

WGLT ISSUES AND PROGRAMS July, August, September 2017

Arts and Culture

[Next 'Six Week Film School' Focused On Scorsese's Style](#)

By MIKE MCCURDY · SEP 26, 2017

Like the first two [Six Week Film Festivals](#) at the Normal Theater, the next one is also focused on style, according to the organizer.

[Star Trek Goes Boldly Into Identity](#)

By LAURA KENNEDY · SEP 22, 2017

From outer space to inner emotions, a new book delves into the psychology of "Star Trek," using the beloved characters to help us understand more about ourselves.

[Illinois Poet Laureate Kevin Stein Strove To Present 'Poems As Experience'](#)

By JUDITH VALENTE · SEP 20, 2017

It's a position with a grand title, but no job description, no budget, no staff, and no salary. Yet, poet and [Bradley University](#) Professor Kevin Stein calls being Illinois Poet Laureate one of the best jobs in the state.

[Normal Theater Film Documents Racism Against Blacks Across The Americas](#)

By JON NORTON · SEP 19, 2017

Black Lives Matter formed in 2014 as a reaction to the shooting of Michael Brown by police officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri. Subsequent shootings of especially young black men by police officers have sparked conversations about race probably not heard and seen in America in decades.

[Fragile Ecology Highlights Artist's Work](#)

By LAURA KENNEDY · SEP 14, 2017

The vulnerability of Earth's biodiversity is a theme that runs through the work of artist Alice Hargrave.

Psychologist Teaches The Superpower Of Comics And Pop Culture

By LAURA KENNEDY · SEP 13, 2017

Long before he was a professor of psychology, Travis Langley was a budding geek.

GLT's Culture Commentator: Summer Rock Acts Protest President Trump

By MIKE MCCURDY · SEP 11, 2017

He had to teach and didn't have time for a summer vacation, so GLT's Culture Commentator spent some summer time catching up with rock heroes and icons. And he saw a thread in all of the concerts.

Playful Art Delivers Powerful Message

By LAURA KENNEDY · SEP 8, 2017

A gigantic witch puppet—both imposing and comical—dominates a new exhibition at the Illinois State University that uses playfulness to explore activism and protest.

Night Of The Exquisite Corpse Brings Creativity To Life

By LAURA KENNEDY · AUG 31, 2017

What at first sounds like a zombie attack is actually a chance for the whole family to get creative with a parlor game that's been around for over 100 years.

GLT Culture Maven: The People's Princess Endures

By LAURA KENNEDY · AUG 28, 2017

Twenty years ago, the life of an intriguing royal and humanitarian came to an end in a devastating car crash. Yet the impact of Princess Diana can still be felt today as millions remember her for her compassion.

Photos: Sweet Corn Blues Festival In Uptown Normal

By CARLEIGH GRAY · AUG 26, 2017

Delicious corn. Great blues. GLT swag. And about a hundred really cute dogs.

B-N Bike Competitor: Race Across Russia Has No Future For Women

By MIKE MCCURDY · AUG 24, 2017

On the first day of a 24-day bicycle race across Russia, a Bloomington-Normal endurance athlete realized she probably would not finish.

"As soon as I started on the first day and I saw this pack of men, as fast as they went off, I knew there was no way," said Thursday Gervais during [GLT's Sound Ideas](#). She called the men's pace "wicked fast" and said it surprised everyone, including the Red Bull organizers.

ISU Professor's New Documentary Showcases Nashville Legend

By JON NORTON · AUG 22, 2017

Illinois State University School of Communication Professor Brent Simonds knows his just completed documentary of Nashville singer/songwriter Verlon Thompson tells a compelling story.

"It's a sweet story about a really sweet man who has monstrous talent, especially when it comes to playing acoustic guitar," Simonds said of his film "[Sweet Dreams Do Come True](#)."

Kite Fest Is Old School Fun For A Good Cause

By LAURA KENNEDY · AUG 18, 2017

An ancient invention that was used for spying, rescuing and military communications eventually evolved into a popular toy—the kite. Now that toy is proving it's more than just for fun at an event that allows families to play together while raising money for a good cause.

Historic Route 66 Site Restored And Ready For Business

By LAURA KENNEDY · AUG 11, 2017

What was once a stopping place on the Mother Road has found new life, thanks to a partnership between a local Route 66 scholar and the Town of Normal.

Tight Harmonies Lift Singing Group To Win

By LAURA KENNEDY · AUG 9, 2017

Barbershop quartets aren't just for squares and old movies. The music style is alive and kicking in the 21st century, thanks to a recent resurgence and young vocalists like Tim Beutel.

