

The Year in Review

Local business openings contradict Southern Illinois' economic woes

Looking back at 2023—in spite of runaway inflation, worker shortages, political polarization, wars in the Middle East and Eastern Europe—on the home front, Johnston City has shown signs of commercial growth. New businesses have opened in our community, contrary to the downward spiral typical of the Illinois economy, especially here in the south.

Spurred by a business-friendly city government, relatively inexpensive property, and high traffic counts on local highways, new businesses have formed or found new homes in Johnston City in the past year. Growing up in JCity motivated two business owners to open in our historical business district downtown. Kari Davis of Blondie's Bakery and Meagan Rich, Attorney at Law, moved into renovated buildings on Broadway. Plans are in the works for an ice cream shop adjacent to the law office.

Other local business owners chose the busy IL Route 37 corridor as locations. Aaron Davis, owner of 360 Fencing, moved into the old NAPA building at 710 Grand Ave. The company installs all sizes and types of fencing, providing service from Centralia to Cairo, Murphysboro to Shawneetown.

After many years of waiting, the residents of Johnston City finally have a local laundromat. Easy Coin Laundry opened in January at the corner of 11th and Grand (410 W. 11th St.). Businessman and veteran, Henry "Brit" Kirby, opened a second facility in Marion last month. Both locations feature the latest equipment, and the Johnston City location has been praised by its customers for its cleanliness. When the Kirby family opened the JCity location, they described the

city leaders as "supportive and easy to work with."

Corporate America hasn't given up on Johnston City. Dollar General decided to relocate from a crowded building with a congested parking lot on Grand Ave. to a new, spacious store built in the 600 block of West Broadway. As part of the city's expanded business zone, DG joins other businesses between I-57 and IL 37 on Broadway—Stuckey's, the ROC, SI Bank, T-Moe's, Pyle Funeral Home, Blush Salon/Spa, Down Home Comforts, CKN Storage, and Edward Jones Investments. According to members of the city's

Planning Commission, other businesses are considering moving to this area.

Investments occurred within the education sector in 2023, as Johnston City Community Unit School District #1 moved to a new office at 1113 Grand Ave., space vacated by Dollar General. The building was completely renovated to provide offices for superintendent Kathy Clark and staff. The new Unit Office is across the street from Jefferson School, also renovated in 2023 to provide more educational space, repair flood damage, and to improve access and traffic flow.

City's demolition program improves safety, appearance of community

BY TIM HASTINGS
Johnston City Mayor Doug Dobbins says demolishing abandoned houses promotes public safety

"In today's society I have to worry about that [abandoned house] being a meth house," Dobbins said. "We don't want to send the fire department in there to put out a fire and then a meth lab explodes."

Dobbins said the city has torn down about 30 abandoned and derelict houses since 2019. "Once the court says it's okay to tear down a house because it's dilapidated, a menace, and dangerous, we go in and destroy the home," Dobbins said.

In most cases a neighbor will buy the newly created vacant lot, Dobbins said. "They purchase them, and now we're not mowing the lot; they [neighbors] are mowing." The city auctions the vacant lots for a minimum bid of 80 percent of the appraised value.

Dobbins visited a recently vacated lot in the 1200 block of Market Ave., December 21. The city tore



Mayor Doug Dobbins inspects a lot on Market Ave., where an abandoned house was torn down in December 2023. (Tim Hastings Photo)

down the house and planted grass seed. "It takes the guy about a week to tear one [abandoned house] down," Dobbins said. "As you can see, he reseeds it and gets it ready to have some grass growing. It's not a safety hazard anymore."

When possible, the city puts liens against derelict property for the cost of demolition. The city currently has liens on 11 privately owned properties it hopes to demolish.



Police Chief J.D. Barter presents Lifesaving Award to Officers Frank Miller and Nick McLaughlin.

Officers honored for saving 2 lives

BY TIM HASTINGS
Johnston City Police Chief J.D. Barter presented the Lifesaving Award, December 12, to Officers Frank Miller and Nick McLaughlin for rescuing two adults trapped in a burning house.

Barter said the Johnston City Police officers broke a bedroom window at 308 W. 5th Street about 7am. on Tuesday, November 28, and pulled the two adults out through the window. "Approximately 60 seconds after this occurred, flames showed through the broken window," Barter stated in

his commendation letter.

