

# THE GAZETTE-DEMOCRAT

The Talk And Cobden Review • Serving Union County Since 1849

Thursday, May 28, 2026

Anna, Illinois

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## News Notes

Items of interest from throughout the Union County area.

Good turnouts were seen at Memorial Day observances on Saturday in Alto Pass and on Monday morning in Cobden and Anna.

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Organizers noted that Monday morning's Memorial Day service at the Cobden Cemetery also was an opportunity to commemorate the nation's 250th anniversary.

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June's upcoming arrival brings with it a number of special events in the Union County area, including JuneFest on Saturday, June 6, in Jonesboro; a celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary which is planned Saturday and Sunday, June 6-7, in Cobden; and the Annabelle Festival on Saturday, June 13, in Anna.

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Shawnee School District 84 has announced that Maryanne Dillard is the district's new elementary principal. She succeeds Sydney Vasicek, who has accepted a position elsewhere for next school year. The district's school board thanked Vasicek for her service. The district shared on social media that Dillard brings nearly three decades of experience in Southern Illinois education to her new role, noting that "From her early days as a paraprofessional at Shawnee District 84 to serving as a special education administrator/Principal at JAMP, and most recently spending the last 8 years as the Principal of Meridian Jr./Sr. High School, Maryanne has dedicated her career to helping students thrive and feel safe."

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Illinois State Police Troop 10 participated in a recent Career Day event at Lincoln Elementary School in Anna School District 37. The troop shared on social media that students were able to observe a rollover car in action and learn about the importance of seatbelt safety. State police safety education officers regularly engage with students of all ages.

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The City of Jonesboro has announced that Shane Jones is the city's new zoning/code officer.

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Pond levels appear to be impacted by an ongoing shortage of rainfall in the area. Local weather observer Dana Cross shared that as of Tuesday, precipitation near Jonesboro had totaled 14.74 inches for the year.

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Shawnee Hills Arts Council has shared that the annual Annabelle Festival art show, Arts by the People, is right around the corner. Art works in any medium can be submitted. An opening reception is planned from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The show is scheduled to be on display June 12-28. Details can be found on the arts council's Facebook page.

(continued on page 2)

## Anna City Pool set to open for season



### Ready for swimmers

The Anna City Pool is scheduled to open Monday, June 1, for the 2026 season. The pool's season is set to run through Aug. 7.

The Anna City Pool is scheduled to open Monday, June 1, for the 2026 season. The pool is set to be open for public swimming from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. The pool season is slated to run through 5 p.m. Aug. 7.

Admission for public swimming is \$3 for those aged 3 years and older. Wednesday is \$1 off day. Passes are \$25 for 10 sessions. Passes are available at the pool.

The pool is scheduled to be open for lap swimming from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Lap sessions are \$3 per person for all ages.

The pool may be closed due to the weather at the discretion of the manager. There is no minimum number of swimmers required to open the pool for public swimming.

The city welcomes sponsors for free swim days, which are open to the public. Information is available by contacting Anna City Hall or by visiting the city's website at cityofanna.org.

Private parties can be booked from Monday through Saturday. Hours for private parties are from 6 p.m. to 7:50 p.m. or from 8 p.m. to 9:50 p.m. Parties must be booked in advance. Prices for private parties include \$150 for fewer than 50 people, \$200 for 50 to 99 people and \$250 for 100 to 150 people.

Private instruction swim lessons are available for children over 2 years old Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. and from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. More information is available by contacting the pool at 833-5222 between the hours of 1 p.m. and 5 p.m.

## Cobden plans to celebrate nation's 250th anniversary

The Village of Cobden is planning to celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary with a Revolutionary War and Civil War Encampment. The encampment is planned Saturday and Sunday, June 6-7, at the Cobden Community Park. Hours are scheduled from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday.

A variety of activities are planned. The encampment will feature demonstrations and other activities presented by reenactors.

Dennis Stroughmatt, an award-winning fiddler, singer and internationally recognized educator, is scheduled to perform his Illinois-Missouri French Creole music at 1:30 p.m. Saturday. Stroughmatt's program includes fiddle jigs, ballads, and folktales.

Stroughmatt has performed at the Kennedy Center, the Smithsonian, the Library of Congress and has been featured on NPR's All Things Considered and Prairie Home Companion. He is an historic preservationist and possibly

the last of the Illinois-Missouri French Creole fiddlers. His free presentation is being sponsored by the Illinois Humanities Council Road Scholar Speakers Bureau and the Union County Historical and Genealogy Society.

A flag presentation by the Veterans of Foreign Wars ritual team is set for 10:30 a.m. Saturday.

A Ulysses S. Grant speech is planned at approximately 2:30 p.m. Saturday.

The encampment will feature games and activities for children.

A prayer service is set for 10 a.m. Sunday, June 7.

Other activities, including period music, are planned as part of the encampment.

Historic exhibits are planned at the Union County Museum in downtown Cobden and at the community park. The exhibits will be presented by the Union County Historical & Genealogy Society.

Those who plan to attend the activities at the park are asked to bring a blanket or chair.

## Drought update

A May 21 update from the U.S. Drought Monitor showed that all of Union County has continued to experience moderate drought conditions. The area did receive some rain in the days following the update.

Moderate drought conditions also were reported in southeastern Jackson County, western Williamson County, most of John-

son 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.

## Memorial Day commemorated Monday in Union County



### Wreaths placed at monument

Wreaths were placed at a monument at the Cobden Cemetery during a Memorial Day service held Monday morning, May 25. Two wreaths were placed, including one by the service's keynote speaker, Diana Steele. The monument at the cemetery honors the memory of those who gave their lives in service to the nation during World War II.



### Memorial Day service at Anna VFW

A Memorial Day service was held Monday morning, May 25, at Veterans of Foreign Wars Carroll P. Foster Post No. 3455 of Anna.

The community came together for Memorial Day services on Monday morning, May 25, in Anna and Cobden. Memorial Day honors the men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in the nation's armed forces. Memorial Day was commemorated throughout the nation on May 25.

Service at Anna VFW Post Veterans of Foreign Wars Carroll P. Foster Post No. 3455 of Anna hosted a Memorial Day service Monday morning. The service, which started at 11 a.m., included the unveiling of a special monument honoring the memory of a longtime, dedicated member of the Union County veterans organization.

The Anna VFW post has hosted a Memorial Day service for many years. Monday morning's service was held outdoors on the post grounds, which are located near Anna.

The service opened with the singing of the National Anthem and the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance. Departed post and auxiliary members were honored.

The keynote speaker for the service was Buddy Walls, a veteran and a pastor who is the Anna VFW post's incoming chaplain. Walls shared that Memorial Day offers an opportunity for everyone to reflect on the sacrifices made by those who served the nation and to remember that "freedom is not free."

"We are truly blessed," he said. "We all need to thank God for our freedom."

Monday morning's service concluded with the unveiling and dedication of a new bench created in honor of the memory of veteran and long-time VFW member Gary Jackson of Jonesboro. Mr. Jackson served in the U.S. Marine Corps, joining at the age of 17. He served tours in Vietnam and was proud of his service to the nation.

He was a Life Member of



### Memory of VFW member honored

A bench was unveiled at Monday morning's Memorial Day service at the Anna VFW post. The bench honors the memory of Gary Jackson, who was a dedicated Life Member of the VFW. His wife, Linda, center, was joined by family members at Monday morning's service.

Carroll P. Foster Post No. 3455. He was recognized at Monday morning's service for serving the VFW for more than 59 years. The bench honoring his memory is located near other monuments which stand on the grounds of the Anna post in honor of veterans.

On behalf of Mr. Jackson's family, his wife, Linda, of Jonesboro, thanked the Anna VFW post for the special honor. "This was home ... this was where he came to meet his friends," she said. "This organization meant the world to him."

Cobden Cemetery Service A Memorial Day service was held at 9:30 a.m. Monday at the Cobden Cemetery. A service in honor of Memorial Day has been held for many years at the cemetery.

The keynote speaker for the service was Diana Steele, who

is president of the recently organized Cobden American Legion Post 259 Auxiliary and is active in other leadership roles with the organization.

Steele's family has a history of service in the nation's armed forces. Steele shared that Memorial Day offers an opportunity to remember and reflect on the "breathtaking sacrifices" made by the nation's veterans and to "remember the price that was paid" for America's freedom.

"We must never forget the families of our fallen," she said. "Nobody can replace these fallen heroes." She encouraged all of those in attendance at the service to teach the next generation of young people about the meaning of Memorial Day.

Local musicians Wil Maring and Robert Bowlin performed at Monday morning's service.



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## News Notes

(continued from page 1)  
Cobden School District 17 hosted its first Fine Arts Night on May 6. The event featured junior and senior high school projects, art students sharing their talent with others, jewelry making, caricature drawings, sticker sketching, face painting and performances by the fifth grade, junior high and high school bands. Four band seniors were recognized, several awards were presented and three basket raffle winners were announced.

The Shawnee Mass Transit District is celebrating 25 years of service to communities in the region, including in Union County.

The Anna District No. 37 Foundation is planning to host a golf scramble on June 13 at the Union County Country Club in Anna. Tee time is 8 a.m. A free lunch will be served.

A new sign highlighting the history of Alto Pass is on display near a historic log cabin which is located in the Union County village’s downtown area.

Apostolic Lighthouse Church in Cobden plans to host prayer and praise for the nation, state and community at 11 a.m. Sunday, May 31. The gathering will be at the Cobden Community Park.

