THE GAZETTE-DEMOCRAT

The Talk And Cobden Review • Serving Union County Since 1849

Thursday, May 7, 2026 | **Anna, Illinois** | **$1.00** | **Volume 179, Number 22**

News Notes

Items of interest from throughout the Union County area.

Happy Mother's Day to all moms. Mother's Day is Sunday, May 10.

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Veterans Honor Flight of Southern Illinois invites the community to attend the next Honor Flight welcome celebration, which is set for the evening of May 18 at Veterans Airport in Marion. Activities are set to kick off at 6 p.m.

***

Just in time for Mother's Day…Anna-Jo Garden Club plans to have a spring plant sale Saturday, May 9. The sale is scheduled from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Anna-Jo Garden Club Park, which is near McDonald's on East Vienna Street in Anna.

***

Congratulations to Anna-Jonesboro Community High School prom queen Aleah Box and prom king Adam Clark.

***

A baccalaureate service for the Anna-Jonesboro Community High School class of 2026 is set for 2 p.m. Sunday, May 10. The service will be in the high school auditorium.

***

Shawnee Hills Arts Council in Anna is planning to host an exhibit June 12 through July 26 featuring the works of The Arts Sisters, a group of Central Illinois women.

***

The Anna-Jonesboro Community High School Art Club went on a recent field trip to St. Louis. The school shared on social media that students explored the St. Louis Art Museum, where they were able to get up close looks at works created by artists and art movements they have been studying in class. They wrapped up the day at the St. Louis Zoo, where they saw handcrafted lantern displays featuring animals and plants.

***

The Anna Junior High School girls' track team won a regional championship.

***

An April 30 family reading night at Lincoln Elementary School in Anna was reported to have been a big success. More than 200 people attended the event. Appreciation was voiced to all of those who volunteered and sponsored a station to help celebrate literacy.

***

Anna School District 37 kindergarten students have been learning about the life cycle of butterflies. Each class watched as their caterpillars grew, formed into chrysalises and emerged into butterflies, which were released on Monday.

***

Cobden Junior High School 7th grade students visited the Union County Museum in downtown Cobden one day last week. The students learned about local history specific to the Civil War.

(continued on page 2)

Yard sale days planned in Cobden, Alto Pass

Community yard sale days are planned this weekend in Cobden and Alto Pass.

Cobden

An annual community yard sale day is planned Saturday, May 9, in the Village of Cobden. Yard sales are scheduled throughout the village.

Maps showing the locations of yard sales will be available at 7 a.m. May 9 at Cobden Village Hall, which is located at 112 E. Maple.

A flea market, food vendors and bounce houses for kids are planned at Cobden's downtown park starting at 8 a.m.

The Cobden Unit School District Beta Club plans to have a yard sale during the Cobden event. The club's yard sale will be in the small gym at Cobden High School. The yard sale will be held to help raise funds to compete at the Beta national convention in Nashville, Tenn.

Union County Women in Business also plan to have a yard sale during the Cobden event. The yard sale is scheduled from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. next to Mother Coffee & Provisions on Appleknocker Drive. Proceeds will support the Union County Women in Business scholarship fund.

Alto Pass

A community-wide yard sale day is planned Saturday, May 9, in Alto Pass. Hours are scheduled from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Multiple homes will be participating, according to a message on social media. Signs will be posted.



Dancers perform in Alto Pass

Cobden High School's ESL Folkloric Dancers performed at last weekend's Cinco de Mayo community celebration in Alto Pass. The celebration was held Saturday, May 2, in the park in downtown Alto Pass. Some of the other activities included a parade and live music.

Rural Health Inc. plans food drives

As the school year draws 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 Johnson, Massac and Union counties this May. All nonperishable food items and monetary donations will be delivered to their distribution sites the same day they are collected. RHI asks those who can make a donation to visit one of the following locations:

Goreville Food Market in Goreville, May 14, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Donations will benefit the Arrowleaf food pantry in Vienna.

Big John's Superstore in Metropolis, May 22, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Donations will benefit the COPE food pantry in Metropolis.

Kroger in Anna, May 28, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Donations will benefit Shawnee Development Council's food pantry in Anna.

"Lack of nutritious food can lead to serious and long-term health problems, particularly for children, such as impaired physical development and reduced cognitive functioning," said Shawnna Rhine, director of public relations for Rural Health Inc. "By supporting our local food pantries we can help ensure that children are getting healthy meals year round."

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 Shawnna Rhine at 618-833-4471, extension 1036.

Minor flooding reported

Minor flooding was reported early this week at locations along the Mississippi River in Southern Illinois and Southeast Missouri. Union County is bordered on the west by the river.

The National Weather Service office at Cape Girardeau reported Sunday that minor flooding was continuing along the Mississippi River at Thebes and Cape Girardeau. The Weather Service reported that the river had crested at both locations and water levels were slowly falling.

At Cape Girardeau, the river was forecast to fall below flood stage Tuesday evening. At Thebes, the river was forecast to fall below flood stage Monday morning.

Flood stage for the river at Cape Girardeau is 32.0 feet. At 9:30 a.m. Sunday, the river's stage was 34.5 feet. Flood stage for the river at Thebes is 33.0 feet. At 9:30 a.m. Sunday, the river's stage was 33.5 feet.

April weather drier, warmer than normal throughout region

The month of April was much warmer and drier than normal in the Southern Illinois, Southeast Missouri and Western Kentucky region.

Temperatures

The National Weather Service in Paducah reported in a climate review for the month that temperatures averaged well above normal by 7 to 8 degrees. This was the warmest April on record for many locations in the region, including four of five of the Weather Service office's climate sites.

Temperatures in the 80s were a common occurrence, with Paducah and registering 15 such days. An average April typically sees around four to six days reaching 80. There were only eight days that finished below normal: April 5-7, April 18-20 and April 29-30. Temperatures dipped into the 30s on several of those nights.

Six daily record highs and 24 record warm lows were recorded at the office's five stations during April.

Precipitation

Precipitation was drier than normal across most of the region, with amounts only ranging from 2 to 5 inches for most areas, which was to 1 to 3 inches below normal for April.

Highest totals were more focused across Southeast Missouri and Southern Illinois. Some of the lowest amounts were recorded in Western Kentucky from the lakes eastward. The highest observed amount in the office's forecast area was 6.32 inches near Sikeston, Mo.

Drought worsened throughout the region with extreme, levels being introduced across southern portions of Southeast Missouri and Western Kentucky by the end of the month. Most of the rest of the region experienced moderate to severe drought conditions by the end of the month. Some much needed heavier rains did occur April 27-28, which helped across the northern half of the area.

The six-month period from November through April officially finished as the second driest on record in Paducah, Cape Girardeau, and Carbondale. Amounts were generally 8 to 15 inches below normal in this six-month period.



Talking about the weather

Kate Hickford, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service office in Paducah, was among the guests at an Ag Bash event hosted by the Union County Farm Bureau. Ag Bash was held from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Friday, May 1, at the Lincoln Memorial Picnic Grounds as a way to celebrate all sorts of special agricultural activities. Hickford had a display featuring weather information and a hands-on "tornado in a bottle" activity.

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County commissioners approve reappointments

The most recent meeting of the Union County Board of Commissioners included reappointments to local governing bodies and discussion about a local road. The meeting was Friday morning, April 24, at the Union County Courthouse in Jonesboro.

Reappointments approved by the county board included: Bruce Newman and John Melfi as Lick Creek Public Water District commissioners, Matt Lambdin and Justin Pender as Shawnee Valley Water District commissioners and Brandon Smithey as a Jackson-Union Counties Regional Port District governing body member.

In other business, a resident who lives along Old Cape Road south of Jonesboro voiced his appreciation to the commissioners for attention which has been given to concerns he had about the road. The resident had voiced his concerns at several recent county board meetings.

In a report about Southern Five Regional Planning District activities, commissioner Darryl Harvell reported that two rounds of work had been completed to remove dilapidated properties in Dongola. A third round of work is being considered. Harvell represents the county on the planning district's governing body.

County board vice chairman Kent Pitts offered praise for the work being done by the staff at the Union County animal control shelter near Anna. Pitts said the staff is doing "an outstanding job."

A professional service agreement with Schneider Geospatial LLC for a GIS portal on the county's website was approved.

Anna VFW set to host several upcoming events

Veterans of Foreign Wars Carroll P. Foster Post No. 3455 of Anna will host several upcoming events, including a Taco Tuesday fundraiser, a smoked pork butt sale and a post cleanup day.

