County, Shawnee and Vienna.

Home-schooled students in Union, Johnson and Massac counties are welcome to apply as well.

Applicants will be recognized for their desire to pursue a career in the healthcare field.

Application packets are available from the guidance counselor at the schools where the scholarships will be awarded.

Home-schooled students

who are interested in applying can call Rural Health Inc. at 618-833-4471 for an application packet.

Students must comply with the following deadlines:

Application packets must be submitted to the guidance counselor at the school/school district by March 7, 2025.

All application packets are due at Rural Health Inc. in Anna by March 10, 2025.

Home-schooled students can return their application packet to Rural Health Inc. in Anna.

Further information about the scholarships is available by contacting Rural Health Inc. at the phone number noted above.

Rural Health Inc. has clinics in Anna, Dongola, Vienna, Goreville and Metropolis.

Anna VFW calendar of events

Veterans of Foreign Wars Carroll P. Foster Post No. 3455 of Anna has announced its schedule of events. The post is located at 70 VFW Ln. near Anna. The schedule includes:

Glo Bingo is scheduled Jan. 24-25.

Star Karaoke is scheduled to be at the post from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Jan. 31.

The canteen is scheduled to be open from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and from 1 p.m. to 12 a.m. on Friday and Saturday.

24; Jerri Miller, Jan. 25.

Anniversary: Marion and Joyce Hill, Jan. 22, 53 years.

The regular schedule for worship at Jonesboro First Baptist includes Sunday School classes on Sundays at 9 a.m., Sunday morning worship at 10 a.m. and Sunday evening worship at 6 p.m.

Youth meet from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Sundays and from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Wednesdays.

The Dig-In program for children meets at 6 p.m. on Wednesdays.

An adult prayer meeting and Bible study are scheduled on Wednesdays at 6 p.m.

videos and the latest information about church events.

Music director Dee Rose led worship, accompanied by the praise team that includes Connor Benbrook, Isabel, Megan and Lucas Tehandon. Debbie York was the pianist.

A church council meeting was held after morning worship.

Men’s and women’s Bible studies were scheduled at 6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 20.

The newsletter folding team plans to meet Thursday, today. The team will work on the February newsletter.

Birthdays: Kim Anderson, Jan. 20; Jerri Tehandon, Jan.

NOTICE OF 2024 ASSESSMENT CHANGES

The following is a list of all real estate assessment changes for townships 11-1W, 11-2W, 11-3W, 11-4W, 12-1W, 12-2W, 12-3W, 12-4W, 13-2W and 13-3W. Real estate assessment changes for the remaining Townships of 11-1E, 12-1E, 13-1E and 13-1W are located in the Quadrennial Reassessment Publication. All assessed values are subject to revision by the Union County Board of Review, as well as by local and state equalization.

This publication is made in accordance with section 12-10 of the Property Tax Code and serves as public notice to property owners that the median level of assessment in Union county for the 2024 tax year payable in 2024 is 30.75% based on three years of sales transactions from 2021-2023. The statutory median level is 33.33% of fair market value for all property other than farmland.

In accordance with section 9-210 and section 10-115 of the property tax code, an equalization factor of 1.08 has been applied to bring assessments to the statutorily required three year median level of 33.33% for the townships of 11-1E, 11-1W, 11-2W, 11-3W, 11-4W, 12-1E, 12-1W, 12-2W, 12-3W, 12-4W, 13-1E, 13-1W, 13-2W and 13-3W as follows:

Farm Land	1.00
Farm Improvements	1.00
Non-Farm Land	1.08
Non-Farm Improvements	1.08

You may check the accuracy of your non-farm assessment by dividing your non-farm assessment by the median level of assessment. The resulting value should equal the estimated fair market value of the property. If the resulting value is greater than the estimated fair market value of your property, you may be over-assessed. If the resulting value is less than the estimated fair market value of your property, you may be under-assessed. The equalized assessed value is used in the calculation of all real estate bills.

Property owners who consider their property to be incorrectly assessed may submit a written complaint with the Union County Board of Review in accordance with section 16-55 of the Property Tax Code. All complaints must be filed with the Supervisor of Assessments within 30 days following the date of this publication at: 309 W. Market Street, Room 128 Jonesboro, Illinois 62952.

All publications can be viewed at unioncountyiil.gov. Please call our office if you have any questions. You may reach us at 618-833-8051 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Tammy Robinson, CIAO
Supervisor of Assessments
Union County

11-1W		
RENDLEMAN, JILL	04-05-02-066-C	154,410
RENDLEMAN, JILL	04-05-02-066-C1	6,100
UHLS, SCOTT L SR & ALETA L	04-05-02-073-	44,110
BEANLAND, JULIE A	04-05-02-074-	6,800
SIEGFRIED, DAVID HOWARD & KIMB	04-06-02-092-	40,210
HAWKINS, ELLA JEAN LIFE ESTATE	04-07-02-120-A1	260
SYKES, JEFFREY & JENNIFER	04-08-02-143-A3	34,730
KELLOGG, JEFF & BARNS LISA	04-09-02-153-	60,330
SELLERS, RALPH & SANDRA KAY	04-09-02-155-1	54,830
NANCE, ROBERT E	04-10-02-172-A1	14,520
HILL, DENNIS G	04-11-02-196-	40,770
YATES, JACK G & MARSHA H	04-12-02-198-A	6,770
MCCUBBIN, PATRICIA ROSS	04-15-02-244-	33,580
LINGLE, LEVI D	04-15-02-245-A	2,040
PEARSON, HOWARD WAYNE & TINAL	04-16-02-252-C	8,160
INMAN, DANIEL L	04-16-02-271-C1A	2,680
WILLIARD, HOWARD & TIFFANY	04-17-02-279-	8,970
WILLIAMS, JOSHUA A & AMY E	04-17-02-292-A	46,430
CLUTTS, JASON	04-18-02-303-A	12,750
THOMPSON, DONNA FAYE	04-19-02-343-	51,470
SWEITZER, THERON C	04-20-02-373-1	49,630
SWEITZER, GARY & CASSANDRA	04-20-02-373-2	2,030
BRUMLEVE, KENNETH & DONNA	04-20-02-377-1	6,250
UNDERWOOD, SHANE	04-20-02-383-A	4,450
PEARSON, DANA LEE	04-20-02-398-	47,770
EADS, WILLIAM WILLIE & VIOLET	04-21-02-408-A1	56,780
EADS, DAVID W	04-21-02-408-B2	11,820
MC GEE, BRADLEY & CHRISTINA	04-21-02-408-C5	940
JACKMAN, JON H & CYNTHIA K	04-21-02-408-C6	270
MC GEE, BRADLEY & CHRISTINA	04-22-02-439-C1	170
JACKMAN, JON H & CYNTHIA K	04-22-02-439-C2	1,640
FISHER, ANDREW JOSEPH	04-22-02-441-1	44,010
MC GEE, BRADLEY & CHRISTINA GAI	04-22-02-441-2	5,770
KHAN, MAHAMMAD ALI	04-22-02-441-A1	157,510
WHITE, JONATHAN & BRITLEY	04-22-02-441-A2	590
MC GEE, BRADLEY & CHRISTINA	04-22-02-446-1	1,190
GARNER, ASHLEY N & DENNIS R	04-24-02-476-	5,850
BENNETT, RICHARD A & MARY JANE	04-25-02-487-A	9,160
BASS, WILLIAM R	04-25-02-504-1	14,680
BENNETT, RICHARD A & MARY JANE	04-25-02-504-2	4,130
INGOLD, MICHAEL	04-26-02-516-	40,120
WHITE, JONATHAN & BRITLEY	04-27-02-543-1	2,650
DEPOY, JERRY & CARRIE	04-27-02-543-2	3,510
MC GEE, BRADLEY & CHRISTINA	04-27-02-543-3	1,300
FRANKLIN, JOSH & BRITTNEY	04-27-02-560-A7	4,960
PITTS, NANCY VAUGHN	04-29-02-600-	58,200
PETERMAN, DALE E & PAMELA D	04-29-02-640-	50,990
QUERTERMOUS, LARRY JR & REBECC	04-29-02-640-A	11,660
RHODES, GARY & MARTHA	04-30-02-664-1	14,890
HERRMANN, TROY ARIEN	04-30-02-677-B	27,560
WESTBROOKS, RICHARD & KARREN	04-30-02-684-	8,340
MAZE, DENNIS L & THERESA L	04-30-02-687-1	43,290
GRAY, ROGER G & JUDITH K TRUST	04-30-02-689-A1	1,640
DALIUS, RONALD J & SUSAN A	04-30-02-691-A	37,110
STROEHLEIN, ROGER E & DEBORAH	04-30-02-695-	53,410
ADAMS, ROBERT D JR	04-30-02-699-A1	12,430
RUSSELL, KRISTOPHER LEE & BRIT	04-31-02-788-	7,290
HALE, ZACHARY & BRITTNEY	04-31-02-792-A3	127,870
TALLY, MICHAEL & CARLA TRUSTEE	04-31-02-792-A4	3,800
DCA LAND ILLINOIS LLC	04-31-02-806-	172,900
BRUMLEVE, KEVIN C	04-32-02-817-2	1,600
STROEHLEIN, JEFFREY A & STEPHA	04-33-02-840-A1	84,920
JACKSON, BRIAN	04-35-02-885-A	43,060
GESKE, ANNA LYNN	14-00-09-882-	9,740
GARCIA, LAURA	14-00-09-885-	4,620
PATEL, VIKRAM	14-00-09-918-	5,140
SHERRILL, SCOTTIE RAY	14-00-10-094-	20,870

