



Wilkins in the Senior Spotlight

Comets blast the Bulldogs, stay perfect



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Box City of Hope spends another night at Reed-Custer

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

Fans entering Comet Stadium on Friday night were treated to yet another big win by this year's undefeated varsity football team.

But just outside the stadium, students were also making sure folks know that cheering on their favorite team and doing something good for others could go hand in hand.

On Oct. 7, members of the RCHS Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) made their way to the front of the high school once again, to set up camp as well as bring awareness to hunger and homelessness. Box City of Hope, an annual event hosted by the student organization, gives students a chance to understand the hardships faced by those experiencing homelessness, while raising funds and collecting goods for the local pantry.

The students spend the night in box shelters or tents to experience what it is like to spend the night without a home. The goal is for the students to step outside of their own comfort zones and experience what it might be like to be homeless.

The event is also a fundraiser, with the students raising cash and collecting non-perish-

able items for donation to the Community Care Center food pantry in Braidwood. To participate, the students pay a \$10 minimum "rent" fee, then work to fundraise for additional dollars.

For the second year in a row, Olivia Williams was the FCCLA's top fundraiser for the event. The 16-year-old junior said the annual event has helped to open her eyes to problems faced by those throughout the community. Olivia said this year, she had a plan to get even more people to donate to the cause.

"I would just go around and ask if anyone has cash on them, because I noticed that people were much more likely to donate to people they know," she said. "If I said, hey, can I have \$5, they'd say yes, versus if I said do you want to donate to homeless people, they might not. So, I'd start with asking if anyone has cash on them, and if someone said yes, I'd say, do you know that there are thousands of people who are homeless, and give my whole spiel about how there are people who are in need who really need this, and of course they'd say yes. They'd say, I never really thought of it like that, and they'd give me a dollar."

SEE BOX CITY, PAGE 2



Photo by Marney Simon

MEMBERS OF THE Reed-Custer High School FCCLA set up tents and boxes in front of the school on Friday, Oct. 7. The students participated in this year's Box City of Hope event, to raise awareness of hunger and homelessness as well as cash and goods for the Community Care Food Pantry in Braidwood.

What happens to Jr. Comets?



Photo by Eric Fisher

JUNIOR COMETS become future Comets when you let them run with the big kids. At least that was the hope Friday night when the Reed-Custer football program invited players and cheerleaders involved in the Jr. Comet youth football program to run onto the field prior to the start of the varsity game. Reed-Custer players and cheerleaders, many of them past Jr. Comets, lined up as the youngsters ran through the giant helmet onto the field. There was a lot of excitement for both youth and high school players as the varsity Comets went on to defeat Streator 73-14 to remain undefeated with two regular season games left. The Comets will play at Coal City on Friday before returning home Oct. 21 against Herscher. They'll then enter the Class 3A playoffs now that they have clinched a berth.

BAHCC enters year five of Drug Free Communities grant

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

The Braidwood Area Healthy Community Coalition (BAHCC) is kicking off year five of its federal Drug Free Communities (DFC) grant, with a long list of goals and objectives set to involve the community in efforts to battle substance abuse and misuse.

Program Director Pete Dell'Aquila gave an update on the status the coalition and plans to utilize the funding during this month's BAHCC meeting held on Monday, Oct. 10 over Zoom.

The coalition was first awarded the grant in 2018. The DFC Support Program provides grants up to \$125,000 per year for five years to community coalitions to strengthen the infrastructure among local partners to create and sustain a reduction in local youth substance use. After five years, community coalitions may re-compete for another five-year cycle.

Year five of the BAHCC grant officially began on Oct. 1.

Dell'Aquila gave members an overview of the action plan for the next year.

"As in the past years, our main goals are going to be

increasing community collaboration and reducing substance use. Those are the two goals of the Drug Free Communities grant overarching, and then we have very specific goals that tie into those," he said. "Our system goal is to increase the number of individuals and organizations that we work with directly to bring in different resources to the community."

Dell'Aquila said the core objectives are to enhance board leadership, and increase youth involvement in substance use prevention programs.

"We want to continue to foster that process and find people who are suitable for the board and get them comfortable with the position before they jump right into a role. So, that was one of the strategies that we had in our previous action plan and we're going to continue to tap into things like that," Dell'Aquila said, adding that the organization is looking to increase available community resources that can help prevent substance use and abuse, such as utilizing recovery coaches.

SEE BAHCC, PAGE 2

Braidwood man killed in single vehicle wreck

STAFF REPORT

The Braidwood Police Department is investigating a car crash that took the life of a Braidwood man on Tuesday.

Will County Coroner Laurie Summers' office reported the death of Benas Ruzga, 30, at 10:05 a.m. on Oct. 11.

According to the release, Ruzga was involved in a single motor vehicle wreck in the 31000 block of SE Frontage Road in Wilmington Township.

An autopsy is scheduled

for Wednesday, Oct. 12.

The incident is being investigated by the Braidwood Police Department and the Illinois State Police.

A final cause and manner will be determined on a later date pending autopsy, toxicological, and law enforcement results.



Diamond Mine Disaster monument shines once again

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

On an unseasonably warm February day nearly 140 years ago, as the winter snowfall was melting quickly, a group of miners headed off to their daily routine inside the Diamond No. 2 Coal Mine.

But after the men descended into the mineshaft on Feb. 16, 1883, disaster

struck, as standing water from the melted snow swept into the mineshaft, quickly flooding the mine and trapping and killing 74 of the 185 miners who went to work that day.

After the tragedy, only 28 bodies were recovered, with the remaining victims left to rest in the mine forever.

In 1898, a monument was erected to remember the men who perished in the disaster.

And in 1926, the Braidwood Homecoming Committee dedicated a plaque to those victims at the site.

Now, 96 years since those names were first displayed at the memorial along Route 113 in Diamond, the plaque has been refreshed so those victims can continue to be remembered.

Braidwood resident Adam Beaty operates The

Memorial Guardian, a cleaning, restoration and preservation service for cemetery headstones and monuments. Beaty and his father spent about two hours earlier this month performing work to help the plaque and the monument shine once again.

"The monument underwent a thorough cleaning

SEE MONUMENT, PAGE 2

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Box City

Olivia helped raised cash through the FCCLA's GoFundMe set up by advisor Katelin Arseneau for the event, as well as asking family and friends over the past month. On the last day of collections she hustled around the high school to eke out some extra cash from those who had something to give.

"The day that the money was due, I went around to each class and I raised about \$90 just in that one day of

going to school and asking anyone if they have cash on them," Olivia said.

In total, she raised \$238.15. Olivia said she got donations as little as 5 cents and as high as \$40, and said every penny was appreciated.

"You never know, you have to just go out there and be confident and ask people. You never know, the worst they can do is say no," she added.

Olivia added that after two years of collecting for the pantry, she definitely sees things a little differently.

"I definitely have been trying to be more aware," she

said, adding that if she sees an opportunity to donate to a worthy cause, such as dropping her change from a purchase to a charity while making a purchase, she'll do that.

"That's my little part of giving back," Olivia said. "Sometimes I just think more about how not everyone has what I have. I'd say my eyes have opened more."

Olivia also volunteers at the Pregnancy Resource Center with her grandmother, where she enjoys helping those who need assistance. And, she said, she plans to continue with charitable efforts as she gets older.

"Just giving back, it just makes you feel good," she said. "I would really love to donate as much as I can, once I get through college."

In addition to the FCCLA fundraising efforts, collections of nonperishable foods were also taken at the gate in lieu of an entry fee for Friday's game, with those donations also going to the pantry.

FCCLA is a co-curricular organization that aims to help youth in public and private schools with family bonds, careers, and participation in the community.

BAHCC

"We're really making good strides on the action that we plan on taking. I know a lot of this we talk about but don't always see it, because it happens through our partnerships, and a lot happens behind the scenes," he added.

Dell'Aquila also said the BAHCC is working hard toward its two main goals—reducing underage drinking, and reducing tobacco use.

"[Alcohol] is, throughout the state, still the number one most overused substance for youth, because it is so readily available, so we are always combating that," he said, adding that communication campaigns in the Reed-Custer School District have helped create parent groups and get more people involved.

Dell'Aquila also noted that the coalition's partnership with the Will County Health Department means the BAHCC has been able to work with the school district to allow students caught vaping or smoking to be given the opportunity for education rather than being suspended from school, sports or activities. That education includes resources to help quit.

"The impacts we are making through this grant are just so awesome," Dell'Aquila said. "Again, it's all through the partnerships. We couldn't do it alone."

The DFC Support Program was created in 1997 to fund community-based coalitions that engage multiple sectors of the community to prevent youth substance use.

Coalitions that are awarded the grant funding engage multiple sectors of the community and employ a variety of environmental strategies to address local substance use problems.

DFC Coalitions consist of community leaders representing twelve sectors that organize to meet the local prevention needs of the youth and families in their communities, including youth, parents, schools, law enforcement, media,

businesses, healthcare providers, and other community organizations.

The funding helps ensure that communities adopt a balanced and comprehensive approach to reducing substance use in their neighborhoods.

With the grant funding, the BAHCC has continued with its objectives of recruitment, retention, increasing youth involvement, sustainability plans, and increasing local resources for substance abuse prevention.

The coalition operates with the assistance of several grants in addition to the DFC funds. Over the past several years, funding has been received from the Amerisource Bergen Foundation, the Community Foundation of Will County, and the BAHCC was the recipient of \$50,000 from Exelon's Fishing for a Cure fundraising effort in 2017, among other funding sources.

The coalition also looks at ways to engage with the community outside of just prevention.

"Our community garden, that's not prevention related but it's community health related," Dell'Aquila said. "So, we've been able to be very creative and tie in some of the prevention things we've been doing into what the community needs as well."

The community garden is an all volunteer garden that sits outside the BAHCC center on Reed Street. Plantings are harvested throughout the season and donated to the Community Care Food Pantry, and are also made available to the public via a garden box at the site.

The BAHCC also sponsors students who attend the Cebrin Goodman Teen Institute, and holds workshops on mental health with community partners.

The coalition also works with the Will County Rapid Response Team to distribute Narcan to local community, supports the Text-A-Tip line in partnership with the Wilmington Coalition, and hosts the bi-annual drug takeback event, among other community activities.

Monument

from top to bottom," Beaty explained. "The concrete steps were cleaned using a biological cleaner with no hazardous chemicals, non-abrasive brushes, distilled water, and good old fashioned elbow grease. All the labor was manual. The granite portions were cleaned and polished, and the bronze plaque was carefully cleaned to return the original bronze shine which also returned the legibility of the victims names."

Beaty said the frequency of cleaning of a monument like the Diamond Mine Disaster monument depends on several varying factors, including climate and weather conditions. He said a cleaning like the one performed this month should happen on a as needed basis, but regular maintenance annually with biological cleaners should keep an already clean monument looking good for many years.

