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Chlorine in water supply draws complaints

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

In response to calls received concerning the smell of chlorine in the Braidwood water supply, city administrator Tony Altiery said the water is safe to drink.

“We are really good on the numbers here in Braidwood,” Altiery said. “Braidwood’s chlorine level is .8 which is in an acceptable range. Coal City’s chlorine level is .7, and in Wilmington it was up and down. I want to make the community aware that we are within range of all the other communities.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, levels up to 4 ppm (parts per million) are considered safe in drinking water. The range of levels detected in Braidwood drinking water is .6 to 1 ppm.

Warming centers

In light of frigid temperatures, Braidwood City Hall, 141 W. Main St., has opened its council room as a heating center. The council room is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

“After hours, people should call the police non-emergency number, (815) 458-2341,” Commissioner Ron Wilczak said.

Snow parking restrictions

The council reminds residents that there is no parking on Braidwood streets when two or more inches of snow have fallen.

Blood drive

Mayor Hart reminded residents of the blood drive being held today, Jan. 22, from 2 to 6 p.m. at Braidwood City Hall, 141 W. Main St. If you haven’t already registered, walk-ins are welcome.

Please call Josh Bolatto at (815) 458-2342 for information.

“One unit of blood turns into three as far as saving lives is concerned,” Hart said. “That sounds like a pretty good investment to me.”

Energy Conservation Code

The Braidwood City Council approved an ordinance amending an existing ordinance as it pertains to the Energy Conservation Code.

The ordinance reads:

“The 2000 International Conservation Code’ as published by the International Code Council, Inc. is hereby adopted as the Energy Conservation code for the city with the following changes or insertions.”

When the state changes the energy code, we don’t have an option,” Mayor Karen Hart said. “So, we have to adopt it put it in our code.”

Increase in waste hauling costs

The council approved an amendment regarding waste hauling charges accepted at the sewer treatment plant.

Specifically, charges will be increased from \$85 to \$100 per truckload for commercially hauled anaerobic waste, for non-commercial, chemically activated waste materials and non-recreational and recre-

ational campers, travel trailers and motor homes, and for commercially hauled, chemically activated waste.

“Essentially, the cost is higher because they have bigger septic trucks,” Commissioner Warren Wietting said.

New squad car

The council approved a motion to waive competitive bidding for the purchase of a 2025 Police Interceptor Utility Vehicle from a Terry’s Ford of Peotone, for use by the Braidwood Police Dept.

The council opted to waive competitive bidding due to the limited availability and rise in price of vehicles, including vehicles outfitted specifically for use by police agencies.

The total cost of the vehicle will be \$45,419, with free delivery and a gratis tank of gasoline.

Service line warranty

Altiery said he was approached by a representative of the National League of Cities (NLC) regarding offering service line warranty services to residents.

“You can insure the water pipes in your house,” Altiery said. “Prices start from about \$6 a month. If you have a water issue, you could spend two, three, four, five, six grand, it would be covered under this insurance.”

NLC insurance covers the cost to repair or replace broken, leaking, or clogged external water lines, sewer lines, in-home plumbing, and drainage lines.

A representative of NLC will be invited

to attend a future city council meeting.

Bills and payroll

The council approved bill payment in the amount of \$275,847.77, and payroll in the amount of \$93,447.44 and \$28,416.30, for retirement payout per agreement.

Police and ESDA statistics

Commissioner Ron Wilczak provided service statistics for the Braidwood Police Dept. and the ESDA.

Police during the time period From Dec. 23 to Jan. 13 the police department handled 252 calls with 23 reports, 11 arrests, 15 charges, 138 traffic stops resulting in 35 citations, 71 warnings, one semi-truck violation and six parking tickets.

The volunteers of the Emergency Service and Disaster Agency (ESDA) dedicated 45 man hours during the month of December. The total for the fiscal year (since May 1, 2024) the agency dedicated 605 total man hours.

Volunteers dedicated man hours to non-emergency police calls, directing parade traffic, Shop with a Cop, mutual aid and other events.

Town hall meeting

A town hall meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 11 at 6 p.m., immediately before the city council meeting. The meeting will feature Alli D’Orazio, managing partner of D’Orazio Ford, and Darren Bauer, managing partner of the Arnie Bauer dealership.

The meeting will take place in the council chambers, 141 W. Main St.



Courtesy photo

TRISTAN RANDALL (left), a junior at Reed-Custer High School was honored at a recent school board meeting for earning a prestigious nomination to the Illinois Music Education Association (IMEA) All State Honors Chorus. Students in grades 9-12 who participated in the ILMEA District Festivals are also eligible to be selected into ILMEA’s All-State Student Programs. Randall is pictured here with Kevin Mangan, the school’s choir director.

Head of CED says small towns need to take risks

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

Doug Pryor, President and CEO of the Will County Center for Economic Development (CED), was guest speaker at the Jan. 14 Braidwood Town Hall Meeting.

In this role, he is focused on designing and implementing strategies to strengthen Will County’s position as a premier business destination for large-scale, regionally investments, while also enhancing the County’s capabilities in innovation and new business development.

While Pryor’s focus is on large cities like Joliet, he emphasized that small towns are also an integral part in securing industry.

Pryor has helped deliver projects totaling more than \$4 billion in investment in a wide range of industries including energy generation, corporate headquarters, electric vehicle manufacturing, transportation and logistics, food production and retail.

Prior to joining the CED, Pryor was the vice president of the Grundy Economic Development Council. In speaking to residents of Braidwood he emphasized keeping goals realistic.

“The CED is a non-profit development corporation representing Will County and its municipalities,” Pryor said. “Our services are free to public and private companies that are looking to locate and grow in Will County.”

Pryor stressed that Will County is a huge county, and over the past five years it was number one in Illinois for single family housing, adding 6,800 units.

“Every project comes with some form of risk,” he said. “It’s important to continue to take risks to be successful.”

With regard to questions about larger name retailers coming to town, Pryor advised being realistic when planning growth.

“A small town is unlikely to get a Target or Home Depot,” he said. “Not that I wouldn’t be pleasantly surprised if one came to town.”

Pryor stressed cooperation and collaboration as key factors in achieving economic growth, and attracting new busi-



DOUG PRYOR

nesses.

Not all attendees welcomed the idea of industry, citing the loss of farm land throughout Will County.

Pryor spoke of the balance of farm land vs. development, stating that farmland, especially south of Joliet, is still fairly abundant. He said he respects and acknowledged the importance of green space, citing the beauty of Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie in Wilmington.

“It’s great, except I don’t really enjoy it when someone blames me for not getting to see the bison,” he said.

Pryor’s presentation made one thing clear, cooperation can mean the difference between failure and success in growing local economies.

“Our strong working relationships with local government allow us to provide expert guidance to our clients,” Pryor said.



Mystery ‘boom’ rocks parts of Will, Grundy counties

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

At approximately 10:30 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 17, a mysterious “BOOM” rocked parts of Will and Grundy counties, according to several sources, including the Grundy County Sheriff’s Office.

It wasn’t a bird, plane, meteor, or “some hick blowing up tennessee” as a Facebook post speculated.

Nor was it the leavings of the Space X rocket, an earthquake, or a nuclear blast.

On Jan. 17, the Grundy County 911 center received several calls of a loud boom or a possible explosion near Dresden Road.

Grundy County deputies, with the assistance of 911 dispatchers, contacted industrial plants in the area, and employees reported they heard a

“boom,” but all plants reported no problems. The Dresden Lock & Dam also reported hearing the boom, but reported no problems.

On Saturday, Grundy Sheriff Ken Briley spoke with the site Vice President of Dresden, who also reported no problems at the site.

“We are unaware of the origin of the boom or explosion and no further

SEE BOOM PAGE 2

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Residents displaced at Super Shine Motel

The Wilmington Fire District was called to the Super Shine Motel, 107 Bridge St., on Tuesday at 12:41 a.m. for a reported structure fire.

Upon arrival, firefighters found smoke present in one of the rooms of the one-story portion of the motel.

Firefighters attempting to locate the fire found a small fire in the attic space above the utility room area which was quickly extinguished.

The cause of the fire appeared to be electrical in nature and ComEd was requested to the scene. Electrical service to the one-story portion of the hotel was turned off.

The fire along with the loss of power to the building displaced approximately eight residents. Some

residents were able to seek alternate shelter however three residents along with three dogs were relocated by Wilmington Police and Fire District personnel to the Wilmington ESDA building on N. Main St. which served as a temporary warming shelter.

Red Cross was contacted and responded to the temporary warming shelter to assist the displaced residents. Temporary alternate lodging was arranged for the residents with Wilmington ESDA assisting with relocation to an area hotel and the temporary warming shelter was closed.

The Super Shine Motel was evacuated on January 26, 2024 due to flooding from the ice jams on the Kankakee River.



Photo courtesy Wilmington Fire District

EIGHT RESIDENTS at the Super Shine Motel were displaced during an early morning fire on Tuesday. Wilmington firefighters put out a small fire above a utility room as electricity was knocked out to the entire building.

Gardner Dodgeball Tourney open to area youth teams

The third annual Gardner Dodgeball tourney will be held Sunday, Feb. 2, at Gardner Grade School.

Any boy or girl in grades 2-8 may participate. Times: 9 a.m., 2nd to 4th grade; 10:30 a.m., 5th and 6th grade; noon, 7th and 8th grade. Cost is \$49 per team, \$7 per person. Fees and forms are due by Feb. 1.

Team manager will get a team of at least seven players. Only the team manager will need to submit the completed pre-registration form to the school office or to Austin McDowell. Checks or cash made payable to GGS. For questions or to request a form contact McDowell at 815-735-6389 or amcdow-

ell@ggs72.org

Teams will consist of a minimum of seven players: no roster is needed. Seven players maximum to start each game; teams may have more than seven players and use subs. Players may only play on one team. 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.

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.

Over 1,500 Glock switches seized by Chicago CBP

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers stationed in Chicago seized 473 shipments containing a total of 1,507 weapon-modifying devices from January 1 to December 31, 2024.

From January to June CBP stopped 155 shipments carrying 354 "Glock switches" which are used to modify weapons to make them fully automatic.

In the months of July, August, and September, officers seized a total of 241 shipments containing a whopping 948 switches.

Most of these seizures were from China and were heading to various locations throughout the U.S.

"These seizures clearly illustrate how closely CBP examines import manifests and identifies items that could potentially harm our nation or our citizens. Using their targeting experience, they're able to

consistently spot new shipping trends and keep these dangerous devices out of the hands of criminals. There are reasons these items are illegal," said LaFonda D. Sutton-

Burke, Director, Field Operations, Chicago Field Office.

Pistol automatic fire conversion switches are illegal devices, to use or possess, which convert standard semi-automatic handguns into fully automatic. It allows the user to pull and hold the trigger to fire the maximum amount of ammunition.

The importation of these items is restricted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). Many of these were undeclared, mis-manifested, or lacked any ATF importation approvals.

Smith prepares students to carry on after he retires

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

At the end of the school year, Mark Smith, Industrial Arts teacher at Reed-Custer High School (RCHS), will retire. His students will miss "The Chief," an honorary title bestowed upon Smith by both students and colleagues.

Smith hails from a long line of educators. His parents were teachers, and so are his siblings. Though Smith has dabbled in industry, his heart lies in academia.

