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# BRAIDWOOD JOURNAL

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2026

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## Braidwood scores \$600,000 grant for city center

BY ROSE PANIERI  
STAFF WRITER

The City of Braidwood has been approved for a \$600,000 Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant from the State of Illinois to support the development of public parks and outdoor recreational space.

In July, 2025, Mayor Todd Lyons said went door to door seeking input from the community on what improvements would make Braidwood a better place to live and a city center with activities was one of them.

"It was more activities," Lyons said. "It was a better Main Street. They need something added to the Main Street beautification events to bring the community together—a farmers market, splash pad, more recreation for kids and teens, parks, trails, playgrounds."

Steve Gulden, the city's administrative consultant, said the OSLAD grant would give the city \$600,000 from the state, and it would have to match that \$600,000. Gulden said at that time the city would have to pay the money up front, and then be reimbursed by the state once the project is done.

The motion for a city center passed with three



THE CITY OF BRAIDWOOD has been awarded a \$600,000 grant by the state for a city center park behind the Casey's store on Main Street. The city will match the state award for the construction of a plan created by Hitchcock Design Group of Naperville. The artist rendering is from Hitchcock Design Group's portfolio.

votes in favor, one vote opposing the measure from Commissioner Dale Walsh, and an abstention from Commissioner Warren Wietting.

### Planning ahead

In September 2025, the Braidwood City Council

approved a measure to apply for an Open Space Land Acquisition and Development Grant for the new city center project.

Hitchcock Design Group, who was contracted to design the city center, assisted the city in applying

for the OSLAD grant. The firm has a portfolio of projects in the works and completed in Illinois, Wisconsin, and other states.

The OSLAD grant will bring recreation opportunities for city-owned property

off Main Street behind the Casey's store. The project would create outdoor community gathering spaces, that will overall improve the quality of life for residents.

"This is an exciting day for Braidwood. This investment will benefit families,

support community events, and strengthen Braidwood for generations to come," Lyons said.

The grant was awarded by Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) as part of the latest round of OSLAD funding. In total, \$36 million was awarded to 67 communities across Illinois for local park development projects.

### Home stretch

Hitchcock Design is currently working on a \$20 million Riverwalk Mill Race District in Kankakee, featuring a white water course carved from a nine-foot dam, a promenade, festival street, transient boat facilities, and mixed use sights. The firm has also developed a city center, complete with splash pad, in Neenah, WI, similar to what the mayor has in mind for Braidwood.

Lyons told the council that improvements include walking trails, a band shelter, splash pads and pavilions, and there's a plan for a second phase that adds pickleball courts.

"I would like to thank our local and state legislators along with our staff for all their hard work and support on this project," Lyons said.

A timetable for construction of the town center has yet to be announced.

## City council defends the cost of two generators for the city's water plant

BY ROSE PANIERI  
STAFF WRITER

The issue of the cost of two new generators for the city's water plant was discussed during the Jan. 13 Braidwood City Council meeting.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, resident Tony Altiery alleges the city is paying too much.

"The new bid came back to \$803,000, which usually happens when the engineer corrects the letting and it comes back at that price," Altiery said. "So, I'm guessing that's either a lie, or maybe a misunderstanding."

Altiery said he had paperwork stating the cost of the generators was \$125,000 each or \$250,000 for both, and approximately \$550,000 for installation. He said that the city is paying \$100,000 to dispose of the old generators. He believes the generators should be sold instead, generating revenue.

City engineer Sean Kelly responded that costs had risen considerably due to the brand and the labor required to install the generators. Kelly brought up a bid for \$1.4 million received from one supplier, that was ultimately rejected. He explained that the cost of installation is what skewed the cost. Kelly claims that what has skewed the costs is the price of installation.

Following the meeting, Steve Gulden, the city's administrative consultant weighed in on the issue.

"The project did not move forward in 2024 because the generators

quoted in 2024 could not be installed due to no design being generated to include all of the above ancillary items that must be included with installing the generators," Gulden said. "You can't just buy generators and hope they fit or work with the existing infrastructure. In June, it was brought to my attention that this project was stalled due to no clear direction on how to proceed."

Gulden said the city is getting an acceptable price for the generators with installation, though the \$803,000 exceeds their original estimate of approximately \$700,000.

"The city is receiving two high quality generators with all of the upgrades mentioned with city staff performing some trenching for the pipe, upgrading the pads versus replacing and capping existing conduit versus removing," Gulden said. "A combination of negotiations, team approach to solving the issue and having public works perform minor work resulted in the \$600,000 savings from the original bid."

Altiery disagrees. He believes city leaders are not utilizing its workers who could install the generators at a bigger saving.

"They'll be installing the generators on the slabs they're already on," Altiery said. "I don't think it's corruption. It's laziness. The city isn't doing enough of its own work which would save a bundle."

### Service agreement

The council approved an agreement with B & F Construction Code Services, Inc. of Elgin to provide complete plan review services for new

buildings.

