

On October 6, 2023, Arian Clark, formerly of Danville, Illinois, was sentenced to seven years in the Illinois Department of Corrections. Upon his release from prison, Clark will be required to serve six months of mandatory supervised release. After a one-day trial on July 18, 2023, a Vermilion County Jury found Clark guilty of Aggravated Driving While License Revoked. Evidence was presented to the Jury that on August 2, 2021 Clark was the driver of a vehicle that caused a rear-end collision on Poland Road in Danville. Clark initially exchanged insurance information with the victim, but tried to convince them not to call the police to report the accident. While the victim was calling 911, Clark left the scene before officers arrived. Officers from the Danville Police Department conducted an investigation and issued a citation to Clark for driving while his license was revoked. At a sentencing hearing on October 6, 2023, the Honorable Derek Girton, who also presided over the Jury Trial, delivered the sentence. Vermilion County State's Attorney Jacqueline Lacy stated, "Repeat offenders will be held accountable for their actions."

4. Vermilion County Child Advocacy Center hires new Executive Director

The Board of the Vermilion County Child Advocacy Center announced Jonathan Munoz has been hired as the new Executive Director of the organization. Munoz has been employed with the VCCAC as a child and family advocate since 2021 and is passionate in his work with children. The VCCAC was founded in 2020 through the combined efforts of Vermilion County State's Attorney Jacqueline Lacy and the late Senator Scott Bennett. The organization has improved the response to child abuse cases in Vermilion County. State's Attorney and Chair of the Board of Directors, Jacqueline Lacy, stated, "I am confident in the abilities of Jonathan Munoz to lead the Child Advocacy Center and to continue the vision Senator Scott Bennett and I had when we started this project. It is evident that Mr. Munoz cares about this work and the path to healing for the child victims and families who walk through the doors of the VCCAC." Jonathan Munoz is a Non-Commissioned Officer in the United States Army. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Human Development and Family Studies from the University of Illinois. In his spare time Munoz also teaches Taekwondo to young adults. "I am extremely honored to be chosen to become the Executive Director of the Vermilion County Child Advocacy Center. I am truly excited about this new chapter in my career and I look forward to working with such an amazing Board of Directors and the Multidisciplinary Team in our community. The foundation of the Child Advocacy Center is strong and I'm

very excited to see it continue to grow,” Munoz said. The VCCAC serves child victims of abuse and their non-offending caregivers by providing services through a comprehensive, child-focused approach in a safe, neutral, environment. By bridging the gaps between law enforcement, the Department of Children and Family Services, prosecutors, and service providers during an investigation, VCCAC reduces the number of times a child has to retell their story. Children are referred to VCCAC through the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services or local law enforcement when abuse is suspected. If you suspect abuse, call your local police department, 911, or the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services at 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873). At this time, VCCAC serves families and children within Vermilion County.

5. LOCAL VETERAN WILL RUN FOR THE 104TH ILLINOIS HOUSE SEAT

Dear Citizens of the 104th District, As a husband, father, and decorated 21-year Marine Corps veteran, I am honored to have the opportunity to represent you. Although I have traveled around the world, Danville has always been my family's home base, and that's why we established our business here. My faith in God drives my desire to work toward a healthy community with honor and valor, and to have courageous conversations. Watching my sons grow up in an ever-changing, nearly unrecognizable world, has made me realize the importance of conservative representation in the Statehouse. By focusing on the issues that matter most to you, I will bring positive change and meaningful representation to every individual in our community. Together, we can build a safe and prosperous state that we can all be proud of!

6. Danville man sentenced for Child Pornography

On November 2, 2023, Gilberto Sanchez, formerly of Danville, Illinois, plead guilty and was sentenced by the Honorable Charles Hall for the offense of Child Pornography, a class X felony. Sanchez will serve 8 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections. Following his term of incarceration, Sanchez will serve 3 years of mandatory supervised release. The Court heard evidence that a cyber tip was sent to the Illinois State Police regarding child pornography. An

investigation began, and Gilberto Sanchez was located and interviewed by Illinois State Police agents. Sanchez told the agents that he had received child pornography, but that he immediately deleted the images. Sanchez then consented to the agents searching his phone and the agents located several images of child pornography that included images of children under the age of 13. Sanchez then admitted to the agents that he receives and sends child pornography regularly. State's Attorney Jacqueline Lacy thanked the Illinois State Police for their thorough proactive investigation. She added, "Although this defendant was not suspected of having physical contact with the children depicted in the images, his actions in receiving and sending pornographic images to others, encourages horrendous acts of sexual violence against children. My office will persist in our efforts with law enforcement to hold these offenders responsible."