After more than a century, it's hard for residents to reflect on a tragedy as cataclysmic as the Diamond Mine Disaster. Beaty hopes keeping the monument in tip top shape can help people remember those victims.

"In a time where more and more history is being erased, I firmly believe it's extremely important to keep this monument and monuments like it vibrant and viewable," Beaty said. "Without perpetual care and the people to notice when that care is needed, nature will erase our history for us. It is just as important that we visit these monuments and learn the purpose behind them. So often we take what we have for granted without realizing and/or respecting the men, women, and, in this monument's purpose, the children who came before us and made our communities possible."

Beaty volunteered his services for the cleaning and restoration project, in hopes that folks both local and traveling through would notice the monument and stop to reflect on the terrible disaster that happened here 140 years ago.

"I volunteered for this project because I am an avid historian and I believe a bright clean monument will attract the eyes of passers-by and garner more visitors and, thereby, interest in its purpose," he said. "I thank the Mayor of Diamond for this treasured opportunity, and I look forward to assisting Diamond and any surrounding community that would like to have their memorials cleaned. It's truly a work of passion and something I highly value."

Beaty's work can be found on Facebook by searching The Memorial Guardian.



Courtesy photos

BEFORE AND AFTER — After a through scrubbing, the commemorative plaque recognizing the 74 miners who perished in the Diamond Mine Disaster is legible once again. Braidwood resident Adam Beaty volunteered to clean and restore the plaque and monument earlier this month.



Library to hold Oakwood Cemetery walk

Come out and learn some local history with John Persic, Jr. from the Wilmington Historical Society, in conjunction with the Wilmington Public Library District for a historical walk through Oakwood Cemetery on Saturday, Oct. 29, at 1 p.m.

Space is limited, so call the Wilmington Library at 815-476-2834 to reserve a spot. Participants will meet at Memorial Park at Vine and Williams Streets the day of the event. For more information, please feel free to contact the library.

NOTICE OF PROPOSED PROPERTY TAX INCREASE FOR THE FOSSIL RIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT

- I. A public hearing to approve a proposed property tax levy increase for Fossil Ridge Public Library District for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023, will be held on Monday, October 17, 2022 at 5:50 p.m. at Fossil Ridge Public Library District, 386 West Kennedy Road, Braidwood, Illinois 60408.

Any person desiring to appear at the public hearing and present testimony to the Library District may contact Rene Leyva, Library Director, 386 West Kennedy Road, Braidwood, IL, 815-458-2187.

- II. The corporate and special purpose property taxes extended or abated for 2021 were of \$989,493.

The proposed corporate and special purpose property taxes to be levied for 2022 are 1,058,757. This represents a 7% increase over the previous year.

- III. The property taxes extended for debt service and public building commission leases for 2021 (\$101,325) were included in the corporate fund levy.

The estimated property taxes to be levied for debt service and public building commission leases for 2022 (\$99,825) are included in the corporate fund levy.

- IV. The total property taxes extended or abated for 2021 were \$989,493. The estimated total property taxes to be levied for 2022 are \$1,058,757. This represents a 7% increase over the previous year.

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher
Marney Simon, editor

The creation of a Diamond; watching it grow

The name is not indicative of the town. It is not beautiful and sparkly, it does not shine in the sun, and worst of all there never were any real diamonds there. But if we are talking about black diamonds then it is aptly named. Set the way back machine for 1873 for the birth of Diamond.

Unlike Braidwood, which was laid out haphazardly as the coal shafts were sunk; Diamond, like Coal City, was laid out by the coal companies.

We read on October 25th, 1873 in the Wilmington Advocate, "A new town has recently been laid out in this county (Will) and Grundy, and the plat of the same duly recorded in the offices of the Circuit Clerks of both counties.

The new town includes the Diamond coal shaft in Grundy County, is itself named Diamond, and consists of 22 blocks, divided into 304 lots. Sixteen of these blocks are in Grundy County, and the town of Braceville, and six of them are in Will County. The town site includes about 35 acres, and is owned in the main by the Wilmington Mining and Manufacturing Co."

By the next summer there was talk of building barracks at Diamond to house the "black legs" that were coming in to break the strike. Whether they did or not, building housing at Diamond must have been a profitable enterprise.

We read on November 20, 1874 in the Wilmington Advocate; "A Rare Opportunity to Secure a Home - Messrs. E. D. Small & Co. of this city, have built twenty cottages at the Diamond Mines, which are neatly finished and painted inside and out."

"We are called upon to print the contracts for their sale, which provide for as low payments as \$15 per month (about \$300 today), with the privilege to the purchaser of increasing the payments to from \$20 to \$25 per month, and securing a liberal discount thereby; they also provide for an extension of time in case the purchaser should become disabled before making the final payment."

"We consider the terms offered very liberal, and think this a rare opportunity for working men to secure homes where the prospect for steady and profitable employment is not surpassed; also where there is every probability that the property purchased will rapidly increase in value, as it is considered by all intelligent observers of our coal field that the center of operations must move westward each year, and the Diamond mines will soon become one of the most desirable and central locations in the Wilmington coal fields."

It was not all work at Diamond. The residents did take time out for leisure. One of the most popular sports was target shooting on the wide open prairie surrounding Diamond.

We read on July 23, 1875, "At the Diamond shaft July 19th, quite a large crowd gathered to witness the shooting match between John Brady, of Braidwood, and John Steel, of Morris. Match for \$200 a side. (about \$4,100 today)"

"Of the 18 birds shot at, Brady got seven, and Steel ten, the other being lost by a snap. The Braidwood boys backed their shootist heavily, with no flinching and a large amount of money was transferred to the pockets of Steel's backers."

"A number of smaller matches of minor importance prevailed throughout. Frank Hall, Wash Foster and some others from Morris were there, carrying home a goodly share of greenbacks."

In 1882, one year before the disaster, Ed Conley, editor of the Wilmington Advocate newspaper, visited Diamond



TIME WAS....
Sandy Vasko



A PICTURE OF Diamond around 1883, not what we would call beautiful.

and described what he saw.

"We made a 2 hour visit to the Diamond the other day, to find that village quite lively and enterprising. Dr. DeNormandie chaperoned us about town, and we could not have chanced upon a guide that is better posted. First, we visited the Mayor, John Graef, Esq., who keeps a well appointed boarding house and billiard parlor.

"Next we found Fred Vetter's meat market, well stocked and well patronized. George Miller was making the steaks fly in every direction. John McGurk runs a nice sample room (saloon), and makes

a specialty of Key West cigars."

"Squire Anderson is the legal power of Diamond, and his decisions are said to be very generally satisfactory in settling the differences arising between man and man. Jacob Rauback keeps a first class saloon as does Joe Dibell.

"At the coal company's office all was busy, it being the center of attraction for miners and a volunteer post office besides. We hope to soon have a regular correspondent at Diamond, that its merits may be shown up to the world at large."

The following year the Diamond Mine disaster put a pall over the town, but the citizens pulled together and came through it. The 140 year old community has a long history of overcoming disasters.

Wilkins in the Senior Spotlight for October



The Reed-Custer High School Senior Spotlight winner for the month of October is Makayla Wilkins. Makayla is the daughter of Lorne and Noemi Wilkins. During her high school career, Makayla was involved in Marching Band, Concert Band, Pep Band, Musical Pit, Solo and Ensemble, Scholastic Bowl, National Honor Society, Chorale, and IT Internship. She was also a member of the Golf team and was on the Honor Roll.

Her future plans are to attend the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa to major in Aerospace Engineering.

Here are a few thoughts from Makayla's teachers:

Mrs. Lee says that Makayla is "such a great student and person! She is extremely motivated, kind, and intelligent. She is a joy to be around and will continue to do great things!"

Mrs. Dennis thinks that Makayla is "responsible, hard-working, and an independent thinker."

Mrs. Leveille is "glad to hear Mikayla won!!! Mikayla was great to have as a freshman in our Honors Biology class!! Mikayla is a silent force in the classroom; quiet and very strong academically! She is a sweet, thoughtful all-around nice person. She has a positive attitude and was willing to help others in our class! Great to see a strong female golfer also on the team!!"

Mrs. Eltrevoog appreciates that Makayla "has been kind and respectful in class. She is a hard worker and is challenging herself by taking Dual Credit

Statistics. It has been a pleasure to get to know Makayla this school year, and I look forward to the rest of the year having her in class."

Mr. Newsom believes that Makayla is "responsible, hard-working, respectful, considerate, kind-hearted, polite, and just a generally all-around good person. I wish there were more students like her."

Mr. Smith says that Makayla is a "very responsible, self-motivated, kind, and great person to be around."

Mrs. Redwitz is thankful that Makayla is "such a kind person. She is always smiling and always friendly. She goes over and above in all that she does. She is a pleasure to talk to."

Mrs. McGarey says that "as someone who just knows 'of' her...she just comes across as just as wonderful young lady. She is always pleasant when we pass in the hallway, and I've heard enough about her to know that she always strives to do well."

Mr. Arndt has had "the pleasure of coaching Makayla Wilkins over the past three years. Makayla has excelled in balancing academics, band, work and varsity golf. She has

been a varsity captain the last two seasons. She has made the all-conference team three years straight and advanced to sectionals the last two years. Makayla's hard work has really paid off. Over the last week, Makayla was accepted to the University of Alabama, took first place in the ICE conference, advanced to sectionals and earned the RC Senior Spotlight recognition! Makayla takes pleasure in showing the boys how much better at golf she is than them. She has always golfed with the boys from the white tees, but after conference, she competes in girls only matches. Every year, when I tell her she has to start golfing from the women's tee box, she takes it as an insult. Makayla is not only a good golfer but she's a great person. I look forward to seeing what she does in the future."

As a final thought, Makayla's advice to younger students is, "Just take it one day at a time."

On behalf of the teachers and staff at RCHS, congratulations Makayla Wilkins, the October winner of the Senior Spotlight.

RCMS ACE winners



REED-CUSTER MIDDLE School announced the Ace winners for the month of September, they included (from left) Jordana Nagle (7th grade), Griffon Davies (6th), Bella Pocius (7th), Harper Roberts (6th) and Cameron Junkroski (8th).

