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TABLE OF CONTENTS

City of Geneseo Update 6

Children's Mental Health 7

Out with the Old 8

Geneseo Love Notes 10

Building Trust for Generations 12

Winter Warriors 13

Fall Post-Season Athletics 14-15

Featured Recipes 17-18

History of the Christmas Walk 20-21

Community-Minded Healthcare 22-23

TSOG Collage 24-25

Building Healthy Habits 26

Scarecrow Row Collage 28-29

Tech for Daily Life 30

10 Life Hacks 31

GHS Basketball 32-33

GPD Impact Program 34-35

Then & Now 36

Organizing and Securing Your Digital Life 37

Supporting Small Businesses 38

Bob Reese Memorial Dual Sport/ Enduro 40-41

Simplify Your Life 42

Snow Day Bucket List 43





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PUBLIC INTEREST PROJECTS UPDATE: *Enhancing Geneseo's Infrastructure and Community*



The City of Geneseo has had a busy and productive 2024. Replacement of infrastructure dating back to the early 20th century has been a primary focus for elected officials and staff. The N. State Street project got started with its first phase and will pick back up in the Spring of 2025. This project is a full replacement of critical underground water, sewer, and storm infrastructure, along with new streets, sidewalk, and decorative street lighting spanning from Park Street to Ogden Avenue. Other water service and main replacement projects took place on Oakwood Avenue, North Street, and Orange Street. A new water well is currently under construction on the north side of town and engineering studies have begun for a deep well for the south end of town as the City plans for future needs.

Thanks to the generous support of the Miller Foundation, Springfield Armory, and the Daughter's of the American Revolution, the new "Historic Landing Area" was completed in the I-80 Interstate Corridor, creating an inviting and welcoming sector to those coming into Geneseo. The City has applied for a State grant to aid in funding a pedestrian bridge over the Geneseo Creek in this area as well, which has been deemed an important pedestrian safety enhancement for the community.

Investments were also made in enhancing décor and improving infrastructure in our Historic Downtown to support the tourism events and initiatives that are vitally important to the businesses that call the Historic District home. Recreational upgrades include new pickle ball fencing and disc golf baskets at Richmond Hill Park.

As look forward to year 2025, the continuation of outdated critical infrastructure continues to be the main focus. The north water tower will undergo an upgrade, including a new paint job. Engineering for a phosphorus removal system will begin at the waste water treatment plant, a mandate by the EPA that the city must come into compliance with by 2030. Geneseo Electric continues to make upgrades to our distribution system and power plant facility and is working on options for a new solar array to produce more local energy in the future. Our police department will be completing an upgrade to their shooting range, making it a certified training facility for law enforcement in our area. On the recreation front, the city will begin exploring a shared use path opportunity on Chicago Street and look at enhancements for bicyclists coming into the city from the Hennepin Canal with new signage and other safety features.

The City of Geneseo remains committed to improving infrastructure, community spaces and quality of life for residents and visitors. For additional information, please give me a call at 309-944-6419.

Brandon Maeglin
Geneseo City Administrator



Children's Mental Health

Parenting plays a crucial role in shaping the mental health of children. As parents, it is important to create a nurturing and supportive environment for our kids to thrive. By providing love, understanding, and guidance, we can help them develop resilience and coping skills to navigate life's challenges.

- **CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT**

Establish daily routines, like meal times and bed times, and make time for activities that your child enjoys.

- **COMMUNICATE OPENLY**

Encourage your child to share their feelings and check in with them regularly.

- **BE A ROLE MODEL**

Work on your own coping skills and show your child how to handle big emotions in healthy ways.

- **PRACTICE MINDFULNESS**

Help your child learn to focus on the present moment through breathing and meditation.

- **ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Children aged 6–17 should get at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity each day.

- **HELP YOUR CHILD FORM SOCIAL CONNECTIONS**

Group activities, like arts or volunteering, can help foster good mental health.

- **PROVIDE A SAFE AND SECURE HOME**

Be loving, patient, and reassuring, and avoid nagging, threats, and bribery.

- **TALK ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS**

If you lose your temper, talk about what happened and why you were angry.

- **CONSIDER OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT**

If your child doesn't want to talk to you, suggest other people they could talk to, like a doctor, family friend, or religious leader.

By creating a nurturing and supportive environment, providing love, understanding, and guidance, and being mindful of our own mental health, we can help our children develop resilience and coping skills. Communication, healthy habits, and seeking professional help when needed are all important aspects of promoting our children's well-being. By working together and staying mindful of our own well-being, we can empower our children to lead happy and fulfilling lives.

Out with the Old, In with the New!

