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Agenda includes move to keep Altiery for a new position

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

A storm is brewing and it was bound to flare up during the April 8 Braidwood City Council meeting which included on its agenda the proposed appointment of City Administrator Tony Altiery to a new supervisory position at city hall.

The move follows the April 1 election in which Todd Lyons won the Mayor's seat and campaigned on the promise that he would replace Altiery if elected.

According to the agenda, Commissioner Warren Wietting intended to appoint Altiery to the position of Supervisor of Public Property.

At the same time, Commissioner Dale Walsh is making a motion to appoint Altiery as Supervisor of Streets and Public Improvements, with the objective of taking a vote during the city council meeting.

The terms of the employ-

ment agreement, the annual salary for the position(s) will be \$119,000, with an annual raise of at least 4.5 percent, use of a city vehicle for business-related travel, a \$600 clothing allowance and \$150 boot allowance.

Deja vu all over again

At the May 9, 2023 Braidwood City Council meeting, Commissioner Dale Walsh motioned to appoint Altiery as Supervisor of Public Works, seconded by Wietting. The motion carried with four "ayes" by Mayor Karen Hart and three commissioners, Wietting, Walsh, and James "Moose" Mikel.

Social media mayhem

The city council meeting agenda with the job offer included as Exhibit 1, appeared on the "Braidwood and Surrounding Areas" Facebook page on Saturday.

From name-calling to guilt-tripping and mudslinging, members of the Braidwood Facebook page were out in force, some

threatening to bring pitchforks to the April 8 city council meeting.

"Doesn't the mayor have the ability to remove that position they created," a poster named Robert Kersmarki said.

"If this gets pushed through then every person the current board should be ashamed of themselves," Drew Hughes commented.

A comment by Katelin E. Monroe pointed out that the supervisory position has existed, but had been vacant, and another comment asked why Altiery was being paid so much to mow grass and install hydrants.

"It's a lot more than that," Monroe commented. "My husband used to work for public works for another city. It's not just mowing grass."

Several questioned why the position was never posted to allow others to apply.

"I've been trying to get in with the city for eight years," Greg Feranec commented. "How do I

apply for this?"

Wearing two hats

In a conversation with Tony Altiery Monday, the city administrator explained that he was officially appointed as the Supervisor of Public Works in 2023, and that he has never resigned or been removed from the position. He said he has been working as Public Works Supervisor in addition to his duties as city administrator, with no additional pay.

Though Altiery still officially holds the position, staff attorney Bryan Wellner suggested he be officially reappointed.

"Bryan said it would be cleaner if I were to be reappointed because I went from that position into administration, and now back again," Altiery said. "They have to approve my benefit package anyway. Then Warren [Wietting] and Dale [Walsh] want to split my pay, and it makes sense."

Why the disunity?

Altiery said he is aware of the

controversy on social media. However, he said that James "Moose" Mikel, who served as a Commissioner Public Health and Safety in at the time and was elected to the same position on April 1, approved his appointment to Supervisor of Public Works and as City Administrator.

Altiery emphasized that the city of Braidwood is in solid shape financially, and that he is on call 24/7, taking calls from residents and commissioners. He shared that he's proud of his track record.

"On May 1 of 2019, we walked into this office with Bobby Jones as mayor with \$67,000 in our bank account and hundreds of thousands of unpaid bills," Altiery said. "Now we have nearly \$8.5 million in the bank. We purchased almost \$2 million in new equipment for the city."

Incoming Mayor Todd Lyons, and Commissioners Warren Wietting and Dale Walsh did not respond to a multiple requests for comment.

Route 66 at a top speed of 39 mph

BY ERIC FISHER
PUBLISHER

Being 5,150 miles from home, Roni Alho could have easily given up.

His 1968 moped, with its single gear, pedal start and one cylinder, suffered catastrophic failure. But the 35-year-old native of Turku, Finland was determined he would return to the U.S. to complete his 2,448-mile ride on historic Route 66.

He had gone too far to resign, passing through Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas and into New Mexico.

It was Oct. 15 of last year, 16 days into his trip, when his motorbike died outside of Tucumcari, NM, about 978 miles shy of the end of the Mother Road.

"Sometimes life gives you lemons. I made it to over halfway Route 66. Chicago - Tucumcari (NM) ~ 2400 km with my 50cc PUCH VS Moped," he wrote his Facebook followers. "That's the final point on my moped," he lamented.

The bearings and front fork on the moped were trashed, causing what he called was a "death wobble".

"So I needed to stop my trip. I thought it was the end of my world then," Alho said.

It didn't help he was driving like a lunatic in desert-like conditions. The temperature was above 100 degrees Fahrenheit. He suffered heat stroke, dehydration and anxiety.

"It caused me very bad health issues and before my flight back to home Finland it took me to hospital in Chicago (needed intravenous therapy)."

When he returned home to Finland his recovery took a couple months but during that time he vowed to himself that he



Photo by Eric Fisher

A GIANT TALE to tell in the end. Roni Alho, a musician from Finland, stands next to the Gemini Giant on March 30, the day of his return flight home. Alho survived his 2,448-mile ride on historic Route 66 using a moped with a top speed of 39 mph.

would return to finish what he had begun.

His unease as being labeled a failure had peaked. "I just tried to keep it normal and hide it from others," he said.

After stewing 4 1/2 months back home he had enough. He packed his suitcase with a new 4-stroke engine, flew back to the U.S., landing in Chicago March 2, where he arranged to meet Ryan Jeffries of Wilmington who knows the ins and outs of vintage motorcycle and moped engines.

The first thing he wanted to see was the Gemini Giant which had

been removed from its original location during his first ride.

Even though it was dark, Jeffries took him to the entrance to the South Island where the Route 66 icon now stands.

Alho said it was beautiful and taller than he expected. He was glad his return trip allowed him to finally see it.

He stayed in Wilmington at Jeffries' house while his moped was being rebuilt. Instead of one gear, which required Alho to pedal fast enough to start the engine, Jeffries added a second gear. The rebuild took sev-

eral days.

Once the moped was complete, the musician from Finland was given a ride (moped included) by Dan Canapa and Russell Walls to Springfield, MO where his Route 66 escort, Brent L. Jones, was waiting. The next day they drove to Tucumcari, NM to the point where Alho's moped broke down five months earlier.

Alho soon discovered March wasn't an ideal time to ride Route 66. Instead of 100-degree heat, he rode through snow in the upper elevations, having to stop often to clean the shield

SEE ROUTE 66 PAGE 2

Lyons by a landslide

New candidates sweep incumbents for Braidwood seats

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

In a heated political battle between Mayor Karen Hart and challenger, Todd Lyons, Braidwood has a new mayor.

Of 1,276 votes, Lyons received nearly 77 percent or 982 votes. Incumbent Karen Hart received 294 votes of 23 percent of votes.

"Please remember we are all residents of the Braidwood area with a common goal of improving our community," Lyons said. "Again, I want to tank everyone for the overwhelming support."

Karen Hart, who has served as Braidwood Mayor since May 23, 2023, who had previously been elected Finance Commissioner in April, 2023.

"I congratulate those who have run, and I congratulate those who voted," Karen Hart said. "I thank those who voted and supported me."

For Commissioner of Public Health and Safety, James "Moose" Mikel received 964 votes, or nearly 77 percent of the total compared to Ron Wilczak, Sr. with 289 or 23 percent of 1,253 total votes.

For the seat of Commissioner of Accounts and Finances, Elizabeth Dixon won over incumbent Kimberly Earling. Of 1,246 votes, Dixon received 900 or approximately 72 percent of votes, and Earling earned 346 or nearly 28 percent of votes.

Meanwhile, Hart asks residents to stay engaged with the community to make their voices heard.

"I doubt if I'll ever run again for office, but you can never tell," Hart said. I



TODD LYONS

do plan on enjoying my great grandchildren a lot more, and do some traveling."

In the race for Custer Township Highway Commissioner, William Marquardt received approximately 68 percent of 182 votes to defeat Zackary Yeck, who got approximately 32 percent or 58 votes of the total.

In the race for Reed Township Highway Commissioner, John Dixon received approximately 53 percent of 1,255 votes or 671 votes. Alexander Frandsen received 584 votes or approximately 47 percent of the total.



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THE END— Alho had to walk his moped onto the pier in Santa Monica to complete his Route 66 trip.

Route 66, continued from page 1

on his helmet and shed the icy buildup.

They made it to Flagstaff, Arizona, a town Alho said he liked the most, and on to California where the California Highway Patrol pulled him over near Needles. The officer didn't like what he inspected.

The moped no longer had working brakes (front and rear), the tail light failed to light and the biggest offense was Alho couldn't reach the minimum required speed of 55 mph while on an interstate highway. No, the officer warned, Alho was not allowed to ride the shoulder.

"I've got a lot of issues with my moped but I promised myself I'm not gonna surrender," Alho posted on March 14. "There is no chance to drive the moped with the chain tensioner totally no bueno. So I loosed my chains all the time plus my front tire blew up after my rear tire."

One other complaint by the patrol man was the moped, which wasn't properly registered, had too many license plates. Alho explained that he collects motorcycle plates and people had given him several old ones along the way. He attached them to the back, along with flags.

It was at the point that Jones, who drove the support vehicle, had a serious talk with Alho.

"After our review, it was pretty obvious with no working lights, brakes (lost front & back), muffler, back wheel out of alignment, seat being held on by bungee cord, throttle held on by pick tool and duct tape and throwing off the chain, we had McGyver'd this moped to our best efforts to get it as far as possible and we did! The CHP wouldn't give approval for Roni to go any further and with the large fines in CA, this journey has to be considered completed in Needles, CA," Jones posted.

They loaded up what was left of the bike and drove the remaining 278 miles to the pier in Santa Monica, CA.

"I think everyone that got to see this moped during the journey has an appreciation for what Roni accomplished on the ride. It's been pretty cool for me to tag along on this adventure. I'm so amazed how many great people we got to meet! People offered food, lodging, repair assistance, information, and great stories," Jones said.

On the return trip Alho returned to earlier stops where he met nice people. He gifted away parts of his moped.

He gave the two wheels, saddle, exhaust system (which wouldn't pass California emissions test) and even his driving shoe, to Rob Borden at Saddle Sore Ranch in Golden Valley, AZ. The handlebar is now at a Route 66 visitor center in Carthage, MO.

All that was left was the frame which ended up back at Jeffries' shop in Wilmington. Alho spent the night in Wilmington where he was treated as a celebrity while taking a round through the downtown beer joints. He praised the people he met in Wilmington for their friendliness on the eve of his return flight to Finland.

"United States of America, I really love you for whole my heart. Land of possibilities. I've never met so pure and genuine-hearted people in my life like you are Americans. United States feels like my second home now," Alho said.



Courtesy photo

EMERGENCY BRAKE—Rono Alho, from Finland, shows the tread missing from the bottom of his riding boots from having to use his feet to stop his moped.

