

at home™

IN CENTRAL ILLINOIS

WINTER 2023

A Little bit of light

Champaign interior-design consultant's home always aglow for holidays

Welcome home

Champaign house lured Illinois native back after 20 years in California

Brightened up

Allerton mansion's solarium sparkling anew after recent renovations

Celebration time

Four recipes steeped in holiday tradition



\$5.95

news-gazette.com

TOP LAWYERS

CHAMPAIGN-URBANA AREA

BASED UPON A SURVEY OF THEIR PEERS



These **LEADING LAWYERS** have been recommended by their peers to be among the **TOP LAWYERS** in Illinois.

Jeffrey I. Cisco	Cisco Law PC	Champaign	217.991.0409	Crim Def:DUI; Crim Def:Felon/Misd; Nursing Home Negligence; PI: General; Work Comp
John L. Barger	Craig & Craig LLC	Mattoon	217.234.6481	Agriculture; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; RE: Commercial; RE Residential; Trust/Will/Estate
Robert G. Grierson	Craig & Craig LLC	Mattoon	217.234.6481	Agriculture; Bank/Financial Inst; Close/Private Held; RE: Residential; Trust/Will/Estate
R. Sean Hocking	Craig & Craig LLC	Mattoon	217.234.6481	Personal Injury Defense: General; Products Liability Defense
J. Patrick Lee	Craig & Craig LLC	Mattoon	217.234.6481	Criminal Defense: DUI; Criminal Def: Felonies/Misdemeanors; Family; PI Def: General
John F. Watson	Craig & Craig LLC	Mattoon	217.234.6481	Insurance/Coverage/Reins; Medical Malpractice Defense; Personal Injury Def: General
Bruce L. Bonds	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	Employment: Management; Personal Injury Defense: General; Workers' Comp Defense
John D. Flodstrom	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	Workers' Compensation Defense
Keith E. Fruehling	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	Employment: Management; Med Mal Def; PI Def: General; Prod Liab Def; Prof'l Mal Def
Joseph K. Guyette	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	Personal Injury Defense: General; Prof'l Malpractice Def; Workers' Compensation Def
Renee L. Monfort	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	Health; Medical Malpractice Defense
Brian M. Smith	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	Civil Rights/Constitutional; Commercial Litigation; Employment: Management
Toney J. Tomaso	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	Workers' Compensation Defense
Kenneth R. Torricelli	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	ADR: Personal Injury
Daniel P. Wurl	Heyl Royster	Champaign	217.344.0060	Commercial Litigation; Insurance/Coverage/Reinsurance; Medical Malpractice Defense
James D. Cottrell	James D. Cottrell Law Office PC	Champaign	217.693.4905	Agriculture; Close/Private Held; Land Use/Zoning; RE: Commercial; Trust/Will/Estate
Larry A. Apfelbaum	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1570	Workers' Compensation
Todd A. Bresney	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1520	Personal Injury: General
William J. Harrington	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1570	Personal Injury: General
Robert M. Javoronok Jr.	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1570	Personal Injury: General; Workers' Compensation
Kathy A. Olivero	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1570	Workers' Compensation
John J. Waldman	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1570	Workers' Compensation
Richard P. Klaus	Klaus LeFebvre & Wince LLP	Champaign	217.337.4700	Civil Appellate; Commercial Litigation; Personal Injury Defense: General
Thomas B. Borton	Livingston Barger Brandt & Schroeder LLP	Champaign	217.351.7479	Commercial Litigation; Medical Malpractice Defense; Professional Malpractice Defense
Kevin M. Toth	Livingston Barger Brandt & Schroeder LLP	Champaign	217.351.7879	Commercial Litigation; Medical Malpractice Defense; Professional Malpractice Defense
Joseph R. Wetzel	Livingston Barger Brandt & Schroeder LLP	Champaign	217.351.7479	Commercial Litigation; Medical Malpractice Defense; Personal Injury Defense: General
Nicholas M. Schiro	Schiro & Themer	Danville	217.443.1721	Personal Injury: General; Workers' Compensation
Rowan E. Themer	Schiro & Themer	Champaign	217.607.0750	Personal Injury: General; Workers' Compensation
William A. Peithmann	The Peithmann Law Office	Mahomet	217.586.6102	Agriculture; Real Estate: Commercial; RE: Residential; Tax: Individual; Trust/Will/Estate
Denise Knipp Bates	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Elder; Real Estate: Residential
Justin N. Brunner	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Civil Rts/Constitution; Gov/Muni/Lobby/Admin; Med Mal Def; PI Def: Gen; Prof'l Mal Def
Eric S. Chovanec	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Employment: Management; Labor: Management; Workers' Compensation Defense
James D. Green	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Insurance/Coverage/Reins; Personal Injury Defense: General
Richard R. Harden	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Medical Malpractice Defense; Personal Injury Defense: General
Kenneth D. Reifsteck	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Civil Appellate; Workers' Compensation Defense
John M. Sturmanis	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Workers' Compensation Defense
Lott H. Thomas	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Trust/Will/Estate
John T. Wozniak	Wozniak & Associates	Urbana	217.367.1647	Trust/Will/Estate

These **EMERGING LAWYERS** have been identified by their peers to be among the **TOP LAWYERS** in Illinois who are age 40 or younger OR who have been admitted to the practice of law for 10 or fewer years.

Gina Couri-Cyphers	Kanoski Bresney	Champaign	217.356.1570	Personal Injury: General
Charles W. Sprague	Livingston Barger Brandt & Schroeder LLP	Champaign	217.351.7479	Medical Malpractice Defense
Nathan T. Kolb	Thomas Mamer LLP	Champaign	217.351.1500	Civil Appellate; Insurance/Coverage/Reinsur; Medical Malpractice Def; PI Def: General

Leading LawyersSM
Find a better lawyer, fasterSM

emerging lawyersSM
on a fast track to the topSM

A lawyer CANNOT buy the distinction of Leading or Emerging Lawyer. The distinction was earned by being among those lawyers most often recommended by their peers. For a full description of our research process, a complete list of all Leading or Emerging Lawyers, and to view profiles of the lawyers listed on this page, go to

www.LeadingLawyers.com

A Division of Law Bulletin Media – est. 1854

ACCIDENTS HAPPEN

Time to try Pet Perfect PLUS Carpet

Shaw's Lifeguard Integrated Moisture Barrier prevents life's accidents from soaking through into your subfloor. Cleaning up is a breeze and stains don't return to haunt you



**FLOORING
SURFACES**

Has Your Floor Covered

401 Mercury Drive
Champaign
217.398.1990

www.flooringsurfacesinc.com

Contents

6 Cold weather, bright garden

John Wisegarver, garden center manager at Prairie Gardens in Champaign, shows how to enliven a drab winter yard.

