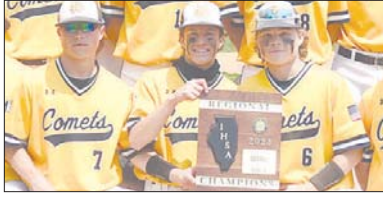




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CLASS OF 2023 — Reed-Custer High School principal Tim Ricketts delivers his final graduation address during the 95th Annual Commencement Ceremony at RCHS on May 21. Ricketts retires this year after 33 years in education.

Ricketts expresses gratitude in farewell address

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

After more than three decades with the Reed-Custer School District, high school principal Tim Ricketts gave his final farewell on Sunday during the 95th Annual Reed-Custer High School Commencement. The 115 graduates of the Class of 2023 walked through the halls for the last time as students on Sunday, May 21.

Ricketts said as he leaves the world of education after 33 years—the past 29 with Reed-Custer—the word to describe his journey is “gratitude,” a quality of being thankful and a readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

“I have been very blessed with many things in my life,



JAINA DUBBERT

and I am grateful that I have been able to call Reed-Custer my home for the past 29 years,” Ricketts said. “I have never really felt like I ever went to work.”

Ricketts began as a teacher and coach with the district in 1994, working in those roles for 12 years before moving into administration.



TYLER WIYNINGER

He served as assistant principal for three years before becoming principal. Ricketts is also a Reed-Custer parent, with both of his children proud Comet grads.

“Most of the credit goes to my wife,” he said. “She raised them, she was a 17 year coach’s wife followed by a 17 year principal’s wife. Not too many people would apply for

that job. I am thankful for her because I definitely would not be where I am today if it wasn’t for my wife, Janet.”

Ricketts also thanked teachers, staff, and administration for the years together.

“I have loved every minute of being a teacher, coach and principal here at Reed-Custer, and I will bleed black and gold for the rest of my life,” Ricketts said.

The retiring principal went on to thank the Class of 2023 for a memorable final year.

“I could not have asked for a better class to go out with,” Ricketts said. “It’s not just about the football records, or the conference championships, or the all-state ath-

SEE GREADS, PAGE 3

Photos by Marney Simon

Earley retirement

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

Three weeks and three days after being sworn in as Braidwood’s newest mayor, Chris Earley has called it quits.

Earley did not make a formal announcement regarding his resignation, a notarized copy of which was tenured last Friday.

Residents found out about the shake-up to local government when this week’s City Council agenda was posted. That agenda included the announcement of a vacancy in the mayoral seat, and the swearing in of Karen Hart as mayor.

On Sunday, the *Braidwood Journal* was given the following statement from the outgoing mayor:

“I, Chris Earley, on May 19, 2023 resigned from my position as Mayor for the City of Braidwood after careful consideration of which path to

take.

“Do I spend my term at odds with the City Council while going against my morals, or resign so the city can still continue to move forward?”

“This is a decision I didn’t make lightly, but the decision I felt was best. I wish to thank all of those who supported me and continue to support me.”

With just one full meeting under his belt, Earley had already been at odds with the other four members of the City Council. Last week, Earley posted letters to each of the commissioners that he had made temporary appointments for city attorney and city administrator, citing frustration that the council members “have repeatedly indicated” they have “no intent” to work with Earley on key positions being filled.

Sources close to the situation told the *Braidwood*

SEE EARLEY, PAGE 2



BPD photo

HELLO FROM UP TOP! Braidwood officer Dave Cornelli and Wilmington officer Sean Liaromatis take part in the Cop on a Rooftop event at Dunkin’ Donuts in Diamond on May 19, raising funds and awareness for Special Olympics Illinois.

R-C says farewell to the Class of 2023

BY MACKENZIE ROMINES
RCHS STUDENT REPORTER

The Reed-Custer class of 2023 had an extremely notable year, and with the students having graduated Sunday, they are sure to go on to do incredible things in life. The year was nothing short of impressive.

The academic excellence of the Reed-Custer graduates is clear. To be recognized as a board scholar, a student must have over a 4.0 grade point average, and 22 students were awarded this title. Principal Tim Ricketts said that is the largest number of board scholars in the 14 years of being the principal.

Alexandra Bohac graduated with a GPA of 4.2923, and will be attending Augustana College in the fall.

Caelan Cole graduated with a GPA of 4.2346, and will be attending Augustana College in the fall.

Gabriella Davies graduated with a GPA of 4.4158, and will be attending Augustana College in the fall.

Jaina Dubbert graduated with a GPA of 4.3375, and will be attending Olivet Nazarene University in the fall.

Colin Esparza graduated with a GPA

of 4.0691, and will be attending Joliet Junior College in the fall.

Connor Esparza graduated with a GPA of 4.0564, and will be attending Joliet Junior College in the fall.

Kaitlyn Faurot graduated with a GPA of 4.0214, and will be attending Eastern Illinois University in the fall.

Halie LaGrange graduated with a GPA of 4.0891 and will be attending Trinity Christian College in the fall.

Maggie Lantka graduated with a GPA of 4.4036, and will be attending San Diego University in the fall.

Jacob McPherson graduated with a GPA of 4.2091 and will be attending University of Wisconsin at Whitewater in the fall.

Grace Moyers graduated with a GPA of 4.1196 and will be attending University of Mississippi in the fall.

Laci Newbrough graduated with a GPA of 4.3906 and will be attending Bradley University in the fall.

Emily Reardon graduated with a GPA of 4.0509 and will be attending Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi in the fall.

Mackenzie Romines graduated with a GPA of 4.1625 and will be attending

Joliet Junior College in the fall.

Wesley Shats graduated with a GPA of 4.1891 and will be attending Lewis University in the fall.

James Sheridan, salutatorian, graduated with a GPA of 4.4278 and will be attending University of St. Francis in the fall.

Jamon Spikings graduated with a GPA of 4.1071 and will be attending Indiana Wesleyan University in the fall.

Nicholas Stroud graduated with a GPA of 4.1673.

Abigail Sunday graduated with a GPA of 4.3818, and will be attending Augustana College in the fall.

Makayla Wilkins graduated with a GPA of 4.319 and will be attending The University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa in the fall.

Tyler Winyinger, valedictorian, graduated with a GPA of 4.4927 and will be attending University of Minnesota at Twin Cities in the fall.

To be an Illinois State Scholar, students at Reed-Custer had to score at or above the 95th percentile on the

SEE CLASS OF '23, PAGE 3

Embracing the stereotype Local law enforcement hang around Dunkin, for a cause

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

Everyone knows the old stereotype of how much cops love their donuts.

This past week, law enforcement officers with Wilmington and Braidwood decided to embrace the cliché and hang around the Dunkin’ Donuts in Diamond, and all for a good cause.

On May 19, the Wilmington Police Department and the Braidwood Police Department partnered up for the 2023 Dunkin’ Cop on a Rooftop event, an annual event that raises funds to benefit the athletes of Special Olympics Illinois.

This year marked the 20th anniversary that the coffee

and donut franchise teamed up with law enforcement across the state. During the event, officers hang out literally on the roof of the shop, encouraging folks to come in and grab a bite and a cup of Joe.

“We have always been interested in participating in this event, and this year we finally had a local Dunkin’ available and willing to host,” Wilmington Police Chief Adam Zink said. “When we were approached by Braidwood PD, we jumped at the opportunity to partner with them.”

SEE COPS, PAGE 2



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Editorial

Time to get real about transparency, Braidwood

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

I pulled out my old thesaurus this week, trying to find the right word for what's happening in Braidwood. But nothing really fit. And all I can come up with is, this has been a hot mess.

For the better part of the past 15 years, I have been covering the Braidwood City Council. I've been there for the administrations of mayors Sue Grygiel, Jerry Pressley, Bill Rulien, Jim Vehrs, Bob Jones, Chris Earley, and now Karen Hart. And through my experience with Braidwood politics, I can tell you that there is one thing that each council promises, but I have yet to see come to fruition: True transparency.

That's not to say that city leaders have been deceptive. With the exception of one former city administrator, the people in that position have always been good at answering calls and emails. Don Labriola, Rich Girot, and Tony Altieri always answered my calls or returned them promptly. The same can be said for various city clerks, from Hillary Bohac to Adam Beaty to Sue Grygiel and even once upon a time when now-State Senator Pat McGuire was clerk, if I asked, I received.

This is also true of the majority of the council. Grygiel, Rulien, Vehrs, and Jones always had time to speak to me, as did Commissioners Fay Smith, Jim Hutton, Dan Graf, Doug Money, Wayne Saltzman, and honestly I could list nearly every elected official who has sat on the dais since 2008, because Braidwood is a small town and its elected leaders have almost always been ready and willing to give me a quote.

However, when it comes to the meat of the meetings—the ordinances, the resolutions, the bills, the contracts, the IGAs, and so on—that paperwork has never really been at the public's fingertips. Mayor Rulien had a policy to make the list of bills available, but that policy ended

when his term did.

I have always been able to get copies of that paperwork when I ask, but I shouldn't have to ask. Nor should residents of Braidwood have to submit a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for basic information that is discussed and voted on in any given meeting.

Back in 2008, when the City Council approved the purchase of more than \$2 million in properties using TIF money, then editor Pam Monson had to get involved to get to the bottom of why those contracts were not made publicly available, as I was brand new on the scene and the administrator at the time simply would tell me no. And when I finally sent a FOIA for the paperwork—paperwork that is made available to the public in almost every other municipality—I was charged \$78 for my copies, some of which were blank pages. I'm still salty about that.

This past administration under Bob Jones was actually much better at explaining the items that were being voted on than had been done before, but there's still a lack of available paperwork unless you actually ask for it.

If you go to the city of Wilmington's website and click on any committee or council meeting, you'll find an agenda and copies of everything the council or committee is reviewing or voting on for that date. Sometimes it is redundant because the council will discuss an issue at one meeting, and vote on it at the next, and sure enough, there is the same paperwork in both packets.

But Braidwood has never made a full packet available, not just to me, but in general.

I don't think it is a matter of being shady or trying to hide anything. It's more a matter of "it's never been done that way."

And it's about time for that to stop.

This election was messy, and one month in, things are still not quite settled. There are plenty of rumors on social media regarding Mayor Earley's reason for

resigning, but I take him at his word in his written statement to the *Braidwood Journal* on his reasons. Earley has been a dedicated servant to the community for 60 years, serving the public with the park district and the Braidwood Lions Club, and I've always known him to be a decent and hard working man who genuinely wants what is best for his town. It was pretty clear that he was going to have a difficult time as mayor, based on a contentious meeting on May 9, and the letters to the commissioners that he posted at City Hall last week.

I am not interested in squabbling about his resignation. He gave his reasons, and that is the end of it.

Now it is time for the new council to get to it when it comes to their promises of transparency and moving Braidwood forward.

And that starts with information.

I'm asking this new council to adhere to the promise of transparency that we heard during the weeks leading up to April 4. No more standard agendas. It's time to make all the paperwork reviewed and voted upon during an open meeting available to the public: The contracts, the ordinances, the bills, the resolutions. Don't make the public ask, just make it available.

Per the Open Meetings Act, we know that some things are exempt, such as ongoing litigation, personnel issues, ongoing land acquisition, and ongoing collective bargaining/contract negotiations. These discussions are meant to stay in closed session. But once any of those items are acted upon, as well as any other resolution, ordinance, payment of bills, payroll, approved contracts, all of that is public. Make it public. A link to the PDF of all these documents should be made on the city's website, and shared on Facebook.

The City Council has promised progress. Progress begins with knowledge.

Earley

Journal that a meeting was held at City Hall last Friday, where Earley submitted his letter of resignation. That letter does not list a reason behind the resignation, however, Earley gave his statement after the newspaper contacted him over the weekend.

While the resignation has set social media a flurry with speculation and frustration from residents, the process of making the council whole again is outlined in the Illinois Municipal Code.

Under a Commission Form of Government, the commissioner of accounts and finances acts as the vice president of the council, and in the case of a vacancy in the office of mayor or the absence or inability of the mayor, performs the duties of mayor.

As the duly elected Finance Commissioner, Hart was elevated to that seat this week.

Because Earley resigned with nearly the full mayoral term ahead, a special election will be held to fill the remainder of his term. However, the state of Illinois prohibits holding special elections in most cases, only allowing special elections to take place during elections that are already on the calendar. That means the election to fill the remainder of the term will take place during the next consolidated elec-

tion, which takes place on April 1, 2025.

Hart will serve as mayor until the results of the 2025 election are finalized, and, unless she resigns from her post as Finance Commissioner, will then return to that seat.

In the meantime, the Council this week approved the appointment of former commissioner Doug Money to serve in the interim as Finance Commissioner.

The new council also moved ahead with some appointments this week, dismissing the law firm that Earley had appointed as interim city attorney and reappointing Bryan Wellner of Mahoney, Silverman, & Cross, LLC as the city attorney. Wellner served for the last four years as city attorney under Mayor Bob Jones, and is also the city attorney for the city of Wilmington.

