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Mayor

between the people who sit on the board and the citizens,” Beard said. “There’s no back and forth, it’s the same... all the time. That’s why I think we need to bring more technology into City Hall. We need to get this stuff on the web so there’s access, so everybody can see what’s going on in the city.”

Earley said his experience as a local leader puts him in a good position to take the reins from day one.

“I’d really like to be a mayor who can lead, and not be led,” Earley said. “I would take control of the board meetings, I would not sit off to the side. I have experience as

the park district president to show that I am committed to the city, what’s best for the city, for the park district, and for the community. I won’t be led around, I will work with the board, but we’re going to bring true transparency as fast as we can to the city.”

Asked about their top three goals for the next four years, each of the candidates

Money said he wanted to continue to encourage new businesses while keeping Braidwood’s small town feel, by making sure any big businesses stay closer to the interstate where they can generate tax revenue without impeding on downtown. Money’s other goals include utilizing an internship program, and keeping crime low.

Beard said his top goals are increased communication

from the City Council to the public prior to voting at meetings to establish working relationships with the public, transparency via a better city website among other ways, and promoting business growth.

Earley said his goals are to increase the city’s transparency and professionalism among city leaders and with the public, infrastructure improvements at the city’s water plant, and staying out of the real estate business, meaning he’d back away from any business deals that would involve the city purchasing land to be donated.

Asked what makes them most qualified to hold the position of mayor, each of the candidates offered their own perspective on what the duties of the position actually entail.

Money said the mayor’s job is to understand the business of running the municipality.

“Any town or city is a corporation,” Money said. “It’s just like any other corporation except this is a legal municipal corporation. The mayor is the CEO... The finance commissioner is responsible for finances, the streets commissioner is responsible for streets. The CEO, the mayor, is in charge of everything. They are the overseer of all those things.”

Beard said the duties of the mayor involve strong leadership.

“There are no real qualifications to be the mayor of Braidwood, I’ve seen the past few people who have been elected mayor and I don’t see where they are any more qual-

ified that I am,” Beard said, adding that as a project manager, he understands the position of overseeing the business of the town.

“Being the mayor is managing the budget, managing by overseeing all the departments... it’s being a leader and working with the people and working with the commissioners, and I just believe I can do all of that,” Beard continued.

Earley said his experience in public office means he’s prepared for the duties of being the chief executive of the city.

“I feel like I would be one of the better candidates for mayor due to the fact that I have the experience being on the park district [board] for 20 years,” Earley said, adding that the mayor’s job is to be fiscally

responsible, to act as the chief financial officer and chief executive officer of the city, and to overall do what’s best for the city.

The Meet the Candidates forum was hosted by the administrators of the Braidwood Politics and News Facebook page. Video from the forum can be viewed on that page.

Editor’s note—Because not all the candidates for the remaining contested seats were present at the forum, the Braidwood Journal opted to only feature the mayoral candidates in the spirit of fairness. All candidates have been provided with a candidate questionnaire. The results of those questionnaires will be printed in the March 29, 2023 edition of the Braidwood Journal.

Council

“Storino, Ramello & Durkin is a law firm that handles a lot of municipal matters, they are being hired by the police department specifically for labor and employment issues, generally related to collective bargaining and negotiations,” Wellner said. “They are a very qualified firm, my firm recommended them, they work with a lot of municipalities that we work with as well, and their rate is the exact same rate as we charge the city.”

The city will pay the firm \$215

per hour. While there is no retainer required within the ordinance, the firm reserved the right to request one if necessary.

The council approved the measure 3-1 with Smith voting no. Finance Commissioner Doug Money was not present at the meeting.

In other business before the full council on Feb. 28:

- As he prepares to leave his post, Commissioner Smith said he remains frustrated at how the past four years have panned out, particularly with regard to the budget in the streets department.

“I haven’t gotten anything accomplished this four years, because I couldn’t,” Smith said. “I

don’t know where my money went, like that \$150,000 that came out of the budget and it was going to go back in the water [department], it never came back and I don’t know where it went. But, that’s beside the point... I didn’t get it and I had to do without it in my budget.”

Smith has argued over the past two years that \$150,000 was removed from his budget in 2021, with the promise to pay it back with the next budget. But, he said, that promise was never kept.

“Don’t tell me something and not do it,” Smith said, adding that the finances have sullied his final term as streets commissioner.

- The council approved an ordi-

nance to authorize the city of Braidwood to enter into and for the Mayor of Braidwood to execute an agreement between the City of Braidwood, Azavar Audit Solutions, and Commonwealth Edison Company. City officials said after Azavar entered into an agreement with the city to audit ComEd’s collection and remittance of municipal utility taxes for electric service, some missing payments were discovered from 2017, which will now be paid.

“We’ll be getting approximately an extra \$18,000 from uncollected utility debts,” city administrator Tony Altiery said.

ComEd is currently engaged in audit processes with other Illinois

communities.

- Public Health and Safety Commissioner James Mikel said that the city was beginning the process for hiring two new police officers. The department is losing two officers, one to retirement and another who is moving on for personal reasons, Mikel said.

Mikel noted that in the second half of February, the Braidwood Police Department responded to 190 service calls, resulting in three arrests.

- The council approved the payroll in the amount of \$88,360.

- The council approved the payment of bills in the amount of \$234,041.

Garbage

Waste Management’s contract, which had already been extended for one year, ran out. City leaders said Waste Management’s new bid came in higher than Environmental, hence the switch.

“Like I was talking to you before Mr. Smith, if you’d like to come to my office I can explain what the difference is, is that... if we had stayed with Waste Management it would be \$3.80 more on your water bill,” Altiery said. “So, instead of it going up that \$3.80 a month, you’re not paying that and you received a yard waste can that’s \$4 a month [with Waste Management], so in essence you’re saving \$7.80 a month. It’s not going down, but it’s not going to go up that amount.”

Smith also said the new cans from Environmental don’t stand up properly, and that residents are having to pull them out of their ditches

because they blow over. Altiery said that is not a problem he’s seen or been made aware of.

“They’re the exact same cans [as the Waste Management cans] with different names. They’re the same cans, the same everything, just different people picking them up,” Altiery said.

Smith also questioned the bidding process.

Altiery said the city got four separate bids on the garage collection contract, but Smith said the process was not explained well, nor was the city transparent about it.

Altiery said that the bids have been available at City Hall for anyone to look at, but has noted before that the bid packets are hundreds of pages long, and therefore the city didn’t see the usefulness of uploading the entire bid packets online, since the city went with the lowest bidder.

The new contract runs through December of 2025.

The monthly price of the new service will be \$23.20 for

2023, \$23.12 for 2024, and \$24.04 for 2025.

The service includes one spring clean up date and one fall clean up date.

The pickup also includes one free bulk item per household per month, with a \$35 charge for each oversized item after that.

A quarterly electronic waste collection will also be offered, at a cost of \$35 per television set, and no charge for other electronics.

Altiery said the switch will save the city as much as \$100,000 over the life of the contract, versus Waste Management.

“That bill did not go up \$3.80 a month, so that’s your savings,” Altiery said. “I’m happy anytime you’d like to show you the bids. Or anytime anyone in the public has questions about it, there are two ways you can do it. If you want to call City Hall there’s a lot of people who FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) stuff, I’d be happy to sit down and explain how the numbers are. It’s in

writing, I can’t turn it around like some people have said. But, I’d be happy to explain it if anybody would like to come in and see the bids. If you come in and look at them, you can sit down and we’ll explain them to you. If you’d like paper copies of them, that’s where you have to file a FOIA.”

Altiery went on to say that coming in and viewing documents is a service available to any resident, for any contract, ordinance, resolution, or other measure passed by the City Council.

“Any part of anything, the car dealerships, the garbage, anything you would like to come and sit down and have a discussion about, I’m here every day of the week,” Altiery said. “Call in, make an appointment, and I can show you in writing. Once it’s in writing you can’t change it, it’s there, so I would be happy to do it with anybody who would like to, especially you Mr. Smith.”

Reed-Custer High School seniors of the week

BY MACKENZIE ROMINES
RCHS STUDENT REPORTER

Each week the Braidwood Journal features members from the Reed-Custer High School class of 2023. Featured this week are Brandon Moorman and Gabby Fitzwater who completed our questionnaire.

Brandon Moorman

What do you plan to pursue upon graduation? I plan on joining the local laborers union.

What is something most do not know about you? I like drawing

What’s an everyday activity you could win an Olympic medal at? Eating

Favorite thing on the school menu? Mini corn dogs

What is one thing you refuse to eat? Sloppy Jones

A sport or club that made an impact on you and why? Football, the bond our team built and the way we brought the community together was



BRANDON MOORMAN

nice to see.

If you could travel anywhere, where would you go? Canada.

What class would you create? Nap time class.

Famous Person (dead or alive) you would like to meet? Jelly Roll, he is a pop country artist who lives a cool and fun life

Teacher shoutout? Shoutout to Officer Reed

Advice you would give to underclassmen? Don’t take the time you have for granted, and



GABBY FITZWATER

do all the activities you can.

Gabby Fitzwater

What do you plan to pursue upon graduation? I plan to study nursing, and go into pediatric oncology

What is something most do not know about you? I put meaningful moments that I don’t want to forget in my notes on my phone

What’s an every day activity you could win an Olympic medal at? Talking

Favorite thing on the school menu? Biscuits and

gravy
What is one thing you refuse to eat? Tomatoes

A sport or club that made an impact on you and why? FCCLA, because Mrs. Arseneau always pushes you to be your best self

If you could travel anywhere, where would you go? Bora Bora

What class would you create? A class that would help you for when you become an adult (taxes, jobs, housing)

Famous person (dead or alive) you would like to meet? Queen Elizabeth because she was such an amazing role model and I loved her outfits

Teacher Shoutout? Mrs. Arseneau

Advice you would give to underclassmen? Take time for yourself. Don’t overcrowd your schedule because you still need time to be a kid!

PERSONAL INJURY

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Correction

In the March 8 edition of the Braidwood Journal, Reed-Custer School Board candidate John Guistat was misquoted as stating that he has a child who is currently enrolled in preschool with the school district. Guistat said that his child was in preschool, not a current preschool student as written.

This newspaper tries to be fair and accurate in its reporting. When errors do occur, we appreciate the opportunity to correct them.

Award Winner

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher
Marney Simon, editor

Schoolmaster Thomas Walsh and Grove School in Braidwood

Bad behavior in schools is certainly nothing new. So in a town like Braidwood, that already had a reputation for being "rough," it is no wonder that there were discipline problems.



TIME WAS....
Sandy Vasko

Since Braidwood sprang into being almost overnight, there were no one-room school houses, but larger ones to accommodate the rising population of miners. There was one person who seemed to be able to control the students though.

Thomas Walsh first comes into view in during the mining strike in September of 1874. We read, "Our public schools are running with a full attendance. We are to have an evening school under direction of Mr. Walsh, principal of the Grove School."

While the above statement doesn't seem that controversial, it was. There were very few small towns that held a night school. All good children should be in bed by then. Braidwood, however, was different. Many children worked

in the mines during the day. The only time they had to attend school was in the evening.

There were also adults who wanted to learn the language of their new country. Walsh was the first one to recognize that fact.

He must also have been radical in other ways, because we read six months later, in March of 1875, "A school meeting was held at the Grove schoolhouse on Saturday last for the purpose of ascertaining the sentiments of the people in regard to retaining Mr. Walsh as school principal. It is said that the vote cast shows a majority of some 200 in favor of retaining him."

Since he won by such a large majority, we can only assume that it was the school board that was unhappy with him, not the parents or students.

What kind of a man was Thomas Walsh? We know very little of him except a few bare bone facts. He was born in Ireland, married a New York lady and came to Illinois sometime after 1870. By 1880 he was

living in Braidwood and had five children.

We also know that he was a tee-totaler. He was the founding President of the Catholic Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society, which he helped to form in Braidwood in 1875.

His students must have liked him a lot, because the outgoing class of 1875 presented him with a gold pen as thanks for all he had done for them.

He also must have been a man who was interested in the world, as every month we read of speakers at the Grove School, ranging all the way from Mormon Joseph Smith to temperance meetings.

