

THE GAZETTE-DEMOCRAT

The Talk And Cobden Review • Serving Union County Since 1849

Thursday, January 30, 2025

Anna, Illinois

\$1.00

Volume 176, Number 8

News Notes

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



Bluebirds...and their feathered friends...might be a little happier with the somewhat milder winter weather which has arrived in the area.

Anna-Jonesboro Community High School is congratulating Wildcat wrestler Zoe Sadler for reaching “an incredible milestone” of 150 career wins. “Your dedication, hard work and passion for the sport continue to inspire us all. Keep striving for greatness,” the school shared on social media.

A-JCHS also is saluting its wrestling coach, Chase Hargrave, for achieving 100 career dual wins on Dec. 11, 2024.

The Union County Sheriff’s office has welcomed Uriah Holmes as a new deputy.

The sheriff’s office also has welcomed Keely Glodo and Brandon Shaffer as new dispatchers.

The sheriff’s office is accepting applications through March 14 for the Illinois Sheriffs’ Association’s scholarship program. More on this to come.

The National Weather Service office in Paducah advised that brief elevated fire conditions were possible during afternoon hours early this week due to gusty winds and and low relative humidity.

The weather service was calling for the possibility of locally heavy rain and a thunderstorm or two in the region Thursday night (today) into Friday. Rainfall amounts in the Union County area could total from 1 to 3 inches.

Illinois Department of Transportation personnel have been working to clear and pick up downed trees, tree limbs and branches along old U.S. Route 51 between Anna and Cobden.

A report from Southern 7 Health Department shared that hospitalization rates are dropping for flu, RSV and COVID in Illinois since peaking in recent weeks. The health department still advises everyone to be vigilant to stay healthy throughout the rest of the winter season.

(continued on page 2)

Anna City Council meetings held Jan. 7, Jan. 21

Long-standing pillars focus of proposed project

A community beautification project has been proposed regarding pillars standing along one of the main streets in the City of Anna.

The proposal was shared at a regular meeting of the city council which was held Tuesday evening, Jan. 21.

The city council also had its first regular meeting of the month on Tuesday evening, Jan. 7. Both meetings were at Anna City Hall.

Jan. 21 Meeting

The proposed beautification project involves the pillars which have stood for many years along East Vienna Street in Anna.

The pillars are remnants of an era when railroad locomotives were powered by steam. The pillars were reported to have been part of a water supply system used for the trains.

Shawnee Hills Arts Council representative Zack Rowatt presented the beautification project proposal from the organization to city officials.

The proposal was met positively by city officials. “I appreciate it,” Mayor Steve Hartline said. “I think it’s a great idea.”

The pillars are located on Canadian National railroad property. City officials will be contacting the railroad regarding the proposal.

In other business discussed at the Jan. 21 meeting:

City crews continue to work to clean up trees, tree limbs and branches which were downed as the result of a recent winter ice storm.



Pillars in Anna

Pillars formerly used by the railroad have stood for many years along East Vienna Street in Anna and are now the focus of a proposed beautification project.

Pick up is scheduled to continue through Feb. 12. Debris which needs to be removed is to be placed at curbsides.

Fencing has been installed at the site of a major community improvement project which is underway along East Davie Street in Anna. The project is scheduled to be completed by mid-September.

Raymond Groves was hired as a full-time police officer.

Jan. 7 Meeting

Minutes from the council’s regular meeting on Jan. 7 showed city administrator Dori Bigler reported that the Hadley’s Haven project at

the Anna City Park is now complete.

A current Fraternal Order of Police contract expires in April. Negotiations are beginning.

Sherrie Crabb, CEO of the Arrowleaf human services organization, addressed the council about the purchase of the Bethany Village property in Anna. Plans for the buildings, renter criteria, services and a timeline for improvements were shared.

Scott Hickam with Beussink, Hickam & Kochel PC Certified Public Accountants presented the city’s Fiscal Year

2024 audit.

Highlights included timely completion, successful fund management and increased interest income under the city administrator’s oversight.

A fire department warming center which was opened during the recent winter storm served 14 people.

The Anna Fire and Rescue Department shared a message on social media which recognized some of the people who offered assistance for the warming center:

“The American Red Cross for providing cots, Davis Pastry Shop for donuts, Union

County Animal Control for providing items for any animals that came in, Deaconess Illinois Union County Hospital for giving us washcloths and towels, Union County ambulance for various needed supplies, Anna Police Department for bringing people to the station, Union County Sheriff’s Department for taking all the calls and coordinating with us, Anna City Works for keeping our parking lot cleaned and accessible, and Steve Frizzell and his wife for bringing in food. Without these amazing people we couldn’t have pulled this off!!!”

Union County CEO program accepting applications

The Union County CEO program recently concluded its recruiting efforts for the 2025-2026 school year at Union County high schools.

Students from Anna-Jonesboro Community High School, Cobden High School and Shawnee High School in Wolf Lake attended informational presentations.

The CEO program aims to provide students with unique opportunities and experiences to foster entrepreneurial and leadership skills.

Applications for the 2025 program opened at 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 26, and are scheduled to close at 11:59 p.m. Monday, Feb. 10.

As part of the application process, students must submit three letters of reference, which will be accepted until 11:59 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 17.

The application process is done entirely online and can be completed at unioncountyceo.

Parent Testimonial

Union County State’s Attorney Tyler Tripp shared his thoughts about the CEO program. Tripp is the parent of a CEO program student participant.

“I have personally observed the positive impact CEO has on young people as both a parent and as a community partner with the CEO program,” Tripp said.

“As a parent, I witnessed my child gain numerous skills and a base of knowledge that will be a great benefit going forward in his education, his profession of choice and adult life in general,” he continued.

“As a community partner who has had the chance to participate in CEO meetings and activities with students,

I have seen the skills and knowledge that is instilled in our young people through the exercises and projects that they complete as a part of the CEO program.

“CEO gives students a head start on so many things whether they choose to enter the workforce right out of high school as an entrepreneur developing their own business or moving on to higher education.

“My experience with CEO participants as well as the teachers/facilitators of the program was one in which a great deal of professionalism, courtesy and encouragement was apparent and a great benefit to the students.

“I would recommend participation in the CEO program to any parent or student that is looking to excel beyond high school whether that be in higher education or the adult workforce.”

Alumni Testimonial

2022 Union County CEO alumni and current UCCEO Board member Hunter Boyd shared his experience:

“The CEO program has been a catalyst for my success throughout my adult life.

“From communication skills to understanding business aspects, CEO helped shape my professional framework. I learned how to communicate effectively and work efficiently in professional

environments. I sharpened my networking skills and created relationships with prominent people I would not have otherwise met.

“These connections helped me advance in both business and my career. I met my current employer at a CEO breakfast years after my time as a student. You never know when you will cross paths with someone who will have a major impact on your life. CEO gives you the skills to be prepared for that moment.

“The class also opened my eyes to the communities around me and the importance of small businesses. Before CEO, I had no idea there was so much business opportunity

in our area. Seeing the ins and outs of many businesses around the county helped me realize the impact small businesses have on the area.

“CEO is much more than a business class. It teaches young adults how to perform in the professional world and gives them the tools they need to succeed in everyday life after high school.

“I credit the CEO program for much of my success and would recommend it to everyone.”

For more information about the Union County CEO program and how it prepares students for future success, visit the program’s website.



Union County CEO team members

The 2024-2025 Union County CEO program holiday season Jingle and Mingle event was held in December at the Davie School Inn in Anna. CEO team members joined in celebrating with investors, mentors, board members, alumni and friends. In the first row are, from left, CEO team members Alaina Charles, Avery Stegle, Brinley Corbit and Chesnee Marks. In the second row are Lucas Salazar, Jackson Rendleman, Cole Pender, Kyle Conway and Cash Hodges. Team members Evelyn Campbell and Kenzie Stover could not be present for the picture. Photo provided.



Initiative creates more than 5,000 preschool seats for low-income Illinois families

By Jade Aubrey and UIS Public Affairs Reporting

Over 5,000 preschool seats have opened for low-income families in Illinois through Smart Start Illinois in the past year.

Smart Start Illinois is an initiative of Gov. JB Pritzker that’s designed to expand publicly funded preschool programs and increase the number of preschool seats available to 80 percent of all working families in Illinois. Lawmakers first approved the program in 2023.

Since then, the state has added 11,000 seats.

“Every Illinois child deserves our full investment starting in their earliest years,” Pritzker said in a statement. “Smart Start Illinois will put our children on the path to growth and opportunity while making our communities stronger, healthier and more connected.”

The initiative includes the Early Childhood Block

Grant, which is distributed by the Illinois State Board of Education.

The block grant allocated \$32.2 million for the 2025 fiscal year to 91 grantees. That funding is serving 4,008 children in half-day preschool and 1,142 in full-day preschool, as well as providing support services for 512 children under the age of 3.

“When we educate our children, we set off a domino effect – education leads to opportunity which leads to prosperity which leads to stability,” Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton said in a statement. “That’s why Smart Start Illinois remains a priority in our administration.”

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.

Bald eagle-watching events planned at Illinois locations

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources, IDNR, invites the public to winter season eagle-watching events across the state.

The best time to see the bald eagle in Illinois is during the winter when the raptors seek open water areas for fishing.

Illinois has more than 3,000 bald eagles during winter, which is more than any other state outside of Alaska.

Some Illinois state parks and other locations host eagle-watching programs during this period.

“Illinois residents have a unique advantage when it comes to opportunities to catch a glimpse of eagles soaring over our scenic waterways and river bluffs,” IDNR director Natalie Phelps Finnie said in a news release. “I invite everyone to bundle up, grab their binoculars, and

head outdoors to one of the many eagle-watching events happening throughout the state this winter.”

Eagle watching events which are planned in the Southern Illinois area include:

Feb. 1-2: Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Eagle Watch, Marion.

Eagle Tours are planned at the refuge on Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 1-2.

Information shared on social media shared that tours are planned each day at 8 a.m., 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Vans will be provided for the tours, which last for approximately two hours. More information is available by calling 618-997-3344, extension 1.

March 1: Kaskaskia Eagle Fest, Jerry F. Costello Lock and Dam, Modoc, Randolph County.

State could adopt ‘kin-first’ approach for children who are in foster care

By Amalia Huot-Marchand and Medill Illinois News Bureau

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois lawmakers could soon make it easier for children in foster care to live with their relatives or other people close to them.

Child welfare experts have long touted the benefits of foster children staying with kin. Advocates say those arrangements offer children more stability, decrease the trauma they experience, improve their mental health and reduce the number of times the child is moved from home to home.

But both state and federal law often made those placements impractical. To get paid to support the children, relatives had to follow the same stringent rules that apply to other foster parents. They go through a rigid home inspection with bedroom size requirements, as well as restrictions on the number of people and gender of individuals who can sleep in the same bedroom. Prospective parents also go through lengthy classroom training.

In 2023, though, the federal government decided to allow states to use separate standards for relatives of children in foster care than for other foster parents, in an effort to pair more children with relatives.

Now, Illinois lawmakers are moving forward with a plan to do just that, along with making other changes that will encourage the placement of children with relatives. The Illinois Senate unanimously approved the measure, known as the Kinship in Demand, or KIND Act, in the fall. But

the House must sign off on the changes by the time it adjourns in early January, otherwise the bill must go through the entire legislative process again to reach the governor’s desk.

