

# Clay County Republican

"Clay County's Favorite Newspaper"

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VOLUME 135 LOUISVILLE, ILLINOIS 62858 WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2020 OFFICIAL CITY AND COUNTY NEWSPAPER

## Bulletin Board

Dec. 14 will be the monthly meeting for Stanford Twp. officials, 7:30 p.m., at Stanford Hall

Louisville Village will be meeting Dec. 10, 6 p.m., at City Hall.

CADA (Coalition Against Drug Abuse) will hold their monthly meeting at 1 p.m., Dec. 10, at the Probation Office.

North Clay School Board will hold their monthly meeting at 6 p.m., Dec. 16, at their Unit Office.

Dec 16, Flora School Board meets at their Unit Office, 6:30 p.m.

## COVID-19 Update

Clay County Health Department reported 35 new cases on Friday, December 4 – Sunday, December 6. Case demographics for new cases are as follows:

December 4-6, 2020		
Age	Male	Female
Under Age 10	-	2
10-19	4	3
20's	4	4
30's	2	-
40's	2	4
50's	2	3
60's	2	1
70's	1	1

Governor Pritzker and the IL Department of Public Health released the COVID Vaccine Administration plan on Friday, December 4. According to the plan, vaccine will first be available to the 50 counties in Illinois with the highest mortality rates due to COVID, which includes Clay County. The number of doses will be limited initially and will be administered in the order prescribed by IDPH. The full vaccine administration plan can be viewed at <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccination-plan>.

Binax NOW rapid COVID testing will be available in the drive-thru at Beyond the Bell, 1010 W. North Avenue, Flora, IL this week, Monday – Friday, from 9 a.m. – Noon. There is no cost for the test. No appointment is necessary, and a physician's order is not required.

For more information on COVID-19, visit [www.dph.illinois.gov/COVID-19](http://www.dph.illinois.gov/COVID-19) or [www.healthdept.org](http://www.healthdept.org).



Santa and Mrs. Claus will be making appearances at Charley Brown Park on Dec. 11 and again on Dec. 19, between the hours of 5-7 p.m. To keep everyone safe and healthy, Santa wants to remind everyone to remain in their vehicles for a no-contact experience! Merry Christmas! Drive through the circle drive around the gazebo at Charley Brown Park and wave to Santa from the comfort of the vehicle! Roll a window down and say "Hi!" to hear a jolly "Ho! Ho! Ho!" from Santa! When exiting the circle drive, don't forget to drop letters to Santa in his mailbox! Santa's mailbox will be up throughout the month of December at the gazebo so drop letters at anytime! Remember to put name and address on letters so Santa knows who they are from! (John Bayler Photo)

*Living Water, John 4:10; Bread of Life, John 6:35; Rose of Sharon, Song of Solomon, 2:1; Alpha & Omega, Revelation 22:13; True Vine, John 15:1; Messiah, Daniel 9:25; Teacher, John 3:2; Holy One, Mark 1:24; Mediator, 1 Timothy 2:5; The Beloved, Ephesians 1:6; Branch, Isaiah 11:1; Carpenter, Mark 6:3; Good Shepherd, John 10:11.*

## CSM Kelli Harr Reflects On 20 Years Of Serving The United States

A questionable and somewhat shaky start 20 years ago turned out to be the right thing for Kelli Harr who is an E-9, Sergeant Major, the highest rank possible for an enlisted Soldier.

The shaky part came when she was doing what so many young people do --trying to figure out her future.

"One summer night in 1999, I was sitting around a bonfire with some friends and heard a guy talk about how he joined the Army for only two years," she began.

"I was intrigued. After graduating Olney Central College in 1998, I was looking for my next move in life. I did not know what I wanted to do. I knew I did not want to attend a four-year university and I did not want to stay in Flora.

"Two days later I contacted a local Army recruiter."

Enlisting turned out to be more of a challenge than she expected.

