



# Rockton-Roscoe News

December 2024 ♦ Special Holiday Edition ♦ Published Daily at [roscoenews.com](http://roscoenews.com)  
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## Rockton Christmas Walk: 40 years of traditions

By Marianne Mueller



Rockton Christmas Walk is steeped in tradition, plus newer ideas for future growth. This year, visitors can honor the event's rich history while taking in all there is to offer on Dec. 6, 7 and 8, 2024. A special project outlining the event's 40 year history will be revealed.

Tirelessly working behind the scenes for the past nine years is event organizer Tricia Diduch.

A full schedule of events, addresses, times, costs of specific events and a complete list of sponsors can be found on the Rockton Christmas Walk website.

In Settlers Park, a stunning Christmas tree is already awaiting the eye-catching displays that will be created by businesses and organizations at the park.

Rockton residents can get in the spirit by lighting up their property with luminaries being provided by the Cronin family at Village Green Park.

The Friends of Talcott Free Library invite the community to their Holiday Used Book Sale on December 6, 7, and 9. Stop by and shop for gently used books,

DVD's and miscellaneous items from 9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. on Friday, and 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. on Saturday, with the sale also happening on Monday from 9 a.m. until 8 p.m.

Throughout the weekend, businesses will welcome shoppers wanting something to eat or drink or for searching that perfect gift.

Buckets n Blooms on N. Blackhawk is offering a 3D printed ornament with any purchase.

### Friday, Dec. 6, 2024

Tickets are already sold out for Dueling Pianos at the Rockton American Legion on Friday evening. This event is generously sponsored by the Gary J. Bach Agency and the RDM Foundation.

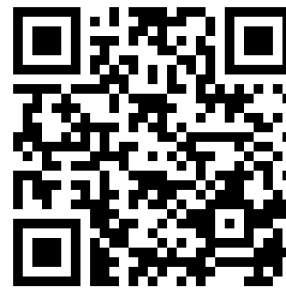
Join the Willowbrook Middle School choir on Friday evening as they bring sounds of the season to life at 5:30 p.m., at Settlers Park where beautiful sights will follow.

Adults are encouraged to wear their ugly sweaters to Friday's Ugly Sweater Pub Crawl, starting at 7 p.m. Crawling is optional.

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Making ornaments at Rockton Christmas Walk 2022



Scan for the latest Stateline news at [roscoenews.com](http://roscoenews.com)

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# What's happening in the Stateline this month

### 40th Annual Rockton Christmas Walk

Fri-Sun Dec 6-8, 2024 6:00 pm, Downtown Rockton IL

### Holiday Tree Lighting

Fri Dec 6, 2024, 4:30 pm, Nature at the Confluence, 306 Dickop Street, South Beloit IL

### Christmas Tree Lighting

Fri Dec 6, 2024, 6 pm, Settlers Park, 150 Hawick St, Rockton, IL

### All You Can Eat Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, Dec. 7, 2024, 7 - 11 a.m., American Center, 221 W. Main St., Rockton, IL

### Rockton Christmas Walk Lighted Parade

Sat Dec 7, 2024 6:00 pm, Downtown Rockton Rockton IL

### Santa's Attic Half Price Sale

Saturday Dec. 7, 2024 9 am - 4 pm, Rockton Township Historical Society, Green and Blackhawk, 529 Green St., Rockton, IL

### 2nd Annual Very Merry Pop Up Shop

Saturday, Dec. 7, 2024, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., Kinnikinnick School, Roscoe IL

### Lighting of Village Green Park

Sat Dec 7, 2024, 4:30 - 5 pm, Village Green Park 100 E. Chapel St. Rockton IL,

### Music: Duosonic

Sat Dec 7, 2024 8:00 pm, Louie's Tap House 5689 Elevator Road Roscoe IL

### Christmas at Macktown

Sun Dec 8, 2024 2:00 pm, Macktown Living History 2221 Freeport Rd Rockton IL

### Heritage Concert Band

Sunday, Dec. 8, 2024, 5 p.m., Heritage Baptist Church, 12848 Willowbrook Road, Roscoe, IL

### Winter Fine Arts Festival

Monday, December 9, 2024, 6:30 p.m., HCHS Performing Arts Center, 307 Salem St., Rockton