This however was not liked by some. We read on February 21, 1879, "We hear a number of complaints in regard to the manner in which the Grove School is being conducted."

Nothing was apparently done about it because we hear no more about him until June of 1879 when we read this is the Wilmington Advocate, "Teachers' Pay Roll - School teachers in district No. 2 receive monthly pay as follows: Thos.



A PHOTO OF Grades 2 and 3 at Grove School in 1896.

Walsh, principal, \$70 (about \$2,260 today); Miss Rose Riley, \$33 (about \$1,070); Miss Mary Pettigrew, \$33; Miss Mary McGee, \$35 (about \$1,130); Miss Alice Brophy, \$32 (about \$1,032); Miss Rose Hawkins, \$32."

From that entry on, we hear no more about Principal Walsh. Whether he was fired or simply quit, by the following year, he had erected a building on Main Street and we read of Business Man Walsh.

He lived on the top floor and rented out the ground and second floor to merchants. We

read, "James Bambrick will occupy the Walsh building (now LeCaron's drug store) so soon as it is vacated, putting in a big stock of boots and shoes. Probably the first of July will see the change effected."

And in 1886 we read, "H. C. Goodrich is to put his grocery stock into the Tom Walsh building early in December."

As for Grove School, it was the largest in the district and had more miners' children than schools closer to the business district. It also meant it was the roughest. After Walsh left it became even rougher. We

read in June of 1882, "Peter Burt and Alex Howatt, nice young bloods, for disturbing the Grove school were fined \$3 (\$94) and costs, each, on June 21st."

It was so rough that the principal, Miss Eddie Coddington took off for Kansas City the following month, to return the following year as principal of Eureka School. Her place was taken by Miss Etta Bardwell who came from Eureka School.

But it was no use, a woman principal just could not keep discipline at the Grove and finally in 1885 we read of another change, "Coal City - Jos. MacElmail left on Sunday to take the principalship of the Grove School, Braidwood."

We read no more of problems at the school. In the 1900 census we find Thomas Walsh living in Chicago with his wife and two children.

No occupation is listed for him, but in the column marked "Attending School" there is a check mark after his name. Whether he was attending school or teaching school we do not know.

Passion drives teachers behind RCHS music programs

BY MACKENZIE ROMINES
RCHS STUDENT REPORTER

The National Association for Music Education has marked March as "Music In Our Schools Month". The celebration of this month is meant to inspire appreciation for the art of music within students, and to support music education programs.

Reed-Custer music teachers Addie Dennis and Kevin Mangan, as well as theater director James Reinbacher all expressed their deep love for music, as well as what they believe it can inspire within their students. When asked about what had made them decide to pursue music as a career, both Dennis and Mangan stated that they had grown up with amazing teachers that lent them the guidance they needed.

"I was lucky enough to just have some really good music teachers that I felt like made a big difference, and it was the thing that I always felt like I fit in, and they always had a special place. So I think having those leaders that kind of showed me the way made me want to follow in their footsteps," Mangan commented.

Dennis agreed, relaying her story of finding her love for music young. She said that even in kindergarten she could always understand music,

largely due to her general music teacher. When Dennis was in fifth grade, her teacher told her that she should try to do band and choir, and she happily agreed, emphasizing how much the teacher had influenced her not only as a student but also in her future.

Dennis and Mangan said they always knew they wanted to be teachers, however the both of them were at first unsure if they wanted to teach music or English. Again, they stated it was the influence from their music teachers that made the difference.

Dennis said that her Junior year in high school a new band director took over, and much like the general music teacher from elementary school, her new director greatly inspired and influenced her, and made her sure of her choice in music education, eventually becoming a band director herself.

Mangan said that in junior high and high school he had played violin, but after discouraging words from a private instructor, he was not sure if he could go to college to teach orchestra as he had originally hoped. However, after his choir director told him he should pursue singing, he began taking private voice lessons, and is now the director of Reed-Custer's choir.

When asked how they feel



Photo by Zandie Sims

STRIKE UP THE BAND! The Reed-Custer Marching Band features brass, woodwinds, percussion and color guard sections that all come together in song.

about the music program, Dennis said "I feel like at Reed-Custer we have this little music utopia". She is grateful for the support the program receives from administration and teachers, as well as parents and kids. Mangan said "we have the best setup we could possibly ask for, so I feel like it's about trying to just get better and better".

However, no matter how good a program could be, love and inspiration for the work being done is still a necessity to a thriving musical environment. Reinbacher said that, "if you're passionate about what you're doing, then your pas-

sion should rub off on the students that you're influencing."

He said that when he went to school, his favorite classes were band, choir, and French, because it was clear that the teachers cared deeply for what they were doing. He said that "passion breeds passion, so if you care about it your kids are going to care about it".

Expanding on what Reinbacher had said, Mangan stated that he tries to make sure that he always cares about what he is trying to teach to his students. He said delves deep into every piece selected, believing that he needs to have a connection to a selection if

he wants his students to connect to the music as well.

Dennis said that these carefully chosen selections are something that makes teaching and learning music unique. "We don't read the same books every year, we don't do the same math problems. Yes, the concepts are the same, but its always fresh because we get to choose new music, and what fits these kids and their personalities."

"There is no linear path to your future," Reinbacher said. "Don't become a teacher because you think it's easy, become a teacher because

you're passionate about it." While he is passionate about the things that he does, he does not feel as though that same love could translate into a classroom. While he may not directly be involved in education himself, the connection he has to theater is clear to everyone around him. He has inspired a love for acting and music in countless kids, even if he does not teach in a traditional sense.

Mangan really appreciates all the diversity among the lives of his students, and that it's great to feel as though they can all come to class at an equal footing. He said that he thinks there are very few places that can say the same about uplifting students in such a way, and that music is really special in that sense. Dennis said that she also really appreciates that music is something her students can do for the rest of their lives, no matter where or how far they decide to pursue it.

The three of them ended the interview by stressing the importance of music in everything. At every event, all across the world, everything contains music and artistry within it. They do not expect everyone to pursue music for the rest of their lives, but they hope to have every student see the importance it plays within life.

RCHS

The cast members say they are grateful for the support the directors provide.

"James is really inspiring, he's always there for us and even through he does push us to our limits sometimes, he does it because he cares and believes in us," said Ava Van Duyn, who takes on the role of narrator in this production.

The show opens with Van Duyn seated at center stage surrounded by young children for story hour inside their local library.

The concept of setting the show inside a library is a bit different that most and it plays to the idea of telling a story.

Reinbacher said, it also creates a central space where, "the beauty of the story is in the story and not what's around them."

Stephen Menard, a senior at Illinois State University, helped bring the concept to life as the show's scenic artist.

Maria Bragg, a junior, who plays the Baker's Wife, says this show is all about the story being told.

"It's funny, but serious at the same time, it balances itself perfectly," she said.

Bragg first took the stage as a fifth grader, appearing as a member of the children's choir in "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat." From that performance she was hooked on theatre and has been cast in every show since.

Being a part of theatre, she said, is fun and it's taught her to come out of her shell.

"I'm really not a social person in any way shape or form. But once you are on stage you learn to become a

leader and push yourself toward being successful."

"Theater isn't just going up there saying some lines and singing, you get to turn into someone else and I find that interesting. You get to study how someone else is and be able to understand and have your own motives of why you are taking the actions that are in the script," Bragg said.

Both Bragg and Van Duyn say they have made wonderful friends through the process of putting a musical together, "we're a family," Bragg said.

A member of that theatre family is Jamon Spikings, who is taking on the role of the Baker in this production.

It's a challenging role for the Reed-Custer senior, who said his character is overwhelmed by his life—dealing with both his wife and father and the road blocks they face.

To understand his character, Spikings, he did some research.

He has been a part of the theatre department since middle school and his current role as the Baker is among the best he's played. Portraying Professor Callahan in the school's 2021 production of "Legally Blonde" is at the top of the list also.

"Into the Woods" opens at 7 p.m. on Friday, March 17 in the Reed-Custer High School Auditorium. Additional shows are Saturday, March 18 at 7 p.m. and 2 p.m., on Sunday, March 19. Admission is free and tickets can be obtained at the door, however those who would like to select a seat in advance can do so by logging on to vancoevents.com.

Bragg encourages the community to join her and her castmates in the theatre for one or more performances



HUNTED BY THE wolf [Mark Martinez], Little Red Riding Hoods [Olivia Allen] heads off to grandmother's house in Reed-Custer Theatre Department's production of "Into the Woods."

this weekend.

"Every live performance of a show is different...no two shows are the same," she said, noting the cast, crew and orchestra have worked hard on developing the story.

Rounding out the cast of "Into the Woods," are: Olivia Allen, junior, Little Red Riding Hood; Victoria Loomis, senior, Witch; Paige Holland, senior, Rapunzel; Olivia Williams, junior, Cinderella; Zack Randall, junior, Jack, and Jaina Dubbert, senior, Jack's Mother.

Also, Tristan Randall, freshman, Rapunzel's Prince; Mark Martine, freshman, Chindrella's Prince and Wolf; Gibson Waldvogel, senior, Mysterious Man; Alice Gruber, sophonore, Cinderella's Step-Mother; Reese Damaschke, junior, Lucinda; Jady Stephens, freshman, Florinda; Dakota Wilkins, jun-

ior, Cinderella's Mother; Eden Przybyski, senior, Granny and Giant; Joey Ulrich, senior Cinderella's Father, and Colton Waldvogel, freshman, Steward.

The cast is supported by a 17 member orchestra directed by Dennis. Student members are: Tyler Wiyngier, senior, flute/piccolo; Kaitlyn Faurout, Makayla Wilkins and Jenna Bragg, seniors, clarinet; Emma O'Neill, sophomore, trumpet; Jack Krall, sophomore, and Julia Janopoulos, senior, horns; Gabby Davies, senior, euphonium; Micah Crisp, junior, bass, and Danny Kuban, senior, and Landon Edwards, junior, percussion.

"The show is fun and has good heartfelt moments, everyone should come and see what we've been working hard on. They will very much enjoy it," Spikings said.

**Godley Park District
to hold hearing
on budget ordinance**

PUBLIC NOTICE
(Change of April Monthly Meeting Date)
The Tentative Amended Combined Budget & Appropriation Ordinance for the Godley Park District for the fiscal year beginning May 1, 2022 and ending on April 30, 2023, has been placed on file for public inspection for the period of 30 days beginning on March 14, 2023.

Said Ordinance may be inspected at the Godley Park District Administration Office Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

A Public Hearing concerning the Tentative Amended Combined Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the Godley Park District for the fiscal year beginning May 1, 2022 and ending on April 30, 2023, will be held at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, April 12, 2023, at the Park District Community Center, 500 South Kankakee Street, Godley, Illinois, 815-458-6129.

Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, March 15, 2023.