8 Inn-vested

After 20 years in California, Kevin Allen came back to Illinois when he fell in love with a home he turned into a bed and breakfast.

12 Holiday Homes I

Besty Holder Bradley transforms her Champaign home into a mix of funky, creative vintage and traditional nostalgia.



16 Holiday Homes II

Bryan Little's southwest Champaign home is always aglow — with both twinkling Christmas lights and the spirit of the season.

22 Bursting with light

Recent renovations have given a fresh sparkle to the solarium in the mansion at Allerton Park and Retreat Center.

25 Baking bonanza

Four traditional recipes from a few of the plethora of religious and cultural celebrations taking place this busy time of year.

28 Ask the Expert

Lisa Carter of L. Marie Interior Design offers an easy, creative way to save your broken ornaments from the trash can.

On our cover

Among the many lights, trees, garland and other holiday decorations at Bryan Little's home in the Glenshire neighborhood in southwest Champaign are personalized Christmas stockings for his three beloved pups, Jynx, Pyper and Poppy.

Photo by
Robin Scholz

Find more photos and feature content at news-gazette.com

Winter 2023



November SALE!

10% OFF In Stock & Special Order



Large Selection
of **La-Z-Boy** Recliners
**Ready to go Home
with YOU Today!**

Furniture + Plus
Your Home and Backyard Store

furnitureplusarthur.com

2062 CR 1800 E - Arthur, IL 61911 ~ 217-543-4093

At Home in Central Illinois won first place in 2020 for best niche publication, and second place for special sections in the Illinois Press Association's Newspapers in Excellence Contests.

**2101 Fox Drive
Champaign, Illinois 61820
217-351-5252**

**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
AND PUBLISHER**

Paul M. Barrett
pmbpub@aol.com

**VICE PRESIDENT
OF ADVERTISING**

Mark Lukas
(217) 393-8238

**DIRECTOR OF
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

Jackie Martin
(217) 393-8237

**VICE PRESIDENT
OF NEWS**

Jim Rossow
(217) 393-8261

CONTENT MANAGER

Carolyn Maille-Petersen
camaillepetersen@gmail.com

ART DIRECTOR

Niko Dugan
(217) 393-8253

To order a subscription of At Home Magazine, please contact Bob Cicone Jr. at (217) 351-5334.

LETTERS

Your input is encouraged. Contact jrossow@news-gazette.com or mail letters to 2101 Fox Drive, Champaign, IL 61820.

At Home in Central Illinois™ is published four times a year by Champaign Multimedia Group LLC, 2101 Fox Drive, Champaign, IL 61820. ©2022 by Champaign Multimedia Group LLC, all rights reserved. Contents may not be reproduced without permission of the publisher.

The beauty of winter



I don't know about you, but I am grateful to be a Midwesterner and experience four distinct seasons. As the days have gotten shorter and cooler, it nudges me into cozy mode. Whereas in the summer months I wanted to be on the go until the sun set over the corn and soybean fields, now I just want to settle in with the latest series on Netflix or a good book and chill.

I also enjoy the changing of the leaves and the switch to sweaters and jeans, and I'll bet many of you do too. Of course, we all get sick of the cold, especially when we have days on end of overcast skies, but I was reminded of the beauty of the season when I chatted with John Wisegarver about creating winter interest in a yard. Even when the leaves are off the trees and the blooms have dried up on the flowers, there is still a lot to appreciate in our corner of the world.

He inspired me to make the effort to pull on warm clothes and go outside even when it's cold and dreary, and pay attention to detail: to see the beauty in the paper-thin curls of bark on our river birch and the bottle-brush fronds on the various ornamental grasses that dot peoples' yards. Though it's definitely easier and less

time-consuming to pull on shorts and a T-shirt and head out the door for a walk

in the warmer months, it's also worth my time (and yours, I hope) now to soak in the beauty of the winter landscape. It often doesn't get the love and attention it deserves.

So, as you transition from fall to winter and all of the attendant holidays, my wish for you is eyes and hearts and minds that are open and alert to the beauty of the season, both indoors and out.

Cheers!

— Carolyn

P.S. Check us out on Instagram (@athomecentralillinois) and Facebook (@athomeincentralillinoismagazine) and drop me a line at camaillepetersen@gmail.com with comments or story ideas to share.



Wine and Wi-Fi are at the ready at the check-in area at the Champaign Garden Inn on West Hill Street near West Side Park.

Photo by Robin Scholz

Brightening up a winter yard

Story **Carolyn Maille-Petersen**

CHAMPAIGN

Fall is quickly fading into winter in East Central Illinois, and with it, so are most gardens. However, while flowers die and trees and shrubs often lose their leaves, it is still possible to have some striking beauty on those days when the clouds hang low and the sun is on vacation in Australia.

John Wisegarver, garden center manager at Prairie Gardens in Champaign, offers some advice on how to enliven a drab winter yard.

“Some people want to have a tidy garden over the winter, and they want to go and cut everything back,” John says, but he suggests rethinking wholesale removal of flowers and other plants in the fall. “You want to consider keeping some of your perennials intact: ornamental grasses, coneflowers, sedums. Even though they’re brown, they have a neat structure and they’re also essential for birds. They make a nice habitat and they look pretty with snow on them.”

Besides being good habitats for birds, these plants also create vertical interest in a yard that might otherwise be flat and lifeless if everything is cut back. Some shrubs and trees also have visually striking details, such as colorful stems or berries or interesting texture or bark. Some of John’s favorites that do well in Midwestern winters include winterberry, red twig dogwood, paperbark maple, river birch, witch hazel and Harry Lauder walking stick.

John’s “number one” suggestion is winterberry, a bush with beautiful green leaves in the spring, white flowers early in the summer and bright red clusters of berries in fall and winter.

“One of my second favorites is red twig dogwood, which is a shrub,” he says.