B&F will work with the city's building department to review proposed building, plumbing, mechanical, electrical energy conservation, and fire suppression and detection systems.

B&F would identify areas of non-compliance, including the code and section referenced. The company informs the city of compliance and non-compliance issues with applicable codes and standards.

The company also offers educational opportunities through the Building and Fire Code Academy (BFCA), providing comprehensive and practical education in the application, implementation and enforcement of building and fire codes for construction industry professionals.

### New squad car

The council approved the waiving of competitive bidding for the purchase of a 2025 Ford Police Interceptor utility vehicle from Currie Motors in Frankfort.

The council authorized disposal of a Monroe Snow Plow owned by the city.

### Financial issues

Bill payment totaling \$169,642.48 was approved as was payroll in the amount of \$89,8429.69. Expenses included \$6,262 to Twin Supplies for maintenance building lighting, \$1,108 to Springbrook Software, \$24,105.09 to ComEd for utilities.

Commissioner Liz Dixon noted that the city has received the Dec. 31 statement which is available on the

SEE CITY COUNCIL PAGE 2



BRAIDWOOD POLICE CHIEF Eric Allen (left) presents an honorary plaque to Zachary Manos on Jan. 13.

## Braidwood police officer honored for service overseas

BY ROSE PANIERI  
STAFF WRITER

Following his return from an 11-month military deployment, Braidwood Police officer Zachary Manos was honored at the Jan 13 Braidwood City Council meeting.

In February, 2025, Manos was called to active duty in support of

Operation Spartan Shield. He served in the Second Battalion, 122 Artillery in the Army National Guard.

Braidwood Police Chief Eric Allen presented Manos with a crystal plaque.

SEE OFFICER PAGE 2



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*School Dist. 209-U seeks  
pupil transportation services bids*

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice is hereby given that the Wilmington CUSD 209U, Will County, Illinois will receive bids for Pupil Transportation Services for the 2026-2027, 2027-2028, and 2028-2029 school years. Bid specifications may be obtained upon request from the Office of the Superintendent, Wilmington CUSD 209U, 209U Wildcat Ct., Wilmington, IL 60481, Phone (815) 926-1751. Please call the Superintendent's office if you are interested in bidding. There will be an optional meeting on Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 2:00 P.M. for all interested bidders. All bids are to be received in the Office of the Superintendent at the above address on or before 2:00 P.M. CDST, Thursday, February 26, 2026, and will be opened publicly at that time. The Board of Education will make its decision at a later date and reserves the right to waive any technicalities or irregularities and to reject any or all bids or any part or parts thereof.

By and for the Board of Education  
Wilmington CUSD 209U  
Peggy Kunz, Secretary

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, Jan. 21 and 28, 2026.

*Notice of Foreclosure - 604 Derbyshire Ln.*

## PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT FOR WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS - CHANCERY DIVISION  
CARRINGTON MORTGAGE SERVICES, LLC, Plaintiff,  
vs.  
LISA KLIMEK; MARK KLIMEK; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS, Defendants.  
Case No.: 2025FC001330  
Property Address: 604 Derbyshire Lane, Bolingbrook, IL 60440

### NOTICE BY PUBLICATION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO THE FOLLOWING, UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS defendants, that this case has been commenced in this Court against you and other defendants, asking for the foreclosure of a certain Mortgage conveying the premises described as follows, to wit: LOT 35 IN BLOCK 23 IN WINSTON WOODS UNIT NUMBER 4, A SUBDIVISION OF PART OF SECTION 2, TOWNSHIP 37 NORTH, RANGE 10, EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED AUGUST 30, 1971 AS DOCUMENT NUMBER R71-20383 AND SUPPLEMENT TO PLAT RECORDED APRIL 24, 1972, AS DOCUMENT NUMBER R72-10436, IN WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

Commonly known as: 604 Derbyshire Lane, Bolingbrook, IL 60440  
Names of the titleholders of record: Lisa Klimek; Mark Klimek.  
Date of the Mortgage: June 18, 2021.  
Name or names of the mortgagors: Lisa Klimek; Mark Klimek.  
Name of the mortgagee: American Financial Resources, Inc..  
Date and place of recording: July 12, 2021; Office of the Recorder of the Deeds of Will County, Illinois.

Identification of recording: Document No. R2021075795.  
NOW THEREFORE, unless you file your answer or otherwise file your appearance in this case, on or before February 13, 2026, A JUDGMENT OR DECREE BY DEFAULT MAY BE TAKEN AGAINST YOU FOR THE RELIEF ASKED IN THE COMPLAINT.

E-filing is now mandatory with limited exceptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://efile.illinois-courts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://illinoiscourts.gov/self-help> or talk with your local circuit clerk's office. If you cannot e-file, you may be able to get an exemption that allows you to file in-person or by mail. Ask your circuit clerk for more information or visit [www.illinoislegalaid.org](http://www.illinoislegalaid.org). For information about defending yourself in a court case (including filing an appearance or fee waiver), or to apply for free legal help, go to [www.illinoislegalaid.org](http://www.illinoislegalaid.org). You can also ask your local circuit clerk's office for a fee waiver application.

PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT, THE PLAINTIFFS' ATTORNEY IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

Lender Legal PLLC  
1800 Pembroke Drive, Suite 250  
Orlando, FL 32810 Tel: (407) 730-4644  
Service Emails: [mrak@lenderlegal.com](mailto:mrak@lenderlegal.com)  
[EService@LenderLegal.com](mailto:EService@LenderLegal.com)  
Lisa Klimek 16516-4430

/s/ Michael Rak, Esq.,  
Michael Rak, Esq.,  
Counsel of Record for Plaintiff  
ARDC # 6340367

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# Illinois Supreme Court likes to patronage pick

Remember the national uproar last November when U.S. Rep. Chuy Garcia bowed out of his reelection race at the last minute and quietly passed petitions to put his chief of staff Patty Garcia on the ballot?

We saw a lesser, but still quite palpable mass grumbling when state Rep. Marty Moylan (D-Des Plaines) did the same that month for his chief of staff Justin Cochran, who was subsequently appointed to the House by the district's Democratic township committeepersons after Moylan resigned.

But you didn't hear any disapproval last week when Illinois Supreme Court Justice Mary Jane Theis simultaneously announced her retirement and the appointment of Appellate Court Justice Sanjay Tailor to fill her seat until the 2028 election.

This sort of resign-and-replacement move is far more common at the Illinois Supreme Court than in any other body of government.

During the 21st Century, six Illinois Supreme Court justices have won open seat elections, but eight Illinois

Supreme Court justices were appointed to fill out terms of retired justices before an election, including Justice Tailor, according to research by my associate Isabel Miller and me.

Justice Theis herself was appointed to replace retiring Chief Justice Thomas Fitzgerald in 2010, and then ran as an appointed incumbent in the 2012 campaign cycle. As with her predecessor Fitzgerald, Justice Theis had finished serving a turn as Chief Justice before she decided to step down. She could have quit before the candidate filing period began last fall, but she waited until long after the ballot was set before making her decision.

Now, I happen to think very highly of Justice Theis. I don't agree with her all the time, but that's not a requirement. She's been a solid jurist and won a Capitol Fax Golden Horseshoe Award last month. Her hand-picked replacement seems robustly qualified to serve.

But this constant resign-and-replacement scheme by the state's top court is really getting old.

The tradition at the

top court is to allow retiring justices to select their replacements. The rest of the justices then go along as a courtesy.

To their credit, no real duds have ever been appointed. And since justices live and dine together in a dormitory-like setting during their Springfield sessions, I can understand why they would want to screen their roomies.

Still, it's not like the people who won open seat races were creeps. Far from it. Justices Tom Fitzgerald and Tom Kilbride both won open seats in 2000. Justice Lloyd Karmeier won an open seat in 2004, and Justice David Overstreet won a similar battle in 2020. Justices Mary Kay O'Brien and Elizabeth Rochford won hotly contested open seat races in 2022. Justice Bob Thomas defeated appointed Justice S. Louis Rathje in the 2000 Republican primary.

Again, the appointees were/are pretty darned good as well. Justices Rita Garman, Anne Burke, P. Scott Neville, Joy Cunningham and Lisa Holder White were the other justices appointed before an election during the 21st Century aside from Rathje, Theis and Tailor.

Soon-to-be Supreme Court Justice Tailor is a good example of the court system's appointment process. Tailor was appointed as an associate judge in Cook County in 2003, and won his first actual election as circuit judge in 2022. Almost ever since, he has served as an appellate justice "by assignment" to the First District Appellate Court without an election.

According to all accounts, he's a very good judge. This is in no way a knock on the guy. All I'm trying to do here is show what the system actually looks like.

The Illinois Constitution does allow the General Assembly to set up a replacement procedure, so it could act if it wanted to.

"A vacancy occurring in the office of Supreme, Appellate or Circuit Judge shall be filled as the General Assembly may provide by law," declares Article VI, Section 12(c) of the state constitution. "In the absence of a law, vacancies may be filled by appointment by the Supreme Court."

I kinda doubt the legislature will ever tackle this subject. The top court has long avoided interfering with internal legislative matters.

Stepping on the judicial branch's vast patronage powers might provoke a retaliation. Even so, legislators can't say their hands are tied. And, frankly, neither can the Supreme Court. The justices ought to establish a much more open and transparent replacement process.

Perhaps the news media should cover these resign-and-replacement schemes like every other governmental branch. Maybe injecting a little shame into this process could work.

The judicial branch is too heavily controlled by too few people without any guaranteed transparency.

Rich Miller also publishes Capitol Fax, a daily political newsletter, and CapitolFax.com.

## KofC Youth free throw contest to be held Jan. 25

All boys and girls ages 9 through 14 are invited to participate in the local level of competition of the Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship.

The Wilmington Knights of Columbus #11149 will host the local contest on Saturday, Jan. 24. Registration will be 8:30 a.m. and competition will begin at 9 a.m. in the St. Rose Parish gymnasium, 626 S. Kankakee St., Wilmington.

