

Local calendar

PAGE 4



STEM award for local teacher

PAGE 4



CDC networking

PAGE 6



Easter egg scramble

PAGE 8

Local News  
Local Journalists  
Local Ownership

# The Denison Free Press

FREE  
TAKE ONE!

Vol. 1 | No. 40

SERVING DENISON & CRAWFORD COUNTY, IOWA

April 04, 2024

## Grants and donations help lower city's expense for all-inclusive playground

Project to be completed by this fall

BY GORDON WOLF

A couple of weeks ago, Sam Ellis, Denison Parks & Rec director, was having a bad Monday, a day in which nothing seemed to be going smoothly.

Then he received word that the Iowa West Foundation was awarding a \$55,000 grant for the all-inclusive playground planned for Washington Park.

"It was just terrific news, knowing that someone sees what we see in the same project, and I was just blown away by the amount," said Ellis. "It was a bad Monday until that happened, and it just made it a great day."

Ellis received help in writing the grant from City Manager Jessica Garcia and City Clerk Jodie Flaherty, who have more experience in grant writing.

Grants, like the one from the Iowa West Foundation, plus donations, are

lowering the City of Denison's overall \$1.3 million projected expense for the all-inclusive playground. That figure covers the equipment and its installation and the site work and the playground surface.

Ellis said WESCO Industries has pledged \$40,000 toward the project. He added that the Monogram Loves Kids Foundation awarded the project a \$10,000 grant and Casey's General Store awarded a \$1,000 grant.

When speaking to the Denison Rotary Club last week Thursday, Ellis said that the project had received \$120,000 in donations and pledges so far, not including the Iowa West Foundation grant.

He said private donations to the playground have been made all the way

PLAYGROUND, PAGE 3

## Music in King Arthur's Court



PHOTO BY GORDON WOLF

Kysen Larson as King Arthur is surrounded by the Mighty Medieval Men during the performance of the song "All I Ever Wanted" in the Broadway Elementary fourth graders' performance of "Joust!" on Tuesday night at the Denison High School Fine Arts Center. The story centered on King Arthur wanting his knights to use musical instruments instead of swords. See more photos inside.

## Cattlemen's royalty selected for 2024



PHOTO BY GORDON WOLF

Kennedy Eischeid, pictured above in center, was crowned the 2024 Crawford County Cattlemen's Association Beef Queen during an event at the Charter Oak Community Building on Monday. She is the daughter of Andy and Heather Eischeid and is a student at IKM-Manning Schools. Crowned as the Beef Princesses are Amber Ragaller (second from left), daughter of Craig and Deb Ragaller and a student at Ar-We-Va Schools, and Isabel Jepsen (second from right), daughter of Dan and Danyel Jepsen and a student at Denison Community Schools. Pictured at left is Jodee Kruse and at right is Calli Korner, the county cattlemen's association co-queens for 2023.

## Continuing the legacy and legend of Harry Houdini

Performance Monday at Denison library

BY GORDON WOLF

Actor Duffy Hudson will bring Harry Houdini to life in a performance at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, April 8, at Norelius Community Library.

The event is free to attend. People may remember Hudson as the actor who portrayed Edgar Allan Poe at the library in October.

Hudson portrays a number of notable persons in one-man shows. Others that he portrays are George Burns, Albert Einstein and Audie Murphy.

Hudson said he selected Houdini as he was looking for an entertainer



PHOTO COURTESY OF DUFFY HUDSON'S WEBSITE, DUFFYHUDSON.COM.

Duffy Hudson as Harry Houdini, about to escape from a pair of handcuffs.

to portray. Friends who are magicians invite him to The Magic Castle in Hollywood each year to do his Poe

HOUDINI, PAGE 3

On the other foot

## Shoe fundraiser benefits Little Hawks Childcare Center

BY GORDON WOLF

In the case of a fundraiser for Little Hawks Childcare Center in Manilla, the shoe is on the other foot, literally.

Pat Palmer and her sister, Ann Lockwood, are spearheading a shoe collection drive with the money targeted for a floor scrubber for the childcare center.

As of Tuesday, 2,500 pairs of shoes had been collected, separated into 100 bags of 25 pairs per bag.

Palmer and Lockwood are working with Funds2Orgs (funds2orgs.com), the nation's largest shoe drive fundraising company.

The fundraiser in Manilla will receive 40 cents per pound of shoes from Funds2Orgs.

The Funds2Orgs website says the shoes collected will become "an

economic lifeline for individuals and families living in developing nations. Due to systemic poverty, lack of education, and economic opportunity, Funds2Orgs works with individuals who create micro-businesses, essentially small businesses."

Funds2Orgs, based in Florida, says it has micro-enterprise partners in 26 nations.

The shoe drive began on February 1 and originally was to end on April 1, but Palmer said the drive has been extended until April 15 as Funds2Orgs won't pick up the shoes for another 30 to 45 days.

People can donate shoes that are worn but not worn out, or new shoes.

SHOE DRIVE, PAGE 3



PHOTO BY GORDON WOLF

IKM-Manning school children climb on top of the bags of shoes in a corner of the old cafeteria at the Manilla school building, to demonstrate just how many shoes have been collected in a fundraiser for Little Hawks Childcare Center. As of Tuesday, 2,500 pairs of shoes had been collected. People can donate shoes through April 15.

