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FALL 2025

MAGAZINE



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# EFFINGHAM

FALL 2025

MAGAZINE

## FEATURE STORY



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### Lawrence Carie: More than a basketball coach

by Alex Wallner

Former Teutopolis head boys basketball coach Lawrence Carie waves to the audience before a high school boys basketball game between Teutopolis and Tuscola at J.H. Griffin Gym, Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024. Carie was honored during the Teutopolis 100-year celebration for the boys basketball program. Alex Wallner photo

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### PUBLISHER

Amy Winter  
amy.winter@effinghamdailynews.com

### EDITOR

Jeff Long  
jeff.long@effinghamdailynews.com

### CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Cathy Griffith  
cathy.griffith@effinghamdailynews.com

### ART DIRECTOR

Natalie Reidford

### CONTRIBUTORS

Marie Adamick  
Alden Kennedy  
Maria Sherman  
Alex Wallner

### SALES SUPERVISOR

Jody Hardiek  
jody.hardiek@effinghamdailynews.com

### ADVERTISING SALES CONSULTANT

Julie Harkins  
julie.harkins@effinghamdailynews.com

### CONTACT US

(217) 347-7151

### E-MAIL

news@effinghamdailynews.com

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### ON THE COVER:

The Elvis skeleton singing into a microphone was the winning pumpkin in 2024, decided trick-or-treaters who voted on the designs on display at the home of Rick and Kathy Syfert in Sigel. Submitted photo

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**A**s that spooky time of year approaches, we decided to visit Rick and Kathy Syfert at their place in Sigel. Before long, hundreds of trick-or-treaters will be flocking there, too.

They aren't attracted by the treats, but the intricately carved pumpkins on display.

As Cathy Griffith reports, it's become a Halloween tradition that began as a casual get-together among friends. Now, this daylong event has blossomed into a spirited competition that the residents of Sigel and neighboring communities eagerly anticipate each Halloween as they choose their favorite creation.

The winning pumpkin is decided by trick-or-treaters who must vote for their favorite before receiving a treat.

As the temperature cools in the transition from summer to fall, we also thought it appropriate to visit Alliann Hoffman, who has crocheted more than 400 blankets in 2 ½ years. Any spare time she has is spent crocheting blankets.

The Effingham woman goes to bed thinking about them and wakes up thinking about them. She even tried to see if she could crochet an entire blanket in a day.

"I started it at 6 in the morning and finished it at 9:10 that night," she told Cathy. "Most people ask, 'Do you ever eat? Do you ever get your work done? Do you ever do your dishes? Yeah, I get it all done.'"

Hoffman doesn't keep or sell the blankets. She donates them to local nonprofits and agencies.

This fall also saw the opening of Crossroads Montessori School in Effingham, which teaches kindergarten through 12th grade. By following the Montessori philosophy, Crossroads emphasizes multi-age classrooms to encourage collaboration and leadership, self-directed learning, real-world engagement through community projects and outdoor learning, and focusing on social-emotional growth. This year at Crossroads, there are six students, ranging from second to 12th grade.

Kody Czerwonka is the teacher for the six students this year.

Czerwonka previously worked at Buckeye Friends School – a Montessori school in Effingham – as the high school teacher before it closed earlier this year. When he learned that Buckeye Friends was closing, Czerwonka decided to open his own Montessori school.

Among the many opportunities for life lessons at Crossroads are the projects students work on together.

"It's important to be able to work with people, especially people who have different ideas, different opinions than yourself," Czerwonka told Marie Adamick. "That's what we're trying to do in there is to get them to be able to work together, even though they are very different."

Elsewhere, we visited with those who cherish the memory of Lawrence Carie, the legendary Teutopolis basketball coach who died earlier this year at the age of 88.

Alex Wallner writes that Carie was devout in everything he did. He was a devout husband, father, grandfather and mentor to young men and women.

"Grandpa was more than a grandpa: he was a mentor, coach and friend," said Cody Rincker, who was one of Carie's 20 grandchildren, and is the current head boys' basketball coach at St. Anthony.

Carie was inducted into the Illinois Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 1988, after winning 441 games in 23 seasons at Teutopolis.

"There's a legacy that he built. We had five years with two coaches who were both under .500," Teutopolis athletics director Derrick Zerrusen told Alex. "If you don't bring in a Lawrence Carie to turn that around, I don't know if Teutopolis basketball would be where it is today."

Those stories and more make up the fall 2025 edition of Effingham Magazine.

Jeff Long  
Editor



**Jeff Long** is the editor of the Effingham Daily News. He is a 1987 graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and has worked for newspapers in England, Pennsylvania and Virginia. For 13 years, he was a reporter and later an editor at the Chicago Tribune. A past president and current board member of the Illinois Associated Press Media Editors, he lives in Altamont with his wife, Karen.



**Cathy Griffith** is news editor of the Effingham Daily News. She is a 1998 graduate of Eastern Illinois University with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism. She has worked at the Daily News for 22 years in news and magazine publications. She is a lifelong resident of Effingham, where she resides with her husband, Tim, and daughter, Leah.



**Marie Adamick** is the newest reporter at the Effingham Daily News. Before deciding to major in journalism, she considered majoring in international business or chemistry. She graduated from University of Cincinnati in 2024 with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and a minor in History. A greater Cincinnati native, she enjoys traveling, collecting music, and going on hikes. She recently moved to Effingham to start her job at the paper and has family in Wisconsin, Cincinnati and St. Louis.



**Alex Wallner** is the sports editor of the Effingham Daily News. He earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2016. Before joining the EDN, he was the sports editor at the Standard-Democrat in Sikeston, Missouri for three years. He resides in Effingham.



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# A HALLOWEEN TRADITION

## *carved out of friendship*



From left are Josh Creuel, Rob Creuel, Eric Koester, Alex Koester, Doug Krone, Susan Krone, Kathy Syfert, Rick Syfert, Shannon Syfert, Phil Heuerman, and, in front, Jensen Syfert with the pumpkins they carved last year. Submitted photo.

**Cathy Griffith**  
Effingham Magazine

**F**or the past several years, hundreds of trick-or-treaters have been flocking to the home of Rick and Kathy Syfert in Sigel.

They aren't attracted by the treats, but the intricately carved pumpkins on display.

It's become a Halloween tradition that began as a casual get-together among friends. One year, a friend had an abundance of pumpkins in his garden, and they decided to carve them just for fun. Over a decade later, this daylong event has blossomed into a spirited competition that the residents of Sigel and neighboring communities eagerly anticipate each Halloween.

The winning pumpkin is decided by trick-or-treaters who must vote for their favorite before receiving a treat. The Syferts estimate 200 to 300 people show up to view the 20 or more pumpkins. They come from not only Sigel but also Neoga, Effingham, and Teutopolis, depending on whether those communities' trick-or-treat nights coincide with Sigel's.

The number of trick-or-treaters and those accompanying them has grown as word has spread of the contest.

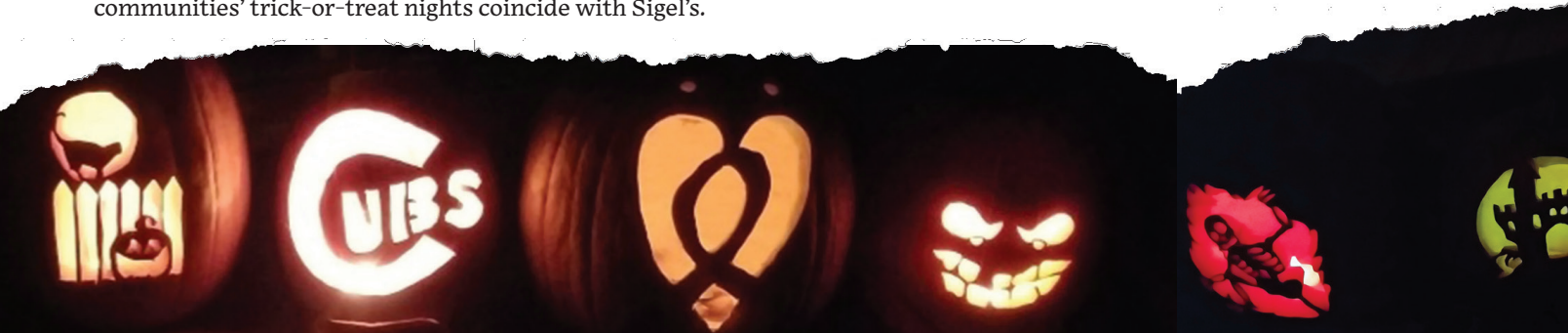
"I think there's been more extended family from other towns come because they know the pumpkins are here," said Kathy Syfert. "Sometimes, they've brought grandchildren or cousins or whatever from out of town to this street (Sunrise) so they can see the pumpkins."

The visitors are always amazed by the variety of carvings, she added. The carvings range from typical Halloween images to cartoon characters to words and even an occasional sports team.

Kathy Syfert always incorporates one image in particular onto her pumpkin.

"I usually do a cat of some sort," she said.

But one person's carvings always seem to grab attention.





"Phil always makes a rather difficult one. They're always awed at that," she said. "A lot of times he either comes in first or second."

Phil Heuerman admits he can be very competitive, adding, "I like a little competition."

Heuerman usually carves more than one pumpkin.

"I do about three," he said. "I'll carve my one pumpkin the night before. I'll carve a detailed one."

Heuerman likes to use patterns, but a couple of those in the group are good at freehand designs. And some are creative.

"One of the girls did one where she added one pumpkin inside the other pumpkin," he said.

Heuerman has accumulated a lot of pumpkin-carving books with patterns in them that the group uses. Still, some bring their own patterns.

Heuerman said friends or co-workers will ask him what carvings he is doing that year.

"I always say it's a secret," he said.

Heuerman likes to put detail into his carvings. He believes the best one he's done is an Elvis skeleton singing into a microphone, which won one year. Another winner is Bart Simpson on a skateboard. He's also done a Hot Wheels one.

"Some are just ones I've done with a lot of detailed scary creatures, like mummies," he said.

With so much detail, Heuerman admits he's usually rushing to get his done before trick-or-treat begins.