All young people, not in another local contest, are invited to participate. Each will vvy for the best of 15 consecutive free throws.

The Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship is spon-

sored annually with the winners progressing through local, district, regional and state competitions. National winners are awarded based on the scores accumulated in the various rounds of competition.

Participants will compete in their respective age division. All contestants on the local level will be recognized for their participation. There is no entry fee.

Proof of age and written parental consent will be required the morning of the event.

Entry forms will be available at the contest or contact Eli Geiss at 779-227-5075.

## Mobile food pantry coming to So. Wilm.

Catholic Charities' mobile food pantry will be distributing food Monday, Jan. 26, at 4 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. at St. Lawrence Church, 135 Rice Rd., South Wilmington in the church parking lot (rain or shine).

Catholic Charities and the Northern Illinois Food Bank have partnered to deliver meat, produce and

nonperishable items to people in need.

Participants are asked to stay in their cars as a "drive thru" method will be used.

Catholic Charities helps people of all faiths and beliefs. For more information about Catholic Charities, please visit [catholiccharitiesjoliet.org](http://catholiccharitiesjoliet.org).

## Spaghetti dinner to be Feb. 7

Coal City United Methodist Church, located at 6805 E. McArdle Rd., invites the community to their Spaghetti Dinner on Saturday, Feb. 7 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. in their fellowship hall.

Each meal includes spaghetti, salad, garlic bread, dessert and beverage. The cost is \$15 per person.

## Named on Saint Mary's dean's list

The following students have been named to the Saint Mary's College Dean's List for the Fall 2025 semester. Calleigh VandeWerken of Coal City and Claire Lenart of Wilmington.

To earn this academic honor at Saint Mary's, a student must achieve a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.6 on a 4.0 scale.

# Free program on how to manage diabetes

Dr. Nuzhat Chalisa, a board-certified endocrinologist with Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers, will talk about "Diabetes and Strategies for Self-Care and Support" during a free community program on Thursday, Feb. 19, from 3-4 p.m. at the Morris Hospital YMCA, 2200 W. Dupont Avenue, Morris.

The free program is open to the community and does not require YMCA membership to participate.

During the program, Dr. Chalisa will share important information about diabetes and how to manage the chronic disease.

To register, call the Morris Hospital YMCA at 815-513-8080, or go to [www.morrishospital.org/events](http://www.morrishospital.org/events) and select the category Education Classes at the YMCA.

# Gardner Dodgeball Tourney open to area youth teams

The fourth annual Gardner Dodgeball tourney will be held Sunday, Feb. 1, at Gardner Grade School.

Any boy or girl in grades 2-8 may participate. Times: 9 a.m. - 2nd to 4th grade; 11 a.m. - 5th and 6th grade; 1 p.m. - 7th and 8th grade. Cost is \$49 per team, fees and forms are due by Jan. 30.

ell@ggs72.org

Seven players maximum to start each game; teams may have more than seven players and use subs. Players may only play on one team per division. A player may play in an older division, but not in a younger division. Games will be played just like P.E. classes; teams can be co-ed.

Team manager will get a team of at least seven players (no roster needed). Only the team manager will need to submit the completed pre-registration form, full payment and insurance liability form for each player to the school office or to Austin McDowell, 598 N. Elm St., Gardner 60424. Checks or cash made payable to Gardner Grade School. For questions or to request a form contact McDowell at 815-735-6389 or [amcdow-](mailto:amcdow-)

Teams will play three games of pool play and then enter a single elimination tourney. Every attempt will be made to pair any all-girls teams with each other in pool play.

Admission will be \$2 for students K-12, \$3 for adults.

Proceeds will benefit the Gardner Grade School Outreach Program- this year's proceeds will supply community micro-pantries and the local food pantry.

# Illinois' new favorite hobby is beekeeping

A five-year Google search analysis reveals a burgeoning curiosity for unconventional pastimes.

Americans are turning towards eclectic hobbies, with searches for activities such as aquarium keeping, home brewing, beekeeping, mushroom cultivation, and letterboxing climbing the charts.

At its core, beekeeping involves the care and management of honeybee colonies, often in man-made hives. What makes it particularly appealing is the deep connection it fosters with the natural world, allowing hobbyists to play a direct role in supporting the health and productivity of these essential pollinators.

To gauge shifting trends in interests and hobbies, ModestFish.com carried out a survey of 3,000 respondents to unearth which hobbies people would most like to adopt, with some interesting results!

The most popular hobby Illinoisans intend on pursuing is beekeeping. It's like being a guardian of a tiny, buzzing kingdom, where you get to don a cool suit and peek into the fascinating world of honeybees. It's not just about getting your own delicious honey (though that's a big plus!), it's also about helping these little pollinators thrive, which in turn brightens up your garden.

