

# The Sidney Scoop

By Ann Rhoton  
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Look for your correspondent's Countryside United Methodist Church Flea Market & Bake Sale and Sidney Improvement Group Easter Egg Hunt SCCTP feature articles with photos published in this week's edition of the Southern Champaign County Today Paper.

The Sidney Dairy Barn located at 311 West Main Street is now open. Their spring hours are Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 2:00 - 7:00 p.m. and folks can call (217) 688-8026 or email to sidneydairybarn@gmail.com for more information.

The next regular monthly meeting of the Village of Sidney Board of Trustees will take place on Monday, April 6 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sidney Community Building located at 211 East Main Street in Sidney. All monthly meetings, unless otherwise posted, are held in the Sidney Community Building meeting room.

The Sidney Spring Dumpster Day is scheduled to take place on Saturday, April 11 from 7:00 - 11:00 a.m. at Witt Park. Some of the prohibited items are: tires, yard waste, paints, oils, chemicals, batteries, or electronics of any kind (televisions, computers, monitors, microwaves, etc.).

You must be a Sidney resident to participate. The Village of Sidney will verify that you are a Sidney resident so be prepared with an ID if they don't know you.

"The State of Illinois Woman's Christian Temperance

Union" meeting will take place on Saturday, April 18 at 10:00 a.m. at the Coles County Memorial Airport located at 432 Airport Road, Mattoon, Illinois on Route 16 between Mattoon and Charleston. A program will be presented by variety of speakers.

New members (men and women) are welcome and folks can call Vice President Marjorie Miller at (217) 202-4397 for more information.

The Sidney American Legion Post 433 will hold their next monthly meeting at the Post Home located at 221 South David Street in downtown Sidney on Monday, April 20 at 6:00 p.m. Prospective new members are always welcome and encouraged to attend and all monthly meetings, unless otherwise posted, are held at the Post Home.

The Sidney Lions Club will host their 67th annual donations accepted fish fry on Saturday, May 2 from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. at the Sidney Community Building located at 211 East Main Street in Sidney.

Alaskan pollock with all the fixings, pork and beans, coleslaw, potato salad, desert, and more are on the menu. Proceeds from the fish fry go toward Sidney Lions Club college scholarships and their eye glasses program.

The Sidney Lions Club will also be giving the community an opportunity to purchase Sidney Lions Club 2026 Christmas Cash - New

Year's Dash raffle tickets at their fish fry. Tickets are \$10.00 each and can be purchased at the fish fry from Sidney Lions Club President Bill Hensch, or from any Sidney Lions Club member.

The inaugural Sidney Spring Fling event brought to you by The Goose & The Gander, LLC and the Sidney Improvement Group will take place on South David Street in downtown Sidney on Saturday, May 9 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. The event will take place the day before Mother's Day so vendors will focus on gifts for Mom and more.

Anyone interested in being a vendor can visit The Goose & The Gander, LLC website at <https://www.tgandt.com/> for more information and for a vendor contract form or reach out to Brett Franzen at The Goose & The Gander, LLC at (217) 530-5696 or by email at [tgandtllc@gmail.com](mailto:tgandtllc@gmail.com) with questions concerning the event.

Happy Easter!

*If you or your organization have news items you want published drop a line to Ann Rhoton at P. O. Box 491, Sidney, IL 61877 or call (217) 688-2812 between 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Don't hesitate to leave a message if there's no answer.*

*News items must be turned in by 10:00 a.m. each Friday to be published in the following week's paper. Items submitted after the deadline will be published in the following week's column.*

sitions to people with a law degree who have passed the bar exam, but with no legal experience - no courtroom experience, no clerking, no nothing? Can you really believe the DOJ wants to hire people - no experience necessary! - to represent the United States of America in US District Court?

Would you believe the President has a plan in case things go south with Operation Epic Fury? (He does - blame Pete Hegseth.)

Would you believe that during a recent press briefing, the WH press secretary did not rule out the President authorizing a draft, and that nobody pointed out that enacting a military draft would require an Act of Congress?

Would you believe RFK Jr and company say they have a plan to save rural health care with AI nurses and robotic doctors?