Chicago Street Decorating Center has been a proud part of the Geneseo community for over 30 years. We are dedicated to creating custom, functional spaces tailored to your lifestyle. Our main location, at 1000 S. Chicago Street in Geneseo, offers a wide selection of flooring, cabinetry, countertops, backsplashes, window treatments, paint, and wall coverings. Meanwhile, our State Street location focuses on the “finishing touches,” including home décor and accessories.

As the new year begins, many homeowners feel inspired to refresh their homes. Some projects may be small, like updating home décor or changing paint colors in a few rooms. Others may involve tackling long-postponed renovations, such as a kitchen remodel. Whatever the project, we recommend visiting our showroom for inspiration. Our variety of displays can help spark ideas, and we even offer free in-home design consultations to guide you through the process step by step.

One of the key design trends for the coming year is stained wood kitchen cabinetry. While not everyone is ready to embrace the return of oak or white-oak-stained cabinets, this is where the industry is headed. For some, it may be a subtle accent, such as on a kitchen island; for others, it may become a defining element of their kitchen's overall design. Additionally, we are seeing a shift in paint preferences, moving away from whites and cool grays toward off-whites and warmer undertones paired with deep accent colors. Hardwood flooring is also making a comeback, replacing LVT as more customers seek a “natural feel” for their homes. Throughout these changes, simple, clean lines remain at the core of modern design and will likely continue to dominate.

“My favorite part of my job is meeting homeowners and getting to know them,” says designer Mariah Hutchinson. “I love the design process—helping people select products that reflect the look and feel of their home is so rewarding. We aim to create a unique experience for every homeowner we work with.”

Mariah has been a designer at Chicago Street Decorating Center for 12 years, working alongside industry expert Scott Kelsall. With over 25 years of experience installing flooring and 12 years of sales expertise, Scott brings a wealth of knowledge to the team. Together, Mariah and Scott provide clients with a personalized and informed approach to design, ensuring every project is a success.





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GENESEO *Love Notes*

Shirley Brown

I love the park! It is the center of most of the attractions...bandstand, ice cream socials, shoot the loop events, and an easy walk to the many fine festivals and parades. It's also a short trip to several restaurants and the downtown area and the movie theater. Just an overall nice town with the park as its star attraction!



Jill Dargin

For a small community in Illinois, we have a vibrant and supportive community. We have a nice selection of small businesses and restaurants. There are great community events and activities. Good schools and programs. It's a great place to raise a family and be a retiree.

Sally Eberhardt

I love the mix of old and new. Our community honors traditions, but people are visionary enough to try new things, too!

Jeanne Anderson

I love the people of Geneseo. When things are difficult, they band together to help others. They are a blessing.

Kristi Barnes Ott

I love the small town with a big smile. Geneseo provides so many wonderful events and a sense of community.

Rhonda Goodson Homboldt

The friendly and safe feeling of a small town but with so many amenities normally seen only in large cities. A hospital, a vibrant community center, pool and splash pad, a bowling alley, a theater, music and art studios, so many restaurants and shopping choices, and non-stop family events.

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- ✓ Real estate listings
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Visit B&B Lawn Equipment to explore Toro snow blowers and prepare for a hassle-free winter.

Winter Warrior: Why a Toro Snow Blower Is a Midwest Must-Have & Seasonal Maintenance Tips

Winter in the Midwest brings heavy snowfalls and icy winds that can quickly turn driveways into impassable paths. For those facing these harsh conditions, a Toro snow blower is not just a convenience—it's essential. Toro's reputation for durability and performance makes its machines perfect for Midwest winters. At B&B Lawn Equipment, we can help you choose the ideal Toro and provide expert maintenance services.

Why Choose a Toro Snow Blower?

Toro snow blowers are built for reliability and efficiency, featuring powerful engines and advanced auger systems to handle deep, wet, and icy snow. Whether you need a compact single-stage model or a heavy-duty three-stage option, Toro has a solution for every need. User-friendly features like electric starts, ergonomic handles, and intuitive controls make operation easy, while rugged construction ensures long-lasting performance. Environmentally conscious? Toro offers electric and battery-powered models for quiet, emission-free operation.

Benefits of Owning a Toro in the Midwest

A Toro snow blower saves time, clearing driveways in minutes instead of hours. It also promotes safety by reducing the physical strain of shoveling and helping prevent slips and falls on icy paths. Built to last, Toro snow blowers provide exceptional value, with dependable performance and minimal maintenance over decades of use.

Three Simple Maintenance Tips

1. Check the Fuel System

Drain old fuel at the start of the season, refill with fresh gasoline, and use a stabilizer to keep the fuel system in top shape.

2. Inspect and Clean the Auger and Chute

After each use, remove debris from the auger and chute and inspect for damage. Lubricate moving parts to extend the machine's life.

3. Change the Oil Regularly

Replace old oil at the start of the season and check levels periodically. Use the type recommended by Toro for optimal engine performance.