Notice of Sheriff's Sale of 265 E. 1st Street

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WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

M&T Bank
Plaintiff,
vs.
William S. Allen; et. al.
Defendant.
No. 22 FC 1024

NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE
Public notice is hereby given that pursuant to a judgment entered in the above cause on the 15th day of February, 2023, MIKE KELLEY, Sheriff of Will County, Illinois, will on Thursday, the 6th day of April, 2023, commencing at 12:00 o'clock noon, at the Will County Courthouse Annex, 57 N. Ottawa Street, Room 201, Joliet, IL 60432, sell at public auction to the highest and best bidder or bidders the following-described real estate: **THAT PART OF THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED TRACT LYING WEST OF THE WEST LINE OF THE LAND CONVEYED BY DOCUMENT NO R87-8414 AND LYING EAST OF THE EAST LINE OF THE LAND CONVEYED BY DOCUMENT NOS. R77-32088 AND R84-8808; SAID TRACT DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: THAT PART OF LOTS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 AND 7 IN THE CHICAGO, WILMINGTON AND VERMILION COAL COMPANY'S RESUBDIVISION OF LOTS 6 AND 7, IN BLOCK 15, IN THE CHICAGO AND WILMINGTON COAL COMPANY'S SUBDIVISION OF THE SOUTH HALF OF SECTION 8, TOWNSHIP 32 NORTH, RANGE 9 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT OF SAID RESUBDIVISION RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 4 (PART 1), PAGE 24 DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS, TO WIT: COMMENCING AT A POINT ON THE NORTH LINE OF SAID LOT 1, 56 FEET WEST OF THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID LOT 1; THENCE SOUTH PARALLEL TO THE EAST LINE OF SAID LOT 1 TO THE NORTHERLY LINE OF KERN STREET; THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY ALONG SAID NORTHERLY LINE OF KERN STREET TO A POINT ON SAID NORTHERLY LINE OF KERN STREET, THAT IS 36 FEET SOUTHEASTERLY OF SAID SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SAID LOT 1, THENCE NORTHEASTERLY TO A POINT ON THE EAST LINE OF SAID LOT 6, 282 FEET SOUTH OF THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID LOT 6; CONTINUING THENCE NORTHEASTERLY ON THE SAME LINE, 26.4 FEET TO A POINT THAT IS 279.8 FEET TO A POINT ON THE NORTH LINE OF SAID LOT 7, 23.4 FEET EAST OF THE NORTHWEST CORNER THEREOF; THENCE WEST 502.2 FEET ON THE SOUTH LINE OF FIRST STREET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, EXCEPTING THEREFROM COAL AND OTHER MINERALS BENEATH THE SURFACE THEREOF AN ALSO EXCEPTING ALL MINING RIGHTS PERTAINING THERETO, IN WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS.**

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Description of Improvements: Residential
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Terms of Sale: ten percent (10%) at the time of sale and the balance within twenty-four (24) hours. No judicial sale fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by a mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. All payments shall be made in cash or certified funds payable to the Sheriff of Will County.

In the event the property is a condominium, in accordance with 735 ILCS 5/15-1507(c)(1)(H-1) and (H-2), 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(5), and 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1), you are hereby notified that the purchaser of the unit, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and legal fees required by subdivisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Illinois Condominium Property Act.

Pursuant to Local Court Rule 11.03 (J) if there is a surplus following application of the proceeds of sale, then the plaintiff shall send written notice pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512(d) to all parties to the proceeding advising them of the amount of the surplus and that the surplus will be held until a party obtains a court order for its distribution or, in the absence of an order, until the surplus is forfeited to the State.

FOR INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:
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15W030 N. Frontage Road Suite 100
Burr Ridge, Illinois 60527
P: 630-794-5300
F: 630-794-9090
Plaintiff's Attorney
MIKE KELLEY
Sheriff of Will County
Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, March 15, 22 and 29, 2023.

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Worse than before

BRAIDWOOD—As a 50-year resident of Braidwood I can honestly say that this is the most vicious local election that our community has ever seen. So many people thought the 2019 election was bad but this one is 10% worse. It is extremely sad to say that our beautiful community is heavily divided by small town political warfare right now. I think we all can't wait for April 4th to come and go so we can pull up the hundreds of campaign signs and move on with our lives.

Retraining

SHADOW LAKES—The Woke left has banned Zip a Dee Doo Dah as a Racist song. If you hear anyone singing this report them to your local Democrat HQ for retraining. Eddie

Bring back Sammy

Memo to the Cubs. Bring Sammy Sosa back to Wrigley Field. Retiring #21. 545 homers, enough said. Thank you.

Rest of the story

BRAIDWOOD—Last week's Sound-Off regarding the City of Braidwood wanting to annex the Braidwood Recreation Club only told half of the story. Consider the following: At present the club pays absolutely nothing to the city in real estate taxes simply because it is not within city limits. But if it was, there would be substantial taxes to pay. I can only guess at what the value of a golf course and pro shop are worth in tax revenue to the city. Add to that a beautiful beach, beach house, campgrounds, etc., all located on hundreds of acres of prime real estate and you can quickly see that the city would stand to make a small fortune at the expense of the club. In fact, the only way the club could meet that burden would be by greatly increasing membership dues. Additionally, the club would be subject to Braidwood zoning and building ordinances and regulations. Braidwood city officials would actually be able to dictate what, if any structures are built and how and where they are built. Nothing could be

done on club property without the approval of the city through its appointed officials and special committees/boards. The Braidwood Recreation Club has been doing just fine for more than 70 years without the interference of the city of Braidwood. I want to keep it that way. And to the present Braidwood Recreation Club board who had the good sense to reject the idea, thank you for doing what is in the best interests of the Club and its members.

Spewing false info

BRAIDWOOD—The Braidwood community is in a state of utter embarrassment right now. All of the political candidates and their supporters are spewing false information from every direction. You can tell this is going to be a close election because the mud being thrown is caked in spurs for added leverage. Don't believe everything you read, but then again no matter what you read chances are it will contain some sort of falsities.

The right direction

BRAIDWOOD—There's something to be said about the fact that residents who have had a negative experience, certainly none like Kim E, are choosing to stay in our city. There's something to be said about the fact that houses that pop into the market aren't available for long. There's something to be said about the fact that rooftops are going up at an amazing rate. More has happened in Braidwood, for the good in the last four years than perhaps in the last two decades. The bank statements don't lie. The new equipment purchased on grant money speaks for itself. The countless "We Support Our Police" signs within yards and windows speaks volumes, and, in my opinion, the city just has a different feel from times past. A step in any other direction than forward would be disappointing and a disservice to prosperity. I hope others feel Kim's passion and follow suit of seeing Braidwood for what it has become and what it truly can be with right people at the helm.



Coal City Area Club

COAL CITY—I have belonged to the Coal City Area Club for years. This year we got socked with a substantial raise our senior dues. We had no notice the dues were going to be raised for us. You would think that something this important would be made known so we could voice an opinion. What are we getting for this raise? Absolutely nothing. As a senior member I cannot hunt, have a dock or pontoons or a fishing boat. I can't take my 10 foot jon boat out to fish in. They say there are a little over 500 senior members, and I don't think our dues raise is going to make a difference in money received for repairs. Are you trying to get us seniors to turn in our membership? If

you need more income for repairs, consider adding another 50 or 100 members. Our club isn't crowded. You assume we hardly use the club, but we do enjoy it. Add some more members. You won't even know we are there.

Just spend less

SHADOW LAKES—Biden wants to raise the taxes on corporations \$8 billion. This is how it works. You tax business more, they raise the price of the things they sell to make up for the new taxes. We get more inflation that the middle class pays for. Simple. Biden will blame Maga white supremacists. That makes no sense. How about just spending less money?

Eddie

Commentary

A budget hawk fighting for fiscal sanity

BY JOHN HENDRICKSON

The national debt is at \$31 trillion and rising. The Congressional Budget Office has recently estimated that the Fiscal Year 2023 deficit could hit \$1.4 trillion. The economy is still struggling with high inflation, which is a direct result of reckless and out-of-control spending.

Under President Joe Biden, the national debt has increased over \$3.7 trillion. Since assuming office, President Biden has increased spending by over \$10 trillion.

Both political parties can share the blame for the national debt and the broken budget process.

Nevertheless, U.S. Sen. Mike Braun (R-IN) is one of a select few policymakers who is trying to seriously address the debt crisis. Braun is a rare budget hawk in Congress and his efforts to address both the national debt and rein in spending should be seriously considered.

Progressives and liberals have embraced the radical Modern Monetary Theory, which states that since the fed-

eral government has the ability to print money it does not have to worry about deficits or debt. This theory argues that the federal government can have a "blank check" to continue to spend without any consequences.

As an example, having the United States Mint produce a platinum coin that would be "worth" \$1 trillion.

Modern Monetary Theory repeals the laws of economics and fiscal sanity. It also ignores the numerous examples from history that demonstrate what happens to nations when they simply just print money.

This is why Braun has introduced a measure that would condemn Modern Monetary Theory.

It is this reckless philosophy that has led to record high inflation. Consumers across the nation continue to not only pay more at the grocery store, but inflation is destroying their earnings and purchasing power. Families and businesses are forced every day to make difficult decisions about their budgets.

This is why Sen. Braun has introduced the Fight Inflation Act through Balanced Budgets Act of 2023 and the Make Rules Matter Act. For too long, Congress has not only side-stepped fiscal responsibility, but through institutional rules, is able to waive budget rules in order to increase spending.

Braun is attempting to correct this by making it more difficult to waive budget rules.

Sen. Braun is also calling for the federal budget to be balanced and has proposed a plan to meet this objective. The Braun Budget plan would place a cap on total spending and would balance the budget over a 10-year period and save taxpayers \$4.5 trillion. The Braun Budget proposal would also require much needed transparency and force Congress to review government programs.

A large portion of the federal budget is on auto-pilot and this not only increases spending, but allows wasteful and unnecessary programs to continue.

Sen. Braun's proposal is also respectful of Social Security and Medicare, and it would extend the life of both trust funds. It would also make the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act permanent, which when passed

Illinois drivers would get \$50 fine for lap dogs with new legislation

BY KEVIN BESSLER
THE CENTER SQUARE

Legislation advancing at the Illinois statehouse would get motorists in hot water for letting their pet ride on the driver's lap.

House Bill 2910 provides that a person who holds an animal in the person's lap while operating a motor vehicle is guilty of a petty offense. The bill's sponsor, state Rep. Jawaharial Williams, D-Chicago, said pets aren't covered under distracted driving laws.

"The new law would allow police officers to pull

you over if they see that you are driving with an animal in your lap, whatever the animal may be," Williams said.

Williams cited a AAA survey that showed that 31% of drivers with pets said they have been distracted by their pets while driving, and 20% of drivers who have admitted to driving with the pet on their lap have been involved in accidents.

Offenders would be subject to a \$50 fine. The measure moved out of the transportation committee and is headed to the House floor.

Illinois Bankers Association says Illinois banks insulated from collapse in other states

BY GREG BISHOP
THE CENTER SQUARE

With two major banks collapsing in other states, the Illinois Bankers Association is reassuring Illinoisans they are secured, and not by taxpayers.

Silicon Valley Bank in California and New York Signature Bank were both taken over by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation over the week-end. President Joe Biden announced Monday the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation took the banks over and management there will be fired.

And while depositors will be secured through FDIC, bank investors won't.

"They knowingly took a risk and when the risk didn't pay off, investors lose their money," Biden said. "That's how capitalism works."

Illinois Bankers Association Vice President of Government Relations Ben Jackson reiterated Biden's insistence that taxpayers are not impacted by the FDIC support of depositors.

"The funds there to back-

stop Americans' deposits are funded by banks so banks pay quarterly assessments based on a very specific formula," Jackson told The Center Square.

He doesn't expect there to be a cascade.

"These were banks that generally had clients that were in areas that pose some risks such as startups, cryptocurrencies, that type of thing, and they had situations where depositors pulled out and the banks didn't necessarily have the liquidity," Jackson said.

Illinois banks and thrifts are strong, Jackson insisted, and they are insulated from bank failures in other states. Anyone with concerns should reach out to their bankers, he said.

"A banker wants their customer to feel secure that their deposits are going to be insured and that they're going to be available when they need them," Jackson said.

Jackson said the reforms that were put in place since the housing and banking crisis 15 years ago have helped insulate banks from when other banks may collapse.

Commentary

Campaign contributions a concern ahead of high-profile cases

BY GREG BISHOP
THE CENTER SQUARE

Attention on judicial integrity has been raised with the focus on \$2 million in campaign contributions Gov. J.B. Pritzker made to two Illinois Supreme Court justice candidates who won in November. The court hears cases next week. In one high-profile case, Pritzker is a top defendant.

Pritzker downplayed his \$1 million donation to each of two then-supreme court candidates who are now on the bench of seven. He gave half a million from each of his political campaign and his revocable trust to Supreme Court candidates Mary O'Brien and Elizabeth Rochford. That's despite the governor signing into law last year limiting contributions to such campaigns to \$500,000 from single indi-

viduals.

"If you're suggesting that the fact that I gave money to let's say the Democratic Party or the committees that supported candidates means that everybody who's received any money has to recuse themselves from anything to do with the state of Illinois, that's ridiculous," Pritzker said at an unrelated event in Springfield. "And I've certainly never asked anybody to vote a certain way or decide on a case a certain way. I would never do that. I never have and I never will."

Pritzker said the justices are independent jurists.

Yesterday the high court was to hear the appeal of a Kankakee County court's ruling that the no-cash bail provision of the SAFE-T Act is unconstitutional. In May, justices hear oral arguments in the gun-ban challenge from Macon County where Pritzker is a lead defendant.

