



BRAIDWOOD JOURNAL.com

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2026

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A BRAIDWOOD RESIDENT is celebrating a special birthday after winning a \$1 million Lotto jackpot from a lottery ticket gifted by a friend.

The \$1 million Lotto winner

A Braidwood resident's birthday celebration became a million-dollar milestone after he won a \$1 million Lotto jackpot from a lottery ticket gifted to him by a friend at his birthday party.

The winning ticket was purchased at Gas N Wash, 1951 E. Laraway Rd. in New Lenox, and given to him as a birthday gift.

"My wife planned a party for my big day," said the winner, who opted to remain anonymous. "One of my friends handed me an envelope with some scratch-offs inside. I never would've imagined actually winning."

The ticket matched all six numbers -- 11-17-22-26-36-45 -- in the Saturday, August 8, Lotto Million 2 drawing, securing the \$1 million prize. The ticket also won an additional \$2 for matching two numbers on another line.

"I didn't even think I won anything at first glance," he said. "I had

one of my friends check the ticket. He must've also overlooked it, because he said I only won a grand."

The winner added, "I thought, 'Wow, a thousand bucks isn't bad, this was a great day.' But I was not prepared for what came next."

When the winner and his wife visited their local Illinois Lottery prize center, they received a life-changing surprise.

"We told the staff that I won a thousand dollars," he said. "One of the workers smiled and said 'Sir, you actually won a million dollars.' I was in complete shock. My wife even started tearing up."

After a few phone calls, the news quickly spread throughout the family.

"Both my son-in-law and eldest daughter said, 'Get out of here, are you sure?'" he recalled with a laugh. "I told them, 'As sure as I am a year older.'"

Now, the winner and his wife are

looking forward to celebrating their good fortune with their family. They plan to take their annual winter trip to Florida to visit relatives, and he hopes to purchase a new car and golf cart.

"We'll be going on a cruise to celebrate our 40th anniversary and my kids' birthdays," he said with a smile. "I told them 'Dad's paying.'"

As a result of selling the winning ticket, Gas N Wash will receive a \$10,000 selling bonus -- one percent of the total prize amount.

So far in 2026, Illinois Lottery players have claimed more than 4.1 million winning Lotto tickets, with total prizes exceeding \$47 million.

Lotto is an Illinois-only game that is played three times a week on Monday, Thursday and Saturday. Tickets for the game can be purchased in-store, online, or on the Illinois Lottery app.

Braidwood to host Harvest Fest Sept. 19

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

The City of Braidwood is preparing for a season of family-friendly festivities this fall and is inviting residents, businesses and community groups to get involved.

City officials recently announced two major community events scheduled for September and October, beginning with the Autumn Harvest Festival on Sept. 19 at City Park.

The festival will run from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and feature live music, food trucks, vendors, bounce houses and a variety of seasonal activities. Organizers are also planning a pie-baking contest, pumpkin decorating and a scarecrow contest designed to appeal to families and children of all ages.

A month later, downtown Braidwood will transform for Nightmare on

Main Street on Oct. 17. The Halloween-themed event will take place in downtown Braidwood and is expected to offer seasonal entertainment and activities for the community.

As planning continues, the city is seeking vendors, food trucks, face painters and volunteers to help make both events successful. Organizers are encouraging residents to spread the word to businesses and individuals who may be interested in participating.

The city is also welcoming volunteers from a variety of backgrounds, including local businesses, community organizations, students seeking community service hours and residents looking to become more involved in community events.

Those interested in participating, volunteering or obtaining additional information should contact the city by email at events@braidwood.gov.

Dedicated account opened to manage OSLAD grant funds

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

Before new playgrounds, trails and park improvements can become reality, someone has to keep track of the money.

The Braidwood City Council approved a resolution authorizing the city to open a dedicated interest-bearing bank account with Federated Bank for the purpose of receiving and managing Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant funds.

While the resolution may appear routine, it represents another important step in moving forward with the city's recently

adopted Comprehensive Parks Master Plan and future park improvement projects.

Fund management
Under the resolution, the mayor or his designee is authorized to execute documents necessary to establish the account, which will be used exclusively for OSLAD grant funding. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources administers the OSLAD program, which helps local governments acquire land and develop public parks and recreational facilities through competitive grants.

Creating a separate account is a common requirement for grant administration and finan-

cial tracking, ensuring funds can be properly managed and accounted for throughout the life of a project.

The action comes as Braidwood positions itself to pursue funding tied to its newly adopted Parks Master Plan. City officials have repeatedly emphasized that securing outside grant dollars will be critical to turning long-term recreation goals into reality.

"Shopping" locally
Following approval of the resolution, Justin Smith, a Vice President of Federated Bank of Braidwood outlined the services available through the institution that will hold the city's grant funds.

Smith, who manages

agri-commercial loans for Federated Bank, said the bank offers a full range of financial services for both residents and businesses.

"We are a full service bank. We have a mortgage lender, myself as the agri-commercial lender. We have another commercial lender here," Smith said.

Smith said Federated provides online banking, checking accounts, certificates of deposit, business banking services and consumer lending programs.

"We have online banking, checking accounts, CDs," Smith said. "We've got some more CD specials that we've sent around to everybody in town. We're going to be doing another CD special a little higher

SEE NEW ACCOUNT PAGE 2



REAL OR PROP? At first glance, the \$10 bill at bottom looks much like the genuine bill above it. Tim Andrews of Wilmington said his wife unknowingly received the bottom bill as change while shopping at a dollar store. A closer look reveals the words "For Motion Picture Purposes," along with other differences.

Prop money passes for the real thing

BY ERIC FISHER
PUBLISHER

Tim Andrews said at his age he doesn't need to learn any more life lessons.

But after a recent quick trip to the store, he is sharing his story so that other people don't end up being short changed like he and his wife did.

It was a Sunday and

the Wilmington couple needed a few things from the store, so they stopped at a local dollar store. Andrews' wife told him it was just a short list and she

SEE PROP MONEY PAGE 2



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Labor in the coal field, miners were ahead of their time

We often talk about the plight of the coal miners; long hours, little pay, dangerous working conditions. But they were not the only workers who faced all of those things. The men who worked for the railroads were the invisible workforce that kept things moving, and often paid the price.

The Chicago & Alton Railroad was the first to come through the area in 1854, long before coal was being pulled from the earth. The only stopping point was at Stewart's Grove to take on more wood and water before moving on toward Springfield.

That was to change in 1861 when we read, "Wm. Hurry, Esq. of the city of New York, a gentleman of wealth and enterprise, and the owner of a large tract of land contiguous to the railroad station at Stewart's Grove five miles southwest of this village, has recently, at the request of R. P. Morgan, Jr., Esq., his agent, visited these lands, with the view of satisfying himself of the expediency of making



Sandy Vasko

the preliminary explorations, and in case of their proving satisfactory, to proceed at once to open and quarry the coal at that point."

That was flowery language, meaning "watch out boys, the coal fields are about to break wide open!" And they certainly did.

The statistics for coal shipped by rail in 1873 were as follows; "As to the amount of coal shipped by rail from this region during 1873, we are given the following figures from 4 companies: C & W company 229,125 tons; Star Company mined 69,714 tons; Eureka 86,729; King's Shaft 16,650"

It wasn't long before there were railroad tracks everywhere you looked, including Diamond, Braceville, Godley, Coal City and Gardner. Spurs led into every part of the city, making walking hazardous.

In 1875 we read, "A Bohemian boy 14 year of age, whose name we did not learn, was killed near Crombie's shaft, on Monday, by falling or jumping from a car while in

motion. His head was crushed by the car wheel, causing instant death. No blame is attached to the company, as they have taken every precaution to prevent children from playing about the cars. Were the city ordinances relating to playing about the cars and railroad, strictly enforced, serious accidents might often be avoided let the boys take warning and keep away from the cars."

Keeping away from the cars was a good idea, especially for those who worked on them. We read in 1876, "Thomas Murphy, yard master at Braidwood for the Chicago & Alton railroad, while chaining up a car, two weeks ago, was caught by the left leg near the hip, between the car couplings and badly mangled. Fortunately, no bones were broken, but the injured man will probably be laid up for several months.

In 1877 railway workers across the nation went on strike. In every case, the strikes were put down by state militias. There was no bargaining, as there was no one to bargain with, the railroad workers had not unionized.

Miners in Braidwood had been talking unions since 1873. We read, "Mr.

Richard Travellick, of Detroit, President of the National Labor Union, addressed a large meeting of miners here last week. "Dick" as he is familiarly termed, is an immense favorite here - labor reform." A few weeks later they were organized.

By 1877, when Dan McLaughlin, Mayor of Braidwood, also head of the Miner's Union, called for a strike, there was no doubt that he bargained on behalf of almost every miner in the coal field. As we know that strike lasted a very long time, but in the end resulted in more pay and less hours.

By the end of the 1890's Braidwood was proud to boast that Local Union No. 396, United Mine Workers of America was very active in the area, having 20 years' experience under their belt.

By 1898 railroads crisscrossed the area like a spider web, and it was then, finally, that rail workers organized. In fact, with coal mines shutting down, there were more railroad workers than miners. By the first decade of the 20th century, there was no doubt that the coal fields had become home to organized labor. And the miners had led the way.

Prop money,

continued from page 1

wouldn't be long if he wanted to sit in the car.

As he waited, Andrews noticed it was a busy place for a Sunday. It wasn't long before his wife came walking out with a couple of sacks in one hand and her receipt and change in the other.

Nothing seemed unusual until the following day, when they took a closer look at the bills she had received. One of the \$10 bills looked peculiar.

At first glance, it appeared to be genuine currency. It featured Alexander Hamilton, the familiar green-and-black coloring, a torch and the words "We the People."

But a closer inspection revealed some important differences.

Across the top, where a genuine bill reads "The United States of America," the Andrews' bill plainly stated: "For Motion Picture Purposes."

Andrews pulled a legitimate \$10 bill from his wallet and placed the two side-by-side. That's when he spotted several other differences in the emblems, wording and fine print.

