

THE GAZETTE-DEMOCRAT

The Talk And Cobden Review • Serving Union County Since 1849

Thursday, May 21, 2026

Anna, Illinois

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News Notes

Items of interest from throughout the Union County area.

Remember to take time to commemorate the observance of Memorial Day, which is Monday, May 25. Many Memorial Day events are planned in the region.

And...a reminder...if you plan to celebrate Memorial Day, please do not drink and drive.

Twenty-four Shawnee Community College students officially became nurses during a practical nursing pinning ceremony held Thursday night, May 14. In a posting on social media, the college noted that the class included the 1,863rd student to complete the practical nursing program at Shawnee. The college shared the graduates “celebrated the completion of months of hard work, long clinical hours, studying, sacrifice and dedication to caring for others. From classrooms and labs to clinical settings across the region, these students have prepared to make a difference in the lives of patients and families throughout Southern Illinois and beyond.”

A map posted early Monday afternoon on the website for the National Weather Service office in Paducah showed that watches, warnings and advisories in the region included a flood warning, a severe thunderstorm watch, a flood advisory, a lake wind advisory, a flood watch, a hazardous weather outlook and a hydrologic outlook. The worst of the weather was happening north of Union County.

The Anna Police Department is joining in the observance of National EMS Week, which is May 17-23. The department shared in a message on social media that it “wishes to acknowledge and thank our partners at Union County EMS for all their hard work, courage, and compassion each day. Every call, every time, you save lives and help our citizens. We thank you and our citizens appreciate you!”

The Cobden High School class of 2026 took a senior trip Wednesday, May 13, to the St. Louis Zoo, The Cheesecake Factory, Galleria Mall and ended with a tour at Meramac Caverns. The trip was organized by class sponsors.

Lick Creek School’s 8th grade students also went on a trip to St. Louis.

Two different Lick Creek School groups attended Rend Lake Outdoor Days, which featured fishing, birding and encounters with live snakes and raptors.

(continued on page 2)

District 37 plans Back to School Store

Anna School District No. 37 has announced plans for its first Back to School Store and is welcoming donations from the community to support the project.

District 37 announced on social media that the store will give parents of District 37 students an opportunity to shop for clothes, coats, shoes and personal care items to get the school year started.

Donations of the following items are welcomed:

Brand new or very gently used clothes, including summer and winter (from 3T to adult sizes). New or very gently used tennis shoes. Brand new underwear (girls and boys in various sizes). Brand new socks (girls and boys in various sizes).

Shampoo/conditioner. Feminine hygiene products. Soap (liquid or bar). Toilet paper. Deodorant. Hair brushes. Toothbrushes. Toothpaste. Laundry detergent. Reusable bags.

Monetary donations are also welcome. Donations can be dropped off at Anna Junior High School or Lincoln School Monday through Friday. More information about is available by contacting school nurse Candice Sauerbrunn at 618-833-8022, extension 224.

Seat belt safety promoted

The Union County Sheriff’s Office is joining law enforcement agencies throughout Illinois for the 2026 “Click It or Ticket” campaign. The Memorial Day travel period safety campaign started May 15 and continues through May 26. Memorial Day is Monday, May 25.

“Buckle up – every trip, every time,” Union County Sheriff David Wilkins said in a news release promoting the campaign. “Seat belts save lives – and we are committed to keeping our roads safe.”

During the campaign, sheriff’s office deputies will be conducting high-visibility enforcement efforts day and night which will focus on seat belt violations. Motorists who fail to buckle up can expect to be stopped and ticketed.

Illinois law requires all drivers and passengers to wear seat belts. While seat belt usage increased to 93% in 2025, unrestrained fatalities remain a serious concern, especially during nighttime hours.

The “Click It or Ticket” campaign is funded with federal highway safety funds administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Weather

High 87, low 44; 0.39 of an inch of rain

Temperatures for the period of May 12-18 in the Union County area ranged from a high of 87 degrees to a low of 44. Precipitation totaled 0.39 of an inch of rain.

Following are highlights for the period as recorded by local weather observer Dana Cross near Jonesboro:

Tuesday, May 12: high 80, low 45.

Wednesday, May 13: high 78, low 49.

Thursday, May 14: high 73, low 44.

Friday, May 15: high 81, low 49.

Saturday, May 16: high 83, low 71. 0.01 of an inch of rain.

Sunday, May 17: high 87, low 69.

Monday, May 18: high 83, low 65. 0.38 of an inch of rain.



Cobden High School commencement held

A commencement ceremony for the Cobden High School graduating class of 2026 was held Friday evening, May 15. The ceremony was held in the main gymnasium at the school. A list of students in the printed program for the ceremony showed 37 seniors in this year’s class.

Off, on rain chances expected in region this week

Unsettled weather with off and on rain chances along with cooler temperatures were in the forecast for this week in Southern Illinois, Southeast Missouri and Western Kentucky. Rain would help to ease ongoing drought conditions in the region.

The National Weather Service office in Paducah was calling for the possibility of a few strong to severe storms in the late morning and afternoon hours on Monday in the region. Rain, accompanied by the rumble of thunder, were experienced around midday Monday in the Union County area. More rain fell later in the day.

More widespread showers and storms were in the forecast for much of the day

Tuesday, but especially in the afternoon and evening.

The forecast for the Union County area called for a chance of rain on Wednesday and continuing on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday and on Monday, which is Memorial Day.

Following the passage of a cold front Tuesday night, much cooler temperatures were in the forecast.

Drought Update

A May 14 update from the U.S. Drought Monitor showed that all of Union County was continuing to experience moderate drought conditions.

Similar conditions were reported in southeastern Jackson County, western Williamson County, most of Johnson County, all of

Massac County and northern parts of Alexander and Pulaski counties.

Severe drought conditions were reported in much of southern Alexander and Pulaski counties.

Abnormally dry conditions were reported in most of Jackson County, eastern Williamson County and part of northern Johnson County.

The Weather Service office in Paducah reported that as of May 14, extreme drought conditions continued in southern portions of Southeast Missouri and Western Kentucky. The six-month period from November through April was the driest on record across those areas, which were averaging 12 to 13 inches below normal in precipitation.

Most of the region is in a hydrologic drought, with streamflows running below to well below normal, the Weather Service office reported.

