

The

February 2026 • Vol. 27 Num. 2

Hometown Treasure



**Ice Carving
Competition
Winner - Bud Lies**

**The Fire That
Nearly Leveled
Emma**

**PJ Sale
Special Section**

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2026 NECC CHAMPS



Assistant Coach Mike Bowen, with his children Bristol and Bodie; Head Coach Chandler Prible with his children Jersey and Clay; Austin Troyer, Hudson Yoder, Austin Slabach, Daniel Yoder, Pierce Yoder, Kaden Grau, Kaine Rhinehold, Brett Springer, Avery Christner, Bryce Yoder, Cooper Schwartz, Blake Hostetler, Manager Noah Cleveland, Manager Mearl Yoder and Manager Collin Vandergriff; Assistant Coach Colin Barker, Assistant Coach Russ Yoder holding his son Briar and his son Baron (in red in front), and Assistant Coach Austin Miller and his son Kaden (in black); Lilly Mullet, Kya Roose, Kendra White, Brylee White, Rylee Watson, Brina Williams, Erica Lambright, Hailey Lambright, Madi Miller, Janessa Miller, Madi Everidge, Sara Bontrager and Laine Bornter.

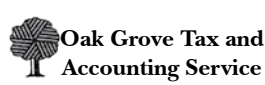
Thursday, January 15, defeated Fairfield 60-50

Friday, January 16, defeated Garrett 66-32

Saturday, January 17, defeated Angola 68-65 in OT



EMMA WAREHOUSE





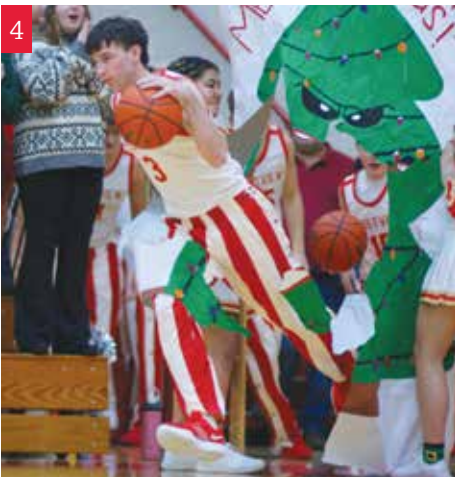
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1) Kaine Reinhold waits for his chance to grab the rebound.

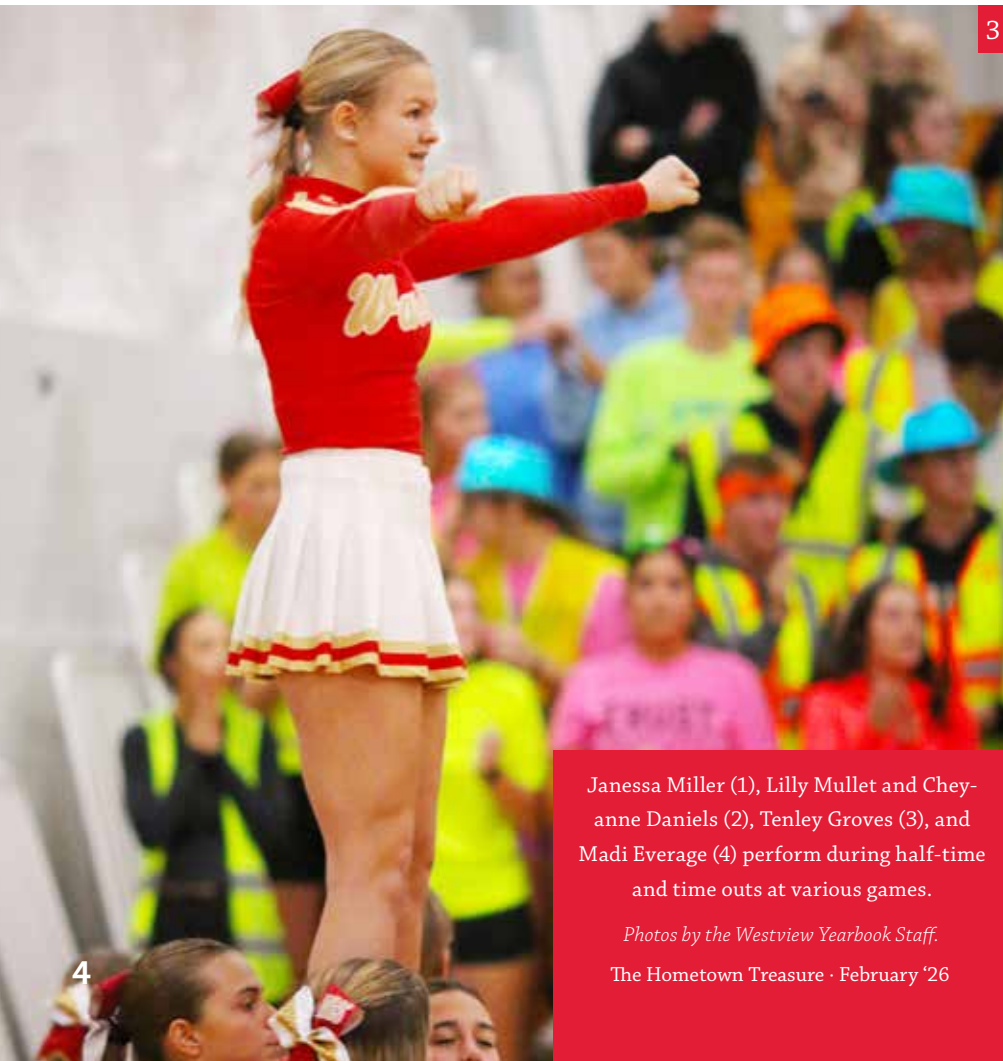
2) Pierce Yoder warms up before the game.

3) On January 16, Kaden Grau became the 12th player at Westview to achieve the 1,000 Career Points Milestone. Congratulations Kaden!
(photo is not from that game)

4) Daniel Yoder leads the charge as the team takes the court against Lakeland.

5) Austin Schlabach goes for a layup.

Photos by Westview Yearbook Staff



Janessa Miller (1), Lilly Mullet and Cheyanne Daniels (2), Tenley Groves (3), and Madi Everage (4) perform during half-time and time outs at various games.

Photos by the Westview Yearbook Staff.

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1



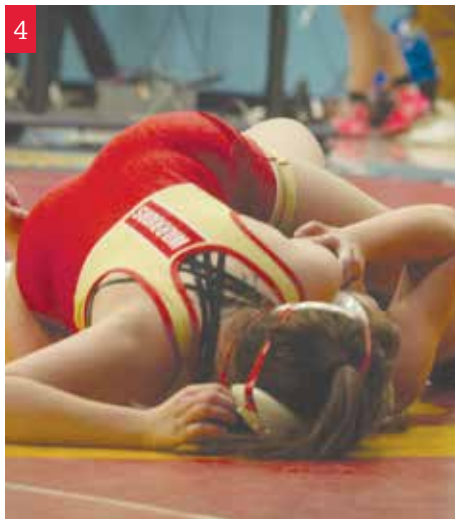
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5



- 1) Logan Miller makes a move against his opponent.
- 2) Chris Terrones has his Lakeland opponent in a hold.
- 3) Charlie Double takes his stance against his Lakeland opponent.
- 4) Jaylynn Brown works to pin her opponent.
- 5) Destiny Mercer starts the match against her opponent.

Photos by Westview Yearbook Staff

The Hometown Treasure · February '26

The Hometown Treasure

A Monthly Publication by
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Serving the towns of Shipshewana, Topeka, & the entire Westview School Corporation since 2000.

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 e-mail: news@lagwana.com

You may call or stop by during office hours:
 Monday - Friday, 8 am-5 pm

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March Issue Date is Tuesday, Feb. 24.

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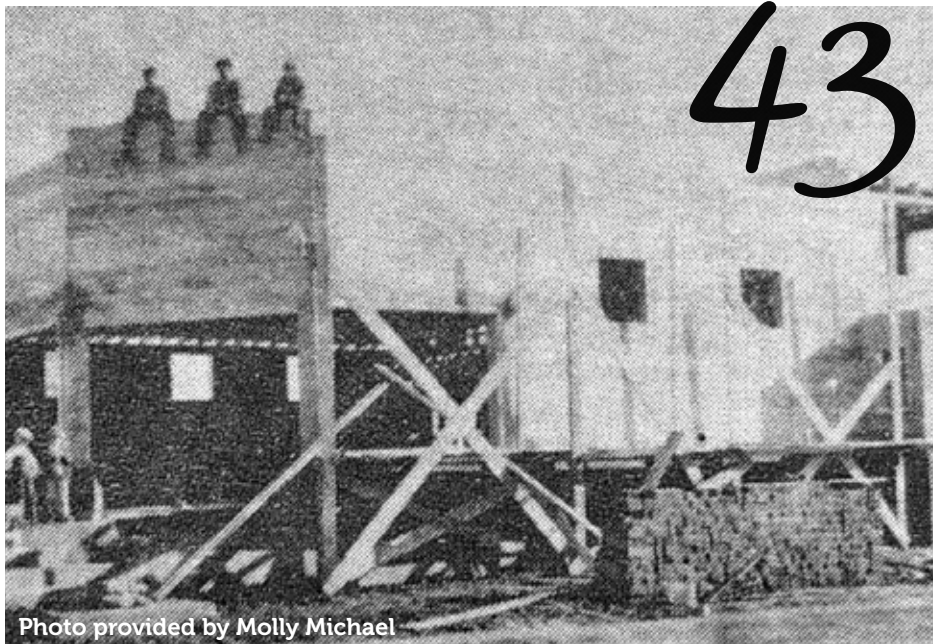


Photo provided by Molly Michael

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Shandi Menzie, NP
PPG - Internal Medicine



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Going Out On A Limb

Zacchaeus was a wee little man; a wee little man was he. He climbed up in a Sycamore tree for the Lord he wanted to see. Are you familiar with this popular Sunday school song? This little ditty tells the little story of a little man with big boldness! Although short in stature, Zacchaeus was “big” on wealth from his work as the chief tax collector. Wealthy? Maybe. Popular? Not so much. Zacchaeus had heard about Jesus, and so when he learned he would be visiting his town, he shimmied up a tree to get a better look.