# Come see our Preschool!

Thank you for your interest in the Denison Community Schools Preschool Program

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Wednesday, April 24<sup>th</sup> • 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.



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Our classrooms will be open from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 9th

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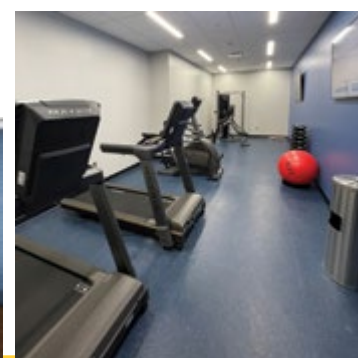
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# HOUDINI, FROM PAGE 1

performance. Magicians are obsessed with Poe in general, he said.

"At some point one of the magicians said, 'You ought to do Houdini.' I like Houdini but I didn't know enough magic. Several of my magician friends said they would teach me all the magic," Hudson explained.

Another encouragement to portray Houdini came from a less obvious group of people.

"I was doing Edgar Allan Poe at a middle school - 400 kids. After the show we did a little Q & A, and one of the kids asked about the other shows I did. And they asked what shows I was thinking of doing, I named a number of shows I was thinking about. No reaction. But when I said Houdini, these 400 middle schoolers started screaming. I didn't know Houdini was so relevant to kids, even. That really convinced me that it would be a good way to go," Hudson said.

Hudson said he gets the idea of portraying people from history all the time. He begins his research, and for some characters, it just doesn't pan out.

"I just don't feel it or for some reason it just doesn't seem like it's a good idea. But Houdini was definitely a good idea," Hudson said. "I picked him because a lot of people told me Houdini would be popular, and I've always been fascinated with magic."

He remembers watching Tony Curtis portray Houdini in a movie. That inspired him to go to the library to learn more about the magician.

After learning from his magician friends, Hudson was able to incorporate a variety of tricks in his portrayal of Houdini.

"People (at Monday's performance) can expect to see the life of Houdini revealed in an interesting and fun way," he said. "I'll escape from a straitjacket, I'll escape from handcuffs, I'll swallow needles and do

some card tricks, all the while telling you about his life from his point of view - so it will be Houdini telling you about his life - and what his life is really about and what he learned through all of his struggles of being an immigrant, being a poor kid from the Midwest and making his way in a world where there really weren't too many magicians making a living."

Hudson said he finds a kinship in portraying a showman like Houdini.

"A couple of weeks before I performed the first show, I was still working on it, pulling it all together, and I was quite nervous about it," he said. "Then a magician called and said he was bringing a club of magicians to see my show. I said I wasn't really a magician, that I was an actor. And he just laughed and said, 'We're all actors, acting like magicians.'"

"That was a really helpful thing to understand. It took a lot of the pressure off because the magic I did know, I could do very well. Magic is such a deep subject. There's so much to learn," Hudson said. "You can spend your entire lifetime just studying card manipulations or any one aspect of magic. It's really quite a deep subject and field."

Hudson said the show is a lot of fun and encouraged parents to bring their kids, although not very young children.

"It's not a little kids magic show. It's a biographical performance about the life of Houdini," he explained. "Middle schoolers on up love it, and we'll do a Q&A afterwards, and it's truly a lot of fun."

Hudson said it is a great blessing to keep the legacy alive of the people he portrays.

"It's wonderful to be able to keep people's legacies alive and bring their work out into the world, so people go to the library to read about these people and become inspired by these people and follow their own dreams," he said. "Everybody that I portray had a dream they followed; all of them did. And that's really the goal for this kind of work, to inspire people to be who they can be."

# PLAYGROUND, FROM PAGE 1

from \$25 to around \$500. He added that a fundraiser run by ID Apparel brought in \$1,700 for the project. Other small fundraisers have added to the total collected so far.

"Every little bit adds up," said Ellis.

Garcia told Rotary Club members that to keep costs as low as possible, workers with the Denison Public Works Department will do as much of the preparatory work as possible, including removing all the sidewalk that needs to be removed and doing some excavating work.

People and businesses interested in making a donation or pledge can stop at the Denison Aquatic Center or stop in at Denison City Hall or call the aquatic center at 712-263-8310 or city hall at 712-263-3143.

The all-inclusive playground at Washington Park will be the only one of its kind in the area, except for a small all-inclusive playground in Carroll. The nearest large all-inclusive playground is in Council Bluffs, Ellis said.

"What excites me about the playground is I think it is going to bring the community even closer together," Ellis told The Denison Free Press. "It's for everybody. Anyone can play on it. It's for all abilities."

At the Rotary Club meeting, Ellis said the playground will attract people from throughout Crawford County and from neighboring counties.

"If you've seen renderings of the

playground, you can't look at it and not be amazed by it. It's got a little bit of everything. It will be good for Denison, a jewel of our park system," he said.

"My favorite part about this is being able to talk about what all-inclusive means to the kids when we do presentations," Ellis told The Denison Free Press, "just giving them a little bit of knowledge on what this is for and letting the community know what it's for, too. It's going to be something we'll be extremely proud of."

He added, "The most exciting part of this for me is there won't be limitations on playground equipment. You see it, you can play on it."