Bonus Tip: Off-Season Storage

At winter's end, empty the fuel tank, clean the snow blower thoroughly, and store it in a dry place. For battery-powered models, remove the battery and store it indoors.



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EASY CARROT CAKE

PREP 20min • COOK 45min • TOTAL 1hrs 5min
Makes 1 (9-inch) double layer cake or 22 to 24 cupcakes

FOR CARROT CAKE

2 cups all-purpose flour, spooned and leveled
2 teaspoons baking soda,
important to level the teaspoon, see tips
1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 1/4 cups vegetable oil
1 cup granulated sugar
1 cup lightly packed brown sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
4 large eggs, at room temperature
3 cups grated peeled carrots, 5 to 6 medium carrots
1 cup coarsely chopped pecans
1/2 cup raisins

FOR CREAMY FROSTING

8 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature
2 teaspoons cornstarch, optional
1 1/4 cups powdered sugar
1/3 cup cold heavy cream, not plain whipping cream, see tips
1/2 cup coarsely chopped pecans, for topping cake



DIRECTIONS

Bake Cake

Position a rack in the middle of the oven. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Grease two 9-inch round cake pans.

Whisk flour, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon in a medium bowl until well blended.

In a separate bowl, whisk the oil, granulated sugar, brown sugar, and vanilla.

Add the eggs, one at a time, whisking after each one.

Using a rubber spatula, scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl. Then add the dry ingredients in three parts, gently stirring until they disappear and the batter is smooth.

Stir in the carrots, nuts, and raisins.

Divide the cake batter between the prepared cake pans. Bake until the tops of the cake layers are springy when touched and when a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean. About 35 to 45 minutes.

Cool the cakes in the pans for 15 minutes, then carefully turn the cake layers out onto cooling racks. Cool completely.

FROST CAKE

In a large bowl, beat the cream cheese with a handheld mixer on medium speed for about one minute or until smooth and creamy.

Beat in the powdered sugar and cornstarch a 1/4 cup at a time until combined.

Pour in the heavy cream. Beat on medium speed for 2 to 3 minutes or until the frosting is whipped and creamy.

Chill covered until ready to frost the cake.

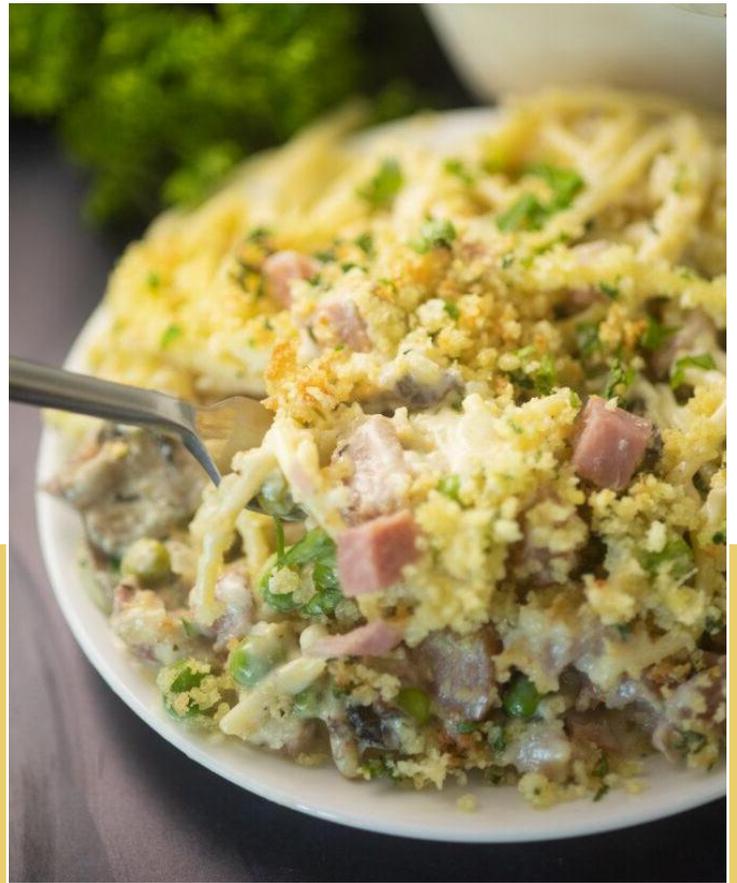
When the cake layers are completely cool, frost the top of one cake layer and place the second cake layer on top.

Add the remaining frosting to the top of the carrot cake. Leave the sides of the cake unfrosted. Finish with a handful of nuts on top.