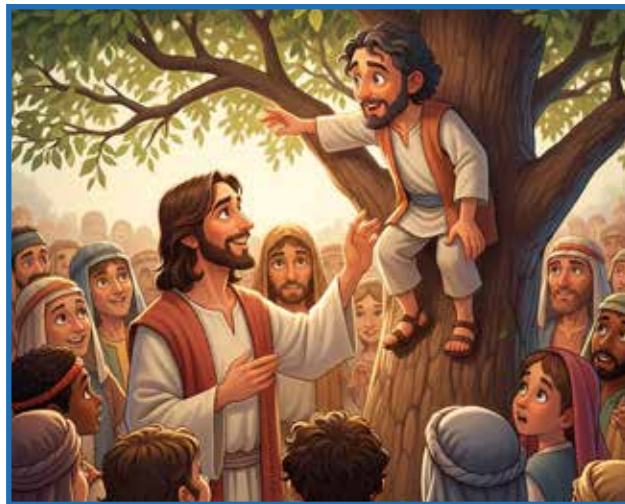
The Master spotted him, called him by name, and told him to come down as he was going to his house. Zacchaeus got down and took his new friend home to serve him dinner. This was met with much ridicule by the community. Why would Jesus

eat in the home of such a sinner, they wondered? But that was the day this sinner found salvation.

Reading this great story of a little man, I was struck by Zacchaeus’s curiosity about Jesus. So much so that he changed his perspective (literally) to get a good look at Jesus

by climbing a tree. What piqued Z’s curiosity, I wonder? Did he feel guilty about the fact that his success was dependent on the demise of others? Was he figuring out that it’s lonely “at the top”? No one knows.

What was the shift for little Z? What made him go out on a “limb” to seek the master? Z was short in stature but not short on inquisitiveness. His nosiness, however, paid off. Not only did he




get a good gander at Jesus, but the Lord called him by name. I wonder how often Zacchaeus was recognized as another human being or spoken to with affection? I’m guessing in his line of work, most people got out of Dodge City when they saw him coming.

Luke reports that when Jesus called Zacchaeus down from his perch, Zacchaeus came down at once and welcomed Jesus gladly. Curiosity took him up the tree – Expectation brought him down. Perhaps Jesus was what others said he was, after all? Maybe he’d do for Zacchaeus as he had done for others? Z came down quickly because he expected Jesus to do something great. And Jesus didn’t disappoint! Z’s boldness that day led him to forgiveness and friendship.

It made me wonder how many “Zacchaeus” there are in my own community who are curious about Jesus but haven’t ventured out to see who he is for themselves. Maybe they’ve seen the actions of Christians that have piqued their curiosity. Maybe they’ve exhausted all other resources to find peace,

and He seems like the next “thing” to try.

Maybe they just need someone to take notice of them, call them by name, and be Jesus to them. Maybe... I’m the one who needs to go out on a limb. Maybe that person is me. 

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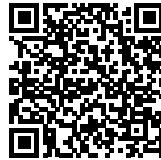
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Yoder's Whole Hanging Hog (unprocessed) \$1.79

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New Tax Laws For 2026 That You Should Know

The new year brings more than resolutions and fresh starts; it also ushers in several tax changes that could affect your wallet. Whether you're saving for retirement, funding your child's education or supporting your favorite charity, here's a few things you need to know about the tax landscape in 2026.

More room to save for retirement and healthcare.

There's good news for savers: Contribution limits for retirement accounts are going up. If you're under 50, you can now contribute up to \$7,500 to an IRA, which is up from \$7,000 in 2025. Those 50 and older can contribute an additional \$1,100, for a total of \$8,600.

The limits for 401(k), 403(b) and governmental 457(b) plans are also increasing, with workers younger than 50 able to defer up to \$24,500. Visit IRS.gov and search "401k limit increases" for an article outlining the details.

Health savings account limits are rising too. In 2026, individual coverage increased to \$4,400 and family coverage to \$8,750. If you are age 55 or older and are not enrolled in Medicare, you can contribute an additional \$1,000 as a catch-up contribution.

The start of the year is an ideal time to review your contributions and consider increasing them, even by small amounts which can add up over time.

A catch-up rule for high

earners. If you're 50 or older and earned more than \$150,000 last year, there's a new wrinkle in your retirement planning. You can still make catch-up contributions to your workplace retirement plan, but they must now be Roth contributions rather than traditional pre-tax contributions. This includes 401(k), 403(b) and 457(b) plans.



While you won't get an immediate tax break, Roth contributions offer tax-free income in retirement and can provide a tax-free legacy for your heirs.


Expanded benefits for 529 education plans. Families using 529 plans to cover K-12 expenses will see the annual federal distribution limit double from \$10,000 to \$20,000 per student. The definition of qualifying expenses has also expanded to include curriculum, books, certain tutoring expenses and testing fees.

This change provides more flexibility for families with

overfunded plans and increases options for managing education costs across multiple children or beneficiaries.

New charitable giving provisions. The rules around charitable deductions are shifting in two directions. Taxpayers who take the standard deduction can now deduct up to \$1,000 in cash donations (\$2,000 for joint filers) to qualified organizations.

However, those who itemize deductions face a new threshold: only charitable contributions exceeding 0.5% of adjusted gross income are now deductible. Donors may want to consider bunching strategies or using donor-advised funds to maximize their tax benefits.

Getting help. Navigating these tax changes can be challenging, but you don't have to go it them alone. A qualified financial advisor and tax professional can help you understand how these and other changes affect your specific situation. Together, you can develop strategies to make the most of new opportunities while minimizing your tax burden. 

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor, Sheldon Q Shrock AAMS®, 120 N Harrison St, Shipshewana, IN 46565, PH: 260-768-4348. Edward Jones, Member SIPC.

LaGrange County Library

Below are the events planned for February 2026.

All activities are In-Person unless noted. If you have any questions, please call the LaGrange library for further information.

Find more information at www.lagrange.lib.in.us or call 260-463-2841.

Facebook Page- m.facebook.com/lagrangelibraryindiana

Shipshewana Branch

250 Depot St. • 260-768-7444

M - F • 11:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m.

Saturday • 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

LaGrange County Public Library

203 West Spring Street • 260-463-2841

M - Th • 9:00 a.m.—8:00 p.m.

Friday • 9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.

Saturday • 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

Topeka Branch

133 North Main Street • 260-593-3030

M - F • 11:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m.

Saturday • 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

All LaGrange County library locations will be CLOSED Monday, February 16 in observance of Presidents Day.

Youth Interest

Preschool Story Time (Ages 0-5) Theme: Alphabet!

LaGrange • Tuesdays • 10:30 a.m.

Shipshewana • Tuesdays • 11:00 a.m. (NEW TIME)

Topeka • Wednesdays • 11:00 a.m.

Enjoy stories, songs and rhymes with a fun craft or activity.

Makerspace! (Ages 5+) (Registration not Required)

LaGrange • Wednesdays in February • 2:30-7:00 p.m.

Parents must stay with kids 10 & under. Drop in and stay as long as you want from 2:30 and 7:00. Makerspace is a collaborative space with a variety of tools and materials to create, learn and share. New special projects every week!

Lego Play (Ages 5+) (Registration not Required)

LaGrange • Thursdays in February • 2:30-7:00 p.m.

Parents must stay with children ages 10 and under. Drop in anytime between 2:30 and 7:00. Use our collection of Legos to create and build anything you want or to complete the monthly challenges.

Teen Games (Grades 6-12)

LaGrange • Monday, February 9 • 4:00-7:30 p.m. Drop in anytime, stay as long as you can. Play larger group party type games or settle in for something longer. Free pizza provided!

Homeschool Hangout (Registration not Required)(All Ages)

LaGrange • Friday, February 13 • 10:30-Noon. Join other homeschool families for a laid-back time to hang out, play games, relax together, share ideas and make new friends.

Book Clubs

Books Buddies Book Club: (Grade 1-3) (formerly Elementary B.C.) LaGrange • Tuesday, February 17 • 4:00-5:00 p.m.

Ratnip - Lost and Found in the City by Cam Higgins.

You will get your book at the meeting. No registration required. At each meeting we will start reading our book together and do a fun activity, then you will take the book home with you to finish reading and bring back next month.

Page Turners Book Club: (Grade 3-7) (formerly Mid-Grade B.C.)

LaGrange • Tuesday, February 17 • 4:00-5:00 p.m.

Mr. Penguin book series by Alex T. Smith.