In his multi-pocket beige vest Smith resembles Indiana Jones (minus the whip). There's also a certain intellectual swagger, reminiscent of the professor. The fact that Smith was born in LaFayette, IN, can't possibly be a coincidence.

"I went to Eastern Illinois University and majored in industrial technology with teacher certification," Smith said. "Within my major I focused on manufacturing and graphic arts."

As he reaches the end of his career at RCHS, Smith is most proud and appreciative of his students. He knows he's done his best to prepare them for life. He also takes great pride in improving and upgrading the industrial arts program.

Smith began his career at RCHS as the school's Industrial Arts instructor in 2016. Though he hasn't taught at RCHS for a full decade, it may seem as if he's held the position for decades.

Smith knows his subjects. He's capable of designing and building custom cabinets with the best of them. He teaches AutoCad and, thanks to his curiosity, learned to build a guitar, passing that knowledge down to his charges.

"All the equipment here was about 50 years old," he said. "Through the school's funding, industry supporters and through grants, we have replaced nearly every single piece of equipment in the shop. We've had tremendous support from the community, from the school administration, and from

my 70 industry supporters that have donated \$3.5 million."

Technology

"Most of us have this idea that these kids have grown up with computers; they know everything. That's not true," Smith said. "They know how to Twitter. They know how to Instagram. They know how to turn on a gaming console, and how to use their phones. We have to teach our kids how to do email, and attach something to that email."

Smith has done his best to make sure his students understand the world at large, letting them know that a range of computer skills will enhance their chances of success.

And once they learn the basics, he presents increasingly complex technological challenges.

"Before I started working here, they were doing the old-fashioned board crafting," Smith said. "Now, we do modern CAD."

Smith teaches six classes, including AutoCAD, a computer-aided design application that uses a programming language.

It is a 2D and 3D design general drafting and design application used in industry. RCHS offers course work in AutoCad, providing students credit toward their high school diploma, college credits, and credentials with the Woodwork Career Alliance of North America.

"Basically, students input information into our CAD, which is a program that basically tells the machines how to carve the wood," Smith said. "Then they incorporate some traditional woodworking tools with more advanced computer control machines."

Guitar pickin' man

Perhaps the accomplishment that Smith is most proud of was landing a guitar-making class—one of only five in the entire nation—for RCHS.

"I saw a video that Taylor Guitar put out and called the place," Smith said. "They asked if I was a teacher, and had me come out and trained me to make a guitar."

Though it was quite a challenge, Smith successfully constructed the guitar. Taylor Guitars was so impressed by Smith that the company agreed to provide materials for a guitar-making course at RCHS.

It's one of the most popular courses in the school, with students vying for position. In fact, there's a waiting list for all of Smith's offerings.

Big industry names like Fastenal, All Star Adhesive, Home Depot, and dozens more, fund grants to the program. Employers are virtually lined up outside RCHS to hire Smith's students, knowing their skills are top-notch.

Teaching is his life

When asked about his personal life, Smith speaks of his family.

"I am married to Linda (Horodnik) Smith and have a daughter (Jessica), two sons (Timothy and Luke) All of my children are grown and living on their own," Smith said.

Smith serves as a quasi father to his students. Without a doubt, he's a high-energy, creative instructor who challenges and motivates them.

As a father figure, Smith understands that ultimately, he's preparing his students to learn to become independent and to succeed.

He allows his students creative freedom, allowing them to make mistakes, while sitting on the sidelines biting his tongue. He knows mistakes are stepping stones to ultimate success.

"Here's a scrap pile of guitar necks that weren't made quite right," Smith said. "I keep them for a while so they understand what went wrong. It goes far in helping them to build on their skills."

As his students saw boards and cobble together countertops, Smith watches from the corner of his eye, but never hovers.

"Hey Chief, can you come over here," a student says, "I don't know what I'm doing wrong. What do you think?"

In addition to class-

room experience, Smith exposes his students to industry through career days, manufacturing days and introduces them to future job or education prospects. He includes them in his outreach efforts, teaching them how to network.

Like a father, he has taught his "children" to carry on without him. Sometimes, it makes him sad, but he understands change is inevitable.

Honored teacher

Throughout his years as an educator, Smith has earned numerous awards and recognition, and honors.

His most recent recognition was the 2024 Wooden Globe Educator of the Year Award. The Wood Industry Association acknowledged his efforts in developing a woodworking curriculum that engages students and exposes them to the woodworking industry.

In addition to being a teacher, Smith has worked in the private sector, including the position of national director and education coordinator at WoodLINKS USA.

"I'd go to Las Vegas. I go to Atlanta. I make presentations to educators and industry and we have people helping us, providing financial help, materials and grants all the time," Smith said. "In the less than 10 years, we've redone everything here, pretty much. And it's another skill I teach my kids, how to network."

As Smith walks through the woodworking shop students salute and say "Hey Chief." Behind his back they talk about how much they've learned, and how cool he is.

Of course, they'll miss him when he retires.

Smith is the type of teacher students never forget because he puts his heart and soul into his calling as an educator. He doesn't teach classes, he teaches life.

"When the day is done I know I've prepared my students to succeed in life," Smith said. "I've given them the skills, and now they understand it's really up to them."

Boom, continued from page 1

reports have been taken today, Jan. 18," Briley said.

Though Dresden was ruled out as the source of the boom, no one knows where it originated. Furthermore, the boom was reportedly heard as far away as Joliet and beyond.

Though the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has documented several fault lines in Illinois, including New Madrid, Wabash Valley Seismic Zones, and Sandwich Fault Zone, USGS maps indicate no seismic activity in the area last Friday.

Nor was it a "sonic boom," a sound associated with shock waves created when an object travels faster than the speed of sound. Nor was a meteor in the process of disintegrating above Illinois.

Some surmise Elon Musk and the explosion of his SpaceX Starship caused the boom. However, the spaceship

was launched on Jan. 16, and exploded over the Atlantic Ocean near the Turks islands.

O'Shea named to dean's list

Braidwood native Darby O'Shea named to Marquette University's fall 2024 Dean's List.

To make the Dean's List, students must have

earned at least 12 credits for the fall 2024 semester. The GPA must have at least a 3.7 to be named to the Dean's List.

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Bryant petitions for name change

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS
COUNTY OF WILL, SS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

IN THE MATTER OF THE
PETITION TO CHANGE THE NAME
OF Teresa Diane Bryant TO Terry
Diane Bryant, Case No. 2024 MR
000519

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned on behalf of herself, Teresa Diane Bryant adult, shall appear in the Will County Court Annex Building, 100 West Jefferson Street, Joliet, IL 60432 courtroom 905 at 9:00 a.m. on the 6th day of March, 2025 before the judge assigned to hear said matter, and then there present a petition requesting the name of Teresa Diane Bryant be changed to Terry Diane Bryant.

/s/ Teresa Diane Bryant
Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, Jan. 15, 22 and 29, 2025.

Legacy Craft Cabinets files as new business

PUBLIC NOTICE

Assumed Name Publication Notice
Certificate 35261 was filed in the office of the County Clerk of Will County, IL on Jan. 17, 2025 wherein the business firm of Legacy Craft Cabinets, located at 2607 Oak Tree Ln, Plainfield, IL 60586 was registered; that the true or real name or names of the person or persons owning the business, with their respective post office address(es), is/are as follows:
Ander Torres Columbie
2607 Oak Tree Ln.
Plainfield, IL 60586

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and Official Seal at my office in Joliet, Illinois, this 17th of January, 2025.

Annette Parker
Will County Clerk
Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, Jan. 22, 29 and Feb. 5, 2025.



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Eric D. Fisher, publisher

Oh, the weather outside is frightful, winter tales

It's here. Those of you living in an old house as I do, learn to dread this time of year. But, snow and cold weather are part of life in our neck of the woods. Today we tell some winter tales to make us glad to be snuggled down reading the paper on a cold night.

All these stories come from George Woodruff's book *The History of Will County* written in 1878. Our first story concerns a man named Holder Sisson from Lockport. "In November 1832, after settling in Lockport, he went to Michigan where he had sold a drove of cattle "on time" while living in the Wabash country, to try to make some collections; but the trip was a fruitless one, as well as one of privation both to him and his family at home, which at that time consisted of a wife and five little children."

"The Winter set in, and he was detained long beyond the time he had intended remaining; his family was almost without provisions, or any of the necessities of life. During his absence his wife had to go out and cut wood in the forest and carry it to the cabin to keep her children from freezing. There were



TIME WAS....
Sandy Vasko

few neighbors, and they were at a distance; Indians were plenty, but mostly of the friendly Pottawatomie, and under these circumstances, the heroic woman endured the long absence of her husband ignorant of his fate, and hardly daring to hope for his return, owing to the severity with which the Winter had set in."

"His sufferings and perils were great, and a man of less courage and energy would have sunk beneath them. As he was returning from this fruitless trip, while crossing Mud Lake with his Indian pony, the ice gave way and pony and rider were submerged; the weather was piercing cold and the snow nearly two feet deep. It was night, and in his frozen clothes he rode on to his home, not knowing whether he would find his wife and children alive or dead."

"Upon his arrival, finding them all well and comfortable as could be expected under the circumstances, he sat down and wept like a child."

Not all winter tales are unpleasant. Styx McDonald writes of a party he attended held one cold winter's night in New Lenox in 1836. "Quilting parties, "kissing

bees" and miscellaneous gatherings of young and old were common. How, at those little parties and throughout the long Winter night kept up the fun, untrammelled by society rules or modern etiquette."

"Styx, describes a "kissing-bee" he attended there in the good old days of the long ago. With such interesting and innocent little plays as " Old Sister Phoebe," "Green Grow the Willow Tree," "Johnny Brown " and all others of like character, laid down in the programme, the night waned, and as the first faint streaks of dawn began to gild the eastern horizon, they decided to wind up the affair with one grand kiss all around."

"The girls were placed in line, and the boys were each to begin at the head of the line and kiss all the girls. As the business proceeded, one little dark-eyed lass, who stood at the foot of the line, exclaimed, impatiently, "Why don't you kiss at both ends of the line, and get through quicker." This remark brought the performance to a close rather abruptly, by someone remarking at the moment, that it was broad daylight and time to be off home."

Another story from the deep snow year of 1836, "A sad story was told us by Mrs. Stevens, who, though but a little girl of 15 or 16 years of age at the time,

remembers the occurrence distinctly. It was of a family who had settled near the present village of Blue Island^ and during this deep snow their store of provisions became exhausted, and the husband and father started for the settlements to procure fresh supplies. Being unavoidably detained by the snow, the last crumb disappeared, and the mother, in the very face of starvation, started for Chicago, as is supposed, to get food for her children, and got lost on the prairie and was either frozen to death or killed by wolves."

"The former supposition is probably the correct one, and after freezing was devoured by wolves, as nothing was ever found but her bones, which were recognized by her shoes. Her

children were discovered by some chance passer-by when almost starved to death, and were taken and cared for by the few kind-hearted people in the country at the time."

And lastly a tale closer to home, "During the winter of 1854 - 55, occurred a great snowstorm, which is, no doubt, yet remembered by many. The train which left Joliet at noon on the 25th day of January, with 350 passengers, 22 of whom were members of the Illinois Legislature, was brought to a full stop when near Dwight."

"The weather had grown cold and the engines had frozen up, and they were utterly unable to proceed. They were held in this condition for six days and nights, during which it was

excessively cold, and there was much discomfort, to use no stronger expression."