"My enlistment process took much longer than normal due to a heart murmur. I spent three months going back and forth to St. Louis, MO for medical appointments.

"While I waited for the Surgeon General to approve my waiver, I kept thinking 'if this gets approved, its meant to be for me to join the Army. There's no turning back."

"I would not say I was scared about joining, but I was a little nervous because I did not know what to expect. My family did not have much of a military background. My grandpa served in World War II at the Battle of Bastogne, but I did not even know that until a few years after I joined. He never talked about the war, except once when I asked about a faded, green tattoo on his forearm. Even then all he said was his buddy gave it to him during the war.

"After numerous chest x-rays and EKGs, the Army granted me a medical waiver in November of 1999.

A few days later she was standing in the St. Louis Military Entrance



Kelli Harr might be the only person in Clay County to have her photo taken Sadaam's palace in Iraq.

Processing Station (MEPS) talking to a guidance counselor about the day she could sign to basic training.

"He kept pushing me to go in a few weeks but I told him I absolutely could not because I had a powerlifting meet in March and was getting a national award for Best Female Lifter. I could not remember the exact date of the meet so he made me call Smitty from the MEPS office. The meet was Feb. 26. I left for basic training five days later on March 2, 2000."

She completed Basic Combat Training at Fort Leonardwood, MO before moving on to Fort Jackson, SC for Advanced Individualized Training (AIT).

"Basic was much more of a mental challenge than physical one for me. I kind of liked basic training. Some parts were not fun--like 15k ruck marches, waking up at 3 a.m., or Drill Sergeants forcing you into a cattle truck while they screamed in your face. But there were also cool parts like the rappel tower, learning land navigation, and weapons qualifications.

"AIT was like basic but with a little more freedom and less yelling by the drill sergeants."

AIT is where Soldiers learn the job they enlisted to do in the Army (also known as a Military Occupational Specialty MOS). Kelli enlisted as a 63B, Light Wheel Vehicle Mechanic. She did not know much about being a mechanic except for the time she and her dad (ACE Hardware's own, Jeff Harr) replaced the water pump on her car. She told the MEPS guidance

counselor she absolutely did not want a desk job (which becomes very ironic a few years later) so he suggested being a mechanic.

"I spent almost six months in training between basic and AIT before successfully graduating both. I had so much support from my family and friends throughout that time. I kept most of the letters and cards people sent me. My parents were able to attend both graduations which made walking across the stages even more special. Now that training was complete, my first duty station awaited."

Shortly after graduation, Soldier Harr learned something she didn't know going into the service.

"Remember when I said the two-year enlistment idea intrigued me? Turns out that was only partially true, but I did not realize this until after I enlisted and reported to my first duty station at Fort Hood, TX. Every service member incurs an eight-year obligation, whether it is all active duty, reserve, inactive, etc. Luckily, I was loving the Army so I did not mind when I finally realized what I signed up for. I was assigned to D Co, 204<sup>th</sup> Forward Support Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. I'm not going to lie--it took me several months to even understand what that all meant.

"I'd been at Fort Hood a little more than a year when 9/11 happened. I can recall every little detail about that day, but what stands out the most was how calm everyone was. I remember thinking how everyone knew what to do based on their job or position, without

hesitation. We had accountability formations every hour for the rest of the day and had to pull guard duty around our buildings due to the increase in force protection levels. Like everyone else in the world, we did not know what was going to happen next, but we were prepared to do whatever was asked of us.

"After Fort Hood I was assigned to the 602<sup>nd</sup> Aviation Support Battalion in Korea from 2002-2003. The war started while I was in Korea so everyone was involuntarily extended an extra 90 days. I did not mind because I loved being in another country. I was fascinated by the sights, food, and locals. Korea was the first time I had been out of the United States and although my travel was limited due to the Army, I still loved my time there."

While in Korea, she decided to transition from the active component to the Army Reserve and reclassified her job from a mechanic to a career counselor (a desk job!). After two years at Fort Drum, she volunteered for a deployment to the Middle East. Her family was again supportive of her decision to volunteer.