'Dunkirk' Gives An Intense View Of Heroism

By LAURA KENNEDY · AUG 4, 2017

"It's intense. It's brutal. It's a strong film."

Living Theatre: Past and Present Combine

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · AUG 3, 2017

Former Illinois State University provost and retired Western Illinois University President Al Goldfarb is not slowing down in retirement. Goldfarb has just published a new edition of his book on the history of the theater, called "Living Theatre."

Prairie Fire Theatre Gets Happy

By LAURA KENNEDY · AUG 3, 2017

[Prairie Fire Theatre](#) is staging "The Most Happy Fella," a musical set in Napa Valley with a plot that's future forward.

New Doctor Who Freaks Out Universe

By LAURA KENNEDY · JUL 27, 2017

The world's most famous time traveler is about to undergo a change that, for some, is shocking and disturbing.

Artist Believes Art Is A Power For Good

By LAURA KENNEDY · JUL 20, 2017

The latest exhibition in the [Joe McCauley Gallery](#) at Heartland Community College features works by an artists whose brand is Romance, and who believes that art and beauty have the power to evoke change.

Miller Park Summer Musical Dedicated To Late BCPA Director

By JUDITH VALENTE · JUL 19, 2017

This is the first time in several years arts advocate Tina Salamone won't be involved in the Miller Park Summer Musical. But the former director of the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts, who [passed away earlier this year](#), won't be forgotten. This year's production of "Once Upon a Mattress" is being staged in her honor.

Under The Sea With A Beloved 'Mermaid'

By JUDITH VALENTE · JUL 14, 2017

"The Little Mermaid," with its charismatic singing sea creatures, ushered in a new era in Disney animation. The 1989 film was the precursor of all those blockbuster film and stage musicals that followed, including "Beauty and the Beast," "Aladdin" and "The Lion King."

Now Bloomington-Normal audiences will have a chance to see if the stage version of "The Little Mermaid" contains everything they loved about the animated film with [Community Players'](#) new production of the musical.

Former Towanda Pastor Returns From LA To Shoot Movie

By COLLEEN REYNOLDS · JUL 13, 2017

A one-time pastor from a church in Towanda felt called to a new mission a decade ago. Kevin Mounce left the flickering lights of liturgical candles for the bright lights of Hollywood to pursue his dream of making movies.

Philip Dawkins Embraces Challenges Of Playwriting

By LAURA KENNEDY · JUL 12, 2017

"I somehow chose the only profession in the world that has fewer chances of employment than professional wrestler."

'True Blood' Actor, Former ISU Student Nelsan Ellis Dies at 39

JUL 10, 2017

Former Illinois State University student Nelsan Ellis, best known for his role on HBO's *True Blood*, has died. The actor is best known for playing Lafayette Reynolds on *True Blood*. He was just 39 when he succumbed to complications from heart failure. His manager confirmed the news, first carried by The Hollywood Reporter. Ellis visited ISU in 2013, when he received a distinguished alumni award. Ellis won a national forensics title and distinguished himself in the School of Theatre and Dance while attending ISU.

Costuming A Classic With A Twist

By LAURA KENNEDY · JUL 7, 2017

With energy, humor and hip hop verse, Shakespeare's timeless masterpiece *Romeo and Juliet* moves to a new rhythm created by the Q Brothers Collective for the [Illinois Shakespeare Festival](#).

Obscure Shakespeare Play Finds Its Voice

By LAURA KENNEDY · JUL 6, 2017

When Shakespeare first wrote *Cymbeline* in 1623, it was well received. But by the 18th century, the play had fallen out of favor.

Audiences found it difficult to pin down and classify, plus it was darkly comedic and just had a whole lot going on from curtain up to curtain down. But there's a new adaptation afoot at the [Illinois Shakespeare Festival](#) that puts the problems of the play in their place and sets the action under the big top.

Business and Economy

[Bloomington-Normal Home Sales Tick Back Up In August](#)

By RYAN DENHAM · SEP 26, 2017

Bloomington-Normal home sales ticked back up again in August as more buyers closed deals toward the end of the busy selling season.

[New Owners Means New Competition For B-N Movie Theaters](#)

By RYAN DENHAM & LAURA KENNEDY · SEP 25, 2017

The end of summer marks the end of the worst summer box office for Hollywood in over a decade, thanks to an especially floppy parade of sequels.

[B-N Jobless Rate Takes Another Dip](#)

By RYAN DENHAM · SEP 21, 2017

Bloomington-Normal's jobless rate continued to fall in August, as the local economy added around 1,700 jobs in the past year, the Illinois Department of Employment Security reported Thursday.