Aquascaping or aquarium keeping emerged as the second most popular in Illinois. Aquarium keeping as a hobby involves creating and maintaining an aquatic environment for various types of fish and aquatic plants. Enthusiasts must learn the right balance of water temperature, pH levels, and cleanliness. This hobby is not just about aesthetics; it also requires knowledge of the biological and chemical processes to keep the aquatic ecosystem thriving.

Falconry took the third position. Falconry is the art and sport of training birds of prey, particularly falcons, hawks, and eagles, to hunt wild animals in their natural state and habitat. The process involves training the bird to respond to commands, often using a lure or bait, and to return to the falconer after hunting.

In fourth place is lapidary, which is the art of cutting and polishing stones. This hobby is a delightful mix of geology and creativity, perfect for anyone who loves to get their hands dirty while also unleashing their inner artist.

The results of other hobbies including (in order from #6): Homebrewing of beer; Astrophotography—photography of the night sky; Toy Voyaging where you send your favorite toys on epic adventures around the world; Foraging—wandering through forests, meadows, and along riverbanks in search of culinary treasures like wild berries, mushrooms, herbs, and greens; and Urban Exploration (urbex) of abandoned or hidden urban structures, such as old buildings, factories, tunnels, and other man-made spaces.

# Illinois casinos finish with strong December

Illinois' casino industry closed out the year with a strong December, generating \$169.1 million in adjusted gross revenue, a 7.6% increase year-on-year, according to new figures from the Illinois Gaming Board.

The December total rose from \$157.1 million in December 2024, with growth driven by standout performances at several major properties despite declines at others.

Full House Resorts, Waukegan, IL, \$10.8 million, up 12.8%

Not all operators shared in the gains. DraftKings at Casino Queen reported a sharp decline of 33.3%, while Bally's Chicago, Harrah's Joliet, and Hollywood Casino Aurora also posted year-on-year decreases.

# Buy 'cheap' gas while you can

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have risen 2.1 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$2.87/g Monday, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Gas prices in the area remain under \$3/g with Mohsen in Wilmington charging \$2.59/g while Circle K charges \$2.79.

Gas stations in Braidwood are all at \$2.99/g.

In Coal City, Shell is charging \$2.95/g while Gas N Wash wants \$2.99/g.

national average price of gasoline has moved higher, breaking the streak as oil prices have climbed back near \$60 per barrel after dipping into the mid-\$50s," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

"With a surplus of winter gasoline built up after large inventory increases in recent weeks, we're likely to see localized discounts as that fuel is cleared from the system before the seasonal rise becomes more organized in the weeks ahead."

# Dietitian to explain a heart healthy diet

In recognition of American Heart Month, a dietitian from Morris Hospital will present a free "Heart Healthy Diet" nutrition program on Wednesday, Feb. 11, from 4:30-5:30 p.m. at the Morris Hospital YMCA, 2200 W. Dupont Ave., Morris.

The program is open to the community and does not require YMCA membership to attend.

A heart-healthy diet is designed to help lower blood cholesterol, reduce

high blood pressure, and decrease the risk of heart disease. During the program, a Morris Hospital dietitian will explain how to reduce intake of saturated fats, cholesterol and sodium while increasing the amount of fiber in the diet.

To register call Morris Hospital's Wellness Manager at 815-705-7358 or go to [www.morrishospital.org/events](http://www.morrishospital.org/events) and select the Nutrition category.

Key property results (YOY): Rivers Casino, Des Plaines, IL, \$45.7 million, up 6.2%; Wind Creek Chicago Southland, East Hazel Crest, IL, \$17.2 million, up 53.1%; Hollywood Casino Joliet: \$11.1 million, up 47.5%; Grand Victoria Casino Elgin: \$12.7 million, up 8.5%

show Illinois finishing the year with real momentum, even with some uneven performances across individual casinos," said Alex Murphy, Digital PR Specialist at Casinos.com.

"Strong growth at Rivers, Wind Creek, and Hollywood Joliet more than offset declines elsewhere and pushed the statewide total solidly higher."

A trip to Morris or Bourbonnais won't save you much, In Morris, gas ranges from \$2.74/g at Circle K, up to 2.79/g at BP. In Bourbonnais expect to pay from \$2.83/g at Gulf with all other stations charging \$2.89/g.

After seven straight weeks of declines, the

The lowest price in the state Sunday was \$2.35/g while the highest was \$4.29/g.

Prices in Illinois are 6.2 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 36.6 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

# CLASSIFIEDS

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## A Thousand Words Photography