The council also appointed Todd Lyons to continue the role of Chief of Police, and reappointed Tony Altieri to the role of City Administrator.

This is not the first time in recent years that a mayoral vacancy has occurred in Braidwood. In 2011, Mayor Jerry Pressley passed away two months into his term. Bill Rulien, who was the finance commissioner at that time, took over the position of mayor, then won the election to fill the remainder of Pressley's term in 2013.



BPD photo

CHASE IS ON THE CASE! Paw Patrol's very own crime solving pup joined the Wilmington and Braidwood police departments during this year's Cop on a Rooftop event at Dunkin' Donuts.

Cops

Officers showed up in the early hours last Friday to get up on the roof, with an assist from the ladder truck from the Braidwood Fire Protection District.

"We got together with Wilmington, we teamed up because we're excited that we have a Dunkin' Donuts in our area," Braidwood Police Chief Todd Lyons said. "It's some-

thing I've always wanted to do in my career, but being from a small community, I never really thought I'd have the opportunity. So, when the Dunkin' Donuts was coming in, and it's such a great cause, we couldn't pass up the opportunity. So we contacted Wilmington and they were more than happy to partner up with us."

Both departments set a goal to make it not just a fundraiser, but an actual event.

"It drew a lot of intention, so we invited Chase [from Paw

Patrol] and made posters, we made it an event and it was a really fun atmosphere," Lyons said. "And I'm not just saying that, I really did enjoy it, it was fun."

The goal was to raise \$2,500, but the event far exceeded their expectations. In addition to raising funds for Special Olympics Illinois, the day was a way to get out and talk to the community, and learn more about Special Olympics athletes.

"This event had a great turnout, and was a huge success!" Zink said. "With our combined efforts and massive support from the community (as well as Chase the mascot), we were able to raise over \$7,500 for the Special Olympics. We're looking forward to doing it again next year."

Statewide, this year's Cop on a Rooftop event raised more than \$925,000 across 315 locations for the 21,000 athletes of Special Olympics Illinois. Over the past 20 years, the event has helped to raise more than \$7.6 million in funding for Illinois Special Olympics athletes.

During the seven hour event, folks who made a donation earned a coupon for a free donut, and guests who donated \$10 or were given a travel mug and a coupon for a free medium hot coffee.

This was the second fundraiser that WPD and BPD took part in for Special Olympics Illinois this year. In March, officers from both departments took part in the Polar Plunge at the Braidwood Rec Club.

All the funds raised by law enforcement are part of monies raised for the annual Law Enforcement Torch Run.



Photo by Ann Gill

NEED A LIFT? The members of the Braidwood and Wilmington fire departments were happy to give a lift to WPD and BPD officers making their way to the rooftop for Friday's Cop on a Rooftop event at Dunkin' Donuts in Diamond.

The Torch Run is the single largest year-round fundraising movement benefiting Special Olympics Illinois. The Torch Run has two goals – to raise money and to gain awareness for the athletes who participate in Special Olympics Illinois.

The Law Enforcement Torch Run includes an annual intrastate relay conducted by officers representing every branch of law enforcement within the state as well as with federal partners. Approximately 3,000 officers carry the Flame of Hope nearly 1,500 miles, running through thousands of Illinois communities via 23 different legs to its final destination, the Opening Ceremony of the Special Olympics Illinois Summer Games in Normal.

The Law Enforcement Torch Run hosts a variety of annual fundraising events including the recent Polar

Plunges and Dunkin' Cop on a Rooftop held locally, as well as Tip-A-Cop events, Truck Convoys and Plane Pull events.

Since 1986, the Law Enforcement Torch Run has raised more than \$65 million

while increasing awareness of Special Olympics Illinois athletes and their accomplishments.

The Illinois Law Enforcement Torch Run has selected "Guardians of the Flame" as the theme for 2023.

Braidwood Park District announces meeting schedule

PUBLIC NOTICE
DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETINGS
BRAIDWOOD PARK DISTRICT
The Regular meetings of the Board of Commissioners of the Braidwood Park District for the fiscal year beginning on May 1, 2023 and ending on April 30, 2024 will be held on the first Tuesday of the month beginning at 7:00 p.m., unless otherwise posted.
All meetings will take place at the Braidwood Park District's Old Smokey Community Building, 245 West First Street, Braidwood, Illinois 60408. (815) 458-3896
/s/ Josh Bolatto, Secretary
Board of Park Commissioners
Braidwood Park District
Published in the Braidwood Journal, May 24, 2023.

Braidwood Park District to hold public hearing on budget ordinance

PUBLIC NOTICE
A Public Hearing concerning the Tentative Combined Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the Braidwood Park District for the fiscal year beginning May 1, 2023 and ending on April 30, 2024 will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 6, 2023 at the Braidwood Park District Old Smokey Community Building, 245 West First Street, Braidwood, IL 60408, 815-458-3896. Said document was placed on file for public inspection on May 2, 2023. The document may also be viewed online at www.braidwoodparkdistrict.com/board-meeting-documents
/s/ Josh Bolatto, Secretary
Braidwood Park District
Published in the Braidwood Journal, May 24, 2023.

Tax Deed filed for 585 West Main St.

PUBLIC NOTICE
TAX DEED NO.: 2023TX000108
FILED: 04-06-2023
TAKE NOTICE
TO: DAVID CLELLAND, SUSAN CLELLAND, MICHAEL REGAN, IRENE KYLES, BMO HARRIS BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, WILL COUNTY CLERK; OCCUPANTS, PARTIES IN OCCUPANCY OR ACTUAL POSSESSION OF SAID PROPERTY; AND UNKNOWN OWNERS OR PARTIES INTERESTED IN SAID LAND OR LOTS AND UNKNOWN OCCUPANTS
This is NOTICE of the filing of the petition for Tax Deed on the following described property: Property located at: 585 WEST MAIN STREET, BRAIDWOOD, ILLINOIS
Property Index Number: 02-24-07-407-033-0000
On October 12, 2023 at 9:00 AM, in the Circuit Court of Will County, Will County Courthouse, 100 West Jefferson Street, Courtroom 905, Joliet, Illinois, the Petitioner intends to make an application for an order on the petition that a Tax Deed be issued. The real estate was sold on December 9, 2020, for delinquent real estate taxes and/or special assessments for the year 2019. Certificate No. 19-03803. The period of redemption will expire on October 4, 2023.
VOYAGEUR HOLDINGS LLC PETITIONER
10546-932806
Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, May 24, 31 and June 7, 2023.

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher
Marney Simon, editor

Braceville grows up, saints and sinners

Last week we looked at a murder in 1894. Let's go back to the beginning of the town to its earliest history. When a new town springs up from nowhere as did the coal towns, there is no long-time residents, no established social groups or religions. Everything comes at once. So, it was with Braceville.

Although Braceville was incorporated in 1880, we have some history from as early as 1861. "Married - On Thursday, October 3rd, by J. T. Augustine, Esq., Mr. John Laymon to Miss Erika A. Olmstead, both of Braceville, Grundy County, Ill." And from 1865, "A young man named Francis Bradley, died at Braceville, on Monday, the 31 instant. He was a member of the 16th Illinois Cavalry, and had been in the service about three years.

Was a prisoner in Richmond nine months, and had been home about two weeks when he died. He was buried in this city (Wilmington) with military honors."

In 1873 mining was to begin in earnest, with large companies taking an interest. "Southern Grundy, more particularly the town of Braceville, is destined to be one of the greatest coal mining regions in the State.

Several companies and individuals, possessed of



Sandy Vasko

ample capital, are operating there, raising coal from old mines and opening new ones. The coal mined there sells readily at the highest prices realized for Illinois coal in Chicago."

All of the newspaper articles after that time are about coal related incidents. The first news of social activities comes in the July 12, 1878 edition of the Wilmington Advocate, we read, "The song, 'The Company's Store,' rendered by the Braceville glee club, on the 4th, brought forth loud applause."

Well this means that at least they had a 4th of July celebration and they had formed a glee club.

It took another two years to find the next little tidbit of evidence of a social life in Braceville. In April of 1880, "There was quite a large and enjoyable dancing party at Geo. Johnson's place, in Braceville, on Wednesday night.

Many guests from Braidwood were present." Well, it looks like they still had social connections to the folks in Braidwood, but by August new social organizations popped up.

From the Morris Independent, "Two carriage loads of Morris Odd Fellows attended the dedication ceremonies of the new Odd

Fellows Hall at Braceville last Thursday, and all speak very highly of their reception at that place.

They were right royally entertained by the Braceville three-linked gentlemen. The hall is a commodious and pretty one. Rep H. H. Funk, of Odell, an eloquent speaker delivered an entertaining address in the afternoon, and the time was spent in the evening at a hall where the feet of the visiting brethren kept time to the music of a very good band."

For several years we can follow the balls, picnics and entertainments sponsored by the Braceville Odd Fellows. We also know that there was a Knights of Pythias lodge in Braceville as they assisted in the funeral of a miner who died in the Braidwood shafts.

I find it interesting that it wasn't until February 2, 1883 that we find the first mention of any kind of church. On that date we read, 'The festival at Malcolm's Hall, in Braceville, on Saturday evening, in aid of the new Primitive Methodist Church in that place, netted about \$100.' and on May 5, 1883, "The new Primitive Methodist Church, in Braceville, will be formally dedicated on Sunday, May 6th, the Rev. Rowe and other clergymen taking part in the ceremonies."

However, on the dark side, crime and criminals were also in the news. The first mention of true crime wasn't until 1882. A Mr. Kellegher was up for assault and battery upon John Horan. This means

that until Braceville reached a certain population, she was relatively crime free. By June 23, 1882, we read the following, "The lock-up has an occupant almost every night."

It wasn't long until crime of a more deadly nature surfaced. We read on September 22, 1882, "Last Friday was payday in Braceville.

A Frenchman, among others, was paid off, receiving his own wages and that of his partner, who worked with him in the coal mine. He visited a saloon on Friday evening, and on Saturday morning his lifeless body was found, considerably bruised, near the railroad track.

While it is possible that he was killed by the cars, it is more than probable that the man was murdered and robbed, as his pockets were only found to contain two five cent pieces, out of a considerable amount of money which he is known to have had on the night previous."

If we count the beginning of Braceville as 1880 we see that social fraternities were there from the start. Also, that it took two years for the first murder, but three years for the first church.

This speaks volumes about the kind of men who were the first pioneers of Braceville. They were men who lived a rough life, and who liked to socialize and were probably single. It wasn't until they married and had children that the more calming influence of religion entered their lives.

Braidwood to host Memorial Day 5K

The inaugural Braidwood Memorial Day 5K, presented by Constellation, will take place on Saturday, May 27, with all proceeds from the event benefiting Honor Flight of Chicago.

The race will begin and end in the Braidwood City Park with the course winding through the residential streets surrounding the park.

Registration will begin at 6 a.m. Run will begin at 9 a.m. Registration can be found online at www.runsignup.com

Registration fee is \$30.00 (+\$3.86 sign-up fee). Registration is capped at

2,500 participants. Walkers are also welcome to participate. This will be a chip timed race on a certified course and awards will be presented in each of the following age groups: 15 and under, 16-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70+.

There will be additional activities taking place in the park before and after the race.

For questions, please utilize the "Questions" icon underneath the Race Contact Info on the above website to contact race organizers.

Grads

letes. This class has amazing musicians, artists, we have 22 Board Scholars, that's the most we've ever had in my 14 years as principal. They have accomplished so many things... Amazing athletes, amazing students, and more importantly, amazing people. Parents, that's because of you. You've done an amazing job raising this group of young men and women."

Superintendent Mark Mitchell thanked Ricketts for his years of dedication, and presented Ricketts and retiring Athletic Director Chuck Anderson with plaques honoring their service to education and Reed-Custer.

"To make this as simple as possible, the district is losing two people who bleed black and gold, and have always been committed to doing everything possible to support students' programs," Mitchell said. "They both have ended their careers in the exact same way that they started them, with true commitment and dedication."

Also this year, the district moved away from a list of the Top 10 students featuring the Valedictorian and Salutatorian, and instead began year one of recognizing students with the Latin Honors of cum laude (with praise), magna cum laude (with great praise) and summa cum laude (with highest praise).

This year's class speakers were Jaina Dubbert and Tyler Winyninger, both Board Scholars and Illinois State Scholars.

The graduates talked about what they learned in high school, and the hopes they have for themselves and their fellow classmates for the future.

"The rest of our future is up to us," Dubbert said.

"Where we will go, who we will see, and who we will become... I've learned how to get back up when life knocks you down, how to keep going when all you want to do is just stop and quit. Whatever you do in your future, whoever you become, remember RCHS. Not because it's the place where you came from or it's your hometown, but remember it because of the lessons that we've all learned within these walls and in these halls."