What his wife had received wasn't money at all. It was a prop bill designed to resemble U.S. currency for use in movies or other productions.

"I don't think it was intentional that the clerk handed out a fake \$10 bill," Andrews said. "They are busy and it looked so real they probably didn't even know it had been handed to them."

"Still, shouldn't they be more aware of looking over each bill before they accept it?"

Andrews took the bill to the Wilmington Police Department and spoke with an officer. He said he was told there was nothing police could do about the couple's loss.

He also stopped at a bank to ask whether employees had seen similar prop money circulating locally. Andrews said he was told the bank had heard about fake or prop \$100 bills being passed, but not the smaller \$10 denomination.

For Andrews and his wife, who live on a fixed income, the discovery meant they were simply out \$10.

But Andrews believes their experience should serve as a warning, especially because the prop bill can look convincing when mixed among legitimate currency and exchanged during a busy transaction.

"There needs to be a public awareness campaign to be on the lookout for these prop bills," Andrews said during a visit to the local newspaper office. "People need to check their change before leaving a store and clerks should check their bills before accepting them."

His advice is simple: Don't assume a bill is genuine just because it looks familiar at first glance.

Taking a few extra seconds to inspect the money going into — or coming out of — a cash register could prevent someone else from learning the same \$10 lesson.

City drafts ordinance for reimbursement for 9-1-1 responses at new dealership

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

A new agreement designed to ensure emergency responders are compensated for services provided during vehicle incidents at a local dealership has received approval from the Braidwood City Council.

City Attorney Bryan Wellner presented the item, and the council approved Ordinance 2026-53, authorizing the City of Braidwood to enter into an Emergency Response Reimbursement Agreement with the Braidwood Fire Protection District and D'Orazio Ford, Inc.

The ordinance also authorizes the mayor to execute the agreement on behalf of the city.

"This is essentially the same

agreement that we previously approved regarding Mastodon gas station," Weller said. "This is regarding the high rise signs that they're installing."

The agreement establishes a formal arrangement between the City of Braidwood, the Braidwood Fire Protection District, and D'Orazio Ford regarding reimbursement for emergency response services.

"In the event that someone needs to be rescued from it, like the gentleman did at the Petrol in Wilmington," Wellner said. "D'Orazio would be required to reimburse the city and the fire department for the rescue efforts."

Municipal officials cited their authority under Article VIII, Section 1(a) of the Illinois Constitution,

which permits local governments to enter into contracts for valid public purposes.

The ordinance states that a copy of the Emergency Response Reimbursement Agreement is available for public inspection through the City Clerk's office prior to council consideration.

In addition to approving the agreement, the ordinance contains a severability clause providing that if any portion of the ordinance is later found invalid, the remaining provisions will remain in effect.

City officials said the agreement formalizes the relationship among the three entities and provides a framework for reimbursement associated with emergency response activities involving the dealership.

Blood drive scheduled for September 17

The City of Braidwood will host its next community blood drive on Thursday, Sept. 17, from 2 to 6 p.m. in the meeting room at Braidwood City Hall, 141 W. Main Street.

Pre-registration is highly recommended, although walk-in donors

will also be accepted.

To register, please visit the online registration link provided by the city or contact Blood Drive Coordinator Josh Bolatto at (815) 458-2342 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Suspect arrested for grooming 13-year-old

Seth Anderson, 34, of Wilmington has been arrested on felony charges after authorities say he groomed a 13-year-old minor and provided the child with alcohol and vape products.

According to Grundy County Sheriff Ken Briley, the Sheriff's Office received a report Aug. 22 that the minor had allegedly been groomed by Anderson. Investigators said that over the course of about a month, Anderson communicated with the minor on Snapchat, sending messages expressing his love and requesting illicit contact.

Authorities also allege

that Anderson provided the minor with alcohol and vape products.

On Aug. 31, the Grundy County Sheriff's Office, assisted by the Braidwood and Wilmington police departments, located Anderson in the 500 block of West Baltimore Street in Wilmington. He was taken into custody and transported to the Grundy County Jail.

Anderson was booked on two Class 4 felony charges: Grooming and contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

The investigation remains ongoing and authorities said additional charges may be forthcoming. Anderson is being held at the Grundy County Jail pending a pretrial release hearing.

Authorities also said Anderson had an outstanding warrant from Idaho for failure to appear on dangerous drug charges. That warrant has since been upgraded to a nationwide arrest warrant.

Dog Park project up for bids in Braidwood

PUBLIC NOTICE

Braidwood Dog Park

The City of Braidwood does hereby invite sealed bids for the Braidwood Dog Park project. Work will include earthwork operations, utilities, asphalt paving, concrete walks and paving, site furnishings, fencing, landscaping, signage, prefabricated park structures, and a drinking fountain.

Project manuals, including bid form and specifications, and construction documents are available after September 14, 2026, available from Accurate Repro, Inc., 2368 Corporate Lane, Naperville, IL 60563, 630-428-4433, www.rviplanroom.com. A non-refundable fee equal to Accurate Repro, Inc.'s charge for printing or digital download of the documents will be charged for each requested bid package.

Bids will be accepted at the City of Braidwood, 141 West Main Street, Braidwood, Illinois 60408, during regular office hours. All bids must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked with the Contractor's name and address, and "Bid for Braidwood Dog Park," on the face of the envelope. Bids must be received no later than 11:00AM October 5, 2026, and will be opened publicly at that time. All bidders will be required to submit Bid Security in the form of a Bid Bond, Certified Check, Cashier's Check in the amount of 10% of the Base Bid, payable to the City of Braidwood.

The City of Braidwood reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, parts of any and all proposals, or to waive technical errors or omissions in submitted proposals. No submitted bid may be withdrawn until a period of ninety (90) days after the bid opening date, without written consent of the City of Braidwood. The City of Braidwood encourages minority business firms to submit bids on this project and the successful contract bidder to utilize minority businesses as sub-contractors for supplies, equipment, services, and construction.

Questions should be directed to Mike Wood, RVI Planning + Landscape Architecture at (331) 229-5422, mwood@rviplanning.com.

Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, September 9 and 16, 2026.

Braidwood seeking bids for Town Center project

PUBLIC NOTICE

Braidwood Town Center

The City of Braidwood does hereby invite sealed bids for the Braidwood Town Center project. Work will include earthwork operations, utilities, concrete curbs, walks and paving, site furnishings, splash pad construction, landscaping, stone masonry, prefabricated park structures, and lighting installation.

Project manuals, including bid form and specifications, and construction documents are available after September 14, 2026, available from Accurate Repro, Inc., 2368 Corporate Lane, Naperville, IL 60563, 630-428-4433, www.rviplanroom.com. A non-refundable fee equal to Accurate Repro, Inc.'s charge for printing or digital download of the documents will be charged for each requested bid package.

Bids will be accepted at the City of Braidwood, 141 West Main Street, Braidwood, Illinois 60408, during regular office hours. All bids must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked with the Contractor's name and address, and "Bid for Braidwood Town Center," on the face of the envelope. Bids must be received no later than 10:00AM October 5, 2026, and will be opened publicly at that time. All bidders will be required to submit Bid Security in the form of a Bid Bond, Certified Check, Cashier's Check in the amount of 10% of the Base Bid, payable to the City of Braidwood.

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Questions should be directed to Mike Wood, RVI Planning + Landscape Architecture at (331) 229-5422, mwood@rviplanning.com.

This project is being financed, in part, with funds from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, "Open Space Land Acquisition & Development" (OSLAD) grant program.

Published in the Braidwood Journal, September 9 and 16, 2026.

CLAIM NOTICE

NOTICE is given to creditors of the death of Morris L. McPherson a/k/a Morris Lee McPherson. Letters of office as Independent Executor were issued to Roger L. McPherson, 3410 Country Club Lane, Morris, Illinois, 60450 whose attorney is DONALD F. BLACK, BLACK & BLACK LAWYERS, 201 Liberty Street, Suite 211, Morris, Illinois 60450.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Court at River Valley Justice Center, 3208 McDonough St., Joliet, IL 60431, with the representative, or both, within six months from the date of the first publication of this notice or, if mailing or delivery of a notice is required by Section 5/18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.

ROGER L. MCPHERSON
INDEPENDENT EXECUTOR
DONALD F. BLACK
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Published in the Braidwood Journal on Aug. 26, Sept. 2 & 9, 2026.

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher



The Braidwood Journal

USPS No. 550-940
Published weekly, 52 times a year, on Wednesdays by G-W COMMUNICATIONS, INC., 111 S. Water St., Wilmington, IL 60481
Periodicals postage paid at Wilmington, Illinois

Postmaster:

Send address changes to: The Braidwood Journal, 111 S. Water St., Wilmington IL 60481

Subscription rates: \$46 Grundy & Will counties; \$53 other Illinois counties and \$60 out of state

Editor's note: This page was produced for the Sept. 2 edition but due to an error with the press configuration, a wrong page was published in its place. Since our team worked hard taking photos and writing the content, it is being published this week.

COMET SPORTS



Photo by Angela Rose

REED-CUSTER'S Nate Vogler (20) is the target of quarterback Jesse Tresouthick during Friday night's game against St. Theresa. Comets fell 41-14.



Photo by Angela Rose

A PACK OF Comet defenders, including Hayden Garcia, make a tackle on Friday.



Photo by Angela Rose

COMET EDDIE BRYAN breaks a pass up by St. Theresa during Friday's game.



Photo by Angela Rose

REED-CUSTER'S TRENT BOUDREAU makes the tackle to stop St. Theresa from gaining more yards.

Bulldogs' bite too much for Comets

BY JIM SHELDON
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

Friday's home opener against St. Theresa had an inauspicious start.

The opening kickoff was fumbled and St. Theresa (2-0) scored on the first play with a 12-yard touchdown pass.

They would score 38 unanswered before the home side broke through in the fourth quarter en route to a 41-14 win.

"It was a theme last year. We beat ourselves. It's going to be a theme this week: self-inflicted wounds," said head coach Joe Turek.

