

# THE GAZETTE-DEMOCRAT

The Talk And Cobden Review • Serving Union County Since 1849

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Anna, Illinois

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## News Notes

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



Happy Groundhog Day. Thursday, today, is the big day.

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WIBH Radio in Anna reports that it has wrapped up its annual coat campaign, "raising more money than ever before." Thanks to more than \$12,000 in donations, the 2022 WIBH New Coats, New Hope Campaign was able to purchase 576 new winter coats for children in need in Southern Illinois. More on this to come...

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Sophomore accounting major Lexie Lingle of Anna is a member of a national champion Southern Illinois University Carbondale business student team. More on this to come, too...

\*\*\*

Thank you to all of the street, road and highway crews who have worked so hard during our two winter storms.

\*\*\*

There will be no second Thursday worship service in February at Kornthal Church near Jonesboro. Second Thursday worship is scheduled to resume at 7 p.m. on March 9.

\*\*\*

The Union County Board of Commissioners had a very short meeting last Friday morning.

\*\*\*

Pre-kindergarten students at Lick Creek School celebrated the 100th day of school. A variety of special activities highlighting the number 100 were featured.

\*\*\*

Southern 7 Health Department reports that it is offering flouride varnish through its Bright Smiles program to area children up to age 3.

### More than half a foot of snow, ice pellets measured in Union County

## Two rounds of winter storms impact region

Two winter storms during the past week and a half blanketed the Union County area with snow, sleet, ice and cold.

The first storm happened Tuesday and Wednesday, Jan. 24-25. The second round of wintry weather occurred Monday and Tuesday, Jan. 30-31.

Local weather observer Dana Cross recorded more than a half a foot of snow and ice pellets (sleet), along with an icy glaze, during the two winter storms.

Frozen precipitation recorded in the Union County area included 3 inches of

snow on Jan. 24, 2 inches of snow on Jan. 25, a trace of snow on Jan. 26 and 1.25 inches of ice pellets and snow on Jan. 31.

### Winter Storm Warning on Monday, Tuesday

Parts of Southern Illinois, Southeast Missouri and Western Kentucky were

under a winter storm warning from Monday afternoon through 9 a.m. Tuesday.

The warning was issued by the National Weather Service office in Paducah.

The weather service was calling for the possibility of heavy mixed precipitation. Sleet and snow accumula-

tions of up to 1 inch, along with ice accumulations of less than one-tenth of an inch, were possible in the region.

"Difficult travel conditions are likely as roadways are icy," the weather service advised late Monday night.

"Union County Road

Conditions have quickly deteriorated over the past several hours and are expected to continue to get worse," Union County Sheriff David Wilkins shared in a message posted Monday night on social media.

(continued on page 2)

## Weather

### Snow, ice pellets; high 52, low 19

Union County's weather during the period of Jan. 24 through Jan. 30 was highlighted by two winter storms and fluctuating temperatures.

The winter storms were accompanied by a variety of frozen precipitation, including:

Jan. 24: 3 inches of snow (.92 of an inch of melted precipitation).

Jan. 25: 2 inches of snow (.30 of an inch of melted precipitation).

Jan. 26: a trace of snow (and melted precipitation).

Jan. 30: 1.25 inches of ice pellets, an icy glaze and snow (.60 of an inch of melted precipitation).

Temperatures during the period ranged from a high of 52 degrees to a low of 19.

Following are temperatures for the period as recorded by local weather observer Dana Cross in Jonesboro:

	H	L
Tuesday, Jan. 24	45	25
Wednesday, Jan. 25	37	32
Thursday, Jan. 26	37	22
Friday, Jan. 27	52	20
Saturday, Jan. 28	51	33
Sunday, Jan. 29	46	30
Monday, Jan. 30	30	19



### Sleet on Anna street

A layer of sleet was covering West Vienna Street in Anna early Monday evening. The frozen precipitation fell during the second of two winter storms which swept through region during the past week and a half.



### Snow plowed in Alto Pass

Snow which had been plowed in Alto Pass was seen Wednesday morning, Jan. 25. The snow had fallen the night before.



### Dancing in the Moonlight...

Union County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development hosted its annual Gala on Saturday, Jan. 28, in Alto Pass. The theme of the event, hosted at the Havisham House event venue, was "Dancing in the Moonlight."

Awards were given out to Union County businesses and individuals in recognition of their special achievements. Aeriz Aeroptic Cannabis won the award for business of the year. Kenz Boutique was named new business of the year. Pizza Villa was recognized as most improved business. Dawson Montfort of Rise Performance was named citizen of the year.

Members of the Union County CEO program volunteered to help at the event. Catering was done by Abernathy's Original Buffalo Tro and by The Kitchen on Lafayette. Entertainment was provided by Deja Voodoo. Photo by Benjamin Marxer.



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# Winter storms

(continued from page 1)  
 "If you can stay home please do so, if you must get out use caution, allow extra room between you and the cars ahead of you, reduce your speed, and always wear your seat belt."

"Our Highway department and road crews are working hard and as fast as they can, as well as our city crews."

The Union County Sheriff's Office on Tuesday morning reported that a few traffic accidents had occurred. No major injuries were reported.

Monday night's storm and the resulting icy and hazardous conditions led to the closing of local government offices, including the Union County Courthouse in Jonesboro and Anna City Hall.

The two rounds of winter storms led to early dismissals, days off and remote learning for public schools in Union County.

### Last Week's Storm

The weather service office in Paducah reported that a winter storm impacted the region from the evening of Jan. 24 into the morning of Jan. 25.

The bulk of snow accumulations occurred across Southeast Missouri and Southern Illinois.

These areas remained



### Snow at the courthouse

Piles of snow were seen around the parking lot at the Union County Courthouse in Jonesboro Thursday afternoon, Jan. 26. The snow had been removed following a winter storm which happened during the night of Jan. 24-25. Another winter storm happened Monday and Tuesday, Jan. 30-31, in the area. Due to the impact of that storm, the courthouse was closed for the day.

far enough northwest of a surface low that moved from Memphis, Tenn., to Murray and Owensboro, Ky., that cold air remained in place once temperatures cooled during the evening of Jan. 24.

Amounts in excess of 3 to 4 inches occurred along and northwest of a line from Poplar Bluff, Mo., and Cape Girardeau to a line including Marion and Mt. Vernon in Southern Illinois.

Due to the heavy wet na-

ture of the snow combining with wind gusts of 15 to 20 miles per hour, significant power outages occurred across the Ozark Foothills of Southeast Missouri.

There were over 75,000 customers without power across south central and Southeast Missouri on the morning of Jan. 25.

Numerous downed trees also occurred in these areas. The morning commute was impacted by snow covered roads, especially in areas that received in excess of 2 inches.

Highest snowfall amounts from this system were across the Ozark Foothills of Missouri into extreme southwest Illinois.

Amounts of 5 to 8 inches occurred from Van Buren to Marble Hill and Perryville in Southeast Missouri into the Murphysboro and Carbondale areas.

There was a sharp southeast cutoff to where no snow accumulated from New Madrid, Mo. to Paducah and Henderson, Ky.

The official snowfall

measurement for Paducah was 1 inch at the weather service office in West Paducah, while most of the city proper observed no measurable snow.

Snowfall amounts in the region included 9.4 inches in Ellsinore, Mo.; 7.5 inches in Marble Hill, Mo.; 6.0 inches in Perryville, Mo.; 4.8 inches in Cape Girardeau; 4.8 inches in Carbondale; 4.5 inches in Poplar Bluff, Mo.; 4.0 inches in Marion; 3.6 inches in Mt. Vernon; and 1.0 inch in Paducah.