Taco Tuesday is scheduled for 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 12, and is open to the public.

The VFW Auxiliary will also be smoking pork butts May 9 in time for Mother's Day. Those interested are encouraged to call or stop by the post to reserve orders while supplies last.

In addition, a post cleanup day is planned for 9 a.m. May 9, with members invited to assist with maintenance and preparation at the facility.

News Notes

(continued from page 1)

A Lawyer in the Library session is set for noon Thursday, May 7, at Stinson Memorial Public Library in Anna.

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Stinson Memorial Public Library in Anna, and the library's branch facility in Cobden, were closed May 5 for staff training.

***

Anna-Jonesboro Community High School is joining in this week's celebration of Teacher Appreciation Week.

***

Illinois's newly updated School Vaccination Coverage Dashboard shows that coverage rates for all school-required childhood immunizations are holding steady compared to last year, and all but one of those immunizations is above the state's 95 percent coverage goal to optimize prevention of infectious disease spread. The dashboard is put together each year by the Illinois Department of Public Health using data provided to the Illinois State Board of Education by pre-kindergarten through grade 12 schools and school districts in the state.

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The Illinois Department of Natural Resources, IDNR, reports that second lottery for deer firearm and muzzleloader seasons opens May 11 and continues through June 30. Unsuccessful Illinois residents who applied in the first lottery drawing but were not awarded a permit, as well as non-residents, can apply. Visit Hunt Illinois online for more information.

***

IDNR reports that May 14 is the final day for over-the-counter spring turkey permit sales. Spring turkey permits are available on a first-come-first-served basis until quotas have been met for a particular county. Go online to huntillinois.org for additional information and a breakdown of permits available for over-the-counter purchase by license vendors in each county.

Union County Farm Bureau hosts Ag Bash in Jonesboro

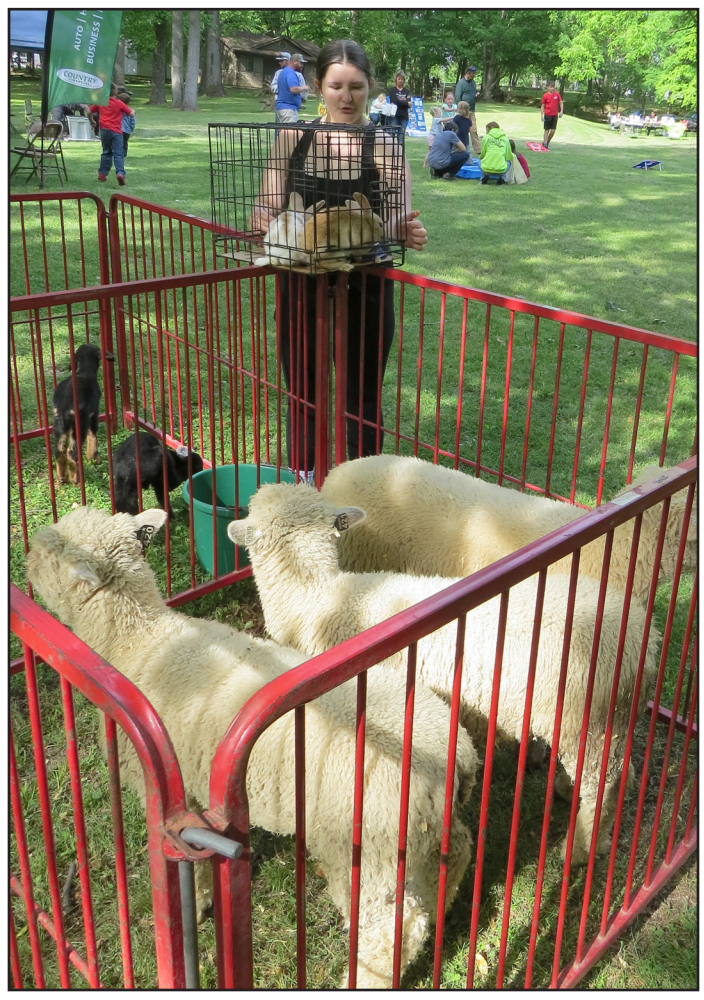
Union County Farm Bureau hosted the second annual Ag Bash Friday, May 1. The event was held from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Lincoln Memorial Picnic Grounds in Jonesboro. Ag Bash featured all kinds of agricultural activities, including a petting zoo and presentations by local businesses and organizations.



Union County Farm Bureau hosted the second annual Ag Bash Friday, May 1. The event was held from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Lincoln Memorial Picnic Grounds in Jonesboro. Ag Bash featured all kinds of agricultural activities, including a petting zoo and presentations by local businesses and organizations.



Jessica and Austin Flamm, and their daughter, Josephine, represented Flamm Orchards at the Ag Bash. Those who visited with them were able to take home some tasty, locally grown strawberries while also learning about the popular fruit.



Those who attended the Ag Bash could have an up-close visit with sheep, young goats and rabbits. Hayden Dillow-Ellis was holding the rabbits, which were provided by Carol Poole. The sheep came from 3D Farms. Mark Glasco provided the goats.



University of Illinois Extension educator in natural resources Erin Garrett, and her daughter, Adelaide, greeted visitors. Lots of gardening information was available. Visitors were able to take home some seeds and native Illinois plants for their gardens.

Weather

High 80, low 35; 0.27 of inch of rain

Temperatures ranged from a high of 80 degrees to a low of 35 during the period of period of April 28 through May 4 in the Union County area. Precipitation totaled 0.27 of an inch of rain.

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

Tuesday, April 28: high 73, low 61. 0.22 of an inch of rain.

Wednesday, April 29: high 68, low 52. 0.05 of an inch of rain.

Thursday, April 30: high 66, low 40.

Friday, May 1: high 64, low 41.

Saturday, May 2: high 64, low 39.

Sunday, May 3: high 71, low 35.

Monday, May 4: high 80, low 57.

April Highlights

The high temperature for the month of April was 86 degrees, which was recorded on April 14. The average high was 76.

The low temperature for the month was 33, which was recorded on April 19. The average low was 52.

Precipitation for the month totaled 3.15 inches of rain. The most rain in a 24-hour period was 0.89 of an inch, which was recorded on April 4 and April 27. Precipitation for the year, through the end of April, totaled 12.95 inches.

The last frost of the season was recorded April 19, when the low temperature was 33.

HOSPITAL DISTRICT BOARD MEETING PLANNED

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

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

Check out The Gazette-Democrat on line at

annanews.com





Summer reading program promoted

Stinson Memorial Public Library District had an opportunity to promote its upcoming summer reading program on Friday, May 1. Library representatives were on hand for the Union County Farm Bureau's Ag Bash, which was held at the Lincoln Memorial Picnic Grounds in Jonesboro.

Summer reading program sessions are planned in June and July at Stinson Memorial Public Library in Anna and at the library district's branch facility in Cobden. A kickoff party for the program is scheduled from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. May 29 at Quick's Skating Rink at 216 E. Davie St. in Anna. Reading program activities for all ages are planned. Details are available on Stinson's Facebook page and by contacting the library.

State board seeks revamp of counting low-income students

By Peter Hancock
Capitol News Illinois

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois State Board of Education is asking lawmakers this year for $200,000 to develop a new way of counting low-income students.

Although that's only a small fraction of the overall $10.9 billion general revenue fund budget the agency is seeking to fund preK-12 public schools next year, the request points to a larger issue that public schools could be facing over the next several years as the number of students officially counted as "low-income" is expected to drop.

That's because Illinois currently counts low-income students based on their enrollment in federal support programs, including Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP.

However, under new eligibility rules that were part of the federal budget law Congress passed last year known as H.R. 1, or the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," the number of people enrolled in those programs is expected to decline.

Those include changes to SNAP eligibility that went into effect May 1 that disqualify many groups of noncitizens and impose new work requirements on many able-bodied adults.

Although the rules mainly affect adults and therefore aren't expected to have an immediate impact on students, officials believe they could eventually cause entire households to become unenrolled in federal aid programs, resulting in fewer children being enrolled as well in future years.

"We believe we have time to come up with an alternative method," Robin Steans, executive director of the education research and advocacy group Advance Illinois, said in an interview.

The changes in federal eligibility rules for Medicaid, SNAP and other federal programs could have a direct impact on the amount of state funding many districts receive through the Evidence-Based Funding formula.

That's the formula that lawmakers adopted in 2017 that calls for $300 million in additional funding for public schools each year, with the bulk of that money earmarked for the least adequately funded districts.

