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Safety issues, truck repair concerns questioned, answered

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

Braidwood's Public Property commissioner said he wants some answers when it comes to how the city keeps records, particularly when it comes to the fleet of vehicles utilized by public works.

During the regular City Council meeting on Feb. 14, Public Property Commissioner Warren Wietting said he has been working on an inventory of all property owned by the city. As commissioner of public property, Wietting is charged with overseeing all the city's property, including City Hall, the wastewater treatment plant

and water plant, all real estate, and any property which is not used by a specific department.

Wietting said that while technically the public works vehicles, which are utilized by the streets department, are not his purview, he had some concerns with the city's large trucks and their maintenance records.

Wietting said at issue were multiple maintenance records for some of the city's salt/plow trucks, which he said were missing itemized invoices for expensive repairs.

"As a business man who has managed many companies throughout the years, I'm a numbers guy. I look at numbers, so, going back to the

maintenance on the vehicles, what I found is there's very little maintenance records on any of the city's vehicles or equipment. Which is kind of alarming to me because everywhere you go, anyone who has any kind of vehicle fleets, they have files on these things. Paper files, it's on a spreadsheet," Wietting said. "I'm trying to get a fair assessment of what the city actually owns and what equipment is in all of your buildings."

Wietting said there were four bills in particular that caught his eye, each for maintenance on trucks. The bills had various totals, one for \$860, one for \$4,635, one for \$8,536, and another for \$3,525.

"It's very vague on the invoices so bear with me," Wietting said. "There's no detailed invoices... and, the most alarming one was on truck 316. It doesn't give any itemizations. And, that was an \$8,536 bill with no accountability for parts or what was done on that vehicle. So, this makes me question, where are the records, and why did we spend that money? Why did we spend the city's money?"

Wietting went further to say that he had questions specifically for Public Works Foreman Nick Grygiel, who had turned in the paperwork to City Hall for processing and approval of payment by the council.

When it comes to an explanation,

Grygiel and Streets Commissioner Fay Smith said Wietting is reaching for answers that are already readily available.

Grygiel said the city's public works fleet usually gets maintenance at J&R Service Center in Gardner. Grygiel said that after Wietting made his public statements, he reached out to J&R for various invoices, which he said had already been submitted to the city, payment for which was also approved by the full city council last fall.

Grygiel said the first issue is that when comparing the money the city

SEE TRUCKS, PAGE 2



Photo by Marney Simon

THE TURF LOOKS inviting at Reed-Custer, ready to welcome spring sports to Comet Stadium. But, repairs are needed before anyone can take the field this season. Water and rain have caused some sinkholes in the new turf, which will be repaired in the coming weeks at no charge to the district.

Problems on the home turf

Fixes on the way for issues at Reed-Custer field

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

The new turf field at Reed-Custer High School

While work on the improvements is moving forward with warmer weather putting installation of the

bleachers and press box a bit ahead of schedule, there has also unfortunately been some bad news with regard to the field.

"Since we did the field last summer, if you remember how dry it was, it didn't rain a lot last summer. So, they put the tile in, they put the sub-base in, they put the top stone in, and it never rained, they turfed the field. Perfect," Superintendent Mark Mitchell told members of the Board of Education during their regular

monthly meeting on Feb. 15. "But, since then, we've gotten rain and we're starting to get some sinkholes around the perimeter of the field in a line where they put the main perimeter tile. The whole field is patterned tile into the perimeter tile."

Mitchell said the root of the problem has already been diagnosed, so now it's just a matter of digging in and addressing the issue.

"What they think is happening in, they are having

trouble with the trench," Mitchell said. "There is sand here, they were having trouble and they dug it but the sand is filling in. They think that some of the pipe may not have been jointed in these spots properly. It's flushing in [sand] whenever it rains."

Mitchell said the fix requires the turf to be peeled back all the way around the field.

"We are replacing the turf

SEE TURF, PAGE 2

RC piloting platform to complement classwork

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

The Reed-Custer School District is looking to add some additional materials to complement its regular academic offerings.

On Feb. 15, district officials explained to the members of the Board of Education that a pilot program for an additional learning platform was underway.

"Curriculum wise, we are moving forward with a pilot for Nusela," Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Danielle Valiente told the board. "Nusela is something that we've had free versions of for a long time, but they have really re-upped what you get with the premium ver-

sion, so we have a lot of teachers who are interested."

According to the Nusela website, the content provided to school districts comes from more than 100 established partners and makes it instruction ready for K-12 classrooms.

Products are customized by state in order to follow state standards of instruction.

The texts represent a wide range of subjects from a variety of sources, including news, reference materials, speeches, opinions, interviews, biographies, court opinions, narrative nonfiction, fiction, and myths, legends, and folktales.

"This will be something that we're going to look in grades three through 12, and

SEE BOARD, PAGE 2

Braidwood looks to address issues at WWTP

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

The city of Braidwood's wastewater treatment plant went online in 2011, the 2 million gallon per day oxidation ditch plant promised to support long term growth for the city.

Now more than a decade into operation, there are some small issues and fixes that city leaders want to see addressed at the site.

During the Feb. 14 regular meeting of the City Council, Public Buildings and Property Commissioner Warren Wietting said he

recently visited the city's wastewater treatment plant, hoping to get a better understanding of the science behind that happens after you flush.

"This past week I requested a plant walkthrough [of the wastewater treatment plant] to get a little understanding," Wietting said. "A couple of my family members have spent a lot of years in water waste treatment plants in municipal-

SEE COUNCIL, PGAE 2



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More flavors of the melting pot in Braidwood

We continue our look at the nationalities of early Braidwood, as documented by M. J. Donna in his book *The Braidwood Story*. Next on his list were the Canadians. Most prominent of while was the Jack family.



TIME WAS....
Sandy Vasko

William Jack was born to English parents in Ontario, Canada to work in the mines, in 1856. In 1862 the family moved to Morris, Illinois and a few years later to Braidwood.

He attended Braidwood schools, then made up his mind to learn to be a tinner and was set to go to Chicago. His father, however, announced that he had just purchased a hardware store and William could learn the tinner's trade there, in a more

practical setting. Together with his brother, he operated a hardware store for the rest of his life.

We move on to the English, both in nationality and last name. The John English family moved to the vicinity in 1865, just when Braidwood was at its very beginnings. So early in fact that there were no grocery stores in Braidwood, so Mary English would walk 5 miles to Wilmington and back to purchase food.

John worked in the mines for a few years, later opening up a tavern near the Eureka shaft. His home was located on the street named after his family, English Street.

Another family from jolly old England was the William

Maltby family. William started his mining career in England, but later moved around to Quebec, Canada, Jackson, Michigan, Peoria and Fairbury, Illinois, Pennsylvania and finally Braidwood in 1866.

He became superintendent of the Eureka Coal Company that operated four mines and laid out the Eureka section of Braidwood. He later worked for other companies, finally purchasing his own mines in the northeast part of the city. He was the founder of the Braidwood Public Library and served as its first president.

Another family Donna mentions under the heading of those born in England was the "G-Shaft" Williamson's. Mr. Williamson was a hoisting engineer and served in several early mines among them the I-shaft and the G-shaft. It was his wife Harriet that made the family famous.

She perfected a candy which she named G-shaft after the mine closest to her home. Donna says that the candy was made after her death in 1914, by other members of her family, but it never tasted the same, so he assumes her recipe died with her. Since he had tasted both, I bow to him as judge.

Of course, the Irish, next on the list cannot be ignored. Donna mentions the William and Thomas Connor families, and the Higgins. The William Keever's family is probably the most famous, known for their "discovery" of coal on their farm in 1864.