"Obviously, opening kick was not what we wanted and then we had ourselves in situations where we didn't execute the way we wanted to. Kind of some football IQ issues where we were lined up and calling plays correctly, but didn't execute based on down and distance and things of that nature."

The Bulldogs added a touchdown pass and field goal before Luke Rhodes stripped Jesse Tresouthick of the ball and took it to the house for a 24-0 advantage midway through the second, one of three Comet (1-1) turnovers on the night.

"It was a simple desire play. Something we talk about all the time is passion and pride and they just had more

of that on the play that we had. They just basically wanted it a little more than we did and they took it away from us, resulting in a huge play.

"We need to limit those big plays against us and maybe get a couple ourselves, but passion and pride, that's basically what that play came down to."

The Bulldogs would score two more touchdowns before Eddie Bryan broke through with a 12-yard score, part of a six carry, 45-yard night.

Casen Mazeika led the rushing attack with 74 yards on four rushes. His long run set up the game's final score, a George Morgan run. Morgan recorded three carries for 33 yards. Tresouthick added 60 yards on seven rushes and Trent Boudreau had five carries for 38 yards.

The Comets were without junior running back Kaiden Klein who sat out with an illness and the offense definitely missed his firepower.

"Unfortunately he had to be out and when you're without him, things could go south quick and they did for us," said Turek.

Despite missing him, they still ran for almost 275 yards and were a few missed blocks or assignments away from making it a different ballgame.

"Those things add up to big results. The score was not indicative of how close

it was. A couple small issues that turned into big issues that resulted in what the result was, unfortunately.

"It was one minor block here or there that we coached them to do and if we just finished that block, it would have been a better result."

St. Theresa quarterback Gavin Paul had three touchdown passes, part of a very efficient 8-for-9 night for 170 yards.

The Comets will head on the road to Streator (1-1) for the start of Illinois Central Eight conference play. Streator is coming off an emotional 41-36 win over rival Ottawa where they led 21-0, 17 secs into the second quarter and had to survive two onside kicks.

Quarterback Sam LeRette accounted for all six touchdowns and ran for 108 yards.

Last year's meeting saw R-C jump out to a 28-0 lead after three quarters and had to hold off a furious comeback attempt (28-21).

"We talk about who the opposing team's flag carrier is, and he's definitely theirs. He did some things against us last

year when we got up 28-0 and it was 28-21 before we knew what happened and a lot of it was because of him.

"We need to make sure we take care of him and we know we need to limit him. They're going to be on their high horse a little bit after a big rivalry win at home. They're at home again, so I think vibes are going to be high and we're going to need to be ready to go into there, no doubt about it."

Streator has surrendered 83 points in their first two games and the return of Klein will be a welcome sight for a R-C offense that scored 42 points in the opener.

"I think we're in good shape. We knew this would be a challenge. We knew we had a shot if we played well, and we did a couple things not well, and it ended up turning out to be bad for us." "I think we need to get our bearings back underneath us and not panic and know we're still where we need to be. We fix a couple things and I think we'll be okay."



Photo by Angela Rose

COMETS BRYCE LAMB (left) and George Morgan converge on a St. Theresa defender while running the offense during Friday's game.

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Do as we please

BRAIDWOOD— In response to "Nix With the Fireworks." No one from Braidwood wants to be like Naperville besides the transplants that keep moving here from the suburbs. If you want Naperville, move to Naperville. We have a great community here that is rather lax and allows their residence to do as they please.

Golf cart crackdown

BRAIDWOOD— Hopefully the Braidwood Police will start enforcing golf cart laws in this town now that the Braidwood Recreation Club is encouraging their members to break the law with their new golf cart entrance. Nothing like saying that 800 residents who are members will be able to ride their golf carts from their homes into the club using this new entrance. Um, try more like 10 because those who live on the other side of the railroad tracks can not drive the golf carts over the railroad tracks to get to the other side. Apparently the Braidwood Recreation Club feels that the laws don't apply to them or their members. That's why we stopped our membership several years ago. Hopefully the police start writing a bunch of tickets for illegally operating a golf cart on an unauthorized roadway or sidewalk.

Denied justice

WILMINGTON— One more time, a major reason of increased inflation in 2022 was government money given out to Americans frivolously by both Trump and Biden. That furious spending caused supplies of goods to suddenly drop thus prices for existing goods went up accordingly with supply and demand. That's Capitalism, a good thing right? Supplies across the world were depleted and supply chains also were disrupted causing even more price gouging (again Capitalism is good right?) As far as that (Epstein thing) again open investigations by law cannot even be discussed. Of course there are prominent Democrats in those files, investigate immediately, who cares? Investigate all involved in those files. Every party affiliation, every political donor, every friend, acquaintance, Grandfather or Grandmother. Those hundreds of living victims are being denied justice given by law that Trump signed personally last year. That Constitution thing also demands that justice is carried out. But ask yourself why won't he release those unredacted files? You know why, it's the very first reason you just thought of. Children were raped, sodomized and murdered according to already released snippets of these files. This blatant cover-up will never go away, nor should it according to the hard-core Patriots who fervently wave flags for the American way. Right?



EDITOR'S NOTE: Joe Heller's original 9/11 cartoon titled "Liberty Laments" is being reprinted from 25 years ago. This cartoon was drawn and published on Sept. 11, 2001, and reflects the sorrow still felt even to this day. Readers responded requesting copies of this cartoon. Heller's newspaper printed 10,000 copies and raised over \$100,000 for the Sept. 11 victims fund through the Red Cross.

Stop the heckling

BRAIDWOOD—Those associated with the previous city administration just need to stop heckling our current city officials. We keep seeing time and time again that the former city administrator and former finance commissioner throwing jabs at the current council members just to be a thorn in their side. Watching city council meetings online and seeing the comments from the same three or four hecklers just makes you shake your head. The only two civilized members of the previous administration are the former Mayor and former public safety commissioner.

The narcissist

WILMINGTON—How do you like your gas prices, your food prices? So it's not a war in Iran, so what is it? Now we have Lake America, coins with Trump face (be sure to order yours). Trump needs the money, (ha, ha) he's destroyed the White House, what's next, maybe Mount

Rushmore, Yellowstone, Grand Canyon; no end to this narcissist! Hope you Trumpers are happy; Canada and the rest of the world hates us.

Against data centers

COAL CITY—I'm calling about the data center. The average between 72 and 75 percent of all Americans do not want a data center in their vicinity. Why is it that our mayor and our trustees of which I just read in the paper all want a raise. So why do we want to be stuck with this? Nobody else wants it. If 72 and 75 percent of all Americans in the whole United States don't want it, why should we get it? Nobody else wants it. And our house values are going to be depreciated.

I know why

SHADOW LAKES— This generation of young children are not as smart as the last generation. Which up to now previous generations were always more intelligent and smarter with more common sense

then previous generations, until now. I think I know why, if you would like to know my answer, send it in the Sound Off column and I will tell you. Dan Hill

Ignored the park

WILMINGTON—So the governor comes to town to visit the Gemini Giant (clever headline by the way). What I want to know is did Pritzker take the time to drive through the park and see all the damage from the tornado? He was right there and the park road was blocked off. I bet he didn't because he is too busy campaigning with all his wealth. The man is not in touch with Illinois communities and its people.

Run by liberals

DIAMOND—Watching an ad on channel 9 about Darren Bailey being too extreme for Illinois people. Well he is too extreme because the state is run by liberal Democrats. I believe in Darren Bailey.

Diesel price hits record high

The national average price of diesel has reached a new all-time record high of \$5.85 per gallon, continuing to climb and surpassing the previous record of \$5.82 per gallon set in June 2022, according to GasBuddy, North America's fuel savings platform.

While gasoline prices often dominate headlines, diesel can have a much broader impact on inflation and business costs. Diesel powers much of the U.S. economy, including freight trucks, trains, agricultural equipment, and construction machinery.

As diesel prices rise, transportation costs increase, often leading to higher prices for consumer goods and services.

According to GasBuddy data, more than 515,000 unique users reported fuel prices in August 2026 alone, contributing to one of North America's most comprehensive real-time fuel price datasets and reflecting the scale of GasBuddy's highly engaged consumer driver community.

"Diesel is the fuel that moves the economy, and when diesel prices reach record levels, the impact extends far beyond the transportation sector," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. "Higher diesel prices impact consumers as rising supply chain costs increase the price of groceries, household goods, deliveries, and countless other products Americans rely on every day."

Diesel prices have climbed sharply in recent months as geopolitical tensions and supply chain disruptions continue to drive volatility in global energy markets. Higher oil prices, reduced refining capacity abroad, and tight global inventories have all contributed to rising diesel and gasoline prices. As a result, diesel prices are up over \$2/gal from a year ago (September 2025: \$3.70/gal diesel).

The average price of unleaded gas over the Labor Day weekend was \$4.29 per gallon. In Wilmington, gas prices ranged from \$3.94/g at Circle K to \$4.04/g at Shell.

In Braidwood, gas was \$4.19/g at Casey's up to \$4.24/g at Marathon.

In Coal City, gas will cost you \$4.49/g across the board.

Morris is charging anywhere from \$3.99/g at Citgo to \$4.07/g at Shell.

Bourbonnais Gulf is charging \$3.96/g while Gas N Wash is at \$4.15/g.

Full shutdown of I-55 planned over two nights

A full closure will be required in both directions of I-55 at I-80 over two consecutive nights beginning, Wednesday, Sept. 9. The closures are necessary to safely install new steel beams on the I-80 bridge over the expressway.

Wednesday, Sept. 9

Starting at 8 p.m., westbound I-80 will be reduced to one lane between Houbolt Road and I-55.

At 9 p.m., northbound and southbound I-55 will be reduced to one lane between Illinois 59 and U.S. 6.

At 11 p.m., the eastbound I-80 ramp to northbound I-55 will close.

Between midnight and 5 a.m., northbound I-55 will be fully closed at I-80.

A detour will direct northbound I-55 traffic to exit at eastbound I-80 to northbound Houbolt Road and reenter westbound I-80 to access northbound I-55.