### Freezing Rain Possible Wednesday, Thursday

The weather service office advised that freezing rain was possible from Wednesday night through Thursday morning for portions of far Southern Illinois, Southeast Missouri and Western Kentucky.

The forecast posted early this week was calling for sunshine and a high temperature near 33 degrees on Friday.

High temperatures in the upper 40s and lower 50s are expected by Saturday and Sunday.

# Union County reported at low community level for COVID-19

As COVID-19 continues throughout Illinois, Southern 7 Health Department reports that as of Jan. 27, no Southern 7 counties reported at high transmission level for COVID-19 for another week, according to Illinois Department of Public Health, IDPH, and the CDC.

All counties in the Southern 7 Region were at a low or medium levels, as of Friday.

Union, Alexander, Hardin, Pope and Pulaski counties each were at a low level. Johnson and Massac counties each were at a medium level.

This came just days after Illinois marked its third year since the first reported case of COVID-19 on Jan. 24, 2020.

IDPH announced that the CDC reported no Illinois counties were at a high community level as of Jan. 27.

With COVID-19, flu and RSV continuing to be reported across the state, IDPH is urging Illinoisans to take action to protect themselves and their loved ones by updating their COVID booster and getting a flu shot if possible.

COVID-19 and flu vaccines are available for adults and children 6 months and older by appointment only at each Southern 7 public health clinic.

Adults can also get their shots, without an appointment, at the Wellness on Wheels, WOW, van. Most forms of insurance, including Medicare and Medicaid, are accepted.

IV medications and oral pills can now be used to treat COVID-19.

"Talk with a health care provider as soon as possible to see if you are eligible for one of these treatments. You will need a prescription," Southern 7 Health Department advised in a news release.

To find the Southern 7 public health clinic or WOW van clinic in an area county, visit [southern7.org](http://southern7.org), download the Southern 7 app or call 618-634-2297, extension 9161.

### Union County COVID Cases Update

Jan. 22: 6,804 cases. 69 deaths.

Jan. 15: 6,786 cases. 69 deaths.

Jan. 4, 2023: 6,712 total cases. 69 deaths.

Dec. 30, 2022: 6,680 total cases. 67 deaths.

Dec. 1, 2022: 6,585 total cases. 67 deaths.

Jan. 18, 2022: 4,378 total cases. 58 deaths.

Source: Illinois Department of Public Health website. Numbers represent statistics since the start of the pandemic.

# Johnson County Genealogical, Historical Society plans meetings

The Johnson County Genealogical and Historical Society has announced plans for programs which will be presented at meetings which are scheduled in March, April and May.

The meeting dates and programs follow:

Sunday, March 19: Ed Annable plans to present a program about "Paradise."

The presentation will be a genealogy and history program about his latest book.

Annable plans to share how to gather family stories to compile a family history for future generations.

Sunday, April 16: The society will welcome students

from the Goreville High School Beta Club.

The students plan to present a program about genealogy and the history of Goreville.

Sunday, May 21: Ed Annable plans to present a program titled "Incredible But True Stories of Tragedy in Johnson County."

The program will highlight the history of Johnson County and is based on an Annable Publishing Company book.

The programs will be presented in the meeting room at the Vienna Public Library. All of the programs are scheduled to begin at 2:30 p.m.

More information about the programs is available by calling Gary Hacker at 618-771-6877 and leaving a message.

# Lots going on during February at Anna VFW

Veterans of Foreign Wars Carroll P. Foster Post No. 3455 of Anna has a full slate of activities planned during February. The post is located at 70 VFW Ln. near Anna.

**Corn Hole Tournaments:** The post plans to host corn hole tournaments on Thursday, today, and again on Thursday, Feb. 9, Thursday, Feb. 16, and Thursday, Feb. 23. The public is welcome.

Sign-up for the tournaments starts at 6 p.m. Play begins at 6:30 p.m. Food will be available for purchase. No outside food or drinks are allowed. The public is welcome.

**Benefit Tournament:** A benefit corn hole tournament is planned Sunday, Feb. 19. The tournament begins at 2 p.m.

The tournament will help with expenses for high school student Clayton Richardson, who received a kidney transplant and is now battling cancer.

Brian Pender is scheduled to play from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

**Fish Fry:** The post plans to serve a monthly fish fry on Friday, Feb. 3. Serving will be from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

# Events set at Giant City

A winter tree identification program and an accessible full moon hike are planned at Giant City State Park near Makanda.

Both activities are free and open to the public. Registration is required. Registration, and more information, are available by calling the visitor center at the park at 618-457-4836.

**Winter Tree ID:** The winter tree ID program is scheduled from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 4.

Missouri Department of Conservation community forester Jennifer Behnken is scheduled to present the program.

**Full Moon Hike:** Interpretive guide Steve Garipey plans to lead a full moon hike from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 5, on the accessible Post Oak Trail.

The menu will include two pieces of fish, potato salad and baked beans for a donation of \$12. Fish can be purchased at a cost of \$2 per piece.

Dine in, carry out or drive-thru will be available. Drive-thru pick up can be arranged by calling 833-7737 prior to noon on Friday.

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

**Diamond Dog:** The VFW post and its Auxiliary plan to host the well-known local band Diamond Dog from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 4.

**Business Meetings:** The VFW post and Auxiliary plan to have monthly business meetings on Thursday, Feb. 9.

The Auxiliary meeting starts at 6 p.m. The post meeting starts at 7 p.m.

**Valentines Dinner:** The post is planning to serve a Valentines dinner on Tuesday, Feb. 14. Serving begins at 6 p.m.

The menu will include New York strip steak, a baked potato, salad and dessert for a donation of \$20 per person.

The VFW noted that reservations must be made for the dinner. Reservations can be made at the VFW any day after 1 p.m. Payment is required when a reservation is made.

"Surprise your sweetheart with flowers or candy from one of the local florists, have it delivered to the VFW and we will present it to her at your table," the VFW shared.

**Mystify Music:** Mystify Music is scheduled to be at the post from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 18.

**Whiskey River Band:** The Whiskey River Band is scheduled to be at the post from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. Friday, Feb. 24. There will be a \$5 cover charge for this event.

**Taco Tuesday:** Taco Tuesday is planned at the post on Feb. 28. Serving will be from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Hard shell tacos, soft shell tacos and taco salads will be served. The public is welcome.

**Worship at Kornthal**  
*There will be no second Thursday worship in February at Kornthal. Second Thursday worship will resume March 9th at 7:00 p.m.*

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**Assisting at Gala**

Once again, CEO team members assisted with the Union County Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development Corporation Gala. The event was Saturday night in Alto Pass.

The Union County CEO program was first brought to the community's attention by Alan Eddington, director of the UCEDC at the time.

The UCEDC hosted the first community meeting asking businesses, organizations, and individuals for financial support to start a CEO program here.

Since 2014, there have been more opportunities for the students and more growth and appreciation for Union County.

Those helping at the Gala included, from left, Reese Reynolds, Sienna Morrison, Jaden Ebberts, Drake Campbell, Marissa Simmons, Lia Mays, Orié Dover and facilitator, Melanie Smith. Abigail Smith and Kaylee Hall could not be present. Photo provided.

**Community support welcomed for program**

**CEO applications close Feb. 10**

An application deadline of Feb. 10 has been set for students who may be interested in being a part of the next Union County CEO program team.