Heuerman estimates he has won the most times but believes everybody's is "really good."

"There are so many times it's been a close call. Some really put in a lot of work, and some are just there for fun and put something together," he said.

But at the end of the day, the only prize the winner goes home with is bragging rights. After all, Heuerman and the Syferts note it's a friendly competition.

"The fight's on once somebody carves something good (for) what they're going to do next year, so they can win. It's a friendly rivalry, I guess," said Rick Syfert.

Carving day begins around noon when everyone in the group arrives at the Syferts. There is food, such as pizza, chili, snacks, and sometimes pumpkin pie for dessert. Those who don't already have a design can browse the books and select one for the day. After they eat, the serious carving starts, according to Rick. They have to be done in time for trick-or-treat, which begins at 6 p.m.

Shown are carved pumpkins from past contests. The far right one below was carved by Eric Koester. Submitted photos.

With limited time to work, Heuerman said carving can get intense at times.

"Oh, yes, there's a lot of choice words said sometimes when somebody screws up and they have to start all over again. Or you get a bad pumpkin – one that's rotten when you get in it. Then there's some rinds that are like cutting into a rock. I've had that before. Thick rinds that I swear you got to use a chainsaw to get into it," he said.

The solution?

"You either give up on it or you keep fighting it. Just use a sharper tool," he said.

Heuerman notes they have a plethora of tools at their disposal. Rick, who is a carpenter, has even made some of his own that work well.

Once they are finished, the pumpkins are set up in the front yard on the porch on a tiered wooden stand that Rick Syfert made. Each one receives a little wooden number that is used in voting, which Rick also made.

While Heuerman says his skills are inferior to those on the pumpkin-carving shows, he has picked up some tricks over the years.

One is the importance of good lighting.

"That really makes a lot of your cutout stand out a lot better," he said, adding they have found battery-powered pumpkin lights work much better than tealight candles.

Another piece of advice is to use good tools and gut your pumpkin "very well."

"The more you clean your pumpkin out, the easier it is to carve. When you open it up and clean the guts out, you've got to scrape that rind," he said. "You want to scrape it really good, but not too far in to where you're going to poke a hole into it, cutting it."

Shown is one of Phil Heuerman's carvings. Submitted photo.







Eric Koester became part of the group after he developed a friendship with the Syferts' son in college. He considers the couple his "adopted second parents."

"Their home became a melting pot for our 'circle of friends,' which is what we call ourselves," he said.

Rick said it started when his eldest son, Ben, brought Koester, Heuerman and Doug (Krone) to his house one day.

"We made the mistake of feeding them, and they have never left," he quipped. "They became family."

The group that has included others over the years does other things throughout the year together, from camping trips and weekly card games to visiting haunted houses, pumpkin patches, county fairs, and tractor pulls, even having Christmas and Super Bowl parties.

"It's something that's just kind of evolved," said Koester. "This is just one other event during the year that we just set aside for friendship and fellowship."

Koester grew up carving the basic jack-o-lantern with three triangles and a mouth. It wasn't until the carving contest that he forayed into more elaborate carvings. Koester aims for two carvings – one more skilled and the other easier. His favorite was a Frankenstein and mad scientist he did years ago.

"Phil had different colored lights to put in the pumpkins. It was really cool. I had an orange and a purple in there, and it looked like the background of a mad scientist's lab," he said.

Koester's method of carving starts with finding the right pumpkin. He prefers a smooth-surface pumpkin, which makes it easier to lay a stencil on and transfer the pattern. He also tries to find a pumpkin that doesn't have a really thick rind.

"You really don't know until you cut it open. I go in and clean it out, make the wall thinner where I'm doing

Clockwise from top left, Alicia Koester carves a pumpkin in 2023.

Eric Koester's son, Alex, takes part in the contest in 2018.

Eric Koester carves a pumpkin.

Alex Koester, in front, carves, with, from left, Kathy Syfert, Lauren Greuel and Rob Greuel, in background, in this 2023 photo.

Alex Koester carves a pumpkin in 2022. Submitted photos.



my stencil. That way, the light is able to shine through the openings better," he said.

But he has learned over time the key to winning is picking the right design – one that kids will like.

"A scary clown – that didn't get that many votes cause most kids didn't like it. I've learned by my own mistakes. You want something kid-friendly. It just boils down to if you really are die-hard on wanting to win the competition, it needs to be something the trick-or-treater admires," he said.

Members of the group have even included their children in the contest. Koester's son has grown up with the tradition.

"He participated even when he was really, really young," said Koester of the now 15-year-old.

Trick-or-treaters have also grown with the tradition and are now bringing their kids.

Koester is surprised by how popular the contest has become in the community.

"I've had people come up, they're telling the kids, 'hey, we all gotta go vote.' That's where it just kind of got me. It's like, wow, this is something that the community looks forward to, that we really just never thought was more than just a get-together. It's really cool," he said.

Heuerman looks forward to seeing all the kids get excited about the contest.

"Even some of the adults love just coming there to vote with their kids. They even say they love to come there just as much as their kids do," he said.



One of Eric Koester's carved pumpkins is shown. Submitted photo.

With the excitement it's generated over the years, Rick Syfert believes the tradition will continue for a long time.

Koester wouldn't even mind if other communities started doing something similar.

"It's a good thing. We just want it to spread," he said.

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Group photo of the students and instructors at The Royal School of Cosmetology in Effingham.

**Marie Adamick**  
Effingham Magazine

**C**handra Niemerg has always loved hair, glam and fashion. They were her only interests growing up. Her mother said that the second she could see over the back of a chair, she started cutting hair. She used to cut her two brothers' hair in the laundry room, and the passion has stuck with her since.

Growing up, her parents instilled a strong sense of entrepreneurship and independence in her and her siblings. She always knew she wanted to open a business and be her own boss.

Her first business was running a cheerleader camp at age 14 because she was involved in the sport through school.

"I love the hustle. I love the challenge. I am very driven," said Niemerg. "I'm a big goal setter."

When she was 16, Niemerg worked as a shampoo girl and at a supply company that carried the hair products that the salon used. Working these jobs taught her about customer service, hair products and sales. This is when she knew she wanted to own a school someday because she enjoys teaching others and sharing what she's learned.

"Every job I've ever had has prepared me for this industry," said Niemerg. "I love to wait on people, and you have to have customer service to be successful in this business."

While studying cosmetology at Lake Land College, she worked as an assistant at a different salon, where she learned more about cosmetology from a different angle.

After college, she traveled the country with a design team for six years to teach hair stylists. She then opened her first salon: The Emerald Room. The salon grew from a two-chair salon to a 10-chair salon.

In 2020, Niemerg called a local investment group asking if they had any buildings she could purchase for her school. The group had purchased a historic train station building 35 years prior; otherwise, it would have been demolished. The 100-year-old building had been empty for 30 years and was in disarray. But this was exactly what Niemerg had envisioned: an authentic, old-school look.

"There were windows that were broken out. There wasn't any electricity. There was no plumbing. The floor was like mud. We didn't think there was a floor until my husband dropped some cleaner on the floor one day, and it just separated," said Niemerg. "We completely redid everything. Wherever you see brick, that was plaster. Anywhere you see paint or wallpaper, that's all new construction. It was so fun, but I'm a visionary. Like, I can see it. I could see it immediately when I came in."

When Niemerg opened The Royal School of Cosmetology on March 1, 2021, she started with hair and nail programs. The school has since expanded to include a barber program and an esthetics program. The school began with 12 hair stations, and now it has 22. She has added another nail station and two more barber stations. She would like to expand the barber program, but there is no room.

Along with The Royal School of Cosmetology, Niemerg also owns another school in Champaign: The Royal School by ID



Hair. Niemerg uses ID Hair products there, which is how it got its name.

Along with The Emerald Room salon, Niemerg also owns The Sapphire Luxury Spa in Effingham. Niemerg started these businesses so students have job opportunities after completing their programs.

"We are employing our own students, and I love that because while they're here, it's their job interview. It's their training," said Niemerg. "So when they get out, they're already on brand with us."

On Mondays and Tuesdays, students are learning from the book and from instructors. On Wednesdays, the students learn for the first half of the day, and the second half is practicing at the stations. The cosmetology program is 56 weeks, the nail technician program is 350 hours, the esthetics program is 750 hours, the barber program is 1,500 hours, the instructor course is 500 hours plus two years of salon experience, the master instructor program is 500 hours on top of the instructor course and the continuing education program is 375 hours.

Niemerg also teaches a basic business class to the students: everything from opening their own business to building clientele through social media. The first topics she teaches them are how to build self-esteem, how to keep their emotions in-check, how to think positive and how to think about others.

"It's more than just teaching in this industry," said Niemerg. "It is about life skills, taking care of themselves, being self-sufficient, building their self-esteem."

She teaches them about saving money, building credit, what a credit score is, how to borrow money and more. The students also learn when the slow periods are, so they can save more money for those times.

One project students do is design their own salon from square one on a poster board. Niemerg goes through each step of the process with them, including utilities, in case any of her students wish to open their own salon someday.

"They do a presentation explaining their vision, what they want to do in the business, what they're going to have, if they're going to have employees or if they're going to be independent, all aspects of the business because I want to raise entrepreneurs," said Niemerg. "I want them to feel like they can take care of themselves. So when the time comes, they're not overwhelmed, and they already have a great idea."

Senior cosmetology student Jazmine Barron reflected on when she completed the project.

"It keeps you open to what you want, but then if you want to change it up a little bit, at least you know what you want to change up rather than starting right then and there," said Barron.

Like Niemerg, Barron was passionate about doing hair – especially cutting it – from a young age. She learned of the Royal School of Cosmetology through one of her friends who studied there.

Along with the opportunities the school offers, Barron also enjoys learning from the different teachers since they each have their own style of teaching and their own experiences to learn from.

"They'll share their experience of how maybe that didn't work for them, not that it wouldn't work for us, too," said

Barron. "It just helps us keep our mind open for a different option to go to or a different route to go."

Along with tours, Niemerg's main responsibility is to teach people about the schools, what the schools have to offer and write contracts. To help her juggle her responsibilities, Education Director Alex Anderson became her right-hand man.