One lane on northbound and southbound I-55 will reopen by 5 a.m., with all lanes and ramps open by 6 a.m. Thursday.

Thursday, Sept. 10

Starting at 8 p.m., westbound I-80 will be reduced to one lane between Houbolt Road and I-55.

At 9 p.m., northbound and southbound I-55 will be reduced

to one lane between Illinois 59 and U.S. 6.

Between midnight and 5 a.m., southbound I-55 will be fully closed at I-80.

During that time, a detour will direct southbound I-55 traffic to exit at westbound I-80 to southbound Ridge Road and reenter eastbound I-80 to access southbound I-55.

All lanes and ramps will reopen by 6 a.m. Friday.

As the I-80 reconstruction continues, the public should continue to expect lane shifts, overnight lane closures and significant delays and allow extra time for trips through this area.

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Interior/Exterior



Photo by Flotsam River Circus

FLOTSAM RIVER CIRCUS will perform on Monday, Sept. 14, at McKinley Woods – Kerry Sheridan Grove in Channahon. The free performance is for all ages.

Flotsam River Circus drops anchor at Forest Preserve District's McKinley Woods for free performance

The Flotsam River Circus will bring its aerial acrobatics, circus acts, songs and silliness to McKinley Woods Kerry Sheridan Grove on Monday, Sept. 14.

The outdoor entertainment troupe will perform on the shore of the Des Plaines River behind Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon.

The free, all-ages event will take place from 5-7 p.m. in partnership with the Channahon Park District.

The theme of the per-

formance is what happens when the world goes awry and mutant fish take over. Flotsam River Circus is a 501 nonprofit organization with the goal of spreading whimsy, wonder and a spirit of possibility.

When Flotsam River Circus contacted the Forest Preserve District about performing on the river at the preserve, it was a unique opportunity that was hard to pass up, said Jerome Gabriel, facility supervisor at Four Rivers.

"The Flotsam River Circus is a non-profit organization that seeks to

bring awareness to the nation's local waterways through art and performance," he said. "Being a preserve that is completely surrounded by water and on a working river, we felt it was important for people to come out to celebrate our local waterways and all they offer."

DBLdaws Food Truck will be serving food from 5-8 p.m. Plan to bring camp chairs or blankets to sit on during the performance, which begins at 6 p.m.

"I hope that families find a relaxing and fun evening along the riverbanks while gaining an appreciation of what the water brings to our local community," Gabriel said.

Flotsam River Circus is a troupe of musicians, circus performers and puppeteers who travel on a ramshackle raft giving free performances in waterfront towns. Since 2019, the troupe has covered nearly 3,000 miles of river, performing in 15 different states.

"Our tours have taken us down many rivers, including the Sacramento, the Ohio, and the Mississippi," the Flotsam website states. "In 2025, we traveled from Buffalo to New York City to help celebrate the bicentennial of the Erie Canal. This year, we are traveling up the Illinois Waterway from St. Louis to Chicago. In future years, we hope to bring our floating circus to the rivers and canals of Europe – and eventually all over the world."

Chapter to meet

Chapter GK PEO will have their monthly meeting on Monday, Sept. 14, at the home of Vicky Weidling. Program for the evening will be on Wilmington history.

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Whether you are just getting started or looking to get more from your DNA test, this presentation will help you take the next

step with confidence.

It will be presented by Michelle Wilson, an experienced genetic genealogist and educator known for making complex DNA concepts easy to understand.

Attend the program Saturday, Sept. 12, at 1 p.m. at the Wilmington Public Library District. Sign up to register by stopping by the library, 201 S. Kankakee St. or calling 815-476-2834.

Garden Club annual membership tea, birthday

The Wilmington Garden Club will have its annual Membership Tea and celebrate its 90th birthday on Wednesday, Sept. 16.

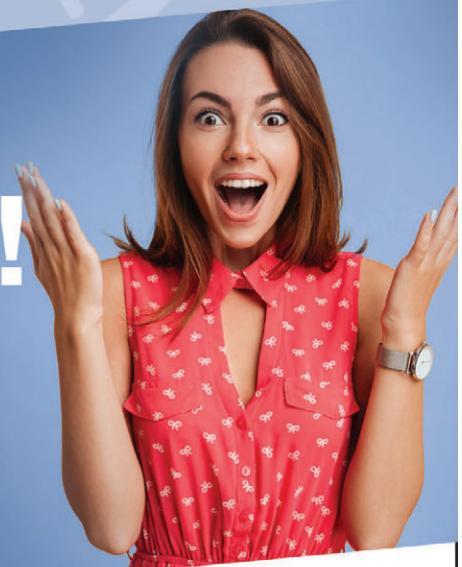
The club's meeting is scheduled for 1 p.m. at the Wilmington Park District 315 N. Water St. If you have an interest in gardening become a member and bring a friend.

For more information call Judy at 815-258-8450.

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OBITUARIES

Nick Cook

COAL CITY—Nick Cook, 21, of Coal City, passed away unexpectedly on Monday, Aug. 31, 2026.

Born April 21, 2005, in Joliet, Nicholas Wesley was the son of Andrew and Julie (Drager) Cook. He was raised in Coal City, attended Immaculate Conception School in Morris, and graduated from Coal City High School with the class of 2023. At the time of his passing, Nick was employed as an Operator with ExxonMobil.

Active and athletic throughout his life, Nick enjoyed a variety of sports and was always willing to try something new. He played basketball at both Immaculate Conception School and Coal City High School, participated in cross country during his grammar school years, was a member of the swim team, and especially enjoyed snowboarding.

Away from sports, Nick found happiness in many of life's simple pleasures. He enjoyed video gaming with his buddies, had an impressive enthusiasm for collecting Mountain Dew memorabilia, and loved being on or around the water, particularly spending time in the lake. Animals also held a special place in Nick's heart. From raising chickens and feeding ducks as a boy to the companionship he shared with his beloved dog, Zofie, his gentle nature was evident in the way he cared for them.

Those who knew Nick will remember him most for the kind and thoughtful person he was. He had a quiet determination and rarely allowed an obstacle to keep him from moving forward. Though he never sought the spotlight, Nick possessed an easy way with people and could strike up a conversation with just about anyone. He was genuine, approachable, and a friend to all, with a sincere belief that people should simply love and care for one another.

Nick could be careful and frugal when it came to himself, yet remarkably generous when it came to others. Beneath his quiet and sometimes complex nature was a young man who valued uncomplicated

things: time with the people he loved, his friends, his animals, the lake, and simply enjoying life as it came.

Above all, Nick cherished his parents and his family. They were at the center of his world, and the love he shared with them was immeasurable. In only 21 years, Nick touched countless lives through kindness rather than attention, friendship rather than recognition, and a gentle spirit that made people feel comfortable simply being themselves.

His life was far too brief, but the goodness with which Nick lived it, and his simple hope that everyone would love one another, will remain a lasting part of all who knew and loved him.

Survivors include his parents, Andrew and Julie; sister, Emma Cook; maternal grandparents: Gam'me – Henrietta Drager, Jerry and Jan Parker and Kathy Kennealy; paternal grandfather, Jerry (Cathy) Cook, and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins, as well as a host of friends.

Nick was preceded in death by his Papa Ray – Raymond Drager and paternal grandparents: Sue (Randy) Majdich.

The family will receive friends for a visitation at Reeves Funeral Home, 75 N. Broadway (one block north of Illinois Route 113) in Coal City on Friday, Sept. 4, 2026 between the hours of 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. A private family funeral services will follow and cremation rites will be accorded.

Preferred memorial may be made as gifts in Nick's memory to Shriner's Childrens Hospital Chicago, 2211 N Oak Park Ave, Chicago, IL 60707.

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

Funeral services and cremation arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves Fruland & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory in Coal City.



Patrick McNulty



WILMINGTON—Patrick Joseph McNulty, 80, of Wilmington, passed away on Aug. 11, 2026, at Saint Joseph Medical Center in Joliet.

Patrick was born in Chicago, on Oct. 31, 1945, to his parents, Joseph and Veronica McNulty. He was a dedicated union pipefitter who spent many years working diligently and making lifelong friends along the way. Patrick also spent time in Vietnam, serving in the Army.

Amongst his other passions was his love of helping people. He has literally given the shirt off his back, and worked on countless home projects. A more loyal friend you will never find. Those who knew him will remember his generous spirit and comical presence.

One of the last things Patrick said was, "I love everybody." Although he usually



delivered that message as a prank, that sentiment was well known to all who knew and loved him. It was simply who Patrick was. He cared about people and usually found a way to make them laugh. He will be sorely missed by his family, friends, neighbors, and all those fortunate enough to have known him.

He is survived by his two children: Erin and Megan; his four grandchildren: Bodhi, Sam, Maeko, and Lily; his two sisters, Leigh and Maripat.

A celebration of life service will be held at the Moose Lodge in Wilmington, IL at 32050 W. River Road on Nov. 1, 2026 at 2pm.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to Ronald McDonald House Charities.

Carol Morin

COAL CITY—Carol Morin, 85, of Coal City, passed away peacefully on Sunday, Sept. 6, 2026 at her home.

Born Dec. 6, 1940 in Joliet, Carol Ann was a daughter of Ervin and Jenny (Small) Phillips. She was raised and educated in Wilmington, and graduated from Wilmington High School with the class of 1958. Carol raised her two children in Coal City and was proud to see her family flourish by growing to include her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She was happiest when she was able to spend time in her yard, tending to her garden, watching her flowers grow and being with her canine companion, Sailor. Carol will be missed deeply by those she loved and those who loved her.

Survivors include her son, Lenny (Carrie) Onsen, of Coal City; three grandchildren: Tiger (Jen) Onsen and Cody Onsen, both of Coal City, and Tony (Rose) Francisco, of Roselle, IL; two great-grandchildren: Griffin Onsen and New Baby Boy Onsen expected any day; one sister, Mary

(the late John) Manietta, of Coal City and many nieces and nephews.

