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SUMMER 2022

MAGAZINE

## FEATURE STORY



Charles Mills photo  
The La Terraza Express Taqueria food truck is open daily between 11 a.m. and 9 p.m. at the intersection of West Frederic Avenue and South Banker Street in Effingham.

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Effingham Magazine is published quarterly by the Effingham Daily News at 201 N. Banker St., Effingham, IL 62401. Reproduction or use of editorial or graphic content in any manner without permission is prohibited.

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## Food trucks return to Effingham

By Charles Mills

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Photo courtesy Linda Heynen  
The pollinator garden at the Effingham Community Garden begins to bloom in springtime.

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## Effingham Magazine on the web

Check out current and past magazines at [effinghamdailynews.com/news/magazines/](http://effinghamdailynews.com/news/magazines/)

ON THE COVER: Lorelei Sims, a Charleston blacksmith, left, stands with Zoryana Mills, a native Ukrainian, beside the piece of art titled "Sunflower" created by Sims in front of Joe Sippers Cafe in downtown Effingham. The sunflower is the national flower of Ukraine. Charles Mills photo.



## FROM THE EDITOR

Effingham Daily News Reporter Charles Mills has been writing about how the war in Ukraine has affected his family. He's visited the country several times, and met his wife there.

Zoryana Mills, a naturalized U.S. citizen who was born in Ukraine, works at Midland States Bank in Effingham. This community has shown great support as the war continues.

We're delighted to bring you the latest story of that

support in this edition of Effingham Magazine: The artwork created by Lorelei Sims of Charleston as part of the Sculptures on the Avenues display in downtown Effingham.

Elsewhere, Susan Horath tells how she and her husband, Gary Lyn Horath, built their dream home from scratch in rural Alabama.

"Gary had been working as a graphic artist for DynaGraphics, a print shop in Decatur, when we

sold our eighth house, a remodel on Lake Decatur, in 2019," she writes. "The sale allowed Gary to retire in 2020 as the pandemic spread.

"We settled in Northport, Alabama, where our oldest daughter, Rachel Smith, lives with her husband, Tim, and our granddaughter, Journey Alana. It was the perfect opportunity for us to create the home of our dreams.

"How? Hard work, determination, and God's

richest blessing, our health and trust in each other."

Determination is also part of the story of a father and daughter who climbed Mount Kilimanjaro.

"It just got to be a real, real struggle," said Fred Walk, 67.

Did they make it? Read that story and more in this edition of your Effingham Magazine.

Jeff Long  
Editor



Jeff Long is the editor of the Effingham Daily News. A 1987 graduate of the University of Wisconsin, he has worked for newspapers in England, Pennsylvania and Virginia. For 13 years, he was a reporter and later an editor at the Chicago Tribune. 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.



Charles Mills is reporter and videographer for the Effingham Daily News. A 1983 graduate of Southern Illinois University Carbondale, he is the son of a south-central Illinois newspaper publisher, worked as master control director for a St. Louis television station, assistant video editor at a video editing facility on Music Row specializing in music videos, served as senior video editor for a Nashville television station and learned the art of computerized video editing while living in Hollywood, California in the mid-1980s. Mills is a native of Vandalia, where he lives with his wife, Zoryana.



Zach Roth formerly covered Effingham city hall and Unit 40 schools for the Effingham Daily News. He has since moved on to a reporting job at the State Journal-Register. The story he wrote about the Effingham Community Garden for this edition of Effingham Magazine was his final piece before departing for Springfield, where he grew up and now works.



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.





## Effingham Community Garden continues to GROW

Zach Roth photo

Cheryl Stolz, an adjunct professor at Lake Land College, stands in front of the pollinator garden at the Effingham Community Garden. Stolz has grown at the garden for most of the garden's 10 years of existence.

ZACH ROTH  
FOR EFFINGHAM MAGAZINE

For Cheryl Stolz, an adjunct instructor at Lake Land College in Mattoon, growing plants and vegetables at the Effingham Community Garden is a way for her to get her hands dirty and unwind after a school year that provides ample stress.

"It's a good escape," Stolz said. "I can get out away from the house for a couple of hours in the summer when I'm not teaching and I can get by myself. It's mainly being able to work with my hands and see some kind of results from it."

Those results are among the many positives for people who grow out at the garden, located next to Bob's Discount and Home Improvement along South Banker Street on a piece of land provided to organizers by the Passalacqua family, who used the space to

grow various fruits and vegetables for a farmers market run at their home.

The garden, run as a joint venture between the city, the Effingham Park District and University of Illinois Master Gardeners, is entering its 10th year in 2022, with the appeal of the property not really changing for those like Stolz, who began growing at the garden shortly after it opened. She says that her original motivation for growing at the garden was to advance her desire to grow things despite living in Effingham on property not suitable for growth due to large amounts of shade covering their yard.

"We have a yard with lots of shade," Stolz said. "I struggle with trying to have even a small garden. When the opportunity came up for me to grow at the community garden, I thought it

was a good opportunity because it was a very small lot. It was something I could handle even if I had not gardened very much before."

Stolz likes growing in the garden not just for unwinding, but to grow fresh produce to use for her family and others. She does have a set of herb boxes in her yard, but growing more vegetables – and other kinds of produce – means she needs the community garden in order to do that.

"I've done beets, green beans, radishes, lettuce, potatoes and lots of zinnias," Stolz said. "I like the fresh produce and it's relatively inexpensive. Because I have a very limited amount of yard that I can use for flowers, I like those zinnias because I can cut them and bring them into the house."

A good garden is only as good as the land it grows on, which



provides challenges for people growing at the garden and those running it.

Linda Heynen, the garden's coordinator and a U of I Master Gardener, said that drainage is a key issue with people growing on the land, with water flow always being something that they keep an eye on.

"The challenge (is) the water flow," Heynen said. "We've been working on getting that fixed through the years. Hopefully, this year, we're going to put more of a drain system for when we get large amounts of water."

Another issue is pesky weeds, with unpredictability being the name of the game with them, seeing them pop up just about anywhere they can find them.

"It's a constant battle," Heynen said. "Mulching helps – when you're mulching your garden or weed barrier, you have to take those steps unless you want to hoe your garden every other day. Every gardener battles weeds, because they like the rain and other stuff, too."

