



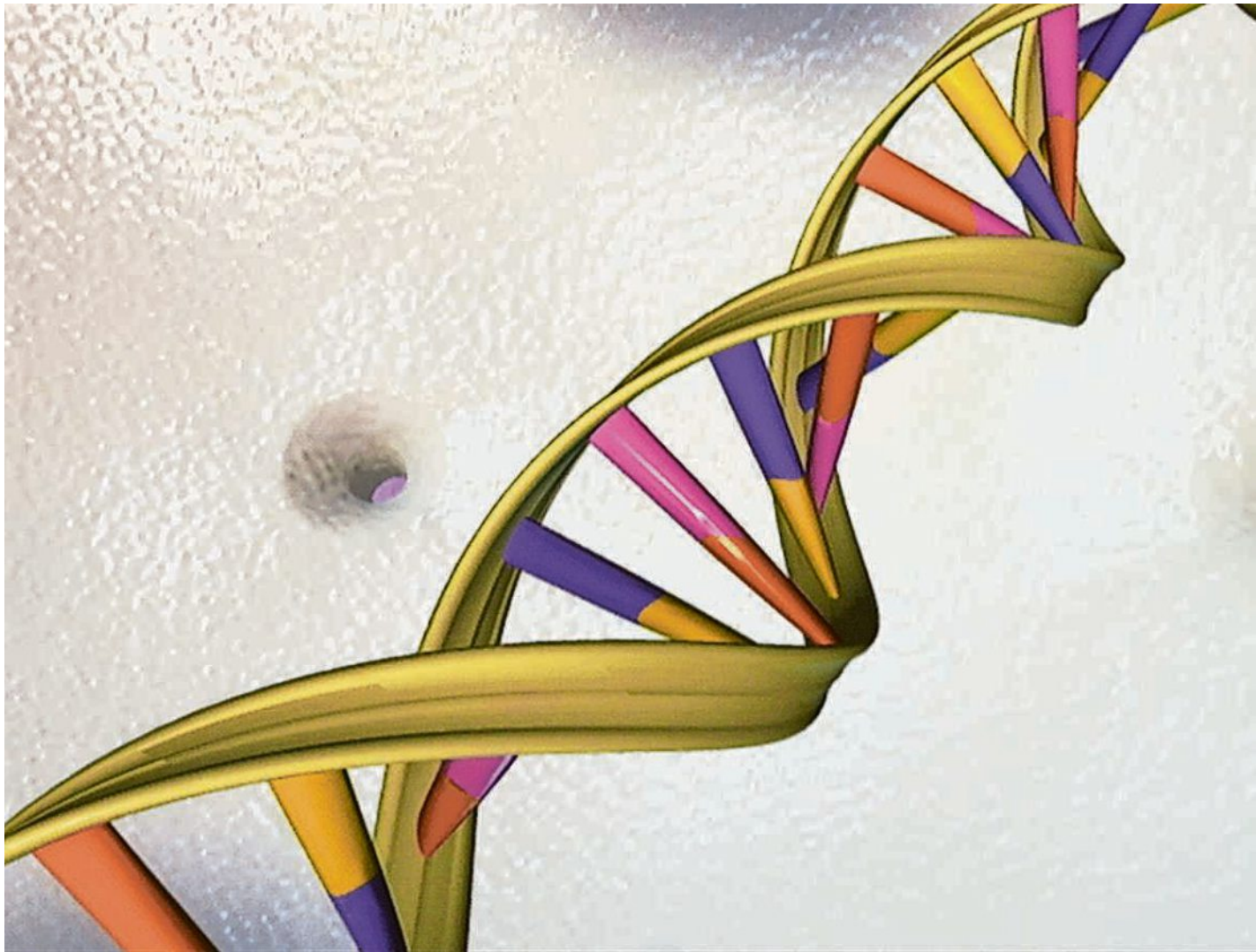
‘Trump Accounts’ set to act as ‘an IRA for kids’

BUSINESS, 9A

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Scientists say mirror cells could inflict “unprecedented and irreversible harm” on our world and will not explore the project further because of the risks. NATIONAL HUMAN GENOME RESEARCH INSTITUTE/HANDOUT ILLUSTRATION FILE

Scientists warn about ‘mirror life’

Microscopic science experiment comes with risks

N’dea Yancey-Bragg
USA TODAY

Kate Adamala had been working on something dangerous.

At her synthetic biology lab, Adamala had been taking preliminary steps toward creating a living cell from scratch with one key twist: all the organism’s building blocks would be flipped. Changing these molecules would create an unnatural mirror image of a cell, as different as your right hand from your left.