385 N. Second Ave. Coal City **Mandy Eaton** 815-791-2913

## STORAGE



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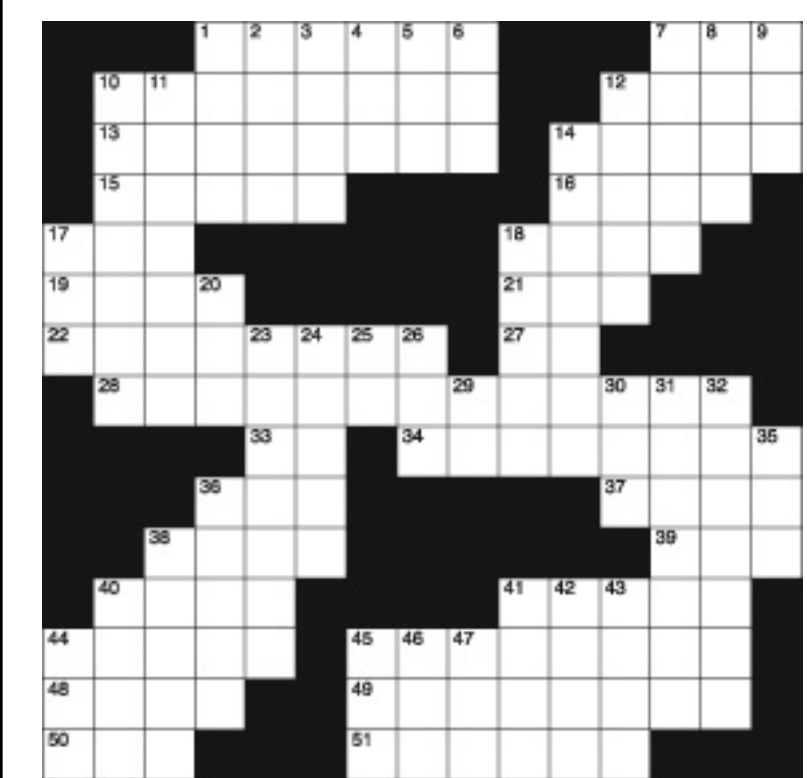
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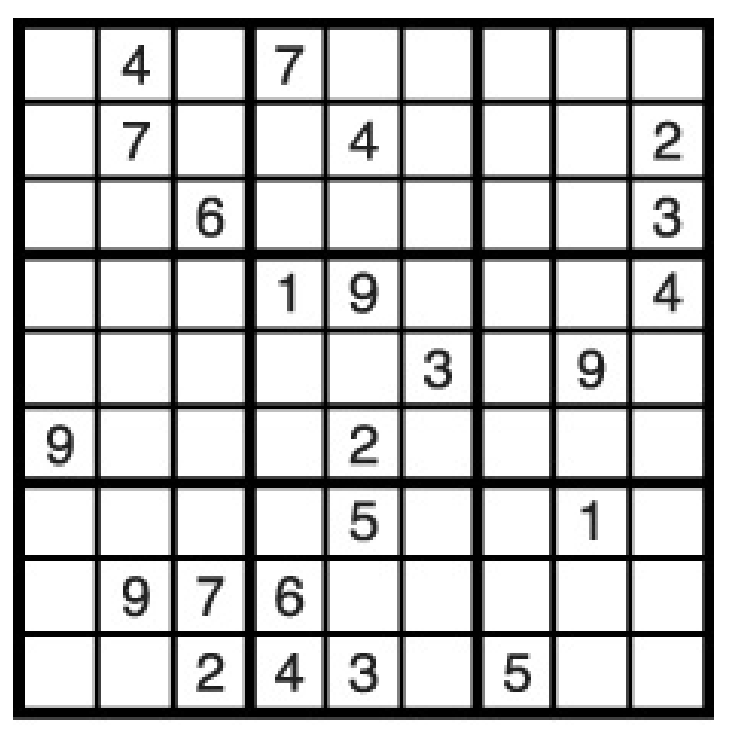
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48. Nocturnal S. American rodent  
49. State again  
50. Expression of disappointment  
51. Type of door
- CLUES DOWN**
1. Yugoslavian communist leader
  2. Exchange rate
  3. High school dance
  4. Peter's last name
  5. When you anticipate arriving
  6. Israeli city \_\_\_ Aviv
  7. Goat-like mammals
  8. Margarine
  9. End-of-the-spectrum color
  10. Make poisonous
  11. Popular beverage
  12. Actress Lathan
  14. Where planes land and depart
  17. Political fundraising entity
  18. The distinctive spirit of a people or an era
  20. Buffer used in microbiology
  23. Light, open carriage
  24. Metrical feet
  25. Email subject line feature
  26. A street with lots of nightmares
  29. Rapper Rule
  30. River in Scotland
  31. One who settles a dispute
  32. Most chummy
  35. We all have our own
  36. Arab tribe
  38. Slap
  40. Ottoman military commanders
  41. Scottish or Irish Gaelic language
  42. Emit coherent radiation
  43. Sun or solar disk (Egyptian mythology)
  44. Inclined to
  45. Olfactory reference syndrome
  46. Chest muscle (slang)
  47. Body part



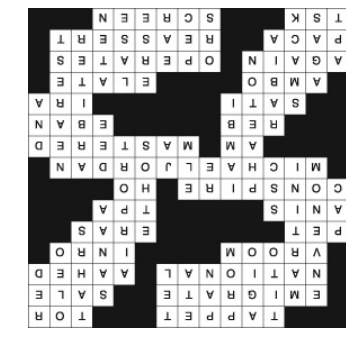
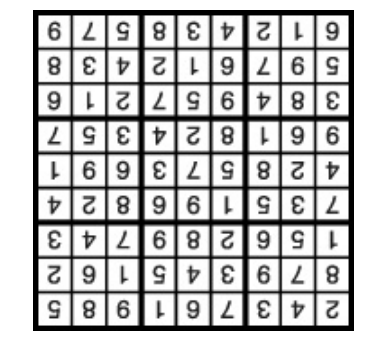
## CLUES ACROSS