The formula uses several factors to determine an "adequacy target" for each district, including the number of teachers and paraprofessionals a district needs based on its enrollment and demographic factors.

For example, for kindergarten through third-grade classes, the statute says each district should receive funding for one full-time equivalent teacher for 15 low-income students, and one for every 20 non-low-income students. For grades 4-12, the formula calls for one teacher for every 20 low-income students and one for every 25 non-low-income students.

According to data from the state's 2025 report card, there were just over 1.8 million students enrolled in Illinois public schools during the 2024-2025 school year. Of those, 49.7 percent, or 933,470, were classified as low-income.

The highest concentration of low-income students for any single district was in Carbon Cliff-Barstow School District 36, in the Quad Cities region, which reported 100 percent of its students qualified as low-income. Lake Forest School District 67, in Lake County, reported only 1.3 percent of its students were low-income.

Although many observers say they do not expect the changes in eligibility rules to have an immediate impact on districts' official poverty rates, they do note that overall enrollment in Medicaid and SNAP has been declining in recent years, for reasons they say they cannot yet explain.

According to data from the Illinois Department of Human Services, fewer than 1.7 million people in the state were receiving SNAP benefits in March 2026. That's down 13.7 percent from a year earlier, and 17.8 percent from March 2023.

Likewise, according to the Department of Healthcare and Family Services, Medicaid enrollment in Illinois in fiscal year 2025, at 3.26 million, was down 5.7 percent compared to the year before, and 18 percent lower than it was in fiscal year 2023.

"It's the right time for the state to explore (other methodologies)," Steans said, noting that the declining enrollment rates "don't comport with our lived experiences."

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Veterans' stories honored at Freedom Sings USA event



Honored through song

Friends, family and supporters of veteran Weldon Davis attended the closing program of the Freedom Sings USA event where Davis' song "It's All About the Lives We Save" was debuted. Pictured are, standing, from left, Gary Hileman, Debbie Hileman, Warren Masters, Erick Turner, Coleen Turner, Shelby Hediger, Weldon Davis and Adam Birk. Seated, Helen Dodd, Debra Davis, Crystal Birk and Reta Dodd.

Local veteran Weldon Davis shared his story of service and sacrifice during the recent Freedom Sings USA Retreat, where his experiences in the Vietnam War were transformed into an original song.

Davis was one of five veterans recognized during the April 16-18 event, along with Norm Bauer, Bob Caraker, Jean Few and Mark Haddick. Songwriters Steve Dean and Don Goodman worked with Davis to craft a song based on his military service, which was written April 17 and performed publicly the following day.

Davis served in the U.S. Marine Corps from September 1970 to April 1971 as a crew chief and gunner aboard a CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter. Assigned to Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 263, his missions included medical evacuations, resupply operations and troop insertions and extractions during combat.

During his service, Davis received numerous honors, including the Distinguished Flying Cross for actions on Dec. 17, 1970, when he helped guide a helicopter into position under heavy enemy fire to rescue wounded Marines during an emergency hoist extraction.

Over the course of his tour, he earned 27 Air Medals for his role in multiple high-risk missions, frequently exposing himself to severe enemy fire to guide the pilots to safe landing spots.

Weldon received a Navy Commendation Medal for delivering crucial information allowing a CH-46 to safely land for extraction of a team. After landing, he helped provide suppressing fire until the team had embarked.

"We were there to save lives. When we were called, we went," Davis said.

His story was captured in the song "It's All About the Lives We Save," which reflects both the intensity of combat and the lasting impact of war. Dean performed the song during the event's closing program April 18, where the five veterans were honored and their songs debuted before an audience of family, friends and community members.

The retreat, hosted locally by the Shawnee Hills Arts Council, brought together veterans and professional songwriters for a multi-day experience focused on storytelling, healing and recognition.

Family and friends joined Davis for the performance, which organizers said highlighted the powerful connection between music and personal history.

Event organizers and attendees praised the program as a meaningful experience for both veterans and the community.

"SHAC threw an incredible multi-day event," said attendee Dori Bigler. "I knew it was going to be cool, but I had no idea how special it really would be."

Rainy weather in forecast this week

Rainy weather was expected through the middle of the week in the Southern Illinois, Southeast Missouri and Western Kentucky region.

The National Weather Service office in Paducah reported that showers and thunderstorms were in the forecast from late Monday night through Wednesday. Widespread showers were expected Tuesday and Tuesday night. A few strong to severe storms were possible Tuesday afternoon and evening, particularly in Southeast Missouri.

"Rainfall will be beneficial for the ongoing drought but spread out enough to keep flooding potential limited," the Weather Service advised. Rainfall totals in the amount of 1.5 to 2 inches were possible in the Union County area.

Drought Update

An update from the U.S. Drought Monitor posted on Thursday, April 30, showed that nearly all of Union County was experiencing moderate drought conditions. Similar conditions were reported in nearly all of Johnson County and parts of Jackson, Williamson, Alexander, Pulaski and Massac counties.

Severe drought conditions were reported in southern parts of Alexander, Pulaski and Massac counties. Abnormally dry conditions were reported in extreme northwestern Union County, most of Jackson County and parts of Williamson and Johnson counties.

Lake Wind Advisory

A lake wind advisory was in effect Monday for parts of Southeast Missouri, Western Kentucky and Southern Illinois, including Union County. The advisory issued by the Weather Service office was in effect from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. Monday.

Southwest winds of 15 to 25 miles per hour were possible, with gusts of 25 mph to 35 mph. Southwest winds of 24 mph, with gusts up to 32 mph, were reported shortly before 11 a.m. Monday at the Southern Illinois Airport near Murphysboro.

The Weather Service advised that strong winds and rough waves on area lakes would create hazardous conditions for small craft. The strong winds, low afternoon humidity and dry seals would lead to elevated fire weather conditions on Monday.

Last Weekend's Weather

Weather last weekend in the region included the possibility of patchy frost early Sunday morning. The forecast called for temperatures to fall into the mid to upper 30s in some low-lying areas.

Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms were possible last Saturday in some areas, mainly east of the Mississippi River. The Weather Service said that some of the showers could have produced small hail and cold air funnel clouds.

The Weather Service explained that cold air funnel clouds are due to very cool air aloft and warm moist air near the ground. They are usually associated with a strong area of low pressure in the upper levels of the atmosphere. Due to little or no wind shear, they are usually very brief and rarely reach the ground.

Looking Ahead

Mild temperatures were in the forecast for this week in the Union County area. The high Thursday, May 7, is forecast to be near 65, followed by highs near 73 on Friday, near 77 on Saturday and near 77 again on Sunday. Lows in the 40s and 50s are expected. There's a slight chance of showers Friday night, followed by a chance for showers and thunderstorms Sunday.



Union County Alliance of Churches
Recommendations

1. The AOC needs teachers who can show us how to help kids learn to read. We want to help, call us.
2. John 3:16 Ministries, "**The Cure**", for drugs/alcohol addiction, john316thecure.com/admission/ FREE
3. "The Old Depot" 6 pm. Free dinner, live praise, fellowship, everyone welcome, come as you are.

Questions call Alliance of Churches (618)-614-2974

Obituaries

Thomas E. Carney, Jr.



Thomas E. Carney, Jr., age 61, of Cairo, passed away peacefully on Saturday, April 25, 2026 at home.

He was born on March 30, 1965 in Glendale, Arizona to Thomas Edward and Sheryl Elaine (Morrison) Carney.

Tom was a proud graduate of Cairo High School where he played pilot football.

Tom answered the call to serve his country by enlisting in the United States Navy. Entered service with the Navy in 1985 and served aboard the USS Austin (LPD-4) as an engineman.

His service included two deployments with the U.S. 6th Fleet on the Mediterranean Sea. Tom was proud of his service and carried the values of discipline and loyalty with him throughout his life.

Despite navigating significant physical challenges, Tom always kept a positive attitude toward life and he had many friends who thought very highly of him and will miss him dearly.

Tom was known for his boisterous laugh, inability to whisper, and easy-going spirit.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Thomas Edward and Sheryl Elaine (Morrison) Carney; grandparents, Viola and Charles Hood; and aunt and uncle, Phyllis and Jerry Kepner.

He is survived by his brother, Stephen D. Carney; along with a multitude of extended family and friends.

A Graveside service with interment was held on Friday, May 1 with Rev. Larry Potts officiating at Spencer Heights Cemetery in Mounds, Ill.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests with gratitude that memorials may be made to the Cairo Public Library.