### Holiday Card Making Class

Wednesday Dec 11, 2024, 5:30 pm, Talcott Free Library 101 E. Main St. Rockton IL

### Roscoe Township Board Meeting

Wed Dec 11 7:00 pm, Roscoe Township 5792 Elevator Road Roscoe IL

### Roscoe Lions Community Blood Drive

Thursday, December 12, 2024, Noon to 6 PM at Roscoe Methodist Church

### Music: Pistol Pete

Fri Dec 13, 2024 7:00 pm, Louie's Tap House 5689 Elevator Road Roscoe IL

### 2024 Hometown Holiday & Merry Market

Saturday, Dec. 14, 2024, 3 - 7 p.m., Main Street, Roscoe

### Rockton American Legion's Chili Cook-Off

Thursday, Dec. 14, 2024, 2 p.m., American Center, 221 W. Main St., Rockton, IL

### Music for the Season

Sunday, December 15, 2024, Roscoe Methodist Church, 10816 Main St. Roscoe IL

### 29th Annual Christmas Candlelight Service

Sun, Dec. 15, 2024, 5 - 6 p.m., Church by the Side of the Road, 500 S Blackhawk Blvd, Rockton

### Christmas Choir Concert

Sunday, Dec. 15, 2024, 5 p.m., Heritage Baptist Church, 12848 Willowbrook Road, Roscoe, IL

### Snowfall: A Winter Band Concert

Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2024, 6 p.m., South Beloit High School, 245 Prairie Hill Rd, South Beloit, IL

### Prairie Hill School Board Meeting

Wed Dec 18 5:30 pm, Willowbrook Middle School Library 6605 Prairie Hill Rd South Beloit IL

### SOBO Food Pantry

Wed Dec 18 4:00 pm, Blackhawk Elementary School 840 Blackhawk Blvd. South Beloit IL

### 25th Stars & Promises Christmas Tour Featuring Peter Mayer

Sat Dec 21 7:30 pm, Hononegah Performing Arts Center 307 Salem Street Rockton IL

### Winter Solstice Rejuvenation

Sat Dec 21 6:00 pm, Nature at the Confluence 306 Dickop Street South Beloit IL

### Children's Christmas Play

Sunday, Dec. 22, 2024, 5 p.m., Heritage Baptist Church, 12848 Willowbrook Road, Roscoe, IL

### Christmas Eve Services at Roscoe Methodist Church

Tuesday, December 24, 2024, four Christmas Eve Service options, Roscoe Methodist Church, 10816 Main St. Roscoe

### Christmas Candlelight Service

Tuesday, Dec. 24, 2024, 5 p.m., Heritage Baptist Church, 12848 Willowbrook Road, Roscoe, IL

### NYE Weekend with Nauti-Nauti at Louie's Tap House

Sat Dec 28 8:00 pm, Louie's Tap House 5689 Elevator Rd. Roscoe



For more information about events or to register for them, scan to visit our community calendar at [roscoenews.com/events](https://roscoenews.com/events)

## About Us:

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# Livin' the dream: La Croûte Bakery Café

By Jean Seegers



Anna Pipitone was literally born into the food service business. She learned the art of creating and presenting great food at her parent's knees. Her mother and father are Tony and Maria Pipitone, owners of Sam's Pizza Restaurant restaurant in Rockton, Illinois, and Pino's Pizza in Rockford, Illinois. Anna's brother, Alberto, is the owner of Fib's Restaurant and Al's Main Street Tap, in Rockton.

Anna grew up in the food world and worked in the family business, learning all aspects of running a restaurant. At an early age, she set her cap on one day owning her own business.

During her years as a student at Hononegah Community High School, one of her favorite classes was "Foods around the World."

Anna was also enrolled in the school's Incubator Program, taught by Jason Brunke, coordinator of Career and Technical Education at the school. The entrepreneur program focuses on learning how to create a new business. Brunke and a group of area business owners mentor and coach the students, teaching them the necessary skills, such as marketing, finance and economics to become business owners.

Anna said she learned a lot from the class. While still in high school, she developed Simply Sweet, a confectionary business that featured homemade candies.

She sold the sweets at the family pizza restaurants and at Rockton River Market.

"Anna was a natural with creating products and finding a market," Brunke said. "Her business instincts, as well as her passion for baking was always evident. I am proud of Anna. She is a great role model for current and future students to know that hard work gets rewarded."

After graduating high school in 2018, she enrolled in the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) school in Napa Valley, California. She earned an associate degree in Baking and Pastry. Anna then transferred to the CIA New York campus in Hyde Park, New York, where she earned a bachelor degree in Food Business Management.

Simply Sweet has now morphed into La Croûte Bakery Café. After months of hard work and planning, Anna has transformed the large gray building at 116 W. Main Street in Rockton into a fully-equipped bakery and café with a European vibe. It was previously the location of eCom Elite Consulting, Home - In Rockton, and Butler's Emporium.

Espresso, soft drinks and lattes are also available.

Anna credits her dad for putting in a lot of effort and time to make the café attractive and functional.



La Croûte French Bakery in Rockton opened its doors on October 17, 2024. After lots of planning and hard work, Anna Pipitone has, fulfilled a life-long dream.