“I think it’s really important that we reckon with how unjust our systems have been in foster care,” said state Sen. Mike Simmons, D-Chicago, one of the bill’s 15 cosponsors in the upper chamber. “It’s an excellent step forward in terms of respecting the integrity of the families these kids come from, that includes their immediate family but also their extended kin that love them.”

Illinois’ Record

Close to 10,000 children, or more than half of the total number of kids in the care of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, live with family members.

But more than 60 percent of those families are not eligible for monthly foster care payments, annual clothing vouchers or foster care support groups according to the ACLU of Illinois.

“Support for kin, for relatives who have not received the same kind of support that foster parents do, for example – I’m talking about monetary support – I think is a very important component of dealing with the amount of time a child spends in the custody of DCFS. We want to make sure they get back to a home environment as fast as they can, and this is a way to encourage that,” said Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker, a Democrat, in a news conference on Dec. 11.

Casey Family Programs, the nation’s largest foundation focused on foster care, states that prioritizing relative caregivers decreases sibling separation, reduces the risk of abuse and gives a higher chance of achieving permanency.

Placing foster children with relatives could also help Illinois do a better job in finding permanent homes for children in its care. Illinois’ foster care system ranked in the bottom third of states in 2019 for children placed in permanent homes, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Between 2017 and 2021, the number of children who were placed in a permanent home decreased by 7.8 percent, according to the 2021 Child Welfare Outcomes Report to Congress.

KIND Act’s Changes

The KIND Act would allow DCFS to pursue additional federal funding in order to apply a kin-first approach. DCFS would use the federal money to put more effort into finding families of foster children, notifying them and improving support services, as well as doing background and identity checks.

“By promoting kinship care and addressing systemic issues with a long length of time to permanency and insufficient support of foster

care, the KIND Act aims to improve safety, stability and the well-being of children in DCFS care,” state Sen. Mattie Hunter, D-Chicago, a primary sponsor of the bill, said during a November Senate Judiciary Committee hearing.

Payments for relatives particularly impact Black children, who are overrepresented in the foster care system.

In Illinois, as of October, more than 18,000 children were in the DCFS system; more than 8,000 of them were Black. In terms of proportional representation, Black children have a 250 percent higher chance of being placed in DCFS care, according to the School of Social Work at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

The poverty rate for Black Illinoisans is 27.7 percent, compared to 8.5 percent for white Illinoisans. Preventing these families from accessing government subsidies for foster care adds on additional hardships and repeats the cycle of poverty they face, according to the University of Alabama Institute for Human Rights.

“We know that the vast majority of kids who are coming in are overrepresented, and the KIND Act is removing financial barriers for relatives being able to care for kids,” said Nora Collins-Mandeville, director of systems reform policy at the ACLU of Illinois, in an interview.

“Relatives who are coming forward have considerably less resources than a foster parent would. And so the fact that we’re not even, in our current system, paying those relatives the same amount that we pay a stranger to care for a child, it’s pretty frustrating,” she said.

Under the KIND Act, there would also be a different criminal background criteria for relatives and foster parents. The federal government allows DCFS to waive “non-safety-related licensing” for relative caregivers on a case-by-case basis. Relatives would be subject to a personal analysis assessing their criminal record and its potential impact on the child. The bill would allow DCFS to consider, for example, the overrepresentation of minorities in the prison system, especially for minor drug felonies.

The foster care legislation would also require courts to oversee DCFS’ implementation of the kin-first approach. Courts would have a larger role in family-finding efforts like monitoring whether DCFS complies with notifying relatives that a child has been removed from its parents’ custody within 30 days. Plus, courts would be able to expedite emergency placements of children with relatives who are waiting for a custody hearing.

Contentious History

The bill’s sponsors called the measure historic because of the collaboration between DCFS and the ACLU, which have long fought each other over the state’s care of foster children. In 1988, the ACLU sued DCFS in B.H. v. Johnson. Three years later, both parties entered a consent decree to reform DCFS to provide safer homes, reduce the caseload per employee,

protect DCFS funding, allow more supervision and accountability and improve caseworker training.

These efforts ran into severe obstacles through the years.

A two-year budget stalemate between Democrats in the General Assembly and Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner that ended in 2017 had a major impact on DCFS funding. It forced the agency to close many group homes throughout Illinois. This led to children under DCFS care being housed in places not designed to accommodate children in the long-term, including psychiatric hospitals, juvenile detention centers and shelters and even DCFS offices.

Since then, DCFS struggled to recover from the loss of funds in 2017 and hasn’t implemented changes spelled out in the consent decree.

In light of those shortcomings, in 2018, the court appointed a special master to DCFS in order to ensure significant action was taken and to mitigate tensions between the ACLU and DCFS,

Pritzker, who defeated Rauner in the 2018 election, campaigned on the promise to reform the system. Since 2019, the DCFS budget nearly doubled from \$1.22 billion to \$2.03 billion, mostly to hire more staff and caseworkers. Despite these improvements, a Cook County judge continuously held DCFS director Marc Smith in contempt of court in 2022 for failing to find adequate placements for foster care children, some of whom were still residing in psychiatric hospitals. An appellate court later vacated the contempt citations, and Smith stepped down at the end of 2023. He was the 13th DCFS director in 10 years.

“For a good period of time, there wasn’t stability in the agency’s leadership at all. We had turnover every year. It wasn’t up until the Pritzker administration that we had a director there for multiple years. And so that can be really challenging. You have different priorities for every leader who comes in,” Collins-Mandeville said.

Despite the turnover at the top and the agency’s ongoing court battles, DCFS reduced the number of youths in care from 50,000 in 1995 to 16,000 in 2023. The number, however, has risen in the past year to 18,000.

“Today marks a day that we had long hoped to see: the ACLU and DCFS are in alignment on a piece of landmark legislation that offers an essential opportunity to reform Illinois’ foster care system,” Collins-Mandeville said in her testimony to the Senate committee.

Amalia Huot-Marchand is a graduate student in journalism with Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications, and a Fellow in its Medill Illinois News Bureau working in partnership with Capitol News Illinois.

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.

Proposals for Lawn Mowing Services

Jonesboro Elementary Consolidated Community School District #43 is accepting a Request for Proposals (RFP) for lawn mowing services. Proposed details and bid packet are available at the District's business office or may be downloaded at www.jonesboro43.com , Look under documents labeled mowing and trimming bids. Sealed bids will be received until 12:00P.M. noon, February 28, 2025. The Board of Education reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, in part or in total, for any objective or subjective reason whatsoever and to waive informalities in bidding. Contact the Jonesboro Superintendent office with any questions. 618-833-6651.

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"The Preaching Pen"

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Lessons from Lot's Wife: Lesson 2

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 2: We must not hesitate to follow God. Hesitation and delay are crippling to spiritual development. I'm sure we have heard the expression of, "dragging our feet." Christians cannot drag their feet in service to God. Lot's wife not only hesitated but stopped following the pathway the angels had designated. This change of direction amounts to disobedience with God. Scriptures point out a key word in Genesis 19:16, LIN JERED. How often have we postponed God's work for something we feel is more important?

To be faithful servants, we cannot stay in the same place in our spiritual lives. Acts 8:3-4 show how Saul of Tarsus was given a way of escape, which led to a complete transformation of his life. We, too, are given a "way of escape" 1 Corinthians 10:13. God does not remove us from sin but provides us with the opportunity to depart from sin. Departure must be not only physical but also mental. In 1 Peter 2:21, Peter urged the saints to follow Christ's "steps" as an example. This indicates that Christians must not only follow His direction but imitate His character, Ephesians 5:1.

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Ryan Thomsberry.
Anna Church of Christ

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR CORRUGATED METAL PIPES

Request for Proposal (RFP) packets are available in the Union County Engineer's office and on our website at www.unioncountylil.gov. Questions regarding specifications may be directed to the County Engineer, Amy Ferris via email at aferris@unioncountylil.gov.

Sealed bids should be submitted to the Union County Engineer by 10 AM on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at the Union County Engineer's Office.

The County reserves the right to reject any and all bids received and to waive or not waive any informalities or irregularities in bids or bid procedures, and to accept or further negotiate costs, terms, or conditions of any bid determined by the County to be in the best interest of the County.

Union County Engineer
306 West Mississippi Street
Jonesboro, Illinois 62952

Check out The Gazette-Democrat online at

annanews.com

Obituaries

Emilee Marguerite Murray

Emilee Marguerite Murray was born on Oct. 28, 1942, in Carbondale, Jackson County, Illinois, the daughter of Edith Gram Cain and James Alexander Murray.

Edith Cain was born in Raleigh, Saline County, Illinois, and James Murray in Elgin, Morayshire, Scotland.

Emilee was named after her mother’s sister, Marguerite Cain Davis.

Emilee was seven when her father died in Jacksonville, Florida, in 1949. Emilee lived with Marguerite and Henry Davis in Cahokia, Illinois, while her mother remained in Florida to settle accounts after James Murray died and then they both moved to Anna, Illinois.

Emilee attended Anna elementary schools while her mother was director of nurses at Union County Hospital.

They then moved to Mexico, Missouri, where her mother was director of nurses until 1956 and Emilee attended middle schools there.

They moved to Carbondale, Illinois, when her mother married a widower, Chalmer Andrew Gross, who became Emilee’s stepfather. Emilee graduated from Carbondale Community High School in 1960.

Emilee married James Martin Fish on November 24, 1962, in Sullivan, Moultrie County, Illinois. They had met at Southern Illinois University. They had one child, Deborah Suzanne Fish, who was born in 1965 in Tuscola, Illinois.

When they were divorced Emilee and Suzanne moved to Washington, D.C., and stayed with her mother and stepfather where he was a professor at American University.

Emilee attended Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and received a Bachelor of Science degree in 1970 in the field of Radiology/CT Technology. She has been on staff at hospitals in Miami, Florida, Boston, Massachusetts, and St. Louis, Missouri. She was a clinical instructor and supervisor at the Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri. She has worked in Ultrasound, Nuclear Medicine, Computed Tomography and Magnetic Resonance Imaging and PET scanning. She was also a St. Louis, Missouri, assistant medical examiner.

Emilee was a member of the Presbyterian church and in 2013 joined the Episcopal church in St. Louis.

Emilee passed away on January 15, 2025, in St. Louis, Missouri. She was cremated and her ashes given to her daughter.

She leaves her daughter, Deborah Suzanne Fish Bentley, son-in-law Robert Bentley and three grandchildren: Evelyn, Abigail, and James Bentley of Lake Forest, Illinois. She also leaves first cousins who were also friends: Phil Boyd of Dickinson, Texas, Linda Coffman Lawler of Rancho Palos Verdes Estates, California, Karen Cain of Rockville, Maryland, Jeanne Cain Luke of Mt. Airy, Maryland, Nancy Davis Melton of Sun Lakes, Arizona, Cynthia Boyd Moritz of Walcott, Iowa, and Therese Cain Ferguson of Wentzville, Missouri. Two cousins, Betty Boyd Rendleman and Judith “Judy” Boyd Holtz, had passed away. These ten cousins have always remained close even though living from coast to coast. She also leaves her first cousin, Robert “Bob” Murray of Wheatley, Ontario, Canada. The Murray family had immigrated from Scotland to Canada and Emilee’s father came to the United States and lived in Massachusetts and Florida. The family is grateful to Lori Gallo of St. Louis, Emilee’s friend, who helped with the last few years of Emilee’s life while she was ill.