Winyninger noted how this graduating class made it through difficult barriers, from cafeteria food gone bad to coming out on the other side of a pandemic.

"Not only did we make it though, we flourished in the end," he said. "We have had the opportunity to watch in awe as our peers rise to the top of their respective niche. We have so many people striving for greatness."

Winyninger also said he sees a lot of support for his peers from the community as a whole.

"This building may not always have the same people teaching or learning inside of it but what it will always have is the love and support of this community which from my perspective is the most important achievement," Winyninger said "Thank you Mr. Ricketts for sustaining that environment and I speak for all of the class of 2023 when I wish you the best of retirement."

Senior Awards night was held on May 16, honoring scholarship recipients as well as those students with achievements in athletics, academics, extracurriculars, and community service.

Graduates entering the military were also recognized during graduation. Those students are Samantha Sprimont, United States Air Force, Ty Zier, United States Marines, Chase Bradley, United States Marines, and Paige Holland, Army National Guard.

Class of '23

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and had to graduate within the academic year they were chosen to be a scholar.

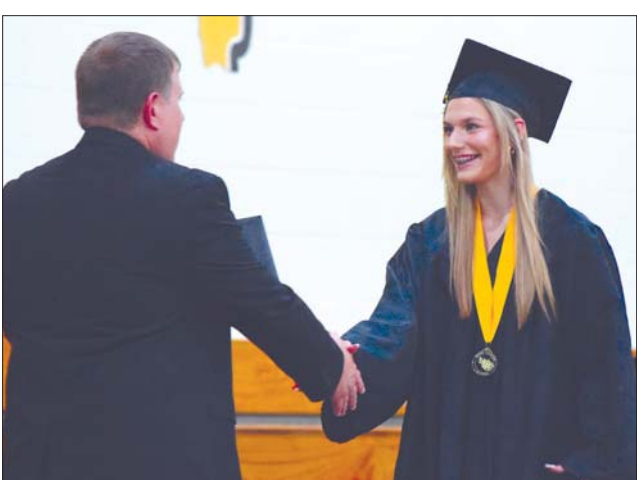
Reed-Custer had seven state scholars: Alexandra Bohac, Gabriella Davies, Jaina Dubbert, Maggie Lantka, Laci Newbrough, James Sheridan, Abigail Sunday, Makayla Wilkins, and Tyler Winyninger.

Davies and Winyninger were also recognized as distinguished scholars, meaning they graduated with GPAs above or at 3.75, had at or above 95% attendance junior and senior year, and scored at or above a 1400 on their SAT.

Many Reed-Custer students also exceeded the standards set for SAT testing in both the math and reading portions. Alexandra Bohac, Gavin Bruciak, Gabriella Davies, Jaina Dubbert, Colin Esparza, Kaitlyn Faurot, Lucas Foote, Maggie Lantka, Logan Leckrone, Jacob McPherson, Echo Mudro, Laci Newbrough, Emily Reardon, Mackenzie Romines, James Sheridan, Jamon Spikings, Abigail Sunday, Gibson Waldvogel, Makayla Wilkins, and Tyler Winyninger all exceeded the expectations on their SATs.

Students at Reed-Custer also excelled in ways besides academics. Multiple students had extremely impressive attendance. Connor Eggleston had perfect attendance senior year. Daniel Kuban had perfect attendance junior and senior year. Wesley Shats had perfect attendance all of high school. Colin Esparza has had perfect attendance since kindergarten, never having missed a day of school.

Community service for this class was also incredible. The 10 students with the most community service hours were Emily Reardon (144 hours), Daniel Kuban (144 hours), Halie LaGrange (189 hours), Gabriella Davies (212 hours), Kyle Fordonski (235 hours), Stephen Condrey (245.5 hours), Kayley Kohler (256.5 hours), Jaina Dubbert (343.5 hours), Julia Janopoulos (455 hours), and Victoria Loomis (595 hours). With almost 3,000 hours of time donated between these ten



people alone, it is no stretch to say that the class of 2023 was nothing short of generous.

The seniors also had a very exciting year in regards to co-curriculars and extra-curriculars. Family, Career and Community Leaders of America state qualifiers included Haley Budick, Lilyana Chavez, Addison Harms, Halie LaGrange, Grace Moyers, Samantha Sprimont, Abigail Sunday, and Madalynn Ziesmer-Hermes.

Jamon Spikings was an Illinois Music Education Association All-State qualifier for Chorus.

Brandon Moorman was a 2022 Illinois High School Association qualifier for bass fishing. Victoria Loomis was a 2022 state qualifier for competitive cheer. Zoe Hasset and Daniel Kuban were track state

qualifiers.

Kody Marschner was a 2021 All-State qualifier for football. Jace Christian was a 2022 All-State qualifier for football. Jacob McPherson was a 2022 All-State honorable mention for football.

Landon Markle was a state qualifier for wrestling his junior year. Gunnar Berg and Cody Marschner were both wrestling all-state qualifiers for multiple years.

Ryan Radetski also won the Wilco student of the year award for culinary, and will be competing with Wilco FCCLA for culinary.

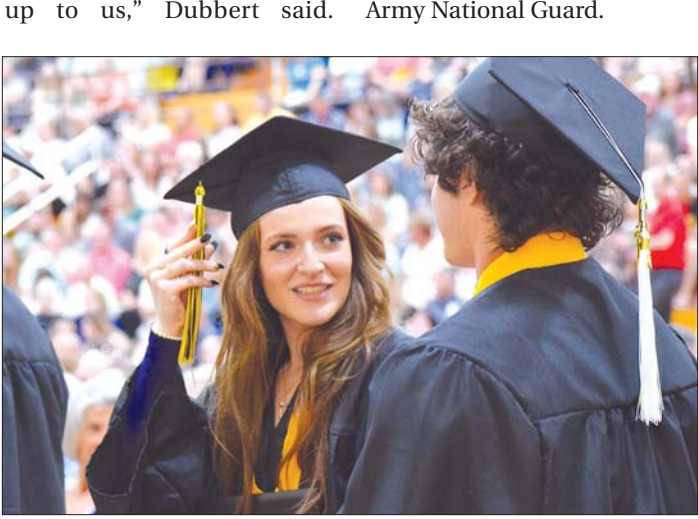
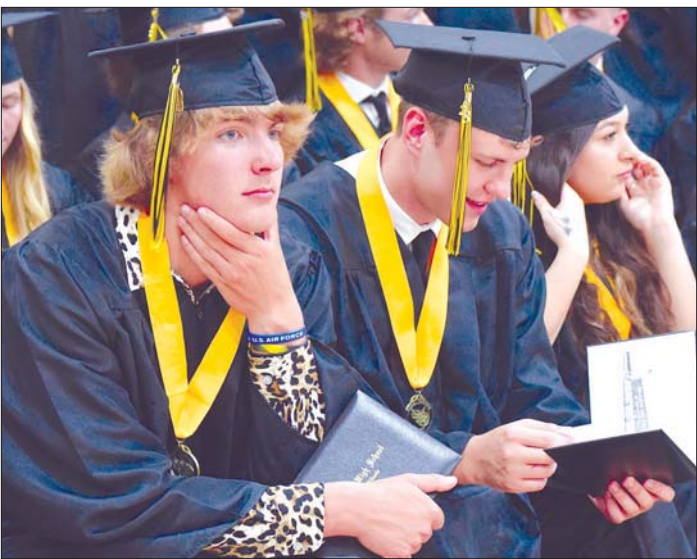
Four students have already planned to enroll in the military after graduation. Paige Holland will be joining the Army National Guard. Sam Sprimont will be joining the US Air Force. Chase Bradley and Ty Zier will be joining the US Marines.

Sixty-five percent of the

graduating class are planning on enrolling in either a 2 or 4-year school, and over \$1.8 million has been awarded in scholarships and grants. Five percent are planning on joining the military, 23% are planning on working, 7% are enrolling in a trade or vocational school.

The Reed-Custer class of 2023 is the first to have a senior year without masks or quarantine periods since the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the challenges the pandemic put onto the students, the class has still managed to flourish and achieve excellence.

High school is challenging, and the incredible things that the graduating class has achieved shows that even in the face of struggle, greatness is possible. The class of 2023 has already made a long-lasting and inspirational impact on Reed-Custer.



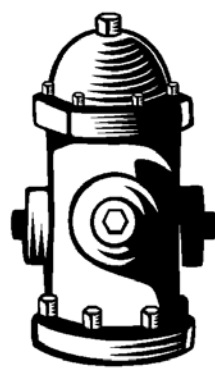
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Fill up on eggs

SHADOW LAKES—Wow! Have you seen eggs have dropped to \$.99 a dozen. How long before the price of gas comes down? Obediently yours, Margot Lane.

Disrespecting veterans

MORRIS—In New York City the mayor just kicked homeless veterans out of hotels to live in the streets to make room for the people that enter the U.S.A. illegally. This shows just how much the Democratic party cares about the people that served in our military and put their lives in danger to protect the freedoms public servants enjoy. They are using their position of employment to destroy our military and the veterans. The public servants and Democratic party have decided that this country should not give any aid to any veteran and don't count on any veterans organizations to help any veteran because they are controlled by the same public servants. This type of treatment of veterans by the public servants in the veterans organizations has been well known for decades. Thank you for your service says the public servants, but don't ever bother us. We thank you for your service and that is enough and all you deserve. We don't care about your life or what happens to you veterans.

Destroying our nation

COAL CITY—I would like to thank every Democrat who voted to put these politicians into office, who have done such a wonderful job. It only took them about two years to destroy the nation and subject every American to harm by individuals from foreign lands but mostly from our leaders that have a warped sense of justice which is to only help criminals while honest American citizens are having their lives destroyed. The twisted mentality by individuals that are power crazy and will stoop into bottomless pit for everything evil that they are imposing on Americans while they commit all forms of illegal acts and violate their oath of office. Money to some public servants is more important than the sovereignty of the U.S.A. or any citizen's life. Are Democrats above the law?

A happy story

This is to "Better News." I, along with most everyone else, enjoyed the story on the baby being born in the ambulance. It was a happy story about a local family, not "some woman", well written by Marney Simon. Very refreshing and a nice break from politics. You also don't have to drink your coffee while reading excellent stories such as this one. Drink it later, read the paper later or just don't read that particular story. Some people aren't happy unless they are complaining about something. If having a wonderful local story is the worst thing in your day then you are truly blessed.

All of us deserve good

WILMINGTON—As we gaze at concrete canyons which mankind built to replace green life, it's no wonder that we're in the midst of earth's sixth mass extinction. It's true that 2/3 of wildlife has vanished across the globe in the last 50 years and marine populations in the oceans are threatened by annihilation. Why? Human activity of a certain kind denoted by the infamous phrase "greed is good." Greed is not good, it's deadly. The pompous self-seekers

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lish these remarks the newspaper makes every effort to forward unpublished comments to the parties to whom they are directed.

The comments stated are the opinions and ideas of the callers and not that of the newspaper. Information may not constitute the actual events or facts of a particular topic.

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who pollute our landscape with narcissistic bluster are petty and weak. Instead we welcome the strong who work bravely to promote the good that all of us richly deserve.

RD

Vote you out

BRAIDWOOD—Why is a city of 6,500 people paying these kind of wages? For you four new city commissioners I hope the next time you run for anything the voters of Braidwood remember your underhanded ways of doing things and vote you out. If I am still around then I will try to remind them.

Great job kids

COAL CITY—Congrats from the parents and grandparents on the honor the Middle School Scholastic Bowl team received in making it to the state finals. We are very proud of all the effort you put forth to be able to advance to the finals. Kudos to Abi, Aiden, Brady, Carson, Caroline, Izzy, Scott, Travis, Grace, Jaiden, Penny, Tess, Wyatt and Xavier. Great job by great kids.

Half the time

COAL CITY—Why did the Coal City McDonalds spend all the money into building a new one with two lanes when half the time only one lane is open because they can't keep enough staff to run it?

Forcing homeowners

DIAMOND—Answer my question FYI. Do you believe Green New Deal should be allowed to give the government the power to force all private homes to be rebuilt according to so-called "sustainable energy" dictates?

Thanks to Trump

WILMINGTON—Republicans have learned that they can lie with impunity because their constituents no longer care about reality. Thanks to Trump, the gullible and/or stupid live in a world of alternative facts that enforces their beliefs and prejudices. Science be damned literally. Penny Lane

Obligation to pay

WILMINGTON—Regarding the debt ceiling, the Republicans are using a metaphor of parents putting limits on their teenagers' credit card because of overspending. But they failed to mention that parents have an obligation to pay back what the kid has already charged. If they want to cut the budget do it in the budget committee and quit being economic terrorists.

Verbal abuse

WILMINGTON—Threatening children with hell and eternal damnation is child abuse.

\$93 trillion cost

DIAMOND—Answer my question FYI. Are you willing to pay even higher taxes to fund the \$93 trillion it will cost in the first decade after passage to pay for the socialists' "Green New Deal" nightmare?