“It has green leaves over the spring and summer, but then in winter, the stems become much more vibrant – blood red or burgundy red.”



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Harry Lauder walking stick, witch hazel, winterberry.



Trees with unique textural features include paperbark maples and river birches, which have exfoliating bark, and Japanese maples, which have interesting bark colors, according to John.

If you want to be the first in your neighborhood with flowers on your shrubs, then witch hazel is the one for you, since they bloom as early as February. Last but not least, Harry Lauder walking sticks also make for an interesting addition because of their “gnarly, twisted stems.”

Though it’s generally too late to do much planting by the time mid-November rolls around, John says it’s not too early to start planning for next

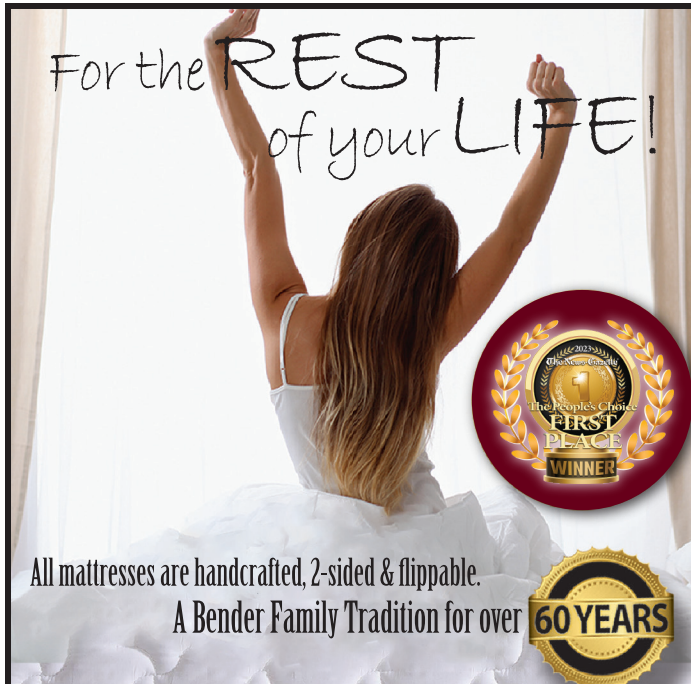


year. The winter months are ideal for seeing how various plants look when it’s cold and dreary outside.

Take a stroll through neighborhoods and parks and photograph plants that strike your fancy. Once you have some ideas, do your research, he says. Look up plants that interest you or talk to your local nursery employees to see if the plants you like will be a good fit for your yard and to see how they will look during different seasons.

If you do your homework now, you’ll be ready to start planting next spring. And when winter comes back around, you’ll have something to look forward to when you look out your window. 

For the **REST**
of your **LIFE!**



All mattresses are handcrafted, 2-sided & flippable.
A Bender Family Tradition for over **60 YEARS**

BENDER
Mattress Factory



URBANA
1206 N. Cunningham
217-328-1700

For the **REST** of Your Life.

www.bendermattress.com | Tues.-Fri. 9-4, Sat 9-1, Mon. By Appt.

Our Precision Neuromuscular Massage Therapy doesn't just feel wonderful, it significantly reduces muscular pain and discomfort.

Online scheduling and gift certificates are available.

407 Windsor Road
Champaign
217-351-1011

BWA Inside Living Legacy Pilates
44 E. Main St., Ste 102
Champaign
217-730-3008

BWA at The Mettler Center
2906 Crossing Court
Champaign
217-351-1011

 **BodyWork**
Associates



www.BodyWorkAssociates.com
SERVING CU SINCE 1982

With a
Prospect Bank
Mortgage you can
make all the
right moves.



 Scan to Apply

P PROSPECT BANK Contact Rachel Patrick Today! NMLS ID 1947580 Member FDIC LENDER

Down the GARDEN

After running a bed and breakfast in California for 20 years, Illinois native [name] saw an opportunity he couldn't pass up in a 1901 house in Champaign's Sesquicentennial



N path

ve **Kevin Allen** saw an
ntennial Neighborhood



ABOVE: The Champaign Garden Inn bed and breakfast is shown on West Hill Street, near West Side Park. **RIGHT:** The library on the main floor faces both the breakfast room, left, and living room, right.



Owner Kevin Allen and his mother-in-law, Kathy Menzies, take care of day-to-day operations and guest interactions while Allen's husband and Menzies' son, Daniel Menzies (not pictured), handles paperwork and accounting.

Story **Luke Taylor**



Photos **Robin Scholz**

CHAMPAIGN

Kevin Allen had no intention of moving back to Illinois, but a house in Champaign changed his mind.

Allen grew up in Stonington, studied at the University of Illinois and got his first taste of the hospitality business at University Inn, which has since become an apartment complex.

"I started there in the restaurant as a busboy — that was my first retail job," Allen said. "I loved it and I've been in it ever since."

He eventually moved to California, where he lived for 20 years and ran a 40-room bed and breakfast called the Rose Garden Inn, but Allen wanted his own place.



Any building in California that would suit his needs was too expensive; he would find a place, then learn it was going for \$1.5 million or more.

On a visit home with his husband, Daniel Menzies, Allen thought to look up houses in the Champaign-Urbana area and discovered an old home at 411 W. Hill St. for sale.

"We were only here for four or five days, and we looked at it twice," Allen said. "We went back and we just couldn't get it out of our heads."

The couple didn't plan to move when they came to visit in 2014, but it was just too perfect: The house was beautiful and the nearby university would bring in a steady stream of potential guests.

It was in a much better price range, too.

"We sold Daniel's one-bedroom condo for what we paid for this," Allen said.

When their bid was accepted, they hired someone to look after the building for a few months before moving to town to start setting up the Champaign Garden Inn.

The house was built in 1901, so Allen is the most recent in a long line of owners.

Allen can point out the former inhabitants' influences on the home over the years and has met a handful who came to stay since he opened the bed and breakfast.

One woman lived in the house for a while with her six children, renting out some of the rooms for income.

After she died, her kids visited the Garden Inn.

"It was like walking down memory lane for them, and it was kind of fun to hear the old story," Allen said.

Allen credits that family for retaining a lot of the original aspects of the building.