FOSSIL RIDGE LIBRARY NEWS

- Adult programs**
- Oct. 18-Cook the Book, 6-7 p.m. Eat Better, Feel Better, by Giada De Laurentiis. Get an inside look at Giada's approach to healthy, balanced living.
- Oct. 19-Oh Freedom: Songs of the CRM, 6-7 p.m. In a show created to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the civil rights movement, award winning Illinois folksinger Chris Vallilo performs pivotal songs from the music that inspired and sustained this landmark movement. Intermixed with the music, Vallilo presents first hand accounts of the historic struggle and discusses the impact of music to our nations most important social cause.
- Teen Programs**
- Oct. 15-Teen Trunk or Treat: Pumpkin Decoration, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. All supplies are provided.
- Oct. 17-4-H Class: Photography, \$5, ages: 8-18, 1-2:30 p.m. Learn the tips and tricks to create beautiful photographs using cell phones and digital SLR cameras. Participants will have optional assignments to complete before the next meeting.
- Oct. 18-Teen Murder Mystery Camp, 6-7 p.m., ages 12-18. There's been a murder! Work with the Grundy County Coroner's Office and learn how to evaluate a crime scene straight from the professionals.
- Oct. 20-Dungeons and Dragons, 5-7 p.m. Gather your party and venture forth into the world of Dungeons and Dragons! Pre Made character sheets and dice will be provided. No past experience necessary.
- Child Programs**
- Toddler Time every Thursday in October, 10-11 a.m. Caregiver must accompany their child during program.
- Oct. 13-Kids Can Cook. Halloween Edition, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Prepare healthy snacks inspired by the season and enjoy spooky treats that are both nutritious and delicious. This instructor lead program introduces children to the basic skills of food preparation and cooking. Children grade 1st- 5th, 20 children maximum.
- Oct. 15-Trunk or Treat. Decorate a pumpkin, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. All supplies included, one per child, ages 3-12.
- Registration is required for programs. More information can be found at www.fossilridge.org or call 825-458-2187.

School lunch menus

- Oct. 17-21
- R-C High school**
- Monday- chicken alfredo, breadsticks, vegetable, fruit and milk
- Tuesday- taco, refried beans, fruit and milk
- Wednesday- meatloaf, potatoes w/gravy, vegetables, fruit and milk
- Thursday- no lunch, early dismissal
- Friday - no school
- Assorted sandwiches and salad bar available daily.
- R-C-Middle School**
- Monday- cheesy pull apart, broccoli and cheese, fruit and milk
- Tuesday-turkey fritter on a bun, mashed potatoes with gravy, vegetable, fruit and milk
- Wednesday- spaghetti with meat sauce, bread, vegetable, fruit and milk
- Thursday- no lunch, early dismissal
- Friday - no school
- Salad bar for third through fifth grades available daily.
- R-C Elementary School**
- Monday- hot ham and cheese, soup, chips, fruit and milk
- Tuesday- bosco sticks, sweet potato fries, salad, fruit and milk
- Wednesday- walking taco with meat, refried beans, corn, fruit and milk
- Thursday- no lunch, early dismissal
- Friday - no school
- Salad bar for third through fifth grades available daily.

Hearing to prevent stacking of cargo containers

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

A PUBLIC HEARING WILL BE HELD BY THE CITY OF BRAIDWOOD PLANNING AND ZONING MEETING ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2022 AT 7:00 PM AT THE CITY HALL OF BRAIDWOOD, 141 W. MAIN STREET, BRAIDWOOD, IL 60408

THE CITY OF BRAIDWOOD IS PROPOSING TO AMEND THE CITY OF BRAIDWOOD ZONING ORDINANCE TO PROHIBIT THE STACKING OF CARGO CONTAINERS IN ALL ZONING DISTRICTS.

ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN ATTENDING ARE INVITED TO DO SO AND WILL BE GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON SUCH REQUEST CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE CITY OF BRAIDWOOD AT 141 W. MAIN STREET, BRAIDWOOD, IL 60408 (815) 458-2333.

HILLARY BOHAC
CITY CLERK
CITY OF BRAIDWOOD

Published in the Braidwood Journal
Wednesday, Oct. 5 & 12, 2022.

Braidwood accepting bids for waste disposal/recycling

PUBLIC NOTICE

CITY OF BRAIDWOOD
141 W. MAIN ST
BRAIDWOOD, IL 60408

Request for residential garbage, recyclables and yard waste collection proposals

The City of Braidwood is requesting proposals for Solid Waste Collection and Disposal Services including the Collection and Processing of Recyclables and Yard Waste.

Bid packets are available online at www.braidwood.us. The Proposals shall be submitted sealed to the City and identified as a "Proposal" on the envelope and delivered to the City Administrator, City of Braidwood, 141 West Main Street, Braidwood, IL 60408 no later than 12:00 noon on October 25, 2022. Proposals will be unsealed and publicly opened at 1:00 PM on October 26, 2022 at the City of Braidwood Council Chambers Meeting Room, located at 141 West Main Street, Braidwood, IL 60408.

Bids not physically received by the due date and time will be returned, unopened to the firm. Emailed or faxed bids will not be accepted. The bids will then be tabulated by the City and furnished to City Council at its next meeting.

Published in the Braidwood Journal
on Oct. 12 and 19, 2022.

Notice of foreclosure of 180 W. Bodine Ct.

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 12TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY - JOLIET, ILLINOIS

Grundy Bank, Plaintiff vs.
Wesley P. Shats, Nicole M. Shats, Unknown Owners, and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants.
CASE NO. 22 FC 980
180 W. Bodine Court, Braidwood, Illinois 60408

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

The requisite affidavit for publication having been filed, notice is hereby given you, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, defendants in the above entitled cause, that suit has been commenced against you and other defendants in the Circuit Court for the Judicial Circuit by said plaintiff praying for the foreclosure of a certain mortgage conveying the premises described as follows, to wit:

THE SOUTH 167.00 FEET, EXCEPTING THEREFROM THE WEST 260.84 FEET THEREOF, OF THAT PART OF LOT 10 LYING EAST OF THE RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY LEADING TO SHAFT "B" IN DANIEL SMALL'S SUBDIVISION OF THE SOUTH-WEST QUARTER OF SECTION 5, IN TOWNSHIP 32 NORTH, RANGE 9 EAST, AND BEING PART OF SUB-LOT 1 OF SAID LOT 10 AS SHOWN ON THE PLAT OF THE COUNTY CLERK'S RESUBDIVISION OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 5, RECORDED JULY 9, 1897, AS DOCUMENT NUMBER 193441, IN PLAT BOOK 10, PAGES 16 AND 17, EXCEPTING THEREFROM THE COAL AND OTHER MINERALS BENEATH THE SURFACE AND THE RIGHT TO MINE AND REMOVE THE SAME TOGETHER WITH THE SOUTH 146.00 FEET OF LOT 7 BEING PARTS OF SUBLOTS 3 AND 4 OF SAID LOT 7 IN SAID COUNTY CLERK'S RESUBDIVISION LYING WEST OF THE WEST LINE OF VODICKA'S OLD BRAIDWOOD, BEING A SUBDIVISION OF PART OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF SAID SECTION 5, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED DECEMBER 9, 2002 AS DOCUMENT NUMBER R2002-214774, ALL SITUATED IN WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

P.I.N.: 02-24-05-309-068-0000

Said property is commonly known as 180 W. Bodine Dr., Braidwood, IL 60408, and said mortgage was made by Wesley P. Shats and Nicole M. Shats and recorded in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds as Document Number R2019047661 and for other relief; that Summons was duly issued out of the above Court against you as provided by law and that said suit is now pending.

NOW THEREFORE, unless you, the said above named defendants, file your answer to the complaint in the said suit or otherwise make your appearance therein, in the Office of the Clerk of the Court at Will County, on or before November 12, 2022, A DEFAULT MAY BE TAKEN AGAINST YOU AT ANY TIME AFTER THAT DATE AND A JUDGMENT ENTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRAYER OF SAID COMPLAINT.

E-filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit www.illinoiscourts.gov/FAQ/gethelp.asp.

YOU MAY STILL BE ABLE TO SAVE YOUR HOME. DO NOT IGNORE THIS DOCUMENT. By order of the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit, this case is set for Mandatory Mediation on October 5, 2022 at 1:00 p.m., and any subsequent date set by the court, at the Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson St., Joliet, Illinois, Room 441. A lender representative will be present along with a court-appointed mediator to discuss options that you may have and to pre-screen you for a potential mortgage modification. For further information on the mediation process, please see the NOTICE OF MANDATORY MEDIATION on file with the Clerk of the Circuit Court or by contacting the Plaintiff's attorney at the address listed below. YOU MUST APPEAR ON THE MEDIATION DATE GIVEN, OR YOUR RIGHT TO MEDIATION WILL TERMINATE.

This communication is an attempt to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose.

James M. Durkee, Malmquist, Geiger & Durkee LLC, 415 Liberty Street, Morris, Illinois 60450 (815) 942-5072, (815) 942-5073 (fax), Attorney Number 6296297, staff@mglawoffices.com THIS LAW FIRM IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR.

Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, Oct. 12, 19 and 26, 2022.

Free Press Newspapers readers

SOUND-OFF

To voice your opinion 24 hours a day, go to
www.freepressnewspapers.com or call 815-634-0317

Sound-Off is a 24-hour phone line provided to give readers a chance to voice their opinions. Calls may be anonymous.

The Free Press Newspapers reserves the right to edit remarks for taste, length, personal attacks, racism, threatening, calls for boycotts and libel. In cases where the publisher selects not to pub-

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

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

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

Messed up world

SHADOW LAKES—I think we can all agree the world is messed up right now but the Woke White House thinks changing the name of two Battleships and the Atlanta Braves is the answer! Come on man how is this woke agenda going to pay our bills? Eddie

Seeking justice

COAL CITY—Have you or a loved one been bamboozled and deceived using Cryptagio services or working with its owner? You are not alone as hundreds of thousands of dollars have been mis-used, misrepresented, or spent for personal use. Justice will be served!

Cruelty never ends

BRAIDWOOD—Remember Kyle Rittenhouse, the 17-year-old who fatally shot two men during 2020 protests, wounded another with an AR-15 style and was acquitted on all counts? The man wounded by Rittenhouse, who shall remain nameless, suffered two years of death threats and recently sought safety for his family by filing a secret petition to legally change his name. But the justice system failed him once again when his attempt to change his name was exposed mysteriously, courtesy of right-wingers. This is MAGA and its unrelenting, ugly evil when the guilty are not held accountable and innocent bystanders are hounded mercilessly.

Just vote no

BRAIDWOOD—I have yet to find the logic behind approving the Amendment 1 on the ballot on Nov. 8. The Chicago Tribune said not to approve it and Illinois Policy Institute is claiming it will cost Illinois taxpayers over \$2,100 over the next four years. So why would lawmakers even put it on the ballot? It wasn't a change made by the public, it was drafted by lawmakers in Springfield. I'm all for worker's rights but this doesn't make sense because we already have federal laws guaranteeing worker's rights. I don't think they have done a good enough job explaining why it's needed and I think that the people in Springfield who want his passed can't be trusted. Therefore, I am voting no. We can't afford another tax increase to pay for state worker pensions.

Attend so you know

WILMINGTON—In the last couple of months there has been changes made on the board of the Wilmington area Historical society and they are not positive changes by any means. People who are now on the board and are in charge are not abiding by the wishes of the members. They're doing what they want to

do and they do not have the museum and the interest of the museum at heart. Members need to start attending meetings so we can vote and make positive changes because things are getting very bad.

Not once

WILMINGTON—Hey road commissioner, what's the deal? Here we are, middle of October, and portions of Cottage Road in Wilmington Township haven't been mowed once.