In talking about ethics, state Rep. Blaine Whillhour, R-Beecher City, raised a red flag.

"It's important to point out that that kind of stuff is inappropriate, he did circumvent the rules basically by doing that, giving from different entities," Whillhour said. "The governor should lead by example in those kinds of things."

State Rep. Ryan Spain, R-Peoria, said campaign spending is growing, but there are other issues of fairness like the judicial redistricting Democrats approved in 2021.

"Let's remember, 600,000 voters said we need to change how we deliver redistricting in the state of Illinois, [former Illinois Supreme Court Justice] Tom Kilbride was the deciding vote to squelch the wishes of those voters," Spain said.

Kilbride lost retention

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Mobile food pantry to visit Kuzma Cottage

Catholic Charities of Joliet will be hosting Mobile Food Pantry at Kuzma Care Cottage on Monday, March 20, at 635 S. Main St., Wilmington from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

When you arrive, please line up in the St. Rose Church parking lot by entering on the Main Street side. (Please do not arrive before 9 a.m.) All Mobile Food Pantries will use a "drive thru" method to dis-

tribute food.

Please clear space in your trunk or backseat so volunteers can load boxes of food directly into your vehicle. Food is free to neighbors in need; no ID, proof of address or income is required. Everyone is welcome.

Food is distributed on a first-come, first served basis, while supplies last.

Wheeler Ave. bridge over I-80 closing

The Illinois Department of Transportation announced that a project to replace the bridge carrying Wheeler Avenue over Interstate 80, in Joliet, will require a full closure of Wheeler Avenue, between Woods and Park avenues beginning March 20 through early November.

The project is part of advance work leading to the \$1.2 billion reconstruction of I-80 through Will County.

A posted detour will direct motorists to Meadow Avenue, Larkin Avenue (Illinois 7) and Jefferson Street (U.S. 52). Motorists should also expect occasional overnight lane closures on I-80 at the bridge during that time.

The \$5.7 million project will replace the existing bridge with a new structure that will accommodate the widening of I-80 under the bridge, new

storm sewers and ADA-compliant sidewalk ramps will also be installed. The project is anticipated to be completed in December.

The overall I-80 project will redesign and rebuild 16 miles from Ridge Road, in Minooka, to U.S. 30, in Joliet and New Lenox, while adding or extending auxiliary lanes to improve safety and reduce congestion.

Interchanges will be rebuilt or improved at Interstate 55, Illinois 7, Center Street, Chicago Street, Richards Street and Briggs Street, with a new flyover ramp linking southbound I-55 to eastbound I-80 to improve traffic flow and safety. More than 30 bridges will be rehabilitated or replaced, including those over the Des Plaines River.

The cocktail that made tequila popular

I am a big fan of classic rock, and the social media advertising algorithm knows this very well. I regularly receive updates in my news feed when my favorite bands release new music, or go on tour.

I was happy to see the Eagles Hotel California tour is still going strong into 2023. If you are a fan of the iconic Hotel California album, you're in luck as the band performs the album in its entirety at every show as part of this tour.

How "iconic" is Hotel California? Well, the December 1976 release is one of the best-selling albums of all time with certified sales of over 26 million copies in the US and over 32 million copies worldwide.

In addition to performing the Hotel California album from start to finish the band will also play a "greatest hits" set on this tour. The band has been touring and recording in various forms off and on for over 50 years, let's toast the country/rock pioneers with the classic Tequila Sunrise.

I had always assumed that the Tequila Sunrise cocktail was named after Tequila Sunrise the song. Though the cocktail and song were popular in the early 1970s, it is actually the song that is named after the cocktail.

The late Glenn Frey and Don Henley wrote the song together, and Glenn Frey almost nixed the title because he felt that the drink was too popular and the title would be too cliché. Henley insisted that they keep the title and told Frey to look at it from the point

of view of someone watching the sunrise after drinking tequila all night.

The title stuck and the song became one of the band's signature songs. It is safe to assume that the Henley and Frey were fans of the Tequila Sunrise as California was ground zero for the Tequila Sunrise craze of the early 1970s.

The drink originated in northern California at the Trident, a bar in Sausalito. Young bartenders Bobby Lozoff and Billy Rice created the cocktail in late 1971 or early 1972 while working at the Trident.

One evening in 1972, legendary Bay Area promoter Bill Graham rented the Trident for a private party to kick off the Rolling Stones North American tour.

Mick Jagger fell in love with the Tequila Sunrise at the party and spent the entire tour drinking Tequila Sunrise cocktails with his entourage.

In 2023, we take our selection of quality tequila for granted. In 1972 tequila was difficult to find on US store shelves, and when you did find it Jose Cuervo was more than likely your only option. Large scale imports of premium 100% agave tequila was still years away in 1972.

The Tequila Sunrise is responsible for giving tequila the boost that it needed, and



THE SUNDAY COCKTAIL
Brian Rung

the folks at Jose Cuervo seized the moment and began to print the recipe for the Tequila Sunrise on every bottle of their tequila shipped to the US. The song was so popular in the spring of 1973 that everyone wanted to make their very own Tequila Sunrise.

The recipe was simple, the ingredients were easy to obtain, and anyone with ice and a glass could make one.

Start with a tall, ice-filled glass. Pour in tequila, top with orange juice, slowly pour in grenadine. Wait a few seconds for the grenadine to settle to the bottom, and do not stir the drink. The red grenadine at the bottom will remain separated from the drink creating a "sunrise" effect in the glass. If you stir the drink it will become a reddish-orange drink that will taste great, but will not have the trademark sunrise.

The drink was likely made with Jose Cuervo Gold tequila in the early days, but higher quality 100% agave tequilas are your best bet both for presentation and taste.

Start with a blanco (white) or plata (silver) tequila. The blanco tequilas tend to be drier and leave very little aftertaste and are better suited for mixing. A good 100% agave blanco or plata tequila will set you back about \$20 depending on state and local taxes.

Pour your tequila over ice and top with a quality orange

juice, most commercial bars use Minute Maid juice for mixing. The ratio of orange juice to tequila is 2 to 1, so you will want to use a quality orange juice.

The best grenadine for a tequila sunrise is the brightest, reddest grenadine that you can get your hands on. Even though Rose's Grenadine is more of a red dyed cherry syrup, it works remarkably well in a Tequila Sunrise due to the bright red color.

Monin makes a wonderful grenadine, Sonoma Syrup Company turns out quality grenadine as well. However, these newer craft cocktail grenadines are made from real pomegranate which makes them a bit dull in color.

Rose's was the only grenadine available in most markets back in 1972, so it is safe to assume that the Tequila Sunrise was created using Rose's.

Pour yourself a Tequila Sunrise and spin (or stream) your favorite Eagles album, be sure to catch the show when it comes to your town.

The Tequila Sunrise is built and served in a Collins (tall) glass.

Fill a tall glass with ice, then add:

- 1.5 oz. tequila
- 3 oz orange juice

Slowly pour 1/2 oz. grenadine into the middle of the glass, allow grenadine to sink to the bottom to form the "sunrise" effect.

Until next week, enjoy responsibly.

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Chicago fastest growing city in U.S. for auto thefts

BY GLENN MINNIS
THE CENTER SQUARE

The city of Chicago easily outpaced the rest of the country as the fastest growing city for auto thefts in 2022 with larcenies rising by 55%.

With such acts of vandalism on the rise across the country as part of an ongoing pandemic-fueled outbreak, a new National Insurance Crime Bureau (NCIB) annual study found Illinois had the largest percentage increase among larger states at 35%.

"Over one million vehicles were stolen nationwide in 2022," NCIB president and CEO David Glawe told The Center Square. "States that saw the largest increase in vehicle thefts were Illinois, Washington and New York. There is little deterrence with vehicle thefts treated as property crimes. Organized gangs and juveniles steal vehicles and use them to facilitate other crimes. To stop this lawless behavior, we must re-invest in our law enforcement partners, support community engagement and policing programs and implement successful early interven-

tion programs for at-risk youth."

Just last week the Braidwood Police reported a carjacking at a gas station at Illinois 113 and I-55. The suspect drove off on northbound I-55 with police in pursuit. They backed off to later find stolen vehicle driven to southeast Chicago. The suspect ran off, leaving the vehicle behind where it was recovered and brought back to Braidwood.

Across the country, thefts were up 7%, pushing the number of stolen vehicles over 1 million for the first time in more than 15 years. Overall, including carjackings, Chicago had 21,516 reported auto thefts over the year, up by nearly 8,000 from 13,856 the previous year.

As part of its campaign to stem the tide, the Chicago Police Department over the past several months has instituted an expanded vehicular hijacking task force. Through February, there were 232 reported carjackings across the city this year, a 23% decline over the same period in 2022.

At the same time, overall motor vehicle thefts are sharply up over the first two-plus months of this year, with 5,375 reports of stolen vehicles through March 5, a 138% increase, according to Chicago

Police Department crime statistics.

"Vehicle crime is certainly still a major issue across the nation and while there are many reasons for this, NICB data does not point to one specific reason," staffers at the Des Plaines-based organization added. "We know that criminals steal vehicles to commit other crimes, sometimes vehicles end up in chop shops, get shipped overseas, or cross the border into Mexico."

Glawe added at least part of the epidemic can be traced to supply chain issues that have made used cars more valuable and the job of upkeep for them more costly. Over the last 36 months alone, catalytic converter thefts have jumped by 1,200% and a recent study by online auto search site iSeeCars details that in Illinois, the average price of a used car now tops \$35,000.

In January, the CPD began hosting vehicle safety events where they passed out steering wheel locks for Kia and Hyundai vehicles as part of a plan aimed at making it easier to identify catalytic converters, which makes them harder to resell.

Illinois bill would require personal finance class

BY GLENN MINNIS
THE CENTER SQUARE

State Senator Kimberly Lightford is pushing a bill that would require all high school students to take a semester-long personal finance course before graduating.

Senate Bill 1266 strives to make sure students learn about managing money before earning a high school diploma, with the course covering everything from banking, to bill payment, to investing, to managing credit and paying for college.

The bill would affect the freshman class of the 2024 to 2025 school year, with those students required to take the course as a junior or senior before receiving their diploma.

The proposed bill comes on the heels of a new Wirepoints report that outlines how Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) data shows not a single student at no less than 53 schools across the state can do math at grade level. The numbers are nearly just as bleak in reading, where the report looked at 30 schools with at least 22 of them being part of the Chicago Public Schools sys-

tem.

Overall, researchers found that only 1 out of 10 kids or fewer can do math at grade level in 930 schools.

Wirepoints President Ted Dabrowski, who co-authored the website's schools report, isn't sure how much difference Lightford's proposal will make, even if it becomes law.

"Every kid should learn about finances and how to manage their financial future, but the first priority for Illinois leaders should be to assure that kids can read and do math and today that's not happening," he told The Center Square. "Instead of adding another mandate for this they should mandate that schools massively elevate the percentage of kids who can read and do math in Illinois schools."

Despite Wirepoints' findings, many of the schools where some students are struggling the most were rated "commendable" by ISBE.

SB 1266 is now awaiting a hearing in the Senate Education Committee.

Turn lights off March 25

Earth Hour is planned for Saturday, March 25 from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

This one-hour event is designed to increase awareness of energy use. To participate, all you need to do is turn off your lights from 8:30 to 9:30 pm on March 25.

This event is celebrated around the world with many iconic buildings turning off lights. It also serves to make the night sky easier to view, with its many stars. Some birds use the stars to navigate and "light pollution" has

proven to interfere with their migration patterns.

If you use outside lighting, be sure it focuses on pavements and not up to the sky. All of us can use lights that are highly efficient and less disturbing to our natural world.

2023 fishing licenses on sale now

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is reminding hunters and anglers that fishing, hunting and combination licenses for the 2023 season are on sale both online and bait and tackle stores.

These licenses are good until March 31, 2024.

Rummage sale in Braceville

A rummage sale will be held Friday, March 24 and Saturday March 25, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. at Braceville United Methodist Church, 106 W. Gould St., Braceville. No food. Funds will be used for Christmas Angels.

