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Braidwood seeks partnership with Will County for local alert system

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

Braidwood could be the next Will County municipality to sign on to a community information system offered through Will County.

Earlier this spring, members of Braidwood Emergency Services and Disaster Agency (ESDA) said they were hoping to create a partnership with the county to help get the word out to more residents during developing events, such as emergency road closures or issued public safety alerts.

Currently, both the city and ESDA leverage their social media platforms and the marquee at City Hall to get the word out quickly to the public for such events. But that reach only goes as far as the folks who follow those pages and happen to see the posts when they go live, or who just happen to drive past the message board.

To fix that, the city is looking to opt into a network already in place in Will County.

The Will County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) hosts a community alert network, which sends out alerts for both emergencies and non-emergencies within the county and participating communities.

Thomas Murray, Chief Deputy Director with Will County EMA, explained exactly how the system works to members of the Braidwood City Council on June 27.

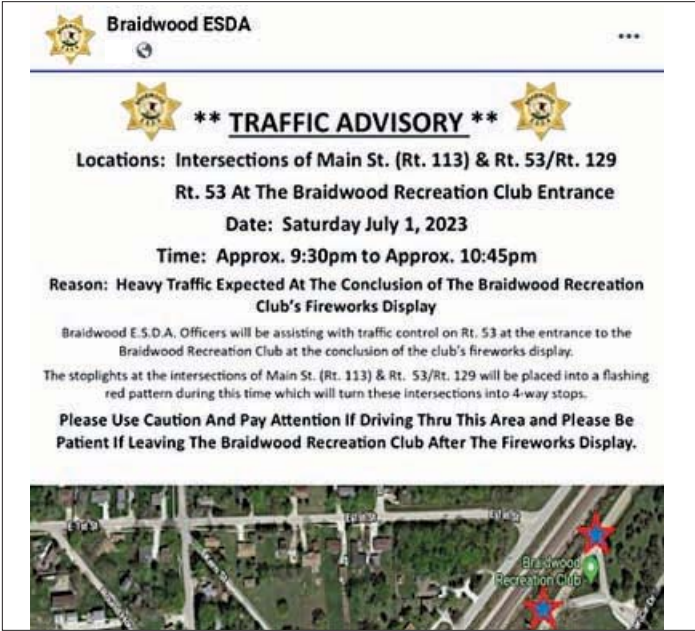
"We want to be able to alert the residents if something is happening," Murray said. "Historically we may have used more antiquated devices, telephones, fax machines, mail. Well, to keep with current technology and demographics, we want to be able to use more devices that are more readily available to the residents. Cell phones, e-mails, text messages."

Murray said only about 10% of homes still have a land-line phone, versus wireless devices/cellphones which are the main home communication line for about 80% of people.

"They have them with them at all times, they're out and about shopping, they're in the car, they're in the kitchen making dinner, they always have their phones around," Murray said. "So, that's the way we want to get a hold of residents, it's the way that they want to be notified."

Will County EMA utilizes a software platform called Everbridge to send out emergency alerts from local officials regarding immediate or pending threats to public safety or property, where immediate notification is necessary such as evacuation recommendations, boil orders, water main breaks, and crime alerts.

"We leverage legacy systems, your home phone, as



BRAIDWOOD ESDA USES POSTS like this one on Facebook for community announcements. ESDA officials have asked the city to consider an agreement with Will County EMA to sign up with the county's community alert system, to reach more people for both emergency and non-emergency messages and alerts.

well as integrate to new systems like cell phones, e-mails, texting," Murray said. "We can target all the demographics that we want to be able to notify... It is a shared system, it is shared between the county EMA, the county 911 system, and other communities have partnered as well, the city of Joliet, Diamond, Wilmington, a lot of cities have partnered so we can all work together to share the cost, so that no community has to bare the cost on their own," Murray said. "The county, the city of Joliet, and the 911 office carry the brunt of that cost, but we're able to make it affordable for the individual communities that want to participate."

The system is not only for emergencies. Residents can also get alerts for non-emergency situations such as road closures or sewer repairs, or

SEE ALERT, PAGE 2

City considers partnership with home warranty company

Agreement would allow company to promote services to residents

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

The city of Braidwood is looking to engage in a public-private partnership with a home service warranty program, to offer programs to local property owners.

On June 27, Mike Chambers with HomeServe Water Solutions gave a brief presentation to the City Council regarding a service line protection program offered to residents.

Chambers said about 1,200 communities across the nation and 60 in Illinois participate in such a partnership with HomeServe, including Kankakee and Rockford.

"Cities get involved in this [because] they understand that infrastructure is getting older and older, especially when it comes to the water and sewer lines," Chambers said. "One of the big issues is that while the cities and municipalities are doing their part to maintain those mains and water/sewer lines here in the street, there are miles and miles of lines that connect to that system and a lot of times they don't pay attention to those issues, and that's your residents lateral water and sewer lines."

Chambers noted that when there are issues with a connecting line, like a freeze or a sewer line connection, homeowners usually call the municipality for assistance. However, maintenance of

SEE COUNCIL, PAGE 2



Photo by Marney Simon

A SIGN HAS BEEN placed in front of the Custer Park firehouse on Route 113 pleading to "Save Custer Fire Dept. from another Braidwood takeover." The sign originally used the word "hostile" rather than "another." Another sign has been placed at the corner of Route 113 and Gray Road.

District officials: "Save Custer" not the message we want to send

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

A sign pleading to "save Custer Fire Department" from a takeover by the Braidwood Fire Protection District has gone up in front of the Custer Park fire house on Route 113.

But, officials in Custer Township said that's not the consensus of the fire protection district's board of directors.

The Custer Fire Protection District (CFPD) and the Braidwood Fire Protection District (BFPD) are currently in discussions to enter into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) that would hand operations of the Custer district over to Braidwood.

But despite what the sign says, members of the CFPD said the sentiment does not reflect the ongoing discussions with Braidwood.

"The sign needs to come down," said board member Mikey Newbrough. "It's just a belief of some people. There is no hostile takeover."

Newbrough said after the sign went up last weekend, it was removed, only to be placed back in front of the fire house. He said that while he appreciates that some people might feel that way, putting it on township property is inappropriate.

"They are not forcing us to do anything, it's not the consensus of the board," Newbrough said about the BFPD. "As a board, we're trying to weigh our options and do what's best for the community."

Custer Park ceased operations in 2013 when the former Custer Fire Department, Inc., a private entity, became defunct. Following the closure, Custer retained services from Braidwood, but in 2018 passed a referendum to allow Custer Township to reopen the fire protection district in May of 2019.

Initially, Custer entered an agreement with Riverside EMS for ambulance and paramedic services, but that contract expired last fall. While Custer has an ambulance, it has not yet been approved by the state for trans-

SEE CUSTER, PAGE 2

Lives turned upside down

Livingston County couple dies in wrong-way crash

BY ANN GILL
STAFF Editor

Tragedy struck a young family from Livingston County, a head-on traffic crash claiming the lives of a mother and father who leave four children behind.

For the children who range in age from 12 years to two years, "their lives have been turned upside down at this point," said Jennifer Jones, of Coal City, a witness to the crash that killed Ronald Dube, 35 and his wife, Kelly Quinlen-Dube, 34, of Emmington.

It was just before 9:50 p.m. on Tuesday, June 27 that the Dubes' GMC Yukon was struck head-on by a wrong-way driver in the southbound lanes of Interstate 55 at the 238 mile marker—Route 129—in Wilmington Township.

The Dubes and three of their children—seven year old twins and a two year old boy—were heading home after visiting family in Plainfield.

The children's physical injuries consisted of broken bones, cuts and bruises. All three were treated at Morris Hospital and transferred to Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago. They have all since been released and are in the care of family.

"Physically, they will heal. I just hope they are going to be OK. They are the sweetest kids," said Jones, who came to know the children on a dark stretch of the interstate.

On the night of the crash, Jones was traveling with her husband and daughter in a car not far behind the Dubes.

"All of a sudden I see headlights, I see headlights

coming towards us on the curve at the 129 exit," Jones said.

Her husband was driving and was able to get into the right hand lane behind a semi-truck.

As they were making a move to get out of the way of the wrong-way vehicle, the Yukon attempted to switch lanes but made contact with the semi ahead of them and were then stuck by the approaching Ford F-150 pickup.

"I saw them hit and I saw the truck come in and him them," Jones said.

The SUV spun around and a semi approaching from behind in the left lane made a strategic move to avoid contact with the Yukon, instead striking a utility trailer the Dubes were pulling. From what Jones could see the trailer had detached from the SUV prior to it being hit by the semi.

Jones' husband, Kevin, a local police officer, immediately jumped out of the car to check on the victims of the crash. She dialed 911 and handed the phone off to her daughter, Korynne and went toward the Yukon.

"I could hear the kids screaming and crying. We couldn't get the doors open and I had nothing to break a window," she said.

A screwdriver she found in their car wasn't enough to break the glass, the doors to the vehicle were locked and the older kids were trying to get out.

A man passing by on the frontage road had stopped,

SEE CRASH, PAGE 2



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Alert

notices on things like upcoming festivals or a change in garbage collection dates. The system can be customized for the city's needs.

In communities where the system is in use, residents can sign up and will receive announcements, notices, and public safety non-emergency information sent to home phones, work phones, texts to cell phones, and e-mails. Residents can select how to receive the information based on the contact information provided during the sign up process.

The partnership would require an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the city and the county, and

would cost the city \$1,500 annually to participate.

Braidwood ESDA Coordinator Josh Bolatto said the city would benefit from participation with such a multi-faceted notification system.

"One of the goals of notification in any type of situation is, how do you reach the most number of people in the shortest amount of time," Bolatto said. "This program really helps to do that. It's something that can benefit pretty much every city department in some way, shape, or form. Water boils, road closure notices, any type of emergency situation, garbage reminders... It's a great communication tool to be in our communication toolkit for all departments."

Should the city enter into an IGA with the county, the public will be notified of when and how to sign up.

The system is not used as a severe

weather notification system.

Weather emergencies are covered under the Emergency Alert System (EAS), which is the national public warning system that allows for immediate communications and information to the general public at the national, state, or local level.

The EAS is used in Will County to disseminate emergency information to the public, including severe weather alerts, AMBER alerts, general emergency alerts such as hazardous materials releases or nuclear power station accidents, and police emergency alerts that would immediately affect residents such as evacuation orders or to alert of a dangerous person.

The EAS does not require sign-up, but rather is sent through broadcasters, satellite digital audio services, direct broadcast satellite providers, cable television systems and wireless cable systems.

Crash

jumped over the wire fencing and came through the thick vegetation with a tool to break the window.

"We got the kids out and were standing towards the back of their vehicle when I turned around and saw fire under the [pickup] truck," Jones said. Her husband had also noticed the fire and was calling out for a fire extinguisher.

To keep the children safe until emergency personnel arrived, Jones and her daughter wrapped them up in beach towels and placed them in their vehicle. Another witness to the crash was there and helped care for the toddler.

"The kids kept asking where their parents were," Jones said, recalling the children kept saying that they were OK and that someone needed to go help their mom and dad.

Jones and daughter, Korynne Elliott stayed in the car with the twins who shared their names and ages and those of their siblings. They told of being at the home of their aunt that day, playing and picking mulberries, and eating McDonald's.

The children, Jones said were keenly aware their parents were hurt. Korynne said that the 7-year-old just wanted to get out of the car to check on his parents.

Jones quickly developed a closeness with 7-year-old Hailey, who sustained a broken arm in the crash.

"She just wanted someone there, she needed that comfort. I can't imagine," Jones said.

The young girl was adamant that she would not leave the crash site alone, so Jones rode to the hospital in the ambulance with Hailey and was there with the children when family arrived.

"The mom in me couldn't let them go to the hospital alone. Even if I had to follow at that point, they needed to have someone there," Jones



A LIVINGSTON COUNTY couple were killed and three of their children were injured in a wrong-way crash on Interstate 55 in Wilmington Township on Tuesday, June 27. Ronald Dube, 35 and his wife, Kelly Quinlen-Dube, 34, were pronounced dead at the scene of the crash reported just before 10 p.m. A Gofundme has been established to assist the couple's four children, and a series of other fundraisers and events are being held for the family.

said. "I just hope that if it were my family someone would stop and do the same thing for them," she continued.

Jones remained with the children until each one was enroute to Lurie Children's Hospital. As each of the children left Morris Hospital in the early morning hours of June 28, Jones gave them a hug and awaits the day she can embrace them once again.