The land does have plenty of room for expansion, with Heynen saying that the garden has room for possibilities when it comes to adding new rows on the Passalacqua property and new features. They've already added a pollinator garden for bees, butterflies and other insects, in addition to raised beds that people can rent out and grow – built by local Boy Scout Troop #335. However, more is available for them to use if needed.

"We have room behind the raised beds and we have room for another row if we need it," Heynen said.

For the challenges presented by the garden, Stolz feels that weather provides one more obstacle to growing, from wet grounds to dry conditions making moisture a priority for anyone growing out there.



Photo Courtesy Linda Heynen  
A group of Scouts from Troop #335 stand in front of some raised beds built at the Effingham Community Garden in 2020. The beds are available for use for \$15 per season.

"We've had a couple of years where it's been very wet," Stolz said. "There's been water standing in the garden spots, so that's always a challenge. If it's dry – which happens often – I need to get out every night and water it. That's the challenge of keeping that part of it under control."

Then there are the times where critters decide to take a bite out of people's plots, with deer and rabbits choosing the growing season to find some kind of food for them to eat out of the garden.

"There's always those challenges," Stolz said.

Stolz plans to be back at the garden this year when she isn't watching her grandchildren living in Michigan. While growing provides a good release for her, she also enjoys interacting with the other gardeners and using the advice given to her by Master Gardeners like Heynen to make her garden better.

"I've just been grateful for (Heynen's) help," Stolz said. "She's very positive. In the times where I've had questions or when I'm not really sure I'm doing things right, I felt she did a good job of stepping in and helping me. I really appreciate that."

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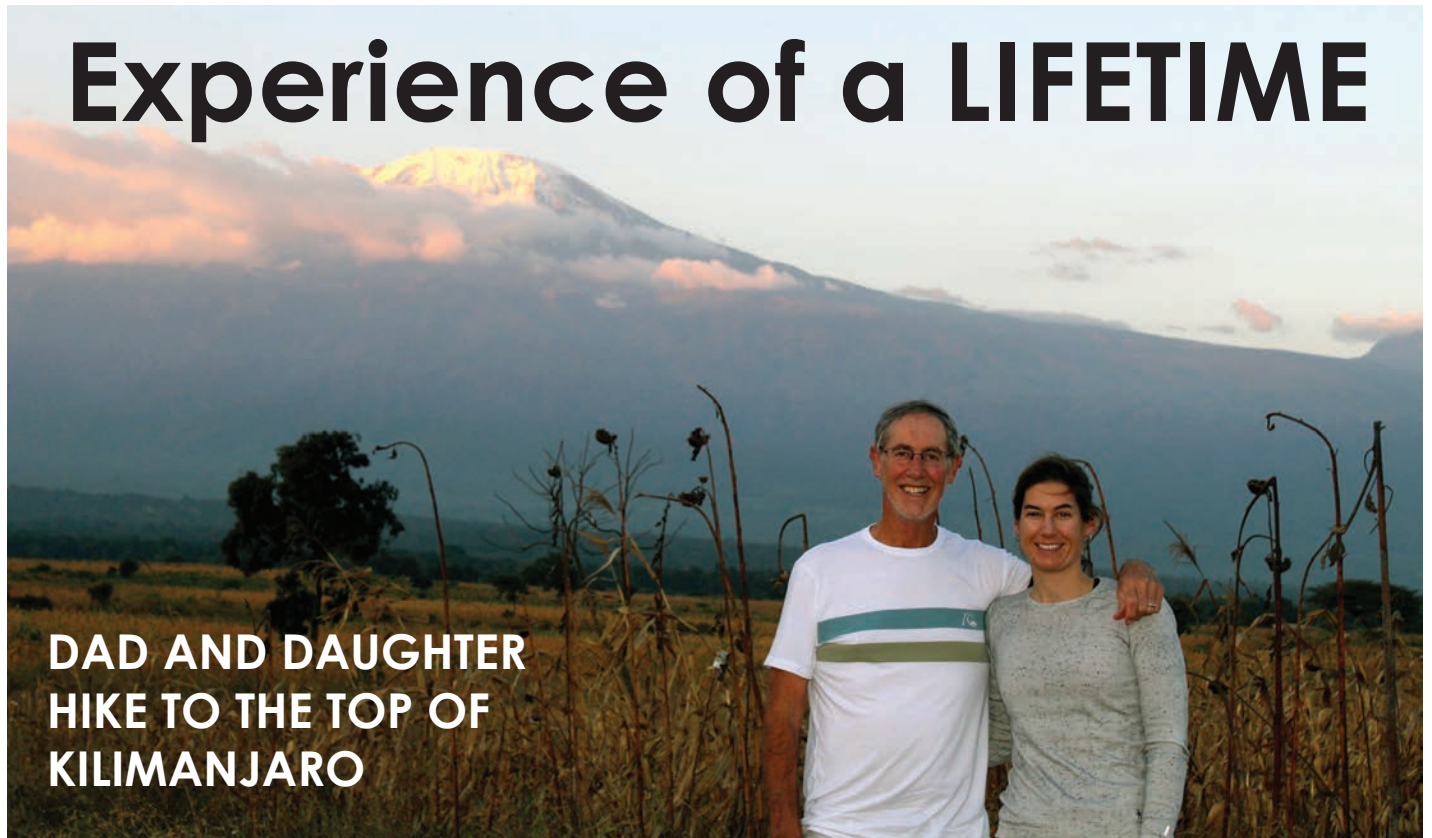
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# Experience of a LIFETIME

## DAD AND DAUGHTER HIKE TO THE TOP OF KILIMANJARO



Submitted photo

Fred Walk and daughter Allison Swisher pose in front of Mount Kilimanjaro the day before they started their climb.

CATHY GRIFFITH  
EFFINGHAM MAGAZINE

Fred Walk and his daughter, Allison Swisher, have always enjoyed the outdoors together – from the first family camping vacations, to visiting national parks and hiking up and down the Grand Canyon.

But when asked whose idea it was to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, their answers differ.

"It depends on who you talk to. She says it was my idea and I swear it was her idea," said Walk.

Walk said the conversation started during a Thanksgiving dinner in 2017. He admits he always wanted to go to Africa, having taught African geography and history. So, he thought this would be a good way to go to the continent to learn more, especially about Tanzania, where Kilimanjaro is located. They were both looking for an additional hiking experience and read and talked about it.

