

Fire Dept: Seeks Volunteers | Mental Health Services Expand | Tiny Tribe Pre-K Program | Weaver Sets Wrestling Record



JCHS senior Braden Stanley (center) celebrates his SIU Chancellor's Scholarship with family members following the surprise announcement. Pictured left to right are Randy Stanley (father), Braden Stanley, Aubree Williford (girlfriend), Katrina Stanley (sister), and Amanda Stanley (mother). Photo provided by Amanda Stanley.

Stanley awarded \$108k Chancellor's Scholarship at SIU

JCHS senior earns university's top award

A Johnston City High School senior received a major academic honor this week as Southern Illinois University Carbondale surprised student Braden Stanley with the university's highly competitive Chancellor's Scholarship.

The announcement came during a special presentation at Johnston City High School, where family members, school leaders, and SIU representatives gathered to celebrate Stanley's achievement. The scholarship is one of the university's top awards, covering tuition, mandatory fees, housing, and meal plans for four years.

A surprise moment for a hard-working student

Stanley said the recognition represents years of dedication in the classroom and beyond. Known among classmates and teachers for his strong academic work ethic, the JCHS senior plans to pursue a degree in engineering when he begins college this fall.

Family members played a key role in the celebration,

helping keep the award a secret until the official reveal. The moment included a maroon-and-white themed presentation—a nod to SIU's Saluki pride—that caught the student completely off guard.

School officials say the scholarship highlights the strength of Johnston City's students and the opportunities available to local graduates who challenge themselves academically.

Continuing a Saluki tradition

For Stanley, attending SIU carries personal meaning. Several members of his family have connections to the university, making the next step feel both familiar and exciting.

The Chancellor's Scholarship selection process includes academic requirements, interviews, and written components, making it one of the most competitive recognitions offered by the university. Only a limited number of students across Southern Illinois are chosen each year.

Fire Dept. appeals for volunteers

JCFD calls for new recruits as department looks to the future

BY ARROW NEWS STAFF
 When a siren sounds in Johnston City, help will not come from a fully staffed station waiting around the clock. It comes from volunteers leaving work, family dinners, or late-night sleep to answer a call.

Now, the Johnston City Fire Department is asking the community to step forward and join them.

The department's message is simple: "Be a part of something great." For a department built largely on volunteers, that message reflects both a proud tradition—and an urgent need for the next generation of firefighters.

A Department Built on Service

Historically, the Johnston City Fire Department has operated as a combination agency, blending full-time, part-time, and volunteer personnel. In 2010, however, financial challenges forced the city to reduce staffing to one full-time chief—leaving the department dependent on volunteers while still meeting the same state and OSHA standards required of full-time departments.

Today, Chief Tom Burton



Assistant Chief Wayne Rice (left) assists a volunteer as he demonstrates the protective gear required for firefighters responding to emergencies. The Johnston City Fire Department is seeking new volunteers as part of an ongoing recruitment effort. (Arrow News photo)

and Assistant Chief Wayne Rice serve full-time roles, with one temporary employee assisting while Burton continues to manage ongoing medical issues.

Despite limited staffing, the department handled

847 fire and medical calls last year, and has already responded to 125 calls this year—with February bringing more fire incidents than medical calls. On average, officials say 80–85 percent

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

JCity Center for Hope and Renewal now accepting Medicaid clients for mental health counseling

BY ARROW NEWS STAFF
 Access to professional mental-health counseling has expanded in Johnston City as JCity Center for Hope and Renewal announces it can now serve Illinois Medicaid clients for therapy services at its Johnston City office.

The Center operates as a satellite location of Car-

oling Counseling Ministries (CCM) of Marion, and lead counselor Sarah Fletcher, LCPC, has recently been approved as an Illinois Medicaid provider. With this authorization, individuals and families who rely on Medicaid can now receive licensed clinical counseling locally—including specialized trauma therapy—without traveling outside Johnston City.

Fletcher, a National Certified Counselor and EMDRIA certified therapist, works with children, adults, and couples, with a primary clinical focus on trauma recovery, relational wounds, and rebuilding safety after difficult life experiences. Her work draws from evidence-based therapies including EMDR, DBT, CBT, and Internal Family Systems approaches.