SKINNER, H GEOFFREY & JILL	14-00-10-111-	30,580
KRAUSE, STEVEN A	14-00-10-319-	2,600
BUEZA, JESSE PAUL & ABBEY L	14-00-10-321-	56,820
12-1W		
NICE, JEREMY & LISA	05-01-02-923-1	77,510
ELNSNER, WILLIAM D & JESSIE D	05-01-02-935-	19,700
O'NEIL, BRETON K & JEFFERY PAD	05-02-02-941-	132,140
TRIPP, JERALD D & GWEN E	05-02-02-947-A	72,680
HACKETHAL, LARRY	05-06-03-012-	43,550
GOINS, CODY & JESSICA	05-06-03-024-1	167,290
SKAGGS, STEPHEN P	05-06-03-024-2	9,200
WHITESIDE, DANIEL R & KATHRYN	05-07-03-039-	46,860
CISSELL, HOMER L JR & BONNIE J	05-07-03-051-A6	3,850
MULL, DONALD E & MARILYN G	05-08-03-067-B	1,140
HALL, WILLIAM M & SHARON R	05-08-03-078-	87,040
BARKER, JUSTIN K & EMMELIE	05-08-03-092-A1	11,340
TREECE, CHRISTOPHER L	05-08-03-092-B1	20,620
EBERSOHL, CHARLES ROBERT	05-09-03-104-A5	25,850
BAKER, THOMAS M & EMMALU	05-09-03-104-A7	25,390
BAKER, SHERMAN	05-09-03-104-A8	10,830
SWEET, CAROLL	05-10-03-117-B	42,910
BOYD, ROBERT J	05-10-03-132-	43,110
GRIFFITH, RANDALL C & DANA S	05-10-03-133-A1	3,680
BRIMM, JACK D & REBECCA R	05-12-03-158-B1	5,790
BRIMM, JACK	05-12-03-158-B2	190
PLOTT, ZACHARY S & JACQUELYN N	05-13-03-174-	71,440
LAMBERT, CHRISTOPHER	05-14-03-194-A	99,580
MOWERY, DELANO & BETTY L	05-15-03-225-1	111,180
HAAKE, STANLEY & BONNIE	05-15-03-225-2	4,690
MERRIMAN, RANDAL & CONNIE	05-15-03-225-A1	114,360
GRAHAM, LONNIE E & JANET S	05-15-03-231-	77,390
RODRIQUE, KYLE & COURTNEY	05-16-03-233-1	37,060
FALLER, WESTON	05-16-03-236-1	25,160
JOLES, JASON S & STEPHANIE	05-16-03-240-	58,410
WGP REAL ESTATE LLC	05-16-03-245-C11	392,000
WGP REAL ESTATE LLC	05-16-03-245-C12	3,378,010
BULLARD, NATHAN D & JULIE	05-17-03-261-	132,750
MCCANN, DYLAN	05-18-03-315-3	520
DUCKWORTH, JAMES E	05-18-03-328-B	5,430
HICKAM, KIMBERLY ANN	05-18-03-328-B1	16,670
BARRETT, KRISTIN AMANDA	05-19-03-430-	25,020
SPURLOCK, DONALD	05-19-03-432-A	5,420
CUNNINGHAM, RICHARD & ROBIN	05-19-03-452-A2	92,930
FARRIS, MONTY SHANE & CHASSIDY	05-19-03-469-	11,540
ANNA COM CON SCHOOL DIST 37	05-20-03-579-	4,650
AMES, JOSEPH & WANDA	05-20-03-582-1	21,000
CITY OF ANNA	05-20-03-604-	1,440
YOUNG, FOREST DALE & VALERIE	05-20-03-614-	19,210
BIERSTEDT 3 LLC	05-20-03-627-	2,590
BIERSTEDT 3 LLC	05-20-03-628-	2,590
BIERSTEDT 3 LLC	05-20-03-629-	2,590
BIERSTEDT 3 LLC	05-20-03-630-	2,590
REHABILITATION & VOCATIONAL ED	05-20-03-631-	2,590
LENTZ, DAN L	05-20-03-690-2	1,110
LAMBDIN, ERIC J & MALORI E	05-22-03-754-1	8,040
WEST KENTUCKY RURAL TELEPHONE	05-22-03-754-2	1,800
CARTER, RYAN S & TORIE D	05-22-03-757-D4	126,670
GARCIA, GUADALUPE	05-23-03-778-A	62,870
PRATER, DAVID & KIMBERLY	05-23-03-789-A3	63,460
BOREUP, ERIC & AMANDA	05-23-03-809-1	4,220
JONES, CHIRSTOPHER & PAULA	05-25-03-835-6	89,280
GOODEN, JOSHUA G & BRITTANY N	05-25-03-840-	55,230
DILLON, ROBERT	05-25-03-851-A	36,080
R & R RENTALS & RENOVATIONS LL	05-26-03-882-C	51,590
TELLOR, LORIE A	05-26-03-882-E2	28,570
R & R RENTALS & RENOVATIONS LL	05-26-03-882-E3	1,120
POOLE, JACKIE L & JOYCE V	05-27-03-884-1	29,710
MARTIN, TODD A	05-27-03-884-2	54,290
L & P CRABTREE INVESTMENTS LLC	05-27-03-887-8	5,630
BASS, KEITH SAMUEL	05-27-03-887-9	6,930
HILEMAN FAMILY TRUST	05-27-03-893-	32,030
MENDENHALL, PHILIP H	05-27-03-897-	69,320
COOLEY, TERRY L & BRENDA S	05-27-03-902-	59,890
SHERWOOD, CLAYTON & MARTINA	05-27-03-905-	28,020
GFLT LAND TRUST NO 466581612	05-27-03-906-	34,310
TURNER, RALPH J	05-27-03-914-	13,570
SCHLABACH, DENNIS W & LAURA M	05-28-03-922-	84,730
WALLER, RICHARD A & MARY JANE	05-29-03-987-B3	2,640
THOMPSON, JAMES & LINDA	05-29-03-987-B4	270
SMITH, AISLYNNE KAY	05-29-03-995-	24,920
BROOKS, F DALE & JANET R TRUST	05-29-04-002-A4	58,910
SAMUELS, JOEL D	05-29-04-015-	7,040
HILEMAN, FLINT O	05-29-04-016-	32,870
BROOKS, F DALE & JANET TRUSTEE	05-29-04-025-B	3,340
NIES, GREGORY OWEN & REBECCA J	05-29-04-025-D1	31,970
DILLOW, KENZIE L	05-29-04-025-D2	20,260
ALSIP, PAYTON	05-30-04-037-	3,250
BRIMM, CAROLE RENEE	05-30-04-039-A	38,290
BUSBY, ASA KEATON	05-30-04-044-	28,280
BEQUETTE, TIMOTHY	05-30-04-045-H1	36,840
RUDOLPH METZGER INVESTMENT CO	05-30-04-061-	17,390
RUDOLPH METZGER INVESTMENT CO	05-30-04-062-	155,540
TEHANDON, JOSE & JERRI L	05-31-04-123-A5	10,010
RICH, TYLER P & AMANDA J	05-31-04-129-3	58,640
LJM TRUST C/O BRUCE MOSBY	05-31-04-129-4	21,450
LJM TRUST C/O BRUCE MOSBY	05-31-04-129-5	25,040
MOSBY, BRUCE R & CYNTHIA J	05-31-04-129-A1	79,520
MCALISTER, LEAH R	05-31-04-133-1	29,670
BROWN, DARREN KEITH	05-31-04-133-2	9,380
COLBOTH, JOHN	05-32-04-140-	6,500
BROWN, MARK	05-32-04-140-A	28,910
POOLE, STEVEN W & DIANA E	05-33-04-160-C	58,980
RAGAN, CHRISTOPHER R	05-33-04-168-2	27,650
MCDOWELL, LYLE & KELLY	05-34-04-172-2	7,260
TELLOR, LOUIE A	05-35-04-202-	29,530
WRIGHT, ALLEN L & REVA	05-35-04-202-A1	11,050
WRIGHT, BRANDON A	05-35-04-202-A2	34,660
MILLIS, ROBERT J & FALLON B	05-36-04-216-A1	53,570
HAHN, VINCENT & NAOMI	05-36-04-219-A	107,180
HILEMAN, LARRY DON JR	05-36-04-219-B	8,310
MCREYNOLDS, TIM & MELANIE	05-36-04-235-	42,510
FOUNTAIN INVESTMENTS LLC	14-00-07-368-	1,320
HESS, KEVIN C & CARRIE L	14-00-07-483-	2,800
NIKOLIC, ALMA Y	14-00-07-497-	5,430
GARNER FAMILY TRUST	14-00-07-589-	2,590
KELLY, KEITH E	14-00-07-623-	7,120
BEAKE, JASON	14-00-07-973-C01	44,750
KINNEY, MICHAEL	14-00-07-982-	8,700
EDWARDS, JASON C	14-00-08-030-	27,030
CRAFTY CHIC LLC	14-00-08-045-	12,990
CITY OF ANNA	14-00-08-125-	6,250
SULLIVAN, MATTHEW	14-00-08-144-	17,960
CITY OF ANNA	14-00-08-297-	19,880
LASPINA, PAMELA	14-00-08-321-	5,300
COOK, SCOTT	14-00-08-433-A1	460
CAMPBELL, WILLIAM CODY	14-00-08-438-	9,290
MOLTER, ZEBULON K	14-00-08-489-	2,170
MCVEY, ALMA Y	14-00-08-517-	11,590
BASS, KELLE J	14-00-08-523-	23,170
REHABILITATION & VOCATIONAL ED	14-00-08-580-	5,260
HUNT, SAMANTHA	14-00-08-658-	29,810
PLOTT, GREGORY L & MARY	14-00-08-873-	31,690
FOX, RICHARD T	14-00-08-973-	25,750