"She's always sort of getting me into these kind of things," he said. "I keep telling her I'm not getting any younger. I figured, well, if I'm going to be doing these sorts of things now's the time to do it."

So, in September 2018 at age 67, Walk and his daughter hiked to the top of Kilimanjaro.

They started training nine months before. However, there was one problem – living in the Bloomington-Normal area, Walk didn't have access to anything to replicate the 19,341-foot mountain. So, he hit the stairmaster and treadmills. As the weather warmed up, he spent more time outdoors and found a nearby hill.

"I had my backpack with about 50 pounds in it and tried that hill I don't know how many times – up and down, up and down, up and down," he said.

Swisher recalls her father taking her to the "hill" in Towanda when she visited.

"The cows in the nearby pasture were his cheerleaders," she joked.

To get in more training, the two completed the Green Bay Marathon in May 2018 – the second marathon they walked together.

Despite all the training, Walk said one aspect was missing.

"You just couldn't replicate the altitude," he said.

That concerned Swisher.

"I have never been anywhere with elevation besides Colorado and I wasn't sure what impact it would have on me," she said.

The information Swisher found online varied greatly from some people saying it was a piece of cake to others not being able to make it to the top.

"I wasn't sure where we would be on the spectrum. I was definitely less worried about it than my Dad. I figured we had trained so it would be fine," she said.

The two arrived in Africa days ear-



lier than the scheduled climb to try and acclimate themselves to the altitude. They did some pre-hikes and went on a safari.

Then it came time for the climb. They started as part of a team of 11 at 7,000 feet.

"Once we started off, we were hiking through rain forest. That wasn't so bad. It was fairly warm, almost like 80 degrees. But as we continued our ascent, there was less and less vegetation and the temperature started to decrease," said Walk.

For approximately every 1,000 foot rise in elevation, Walk said the temperature declines by 5.5 degrees, so the temperature started to get colder and the air thinner. Walk also knew altitude sickness could be a problem as they ascended.

"Even though I was taking medication for that, that started hitting me about three days into the climb



Submitted photo  
The team that included Fred Walk and Allison Swisher pose after climbing Mount Kilimanjaro.

at about 13,000 feet. At that juncture, I didn't feel like eating hardly anything at all," he said.

As he continued to hike and burn calories, the problem worsened.

"My stomach was just a mess. I would eat some watermelon and oranges and that was pretty much about it," he said.

They also had to stay hydrated.

"We drank about two gallons of water a day," he said.

Walk was facing other challenges as well.

"My legs and back and shoulders were really taking a beating," he said.

Swisher also had challenges.

"My challenges were watching the other group members struggle and wondering when it was going to happen to me. I fortunately never suffered the effects of altitude sickness or GI issues, but it was stressful thinking it was going to happen at any moment," she said.

As the climb progressed,

Walk's muscles were cramping and breathing was becoming more labored.

"When you get up to these type of elevations with the air being so thin and the lack of air pressure forcing the air into your lungs, you got to take three breaths for every one you take where we are at elevation. So, it just got to be a real, real struggle," he said.

Walk's biggest challenge came on the sixth day of the climb. Nine members of the group remained. The only other gentleman older than Walk had to be taken off the mountain the day before, Swisher said.

The group was nearing the summit. The plan was to leave the camp right around midnight and then make it to the peak and see the sunrise. As they took off, Walk said

Submitted photo  
Fred Walk and daughter Allison Swisher are shown just after completing the climb.





the temperature was getting really cold.

"It was about 10 degrees above zero and windy," he recalled. "The water we were carrying started to freeze up as well, which was an issue."

As the group started off, Walk and a guide followed behind.

"I could look up and see all these little lights (lamps they were wearing), just little specks on the way up there. That was the last time I looked up because it really just kind of psychs you out and just concentrated on what I was doing – putting one foot in front of the other," he said.

Swisher could tell her Dad was struggling. He wasn't keeping up with the group.

"As I started to have my own struggles – more mental than physical – hiking that morning, I figured there was no way that he would make it. It was hard to see him struggle," she said.

The two made a deal beforehand that if one of them couldn't make it the other one would continue on and make it for the one who couldn't.

The terrain became harder. It consisted of loose gravel and a kind of sand and rock called scree.

"It's like you take two steps up and one step back. Kind of like walking through sand up hill. That was very challenging," he said.

Walk started to feel woozy and sud-



Submitted photo  
Fred Walk and daughter Allison Swisher at the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro.

denly passed out. When he came to, the guide was staring him in the face.

"At that point, the elevation and altitude sickness really caught up with me and at that point in time was really when I decided to cash it in. So, he looked at me and said 'what do you want to do?'" I said, 'Well, you know, I do want to live.'"

Walk remembered reading that approximately 10 people die every year attempting to make it to the summit.

"The success rate is about 65 percent of those who try to make it," he said.

But Walk decided to keep going. Something his wife said to him when he was deciding whether to do the climb stuck in his mind.

"She said, 'If anybody can do it, you can.' Those words in the back of my mind kept me going," he said.

He also drew from his experience growing up on a farm outside of Sigel.

"I think part of it is my upbringing on the farm kind of kicked in a little bit. I can do the hard work to get the job done. I think that kind of helped me dig down a little deeper and I said 'OK we're going to keep going, try it anyway. There's a saying in Swahili 'poly, poly' meaning 'slowly, slowly.' They kept saying that. It's not a race. You just got to take your time slowly, slowly. I wasn't in any hurry at that point. I put my head down to focus on one step at a time. So, I just kept on going," he said.

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Walk didn't know where his daughter was. Swisher had made it to the summit in time to see the sunrise.

"Reaching the summit was a bit bittersweet. I knew it was a significant accomplishment but I wasn't able to celebrate – not yet anyway – with my Dad. It was also extremely windy and cold and people were arguing about people cutting in line to get their photo with the sign. All of our water was frozen and we were just generally miserable," she said.

As Swisher and others started to come back down, she saw Walk.

"Seeing my Dad making his way up to the summit after we had started to go down, it was an emotional moment for many people in the group because we all knew he was struggling and it was such a relief to see him make it. That was definitely the best moment," she said.