Crain Funeral Home in Cairo is in charge of arrangements.

Crain Funeral home

Lola Elizabeth Lehman



Lola Elizabeth Lehman, age 84, of Anna passed away at home on Thursday, April 30, 2026 with her loved ones at her side.

She was born Aug. 13, 1941 in Litchfield, Ill., the daughter Archie and Lola Toigo. She grew up in Benld, Ill. Lola married John Lehman on June 6, 1964.

Lola was in the 1st graduating nursing class at Illinois Wesleyan University in1963. She had a master's degree in nursing from the University of Central Arkansas.

Lola taught nursing at Shawnee Community College and Southeast Missouri State University. She was also a home health nurse and parish nurse for Anna United Methodist Church where she started the teddy bear ministry.

She is survived by her three children, John (Suzy) Lehman, Angela Lehman, and Michelle (Troy) Wiseman; and five grandchildren Angelina, Margret, Anthony, Peyton, and Chord.

She was preceded in death by her parents and husband.

Funeral Services will be held Thursday, May 7, 2026 at 11 a.m. with Pastor Nixon Estioko officiating at the Anna United Methodist Church. Visitation will be held prior to the service from 10 a.m. until the time of service at the church.

Interment will follow the service at Anna City Cemetery.

The family requests with gratitude that memorial contributions may be made to the Anna United Methodist Church.

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

Crain Funeral home

Sue Egner



Sue Egner, age 85 of Washburn, formerly of Anna, died Saturday, April 25, 2026.

She was born July 23, 1940 in Ava, the daughter of Henry "Frog" and Nora (Davis) Bryan. She married Kent Stanley Egner on July 6, 1958.

Sue is survived by her loving husband, Kent Egner Sr. of Washburn; son, Kent Stanley II (Ginger) Egner of Larose; daughter, Teresa (Lee) Grebner of Washburn; granddaughter Charlyn (Eric) Heinrich; eight step-grandchildren; two great-grandchildren, Mikayla and Erica; twenty-one, step great-grandchildren; one step great-great grandchild; nieces and nephews; other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; son, Michael Van Egner; siblings, Betty Mueller, Henrietta Youngblood, Myrtle Schulter, Charlotte Toler, Joyce Sullivan and Lawrence "Butch" Bryan.

Sue always enjoyed a good game of Bingo with her friends. She loved to dance and laugh and she will be truly missed.

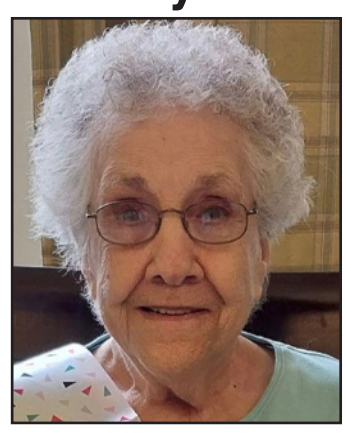
Funeral services were on Saturday, May 2, 2026 at the Rendleman & Hileman Funeral Home in Anna with Bill Littrell officiating. Interment followed in the Green Lawn Cemetery in Villa Ridge.

RENDLEMAN & HILEMAN FUNERAL HOMES

View Obituaries Online at

annanews.com

Zetta E. Ramsey



Zetta E. Ramsey, age 92, died Friday, May 1, 2026 at The Voyage Senior Living of Anna.

She was born Sept. 9, 1933 in Wetaug, the daughter of Tilden B. and Ruth (Lentz) Crader. On April 19, 1952, she married Arence Ramsey, Jr. He preceded her in death on July 17, 1986.

Zetta was a former member of the First Baptist Church of Jonesboro. She worked as a bank teller at AJ National Bank in Anna for over fifteen years.

Zetta is survived by her daughter, Lisa Smith of Cape Girardeau, sons, Stacey (Susan) Ramsey of Jonesboro and Randy Ramsey of Anna; thirteen grandchildren; twenty-two great-grandchildren; other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Arence Ramsey, Jr., sons, Alan Wade and Rick Ramsey; daughter, Teressa Peters; grandson, Scott; great-grandson, Sebastian; brothers, Don, Hugh, Linus, and Bill Crader, and sisters, Helen Stevens and Hazel Youngblood. She will be dearly missed.

Graveside services will be held for the family at 11 a.m. Friday, May 8, 2026 at the Jonesboro Cemetery. Interment will follow.

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

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

RENDLEMAN & HILEMAN FUNERAL HOMES

News from

Anna Nazarene Church

Sunday, May 3

The morning worship service was held at 10:35 a.m. on May 3. Announcements were given by Jessica Elkins.The worship service was led by Pastor Wright and the Worship Team.

The message "Nameable Non-Christian People" from Romans 10:9-15 was given by guest speaker, Dr. Michael Benson, who has conducted 500+ revivals, retreats and camp meetings. During that time, he completed the Doctor of Ministry degree from Asbury Theological Seminary, focusing on Spiritual Formation.

For nearly a decade, Benson served as Chaplain to the University at Olivet Nazarene University. He has taught in their Graduate School of Theology and Christian Ministry. Benson has one published work, "Disciples For The Inner Life" which was co-authored with his father, the late Bob Benson, former President of the Benson Company.

In 2011, Benson returned to itinerant ministry and preached more than 100 times annually around the country at churches, conferences, and retreats and bike rallies. He serves as the National Evangelist for the Priesthood Motorcycle Ministry. Riding under the road name of "Chap Daddy," his time is devoted to evangelistic efforts among the biker culture. Also, he was recently elected as the chairman of the Nazarene Motorcycle Fellowship whose sole mission is to provide motorcycles for missions to pastors in Central and South America and Africa. He is the co-founder of Salvage Yard Biker Church in Kankakee, Illinois, which has celebrated its fifth anniversary.

In 2018 he began to commute weekly to Cincinnati, Ohio where he has planted the second Salvage Yard Biker Church. That congregation was commissioned in February 2019. He pastored the Cincinnati Salvage Yard until the end of 2025.

There was no evening service.

Saturday, May 9

Ladies Banquet 5:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Sunday, May 10

Breakfast - 9:00 a.m.

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

Wednesday, May 13

Wednesday Night Service will be held at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. 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.

Commencement ceremonies set at SIU

The academic achievements of nearly 2,100 Southern Illinois University Carbondale students will be celebrated during spring 2026 commencement exercises which are planned May 8-9.

Festivities start with the SIU Simmons Law School commencement on Friday, May 8, at Shryock Auditorium. On Saturday, May 9, Banterra Center is scheduled to host two commencement ceremonies.

As of mid-April, there were 2,087 candidates for degrees and certificates, including 1,402 candidates for bachelor's degrees, 432 candidates for master's degrees, 98 candidates for doctoral degrees, 87 law degree candidates and 68 candidates for associate degrees. The graduating candidates represent 19 different countries.

There is no ticketing for guests, and guest seating for all of the ceremonies is on a first-come, first-served basis. The ceremonies will also be livestreamed at commencement.siu.edu/videos. The video stream will begin 15 minutes before each ceremony begins May 9.

The schedule for Saturday, May 9, includes:

9 a.m. College of Agricultural, Life and Physical Sciences; College of Arts and Media; College of Business and Analytics; College of Liberal Arts and the School of Education.

1 p.m. College of Engineering, Computing, Technology and Math; College of Health and Human Sciences, and School of Medicine.

Union County Fixin's

Broccoli Salad by Mary Stacy

Mix together in large, sealable bowl:

1 bunch fresh broccoli, cut into florets

1 cup raisins

1 cup salted sunflower seeds

1 small onion, diced fine

6 strips of bacon, cooked crisp and broken into pieces

Mix the following and pour over the salad:

1 cup miracle whip

2 Tablespoons red wine vinegar

1/2 cup sugar

Toss salad so dressing coats well. Seal and chill at least 4 hours or overnight.

County Line News

(Mill Creek and Upper Elco) **By Suzan Harvel**

Carol Palmer and I took a small trip up north a couple weeks ago. The Illinois State National Society Daughters of the American Revolution held their spring conference in Bloomington, Ill. from April 23-26. We were both able to connect with relatives that live in the area either before or after the conference, so it had dual purposes.

The guest speakers were wonderful and I purchased both books. Tom Emery spoke on his book "Illinois in the Revolutionary War." Yes, we played our part. The French laid claim in 1671 and held it until after the Treaty of Paris was signed and ended up in British control in 1763. This actually made it easier to claim after the Revolutionary War. George Rogers Clark, Pierre Gibault, Patrick Henry, and the Marquis de Lafayette were just a few of the notable names that helped shape what would become the State of Illinois.