CEO program Team 24 has been busy with recruitment activities at all four of the county's high schools.

The recruitment presentations are excellent opportunities for sophomores and juniors to ask questions and to hear about the ways the program has affected the current class.

The online application process is simple to complete. Though all personal and school information is redacted for the selection committee, prospective students have a chance to "sell themselves" in the narrative section.

There they are encouraged to discuss their personality type, how they work with others, special skills, how they spend their after-school time, future goals and why they want to be a part of the CEO program.

They are also required to submit three references from teachers and employers, if applicable.

Union County high school juniors or sophomores are encouraged to visit unioncountyceo.org for more information.

More information is also available from the Union County CEO Facebook page and the schools' counselors.

Team member Sienna Morrison recently shared her thoughts about being a part of the CEO program.

"One of the reasons I love CEO is because it has taught me so much about how to work with other people," Morrison shared.

"I have always been more of an independent person, so having to work with more people than I'm used to was a bit challenging for me.

"However, it taught me so much and has improved my ability to be able to work with others. I am grateful for being a part of this team.

"Another reason I love CEO is because of all the opportunities that it has given me. If I wouldn't have joined this program, I wouldn't have met the people I've met, or been able to have learned so much more about Union County like I have.

"CEO has shown me all the amazing things Union County has to offer that I never knew before. It has shown me that there is a place for me here if I choose to stay.

"There are so many other reasons why I love CEO.

Even if they are small reasons, they are big to me, and I wouldn't trade this opportunity to be a part of this amazing program for anything!"

UCCEO is an economic development program which is training future leaders – and many of them will make Union County home in their futures.

**Valentine's Day steak dinner planned at Anna VFW post**

Veterans of Foreign Wars Carroll P. Foster Post No. 3455 near Anna is planning to serve a steak dinner on Valentine's Day, which is Tuesday, Feb. 14.

The post invites everyone to "stay close to home and support a local business."

The menu for the dinner will include New York strip steak, a baked potato, salad and dessert for a donation of \$20 per person.

Dinner starts at 6 p.m. A 6 p.m. seating or a 6:30 p.m. seating can be requested.

The dinner is open to the public. Dine in, carry out

or drive thru options are available. Dinner reservations can be made any day after 1 p.m. at the VFW post.

The post notes that payment must be made at the time a reservation is made. Only 76 steaks will be available.

"Surprise your sweetheart and call your local florist and order flowers for her to be delivered to the VFW and we will bring them to your table," the Anna post noted.

More information is available by contacting the post at 833-7737.

Board treasurer Stephanie Cox at Anna-Jonesboro National Bank can be contacted for more information.

**County Line News**

(Mill Creek and Upper Elco)

Have you ever tried to look through a shattered glass? Everything is distorted and fragmented. It's hard to find a portion where it's clear to see through. We give up and become frustrated.

This was how many of us started our Sunday morning off. We had a fellowship dinner planned for after church services and prep for that, oversleeping, important phone calls, family demands and such put nearly all of us running late for one reason or the other and very frustrated with it.

We have to wonder how many didn't come at all for one of those various reasons.

We were late receiving His word, by the clock standards, but God had a message for Brother Bobby Newberry to bring to us about that very thing, in His time.

Matthew 14 has much to tell us. It starts with the beheading of John the Baptist, a powerful prophet and Jesus' cousin.

Jesus wanted to isolate and grieve, instead God sent a multitude with needs which led to the miracle of feeding the 5,000 from a meager five loaves of bread and two fish.

The disciples were frustrated at the crowd, but Jesus did what was needed, he preached, he healed, and he fed them. Then he sent his disciples out to sea while he went up onto the mountain alone. This is where we hear of Jesus' walking on water to rescue his disciples, who had lost their faith.

In Mark 6:52 we read where Mark recounts that event and states that they had hardened their hearts to the multitudes during the attempt to isolate and grieve the loss of John, and their faith was tested.

Events happen that harden our hearts and keep us from seeing and understanding God's will. Where is our faith during stressful times? Things happen as they are meant to, when they are meant to.

Brother Bobby recounted an event during a mission trip he was on once. Supplies had been lost, they were frustrated and couldn't do what needed done.

Psalm 27:14, Isaiah 40:31

and Psalm 37:7 are just a few of the passages where God sends his message to be still and wait. Naturally God worked it all out, and better than they had planned, and the mission was accomplished.

We need to stand still and wait at times too. God's working. While it's hard, try not to be frustrated, and keep your faith strong. There may be a better blessing in store.

**Prayer List**

Our prayer lists this week added a praise that Allison Rider doesn't have cancer and that shoulder surgery to remove a tumor is all that is required.

Lula Belle Tripp is recovering from her surgery at home. Brother Bobby Richardson is doing much better, but is still at Barnes. Jeff Starr is a bit better, but still in the hospital too.

Buck McDaniel is much better and was back in church this morning. Shirley Harvel is healing nicely from her surgery too.

Those in need include Reba Short, who is having good and bad days, so keep her in prayer; a co-worker of mine is having heart issues and needs prayer; Billie Henderson is also in need of prayer; as is Dawn Rider, who is still awaiting news from her tests; and Bon Kohler, who is having trouble getting around, so we placed him on our prayer list. My husband took him several plates of food after the fellowship dinner.

Plates were also fixed for Lula Belle and Junior Tripp, which Brother Bobby Newberry and his wife Debbie delivered; Shirley Harvel, which we delivered; Reba Short, which her son Dean and his wife Gail delivered, and several others from the bounty of our dinner. God is working, folks, never doubt it.

**Visitors**

Shirley Harvel had company this past week. Her grandson Sam Harvel, his wife Bethany, and their seven children, with pup, Etta, of Cobden, came to visit and open late Christmas goodies. Her son, Chuck Harvel, and his wife, Martha, and their pup Ella, of Tamms, were

also in attendance.

**Daniel Chapman Chapter**

Daniel Chapman Chapter, NSDAR is happy to report that their end of year report, called the CMR, is completed and turned in.

Registrar Marilyn Meisenheimer reports that several prospective members will be in attendance at the next meeting. Our official welcoming of two new additions will occur also.

This next chapter meeting is planned at 11 a.m. on Feb. 13 at the PAST Heritage House in Jonesboro. District VII director Lisa Thomas is scheduled to bring the program. Julia Mowery will be catering the luncheon.

Members will be voting for the new officers for the 2023-2025 term. Delegates for both the state conference and Continental Congress will also be chosen.

Librarian, Deborah Simmons, has given us a list of good reading choices, so check those out ladies. She would like us to consider doing a book club and would like your input on that.

After the luncheon, program and business meeting, a tour of the PAST House will be available.

Donations of ground coffee and snacks, or other donations, for the Illinois Veterans Home in Anna also be collected and delivered. Those donations are for the residents use at their annual Valentine's Day bingo event.

**Heavy Snow**

Clean up is still going on after the heavy snow we received last week. The little bit of rain did quite a bit in removing the snow. Limbs are down in many yards though, ours included.

Winter is hardly over, as seen by the ice at the first of this week, so we'd all best prepare for more.

I'm really hoping we've seen the worst, but it is February at this reading and that tends to be our worst weather month.

We're still stocked up on salt for the walk and patio, the shovels are still at hand, and I've plenty of coffee to drink and books left to read. What better way to spend a chilly, winter day?

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# Sports

## Visiting A-J outscores West Frankfort in OT

The visiting Anna-Jonesboro Community High School boys' basketball team defeated West Frankfort 60-58 in overtime Saturday, Jan. 28.