Bring it back

WILMINGTON—Since when has burning been approved in the city limits. I stepped outside to let the cat in for the night and there stood my neighbor burning piles of leaves in the dark. Meanwhile, I raked and bagged all my leaves to obey the law. Seems to me if burning is going to happen again, the city should bring back the leaf vac truck. It was a great service for us old timers and the community. I'd like to see my tax dollars put to use in bringing the leaf vac back.

Just a sham

DIAMOND—Climate change disclosures. Have you heard the expression 97% of climate change is real, man-made and dangerous. Al Gore said it so, Barack Obama did too, but that doesn't make it so. Thousands of real scientist believe that humans, cattle, pigs, sheep or horses have passed enough gas whether methane, carbon dioxide or green house gases, to cause or will cause in the future any catastrophic heating or disruption of the earth's climate. The real key that controls our planet's temperature is the mighty sun. No human activity can change that. Global warming is a sham. We haven't seen any warming in 21 years. The world is actually 1.08 degrees cooler than in 1998. Global warming is dead in its tracks. NASA images of the Arctic Polar ice cap on 8/27/12 and 8/14/14 show a growth of 43-63%. Since 2002, ocean temperatures have fluctuated less than one degree Fahrenheit. Our government has spent \$22 billion, taxpayer money. That's \$41,856 every minute to stop global warming. Perhaps the most expensive and lethal sham in American history. All you tree huggers can go hug an oil well. Sharon.

Let stockholders pay

Regarding utility rate increases. Shouldn't their stock holders be asked to receive lower dividends to ease utility bills? The consumers don't receive dividends. If companies want to invest then the stock holders should bear the increases.



Just for votes

BRAIDWOOD—You may have noticed that, per their Facebook site, the city council is considering the installation of a dog park and would like public input on the matter. Isn't that interesting? The city council members are proposing a feel good project at the same time that re-election petitions can be circulated. And believe it or not, they actually want public input. Why didn't they ask for public input when they strapped us taxpayers with a \$1.8 million debt to buy real estate that they are literally giving away? Why didn't they ask for public input when they committed another \$5 million to improve the real estate with taxpayer money? Or when they voted to increase council salaries, or when they increased the administrator's salary, or when they replaced commissioners Hart, Saltzman and Cockream? Why didn't they ask for public input when they vacated a roadway so that hundreds of semi trucks can have an in-town place to park? Oh wait, we did give input on that one, but they went ahead and did what they wanted to do anyway. The list goes on ad nauseam. Don't be fooled. This has nothing to do with public input, transparency or their love of puppies. It has everything to do with re-election.

By the tracks

COAL CITY—All the plants and flowers in the cement planters on South Broadway are so beautiful. Is there any reason why the dividers by the tracks can't be done with something better? They just look like weed beds.

They turn silent

WILMINGTON—My brother and I were wondering what sort of person votes for Marjorie Taylor Greene. I realize stupid people deserve representation, but when the issue is science or technology they need to shut up and butt out.

Penny Lane

How cynical

WILMINGTON—I heard a conservative woman say she didn't care that Herschel Walker paid for an abortion and added she didn't care if he aborted baby bald eagles because Republicans need the Senate. So abortion is OK to save the Senate, but not the life of the mother.

Fall Festival fun

CUSTER PARK—The girls and I sure enjoyed the Fall Festival held on the North Island Park. Perfect weather, perfect setup and perfect event between friends. Thanks Wilmington Chamber and Steve Evans for organizing it. We'll be back next year.

Voters will decide on 'right to unionize' constitutional amendment

Opponents, backers debate the measure's warrants

BY PETER HANCOCK
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois voters will be asked in November to decide whether the right of workers to form unions and engage in collective bargaining should be enshrined in the state constitution.

The first clause of the amendment contains two sentences. The first would establish a "fundamental right to organize and to bargain collectively and to negotiate wages, hours, and working conditions, and to promote their economic welfare and safety at work."

The second would prohibit the state or any local unit of government from enacting "any law that interferes with, negates, or diminishes the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively over their wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment and workplace safety."

The provision is intended to prevent passage of any state

or local "right to work" laws, which prohibit employers from requiring workers to be union members to keep their jobs.

The second clause states that the amendment would be controlling over another part of the constitution that spells out the powers of home rule units of local government, meaning those units of government would still be subject to the amendment.

Lawmakers approved putting the measure on the ballot during the 2021 spring session. The resolution passed both chambers with bipartisan support: 49-7 in the Senate and 80-30 in the House.

Like any constitutional issue, however, there is considerable disagreement over what those words mean and what effects they would have if the amendment is adopted.

The proposal is supported by several large labor unions, but it has drawn opposition from groups such as the Illinois Association of School Boards, the Illinois Chamber of Commerce and the Illinois Manufacturers' Association.

To gather a sense of the arguments for and against the measure, the Illinois Associated Press Media Editors convened an online forum with Joe Bowen, communications director for a Vote Yes for

Workers Rights, the only organized political committee campaigning on the issue. They also spoke with Mailee Smith, director of labor policy and a staff attorney with the Illinois Policy Institute, a conservative think tank that opposes the measure.

Bowen and Smith were asked at the outset what they believe the amendment would mean and the implications of adopting it.

"The workers' rights amendment will guarantee your fundamental rights in the workplace to organize and bargain collectively with your coworkers to negotiate for things like better pay, safer working conditions, and crucially, it will also protect Illinois voters from politicians who try to take away their rights in the future," Bowen said.

He said it gives Illinois workers an opportunity "to vote for themselves on Nov. 8." "It will enshrine protections that most of us are already enjoying while extending protection to workers who don't currently have it," Bowen said.

Smith, on the other hand, asserted that the amendment would apply only to public-sector workers because private-sector workers are already covered by the National Labor

Relations Act, which would supersede any state law or state constitutional provision.

As a result, she argued that it would drive up local property taxes by giving public employee unions power to negotiate a broader range of issues, including "economic welfare," which isn't defined in the amendment or other state law.

"And it's not defined in other similar laws like the National Labor Relations Act," she said. "That could mean things like the expansion of affordable housing or positions on rent abatement could be demanded by government unions."

She also said the provision preempting right-to-work laws could have unintended consequences.

"It prohibits lawmakers, as the people's representatives, from ever enacting reforms or fixes," she said. "So if lawmakers decide down the line, 'Oh, wow, we didn't mean economic welfare to mean all of these broad subjects,' they could never go back and define what economic welfare actually is because they'd be prohibited in the amendment itself from doing that."

Bowen countered that the amendment has nothing to do with taxes but, instead, pro-

tests only the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively in the workplace.

If it were adopted, he said, it would apply uniformly statewide to all workers in both the public and private sectors. He also said it would protect workers from politicians who attempt to enact right-to-work laws, a reference to former Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner, who tried unsuccessfully to push such legislation through the General Assembly.

As a follow-up, the two were asked to identify what rights workers would have under the amendment that they don't already have under existing law.

Bowen said the amendment would protect existing rights and extend them to "hundreds of thousands" of workers who aren't covered under existing law. He said it's important to guarantee bargaining rights now and into the future, considering "we spend almost half of our lives in the workplace."

"Whether or not you have the ability to earn a good living, to stay safe on the job, it really impacts every part of your life," he said. "So making sure that we guarantee these protections in the Illinois Constitution is critically important."

Smith argued that elevating collective bargaining rights to the level of the constitution would put labor agreements beyond the reach of existing statutes that apply to public employee contracts.

"If a teachers union didn't want to have background checks as part of the job application process, the hiring process, they could write that into their contract," she said. "It could keep government union contracts a secret. They could actually void the (Freedom of Information Act) law that requires government union contracts to be open to the public, simply by writing that provision into the contract."

Constitutional amendments have two paths to passage in Illinois. If the measure receives 60 percent of the vote from those voting on the question, it passes. But if it fails to reach the 60 percent threshold on the question but still musters "yes" votes from more than half of those voting in the election, it would still pass.

Election Day is Nov. 8, but early voting has already begun. More information is available at local election authorities.

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Take the chill off with hot buttered rum

We are now over a week in to fall 2022, perhaps you have the Halloween and/or fall decorations up at your house. Before you know it, Thanksgiving will be here, followed by weeks of Christmas functions.

You may have your grandmothers Christmas cookie recipe and mom's pumpkin pie recipe, but do you have a Hot Buttered Rum recipe?

Seriously, you need a good Hot Buttered Rum recipe. One reason that many of us shy away from Hot Buttered Rum is that many of the

recipes online are too labor intensive and are simply overkill in terms of ingredients.

At the end of the day, the only ingredients that need to be in a Hot Buttered Rum are rum, butter, sugar, and your choice of a few familiar holiday spices.

Hot Buttered Rum is not nearly as popular as it was a generation ago. Visit any thrift store in America and you will find a selection of old mugs from the 60's and 70's with the words "Hot Buttered Rum" printed on the side.

The fascination with this drink goes back further than that. In fact, this love affair began over 200 years ago in the Colonial US. The ingredients in Hot Buttered Rum are representative of the trade routes of the time, all coming together in a delicious warming drink.



THE SUNDAY COCKTAIL
Brian Rung

One place that Hot Buttered Rum has remained popular is New Orleans. Mardi Gras is held during a season that can resemble what most of know as winter, and some years it will be rainy, windy, and even downright cold.

Every bar and restaurant in New Orleans will have their own take on Hot Buttered Rum on the menu for the patrons that come in out of the cold.

It may not be the first drink that you think of when you think of New Orleans, but if you find yourself there in the fall or winter, order a Hot Buttered Rum. You will be pleasantly surprised.

We will start with the butter. Use a "soft" butter, preferably real butter. Real butter melts into the drink leaving a warm, rich texture. Sometimes margarine and other altered butter substitutes leave an odd taste when melted, and will not give the consistency that you need.

The ideal sugar in Hot Buttered Rum is brown sugar, or demerara sugar. Cane sugar can be used, but it lacks the depth and the complexity of darker sugars.

The right sugar will melt into the butter leaving you with a perfect butterscotch/caramel flavor. A good rule of thumb for Hot Buttered Rum is to use "baking" spices as opposed to sugar from a packet that is meant for tea or coffee.

Speaking of baking spices, this one calls for both cinnamon and nutmeg. Don't skimp on either one, especially the nutmeg. After all, nutmeg is one of those spices that "tastes like Christmas" and also hap-

pens to pair well with aged rum.

Vanilla extract is extremely potent, start with a few drops and work your way up from there. The vanilla notes should complement the other spices, not overpower them.

Allspice is also potent, so go easy. Don't skip the allspice though, I promise you will miss it if it's not there.

Last but not least, the rum. Any dark rum will work in the Hot Buttered Rum, but some will work better than others. Dark Jamaican rum is best suited for Hot Buttered Rum, look for Appleton Estate, Myer's Original Dark, or Coruba.