Ellis spoke at the Rotary meeting about the timeline for the all-inclusive playground project. It will be completed this fall.

He added that September is a good guideline for the playground to be done but also said he had hoped it could be done in August for the start of the school year. Students from Broadway Elementary School have been using Washington Park for recess as the school's playground is unavailable while an addition to the building is being constructed.

The playground equipment has been ordered from AB Creative, a company based in DeSoto, Kansas. AB Creative will also install the equipment.

In June, bidding documents will go out to contractors for the site and playground surface work. Prior to that, as soon as the weather permits, Denison Public Works Department will start the site preparation.



# SHOE DRIVE, FROM PAGE 1

One day a drive-up shoe drive took place. Kids who volunteered would go to the cars to collect the shoes.

Palmer said people in the past have called her or Lockwood to have their shoes picked up. They can continue to do that.

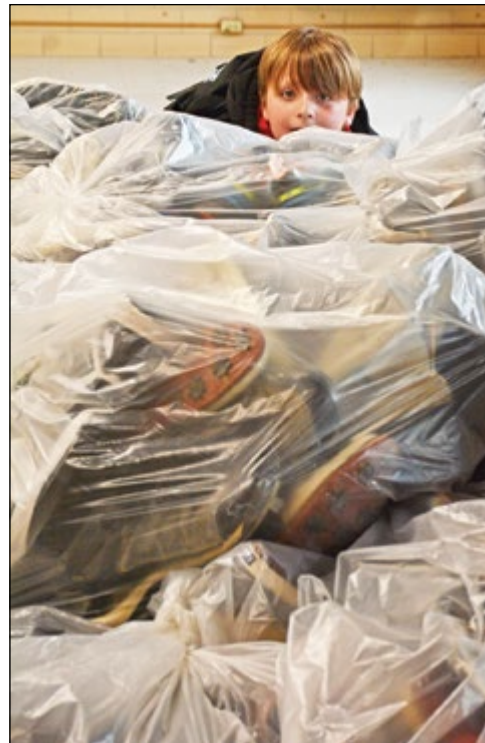
"People drop them off at our houses, also," said Lockwood.

Manilla City Hall and many businesses in Manilla have and continue to serve as drop-off points.

The shoe drive has extended beyond Manilla to other towns in Crawford County and neighboring counties.

And in Maryville, Missouri, where Lockwood used to live, a school classroom collected 500 pairs of shoes as a project.

People who want more information or have shoes to donate can call Palmer at 712-269-4217 or Lockwood at 712-269-7709.



PHOTOS BY GORDON WOLF

Jayden Wax, a grandson of Pat Palmer, peers over the pile of shoes.

Shoes are placed in bags with 25 pairs per bag.

# To our readers:

*The Denison Free Press office is now located in the lower level of the Chamber & Development Council of Crawford County building.*

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# Local Calendar

## THURSDAY APRIL 4, 2024

**Crawford County Women in Business Impact Organization (WIBIO)**, 5 p.m., Chamber & Development Council office, 109 North Main Street. All women looking to make Crawford County a better place to live, work and play are invited to attend.

**Anime Club at Norelius Community Library**, 5:30 p.m. Participants will watch "Your Life in April." Participants can make cherry blossom art. Drinks and snacks will be provided. For teens ages 12-18.

## FRIDAY APRIL 5, 2024

**State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) Lunch & Learn**, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Boulders Conference Center, Denison. Free session. Learn about the \$96 million investment to support small businesses and entrepreneurship. Panel for informational event composed of leaders from organizations that distribute funds to entrepreneurs. Registration required. To see a program flyer and to find the registration link, go to the event calendar on the CDC's website at [www.cdcia.org](http://www.cdcia.org).

## SATURDAY APRIL 6, 2024

**Friends of the Library White Elephant, Book & Bake Sale**, at Norelius Community Library, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Proceeds to benefit children's programming.

**Your First Quilt Program at Norelius Community Library**, 9 a.m.-12 p.m. Call the library at 712-263-9355 for more information.

**United Church of Westside 41st Windsor Chop Supper**, drive-through at the church, 5-7 p.m. Also serving potatoes, green beans, salad, dinner roll and cookie. Tickets cost \$15.

## SUNDAY APRIL 7, 2024

**Bingo at the Deloit Community Building**, 12 p.m., quarter cards, regular bingo.

## MONDAY APRIL 8, 2024

**LifeServe Blood Center drive**, 12:15-5:45 p.m., Crawford County Memorial Hospital, Denison. Schedule a blood donation appointment online at [lifeservebloodcenter.org](http://lifeservebloodcenter.org) or call 1-800-287-4903.

**Harry Houdini performance by Duffy Hudson** at Norelius Community Library, 5:30 p.m.

**Euchre at the Denison Senior Center**, 6 p.m.

## TUESDAY APRIL 9, 2024

**Cards & Coffee at Norelius Community Library**, 5:30 p.m. Play cards with other library patrons. Coffee and tea provided. For people ages 19 and older.

**Euchre Night at Ricketts Community Building**, 7 p.m. Entry fee is \$5. No need to bring a partner.

## WEDNESDAY APRIL 10, 2024

**Storytime at Norelius Community Library**, 3 p.m., for children ages 0-5. Stories, songs and a special activity. Storytime lasts about one-half hour, including playtime.