Anderson met Niemerg and her daughter, Whitley, at his previous salon in 2020, before the Covid-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, Anderson and Niemerg kept in touch. When Niemerg told him that she wanted to open a beauty school in the old train station building, Anderson said he'd come work for her when she

**"It's more than just teaching in this industry. It is about life skills."**

**— Chandra Niemerg**



Chandra Niemerg (in red) with her son, Drake McHugh; husband, Ray Niemerg; grandchildren, Mateo Carrillo and Yani Carrillo; daughter, Whitley Carrillo and son-in-law, Jalen Carrillo.





Top, barber students gather for a photo. From left: Isabella Heuerman, Lyric Black, McKenzie Babbs, Beth Wyss, Department Head of Barbering Marcus Robinson, Nathaniel Eagleson, Nathan Fuller and Alejandro Garcia.

Center, Royal School of Cosmetology students study and learn on Mondays and Tuesdays. On Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, students practice hands-on with clients.

Bottom, Jazmine Barron practices cutting hair on Education Director Alex Anderson.

opens it because he has always been interested in education.

Soon after starting at the Royal School of Cosmetology, Anderson earned his cosmetology license and received teacher training there. He worked at The Royal School by ID Hair for a year before coming back to work in Effingham where his family lives.

"We have an awesome bunch here. We all have individual strengths," said Anderson. "I'm excited to guide the next generation of hairstylists [with] what I've learned through the years and give them a little bit more of a real-life perspective."

Niemerg was asked to join the Illinois Department of Professional Regulations because she comes from two cosmetology angles: the school side and the business side. The board meets three to four times each year in Springfield, Illinois. She loves being part of the board because the members brainstorm ideas for new laws and regulations to send to the Illinois House of Representatives and the Illinois Senate. From there, the ideas pass to the governor.

"When new things come about in the industry and we don't have any guidelines, we're the ones that help navigate through that so that ... everybody knows what we need as professionals to support those guidelines and laws," said Niemerg. "It's awesome. I love it."

The board also implements disciplinary action related to any cosmetics. For example, if someone were to practice cosmetology in a salon without a license and the board learns of it, the







Above and top right, The Royal School by ID Hair in Champaign. Bottom right, The Sapphire Luxury Spa lobby. Photos submitted by Chandra Niemerg.

board then navigates through what disciplinary action to take.

“We have to navigate how long you’ve been doing it, what’s happening and then we have to come out with what they have to do ... It just depends on what they do,” said Niemerg. “Of course, everything we do, we try to set people up for success in making it right. I mean, that’s always the goal.”

Niemerg hopes to own more buildings in downtown Effingham because she wants to expand its services and retail stores. Her newest project is opening The Diamond Blade Barber, which was scheduled to open mid-September.

“I’m an open book. I’ll tell you anything. I don’t keep anything private. That’s one thing here when I teach the kids: I tell them everything I’ve done right in the industry, and then I tell them all about my hiccups — is what I call them — because that’s where I, of course, learn the most,” said Niemerg. “I don’t want any of them to think that I just had success from day one. That’s not true. I’ve had other setbacks.”

The Royal School of Cosmetology is open weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and can be reached at 217-347-3991 or at [royalschoolofcosmetology@gmail.com](mailto:royalschoolofcosmetology@gmail.com).



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Crossroads 4: From left: teacher Kody Czerwonka, sixth grader Caden Heard, fifth grader Syllas Nordhaus, fourth grader Tristan Nordhaus, second grader Willie Cooley and senior Jackson Stice. Not pictured: Stella Apke.

# Crossroads Montessori School

## ***‘The Montessori method really accommodates more learning styles’***

**Marie Adamick**  
Effingham Magazine

**T**he newly opened Crossroads Montessori School in Effingham teaches kindergarten through 12th grade. Montessori education is an educational philosophy developed by Dr. Maria Montessori that is more flexible than traditional public school teaching.

By following the Montessori philosophy, Crossroads emphasizes multi-age classrooms to encourage collaboration and leadership, self-directed learning, real-world engagement through community projects and outdoor learning, and social-emotional growth. This year at Crossroads, there are six students, ranging from second to 12th grade.

Kody Czerwonka is the teacher for the six students this year. Czerwonka previously worked at Buckeye Friends School – a Montessori school in Effingham – as the high school teacher before it closed earlier this year. When he learned that Buckeye Friends was closing, Czerwonka decided to open his own Montessori school.

Since January 2025, Czerwonka has been working hard to organize the school – everything from finding a space for the school to registering as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

“It was very rushed and fast-paced because that was a short window from January to now to get everything up and running,” said Czerwonka.

Aug. 18 was the first day of Crossroads; the school day runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The first 20 minutes of the day include reviewing the day’s schedule, announcements, a word of the day and 30 seconds of silent meditation. Then the students split into two groups: elementary and secondary kids. Czerwonka will check in with each student to see how they are doing before they start their morning work period, which lasts until lunch at 11:30 a.m.

“They have that extended work period where they get to deep dive and focus in on a subject of their interest or of their choosing, and then I help them implement that,” said Czerwonka.

Czerwonka gives each student independent work, and he helps them as needed. The secondary students focus on a subject of their choosing, and the elementary students learn more basic skills and subjects. Each student has a small tent on their desk with three pages on it: “I’m not working, and I need help;” “I can still work, but I need help;” and “I’m working fine.” This helps Czerwonka see if students need help or not.



Senior Jackson Stice wants to learn more about coding and computer engineering, so Czerwonka gets him different lessons to learn more about those topics.

Sophomore Stella Apke is interested in learning piano, so she will spend different morning work periods learning how to play the instrument.

Czerwonka is always around to support the students' growth through their courses and answering any questions they might have.

After the students' one-hour lunch, the school will sometimes host a guest speaker. After the speaker, or if there



Fifth grader Sylas Nordhaus (left) and his fourth grade brother Tristan Nordhaus (right) work during the afternoon work period at Crossroads Montessori School in August. Tristan has his small tent on his desk showing "I'm working fine!"



Kody Czerwonka reviews the daily lesson plan with senior Jackson Stice at Crossroads Montessori School in August.



Sophomore Stella Apke independently reviews piano lessons on her computer while senior Jackson Stice asks Kody Czerwonka a question at Crossroads Montessori School in August.

isn't one that day, the students have a second work period to focus on a different subject than that morning's. The afternoon work periods are for learning more practical life skills, such as cooking, rather than studying academics. Each of the two work periods have five-minute breaks throughout.

The afternoon work period ends at 2:15 p.m., which is when Czerwonka and the students have a closing reflection. Reflection is one of the Montessori principles. The students reflect on the day, things they can learn from, what their wins were and something positive. The reflections are either individually written down or discussed as a group.

Kindergarten through third grade, fourth through sixth grade and seventh through 12th grade each have curriculum lists that students mainly work from during the morning work period. The elementary curriculum lists include science, history, geography, language arts, math, practical life skills and outdoor learning. The secondary curriculum list includes cultural studies, history, geography, literature, science, technology, math, foreign languages, life skills, wellness, visual and performing arts, community engagement, a capstone project and independent study.

"It's probably not going to look the same as what it would look like in a typical public school, but we still will cover those concepts in a hands-on, practical way," said Czerwonka.

When it comes to the ACT and SAT tests, the parents or guardians choose how to go about preparing for the tests because, according to Czerwonka, some parents are less focused on the tests now that colleges aren't looking at the tests' scores as much as they once did.

However, Czerwonka will still do college preparation lessons with them. He will also have a Lake Land College representative visit the school to speak to the two high school students about enrolling in dual-credit classes. They will also learn about the test Lake Land College offers high school students to learn what classes they should take to prepare for enrolling in the college.

Each of the six students used to attend Buckeye Friends School, which made the transition to Crossroads a little easier for everyone. He has the students' files from Buckeye, which helps him create lesson plans for them because he knows what they have studied before.

On the last Wednesday of the month, Czerwonka takes the students to Thunder Lanes, a bowling alley in Neoga, as part of their physical education curriculum. And every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., they visit Willowbrook Memory Support Residences to visit with the senior citizens — something they did at Buckeye.

"It just really makes their day. It almost makes me wanna cry every time we go there because the older residents are so sweet to them and vice versa," said Czerwonka. "So that might make a lot of their weeks over there."

The students are planning a hydroponic garden: an indoor, soil-free vertical garden. Crossroads recently received a \$3,500 grant to support the project.

Projects are a good way for the students to work both independently and together.

"It's important to be able to work with people, especially people who have different ideas, different opinions than yourself," said Czerwonka. "That's what we're trying to do in there is to get them to be able to work together, even though they are very different."





