

Rocket Rundown



By Olivia Witheft

Softball and baseball were the only sports this week due to Easter break and ACT testing, but don't worry next week's business makes up for this week's lack of activities. Softball had three games planned this week, but only played one. The team took on the Oakwood Comets for their first home game Monday. The Rockets ended up sending the comets back to the Kuiper Belt after a 9-0 win. The team had their re-

scheduled game against Normal on Thursday, but due to weather conditions the game had to be rescheduled again. So next Tuesday, they will play Normal High. Similarly, the Saturday game against Washington was also cancelled due to weather. The girls will take on Rochester on Monday and Monticello on Thursday. Softball will play in Carterville on Saturday as well. Baseball was also supposed to have three games

this week, but the weather got in the way of both Thursday's game against Effingham and Saturday's round robin with Neoga and Iroquois West. Next week, they have two games and multiple games in Carterville on Saturday. Girls and boys Track and Field will have a meet in Clinton on Tuesday and then they both also compete on Saturday in Carterville.

TIF

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not being for another TIF commitment along with Casey Wilson, who has posted regularly on public social media platforms and brought a binder full of examples of how she felt disappointed after following the money trail she had researched on the past TIF and it's impact on our community.

Denny Davis, sitting next to his wife Marcia, was called upon and with the Strategic Downtown Planning flyer in hand, asked if there was any progress on these 'strategies' after an outside firm had been hired to improve the look of our downtown area. Trustee Jared Robbins has been the lead on this project and noted that the first phases of assessment and research had been completed over the last year, but it would take time, more volunteers and input to see some of the progress that has been proposed. This brought on another property owner from the downtown area, Damian Donberger, who griped about access to the back of his place with an ongoing debate (mostly on social media) about whether the current space across from the "Loose Cobra" will be turned into recreational space (a small park) and take away parking spots. Another Trustee, Daniel Grady, took the mic at the front of the room, to try and keep those attending the meeting on track with the TIF conversation and talked about being accessible to people with other points of discussion on their minds.

As Carolin Tschopp talked on the roving microphone, one of the things she brought up was frustrated with traffic patterns on the south side of town with the truck routes. Other people that have also lived in the town for decades, complained about the drainage projects being ineffective, which had former Mayor Jeff Holt sharing stories how he and his board allocated the funds to update pipes, the water treatment plant and improve the flow of water with retaining ditches and ponds. These comments were made to defend that the TIF money was spent appropriately over the past couple of dozen years.

When the growth of Tolono came up as a topic with the new subdivisions and houses (around 300 were built during TIF 1) that lead to additions to our Unit 7 schools (Unity West built on a wing and Unity High School added classrooms to the long hallway) attendees paid close attention as Superintendent Dr. Brian Brink gave his report. One thing that stuck out was his comment on wages for teachers and support staff being lower than some of the other districts in East Central Illinois. This got educators in the room chiming in about how a growing population means more students in classrooms and what a burden that can be to our educators and support staff. Bree Ocasio, the Tolono Park District President, commented on getting money from the Village for current lighting and ball diamond upgrades, but because of the current TIF causing their budget

to be strained, her board of commissioners has to ask for money to be given to them, instead of being able to function without going to meetings, doing a proposal and waiting for approval.

At it's peak, 55 people attended the meeting, but only about 40 were left towards the end when an investor talked about how private developers need these direct incentives from a TIF to prepare sites to build and expand the growth in town (with his current plan to build 30-35 homes) should the joint review board vote to approve it. There was push back on his comments from Robert (Bobby) Kolakowski who felt like he was being talked down to in regards to the person who didn't live in our village, but was planning to build. Many left the discussion discouraged as negative vibes seemed to prevail.

The next Village meeting of the Board of Trustees, will be on Tuesday, April 7th at 6:30pm in the downtown police station. Typically, the meeting video can be seen on facebook, just like this gathering which garnered nearly 85 views at it's peak during the Thursday night meeting, with over 250 comments. Four of the Trustees present and the Mayor, talked on the microphones in the front of the room and encouraged people to reach out to them directly to address some of their concerns. Those who want more information and clarity can sending an email to addresses that can be found at TolonoIL.us

Spring Book Sale at the Tolono Library

By Hilary Reinhart, MSLS
Community Engagement Librarian

Our book donation closet is overflowing, and that means it's time for a BOOK SALE! April 9-11, we will have our large collection of donated and weeded books, DVDs, video games, puzzles, and more set out for you to peruse. We've had several donations of very new, popular books. The sale will be available in our meeting room during all open hours Thursday-Saturday, and all purchases will be by donation. Choose what you like and pay what you think is fair to help support the library! Donations from book sale purchases are used, in part, to complete or enhance our collection, purchase chil-

dren's books for giveaways for both Summer Saturdays in the Park and our Christmas events, and to purchase prizes and gifts for the Summer Reading Challenge.