Shawnee Community College’s summer hours are

scheduled to go into effect on Monday, June 1. The college is scheduled to be open from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Monday through Thursday and closed on Fridays. The schedule is in effect through July. Regular hours are scheduled to resume on Monday, Aug. 3. Summer classes at the college are set to start June 1.

Start Strong@SCC, a new student orientation experience, has been introduced at Shawnee Community College and is designed to help students feel confident, connected and prepared before their first day of classes. The college notes on social media: “Whether you’re coming straight from high school or starting a new chapter later in life, Start Strong@SCC is here to help you begin your journey with confidence.” Orientation sessions are scheduled to begin June 17 at the college’s main campus near Ullin and at Shawnee’s extension centers, including the center in Anna.

The forecast posted on the website for the National Weather Service office in Paducah was calling for widespread showers to move through on Tuesday, with a few thunderstorms possible from midday through the afternoon hours. Drier weather moves in for late week and the weekend, with shower chances lingering longest in Southeast Missouri and nearby areas.

## Lick Creek names fourth quarter honor roll students

Lick Creek School has announced its honor roll and high honor roll students for the fourth grading period of the 2025-26 school year for grades three through eight.

### High Honor Roll

Students earning high honor roll recognition were Otto Wayne Banks, William Scott Bowen, Payton Abigail Brown, Blakeley Ann-Marie Bryan, Bella Lynn Cook, Madelyn Jo Coomer, Owen Cache Corbit, Abigail Rosalie Fern Marie Evers, Kooper DuWayne Glasco, William Ellis Glays, Mallory Elizabeth Hall, Elias Carter “Eli” Houseman, Miles Parker “Milo” Houseman, Isabella Marie Mendez Fabery, Rosaleigha Annabelle Mendez Fabery, Friedrich Wichmann “Fritz” Moberley, Heinrich Wichmann “Henry” Moberley, Paisley Jae New, Hank Sawyer Newman, Jet Allen Newman, Hayes Matthew

Pinnon, Daniel Austin Plott, Maggie Dawn Roach, Michael Christopher Schmidt, Benjamin Kyle Shelton, Lukas Ryan Shelton, Abigail Rene Thorn and Rodney James “RJ” Wright.

### Honor Roll

Students earning honor roll recognition were Taylor Marie Baker, William Xavier Brown, Alexa Danielle Chaney, Macy Elaine Clutts, Bentley Drew Cobb, Ayla Kree Corbit, Bailey Lynn Duty, Lawson Carter Duty, Tanner Hope Gerardi, Taylynn Faith Gerardi, Serenity Lynn Hanney, Alice Marie Hyleman, Blakeley Nicole Hoehner, Bryson Wayne Hoehner, Ryan Christopher Houseman, Jocelyn Colleen Lyon, Kayleigh Elizabeth McMahan, Jaden Jeffrey Miller, Emelia C. Orange, Gabriel Marshall Shelton, Brooklyn Rebecca Shipley and Sofia Mae Short.

### Anna City Council meets

## Council hears update on city park project

### New ball fields at Anna City Park

Play was scheduled to begin this week on some of the new ball fields at the Anna City Park. The new fields are part of a major improvement project at the park.

New playing fields at the Anna City Park were scheduled to host their first games this week. An update about a major park improvement project, which includes new ball fields, was shared at last week’s regular meeting of the Anna City Council. The meeting was Tuesday evening, May 19.

The park project includes five new playing fields. A May 18 date had been set for substantial completion of the project. The ball fields are among major improvements at the park included in the project which got underway in the summer of 2025. At last week’s council meeting, it was announced that the first Southern Illinois Baseball and Softball Association games were set to be played on the fields Tuesday, May 26. However, rain was in the forecast.

In a related matter, the council approved a motion to spend up to \$11,300 to acquire new scoreboards for the playing fields at the park.

### Other Business

In other business at last week’s meeting:

The city has agreed to work with the Edward Jones office of Rick Jones to allow a “Sunnytime Snacks Summer-time Meal” program in Anna. Jones has shared information with the city about a plan to serve dinners to families each Wednesday in June and July. The dinners will be served from 6 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the city’s new plaza and pavilion located at 124 E. Davie St. Jones also has announced that he will make sack lunches available during the summer months at his office, which is located at 1200 Leigh Ave. in Anna.

The city council voted to deny a zoning application and requested variance for 109 Evergreen Dr. The city’s zoning board of appeals had recommended that the council deny the request. Several residents of Evergreen Drive were in attendance at last week’s council meeting and voiced opposition to allowing the variance. Concerns about safety, aesthetics and property value were voiced. Mayor Steve Hartline said the city was willing to work further with the property owners on the matter.

The city council approved an audit for fiscal year 2025 which was prepared by Kerber, Eck & Braeckel in Marion. The city is expecting to see an audit for Fiscal Year 2026 this summer.

Police department capital equipment expenses were

approved. Amounts include \$10,132.64 for new firearms and \$10,999.78 for new radios. Both purchases will replace aging equipment now used by department personnel.

The city continues to make progress on the removal of public nuisance properties in Anna. Legal processes are moving forward on resolving the status of three locations. Six more properties have been identified for action. The work is part of an ongoing process to beautify the city. “This is a good start ... and we know we have more to do,” the mayor said about the work which is being done.

A city property use application from the Southern Illinois Fair Association for the period of Aug. 17-31 was approved. The association is planning to present the 2026 Union County Fair in August.

## Southern Illinois Music Festival will pay tribute to nation’s birthday

The upcoming 22nd season of the nationally recognized Southern Illinois Music Festival, SIFest, will pay tribute to the nation’s 250th birthday.

The three-week festival, which is scheduled from June 18 to July 4, will commemorate the nation’s music history with American classical music from the 18th through the 21st centuries. Performances are set to include five major orchestral programs, five “patriotic pops” concerts and numerous chamber music programs at locations throughout the region, including in Union County.

A pre-fireworks concert is planned outside of Southern Illinois University Carbondale’s Banterra Center on July 4. A Patriotic Pops Concert is set for 7 p.m. Saturday, June 27, at Alto Vineyards in Alto Pass.

Edward Benyas, SIFest artistic director, founder and conductor, said this year’s repertoire is an opportunity to introduce audiences to a tremendous range of music by American composers.

“The crux of the festival is five concerts at Carterville High School that will cover about 150 years of American classical music, which major symphony orchestras and music festivals often neglect,” said Benyas, professor emeritus of oboe and conducting at SIU Carbondale and executive director of the Cascade Symphony in Edmonds, Wash.

Benyas said the five concerts include the music of 19th-century masters George Whitefield Chadwick and Charles Ives; 20th-century icons George Gershwin, William Grant Still, Florence Price, Samuel Barber, Aaron Copland and Leonard Bernstein; and living American composers John Adams, James Stephenson, Peter Boyer, Mary Watkins and John Williams.

The festival will commemorate the music of no less than 15 living American composers who range in age from 21 to 94 years old. In addition, throughout the festival there will be instrumental selections from American musicals including “Oklaho-

ma!,” “Hamilton,” “South Pacific,” “West Side Story” and “A Chorus Line.” There also will be excerpts from John Williams’ film scores at every orchestral concert.

Artist biographies, ensembles and the full schedule of concerts are available on the festival website, sifest.com.

This year’s festival received a significant boost to help with programming with a \$20,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The funds went toward performance rights for American classical music not in the public domain that will be performed at this year’s festival.

WSIU Radio plans to host a one-hour festival preview at 8 p.m. June 12 (with a rebroadcast planned June 19). On June 18, a festival preview and reception featuring jazz and string chamber music is set for 8 p.m. at Buckwater Brew Works and Whiskey House in Carbondale.

The festival’s opening event is at 7 p.m. June 20 with a “Patriotic Pops Concert” at SIU Carbondale’s

Tedrick Welcome Center, highlighting American music from composers including John Philip Sousa, Gershwin, Copland and Williams.

Other concert locations include Carterville High School, the Marion Civic Center, the Harold Jones Fine Arts Center in Cairo, the Artspace Southern Illinois 304 Cultural Arts Center, the African American Museum and the First United Methodist Church, all in Carbondale, and Alto Vineyards.

Tickets for all SIFest 2026 events, except those that are free, are \$25 general admission and \$10 for students of any age, and available at concert venues beginning 30 minutes before each performance. An all-festival pass is \$200 and includes admission to all events along with a 60-page program booklet, valued together at \$280. Advance festival passes and individual tickets are available on the SIFest 2026 brochure ticket order form on the festival website.

## Weather

High 86, low 58; 0.28 of an inch of rain

Temperatures for the period of May 19-25 in the Union County area ranged from a high of 86 degrees to a low of 58. Precipitation totaled 0.28 of an inch of rain.

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

Tuesday, May 19: high 86, low 63.

Wednesday, May 20: high 71, low 60. 0.07 of an inch of rain.

Thursday, May 21: high 68, low 60.

Friday, May 22: high 66, low 62. 0.07 of an inch of rain.

Saturday, May 23: high 72, low 63. 0.02 of an inch of rain.

Sunday, May 24: high 78, low 60. 0.12 of an inch of rain.

Monday, May 25: high 65, low 58.

## Rural Health food drives wrapping up

Food drives sponsored by Rural Health Inc. in three area counties are coming to an end this week.

With the school year coming to a close, many families throughout Southern Illinois are looking ahead to summer and concerns about feeding their children without support from the National School Lunch Program. As a result, each year it is estimated that regional food pantries often experience demand spikes between 700 percent and 850 percent during the summer months, placing an additional strain on pantries when donations are often at their lowest.

Rural Health Inc. is working to help reduce the food burden for families in the Illinois counties it serves by

hosting food drives in Union, Massac and Johnson counties. The food drives began on May 14 in Goreville. A second food drive was held May 22 in Metropolis.