Our other speaker was Major General John Borling USAF, Ret., who wrote "Taps on the Walls, Poems from the Hanoi Hilton." He was a prisoner of war in Hanoi for six years during the Vietnam War and he composed and then shared his poems through taps on the wall of his cell. This war had a whole different outcome. He shares stories of his family, his service, his capture, and eventually his release.

He includes the code they used to communicate in this book. You can see how laborious it was to impart basic questions, let alone entire poems, but it was often the only way they had to communicate, which was vital to having hope and staying alive.

Both books show you just how strong the American spirit is and I recommend reading them.

Also, at the conference we were proud to see students from Kindergarten to High School who participated and won awards for their projects in recognizing America's 250th anniversary. Some will go on to compete at national levels in Washington D.C. in June and we congratulate them all.

Daniel Chapman Chapter of DAR will meet on May 11 at St. John's Lutheran Church at 1 p.m. for their monthly meeting. The speaker will be Carol Palmer who will give a history of St. John's. Members are asked to bring a bottle of water, no food will be served.

P.A.S.T. of Union County held their monthly meeting on April 28. Plans are being finalized to participate in the Jonesboro's JuneFest activities on June 6, Anna's Annabelle Festival on June 13, and the Fourth of July Parade on July 4.

Heritage House will host a yard sale on June 20 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Jonesboro. Other activities include displays of quilts from the Heritage House collection at John A Logan July 25-26. Then on August 9, 16, and 23 and possibly the 30, P.A.S.T. will feature Sunday Talks on the topics of historical modes of transportation in Union County.

In September, P.A.S.T. will be helping the Shawnee Arts Council host Constitution Week Celebrations. In October, we will be hosting spooky and fascinating tales of unique headstones, lost cemeteries and funeral practices. Dates, speakers, and topics will be posted as details are finalized. Then, in December, the Christmas Luncheons will be held once again. As with the other events, more details will be made available closer to time of event.

P.A.S.T. has been given permission to replicate the "houses" that Juanita Heisner has created depicting local landmark buildings. Information on which buildings and their release dates will be posted as soon as possible.

Some of the Stinson Library were available during the 150th Anniversary of the birth of Walter Burley Griffin, the architect of the Stinson Library. The next meeting of P.A.S.T. will be on May 26 at 6 p.m.

A brief round of storms came through this last week. I'm sure more will be coming around. We were spared the worst of it, but you never know when that might change. It's that time of year. Stay safe and keep your weather apps turned on.

We attended the opening of the farmer's market this past weekend in downtown Cape Girardeau. There wasn't much produce available yet, but other vendors were set up and a heavy turnout was in evidence. We enjoyed the antique shops, checking out the food and craft booths, hearing the live music, indulging in fresh squeezed lemonade and gooey hot donuts, and running into others we know.

My youngest daughter met up with her best friend since birth, Hannah, there. She and her husband, Bill, live in Puxico, but made the trip over to check it all out and they visited for a while. The grandkids ran into teachers and friends from school and the adults all saw friends, co-workers, and neighbors as well. A larger craft fair will be held in downtown Cape on May 16.

Those venues are so much fun and we look forward to all that our local ones in Union County will have to offer in the next months also. Check out the News Notes in this paper to see what's coming up next. AJ plant sale will be held on Saturday, May 9. Blood drives, Memorial Day services, civic and school performances, graduations, and much more will be posted. Cobden is hosting a Revolutionary War Encampment on June 6 and 7, so put that on your calendar too.

As school days are ending, vacations are starting, school and family reunions get attended, and those lazy days of summer are enjoyed, let us all be mindful to stay safe and have fun. Time does fly away quicker than we wish it would and we all want to look back and remember them with laughter and joy.

Also, don't forget Mother's Day is Sunday, May 10.

Brother Bobby Richardson led Mill Creek Baptist Church in worship from Genesis 22: 1-19. This text covers the confirmation of Abraham's faith when he is asked to sacrifice his son, Issac. God was testing Abraham. He often tests any of us who live by that faith. We need to ask ourselves when we are tested, is what God gave you more important than God himself? How strong is your trust? Just as God provided another sacrifice for Issac, God will provide us with other answers. Brother Bob reminded us that our greatest accomplishment in life needs to be the salvation of ourselves and others… especially our children. It all comes down to faith, trust, and obedience.

Those added for prayer are: the family of Sharon Yearwood in her passing, the family of Teresa Phillips in her passing. Prayer for renewed health are asked for Allison Harvel-Austad, Bob Holderfield, Cliff Waller, Joe Moreland, Jordan Cobb, Maddie Keller, Mike Miller, Peggy Wright, Randy Morgan, and those involved in a wreck on Route 146 this Sunday morning.

Vacation Bible School plans have been made for August 3-7 from 5:30-8 p.m. at Mill Creek Baptist Church. Classes will be available for Pre-School-Kindergarten and Elementary-Junior High. More information will be posted soon.

News from

Anna First Baptist Church

Anna First Baptist Church met for Worship on May 4, with Matthew Lopez leading our Opening Prayer.

Menda Cash led our Call to Worship, which was on The Lord's Supper.

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying. This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

After our Worship service we will, as a Church Family share the Lord's Supper together.

Our Worship Team led us in "I Speak Jesus," "Holy Forever" and "Here I am to Worship."

Pastor Lupe's sermon title was "When Pressure Turns Into Mission." Highlights of his sermon included Acts Chapter 8, showing how God uses persecution to scatter the church and spread the gospel beyond Jerusalem.

Through Philip the Evangelist, the message reaches Samaria, where real power brings deliverance, healing, and great joy. At the same time Simon Magus exposes the danger of false faith—wanting God's power without surrendering to God Himself. Peter the Apostle rebukes Simon, revealing that a heart not right with God cannot receive what only comes through repentance and transformation.

The chapter ultimately declares that the gospel advances through obedience, not comfort, and that God turns pressure into mission for those willing to go.

Our Sunday School begins at 9 a.m. and is for all ages. Our Children's Worship and Adult Worship Service begin at 10:15 a.m. on Sunday Morning. Our bus runs for both of these services. If you need to be picked up, please call our church office to be put on a list.

We have other programs you may be interest in, please ask about those when you call.

We are having our Mexico Mission Trip Yard Sales on Saturday mornings from starting at 8:30. Please come by and shop.

Our church is located at 409 Morgan Street in Anna, Illinois. Our phone number is 618-833-5416.

Our Fasebook is AnnaFirstBaptistChurch Our email is fbcanna409@gmail.com

You are always welcome to come to our services and visit. We would love to tell you about Jesus and how He has changed our lives. Come by, let us pray with you. God Bless You and your family.

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How often we see "for your protection" when we buy consumer products. Polyurethane protects your floor...oil protects your engine... fabric guard protects your furniture. A car seat is required by law to protect your most precious new family member. We read about a myriad of products that promise protection, but none of them can protect our well being like a personal relationship with our Heavenly Father. God is available to protect and comfort you on your every journey. Get to know Him at your chosen house of worship.

Daily Devotional Reading

Romans 1:1-17	Romans 2:1-16	Romans 3:19-31	Romans 4:1-12	Romans 4:13-25	Romans 5:1-21	Romans 6:1-23

Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society

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YARD SALE

Cobden Community Yard Sale Day and Downtown Flea Market, Sat., May 9. Maps at Village Hall on E. Maple, 7a.m.

HELP WANTED

City of Anna, Police Officer The City of Anna, IL is accepting applications for the position of a Full-Time Police Officer. Duties include but are not limited to enforcement of laws and ordinances, protection of life and property, order maintenance, apprehending suspects, monitoring traffic, as well as preserving the peace and service to our community. Minimum qualifications for an interested candidate are as follows; must be a U.S. citizen, have a valid driver's license, possess a valid Illinois FOID card, must pass a medical and criminal background check, and reside within 30 minutes of the corporate limits of Anna. Preferred but not required qualifications include certification from the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board. Salary is based on current Bargaining Union Contract/Fraternal Order of Police. Starting salary is $23.58/hr without PTI certification or $26.53/hr with PTI certification. Applications will be available for interested candidates at Anna City Hall or online at cityofanna.org. Please return resume and employment application to the Human Resources Department at Anna City Hall, 103 Market Street Anna, IL 62906 or by email to mmcreynolds@cityofanna.org. Position will remain open until filled. EOE

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS ESTATE OF JAMES BRUCE JONES, SR. DECEASED. NO. 2026-PR-8 IN PROBATE NOTICE OF DEATH INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION, AND CLAIM DATE

NOTICE IS GIVEN to creditors of the death of James Bruce Jones, Sr., of Dongola, Illinois.