"The lady who lived here, the widow, she never did anything to the house, and that's one reason it's so beautiful," Allen said. "In the

'60s and '70s, people painted all the woodwork and carpeted all the hardwood. This would've all gone."

The B&B has completely modern amenities, but Allen has kept the woodwork and most of the wallpaper and tiling that were in place when he bought it — even if that retro tile is frustrating to clean.

"It's pretty stunning ... although I hate it, because every little thing shows up," Allen said.

Allen also keeps an eye out for vintage furniture and decor to keep with the theme of the house, with the exception of things like mattresses and bedding that he wants to guarantee are new for the guests.

These days, the inn is a three-person operation: Menzies handles most of the paperwork and accounting, while his mother, Kathy Menzies, and Allen take care of the day-to-day and interacting with guests.

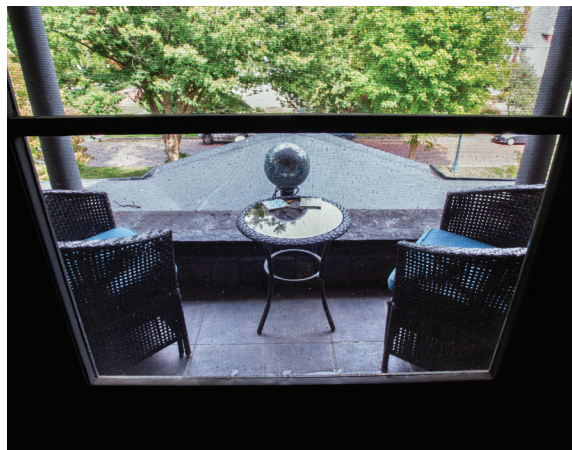
Kathy Menzies lives in the inn now, but it took some convincing for her to join her son and son-in-law in Illinois.

"I've been glad to be back, but it's been harder on Mom and Daniel because they're California born and bred," Allen said.

Daniel Menzies was worried, too, about moving to a more rural area as a gay couple — Allen remembers he didn't want to hold hands while walking in public when they first visited. After they rounded a corner right into the CU Pride Fest, those concerns were put to rest.

Now that they've had time to acclimate, Kathy Menzies still isn't happy about the cold winter months, but she spends her time sewing and conversing with guests at the B&B.

Allen has more plans for the future, like new plants in the garden and updates to the outdoor seating area, but the family is here to stay. 





The main living room reflects owner Kevin Allen's desire to keep the decor with the theme of the home, built in 1901.
OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP: The shared bath on the third floor; the main entry hall; a bedroom on the second floor; and a small sitting porch seen through the door at the end of the second-floor hallway.


CHAMPAIGN
Jewelers
 2437 Village Green Pl
 Champaign, IL 61822
 217-693-7655

 **COUNTRY SHOE LLC**
 FOOTWEAR FOR EVERYONE'S JOURNEY
Styles That Feel Good
SAS

Many Other Brands You Trust

 Hours: Monday-Friday 8-5, Saturday 8-3
 2068 County Road 1800 E, Arthur, IL | 217-543-2082



Story **Alexis Castillo** § Photos **Robin Scholz**

CHAMPAIGN

Betsy Holder Bradley of Champaign is a mother to four kids under the age of 16, a dog mom, a wife and a lawyer.

When she's not busy running a law firm and driving her kids to and from extracurriculars, she likes socializing with friends, interior design and crafting—in particular, creating holiday wreaths and decorations.

Growing up, Betsy had a live Christmas tree each year and looked forward to receiving an annual ornament, which she placed alongside handmade ornaments. Memories of her childhood home during the holidays and her participation in Festival of Trees when she was younger influence her tree decorations.

When determining themes for her Christmas trees and other spaces in her home, Betsy also looks to Pinterest, Instagram and the work of professional designers for inspiration.



The dining room, with its own slender Christmas tree, is set for holiday guests at Betsy Holder Bradley's home in Champaign. **LEFT:** The stockings are hung by the chimney with care.



Betsy Holder Bradley with her two pups.

Creating a

*The holiday decorations
a mix of creative, funky*



a NOSTALGIC NOEL

ns at **Betsy Holder Bradley's** Champaign home feature
ky vintage and traditional elements from her childhood



This year, her home features a Santa Claus-themed tree and one decorated with Swarovski and Waterford crystal ornaments.

She describes her style as creative, funky vintage meets traditional and the atmosphere of her home as warm and cozy. While Betsy has learned different ways to decorate her trees with ribbon, garland and other materials, and is drawn to some of the new designs she sees on social media, her eclectic holiday decorating style has remained consistent throughout the years.

Betsy says she has found some of her holiday decorations while shopping at estate sales and antique stores around town. Some of her trinkets, such as her shiny and bright Mid-Century ornaments, are from Champaign's Crossroads Corner Consignment and Habitat for Humanity ReStore.

When shopping for a home, Betsy was set on finding one on the older side with character and original woodwork — she envisioned an old mantle and an antique feel. She pictured how the house would look during Christmastime and was sold.

As someone who chooses live garland as the essential finishing touch to her favorite festively decorated spaces, Betsy envisioned how beautiful the natural green would look placed on top of a mantle of original woodwork — adding a vibrant pop of color — and knew that the house was a place she could turn into a beautifully and originally adorned home.

Live greenery is also found woven through the staircase handrail with twinkle lights and ribbon. Charming needlepoint stockings, however, are the attention-grabbers of the staircase. The matriarchs of the households of Betsy's ancestors had personalized stockings for everyone in the family, and this tradition has been passed on through generations. The needlepoint stockings that hang from the staircase are cherished gifts from Betsy's late great aunt.

Candles mixed into live greenery and surrounded by fine china and crystal complete Betsy's dining-room tablescape. She adds traditional and whimsical touches with brightly colored linens and candy canes. She says her dining room, formal living room and fireplace



TOP: A miniature Christmas village is set up on the sideboard in the dining room: **ABOVE:** Two of the trees set up in the home, with the one at left matching the colors of the painting on the wall. **RIGHT:** A vignette in the kitchen.



mantle are what she enjoys decorating the most.

Placed at the sides of the mantle are stunning silver bells that were gifted to her husband by his late grandmother. Treasured items that have been passed down through generations bring a personalized, nostalgic warmth.