Emilee was a very intelligent person who loved to travel, visit art galleries, and symphony concerts. She had many dogs in her life which gave her pleasure. Both the Cain and Murray families have always had a connection with dogs and cats. As one cousin said the week of Emilee’s passing: “we were ten and now we are seven.”

Donna Sue Thomas

Donna Sue Thomas, 85, died Sunday, Jan. 20, 2025, at the Mercy Health Ray and Kay Eckstein Hospice Care Center in Paducah, Ky.

She was a beloved mother, grandmother, and friend who touched the lives of many with her kindness and unwavering faith.

She was born in Cairo on Jan. 17, 1940, the daughter of Willis and Alice Sumner Rothchild and was the oldest of nine children.

She attended St. Raphael Grade School and Cairo High School. She was a telephone operator until she became a full-time stay at home mother.

Along with her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Carl “Johnny” Thomas, and her cherished daughter, Kara Alison Hubbard, as well as her siblings Marcina, Darrell, Barron and Tom.

She is survived by her five devoted children: John Kevin Thomas (Angie), Kent Thomas (Stacey), Kyle Thomas (Brenda Dickerson), Karla Thomas Shaffer (Chuck) and Keith Thomas (Kiera); son-in-law David Hubbard; and their families, who will continue to honor her legacy of love and compassion. She also leaves behind her beloved siblings, Buddy, Deanna, Russell and Robert and many treasured nieces and nephews.

A dedicated member of her church, she found great joy in her faith and the fellowship of her church community. She was a regular attendee of church services and her faith was a cornerstone of her life, providing



her with strength and comfort.

She was also deeply involved in the lives of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She took immense pride in their accomplishments and never attended a family gathering, sporting event or activity without her camera...and red lipstick. Her family was her greatest joy, and she leaves behind a legacy of love, support and wonderful memories.

A memorial service to celebrate her life was held Friday, Jan. 24, at Mighty Rivers Church in Cairo at 11:30 a.m.

Interment followed the memorial service at Mound City National Cemetery.

Memorials can be made to the Mighty Rivers Upward Basketball program.

She will be dearly missed by all who knew her, but her spirit will live on in the hearts of her family and friends. May she rest in peace.

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

Crain Funeral Home in Cairo was in charge of arrangements.

Ralph E. Glasford

Ralph E. Glasford, 82, of Anna, died at 4:45 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2025, at Deaconess Illinois Union County Hospital in Anna.

Mr. Glasford was born on June 11, 1942, in Pomona Township (Jackson County) Illinois. He was the fifth of six children born to Ralph and Hallie Stutes Glasford.

On Nov. 27, 1963, he was united in marriage to Darlene L. Richardson in Vienna. She survives.

He is also survived by two daughters, Robin Sullivan of Murphysboro and Gena (David) Grey of Anna; a heart-daughter, Nicole (Stuart) Butwell of Vienna; grandchildren William Sullivan of Midland, Texas, Ashley Bell of Vienna, Bradley (Skye) Reinier of Carbondale, Isabella Grey and Poppi Grey, both of Anna; great-grandchildren Hunter, John, Alex, Mia, Joseph, Noah, Bryce, Trystin, Edan, Ethan, Zoey and Logan; a brother, Phillip (Elizabeth) Glasford of Anna; and several nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, Mr. Glasford was preceded in death by a daughter, Sonya Reinier; a grandson, Joshua Lowell Reinier; and four sisters, Mayme Petty, Jean Petty, Dorothy Goodpasture and Barbara Porterfield.

He attended Anna-Jonesboro Community High School. He also attended both Shawnee Community College as well as John A. Logan Community College.

Mr. Glasford was a U.S. Army veteran. He enlisted in 1959 and was honorably discharged in 1962. During his military service, he was stationed in Korea.

He was a member and past chaplain of Beggs-Gurley VFW Post No. 5222 in Vienna.

Mr. Glasford was employed by Caterpillar Inc as an assembler in the company’s Joliet manufacturing facility. Following his return to Southern Illinois, he was employed by Flor-



sheim Shoe Company in Anna as a machinist. He also worked as an operator and truck driver at the Anna Stone Quarry.

He was last employed by the Illinois Department of Corrections. He first was employed at the Menard Correctional Center in Chester for 17 years, prior to transferring to the Big Muddy Correctional Center at Ina at the time of that facility’s opening. He worked at Big Muddy for 17 years, retiring with the rank of lieutenant.

He enjoyed camping and cherished time spent with his family. He was a member of Anna Heights Baptist Church in Anna.

Funeral services were at 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 25, at Bailey Funeral Home in Vienna.

Burial was in the Alto Pass Cemetery. Military rites were accorded by Beggs-Gurley VFW Post No. 5222 and the Illinois National Guard burial honors detail.

Memorials can be made to the Alzheimer’s Association, 2200 Cabot Dr., Suite 460, Lisle, Ill. 60532 or to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, Tenn. 38105-1905.

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

Bailey Funeral Home in Vienna was in charge of arrangements.



Carol A. Boucher

Carol A. Boucher, 63, of Anna, and formerly of Hinckley, died Saturday, Jan. 18, 2025, at Deaconess Illinois Union County Hospital in Anna.

She was born on July 22, 1961, in Hinsdale, the daughter of John and Joann Sowder Vedok.

She was a welder for American Commercial Line in Alexander County/

Survivors include her son, Michael (Rachel) Boucher of Salem, Ind.; grandson Lucas Michael Boucher; sister Patricia Jo Vedok of Anna; nephews John Whitney of Anna and Dalton Pearl of Jonesboro; other relatives and friends.

Along with her parents, she was preceded in death by her sister, Gail Lyne Pearl.

Cremation rites will be ac-



corded. No services will be held.

The cremation of Carol A. Boucher will be personally handled by the staff of Crain Funeral Home.

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

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

Doris L. Hewitt

Doris L. Hewitt, 89, of Anna, died Thursday, Jan. 23, 2025, at Deaconess Heartland Medical Center in Marion.

She was born on Nov. 26, 1935, in Anna, the daughter of Raymond Leroy and Birdie Louise Rendleman Barker.

She married Douglas C. Hewitt on Sept. 9, 1979, and together they spent over 16 years together until his passing in September of 1995.

She was a homemaker and a member of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Survivors include several nieces and nephews.

Along with her parents and husband, she was preceded in death by her son, Richard Edward Barker; a sister, Anita Aldridge; and a brother, Duane Barker.

Funeral services were at 1 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 29, with the Rev. Jim Easton officiating, at Crain Funeral Home



in Anna-Jonesboro.

Entombment followed the funeral service at Pleasant Grove Memorial Park Mausoleum.

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

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

Bonita June Laster

Bonita June Laster, 64, of Jonesboro, died Monday, Jan. 20, 2025, at Saint Francis Medical Center in Cape Girardeau with her family by her side.

She was born on June 6, 1960, in Memphis, Tenn., the daughter of George Monroe “Bob” and Edda Janette Johnson Laster.

She worked as a rural postal carrier for the United States Postal Service. She was a member of First Baptist Church in Jonesboro. She was known by her family, whom she took care of and loved so dearly, as Beeda. She loved woodworking, Jeepin’, riding motorcycles and keeping her yard pristine.

Survivors include her daughters, Mindy (Michael) Goodman and Carla (David) Whitaker; eight grandchildren, Jason (Madison) Goodman, Tiffany (Jordan) Curtis, Caleb (Skyler Ellison) Clover, Kyle (Olivia) Clover, Brock (Karleigh Jones) Clover, Abby (Evan Treat) Clover, Cole Whitaker and Ella Whitaker; two great-granddaughters, Carter Curtis and Dilynn Curtis; brothers Sammy (Suzanne) Laster, Kenny Laster, Donny (Sharon) Laster and Ricky (Debbie) Laster; sister Janice (Garry) Derossett; best friends of 52 years Becky Foster, Cindy Ellett and Loretta Dodson; and close cousins



Conley Laster and Sherre Simmons.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Bob and Janette Laster; and her brother, Tommy Laster.

Funeral services were at 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 23, at the First Baptist Church in Jonesboro, with the Rev. Perry Williams officiating.

Interment followed the funeral service at Oakdale Cemetery in Commerce, Mo., at 2 p.m.

Memorials can be made to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

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

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



James A. ‘Jim’ Wright

James A. “Jim” Wright, 86, of Ware, died Monday, Jan. 20, 2025, at Saint Francis Medical Center in Cape Girardeau.

He was born on July 13, 1938, in Union County, the son of Wayne Karl “Kate” and Ivory Wilson Wright.

He retired from the Choate Mental Health and Developmental Center in Anna. He worked for five years at the Murray Center in Centralia and then transferred to the Choate Mental Health and Developmental Center for 25 years.

His passion was watching his grandsons participate in sports, playing bingo and going to the casino. He loved to watch any sport on television and the St. Louis Cardinals were his favorite team.

In his younger years, he loved to fish and hunt. He also loved his fried chicken.

Mr. Wright was an active member of the Democrat Party for his entire life, serving as a Precinct Committeeman for over 50 years. He worked diligently for the election of hundreds of office holders at the local, state and federal levels.

He was also a strong AFSCME Union member both while an employee at Choate and he continued his activism after he retired. He had served as President of AFSCME Retirees Local Subchapter 90 for 30 years. He made hundreds of trips to Springfield to fight against layoffs, also fighting for our pensions, and our healthcare. He was recently presented with a plaque from AFSCME thanking him for his years of dedication to the cause and for inspiring others to keep fighting the good fight.

Survivors include his daughter and son-in-law, Vonda and Steve Benefield and grandsons, Skyler Benefield and



Brayden Benefield, all of Anna; brother Richard Wright of Dexter, Mo.; sisters Beverly Ellis of Grand Tower, Sharon Smith of Poplar Bluff, Mo., Vicki Wilson of Ware, Debbie Wright of Cobden and Karen Wright of Ware; as well as numerous nieces, nephews, extended family and friends.

Along with his parents, he was preceded in death by his brother, Bill Wright; sisters Barbara Foster, Lois Dickerson, Ruth Allen, Sondra Clover and Audrey Wright.

Funeral services were at 11 Saturday, Jan. 25, with the Rev. Bobby Henson officiating and a flag presentation by the Illinois National Guard at Crain Funeral Home in Anna-Jonesboro.

Interment will take place at a later time at Anna City Cemetery.

Memorials be made to Shawnee CUSD No. 84 for the Christmas Giving Tree Program.

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

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



Donald Edward Thady

Donald Edward Thady, 95, of Jonesboro, died Friday, Jan. 24, at the Illinois Veterans Home in Anna.

Graveside funeral services will be at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 4, at the Jonesboro Cemetery, with Mark Mattheis officiating. Interment will immediately follow.

Graveside military honors will be conducted by Carroll P. Rendleman & Hileman Funeral Homes.