Barter said the officers broke the window after hearing screams and after discovering all doors to the house were engulfed in flame. "The officers used flashlights and their voices to direct the occupants to the broken window and then pulled them out," Barter said.

Barter presented the awards during the regular Johnston City Council meeting. The city council and those in attendance gave the officers a standing ovation.

City Council swears in new police officer as SRO

The Johnston City Council swore in Terry Fann as police officer at their regular meeting, December 12. Fann will serve both the police department and the Johnston City Community Unit #1 School District as a School Resource Officer (SRO). The district has employed an SRO since 2019. The program improves school security and helps build positive relationships between students and police.



City Clerk Jade West swears in Terry Fann as the new School Resource Officer (SRO).

This will be Fann's second tour of duty with the Johnston City Police Department. He has also served as a deputy with the

Williamson County Sheriff's Department.

Fann was reared in the Village of Bush.



JUST FOR KIDS

Art for Fun & Relaxation

Hands-on workshop introducing budget-friendly art supplies that can be used for relaxation or just for fun. Art mediums to be explored include:

- Watercolor, acrylic, and gouache paint
- Wax, oil, graphite, and charcoal-colored pencils
- Soft, oil, and pencil pastels
- Oxide, chalk, gel, and liquid ink
- Alcohol, water-based, and acrylic markers

In the first 15-20 minutes, the medium will be introduced; the last portion will be hands-on application. All supplies are provided to students during the workshop.

BEGINS JAN. 23 @ JCity Center for Hope & Renewal
504 E. Broadway, Johnston City
Tuesdays 4:00-5:15 pm • 4 sessions • Grades 3-5
Call 618-952-1272 for information.

Local writer gives overdue kudos to those who make JCity great

BY JIMMY DEAN

My first two columns were columns that meant a lot to me, written several years ago for other newspapers and republished here in the *Arrow*.

This month, I would like to share kudos to folks and organizations around Johnston City that most people either take for granted, or just never notice.

Our small town will never have the population, business, or amenities of the bigger towns in our area, but I want to point out some of the many things we do have and offer that others do not.

Arrowhead Lake and Campground and Mike Dean Memorial Park. In my opinion, these are two things no town comes even close to matching. The scenic lake and campground draw folks from all over the United States to camp (and spend money in town). I hope we can add more playground equipment and trees at Mike Dean Park. It warms my heart watching kids use it.

Manna Mission. The Littons and their volunteers help hundreds of folks around Southern Illinois. This food pantry and thrift store can always use your donations.

Our Volunteer Fire Department and EMT's. Despite going from a full-time department to a volunteer organization, Tom Burton and his department answer the call 24/7. Chief Burton is working on bringing back

a full-time department.

JCity Center for Hope and Renewal. This volunteer-based organization on East Broadway offers many services to help our community. Its unique invested counseling program allows individuals to exchange community service for sessions with a professional counselor.

Methodist Church Food Pantry. Directors Jan Meyer and Mark Webster, along with some great volunteers, pass out food to the needy on Thursdays. Donations of food or finance are always welcome there.

JC Kids' Lunch Bunch. Now beginning its 15th year, this local program serves thousands of meals each summer to make sure no kid in Johnston City goes hungry. Launched by JCity Church (Free Will Baptist) in 2010, this has truly become a community endeavor with volunteers from a variety of churches and organizations.

Lions Club. This small group of hard-working men and women do a lot to help our community, annually raising thousands of dollars for college scholarships and eyeglasses for those who can't afford them.

Johnston City Planning Commission. Another group of hard-working men and women, the members dedicate their time to make the city a better place again, doing this for no pay, and sometimes, little appreciation.

Local Business Leaders.

The first Tuesday of each month, local business leaders gather at Andresen's to share information and announce upcoming events. Alysa Bunting of Indigo Realty, one of our newest businesses, got this well attended meeting started.

Our Schools and Churches. Second to none, these two are the glue that holds the town together. I'm prejudiced, but I feel the Johnston City school system has some of the best teachers, administrators, and support staff around. The same can be said about the churches. The Ministerial Alliance is always there in someone's time of need, and the pastors go the extra mile.

I know I have left out some organizations, and I apologize for that. If you know of any not mentioned, let me know and I will include them next time.

This town is not perfect, but I wouldn't trade it for any other.



Jimmy Dean is a former mayor of Johnston City, and currently serves on the school board. He is a freelance writer for several area papers and has agreed to share his skills with *Arrow News*.