The truth is, the existence of coal in the area was well-known a long time before. He sunk a mine on his property and soon a small hamlet built up around it, known as Keeverville. When the mine gave out, Keeverville became a ghost town, with most of the houses moved to Diamond

and other villages in the area. Donna mentions the William Miner's Union were Irishmen from Braidwood, that would include James Ryan who was elected to the State Board of the Union, ending his career as an arbitrator for the U.M.W.A. and the Illinois Coal Operators' Association.

He was a warm friend of Union leaders such as John P. Mitchell (another Braidwood man) and John L. Lewis. We move on to the Italians, starting with the Bertas. Donna describes them as the most prolific family among the early Italians.

More than a dozen different branches of the family settled in the Braidwood area in the 1870's and 80's. He says, "In the early 80's families of that name came here in flocks, all adding materially to the development of the town." James Berta set up a truck

garden business, starting with a few acres on the western side of the city, adding more to it every year, until he became the largest land owner within the city limits. Two of his sons followed him and were just as successful.

The Stephen Faletti family came to Braidwood in 1873. He worked for the mines for about ten years, then opened a dry-goods and grocery store from 1883 to 1922.

He was considered a leader in the Italian community helping to arrange passage for new immigrants, and visits back home for those already settled here as the agent for the White Star Steamship Line. His wife also did her part by helping women adapt to the strange ways of their new country.

We will continue with Donna's inventory of nationalities when next we meet.

RCCHS Theater heading "Into the Woods"



Courtesy photo

THE REED-CUSTER Theatre Department will present "Into the Woods," a Tony Award winning musical by Stephen Sondheim and book by James Lapine. The story brings together several Brothers Grimm fairytales—Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk, Little Red Riding Hood and Rapunzel—all tied together with a baker and his wife and a witch who casts a spell on them. The musical will be presented March 17 and 18 at 7 p.m. and 2 p.m. on March 19 in the Reed-Custer Auditorium, 249 Comet Dr. Admission is free, however attendees can pick their seats in advance by securing a ticket at vancovevents.com. The cast includes [from left, row one]: Matthias Martinez, Lucas Doolin, Mia Nacey, Lucy Esparza, Marshall Gee, Mollie Dockery, Charlotte Barry and Katie Carson. Paige Holland is in row two with Ollivia Allen, Jady Stephens, Eden Przybalski, Victoria Loomis, Maria Bragg, Jaina Dubbert, Olivia Williams, Alice Gruber, Reese Damaschke and Dakota Wilkins. In row three are Gibson Waldvogel, Tristan Randall, Zach Randall, Mark Martinez, Ava Van Duyne, Jamon Spikings, Joey Ulrich and Colton Waldvogel. The cast is directed by James Reinbacher with vocal direction by Kevin Mangan and choreography by Kim Scerine. The musical pit is directed by Addie Dennis and is comprised of Tyler Winyinger, Kaitlyn Faurot, Makayla Wilkins, Jenna Bragg, Emma O'Neill, Jack Krall, Julia Janopoulos, Gabby Davies, Micah Crisp, Danny Kuban and Landon Edwards.

Budick's art places in Art 4 Heart contest

BY MACKENZIE ROMINES
RCCHS STUDENT REPORTER

This February marks the 12th year of the "Art 4 Heart: A Journey to a Healthy Heart through the Artist's Eye" exhibit hosted by Riverside Health Care, and curated by Christina Loraine. It coincides with American Heart month, focusing on cardiovascular health. The exhibit, hosted in Kankakee, displayed the art of students from local schools.

The event highlights the beauty in which the eye of an artist works, and has a heavy focus on the health of the heart for the pieces. Entries could be done in any medium, and both digital and traditional pieces were included.

Many Reed-Custer students had pieces selected to be displayed. The Braidwood students who participated were Braden Belcher, Haley Budick, Liliana Chavez, Gabby Davies, Margaret Dockery, Zoe Hassett, Savana Helton, Seth Johnson, Ethan Mann, Andrew Martinez, Echo Zeke Mudro, Dallas Mueller, Cooper Sterrett, Abigail Sunday, Makenzi Thompson, Jaidan Wilbur, and Emma Whittum. The event was held Feb. 23, and was the 7th year that the school submitted work.

Senior Haley Budick's stunning piece "From the ground up" won second place overall, and she was given a \$50 gift card as well. When asked for a statement about her piece, Budick said,



REED-CUSTER art student Haley Budick (fourth from left) was first runner-up in the Riverside Healthcare 12th Annual Art 4 Heart contest featuring the work of 60 area high school students. Budick submitted a colored pencil piece titled "From the Ground Up" which took first runner-up among intricate drawings, painting, sculptures, photography and more submitted by students from nine area schools. Budick received her award Thursday at The Majestic Theater in Kankakee where nearly 200 students, teachers and community members attended a reception recognizing the works of high school students depicting the journey to a healthy heart through the artist's eye. Also pictured are (from left) Riverside Vice President of Public Relations and Communication - Matt McBurnie; Juror - Ann Wendlick; 2nd runner up Jolie Corral; Budick; grand prize winner Anna DuMontelle; and Curator - Christina Loraine.

beyond grateful for this opportunity. Getting second place was very unexpected yet really appreciated."

Budick commented, "From the ground up" was a piece I created from collaging a series of ideas that I found

online. I then added and changed aspects to make the piece my own, such as the flowers and the color scheme of the heart. I wanted to include flowers and plant life that could be seen around Braidwood, and add as many natural elements as possible.

The heart was created using colored pencils which took me roughly 15 hours total. I could not have created this without the help and support of my art teacher Miss Baron, and my parents for always cheering me on."

RCCHS seniors of the week

BY MACKENZIE ROMINES
RCCHS STUDENT REPORTER

Each week the Braidwood Journal features members from the Reed-Custer High School class of 2023. Featured this week are Angie Martinez and TJ Boyd who completed our questionnaire.



ANGIE MARTINEZ

Angie Martinez
What do you plan to pursue upon graduation? Elementary Education at Eastern Illinois University

What is something most do not know about you? I cry a ton

What's an everyday activity you could win an Olympic medal at? Procrastinating

Favorite thing on the school menu? Chicken tacos or quesadilla

What is one thing you refuse to eat? Green beans, because they are soggy and gross

A sport or club that made an impact on you and why? Color Guard. I've been doing it forever and it's just something that I really love. I can't wait to do it in college

If you could travel anywhere, where would you go? Tokyo, Japan

What class would you create? How to pick your video game main 101

Famous Person (dead or alive) you would like to meet? Jacksepticeye, because he's like my hero

Teacher shoutout? Mr. Gleixner, he just really cares and I actually love his class

Advice you would give to underclassmen? Don't be mean people, because people never forget

TJ Boyd
What do you plan to pursue upon graduation? I'm planning on either going into the military or the union

What is something most do not know about you? I'm



TJ BOYD

currently building a guitar in one of my classes

What's an every day activity you could win an Olympic medal at? I'm very good at stocking shelves

Favorite thing on the school menu? Chicken Alfredo

What is one thing you refuse to eat? Max sticks

A sport or club that made an impact on you and why? Basketball, it made me more open and social

If you could travel anywhere, where would you go? Australia, it's a beautiful country

What class would you create? A class revolving around computers and how to make them better

Famous Person (dead or alive) you would like to meet? Jeffery Dean Morgan, he is such a nice guy and he is really good at acting

Teacher Shoutout? Mr. Smith

Advice you would give to underclassmen? Do your homework

RCMS students of the month



REED-CUSTER MIDDLE School named the students of the month for January. The characteristic was dedication, students include (from left): Kamryn Wilkey (7th grade), Kirstin Klein (8th), Kadance Van Duyne (7th), Reese Brown (8th), Colton Schultz (7th), Aiden Kerwin (8th), Johanna Janopoulos (6th), Jesse Tresouthick (8th), Isabella Dixon (6th), Isaac Knight (7th) and Caleb Cisco (6th). Not pictured: Aubree Bobzin (6th).