"It was several miles to timber, and the stock of fuel carried by the train was soon exhausted. The seats of the cars and also the second-class cars were cut up for fuel. They had no provisions the first day excepting a few cans of oysters and a few boxes of crackers, which were in the freight car."

"Relief, to some extent, was brought in sleighs from the surrounding farmhouses and the nearest villages; and on the seventh day, an engine from Joliet succeeded in forcing its way through and bringing the shipwrecked train back to Joliet"



ACE WINNERS at Reed-Custer High School for the month of December are Preston Traxler, Ethan Hertz, Camryn Garrelts and Emma Wilson.



Herbert has winning essay in Voice of Democracy contest

MRS. GIFFIN'S HONORS English 9 students participated in the VFW Voice of Democracy Essay Contest. Reed-Custer's Cloey Herbert (pictured) took second place in District # 18 and first place at the Wilmington VFW post level.

Tickets on sale ICC Mystery Night

You have been invited to The Cat's Meow, a 1920s jazz club in New York City owned by Felix Fontano, for a private party for a select group of Mr. Fontano's friends.

It is the height of the Jazz Age, and social revolution is afoot. This is the age of Prohibition and of bootleggers and gangsters. It will be a night of revelry like many other nights of revelry enjoyed by this group of sophisticates, artists and hoodlums—until things go horribly wrong.

Join the Immaculate Conception Church on Saturday, March 1 at 6 p.m. for a night of fun! You will be assigned a role as a guest or staff of The Cat's Meow and will play the character for the evening. You are encouraged to come dressed as your character!

There will be great food...laughs...suspense... and mystery solving! Spaces are limited so sign up fast! Must be at least 21 years old to participate.

Advance sign up is required as each person is important in the mystery and to ensure we have enough food and beverages. Character assignments will be sent out by Feb. 17.

The mystery night will take place at Fr. White Hall, 110 S. School Street, Braidwood. Cost is \$30/person (includes dinner/drinks). Register no later than Friday, Feb. 14.

Make check payable to: Immaculate Conception Church (110 S. School St., Braidwood, IL 60408) Feb. 14. Contact: Sara Wollgast, (815) 341-5946, for details.

Adult Programs

Friday, Jan. 24-LIHEAP, 1-3 p.m. This program provides financial aid to low-income households to help them meet their energy needs. Important note: Anyone who doesn't live in Will County is not eligible for services through LIHEAP in this area; a person must go to the agency in which county they reside.

Friday, Jan. 24-Serial Killers with Dr. Scott Bonn, 6:45-10:15 p.m. Rialto Square Theater, 102 N. Chicago St., Joliet. Spend a deliciously chilling evening with renowned criminologist and serial killer expert Dr. Scott Bonn as he takes you inside the minds of the world's most savage and prolific murderers. The bus leaves the library at 6:45 p.m. No exceptions. The bus arrives at Rialto Square Theater at 7:15 p.m. The bus returns to the library

parking lot at 10:15 p.m. Price per ticket: \$30. All seats can only be registered for individually and in person. Each individual must have an active Fossil Ridge Library card. Either return the completed waiver to the library or e-mail kclark@fossilridge.org

Monday, Jan. 27-Fiction Addiction Book Club, 5:30-6:30 p.m. The book club meets monthly on the fourth Monday at 5:30 p.m. to discuss a book selected by one of the members. This group discusses a wide variety of books. Copies of the monthly book selections are available at the front desk for checkout. All readers are welcome to join. January's Title: *James Patterson* by James Patterson.

Children Programs

Thursdays, 23, 30-Toddler Time, 10-11 a.m.

We welcome toddlers and their caregivers to join us weekly to explore various toys and sensory materials. Toddlers can enhance their gross and fine motor skills, social interaction, and language skills. Caregivers must accompany their little ones throughout the program.

Thursdays, Jan. 23, 30-Listen and Create Storytime, 6-7 p.m. This program is specially designed for children aged 3-5. Every week, children can explore new books and engage in a fun craft project. Please make sure to dress in clothes that can get messy, as the craft project will involve getting creative with various art materials.

Registration is required for all programs. For more information call 815-458-2187.



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A bad decision

WILMINGTON—Who at city hall thought it was a good idea to build a large truck stop within the city limits? And can anything be done to stop this train wreck? Was the traffic taken into consideration? Or noise from nonstop trucks or how this is gonna affect the home values of Waters Edge Subdivision? Should be quite a show for the residents of Waters Edge once it's up and running, plenty of truckers and night time tow-behind camper traffic. Let's see how the police handle crime at our new truck stop. Should be quite a show Wilmington.

See what's happening

BRAIDWOOD—For those of you who believe that one of the mayoral candidate is not running to seek revenge, it must be nice to live with blinders on. This person was let go from his position with the city and now he wants revenge on them and anyone else who remained in their positions. Kissing puppies and hugging kittens for his Facebook followers is what this person is all about. The praise and accolades from the public is what he seeks, not the responsibility of running our local government, increasing business, economic and residential growth or bringing the years of neglected infrastructure and equipment of our city's various departments up to par so that our city employees are able to do their jobs safely and proficiently. In the famous words of former Commissioner Smith, you'd have to be completely totally blind to not see what's going on here.

Divider in chief

BRAIDWOOD—On July 1, 2024 Justice Sotomayor stated unhappily that "the President is now a king above the law" in her dissent of the Supreme Court's immunity ruling. It's also frightening that Trump announced during the election campaign that he intends to become dictator on day one. But it's not surprising considering that Trump holds nothing but disdain for the poor and middle class except to get their vote. Consider Trump's antagonism toward California whose people are suffering incomprehensible tragedy. It's nothing new. Remember how shabby Trump treated Puerto Rico, whose people are U.S. citizens, when 2,975 people died from category 5 Hurricane Rita in 2017? In contrast, remember how well Trump treated the red state of Texas after category 4 Hurricane Harvey killed 103 people one month earlier? Yes, Trump plays favorites and I am in solidarity with those unfortunate people who suffer at Trump's hand. In fact most Americans are adversely affected because freedom of speech has been eroded throughout the country changing the content of newspapers, books and broadcasting. Therefore as Trump takes the oath of office I do not consider Trump my president, neither my king nor my dictator but the divider-in-chief of my country.

Well overdue

BRAIDWOOD—Since the city administrator is getting so many things done before the election coming up, how about the land mine of a hole on Vita Lane and at intersection of Visa Lane and Ridge Street? The road is destroyed completely cracked and damaged. How has this not been repaired as well as so many other streets in town in dire need? Maybe Commissioner Walsh should take a ride and see it since he's in charge of streets and public improvements.

False prophet lost

SHADOW LAKES—Just wondering what good journalistic news station like Newswhacks would be saying if Harris had won and insisted on the flag not being at half staff for her inauguration? P.S. Democrats were not the ones who kicked

and stomped their feet for four years because their false prophet lost the election fair and square. Brian

Long-term benefits

BRAIDWOOD—Thank you to the City of Braidwood for holding the recent town hall meeting. It was extremely informative and provided a lot of great insight as to how attracting business and commerce to a community really works. There's so much more to it than anyone can even imagine. The fact that car dealerships are one of the most sought after businesses because of their huge benefit to the sales tax base of a smaller community like ours speaks volumes about our community and how much we will benefit once the two dealerships open up in town. It just goes to show that sometimes a community has to give a little up front in order to reap the long-term benefits further down the road.

Voters beware

BRAIDWOOD—As of Wednesday, Jan. 22, we have 69 days until the election for mayor, finance and accounts and public health and safety commissioners. Make sure to get out and vote. Mayor Karen Hart is currently filling a vacancy in her position and running in her first election. If elected mayor on April 1 she will be keeping both the current city administrator and the 5th city clerk since 2019. So make your votes count Braidwood residents. Todd Lyons for Mayor and Jim (Moose) Mikel for public health and safety. Let's get Braidwood on track with the correct type of growth like Diamond, Wilmington and Coal City.

A sad man

WILMINGTON—I enjoyed reading the comments in the Sound Off on Jan. 15th regarding President Carter's funeral. I watched the service and it was a very nice tribute. I know President Carter was not perfect, no person is perfect and I always say when my house is clean I can pick up stone and throw it because as the scripture in the Bible says "Yet he who is without sin cast the first stone." The tributes that were said were nice and it was nice to see something told about President Carter or even President Ford's son about the relationship that President Carter and President Ford acquired over the years. To see people smile, laugh and enjoy themselves. Mr. and Mrs. Biden, Mr. Obama, Mr. and Mrs. Bush and Mr. and Mrs. Clinton all had smiles on their face. Mr. Trump sat there with a scowl, like he had a bug up his butt. It was really disgusting that he could not even crack a smile in remembering President Carter. It's really sad I have never seen a man so unhappy in my life.

Pay back time

WILMINGTON—There was a caller from Coal City that stated "election is over people and Trump won fair and square so get over it and stop complaining." Oh just like you did Jan. 6, 2021.

Overpaid appointees

BRAIDWOOD—There is only one employee who has the most to lose in the upcoming election and one would think he's running for mayor. The city administrator is the highest paid employee making a salary of \$10,062 a month with seven weeks paid vacation, given a new city vehicle which he takes home every night, gas paid for by the city and takes every Friday off. His annual salary is \$120,744 before extra benefits. As a single mom I would love to have a job where I'm given seven weeks paid vacation from the day I start, 5% raise every May 1 and take every Friday off to spend a long weekend with my kids, wow. The city clerk is making \$4,546.53 a month, \$80/hr. less than a former qualified long time city clerk with an annual salary of \$54,558. Administration



Department has a budget of \$1,806,000 and I bet taxpayers would love to see where all that money is being spent on.

The sore loser

WILMINGTON—To the Sound Off poster of "Fair and Square." You are correct, Trump won in 2024 fair and square. Biden won in 2020 fair and square. So explain why the 2020 loser tried to overthrow the government but nobody has attempted that after the 2024 election? Republicans are screaming because Michelle Obama is not attending the inauguration. The 2020 loser didn't attend in 2021 and that was OK.? Want more?

Take 'em down

DIAMOND—I'm calling about people leaving their political signs in their yards. The election was two months ago it's time to take them down especially the little house by the railroad tracks in Coal City. We know you support Trump and he won, it's time to put them away. I put my Kamala away and I don't see the purpose of you leaving yours up for so long and it makes the city look tacky. So please take them down.

Suffered with Biden

DIAMOND—Trump did not win because he is so great. He won because the past four years with Biden hurt everyone and there had to be a change one way or another. Kamala could have won until she stated in an interview that she would change nothing that Biden did. That sunk her battleship immediately. So who was left? In January of 2021 when Biden was inaugurated, inflation was at a comfortable 1.4% and the national average price for gas was \$2.33. We all know what happened very soon after that. A couple writers out there stated that Trump does not care about inflation and he could care less about average Americans. I guess that statement applies more to Biden than Trump at this point. What did he do in his four years to end this? I guess he did not care about the average people then. Someone else states that Trump wants to spill American blood. How many wars were there from 2016-2020? How about the Israel-Hamas war? Soon after Trump won the election he gave a stern warning to Hamas to let loose of those hostages before he is inaugurated. A few days before his inauguration Hamas is handing over hostages. Biden could not do that in 15 months? On the world political stage Biden is considered weak. Then the botched Afghan exit where 13 of our troops were killed. Talk about spilling American blood. We suffered with Biden for four years and probably will with Trump too. If you want to hear something positive go talk to the leaders of your town. They understand what we say. Let Trump make his mistakes and call him out on it. Although, as long as you all keep blaming him for Biden's disasters I will be here to remind you of the truth. Your friendly neighborhood Independent, John.