View Obituaries Online at
annanews.com

Obituaries

Rebecca Mae Brust Brown

Rebecca M. Brown, 75, of Anna, died Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2025, at her home.

She was born on May 25, 1949, in Anna, the daughter of Bernard F. Brust Jr. and Dorothy M. Bryant Brust.

She is survived by her children, Todd Andrew Brown (Heather) and Tiffany Brown; grandchildren Logan Brown Fombelle (Jeff), Jaden Ebberts (Moises), Andrew Ebberts and Addison Ebberts; great-grandson Adonis Lara; other relatives and friends. She was preceded in death by her parents and a brother, Anthony Brust.

She was a devout Catholic and member of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Cobden. She loved spending time with her family, enjoying trips to the beach. She was a proud grandmother and great-grandmother. Besides taking care of her own family, she was a caregiver to many children, operating a daycare for 13 years. She loved all children as if they were her own. She retired as a correctional officer with



Pulaski County.

Funeral Mass for Rebecca Brown was at 11 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 25, at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Cobden, with Father Uriel Salamanca as celebrant. Interment followed in St. Joseph Cemetery in Cobden.

Memorials can be made to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

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

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

News from

First Baptist Church, Jonesboro

On Sunday, Jan. 26, Pastor Perry Williams spoke in the morning service.

His message addressed what he considers to be the most important message in the Bible, which is John 3:16, which tells about God’s love for the world and that He “loves us so much because He made us.” Scripture was from the whole chapter of John 3 in the New Testament.

The service was sent by transmitter station 87.9 for those who wanted to listen on the radio. The service was also live streamed on Facebook. The church’s Facebook page, Jonesboro FBC, has 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 and also joined the praise team to sing a special, “Beautiful One.”

A Hospitality Sunday pot-luck meal was shared on Jan. 26.

Men’s and women’s Bible studies were scheduled at 6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 27.

Birthdays: Shirley Kohler, Jan. 27; Joe McRaven, Feb. 6.

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.

Republican picked to chair state House veterans committee

By Jade Aubrey and UIS Public Affairs Reporting

For the first time in more than a decade, a Republican will chair an Illinois House committee.

Rep. Dan Swanson, R-Alpha, received the call from Democratic House Speaker Emanuel “Chris” Welch, D-Hillside, earlier in January that he was tapped to head the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee. Swanson said the appointment was a “total surprise.”

“(The Speaker) called me and said I’d like to offer you the chairmanship of the veterans committee,” he said. “And I paused. I was so caught off guard, I actually sank down to my feet, just overwhelmed with emotions.”

Welch cited Swanson’s 27-year military background.

“As a veteran, Representative Swanson has served our country with honor and distinction, and I know he will bring the same solemn sense of duty to leading a bipartisan Veterans Affairs Committee,” Welch said in a statement.

Swanson is a retired lieutenant colonel with the United States Army and Illinois Army National Guard. He was in active duty for 20 years with the Illinois Army National Guard from 1980 to 2001, served in Iraq from 2007 to 2008 and earned the Bronze Star and Combat Action Badge. He was recalled back to active duty

from 2010 to 2013 with the Army Sustainment Command Rock Island Arsenal.

He said he quickly accepted Welch’s offer to chair the committee.

“And I said ‘sir, I’d be honored. I’d be honored to do that. I’d be honored to serve as chairman of the Veterans Committee, serving Illinois veterans and veterans throughout the district,’” he said.

Democrats have held a majority in the Illinois House since the mid-1990s, making it rare for a member of the minority Republican Party to chair a committee. Former Rep. Don Moffitt of Galesburg chaired the House Fire Protection Committee in 2010.

Rep. Stephanie Kifowit, D-Oswego, previously chaired the Veterans’ Affairs Committee and the Personnel & Pensions Committee. This year, she’ll serve as vice chair on Veterans’ Affairs and will chair the appropriations committee on personnel and pensions.

Although she said she doesn’t know why Welch made the change, she said Swanson, “is certainly an ally of our veterans.”

“He’s a staunch advocate for our veterans, as am I, and I look forward to working with him on the committee,” Kifowit, a Marine Corps veteran, said in an interview. “And he is somebody who has a distinguished military career and has always been fighting for veterans to be put in charge of

Union County Fixin’s

By Suzan Harvel
Butterfinger Cake
By Vickie Woolverton,
Windsor, Colo.

6 full sized Butterfinger candy bars, crumbled

1 box yellow cake mix and ingredients it calls for

1 8 oz. block of cream cheese

1 stick of butter, softened

1 1/2 cups powdered sugar

1 large container whipped topping

Make cake according to directions.

Mix whipped topping, cream cheese, butter and powdered sugar together.

Crumble half of the cooled cake into a trifle bowl or large bowl

Spread half the cream mix on top of cake and smooth.

Sprinkle half the candy bar crumbles over the cream mix.

Repeat layers, ending with candy bar crumbles.

Cover and refrigerate.

News from

Anna First Baptist Church

Anna First Baptist Church met for worship on Sunday, Jan. 26.

Pastor Lupe greeted everyone and led the opening prayer.

Menda Cash did the call to worship, which was on prayer and fellowship with God.

The worship team led in the singing of “All to Jesus, I Surrender,” “Lord I Lift Your Name on High” and “Holy Forever.”

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

The message was about the seven letters found in chapters 2 and 3 in the Book of Revelation.

The letters were written by the Apostle John to the churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.

The message shared that each letter contains Christ’s commendations, correction and a call to overcome, reflecting the spiritual state of each church.

The letters serve as both

historical messages to first-century congregations and prophetic warnings applicable to churches today.

The letters emphasize faithfulness, repentance and perseverance in the face of trials and spiritual complacency.

Sunday School for all ages 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.

County Line News

(Mill Creek and Upper Elco)

Weather Extremes...

I don’t understand folks who enjoy winter. Of course, I don’t understand folks who enjoy summer either. Extremes are not my thing.

Needless to say, I am tired of winter. Only 50 days until spring...believe me, I’m counting them down.

I will also admit to a bit of a snicker or two at my relatives’ postings, from Texas to North Carolina, who are sharing in our winter misery. Why should we suffer alone?

Planet Watching

This past week, after putting on multiple layers, I stepped out to see the alignment of the planets.

I am pretty sure I identified them. I have a book somewhere, but didn’t consult it, since it was a short trip outside...seeing as how it was so cold my eyeballs hurt.

Anyway, the next day my coworkers were talking about downloading an app on their phone for that. Seri-

ously...I think there’s an app for everything now.

PAST Meetings

PAST of Union County planned to have a monthly meeting Monday evening, Jan. 28, at the Heritage House in Jonesboro.

There’s a lot of planning for this new year to do. If you are interested in being a part of it, please join us at the next meeting, which is scheduled at 6 p.m. Feb. 25. New members are always welcomed.

Daniel Chapman Chapter, NSDAR

Daniel Chapman Chapter, NSDAR, plans to meet at 11 a.m. Feb. 10 in the community room at Stinson Memorial Public Library in Anna.

New member Debbie McKibben will have her welcoming ceremony at that time. Please bring a sack lunch.

The chapter will then have its annual bingo party at the Illinois Veterans Home in Anna at 2 p.m.

The book club book for February was “The Downstairs Girl” by Stacey Lee. March’s book will be “Never Give Up” by Tom Brokaw.

Mill Creek Baptist Church

Brother Bobby Richardson led the congregation of Mill Creek Baptist Church in worship from the Book of Luke 7: 36-50.

These passages speak of a woman who had sin in her

A-J teams compete at Brain Games

Teams representing Anna-Jonesboro Community High School competed at the recent ROE Brain Games held at John A. Logan College in Carterville.

A-J’s Team Two, consisting of Gabe Morey, Nati Corbit, Drue Teske and Cash Hodges, finished in sixth place overall. The finish earned the team a spot at the next level of competition at Rend Lake.

The Union County school noted on social media that A-J’s Team One, featuring Josh Binversie, Grayson Garner, Jay Althoff and Ruby Yates “gave it their all and made us proud.”

By Suzan Harvel

life, but humbled herself before Jesus, who forgave her.

The Pharisee whose house they were in didn’t show Jesus the respect this sinful woman did.

There are many of us who choose to judge others, when we are as guilty of sin too. God doesn’t see the sin, but the sinner, whom He loves, regardless of the sin.

Like the Pharisee and the woman, there are two kinds of “religious” people: those that want to be seen as associated with God, and those who really seek a relationship with God. Think about that.

Valentine’s Dinner

Mill Creek Baptist Church men will be honoring all the ladies with a Valentine’s dinner on Feb. 12 at 6 p.m. Dinner will be cooked entirely by the gentlemen. It is much appreciated too. All are welcome.

We will be moving the monthly business meeting from Feb. 12 to Feb. 19.

Prayer List

Mill Creek Baptist Church added the following to their prayer list.

The family of Bonita Laster Henderson in her passing; Mary Powles’ friend, Chrissy, whose husband passed away; Ron Ury for health; Gary Rider, who will need more surgery soon.

Bobby Toler Jr., who has serious health concerns; Nikki Bates, who is having issues with her MS medicine costs; Justin Bonner for health; Justin Richardson for personal reasons.

Jack Knight, who had a heart attack; Becky Poole, who’s battling a bad infection; Scott LaRue, who will be having back surgery.

Brad Vaughn, who goes for tests soon; Johnnie Thomas, for health concerns; Marcie Bundren, who also has serious health concerns; Jonathan Crawley, who needs prayer for continued recovery from a hit and run.

Fred Wood, who had successful heart surgery, but has a long recovery ahead; Sue Starr, who is in the hospital in Carbondale; prayers for our new government; and especially those who are in need of salvation or a church home, may God lead them where He wants them.

Genetically modified corn decision seen as win for Illinois corn farmers

By Tammie Sloup
FarmWeek

The United States’ victory in its dispute over Mexico’s decree to ban genetically modified corn imports is good news for Illinois corn growers.

United States Trade Representative Katherine Tai announced the United States prevailed in its dispute under the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, USMCA, challenging certain Mexican biotechnology measures concerning genetically engineered, GE, corn.

The USMCA panel agreed with the United States on all seven legal claims, finding that Mexico’s measures are not based on science and undermine the market access that Mexico agreed to provide in the USMCA.

“The panel’s ruling reaffirms the United States’ longstanding concerns about Mexico’s biotechnology policies and their detrimental impact on U.S. agricultural exports,” Tai said.

“It underscores the importance of science-based trade policies that allow American farmers and agricultural producers to compete fairly and leverage their innovation to address climate change and enhance productivity.

“We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Mexican government to ensure a level playing field

and provide access to safe, affordable and sustainable agricultural products on both sides of the border.”

The dispute challenged two sets of measures reflected in Mexico’s February 2023 presidential corn decree, including an immediate ban on the use of GE corn in dough and tortillas, and an instruction to Mexican government agencies to gradually eliminate the use of GE corn for other food uses and in animal feed. The United States established the panel in August 2023.

Illinois Farm Bureau president Brian Duncan called the decision an “important victory.”

“It was a strong ruling on behalf of U.S. corn growers and a vital export market that we need to remain open,” Duncan told RFD Radio. “It’s also a victory for rules-based trade.”