Limited impacts on agriculture had been reported in the region, aside from very low farm pond levels. Planting is ahead of schedule due to the dry conditions. “Ag impacts will likely increase rapidly if we don’t receive notable rainfall over the coming weeks, as subsoil and topsoil conditions remain quite poor,” the Weather Service office advised.

Wildfire activity in the region remained elevated. Burn bans have been issued in Western Kentucky and in a few areas in Southern Illinois.



Celebrating the Class of 2026

The scoreboards at the Anna-Jonesboro Community High School stadium celebrated the graduating class of 2026. A commencement ceremony for this year’s graduates was held Saturday evening, May 16. The ceremony was held outdoors.



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News Notes

(continued from page 1)
Students at Lincoln and Davie schools in Anna raised \$3,858 for Breakthrough T1D and diabetes research. Students in grades K-4 celebrated their fundraising efforts with a special day at the Anna City Park. Vince's DJ Show provided music.

Anna School District 37 celebrated 26 Davie School students who made their Accelerated Reader goal for all four quarters of the school year. The students were taken to Barnes & Noble, where each of them was able to pick out and purchase a book. Then they went to the park for a picnic lunch and some playtime.

Shawnee Community College shared on social media that a newly released study shows the college contributes \$49.9 million annually to the regional economy and supports 805 jobs throughout Southern Illinois.

Shawnee Community College reports that its Facebook page now has 10,000 followers. The college thanked its "students, alumni, faculty, staff and supporters across the region for following along with the stories, achievements, events and moments that make SCC special."

Rendleman Orchards near Alto Pass has scheduled a "soft opening" for the 2026 summer season on June 1. A u-pick cherry tomato patch

features six varieties of cherry tomatoes, as well as fresh basil and oregano which are ready to cut. Peach season begins in mid-June.

A book signing with author Sarah Raganyi is planned from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. May 23 at The Green Mug in downtown Cobden. Raganyi has written a collection of poetry and reflections titled "Oil in Water: A Journey from Survival to Restoration." The book is scheduled to be released May 24.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resource (IDNR) once again reminds everyone to leave young birds and other animals alone when they encounter them in the wild. The department notes that well-intentioned people may believe they are helping nature by taking possession of young rabbits, fawn deer, baby birds and other animals that appear to be orphaned or abandoned. However, IDNR advises, in nearly all cases, human intervention does more to hurt animals than to help. Young birds and animals are still being fed and cared for by their parents, who usually stay away from nests and dens if humans are nearby.

The National Weather Service office in Paducah notes that Heat Safety Week is May 18-22. The week offers an opportunity to increase awareness and promote preparedness about heat-related hazards.

Board members being sought for Southern Seven

Southern Seven Health Department has shared an announcement on social media that board of health members are being sought to represent four area counties. The counties include Union, Alexander, Hardin and Pope. The announcement shared that board of health members help to guide and support the programs and services provided by Southern Seven Health Department. They serve as advocates for public health and help make decisions that impact the health and well-being of our communities.

Board members may attend regular board meetings; review policies, budgets and programs; support community health initiatives; help represent the needs of their county; and advocate for strong public health services

across Southern Illinois
Board members play an important role in helping ensure families and communities have access to quality public health resources and services, the health department noted.
Those who may be interested in serving their community and learning more about becoming a board of health member were advised to contact their local county courthouse for information about qualifications and current vacancies.

HOSPITAL DISTRICT BOARD MEETING PLANNED

The Union County Hospital District Board of Directors will meet on May 26, 2026 for a regular business meeting. Agenda topics include: Financial Report, Sale of Property to Deaconess Illinois Union County, Donation Request.

The meeting is scheduled to begin at 6:00 pm in the Deaconess IL Union County Hospital 3rd Floor Conference Room at 517 N. Main St. Anna, IL.



Commencement held at Anna-Jonesboro Community High School

Anna-Jonesboro Community High School's commencement ceremony for members of the graduating class of 2026 was held Saturday evening, May 16. The ceremony was held outdoors on a nice spring evening at the Union County school's stadium. A printed program for the ceremony showed just over 100 students in this year's graduating class.

College offers two courses

Shawnee Community College has scheduled two upcoming workforce development opportunities in Union County.

On Saturday, May 23, the college's Union County Extension Center in Anna is planning to host a certified food protection manager course from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

On Friday, May 29, the Union County Extension Center is planning to host Quick-Books Training from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

More information and registration is available by visiting the college's website at <https://shawneecc.edu/business-and-workforce-development/>

FCI hosting hiring event

Federal Correctional Institution Marion will host a hiring event Tuesday, May 26, for individuals interested in career opportunities with the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

The event will be held from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the FCI Marion Administration Building, Human Resources Department, 4500 Prison Road in Marion.

Representatives will be available to discuss career opportunities and answer questions about working for the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Positions being recruited include correctional officers, registered nurses, medical officers, psychologists and psychiatrists. Applicants are asked to bring two forms of identification, including at least one photo ID, a federal resume and college transcripts if applicable. Veterans may also bring a Member 4 copy of their DD-214, an SF-15 application for 10-point preference and a VA rating decision letter, if applicable.

For more information, call 618-964-1441, email MAR-HumanResources-S@bop.gov or visit the Federal Bureau of Prisons careers website.

Blessing of the Rats and Rods Set

Car enthusiasts are invited to the annual Blessing of the Rats and Rods on Saturday, May 23, in Pomona.

Participants will gather at Mase's Place Bar & Grill, 5162 Hickory Ridge Road, for a cruise departing at 10:30 a.m. The blessing will be held at noon at Bald Knob Cross of Peace.

Following the blessing, participants will return to Mase's Place for food, drinks and burnouts. Organizers said those who are unable to take part in the cruise are welcome to attend the blessing at Bald Knob Cross.

Cobden Masonic Lodge rewards young readers with new bikes



Bike winners

Miguel Garcia (left) and Lexi Jackson (right) show off their new bikes with Travis Stewart, Secretary of Cobden Lodge No. 466.

Students at Cobden Elementary School read hundreds of books this spring as part of the Bikes for Books program, sponsored by Cobden Lodge No. 466.

The reading incentive program, open to students in prekindergarten through fifth grade, was held March 2-27. Approximately 240 students participated and read a total of 517 books.