His supporters

WILMINGTON—Not all of Trump's supporters are racists, but all racists support Trump.

Not a clue

COAL CITY—For the person that wanted "transparency," take a look at your own party which gives very limited access to Biden and hid Biden's dementia and failing cognitive issues for years. By the way, check on how many vacation days he took during his term, more than he worked. This just didn't have happen overnight. All he does is just do what someone tells him to say or do. I ask you... who do you think is actually running this country, since Biden doesn't have a clue? This is what really scares me about the Democrats. They hide everything and

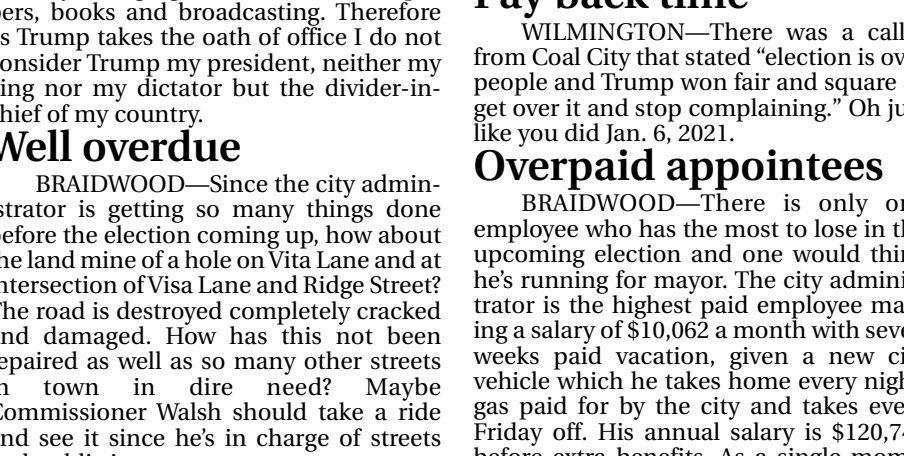
never tell the truth or keep their promises. Give President Trump a chance and then evaluate his performance on immigration, economy, security and strengthening our country on the world stage.

Beware of scammers

WILMINGTON—Many voters chose Trump because they thought he is good for the economy. When Trump became president in 2017, he inherited an economy that was thriving and he continued to run it by favoring the wealthy causing income inequality to soar. And then Covid happened which Trump refused to acknowledge and it exploded across the country. Did you know that President Obama wrote a manual on how to handle pandemics due to his administration's successful elimination of Ebola, the flesh-eating disease? But the spiteful Trump had thrown that manual into the trash, hitting the 'delete' button because he was too stupid to realize he might need it someday. And that's one of the many ways Trump mishandled Covid, driving the economy into the ground and leaving the Biden administration to dig its way out. Furthermore, Trump personally declared bankruptcy six times and no U.S. banks would do business with him except Deutsche bank. And despite his father's help bailing out his failed casinos in which the house always wins, Trump was never a successful businessman but rather a good reality show host. Unfortunately, Americans never discerned that his acting skills serve him well as an imposter. Irene

A vicious cycle

GARDNER—To the Trump supporter saying we're outnumbered, I think he needs to read the page again. Yes, his convicted felon and sexual predator won the election, but it was far from "fair and square." With the help of disinformation, thousands of lies, voter suppression, threats, and of course the help of Russia, China, Hungary, and the rest of his dictator friends, he pulled it off. Oh, and let's not forget the billionaires. The grift has never stopped and the money is just pouring in for him, but it won't help you. It always goes in his pockets. In years to come we'll find out that there were many other cases of voter fraud as you all like to call it. Now that you're happy and about to destroy our country and our Democracy enjoy what is about to come. You won't get what he promised you and you may never get to vote again. You'll be ruled by the billionaires you said you hated. Tax cuts for them will come out of your pocket. We'll lose our insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, Snap, and any other good thing we have. Prices will NOT come down as they were starting to the last four years. You were just so impatient with inflation and the price of eggs (and by the way, the reason is bird flu) you wouldn't believe the truth. So many good things were done in the last four years and we could have made great strides in these next four, but now we'll have to suffer through all of this garbage and hopefully start over again, because that's what we do. Republicans destroy the economy, and Democrats have to come in and clean it up. It's a vicious cycle. So many people died because of how your guy ignored Covid and Biden got us back. It takes time and he did it. What happens when the next pandemic comes along? How many people will die because of him this time? Conspiracy theories instead of science. Stupidity instead of common sense. The rule of law is dead and our Democracy may well be also. He wasn't my president last time and he won't be this time either. The norms are gone and there is only one party on the side of Democracy, and it isn't the Republicans. We will fight again, and we will win honestly. May God help us thru this hell we're entering into, and God bless our troops and Veterans.



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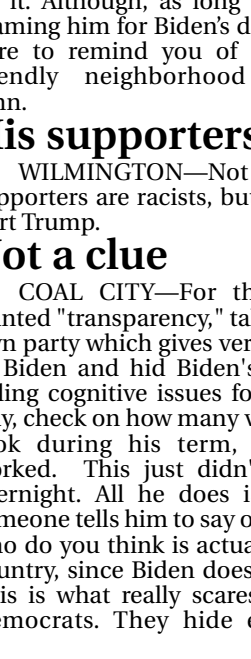
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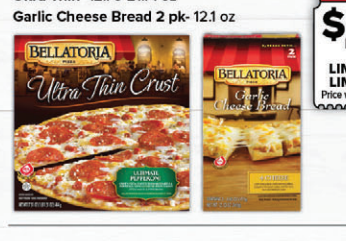
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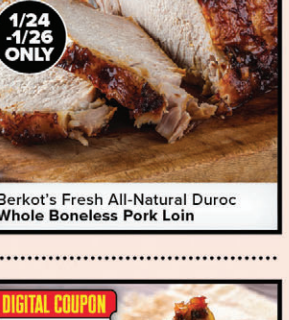
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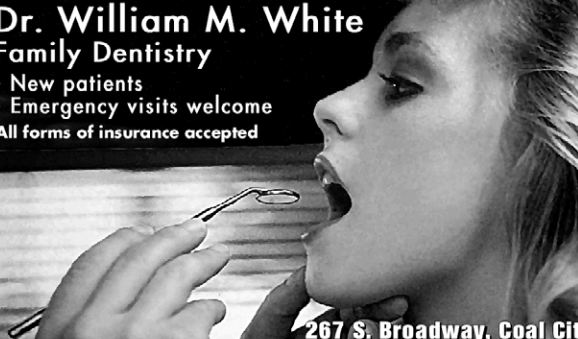
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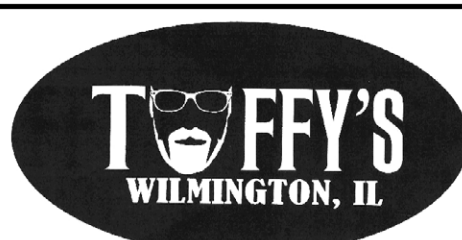
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Madigan should've known better

Former Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan's longtime law firm partner Vincent "Bud" Getzendanner testified in Madigan's defense against numerous federal charges last week.

One of the main themes of Getzendanner's testimony was the property tax firm's process of weeding out clients and potential clients who could pose a conflict of interest to Madigan.

Getzendanner testified "there would be a meeting once or twice a year involving Madigan's statehouse legal staff regarding Madigan & Getzendanner clients," Sun-Times reporter Jon Seidel reported from the courtroom. Getzendanner would also periodically send the firm's client list to some of Madigan's Statehouse staffers so that they could check it against legislation that was currently before the Illinois House, Seidel noted.

The jury was also shown emails from Madigan's legislative staffers to Getzendanner regarding inquiries about the firm's clients, or whether some entities with issues before the legislature were clients.

"There was a constant back and forth between Mike's legislative staff and the law office,"

Getzendanner told jurors, according to Dave Byrnes with Courthouse News.

Getzendanner also testified that he had the final say about whether to bring in clients.

As an example, in a memo shown to jurors from Getzendanner to Madigan, Getzendanner wrote, "No file is accepted and opened until I do a review to determine if the firm's representation would constitute a conflict, or the appearance of a conflict, with your legislative duties," reported the Tribune's Jason Meisner.

Jurors were shown a chart of Madigan clients with notations from various folks about potential conflicts. "Most entries on the chart say, 'no conflict,'" reported Seidel. Madigan attorney Dan Collins highlighted one email that read, "possible appearance of conflict; principal owner of Walton is Neil Bluhm who is principal owner of Rivers Casino. Very thin connection, but err on side of caution."

This thorough and nearly constant vetting process is why the people who thought they knew Madigan well firmly believed that he under-



CAPITOL FACTS
 Rich Miller

stood where the legal lines were and that he had never crossed them. Some still believe that's true today.

Clients with land-transfer issues would definitely be screened out, Getzendanner testified, according to Seidel. "That's a category where you absolutely could not take on a client."

And yet, the prosecution has shown jurors evidence that Madigan did, indeed, work on legislation to help a real estate investor by trying to move a Chinatown land transfer bill through the House. The feds also presented evidence that allege a successful transfer would've resulted in legal business for Madigan & Getzendanner from that developer.

The deal was being put together by then-Chicago Ald. Danny Solis, who became a mole for the FBI after being confronted with his own lawbreaking. As I've told you before, Madigan instructed Solis to reach out to Michael McClain to see if he could help. McClain was Madigan's top advisor and the trial's Madigan co-defendant.

Madigan later told Solis that he was considering approaching the Illinois Department of Transportation about the transfer, because the agency was an important part of the process. He then told Solis, "I'm trying to figure out a way to

approach it," suggesting that he was trying to help with the transfer while avoiding leaving his fingerprints.

Madigan suggested at one point that McClain talk to a Senator, then received a briefing from McClain about legislators who were opposing the bill.

At one point, Solis told Madigan that if the House Speaker could "take care" of that Chinatown transfer by the end of spring session, "I'm confident they'll appreciate it and ... sign you up on after May," as their property tax attorney.

OK, wait a second. Didn't Getzendanner testify under oath that he had the final say in taking on new clients and that there was no way a client with a land transfer bill would ever be accepted? And wasn't there a massive and ongoing client vetting process?

It doesn't matter to the feds. Policies can be changed, after all. And they have enough recordings to suggest Madigan was pushing the bill and was being told he'd get a new client out of it.

"One of my regrets is that I had any time spent with Danny Solis," Madigan told jurors, according to the Sun-Times.

The trial is wrapping up as I write this. But whatever happens, Madigan should've known better than to have ever worked with Solis. He brought all this on himself.

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 10 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. 25. 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 vy 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.

Final week to recycle your used Christmas lights

The Braidwood Lions Club is collecting used/non-working strands of Christmas lights thru Jan. 31.

Collection bins will be located inside Whitmore Ace Hardware in Braidwood and Coal City. The Lions will also accept them during the club's Christmas Tree sale fundraiser during hours of operation.

All proceeds from the recycling will benefit the Braidwood Lions

Club's sight and sound services for the visually and hearing impaired residing in the Braidwood, Godley and Shadow Lakes communities.