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Enjoy the PGA sipping on an Azalea

The 2023 PGA Tour is in full swing, and we are mere weeks away from the Masters at Augusta National set to tee off in April 6. The big story of last year's Masters was the return of the crowd after a two year absence.

Aside from the roar of the crowd, Scottie Scheffler's performance was the stuff of legend and I look forward to reliving the magic in the highlight reel ahead of this year's Tournament. Azaleas will bloom, pimento cheese sandwiches will be served, but this year the official cocktail of the Masters will be part refreshment, and perhaps part peace

offering. If you have followed pro golf over the last few years, or even if you have not, you may have heard of LIV, a rival professional golf tour financed by a Saudi Arabian investment fund. Some of the PGA's top talent defected from the PGA tour to join LIV including Phil Mickelson, Brooks Koepka, and Dustin Johnson. With two rival pro tours, which player will be regarded as the "best" pro golfer?

We may never find a way to objectively answer the question, but this year's Masters tournament will surely spark plenty of spirited debate among fans.

The PGA is allowing LIV players to attend majors, and the Masters will be the first time this season that golfers from the two rival tours will tee up alongside each other. LIV golfers recently received clearance to enter the Masters, and 17 of the upstart tour players were invited to play Augusta National in April.

At the end of the day, no single player is bigger than the game.

The Masters is an "invitation only" tournament, and

the issue is further complicated by six LIV players that have lifetime exemptions into the Masters as past champions, and several others that have an invite based on winning PGA majors in the past five years. As long as the best players in the game show up to play Augusta National next month, I'll be happy.

That's enough controversy, let's pour the official cocktail of the Masters, the Azalea. Why is the Azalea cocktail the official cocktail of the Masters? The Azalea cocktail is named for the iconic pink azalea's that line the #13 fairway, and the azaleas are the only things "pretty" about that particular hole if you are playing the course against the top players in the world. Augusta's 13th hole is a par 5, 510-yard hole that is regarded by many as one of the most difficult in the game.

It's unlikely that I will ever play Augusta National, but there's a good chance that each and every spring I will enjoy a delicious Azalea while taking in the action from my living room. Augusta National is home

to over 30 varieties of azaleas, and they all seem to be in peak form around Tournament time. What is the best way to get the Azalea cocktail in the glass in peak form?

Before you prepare your Azalea, you have a big decision to make: vodka or gin?

The drink was originally made with gin, which is the preferred spirit of golf club bars around the world. I'm not sure why that is, but it is. If you prefer vodka, go ahead and use vodka. A quality gin will lend a unique blend of herbs and botanicals to the drink for more depth, whereas vodka will keep the sweet and sour fruit flavors in-tact without overpowering the drink.

This is a great "first" cocktail if you are new to mixology as it is made from common ingredients, and if you keep the proportions listed below in the ballpark the drink will be delicious.

Many fans of the Azalea like to go a bit heavy on the fresh lemon juice, while some prefer to skip lemon juice altogether in favor of fresh lime juice. Lemon juice is most commonly used when the drink is served in a commercial bar, I make a few of these a year at home and prefer lime juice.

Use a quality pineapple juice. At 2 oz. per drink, if your pineapple juice is subpar, then

your Azalea will be subpar. Dole Unsweetened Pineapple juice is the choice of most commercial bars because it is a dynamite mixer.

The "splash" of grenadine listed in the recipe below is usually around a teaspoon. It largely depends on the type of grenadine used and the desired color of your Azalea. If you look at pictures of Azalea cocktails online you will see a wide variety of reddish colors ranging from light pink to deep burgundy.

The bright red syrupy grenadine (Rose's) will yield a light red/pink cocktail, the deeper colored offerings from Sonoma Syrup co and Monin will darken the drink and bring some pomegranate notes to the Azalea as well.

The Azalea is built in a shaker and served over ice in a chilled Collins (tall) glass.

Combine in shaker:
1 oz. fresh lemon juice
2 oz pineapple juice
2 oz. vodka (or gin)
Splash of grenadine, add until desired color is achieved
Add ice to shaker
Shake and strain into chilled Collins glass over fresh ice

Garnish with orange wedge and cherry
Until next week, enjoy responsibly.

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State of Illinois earns credit upgrade

BY PETER HANCOCK
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD – S&P Global Ratings announced Feb. 23 that it raised Illinois' long-term credit rating to A-, up from BBB+, marking the seventh upgrade the state has received from a major rating agency in less than two years.

The rating applies to roughly \$27.7 billion in outstanding general obligation, or GO bonds.

"The upgrade on the GO debt reflects our view that Illinois' commitment and execution to strengthen its budgetary flexibility and stability, supported by accelerating repayment of its liabilities, rebuilding its budget stabilization fund to decade highs; and a slowing of statutory pension funding growth, will likely continue during the outlook period," S&P Global Ratings credit analyst Geoff Buswick said in a news release.

Bonds are a tool that governments and businesses use to borrow money, typically for long-term capital projects such as building construction or other kinds of infrastructure. GO bonds are backed by the government's general taxing authority but other bonds may be backed by more specific revenue sources, such as sales or motor fuel taxes. Higher bond ratings generally mean the borrower – in this case

the state – pays lower interest rates.

Before the recent string of upgrades, all three major rating agencies – including Moody's Investors Service and Fitch Ratings – had rated Illinois' bonds at one notch above "junk" status, the point at which large institutional investors will no longer purchase them.

During the last two years, however, Illinois has used higher-than-expected revenues to pay off its backlog of past-due bills and retire other short-term debt early. In addition, it has set aside \$1.9 billion for the state's budget stabilization fund – commonly known as the "rainy day" fund – and the state is projected to deposit another \$138 million into that fund in the upcoming fiscal year, according to Gov. JB Pritzker's latest budget proposal.

"Our continued fiscal responsibility and smart budgeting will save Illinois taxpayers millions from adjusted interest rates, and my partners in the General Assembly and I look forward to building on that success," Pritzker said.

S&P credited the state's "deep and diverse economic base" as well as the state government's access to readily available cash, including the rainy day fund and untapped interfund borrowing authority. The agency also said it expects ongoing union contract negotiations to

be settled in a timely manner.

Offsetting those factors, S&P said, is the state's high unfunded pension and other postemployment benefit liabilities such as health care. The agency also dinged Illinois on its practice of releasing annual financial audits later than most other states and population declines, which it warned could impact future economic growth.

S&P said it could further upgrade Illinois' rating if the state continues paying down unfunded pension liabilities and building up its rainy day fund while shrinking its structural deficit.

On the other hand, S&P said it could downgrade the state's rating in the future if the structural deficit were to increase due to economic uncertainties or if its pension and other fixed-cost obligations exceed expectations.

Pritzker's recent budget proposal seeks to add an extra \$200 million to the pension fund beyond statutory levels for the current fiscal year.

For now, S&P said the state's near-term credit outlook is "stable."

In addition to upgrading the state's general obligation bond rating, S&P also raised its rating on the state's Build Illinois sales tax bonds to A, up from A-.

State Police squad car rear-ended on I-55

An Illinois State Trooper and his K9 companion escaped serious injury Monday morning after their squad car was struck on Interstate 55 in Joliet.

The officer was investigating a previous crash on the right shoulder of Interstate 55 northbound at Illinois Route 59, with emergency lights activated, when it was rear ended at approximately 7:46 a.m.

A silver 2018 Nissan Altima, traveling northbound

on Interstate 55, failed to yield to the stationary emergency vehicle and struck the left rear side of the ISP squad car.