The events of that evening keep playing over and over in the minds of Jones and her family.

"It's not something I ever want to have someone witness," Jones said. Korynne adding, "it's something you only see on the news until you see it for yourself."

Korynne and Kevin Jones remained at the scene until around 1:20 a.m. She recalls the flood of emergency personnel on site, people stopping on the frontage road to take pictures and the questions from paramedics about being related to the children.

"They kept asking are you related to any of them,

because we were talking about them like we knew them. All of us were just people who stopped to help, we had no clue who they were. We didn't know their names until the kids told us," Korynne said.

The driver of the wrong-way pickup truck was transported to a Joliet hospital for treatment of non-life threatening injuries.

Illinois State Police are investigating the crash. As of press time Monday, ISP had not yet released information regarding the driver's identity or possible charges.

The focus, Jones said, needs to be on the Dube children and the family left to care for them.

"They need all the support they can get. Again their lives have been turned upside down. My biggest concern is them, we have to make sure they are OK and it takes a community," Jones said.

Her family is encouraging the community to help support the children through various fundraising efforts that have been put forth since the

crash.

A Gofundme account has been established to collect monetary donations to cover funeral, medical and living expenses. That fund can be accessed on the Gofundme website under Help The Dube Family.

A Meal Train has also been set up for the family allowing the community to prepare a meal, send in a monetary donation or purchase a gift card.

The Dwight Veterinary Clinic has stepped up to assist the family in the care of their animals and a benefit is being planned for Sept. 8 at the American Legion in Lockport.

Even if one cannot make a monetary donation, Jones said, a simple social media share helps.

"This community has shown over the years how much they help and support somebody and I hope people will do that for them," she said.

As for the Jones family, "we will be there for whatever they need. We will do whatever they will allow us to do for them. They will always have a special place with us," Jones said, tears running down her cheeks.

What they witnessed on the I-55 that night had a big impact on Jennifer and Korynne.

"I couldn't believe how fast it happened and out of nowhere," Jones said.

The pickup truck was initially spotted heading in the wrong direction at mile marker 236—the Coal City exit. What led the driver down the wrong lanes of the interstate have not been publicly released by ISP.

Whatever the cause, the mother and daughter encourage motorists to be aware of their surrounding. Korynne said she certainly is these days.

They say there is no place for impaired or distracted driving, there is always an alternative be it calling on a friend or a ride share service.

Being a responsible driver, they say, is the least one can do.

Custer

port, although that application is pending. CFPD currently operates under a non-transport license, which allows the district to provide emergency medical care until an ambulance from a neighboring district arrives.

Talks with Braidwood about an IGA or a potential merger began late last year.

While the IGA is still in draft form, the agreement would pass 100% of the tax revenue taken in by the Custer Fire Protection District to Braidwood, and CFPD will sell off all assets that Braidwood does not need or want, liquidate those assets, and forward those monies to Braidwood.

Per the draft IGA, Braidwood would keep Custer's ambulance.

If approved, the departments would like to move ahead with the terms of the IGA as of August.

The draft puts the length of the agreement at five years, at which time the agreement will be reevaluated, and the two departments could possibly merge. A merger could generate taxpayer savings by reducing duplicate costs, such as dispatch and insurance.

Newbrough added that the board wants to hear from the public, which is why a town meeting has been scheduled for later this month. Residents will hear the details of the plan and get a chance to weigh in before the final vote on the IGA.

"What Braidwood has offered is fair and on paper looks pretty good," Newbrough said. "So, we're just doing our due diligence."

The Custer Fire town meeting takes place on Monday, July 17 at 6 p.m. in the gymnasium of the Custer Park school. The public is encouraged to attend.

Council

those lines leading up to homes and businesses and within the property lines are actually the responsibility of the property owner, a fact some folks simply don't know until an issue arrives. And once there is a break, repairs can cost thousands of dollars.

"That's where our program comes in," Chambers said.

If the city opts to partner with the program, it would not cost the city any money. HomeServe would engage in a public education campaign, and offer up their services for homeowners to enroll in a warranty program.

"It's a turnkey program, we offer all the marketing, all the billing, all the customer service, all the claims. There is no cost for the city to participate. The nice part for your residents is, it's completely optional," Chambers said. "If the city decides to participate it's nothing that goes on your bill or the residents have to do, it's just something that's available if they want to enroll."

Chambers said there are three different warranty programs that would be offered. Residents enrolled would contact HomeServe rather than the city if there are any issues. Chambers also added that the company utilizes local labor for calls.

"That's another huge benefit of the program, we only use contractors from your community for repairs, not only does that keep the dollars here in your community, but more importantly the local contractors know what permits they need to pull, all the codes, all that sort of thing," he added.

If the city opts to partner with the company, the program will include educational outreach, service delivery and program administration. Participation is voluntary and plans can be canceled by the city at any time.

Chambers said enrollment in partner cities usually totals about 25-30% of all property owners.

A partnership with the city means that the city would support the program and its local marketing campaigns, but does not preclude residents from enrolling in a different home warranty program.

In other business before the city council on June 27:

- Streets Commissioner Dale Walsh reminded residents that the city will host the first of three town hall style Q&A sessions with city administrator Tony Altieri on July 25 at 6 p.m. at City Hall. That meeting will not be live broadcast on the city's Facebook page, but questions can be submitted in advance to City Hall.
- Public Health and Safety Commissioner James Mikel reported that from June 12 through June 26, the Braidwood Police Department responded to 228 calls for service, and made a total of eight arrests with eight related arrest reports.
- After a brief executive session, the council tabled a vote with regard to a compensation package for Police Chief Todd Lyons. Administrator Altieri noted after the meeting that the delay on the vote was to get some paperwork in order.
- The council approved the payment of bills in the amount of \$85,988.
- The council approved payroll in the amount of \$84,356.

Will County, city of Joliet work on plans to create Consolidated Government Campus

Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant and City of Joliet Mayor Terry D'Arcy have partnered together to explore the creation a consolidated government campus for both county and city services.

The unified city-county office campus would be located on the site of the vacated Old Courthouse, which is slated for demolition in Fall of 2023.

"The potential for both of our governments to share a single space would be transformational for Joliet and Will County," said County Executive Bertino-Tarrant.

"These conversations are a step in the right direction to prepare us for the future. Our region is continuing to grow, and we need to work together to ensure that county and city

services are prepared for continued population increases."

Discussions about a consolidated government campus began as part of the Will County Board's decision-making process to demolish the Old Courthouse in 2019.

The Will County Executive Office prepared a space needs assessment that determined that county government would outgrow its existing office space and that the Old Courthouse property would comfortably accommodate a unified government campus.

"Joliet is proud to be the County Seat for Will County," said Mayor D'Arcy.

"Having both of our services in a unified campus, at the entrance of downtown Joliet, will promote visibility of local government and ensure

that residents get the modern services they deserve."

Several renderings have been prepared of how a consolidated government campus could utilize the property located at 14 West Jefferson Street. The renderings also included potential street-edge retail space to add to the continued revitalization efforts of downtown Joliet.

"I look forward to continued conversations between county and city officials about the great potential of this property," added Bertino-Tarrant.

Both of our governments have clearly outgrown our existing space. Maintaining an open dialogue will ensure that we identify the best option for our residents."

Will County non-judicial offices are currently located at the County Executive Office Building (COB) located at 302 North Chicago Street, along with leased space throughout Joliet.

The COB was built in 1947 and became Will County's primary government building in the 1980s, when the county-wide population was around 300,000. Will County now has nearly 700,000 residents and is projected to continue to grow.

Joliet's City Hall, located at 150 West Jefferson Street, was built in 1968 when the city population was approximately 75,000 people. That population has since doubled to more than 150,000 residents today and the existing space has no additional capacity for city staff.

While City Hall was renovated following the relocation

of the Police Department and Fire Department, the retrofitted offices have customer service centers and administrative offices inefficiently scattered throughout the building.

"This is an exciting time for the City of Joliet, with an increased prioritization of renewing our downtown spaces," added D'Arcy.

"If the County and City moved to a unified space, it could potentially free up two prime property locations to support downtown revitalization efforts. I look forward to these continued conversations."

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WORKERS COMPENSATION

4th of July in Braidwood, 1886 - fun and more fun

Today the way-back machine is set for the Fourth of July, 1886 - place, Braidwood, Illinois.

Most of the population was not native born Americans, so celebrating this peculiar American holiday may have been a bit foreign to them. This probably accounts for the fact that Wilmington had a very "Patriotic" celebration; Braidwood's was more in the line of a party.

The following is taken from the July 9, 1886 edition of the Wilmington Advocate. "The Fourth in Braidwood - Old residents claim that the celebration of Monday and Tuesday last excelled anything of the kind heretofore attempted in Braidwood.

Notwithstanding the fearfully hot weather, thousands gathered at the grove, near the race-track, on Monday forenoon in fond anticipation of a good time. The guests came from all quarters, and in every manner of locomotion.

Hon. Dan McLaughlin, as president of the day, called the throng to order at 1 p.m. and introduced Mayor Steen, who proceeded to read the Declaration of Independence. City Attorney Reynolds was next announced as orator, and those who heard him talk speak of his effort in quite complimentary terms.

The president of the day, by request, made some remarks, and concluded by proclaiming the sports of the day to be then in order.

Next came a trotting match, foot races, bowery dancing, climbing greased pole, wheelbarrow race, etc., etc., while the sale booths did a "land office business" in the skirt of the grove.

This sort of programme occupied the balance of the day, after which the crowd dispersed and many repaired to the city. Here the Ancient Order of Hibernians opened their ball in presence of 156 couples. Another party was had in Free Gardeners' Hall, while a fine private display of fireworks was had in front of the Miners' drug store.

On Tuesday the crowd met at the grove again, and the fun was resumed without ceremony. The horse races comprised the principal feature in the sports, and it is said that they were well worth witnessing.

In the evening a sparring match was had in Music hall; this, however, was a sideshow. A special train from Streator arrived at 8 o'clock, bringing Billy Myers and 200 of his friends, with plenty of money. He was matched against Paddy Welch, of Chicago, for \$500 (\$16,700) a side.

A band from Streator accompanied the party. A ring was formed in the Hall; the men shook hands in one-ounce gloves, and proceeded at once to business.

In brief Myers knocked out his man in three rounds, in the last of which Welch's shoulder blade was fractured. Myers was declared victor. The elated excursionists, with their champion, returned to Streator soon after midnight.

The days passed quiet orderly, and few, if any arrests were made. All in all, the whole affair was voted a big success."

We take notice that most of the celebrators were Irish. McLaughlin was president of the day, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, an Irish group had a ball, and the boxers were also both Irish.

During the Civil Way many an Irish man had "volunteered" as soon as they got off the boat, as seen in the movie "The Gangs of New York." Consequently many of them were veterans of the War of the Rebellion and had a real reason to celebrate the Fourth.

Perhaps this made for an atmosphere that other ethnic groups found uncomfortable. We read in the same edition, "A large party of colored folks from Braidwood were here (in Wilmington) Monday picnicking on the island. They appeared to have an enjoyable time, and they'll come again with their friends."

Also we take note that a "private display of fireworks" happened that night. It could be that is why we also read in the same edition, "On Monday night after the celebration in Braidwood a two-story house known as the Braidwood house, near the grounds, was burned. Two families got out of it in a hurry, taking what few effects they possessed. No insurance."

While there were other Fourth of July celebrations in the 19th century in Braidwood history, this one is the only I have found so fully described. Actually, it sounded like a pretty good time.

Braidwood First Presbyterian Church to host VBS

The First Presbyterian Church, on 106 South Lincoln Street, will be holding their annual Vacation Bible School on July 10, 11 and 12, from 9 a.m. to noon. For ages kindergarten to sixth grade.

There will be games, snacks, music and lots of fun. This is free to the public and open to all denominations. This years theme is Super Hero Hotline called together to serve God.

Clark earns spot on Coe College dean's list

Coe College in Cedar Rapids, IA named 115 students to its spring 2023 dean's list including Kaitlyn Clark, of Custer Park. To be named to the dean's list, a student must earn at least a 3.5 grade point average for the term and rank in the top 10% of the student body.