Aged demerara rums will also work, such as El Dorado 12 Year, or Pusser's Navy Rum which is a blend of demerara and Jamaican rums.

Steer clear of light rum, as well as high octane over-proof rums in this one.

Keep the preparation simple. Start with a warm mug, add the butter and spices. Mix or muddle the spices into the butter, it's even ok to partially melt the butter at this point.

Once the spices and butter are mixed, add the rum. Give it a quick stir, then top with hot (but not boiling) water.

Hot Buttered Rum is built and served in a preheated tempered mug.

Combine in mug:
1 small slice soft butter
1 teaspoon brown sugar
1 dash ground cinnamon
1 dash ground nutmeg
1 dash ground allspice
Vanilla extract to taste (start with 2-3 drops)
Muddle spices and butter in mug

Add 2 oz. dark rum
Add 5 oz. hot water
Stir and serve
Until next week, enjoy responsibly.

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Close-up hawk wins September photo contest

A crystal clear closeup of a red-tailed hawk netted Shorewood resident Joe Viola a win in the Forest Preserve District of Will County's Preserve the Moment photo contest.

Viola's photo won the month of September after judges selected the top five photos from submissions and members of the public chose it as the best shot of the month. Viola snapped the photo at Hammel Woods preserve in Shorewood.

"I was pulling into the back lot by the river and saw the hawk swoop down and grab a rabbit alongside the road," he said. "I wasn't able to get my camera out the window fast enough to get a shot of it on the ground and it took off and flew into a nearby tree. I parked the truck and was able to get out and get close enough to watch and get some amazing shots of it."

The four other finalists were: Sally Knudson of Channahon for a photo of a



Courtesy photo by: Joe Viola

SHOREWOOD RESIDENT Joe Viola won September's portion of the Forest Preserve District of Will County's Preserve the Moment photo contest with this shot of a red-tailed hawk at Hammel Woods. The contest continues with monthly winners through December.

Demand for beef, pork expected to grow

BY DANIEL GRANT
FARMWEEK

Jeff Simmons, president and CEO of Elanco Animal Health, believes plant-based meat will have its place in the market for years to come.

But it certainly doesn't appear to be a major threat to the livestock industry at the checkout aisle.

Simmons projects worldwide demand for animal protein will continue to grow. And, he believes the livestock industry is poised to help address some of the world's top challenges, including hunger.

"The three big issues right now are food insecurity, a global health crisis and climate," Simmons said during the Agri-Pulse Ag Outlook Forum in Kansas City on Sept. 26. "Animals are connected to all three. I believe they're the missing piece to some of the world's biggest problems right now."

About 60% of consumers around the world aren't getting

enough calories, leading to food insecurity, or they're getting the wrong calories, which is contributing to health issues, according to Simmons.

Boosting animal protein output addresses both those issues by reducing food insecurity and increasing the availability of healthy protein choices.

"Animal protein is one of the hottest food segments the last three years, with 50% growth the last 10 years," Simmons said. "You can't disconnect consumer choice, calories or the climate."

Sales of plant-based meat, conversely, could stay flat through 2022 and remain about 1% of the total protein market through 2027, according to Simmons.

Top consumer preferences when choosing their protein include taste, cost and nutrition, he noted.

"Consumers are starting to vote (at the food checkout lane)," Simmons said. "Meat is on demand."

Erin Borror, vice president

of economic analysis for the U.S. Meat Export Federation, noted U.S. beef and pork exports reached a record \$18.7 billion in 2021 and could push \$20 billion this year.

"Beef exports have surpassed \$1 billion six of the last seven months. It really has been demand driven," Borror said. "We have lots of opportunities."

The U.S. could see even stronger demand for red meat as the world's top exporter of pork, the European Union, is projected to reduce output this year by nearly 5% due to disease outbreaks in its herd and policy to reduce animal numbers on farms.

"It's critical to have a diverse export base," said Borror, who noted U.S. farmers must be proactive to maintain their premier animal health status. "That's part of what continues to offer us opportunities as we look ahead."

Simmons also views climate challenges as an opportunity for the livestock industry.

"With a carbon market, it increases opportunities for ag," he said. "Climate-neutral cattle farms are achievable by 2030."

But to get there, he said farmers must do more than tell their story.

"We need action plans on farms," he said. "Climate-neutral farming can happen. I see us changing the game."

This story was distributed

green heron with its neck outstretched at McKinley Woods.

Greg Winkelmann of Romeoville for a picture of a ruby-throated hummingbird hovering near a blazing star in bloom at Hidden Oaks Preserve.

Les Stevens of Joliet for a photo of the mist at Hadley Valley preserve.

Joe Viola for waddling wood ducks at Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve.

The contest continues through December with monthly winners and overall winners will be picked in January via Facebook voting. Prizes, funded by The Nature Foundation of Will County, range from \$75 gift cards for monthly winners to \$500 for first place in the overall contest.

For contest rules and submission instructions, visit ReconnectWithNature.org. To view all photo contest entries, visit the District's Flickr account, Flickr.com/WillCoForests.

Garden Club to meet

Have an interest in gardening? Then consider joining the Wilmington Garden Club.

The club's next regular meeting will be 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 19 at the Wilmington Park District, 315 N. Water St.

Meetings are open to all visitors.

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First United Methodist to host annual pork dinner

The First United Methodist Church will be hosting its annual roast pork dinner on Saturday, Oct. 22, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

It will be held at the church on 401 E. Kahler Rd., Wilmington. The meal will

include roast pork, stuffing, potatoes, green beans, oriental slaw and desserts.

A free will offering can be made to benefit local charities and a silent auction will take place for The Caring Closet of Wilmington.

When was your last mammogram?



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OBITUARIES

Virgil Clayton Flener

 **BRAIDWOOD**—Virgil Clayton Flener, 71, of Braidwood, passed away unexpectedly, Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 at Morris Hospital.

Born Sept. 21, 1951 in New Albany, IN, he was the son of Delmer Clayton and Irene Grace (nee Owen) Flener. He was a retired Veteran of the United States Navy, serving during Desert Shield. Virgil retired from Exelon Corporation after many years of employment. After retirement he enjoyed driving around in his Mustang, fishing, and riding his bicycle.

Surviving are his wife of 49 years, Barbara Ann (nee Kuh) Flener, of Braidwood, who he married July 13, 1973 in Virginia; two children, Joshua (Alison) Flener and Michelle Flener, both of North Texas; three grandchildren: Clayton, Caitlin and Lillian; one great-grandson, Colton; two brothers, William (Tina) Flener, of Corydon, IN and Lloyd (Janet) Flener,



of Indiana; one sister, Carol Kinser, of Corydon, IN and numerous nieces, nephews, and their families.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Cremation rites will be accorded.


Memorial visitation for Virgil was held at the R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory in Braidwood. Inurnment immediately followed at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations to the American Heart Association would be appreciated.

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

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

Doyle Daugherty

 **STREATOR**—Doyle Ray Daugherty, 73, of Streator, formerly of Wilmington and Braidwood, passed away Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022 at his residence.

Born Nov. 30, 1948 in Shreveport, LA, Doyle was a son of Oliver Daugherty and Katie (Owens) Ferguson. He was raised in Shreveport until relocating to Lockport, IL. Doyle then enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, serving honorably from 1969 to 1971. On Dec. 19, 1970, he married Aliene Louise Porterfield at the White Chapel in Las Vegas, NV.

Doyle worked at US Steel in Joliet for many years, and retired from Case International Harvester as a millwright. He was also an entrepreneur who owned and operated Continental Amusements from 1982 to 1995, during which time he owned The Mar Theater in Wilmington. Doyle was a member of the A.F. & A.M. Lodges in both Joliet and Wilmington, and was also a past member of the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce.

Doyle had many hobbies, including jukeboxes, playing pinball, and movies. He loved visiting Disney World with his family and going for rides on his Honda Goldwing motorcycle,



but Doyle was happiest when he was with the love of his life and "Baby," Aliene.

Survivors include his wife of 51 years, Aliene, and their two children, Bridget "Mouthie" and Adam (Jessica); five grandchildren: Jacob (Brittany), Zakary (Alex), Scott II, Aiddan, and Kennedy; two great-grandchildren, Bentley and Delanie; as well as one sister and brother-in-law, and several nieces and nephews.

Doyle was preceded in death by his parents, his step-mother and step-father, two brothers, one sister, one nephew, and his mother-in-law.

The family will receive friends on Thursday, October 13, 2022 at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd., in Wilmington from 11 a.m. until the time of Masonic Funeral Rites at 1 p.m. Burial with full military honors will immediately follow in Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood.

Family and friends are encouraged to visit www.BaskervilleFuneral.com to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Doyle's memorial page via social media.

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

Leslee Nelson

SOUTH WILMINGTON—Leslee Ann Nelson (nee Pomatto), 76, of South Wilmington, passed away peacefully with her family by her side, Tuesday, Oct. 4, 2022 at her home.

Born March 4, 1946 in Joliet, she was the daughter of Francis "Bud" Secondo and Cele Lorraine (nee Cinotto) Pomatto. She graduated from Coal City High School with the class of 1964. She was a member of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church in Coal City. Leslee was a dental assistant for most of her life. She and her husband, Dr. James A. Nelson, operated a dental office in Coal City for many years. After Jim's retirement she worked for Dr. Kevin Gallagher's dental office in Plainfield, where she eventually retired.

Christmas was Leslee's most favorite holiday. She always enjoyed crafting homemade Christmas gifts and holiday baking, but most of all she cherished the time spent with her grandchildren making G-Shaft candy.

Surviving are her husband, Dr. James A. Nelson, who were together 42 years and mar-



ried for 29 of those years; two daughters, Nicole (John) Corneglio and Marti (David) Bafia, both of South Wilmington; three grandchildren: Joey Corneglio, Gavin and Marissa Bafia; brother-in-law, Richard (the late Linda) Nelson, of Oregon; and dear friends, Kathy Brown and JoAnn Burns, along with many other close friends.

Cremation rites will be accorded. A Memorial service was held at the R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory in Braidwood. Inurnment will be private in Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Wilmington.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in her name directed to Lightways Hospice, Parkinson's Foundation, or the American Diabetes Association would be appreciated.

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

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

Kenneth Nelson

JOLIET—Kenneth Wayne Nelson, 82, of Joliet and formerly of Wilmington, passed away unexpectedly on Thursday, Oct. 6, 2022 at Ascension St. Joseph Medical Center in Joliet.

Born Dec. 9, 1939 in Joliet, Kenneth Wayne was the son of Wayne and Irma (Tenn) Nelson. He was raised and educated in Wilmington and graduated from Wilmington High School with the class of 1958. Ken attended Quincy University on a baseball scholarship before transferring to Lewis University, where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Education. Ken taught math at Assumption Parochial School in Coal City, before returning to Wilmington to work in the family business. It was in 1967, that Ken, along with his father, transitioned their business which originated with milk, a chicken hatchery, bottled gas delivery, a Maytag dealership and a Royal Blue grocer into Nelson's Furniture. This new offering in addition to carrying furniture held a Zenith TV dealership, Sherwin Williams Paint and carpeting. Today Nelson's Furniture continues to be owned and operated by the family going into the fourth generation, a legacy in which Ken was very proud.