The Secret of Hope

BY THE EDITOR

According to the Marist National Poll, nearly six in 10 Americans are pessimistic about personal finances in 2024. This is the highest rate of pessimism in six years. Though this one poll focuses on only one topic, it suggests our nation is losing hope for a brighter future.

What do you believe about 2024? Of course, no one but God knows the future. Who knew at the beginning of 2020, that a pandemic would isolate individuals, divide families, change the way we work and shop, and trigger a global economic downturn, which some would say continues to this day? Need I say it? God did.

Like many words describing emotion or a state of mind, the word hope has a broad range of meanings. "I hope it doesn't rain today" holds far less weight than "Without food or water, the stranded sailors lost all hope of survival." In the first, hope is wishful thinking; in the second, lost hope equals total despair."

When the Bible uses words like hope, love, joy, and peace, those words take on deeper, often spiritual and eternal connotations. Paul admonished the church in Rome, to "Be joyful in hope, patient in af-

fiction, faithful in prayer" (Romans 12:12, NIV). That could sound like kittens and butterflies but for one word in the middle: "affliction." For most people, the idea of being joyful or hopeful while suffering is nearly impossible, or at least Pollyanna optimism. Perhaps some might suggest being "patient" in the sense of the old British cliché, "Keep a stiff upper lip." Or as an American might more bluntly chide, "Suck it up, Buttercup."

The key to inexplicable joy, relentless hope, and patient endurance is found in the last phrase, "Faithful in prayer." Those who pray in faith cannot remain pessimistic, especially concerning what they are praying about. Lewis Smedes wrote, "...in the Bible, hope is no longer a passion for the possible, it becomes a passion for the promise."

Paul defined hope in this way: "God decided to let his people know this rich and glorious secret which he has for all people. This secret is Christ himself, who is in you. He is our only hope for glory" (Colossians 1:27 NCV).

For secular optimists (or even pessimists), there's the rub. True, lasting hope is impossible without Christ. If we have faith in Him, He is our hope, no matter what the future holds.

Arrow News JCity Trivia Contest Quiz



1. In what year did JCHS win the State Basketball Championship? _____
2. This JCity actor co-starred with David Jansen in the TV series "Harry O." _____
3. Name the famous artist and violin maker who had his workshop in downtown JCity. _____
4. An eating establishment that has been open since 1927. _____
5. Name the local fraternal organization located in JCity that is older than the town. _____
6. Which Beatle had a niece and nephew who went to JCHS in the 1970s? _____
7. Name 3 brands of gasoline sold at the old 4-way stop in JCity. There were 4. _____
8. What JCHS team has won more state championships than all others? _____
9. Ironically, this building was originally a hospital. _____
10. At what I-57 mile marker is the Johnston City exit? _____

To enter the contest, fill in the answers and return this form to JCity Center for Hope and Renewal, 504 E. Broadway Blvd., Johnston City, IL 62951. Email: jcitycenter@gmail.com. See page 4 for contest details.

Name _____
Phone _____ Email _____

QUIZ BY DOUG HANCOCK



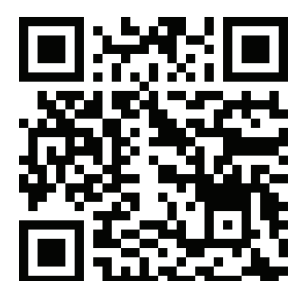
JC Ministerial Alliance establishes scholarship program

Beginning with the graduating class of 2024, the Johnston City Ministerial Alliance will grant a one-time \$1,000 scholarship to one or more seniors (depending on available funds). As with all JCMA programs, recipients must reside within the Johnston City School District. The scholarship, however, is not limited to Johnston City High School graduates, but is available to graduates of area Christian schools, and those who are home-schooled.

Applicants must provide a completed scholarship application, high school transcript (indicating B GPA or higher), reference letter from pastor

or church leader, and 2-4 page essay regarding the student's faith and the potential benefits of his or her chosen field of study to the community. Selection considerations include the applicant's church or ministry involvement, leadership ability, and previous acts of service on campus or in the community. Submit materials via mail or email by the March 1 deadline to: JCMA Scholarship Committee @ JCity Center for Hope and Renewal, 504 E. Broadway Blvd., Johnston City, IL 62951. Email: jcitycenter@gmail.com. The Johnston City Ministerial Alliance consists of a majority of churches and ministries in Johnston City.