If you come explore the book sale on Friday, April 10, bring your littles with you to Story Time at 10:00! We have a new story time leader, Leslie, who will be using her unique experience and expertise to revitalize our story times and make them an exciting experience for our baby and toddler patrons.

If you stop by the sale on Saturday, please buy as many items as you can! Amy, Hilary, and the clerks will have a quick turn around after the sale to set up for the Mobile DMV event on Monday, and the fewer

items leftover from the sale the better. The Secretary of State's office will be in our meeting room on Monday, April 13 from 10:00AM-2:00PM to offer a convenient location to complete your simple DMV tasks. Driver's License renewal, Real IDs, or vehicle stickers can all be obtained at the library that day. Registration is required, so please call the library or visit our events page to sign up.

Finally, Wednesday, April 15 invites all seniors to join us for Coffee Talk in the morning from 9:00-10:00 and all teens to the Teen Make Lab in the afternoon from 3:30-5:00. There's something for all ages this week at the library, so we hope to see you stop in, say hi, and see what all we have to offer you.

Philo Library hosting BYOB

BYOB has a different meaning this time - Bring Your Own Book. After a long hiatus there will again be a Book Club meeting at Philo Public Library. This Book Club has no required books to read, just come with or without a book and enjoy a chat about what people have been reading recently. Maybe you want to talk about a book you read that you thought was really, really good, or maybe it was really bad, or just a "meh" read - share it with the group. Lots of people discover new reads by having them recommended by a friend or acquaintance. Our first meeting will be Tuesday, May 12th at 6:00 p.m. in the Library's meeting room. Light snacks and

refreshments will be available. If you have questions, email us at philopublib@gmail.com. Hope to see you then.

By the time you read this article, we may have our new Book Drop installed. The old one has finally given up the ghost and is being replaced by a new, improved book drop. The new one will be located in the alley to the west of Philo Library (where the old one was) and will accept anything that you checked out from the library - books, magazines, DVDs, audio books and CDs plus other media that you might have borrowed. Sometimes it is difficult to make a return in person at the Library - you didn't get home in time to

return items that are overdue and the library's now closed, or you had the kids in the car and didn't want to have to bring all of them in just to return a dozen books or any other occasion when you weren't able to return checked out items in person, that's what the book drop is for. The Drop Box provides a safe place for books and other materials where they should not be damaged by the elements, even if left overnight. While we love seeing you, we also understand there are times that it's more convenient to drop and run and we're good with that too. So remember the book drop is there if needed. That's all for now - thanks for reading!

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Area Church Services

<p>IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH 390 CR 2400E, Broadlands (217) 834-3289</p> <p>Pastor Rev. John Sharp Sunday Schedule Service - 9 a.m. Sunday school and Bible classes - 10:15 a.m. (Aug. - June) Adult Bible Study Wednesdays - 9 a.m. (Aug. - June) Men's Bible Breakfast - 7:30 a.m. Second and Fourth Saturdays (Lincoln Street Lounge)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Group • Sewing Circle • • Men's Club • <p>Call the church office for more information.</p>	<p>FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (Non-Denominational) "Come Rejoice With Us" 701 N. Sycamore Street Villa Grove, Illinois Phone (217) 832-5231 Fax (217) 832-9348 website: www.fccvg.com e-mail: fccvg@frontier.com Minister—Mike Zylstra e-mail: fccvgmin@frontier.com</p> <p>Open communion observed weekly Morning Worship Service: 9:30 a.m. Sunday School (all ages) 10:45 a.m. Jr. & Sr. High Youth Group 1st & 3rd Sundays 6:00 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>COUNTRYSIDE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 1807 County Road 1000N, Urbana Between Sidney and Philo Rev. Jeff Stahl E-mail: cumc.office99@gmail.com www.countrysidemethodist.com</p> <p>Worship Coffee Hour- 8:30 a.m. Worship-9:00 a.m. Nursery Available during worship Wednesday Wednesday's Bible Study 1:30pm Facebook Devotionals on Thursdays - 1:30 Crossroads Youth Group meets on the last Sunday of the Month from 5-6:30pm; dinner is provided. (Ages 7 & up) Please contact the office for more information 217-688-2422 "Love God; Love Each Other"</p>
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To add your church to the directory, email:
office@thecounty-chronicle.com