Easter egg hunt to be held April 12

The Braidwood Park District's annual Children's Easter Egg Hunt will take place Saturday, April 12, beginning at 1 p.m. at Old Smokey City Park.

Age groups and locations are as follows:

1-3 years-old: Tee-Ball Field

Parents/Guardians may walk with their children as the children pick up eggs.

4-6 years-old: North boys' baseball field: If necessary, one parent or guardian may walk with the child as the children pick up the eggs.

7-10 years-old: South girls' softball field. Parents/guardians will not be allowed in the grass area where the eggs are spread out.

Treat bags will be given out for all children while supplies last. Mr. and Mrs. Easter Bunny

will be making a special appearance to meet with children before and after the hunt.

Check-in will begin at noon under the pavilion between the baseball fields. The first 400 children to check in will also receive a free Easter basket, compliments of the Braidwood Knights of Columbus Council 1574 and the Braidwood Lions Club.

Please park in the south parking lot off of First Street near the baseball fields. More information and additional rules for parents/guardians may be found on the Braidwood Lions Club's Facebook page.

The rain date for the hunt will be Sunday, April 13, same times.

Old Smokey Park is located at 245 W First Street.

Riverside adds cancer care and more to Coal City campus

Riverside Healthcare recently expanded its Coal City campus. This expansion adds cancer care and physical therapy, along with other services, and has doubled the size of the facility.

The space features exam rooms, a pharmacy, and chemotherapy bays and offers new and expanded services in Coal City, including physical therapy, cancer care, and more. The modern facility serves Coal City, Diamond, Braidwood, and surrounding commu-

nities with comprehensive healthcare services designed around your needs.

"This expansion is part of Riverside Healthcare's commitment to bringing the best care possible to the communities, patients, and families we serve," said Riverside Healthcare President and CEO Phil Kambic. "We are thrilled to be able to offer more services to our patients in Coal City and the surrounding areas within this dynamic space."

Expanded services include:

Oncology and Infusion (chemotherapy, medication, education, coordinated care with the entire medical team)

Physical Therapy (injury/surgery recovery, chronic pain management, improve mobility/strength)

Heart Care (rhythm monitoring, diagnostic testing, prevention, ongoing care management)

New Primary Care Provider with expanded hours (preventive care,

wellness checks, chronic conditions, child/adolescent care, senior health services).

Specialty services include: podiatry, cardiology, rheumatology, electrophysiology, and neurosurgery

The Coal City Campus is located at 5775 E. Highway 113. Hours are 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. For more information, call (815) 634-0100.

March weather report

The month of March was a typical mixed bag of tricks when it came to weather.

Temperatures reached a delightful high of 81 degrees on March 29, and a frigid low of 14 degrees on March 2.

The average temperature was 46 degrees Fahrenheit, and 11 days were 32 degrees or colder.

March was also a rainy month, with 3.53 inches of

rain falling, 1.31 of those inches on March 5. In total, it rained 10 inches for the month. There was only one day with measurable snow, March 8, bringing total snow to .9 inches in March.

For the season, we have had 10.6 inches of snow.

March was also a blustery month with gusts of 61 mph on March 19, and nearly 50 mph on March 1 and again on March 23.

Police department obtains drone

The Braidwood Police Dept. purchased a drone using federal asset forfeiture funds. The police department plans to use the drone in missing person cases, suspect search, barricaded subject situation, assessment and surveillance of large incident scenes, and other incidents that would enhance public and officer safety.

March was a busy month for the Braidwood Police Department, with 536 calls for services received.

"For the first quarter of 2025 we are already 271 calls for service ahead of this same time last year," Brett Goodwin, Chief of Police, said.

The police department also installed a

much-needed new telephone system.

"Our telephone system got a needed upgrade, so when you call our administrative phone number you will be greeted with an all new message and options to choose from," Goodwin said.

Two new recruits are nearly finished with academic training at the Police Training Institute and will be graduating April 24.

For the month, there were twelve arrests and 73 traffic citations.

At a recent blood drive, 18 units of blood were collected which will impact 57 lives.

Essex Self Storage to dispose of property

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Section 40 of the Self-Storage Facility Act, State of Illinois, on April 25, 2025, Essex Self Storage will sell or otherwise dispose of the air conditioner and misc. boxes stored at Essex Self Storage, 815-365-2569, 445 S. East St., Essex, IL 60935

Occupant: Kaitlyn & Susan Butler, Unit 85

Property: air conditioner & misc. boxes

Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, April 9 and 16, 2025.

Essex Self Storage to dispose of property

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Section 40 of the Self-Storage Facility Act, State of Illinois, on April 25, 2025 Essex Self Storage will sell or otherwise dispose of the bed frame and misc. boxes stored at Essex Self Storage, 815-365-2569, 445 S. East St., Essex, IL 60935

Occupant: Katherine Kronon, Unit 309

Property: Bed Frame & Misc. Boxes

Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, April 9 and 16, 2025.

Gails Groomerie files as new business

PUBLIC NOTICE

Assumed Name Publication Notice

Certificate 35304 was filed in the office of the County Clerk of Will County, IL on April 7, 2025 wherein the business firm of Gails Groomerie, located at 2035 S. Washington, Naperville, IL 60565 was registered; that the true or real name or names of the person or persons owning the business, with their respective post office address(es), is/are as follows:

Lana L. Edwards

126 E. 3rd Street

Braidwood, IL 60408

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and Official Seal at my office in Joliet, Illinois, this 7th of April, 2025.

Annette Parker

Will County Clerk

Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, April 9, 16 & 23, 2025.

Reed Township Road District to hold annual budget hearing

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING REED ROAD DISTRICT BUDGET

Notice is hereby given that a Tentative Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for REED TOWNSHIP ROAD DISTRICT, Will County, Illinois for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2024 and ending March 31, 2025 will be on file and available to public inspection starting March 31, 2025 at the Reed Township Office/Hall 440 N. Division Street, Braidwood, Illinois 60408.

Notice is further given that a public hearing on said Budget and Appropriation will be at 4:15 on April 30, 2025 at 440 N. Division Street, Braidwood, Illinois and that the final action on this ordinance and appropriation will take at the public hearing. Dated this 31st day of March, 2025.

Thomas Nahas,

Reed Township Clerk

Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, April 9, 2025.

Reed Township to hold annual budget hearing

PUBLIC NOTICE

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Thomas Nahas,

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Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, April 9, 2025.



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Eric D. Fisher, publisher

What's in a name, popular remedies in 1877

Of all the businesses that came and went in Braidwood, we have never mentioned the druggists. It is an oversight that I am correcting. Surely the druggist was one of the most necessary businesses in an era where manual labor in dangerous environments, and wretched health conditions existed. However, the drugs that were sold were not exactly like the kind we get over the counter now. Set the way-back machine for 1877.

The first mention of any druggists that I can find is a Mr. Allison, Barr & Watson and Dr. Henri LeCaron in 1877. All had stores in Braidwood. But not all were trained, in fact only LeCaron. He was particularly successful, opening bigger and bigger stores each year, including branches in Lockport and Braceville. In 1880 LeCaron bought out Barr & Watson.

Dr. LeCaron would go on to be the president of the Illinois Druggist Association, the first group to try to educate, test and regulate the pharmacists of the state. Until that time, anyone could set themselves up in the trade,

whether they knew anything about medicine or not.

Others in the drug trade were C. K. Charleton, Peter Barr & Sons, Dr. Wade & Co., Smith & Co. and one operated by the coal company called the "Miners' Drug Store."

The shelves in most drug stores of the time, were filled with "patent medicine." There was no testing of the contents or the claims made for it. It was a serious situation. However, the Braidwood correspondent to the Joliet Weekly Sun wrote a column in September 1877, making fun of these drugs, or at least their names.

"The genius of man and the inventive faculty of woman have well-nigh exhausted the resources of the new \$12 edition of Webster's dictionary in fashioning suitable names for the various patent medicine which line the shelves of our pharmacutists (gilt-edge term for druggists), and crowd the columns of our favorite family newspapers with mysterious advertisements, which almost smell of the articles whose many virtues they so eloquently portray."

"What oceans of bliss are contained in the simple

announcement, 'Mrs. Losefast's Soothing Syrup! How much earthly joy is expressed in that alliterative decoction, 'Rightofway's Ready Relief!' How many bushels of contentment are to be found in a 25 cent bottle of 'Lickspittle's Lockjaw Lubricator!' How much unalloyed peace is foreshadowed in the very label on a bottle 'Killmequick's Kangaroo Korrektive!'"

"As you ride into town from your rural residence how often are you forced by love of art to stop and admire the beautiful fresco work on the fences, depicting the glorious benefits of some newly invented drug, warranted to cure hams and force a luxuriant moustache to grow on the smoothest door knob in 3 minutes."

"How the soul is entranced in contemplating the chromatic sketch of 'Captain Jack's Modoc Mutilator' and 'Sitting Bull's Blood Purifier,' 'Pike's Long-horned Tooth Prod' also occupies an occasion side of a barn."

"In introducing a new remedy for man or beast there is nothing like having an attractive title. The latest achievement is a notorious 'Web-foot' pill, which is bound to take, and be taken. The very name is sadly suggestive of disease and mutely appeals for relief."

Church to have annual flower sale

The First Presbyterian Church of Braidwood are selling hanging baskets of flowers for \$25. They will be available Tuesday, April 29. There will be Supertunia baskets, Fuchsia, Geraniums, Millonbells/Calibrachoa, and Dragon Wing Begonia for sale.

Pre-orders are being taken ahead of time by calling or texting LuAnn Bolatto at 815-790-7134. The number of baskets and color choices will be needed when you contact her. These baskets may be used as regular pots of flowers too.

Mobile food pantry coming to town

The Village is a church that works with the community to help where it is needed the most.

Many families are struggling to bring food to the table. That is why The

Village is partnering with Northern Illinois Food Bank to host a mobile food pantry at the Reed-Custer Middle School, 407 Comet Drive, Braidwood, on Monday, April 14, at 5 p.m.



RCHS PHYSICS students (from left) Gwen Stewart, Tanner Gehris and Ana Smith show off their roller coaster track "The Leaning Tower of Pisa."

Blooming in science

This semester at Reed-Custer High School students have been engaged in a variety of activities in the Science department. The Freshman students take one of two Biology classes, where this semester we have been learning about cellular energy, DNA, and inheritance.

Many of the Biology classes engaged in a 3-week lab growing Brassica rapa plants, to test which color of light allowed for the best plant growth, and later writing a formal lab report to communicate their findings (pictured).

Other Biology classes extracted DNA from both their cheek cells, and a fruit of their choice. In other life science news, Seniors in Anatomy and Physiology will be taking a field trip to Northern Illinois University in April to practice their cumulative knowledge of human body systems in a 1-day short course.

As students move forward in their science career, they move into the Physical

Sciences- Chemistry and Physics. Physical Science students just finished learning about different types of chemical reactions, and now are making their way into learning about Sir Isaac Newton, forces, and energy.