**Euchre Night at Charter Oak Community Building**, 7 p.m. No need to have a partner before the game.

## THURSDAY APRIL 11, 2024

**Grim Readers at Norelius Community Library**, 5:30 p.m. A true crime and true mystery book club for teens and adults. Register at <https://norelius-ia.whofi.com/calendar/event/5230325?method=embed> and pick up your copy at the circulation desk.

**Storytime at Norelius Community Library Children's Library**, 6 p.m. Songs, stories and activities. For children ages 0-5.



## NORELIUS COMMUNITY LIBRARY NEWS

### Library Friends annual sale this Saturday

The Denison Library Friends Annual White Elephant, Book & Bake Sale will take place at the Norelius Community Library this Saturday, April 6, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Those who attend the sale are also invited to browse the Friends book sale room upstairs and to also look at the restoration project in the original Carnegie portion of the library building.

Donations for the sale can be accepted at the library through Friday, April 5.

For more information, contact the library at 712-263-9355.

## DES instructor Stephanie Prussing receives Iowa STEM Teacher Award



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Stephanie Prussing, right, educational technology teacher at Denison Elementary School, receives a ceremonial check for \$3,000 presented by Mary Trent, the Northwest Regional manager for the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council. Prussing received the monetary award for receiving an Iowa STEM Teacher Award. Half of the money will go toward Prussing's classroom and half can go to her personal use.

The Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council at the Iowa Department of Education announced that Stephanie Prussing, educational technology instructor at Denison Elementary School (DES) has been named as a recipient of the 2024 Iowa STEM Teacher Award, sponsored by Kemin Industries.

The award is given to six educators each year who go above and beyond to inspire student interest in and awareness of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Now in its 10th year, the award is given annually to one full-time, licensed preK-12 teacher from each of the six STEM regions in Iowa. Each recipient

is honored for their efforts to foster enthusiasm and inspire a passion for STEM that goes beyond the classroom and helps prepare students for future high-demand careers.

Prussing was recognized for her tireless efforts to promote computer science and technology instruction through her specials classes, Engineering Cohort, Computer Science Week, Hour of Code Celebration, STEM Night, and Tech Club.

She also participated in the Computer Science is Elementary Mentorship Program where she became a resource for schools in Iowa looking for ideas on how to implement computer science lessons in their own school. This experience led to Denison Elementary School hosting an AEA learning lab and inviting teachers from surrounding schools to visit for an afternoon of learning about computer science and STEM.

As a recipient of the 2024 Iowa STEM Teacher Award, Prussing will receive \$1,500 to use for her classroom and \$1,500 for personal use.

Established in July 2011, the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council leverages public-private partnerships of educators, companies and Iowa students and families to ensure that every Iowa student has access to world-class STEM education opportunities. The Council's work supports strong college and career pathways for students and growth for state and local economies.

Kemin Industries is a global ingredient manufacturer that strives to sustainably transform the quality of life every day for 80 percent of the world with its products and services. The company supplies over 500 specialty ingredients for human and animal health and nutrition, pet food, aquaculture, nutraceutical, food technologies, crop technologies, textile, biofuel and animal vaccine industries.

## ON THE SCANNER

**March 27, 6:11 a.m.:** The Crawford County Sheriff's Office investigated a vehicle vs. deer accident that happened on 330th Street. Bryan Todd Davis, 38, of Irwin, was driving a silver 2016 KIA Sorento north on 330th Street. He stated he swerved to miss a deer and his vehicle went into the east ditch. The vehicle came to rest at a culvert. When it entered

the ditch, the vehicle caused \$1,000 damage to a fence owned by Larry Schwartz, of Manilla. Davis stated that the rearview mirror came off the windshield and struck him in the face, injuring his nose; he refused medical attention. Davis was transported to his residence. He arranged for his vehicle to be towed. The vehicle received \$6,000 damage.



## Letters TO THE EDITOR

To submit a letter visit, [denisonfreepress.com](http://denisonfreepress.com)

The Denison Free Press is not responsible for the content in the Letters to the Editor section. The Denison Free Press reserves the right to choose not to publish submissions. Letters not be more than 300 words.



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## Business networking at Coffee Connections



PHOTO BY GORDON WOLF

Paul Plumb, executive director of the Chamber & Development Council (CDC) of Crawford County, talks at the CDC Coffee Connections networking event last week Friday. CDC members who attended conversed over coffee and donuts. An upcoming event that Plumb mentioned was the State Small Business Credit free Lunch & Learn scheduled for this Friday, April 5, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Boulders Conference Center. For more about this event, see the Local Calendar in today's edition of The Denison Free Press. The next CDC Coffee Connections will take place on April 16 from 8 to 9 a.m. at the CDC office, 109 North Main Street. All CDC members are invited to the networking event.

## Funeral Notices

### Edward "Ed" Schillerberg

A memorial service for Edward "Ed" Schillerberg, 77, will take place at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 6, at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Denison.

Burial with military rites will be at Crawford Heights Memorial Garden in Denison.

He passed away on Monday, February 5.