Come to the library in January to get your book to read and discuss in February. At each meeting we will discuss the book we read this month and do fun activity or craft related to the story.

Books & Banter Book Club: (Grade 7-12) (formerly Teen B.C.)
SPECIAL DATE AND TIME THIS MONTH:

LaGrange • Tuesday, February 17 • 5:00-6:00 p.m.

Renegades by Marissa Meyer

Come to the library in January to get your book to read and discuss in February. At each meeting we will discuss the book we read for this month and do fun activity or craft related to the story.

Teen Video Games and Table Top Roll Play Games

(TTRPG) (Grades 7-12)

LaGrange • Monday, February 23 • 4:00-7:30 p.m.

Join us on the 4th Monday of each month for Nintendo Switch, Wii and VR. Come and go as you are able during this time. If you enjoy TTRPG's like Dungeons & Dragons, we will have some premade games to play through. We will have snacks and TV's set up to play!

Adult Interest

Tai Chi (All Ages) Free!

LaGrange • Mondays • 11:00-11:30 a.m.

Learn Tai Chi with videos from International Tai Chi Master David-Dorian Ross. These gentle workouts focus on slow movement, balance, and deep breathing.

Walking Well-Read (All Ages) - Free!

LaGrange • Mondays & Thursdays • Noon-12:30

Come to the library for 30 minutes of cardio! We'll walk up and down stairs, around the book stacks, and through some behind-the-scenes areas. It's great exercise. Drop in and join us!

Second Saturday Book Club (Ages 16+)

LaGrange • Saturday, February 14 • 11:00 a.m.

This month we'll discuss "Shakespeare" by Bill Bryson. Bryson celebrates Shakespeare as a writer of unimaginable talent and enormous inventiveness, a coiner of phrases ("vanish into thin air," "one fell swoop") Copies available at the LaGrange Library Adult Information Desk."

Crochet for Beginners (Ages 12+)

LaGrange • Tuesday, February 24 • 6:00-8:00 p.m.

This class is for adults who have never crocheted before. All materials will be supplied. Cost is \$5 to cover materials. Registration is needed by February 17 at the LaGrange Library or by calling 260-463-2841x1030

Make & Take with Deb - 3 Dimensional Canvas (Ages 12+)

LaGrange • Wednesday, February 25 • 6:00 p.m.

Participants will add freeform adhesive piping to a canvas in their own design, then paint as desired. All materials supplied. A finished sample will be on display at the library and on the library Facebook page beginning February 2. Cost is \$25 per person. Register with non-refundable deposit of \$15 by February 18 at the Main Library in LaGrange.

Cookbook Club

LaGrange • Saturday, February 28 • 11:00 a.m.

This month's theme is Teatime! Choose a Teatime recipe. Make it and bring it to the Cookbook Club Carry-in! Plates, silverware, coffee and tea will be provided. Cookbook Club meets the 4th Saturday of each month. Families welcome!

February Events

Quilt Class Maple Wood Nature Center

Saturday, February 21 • 9 am–3 pm
Patterns: Two Underground Railroad Patterns. "Bear Paw" and "Basket" and the alternate pattern is "Cherry Berry"

Registration is required.
Instructions are provided upon registration. Fee is \$25 (\$5 is given back to Parks). Instructors will be present to assist with your project questions. Join us for a light potluck lunch; bring a dish to pass and your own drink. To register, call the Park Office at 260-854-2225.



2026 Sap Run & Syrup Stroll

Hosted by the Friends of LaGrange County Parks

5K Fun Run and 1 Mile Walk

Saturday, March 14 • 10 am start time
(9:15 am begins packet pick-up)

Registration information coming soon

LaGrange County Parks and recreation



Maple Syrup Days

Mar 21 & 22, 2026

Maple Wood Nature Center
4550E 100S, LaGrange, IN

It's Maple Syrup season! Dress for the weather. Most everything is outside!


7 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. both days


- Pancake Meals served.
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Meal tickets are:
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While supplies last. All listed prices are subject to change

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- Outside syrup-making demos.
- Horse-drawn wagon rides
- Entertainment Tent open
- The Syrup Store will sell a variety of items 8 am - 2 pm both days. Cash, check or charge are accepted (credit cards have a convenience fee)
- Maple kettle corn and maple sap tea will also be available for purchase (cash only-small bills).

To learn more, call 260-854-2225 or visit www.lagrangecountyparks.org. 



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Foundation Launches Howe Legacy Scholarship

Applications are now being accepted for the Howe Legacy Scholarship, marking the inaugural year of a program created to honor the 135-year legacy of Howe Military School.

The scholarship was established in December 2021 at the LaGrange County Community Foundation using proceeds from the sale of Howe Military Academy following its closure in 2019.

For the program's first year, the Foundation will award ten one-time scholarships of \$5,000 each to students currently enrolled full time in a two-or-four-year program who plan to continue their studies in the fall 2026 semester.

Applications may be submitted through the Foundation's online scholarship portal at www.lccf.net/scholarships no later than 4 p.m. on Feb. 6, 2026.

To be eligible, applicants must be enrolled full-time at an accredited two- or four-year college, university, trade school, or vocational institution in the United States and have a minimum 3.0 GPA. Official documentation will be required.

Applicants must also meet at least one of the following criteria:

- be a graduate of Howe Military Academy;
- have been enrolled as a cadet at the time of the school's closure in June 2019;
- be a descendant (up to two generations) of a Howe Military Academy graduate; or
- be a resident of LaGrange County.

While preference will be given to applicants with ties to Howe Military, the Foundation encourages all eligible LaGrange County post-secondary students to apply.

"The Howe Legacy Scholarship reflects the commitment of preserving the school's spirit of leadership and educational excellence," said Beth Retterbush, LCCF Scholarship and LIFE Program Manager. "We are honored to steward this legacy and support students as they pursue their goals."


Howe Military Academy traces its origins to 1884, when it was founded as the Howe Grammar School through a bequest from John Badlam Howe, a prominent banker, lawyer, and politician who settled in Howe in 1833. After his passing, his widow, Frances Marie Glidden Howe, used his \$10,000 bequest — along with support from the Episcopal Church — to establish a preparatory school for young men seeking ordination. The school opened in the former Howe family residence, a Greek Revival structure that still stands on the east end of the historic campus.

In 1895, the institution transitioned into a military academy. Howe Military Academy reached its peak enrollment of 458 cadets during the 1966–1967 academic year. As global attitudes toward military preparatory schools changed, enrollment gradually declined. Combined with the challenges of maintaining an aging campus, annual operating deficits mounted and eventually consumed the school's assets. Howe Military Academy closed in 2019, concluding a remarkable chapter in the community of Howe.


Following the school's closure, the Howe Military School Board of Trustees created two permanent funds at the Foundation: The Howe Legacy Fund, a community grantmaking fund supporting projects in Howe, and the Howe Legacy Scholarship Fund, a scholarship fund assisting students

pursuing post-secondary education.

About the LaGrange County Community Foundation

The LaGrange County Community Foundation works to inspire generosity, leadership, and service by connecting donors to community needs. Through grants, scholarships, and partnerships, the Foundation helps build permanent charitable resources that strengthen LaGrange County now and for generations to come. 

Noah Bontrager named Mental Attitude Award Winner

On Westview's web site there was this: Congratulations to Senior Noah Bontrager who ran an extremely tight race at the Cross Country State meet in Terre Haute on Nov 1, 2025. He finished runner up and brought home the Charles F Maas Mental Attitude Award in an exciting finish that had officials looking at the one-hundredths of a second to determine the winner. Noah finished 0.02 seconds behind the State Champion. The race rounds out Noah's high school cross country career as a 4 time All-State runner. 



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Support groups offer help coping with grief

Free bereavement support groups provide guidance, connection and practical tools for healing after loss

When a loved one passes away, grief can be overwhelming and isolating. While each person experiences grief in their own way, getting support to understand your grief and find companionship with others can help you navigate your feelings and move forward.

Parkview Hospice counselors know the challenges of working through grief. That's why they help guide bereavement support groups across the region. Any community member who has experienced the loss of a loved one is welcome to attend, regardless of whether the loss is recent or happened further in the past.

The groups focus on concepts in the book, "Understanding Your Grief," by noted author, educator and grief counselor Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D. Wolfelt's exploration of grief, self-compassion and practical steps toward healing has been a helpful guide for thousands of people nationwide.

Support group members will receive a free copy of the book, which they will read and discuss during the meetings as they explore the normal emotional responses to illness and death and ways to cope with loss.

January – March support group meetings

Ten-week groups are beginning now in the region's northernmost counties. Times vary by location.

LaGrange County

- 4 – 5:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, Jan. 13 – Mar. 17, at First Presbyterian Church, 200 W. Michigan St., LaGrange.

Noble County

- 4 – 5:30 p.m. on Thursdays, Jan. 15 – Mar. 19, at the Kendallville Public Library, 221 S. Park Ave., Kendallville.

DeKalb County (two groups)

- 1 – 2:30 p.m. on Mondays, Jan. 12 – Mar. 16, at the Heimach Center, 1800 E. 7th St., Auburn
- 4 – 5:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, Jan. 14 – Mar. 18, at Miller's Merry Manor, 1367 S. Randolph St., Garrett

Steuben County

- 1 – 2:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, Jan. 13 – Mar. 17, at Fairview Missionary Church (Fireside door), 525 E. 200 N., Angola

Experienced hospice social workers encourage group members on their grief journey. Rev. Ken Weaver, LCSW, LMFT, hospice chaplain, and Cathy Petrie, LCSW, MSW, bereavement counselor, have led support groups together in Noble and LaGrange counties for 17 years. Other helpful group leaders include Angela Beer-Walker, LCSW, hospice social worker; Amber White, LCSW, hospice social worker; and HaEun "Sam" Cho, hospice chaplain.