At the grand opening of La Croûte at 7:00 am on Thursday, October 17, 2024, the first 100 customers received a free chocolate cookie with purchase.

Café hours are Wednesday through Friday, 7 a.m. – 3 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

During business hours, customers and people passing by have the opportunity to watch Anna at work creating her signature pastries and breads through the large street-front window at the café.

Anna is happy to be back in her hometown. "I came back to Rockton because I wanted to be close to my family and open a small bakery."

Her dream has come true.

"Baking and creating beautiful cakes and pastries doesn't even feel like work."

*La Croûte Bakery Café is located at 116 W. Main Street in Rockton, Illinois.*

## Rockton / from Page 1

Start your Saturday off right by attending the Rockton Lions Breakfast with Santa where he will make his first appearance of the day. Enjoy all you can eat pancakes, sausage, juice and coffee from 7 to 11 a.m. No ticket purchase is required but free will donations will gladly be accepted.

Find the best in baked goods and Christmas decor at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation on Saturday from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m., off Blackhawk Blvd. southwest of downtown Rockton, before you get to Buckets n Blooms and China Palace Restaurant.

The first ever Main Street Market will be open from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m., on Saturday. Goods will be available for purchase, under pop up tents provided by vendors.

Outdoor action continues in Settlers Park with a visit with Santa's elves on Saturday, at noon. They're not really elves, they're the miniature horses from the lighted parade.

Atreyu from Kaleidoscope, Mr. from Fair Light, and Indy from Mare's Place, all from Stillman Valley who will be joined by

Becca from Rocking Pony Ranch in Rockford. This action is being sponsored by First Northern Credit Union.

Santa makes his next stop in the warm and cozy environment of the Rockton Village Hall. He will hear wishes of all ages. Photos with Santa can capture these memories from noon until 4 p.m.

Express your wishes in writing with letters to Santa at Edward Jones Financial Advisor Brenda Brugger's office from noon until 4 p.m.

Experience festive splendor on horse drawn carriage rides from 12 noon - 4 p.m. boarding at Lighthouse Speech Therapy, 203 W. Main St.

Students from Whitman Post Elementary School will brighten the day with Christmas carols at noon at Settlers Park.

The River City Sound Chorus Sweet Adelines are creating beautiful music on Saturday at After the Vine, 163 Hawick St. in Rockton, IL from 1-3 p.m.

Join the Cronin family in honoring Katie's memory with the reading of a dedication poem and lighting of Katie's Tree at 5 p.m.

Katie Cronin oversaw the decorating of the Village Green Park with a strong volunteer base, through the Our Town Committee in 1987.

Paint a make and take chubby bird paper mache ornament at Jill Rae Finally Art, 210 W. Main Street, on Saturday afternoon. The cost to create a one of a kind piece is \$8.

Take in beautiful scenes and spectacular floats, in the 2024 Lighted Parade. This year's Grand Marshal sponsor is Benchmark Exteriors. Rockton-Roscoe News will be in the parade too.

Following the parade is the Wimpy's Fund Auction at the Rockton American Legion. Find one of a kind pieces to bid on for special people on your list. Even if you're unable to attend in person, you can bid online with at Silent Auction Pro.

## Sunday, Dec. 8, 2024

Those who love hot cocoa are in luck once again. The 7th annual Hot Cocoa Crawl is back on Sunday. This year ticket holders will receive a 12 oz. hot beverage tumbler with a lid. Tickets can be purchased online or in person.

Visitors can also take part in a scavenger hunt - just follow clues in an attempt to win a prize.

Learn about Christmas at Macktown on Sunday afternoon at 2 p.m. Activities include horse drawn wagon rides, making ornaments in the Whitman House, visiting the Whitman Store to see what people in the 1800's would purchase as gifts, making toys with the Woodworker in the Stevens Carpenter Shop, and visiting the Mack House as it is being decorated in anticipation of friends and family visiting on Christmas Day

Visit historic sites during the Historic Homes for the Holidays tour featuring the homes organizer, Diana Wieser, along with the Martin, Meichtry and Weldon families. Take this three hour tour beginning at 4 p.m., complete with visits, refreshments and booties to wear.

Locations include 316 N.Blackhawk, 417 W. Chapel Street, 120 W. Union Street, and 101 W. Main Street, which is a second floor apartment above DeeDees Main Street Coffee and Decor. Tickets are available in person at DeeDee's or for an extra fee online at Eventbrite.



# Mr. Christmas lights up the night

By Jean Seegers



Following tradition, a spectacular light display kicked off the Christmas season in Roscoe on Thanksgiving night, November 28, 2024. The Christmas spectacular, at 5524 Hodges Way in Roscoe, is hosted by Luis Roldan, known as Mr. Christmas. The lights are turned on at precisely 5 p.m., plus 10 seconds.