The two went back up together.

"She was an inspiration and that

was another thing that kept me going – I wanted to do it with her. It was a pretty special bonding moment," he said.

Swisher said her Dad has always pushed her to try new things and challenge herself, so it was good to have him as her cheerleader throughout the journey.

"He was a big motivation to the entire group telling people they were 'looking good,'" she said.

For Walk, reaching the top was exhilarating.

"Being there, you feel like 'OK, this is it. I've done it.'"

However, Walk was not prepared for the descent, which would only take a day. Instead of the zig-zag hike up the mountain, the descent was straight down.

"By this time, my knees and my hips and my legs are just screaming and burning. I read about it but nothing could really prepare you for it," he said.

Walk said the recovery afterward took a long time.

"I still didn't feel like eating anything for the longest time. When I got home, my wife looked at me and said, 'God, what the heck happened to you?'"

Walk had lost nearly 15 pounds. His lips were superchapped and his face was burnt from the wind and cold.

Walk said he is asked a lot whether he would do it again but he and Swisher agree the climb is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. That doesn't mean they are done having experiences, though.

"Right now, my daughter and I are looking to go to Peru, South America, and do Machu Picchu."

Walk noted the trail up to Machu Picchu isn't nearly as much of a challenge.

"So, the adventures will continue," said Swisher.



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## EFFINGHAM AREA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**June 11:** Brush Pull at Beecher City Community Park in Beecher City, IL.

June 16 through June 19: Moccasin Creek Festival at Larson's Landing at 8724 E. Marine Rd., Effingham. Moccasin Creek Festival is back and an official lineup has been announced! From headliners to small-stage acts, talent abounds... For more details, including a full lineup and a link to purchase your weekend pass go to [www.moccasin creek festival.com](http://www.moccasin creek festival.com)



Effingham Daily News file photo Brian and Deana Tusing of Pierceton, Indiana, traveled to Effingham in their 1971 Volkswagen convertible for the 2021 VW Funfest.

**June 17 & 18:** VW Funfest at Mid America Motorworks at 2900 North 3rd, Effingham IL. VW Funfest: Fully Loaded will celebrate the Volkswagen hobby with two fun-filled days featuring expert seminars, special VW displays, awards, giveaways and more! This year is not to be missed as we celebrate Herbie's 53rd Birthday!! Don't miss out on an unforgettable weekend surrounded by Volkswagen enthusiasts from across the country and around the globe! The event includes a Friday Night Road Tour, Exhaust Wars & Audio Sound Off, Entertainment, Beer Stein Hoist Competition, Food Court, Kid's Village featuring Bounce Houses, Car Painting, Tie Dye Making, Hot Wheels Races and tons more!!

**July 15 and 16:** Effingham Artisan Fair at Tuscan Hills Winery in Effingham

This event will be on Friday July 15 from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday, July 16 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Enjoy shopping many artist booths featuring

the work of talented artists and makers for an unbelievable experience and also enjoy live music and food vendors!

**July 15-17:** Corn Fest at Beecher City Community Park in Beecher City, IL. Food, fun, music and more! Mud Drags on Saturday July 16.

**July 22 & 23:** Effingham JAM 2022

Two-day event filled with BBQ and fun! Come to downtown Effingham Friday for the local Hometown Throw-down BBQ Competition and stay for live music, wine and beer tasting and more. Come back downtown Saturday to see the pros compete in the KCBS BBQ Competition and enjoy plenty of family fun!

**July 30 – Aug. 6:** Effingham County Fair at the Fairgrounds in Altamont, IL. Featuring Scotty McCreery on Aug. 5th with Austin Edwards – Gate opens 6 p.m. with Show at 7 p.m. Visit [effinghamcountyfair](https://www.facebook.com/effinghamcountyfair) Facebook page for more information and to buy tickets. Daily Events include Lucas Oil Pro Pulling League Tractor Pull on July 30 at 6:30 p.m. and Aug. 3 at 7 p.m., Harness Racing July 31 through Aug. 4 at 1 p.m., I.T.P.A. Tractor – Truck – Garden Tractor – Local Semi Pull on Aug. 1 at 7 p.m., Harness Racing followed by Running Races on Aug. 5 starting at Noon, Whippoorwill Rodeo Company Rodeo Aug. 4 at 7:30 p.m., Demolition Derby Aug. 6 evening.



Effingham Daily News file photo Chevy Hettinger takes part in the Corn Shucking contest at the Beecher City Corn Fest in 2019.

**Aug. 11-14:** 41st Annual Mill Road Thresherman Show at the Effingham County Fairgrounds in Altamont, IL. Truck & Tractor Pull Aug. 11 at 6 p.m.,



Effingham Daily News file photo Contestants ram each other at the 2021 Effingham County Fair's demolition derby.

Consignment Auction – Farm Toy Show – Craft Show & Flea Market – Parts Vendors – Field Demonstrations – Threshing & Baling & Corn Shredding – Tractor Games – Braggin' Rights Tractor Pull & Garden Tractor Pull on Aug. 12 & 13.

Kids Tractor Driving – Horse Farming – Power Parade – Potato Digging – Draft Horse Pull and Petting Zoo on Aug. 13. Worship Service – Farm Toy Show – Craft Show & Flea Market – Parts Vendors – Car Show and Antique Tractor Pull on Aug. 14. [www.millroadthresherman.org](http://www.millroadthresherman.org) for more information.

**Aug. 13:** Mud Drags at Beecher City Community Park in Beecher City, IL with races starting at 5 p.m.

**Aug. 24:** Happy Together Tour 2022. The Turtles, Chuck Negron (formerly of Three Dog Night), The Association, Gary Puckett & The Union Gap, The Vogues, and The Cowsills return for the Happy Together Tour 2022. They will be performing their biggest hits of the 1960s and 1970s.

**September 10:** Last Chance Tractor Pull at Beecher City Community Park in Beecher City, IL.

**September 23:** 8 p.m., Clay Walker at the Effingham Performance Center. Clay Walker is a true fan favorite with a devoted legion of followers from across the country. Clay has sold over 11 million albums, has had 11 hit singles, four RIAA Platinum and two Gold certified albums under his belt. Clay has just released his 12th studio album called "Long Live The Cowboy."