GARNER FAMILY TRUST	14-00-09-071-	52,070
HAZEL, DEVIN A	14-00-09-161-	13,680
BROCKETT, HALEY	14-00-09-171-	29,610
BOHANNON, REMINGTON C	14-00-09-197-	5,400
KERR, BRIAN & MARY	14-00-09-363-	2,590
MCLEAN, PATRICK M & PAMELA E	14-00-09-490-	48,070
DOWDY, ROGER D	14-00-09-605-	23,390
HARVEL, JUSTYN	14-00-09-638-	38,590
BARRA, JEFFREY ROGER	14-00-09-668-	63,950
GRACE, BARBARA JEAN	14-00-09-673-	43,800
ZIMMERMAN, JACOB	14-00-09-698-	42,730
RENDLEMAN, CARL	14-00-11-773-	13,350
BIGGERSTAFF PROPERTIES LLC	14-00-11-831-	19,630
BIGGERSTAFF PROPERTIES LLC	14-00-11-832-	160
BAGGOTT, DARREN & MICHAELLE	14-00-11-967-	84,800
SHERWOOD, CINDY	14-00-12-241-1	50,670
CACHE RIVER FARM N GARDEN LLC	14-00-12-317-	134,110

11-2W		
TAITT, PAUL D & ALBERDINE L	07-01-05-125-A4	59,180
MOORE, TERRY L & GYLIAN E	07-09-05-226-	146,120
GREENE, VIRGIL O & SANDRA A	07-10-05-268-	9,510
HAND, CODY	07-12-05-310-A	50,770
HAWKINS, ELLA JEAN LIFE ESTATE	07-12-05-311-	9,310
ANDERSON, ROBERT J	07-12-05-326-B	42,570
MACK, GILBERT G	07-13-05-354-	45,260
KNOPP, REBECCA	07-13-05-358-C1	14,250
MCHUGHS, JORDAN	07-15-05-397-	1,620
MC GEE, ROBERT	07-15-05-409-A	32,070
CECIL, CATHERINE	07-16-05-417-C	40,920
LEE, CHRISTINA	07-16-05-426-	7,840
RAINS, JAMES E & PEGGY	07-22-05-470-	85,620
BARTER, JIMMIE DALE JR & DANIE	07-24-05-510-	32,860
REIMANN, DARREN L & LISA M	07-24-05-514-A2	60,090
SCHULTE, RICKY G & REBECCA A	07-24-05-515-A	25,640
LAZY Q FARM TRUST	07-25-05-558-	67,860
EADES, JOSH A & MELISSA TRUSTE	07-26-05-562-	10,320
CLOVER, DOUGLAS E & CHARLOTTE		
07-27-05-594-B1		68,160
TOWER TINES LLC	07-34-05-644-A2	5,430
SCHAEFER, ANDREW J & KARRIE D	07-34-05-644-A3	220
JORDAN, KEVIN & CAROLE	14-00-10-844-1	8,810
JORDAN, KEVIN & CAROLE	14-00-10-847-1	22,280
GREENE, VIRGIL O & SANDRA A	14-00-11-130-	7,500
MCINTIRE, PAUL	14-00-11-147-A09	98,060
MILLER, DAVID B & SARA JO	14-00-11-147-A13	80,170
MORELAND, BRUCE JR	14-00-11-147-C6	12,730

News from

Anna Nazarene Church

A morning worship service was held Sunday, Jan. 19.

Announcements were given by Pastor Randy Wright. Music was led by Pastor Wright and the worship team.

A message titled “God’s Love is Shown Through Us” was brought by Pastor Wright. Scripture was from John and 1 John.

There was no Sunday evening service.

Birthdays: Emily Wiseman, Jan. 20; Joyce Johnson, Trevor Treece, Jan. 24; Larry Fuller, Jan. 25.

Sunday, Jan. 26
Breakfast, 9 a.m. Sunday School, 9:30 a.m. Morning service, 10:35 a.m. Evening worship service, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 29
A Wednesday night service is planned at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. A youth group meeting is planned at 6:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall.

The church can be contacted by calling the church office at 833-6702 and leaving a message if necessary or by calling Pastor Wright at 618-534-7103.

News from

Camp Ground Church, Community

In spite of the cold, attendance at Camp Ground Church was up Sunday. Bro. Easton’s sermon was titled “Strength in Weakness,” with scripture selection 2 Corinthians 12: 6-10.

The sermon asked: “When do we feel the strongest? When we have had plenty of rest, healthy, without conflicts?”

“What about when we are in pain, unsure, afraid? Do we feel strong then?”

“Generally, when we feel good, we feel self-sufficient.

“When we are ‘afflicted,’ we tend to reach out to God to help us.

“In the selected scripture, the Apostle Paul reminds us that we should not boast because without God, we are nothing.

“If we should boast, it should be to give God the glory for helping us.

“Our love for Christ is exemplified when we give Him the glory in whatever our circumstances.”

In closing, Bro. Easton read Philippians 4:13: “I can do

all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

During the beginning of worship, the Rev. Dee Ann Thompson reinstalled Rodney Miller as an active elder for 2025 through 2027.

Reed Crane rang the bell to begin the worship service. Reed and Kayton Crane and Huntyr Herron received the tithes and offerings.

Camp Ground Church’s elder for January is Rodney Miller.

Bro. Brad and Amber Easton’s wedding anniversary

was Jan. 16. Jennifer Herren’s birthday was Jan. 20.

Camp Ground Church will observe its Heritage Sunday on Feb. 2. A potluck meal is planned following morning worship.

Camp Ground Church invites anyone who does not have a church home to join them in study and worship any or every Sunday.

Fellowship and coffee are at 9:15 a.m., followed by Sunday School classes for all ages at 9:30 a.m. and morning worship at 10:30 a.m.

The church is located at the intersection of Camp Ground Road and Tunnel Lane east of Anna and just north of Illinois Route 146.

The sponsors on this page urge you to attend the church of your choice.



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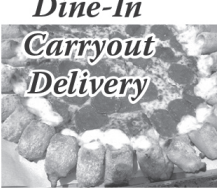
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ARE YOU LUCKY??



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You just won the lottery! Are you lucky? Maybe, maybe not, many winners go on to lose everything. A layoff at work; are you unlucky? Maybe, maybe not, you may end up with a better job. We cannot control our state of being, but we can control our state of mind. Instead of luck, depend on God. Have faith that He is in control no matter what happens. “But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.” (Hebrews 10:39) Worship this week in God’s House. Depend on Him, not on luck.