IL Corn Growers Association, ICGA, president and Waterloo farmer Garrett Hawkins said the panel’s decision is positive news for Illinois corn farmers and Mexican corn importers.

“As the largest corn export state in the union, Illinois corn farmers are proponents of free trade agreements and of making free trade agreements work,” Hawkins said in a statement.

“ICGA and the National Corn Growers Association

had a significant role in fighting this unscientific Mexican government overreach and urging the U.S. Trade Representative to challenge the ban that would limit Mexican buyers’ choices and reduce U.S. market access.

“We are so happy to see the ruling issued in our favor and look forward to building our trade relationship with our top export customer for all types of corn.”

From January through October 2024, the United States exported \$4.8 billion of corn to Mexico, which is the United States’ largest export market for the grain.

The panel issued its final report on Dec. 20. Under USMCA rules, Mexico has 45 days from the date of the final report to comply with the panel’s findings.

The panel, in its report, wrote that while Mexico is seeking to address genuine concerns in good faith, such concerns should be “channeled into an appropriate risk assessment process, measures based on scientific principles and in dialogue among all USMCA parties to facilitate a constructive path forward.”

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.

The Gazette-Democrat

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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 IICS 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 ad-

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The Gazette-Democrat

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Bill would raise age for mandatory license renewal driving test for seniors

By Ashley Soriano and Medill Illinois News Bureau

CHICAGO – Older drivers in Illinois could face fewer barriers to renew their driver’s licenses next year as part of a bill that would raise the age for the state-mandated annual driver’s test from 79 to 87.

Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias announced support for House Bill 1226, joined by lawmakers from both parties.

The measure, dubbed the Road Safety and Fairness Act, would impact roughly 350,000 Illinoisans, according to Giannoulias.

Illinois is the only state that requires a driving test for seniors based on age. Currently, people 79 and above are required to take a road test to renew their license.

The proposed bill comes after years of efforts by some lawmakers and advocates to raise the “behind-the-wheel” driving test age and to establish procedures to report unsafe drivers.

“Age alone does not necessarily determine if someone should or should not have a driver’s license,” said Giannoulias, whose office oversees driver’s license issuance and vehicle registration, at a news conference on Tuesday, Jan. 14. “A birthday is not an accurate gauge of one’s ability to get behind the wheel safely.”

Older drivers tend to have lower crash rates, according to state data. In 2023, the crash rate for drivers aged 75 and above was 24.61 per 1,000 drivers, which was lower than any other age group, according to the Illinois Department of Transportation.

The low crash rate has been consistent since at least 2018, according to the Secretary of State’s

Office’s 2023 Study on Age-Related Driving Abilities.

The crash rate is more than double for many of the other age groups.

“I think about my mom. I don’t think my mom would admit she’s a senior, but she is someone that is very much a safe driver,” said state Sen. Ram Villivalam, D-Chicago. “I can’t think of someone that I know that’s a safer driver. This legislation is removing this archaic requirement and doing so in a very balanced way.”

Villivalam, chair of the Illinois Senate Transportation Committee, said the road test is the number one issue seniors reach out to his office about in his district, which includes Chicago.

“They do not appreciate being discriminated against in this way. They do want this barrier removed,” he said.

Before the pandemic, the road test for senior drivers applied to people over the age of 75 but a temporary measure raised the age to 79. This became permanent last year after a study from the secretary of state’s office found the number of crashes did not increase significantly in each age range.

Cosponsor State Rep. Jeff Keicher, R-Sycamore, referred to the legislation as “the art of the possible,” despite some pushback from some other legislators.

The Road Safety and Fairness Act would also allow relatives to report unsafe drivers.

Illinois is one of only five states that do not allow immediate family members to report concerns about a relative’s driving ability, but the new legislation, in partnership with AARP Illinois, would change that.

“Illinois AARP members have asked our team for years, ‘Why is Illinois

the only state in the nation to use age as a factor to require people to retake their driving test?’” Philippe Largent, AARP Illinois state director, said. “It’s time for Illinois to join the 49 other states and take a step forward in increasing the age in which older drivers in the state are required to take a driving test.”

The proposed legislation would eliminate the driving test for some, but it would still require renewals at a DMV location every one to four years, depending on age.

Every four years, 79- and 80-year-olds will still need to renew their licenses in person, while drivers between 81 and 86 years of age will need to renew every two years in person. Those 87 and above will renew annually in person, and a vision test is required

for all age groups.

The bill moves Illinois closer to being consistent with other states’ driving requirements, although it remains one of the strictest states when it comes to license renewal for older drivers.

Wisconsin requires drivers of all ages to renew their licenses every eight years without a driving test. Indiana once mandated a road test for seniors but repealed it in 2005. New Hampshire was the last state besides Illinois to do away with their age-based road test in 2011.

“I would look at this as where we’re able to get the ball right now,” Keicher said. “It doesn’t mean the battle ends, but it does mean this is where we’re able to get from the feedback that we had during the spring session (last year).”

Potawatomi Band land transfer clears Illinois General Assembly

By Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

SPRINGFIELD – Nearly two centuries after losing its reservation in Illinois in a land sale that most people now concede was illegal, the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation could soon get its land back.

In the final hours of a lame duck session Tuesday, Jan. 7, the Illinois House gave final approval to a bill authorizing the state to hand over to the tribe a 1,500-acre state park in DeKalb County, land that largely overlaps the tribe’s original reservation.

“You know, this has been a struggle,” tribal chairman Joseph “Zeke” Rupnick said in an interview in the Statehouse rotunda while waiting for the House to take up the bill.

Senate Bill 867 is the culmination of nearly

20 years of negotiations between the tribe and the state. The bill authorizes the director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to deliver a quitclaim deed to the tribe for land that currently makes up Shabbona Lake and State Park.

The transfer of land, however, would be contingent on the state and tribe executing a land management agreement under which the park would continue to be operated as a park and open to the public.

“If there’s no agreement, there’s no transfer,” Rep. Will Guzzardi, D-Chicago, the bill’s chief House sponsor, said during floor debate. “The land does not get transferred with the passage of this bill. It is pending a land management agreement to keep the park a park.”

The Potawatomi Indians once occupied much of the Great Lakes region, but they were gradually displaced by growing European settlements. In 1829, the Treaty of Prairie du Chien granted the Prairie Band Potawatomi two square miles, or 1,280 acres, in what is now DeKalb County.

According to Rupnick, Chief Shab-eh-nay, after whom the park is named, and several members of his extended family lived on that reservation. But after passage of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, many other tribal members left Illinois, eventually settling in northeast Kansas, where the tribe is now headquartered.

But around 1849, Shab-eh-nay traveled west to Kansas to check on the status of tribal members there. While he was gone, the federal government declared the reservation land abandoned and sold it at public auction.

The legality of that sale, however, has always been in doubt because under federal law, tribal land cannot be sold except by an act of Congress. And since Congress never authorized that sale, and the tribe has never relinquished its claim to the land, all deeds and titles to that land have been legally clouded.

Most of the original reservation is now part of the state park, which the state acquired in the 1960s. But some portions of the original reservation are now occupied by private owners.

Rupnick said the

The Road Safety and Fairness Act will be considered in the upcoming spring General Assembly session. If passed and signed by the governor, the changes would take effect July 1, 2026.

Ashley Soriano is a graduate student in journalism with Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications, and a Fellow in its Medill Illinois News Bureau working in partnership with Capitol News Illinois.

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.

tribe’s efforts to reestablish a reservation in Illinois began in 2006 when it purchased about 130 acres of farm land that had once been part of the original reservation. It also began petitioning the U.S. Department of Interior to take the land into trust as reservation property, which the agency finally did in April 2024.

“Once we started meeting with lawmakers down here (in Springfield), they realized that a majority of the original reservation was a part of the state park,” Rupnick said. “So DNR at that time said, ‘Well, since this is part of the reservation, what would you guys do if we said, let’s turn it over to you?’ And I said, ‘Well, we’ll take it.’”

Rupnick said the state legislation will go a long way toward permanently satisfying the tribe’s land claims in Illinois.

In addition to pushing for SB 867, which awaited Gov. JB Pritzker’s signature, the Prairie Band Potawatomi are also seeking federal legislation that would settle the tribe’s claims to remaining land on the original reservation site in exchange for a cash payment that would allow them to repurchase land currently in private hands.

Speaking on the House floor, Guzzardi said passage of the bill would be a small step toward correcting a historic injustice committed in America 175 years ago.

“I firmly believe that for all of our problems, America is the greatest country on Earth, and I’m proud to be American,” he said.

“But I also don’t think that the answer is to turn a blind eye to the violence and the ugliness of our past, to rewrite the history books, to gloss over the unpleasant parts. I think the answer is to look our past square in the eye, the good stuff and the bad stuff, and when we recognize that we’ve done wrong as a nation, to see it, to own it, and to find some way where we can make it right.”

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.

What Is The Value Of A Community Newspaper?

What is the value of a community newspaper?

What does it bring to that community that no other institution can provide?

The local newspaper is a basic institution in any community, like the post office, the schools and the churches.

The local community newspaper, whether it be a 2,000 circulation weekly or a 50,000 circulation daily, serves to keep people connected to their community, by telling them what's happening with their neighbors, as well as the institution serving the community.

The publication of obituaries, birth announcements, weddings and other significant events in our lives remind us of poet John Donne's words, "no man is an island."

Community newspapers alert members of the community to problems needing attention.

The community newspaper facilitates the exchange of ideas and opinions through its editorial page and letters to the editor.

There are so many things of value community newspapers provide: the recording of local history and helping to maintain a healthy local economy through effective advertising for local businesses are just a few areas of value.

The community newspaper's value to its community is unquestioned.

from Publishers Auxiliary, a publication of the National Newspaper Association

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News from

Anna Nazarene Church

A morning worship service was held Sunday, Jan. 26.

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

A message titled “Encourage Each Other Daily” was brought by Pastor Wright. Scripture was from Hebrews.

Pastor Wright brought the message at the Sunday evening service.

Birthday: Jack Shepard, Jan. 30.

Anniversary: Dorris and Joyce Johnson, Jan. 27.

Sunday, Feb. 2
Breakfast, 9 a.m. Sunday School, 9:30 a.m. Morning service, 10:35 a.m. Evening worship service, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 5
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

The sermon on Sunday, Jan. 26, at Camp Ground Church was titled “Born Again,” based upon John 3, Nicodemus’ visit to Jesus.

The message shared that “we tend to think of everything in the physical sense. But there is a spiritual side to many teachings in the Bible.

“The world wants us to look inside ourselves, but as Christians, we should look to God for what we need.

“Nicodemus visited Jesus at night. Many assume he came at night to keep from being seen in the presence of Jesus in public.

“But perhaps Nicodemus just wanted some one-on-one time with Jesus.

“By coming to Jesus, Nicodemus was admitting that something was missing in his life. When we invite Christ into our hearts, we are admitting that there is a void in our life.

“When we are born in the physical sense, we are destined to eventually die.

“When we are born again, in the spiritual sense, it sets us on the path to God and life eternal.

“Like Nicodemus, we need

to spend one-on-one time with Christ.