Support group participants have commented that the group gave them a safe place to express their thoughts and equipped them with the tools to share their feelings with friends and family members so they feel less alone in their grief. Group leaders strive to create a warm, accepting, non-judgmental atmosphere. Participants may attend as often as they like and may still join a group even if they've missed the first meeting. No registration is required.

For inquiries and enrollment in a LaGrange, Noble, DeKalb or Steuben group, call 800-292-9894. Groups can also be arranged for Zoom or conference call format.

Year-round support group meetings

Bereavement support groups are also available on an ongoing basis in Allen and Huntington counties on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month.

Allen County support group

5:30 – 7 p.m., PACH Conference Room at Parkview Randallia Hospital, 2200 Randallia Drive, Fort Wayne. Participants should use ground floor entrance 2 to access the PACH room.

Huntington County support group
5:30 – 7 p.m., Parkview Hospice, 2708 Guilford St., Huntington.

Participants should enter the Parkview Walk-In Clinic/Parkview Ortho Express in the Kroger Plaza. The meeting room is on the right.

For information about the Allen or Huntington County groups or other bereavement support, call 260-373-9800.



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Audri Martin Named 2026 LaGrange County Lilly Endowment Community Scholar



Photo Submitted

Audri Martin of Westview Jr-Sr High School is the recipient of the 2026 Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship for LaGrange County.

Each Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship provides full tuition, required fees and a special allocation of up to \$900 per year for required books and required equipment for four years. The scholarship is for full-time undergraduate students pursuing a bachelor's degree at an Indiana public or private college or university.

Lilly Endowment Community Scholars are awarded for their community involvement, academic achievement, character, and leadership.

"The scholarship committee was inspired by Audri's dedication to leadership and service through 4-H and her wide range of extracurricular involvement. Her commitment to expanding opportunities for young people, combined with clear career goals and a strong entrepreneurial spirit, reflects the leadership and character the scholarship seeks to recognize," said Beth Retterbush, Scholarship and LIFE Program Manager.

Martin will graduate with academ-

ic honors and is planning to attend Purdue University next fall, where she will pursue a pre-veterinary track. She also plans to continue running her show lamb business, AGM Genetics. Martin is the daughter of Ken and Tina Martin of LaGrange.

"I've grown up showing in 4-H," Audri said, "So this scholarship is the first step in making it possible for me to fulfill my dreams in veterinary medicine and to pursue a job rooted in the livestock industry. I hope to help expand knowledge of small ruminant reproduction in Lagrange and advise local producers after I become a vet. I will forever be thankful to Lilly because it allows me to make my dreams a reality."

An active leader throughout her high school career, Martin has served as an FFA member and president, National Honor Society vice president, senior class secretary, and student council senior class representative. She is also a saxophone player in both the Jazz and Concert Bands and earned a medalist designation in Instrumental Solo and Ensemble. In addition, she is a member of the Ski Club.

Outside the classroom, Martin has gained valuable work experience at Grogg Martin Auctioneers, Lambright Club Lambs, and AGM Genetics. She is a nine-year member of 4-H, an event organizer for Feed the Farmers, a Junior Achievement volunteer, a member of Shore Church, and a camp counselor for the Building the Basics Showmanship Camp.

In selecting LaGrange County's Lilly Endowment Community Scholar, the selection committee considered ac-

ademic achievement, leadership ability, service to others, employment history, extracurricular involvement, personal essays, and letters of recommendation.

The top five students who scored highest on their application were then invited to participate in a workshop day. Finalists returned for digital presentations and personal interviews conducted by the Lilly Scholarship Advisory Committee. After the field of applicants was narrowed, nominees were submitted to Independent Colleges of Indiana (ICI), the statewide administrator of the Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship Program, which approves the final selection of scholarship recipients.

Finalists for the 2026 award include Lydia Jacobson of Lakeland Jr-Sr School and Briana Kaufman, Myra Miller, and Bentley Ryall of Westview Jr-Sr High School. Each finalist will receive the Lambright Leadership Scholarship, a \$1,000 renewable award established by Kevin and Carrie Lambright. The scholarship may be renewed up to three additional years, providing recipients with total scholarship support of \$4,000.


"It is a privilege for the Foundation to nominate a talented LaGrange student," said Octavia Yoder, LCCF Executive Director. "We appreciate Lilly Endowment's commitment to supporting young leaders and opening doors for their futures. With so many exceptional young scholars in our county, the committee faced a very difficult choice this year."

Lilly Endowment created the Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship Program for the 1998-99 school year and has supported the program every

year since with grants totaling more than \$505 million. More than 5,400 Indiana students have received the Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship since the program's inception.

The primary purposes of the Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship

Program are: 1) to help raise the level of educational attainment in Indiana; 2) to increase awareness of the beneficial roles Indiana community foundations can play in their communities; and 3) to encourage and support the efforts of current and past Lilly Endowment

Community Scholars to engage with each other and with Indiana business, governmental, educational, nonprofit and civic leaders to improve the quality of life in Indiana generally and in local communities throughout the state. 

LaGrange County Community Foundation's Community Scholarship Program Opens January 15

The LaGrange County Community Foundation will open its 2026 Community Scholarship Program on January 15.

The program offers financial support to high school graduating seniors who plan to graduate by June 30, 2026, and continue their education at an accredited college, university, or trade school. Scholarships are awarded based on factors such as residency, high school attendance, extracurricular and community involvement, and career goals.

More than \$300,000 in scholarship funding is available to the Class of 2026, supporting a wide range of career paths including education, agriculture, business, health care, science, nursing, engineering and more. Individual awards typically range from \$500 to \$5,000, and several scholarships are renewable for up to four years.

Students apply through a single online common application, which automatically matches applicants with scholarships for which they qualify. The application deadline is March 6, 2026.

"The Community Scholarship Program reflects our strong support for higher education and the generosity of donors who are passionate about creating opportunities for students," said Octavia Yoder, Executive Director of the LaGrange County Commu-

nity Foundation. "These partnerships make it possible for students to pursue their dreams and strengthen our community."

The 2026 program offers 50 donor-created scholarship opportunities, made possible through generous support from local families, individuals, and organizations.


2026 Community Scholarship opportunities include:

- Allread-Rife Family Scholarship
- Amanda Lou Crofts Memorial Scholarship
- Beverly J. Todd Memorial Scholarship
- Brian J. Evans Memorial Scholarship
- Bruce Brown Memorial Scholarship
- Bulldog Spirit Scholarship
- Chase E. Scott Memorial Football Scholarship
- Craig D. and Ronda S. Neff Memorial Scholarship
- Eldon Hostetler Family Scholarship
- Ellsworth Fanning Memorial Scholarship
- Farmwald Scholarship
- George O. Witwer News-Sun Journalism Scholarship
- GO Shine Like Gwen Memorial Scholarship
- Holly Petersen Memorial Science Scholarship

- HOPE Nursing Scholarship
- Huggins Family Scholarship
- Ignite Your Future Scholarship
- J.O. Mory Company Scholarship
- James F. Kalb Memorial Scholarship
- Jean Seagly Crouse Memorial Scholarship
- Joseph Willard Memorial Scholarship
- Judy Gage-Keenan Scholarship
- Keith and Arline Davis Memorial Scholarship
- Kerry Wilt-Spradlin Memorial Scholarship
- Kevin Lewis Purdue Agriculture Memorial Scholarship
- LaGrange County Farm Bureau Co-op Scholarship
- Lakeland Scholarship
- LIFE Scholarship
- Lyle Smith Scholarship
- Mattea Hope Holton Memorial Scholarship
- Matthew Terry Memorial Scholarship
- Melvin and Marjorie Bricker Memorial Scholarship
- Morgan Hunter Memorial Scholarship
- Mory Family Scholarship
- Ned Stump Memorial Scholarship
- Olivia Bay Lemings Memorial Scholarship
- Partners in Education Scholarship
- Paul and Marian Krebs Memorial

Scholarship

- Perkins Family Scholarship
- Prairie Heights Band Scholarship
- Prairie Heights Student Council Scholarship
- Prairie Heights High School Scholarship
- Ray and Ruth Culp Memorial Scholarship
- Rex Fisher History Scholarship
- Rheinheimer Scholarship
- Russell Hepler Media Scholarship
- Terry Schmidt Memorial Basketball Scholarship
- Schlemmer Scholarship
- Virgil L. and Florence E. Hardin Memorial Scholarship
- Waddell Memorial Scholarship

For more information on the 2026 Community Scholarship Program, visit Lccf.net/scholarships or contact Beth Retterbush, Scholarship & LIFE Program Manager, at (260) 463-4363. 

Lake City Bank Welcomes Breanne N. Yoder to its Retail Team




Photo submitted

Lake City Bank is pleased to welcome Breanne N. Yoder as Retail Banking Officer of the Shipshewana branch.

In this position, Yoder leads sales and service efforts in the branch, manages the daily operations of the

office and supports office staff in their efforts to provide quality service and build customer relationships. She has five years of experience in financial services.