Weekly Scripture Reading						
John 17.1-26	Acts 6.1-15	Acts 7.1-34	Acts 7.35-8.3	Acts 8.4-25	Acts 8.26-40	Acts 9.1-25

Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society

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Midweek service Wednesday at 7 p.m.

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Wednesday
Bible Study
7pm



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HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED: Shawnee Community College is looking for full and part-time Custodian for their Ullin Campus and The Massac County Extension Center. For more information, please Call 618-634-3200 Ext. 3436 6-17gp

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PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS

ESTATE OF BARBARA ANN PORTERFIELD, DECEASED. NO. 2024-PR-30 IN PROBATE

NOTICE OF DEATH INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION, AND CLAIM DATE

NOTICE IF GIVEN to creditors of the death of BARBARA ANN PORTERFIELD, of Anna, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued on January 3, 2025, to STEPHEN R. PORTERFIELD, of 4190 Burns Road, P.O. Box 84, Dongola, IL 62926, whose attorney is Elvis C. Cameron, 205B N. Main St., Anna, Illinois.

Within 42 days after the effective date of the original Order of admission, you may file a petition with the Court to require proof of the Will by testimony of the witnesses in open Court or other evidence, as provided by Section 5/6-21 of the Probate Act (755 ILCS 5/6-21.)

You also have the right, under Section 5/8-1 of the Probate Act (755 ILCS 5/8-1), to contest the validity of the Will by filing a petition with the Court within six (6) months after admission of the Will to probate.

The estate will be administered without Court supervision unless, under Section 5/28-4 of the Probate Act (Ill. Compiled Stat. 1992, Ch. 755, Par. 5/28-4), any interested person terminates Independent Administration at any time by mailing or delivering a petition to terminate to the Clerk of this Court.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of this court at the Union County Courthouse, 309 W. Market St., Jonesboro, Illinois, or with the Independent Executor, or both, on or before July 16, 2025, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the Executor is required by Section 5/18-3 of the Probate Act of the State of Illinois, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the

claimant to the Executor and to the attorneys within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

Dated: January 16, 2025.
STEPHEN R. PORTERFIELD
CAMERON LAW FIRM, LLC
ELVIS C. CAMERON
ATTORNEY FOR INDEPENDENT EXECUTOR
205B N. MAIN ST.
ANNA, ILLINOIS 62906
PHONE: 618-833-2220
ARDC# 6244394
8221-949365

NOTICE UNDER ASSUMED BUSINESS NAME ACT State of Illinois SS

County of Union Notice is hereby given pursuant to “An Act in relation to the use of an Assumed Name in the conduct of Transaction of Business in the State,” as Amended that a certification was filed by the undersigned with the County Clerk of Union County,

Filed this 7th day of January, 2025, under the Assumed Name of Bread of Life Cafe, with the place of business located at 1155 E. Vienna St., Ste. D, Anna, IL 62906, and that the True Name(s) and Residence Address of the Sole Owner(s) and Proprietors of said Business is:

Owners: Vincent and Naomi Hahn
Address: 2880 Friendship School Rd., Anna, IL 62906

Lance Meisenheimer
Union County Clerk
8221-949364

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF DONALD M. BALLESTRO Decedent. No. 2024-PR-28

CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given to creditors of the death of DONALD M. BALLESTRO. Letters of Office were issued to Executor, Sandra L. Ballestro whose address is 3085 Kaolin Road Cobden, Illinois 62920, whose attorney of record is the law office of Brandon, Schmidt & Montgomery, 916 West Main Street, P.O. Box 3898, Carbondale, Illinois 62902. (The estate will be administered without court supervision unless under 28-4 of the Probate Act (755 ILCS 5/28-4) any interested person terminates independent administration at any time by mailing or delivering a petition to terminate to the clerk.)

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Union County Circuit Clerk’s Office or with the representative or both, on or before July 9, 2025 or, if mailing or delivery of a notice from the representative is required by 18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the estate representatives and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

/s/ Dakotah L. Hubler,
6349451
8221-949212

New Illinois General Assembly sworn in Jan. 8



Illinois House members

The 118 members of the Illinois House of Representatives sit on stage at the chamber's 2025 inauguration ceremony on Jan. 8. Capitol News Illinois photo by Andrew Adams.

By Capitol News Illinois

A new Illinois General Assembly was sworn in for the next two years on Wednesday, Jan. 8, with the House and Senate ceremonies taking two starkly different tones.

The House inauguration ceremony, conducted in an auditorium on the University of Illinois Springfield campus, was at times boisterous, featuring speeches that were more politically divisive and sometimes led to jeering.

House Speaker Emanuel “Chris” Welch, who was reelected to his third term leading the chamber, tried to strike a chord of unity as he exhorted his colleagues to work together to meet the challenges of what he called a unique moment in history.

“The urgency of this moment shows that unity is our power,” he said. “Members of the 104th General Assembly, let’s rise to meet this moment together. Let’s use this time and all that has been given to us to do the work and move Illinois forward. Winners do the work.”

But there was less talk about unity and cooperation from Republicans who spoke at the ceremony.

Rep. Steve Reick, R-Woodstock, spoke to nominate Republican Tony McCombie as speaker. He said he agreed that coopera-

Giant City Gnome Roam extended

The second annual Gnome Roam at Giant City State Park near Makanda has been extended.

Due to the recent winter weather, participants now will have until Feb. 15 to discover seven gnomes at the park.

On each of the seven trails at the park, excluding the Red Cedar Backpacking Trail, there is one winter hiking gnome waiting to be discovered.

Each gnome is holding a different item that is recommended for a winter hike.

For those who would like to participate in the Gnome Roam, directions include:

Record all seven gnomes by taking a photograph of yourself and the gnome.

Gnomes will be located along the designated trails.

Bring your proof into the Giant City visitors center for a free Giant City Gnome Roam patch.

For more information please call the Giant City State Park Visitors Center at 618-457-4836.

tion and compromise are needed to solve the state’s problems. But he also criticized “people on both ends of the political spectrum” for pushing “ideas on which there is nothing resembling a social consensus.”

“What results are laws that offend the heart-felt beliefs of people whose voices are not being heard and toothless resolutions that call for us to separate this state from a world class city that’s being driven into the ground,” Reick said.

Meanwhile, McCombie, of Savanna, who was reelected to her second term as minority leader, used her speech to vent some of the frustration she and other Republicans have felt at being locked out of negotiations with majority party Democrats on major legislative issues.

“I, like many, were disappointed with our election outcomes and the ability for us to secure more Republican seats to bring some balance to the General Assembly,” she said. “However, this was not due to a lack of good candidates or hard work, but due to special interest in Illinois’ gerrymandered maps, the most outrageous maps in the nation.”

Senate Inauguration

Senators from across Illinois were sworn in Wednesday, Jan. 8, in the newly renovated Senate chamber. The room had been closed for two and a half years while the Senate conducted business in a modified auditorium in a separate building on the capitol complex.

Sen. Don Harmon, D-Oak Park, and Sen. John Curran, R-Downers Grove, were reelected by their colleagues to their positions of Senate president and Senate minority leader, respectively.

The mood in the chamber, where bipartisan engagement has been more common in recent years, was far more reserved than in the House.

“While they may not always see eye-to-eye, they share a mutual respect for each other, our caucus and the constituents that allow them to work together for the good of Illinois,” Sen. Sue Rezin, R-Morris, said of the two leaders in her nominating speech for Curran. “This calm dialogue may not be the exciting drama that you see in D.C.”

Harmon is beginning his fourth term as the chamber’s leader after being elected by his caucus in January 2020 and serving in the Senate since 2003. His 2020 opponent in that contest, Sen. Kimberly Lightford, D-Westchester, gave the nominating speech for Harmon, saying the suburban Democrat has proven to be an effective leader.

“In an era of deeply political division, Don stands apart through his remarkable ability to unite people,” Lightford said.

Harmon’s acceptance speech had one overarching message: be kind. He asked senators to work across the aisle, including on behalf of their constituents who didn’t vote for them.

“Remember that your

neighbors in this chamber are some of the only people in Illinois who can relate to what you’re going through,” Harmon said. “The Senate is an active laboratory for coalition-building. Forge those bonds and look out for one another.”

The messages from Harmon and Curran stood out in a week when the House has grabbed headlines for a caucus meeting that left a governor’s office staffer in tears while three of Welch’s senior staff members announced plans to resign.