Students in Chemistry are performing Acid-Base titrations to determine the acidity and sour candies, and using their knowledge of gas laws to design their own airbags in a simulation using eggs and cardboard "cars."

As Physics students explore learning about energy, they are able to apply their knowledge of external forces to calculate the kinetic and potential energy of hot wheels cars down a track, and build their own marble roller coaster made entirely of paper and scotch tape (pictured). In both of these activities are able to measure the speed of objects at various points throughout the track.



RCHS SAM MAHR and Nevaeh Juricic predict whether pink or blue light will allow for the most growth in their Brassica rapa plants in Biology.

TEACHER OF THE MONTH

MARCH 2025

"She's really funny"
"Kind and fun"
"Positive"
"Happy and cheerful"
"Makes me want to come to school"

MRS. KATELIN ARSENEAU

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE RCHS March Teacher of the Month, as voted on by the student body, Mrs. Katelin Arseneau. Students had the following comments to share about Mrs. Arseneau: "She's really funny, kind and fun, positive, happy and cheerful, and makes me want to come to school. Mrs. Arseneau, who is in her 9th year at RCHS, teaches Family and Consumer Science, runs Little Comets Preschool, facilitates the Career Internship and Teacher Internship programs, and sponsors FCCLA and Student Council.

Fossil Ridge Library News

Adult Programs
Wednesday, April 9- Singer Songwriter concert with Dave Rudolf. 6-7:30 p.m. Join Grammy-nominated Gold Record Artist Dave Rudolf for a night of Cat Stevens, Paul Simon, and a few other singer-songwriters. Hear some of your favorite tunes from the 60s and 70s premiere songwriters.

Tuesday, April 15-Cook the Book Club, 6-7 p.m. Join us on the Third Tuesday of every month for our cookbook-meets-potluck. Each member chooses a recipe from the same cookbook voted on by the group and brings a dish to share at the following meeting. Recipes chosen may contain gluten, soy, dairy, etc.-April's Title: Simply, Easy Fast Slow Cooker.

Teen & Tween Programs
Thursday, April 10, 6-7:30 p.m. Prevention and Life Skills: Empowering Youth. Helping youth identify their "natural high" increases their awareness of substance abuse and its associated dangers. Join us as we inspire kids to find their passion, set goals, and make good life choices.

Monday, April 14-Eat Your Science: Candy Geodes, 6-7 p.m. Eat Your Science is an educational and delicious science program. Each month, you can participate in and explore various science experiments and demonstrations featuring edible ingredients. This unique experience will allow children to learn about science and taste many final products, making it an entirely edible STEM activity. Registration is required, and grades 3rd through 8th are preferred.

Children Programs
Wednesday, April 16 - Lap-Sit, 10-10:30 a.m. Let's instill a love of books in children from birth to three years old. This program is designed to introduce your child to the wonderful world of books. Caregiver participation and guidance are required as we read, sing, and do finger plays.

Thursday, April 10, 17, 24-Toddler Time, 10-11 a.m. We welcome toddlers and their caregivers to join us weekly to explore various toys and sensory materials. Toddlers can enhance their gross and fine motor skills, social interaction,

and language skills. Caregivers must accompany their little ones throughout the program.

Thursdays, 10, 1-5:30-6:30 p.m. Listen and Create Storytime, This program is specially designed for children aged 3-5. Children can explore new books every week and engage in a fun craft project. Please make sure to dress in clothes that can get messy, as the craft project will involve getting creative with various art materials.

Tuesdays, April 15, 29-Play-Doh Playdates, 10:30-11 a.m. Join us for a Play-Doh workshop. Display your creativity using our Play-Doh and tools. This program is for children aged 2-6.

Wednesday, April 16-Chess Club for all ages, 5-7 p.m. This club is a drop-in session, and members can attend at leisure to learn or enhance their skills and play against other players. All ages are welcome.

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We all will pay

SHADOW LAKES—So today is March 2nd liberation day according to Trump. It's the beginning of the tariff war and it will be the first world tariffs war. The U.S. government owes an enormous amount of money and every year it seems to go up. The millionaires in this country know that eventually they're gonna have to reach in their pockets to help pay this off but at this point they're the ones with the money and power, they're the ones to control the government. So what they're doing is make us, the regular citizens, pay for this. How do they do that? Tariffs. Tariffs is just another word for tax, we're gonna be paying more taxes on the products we buy and that extra money is going to fund the government. The other way will be to tax the rich and when I say tax the rich, I'm not talking about the people that make 200,000-\$300,000 a year. I'm talking about the people that make millions and billions. Aren't the American people the ones that work for them in order for them to make all these billions of dollars? So why shouldn't they pay their share.

Polk-A-Dot the best

BRAIDWOOD—Thank you Polk-a-Dot drive in. Best cheeseburgers and hottest fries in Will County. Calling from Manhattan.

Fine them

WILMINGTON—It's almost a week after the election and there are still candidates signs up. The city needs an ordinance that fines the candidates who don't take them all down. We got tired looking at for the two months leading up to the election.

Hwy. honoring vets

BRAIDWOOD—On December 17, President Joe Biden signed into law legislation to designate U.S. Route 20, a coast-to-coast highway spanning 12 states for a total distance of 3,365 miles from Newport, Oregon, to Boston, Massachusetts, as the National Medal of Honor Highway. Ok Vets, put that in your pipe and remember this.

On our dime

COAL CITY—The governor of Illinois has been traveling to different countries making deals with foreign governments. But isn't it his job to take care of the lives of the citizens in Illinois, not wasting tax payers' money being a diplomat. I don't think he uses his own money for trips. But he doesn't mind sightseeing for free while the Illinoisans are facing crime and poverty. Maybe the governor of Illinois has decided to give more aid to illegal activity by bringing more people in secretly into the U.S.A. from foreign lands. The governor is playing king of the hill while more families are being forced out onto the streets.

Big congrats

BRAIDWOOD—Congratulations to Lyons, Dixon and Mikel on their wins this week. This town has been in desperate need of new leadership for a long time. Please hurry up and get to work as this council on their way out has done nothing but go off the rails since the election results. Themselves and their families should be ashamed of their behavior both as themselves and as of anonymous posts created by them. Next up, they will vote Tony into a made up position that this town does not need at this week's city hall meeting. I sure hope you all have a way to amend this last minute stunt that is completely against what the residents want for Braidwood.

Worse than incompetent

WILMINGTON—Is the Trump administration extremely incompetent or is it something far more sinister? The latest debacle is a clerical error resulting in the wrongful deportation of the father of a disabled child to a jail in El Salvador, the land of the harshest torture on earth. Will we be able to get him back? Considering that in 2019 the deported man proved himself innocent of any charges in this country, Trump must make it his absolute priority to restore the man to his family here but will he do so? Also what about the men scooped up by ICE without due process and sent to El Salvador several weeks ago? If Trump feels comfortable sending innocent men to a likely death, then it's a piece of cake for Trump to deprive healthcare for millions of ordinary Americans by cutting Medicaid and stripping Americans of the Social Security they earned. And especially because Trump knows how dictatorships work to deprive the population of their benefits. Start by dismantling the phone system and then the website crashes from the extra load. Slash the staffing at Social Security offices so lines of people form around the block. It gets to the point where people give up trying. Sound familiar? It's happening already and we suspect the incompetence may be something more than just errors. It feels like something bleak and foreboding. It's the deliberate machinations of a pathological liar and a con man who has been convicted of

34 felonies, wants a third term and told us he would be dictator on day one. Irene

We need to fight

GARDNER—The following parable from WWII is very appropriate. The American Version is as follows: When they came to take the Jews, I wasn't Jewish, so I said nothing. When they came to take away the Blacks, I wasn't black, so I said nothing. When they came to take the Latinos, I wasn't Latino, so I said nothing. When they came to take away the Muslims, I wasn't Muslim, so I said nothing. When they came to take away gay people, I wasn't gay, so I said nothing. When they came for the resistance, I was afraid to speak up, so I said nothing. When they came for me and my loved ones, there was no one left to defend us. Now you can add Trans people, book banning, the changing history to get rid of Black and Native American culture, the assault on women's rights and history, immigrants who contribute billions of dollars to this economy and pay into our Social Security and never get a dime in return. And yes, all criminals should be put in jail - maybe the convicted felon? The assault on our Constitution, free speech (you'll notice it's only free if you agree with them) the assault on our national security, our Veterans and so much more. Trump is going by Orban's plan to turn this country into a dictatorship only much faster. We may never have free and fair elections again. Protests are going on all over the country, and they are making a difference. We need to fight for this country. If you do nothing, you have only yourselves to blame for living in an autocracy. It's almost always impossible to get your country back once it's taken from you. The people of Hungary are fighting back because their country is a disaster and I'm hoping they can oust Orban, but their elections are not free and fair, so who knows. Other countries will never trust again with information vital to our security and why should they. We are now on the dark side with Putin, China, Iran, and North Korea. More people are dying in Ukraine because Trump is so jealous of Zelenskyy. Trump would never be that brave or smart and he knows it. The only reason Trump wants to end the war is so he can get a Nobel peace prize. How sick is that? He has abandoned that country and now he stopped the tracking of all the kids Putin kidnapped, so they can never be found. How disgusting. So many people/children all over the world will now die because of this vile incompetent fool. He is an empty vessel. Have fun with no SS, Medicaid, Medicare, and no insurance. The government can always be better, but to destroy it so the rich can take over and profit from it is sick. Welcome to the world you helped bring to us all. May God help us through this disaster. And yes, I ask God for help every day.

Tariff War

SHADOW LAKES—With all this talk about tariffs, everybody should know by now what it means and how tariffs work. And if you don't know how tariffs work it doesn't matter you should at least know that it's gonna make everything more expensive. Tariff is another word for tax. A tariff and a tax are exactly the same thing. Anything that is imported into the USA from any country in the world except Russia (figure that one out) will be charged import tax. That will be passed on to the consumer meaning we the people. This is being called a tariff war and the reason for that is because that is exactly what it is. It's a tariff war. The United States against every country in the world. How do you think this is gonna go for us?

Give seniors a break

MORRIS—I just heard the Morris High School tax increase referendum passed. Now everybody can complain about their taxes going up. Personal property tax, gas tax, etc. Now the high school teachers and administrators will get their usual four and five, six percent pay raises this year and every year. How about a referendum for senior citizens over the age of 80 or 85 only have to pay half their property taxes. This is ridiculous. I never vote for a tax increase. All these rich people in Morris voted for it. Why don't they pay my property taxes for me. They are a bunch of stupid people that want to vote for their property tax increase.

19 pennies a day

BRAIDWOOD—Remember when Republicans refused to allow anyone to give bottles of water to voters waiting in the hot sun for hours? Now Musk is allowed to give million dollar checks to buy votes. Meanwhile, Musk and Trump shut down USAID which constituted only 0.3% of federal spending for 2024 according to the OMB and Department of the Treasury. Furthermore, the U.S. is in 6th place in the world for per capita foreign aid with Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, the UK and France giving more in that order. And my message to Musk is clear: Due to your chainsaw, children previously assisted by USAID are starving for the purpose of saving 19 cents per day per child. Trump should hang his head in shame and Musk should keep his



kid away from the cameras because we don't want to see Musk's kid while other kids are needlessly dying. And to Pete Hegseth who has done enough damage to our national security, keep your wife out of official meetings. What a bunch of bunglers, unlike when the Clinton-Gore administration streamlined the government and balanced the budget with surpluses to pay down the national debt from 1998-2001.