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Charles Mills photo  
Zoryana Mills, a native Ukrainian, stands beside a piece of art titled “Sunflower” created by Lorelei Sims, a Charleston Blacksmith, located in front of Joe Sippers Cafe in downtown Effingham. The sunflower is the national flower of Ukraine.

## AN EFFINGHAM SUNFLOWER STORY OF SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

CHARLES MILLS  
EFFINGHAM MAGAZINE

Life sometimes works in mysterious ways. For a Ukrainian-born U.S. citizen who works in downtown Effingham, that mystery became heart warming.

The war in Ukraine is constantly on her mind because her family and friends are in harm's way of Russia,

which launched an unprovoked attack on her country. Today, Ukrainians must fight for their freedom and to keep their country sovereign.

Zoryana Mills of Vandalia is a personal banker at the Midland States Bank branch in downtown Effingham. She spends some of her free time across the street at Joe Sippers Cafe, studying for the business

courses she takes at Kaskaskia College.

One day Mills was leaving the cafe and noticed a new piece of art that looked like a sunflower standing on the corner. The sunflower is the national flower of Ukraine.

"I thought, 'How did this get here?'" Mills said. "Then I looked down."

On the base of the sunflower was written the Ukrainian word for "Unity."

"Unity was spelled in the Ukrainian language, not Russian or English ... Ukrainian," she said. "My question is: How did it get here?"

Mills was touched by the display and the word written in her native language, she asked someone she knows from the City of Effingham to find out more about the artist. Mills knew the artwork was just one of several pieces of artwork being displayed downtown.

"They came back that same day with the name, email address and what they knew about the artist," said Mills. "I wrote her (the artist Lorelei Sims) a thank you note. I still can't believe it was placed this close to my work."

Alyssa Robinson is the marketing assistant for the City of Effingham at the Effingham Convention and Visitors Bureau. Robinson and her boss, Jodi Thoele, director of tourism, are responsible for the Sculptures on the Avenues project.

Several pieces of art are displayed throughout the downtown area by a variety of artists and a brochure is published that highlights each piece of art and a map indicating where it is located.

Robinson said the artist, Lorelei Sims, had two pieces of art in the Sculptures on the Avenues and a piece titled "Sunflower" at the intersection of South Third Street and Section Avenue, along with a piece titled "Purple Cone, Prairie Cone plus Monarch."

The placement of the art is a collaboration between her office and



the public works department. There are 22 art pieces in the Sculptures on the Avenues and three pieces are permanent, for a total of 25 pieces.

"Tourism decides where it is a best fit for the style and public works decides whether we can do that or not," Robinson said. "Some spots are just trickier to safely place them due to higher traffic."

She thought the artwork titled "Sunflower" would look good in front of Joe Sippers. Robinson has never met Mills.

She said every year they take in 20 to 25 new art pieces to display downtown. The "Sunflower" was installed in front of Joe Sippers on March 31.

"I thought the sunflower would look good in front of Joe Sippers because it really matched the aesthetic and I felt like it would be seen a lot more because Joe Sippers has great traffic," she said. "I thought with the message being uniquely appropriate for this year and the current climate."

Lorelei Sims of Charleston, a blacksmith and artist, created the "Sunflower." Sims received a thank you note from Mills. But she wasn't sure how Mills knew it said "Unity" on the base.

"I didn't know if she knew the word or read something I wrote on my artist statement," Sims said.

Then Sims found out Mills was originally from Ukraine and was very moved.

"It is serendipitous with a capital S," Sims said. "There is fate and there is coincidence, but moments like these are meant to be. I think there a lot of fun connectors to all of this."

She said her quest to create a sunflower started in January.

"I try and pick something I want to do just for me for the first sculpture of the new year," she said. "I knew it was going to be a sunflower because I had all of the elements now and I wanted to get it into the

Effingham show."

The "Sunflower" is made primarily from gardening tools, along with several other pieces she had been collecting over the years.

Sims said every element of the sunflower comes from junk she has found throughout the years that were once in an agricultural or garden setting. The "Sunflower" features a shower head from a watering can, discs used for flower pedals that were once used to plow the ground and sunflower leaves made from old shovel heads once used in a garden to dig dirt.

"Your goal is putting them together to form a sculpture that is still indicative of its elements," she said.

Sims said a video on the news inspired her to make the sunflower about Ukraine.

"In February, when Ukraine was invaded there was a news program and I saw this older Ukrainian woman and she was yelling at a Russian soldier, reaches in her coat pocket and pulls out sunflower seeds and she said, 'Here, put these in your pocket because when you're dead your body is going to fertilize our national flower,'" recalled Sims.

Sims realized the national flower of Ukraine was the sunflower. Her first thought was to make the word peace, then decided unity would be a more appropriate choice. Inscribed on the base of the "Sunflower" is the Ukrainian word for unity which Zoryana Mills picked up on right away when she saw the artwork for the first time.

"I wanted a word that was clearly not English and didn't want a word that could be mistaken for Russian or Hungarian," said Sims.

Charles Mills photo  
Zoryana Mills of Vandalia, left, and Lorelei Sims of Charleston, right, creator of the piece "Sunflower," meet for the first time in front of Joe Sippers Café in downtown Effingham.







Charles Mills photo

The word "Unity" is inscribed in Ukrainian on the base of "Sunflower," an art piece created by Lorelei Sims of Charleston. It's part of the Sculptures on the Avenues presented by the Effingham Convention and Visitors Bureau.

During the creation of the sunflower, Sims said she sent photos of her progress to Alyssa Robinson.

"I have about 50 hours into this project, but I have 20 years of collecting the right elements for the project," Sims said.

"It is a good symbol of hope," Robinson said. "We think "Sunflower" will really shine bright this year."

On May 3, Mills met Sims for the first time during a surprise visit to Joe Sippers. She gave Sims a big hug.

"I can't believe this," Mills said. "I'm finally getting to meet you."

"I am truly grateful for Lorelei's work and the City of Effingham for making this happen," Mills said.

"This iron sunflower to me is just like Ukraine ... It's beautiful and strong."

*Editor's note: Zoryana Mills is the wife of Effingham Daily News reporter Charles Mills, who has been writing about the support his wife has received from the community since the war began.*

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## SNAPSHOTS

Here are some of the people, places and events featured in the Effingham Daily News over the past few months.