“With Christ giving even His life for us, we should not stop with our rebirth and promise of eternal life. In gratitude for the price He paid for us, we should allow the Holy Spirit to mature us that we might be used for the glory of His kingdom.”

Nathan Smith rang the bell to begin the worship service. Vodra and Aldi Gerard receiving the tithes and offerings.

Camp Ground Church’s elder for February will be Sandra Boaz.

Best wishes to Erin Stute whose birthday is Friday, Jan. 31.

On Feb. 2, Camp Ground Church will be observing Heritage Sunday with the church’s first potluck meal of the year following morning worship.

Camp Ground Church invites everyone 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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Command That Mountain



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God tells us that when we believe in His Word, we possess limitless power through Him, the Creator of the universe. Jesus said “...if you have faith and do not doubt...but also you can say to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and it will be done.” (Matthew 21:21) Be patient and have confidence in your Heavenly Father’s will for you. Pray to Him and He will answer your prayer in His time and in His way. Try not to be discouraged, keep in touch with God in worship and remember, you, too can command that mountain.

Weekly Scripture Reading						
Acts 9.26-43	Acts 10.1-33	Acts 10.34-48	Acts 11.1-30	Acts 12.1-25	Acts 13.1-12	Acts 13.13-35

Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society

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**Wednesday
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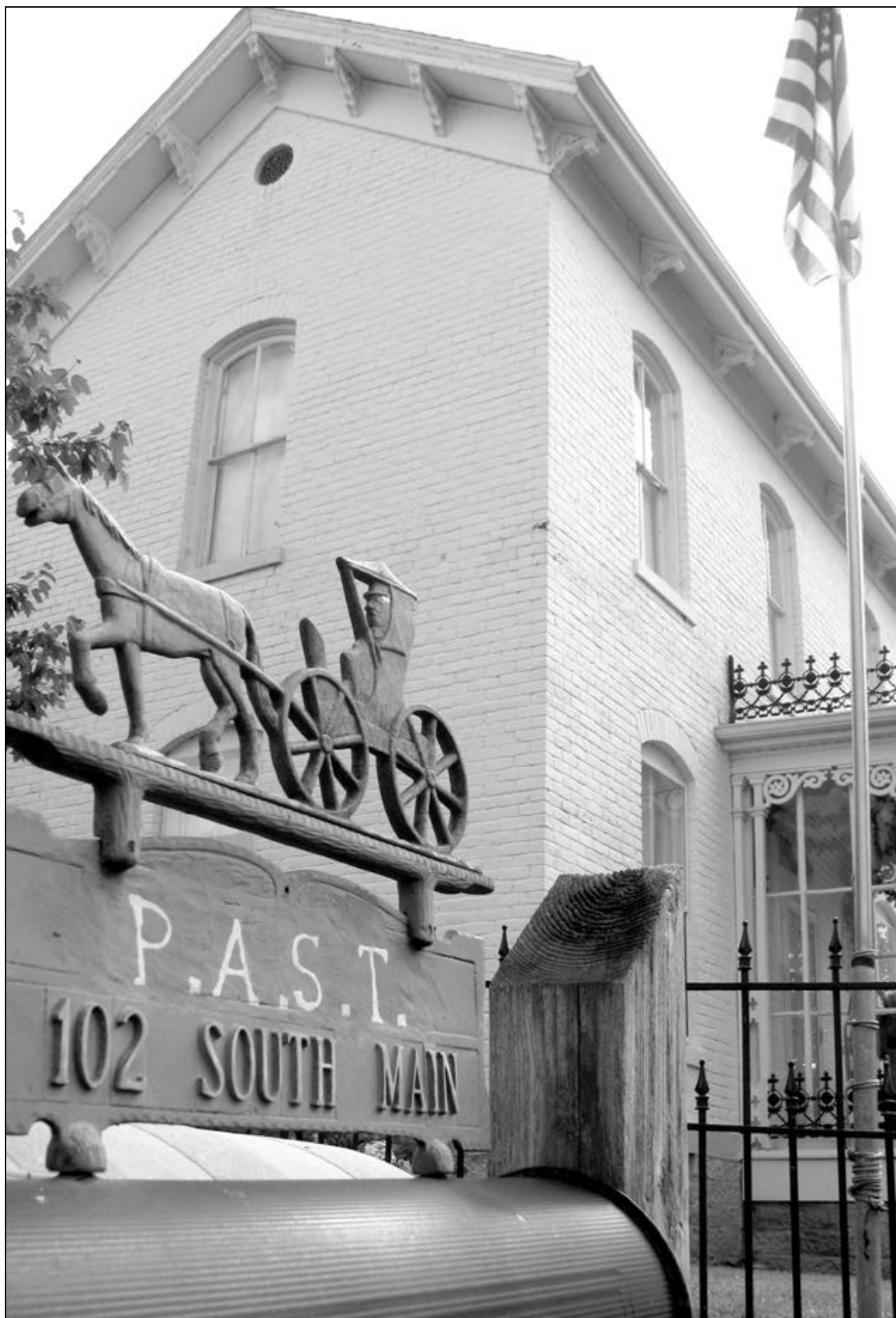




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Heritage House Museum, Jonesboro

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The Gazette-Democrat

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Extension planning to offer Southern Illinois Fruit, Vegetable School

Commercial fruit and vegetable growers face a lot of uncertainties.

One thing is certain: University of Illinois Extension has the practical, current research to help growers make important production decisions.

Practical research-based information will be shared at Extension’s Southern Illinois Fruit and Vegetable School, which is scheduled Feb. 12 in Mt. Vernon.

The program will be held at the Doubletree Meeting &

Event Center at 222 Potomac Blvd. in Mt. Vernon.

The event is scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Registration begins at 7:45 a.m., and lunch will be on your own.

The 2025 Southern Illinois Fruit and Vegetable School will offer informative, practical and up-to-date research-based information to address the challenges of growing fruit and vegetables commercially in Southern Illinois and Missouri.

Industry experts will share

current trends in insect and disease management, as well as a variety of other production-related topics.

This year, the program will feature three separate tracks to address vegetable, tree fruits and cut flower production.

On-site vendors will also be available to discuss production needs.

A new spray guide is not available this year. Instead, participants will be given a supplement to the 2023-2024 Midwest Fruit Pest Manage-

ment Guide. Spray Guides will be available for purchase at the school for \$15.

For more information or to register, visit go.illinois.edu/TreeFruitVegetable. Attendance is \$35 per farm for advanced registration on or before Feb. 1. Registrations after Feb. 1 or at the door are \$50 per farm.

More information about the event is available by contacting Extension horticulture educator Christina Leuking at lueking@illinois.edu.

Math teachers conference scheduled

Southern Illinois University Carbondale plans to host a conference for mathematics teachers in mid-February.

The 39th annual Illinois Conference on Teaching Math is scheduled from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Feb. 13 at John A. Logan College in Carterville. The event will be in the college’s F wing in the Hancock Conference Center.

The conference is scheduled to feature presenters from throughout Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri and Indiana who will

focus on new and innovative ways to teach math to K-12 students.

The majority of the speakers are experienced classroom teachers eager to share knowledge and strategies for sparking the love of mathematics among younger students.

Registration includes continental breakfast and lunch. Registration can be done online at conferenceservices.siu.edu. For more information, contact conference leader Cheng-Yao Lin at cylin@siu.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)	Law & Order: SVU	Big City Big City	(:10) “Trap” (‘24, Thriller) Josh Hartnett.	(5:20) “50/50” (‘11) (R)	“Daddy’s Home 2”
7 PM :30	Ext. Makeover (HD)	Marriage Ghosts	Hell’s Kitchen (HD)	Law & Order (HD)	To Be Announced <i>Info unavailable.</i>	Bang (HD) Bang (HD) Bang (HD)	★★½ “Ambulance” (‘22, Thriller) Jake Gyllenhaal. (R)	Primos Primos Miraculous		“Online” (‘10) Colin Farrell. (HD)	(:15) “Bad Moms” (‘16, Comedy) Mila Kunis.
8 PM :30	Scamanda (HD)	Matlock “Friends” (HD)	Animal Dutch	Law & Order: SVU		Bang (HD) Jokers Jokers		Miraculous ZOMBIES ZOMBIES	C.B. Strike (HD)	(:03) C.B. Strike	“The Fabulous Four” (‘24) (HD)
9 PM :30	Perfect Wife	Elsbeth “Unalive Well”	Local Programs <i>Local info.</i>	Found (HD)					(:06) C.B. Strike (HD)		
10 PM :30	Local	Local		Local (:35) Tonight (HD)	SportsCenter (HD)	“Semi-Pro” (‘08, Comedy) Will Ferrell. (HD)	Law & Order: SVU	Jessie Jessie			
11 PM :30	Jimmy Kimmel Live	(:35) Late Show (HD)	Local Programs	Late Night	SportsCenter (HD)		Law & Order: SVU	Bluey Bluey	(:08) “Mad Max” (‘79)		“Slingshot” (‘24) Casey Affleck.
	Nightline	Midnight									

JANUARY 30, 2025

FRIDAY

	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)	“Ambulance” (‘22) (R)	“Inside Out” (‘15)	(:06) C.B. Strike (HD)	“Sisters” Tina Fey.	“Impossible” (‘96)
7 PM :30	Shark Tank (HD)	NCIS: Sydney (HD)	College Basketball <i>Indiana vs Purdue</i> (Live)	Place Lopez vs.	(:43) To Be Announced <i>Info unavailable.</i>	“Semi-Pro” (‘08, Comedy) Will Ferrell. (HD)	WWE Friday Night SmackDown (HD)	Wizards Wizards Jessie	“The Usual Suspects” Stephen Baldwin. (R)	★★½ “What’s Your Number?” (‘11)	Dexter: Original Sin
8 PM :30	(:01) 20/20 <i>Investigative news.</i> (HD)	Fire Country (HD)		Dateline NBC				Jessie		“Forgetting Sarah Marshall” Jason Segel.	The Agency (HD)
9 PM :30		S.W.A.T. (HD)	Local Programs		(:05) To Be Announced <i>Info unavailable.</i>	“Get Hard” (‘15, Comedy) Will Ferrell. (R) (HD)		Tales Shadybug	Real Time with (HD)		★★½ “Braveheart” (‘95, Action) Mel Gibson. (R) (HD)
10 PM :30	Local	Local	Local Programs	Local (:35) Tonight (HD)			Bel-Air “Canvass”	Wizards Wizards	Real Time with (HD)		
11 PM :30	Jimmy Kimmel Live	(:35) Late Show (HD)	Local Programs	Late Night	SportsCenter (HD)	The Joe Schmo Show	(:04) 9-1-1 “Jinx” (HD)	Big City Big City	Real Time with (HD)	(:38) ★★½ “Spring Breakers” (‘13)	
	Nightline	Midnight									