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Photo by Eric Fisher

SIGNATURE RETINA CONSULTANTS has open in the former U.S. Bank building in Braidwood. Dr. Sumit Bhatia and staff members Nichole Olson (left) and Cherie Watts (right) have been busy setting up the new medical offices. They stand in the reception area after entering the building.

Signature Retina Consultants opens in Braidwood

BY ERIC FISHER
PUBLISHER

A world-class retina specialist is feeling right at home with a recent move to Braidwood.

Dr. Sumit Bhatia opened new offices on Main Street in the former U.S. Bank building. In three short months and still a work in progress, the feeling of moving to a small town with regional appeal has settled in.

"We love the small town feel. It just feels so cozy and everybody has been kind and knows each other," Bhatia said.

Like the other day when a delivery for his office went to a wrong address. "The guy who got it actually came by and dropped it off for us. You don't get that kind of hospitality in every town."

Bhatia is a board-certified ophthalmologist and retina surgeon who has been in private practice since 2007 and comes with a wealth of experience having done over 33,000 in-office and operating room based surgical procedures.

He's is a native of Illinois having grown up in Peoria. He received his undergraduate education from the University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign. He earned his Doctor of Medicine from the University of Chicago in 2001. Following a one year internship at MacNeal Hospital in Berwyn, IL, he completed his ophthalmology residency at the University of Chicago in 2005. He then obtained his Retina Medical and Surgical fellowship at the esteemed Boston University Medical Center in Boston, MA.

Dr. Bhatia has 15 years of experience in the treatment of surgical and medical diseases such as age related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, retinal vein occlusion, retinal tears and detachments, vitreous hemorrhages, epiretinal membrane and macular holes.

He helped patients in Bloomington, Peoria, Decatur, Danville, Springfield, Peru, Champaign and Galesburg before opening his own practice here.

He lives in Bloomington with his wife and two children so his commute is a little more than one hour.

"I drove up here, drove around and found a couple of properties that were available. I worked with a realtor who mentioned a bank branch that had been closed and was immediately available. After looking over the town and surrounding communities I felt it could work."

The first month was spent renovating the building. The indestructible bank vault and bullet-proof drive-up window are still there, but the rest of building has been converted into a spacious waiting room, reception area, four patient rooms with state-of-the-art laser and optical equipment, break room and new restrooms.

"It was a long month, we were always here while this place was being worked on. We were going to Casey's like two times a day. So we've got to know all the staff. We've gotten to know the people at Rosati's Pizza, eating there sometimes two, three times a week," joked Bhatia. "But you know that small town feel just really welcomes you and lets you know that everybody is really happy to have you in town."

As a retina specialist his patients are mostly by referral. He does not perform cataract surgery, nor general eye exams or dispense glasses, instead specializing on treating eye diseases.

"I wanted to focus on, at that time, diseases where

there were no great cures. I wanted to be at the forefront of diseases you could barely treat or not treat at all. So now, in the 15 years I've been in practice, we have treatments for wet macular degeneration and we can help people initially improve their vision and then maintain it for years. Normally with that disease you'd lose your vision in about four months.

"So it's nice to be able to say to people 'we can do something for you, prolong your vision' when in their parents' generation that wasn't an option," Dr. Bhatia said.

He noted that just in the last few weeks a new drug has become available that can prolong vision for dry macular degeneration. Before, there was little more than vitamins to offer.

"There have been some amazing advances for retina diseases. On one hand there are diseases which you don't have necessarily the ability to regain perfect eyesight. But we can help people maintain and even improve it somewhat. You can keep it going much longer than the natural disease."

Bhatia said it's rewarding knowing he can do more for his patients today than he could 15 years ago.

"That's what gets me up in the morning and keeps me wanting to come to work every day. It's being able to do more for my patients. Like getting this office open for patients. It's got a special place in my heart to get my own building.

But what really brings me in day after day and has been for 15 years is seeing the patients and being able to talk with them and being able to encourage them that we will keep this vision going for as long as we can. That's what I hope to be doing here for the next 20-25 years."

As for hobbies Dr. Bhatia says other than family he has none. He loves family time, eating together, watching movies or being outdoors. But now that he's practicing on his own there are new demands.

"It definitely has brought on new challenges the last six months and I'd say they're starting to ease a bit. But you learn a lot about how to run a business and you appreciate all the other small businesses that are around in town, especially what it takes to keep them going. I see a lot of hard working people in these small towns and I've come to appreciate them more now that I am a business owner too," he commented.

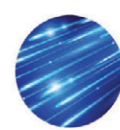
Ideally he'll draw patients from a 60-mile radius.

"There are not a lot of retina specialists outside of Chicago in this part of Illinois or even down in Central Southern Illinois. The people I treat are usually a little bit older who need to sustain the vision they have. They may feel more comfortable coming to a small town than going to Chicago. We've got the latest medicines and equipment being used anywhere in the U.S. and we're able to treat them right here."



DR. SUMIT BHATIA, a retina surgeon, uses state-of-the-art optical quipment and medicines to examine and treat patients. Here he tests the eyes of his receptionist Nichole Olson.

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Photos by Marney Simon

BATHING SUITS, SWIM trunks and even some Hawaiian skirts might look normal on the beach at the Braidwood Rec Club in July, but it was not your typical refreshing dunk in the water on Saturday, March 11. Hundreds of participants including law enforcement and fire department officials from Braidwood, Wilmington, Will County, and the Illinois State Police, as well as residents and fun seekers, took the plunge for the 2023 Law Enforcement Torch Run Polar Plunge to support Special Olympics Illinois athletes. The polar plunge, which takes place at multiple sites across the nation, raises funds for Special Olympics. The Illinois Law Enforcement Torch Run is the statewide presenting sponsor for the 2023 Polar Plunge. The Law Enforcement Torch Run has raised more than \$61 million since 1986 while increasing awareness of Special Olympics Illinois athletes and their accomplishments.



DIVERS FROM THE Braidwood Fire Protection District coax some polar plungers into the water at Braidwood Rec Club. The divers were on hand to ensure a safe event.



AUDREA HUSTON

Local author book signing

Local author Andrea Huston, of Diamond, will be at Lori Bonarek Realty, 640 S. Broadway in Coal City on Thursday, March 16, 6-7:30 p.m. Sway is the first book written by Huston who writes under the pen name Kathleen Lacie. Join us on Thursday, March 16, 6-7:30 p.m. Limited books will be available for sale, or bring your own book to be signed.

"We are so excited to support a local author" stated Bonarek. For more information call 815-518-2300.

Gas prices rise despite drop in price for oil

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have risen 12.2 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.62/g, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices in Illinois are 11.4 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 95.2 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

"With the transition to more expensive summer gasoline underway coast to coast, wholesale gasoline prices continue to inch up at a rate typical for this time of year, reflected in the national average rising for the second straight week," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois was priced at \$3.13/g while the most expensive was \$4.69/g.

Locally gas prices varied from \$3.33/g at Mohsen on Lorenzo Rd., Wilmington, \$3.41/g in Braidwood, \$3.46/g in Wilmington and \$3.59/g in Coal City.

The national average price of gasoline has risen 8.0 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.44/g.

"While oil prices edged slightly lower on weaker outlooks for economic growth, continued refinery maintenance and the higher cost of seasonal blends of fuel are offsetting oil's decline. The price of diesel, however, continues to slowly decline as we see consumption for diesel lighten. The best news for both gasoline and diesel prices is how significant a drop we've seen from year-ago levels, with more disinflation to come in the weeks ahead, even as gas prices are likely to inch up."

Named on fall dean's list

Mizzou recognizes the following area students to the fall 2022 dean's list:

Anna Schulte, of Braidwood; Joseph Piatak, of Coal City; Harley Felker, Courtney Meyer and Joshua

Michalak, all of Diamond; Mazie Meyr, of Essex and Rhianna Brown, Raelene DesRochers, Rebecca Horton and Emily Watson, all of Wilmington.

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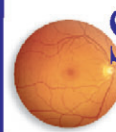
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BUNNY BREAKFAST

April 1

10:00 - 11:30 am

Register by: March 24

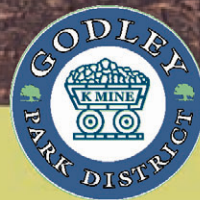
\$6: AGES 2-12

\$10: AGES 13 - ADULT

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APARTMENTS FOR RENT

Wilmington - Beautiful 2 bedroom with all new carpet, 1 car attached garage. \$1,200 a month. 618-383-6330 cc10-13

AUTOS

Accepting bids, 1996 International 4900 as is. 4x2 single axle, 26,000 miles, 11R/22.5 tires, fitted bed, V Box with conveyor, rear spreader, Monroe 11 Ft Poly Snow Plow. Repairs needed. Contact Highway Commissioner Jeff Sorensen at 815-476-7869 with questions. Sealed bids due to Wesley Township Hall by 3:00 PM on April 11, 2023 and will be opened at the monthly township meeting later that evening at 7:00PM. Wesley Township Road District 21333 W Ballou Rd, Wilmington, IL 60481 ch9-11

DUPLEX FOR RENT

2 bedroom, 1 bath, 2 car garage. 140 W. Fourth Street, Coal City. \$1,200/month plus security. 815-210-9220. ca9-11

FOR FREE

Kittens, free to a loving home, litterbox trained. Male & females. Wilmington. 618-383-5870.

HELP WANTED

Teresa's Family Styling has been serving the Wilmington community for the last 23 years on the corner of Water St.(102) & Kahler Rd in Wilmington. We are looking to hire a LICENSED STYLIST. An individual who is upbeat, hardworking & honest. A steady clientele is preferred but we're willing to work with the right candidate. Commission % based on experience. Please call 815-476-1955. ca11-14

Office help wanted. Experience with excel, QuickBooks and payroll. Approximately 30 flexible daytime hours per month. Send resume to P O Box 181, Gardner, IL 60424 or email to admin@gardnerfpd.com ch9-10

HELP WANTED

Coal City Area Club, hiring all positions. Gateguards, Lifeguards, Area Maintenance and Main Office Admin. \$15. LG Supervisors, \$16. Applications @ our website or main office. 285 S. Broadway Street. www.coalcityareclub.net ch8-11

Office help needed at a local sportsmen's club. Seasonal part time hours. Experience with computers and knowledge of Excel and Access preferred. Please send inquiries to wccsc1946@gmail.com cc2-13

The Braidwood Recreation Club is hiring for the 2023 Season. Concession Stand - Must be at least 16 years old. Operating hours are from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day. Open daily 10:30am to 6:00pm, 7 days per week. Must be willing to work flexible hours and duties include stocking, cleaning, and customer service. Shifts will be approximately 5 hours each. Custodians - Must be at least 16 years old and be open to a flexible schedule. Certified Lifeguards - All applicants must be CPR and Lifeguard Certified and be at least 16 years of age. Proof of certification must be provided at time of application. Gate Guards - Average 5 hour shifts. Applications can be printed off the club website (on Club Documents page) at braidwoodrecclub.com and emailed or picked up at the office. Please call with questions 815-458-2150. ch9-12

HOMES FOR RENT

Braidwood area, 3 BR, 2 bath, stove, refrigerator, C/A, W/D hookup, storage shed. Large lot & deck, 169 N Vernon Dr., Godley. \$1,250/mo. 1st, last, security, credit check. 815-476-6462. cc10-13

House for rent: 3 bedroom, 2 bath, attached garage. Cottage Rd. on Kankakee River with boat launch. \$2,200/month. 708-205-4826. ck10-13

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MOBILE HOMES FOR RENT

Godley - Small mobile home, recently remodeled, no pets, no smoking. \$700/month, 1st, last and security. One year lease required. 815-263-8597. cc8-11

REAL ESTATE

SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE OF 265 E 1st Street, Braidwood, IL 60408 (Residential). On the 6th day of April, 2023 to be held at 12:00 noon, at the Will County Courthouse Annex, 57 N. Ottawa Street, Room 201, Joliet, IL 60432, under Case Title: **M&T Bank Plaintiff V. William S. Allen; et. al.** Defendant. Case No. **22 FC 1024** in the Circuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit, Will County, Illinois. Terms of Sale: ten percent (10%) at the time of sale and the balance within twenty-four (24) hours. No judicial sale fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. All payments shall be made in cash or certified funds payable to the Sheriff of Will County. In the event the property is a condominium, in accordance with 735 ILCS 5/15-1507(c)(1)(H-1) and (H-2), 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(5), and 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1), you are hereby notified that the purchaser of the unit, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and legal fees required by sub-

divisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Illinois Condominium Property Act. Pursuant to Local Court Rule 11.03 (J) if there is a surplus following application of the proceeds of sale, then the plaintiff shall send written notice pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512(d) to all parties to the proceeding advising them of the amount of the surplus and that the surplus will be held until a party obtains a court order for its distribution or, in the absence of an order, until the surplus is forfeited to the State. For Information Please Contact: **Codilis & Associates, P.C.** 15W030 N. Frontage Road Suite 100 Burr Ridge, Illinois 60527 P: 630-794-5300 F: 630-794-9090 PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT YOU ARE ADVISED THAT THIS LAW FIRM IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. Published in the Free Press Newspapers on Wednesday, March 15, 22 & 29, 2023.