◀◀ Charles Mills photo

The employees at the Midland States Bank in downtown Effingham wore special t-shirts in support of fellow employee Zoryana Mills, who is a native of Ukraine. Front row from left, Assistant Banking Center Manager Lisa Cornell, Personal Banker and Ukraine Native Zoryana Mills and Banking Center Manager Julie Withers. Back row from left, Allison Stevens, Personal Banker Madison Watson, Tyler Williams, Kristen Rodgers, Spencer Ritter, and Kaylee Kuenstler.



▲▲ Charles Mills photo

Lucas Shaffer, owner of Effing Bees, demonstrates the proper way to start a beehive smoker during Bee School.



▲▲ Charles Mills photo

John Casolari of Flora works on a sub floor in front of the stage at the future Nostalgia Theater in the former Town Theater in downtown Flora.



## MARCH

▶▶

Charles Mills photo  
Melissa Josefowicz and Alena Heckert compete in Just Tri Indoor Triathlon at the Richard E. Workman Sports and Wellness Complex. Pictured, from left, are Josefowicz, Alena Heckert, Rob Heckert and Michael Meyer. Alena Heckert placed fourth overall in the women's division and Melissa Josefowicz placed fifth.







Charles Mills photo  
RuralMed took over the Effingham County 911 emergency ambulance service contract on May 1. Pictured, from left, are RuralMed owners Scott Casolari, Ethan and Kim Bouser.



▲▲ Charles Mills photo  
Maddox Nichols holds a piece of artwork he entered titled "Worm" at the Children's Art Show sponsored by the Effingham Art Guild at the Suzette Brumleve Memorial Effingham Public Library. Nichols is a third grade art student at Dieterich Elementary School.



◀◀ Charles Mills photo  
Madeline Henkelman of Effingham finds an Easter egg during the annual First Christian Church Easter egg hunt.



◀◀ Charles Mills photo  
Tanielle Ulm, right, early childhood education instructor at Lake Land College, distributes information about the early childhood education program offered by the college at an Effingham County Child Care Research Committee meeting. Pictured from left are St. Anthony High School seniors Isabelle Hakman, Alexis Stephens, Riley Guy and Ulm.

A family visits The Cross after the Easter Sunrise sermon in The Cross Chapel on Easter Sunday.  
Charles Mills photo ▼▼







Charles Mills photo  
Altamont Police Chief Alan Heiens, left, introduced recently hired police officer Ashley Ruholl to members of the Altamont City Council.



Charles Mills photo  
Council members applaud as Effingham Police Chief Jason McFarland presents Joshua Painter with a Citizen Service Citation for following a robbery suspect into Indiana after hearing an ISPERN (Illinois State Police Emergency Radio Network) dispatch on the morning of April 1.



Charles Mills photo  
Fun-Tronics co-owner Janet Heuerman, right, stands next to a the soda fountain counter in their Teutopolis showroom. The soda fountain server to the left is a mannequin made by Creative Characters.



Charles Mills photo  
Teutopolis Unit 50 Superintendent of Schools Matt Sturgeon, a percussionist when he was in high school, tries out a new drum set donated to the school in The Craig Lindvahl Band Room built in 2020.

Charles Mills photo  
Tara Slifer of Watson searches through merchandise offered at the Effingham County Humane Society garage sale.



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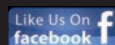
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# Food trucks coming to downtown Effingham this summer

CHARLES MILLS  
EFFINGHAM MAGAZINE

Food trucks have become more popular in the Effingham area, whether it's for a hot cup of coffee, an ice cream treat, home grown food or a taste of a foreign cuisine.

Restrictions created by the COVID-19 pandemic created a hardship on the local traditional restaurant, especially restrictions on in-restaurant dining. Some restaurants started offering carry out for the first time.

The operator of a food truck doesn't have worry about in-house dining, offering an open-air solution to the dining experience.

## LA TERRAZA EXPRESS TAQUERIA

La Terraza Express Taqueria has become a popular stopping point in the community, located at the corner of West Frederic Avenue and South Banker Street in Effingham for the past three years.

"We're busy all of the time," said co-owner Daniel Urrutia. "We're open every day."

He owns and operates the food truck along with co-owner Josefina Jacinto. Urrutia said he has four people working on the truck. The truck is open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

"It is very authentic," said one customer, Kiersten Goodman.

Goodman came to the truck during her lunch break from her job at Elite Hair Studio.

She said she enjoys coming to the La Terraz Express Taqueria food truck.

"They are very fast and the food is delicious," she said. "I don't eat out a lot, but when I do I usually come here."

Kelley Ronan came to the food truck to pick up an order for her co-workers at Heartland Dental.

"I really wish this were at the other end of town. I live at Lake Sara," Ronan said. "I like the fact they have authentic Mexican."

Brooklyn Baugher of Louisville brought along her one-month-old daughter Ila to the food truck.

"I love this place. Everything is good," Baugher said.

She comes to La Terraza Express Taqueria quite often, even though she lives about 30 miles south of Effingham. She made several trips over the past year.

"She got a lot of tacos, too, when I was pregnant," Baugher quipped, referring to her daughter before she was born.

The food truck offers a variety of Mexican delicacies, including a Chorizo Pollo, grilled chicken and Chorizo with Queso on top that comes with rice and beans; Taco Quezabirria that include three 6-inch corn tortillas with traditional Mexican barbacoa, mozzarella, onions cilantro and a cup of beef soup consome; Burrito Vegetables featuring beans, rice, green pepper, onions lettuce, pico de gallo and mozzarella; and Alambre Mexicano with five tortillas or bag of chips and salsa Azada (Steak) and Pastor (Pork) cooked with Bell Pepper, onions with mozzarella.

## DOWNTOWN EFFINGHAM

Kelley Ronan is excited about the idea of having food trucks in downtown Effingham.

Charles Mills photo  
Daniel Urrutia and Josefina Jacinto are co-owners of the La Terraza Express Taqueria food truck located on South Banker Street in Effingham. Pictured from left: Daniel Urrutia, Alma Urrutia and Esteban Sixto.



"It makes it easier to grab something and bring it back to work," she said.

This summer the Downtown Effingham Business Group is offering food truck eating options, according to organization co-chair Sara Ruholl.