The Trooper and K9 were inside the vehicle at the time of the crash. The Troop was transported to an area hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. The K9 was uninjured.

The driver of the Nissan, Tanner R. Poppenhager, 24, of Beardstown, IL, was issued a citation for: Scott's Law – Failure To Yield To Stationary Emergency Vehicle.

This is the sixth Move Over Law crash so far this year. In 2022, ISP had 23 Move Over Law-related crashes where eight Troopers sustained injuries.

ISP is reminding the pub-

lic of the requirements of the Move Over Law, otherwise known as "Scott's Law".

When approaching an emergency vehicle, or any vehicle with their emergency or hazard lights activated, drivers are required to slow down and move over. A person who violates Scott's Law, commits a business offense and faces a fine of no less than \$250 or more than \$10,000 for a first offense.

Spring cleanup at Braceville Gardner Cemetery

All grave decorations must be removed by March 15 or they will be discarded. Also, during the year, all wilted, faded and broken grave decorations will be removed. Garbage will be placed in containers located next to maintenance building.

Please do not replace decorations until the cleanup is completed.

Braceville Gardner Cemetery Association
Board of Directors

Speedway Solar project coming

ComEd has announced the opening of the 75th community solar development in its service territory, a 2.495 megawatt (MW) dubbed the Speedway Solar project.

The project will provide more than 350 ComEd customers with the benefits of solar energy and savings on their energy bills. The Speedway Solar project includes more than 2,300 solar panels and occupies 31 acres on West Sharp Road in Elwood.

By the end of this year, ComEd expects to have doubled the number of community solar projects interconnected to its electric grid to more than 150, serving approximately 36,000 customers!

2023 12U Wilmington Wildcats

EUCHRE NIGHT

Saturday, March 11
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Any 12U Wildcat Family
Tuffy's Lounge

Lynx, porcupine featured in Mammal Madness

Celebrate the warm-blooded creatures around us during a Mammal Madness program from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, March 4, at Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon.

One of the highlights of this Forest Preserve District of Will County program will be a free, all-ages live animal presentation at 11 a.m. by Big Run Wolf Ranch. The presentation will feature a Canada lynx, opossum, skunk and porcupine. There is room for 200 and seating will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

"Mammals are relatable, and they play such a large role in our native ecosystem that we should celebrate them as much as possible," said Jess McQuown, a program coordinator at Four Rivers. "We're all taught about dolphins in the oceans and elephants in Africa, but we have some incredible mammals right here in our own backyards and we wanted to share our excitement with everyone."

The big draw for the animal show will be the Canada lynx, said Alexis Lyons, an interpretive naturalist at Four Rivers.

"The Canada Lynx is a wild cat with large paws and long ear tufts," Lyons said. "They're about the size of a medium dog, standing 2.5 feet tall. We



A CANADA LYNX and three other mammals will be part of a presentation made by Big Run Wolf Ranch at the Forest Preserve District of Will County's Mammal Madness program on March 4 at Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon.

are very thrilled to have this majestic animal visiting Four Rivers!"

Some of the animals that will be featured during the presentation have bad reputations, Lyons said.

"For instance, skunks have gotten a bad reputation from the foul-smelling musk they spray when frightened," she said. "Skunks provide many warning signs prior to spraying such as, hissing, raising its tail, puffing its fur and stamping its front feet. Skunks are generally quite easy-going and benefit our neighborhoods by eating

the insects and rodents that get into our homes and gardens."

In addition to the presentation by Big Run Wolf Ranch, which is a non-profit wildlife education facility in Homer Township, the event will feature other family-friendly activities.

"After the presentation, there will be mask-making in the craft room," McQuown said. "We'll have a puppet stage for families to bring their own mammal stories to life. There will be a show-and-tell space where families can

One day conference to address river issues

Organizers of the Kankakee River Watershed Conference said the time is now to restore the pristine waterway.

"Sand and sediment flow into the river are being caught by fallen trees forming sand bars, turning sand bars into islands and redirecting the flow of water" say conference organizers Frank Koehler, former Wilmington City Administrator, and Angel Crawford. "The time is now to address these challenges and protect the areas' greatest asset—the Kankakee River Watershed."

With the theme "The Time is Now", a one-day conference on the Kankakee River will be held on Friday, March 10, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the campus of Kankakee

Community College.

Issues that will be discussed include water quantity and quality, biodiversity, nutrients and agriculture, river recreation, watershed initiatives, and most importantly, sand and sediment.

There is no fee to attend, but individuals are asked to register online. Lunch and refreshments will be provided to attendees.

Registration and conference schedule are available at Kankakee Community College's Continuing Education. Course Detail: LECT-7045 - Kankakee River Watershed Conference.

The conference should be of interest to residents of Illinois and Indiana, particularly those in the Kankakee River, Iroquois River, and

Yellow River watersheds.

Wilmington City Administrator Jeannine Smith will give a presentation on local initiatives and members of the Will County Forest Preserve District will be presenting on sand and sediment projects.

For more information, email Koehler through the Potawatomi Paddlers Association Fjkoehler1952@gmail.com or Crawford from the Iroquois Economic Development Association at iedaillinois@gmail.vcom

Annual FUMC Men's Club spaghetti dinner March 4

The Men's Club of the First United Methodist Church of Wilmington will be hosting its 37th annual spaghetti dinner on Saturday, March 4, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the church located at 401 E. Kahler Road, Wilmington.

Come for the spaghetti, stay for the desserts! Carry-outs available. Invite your neighbors—better yet, pick them up! Free will offering, no set price.

Proceeds from this event are used to support local missions such as Kuzma Care Cottage, Our Caring Closet, Lamb's Fold and the Christian Help Association.

Library collecting used items for upcoming book sale

The Wilmington Public Library District will be holding a used book sale during the weekend of March 25 and March 26. The sale will run from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Saturday and from 12 p.m. until 4 p.m. on Sunday.

Books will be sold for \$3 a bag, and the library will provide the bag. Donations of

books and DVDs for the book sale will be accepted now through March 24.

The library kindly asked for books free of mold, dirt, and smoke damage. NO encyclopedias, VHS, National Geographics, outdated medical & text books or other obsolete materials will be accepted.

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Photos by Eric Fisher

AN EXCITING START - The first match of the battle for first place resulted in a 4-0 win for Coal City's Brock Finch at 126 pounds. He scores a two-point takedown over Yorkville Christian's Tristan Gleason, much to the delight of his coaches and teammates.



WHAT A BLESSING...as in Mataeo Blessing, who came out and pinned his opponent in :52 seconds to give the Coalers six big points over Yorkville Christian on Saturday. The Coal City senior won all three of his matches during the state dual finals, one of five Coalers to do so. Gotta love the reaction by coaches Joe Widlowski, Jim Looper and Mark Masters.



COAL CITY SENIOR Jack Poyner trips up Yorkville Christian's Tyler Martinez at 160 pounds.



JUST FOR YOU MOM! Coal City senior Derek Carlson points to the stands inside Grossinger Auto Arena in Bloomington, IL after singing the National Anthem to start the Dual Team wrestling championships.



COAL CITY SENIOR Braiden Young works on Mustang Jeremy Loomis during a 16-8 major decision at 182 pounds.