A Thousand Words Photography
385 N. Second Ave. Coal City
Mandy Eaton
815-791-2913

REAL ESTATE

SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE OF 306 S OUTER DR., WILMINGTON, IL 60481 (Single Family Residence). On the 30th day of March, 2023 to be held at 12:00 noon, at the Will County Courthouse Annex, 57 N. Ottawa Street, Room 201, Joliet, IL 60432, under Case Title: **LAKEVIEW LOAN SERVICING, LLC Plaintiff V. JULIE WHITMER; CITY OF WILMINGTON; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS;** Defendant. Case No. **22 FC 0498** in the Circuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit, Will County, Illinois. Terms of Sale: ten percent (10%) at the time of sale and the balance within twenty-four (24) hours. No judicial sale fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. All payments shall be made in cash or certified funds payable to the Sheriff of Will County. In the event the property is a condominium, in accordance with 735 ILCS 5/15-1507(c)(1)(H-1) and (H-2), 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(5), and 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1), you are hereby notified that the purchaser of the unit, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and legal fees required by subdivisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Illinois Condominium Property Act. Pursuant to Local Court Rule 11.03 (J) if there is a surplus following application of the proceeds of sale, then the plaintiff shall send written notice pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512(d) to all parties to the proceeding advising them of the amount of the surplus and that the surplus will be held until a party obtains a court order for its distribution or, in the absence of an order, until the surplus is forfeited to the State. For Information Please Contact: **ANSELMO LINDBERG OLIVER LLC.** 1771 W. Diehl Rd. Suite 120 NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS 60563 P: 630-453-6960 F: 630-428-4620 PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT YOU ARE ADVISED THAT THIS LAW FIRM IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. Published in the Free Press Newspapers on Wed., March 8, 15 & 22, 2023.



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815-791-2913

REAL ESTATE

SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE OF 306 S OUTER DR., WILMINGTON, IL 60481 (Single Family Residence). On the 30th day of March, 2023 to be held at 12:00 noon, at the Will County Courthouse Annex, 57 N. Ottawa Street, Room 201, Joliet, IL 60432, under Case Title: **LAKEVIEW LOAN SERVICING, LLC Plaintiff V. JULIE WHITMER; CITY OF WILMINGTON; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS;** Defendant. Case No. **22 FC 0498** in the Circuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit, Will County, Illinois. Terms of Sale: ten percent (10%) at the time of sale and the balance within twenty-four (24) hours. No judicial sale fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. All payments shall be made in cash or certified funds payable to the Sheriff of Will County. In the event the property is a condominium, in accordance with 735 ILCS 5/15-1507(c)(1)(H-1) and (H-2), 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(5), and 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1), you are hereby notified that the purchaser of the unit, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and legal fees required by subdivisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Illinois Condominium Property Act. Pursuant to Local Court Rule 11.03 (J) if there is a surplus following application of the proceeds of sale, then the plaintiff shall send written notice pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512(d) to all parties to the proceeding advising them of the amount of the surplus and that the surplus will be held until a party obtains a court order for its distribution or, in the absence of an order, until the surplus is forfeited to the State. For Information Please Contact: **ANSELMO LINDBERG OLIVER LLC.** 1771 W. Diehl Rd. Suite 120 NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS 60563 P: 630-453-6960 F: 630-428-4620 PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT YOU ARE ADVISED THAT THIS LAW FIRM IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. Published in the Free Press Newspapers on Wed., March 8, 15 & 22, 2023.

REAL ESTATE

SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE OF 404 N Outer Dr, Wilmington, IL 60481 (Single Family Home). On the 6th day of April, 2023 to be held at 12:00 noon, at the Will County Courthouse Annex, 57 N. Ottawa Street, Room 201, Joliet, IL 60432, under Case Title: **Nationstar Mortgage LLC Plaintiff V. Ryan L. Zelek; et. al.** Defendant. Case No. **22 FC 1131** in the Circuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit, Will County, Illinois. Terms of Sale: ten percent (10%) at the time of sale and the balance within twenty-four (24) hours. No judicial sale fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. All payments shall be made in cash or certified funds payable to the Sheriff of Will County. In the event the property is a condominium, in accordance with 735 ILCS 5/15-1507(c)(1)(H-1) and (H-2), 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(5), and 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1), you are hereby notified that the purchaser of the unit, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and legal fees required by subdivisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Illinois Condominium Property Act. Pursuant to Local Court Rule 11.03 (J) if there is a surplus following application of the proceeds of sale, then the plaintiff shall send written notice pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512(d) to all parties to the proceeding advising them of the amount of the surplus and that the surplus will be held until a party obtains a court order for its distribution or, in the absence of an order, until the surplus is forfeited to the State. For Information Please Contact: **Codilis & Associates, P.C.** 15W030 N. Frontage Road Suite 100 Burr Ridge, Illinois 60527 P: 630-794-5300 F: 630-794-9090 PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT YOU ARE ADVISED THAT THIS LAW FIRM IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. Published in the Free Press Newspapers on Wednesday, March 15, 22 & 29, 2023.

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Entry-Level Police Officer Hiring Process



Wilmington Police Department, Wilmington, Illinois

The Wilmington, Illinois Board of Police Commission is accepting applications for the position of police officer with the Wilmington Police Department.

Starting Salary: \$61,530 - \$73,376

Population: 5,735

Sworn Police Officers: 22* (17 Full-Time and 5 Part-Time)

*Will add four (4) full-time within next 2 years.

The Wilmington Police Department is proud to announce that they are now certified by the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs for the Police Officer on-the-job Training Program.

Please visit http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/onthejob_apprenticeship.asp

All applicants must meet the following minimum requirements established by the City of Wilmington:

- U.S. citizenship;
- No felony convictions;
- Possess a valid state-issued driver's license with good driving record;
- Must be a minimum of 21 years of age and UNDER 35 years of age at the time of application unless otherwise exempt by State Statute 65 ILCS 5/10-2.1-6;
- Possess a high school diploma or G.E.D. equivalent;
- Possess a valid NIPSTA card - **OR** - equivalent criteria as per the State standard, **issued within 12 months of the written exam date (April 15, 2023);**
 - POWER Test Cards issued by NIPSTA, Triton College or Joliet Junior College will be accepted.
 - Applicants must present the POWER Test card **NO LATER** than the written exam date (**April 15, 2023**).
- Any applicant who would like to schedule a ride along with a Wilmington police officer may contact Sergeant Dan Brimer at 815-476-2813.
- Successfully pass a written examination with a minimum passing score of 70% on each of the (4) sections;
- Successfully complete an oral interview with the Board of Police Commission;
- Successfully complete a background investigation, polygraph, and psychological testing;
- Successfully complete a medical physical, to include drug and alcohol screening;
- There is no application processing fee.
- Applications must be submitted prior to April 3, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

To apply for this position or obtain additional information, please visit the following website: <http://www.applytoserve.com>

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Seeking Qualified Applicants for Firefighters/Paramedics

The Wilmington Fire Protection District is seeking qualified applicants to establish an eligibility list for the position of Firefighter/Paramedic with the District.

Starting Salary: \$59,731.88

QUALIFICATIONS

- Applicant must be at least 21 years of age and under 35 years of age at the time of submission of an application unless otherwise provided by state or federal law
- Be a citizen of the United States
- Have a high school diploma or equivalent (GED)
- Possess a valid class B non CDL driver's license in the State of Illinois
- Be certified as a Basic Operations Firefighter or Firefighter II through the Office of the State Fire Marshall in the State of Illinois prior to conditional offer.
- Be certified as a Paramedic in the State of Illinois (IDPH EMT-P) prior to conditional offer.

Applications will be available to qualified candidates March 13th, 2023 - April 17th, 2023 between the hours of 8:00am-3:00pm, Monday-Friday at Station #1, 501 N. Main Street, Wilmington, IL.

A valid driver's license must be presented in order to obtain an application. Only one application per candidate will be given.


Completed application shall be returned to the above address no later than 3:30 pm on April 17th, 2023. Failure to complete the application in its entirety shall be grounds for rejection from the process. Applicants must attend the following:

- Orientation/Written Exam: Monday, April 17th, 2023 at 6 pm Sharp (No one will be allowed in the room after 6 pm)
- Oral Interviews: Monday, April 24th and Wednesday, April 26th, 2023.
- Physical Ability: Must have a CPAT card with ladder climb issued no more than 365 days prior to conditional offer.

The Rules and Regulations of the Board of Fire Commissioners, Wilmington Fire Protection District, will govern all facets of the hiring process, a copy of which is available for viewing at the District's Station#1. If you have any questions please call (815)-476-6675.

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Illinois must get smarter with mental health

Gov. JB Pritzker declared last week when announcing the formation of the Behavioral Health Workforce Education Center that the state was building "the best behavioral health system in the nation."

It was quite a bold thing to say. So, my associate Isabel Miller and I asked a couple of follow-up questions: How long will this take and how much will it cost?

The response from a spokesperson was kinda underwhelming: "Under Governor Pritzker's leadership, the state has invested hundreds of millions of dollars to rebuild our behavioral health infrastructure and the Governor is committed to continuing these critical investments year after year to build the best system in the nation. Illinois has climbed in the national rankings by putting our people first and we're on the right path if we continue to make generational change. With our statewide partnerships and continued investment Illinois will soon serve as the national standard for a behavioral health system that prioritizes workers and provides the best possible care for those who need it."

That obviously didn't answer either of our questions. And no Brownie Points for brevity, either. Sorry to make you read it.

Also, the background information the governor's office sent about the administration's progress didn't quite

match up with the governor's flowery rhetoric.

Recent national rankings issued by Mental Health America, a group founded more than a century ago, show Illinois has moved from an 11th-place overall mental health back in 2018 to 9th place this year. An overall ranking of 1-13, according to the organization, "indicates lower prevalence of mental illness and higher rates of access to care."

However, the state's ranking for adults actually slipped during that time period from 8th to 9th, and the ranking for youth remained at 13th. This despite spending hundreds of millions of additional dollars since the start of 2019 on mental health initiatives.

Even so, a key stakeholder heaped praise on the governor's plan to use the new Behavioral Health Workforce Education Center to lead the revamp of the long-troubled Choate Mental Health and Developmental Center in deep southern Illinois.

Equip for Equality issued an investigative report back in 2005 which documented numerous horrors at Choate. The group called for the facility's closure at the time. "Nearly two decades later," the group claimed last week via press release, "enhanced monitoring



CAPITOL FACTS

Rich Miller

activities show little has changed."

The group claims that Choate residents continue to be "segregated" from their community "without receiving the necessary services to actually address why they ended up there."

Residents, the group said, continue to be "afraid of retaliation if they report staff abuse."

"Many of the recent news stories are about incidents that happened a year or more ago," said Stacey Aschemann, Equip for Equality's vice president in charge of monitoring the conditions at Choate. "Based on our recent monitoring, we can say without a doubt that these continue to be ongoing issues."

So, why has it taken so long for the state to act? The governor told reporters that the state simply hadn't had the financial resources to do enough about the problem.

The new Behavioral Health Workforce Education Center has been in the works for five years and will hopefully help the state increase the workforce size enough to deal with the issues, not only at Choate, but throughout the state. With more tax revenues coming in, the state can start getting a handle on things.