Ken loved baseball, was a fan of the Chicago Cubs, and continued to play baseball and softball into his later years on the Merchants Team. He was an avid card player and throughout the years could be found playing cards at The Corner on most afternoons. Ken enjoyed to golf, and took pleasure in traveling out West, particularly to Las Vegas, Flagstaff and Jackson Hole, which were some of his favorite destinations.

Survivors include his wife, Debbie (nee VanGampler), who he married July 19, 1984; two sons, Steve (Tina) Nelson and Mark Nelson, both of Wilmington; two grandsons, Ryan (Annie) Nelson, of Channahon and Aaron



(Sami) Nelson, of Manhattan; two great-granddaughters, Ryanne and Taylee; two sisters, Sis Rodgers, of Avondale, AZ and Barbara Hansen, of Wilmington; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law: Dennis (Cecilia) Rowan, of Mundelein, IL; Sherrie Wheat, of Plainfield; Lorrie Harvey, of Escondido, CA and Al (Toni) VanGampler, of Plainfield; many niece, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews, and his best friend of many years, John Nunley, as well as his faithful canine companion, Snickers.

Ken was preceded in death by his parents, Wayne and Irma Nelson; two daughters, Julie and Diane, and his father-in-law and mother-in-law, Emanuel and Evelyn VanGampler.

The family will receive friends for a memorial visitation at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd. in Wilmington on Thursday, Oct. 13, 2022 between the hours of 4 and 8 p.m. Funeral services will follow Friday morning, Oct. 14, 2022 at 11 a.m. in St. Rose Catholic Church, 604 S. Kankakee St. in Wilmington. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated with Reverend Sebastian Gargol presiding and Deacon Jay Plese assisting.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Ken's memory to Kuzma Care Cottage, 635 S. Main St., Wilmington, IL 60481 or to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, www.stjude.org, which was an organization special to Ken's heart.

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

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

Morris Hospital updates visitor, mask guidelines

Morris Hospital has made another step toward returning to pre-COVID visiting guidelines. Effective as of Oct. 7, hospitalized patients may have up to two visitors at a time, age 12 or older, during 8 a.m.-7 p.m. visiting hours. Prior to this most recent update, visitors were restricted to age 18 or older.

Under the updated visiting guidelines, COVID-19 positive patients are now permitted to have one designated visitor for the duration of their stay.

Patients coming to the hospital for outpatient surgery, endoscopy, cath lab and other procedures are permitted up to two support persons.

In accordance with the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) updated recommendations for healthcare providers,

Morris Hospital has also updated its mask policy. At this time, universal masking will only be required inside Morris Hospital and all Morris Hospital patient care facilities, including physician offices, when the Grundy County "Community Transmission" level is high. When the Grundy County Community Transmission level is substantial, moderate, or low, masks will be optional.

As Community Transmission levels are updated weekly by the CDC, signs will be posted at the entrance to each Morris Hospital facility indicating whether masks are optional or required based on current community transmission levels.

Officials at Morris Hospital emphasize that the CDC's Community

"Transmission" level is not the same as Community "Risk Level" and that it is possible for a community to be at a low or moderate "risk" level but a high "transmission" level, in which case masks would be required. Morris Hospital's masking requirement could change weekly depending on the current transmission level.

As has always been the hospital's visiting policy, anyone currently showing signs of illness should not visit or accompany a patient.

Current visitor guidelines are posted at all times on the hospital website under morrisrhospital.org/visitors. With the approaching flu season, it is recommended to check the hospital website for current visiting guidelines before visiting a patient in the hospital.

Morris Hospital's Rhythm of Our Youth returns high schools

Morris Hospital will be offering its free Rhythm of Our Youth cardiac screening at several area high schools this fall, including Coal City High School on Oct. 27. The goal is to identify high school students who may be at risk for sudden cardiac death by screening those who may have undiagnosed cardiac abnormalities.

Rhythm of Our Youth first launched in 2016 as a result of funding provided by generous donors to the Morris Hospital Foundation. Since then, over 8,000 area high school students have been screened through the program.

On the screening day, a team of specially trained volunteers from Morris Hospital perform electrocardiogram (ECG) screenings free of charge to students who have

received parental permission to participate. An electrocardiogram is a non-invasive, painless test that measures the electrical activity of the heart and detects certain heart abnormalities that can lead to sudden cardiac death.

Screenings are typically held during PE class or study hall, depending on student schedules. The test takes about three minutes to complete.

Based on results of the screenings, about three percent of students are referred to their physician for additional follow-up. Typically, less than one percent are found to have a medical problem that requires cardiac intervention. Results are sent home to the student's parents and are not shared with the school.

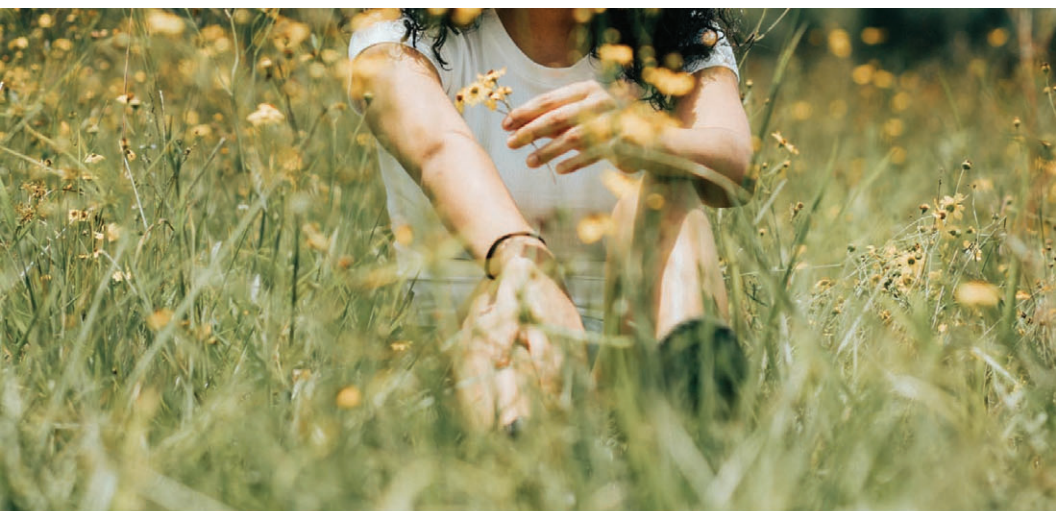
Parents who wish to have

their child screened should complete an electronic consent form prior to the screening day by going to www.morrisrhospital.org/rhythmofouryouth.

Reed-Custer and Wilmington high schools are on the rotation for the 2023-2024 school year.

Sudden cardiac death claims more than 2,000 lives of children and adolescents in the United States each year. Most victims of sudden cardiac death have had underlying heart conditions that could have been detected through a simple ECG.

For more information or to volunteer at a Rhythm of Our Youth screening event, go to www.morrisrhospital.org/rhythmofouryouth.



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Illinois near the top for best health care

BY KEVIN BESSLER
THE CENTER SQUARE

A new report on the best and worst states for health care gives favorable reviews for Illinois.

The financial website MoneyGeek analyzed a wide array of statistics, from health outcomes, to health access and cost to determine how states rank in terms of health care.

MoneyGeek also consulted health industry experts to understand some of the potential choices states are making to affect their local health care systems for better or worse.

The report ranked Illinois as the 11th best state for health care with a score of 80.8.

"Illinois ranked 17th for outcomes, 21st for costs and 16th for access," researcher Doug Milnz said.

Illinois recently dispersed \$49 million in federal funding for health care programs and initiatives around the state. Officials said the money will be used in a wide range of programs that aim to keep Illinoisans healthy.

The report said the top three states for health care were Hawaii (99), Iowa (95.4), and Colorado (91.6).

States that fare worse on

MoneyGeek's health care rankings tend to have higher costs for less access and higher rates of medical conditions like diabetes and obesity. The worst states for health care are concentrated regionally, with 8 of the 10 clustered in the South and Southeast.

The report said West Virginia has the worst health care in the nation. Though West Virginia ranks No. 6 for accessibility, it has the worst health outcomes in the country and the highest average private health insurance premiums in the U.S. at \$8,546, with 48% of its population on public health care.

The good and bad of coffee

BY OSF HEALTHCARE

Did you know that 62% of Americans drink coffee every single day? The strong, fragrant brew is a favorite among young and old, and is enjoyed for both its flavor and caffeine boost.

However, in addition to the caffeine buzz, coffee also contains good nutrition and may provide other health benefits.

Coffee contains several vitamins, minerals and other nutrients, including Riboflavin and Niacin, B vitamins that are important for energy and other functions in the body.

It also contains Magnesium, a mineral with many roles, such as helping the heart and nerves to work properly and building bones. Potassium, which is important for the muscles, nerves and kidneys is also present as well as antioxidants called

polyphenols which stop harmful chemical reactions in the body.

In addition to its nutrition content, some studies have found that coffee may protect the liver and may reduce the risk for heart disease, Parkinson's disease, diabetes, gallstones and cancer.

Coffee does contain a large amount of caffeine. That may cause problems for some, including anxiety, irregular heartbeat and difficulty sleeping.

The dietary guidelines for Americans recommend 400 milligrams of caffeine or less per day, which is equal to three to five cups of coffee.

Pregnant and breastfeeding women should limit coffee to two cups or 200 milligrams of caffeine per day because of possible risks to the baby.

In addition, children and teens, those with reflux, uncontrolled high blood pressure or problems with sleeping

should avoid or limit it.

It may also be wise to avoid or limit drinking unfiltered coffee (like French press) and eating whole coffee beans because they contain a compound that has been connected with higher triglyceride and cholesterol levels.

While coffee may have health benefits, specialty coffee drinks can be significant sources of extra calories, saturated fat and added sugar. You may be surprised by the calories and sugar found in just one drink. A French vanilla latte from Dunkin' with whole milk: 330 calories, 5 grams (g) saturated fat and 31 grams added sugars. A frozen hazelnut swirl: 680 calories, 6 grams saturated fat and 119 grams added sugars.

At Starbucks (Grande drinks) a white chocolate mocha: 430 calories, 13 grams saturated fat and 53 grams sugars or a caramel frappuccino: 380 calories, 10 grams sat-

urated fat and 54 grams sugars.

While drinks like the ones above can be enjoyed as a special treat, it is a good idea to choose them less often. Instead, try a latte, cappuccino or macchiato with skim or almond milk (70-130 calories per medium cup).

Ask for added cocoa or cinnamon in your drink to give the flavor a boost.

Ask for sugar-free syrup if you want a shot of sweetness in your drink or request one pump of regular syrup instead of two or three pumps.