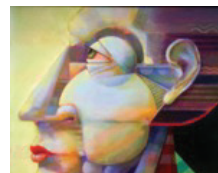
Vivid hues and patterns are featured in Betsy's home through artwork, textiles and decorations adding character to an already architecturally interesting home. She incorporates brilliantly colored miniature trees, trinkets and Christmas villages with traditional pieces, which

give her home an energetic, tasteful, and inviting aesthetic.

Betsy cherishes time spent with her loved ones during Christmas Eve dinner at her parent's home, hosting dinner on Christmas night, and taking in the magic of Candlestick Lane in Urbana. Each year, she looks forward to sitting in the formal living room next to the fireplace and sinking into a book while surrounded by her kids. While her children read and study for exams alongside her, she reflects on the precious time when they were little and she would watch them excitedly come downstairs and open presents from Santa. 



THE GILBERT GALLERY



Open 12:00-4:00pm 102 West Main Street
Wednesdays-Saturdays 2nd Floor, Urbana

thegilbertgallery.net

Stained & Decorative Glass since 1972

Artist:
Marilyn Pollard
marilynfx@gmail.com

**DESIGN
BUILD
INSTALL**

Decorative glass for:
Holiday accent panels
Wine cellars
Front entryways
Room dividers
Skylights
Kitchen cabinets
Over tub windows
Meditation rooms
Transom windows
Casements

Glass FX

103 E. Clark St
Champaign
217-359-0048





Holiday GLOW-UP

Interior-design consultant **Bryan Little's** southwest Champaign home is always aglow with his trademark infectious enthusiasm for getting into the spirit of the season



The family-room tree is reflected in the patio doors as more greenery and soft Christmas lights fill up the room in Bryan Little's home in southwest Champaign.

Story **Carolyn Maille-Petersen**



Photos **Robin Scholz**

Gently twinkling Christmas lights greet visitors to Bryan Little's delightful home in southwest Champaign's Glenshire neighborhood, where the holiday spirit is alive and well, year after year.

From the moment you pull up to his home, the Christmas spirit draws you in, starting with his collection of lighted Christmas

snowflakes that lead the way to the front door. As you step onto his porch with its candle-lit glass lanterns and frosted white miniature Christmas trees, you feel the enchantment. Softly glowing white lights are everywhere, from the wreath on the front door to the greenery-wrapped chandelier in the entryway.

The chandelier, hung with glass icicles from Prairie Fire Glass in Monticello, is just the prelude. Walk into Bryan's living room and you are greeted by a Christmas extravaganza. The mantle is covered in garland and hung with personalized Christmas stockings for his three beloved pups, Jynx, Pyper and Poppy.





All of the horizontal surfaces are covered in artfully displayed holiday decorations. Then there is the gigantic red-ribboned tree next to the sofa, which is just one of 10 trees that Bryan has scattered throughout his home.

Two of those trees, decked out in silver, gold and red, have pride of place in Bryan's "Little Martini Lounge" adjacent to the living room. The room draws the eye with its bold geometric blue and gold wallpaper, side bar and tall, round game table with four quarter-round stools tucked neatly underneath.

"This is my favorite room. I love sitting in here," says Bryan, "and (I love) the game table."

Of course, this magical wonderland doesn't happen without a lot of effort and imagination. Bryan spends two full days putting up all of his decorations, but thanks to his organizational skills, he has it down to a science. Everything is separated by room and packed into labeled storage bins that live in his garage and attic during the off-season. Since the house doesn't have a basement, that was his only storage option.

Typically, storing delicate items in an attic is less than ideal due to the temperature extremes, but Bryan solved this problem by installing a separate climate control system in his attic. This feature is particularly useful for items like snow globes that can freeze and shatter if stored in extremely cold temperatures or holiday candles that can melt in the heat.

Once he has distributed all his boxes to the proper rooms, the fun begins.



ABOVE: Bryan Little sits next to one of the 10 Christmas trees that adorn his home in southwest Champaign. **BELOW LEFT:** The primary bedroom features another tree and Christmas decor on the bed. **BELOW RIGHT:** Lights, wreaths and ornaments are prominent features at the front entryway of the home.

"The first day is always a full day," Bryan says.

Little bits of Christmas cheer are scattered everywhere, including the bedrooms and bathrooms. There are themed Christmas trees in virtually every room, including his red-ribbon tree in the living room — a favorite among his friends, he says — as well as a Waterford crystal and Tiffany & Co. ornament tree by his dining room table; a small tree in his pups' bedroom that is filled with mementos of all the pets he's ever had; and another tree in the guest bedroom that is filled with ornaments collected on his travels. His favorite is

the tree in his bedroom that is covered in ornaments from his childhood.

"All those ornaments have been given to me through friends and family," he says. "I don't think there's anything on that tree that I've purchased."

His house, a 2,400-square-foot ranch, received a complete overhaul when he bought it in 2021. Bryan, an interior-design consultant and owner of B. Little Interiors, spent three months painting walls and cabinets, replacing countertops and floors, and creating a walk-in closet in the primary bedroom where once there was just a narrow storage closet.



He has his own crew of 13 people who work on all his decorating jobs, so he knows the quality of the work will be up to his standards.

For the most part, his updates were cosmetic. In the kitchen, he did make a few minor changes — moving cabinets along one wall over a few inches to accommodate a larger refrigerator, installing quartz countertops, painting the maple cabinets white and adding tape lighting both underneath and on top of the upper cabinets. All of the original upper cabinets were the same height, says Bryan, so he replaced some with taller cabinets with frosted-glass doors to create visual interest.

Outside, he had new siding installed and cleaned up the yard, which of course is also included in Bryan's Christmas display.

"I always do a slow twinkle here and there. I get my lights at Menards for that because they have the best twinklers," he says with his infectious laugh.

But though he buys the lights, he uses Kingdom Lawn & Lights to put up, take down and store the lights on his roof, while he takes care of all the lights down low. When all is said and done, both his yard and his home are aglow with light and imbued with Bryan's holiday spirit.

"Christmas is my holiday. I'm a winter person," he says. "I love it. The snowier, the colder, the better and the happier I am."

While Champaign may not be known for copious amounts of snow, that doesn't stop Bryan from celebrating the biggest winter holiday with a contagious enthusiasm that he is happy to share with friends and neighbors alike. 