Please place all strands of lights into plastic bags before placing them into the collection bins.

For more information please call (815)791-8093 or visit www.braidwoodlionsclub.org.

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Those claims cattle causing global warming

Dear EarthTalk: I've heard that cattle cause a large share of global methane emissions that fuel global warming. What can be done besides reducing or eliminating meat consumption?

- N.V.



Methane is a greenhouse gas that is 28 times more potent than carbon dioxide (CO2) when trapping heat in the atmosphere and is responsible for nearly half of the 1.1-degree Celsius increase in global temperatures. The gas is short-lived and gets broken down into CO2 and water vapor after a decade.

Cattle are ruminants: their stomachs allow them to digest fiber-rich foods like grass and hay. This produces methane, expelled as gas when cattle belch. Every year, a single cow will belch around 220 pounds

of methane, which is oxidized to CO2, absorbed by plants and reintroduced into cows' diets.

One of the most promising ways to reduce methane is altering cows' diets. Methane is primarily produced by the digestion of fiber, so feeding cattle grains and fats like corn and barley may lower methane output. A study led CU Boulder, NIST, and Kansas State University explored this idea, feeding cows sorghum, a more sustainable crop requiring less water and fertilizer.

Initial findings reveal minor differences in emissions, but further research will determine if these changes are statistically significant. Another approach, tested by scientists at UC Davis, involved adding one percent red seaweed to cattle feed, which reduced methane emissions by up to 60 percent without affecting milk production.

Another potential solution is genetic selection. Cattle living on the same farm, eating identical amounts of feed, can produce different amounts of methane because of certain genetic traits. Scientists are exploring possibilities of



ONE OF THE most promising ways to reduce methane is altering cows' diets.

breeding for these traits or breeding cattle with bulls to reduce emissions.

Additionally, methane reducing feed additives, which incorporate less than one percent of cattle diets, can interrupt the methane-formation process and reduce emissions. However, certain additives require further approval for animal health. Methane-reducing vaccines are also a viable solution that requires further testing, and are unlikely to be available before the end of the decade.

Changing management practices is expensive and many farmers have no economic incentives to

adopt such methods.

Therefore, many countries and organizations are developing a Payment for Environmental Services (PES) program to financially support these changes. Economists argue that these programs need to be tailored to meet the specific funding needs of farmers across different regions. Emissions intensity varies greatly across different countries based on their income level, with 6-16 times more intense emissions in lower income countries, due to less efficient systems.

Anyone can make a difference by supporting sustainable agriculture,

Gas prices creeping up, but there are still a few bargains

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have risen 2.5 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.23/g, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois. Prices in Illinois are

0.9 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 2.1 cents per gallon higher than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has increased 8.1 cents in the last week and

stands at \$3.6 per gallon.

Locally, gas prices are creeping up, though you can still get gas for \$2.98/g at BP on Lorenzo Rd., Wilmington. However, it will cost you \$3.21/g at Circle K.

In Braidwood, expect to pay \$3.14/g at Casey's all or \$3.39/g at Marathon.

Coal City's prices have spiked. Gas at Shell is \$3.27/g and \$3.29/g at BP.

Nor will you save much by traveling to Morris where gas runs \$3.19 at BP up to \$3.29 at Shell.

Finally, Bourbonnais has gas for \$2.99/g at Road Ranger, but it spikes up to \$3.19/g at other locations.

"It was only a matter of time before the national average began to rise, with oil prices last week reaching their highest level since

July. Diesel prices have also jumped, driven by cold weather that has boosted heating oil demand," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

"In addition, with President Trump's inauguration, there could be price impacts depending on the executive orders he is preparing to sign. We'll be closely monitoring potential impacts from any orders, while the threat of tariffs and possible retribution from Canada remain top of mind."

The cheapest you'll find gas in Illinois is \$2.84/g while the highest was \$4.49/g, a differ of \$1.65/g.

Wilmington Freemason's chili cook-off seeks entries

The Wilmington Freemasons Lodge #208 will be having their 15th annual Chili Cook-Off and bake sale to fund the Pedals for Progress program/bookfair for Wilmington schools on Sunday, Feb. 2 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Tasting and a bowl of house chili \$10 for adults, \$5 for kids over 11 and free

for kids 11 and under. There will also be \$1 hot dogs available.

Wilmington Masonic Lodge is located at 311 Main St., Wilmington.

Think you have what it takes to be the Chili King? Register to be a contestant. Call Ben Stickel 815-370-7331 or Matt Lohmar 815-210-9606.

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OBITUARIES

Norman Lutes

 **COAL CITY**—Norman Dale Lutes, 76, of Coal City, passed away on Thursday, Jan. 16, 2025 at his home.

He was born on July 18, 1948 in Newport, AR to Clyde Lutes and Elsie (McSpadden) Latham. Norman served his country honorably in the United States Army during the Vietnam Era. He married Belinda J. Moore on May 4, 1981 in Pontiac, IL. Together, they raised their daughters. Norman retired in 2012 after 34 years at Akzo Nobel as a Lead Maintenance Mechanic. He loved helping his family, neighbors and friends.

He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Belinda Lutes; his daughters, Bryn (Rene` A. Garza) Lutes and Afton (Andy Vota) Lutes; his grandchildren: Westin Serena, Wyleigh Serena, Monique Waddell, Kenneth R. Smith and Kenneth E. Bannon III; his great-grandchildren: Cadence Kent, Kash Smith, Kye Smith, Joseph Bannon



and Rhonda Bannon; his sister, Becky (Dean) Haldorson and many nieces, nephews, brothers and sisters-in-law.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his daughter, Rhonda Swanson; his brother, Douglas Lutes and his brother, Troy Lutes (in infancy).

Cremation rites have been accorded.

Memorial Visitation will be from 2 p.m. until the time of the memorial service at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 23, 2025 at Ferrari Funeral Service, 1044 Ferrari Dr., in Coal City.

Inurnment will be private at Braceville Gardner Cemetery.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guestbook at www.ferrari-funeral.com.

Ferrari Funeral Services of Coal City are entrusted with arrangements.

Karen Shroba

Karen Rae Shroba, 76, formerly of Wilmington, passed away on Jan. 11, 2025.

Karen was born in Joliet on Dec. 14, 1948. She attended Catholic schools throughout her life, honored to be a graduate of the first co-ed class at Providence Catholic High School in New Lenox in 1966. Shortly after high school, she met the love of her life, Larry. Karen and Larry were married in the fall of 1973 and welcomed their children, Kevin and Angie shortly afterwards. Karen was just as strong as a supporter of Larry, as he was for her. They made a good team. They spent over 40 years at the home Larry lovingly built for them to raise their family in. She, along with Larry, gave Kevin and Angie an idyllic childhood filled with so many happy memories of time on the river, camping, vacations to Florida, all day pool days, and inside the walls of the family home.

Karen was happy to be a stay-at-home mom for many years. This allowed her to cart Kevin and Angie off to their multiple activities and volunteer her time as Cub Scout Leader and Brownie Leader. Once the kids were old enough to be "Latchkey Kids," Karen returned to the work force. She worked for many years at a local bank, close enough to allow her to run home over lunch break and check in. She also had many happy years as an administrative assistant at Horseshoe Casino. Her final place of employment was at Riverside Diabetes Center, where she made many friends and genuinely enjoyed helping the patients who came for appointments. Her pleasant nature and easy smile were appreciated and a welcome sight for many patients. She was also very active in the Women's Club at Providence Catholic High School when her children were enrolled.

In her retirement, Karen loved to travel to Florida where each year she and Larry became snow birds. They spent time visiting her only sister there, as well as making



many new friends. Serious games of Scrabble, trips to the beach, and late nights with multi-course dinners and drinks were the norm. She and Larry also spent time exploring areas of South Carolina, South Dakota, Arizona, Wisconsin and Michigan. She'd already be planning the next trip while on their current vacation.

Karen was a true friend to many. She was described as loving, fun, and always welcoming. She didn't hesitate to step in and help a friend in need. Karen would never turn down a shopping trip and spent many years braving the Black Friday crowds with her special friends: Lynn, Mary and Chris. She will be dearly missed by beloved family friend of over 50 years, Nancy. Karen also loved a "fancy" cup of coffee and any kind of dessert, especially chocolate. Even as her health failed, her eyes would light up at the mention of chocolate. She loved gathering family and friends together to share a meal.

Karen was a loyal wife, caring mother, and doting grandma who will be missed fiercely. Heartfelt thanks are extended to the entire staff at Vista Grande Villa and Tammy at Careline Hospice. We appreciate the love and respect you always showed.

She is survived by her strongest supporter, her husband of 51 years, Lawrence (Larry). She was the proud mother to son, Kevin (Becky) Shroba and daughter, Angie (Ted) Lefere. Her favorite title was "Grandma" and she will be greatly missed by her grandchildren: Andrew and Daniel Shroba and Maggie, Helen, Luke and James Lefere.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Elmer and Pauline Weese and older sister, Lynn Weese.

The family is having a private, local service. Karen's life will be celebrated with family and friends at a later date in Illinois and details will be forthcoming.

Desnoyer Funeral Home in Jackson, MI is entrusted with arrangements.

Robert Walsh

COAL CITY—Robert Joseph Walsh, 72, of Coal City, passed away Saturday, Jan. 18, 2025, at his home.

Born Oct. 26, 1952, in Joliet, Bob was the son of Kenneth and Elsie (Unger) Walsh. He was raised and educated in Coal City and graduated from Coal City High School with the class of 1970. On June 24, 1978, he married the love of his life, Susan at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Roman Catholic Church in Coal City, and together they shared 46 years of marriage.

His career began immediately after graduation and never truly stopped. Bob started his professional journey at Fluor Construction, Reichhold Chemical and Wolven TV + Appliance, gaining a wealth of experience before branching out on his own. In 1986, he founded Walsh Appliance Repair, quickly becoming a trusted figure in the community. He was the first-person people called when things went wrong with their appliances. No matter the time of day or night, Bob was always there to lend a hand, offering his services with unmatched generosity and dedication. His reputation for reliability and kindness was well-known, and he became a beloved fixture in the lives of many; whether it be fixing an appliance or providing much needed additional space at The Diamond Self Storage.

Outside of his work, Bob had a deep love for sports, particularly his local Chicago teams. He was an avid supporter of the Bears and the White Sox, always keeping up with their games and cheering them on. Sports weren't his only interest, though. Bob also relished spending quality time with his family at the Coal City Area Club, where they created many cherished memories. He had a deep appreciation for the outdoors, and as an avid hunter and fisherman, he often spent afternoons enjoying nature. Whether casting a line or simply enjoying the peace of the outdoors, those moments were precious to him.

Above all, Bob's family was his greatest joy. He was a proud father and an even prouder grandfather, always attending his grandchildren's extracurricular activities, particularly their sports events. To his family, Bob was more than just a relative—he was a steadfast, generous, and fun-loving figure, someone they could always count on. His dependability, compassion, and selflessness were qualities that defined



him, making him not just a loved one, but a true gentleman in every sense of the word. He was the kind of person who would drop everything to help others, and his legacy is one of kindness, loyalty, and unwavering support.