A third and final food drive is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday, May 28, at the Kroger store in Anna. Donations will benefit Shawnee Development Council’s food pantry in Anna.

According to the University of Illinois Extension, more than 45,000 Southern Illinois residents struggle with hunger, with child food insecurity rates in the region reaching between 17.9 percent and 29.5 percent. This translates to over 12,000 hungry children in Southern Illinois. During the summer months,

families must often provide an additional 10 to 14 meals per week.

While anything nonperishable will be accepted, Rural Health Inc. is asking donors to consider nutritious items that are kid-friendly and easy for children to make themselves. This can include mac and cheese boxes, canned meals (such as ravioli, spaghetti, chicken and others), peanut butter, ramen noodles, individual boxes of cereal, crackers, individual fruit cups (with no sugar added) and juice boxes.

More information about supporting the food drive is available by contacting Rural Health Inc. public relations director Shawna Rhine at 618-833-4471, extension 1036.

# Bost introduces resolution highlighting farmers’ mental health needs

U.S. Representative Mike Bost (IL-12) has joined Rep. Kim Schrier (WA-8) in introducing a resolution to raise awareness about the mental health challenges facing farmers, ranchers and agricultural workers across the country.

The resolution would designate May 29 as Mental Health Awareness in Agriculture Day and draw attention to the unique pressures experienced by those working in agriculture, including volatile markets, rising production costs and unpredictable weather.

According to the National Rural Health Association, the suicide rate among farmers is 3.5 times higher than that of the general population.

"Our farmers are proud, salt of the Earth people, but they face tremendous pressures in a tough industry. The stress that comes with the profession is real, with a suicide rate 3.5 times higher than the general population," said Representative Bost.

"Volatile markets, rising input costs, and unpredictable weather don't just threaten a family farm's bottom line, they take a toll on mental health, too. This legislation is a step towards making sure they know that if they're struggling, they don't have to struggle alone."

The congressman represents Illinois' 12th congressional district, which includes Southern Illinois.



**Information about health care coverage shared**  
Staff from Rural Health Inc. visited with Anna Kiwanis Club members on Thursday, May 7. Chrissy Childers, outreach and enrollment supervisor/Get Covered Illinois navigator and Senior Health Insurance Program, SHIP, counselor at Rural Health Inc., shared information and answered questions about enrolling in Medicare, Medicaid and Get Covered Illinois health insurance plans during a visit with the club in Anna. Rural Health Inc. offers free insurance consultation to all residents. The service is available regardless of a patient's status with Rural Health Inc. Photo provided.

## Union County issued 1.0000 tax multiplier

The Illinois Department of Revenue, IDOR, on May 15 reported that Union County has been issued a final property assessment equalization factor of 1.0000.

The property assessment equalization factor, often called the "multiplier," is the method used to achieve uniform property assessments among counties, as required by law.

IDOR said the equalization is important because some of the state's 6,600 local taxing districts, such as school and junior college districts, overlap into two or more counties. If there was no equalization among counties, substantial inequities among taxpayers with comparable properties would result.

Under a law passed in 1975, property in Illinois should be assessed at one-third of its market value. Farm property is assessed differently, with farm homesites and dwellings subject to regular assessing and equalization procedures. Farmland is assessed at one-third of its agriculture economic value and not subject to the state equalization factor.

Assessments in Union County are at 33.32 percent of market value, based on sales of properties in 2022, 2023 and 2024, IDOR reported in a news release. The

equalization factor currently being assigned is for 2025 taxes, payable in 2026. Last year's equalization factor for the county was 1.0000.

The final assessment equalization factor was issued after a public hearing on the tentative factor. The tentative factor, issued on Feb. 26, was 1.0000.

The equalization factor is determined annually for each county by comparing the price of individual properties sold over the past three years to the assessed value placed on those properties by the county supervisor of assessments/county assessor.

If the three-year average level of assessment is one-third of the market value, the equalization factor will be 1. If the average level of assessment is greater than one-third of market value, the equalization factor will be less than 1. If the average level of assessment is less than one-third of market value, the equalization factor will be greater than 1.

IDOR noted that a change in the equalization factor does not mean total property tax bills will increase or decrease. Tax bills are determined by local taxing bodies when they request money each year to provide services to local citizens. If the amount requested by local taxing districts is not greater than the amount received in the previous year, then total property taxes will not increase even if assessments increase.

The assessed value of an individual property determines what portion of the tax burden a specific taxpayer will assume. That individual's portion of tax responsibility is not changed by the multiplier.

## Stinson Library to kick off summer reading program

Stinson Memorial Public Library in Anna is planning to have a kick-off party for this year's summer reading program. The party is scheduled from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. May 29 at Quick's Skating Rink in Anna. The rink is located at 216 E. Davie St. Sign-up for the program will be available.

Summer reading program sessions are scheduled in June and July at Stinson Memorial Public Library in Anna and at the library's branch facility in Cobden. Programs are planned for four age groups: babies and toddlers, pre-kindergarten through third grade, fourth through eighth grades and adults.

Reading sessions in Cobden are set for 10 a.m. on Mondays. The sessions will be at Mother's Coffee and Provisions in the downtown Cobden area.

Sessions for incoming fourth through eighth graders are planned at 10 a.m. on Tuesdays at the library in Anna. Pre-K to third grade and babies and toddlers are invited to sessions which are set for 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Wednesdays. Reading program sessions for adults are planned at 4 p.m. on Fridays.

More information is available by contacting Stinson Memorial Public Library in Anna at 833-2521, the Cobden branch at 893-4637, and by visiting stinsonlibrary.org or library's Facebook page.

## Special Olympics Day scheduled at Touch of Nature Center

Special Olympics Day is planned at Southern Illinois University Carbondale's Touch of Nature Outdoor Education Center near Carbondale on May 30. The free, inclusive, community-wide event is open to everyone, regardless of age or ability. Touch of Nature Outdoor Education Center is located about 8 miles south of Carbondale off Giant City Road.

Special Olympics Day is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Organizers said the event is for current Special Olympics athletes and coaches, a chance for new participants to learn about the organization's programming opportunities and an opportunity for everyone to celebrate inclusion while participating in a wide variety of activities.

Those who attend Special Olympics Day will have an opportunity to join in a wide range of activities, including archery, fire building, disc golf, a scavenger hunt, yard games, slacklines, arts and crafts, a giant swing, a climbing wall and a cargo net tower.

Food and refreshments will be served. Thanks to First Southern Bank sponsorship, all Special Olympics athletes and people who identify as having a disability can eat for free. Other community members who attend can dine using a "pay what you can"/donation-based plan.

Organizers said the goal of Special Olympics Day is to strengthen community connections and increase awareness and participation in Southern Illinois Special Olympics programming.

NOTICE OF PRACTICE CLOSURE

~RETIREMENT~

Drs. Roger & Connie High, announce their retirement and the permanent closure of High Chiropractic Center located at 35 Walton Lane, Anna, Illinois, effective June 26, 2026.

"After 43 years of service to the communities of Anna and Vienna, we will be retiring from our practice. At this time, there is no successor physician assuming the practice. We want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our patients for their trust and loyalty throughout the years. It has been a privilege to provide care and support to so many individuals and families. It has been a wonderful journey and we thank you."

If you have any questions regarding records or administrative issues, please call 618-833-7014 on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

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# Obituaries

## Eunice Lucille Chilman

Eunice Lucille Chilman, age 94 of Cobden, Ill., passed away peacefully on Sunday, May 24.

She was a dedicated caregiver – with a strong and kind spirit – ready to give love and support to anyone in need. She will be deeply missed by family and friends.

Eunice was born in Galva, Ill. on Dec. 19, 1931, to William and Beulah Clevenger.

After graduating from Galva High School in 1949 Eunice went on to complete training for nursing and worked as an R.N. in the 1950’s in hospitals in Illinois, California, New Jersey and Michigan. Her nursing adventures and friends made along the way defined her independent and adventurous early life.

She married Kenneth Claus Chilman in June 1959 – and together the adventure continued. They moved from the Midwest to California where Ken served with the Forest Service in Bishop, Downieville and Mammoth Lakes, California in the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Eventually they moved to Ann Arbor, Mich. then Columbia, Mo. and finally settled in Cobden, Ill. – where she has lived for 50 years.

She was an attentive mother and caregiver to family and friends – always eager to listen, give a kind word, and a warm hug. She loved her family, many travels across the U.S and internationally, Christmases on the beach, her garden and being active in the Cobden community.

Eunice was devout in her faith; she was a member of First Presbyterian Church in Cobden where she served for many years as church treasurer and contributed to countless church activities.

She lived a long, full life—for which she felt so richly blessed.

Eunice is survived by children Beth Chilman of Harrisburg, Ill., Brenda Chilman of St. Louis, Mo. and Eric Chilman (Stacey) of Jonesboro, Ill. She was blessed with amazing grandchildren: Kaitlin Chilman, Evan Chilman, Dylan Chil-

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FUNERAL HOMES



man and one great grandson, Jackson Claus Grover.

Eunice is survived also by brother, Jim Clevenger of Galesburg, Ill., sisters in law Eva Ann Chilman, Jane Hamblen, and brother-in-law Jim Hamblen – all of North Vernon, Ind., and sister-in-law Alice Jones, of Loogootee, Ind. Eunice cherished her very dear nieces and nephews and their families. She also leaves many friends who enriched her life.