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we are so proud of you.
 Love, Mom & Dad

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Noah Houston, we are so proud of you!
Congrats to the Coalers on Team State.
 Love, Mom, Devon and Ava

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Congratulations Coalers on the first ever Team state Title.
 Congrats **Jacob Piatak** on your individual 6th place finish.
 What an ending!
 Vince, Gina and Jason Joey

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Congratulations Wrestlers and Coaches on an amazing and most memorable season.
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Congratulations Coal City Wrestlers!
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Congratulations Aidan Kenney and all the Coal City Wrestlers on your State Championship.
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Congratulations Braiden and all the Coal City wrestlers and coaches on your State Championship.
 Love, Gramps & Grandma Hamilton

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ATTENTION COALER FANS
 Look in next week's paper for ordering the 2023 State Championship Coal City poster. Only pre-orders will be taken to save on the cost of shipping. Size will be 16x24 printed on quality cover stock. More details coming

USF spring dean's list

The University of St. Francis (USF) congratulates the following students who have been named to the dean's list for the spring 2022 semester. Students who have attained a grade point average of 3.5 or higher at the end of a semester in which they have taken at least twelve credit

hours. Local students include Rylee Glagola and Avery Hannig, of Coal City; Abigail Lab, of Elwood; Julia Santiago, of Gardner and Madison Gorges, Cameron Holman, Benjamin Kreitz and Dylan Spangler, all of Wilmington.

The importance of the sea turtle and what we can do to help them

Dear EarthTalk: How are populations of sea turtles faring these days?
-- A.J., Los Angeles, CA

Swimming alongside a sea turtle in coastal waters is certainly a thrilling sensation, but the experience is becoming increasingly harder to come by.

Declines in sea turtle populations around the world and in U.S. waters over recent decades is a sad reminder of all the environmental offenses that contribute to making the world's oceans less hospitable to these majestic, iconic reptiles.

Researchers estimate that since the dawn of the Industrial Age in the early 20th century, global sea turtle populations have decreased

EARTH TALK

Questions & Answers About Our Environment

by as much as two-thirds overall.

These days only about 6.5 million sea turtles roam the world's subtropical and tropical coastlines. Indeed, sea turtle populations are on the ropes:

Three out of the world's seven sea turtle species are considered "critically endangered" by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN); green sea turtle numbers have fallen by some 90 percent while Leatherbacks have lost 40 percent of their population.

Strict conservation measures are needed if we are to save these species outright. But why even care about the turtles? They might seem like any other sea creature, but they are actually vital to maintaining a balanced environment.

Turtles graze on seagrass meadows to regulate their growth and prevent them from suffocating. Unhatched eggs are also a vital source of nutrients to sand dunes, which allow vegetation to grow. So, if our turtle populations become too low, it will cause a chain reaction within the whole shoreline ecosystem.

Unfortunately, populations of sea turtles face myriad threats. For starters, sea turtles often mistake plastic bags for jellyfish, one of their favorite delicacies.



SINCE THE DAWN of the Industrial Age, global sea turtle populations have decreased by 2/3, with only 6.5 million sea turtles left today.

But this plastic can get stuck in the turtle's stomach, imitating their sensation of being full which causes them to not eat any actual food.

Researchers estimate some 52 percent of turtles have eaten some type of plastic.

With sea level rises, many beaches and even smaller barrier islands are disappearing. Turtles therefore become confused as to where to lay their eggs, potentially making it so that they don't lay any.

In addition, as reptiles, the gender of their hatchlings relies on temperature. Higher equals females, and lower equals males.

With global warming, beaches are warming up, drastically altering the male/female balance. This could potentially affect the breeding success of turtles, and contribute to the decline as well.

The federal Endangered Species Act already protects turtles by making it illegal to harm them in any way, and

provides resources to combat endangerment.

Environmentalists have also created new programs like the State of the World's Sea Turtles and the IUCN Turtle Specialist group which examine risk factors, data and potential conservation efforts.

Additionally, many volunteers come together during nesting and hatching season to protect and guide turtles.

And their efforts have not gone to waste; Leatherback turtle nests in and around U.S. waters are up from 27 in 1989 to 614 in 2014 thanks to protections enacted under the Endangered Species Act.

In addition, 3,960 nests have been counted on the Georgia Coast, a record for the state. By continuing to fund conservation efforts and with the help of volunteers, sea turtles can continue to thrive in the wild.

EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.

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Law would phase out subminimum wage for Illinois tipped workers

BY KEVIN BESSLER
THE CENTER SQUARE

In an effort to attract workers to the restaurant and bar business, some Illinois lawmakers are proposing hiking the wages of tipped staff.

Legislation has been filed that would phase in a full minimum wage for service workers in addition to their tips. At least a dozen other states are considering eliminating subminimum wages. Under federal law, some workers can be paid less than the minimum wage, such as tipped workers, students and disabled workers. Illinois' minimum wage is \$13 an hour. The state's subminimum is \$7.80 an hour for workers who get tips.

"When it comes down to it, to live on \$7.80 an hour is just not doable, it's not sustainable and frankly, its exploitative," said State Sen. Christine Pacione-Zayas, D-Chicago, the sponsor of Senate Bill 293.

The group advocating for the pay raise, One Fair Wage, says more than one in seven

Illinois workers have left the industry since last year, and over one third of workers who remain in the Illinois restaurant industry are considering leaving their job.

State Rep. Mike Coffey, R-Springfield, who owns a restaurant in Springfield, said the gratuity system that's in place has always worked just fine. If a tipped employee doesn't make a full minimum wage, the employer makes up the difference.

"They've got a system that works, they need to leave it alone," Coffey said. "They've got to quit going after and try-

ing to find out new ways to tax people and new regulations to hamper business."

Some are concerned that the higher wages will eventually affect menu prices. There is also a conversation about the effects on service if a worker isn't relying on tips.

"Just because you are now making what is technically defined as a livable wage doesn't mean that automatically makes you a jerk in terms of how you approach your job," Pacione-Zayas told The Center Square.

Today, 43 states use subminimum wages.

Veterans assistance available in Grundy County

The Edward Hines Jr. VA Medical Center Outreach Team and the Grundy County Veterans Assistance Commission, will make an outreach visit at the Morris American Legion, 212 W. Washington St., from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Monday, March 6.

The outreach team can assist veterans with U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, along with veteran's benefits available from other agencies. This event is free and open to all veterans.

If a veteran is interested in enrollment in the VA Health Care System, bring a copy of their DD214 and a government issued photo ID. One may be eligible for VA health care benefits if they served in the active military, naval, or air service and didn't receive a dishonorable discharge.

Those who enlisted after Sept. 7, 1980, or entered active duty after Oct. 16, 1981, must have served 24 continuous months or the full period for which you were called to active duty. There are other conditions under which you might be eligible, attending these outreach events will allow you to discuss your situation with the enrollment coordinator directly.

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Gather electronics, string lights for recycling

Will County's free electronics drop-off event will be held Thursday, March 9, from 5-7 p.m. at the Wilmington City Hall parking lot, 1165 S. Water St.

Holiday string lights that are no longer working may be dropped off for recycling. This is for string lights only, no stand alone LEDs, CFLs or other fluorescent lights.

Participants are reminded to remain in their vehicles at all times, show ID by holding it to the window for staff to see and then allow staff to remove items without assistance from each vehicle.

Items accepted include: Televisions (limit 2), monitors, printers, computers (desktops, laptops, notebooks, tablets),

electronic keyboards, fax machines, videocassette recorders, portable digital music players, DVD players, DVD recorders, video game consoles, small scale servers, scanners, electronic mice, digital converter boxes, cable receivers, satellite receivers, cell phones, computer cable, portable digital assistants (PDAs) and zip drives.

Electronic items contain materials that can be recycled countless times while other materials in items are considered hazardous.

The recycling takes place in Wilmington the second Thursday of each month. An ID showing Will County residency may be required.

Impending Medicaid changes could leave hundreds of thousands uninsured

BY PETER HANCOCK
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD—As many as 700,000 Illinoisans may lose Medicaid coverage in the months following March 31, but the Department of Healthcare and Family Services says it is working to reduce that number and help those affected find health insurance elsewhere.