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Read Time Was... by Sandy Vasko
EACH WEEK IN THE BRAIDWOOD JOURNAL

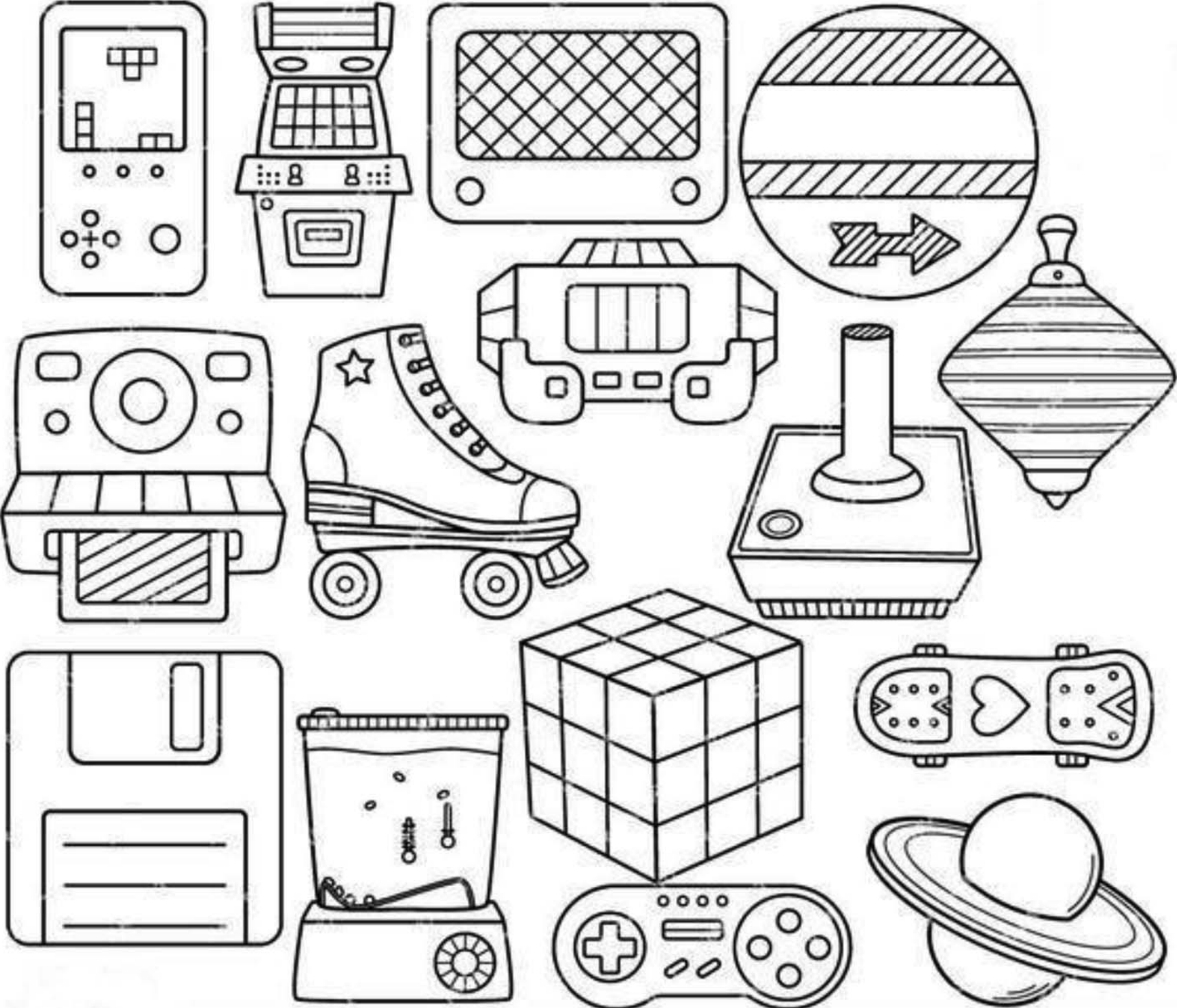


2023 Braidwood Lions Club Summerfest

COLORING CONTEST

"An 80's Rewind"





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Submissions by email to: courant@fpnusa.com with "soundoff" in the subject line or go to www.freepressnewspapers.com, -> Submit Sound-off or call 815-634-0317. Please state the town in which you are calling from or in regards to. Mail comments to Sound-Off, 271 S. Broadway, Coal City, IL 60416 or 111 S. Water St., Wilmington, IL 60481.

It burns me

COAL CITY—Finally Chicago won 1st place in something! The worst air pollution in the world, courtesy of our friends up north, Canada. These fires have been going on for weeks now, yet I have yet to hear any outrage, peaceful protests, or cries of the earth will die in weeks from all the climate change tree huggers. They worry about cows farting, my lawn mower, or my barbecue, but not about almost half the US under air quality warnings from smoke. What a bunch a hypocrites! Also I love the plan that the new mayor Brandon Johnson and police chief have put into effect to curb violence in the streets of Chicago. Since Memorial weekend nearly 150 -170 people shot, and over 20 dead. At least 3-5 takeovers of streets or neighborhoods. Great plan! KL

Blowing in the wind

WILMINGTON—Remember when the wind blew parched soil from the farms of Oklahoma to the window ledges of New York City almost a century ago? As many farmers simply abandoned their land, the government stepped in with scientific methods to help. But in more recent decades we've had poor leadership from right-wing politicians who now reject science and scoff at climate change. These right-wingers are Republicans including Trump who cut almost 100 rules from the EPA while he was president to benefit the big shots. The corporations have knowingly been destroying our country while their executives and shareholders thumb their noses and live the high life. We, the people, need somebody in our corner to stand up to these white collar bullies. Irene

The real C.T.

WILMINGTON—Sharon must be talking about a different Clarence Thomas because when I look at Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas all I see is a big steaming pile of anger, resentment, grievance, hypocrisy and corruption.

The blame game

SHADOW LAKES—Just a reminder, under the Biden administration interest rates, inflation, crime, illegal immigration and Fentanyl deaths are all up. But somehow, it's the Republicans' fault. Eddie

Support the department

CUSTER PARK—To answer some questions in the last Soundoff on 6/28/23 in regards to Custer Fire Protection District. It was stated Custer Park was having a fundraising event and why should anyone go if they aren't getting services they are paying for. When Custer Park reopened in 2019 the referendum was for fire services. The residents are not paying for an ambulance currently. Custer Park has worked diligently in getting staff for the station to staff 24 hours a day. The residents are getting the services they are paying for currently. There is an ambulance at the station that the department has been working daily on getting in service. It is not an easy task to get an ambulance up from scratch from my understanding. Instead of continuously bashing the Custer Park Fire Protection District as an anonymous person, maybe these individuals could stop hiding behind a keyboard and go to a public meeting that gets held monthly. The department posts on social media when the meetings are and where they are located. This community needs to come together and support the fire department. There is a crisis going on in fire and emergency services and this department has acknowledged this and has seen this struggle first hand and has been doing everything they can to fix the situation. Support

your fire department and stop going against the department if you are not attending meetings to have the knowledge as to what is going on with the department. They posted they are having a town meeting in July. I will be attending and I fully support the department and I will move before I ever agree to have Braidwood come to my town and have my taxes raised.

Not a hostile takeover

CUSTER PARK—A sign was recently put up along Hwy. 113 in front of the Custer Park Fire Department which read "Save Custer Fire Dept. from hostile Braidwood takeover.". First and foremost, whoever put that sign up should be absolutely ashamed of themselves. Hostile is an interesting choice of a word. "Bail out" would be more appropriate. Since the referendum in 2018, Custer Fire's best option was for the residents to wait 25-30 minutes for an ambulance coming from Kankakee or Bourbonnais. Custer cannot get an ambulance licensed because they cannot guarantee the state that they have the manpower to staff it. Through the first quarter of this year, Custer Fire had 39 ambulance calls and Braidwood sent their ambulance to 36/39 of those calls. Hostile? Maybe they should ask how many residents of Custer Park have drove themselves or their loved ones into Braidwood to the fire station during a medical emergency or have called for an ambulance to meet them at the gas station. How about putting up a sign thanking Braidwood Fire Department for providing the service that Custer residents deserve. Thank them for coming all the times that the Custer Fire Department never showed up. If you think it's hostile for Braidwood to guarantee two people in the Custer station 24/7 with a licensed ambulance that is able to transport, there must be a selfish, ulterior motive to this sign. The Custer Fire Department tried to provide service and should be commended. However, it has failed time and again and it is time to stop the nonsense and allow the Braidwood Fire Department to provide the service that the Custer residents were promised and deserve. Hopefully the trustees of the Custer Fire Protection District conduct a full investigation into the source behind this sign and see to it that they are dealt with accordingly.

Inconsistent Ron

WILMINGTON—Ron DeSantis wants to ban natural citizenship for children born in the U.S. from illegal immigrants. The 14th amendment grants citizenship to those "born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof." DeSantis argues that the current practice is "inconsistent with the original understanding of the 14th amendment." So answer me this, Ron or any other Republican (not Trump. He doesn't read.) Since you seem to be an expert on the Constitution, tell us how the framers of the Constitution intended the meaning of the 2nd amendment to be. "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of the state, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." Would the framers think it would be "inconsistent with the original understanding" of the 2nd amendment with AR-15s and other assault weapons being used other than to maintain a well regulated militia? Inconsistent, Ron?

Question for trustees

CUSTER PARK—So after the recent Sound Off and article about Custer Park Fire Protection District I have began doing research into their organization and who runs it. After doing said research I found out that two of their Trustees which are appointed by Custer Township, do not actually reside in the CPRPD



district and actually reside in the Essex Fire Protection District. I found this out through the Will County GIS website. How can someone who doesn't live in said district have a seat of power that is supposed to represent the people of said district?

See you in court

BRAIDWOOD—Black is gray, white is beige and a little bit of truth gets transformed into fiction of frightening proportions. And so it happened in the State of Maryland where the Gun Safety Act of 2023 was passed recently. This law is pure common sense by keeping guns out of schools, hospitals and government buildings. Sounds great. Until the NRA got wind of it. The NRA promptly sue the State of Maryland because the NRA does not care about common sense or the safety of Americans. The NRA misconstrues the purpose of the Second Amendment, which was meant for the good, and contorts into violence and death. Vince

Sub-standard work

COAL CITY—Last week's "Worst road in IL" sound-off is right about 53 between Elwood and Wilmington. I think that someone made millions installing sub-standard concrete in the first place instead of what should have gone in. I bet the state did not even notice and that no one spent a day in jail. We moved to Coal City in 1975 and streets that needed fixing then are the same today. Broadway, north to North St. should have been 3 or 4 lanes a long time ago. Just think of the money that it would have made in speeding tickets since then. There is always money for flower pots and their permanent expense though. Lots of standing water to keep the West Nile Virus going also. They have to replace Covid-19 with something to worry us about. I catch a lot of mosquitos in one of those purple-light traps in my back yard. They work fine and I have not been bit in years. You just need to dump the full basket of dead ones now and then.

Should say "thanks"

CUSTER PARK—This is to Custer Park Fire Department, how in your right mind do you let someone put a sign in front of the Custer Fire station stating "Save Custer Fire Dept. from Hostile Braidwood take over?" The Braidwood Fire Dept. has always provided service to you and at the expense of my tax dollars. I think a

sign that said "thank you for covering our butts, while we pretend to know what we are doing, and robbing our citizens tax dollars" would be much more fitting, and accurate to what has happened. People please support the Braidwood IGA or we are going to continue to not have proper Fire and EMS services while they continue to pretend to be something they are not.

Good job

WILMINGTON—I would like to thank the city for the amazing fireworks show that was held on Friday night, June 30. It was really nice to see the town so busy. Downtown was packed later on with the car show and I was so happy to hear that because the rotary does so much for the community in raising money and trying to get this all inclusive playground completed for children. My girlfriend came down from where I used to live and she was impressed with the fireworks and the city. I think Mayor Dietz and City Administrator Smith are both doing an amazing job for the city. I know people complain they want a Dunkin Donuts or a Wendy's, they want to see this and that in town while Diamond and other towns get everything. I know the Mayor and City Administrator do all that they can to put businesses in this community. I am very grateful that we have them leading our city as well as the city council and our first responders, police, firemen, EMT's, paramedic and ESDA. I appreciate you all and thank you for your service to this community. Sheri Michaels

The rule of law

DIAMOND—Someone should explain why a Democrat public servant can commit illegal acts and not be prosecuted when all the Democrat public servants say that no one is above the law and that the rule of law must be obeyed. This has proven that public servants do not care about the laws of the U.S.A. even though each of them took an oath to protect the lives of every American. And the worse thing that they have done is to give more legal rights and finances to immigrants in the U.S.A. illegally which they deny the same rights and finances to Americans which is a misuse of taxpayer funds that is also a crime. Where is the rule of law when Democrats commit crimes against the American citizens. Are the Democrats above the law?