Letters of Office were issued on April 20, 2026, to Angela K. Sharp, 2215 Oak Creek Drive, Sherman, TX 75092 as Independent Executor, whose attorney is Elvis C. Cameron, 205B N. Main St., Anna, Illinois.

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

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

The estate will be administered without Court supervision unless, under Section 5/28-4 of the

Probate Act (Ill. Compiled Stat. 1992, Ch. 755, Par. 5/28-4), any interested person terminates Independent Administration at any time by mailing or delivering a petition to terminate to the Clerk of this Court.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of this court at the Union County Courthouse, 309 W. Market St., Jonesboro, Illinois, or with the Independent Executor, or both, on or before October 30, 2026, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the Executor is required by Section 5/18-3 of the Probate Act of the State of Illinois, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the Executor and to the attorneys within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

Dated: April 21, 2026.
ANGELA K. SHARP
CAMERON LAW FIRM, LLC
ELVIS C. CAMERON
ATTORNEY FOR INDEPENDENT EXECUTOR
205B N. MAIN ST.
ANNA, ILLINOIS 62906
PHONE: 618-833-2220
ARDC# 6244394
8221-964267

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT UNION COUNTY, ILLINOIS ESTATE OF CHERYL TRAYLOR, DECEASED. NO. 2026-PR-9 IN PROBATE NOTICE OF DEATH INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION, AND CLAIM DATE

NOTICE IS GIVEN to creditors of the death of CHERYL TRAYLOR, of Jonesboro, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued on April 22, 2026, to RITA HUMPHREY, 1115 Tollgate Road, Anna, IL 62906, as Independent Administrator, whose attorney is Elle J. Mobley, 205B N. Main St., Anna, Illinois.

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

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

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

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of this court at the Union County Courthouse, 309 West Market Street, Jonesboro, Illinois, or with the Independent Administrator, or both, on or before October 30, 2026, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the Administrator is required by Section 5/18-3 of the Probate Act of the State of Illinois, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the Executor and to the attorneys within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

Dated: April 24, 2026.
RITA HUMPHREY,
Administrator
CAMERON LAW FIRM, LLC
ELLE J. MOBLEY
ATTORNEY FOR INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATOR
205B N. MAIN ST.
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What Is The Value Of A Community Newspaper?

What is the value of a community newspaper?

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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

SAFE-T Act in spotlight after killing of Chicago police officer

By Ben Szalinski
Capitol News Illinois

SPRINGFIELD – The SAFE-T Act is again generating controversy following the killing of a Chicago Police officer whose alleged shooter critics of the law say was only out of jail because of the state's pretrial laws.

While Republicans say the law needs to be changed to make it easier to hold a person in custody while they await trail, others say the judge who allowed the suspect's release had the authority to detain him but made the wrong decision.

Gov. JB Pritzker said the judge should have ordered the detention of Alphanso Talley, man with a violent criminal history who is charged with shooting and killing Chicago Police Officer John Bartholomew at a hospital on the city's North Side on April 25.

The law creates a presumption of pretrial release and directs the justice system to order the least restrictive method of ensuring someone attends their trial. But it also lets prosecutors petition judges to detain individuals who they believe are a risk to the public or of fleeing prosecution.

Talley had previously served time in prison and been convicted of crimes such as aggravated armed robbery and battery of a correctional officer.

According to WGN, Talley was granted pretrial release by a Cook County judge over prosecutors' objections while he faced armed carjacking charges. He was put on electronic monitoring, but he stopped showing up to court in March and his monitor went silent. A warrant was issued for his arrest, but he remained out of jail.

"The reality of the SAFE-T Act is stark," House Republican Leader Tony McCombie, R-Savanna, said at a news conference on Wednesday. "Individuals with extensive criminal histories or active charges are being released and committing crimes, serious crimes in their communities."

McCombie and Senate Republican Leader John Curran, R-Downers Grove, are proposing a specific solution in response to Bartholomew's killing. They want people who are on electronic monitoring pretrial and commit a new crime to automatically have pretrial release revoked until the case is resolved.

Since the law's early days, its Republican opponents repeatedly called for giving judges full discretion to keep dangerous suspects detained.

Pritzker told reporters in Chicago on Wednesday that judicial decisions have led to many of the high-profile releases of people who've gone on to commit violent crime.

"In most of the cases where Republicans have complained about the SAFE-T Act, it's actually been the bad decision by an elected judge in Illinois, or no hearing at all because the prosecutor didn't bring it to the judge, and that has been a reason why somebody gets let out," Pritzker said.

In many instances, proponents have argued, repeat offenders could have been out on bail under the previous system.

State lawmakers passed the SAFE-T Act in January 2021 as part of a series of initiatives led by the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus in response to civil unrest and racial justice conversations following the 2020 murder of George Floyd.

On the Campaign Trail

Pritzker's Republican opponent this fall, former Sen. Darren Bailey of Clay County, held a news conference at the Statehouse on Thursday, April 30, to call for the SAFE-T Act's repeal. However, some of his proposals mirror the existing Pretrial Fairness Act, the portion of the SAFE-T Act that deals with pretrial procedures and is the subject of much of the criticism over the law.

Bailey outlined his six-point proposal in a news conference. It would keep the no-cash bail system and require judges to evaluate a person's criminal history, compliance with supervision and risk to victims. It would also allow judges to order detention of people who are deemed a public safety threat or flight risk before trial. All of those are components of the current law.

"If a judge believes that someone is more likely than not to be a danger to the community, they stay in jail," Bailey said.

Sen. Elgie Sims, D-Chicago, an architect of the SAFE-T Act, said he hopes other Republicans also come to realize the state is better off without cash bail.

"Certainly, it's recognition that that the policy is working," Sims said of Bailey's proposal. "And the (cash bail) policy was certainly never about safety. It was always about the access to wealth."

Bailey's more specific changes to the law would create a presumption of detention for repeat violent offenders, while the current law requires prosectors to prove a person must be detained. He also wants changes to electronic monitoring rules to end free movement requirements.

"It's basically the honor system. That ends," Bailey said. "Violent offenders will be supervised by real law enforcement, people with the authority to act when something goes wrong, and if you violate your monitor, even once, you're back in front of a judge within 48 hours – no loopholes, no excuses, no second chances."

Pritzker also said he believes people should be "immediately apprehended" if they violate mandatory supervised release terms.

Legislative Deliberations

McCombie and Curran say their proposal is common sense.

"This is saying that if you get a get-out-of-free-jail card, and you get a second chance, and you mess that up by committing another felony while on release, you don't get any more chances," Curran said.

Despite chatter from some top Democrats earlier this year that lawmakers could consider changes to the SAFE-T Act, nothing is immediately being considered in Springfield.

"If there is something that we need to work through, we certainly can evaluate that to see how that works," Sims said.

Cook County court records show 83% of people who have been released pretrial have not committed new crimes. Six percent have been charged with new violent crimes while 11% have been charged with new nonviolent crimes.

Sims said the tragedy involving Bartholomew doesn't mean the law needs to be tossed aside.

"I wish that folks who were the purveyors of fear who want to just trot these issues out – the one-offs – they would take time to delve into the policy and how things are working," Sims said. "And that's what you see from folks, from academicians to practitioners, they're showing that we are making progress."

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

'This is what really happened...

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

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

"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 is 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 newspapers." Luis Bunuel

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

Anna-Jo Garden Club news

Sharings from April

Our guest speaker for our April meeting was Cynthia Dudek, known as the Herb Lady when she was actively producing for Farmer's Market in Carbondale. Cynthia shared her lovely life story and how she learned to love plants, gardening and our natural world.

Cynthia and her husband raised their children in Union County, her son lives here still and shares her ongoing love of growing food and flowers. She first learned from her Polish grandmother and as a young woman worked as labor on early organic farm operations. She developed skills along the way in plant crafts and learned how to create healing tinctures from her herbs, as well as well as how to can produce for a growing family.

Her counsel from decades of caring for plants and people: Pay attention and spend time with the earth. Grow indigenous plants organically and leave the edges for pollinators. Achieve stillness within to hear the birds and learn what the earth is about. Spend time everyday outdoors with your garden. Calm your nerves by building a bouquet.