Survivors include his wife, Susan Walsh, of Coal City; two children: Kelli (Peter) Ogrodnik, Christopher (Allison) Walsh; five grandchildren: Madeline Ogrodnik, Peter Ogrodnik, John Ogrodnik, Harrison Walsh, Ace Walsh; his mother-in-law, Gloria Zerboglio; one sister, Ann Stansberry; two sisters-in-law, Lori (John) Halliday, Julie (Darren) Stiles, and numerous nieces and nephews, as well as several cousins.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents; one brother, Kenneth (Murphy) Walsh; his father-in-law, Robert Zerboglio and one brother-in-law, Robert Stansberry Jr.

The family will receive friends for a visitation at Reeves Funeral Home, 75 N. Broadway St., one block north of Illinois Route 113 in Coal City on Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2025, from 4 p.m. until 7 p.m., and again on Thursday, Jan. 23, 2025 at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Roman Catholic Church, 195 S. Kankakee St. in Coal City from 10 a.m. until time of funeral service at 11 a.m. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated with Father Josh Miller presiding and Deacon William Dunn assisting.

Pallbearers will be: Adam Walsh, Davis Walsh, Kyle Halliday, Colin Stiles, Peter Ogrodnik and Bobby Stansberry III. Honorary Pallbearers will be: Earl Fatlan, Ed Unger, David McClucklie and Raymond Berta.

Cremation rites will be accorded following the services, and a private inurnment will take place at a later date.

Preferred memorials may be made out to Lightways Hospice or to Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Roman Catholic Church.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.ReevesFuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Bob's memorial page online through social media.

Funeral services and memorial arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory in Coal City.

Gregory G. Fisher

WILMINGTON—Gregory G. Fisher, 75, of Wilmington, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2025 at OSF St. Clare Medical Center in Princeton, IL.

Born on June 24, 1949, in St. Paul, MN, Greg was a son of George Harrison and Janet (Dike) Fisher. He spent his early years in Ivanhoe, MN, before moving with his family to Fort Madison, IA, in 1963. There, Greg graduated from Aquinas High School.

In 1980, Greg relocated to Wilmington, where he planted lasting roots. Known for his culinary skills, he initially worked as a chef before joining the family business, The Free Press Newspapers, where he skillfully managed the information technology department. Greg's passion for technology led him to attend the DeVry Institute of Technology in Chicago, and he remained a trusted resource for staying ahead in the ever-evolving tech world.

Greg's love of cooking was a defining feature of his life. He generously shared his talents with various organizations, finding joy in serving others through his culinary expertise. In addition to his love for food, Greg delighted in the timeless charm of movies.

Survivors include his siblings: Dr.



Marc (Kris) Fisher, of Manteno; Alan (Suzanne) Fisher, of St. Charles; Eric (Janet) Fisher, of Wilmington; Jeffrey (Mary Theresa) Fisher, of Coal City; Joy Africano, of Buffalo, NY; Janet Sue (Thomas) Schatz, of Lemont and Beth (James) Brace, of Westmont; 21 nieces and nephews and numerous great-nieces and great-nephews.

Greg was preceded in death by his parents.

The family will receive friends for a visitation at Saint Rose Catholic Church, 604 S. Kankakee St. in Wilmington on Thursday, Jan. 23, 2025 from 10 a.m. until time of funeral service at 11 a.m. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated with Reverend Sebastian Gargol presiding.

Burial will follow in Mt. Olivet Catholic Cemetery in Wilmington, where Greg will be laid to rest with his parents.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.BaskervilleFuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Greg's memorial page online through social media.

Funeral services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Baskerville Funeral Home in Wilmington.

Thomas Murray

 **HAZEL CREST**—Thomas "Tom" Murray, 83, of Hazel Crest, IL, formerly of Wilmington, passed away Monday, Jan. 13, 2025 at Charter Senior Living in Hazel Crest.

Born Aug. 26, 1941 in Joliet, Thomas Henry was the son of Harold and Martha (Rowe) Murray. He was raised and educated in Lockport and graduated from Lockport Township High School with the class of 1959. Tom then attended Joliet Junior College before enlisting in the United States Army, serving honorably from 1963 to 1965. On June 12, 1976, he married Angela P. Jangula in Channahon, and together they made their home in Wilmington.

Tom worked for the Exxon Mobil Joliet Refinery as an operator for 23 years until he formally retired. He attended Saint Rose Catholic Church in Wilmington, and will be remembered for his mechanical inclinations. If something was broken or not quite working just right, he had the natural talent and determination to fix it. Tom was very content to retire and spend time on his mini farm and work out in his garage. Above all else, he was a husband, father, and grandfather, who provided for them



the best he could and set a great example for those who were dear to him.

Survivors include his wife, Angela Murray, of Hazel Crest; four children: Matthew Murray, of Conway, AR; Kathryn Murray (Charlie Corrigan), of LaGrange Park, IL; Daniel (Candice), of Hensley, AR and David (Jennifer) Murray, of Braidwood, as well as nine grandchildren, one great-grandchild, and two sisters: Kay (the late Jerry) Stonitsch, of Florida and Jane (Don) Carter, of Osage Beach, MO.

Tom was preceded in death by his parents.

Funeral services were held Monday, Jan. 20, 2025 at Baskerville Funeral Home in Wilmington. Burial followed at Woodlawn Memorial Park in Joliet where Tom was laid to rest with his parents.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book at www.ReevesFuneral.com, upload photographs, and share Thomas' memorial page via social media.

Cremation services and memorial arrangements were made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory.

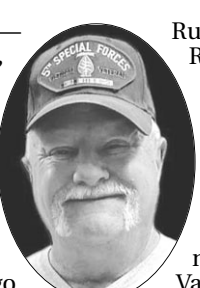
Peter F. Runions Sr.

 **WILMINGTON**—Peter F. Runions Sr., 72, of Wilmington, passed away unexpectedly on Sunday, Jan. 19, 2025 at Ascension St. Joseph Medical Center in Joliet.

Born March 6, 1952 in Chicago, Peter Francis was a son of Charles Sr. and Agnes (McCue) Runions. He was raised in Chicago and graduated from Fanger High School with the class of 1970. Pete enlisted in the United States Army and was proud to be a member of the 5th Airborne Special Forces Group. During his military service, he was a tunnel rat and even acted as the personal driver to General William Westmoreland.

Pete worked as a car salesman for many years at Mancari's Chrysler Jeep Dodge in Crestwood, IL, and in his later years he worked as process server and as a volunteer cross guard for the Reed-Custer School District in Braidwood. He enjoyed playing in his regular APA Pool League, starting at the Wilmington VFW Post and continuing to play at several other establishments in the area. He loved working on cars and going for bike rides, either bicycles or motorcycles. Pete will be most remembered as a true family man, devoting himself to raising his kid and spoiling his grandchildren.

Survivors include his wife, Christine Runions, of Wilmington, who he married on June 1, 1995; five children: Nicholas (Annette) Runions, of New Lenox; Joshua



Runions, of Orland Park; Tony Runions, of Wilmington; Eric (Lisa) Runions, of Coal City and Peter F. Runions Jr., of Wilmington; three grandchildren: Dominic, Madison and Lilly; his mother-in-law, Beatrice Blaha and sister-in-law, Kathy Blaha, both of Oak Lawn, IL and several nieces and nephews, including Carol Vanderploeg.

Pete was preceded in death by his parents, and his father-in-law, Henry Blaha; three siblings: Patrick Runions, Charles Runions Jr., and Becky Best and three nieces: Cynthia, Char, and Connie.

The family wishes to extend their most sincere appreciation to Dr. Daniele De Girolami for his years of friendship and care to Pete and his family.

The family will receive friends for a visitation at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd., in Wilmington on Friday, Jan. 24, 2025 from 4 p.m. until the Celebration of Life at 7 p.m.

Cremation rites will be accorded following the services and Pete will be laid to rest at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Pete's tribute page via social media.

Funeral services and cremation arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory in Wilmington.

Shane Pampuch

DIAMOND—Shane James Pampuch, 56, of Diamond, passed away on Friday, Jan. 17, 2025 at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

Born on July 1, 1968 in Joliet, he was the son of James and Judith (nee Moats) Pampuch. On March 27, 1993, he married Lynn Crompt at the First Presbyterian Church in Braidwood and together they built a life revolving around their love of each other and their family. He was a laborer for nearly 27 years at Ardex Americas in Bourbonnais and was also employed at Berkots in Wilmington as a stocker.

A Chicago Bears fan, he also enjoyed watching the old classic TV shows. He enjoyed fishing. He was a family man and more than anything enjoyed spending time with his wife, children and grandchildren, especially family game nights. Shane leaves behind a legacy of love and kindness that will be felt for generations. He is dearly missed by all who loved him.

Surviving are his wife, Lynn Pampuch; children: Jamie Crompt (Gary Donnelly), of Monroe Center, IL; Kaitlin Pampuch, of



Diamond; Michael Pampuch (Alex Michalak), of Norfolk, VA and Madison Pampuch, of Diamond; grandchildren, Bradyn and Aubrey Donnelly; mother, Judith Pampuch, of Joliet; sister, Shilo (Pat) Canning, of Paducah, KY; brother, Shannon Pampuch (Pat Mayfield), of Joliet and beloved dogs, Lexi and Rosie.

Preceding him in death were his father, James Pampuch and grandparents.

Cremation rites have been accorded. Memorial visitation will be held at R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory on Saturday, Jan. 25, 2025 beginning at 10 a.m. until time of funeral service beginning at 1 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be directed to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

For more information and to visit his online guestbook, please log on to www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com or find them on Facebook.

R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, 401 E. Main St., Braidwood has been entrusted with arrangements.

OBITUARIES

H. Paul Fruland

MORRIS—H. Paul Fruland, 89, of Morris, passed away peacefully on Jan. 18, 2025, surrounded by his loving family.

Paul was the beloved husband of his high school sweetheart, the late Charlene Fruland and a devoted father to DiAnn Hillesland, Mike Fruland, Heidi Wozniak (Bob), and Eric Fruland (Ann). He was a proud "Bumpa" to 10 grandchildren: Zachary (Claire) Hillesland, Haley (Noah) Hirshman, Michael (Ali) Fruland, Joshua Fruland, Lauren (John) Rerucha, Wyatt Fruland, Meg (Jackson) Mihevc, Matt Wozniak, Lila Fruland and Will Fruland and six great-grandchildren: Ava Kulka, Owen and Hadley Fruland, Jax and Josie Rerucha, and Lottie Hillesland. He was also a cherished uncle to Ed (Jan) Harseim, Carlene (Dave) Reid, Tom Harseim, Amy (Patrick) Snow and Brian Fruland.

Born on March 19, 1935, in Morris, he was the son of Earl and Charlotte Fruland. He was the older brother to Doug and Dick (Kathy). Paul graduated from Morris Community High School in 1953, attended Northern Illinois University and later pursued studies at Worsham College of Mortuary Science. He joined his father as the funeral director at Fruland Funeral Home and served the community with compassion until his retirement. He also served on the Board of Directors at the Morris Savings and Loan for many years.

A man of unwavering faith, Paul was a devout member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, where he served as an usher for over 70 years, rarely missing a Sunday. He was known for his deep love of family and always put them before himself. Paul's life was a true reflection of his moral compass, guiding those around him with kindness, humility, and love.