First response to years of friendship

How EMTs saved a life and then enjoyed living it together

BY THE FOUNDATION
FOR A BETTER LIFE

Ask any first responder, and they'll tell you the hardest calls you will ever get are those that involve a child. Many EMTs put their hearts on the line when kids are hurting.

That was the case when a call came into an Indiana station about

an injured person. At first, it seemed routine. But when paramedic Rick Allgood arrived, he found a 7-year-old boy unconscious. He had fallen over a railing and landed hard on his head, fracturing his skull. Luckily, the adult babysitter was a nurse. Still, the boy's siblings were in the room, and the situation could have quickly turned to panic.

Rick and other crew members calmed the children by explaining what was happening. One member took the children aside and reassured them while the others attended to their little brother, Will. In less than 10 minutes, the boy was stabilized and

headed not toward the nearest hospital but to the best trauma center in the area. That calm decision under pressure saved the boy's life.

The crew's teamwork, their focus in a life-threatening situation for a young boy and their quick decision-making ability would be the most every parent would hope for in that situation. But the team also was touched by the family and concerned for Will's health while Will rested in an induced coma, his parents wondering how different their boy would be when he woke up. A brain injury often means difficulty regaining speech and motor functions. It can present

lifelong challenges. Knowing this, one of the EMTs was always there with the family, and having a familiar face that was also a first responder helped comfort them.

"Every once in a while, you go on a call like this, and no amount of pay in the world can really replace the relationship you develop with the patient, the family," said Rick.

Over the next 11 years, after Will came home, Rick Allgood and his crew became part of Will's family. They followed Will's achievements on Facebook, had regular visits will the family and celebrated the anniversary of Will's accident with donuts or pizza

together. Will's mother, Marcy, loves her visits to the station. "I just admire you guys for what you do. It's amazing," she said.

It was a long road to recovery for Will. But as he gradually improved to full health, the first responders could breathe a rare sigh of relief. When your job is to comfort and save lives every day, it would be easy to forget names and people. But the paramedics who were first on the scene to attend to an unconscious 7-year-old boy would never forget. He became part of their family. And what a great family to be a part of.

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Lawmaker: 'Reform' necessary to reduce Illinois' 6,000 units of government

BY GLENN MINNIS
THE CENTER SQUARE

Republican state Rep. Dan Caulkins fumes that Illinois taxpayers are being forced to pay for the state's more than 6,000 units of local government.

"It's symbolic of one of the biggest problems we have here in Illinois and that's too much government," Caulkins told The Center Square of a new Illinois Policy Institute (IPI) study that concludes the state is home to more units of government than any other state in the country.

"There's too much government, too much bureaucracy and too much red tape, which in turn makes for high taxes as a way to pay for all the overhead."

While IPI puts the number of local government units at around 6,032 units, Census Bureau data from 2017 puts it at around 7,000 units and the Civic Federation actually pegs it in the neighborhood of 9,000 units.

"We Republicans talk about consolidation in a way that won't force our citizens to suffer,"

Caulkins said. "We think there should be an easy way to support consolidations of things like townships and road districts. We think there should be an easy way to consolidate school district administrations. All of that would free up money that could be spent in the classroom, allowing property taxes to be reduced."

While Township Officials of Illinois executive director Jerry Crabtree insists there's a good reason for government being as big as it is in the state, namely the fact that the state is the sixth largest in the country based on population and has a heavy mix of urban and rural communities, Caulkins sees things differently and before long feels more and more lawmakers will have to come around to his way if thinking.

"At some point in the near future, I believe, they will have to because as it is the state has been bailed out by the COVID crisis and all the billions it received in federal funding," he said. "That's hidden many of the financial issues we have and when the time comes that we no longer have that money to meet all our obligations, we're going to have to look at reform."

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Grocery tax resumes, gas tax increases

BY JERRY NOWICKI
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD — A new state fiscal year began July 1, ushering in the reinstatement of a 1 percent tax on groceries and a second increase to the state's motor fuel tax in 2023. Amid record-high infla-

tion last spring, the General Assembly temporarily waived Illinois' grocery tax for the coming fiscal year and delayed the annual increase in the state's motor fuel tax for six months.

Democrats introduced both those measures as part of a larger tax relief package that drew criticisms for its proximity to the November general election.

"What we did last year was a temporary measure because we had very high inflation," Pritzker said when asked at an unrelated news conference on June 27, whether the changes were election-related. "Inflation, you may notice, has come down."

Inflation was approaching 9% when the tax relief plan passed last year, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor

Statistics, but it was 4% in May when the fiscal year 2024 was budget passed.

The Pritzker administration estimated at the time the temporary pause on the grocery tax would cost the state \$400 million. Most grocery tax revenues are distributed to local governments, so last year lawmakers directed state general revenue funds to reimburse local governments for any financial hit they would have taken due to the pause.

"I would like very much to eliminate entirely the grocery tax, but it is a matter of local governments and what they would do if they didn't have that income as a result of the grocery tax," Pritzker said.

The motor fuel tax on gasoline, gasohol and compressed natural gas, meanwhile, increased by 3.1 cents

on July 1, to 45.4 cents per gallon. The tax rate for diesel fuel also increased by 3.1 cents, to 52.9 cents per gallon.

The automatic increase in the fuel tax at the beginning of the new fiscal year is an annual process that became law in 2019. Lawmakers doubled the motor fuel tax and indexed it to increase at the rate of the federal government's Consumer Price Index each year.

The motor fuel tax revenue, combined with one-time increases to license and registration fees that took effect in 2020, provided the funding backbone for the state's \$33.2 billion six-year infrastructure plan for road and bridge upkeep, dubbed Rebuild Illinois.

According to the governor's office, Rebuild Illinois has funded \$10.9 billion of

upgrades as of March 31, including 4,913 miles of roads, 479 structures, and 709 other safety improvements.

Last year's July 1 motor fuel tax increase was delayed six months, so the per-gallon tax already increased by 3.1 cents in January. Pritzker last year estimated that the temporary pause on the gas tax hike would have saved consumers about \$70 million.

As part of last year's tax relief plan, lost motor fuel tax revenues were replaced by money from the state's Leaking Underground Storage Tank fund, which is historically paid into by fees and fines related to underground chemical storage tanks, such as those at gas stations.

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Musicians invited to Circle jam

There will be a circle jam Saturday, July 8, from 5 to 8 p.m. in the hall under the water tower at the Godley Park District, 500 S. Kankakee Street, Godley.

Bring your instrument and play, sing or just enjoy. The free event is open to everyone including musicians and listeners. Donations will be accepted.

Circle jams are social hours featuring a mix of music from classic country to bluegrass and more. For more information call Randy Kieffling at 815-237-8139 or 815-210-8563.

Silverstrings concert, Ukulele lessons at Elwood Garden

The Elwood Children's Garden will host a free concert featuring local band Silverstrings on Tuesday, July 11 from 7-8 p.m.

Also on July 11 there will be gentle Yoga in the garden from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. This will be the first morning session of Yoga on every Tuesday morning through Aug. 29. Participants must bring their own mat.

Ukulele lessons for complete beginners will start Wednesdays, from July 12 to August 2.

The one-hour group class will be held 7-8 p.m. The entire cost for the four-week program is \$25. All money collected goes directly to the Elwood Children's Garden.

Sign-ups are at the park or call 815-693-0214. All ages are welcome. The class meets in the outdoor pavilion. Participants must bring their own ukulele.

The Elwood Garden is located at 801 N. Chicago Ave. in Elwood's Lloyd Erickson Park. In case of inclement weather, the concert will move to the Elwood Church at 101 N. Chicago St.



Courtesy photo

VOLUNTEERS BEING RECOGNIZED for milestone anniversaries with Morris Hospital President & CEO Tom Dohm (front from left) Thelma Campbell, Char Orndorff, Jan Hedenschoug; (back from left) Larry Mitchell, Ron Ragan, Ray Paulson, President & CEO Tom Dohm, Bill Akre, Ray Lisy.

Morris Hospital hosts volunteer luncheon

Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers recently hosted a celebratory luncheon at the Morris Country Club to recognize hospital volunteers for achieving milestones in their volunteer hours and years of service.

In 2022, volunteers at Morris Hospital logged a total of 19,390 hours in over 20 different areas. Volunteer service allowed Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers to provide over 7,000 rides through its free patient transportation service. In addition, volunteers assembled 5,000 admissions packets for Morris Hospital patients, welcomed and screened thousands of visitors at the main entrance reception desk, staffed the hospital gift shop resulting in \$25,000 in gift shop proceeds that were donated back to the hospital, and assisted in various departments and with numerous special projects.

In addition to recognizing volunteer hours, Morris Hospital celebrated volunteers who achieved significant milestones in their years of volunteer service. Thelma Campbell, Jan Hedenschoug, and Raymond Paulson were

honored for 20 years of volunteer service; Larry Mitchell, Ray Lisy, and Ron Ragan were honored for 25 years, and Bill Akre and Char Orndorff were honored for 35 years.

While the volunteer appreciation luncheon has traditionally been held annually, this was the first time the event was held since 2019 due to the COVID pandemic.

Manager of Volunteer Services Karen Nowosielski addressed the volunteers at the luncheon and said, "We are filled with so much GRATITUDE for each of you, and we're so happy to be back together supporting the mission of Morris Hospital."

Morris Hospital President & CEO Tom Dohm was also in attendance and told the volunteers, "I could go on and on about the many ways your volunteer hours make a difference and touch the lives of so many people. Your gift of time means so much, and we appreciate all that you do. Thank you to each and every one of you for being part of our Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers family."

Motorists enjoy price drop at the pump

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have fallen 10.1 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.86/g, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

In Wilmington, gas was lowest at \$3.78/g, down from \$3.99 the week before. In Braidwood Monday the price was \$3.67/g, down from \$3.84/g. In Coal City it was \$3.79/g, up from \$3.74 the week before. Morris stations were as low as \$3.44/g Monday and in Bourbonnais, \$3.49/g.

Prices in Illinois are 0.5 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 145.3 cents per gallon lower than a

year ago.

"Just ahead of Independence Day, the national average has fallen to its lowest level since late April, with oil prices remaining under considerable pressure due to a cloudy outlook for the global economy. We could see gasoline prices under some additional pressure soon, especially as we head into the closing innings of summer next month," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois was priced at \$3.18/g while the most expensive was \$5.09/g, a difference

of \$1.91/g.

"For now, gasoline demand will likely ramp up as we enter the peak of the summer, with millions of Americans set to take to the roads with some of the season's lowest average gasoline prices. At the half point of the year, the national average is right at level we anticipated for a full year average. While that's good news, I believe we may see prices close out the second half of the year below our expectations, which would be welcome news for motorists, and the possibility exists that the national average this fall could fall under \$3 per gallon."

Summerfest carnival ride tickets on sale

Avoid standing in long lines on the midway by buying Braidwood Summerfest ride tickets and armbands ahead of time. Plus you even get to save some money.

Sheets of 20 tickets will be on sale for \$20. That's a savings of \$5 and can be used anytime throughout the event.

Unlimited ride armbands are \$25 each, a savings of \$3 when purchased ahead of time. These armbands can be used on Thursday, July 13 from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.; Friday, July 14, from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.; Saturday, July 15, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., or 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.; or Sunday, 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Mega Pass wristband are also being offered at \$70 each. At the midway they will be sold for \$80. These special wristbands may be utilized for the entire time of the carnival.

Mega Pass wristbands must remain on the person's wrist for the entire duration of the festival in order to be valid. But oh so much worth the savings of \$10 each.

The First Presbyterian Church of Braidwood will be coordinating the pre-sale campaign and will receive a percentage from every pre-sale ticket and armband sold in advance. Not only are you helping yourselves you are also helping the Braidwood Lions Club and the Presbyterian Church.

These pre-sale items are available at these fine locations until Thursday, July 13 at 4 p.m. in Braidwood- Berkot's Super Foods, Whitmore Ace Hardware, Hairagain, Rocking Robin's Hair Salon, Fossil Ridge Library and Braidwood City Hall. In Diamond-Midland State Bank.

Lake Renwick Heron Rookery to open July 8

Lake Renwick migratory bird viewing will take place from 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, July 8, at the Lake Renwick Heron Rookery Nature Preserve, Plainfield.

See the dazzling display of nesting herons, egrets, cormorants and bald eagles. The preserve has controlled access during nesting season to minimize disturbances to nesting birds, so the only way to view these amazing creatures at Lake Renwick during this time of year is to attend a viewing program.