[Iconic Hobbyland Store Closing For Good Next Month](#)

By RYAN DENHAM · SEP 21, 2017

The most famous red door in Bloomington-Normal will be closing for the last time next month.

[State Farm: IT Changes Won't Cut Into B-N Workforce Size](#)

By RYAN DENHAM & CHARLIE SCHLENKER · SEP 15, 2017

An internal announcement this week at State Farm won't have a major impact on the size of the insurer's overall workforce in Bloomington-Normal, the company said Friday.

What's It Like To Drive For Uber and Lyft In Bloomington-Normal?

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 28, 2017

Bloomington-Normal bars and restaurants aren't the only ones happy to see the college students back in town.

B-N's Jobless Rate Falls As Economy Adds Professional Services, Leisure Jobs

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 25, 2017

Bloomington-Normal's jobless rate continued its decline in July, as the local economy added more jobs in professional and business services and leisure and hospitality.

New Nano-Brewery Gets Ready For Fall Opening In Bloomington

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 16, 2017

There will soon be another place to drink local in Bloomington-Normal.

Bloomington-Normal Home Sales Dip in July

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 16, 2017

Bloomington-Normal home sales dipped in July as fewer buyers closed deals during the busy summer selling season.

On The Road By 3:30 a.m. For Another Portillo's Opening

By STUDENT REPORTER BAYLEE STEELMAN · AUG 15, 2017

You may like Portillo's. But Peter Robinson *loves* Portillo's. He left his home in Waterman (near DeKalb) at 3:30 a.m. to be one of the first in line for [Tuesday's much-anticipated opening of the new Portillo's](#) in Normal. That's a 90-minute drive, then another 5-hour wait, before the 10:30 a.m. opening. (By 9 a.m. there were around 12 people already in line in Normal, including Robinson.)

By The Numbers: Is Portillo's The Biggest Restaurant Opening Ever?

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 14, 2017

It's time for a serious, data-driven look at hot dogs and chocolate cake shakes. The new [Portillo's opening Tuesday in Normal](#) is widely considered one of the most—or *the* most—anticipated restaurants openings in this community's history. (Sorry, Chick-fil-A.)

Aspire To Inspire: Amazon Shoots Video At ISU

By STUDENT REPORTER BAYLEE STEELMAN · AUG 9, 2017

A local entrepreneur is shedding light on the hardships of starting a small business as a woman or minority.

Year Later, MetroNet Grows Footprint In Bloomington-Normal

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 8, 2017

More than 1,000 Bloomington-Normal homes have already signed up for MetroNet, with 12,000 residences and businesses ready for installation, a company spokesperson said.

Trump's Ag Secretary Talks Farm Bill, NAFTA During Local Stop

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 7, 2017

President Donald Trump's top agriculture official stopped in Central Illinois on Monday to talk with farmers about the next farm bill and other federal programs.

Normal Breweries To Compete in State Fair Competition

By IPR · AUG 7, 2017

Several breweries from across the state will compete during a new attraction at this year's Illinois State Fair that's tied into Illinois' upcoming birthday.

Bowling, Fitness, and Dining? Imagining Eastland Mall's Future

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 1, 2017

The wafting smell of a Cinnabon. The madness of Black Friday shopping. Getting dropped off by your parents so you can meet your friends at the arcade. Your first job as a 16-year-old. For many Americans, malls aren't just a collection of stores. They're a collection of memories. And so when malls struggle—or close—it hits harder than, say, when a Circuit City goes under.

Bloomington-Normal Restaurant Scene: Coffee and Donuts

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · JUL 27, 2017

Bloomington-Normal is known as an area where people like to dine out ... a lot. And that's inspiring a rash of entries into the Bloomington-Normal restaurant scene.

Bloomington-Normal Jobless Rate Continues To Fall

By RYAN DENHAM · JUL 27, 2017

Bloomington-Normal's jobless rate fell again last month, with the area adding more jobs than other metro areas in the state, the [Illinois Department of Employment Security reported Thursday](#).

B-N Beer Tourism Brewing As White Oak Takes Off

By RYAN DENHAM · JUL 20, 2017

The new Destihl Brewery in northeast Normal has put Bloomington-Normal on the craft beer map. But another smaller but growing brewery is taking off across town—inspired in part by Destihl's success.

Low Inventory, Fast Offers Driving B-N Real Estate

By RYAN DENHAM · JUL 18, 2017

Like many couples who decide to buy their first house, Shelby Dietz and her boyfriend, Drew Ison, were sick of throwing away their money on rent.

Now in their mid-20s, secure in their jobs at ISU, and ready to build some equity in a starter home, Dietz and Ison were eager to buy in Bloomington-Normal. But they ran into an unexpected problem: There weren't a lot of options.