Meeting a Growing Local Need

The expansion comes at a time when Medicaid plays a major role in local healthcare coverage. In William-

son County alone, roughly 19,600 residents receive Medicaid benefits—about one in five people—with children and working-age adults making up more than 80 percent of enrollees.

Statewide, approximately 3.1 million Illinois residents rely on Medicaid coverage, and in Southern Illinois counties the percentage is often even higher due to rural healthcare needs and economic factors.

Mental-health services are among the core benefits covered by Medicaid in Illinois, including outpatient counseling, psychiatric care, trauma therapy, and crisis services—making the new authorization especially significant for families who previously struggled to find accessible care.

Cris Corzine-McCloskey, director of Caring Counseling Ministries, said the additional provider capacity helps address an ongoing shortage.

"The reality is that Medicaid is an overburdened

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Tiny Tribe Wrap-Around Program expands options for Pre-K families

Johnston City Schools is expanding its early childhood offerings with the launch of the new "Tiny Tribe" Pre-K Wrap-Around Care Program, an initiative aimed at helping working families while strengthening the daily learning experience for young students.

School leaders say the program is designed to extend the structure and social interaction children receive in the classroom, creating a consistent environment before and after traditional Pre-K hours. By offering additional supervised time within the school setting, Tiny Tribe allows families to keep children in a familiar, education-focused atmosphere throughout the day.

District officials describe the program as a natural extension of Johnston City's commitment to early learn-

ing, emphasizing routines that support social development, independence, and readiness for kindergarten. The wrap-around model is becoming increasingly common in smaller communities as schools look for ways to meet the needs of families balancing work schedules with early education.

The announcement comes as local families prepare for upcoming preschool screenings, which help educators connect children with appropriate resources and ensure a smooth transition into the classroom. School officials note that early screenings and expanded childcare options work hand in hand—helping identify student needs early while giving parents greater flexibility once enrollment begins.

Tiny Tribe Wrap-Around Care Parent Information

ELIGIBILITY
 JC Pre-K students
 Age 3–4 by Sept. 1, 2026

HOURS
 AM: 8:10–12:10 | PM: 10:45–2:45
 Full Day: 7:30–5:30
 Early: 7:30–8:10 | After: 2:45–5:30

REGISTRATION
 Begins May 2026 | Deadline Aug. 1
 \$50 reg. fee | Daily fee applies

CONTACT
 Renee Grisham 618-983-7561
 rgrisham@jcityindians.org

PRE-K SCREENING
 Mar. 24 • 8–10:30 a.m.
 JCity Church, 609 Monroe Ave.
 Birth-Age 5 | Appt. Required
 618-993-2138 | 618-733-3355

SEE SPORTS ON PAGE 6

Last Chance for Little League (JCJBL) Sign-Ups!

FINAL REGISTRATION DATE MARCH 1

109 WINS!

WEAVER'S RECORD-BREAKING CAREER

Fire Dept. Volunteers (FROM P. 1)

of responses remain medical in nature.

The Reality Behind Volunteer Numbers

Eighteen volunteers are currently on the department's roster, but when a call comes in, only three or four may be able to respond.

"Most of our volunteers have full-time jobs and other commitments," Burton explained. "Some have only been able to respond to about 15 calls out of hundreds in a year."

That reality underscores why recruitment has become a priority—not just to grow the roster, but to ensure enough trained personnel are available when emergencies happen.

Training, Standards, and What It Takes to Join

Department leaders stress that volunteer firefighting involves serious training and commitment.

Volunteers may join as young as 18 years old, beginning with a six-month probationary period. During their first year, each volunteer must complete Basic Operations Firefighter (BOFF) training, offered through John A. Logan College.

New members must also:

- Complete ICS (Incident Command System) training within the first six months—often available online.
- Enroll in or complete an EMT or EMR certification course within their first year, with regional classes offered in Sesser.

While the upper age limit for new full-time firefighters is typically around 35, Burton says the Johnston City Fire Department welcomes older volunteers as long as they can complete the required certifications and maintain annual training standards.

"Everybody has to meet the same guidelines," Burton said. "Even as a volunteer department, we follow the same rules and regulations as any full-time agency."