Volunteers and staff will be at the viewing platform and visitor center to answer questions. Bringing your own binoculars or spotting scope is recommended. Free, ages 7 or older.



Courtesy photo

MASON DIXON, a just age 8, has been winning in his age division in motocross racing. He's the oldest of three Dixon boys who race all across the country.

A family affair on two wheels

BY MACKENZIE ROMINES
SUMMER INTERN

At the age of two Mason Dixon hopped on a bike without training wheels and took off. He has stopped riding ever since.

The Coal City youngster has made riding his passion, advancing from pedal-powered wheels to a motocross dirt bike.

Mason is the son of Holly Dixon and Robert Dixon, who has two little brothers named Evan and Austin.

The three siblings all love motocross, inspired by their dad, who also rides dirt bikes.

Mason has been riding dirt bikes since he was two and riding competitively since the age of four, the youngest age allowed to race. Amateur races last between 8-15 minutes.

Mason recently competed in Salt Lake City, UT taking second overall at Supercross for his division. The 8-year-old Coal City rider was featured on TV, riding for the KTM Junior competition.

He also recently competed in regional qualifiers for Loretta Lynn's Amateur Championship in Hurricane Mills, Tennessee. To qualify for Loretta's, a competitor must rank top 10 and top 6 at regionals.

Only 40 kids will compete, and Mason can win a sponsorship if he places first. His family hopes he will make it to at least the top 10.

Dixon has competed in the Loretta Lynn's Nationals three times, winning sixth place the previous year. This year, Loretta Lynn's finals will begin on July 31st and end on August 5th.

Reaching Mason's level of skill so young takes a lot of practice, his mother Holly said. He practices often at the Joliet MX track in Wilmington. He also practices in Casey and Byron and Megatrax in Mendota.

The Dixon family has traveled to Ohio, Florida, Michigan, Indiana, Texas, and Utah so the three boys can race.

Holly says it takes many things to become a good racer. Staying focused, listening to coaches, intuition, and practice can help achieve the goals.

A good bike is also crucial to competition. Mason rides both a 50 SR and a KTM 65. The KTM 65 has a clutch, and Mason has only recently started riding it. According to his mom, he learned to ride it quickly and has been very observant.

Mason has multiple sponsors, including his family, BC Racing, Investment SOS, Mike Milewski Flooring, Euphoria MX, SSR, Metro East Moto Photos, Surface Ride Shop, Thor



Racing, Larkin Farms, and Excel Restoration.

Riding and traveling can be costly, so Mason and his family appreciate their sponsors. People and businesses that want to help sponsor the Dixon family can email Holly at hollistuuur@yahoo.com or Robert at robert_dixon11@hotmail.com.

The passion the family has for dirt bikes and racing them is inspiring, and the Dixon children are proof that it is never too early or too late to try something new.

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OBITUARIES

Al Childrey

UNION CITY, TN—George Allen "Al" Childrey, 67, of Union City, TN passed away Thursday, June 29, 2023, at his home.

Al was born Dec. 6, 1955, in Pontiac, IL, son of the late James Madison and Iris Louise (Drummond) Childrey. He was the owner and operator of Collision Specialty in Union City for 38 years. Al was an avid Chicago Cubs fan and enjoyed traveling to games with his friends. He had coached youth baseball in Union City for 25 years and loved animals. Al was a member of First Methodist Church in Union City.

He is survived by his sister, Rebecca Murphy and husband Greg of Everett, WA; his brother, Joe David Childrey and wife Danette of Fairview, NC; his companion, Tina Isbell of Union City; his two nieces, Cara McCafferty and husband James of Camano Island, WA and Kasie Sedwick of Centralia, IL; his great niece and great nephew, Madeleine McCafferty and



Benjamin McCafferty both of Camano Island, WA; Teresa Underwood of Troy, TN who was like a little sister to Al; and his special cousin, Evelyn Rudd of Mason Hall, TN.

Funeral services will be conducted 3:00 p.m. Sunday July 2, 2023 at First Methodist Church in Union City. Rev. Roger Shock will officiate. Burial will follow in Mt. Ararat Cemetery.

Visitation will be held at Edmaiston Mosley Funeral Home from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. Saturday July 1, 2023 and at First Methodist Church from 2:00 p.m. until the hour of services Sunday.

Memorial donations may be made to Hometown Walk of Hope, 902 Perkins Street, Union City, Tennessee 38261 or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Edmaiston Mosley Funeral Home, 1200 South Miles Avenue, Union City, Tn is entrusted with arrangements.

Norma Crenshaw

CHANNAHON—Norma Crenshaw, 82, of Channahon, formerly of Mt. Vernon, IL, passed away Thursday, June 15, 2023 at her home with her family by her side.

Born Jan. 26, 1941 in Mt. Vernon, Norma Jean was a daughter of Arley Terry and Wanda (nee Allen) Beasley. She was raised in Mt. Vernon and on Aug. 10, 1957 she married Ronald Troy Crenshaw, and together they would make their home in Channahon, and enjoy 64 years of marriage.

Norma was a member of the Channahon United Methodist Church, life time member of the Morris Rod & Gun Club, and was an avid square dancer. She worked for the Olin Box Company for many years, as well as Joann Fabrics, but her most important role was that of being a wife and mother. Norma devoted her life to making sure her family was well taken care of and knew that they were loved. She made many memories with them over the years, especially at Kentucky Lake which was a special place for her family. Norma was the best wife, mom, and grandma, cherishing all of the good times with her family, and she will be dearly missed by those who loved and knew her.

Survivors include her daughters: Marissa (Larry) Weber, of Morris and Rhonda Crenshaw, of Channahon; three grandchildren: Douglas Weber and Stephanie (Jason) Emmons, both of Morris and Cassandra Crenshaw of Channahon; two brothers and two sisters: Carolyn (William) Tate, of Mt. Vernon; Daniel



Terry, of Carbondale, IL and Jimmie (Millie) Beasley and Doris (the late Lonnie) Cooper, both of Mt. Vernon; three sisters-in-law: Kyra (the late Stephen) Crenshaw, of Channahon; Rosemary (the late Fred) Ehrman, of Coal City and Marilyn (Dave) Stinson, of Janesville, WI; and numerous nieces and nephews who were very special to Norma.

Norma was preceded in death by her parents, Arley (Gladys) Terry and Wanda Beasley; her husband, Ronald Crenshaw, and her son, Kenneth Crenshaw; brothers and sister: Shirley Beasley, Bobby Beasley and Charles Terry and two sisters-in-law, Janet Ridenour and Karen Cole.

Per her wishes, flameless cremation rites are being accorded, and the family will have a memorial service on Saturday, July 8, 2023 at Channahon United Methodist Church, 24751 West Eames Street, in Channahon at 11 a.m. A private graveside service will be held at Evergreen Cemetery in Morris.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Norma's memory to Lightways Hospice or to the family for their distribution.

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

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

Ron Habing

WILMINGTON—Ron Habing, 90 of Wilmington, died Monday, July 3, 2023 at the Illinois Veterans Home in Manteno, IL.

Born Jan. 27, 1933 in Altamont, IL, Ronald Patrick was a son of Fredrick Bernard and Amelia Teresa (Laux) Habing. He was raised in Teutopolis, IL until moving to Wilmington with his family during his grade school years. Ron went on to graduate from Wilmington High School with the Class of 1951, and on May 17, 1952 married Elvera Roach in St. Rose Catholic Church in Wilmington. He later entered into the United States Army where he honorably served overseas during the Korean Conflict.

Ron's employment began at the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant prior to entering into the service, and again following his honorable discharge. He then gained employment with Caterpillar Tractor Company in Joliet and later Johnson & Johnson Personal Products in Wilmington until its closing. Following his retirement Ron gained employment with Whitmore Ace Hardware in Wilmington where he enjoyed being a part of the team for another 16 years. He was a member of the Wilmington V.F.W. and the Father George Kuzma Council of the Knights of Columbus.

Throughout the years, Ron enjoyed camping at the Coal City Area Club with the kids as they were growing up; taking motorcycle trips, and holding his private pilots license. He was always one to keep busy, whether it be tinkering or socializing with his coffee clutch friends around town. Gone from our sight, there is no doubt that Ron will be missed and fondly remembered by those who knew and loved him.

Survivors include his wife of 71 years, Vera; three children: Sue Thompson, Sandy (Bob) Adams and James (Tina) Habing, all of Wilmington; son-in-law, Todd (Doreen) Soltysik of Kankakee; grandchildren: Jeff Thompson (fiance' Kristi Armstrong), Stephanie Thompson, Chris Thompson (Katie Bowman), Carrie



(Brent) Van Duyne, Tony (Natalie) Adams, Curt (Shanta) Adams, Bryan (Taylor) Adams, Bobby Soltysik (fiance' Amber Combs) and Brian Butcher; great grandchildren: Cole (Haleigh) Thompson, Kile Thompson, Zach Thompson, Aiden Thompson, Korbin Thompson, Tucker Thompson, Mike Catlin, Hunter Catlin, Zander Van Duyne, Chance Van Duyne, Blayne (Katie) Adams, Makenna Adams, Peyton Adams, and Logan Adams; great-great grandchildren: Eoghan Thompson, Declan Thompson and Maverick Thompson; one sister, Jean (Richard) Skelly of Kankakee; brother, Tom (Sherrie) Habing of Rockford; two sisters-in-law: Pam Habing of Milford and Nancy Habing of Ames, IA, and dear friends, Bryan and Nitsa Smythe of South Carolina, as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

Ron was preceded in death by his parents; daughter, Sheila Soltysik; two grandsons: Ronnie and Ryan; his son-in-law, Rick Thompson, and two brothers: Pat Habing and Charles Habing.

The family will receive friends for a visitation at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 East Kahler Road in Wilmington on Friday, July 7, 2023 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Funeral services will follow at 12:30 p.m. in St. Rose Catholic Church, 604 S. Kankakee Street in Wilmington. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated with Reverend Sebastian Gargol presiding.

Burial will be in Mount Olivet Catholic Cemetery in Wilmington.

Pallbearers will be Ron's Grandsons. Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Ron's memory to Illinois Veterans Home Manteno Volunteer Services, or to the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

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

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

Andrew Nicoletti

BAYONNE, NJ—Andrew Nicoletti, 55, of Bayonne, NJ and previously of New York and Texas, passed away unexpectedly on May 24, 2023.

Born Dec. 23, 1967 in Chicago, Andrew was a son of James Landon and Lynne Kathleen (Koerner) Nicoletti. He was raised in Coal City and graduated from Coal City High School with the class of 1986. Andrew went on to earn his bachelor's degree from MacMurray College in Jacksonville, IL where he was a member of the Alpha Sigma Phi.

Andrew worked at Control Services, specializing in demolition; was a fan of Chicago sports, and enjoyed sailing. He raced several races including Mackinac and was a former member of the Chicago Yacht Club.

Survivors include his sister and brother-in-law, Jennifer Nicoletti and Mike Togliatti, as well as several cousins.

Andrew was preceded in death by both of



his parents, James and Lynne Nicoletti.

Cremation rites have been accorded, and there will be a memorial visitation held on July 8, 2023 at Reeves Funeral Home, 75 N. Broadway in Coal City from 10 a.m. until a 12 p.m. memorial service.

Andrew will be laid to rest in Braceville-Gardner Cemetery.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Andrew's memory to the family who in turn will donate to US Sailing, developing and inspiring youth sailors.

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

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

Carolyn Stamets

ELWOOD—Carolyn Stamets, 82, of Elwood, and formerly South Holland, IL, passed away Thursday, March 30, 2023 at Northwestern Memorial Palos Hospital in Palos Heights, IL.

Born Jan. 30, 1941 in Hammond, IN, Carolyn was a daughter of A. Albert and Hester (Ball) Lindquist. She was raised in the Hegewisch Neighborhood of Chicago and graduated from Bowen High School with the class of 1959. On June 3, 1961, Carolyn married Stanley Stamets in Lebanon Lutheran Church in Chicago.

Carolyn was a 35 year member of Redeemer Lutheran Church in South Holland, and active with the Thornwood High School Band, where she was known as the doughnut and hot dog lady to many kids throughout the years.

She was employed as a school bus driver for 20 years, and when out of school, Carolyn loved traveling and participating in 'out of the box' activities. She enjoyed rock hunting, art fairs and jewelry shows, but nothing gave her greater joy than being a loving wife, mother and grandmother.