Ham Tettrazini

5 tablespoons butter
1/2 lb sliced fresh mushrooms
1/2 cup chopped onion
1/4 cup flour
2 cups chicken broth
1 1/4 cups milk or 1 1/4 cups cream
1 cup shredded monterey jack and cheddar cheese blend
1 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon lemon juice
8 ounces spaghetti noodles, broken into thirds
3 cups cooked ham, cubed
4 ounces chopped pimienta, drained
1/4 cup parmesan cheese

1/4 cup toasted breadcrumb
Melt butter in a skillet. Saute mushrooms and onions, until most of mushroom liquid has evaporated.
Blend in flour until smooth.
Add broth, and milk or cream, stirring until smooth and thickened.
Add cheese, salt, pepper and lemon juice. Stir until cheese melts.
Lower heat and simmer uncovered 10-15 minutes.
While sauce is simmering, cook spaghetti noodles. Drain noodles and add sauce along with ham and pimentos.
Spoon into greased 2 quart casserole and sprinkle with parmesan and bread crumbs.
Bake at 400 for 20-30 minutes.



French Toast Casserole

1 loaf sourdough bread (or brioche or French bread)
8 large eggs
2 cups milk
1/2 cup heavy cream
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
3/4 cup sugar
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup cold unsalted butter, cut into pieces



Instructions

Cut bread into 1-inch cubes and scatter evenly in a greased 9-x-13-inch baking dish.
In a medium bowl, mix eggs, milk, heavy cream, vanilla, and sugar together, then pour evenly over bread.
Cover the dish with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 4 hours, or overnight.
To make the topping, mix flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, and salt in a medium bowl. Cut butter into this mixture until crumbly. Place the topping in a small resealable plastic bag and refrigerate overnight, as well.
When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
Unwrap the baking dish and sprinkle the topping evenly over the bread.
Bake, uncovered, for 45-60 minutes, depending on how soft you like it.
Serve with warm syrup and powdered sugar.



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Merry Christmas

Geneseo's Friday Night Victorian Walk Becomes a Saturday Christmas Walk Tradition

By Claudia Loucks, Geneseo Current

The Christmas Walk tradition continues not only in Geneseo, but also with a Geneseo family who was instrumental in the Walk's beginning.

The late Linda Kutsunis, who with her husband, George Kutsunis, founded Four Seasons and Pegasus Fine Gifts stores in Geneseo, is one of the people who was involved with the Walk in its infancy, 39 years ago, and who helped make it the success it is today.

The couple's daughter, Katie Kutsunis, has taken over the reins of the businesses as her mother has passed and her father is semi-retired.

Katie Kutsunis also has continued in her mother's footsteps in working to make the annual Christmas Walk a success, and she said, "Geneseo's Christmas Walk has evolved over the years and has expanded; it just keeps getting better and better."

In checking with Zack Sullivan, executive director of the Geneseo Chamber of Commerce, as to whether or not the Christmas Walk happened during the Covid pandemic, it did indeed happen, and he said, "Yes, the event happened during Covid, in 2020, as a hybrid live and virtual event. We did the Lighted Parade city-wide, but the tree lighting was done virtually."

In an interview six years ago with the late Linda Kutsunis, she shared how her volunteer work began with the Christmas Walk. She said the event had been in existence for a couple of years when a good friend of hers, Judy Deutsch, who was on the Chamber of Commerce board at that time, told her the Chamber was looking for someone to take over chairmanship of the Walk and encouraged Kutsunis to fill that spot, and Kutsunis said, "yes."

In our earlier conversation, Kutsunis said she never regretted saying "yes" to the Walk and she began the challenge by soliciting help from the late Clyde Walter, who at that time was Director of the Chamber.

They developed a committee and met nearly every week.

Linda Kutsunis spearheaded the Walk efforts until 1991 when she opened Pegasus, and relied more on her Walk Committee. The group planned many fundraisers, including bringing a circus to town in the summer to raise money for the then "Victorian Walk."

In my interview with Linda Kutsunis before her death, she described the Victorian Walk as a time of hoop skirts and high-laced shoes...a team of horses and buggies and bicycles built for two...and her quote at that time, "Even though it has become the Christmas Walk, it remains a magical time of year."

The things that made America special and great have been

forged, nurtured and cherished in small towns just like Geneseo, including events like the Christmas Walk.

The Christmas Walk was known as the Victorian Walk until 2008 when it became the Christmas Walk, and Linda Kutsunis referred to both events as a "unique experience."

The first Victorian Walk in Geneseo was held during the pre-Christmas season of 1985, the brainchild of Ann Ruble, who, with her husband, ran the Décor Shop in downtown Geneseo. Ruble had seen what was being done in the Village of East Davenport and after talking to some of the participants there, she decided a similar event on a slightly larger scale would be a natural fit for Geneseo.

For many years Geneseo's Victorian Walk was held on a Friday night in December, and the date was later changed to Saturday to accommodate people.

In the beginning years, Geneseo received funding from the Illinois Office of Tourism for the Victorian Walk, but that money slowly dwindled down to nothing.