"I don't think my sisters fully understood why I would voluntarily go to war, but they remained supportive. I'm not sure I could articulate the reasons why, but in my heart, I knew I needed to do something. My brothers and sisters in arms were supporting our country so I felt I needed to do the same."

Kelli worked as a career counselor while deployed which meant she re-enlisted soldiers to stay in the Army. When a group first arrived in Kuwait, her boss asked soldiers each individually where they wanted to be assigned.

"I immediately said Iraq. I wanted to feel like I was deployed (versus being in Kuwait where there was a pool and a Starbucks on base). Unfortunately, I stayed in Kuwait. At first, I was very annoyed and upset but over the course of eight months I traveled all around Kuwait and Iraq. I also spent some time in Afghanistan, Qatar, and Djibouti. Reenlisting Soldiers in a combat zone was awe inspiring to me.

"I did one reenlistment on a flight line just minutes after a helicopter landed with wounded troops. To see soldiers willingly continue service in that environment was

something I will never forget.

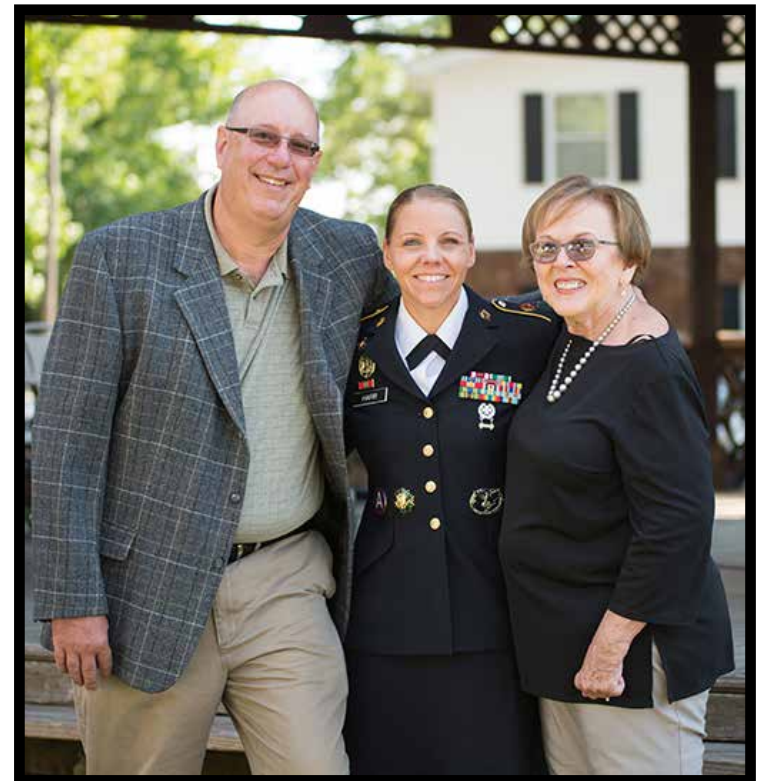
"Finally, there was an opportunity for me to move to Iraq so I jumped at the chance. We needed to open a new reenlistment office at a small FOB (Forward Operating Base) in northern Iraq to support an increase in Soldiers in that area.

It was at that FOB, Kelli learned that wearing a uniform gives a

person a new family and that no soldier is ever truly alone.

"I got to my FOB in Iraq about a week before Thanksgiving. As career counselors, we work independently so I didn't know a single person. On Thanksgiving I went to the chow hall for a late lunch and sat down at a long table with several other soldiers.

Please Turn To Page Three



Sergeant Major Kelli Harr with her parents, Jeff and Janice Harr at her promotion ceremony at Library Park.