Cutting our benefits

COAL CITY—As a disabled veteran I'm just so glad that the Republican Party has decided to cut our benefits which is exactly what we need. We have had too much. Thank you Republicans. Luke



Eight crimes

WILMINGTON—The Republicans claim the Durham report somehow exonerates Trump and other traitors buy they ignore the Mueller report that concluded Trump could be charged with eight crimes but was stymied because of a specious rule against charging a sitting president. In fact, Mueller said he wished he could say Trump was innocent.

Do what's best

BRAIDWOOD—On Friday, May 19 the mayor resigned because the commissioner of public property refused to work with him and told him he would not get anything done if he didn't appoint what the commissioners wanted. Commissioners, you were elected by the citizens of Braidwood to do what's right for Braidwood and not to make sure your friend had a job. So commissioner of public property and commissioner of streets follow suit and resign also. Do what's best for Braidwood. Remember, there's an election in two years.

Mayor resigns

BRAIDWOOD—So the mayor resigned. I hope all the council members are happy. Now they can give their friend a job making well over \$100,000 a year. I bet if they were spending their own money this wouldn't happen. That type of job they should be \$80,000 a year with no benefits. Let's see how long it takes before they vote to buy a new vehicle. And for commissioner of public property, you should be ashamed of yourself. I voted for you and never thought you would be someone's puppet. Next time there will be no vote for you.

Always at odds

BRAIDWOOD—I saw Mayor Earley has released a statement on his resignation. He didn't want to spend his term at odds with the city council. The council would not work with him because he was not going to retain their friend. I hope the council is happy now that they can give their friend a job. All of you council members should be ashamed of yourselves. Just remember the same citizens that voted you in will be voting you out, some in less than two years, the rest in 2027.

Forced bankrupt

DIAMOND—Answer my question FYI. Are you willing to let government bureaucrats in Washington D.C. force American businesses and even homeowners to bankrupt themselves to abide by the left's Green New Deal?

Snakes are back

BRAIDWOOD—The snakes are back in business again. We, the people of Braidwood elected a new mayor. This election ran the

snakes out and after so much badgering, complaints and outright attacks by these snakes our newly elected mayor resigned. You should all be ashamed of putting a decent man in the hospital but none of you have any shame, conscience or decency, especially the head snake who was so grossly overpaid. As a property owner in Braidwood I am so thoroughly disgusted by our town again being run by the downright evil snakes.

Sweeps every Monday

WILMINGTON—I was just wondering why the city said they can't afford a leaf vac to pick up the leaves in the fall but they have the money to run a street cleaner every Monday. To me that doesn't make any sense. I think that having a leaf vac is far more important than having a machine going up and down the streets cleaning every Monday morning. I just don't understand the priorities the city has and I'm sure a lot of other citizens feel the same way. I'm sure if it was asked during an election what would the residents rather have they would choose the leaf vac. So city council, please bring back the leaf vac and discontinue the street cleaning program.

They will determine

DIAMOND—Answer my question FYI. Were you aware that the Green New Deal would let the government tell you how often or even if you can drive your own car or fly an airplane?

It would be evident

DIAMOND—Regarding an article "Inconsistent" submitted from Wilmington in the April 26 soundoff column. Many people, including parents and most Republicans are concerned about trans girls sharing girls' restrooms as well as competing in girls sports. When the sporting event is over and competitors are in locker rooms changing clothes is of grave concern. When the trans girl removes the uniform, standing unclothed and exposed, the "trans" is evidently still a boy. It really doesn't matter how you translate the biological facts, these facts are consistent with the verifiable truth. Girls remain girls and boys remain boys—just as God created them to be.

Sharon

In support of

WILMINGTON—So glad to see the mayor and aldermen supporting a kayak launch on the Kankakee River. Every time I cross the river and read that sign that says national water trail I laugh to myself how inappropriate that designation is when it comes to city hall. They took away our fishing at the dam and the spots downstream. How uninviting that is as a town. At least with a kayak launch people will get access to the 'National trail'.

Letter to the editor

Life jackets are a great investment

Recently, an instructor representing a well known swim school in proclaimed that four-month-old babies can hold their breath.

Be cautious of this statement. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, infants breathe between 30-60 times per minute.

You do the math. When an infant is submerged for approximately 10 seconds, this immediately causes an involuntary breath holding situation. Does your child cry or grasp during this activity? Is your child crying, reacting in distress?

According to the Cleveland Clinic, those who have had a traumatic water-

related experience may develop aquaphobia. Dr. Reetu Grewal, Medical Director at UF Health Family Medicine and Pediatrics surveyed 20 family practice providers and pediatricians in the area.

She shared a video of an infant during a survival program. All 20 doctors agreed it was involuntary breath holding.

With forced submersion, you are taking unnecessary chances of creating possible physiological and psychological trauma.

The majority of infant and child drownings are due to inadequate adult supervision. Pool alarms are annoying and fencing is not attractive however these tools are essential to

the safety of nonswimmers.

Human error is the #1 cause of accidents worldwide. Per the AAP and CDC water safety guidelines, to supplement child safety in any body of water, make lifejackets a must and provide arms-length supervision.

In 2022, over 410 drownings resulted in death, 90+ of which were toddler-related at residential home pools. There were numerous additional drowning incidents which resulted in hospitalization.

Would you ever trust or use a caregiver again who left your child in a hot car for more than 15 minutes? Treat every pool like a hot car.

We are human - consider a \$35 investment as Dr. Tom Griffith advocates, "Wear lifejackets for non-swimmers with the same consistency as seatbelts. Lifejackets are the cheapest, most effective form of life insurance that can be purchased."

Jennifer Matthew, instructor
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Arnie Bauer Chevy-Buick takes on GMC dealership

BY ERIC FISHER
PUBLISHER

After 70 years as one of three new car dealerships in Wilmington, Community GMC has closed its doors on South Water Street.

But thanks to a deal with another family-owned auto purveyor, you can still by a new GMC truck in Wilmington.

Arnie Bauer Chevy-Buick has taken on the long-time GMC dealership owned by the George Zouganelis family. George, daughter Alexis and mechanics have moved to the east side dealership.

The decision by the Zouganelis family wasn't easy but driven, in part, by the big push to switch to electric vehicles (EVs).

"There's been a lot of changes over the years for us with the store and the whole deal is really bittersweet. You know, my father and the Zouganelis family worked very

hard at it for 55 years and it's been a bumpy road going from three divisions down to one," George Jr. said in regards to GM dropping the Oldsmobile and Pontiac brands.

"We were looking at where we were and the investment we'd have to make to be able to service EVs and we made the decision we felt would be best for our customers and our family."

George will be working in the front office at Arnie Bauer while Alexis is managing the service department. The additional mechanics has boosted the service department at Arnie Bauer so repairs are speedier with more specialized work.

"The deal expands the capacity to get things done quicker and more efficiently," Zouganelis said. "We're gonna turn cars around and repair them and give them back to much quicker than we could just because of the available

resources, more technicians, more equipment and more space."

It's given the overall inventory of cars and trucks a boost too where Community GMC had 11 trucks before, Arnie Bauer, with access to its bigger store in Matteson that sells GMC and Cadillac, can offer 74 trucks.

"The immediate pluses are easy to see," Darrin Bauer said. "The past was two stores sitting here kinda butting heads every day. We were diluting each other's service business; and diluting each other's used car business. We just felt it was the smarter move to combine them instead of having two stores struggling to get by. You combine them, up the volume, up the service and everyone wins."

The EV future

Across the globe, 14% of new cars registered in 2022 were electric, with 26 million EVs on the road, reports the International Energy Agency. That's a 60% increase in one year with China leading the way, followed by Europe and the U.S. with just an 8% increase.

While Americans still favor internal combustion engines, high fuels costs, government incentives and lower sticker prices have more new car buyers taking a second look at EVs.

Darrin, a third-generation general manager for Arnie Bauer, is charged up about EVs.

"They're coming...and they are going to save most people a lot of money," Bauer said. "But not everyone is excited about the new technology. Consumers have some misconceptions right now about EVs but that will change. It's different."

Bauer said EVs will be dramatically less expensive to operate than your gas vehicle with no oil changes and cheaper recharges. And with advances in battery technology the distance on a full charge is increasing too.

"For the average Joe a nightly charge will get you where you need to go the next day. You plug your car into a regular outlet at home and it will be ready by morning. For those who need more distance, depending on how much you drive, there will be different options. We're having fast EV chargers put in here later this year which will help those peo-



Photo by Eric Fisher

A GOOD MOVE—Community GMC has moved to Arnie Bauer Chevy-Buick in Wilmington, bring more sales and service experience under one roof. Community GMC owner George Zouganelis Jr. (from left) and his daughter Alexis Delehanty will be working with Darrin Bauer, general manager of the Wilmington dealership. George will help in the front office while Alexis will manage the service department.

ple stay on the road."

The dealership will install level two chargers (240 outlet) plus one that's dramatically faster so travelers can pull over for a quick charge. A scan with their phone will allow drivers to connect, charge up and be on their way in about 20 minutes.

It will require a large investment by the dealership, an expense Community GMC wasn't prepared to make.

"GM was talking anywhere from \$500,000 to \$800,000 for dealerships to be able to handle EVs," Zouganelis said. "Ford is at \$1.2 million to invest in EVs. For us we weren't certain if 480 volt circuit was even available on our block. Our original building, which has been there since Dad went to work there in December of 1953, would have needed some major modifications. EVs, with the weight from the batteries, are much heavier which would have required new heavy duty lifts and there are height limitations with the building. Arnie Bauer's building doesn't have those same constraints so that influenced our decision too."

Arnie Bauer rents the East Baltimore location where EV upgrades are being made.

The Braidwood move

Arnie Bauer Chevy-Buick-GMC and D'Orazio Ford, the two remaining new car dealerships, previously announced they will be moving to a location just off Interstate 55 in Braidwood.

The plan is for a new building by the end of next year that's double the size, has 470 parking spaces on 6 acres, with the infrastructure to support both EVs and gas vehicles.

General Motors wants dealerships aligned along the interstates, Bauer said. They want people who are traveling with EVs to be able to pull into dealerships to charge their vehicles. At present there's not enough infrastructure out there for EVs and dealerships with charging stations are the answer.

"Although we're moving out of Wilmington into Braidwood, we will be able to better serve our customers in a much bigger area. It'll be where you can pull in your car for service and be offered amenities. We can't do that where we are now," Bauer said. "It's strictly a business decision to invest in our customers with a bigger facility in Braidwood. We're doing what the best

thing is, it'll end up. I couldn't rebuild here in Wilmington even if I wanted to," Bauer said.

About the time the building is complete there should be a handful of GM models that are all electric.

"We'll get an all electric GMC Hummer, probably within the next few months. That will be followed by the Chevy Blazer EV and then the Equinox sometime this winter. They're billing Equinox as one of the most affordable starting at around \$30,000," Bauer said.

He said GM is focusing on lowering the price of EVs to attract long-time Chevy and GMC owners who want to stay with their product.

Customer loyalty

Zouganelis understands customer loyalty, it's what kept Community GMC operating for so many years.

"This wasn't a five minute decision we made. Our business had been in our family for 50-some years so it was a very bittersweet decision. But the bottom line is the world's changing, and we had to crank up the volume. Join up with Arnie Bauer was the best way to crank the volume up. There's a brighter future ahead for all of us," George said.

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The eighth grade boys at Gardner-South Wilmington-Braceville School collected a team total of 41 points to become state champions last weekend at the East Peoria state meet.

This is the first time in school history to win a state title in track and field and the first ever State Championship for all of the Tiger sports.

"We are so proud of all of our Tiger track team. This team has worked so hard all season, and their efforts definitely paid off," said track coach Anne Sims. "Despite having a very rainy and injury-filled season, our athletes persevered and continued with drive and determination to achieve big things."

"Coach Residori and I have been watching times and distances very closely this season, and knew that we had a



GSWB's Boys State Qualifiers for track included (from left): Christopher Ozee, Holden Grimes, Case Christensen, Aiden Mack, Tyler Gubbins, Reed Millette, Aiden Bodine (back), Cameron Gray and Kaden Cavaness.

very talented group this year. We were very fortunate to have multiple 8th grade boys try their hand at track for the first time, and helped out hugely, especially when some of our team was injured."

The GSWB girls team, though a bit smaller, was also a great group placing in the top three at sectionals as well.

"I know it may not look as good on paper as the five school records broke this season, or the nine state medals and team trophy brought

home from the state meet; but my greatest pride in this team is their character."

"The way that they cheered, cared, helped, and kept each other going was truly remarkable. They are an outstanding group of athletes, and their great character may even outmatch their talent. With this combination, even with challenges that arose during the season, they excelled."

