



Hinckley Historical Society News

2026, volume 3

Summer Music Will Again Fill the Air

Mark your calendar and plan to join the fun as HHS continues the tradition in Hinckley of providing quality summer musical entertainment for the whole community. The Historical Society for the fourth year has planned a wonderful variety of professional performances. “Part of our mission is to bring history to life and music has been a constant theme in our community,” says HHS Vice President Catherine Bartels.

“The concerts are intended to bring all ages together, encourage the enjoyment of music and provide affordable local entertainment,” Bartels continued. Some concerts will be inside while others will be Ravinia style on the lawn and all begin at 6:30 p.m. at 100 N Maple Street, Hinckley.”



The Thursday June 18 concert will be on the Community Building lawn with the Shade Tree Music Company. A popular local group, they combine a unique blend of original tracks with classic rock, country, R&B, and the latest hits mixed in.

Bring your lawn chair, blanket and refreshments. The Hinckley Harvestors 4-H Club will be selling ice cream to add to your enjoyment and fund their activities.

Come Thursday July 16 to enjoy the Misty River Music Makers, a women’s a cappella barbershop chorus. The group has entertained audiences throughout the Fox Valley with their uniquely American style of music that includes special selections to honor our nation’s birthday.

Barbershop is sung in four distinct parts (Tenor, Lead, Baritone and Bass) with close harmonies and ringing chords. Don’t worry about the weather as you will enjoy the performance in the air conditioned Community Building auditorium starting at 6:30 p.m.



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Enjoy the Wednesday August 5 performance of Chris Vallillo in the Community Building auditorium as he brings the “The Power of Song in Democracy.” In this solo program, Chris weaves original, contemporary and traditional songs into a compelling and entertaining portrait of the history in the Midwest. He will perform a wide range of material from the Revolutionary War, the Dust Bowl ballads of Woody Guthrie, right on up to the songs of the 50s and 60s. Popular music has always been a powerful tool to shape opinions and share the news of the day.

Vallillo is a singer and songwriter with roots in rural Illinois. He will share the history and the back stories of the music that shaped the course of our nation over the past 250 years. He uses a variety of historic instruments, including the bottleneck slide guitar, skinhead banjo, and Dobro.

Finally on Thursday August 20, the Pete Ellman Big Band will perform on the lawn of the Community Building. Bring your lawn chair and refreshments ready to hear great big-band and jazz classics!

Pete Ellman is known for his involvement with the Ellman’s Music Center in Aurora. He formed the Big Band when he retired from the Illinois Air National Guard.

Since then, the band has played regularly in the Chicagoland and Western suburbs. They frequently invite student jazz ensembles to join them and will feature guest clinicians. For Pete, this is a way to get these budding musicians into a real world environment playing the music they love and enrich the arts in a community.



Board Members:

President - Bob Pritchard; Vice Pres. – Cathy Bartels;

Secretary – Jennifer Klambauer; Treasurer – Barry Morsch

Other members –Shawn McCrea, Rebecca Nickels, Stephanie Shelton, Ardith Trumpy, and Jay Yaggie

Newsletter published by Bob and Mary Pritchard

Thank you

Your support during the May 7 “Giving Day” set records! We thank you and pledge to continue sharing Hinckley area stories.



Student Work Displayed in Art Exhibit

Artwork from HBR students dominated this year's **Frame of Mind** juried art exhibition in DeKalb. Only 20 pieces were selected for the exhibit from more than 150 entries of K-12 students across DeKalb County, and half of the pieces selected were from HBR students.

Each piece was professionally framed for the exhibition and was then available for businesses to "rent for a year" after the show closed. Frame of Mind is made possible with support from the Cy Miller Foundation and Franklin's Frames and Art. The exhibition was held at the Ellwood House Museum.

Three of the HBR selections were from elementary students, four from middle school students, and three from high school students.



Second grader Boaz Wood is shown by his exhibit with Elementary and Middle School Art Instructor Carissa Zill. The work of Addie Ramey and Christian Whitlock were also selected.



Showing their middle school work are: (left) Evelyn Martin, Anne DiBenedetto, and Anna Wylde.



Also Emily Pickert is shown by her work at the exhibit.





Senior Sydney Babcock, left, is show with her photography and high school Art Instructor Amy Decker.

The work shown below of Monica Brandonisio and Addalyn Gorsky were also featured in the exhibit.



Congratulations to the HBR Class of 2026!

May your journey through life be successful and satisfying. Best wishes!