TEMPUR-PEDIC

LOVE YOUR SLEEP

 **Illinimattress**
family owned & operated

514 S. COUNTRY FAIR DRIVE CHAMPAIGN, IL 61821
(217) 359-0156 ILLINIMATTRESS.COM

Precision Painting

Quality calls for Precision

Siding • Windows • Walls • Garage Doors • Cabinets
Drywall Texturing • Epoxy Floors & Much More!

Ask out how to get your FREE Estimate!

(217) 384-7590
701 West Park Ave., Champaign • whyprecision.com

magical.



MICHAELS'
C A T E R I N G

217-351-2500
MichaelsCateringEvents.com



PREMIER DESIGN
CABINETS & FURNITURE
Hours: Mon - Sat 9:00 - 4:00

Furnishings for Your Entire Home or Office
You Dream it... We Build it

201 E CR 200N - Arcola, IL 61910 ~ 217-543-3863
www.premierdesignfurniture.com



Let the

Recent renovations have the

Story **Carolyn Maille-Petersen** Photos **Steve Hoffman**

MONTICELLO

A visit to the mansion at Allerton Park and Retreat Center is like stepping back in time to a more elegant era.

Thanks to the many renovations completed in recent years, it's not hard to imagine women in ball gowns and men in tuxedos mingling in the central hall and opulent sitting rooms or gliding up to the bar in the solarium.

Built in 1899 by philanthropist Robert Allerton, the mansion and surrounding property were bequeathed to the University of Illinois in 1946. The mansion is now used for meetings and retreats, as well as weddings and other events, so the updates make the space not only more beautiful, but also more functional. They are a feather in the cap of the staff who have worked diligently to make sure all work stays true to the home's original look.

The most recent update is to the solarium, located on the southwest side of the mansion. Its wall of original floor-to-ceiling paned-glass windows offers visitors a pastoral view of a grass and gravel terrace and koi pond, as well as the larger reflecting pond and meadow beyond.

Originally designed as a porch for Robert to enjoy the natural beauty of his surroundings, it also had a glass ceiling, says Executive Director Derek Peterson. However, the space proved too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter, so Robert covered the glass roof and had the outer glass wall and doors installed.

Other original elements of the room also remain, but it has a new lease on life, thanks to generous donors who paid for the renovations and the staff and volunteers who had the vision.

When the time came to renovate the space, a small subcommittee of board members and staffers gathered to discuss their ideas.

"When we do these renovations, we kind of think about functionality of the space," says Jordan Zech, Allerton's associate director of the retreat center and programming.

SUNSHINE in

the Allerton Mansion Solarium sparkling like a jewel



Anne Carlson, the interior designer the staff works with, does research and provides insight into how to keep the space appropriate to the period it was built in, Jordan says.

"We're not looking to come in and make it super modern, because it is a historic home," she says.

As such, most of the renovations were cosmetic. The brick walls and herringbone-patterned brick floors stayed, with some repair work to level the floors. Also remaining are the bank of French doors that open into the great hall running through the center of the main floor.

The biggest addition was the custom-built bar at the south end. The olive-green back bar creates drama with its gleaming mirrored glass, wood cabinets for storing liquor, and shelves of wine and cocktail glasses and shiny copper mugs. The front bar, with its recessed, painted-

wood side panels and varnished wood bar top, invites guests to linger over their drinks.

Overhead is one of two original gold chandeliers with electric candles, completing the Gatsby-esque feel of the space.

It was also outfitted with new indoor-outdoor furniture that can be moved onto the terrace or into other areas as needed. The bamboo-style tables and cushioned chairs and loveseat match the furniture on the library terrace across the great hall.

The renovated space now serves a variety of purposes, from hosting cocktail hours to providing a peaceful spot for guests or conference attendees to eat breakfast or lunch.

When not reserved for private events, this bright, beautiful space is open to the public. You are invited to come in, tarry a while and enjoy the comfortable new amenities. 

STEAM SPECIALISTS

Water
Restoration

Carpet & Upholstery
Cleaning

Tile & Grout
Cleaning

**Former Owner of
Steamatic of C/U Inc.**

Call for a FREE Estimate

- 3 Room Special for \$110
 - 25% Off Tile & Grout Cleaning
- Expires 12/31/2023*

KEITH F. MCFALL
Owner

2918 Hundman Dr. • Champaign, IL 61822
217-202-6170
keith@custeamspecialists.com



Come see us at
Health In Harmony
for all your gift giving needs!

Book your appointment today
for massage, stretch, and skin care!

Gift Certificates

Luxurious Lotions

Cause Medic CBD Products

Only Yourx Skin Care Line



217-344-9144

www.healthinharmony-cu.com



503 S. Country Fair Dr.
Champaign, IL. 61821
(217) 359-7601



We offer used upright and grand pianos
from \$1,000 to \$20,000

- Fine piano restoration
- Professional piano moving ILCC MC 225032
- Piano Tuning and Repair
- Over 40 years in Central Illinois

www.thepianoshopcu.com

TASTES LIKE TRADITION

Four great recipes for celebrating throughout the holiday season

Story **Carolyn Maille-Petersen**

The holiday season is fast approaching and the calendar is replete with a variety of religious and cultural celebrations. In this issue, we offer a little bit of insight and a lot of good food from just a few of these upcoming holidays.

HANUKKAH (DEC. 7-15): LATKES

Rabbi Jody Cook of Sinai Temple in Champaign says Hanukkah means “dedication.” Centuries ago in Israel, the Jewish temple was destroyed by the Syrian-Greeks who wished to force their beliefs on the Jewish people. Against the odds, the Jewish army prevailed. When they rededicated the temple, says Cook, “part of cleaning up the sacred space was re-lighting the menorah. Legend says that the Jewish army found a small container of oil that they expected to last only one day, but it actually lasted eight days.” Hence, one traditional way to celebrate this miracle is by eating foods fried in oil, particularly potato pancakes, also known as latkes. If you want to try your hand at latkes, Cook shared her recipe with us.



Servings: 4-6

4 large potatoes
2 eggs
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon pepper
3 tablespoons flour (or matzo meal)
1 tablespoon grated onion
(I usually use more)
½ teaspoon baking powder
Oil (a lot!)

→ **1.** Wash, peel and grate potatoes. You can take a shortcut and use pre-grated “hash browns” or a food processor. Hand grating is best, but it adds a little time!