The game was tied 11-11 after one quarter. The host Redbirds were ahead 31-17 at halftime.

A-J pulled ahead 40-39 after three quarters. The game was tied 50-50 going into overtime.

Dylan Harvel led A-J with 21 points and 5 rebounds. Dawson Trammel had 13 points and a rebound. Payton Denny had 13 points and 7 rebounds. Drew Page had 6 points. Aiden McFadden had 4 points and a rebound. Evan Hall had 3 points and a rebound.

A-J was 13 of 23 from the floor, 8 of 22 from 3-point range and 10 of 20 from the free throw line.

The Redbirds were 19 of 31 from the floor, 2 of 8

from 3-point range and 12 of 14 from the free throw line.

**Cartersville 61, A-J 40:** Host A-J was shut out in the first quarter 17-0 in the game played Friday, Jan. 27.

Harvel led A-J with 21 points, including 19 points in the second half. Trammel had 7 points and 4 rebounds. Hall had 6 points and 10 rebounds. Page had 3 points. Denny had 2 points and 5 rebounds. Hall and Dawson Nichols had 2 rebounds each and Noah Cavens had 3 rebounds.

A-J was 8 of 25 from the floor, 6 of 24 from 3-point range and 3 of 4 from the free throw line.

The Lions were 16 of 30 from the floor, 6 of 22 from 3-point range and 11 of 18 from the free throw line.

A-J, 9-16, plays Friday, Feb. 3, at Pinckneyville.

## Shawnee tops Egyptian in tournament action

The Shawnee High School boys' basketball team defeated Egyptian 51-34 in action at the Zeigler-Royalton Mid-Winter Classic Saturday, Jan. 21.

Shawnee led 12-6 at the end of the first quarter, 23-16 at the half and 39-30 at the end of three quarters.

Brody Wills led Shawnee with 22 points and 2 rebounds. Dryden Wills had 11 points and 3 rebounds. Noah Mayberry had 7 points and 8 rebounds. Kayman Ford had 6 points and 6 rebounds. Ryan Libbert had 4 points and 7 rebounds. Austin Kinder had 1 point and 2 rebounds.

**Zeigler-Royalton 62, Shawnee 56:** The host Tornados were ahead 38-28 at the end of the first half and went on to win the game played Thursday, Jan. 26.

Libbert led Shawnee with 12 points and 4 rebounds. Brody Wills had 12 points and 3 rebounds.

Dryden Wills had 11 points and 5 rebounds. Ford had 9 points and 3 rebounds. Mayberry had 9 points and 4 rebounds. Gabe Ellet had 2 points.

## 4-H air rifle, air pistol meetings set

4-H air rifle and air pistol are currently meeting weekly through Feb. 28.

Practices start on Tuesdays at 6 p.m. at the gym at the Shawnee Worship Center in Vienna.

Eligible young people in Alexander/Pulaski, Massac, Johnson and Union counties who were 8 years old or older as of Sept. 1, 2022, are eligible to participate. All equipment and supplies will be provided.

For more information or to learn how to get involved, contact AJMPU 4-H shooting sports coordinator Rhonda O'Neal at [jcshootingssports@gmail.com](mailto:jcshootingssports@gmail.com).

## A-J wrestlers close regular season at home

The Anna-Jonesboro Community High School wrestling team closed its regular season with home matches against Sparta and Murphysboro on Tuesday, Jan. 24.

The Wildcats defeated Sparta 75-6 and lost to Murphysboro 43-35 to finish with a 20-9 dual team record.

A-J finished in second place in the Mississippi Division of the Southern Illinois River-to-River Conference with a 6-1 mark.

A-J is scheduled to host the Class 1A regional Saturday, Feb. 4.

## Shawnee girls in action

The Shawnee High School girls' basketball team fell to Joppa and Elverado in recent action.

**Joppa 35, Shawnee 18:** Host Shawnee couldn't hold an 8-4 first quarter lead in the game played Friday, Jan. 27.

Emma Young led Shawnee with 6 points. Alie Myers scored 4, Kelsi Bader and Alaina Charles 3 each and Avery Stegle 2.

**Elverado 42, Shawnee 27:** Visiting Shawnee was behind 11-10 in the first quarter in the game played Tuesday, Jan. 24.

Myers led Shawnee with 14 points. Young scored 5, Bader 4 and Stegle and Charles 2 each.

Shawnee plays again Tuesday, Feb. 7, at Century.

## Cobden 1-1 in recent play

The Cobden High School boys' basketball team went 1-1 in action last week.

**Webber Township 73, Cobden 41:** The host Appleknockers couldn't recover from a 17-11 first quarter deficit in the loss Saturday, Jan. 28.

Tyler Franklin led the Appleknockers with 36 points. Jeff Kuhn scored 4, Matthew Howell 2 and Brady Bundren 1.

**Cobden 56, Joppa 41:** Host Cobden led 13-11 after one quarter on the way to the win Friday, Jan. 27.

Franklin led Cobden with 35 points. Mitchell Howell scored 8, Thomas Coleman 6, Bundren 4 and Kuhn 2.

## Wildcats win one, lose one in dual meet

The Anna-Jonesboro Community High School wrestling team hosted two teams for a pair of meets at home on Tuesday, Jan. 24. The Wildcats won big against visiting Sparta with a team score of 75-6 with 12 pinfall victories.

Later in the evening A-J came up short against conference rival Murphysboro, losing a close meet 44-33. With the loss, A-J finished second in the conference with a conference record of 6-1. The team finished with a record of 20-9 for the season heading into the regional tournament, which will be hosted at A-J on Saturday, Feb. 4. Photos by Benjamin Marxer.



Drew Holshouser, right, of A-J, grapples for advantage against Trevor Faith, left, of Sparta. Holshouser would score a second-period pinfall win for the Wildcats in the 152-pound weight class.



Daniel Cowan of Sparta struggles to keep off his back against Matteo Vaca Diez of A-J. Vaca Diez earned a pinfall victory.



Wildcat Carson Bracken, right, faces off with Ethan Ledbetter, left, of Sparta. Bracken won by pinfall in the first period.



A-J wrestler Daniel Dover sweeps the leg of his opponent prior to scoring a pinfall win for the Wildcats in the 126-pound weight class.