## Kay Spitzner Newest Member Of FHS Retired Teacher Hall of Fame

Mary Kathryn McMillan was born in Carbondale on Oct. 15, 1920 to John and Ruth McMillan. She eloped with Leo Spitzner in June of 1941, whom she met at a square dance. Mary Kathryn McMillan Spitzner (known as Kay) received her Bachelor of Education with a triple major in Home Ec, Chemistry, and Math in 1941. She received her Masters in Science in Education in 1970 at SIU.

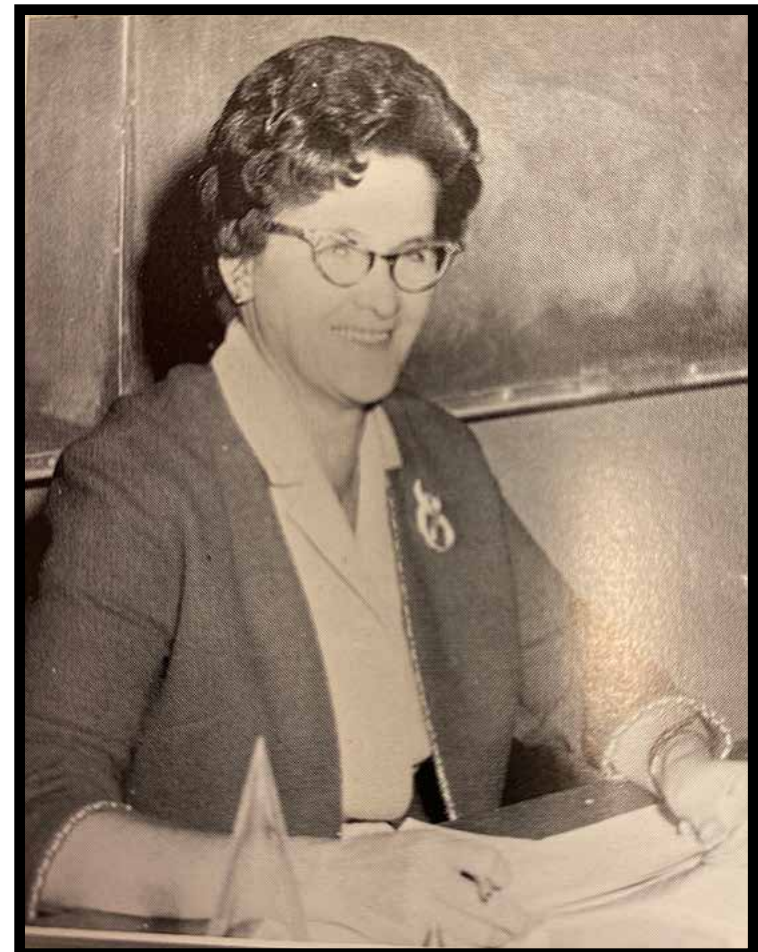
Mrs. Spitzner stayed at home and raised her six children until 1959 when Floyd C. Smith begged her to teach PE for one semester in January. She knew nothing about P.E., but Mr. Smith was desperate. She later was hired to teach math the following August, 1959 which included her oldest son, Everett in her Senior Math class. During the next 15 years she taught her other five children, John, Lee, Scott, Jeanne, and Lance. She was pretty strict and even had her own children call her Mrs. Spitzner. She taught Algebra I and II, Senior Math which included Calculus and Trigonometry for 22 years until 1982. She also sponsored the Math Club all those years with an annual Bunco party at Christmas.

In the classroom she had a saying, "The bugaboo of Algebra II is the middle term, now get behind the door and learn it." She also had a piggy bank for students who were caught chewing gum. She charged a nickel which went toward the math Christmas party. You never borrowed a Kleenex from Mrs. Spitzner because she said she didn't want it back.

Mrs. Spitzner usually took tickets during ballgames while knitting which was one of her favorite pastimes. She also enjoyed cooking, sewing, reading, bowling, playing bridge, pinnacle, Bingo, and camping. She never met a stranger and loved to entertain and to be around people.