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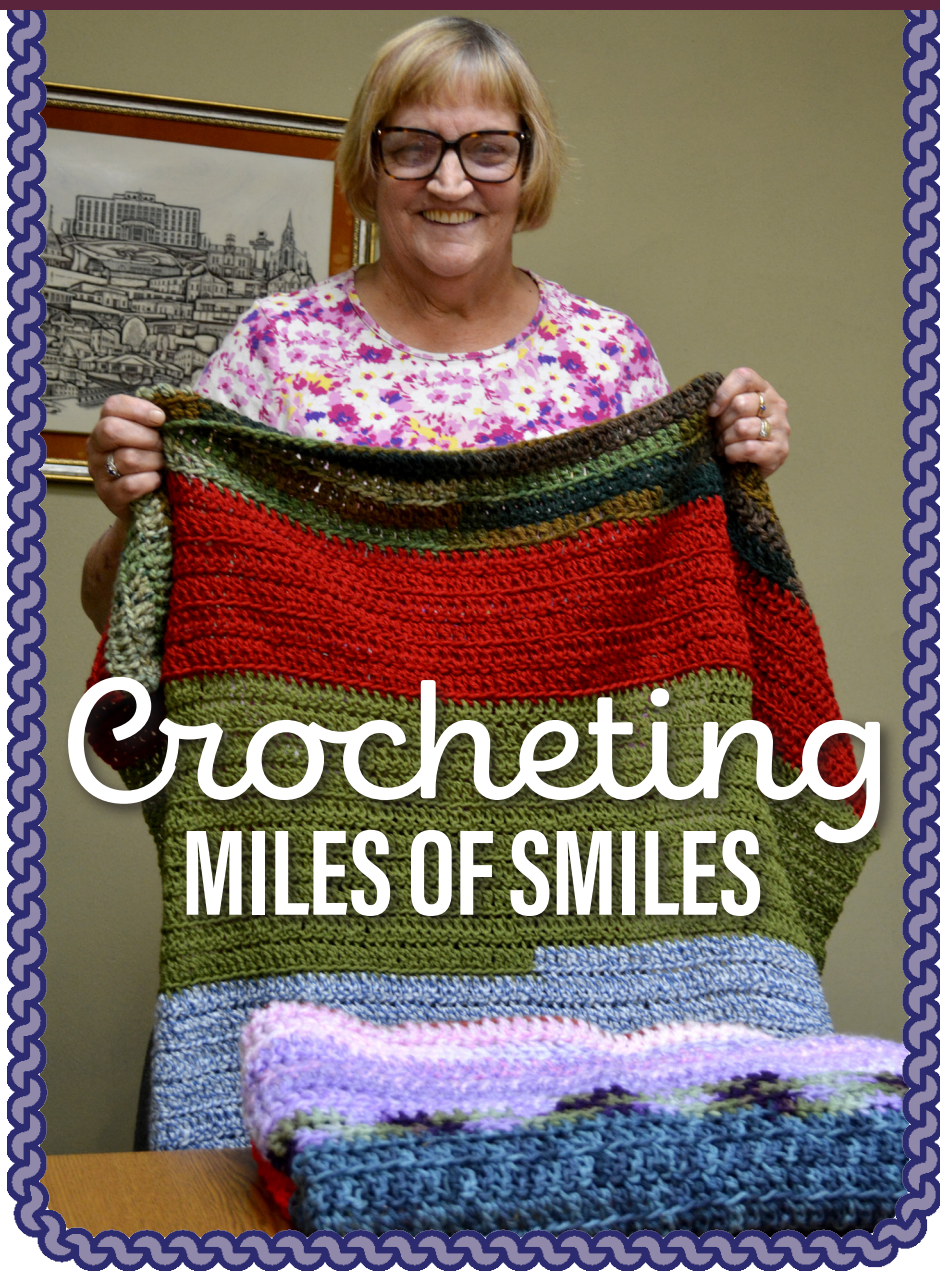
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# Crocheting MILES OF SMILES

Allianne Hoffman holds one of the blankets she finished crocheting that she plans to donate, along with the folded blanket on the table. Cathy Griffith photo

**Cathy Griffith**  
Effingham Magazine

Allianne Hoffman has crocheted more than 400 blankets in 2 ½ years. Any spare time she has is spent crocheting blankets. The Effingham woman goes to bed thinking about them and wakes up thinking about them. She even tried to see if she could crochet an entire blanket in a day.

"I started it at 6 in the morning and finished it at 9:10 that night," she said. "Most people ask, 'Do you ever eat? Do you ever get your work done? Do you ever do your dishes? Yeah, I get it all done.'"

Hoffman doesn't keep or sell the blankets. She donates them to local nonprofits and agencies.

She has amassed a long list of places she donates to, including Crossroads Cancer Center, Crisis Nursery of Effingham County, Effingham County Sheriff's Office, Effingham Police Department, Enduring Freedom Ministries, Family Life Center, El Shaddai Maternity Homes, Effingham County Health Department, HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital, Heartland Senior Living Center, Lakeland Rehabilitation and Health Care Center, Evergreen Nursing and Rehabilitation Center,

CASA for Kids, Heartland Human Services, Effingham County FISH Human Services, Effingham Unit 40 mentoring program and Land of Lincoln Honor Flight.

Hoffman started out crocheting for family and friends after she learned the technique from her mother-in-law in 1979.

"I've actually got people telling me that the blankets I gave them when they were babies; they still have them, and these kids are in their 30s and 40s," she said.

But in January 2023, Hoffman decided to do something more. She had retired from Martin's Midtown Fuels, and taken up a hobby that had run its course.

"I was doing Diamond Paintings, and they weren't going anywhere. I would have at least 60-80 hours in each picture," she said.

Looking for something new, she took the yarn she had left over and got the idea to crochet blankets to give away. She posted them on Facebook with the stipulation that the recipient had to be either a cancer patient, homebound, or a nursing home or assisted living resident — someone in need.

"I thought, you know, let's just see what happens," she recalled.

To her surprise, the response was overwhelming.

"For a while, I couldn't even keep up because people were getting a hold of me and saying, 'Can I have this, this, this, and this?'" she said.

As word of Hoffman's generosity spread, people began returning the favor with donations of yarn. Earlier this spring, some people from Teutopolis called her with a donation of yarn that belonged to their aunt who had passed away.

"The donation I got was unreal. It spread the length of my car as far as boxes and bags, just full. I still got a lot of it left. It's going to take me a long time to go through it," she said.

Hoffman prefers four or five-ply yarn and supplements the donations from time to time with yarn she finds at thrift stores or bargain bins. Hoffman notes she has pretty much every color of yarn available stored in banana boxes she has stacked in a spare bedroom. Her friend, Tara Hagen, likens it to a yarn barn.

"That room is just full of yarn," she said.

Hoffman makes what she calls "patchwork" blankets, which have no design



pattern or color scheme. Her method is simple. She fills a 5-gallon bucket with variegated yarn and a box with solid-colored yarn.

"Basically, I close my eyes, reach in and pull it out, and that's the next one on the list," she said.

The technique makes each blanket unique. Each one, she notes, is special in its own way, much like the people she gives them to. Hoffman has been making her blankets that way for years.

"I would make baby blankets and stuff for friends, family, whatever, and I'd have the leftover yarn," she said. "It just came to me on a whim, I thought, why not try it?"

People like the result, she said.

With the number of blankets she churns out, Hoffman has been asked if she uses a machine.

"Yeah, I got a machine. It's called my two hands," she often replies.

Crocheting has become second nature to her.

"I can go down a row and not even look at it cause I've done so many," she said, noting she can do it while watching TV.

Not only can she do it without looking, but Hagen is amazed by the speed at which Hoffman crochets.

"She has got the fastest crocheting hands in the world, I think, for a lady to get one done in a day. She'll text me late at night and she's like 'knocked out another one,' and I'm like, 'oh my gosh,'" Hagen said.

Hoffman pretty much crochets year-round. She and her husband don't take trips, a lifestyle they have become accustomed to after years of dairy farming. They have since retired from the mom-and-pop business.

"When you're in that business, it's a 24/7 business. Cows have to be milked at certain times of the day, and they don't like strangers. So, I got used to it," she said.

Hoffman doesn't mind spending the majority of her time crocheting. In fact, she loves it.

"It's been a joy," she said.

At Enduring Freedom Ministries, Hoffman's blankets are given as prizes once a month for the Ministries' drawings. And, thanks to her, babies and toddlers receive special blankets at EFM's Locker Blessings, during which kids draw a locker number and receive all the presents in it.

"She has helped us big time," said Enduring Freedom Ministries Director Vickie Kight.

Hoffman has even donated blankets to hurricane relief efforts in North Carolina, although she tries to keep donations local.

"I saw it on the news and felt like I had to do something," she said.

That doesn't surprise Hagen, who notes Hoffman is a giver.

"That woman's got a big heart. I feel like Alliann is one of those who would give you the shirt off her back if you needed it. She's just a very giving soul," said Hagen.

When Hoffman told Hagen she was giving blankets to local long-term care facilities as Christmas gifts, Hagen didn't hesitate to help, including some of her own handmade fleece blankets. The two added grip socks to each gift, and Hagen's son, Austin, joined in to help deliver them. The gifts have become an annual tradition.

Hagen said she loves seeing the smiles on the residents' faces when they get the gifts.

"I think there are some of them out there that probably don't get a lot of visitors," she said. "It's great she started doing this."

Hoffman said the recipients are often surprised and would ask who they are.

"Our answer is always 'we're Santa's elves, here to make you smile,'" she said.

Hoffman said many of those she donates to are shocked by the gesture.

"They can't believe what I'm doing. Some places will say, 'Are you sure you don't want something?'" she said, which she never does.

Hagen has nicknamed her "the blanket lady" and even had a sticker made with those words on it, accompanied by a ball of yarn and crochet hook, for Hoffman to put on the back of her car.

It's not the first time Hoffman has earned a nickname for her generosity. Years earlier, when she worked at Midtown Fuels, Hoffman became known as "the sucker lady," after she began handing them out to kids who would come into the store. The suckers she bought with her own money. She would go to Sam's Club and buy a bag of 5,000 of them.

"When you see the smile on a child's face, it's all worth it, and that's how I got into these (blankets), cause I wanted to do something to make somebody smile," she said. "When I know that some child or some senior person, some elderly person is going to smile, that's all it takes."

Hoffman plans to continue crocheting blankets and donating them as long as she is able, with no limit on the number of blankets she will donate. By mid-August, she had already made 140 blankets, possibly on track to surpass the 194 she made last year.

"My motto is crocheting miles of smiles," she said.

Those who wish to donate four- or five-ply yarn can private message Hoffman through her Facebook page, Alliann Lidy Hoffman.

**From left, Alliann Hoffman, Austin Hagen and Tara Hagen deliver gifts containing blankets Hoffman crocheted, fleece blankets Hagen made and grip socks to Lakeland Rehabilitation and Health Care Center. Submitted photo**





A photograph of Lawrence Carie, an elderly man with glasses, wearing a yellow jacket over a blue shirt and tie. He is smiling and waving his right hand, while his left hand holds a small orange and blue object. In the background, a person in a green and white plaid shirt is also visible, waving.

# LAWRENCE CARIE: MORE THAN A BASKETBALL COACH

Former Teutopolis head boys basketball coach Lawrence Carie waves to the audience before a high school boys basketball game between Teutopolis and Tuscola at J.H. Griffin Gym, Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024. Carie was honored during the Teutopolis 100-year celebration for the boys basketball program.

Story and photos by  
**Alex Wallner**  
Effingham Magazine

**W**hen you think about Lawrence Carie, you think about coaching.

But he was so much more than that.