Medicaid is a health insurance program for poor and disabled people that is jointly funded by the federal government and the states.

Congress passed a spending bill in December that puts a March 31 end to a pandemic-era rule that paid states that kept Medicaid patients continuously enrolled in the program through the end of the public health emergency.

Those individuals did not have to go through the normal process of reapplying every 12 months to determine whether they were eligible, even if there were changes in their income or household that would normally make them ineligible.

The change in law means many who have been receiving continuous coverage will have to reapply for benefits, potentially leading to loss of coverage if the individual would no longer qualify for benefits or if they fail to complete a reapplication.

Nationwide, the federal government estimates that 15 million people, or 17.4% of Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program enrollees, will lose their coverage as a result of the change. That would translate to roughly 700,000 people in Illinois, but DHFS officials believe they

can mitigate the impact to "roughly 384,000" individuals through outreach efforts.

The department also noted that those individuals will be subject to redetermination over a staggered timeline over the next 12 months, not all at once when the program ends.

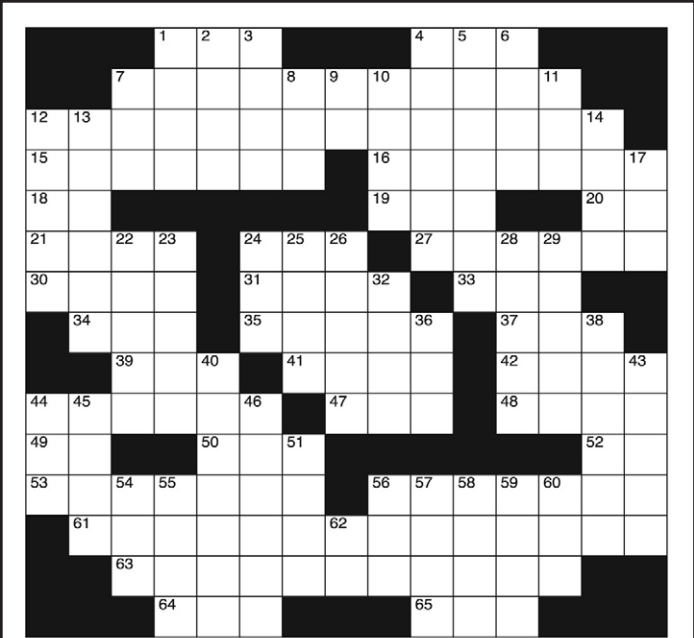
"The truth is, nobody knows for sure. What we do know is that we are committed to ensuring everyone who is eligible maintains their coverage, and that those who are not are given information about alternative coverage," DHFS spokesperson Jamie Munks said in an email.

To avoid losing coverage, DHFS strongly urges Medicaid enrollees to fill out their renewal forms as soon as possible. The agency will resume regular verifications starting in late April, and people with a

June renewal date will be the first to go through the restart process. Those people will need to submit their renewal forms before June 1 so they can maintain coverage.

Customers can complete their renewal by phone, although online is the preferred method. She also said it is important for enrollees to update their contact information with the Medicaid program.

Munks said people who are found to be ineligible may still have other options for low-cost insurance, including individual plans sold through the Affordable Care Act marketplace, Get Covered Illinois. People who meet certain income guidelines can receive tax credits to pay all or part of their premiums.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Relaxing place
- 4. Plant by scattering
- 7. A type of explorer
- 12. Unique traits
- 15. Lady
- 16. Dismayed
- 18. Railway
- 19. Type of whale
- 20. Sodium
- 21. Manning and Lilly are two
- 24. Where golfers begin
- 27. Entrapped
- 30. Influential punk artist
- 31. Hebrew calendar month
- 33. Car mechanics group
- 34. Undesirable rodent
- 35. Minneapolis suburb
- 37. Witch
- 39. Get free of
- 41. A written proposal or reminder
- 42. British School
- 44. Country on west coast of Africa
- 47. Cool!
- 48. Information
- 49. _ route
- 50. Jim Nantz's network
- 52. Something to register (abbr.)
- 53. Give cards incorrectly
- 56. One who's learning on the job
- 61. Stevenson adventure novel
- 63. Taking careful notice
- 64. CNN's founder
- 65. Speak badly of

CLUES DOWN

- 1. A person with unusual powers of foresight
- 2. Single sheet of glass
- 3. Portrays a character
- 4. Expresses happiness
- 5. Acquires
- 6. "The Martian" author
- 7. Degree
- 8. 60-minute intervals
- 9. A detective's pal
- 10. Group of nations (abbr.)
- 11. Popular Georgia rockers
- 12. Fencing swords
- 13. Basement
- 14. Samoan monetary unit
- 17. Male parent
- 22. Finnish lake
- 23. A smooth fabric
- 24. Arctic explorers (abbr.)
- 25. Mild yellow Dutch cheese
- 26. Very willing
- 28. Expressed pleasure
- 29. Lasso
- 32. Hindu model of ideal man
- 36. Move your head in approval
- 38. Ill-_: gained illegally
- 40. Die
- 43. Accused publicly
- 44. Precious stone
- 45. Individual thing or person
- 46. Behaved in a way that degraded
- 51. Derogatory term
- 54. No seats available
- 55. Liability
- 56. Popular beverage
- 57. Tough outer skin of fruit
- 58. _ Spumante (Italian wine)
- 59. Troubles
- 60. Negative
- 62. Camper

Pritzker launches children's behavioral health initiative

BY PETER HANCOCK
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD - Citing what he called a nationwide crisis in children's mental health, Gov. JB Pritzker on Feb. 24 unveiled a sweeping plan to overhaul and expand the availability of children's behavioral health services in Illinois.

"Long before COVID-19 turned our world upside down, our nation was facing a mental health crisis," Pritzker said at an event at the West40 Regional Safe School in the west Chicago suburb of Maywood. "Nearly one in five children experienced a mental health disorder, from depression to anxiety to ADHD. But only 20% of them received the behavioral health care that they needed."

In March of last year, Pritzker launched what was called the Children's Behavioral Health Transformation Initiative, a project that involved six state agencies and other outside

entities that deal with children's mental health. Its task was to build a coordinated, interagency approach to ensuring young people with significant behavioral health needs receive the community and residential services they need.

The results of that effort were released in a recent report that examined data from multiple state agencies to assess the need for services, determine which populations are most affected by the crisis and come up with a plan for coordinating state resources to meet those needs.

"It's a blueprint for transformation of the behavioral health system for Illinois' youth," Pritzker said. "This is an unprecedented interagency effort that will provide more and better treatment and save lives."

Although a recent study by Mental Health America found Illinois ranks 13th-best overall on a set of factors related to youth mental health

care, the Transformation Initiative analysis found that 40 percent of young people in Illinois who experienced major depressive episodes were unable to receive mental health care.

Youth in care of the Department of Children and Family Services who need inpatient residential treatment for their condition are disproportionately Black, the report found. As well, the report found a quarter of all the beds at residential treatment facilities are unavailable due to understaffing.

It also found that the state has a fragmented system of delivering mental and behavioral health services, with different state agencies providing services under different standards and often paying different reimbursement rates for similar services.

"Multiple state agencies operate programs that provide services to support children's behavioral health, but there is minimal systematic coordination and no holistic, developmentally informed approach to meeting youth needs," the report stated. "With no central point of entry to help families navigate, children and families must access services differently across agencies, meet agency-specific eligibility requirements, and maintain access to services with minimal supports."

To address that issue, Pritzker said, the Transformation Initiative developed and pilot tested a new online portal where people seeking assistance for youth could connect with the services they need. He described it as "a kind of a front door for stakeholders seeking assistance for youth with the greatest needs."

As of Jan. 30, after only a few months of operation, Pritzker said, 41% of the cases that came through that portal had already been connected with interventions, place-

ments and services.

