

Students make butter during Ag in the Classroom presentation

The Ag in the Classroom topic this month has been dairy farming. Dairy cows are amazing animals, able to turn grass and silage into milk by the gallons. A dairy cow will eat 100 pounds of feed and drink 25-50 gallons of water each day. A cow then can produce seven to eight gallons of milk per day. It takes about two days for milk to go from the farm to the retail store.

Students learned about different breeds of dairy cattle. Some cows, such as Holsteins, are used for the large quantity of milk they produce. Other cows, like the Brown Swiss breed, are chosen because they produce a very rich, velvety milk that is high in butterfat. This milk can be used to produce delicious cheese. Still, other cows are chosen because of their size or grazing habits. Jersey cows are a smaller breed and do not take as much land or feed to maintain. Milking Shorthorns are better able to utilize pasture grasses, thus not requiring as much feed.

Almost 97% of dairy farms are family owned. Dairy farmers work extremely hard to produce a safe and wholesome source of dairy products for the public. Dairy farmers protect the land, water, and air not



COLETTE PFLUM ENJOYING the butter she made during the Ag in the Classroom lesson. *Submitted photo.*

only for their animals but also for their families and the surrounding community.

Milk does not magically appear at our breakfast table, so students learned about the process of bringing milk to our homes. Nature, farmers, and cows start this process, followed by veterinarians, truck drivers, processors in the dairy plants, and workers in the grocery stores.

Dairy products provide

your body with calcium which is needed for healthy bones and teeth. Calcium also helps our muscles and nerves work properly and helps blood to clot. Children need three servings of dairy products every day. Low-fat dairy foods are an excellent option.

Douglas County Ag in the Classroom is supported by Douglas County Farm Bureau, Douglas County Ag Center, and Illinois Ag in the Classroom.



Sheep to Yarn to Quilts is set for May 13 at Illinois Amish Heritage Center

Sheep to Yarn to Quilts returns to the Illinois Amish Heritage Center on Saturday, May 13, and hours for the event are from 7 a.m. until 3 p.m. This event will include sheep shearing demonstrations, cleaning and dyeing the wool, and spinning it into wool.

Weavers will demonstrate weaving with looms, and quilting displays and demonstrations will complete the journey from Sheep to Yarn to Quilts. Visitors will be invited to try their hand at many of the activities being demonstrated.

Other activities will include period crafts, rope-making, games and activities for the kids, pony cart rides, and the ever-popular petting zoo. A pancake breakfast will be served, and food concessions will be available throughout the day. There will be craft items/materials and locally produced food items available for sale. Updates on activities

and vendors will be posted on Facebook and the center's website (see information below).

Early Amish clothing, quilts, coverlets, and other hand-woven fabrics will be on display in the Schrock House during the event including a blue and white coverlet that was woven by the Diener family before they came to America. Also on display will be the 1870s-style suit worn by Daniel Schrock at the time of his death in 1892, and the 1840's era Campbell family quilt, hand-made entirely from locally produced fabric, dyed from plants grown in the area, and then spun, woven, and assembled into a quilt.

The IAHC Campus continues to expand. This year will feature tours of the 1879 Miller/Herschberger Barn that was relocated and raised in 2022, plus the restored 1882 Daniel Schrock home that has

been beautifully outfitted with period furnishings and fixtures. The 1865 Moses Yoder home will be open as well as our German Schoolhouse and Yoder Workshop. The campus will be open for touring, and local experts will be available to answer questions.

The Illinois Amish Heritage Center is located on Illinois 133 nine miles west of Arcola or 3.5 miles east of Arthur on Illinois Route 133. For more information, check online at www.illinoisamish.org and on Facebook, Illinois Amish Heritage Center.

Questions can be submitted on Facebook or the website, or contact Wilmer Otto at 217-721-9266. This is an outside event and is completely reliant upon the weather. Decisions affecting activities may be made onsite without notice of printed and broadcast announcements.



Don and Linda Rankin

Newspaper buys two legacy magazines

Better Newspapers, Inc. (BNI), headquartered in Mascoutah, announced today that it has finalized the purchase of two long-standing magazines in Arcola, to expand its Central Illinois publication roster.

The two publications are the 111-year-old Broom, Brush & Mop (BBM) magazine and Discover magazine, an annual tourism guide. Both magazines were sold by Rankin Publishing, Inc.

Greg Hoskins, owner of BNI, noted that both publications began with the Arcola Record-Herald, which BNI purchased in July 2022. He said the two publications add resources and diversity to the company's growing portfolio.

Linda Rankin, owner of Rankin Publishing, Inc., said BBM began more than 111 years ago as a regular feature in the newspaper. It was called the Broom Corn Corner and focused on the broom and broom corn industry, which has a rich history in the Arcola area. Arcola is still home to several related businesses including the largest manufacturer of cleaning products in the U.S.

The newspaper feature about the industry morphed

into a newsletter titled Broom and Broom Corn News. Rankin and her husband, the late Don Rankin, purchased the newspaper and the broom publication in 1977, and changed the name of the niche publication to Broom, Brush & Mop magazine to reflect the changing needs of the industry. It has become the authoritative resource for industry information with an international audience.

Rankin said she's pleased that the magazine is "back where it began." She said her husband also would have been happy that the magazine will continue to be published in Arcola.

Discover is another publication that Rankin and her husband developed when they owned the newspaper. It started out as a flyer promoting local tourism, she said. It is now the leading tourism guide throughout East Central Illinois.

Hoskins said BNI is well positioned to continue to grow Discover magazine to promote tourism across the middle third of the state.

When the Rankins sold the Arcola newspaper, they focused their attention on niche

magazines adding two more titles, which were sold last November to RDG Media in Florida. With the sale of the two remaining publications to BNI, Rankin is retiring but said she's unsure what that will include.

She said she plans to stay in Arcola. "Arcola is home, and this community has been very good to Don and I," she said. "It's a nice place to visit but an even better place to live."

She has two grown sons. Jason, the oldest, is senior vice president of advertising for the Las Vegas Review Journal and its publications. Jason is a partner in the law firm Hepler Broom in Edwardsville.

BNI owns more than 30 newspapers in Illinois and Missouri including this newspaper. It is a family-owned and operated company founded in 1991. Holdings include a press plant in Altamont, and the Illinois Business Journal in Springfield. Hoskins' wife, Linda, works in the editorial department in Mascoutah, while his son, Scott, is the Metro East General Manager, and son Mark manages the press plant and newspapers in the Altamont area.



STEPHANIE WIERMAN, general manager of Better Newspapers, Inc., right, presents a check for \$2,020 to Mike Brennan of the Douglas County American Legion Post 27. The American Legion lent a hand to the newspaper company to clean out office space in Tuscola, which included recycling a large amount of obsolete metal equipment. The newspaper provided the donation in appreciation for the hours spent on the project. *Photo by David Porter.*