Checking In At The New Radisson in Normal

By LAURA KENNEDY · JUL 13, 2017

After almost a decade of dormancy, there's new life on the north Normal hotel landscape. Holiday Inn failed. So did Sheraton Inn. And Staywood Inn, as well. Now the new [Radisson Hotel](#) hopes to rise from their ashes on the north side of Normal to turn the location into a success story.

Education and Family

ISU Professor Designs New Model To Teach Teachers

By JON NORTON · 3 HOURS AGO

Illinois State University Education Professor Deborah MacPhee has designed a collaborative model of teacher education she says bridges the gap between theory and practice.

Pastors Debate What To Say About Trump From Pulpit

By JUDITH VALENTE · OCT 4, 2017

A majority of evangelical Christians threw their support to President Donald Trump in the 2016 election, as did a large number of conservative Catholics and mainline Protestants who agreed with candidate Trump's positions on abortion and the economy.

Unit 5 Board Approves Budget; Administrators On Salary Freeze

By STUDENT REPORTER BAYLEE STEELMAN · SEP 28, 2017

BAYLEE STEELMAN / WGLT

The Unit 5 school board has approved a 3 percent increase in spending in its next budget, even as it faces an overall deficit.

Heartland President Widmer To Retire Next Summer

By RYAN DENHAM · SEP 22, 2017

Heartland Community College President Rob Widmer announced Friday he plans to retire next summer.

Bed Building Effort Doubling To Meet Need

By MIKE MCCURDY · SEP 21, 2017

Every day starts with a good night's sleep, according to Ryan Heeren. He and Robert Bosquez are with the West Bloomington Revitalization Project's Tool Library and helping to organize the Bed Blitz, a volunteer effort to build and provide beds to kids sleeping on the floor, on furniture, or with family members.

ISU Opens New Community Engagement Center

By RYAN DENHAM · SEP 20, 2017

A new center at Illinois State University will try to more purposefully pair students with community organizations that can benefit from their growing knowledge and skills.

Are Later Start Times Helping Students In Unit 5?

By RYAN DENHAM · SEP 6, 2017

A cost-cutting move in Unit 5 schools may be paying off in another way for students.

Freshman Enrollment Falls at Illinois State University

By WGLT STAFF · SEP 6, 2017

Illinois State University enrolled fewer new freshmen and transfer students this fall, ending three straight years of record-breaking growth, officials said Wednesday.

Eastview Pastor's Sex Sermon Called 'Offensive'

By JUDITH VALENTE · AUG 31, 2017

Pastor Mike Baker stands on a large stage at [Eastview Christian Church](#) that serves as a pulpit. He is dressed casually in a summer suit, open collar shirt, and loafers with no socks. Behind him, lit up in stage lights, are the letters: S E X.

Unit 5 Official: 'Something Has To Happen' on School Funding

By STUDENT REPORTER BAYLEE STEELMAN · AUG 24, 2017

The business manager for Unit 5 said Wednesday he has never faced more uncertainty concerning school funding during his time with the district.

Eclipse Helps Science Shine At Local Schools

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 18, 2017

Monday's long-awaited solar eclipse is giving Bloomington-Normal teachers an opportunity to get their students excited about science.

ISU's Fall Semester Starts With Strong Numbers

By LAURA KENNEDY · AUG 16, 2017

The recent budget crisis in Illinois created real problems for college students across the state, some of whom opted to find less uncertainty in colleges in other states.

Unit 5 Board Gets Bus Update, OKs Normal Joint Committee

By STUDENT REPORTER BAYLEE STEELMAN · AUG 10, 2017

Unit 5 Superintendent Mark Daniel said Wednesday he is cautiously optimistic the school's bus contractor will do better than the start of school last year.

Unit 5's Bus Company On Short Leash When School Year Begins

By RYAN DENHAM & CHARLIE SCHLENKER · AUG 9, 2017

Will Unit 5's bus system be ready to go on the first day of school Aug. 16?

Pope To Young Catholics: Let's Hear From You

By JUDITH VALENTE · AUG 7, 2017

It's the 5:30 p.m. Sunday Mass at Epiphany Catholic Church in Normal. This used to be the parish's "Life Teen Mass," but it isn't any longer. White-haired and middle-aged people fill the pews—even some couples with children. But there are few teens or young adults. That concerns Father Eric Powell, Epiphany's pastor.

ISU's Board of Trustees OKs New Contract For Dietz

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 5, 2017

Illinois State University's Board of Trustees approved a [new three-year contract](#) for President Larry Dietz on Saturday, including a 7 percent raise over his last full contract and the possibility of annual bonuses.