Cobden Lodge No. 466 has sponsored the program at the school for four consecutive years.

At the conclusion of the program, one boy and one girl were selected in drawings to receive bicycles and helmets. This year's winners were Miguel Garcia, a third-grade student, and Lexi Jackson, a fourth-grade student. The bicycles were presented May 11.

The Bikes for Books program is coordinated statewide by the Illinois Masonic Children's Assistance Program, a charity of Illinois Freemasonry. The initiative is designed to encourage reading among elementary school students by

giving them the opportunity to win a bicycle and helmet.

Under the program, local Masonic lodges partner with public schools to organize reading challenges for students in prekindergarten through fifth grade. The Illinois Masonic Children's Assistance Program provides bicycles and promotional materials, while participating lodges coordinate with schools and supply the helmets.

The program aims to promote reading while strengthening ties between local schools and community organizations.

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Obituaries

Betty L. Seals

Betty L. Seals, age 88, of Anna, passed away on Saturday, May 9, 2026 surrounded by her family.

She was born on Aug. 14, 1937 to Clyde Miller and Leona Miller in Alexander County, Ill.

Betty had worked at the shoe factory and later for Choate Mental Health for 26 years. Betty was of Christian faith. Years ago Betty had to have a cornea transplant and desires for people to donate their corneas so that others can be helped and blessed the way she was.

Survivors include her grandchildren, Chris Tellor, Jeremy Tellor, and Brittany Easter; great-grandchildren, Jacob Tellor, Alexander Tellor, Trinity Tellor, Tanner Tellor, Damon Easter, and Zariah Cornell.

Along with her parents, she is preceded in death by her daughters, Marcia Easter and Michelle Easter; and an infant brother, Billy Miller.

Cremation Rites



will be accorded. A private inurnment will be held at a later date at the Anna City Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Mid-America Transplant team at midamericatransplant.org/

The cremation of Betty L. Seals will be personally handled by the staff of Crain Funeral Home.

Crain Funeral Home in Anna, Illinois is in charge of arrangements.

Willard C. Cunningham

Willard C. Cunningham, age 83 of Anna, passed away on Wednesday, April 29, 2026 at his home surrounded by his family.

He was born on March 12, 1943 to Paul H Cunningham and Ondean (Karraker) Cunningham in Anna, Illinois. March 21, 1964, he married Mary Kietzman and they have been together for over 62 years.

Willard was a journeyman electrician starting in 1962, later starting Highway Electric, an electrical contracting business in 1982.

He was an active member of Mt. Moriah Lutheran Church, serving multiple terms on church council. In addition, he was a 57-year member of Anna Kiwanis, served on the Union County Hospital Board for over 15 years and was on the Anna State Bank Board of Directors for over 20 years.

Willard was an avid outdoorsman and in his younger years won numerous state championships in duck calling. He enjoyed raising cattle on the farm.

In retirement, he and wife Mary traveled extensively on the waterways of the United States in their boat and spent time traveling across the country in their RV.

Survivors include his wife; two daughters, Melissa Kinder of Gor-ville, Ill. and Sarah



Long (David) of Smithville, TN; one son, Ted Cunningham (Ashlee) of Salem, Mo.; grandchildren, Kaleb (Abbie) Kinder of Marietta, Ga., Kyle Kinder of Louisville, Ky., Isabella Long, Anna Long, Nora Long all three of Smithville, Tenn., Raymond (Alley) Cunningham, John Cunningham, and Edlyn Paige Cunningham all three of Salem, Mo.

He is preceded in death by his parents; and siblings, John Cunningham and Martha Holbach.

Funeral Services were held on Saturday, May 2, 2026 with Pastor Mark Hasty officiating at Crain Funeral Home in Anna.

Interment followed the service at Trinity Cemetery in Anna, Ill.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests with gratitude that memorial contributions may be made to Trinity Cemetery.

Crain Funeral Home in Anna, Illinois is in charge of arrangements.



Cheryl Lynn Rion

Cheryl Lynn Rion, age 70, of Anna, passed away on Tuesday, March 12, 2026 at Memorial Hospital in Carbondale.

She was born Feb. 1, 1956 to Donald Rion and Dorothy (Dalton) Rion in Anna, Ill.

Cheryl had worked as a Care Worker in CILA homes and worked at the Anna VFW as a bartender. She loved watching baseball, especially the Cardinals, and enjoy doing some gardening.

Survivors include her sons, Rion Scott (Shannon) Thompson and Austyn Wayne Brazell; grandchildren, Brian and Benjamin; along with two brothers, Lonnie Rion and Doug Rion.

She is preceded in death by



her parents.

No services will be held at this time.

The cremation of Cheryl Lynn Rion will be personally handled by the staff of Crain Funeral Home.

Crain Funeral Home in Anna, Ill. is in charge of arrangements.

Charles Edward “Charlie” Hileman

Charles Edward “Charlie” Hileman, age 93 of Evansville, Ind., formerly of Mill Creek, passed away peacefully, surrounded by his loving family, Saturday, May 16, 2026, at his home.

A celebration of life visitation will take place Sunday, May 24 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Rendleman and Hileman Funeral Home in Jonesboro.

Eulogies and remembrances will be shared at 4 p.m. Memorial contributions may be made to Heart-to-Heart Hospice. Envelopes will be

available at Rendleman and Hileman Funeral Home website

News from

Anna Nazarene Church

Sunday, May 17

The morning worship service was held at 10:35 a.m. on May 17. Announcements were given by Jessica Elkins. The worship service was led by Pastor Wright and the Worship Team.

The message “Ascension and Pentecost” shared that the promise of Pentecost was not merely emotional experience. It was the fulfillment of God’s promise to cleanse hearts and empower holy living through the Holy Spirit. from Acts 1:4-14, Luke 24:49, John 14:16-17, Matthew 28:18-29, Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 was given by Pastor Wright.

There was no evening service.

Sunday, May 24

All graduates will be honored during the morning worship service for graduate Sunday. Pentecost Sunday-communion will be served.

Breakfast - 9:00 a.m. Sunday School - 9:30 a.m. Morning Worship Service. No Evening Service

Wednesday, May 27

Wednesday Night Service will be held at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary-Studying the book of Daniel. Youth Group in the Fellowship Hall at 6:30 p.m.