Curran is beginning his second term as Senate minority leader after being elected by his caucus in 2023. A former Cook County prosecutor, Curran was elected to the Senate in 2016.

“It’s easy to insulate ourselves with people who look, live and think like us,” Curran said. “But if American democracy has taught us anything, it is that real progress comes from stepping outside of your comfort zone and building a coalition of different viewpoints to craft policy for the greater good.”

Of the 59 Illinois senators, three sworn in Jan. 8 were not incumbents: Graciela Guzmán, D-Chicago; Liandro Arellano, R-Dixon; and Chris Balkema, R-Channahon.

Governor on Upcoming Challenges

The 104th General Assembly has a lengthy to-do list, ranging from eliminating a projected \$3.2 billion budget deficit to reforming transit in the Chicago area.

In a news conference following the inauguration, Gov. JB Pritzker spoke about the budget challenges he faces this spring ahead of his late February budget address.

“When we talk about priorities, prioritizing the fiscal health of the state has been, you know, among the most important things that I’ve, I think, achieved and will continue to prioritize,” Pritzker said.

Pritzker also faces a reemerging challenge from his first term as governor: a Donald Trump presidency.

Pritzker said he has general concerns about

Trump’s plans, particularly as they pertain to health care. But he is taking a wait-and-see approach before deciding specific actions to counter the Trump administration’s initiatives.

He noted Trump is often “unpredictable.”

“There’s not a specific thing that I can point to though because he hasn’t taken office yet,” Pritzker said, adding he’d remain “on guard” for what actions may be needed in the future.

Capitol Renovations

The Jan. 8 inauguration also served as the reopening of the Illinois Senate chamber following renovations to the space that began over two years ago.

The north wing of the Illinois Capitol remains in the middle of an expansive \$350 million renovation that began in 2022.

Much of the project on the interior of the Capitol is designed to restore the building to how it looked centuries ago. The building was constructed in the late 1800s in the decades after the Civil War and has undergone numerous renovations that have changed its appearance and layout.

In the Senate specifically, construction included restoring the room’s original laylight and making safety upgrades. The stained glass laylight is designed to resemble the chamber’s original look before it was damaged by fire decades ago. Renovations also added more stalls to the women’s restroom to make it comparable to the men’s bathroom.

The project is also aimed at modernizing the capitol complex and includes construction of a new public entrance and visitor center on the north wing. The addition is also designed to improve security at the complex and funnel visitors in through a single space.

Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service that distributes state government coverage to hundreds of news outlets statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.

An Homage to Hometown Happenings

By Kate B. Jerome

No matter where my travels take me, I always seek out the local newspaper.

I know. My smartphone easily provides more detail about a town than I will ever need.

But the local paper does so much more. That’s because it fits the many pieces of the community puzzle together. Where else can you get a glimpse of what a citizenry most values and fears – all within a few recyclable pages?

In the tiny town where I grew up, the local paper was a powerful tool – no doubt for many reasons beyond my young comprehension. However, I looked forward to the daily delivery for two simple reasons.

First, I loved to read the personal stories – from tragedy to triumph – about the people in my own community. It was the first inkling I had that I might be part of something larger than the family who lived at 12 Parkview.

Second, I couldn’t wait to hear the interesting dinner conversations that some tidbit in the paper was bound to spark. Of course, my favorites were the most heated discussions. And when my parents resorted to spelling out words? Well, let’s just say the training led to considerable success in my grade school spelling bees!

Decades of educational publishing experience later, I know my hometown paper was just one arrow in the successful child-raising quiver my parents used. But it was an important tool, and the outcomes it helped produce are still of the utmost importance today.

You see, building a strong sense of place plays a key part in a child’s social and emotional development. When children connect with the community around them, it helps them develop their own personal identity. An added benefit is the sense of stewardship it often inspires.

And the value of generating meaningful conversations? In my view, it’s off the charts. Too often in our busy world, dialogue with our kids tends toward the practical (Did you pick up your toys?) rather than the profound (Keep trying even when it’s hard!). So any tool that inspires discussion of such issues as friendship and community should be deeply valued. Why? Because that’s when our own stories of personal grit and resilience begin to flow.

And aren’t those the kind of Hometown Happenings that we really want our children to remember?

Kate B. Jerome is the author and series creator of two Read Together/Do Together children’s book series from Arcadia Kids that are designed to jump-start meaningful conversations between kids and their favorite adults. A publishing executive, an award-winning children’s book author, and a recent Fellow in Stanford’s

Distinguished Careers Institute, Kate is a passionate supporter of intergenerational communication.

The Gazette-Democrat

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Shawnee Community College welcomes entries for young writers contest

Shawnee Community College has announced the return of the Celebrating Young Writers Contest.

The contest features two age divisions: 9th/10th grades and 11th/12th grades.

Categories include short fiction, poetry and non-fiction essay.

Short Fiction: This category includes short stories or excerpts from longer works. Entries should be no more

than 1,000 to 1,500 words, with one entry per student.

Poetry: Poetry of all kinds is encouraged. Each poem has no length limit, but please limit submissions to four poems per student. Poems will be judged individually.

Non-fiction Essay: This category includes more formal topics such as literary criticism, researched arguments or informational research essays. Entries may

include research, but it is not required. Essays should be no more than 1,000 to 2,000 words, with one entry per student.

Submission Requirements

All entries must be computer-produced and printed on standard 8 1/2 by 11 paper.

Students may submit in any or all categories. Three copies of each entry should be paper-clipped to one copy

of the entry form (which is available online at <https://shawneecc.edu/.../10/Writing-Contest-Entry-Form.pdf>).

Students’ names should appear only on the entry forms and not on their submitted work(s).

The deadline for entries to arrive at Shawnee Community College is Friday, Feb. 14.

Qualified judges will evaluate the entries. No entries

will be returned, so please keep copies of your work.

Cash awards and prizes will be presented to winners in each division and each category.

Ceremony Planned

A ceremony to celebrate the student writers is set for 5:30 p.m. on April 17 at the college’s main campus near Ullin.

Winners in each division and category will be announced and prizes will be awarded.

Winning entries (or excerpts) will be read aloud during the ceremony. Light refreshments will be provided.

Questions and entry packets are to be directed to Dr. Ryan Thornsberry, Shawnee Community College, 8364 Shawnee College Road, Ullin, Ill. 62992; 618-634-3329 or ryant@shawneecc.edu.

Television Listings

THURSDAY

	ABC	CBS	FOX	NBC	ESPN	TBS	USA	DISN	HBO	MAX	PARSHO
6 PM :30	Local Programs	Local Programs	Local Local	Local Programs	ESPN Original	Bang (HD) Bang (HD)	(4:00) College Basketball (HD)	Big City (:25) “Movie”	“Sherlock Holmes” (‘09) Robert Downey Jr.	★★★ “Forgetting” (‘08)	(5:30) Love Lies FBI
7 PM :30	Ext. Makeover (HD)	Hollywood Squares	Hell’s Kitchen (HD)	Law & Order (HD)	To Be Announced <i>Info unavailable.</i>	Bang (HD) Bang (HD)				“Everything Everywhere All at Once” (‘22)	“Hell or High Water” (‘16) (HD)
8 PM :30	Only Murders (HD)	Marriage Ghosts	Animal Dutch	Law & Order: SVU		Bang (HD) Bang (HD)	Law & Order: SVU	Wizards Wizards Waverly (HD)	C.B. Strike (HD)		(:45) “Panama” (‘22, Action) Cole Hauser. (HD)
9 PM :30	Only Murders (HD)	(:01) Matlock (HD)	Local Programs <i>Local info.</i>	Found “While Outed”		Jokers	Law & Order: SVU	Wizards	(:03) C.B. Strike (HD)	(:20) “Criminal” (‘16, Crime) Kevin Costner. (R)	
10 PM :30	Local	Local		Local	SportsCenter (HD)	“Tag” (‘18, Comedy) Ed Helms. (R) (HD)	Law & Order: SVU Sex crimes. (HD)	Miraculous Miraculous	(:07) C.B. Strike (HD)		“There Will Be Blood” (‘08) (HD)
11 PM :30	Jimmy Kimmel Live	(:35) Late Show (HD)	Local Programs	(:35) Tonight (HD)	SportsCenter (HD)			Bluey	“The Hangover” (‘09)	“Renegades” (‘18)	
	Nightline	Midnight		Late Night				Bluey			