The cost of the Walk is now covered by sponsorships and donations and the dedicated volunteers and loyal sponsors continue to make the Walk a magical time in Geneseo.

Kutsunis said the Victorian Walk was never meant to be a "money maker," but rather a gift from the community to the people in the community and to the visitors who come each year from miles around. The Christmas Walk is an opportunity to showcase Geneseo. It's another day and another age in Geneseo."

AN EARLIER CONVERSATION WITH KATIE KUTSUNIS

Katie Kutsunis said, "My Mom, Linda Kutsunis, loved the time she spent volunteering and leading the Christmas Walk Committee. I am honored to be a part of this event every year. My Mom loved Christmas and this event is the perfect way to celebrate this time of year."

She credits the Geneseo Chamber of Commerce for the success of the Walk, and said, "The Geneseo Chamber of Commerce works so hard to plan an event that showcases our shops and restaurants and gives visitors a beautiful and fun way to enjoy a small town holiday experience."

She added, "The business community really comes together to roll out the red carpet for the Geneseo Christmas Walk and we invite everyone to plan on attending and joining in the festivities."

The new holiday Christmas Tree, located on the corner of the boulevard at State and Second Sts., recently was introduced to the community, and Kutsunis said, "The City of Geneseo will showcase the new holiday Christmas Tree which is a gorgeous new addition for our beautiful town. Everyone should plan on taking a picture in front of the new iconic addition to Geneseo."

The lighted parade is a huge attraction of the Walk, and immediately after the parade, people can browse the shops and see the living windows.

"Geneseo is truly magical during the holidays and the Geneseo Christmas Walk is the pinnacle of the holiday season," Kutsunis said.



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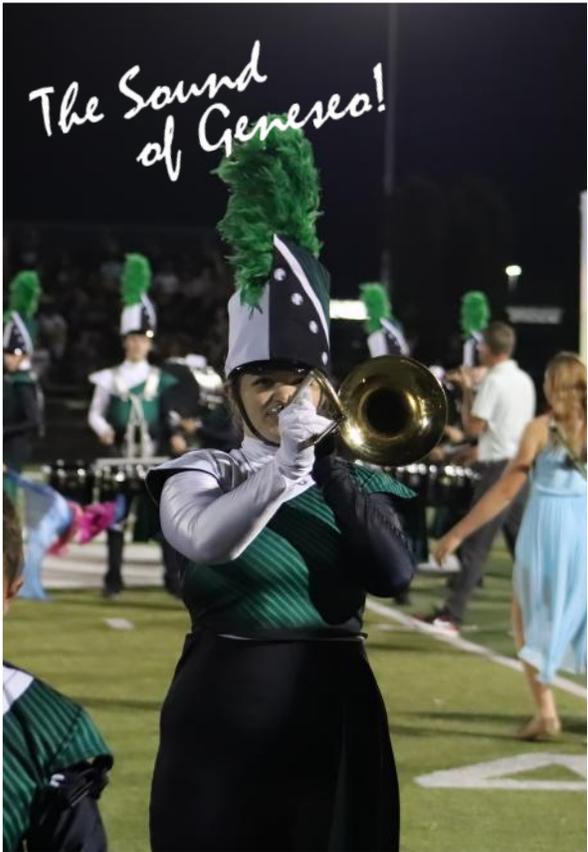
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TECH To Simplify Daily Life

Technology is no longer just the domain of younger generations; it's a powerful ally for simplifying and enhancing life for all ages. From managing daily tasks to pursuing hobbies and staying healthy, the right gadgets can make a big difference. Here are some of the best tools and tech to consider adding to your life.



CONVENIENCE

smart speakers, smart thermostats, portable chargers

DAILY LIFE

AirTags or Tiles, smart coffee makers, automatic lawn mowers, noise-canceling headphones



TRAVEL

GPS devices, power banks with solar charging, smart luggage

FITNESS AND HEALTH

wearable devices, smart water bottles, digital blood pressure monitors





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1. Charge Faster in Airplane Mode

Put your phone in airplane mode while charging to speed up the process by reducing background activity.

2. Use a Binder Clip for Cable Management

Attach binder clips to the edge of your desk to organize and keep charging cables from falling off.

3. Freeze Herbs in Olive Oil

Chop fresh herbs, place them in an ice cube tray, and cover with olive oil. Freeze for easy use in cooking later.

4. Keep Shoes Odor-Free with Tea Bags

Place unused tea bags inside shoes to absorb moisture and odors overnight.

5. Speed Up Cooling Drinks

Wrap a damp paper towel around a bottle or can and put it in the freezer for 10-15 minutes for quick chilling.



6. Prevent Foggy Mirrors

Rub a small amount of shaving cream on bathroom mirrors, then wipe it off to prevent fogging after showers.