Carol was preceded in death by her parents; the father of her children, Leonard "Swede" Onsen; her daughter, Tammy Francisco, and two sisters: Marilyn (Gerald) Krell and Joan Schumacher.

Private family services will be held at Braceville Gardner Cemetery where Carol will be laid to rest with Swede.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Carol's memory to Lightways Hospice and Serious Illness Care, 250 Water Stone Circle, Joliet, IL 60431.

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

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



Lucille DeGulie

COAL CITY—Lucille DeGulie, 102, of Coal City. The Lord claimed His servant, Lucille Plese DeGulie on Wednesday morning, Sept. 2, 2026.

Lucille was born the second child of John and Margaret (Berta) Plese on April 15, 1924. She always felt blest to have been born on the farm located on the beautiful Kankakee River and all the pleasures, events, and friendships that blest her early years there.

Lucille attended Johnson School, a one-room country grade school, enjoyed her years at Reed Custer High School, and received B.A. and Masters Degrees from the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana.

Lucille was proud of and deeply grateful to her parents for their strong mantle of parental guidance which created a respectful family love, a sound work ethic and a deep Catholic faith. She loved, appreciated and relished her six siblings; they were gifts.

Lucille's life was enriched by her teaching profession. She enjoyed the interaction with many young people and treasured all the friendships gained from that profession.

Lucille is survived by her beloved sisters Madonna Orr and Margaret Paoletti, and many loving nieces, nephews and cousins.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her beloved husband, Joseph DeGulie in 2019, and by her loving siblings and their spouses: Jim and Donita Plese, Marilyn and James Tyler, Leo and Ceil Plese, Dean and Judy Plese; brothers-in-law: Jack Orr and Albert Paoletti; sister-in-

law and brother-in-law, Freda and Ghlee Blair. She was also preceded by her beloved nieces: Clare Gaaney, Suzy Rhodes, Debbie Plese, and Jacqui Rilea; nephews: Tony Plese, Dean Plese Jr. and Greg Dennis and great-nephew and great-nieces: Joey Tyler, Margaret Rice and Lena Mogler.

There will be no visitation, but family and friends are invited to a Mass of Christian Burial on Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. in St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church, 604 S. Kankakee Street in Wilmington. Rev. Thomas Logue will preside and her nephews, Deacon Jay Plese and Deacon Michael Plese will assist.

For those who wish to participate, the Holy Rosary will be recited one half hour before Mass.

Lucille was an active member of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Coal City where she cherished her membership, but per her wishes, Mass will be celebrated at St. Rose of Lima Church in Wilmington where she wanted to receive her final Mass of Christian Burial, having celebrated all her previous Sacraments at St. Rose.

Per Lucille's request, please no memorials. Just light a candle and say a prayer for Lucille's soul.

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

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



Betty Roberts

COAL CITY—Betty Davidson Roberts, age 90, of Coal City, most recently a resident of The Gardens at Park Pointe in Morris, passed away on Sept. 1, 2026 at Morris Hospital.

Betty was born March 6, 1936, in Harriman, TN, to Charles and Alice (Ladd) Davidson. Though she made Illinois her home, she never lost the Southern roots that were an important part of who she was.

Betty was a devoted member of the Braceville United Methodist Church and spent many years volunteering at Morris Hospital. Having once been a caregiver herself, she understood the importance of helping others and giving of her time.

Strong-willed and fiercely independent, Betty was determined to do things her own way and remain independent for as long as possible. Her family often joked that her stubborn streak was probably a big reason she made it to 90. She was never afraid to speak her mind and always had an opinion to share.

Betty was also a wonderful Southern cook. She loved her recipes and cookbooks and took great pride in passing along her cooking knowledge and traditions to her family. Her kitchen was one of the many places where she showed her love.

Above all, Betty loved her family. She

is survived by her daughter, Katherine Rose, and daughter-in-law, Pam Roberts; her grandchildren: Adam and Kristi Roberts of Coal City; Michelle Reddinger and Derrick "D" Wren of Morris; Alan and Jessica Gabehart, Matt Gabehart and Katie Gabehart; her great-grandchildren: Zachary Reddinger, Samuel Reddinger, Caleb Reddinger, Haidyn Wren, Cooper Roberts, Zoe Roberts, and Keirsten, Kamden and Darcie Gabehart.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Charles and Alice Davidson; her husband, Joe Roberts; her son, Quintin Keith Roberts; and several brothers and sisters.

Memorial contributions in Betty's name may be made to the Braceville United Methodist Church.

Betty leaves behind a legacy of faith, strength, independence, family traditions, and love. Her family will miss her humor, her strong opinions, her cooking advice, and the unmistakable way she was simply Betty.

Services will be announced at a later date.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guestbook at www.ferrari-funeral.com

Ferrari Funeral Services are entrusted with arrangements.



Midewin NT Prairie opens additional areas to deer and turkey hunting

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie (NTP) in Wilmington is opening additional areas to hunting, starting with the fall 2026 deer hunting season, which begins October 1.

In previous years, hunters were restricted to an assigned zone. Starting with this fall's deer hunting season hunters will no longer register for a zone with each visit but will have access to approximately 17,000 acres that are open to the public. Maps of the new areas will be available at the Welcome Center located on Illinois 53 just north of Wilmington.

While the amount of land available to hunters has increased, what hasn't changed is the necessity for hunters to follow all Forest Service and Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) laws and regulations.

"We are happy to expand opportunities for the public to enjoy their public lands," said Robert West, Midewin NTP's Prairie Supervisor. "As with everything we do, safety is our top priority. Opening

that's safe for everyone."

Deer archery season runs from Oct. 1 to Jan. 17 with breaks for firearm deer season Nov. 20-22 and Dec. 3 to 6.

All visitors, including hunters, are reminded to park at trailheads and designated areas without blocking gates or access points. All 30 miles of trails at the prairie are non-motorized, with 22 miles being multi-use for hiking, biking, and horseback riding and eight miles are pedestrian only.

The Wauponsee Glacial Trail, which runs along the eastern edge of Midewin NTP, is controlled by the Will County Forest Preserve which strictly prohibits firearms, bows and hunting on its land.

Midewin trails will remain open through all hunting seasons. Hikers, bikers, and horseback riders are encouraged to stay on the trails to ensure their safety. Hunters are reminded shooting is prohibited within 150 yards of any trail, building, developed recreation site, or occupied area.

Forest Service, IDNR, and Will County Forest Preserve law enforcement

will be patrolling the prairie during hunting seasons to enforce all county, state, and federal regulations.

The work of prairie restoration never stops, and there may be times areas of the prairie are closed to hunting due to prescribed fire or Forest Service operations. Check trailhead bulletin boards or call the Welcome Center to find out about areas that may be temporarily closed.

"We will continue to evaluate our hunting program into 2027," said West. "And we will work closely with IDNR to increase hunting and fishing opportunities that are in line with our restoration goals."

For the full list of Forest Service hunting rules at Midewin NTP visit www.usda.gov/r09/midewin/safety-ethics/hunting-rules-regulations-and-guidelines

More information on hunting in Illinois, to include hunting permits, can be found online at <https://dnr.illinois.gov/hunting>

For questions or tips please contact the U.S. Forest Service Tip Line at 618-201-3364.

Fossil Ridge Library calendar

Adult Programs

Bingocize, 1-2 p.m. Every Tuesday starting Sept. 1. Looking for a fun new way to be more active?

Bingo + Exercise = Bingocize®, a health promotion program that combines the game of bingo with fall prevention exercise. Play bingo with us and meet new people while learning about techniques to reduce falls.

Tween Programs

Monday, Sept. 14- Tween Game night- 5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m. Join us at the library for the ultimate after-school mashup. Test your skills on the highly anticipated Nintendo Switch 2 with open multiplayer gaming, or take a break at our epic Mobile Art Cart loaded with DIY crafting supplies, stickers, and markers. Bring your friends, challenge your rivals, or just kick back and create. Open to students in 4th through 8th grade. Refreshments will be provided. Registration is required to save your spot.

Tuesday, Sept. 15 & 22- Community Helpers Storytime (Registration Required) 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. 275 W. Main St, Braidwood, on Sept. 15th. 21750 IL-113, Custer Park, on Sept. 22nd. Join us at the Braidwood Fire Protection District for a tour of the fire station. Meet Sparky, the

fire dog, and listen to stories read by the firefighters. Registration is required, and a caregiver must accompany their child.

Children & Toddler Programs

Wednesday, Sept. 9, 16, 23 & 30- (Registration Required) 10 a.m.-10:45

Little Learner's: Let's learn our ABCs! "Little Learners" is a fun, weekly program where preschoolers can master the alphabet through stories, music, and a craft. Join us as we explore the wonderful world of letters, one week at a time.

Thursday, Sept. 10, 17 & 24- (Registration required)

Toddler Time: 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. We welcome toddlers and their caregivers to join us weekly to explore various toys and sensory materials. Toddlers can enhance their gross and fine motor skills, social interaction, and language

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

Listen and Create Storytime 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. This program is specially designed for children aged 3-8. Every week, children can explore new books and engage in a fun craft project. Please make sure to dress in clothes that can get messy, as the craft project will involve getting creative with various art materials.

Saturday, Sept. 12- 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Children's Costume Swap: Halloween is around the corner! Swap out the costumes your children have outgrown for something new. Stop by the library to see what you might be able to find! Costumes should be in good condition. Please make sure the items are freshly washed.

Mum flower fundraiser

The First Presbyterian Church of Braidwood is holding a Fall Mum Flower Sale.

These huge 9 inch pots will be delivered to the church on Wednesday, Sept. 16, and will be ready to bloom beautifully for your fall decorating.

They are \$12 each and are available in orange, yellow, purple, pink, bronze & white.

Call or text LuAnn Bolatto at 815-790-7134, Lora Grant 815-955-9927 or Joyce Bauer at 815-584-7239, by Sept 9 to order.

Plants can hear with no ears

Dear EarthTalk: Can plants actually "hear" pollinators nearby and open up accordingly and can we harness this knowledge to help pollinators and plants thrive?