JANUARY 23, 2025

FRIDAY

	ABC	CBS	FOX	NBC	ESPN	TBS	USA	DISN	HBO	MAX	PARSHO
6 PM :30	Local Programs	PGA Tour Golf (Live)	(5:00) Local Programs	Local Programs	TBA	Bang (HD) Bang (HD)	Law & Order: SVU	(:20) “Movie”	(5:56) C.B. Strike (HD)	★★★ “Moonlight” (‘16)	(5:50) “Jack Reacher” (‘12) Tom Cruise. (HD)
7 PM :30	Shark Tank (HD)	NCIS: Sydney (HD)	College Basketball Michigan vs Purdue (Live)	Figure Skating “U.S. Figure Skating Championships” (Live) (HD)	(:43) To Be Announced <i>Info unavailable.</i>	★★★ “Kong: Skull Island” (‘17) Tom Hiddleston. (HD)	WWE Friday Night SmackDown (HD)		“Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire” (‘24)	“The Curse of La Llorona” (‘19)	The Agency (HD)
8 PM :30	(:01) 20/20 Investigative news. (HD)	Fire Country (HD)						Wizards Waverly (HD)		“Backtrack” (‘16) Adrien Brody.	
9 PM :30		S.W.A.T. (HD)	Local Programs		(:05) To Be Announced <i>Info unavailable.</i>	“Gemini Man” (‘19, Action) Will Smith. (HD)	Law & Order: SVU	“Movie”	Real Time with (HD)		“Drive Angry” (‘11) Nicolas Cage.
10 PM :30	Local	Local	Local Programs	Local			Law & Order: SVU		Real Time with (HD)	“A Hologram for the King” (‘16)	“Face/Off” (‘97) John Travolta. (R)
11 PM :30	Jimmy Kimmel Live	(:35) Late Show (HD)	Local Programs	(:35) Tonight (HD)	SportsCenter (HD)	“Solo”	Law & Order: SVU	Big City	Real Time with (HD)	“Homefront”	
	Nightline	Midnight		Late Night				Big City			

JANUARY 24, 2025

SATURDAY

	ABC	CBS	FOX	NBC	ESPN	TBS	USA	DISN	HBO	MAX	PARSHO
6 PM :30	NBA Basketball (Live)	PGA Tour Golf (Live)	Wom Bball FOX (HD)	Local Programs	To Be Announced <i>Info unavailable.</i>	Bang (HD) Bang (HD)	(3:30) IMSA WeatherTech Sports Car Championship (HD)	Big City Big City	“Scott Pilgrim” (‘10)	(:03) The Knick (HD)	“The Big Short” (‘15)
7 PM :30	NBA (Live)	NCIS Military crimes.	College Basketball Connecticut vs Xavier	Saturday Night’s Main Event (Live)		“The Wedding Singer” (‘98) Adam Sandler.		“Movie”	To Be Announced	“The Kill Team” (‘19) Nat Wolff.	★★★½ “The Hateful Eight” (‘15, Western) Samuel L. Jackson. (R) (HD)
8 PM :30	NBA Basketball Los Angeles vs Golden State (Live) (HD)	NCIS: Origins (HD)									
9 PM :30		48 Hours (HD)	Local Programs	Saturday Night Live	(:15) To Be Announced <i>Info unavailable.</i>	★★★ “Game Night” (‘18) Jason Bateman. (HD)	9-1-1 (HD)	ZOMBIES	(:46) “Ghosts of Girlfriends Past” (‘09) (HD)	“Dream Scenario” Nicolas Cage.	
10 PM :30	Local Programs	Local Programs <i>Local info.</i>	Special (HD)	Local			9-1-1 (HD)	ZOMBIES		(:12) “Beowulf” (‘07, Fantasy) Ray Winstone.	“Outlaw Posse” (‘24) Mario Van Peebles. (R)
11 PM :30	Local Programs		Local Programs	Saturday Night Live (HD)	SportsCenter (HD)	“The Boss” (‘16) (HD)	9-1-1 (HD)	Big City	“She’s Out of My League” (‘10)		
								Big City			

JANUARY 25, 2025

SUNDAY

	ABC	CBS	FOX	NBC	ESPN	TBS	USA	DISN	HBO	MAX	PARSHO
6 PM :30	Home Videos (HD)	(5:30) NFL Football “Teams TBA” (HD)	Burgers Krapopolis	“How to Train Your Dragon” Jay Baruchel.	SportsCenter (HD)	Bang (HD) Bang (HD)	Law & Order: SVU	Big City Big City	“Keeping Up” (‘16)	“Everything” (‘22) (R)	The Agency (HD)
7 PM :30	Videos		Simpsons		Sports	Bang (HD)	Law & Order: SVU	“Toy Story 3” (‘10) Tom Hanks.	“Uncharted” (‘22, Action) Tom Holland. (HD)	“A Private War” (‘18) Rosamund Pike. (R) (HD)	The Agency (HD)
8 PM :30	(:31) “The Proposal” (‘09, Comedy) Sandra Bullock. (HD)		Universal	Dateline NBC Investigative news.	College Ftbl (HD)	Bang (HD)	Law & Order: SVU	Wizards			The Agency (HD)
9 PM :30		Watson “Pilot”	Krapopolis		30 for 30 (HD)	Wipeout	Law & Order: SVU	Wizards	★★★½ “Prisoners” (‘13, Thriller) Hugh Jackman. (R) (HD)	(:51) “Ondine” (‘10) Colin Farrell.	Dexter: Original Sin
10 PM :30	Local Programs <i>Local info.</i>	Local	Local Programs <i>Local info.</i>	Local Programs <i>Local info.</i>	Sports	“The Intern” (‘18, Drama) Moyo Lawal, Timini Egbuson.	Law & Order: SVU	StuGo		(:35) “The Revenant” (‘16) (HD)	The Agency (HD)
11 PM :30		(:35) Late Show (HD)			SC (HD)		Law & Order: SVU	Hamster	“House at”		Dexter: Original Sin
		(:37) Local	Local Programs		SportsCenter (HD)	Joe Schmo		Hamster			

JANUARY 26, 2025

MONDAY

	ABC	CBS	FOX	NBC	ESPN	TBS	USA	DISN	HBO	MAX	PARSHO
6 PM :30	Local Programs	Local Programs	Local Programs	Local Programs	(5:00) To Be Announced <i>Info unavailable.</i>	Bang (HD) Bang (HD)	Chicago P.D. (HD)	Big City Big City	“The Accountant”	(5:10) “In Time” (‘11)	“Face/Off”
7 PM :30	The Bachelor (HD)	Neighbor. Poppa’s	9-1-1: Lone Star	Saturday Night Live “50 Years of SNL Music” (HD)		Bang (HD)	★★½ “F9” (‘21, Action) Vin Diesel. (PG-13) (HD)	Primos	C.B. Strike (HD)	★★½ “Immortals” (‘11, Fantasy) Henry Cavill.	“Murder Company” (‘24) (HD)
8 PM :30		NCIS “Baker’s Man”	(:02) Rescue: HI-Surf			Bang (HD)		Primos	“Buffaloed” (‘20) Zoey Deutch.		Dexter: Original Sin
9 PM :30	(:01) Mormon Wives	NCIS: Origins (HD)	Local Programs <i>Local info.</i>			Dad (HD)		Wizards		“Paranoia” (‘13) Liam Hemsworth.	The Agency (HD)
10 PM :30	Local	Local		Local		Dad (HD)	★★½ “F9” (‘21, Action) Vin Diesel. (PG-13) (HD)	Jessie	(:40) “A Different Man” (‘24) Sebastian Stan.		Dexter Sin
11 PM :30	Jimmy Kimmel Live	(:35) Late Show (HD)	Local Programs	(:35) Tonight (HD)	SC (HD)	Dad (HD)		Kiff		“Moonlight” Trevante Rhodes.	(:50) The Agency (HD)
	Nightline	Midnight		Late Night	Sports	Dad (HD)		Bluey	“Good Time”		“Patriot”