Eunice was preceded in death by husband, Ken, her parents, sister, Ila Faye Price, brothers in law, Wayne Chilman (North Vernon, Ind.), Marlo Chilman (Washington, Ind.), and Eugene Price (Jacksonville) and sister-in-law, Rita Clevenger (Galesburg, Ill.).

Celebration of Life services will be held at noon on Friday, May 29 at the First Presbyterian Church of Cobden with Rev. Sterrett Collins officiating.

Graveside services will follow at the Cobden Cemetery. Visitation will be held from 10 a.m. until the service at noon.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to First Presbyterian Church of Cobden or preferred charity. Envelopes will be available at the church and the Rendleman and Hileman Funeral Home.

There will be a reception held at the First Presbyterian Church following graveside services.

To view the obituary and leave online condolences for the family, visit [www.rendlemanhilemanfh.com](http://www.rendlemanhilemanfh.com).

Rendleman and Hileman Funeral Home in Cobden in charge of arrangements.

## Charles Edward “Charlie” Hileman

Charlie “Chuck” Hileman passed away peacefully on Saturday, May 16, 2026 surrounded by his loving family.

Born on Jan. 11, 1933, he was the second of eleven children born to Dock and Susie Hileman of Anna, Ill.

After graduating in 1951, he entered the Air Force and served from 1952 to 1956. He was a graduate of The American Institute of Baking in Chicago in 1961.

He retired from Bunny Bread after 30 years, serving as a production manager and vice president. After his retirement, he continued working as a consultant for Fleischmann’s Yeast throughout the United States.

He married Barbara Vaughn on Oct. 6, 1951 and together they raised two children: Connie (Michael) Guetling and David (Robin) Hileman. He was blessed with three grandchildren — David (Kelly) Guetling, Caitlin (Drew) Meny, and Addi (Robbie) Mayes — as well as four great-grandchildren: Carter, Kylie, Nora, and Kenzie.

Charlie loved spending time with his family, as they were the light of his life.

Together they enjoyed countless beach trips to Indian Rocks Beach, Fla., where a lifetime of memories were made. He also enjoyed many cruises throughout the years with his wife and friends.

He was an avid St. Louis Cardinals baseball fan and In-

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diana University basketball fan (GO HOO-SIERS!).

You could always find Charlie sitting outside on his patio with his family, enjoying their laughter and the sunshine.

He is survived by his wife of over 74 years, his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, a number of siblings, and many nieces and nephews.

His family would like to extend their deepest thanks to Julie Greer and his care team from Heart to Heart Hospice for their compassionate and loving care of Charlie.

A celebration of life visitation took place on Sunday, May 24 at Rendleman Hileman Funeral Home in Jonesboro.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be directed to Heart to Heart Hospice. Envelopes will be available at the funeral home.

## Elmer LeRoy Tellor

Elmer LeRoy Tellor, age 67 of Jonesboro, died Wednesday, May 13, 2026 at his home.

He was born on June 10, 1958 in Anna, the son of Floyd William and Catherine (Beltz) Tellor. He married Sherry Lynn Newberry on April 18, 1989.

He is survived by his wife, Sherry Lynn Tellor; longtime girlfriend, Sherry Stoner; children, Larry Tellor, Eli (Miranda) Tellor, Justin (Dani) Tellor, Brandi Yates, Orry Dale and Chassidy (Monty) Farris; grandchildren, Kynleigh, Larry Jr., Greyson, Chaice, Aden, Katie, Stephanie, Shaylee, Addison and Lyza; siblings, Belinda Peterman, Holly Tellor, Darlene Brown, Walter Smith and Bobby Smith; nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents and two brothers, Larry Tellor and Floyd Tellor, Jr.

Elmer worked in construction, building homes throughout the area. He was a talented stone mason.

He enjoyed fishing and spending time with his family.

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They will remember his great sense of humor.

He will certainly be missed.

Graveside funeral services for Elmer Tellor were held on Friday, May 22, 2026 at Kelly Cemetery with Dave Maragni officiating. Interment followed.

Rendleman and Hileman Funeral Home in Jonesboro is in charge of arrangements. Memorial contributions can be made to Rendleman and Hileman Funeral Home to assist the family with final expenses.

Envelopes will be available at the cemetery and at Rendleman and Hileman Funeral Home.

## Beverly Ann Ford

Beverly Ann Ford, age 60, of Thebes, formerly of Anna, passed away on Thursday, May 21, 2026 at Integrity Healthcare in Anna, after a brief stay, with her mother at her side.

Beverly was born on August 18, 1965 to Charles Henry Jordan and Vermel (Abbott) Jordan at Union County Hospital in Anna, Ill.

Beverly graduated from Century High School and went to receive her CNA certificate from Shawnee Community College. She had worked as a caregiver in various nursing homes in the area.

Beverly enjoyed crafting jewelry, spending time on social media with friends and family. She professed to love the Lord and was of Baptist Faith.

Survivors include her mother, Vermel Huckelberry and her step-father Lowell Huckelberry; children, Wendy McCormick and Justin Ford; grandchildren, Addyline Hadley of East Peoria, Ill., Brylee Renner, and Olivia Renner

both of Hohenwald, Tenn.; step-sister, Jill Huckelberry of St. Louis, Mo.; step-brother, Roger Huckelberry of Herman, Mo.

Beverly was preceded in death by her father, Charles Jordan; grandparents, Ora Abbott and Dorothy Abbott Roberts and Avis and Omar (Johnny) Jordan.

The cremation of Beverly Ann Ford will be personally handled by the staff of Crain Funeral Home.

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

**Crain**  
*Funeral home*



## Wilma J. Roach

Wilma J. Roach, age 88 of Anna, passed away Friday, May 22, 2026 at Deaconess Union County Hospital with her loving family by her side.

She was born Feb. 20, 1938 in Villa Ridge, the daughter of Theodore and Hazel (Windings) Goins.

On Sept. 8, 1956 she married Jack Roach, Sr. in Jonesboro. They have shared 70 loving years of marriage.

Wilma is survived by her husband, Jack Roach, Sr.; three daughters, Brenda (Terry) Bartruff, Angie (Jim) Pogue, and Laura (Dan) Guined; ten grandchildren; seventeen great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild; brother, Eddie (Donna) Goins; two sisters, Joyce Cameron and Lucille (Leonard) Temke; several nieces, nephews, other relatives, and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sons, Jack Roach, Jr. and Shane Roach; brothers, Ted, Gary, Glen, and Rev. Robert Goins, and sisters, Wanda Carson, Cynthia White, and Betty Schultz.

Wilma was a member of New Beginnings Community Worship in Anna. She loved spending time with her grandchildren. Family and church were her world. She will be dearly missed.

Funeral services were Tuesday, May 26, 2026 at New Beginnings Worship Center in Anna with Pastor Lonnie Lewis officiating. Interment followed in the Anna Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to New Beginnings Worship Center. Envelopes will be available at the church and Rendleman and Hileman Funeral Home.



## Glenn E. Clutts

Glenn E. Clutts, age 74 of Cobden, went home to his Lord and Savior, Wednesday, May 20, 2026, surrounded by his loving family.

He was born Oct. 31, 1951 in Anna, the son of Earl W. and Dorothy E. (Harrell) Clutts. He married Louise (Dodge) on June 18, 1994.

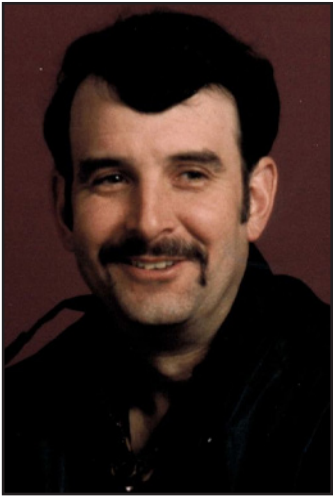
Glenn is survived by his wife, Louise Clutts of Cobden; children, Stacy (Greg) Smith, Brock Proctor, Josh (Danielle) Proctor; grandchildren, Haley Smith, Molly (Luke) Falgout, and Rilynn Proctor; sister, Janet Meadows; niece, Rhondalynn (Ken) Rushing; nephew, Jeff Meadows; other extended family and many friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Glenn was a devoted man of faith, he read his bible every day. He was a member of the Vine Church in Carbondale for many years.

Glenn worked as the plant manager for F.S. until his retirement. Glenn was solar powered, he was always outdoors,

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either checking the cattle, the crops or tending to his vegetable garden. He was also an avid Pittsburg Steelers and Pittsburg Pirates fan.

He dearly loved his grandchildren and spending time with all of them brought him the most joy.

Memorial services were on Saturday, May 23, 2026 at the Vine Church in Carbondale with Noble Staley officiating.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Vine Church. Envelopes will be available at the church and the Rendleman & Hileman Funeral Home.

### News from

## Anna First Baptist Church

Anna First Baptist Church met for Worship Service on May 24 with Sharon Farris leading our Opening Prayer and doing our announcements.

She then introduced our speaker for the day Pastor Kamal Maddala.

Pastor Kamal and his family did our worship music and Pastor Kamel did our preaching for the day in absence of our Pastor Lupe who was out of town with his family.

Pastor Kamel has a ministry in Paducah which allows him to serve the local community, sharing his faith and guiding others on their spiritual journey through life.

Pastor Kamal and his family are always a blessing as they minister to our church and share God’s Word.

On Wednesday evening we have a Bible Study which we are going through the Book of Genesis, Pastor Lupe is teaching an in-depth study on this book at 6 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Our Mexico Mission 2026 is here! After many yard sales and much planning, eight of our members and missionaries are going to Mexico to share Jesus with some people who may have never heard who Jesus is. Maybe even some people who worship Satan or witchcraft, or worship beings we can not begin to imagine. Please pray every day for our missionary’s, pray for their safety, pray for their effective witness to the people of Mexico that souls will be won for Jesus.