Leadership at the Center

The recruitment effort comes as Burton marks 39 years in the fire service—a milestone reflecting de-



Chief Tom Burton was recognized Feb. 3 for 39 years of full-time service in the fire department (Arrow News photo).

that can sometimes create misconceptions when multiple departments arrive at an incident.

Officials say mutual aid responses are designed to bring manpower and equipment quickly, ensur-

"Most of our volunteers have full-time jobs and families—but when the call comes, they still show up."

ing that even a small department can handle large emergencies.

Community safety efforts extend beyond emergency response itself. City initiatives to remove unsafe structures in recent years have also aimed to reduce hazards faced by firefighters entering dangerous properties.

A Community Effort
The department's 21st annual Chili Supper fundraiser was held Feb. 28. The effort continues to demonstrate strong local support. Proceeds help cover equipment, training, and operations.

Understanding Volunteer Fire Service

Across rural communities, volunteer firefighters respond from home or work rather than waiting at the station full-time—a system

ing that even a small department can handle large emergencies.

Community safety efforts extend beyond emergency response itself. City initiatives to remove unsafe structures in recent years have also aimed to reduce hazards faced by firefighters entering dangerous properties.

A Community Effort

The department's 21st annual Chili Supper fundraiser was held Feb. 28. The effort continues to demonstrate strong local support. Proceeds help cover equipment, training, and operations.

Not every volunteer role involves fighting fires. Auxiliary members assist with education, outreach, fundraising, and support services that keep the department running behind the scenes.

Every role, Burton says, matters.

Applications are available at the Johnston City Fire Department. Residents may stop by the station or call 618-983-8311 for more information.



The Johnston City Fire Department's 2026 Executive Board. From left: Vice President Tiffany Hearn, Quartermaster Michael Garland, Secretary/Treasurer Sara Holmes, and President Nancee Burton. Board officers are elected annually by majority vote of department members. (JCFD photo)

New Local Medicaid Provider (FROM P. 1)

system. The needs are great, but there simply aren't enough providers. That's where we can help by increasing access," she said. "We also offer a slightly different style of service. If someone wants a faith-based component integrated into counseling, we can provide that—but it's never required. Our services are open to everyone, and we're fully non-discriminatory. For those who desire that spiritual element, that's part of our wheelhouse."

JCity Center becomes the second facility in Johnston City to offer Medicaid-covered mental-health services. The Christopher Rural Health Planning Corporation operates multiple locations across Southern Illinois, including the Johnston City Community Health Center, where providers offer medical, behavioral-health, and psychiatric services.

"I really appreciate what the Johnston City Community Health Center offers," Corzine-McCloskey said. "I refer clients there often, especially when medication management is needed, since we don't provide psychiatric medications."

Rebecca Sloan, a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP), practices at the Johnston City clinic and is able to prescribe and monitor medications. In the mental-health field, a PMHNP is an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) who specializes in psychiatric and behavioral health care.

Trauma-Focused Care Close to Home

At the Center, Sarah Fletcher's counseling approach emphasizes walking with clients through betrayal trauma, grief, burnout, and relational rupture. According to background information provided by the CCM, her clinical work is informed not only by professional training but also by personal life experience and years of ministry involvement.

Sessions will be avail-



able for clients of all ages, with a particular emphasis on trauma treatment using EMDR, a therapeutic approach designed to help individuals process distressing memories and experiences.

Changes to "Invested Counseling" Program

Since 2022, the Center has offered a unique "Invested Counseling" program, which allowed individuals without insurance to exchange community service hours for counseling sessions. The program provided a pathway for individuals, couples, and families to receive professional counseling when traditional insurance coverage was not available.

With Medicaid services now in place, Center leaders expect many clients who previously relied on the program will be able to use their insurance benefits. However, invested counseling will remain available for uninsured individuals or those facing high private-insurance deductibles.

Expanding Access in Johnston City

For clients with transportation, Caring Counseling's main office on Route 37 north of Marion includes additional Medicaid-approved counselors. JCity Center schedules appointments during daytime hours and early evenings Tuesday through Thursday, along with Monday evening hours. The Marion office offers Tuesday through Saturday appointments with several counselors on staff.