Order coffee black and add your own sugar packets. One packet of sugar equals 4 grams of sugar.

CC United Methodist to host blood drive

Coal City United Methodist Church, located at 6805 E. McArdle Road in Coal City, will host a Community Blood Drive in conjunction with Versiti Blood Center on Wednesday, Nov. 2, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Anyone willing to donate blood can contact Karen Hart

at 708-217-5808 to schedule a preferred time or you may register online at www.versiti.org.

Walk-ins are also welcome, but appointments are recommended. Please bring a photo ID and eat a good meal before donating. Please consider giving blood - one pint of blood can save up to 3 lives.

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Price at the pump rises

Will gas prices rise or fall this week? Your guess is as good as any as the local price per gallon, which was falling, was triggered by world events.

Average gas prices increased 25.9 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$4.40/g, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices are 38.4 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 95.8 cents per gallon higher than a year ago.

Braidwood area stations averaged \$4.03/g Monday, according to Gasbuddy.com, while the highest price in the area was \$4.49/g at a Wilmington station on Lorenzo Road. Coal City area stations were \$4.17/g as of Monday morning while in Morris they were \$4.19 and in Joliet jumping to \$4.49.

"With OPEC+ deciding to cut oil production by two million barrels a day, we've seen oil prices surge 20%, which is the primary factor in the national average rising for the third straight week," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois was priced at \$3.48/g Monday while the most expensive was \$9.99/g, a difference of \$6.51/g.

The national average price of gasoline has risen 13.8 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.92/g. The national average stands 67.0 cents per gallon higher than a year ago.

"Some of the refinery snags that have caused prices to surge in the West and Great Lakes appear to be improving, with prices in those two regions likely to inch down, even with OPEC's decision, as the drop in wholesale prices has offset the rise due to the production cut. But where gas prices didn't jump because of refinery issues, they will rise a total of 10-30 cents due to oil's rise, and some areas are certainly seeing the jump already," DeHaan said.

"For now, I don't expect much improvement in prices for most of the country, with California and the Great Lakes as the exception, with down-drafts likely in the days and weeks ahead."



Molly is looking for a home

MEET MOLLY, she is approximately 2-years-old and is a lab mix. She is house trained and great on a leash. Adoption fee includes spay, rabies shot, distemper, microchip, heartworm test and fecal exam. Please contact Hopeful Tails Animal Rescue if you are interested today at hopefultailsadoptions@outlook.com

Scotty McCreery to perform at the Rialto

Country singer Scotty McCreery has been booked for a Jan. 28 appearance at the Rialto Square Theatre in Joliet, on Friday, January 27 at 8 P.M. Tickets go on sale Friday, October 14 at 10 AM.

Tickets went on sale for the 8 p.m. performance. Scotty McCreery's current album "Same Truck" contains his No. 1 RIAA gold-certified singles "You Time" and "Damn Strait," and his current single "It Matters to Her."

McCreery co-wrote 10 of the 12 songs on "Same Truck." An expanded edition, Same Truck: The Deluxe Album, will be released on Nov. 18, with six additional new songs.

He achieved new heights by earning three back-to-back No. 1 hits from his last album "Seasons Change," which debuted at No. 1 on the

Billboard Country Album chart: the RIAA Double Platinum-certified "Five More Minutes," the RIAA Platinum-certified "This Is It," which stayed at the top of the charts for two weeks, and RIAA Gold-certified "In Between."

McCreery won the 10th season of "American Idol" in 2011; was named the ACM New Artist of the Year in 2011; won the CMT Music Award for Breakthrough Video of the Year and more.

The North Carolina native released his first book, Go Big or Go Home: The Journey Toward the Dream, in 2016. His song "Five More Minutes" inspired a popular movie of the same name which aired on the Hallmark Movies & Mysteries Network during November-December 2021.

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The use of air conditioners takes a toll

Dear EarthTalk: Is it true that as the planet warms, it will be the huge demand for and use of air conditioning that will push us all over the edge of cataclysmic warming?
— Joseph Still, New York, NY

As innocuous as it may seem, the common household air conditioner is actually a significant contributor to climate change!

According to researchers from the Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and Xerox's Palo Alto Research Center (PARC), almost four percent of global greenhouse gas emissions are the result of air conditioning use alone.

Even more worrisome, that number is expected to grow. AC usage, especially in countries like India, China and Indonesia, has been increasing steadily as average yearly income increases.

In an analysis by the International Energy Agency, it was found that AC use would likely triple by 2050.

AC usage is of course problematic, but it is also unavoidable, so what can we do? For starters, there are definitely improvements that could be made with regard to the engineering of AC units. Interestingly enough, the technology is quite archaic—in fact, it is nearly the same as it was 100 years ago.

Many air conditioners use a vapor compression cycle to cool the air inside your home. It is a system that requires refrigerants—chemical compounds like chlorofluorocarbons and hydrochlorofluorocarbons—to accomplish the cooling effect. However, most of these refrigerants actually destroy the ozone layer.

Thankfully, more modern air conditioners avoid the use chlorofluorocarbons and hydrochlorofluorocarbons, opting for less destructive refrigerant alternatives. There are dozens available that do not harm the ozone layer; however, they are still considered greenhouse gasses.

Despite these improvements, modern air



conditioners will still need a lot of re-engineering if we hope to ever make them carbon neutral. They are very inefficient, not just use, but in their production and transportation, too.

According to the NREL and Xerox PARC study, of the 1,950 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO2) released into the atmosphere as a result of AC use every year, only 531 million tons are associated with actually cooling the air; 599 million tons of CO2 are associated with the dehumidification process, and 820 million tons are due solely to leakage during production and transportation.

Fortunately, there are a few worthwhile prototypes being tested today that may finally change the AC game for good.

The startup Transaera has been testing what they call metal organic fibers (MOFs), a type of manufactured, highly porous material, that is capable of passively pulling moisture from the air.

Since almost half the energy usage of a traditional AC unit is spent on dehumidification, passive dehumidification would translate into huge energy savings, and therefore, huge carbon savings as well.

Another startup known as Blue Frontier has been working on an AC unit that uses liquid desiccants (drying agents) to passively dehumidify the air that passes through it. In addition, the machine only uses refrigerants to regulate a heat pump that maintains the salt concentration of the desiccants.

This vital change in design separates contact between the air passing through the machine and the refrigerant itself, thereby preventing refrigerant leakage. The end result is an AC unit that contributes 85-87 percent less carbon emissions than traditional AC units!

EarthTalk® is a 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. To donate, visit earthtalk.org. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.

Barges getting stuck

The unusually low water level in the Mississippi River is causing barges to get stuck in mud and sand, disrupting river travel for watercraft.

A lack of rainfall this past summer has left the river approaching record low levels in some areas from Illinois south to Louisiana. The U.S. Coast Guard reports at least eight groundings of barges in the past week alone.

Officials said it is bad timing during harvest when corn and soybeans need to be transported south.

Spaghetti dinner planned for Saturday

The St. Rose Knights of Columbus will hold its annual spaghetti dinner on Saturday, Oct. 15 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the St. Rose School gym, 620 S. Kankakee St., Wilmington.

Spaghetti with meat

sauce, garlic bread, desserts, coffee and lemonade will be served. Carry-outs will be available.

Cost is a free-will offering to help the Knights with community service projects.

Elwood Church to host fundraiser dinner

Elwood Community Church will be hosting a Fundraiser Dinner on Saturday, Oct. 15, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. It will be held at 101 N. Chicago Street, in Elwood.

Pot roast and veggies, coleslaw, beets, and assorted

desserts will be served. Tickets at the door are \$15 for adults and \$10 for children (under 12) Carry out available. There will be a silent auction during the dinner so be sure to place a bid.



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The Wilmington Coalition for a Healthy Community (WCHC) is accepting applications for a full-time Coordinator to implement grant-related strategies to reduce underage drinking and youth misuse of opioids and prescription drugs. Requires 2 years of experience in a prevention-related field, with special focus on communications and youth-related work. Bachelor's degree is preferred, but not required. The ideal candidate will be comfortable in working with middle and high school youth in classroom and community settings. Strong communications (oral and written) and computer skills will also be important for grant-related projects that include organizing meetings and assemblies, developing messages and signage, working on campaigns, in-person presentations and webinars, and collaborating with local stakeholders to reduce substance use/mental health disorders among youth. Salary starts at \$35,000, with a flexible schedule (some nights and weekends). Benefits include paid holidays and vacation. Start date: November 14, 2022. Interested candidates should send a resume and cover letter to: WCHC, 1095 S. Water St., Suite F, Wilmington IL 60481; info@wilmington-coalition.org For more info about the Wilmington coalition, please visit our website, https://www.wilmington-coalition.org or call 815-476-1660.

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Website to keep public informed on I-80

The Illinois Department of Transportation has launched a new website, I80will.org, to provide the public with the latest information on the \$1.2 billion reconstruction of Interstate 80 through Will County.

“Our commitment to fixing the I-80 corridor involves one of the most complex stretches of interstate in the entire country,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. The new website, I80will.org, will provide the public the latest information on how the project is progressing and what they can do to detour around it.

The website includes updates on construction impacts on the public, reports, newsletters and answers to frequently asked questions, construction schedule information and timeline for each

portion of the project, photo and video galleries to view construction progress and more.

As one of the country’s three coast-to-coast interstates, I-80 through Joliet and Will County carries approximately 80,000 vehicles a day, about 25% of which are trucks.

Advance work on I-80 started last year with a \$41.7 million project to replace the eastbound bridges over Hickory Creek, Richards Street and Rowell Avenue/Canadian National Railroad, and westbound over Richards Street, in Joliet, Rockdale and New Lenox, while widening eastbound I-80 from Gardner Street to Rowell Avenue.

Once the eastbound improvements are completed later this year, similar improvements will begin in the westbound direction.

Calling out Gov. Pritzker on SAFE-T Act

“If we didn’t pass something, we wouldn’t have gotten anything from law enforcement. We wouldn’t have gotten a serious conversation,” claimed Rep. La Shawn Ford (D-Chicago) recently about why the SAFE-T Act was originally written and passed the way it was.

Rep. Ford was speaking about the cash bail provisions within the SAFE-T Act during a public event in suburban Forest Park, according to the Forest Park Review.

Lots of folks on the other side of the negotiations were taking a hard “No” position, so a decision was essentially made to jam the bill through in order to eventually force the other side to the bargaining table.

The cash bail provision is the most discussed aspect of the law. But the original legislation also prevented police

officers from using their body cam footage to write reports. The provision wasn’t designed to be permanent, but was specifically inserted to make the other side adopt a good faith position at the bargaining table. It worked and the provision was removed in a subsequent trailer bill.

The difference between these two topics, of course, is that the end of cash bail has caused big public relations headaches for the Democratic Party in the lead-up to the general election, as state’s attorneys, sheriffs, police chiefs and others have denounced the law in a way that has put the majority party on the defensive. But, the Democrats have such large supermajorities with a new and more favorable legislative district map that they apparently believed they could assume the risk.