Lake City Bank, a \$6.9 billion bank headquartered in Warsaw, Indiana, was founded in 1872 and serves Central and Northern Indiana communities with 55 branch offices and a robust digital banking platform. Lake City Bank's community banking model prioritizes building in-market long-term customer relationships while delivering technology-forward solutions for retail and commercial clients. The bank is the single bank subsidiary of Lakeland Financial Corporation (Nasdaq Global Select/LKFN). For more information visit www.lakecitybank.com. 


Parkview Noble Hospital Welcomes First Baby Born in 2026



The first baby born at Parkview Noble Hospital's Family Birthing Center in 2026 was a boy whose first name is Makiah.

Born: Jan. 1, 1:08 p.m.

Weight: 8 lbs., 9 oz.

Length: 21 in. 

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Heartland Handmade Chocolate Trail February 2 – 28, 2026



Shipshewana/LaGrange County Visitors Center

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Explore Shipshewana & Middlebury by sampling handcrafted chocolates, treats and specialty creations

made right here in the heart of Amish Country. The Heartland Chocolate Trail allows you to build your very own box of chocolates, enjoy chocolatey themed experiences, free events, and more! Join us February 2–28, 2026 to experience a new winter tradition!

How does it work?

1. Purchase a \$35 Heartland Handmade Chocolate Experience online or at the Shipshewana Visitors Center.
2. Pick up your Chocolate Box at:
 - Shipshewana Visitors Center, 350 S Van Buren St. M-F 9a-5p & Sat. 9a-1p
 - Aunt Millie's Candy Shop inside the Davis Mercantile. M-Sat 10a-5p
3. Visit each shop named inside the box to pick up a single piece of chocolate at each stop.
4. Get extras using the Heartland

Handmade Double Dip Deals and Exclusive Experiences card.
5. Enjoy the fun!

What is included?

Included in your Heartland Handmade Chocolate Trail box are 16 spaces to fill with locally handmade chocolates, a Double Dip Deals card with additional goodies found along the tour, plus access to Exclusive Chocolate-themed experiences such as free hot chocolate, buy-one-get-one chocolates, and more! (Double dip deals cards are only available when purchasing a Heartland Handmade Chocolate Trail box)

This year's Chocolate Trail features 24 businesses across Shipshewana and Middlebury, including:

- 16 chocolate candy stops
- 3 hot cocoa bars
- 5 locations offering chocolate-themed freebies and discounts

You can preview the full trail experience at: <https://visitshipshewana.org/heartland-handmade-chocolate-trail/>

Questions? Call the Shipshewana Visitors Center (260) 768-4008.

LaGrange County 4-H Association Announces Upcoming Event

The LaGrange County 4-H Association invites you to the 5th annual Silent Auction and Dinner. The event will take place Saturday, March 7th, in the community building, at the LaGrange County 4-H fairgrounds. The doors open at 4 pm with the kick off of the silent auction. An Italian dinner will begin at 5 pm. The evening will finish up at 8 pm with the conclusion of the silent auction items. Dinner is by donation. Many great local businesses have made generous donations to help make this year's event a success. A list of donations can be seen at www.lagrangecounty4hfair.org or on Facebook at Lagrange County 4-H Fair. Please check back regularly as more items are

added as more donations come in.

4-H began over 100 years ago, and has since grown into the largest youth development program in the nation. 4-H prepares young people to be leaders in their community and around the world through hands-on experiences alongside their peers and caring adults. Your support ensures over 400 youth continue to benefit and discover their true potential from the 4-H youth programs here in LaGrange County.

Bring your family and friends to enjoy a fun evening of fellowship. If you have questions or would like to donate to the silent auction, please contact Amy Newby at (260) 849-9135.

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Dr. Jamie Carroll—Westview Superintendent

The Westview School Corporation board of trustees unanimously approved Dr. Jaime Carroll as the next superintendent at Westview School Corporation at a special meeting January 15th. Dr. Carroll will be starting February 2, 2026. The board utilized the services of the University Search Team and completed a competitive and thorough search process.

Dr. Jaime Carroll currently serves as the Curriculum Director for Whitko Community Schools. Prior to joining Whitko she worked 27 years at East Noble School Corporation, serving in a variety of instructional and leadership capacities, including her final eight years as Principal of Wayne Center Elementary School. In addition, Dr. Carroll served as an adjunct professor in the School of Education for Ivy Tech Community College for eight years and spent four years mentoring principals across the state through the Indiana Principal Leadership Institute.

Keith Lambright, President comments:

“We are thrilled to have Dr. Carroll joining us at Westview and anticipate that under her leadership we will continue to be a great school district. Our students, staff and community expect a lot of themselves and with Dr. Carroll’s leadership we anticipate our tradition of excellence to continue.”

Dr. Carroll comments:


“I am incredibly excited to be joining Westview School Corporation and look forward to learning from the students, staff, families, and community about the values, traditions, and relationships that make Westview the special place it is today. Honoring those traditions while thoughtfully planning for the future is essential to leading well.” 



Photo submitted



- 1 Jared Hershberger, Ava Miller, Sara Walter
- 2 Bryan Bontrager, Carson Hertzler, Evan Miller, Kurtis Miller
- 3 Landon Fry, Peyton Lambright, Alyssa Miller, Kylie Miller, Tanner Troyer
- 4 Lucas Raber, Hadley Yoder
- 5 Daryl Beechy, Jeremiah Borkholder, Ian Glick, Kurtis Miller, Harper Raber, Emersyn Wingard
- 6 Evan Bontrager, Avalynn Brandau Garib, Khaled Omer
- 7 Kinsley Collier, Easton McDonald, Jediah Wingard, Kari Yoder
- 8 Evelyn Brown, Derek Lehman, Andrew Martin, Jared Mast, Isaiah Stickler
- 10 Colton Beechy, Jeremy Miller, Austin Yoder
- 11 Landon Fry, Bowen Short, Kelsey Smith
- 12 Melanie Bontrager, Neil Lambright, Angela Miller
- 13 Kaiden Beechy, Kayla Beechy, Derek Bontrager, Austin Miller, Jayda Stutzman, Noah Yoder
- 15 Alison Camacho Esparza, Anya Miller, Isaiah Miller, Austin Wingard, Briana Yoder, Taya Yoder
- 16 Alyse Bontrager, Owen Frey, Nevaeh Howard, Ethan Riehl, Wesson Slattery



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- 17 Jada Hershberger, Jenna Miller, Kinsley Miller, Eric Schlabach, Justin Schlabach, Felicity Wilson, Harleigh Wilson
- 18 Brandon Bontrager, Isaiah Graber, Isaac Miller, Elizabeth Thompson
- 19 Jena Bontrager, Sage Fisher, Makenna Grossman, Cheyenne Miller, Olivia Miller, Fatima Omarouf, Emmerly Spencer
- 20 Vivian Phillip, Sean Slabach
- 21 Caleb Lehman, Avery Mast, Halle Miller, Kenlin Yoder
- 22 Dixie Altimus, Cameron Bontrager, Maddex Brohm, Carsyn Haines, Kyrie Mauck
- 23 Lillian Berkey, Aaron Hershberger, Julianna Lambright, Isaiah Miller
- 24 Romina Camacho Esparza, Raylan LaForce, Andrew Unternahrer
- 25 Jariah Lehman, Darin Stutzman, Kylie Wingard
- 26 Caleb Mast, Nicholas Slabaugh, Janae Stutzman, Kara Yoder, Teysem Yoder
- 28 Abel Eudy, Bryson Noble, Kaylee Yoder
- 29 Ruth Helmuth, Jenna Unternahrer, Royce Valentiny

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Polar Express Day

Mrs. Willard's 2nd graders had a fun "Polar Express Day" before Christmas break. Lots of memories were made and sweets were eaten. 🍪



This page made possible by the



Meadowview Elementary

Home of the Mustangs



Back Row (left to right): Savannah Lambright (4th), Audrey Bontrager (4th), Ashton Yoder (4th), Austin Bontrager (3rd). Not Pictured: Brent Miller (4th). Middle Row: Leah Mast (3rd), Seth Yoder (3rd), Halle Stutzman (2nd), Thomas Miller (2nd), Adrianna Wingard (3rd). Front Row: Liam Slabach (K), Kristyn Miller (K), Allison Miller (K), Arier Gongwer (1st), Matthew Miller (1sr). Photo submitted.

MUSTANGS OF THE MONTH

Each month 15 MES students are recognized during the monthly school wide Family Meeting assembly. These students have shown safety, responsibility, and respect throughout the month. Winners receive a certificate, a Mighty Mustang medal, and get to participate in a game during the assembly. Pictured are the winners from December of the 2025-2026 school year. Go Mustangs! 🏆



All photos submitted



Classroom Buddies

Here are some pictures from classroom buddies. Two teachers were paired and throughout the year their students get together to play games and read together. ①

Elkhart Parks Department

The Elkhart parks department came to visit our 1st graders before Christmas. They talked with them about the different types of rocks, volcanoes, and much more. ①



All photos submitted

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Francine's Friends is a partnership between Parkview Packnett Family Cancer Institute and Breast Diagnostic Center. Mammograms and follow-up diagnostics are made possible by funding from the Parkview Health Foundation.