-- Peter B., Bloomfield, CT



As pollinator populations face steep global declines due to habitat loss, pesticides and climate change, scientists are exploring surprising ways plants may be helping themselves, as well as their insect partners, thrive.

Recent research suggests that some plants may actually be able to detect the sounds of nearby pollinators and respond by boosting nectar production. This discovery opens up new possibilities for agriculture, conservation, and our understanding of how plants interact with the world.

Although plants don't have ears, they can sense vibrations in their environment, including sound waves in the air.

In a 2024 study,



RECENT RESEARCH SUGGESTS that some plants, such as this evening primrose, may actually be able to detect the sounds of nearby pollinators and respond by boosting nectar production.

researchers found that the evening primrose (*Oenothera drummondii*) increased the sugar concentration of its nectar within just three minutes of being exposed to sound frequencies mimicking bee wingbeats. Interestingly, when the flower petals were removed, the response disappeared, suggesting that petals themselves act as acoustic sensors.

This form of "hearing" allows plants to dynamically adjust their offerings based on the likelihood of being visited, effectively making their nectar more appealing to pollinators.

As National Geographic reported, it's a fast and targeted response to a specific ecological cue, and it's now considered one of the most direct examples of plant bioacoustics.

More recent studies suggest that plants can detect and respond to pollinator sounds in surprisingly specific ways. Francesca Barbero, a professor of zoology at the University of Turin, explains that "plants could improve their reproductive success if their responses drive modifications in pollinator behavior."

Additional studies have shown that even some non-flowering plants may respond to mechanical vibrations in their surroundings.

A 2025 report highlighted new evidence that even some non-flowering species respond to mechanical vibrations in their environment.

One 2024 working paper proposed using pollinator sound simulations in greenhouses to trigger nectar production in crops like berries and tomatoes. This offers a potential tool for improving yields without chemicals.

If developed further, such applications could help support pollinators, reduce pesticide use, and optimize crop health naturally. Researchers are thinking about "sound gardens" where speakers mimic pollinator wingbeats to stimulate plants into a more receptive state.

Scientists caution that we don't yet fully understand the mechanisms behind these responses or how consistent they are in real-world environments. Others warn against overstating things, as these are unconscious biochemical responses.

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Operation Firm Handshake plans annual Veterans Picnic

Veterans from across Illinois and their families are invited to Coal City on Saturday, Sept. 12, for a day of food, fellowship and recognition during the 13th annual Operation Firm Handshake Veterans Picnic.

The free event will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 1500 N. Broadway St. at the Coal City Area Club. Organizers bill the gathering as Illinois' largest free veterans picnic, bringing together veterans from all branches of the military, active-duty service members and their families.

Now in its 13th year, Operation Firm Handshake is organized by local Grundy County veterans as a way to recognize those who have served while giving veterans an opportunity to reconnect with old



friends and meet others who share the bond of military service.

A pig roast will serve as the main course, with refreshments also provided throughout the day. Those attending are encouraged to bring their appetites and lawn chairs and settle in for an afternoon of activities.

The picnic will feature door prizes, a 50/50 drawing, entertainment and a

bean bag tournament. Organizers are also planning plenty of activities and entertainment for children, making the gathering an event for the entire family.

Representatives of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and Space Force are represented in the event's invitation, emphasizing that veterans of all branches and eras of service are welcome.

The purpose behind Operation Firm Handshake remains much the same as when the picnic began — providing veterans with a place to meet, share stories and receive recognition for their service to the nation.

For additional information or to volunteer, contact Fred Gaddis at (815) 374-0302 or Mary Gaddis at (815) 351-3125.

Electronics dropoff in Wilmington

Will County's next free electronics drop-off event will be held Thursday, Sept. 10, from 5-7 p.m. at the Wilmington City Hall parking lot, 1165 S. Water St.

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

Items accepted include: Televisions, monitors, printers, computers (desktops, laptops, notebooks, tablets), electronic keyboards, fax machines, videocassette recorders, portable digital music players,

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

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

Scrap metal like pots and pans, baking sheets, car jacks, chains, keys, copper pipe and wire, door knobs silverware and more.



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Hope & Healing Cancer Services, now even closer

Join us Sept. 17 at 9:30 a.m. for our ribbon-cutting and open house at our Morris location, 1515 Creek Dr, Morris, IL 60450.

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port through every stage of your journey, from diagnosis to recovery.

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A Giant adventure Down Under



Photo by Matthew Youell

THE BEES WERE BUZZING with joy during a recent visit by the Gemini Giant to a mesmerizing flowering canola farm in Woomargama, Australia. This Share-A-Shot photo, along with two others, were submitted by Matthew Youell who lives in Australia and has a The Gemini Giant replica from Wilmington. Youell's other photos of the Giant were taken while visiting the giant Magpie statue in Euroa, Australia and the Mary Poppins statue in Bowral. "The giant magpie is named Swoop the Big Barrwarrang to pay tribute to our local Taungurung Aboriginal people - meaning magpie in their language. The Australian magpie is known to swoop on anyone to protect their nest and their yodelling melody," Youell said. "The Mary Poppins statue commemorates author P.L. Travers' magical fairytale, where she conceived the famous folktale as a youth growing up in the town of Bowral." Submit interesting Share-A-Photos by email to freepress604@gmail.com.

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WHS Class of 1957 to hold reunion

Members of the Wilmington High School Class of 1957 are being invited to turn back the clock and spend an afternoon catching up with old friends during an upcoming class reunion.

The reunion will be held Saturday, Sept. 19, from noon to 4 p.m. at Nellie's Restaurant and Old School Brewery, 110 Bridge St. in Wilmington.

Organizers say the gathering will provide classmates with an opportunity to see one another again, renew old friendships and spend a few hours reminiscing about their Wilmington High School days.

A \$15 cover charge will be collected at the door

and includes a meal of pulled pork, Italian beef, baked beans and coleslaw.

The invitation is open to members of the Class of 1957 and their guests. Reunion organizers are also asking classmates to spread the word, particularly to former classmates who may not have received an invitation.

Those planning to attend — as well as those unable to make the reunion — are asked to contact Jim Johnston (815) 476-7572 or email johnstonjames132@yahoo.com, or Marilyn 708-289-5613, so organizers can get an accurate count and confirm current contact information.

Seated Yoga at the Forest Preserve

The Forest Preserve of Will County is hosting Seated Yoga and Seasonal Sights on Sunday, Sept. 13 from 11 a.m. to noon at Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon.

Take part in a 30- to 35-minute all-levels seated yoga session followed by a 25- to 30-minute exploration of the natural world. Bring water and wear comfortable clothing. Ages 12 or older; free. Register by Sept. 12.

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Legislature needs to question its Inspector General

The legislature needs to question its own Inspector General over allegations made by declared sexual harassment victims. In the past week or so, three women have told stories about their dissatisfaction with the way they were treated by the state's Legislative Inspector General. And it's clear that at least three of the four legislative leaders are quickly becoming fed up with the LIG and that another leader may have trouble sustaining his claim that one of his members was cleared of wrongdoing.

You may have seen the Chicago Tribune story about an unnamed female lobbyist who formally objected to the way she was treated by Legislative Inspector General Michael McCuskey during his sexual harassment probe of now-former Rep. Harry Benton.

The lobbyist sent a letter to the four legislative leaders at the end of July claiming McCuskey had "violated the confidence of other victims and me, broke standard investigative norms, and made inappropriate comments" to her. "Specifically," she wrote, McCuskey "shared the names of the other victims and other confidential information about their cases with me without prompting, among other inappropriate statements and missteps."

The day after that story was published, my associate Isabel Miller reached



Rich Miller

and then served as Rep. Briel's deputy chief of staff. LIG McCuskey ruled that her allegations were "unfounded" and Rep. Briel said the ruling proved everything Jackson said was false and the House Democrats began unapologetically ramping up support for Briel in her second race against Republican Liz Bishop.

Jackson told Isabel that she, too, had experienced some of the same McCuskey behavior as the unnamed lobbyist. McCuskey, she said, "shared other stories from other people and their experiences with [Briel]."

Jackson also said McCuskey claimed Rep. Briel was "crazy." Asked about that, Jackson insisted that McCuskey "verbatim called [Briel] 'crazy' and... was telling me about the things that they were saying on their side in the interviews but he definitely called her crazy to me."

Jackson said McCuskey's stories were "very validating in a sense because it was like he was telling me, 'Here's all these other shared experiences, don't worry.'"

"I don't remember if he did tell me names [of other accusers]," Jackson said. "He spoke about, I think it was like an environmental lobbyist group that

out to Laura Jackson, who claimed she was sexually harassed by Rep. Amy "Murri" Briel (D-Ottawa) and made other allegations, including how drugs were provided to campaign workers.

Jackson worked on Briel's 2024 campaign and then served as Rep. Briel's deputy chief of staff.

LIG McCuskey ruled that her allegations were "unfounded" and Rep. Briel said the ruling proved everything Jackson said was false and the House Democrats began unapologetically ramping up support for Briel in her second race against Republican Liz Bishop.

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"I don't remember if he did tell me names [of other accusers]," Jackson said. "He spoke about, I think it was like an environmental lobbyist group that

had a lot of issues with her, and he told me about that. He shared with me about a story I had already known... about Briel yelling at one of Pritzker's staff openly and just like berating him openly, but I don't think he told me that staff's name."

We reached out to all four legislative leaders and showed them Ms. Jackson's quotes. Three responded.

I asked Senate President Don Harmon's spokesperson whether the Briel LIG investigation should be revisited: "Central to our ethics laws is that victims and witnesses know they will be treated with respect, confidentiality and professionalism in this process. We would encourage the Legislative Ethics Commission to take the appropriate steps to uphold those standards."

The Legislative Ethics Commission is empowered by state law to request further investigation of a case by the Legislative Inspector General.

The commission, which is equally divided between the two parties, also has the power to request an investigation by the Illinois Attorney General.

Asked the same question about whether the Briel LIG investigation should be revisited, House Minority Leader Tony McCombie's spokesperson issued a one-word response: "Yes."