Luis Roldan, known as Mr. Christmas, has been lovingly creating a huge Christmas scene on his front yard for several years. Luis and his beloved wife Debbie started decorating for the holidays. Each year they did a little more.

In 2016, Debbie passed away. Before she died, she urged Luis to continue to create the holiday tradition. "She asked me to do it, for the children."

So, every year, with occasional help from his grandchildren, he keeps his pledge to Debbie.

"I am almost 84 now. It's getting a little more difficult to do it by myself."

Luis begins brainstorming and making plans for the next season right after the display comes down for the year.

Then there are repairs to be made and hundreds of lights to be checked. His goal is to gradually have LED lights on all the decorations. So far 60 trees have LED lights.

Every year, he builds more and more trees, some as high as 30 feet, held in place by cables.

Each year he adds more lights, more characters and more Christmas trees. A mixture of whimsical characters, including Santa, his sleigh and eight reindeer, the nativity scene and angels cover the front and side lawn at his home. This year he has added a new baby Jesus lying in the manger.

It's become a Thanksgiving evening tradition to begin the Christmas season with a drive by the home of Mr. Christmas as the lights go up and the holiday season begins. The display will be lighting up the night until early January 2025. Families are invited to drive by and see the display throughout the holidays.

The impressive celebration of Christmas has become contagious in the Hodges Run neighborhood. Many homes in the subdivision are now lighting up the night.



Luis Roldan, Roscoe's Mr. Christmas, on his front porch.



The Christmas lights go on at 5524 Hodges Way on Thanksgiving evening at exactly 5:00 pm.

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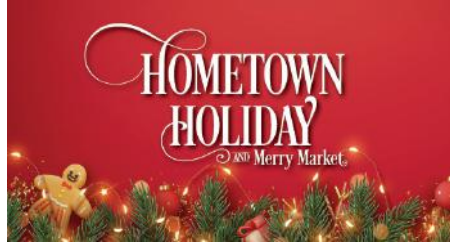


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# Roscoe's Hometown Holiday & Merry Market

By Michael McGinnis 



The Village of Roscoe once again presents a Hometown Holiday but this time adds a Merry Market. The event will last four hours, from 3 - 7 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 14, 2024.

The new Village multi-use parking lot on Bridge Street, behind Velvet Robot, will be the site of Christmas huts featuring local food and drink. Among the choices: Pietro's, Whiskey Hotel Barbecue, Perfectly Seasoned, and Mary's Market. Drinks will be provided by Louie's Taphouse and Poison Ivy Pub.

And it will be a merry market indeed with music from the portable band "When Pigs Fly."

Across the street, at the corner of Bridge & Main Street, trees will be decorated by local youth groups. It will be the new location for the Village's official Tree Lighting at 6:30 p.m..

Several current and new downtown district businesses will be open for holiday style festivities. All Roscoe businesses are invited to set up tents and participate in the event.

Travel along Main Street will be expedited by horse drawn lighted Christmas trolley rides.

The Harlem-Roscoe Fire Department will become a "Holiday Hangout" for kids from 3 to 6:15 p.m., as elev815 provides games, prizes, crafts, hot chocolate, popcorn, and Mrs. Claus. Plus surprises.

And kids, whether you've been extra nice this year, or you just need someone to talk to, Santa Claus himself will be seated in Village Hall.

Roscoe United Methodist Church will be full of events, beginning with a soup/chili meal from 3 - 6:30 p.m. You may wish to give a freewill offering or food donations for the food pantry. All proceeds will support a long list of local charities.

Six local school choirs (a record) will be singing from 3 - 5:15 p.m.

- 3:00 Willowbrook Middle School Choir,
- 3:23 Roscoe Middle School Choir
- 3:45 Hononegah High School Choir
- 4:17 Stephen Mack Middle School Choir
- 4:37 Harlem High School
- 5:00 Harlem Middle School Choirs

Meanwhile, there will be fake snowball fights (wth fake snow) downstairs from 3 - 6 p.m

At 7 p.m., the Alleluia Quartet will be singing four-part harmony, as they have on six albums since 1985. Again, you may wish to give a freewill offering.

## 5 expert tips to keep your skin glowing through harsh northern Illinois winters

By Alycia Dioneda Schneedles 

When I moved to Northern Illinois from Southern Illinois in 2013, I thought I knew what winter was. But the biting wind, bone-dry air, and freezing temperatures in the Rockford area were on a completely different level. It didn't take long to realize that protecting myself from the cold wasn't just about bundling up—I needed to take extra care of my skin, too.

I asked local esthetician and owner of Gold & Glow Lab, Taliyah Huffman, to share her top 5 tips with our readers. Known for her passion for skincare and helping clients achieve their best glow, Taliyah understands how brutal Northern Illinois winters can be on our skin. She shared her advice to help your skin stay healthy, hydrated, and glowing all season. Gold & Glow Lab is located at 10532 Main St in Roscoe, Illinois, with locations in Cherry Valley and Machesney Park, IL as well.