You may contact the church by calling the church office at 618-833-6702 and leaving a message if necessary or by calling Pastor Wright at 618-534-7103.

County Line News

(Mill Creek and Upper Elco)

By Suzan Harvel

Summer dipped its finger onto us this past weekend with temperatures reaching 90 degrees. Yuck! Especially, as I was in downtown Cape Girardeau at the Downtown Flea Market event manning a booth. It was cool with a nice breeze and a few sprinkles when we set up...but by 2 p.m. the breeze left and the heat cranked up. We did good business, but I sure was glad to get home and into a shower, and then collapse into my chair.

We shall get another round of a cool down, accompanied by rain in these next two weeks. I won’t complain. We need the rain and cooler temperatures are always welcomed. The nasty summer heat will be coming soon enough, so the longer it is prolonged the happier I am.

My birthday this year became a five-day event. I guess when the numbers get that large, it takes that long to get it done. My co-workers threw me a pizza party several days before my birthday (it worked with our schedules best), my youngest treated me to lunch out and a shopping trip the next day, my mother-in-law treated me to dinner out at Tom’s Place where we ran into several folks from church the day before my birthday, my eldest treated me to lunch on my birthday, then we had a big deal with the grandkids and the whole family for a shrimp boil followed by cake, ice cream, and presents over the weekend.

I also received many birthday greetings via phone, text, and other social media outlets. I, along with Gary Rider, was also treated to the birthday song at church. Thank you everyone, you made the number less of a pinch.

Mill Creek Baptist Church was led into worship by Brother Bobby Richardson with the questions “What do we need be saved from?” and “Why do we need to be saved?”. The answers are found in Genesis 2-3, Romans 5, and 1 John 1-2. These passages tell us we were created to never know sin or death, but because of Adam’s sin we no longer have that perfect life. Instead, we know sin, pain, toil, suffering, and death.

Only through the sacrifice of Christ do we have the chance to be redeemed. Jesus is our advocate to God. We need to make the decision to choose to be better, then ask for God’s forgiveness and trust He will receive us just as we are...imperfect in sin, but made in His

image to be made perfect under his grace and by our faith. What do you have to lose?

Those added for prayer are: the Garrett Hunerkoch family in his passing; Henrietta Smith Family in her passing; Ryan Sadler, personal; Braden and Kristin Rider who are house hunting; Clayton Richardson who is undergoing kidney rejection; Tracy Richardson, personal; and Janet Cruse, health issues.

Members of the Daniel Chapman Chapter, NSDAR will meet at the Vienna Public Library for the Johnson County Memorial Day Service at 11 A.M. and a brief business meeting will be held afterwards. Evelyn Bailey was inducted into Daniel Chapman’s Chapter of NSDAR at the last meeting on May 11, held at St. John’s Lutheran Church. Prospective members are always welcome. Contact suzpark58@gmail.com if you are interested in joining.

P.A.S.T. of Union County will be meeting on Tuesday, May 26 at 6 p.m. for their monthly business and planning meeting.

Union County Fixin’s

Shepherd's Pie

- 1 1/2 lbs. ground beef
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1/4 cup green bell pepper, diced
- 1/4 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 (6 oz.) can tomato paste
- 1 (15 oz.) pkg frozen mixed vegetables, thawed
- 3 medium potatoes, boiled, mashed, and seasoned
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- Sprinkles of paprika (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a skillet, cook the ground beef. About half-way through, drain fat off and add onion and bell pepper. Continue cooking until the beef is done.

Add Worcestershire sauce, tomato paste, and mixed vegetables. Stir and cook until heated through.

Transfer mixture to a greased baking dish. Top with mashed potatoes and smooth them to seal the beef and vegetable mixture. Sprinkle cheese and paprika over the potatoes.

Bake until the cheese has melted and the pie has heated through.

News from

Anna First Baptist Church

Anna First Baptist Church met for Worship on May 17, 2026 with Matthew Lopez leading our Opening Prayer.

Vickie Wagner led our Call to Worship titled “The Witness of the People of God.”

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Our Worship Team let in three songs, “New Wine,” “Because He Lives” and “Agnus Dei.”

Pastor Lupe’s sermon title was “No Walls In the Kingdom” Highlights included, God shattered the invisible walls that people had built between races, cultures, and backgrounds by sending the Gospel to Cornelius and the Gentiles in Acts 10 and 11.

Peter learned that the message of Christ was never meant to stay confined within one nation or one people, because Himself declared,

“What God has cleansed you must not call common.” The Holy Spirit falling upon the Gentiles proved that salvation is offered freely to all who believe, regardless of ethnicity, status, or past. These chapters remind us that God’s Word crosses every boundry mankind tries to construct, whether social, political, cultural, or personal.

Our Sunday Scool begins at 9 a.m. and is for all ages, our Worship Service and Chirdren’s Church begins at 10 a.m. on Sunday morning. Our bus runs for both of these services.

We have a Bible Study/Discipleship Class on Wednesday evening at 6 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend this class.

We have two more Mexico Mission 2026 Yard Sales and then our Missionary’s head for Mexico, please pray for their safety, pray for souls to be ready to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives. What an awesome opportunity to share Jesus with folks who may never heard about Jesus and His Saving Grace.

Our church is located at 409 Morgan Street in Anna, Illinois. Our phone number is 618.833.5416

Our Facebook is AnnaFirst-BaptistChurch Our email is fbcanna409@gmail.com.

You are welcome to come by and visit any and all of our services. Or come by during the day, let us talk with you, pray with you, share Jesus with you and tell you how He has changed our life.

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RENDLEMAN & HILEMAN FUNERAL HOMES



New member
The Daniel Chapman Chapter National Society Daughters of the American Revolution inducted Evelyn Bailey St. John's Lutheran Church on May 11. Pictured are Carol Palmer, Chaplain; Suzan Harvel, Membership Chair; Evelyn Bailey, new member; and Marilyn Meisenheimer, Registrar.

News from

First Baptist Church, Jonesboro

On May 17, Bro. Perry Williams spoke in the morning service. Bro. Perry's message addressed told the story of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. The Pharisee was self-righteous; but the tax collector wanted mercy and acknowledged he was a sinner. The truth is we all have sinned and need Jesus. God's goal is not to find a perfect sheep; He wants to bring the lost sheep home. His text was from both the 15th and the 18th chapters of Luke, found in the New Testament.