Appointments for Medicaid clients are now available at both locations. For more information, individuals may contact JCity Center directly at 618-952-1272. Appointments may also be scheduled through Caring Counseling Ministries at 618-997-2129.



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Snowstorm throws a curve ball at a carefully planned week

BY JIMMY DEAN

Being organized might be one of my very few skill sets. Having my organized list of things to do get thrown off schedule tends to send me into a frustrated state of mind.

Usually on Sundays I sit down and write out the day-to-day things I need to do. This is my way of making sure I get things accomplished in an orderly fashion. Things that are sure to make the list include putting out the trash (Tuesday), updating all the online football contests I'm in (Monday), and getting needed items from the grocery store (every day). Referee dates, oil changes, meetings and more vary from week to week.

The recent major snowstorm threw a huge monkey wrench into my everyday plans. Basketball games were canceled, then rescheduled, then canceled

again. Before my driveway was plowed, I couldn't get out to go to the store or run errands.

The only "normal" item on the agenda totally blew me away. My wife noticed the garbage truck coming down the street early Tuesday morning picking up the trash. I had actually dragged the container through two feet of snow the night before, not thinking they would be on their regular schedule. By the way, Johnston City has the best garbage driver and company around.

I watch a lot of television. If a ballgame is on—or an old western or *Impractical Jokers*—I'm in front of the tube. After two days of being snowed in and not knowing when I would be able to get out, I started getting antsy. My schedule had been hijacked by Mother Nature. With no basketball games to referee

and reruns of *Guns n' Smokes* on repeat—plus being bored with the only sport on, ice



Jimmy Dean is a freelance writer and former mayor of Johnston City. He can be reached at jrdean@mchsi.com.

skating—I started going to bed earlier and earlier.

Finally, when I was able to get out and go to the store, some sense of normalcy returned. Athletic directors started calling to reschedule games, church services were back on track and schools returned to their routines.

I know the snow and below-freezing temperatures were only around for a week, but that one week totally messed up my little world of organization.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR



March Events

MARCH 3
JC Business Meet & Greet, Andresen's, 9 am

Lions Club mtg., JCity Church, 5:30 pm

MARCH 4
Rotary Lunch, Andresen's, Noon

MARCH 7
Yard Sale (proceeds for student mission trip), JCity Church, 8 am–2 pm

MARCH 8
Free Movie Night, JCity Church, 5 pm

MARCH 9–13
No School—Spring Break

MARCH 16
Return to School

MARCH 17
St. Patrick's Day

Lions Club mtg., JCity Church, 5:30 pm

MARCH 18
Rotary, Indigo Realty, 5 pm

MARCH 27
School Half Day, 11:30 am dismissal

MARCH 28
Lions Club Fish Fry, 11 am–2 pm, JCHS Cafeteria

MARCH 29
JCMA Palm Sunday Community Service, Heritage Fellowship, 6 pm

Public Meetings

MARCH 9
Library Board mtg., 6:30 pm

MARCH 10
City Council, Scout Cabin, 5 pm

MARCH 16
Planning Commission, Scout Cabin, 5 pm

MARCH 19
School Board mtg., Unit Office, 6 pm

MARCH 24
City Council, Scout Cabin, 5 pm

Coming Up Next Month

APRIL 5
Easter Sunday

Citywide Cleanup
TBA

For calendar updates, please see Facebook or watch our video podcasts. To submit an event, email date, time, and details to jcitycenter@gmail.com or call 618-952-1272.

DEVOTIONAL

Spring's Promise: From Empty Tomb to New Life

BY DR. RANDY CARNEY

Spring!

My wife and I have an ongoing, good-natured debate that has probably logged more miles than our car: Which is better—spring or fall? She comes armed with pumpkin-spice logic and cozy-sweater statistics. I counter with sunshine charts and anti-frost arguments.

She says fall is wonderful because the weather finally cools off after the sweltering heat of summer. I remind her that spring is when the temperature mercifully warms up after winter tried to turn us all

into human popsicles. She talks about those gorgeous fall colors. I point out that those colors are basically leaves waving the white flag of surrender before they fall into our yard.



Dr. Randall Carney was called to pastor JCity Church in 2023. As an author of several books, he also mentors other aspiring writers.