Our Sunday School begins at 9 a.m. and is for all ages. Our children’s Church and Adult Worship Service begins at 10:15 a.m. Our bus runs for all of these services and for our Wednesday evening Bible Study. Please call the church office and we will be happy to put you on a list to be picked up.

Our Church is located at 409 Morgan Street in Anna. Our phone number is 618-833-5416. Our email is [fb-canna409@gmail.com](mailto:fb-canna409@gmail.com).

Our Facebook is Anna-FirstBaptistChurch

We welcome you to all of our services and programs. We would love for you to stop by and talk and let us pray with you, tell you about Jesus, share what He means to us.

May God bless you and your loved ones.

### News from

## Camp Ground Church, Community

We acknowledged three occasions Sunday: Memorial Day, Pentecost, and Bro. Easton’s delayed Mother’s Day message since he had not been in the pulpit for two Sundays.

His message was “A Mother’s Faithfulness” with scripture from Hebrews 11.

Mothers, as well as grandmothers, aunts, adult women friends or even neighbor ladies can positively influence children daily by the example they live and the guidance they provide.

In the creation story, and after the great flood, God told his people to go forth and multiply. He did not mean to have children just to fill a space, but to rear children in the way of, and with love of the Lord.

It takes Godly parents to provide a firm foundation in faith for their children.

Even though we have been reared by parents of faith, it is up to us as to how we live.

We are to obey God rather than man. We must be willing to do what God wants us to do; we have to stand up for what is right.

Bro. Easton asked “What are you doing to influence a child in love for God?”

Olivia Painter and Caraly-na Pind received the tithes and offerings guided by Raelynn Bonner.

Those celebrating birthdays since our last column have been Landon Roach the 17th, Vanda Gerard the 20th, and Dean Jones the 25th.

Congratulations to Cody and Sara Poole whose wedding anniversary was Tuesday, the 26th.

Following emergency surgery early Mothers’ Day morning, Bro. Easton’s wife Amber was transferred to a St. Louis hospital for another surgery. She was released late the 16th, but was still home recovering this past Sunday.

We invite you to join us each and every Sunday as we gather to study and worship. At 9:15, we enjoy coffee and fellowship preceding Bible Study at 9:30 followed by Worship at 10:30. We are located at the intersection of Camp Ground Road and Tunnel Lane east of Anna, north of Route 146.

View Obituaries Online at  
**annanews.com**

News from

Anna Nazarene Church

Sunday, May 24  
The morning worship service was held at 10:35 a.m. on May 24. The worship service was led by Pastor Wright and the Worship Team.

2026 eighth grade graduates, Gabe Hammer, Alex Wright, Ben Thompson and 2026 high school graduates, Jayda Benefield, Chris Wright, Christian Thompson, Drake Maurer, Aaron Wiseman and Ally Simmons were recognized and presented a gift from the church.

A video was shown remembering those who have served in remembrance of Memorial Day followed by a poem read by Nancy Smith.

The message “Pentecost Sunday” from Acts 1-4 was given by Pastor Randy Wright sharing that Pentecost is not only history — it is present reality. The same Spirit who filled the upper room still fills believers today.

Communion was served at the close of morning worship service.

There was no evening service.

Celebrating birthdays are: 24th Jessica Elkins, 25th Nancy Smith, Terry Wiseman

Sunday, May 31  
Breakfast - 9:00 a.m. Sunday School - 9:30 a.m. Morning Worship Service No Evening Service.

Wednesday, June 3  
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.

News from

First Baptist Church, Jonesboro

On May 24, Bro. Perry Williams spoke in the morning service. Bro. Perry’s message addressed remembrances throughout the bible. The very first memorial in the bible was discussed as well as other times God has delivered His people and need to be remembered.

His text was from the fifteenth chapter of the gospel of John, found in the New Testament and also, the ninth chapter of Genesis from the Old Testament.

Dee Rose led in worship accompanied by Debbie York on the piano, and the praise team: Isabel Tehandón, Larry Keller, and Rodger Goines. Jayson Rose sang the song, “You Love Me Anyway,” as a solo.

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 Newsletter Folding Team meeting Thursday, May 28, at 9 a.m.

Recent birthdays: Jodie Dial,

born May 24; Rob Wright and Clay York, both born on May 25; Daniel Osman, May 28; and Sierra Beggs, May 29. 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.

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



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As children we are fresh, unsoiled by culture and untouched by defeat. As life progresses, we pick up smudges and our fresh outlook fades. It’s laundry time! Actually, our laundry should be done regularly, for once soil is set in it’s difficult to remove. If we are part of a community of worship, each week we have the opportunity to refresh our bodies and renew our spirits as we enter God’s sanctuary. We can experience a “soul cleansing” as God’s Word washes away anxiety and fear. Worship this week and begin afresh with God.

**Daily Bible Reading**

|        |        |        |        |        |         |       |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|-------|
| Ruth   | Ruth   | Ruth   | Ruth   | Acts   | Acts    | Psalm |
| 1:1-22 | 2:1-23 | 3:1-18 | 4:1-22 | 1:1-11 | 1:12-26 | 47    |

*Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society* ✕ *Daily Devotional at DailyBible.AmericanBible.org*

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## GARAGE / YARD SALE

Garage Sale Fri. May 29 & Sat. May 30 205 Grand Avenue, Anna. Women's clothing various sizes, household items and much much more. Don't want to miss 8am-2pm No early sales.

Cobden First Baptist Church Yard sale in the Family Life Center Sat. May 30 7am-2pm to benefit Carmi Children's Home.

Quilters, Seamstresses and Crafters this is the sale for you. Lots of materials, sewing notions of all types at excellent prices. Quilting magazines, Quilting stencils, Quilting frames and sewing patterns. Misc glass-ware, man stuff, ladies size 3x clothing mostly QVC Brand at bargain basement prices. Not sure what else will be added by the time of sale. Don't miss this one. Fri. May 29 & Sat. May 30 8am-3pm both days. 203 Brady Mill Rd. Anna, IL. Rain cancels

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## LEGAL NOTICE

### NOTICE UNDER ASSUMED BUSINESS NAME ACT State of Illinois

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

Filed this 8th day of May, 2026, under the Assumed Name of Gene Fisher dba Fisher Restorations with the place of business located at 121 Turner Ave., Anna, IL 62906, and that the True Name(s) and Residence Address of the Sole Owner(s) and Proprietors of said Business is:

Owner(s): Gene Fisher  
Address: 121 Turner Ave., Anna, IL 62906  
Stephanie L. Cox  
Union County Clerk  
8221-965388

### NOTICE OF INTENT TO FILE APPLICATION

The Anna Jonesboro Water Commission (AJWC), Union County, IL is submitting an application for financial assistance to USDA Rural Development to replace exposed watermain in creek bed.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting Casey Johnson at the Anna Jonesboro Water Commission Office at 618-833-5313

8221-965386

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

### 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 FALLING IN THE COUNTY ROAD AND ANY OTHER EXISTING EASEMENTS OF RECORD, IF ANY. PER PLAT OF SURVEY PREPARED BY SCOTT A. RICHARDS, ILLINOIS LAND SURVEYOR NO. 2996 , RECORDED ON NOVEMBER 4 , 2005, IN RECORD BOOK 269 AT PAGE 352 IN THE RECORDER'S OFFICE OF UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

and for other relief, that summons was duly issued out of the said Court against you as provided by law, and that said suit is still pending.

Now, therefore, unless you, the said Defendants, Stephen M. Benefield, Tonia R. Benefield, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, file your answer to the Complaint in the suit, or otherwise make your appearance therein, in the Circuit Court of Union County, Illinois, in the County Courthouse in the City of Jonesboro, Illinois, on or before the 13th Day of July, 2026, default may be entered against you and each of you at any time after that day and a decree entered in accordance with the prayer of said Complaint.

Keri E. Clark  
Clerk of the Circuit Court  
Prepared by:  
JOHN R. SCHNEIDER  
JOHNSON, SCHNEIDER & FERRELL, L.L.C.  
212 North Main Street  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701  
Tel: (573) 335-3300  
Fax: (573)335-1978  
8221-965084

### TAX DEED NO. 2026TX4 FILED May 6, 2026 Certificate No. 2022-00165 TAKE NOTICE

TO: MICHAEL P BLANK; UNKNOWN HEIRS AND DEVISEES OF MICHAEL P BLANK; UNKNOWN OWNERS OR PARTIES INTERESTED; AND NON-RECORDED CLAIMANTS.

This is NOTICE of the filing of the petition for Tax Deed on the following described property:

4 MAIN ST. ALTO PASS, IL 62905  
Property Index Number No. 14-00-10-917

On September 16, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. the Petitioner intends to make application for an order on the petition that a Tax Deed be issued in the Circuit Court of Union County, IL. The real estate was sold on February 7, 2024 for general taxes of the year 2022. The period of redemption will expire September 7, 2026.

Matthew & Kelly Bliss,  
Petitioner  
8221-964746

### TAX DEED NO. 2026TX5 FILED May 6, 2026 Certificate No. 2022-00061 TAKE NOTICE

TO: CAROLE & ERWIN R EDDLEMAN; SUSAN M NANCE; UNKNOWN HEIRS AND DEVISEES OF CAROLE & ERWIN EDDLEMAN; UNKNOWN OWNERS OR PARTIES INTERESTED; AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS.