The athletes who placed and their times included"

Chloe Biros- 1600 M-

13th-6:41

Ellie Marquez- 400 M-

12th-1:12.05

(Vermaat, Olson,

Manzello, Marquez) 4x400-

10th-5:01.61

Christopher Ozee- 800 M-

11th-2:22.67

Isaiah Bouwma- 1600 M-

9th-5:29

Aiden Mack- 1600 M-

15th-5:32

Mack, Ozee, Cavaness,

Bodine,Gray- 4x200-18th-

1:52.61

Kaden Cavaness- shot

put- 22nd- 32'02.5

Case Christensen- discus-

12th- 97'01

Tiger State Medals:

(Mack, Millette, Ozee,

Gubbins, Bodine) 4x400- 8th-

4:07.74

Olivia Siano- long jump-

8th place- 14'9

100 M Dash- 7th place-

14.11

200 M- 6th place- 28.88

Holden Grimes- discus-

2nd place- 133'02

Shot put- 3rd place- 40'4

Tyler Gubbins- 100 M

Dash- 2nd- 12.00 and 400 M-

2nd- 54.06

"Coach Residori and I could not be prouder of these athletes. They had an amazing weekend down in East Peoria. We saw many great attempts, and had many personal bests," Sims concluded.



GSWB'S TRACK member Olivia Siano showing off two of the three medals that she won in her individual events at the state meet.

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Celebrating 60 years of marriage



JOHN AND MARILYN (Cummins) Kerr will be celebrating 60 years of marriage since May 25, 1963. John is the son of Pastor Sterling and Maxine Kerr. Marilyn is the daughter of Cleo and June Cummins. The couple was married at the Southern Baptist Church in Wilmington. Pastor Kerr officiated the wedding. They reside in Wilmington and are graduates of Wilmington Highschool. John just recently retired and Marilyn currently works at KMC INC as a tax preparer, with their daughters Deborah and Dyanna. Besides two daughters, they have three wonderful grandchildren, Robert, Cherokee and Holly. Plus four great-grandchildren, Josie, Belle, Riply and Toby.

Will County to spend \$7.8 million for new election equipment

The Will County Board voted to approve the purchase of election equipment for the Will County Clerk's office using \$7.8 million from the general reserve.

Lauren Staley Ferry, Will County Clerk reports that election equipment and software systems owned and operated by the Will County Clerk's Office have either exceeded life expectancy or are nearing end of life status. The Clerk's office conducted an exhaustive review that involved more than 40 interviews, demonstrations and site visits.

"Safe and effective voting equipment is one of the biggest responsibilities we have to the voters of Will County," said Judy Ogalla, Chairman of the Will County Board. "The Board recognized the need to update the system that the Clerk's office is using at this time and chose to move swiftly to have this new system available for the 2024 election cycle."

County Board Member and Democratic Caucus Leader, Jackie Traynere stated: "The hope of the Board is that this new equipment will be a

viable option for many election cycles to come no matter what changes might come to the election laws in Illinois."

County Board Finance Chair, Jim Richmond, stated: "There was a lot of debate regarding the most cost-effective way to fund this necessary project. The County Board decision to use reserve funds prevents the need to take out loans to purchase this equipment and still allows for a healthy and necessary cash reserve."

Senators outline critical response plan for schools

SPRINGFIELD – Working across the aisle and in tandem with police chiefs and education officials, members of the Illinois Senate outlined an initiative at a press conference Thursday to enhance crisis response plans in case of a school emergency.

The bipartisan proposal would allow public schools to obtain crisis response mapping data and provide copies to appropriate law enforcement and first responders to use in the event of an emergency.

When first responders arrive to a school, it is likely they've never visited the location. Most schools' blueprints on file are inaccurate, unlabeled and not compatible with the technical platforms used by law enforcement – which can cause major delays in responding to an emergency.

"When our office receives a call for an emergency at a school, we are generally met with many different agencies

responding to the same call. When we don't have an accurate map of the facility, we lose time and could potentially lose lives," said Jack Campbell, Sangamon County Sheriff. "Giving schools access to accurate maps for their schools, would be a game-changer for public safety and could save lives."

The plans comes after the May 2022 mass shooting at Robb Elementary School. A gunman fatally shot 19 children and two teachers, and wounded dozens of others. In the months since, the response at the Uvalde, Texas school has been under fire after reports from Texas' safety chief that said police could have stopped the shooting within three minutes – rather than the hour and 14 minutes it took.

Emergency response mapping data is a technique used by the U.S. Military special operations units to navigate unfamiliar locations. Senators believe it is vital for first responder to have access to the same information and maps so they can respond as quick and safe as possible.

"As a former school board member, I've personally experienced the mass confusion when my daughter's school

went on lockdown after receiving a threat. The biggest challenge was that we could not find an accurate map onsite and responding agencies did not know where to go as quickly as we wanted them to," said Barbara Hobrock, former member of a downstate Illinois school board. "After we experienced that incident, we knew that we needed an accurate, standardized map that was available at school and to responding agencies. I know this will be helpful to all schools across Illinois."

Members of the Illinois Senate will work across the aisle to pass the proposal before adjournment.

EV chargers required for new homes if passed

BY KEVIN BESSLER
THE CENTER SQUARE

Illinois may soon force new home builders to include electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Senate Bill 40 would require buildings to have EV capable conduits, and would apply to new and existing homes, apartments and condo buildings. It also would require new construction of homes and multi-unit buildings to include basic infrastructure for electric vehicle charging in a certain number of parking spaces.

Proponents said it can be up to six times more expensive to retrofit a parking space for electric vehicle charging than it is to install the necessary infrastructure at the time of construction.

"Charging your car is a lot less expensive than buying gas, and we should make this as easy as possible for electric car owners," said state Rep. Robyn Gabel, D-Evanston, the bill's sponsor.

House Republicans voiced concerns over the costs and the strain that will be put on the electric grid. The House it by a 69 to 38 vote and is headed to the governor for his signature.

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Drawing by Kate Guzman



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OBITUARIES

Robert V. Ames

COAL CITY—Robert V. (Bob) Ames, 75, of Coal City passed away on May 15, 2023 surrounded by his wife, children, and grandchildren.

Bob was born to Victor and Eileen (O'Leary) Ames on June 24, 1947 in Blue Island, IL. He was married to his wife, Jill, on June 21, 1969 after knowing her since the first grade. He later graduated from University of Illinois Chicago with a degree in Physics in December of 1969.

Bob worked for Ford Motor Company for 35 years. He started as a mechanic at a Ford dealership and was later brought on by Ford Corporate where he would retire as a Parts and Service District Manager in 2005. Anyone who knew Bob, knows that he bled Ford blue with his years of dedicated service at the company, countless Ford vehicles and love for all things with a motor.

For the last 11 years, Bob volunteered for 2,715 hours driving the Morris Hospital Transportation Bus. He also volunteered alongside Jill driving for Meals on Wheels and delivering meals to local people in the community.

Bob loved exploring the United States. His ideal vacation included treks across the nation with Jill. Their National Parks adventure began on their honeymoon at Arcadia National Park in June of 1969. They would later visit 47 National Parks and all 13 Presidential Museums on their many trips.

Bob was known for his love for tinkering and all his toys. He was an avid boater and enjoyed being the captain of his Carver, Jill's Joy 2. He spent countless hours on the lake and passed on his love for boating and the water to



his family and friends. Bob had a passion for anything with a motor. He loved snowmobiling, riding his Spyder, driving his Mustang (or just driving in general), boating, watching the Bears, campfires and spending time with his family. Above all else, Bob loved to share his time and his toys with his family and friends. There was nothing better than sharing his home, his toys, his boat and the lake with the people he loved.

Bob, a devoted husband, father, and grandfather leaves behind his wife of nearly 54 years, Jill (Dragoo) Ames; his children, Stacy (Mark) Miller and Victor (Leah) Ames, and his grandchildren: Katelyn Miller (Mike Kipka), Mark (Lily) Miller, Samantha, Jessica and Derek Ames. He is also survived by his sisters, Sue (Larry) Gerke and Kathy (Larry) Sargis and brother, Keith (Felicia) Ames and many nieces and nephews.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents and his brother, Tom Ames.

Donations may be made in Bob's name to the Alzheimer's Association or to the charity of the donor's choice.

Funeral Services were held on Monday, May 22, 2023 at the Coal City United Methodist Church in Coal City. Rev. Dr. Jay Regennitter officiated.

Cremation rites were accorded following the service.

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

Ferrari Funeral Services of Coal City were entrusted with arrangements.

Crystal Nelson

BRAIDWOOD—Crystal Lynn Marie Nelson (nee Strohm), 62, of Braidwood, passed away unexpectedly, Wednesday, May 17, 2023 at Ascension St. Joseph Medical Center in Joliet.

Born Feb. 5, 1961 in Joliet, she was the daughter of Melvin Gene and Sharon Eve (nee Favero) Strohm.

She graduated from Gardner-South Wilmington High School with the class of 1979. She became a certified nursing assistant, working at nursing homes and caregiving for many friends and family. She also worked as a bus monitor for special need students within the Coal City school district. Crystal was an elder at the Church of Hope in Gardner, where she also operated the Food Pantry. She was the most caring, loving, and forgiving person that one could meet. She loved to entertain and never showed up to an occasion empty handed, she was known to always have a dish ready or a special cake baked. Her family meant everything to her, especially her grandchildren. She had a knack for sewing just about anything, but she adored making blankets for her loved ones.

Surviving are her lifelong partner, Dennis Dalziel, of Braidwood; two children, Cassandra (Mason) Wehrle, of Toluca, IL and Jacob (Aaron) Nelson, of Orland Park, IL; one step-daughter,



Amanda (Chris) Sternisha, of Wilmington; seven grandchildren: Jaxson, Gavin, Lucas, Zane, Chase, Ethan, and Evan; three siblings: April (Robert) VanWinsen, of Green Forest, AR; Belinda (Clayton) Brown, of Red Banks, MS, and Jeffery Strohm, of South Wilmington; nieces and nephews: Sarah Kisner, Joseph and Travis VanWinsen; Andrew and Becky Brown, and Avery Strohm; numerous great-nieces and nephews; and former father-in-law, Gary Nelson, of Herscher, IL.

Preceding her in death were her parents; step-daughter, Jessica Dalziel; niece, Cynthia VanWinsen and former mother-in-law, Marlene Nelson.

Funeral services were held Sunday, May 21, 2023 at the R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, Braidwood.

Cremation rites were accorded following services.

Memorial donations to the family would be appreciated.

For more information and to visit her online guestbook, please log on to www.rwpatersonfuneralhomes.com.

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

Ronald Stockman

COAL CITY—Ronald Gary Stockman, 79, of Coal City, passed away peacefully at his home on Sunday, May 21, 2023.

Ron was born on Aug. 21, 1943 in Glencoe, MN to John and Ruth (nee Uecker) Stockman. He was raised in Stewart, MN on a family farm. He attended schools in that area, and when in high school, Ron was one of eight wrestlers to make the state tournament in his weight class. He received his B.S. in Business at Mankato State University. He served honorably with the Minnesota Army National Guard. Ron married Cheryl L. Bumgardner on Dec. 30, 1972 at the Theodore Street Lutheran Church in Crest Hill. Together, they raised their family of two children. He worked as a purchasing manager for most of his career at Insta Foam/Dow Chemical in Joliet.

Ron was a humble, quiet and generous man of strong faith. He was an active member through the years with the United Lutheran Church of Gardner. Ron enjoyed gardening and canning. He was a football fan and cheered for the team of his home state, the Minnesota Vikings. He also enjoyed watching old westerns and Perry Mason.

He is survived by his children, Jodi (Shawn) Chapman, of Coal City and Ronny (Stephanie)



Stockman, of Braceville; his four grandchildren: Nathan, Ryan and Brooke Chapman and Morgan Stockman; his sisters: Almira Polzin, Arlene Torgerson and Audrey Weber; his brother, Earl (Kathy) Stockman; his sisters and brothers-in-law, Pam (Tom) Jaronski and Robin (Arlan) Hogan and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Cheryl; his parents, John and Ruth Stockman; his infant sister, Doris Stockman; his brother, Wayne Stockman and his brothers-in-law: Jim Weber, Vernon Polzin and Charles "Bum" Bumgardner.

Memorials in Ron's name may be made to the United Lutheran Church, 309 E. Jefferson St., Gardner, IL 60424 or to Lightways Hospice, 250 Water Stone Circle, Joliet, IL 60431.

Visitation will be on Thursday, May 25, 2023 from 9:30 a.m. until the time of the Funeral Service at 11 a.m. at the United Lutheran Church in Gardner with Pastor Greg Olson officiating. Burial will follow at Braceville Gardner Cemetery.

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

Ferrari Funeral Services are entrusted with arrangements.

Barbara Ann Ray

BRAIDWOOD—Barbara Ann Ray (nee Jones), 65, of Braidwood, passed away on May 19, 2023 at Ascension St. Joseph Medical Center in Joliet.