The endeavor was not only a fascinating research challenge, but could be used to improve biotechnology and medicine. But as Adamala and her colleagues talked with biosecurity experts about the project, grave concerns began brewing.

“They started to ask questions like ‘have you considered what happens if that cell gets released or what would happen if it infected a human?’” said Adamala, an associate professor at the University of Minnesota. They hadn’t.

So researchers brought together dozens of experts in a variety of disciplines from around the

In a mirror cell, the chirality of these molecules would be reversed. In theory, researchers said, the mirror cells would be able to live and grow the same way ours do.

globe, including two Nobel laureates, who worked for months to determine the risks of creating so-called “mirror life” and the chances those dangers could be mitigated. Ultimately, they concluded, mirror cells could inflict “unprecedented and irreversible harm” on our world.

“We cannot rule out a scenario in which a mirror bacterium acts as an invasive species across many ecosystems, causing pervasive lethal infections in a substantial fraction of plant and animal species, including humans,” the scientists wrote in a paper

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Curtain Up! coming Sept. 4

Abreanna Blose
AI-assisted reporter
Rockford Register Star | USA TODAY NETWORK

Rockford Symphony Orchestra and the Coronado Performing Arts Center are teaming up for Curtain Up!, an event to kick off the Stateline area’s performing arts season.

The event is scheduled for 4 p.m. Sept. 4 at the Coronado, 314 N. Main St., Rockford, according to a community announcement.

The evening will start with a press conference featuring representatives from the host organizations and community advocates. Speakers include Julie Thomas, executive director of Rockford Symphony Orchestra; Doug Johnson, assistant general manager and regional director of booking for Legends/ASM Global; Mayor Tom McNamara; and Rudy Valdez, according to the announcement.

Following the press conference, the Coronado lobbies will open to the public for a free mixer and expo from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Guests can enjoy a cash bar and complimentary desserts provided by SAVOR while learning about the participating organizations’ programs and lineups. Attendees will also have the chance to win door prizes and experience a live organ performance presented by the Land of Lincoln Theatre Organ Society.

The Coronado’s box office will remain open for guests to purchase tickets for upcoming shows and for Rockford Symphony Orchestra’s 92nd season, which opens Sept. 20.

A highlight of the press conference will be the introduction of Pecatonica native Kevin Stites as Rockford Symphony Orchestra’s principal pops conductor this season.

Participating organizations include Artists Ensemble Theater, Children’s Theater Project, Friends of the Coronado, Kantorei - Rockford’s Premier Youth Choir, Main Street Players of Boone County, Mendelssohn Performing Arts Center, Music Academy, Nielsen Chorale, Rock Valley College Music Department, Rockford Area Arts Council, Rockford Dance Company, Rockford Public Library, RPS205 Fine Arts/CAPA, Rockford University Performing Arts Department, Starlight Theatre and The Studio Rockford.

This story was created by reporter Abreanna Blose, ablose@gannett.com, with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Journalists were involved in every step of the information gathering, review, editing and publishing process. Learn more at cm.usatoday.com/ethical-conduct.

Winnebago County treasurer extends hours for tax deadline

Abreanna Blose
AI-assisted reporter
Rockford Register Star | USA TODAY NETWORK

The Winnebago County Treasurer’s Office will have extended hours Sept. 5. The office will be open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. to accommodate second installment payments of real estate property taxes, which are due that day, according to a community announcement.

Taxpayers are encouraged to mail their payments on or before the due date, as postmarks are accepted.

Online payment options available

Payments can also be made online at treasurer.wincoil.gov using a check or credit card. Payments can also be made by calling Autoagent at 815-859-9650 with a 2.25% convenience fee.

First installments that remain unpaid have a 4.5% penalty, which will increase to 6% after Sept. 6. Second installments not paid by the due date will incur a penalty of 1.5% per month, starting Sept. 6, according to the announcement.

Taxpayers can contact the Treasurer’s Office at 815-319-4400 to confirm the correct amount due before mailing late payments.

Delinquent taxes to be published Oct. 16

Delinquent taxes will be published Oct. 16, and certified notices will be mailed the same day. The last day to pay taxes for the current year is Nov. 14, according to the announcement.

If a taxpayer did not receive a tax bill

this year and has not changed their address with the Treasurer’s Office, they can call 815-319-4400 to arrange for a form to be emailed or faxed. Alternatively, they can visit the Treasurer’s website to print out a change form.

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