Carie, who passed away on Feb. 27 at the age of 88, was devout in everything he did. He was a devout husband, father, grandfather and mentor to young men and women.

"Grandpa was more than a grandpa: he was a mentor, coach and friend," said Cody Rincker, who was one of Carie's 20 grandchildren, and is the current head boys basketball coach at St. Anthony. "I spent a lot of time with him growing up."

Carie and his wife, Barb, were married for 67 years. They would have celebrated their anniversary in June.

She said that he was never a romantic type of person.

"When we dated, it was always the (St. Louis) Cardinals game on the car (radio) when we were driving," Barb said. "It wasn't anything romantic."

Lawrence was the youngest of 11 boys. His mom passed away when he was 17 years old.

"He always grew up with older boys pushing him," Barb said. "They knew he had talent in sports and they pushed him in their own way, but he never felt pushed into what he did."

"He loved (teaching); it was his life."

Carie was inducted into the Illinois Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 1988, after winning 441 games in 23 seasons at Teutopolis.

Carie shaped the program into the one you see today.

"There's a legacy that he built. We had five years with two coaches who were both under .500," Teutopolis athletics director Derrick Zerrusen said. "If you don't bring in a Lawrence Carie to turn that around, I don't know if Teutopolis basketball would be where it is today."

J.H. Griffin won 404 games in 24 years. The following two coaches went a combined 48-68.

Teutopolis has had 44-straight seasons of its boys basketball team finishing .500 or better. Carie's teams were above .500 in 21 of his 23 seasons.

Doris Zerrusen, one of Lawrence's three daughters, said that what he did, above winning games, was drive values into the players he coached.



"He didn't win a sectional or state championship; he won hearts and respect," Doris said.

Rincker remembers Lawrence coaching him when he was younger.

Not one weekend went by without the two finding somewhere to shoot a basketball, especially when Rincker was struggling with his game.

"We'd hang out and go up to the old grade school gym at T-Town, the YMCA, or wherever we could find a hoop and he'd put me through drills and all these different things," Rincker said. "He shared all those life lessons along the way. I always looked up to him and admired him. He helped me become a better basketball player.

"Whenever I was struggling with shooting, I'd call grandpa up and meet him in the gym somewhere on a Sunday afternoon. I would let him watch me shoot and let him give me pointers and tips."

Rincker said he is still using a lot of those pointers today with his players. He is using Lawrence's infamous phrases, as well.

"I'm still using those lessons and skills as a coach today, and as a father," Rincker said. "Some of the sayings make more sense now as I've gotten older. I never really asked for an explanation, nor did he ever give one, on what he was saying and why, but I try to do a good job and explain to my players what I think the meaning actually is."

*Be quick, but don't hurry.*

*When in doubt, shoot, but never be in doubt.*

Those were just two of the sayings that Rincker commonly heard from his grandfather.

"He took them from everywhere," Rincker said. "He had slogans from all the greats back in the day."

Rincker said that "Be quick, but don't hurry" refers to a "fine line" that Carie always talked about.

"There was a subtle difference — a fine line," Rincker said. "There was a fine line between being quick and hurrying."

As for "When in doubt, shoot, but never be in doubt," Rincker said that was a phrase coined for being decisive and taking action.

All of those sayings came full circle in 2017, when Rincker won St. Anthony's only state championship for boys basketball.

Something that Lawrence could never achieve, he was able to witness firsthand with his grandson on the sidelines.

"I'd always grown up hearing the stories about the one-class system and the two-class system; it never quite worked out for him to get past the sectional and I know, from a competitive standpoint, that always stuck with him and I felt like there was something left for him to accomplish on the basketball-end of it," Rincker said. "It really meant a lot to me to be able to have him witness that."

Rincker said that Lawrence always talked about being "emotionally poised" as a coach and player.

More often than not, coaches can wilt under the pressure. Rincker understood at an early age that he wasn't going to let that happen to him.

He proved that this past season.

Rincker helped guide St. Anthony back to the state tournament in March, nearly 10 days removed from his grandfather's passing.





He said that once he found out the tragic news, he relayed the message to his team.

They ended up responding.

St. Anthony won the regional championship over Arcola the next night.

Though years apart in age, Rincker and Lawrence share many traits in common.

One is the amount of time each spends in a gym.

There weren't many nights when Lawrence wasn't in one. The same could be said of Rincker.

Barb said that her three daughters were all cheerleaders, while the boys played basketball, so it was almost second nature to her.

"We were all a family at the gym," she said.

Being a "coach's wife" was always a joy for Barb, even when he was at practice and coming home late in the evening.

Lawrence always made sure to have time set for family dinner.

"There were a lot of meals on the table ready to go; the children waited until their father came home from practice," Barb said. "I can remember feeding them soda crackers before he would come home."

Doris always remembers Lawrence having a big heart and

looking out for others.

As he got older, Lawrence would always want to visit people; he would attend funerals and would use those trips as a time to talk to those from his past.

"That was my dad," Doris said. "He had such a big heart and always talked about wanting to go to this funeral and this funeral. At his age, that's what he went to. That was his time to talk to people."

He was also receptive to the coaches who followed him.

Current Teutopolis head coach Chet Reeder said Lawrence was "always really great to me."

"He was always really friendly, open to advice and ready to help with anything I needed," Reeder said. "He was always willing to help in any way and he was just a fan of basketball, this community

and all of our kids. It didn't matter what school they were at; I felt like he supported everything.

"I was really proud to be able to know him and get to follow in his footsteps."

Reeder shared a story of the first time he met Lawrence, which was at a freshman-sophomore game.

"The very first time that I met him, our freshman-sophomore (team) was playing at home against Effingham," Reeder said. "He walks in, and I didn't see him coming. He snuck up behind me, grabbed my arm and immediately started rolling

**"When in doubt, shoot,  
but never be in doubt."**

**— Lawrence Carie**



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right into basketball stories and stories about T-Town and Effingham. As we're watching, he's saying what these kids should be doing while they're on the floor and playing this freshman-sophomore game and was spot on with everything.

"He was a student of the game, always."

While a student of basketball, Lawrence also did more for Teutopolis athletics than anyone at the time.

Former Teutopolis head boys basketball coach Lawrence Carie and St. Anthony boys basketball coach Cody Rincker look over the plaque given to Carie.



He was not only a basketball coach but also ventured into the realms of track and field, softball and volleyball, while being a teacher and then an athletics director.

"He opened the door to sports," Barb said. "When he came, that was his thing to do."

"The year T-Town was on the verge of dropping volleyball and cutting the program, he coached for two years," added Dennis Carie, one of Lawrence's two sons. "He felt that we shouldn't lose the sport."

The community showed its appreciation for Lawrence when Teutopolis held its 100-year ceremony for boys basketball in January of 2024.

Lawrence was greeted with a raucous, standing ovation among a sold-out gym.

"It was a challenge, because we weren't sure if he was going to make it," Doris said. "We were all like, 'We got to get him there and we got to get him close.' He was ready and I wheeled him out there and didn't expect what I saw and heard."

Lawrence wore an old gold and navy beanie on his head and dressed to the nines with an old gold blazer that Barb made.

"It was great to see him get the reaction," Derrick Zerrusen said. "His legacy in the school, and with basketball, was preserved there."

The family took home a plaque with his name and a brief message carved on it — a token of appreciation for a man who was not just a basketball coach, but a man of honor and integrity who drilled his beliefs into everyone he met and made them better.

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## Louisville's Bailey Zimmerman is FIGURING IT OUT

Bailey Zimmerman poses for a portrait on Thursday, July 24, 2025, in Los Angeles. (Photo by Rebecca Cabage/Invision/AP)

### From a job at a meat processing plant to country music stardom

**Maria Sherman**  
AP Music Writer

**H**is is a Cinderella story.

Before the big tours and country music award nominations, Bailey Zimmerman was growing up in the small town of Louisville, Illinois, working at the local meat processing plant and laying gas pipeline. Then, in 2020, he decided to upload videos of himself singing to social media — Black Stone Cherry's "Stay," and, later, an original.

He quickly garnered a fan base on TikTok. It wasn't overnight, but it was fast. Soon, he inked a deal with Warner Music Nashville and released his debut full-length, 2023's "Religiously. The Album." It peaked at No. 7 on the all-genre Billboard 200 chart and was certified two-times platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America. On Aug. 8 he followed it up with a sophomore offering, "Different Night Same Rodeo."

"I don't know what I'm doing," Zimmerman, 25, tells The Associated Press through a smile. "I randomly got into music in 2020, 2021, and I'd never sang before. I'd never wrote songs before."

After "Religiously. The Album." did well — something he didn't see coming — Zimmerman found himself trying to recreate it while writing for his second album. "It just didn't work," he says. "I just found myself not really writing that great of songs because I'm trying to write other songs that have already been written."

So, he took a step back, and asked himself: "What am I trying to do with my music? And what is the whole goal of this next album?" The answer was simple: He wanted to tell stories from his life.

"You didn't know what you were doing the first time. And you don't know what you're doing now," he told himself. "So just write songs that you love and try to write songs that you feel like people can relate to, you know, stories from things I've been through."

On "Different Night Same Rodeo," those stories are told in big-hearted ballads ("Hell or High Water"), good time stomps ("New to Country") and varied collaborations, including with country star Luke Combs ("Backup Plan"), the rising pop voice the Kid LAROI ("Lost"), and Diplo ("Ashes"). He's always been open to such eclectic collaborations, anchored in his raspy, charismatic tone — Zimmerman's highest charting song to date is "All The Way," a hip-hop-country hybrid he features on with rapper BigXThaPlug.



For his second album, Zimmerman wanted to make sure he worked with artists he had true relationships with. For Combs, he knew the singer would be perfect for the fiery "Backup Plan" — he just never thought he'd meet him. Then, Combs invited Zimmerman to perform at his Hurricane Helene relief benefit "Concert for Carolina." They hit it off, and the rest is history. The Kid LAROI ("We're like the same person," Zimmerman says) and Diplo ("Sometimes things just feel like God's plan," he says) were partnerships that also happened organically.