This is NOTICE of the filing of the petition for Tax Deed on the following described property:

S18 T13 R1W N PT SW. UNION COUNTY, IL  
Property Index Number No. 06-18-04-583

On September 16, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. the Petitioner intends to make application for an order on the petition that a Tax Deed be issued in the Circuit Court of Union County, IL. The real estate was sold on February 7, 2024 for general taxes of the year 2022. The period of redemption will expire September 7, 2026.

Matthew & Kelly Bliss,  
Petitioner  
8221-964747



# Warm weather brings concerns about mosquitoes, ticks, bats

The Illinois Department of Public Health, IDPH, is reminding the public that warmer weather means an increased potential for exposure to several illnesses that can be carried by animals or biting pests. While enjoying outdoor activities, people should take appropriate precautions to reduce their risk of contracting serious illness, the department advised.

“Spring and summer provide so many opportunities for outdoor fun all across Illinois,” IDPH director Dr. Sameer Vohra said in a news release. “It is important to remember that some common biting pests and animals may be carrying disease that can cause serious human illnesses. Illinois residents should take precautions like wearing bug repellent and vaccinating their pets against rabies, among other measures, to keep themselves and their communities healthy and safe.”

There are three main categories of concern this time of year. They involve mosquitoes, ticks and bats.

### Mosquitoes, West Nile Virus

Each year, IDPH and local health departments test mosquito samples for the presence of West Nile virus. The first positive mosquito batches for 2026 were recently found in Cook County. While no human cases had been reported as of May 14, in 2025 there were 150 total human cases and 10 fatalities reported in Illinois.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a Culex mosquito, commonly called a house mosquito, that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks.

Most people infected with West Nile virus will

not show any symptoms; however, in rare cases it can lead to severe illness including paralysis, meningitis or encephalitis (such as brain and nerve infections), or even death. People older than 60 and those with weakened immune systems are at highest risk for severe illness.

IDPH urges the public to Fight the Bite by practicing the three “R’s”: reduce, repel, and report:

**Reduce:** make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires and any other containers.

**Repel:** when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol, PMD, or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.

**Report:** report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water to remove mosquito larvae.

### Tickborne Illness

Ticks can spread a number of potentially serious illnesses, including Lyme disease, spotted fever group rickettsiosis, ehrlichiosis and others. Last year, the first confirmed case of Powassan virus, a potentially deadly illness, was diagnosed

in an Illinois resident, although it is unclear if the case was contracted within the state.

IDPH advised that the best protective measure against tickborne illness is preventing tick bites, no matter what state you are in. The department shared some tips on how to avoid tickborne illnesses.

Walk in the center of trails. Avoid wooded, bushy areas with high grass and leaf litter. Wear light-colored clothing to make ticks easier to find. Tuck long pants into socks and boots. Apply an EPA-registered insect repellent containing 20 percent DEET, picaridin, IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus according to label directions. Conduct full-body tick checks on family members every two to three hours. Also check any gear or pets taken on outings. Talk to your veterinarian about how to best protect your pet from ticks.

To kill ticks after being outdoors, put clothes in the dryer on high for 10 minutes (or one hour for damp clothes). Bathe or shower within two hours after coming indoors. Many tickborne diseases can have similar signs and symptoms. If you get a tick bite and develop fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, joint pain, fatigue or rash, within a few weeks, see your healthcare provider.

It is often helpful to keep the tick for species identification. Place the tick in rubbing alcohol or in a sealed bag/container to bring to your healthcare provider or local health department for submission to IDPH for species identification. A submission form can be found on the IDPH website at [dph.illinois.gov](https://dph.illinois.gov).

### Rabies in Bats

IDPH also tracks cases of rabies in animals. The disease is most commonly found in bats. As of

May 14, two bats had tested positive for rabies in Illinois: one in Whiteside County, the other in Sangamon County.

The greatest risk of exposure comes from bats that make their way into people’s homes, IDPH said. The department’s website has information on steps you can take to keep bats out of your home at Bats and Bat Exclusion. If a bat is found inside a home, try and cover it with a container and contact animal control so it can be tested for rabies.

Illinois residents should also make sure that rabies vaccinations are up to date for pets and any valuable livestock and horses for which a rabies vaccine is available. If a pet is exposed to a high-risk wild animal, such as a bat, skunk, raccoons, fox or coyote, pet owners should immediately contact a veterinarian for advice.

People can get rabies after being bitten by an infected animal or when saliva from a rabid animal gets directly into a person’s eyes, nose, mouth, or a wound. Bats have very small teeth making their bite marks hard to see. If you find yourself in close proximity to a bat, do not kill or release the bat before calling your local health department to help determine if you could have been exposed to rabies and need preventive treatment. If the bat is available for testing and test results are negative, preventive treatment is not needed.

People may also need rabies preventive treatment after bites from untested skunks, raccoons, foxes or coyotes. If you have been bitten by any animal, seek immediate medical attention. Bite wounds can become infected and if the animal is high risk for rabies, preventive treatment must begin quickly, IDPH said.

# IDNR Urges Boaters to Wear Life Jackets and Stay Sober This Summer

Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Conservation Police are reminding boaters to wear life jackets and avoid alcohol as Memorial Day weekend marks the unofficial start of the summer boating season.

National Safe Boating Week is observed May 16-22 to promote safe practices on the water.

“As boating season gets underway, protecting safety on the water is a community effort,” said Jed Whitchurch, director of IDNR’s Office of Law Enforcement. “Knowing and following boating

laws, carrying required safety equipment, respecting no-wake zones and staying aware of weather conditions are keys to a safe and enjoyable experience.”

According to the Illinois Conservation Police, 81 reportable boating accidents occurred on Illinois waterways in 2025, resulting in 12 deaths and 37 injuries. In seven of the fatal accidents, alcohol or drug impairment was a factor.

Conservation officers arrested 72 boaters for operating under the influence in 2025. Officials noted that boating

under the influence can be especially dangerous because waterways lack lane markers and boats offer little protection in the event of a collision.

State law requires that a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket be available for every person aboard a boat. Children younger than 13 must wear a properly fitted life jacket while on the deck of a boat or in an open watercraft. Anyone operating a personal watercraft, such as a Jet Ski, must also wear a life jacket.

IDNR officials say wearing a life jacket is

the single most important step boaters and paddlers can take to protect themselves.

The department also offers free boating safety courses covering Illinois boating laws and safe operation of watercraft. Anyone born on or after Jan. 1, 1998, must complete an approved boating safety course and carry a valid boating safety certificate to operate a motorboat with more than 10 horsepower.

More information about boating safety courses is available at <https://dnr.illinois.gov>.

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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# County Line News

(Mill Creek and Upper Elco)

By Suzan Harvel

The Mill Creek Village Board met on Tuesday, May 19 for their monthly business meeting. Rubber mulch was voted on and will be ordered for the park area for around the playground equipment. Mosquito disks are to be ordered due to consistent rain and ponding in ditches. Estimate on repairs to village roads was received from Union County Highway Department and was voted on and approved. The village has investment CD’s that will be re-invested per a vote.

No word from WK&T on substation work has been received. Black-top work on the Lake Road has been completed in the Mill Creek area and while appreciated area residents are concerned about how fast cars will now be traveling and whether road surfaces will be slicker during rainy conditions. The next meeting will be held on June 16 at 7 p.m.

Mill Creek Baptist Church held graduate recognition on Sunday, May 24. Braden Rider graduated from the Fire Academy and will be working for Murphysboro Fire Department. Macy Clutts graduated from eight grade and is now ready for high school. Congratulations to them both.

A lot of family has been traveling “overseas” of late. Chuck and Martha Harvel, along with Ted and Nancy Beanland, have returned from a 14-day trip throughout the western parts of the country, Canada, and an Alaskan cruise with Chuck’s sister, Tina, and her husband, Darron Moore, and some of Darron’s family and friends. A total of 12 of them made the trip and everyone found something different to see and do, so a great time was had by all.

Our niece, Jennifer, and her family have moved to England for the next two years for her job as a music teacher. She’s been sending many photos of

the journey. They’re already loving the tradition of cups of “tea.” Jennifer and her husband have been taking the children to see all the landmark spots they can in between moving from temporary housing and into a rental, as well as getting settled into new schools. What a remarkable learning experience for them all.

Our niece, Ashley, her husband, and sons are also in England for a trip to visit her husband’s family, many of whom she and the children have never met. They, too, are making the rounds of landmark spots and having a great time.

Brother Bobby Richardson led the congregation of Mill Creek Baptist Church in a Memorial Day sermon this Sunday, taken from John 15:17. This passage talks about no greater love than to give your life for a friend. Too many of our service personnel have given their all for our country. They didn’t know all of us, but their service with a greater love for country/ community is strong enough to allow themselves to be put in harm's way for us. You also hear stories all the time of regular folks stepping up to save a stranger’s life. Many of us state we would give our lives to protect our spouse, child, grandchild, etc. God’s love was certainly a greater love when he gave us his son, Jesus. Jesus in turn gave his life to save us from eternal damnation.

We also need to remember that a sacrifice of our lives doesn’t always happen ... it’s the offer and the intent to do so. We need to remember to pray for ourselves and others; also, to live for ourselves and for others; and to exercise our faith for ourselves and others. A fighting death is hard, but survival can be as hard a battle. What legacy will you leave behind? Will you fight the “good fight” and live your life so others can see your selflessness, service, and faith, and take hope from them to continue that fight themselves? This, too, is a great love.

Those in need of prayer are: the family of Cliff Cavins in his passing; Salina Sadler, for health; Kim Perry and husband, for health; Richard Harvel for a hernia; and Gail Vellella, for a fall.

