

# ROCKET NATION

WITH DIANE DUCEY



My birthday is on Easter Sunday this year. In a way, I'd sort of like to do something special since we're also celebrating Jesus rising from the dead! My family has been asking my vision to make some plans and I always feel awkward asking them to 'take it up a notch' after a few dud years with the pandemic when we all were staying in more and not going to a nice restaurant and being pampered in some way.

As you probably know as a regular reader of this column, I'm pretty passionate about being a mouth piece for community events. As a radio personality, for over 30 years, when listeners reach out with announcements about upcoming events, I want them to get a response and make sure people know how to participate, get involved and give time or money to the cause! Off the top of my head, I know the Pregnancy Resource Center in our area is raising money and awareness Saturday April 23rd after 11am at Colbert Park in Savoy so that young ladies in that situation know they

can find support with this group (free pregnancy testing, sonograms, advice, healing, a place to stay, etc). On May 7th between 11am-3pm at the Savoy Rec Center, my son Aidan (autistic) and I will be a part of the C-U Autism Network's Walk and Health Fair and with his volunteering at the C-U Humane Society, we plan to go to Crystal Lake Park in Urbana that same Saturday, after 4pm, to be a part of the Mutt Strut fundraiser, too!

Anyway, my friend Melissa Wilhelm at the Salvation Army at the Shield Center off Market and Wilbur Streets over behind Market Place Mall in Champaign recently had me come to a volunteer appreciation evening at the Urbana Country Club to be acknowledged for helping drum up some funds since the Red Kettle campaign fell short over the holiday with the lack of bell ringers due to the pandemic. We also shared news at Stevie Jay Broadcasting about their "paint day" to spruce up the resource rooms with over 15 volunteers taking action to help on a Saturday for a few

hours. The next action item for this group (saChampaign.org) is to train up volunteers to help in emergency situations (like when they handed out supplies to the Gifford residents after the tornado) and the sign up for those sessions is coming in early May, so we're coming up on a deadline to get registered soon.

When my husband and I were leaving, we met one of the managers named Noy. He took us on the most wonderful tour of the Urbana Country Club, showing us what billionaire Shad Khan has done with the place. Talk about a gem nestled in the back woods off Bradley Avenue and Lincoln in Urbana! It was fabulous seeing the new spa, pool, hot tub, sauna, bars, suites to stay in, as well as the Oak Room and tranquility areas for a serene feeling to feel peaceful after a treatment. This may be where I'd like to celebrate my new year of life soon! We'll see if I can work something out! Enjoy your mid-April and all the happy egg hunts and Spring scenes!

# Unity Track and Field Opens Up the Outdoor Season



Front: (L-R) Bri Ritchie, Caelyn Klepanski Middle: (L-R) Paige Garretson, Camryn Reedy, Erica Woodard, Ana Clark, Analyse Carter, Harper Hancock, Olivia Shike, Lauren Miller, Kayla Nelson, Molly Baxley Back: (L-R) Amelia Rinella Flores, Tessah Williams, Emily Decker, Ashlyn Denney, Rebecca Carter, Kadence Goff. Photo by Tony Reetz.

By Tony Reetz Rocket Track and Field moved into the outdoor part of their season this week with a tri-meet at Clinton and their first invitational at the Carterville Lions Invite.

The boys and girls teams eased into the outdoor season on Tuesday with a tri-meet at Clinton pairing up with Clinton and Argenta-Oreana high schools. The cold and rainy conditions didn't stop the Rockets from putting up some impressive performances. On the boys side, Eric Miebach was second in the 100M dash, Jay Saunders was first in the 400M, Brendan Graven was second in the 800M, the 4x200M team of Cold Saunders, Tanner Wells, Joe Thompson, and Will Thompson took 1st. In the field events, the boys had a strong showing with Camdin Mette taking second in the Long Jump, Nathan Weakley and Jacob Maxwell took first and second in the Triple Jump respectively. Maxwell also teamed up with Liam Alt to take first and second in the Discus Throw.

On the girls side, there were 14 top 2 finishes. Kayla Nelson won the 100M dash and Lauren Miller took second. Ashlyn Denney was first in the 400M, followed by Harper Hancock in second. Erica Woodard won the 800M. Bri Ritchie won both the 100H and the 300H. The 4x100 team of Estella Dodd, Bri Ritchie, Kayla Nelson, and Lauren Miller. The Rocket relay teams

were all in the top two for all four events. The 4x100 team took first and consisted of Estella Dodd, Bri Ritchie, Lauren Miller, and Kayla Nelson. The 4x200 team of Lydia Rossi, Paige Garretson, Kadence Goff, and Sophia Hartke was first. The 4x400 team was made up of Erica Woodard, Harper Hancock, Ashlyn Denney and Molly Baxley took second. And Olivia Shike, Harper Hancock, Arianna Pruitt-LeFavre, and Erica Woodard also took first place.

In the field events, Bri Ritchie and Kayla Nelson went one and two in the Long Jump and Analyse Carter took first in the Discus Throw.

At Saturday's Carterville Lion Invite, the boys team finished sixth, while the girls were the meet champions for the third time in a row.