After retiring, she and Leo went to Florida for the winter for 20 years. They traveled through 49 states except Alaska. She raised six children and had five grandchildren. She died in February of 2004 before her three great-grandchildren were born.

Kay is extremely deserving of this recognition and her dedication and contribution to the lives of her students and the field of education is greatly appreciated!!



## Clay City Village Board Meets

### For The Final Time In 2020

By Mary Anne Maxwell

The Clay City Village Board met for the last time in 2020, and discussed a variety of agenda items.

The first item of business was to change the meeting time for the January meeting. The regular monthly meeting scheduled for Jan. 5 will begin at 5:30 p.m. Mayor Rod Franklin told the board the dinner at NMN (No More Nicotine) Club is still on and they will be notified if there are any changes. Approval was given to the change in meeting time.

Final approval was given to the new Tax Levy ordinance. Attorney Barry Bright noted the 4.99 increase will not require a Truth in Taxation Hearing and will add another \$3,200 to the Clay City Coffers increasing the total to \$68,400. The board unanimously approved the Tax Levy increase.

Board approval was given to an ordinance approving an Intergovernmental Agreement with Clay County II to trade lots in Sunset Acres with Leaseback Provisions. This ordinance paves the way for a new Clay County Hospital Clinic in Clay City and is between the Village, Clay County, and Clay County Hospital.

The board also approved an ordinance for a two-year extension to Larry Schnautz for a 2018 TIF (Tax Increment Financing) Agreement. The previous agreement was not turned in.

Board approval was given to a resolution use TIF Funds to pay for Lots 44-48 in Sunset Acres (Frank Merrow Lots).

The 2021 Holiday and meeting schedules were approved.

Utility Foreman Tyler Turner noted a second line locator was needed. He said Wabash Communications is currently in the process of completing fiber optics in the Village and right now the Village has only one locator. Approval was given to the purchase of a second line locator at a cost of \$3,225.

Board approval was given to increase pay for Village Employees by three percent with benefits remaining the same.

Santa will be in Mills Park on Dec. 19 from 1-3 p.m.

The Sheriff's Report for November revealed the following statistics: three 911 hang-ups/open line/misdiagonal; one abandoned vehicle; two accidents; one alarm/burglary; one alarm testing/maintenance; one animal complaint; one burglary; one deceptive practice; one disorderly person 6-3-10/one document; two domestic trouble; one fight in progress; one fire structure; one fire vehicle; two funeral assists; three information; one motorist assistance; two noise 6-3-22 music/party; one officer initiated 23; two property damage, dispute, exchange; two questions; two reckless drivers 9-1-5; one speak with; four suspicious person/activity/vehicle; one theft; 27 traffic stops; one UTV info/inspection; and one wanted person/stolen indicated for a total of 67 incidents. One written citation was issued; patrol hours totaled seven daily; and \$75 was collected in fines.

All Trustees were present for the December meeting.



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**Edward Jones | INVESTMENTS**

**Consider These Year-End Financial Moves**

We're nearing the end of 2020 – and for many of us, it will be a relief to turn the calendar page on this challenging year. However, we've still got a few weeks left, which means you have time to make some year-end financial moves that may work in your favor.

Here are a few suggestions:  
Add to your IRA. For the 2020 tax year, you can put in up to \$6,000 to your traditional or Roth IRA, or \$7,000 if you're 50 or older. If you haven't reached this limit, consider adding some money. You actually have until April 15, 2021, to contribute to your IRA for 2020, but the sooner you put the money in, the quicker it can go to work for you. Plus, if you have to pay taxes in April, you'll be less likely to contribute to your IRA then.

Make an extra 401(k) payment. If it's allowed by your employer, put in a little extra to your 401(k) or similar retirement plan. And if your salary goes up next year, increase your regular contributions.

See your tax advisor. It's possible that you could improve your tax situation by making some investment-related moves. For example, if you sold some investments whose value has increased, you could incur capital gains taxes. To offset these gains, you could sell other investments that have lost value, assuming these investments are no longer essential to your financial strategy. Your tax advisor can evaluate this type of move, along with others, to determine those that may be appropriate for your situation.