Dee Rose led in worship accompanied by Debbie York on the piano, and the praise team: Isabel Tehandón, Chris Rose, and Rodger Goines.

Chris Rose sang the song, "The God on the Mountain," as a special.

Graduates were recognized in our morning service. We are so proud of each one and pray God's blessings for a bright future.

Our service was sent via transmitter station 87.9 FM for those who want to listen via the radio. The service was also live streamed on Facebook, so if you missed it, you still have an opportunity to view it. Please check our Facebook page, Jonesboro FBC, for the latest videos and info on church events.

This week's activities include the Men's Bible Study at 6 p.m., Monday, May 18,

at the church; and the Ladies' bible study, also on May 18, at the home of Sheila Aldridge.

Recent birthdays: Mary "Murk" Cripps, born May 20; and Jodie Dial, born May 24 Happy birthday!

Currently, our 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.; Sunday evening worship at 6 p.m. Youth for 6th-12th grades meet also on Sundays at 6 p.m. and Wednesdays from 6-8 p.m. Our Adult Prayer Meeting and Bible Study also meets on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. All are invited to attend.

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Daily Devotional Reading						
Acts 2:1-28	Acts 2:29-47	Acts 3:1-26	Acts 4:1-22	Acts 4:23-31	Acts 6:1-15	Acts 7:1-22
Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society						
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LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS In the Matter of the Estate of William B. Ballard, Jr., Deceased No. 2026-PR-10 CLAIM NOTICE Notice is given of the death of William B. Ballard, Jr. of Anna, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued on May 6, 2026, to Joshua Brendan Ballard, 721 Southwest Drive, Champaign, IL 61820, whose attorney is Hayden W. Eddings of Johnson, Schneider & Ferrell, L.L.C., 212 North Main Street, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, 63701. Claims against the estate may be filed in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court at the Union County Courthouse, 309 W. Market St., Room 108, Jonesboro, IL 62952, or with the representative, or both, by November 30, 2026, or six (6) months from the date of mailing or delivery of a personal claim notice, whichever date is later, and any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed. Keri Clark UNION COUNTY CIRCUIT CLERK 8221-964942

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS ANNA NATIONAL BANK n/k/a ANNA-JONESBORO NATIONAL BANK, a National Chartered Bank, Plaintiff, vs STEPHEN M. BENEFIELD, TONIA R. BENEFIELD, UNKNOWN OWNERS and NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS, Defendants. Case No.: 2026FC9 PUBLICATION NOTICE The requisite affidavit for publication having been filed, notice is hereby given to you, Stephen M. Benefield, Tonia R. Benefield, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants in the above entitled suit, that the said suit has been commenced in the Circuit Court of Union County, Illinois, by the said Plaintiff against you and other defendants to foreclose a certain Mortgage covering the following described premises, to-wit: A PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED IN PART OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 5, TOWNSHIP 12 SOUTH, RANGE 1 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED BY METES AND BOUNDS AS FOLLOWS: BEGINNING AT AN IRON PIPE AT THE SOUTH QUARTER CORNER OF SAID SECTION 5; THENCE S 89° 14' 30" W, ALONG THE SECTION LINE, A DISTANCE OF 208.00 FEET TO A 1/2" IRON ROD; THENCE DEPARTING FROM SAID SECTION LINE, N 00° 16' 01" E, A DISTANCE OF 208.00 FEET TO A 1/2" IRON ROD; THENCE N 89° 14' 30" E, A DISTANCE OF 208.00 FEET TO A 1/2" IRON ROD ON THE EAST LINE OF SAID SOUTHWEST QUARTER; THENCE S 00° 16' -01" W, ALONG THE EAST LINE, A DISTANCE OF 208.00 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING. CONTAINING 0.993 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, IN UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS. SUBJECT TO THAT PART THEREOF FALL-

IDOT Urges Motorists to Slow Down for Litter Crews and Help Keep Roads Clean

Illinois Department of Transportation is reminding motorists to slow down and move over for maintenance crews as roadside litter cleanup efforts increase across the state this spring and summer.

Transportation officials say warmer weather means more workers will be along highways collecting trash and debris, particularly near ramps, interchanges and other areas where litter tends to accumulate.

“Litter is more than an eyesore, it has harmful consequences for safety and the environment,” said Gia Biagi, Illinois transportation secretary. “At IDOT, we are doing more than ever this year to keep roadsides clean. Please help us put a lid on litter by disposing trash where it belongs and slowing down when you see our maintenance teams out collecting litter.”

This year, IDOT is expanding its cleanup efforts with overnight sweeping operations on expressways in Cook County and surrounding counties. Officials say the work is safer

and more efficient when traffic is lighter.

Even when no lane closures are in place, drivers may encounter crews working on shoulders and rights of way. Under Illinois law, motorists are required to slow down and move over when approaching highway workers and vehicles.

State officials are also encouraging residents to take simple steps to reduce litter, including keeping trash bags in vehicles, securing loads with tarps or straps and using reusable shopping bags and refillable drink containers.

Littering is illegal in Illinois and can result in fines of up to \$1,500. Drivers who fail to properly secure loads may face additional fines of up to \$250.

IDOT spent about \$33.2 million last year picking up litter, sweeping shoulders and removing debris statewide. According to the agency, that amount could have purchased 100 maintenance trucks or paid to resurface 26 miles of four-lane interstate highway.

In addition to cleanup by state crews, volunteer groups continue to assist through IDOT’s Adopt-A-Highway program. In 2025, more than 2,000 volunteers donated 777 hours and collected more than 1,825 bags of trash along Illinois highways.

IDOT officials note that litter can clog drainage systems, contribute to flooding, harm wildlife and create distractions that lead to crashes.

More information about IDOT’s anti-litter campaign is available at idot.illinois.gov.

IDPH shares alert about headcheese deli meat brand

The Illinois Department of Public Health, IDPH, is urging consumers to take precautions after an outbreak of Listeria monocytogenes (Lm) linked to a brand of headcheese deli meat product sold in Illinois.