Paul's heart was full of pride for his Norwegian heritage, and this was only second to his hometown, which he referred to as the "garden spot of the world." His daily

routine included a 38-minute walk and daily coffee with his lifelong friends, a tradition that spanned more than 50 years. There, he joked that discussions revolved around sports when they were young, politics in midlife, and health in their later years. He was an avid Redskin fan, known for walking the sidelines. He enjoyed classic movies, especially his favorite, It's a Wonderful Life—a film that reflected his small town values. To his family, Paul was George Bailey, always ready to lend a hand, offer a word of wisdom, and show up for every occasion, no matter how big or small.

He was preceded in death by his parents, wife, Charlene; brother, Doug, and son-in-law, Dan Hillesland. Paul leaves behind a legacy that will live on through his family, friends, and all who had the privilege of knowing him. Simply put, Paul was the best son, brother, husband, father, grandfather, uncle, friend and neighbor.

The family will receive friends for a visitation at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 202 W. Jefferson St. in Morris on Jan. 28, 2025, from 10 a.m. until time of funeral service at 12 p.m. Pastor Patrick Lohse will officiate and interment will follow in Mt. Carmel Cemetery in Morris.

A special thank you goes out to Carlene and Dave Reid and Ed Harseim for their above and beyond generosity and support over the last several years.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that donations be made to Operation St. Nick or Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.FrulandFuneralHome.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Paul's memorial page online through social media.

Funeral services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves, Baskerville and Fruland Funeral Homes.

Mildred Dyer

MORRIS—Mildred "Millie" Margaret Dyer (née Weitz), 83, of Morris, passed away peacefully in her sleep on Jan. 19, 2025 at Arcadia Nursing Home.

Born July 31, 1941, in Morris, Millie was the daughter of Herb and Genevieve "Toots" Weitz. She was a graduate of Morris Community High School with the class of 1959. She went on to further her education at Illinois State University, graduating in 1963 with a bachelor's degree in education.

Millie married Harold Schofield in 1963. As they made their home in various cities in Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin, they had three children: Sally, Steve and Lisa.

She returned to Morris in January 1983, where she attained her master's degree in curriculum and instruction at Illinois State University and dedicated her career to teaching Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd graders for 17 years. She loved her students, especially finding joy in singing silly songs, helping with crafts, and finding unique Halloween costumes.

Millie married the love of her life, Hank Dyer, in June 1994, with whom she spent 17 wonderful years. She loved spending time with her family, friends, and with her dogs and cat. She had a very good sense of humor and a wonderful laugh. She enjoyed knitting, was an avid reader, and was an excellent baker.

She was a long-time member of the First United Methodist Church of Morris, where she served as the Handbell Director for many years and volunteered for various programs, including PADS and St. Vincent's Table. With a passion for helping others, she served as a County Board Member and on its various committees for 20 years. She also participated with the Grundy County Retired Teachers Association, the Grundy County Historical

Society, the Grundy County Republican Women's Group, and other community groups.

Millie touched many lives in her lifetime, and her legacy will still live on for many years to come.

Millie is survived by her children: Sally (Roger) Hausken, Steve (Amy) Schofield and Lisa (Patrick) Simpson. She was a proud grandmother to Kate (Glenn Tallar) Hausken, Lauren (Ethan) Barse, Amanda Schofield, Sarah Schofield, and Michael Schofield, and she was blessed with great-grandchildren: Caleb and Myles Barse, Vivian and Lance Tallar. Millie is also survived by her sister, Judy (Walt) Roll, numerous cousins, nieces and nephews.

Preceding her in death were her parents, Herb and Toots Weit; her husband, Hank Dyer and many beloved pets.

The family will receive friends at the First United Methodist Church, 118 W. Jackson St. in Morris on Saturday, Jan. 25, 2025 from 9 a.m. until time of funeral service at 11 a.m. with Rev. Dr. Keck Mowry officiating.

A private family burial will take place in Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood.

Memorial donations can be made to the First United Methodist Church, 118 W. Jackson St., Morris, IL 60450 or the Pine Bluff Animal Hospital, 7995 E. Pine Bluff Rd., Morris, IL 60450.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.FrulandFuneralHome.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Millie's memorial page online through social media.

Funeral services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves, Baskerville and Fruland Funeral Homes.

Lois A. Newell

MORRIS—Lois A. Newell, 92, of Morris, passed away Friday, Jan. 17, 2025 at Serenity Care in Morris.

Born May 3, 1932 in Deer Park, IL, Los Arlene was the daughter of Sigurd and Delia (Voll) Ostby. She was raised and educated in Serena, IL where she graduated from high school with the class of 1950. On June 28, 1960 Lois married Elmer Newell in Morris where together they built their home and raised their family.

She made her family her number one priority, working hard to raise the children and maintain the family home. Lois was a familiar face at Dairy Queen in Morris where she worked part-time for 25 years, and hired out her ironing services to help make ends meet. She was a long time member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Morris and featured her lovely singing voice with the Sweet Adeline Ladies singing group. Lois took pleasure in hand crafts such as latch hooking and crochet, and would often collaborate with her husband painting the wooden crafts he would create.

She could be described as "an angel on Earth," whose giving nature and generous spirit was readily available for anyone in need. Lois' happy disposition was infectious, often able to brighten anyone's day simply by being in her presence. She loved her family dearly, especially her grandchildren, and though it is difficult to say goodbye to her, all can find comfort that she is reunited with her beloved Elmer.

Survivors include her three children: Cathy (Dan) Odell and Pam (the late Chris) Jonesen, both of Morris and Brian (Vicki)

Newell, of Newark, IL; seven grandchildren: Nicholas (Tara) Odell, Ben Odell, Pete Odell, Nikki Hardecopf (Eric Bebar), Brandon Newell (Missy Pumphrey), Ryan (Katie) Newell and Brianna (Eric) Koester; nine great-grandchildren: Tayton, Kendon, Brayden, Gannon, Bryson, Kaden, Keeli, Colton and Alex; one sister-in-law, Loretta (the late Marion) Ostby, of Marseilles and one brother-in-law, Richard Newell, of Los Angeles, CA and several nieces and nephews.

Lois was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, one son, Albert Newell, and two grandsons: Albert Jr. and Josh Newell; and two brothers: Harry (Kathy) Ostby and Dale (Carol) Ostby.

Per Lois' wishes, cremation rites are being accorded.

The family will receive friends for a memorial visitation at Fruland Funeral Home, 121 W. Jefferson St., in Morris on Monday, Jan. 27, 2025 from 10 a.m. until the time of memorial service at 12 p.m. Pastor Steve Larson will officiate, and burial will follow at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Lois' memory to the family for distribution to local charities of their choosing.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.FrulandFuneralHome.com to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Lois' memorial page via social media.

Cremation services and memorial arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves, Baskerville & Fruland Funeral Homes and Crematory.

John Mikula

GOOSE LAKE—John Mikula, 84, of Goose Lake, formerly of Lockport, IL, passed away Friday, Jan. 17, 2025 at his home.

Born Aug. 18, 1940 in Lockport, John Raymond was the son of John and Victoria (Dobosz) Mikula. He was raised in Lockport and graduated from Lockport Township High School. John worked for Caterpillar Tractor Company in Joliet for 35 years until he retired in 1995, and then owned and operated Victoria's Antique Shop in Coal City for many years. He thoroughly enjoyed antiques and going to flea markets, selling every year at Dwight Harvest Days, and even learned how to sell goods and discover great finds on eBay.

John bought his property in Goose Lake in 1972, and built his home from the ground up and moved in 1974. He had a natural instinct for craftsmanship, particularly carpentry, and used his skills not only to build his home, but also remodel several additional homes. John was a member of the Goose Lake Club and Coal City Area Club, as well as the Fraternal Order of Eagles and Loyal Order of Moose in Morris. He was quick with a joke for every occasion, was an avid Chicago Cubs and Bears fan, and was always up for a game of cards or solving puzzles. Many memories were made staying at Fitzgerald's Motel in Wisconsin Dells, where remembered as one of their favorite families.

Survivors include his wife, Sharon Mikula, of Goose Lake; five children: Amber Mikula, of Plainfield; Angela (the late David) Stirbis, of Ottawa; John (Sue) Mikula, Jr., of Warner Robins, GA and Joseph (Tina) Mikula and James Mikula,

both of Morris; one step-son, Donald (Laura) Bedford, of Waterloo, IL; 12 grandchildren: Ashley (Rusty) Fosnaugh, Kourtne Huddleston, Corey (Megan) Mikula, Kammiroen (Phillip) Reilly, Kelsey (Ryan) Boese, Chayancze Stirbis, Joshua Mikula, Caitlin Mikula, John "Jack" Mikula, Loren Mikula, Austin Bedford and Nicholas Bedford; nine great-grandchildren: Blake and Luke Fosnaugh, Brooke Huddleston, Lydia and Zoi Mikula, Creed and Blare Reilly, and Nora and Tucker Boese; one sister, Carol (the late Leon) Bazzarone, of Coal City; one brother-in-law, Alan (Judi) Bachert, of Wildwood, MO and several nieces and nephews.

John was preceded in death by his parents and one sister, Jacqueline (Howard) Mau.

Per John's wishes, cremation rites are being accorded.

The family will receive friends for a memorial visitation at Peace Lutheran Church, 101 Candlelight Drive in Morris on Saturday, Jan. 25, 2025 from 9 a.m. until the time of memorial service at 12 p.m.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in John's memory to: Grundy County P.A.D.S., Grundy County We Care, or to the Grundy County Community Foundation.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.ReevesFuneral.com to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share John's memorial page via social media.

Cremation services and memorial arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory in Coal City

John P. Marshall



WILMINGTON—John P. Marshall, 81, of Wilmington, and formerly of Chicago, passed away unexpectedly on Friday, Jan. 17, 2025 at Ascension St. Joseph Medical Center in Joliet.

Born May 18, 1943, in Chicago, John Patrick was a son to John and Sophie (Strzemp) Marshall. He was raised and educated in Chicago and went on to honorably serve in the United States Army. John worked as a surveyor with Local 130 until retirement. He enjoyed photography, music, and collecting coins, rocks, gemstones, and fossils.

A devoted grandfather, John cherished time with his grandkids and will be remembered for his humor, simple nature, and love of life's small joys.

Survivors include his son and daughter-in-law, John C. and Andrea Marshall, of

Ocala, FL; four grandchildren: Alexander "A.J.," Juliana, Blake and Joshua and his half-sister, Debbie Ivankowski, of Tinley Park, IL.

John was preceded in death by his parents and one brother, Ronald.

Cremation rites have been accorded, and he will be laid to rest in Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood with military honors at a later date.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.BaskervilleFuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share John's memorial page online through social media.

Cremation services and memorial arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory in Wilmington.

Georgia Sewall

ELWOOD—Georgia Sue Sewall, 94, of Elwood, passed away Thursday, Oct. 17, 2024 in Elm Grove, WI.

Born Jan. 29, 1930 in Chicago, Georgia was a daughter of Alois and Vivian (Millard) Haid. She was raised and educated in Downers Grove, IL, and on June 24, 1950 she married Robert F. Sewall in Chicago.

Professionally, Georgia contributed her skills to the Chicago Tribune's advertising department as a sales representative, later serving as an Administrative Assistant at Lewis University. Known for her expertise as a seamstress, she dedicated time to independent work, helping those in need of her craft.