Here are Taliyah's five go-to tips to keep your skin happy and hydrated this winter:

### 1. Winter is the best time for facial peels

Winter is a time for resetting, and your skin is no exception. The colder months are the perfect opportunity if you've ever considered trying a facial peel.

"Winter is the BEST time for peels," Taliyah says. "It preps your skin for the sunny seasons ahead, and you're less likely to be exposed to extreme amounts of sun, which can reverse your peel's progress."

### 2. Keep your skin hydrated

The dry winter air can leave your skin feeling parched, and dry skin can be painful. Hydration is essential to protect your skin from cold conditions.

"Does your skin feel dry, irritated, or tight? Especially after a shower or during winter months?" Taliyah asks. "Winter air strips your skin of its natural oils. If not corrected, your skin can develop early signs of aging, like fine lines, crow's feet, large pores, and even random breakouts."

Taliyah's holy grail for dry skin? "Dermalogica's Intensive Moisture Balance cleanser and moisturizer," she says. "Use them heavily and frequently to keep your skin hydrated and balanced."

### 3. Don't skip sunscreen

Just because it's cold outside doesn't mean the sun isn't causing damage. Even in the winter months in Winnebago County, sunscreen is a must to prevent premature aging.

"You need to wear your SPF daily," Taliyah says. "Even if you're staying inside, even if it's winter. I know—yawn. I don't even want to hear this myself because it can feel like a chore. But 90% of visible signs of aging on the face and neck are due to sun exposure and insufficient protection, even during the cold and cloudy months."

### 4. Small changes add up

Taking care of your skin doesn't always require big commitments. Small lifestyle adjustments can go

a long way toward protecting your skin from the harsh winter weather.

"Little things add up!" Taliyah says. "We highly recommend limiting hot showers, adding a humidifier to your home, and drinking appropriate amounts of water. These may seem unnecessary, but they can really help you combat uncomfortable skin."

### 5. Try Dermalogica's Precleanse

A good skincare routine starts with the right products, and Dermalogica's Precleanse is one Taliyah always recommends. It's perfect for addressing the effects of winter on your skin.

"One product we always rave about and encourage the use of is Dermalogica's Precleanse," Taliyah says. "It's my first step to every skin treatment. It acts as a makeup remover, preps your skin for your main cleanse, and adds tons of moisture to balance your skin's pH — perfect for combating winter skin issues."

"At Gold & Glow, one of our top services booked is skin treatments," Taliyah says. "We pride ourselves on helping you achieve your dream skin with the right home skincare routine and our professional-grade treatments. If the winter season has your skin looking and feeling less than desirable, we've got you covered!"

### Don't forget the basics

On top of these tips, you can practice some simple daily habits to keep your skin healthy. Wash

your face morning and night to remove dirt and oil, avoid touching your face throughout the day (as hard as that is!), and exfoliate gently once or twice a week to keep your skin smooth. Consistency is key — sticking to your routine can make all the difference, especially during winter.

Ready to take the next step?

Winter can be tough on all of us, but your skin doesn't have to suffer. Everyone's skin has different needs, and the Gold & Glow Lab team is here to help you create a personalized skincare regimen that works for you. With Taliyah's expert advice and the right habits, you can face even the harshest Northern Illinois weather with confidence—and glowing skin.

Visit Taliyah and her team at Gold & Glow Lab to find the best treatments and products for you.

### About Taliyah Huffman and Gold & Glow Lab

Taliyah, 24, has been in the beauty industry since 2021 after graduating from Tricoci University of Beauty Culture. She started her career sharing a small studio but quickly grew her business to open Gold & Glow Lab, located at 10532 Main St in Roscoe in October 2023.

To book an appointment, visit <https://goldandglowlab.com/>

This article is sponsored by Gold & Glow Lab.

Photos by - Carris at Til Death Photo Co.





# A rusty old Plymouth found a permanent home at Historic Auto Attractions

By Jean Seegers



Picture this: It's the year 2007. A gold and white 1957 Plymouth Belvidere sports coupe with swooping rear wings is resurrected after 50 years, buried in a time capsule under the front lawn of the Tulsa, Oklahoma courthouse.

As part of Oklahoma's celebration of 50 years of statehood, the time capsule was sealed inside an underground cement vault in 1957, along with some Tulsa memorabilia and a can of gasoline so it could be driven away in the future by its lucky new owner.

In 1957, a brand-new gold and white 1957 Plymouth, nicknamed "Miss Belvidere," was buried inside a cement vault, and lowered into the ground on the front lawn of the Tulsa, Oklahoma Court House. When the time capsule was unearthed in 2007, it was covered with rust and beyond repair due to a leak in the vault.