Survivors include her sons: Russell (Reena) Stamets, of New Delhi, India and Donald (Barbara) Stamets, of Addison, IL; four grand-



children: Tristan, Matthew, Freya and Thomas; one sister, Lisa (Steve) Buccellato, of Ft. Myers, FL and extended family in Sweden.

Carolyn was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Stanley; half sister, Betty Kavanaugh and half brother, Marion Forest Gregory.

Per Carolyn's wishes, cremation rites were accorded, and she was privately laid to rest with her late husband, Stanley in Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood.

Family, friends, and neighbors are invited to attend a celebration of Carolyn's life at the Lloyd Erickson Park Pavilion, 801 N. Chicago St., in Elwood at 12 p.m. on Saturday, July 8, 2023.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Carolyn's memory to the Elwood Children's Garden, www.villageofelwood.com/161/Childrens-Garden-Project-of-Elwood

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

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

William "Buzzy" Smith

DIAMOND—William "Buzzy" Smith, 84, of Diamond, passed away Sunday, July 2, 2023 at the Lightways Hospice Home in Joliet.

Services were pending at the time of publication, and a complete obituary with service details is available on the funeral home website: ReevesFuneral.com

The complete obituary will also follow in next week's newspaper.

Funeral services and arrangements are being made under the direction and care of Reeves Funeral Homes, Ltd., 75 North Broadway in Coal City.

Edward Tamosaitis

WILMINGTON—Edward C. Tamosaitis, 69 of Wilmington, and formerly of Bridgeview, IL passed away unexpectedly on Wednesday, June 28, 2023 at Amita Saint Joseph Medical Center in Joliet.

Born Dec. 17, 1953 in Chicago, Edward Casmir was a son of Vytas and Sylvia Marie (Pupka) Tamosaitis. He was raised in the Marquette Park neighborhood of Chicago and graduated from Leo High School with the Class of 1971. Ed attended Richard J. Daley College where he studied Law Enforcement, as well as University of Illinois at Chicago, majoring in Accountancy. He was a proud veteran of the United States Army, where he worked as an Atomic Demolition – Munition Expert and was stationed in Germany prior to his honorable discharge.

Ed's career was primarily in security, and he held employment at Holy Cross Hospital, National Bank of Chicago, Northern Trust Bank, Ford City Mall, American Security and Investigating, and lastly The Chicago Board of Trade from where he retired.

One who was always extremely patriotic, Ed was proud of his service to Country; loved the flag and the USA, and also cherished his Lithuanian Culture. He enjoyed working on computers; could nearly fix anything broken and loved music and collecting vinyl. Christmas and the 4th of July were favorite holidays for Ed, and referenced to as "tater tot", he will be remembered for being a loving and kind sentimental soul, which was not always identifiable by his outward appearance. He loved anything Harley, and only second to his family, were his dogs, which he dearly loved.

Survivors include his loving wife, Mary Carrie; his three children: Melissa Willuhn of



Joliet, Michael (Rose) Tamosaitis of Colorado Springs, CO, and Joseph (Tonya Branch) Tamosaitis of Westmont, IL; (8) grandchildren: Justin Kroll, Johnathan Kroll, Shawn Thomas, Jr., James Thomas, Jace Sanchez, Erik Tamosaitis, Andy Tamosaitis, and Elena Tamosaitis; two brothers: Leonard Tamosaitis and David (Holly) Tamosaitis, both of Oak Lawn, IL and one niece, Amanda Tamosaitis. Ed is also survived and loved by Mary's daughters: Cheryl, Kristyn and Brenda.

He was preceded in death by his parents; daughter, Samantha, granddaughter, Crystal; one brother, Roman and his nephew, Lucas.

The family will receive friends for a visitation at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 East Kahler Road in Wilmington on Wednesday, July 5, 2023 from 9:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. Funeral services will follow at 12:00 noon in St. Rose Catholic Church, 604 South Kankakee Street in Wilmington. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated with Reverend Sebastian Gargol presiding.

Burial will be in Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, where Ed will be laid to rest with military honors. Pallbearers will be: Michael Tamosaitis, Joseph Tamosaitis, Jace Sanchez, Erik Tamosaitis, Len Tamosaitis, Joe Humbles and Nick Humbles.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Ed's memory to the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery Honor Squad.

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

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

Huhnke named Morris Hospital Firestarter

When Katrina Huhnke saw an opening for a Registration-Scheduling Representative at the Morris Hospital Diamond-Coal City Campus in 2021, she was interested in the position because she wanted to help others. Since then, Huhnke, of Coal City, has made such a notable impact through her role that she was selected as the Morris Hospital June Fire Starter of the Month.

Since day one, Huhnke has become an invaluable member of the team. Her co-workers describe her as the "go-to" person for questions no matter what time of day. Morris Hospital Diamond-Coal City Practice Manager Kathy O'Neill says, "Katrina is amazing. She is so knowledgeable and is an expert at what she does. She is a leader to everyone she works with, and her work ethic is second to none. Katrina strives for excellence every day, and that inspires her team to be excellent too."

The former manager of a fitness center who promoted the importance of health and wellness in her community, Huhnke says she knew being part of Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers would be a great fit.

When asked to share the most rewarding part of her job, Huhnke says it's the people she works with and the patients she gets to meet.

"Getting to know the regular patients and their families allows me to connect with them on a more personal level," she says. Most of all, she most enjoys being able to see patients get the excellent care they deserve.

In nominating Huhnke as Fire Starter of the Month, Registration-Scheduling Representative Sheri Fisk wrote that Huhnke is the kind of co-worker everyone should be



Courtesy photo

KATRINA HUHNKE, a registration-scheduling representative at the Morris Hospital Diamond-Coal City campus, was selected as the June Firestarter of the Month.

"so lucky to work with." She said Huhnke helps everyone with schedule changes so her co-workers can spend time with their families and do the things that are important to them.

Airfryer TikTok recipe that will please any kid

BY ELAINE FISHER-OHLUND
STAFF MEMBER

I think most moms would agree with me that giving our kids cell phones is such a catch 22. As adults we think we can't live without them but with our kids they will be a useful tool to better communicate their whereabouts and calling us when they need a ride from school or practice.

But there are times when I feel the cell phone has sucked my child's soul right out of their body.

At this point I think cell phones will be the cause of the first zombie apocalypse. I know that sounds crazy but think about it. I have stood right next to my child, calling their name over and over and they just stare into the abyss of their phone, scrolling and scrolling, like they have lost their hearing.

I have witnessed my kids walk into walls as they pass through the house staring into that screen. It drives me crazy and I feel like all I do is yell at them to put the phone away.

However, leave it to my son to find a loophole into using his phone. It was his social media scrolling that got me to cook him a good meal.

It first started with our text message chain being flooded with dessert Tik Tok and Instagram recipes.

He shared videos of deep-fat fried Oreos served with ice cream and cookie dough rolled with cinnamon rolls baked in the oven. He tried both on his own and they were disgusting but I was intrigued that he was trying to cook and be creative on his own.

I challenged him to find a healthy TikTok recipe and told him I would be happy to help him make it. Which is how we came across low calorie honey bbq chicken tenders in the air-fryer.

This recipe is great because it is easy to make and the kids enjoyed making it. It is a lot of dipping and mixing which is perfect for my 6-year-old Layla to get in on the action with big brother and mom.



AIRFRYER honey bbq chicken tenders found on Tiktok.

- Ingredients**
- 2 eggs
 - 2 cups of crushed cornflakes (60g)
 - 1 tsp salt
 - 1 tsp garlic powder
 - 1/2 tsp paprika
 - 1/2 tsp pepper
 - 16 oz chicken breasts
 - Olive oil spray

- Sauce**
- 1/2 cup of sugar free bbq
 - 2 Tbs of honey
 - 2 Tbs of sugar free ketchup

First scramble two eggs in a bowl and set aside. Then in a separate bowl, add the crushed cornflakes and seasonings together. Tip: Nature's Path has a healthy option of organic cornflakes that is gluten free.

Chicken breast tenders were on sale the first time I made this. The next time I went they were priced at a premium so I used chicken breast and cut them down to chicken

tender size. 16 ounces of chicken breast should cut down into about four tenders.

Once your chicken is clean and cut, dip the tender into the egg bowl then coat it with the cornflakes and seasoning mixture.

Place the chicken tenders in the air fryer at 375 degrees for 12 minutes. I like to spray them with olive oil to make it extra crispy.

While the tenders are in the air fryer, you can add the sauce ingredients to a sauce pan and simmer for 5 minutes.

Tips: G Hughes has a delicious sugar free bbq and ketchup sauce. Not all stores carry that brand so my backup is Sweet Baby Ray's no sugar added bbq sauce. Heinz also makes a ketchup with no sugar added.

Once the tenders are finished and sauce has simmered you can coat the tenders with

the sauce or having pour the sauce into small dipping bowls at everyone's plate.

Near future zombie apocalypse or not, I guess the scrolling did inspire my son to cook. If it leads to mom getting a night off in the kitchen then I'm all for it. But please don't serve us fried Oreos.

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Coal City - 410 S. Illinois St., Friday, July 7 from 9AM-4PM & Saturday, July 8 from 9AM-2PM. Baby items, girls 0-3T, boys 0-5T, books, puzzles, plants, housewares, much more. cc27

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Manager needed for dog training facility in Wilmington, IL. Helping with training dogs, maintaining grass cutting of 200 acres and managing employees. 5 days a week, year round paid holidays. Pay appropriate to experience & ability. Call 630-399-4982 before 8:00 PM. cc25-28

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Found: Diamond ring on Wood Street in Wilmington. Please call 815-476-7966 with a description of the ring.

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. fr17fn

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NOTICE

Notice to J.P. Ferrer. All items stored in the Goose Lake Assoc. Storage spot 70, must be removed by July 15, 2023. Failure to comply with this notice will result in all items being disposed of at your expense with any proceeds from sale of items going toward payment of over due storage rental & fees. Goose Lake Assoc. ca27-28

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REAL ESTATE

SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE of 501 Debbie Lane, Wilmington, IL 60481 (The property is a single family. The property has a two car garage. The garage is attached. The exterior is vinyl siding. The color is gray. The gas is on. The water is on. The property does not have a fence. The vacancy is unknown for this residency.). On the 27th day of July, 2023 to be held at 12:00 noon, at the Will County Courthouse Annex, 57 N. Ottawa Street, Room 201, Joliet, IL 60432, under Case Title: **PENNYMAC LOAN SERVICES, LLC Plaintiff V. Joshua Bailey; Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants** Defendant. Case No. 22 FC 0982 in the Circuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit, Will County, Illinois. Terms of Sale: ten percent (10%) at the time of sale and the balance within twenty-four (24) hours. No judicial sale fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. All payments shall be made in cash or certified funds payable to the Sheriff of Will County. In the event the property is a condominium, in accordance with 735 ILCS 5/15-1507(c)(1)(H-1) and

(H-2), 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(5), and 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1), you are hereby notified that the purchaser of the unit, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and legal fees required by subdivisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Illinois Condominium Property Act. Pursuant to Local Court Rule 11.03 (J) if there is a surplus following application of the proceeds of sale, then the plaintiff shall send written notice pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512(d) to all parties to the proceeding advising them of the amount of the surplus and that the surplus will be held until a party obtains a court order for its distribution or, in the absence of an order, until the surplus is forfeited to the State. For Information Please Contact: **MCCALLA RAYMER LEIBERT PIERCE** 1 N. Dearborn Suite 1300 Chicago, Illinois 60602 P: 312-346-9088 F: PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT YOU ARE ADVISED THAT THIS LAW FIRM IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. Published in the Free Press Newspapers on Wed., July 5, 12 & 19, 2023.

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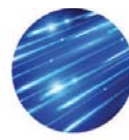
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7	3	2	5	8	9	6	4	1



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Lawsuits will continue over fingerprint scans

Senate President Don Harmon told Public Radio talk show host Brian Mackey in late June that some of the most prominent business association leaders had "punched us in the nose" after the Senate Democrats devised what he called a "good faith solution" to solve problems created by the state's super-controversial Biometric Information Privacy Act.

Harmon also claimed the Senate Democratic proposal the business groups attacked was "very friendly to the business community that has been asking for these changes."

Companies routinely collect biometric data like facial recognition and fingerprint scans. But, in Illinois, that's illegal unless the companies first obtain informed consent. Lots of lawsuits have been filed as a result and businesses want relief.

The Illinois Supreme Court all but begged the General Assembly earlier this spring to take another look at the law in its ruling against the White Castle company. That ruling could ultimately cost the burger chain as much as \$17 billion for collecting employee fingerprint scans.