JANUARY 31, 2025

SATURDAY

	ABC	CBS	FOX	NBC	ESPN	TBS	USA	DISN	HBO	MAX	PARSHO
6 PM :30	Local Programs	Local Programs	Wn’s Gym. Tip-off	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	(5:00) “Movie”	“Movie”	“The Untouchables” (‘87) Kevin Costner. (R)
7 PM :30	NBA (Live)	Tracker (HD)	College Basketball <i>Connecticut vs Marquette</i>	The Wall “Adam and”		★★★ “Kong: Skull Island” (‘17) Tom Hiddleston. (HD)					
8 PM :30	NBA Basketball <i>Los Angeles vs New York</i> (Live) (HD)	48 Hours (HD)		Dateline NBC				StuGo		“Movie”	Ride x (HD)
9 PM :30		48 Hours (HD)	Local Programs	Saturday Night Live	(:15) To Be Announced <i>Info unavailable.</i>	★★★ “Godzilla vs. Kong” (‘21) Millie Bobby Brown. (HD)	9-1-1 (HD)	StuGo	“Movie”		
10 PM :30	Local Programs	Local Programs <i>Local info.</i>	Special (HD)	Local Saturday Night Live (HD)			9-1-1 (HD)	Miraculous		“Movie”	“Panama” (‘22) Cole Hauser. (HD)
11 PM :30	Local Programs		Local Programs		SportsCenter (HD)		9-1-1 (HD)	Big City Big City	“Movie”		Dexter: Original Sin

FEBRUARY 1, 2025

SUNDAY

	ABC	CBS	FOX	NBC	ESPN	TBS	USA	DISN	HBO	MAX	PARSHO
6 PM :30	Videos <i>Reel comedy.</i>	60 Minutes (HD)	NASCAR Cup RaceDay	Deal or No Deal (HD)	(5:00) NBA Basketball (Live) (HD)	Bang (HD) Bang (HD)	Law & Order: SVU	Big City Big City	(5:59) C.B. Strike (HD)	(:12) The Knick (HD)	“Gump”
7 PM :30	Videos	The 67th Annual Grammy Awards	NASCAR Cup Series (Live)	Deal or No Deal (HD)	NBA Basketball <i>Memphis vs Milwaukee</i> (Live) (HD)	Bang (HD) Bang (HD) Bang (HD)	Law & Order: SVU	“Movie”	★★★½ “Malcolm X” (‘92, Drama) Denzel Washington. (PG-13) (HD)	“Joy” (‘15, Drama) Jennifer Lawrence. (HD)	(:25) ★★★★★ “Gladiator” (‘00, Drama) Russell Crowe. (HD)
8 PM :30	(:31) To Be Announced <i>Info unavailable.</i>			Dateline NBC <i>Investigative news.</i>		Bang (HD) Bang (HD)	Law & Order: SVU	Wizards		“Good Luck Chuck” Dane Cook.	Dexter: Original Sin
9 PM :30			Local Programs			Bang (HD) Bang (HD)	Law & Order: SVU	StuGo			Dexter: Original Sin
10 PM :30	Local Programs <i>Local info.</i>		Local Programs	Local Local Programs <i>Local info.</i>	SportsCenter (HD)	The Joe Schmo Show	Law & Order: SVU	Hamster	(:25) To Be Announced	“Black Swan” Natalie Portman.	Shooter” (‘07) (HD)
11 PM :30		Local	Local Programs		Sports	The Joe Schmo Show	Law & Order: SVU	Bluey Bluey			

FEBRUARY 2, 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) SportsCenter (HD)	Bang (HD) Bang (HD)	Law & Order: SVU	(5:55) “Movie”	“Nixon”	(4:13) “Gangs” (‘02)	(5:00) “The Godfather” (‘72) Marlon Brando.
7 PM :30	The Bachelor (HD)	Neighbor. Poppa’s	9-1-1: Lone Star	The Voice “Blind Auditions Premiere” (HD)		Bang (HD) Bang (HD) Bang (HD)	WWE Monday Night Raw (HD)		(:24) ★★½ “Life Partners” (‘14) (R)	“A Most Wanted Man” (‘14, Thriller) (R) (HD)	Dexter: Original Sin
8 PM :30		NCIS (HD)	(:02) Rescue: HI-Surf			Bang (HD) Dad (HD) Dad (HD)		Wizards Wizards Wizards	(:59) C.B. Strike (HD)		
9 PM :30	(:01) Mormon Wives	NCIS: Origins (HD)	Local Programs <i>Local info.</i>	The Hunting Party		Dad (HD) Dad (HD)		Wizards	(:01) To Be Announced	(:03) “Pride” (‘07, Drama) Terrence Howard.	★★★★ “The Godfather” (‘72, Crime) Marlon Brando. (R) (HD)
10 PM :30	Local	Local		Local		Dad (HD)	Law & Order: SVU	To Be Announced	(:46) ★★½ “Crouching Tiger” (‘00)	(:52) “Wanted” (‘08)	
11 PM :30	Jimmy Kimmel Live	(:35) Late Show (HD)	Local Programs	(:35) Tonight (HD)	SC (HD) Sports	Dad (HD) Dad (HD)	Race <i>Alaska race.</i>	Bluey Bluey			

FEBRUARY 3, 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	“Movie”	Real Time with (HD)	(5:10) “Arthur” (‘11)	“The Mask” (‘94) (HD)
7 PM :30	Will Trent (HD)	FBI “Redoubt” (HD)	Kitchen Nightmares	Medical Night (HD)	To Be Announced <i>Info unavailable.</i>	Bang (HD) Bang (HD)	Law & Order: SVU		To Be Announced <i>Info unavailable.</i>	★★½ “Ride Along 2” (‘16) Ice Cube.	Dexter: Original Sin
8 PM :30	High Potential (HD)	FBI: International	Doc (HD)	The Voice (HD)		Bang (HD) Bang (HD)	Law & Order: SVU	Wizards		(:42) “I, Tonya” (‘17, Drama) Margot Robbie.	“Shooter” (‘07, Thriller) Mark Wahlberg. (HD)
9 PM :30	The Rookie (HD)	FBI: Most Wanted	Local Programs <i>Local info.</i>	The Irrational (HD)		Bang (HD)	Law & Order: SVU	Wizards	“Final Destination” Devon Sawa.		
10 PM :30	Local	Local		Local	SportsCenter (HD)	Wipeout	Law & Order: SVU	To Be Announced	“Final Destination 2” Ali Larter.		(:05) “Geostorm” (‘17, Thriller) Gerard Butler.
11 PM :30	Jimmy Kimmel Live	(:35) Late Show (HD)	Local Programs	(:35) Tonight (HD)	SportsCenter (HD)	Family Family	Law & Order: SVU	Bluey Bluey			
	Nightline	Midnight		Late Night							

FEBRUARY 4, 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)	SVU (HD)	(:15) “Movie”	(5:56) C.B. Strike (HD)	“Confidence” (‘03)	“Tropic Thunder” (R)
7 PM :30	Gears	Super Bowl	Special Forces: World’s Grueling challenge.	Chicago Med (HD)	(:43) To Be Announced <i>Info unavailable.</i>	Bang (HD)	Law & Order: SVU		“Going to Mars: The Nikki” (‘23)	★★½ “War on Everyone” (‘16) (R)	“Jack Reacher” (‘12, Crime) Tom Cruise. (HD)
8 PM :30	Elementary					All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite	Law & Order: SVU	Wizards			
9 PM :30	Celebrity Jeopardy!	The Price Is Right at		Chicago Fire (HD)			Law & Order: SVU	Wizards Waverly (HD)	(:45) ★★½ “The Color Purple” (‘85, Drama) Whoopi Goldberg. (HD)	(:39) ★★½ “Stone” (‘10, Drama) Robert De Niro.	(:10) “The Hunt for Red October” (‘90) Sean Connery.
10 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>	Wipeout	Law & Order: SVU	Wizards		“Mechanic: Resurrection” (‘16)	
11 PM :30	Local	Local		Local		Family	Law & Order: SVU	To Be Announced			
	Jimmy Kimmel Live	(:35) Late Show (HD)	Local Programs	(:35) Tonight (HD)	SportsCenter (HD)	Family	SVU (HD)	Bluey	“Speed”		“Perdition”
	Nightline	Midnight		Late Night							

FEBRUARY 5, 2025

THURSDAY

7:00pm
MAX Ondine ★★★ (2010, Drama) Colin Farrell, Alicia Bachleda. A young Irish angler discovers a woman in his fishing net who he believes may be a mermaid, as she begins to immerse herself in the local community. PG-13 (HD)
8:00pm
ABC Scamanda “Stage 1: Perfect Wife, Perfect Life” When a young mother receives a tragic cancer diagnosis, members of her church and local community come together to lend their support. (HD)

FRIDAY

7:08pm
HBO The Usual Suspects ★★★★★ (1995, Crime) Stephen Baldwin, Gabriel Byrne. Five small-time crooks and swindlers meet in a police lineup and are drawn into a scheme directed by a legendary and mysterious criminal mastermind. R (HD)
8:47pm
MAX Forgetting Sarah Marshall ★★★ (2008, Comedy) Jason Segel, Kristen Bell. A man escapes to a Hawaiian resort to get away from his ex-girlfriend, but he discovers that she and her new, rock star boyfriend are visiting the same place. R (HD)

SATURDAY

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
PARSHO Ride Following the lives of a rodeo dynasty going back a generation, as they struggle to keep their beloved Colorado ranch afloat after a tragic loss. TVPG (HD)

SUNDAY

7:00pm
HBO Malcolm X ★★★★★½ (1992, Drama) Denzel Washington, Angela Bassett. Portrait of the controversial civil rights activist who hit bottom, then rose above his past to preach the word of Elijah Muhammad and become a national leader. PG-13 (HD)
9:05pm
MAX Good Luck Chuck ★★½ (2007, Comedy) Dane Cook, Jessica Alba. A man who has a gift of helping women find their true love after a rendezvous in the bed tries to break his curse when he meets the woman of his dreams. R (HD)

MONDAY

7:00pm
MAX A Most Wanted Man ★★½ (2014, Thriller) Philip Seymour Hoffman, Rachel McAdams. A tortured immigrant arrives in Hamburg’s Islamic community and looks to claim his father’s ill-gotten fortune, however, security agencies take interest. R (HD)
9:00pm
PARSHO The Godfather ★★★★★ (1972, Crime) Marlon Brando, Al Pacino. A decorated veteran takes over control of his family’s criminal empire from his ailing father as new threats and old enemies conspire to destroy them. R (HD)

TUESDAY

7:00pm
ABC Will Trent “Breathe with Me” Evelyn Mitchell gets involved in a case regarding a rare stolen coin as she returns to town, and Faith tries to juggle her roles as a daughter and a detective. (HD)
8:00pm
PARSHO Shooter ★★★ (2007, Thriller) Mark Wahlberg, Michael Peña. A former Marine sniper is recruited to prevent the assassination of the president and is framed for the assassination of an Ethiopian dignitary. R (HD)

WEDNESDAY

7:00pm
PARSHO Jack Reacher ★★★ (2012, Crime) Tom Cruise, Rosamund Pike. A homicide investigator takes his job to another level while trying to figure out why a trained military sniper shot five innocent individuals. PG-13 (HD)
8:39pm
MAX Stone ★★½ (2010, Drama) Robert De Niro, Edward Norton. A parole officer attempting to reach retirement as peacefully as possible faces trouble when he is approached by a convicted arsonist’s stunning wife. R

Opinion and Commentary

Secretary of State issues warning about scammers selling used vehicles

Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias is warning Illinoisans shopping for a used vehicle to exercise caution and employ best-practices amid a rise in fraudulent vehicle purchases across the state.