Three cases of Listeria in Illinois have been identified. The individuals report eating headcheese products purchased from three different locations prior to getting sick. USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service, FSIS,

collected an unopened headcheese sample which tested positive for Listeria monocytogenes.

Additional testing of the product samples is ongoing to determine if the positive samples are related to the outbreak strain, IDPH reported on May 13. The product has not been recalled because it is no longer believed to be on store shelves, but officials are concerned that some of it may still be in consumers’ refrigerators. If so,

the product should not be consumed, but should be discarded immediately or returned to the point of purchase.

IDPH shared the following information about the products which are the focus of concern:

Various weight packages packed or sliced in retail delis, containing “DAISY BRAND Meat Products HEAD-CHEESE,” with a red sticker indicating “HOT” and a “USE BY” date of “MAR 26, 2026.”

The products bear establishment number “EST. 21406” inside the USDA mark of inspection. The items were distributed to retail deli locations in Illinois and Indiana. These products are intended for slicing at retail delis and

some deli purchases may only show the producer’s brand without the affected date.

IDPH advised that consumers who may have had the product are urged to thoroughly clean their refrigerators to avoid any potential risk of cross-contamination.

IDPH pursued the investigation in partnership with local health departments and the USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service.

The Cat's Meow

by the Cobden Spay and Neuter Coalition

We continue to be very grateful and overwhelmed by the support shown for our work during Spayapalooza by the folks of this county. We would also like to note and thank the ongoing support of the cities and villages within our county. They have not only been generous financially, but also in their vocal and social media support of our efforts.

Moving forward over the rest of the spring and summer, we continue to offer subsidized spays and neuters to those needing that support. Our TNR program will also keep moving forward, as the numbers of feral and outdoor community cats remains a significant issue. We appreciate the cooperation and assistance by the feral and community cat caretakers. Their knowledge of the cats’ habits, feeding times and comings and goings are invaluable.

You will see us at the upcoming Annabelle Festival June 13. Always a lovely event and an opportunity to meet and network with our community. See you there!

Please visit our website, cobdenspayneutercollaboration.org, or our facebook page to see what we’re up to. You may drop off, call in, or send donations to our account at Meller-James & Associates, send your gift online through givebutter.com, or mail them to CSNC, P.O. Box 542, Cobden, IL 62920. If more convenient, you may also drop off donations for us at Kiki’s in downtown Anna. CSNC is a 501c3 nonprofit organization, and donations are tax-deductible.

Spay/Neuter/Adopt companion animals. Meanwhile, if you see a companion animal in need, in trouble, or suffering, please, please call someone before it’s too late for them. Call your local animal control office, the police, or the Sheriff’s Dept. It IS your business if an innocent being who cannot speak for himself needs your help!

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Martial arts student earns second-degree black belt



Black belt earned

Jeffrey Stout III recently earned his second-degree black belt in ChunJiDo after completing one of the most challenging tests in the martial arts system. The examination included 14 kata, stick defense, three-on-one self-defense, sparring, rolling, falling, throwing, bag work and board breaking. Stout was recognized not only for his technical skill but also for demonstrating courtesy, integrity, strength and perseverance. He received his black belt during a traditional candlelight ceremony attended by family, friends and fellow students. Stout is the son of Jeffrey Stout II and Lindsey Stout.

Anna VFW Plans Poppy Drive, Memorial Service and Public Events

Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Carroll P. Foster Post No. 3455 from Anna will host several public events in the coming weeks, including a Poppy Drive, Memorial Day service, Taco Tuesday and live music.

The annual Poppy Drive will be held Saturday, May 23, on the Jonesboro Square from 8 a.m. to noon and at Kroger in Anna from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Donations will be accepted to support veterans. The poppies distributed during the drive are handmade by disabled veterans.

The VFW's annual Memorial Service will take place Monday, May 25, at 11 a.m. to honor members who have died during the past year. The public is invited to attend the service and a luncheon that will follow.

Installation of officers for the 2026-27 year will be held at 1 p.m. the same day.

The post will host Taco Tuesday on Tuesday, May 26, from 5 to 7 p.m. The event is open to the public.

Live music will be featured Friday, May 29, when Mystify Music performs from 7 to 11 p.m.

Union County CEO program celebrates success, continued community support



Ribbon cutting held

A ribbon cutting was held at the recent Union County CEO program trade show in Anna. Taking part were CEO students Zoe Chen, Drue Teske, Alyssa Fabian, Mariel McGrath, Foster Needling, Jayci Needling, Grant Miller, Alexis Houseman, Reese Jones, Raegan Jones, Maggie Gooden, Adam Clark, Jaylen Althoff, Aleah Gaines and Mason Lyerla, and Union County CEO facilitator Melanie Smith. Union County CEO photo.

In the short time since the recent 2026 Union County CEO All-Star Celebration & Trade Show, members of the Union County CEO program are reflecting on the support, encouragement and community involvement that made the evening a success..

The annual trade show marks the culmination of nine months of learning, growth, business development and hands-on entrepreneurial experience for the Class of 2026. Throughout the year, students developed and launched their own individual businesses while gaining real-world experience through business visits, mentorship, guest speakers, networking opportunities and community involvement.

From the beginning of their CEO journey, students learn not only from a facilitator, but from an entire community of business owners, mentors, community leaders, investors and supporters who pour their knowledge, experiences and encouragement into them throughout the year. Along the way, students learn to overcome challenges, work together as a team, and grow both personally and professionally.

One of the most meaningful parts of the evening was the continued support shown by Union County CEO alumni and the community as a whole. With more than 200 people in attendance this year, the 2026 trade show was a powerful reflection of the encouragement and investment this community

continues to invest in local students and young professionals. Seeing so many former students return to attend the trade show, support the current class, assist with preparations, and reconnect with the program served as a meaningful reminder of the lasting impact the CEO experience has on its students. Their continued involvement reflects both pride in the program and gratitude for the opportunities, relationships and experiences that helped shape their own journeys.

Longtime investor and board member Amy Penninger reflected on the impact of the evening, stating, “The 2026 CEO Trade Show was an impressive culmination of an entire school year’s worth of work. As both a board member and investor in the program, it was truly a moving experience to witness student growth and achievements, despite a number of them facing setbacks and other challenges. This fortitude is the mark of a true professional. Their gratitude for the program and the entire Union County community was made evident, one of the many reasons an investment in the CEO program is so rewarding.”