The Illinois Retail Merchants Association, the Illinois Manufacturers' Association and the Illinois Chamber of Commerce held a press conference with other business leaders near the originally scheduled end of the spring legislative session to denounce the Senate Democrats' proposal in no uncertain terms.

Illinois Manufacturers' Association President and CEO Mark Denzler, who has not exactly been known for vitriol, claimed the proposal would make the problem even worse. The legislation, Denzler claimed, "will only increase abuse of this law by trial attorneys" who have filed thousands of claims under the statute.

The three business groups either refused to respond to Harmon's comments, or, in one case, didn't respond at all.

Senate President Pro Tempore Bill Cunningham, who helped lead the negotiations and is also not generally known for his temper, said he was even more upset than Harmon after the business groups' press conference. He said he reached out to them and said the Democrats were "trying to draft a pro-business piece of legislation," and since they claimed the bill would make matters worse, he and the Senate Democrats decided to not run any bill during the spring session and maintain the status quo.

The Supreme Court ruled that the legislative intent of BIPA was to penalize each and every collection of employee biometric information. With large numbers of White Castle employees being scanned several times a day for five years, "that's how we ended up with a \$17 billion" penalty, Cunningham said. The Democratic proposal would've specifically changed the law to base the penalty on the number of employees, not the number of scans. But they also increased the penalty from \$1,000 to \$1500, which the business groups denounced as well.

Opponents of the BIPA law claim the original state statute has little to nothing to do with the real world. The idea behind the law is to protect people against having their biometric data stored and even traded without their knowledge or permission. After all, an online password can be changed after a data hack,



Rich Miller

but people can't just change their fingerprints to protect their identities.

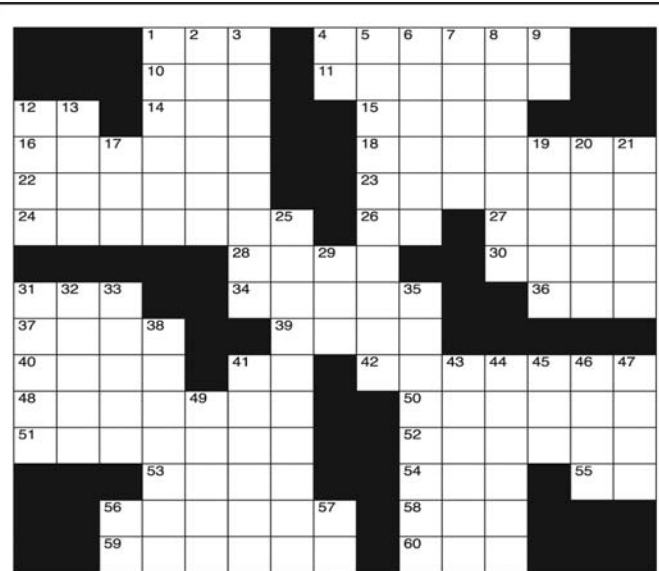
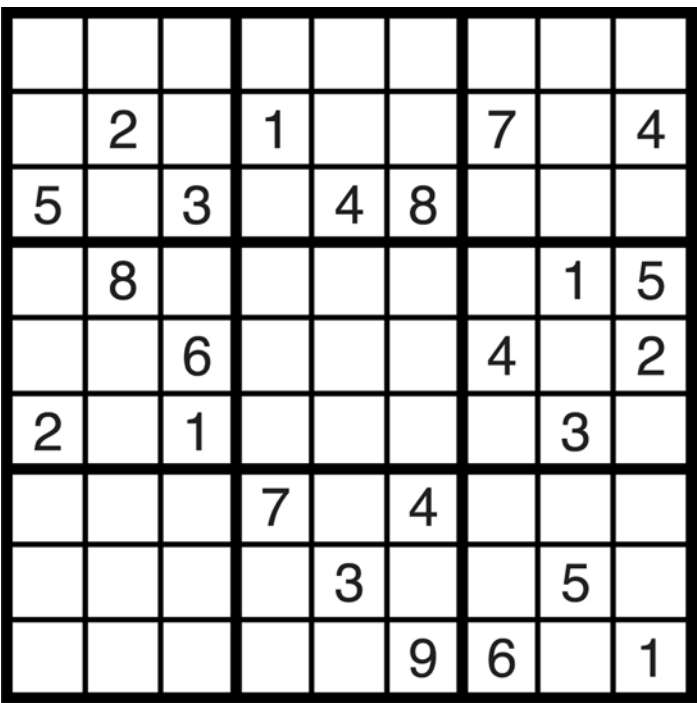
All true, the critics say, but the fingerprints that are used to verify timecards, etc. aren't kept or stored after they are scanned. Instead, the fingerprints are immediately converted into a set of numbers using a proprietary algorithm.

"The only biometric information utilized by employers to identify employees is an encrypted string of numbers, systematically created as a result of the mathematical algorithm," according to a white paper released last week by Littler, a pro-employer law firm. "There is no biometric identifier being stored or disseminated," and, therefore, "it is virtually impossible to reverse engineer an employee's original fingerprint."

Cunningham said he heard a theory from a Republican lawmaker that the business groups have been told by the corporate defense bar that they're confident they can get the state law overturned by the US Supreme Court, so there was no reason to settle for a compromise at the state level. "I have no idea if that's true or not," Cunningham said, "But it's a better explanation that I can come up with."

Another person close to the issue said the Senate Dems ordered the handful of people involved with the talks to not communicate with anyone outside the room. The business groups, this person claimed, weren't experts on the topic, so it wasn't until the actual legislation surfaced when experienced business lawyers could see what was going on, and that's when everything fell apart. Cunningham said that while they took input from others, the "big lobbying groups" were what they were most concerned with.

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



CLUES ACROSS

- Small Eurasian deer
- Irish county
- A major division of geological time
- Broadway actor Lane
- Canadian province
- It causes fainting (abbr.)
- Two
- A notable one is blue
- Utter repeatedly
- Rings
- Sullies
- Occurs
- Publicity
- Near
- Tools of a trade
- Offer in good faith
- "American Idol" network
- Garments
- Soviet Socialist Republic
- Retired NFL DC Dean
- Hot meal
- A type of gin
- Percussion instrument
- A \$10 bill
- About ground
- Medicine man
- Seedless raisin
- National capital of Albania
- Appendage
- OJ trial judge
- By the way
- Bicycle parts
- Barbie's friend
- In a way, stretched
- Commercials

CLUES DOWN

- Make up for
- American songbird
- Pay
- International organization
- Engravers
- Declared as fact
- Criminal
- Jewelry
- Hospital worker (abbr.)
- Nonsense (slang)
- Town in Galilee
- Value
- Another name
- Sheep in second year before shearing
- Town in Surrey, England
- Appropriate during a time of year
- Creative output
- Recesses
- District in N. Germany
- Rider of Rohan
- The official emblem of the German Third Reich
- One who puts down roots
- Scribe
- Painted a bright color
- Tycoons
- Actress Thurman
- Walking accessory
- Crest of a hill
- Member of a North American people
- Type of computer
- U.S. State (abbr.)

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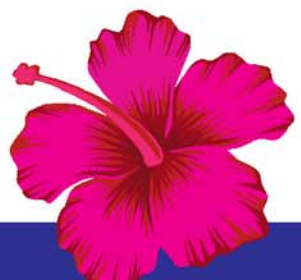
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Event Calendar

THURSDAY, JULY 13TH

- 5-11:00pm 42nd Annual Braidwood Lions Summerfest Begins
Food Court, Lions Beer Garden & Knights of Columbus Council #1574
Concession Stand Open
- 5-7pm 103.1 FM WCSJ Live Remote Broadcast & Giveaways (next to the
Constellation Energy Entertainment Stage)
- 6-11pm Carnival Opens – Pay One Price for Unlimited Rides *all night*
- 6-10pm Lions Club Bingo (under the Lions pavilion) \$0.25 a card
- 6-9pm Braidwood Fire Department Fire Prevention Booth & Equipment Displays
- 7:30-10:30pm Constellation Energy Entertainment Stage: DJ Roy Gregory’s Country,
Rock & Blues Dance Party

FRIDAY, JULY 14TH

- 5pm-11:30pm Food Court, Lions Beer Garden & Knights of Columbus Council #1574
Concession Stand Open
- 5-8pm 98.3 WCCQ Live Remote Broadcast & Giveaways
(next to the Constellation Energy Entertainment Stage)
- 6-9pm Braidwood Fire Department Fire Prevention Booth & Equipment Displays
- 6-11pm Carnival Open: Pay One Price for Unlimited Rides *all night*
- 6-10pm Lions Club Bingo (under the Lions pavilion) \$0.25 a card
- 8pm-11:30pm Constellation Energy Entertainment Stage: “Nashville Electric Company”
High Energy Country Party Favorites!!

SATURDAY, JULY 15TH

- 9am-5pm Flea Market, Arts & Crafts Show (south end of the city park)
OVER 80 VENDORS
- 10am-Noon Annual Summerfest Baby Contest (under the Lions pavilion)
Coordinated by: Braidwood Area Healthy Community Coalition
- 10am-2pm Summerfest Car Show (east side of the skate park)
Coordinated by: The RC Gridiron Club
- 10am-2pm DJ Jeff Saltzman (car show area, east side of the skate park)
- 12pm-Midnight Food Court, Lions Beer Garden & Knights of Columbus Council #1574
Concession Stand Open
- 12-4pm DJ George – Chi-City Enterprises (next to Constellation Energy
Entertainment Stage)
- 1pm Annual Summerfest Pie Eating Contest (under the hospitality tent)
- 1pm-Midnight Carnival Opens:
Pay one price and ride unlimited from 1 to 5pm OR 6-11pm
- 12pm-9pm Ignite Christian Church Baby Changing/Feeding/Cooling Station &
Outreach Booth (north of the hospitality tent)
- 1:45-2:15pm River Valley Martial Arts Demonstration
(in front of the entertainment stage)
- 2-4pm Lions Club Bingo (under the Lions pavilion) \$0.25 a card
- 2-4pm Will County Emergency Management Agency Public Preparedness
Booth & Displays (near the hospitality tent)
- 2-9pm Braidwood Fire Department Fire Prevention Booth & Equipment Displays
- 2-4pm Balloon Twisting Art & Face Painting with Pete the Fun Guy
& Linda the Face Painter
- 4-4:45pm Tim “That’s Amazing!!”... an amazing show of magic & comedy that’s
fast paced, funny & interactive. As seen at Six Flags and twice at The
White House! (in front of the Constellation Energy Entertainment Stage)
- 6-7pm 101.7FM River Country Live Remote Broadcast,
Prize Wheel & Giveaways
(next to the Constellation Energy Entertainment Stage)
- 6-10pm Lions Club Bingo (under the Lions pavilion) \$0.25 a card
- 7:30-11:30pm Constellation Energy Entertainment Stage: “The Brat Pack”
Totally 80’s Party Rock

Sunday, July 16th

- 9am-5pm Flea Market, Arts & Crafts Show (south end of the city park)
OVER 80 VENDORS
- Noon-10:30pm Food Court, Lions Beer Garden & Knights of Columbus Council #1574
Concession Stand Open
- 1pm Hometown Proud Parade: Main & Mitchell Street to RC Elementary
School (S. Walker Street)
Grand Marshal: Rich Bieda
- 2-10:30pm Carnival Opens: Pay One Price for Unlimited Rides from 2 to 6pm
Buy a wristband on Sunday and receive a chance to win one of two Bikes,
Must Be Present To Win, Drawing at 6:30pm at the Midway Ticket Booth
- 2-4pm Balloon Twisting Art & Face Painting with Pete the Fun Guy &
Linda the Face Painter (under the hospitality tent)
- 2-4pm Lions Club Bingo (under the Lions pavilion) \$0.25 a card
- 2:30-4:30pm “The NORMAL One” –Clowning Around with Laughs & Smiles
(in the hospitality & entertainment area)
- 2-6pm DJ George – Chi-City Enterprises
- 2-9pm Ignite Christian Church Baby Changing/Feeding/Cooling Station &
Outreach Booth (north of the hospitality tent)
- 2-8pm Braidwood Fire Department Fire Prevention Booth & Equipment Displays
- 6-9pm Lions Club Bingo (under the Lions pavilion) \$0.25 a card
- 6:30-9:30pm Constellation Energy Entertainment Stage: “The Baked Potatoes”
60’s-70’s-80’s-90’s Rock & Roll
- 9:30pm ANNUAL SUMMERFEST FIREWORKS DISPLAY

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****No Smoking Will Be Allowed Under The Bingo Pavilion.** Seating Under The Bingo Pavilion During Game Sessions Will Be Reserved For Those Who Are Playing**

The Herculean effort to slow the spread of invasive carp

BY ERIC FISHER
PUBLISHER

In June, commercial fishing efforts to keep invasive Asian carp in check along the upper reaches of the Illinois river netted one of the biggest invaders to date.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resource and the Illinois Natural History Survey, working in partnership with contracted commercial netters, collected a 109-pound bighead carp in the Hanson Gravel Pit off Southmor Rd. near Morris.