7. Extend Candle Life

Place candles in the freezer for a few hours before lighting to make them burn slower and last longer.

8. Keep Bananas Fresh Longer

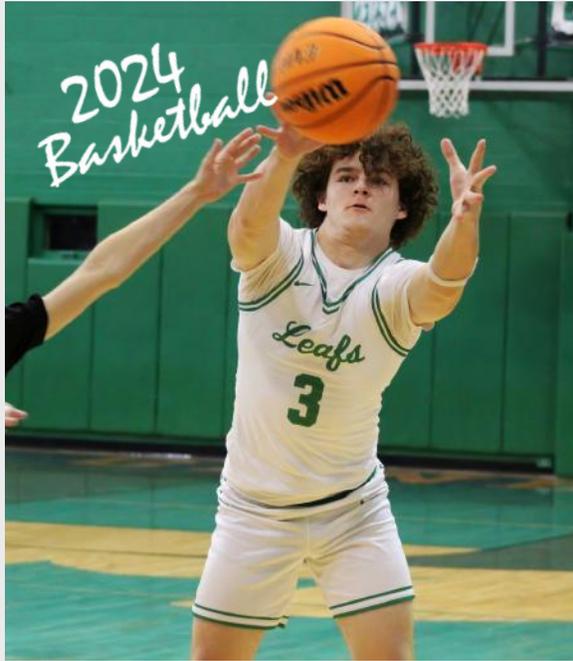
Wrap plastic wrap around the crown of a bunch of bananas to slow ripening.

9. Quickly Find Tiny Lost Items

Stretch a piece of pantyhose over the end of a vacuum hose to find small items like earrings without sucking them up.

10. Use an Elastic Band for Better Grip

Wrap an elastic band around a jar or bottle lid to give you extra grip, making it easier to open tight containers without straining your hands.





GPD IMPACT



The Geneseo Police Department launched a support task force called IMPACT in 2022. This task force focuses on mental health, substance use, and crisis intervention in the community and includes Chief Disterhoft, Deputy Chief Karzin, Sgt. Sleaford, Detective J. Shoemaker, Detective Tim Steines and officer Berthoud. All officers in the department assist.

The team is currently supporting multiple clients with various resources, such as inpatient detox, therapy, food, and housing. While some individuals have extreme, urgent needs, others may only need regular check-ins, while still others benefit more from communication with their families. The goal, says Detective Shoemaker, is to make sure all necessities are met because "a person in crisis may overlook day to day necessities."

The IMPACT program has seen great success this year. The team has helped many individuals get into treatment, find housing, and assist families in need of resources and support. They also just hosted their third annual conference to educate first responders and break the stigma surrounding substance abuse and mental illness.

The program continues to evolve based on the needs of the community. This year the GPD also added the Dementia Task Force and made Geneseo a Dementia-Friendly Community. Dementia bracelets, an easy way for first responders to identify those afflicted and provide targeted care, are now available for free to the community thanks to fundraising efforts by the GPD. Contact the GPD for more information.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT PROGRAM?

Integrated Mobile Peace and Crisis Team

Collaborative, immediate and comprehensive crisis response for individuals and their families

Targeted and proactive approach to individuals' needs

Addresses mental illness, substance abuse, and crisis calls



Detective J. Shoemaker

"This job is tough at times, but the juice is worth the squeeze, and it makes my heart full to know we are doing so much good. The Geneseo Police Department is changing how policing is viewed and that to me is priceless."

IMPACT MISSION STATEMENT

"The mission of the Geneseo Police Department IMPACT Task Force is to provide a coordinated, professional and compassionate police response to individuals affected by mental illness, substance abuse or in need of crisis intervention. IMPACT officers will work collaboratively with family members and partnering agencies to achieve improved outcomes for individuals affected by mental illness, substance use or suffering a crisis by connecting them to needed services and diverting them away from the criminal justice system whenever possible. IMPACT officers will follow up with individuals and family members to prevent future calls for service. By providing access to professional assistance and crisis resources IMPACT will seek to improve safety for all members of our community."

Then & Now



The Deck Plaza opened in 1971. The ten acre site featured a gas station, dining room, coffee shop, gift shop, convention room, cocktail lounge, 120 room motel, & indoor swimming pool. The site was leveled in the early 2000's.

Built at the former Deck Plaza location, Hy-Vee Dollar Fresh Market became the first in Illinois when they moved into the former Save-a-Lot building.



ORGANIZE AND SECURE YOUR DIGITAL LIFE IN THE NEW YEAR

As a new year begins, it's the perfect time to declutter, organize, and secure your digital life. With our reliance on technology growing daily, maintaining a well-organized and secure digital presence is essential for productivity and peace of mind. Here are actionable steps to get started:

1. CONDUCT A DIGITAL DECLUTTER

Start by cleaning up your devices and accounts. Delete unused apps, files, and software that no longer serve you. Unsubscribe from newsletters and services that clutter your inbox. Organize your files into clearly labeled folders, and back up important data to a secure cloud service or external hard drive.