2016 UCCEO alum Kaitlyn McWhorter also shared her thoughts on the evening: “I have made it a priority to attend the UCCEO Trade Show for the past several years, and the 2026 event truly blew me away. I am so proud to be an alum of such a wonderful organization that prepares young people for the real world. These businesses were an incredible representation of the hard work that our young entrepreneurs put in throughout the school year. I hope they continue to pursue their ideas and share with others along their journey about the amazing businesses and people right here in Union County. After more than 10 years of UCCEO, the growth and impact are undeniable.”

“This event is special not

only because students launch businesses they work incredibly hard to build, but because it allows them to reflect on what they learn about themselves, entrepreneurship, leadership, and the community around them as they prepare for the next chapter of their lives.” Union County CEO facilitator Melanie Smith said. “It is truly an honor and a privilege to witness that growth and share it with the people who make up this incredible community.”

The Union County CEO program extends sincere gratitude to Harvest Church of Southern Illinois, Chris Snyder and Matt Crain for welcoming the organization into their facility and accommodating the event as students and organizers adapted to a new venue setup.

Special thanks also go to Union County CEO Board Members Angela Boyd and Meghan Norris for assisting throughout event preparation, as well as Board Member and parent Chris Clark and Board Member Grant Capel for overseeing the event’s sound system during the evening. Appreciation is also extended to UCCEO Board Member and alum Drake Campbell for assisting with setup and UCCEO Board Member and alum Hunter Boyd for assisting with teardown after the event.

The program also recognizes mentor Tanya Loveless for sharing trade show advice and resources, as well as lending decorative items and materials from her “she-shed” to assist not only her mentee, but several students as they prepared booth displays and presentations.

Additional thanks go to Courtney Misener, parent of 2024 UCCEO alum Presli Garner and Karen Clark, parent of current student Adam Clark, for their assistance in designing invitations, posters, and promotional materials for the event.

Union County CEO also recognizes alumni Alex Keller and Cole Pender, along with 2027 UCCEO team members Hunter

Dillow, Maxwell Ruddick and Tilman Dallas, for their hard work assisting with teardown following the event.

The Union County CEO program is also excited to officially welcome the Class of 2027. Representing Cobden High School are Leslie Rafael, Natalie Storm and Alivia Kilpatrick. Representing Shawnee High School in Wolf Lake are Sereniti Mefford, Shelby Pender and Addilyn Clark. Representing Anna-Jonesboro Community High School are Tilman Dallas, Hunter Dillow, Maxwell Ruddick, Kinley Leek, Natilyn Corbit, Mackenzie Barnhart, Grayson Garner, Holly Yana and Ella Helton.

As the Class of 2026 celebrates the culmination of their CEO journey, the program is excited to watch a new group of young professionals begin their own year of growth, opportunity, entrepreneurship, leadership development and community connection.

Most importantly, the Union County CEO program expresses sincere appreciation to the many investors, board members, mentors, business owners, guest speakers, community leaders, parents, family members, friends and supporters who continue to invest in the success of local students and the future of the region.

“The Union County CEO program is successful because of the people who support it,” Smith said. “Each person who encourages, mentors, invests in, or believes in this program plays a role in the impact it continues to make on students and our communities.”

The Union County CEO program is part of the national Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities, CEO, model, an experiential, community-driven program designed to prepare high school juniors and seniors for success through entrepreneurship, leadership development and real-world business experiences.

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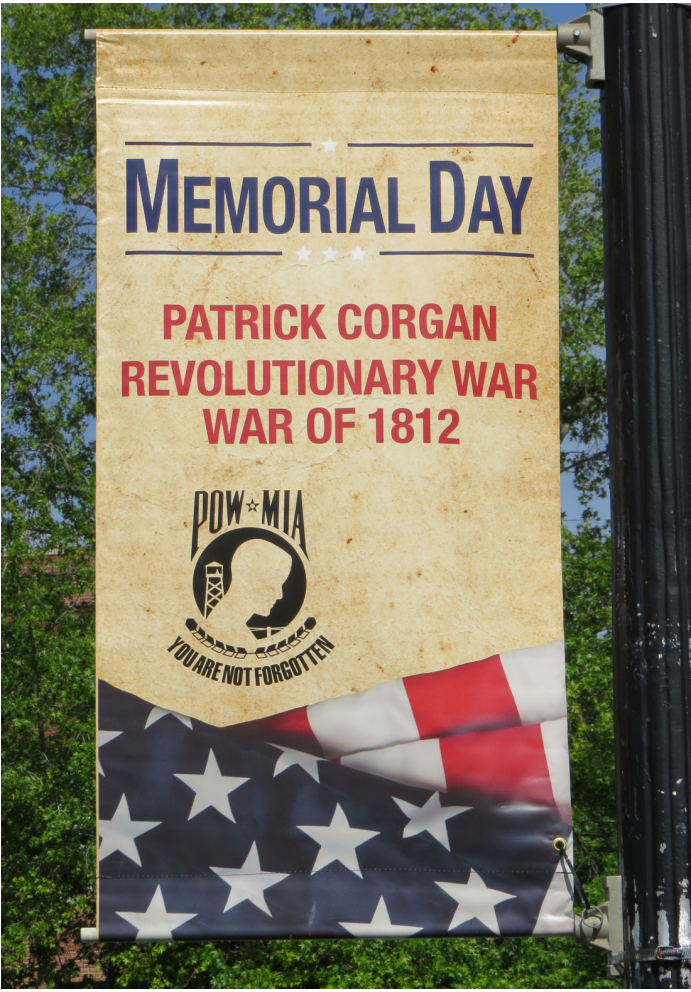
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Opinion and Commentary



MEMORIAL DAY ORDER

Headquarters Grand Army of the Republic,
Washington, D.C., May 5, 1868.
GENERAL ORDERS
No. 11

I. The 30th day of May, 1868 is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet churchyard in the land. In this observance no form or ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will in their own way arrange such fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit.