"When I collaborate, I just want it to be a real friendship," he says. "And I want it to feel real, because it comes across not real when it's not."

For an artist who describes himself as "dealing with a little bit of impostor syndrome," he seems to know, at least intuitively, what works for himself and his fans.

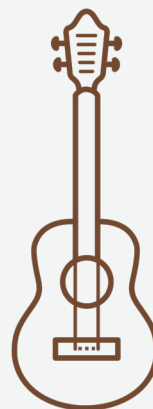
"The main reason I write music is so people know they're not alone and that I've been through the things that they've been through, too," he says. "I think that's what I started my whole career on, was people relating to me kind of 'therapy writing,'" he says. "'Different Night Same Rodeo' — it's the fluctuation of life. It's the ups and the downs, the mountains, the valleys, but we're still on a good vibe."

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**"The main reason I write music is so people know they're not alone and that I've been through the things that they've been through, too."**

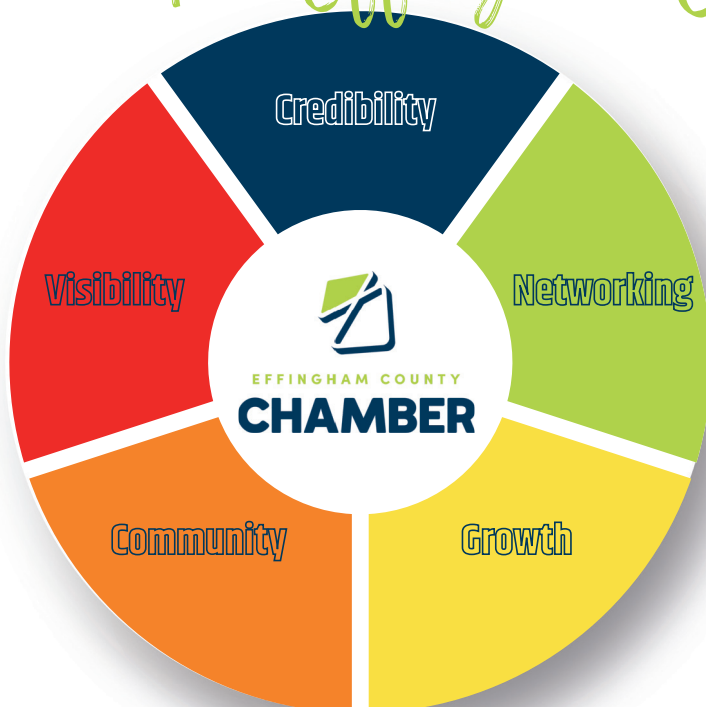
**— Bailey Zimmerman**

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## Trevor Storm: Running for a Reason

### Shelbyville man running in Chicago Marathon to aid ALS research

Story  
**Alden Kennedy**  
**Les Turner ALS**  
**Foundation**

Photos  
**Courtesy Les Turner**  
**ALS Foundation**

Shelbyville hospice nurse Trevor Storm and Gregory Dirks, who is living with ALS.

**T**revor Storm is no stranger to the fragility of life. As a hospice nurse from Shelbyville, a small town of fewer than 5,000 people, he has spent his career helping families navigate their most vulnerable moments. But it wasn't until he began caring for Gregory Dirks, who is living with ALS, that Trevor found himself forever changed.

Trevor didn't set out to be a nurse. In high school, he took a health occupations class thinking it would be an easy elective. Instead, it sparked a calling. He earned his nursing assistant certificate and never looked back.

When his grandmother was diagnosed with lung cancer and entered hospice care, Trevor witnessed the transformative role of a hospice nurse firsthand.

"The way I saw her care for my grandma," he recalls, "I thought, 'This lady loves her just like we do.'"

That moment solidified his path. Trevor was drawn to the deeply human core of hospice care.

"People don't like to talk about hospice," he says. "But it's not just about the end. It's about helping people and families make the most of every moment left."

His perspective on end-of-life care was transformed again when he met Greg and his wife, Janet. Trevor admits he knew little

about ALS before working with Greg.

"Even in nursing school, we only briefly touched on it," he says. "But ALS presents so differently in each person. No two cases are the same."

Greg's case, Trevor says, has been particularly inspiring. Diagnosed nearly seven years ago, Greg has defied the odds. While the average life expectancy for someone with ALS is two to five years, Greg continues to live with humor and resilience.

"He's always laughing, always joking," says Trevor. "He's never let this disease define him."

Watching Greg fight, day after day, lit a fire in Trevor.

"He doesn't get to choose his battle," Trevor explains. "But I do. And I wanted to do something hard — something that would challenge me and honor him."





That's how Trevor found himself training for the Bank of America Chicago Marathon with Team Race for ALS.

It started as a playful challenge.

"I was trash-talking my son, who runs cross country," Trevor laughs. "We raced, and he crushed me."

That loss led Trevor to start running more seriously.

"I downloaded a couch-to-10K app by accident," he says. "But I stuck with it, and I found I really liked the solitude of running. It became a kind of meditation."

After a particularly moving visit with Greg, Trevor considered making his new hobby even more meaningful.

"I thought, 'I whine about running. But Greg wakes up every day and faces ALS with grace.' That was the moment I decided to run for him."

Trevor joined Team Race for ALS, the Les Turner ALS Foundation's official marathon team, and began raising funds for ALS care and research. His training hasn't been easy.

"I'm running 15- to 18-mile stretches by myself," he says. "It's early mornings, late nights. Sometimes I run at 10 p.m. after my kids are in bed."

Still, Trevor finds strength in his purpose.

"When my legs hurt or I feel like quitting, I think about Greg," he says. "He doesn't have the choice to stop fighting. So I don't either."

His experience has shifted how he views both hospice and life.

"We often think of hospice as a last resort," he says. "But getting in earlier—when the diagnosis is fresh, when treatment stops—that's when we can really help."

Trevor urges people to understand that hospice isn't about dying. It's about living fully, even as life nears its end.

And for Trevor, that philosophy now extends far beyond his day job.

"This experience has taught me not to take anything for granted," he says. "Being able to run — even when it's hard — is a gift. I get to do this. A lot of people can't."

His message to others is simple: get involved.

"People don't know a lot about ALS," he says. "But the more we learn, the more we can help. Whether it's raising money, volunteering, or just educating yourself — every bit makes a difference."

As the Oct. 12 Chicago Marathon draws near, Trevor continues to train — mile after mile, often alone, sometimes in the cold, often exhausted. But he runs with purpose, powered by the memory of every visit to Greg's home, every laugh they've shared, and every moment that reminds him why this race matters.



"This isn't just for Greg," he says. "It's for every family living with ALS. And I'm proud to be running for them."

Support Trevor and Team Race for ALS at [lesturnerals.org/race](https://lesturnerals.org/race)

**Trevor Storm trains for the Oct. 12 Bank of America Chicago Marathon.**

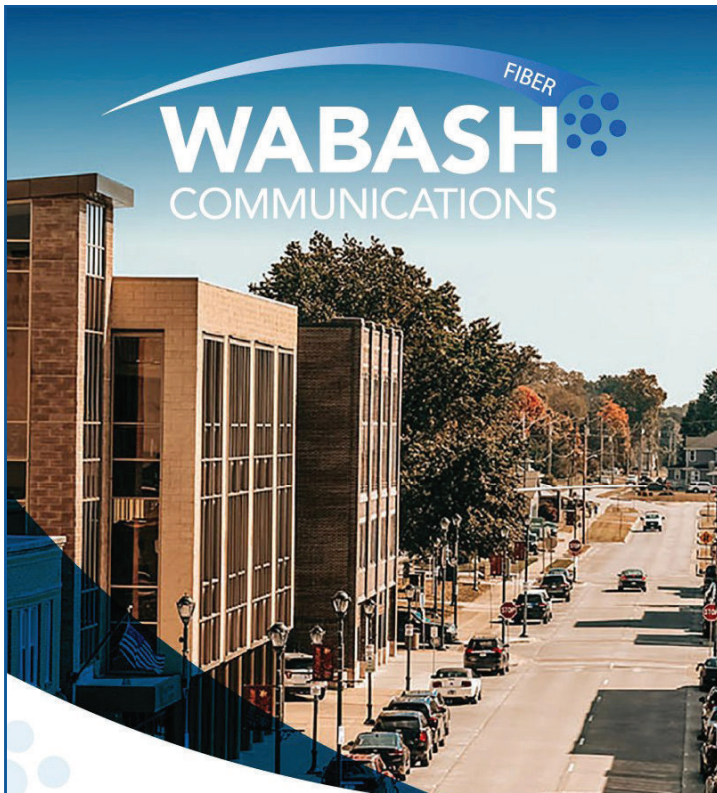
### About Les Turner ALS Foundation

Founded in 1977, the Les Turner ALS Foundation's mission is to provide the most comprehensive care and support to people living with ALS and their families so that they can confidently navigate the disease, and advance scientific research for the prevention, treatment, and cure of ALS.

Also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) weakens the muscles we use to move, swallow and breathe. It can, in some cases, also cause changes in behavior and thinking. The effects of ALS grow more severe over time and eventually become fatal. The average survival for someone with ALS is two to five years.

There is no cure yet — but research and clinical trials at the Les Turner ALS Center at Northwestern Medicine are bringing us closer to a world free of ALS. Learn more and get involved at [lesturnerals.org](https://lesturnerals.org)





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# Effingham & Area Events



**Sept. 26**

**HSHS St. Anthony's Foundation Annual Golf Benefit** at Effingham Country Club. For more info, contact Michael Wall at 217-347-1854 or email Michael.wall@hshs.org

**Adult Pumpkin Hunt Fundraiser** at dusk at Tuscan Hills Winery in Effingham. Hunt. Sip. Win. Pumpkins packed with prizes and the Golden Pumpkin holds \$500 cash for one lucky winner! All proceeds go to Enduring Freedom Ministries.

**Sept. 26-28**

**Flea Market** at Cross County Mall in Mattoon.

**Sept. 27**

**Family Fall Fest** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Camp New Hope. Games and inflatables, food trucks, vendors, music, Wheels of Hope Car Show, train rides on the Camp New Hope trails, and more! Open to the public!