Creepy behavior

WILMINGTON—We only need to look to the state of Maine to get a glimpse of Trump's temper tantrums and creepy behavior. There was a public squabble between Trump and Governor Janet Mills of Maine who told Trump she had to follow state law regarding transgender athletes. How did Trump get retaliation? He created inconveniences such as imposing special rules for newborns and their Social Security numbers, denying schoolchildren's lunches, reversing funding for coastline conditions and other miscellaneous forms of vengeance against the state of Maine and only the state of Maine. One confusing eruption after another occurred until finally it was discovered that Trump was the source of Maine's troubles. The question needs to be asked, why is Trump sitting in the Oval Office behind the resolute desk when his maturity level is that of a spoiled adolescent?

Hope they checked

COAL CITY—Regarding the church on Broadway that was demolished, were asbestos precautions taken? I live nearby and breathed in the debris. I don't know if anyone checked for asbestos but if not, how could the village allow this to take place?

FOB dead zone

WILMINGTON—There is an area on South Kankakee Street that seems to have some sort of electrical frequency interference. I don't know how wide or long this may be. Myself and many neighbors can no longer use our key fobs to lock or unlock our car doors. We have four vehicles that don't work with the key fobs and when my son came to visit it happened with his vehicle too. There was a post on Wilmington community group where many are experiencing the same thing. Not sure who I can ask or who could help. This has been going on for two to three weeks. Any suggestions be greatly appreciated.

Wrong all along

BRAIDWOOD—As the stock market plummets and 401(k) investments shrink, Democrats console those who face a bleak future. As for the billionaires, we have you in our sights for a huge tax increase. Because you see, Democrats have been right all along, Biden's administration accomplished amazing results and Trump has been proven to be wrong, just like Democrats predicted. In fact, the entire world is aligned against America now except for the dictators of savage Russia, dark North Korea and the terrorist nation of Iran. Meanwhile Trump babbles incoherently while onlookers stare in gloomy disbelief thinking about the recession to come.

Eat your fruits

SHADOW LAKES—Has anybody noticed that we are running out of fruits and vegetables in the grocery stores? The left told us with the deportation of the illegals this would happen.

Obediently yours, Margot Lane

Where's the outrage?

SHADOW LAKES—I enjoy reading the Sound-Off column. These articles written by all the leftist give them this chance to blow off steam. The left expects President Trump to fix our country, in 100 days, when it took China Joe four years to screw it up. Here was a commentary, in this paper, written by Jason Bunting: "Illinois vastly underestimated costs of immigrant benefits." Find this article and read it. This money is going to come out of your pocket. Now, after the money is spent, Pritzker wants to end this program. But he is still in favor of sanctuary cities. Will I see outrage in the paper about this cost? I think not. You voted this man into office, and I am sure when he runs for president, you will vote for him again. This is what the Left does. Margot Lane

The blame game

RITCHIE—We knew it wouldn't take

long for Republicans to blame Joe Biden for the stock market crash. But the facts tell a different story. Biden left office with a strong economy after creating 16 million jobs, which is a record high, unemployment at a 50-year record low of 4%, the stock market at a record high and the strongest GDP in the industrialized world when Trump became president. Compare that to now, only 79 days later, we are in the middle of a trade war, economists are predicting a recession, and companies are laying off workers by the hundreds. During the Biden years prices were high across the entire world due to post-Covid, but Trump's tariffs today are raising prices even higher yet, causing a voluntary recession and wiping out workers' retirement accounts. Biden did the hard work of passing bipartisan legislation at home and maintaining relationships with allies abroad without using dirty tricks and pressure tactics of a bully. If only we could avoid this chaos and go back in time to those reassuring times.

How many?

WILMINGTON—Solar farm problems: Toxic hazardous chemicals in solar panels such as cadmium, lead, arsenic, copper, aluminum, nickel, silicon, uranium, thorium, radium, hydrofluoric acid can seep into ground when rainwater, snow and moisture wash away these chemicals used to create the panels or if panels are damaged by hail or wind. These dangerous cancer-causing chemicals can contaminate and pollute the soil, well water, creeks/streams in surrounding areas. The proposed solar farms are located in flood zones with all the property having very high water tables.) So-called dirty electricity" is extremely harmful to human health, mentally and physically. The high frequency electrical noise is common and comes out of light bulbs, outlets, and other electrical devices causing headaches, dizziness, nausea, insomnia and behavioral issues in children and pets. Power surges and outages are also very common surrounding the area. EMF radiation from solar panels is mostly from the wiring or inverter, can effect people with children and pets. power urges and outages are also very common surrounding the area. EMF radiation from solar panels is mostly from the wiring or inverter, can affect people with hypersensitivity and may get ill while the long-term effects of the radiation on the body are not known. Fire hazards are high depending on battery storage an the type of lenses/mirror used which can generate high levels of heat and electromagnetic radiation. Wildlife in our area is very vibrant with deer, turkeys, cranes, hawks, bald eagles, coyote along with the usual assortment of squirrels and raccoons. Some of their habitat will be cut off. Birds are attracted to the panel and can be maimed or killed, and possible soil/plant and water resources contaminated. Home values often decline in the surrounding area. This is the second solar farm now proposed for this immediate area. The first one being built on 25 acres on 216th Street, so this is now an additional adjacent 34 acres. Solar farms do not benefit Wilmington in any way, no profit, only 1.56% of electricity in Illinois comes from solar. Personally, my biggest fear is private well water contamination. Our property, although not in a flood zone, is continuously flooding. I cannot see how they can guarantee our health and safety living on property with such a high water table. I am also concerned about our wildlife population. The public hearing is April 15 at 5:30 p.m. in the Will County Office Building at 302 N. Chicago Street, Joliet, IL 60432 and we will be able to ask questions and give statements.

Deserve to retire

WILMINGTON—I was sorry to read the article about Steve and Tina Nelson and that they will be retiring but I am also very happy for them that they will be able to enjoy retirement. When Linda and I moved to Wilmington in 2001 I told my friends up in Richton Park we were moving to Wilmington. The comment I heard most was how many friends would drive 70 miles round trip to come to Nelsons to get their furniture. So that's a real testament to the furniture store. Everything that has the name of Nelsons has always been a positive experience. Steve and Tina I wish you and your family all the best. Thank you for your service to the community. Enjoy your retirement. May God bless you always. Sheri Michaels

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Forest Preserve photo

THE WAUPONSEE GLACIAL Trail bridge over the Kankakee River in Custer Park is one of five unique spans that are part of a Bridges of Will County challenge. The challenge runs through June 30.

Forest Preserve adventure features five Bridges of Will County

The Forest Preserve District of Will County is inviting adventurers of all ages to take on a new kind of spring challenge - one that blends exploration and history.

The free Bridges of Will County program kicked off on April 1 and runs through Monday, June 30, offering participants the chance to traverse five unique Forest Preserve bridges across the county.

Participants who check in at each bridge will be rewarded with a Forest Preserve tote bag that can be picked up at a visitor center in July.

To get started, download the free Goosechase smartphone app and search for the program by name or use join code CLF9CZ.

Each bridge has been carefully selected for its beauty, history and significance in connecting communities. The five bridges are:

- Kankakee River Bridge along the Wauponse Glacial Trail, Custer Park.

- DuPage River Bridge at Hidden Lakes Trout Farm, Hidden Oaks Preserve, Bolingbrook.

- Big Bridge at Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve, Crete Township.

- Swing Bridge at Centennial Trail, Romeoville.

- I&M Canal Bridge at Lake Chaminwood Preserve, Channahon.

The Swing Bridge and the Kankakee River Bridge both tout impressive histories participants can learn about on their adventures.

The timber Big Bridge stretches over a 40-foot ravine offering visitors opportunities to connect with the surrounding preserve and the serenity of the treetops.

The new I&M Canal Bridge and the DuPage River Bridge are community connectors that enhance accessibility across the county.

The inspiration for this year's event came from an article published by the Forest Preserve in 2017: "Harnessing the wilderness - forest preserve bridges

people and nature."

"Bridges are essential in connecting communities and creating access," said Em Wilcher, the Forest Preserve's recreation coordinator. "As an avid trail user and recreation planner, it was a no-brainer to celebrate the engineering, planning and history of our bridges with this program."

Pace yourself

The challenge encourages residents to explore Will County's natural beauty at their own pace. And with nearly three months to complete the challenge, participants can take their time or fast track their fun.

Wilcher said she's looking forward to hearing feedback on the challenge and stories about how people traveled to see the bridges.

"I'll be curious to hear who tries to make it to all the bridges in a single weekend adventure, who maximizes their miles, or if anyone comes up with side challenges to make it even more fun."

Scrap metal can be recycled during electronics drop-offs

Don't throw that old frying pan in the trash bin. Now you can take it and other scrap metal items to a Will County electronics waste recycling drop-off held the second Thursday of the month in the parking lot of the city hall, 1165 S. Water St., Wilmington.

Small scrap metal items being accepted including cookie sheets, pots and pans, car jacks, chains, keys, copper pipe and fittings, nuts, bolts, screws, hand tools, metal door knobs, silverware, tool boxes, watches, wire hangers, wire screens and more.

Will County's next free electronics drop-off event will be Thursday, April 10, from 5-7 p.m.

Participants are

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

All electronic items (broken or obsolete) are accepted. Items include: televisions (limit 2), computers and monitors including desktops, laptops, notebooks, tablets, e-readers), printers, electronic keyboards, fax machines, videocassette recorders, portable digital music players (iPods, MP3s), CD/DVD/Blu-ray players, DVD players/recorders, video game consoles, small scale servers, scanners, electronic mice, digital converter boxes, cable

receivers, satellite receivers, computer cable, computer speakers, portable digital assistants (PDAs) and zip drives.

Also air fryers, all types of telephones, calculators, camcorders, cell phones, CB radio/CB scanners, digital/SLR cameras, digital photo frames, digital projectors, electric lawn mowers, electric scooters, fans, GPS devices, hands-free phone headsets, Instapot, microwaves, power tools, radar detectors, radios, rice cooker, shredders, stereo receivers, string lights, toasters and toaster ovens, UPS/battery backup devices and vacuums (stick, robot, canister) and tollway responders.

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Vote by mail taking a bigger role

You've probably read about the Republican Party implosion last week in suburban municipal and township campaigns, particularly in DuPage County.

It's important to remember that these consolidated elections are not always a reliable indication of the future. They're very low turnout, and in years like this - when the election was held during a hugely controversial US president's first 100 days - they can be influenced by the outrage of the moment, particularly when one political party was putting its finger on the scale, as the Democratic Party of Illinois was.