ISU's Dietz To Get Raise In New 3-Year Contract

By RYAN DENHAM & CHARLIE SCHLENKER · AUG 3, 2017

Illinois State University's Board of Trustees will vote Saturday on a [new three-year contract](#) for President Larry Dietz that includes a 7 percent raise and the possibility of annual bonuses.

Grants Support Nursing Future At ISU

By LAURA KENNEDY · JUL 21, 2017

A pair of grants will allow Illinois State University's Mennonite College of Nursing to address the diversity of the nursing workforce and help nurses find a place where they are most needed.

Health and Medicine

McLean County's Human Milk Donation Program Off To Strong Start

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 22, 2017

For many new parents, the most precious commodity on Earth isn't diapers or even a good night's sleep. It's milk from mom.

Politics and Government

Davis Thrilled At Scalise's Return To House

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · SEP 29, 2017

Republican Majority Whip Steve Scalise returned to Capitol Hill this week, and a central Illinois congressman said it was an emotional moment for him.

Bloomington-Normal Teacher Withdraws From Congressional Race

By RYAN DENHAM · SEP 26, 2017

A Bloomington-Normal teacher announced Tuesday he's pulling out of the Democratic race for the 13th Congressional District.

Dietz Frets About Possible Election Year Budget Politics

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · SEP 21, 2017

Illinois State University President Larry Dietz said a looming state election cycle could hold new budget negotiations hostage.

Sen. Raoul Enters Democratic Race for Attorney General

By AP · SEP 21, 2017

State Sen. Kwame Raoul is running for Illinois attorney general next year, becoming the second Democratic state lawmaker to throw his hat in the ring.

Democrat To Run For Rankin's County Board Seat, Setting Up Contested Race

By RYAN DENHAM · SEP 19, 2017

Republicans and Democrats appear headed for a contested election for McLean County Board's District 9 seat on Bloomington's south side.

Attorney General Lisa Madigan Won't Run For Re-Election

By AP · SEP 15, 2017

Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan says she's not seeking re-election for a fifth term.

Former Sheriff's Deputy Plans Run For McLean County Board Seat

By RYAN DENHAM · SEP 13, 2017

A former sheriff's deputy announced plans Wednesday to run for McLean County Board's District 9, as Republicans try to seize the seat being vacated by Democrat Erik Rankin.

Two More GOP Candidates Running For 101st House District

By IPR · SEP 12, 2017

Two new candidates have announced election plans to try to replace [retiring State Rep. Bill Mitchell](#) of Forsyth. Piatt County Board Chair Randy Keith said he will run for state representative as a Republican in the 101st Illinois House District that covers portions of McLean, Champaign, Piatt, Macon, and DeWitt counties.

West-Side Libertarian To Run For McLean County Board

By RYAN DENHAM · SEP 11, 2017

A Libertarian from Bloomington has announced plans to run for the McLean County Board.

Thompson Plans McLean County Board Run In District 1

By RYAN DENHAM · SEP 8, 2017

A Colfax Republican plans to run for the McLean County Board in 2018.

Democrat Blair Officially Kicks Off Run Against Rep. Sommer

By RYAN DENHAM · SEP 8, 2017

Democrat Jill Blair made it official Thursday, announcing her candidacy for the Illinois House's 88th District, setting up state Rep. Keith Sommer's first contested general election in a decade.

Beyond Money, Which Democrat Has Best Chance To Unseat Rodney Davis?

By RYAN DENHAM · SEP 7, 2017

Labor Day is typically seen as a turning point in an election year, the time when regular voters start paying attention. But for the 2018 election—still more than a year away—that adage about Labor Day may need to be updated.

Photos: Pritzker Picks Up Union Endorsement During Bloomington Stop

By RYAN DENHAM & CARLEIGH GRAY · AUG 31, 2017

Democratic candidate for governor JB Pritzker stopped in Bloomington on Thursday to pick up a big union endorsement and lay out his plan for creating jobs in Illinois.

Democrat To Announce Run In Rep. Sommer's District

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 30, 2017

A Bloomington woman is planning to run for the Illinois House next year, setting up state Rep. Keith Sommer's first contested general election in a decade.

U of I Professor Announces Run Against GOP's Rodney Davis

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 25, 2017

A fifth Democrat has announced plans to challenge U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis next year.

Biss Is Frequent Campaigner In Bloomington

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · AUG 23, 2017

State Sen. Daniel Biss said the reason the state government is broke is not because Illinois is a poor state. He said Illinois has a lot of economic activity.

Clerk To GOP Critics: 'Thank You for Energizing' Republicans

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 17, 2017

An influential McLean County Republican leader said Thursday that the local GOP chairman should not have shared a controversial post this week on the party's Facebook page. She also

said the resulting backlash was "beyond deplorable" and may energize local Republicans going into next year's elections.