## Senior Hall welcomes nominations

The Illinois Department on Aging, IDoA, is accepting nominations for the 2026 induction class of the Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame through June 1.

Each year, four older adults are inducted into the Hall of Fame for their work in the arts, sports and entertainment; community service; education; or the labor force. Anyone can nominate an older adult for consideration.

To be eligible for nomination to the Hall of Fame, nominees must be at least 65 years old at the time of nomination and a current Illinois resident or a previous resident of Illinois for most of their life. Posthumous nominations are also accepted, provided the nominee was 65 or older and living in Illinois at the time of death.

To guarantee consideration for the 2026 induction class, nominations must be submitted on or before June 1, 2026. Nominators of new Hall of Fame inductees are expected to participate in an award ceremony honoring their nominee and highlighting their accomplishments. For more information or to submit a nomination, visit IDoA’s website at [ilaging.illinois.gov](http://ilaging.illinois.gov).

Anna-Jo Garden Club news from the AJGC Secretary

## History News

Some may not know the history of all the different memorials represented in the Anna Jo Garden Club Community Park, on Route 146 near the eastern entrance of Anna.

One feature of the park is the Pat Abernathy Garden Room, created in 2014 to honor a longstanding member. Pat took part in the original creation of the park, and passed from this world on the last day of 2014. In early February of 2015 many memorial contributions were being made to AJGC to fund a memorial in the garden park. Pat was known and beloved in many circles.

Pat was president of Anna Jo Garden Club from 1997 to 1999. She also served AJGC and the Garden Clubs of Illinois as District Associate Director and District Director on behalf of our District VII. She led the AJGC initiative to create the Blue Star Marker in Anna. Pat and others (including our current and longest standing member Donna Budelsky) created the AJGC Community Park. The land had originally been owned by the Hindman family, and was utilized as a staging ground for the construction of New 51, by ET Simonds and the State of Illinois.

With vision for the possibilities, and along with their newly retired husbands, Pat and Donna sought the support of local city government, businesses and the community for the contributions to build, plant and develop the Anna Jo Garden Club Community Park. With timing and finesse Pat helped this little park evolve, along with the help of supportive community members, members of Anna Jo Garden Club, and expertise from others.

## The Cat's Meow

by the Cobden Spay and Neuter Coalition

We’re taking a bit of a break from trapping right now. We are strategizing for summer TNR (trap-neuter-return) work. Hot and humid weather presents some logistical problems with safely holding cats that have been trapped. Our wonderful partners at Meller-James allow us to house our trapped cats at their facility.

Meanwhile, we probably need to remind our community that we do not have resources to house or hold cats or kittens. We have wonderful nearby facilities that do and also provide adoption services. Finding Forever Animal Rescue in Marion, Wright Way Rescue in Murphysboro, and St. Francis CARE in Carbondale . They all do an amazing job of taking in, vetting, and placing cats and kittens. Please contact them for assistance with friendly cats or kittens.

There are no housing facilities for feral cats, thus our job. We trap, neuter, vaccinate for rabies, and return to the area where they have lived. Last winter we assisted in outdoor sheltering by providing straws and some shelters for cats. We hope to expand that effort in the coming months.

We will be at the lovely Annabelle Festival June 13 to share information and visit with our community. We are also planning a great raffle. See you there!

Please visit our website, [cobdenspayneutercoalition.org](http://cobdenspayneutercoalition.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](http://givebutter.com), or mail them

The Pat Abernathy Memorial is located on a stamped concrete base with a large planter on a pedestal. The planter belonged to Pat Abernathy and serves as an ongoing tribute to an AJGC Community Park founder. It is located in the southwest corner of the park, near the AJGC garden shed, and backed by crepe myrtles which bloom red in mid-summer.

Current member Charlotte Clover (former owner of Shawnee Hills Lavendar near Alto Pass) planted lavender at each corner of the base. Roses are planted along the western edge of the concrete pad. Pat’s planter has lovely flowers and drooping perennial succulents to highlight this garden room. The bench beneath the river birch tree nearby was part of the original memorial, and the tree was planted by the AJGC while Pat was President in 1998. In every season it is a lovely space.

We hope the community enjoys our AJGC Community Park, and appreciates the history and hard work of the Anna Jo Club members, past and present. We welcome new members to share hard work and good fun, with our many activities. AJGC P.O. Box 139, Alto Pass, IL 62905. Membership is \$15 per year.

Upcoming is National Garden Week, and our annual Garden Walk. On Thursday, June 25 at 6 p.m. the AJGC will present college scholarships to two Anna Jo high school students. We hope to celebrate at the park with music, and snacks and with the students, their families and the community.

Members will be happy to share our plant guide (only \$2) and point out the many different plants within our park. Please join us on a lovely evening and bring your picnic dinner.

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!

# Internationally Acclaimed Organist Nicole Keller to Perform Free Concert



Nicole Keller

Nicole Keller, an internationally recognized concert organist, educator and recording artist, will perform a free public concert at 4 p.m. Sunday, June 7, in Shryock Auditorium on the campus of Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

The concert, sponsored by the Southern Illinois Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, will feature Keller performing on the historic Marianne Webb Organ. The event is free and open to the public.

Keller currently serves as chair of the Department of Organ in the School of Music, Theatre and Dance at the University of Michigan, where she is recognized for both her teaching and performance career. She has developed a national and international reputation for colorful, virtuosic performances that combine technical mastery with imaginative musical interpretation.

Critics have praised Keller’s artistry and musicianship. The American Organist magazine described her as “a skilled and stylish player with a keen ear for orchestration,” noting her ability to create “a sense of building tension in the music’s joyful enthusiasm and

energy.” Reviewers have also highlighted her strong sense of rhythm and her ability to bring orchestral depth and color to organ music.

Over the course of her career, Keller has performed on major instruments in historic venues around the world. Her appearances have included performances at St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Notre-Dame de Paris, Dom St. Stephan in Passau, Germany, St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Armagh, Northern Ireland, and the Kazakh National University for the Arts in Astana, Kazakhstan. She also has performed at the Library of Congress and other prestigious venues throughout the United States and abroad.

In 2024, Keller released her debut commercial recording, *Those Americans*, through Raven CDs. The album features works by 20th- and 21st-century American composers and was praised by critics for its exciting programming and expressive performances.

In addition to the June 7 concert, Keller will present a “Workshop on Creative Hymn Playing” at 10 a.m. Saturday, June 6, at Our Savior Lutheran Church, located at 700 S. University Ave. The workshop is open to church organists and pianists interested in expanding their hymn-playing techniques and musical creativity.

Organizers say the weekend events offer a rare opportunity for Southern Illinois audiences and musicians to hear and learn from one of the country’s leading organ performers and educators.

For more information or to arrange an interview with Keller, contact Jane Otte at [ottejane@gmail.com](mailto:ottejane@gmail.com).

# OHV trails at Sahara Woods open for season

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources, IDNR, has announced that off-highway vehicle, OHV, trails at Sahara Woods State Recreation Area in Saline County are open and ready to welcome visitors for the 2026 outdoor recreation season.

Sahara Woods near Carrier Mills offers nearly 30 miles of landscaped OHV trails for riders. The trails are scheduled to be open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday through Monday each week, from May through January.

A one-day permit costs \$20 per vehicle. Four-day permits are available for \$65 per vehicle. Rules and guidelines can be found online at [dnr.illinois.gov](http://dnr.illinois.gov), along with registration forms, waivers of liability and

instructions for purchasing ride permits. More information is available by calling 618-994-2022 or emailing [dnr.saharawoodsohv@illinois.gov](mailto:dnr.saharawoodsohv@illinois.gov).

The OHV trail system, which officially opened to the public in 2025, was built on reclaimed land where both surface and underground mining operations were conducted by Bankston Creek Collieries and the Sahara Coal Co. from 1936 until 1993. The company donated the land to the State of Illinois in 1999.

Sahara Woods State Recreation Area also features 4,000 acres of fishing opportunities including largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill, redear and channel catfish; along with boat ramps and hunting.

## ‘This is what really happened...

...some thoughts about newspapers from the Oregon Digital Newspaper program website

“This is what really happened, reported by a free press to a free people. It is raw material of history; it is the story of our own times.” Henry Steel Commag

“Newspapers cannot be defined by the second word—paper. They’ve got to be defined by the first word—news.” Arthur Sulzberg, Jr.

“A good newspaper is a nation talking to itself.” Arthur Miller

“The newspaper is a greater treasure to the people than uncounted millions of gold.” Henry Ward Beecher

“Were it left to me to decide if we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.” Thomas Jefferson

“Most of us probably feel we couldn’t be free without newspapers, and that the real reason we want newspapers to be free.” Edward R. Murrow

“People don’t actually read newspapers. They step into them every morning like a hot bath.” Marshall McLuhan

“Every time a newspaper dies, even a bad one, the country moves a little closer to authoritarianism...” Richard Kluger

“I’d love to rise from the grave every ten years or so and go buy a few new papers.” Luis Bunuel

“All I know is what I read in the papers.” Will Rogers

# Opinion and Commentary

## EMS personnel honored for service

The Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal, OSFM, and the Illinois Department of Public Health, IDPH, joined in honoring Emergency Medical Services, EMS, personnel throughout the state during the observance of the 52nd annual EMS Week, which was May 17-23. This year’s theme was “Improving Outcomes, Together,” which focused on not only patient outcomes, but also on the well-being of EMS providers.