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Ministerial Alliance hands out boxes of Christmas joy

Members of the JCHS Student Council pitched in to help on a recent Saturday morning, ensuring more than 80 local households a Christmas dinner. The students joined volunteers from local churches at the First United Methodist Church, where the group filled and distributed 164 boxes of food. Each household received 2 boxes—one with ham, milk, eggs, pie, and fresh food items; the other with Christmas dinner staples. Many boxes were custom filled by church members, who adjusted contents according to family size and number of children.

The Johnston City Ministerial Alliance sponsors this project annually and relies on churches and businesses to provide food and funding. Recipients must sign up in advance to receive the boxes because



STUDENT COUNCIL MEMBERS: (L-R) Ariyanna White, Erica Hinkle, Lacy Edwards, and Taylor Johnson (Ashley Gualdoni photo)

the JCMA orders fresh food items from local stores. Registration takes place during the two weeks following Thanksgiving. Boxes are typically distributed the Saturday before Christmas. According to organizers, the number of individual recipients totaled over 200, twice the number served last year. "This is the largest

response we've had since before COVID," said Marta Phillips, president of the JCMA. "We would like to thank everyone who contributed and volunteered to help get these boxes out." (See page below for a list of churches that are active in ministerial alliance.)

JANUARY 2024 COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Seasonal & Special Events

- JAN. 4 School back in session
- JAN. 12 School Dismissal @ 11:30 am
- JAN. 15 - MLK DAY School's Out Lunch at the Library, JC Public Library, 11 am
- JAN. 12 School Dismissal @ 11:30 am
- JAN. 23 Art Class for kids begins at JCity Center, 4 pm
- JAN. 26 School Dismissal @ 11:30 am
- JAN. 28 Sunday Night Community Sing, Heritage Fellowship (Church of God of Prophecy), 301 W. 12th, 6 pm

Celebrate Recovery, J.C. United Pentecostal Church, 6:30 pm

SATURDAYS
Free drive-thru meal for the community, JCity Church, 609 Monroe, 5:30-6:00 pm

Monthly Events

1ST TUESDAY
Business Leaders Mtg. 9am, Andresen's, 618-534-0303 or 618-922-8089

1ST THURSDAY
Ministerial Alliance Mtg., 6 pm, JCity Center, 504 E. Broadway, 618-952-1272

2ND & 4TH TUESDAYS
City Council Mtg., 5 pm, Scout Cabin, 618-983-6651

3RD MONDAY
Planning Commission Mtg., 4:00 pm, JCity Church, 618-983-6651

3RD THURSDAY
Commodity Distribution/Food Pantry, First United Methodist Church, 400 W. Broadway, 10 am-1 pm

School Board Mtg., 7 pm, Unit Office, 1113 Grand Ave., 618-983-8021

Weekly Events

MONDAYS
SIMI (Southern Illinois Men of Integrity), 7 pm. Call 618-952-1272 for details.

THURSDAYS
Food pantry open, First Christian Church, 505 E. Broadway, 3-5 pm

For more details and calendar updates, see Facebook.com/JCityCenter



Education

The Johnston City C.U.S.D. #1 is accepting applications for the following positions (Correspondence should be directed to **Johnston City CUSD #1, P.O.Box 147, 1113 Grand Ave., Johnston City, IL 62951**):

PARAPROFESSIONALS (2) Washington Middle School OR Lincoln School. Please send a Letter of Application, resume, proof of paraprofessional certification, and two professional references to Mrs. Kathy Clark, Superintendent at address above.

DISTRICT CROSSING GUARD Submit letter of interest, resume, and two professional references.

HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE COUNSELOR Send Letter of Application, resume, proof of teaching certificate with appropriate certifications, 4 references and university transcripts/credentials.

SUBSTITUTE CUSTODIANS Candidates must pass a criminal background check. Those interested in applying should complete

application available at the Johnston City C.U.S.D. #1 Unit Office, 1113 Grand Ave., Johnston City, IL 62951.

KITCHEN HELP Chartwells is now hiring. Please call 618-983-6404 for more information or to apply.

SCHOOL BUS MONITORS AND DRIVERS Illinois Central School Bus is hiring school bus monitors and drivers. Contact Illinois Central Bus Garage at 618-800-6402.

Retail

PART-TIME CASHIER. Johnston City Food Shop. Open availability is preferred, but will discuss when interviewed. 24-29 hours per week. Preferably not in school. Apply in store please.