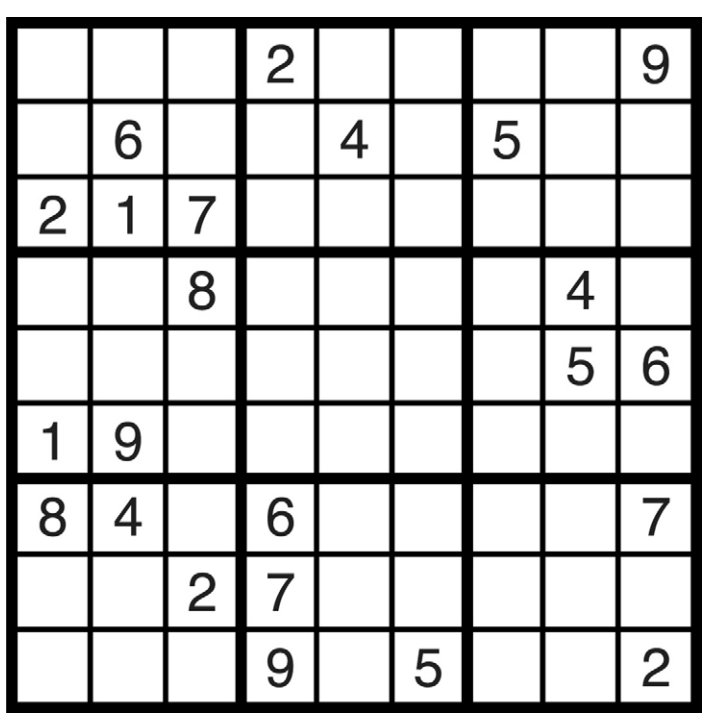
"So with a successful pilot underway and under our belt, we are now going to build out this more robust care portal for children and families seeking behavioral health services," he said. "And we're adding to it a hotline for assistance and specialized guidance for those beginning the process of accessing care."

The Transformation Initiative report also spells several other recommendations for improving services. Those include standardizing reimbursement rates for services so providers are compensated consistently; offering universal screening in schools and health care settings for behavioral health problems so they are detected early; and expanding eligibility for current programs and developing new service types.

"Our ability to provide the behavioral health support that we desperately need for our kids and adults hinges on growing our behavioral healthcare workforce. We have to do it," state Representative Lindsey LaPointe, D-Chicago, a former social worker, said during the event.

As part of his budget proposal released last week, Pritzker asked for \$22.8 million to begin to fund and implement the Transformation Initiative's recommendations.

Also on Friday, Pritzker signed an executive order establishing a new office of Children's Behavioral Health Transformation Initiative Chief to lead the interagency effort to implement that plan. At the event in Maywood, he announced that Dana Weiner, a child welfare expert at the University of Chicago's Chapin Hall who chaired the Transformation Initiative, would fill that role.



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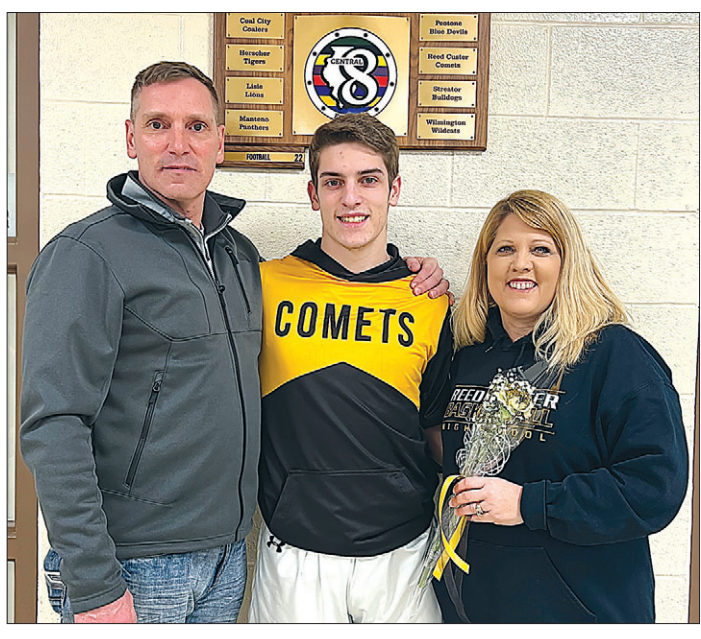
Comet seniors, parents recognized



JACOB MCPHERSON, a basketball senior, is the son of Chris and Beth McPherson. After graduation, he will attend the University of Wisconsin - Whitewater to study business and play baseball. His favorite memory is beating Jace and Wes in 8 spot shooting every time.



SENIOR LUCAS FOOTE is the son of Josh and Sara Foote. In the fall, Lucas will attend the University of Wisconsin - Platteville to play football and work on a degree in engineering. His favorite memory is watching Cooper dominate Jace in practice every day. Lucas will miss having the chance to play basketball with his friends daily.



REED-CUSTER SENIOR Drew Anderson, son of Janine Jones and Matthew Anderson, was recently honored during Senior Night for the basketball Comets. In the fall, he plans on attending JJC and becoming an electrician. His favorite memory was the energy in the locker room after beating Streator. Drew will miss the 11-man break at the beginning of every practice.



SENIOR JOSHUA BOHAC, son of Josh Sr. and Felicia Bohac, will head off to college to continue playing one of his favorite sports, football. Josh's favorite memory was the entirety of his sophomore year. He will greatly miss the opportunity to play basketball every day with his friends.



SENIOR JACE CHRISTIAN was escorted by his parents Scott and Lynn Christian during the Reed-Custer basketball senior night. Jace plans on attending the University of Wisconsin—Platteville to pursue a degree in engineering. His favorite memory was being around everybody during the season and making memories with his entire team.



WESLEY SHATS, a Comet senior, is the son of Nicole Shats and Wes Shats. In the fall, Wes will attend a four-year university to pursue a degree in engineering. His favorite memory was his freshman year as a whole and hanging with brother John before practice and games. Wes will miss the team and playing his favorite sport.



CONNOR EGGLESTON is escorted by his parents Jessica and Todd Eggleston during basketball senior night. After Connor graduates from Reed-Custer he plans on joining the trades and becoming an engineer. One of his favorite memories was the game where everyone was following behind Wes before it started and Cooper fell into someone in the stands. Connor will miss sitting on the bench during games and doing all of the little things the team did together when something big happened on the court.



SENIOR VICTORIA LOOMIS, a Comet cheerleader, is the daughter of Christy Robert and Matthew Loomis, escorted along with her step-father, Brandon. After graduation she plans on attending Lewis University to study pre-medicine and biology. Tori's favorite memories are making it to state her junior year and placing in the top 5 every competition this season.

Senior Lady Comets honored during final home game



REED-CUSTER SENIORS who were honored along with their parents during Senior Night during the last home game of the regular season are (from left) Samantha Sprimont, Caelan Cole, Brooklyn Harding, Laci Newbrough and Addison Harms.

Photo by Zadia Sims

Golf outing to support childhood cancer research

Megan's Mission Foundation will host its annual golf outing to continue Megan Bugg's mission of ending childhood cancer. The Megan Bugg Memorial Golf Outing is scheduled for Saturday, July 22 at The Creek in Morris with a shotgun start at 9 a.m.

All proceeds from the event will go to further the work taking place at the Megan Bugg Global Rhabdomyosarcoma Research Laboratory at Children's Cancer Therapy Development Institute [CC-TDI].

The foundation recently donated \$100,000 to continue supporting two promising childhood cancer research projects that Megan founded at CC-TDI, according to Kent Bugg, Megan's father and foundation president.