Our June meeting is Bouquet Day! On June 9, our meeting will be at the AJGC park. Join us at Anna Jo Garden Club Park to create a bouquet to be delivered to local establishments. Potluck lunch.

On May 9, come buy plants for Mother's Day and the summer at the AJGC plant sale at AJGC park from 8a.m. to 2 p.m.

On May 11, join AJGC's Conservation Corner at Shawnee Hills Art Council at 6 p.m.

Our May meeting will be held at United Methodist Church Anna on May 12 from 1 to 3 p.m. Our guest speaker's topic will be Hydrangeas 101, for all those Annabelles around Anna.

Our meetings are typically held at United Methodist Church Anna 1- 3 pm on the second Tuesday of each month.

Everyone is welcome.

News from

First Baptist Church, Jonesboro

On Sunday, May 5, Pastor Perry Williams spoke in the morning service. He taught on the subject of stewardship and discussed how we steward our time, our bodies, our possessions, our minds, and our talents. Do we use them for God's glory? One day, God will ask us what we did with what He has given us. His text was from the 25th chapter of Matthew, found in the New Testament.

Music Director, Dee Rose, led in worship accompanied by Debbie York on the piano, and the praise team: Sharon Morgan, Chris Rose, and Rodger Goines. Jerri and Josè Tehandòn sang a special, the Casting Crowns song, "I am Yours."

Zayden Wright followed the Lord through baptism during the morning worship and became a member of our church. Welcome to the family, Zayden!

Our service was sent via transmitter station 87.9 FM for those who want to listen via the radio. Due to technical conditions, we were unable to live stream the service. Please check our Facebook page, Jonesboro FBC, for the latest videos and info on church events.

This week's activities include the Men's Bible Study at 6 p.m., Monday, May 4, at the church; and the Senior Adult group, Living Longer and Loving It, "LLL," had their meeting and potluck on Tuesday, May 5, at 11 a.m. with guest Ken Carr who shared his testimony in song.

Recent birthdays: Levi Jones, May 4; and Jacob Ellis, May 7. 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 p.m. All are invited to attend.

The Cat's Meow

by the Cobden Spay and Neuter Coalition

Huge thanks to the Cobden Village Board and to the Cobden Civic and Industrial foundation! They each donated $750 for our Spay-apalooza campaign. Those, along with some very generous individual donations very nearly have made our goal of raising $10,000 in two months to fix 100 cats. We'll have our final count and calculations by next week. Watch our Facebook page for up-to-the-minute news.

The impact of this campaign to lessen the cat overpopulation in Union county, along with the success of raising awareness of these issues, has been tremendous. We are so thankful to all those who have shared, donated, volunteered, and talked about these issues in our wonderful community. There is much more to do. With you all in our court, we will continue to experience the positive benefits of TNR and subsidized spay and neuter.

Please visit our website, 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, or mail them to CSNC, P.O. Box 542, Cobden, IL 62920. If more convenient, you may also drop off donations for us at Kiki's in downtown Anna. CSNC is a 501c3 nonprofit organization, and donations are tax-deductible.

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

Cobden students reach April goals for Accelerated Reading Program

Cobden Elementary School is celebrating the students in the Accelerated Reading Program reaching their goals for the month of April. Students in the program are required to read books and take comprehension tests on a computer to achieve their points. Photos provided.



25 Point Club

Back row, from left, Aurora Holtzman, Jocelyn Blake, Ryker Cash, Chevy Moreland, Maddox Gibson, Roger Flores, Lukas Quertermous and Gordon Paulson. Front row, Axton Parr, Knox Sweitzer, Aurora Olvera, Kolsen Hale, Evelyn Newberry, Kennady Newberry and Lillian Null.



50 Point Club

Back Row, from left, Thai Matthews, Xander Lannom, Hasely LeFevre, Finley Lofton, Allie Stringer, Elise Belmont, Kyrie Cashion, Yana Santaclara, Sofia Salas, Thorin Leek, Ian Olvera and Dante Juarez. Front Row, Lainey Joyner, June Stamp, Aria Vega, Emberlynn Cash, Lily Morrison, Faith Rumfelt, Scarlett Brumleve, Amelia Anderson-Estes, Julia Tetmeyer, Ruth Sheridan and Annika Middleton. Not pictured, Lillian Sweitzer



100 Point Club

From left, Reagan Moore, Grayson Johnson, Arthur Kaszubski, Marshall Jackson, Samwell Meyers-Matthews, Tadeo Nava, and Alexander Olvera

Shawnee National Forest to host youth fishing derby

The Shawnee National Forest will host its annual youth fishing derby Saturday, May 16, at the Oakwood Bottoms Interpretive Site in Grand Tower.

The free event is open to children ages 5 to 15, who must be accompanied by an adult. No fishing license is required, and some bait will be provided, though participants are encouraged to bring their own fishing equipment if available. Prizes will be awarded in several categories.

Registration will begin at 8 a.m., with fishing starting at 8:30 a.m. Lunch will be provided, and the event will be held rain or shine.

The annual derby is supported by several organizations and local partners, including the Friends of the Shawnee National Forest, Friends of Turkey Bayou, Wildlife Forever, Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, Little Egypt Longbeards Chapter NWTF, Graphics Galore, Timberline, Illinois Extension, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Corp of Engineers-Rend Lake and other local supporters.

For more information, contact the Mississippi Bluffs Ranger Station at 618-833-8576.

Nationwide relay to pass through Southern Illinois

Southern Illinois will be part of a historic cross-country relay this fall as the American Discovery Trail Society organizes the "American Discovery 250 Relay: One Trail · One Nation · 250 Years in Motion."

The event, part of nationwide America250 celebrations, will span more than 6,800 miles along the American Discovery Trail, stretching from California to Delaware. The relay is scheduled to begin July 4 at the Golden Gate Bridge and conclude on Thanksgiving at the Atlantic Coast.

Participants across the country will carry a baton containing a copy of the Declaration of Independence, traveling the route by foot, bicycle and horseback.

Carol Hoffman of the Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau said local residents are encouraged to take part.

"For those looking to participate in a large national event, this could be it," Hoffman said. "Individuals, families, groups and businesses are encouraged to take part."

The relay is expected to pass through Southern Illinois from Oct. 6-11, with segments running from the Inspiration Point Trail near Grand Tower through Makanda, Goreville and Eddyville, and on to High Knob Campground before continuing into Indiana.

Organizers are seeking volunteers and participants of all ages and experience levels to help carry the baton through the region.

More information about route segments and how to participate is available at discoverytrail.org.

River to River Trail Society hike planned

The River-to-River Trail Society has announced its tenth public hike of the 2026 spring hiking season for Saturday, May 9 at at Horse Creek Trail in Alexander County

The hike is free and open to the public. This will be a very difficult hike for experienced hikers. The trek is approximately 6 miles in length with 3.5 hours of hiking time.

The leader of the hike can be reached at 708-471-7500 for more information.

Hikers are asked to meet at 10 a.m. at the Horse Creek Trailhead.

The trail society stated that the hike is intended for people in very good health who have done some hiking.

Hiking sticks and boots or sturdy shoes are recommended. Hikers should bring their own water and snacks. Hikers are asked to not bring dogs.

More information, including driving instructions to the meeting area, can be found online at the River to River Trail Society's website at www.rivertorivertrail.net

The Gazette-Democrat
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Opinion and Commentary

Highway work zone safety highlighted

With construction across the state underway, the Illinois Department of Transportation, IDOT, the Illinois State Police, Illinois Tollway, industry partners, labor, local agencies and frontline construction workers teamed up for National Work Zone Awareness Week in late April to remind the public that "Safe Actions Save Lives."

"At IDOT, we are doing more than ever this year to fix and modernize roads and bridges. Please remember to remain alert for work zones, slow down and give our crews plenty of room to do their jobs," IDOT Secretary Gia Biagi said in a news release. "The people wearing the vests behind the cones and barricades want to get home at the end of the day, just like you."

The theme for this year's National Work Zone Awareness Week was "Safe Actions Save Lives," reinforcing the message that staying alert and anticipating changing conditions impact everyone in work zones: not just workers, but drivers and their passengers, bicyclists and pedestrians.

At all times during construction season, state officials said the public should be ready for lane closures, reduced speed limits and the presence of workers and equipment. When motorists are behind the wheel and approach a work zone, the are urged to eliminate all distractions, decrease their speed, adjust to new traffic patterns and proceed with care and consideration for others.