1. Mechanical lever
7. Rocky peak
10. Leave a country
12. Discount
13. D.C. ballplayer
14. Partner to "ooled"
15. Engine sound
16. Japanese ornamental box
17. Fido is one
18. Amounts of time
19. DiFranco and Phyo are two
21. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)

## CLUES DOWN

22. Make secret plans
27. "Tiny Bubbles" singer
28. "His Airness"
33. Morning
34. Perfected
36. Winger guitarist Beach
37. Abba \_\_\_\_, Israeli politician
38. Self-immolation by fire ritual
39. A way to save money
40. Pulpit
41. Make ecstatically happy
44. Once more
45. Works on

**Puzzle Answers** ➔

# COMET SPORTS



Photo by Zach Ohlund

**PULLING UP** to shoot for two of her 14 points against Wilmington is scoring leader Alyssa Wollenzien.



Photo by Zach Ohlund

**ONE STEP AHEAD** of a Lady Wildcat defender is Reed-Custer's Kamryn Wilkey who scored 10 points.

## Lady Comets started the week right, but turned cold

The Reed-Custer girls basketball team went 1-2 last week, dropping two of three games as the Comets' record moved to 9-10 overall and 2-6 in the ICE Conference.

The week began on a positive note Monday as the Comets earned a 50-43 ICE Conference road win at Coal City.

Alyssa Wollenzien led Reed-Custer with 23 points while grabbing eight rebounds. Harlie Liebermann added 10 points and dominated the glass with 14 rebounds, while Kamryn Wilkey chipped in eight points. Reed-Custer forced 20 turnovers and made 12 free throws, using defensive pressure and rebounding to secure the conference victory.

**Dwight 52, R-C 31**  
Reed-Custer followed with a 52-31 non-conference loss at Dwight on Wednesday.

The Comets struggled offensively early, scoring just nine points in the first half, before showing improvement in the third quarter. Dwight pulled away late to seal the win.

Wollenzien once again paced Reed-Custer with 19 points, while Morgan Toler scored five points and Wilkey added two points. Reed-Custer committed 24 turnovers and shot 23 percent from the field, making it difficult to keep pace despite recording nine steals.

**Wilmington 44, R-C 37**  
The week concluded Thursday with a 44-37 ICE Conference loss at

Wilmington. It's the third loss to the Wildcats this season.

Reed-Custer scored just seven points in the first quarter and two in the second, but responded with a strong third quarter to stay within reach. Wilmington pulled away in the final period to earn the win.

Wollenzien led the Comets with 14 points, while Wilkey finished with 10 points and Toler added eight points and 11 rebounds. Reed-Custer won the rebounding battle 34-31 and recorded 12 steals, but shooting woes and 23 turnovers proved costly.

Reed-Custer will look to regroup on Thursday when they host Herscher then travel to Peotone on Monday.



Photo by Miley Morris

**IN CONTROL** of his opponent at 215 pounds is Comet senior Dominic Alaimo who finished second during the Comet Classic on Saturday.

## Reed-Custer has five place during Comet Classic

Reed-Custer turned in a strong showing at its own 32-team Comet Classic on Friday and Saturday, highlighted by a second place finish from Dominic Alaimo and four other top-six placers.

Alaimo finished runner-up at 215 pounds, while Colton Drinkwine placed fourth at 113, Kaaden Wood took fifth at 126, and Cole Harris and Aiden Shultz each placed sixth at 120 and 190, respectively.

Alaimo (29-6) delivered one of the tournament's most impressive runs. He pinned LaSalle-Peru's Andrew Sell in the second round, then added back-to-back falls over Morrison's Caleb Carroll and St. Viator's Colton Schneider to reach the championship match.

In the finals, Alaimo ran into unbeaten Sebastian Sanderson of Tinley Park and dropped a 9-4 decision, settling for second place.

Drinkwine (25-4) advanced deep into the bracket with a bye and consecutive pins over Hoopeston's Dominick Miranda and St. Viator's Carter Brock. He was edged 7-4 by Yorkville Christian's Phoenix Senodinos in the semifinals.

Drinkwine rebounded with a pin over Wheeling's Frankie Katz in the consolation semifinals before losing a 9-3 decision to Olympia's Brandon Gaither in the third-place match to finish fourth.

Wood (29-9) also opened with a bye, then pinned Yorkville Christian's Ryan Festerling and advanced to the semifinals via forfeit. He was knocked into the consolation bracket by Hoopeston standout Aiden Bell via technical fall, then lost by fall to Althoff Catholic's Jaxon Lynn. Wood secured fifth place by medical forfeit over Olympia's Tucker Garey.