Survivors include his children, Shawn (Keith) Gordon, of Grimes, Shane Schillerberg, of Omaha, Nebraska, Justin (Therese) Schillerberg, of Omaha, and Shawn (Kara) Hopkins, of Raymore, Missouri; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild; sisters, Nancy Barango, of Palmetto, Florida, Lois (Paul) Hofer, of Aurora, Colorado, Shirley (Thomas) Kloes, of Menasha, Wisconsin, Susan (Gene) Smilie, of Illinois, and Alice Schillerberg (Michael Albrich), of Portland, Oregon; and 11 nieces and nephews.

The Pauley Jones Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.



husband, John Torres, of Indianola, and Sherrill Gerschevske, of Missouri; and other relatives and friends.

Services are entrusted to the Huebner Funeral Home.

### Dena Nemitz

Funeral services for Dena Nemitz, 94, of Denison, were conducted at 11 a.m. Thursday, April 4, at Zion Lutheran Church in Denison.

Burial was at Crawford Heights Memory Gardens in Denison.

She passed away Saturday, March 30, at Gracewell in Denison.

Survivors include her son, Kenneth (Connie) Boger, of Ida Grove; daughter, Vickie Hember, of Cherokee; son-in-law, John Hember, of Quimby; daughter-in-law, Penny Boger, of Florida; 12 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren; 11 great-great-grandchildren; and many nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

Services were entrusted to the Huebner Funeral Home.



### Daniel Kock

Funeral services for Daniel Kock, 62, of Arcadia, will be conducted at 10:30 a.m. Friday, April 5, at United Church in Westside with burial at the Westside Cemetery.

Friends may call from 5 to 8 p.m. Thursday, April 4, at United Church in Westside.

He passed away Sunday, March 31, at his home.

Survivors include his children, Jocelyn and her husband, Garrett Shaal, and their son, Roland, of Omaha, Nebraska, Danielle Kock, of Des Moines, and Alex Kock, of Arcadia; his mother, Joyce Kock, of Vail; sister-in-law, Janine Kock, of Westside; and other relatives and friends.

Services are entrusted to the Huebner Funeral Home.



### Earl Gerschevske

Memorial services for Earl Gerschevske, 81, of Soldier, will be conducted at 11 a.m. Friday, April 5, at United Methodist Church in Dow City with visitation one hour prior to the service.

He passed away Friday, March 29, at Crawford County Memorial Hospital in Denison. Survivors include nieces and nephews, Mark Gerschevske and his wife, Barb, of Merida, Mexico, Shane Gerschevske and his wife, Emily, of Florida, Rita and her husband, Joe Short, of Texas, Ray Olsen and his wife, Dixie, of Indianola, Kristy and her husband, Duane Zenk, of Denison, Bonnie and her husband, Greg Kastner, of Arizona, Lisa and her husband, John Langholz, of Denison, Jennifer and her



## Could sustainable aviation fuel be 'biggest thing that's ever hit Iowa?'



BY DOUGLAS BURNS  
SPECIAL TO THE DENISON FREE PRESS

The long-time leader of the Iowa Renewable Fuels Association says a game-changing, farm-economy-lifting new market for Hawkeye State farmers' grain and ag products is sustainable aviation fuel.

"I think we have an amazing opportunity ahead of us," said Montgomery Shaw at a recent biofuels summit held at Landus in Des Moines.

How big is the market for aviation fuels generated from ag resources for Iowa?

"If this happens, it will be the biggest thing that's ever hit Iowa in the history of the state," Shaw said.

In an interview, Shaw said the renewable aviation fuels process involves transporting ethanol to a separate facility where it is blended with hydrogen to create a new molecule that would look more like kerosene.

"The first plant is up and running in January in Georgia," Shaw said. "It's a new technology."

The process costs more than producing traditional ethanol as the carbon need to hit lower metrics. The physical specifications for the fuel are more specific, he said.

"The Inflation Reduction Act tax

credits are providing the incentive to say, 'Hey, we can make this economically,'" Shaw said.

"Those tax credits did open up the opportunity to do this," he said.

Shaw said there has never been a new market remotely this size for Iowa farmers.

One reason that is so important: the demand for corn is four times less than production if ethanol is removed from the mix.

"Our customers are asking for sustainable aviation fuel," Shaw said.

According to the Department of Energy, an estimated 1 billion dry tons of biomass can be collected sustainably each year in the United States, enough to produce 50-60 billion gallons of low-carbon biofuels. These resources include:

- Corn grain
- Oil seeds
- Algae
- Other fats, oils, and greases
- Agricultural residues
- Forestry residues
- Wood mill waste
- Municipal solid waste streams
- Wet wastes (manures, wastewater treatment sludge)
- Dedicated energy crops

## Play for the playground

### Trivia night a fundraiser for park project

BY GORDON WOLF

People are being invited to test their knowledge of trivia through the decades but more importantly to have fun and raise money for the all-inclusive playground that will be installed at Washington Park in Denison.

The Denison Parks & Rec Department will host a trivia night and silent auction on Saturday, April 20, at the Boulders Event Center. Doors will open at 6 p.m., and the trivia contest will start at 6:30 p.m.

The theme of the evening is trivia through time - trivia based on different decades - and participants are encouraged to dress up according to their favorite decade or period in history. For example, Parks & Rec Director Sam Ellis said he is thinking of dressing up as Benjamin Franklin for the decade of the 1770s.