And, make no mistake, the

problems are severe, despite what national rankings may show. Currently, 15,000 people are on a waiting list for community-based intellectual and developmental disabilities placement, according to a report last week by Capitol News Illinois, Lee Enterprises and ProPublica Illinois. Those outlets' reporting on Choate, by the way, sparked the recent intense interest in the facility's many problems and helped push the administration into action, a fact which Pritzker himself has acknowledged.

There are, of course, parochial concerns about any changes at Choate. Sen. Terri Bryant (R-Murphysboro), who represents the area, claimed the central problem is with facility management (a good point) and said she opposed moving residents out of the facility (not so good). AFSCME, of course, is worried about the future of its members at Choate.

The bottom line is that the state just has to get smarter. These problems have existed for decades and decades, but the folks at Choate and thousands of others across this state deserve care and help, not physical abuse and neglect. The people in charge need to be better than this, so this attempt to bring new workers into the system and keep them there cannot fail.

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

Bill to end moratorium on building nuclear plants in Illinois advances

SPRINGFIELD — State Senator Sue Rezin has advanced legislation putting Illinois one step closer to finally lifting its moratorium on building new nuclear reactors. "For over 35 years, our state has had an archaic and arbitrary ban on the construction of new nuclear power plants," said Senator Rezin. "This moratorium has remained in place despite the fact that Illinois has efficiently and safely received carbon-free energy from our state's six nuclear stations for roughly four decades."

Senate Bill 76 would delete the language that provides that no construction shall commence on any new nuclear power plant to be located within the state. Under Rezin's legislation, public utility and energy companies would be given the option to choose whether they want to invest in the construction of both traditional, large nuclear reactors or new, small modular reactors (SMRs) that could be placed in existing infrastructure such as factories or

pre-existing coal-fired power plants that are already connected to the electric grid.

"New nuclear power plants, whether SMRs or the traditional, offer our state the ability to increase its energy capacity and potentially lower future energy cost with carbon-free, reliable, and resilient nuclear power," continued Rezin. "They would also have the potential to help local economies of traditional coal communities that are currently or will be struggling from the loss of their decommissioned coal-fired power plants."

Senate Bill 76 advanced out of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee on March 8, and now awaits a vote by the full Senate chamber.

Soup Supper, talent show

A soup supper and talent show will be held at Braceville United Methodist Church, 106 W. Gould St., Braceville on Saturday, March 18. Supper will be from 4-6 p.m. with talent show starting at 6 p.m. Admission is donation.

State police see alarming trend in road rage shootings

The Illinois State Police (ISP) is warning the public about what appears to be an increasing trend in road rage.

While the number of shootings on Chicago area expressways continues to decrease compared to the height in 2021, victims are increasingly reporting road rage as the reason behind the expressway shooting.

In 2022, road rage was reported in approximately 40% of Chicago area expressway shootings handled by ISP. This is up from 12% in 2021. Already in 2023, road rage has been reported in at least nine Chicago area expressway shootings. This is in addition to other types of road rage-associated violence such as crashes and physical fights.

Watch for the following signs of road rage, aggressive driving:

- Following too closely or tailgating
- Improper or erratic lane changing

- Illegally driving on the shoulder of the road (emergency lane), in a ditch/median, or on sidewalk
- Passing where prohibited
- Operating the vehicle in an erratic, reckless, careless, or negligent manner or suddenly changing speeds
- Failure to yield right of way
- Failure to obey traffic laws, signs, and devices
- Failure to yield to emergency personnel and construction zone speed limits

- Failure to signal
- Driving too fast for conditions or in excess of posted speed limit
- Racing
- Making an improper turn

According to a AAA Foundation study, when drivers explained why they became violent, the reasons were often trivial such as the other driver wouldn't let

them pass or they kept tailgating.

If you are in the left lane and someone wants to pass, move to your right and allow them to pass.

When merging, make sure you have plenty of room and use your turn signal.

If someone cuts you off, slow down and give them room to merge into your lane.

If a speeding driver is tailgating you, safely change lanes when able.

Making gestures might anger the other driver; create distance and avoid confrontation.

If another driver is acting angry, don't make eye contact. Call the police if you believe a driver is following you or harassing you. Call 911 and/or go to the nearest police department to report it.

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COMET SPORTS

Comet athletes take to the track



VINCENT BOLLINO runs 800 meters at Tuesday's meet at home in the field house.

Photo by Zadie Sims



COMPETING IN HURDLES for Reed-Custer is Connor Eggleston during the first track meet this year last week in the fieldhouse.

Photo by Zadie Sims



HAYLEE KEYMON competes in the hurdles against Wilmington, Dwight, and Streator on Tuesday.

Photo by Zadie Sims



MADYSEN MEYER races against Coal City, Streator and, Dwight on Tuesday.

Photo by Zadie Sims

RCMS wrestlers compete at state

Five Reed-Custer Middle School wrestlers competed in the IESA Class 1A state tournament in DeKalb on Friday and Saturday but did not place. Two Panther wrestlers went 1-2 during the event, getting victories in the first round of the wrestlebacks before bowing out.

RCMS seventh grader Colton Drinkwine (1-2) wrestled at 85 pounds, losing his opening match 12-0 to Bentley Fields (Gibson City). He rebounded with a 5-0 decision in the consolation bracket, defeating Tyler Olson (Orion) with a 5-0 decision.

Drinkwine then suffered a heartbreaking 5-3 loss to Kazmyn Barber (Dixon Reagan). At 105, Kaaden Wood (1-2) suffered a 1:39 fall to eventual state champion Nelson Benesh (Oregon JHS) in the opening round.

Wood fought back with a 5-2 victory over Patrick Schaefer (Morrison JHS). But his run came to an end against Preston Richards (Dixon Reagan) who outscored him 2-1.

Finishing with 0-2 records were Panthers: 65—Finnley Wood who lost by :58 and 2:50 falls. 75—Collin Bryant who lost his opener by sudden death 9-7 and then by fall in 1:27.

At 85, Cole Harris lost to the eventual state champion 7-0 before getting pinned in 3:47 in the wrestlebacks.

Newbrough in the Senior Spotlight for March

The Reed-Custer High School Senior Spotlight winner for the month of March is Laci Newbrough.

Laci is the daughter of Mike and Angie Newbrough. During her high school career, Laci was involved in Volleyball, Basketball, Soccer, Yearbook, Safe School Ambassadors, FCCLA, and Academic Challenge Team. She was also an Illinois State Scholar, a Student of the Month, an ACE winner, a class officer, Captain for all three of her sports, on the High Honor Roll, and was Honorable Mention All-Conference in Basketball.

Her future plans are to attend Bradley University in Peoria, major in Kinesiology and Health Science, and eventually pursue a career in Physical Therapy.

Here are a few thoughts from Laci's teachers.

Mrs. Terry thinks that Laci "is amazing. She is confident and independent and always has a smile on her face. She steps in and helps out when needed and without being asked. She is an enormous asset to the yearbook program."

Mrs. Leveille remembers that Laci, "as a Freshman, was energetic and had a positive attitude. She was always willing to help others out in class and stood out as a leader with group work. She is friendly and polite towards others and participated on the Academic Challenge team as a senior."

Mr. Welsh says that Laci is "a young woman with a big heart, one who cares for those around her."

Mr. Smith believes that Laci "was a wonderful student for me in OT. She was diligent, respectful, and fun."

Mrs. Benoit thinks that Laci is "the real deal! Great as a person in school and out of school. She works hard to maintain her high academic success with her tough course load. She is fun, athletic, respectful of others, a great communicator with her teachers, helpful towards her peers, AND is great on the slopes as a snowboarder!"

Mrs. Morrissey says that Laci "is a one of a kind, honest, hardworking student. She gives 110% in all she does."

Mrs. Rankin loves that Laci is "super diligent, enthusiastic, and has great taste in books!"

Mrs. Lee appreciates that Laci "great in so many ways! She is so kind to her teachers and peers. Laci truly cares about succeeding in all aspects of her life and will continue to have great success throughout her life."

Ms. Zastrow thinks that Laci is "an awesome student inside the classroom and out! She is one of the students that puts in effort to include everyone around her! She is smart, kind, proactive, and positive. Laci holds herself to a high standard and ensures that she is always at her personal best!"

Ms. Conley says that "It has been a joy getting to know Laci over these last couple of years! Many stories, laughs, and cups of coffee have been shared while planning for her future this past year. She keeps things light and fun, but is serious and dedicated when it comes to her schoolwork and responsibilities. I can't wait to see what her future holds!"

Ms. Meents believes that Laci is "overall an extremely dedicated person, no matter what she is doing. She works hard in the classroom, and I'm excited to see all the success that she will have in her next four years. I also had the privilege of coaching her, and I enjoyed watching her grow as an athlete mentally and physically throughout the season. I will definitely miss Laci when she graduates, although I know she will do amazing things!"

Mrs. Cann appreciates

that Laci is "an extremely hard worker, both in athletics and academics. She is always willing to help others—students and teachers. Additionally, Laci is a great listener. She is always willing to lend an ear or give advice to those who seek it. She will be missed next year, but I know she is on to bigger adventures and I have no doubt she will be successful."

As a final thought, Laci's advice to younger students is, "Keep an open mind".

On behalf of the teachers and staff at RCHS, congratulations Laci Newbrough as the March winner of the Senior Spotlight.

Lady Panthers bow out in regional finale

The Reed-Custer 8th grade volleyball team lost to Saratoga last week for the regional championship, 9-25 and 18-25, ending their season.

Kirstin Klein had two aces and three assists. Alyssa Wollenzien had one kill and one dig. Mackenzie Foote had two kills, two aces, and one block. Kayla Schott had two aces, one dig, and one kill. Caysie Esparza had one dig and one kill. Taylor Bova had three kills.

Great season ladies!

The Lady Panthers beat Peru in the semifinal, 27-25, 24-26 and 25-23. Alyssa Wollenzien had six kills, three aces, and two digs.

Kayla Schott had six aces. Taylor Bova had eight kills, one ace, and one dig. Mackenzie Foote had two kills and one ace.

Kirstin Klein had eleven assists, three digs, two aces, and a kill. Kaitlyn Lantka had two digs and one kill.

A portrait of Laci Newbrough, a young woman with long blonde hair, smiling. The background is dark with yellow text and graphics.

senior spotlight

MARCH 2023

A graphic featuring a graduation cap and the text "CLASS OF 2023".