JANUARY 27, 2025

TUESDAY

	ABC	CBS	FOX	NBC	ESPN	TBS	USA	DISN	HBO	MAX	PARSHO
6 PM :30	Local Programs	Local Programs	(5:00) Local Programs	Local Programs	CFP Rankings Show	Bang (HD) Bang (HD)	Law & Order: SVU	Big City Big City	★★★ “Annabelle” (‘17)	“17 Again” Zac Efron.	“Michael Clayton”
7 PM :30	Will Trent (HD)	FBI “Descent” (HD)	Kitchen Nightmares	Medical Night (HD)	To Be Announced <i>Info unavailable.</i>	Bang (HD) Bang (HD)	Law & Order: SVU	Big City Big City	“The Florida Project” (‘17) Willem Dafoe. (R)	“The Color Purple” (‘23, Musical) Fantasia Barrino. (HD)	Dexter: Original Sin
8 PM :30	High Potential (HD)	FBI: International	Doc (HD)	Deal or No Deal (HD)		The Joe Schmo Show	Law & Order: SVU	Miraculous			The Agency (HD)
9 PM :30	The Rookie (HD)	FBI: Most Wanted	Local Programs <i>Local info.</i>	The Irrational (HD)		The Joe Schmo Show	Law & Order: SVU	Miraculous	(:55) “Tangerine” (‘15, Comedy)		To Be Announced
10 PM :30	Local	Local		Local	SportsCenter (HD)	Family	Law & Order: SVU	ZOMBIES	(:21) “Sisters” (‘15) Tina Fey. (HD)		
11 PM :30	Jimmy Kimmel Live	(:35) Late Show (HD)	Local Programs	(:35) Tonight (HD)	SportsCenter (HD)	Family	Law & Order: SVU	Raven Home	“Teen Wolf” (‘85) Michael J. Fox.	“Miss. Masala” (‘92)	(:45) “Panama” (‘22) Cole Hauser.
	Nightline	Midnight		Late Night		Family		Bluey			

JANUARY 28, 2025

WEDNESDAY

	ABC	CBS	FOX	NBC	ESPN	TBS	USA	DISN	HBO	MAX	PARSHO
6 PM :30	Local Programs	Local Programs	(5:00) Local Programs	Local Programs	TBA	Bang (HD) Bang (HD)	Law & Order: SVU	Big City Big City	“Scott Pilgrim vs. the World” Michael Cera.	“The Monster” (‘16)	“Cop Land” (‘97) (HD)
7 PM :30	Gears	The Price Is Right at	Special Forces: World’s Grueling challenge.	Chicago Fire (HD)	(:43) To Be Announced <i>Info unavailable.</i>	All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite	★★★ “Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings” (‘21) Simu Liu.	Big City		“The Last Black Man in San” Jimmie Falls.	“The Untouchables” (‘87) Kevin Costner. (R)
8 PM :30	Celebrity Jeopardy!	Raid The Cage (HD)		Chicago Med (HD)				Big City	TBA		
9 PM :30	What Would You Do?	Hollywood Squares	Local Programs <i>Local info.</i>	Chicago P.D. (HD)	(:05) To Be Announced <i>Info unavailable.</i>	The Joe Schmo Show		Miraculous	To Be Announced	(:01) “The Revenant” (‘16, Drama) Leonardo DiCaprio. (R) (HD)	★★★ “The Pledge” (‘01) Aaron Eckhart. (R) (HD)
10 PM :30	Local	Local		Local		Family	Law & Order: SVU	ZOMBIES	TBA		
11 PM :30	Jimmy Kimmel Live	(:35) Late Show (HD)	Local Programs	(:35) Tonight (HD)		Family	Law & Order: SVU	Raven Home	(:15) “The Cable Guy” (‘96) Jim Carrey. (HD)	“Dead” Vicky Krieps.	
	Nightline	Midnight		Late Night	SportsCenter (HD)	Family		Bluey		“Backtrack”	

JANUARY 29, 2025

THURSDAY

7:00pm
PARSHO Hell or High Water ★★★½ (2016, Drama) Jeff Bridges, Chris Pine. Two estranged brothers decide to rob the bank that is threatening to foreclose on their land, but they are chased by a Texas Ranger and his partner. R (HD)
8:00pm
CBS Georgie & Mandy’s First Marriage “A Regular Samaritan” Georgie joins a new church aiming to sell tires to the congregation, but Mandy begins to worry that there’s more going on than just a sales pitch. TVPG (HD)

FRIDAY

7:00pm
TBS Kong: Skull Island ★★★ (2017, Adventure) Tom Hiddleston, Samuel L. Jackson. A scientific expedition comprised of explorers and soldiers unknowingly cross into a realm of monsters on an uncharted island in the Pacific. PG-13 TV14 (HD)
8:00pm
CBS Fire Country “What the Bride Said” A helicopter crash in the middle of Gabriela and Diego’s wedding sends the team rushing into action to stop fires and save the victims of the crash. TV14 (HD)

SATURDAY

7:00pm
MAX The Kill Team ★★★½ (2019, Drama) Nat Wolff, Alexander Skarsgård. A 21-year-old soldier witnesses members of his platoon kill innocent civilians in Afghanistan and attempts to warn his superiors about the war crimes. R (HD)
8:46pm
HBO Ghosts of Girlfriends Past ★★★½ (2009, Comedy) Matthew McConaughey, Jennifer Garner. A womanizing bachelor tries convincing his brother to not get married, but three ghosts visit the bachelor revealing his past, present and future relationships. PG-13 (HD)

SUNDAY

7:00pm
HBO Uncharted ★★★ (2022, Action) Tom Holland, Mark Wahlberg. A street-smart person gets recruited by an experienced treasure hunter to find a fortune lost over 500 years ago by the House of Moncada. PG-13 (HD)
7:30pm
FOX Universal Basic Guys “Bird Cage” Mark buys a Superbowl ring and uses it to lie his way into becoming the new coach for the local team, eventually winding up in the team’s jail. TV14 (HD)

MONDAY

7:00pm
NBC Saturday Night Live “Ladies and Gentlemen... 50 Years of SNL Music” The untold stories of the culture-defining, groundbreaking and newsworthy musical performances, sketches and cameos of the past 50 years. TV14 (HD)
9:01pm
ABC The Secret Lives of Mormon Wives “The First Book of Taylor” #MomTok takes hit after hit when their swinging scandal goes viral across the globe and Whitney returns from exile to reveal more secrets.

TUESDAY

7:00pm
HBO The Florida Project ★★★½ (2017, Drama) Willem Dafoe, Brooklynn Kimberly Prince. Mischievous young girl, living in a run-down hotel with her wayward but caring mother, encounters adventures with her friends over the course of a summer. R
9:00pm
ABC The Rookie “Darkness Falling” Wesley returns to the district attorney’s office, and his past connects him to the team’s case; Lucy feels uncertain about Seth; John and Bailey disagree. TV14 (HD)

WEDNESDAY

7:00pm
PARSHO The Untouchables ★★★½ (1987, Crime) Kevin Costner, Charles Martin Smith. A naively idealistic federal agent builds a team of mob fighters and battles crime boss Al Capone and police corruption in 1920s Chicago. R (HD)
9:01pm
MAX The Revenant ★★★½ (2016, Drama) Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Hardy. After a brutal bear attack, a frontiersman fights to get back home so that he can exact his revenge on his former friend who abandoned him in the wilderness. R (HD)

Opinion and Commentary

Internet, phone services crucial for rural areas

As the U.S. Supreme Court reviews an important case that could impact access to internet and phone service for millions of people living in rural areas in Illinois and across the country, Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul joined a bipartisan effort urging the court to keep in place a fund that supports those services.

Congress established the Universal Service Fund, USF, in 1996 to promote the infrastructure necessary to provide nationwide communications services (including internet and phone service) to rural communities, schools and low-income users, among other populations.

The resources allocated by the Federal Communications Commission, FCC, through the USF help make it financially feasible for telecommunications companies to provide affordable service in those areas, including for schools, libraries and health care providers.

In their amicus brief, Raoul and officials from other states argue that the USF has been critical to realizing the benefits envisioned by Congress and urge the Supreme Court not to find the federal law establishing it unconstitutional.

“Access to internet and phone services are crucial for the economic security and well-being of rural communities in Illinois,” Raoul said in a news release. “Disparities in access to internet connectivity exacerbate existing gaps in educational and health outcomes along lines of geography, economic resources and race. I urge the Supreme Court to reverse the lower court’s ruling and ensure that all Americans have access to vital telecommunications resources.”

Plaintiffs in this case argue that the federal statute establishing the USF delegated too much power to the FCC to administer the fund, including by allowing the FCC to task a separate not-for-profit corporation with establishing the fees that telecommunications companies must pay into it. Courts have unanimously rejected such claims, but the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit ruled that the statute is unconstitutional.

Raoul and the coalition note that administration of the fund has been cost effective for program participants and has helped bring rural areas the same telephone, internet, education and health benefits available in urban areas.

Illinois consumers in rural areas benefit from the High Cost program, which makes both telephone and internet service available in rural areas at reasonable rates. Illinois consumers are also assisted by Lifeline programs, which make low-cost telephone and internet services available to low-income residents and support for rural education and health care initiatives.

Joining Raoul in filing the brief are attorneys general from Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

Letter to the editor

Words of gratitude shared after early January’s ice storm

Greetings neighbors and friends of Union County...