"I'm super excited. I hope this brings more people to downtown Effingham," Ruholl said.

Allie Weber, owner of Modern Family Dinners, which has a storefront in downtown Effingham, is organizing food trucks for June, July and August.

Weber, on behalf of the Downtown Effingham Business Group, is booking food trucks for this summer.

"We will have food trucks every Friday in June, July and August," Weber said.

She said in addition to the Friday food trucks there

would be trucks on Monday, June 6, Monday, July 11, and Monday, Aug. 1. She said due to the Fourth of July holiday falls on the first Monday of July, the food trucks will be booked on the second Monday, July 11.

The food trucks will setup in the northeast corner parking lot at the Effingham County Museum (the old courthouse) in downtown Effingham.

"I'm going to try to have a drink truck, food truck and dessert truck at each event," she said.

Some of the vendors she has lined up so far this summer are Donut Dollies Mini Donuts, the Vagabond Eatery and Coffee Sisters.

Weber said food truck operators interested in participating this summer are encouraged to call (217)



Charles Mills photo  
Kiersten Goodman picks up a to-go order at the La Terraza Express Taqueria food truck during her lunch hour. The food truck is open daily between 11 a.m and 9 p.m.

821-9411. The Downtown Effingham Business Group charges a small fee per food truck.

"All that money goes to the group (Downtown Effingham Business Group) and almost all is spent on the Hometown Christmas event," she said.

The Downtown Effingham

Business Group is a sub group of the Effingham County Chamber. Visit the group's "Experience Downtown Effingham" Facebook page for more information.

"I hope this something fun people can look forward to on Fridays and first Mondays," Weber said.

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# Our dream retirement home on the edge of Lake Tuscaloosa in Alabama

SUSAN HORATH  
FOR EFFINGHAM MAGAZINE

I was born on June 6, 1958 at Mattoon Memorial Hospital to John and Allene Wilcox.

A few days later, on June 11, Gary Lyn Horath was born at the same hospital to Roy and Madeline Horath, who lived in Sigel.

Much later, Gary and I learned that our cribs had shared the same hospital nursery for a time. Perhaps some babyhood attraction led us to become childhood sweethearts at Neoga Elementary School in 1971. But my family's move to Brownsville, Texas in 1973

separated us. For a time.

Gary went on to play four years of varsity baseball and two years of varsity basketball for the Neoga Indians, earning the school's 1976 Senior MVP honor for his skill on the hardwood.

My return to Neoga in 1981 was the beginning of a renewed romance that culminated in our marriage at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Sigel on March 26, 1983.

Since then, our relationship has been built on a young love that was never forgotten – despite distance or time. Our nearly 40 years of marriage has been strength-

ened by our Christian faith and a mutual devotion to our hobby: Building homes, which we've done in Illinois and South Carolina over those decades of happiness.

Our latest – the ninth – is our retirement home. It sits on the edge of Lake Tuscaloosa in west-central Alabama.

Gary had been working as a graphic artist for DynaGraphics, a print shop in Decatur, when we sold our eighth house, a remodel on Lake Decatur, in 2019. The sale allowed Gary to retire in 2020 as the pandemic spread.

We settled in Northport, Alabama, where our oldest daughter, Rachel Smith, lives with her husband, Tim, and our granddaughter, Journey Alana. It was the perfect opportunity for us to create the home of our dreams.

How? Hard work, determination, and God's richest blessing, our health and trust in each other.

We found our acre near Lake Tuscaloosa, a reservoir five miles north of the cities of Tuscaloosa and Northport. It's a 5,885-acre water-supply reservoir with 177 miles of shoreline. The tailwater area drains into the Black Warrior River basin and is a popular recreational area to many anglers.

We also found southern hospitality, with good people to help facilitate everything from clearing the land to installing windows 15 feet above the ground – the Alabama hills and water drainage required a pillar foundation.

Our daughters and their husbands were also instrumental, helping with the sheeting, roofing, and truss systems. They also cooked dinners and encouraged us from start to finish.

We became Alabamans on April 11, 2020. The very next day, Gary staked off the house, began to clear land and scheduled water tap.

Submitted photo

Susan and Gary Lyn Horath's home sits on the edge of Lake Tuscaloosa in west-central Alabama.





Gary drew the plans to adapt a specific foundation layout for the carport under the back half of the home.

Due to the pandemic, literally all communication with county personnel was by phone or email. The courthouse was closed to any physical meetings.

Digging the footer began on April 17, 2020, the day the permit was issued. The block and base lumber started arriving simultaneously.

May and June passed with completion for the floor system, followed by the custom walls layout, an additional benefit of being a self-contractor/builder. When the walls were erected, Gary began basic plywood sheeting with – help from our sons by marriage, Tim Smith and John White, as well as our daughters, Rachel and Andrea.

A new friend and business owner for Dirt Works Alabama rented a crane to help set trusses for roof. Our son-in-law and daughter



Submitted photo

The Horath family works on wall framing at Susan and Gary Lyn Horath retirement home in Alabama.

Submitted photo  
Susan Horath sits on the porch of Alabama retirement home built by her husband, Gary Lyn Horath.



helped set these pre-built trusses in two days. Our family worked on plywood walls and roof.

June and July flew by with framing inspections passing, and work started on plumbing, electrical, and mechanical. Gary filled rainy days and evenings with scheduling deliveries for materials. Inspectors were very helpful in applying new codes established after a devastating and deadly tornado struck Tuscaloosa in 2011.

A pressure sealant testing process was required prior to dry-in inspection. Gary passed this test the first time inspectors checked his work. It was a sign of his building expertise.

Additional rough-in inspections passed in August and sheet rock transformed the frame into a house.

Gary and I began the joyful process of choosing paint, flooring, cabinets, doors, trim and appliances. Work continued into September and beyond as the weath-

er became cooler.

We passed the final inspection and earned a legal Certificate of Occupancy on Dec. 29, 2020.

We invite folks to believe, think, and trust in their dreams as we have. People come and go for some in our whole lives while some are sometimes, only for a season. We are grateful to all the people we have known over the years who have given us more than we could possibly share in this, our story.