Not to be outdone, I may have (once or twice) described fall as "nature's slow-motion funeral." She was not impressed.



Now, to be fair—and because I value my long-term survival as a husband—I do stay quiet for a couple of weeks each autumn when God clearly dips His brush into the brightest reds, oranges, and yellows imaginable. During that brief window, she wins. Temporarily.

But give me spring.

I love the first hints of green pushing through the soil, the buds forming on the trees, and the sense that the world is waking from a long nap and stretching its arms. Spring whispers a powerful word: *Life*.

And that brings us to something far more important than our seasonal debates.

Spring reminds us of the most significant events in the Christian faith. We observe Good Friday—a name that has puzzled many people. After all, it marks the death of Jesus Christ. What could possibly be "good" about that?

It is good because His death was sufficient to pay the full penalty for our sin. What looked like defeat was actually the greatest victory in history.

Jesus was placed in a borrowed tomb—but three days later, the tomb was empty. He paid for sin and conquered death. That is the ultimate springtime message: life after death.

The best thing any of us can do—in spring or any season—is to place our faith and trust in Jesus Christ and receive His gracious gift of eternal life.

Happy spring!



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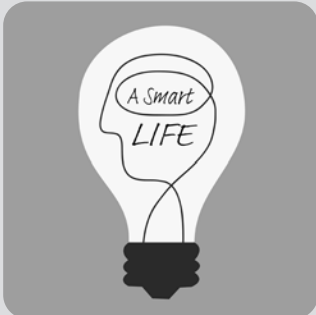
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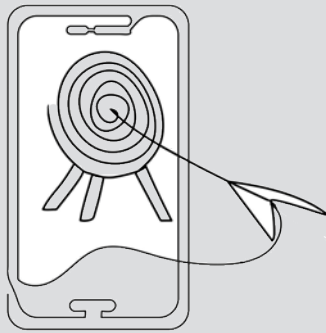
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A SMART LIFE

Your cell phone is a target



BY DON McCHESNEY

Your cell phone is more than just a device for texts, calls, and social media—it is a portal to your identity, finances, health, and work, and cybercriminals know it! Have you been hacked or know someone who has? It happens all the time. So why are they such a prime target? Your cell phone is essentially a mini-computer, and this imbalance has led to a surge in mobile-related cyber threats.

More than 60% of digital fraud originates from mobile devices, and mobile cyberattacks have hit 2.8 million per month. Half of all mobile devices run outdated operating systems, leaving them vulnerable to known exploits. What are some of the rising mobile threats? Phishing attacks via text messages, malicious apps, and side-loaded software. AI-powered threats on mobile devices have also increased, and 1.4 million cell phones have been stolen. Many people have experienced mysterious app crashes. It has been

said that we are in a mobile security crisis, and the threats are growing every year.

So how do you protect your cell phone? Use multi-factor authentication and upgrade to phishing-resistant options or authenticator apps. Avoid side-loading and third-party app stores. Be cautious with apps asking for unnecessary permissions. Be careful when using public Wi-Fi. Look for tools that allow you to remotely lock or wipe your device if it is lost or stolen.

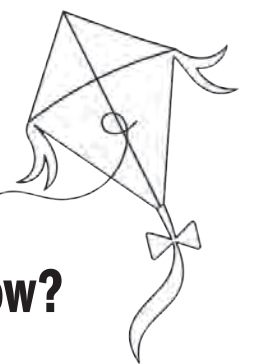
Mobile cybersecurity is not just an I.T. problem—it is a personal and business security issue. Whether you are a casual user or a business leader, protecting your phone should be at the top of your cybersecurity checklist. Staying informed is the first step; taking action is the next step to help eliminate your cellphone as a target.



Follow the String

aimed at all ages

Which way does the wind blow?



BY DON McCHESNEY

Hey kids!! Did you know that March is called the Windy Month? Wind can be mysterious, even alarming, like a tornado where wind can blow 300 miles per hour. You cannot see it, but you know it is there when you feel it blow your hair, see leaves shake and see flags move. You can hear it coming when it blows through trees and howls loudly. But what is wind? What makes it blow?