**Oktoberfest** at Teutopolis Banquet Hall 5 p.m.-midnight. Bands include Dave Hylla's Good Times Band from 5:30-9 p.m. and Nerdvana from 9-end. Free admission. Free inflatables for kids. German-style food. German-style beer. Stein-holding contest.

**Schuetzenfest** at Effingham County Fairgrounds in Altamont.

**Sooney Fest** in Neoga IL. BBQ Smokeoff, live music, beer garden, food and craft vendors, duck derby, and free activities for the entire family, all at Jennings Park in Neoga 1-7 p.m.

**FAF Appleknocker.** A great family-friendly arts & science festival event put on by the Flora Academic Foundation and held at the Flora Elementary School grounds that has free entertainment, inexpensive games for kids, and great food. Booths are run by school groups, churches, and local organizations. The money raised goes to groups working the booths. Everyone is welcome to attend! 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

**Sept. 27 & 28**

**Fall Frolic** at Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site, 8 miles south of Charleston / 11 miles north of Toledo.

**Oct. 3**

**T. Graham Brown.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**Oct. 4**

**Ham City Fall Fest** starting 10 a.m. in downtown Effingham. Bavarian style brunch, live music, sip German-inspired beers, festive bites, Kids Korner with animals, bounce house and corn pit.

**Fall Village-Wide Garage Sales** in Dieterich 7 a.m.-noon.

**Oct. 9-11**

**Chamber of Commerce Greenup Apple Fest** in Greenup.

**Oct. 10**

**Grits & Glamour: Lorrie Morgan & Pam Tillis.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**Crusin' Downtown Mattoon** 5-9 p.m.

**Oct. 10-12**

**Touchstone Energy Hot Air Balloon Fest** in Shelbyville.

**Oct. 11**

**Car, Truck & Tractor Show and Harvest Maker Market** at The Patch, 2117 N. 2150 St., St. Elmo IL. Classic cars, vintage tractors and custom trucks. Food trucks, petting zoo, and more! Admission is free.

**Tom Petty — Fear Nothing.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**Scarecrow Daze Fest** in Shelbyville. Parade at 10 a.m. with route from Forest Park to Main Street School. (Lineup begins at 9 a.m. at Forest Park.) Downtown events 11 a.m.-3 p.m. with Kids' Corner at courthouse parking lot next to Rincker Law, food and beverage trucks, vendors, car show and Legend of the Lost Scarecrow Mystery Walk. West end events with kids' activities (bounce houses, petting zoo, straw maze and more) 2-6 p.m., beer tent 4-10 p.m., live music, food trucks.

**Oct. 16**

**Women's Health Showcase** at Keller Convention Center in Effingham. Presented by HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital. Pamper yourself, do Christmas shopping, girls' night out, panel discussions and more!

**Oct. 17**

**Adam Wainwright Band.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**Oct. 18**

**Hocus Pocus Interactive Movie.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

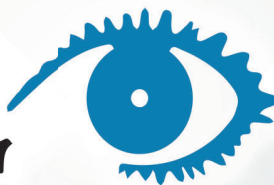
**A Spooktacular Bingo Night** at Neoga American Legion Post 458 in Neoga. Check their Facebook page for more details

**Oct. 19**

**Benefit for Ashley (Kinkelaar) Westendorf** at Teutopolis Banquet Hall starting 1 p.m. Food, drinks, silent auction, 50/50 drawings. Back of the Bus Band 2-5 p.m.

**Amy Grant.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

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DATE/TIME	SHOW	TOP TIER	LEVEL A	LEVEL B
Oct. 03   7:00 pm	T. Graham Brown	\$50	\$40	\$30
Oct. 10   7:00 pm	Grits & Glamour: Lorrie Morgan & Pam Tillis	\$75	\$55	\$45
Oct. 11   7:00 pm	Tom Petty Night - Fear Nothing	\$30	\$30	\$30
Oct. 17   7:00 pm	Adam Wainwright Band	\$84.99	\$64.99	\$44.99
Oct. 18   7:00 pm	Hocus Pocus (Interactive Movie)	\$20	\$20	\$20
Oct. 19   7:00 pm	Amy Grant	\$80	\$70	\$60
Oct. 24   7:00 pm	Nitty Gritty Dirt Band	\$80	\$60	\$50
Oct. 26   7:00 pm	Colin Mochrie & Brad Sherwood	\$70	\$55	\$45
Nov. 07   7:00 pm	Straight No Chaser	\$80	\$60	\$50
Nov. 08   7:00 pm	Disenchanted	\$60	\$40	\$30
Nov. 15   7:00 pm	Three Dog Night	\$80	\$70	\$60
Nov. 21   8:00 pm	Hairball	\$39	\$39	\$39
Nov. 22   7:00 pm	Michael Cavanaugh Christmas	\$55	\$45	\$35
Dec. 06   7:00 pm	Who Brought the Humbug?	\$55	\$40	\$30
Dec. 07   7:00 pm	Lonestar & Collin Raye	\$80	\$65	\$50
Dec. 12   7:00 pm	Texas Tenors	\$60	\$50	\$40
Dec. 13   3:00 pm	Polar Express (Interactive Movie)	\$40	\$20	\$20
Dec. 19   7:00 pm	Jingle Bell Jam	\$30	\$30	\$30
Dec. 20   7:00 pm	Christmas with Elvis - Scott Wattles	\$50	\$40	\$30
Jan. 17   3:00 pm	Frozen (Interactive Movie)	\$40	\$20	\$20
Jan. 23   7:00 pm	Matt Dusk Sings Sinatra	\$50	\$40	\$30
Jan. 30   7:00 pm	Chris Janson	\$80	\$65	\$50
Feb. 06   7:00 pm	Hee Haw Honey Reunion	\$60	\$45	\$35
Feb. 07   7:00 pm	Mike Super 2.OH!	\$60	\$40	\$30
Feb. 14   7:00 pm	Direct from Sweden: The Music of ABBA	\$60	\$50	\$40
Feb. 20   7:00 pm	Dinosaur World Live	\$50	\$40	\$30
Feb. 21   7:00 pm	Floyd Nation	\$60	\$45	\$30
Feb. 26   7:00 pm	Dr. Reed Timmer: America's Storm Chaser	\$50	\$35	\$25
Feb. 27   7:00 pm	The Barricade Boys	\$53	\$43	\$33
Feb. 28   7:00 pm	Six String Summit	\$30	\$30	\$30
Mar. 06   7:00 pm	Celebrating Meat Loaf	\$65	\$50	\$40
Mar. 12   7:00 pm	Vitamin String Quartet	\$55	\$45	\$35
Mar. 13   7:00 pm	Pauly Shore	\$70	\$50	\$35
Mar. 21   7:00 pm	Mama I'm a Big Girl Now	\$65	\$50	\$35
Mar. 27   7:00 pm	The Traveling Salvation: A Tribute to Neil Diamond	\$50	\$40	\$30
Mar. 28   7:00 pm	Fake News: A Tribute to Huey Lewis	\$50	\$40	\$30



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or online at [www.TheEPC.org](http://www.TheEPC.org) or [www.ticketmaster.com/EPC](http://www.ticketmaster.com/EPC).

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**Oct. 24**

**Nitty Gritty Dirt Band.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. [theepc.org](http://theepc.org)

**Celebrate Downtown Mattoon Trunk-or-Treat.**

**Halloween Soup Supper, Parade, Costumes, and Cake Walk** at the Community Center in Strasburg.

**Oct. 24 & 25**

**Louisville IL Fall Festival.**

**Oct. 25**

**Dieterich's Boos and Brews** 10 a.m.-11 p.m. at Liberty Park in Dieterich. Carriage rides, inflatables, food vendors, live music, spirits tasting. Trunk-or-treat at 5 p.m. and more!

**Downtown Trick-or-Treat** in downtown Effingham.

**Halloween Celebration** at the Greenup Municipal Building in Greenup.

**Oct. 26**

**Effingham Sunrise Rotary Halloween Parade** in Downtown Effingham with theme "Once Upon A Time ..."

**Colin Mochrie & Brad Sherwood.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. [theepc.org](http://theepc.org)

**Oct. 30**

**Lions Club Annual Halloween Parade** in downtown Vandalia.

**Oct. 31**

**Trunk-or-Treat** at Cross County Mall in Mattoon

**Nov. 1**

**BJ Saloon Annual Jeepsgiving.** Sign-in begins at 11 a.m. Leave at noon. Stops announced day of event. Dakota Danielle is the entertainment at BJ's Saloon after the ride. Benefit to purchase Christmas gifts and coats for children in need in the county.

**Nov. 2**

**American Legion Christmas Auction** starting 1 p.m. at the Community Center in Strasburg.

**Nov. 7**

**Straight No Chaser.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. [theepc.org](http://theepc.org)

**Nov. 7-9**

**Sports Card Show** at Cross County Mall in Mattoon.

**Nov. 8**

**Santa Brigade Breakfast** starting 6 a.m. with Christmas market starting at 7 a.m. at St. Paul's Social Hall & Gym in Strasburg.

**Disenchanted! The Hit Musical Comedy**

(adult content). Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. [theepc.org](http://theepc.org)

**Nov. 11**

**Veterans Day Parade** in Mattoon.

**Nov. 14 & 15**

**Olde Tyme Christmas** in downtown Vandalia.

**Nov. 14-16**

**Christmas Gift and Craft Show** at Cross County Mall in Mattoon.

**Nov. 15**

**Three Dog Night.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. [theepc.org](http://theepc.org)

**Nov. 21**

**Hairball: A Tribute to Arena Rock.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 8 p.m. [theepc.org](http://theepc.org)

**Pink Friday** in downtown Effingham. Shop small first before the holidays!

**Nov. 22**

**Michael Cavanaugh Christmas.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. [theepc.org](http://theepc.org)

**Nov. 28 & 29**

**E.A.R.S. Tinsel & Tails.** Enjoy a golf cart ride and be delighted by spectacular light displays along the golf course at Cardinal Golf Course in Effingham. Sip on hot chocolate, enjoy warm snacks, roast s'mores and make plenty of family fun holiday memories. Friday and Saturday night 5-9 p.m. Benefit for Effingham Animal Rescue Sanctuary.