The cost to play a round of golf in honor of Megan is \$500 per foursome—\$125 per golfer— and includes 18 holes of golf and lunch.

Non-golfers who would like to support Megan's Mission can do so by signing on as sponsor—various levels are available—or participating in the post golf lunch that will include raffles, silent auction and a presentation about Megan's Mission.

To register for the outing, inquire about sponsorships or make a donation text 815-210-6394 or e-mail debbugg@gmail.com.

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Courtesy photo

ACCEPTING A CHECK for \$500 are members of the boys and girls basketball teams at Reed-Custer High School. From left are Coach Mark Porter, Jacob McPherson, Lucas Foote, Laci Newbrough, Caelan Cole, Brooklyn Harding, Coach Shelby Zwolinski and Christine Mendez, Marketing & Sales Director of Grundy Bank.

JV Lady Panthers play for regional title

The Reed-Custer Middle School 7th grade volleyball team advanced to the regional championship after beating Saratoga on Monday, 25-14, 28-26.

"They played a phenomenal game and came out on top to advance to the championship," coach Lauren Cunningham said.

They were to battle Peru last night (Tuesday) for the regional championship.

The JV Lady Panthers won the opening round of regionals against Spring Valley Kennedy, 25-14 and 25-13.

They finished the regular season with a loss to GSW. Despite their loss, Sophie Moyers had four aces. Madelynn Marschner had one assists, one kill and one ace. Peyton Landgraf had three aces and three digs. Kadance VanDyne had three aces and one dig and Emberly Schumacher had one ace.

It pays to "shoot for 3's" thanks to Grundy Bank

The Reed-Custer Comets benefited from Grundy Bank's \$3 for 3-Pointer program this past basketball season. For each 3-pointer made by either the boys' or girls' varsity teams, \$3 was donated by Grundy Bank.

"We are very happy to partner with Grundy Bank during our basketball season," said Chuck Anderson, Director of Athletics at Reed Custer

High School.

"They sponsored each 3-point made basket at the boys and girls regular season home games. We plan to use the money towards equipment and supplies within the boys' and girls' basketball programs. Reed-Custer High School athletics would like to thank Grundy Bank for their generosity and look forward to working with them in

the future."

The girls' varsity team made 20 3-point shots and the boys' varsity team made 97 3-point shots for a total of 117 3-pointers and a grand total of \$351 for the school. Grundy Bank generously donated \$500 to the Reed-Custer High School Athletic Department for this program.

"We believe that having a partner-

ship with our local high schools and students is important. Grundy Bank was excited to offer this program to the Reed Custer Comets boys' and girls' varsity basketball teams. We applaud all players and hope they had a terrific season," said Christine Mendez, Marketing & Sales Director of Grundy Bank.

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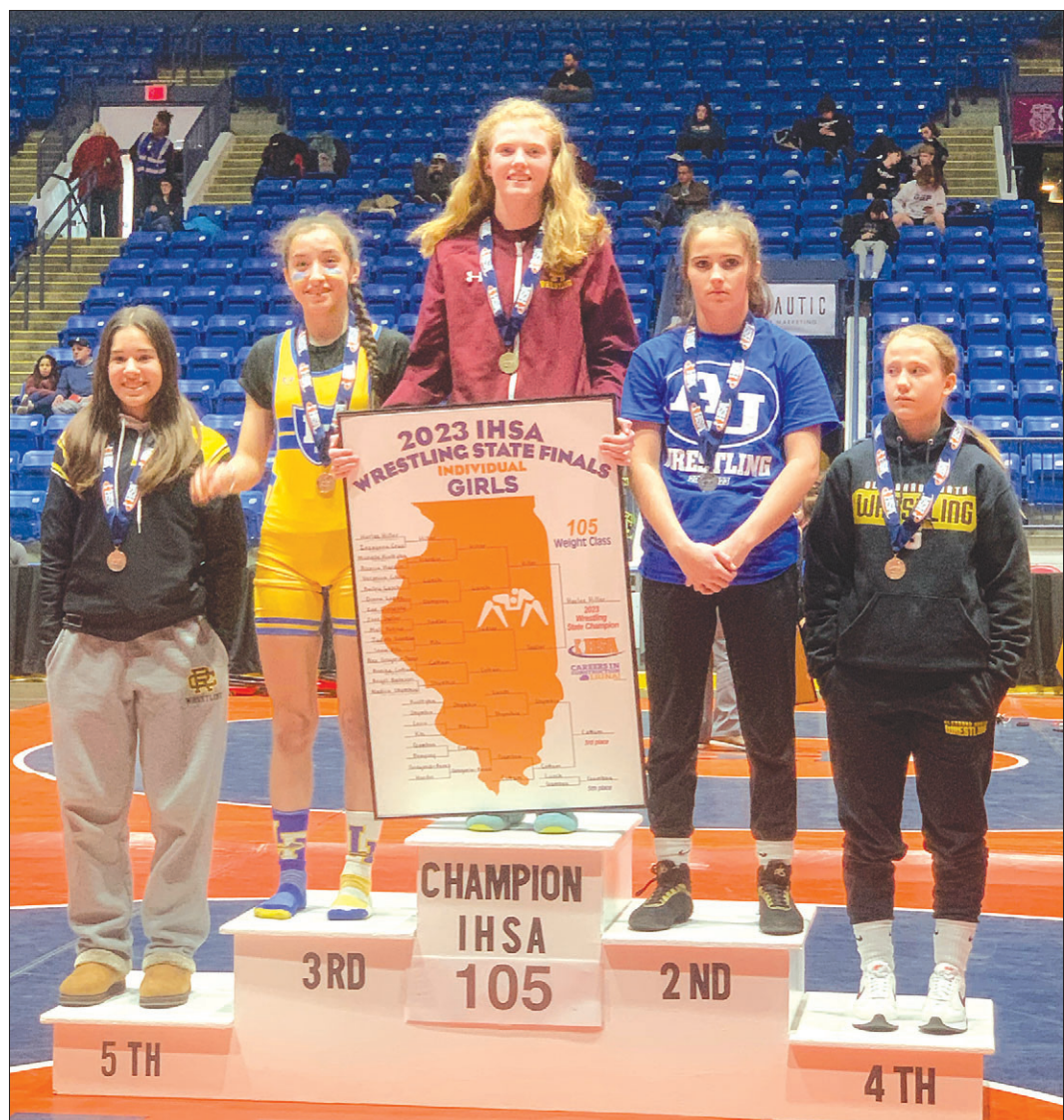
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Gamboia makes RCHS history



Courtesy photo

REED-CUSTER JUNIOR Judith Gamboa (left) traveled to Grossinger Arena in Bloomington, IL on Friday and Saturday, to compete in the IHSA Girls State Tournament. She started off slow, losing her first match, but then battled all the way back to 5th place! Last year, Judith made history being Reed-Custer's first IHSA Girls State Qualifier and now she is the first girls' placer in school history. Hard work pays off. Go Comets!

Lady Panthers drop two just before regional

The Reed-Custer 8th grade volleyball team lost to MVK, 25-18, 22-25, and 21-25. Taylor Bova had nine kills, four aces, and one dig. Alyssa Wollenzien had three kills, two digs, four aces, and one block.

Mackenzie Foote had six aces, three digs, and four kills. Kirstin Klein seven aces and one dig. Reese Brown had four aces. Gracie Robinson had three kills. Regionals are next

Saturday.

They also lost to GSW, 8-25 and 23-25. Alyssa Wollenzien had six kills. Mackenzie Foote had two kills and two aces. Reese Brown had four assists and one dig. Kirstin Klein had two aces and two assists. Taylor Bova had one kill. Kayla Schott and Molly Jarchow each had one dig. Emily Garabedian had one ace.