2. STRENGTHEN PASSWORD SECURITY

Weak or reused passwords are a major vulnerability. Create strong, unique passwords for every account using a password manager. These tools generate and store complex passwords, eliminating the need to remember them. Enable two-factor authentication (2FA) on critical accounts, such as email and banking, for an added layer of security.

3. AUDIT YOUR ONLINE ACCOUNTS

Take stock of the accounts you've created over the years. Use a tool or checklist to identify unused accounts and delete them to reduce your digital footprint. For active accounts, review your privacy settings and ensure you're sharing only necessary information.

4. UPDATE AND PATCH SOFTWARE

Outdated software is a common entry point for cyberattacks. Ensure your operating system, apps, and antivirus programs are up to date. Enable automatic updates where possible to stay ahead of vulnerabilities.

5. MANAGE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

Social media platforms often store a significant amount of personal data. Review and clean up old posts, adjust privacy settings, and be cautious about the information you share publicly. Consider using separate accounts for personal and professional interactions.

6. ORGANIZE YOUR DIGITAL FINANCES

Track your subscriptions and set reminders for billing cycles to avoid unnecessary expenses. Use financial apps to monitor spending and secure accounts with fraud alerts.

7. ESTABLISH A ROUTINE

Commit to regularly maintaining your digital life. Set monthly reminders to back up data, review account security, and declutter devices. Building these habits can save time and prevent future headaches.

By taking these proactive steps, you can start the new year with a more organized and secure digital presence. Whether you're safeguarding your personal information, improving productivity, or reducing digital stress, a little effort now can make a big difference throughout the year.



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Support Local Small Business

Supporting local small businesses is a powerful way to strengthen your community, but many people don't realize that you can make a significant impact without spending a dime. Whether you're sharing a post on social media or offering a kind word of encouragement, there are countless ways to show your support for small businesses that don't require a financial commitment. By getting creative and using your time, energy, and connections, you can help boost the visibility and success of local shops, restaurants, and services. Here are some simple yet effective ways to support your favorite small businesses—no wallet required!

1. Spread the Word on Social Media
2. Leave Positive Reviews
3. Recommend Them to Friends and Family
4. Engage with Their Social Media Content
5. Attend Free Events or Promotions





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THE BOB REESE MEMORIAL DUAL SPORT/ENDURO

This past October, over 200 riders lined up on a local farm in Geneseo for a fun-filled trail ride, the Bob Reese Memorial Dual Sport/Enduro. This has been an incredible event organized by motorcycle enthusiasts and riders themselves. The planning begins in early July, with a group of more than 30 volunteers who dedicate countless hours during nights and weekends to lay out and clear the 50+ mile trail that crosses 13 different landowner properties. Riders come from near and far to participate in this annual two-day event, challenging themselves by crossing deep creek beds, jumping over huge logs, climbing steep hills, and navigating off-camber trails that are sometimes impassable, especially if the weather does not cooperate.

Originating in the 1960s, the Enduro event became more than just an idea. With that in mind, 2025 will mark 60 years since its inception. However, the Enduro has not been held continuously due to various challenges.

The event was originally called the Con Rod Derby, and it was hosted by the Tri-City Motorcycle Club, based in Coal Valley, Illinois. The race started on the Kershaw Farm in Colona, at the base of the Rock River Bridge. It traversed many areas of land in Henry County, including the Green River and Rock River bottoms, which were unsuitable for farming. The course passed through multiple landowners' fields and wooded areas, including Bob Reese's farm, the former owner of Springfield Armory in Geneseo. Bob Reese's farm always presented the biggest challenge due to its steep hills.

Over time, as off-road motorcycling became more centralized with shorter courses, hare scramble races became more popular, and Enduros began to fade away.

In the early 1990s, Enduro enthusiasts Ron and Harv Whipple revived the event with support from their families and friends. With backing from the Reese family, the event was renamed the Springfield Armory Silver Dollar Shootout. After a brief hiatus, the event was held at the Livesay Farm in Geneseo, and later alternated between Loitz's Farm and the Springfield Armory machine shop by the Reese Farm.

However, like in the early days, it became increasingly difficult for the Whipple brothers to lay out a course over such long distances, so they decided to step back. Troy McDonald, another Enduro enthusiast, then took over the event and ran it for a while.

In 2013, Jerrod Minnaert and a handful of his close friends, including the Whipple and McDonald families, took over the Enduro. After Bob Reese's passing in June of 2019, the decision was made to honor him and his legacy by renaming the event in 2020 to the Bob Reese Memorial Dual Sport/Enduro.