7. DON'T TAKE YOUR GUNS TO TOWN-

On November 1, 2023, Tyjuan Watkins, formerly of Danville, Illinois, plead guilty and was sentenced by the Honorable Derek Girton to 8 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections for the offense of Unlawful Possession of a Weapon by Felon, a class 2 felony. Watkins must serve a term of one year of mandatory supervised release following his incarceration. The Court heard evidence that on July 31, 2023, an officer from the Danville Police Department conducted a traffic stop for speeding. The officer noticed an odor of cannabis when he approached the vehicle. The vehicle was subsequently searched as were the occupants. Watkins was a passenger in the vehicle and was found to be in possession of ammunition, which was located in his pocket. During the search of the vehicle two bags were found in the trunk and Watkins stated to police that the bags were his. Inside the bags, officers located two rifles, one with the serial number defaced, magazines, ammunition, and other firearm accessories. State's Attorney Jacqueline Lacy thanked the Danville Police Department for their work in removing illegal firearms from the hands of criminals. "My office will continue to work with law enforcement to put a stop to felons unlawfully possessing guns."

8. Vermilion County has received an approved SBA Disaster Declaration Vermilion County has received an approved SBA Disaster Declaration in connection with the storms we experienced from June 29th to July 2nd. The SBA has opened a Disaster Loan Outreach Center (DLOC)

which is located in the basement level of the Vermilion County Joseph Cannon Administration Building, 201 N. Vermilion St in Danville. The easiest access is through the building's south handicapped ramp entrance directly to the basement level. SBA representatives will be on hand to discuss options and applications for disaster loans to businesses and private citizens who experienced damages to their businesses or residences from these storms. Residents are reminded these are low interest loans being offered by the SBA, not grants.

9. Hoopeston man among those that the Iroquois County Sheriff's Office and the U.S. Marshals Service Great Lakes Regional Fugitive Task Force arrested in Iroquois County:

Deitrick D. Baines, age 41, of rural Martinton, IL, was arrested on an outstanding Iroquois County arrest warrant charging him with Aggravated Fleeing and Eluding, a Class 4 Felony. Baines was taken in to custody without incident at his residence and transported to the Iroquois County Jail. ?

Candace R. Searcy, age 38, of Cissna Park, IL, was arrested on outstanding warrants out of Vermilion and Douglas Counties in Illinois and Benton County in Indiana. Searcy was wanted on a Vermilion County, IL, warrant charging her with Failure to Appear for the offense of Possession of Cocaine, a Douglas County, IL, warrant charging her with Failure to Appear for the offense of Possession of Methamphetamine and a Benton County, IN, warrant charging her with a Violation of Probation for the offense of Possession of Methamphetamine. Searcy was taken in to custody without incident at her residence and transported to the Iroquois County Jail. ?

Kyle A. Frazier, age 22, of Hoopston, IL, was arrested on an outstanding Vermilion County, IL, arrest warrant charging him with Criminal Damage to Property. Frazier was taken in to custody without incident at a residence in Cissna Park, IL, and transported to the Iroquois County Jail.

10. BOTH DRIVES KILLED IN CHRISTMAS DAY ACCIDENT

Tragedy struck Christmas Day when a vehicle slid off an overpass and landed on top of a semi-trailer on Interstate 57 in northern Champaign County, killing both drivers.

The crash occurred around 2:50 p.m. Monday, Dec. 25, near milepost 252 north of Rantoul, according to a news release from Troop 7 Illinois State Police. It happened when a vehicle traveling west on County Road 3200 North slid off the overpass above I-57 for unknown reasons and landed on top of a northbound semi-trailer, the release said, with debris from both vehicles then striking a third vehicle that was southbound.

The drivers of the semi-trailer and the vehicle that slid off the overpass sustained life-threatening injuries and died, the release said, while the driver of the third vehicle was uninjured.

On Tuesday, Dec. 26, Champaign County Coroner Stephen Thuney identified the driver of the westbound vehicle as Tyler S. Flynn, 34, of Dewey, and the driver of the northbound semi-trailer as Muharem Ugarak, 48, of St. Louis, Mo. An autopsy will be performed on Mr. Flynn at the Champaign County Regional Autopsy Facility later this week, and no autopsy will be performed on Mr. Ugarak, Thuney said.

Starting around 3 p.m., all northbound lanes of I-57 near milepost 250 at Rantoul and all southbound lanes of I-57 near milepost 261 at Paxton were closed as the crash was investigated by police. All lanes were reopened around 12:21 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 26.

The accident was being investigated by Illinois State Police and the Champaign County Coroner's Office.