Wind is simply moving air, and that movement is caused by differences in air pressure, which is caused by differences in temperature. Warm air has a lower

pressure and wants to rise. As it rises, cooler air, with its higher pressure, moves in and takes its place. This movement of warmer and cooler air is what creates wind.

Winds like the trade winds near the equator, and the polar winds at the North and South Poles almost always blow the same way. But local winds can change directions several times a day, depending on what is happening in the weather around them.

Cape Blanco in Oregon is one of the windiest places on earth. Strong winter storms often create winds that roar through at more than 100 miles per hour. But

the honor of the windiest spot in the world belongs to Port Martin in Antarctica where winds there blow at an average of 40 miles per hour the entire year.

People can be like the wind sometimes. They can change their direction depending on what is happening around them or who is standing near them. But you don't have to change just to fit in. If someone asks you to do or say something you know is wrong, you can stand strong and make a good choice. It's okay to say, "No thanks—I'm choosing what's right." Stay steady and be yourself, no matter which way the wind blows!



BY DOUG HANCOCK

- ☘ St. Patrick wasn't Irish. Born in Britain in the 4th century as *Maewyn Succat*, he was kidnapped by Irish pirates and enslaved for six years before escaping.
- ☘ After training as a priest in France and taking the name *Patricius*, he returned to Ireland as a missionary.
- ☘ Patrick's color was originally blue—green became associated with Ireland centuries later.
- ☘ The famous story of him driving out snakes is legend; snakes aren't native to Ireland.
- ☘ The shamrock (three leaves, not four) is

said to have been used to explain the Holy Trinity.

- ☘ St. Patrick's Day was historically a dry holiday with pubs closed.
- ☘ About six million people live in Ireland today, while nearly 37 million Americans claim Irish heritage.
- ☘ "Corned beef and cabbage" is more Irish-American than Irish; immigrants adapted cheaper beef with cabbage.
- ☘ Patrick died March 17 (traditionally) in Saul, Ireland, though the exact burial place is debated.

Enjoy the day however you like—just don't forget to wear green.



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Is Social Media More Harmful Than Helpful for Teens?

SUBMITTED BY MARGIE SANDERS
As part of a classroom writing assignment, Washington Middle School students were asked to explore a timely question: *Is social media more harmful than helpful for teenagers?* Each student developed and defended a personal viewpoint, offering reasons and examples to support their position. The following essays reflect their individual perspectives.

Social Media: More Harmful Than Helpful

BY ELLA DEAN, 7TH GRADE
In my opinion, social media is more harmful than helpful for teens because it can be accessed by anyone who uses it. There are pros and cons to having social media, but the cons outweigh the pros. Social media can be depressing, and anyone can see what you post. Even though teens can stay updated about events, the majority use it for posting.

Social Media as a Positive Learning Tool

BY GABE MUSGRAVE, 7TH GRADE
In my opinion, social media is more helpful than harmful to teens. I think this way because it allows them to connect with people from very different areas and cultures. It can also teach them valuable lessons that can help them in school.

Social media today is a learning tool that kids should take advantage of because there are so many helpful and useful learning resources. Although there are negatives, the positives outnumber the downsides in many ways. For example, YouTube has some bad videos, but the amount of information and learning content outnumbers the useless ones.

Finding a Balance with Social Media

BY JAXON JONES, 8TH GRADE
Do you think that teenagers should be using social

other reason is that parents who are more strict can set boundaries on social media apps very easily. They can limit who teens talk to on social media more than they can with phone numbers.

Finally, some kids aren't able to socialize without it. If you take away a kid's primary form of communication and entertainment, what do you think will happen? It will not be good. I know why parents don't let their kids have social media, but they need to realize that they can limit who their kids talk to and even get reports back. In my opinion, kids would much rather have social media—even if their parents check it—than to not have it at all. That is why I think kids should have social media.

The Dangers of Teens Using Social Media

BY ADDISON VAUGHN, 8TH GRADE
Social media is a large web that may look innocent on the outside but is often more harmful than helpful to teens in today's society. Read more to see my explanations as to why.