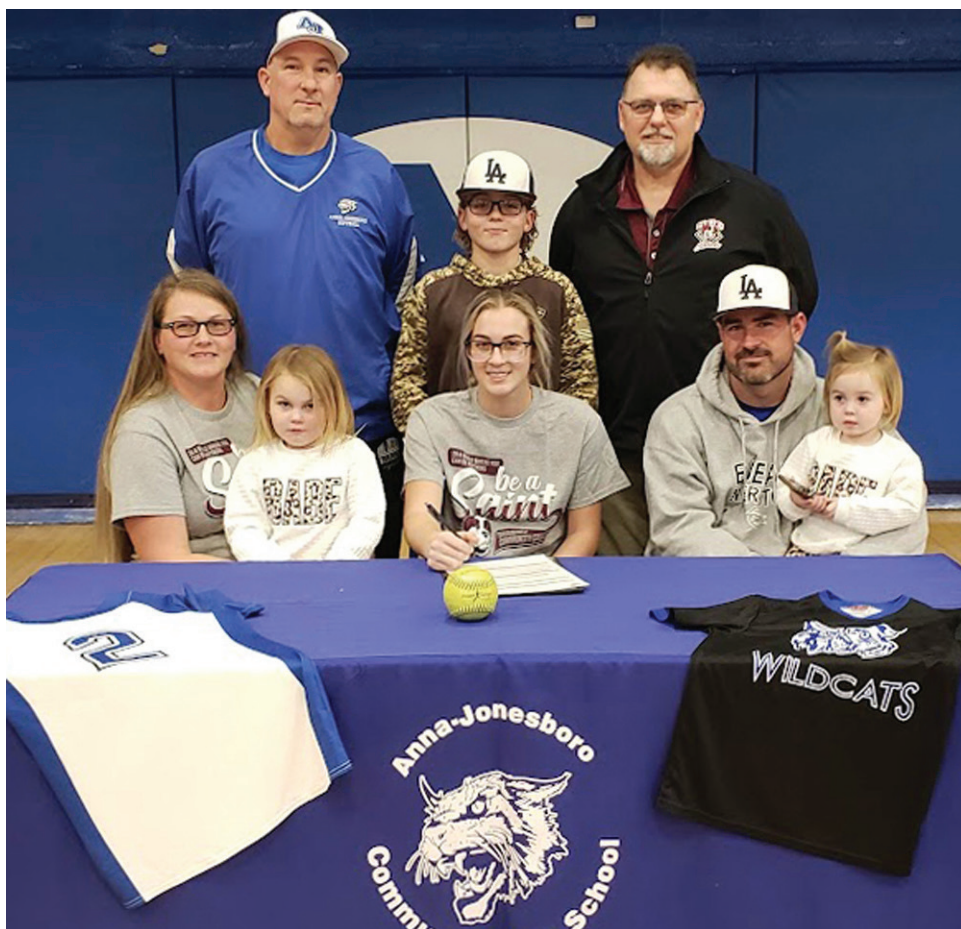
## George signs with Kaskaskia

Anna-Jonesboro Community High School senior Macie George will be headed to Centralia for the next school year after signing a letter of intent to play basketball for Kaskaskia College. A signing ceremony was held at A-JCHS. Those present included, in the first row, from left, Kaskaskia coach Jay Jenkins, Macie George and her mother, Terri George. In the second row are her father Greg George and A-J coach Dave Sullivan. George plans to study speech pathology.



**Thorn signs with Shawnee**

Anna-Jonesboro Community High School senior Shealyn Thorn has signed a letter of intent to join the Shawnee Community College Saints softball team. Thorn was joined by family and coaches at A-JCHS for the signing. With Shealyn are, in the first row, her father Ronnie Thorn, left, and mother Amy Thorn, right, as well as coaches, in the second row, A-J coach Rodney Seip, left, and Shawnee coach Kyle Smith, right. Shealyn plans to study either criminal justice or physical therapy at Shawnee.



**Smith signs with Shawnee**

Anna-Jonesboro Community High School softball player Carmin Smith has signed a letter of intent to play for the Shawnee Community College Saints. A signing ceremony was held at A-JCHS. Those present included, in the first row, from left, Carmin's mother Stacy Smith, sister Pyper Smith, Carmin Smith, father Joey Smith and sister Pippi Smith. In the second row are A-J coach Rodney Seip, brother Tytan Smith and Shawnee Community College coach Kyle Smith. Carmin plans to study either criminal justice or medicine at Shawnee.

**U of I Extension plans Master Naturalist volunteer training**

University of Illinois Extension is planning to host a hybrid training in early 2023 for the next cohort of Master Naturalists.

The training consists of science-based educational opportunities offered through self-paced assignments, in-person activities and discussions.

Regional experts will teach class sessions about ecology, invasive species, aquatic life, forestry, geology, herpetology, entomology and much more.

The program includes videos, a manual, reading materials, and activities. U of I Extension noted that a strong internet connection is highly recommended to participate in the program.

Following the training, participants complete a 60-hour volunteer internship to become certified as Master Naturalists within two years.

After certification, volunteers continue learning and volunteering to remain active Master Naturalists by completing 10 hours of continuing education and 30 hours of volunteering each year.

The fee for the spring

**Garden club meeting set**

Anna-Jo Garden Club plans to meet Feb. 8 at Giant City State Park near Makanda.

The meeting is set for 1 p.m. at the nature center at the park. All are welcome. The center is located at 235 Giant City Rd.

Guest speaker Jennifer Randolph-Bollinger plans to give a talk about spring flowers on the forest.

course is \$250, which includes nine weeks of online materials and live sessions.

Training sessions are scheduled on Thursdays, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., starting April 13 and continuing until June 8.

The group will meet at the Williamson County Extension office at 1301 Enterprise Way, Suite 60, in Marion, with field trips planned to the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge.

An orientation session is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on April 13.

An application packet can be downloaded on-

line at [go.illinois.edu/ajm-puMN](http://go.illinois.edu/ajm-puMN). The deadline to apply is March 31.

To learn more about becoming a Master Naturalist, contact local Master Naturalist coordinator Anne Townsend at 833-6363 or at [cupquake@illinois.edu](mailto:cupquake@illinois.edu).

University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

Those who need a reasonable accommodation to participate in programming are advised to contact Townsend. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time for meeting participant needs.



**Five generations**

An area family, with members from Alto Pass and Metropolis, is celebrating five generations. The five generations include, seated, Virginia Bittle and Isabella Windings; and standing, Caleb Windings, Jennifer (Bittle) Windings, Everett Bittle and Bob Bittle. Photo provided.

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News from

# First Baptist Church, Jonesboro

On Sunday, Jan. 29, during the morning worship service, Pastor Perry Williams spoke about "legacy, relationship with the Lord and each other and the importance of knowing true doctrine."

The message was based on scripture from 2 Timothy in the New Testament.

The service was sent via transmitter for worshippers who stayed in their cars on the church's lower parking lot while tuned in to their

radios on station 87.9 FM.

The service also was live streamed on Facebook, where it can be viewed.

The church's Facebook page, Jonesboro FBC, has videos and the latest information about possible closings.

Music director Dee Rose led the worship. Debbie York was the pianist. Jayson Rose provided special music, "Bless the Lord, Oh My Soul."

Women's and men's Bible study were planned at 7 p.m. Monday.

The senior adult group, Living Longer and Loving It, plans to meet at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 7, with Dr. Jason Ozbourn as guest.

A date night, with dinner and games, is planned at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 14.

Anniversary: Marc and Amy Sheffer, Feb. 2, 21 years.

The regular schedule for

worship at Jonesboro First Baptist Church includes Sunday School classes on Sunday at 9 a.m., Sunday morning worship at 10 a.m. and Sunday evening worship at 6 p.m.

The Dig-In Children's program for children ages 4 through 6th grade is scheduled from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Wednesdays.

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

Adult Bible study is scheduled at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesdays.

## Secure Choice investments top \$100 million

Workers who participate in the Illinois Secure Choice retirement savings program have set aside more than \$100 million of their own money for their retirement, Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs said Jan. 17.

The state treasurer said the threshold signals a growing recognition that workers understand Social Security alone will not provide enough

income after their working days are over and reflects data that shows workers are more likely to save for retirement if they can do so through workplace payroll deductions.

Through Illinois Secure Choice, workers can save for retirement through Individual Retirement Accounts, IRAs, funded by payroll deductions facilitated by their employers.

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### Daily Bible Readings

Acts 7:1-22	Acts 7:23-43	Acts 7:44-8:3	Leviticus 19:1-18	Deut. 5:1-22	Deut. 6:1-25	Deut. 7:1-11
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Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society X Daily Devotional at [DailyBible.AmericanBible.org](http://DailyBible.AmericanBible.org)

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# Anna News

By Martha Ann Webb

Please have news to me by Sunday night. Email me at marthaannwebb@gmail.com, mail to me at 118 W. Monroe St., leave news in the back of the green box at the right of my front door or call me at 833-5717.