National Championship Comes to Hinckley



The sky over the Hinckley Airport was full of gliders in early May as pilots sought to demonstrate their flying skills in the Schweizer 1-26 glider National Championship. Sponsored by the Windy City Soaring Association which is based at the airport, the contest attracted 35 pilots from a wide area of the U.S.

High winds and rain caused the seven-day contest to cancel several days.

Kurt Lewis, Loves Park, a member of the club, organized the contest and tabulated the results. He explained “Each day the pilots are

judged on the distance traveled in a set amount of time and the speed with which they reach all of the designated marker areas.”



“All of the gliders had to be in the air at the same time before the race could start, so we had three tow planes involved. We were able to tow each glider to about 2500 feet in just

two and a half minutes,” he added.

“This contest is a real test of the pilot’s skills since they are all using the same model of glider,” according to Lewis.

Brad Ruda, an instructor at the airport, proudly displayed his Schweizer 1-26. “This model was produced from about 1954 to 1981 by the company in Cayuga, New York. It became popular because it was inexpensive, could be built from a kit, and was small and light weight for easy storage,” he added.



The Windy City Soaring Association has about 50 members and has operated at the airport since 1973. Bill De Carlo is president and can be reached at wdecarlo@gmail.com. The airport was created by Gene Bastian in 1966 and has been popular with amateur pilots.

Through Our Eyes

The Hinckley Big Rock High School has received a Meta Community Action Grant to purchase eight, high-quality, digital cameras for its photography and design classes. The cameras will empower students to capture and share the stories that define life in our small town.



Art Educator Amy Decker applied for the grant after seeing the student interest and results from having access to two digital cameras last year. The school district had purchased one camera and Decker lent her own camera to the classroom. “Students asked almost daily to checkout the cameras as they photographed nearly every school event, and the classroom energy was never higher,” Decker said. She estimates that 95 percent of the photography in this year’s high school yearbook was taken by students.

Decker continued “I am excited that the cameras will allow students to pursue their career interests and have more time behind the camera to experiment with design and composition. Every student in the class will have the tools to grow, create, and share their stories.”

Another goal Decker expressed in the grant proposal was to strengthen the relationship between the school and the community by documenting and sharing local stories. “I would like students to photograph at least four community events outside of school and build a connection with community members.” The pictures will also help document local history.

Meta provides funding to schools, nonprofits, and community organizations near Meta data centers to support technology-driven projects, STEAM education, and community development. Over the past three years, HBR has received grants for equipment to start a podcasting program and assist with language translation.

Decker has been teaching photography, drawing, painting and ceramics at the high school for ten years. One of her students designed a wall painting in the science classroom area that incorporated all types of animals in the tree trunk.

Decker has also painted historical figures on the walls of the social studies area and was commissioned to design a welcome sign for the City of Batavia to welcome visitors to their downtown area.



Teachers Receive County Honors

Two HBR teachers were honored at the 2026 Excellence in Education county ceremony, for inspiring students to love learning and play an active role in their schools and communities. Hosted annually by the DeKalb County Community Foundation and DeKalb County Regional Office of Education, this event celebrates local educators who exceed expectations and make meaningful differences in their schools.

The award includes a \$1,000 honorarium, an engraved clock, and a copy of *Lifelong Learner*, a book on the life and legacy of Yvonne Johnson who created the award.

HBR recipients were Mallory Wassmann, Social Worker in the elementary school with student London Allen; and Ben Mueller, Math Teacher at the high school, with student Matt Badal. The students read their letters of recommendation for the teachers at the event. Administrators pictured with the honorees included Deb Hervey, Becky Lauer and Jessica Sonntag.





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Come Join Us:

- ⇒ Museum is open Saturdays 10-Noon
- ⇒ May 26- Illinois Museum Program
- ⇒ June 18- Band Concert in the Park
- ⇒ June 27- Town Festival & Fireworks
- ⇒ July 8- Declaration of Independence Reading
- ⇒ July 16- Misty River Choral Concert

Let's Read the Declaration on July 8

You are invited to gather on Wednesday July 8 as Hinckley reads the Declaration of Independence as part of the celebration of our nation's 250th birthday. Members of the community are invited to read a portion of the declaration at the Hinckley Community Building at 5 p.m. People across the country will also be reading the document during this day in a show of unity, reflection on our past, and to renew our commitment to the ideals of democracy in the United States.



The Historical Society is organizing the reading around the flagpole of the Community Park (100 Maple Street, Hinckley). Come be a part of the reading.

In 1776, the public reading of the Declaration of Independence was a crucial step in transforming a **political decision** into a **shared national commitment** during the early stages of the American Revolution. The reading symbolized the transition from private deliberation in Congress to public affirmation of independence throughout the 13 colonies.