Born Jan. 9, 1958 in Chicago, she was the daughter of Dwight D. and Columbia Ophine (nee Thompson) Phillips. Barb attended Joliet East High School. She married Bobby E. Ray Sr. on June 12, 1999 at Pilcher Park in Joliet. She bartended for over 32 years, previously at Spivey's in Coal City. Barb enjoyed karaoke, designing jewelry, playing Yahtzee, and fund raising and organizing for the Moms of Military Prayer and Support Group.

Surviving are her children: Amanda (Rodney) Heston, of Gary, IN; William Prater III, of Joliet; Eddie Andrew Prater, of Louisville, KY; and Heidi (partner Michael) Prater, of Joliet; two brothers, Dwight Jones, of Nixa, MO and Donald E. Phillips of Texas; three sisters: Evelyn Jones, of Joliet; Vicky (Tom) Kolkind, of Lacross, WI and Anita (John) Tonelli, of Braidwood;



numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren and nieces and nephews.

Preceding her in death were her husband, Bobby E. Ray Sr.; father, Dwight Jones; mother, Columbia Ophine Phillips and granddaughter, Becca Lynn Keto.

Visitation for Barbara will be at the R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, Thursday, May 25, 2023 from 4-7 p.m. with funeral service at 7 p.m. Cremation rites will be accorded following services.

Friends and family will meet at Maple Hill Cemetery in Elwood on Saturday May 27 at 11 a.m. for Inurnment.

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

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

Beverly Grant

GARDNER—Beverly Jean Grant (nee Neece), 82, of Gardner, passed away Saturday, May 20, 2023 at Morris Hospital.

Born July 10, 1940 in East Brooklyn, IL, she was the daughter of Delbert and Alice (nee Johnson) Neece. She was a graduate of the Gardner-South Wilmington High School with the class of 1958. Bev was a dedicated member of the Church of Hope in Gardner, where she proudly served as an Elder. She was also a member of the Jr. Women's Club and the Style Show Committee Club. She enjoyed volunteering at the Rialto, lovingly referred to as a Rialto "Penguin" and also served on the committee for Grundy County Hospice.

Amongst her dedicated volunteer efforts towards her community, she also worked alongside her husband, son, and brother-in-law, co-owning and operating several businesses, most recently Grant Bros. Construction and Grant Farms. Bev was the pillar of her family, whose love will be missed dearly, but she will forever live on within our memories. She will always be remembered as a wonderful wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, great-great-grandmother, daughter, sister, aunt, cousin, and friend.

Surviving are the love of her life, husband of 56 years, Rodney Grant, of Gardner, who she married Nov. 19, 1966 in Joliet; one son, Duane Grant, of Gardner; two daughters, Dawn (Stephen Wilhelmi) Grant, of Mazon and Tari (Casey) Barker, of Hendersonville, TN; step-daughter, Carol Jarman, of Clarksville, TN; her



children held a special place in her heart, but her grandchildren are the ones who won her affection, also surviving are eight dear grandchildren: Chad Crater, Carissa Crater, Garrett Grant, Bennett Grant, Gage Barker, Grant Barker, Chassidy Sinks and Nathan Jarman; four great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild, two sisters, Joan Utley, of East Peoria and Barb (Rick) Phillips, of Gardner, who she profoundly held a special bond with and numerous beloved nieces, nephews, and their families.

Preceding her in death were her parents, Delbert and Alice; brother, John D. Neece and three year old sister, Barbara Ann Neece.

Cremation rites will be accorded. All family and friends are welcome to celebrate Bev's life at the Church of Hope: 202 N. Monroe St., Gardner, Thursday, May 25, 2023 with a memorial visitation beginning at 10 a.m. until the time of memorial services at 12 p.m. Dear Friend and Pastor, Jan Chandler will officiate. The funeral dinner will immediately follow and will be announced after the services.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in her name may be directed to the Church of Hope or GSW Athletics.

For more information and to sign her guestbook please log on to rwpatersonfuneralhomes.com or find them on Facebook.

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

Beverly Tackett

MORRIS—Beverly Annette Tackett, 64, of Morris, passed away Wednesday, May 17, 2023, at Morris Hospital following a brief illness.

Born May 12, 1959, in Terre Haute, IN, Annette was a daughter of Paul Norton and Beverly (Whitkanack) Norton Hacker. She was raised in Mazon, graduated from MVK High School, and attended Judson University in Elgin, IL.

Annette began working at the age of 19 for what is now LyondellBassell in Morris and held employment there for 44 years. She was a dedicated employee who was very proud of her work there, participating with the Volunteer Fire Department, organizing health fairs and Earth Day events, and helping create a new system to limit plastic pollution.

Annette loved all things nature and took great pleasure in gardening, working towards preservation efforts, and donating to the Morton Arboretum. She was an amateur photographer, a passion her whole life, taking classes at Joliet Junior College later in life to deepen her skills. She always had a camera in her hand and had thousands of family photos at home, capturing years of loved ones and special events around her.

Annette was also a lifelong pianist and music lover, lending her talents for many years to First Baptist Church in Coal City, where she was a past member and led the youth group. In addition, she was an avid fan of the Chicago Blackhawks and had their memorabilia scattered throughout her home and car.

Annette held social justice causes in high esteem and supported several groups, including the Human Rights Campaign, American Civil Liberties Union, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. She was a straight shooter who made it clear where she



stood with people, but she was kind and loving and welcomed anyone into her home. Annette was very loyal and was the type of person that always showed up, committed to keeping her word and following through- if she said she was going to do something, she did it.

Survivors include her mother and father: Beverly Norton Hacker, of Mazon and Paul Norton, of Hutsonville, IL; ex-husband, Terry Tackett, of New Carlisle, OH; two children, Melanie Tackett, of Johnson City, TN and Jacob Tackett (Luke Brand), of St. Paul, MN; six grandchildren: Kaylie, Aleese, Shallon, Liam, Carson, and Cameron; four sisters: Brenda (Ken) Funk, of Morris; Angie Hopkins, of Indiana; Amy (Ron) McClelland, of Panama City, FL and Paula (Kevin) Middendorf, of Humboldt, TN; as well as numerous nieces and nephews, and her best friend, Carissa Baumeister.

Annette was preceded in death by her step-father, Jerry Hacker and two children, Melissa Bordeaux and Stephen (Arianna) Tackett.

Funeral services were held Monday, May 22, 2023, at Reeves Funeral Home in Coal City.

Cremation rites were accorded following the services, and Annette will be laid to rest in Oregon, IL.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Annette's memory to the family to go towards funeral expenses, or to Morton Arboretum and the ACLU.

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

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

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Photos by Zedie Sims

AMERICAN TELEVISION HOST Samantha Brown (center) made a stop in Braidwood last week while filming a travel segment on Route 66. Brown and her film crew of eight stopped at the Polk-A-Dot Drive In in Braidwood to meet with Wilmington author John Weiss (right). After making stops at the Old Joliet Prison and the Gemini Giant in Wilmington, Brown interviewed Weiss about his book "Traveling the ...New Historic Route 66 of Illinois" a guide highlighting unknown Illinois stops along the Mother Road. Over the last 20+ years, Brown has traveled around the world visiting over 250 cities in 62 countries and 40 of the United States creating over 160 hours of program-

ming for the PBS and the Travel Channel. In January 2018, she began hosting and producing "Samantha Brown's Places to Love" on PBS. The following year, the show won the Emmy for Outstanding Travel/Adventure Program and Brown won the Emmy for Outstanding Host. The crew was at the Polk-A-Dot a good two hours, filming Brown and Weiss while the restaurant remained open to the public. Brown said she intended to utilize Weiss' book, the only guide book exclusively on Illinois, to make numerous side trips to back road adventures. Weiss, a Route 66 Hall of Fame member and recipient of the John Steinback Award for his ongoing efforts of supporting and preserving the Mother Road, was told the show will air in late November or December. And yes, Brown enjoyed the Polk-A-Dot's French fries.

Reed-Custer Comets to host youth basketball camp

Reed-Custer will host a boys basketball camp for students entering grades 3-8 this summer. Camp will run from July 10 until July 13 at the Reed-Custer Elementary School. Grades 3rd-4th will run from 8 a.m. until 9:30 a.m., Grades 5th-6th will run from 10 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. and Grades 7th-8th will run from noon until 1:30 p.m.

The goal of the Reed-Custer Basketball Camp is for the players to improve their individual and team skills through summer competition. The fundamentals of basketball will be stressed in a fun atmosphere where the players can develop a love for the game. High School players will also be assisting with camp.

The campers will be grouped by ability and age. The purpose of the camp is to prepare the athletes for basketball competition at their respective grade levels. There will be skill contests for every age group as well as daily games.

All youngsters are encouraged to attend camp regardless of their basketball background. Bring basketball shoes and a water bottle every day.

The cost of the camp is \$40 per child. Cash or check made out to Reed-Custer High School or RCHS. Walk ins are welcome the first day of camp but you may not get a camp Tee shirt. Please return the camp form by June 30 to the Reed-Custer High School or Middle School offices or show up the day of the camp.

2023 Reed-Custer Comets Basketball Camp

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Grade next year: _____

T-shirt size (circle one): Youth - L

Adult - S M L XL

I hereby authorize the directors of the Comets Basketball Camp to administer first aid in case of an emergency. The participating student is physically fit according to our family physician.

Parent/Guardian signature _____

Date _____

Bohemian cemetery meeting

The annual meeting of the Bohemian National Cemetery of Braidwood, Ltd. will be held on Sunday, May 28, at 1 p.m.

The meeting will be held at the cemetery, on the west side of Essex Road, south of Route 113, in Braidwood. Further details at www.bohemiannational.org.

Breakfast with birds

The Forest Preserve of Will County will be hosting Breakfast with the Birds on Wednesday, June 7, at Four Rivers Environmental Education Center, Channahon. The program will be 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

View the bird-feeding exhibit at Four Rivers from the exhibit room indoors and enjoy provided warm beverages and muffins. Need more than a muffin? Bring your breakfast.

A naturalist will give a brief talk about the colorful visitors at the feeders and will be on hand to discuss all the birds that come and go throughout the morning. Free, ages 18 or older. Register by June 6.

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The Food Tent will serve Beef Burgers, Brats & Hotdogs, drinks, chips & snacks for a nominal fee.

Park your car in the north end of the parking area. Walk the trail to the Cragg Cabin or catch the wagon ride

Driving Directions: From Morris, take Route 47 south to Pine Bluff Road; then east about 6 miles to Jugtown Road and watch for the stone park entrance sign on your left. From Interstate 55, turn on (Exit 240) Lorenzo Road west about 7 miles to Jugtown Road and watch for the stone park entrance sign on your right. Park Address: 5010 N. Jugtown Road, Morris, Illinois 60450.

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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.

Phone (815) 476-7966 or (815) 634-0315 for details.

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Line Ads are up to 30 words
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The Braidwood Journal — The Coal City Courant — The Free Press Advocate



APARTMENTS FOR RENT

Braidwood, 2 BR, stove and refrigerator, w/d hookup, C/A, garbage included, \$1,000 month plus security, no pets, call 815-474-4407.

BOATS

10 foot aluminum John Boat and trailer. Two trolling motors & life jackets. \$500.00 Call 815-530-4479. ca21-22

GARAGE SALE

14th ANNUAL WILMINGTON ALL-TOWN GARAGE SALE
Thurs., June 1 (8 am-5 pm);
Fri., June 2 (8 am-5 pm);
Sat., June 3 (8 am - 2 pm)
Sponsored by First United Methodist Church, 401 E. Kahler Rd., Wilmington

Everyone is welcome to come out and explore all the great sales at the church and throughout the whole town. Stop by for lunch at the church Friday from 11:30-1:30. Listing maps will be available for pick up at the church beginning at 8 am on June 1 and throughout the sale dates. For more information, call 815-476-5474.

Braidwood Garage Sale Days
Friday & Saturday
June 9 & 10
8am to 3pm
Get maps at First Presbyterian Church Main & Lincoln St.
Look for bright blue pennants.
No rain date.

Coal City - 470 E. Division St., garage in alley., Thurs., May 25 from 9am-4pm. Toys, Barbies, books, boys & girls clothes & shoes, childrens-teens books & puzzles, some adult clothes, small grill, home decor, much misc. Too much to list.

GARAGE SALE

Essex - HUGE multiple family garage sale. 185 Essex Way. Fri., & Sat., June 2 & 3 from 8am-3pm and Sun., June 4 from 8am-12pm. Household items, tools, women's clothing, young adult clothing, books, ceiling fans, tool chest, TONS of misc. items. cc21-22

S. Wilmington - 365 Third Ave. Thur., Fri. & Sat., May 25, 26 & 27 from 8am-2pm. We have something for everyone. 2 BR sets, Handmade oak: spinning wheel, conversation bench & roll top desk. Fenton glass, household items, yard tools. cc21

Shadow Lakes Annual Flea Market and yard sale Non Residents invited Memorial Day Weekend Sat., May 27 8am-3pm Entrance only Gate 3 or 4a off Novy Road. Maps available at gates and pavilion. For info: 815-458-3647. (No entry after 2 p.m.) ch20-21

HELP WANTED

The Village of Elwood is accepting applications for seasonal help within the Public Works Department. Hours are Monday through Friday from 6:30am to 3:00pm. Employment Application can be downloaded online at www.villageofelwood.com. For more information please contact Public Works Director Larry Lohmar 815-693-9738. Please email completed application to julie.friebele@villageofelwood.com ch21.