"We will be giving prizes for the best costume and the best team name based on the decade," said Ellis. "It will be

fun and not just about trivia. It's about having a good time."

The cost to participate is \$25 per person. Teams can also secure a table for \$25. The number of players per team can range from a minimum of five to a maximum of eight.

"If someone doesn't have a team, we'll find them a team," Ellis said.

The entry fees can be made at the aquatic center.

The Parks & Rec Department is also welcoming any donations for a silent auction that will be part of the night. People can call the Denison Aquatic Center at 712-263-8130 or

stop out at the pool or send an email to denisonrec@gmail.com.

"Last year we had a trivia night, and it went well. This year we decided to do it again, and the idea of the theme came from our program coordinator, Tara Wareham. She is spearheading a lot of this and is doing a fantastic job," said Ellis.

Snacks and raffles will also be a part of the evening.

To read an article about other fundraising for the playground, see a separate story that starts on the front page of this issue of The Denison Free Press.

## Our news is also published online!

Featured stories and more at DENISONFREEPRESS.COM

### Medieval times staged by fourth graders



PHOTOS BY GORDON WOLF

“Joust” was the name of the Broadway Elementary fourth graders’ musical performed Tuesday night at the Denison High School Fine Arts Center, and that’s just what these two young actors did during the performance of a song by the same name.



The imminent arrival of the French is announced by Colvin Young, the messenger.



The court jesters, Kennisyn Burns, Maliaya Mich, Macy Houston and Hayden Ulrich, perform the song “Nobody’s Fool.”



King Arthur (Kysen Larson) contemplates what to do after he hears the French are arriving.



The Musical Monarchs performed four songs prior to the start of the fourth grade production. Pictured, they are performing “Rockin’ Robin.” The director of the group and of the musical is Mandy Lauderbaugh.



Merlin (Preston Wessel) makes a point during the performance.



The Mighty Medieval Men raise up their swords during the song “Mighty Medieval Men.”



The soldiers, king and ladies from France arrive not with swords but with their own musical instruments.



The ladies of King Arthur’s court perform during the song “Mighty Medieval Men.”



Kazoos were added to the Musical Monarchs’ performance of the song “The Kazoo Koncerto.”

# Sports

## CRAWFORD COUNTY SHOOTING SPORTS

### Crawford County Shooting Sports season begins

The Crawford County Shooting Sports team is looking forward to its first meet of the season on April 6. That meet will be hosted by Ida County and will be at Schaller.

Practices began on March 11, said Head Coach Mike Schrum.

Depending on the weather, practices will take place every Monday.

"The team hit the ground running without skipping a beat from where they left off last season, and although the season is very young, the kids have done a great job in making their coaches proud already," Schrum said in an email sent to media outlets.

He provided the following highlights for the season.

- The overall student count is 62, which includes 53 returning team members and nine students who rejoined the team after an absence or joined the team

for the first time.

- The team lost 13 members to graduation last season.

"With such a high number of students graduating, we weren't sure exactly what to expect for student numbers this year, so it was exciting to see our inbound student numbers being a respectable number as well," said Schrum.

He said the graduation of 13 team members created and opened up some "great opportunities for our team members to pick up that torch and step up to the podium. With practice scores being what they have been the first couple of weeks, it is apparent the students are very accepting of the challenge and the opportunity."

Schrum continued that with the sustained large number of students on both the local teams as well as the teams in the conference, it was determined last year that a three-phase growth strategy was needed, with additional equipment and range upgrades needed for the shooting sports facility.

"On a meet day, it is not uncommon to have 175+ students utilizing our

range for competition," Schrum said. "On an average practice night, it is not uncommon to see 55+ students utilizing the range."

"Thanks to some incredible partners, the organization was able to successfully complete Phase 1 of our plan last year, with donations being received this year that will allow us to successfully complete Phase 2 yet this year," he continued. "We never dreamt these would be one-year sponsors for their support."

Sponsors are Crawford County Chapter of Pheasants Forever, Iowa Chapter of Safari Club International, Community Foundation of Southwest Iowa, Denison Rotary Club, Farmers Mutual Insurance of Schleswig, Bobby Boettger and Blazin "B" Ranch, and the Colton Claussen Family.

Following is the meet schedule for the season.

- Saturday, April 6: at Schaller, Ida County host
- Saturday, April 13: at Dedham, Carroll

County host

- Saturday, April 20: home meet at Denison
- Saturday, April 27: at Dedham
- Saturday, May 4: at Schaller
- Saturday, May 11: at Denison
- Saturday, May 25: at Schaller for the 100 target conference finals
- June 2-9: state meet at the Cedar Falls Gun Club

Schrum stated, "We leave an open invitation to all donors or anyone interested from the general public that wishes to learn more about our organization to stop out for a home meet or to contact a coach to see what the excitement is all about. We are extremely proud of the team and the family we have grown and would love nothing more than to show all who we are and what we are all about."

Crawford County Shooting Sports is a member of the Western Iowa Conference. Other teams in the conference are Carroll County Shooting Sports, Ida County Shooting Sports, South Central Calhoun and the MVAOCOU Rams.