Legal

PARALEGAL Organized, professional, positive attitude. Interested candidates should email a resume & cover letter to paralegal@richlawllc.com. Salary commensurate with experience.



Family Worship Center
400 W. 13th St.
Johnston City, IL,
(618) 952-1280
Pastors Brad & Kelly Dexter

First Baptist Church
401 E. 7th St.
Johnston City, IL 62951
(618) 983-6455
Larry Stevens, pastor

***First Christian Church**
505 E. Broadway Blvd.
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-6474
Adam King, pastor

***First United Methodist Church**
400 W. Broadway
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-5150
Sherry Cisneros, pastor

Gospel Mission Church
1100 Peterson Ave.
Johnston City, IL 62951

***Heritage Fellowship**
(Church of God of Prophecy)
308 W. 12th St.
Johnston City, IL 62951
Pastors Gaylon & Dawn Stewart

***JCity Church**
(Free Will Baptist)
609 Monroe
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-5254
Dr. Randy Carney, pastor

Johnston City United Pentecostal Church
1101 W. 10th
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-5938
Brandon Abernathy, pastor

***St. Paul's Catholic Church**
1103 Washington Ave.
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-5073
Father Brian Barker

***Stiritz United Methodist Church**
Sherry Cisneros, pastor

***Washington Ave. Baptist Church**
9th and Washington
Johnston City, IL 62951
Barry Robertson, pastor
618-694-2995

Other Ministries

***JC Kids' Lunch Bunch**
c/o JCity Church (see above)

***JCity Center for Hope and Renewal**
504 E. Broadway Blvd.
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-952-1272

***Manna Mission**
306 E Broadway Blvd.
Johnston City, IL 62951
618-983-6262

**active members of Johnston City Ministerial Alliance*



SUNDAY NIGHT
community
SING

January 28, 6:00 pm

HERITAGE FELLOWSHIP

(Church of God of Prophecy) 301 W. 12th St.

Everyone Welcome

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504 E. Broadway Blvd., Johnston City, IL 62951, 618-952-1272, jcitycenter@gmail.com, www.jcitycenter

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To submit news items, story ideas, events, employment/volunteer opportunities, donations, please call 618-952-1272 or email jcitycenter@gmail.com. All items for publication must pertain to events, individuals, or jobs located within Johnston City, Illinois.

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-2 Corinthians 5:17
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JCity Church
FREE WILL BAPTIST
Broadway & Monroe (609 Monroe)
618-983-5254 | jcitychurch.com
Randy Carney, pastor
Sunday School 9:30 | Morning Worship 10:30 | Wed. Night 7:00



TEE PEE TALK PHOTO

Poet's rhyme provides primer for living

BY TIM HASTINGS
Johnston City resident Philip Allen Crosby knows that at least one of his poems has changed a life.

"I wrote a poem for an inmate at the federal penitentiary in Marion," Crosby said. "He told me later, 'I read the poem a thousand times and now I'm a Christian!'"

"You want to hear, the seeds you plant bear fruit," Crosby said. "That time I did!"

Crosby, 76, has lived half his life in Johnston City. In the 1970s he was assistant manager of Grandpa John's, a discount retailer once located on Rt. 37 north of town. After that, he worked as a delivery driver for Bob Stotlar Lumber in Marion.

Crosby said that for many years he and his late wife Karla volunteered to conduct worship services at the U.S. Penitentiary in Marion. "The first time I spoke, I told about being lost in a snow storm in the California mountains," he said. "I told the inmates, I prayed to God for help, and He led me right out." Crosby said three inmates dedicated their lives to Christ at that service.

"I would tell stories from my life and then read from the Bible during those services," Crosby said. "Karla would sing. She knew

many hymns and choruses. Sometimes 150 inmates attended." Crosby wrote a personal poem for many of the prisoners.

Crosby's theme is simple: *No God; no peace. Know God, know peace.* He repeats the theme in many of the 233 poems in his independently published volume, "Poetry of the Heart, and by the Spirit," released as an over-size paperback in 2019.

Crosby, who stands 6'2" and swims three times a week, fleshes out his theme with down-to-earth images. In one poem, he compares himself to a baseball held safe and tight in God's mitt.

His simple rhymes are catchy reminders of faith, like the rhymes in the *New England Primer* used to teach the ABCs and spiritual truth to generations of school children. They're also like the chants missionary William Carey composed to help his East Indian converts cling to the gospel.