Rep. La Ford and others have said privately and publicly that some components of the law will have to be changed. But they are sticking with the overall concepts. And with less than three months before the elimination of cash bail and other provisions of the law take effect, maybe the gambit will work. But it hasn’t come without political trouble for people like Gov. JB Pritzker.

I saw Gov. Pritzker at an

event not long after he refused to answer a question from my associate Isabel Miller about what specific changes he would like to make to the SAFE-T Act. I warned him that, since he agreed the law needed to be changed, Isabel’s question wasn’t going away.

Well, the governor dodged the same question again and again during and after last week’s televised gubernatorial debate, saying only that he wants unspecified “clarifications” to the law.

The governor likely didn’t want to insult the Black Caucus or have any sort of negative impact on the trailer bill discussions by publicly negotiating against his own side. He probably also didn’t want to cave into pressure from disingenuous actors and instead wanted to tough it out through the election and then deal with the issue in the post-election veto session.

Even so, campaigns ought to be about the exchange of ideas and the governor’s refusal to engage deserves to be called out.

Besides, this shouldn’t be that difficult. For example, some are making wild claims about the law’s trespassing language. Hinsdale’s Village President Tom Cauley recently said, according to the Hinsdale Patch, “I guarantee you that

we’re going to find ourselves with people just camped out in parks, and we cannot ask them to leave. They may be in your backyard or in your shed living there.”

Nonsense.

The Illinois Supreme Court’s Implementation Task Force has officially advised law enforcement that they “do have discretion to remove the person from the location of the alleged criminal activity, and then cite and release the person from another location.” Repeated refusals to comply could then easily be interpreted as being a threat, which would allow an arrest.

It just seems to me that tightening up the law’s language to fully reflect the task force’s guidance and resulting inference about arrests would be a no-brainer response to the question about changes he wants to make.

The list of forcible felonies which trigger provisions to hold people without bail could and should also be expanded, which even some proponents are saying behind the scenes.

And so, not long after I challenged Pritzker in my subscriber newsletter to step up, he did finally tell reporters on Friday that he thought former prosecutor state Sen. Scott Bennett’s (D-Champaign) proposed changes were worth a look, but stopped short of endorsing any specifics in the Downstate Democrat’s bill.

Baby steps, I guess.



Rich Miller

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COMET SPORTS

Comet kickers advance in Braidwood regional

The Reed-Custer soccer team advanced through the quarterfinal round of the Class 1A regional Saturday, beating Grace Christian Academy 9-1.

The Comets will host Herscher at 6:30 p.m. tonight with hopes of beating the Tigers and advancing to Saturday's championship at 10 a.m. against either Beecher or Mokena.

Comets Danny Kuban had a sensation match on Saturday, scoring four goals. He was supported by Brady Shultz who contributed three goals while Josh Sprinkles and Logan Leckrone kicked in one each.

Assists were credited to Kuban (2), Leckrone, Wyatt Crater, Jerreck Hirsch and Jayden Bustos.

Goalkeeper Stephen Condrey had two saves for the Comets.

The victory improves the Comets' record to 8-13 overall.

Edged by Clifton

The prelude to regional play was a 2-1 loss to Clifton Central last Thursday.

The lone goal for Reed-Custer was scored by Brady Shultz.

Condrey had four saves.



KICKING THE BALL toward the goal is Comet Conor Kochanny during Saturday's win over Grace Christian Academy in the regionals.

Photo by Zandie Sims



STOPPING THE BALL for Reed-Custer is Tyson Wittium while playing against Grace Christian Academy on Saturday.

Photo by Zandie Sims

Lady Comets spike against breast cancer



SENDING THE BALL OVER the net is Lady Comet Kaylee Tribble playing on Volley for a Cure night at home against Peotone.

Photo by Zandie Sims



SETTING THE BALL to her teammates is Reed-Custer's Adilene Fierro playing against Peotone on Thursday. The Lay Comets held a Volley for a Cure night to raise funds for cancer prevention.

Photo by Zandie Sims



HALIE LAGRANGE bumps the ball over the net for the Lady Comets when they hosted Peotone on Thursday for cancer night.

Photo by Zandie Sims

Two Interstate Eight schools want to join ICE Conference

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

Two Interstate Eight Conference schools looking to join the the Illinois Central Eight Conference are being turned away.

Athletic director Dan Hutchings reported to the Unit 1 Board of Education that discussions were taking place with other ICE Conference schools to consider the addition of Plano and Sandwich high schools.

The ICE Conference was established in 1979 with its first season of competition held during the 2019-2020 school year. ICE is comprised of Coal City, Reed-Custer, Wilmington, Peotone, Herscher, Manteno, Streator and Lisle.

Back in 1979 the three local schools were among the founding members of the Interstate Eight, as was Plano and a few others. Sandwich joined the conference not long after its establishment.

When Coal City, Reed-Custer and Wilmington left the Interstate Eight after 40 years, Plano and Sandwich stayed on and the name stayed with them and the new member districts—and last season those districts joined with the Kishwaukee River Conference for football only partnership that divided the teams into two groups.

Now it looks like Sandwich and Plano are looking to move out of their long standing conference, but it won't be with the ICE.

Unit 1 Superintendent Chris Spencer informed the Board that the ICE Conference principals met and decided not to expand conference membership, "so it's a no go," he said.

Hutchings reported the addition of two schools would allow for a closed football conference and eliminate the difficulty in scheduling non-conference games, and it would strengthen the wrestling and track programs, "by adding quality schools with good programs."

The reasons why the principals turned down the requests from Plano and Sandwich were not disclosed.

Interesting to note is that Sandwich did not field a varsity football team this season due to low participation. In fact there were just 12 players—six juniors and six seniors—interested taking the field for the Indians.

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Greater Grundy County Readers' Choice Awards 2015

Comets score most points yet to stay perfect

BY ERIC FISHER
PUBLISHER

Streator High School did what no other football team has done so far this season. That is to score more than one touchdown against #2 state-ranked (3A) Reed-Custer.

In fact, of the seven teams Reed-Custer has played so far, only two were lucky enough to score a touchdown. They even held Wilmington, with its potent state-caliber offense, to no touchdowns.

While it was a mental victory for the bottom-dwelling Bulldogs (2-5 overall, 1-4 conference), there was no comparison in the end as the Comets blew them away 73-14.

Had this been a playoff game, the Comets would have set a record in Class 3A for most points scored by a team in a game. That's what happens when you have so many weapons you never know who is going to score next.

The Comet faithful waited 7:48 into the first quarter for their team to score. It looked like Jace Christian would be the first to hit pay dirt with a beautiful 65-yard run. But the touchdown was waved off with a penalty flag and Reed-Custer had to try again. Five plays later quarterback Jake McPherson tossed one to a wide open Peyton Bradley to complete a 38-yard score. The two-point conversion run by Lucas Foote made it 8-0.

It wasn't long before Reed-Custer was back in the end zone, this time thanks to Connor Esparza who bolted 12 yards with the ball. The two-point conversion run by



Photo by Eric Fisher

GET 'EM GUNNAR! Reed-Custer lineman Gunnar Berg makes a diving tackle on the Streator ball carrier Friday during a 73-14 victory for the Comets. Berg dropped the Bulldog for a loss of yards.

Christian was good. RCHS 16, Streator 0.

But the visitors kept things interesting by putting together a 13-play drive, including a quarterback keeper for a touchdown to narrow the gap to 16-6.

The second quarter brought 41 points for the Comets. They scored on a 12-yard pass from McPherson to Foote for 12 yards. In short

order the teammates did it again, this time for 35 yards to pull ahead 30-6.

Reed-Custer had a comfortable 36-6 advantage thanks to a pass from McPherson to Brandon Moorman for 54 yards. It was a turning point for the Comets as Moorman turned a simple play into a long-distance sprint into the end zone.

But the Bulldogs were

gruff. The very next play was a quick sideline pass to #2 who sprinted 99 yards for the score. It was 36-14 but that would be the end of their offense as the Comet defense doubled down to hold them scoreless the rest of the way.

Meanwhile the Comets would build a 57-14 half-time lead with a pair of Christian touchdown runs (60 yards and 2 yards) and a fumble recovery when he ran it 32 yards for a score. Streator finished the night with three turnovers, all

of which the Comets turned into points.

While the Bulldogs had the ball 75 percent of time, they converted on third and long, and fourth and long, situations only 6 of 17 tries. Not once were the Comets in a fourth and long situation and were 5-for-6 when converting on third down.

McPherson's 224 yards passing included a 14-for-19 with four touchdowns night. He also contributed 51 yards on the ground in three

attempts.

Christian led the Comet attack with 122 yards in four carries and 12 yards with 12 receptions. Colin Esparza contributed 74 yards on six carries including a one-yard plunge for a fourth quarter score. Nick Cieslak had four rushes for 19 yards while Zach Cieslak ran in a one yard, third quarter touchdown.

Other Comet ball carriers included Rex Pfeifer (13 yards), Josh Bohac (1), Bradley (13) and Connor Esparza (12).

Streator passed for 273 yards and finished with 85 yards rushing. Compare that to 224 yards passing for RCHS and 304 yards on the ground for 528 total.

Receiving passes for RCHS were Moorman with two catches for 60 yards, Connor Esparza two catches for 57 yards, Lucas Foote three for 49 yards, Bradley two for 46 yards, Christian four for 12 yards and Josh Bohac one for 1 yard.

R-C coach Gavin Johnston was comfortable with the defensive effort, despite giving up a couple of key plays.

Leading the defense was Christian with six tackles. Nick Cieslak was credited with five tackles and one assist while Zack Cieslak and Moorman were in on 4.5 stops.

Connor Esparza, Gavin Bruciak and Rex Pfeifer contributed three tackles each. Having two tackles each were Josh Bohac, Travis Bohac, Johnathon McLean and Bradley. Other tackles were made by Kody Marschner, Gunnar Berg, Colin Fitzpatrick and Lorne Wilkins.

The undefeated Comets head to Coal City on Friday to take on the 5-2 Coalers.



Photo by Eric Fisher

UPLIFTING TACKLE - Reed-Custer senior Connor Esparza (11) gets under a Streator receiver to make a solo tackle on Friday.



Photo by Eric Fisher

TOUCHDOWN CATCH - Reed-Custer junior Peyton Bradley reigns in the ball to for a 38-yard reception on Friday against Streator.

Fresh-Soph Comets earn the win over Bulldogs



SPEEDING TO THE OUTSIDE for the fresh-soph Comets who won 34-22 over Streator on Friday is Kris Budick.



FRESH-SOPH ATTACK - Reed-Custer defenders Landen Robinson (8) and Lucas Vaughn (55) put a big hit on the Streator ball carrier during fourth quarter action of Friday's junior varsity game. The Comets won the contest 34-22.