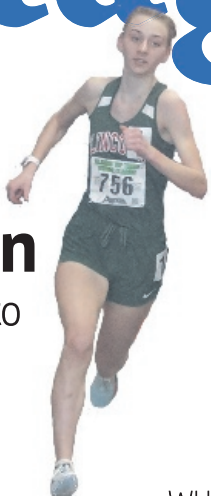




Heitzig makes quick transition

Lincoln star goes straight to track from hoops **B1**



Russia-Ukraine War

Ukraine calls for emergency meeting **A5**

Ask Amy and more!

A look back at the day in history **B3**

Monday, March 27, 2023

WHERE YOUR STORY LIVES

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EXPLORE WITH LENORE



LENORE SOBOTA, THE PANTAGRAPH

Stephanie Bishir, a wildlife biologist for the Illinois River National Wildlife Refuge, describes how the recreated wetlands behind her provide habitat for chorus frogs and other wildlife. The refuge includes a unit in Meredosia where volunteers will be creating shallow wetland areas as part of Save the Frogs Day on April 27 and 28.

SAVE THE FROGS

Meredosia refuge sets two dates to build wetlands

MEREDOSIA — Birds aren't the only things singing in spring. It's time for frogs to break into song, too.

We're not talking about a Muppet named Kermit singing about a rainbow connection. These songsters include chorus frogs and spring peepers.

But as Kermit crooned in another tune, "It ain't easy being green."

That's especially true if you are an Illinois chorus frog, a chubby inch to inch-and-a-half frog that is more tan or gray than green, with a white belly and dark brown or black lines on its back. It's a state-threatened species found only in special sand prairie habitats.

One such area is in Morgan County on the Meredosia National Wildlife Refuge. And there's something you can do to help them.

As part of a celebration of Save the Frogs Day, volunteers are being sought to help build what are called vernal or ephemeral wetlands. The event will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 27 and 28. Volunteers can participate one or both days. There's no charge, but you need to bring your own food.

More information about the event and registration is available at savethefrogs.com/wetlands-illinois.



JACOB CACKOWSKI, U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

The Illinois chorus frog, a threatened species in Illinois, spends nearly all its life underground and is only an inch to an inch and a half in size.

The Meredosia refuge is one of three units in the Illinois River National Wildlife Refuge.

Stephanie Bishir, a wildlife biologist for the refuge units, said building the wetlands won't be all work.

"We're going to be having a lot of fun events, dip netting for invertebrates and listening for frogs. It should be a good

time," she said.

Participants might also see crayfish and salamanders.

Volunteers will help lay an aquatic-safe plastic liner, cover it and seed the area with native vegetation. "A lot of hands-on work," said Bishir.

Please see **FROGS**, Page A2



VIDEO: To see how volunteers are providing crucial wetlands habitat for the Illinois chorus frog, point your smartphone camera at the QR code, then tap the link. **NEWSVU**

TAXES

A guide to filing your return for 2022

Pandemic-era tax breaks to expire

ROBERT CHANNICK
Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO — With less than one month to go before the April 18 deadline, the majority of the nation's 168 million tax filers are once again scrambling to download software, organize

receipts and call their accountants for last-minute help.

Procrastinators may find what early filers already know: Tax year 2022 is not producing as many happy returns as in previous years due to a number of changes, including the expiration of some pandemic-era tax breaks.

"People will be getting smaller refunds on average be-



Rahill

cause of that," said Dan Rahill, a longtime Chicago tax partner and past chairman of the Illinois CPA Society, who now serves as a wealth strategist at Wintrust Wealth Management.

From a reduced child tax credit to the end of a charitable tax break that allowed for an above-the-line deduction last year, the changes are most likely to erode refunds that have become the norm during the pandemic.

For the 63 million people who had already filed their

Please see **TAX**, Page A6

STATE GOVERNMENTS

GOP bills push for cash bail

Measures subvert Democratic changes

HARM VENHUIZEN
Associated Press/Report for America

MADISON, Wis. — Just two days before he drove his SUV through a Christmas parade in suburban Milwaukee, killing six people and injuring more than 60, Darrell Brooks Jr. posted bail for charges of domestic violence.

He had been accused of using his SUV to run over the mother of his child, and a pretrial assessment found Brooks was at high risk of reoffending. But a court official set that bail at a mere \$1,000 cash at the request of prosecutors, who later called their recommendation a mistake. For the parade killings, Brooks was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Brooks quickly became the poster child for a Republican-backed push to enact tougher bail policies. The Republican-controlled Wisconsin Legislature is asking voters to ratify a constitutional amendment that would make it harder for violent criminals to get out of jail on bail.

GOP lawmakers in other states also are scrambling to make it harder for defendants to get out of jail before trial after branding themselves as tough on crime in the 2022 midterm elections. Their efforts led to a fierce fight with Democrats over public safety and the rights of criminal defendants.

Recent Democratic overhaul measures in states such as Illinois and New York have sought to eliminate cash bail and lessen pretrial detention on the premise they do more harm than good, especially to marginalized groups.

Please see **BAIL**, Page A2

TECHNOLOGY

Educators push for media literacy

DAVID KLEPPER AND MANUEL VALDES
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Shawn Lee, a high school social studies teacher in Seattle, wants to see lessons on the internet akin to a kind of 21st century driver's education, an essential for modern life.

Lee has tried to bring that kind of education into his classroom, with lessons about the need to double-check online sources, to diversify newsfeeds and to bring critical thinking to the web. He's also created an organization for other teachers to share resources.

"This technology is so new that no one taught us how to use it," Lee said. "People are like,

Please see **LITERACY**, Page A2

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