### DENISON-SCHLESWIG MONARCHS SOCCER

#### Monarch boys fall to Sioux City East

The Monarch boys' soccer team dropped a tough match with Sioux City East 3-2 last week Thursday.

The Monarchs showed a lot of potential but came up short, said Head Coach Nate Desy.

Richard Gonzalez ended the night with two goals with one assist by Emmanuel Prado.

Sebastian Contreras had a total of six saves, and three found the back of the net.

# OUR SPORTS COVERAGE CAN ALSO BE FOUND ONLINE! [denisonfreepress.com](http://denisonfreepress.com)



### A fast hunt for Easter eggs



Children scramble to pick up Easter eggs and prizes in front of the nature center at Yellow Smoke Park on Saturday. It did not take long after the start of the event for the ground to be cleared of all eggs and prizes.



A girl searches the tall grass in front of the nature center to find any eggs that remain.



Jaxson Farrow, of Denison, searches through his bucket of eggs with his sister, Andrea Santos.



With activity swirling around her, a girl pauses to look for more eggs to gather.



Two Easter bunnies and the Easter skunk pose with the helpers at the Easter egg hunt.



Color photos online! [denisonfreepress.com](http://denisonfreepress.com)



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## In Remembrance

**Kenneth Joseph Ries**  
August 26, 1929 - March 21, 2024

Kenneth Joseph Ries, age 94, passed away on Thursday, March 21, 2024 at Bickford in Ames with his wife, Delores, by his side. Memorial Services will be held on Saturday, April 6, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. at St Cecilia Catholic Church, 2900 Hoover Ave, Ames, IA 50010. Visitation will be held one hour before the service at the church. Inurnment of ashes will be held at Crawford Heights Memorial Gardens Cemetery in Denison, Iowa at a later date. There will be a luncheon at the church following the Funeral Mass.

Ken was born on August 26, 1929 to Marie (Driscoll) and Edward Joseph Ries in Carroll, Iowa. He graduated from St. Anne's Academy, located in Vail, Iowa in 1948. While growing up he worked on the family farm, delivered ice, and at The Ries Cafe in Vail, as well as on a railroad section crew before being called to duty in the Army. Ken served honorably in the Army from 1951 until 1953 and was stationed in Germany. After returning home, he married his sweetheart Delores Petersen on October 15, 1955 at St. Anne's Catholic Church in Vail. He was involved with Ries Amusement Company in Denison both before his Army enlistment and after. In 1959, the family moved to Ames to start their business, KD Amusement and Game Room Supply. Ken was an active member in the American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans, and a member of St. Cecilia Catholic Church.

Ken is survived by his wife, Delores Anna (Petersen) Ries; his six children, Ron (Linda) Ries of Ames, Iowa, Deanna Gallaher of Cedar falls, Iowa, Thomas Ries of Lee's Summit, Missouri, Debra (Tony) Barry of Buffalo, Minnesota, Edward (Carrie) Ries of Ottumwa, Iowa, and John (Erin Albright) Ries of Lee's Summit, Missouri; his eight grandchildren, Matt, Geoff, Hannah, Kyle, Jake, Charity, Chad, and Tina; several great grandchildren; his brother-in-law, Delano (Jan) Petersen, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Ken was proceeded in death by his parents, Marie (Driscoll) and Edward Joseph Ries; his siblings, Ethel Abbott, Phillis Ries, Don Ries, Helen Quesnell; his granddaughter, Alyssa Gallaher, and his nephew, T. Ed Abbott.

The family would like to thank the staff at Bickford of Ames and Gentiva Hospice for their loving care of Ken.

Memorials may be directed to the family in loving memory of Kenneth.

Fond memories and expressions of sympathy can be shared at [www.stevensmemorialchapel.com](http://www.stevensmemorialchapel.com) for the Ries family.

**Leslie Eugene Rauch, Sr.**  
March 30, 1940 - March 30, 2024

Leslie Eugene Rauch, Sr. was born March 30, 1940 to Arthur and Agnes Rauch at the family home in Grant City, MO.

Leslie and his siblings grew up in Grant City, MO and Mount Ayr, IA. Leslie grew up working hard and being charitable. His family farmed so that meant the kids were busy with chores in addition to schoolwork and activities. He was active in sports, 4-H, FFA, Grain Judging Team, the "M" Club, High Y and faith clubs as well as working for local farmers.

Leslie attended Iowa State University for 1 1/2 years, then joined the Army Reserves in 1959 and trained at Fort Leonard Wood in MO and completed advanced infantry training in Fort Dicks in NJ. He returned home to Mount Ayr to farm and drove the school bus.

Leslie met his wife, Cela (Walters), through his sister and they began dating in 1960. The following year he proposed and they were married December 13, 1961. They lived in Mount Ayr until they moved to Manning, IA in 1964. While living in Mount Ayr, his sons Gene and Mike were born. After moving to Manning, daughter Christy was born. In 1968, they moved to Denison, IA and daughters Theresa and Suzanne joined the family.

Leslie was active in his community, regardless of which community it was. He was a charter member of the Jaycees in Manning and later helped start the Denison chapter. He was also involved in United Methodist Men, Cheer, Inc., Optimists, Habitat for Humanity, and Promise Keepers. Leslie had a passion for helping others and sharing his love of Christ. He has dedicated himself to serve as a Sunday School teacher at the First United Methodist Church. He and Cela served as janitors, as well. He picked up kids for church for Cornerstone Family Church.