### Renewals

A special thanks to Philip and Sharon Dillow for giving me credit when they took out a subscription to The Gazette-Democrat and to Janis Carrington, and Aaron Hart for giving me credit when they renewed their subscriptions to The Gazette-Democrat and to Aaron Hart for his gift sub-

scription to Stephen Burns.

### Congratulations

Congratulations to A-J Wildcats wrestling team, which placed second in the conference.

### Congratulations Meiseneheimers

They won two high point awards this year at the Racking Horse Winter end of the year awards.



Anna city administrator Doris Bigler and Anna city commissioner Martha Ann Webb represented the city of Anna at the Union County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development 8th Gala held at Havisham House in Alto Pass.



Kaitlin Rain McWhorter, Miss Rodeo Troy 2022/ assistant manager at Buckle Carbondale and Tiffany Bowles of Just Peachy Cleaners attended the Gala at the Havisham House.



A special thanks to the band Deja Voodoo from Springfield who entertained at the 8th Gala Dancing in the Moonlight at the Havisham House.



Sen. Dale Fowler of Harrisburg, Brenda Allen of B.A. Design First, Jerry Reppert owner of The Gazette-Democrat and Martha Ann Webb attended the Union County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Gala at Havisham House in Alto Pass last Saturday night

Their Jazz horse won Stake Horse of the year and Pumped up Kicks won 12 and under Specialty Action with their granddaughter Reese.

Marilyn said "One of the best parts of this award is that the horse is on a piece of wood from our barn on the show grounds. It even has an H written on the bottom, which was our barn!"

### United Methodist Church, Anna

Rev. Tim Gossett's sermon was In Pursuit of Happiness with scripture from Matthew. Special music was by Carla Anderson and Marcy Morris. Children's message was What Makes You Happy.

### Anna First Baptist Church

Rev. Lupe Lopez sermon was on Hell, the Hottest Place in the Universe with scripture from Luke.

Preachers try so hard to tell people about the love of Jesus and if we accept him in our hearts, ask him to forgive our sins, believe he died on the cross for those sins, was dead, buried and risen from the dead and now lives in heaven preparing a place for all those who believe in him so that people will not go to hell, and how the angels rejoice when one lost person is saved.

The scripture told about the one lost sheep and how the shepherd hunted until he found him. Not everyone can preach but we can be doers of the word.

Dale Denny welcomed everyone. Jean Denny played the piano and led everyone in singing His Name is Wonderful and There's Something About that Name.

The worship team of Rev. Lupe Lopez, Yadi Lopez and Vickie Wagner led everyone in singing Amazing Love and Jesus Messiah.

Many people in the church have fallen sick or have lost a loved one. Rev. Lopez prayed for each of them and that the world would be healed from cancer. He prayed for all those in the military who are protecting our country and away from their families.

Carol Anne Baker taught the women's Sunday School Class The voice of God seeks to convict us of the truth. The class was sorry to hear their Sunday School teacher had hurt her back but enjoyed studying the Bible with Carol Anne. Everyone prayed for those who are sick.

Carlena Thompson thanked the class for the meal they fixed and brought them while Loyd is recuperating from a fall and their daughter Michelle was here from Florida helping them.

Next Sunday, Feb. 4, our Lord's Supper will be taken.

### Anna Heights Baptist Church

Rev. Darryl Williams continued his sermon series on The Mission of Renewal. This week Sharing the Gospel.

WMU Gems will meet Thursday, today, at 1:30 p.m. at the Voyage. WMU Relentless is collecting food and snacks for the A-JCHS Comfort Closet. Please bring nonperishable food items to the collection center during February and March.

Sunday School and attendance contest Jan. 22, Feb. 12 Souper Bowl chili and dessert contest and fellowship, Sunday, Feb. 12, after the 10:30 a.m. service. Please bring canned food items for the food drive.

February birthdays: 4th Teri Dover, Sherri Goforth,

Don Yates, 6 Logan Davis, Christopher Mowery, 7 Angela Harris, Kimberly Williams, 9 Donna Taylor.

January attendance: 8 a.m. worship service, 87. 10:30 a.m. worship service, 128. Small group Bible study, 196. 6 p.m. worship, 31.

### 96th Birthday

Alfred Dammann celebrated his 96th birthday Jan. 28 at his home with friends and family.

### Birthday

Don Trambly celebrated his birthday Jan. 26 and was honored with a birthday dinner and party by his family.

### Women's Club

The GFWC Illinois Anna-Jonesboro Women's Club will meet Feb. 6 at 1:30 p.m. at the Shawnee Community College annex in Anna. The program is on education. The speaker will be Janet Ulrich, former regional superintendent of

schools. Devotion by Marie Samuel and community event by Lillian Milam.

Everyone is welcome to attend. The club is always looking for new members.

### Honor Wreaths for Veterans

A special thanks to Golda Kestler for her donation of Honor Wreaths for Veterans for her husband Donald Army Korean War, Jack Bennett Army Korean War, Bernoid Freeze Army World War II.

A special thanks to Wayne Dunn from Cypress for his donation of four Honor Wreaths for Veterans for a small cemetery. Wayne will pick his wreaths up in Anna and lay them.

### AFSCME State Retiree Union Meeting

There was a large group of retired union members met in the Kiwanis building at the Anna City Park.

President Jim Wright



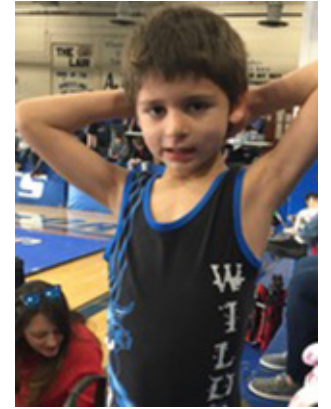
Congratulations new store owner Brandy Renshaw at Farmers Daughter Boutique located on South Main Street in the former Dr. Paul Jacobs Office.



A-JCHS Class of 1963 had a reunion planning meeting Thursday Jan. 26, at Hardees in Anna. Those present were Mary Carolyn Rendleman, Martha Ann Webb, Barbara Rhymer, Nancy Young, Donald Wayne Denny and Larry Rendleman. Their reunion will be homecoming weekend Sept. 22 and 23. They are planning to be in the homecoming parade with a tailgate party that evening at the game. They also plan to have their dinner in Anna on Saturday. More to come about their reunion as plans are being made.



Laurie and Brett Whitnel with their grandson Coy Whitnel 9.5 months the youngest to attend the Gala at the Havisham House Saturday night. Brett works at Shawnee Community College and is their small business advisor. Laurie is a dialysis nurse for Fresenius Kidney Care in Metropolis.



Willie and Terrie Rhymer attended the A-J youth wrestling meet at A-J Community High School on Saturday to watch their grandson Junior Rhymer wrestle. He won two matches out of three and won second place for his weight and age category.



The Rhymer's granddaughter Violet Yates recently won first place for the DARE program poster contest at her school Anna District 37 Junior High. She is the daughter of Jamie and Rebecca Yates of Anna.

They also motored to Lamberts on Jan. 29 to celebrate the 26th birthday of their first grandson Jordan Rhymer. In attendance were, Willie and Terrie Rhymer, Violet Yates, Jordan, Alexis, Junior, Jaxson and Rowan Rhymer.

called the meeting to order and everyone stood and said the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

The new insurance was discussed. New officers were elected. Tom Sadowski won the door prize.