Jerrod and his friends have breathed new life into the Enduro by aligning with various charities to donate the proceeds. Funds are raised through rider entry fees and the sale of raffle tickets for a chance to win a pistol donated by Springfield Armory. This year, the proceeds were donated to the



Honor Flight of the Quad Cities and the Henry County Special Operations Squad. This year marks the 15th year that proceeds have been donated to the Honor Flight of the Quad Cities, with total donations exceeding \$75,000. These funds have enabled the Honor Flight to send numerous veterans who served in WWII, the Cold War, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War to Washington, D.C. They are currently accepting applications from veterans who served during the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), as well as female veterans who have ever served. They are also accepting applications for Guardians. Both forms can be found on their website under the Application Forms tab: www.honorflightqc.org.

The Henry/Stark County SWAT Team was the other organization to receive a donation from the 2024 Bob Reese Memorial Dual Sport/Enduro. Since 2019, nearly \$15,000 has been donated to the SWAT Team, which helps cover the costs of training, consumable materials used during operations, and the purchase of new equipment. The SWAT Team consists of 12 officers who are either patrol officers or detectives from local county agencies.

The Bob Reese Memorial Dual Sport/Enduro brings together a large group of passionate motorcycle enthusiasts—individuals who embrace the challenge of the sport—year after year to raise funds for meaningful causes. Their dedication and teamwork continue to make a significant impact on the lives of others. For more information, visit the Bob Reese Memorial Dual Sport/Enduro Facebook page.



Simplify Your Life:

Effective Decluttering Methods to Organize Your Space

Decluttering is more than just tidying up; it's a way to reclaim your space, reduce stress, and create an environment that fosters productivity and peace. Whether you're tackling a cluttered desk or an entire home, these effective decluttering methods can help you simplify your surroundings and your life.

1. The KonMari Method

Marie Kondo's KonMari Method focuses on keeping items that "spark joy." This method is great for those seeking an emotional connection to their belongings.

2. The Four-Box Method

This practical technique is perfect for quick decision-making: keep, donate, trash, relocate. This method works well for breaking down large projects into manageable chunks.

3. The 20/20 Rule

From the Minimalists, this rule suggests that if an item can be replaced for \$20 or less in 20 minutes, you don't need to keep it.

4. The One-In, One-Out Rule

To prevent future clutter, adopt this habit:
For Every New Item, Let One Go

5. The 12-12-12 Challenge

Turn decluttering into a fun, family-friendly activity:
Find 12 items each to throw away, donate, or
put away in their proper place.

6. The Timer Technique

Overwhelmed by a big mess? Break it down with timed sessions and small areas. This approach is ideal for maintaining motivation without burnout.

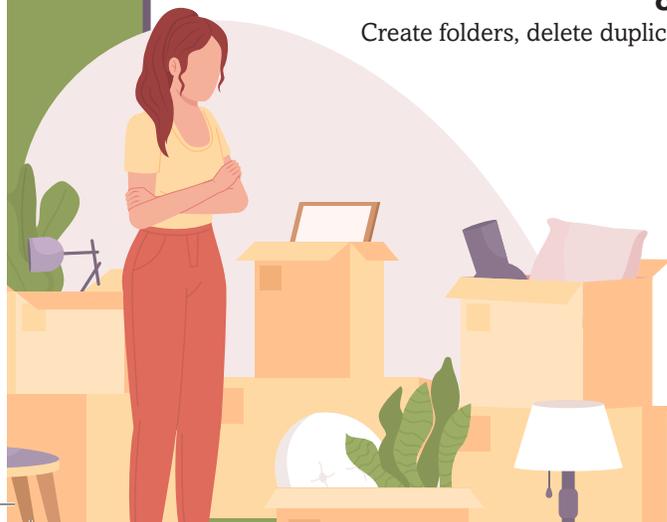
7. The Five-Minute Rule

Spend just five minutes a day decluttering in small, high-traffic areas like countertops or entryways.

8. Digital Decluttering

Create folders, delete duplicates, unsubscribe from mailing lists, and delete unused apps.

Decluttering doesn't have to be daunting. By choosing a method (or combination of methods) that works best for you, you can create a space that supports your lifestyle and promotes peace of mind. Remember, the goal isn't perfection but progress—every step you take brings you closer to a more organized, joyful environment.



Snow Day Bucket List

1. Build a snowman in the backyard
2. Have a snowball fight with friends and family
3. Go sledding down a nearby hill
4. Make snow angels in the fresh snow
5. Create snow art by painting the snow with food coloring
6. Bake cookies or make hot chocolate to enjoy after playing in the snow
7. Have a movie marathon with popcorn and blankets
8. Play board games or do a puzzle together
9. Have an indoor scavenger hunt
10. Make homemade snow ice cream to enjoy a sweet treat on a cold day



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