Has Trump Crossed The Line? Local Republicans Say 'Not Even Close'

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 17, 2017

It's been a tough week for President Donald Trump. But if you're wondering if this is finally enough for his strongest allies in McLean County to abandon ship, it's not.

McLean County GOP's Facebook Post On Charlottesville Splits Local Republicans

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 16, 2017

The McLean County Republican Party is facing criticism over a Facebook post that sided with President Donald Trump and his [widely condemned "both sides" remarks](#) in the wake of the Charlottesville violence.

Polling Places In Normal Shift To Heartland Community College

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · AUG 15, 2017

Unit 5 officials are pleased after the McLean County Board on Tuesday changed a couple of polling place locations in Normal to get them out of schools.

GOP's Erika Harold Plans To Challenge Attorney General Lisa Madigan

By IPR · AUG 15, 2017

Urbana attorney Erika Harold is running for Illinois Attorney General.

Davis, LaHood Speak Out On Charlottesville Violence

By IPR · AUG 14, 2017

U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis says he was satisfied with President Donald Trump's original comments about the race-fueled violence in Charlottesville, Virginia, on Saturday.

Realtor Mulls GOP Primary Challenge To Dan Brady

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 11, 2017

Republican David Paul Blumenshine of Normal said Friday he's strongly considering a run against state Rep. Dan Brady, R-Bloomington, in next spring's Republican primary election.

Democrat Pritzker Chooses Running Mate In Governor's Race

By IPR · AUG 10, 2017

JB Pritzker announced his running mate Thursday as he pursues the Democratic nomination for Illinois governor.

Political Spat Over Tents, Emails Sets Up Long Election Season

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 10, 2017

It's going to be an interesting 15 months.

The next general election isn't until November 2018, and local Republicans are already sparring with Democrats over allegations of campaigning with taxpayer money, dirty tricks, and inappropriate emails.

Republican From Clinton Plans Run For Mitchell's Seat

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 3, 2017

Republican Joe Alexander of Clinton said Thursday he's seriously considering a run for the 101st House District seat being vacated by retiring state Rep. Bill Mitchell.

Bill Mitchell Won't Seek Re-Election In 2018

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 3, 2017

State Rep. Bill Mitchell, whose district includes parts of McLean County, said Thursday he will not seek re-election in 2018.

Digital Democracy: Facebook Makes Political Push With Town Hall Feature

By STUDENT REPORTER BAYLEE STEELMAN · AUG 2, 2017

Facebook is hoping its newest feature will build civic engagement among its users.

Professor Plans Another Run Against Darin LaHood In 2018

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 1, 2017

A Eureka College history professor who was handily defeated by incumbent U.S. Rep. Darin LaHood in 2016 is planning another run next year as a Democrat in the [18th Congressional District](#).

Rodney Davis, GOP Pivot To Tax Reform

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · AUG 1, 2017

Following the failure of the House and Senate to agree on a mechanism to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, Republicans have moved on to an overhaul of the tax code.

Joliet Council Blindsided By Hales On Coliseum Investigation

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · SEP 27, 2017

STAFF / WGLT

Joliet city council members say their new city manager never told them about a looming financial scandal in Bloomington.

Schmidt Asks Deferral Of Judgment On Coliseum Fault

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER & MIKE MCCURDY · SEP 26, 2017

Bloomington Mayor Pro Tem Karen Schmidt said Tuesday she thinks it's unfair to speculate whether aldermen bear blame for any factors that might have led to [alleged theft of nearly a million dollars](#) by the city's former arena management company.

State Restores Butterfly Project Funding

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · SEP 25, 2017

The state has restored funding for one of the programs Children's Home and Aid cut two years ago, the Butterfly Project.

Dietz Frets About Possible Election Year Budget Politics

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · SEP 21, 2017

Illinois State University President Larry Dietz said a looming state election cycle could hold new budget negotiations hostage.

Future Of McLean County Nursing Home Under Debate

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · SEP 20, 2017

The future of the McLean County Nursing Home is in question.

McLean County Faces Austere Budget Proposal

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · SEP 19, 2017

Next year's proposed budget for McLean County government is \$327,000 less than last year.

Normal Council OKs Early Retirement Incentives To Cut Costs

By STUDENT REPORTER BAYLEE STEELMAN & DANIA DE LA HOYA · SEP 19, 2017

The Normal Town Council is hoping to downsize its payroll because of revenue losses.

Dan Brady Asks Voters For Another State House Term

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · SEP 18, 2017

After 16 years in the job, state Rep. Dan Brady said he wants another term.