Gala

The Havisham House in Alto Pass was beautifully decorated for the Gala sponsored by the Union County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development last Saturday night.

Congratulations to all who were honored. A special thanks to the CEO class for helping. Thanks to all the sponsors and to everyone who came.

A-JCHS Class of 1963

A class reunion is being planned for the weekend of homecoming Sept. 22 and 23. If you have moved or changed your phone please email or call me and leave a message on my answering machine.

We would love to have a float in the homecoming parade if anyone has a trailer or truck to pull it please let me know or a 1963 truck we could all ride in the back of. Looking forward to seeing everyone.

We have lost a lot of classmates since our last reunion sympathy to their families.

Little Egypt Red Hat Ladies

Marie Samuel is hostess for Feb. 15, 11 a.m. Little Egypt Red Hat Ladies in Jonesboro at the PAST Heritage House.

Marie hopes our Red Hatters will enjoy attending a Valentine tea luncheon from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. with a tour of the house and a special quilt turning event included.

We have 20 spots reserved for the event and need a check for \$15 made to PAST to reserve your spot. The checks will be given to Barbara Bauer who is in charge of reservations and can be mailed to her by Feb. 1 to reserve your spot.

Anyone who can bring cookies or a dessert will be appreciated. Our \$15 includes teas, sandwiches,

chips and a salad. There is no extra charge for tax or tips but donations are always welcome for the upkeep of the Promoting Appreciation of Structural Treasures.

Email

I received this email from Stephen Burns who lives in St. Louis.

Honor, Respect, Teach.

Are my thoughts upon learning of the death of my uncle, Edward R. Cullen. Uncle Ed passed yesterday, Jan. 28, 2023, at the age of 91 in Austin, Texas.

As a retired Lieutenant Colonel of the U.S. Air Force, he was very often an example of integrity, duty to God, family and country. He lead an active life in retirement, even attending a family reunion in St. Louis last September 2022.

He earned his reward and may he rest in peace.

Honor, Respect, Teach also transcended through the generations.

One of my earliest experiences with this motto actually occurred in the Anna City Cemetery. I was nine years old when Grandpa and my Uncle Bob brought me to visit Anna. It was on this visit Grandpa told me of his grandfather who was a Civil War veteran and fought with the 9th Illinois as we visited the family graveside in the Anna City Cemetery.

So being grandpa's eager student of family stories I learned from Grandpa about his Grandpa, a man he knew.

Honor, Respect, Teach is why I pursue family history the way I do.

No haystack is large enough to search for needles. My mother, Aunt Jean (wife of the late Edward R. Cullen) and Uncle Bob were and are by my side as we sought information about those who have gone before us.

Honor, Respect, Teach is a lasting way to remember those who fought for the freedoms we enjoy.

Thank you to Martha Ann for igniting this program in Union County, Illinois.

I appreciate this so much from Stephen. Stephen has

always come help us lay the Honor Wreaths and he is appreciated so much. 2021 bad weather kept him from coming and 2022 he was hit in the head with something at his job and now is not able to drive. He has been missed so much.

I laid the wreaths he always laid for him but would have to take pictures in the cemeteries and send to him of the Civil War ones to make sure I had the right monument.

Some of those older monuments you can't read anymore and some are almost buried in the ground. After Stephen would lay all those he would help us finish laying the other veterans wreaths.

Stephen also visited Anna many times to help with the PAST House and at the Anna Arts Center. His hope someday is to move to Anna. Please keep him in your prayers that his head injury heals, he can drive again and he finds the home of his dreams in Anna.



Weekend trip to Alabama for the Racking Horse Awards and Banquet. The Meisenheimer family had two horses to win year end awards. Their granddaughter Reese Lofton won the Juvenile Division on Pumped Up Kicks and their horse Jazz and the Blues was voted Stake Horse Champion of the Year. They were very proud and honored to receive these awards.



AFSCME retirees met at the Kiwanis building at the Anna City Park to discuss their new insurance and to vote on new officers. Tom Sadowski won the door prize.

Television Listings

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 2, 2023

Table with 12 columns for channels (ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, ESPN, TBS, USA, DISN, HBO, MAX, SHOW) and 5 rows for time slots (6 PM, 7 PM, 8 PM, 9 PM, 10 PM, 11 PM).

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 3, 2023

Table with 12 columns for channels and 5 rows for time slots (6 PM, 7 PM, 8 PM, 9 PM, 10 PM, 11 PM).

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 4, 2023

Table with 12 columns for channels and 5 rows for time slots (6 PM, 7 PM, 8 PM, 9 PM, 10 PM, 11 PM).

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 5, 2023

Table with 12 columns for channels and 5 rows for time slots (6 PM, 7 PM, 8 PM, 9 PM, 10 PM, 11 PM).

MONDAY FEBRUARY 6, 2023

Table with 12 columns for channels and 5 rows for time slots (6 PM, 7 PM, 8 PM, 9 PM, 10 PM, 11 PM).

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 7, 2023

Table with 12 columns for channels and 5 rows for time slots (6 PM, 7 PM, 8 PM, 9 PM, 10 PM, 11 PM).

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 8, 2023

Table with 12 columns for channels and 5 rows for time slots (6 PM, 7 PM, 8 PM, 9 PM, 10 PM, 11 PM).



IAAF Fair Convention in Springfield: Union County Fair Board members Mike Meisenheimer and Dale Moreland with Avery Osman Union County Fair Queen, and second place runner up out of 72 candidates from all the county fairs in the state.



“Playing dolls” last week at PAST’s Heritage House in Jonesboro: Barb Bauer helped Lillian Milam prepare exhibits for a couple of up-coming special Valentine parties at Heritage House. Lillian’s extensive doll collection includes several special treasures appropriate to Valentine’s Day. One of the special meetings will be hosted by Daughters of the American Revolution, DAR, and the other event is hosted by The Little Egypt Red Hats Society.

# Opinion and Commentary

## A Resilient Illinois

Lessons learned from COVID-19 more important than ever

**By Dr. Sameer Vohra, Director Illinois Department of Public Health**

Three years ago today, on January 24, 2020, Illinois confirmed its first case of COVID-19. Since then, Illinois has recorded 4 million cases and 36,000 deaths – losses that have devastated families and communities across every part of our state.

The numbers have left us numb. We have started to shut COVID-19 out of our lives. But the threat remains. COVID-19 took the lives of more than 200 Illinoisians in December, more deaths than from Ebola in the entire world last year. Many of those deaths were preventable.

It is time to remind ourselves that in 2023, we have effective tools we didn't have in 2020. And we have something even more powerful: Knowledge and Experience. We know now what can protect us: a vaccine, a timely test, a pill, a mask, a portable air filter, an open window or just staying home if sick.

We are thankful to be in a better place. The deaths and strain on our healthcare system are nothing like the depths of the pandemic when Illinois recorded hundreds of deaths and thousands of hospital admissions each week. But, as new COVID-19 variants emerge and other respiratory illnesses circulate, we must remain vigilant to preserve hospital capacity and protect our most vulnerable.

As we move forward, we must understand where we are and how to maintain a health system that protects us from challenges ahead – those we can anticipate and those we cannot.