Laci Newbrough

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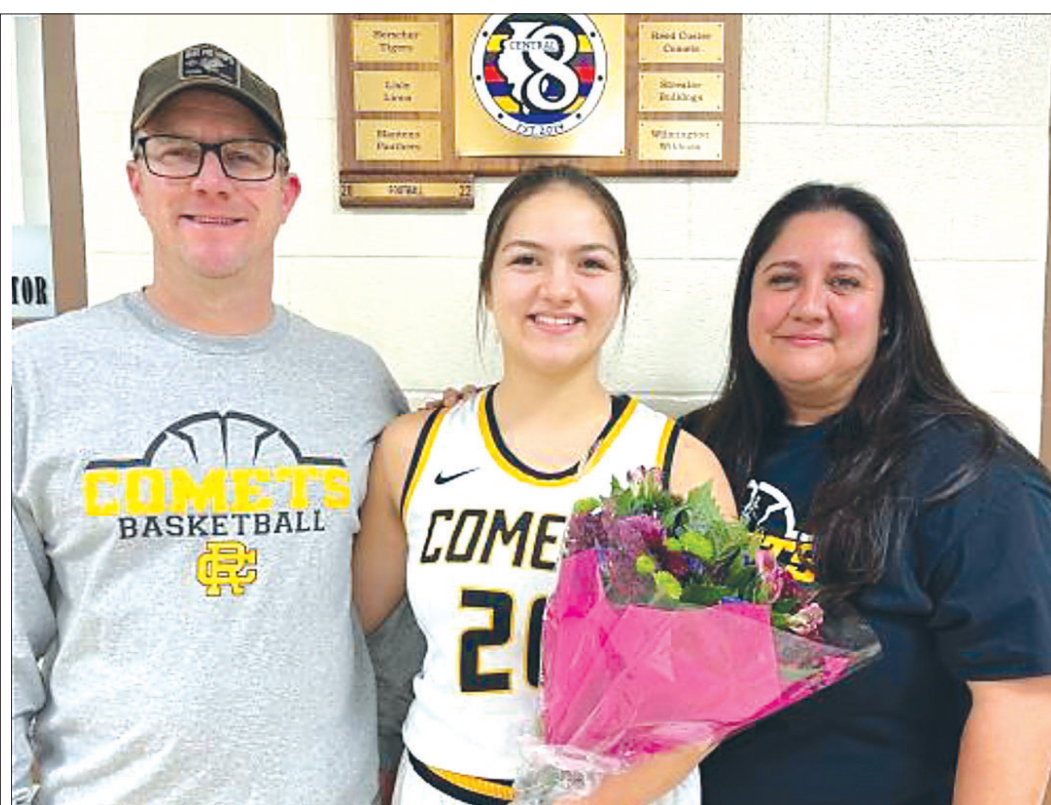
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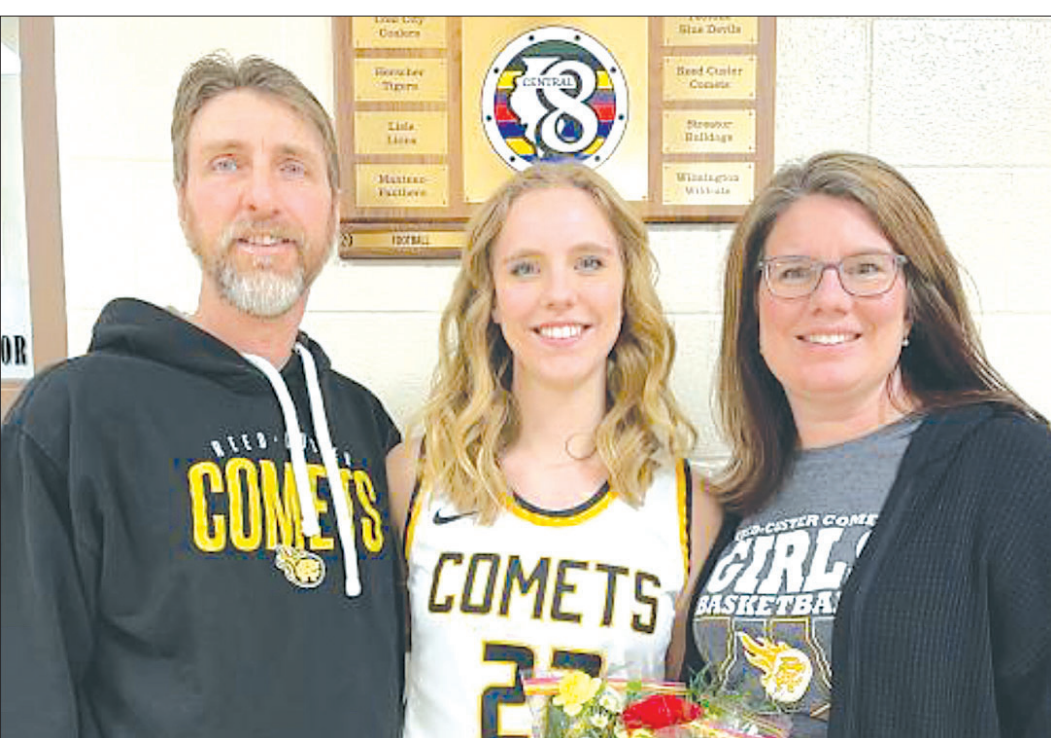
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Lady Comets Class of 2023 honored on Senior Night



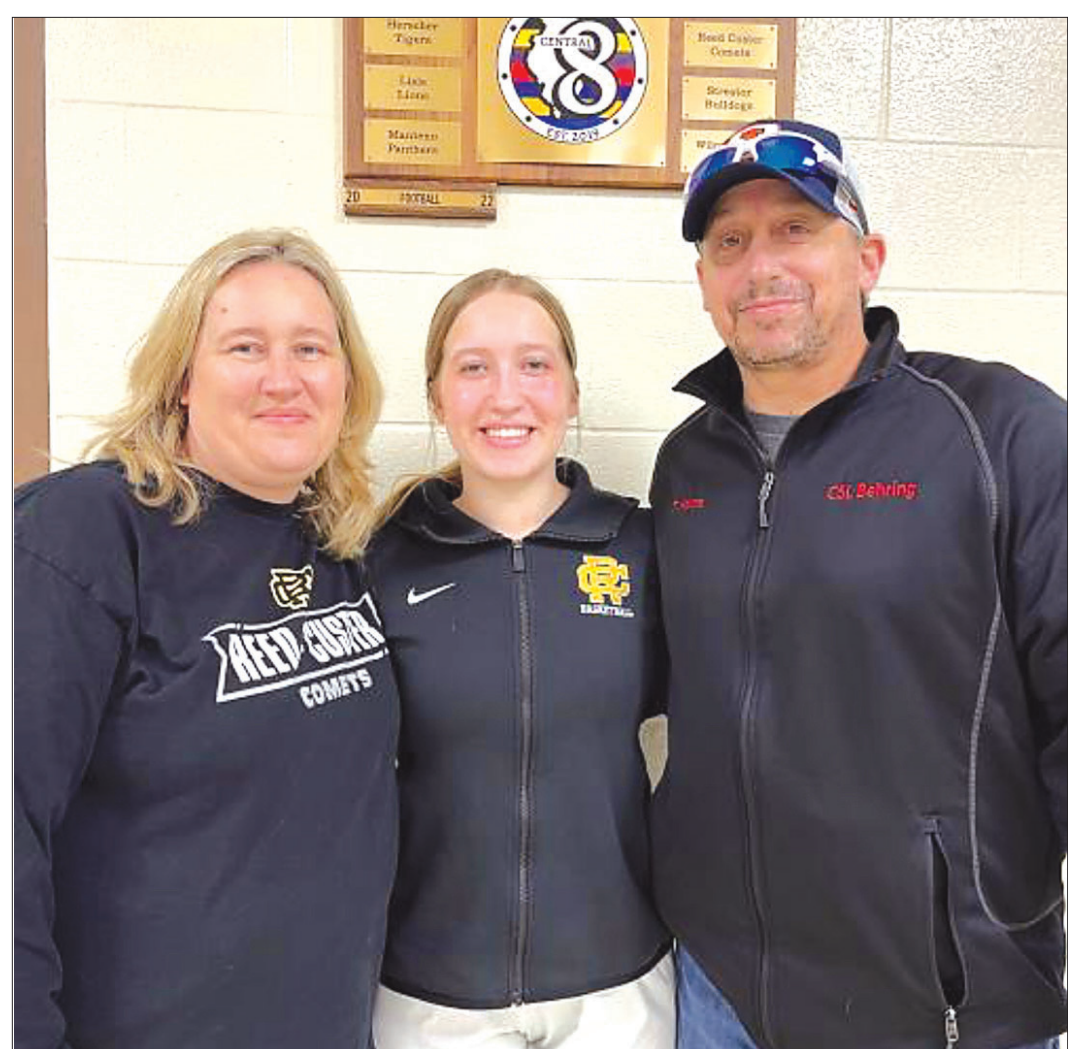
RCHS BASKETBALL SENIOR Samantha Sprimont is the daughter of Zak and Lenna Sprimont. After graduation, Samantha is joining the Air force and continuing her education to become a physical therapist or athletic trainer.



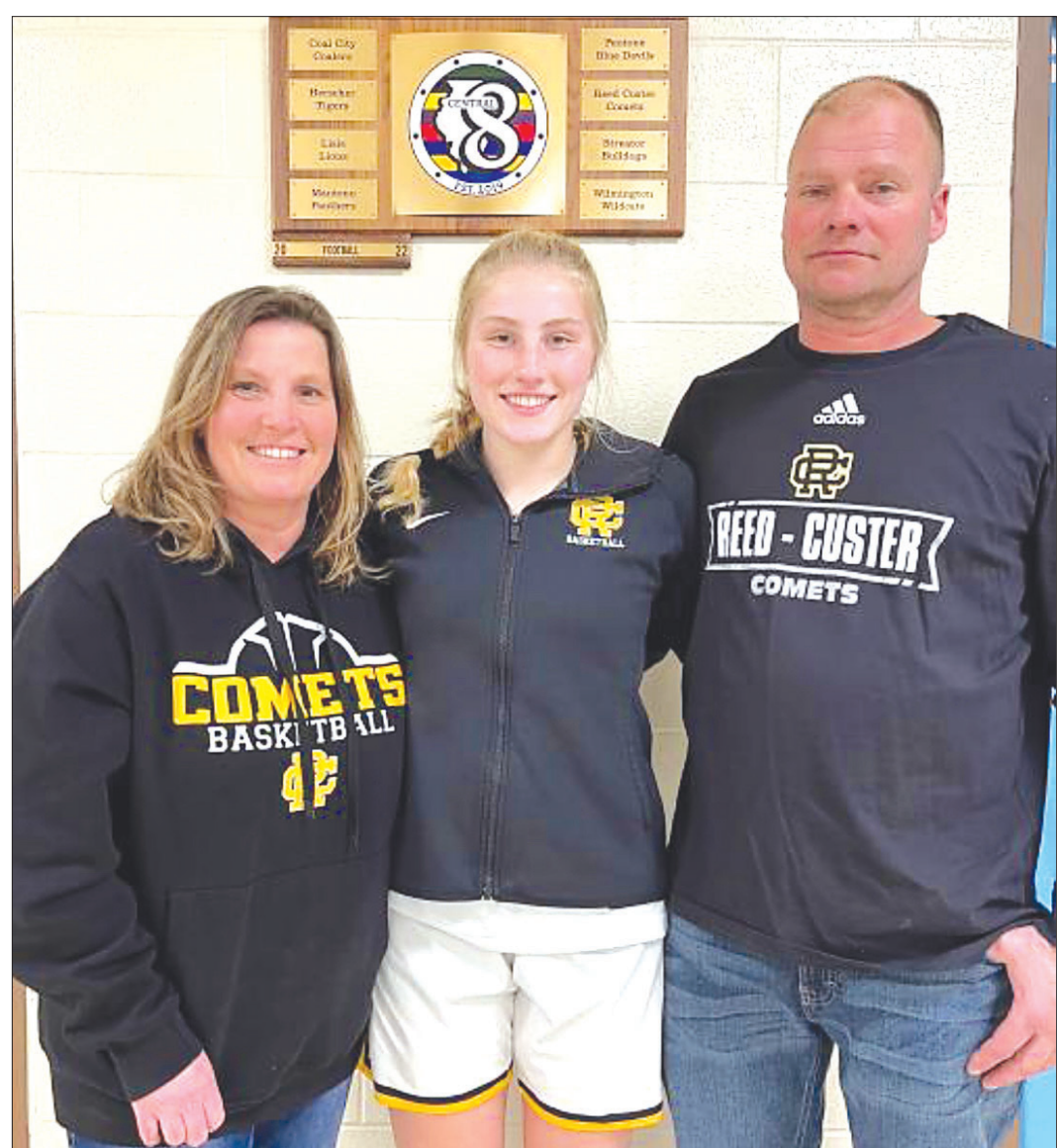
RCHS BASKETBALL SENIOR Laci Newbrough is the daughter of Mike and Angie Newbrough. Although undecided on where she will go after graduation, Laci plans on attending a four-year university to work towards a degree in Physical Therapy.



RCHS BASKETBALL SENIOR Caelan Cole is the daughter of PD & Katie Hollis and is also being escorted by sister Rory. After graduation, Caelan plans on attending a four-year university to major in Biology/Kinesiology and eventually find a career as a Physician's Assistant. She also plans on playing soccer while in college.



RCHS BASKETBALL SENIOR Addison Harms is the daughter of Tim and Heather Harms. In the fall, Addison plans on attending a four-year university to study forensic science and psychology and plans on working towards a career as a forensic psychologist.



RCHS BASKETBALL SENIOR Brooklyn Harding is the daughter of Tina Pruett and Rich Harding. After graduation, Brooklyn plans on joining the union and starting her career.

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