"Safety is a shared responsibility when driving through road construction work zones," Illinois State Police director Brendan F. Kelly said. In the first three months of 2026, the state police had already handled 640 crashes in work zones, 91 of which resulted in injuries.

This year, IDOT and its partners are strengthening efforts to make work zones safer. A new initiative which started during National Work Zone Awareness Week is a data feed to connect with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Work Zone Data Exchange. The initiative allows providers such as Google, Apple and Waze to more easily share information on work zone activities with the public with the use of mapping apps and notification systems in cabs of commercial vehicles. The partnership also will capture short-term maintenance activities happening in the field, such as pavement patching and sign repairs.

Other measures to help curb speeds and increase awareness include expanding the use of photo enforcement vans, coordinating with the Illinois State Police to assign additional troopers to patrol near construction activities and deploying more temporary rumble strips approaching projects.

Each year, an average of 6,195 crashes occur in Illinois work zones, resulting in 1,073 injuries. Preliminary statistics for 2025 show that 35 people, but no workers, died in work zones in Illinois, an increase of 22 from the previous year and a reminder that crashes in work zones generally have a much greater impact on drivers and their passengers.

Motorists are advised to follow these guidelines at all times when they are traveling through work zones:

Buckle up, phone down. A seat belt is your best defense in a crash. Phones and electronic devices should be put down at all times.

Obey the signs. They will help you safely navigate work zones and avoid delays.

Slow down. The posted speed limits are there for the safety of workers and you.

Look out for slowed or stopped traffic.

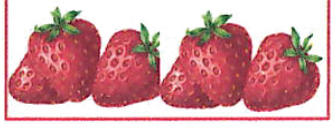
Give yourself time to react. Avoid following too closely and maintain at least two seconds of space in front of you.

Consider the limitations of heavy equipment, trucks and commercial vehicles. Provide them extra distance to come to a complete stop if they are behind you.

Remember that a work zone can take many forms: A crew patching potholes, fixing signs and guardrail or collecting litter. A major interstate reconstruction. A minor repair on a neighborhood street or a utility company out in the field. If you see orange, slow down and save lives.

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Please read this...

By Geof Skinner

Frogtown…rabbits…a groundhog…a cat…

Speaking of exciting spring weather…a severe thunderstorm warning was issued Monday afternoon for parts of Clinton and Washington counties, which are just up the road a piece from our little corner of the world here in Southern Illinois. One of the places included in the warning area was Frogtown. Sounds like an interesting place. I wonder if there are any people in Frogtown…or just amphibians…

Speaking of frogs…we have not seen one of those Critters in the Gulf of Cobden yet this spring. Maybe that's because the Gulf has been rather low these days, thanks to ongoing dry conditions in the great outdoors. A lone frog spent last summer in the Gulf. Maybe it flew south for the winter…and decided to stay. Some rain on Tuesday was welcomed.

Sometimes…yours truly wonders whether Critters, including frogs, worry about the weather. This came to mind Monday afternoon when "work" was started to create this week's gem. At the time, I could see…and hear…the wind blowing. Again. As noted many times in this space, conjuring up a few words to create a column really does not fall into the category of "work."

"Work" was what this writer did one summer while attending college, where I was attempting to learn how to put some words together on a regular basis – and, hopefully, actually get paid someday to accomplish that task. That particular summer was spent in a factory where mountains of copper were recycled in a system which included massive vats of molten metal that moved back and forth over our heads. Oh…there were some acid baths, too. Special memories.

Memories of another college experience came to mind last weekend when The Other Half and yours truly watched the Kentucky Derby. I had the opportunity to attend the famed horse race, thanks to a friend in college who had lived in Louisville, Kentucky. Louisville, as you know, is the home of the Derby. My friend thought that everybody should attend the Derby at least once, so it was road trip time.

To tell you the truth, I did not get to see much of the race itself. We were "seated" on the infield at Churchill Downs, where the Derby is run. We were far…far…far away from the track. When the Derby was run, I did catch a blurred glimpse of brown and whatever other colors the horses might have been as they headed for the finish line.

Little did I know at the time how important Kentucky would become in my/our life. The Journey Through Life ended up taking us to the Bluegrass State many, many times. Our visits included a number of opportunities to actually see horses.

Meanwhile…

Anyway…do you suppose that Critters know when bad weather is on the way? Like severe thunderstorms…heavy snow…freezing rain…frost…and other such excitement. I kind of think they do have some way of knowing such things. That might explain why I don't see squirrels very often when storms are on the way.

Meanwhile…

Recent Critter sightings included a couple of rabbits which looked to be just having some good ol' fun. The bunnies looked to be playing in a neighboring back yard.

A robin chasing a mourning dove. Hadn't seen that before. And the chase only lasted a moment or two.

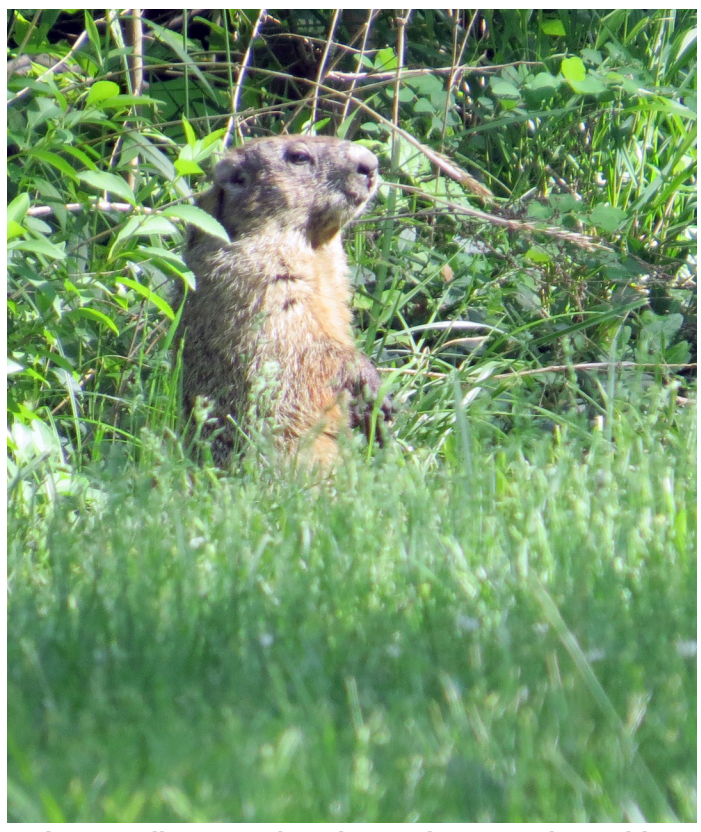
A groundhog…down the street a bit…while I was out for a walk one day last week. The Critter was close to the street…and paying close attention to what was happening. Groundhogs don't waste much time when they need to scamper off and find a safe place to hid.

Mosquitoes were a non-sighting when Bob and I spent some time out on the porch swing last weekend when the weather was nice and cool.

While it was not technically an actual sighting of the Critter, I did stumble across a very short story which mentioned a cat. The story appeared in a wrap up of news from around the country which appeared in a recent issue of USA TODAY. I say "recent" because the story appeared in a February issue of the paper. The issue with the story had been set back for future reading…and I was finally able to do some catching up.



Two rabbits paused during what appeared to be play time one evening last week.



A groundhog was keeping a close watch on things when it was seen on a sunny afternoon last week.

It seems that the cat mentioned in the story had found a home for more than five years at a retail location in a city in a state in the south. The cat was even filling an important role in pest control. However, corporate folks, citing complaints by customers about the Critter, had the cat removed from the store. The move was reported to have sparked a wave of public outrage.

As I was reading the story, I thought about sharing the story with Bob…just to get his thoughts…and see if he might be outraged. Bad timing. He was taking a nap. Maybe some other time…



Studying history

Students in Ashley Taylor's seventh grade history class from Cobden visit the Union County Museum on April 25. The class is studying the Civil War and learned about Union County's role in the conflict.



Alto Pass hosts Cinco de Mayo celebration

The park in downtown Alto Pass was a busy place on Saturday, May 2. The Union County community hosted a Cinco de Mayo celebration which attracted a big crowd. The schedule for the day's activities included a parade; live music by Colleen and Friends, including The Hornworms, and the Carbondale Middle School Cougar Choir; a performance by the Cobden High School ESL Folkloric Dancers; a chance to visit with alpacas from Burks Family Farms; a bouncy house; a pinata; authentic Mexican food and more.