One dangerous thing on social media is influencers. Influencers on apps such as TikTok, Instagram, and X make trends out of dangerous activities. They try to push addictions to nicotine as trendy to teens by looking "cool" while smok-



ing and vaping. Smoking increases the severity of respiratory illnesses, decreases physical fitness, and can affect lung growth in teens. The 2014 Surgeon General's Report states that if cigarettes continue trending as they are now, 5.6 million of America's youth (under age 18) will eventually pass away from smoking-related illnesses. The Centers for Dis-

social apps to find young users with harmful intent. Second, cyberbullying can be just as damaging as direct bullying. It can harm a teen's mental health and lead to depression, anxiety, insomnia, and suicidal thoughts. Correlates of Teen Sadness and Suicidality states that 14.7% of teens reporting cyberbullying had attempted suicide.

"Cyberbullying can be just as damaging as direct bullying." —Addison Vaughn, 8th Grade

ease Control and Prevention (CDC) has stated that throughout 2019–2020, 2,807 teens were hospitalized and 68 teens died due to vaping. Approximately 1.63 million teenagers use e-cigarettes.

Another harmful thing influencers post about is their bodies, which are often only possible to achieve through surgery. Seeing influencers flaunt their "perfect" bodies can cause teens to feel insecure about their own bodies, even though they have not fully grown. Teens may think they are too thin or not thin enough, which can lead to binge eating or anorexia. They may think they are too short or too tall—all because media pushes certain beauty standards.

Social media apps with chat or comment features can also be extremely detrimental for two reasons. First, people often lie online, especially about their ages. Predators may use

This is something we can change. Parents can teach their kids to be kind-hearted and caring, and we can work toward a world without bullying.

Most teens are not getting enough sleep because of social media distractions. The blue light from electronic screens stimulates the brain, making it difficult to fall asleep. If parents make sure all electronic devices are turned off a couple of hours before bedtime, teens may rest better and improve their moods.

Many social media apps also lack effective age restrictions on inappropriate content, and the ones that do exist can be bypassed. Teens are exposed to inappropriate content daily due to weak safeguards. Social media apps need to change so teenagers in our nation can be safer. Now is the time to protect young users from these dangers.

"Social media today is a learning tool that kids should take advantage of." —Gabe Musgrave, 7th Grade

It can cause depression, and teens can get easily discouraged and lack self-confidence. I believe that kids should mature before owning social media on any platforms. Therefore, I believe that social media is more harmful than helpful for teens.

media? Why or why not? I think that they should, but only to a certain extent—and here is why.

First, many use social media to talk to other people. Not only is it easier for them to make friends, but you can socialize much more with social media. An-

Johnston City Indians MARCH 2026 – ALL-SPORTS SCHEDULE

H = Home • A = Away Times PM unless noted		
MON 3/02 MS Volleyball (H) vs Christopher Elem., 6:00	FRI 3/13 HS Boys Track (A) Marion Indoor, TBA MS Boys BB (A) Eldorado 6th Tourney, TBA	TUE 3/24 HS Boys Baseball V (H) vs Woodlawn, 4:30 HS Girls Softball V (H) vs Woodlawn, 4:30 HS Boys Track (A) Redbird Coed, TBA HS Girls Track (A) Redbird Coed, TBA
TUE 3/03 MS Volleyball (A) at Du Quoin, 5:00	SAT 3/14 MS Volleyball (A) at Massac Co., TBA HS Scholar Bowl (A) IHSA Sectionals, TBA	THU 3/26 HS Boys Baseball V (H) vs Frankfort, 4:30
WED 3/04 MS Volleyball (H) vs Z-Royalton, 5:30	MON 3/16 HS Boys Baseball V (A) at Eldorado, 4:30 HS Girls Softball V (A) at Eldorado, 4:30 MS Volleyball (A) at WF Central, 6:00	FRI 3/27 HS Girls Softball V (A) KY vs IL Tournament, TBA
THU 3/05 MS Boys BB (H) vs Harrisburg, 5:00 MS Volleyball (A) at Carterville, 5:00	TUE 3/17 HS Boys Baseball V (H) vs Carrier Mills-Stonefort, 4:30	SAT 3/28 HS Girls Softball V (A) KY vs IL Tournament, TBA
SAT 3/07 MS Volleyball (A) WF Invite, TBA HS Scholar Bowl (A) Masonic State, TBA	THU 3/19 HS Girls Softball V (H) vs Anna-Jonesboro, 4:30 HS Boys Baseball V (A) at Harrisburg, 4:30 HS Girls Track (A) Marion Indoor, TBA	MON 3/30 HS Boys Baseball V (A) at Galatia, 4:30
MON 3/09 MS Volleyball (H) vs Sesser-Valier, 6:00 HS Scholar (A) IHSA Regionals, TBA	MON 3/23 HS Girls Softball V (A) at Webber, 4:30	TUE 3/31 HS Boys Baseball V (H) vs Steelville, 4:30 HS Girls Softball V (H) vs Steelville, 4:30
WED 3/11 MS Volleyball (A) at Crab Orchard, 5:30		