**What We Have Learned**  
**•Illinois is a State Full of Heroes**

Illinois had no shortage of heroes. We start with the bravery of our state's front-

line healthcare and public health workers who risked their lives to protect us. And the pandemic scientists who raced to understand the new virus and the steps needed to protect us, and created the lifesaving tests, vaccines, and treatments that helped limit the effects of this deadly disease.

The most unsung heroes were the essential workers who did not have the luxury of working from home. They kept our grocery stores open, cooked our food, drove our buses, made deliveries, and taught our children. Those in community and social services occupations had the highest death rate from COVID-19 followed by transportation workers. Society owes a debt to these heroes, many of whom suffered disease and death, we may never be able to repay.

**•Health Inequities Must be Addressed**

The pandemic shined a harsh spotlight on the disparities and fragmentation that has existed in our healthcare system for too long. The racial, socioeconomic, and geographic disparities we saw early in the pandemic revealed a health system that was not equitable for all.

Our scientific discoveries did not guarantee access or equitable distribution. It took leadership from Governor JB Pritzker and sustained efforts by local, city, county and state leaders to roll out vaccines and treatment equitably.

By May 2021, more than 10 million doses of vaccines were administered free to Illinoisans through a massive vaccination campaign involving local health departments and community groups in every corner of the state.

**•Misinformation is Affecting Health**

Misinformation has eroded trust in the people and systems that protect our

health. Dangerous misinformation about vaccines and unvetted medical treatments spread through social and even traditional media channels.

We learned that countering misinformation and building trust requires constant effort. Illinois took an important step in this direction when we became the first state in the nation to require high schools to teach media literacy.

**The Way Forward**

We already have examples of how lessons learned from the pandemic have strengthened our public health system.

We've used those lessons to launch successful responses to Mpox (formerly monkeypox) and Ebola. Within weeks, the public health system mobilized to distribute vaccines and share accurate information about Mpox. In doing so, we leveraged relationships and communications channels developed for the pandemic. For Ebola, federal, state and local public health authorities established protocols to closely monitor travelers from Uganda, again building off platforms developed for COVID-19.

Looking forward, our mission to rebuild the future of public health is just beginning. We need a health system mobilized around decreasing health inequities not just with respiratory diseases, but also chronic diseases and mental and behavioral disorders.

We must continue to prioritize a public health system that works best behind the scenes, investing in people, information, and infrastructure with the goal of protecting and promoting your health.

And we need to constantly earn your trust – by countering misinformation with accurate data and sharing the incredible work of health heroes across Illinois.

The future in Illinois looks bright. Let's meet this moment together and use these lessons and those we continue to learn to make every community in Illinois as healthy as it can be.

*(Editor's note: This op-ed by the director of the Illinois Department of Public Health was shared by Southern 7 Health Department.)*

## Please read this...

By Geof Skinner



This was the view from the front porch late Tuesday night, January 24. At least there weren't any mosquitoes.

## Staying inside would have made sense...

The item posted on the website for the National Weather Service office in Paducah Monday evening was a little bit disconcerting. What I saw got me to wondering if Stephen King had hacked into the system...

"Unknown precip" the message declared. The message was accompanied by an image featuring two pair of what appeared to be glowing lights in the dark. One pair of glowing lights was white. One pair was red. Snow zombies? Abominable snow persons?

My first thought was that the folks at the weather service are the experts. Just what exactly would "unknown precip" be? I'm not much of a meteorologist, but it would seem like "precip" would be rain... or snow...or hail...or sleet... something fairly familiar.

And pairing "unknown precip" with a pair of what looked like a pair of sinister eyes glowing the dark... well, it was just a little bit creepy. Then again, my imagination may have been running a little bit wild in the midst of the "unknown precip."

I saw the message and the image with the glowing lights while checking for the latest update about the wonderful weather we were having Monday evening.

The first day of a new work week had started on a rather icy, frigid note. When I looked out the front window Monday morning, I saw that the trusty mechanical steed which I depended on to get me to work was coated in what appeared to be a layer of ice. That did not surprise me, since freezing drizzle had been in the forecast for Sunday night into Monday morning.

Yes, indeed. The car was covered in a layer of frozen precipitation. Faced with that icy challenge, I headed out into the cold to warm up the car.

Surprise. All four door handles on the car were covered with a layer of ice. With a little bit of work, and a somewhat "creative" solution to the challenge, I managed to get the door on the driver's side of the car open.

I started the car and let it warm up for a while. And "warm up" is somewhat of a relative term. We'll just say that it was a little bit warmer in the car than it was outdoors.

The ice on the front windshield melted. Sort of. Same for the ice on the front windows on the driver's side and passenger's side. Again, sort of. As for the back windows...well...they needed a little bit of work... As Monday progressed, I kept checking the weather service website for updates...which just seemed to get more and more interesting.

Due to the weather, the time spent at The Paragraph Factory on the first day of the new work week came to an early end. As I was getting ready to head for home, sleet was falling from the

sky. The windows on the car which I had cleared just a couple of hours earlier were quickly being coated with another layer of frozen precipitation.

On the way home, the frozen mess that was falling from the sky seemed to get heavier. I made it home safely, thank goodness.

Common sense would have suggested that once I got home, I should just stay inside, where it was warm and no "unknown precip" was falling. So, I went for a walk. I'm here to tell you, that between the wind and a falling temperature, it was c-o-l-d. And the "unknown precip" just kept coming down.

Tuesday morning was pretty much a repeat of Monday morning, at least in terms of getting into the car and motoring to metropolitan Anna. But duty called. Once again, that guardian angel I mentioned last week was keeping me company. Hopefully, we'll get this week's paper finished, and with a little help from that angel, I'll get back home... and maybe stay inside...

## A Page from the Past

from the files of The Gazette-Democrat

Thursday, February 1, 1973

Church bells rang in the Union County area Saturday evening, January 27, 1973, at 6 p.m. when the cease-fire was scheduled to begin, ending the longest war in which Americans have been involved. Union County has given 11 of its men to the War in Vietnam.

All young men reaching the age of 18 must continue to register with their local Selective Service Boards within 30 days after their birth date, according to the local Selective Service Board.

Temperatures in the Union County area ranged from a high of 63 recorded Thursday, Jan. 25, to a low of 20 degrees on Monday, Jan. 29, for a differential of 43 degrees.

An Illinois Central Gulf Railroad representative appeared and spoke to the Union County Board of Commissioners Monday, Jan. 29, about abandoning a section of railway lines from the north county line to the south county line, more commonly known as the "Old Mud Line."

From the Friendship news: Oh boy our nice weather has gone bad now. This is Sunday night and we have had snow flurries all evening and it is turning much colder. I sure would have preferred the pretty sunshine but we should have known it couldn't last.

## Letter to the editor

### Preserving local history

To the editor,  
 I want to say thank you to Brock Buckner for the plans he has to restore the Anna Plaza Motel sign. That sign has a special place in my heart. My grandmother, Ruth Davidson, along with her partner, Ralph Gray, built the motel in the early sixties. She lived there and operated the motel for several years. It's nice to see some history preserved.  
 Signed, Shirley Davidson Ray, Cobden

# Heart Smart

## TAKE THIS INFORMATION *to Heart*

You can take a proactive role in helping prevent heart disease from affecting you or those you love. The American Heart Association recommends taking the following steps to reduce your risk of developing heart disease:

Get Active

Lose Weight

Reduce Blood Sugar

Stop Smoking

Eat Better

Control Cholesterol

Manage Blood Pressure

Know Your Family Health History

FREE smoking cessation classes available!

Complete a **FREE** Heart Health Risk Assessment at  
**sehealth.org/heartsmart**