Town Of Normal Could Cut Payroll With Early Retirement Booster

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · SEP 15, 2017

The Town of Normal wants to cut its payroll because of revenue losses. Staff are recommending the town offer early retirement incentives to 18 people.

State Budget Puts McLean County Budget In Red

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · SEP 11, 2017

McLean County government must cut up to 25 people from its workforce, County Administrator Bill Wasson said Monday during a Board Finance Committee meeting.

Potential Buchanan Replacements Apply For McLean County Board

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · SEP 8, 2017

Four people want to succeed McLean County Board member Rich Buchanan—and three of them are former Bloomington City Council or mayoral candidates.

DACA Decision Causes Furor In Bloomington-Normal

By DANIA DE LA HOYA & CHARLIE SCHLENKER · SEP 5, 2017

At least two significant demonstrations were sparked Tuesday in Bloomington-Normal after [President Donald Trump's decision to wind down a program](#) protecting young immigrants from deportation.

[ISU President's Contract Hitch Shows Rauner Distrust Of Senate](#)

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · AUG 30, 2017

Illinois State University's Board of Trustees must vote again on the contract employing President Larry Dietz. When the board approved the contract Aug. 6, it turns out four of them weren't trustees at all.

[Aldermen Fold Downtown Bloomington Association Into City Government](#)

By STUDENT REPORTER BAYLEE STEELMAN & MIKE MCCURDY · AUG 29, 2017

The Bloomington City Council has created a downtown section for its Community Development Department.

[Unit 5 Official: 'Something Has To Happen' on School Funding](#)

By STUDENT REPORTER BAYLEE STEELMAN · AUG 24, 2017

The business manager for Unit 5 said Wednesday he has never faced more uncertainty concerning school funding during his time with the district.

[During B-N Visit, Krishnamoorthi Proposes New Hate Crimes Commission](#)

By STUDENT REPORTER BAYLEE STEELMAN · AUG 17, 2017

A congressman who represents Chicago's northwest suburbs condemned the uproar of violence and hatred displayed in Charlottesville, Virginia.

[Durbin Expresses Optimism And Haste About Health Care Reform](#)

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · AUG 16, 2017

Now that Republican efforts to scuttle Obamacare have failed, U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin said Wednesday he is hopeful a bipartisan reform measure can emerge.

The Illinois Democrat said he trusts GOP Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee to help come up with health care reform.

Duckworth Confers With Illinois Farm Bureau

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · AUG 16, 2017

U.S. Sen. Tammy Duckworth said Wednesday she will fight proposed Trump administration cuts to agriculture. During comments to reporters at the Illinois Farm Bureau in Bloomington, the Illinois Democrat singled out crop insurance as something that needs to be preserved.

Durbin, Duckworth Criticize McLean County GOP Chair's Remarks

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · AUG 16, 2017

Both U.S. senators from Illinois are criticizing remarks by McLean County Republican Party Chairman Chuck Erickson.

Heartland May Add New Courses In Logan, Livingston Counties

By STUDENT REPORTER BAYLEE STEELMAN · AUG 15, 2017

Heartland Community College campus extensions in Logan and Livingston counties could gain more courses in different fields of study.

Polling Places In Normal Shift To Heartland Community College

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER · AUG 15, 2017

Unit 5 officials are pleased after the McLean County Board on Tuesday changed a couple of polling place locations in Normal to get them out of schools.

Not Enough Council Aid For Renner's Aide Proposal

By STUDENT REPORTER BAYLEE STEELMAN · AUG 15, 2017

Bloomington Mayor Tari Renner's proposal to hire an aide does not appear to have solid majority support among aldermen.

Attendance Sparse At Blue Lives Matter Rally

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • AUG 14, 2017

A Blue Lives Matter rally outside Bloomington City Hall on Monday evening drew about 15 people.

Police, Felons Excluded From Bloomington Review Board Draft

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • JUL 20, 2017

The final draft of a police citizen review board may leave advocates on both sides of the issue feeling like they have lost something.

After Budget Passes, Heartland Concerns Shift to Pensions

By STUDENT REPORTER BAYLEE STEELMAN • JUL 19, 2017

Heartland Community College now knows what the state will give to operate in the current fiscal year, but questions remain about the cost-shifting of employee pensions.

Parking Meters Possible For Downtown Bloomington

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER • JUL 18, 2017

Some members of Bloomington's [Downtown Task Force](#) expressed support Tuesday for installing new parking meters in the central business district, as the committee worked to prioritize suggestions for downtown improvements.

Ward 1 Alderman Jamie Mathy said Bloomington and Normal are the only major cities in Illinois he has seen that do not have parking meters.