Harris (30-8) pinned Clifton Central's Beau Williams after a bye, then lost in the quarterfinals to Morrison's Cael Wright. Harris responded with pins over Althoff Catholic's Nathan Fisher and Herscher's Kaden Shroyer

before falling 3-0 to Chicago Hope's Nolan Callahan in the consolation semifinals.

He then lost a 7-1 decision to Wright in the fifth-place match to finish sixth.

Shultz (28-10) dropped a narrow 1-0 decision to Althoff Catholic's Austin Wilkinson in the second round but stormed through the consolation bracket with wins by fall over Kenny Fox and Shawn Lee and a forfeit victory over Landen Venecia.

His run ended with a technical-fall loss to Winnebago's Johnny Strauss in the consolation semifinals and an 18-11 decision loss to Morrison's Noah Stout in the fifth-place match.

Other Comets who did not place include 106 - Collin Bryant (15-12), at 106 who went 1-2 on the day; 132 - Jayden Sanchez (27-9) who had two wins and two losses; 138 - Rylan

West (21-11) who pinned two opponents but lost by decision twice; Nathan Kuntz (10-21) at 144 who started with a pin but was pinned and then lost a 14-12 decision to Plano's Liam Soyk; 165 - Reed Newbrough (24-11) who pinned two before losing two; 175 - Nathan Vogler (20-13) who opened with a major decision before being pinned twice; and Christian Mounts (24-11) at 285, who lost by fall, then won by medical forfeit before falling by major decision.

Olympia won the team title with 195 points, followed by Chicago Hope (180), Althoff Belville (169.5) and Yorkville Christian (163.5). The Comets ended up in 8th place.

The Comets will face undefeated Coal City on Thursday in Coal City. They will return there Saturday for the ICE conference tournament.

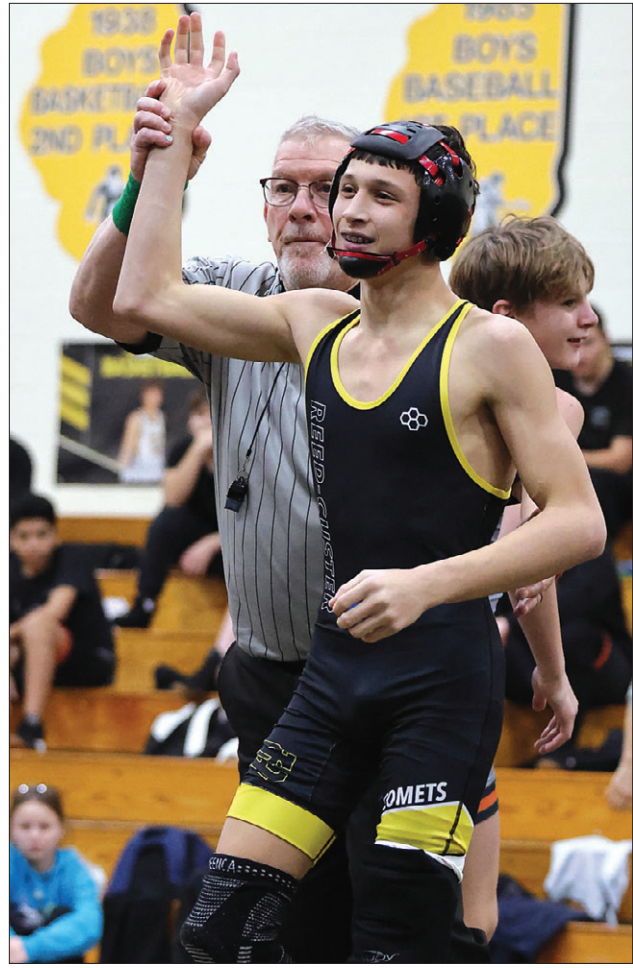


Photo by Miley Morris

**VICTORY HAND SHAKE**—Colton Drinkwine gets a win at 113 pounds. He placed fourth during the Comet Classic tournament.

## New Year, New You.

Put your health first this new year by scheduling an **annual check-up** with a primary care provider. Primary care providers have a key role in helping you manage your health by monitoring existing health issues, keeping you up-to-date on vaccinations and screenings tests, and detecting new health issues before they develop into something serious. **EVERYONE** should have a primary care provider!

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## Community Coffee & Conversation

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR  
LOCAL COMMUNITY  
COALITION



These quarterly meetings are designed to increase awareness and engage our community around substance-use prevention, family wellness, and the importance of creating supportive environments and opportunities for our youth.

**TUESDAY  
JANUARY 27TH**

**5:30pm**  
(prior to city council meeting)

**Braidwood City Hall  
141 W Main Street  
Braidwood**

**2026 SCHEDULE & TOPICS**

- **Jan 27:** Getting to Know Your Local Coalition
- **Apr 28:** A Healthy Community Matters
- **July 28:** Community Gathering for Prevention & Family Awareness
- **Oct 27:** TBD