The Secretary of State’s office has uncovered a growing number of fraudulent sales from out-of-state businesses licensed as wholesale dealers that illegally falsify the mileage shown on a used vehicle’s title and odometer to defraud car buyers.

Giannoulias’ warning comes on the heels of an Illinois car buyer, who thought they purchased a used vehicle from a wholesale dealer with 80,000 miles, only to find out the seller rolled back the odometer from over 200,000 miles and deliberately failed to disclose major mechanical problems with the car.

“Nightmare stories like this one is one of the worst-case scenarios when purchasing a used car,” Giannoulias said in a news release. “In many cases, the purchaser is in a desperate financial situation or needs a car fast, which leads them to overlook red flags and fail to do their due diligence.”

The wholesale car dealer scam is a deceptive practice in which someone licensed in other states to sell vehicles exclusively to dealers, instead poses as a private vehicle owner. Vehicles are often sold in Illinois through online advertisements and social media channels at seemingly low prices. In many cases, these vehicles have serious mechanical issues or are missing the ownership documents required to title and register the vehicle. By the time the buyer discovers the problem, the wholesaler is long gone.

Odometer fraud across the country is rising each year. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that more than 450,000 vehicles are sold annually with false odometer readings causing consumers to lose over \$1 billion annually. In December, Carfax ranked Illinois the fifth highest state in the nation with 79,000 cars discovered with rolled-back odometers.

With older vehicles, odometers scammers roll back odometers manually; however, newer vehicles have digital odometers that can be altered by removing or manipulating a car’s circuit board, deceiving buyers into believing a car has a lower mileage that would sell for a higher price.

“My office is continuing to work with law enforcement and to educate the public to identify these scammers before they take advantage of customers,” Giannoulias added. “It’s imperative that buyers do their homework and know the signs before it is too late.”

To best protect yourself against fraudsters, Giannoulias recommends the following tips when buying from an individual seller:

- When buying from an individual, always get the properly signed title at the time of purchase.
- Make sure the seller owns the vehicle.
- If there is a lien on the vehicle, make sure it is paid off before taking ownership.
- Look for evidence of erasing or other tampering with the title documents.
- Make sure the wear and tear on the vehicle appears to match its age and mileage.
- Closely examine the vehicle history report on Carfax, Auto-Check or the National Motor Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTIS) and compare the report to the name on the title, title number, VIN number, issue date and odometer reading. Compare the VIN on the vehicle’s dashboard against the title and history report.
- Have the vehicle inspected by an automotive professional.
- Never buy a previously junked vehicle, meaning the vehicle is inoperable, wrecked or dismantled. You cannot register the vehicle in Illinois and it cannot be rebuilt, no matter what it looks like.
- If you believe you are buying from an individual seller, but the last assigned owner looks like a dealer name, do not buy it. You may have trouble registering the vehicle and you may pay additional taxes.

For more information, visit ilsos.gov and scroll down to Publications & Forms where, under the Law Enforcement section, you can find informational forms on odometer fraud and buying or selling a vehicle. If you believe you are a victim of odometer fraud or other vehicle-related fraud, contact your local police department.

Annual Shawnee Plunge into Pounds Hollow Lake planned

The fourth annual Shawnee Plunge into Pounds Hollow Lake to support the Friends of the Shawnee National Forest and the Equality Fire Department. is set for Saturday, March 1.

The event will take place at the Pounds Hollow Recreation Area in Hardin County.

Advanced registration can be made online through Tuesday, Feb. 25, at <https://www.shawneefriends.org>.

On-site check-in is scheduled to begin at 1:30 p.m. on March 1. The plunge starts at approximately 3 p.m.

Organizers said that donations are welcome. Teams are encouraged.

Children are welcome to participate at the discretion of the child’s parent or guardian.

For individuals under the age of 18, a parent or guardian must sign a participant waiver at the event site.

Hot beverages will be served at Pounds Hollow and fire rings will be set up.

Several events leading up to and following the Shawnee Plunge are planned, starting at approximately 9:30 a.m. with a guided interpretive hike. Food and warm beverages will be served. Live music will also be performed.

The Friends of the Shawnee welcomes volunteers to help with the event. Information is available by sending an email to friendsoftheshawnee@gmail.com, with the subject line “Shawnee Plunge volunteer.”

Additional information about the Plunge can be found on the Friends of the Shawnee Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/shawneefriends>.

Please read this... Gaping maw...of ice...spotted along Spanish Bluff Road...

By Geof Skinner

TGIAF.

Thank goodness it’s almost February.

Not that I’m a big fan of the month of February, but I’m sure glad that the first month of 2025 is coming to an end.

Truth be told, I would be happy to skip February and move right on to March, but that’s another story, which I believe has already been told a time or two in this column...

No doubt...January will be fondly remembered for an ice storm, some snow, the Polar Vortex and Arctic cold which just seemed to keep hanging on...and on...

I’m pretty sure Old Man Winter has been thoroughly enjoying the fun and games he shared with us. I’d like to offer him a big ol’ mug of hot chocolate, which, if we were lucky, would cause him to melt...just like the Wicked Witch in “The Wizard of Oz.” Hmmmm...I wonder if Old Man Winter has any flying monkeys. Those critters scared me when I was a kid...

I suppose we can all take heart in knowing that spring isn’t very far away...

I now that because The Other Half has gotten serious about her 2025 garden adventures. Hopefully, she will be able to stay home this year and actually see her hard work pay off.

Over the weekend, she did some work on her acreage in the Back 40 to get ready for this year’s crop and yummy harvest.

She also got some onions in the wonderful little greenhouse that’s in the backyard. I believe she said there’s Swiss chard in the greenhouse which has been struggling to make a go/grow of it in our recent bitter cold.

The bitter cold which is hampering the Swiss chard has been great for growing icicles, which I don’t think does us a whole lot of good.

However, icicle formations do make for good photo opportunities.

One day last week, I decided to take a drive along Spanish Bluff Road north of Anna. I often take a drive along that road... just because.

Old Man Winter had crafted some really nice icicles in rock



Gaping maw...that’s what came to mind when I spotted these icicles along Spanish Bluff Road north of Anna while on a driveabout one day last week. Look for a little bit more about “gaping maw” in the midst of this week’s word salad jumble.

formations along the road.

For some reason, one batch of the icicles reminded me of a gaping maw. www.dictionary.com defines gaping maw as “a cavernous opening that resembles the open jaws of an animal: the gaping maw of hell. the symbolic or theoretical center of a voracious hunger or appetite of any kind: the ravenous maw of Death.”

To be honest with you, I was thinking more like the jaws in the great white shark featured in the film of the same...you know... “Jaws”...

Fortunately for me, I suppose, the icicles along Spanish Bluff Road didn’t seem to involve “the ravenous maw of Death”... Meanwhile...

How ‘bout a few Critter Sighting Updates...

Bald eagle. Right there in the living room. Yup. Saw it last Sunday when I was watching the Washington and Philadelphia playing for a shot at Super Bowl Roman Numeral Whatever It Is this year. The NFL football team in Philadelphia is, of course, the Eagles. Which explains the Critter Sighting Update.

Raptor. High in a tree on a cold, cloudy Sunday afternoon in January. Yup. Wish I could tell you exactly what kind of raptor it was. A small hawk, perhaps.

Small rodent. Accompanying a raptor high in a tree. Yup. Based on what I saw, the small rodent, which I also could not identify, appeared to be having a very, very, very bad day. Unless you happen to think that being Sunday dinner is a good thing.

White-tailed deer. Lots of ‘em. Yup. Not even in our backyard. That will come later this year, after The Other Half has planted snacks for them in her garden. Quite a few deer were spotted while I was motoring along Kaolin Road on bright and sunny afternoon on the fourth Thursday in January.

Flying monkeys. Nope. Not this week...

Oh...one more sighting...not of the Critter variety...I saw Taylor what’s her name three or few times while watching football games last Sunday. Pretty exciting...or not...



A raptor made a brief stop high in a tree last Sunday afternoon. The bird was accompanied by an unwilling traveler...which I am guessing was about to be Sunday dinner.

Municipal Utilities Association welcomes scholarship applications

In celebration of its 25th anniversary year, the 2025 Illinois Municipal Utilities Association, IMUA, Scholarship Program and Essay Contest will feature four \$2,500 scholarship awards, one each to the competition’s top four finalists.

The Village of Cobden, in partnership with IMUA, is again offering a scholarship competition program for eligible high school seniors.

Each eligible applicant is asked to submit an application and an essay of 500 words or less addressing their choice of one of five utility-related questions.

The top four vote-getters in this year’s essay competition will receive a finalist certificate and a \$2,500 scholarship award check from IMUA. Previous years’ winners received a \$1,000 scholarship check.

Applicants must be high school seniors whose parents or legal guardians are residential customers of the Village of Cobden Municipal Utilities.

According to Karen Winzenburger, village clerk for the Village of Cobden, the program has a dual purpose:

To promote and recognize scholastic achievement and to create greater awareness among young adults about the many issues facing consumers and public power municipalities today.

“Today’s energy providers, including municipally-owned and operated utilities, continue to face myriad economic, energy, environmental and other challenges which warrant creative and innovative solutions,” Winzenburger said in a news release.

“Creating a greater awareness of these issues among tomorrow’s leaders can be the first step in helping to determine effective, long-term solutions, both now and into the future,” she said.

“Since its inception in 2000, IMUA’s scholarship program has proven to be a very popular and successful program for IMUA, its members and the communities they serve,” said Kevin Gaden, president and CEO of the IMUA.

“Public power communities offer their customers a number of cost, efficiency, service and other advantages compared to

those served by other energy providers.

“IMUA’s scholarship program is another example of how municipally-owned and operated utility systems can help return value to their communities while at the same time, provide a measure of financial assistance and support to those students who wish to pursue a college education.”

Since it began,the program has awarded more than \$68,000 to 108 students from 30 different IMUA member communities statewide.

Organized in 1948, IMUA is a statewide trade association which represents the unified interests of, and provides services to, nearly 50 municipalities which operate their own electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water and wastewater treatment systems.

The deadline for submitting applications and essays is Friday, March 7, 2025. Applicants can contact IMUA’s Dee Dee Bunchat at 217-789-4632 or dbunch@imea.org for more information.

Vandalia Statehouse plans Lincoln’s birthday event

The Vandalia Statehouse State Historic Site will celebrate Abraham Lincoln’s birthday with a special event on Sunday, Feb. 9.

Bond County historian Kevin Kaegy is scheduled to present the program “The Lincoln Boys in the Whitehouse” in the Supreme Court Room on the first floor of the Vandalia Statehouse. The program begins at 2 p.m. This is a free event. Refreshments will be provided afterward.

On Feb. 12, in honor of Lincoln’s 216th birthday, the site will be open during normal hours for tours and will have free cookies while supplies last.

The Lincoln’s Birthday celebration is sponsored by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Old State Capitol Foundation.

The Vandalia Statehouse, 315 W. Gallatin St., served as the Illinois capitol building from 1836 to 1839. It is open to the public between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday.

For more information about the site and its programming, call 618-283-1161 or visit the Vandalia Statehouse State Historic Site on Facebook.