→ **2.** Soak the grated potatoes in ice water for an hour or longer (you can do a quick rinse to save time), drain and pat dry. Soaking will result in crispier latkes.

→ **3.** Put potatoes into a large mixing bowl. Beat eggs and add. Mix.

→ **4.** Add salt, pepper, grated onion, baking powder and flour. NOTE: Measurements of salt, pepper and onion are estimates and can be adjusted.

→ **5.** Heat pan. Add oil so there is ⅛ of an inch covering bottom of pan. Heat oil. Check that oil is ready by adding a drop of water (carefully, this can splatter).

If it bubbles, it is ready! Adjust heat as needed. Add spoonfuls of potato mixture into hot oil. Cook on one side until browned, flip and cook on other side.

→ **6.** If oil starts to get dirty from previous batches, you might need to clean out pan. You also will likely need to add oil as you go.

→ **7.** Remove batches onto a paper towel to drain. You can keep them warm in oven on a low temperature while cooking remaining batches.

Latkes are traditionally served hot with sour cream and/or applesauce.

CHRISTMAS (DEC. 25): PIZZELLES

Christmas is associated with a plethora of sweet treats, many of which are derived from other cultures. A traditional Italian treat, pizzelle, originated in southern Italy and is considered a staple at holiday gatherings. Champaign resident Franca Mozzone recalls her aunt, or “pia,” Victoria, making pizzelle, a thin, crispy round cookie with a snowflake-type design in it, every year.

“They were one of my favorite cookies at Christmas time,” she says.

Eventually, she asked her pia if she could help make them, and a tradition was born. Pia Victoria passed the recipe down to Franca, who has since passed it down to her nephew.

“It always reminds me of family and getting together and my aunts,” she says. “It’s just something really special.”



Franca notes that there are a variety of ways to flavor pizzelle, particularly using anise. However, she is not a fan of anise, so she makes hers with vanilla. The cookies are made using a specialized hot iron akin to a waffle maker.

6 eggs
3½ cups flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
1½ cups sugar
2 tablespoons vanilla
1 stick butter, melted
Orange peel (optional)

→ Combine all ingredients and mix for three minutes. Pour a rounded teaspoon of batter on hot pizzelle maker, depending on how thick or thin you want, and cook until golden.

KWANZAA (DEC. 26-JAN. 1): CARAMEL CAKE

Established in 1966, Kwanzaa is meant to “bring various Black cultures together across the diaspora,” says **Jazmyne Kellogg**, director of the Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center at the University of Illinois. This cultural holiday celebrates seven principles, one per day: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith.

“Each day is an opportunity to be reflective,” says Jazmyne, and come together as a family

or community to discuss the day’s principle. “The job is that you’re actualizing those principles throughout the year.”

As with many holidays, food is central, as families come together at mealtime. Often, the meals are traditional to a family’s culture.

“For my family, we would switch it up,” Jazmyne says. “I knew we were going to have soul food, but I didn’t always know what it would be.”

Dessert was caramel cake, peach cobbler or banana pudding. Here’s her caramel cake recipe.



For cake:

1 cup unsalted butter
1/3 cup vegetable oil
2 1/2 cups sugar
6 large eggs
2 large egg yolks
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
3 cups cake flour, sifted
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup sour cream

For icing:

1 1/2 sticks butter
2 (12-ounce) cans evaporated milk
2 cups sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla

To make cake:

- **1.** Heat oven to 350 degrees.
- **2.** In a large mixing bowl, cream butter, oil and sugar on high until fully incorporated and light and fluffy, about 5-6 minutes.
- **3.** Turn mixer to medium; mix in eggs and yolks one at a time until well incorporated. Add vanilla and mix.
- **4.** Sift flour, baking powder and salt into medium bowl.
- **5.** With mixer on slow, alternate adding flour mix and sour cream, ending with flour, until mixed through. Do not over mix.
- **6.** Grease/spray three 9-inch round cake pans; flour them. Pour batter evenly into each.
- **7.** Bake for 23-30 minutes. Start with least

amount of time and check often.

- **8.** Remove pans from oven and place on cooling racks for 10 minutes.
- **9.** Remove cakes from pans and wait until completely cooled to ice.

To make icing:

- **1.** Cook butter, evaporated milk and sugar in saucepan over medium heat until melted.
- **2.** Leave on medium to low, stirring every so often until thickened and golden brown — about 90-120 minutes. Watch so it does not burn. It should thickly coat back of a spoon.
- **3.** Remove from heat and add vanilla.
- **4.** Cool for about 15-20 minutes to allow it to thicken, then add to cake. If too warm/thin, cool in refrigerator. If too thick, add milk.

**YOU LIVE HERE.
WE LEND HERE.**

Investing in the Champaign
area one home at a time.

Contact **Mitch Wilson**
and begin today.



217.872.7562

mitch.wilson
@hickorypointbank.com

Loan Originator Identifier: 1718980
Loan Origination Company Identifier: 433956

HICKORYPOINTBANK.COM

 **EQUAL HOUSING LENDER** MEMBER FDIC

HICKORY
POINT BANK 
Invested.

202 W. Park Avenue, Champaign

FEAST OF ST. BASIL (JAN. 1): VASILOPITA

Jan. 1 is the observance of the feast of St. Basil the Great for the Greek Orthodox Church. According to Father Michael Condos, pastor of Three Hierarchs Greek Orthodox Church in Champaign, its origins go back to the fourth century.

"Tradition has it that there was a time in St. Basil's diocese where the people were being heavily taxed" and had to relinquish their precious goods, he says. St. Basil intervened on their behalf and the emperor unexpectedly relented, returning the goods.

As there was no easy way to redistribute the items, St. Basil baked them into a large loaf of bread and invited all to partake.

"Each person miraculously got back their items," Fr. Condos says, and "it became a tradition to bake a St. Basil's bread or cake on New Year's Day, which is his feast day."

In modern times, people bake a coin into the sweet bread, known as vasilopita.

"Traditionally, the faithful attend the Divine Liturgy. At the conclusion of the Liturgy, they will sing the hymn of St. Basil," Fr. Condos says. Then, the priest reads a prayer of blessing for the loaf and as they leave, everyone gets a slice. At home, families celebrate with their own vasilopita.