Experienced laborer wanted. 815-634-3976 ca19-22

HELP WANTED

NOW HIRING Summer Time Maintenance Employee
The Village of Coal City is seeking summer help to work on the Village's Maintenance staff. This person will report to the Maintenance Supervisor and perform a variety of public works related tasks. Candidates are expected to work safely and effectively with a variety of maintenance tools and equipment, perform physical tasks involving frequent bending, lifting, carrying, pushing and pulling executing tasks up to 50 pounds. This work is often conducted outside in adverse weather conditions. This employee must be able to establish and maintain effective work relationships with co-workers and those contacted while performing the requisite tasks. Candidate must possess a valid Illinois license along with a safe driving record. No more than 32 hours of work per week. A job readiness physical will be required. High School students encouraged to apply. Interested and qualified candidates should apply by submitting a resume along with an employment application at Village Hall by June 1, 2023. ch21

VILLAGE OF COAL CITY NOW HIRING PART-TIME MAINTENANCE EMPLOYEE
The Village of Coal City is seeking a part-time employee to work on the Village's Maintenance staff. This person will report to the Maintenance Supervisor and perform a variety of public works related tasks. The candidate must display his/her previous experience with working safely and effectively with a variety of maintenance tools and equipment, perform physical tasks involving frequent bending, lifting, carrying, pushing and pulling executing tasks up to 50 pounds. This work is often conducted outside in adverse weather conditions. This employee must be able to establish and maintain effective work relationships with co-workers and those contacted while performing the requisite tasks. Candidate must possess a valid Illinois license along with a safe driving record. A CDL preferred but not required. No more than 32 hours of work per week. A job readiness physical will be required. Interested and qualified candidates should apply by submitting a resume along with an employment application at Village Hall by June 1, 2023. ch21

Experienced laborer wanted. 815-634-3976 ca19-22

HELP WANTED

Coal City United Methodist Church has a position open to serve as treasurer. Job description available upon request. If interested in this position, please submit a cover letter and resume to revjaynr@gmail.com.

HANDYMAN NEEDED

Custer Park couple looking for handyman for all types of work: yard work, painting, power washing, drywall, lifting and cleaning garage. \$18/hr., flexible to your schedule. Same day cash. Call 618-387-2245 ask for Ann

HOMES FOR RENT

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

Braidwood area - 3BR, 2BA, stove; refrigerator; C/A; W/D hookup, storage shed. Large lot. 1st, last & security. Credit check required. 745 E. Mary Ln., Godley. \$1,250/month. 815-476-6462. cc19-22

LOST & FOUND

Have you found a lost pet or lost a pet in Will County? Please call Will County Animal Control. We may have your pet. We want to reunite your family, 815-462-5633. fr/tfn

MISCELLANEOUS

Hall Rental - Available for parties, showers & meetings. Seats 100 people, full kitchen available. If interested call New Hope Presbyterian Church in Coal City, 815-634-8332. ch

For Sale: 6x16 ft. Keefer built livestock trailer, good shape; Schram antique jackhammer/air compressor. Call after 6 p.m. 779-279-5116.

HPZ Pet Rover Run performance stroller for dog. Made in USA with heavy-duty tubing. Holds up to 50 lbs. Lifetime warranty. Retail for \$363. Asking \$125; also large plastic dog kennel, \$40. Call Eric 815-922-7966.

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SHOP YOUR LOCAL BUSINESSES!

REAL ESTATE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 13TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT GRUNDY COUNTY - MORRIS, ILLINOIS LAKEVIEW LOAN SERVICING LLC Plaintiff, -v- ERIC D EVANS Defendant 21 CH 21 NOTICE OF SALE PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on August 11, 2022, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 11:00 AM on June 21, 2023, at the Grundy County Courthouse, 111 East Washington Street front door entrance, MORRIS, IL, 60450, sell at a public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate. Commonly known as 1923 TALLER ROAD, MORRIS, IL 60450 Property Index No. 02-31-478-034

The real estate is improved with a townhouse with a two car garage. Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, in certified funds/or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court. Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser will receive a Certificate of Sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale. The property will NOT be open for inspection and plaintiff makes no representation as to the condition of the property. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information. If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and the legal

fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4). If this property is a condominium unit which is part of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1). IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW. You will need a photo identification issued by a government agency (driver's license, passport, etc.) in order to gain entry into our building and the foreclosure sale room in Cook County and the same identification for sales held at other county venues where The Judicial Sales Corporation conducts foreclosure sales. MCCALLA RAYMER LEIBERT PIERCE, LLC Plaintiff's Attorneys, One North Dearborn Street, Suite 1200, Chicago, IL, 60602. Tel No. (312) 346-9088. THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-4650 (312) 236-SALE You can also visit The Judicial Sales Corporation at www.tjsc.com for a 7 day status report of pending sales. MCCALLA RAYMER LEIBERT PIERCE, LLC One North Dearborn Street, Suite 1200 Chicago IL, 60602 312-346-9088 E-Mail: pleadings@mccalla.com Attorney File No. 21-078751L-722031 Case Number: 21 CH 21 TJSC#: 43-1799 NOTE: Pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, you are advised that Plaintiff's attorney is deemed to be a debt collector attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. Case # 21 CH 21 I3220141 Published in the Free Press Newspapers on Wed., May 17, 24 & 31, 2023

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Mandy Eaton
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Jim Baudino
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cc9-24

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14th ANNUAL WILMINGTON ALL-TOWN GARAGE SALE

Thurs., June 1 ~ Fri., June 2 ~ Sat., June 3

The 14th Annual All-Town Garage Sale will be sponsored by the First United Methodist Church. We will be producing MAPS of listings throughout the town. All of the advertising will be done for you and bargain hunters will be out all over town. You may sign up for one or all three days, and specify your hours. We will also have sellers inside the church and vendors/crafters can have a space in our parking lot for an additional \$10 (for all 3 days). MAPS can be picked up at the church on Thursday, June 1st beginning at 8 a.m. through the entirety of the sale. Return the filled-out form below by May 26 with a \$10.00 donation to have your information in our Map Listing (60481 RESIDENTS ONLY). These forms are also available at Wilmington City Hall, Wilmington Library, FUMC church, or download from our website at: www.funewilm.org

NAME: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

Yes, _____ I want a CHURCH PARKING LOT (10X13) SPACE for an additional \$10 (June 1: 8-5; June 2: 8-5; June 3: 8-2)

MAP LISTING INFORMATION:

Dates/Times of your sale: _____

Address of participating sale: _____

Subdivision/Neighborhood: _____

Items to be sold: _____

Make your check payable to First United Methodist Church and you may drop off or mail your check to FUMC, All-Town Garage Sale, 401 E. Kahler Road, Wilmington, IL 60481. Call the church office M-F 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. at 815-476-5474 with any questions. *(The First United Methodist Church of Wilmington is not responsible for lost, stolen, or broken items. All unsold items and trash must be removed after the sale.)*



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Source: Midwest Real Estate Database, (MLS)
Single Family Detached Homes Sold in 2022 By Grundy County Offices.

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MORRIS \$149,900 Affordable priced 3 BR home w/ lg. rooms, 1 car gpg, fenced yard and two covered porches. Shawn 815-474-6670. JB825

SOLD
MAZON \$119,000 2BR, 1.5 BA roomy home. Large corner lot, 24x24 det. gpg, 12x12 shed, 27 ft. above ground pool. Crawl. Della 258-4667. HL111

SOLD
VERONA \$108,000 2 story home in small quiet town. 4 BR, 1.1 BA needs work. Lg. rooms/yard. Call Della 815-258-6467. AO432

SOLD
MAZON \$398,000 3 BR, 2 full & 2 half BA. Back home w/ geothermal heating and cooling for low utility bills. Text Shawn 815-474-6670. WM12

SOLD
GARDNER \$188,900 Well kept 3 BR, 1 1/2 BA ranch home with a full basement and huge 1/3 acre fenced yard. Call 815-942-9190. PW217

SOLD
BRAIDWOOD \$164,900 Look no further! Affordable 2BR, 1 BA, 1 car garage on crawl. Be your own landlord. Call Tami 815-325-0550. NC318

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DIAMOND \$16/SF/YR Prof office space, 1/425 sf for rent. High visibility. Gross lease. Call Rodney Baudino 815-674-2583. DH1360

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Proposed transactions tax doesn't stand a chance

From Illinois law: "No unit of local government shall levy any tax on stock, commodity or options transactions."

That statute has long been targeted for elimination by the Chicago Teachers Union and its allies. The CTU reliably shuns any proposal to increase property taxes across the board, instead pushing oftentimes "magical" solutions as alternatives. It's one way the union has maintained its popularity among Chicago voters.

And new Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson, who spent much of his career working for the CTU, made it clear during his inaugural address that he will eschew property tax increases, lumping them in with onerous fines and fees. "We have a structural deficit," Johnson told his audience. "And we have to invest in people. And we have to do that without breaking the backs of working people with fines, fees and property taxes."

During the campaign, Johnson proposed a 1-2 percent "Big Banks Securities and Speculation Tax" that would raise \$100 million. So, naturally, there's worry that Mayor Johnson will try to use his considerable contacts in the General Assembly and CTU's clout to persuade Gov. JB Pritzker to reverse his position on allowing Chicago to impose a transaction tax and ease the city's structural deficit.

When he was asked last month about the transaction

tax, Pritzker said, "Obviously what we all want is a thriving financial services economy in the state and the city. I have not stood for a transaction tax, because I think it would be easy for those companies' servers to move out of the state."

The financial services industry employs thousands of Illinoisans. And one of the leaders of that industry left Chicago in a huff last year. Citadel CEO Ken Griffin abruptly announced his move to Florida after shutting down funding for his preferred Republican gubernatorial candidate Richard Irvin.

Griffin and Pritzker have exchanged verbal jabs ever since then and Pritzker has repeatedly full-on attacked Griffin's Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis.

It's not a stretch to believe that Griffin would love to see more Illinois-based companies relocate to Miami. Crain's Chicago Business, citing "multiple industry sources," recently reported that investment firm Guggenheim Partners, which has strong Chicago ties, "is on the verge of deciding to move its headquarters to Miami, the Florida city to which Citadel recently decamped."



Rich Miller

And lots of heads turned last week when Bloomberg reported that CME Group CEO Terry Duffy indicated that the company could leave Chicago. CME has already sold all of its real estate in the city and the state, Duffy said. "In our leases, we have a language in there that says if there's something that's ill-conceived from the city or the state, that our leases are null and void," Duffy said on a Bloomberg podcast. "We're in a very strong position. If we had to leave, we could leave."

Duffy did make it clear that "We like Chicago," saying he wants to be "part of the solution, not a part of the problem." Also, if you listen to the podcast, Duffy made a point to say he realized that campaign rhetoric often changes when people assume office and have to govern.

And Johnson's own campaign website claims: "We should raise revenues from activities that won't leave and cost us jobs."

While Duffy has strong, lifelong ties to Chicago, he is clearly not happy with how the city has been run. Earlier this

month, Bloomberg reported that Duffy said: "Three o'clock in the afternoon, my wife got carjacked right in the city of Chicago and it's absolutely insane what's going on here."

Duffy said he was also upset with the response he received from then-Mayor Lori Lightfoot about how the homicide rate was falling. "I said, 'don't go there. Please don't go there.' One is too many."

I would assume that Duffy has been inundated with offers to move his company elsewhere since the progressive Brandon Johnson's election. Company headquarter locations are very often subject to the whims of the CEO. Duffy said during his most recent interview that he hadn't yet talked with the new mayor. "I'm hopeful that he reaches out, I don't care if it's me or whoever, and talks about these things."

So, I reached out to the two legislative leaders to see where they stood on allowing home rule units like Chicago to impose a tax on electronic transactions.

Spokespersons for both Senate President Don Harmon and House Speaker Chris Welch said their bosses opposed the idea.

This thing is off the table.

Holiday fillup will be \$1.08/g less than 2022

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have risen 2.4 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.90/g, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices in Illinois are 16.6 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 108.0 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois was priced at \$3.20/g while the most expensive was \$4.99/g.

Locally prices were \$3.62/g in Braidwood Monday, \$3.69/g in Wilmington and \$3.84/g average in Coal City.


The national average price of gasoline is unchanged in the last week, averaging \$3.51/g.