[Parkview.com/FrancinesFriends](https://www.parkview.com/FrancinesFriends)

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[Lagrangecountyhealth.com](https://www.lagrangecountyhealth.com)

Donation

The former Topeka Chamber of Commerce and Shipshe-wana Furniture helped to make it possible for Topeka Bears to relax and enjoy two gliders on our playground. This is a place where students can sit and read or chat while still enjoying being outside. Thank you for your support! 📌



Learning Pictures

We may have had winter fun, but the learning did not end! Here are some pictures in and around TES. 📌



This page made possible by the




Topeka Elementary

Home of the Bears


The Hometown Treasure · February '26

Dress Up Days

This didn't make the last issue, but we wanted to share some of the fun winter season dress up days! 



Read United

We are lucky to partner with Read United. This is a United Way program that connects community volunteers with elementary schools to encourage reading. We have really enjoyed sharing our love of reading! 



All photos submitted



Sixth Grade Musical

Westview Elementary 6th graders performed “Holiday Roadtrip” for a fun night of entertainment and song. These students took the audience on a trip around the US through music. 📍



All photos submitted



Westview Elementary

Home of the Warriors

Homemade Piñatas

6th grade constructed homemade pinatas and enjoyed celebrating the Christmas season. 📌



Twelve Days of Christmas

Westview Elementary had their traditional Christmas sing along with staff and students. Mr. Boyer's class



performed an original "12 Days of Christmas" skit for the festivities! 📌



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8TH A BOYS BASKETBALL

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2025-2026 8th Grade A Boys Basketball Team: Back (left to right): Coach Caleb Cory, Cody Hill, Sammy Miller, and Brigham Rahn. Middle: Kendall Lambright and Carson Yoder. Front: Jared Beechy, Tanner Porter, Harrison Bontreger, and Miles Yoder.

Photo by Abby Wenger



8TH B BOYS BASKETBALL

Sponsored by



2025-2026 8th Grade B Boys Basketball Team: Back (left to right): Coach Paul Baker, Jacob Miller, Damon Lambright, Bently Miller, Drayden Slabach, and Jason Bontrager. Front: Justin Miller, Adrian Bontrager, Cayden Coleman, and Coltin Bontrager.

Photo by Abby Wenger



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|--|---|--|

There are times when HD inspectors, vital records registrar, office staff, and nurses are engaged in field work, taking care of customers, or in satellite clinics. Please, feel free to call us before stopping in to make sure someone will be here to help you. **(260) 499-4182**

Nursing Division: Ext. #1 & #2

WIC Office: Ext. #3 & #4

Vital Records (Birth & Death Certificates): Ext. #5

Food Inspector: Ext. #6

Septic Inspector: Ext. #7

Water/Well Testing Information: Ext. #5 & #6



7TH A BOYS BASKETBALL

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2025-2026 7th Grade A Boys Basketball Team: Back (left to right): Jordan Troyer, Wes Steider, and Coach Michael Christner. Middle: Ryan Mast, Travis Bontrager, Graison Yoder, and Gavin Miller. Front: Mason Grossman, Tyler Wingard, and Derek Hochstetler. Photo by Abby Wenger



7TH B BOYS BASKETBALL

Sponsored by
SC SHORE CHURCH

2025-2026 7th Grade B Boys Basketball Team: Back (left to right): Coach Jeff Marchant, Seth Lambright, Alex Detweiler, and Elijah Wingard. Middle: Ethan Bontrager and Austin Schrock. Front: Travis Miller, Tyson Yoder, and Kole Moon. Photo by Abby Wenger



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CHURCH**

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Join us!

first service

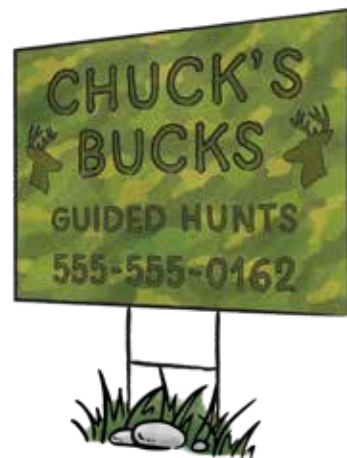
8:30

second service

10:45

BEGINNING JANUARY 4, 2026

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It's
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JH CHEER

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2025-2026 Junior High Cheer Team: *Back (left to right): Kennedy Stutzman, Marsha Miller, Ashlin Rockey, Calista Bollinger, and Aubrey Young. Front: Raigen Bryant, Avery Myers, Addy Raber, and Mercy Buckley.*

Photo by Abby Wenger

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Pajama Sale

Saturday, February 7, 2026

Sponsored by the Shipshewana Retail Merchants Association



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SHIPSHEWANA, IN
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We also have a large selection of braided rugs & quilts.

PAJAMA SALE!

Saturday, Feb. 7th • 9:00 am - 4:30 pm

15% OFF
IN-STOCK ITEMS

Some exclusions may apply.

10% OFF
ORDERS PLACED DAY
OF PAJAMA SALE

Kids Kreations

150 N Harrison Street • Shipshewana



7am - 4pm
Feb. 7, 2026

10% Off Storewide

Up to 60% Off
Selected Items

Dolls, Furniture, &
Accessories

260-768-7744

Mon-Sat 10am-5pm • Call For Winter Hours: Jan-March

SALE

6AM-9AM BUY ONE GET ONE FREE

9AM-12PM BUY ONE GET ONE 20%

12PM-6PM BUY ONE GET ONE 10%

BAG SIZES ONLY



Chocolate Covered Strawberries
Available in 6pk or 12pk
While supplies last.

PAJAMA DAY SALE

Hours: 6am-6pm
100 S Van Buren ST
Shipshewana, IN 46565
260-293-2534



PAJAMA SALE ONLY

1 Day Only • February 7th • All Day



JOJO'S PRETZELS

**\$2 PRETZELS
ALL DAY LONG!**

ONLY DURING PAJAMA SALE.
EXCLUDES GLUTEN FREE.

KITCHEN CUPBOARD

COFFEE HOUSE

**\$1 DRIP COFFEE
ALL DAY LONG!**
Only during Pajama Sale.



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Christmas....50% Off**

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Sarah Davis Ltd.

50% Off

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\$20 Apparel Rack

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160 Harrison Street, Shippshewana

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FEBRUARY 7, 2026

6am to 4pm

10-60% OFF STOREWIDE

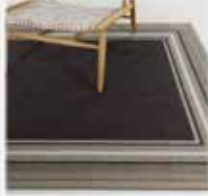
*EXCLUDES SELECT INDOOR/OUTDOOR RUGS

GREENERY 20-50% OFF

QUILTS 10-50% OFF

*SAME DISCOUNTS ALL DAY

IN STOCK, IN STORE ITEMS ONLY



10% off Storewide

**No Discount on Butchering & Processing,
Previous Orders or Purchase of Gift Cards.**

February 7th 7-11a.m.

SR 5 • Shippshewana • 260-768-4715
Located next to the Red Barn Shoppes

Pajama Sale

Saturday, February 7, 2026

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Don't Miss the Fun!
OPEN AT 5:00 AM

PAJAMA DAY

specials



RETAIL SALE

Craft Barn / Shipshewana Furniture Co. / Traditions

5-7am **40% OFF**

7-9am **30% OFF**

9-11am **20% OFF**

(Excludes furniture, grandfather clocks, food & consignment items).

FURNITURE SALE

Shipshewana Furniture Co. / Traditions

FURNITURE & CLOCKS

15% OFF All Day!

* Includes Outdoor Furniture & Accessories.



BREAKFAST SALE

Blue Gate Restaurant

- Open at 7am -

One **FREE Beverage** with the purchase of a Breakfast Buffet.

Specials good February 7, 2026 only. May not be combined with other discounts or specials.

105 E. Middlebury St. • Shipshewana, IN
260.768.4725 | TheBlueGate.com



Lolly's
Fabrics Quilts

Cuddle
Corner

J

J. FARVER HOME & LEATHER



Both stores located on the 1ST floor of the Davis Mercantile

Both stores located on the 2ND floor of the Davis Mercantile

FEB
7th

30% OFF STOREWIDE
260-768-4703

6am
to
10am



Winter Sale



325 South Van Buren Street Shipshewana, IN 46565

Saturday, February 7

6:30-7:30 am **25% Off**
 7:30-9 am **20% Off**
 9 am-4 pm **15% Off**



Some exclusions apply

Do not need to wear pajamas to receive discount

YODER'S
 Shipshewana Hardware
inside the
Yoder's Shopping Center
 300 South Van Buren St
 260.768.4163

February 7, 2026

15% OFF
8am-11am

Some exclusions may apply.



Must be wearing pajamas to receive discount!

www.yodershardware.com



15% OFF STOREWIDE & 20% OFF ACCESSORIES

Extra Special Deals 6am-10am

Saturday 2/7/26!



Also in the Davis Mercantile

SHIPSHEWANA
 South & East of SR 5 & US 20
 Open 9-5 Mon-Fri & 9-4 Sat

You Snooze? You Lose!

30% OFF STORE-WIDE

Pajama Sale

Saturday
 February 7
 7:30am - 4:30pm

- **30% OFF MSRP** on all in-stock furniture **AND** orders.
- Take an additional **30% OFF** already reduced TRUCKLOAD items!

WAKE UP!