"The head of the household leads a prayer seeking God's blessing for the new year, through the intercession of St. Basil," he says. "Then, he/she takes a knife and makes the sign of the cross over the cake." Everyone gets a slice, and the one who finds the coin is believed to get a special blessing from St. Basil.

½ cup warm milk

1 (0.25-ounce) package active dry yeast

½ cup bread flour

6 cups bread flour

½ teaspoon salt

½ cup white sugar

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon ground nutmeg

¾ cup butter, melted

3 eggs, room temperature

2 cups warm milk

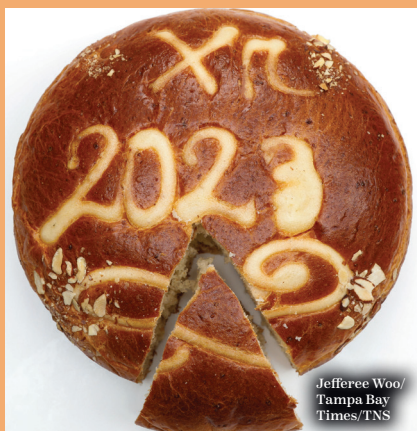
2 tablespoons butter, melted

1 egg, beaten

1 tablespoon water

½ cup chopped almonds

→ **1.** In a small bowl, stir together ½ cup milk, yeast and ½ cup flour. Cover and let sponge rise in a warm place until nearly double in size, about 45 minutes.



Jefferey Woo/
Tampa Bay
Times/TNS

→ **2.** Place 6 cups of flour in a large bowl. Make a well in center and add sponge, salt, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, ¾ cup melted butter, 3 eggs and 2 cups milk. Mix thoroughly to make stiff dough.

→ **3.** Transfer dough into a greased springform pan. Brush with melted butter, cover with greased plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place until doubled in size, about 60-90 minutes.

→ **4.** Heat oven to 375 degrees. Beat egg with 1 tablespoon water for egg wash.

→ **5.** When the dough has risen, insert a clean silver coin into loaf. Brush dough with egg wash and sprinkle with chopped almonds. Bake until deep golden brown, about 40 minutes.

techline®

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
www.techline-cu.com

Green Street Studio, Inc. furniture and cabinetry for home and office

Working from home?



Need a space of your own?



We can create your space, your way.



Partner with Techline Office spaces to help you organize!

307 S. Locust St., Champaign, IL 61820 • 217.352.5570 • M-F: 9-5

Ask the expert

Q: How can I save my broken ornaments?

A: Broken ornaments can be heartbreaking, especially when they hold sentimental value, making it difficult to part with them. But why throw them away if you can showcase them in a creative fashion? Whether you are holding on to heirloom pieces or fun favorites, here is a brilliant way to display those broken pieces and continue to enjoy them as part of your annual holiday decor.

Many ornaments are made of glass and can be pretty sharp when broken. Placing them where they cannot be handled is the best scenario. Thus, a clear glass bowl will be the best pick.

If you don't already own an appropriate glass bowl, head to your local hobby store and find something that catches your eye. It can be simple

or show more curvature. The deeper and larger the bowl, the more stacking possibilities you will have.

Have fun with choosing the right bowl! There are no wrong answers, just one rule of thumb: If the ornaments are on the larger side, you want to get a fairly large bowl to accommodate your collection without looking overcrowded.

Let's begin! Lay out your favorite pieces. Start placing the least-liked pieces at

the bottom of the bowl for a base. Stack more on top while also adding in broken scraps as filler for large gaps. Be sure to place your favorite decorative pieces on the sides and the top where they are most visible. If any of the pieces come with a story, place them on top for all to see.

Now your showcase of broken ornaments is ready to shine as a table centerpiece. If you use a tall glass bowl, it might also work on a mantle or as

part of a floorscape.

Adding extra touches and accessorizing by surrounding the bowl with greenery or topping it with draping ribbon enhances the holiday effect.

A simple and joyful holiday decor project! 

Lisa Carter owns L. Marie Interior Design and is a member of the American Society of Interior Designers and the National Kitchen & Bath Association.








Voted #1 Florist

**the CU flower house
by A. Hunt Design**

2006 S. Neil St, Champaign
217-419-1774
www.theCUflowerhouse.com




Serving the greater Champaign Urbana Area



A Complete Painting & Decorating Service

Interior & Exterior Residential & Commercial

217-643-2600 | mjt013160@gmail.com
atozpaintinganddecorating.com

ANDREW FELL

ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

At Andrew Fell Architecture and Design, we strive to not only be a place to produce structures and art, but to also laugh, think, plan, scheme, create and sometimes argue. Our goal is to foster a collaborative environment where we can produce architecture that is tailored specifically to each client.



www.andrewfell.com

515 Hickory Street, Suite 101, Champaign

217-363-2890 | info@andrewfell.com

Opening Spring 2024

Availability Limited – Make Reservations Now



**Assisted Living Apartments & Memory Care Suites
in a modern, three-story building in Urbana.**

Person-centered assisted living, Montessori-based memory care, and all of the amenities of ClarkLindsey.

ClarkLindsey 

217-344-2144

www.clarklindsey.com



Ready To *hear* Better?

Illini Hearing

Widex, Signia, Phonak, Starkey & ReSound

These insurers may cover hearing aids:

- Aetna
- Health Alliance
- AARP
- Blue Cross Blue Shield
- United Health Care
- Humana

With 2 locations to serve you:
1801 W Kirby Ave, Champaign
1002 Commercial Dr Ste 3, Mahomet



NATIONAL BOARD FOR
CERTIFICATION IN HEARING
INSTRUMENT SCIENCES



With 25 years experience in building, repairing, and dispensing hearing instruments, Andy's passion for helping those with hearing loss reconnect with loved ones continues to grow with each successful patient.

IlliniHearing.com • (217) 552-1730



2101 FOX DRIVE
CHAMPAIGN, IL 61820

PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
CHAMPAIGN, IL
PERMIT NO. 880

Hundreds of Dining, Bedroom, & Living Room Items **IN STOCK NOW!**



ILLINOIS' LARGEST AMISH FURNITURE OUTLET

HAVE YOUR FURNITURE DELIVERED OR TAKE IT HOME TODAY!

468 E Springfield Rd, Arcola, IL 61910 • 217-268-3355 • KauffmanAmishFurnitureOutlet.com