For large river fisheries biologist Jason DeBoar, it's the heaviest bighead carp he's seen in the 11 years he's been in the field with the INHS.

"We see a lot of 40, 50 and even 60 pound fish and they are considered big," DeBoar said. "But this one was obviously almost twice that big. Based on other fish that we've caught that are 5, 6, 7, or 8 years old, this one is probably at least 10 years old."

DeBoar said it doesn't surprise him to discover a bighead of over 100 pounds in the Hanson pits. It's a private backwater off the main river channel that stretches three miles.

It's the perfect place to drop gill nets to get an idea on the density of the Asian carp population. DeBoar said what they mostly find are bighead carp, not the smaller silver carp known for their leaping abilities.

"Bigheads are not really looking to live in the river main channel itself. That's kind of like living on a treadmill. They'd much rather sit in their easy chair in an off channel area, whether that's a side channel behind a fallen tree or log jam or in one of those backwater areas," explains DeBoar. "There's still a lot of plankton back in there, but they don't have to work nearly as hard to swim around."

Contracting with commercial netters has proven to be the most effective control for invasive carp.

"That's really the best way to remove lots of those fish at one time, especially from backwater areas like Hanson pits where the bigger fish tend to go," DeBoar said.

In 1991, commercial fishermen came to biologists asking what type of fish is this? They'd show up with one or two at a time. By 2000, instead of finding a handful, it turned into the thousands of fish—mostly silvers and bigheads—trapped in commercial nets.



Photo courtesy Thad Cook, Illinois Natural History Survey.

SILVERS SAILING—Thank goodness the density of the silver carp population locally isn't as high as it is in pools of the Illinois River near Peoria. The silver carp are one of four freshwater species that have become a nuisance in waterways across the U.S. over the past 30 years. Efforts by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Natural History Survey to monitor the invasive carp and hire commercial fishermen to net them have reduced their numbers in the Dresden, Marseilles and Starved Rock pools of the Illinois River. Their efforts are to keep the fish from entering the Great Lakes with an underwater electric barrier installed by the Army Corps of Engineers at Romeoville and a newer \$800 million second barrier being planned for the the Brandon Road Lock and Dam on the DesPlaines River near Joliet.

Before the decade was through biologists took more action as it became evident the carp were affecting native fish species, especially gizzard shad, the forage base for game fish like largemouth bass, white bass, walleye and catfish.

So in 2015 the state hired commercial netters to comb the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers with gill nets. The biologists gained valuable insight real quick.

"We discovered the big heads were much less abundant than the silver carp. At least in our standardized surveys, they make up I think less than 5% of the fish that we deal with that are invasive. And the big heads tend to get netted out fairly quickly, particularly with commercial netters in the area, because they tend to be the largest of the fish. They tend to get yanked out pretty quickly."

That was good news because each year it looked as though the bigheads were migrating further upstream, closing in on Lake Michigan. That's when an electric barrier was installed in the DesPlaines

River near Romeoville allowing for barge traffic but deterring fish. State and federal authorities at the same time got aggressive surveying and shocking from the Brandon Locks on south.

"I haven't seen the figures lately, but the number that's rolling around in my head is we have greater than 90% reduction of fish in the pool below Brandon Road Lock and Dam. Right where I-55 crosses was the farthest upstream pool of the DesPlaines River where we've seen them," DeBoar said.

"And now netters have removed 90% of the fish from that pool. That was the least abundant population of silver and bighead carp in one pool. And that number has come down and stayed down. And these netters are also taking a big bite out of the fish in the Marseilles and Starved Rock pools so it makes the most sense to focus our efforts in those areas."

DeBoar's research right now focuses on monitoring long term changes in fish populations on the Mississippi River and its tributaries. By

default, Asian carp make up a large component of his work. Mostly what he does is trying to document changes from what he calls big ecological events: Things like the Clean Water Act, or lock and dam closures on the upper river the last few years, and of course, these invasive species.

"They are much more abundant from the Starved Rock pool downstream. The fish tend to be a little bit smaller down here. The larger individuals in the population, generally, tend to be the roamers, the ones that are looking for that new habitat upstream," the biologist said.

"So if left unchecked, they would happily swim up the Kankakee River to that dam at Wilmington and likely turn around. If it ever overtops when it floods then they would keep on going. But given that where the Kankakee meets with the Des Plaines river to form the Illinois, that's one of our targeted areas where a lot of effort focuses on removing as many fish as possible," DeBoar said.

So the good news is the

state's efforts are paying off.

"We are holding the front, as it were. It's a constant battle to try and keep these fish at bay," DeBoar admits.

The effort includes a new second fish barrier with different technology being installed at the Brandon Road locks.

"That will definitely help but I get the sense that the maintenance removals (commercial netting) are going to be a perpetual thing," DeBoar said.

The bad news is the invasive carp are here to stay. And there are concerns of the effects they are having on the native fish and mussel populations.

"In the upper river, where we have reduced COPI popula-

tion numbers, we've actually seen things like gizzard shad populations start to rebound. There's more plankton for gizzard shad to eat and they are at the bottom of the food chain for game fish. That benefits largemouth bass and white bass and walleye and sauger. It's not a dramatic upswing but it's there. The gizzard shad are kind of the engine that drives a lot of the productivity in the Illinois. They turn that plankton into fish and then they turn that fish into food for every other species that's a predator out there, which is a lot of our sport fish," DeBoar said.

He said another plus has been the statewide campaign to rebrand the fish as Copi. DeBoar urges people who see it on a restaurant menu to give it a try.

"They're delicious to eat. They're very flavorful and the best part is you don't even have to be a good angler to catch them...they volunteer to get eaten by jumping into your boat," DeBoar quipped.

"The DNR's rebranding effort last year is helping. We like to joke around our field station that carp is a four-letter word, both literally and figuratively. You hear the word 'carp' and you think common carp, the bottom feeder that's mucking around in the sediment and they don't taste good. But silver carp and grass carp feed differently in the water column. They feed differently on the food chain. Like the ad campaign said last year, it's a tender, flaky white meat," he noted.

"Just like the slogan from that Copi campaign said, if we can't beat them, eat them. If you haven't tried them, try them. I think most people will be surprised how good COPI is."

Note: The closest restaurant we found with Copi on the menu was A. Fusion Restaurant on Lincoln Highway in Matteson. There four others listed in the Chicago area and five in the Springfield area. Visit "choosecopi.com" for recipes, locations and suggestions for eating cop.



Photo courtesy Illinois Natural History Survey

BY THE BOATLOAD—In 2021 a record-breaking 87,500 pounds of silver, bighead and grass carp were collected in the Mississippi River by commercial netters. The fish were donated to a fish processor who turned them into fertilizer, catfish and crayfish bait and fish oil. Since then the push for COPI to be sold in stores and served in restaurants is bringing the delicious fish to table.



Photo courtesy commercial netter Charlie Gilpin, Jr

MONSTER BIGHEAD—Andrew Wieland, ecologist with the Illinois Natural History Survey, displays a 109-pound bighead carp taken by gill net in the Hanson gravel pit near Morris.

Wilmington man pleads guilty in video gaming burglary ring

A Wilmington man and a Joliet man pleaded guilty and were sentenced to prison for burglarizing businesses and stealing cash from video poker machines.

The plea is part of an ongoing burglary case Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul announced in 2022 following a joint investigation with the Illinois Gaming Board, the Illinois State Police (ISP) and several local law enforcement agencies.

Lucas Bailey, 41, of Wilmington, was sentenced to three years in prison in Lake County Circuit Court after pleading guilty to one count of Class 2 Felony Burglary. Bailey is currently in prison, serving a separate sentence in connection to unrelated charges.

Gino Wuttke, 33, of Joliet, Illinois, was sentenced to eight years in prison in Lee County Circuit Court after pleading guilty to one count each of Class 1 Felony Theft and Class

2 Felony Burglary.

In April, co-defendant Brian Morgan, 42, of Plainfield, was sentenced to eight years in prison for his role in the burglary ring.

"Members of this burglary ring allegedly targeted bars, restaurants, social clubs and other small businesses that have video poker and video gaming machines. They broke into dozens of these establishments in multiple counties and stole hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash out of the machines," Raoul said.

"This case is the result of countless hours of collaboration between my office and several law enforcement agencies. I would like to thank these agencies for their hard work investigating this burglary ring and assisting in holding the members responsible accountable."

In August 2022, the Attorney General's office filed charges against six individuals,

including Wuttke and Bailey, alleging they broke into businesses around Illinois and robbed video gaming machines, stealing approximately \$400,000.

The Attorney General's office received support in its investigation from the Illinois Gaming Board and several law enforcement agencies, including the ISP, the DuPage County State's Attorney's office, the Lake County State's Attorney's office, the Joliet Police Department and the Bureau, DeKalb, Grundy, Iroquois, Kendall and LaSalle county sheriffs.

"Illinois State Police Division of Criminal Investigation special agents will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to fully investigate criminal acts and assist the Attorney General's office in bringing those who break the law to justice," said ISP Director Brendan E. Kelly.

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Comets headed to Clay Target nationals

Athletes and teams representing 466 high schools from across the nation are participating in the 2023 USA High School Clay Target League National Championships this week.

Reed-Custer High School is one of 37 Illinois teams taking part in the two-day event in Mason, MI.

The USAHSCTL national championship is being held at the Michigan Trapshooting Association and will start with

two days of practice and three days of qualifying and championship rounds.

The top 80 of 240 teams will qualify to compete in the team championship round on Friday, July 7. Individual championship qualifiers will compete Saturday, July 8 and the championship for both team and individual titles will take place on Sunday, July 9.

There were over 34,600 student athletes representing 1,625 high school teams across

the county that participated in USA Clay Target League programs this spring. Only the top athletes and teams qualified to register for the national championship, based on season averages at the completion of the spring season.

The USA Clay Target League is the only 100% school approved clay target shooting sport program in America with a participation of over 47,000 athletes.

Cup-in-Hand Kickball looking for teams

Registration for the Cup-in-hand kickball tournament prior to Catfish Days is underway.

The kids tournament (ages 10-17) will be Friday, July 14 from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. The adult tournament (ages 21 and older) will be Saturday, July 15 at 11 a.m. until 9 p.m. or when a champion is determined.

Games will be played on the South Island ball field with proceeds to benefit the grassroots Community Foundation for Wilmington Parks, Recreation and Improvement.

Co-ed players must take the field holding a solo cup more than half-filled with liquid. At all

times the players must maintain the level of liquid whether it be while kicking the ball or fielding it. If a player spills too much, the umpire may nullify a play.

The cost per team to enter the kids tournament is \$150. Coed teams of 10 to 12 members is needed.

For the adult tournament the entry fee is \$400 per team.

Teams must sign up by July 9 at the Wilmington Park District, 315 N. Water St., Wilmington. Teams can also register online at www.islandparkdistrict.com.

CONTACT US AT
news@fpnusa.com
WITH YOUR STORY
IDEAS

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 _____

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NIAA For More Information call **815.304.4569** or log onto **www.kankakeefishingderby.com**

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Craig Long of Oak Knoll Insurance Strategies has been awarded a professional degree in the field of long-term care, Certified in Long-Term Care (CLTC). The program focuses on providing financial service professionals the tools needed to meet their client's long-term care needs.

"The field of long-term care is complex. It intersects with other professions such as financial planning, tax law, home care, government funding and elder law. My ability to serve the community depends on understanding what resources, such as housing and services, clients will need as they age and how they will be paid for," Craig explained.

He continued, "I have had many families ask for advice on what they can do after a loved one has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, dementia, or some other chronic illness. Sadly, there is little that can be done at this point. Families are faced with



CRAIG LONG

possibly years of stress and financial uncertainty. Paying for care can easily devastate their family's financial plan."

Craig is committed to helping his clients create an appropriate plan to meet their specific needs. He can be reached at Oak Knoll Insurance Strategies, 205 S. Water Street, Wilmington, by phone 815/476-2105, or email, craig@oakknollinsurance.com.