Senate Minority Leader John Curran also weighed in: "Yes, the LEC should reopen the investigation and ensure that all appropriate steps were taken, including referring any criminal activity to the appropriate law enforcement agency."

House Speaker Chris Welch's office did not

respond to a request for comment.

As a matter of policy, the LIG does not respond to news media inquiries about specific details of cases.

And then yet another woman who filed a detailed sexual harassment complaint against a different House Democrat a few years ago sent us a statement corroborating many of the complaints against Legislative Inspector General McCuskey, who also deemed her allegations "unfounded."

"His treatment of victims is unacceptable," she wrote. "The LIG kept telling me he was a federal judge, and that I made him look incompetent and questioned his integrity of investigating... If someone really comes forward with a serious sexual assault or a big case, nobody should have to talk to him."

The legislature needs to get to the bottom of this.

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

Dietitian to discuss nutrition for GLP-1 users

In collaboration with the Morris Hospital YMCA, Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers is presenting an important nutrition seminar for individuals who take appetite suppressant GLP-1 medications.

The free seminar, "Nutrition Tips for GLP-1 Success," will be presented by a Morris Hospital dietitian on Wednesday, Sept. 16, from 4:30-5:30 p.m. at the Morris Hospital YMCA, 2200 W. Dupont Ave.,

Morris.

The program is open to everyone.

While GLP-1 medications can help reduce appetite, it's important for people who are taking the medications to practice healthy habits through smart nutrition and practical lifestyle strategies.

To register call 815-705-7358 or go to www.morrishospital.org/events and select the nutrition category.

Mobile food pantry coming Monday to So. Wilmington

Catholic Charities' Mobile Food Pantry will be distributing food on Monday, Sept. 21 and Oct. 19 from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at St. Lawrence Church (135 Rice Rd. in South Wilmington) in the church parking lot (rain or shine).

Catholic Charities and the Northern Illinois Food Bank have partnered to deliver nutritious food

(meat, produce and non-perishable items) to people in need.

The Mobile Food Pantry will use a "drive thru" method to distribute pre-packed groceries.

For more information about Catholic Charities, please visit catholiccharitiesjoliet.org.

Emergency sewer repair completed following utility line damage

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

An emergency sewer repair on Kankakee River Drive has been completed and paid for after a utility contractor accidentally damaged a sanitary sewer main and service line during construction work in July.

The work was performed by Conley Excavating & Construction of Morris, which repaired a section of sewer infrastruc-

ture after a contractor drilling operation struck both an 8-inch sanitary sewer main and a 6-inch service line.

According to the invoice submitted to the City of Wilmington, the damage occurred July 15, 2026, during utility installation activities. Conley Excavating was called in to complete the repair and restore service.

The total cost of the emergency repair was \$8,934.90.

City Administrator Melissa Wiak informed the council that the damage was the result of the contractor's negligence during the installation of fiber optic cable at the site.

"So, let's just approve this tonight, and then we will go after them for reimbursement," Wiak said.

The payment covers labor, equipment and materials associated with repairing the damaged sewer main and service connection.



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Downtown Restaurants & Bars will be Open



Illinois Capitol renovations set to wrap up this winter

BY BRENDEN MOORE
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD — Nearly five years after construction crews started moving dirt on the \$350 million renovation of the Illinois State Capitol's north wing, there are finally glimmers of light at the end of the tunnel.

The massive project, which included a rehab of the Illinois Senate chamber, construction of a new underground parking garage and conference room and the creation of a new main entrance with enhanced security features, will wrap up "sometime this winter," Architect of the Capitol Andrea Aggertt told Capitol News Illinois in an interview this week.

"We are slightly behind," Aggertt said. "As with everything, it's almost like we're on an archeological site. You don't know what you're going to find until you get into it."

There's been progress: The Senate returned to its refurbished digs on schedule in January 2025. And the \$46 million, 435-space parking garage for legislators and staff opened this spring — more than two years later than anticipated. Under the updated timetable, the entire project will be complete about two years behind schedule.

Despite overruns on time, Aggertt said the project, funded by the Rebuild Illinois capital construction program, is "within that budget" and they "don't anticipate going over that."

'Surprises'

Labor shortages attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and a scarcity of specific materials necessary to renovate a 150-year-old building contributed to the slowdown, Aggertt said. Not to mention the weather. Multiple heavy rain events this summer set the construction timeline back another several weeks. And then there were several unanticipated "surprises" that Aggertt and her team were confronted with as construction progressed.

Among them: The discovery of wrought iron trusses that were apparently hidden behind walls for more than a century. Their presence was not even unearthed during the last major renovation of the north wing in the 1970s. But the trusses, it turns out, play a critical role supporting the Capitol's mansard roof.

So, they had to pivot, working around those structural components and reallocating floor plans while making sure they



Capitol News Illinois photo by Jerry Nowicki

A NEW SECURE entrance on the north side of the Illinois Capitol is under construction. The Capitol architect's office says construction should be done this winter, five years after it began.

would be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

"There have been things that we did not anticipate," Aggertt said. "We also had staff and members in offices all the way until the time we started construction. So that means our first chance to look behind walls that nobody had seen for 70 years was at that point, and that also led to surprises that we had to overcome, which I'm proud to say that the group that we have working, the general contractors, the subcontractors, all the union tradesmen and women, have done a great job to complete that."

Most of the work inside the north wing is now complete, including the removal of mezzanines added in the 1960s and 1970s that subdivided floors with lofty ceilings. This will result in less office space in the Capitol but restore the building's original look.

Detailing work is done and new carpeting has been installed with furniture to be delivered to the refurbished north wing

in the coming months, Aggertt said.

A casualty of this restoration? The Capitol office of former President Barack Obama, who served in the Illinois Senate from 1997 to 2004. Aggertt said it would've been "impossible" to maintain that one space while gutting everything else around it.

What's left?

The renovations of the third through sixth floors is complete with construction still wrapping up on the first and second floors along with the new underground conference center and welcome center, Aggertt said.

Work has finally begun on the removal of the paved north drive. Its tear-up had been pushed to the back of the queue so construction crews could utilize it.

The drive once included parking spots for senators and staff and was a popular pick-up and drop-off location, first with horse-drawn carriages and later cars.

But in an era of heightened security

threats, the drive allowed cars too close to the building and it will thus be replaced with a sidewalk that'll allow pedestrian access to the building from Second and Monroe streets.

Security enhancements were a key consideration in the details of the renovation.

The new north wing entrance, which will serve as the main gateway into the building, will feature an attached welcome center that will allow the Secretary of State's police to screen visitors before they enter the Capitol itself. There will be two security lines to better accommodate large groups and a dedicated drop-off lane for tour buses on Monroe Street.

The new space will include an information desk, a cafe, public restrooms and a room where visitors can start their tour of the building with an informational video.

"Our plan is that when groups do come into the Capitol building, there would hopefully be a video or two that they can watch... about this construction, maybe the original construction" and "some of the more notable officials that have served in the Illinois State Capitol building," Aggertt said.

Like any building, the Capitol requires regular upkeep and maintenance, Aggertt said. Before this, the Capitol's west wing underwent a \$50 million renovation between 2011 and 2013.

Aggertt said there's no funding allocated yet for future work, but she said the building's east wing will need a refurbishment like the north wing within the next decade. They'll soon need to replace the roof of the Capitol dome, which hasn't had any major work done on it since the 1970s.

If there's anything she wants people to take away from the renovation, Aggertt said it's the "beauty of the original architecture."

"So, unfortunately, over the last several decades, mezzanines were added," and "walls were painted white," Aggertt said. "So we had the cool opportunity to take a deeper look at all those layers of paint and determine what was originally there. So everyone's going to be able to see that now."

Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service that distributes state government coverage to hundreds of news outlets statewide. It is funded primarily by the Illinois Press Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.

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STORAGE

PUBLIC STORAGE
Clementine's Closets
815-530-0200
- No Deposit - Starting at \$50
515 Davy Lane, Wilmington

APARTMENT FOR RENT

Apartment for rent Newly renovated 830 sq ft. apartment, 2 bedroom, 1 bath. Located in Godley, \$1,200 a month. Call Mike for details, 815-370-6110.

GARAGE SALE

Braidwood - 888 North English Street, Fri., Sept. 11, 8a-4p and Sat., Sept. 12, 8a -2p Furniture, boys, womens & mens clothing, toys, tools, child bike trailer, trailer hitch carrier, lawn dump cart, numerous household items.

HELP WANTED

RELIABLE FARM WORKER needed full-time. Duties include cutting grass, small engine maintenance and repair, dog training and more. Year-round position pays hourly wage. Wilmington. Call 630-399-4982. ch34-36

HOME FOR RENT

House for rent: Braceville/Gardner 3 Bdr, 1 1/2 Bath, Washer and Dryer. Attached garage. Whole house generator. 1st, last and security deposit. Call 815-405-6134.

CLUES ACROSS

1. Longtime Vogue editor Wintour
5. A Spanish title of respect
10. A way of looking
12. Properly
14. Rolled steel
16. Not down
18. Law degree
19. Consume food
20. Intermediate ecological stage
22. Old world, new
23. Dispense justice
25. Stiff hair-like structure
26. Ethiopia
27. Cool!
28. Father
30. An enthusiastic devotee of sports
31. Holm oak
33. Be united
35. Rattling breaths
37. Supermarket chain
38. Provided with a quality
40. Samoan monetary unit
41. Swiss river
42. Hill (Celtic)
44. Have already done
45. ATM company
48. Syngman ___, Korean president
50. Very willing
52. Arctic explorers (abbr.)