SOCIAL MEDIA & TEENS

Pros & Cons at a Glance

Pros	Cons
Connects teens with friends and new cultures	Can harm self-esteem through comparison
Access to learning tools, tutorials, and ideas	Cyberbullying and online drama
Encourages creativity and self-expression	Risk of predators or fake accounts
Helps organize school and social activities	Exposure to unsafe trends or content
Parents can set limits and monitor use	Sleep loss and screen addiction

BALANCE TIP: Set limits, follow positive content, and think before you post.

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Randy Carney, pastor
Sunday School 9:30 | Morning Worship 10:30 | Wed. Night 7:00

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First United	T-Moe's
Methodist	Washington Ave.
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Gibbons & Kiel	JCUP Church
JCUP Church	ZX



109 Wins!

Weaver closes record-setting career at IHSA State Finals

BY ARROW NEWS STAFF
Johnston City senior wrestler Jace Weaver brought a historic career to a close Feb. 20 at the IHSA Class 1A State Wrestling Finals, finishing his run with the most wins in Johnston City High School history.

Weaver qualified for the state tournament after a strong senior season and represented the Indians on the state stage with mat times beginning Thursday, Feb. 19. After battling through the championship bracket, he returned Friday determined to wrestle back through the consola-

tion side, showing the same toughness that defined his career.

When the final whistle sounded, Weaver's high-school career officially ended—not just with a state appearance, but with 109 career victories.

"It has been an absolute pleasure to watch his growth on and off the mat," Dustin Hill of Tee Pee Talk noted following Weaver's final match. "Thank you for the memories."

Weaver's senior season included strong tournament performances and helped anchor Johnston



A referee raises Johnston City senior Jace Weaver's hand in victory during the Black Diamond Conference Tournament—one of the many wins in his record-setting career at JCHS. (Photo courtesy of Weaver's Instagram)

City's middle-weight line-up. His leadership was part of a senior class that helped shape the direction of the program, alongside teammates Kiowa Quillen and Joseph Hercules. Quillen made history as the first fe-

male wrestler to earn back-to-back sectional appearances. She has signed with Upper Iowa University to continue her wrestling and academic career. Hercules also advanced to the sectional level this season.



Final Call for JCJBL Summer Ball

Registration for the Johnston City Junior Ball League (JCJBL) summer baseball and softball season closes March 1, just before practices begin March 2. The final in-person registration from 2-4 p.m. at Arrowhead Park ball fields. Families may also register online and pay via PayPal.

JCJBL is offering a Registration Waiver Raffle. Tickets are \$1 each, with one winner drawn per age group on Opening Day, May 9, following the annual parade. An equipment donation drive is also underway; families who donate gently used gear receive five free raffle tickets.

Questions may be directed to jcjbleague@gmail.com or the league's Facebook page.

Scholar Bowl teams at Washington Middle and JCHS continue to advance

WMS Scholar Bowl (right) captured the Black Diamond Conference title and will compete against teams from across southern Illinois.

There is no official state series at the middle school level. The JCHS Scholar Bowl team (far right) also won the BDC and are advancing into post-season play. Results were unavailable at press time. (Photos courtesy of WMS and JCHS social media.)



JOHNSTON CITY LIONS CLUB

FISH FRY

SAT. MARCH 28
11:00AM-2:00PM
OR UNTIL WE RUN OUT

Proceeds to benefit Lions Club charities

\$12 PER PERSON

fish, hushpuppies, sides, dessert & drink

Dine-in or Carry out

Johnston City High School
1500 JEFFERSON, JOHNSTON CITY

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