Leslie started working at Farmland in 1964 where he also served as chairman of the Union. In 1980, Leslie became Secretary/Treasurer of UFCW Local 440 until being elected as Vice-President and later, President. He retired in 1995 from UFCW. His relentless spirit kept him working during his retirement at Farm Services Co-Op, Dairy Queen, Rauch Farms, AMVC, Argotsinger Farms, driving school bus in Charter Oak-Ute Schools and managing rental properties.

Leslie enjoyed spending his free time with family, card clubs, fishing, traveling and watching his kids, grandkids and great grandkids activities. There was very little that could keep Leslie from attending events and showing his pride and support.

Leslie passed away peacefully on his 84th birthday, Saturday, March 30, 2024 at Gracewell-Eventide Lutheran Home in Denison. He was preceded in death by his parents Arthur & Agnes Rauch; wife, Cela Rauch; daughter Wanda Christine Rauch; grandson Derek Rauch; brothers-in-law Lyle Quick and Dale Walters; sister-in-law Donna Schrodt; niece Michelle Schrodt; and nephew Scott Walters.

He is survived by his loving children: Gene (Kelly) Rauch of Schleswig, IA; Mike (Rhonda) Rauch of Denison, IA; Theresa (Mark) Beck of Denison, IA; and Suzanne (Scott) Paulsen of Omaha, NE; eleven grandchildren: Christy (Scott) Berndt of Avoca, IA, Casey (Spencer) Hicks of Grand Junction, CO, Cassie (Aaron) Johnson of Onawa, IA, Garrett Beck of Schleswig, IA, Madison (Connor) Krajicek of Belton, MO, Zachary Rauch of Denison, IA, Bryce Paulsen of Omaha, NE, Jazlyn Beck of Savannah, GA, Kayla Rauch of Omaha, NE, Nicole Paulsen of Omaha, NE, and Dominic Rauch of Schleswig, IA; nine great-grandchildren: Braden Fineran, Lauryn Johnson, Cael Berndt, Jagger Sharp, Cela Hicks, Callahan Hicks, Frankie Hicks, Avery Beck, Aurora Krajicek; siblings: Charles (Pam) Rauch of Parrish, FL; Jeannette Quick of Akron, IA; Dean (Linda) Rauch of Cornelius, NC; Leland (Wanda) Rauch of Montgomery, TX; Helen (Wendell) Akers of Geneseo, IL; David (Sue) Rauch of Manning, IA; sister-in-law, Beth (Keith) Whitson of Beaconsfield, Iowa; brothers-in-law: Rex (Ann) Walters of Beaconsfield, Iowa and Lyle (Barb) Walters of Bayfield, Colorado; a host of other relatives and friends.

Funeral Services were held 11:00 A.M., Wednesday, April 3, 2024 at First United Methodist Church in Denison, Iowa. Rev. David Rauch officiated the service with Private Graveside Services at Crawford Heights Memorial Gardens in Denison. Organist Patti Bekkerus provided accompaniment for congregational hymns "The Old Rugged Cross" and "Just a Closer Walk with Thee." Recorded musical selections included "Well Done" by the Afters and "The Battle of New Orleans" by Johnny Horton. Serving as honorary pallbearers were Leslie's grandchildren. Military Honors were members of the Denison American Legion Post 8 and Iowa Army National Guard Honor Guard. Immediately following the service, the family invited everyone to the church fellowship hall for a time of fellowship and lunch. Services were entrusted to the Huebner Funeral Home.

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# SUMMER NATURE EXPLORER CAMPS!



Once again, the Nature Center will host its annual summer Nature Explorer Camps for kids preschool through 5th grade! The camps will take place at the Neal Moeller Environmental Education Center at Yellow Smoke Park. The camps are designed to help kids experience nature up close!

The children will be able to learn about nature through hikes, games, crafts, stories and other hands-on activities! Fee includes t-shirt, crafts & snacks. Children must bring a sack lunch. Get signed up early!

Pre-registration is required! Registration is on a first-come-first-served basis and this year you must be registered and paid by May 3, 2024 or your spot in camp will not be held.

**Cost: \$40 for all camps | Must be paid by May 3, 2024**

### Tadpole Times

Preschool 4 & 5 years olds  
(have not been to Kindergarten)  
June 4-5 • June 25-26  
July 9-10 • July 23-24

### Nature Explorers

Just finished K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade  
June 6-7 • June 11-12  
July 11-12 • July 30-31  
9 am to 1 pm

### Junior Naturalist

Just finished 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade  
June 13 • June 27  
July 16 • July 25  
9 am to 3 pm



## KNEE HIGH NATURALISTS

This is a program for 2 to 4 year olds that have not been to kindergarten. Come for an hour of nature play and exploration specially designed for preschoolers accompanied by an adult.

Each class will focus on a specific theme and include a story, game, snack, and other activities. The fee for each class is \$5 per child.

Classes take place at the Nature Center from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Please pre-register by calling 712-263-2748.

### Dates:

April 22, May 21, June 24, July 29, Aug. 27, Sept. 24, Oct. 22

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