Illinois State Fire Marshal Michele Pankow said the theme for week truly reflected the work done every day by EMS personnel. “Whether responding to medical emergencies, serious accidents, natural disasters, or everyday calls for help, you are there in the moments when people need you most,” Pankow said. “Thank you for your unwavering service, your countless hours of training and preparation and your continued commitment to protecting the health and safety of others. Illinois is stronger because of your work and your willingness to answer the call at any hour.”

“Emergency Medical Services professionals provide life-saving care for Illinois residents in times of turmoil, bringing stability amidst a backdrop of fear. I am proud to join with State Fire Marshal Pankow to extend our gratitude to these hardworking men and women,” IDPH director Dr. Sameer Vohra said. “No matter the hour, EMS professionals are ready to answer the call for help to protect the well-being of communities across the state.”

Emergency Medical Services professionals across Illinois respond to millions of calls for help each year, providing lifesaving care in communities large and small. According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, Illinois recorded more than 8.8 million 911 calls in 2025, supported by 613 ambulance providers, more than 2,727 ambulances, more than 20,000 EMTs and over 16,000 paramedics statewide.

In addition, Illinois fire departments reported more than 1 million rescue and EMS incidents annually, accounting for roughly 70 percent of all emergency responses statewide. These numbers highlight the critical role EMS personnel play every day in protecting the health, safety, and wellbeing of Illinois residents.

In 1974, President Gerald Ford authorized EMS Week to celebrate EMS professionals and the important work they do in the nation's communities. Each year, National Emergency Medical Services Week brings together local communities and medical personnel to honor the dedication of those who provide the day-to-day lifesaving services of medicine's frontline.

## Older Americans Month emphasizes prevention, wellness, responsibility

May is Older Americans Month. The theme for this year’s observance, Champion Your Health, emphasizes prevention, wellness and personal responsibility as foundations of healthy aging.

During Older Americans Month, Rural Health Inc. encourages seniors to take an active role in managing their health, which also includes understanding changes to their Medicaid coverage if they are enrolled in the program. Rural Health Inc. is a not-for-profit organization serving Union, Johnson and Massac counties in Southern Illinois.

The federal government is making changes that may affect some Medicaid customers nationwide starting in January 2027. Many customers will not be affected, but if these changes apply to you, Illinois Medicaid will contact you before you need to take any action.

“The most important step you can take right now is to make sure your contact information is up to date,” said Shawwna Rhine, director of public relations for Rural Health Inc. “Make sure your address, phone number and email are current. This helps ensure you receive important notices about your coverage when they happen.”

You can update your information by visiting [www.ABE.Illinois.gov](http://www.ABE.Illinois.gov) and click “Manage My Case.” There you can view notices, check coverage, update your information and more, all in one place. You can also update by calling 877-805- 5312. If you receive mail from the State of Illinois, open it right away. Your Medicaid coverage may depend on it.

According to the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, in Illinois, there are approximately 288,000 people age 65 and older enrolled in comprehensive Medicaid benefits. Seniors account for about 9 percent of the total Medicaid enrollment across the state, and Medicaid is the primary funder for roughly 68 percent of long-term and nursing facility care days in Illinois.

If you have any questions about your Medicaid coverage, or if you need help enrolling for coverage, call Chrissy or Carol at Rural Health Inc. at 618-833-4471.

Clean out the closet, It's yardsale season! To place your ad call 618-833-2158

# Please read this...

## Ditch lilies...Bigfoot...and a slice of pie...

By Geof Skinner

Maybe it’s time to turn this column over to AI.

After, lo, these many years of crafting a column, the stash of words in my simple little brain seemed to have run dry this week. After all, there are only so many words in the English language. Just in case in you were wondering, “Search Assist” informed me that “The exact number of words in the English language is difficult to determine, but it is estimated to include roughly 1 million words.” I cannot be sure if I have used roughly one million words over the years...

So...given the challenge...I set things aside for a little while and went for a walk in the sultry air Monday afternoon. Thank goodness. It helped... I found a few vowels and consonants, some nouns and pronouns, a couple of adjectives and a low-hanging dangling participle...

The walk gave me a chance to think about the happy young man I encountered earlier on Monday at a public gathering in Union County. The young man was getting ready to head home...with a big ol’ piece of pie and some baked beans on a styrofoam plate in hand. An observer (that would be me) suggested that the pie might be of the blueberry variety. Nope, blackberry, he responded emphatically. Blueberry pie. Blackberry pie. I’m pretty sure either one would have been tasty...

In addition to a slice of pie, inspiration for this week came in the form of Bigfoot in Alto Pass and the first orange-ish lilies of the season in our front yard.

After all of these years, I should probably remember the name of those lilies. Yet, I do not. A quick check with my traveling companion on The Journey Through Life filled in the blank. They are ditch lilies. The name is not very flattering, but the flowers do put on a colorful show.

The ditch lilies bloom at around this time every year. I tend to associate them with the imminent arrival of steamy hot weather in Southern Illinois. We have not experienced such conditions. Yet. I am sure our famed heat and humidity are on the way.

Unlike some of the other flowers in our yard, white-tailed deer must not like the orange lilies. Those Critters have been known to practically wander up to our front porch to snack on The Other Half’s flowers.

Speaking of The Other Half’s garden...we’ve been enjoying a few peas and beans lately. Those have been the ones the Critters have left for us...so far...

Bigfoot also became a part of the story for this week thanks to a short walk along the Quetil Trail in metropolitan Alto Pass last Saturday afternoon.

I have walked along the trail in Alto Pass a number of times over the years. I’ve been there when the trail was covered in snow and an ice-cold wind was blowing...when icicles had formed in the rock formations along the trail...and when the colors of autumn surrounded the trail.

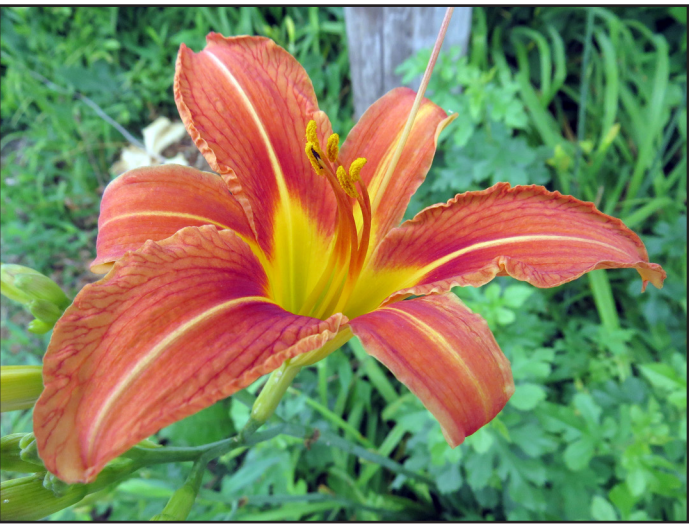
In the times I have walked along the trail, I have seen all kinds of Critters: lots of birds...frogs...and a skink one time. I have not seen Bigfoot. Maybe Bigfoot is just shy. Or, maybe, he/she is just really, really quiet. Or, maybe, Bigfoot is just the product of a lot of very vivid imaginations. I will leave that consideration up to you.

Anyway, I suppose the next time a walk along the Quetil Trail is part of The Journey Through Life, eyes will be be kept wide open...just ‘cause you never know what might be seen... Meanwhile...

Up until last Saturday evening, I don’t think I had ever actually hear the call of a great blue heron. We’ve seen great blue herons, many times. They are pretty common in our little corner of the world. And they seem to be easier to spot than Bigfoot. They just had not made any sounds when we saw them. Mostly, they got spooked and flew away.

Bob and I were sitting out on the porch swing (yes, again), enjoying the evening and a lack of mosquitoes. I don’t know if the ongoing somewhat cooler than normal weather has kept the little, blood-sucking Critters away, but there just haven’t been very many of them.

While we were sitting on the swing, I heard an unusual sound which seemed to be coming from overhead somewhere. The



Ditch lilies are starting to make their annual appearance in our little corner of the world.



A sign at the Quetil Trail in Alto Pass suggests that visitors need to be on alert for an unusual Critter.

sound repeated itself. I looked up and saw what appeared to be a great blue heron flying overhead, heading south. I assumed the sound and the bird were connected. Of course, it’s not always good to make assumptions about things.

The great blue heron was one of a few recent Critter Sightings. Rabbits have made frequent appearances. Lightning bugs continue to put on a show. Hummingbirds seem to have arrived for the season. And, there are squirrels...of course there are squirrels.

Well...thanks to a walk, that dearth of words that were a cause for concern seemed to have dissipated. That is good. I really don’t want to hand this column over to AI. Some time, however, I would still like to get Bob to craft a column...

Now...I think I will try to find a big ol’ slice of blueberry pie...or even blackberry pie...



**Veterans honored in Alto Pass**  
The Alto Pass Area Veterans Memorial organization conducted a memorial ceremony Saturday afternoon, May 23. The ceremony was held at the Veterans Memorial in downtown Alto Pass to honor the memory and sacrifices of area veterans. Memorial Day was commemorated on Monday, May 25.



**Class reunion**  
The Anna-Jonesboro Community High School class of 1965 met for a class reunion. Picture are, in the back row from left, Bill Abernathy, Jerry Reppert, Karen Copeland Hubbs, Ron Hubbs, Dennis Earnhart, Wes Sadler, Mike Coffman, Greg Lence, Clark Newton, Ernie Craft and Wes Lyerla. Front row, Carolyn Dodd Cross, Cindy Sorrels Swope, Judy Batson McClure, Lynda Lyerla Mosby, Bonnie High Goodman, Bonnie Dunn McCommons, Peggy Ralls Jerrell, Linda Dawes Jackson and Dennis Goodman.