The state party supported 280 local candidates, and it claims 222 of those candidates won, for a 79 percent success rate.

Former state Rep. Jeanne Ives, a member of the Illinois Republican Party's state central committee, described her party's losses as a "complete wipeout."

President Donald Trump's impact on the contests is undeniable. But a lot of hard work was put in at the state and local levels. The DuPage Democrats won all of their contested township races, much of it due to strong



CAPITOL FACTS
Rich Miller

grassroots work and decent candidate recruitment.

But there's another aspect to this: Vote by mail; particularly the state's permanent vote by mail program.

Illinoisans have been able to sign up for permanent vote by mail status for about four years now. You fill out a simple form and then your local election authority sends you a ballot before every election.

Former Republican state Rep. Mark Batinick told me before the election that when the statute took effect, 2025 was "the election I feared the most."

His reasoning was simple. This was the first off-year election for permanent vote by mail after years of compiling participants. As noted above, these elections have notoriously low turnout. But Democrats have far more trust in mailed-in ballots than Republicans, so they're much more likely to sign up for the permanent VBM program.

The most important part of permanent VBM is that the ballots are a major reminder to voters that it is time to vote again. They may tune out the news or the ads, but that official mailer from their county clerk will likely catch their attention.

And he was right.

For example, on election night, the chief of staff for Rep. Norma Hernandez (D-Melrose Park) Bobby Hernandez had a slight 14-vote lead over incumbent Addison Township Supervisor Dennis Reboletti.

The Republican Reboletti had a 212-vote lead among early voters and a 206-vote lead among voters who cast their ballots on election day itself.

But by that Friday, the Democrat Hernandez had a 775-vote lead among mailed-in ballots. His 357-vote overall lead is expected to increase as more mail trickles in.

The reason for the Republican aversion to voting by mail is that President Trump has long blasted it as a way for Democrats to steal elections. He and party leaders reversed course before the 2024 election. The party

did make some gains, but, at least in Illinois, they haven't yet matched the Democrats' superiority.

And now Trump has reversed course again, issuing an executive order that in part commands the US Attorney General to take "all necessary action" against states which count mailed-in ballots that arrive after federal election days. The Postal Service being what it is (and service may very well deteriorate even further going forward), that could disenfranchise a whole lot of voters.

A federal district court and an appellate court ruled against a lawsuit originally filed in 2023 by Illinois US Rep. Mike Bost attempting to stop the count of ballots received after midnight on election days, even if they're postmarked by election day itself (identical to the rules for mailing income tax returns by deadline dates).

Bost has since asked the US Supreme Court to step in.

Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul is among several Democratic AG's across the country to join a lawsuit against Trump's executive order.

Their main argument: "The President has no constitutional authority to 'make or alter' laws governing federal elections."

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

M-E Quilt Group to hold annual resale

The Manhattan-Elwood Quilt Group is hosting its 11th annual Rescue ME Crafters' Resale to be held from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 12 at the Manhattan Township Office, 230 Wabash St., Manhattan.

This resale will feature quilting, sewing and needlework supplies. Purchase a bag to fill for a \$10 donation.

There will also be vintage quilts and sewing machines available for purchase. The funds raised from the resale will be used to offset the costs of the group's Quilting for ME - children's project and other charitable projects.

More information about the group and event is available on the Manhattan-Elwood Quilt Group Facebook page.

Forest Preserve recycling bikes

The Forest Preserve is collecting old bikes on behalf of Working Bikes, workingbikes.org, an organization that refurbishes and distributes bikes locally and globally as tools of empowerment.

During Preserve hours, from Saturday, April 12 to Sunday, April 27, at three locations - Monee Reservoir, Monee Township; Hidden Oaks Nature Center, Bolingbrook; and McKinley Woods - Kerry Sheridan Grove, Channahon, bikes can be dropped off. No bike is too old or rusty.

Spring Fling event all set in Coal City

The Village Christian Church in Coal City will be holding a Spring Fling featuring games and activities for all ages on Sunday, April 27, around 11:30 a.m., following the 10:30 a.m. service.

Guests are invited to enjoy games and activities, along with some great food!

Kid Village will be open for infants through grade 3, and Pulse Students will meet for kids from grades 4-8. Your kids will feel special, have fun and develop friendships, all while getting to know Jesus!

The Coal City campus is located at 965 East Division Street. The event will be held rain or shine.

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Animals starting to prefer city living

Dear EarthTalk: Why do some wild animals live in cities more than in rural areas?

- L.K. via email



When people think of wildlife, they often picture animals wandering in nature. However, in the past 15 years, scientists have found more animals moving into and thriving in cities-sometimes even more successfully than in their natural habitats.

Before learning about why animals are moving to cities, it's important to understand what urban and rural mean. Urban areas are densely populated regions dominated by human activity. Rural areas are sparsely populated with more natural ecosystems. Wildlife that successfully adapt to city life are often called urban wildlife.

Unlike rural areas, where animals rely on seasonal food cycles, the urban environment provides them with more predictable food sources like waste bins, pet foods and restaurant waste, ensuring a steady food supply. Thus,



WE ARE ALL used to seeing wild animals in the city nowadays across the United States.

animals endure harsher habits in rural areas, leading to greater migration into the city.

"Anecdotally, we see high densities of coyotes in nature preserves and urban parks," said Emily Zepeda, of the School of Environment and Natural Resources from Ohio State University. "Also, in low-income areas, coyotes are 1 1/2 times more likely to survive to age two than in high-income areas," due to the amount of human food waste.

The presence of humans discourages natural predators, unlike rural areas where predation is a major threat to wildlife.

Thus, animals prefer cities, as they can thrive with less competition. Moreover, urban settings

provide animals with shelter, like parks and suburban green spaces. Also, warmer microclimates in cities make survival easier for animals that struggle in colder rural areas.

Urban wildlife is adapting to cities in many ways. Lauren Stanton, a PhD candidate at the University of Wyoming, says that raccoons in Toronto "are making rapid associations, and they can alter their behavior."

To find more food sources, animals have learned to synchronize their behavior with human activity; for example, raccoons have learned to get inside rubbish bins with securely locked lids. And pigeons typically nest on cliffs, and a multi-story building is indeed a type of

cliff, albeit manmade. Therefore, adapting to cities isn't hard for the pigeons due to preadaptation.

Living in cities as urban wildlife isn't easy. There is a risk of vehicle collisions, habitat fragmentation and human-wildlife conflict. Thousands of animals die each year on roads. Humans are also at risk. Animals cause serious road hazards.

Bears break into homes and garages to search for food. Ultimately, humans need to balance urbanization with wildlife needs, like expanding natural habitats, thoughtful city planning and wildlife corridors to ensure a future where both species can live together safely and peacefully.

EarthTalk® is a 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.

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Gas prices see largest gain of the year

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have risen 4.5 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.47/g, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices in Illinois are 29.5 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 48.5 cents per gallon lower than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has increased 3.6 cents in the last week and stands at \$3.594 per gallon.

In Wilmington, expect to pay anywhere from \$3.27/g at Mohsen to \$3.44/g at Circle K. Braidwood gas ranges from \$3.49/g at Casey's, up to \$3.54/g at Circle K, which by the way is closing at the end of the week.

In Coal City, the least expensive gas is \$3.48 at Shell and the highest is Gas N Wash at \$3.51/g.

In Morris, gas is \$3.39/g at Amoco, up to \$3.49/g at BP. Bourbonnais ranges from \$3.26/g at Gulf to \$3.39/g at Circle K.

"While the national

average price of gasoline saw its largest weekly gain of the year, it likely won't last long, as oil prices have plummeted amid growing concerns about the global economy following the U.S. announcement of some of the most significant tariffs in over a century, along with OPEC+ restoring oil production faster than anticipated," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

"In addition to falling oil prices, the stock market has dropped sharply, and the risk of a recession has increased—raising the like-

lihood of reduced global energy and oil demand. As a result, motorists can expect gas prices to begin falling nearly coast-to-coast, with oil now at its lowest level since the early days of the pandemic in 2021. If tariffs aren't scaled back soon, the national average could fall below \$3 per gallon."

The lowest price for gas in the state is \$2.68/g and the highest was \$4.49/g, a difference of \$1.91.

Wilmington Garden Club to talk about tree plantings

The Wilmington Garden Club will meet at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, April 16, at the Wilmington Park District building, 315 N. Water St.

Special guest will be a Master Gardener from Allied Nursery who will talk about tree plantings and tree care.

The meeting is open to the public and bring a friend.

On May 24 the Garden Club will host its annual perennial exchange on Saturday, May 24, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Wilmington VFW Post 5422, 557 W. Baltimore St.

Bring a plant and take a plant as part of the exchange. Anyone can participate for free.

Like to garden? Then come sit in a Garden Club meeting and bring a friend.

Knights of Columbus offering scholarship

Knights of Columbus Fr. George J. Kuzma Council 11149 is offering its Sr. Ann Ellen Catholic Education Scholarship in the amount of \$500 to one applicant choosing to further their Catholic education at the grade school or high school level.

To qualify, the applicant must be:

- Member of St. Rose Parish, Wilmington, IL.
- Presently attending a Catholic school or registered to attend a Catholic school for fall 2025.

Please provide the following information as your application:

- Name of student applicant.
- Name of Catholic school presently attending or registered to attend fall 2025.

A handwritten note from the student stating why they want to attend/continue to attend this chosen Catholic school for a Catholic education (1 page).

Please mail applications to: Fr. George J. Kuzma Council 11149, P.O. Box 767, Wilmington, IL 60481. Mail the information so that it is received before April 22.

If you have any questions contact Grand Knight Joe Welps at 815-919-1170 or email: splewj@gmail.com.

Our Caring Closet

a 'not for profit' community asset

Our Couture Closet Fashion Show Charity Fundraiser

Sunday April 13th
2pm-5pm
doors open at 1:30pm

located at the Wilmington High School
209 Wildcat Ct, Wilmington, IL

Free Will Donation for Admission

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Rotary Club of Wilmington

WilmingtonIllinoisRotary
www.rotaryofwilmington.com

OBITUARIES

Bryan Hendrex

MORRIS—Bryan Hendrex, 59, of Morris, passed away April 2, 2025, at his home. He was born Nov. 4, 1965, in Joliet, the son of Dora (nee Heck) and Paul Hendrex.

Bryan grew up in Braceville, graduated high school, and attended technical school to become an auto mechanic. He owned and operated Bryan's Autoworld in Braidwood for 32 years and had many loyal customers. He enjoyed cheering on the Cubs, the Bears, and especially loved watching NASCAR. He also worked on local race cars in the pits at Grundy County Speedway on Friday nights.

Survived by his beloved wife of 38



years, Lori (nee Wulffen) Hendrex; his loving son, Brandon Hendrex; dear sisters, Tina Hendrex and Terry Champion; dear brother, Duane Hendrex; numerous nieces, nephews and friends also survive.