McLean County Board Disputes Funding For Behavioral Health Grant Writer

By STUDENT REPORTER BAYLEE STEELMAN • JUL 18, 2017

McLean County Board members disagreed Tuesday on how to fund a job supporting behavioral health services.

Science and Technology

Bloomington-Normal Pauses For Solar Eclipse

By RYAN DENHAM & NATE HEAD • AUG 21, 2017

Cubicles, classrooms, and even some streets emptied out Monday afternoon as Bloomington-Normal gazed up to the sky for the [much-anticipated solar eclipse](#).

[5 Ways Bloomington-Normal Will Be Watching The Total Eclipse](#)

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 17, 2017

Can't make the trip down to Carbondale for Monday's total eclipse? There's plenty of ways to enjoy this rare event right here in Bloomington-Normal, which will get a maximum 90 percent of the Sun obscured by the Moon. That should make it seem like twilight, according to the [Twin City Amateur Astronomers](#).

[Local Educators Thank Their Lucky Star](#)

By STUDENT REPORTER BAYLEE STEELMAN · AUG 9, 2017

[BN STEM](#) (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) is giving away thousands of glasses to classrooms across McLean County for safely viewing the [upcoming solar eclipse](#).

Environment and Sustainability

[Earlier Application Date Opens For College Financial Aid](#)

By DUSTY RHODES · OCT 3, 2017

Have you filed your FAFSA already? That's the question high school seniors and college students should be asking each other these days.

[Biologist Studies The Voices \(And Songs\) Of Trees](#)

By JUDITH VALENTE · OCT 2, 2017

You might have heard about people who talk to trees. But can trees speak?

['Bike Share 309' Expansion Tied To Private Sponsorship](#)

By MIKE MCCURDY · SEP 28, 2017

Future growth of the community's bike share program will likely depend on private sponsorship.

[Lack Of Adequate Sanitation Affects Poor Across The Globe And In The U.S.](#)

By JUDITH VALENTE · SEP 27, 2017

Here in the U.S., if you have to go to the bathroom, chances are there's a toilet just a few steps away. That's not the case for some 4.5 billion people across the world who don't have access to toilets and safe sanitation systems.

Unknown Illinois: A Nighttime Walk Through Fugate Woods

By JUDITH VALENTE · SEP 15, 2017

Most people would shrink from an opportunity to walk through the woods at night. All that darkness. All those strange insect sounds, not to mention the screeching owls.

Illinois EPA: Heyworth Mobile Home Park's Water Contaminated

By RYAN DENHAM · AUG 30, 2017

The state's Environmental Protection Agency on Wednesday asked the Illinois attorney general to step in and force a mobile home park outside Heyworth to clean up its water supply.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Moving Forward

By MIKE MCCURDY · AUG 3, 2017

The [Ecology Action Center](#) (EAC) is moving forward with its 2017 Household Hazardous Waste Collection event after meeting an early fundraising goal.

Local Food Blog Helping With Legit Concerns

By MIKE MCCURDY · JUL 28, 2017

When Steph Davidson and Jennifer Swartout heard talk that the local food trend in Bloomington-Normal had maxed out, they decided to take action.

Some Illinois Farmers See A Future in Craft Whiskey

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER & RYAN DENHAM · JUL 26, 2017

McLean County has some of the most productive farmland in the country. As its farmers look to the future, should they be looking beyond corn and soybeans to something a bit more flavorful?

Farm Bureau Speaker Tries To Build Trust In Food Safety

By CHARLIE SCHLENKER & KATE LORENZ · JUL 25, 2017

The public's increased awareness of food safety has led to perception problems for some Illinois farmers.

In Search Of Sexy Dragon Flies, Glad-Handling Penguins

By JUDITH VALENTE · JUL 12, 2017

Baby stink bugs. Jealous giraffes. Opportunistic baboons. Seamstress crab spiders. Slipper-shaped orchids. Cypress-studded swamps.

In more than 30 years of observing, recording and photographing insect, plant and animal life across the globe, Michael Jeffords and Susan Post have seen it all—or nearly.

Calling All Sun Lovers And Star Gazers: Here Comes The Eclipse

By JUDITH VALENTE · JUL 11, 2017

Day will look dark as night. Stars will shine at midday. Birds that are normally vocal during the day will suddenly grow silent. The daytime spectacle will rouse insects and other wildlife that usually come out only at night.

'No-Mow' Trend Examined As Bloomington Parks Develops Master Plan

By MIKE MCCURDY · JUL 10, 2017

Leaving green grass to grow can save lots of green money.

As residents help develop a new master plan for Bloomington Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts, they will be asked to comment on a trend seen nationwide to save money: no-mow.