"In the run up to Memorial Day, the national average price of gas has seen

little overall movement over the last week. We've seen more states see prices climb than fall, which has been driven by oil's volatility as debt ceiling discussions are ongoing. I think we'll see prices rise slightly as we get closer to Memorial Day, especially if there are positive developments in the debt ceiling discussions in D.C., while pessimism could drive prices slightly lower," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

"I continue to be optimistic that the national average will remain under \$4 per gallon for most of, if not the entire summer, with Americans spending a combined \$1.6 billion less on gasoline over Memorial Day weekend this year compared to last."

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COMET SPORTS

Lady Comets fall in Regional action



Photo by Alyssa Ohlund

SQUARING OFF to bunt the ball for the Lady Comets during the regional loss to Wilmington is junior Delaney Bruciak.



Photo by Amy Walker

MAKING A SAVE for the Reed-Custer soccer team during playoff action against Coal City is Comet goalkeeper Margaret Dockery.

Class of 2023 Comet tracksters honored



REED-CUSTER track senior Haylee Keymon is the daughter of Brandon and Jessica Keymon. In the fall, Haylee will head off to further her education at Olivet Nazarene University. One of her favorite memories from track is the motivation that her team mates and her coaches gave her to keep pushing herself to her greatest ability. Haylee will miss the way her team and coaches helped her overcome the stress of not being able to do certain events and she's thankful for that encouragement.



REED-CUSTER track senior Zoe Hassett is the daughter of Nate and Rachel Hassett. In the fall, Zoe plans on attending college to work towards a degree in Early Childhood Education and will continue running track in college as well. Her favorite memory was when Doc made Danny go get a garbage can and put it where their workout would end because he knew Zoe would get sick. Also, the fact that she broke the school record running the 400. She would also like to say thank you to all of her coaches, teammates and everybody else who was constantly cheering her on throughout her 4 years of track at RCHS.



REED-CUSTER track senior Connor Eggleston is the son of Todd and Jessica Eggleston. After graduation, Connor plans on entering the trades to become an engineer. One of his favorite memories from track season was playing games before practice with Doc. Connor will miss the indoor invites, track meets and pushing himself to get through the prelims and making it to the finals.



REED-CUSTER track senior Nicholas Doran is the son of Greg and Christina Doran and being escorted this evening by his parents. After graduation, Nicholas wants to possibly attend JJC or find a career within the Union. His favorite thing about the track season was seeing his friends and teammates do great at all of their events. Nick will miss the coaches because they were the ones that encouraged him to push himself and helped him do better at each event.



REED-CUSTER track senior Drew Anderson is the son of Janine Jones and Matthew Anderson. After graduation, Drew plans on continuing his education at KCC while focusing on courses in renewable energy. One of his funniest moments was the time that they were playing volleyball and Zoe got taken out by a ball. Something that Drew will miss after graduation are the practices he had with Joey, Jordan and Connor.



REED-CUSTER track senior Tyler Winyinger is the son of Dawn Kochan. In the fall, Tyler plans on attending the University of Minnesota to work towards a degree in science. One of his favorite memories was when another opponent told him a knock knock joke during the second lap of the 3200 his sophomore year.



REED-CUSTER track senior Daniel Kuban is the son of Heather Rozak and Dan Kuban. After graduation, Daniel will be attending Olivet Nazarene University and working towards a degree in Elementary Education. He also plans on playing soccer while in college. Some of Danny's favorite memories were the bus rides home from invites when the coach would hand out the medals and awards. He also enjoyed the fun he would have with his teammates during practices. He would like to say thank you to the coaches for doing their best to work with the team even with all the attitudes. Lastly, thank you to Reed-Custer for being his second home and a place where he can be himself and a place he'll miss every day.

Kuban advances to state in two events

The running Comets traveled to Seneca on Wednesday, May 17, to compete in the IHSA sectional track meet. The ultimate goal of this meet was to qualify for the state meet next weekend on the campus of Eastern Illinois University in Charleston.

Senior Danny Kuban qualified in two events. Advancing to state in the mens varsity 300 hurdles is Kuban with a first place sectional time of 41.09. Connor Eggleston ran the 300m hurdles too, finishing seventh at 43.89 which did not qualify.

Kuban also advances to state in the pole vault. He was second at sectional with a height of 3.56m while teammate Dominic Alaimo (2.95m) was fifth but did not qualify.

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Greater Grundy County Readers' Choice Awards 2015

Comet defense results in regional title

BY ERIC FISHER
PUBLISHER

The Comet baseball team did a fine job of backing up senior pitcher Jake McPherson who threw a one-hitter Saturday at Manteno to win the regional championship 3-0.

Reed-Custer improves to 23-7 as they advance to the sectionals hosted by Joliet Catholic Academy today (Wednesday) against Chicago Christian who won the Palos Heights regional with two shutouts of 20-0 and 15-0.

Chicago Christian was the #1 seed in the lower bracket while Reed-Custer is #2 in the upper bracket behind regional winner JCA, the #1 seed.

"Defensively, we were rock solid today," praised R-C coach Jake Evans. "I think the kids would be the first ones to tell you that there were some moments this season where we weren't very good defensively. But that's just a testament to the hard work that these guys have shown, busting their butts every day at practice and we've just progressively gotten better as the season rolls along."

McPherson fired the one-hit shutout with seven strikeouts and one walk. But it helped when his teammates turned a double play in the top of the seventh when Manteno was threatening and when they scooped up nine groundouts and caught three flyouts.



REED-CUSTER baseball team claimed the regional championship 3-0 over Manteno on Saturday. Team members include, (front, from left) Josh Sprinkles, Brady Tyree, Connor Esparza, Joe Bembenek, Joe Stellano, Kyle Fordonski, Chase Bradley and Evan Ehringer. Back row: Coach Jake Evans, Ethan Slager, Ben Lepper, Jake McPherson, Landon Jankus, Collin Monroe, Wesley Shats, Cameron Smith, Colin Esparza, Cole Goodwin, Landen Robinson, Coach Chris Vidmar and Coach Jeff Richey.

"Jacob was outstanding today and that's what he's done for us all season. I talked to him when we showed up for batting practice this morning and said, you know, on February 27, we're playing for a regional championship with you on the mound. I'll take that all day long. And Jacob did everything that he's done all year long. We have extremely high expectations of him every

time he takes the ball and he delivered with those today."

The Comets got the job done with just three hits. They put two runs on the board in the fifth and added one more in the sixth before closing out the win with the double play and a quick grab catch by third baseman Joe Bembenek to end the game.

McPherson, Connor Esparza (RBI single) and Colin

Esparza had a hit apiece. Colin's hit was a perfect bunt down the third base line that loaded the bases. Bembenek put the ball in play, allowing McPherson to score. That run gave them a 2-0 lead and took the wind out of Manteno's sails.

"We said put the ball in play and good things are gonna happen. And, you know, when we did that good things hap-

pened. We had the bases loaded with no outs and we could have folded. But we kept the ball in play and it paid off for us," Evans said.

Joe Stellano connected for an RBI out in the sixth to give the Comets an insurance run they would not need.

"We want to be playing our best baseball at this time of year. I know that's a cliché thing that everybody says, but

it's true. We feel like we're playing our best baseball right now and we've got a tough sectional ahead. We've got some business to take care of Wednesday first (against Chicago Christian) and odds are we'll be playing the other #1 seed, JCA, for the championship. It's going to be tough," Evans said.

The Comets were sure-handed and didn't commit a single error. Catcher Cameron Smith made the most plays with seven.

Beating Beecher

Joe Stellano was brilliant on the mound on Wednesday, throwing a no-hitter to lead Comets past Beecher, 15-0.

Reed-Custer secured the victory thanks to eight runs in the fourth inning. The offensive onslaught by the Comets was led by Cameron Smith, Cole Goodwin, Kyle Fordonski, Jake McPherson, Colin Esparza, and Joe Bembenek, who all drove in runs.

Stellano got the win with no hits and no runs over four innings, striking out seven.

Comets totaled 13 hits. Bembenek, Esparza, Connor Esparza, and Goodwin each had multiple hits for Comets.

Bembenek went 3-for-4 for three RBIs to lead Comets. Brady Tyree had a triple while Connor Esparza and Goodwin (three RBIs) both had doubles. McPherson, Smith, Stellano, and Fordonski added a hit a piece.



Photo by Eric Fisher

SAFE BUNT! Connor Esparza bunts the ball down the third base line to load the bases for the Comets during Saturday's regional championship.

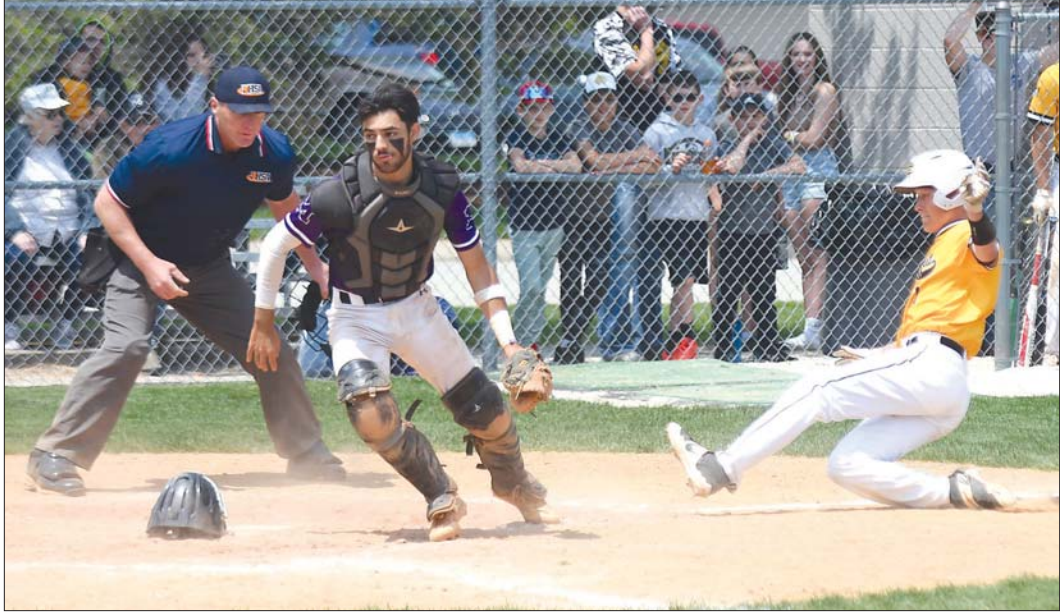


Photo by Eric Fisher

SLIDING HOME — Reed-Custer's Connor Esparza hits the dirt while charging home to score on Saturday against Manteno. The throw to the catcher went errant as Esparza scored without being tagged.



Photo by Eric Fisher

PICKING UP a dropped third strike and firing down to first base to get the force out is Comet junior Camerson Smith.



Photo by Eric Fisher

RUNNING BACK in center field to make a catch on a Manteno popup is Comet Colin Esparza on Saturday. Reed-Custer played error-free, giving up only one hit.



Photo by Eric Fisher

ON THE BALL for Reed-Custer Saturday during a soft hit back to the mound is Comet pitcher Jake McPherson who scooped it up and ran it half way to first for the force out.



Photo by Eric Fisher

DOUBLE PLAY — Reed-Custer had excellent fielding on Saturday in the regional championship victory over Manteno. In the top of the seventh inning, with Manteno threatening, the Comets turned a double play as Joe Stellano steps on second and throws to Kyle Fordonski at first for the out.

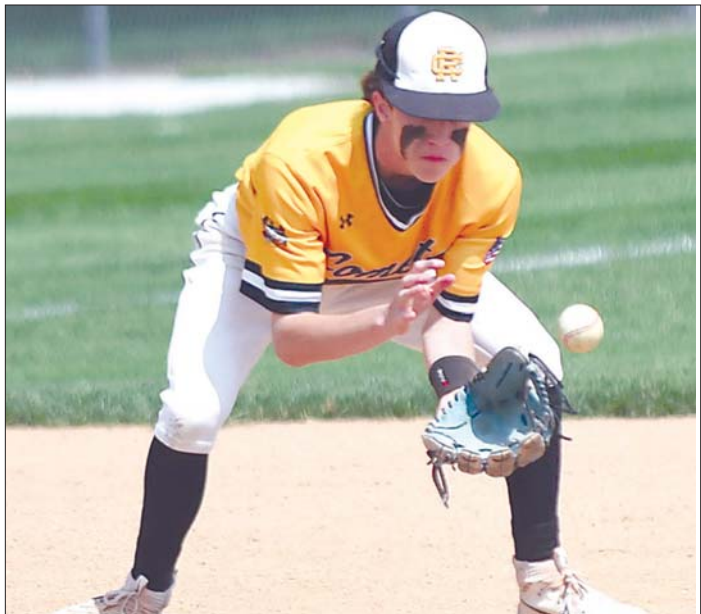


Photo by Eric Fisher

HANDLING A HOT ONE at third base is Reed-Custer sophomore Joe Bembenek.