He was preceded in death by his father, Paul Hendrex; mother, Dora Wilson; and brother, Orman "Lee" Heafner.

At Bryan's request, there will be no formal services and cremation rites have been accorded.

Please visit his Memorial Tribute at www.fredcdames.com where you can share a favorite memory or leave a condolence.

John W. Harvey

BRAIDWOOD—John W. "Johnny" Harvey, 52, of Braidwood, passed away on Saturday, April 5, 2025 surrounded by his family at MacNeal Hospital in Berwyn.

Born Feb. 2, 1973, in Morris, John "Johnny" William Harvey Jr. was the son of John "Jack" (Denise) Harvey and Pam (Brad) Oram.

Johnny dedicated himself to his work at Industrial Parts Group, hitting his first million dollars in sales on November of 2019,

He enjoyed fishing, working on his Camaro's, Pebbles and Hard Core 2 and all things racing. Johnny's greatest joy came from spending time with his family.

Survivors include his daughter, Ashley (Nate) Swatzell, of Janesville, WI; parents, John "Jack" (Denise) Harvey, brother, Joe (Beth) Harvey; brother, Joe (Jenny) Zolper; sister, Mindy (Lenny) Friddle; nieces, Ruby Zolper and Pearl Friddle; nephew, Jaden Friddle; stepson, Darrell (DJ) Williams Jr.; stepdaughter, Whitney (Austin) Sysol and



stepgrandchildren, Brycen and Beckham Sysol.

Johnny was preceded in death by his son, John Patrick; brother, Billy Harvey; mother, Pam Oram; stepfather, Brad Oram and wife, Melissa (Welsh) Harvey.

Per his wishes, cremation rights have been accorded.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to the Grundy County Humane Society.

The family will receive friends from 3:30 p.m. until the time of the Memorial Service at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 12, 2025. Rev. Dr. Jay Regennitter will officiate.

In honor of Johnny's love and passion for cars, the family asks that you please drive your favorite car in memory of John.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guestbook at www.ferrarifuneral.com.

Ferrari Funeral Services of Coal City are entrusted with arrangements.

Cheri Lynn Widlacki

ESSEX—Cheri Lynn Kiukman Widlacki, 62, of Essex, and formerly of Crestwood and Bourbonnais, passed away surrounded by her children on April 4, 2025 at Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood, IL.

Born Dec. 19, 1962 in Evergreen Park, IL, Cheri Lynn was the daughter of Kenneth and Jean Kiukman and Betty (Feddery) Milton. She was raised in Crestwood, IL. She was a dedicated and hard-working woman who took pride in her job and truly loved her coworkers and customers. Fondly known as "your neighborhood gas station lady," Cheri greeted everyone with a warm smile, a quick wit, and perhaps a clever wisecrack to brighten their day. Her door was always open—figuratively and literally—and she was always ready to feed an army at a moment's notice. Whether you needed a meal, a laugh, or a place to feel at home, Cheri made sure you had it.

A passionate Green Bay Packers fan, Cheri wore her green and gold with pride, though she loved the friendly rivalry with Bears fans just as much. "Go Pack Go!" was more than a chant—it was a piece of her vibrant spirit. Known for her welcoming heart, sharp humor, and silly antics, Cheri brought joy, comfort, and connection to everyone lucky enough to know her. Her legacy of kindness, humor, and love lives on in the countless lives she touched.



Survivors include her children: Marissa Osborne, Kelly and Ian Issert, Carrie Widlacki, Billy and Susie Widlacki and Jenny and Josh LaGrange; grandchildren: Lukas Billet, Allen Peace, Bobby Smith, Ian, Ryker and Rowan Issert, Jaidyn and Jasmyn LaGrange, Ally, Lilly and Sammy Widlacki; brothers: Dave and Linda Kuikman, Dan and Chris Kuikman, Rick and Jen Kuikman and Jeff Kuikman, and many beloved nieces and nephews.

Cheri was preceded in death by her mother, Betty Jean; father, Kenneth Kuikman and brother, Joey Kuikman, as well as her loving Nana and Bombpa.

The family will receive friends for a visitation at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd. in Wilmington on Thursday, April 10, 2025 between the hours of 4 and 7 p.m. In light of Cheri's spirit, those attending are encouraged to wear football attire or her favorite color purple.

Funeral services will follow Friday, April 11, 2025 at 11 a.m. in the funeral home with Pastor Jeff Whittum from Ignite Christian Church officiating. Graveside service will immediately follow. Afterwards, friends and family are welcome to join a luncheon at Ignite Christian Church, 1180 W. First St., Braidwood at 12:30 p.m.

Anna Mae Winke

GARDNER—Anna Mae Winke, of Gardner, formerly of Lake Shannon, Reddick, IL and Lockport, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, April 1, 2025 surrounded by her family.

Born Nov. 20, 1931 in Logansport, IN, She was the daughter of William Pamel and Cora (nee Rinehart) Pamel-Albertson. Anna married the love of her life, Edward F. Winke on Aug. 23, 1948, and he passed away April 22, 2012.

Anna and her husband, Edward loved going to the Lockport VFW where Edward had served as Vice Commander and Anna was a member of the Ladies Auxiliary Post 5788. They loved to meet their family and friends there and dance the night away. When the band, Eddie Korosa Jr. and the Boys from Illinois, would play at the VFW, they always played the song, "Unforgettable" and said, this song is for Ed and Ann Winke. They were an unforgettable couple that shared an unforgettable love.

In Anna's later years, she enjoyed spending time with her family. She lived with her daughter, Kyle, and son-in-law Dean, on Lake Greenfield. She loved running errands with Dean in his truck and in the summer they would take the Ranger utility vehicle to visit friends. Dean kept recordings for her of her favorite TV show, "The Carol Burnette Show" and she loved to attend all of the summer festivals.

Ann's family wishes to show much love and appreciation for the caregivers who looked after her over the years. A special heartfelt thank you to Lightways



Hospice of Joliet, Shanna Arnold, Anna's nurse, and Emma Fisher, Anna's current caretaker. Thank you for making her life better.

Surviving are her three children: Edward Lonnie (Paula) Winke, of New Lenox; Kyle Ann (Dean) Cunning, of Gardner and Cheryl Lynn Winke, of Downers Grove; four grandchildren: Aaron Winke, Timothy Winke, Erica Mendyk (John Totura), and Sean (Kaitlyn) Mendyk; her great-granddaughter, Kinsley; one sister, Carolyn Sue Kline, of Arizona, and many nieces and nephews.

Anna was preceded in death by her parents and husband, her half brother, Edward Pamel Johnson, and her brother-in-law, Roy Kline.

The family will receive friends at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd., in Wilmington on Sunday, April 6, 2025 from 12 p.m. until the time of funeral service at 2 p.m. A private burial will be held at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, where Anna will be laid to rest with her husband.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Anna's memory to Lightways Hospice in Joliet.

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

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

Thomas E. Bradley

WILMINGTON—Thomas E. Bradley, 65, of Wilmington, formerly of Chicago, passed away on Saturday, March 29, 2025 at Lightways Hospice in Joliet with family by his side.

Born on Aug. 15, 1959, Thomas Edward was a son of Earl and Mary (Kwiatkowski) Bradley. He was raised in Chicago, and graduated from Kelly High School with the class of 1979. Shortly after, he began what would become a long and dedicated career at Andrews Automotive, where he proudly worked for over 30 years until his retirement. On June 21, 1980, Thomas married the love of his life, Nancy, at St. Agnes of Bohemia Catholic Church in Chicago. The pair began their lives together in Chicago before planting roots in Wilmington in 1994.

Thomas was a long-standing member of the Will County Sportsman Club "Lake Will" in Wilmington. A true outdoorsman at heart, he found joy in fishing, hunting, gardening, and camping. He cherished time spent in nature and never passed up the chance to share a drink and good conversation with his friends. A lifelong Chicago White Sox and Bears fan, Thomas's loyalty to his teams was unmatched. Known for his larger-than-life personality, he lit up every room he



entered—always social and seemingly knowing everyone. Thomas was the life of the party, a charismatic and strong-willed man who thrived in the spotlight and brought laughter wherever he went.

He is survived by his wife, Nancy; three children: Nicole Bradley, Tommy (Karissa) Bradley and Kylie (Sky) Rys; seven grandchildren: Bradley, Brooklynn, Payten, Isabella, Brody, Tomi, and one on the way, Remy; sister, Vickie (Kevin) Amsler; sister in law, Pamela Vega; his foster mother, Edith Miller; several cousins and numerous nieces and nephews, as well as extended family, including the Cygan family.

Thomas is preceded in death by his parents, parents-in-law, Phil (Joan) Wojtonik; foster father, Wayne Miller; brother, Daniel Bradley; brother in law, Leroy Vega (Junior).

The family will receive friends for a memorial visitation at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd. in Wilmington on Saturday, April 12, 2025 from 2 p.m. until time of the Celebration of Life service at 5 p.m.

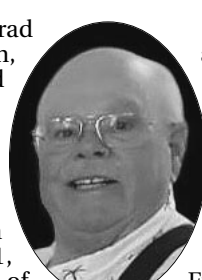
Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Thomas' name to the family for their distribution.

Conrad Stanley

SOUTH WILMINGTON—Conrad Stanley, 68, of South Wilmington, formerly of Colorado and Wyoming, passed way Monday, April 7, 2025 at Ascension Saint Mary Hospital in Kankakee.

The family will receive friends at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd., in Wilmington on Friday, April 11, 2025 from 4 p.m. until the time of funeral service at 7 p.m.

Cremation rites will be accorded following the funeral services.



Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.BaskervilleFuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and to view Conrad's full obituary.

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

A full obituary will appear in next week's paper.

Don't be April Fooled

Spring brings hope for an uptick in business as tax return checks trickle in and consumers make long-delayed purchases. If you think you don't need to advertise because customers are planning to spend no matter what, think again.

Just because customers are in the mood to buy what you're selling, doesn't mean they are choosing your business. With a solid marketing plan utilizing our weekly newspapers, social media and digital readership, now is the time to build "top of mind" presence with your prospects.

While something as simple as your competitor's ad may have caught their attention, when you include call for action terms like "limited time offer" or "talk to an expert" or "act quickly", you can get them thinking of your business first. There are a thousand and one other things that can impact consumers' purchase decisions, so ramping up your marketing and advertising efforts now reminds shoppers of all the benefits, offerings and reasons to choose your business.

Let's face it. Consumers trust what they read in their local newspaper, including advertising. Our audience is engaged in their community and buy from LOCAL businesses.

So put your business in print with our April special.

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Call our ad department 815-476-7966 and mention the April special coupon. Color charges will be applied.

Illinois unemployment rate above average

Illinois' unemployment rate holds at 4.9%, continuing to be higher than the national average.

The January unemployment report showed that the state held steady at a 4.9% unemployment rate, nearly a full percentage point higher than the national average. The unemployment rate in December was also 4.9%.

In 2024, Illinois lost 17,800 jobs in the category of Professional and Business Services, 5,900 jobs in the manufacturing category and 3,400 jobs in construction.