We are organized, comrades, as our regulations tell us, for the purpose, among other things, “of preserving and strengthening those kind and fraternal feelings which have bound together the soldiers, sailors and marines who united to suppress the late rebellion.” What can aid more to assure this result than by cherishing tenderly the memory of our heroic dead who made their breasts a barricade between our country and its foes? Their soldier lives were the reveille of freedom to a race in chains and their deaths the tattoo of rebellious tyranny in arms. We should guard their graves with sacred vigilance. All that the consecrated wealth and taste of the nation can add to their adornment and security is but a fitting tribute to the memory of her slain defenders. Let no wanton foot tread rudely on such hallowed grounds. Let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitors and fond mourners. Let no vandalism of avarice or neglect, no ravages of time, testify to the present or to the coming generations that we have forgotten, as a people, the cost of a free and undivided republic.

If other eyes grow dull and other hands slack, and other hearts cold in the solemn trust, ours shall keep it well as long as the light and warmth of life remains in us.

Let us, then, at the time appointed, gather around their sacred remains and garland the passionless mounds above them with choicest flowers of springtime; let us raise above them the dear old flag they saved from dishonor; let us in this solemn presence renew our pledges to aid and assist those whom they have left among us as sacred charges upon the nation’s gratitude – the soldier’s and sailor’s widow and orphan.

II. It is the purpose of the commander in chief to inaugurate this observance with the hope that it will be kept up from year to year, while a survivor of the war remains to honor the memory of his departed comrades. He earnestly desires the public press to call attention to this order, and lend its friendly aid in bringing it to the notice of comrades in all parts of the country in time for simultaneous compliance therewith.

III. Department commanders will use every effort to make this order effective.

By Command of - John A. Logan, Commander in Chief
N.P. Chipman, Adjutant General

(Note: The Memorial Day Order originally was posted on the website for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ National Cemetery Administration.)

Please read this...

‘Creepy’ green light seen Monday evening...

A news item which appeared in USA TODAY on Friday, May 15, reported that the town of Utqiagvik, Alaska, “just saw its last sunset for 84 days.” Utqiagvik, in addition to being hard to spell, is the northernmost city in the United States, the article noted. The sun won’t set again in the town until 2:57 a.m. local time on Aug. 2, the paper shared.

The sun set a little earlier than that Monday evening in our little corner of the world, where the names of the towns and cities are much easier to spell. Presumably, the sun set again Tuesday evening. However, this column was created before Tuesday evening. Since foretelling the future is not in my skill set, I cannot tell you what happened as the day came to an end on Tuesday.

As the sun was leaving the stage Monday evening, I happened to notice that the light in the great outdoors looked a little bit “creepy.” The Other Half saw it, too, which made me feel better. It was comforting to know that it wasn’t just me.

The “creepy” light seemed to make things look kind of green. Not just regular green, like you would expect to see in the spring time in Southern Illinois. More like a “creepy” green. The Other Half and yours truly tend to associate such a color with the possible arrival of nasty, stormy weather. We have seen such a thing in the past.

With that being said, nothing of significance, at least in terms of the weather, happened Monday evening. I did step outside just to see what might be going on. I noticed that some of the clouds in the sky overhead were moving from the southwest to the northeast. Some were moving from the east to the west. And a breeze was blowing, also from the east. A little bit of rain fell. Briefly. At around 8 o’clock, a band of rather ominous looking gray clouds began to move in our direction from the southwest. The band of clouds passed overhead about half an hour later, without any drama...

Meanwhile...

Don’t know about you, but this traveler on The Journey Through Life was not ready for the soupy mix of warm air and moisture that Mother Nature cooked up early last Monday afternoon. At least we received some rain, which was a good thing for The Other Half. She spent part of the weekend getting tomato, parsley and sweet potato plants in the dirt. Never thought she would have such a challenge finding some parsley and sweet potato plants.

Meanwhile...

Plenty of Critter Sightings to share this week...as well as an eye-catching sunset over the weekend...

The sunset was spotted last Saturday evening in the sky over Anna. Hope you got to see it. It sure made for a colorful backdrop to Anna-Jonesboro Community High School’s commencement ceremony.

As for the Critter Sightings...

What appeared to be...and sounded like...a forlorn squirrel was hanging out all by its lonesome self last Saturday afternoon on a utility wire just across the street from our humble abode. I’m thinking the squirrel may have just been offering some thoughts on the current state of the world. However, I am not fluent in squirrel. Perhaps it’s available on Duolingo.

Momma Turtle...presumably laying eggs in a small flower garden.

A pair of rabbits...just hanging out...maybe waiting for the sun to set.

White-tailed deer were out enjoying a nice spring evening in a field of what might have been newly sprouted soybean plants one day last week when they were seen while I was motoring along Mountain Glen Road and Kaolin Road. Deer must think they have struck it rich when they come across such bounty.

Lightning bugs, AKA fireflies, were making frequent appearances in the nighttime hours during the past week or so. Have not heard any cicadas yet.

Four or five Canada geese were unexpectedly seen flying from the east in the direction of the setting sun last Saturday evening while yours truly was heading to metropolitan Anna for a photo opportunity. The exact number of geese was hard to tally since they were seen out of the corner of my eye while the rest of me was traveling at around 55 miles per hour on U.S. Route 51.

Lots of vultures. Vultures from near the bottom of a cell tower...all the way to the tippy top. Saw them Saturday evening...right before the geese were spotted...also not far from metropolitan Anna. Maybe they were admiring the sunset...

Enough for this week...I wonder if the folks in Utqiagvik will see any “creepy” green light when the sun sets in August...

By Geof Skinner



Let’s go “old school”...for those who still use “rabbit ear” antennas with their televisions... Do you suppose two sets of rabbit ears get better reception than just one?



This little fellow...or gal...just might have been lonely. The Critter was making some really pitiful sounds when he/she was spotted last Saturday afternoon on a utility wire.



Momma Turtle might have been wishing the rest of the world would just leave her alone when she was spotted last Friday evening. The guess is that the Critter might have been laying eggs.



Garden of the month

The Anna-Jo Garden Club named Carole Baker's garden at 105 Orchard Drive in Anna as its Garden of the Month for May. Baker's landscape features boxwoods, a dwarf red Japanese maple, hydrangeas, ornamental grasses and a variety of perennials, including irises, daylilies, clematis and roses. A waterfall and fish pond accented with river rock is a focal point of the backyard and can be viewed from both the home and the street.