Georgia was a committed community member, attending Elwood Community Church, and taking part in both the Elwood History Club and the Jackson Twilighters Club. Her dedication to local history and honoring the memory of Civil War veterans was notable; she collaborated with the Veteran's Administration to restore and replace neglected headstones, ensuring these soldiers were remembered with dignity. Additionally, Georgia was passionate about genealogy and enjoyed various hand crafts, particularly cross-stitch and embroidery.

Georgia's devotion to family, history, and community, along with her love for crafting, left a lasting legacy for all who knew her.

Survivors include her three sons:

Steven (Sharon) Sewall, of Brookfield, WI; Mark (Nga) Sewall, of Georgetown, TX and Paul (Laura) Sewall, of Haslet, TX; five grandchildren: Nicole (Ben) Miller, of Knoxville, TN; Jennifer Sewall, of Grand Junction, CO; Jillian (Billy) Thomas, of Haslet, TX; Bethany (Daniel) Gallagher, of Peotone and Megan Sewall, of Norman, OK, as well as seven great-grandchildren and one sister, Jane (the late Joseph) Srail, of Statesville, NC.

Georgia was preceded in death by her parents and her husband; one brother, Roger Haid, and her brother and sister-in-law, Ralph Sewall and MaryAnn Sewall.

Per her wishes, cremation rites have been accorded.

The family will receive friends for a memorial visitation Jan. 28, 2025 at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd., in Wilmington from 10 a.m. until the time of the memorial service at 11:30 a.m.

Interment will follow the service at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood where Georgia will be laid to rest with her late husband.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.BaskervilleFuneral.com to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Georgia's memorial page via social media.

Cremation services and memorial arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory in Wilmington.

David J. Ligocki

CRYSTAL LAKE—David J. Ligocki, 65, of Crystal Lake, IL, passed away Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2025, at Northwestern Central DuPage Hospital in Winfield, IL.

Born March 14, 1959, in Chicago, David was a son of John and Regina Ligocki. He was raised in Schaumburg, IL and graduated from Proviso West High School. David worked in retail for his remaining years in the workforce until he retired. His last position was a manager for Walmart in Palatine. He found great purpose in putting in a hard day's work. David was extremely mathematical and enjoyed being around people. Though gone too soon, he made an impact on many people and tried the best he could to leave a positive legacy behind.

Survivors include his daughter, Kelsey Ligocki, of Essex and his stepson, Daniel Shock, of Michigan; two grandchildren:

Jack and Jordan Nelson-Ligocki; and one brother, Scott (Heather) Ligocki and their family.

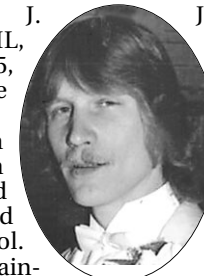
David was preceded in death by his parents and one sister, Tina Ligocki.

The family received friends for a visitation at Baskerville Funeral Home in Wilmington on Friday, Jan. 17, 2025.

Per David's wishes, cremation rites were accorded following the visitation.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.BaskervilleFuneral.com to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share David's memorial page via social media.

Services and arrangements were made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory in Wilmington.



Melissa's Closet & Crystals Jewelry Box

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www.facebook.com/melissacrystalprom
www.melissascloset.org

Georgia Southern University recognizes President's list

Georgia Southern University recently recognized approximately 2,520 students on the Fall 2024 President's List. Rylee Endrst of Diamond has been named to the list for excellence in academics.

To be eligible for the President's list, a student must have at least a 4.0 grade point average and carry a minimum of 12 hours for the semester.

OBITUARIES

Kurt L. Mathes

GARDNER—Kurt L. Mathes, 81, of Gardner, formerly of Tuscola, IL, passed away Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2025 at Morris Hospital.

Born Dec. 14, 1943 in Cleveland, OH, Kurt was the son of Walter Mathes Jr. and Gladys (Nicholl) Mathes. He was raised in Lakewood, OH, graduated from Lakewood High School, class of 1961, and completed a Bachelor's Degree in Chemical Engineering at Case Institute of Technology in Cleveland, OH. On May 29, 1969, Kurt married Betty Lou Griffin in Tuscola, which they would call their home for the next 19 years until they relocated to Gardner in 1988.

He worked as a chemical engineer for Millennium Chemical Plant in Tuscola from 1965 to 1988, and later relocated to their Morris facility, now known as LyondellBassel, and worked there until he retired in 1998. Kurt was an avid golfer for his entire life, playing regularly at the Dwight Country Club. He was blessed to share 55 years of marriage with his loving wife, Betty, who was his best friend and companion.

Survivors include his wife, Betty Mathes, of Gardner; one sister, Karen McIntyre (Mark Minns), of Grafton, OH; nephew, Brain McIntyre; niece, Stacy (Rob) Bolin; great-nieces and nephews, Erin and Collin McIntyre, Caleb and Noah Daw, and Sophia Bolin; and many cousins.

Kurt was preceded in death by his parents, Walter and Gladys Mathes.

Per his wishes, cremation rites are being accorded and there will be no services at this time.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.ReevesFuneral.com to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Kurt's memorial page via social media.

Cremation services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory in Coal City.

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Deadlines
Classified Display
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Classified Word Ads
Mondays - noon

The Free Press Newspapers will be responsible for the first incorrect insertion, and its liabilities shall be limited to the price on one insertion. The Free Press Newspapers reserves the right to classify correctly, edit, reject or cancel any advertisement at any time in accordance with its policy. All ads must be checked for errors the first week of publication by the advertiser.

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Wilmington, 2nd floor, efficiency/studio, \$600 monthly plus security, plus utilities, no pets, no smoking. Text 815-768-5020. cc2-5

BUSINESS PROPERTIES FOR RENT

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Hay for sale. Big bales, square bales, small. If you need hay, give us a call. 779-435-2498. cc4-6

HELP WANTED

Friends Over Fifty has an immediate need for two full-time schedulers. We help the elderly maintain their independence by providing in-home companionship and other non-medical assistance with Activities of Daily Living. This is largely an administrative position in our office with minimal care duties. Some travel may be required within Will and Grundy counties. Although office hours are 9-5, M-F, you must commit to taking responsibility for our scheduling phone on nights and weekends alternating with other office staff. Training is provided as well as PTO, partially self-funded insurance plan available and employer matching IRA. Salary range is \$17-\$20 per hour with bonus incentives. Apply online today at <https://fofseniorcare.ersp.biz/> employment or call 815-545-4760. cc3-5

HELP WANTED

Friends Over Fifty has an immediate need for Caregivers for various days and care shifts. We help the elderly maintain their independence by providing in-home companionship and other non-medical assistance with Activities of Daily Living. Training is provided as well as a salary of \$15-\$17 per hour and employer matching IRA. Apply online today at <https://fofseniorcare.ersp.biz/> employment or call 815-545-4760.

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Coal City
Mandy Eaton
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Starting at \$50
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Source: Midwest Real Estate DataBase, (MLS) Single Family Detached Homes Sold in 2024 By Grundy County Offices.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. "Loser" rocker
5. Partner to relaxation
9. Mixing
11. Winged nut
13. Expression of blame
15. Vast ocean
16. Comedienne Gasteyer
17. Multiply
19. Meat from a pig (French)
21. Related
22. Rocker Stewart
23. Surprise completely
25. Loon
26. Canister
27. Large, deep-bodied fish
29. Takes forcefully
31. Oil cartel
33. Palmer and Hepburn are two
34. More than one
36. Places down purposefully
38. Pitching statistic
39. Type of sword
41. Witnesses

43. Body part
44. Mixes slowly
46. Satisfy
48. Strong belief
52. One's physique (slang)
53. More frightening
54. Soup cracker
56. Teaches
57. One who carries something
58. Actor Sean
59. Changes

CLUES DOWN

1. ___ Aires, city
2. Coarse grass
3. Type of gene
4. Door handle
5. Competition
6. Muslim ruler title
7. Hunting expeditions
8. Large mollusk
9. Bind securely
10. Former U.S. presidential candidate
11. 2-point plays in football
12. Brezed through
14. Type setting

15. Felt for
18. Codified rules
20. Small dome
24. Chevrotrain
26. Male reproductive gland
28. Controversial beliefs
30. Z Z Z
32. One who confines another
34. Bishop
35. Garlands
37. Bird that flies by the coast
38. Optical device
40. Greek goddess of discord
42. Some are "Rolling"
43. Formerly (archaic)
45. Thrust a knife into
47. German river
49. Atomic #26
50. Make a grotesque face
51. Primordial matter of the universe
55. Chinese philosophical principle

COMET SPORTS



Eggleston earns Comet Classic title

RCWS WRESTLING hosted the Comet Classic on Saturday inside the Reed-Custer Fieldhouse. The Comet Classic is made up of 26 teams from all three classes. The Comets wrestled well and had nine wrestlers score team points to finish fifth overall. Placers included champion Jeremy Eggleston (pictured) at 138 pounds, 2nd place Dominic Alaimo (215), third place Colton Drinkwine (106) and Kaaden Wood (120), 5th place Jayden Sanchez (126) and Nathan Vogler (175) and sixth place Cole Harris (113).

WEE WINTER CARNIVAL

Do the kids need to get out and burn off some energy? Bring them to the park for some carnival fun! There will be inflatables, carnival games, prizes, hot dogs, popcorn and such a good time to be had!

Friday, January 24 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm
Ages 2-5 (must be accompanied by an adult)
\$8 per child if registered/paid by January 23
\$10 per child day of or at the door

GODLEY PARK DISTRICT

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www.godleypark.com

Two matmen victories with Coalers up Thursday

On Thursday, the wrestling Comets traveled to Manteno to take on the Panthers and Peotone Blue Devils.
Reed-Custer got two wins: Manteno 64-13, Peotone 63-18 to improve to 22-3 overall with a showdown expected on Thursday when state ranked Coal City coming to town.

Lady Comets hit bumps in the road

Reed-Custer girls basketball team lost three games last week to fall to 8-11 overall, 2-6 in conference play.
On Thursday against Wilmington the Lady Comets were leading 27-24 after three quarters when they were outscored 13-2 in the fourth to lose 37-29.
It was their third loss to Wilmington this season as the Wildcats pressured Reed-Custer's top scorer Alyssa Wollenzien who finished with seven points with a trap defense.
Gwen Stewart, Harlie Liebermann, and Leah Grace each had six points. Wollenzien and Liebermann had eight rebounds each. Stewart had seven rebounds.
On Wednesday the Lady Comets lost to Dwight Trojans 47-26. Reed-Custer came out strong in the first taking the lead 11-8. But in the second only scored 7



LADY COMET Cameron Wallace takes a shot against Lisle Lions during Monday's game. Wallace had five points total.



REED-CUSTER'S ATIANA HOOD dribbles the ball down the court during Monday's game against Lisle. Lady Comets lost 36-31.



LAUNCHING A THREE-point shot over a Lisle defender is Comet Collin Monroe.

RC boys score their most yet against Lisle

The Comet boys snapped a three game losing streak last week by defeating Lisle 76-61 at home. (Sorry, game stats unavailable).
The win improves Reed-Custer's record to 5-13 overall, 1-6 in the conference. They travel to Momence on Wednesday before facing conference-leading Streator on the road Friday. They will host Manteno on Tuesday.



REED-CUSTER SENIOR Dom Eddy keeps the play alive during last week's 76-61 victory over Lisle.

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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Amy Bohland
Family Nurse Practitioner

Dr. Jennifer Thomas
Behavioral Health, Addiction Medicine

Call 815-458-2532 to schedule an appointment!

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