There were slight gains in health services, education and government, but not enough to outweigh the losses.

Data for the report came from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and was released by the Illinois Department of Employment Security.

Route 66 Red Carpet Corridor Craft & Flea Market

The Route 66 Red Carpet Corridor Craft & Flea Market will be held Saturday, May 3, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on North Water Street in Wilmington.

Exhibitors' spaces will be approximately 10-feet wide by 10-feet deep. A non-refundable fee of \$45 paid by April 12 and thereafter starting April 14 it becomes \$60 for a space. Chamber members are given a \$20 discount on vendor fees.

Set-up time begins at 7 a.m. After checking in at the north end of Water St. and arrive no later than 8 a.m. and remove all vehicles before 8:40 a.m. or spaces will be forfeited.

The Wilmington Chamber of Commerce will not assume liability for losses, damages and/or injuries by or to exhibitors.

Applications can be submitted and paid on line at wilmingtonilchamber.org/redcarpet. Checks must be mailed and made payable to Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, 616 Davy Ln, Wilmington, IL 60481.

Red 66 Red Carpet Corridor Flea Market and Arts & Crafts Show

Contact name: _____

Phone: _____

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Number of spaces: _____ Amount enclosed: _____

Our Caring Closet planning charity fashion show April 13

Just about everyone in the area has heard of Our Caring Closet. But for those that have not, “the free store”, as it is affectionately called by many, has been serving Wilmington and just about anywhere else that has needed help for years.

The closet accepts donations of clothing and household items. Everything is carefully sorted and placed in the showroom, anyone in need is welcome to come shop for anything they’d like and it’s all free of charge.

This year the closet is planning something a little different for its annual fundraiser, “Our Couture Closet” a charity fashion show at the Wilmington High School to raise funds to help continue its mission.

On Sunday, April 13, volunteer models will showcase many of the wonderful items received from this generous community. Everything from casual to formal, children’s to adult’s and men’s to women’s will be included. Even a special local celebrity has agreed to walk the runway.

The models will be

carrying purses, bags and backpacks filled with exciting gifts donated by many local businesses. You will have the chance to win movie tickets to The Mar, a fire safe provided by Rich’s Lock and Key, a golf outing at Cinder Ridge, even bowling for 20 of your closest friends and family at Riverfront Lanes.

Additionally there will be gift certificates to many local restaurants, salons, spas, retail shops, too many to list! These bags will be auctioned off during the show. Our sponsors Chic, Geek and Antique and Lionsmark Auction House will be providing auctioneer and master of ceremony services.

Formal dress is not required to attend but you will have the opportunity to design an outfit like one of our models! There will be a boutique set up where you can shop the rack. Everything in the Boutique is free of charge but a free will donation is greatly appreciated. Once you have your ensemble together you’ll have the chance to show off your new look in a photo booth sponsored by **Tori Elizabeth + Company**.

After having your picture taken don’t forget to place a bid on one of the tablescapes silent auction items. Each tablescape includes a unique table setting along with items from our donors, including items like a one-year digital subscription to the Free Press and the opportunity to have a private picnic at Art on 66, and be sure to purchase a 50/50 raffle ticket also!

Before taking your seat for the show be sure to help yourself to the hors d’oeuvres table. Among many items available, there will also be treats provided by the Blue Horse Wine and Martini Bar, Trip G’s and the Wilmington Subway.

The doors open at 1:30 p.m. with the showing beginning at 2 p.m. We at the Closet along with our sponsors, Chic, Geek and Antique, Lionsmark Auction House, Free Press Newspapers, First Christian Church, Wilmington Rotary Club, Robert Bolser Country Financial, and Eaton and Schults Insurance Group, all hope to see you there!

Grundy Bank joins 'Teach Children to Save' campaign

Grundy Bank is excited to celebrate and be a proud participant in the American Bankers Association Foundation’s #TeachChildrenToSave program to bring savings education to students of all ages during the month of April.

Established by the American Bankers Association Foundation in 1997, Teach Children to Save and the Foundation’s other financial education initiatives have helped reached 11.6 million young people through the commitment of more than 275,000 banker volunteers. “Introducing financial education to students early on can set them on a path to becoming wise money managers in adulthood,” said Kevin Olson, President & CEO of Grundy Bank. “The Teach Children to Save initiative offers a fantastic chance for us to express our enthusiasm for financial literacy while positively impacting our local community.”

Grundy Bank offers the following tips for money-savvy parents raising money-smart kids:

- Set a positive example as a responsible money manager by consistently paying bills promptly, making thoughtful spending decisions, and actively saving for the future. Children

often mimic the financial behaviors they observe in their parents.

- Engaging in open conversations about money with your children is essential. Share your financial values and personal experiences, and create an environment where they feel comfortable asking questions. Be ready to address their inquiries, including the challenging ones, to foster their understanding and confidence in managing finances.

- Explain the difference between needs and wants, the value of saving and budgeting and the consequences of not doing so.

- Open a savings account for your children and take them with you to make deposits so they can learn how to be hands-on in their money management.

- Let friends and family know about your child’s savings goal. They will be more likely to give cash for special occasions, which means more trips to the bank.

- Introduce the concept of financial literacy to your children by encouraging them to read books that cover various money concepts. This not only enhances their reading skills but also equips them to become savvy money managers.

- Engage your community. Many schools, banks, and community organizations are dedicated to fostering financial literacy among young people. By joining forces with these groups, you can create a powerful coalition dedicated to equipping youth with the essential skills and knowledge they need to thrive financially.

The ABA Foundation provides financial education initiatives and resources that help bankers make their communities better. The association’s signature initiatives, Teach Children to Save, Get Smart About Credit, Lights, Camera, Save! and Safe Banking for Seniors bring bankers and students of all ages together to enhance financial education.

For locations and information on Grundy Bank call 815-942-0130 or visit grundy.bank.

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Letter to the editor

Letter to the Editor: Gardner- I would like to congratulate the Gardner-South Wilmington-Braceville 7th & 8th grade girls volleyball teams for a great season. The 7th grade girls were Regional Champs. The 8th grade girls were Regional & Sectional Champs last year

as 7th graders. This year was just as exciting. They were Regional and Sectional Champs, playing in the Elite 8 for state. I would like to thank Mr. Heck for supporting the girls at these important games. Your support means a lot. Thanks again girls for a great season, Jake Olson.

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Easter Egg Hunt

Wilmington Lions

Invite you to bring your Easter Basket to the
Annual Easter Egg HUNT
Saturday April 12, 2025

Photos with Easter Bunny

EGG Hunt Begins at 2 pm (divided groups by ages)

Register at Egg Hunt starting at 1 pm

Location *Wilmington High School Soccer Field*

(Rain date Sunday April 13 @2 pm)



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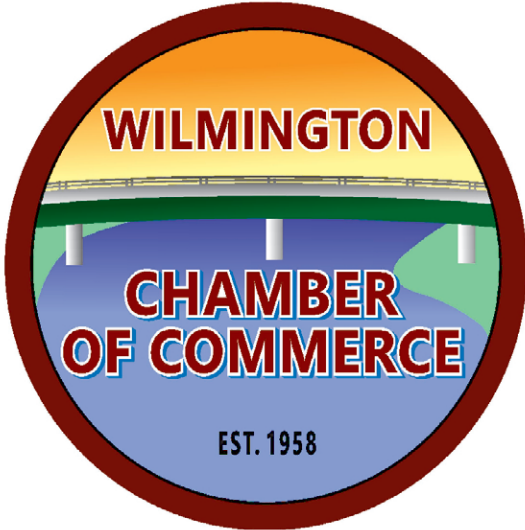
Top 10 Reasons to Choose Local First

1. Build Community! Casual encounters and friendly conversations at our local businesses and around town make us feel connected to one another.
2. Strengthen our Local Economy! Each dollar you spend at independent businesses returns three times more money to your local economy – a benefit we all can bank on. The more dollars we can re-circulate in our community, the more we are reinvesting in ourselves!
3. Shape our Character! Where we shop, dine and have fun – all of it shapes our community's distinct personality and character.
4. Local Sales Tax Dollars Support our Services! Sales tax generated from shopping local is an important funding source supporting essential city services such as police, parks and recreation programs, and road maintenance – for starters.
5. Enhance Choices! A wide variety of local businesses, each serving their customers' tastes, creates greater overall choice for all of us. And local businesses offer a wider array of uniquely focused products because they buy and sell based on what they know local customers want and need, creating more relevant choices.
6. Create Jobs and Opportunities! Local businesses are the largest employer nationally per dollar of revenue, and they are customers of other local businesses and services. Small businesses employ over half of the American workforce!
7. Knowledgeable Customer Service! Local business owners offer great personal service because they are often more interested in getting to know their fellow community members and have a high level of expertise and passion for the products they offer.
8. Give Back to our Community! Local businesses donate more than twice as much per sales dollar to our local non-profits, events, and teams.
9. Increase Wealth of Residents! Research shows more locally-owned businesses means greater per capita income growth.
10. Enhance Local Democracy! Local businesses with roots in our community help shape decisions in our community.

- PARTNER WITH THE CHAMBER BECAUSE OUR MEMBERS BENEFIT FROM
- Networking
 - Growth
 - Referrals
 - Credability
 - A Common Voice
 - Community
 - Discounts
 - Visability
 - Learning

2025 CHAMBER EVENTS & PROGRAMS

- ROUTE 66 RED CARPET FESTIVAL
- AUTUMN FESTIVAL OF CRAFTS
- CHRISTMAS PARADE
- BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR
- SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY
- HOMETOWN HEROES BANNER PROGRAM
- CHRISTMAS BANNER PROGRAM
- RIBBON CUTTING & GRAND OPENING CELEBRATIONS
- EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH TROPHY
- CHAMBER APPRECIATION DAY FOR MEMBERS
- BEFORE/AFTER HOURS WORKSHOP
- TWO \$ 1,000 COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS BOY/GIRL
- FREE ADVERTISING ON CHAMBER WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA
- CHAMBER NETWORKING
- DONATIONS TO LOCAL CHARITIES
- TOURISM & BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM
- ALDERMAN/MAYOR FORUM EVERY 4 YEARS
- THREE ANNUAL SPLIT THE POT WINNERS
- JULY 13, 2023 CHAMBER CELEBRATES NEW OFFICE
- CHRISTMAS PARTY WITH MEMBERS & SPOUSES
- GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE
- MONTHLY MEETINGS- 2nd THURSDAY OF MONTH AT NOON



GIVE CHAMBER GIFT CERTIFICATES

They're perfect for someone on your gift list, for prize winnings, gift baskets or to show someone your appreciation. Available in \$10 or \$25 denominations from the Chamber office, 616 Davy Ln, Wilmington.

Redeemable at any chamber business.

Are you a member, if not why? Let us know.

