

Black Diamond are the best....Hard time cleaning the buggy

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:1,2,3,4,8

Early this morning the moon was shining. It was so nice, quiet, peaceful, but it was chilly. It seemed like quite awhile since the sky was as clear in the early morning. It was 55 degrees and I figured had it been February, I would have thought it was warm. But then, I guess my thermostat is a bit wacky.

This morning when I put on my sweatshirt, I remembered, oh yes, I believe I wear a sweatshirt until the last of July, then the first of August I start again! That may be a stretch! And yes, if I don't slow down on the ice cream, my sweatshirt will stretch!

Actually, we did something. We've been eating watermelon. Oh my! When I saw that Shady Crest had contain-

My Amish Home

By Millie Otto



ers of cut up watermelon in the showcase, I figured the whole ones would soon be out on the floor. They were and they were the Black Diamond. Those are absolutely the best! But it is best if we eat them for lunch instead of supper. Otherwise, we have to make these late night treks to the little room off the bedroom!

This is now after lunch, mine that is. Hubby opted to take a nap. But he wanted coffee. He figured I could just give it by infusion while he sleeps. I think not!

Did I say earlier that it was chilly? What was I thinking?! It is wonderfully warm now. I'd like to sit on the patio to

write but it is plenty breezy.

No, seriously, the hard part is just finding a slot in my schedule when it is a nice day. Like today, but by the time I get done with this and get my papers to the library, it will probably be kind of late in the afternoon, plus while I'm in town, I need to go through the Welcome Center and clean. By then, I figure my feet will say "STOP!" already. Anyway, cleaning the buggy, I can find all kinds of excuses to put it off. And off. And off.

In closing--There is nothing like faith to help in a pinch, faith dissolves doubts as the sun drives away the mists... At what time said the good man, I am afraid, I will trust in thee.--John Bunyan

\$30 million patronage paid to Farm Credit members

More than 8,400 local farm families receive their share of a \$30 million cash patronage distribution this week from their Farm Credit Illinois (FCI) lending cooperative.

“Patronage is a tangible example of what sets our cooperative apart,” says Kelly Hunt, FCI CEO. “Giving patronage back to our member-borrowers reflects the strength of our Association and our ongoing commitment to the farm families, rural landowners, and agribusinesses we serve.”

This marks FCI's eighth consecutive annual patronage distribution, totaling \$271 million declared since 2018. FCI's Board of Directors declared a \$30 million distribution after reviewing 2025 financial information, considering the business climate, capitalizing marketplace growth, and retaining adequate capital to meet regulatory requirements and navigate economic volatility.

Patronage is distributed proportionally to member-borrowers based on the net interest margin contribution



FARM CREDIT ILLINOIS

Helping Farm Families Succeed

of each loan and returns a portion of the interest accrued during the previous year. The Board prioritizes delivering competitive up-front interest rates and managing the cooperative's capital prudently while still providing an annual patronage distribution.

About Farm Credit Illinois Farm Credit Illinois (FCI) is an agricultural financial cooperative owned by more than 17,100 farmer, rural landowner, and agribusiness voting stockholders in the southern 60 counties of Illinois. Dedicated to Helping Farm Families Succeed, FCI provides competitive and flexible financing, crop insurance expertise, and Rural 1st® country life lending.

FCI manages an \$8 billion loan portfolio, sells 1.5 million acres of crop insurance coverage, and employs approximately 300 staff in the Mahomet headquarters and 14 regional offices. The Association returns \$30 million of 2025 earnings as cash patronage to member-borrowers this week. The U.S. Farm Credit System is a network of locally owned cooperatives supporting rural communities, farm families, and agriculture with reliable, consistent credit and financial services today and tomorrow.

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Champaign County Freedom Celebration

Champaign County Freedom Celebration is kicking off America's 250 with the first part of a giveaway on Flag Day June 14th to those people in the community who give \$25 at July4th.net Traditional forms of donating to put on this area's premier patriotic party have not proven to be fruitful, so the group of volunteers have put together a prize pack to incentivize participants to give! Illini Basketball player, Keaton Wagler was 18 at the time he had 46 points in the January game at Purdue and our friends at the NIL store had him sign an extra large navy shirt to raffle off to help the cause. Wagler is expected to be a high pick in the NBA Draft June 23rd and 24th in Brooklyn, New York. There will be Illini game, St Louis Cardinals and NASCAR tickets to try and win, too! The 4th of July festivities planned near Gies Memorial Stadium will begin with the 5k (sign up soon!) at 9:05am (Kid's Dash at 8:30am) then parade at 11:05am (still time to get an entry in!) and the evening program with food trucks, kids activities and music from Captain Rat and the Blind Rivets! The patriotic salute for America's 250 will include retiring the colors, a blessing on our country, a salute to fallen heroes and commemorative comments from the Grand Marshal group the Champaign County History Museum before the 9:15pm fireworks and the synchronized show soundtrack heard on local radio stations. Everyone's encouraged to attend as we say "Happy Birthday America!"

URGENT CALL: Blood and platelet donors needed now

The American Red Cross has an urgent need for donors and is counting on people to act now and book a time to give lifesaving blood or platelets. Donors of all blood types are essential in keeping the blood supply strong enough to withstand summer challenges.

Scheduled donations, which account for 90% of all blood donations, have dropped sharply in recent weeks. As a result, the blood supply has fallen by several thousand units in just a week, raising concerns that the decline could worsen as we enter trauma season. This period between Memorial Day and Labor Day brings an increase in severe injuries from car accidents, ATV crashes, sports-related injuries and other summer activities. In fact, AAA reports that fatal crashes involving teen drivers rise by 30% during this time, often called the "100 deadliest days." A single person injured in a serious car accident can require up to 100 units of blood.

"For a person suffering from severe bleeding – and the emergency medical responders caring for them – stopping the bleeding and stabilizing them is a race against an unforgiving clock," says Dr. Emily Coberly, medical director for the Red Cross. "Every minute matters. For each minute that passes without blood transfusion, the risk of death increases by 11% for patients suffering from hemorrhagic shock. That's why having a readily available blood supply is critical."

Securing appointments in the coming weeks is critical to maintaining a healthy blood supply for all patients depending on transfusions. Make an appointment to give now by visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS or by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App.

All who come to give by May 31 will get an exclusive Red Cross beach towel, while supplies last. Those who come to give June 1-28, 2026, will receive a \$15 e-gift card to a merchant of choice, plus be automatically entered for a chance to win one of two \$7500 gift cards. See RedCrossBlood.org/June for details.

Summer challenges

A sharp drop in scheduled donations is especially troubling now, during a season when blood collection can be difficult due to end of the school-year activities, travel and school breaks, as well as severe weather and heat that can disrupt blood drives entirely. Large-scale sporting events in the coming months can also add pressure to the blood supply at a time when every donation is crucial. Now is the time to make and keep blood or platelet donation appointments to ensure blood products are readily available for people living with chronic illness, new mothers, surgery patients and those facing traumatic injuries.

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