

# THE IOLA Register

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## 'Mamma Mia!' magnifique

By RICK DANLEY  
The Iola Register

"Mamma Mia!," the most ambitious, fully realized, light-filled production to adorn the Bowlus stage in a long while begins its three-day run tonight at 7:30.

The jukebox musical, a rare collaboration between the Allen Community College theatre and music departments and the Iola Community Theatre, assembles a cast of nearly 40 players for two fizzy, fast-paced hours of song and dance, with a libretto that also manages to inject this candy-colored bonbon with vibrations of real feeling.

The action is set on the fictional Greek island of Kalokairi, at a small hotel run by an American expat named Donna Sheridan, played brilliantly and with quiet authority by Susan Raines.

The musical begins with Donna's 20-year-old daughter, Sophie, who is busy prepping for her upcoming wedding. Before tying the knot, however, Sophie aims to get to the bottom of a long-unsolved mystery: namely, who is her biological father? Having recently found her mother's diary, which records intimate encounters with three different men exactly 20 years earlier (on separate occasions, it should be said; not three at the same time), Sophie



"Mamma Mia!," a collaboration between Allen Community College and the Iola Community Theatre, kicks off tonight at the Bowlus Fine Arts Center at 7:30. Shows also are at 7:30 p.m. Friday and 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday. Tickets cost \$7.

Pictured, top, is lead actor Sabra Stockebrand, center.

At right, are Drew Shepard, Jeff Cokely, Jim Stuke, Jim Gilpin, and Susan Raines. REGISTER/RICK DANLEY



Volleyball squads hit the home stretch



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High Court hears detention case

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## LaHarpe tackles stop signs

LAHARPE — Back when LaHarpe still had a school, and more businesses around town, it made sense for the community to have the number of stop signs it does.



But now, with the school long since closed, and only a handful of businesses still in existence, City Councilman David Lee asked Wednesday if the city could rethink the number of stop signs.

"I wonder if we could take

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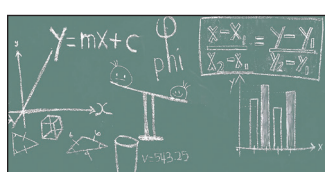
## Report: Kansas schools list 600 teaching vacancies

By STEPHAN BISAHA  
Kansas News Service

Kansas schools are still struggling to hire teachers.

There are more than 600 vacant teaching positions in Kansas, nearly 100 more than in the fall of 2017. Special education and elementary positions have the largest number of vacancies.

The Kansas State Board of Education received the update on Tuesday from the Teacher Vacancy and Supply Committee. The main reason for the open positions is a



lack of applicants or qualified applicants.

The committee also hinted that the vacancy numbers could be worse than reported, as some schools have been reluctant to report open positions.

"I have calls from super-

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## MV staffers receive raises

MORAN — Non-teaching staff, including bus drivers and administrators, in the Marmaton Valley school district can expect a raise, approved by USD 256 board members at their meeting Monday evening.

Classified staff will receive a raise of 35 cents per hour. That includes non-teaching positions including custodians, para-profession-

als, secretaries and cooks.

Bus drivers will receive an additional \$40 per month to their base pay.

Administrators, including the board clerk, will receive a 3 percent raise.

The increases will be retroactive to the start of the 2018-19 school year.

The board also adjusted

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## Enrollment down across Allen Co.

By VICKIE MOSS  
The Iola Register

Area school districts expected to see fewer students roaming the halls this year in the face of a declining population trend in southeast Kansas.

For the most part, those expectations played out. The lone exception was in the

Humboldt school district, which saw one more student than last year. The Iola school district dropped by about 40 students, and Marmaton Valley decreased by about 10.

An official student headcount was conducted Sept. 20. The state sets that date to determine enrollment numbers at all Kansas districts, and uses the information for

funding purposes. Declining enrollment is worrisome for districts because it translates to less money from the state.

Iola - USD 257

Iola's total student count was 1,233, down from last year's 1,273. Superintendent Stacey Fager said the district

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## Michael spreads misery across Southeast

PANAMA CITY, Fla. (AP) — Search-and-rescue teams fanned out across the Florida Panhandle to reach trapped people in Michael's wake today after the third-most powerful hurricane on record to hit the continental U.S. carved a path of destruction across the Southeast.

At least two deaths were blamed on Michael, and it wasn't done yet: Though weakened into a tropical storm, it continued to bring heavy rain and blustery winds to the South as it pushed inland, soaking areas still recovering

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Brian Bon inspects damages in the Panama City, Fla., downtown area after Hurricane Michael made landfall along Florida's Panhandle Wednesday. MIAMI HERALD/PEDRO PORTAL/TNS

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# 'Mamma Mia': College, ICT collaboration opens

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makes a secret bid to invite all three men to her wedding, where, she imagines, she'll at last be able to determine the truth of her parentage. It's around this paternal mystery that the plot revolves — not that plot matters much in a production so richly jammed with a cortege of instantly recognizable, joy-drenched, irrepressibly campy ballads by the 1970s Swedish pop band ABBA.

Soon after receiving Sophie's invitations, the men arrive on the island at which point, as one might guess in a musical of this stamp, chaos and song ensue.

Sophie is played with subtlety by Sabra Stockebrand, whose voice — familiar to many who've seen her in various star turns on the Bowlus stage in recent years — retains its capacity to raise goosebumps on the arms of anyone with ears to hear it. As pure as the Aegean breeze, as rich as the first bite of Baklava, as strong as a cold slug of ouzo, as intoxicating as two bottles of Roditis on an empty stomach, as precise as the marble cuts of Praxiteles — the musical is Greek, get it? — Stockebrand's deep-timbred voice is the sustaining grace of an already strong production.