On Oklahoma's 100th birthday (in 2007) the Plymouth was unearthed. But the vault wasn't water-tight after all. After being underground for 50 years, the car was a rusted mess. The exterior wasn't in great shape, but the interior was beyond repair.

It was filled with rust, mud and tangled pieces of wire, due to water intrusion in the cement vault. There was significant structural damage. Many items reminiscent of the times had been placed on the seat of the car. All of the historical time capsule pieces buried with the car were destroyed.

The inside of the 1957 Plymouth as it looked when resurrected from the time capsule in 2007. "Miss Belvidere" found her permanent home at the Historic Auto Museum, 13825 Metric Drive, Roscoe, Illinois. The city of Tulsa donated the car to owner Wayne Lensing. Copies of the historic novel, "The Buried Plymouth," written by Sanford Miles, are available at the museum.

Author Sanford Miles has written an historical novel: *The Buried Plymouth – A Story Unearthed in Tulsa*.

As his story goes, a fictional Tulsa, Oklahoma resident, Jacob Duncan, secretly buried something in the Plymouth that would amaze the world because of its historical significance and potential value.

Miles combines history and fiction in telling the story of the two-toned gold and white Plymouth Belvidere, nicknamed "Miss Belvidere." Miles skillfully weaves history and fiction together to create a story surrounding the burial and unearthing of the buried Plymouth. The story is reminiscent of the Stephen King novel, "Christine."



The original gold and white 1957 Plymouth Belvidere sports coupe, on display at Historic Auto Attractions in Roscoe

Sanford Miles is the author of "The Buried Plymouth." Miles said he has always loved classic cars and was fascinated with the history of "Miss Belvidere." He found and purchased an exact copy of the famous car on the internet and named it "Mr. Belvidere." The historical novel can be purchased at the Historic Auto Museum.

Since the unearthed Plymouth was beyond repair and of little value, the city of Tulsa wanted to donate it to the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. However, the museum said, Thanks, but no thanks. Tulsa officials decided to reach out to auto museums across the country.



Sanford Miles is the author of "The Buried Plymouth." Miles said he has always loved classic cars and was fascinated with the history of "Miss Belvidere." He found and purchased an exact copy of the famous car on the internet and named it "Mr. Belvidere." The historical novel can be purchased at the Historic Auto Museum.



In 1957, a brand-new gold and white 1957 Plymouth, nicknamed "Miss Belvidere," was buried inside a cement vault, and lowered into the ground on the front lawn of the Tulsa, Oklahoma Court House. When the time capsule was unearthed in 2007, it was covered with rust and beyond repair due to a leak in the vault..

Wayne Lensing, owner of Historic Auto Attractions in Roscoe got wind of the historic car. "They reached out to me. I was more than happy to accept the car."

The car was delivered to the museum in 2017, where it was kept in storage. When Lensing added a 36,000 sq. ft. addition to the 50,000 sq ft museum, (it now totals over 86,000 sq. ft.), he found a perfect spot for "Miss Belvidere."

Historic Auto Attractions Museum now totals over 86,000 square feet.

Lensing placed the car in a special room of its own. Graphics telling the story of the unearthed 1957 Plymouth are on the surrounding walls. Artifacts such as a gallon of gas and a case of Schlitz Beer are displayed on the hood.





The Historic Auto Attractions Museum is located at 13825 Metric Drive, Roscoe, Illinois. For more information, visit [www.historicautoattractions.com](http://www.historicautoattractions.com) or call 815-389-7917. Copies of *The Buried Plymouth* can be purchased in the museum lobby.

Sanford Miles, the author of *The Buried Plymouth*, is a former English teacher, freelance writer, and a classic cars buff. Miles bought his own 1957 Plymouth Belvidere online in 2013. "I thought to myself, I've got to get that. It wasn't cheap – about \$35,000 for a car with an original sticker price of about \$2,400." He named this version, "Mr. Belvidere."



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# Hundreds of children could see a brighter Christmas season through Rockton Lions Wimpy's Fund auction

By Marianne Mueller



Every year at Christmastime the Rockton Lions Club continues to give back through Wimpy's Fund while making the Christmas season brighter for local families.

One of the ways this goal is reached is through the Wimpy's Fund. As a result of the Wimpy's Fund auction and other fundraising efforts, last year a record high of 134 families received an extra dose of Christmas cheer. Around 350 children were recipients of this caring act. Of these 18 families had four or more children in them.

Working with Rockton Lions delivery chair Tami Verstraete, numerous volunteers spend many hours in the week prior preparing for the delivery of food, toys, clothing, gifts and toiletries.