WanaFurniture.com

Brandenberry FURNITURE

PJ Sale

15% OFF

Saturday February 7, 2026



25% OFF FLOOR MODEL Dining Sets

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 SR 5 & US 20, Shipshewana
 (260) 768-3270
BrandenberryFurniture.com

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Pajama Sale

Saturday, February 7, 2026

Sponsored by the Shipshewana Retail Merchants Association

Must be wearing your Pajamas to get the deals!



pajama Day Sale




**SATURDAY
FEBRUARY
7, 2025**

[8:00 AM - 10:00 AM]
**20% OFF REGULAR
PRICED ITEMS
IN THE FABRIC
DEPARTMENT**

[10:00 AM - 5:30 PM]
**ADDITIONAL 10% OFF
SALE FABRIC. FAT
QUARTERS \$2.50 EACH**

**201 E Van Buren Street
Shipshewana, IN**

*Some restrictions may apply



COUNTRYROAD

Fabrics • Shoes • Boots • Apparel

Pajama Sale

1205 S Van Buren St. Shipshewana, IN 46565
260-768-7804

**February 7
8am-3:30 pm**

Specials:

- 10% OFF all in-stock Shannon cuddle fleece
- 10% OFF all in-stock ladies shoes



Yoder's RED BARN SHOPPES

PAJAMA DAY SALE
445 S. Van Buren St. (S.R. 5)

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Eminence HOME + BOUTIQUE</p> <p>25% Off (5-6 AM) 20% Off (6-8 AM) 15% Off (8-10 AM) STOREWIDE</p> | <p>PARKER'S OUTLET CENTER</p> <p>260-768-7399</p> <p>20% Off (5-8 AM) 10% Off (8-10 AM) STOREWIDE</p> | <p>The Fancy Farm Girl</p> <p>25% Off (5-6 AM) 20% Off (6-7 AM) 15% Off (7-10 AM) STOREWIDE</p> |
| <p>The Victorian CANDY COMPANY</p> <p>Spend \$10 to SPIN THE WHEEL For Great Deals (5-10 AM)</p> | <p>Wana Cabinets & Furniture.</p> <p>30% Off STOREWIDE (5-10 AM)</p> | <p>LIGHT of grace BOOK & GIFTS -Est. 2010-</p> <p>25% Off (5-8 AM) 20% Off (8-10 AM) on Regular Priced Items</p> |
| <p>Red Bud Gifts Coffee Tea Cafe</p> <p>20% Off SELECT TEAS Fresh Glazed Pretzels Available (6-10 AM)</p> | <p>GIFTED HANDS VILLAGES Artistic Expressions • Always Handmade:</p> <p>20% Off Regular Priced Items (5-10 AM)</p> | <p>Red Barn BARGAINS</p> <p>25% Off (5-8 AM) 20% Off (8-10 AM) STOREWIDE</p> |



Photo provided by Molly Michael

The Fire that Nearly Levelled Emma

By Harold D. Gingerich

It was a normal Sunday morning in early November of 1931. Samuel and Clara Miller rose from a night's rest, packed up their family, and headed for church. There was no way for the Millers to know that within a few short hours everything they had worked for would be gone. What is more, the flames which destroyed their home and business nearly wiped out the entire small community of Emma.

Emma, located 5 miles north of Topeka, was originally known as Emma Mills. It is best known for Emma Lake, which continues to be a popular fishing spot and is said to have no bottom. But one of the unique things about Emma is that if you stand in the middle of the main intersection (CR 200 S and 600 W) you can touch four LaGrange County townships at the same time.

That is the point where Eden on the southwest corner, Clay on the northeast, Clearspring on the southeast, and Newbury on the northwest meet.

The 1874 Plat Map of Clearspring Township shows the northwest corner as being owned by John C. Yoder (1821-1906). At some point he sold the property to his brother Valentine. Maggie Glick, who compiled and edited *Celebrating a Century 1893-1993* for the Topeka Area Historical Society, devoted seven pages to the history of Emma. She wrote that when Valentine (Felty) Yoder purchased 160 acres in the northwest corner of Clearspring Township, he set aside the northwest corner for business purposes.

In 1881, Jacob J. and Andrew J. Hostetler purchased the corner property from Yoder and constructed a

wood framed store. The store's construction also included family living quarters. The village post office was also in the store building. The late Oscar S. Hostetler (1874-1967), nephew to the Jacob and Andrew, was quoted in an article for the *LaGrange Standard* entitled "Emma Town from 1860-1961" regarding the history of the store. "Stones were hauled to this place for the erection of the store building." Oscar added that, "The first floor was used for merchandise while the second floor served as for living quarters." Oscar was a charter member of the Emma Mennonite Church, ordained as minister in 1902, and bishop in 1923.

Maggie Glick included a fascinating bit of Emma history. "Also in 1881, 21-year-old Samuel D. Frye built a blacksmith and woodworking shop

HISTORICAL FEATURE

east of the store. When Samuel married Lovina Hershberger six years later, he ‘bought the saloon building (that was voted out) and altered the inside for living quarters’”. Where the saloon was located would be interesting to know. But it is hard for this writer to imagine there ever being a saloon in “beautiful downtown Emma.”

For 16 years the Hostetler brothers operated their Clearspring Township corner store. Harman and Rose Jahn, a German speaking couple from Chicago purchased the store. How they came to know about Emma and decided to purchase the store would be interesting to discover. Harvey S. Frye, in his Emmatown History (1984) noted the local people who spoke Pennsylvania Dutch were sometimes confused by Harman and Rose’s High German. The Jahns would own and operate the store for nine years.

The next owner was Henry Klemm, who also had a German background. The Klemm family was fluent in English, and being well liked, quickly fit into the community. By 1906, automobiles were becoming more popular. Klemm saw a business opportunity, so he installed a pump with an underground storage tank and started selling gasoline.

In 1926, the Klemm family sold the store to Jacob Eash of Middlebury. Eash’s son, Glen, who would later become the sheriff of LaGrange County, operated a farm equipment store in what had formerly been Samuel Frye’s blacksmith shop. Sometime around 1930, the store was sold to Samuel W. and Clara Miller.

The fire that destroyed the Emma Store was not the first calamity Samuel Miller faced. On May 26, 1926, death

unexpectedly claimed the life of his wife Sarah Ann at the age of 33. Sarah Ann was only 18 when she married Samuel on August 26, 1911. The couple would have three sons: Freeman S. (1912-1986), Milo S. (1914-2002), and Eldon E. (1918-1987). There are many still living in the Westview community who remember them. Freeman drove a school bus for years.

How quickly Samuel remarried following Sarah’s death is not clear. Thus far I have been unable to find any marriage records. We do know from the 1930 U.S. Census records that he was married to Clara whose age was listed as 42. Samuel’s obituary in the August 16, 1950, edition of the Topeka Journal stated that he had four stepchildren. That would lead us to believe that Clara had previously been married.

The November 5, 1931, edition of the Topeka Journal gave page one coverage to the fire that leveled the Emma Store. According to the newspaper report the fire was discovered about 10 o’clock on Sunday morning (November 1st) while the Millers were attending church. The origin of the fire was never determined. It was believed that the fire started in the store and spread to



Photos submitted

the residential section of the building. The loss was estimated to be \$18,000.

Initially it appeared that the entire village, composed of two churches, two blacksmith shops, and about a dozen houses, might all go up in flames. The homes of Lawrence Miller and A.C. Roth, which were the closest to the Miller’s store, were the most endangered. Fortunately, the fire departments from Topeka and LaGrange were able to contain the fire. While the store with its soda fountain was a total loss, the adjacent buildings were saved.

The newspaper reported that Miller planned to rebuild and that he would open a temporary store in another building. Where the temporary store was located was not mentioned.

Milo S. Miller, Samuel’s son, recalled that many volunteers from the

HISTORICAL FEATURE

community showed up to help. In just over a month's time, a new brick structure was completed. According to the article in *Celebrating a Century* (page 148), "the new store opened between Christmas and New Year." The new

Class of 1936. On August 18, 1938, he married his high school classmate Evelyn Buhl. For the next 44 years Howard & Evelyn would call Emmatown and the Fought's General Store home. In 1945 Howard & Evelyn purchased the build-

they liquidated the inventory.

In the years that have followed, the iconic building has been home of numerous business ventures. It is currently owned by Ben & Molly Michael. A portion of the living area has been turned into apartments. And the locker is still serving residents of the community.

Rumor has it that a new restaurant will be opening soon. Let's hope so ... and, we wish great success to the next operators of the business on the "northwest corner of Clearspring Township."



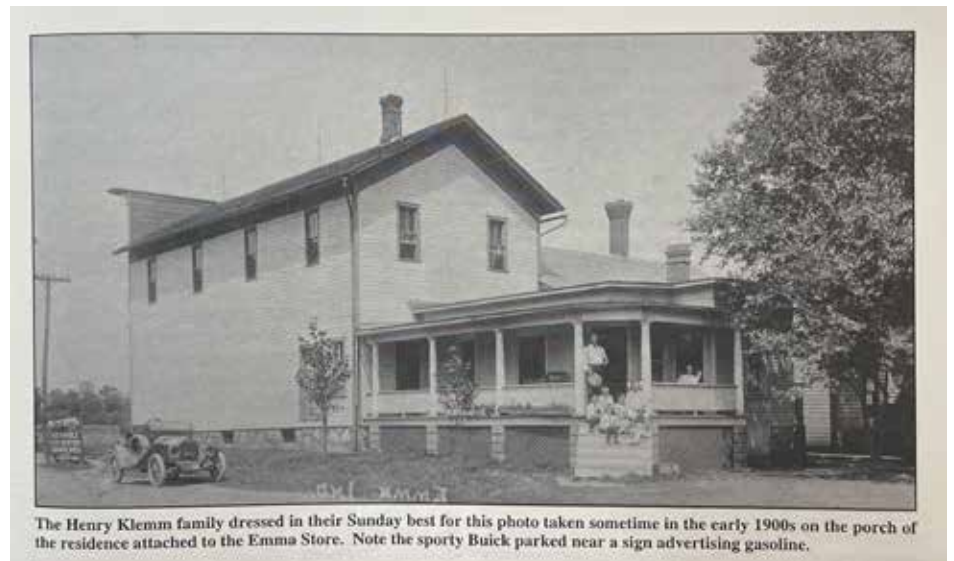
This article sponsored by



building was a combination store and family dwelling.