I believe and hope that we all made it safely through all the difficulties and consequences of the great Ohio River Valley ice storm of early January 2025. Days without electricity are certainly enough to create gratitude for its return.

Thank you to the Southern Illinois Electric Co-op and Ameren and each and every worker who worked through the darkness and frigid temperatures to bring back the power. We know how dependent we are upon electricity and upon our neighbors.

Thank you Union County Highway Department and all those folks in the county departments who work keeping the community safe and protected, from road clearing and cindering to welfare checks and rescues.

Thank you to all those neighbors who volunteer cutting downed trees and clearing driveways and hauling wood and bringing meals.

Thank you to those who offered unexpected guests their homes and hot showers, when homes were cold and dark.

I know that I speak for others as well as myself when I say that we are enormously grateful for all of you and us .

So much gratitude.

Thank you Union County, for being such a beautiful place to call home.

When every branch and twig and blade was ice coated

The hills frosted matching snow and sky

When every creature sought harbor and birds rejoiced in seeds provided

When skies shone with the gathering moon

The fullness of stars

In darkness for miles and miles

When some of us became climate refugees as we learned of the Los Angeles fires

As we huddled by fireplaces and wood stoves

Listening to the cracking of limbs

Hearing the falling trees

Firewood and fire danger in the coming seasons

In our beloved Shawnee.

We are always in the times that change us

That can bring forth the best in us

Thank you friends and neighbors of Union County.

Signed, Julie Osborn Murphy, Cobden

Take Your Child to Library event scheduled at Stinson

Stinson Memorial Public Library in Anna is planning to host a Take Your Child to the Library Day event on Saturday morning, Feb. 1.

The library shared that it offer “a fun, old-fashioned Saturday morning cartoon event” from 10 a.m. to noon.

The morning will feature breakfast with cold cereal; watching classic cartoons; a chance to explore the library, check out books or sign up for a library card; and picking up free passes to the Science Center for the whole family.

Please read this...

By Geof Skinner



A pileated woodpecker, one of my favorite birds, was seen searching for some tasty morsels on a sunny afternoon last week at the Lincoln Memorial Picnic Grounds in Jonesboro.

Balmy heat index of 10.7 degrees Tuesday morning...

This just in...a sure sign that the end of the world was nigh this week...

Union County had a Winter Storm Warning last Tuesday and Wednesday. Union County, Florida, that is...

That’s right. Folks in some parts of Florida were faced with the possibility of accumulations of ice and snow this week. Who would have thunk it?

Meanwhile...

2. 3. 6. 18. 30. 46.

Winning lottery numbers? If only...

Those were some of the fascinating numbers associated with the wonderful weather we’ve been having lately in our little corner of the world.

3. 6.

Those were the temperatures I saw early Monday morning.

It was 3 degrees in the microclimate in our backyard early in the morning. And as I was heading to The Paragraph Factory, an electronic sign at one of the banks in Anna informed me that it was a balmy 6 degrees. Well, I had traveled south...

I suppose the good thing is that we weren’t in Turtle Lake, North Dakota, over the past week.

If what we see on the internet is true, and we all know that EVERYTHING we see on the internet is true, then Turtle Lake is a city in McLean County, North Dakota, which had a population of 537 people in the 2020 census, which made it the 98th (out of 403) most populated cities in North Dakota.

I have never been to Turtle Lake. I have never been to North Dakota, not even to fly over. I just happened to see Turtle Lake in a list of cities in North Dakota which were under an Extreme Cold Warning which began last Saturday morning and continued through noon on Tuesday. I guess Turtle Lake just kind of caught my eye because I like turtles. We actually saw a turtle on Christmas Eve in some water in the metropolitan Ware area.

The Extreme Cold Warning was issued because the folks in Turtle Lake, and in a bunch of other places in North Dakota, were about to experience dangerously cold wind chills as low as FIFTY DEGREES BELOW ZERO.

And to think, all we had in our little corner of the world this week was a plain old Cold Weather Advisory, ‘cause our wind

chill Monday was only 10 degrees below zero...

Someday, perhaps, I’ll make a trip to Turtle Lake, North Dakota. Perhaps in the spring...

Meanwhile...

2. 18. 30.

The temperature was 18 degrees at about 2 o’clock last Sunday afternoon. The wind was blowing at something like 20 miles per hour, with gusts up to 30 miles per hour. That meant our wind chill was 2. Which wasn’t all that bad compared to what the folks in Turtle Lake were experiencing.

The 2-18-30 combination seemed like just the right numbers to consider going for a walk on an icy Sunday afternoon in January. At least the sun was shining. The Other Half suggested I might have been an icy bubble out of plumb to even think about going for a walk. Oh, well...

So, I put on about 40 layers of clothing, my nice, warm knit cap, a face covering and a scarf and headed into the Great Outdoors. All in all, it wasn’t bad.

Oh...just in case you wondering...even with the ice and snow and bitter cold...yours truly has not missed a daily walkabout. I will admit that Tuesday was a little iffy...the forecast was calling for a “high” temperature of 15 degrees. Or maybe it was 14 degrees.

At least there was somewhat of a “positive” note about our adventures in the bitter cold. Our local weather observer shared that we had a “heat index” Tuesday morning. At the time, the wind chill was 3 degrees below zero...and the “heat index” was 10.7 degrees. At least it was a dry cold...

Meanwhile...

46.

Our last number for the week...46...as in miles per hour, which was a wind gust recorded in our little corner of the world last Friday afternoon. The temperature was 52 degrees at the time, so the wind chill was only 44 degrees.

Meanwhile...

For this week’s Critter Sighting Update, please read the caption with the picture which accompanies this week’s column. Truth be told, I haven’t seen a lot of critters out and about lately. I guess they’re trying to find a place to stay warm, too.

Time to renew Shawnee Forest Challenge

Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau, SITB, invites everyone to renew the challenge to visit locations throughout the Shawnee National Forest in 2025.

Five additional locations have been added to the challenge, along with a new prize option of a patch.

The Shawnee Challenge is a free mobile exclusive, self-supported, outdoor challenge.

The challenge allows everyone to experience different parts of the Shawnee National Forest in Southern Illinois in ways they prefer, including hiking, paddling, on horseback or mountain biking.

Participants earn points by checking into challenge locations to redeem a Shawnee Challenge sticker, and, new this year, claim a Shawnee National Forest patch.

Points can still be used to gain entries for a quarterly drawing of a Shawnee merchandise prize package.

Locations to explore can be viewed on an interactive map once a free pass has been obtained at southernmostillinois.com/explore.

Spanning 289,000 acres, the Shawnee National Forest is nestled in Southern Illinois between the Ohio and Mississippi rivers.

SITB shared in a news release that the forest “features strikingly beautiful oak-hickory forests, flourishing wetlands, lush canyons, razorback ridges and unique geological features.”

“This challenge is not a stroll in the park,” the tourism bureau noted.

“It is for those looking to get off the beaten path, and reconnect with nature. Many of the locations have limited or no services. Part of the

challenge is to ‘pack it in and pack it out’ – a ‘leave no trace’ adventure.”

The tourism bureau shared how the challenge works:

“When visiting a participating location, simply enable location services, check in, and earn points. Since the forest can have connectivity

issues, a 1 mile radius from each location is set for check in, so try in different areas.”

“Shawnee Forest Country is known for its scenic beauty and natural wonders, which create the perfect backdrop for adventure,” SITB continued.

“The Shawnee National Forest provides a natural arena

for a wide variety of outdoor exploration.

“To help you enjoy your experience, you need to be prepared, watch your step and be alert of any hazards. Wear proper clothes and shoes for a forest adventure. Start checking in and earning points to be redeemed for prizes.



New black belts recognized

Heather Coffman announces that Sam Allen and Jeffrey Stout III are the newest black belts at Coffman’s Martial Arts Academy in Anna. Coffman shared that Mr. Allen and Mr. Stout first completed a three-page written test, allowing them the opportunity to participate in a demanding physical test. The gentlemen successfully completed the Taekwondo Black Belt Test on Dec. 21, 2024. They were awarded their black belt on Dec. 31.

The testing board consisted of Grandmaster Robert Cutrell, founder of ChunJiDo International; Master Heather Coffman of ChunJiDo International; Sensei Nathen Steele of the Evansville ChunJiDo Academy; and ChunJiDo Ambassador Sensei Jerry Richey. The testing was also witnessed by numerous family and friends.

Coffman said that Mr. Allan and Mr. Stout spent an average of five years training for this opportunity. Now that they are black belts, they will become Taekwondo instructors as Coffman’s Martial Arts. This also marks the beginning of a new journey, as becoming a black belt is the start of true understanding of the arts, she said. Photo provided.