IT TAKES YOU TO START THE TREND...Support these member businesses who support the area where you live, work and play

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Grace Lutheran Church
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Mimi's Café
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Rt66 Old School Brewing
Rustic Inn
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Stitching Memories Embroidery
Trinity Services
Tuffy's Lounge
US Cold Storage
VFW Post 5422
Wee-Sip Liquors
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The Wine Café
Wilmington Coalition for a Healthy
Community
Wilmington Church of Christ
Wilmington Garden Club
Wilmington Lions Club
Wilmington Moose Riders
Wilmington Park District
Wilmington Pharmacy
Wilmington Public Library
Wilmington Rotary Club
Wilmington School District 209-U
WindowRepairGuy.com

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CLASSIFIED DEADLINES

Pre-payment required for all classified ads unless customer has a pre established business account

Deadlines
Classified Display
Fridays - 5 p.m.
Classified Word Ads
Mondays - noon

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

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3 wks. - \$25; 4 wks. - \$29*
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The Braidwood Journal — The Coal City Courant — The Free Press Advocate



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Optometric Office Member to join our team. Qualifications: Leadership skills to build a working team; Previous experience in administrative services or other related fields; Ability to prioritize and multi-task; Strong organizational skills; Deadline and detail-oriented; Strong leadership qualities. Quickbooks skills a plus. Our goal is to build from low volume practice to a highly efficient business, increasing profit and employee compensation. Compensation: \$17.00 to \$22.00 + depending on confirmed resume. In Joliet across from St. Joseph Hospital. Applicant must be able to work occasionally in our Dwight Location adforhelpwanted@yahoo.com cc12-15

REAL ESTATE

SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE OF 1826 Albert Lane, Wilmington, IL 60481 (Non-occupied single family). On the 1st day of May, 2025 to be held at 12:00 noon, at the Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Room 1001, Joliet, IL 60432, under Case Title: **Onslow Bay Financial LLC Plaintiff V. Gustavo Campos; Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants; Lakewood Shores Improvement Association** Defendant. Case No. **24 FC 0142** 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: **Manley Deas Kochalski, LLC One East Wacker Suite 1250 Chicago, IL 60601 P: 1-614-220-5611** 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., April 9, 16 and 23, 2025.

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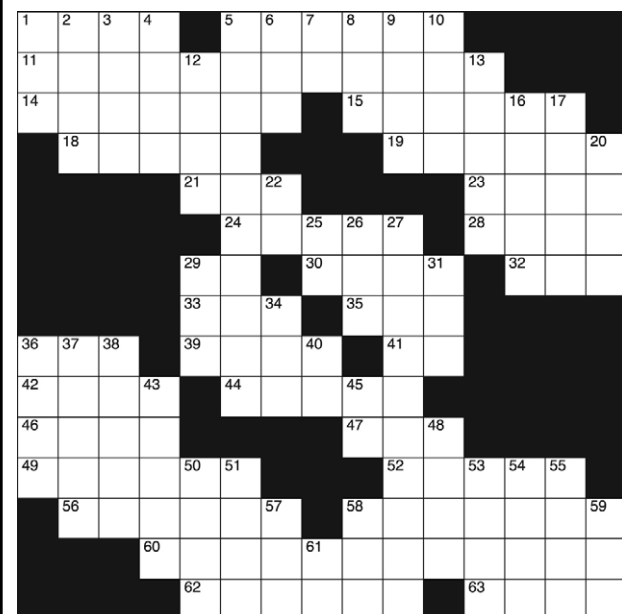
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CLUES ACROSS

- Garden tool
- A way to preserve
- Gratitude
- Domestic sheep
- Simpler
- Cavities containing liquid
- Large fish-eating bird
- Ocular protection index
- Phil __, former CIA
- Icelandic poems
- Pop
- Device
- Actor Rudd
- A pituitary hormone
- Focus on an object
- Corpulent count (abbr.)
- Young women's association
- Not shallow
- Doctor
- Furniture
- Hindu male religious teacher
- Highly spiced stew
- A way to communicate
- Almost last

CLUES DOWN

- Popular Sunday dinner option
- Oil cartel
- Agile
- Greek goddess of discord
- Genetically distinct variety
- Indicates badly
- Popular Mr. T character
- Consumed
- Chinese dynasty
- NFL great Randy
- Within
- Palm trees
- Fungal disease
- Tall, slender-leaved plants
- Affirmative! (slang)
- A passport is one

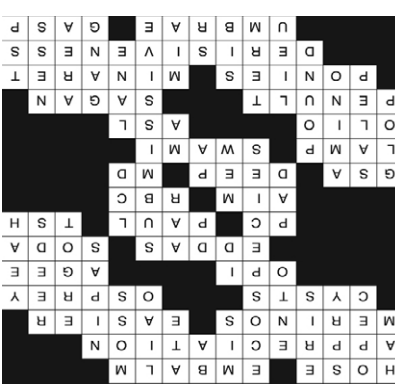
CLUES DOWN

- Two outs in baseball (abbr.)
- Swiss river
- Deferential
- Where a bachelor lives
- Portable computer screen material
- A crying noise of a bird
- Stick, amorphous substance
- Starchy dish of dried tubers
- Type of acid
- Partner to "Ma"
- 16 ounces
- The Bay State
- A well-defined track or path
- Substitution
- Defined period
- Group of toughs
- Region
- Famed Scottish Loch
- Blood relation
- Not around
- Recipe measurement
- Father to Junior

GUESS WHO ?

I am an actress born in California on April 9, 1990. My parents were both in the film industry and I made my acting debut in a Disney Channel film. I became known for playing a lead role in a saga about vampires and werewolves.

Answer: Kristen Stewart



COMET SPORTS



Photo by Eric Fisher
REED-CUSTER'S AURORA HAAKE kicks a goal against Wilmington during Thursday's game. Haake had two goals and six assists.

Comet kickers win second straight

The Reed-Custer girls soccer team won their second straight on Thursday, upended Wilmington 10-3 to improve to 3-2 overall.

The Lady Comets were in control the entire time against Wilmington, scoring eight goals in the first half coming off six corner kicks.

Anchoring the Lady Comet attack were junior Gwen Stewart and sophomore Hailey Compton who score three goals each. Aurora Haake contributed with two goals while Natalie Flores and Giuliana Meister added one goal each.

Goalkeeper Maggie Dockery finished with eight saves while Harlee Liebermann stepped in for the second half to make 15 stops.

A week earlier Reed-Custer tallied four goals in the second half to defeat Beecher 6-3.

The Lady Comets were paced by Stewart who found the back of the net three times while making with steals. Compton hustled the entire match, making two goals while coming up with 21 steals. Haake delivered three assists while taking a turn at the net with one goal.

Dockery was busy at goalkeeper, recording 29 saves.

The Lady Comets will host Streator on Thursday.



Photo by Eric Fisher
REED-CUSTER'S NATALIE FLORES takes the ball to the goal to score against Wilmington during Thursday's game. Flores had one goal and one assist.

Lady Comets struggle against mighty 'Cats

The Reed-Custer softball team stayed within striking distance with Sandwich on Thursday but just couldn't get the one run they needed, losing 5-4.

It was a rough week for the Lady Comets as then ended up on the down side of three games to lower their record to 3-4 overall.

Sandwich scored one run their first at-bat but the Lady Comets answered in the bottom of the frame to tie it 1-1. It hurt in the third when Sandwich plated four runs to take the lead for good. Reed-Custer's three run rally attempt in the fifth helped but wasn't enough to overcome the eventual winners.

Comet pitcher Sophia Moyers gave it a gallant effort, striking out nine batters while giving up eight hits, four walks and five runs (only one earned) over seven innings.

Reed-Custer had five hits with doubles recorded by Amber Syc and Kirstin Klein. Kamryn Wilkey, Addison Hartman and Adalyn Steichen contributed a hit each.

Put on ICE

The Lady Comets started ICE conference play against the league leaders, falling to Wilmington 16-6 on Tuesday and 12-0 on Monday.

The Lady 'Cats are rocking, outscoring eight opponents 113 runs to 24

so far, and it was noble for RCHS to have five of those runs on Tuesday on their own field.

The visiting 'Cats were up 12-0 until the bottom of the third when the Lady Comets scored all five of their runs. That would be the closest they would get before the contest ended by mercy rule in the fifth.

Reed-Custer threatened with nine hits including doubles for Leah Grace and Addison Hartman, Wilkey went 2-for-3 with one RBI while Klein was 2-for-2. Caysie Esparza and Syc also chipped in with one hit each.

Moyers started in the circle, lasting two innings with eight hits and 12 runs allowed. Steichen finished the last three innings, getting tagged for five runs (three earned) off four hits and one walk.

Monday's 12-0 loss resulted after the Lady Comets got just one hit off Wilmington pitcher Taryn Gilbert. That hit was a lone single by Wilkey who was left stranded on base.

The Lady Comets host Clifton Central Thursday, Dwight on Friday, then travel to Pontiac Saturday. On Monday and Tuesday they swap games with Manteno.



Photo by Elaine Fisher-Ohlund
LADYCOMET Kirstin Klein winds up against Wilmington during Monday's game. The Comets lost 12-0.



Photo by Elaine Fisher-Ohlund
MAKING THE THROW to first is RCHS Sophia Moyer during Monday's game against Wilmington. Reed-Custer will host Coal City on Thursday.

Kuban throws shutout against Sandwich

The Hustling Comets got back on track Thursday with a 2-0 victory over Sandwich.

Matt Kuban pitched the shutout, holding the visitors to just two hits over seven innings while walking none and striking out seven.

Senior Jacob Reardon made the highlight reel with a home run and two RBIs. The Comets scored one run in the second and an insurance run in the sixth but with Kuban on the mound the extra run wasn't needed.

Alex Bielfeldt hit a double while singles were credited to Joe Bembenek, Landen Robinson, Thomas

Emery, Collin Monroe and Kaiden Klein.

On Tuesday, the Comets hosted Wilmington in a 9-0 loss. Wildcat All Conference pitcher Kyle Farrell held RCHS to three hits and the Comets didn't help themselves with three errors.

The game remained

scoreless through three innings with Bielfeldt on the mound. He pitched 5.2 innings, giving up 10 hits off eight runs (6 earned) while walking five and striking out four. Robinson took over in the bottom of the sixth, getting tagged for two hits and one run while striking out two.

Brady Tyree finished with a double while Bielfeldt went 2-for-3.

The Comets lost 1-0 to the Wildcats the day before.

Reed-Custer, 6-3 overall, will exchange games with Streator on Monday and Tuesday.



Photo by Elaine Fisher-Ohlund
COMET JOE BEMBENEK catches a line drive on Monday against Wilmington. Reed-Custer plays tonight at Dwight.

Godley Park District's Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, April 12 - FREE event!

Kids, come to hunt for colorful eggs & then visit with the Easter Bunny. Bags for the egg hunt will be provided by the Park District.

12:00 pm - Ages 1-3 at the Childcare Playground attached to the building
12:15 pm - Ages 4-6 at the ball field closest to the Community Center
12:30 pm - Ages 7-12 at the lighted ball field closest to the main entrance

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