**Nov. 29**

**Hometown Christmas** in downtown Effingham. Lighted parade, food trucks, kids and adult activities, Santa and much more!

**Hometown Christmas** in Neoga IL.

**Magic and Mischief: A Winter Witch Market and Enchanted Yule Ball** at Thelma Keller Convention Center in Effingham. Market noon-4 p.m. Ball at 5:30 p.m.

**Christmas in a One-Cow Town.** This year's lighted parade theme will be "Christmas songs." So get cracking; it could be Scrooge, Peanuts, "Silent Night," "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" ... this theme will have endless possibilities. All, of course, for cash prizes!! New things coming along with the most popular activities staying. And maybe a famous blast from your high-school past.

**Nov. 30**

**All I Want for Christmas Craft & Vendor Show** at Thelma Keller Convention Center in Effingham. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free entry. 80+ booths to shop from. Free pictures with Santa! Free entry!

**Dec. 4-7**

**Holiday Fest** at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston.

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# TOP LAWYERS

## EFFINGHAM AREA

BASED UPON A SURVEY OF THEIR PEERS



These **LEADING LAWYERS** have been recommended by their peers to be among the **TOP LAWYERS** in Illinois.

Elizabeth Eberspacher Nohren	Dove & Dove	Shelbyville	217.774.2137	Adoption; Close/Private Held; Family; ADR: Family; Trust/Will/Estate
Bret P. Coale	Hughes Tenney Postlewait Coale LLC	Decatur	217.428.5383	Commercial Litigation; Medical Malpractice Defense; PI Def: General
R. Samuel Postlewait	Hughes Tenney Postlewait Coale LLC	Decatur	217.428.5383	Agriculture; Close/Priv Held; Comm Lit; RE: Comm; Trust/Will/Estate
Todd A. Bresney	Kanoski Bresney	Decatur	217.429.3509	Personal Injury: General
William J. Harrington	Kanoski Bresney	Decatur	217.429.3509	Personal Injury: General
Robert M. Javoronok Jr.	Kanoski Bresney	Decatur	217.429.3509	Personal Injury: General; Workers' Compensation
Kathy A. Olivero	Kanoski Bresney	Decatur	217.429.3509	Workers' Compensation
John J. Waldman	Kanoski Bresney	Decatur	217.429.3509	Personal Injury: General; Workers' Compensation
Jack Kiley	Kiley Klein Ltd	Decatur	217.428.0948	Civil Appellate; Comm Lit; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; PI Def: Gen; PI: Gen
Keith W. Casteel	Samuels Miller Schroeder Jackson & Sly	Decatur	217.429.4325	Agriculture; Banking; Environmental; RE: Comm; Trust/Will/Estate
Joshua J. Dubbelde	Samuels Miller Schroeder Jackson & Sly	Decatur	217.429.4325	Close/Private Held Bus; RE: Comm; RE: Residential; Trust/Will/Estate
Scott E. Garwood	Samuels Miller Schroeder Jackson & Sly	Decatur	217.429.4325	Close/Private Held; Mergers/Acquisition; RE: Comm; Trust/Will/Estate
James T. Jackson	Samuels Miller Schroeder Jackson & Sly	Decatur	217.429.4325	Commercial Litigation; Personal Injury Defense: General; School
Craig W. Runyon	Samuels Miller Schroeder Jackson & Sly	Decatur	217.429.4325	Banking; Creditor Rights; RE: Comm; RE: Resident; Trust/Will/Estate
Darrell A. Woolums	Samuels Miller Schroeder Jackson & Sly	Decatur	217.429.4325	AG; Banking; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; RE: Comm; Trust/Will/Estate
Timothy M. Shay	Shay & Associates Law Firm LLC	Decatur	217.425.5900	Personal Injury: General; PI: Professional Malpractice; Work Comp
Nicholas T. Williams	Shay & Associates Law Firm LLC	Decatur	217.425.5900	Personal Injury: General

This **EMERGING LAWYER** has been identified by their peers to be among the **TOP LAWYERS** in Illinois who are age 40 or younger OR who have been admitted to the practice of law for 10 or fewer years.

Gina Couri-Cyphers	Kanoski Bresney	Decatur	217.429.3509	Civil Appellate; Personal Injury: General
Jordan T. Klein	Kiley Klein Ltd	Decatur	217.428.0948	Close/Priv Held; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; PI Def: Gen; Trust/Will/Estate
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**Dec. 5**

**Downtown Mattoon Celebrate Christmas.**

**Dec. 5 & 6**

**E.A.R.S. Tinsel & Tails.** Enjoy a golf cart ride and be delighted by spectacular light displays along the golf course at Cardinal Golf Course in Effingham. Sip on hot chocolate, enjoy warm snacks, roast s'mores and make plenty of family fun holiday memories. Friday and Saturday night 5–9 p.m. Benefit for Effingham Animal Rescue Sanctuary.

**Dec. 6**

**Holiday Vendor Market** at West End Event Center in Newton IL starting at 9 am

**Christmas Around the Square** in Toledo. Join us for another magical celebration filled with festive fun, holiday cheer, and community spirit.

**Who Brought the Humbug?** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**Dec. 7**

**American Legion Christmas Auction** starting 1 p.m. at the Community Center in Strasburg.

**Small Town Christmas** in Dieterich at Liberty Park from 2–5 p.m.

**Lonestar & Collin Raye Christmas.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**Dec. 12 & 13**

**Christmas Store/Cookie Walk** at the Community Center in Strasburg.

**E.A.R.S. Tinsel & Tails.** Enjoy a golf cart ride and be delighted by spectacular light displays along the golf course at Cardinal Golf Course in Effingham. Sip on hot chocolate, enjoy warm snacks, roast s'mores and make plenty of family fun holiday memories. Friday and Saturday night 5–9 p.m. Benefit for Effingham Animal Rescue Sanctuary.

**Dec. 12**

**Texas Tenors Christmas.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**Dec. 12–14**

**Flora Kriskindle Market 2025** – Library Park area in Flora, IL. Step into a holiday wonderland where twinkling lights, festive

cheer and magical memories await! Shop handcrafted gifts, holiday décor and seasonal treats from local artisans and vendors. Live Reindeer, Ice Skating Rink, Breakfast with Santa with pancakes, Giant Selfie Snow Globe (step inside and snap the ultimate holiday photo!), Food Trucks and Festive Eats and much more!

**Dec. 13**

**Christmas in the Village** at the Greenup Municipal Building in Greenup.

**Santa comes to the Community Center** in Strasburg from 9:30–11 a.m.

**Polar Express Interactive Movie.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 3 p.m. theepc.org

**Dec. 14**

**Lutheran Churches Christmas Cantata** at 7 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church in Strasburg.

**Dec. 19 & 20**

**E.A.R.S. Tinsel & Tails.** Enjoy a golf cart ride and be delighted by spectacular light displays along the golf course at Cardinal Golf Course in Effingham. Sip on hot chocolate, enjoy warm snacks, roast s'mores and make plenty of family fun holiday memories. Friday and Saturday night 5–9 p.m. Benefit for Effingham Animal Rescue Sanctuary.

**Dec. 19**

**Jingle Bell Jam.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**Dec. 20**

**Stocking Stuffer Saturday** in downtown Effingham. Downtown stores have great stocking stuffer offers!

**Christmas with Elvis featuring Scott Wattles.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**Dec. 22**

**Scrooge Day** in downtown Effingham. Last-minute shopping ideas from your downtown Effingham businesses!

**Dec. 26 & 27**

**E.A.R.S. Tinsel & Tails.** Enjoy a golf cart ride and be delighted by spectacular light displays along the golf course at Cardinal Golf Course in Effingham. Sip on hot chocolate, enjoy warm snacks, roast s'mores and make plenty of family fun holiday memories. Friday and Saturday night 5–9 p.m. Benefit for Effingham Animal Rescue Sanctuary.

**Jan. 17**

**Frozen Interactive Movie.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 3 p.m. theepc.org

**Howl at the Moon Dueling Pianos** at West End Event Center in Newton.

**Jan. 23**

**Matt Dusk Sings SINATRA.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**Jan. 30**

**Chris Janson.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**Feb. 6**

**Hee Haw Honey Reunion** featuring the original stars of Hee Haw: Misty Rowe, Jeff Smith and Tammy Stephens Smith. Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**Feb. 7**

**Mike Super 2.OH!** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**Feb. 14**

**Direct from Sweden: The Music of ABBA.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**Feb. 20**

**Dinosaur World Live.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**Feb. 21**

**Floyd Nation Celebrating Pink Floyd.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**Feb. 26**

**Dr. Reed Timmer, America's Most Famous Storm Chaser.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**Feb. 27**

**The Barricade Boys Broadway Party.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**Feb. 28**

**Six String Summit.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**March 6**

**Celebrating Meat Loaf.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**March 12**

**Vitamin String Quartet.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**March 13**

**Pauly Shore Stand Up Comedy.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**March 21**

**Mama I'm A Big Girl Now!** Celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Broadway musical "Hairspray." Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**March 27**

**Fake News: A Tribute to Huey Lewis.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org

**March 28**

**The Traveling Salvation Show: A Tribute to Neil Diamond.** Tickets online now! Effingham Performance Center 7 p.m. theepc.org





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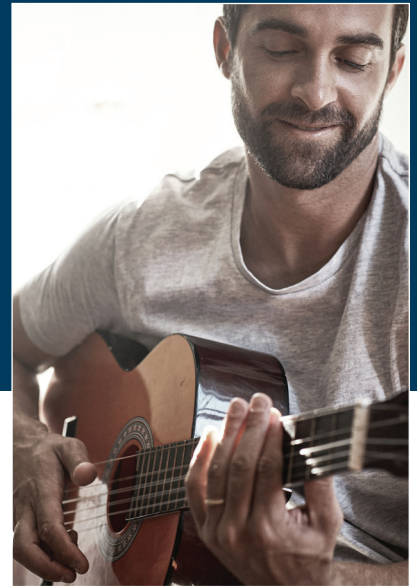
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Interventional Pain Specialist



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