And would you believe that the President of the United States voted by mail in the last election?

team practices and the Reese's NABC All-Star Game. Parking is free in the South Lot of Lucas Oil Stadium.

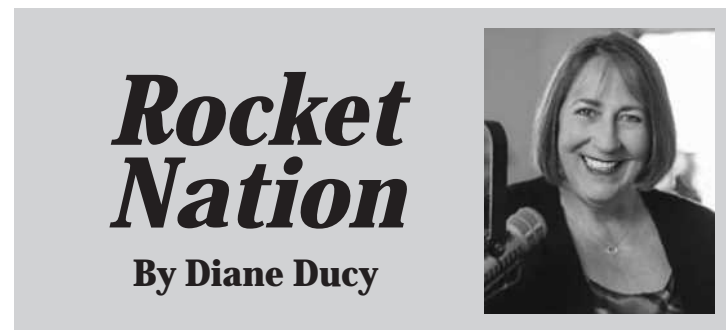
**Men's Final Four Tip-Off Tailgate**  
April 3-6  
Georgia Street (across the street from the Convention Center)

Free viewing parties for both Men's and Women's Final Four games, plus giveaways, basketball-themed activities, and food and beverage.

For more information, visit <https://www.ncaa.com/mens-final-four>.

## Knights of Columbus fish fry fun

The Knights of Columbus based out of St. Thomas hosted people for their Fish Fry on Fridays during Lent. On their last dinner, they counted this years earnings of just over \$2,750 that will support several needs for the school. After these projects or supplies are identified by school staff, (such as curriculum or text books. In 2024 profits went towards furnishing the second kindergarten classroom). The council members will meet now that the fish fries are over and vote on where to direct their profits. This past Friday, following "Stations of the Cross" at St. Thomas Church across the street, a cake was brought out on Alvin Decker's 100th birthday March 27th and all those attending sang "Happy Birthday"!



## Rocket Nation

By Diane Ducy



Diane Ducy and Alvin Decker



The Knights of Columbus and Alvin Decker celebrate his 100th birthday March 27th at their annual fish fry. Submitted photo.

## The music in me

I have a long-standing love affair with music, though it's fair to say the relationship is more enthusiastic than accomplished. I can play a handful of instruments—just well enough to keep things interesting, but not quite well enough to impress anyone who didn't already love me. The drums are probably my strongest suit, if only because rhythm feels like something my bones understand even when my hands occasionally disagree.

My musical journey started early. I took piano lessons as a child, dutifully practicing scales and simple songs, never quite becoming a prodigy but learning enough to keep the door open. Years later, as an adult, I signed up for a community class and discovered the mountain dulcimer—a gentle, unassuming instrument with a sound like a deep breath at the end of a long day. That one stuck with me.

These days, my collection reads like a small folk band in progress: piano, dulcimer, Irish tin whistle, harmonica, assorted percussion, and a ukulele that waits patiently in the wings for its turn. Each instrument has its own personality. The dulcimer, for instance, is pure calm. When I play, the sound drifts through the house like a lullaby you didn't know you needed. My dog and cats seem to agree. They gather around, stretch out, and within minutes they're fast asleep, as if I've tapped into some secret frequency reserved just for them.

The wind instruments, however, are another story entirely.

The tin whistle and harmonica are apparently offensive on a deeply personal level. The cats protest loudly

## Holding It All Together

By Amy McCollom



and with great conviction, and the dog retreats under a chair as though bracing for severe weather. It didn't take long to establish a house rule: stringed instruments inside, wind instruments outside.

Which brings me to the harmonica—and how I learned to play it.

That story begins in a chapter of my life that feels like it was written by someone with a questionable sense of judgment. My first husband, bless his not-particularly-saintly heart, had a fondness for what people now politely call "The Devil's Lettuce." I've always preferred to call it what it is: pot.

One evening, he and a friend came home with three black garbage bags full of freshly harvested plants, having apparently stumbled upon a field and decided to help themselves. Then came the instruction: I was to bake it all—on my cookie sheets, in my oven—to dry it out.

I remember standing there thinking, This has to be a felony. A big one. And I am not a lawbreaker.

But, being a dutiful wife at the time, I did as I was told, all while imagining flashing lights, courtrooms, and an abrupt change in my living arrangements. Convinced I might soon be needing a hobby suitable for incarceration, I decided I'd

better learn to play the harmonica.