Money raised from these auctions is used to help around 100-300 families in Rockton, Roscoe, Shirland, South Beloit and Harrison. All families are referred by local schools and are also verified by the Lions Club. Parents provide a list of items that their children would like to receive.

This year's auction opens with online bidding from December 5-7, with a live auction happening following the Lighted Christmas parade at the Rockton Christmas Walk on Saturday, Dec. 7. The live auction is bringing all of the fun by adding music provided by a DJ, raffles and wine pulls.

The site that will be used to run the event is Silent Auction Pro. Anyone who has bid in the past can login with their past login credentials. Or you can text 'G914' to 888-990-9876 to get the sign up link on your mobile device or computer. Then place a bid on awesome goods donated by various individuals, organizations and businesses.

Donations of baskets or other items are needed and welcome. Reach out through the Wimpy's Facebook page, or on Facebook Messenger, or contact a Lions Club member if you want to donate something for the auction.

In addition to bidding on and collecting winning items, donations can given directly to the Lions Club through First National Bank and Trust, or they can be mailed to Rockton Lions Club, P.O. Box 90, Rockton, IL. 61072.

Wimpy's Fund began in memory of former Rockton police chief Everett Vaughan who served as chief from 1977-1981. He was given the nickname Wimpy based on the cartoon character in Popeye who walked the streets and carried a sandwich board.

As Vaughan was helping children cross the street, he would notice that some of the children didn't have gloves, hats and socks.



VAUGHAN PROMOTED TO SERGEANT... Rockton police officer Everett Vaughan was promoted to sergeant by action of the village board Monday night. Vaughan is a 20 year member of the police department and active in area police associations. (Staff photo)

He went one step further and took the mothers of those families shopping to buy clothing, groceries and one gift for each child in need. His wife Betty provided Christmas dinner for the families; over time they added toys into the mix.

Vaughan passed away in 1997 and his friend Jack Stewart took action in carrying on his legacy. Other Lions Club members have teamed up over the years to make the Christmas season special by carrying on this long time tradition.



The Green family have a family tradition of delivering gifts through Wimpy's Fund.

Many hours go into preparing for the auction. Volunteers work for at least a month, with a weekly meeting to plan the next steps, and making phone calls to organize and gather donated items.

A group of core volunteers put the auction together led by co-chairs Terrie Garlow and Carol Wright. They gather donations and organize both the silent and live auction event. Many other Lions members lend a hand by donating or helping during the auction.

The overall process to make Wimpy's Fund come to life each year starts in October. Rockton Lions Club members and community volunteers spend a total of well over 200 hours of time on each Wimpy's Fund, including paperwork, communications with the schools, and other volunteer activities.

Volunteers for the delivery day are always too many to count. It is made up of a huge group of Lions members, people in the community, businesses, school districts and local churches. Rockton and Roscoe schools are key supporters of Wimpy's Fund.

"Giving Trees" are another place where needed items are collected and donated.

Businesses display tags for community members to adopt a family, employees in those businesses lend a helping hand by adopting a family or through donations of gifts for families. Extra donations come in from churches, and schools with some also adopting a family.

Several organizations hold toy drives and donate those toys to Wimpy's Fund.

Every year the Rockton Lions Club hosts Breakfast with Santa at the Rockton Christmas Walk. Funds from the breakfast also go toward Wimpy's Fund.

Future Wimpy's Fund hopes are to increase the giving of gift cards through a drive or in other ways to fill a teenager's wish list. This year, one company donated gift cards but more donations will gladly be accepted.

You can show support for local families this Christmas season by donating to the Lions Club Wimpy's Fund, or by participating in the auction, where you can find that one of a kind gift or basket for that special person on your list.



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# Busse Prairie Preserve spans Illinois/Wisconsin border

Natural Land Institute (NLI) purchased a 327-acre natural area in September 2024, just north of NLI's Lost Flora Fen on Raccoon Creek, west of South Beloit. The property was named the Jerry and Kathy Busse Prairie Preserve on Raccoon Creek. It features wetlands, ponds, a lake, Raccoon Creek and grassland bird habitat.

This pristine property is home to several threatened and endangered species. It includes 196.52 acres in Illinois (northern Winnebago County) and 130.25 acres in Wisconsin (southern Rock County). The purchase was completed for \$816,925 plus closing costs.

The Busses purchased the naming rights for this preserve with a \$500,000 gift to NLI because they have a passion for protecting nature. Jerry Busse is the retired CEO and Founder of Rockford Toolcraft Inc.

Busse Prairie Preserve will open to the public at a date to be announced. Dorothy Baits gave \$50,000 to name the walking trails, which will be called the "Stephen and Dorothy Baits Trail."