Review your investment mix. As you consider your portfolio, think about the events of these past 12 months and how you responded to them. When COVID-19 hit early in the year, and the financial markets plunged, did you find yourself worrying constantly about the losses you were taking, even though they were just on "paper" at that point? Did you even sell investments to "cut your losses" without waiting for a market recovery? If so, you might want to consult with a financial professional to determine if your investment mix is still appropriate for your goals and risk tolerance, or if you need to make some changes.

Evaluate your need for retirement plan withdrawals. If you are 72 or older, you must start taking withdrawals – technically called required minimum distributions, or RMDs – from your traditional IRA and your 401(k) or similar retirement plan. Typically, you must take these RMDs by December 31 every year. However, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Stimulus (CARES) Act suspended, or waived, all RMDs due in 2020. If you're in this age group, but you don't need the money, you can let your retirement accounts continue growing on a tax-deferred basis.

Think about the future. Are you saving enough for your children's college education? Are you still on track toward the retirement lifestyle you've envisioned? Or have your retirement plans changed as a result of the pandemic? All of these issues can affect your investment strategies, so you'll want to think carefully about what decisions you may need to make.

Looking back – and ahead – can help you make the moves to end 2020 on a positive note and start 2021 on the right foot.



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This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

**It's All About The Food By Debby Devore**

Hello again! It has been a cold week but at least it has been sunny. I appreciate sunny days more and more as I get older. I actually feel happier when the sun is shining, how about you? Do you feel this way on sunny days? Last Saturday was a beautiful day for driving and my granddaughter, Maleah, needed to get some practice hours in for Drivers Ed. We decided to run to Effingham to Hobby Lobby and she would drive. She's been driving my car (with me supervising!) since early summer. We've been on every road in Clay County I think, many of which I was on for the first time. It's been fun and I have enjoyed every minute of it. I think I will be sad when she gets her license and won't need me to go for a drive. Since we were going to Effingham, she asked, "Grandma could we eat at Cruisers?" Not one to deny my grandkids much of anything, of course I said, "Yes!" I had been by Cruisers several times and had mentioned to David that "We should stop by and try it out sometime." So I was excited to finally have the chance. It was shortly after noon when we arrived at Cruisers and I have to say, they must have quite a following. There were so many cars in the drive-up that several were still on the road waiting to pull in. Cruisers is drive-up only. All the time, not just in Covid time. Although, you can pull into their driveway and walk inside to order if you choose. Which is what we did because neither of us felt comfortable waiting on the busy road. They were so busy that I did not get much information on the business except that they have been open since 1995 and the hours of operation. Maleah ordered a cheeseburger and fries which was about \$5.50 I believe and I ordered a cheeseburger melt which was \$5.39. Both were good and service was extremely quick. I don't think we waited three minutes on our food. They have a variety of sandwiches and certainly appears to be a town favorite. As we sat in the parking lot and ate, there was a very steady stream of customers going through the drive-up. I forgot to ask if they were open all year long or just seasonal, but they are open every day but Sunday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Their phone number is 217-342-3760 if you'd like to call in an order. They are located at 806 East Fayette Avenue in Effingham. It's just after Goeckner Auto if you're familiar with where Goeckners is. It was a good day to eat in the car but I admit, I miss indoor dining! I really hate what this Covid has done to the small mom and pop restaurants and if I'm truthful, the larger chains as well. 2020 has been a topsy-turvy kind of world this year, hasn't it?

This week my only grandson, Silas, turns nine. Born at only 25 weeks and weighing two pounds, we consider him a precious miracle! People all over the world were praying for him from the day he was born until he left the hospital eighty-six days later. I'm sure some were still praying longer. At his first birthday party, his parents had a map of the world on the wall with push pins marking the location of all the people who had prayed for Silas. It was an amazing prayer chain. He is a true testament to the power of prayer and we are thankful every day for him. If you were one of those praying for him, thank you!