As the villa's matriarch, Raines is the other essential chromosome that gives life to this project. Shifting between confidence and vulnerability, while never once bungling a dance move, Raines — in tandem with Stockebrand — finds the emotional reality in a musical that might otherwise go spinning off its axis on the gyrating power of its own ecstatic improbability.



**Julius Hodges, top at center, stars in "Mamma Mia!" which runs tonight through Saturday at the Bowlus Fine Arts Center. At right are Angela Whitmore, left, and Jessica Quinhones. REGISTER/RICK DANLEY**

The ACC-ICT collaboration gives director Tony Piazza — who deserves Olympian amounts of credit for steering a ship this large with such a gossamer touch — the pick of local talent, and he's selected wisely. In a huge cast, which includes the 25 singing-dancing ensemble players, there isn't a rotten olive in the bunch.

The musical's potential papas represent three distinct stars in the galaxy of male archetypes (and, let's be honest, it's a fairly dim night sky when you consider how few male types there actually are). First, there's Bill Austin (Jeff Coke-ly), the buccaneering American travel writer. There's Harry Bright



(Drew Shepard), the dapper, self-possessed Englishman. And there's Sam Carmichael (Jim Stukey), the earnest, romantic, tousle-haired charmer, who seems to have the keenest hold on Donna's heart. With the virile charisma generated by this onstage trio, a blind man could see why Donna invited each of them into her bed (at different times!) on one or another per-

fumed night in Kalo-kairi 20 years prior. For all the romance and who's-my-pater intrigue, the musical wouldn't achieve its glorious altitude without the comedic interplay and saucy wisenheimering of Donna's two best friends, Tanya and Rosie, played with lusty, hilarious appeal by Jessica Quinhones and Angie Whitmore.

If you're sick of the toxic noise that bombards the ears during a choleric campaign season, such as the one we're in the midst of — in other words, if you're looking to escape to that Greek island of the mind — then you could do worse than paying the \$7 price of admission to "Mamma Mia!" which runs tonight and Friday, at 7:30 p.m. and twice on Saturday, at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. It's the best show you'll see this year.

# Judge wants to sentence Manafort

WASHINGTON (AP) — The judge in one of Paul Manafort's criminal cases threw a wrench today into special counsel Robert Mueller's plans for the former Trump campaign chairman's cooperation.

U.S. District Judge T.S. Ellis III said in a new order that Manafort's plea deal cut last month set a timeline that is "highly unusual" compared with how he normally handles cases of government cooperators. Ellis set a hearing for next week that would move ahead with both Manafort's sentencing and the government's decision whether to retry Manafort on numerous felony counts on which jurors deadlocked.

The move was the latest by Ellis that could rankle prosecutors who recently gained Manafort as a key cooperator in the investigation into Russian election interference and any possible coordination with associates of President Donald Trump. During Manafort's weeklong trial over the summer, Ellis made a point of hurrying prosecutors and routinely threw them off balance with comments about their facial expressions, eye contact, trial strategy and their requests to introduce certain pieces of evidence that he found unnecessary.

The plea deal deferred Manafort's sentencing until after he concludes his cooperation with the special counsel's office.

# U.S., Russian astronauts safe after emergency landing

BAIKONUR, Kazakhstan (AP) — A booster rocket failed less than two minutes after launching an American and a Russian toward the International Space Station today, forcing their emergency — but safe — landing on the steppes of Kazakhstan.

It was the latest in a recent series of failures for the troubled Russian space program, which is used by the U.S. to carry

its astronauts to the station.

NASA astronaut Nick Hague and Roscosmos' Alexei Ovchinin were subjected to heavy gravitational forces as their capsule automatically jettisoned from the Soyuz booster rocket and fell back to Earth at a sharper-than-normal angle and landed about 12 miles east of the city of Dzhezkazgan in Kazakhstan.

"Thank God the crew is alive," said Dmitry Peskov, the spokesman for Russian President Vladimir Putin, when it became clear that they had landed safely. He added that the president is receiving regular updates about the situation.

NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine, who watched the launch at the Russian-leased Baikonur cosmo-

drome along with his Russian counterpart, tweeted that Hague and Ovchinin are in good condition.

Hague, 43, and Ovchinin, 47, lifted off as scheduled earlier today from Baikonur. The astronauts were to dock at the International Space Station six hours after the launch and join an American, a Russian

and a German currently aboard the station.

But the three-stage Soyuz booster suffered an unspecified failure of its second stage about two minutes after launching. Search and rescue teams were immediately scrambled to recover the crew, and paratroopers were dropped from a plane to reach the site quickly.

While the Russian space program has been dogged by a string of launch failures and other incidents in recent years, Thursday's mishap marked the program's first manned launch failure since September 1983, when a Soyuz exploded on the launch pad.

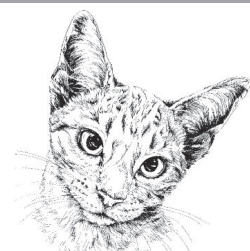
It was to be the first space mission for

Hague, who joined NASA's astronaut corps in 2013. Ovchinin spent six months on the orbiting outpost in 2016.

The astronauts were flown by helicopter to Dzhezkazgan and then by plane to Baikonur. Russian officials said they may spend the night in Baikonur before being flown to Star City, Russia's space training center outside Moscow, the Tass news agency said.

NASA posted pictures of Hague and Ovchinin undergoing a medical check-up at Dzhezkazgan's airport. One of the pictures showed Hague smiling and another had him sitting next to Russia's space agency chief Dmitry Rogozin.

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