We invite comments, questions, and interest from our readers as sharing and paying forward our gifts will be the joy in our retirement future. We can be reached at [horaths@yahoo.com](mailto:horaths@yahoo.com)

*Editor's note: Share the story of your home or garden project in an upcoming edition of Effingham Magazine by emailing the editor at [jeff.long@effinghamdailynews.com](mailto:jeff.long@effinghamdailynews.com)*





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Suite 3 – Lincoln Land Leasing Office  
Suite 4 – Central Illinois Care Services  
Suite 5 – Julie's Counseling  
Suite 6 – Mayhood Construction Company  
Suite 8 – Farmers Insurance, Jen Hurley Agency  
Suite 10 – Lifeline Christian Books & Gifts  
Suite 11 – Pins and Pines Home Décor  
Suite 12 – Kathy's Resale Shop  
Suite 13 – Merle Norman Cosmetics  
Suite 14 – Effingham Pelvic Health and Wellness  
Suite 15 – Murfee & Weishaar Insurance  
Suite 16 – Home Accents Framing  
Suite 17 – Hair Xperts  
Suite 18 – AT Style Xperts Boutique  
Suite 19 – Xperts Nail Salon  
Suite 20 – The Rock Church  
Suite 24 – Effingham County Connections  
Suite 25 – Design Pro, Graphic Designs  
Suite 26 – Effingham County Health Department  
Suite 27 – Cornerstone DPC, Dr. Sieberg  
Suite 28 – Caritas Family Solutions  
Suite 30 – Magoo & Associates Computers

Suite 31 – TIJ Print Solutions  
Suite 32 – 8-Eleven Media  
Suite 33 – Brook of Life Church  
Suite 201 – Midwest Neurofitness, Counseling  
Suite 202 – Effingham Teutopolis News Report  
Suite 203 – Anthony Siemer, Attorney  
Suite 204 – The Brown Group  
Suite 206 – LTS, Your Vegetation Control Expert  
Suite 208 – CASA Visitation Room  
Suite 209 – Child and Family Connections  
Suite 210 – Family Matters Community Support  
Suite 211 – CASA  
Suite 213 – One Hope United  
Suite 215 – Regional Office of Education  
Suite 216 – Aspire High School  
Suite 220 – WB Manufacturing  
Suite 221 – Strong Tower Church  
Suite 222 – MPS North America  
Suite 229 – Midland  
Suite 231 – Workman Insurance-Horace Man  
Suite 233 – Mobil Technical Services  
Suite 234 – Tristar Academy  
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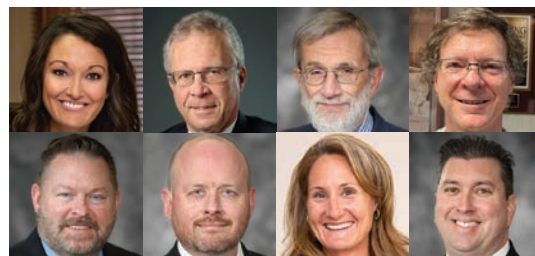
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# TOP LAWYERS

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**John L. Barger** **Craig & Craig LLC** **Mattoon** **217.234.6481**  
Agriculture; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; Real Estate: Commercial; Real Estate: Residential; Trust, Will & Estate Planning

**Robert G. Grierson** **Craig & Craig LLC** **Mattoon** **217.234.6481**  
Agriculture; Banking & Financial Institutions; Closely & Privately Held Business; Real Estate: Residential; Trust, Will & Estate Planning

**R. Sean Hocking** **Craig & Craig LLC** **Mattoon** **217.234.6481**  
Personal Injury Defense: General; Products Liability Defense

**J. Patrick Lee** **Craig & Craig LLC** **Mattoon** **217.234.6481**  
Criminal Defense: DUI; Criminal Defense: Felonies & Misdemeanors; Family; Personal Injury Defense: General

**John F. Watson** **Craig & Craig LLC** **Mattoon** **217.234.6481**  
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**Elizabeth Eberspacher Nohren** **Dove & Dove** **Shelbyville** **217.774.2137**  
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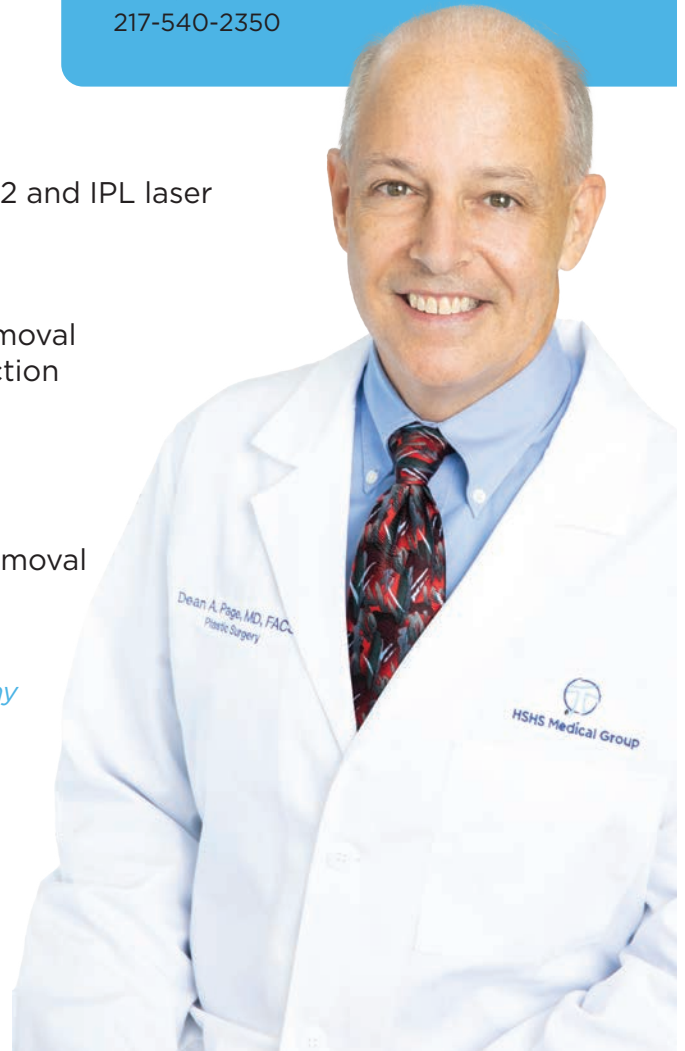
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