The boys were highlighted in the field events with Karson Richardson taking second in the Shot Put. Jacob Maxwell and Liam Alt were second and third in the Discus. Maxwell also took second in the Triple Jump. Nathan Weakley was third in the Triple Jump. Camdin Mette was third in the Long Jump.

The girls got a just handful of points from the field events but did most of their damage on the track. Molly Baxley scored a point in the Pole Vault, Kayla Nelson was the meet champion in the Long Jump and Analyse Carter scored in two field events taking fifth in the Triple Jump and fourth in the Triple Jump.

Her sister Rebecca Carter also scored in the Triple Jump in fourth place.

When the track events started, the Rockets put the throttle down, scoring double points in every event they entered. Kayla Nelson and Lauren Miller took second and third in both the 100M and 200M. Ashlyn Denney and Josie Cler were first and second in the 400M. Harper Hancock and Emily Decker were fourth and fifth in the 800M. Erica Woodard won the 1600M and Olivia Shike took 3rd. Woodard also took second in the 3200M. Camryn Reedy was 3rd in the 3200M. Bri Ritchie won the 300H and took second in the 100H. She was joined by Rebecca Carter in the 100H, who took fifth, and Ana Clark, who was fourth in the 300H.

The Rockets brought home a medal in three of the four relays. The 4x200 team of Paige Garretson, Kadence Goff, Tessah Williams, and Rebecca Carter was third. The 4x800 team of Olivia Shike, Emily Decker, Josie Cler, and Ana Clark took 1st. And the 4x400 team Denney, Hancock, Cler, and Reedy finished the meet off with another first place on the track.

The Rockets finished with 153 points, 44 points better than second place.

Unity girls will be at home this Thursday for the Unity Girls Invitational and the boys team will be at Monticello for the Sages Invite.

# Spring Clean-Up Day in Tolono

By Diane Ducey Staff Writer

Tolono citizens were notified on social media, through the village website and app on their phones with reminders on what's happening in their neighborhood, that "Clean Up Day" was from 9am-12pm on Saturday April 9th. Members of the maintenance staff, including Trustee Ryan Perry and his son, Mason as well as Mayor Rob Murphy took shifts greeting folks driving up to get their junk unloaded and tossed into 6 dumpsters located near the recycling area off Strong Street.

Golf cart stickers went on sale to get golf cart owners ready for the season and aware of the town's rules with Vicki Buffo assisting in the office.

Tolono Parks had people picking up sticks and litter as well as some preparing the grounds for Spring activities and ball games ahead. There



Workers volunteered for Tolono Clean Up day on Saturday, April 9. Photo by Diane Ducey.

continues to be a shift in the way Tolono is approaching recreation with the duties weighing heavy on volunteer board members as our culture shifts to doing work with more transparency and better bookkeeping to track how taxpayer money is being spent as improvements are made within the park district.

It was apparent at the Tolono Village Board meeting that all parties involved are doing their best to be held accountable for keeping re-

cords and getting certain people (like officials) paid, as the conversation towards the end of the meeting Tuesday April 5th even brought in our legal counsel present (Marc Miller) to consult with his resources and connections in other towns, on how Tolono can move towards an inter-governmental agreement and smoothly absorb park district responsibilities while actively serving the community with programs in progress.

# Rocket Replay

By: Sarah Rink



This weekend, Unity's Track and Field team woke up early to compete at a meet in Carterville, Illinois, their competitive season fully underway. Unity won six events, one field and five track, to take first at the competition with a score of 153 points. The 400-meter dash was won by Ashlyn Denney, the 300 by Bri Ritchie, and the 1600 by Erica Woodard. Unity also won the 1600 (Josie Cler, Ashlyn Denney, Harper Hancock, Camryn Reedy) and 3200 (Anna Clark, Josie Cler, Emily Decker, Olivia Shike) meter relays. Kayla Nelson won the singular field event, placing first in long jump at 14 feet, 11 inches. This marks an-

other successful competition, Unity's win at the Carterville Invitational representing the incredible history of runners at the high school- a tradition to hopefully carry on long into the future.

Also on Saturday, Unity's softball and baseball teams added to their records while competing in Carterville. The softball team lost their first game against Carterville 2-0, but regained their footing and pulled off a 4-0 win against Carbondale, making their record 8-4. The baseball team won both of their games, 9-0 against Carterville and 15-3 against Carbondale, leaving them with a 11-2 record.

This week, the Junior class will take the SAT and the Illinois Science assessment, making for two long days of testing for the students. However, they will have a chance to rest afterwards due to Easter break, so the somewhat daunting task seems a little less so. The Freshman and Sophomores will also take the PSAT that same day. Unity High School continues to move forward as the weather starts to get warmer and graduation is now less than a month away. However, there are still many exciting events to look forward to before the year ends, so look out for those in the next several weeks.



# Revival

With Evangelist Matt Henson

April 24 & 25th @ Newman UMC 6:30pm CST  
709 North Broadway Newman, IL 61942

April 26 & 27th @ Murdock UMC 6:30pm CST  
120 W Main St. Murdock, IL 61941

You won't want to miss a single night!



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