Ross and Alice Fought purchased the store's inventory in the summer of 1934, but Sam & Clara retained ownership of the building. Ross (1892-1955) was a 1911 graduate from Topeka High School (T.H.S.) and a member of the undefeated 1910 football team. Alice was the daughter of Rev. Simon J. Weed, a Baptist minister from Ohio.

The store would be under Fought ownership for nearly 50 years. From the spring of 1936 to the spring of 1938, Ross & Alice's daughter Lucille and her husband, Clayton Martindale, operated Fought's General Store. In April of 1938, Howard R. Fought, Ross and Alice's son, purchased the inventory. Howard (1918-2006) was a member of the THS



The Henry Klemm family dressed in their Sunday best for this photo taken sometime in the early 1900s on the porch of the residence attached to the Emma Store. Note the sporty Buick parked near a sign advertising gasoline.

Photos submitted

ing from Sam & Clara Miller.

In 1981, Richard & Myrna Gerber purchased the business and the property. In 1986 they added a freezer locker in a separate building. The Gerbers operated the store until July of 1989 when

Valentine's Day.

Saturday, Feb 14th

Flowers
Chocolates

Balloons
Plants

Valentine
Flush

Celebrate the LOVE you share on Valentine's Day
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Left-Over Letters Spell Out A Message From Erika!
Enter remaining letters starting at the top and going left to right.

----- !

Well the weather has certainly been keeping us on our toes lately! Just last weekend, I walked downtown with some friends for supper, because it was such a lovely day that it seemed a shame to drive instead. Yesterday I thought I was going to slide right into a ditch simply trying to drive into town on my lunch break!

A friend told me that last night he drove into white-out conditions just fifteen minutes from our house, but this morning my car barely had a light dusting of snow on it!

I'm not sure which weather I would prefer to keep for the rest of the winter, but my aching head would appreciate less constant fluctuation in air pressure!  Solution on page 50.

Word Search

(find all the underlined words) by Erika Byler

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y | P | D | C | R | T | E | P | Y | P | S | I |
| E | N | N | G | E | F | H | L | U | N | C | H |
| S | T | E | O | R | R | E | G | O | S | I | S |
| T | N | I | T | N | T | T | I | I | G | G | I |
| E | A | R | H | A | T | T | A | B | N | D | M |
| R | T | F | L | W | I | H | E | I | E | I | P |
| D | S | L | I | D | E | C | O | M | N | L | L |
| A | N | E | N | V | A | G | E | U | A | L | Y |
| Y | O | O | O | U | D | E | T | R | G | H | Y |
| I | C | R | S | G | S | E | I | T | P | H | S |
| S | D | E | R | U | S | S | E | R | P | P | T |
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FOR YOUR BUSINESS**

Mystery Farm FEBRUARY CONTEST

OVER \$50 WORTH OF PRIZES!

1st Prize: **Tiffany's Restaurant**, Topeka, \$25 Gift Certificate, a pen, notepad set, a letter opener, and a copy of *The Way I See It* from LaGwana.

2nd Prize(s): A pen, notepad set, a letter opener, and *The Way I See It* from LaGwana.

3rd Prize(s): *The Way I See It*.

**Additional 2nd and 3rd prizes will be awarded for every 50 entries over 100 received.*

RULES:

- 1) Identify farm shown by owner's name, by address, or by road and nearest intersecting road.
- 2) Mail to *Hometown Treasure - Mystery Farm*, P.O. Box 70, Shipshewana, IN 46565. **Please include your name and address.**
- 3) Entry deadline: **February 17, 2026**
Please allow time for mail delivery.
- 4) Winners will be drawn and prizes mailed.
*Next month's winner will receive a 1 year subscription to *The Connection* and more!*
- 5) Correct entries listed in our next issue!

LAST MONTH'S WINNERS

Lyle & Erma Troyer, 050N, LaGrange correctly identified last issue's farm as being owned by **Karl & Doris Troyer on 675W, Shipshewana.**

Congratulations! They won a \$25 Gift Certificate from Tiffany's Restaurant, a pen, a notepad set, a letter opener, and a copy of *The Way I See It* from LaGwana. Second prize went to **Jacob & Jennifer Bontrager, 1125W, Millersburg.** Third prize went to **Elmer & Loretta Lehman, 275N, Shipshewana.**

**Hint: This month's Mystery Farm is not in LaGrange County*

There were 22 correct entries this month. **Others that guessed correctly were:** Marcus & Emma Hochstetler, Sam & Ruby Beechy, Harry W Miller, Mike & Lorene Troyer, Dan & Lisa Beechy, Austin Miller, Lyle & Jolene Miller, Samuel & Emily Schwartz, Mark & Thelma Beechy, Daryl & Karena Yoder, Ava Miller, Leonard & Melanie Miller, Marcus & Ruth Yoder, Dave & JoAnn Bontrager, Joe & Marilyn Detweiler, Marion & Diane Bontrager, David & LeAnn Raber, Loren & Colleen Mullett, Steven & Sharon Miller,



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2465 N 850 W
Shipshewana, IN 46565



414 E. Lake Street
Topeka, IN 46571

MORE FARMS NEEDED!

Please mail to:
Hometown Treasure - Mystery Farm,
P.O. Box 70,
Shipshewana, IN 46565.
Please include your name and address. 


Next Month Sponsored By: **THE CONNECTION**

Coloring Contest Winners

Six-year-old Madison Kate Lambright of 250 N, Shipshewana was our winner for the January Coloring Contest. She won an ice cream treat of choice at Tiffany's in Topeka.

Everyone else that sent in a page can stop by Tiffany's for a free small ice cream cone through February.

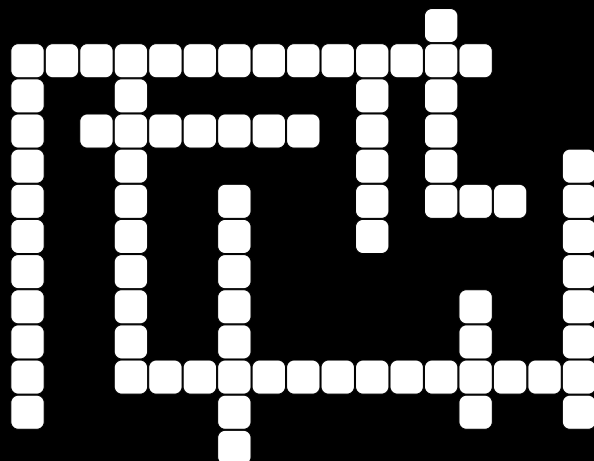
Runners-up were Erika Jade Miller, age 6; Drew Lambright, age 5; Maddelyn Rae Byler, age 4; Katie Jolyn Lehman, age 3; Adrian Like Fry, age 2. Honorable Mentions: Melanie Lambright, age 6; Julie Deann Bontrager, age 6; Sadie Bontrager, age 6; Brianna Rose Eash, age 6; Addalyn Hostetler, age 5; and Drew Nissley, age 4. Check out page 49 for this month's coloring page.

Be SURE to include all your information on the coloring page, even your age! ... we do not want you to miss out! Remember, the contest is only for children up to six years old. 



- Falcon
- Ferret
- Fiddler Crab
- Field Mouse
- Fire Salamander
- Flamingo
- Flatfish
- Flying Squirrel
- Fox
- Frog
- Fur Seal

Use the words listed to fill in the spaces!
(Might be backwards)



Clueless
Crossword

Solution to Clueless
Crossword is on pg 50.
by Marsha Patrick



WHAT DID
THE PICKLE
SAY TO HIS
VALENTINE?

Answer on page 50.

Want a different way to advertise?

We are looking for sponsors for the Clueless Crossword on a month by month basis. Emily would be happy to use words to do with your business as the words that get put in the puzzle. Call for more details! 260-463-4901.

100% HOMEMADE ICE CREAM
VANILLA BEAN
— CREAMERY —



100 S Van Buren St.
Shipshewana, IN 46565



Name: _____ Age: _____

Coloring Contest: kids age 6 and younger. Sponsored by Vanilla Bean Creamery in Shipshewana this month! Winner gets a **FREE ICE CREAM TREAT OF CHOICE** at Vanilla Bean Creamery. The Winning Drawings will be on display. **ALL PARTICIPANTS** claim your drawing for **A FREE ICE-CREAM CONE** at Vanilla Bean Creamery in March. Mail submission to: LaGwana, Coloring Contest, PO Box 70, Shipshewana, IN 46565. **Entry deadline is February 17, 2026**

Address: _____

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