NLI staff and volunteer wildlife monitors have found many threatened and endangered species there, including the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly, Blanding's Turtle, Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, and a plethora of other plants and animals of conservation concern. Eastern Meadowlarks,

Bobolinks, Dickcissels, and Henslow's Sparrows are key grassland birds that will have nesting habitat protected at the preserve.

NLI purchased the Busse Prairie Preserve for its incredible variety of plants and animals and to protect the water, fish and other aquatic species, and other wildlife. "We are thrilled to be able to protect this property. It is such an incredible complex of wetlands and wet grasslands and hosts an amazing variety of birds, wildflowers, and pollinators," said Alan Branhagen, Executive Director, Natural Land Institute. "The big views of the skyline from here are impressive," he said. *(The natural skyline, that is. No urban skyline is visible there.)*

Other naming opportunities were available for naming the lake, the bur oak grove, and the walking trails. A gift of \$50,000 was received from an anonymous donor to name the lake, "Lake AJ," after their two daughters' first names, Andrea and Jessica. A gift of \$50,000 was received from the Vanderpoel Family and the Vanderpoel Conservation Foundation to name the bur oak grove "The Vanderpoel Family Bur Oak Grove."

*Burr or bur? NLI also owns Burr Oak Valley Nature Preserve, between Burr Oak Road and Elevator Road in Roscoe, but the more official spelling for the Quercus macrocarpa tree is "bur" with one R.*



Joyce Gibbons, a volunteer wildlife monitor with NLI, looks for damselflies at Busse Prairie Preserve. Photo: Alan Branhagen

While this property already has one level of protection with enrollment in the Wetland Reserve Program, NLI will further protect it by managing it for invasive species and any trickle down impact to NLI's other holdings on Raccoon Creek such as Lost Flora Fen on Raccoon Creek and Nygren Wetland Preserve. NLI will also protect it from tree and shrub encroachment, which would eventually destroy the grassland habitat.

Closer to Rockton, in September the William & Gayle Keefer Nature Reserve opened to the public on a daily basis, sunrise to sunset (no pets, though). This site includes three quarries, fossils, woodlands, and remnant prairie

The public access address and parking lot are located at 12804 Old River Rd., Rockton, Ill. 61072.

The Natural Land Institute, an accredited conservation land trust, is a 501(c)3, non-profit organization based in Rockford, Illinois, which has protected 18,000 acres of natural land in Illinois since 1958. The current service area covers twelve counties in northern Illinois. NLI's mission is to create an enduring legacy of natural land in northern Illinois for people, plants and animals. For more information and to donate visit NaturalLand.org, call 815/964-6666 or email: info@naturalland.org.

# Roscoe welcomes two new clothing boutiques

By Jean Seegers



Before the COVID pandemic, Roscoe had a handful of dress shops and boutiques. Consignment shops fared well during those years.

MeMe's Upscale Consignment Boutique at 11447 2nd Street survived the pandemic and has flourished, as has Just a 2nd Thrift Boutique at 5079 Edgemere Court in Roscoe, and Truly Treasured Gift and Thrift at 112 West Main Street in Rockton.

Retail businesses have returned. In mid-October 2024, two new boutiques have opened in Roscoe: Daisy Jean at 5454 Bridge Street and Berkshire and Way at 5759 Elevator Road.

Ashley Calhoun opened Berkshire and Way in October, 2024. The cozy little store is tucked into the mini shopping mall west of Poison Ivy Pub. The eclectic boutique is chock full of boots and shoes, the latest trends in sweaters, dresses, jackets, hats, jeans, screen-printed and



Ashley Calhoun recently opened Berkshire and Way, near Poison Ivy Pub.

sublimation transfer tees, and lots of hand-made jewelry. She also promotes and sells her products on Etsy.

In addition to owning and managing the new shop, Ashley is a full-time member of the Rockford Police Department.

Berkshire and Way is open four days a week, Thursday through Sunday, or shop on their website or visit them on Facebook, Instagram, or Etsy.



Not far away, at 5454 Bridge Street in Roscoe, another boutique clothing store opened in October, 2024.

Now the home of Daisy Jean Clothing Boutique, the large white house with black trim has been the location of several décor and clothing establishments over several years.

At Daisy Jean, three large rooms are filled with modern and affordable sweaters, dresses, fragrances, candles, accessories, shoes and lots and lots of jeans.

Risen, Judy Blue and Vervet jeans are among popular brands offered in every style and color.

Linkt Permanent Jewelry, owned by Katie Thompson, is right next door to the boutique. The two businesses recently hosted pop-up events and are planning more.



Rhonda Sunden (L) and her daughter Becky Smith are the owners of Daisy Jean, on Bridge Street.

The boutique is owned by Becky Smith and her mother Rhonda Sunden. One or both women are in the store from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. They are closed on Mondays. They can be reached at 815-222-5361.