53. Food listings
55. Bachelor's place to crash
56. Big Blue
57. Sports magazine
58. Relating to a place north of south of the equator
63. Female follower of Bacchus
65. A type of laugh
66. Slovenly women
67. Large jug
- CLUES DOWN
1. Boxing's GOAT
2. Zero
3. Midway between north and northeast
4. Concurred
5. Added flavor
6. Amount of time
7. Eggs of parasitic insects
8. S-shaped moldings
9. Atomic #45
10. ___ d'art: small artistic item
11. A godparent's "kids"
13. Nocturnal burrowing lizard
15. Hit lightly
17. Aircrafts
18. Witness
21. Alluding to something
23. Take to the limit
24. Baglike structure in a plant or animal
27. Start over
29. Administered
32. Romanian monetary unit
34. Unit of liquid capacity
35. Equips with weapons again
36. Disney town
39. Female deer
40. Title of respect
43. A place to go rafting
44. A hint to conclude
46. Type of television
47. Georgia rockers
49. Leonhard ___, Swiss mathematician
51. Slang for gun
54. River in Bosnia and Herzegovina
59. Bar bill
60. Small, gray-headed crow
61. Frozen water
62. Norwegian krone
64. Commercial

SUDOKU - Here's how it works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle.

							6	
	4			5				
	3	7			1		5	
			4	1				
				9		6		8
8		2			5		7	
	7			9				
					3			7
3				8	2			1

CLUES DOWN

1. Boxing's GOAT
2. Zero
3. Midway between north and northeast
4. Concurred
5. Added flavor
6. Amount of time
7. Eggs of parasitic insects
8. S-shaped moldings
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59. Bar bill
60. Small, gray-headed crow
61. Frozen water
62. Norwegian krone
64. Commercial

1	6	4	2	8	7	9	5	3
7	2	9	3	1	9	6	8	4
9	8	3	4	6	5	1	7	2
6	7	1	5	3	4	2	9	8
8	4	9	7	2	6	3	1	5
5	3	2	8	9	1	4	6	7
2	9	6	1	4	7	8	7	3
3	1	7	9	5	2	8	4	6
4	9	8	6	7	3	5	2	1

COMET SPORTS



Photo by Angela Rose

MAKING A CATCH for Reed-Custer on Friday is Donald Bryan.



Photo by Angela Rose

A BIG GAIN—A 42-yard run by sophomore Sam Crotty on the game's opening drive set Reed-Custer up for a touchdown to take control over Streator.

Comets overpower Streator in ICE opener

BY JIM SHELDON
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

If you can run the ball and control the line of scrimmage on both sides of the ball, success will follow.

That blueprint was on display Friday in the Illinois Central Eight opener at Streator. Reed-Custer (2-1) ran the ball for 266 yards and only gave up 87 total yards as the visitors scored a touchdown in every quarter and cruised to a 28-0 shutout.

"The word of the week was respond. Obviously, it didn't go well for us last week and then it went really well for Streator, beating their rival at home. So we knew they'd be excited," said head coach Joe Turek.

"We just knew that we had to do our job and be ready to go and start fast and we did that. Fortunately, it was an all-around solid team effort for sure."

A 42-yard run by sophomore Sam Crotty on the game's opening drive led to a Kaiden Klein (10 carries, 43 yards) two-yard plunge and an early advantage for the visitors.

A poor Streator punt set up the second score as Crotty broke away for a 14-yard touchdown run early in the second quarter. He led all rushers with 99 yards on 11 carries.

"He's been quietly kind of making his way up for us. He ran real well for the junior varsity last year as the main running back. Obviously, he had some time with Klein and Jesse Tresouthick carrying the load a little bit."

"He hit that one early and he kind of had a good feeling going throughout. He was running hard, hit-



Photo by Angela Rose

MAKING A SACK for the Comets is linebacker Nate Vogler.

ting holes behind our guys up front.

It was a nice kind of coming out party for him."

In the final minute of the third Tresouthick found Donald Bryan for a 25-yard touchdown and a 20-0 advantage.

Tresouthick then put the game on ice with a nine-yard touchdown run midway through the fourth. He was 4-for-6 passing for 51 yards and added 10 carries for 71 yards as the Comets chewed up the clock all night and didn't allow Streator's offense to

get on track.

"I love it a little extra every time there's a zero still on the scoreboard towards the end. They worked hard this week. They practiced hard. Learning the option is not easy. They bought into their jobs," said Turek.

"They knew they had to do their job and run to the football. That's what they did. Kudos to them for buying into what they needed to do and just playing with a sense of urgency and playing hard."

They allowed just 34

rushing yards on 21 carries. Quarterback Sam LeRette who accounted for 284 total yards last week, was sacked four times and held to just 47 total yards.

The line play on both sides of the ball was huge as Donald Bryan, Hayden Garcia, Jon Claassen, Josh Krutchen and Hunter Baker were standouts all night.

"Bryan had another great game at defensive end. He was everywhere and when you run for 266 yards and hold them to just 34 yards rushing, it has a lot to do with the guys

upfront."

"Those guys leading the way make our backs and linebackers go. When we're watching the film on Saturday morning, we know who's doing it and it's those guys listed."

The Comets accumulated long scoring drives all night making it difficult for Streator to respond.

"I'm singing coach Nick Klein and coach Mark Wolf's praises anytime we have eight minute drives that result in points. It's kind of why it was only 28 points. It was long, sus-

tained drives and again that is kudos to the guys upfront."

Last week, the heat greatly affected the practice schedule for area teams so a return to normalcy will be welcome.

"We had about an hour and a half total on the field before we took the field Friday night. We were in the gym after school Tuesday and Thursday and on our turf Wednesday," said Turek.

"We appreciated their flexibility and I thought we had a very nice week. It was good attention to detail, less physical, more mental."

The Comets will stay on the road which has been a welcome sight so far this season as they head to Manteno (3-0) Friday.

The Panthers blitzed Herscher last week 48-13 and running back Nick Honkisz is the main focal point of their offense. He has accumulated over 100 yards rushing in all three games, including an 84-yard touchdown run last week.

"He's a load to bring down for sure. He plays the end on the other side of the ball so he's kind of a bigger back. He's a little angry when he runs. It's going to be a physical one for sure, but I think we're in a good spot and a good headspace," said Turek.

"I think the guys know that Manteno is kind of similar to us. They have a solid group of skill kids and upfront, they're learning on the job, and they don't have a lot experience yet. They have started well. We've started okay and I think it should be a good one out in Manteno on Friday."



Photo by Angela Rose

BLOCKING OUT FRONT is Reed-Custer's Trent Boudreau (4) leading the way for ball carrier Kaiden Kline.



Photo by Angela Rose

THE COMET DEFENSE was swarming on Friday during a 28-0 shutout against Streator. Reed-Custer held the Bulldogs to just 87 total yards.

COMET SPORTS

Comets fall twice on soccer pitch

The Reed-Custer boys soccer team came up short twice last week, including a narrow conference loss to Manteno, as the Comets slipped to 0-5 overall.

A scheduled match against Streator/Woodland earlier in the week was postponed, leaving the Comets with matches Thursday at Manteno and Saturday at home against Beecher.

Reed-Custer opened Illinois Central Eight Conference play Thursday with one of its closest matches of the young season, falling 2-1 at Manteno.

The Panthers grabbed a 1-0 advantage during the first half before Reed-Custer found the net in the second. Both teams scored

once after intermission, allowing Manteno to hold on for the one-goal victory.

Jakub Lichaj accounted for Reed-Custer's goal with an assist from Matt Kuban.

Goalkeeper Caden Atwell helped keep the Comets within striking distance by making 12 saves while allowing two goals. Lichaj was named Reed-Custer's Player of the Match.

The Comets returned home Saturday morning to host Beecher, which broke open the match in the second half for a 7-1 victory.

Beecher led 3-1 at half-time before adding four unanswered goals in the second half.

Lichaj again supplied

Reed-Custer's offense, scoring the Comets' lone goal. It was his third goal of the season.

Atwell recorded another 12 saves in goal. Aiden Jones was selected as Reed-Custer's Player of the Match.

The two losses dropped Reed-Custer to 0-5 overall and 0-1 in the Illinois Central Eight Conference.

The Comets will try to break into the win column this week with a pair of road matches. They travel to Bishop McNamara in Kankakee on Wednesday, Sept. 9, for a 6:30 p.m. non-conference match before heading to Streator on Saturday, for a 10 a.m. contest.



REED-CUSTER'S Aldo Garcia-Diaz fights for position with a Beecher defender during a home match on Saturday.



LEAPING FOR THE block near midfield is Reed-Custer senior Jakub Lichaj.



SOPHOMORE CHRISTOPHER OZEE gets a head on the ball while defending for Reed-Custer.

Lady Comets battle through tough week

The Reed-Custer varsity volleyball team endured a tough week on the court, dropping matches to Streator and Manteno as the Comets moved to 1-4 overall and 0-2 in conference play.

Reed-Custer came close to pulling out a three-set victory against Streator on Tuesday.

The Comets dropped the opening set 25-16 before responding with a strong effort in the second. Reed-Custer turned the tables on the Bulldogs with a 25-17 victory to force a deciding third set.

Streator regained control in the finale, winning 25-13 to take the match 2-1.

Kenzie Foote led Reed-Custer at the net with six kills while Alyssa Wollenzien contributed five kills.

Madelyn Marschner directed the offense with 18 assists.

Taylor Bova finished with three kills, one solo block and an assisted block, while Reese Brown recorded two

solo blocks. Kadance Vanduyne and Kamryn Wilkey helped anchor the Comets' back-row defense with several digs.

The loss dropped Reed-Custer to 1-3 heading into Thursday's conference road match at Manteno.

The Comets ran into an unbeaten Manteno squad that continued its strong start to the season with a 25-6, 25-8 victory.

The Panthers improved to 7-0 with the win while Reed-Custer slipped to 1-4 overall and 0-2 in conference play.

The Lady Comets have three matches scheduled this week, beginning Monday, Sept. 7, when they host Marquette Academy of Ottawa at 10 a.m. Reed-Custer will have a quick turnaround Tuesday when rival Coal City visits Braidwood for a conference match at 5 p.m.

Reed-Custer will then travel to Peotone on Thursday, Sept. 10, for another conference matchup at 5 p.m.



LET'S GO—The Reed-Custer varsity volleyball players celebrate a hard-earned point scored on their home court.



ANTICIPATION—Reed-Custer setter Madelynn Marschner slides low to keep the ball alive after it hit the net.