I worked at the University of Illinois back then, and each day at lunch I'd sit outside in the courtyard with an old harmonica my dad had given me and practice. I assumed I was alone, just me and the occasional breeze. Then one day, a deep voice called out from an open window: "You're getting better. Keep it up."

Apparently, I had an audience.

So I kept at it. For months. And I did get better. And, as it turns out, I never did get arrested. No jail time, no courtroom drama—just a slightly absurd story and a new musical skill.

Now, forty years and a much better husband later, I can happily report that I never had to play the harmonica behind bars. I have, however, played it in church a time or two, and I still take it outside to let the notes drift through the air for the birds—and the neighbors, who so far have been kind enough not to complain.

I may never master any one instrument, but that's never really been the point. Music has given me laughter, a few good stories, and a surprising amount of peace. And in the end, that feels like more than enough.



I was contemplating an April Fool's day column, but truth is stranger than fiction.

Violets are blooming like crazy. The other day I saw a dragonfly patrolling my backyard. On Thursday, March 26 I saw a butterfly for the first time this year. Probably an Eastern Comma (Polygonia comma). My outdoor thermometer read 87 degrees F around 3PM. Later in the afternoon I watched as ominous clouds approached from the northwest. Suddenly the breeze turned chilly. The temperature began to plummet. It hit 55 degrees by 6:30 and kept falling. Friday morning it was teasing with freezing.

One of the targets of Operation Epic Fury turned out to have been the Shajareh Tayyebeh Girls' School. The building

had once been part of a Revolutionary Guards complex, and Iran's military still owned the building. But they quit using it for military purposes long since, and walled it outside the complex by 2018. The building was targeted anyway. On February 28 it was hit by missiles while other missiles were hitting buildings inside the walled complex. At least 168 people, mostly girls 7-12 years old, along with their teachers, died. A terrible tragedy, and clearly a military mistake. It is customary to offer apologies and compensation.

But would you believe the Administration then tried to blame Iran for the attack?

Would you believe that in some US Court districts, the Department of Justice is offering federal prosecutor po-

## NCAA® Men's Final Four® events

**Official Fan Events**  
**Men's Final Four Fan Fest**  
presented by Capital One  
April 3-6

Indiana Convention Center  
Interactive games, celebrity and athlete appearances, and fan activations. Free for Capital One cardmembers, 2026 Final Four ticket holders, military personnel with ID, college students with ID, and children 12 and under.

**March Madness Music Festival**  
April 3-5  
American Legion Mall: FREE outdoor music festival!

AT&T Block Party: Friday, April 3 - Featuring Twenty One Pilots, keshi, and Joey Valence & Brae

Coca-Cola Live: Saturday, April 4 - Featuring Zac Brown Band, Russell Dickerson, Ravyn Lenae, and Breland

Capital One JamFest: Sunday, April 5 - Featuring Post Malone, Megan Moroney, and Dominic Fike

**Reese's Men's Final Four Friday**  
April 3  
Lucas Oil Stadium (One block south of the Convention Center)  
Free public event with open

**DEADLINES: 12 noon Friday prior to publication.**

**Ads must be prepaid.**

**CLASSIFIED ADS: 25 words for \$20; 30 cents each additional word**

## St. Patrick's Senior Luncheon

Wednesday April 8th is the St. Patrick's Senior Luncheon (in the parish hall 304 N Vine in Tolono) for people 55+ between 11:30-1pm will have a "Driving Miss Daisy" theme. A panel of local professionals will address self assessment before getting behind the wheel. From "Help at Home" Heather Harden, To-

lono Police Chief Justin Levingston, Carle Community Health's Dana Williamson and Adam's Automotive's Adam Carlson plan to answer questions about the issue. Various aspects of this topic include the drivers health, resources, mechanical issues, the financial aspect of driving (cost of gas, insurance, tune-

ups), seasons and time of day, traffic, school zones and safety as well as public transportation options in the rural areas. Make arrangements to bring \$3 and a side to share with others as the main entree, drinks, plates, flatware and cups are provided. For more information visit: St-PatrickTolono.com