This stanza from the volume's first poem, "Peace" is especially pithy:

"No peace at all
Does this world bring.
No peace at all
In anything."

Try repeating that 10 times without crying out for help from a higher power.

Seniors leading the way for Lady Indians

BY DUSTIN HILL
The Johnston City Lady Indians are off to an 8-5 start to the season (as of this writing) thanks in large part to senior leaders Carsyn Clark, Hope Newell, Molly Curry, and Rylee McPhail.

Clark leads the team in both points per game (13.7) and rebounds per game (9.5). The senior post player is on pace to be right at the magical number of 1000 career points. Will she get there? That remains to be seen. Stats are nice, but Carsyn also makes those plays that don't show up in a box score.

Newell is the vocal leader. The Lady Indians point guard leads the team in steals per game (3.15) and assists per game (3.4). Hope

is the on-floor general that will get her teammates in the right spot within the offense and put them in the best position to make plays. Curry has become one of the better sixth man in the BDC West. Coming off the bench, the senior guard plays an in-your-face style defense that can result in turnovers and can hit a clutch triple when called upon.

McPhail gives a post presence that can come off the bench and potentially get you a defensive stop

with her long frame, and knock-down, clutch free throws.

Coach Ryan Schick's squad also gets key contributions from Makenzie Mowery, Kylie Dugger, Zoe Cullum, Peyton Smith, and Peyton Johnson.

The Lady Indians were back in action against Chester at the Christ Our Rock Lutheran Winterfest Tournament.

To keep up with all things Johnston City athletics, follow Tee Pee Talk on Facebook and Instagram.

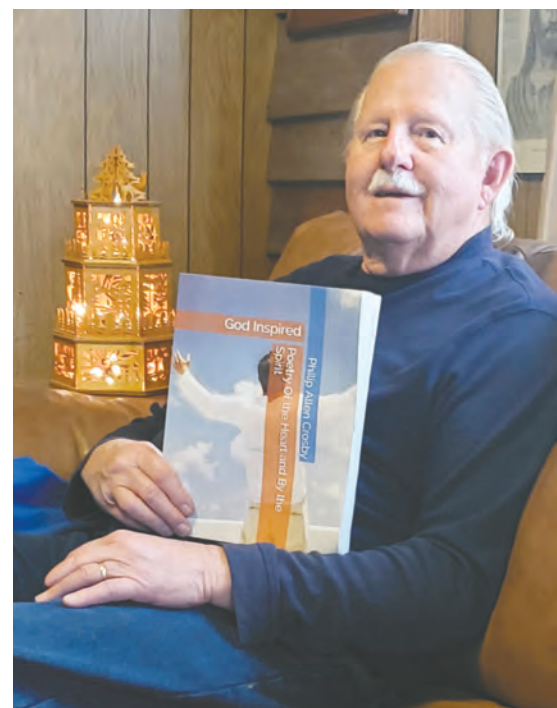
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 🌐 https://www.facebook.com/jctptalk
 📍 1407 Benton Ave
 Johnston City, IL 62951

Think you know a lot about JCity? Enter Arrow News Trivia Contest today



Instructions

1. Complete quiz on p. 2 of this issue and clip out form. Be sure to include your name, phone number, and email.
2. Submit finished quiz to JCity Center (mail, email, or drop off) on or before **January 15**. Email to JCityCenter@gmail.com.
3. Winners will be chosen at random from those who have the highest number of correct answers.



Philip Allen Crosby holds a copy of his book *Poetry of the Heart and by the Spirit*. (Tim Hastings Photo)

LINK TO PHIL'S BOOK ON AMAZON



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Kyle Savant
Erik Savant
Raymond D. Savant
Funeral Directors
618.983.6542
211 W. Broadway
Johnston City, IL 62951

www.murmanandwilson.com murmanandwilson@yahoo.com

Washington Avenue Baptist Church

9th and Washington
Johnston City, IL 62951

Barry Robertson, pastor
618-694-2995

PYLE
Funeral Homes

1008 W. Broadway Blvd.
Johnston City, IL 62951 (618) 983-7777

State Farm

Paul E Lawrence, Agent

305 E Broadway PO Box 118
Johnston City, IL 62951
Bus: 618-983-6953
paul.lawrence.by9j@statefarm.com

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