Next week, I'm sure I'll have a recipe for you. I'm not expecting to find a new restaurant but who knows? Never say never, right? Until next week, happy eating everyone

**Sailor Springs Bridge Beginning To Look Like Bridge**



**DID** is a word of achievement;  
**WON'T** is a word of retreat;  
**MIGHT** is a word of bereavement;  
**CAN'T** is a word of defeat;  
**OUGHT** is a word of duty;  
**TRY** is a word each hour;  
**WILL** is a word of beauty;  
**CAN** is a word of power.



**Blue Point Church hosting 'The Farmhands,' Dec. 13**

The Blue Point Church, north and west of Cisne, will be hosting a Christmas Concert by "The Farmhands" on Sunday evening, Dec. 13, at 6 p.m.  
The 'Farmhands' is a Christian bluegrass quartet that travels and performs concerts in several different states and venues. Their concert will include many Christmas classics and some of their own music. This group is very talented, playing several different instruments that they incorporate in their concert.  
Everyone is invited to attend this special concert. It is free to all. A love offering will be received for the quartet. For more information call Pastor Ernie Lewis at 838-6708.  
The Blue Point Free Will Baptist Church is located three miles west of Cisne and 2 miles north off the Blue Mound Road.

**Clay City News By Jean Taylor**

Christmas is just around the corner. It's not the kind we want this year. Maybe next year we can have a old fashion Christmas where families can get together.  
Happy birthday to Connie Rockwood, Ruth Harmon, Grayson Taylor, Shirley McCracken and everyone else who is having a birthday. Happy birthday to all.  
Answer to the word Scramble words stuffing, gravy, gratitude, Autumn, cranberries, and pumpkin.

**Humor**  
If the person who named walkie talkies named everything would

Stamps be lickie stickies,  
Hippos be floaties floaties,  
Pregnancy tests be maybe babies  
My uncle only polished the front of his car because it was the only part he saw when he drove it.  
**Recipe Custard Pie**  
3 eggs  
1 c. sugar  
1/2 tsp nutmeg  
Pinch of salt  
3 c milk  
Mix all but nutmeg pour into

unbaked pie shell. Sprinkle nutmeg on top and bake for 15 minutes at 350 and then 50 minutes at 250.  
Sympathy goes to the families of Lee Roy Cruse, Mary Niccum, Tom Vincent, Wayne Allison, Judy Oakes, Troy Mayberry, Jim Cross, Dorothy Daugherty and everyone else who lost a loved one. Prayers to all.  
Stay safe, wash your hands, be careful.  
Until the next time, God bless the USA and everyone.



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# Judge Joel Powless Swears In Elected County Officials



A sign of the times, Associate Judge Joel Powless swore in Clay County Board Members Chris Rinehart and Brad Harris via a video, internet link.



Clay County Board Member Terry Hronec had his hand on the Bible, held by Deputy Circuit Clerk Stacey Blair as Judge Joel Powless swore him in.



Judge Joel Powless swears in Circuit Clerk Crystal Ballard as Deputy Circuit Clerk Stacey Blair holds the Bible.



Andrew Koester made the change from "appointed" State's Attorney to "elected" State's Attorney with his wife, Olivia, holding the Bible..



Shannon French takes the Oath of Office for the Clay County Board as her fiancé, Bill Hall, holds the Bible during the swearing in ceremony.



Judge Joel Powless reads the Oath of Office to newly elected Clay County Coronor Bryce Henry as his wife, Grace, holds the Bible.



There was a little role reversal during the swearing in ceremony with County Board Member Joe Gilliland holding the Bible for County Board Member Janice Brooks, then County Board Member Brooks holding the Bible for County Board Member Gilliland.



County Board Member Tara Bangert took her Oath of Office as County Board Member Shannon French held the Bible.

**John Bayler Photos**