

# BRAIDWOOD JOURNAL

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2025 | A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER • (815) 476-7966



MS. PACHOLSKI'S second grade students at Reed-Custer Elementary School have provided Braidwood Journal readers with directions on how to cook a turkey. They also extend a Happy Thanksgiving to all. Students include (from left, kneeling) Maci Bohac, Sloan Davis, Remi Giffin, Rowan Albin, Amelia Wohead, Jean Schaffer, Grace Coronelli, Porter Hammack, Greysun Gargo, Carmen De Loera, Paisley Morgan and Amelia Leiterman. Standing are Bentlee Lagasse, Kayla Gonzalez, Calvin Wadsworth, Owen Beasley, Avery Krueger, Liam Garza, Oliver Zarecki, Ember Childers, Emma Muilenburg, Belva Schaffer and Levi Wilkins.

## Second graders give directions for cooking a holiday turkey

In preparation for the Thanksgiving holiday the following turkey recipes were submitted by second grade students in Ms. Natalie Pacholski class at Reed-Custer Elementary.

What you should know is each submission, with some writing prompts from their teacher, appears as written by the students who are just learning the art of writing and these recipes are 'not' kitchen tested.

**By Oliver** - The first step in making a turkey is to hunt a turkey. Next, you have to stufe the turkey. Stuff the turkey with sowercrem. Turn the oven to 70 dgres. Cook the turkey for 80 minutes hour. Finally, eat the turkey with cranbiy jelly.

**By Amelia** - The first step in making a turkey is to refrost. Next, you have to stert the oven. Stuff the turkey with bread. Turn

the oven to 10:15. Cook the turkey for 15 min. Finally, eat the turkey with fork and nif.

**By Levi** - The first step in making a turkey is to pre heet the uvin. Next, you have to kill it. Stuff the turkey with stuffing. Turn the oven to 250 degrees. Cook the turkey for 20 min. Finally, eat the turkey with a fork.

**By Calvin** - The first step in making a turkey is to buy a turkey. Next, you have to put the turky into oven. Stuff the turkey with stuffing. Turn the oven to 250. Cook the turkey for 2 h. Finally, eat the turkey with filling.

**By Jean** - The first step in making a turkey is to buy it. Next, you have to make the stuffing. Stuff the turkey with vegges. Turn the oven to 50 degrees. Cook the turkey for 30 a minets. Finally, eat the

turkey with furkawiey

**By Belva** - The First step in making a turkey is to get a turkey. Next, you have to turn on the oven. Stuff the turkey with stuffing. Turn the oven to 30 togres. Cook the turkey for 30 minut. Finally, eat the turkey with vechbles.

**By Emma** - The first step in making a turkey is to stuf the turkey. Next, you have to let it thaw out. Stuff the turkey with stafing in it. Turn the oven to pr heat. Cook the turkey for one hour. Finally, eat the turkey with plats and soase.

**By Paisley** - The first step in making a turkey is to frust. Next, you have to stert the oven. Stuff the turkey with bred. Turn the oven to 350. Cook the turkey for inarde. Finally, eat the turkey with mash btadoe.

**By Amelia** - first, by a turkey de frost it by leving it out make the stufing put carits

and vechtavalls. Next, put the stufing in the turkey put it in the oven for two hours take it out of the oven. Last, put buter on it and grave.

**By Bentlee** - The first step in making a turkey is to frost it. Next, you have to unwrap it. Stuff the turkey with stufing. Turn the oven to hundred fifty degrees. Cook the turkey for over. Finally, eat the turkey with a fork and nif.

**By Avery** - The first step in making a turkey is to buy one. Next, you have to put it on a tray. Stuff the turkey with stuffing. Turn the oven to 50 degrees. Cook the turkey for 30 minits. Finally, eat the turkey with mashed potados.

**By Porter** - The first step in making a turkey is to kil it. Next, you have to cut it up. Stuff the turkey with seneing. Turn the

SEE COOK A TURKEY PAGE 2



JENNY DINELLI of Braidwood runs a five mile course in Arizona which got her interested in running a 125-mile ultra marathon in May.

## Braidwood woman to run 125-mile desert marathon

BY ROSE PANIERI  
 STAFF WRITER

Five years ago, Jenny Dinelli wasn't particularly interested in running. It isn't that she lacked strength and stamina, running simply didn't make her smile.

A lot has changed since then. In May, the 43-year-old will run the Cocodona Sedona Canyons race, a 125-mile run through a variety of challenging terrain, including desert canyons, mountains, and pine forests.

The Cocodona races in Arizona range in distances from 39 miles to 250 miles. Dinelli is determined to complete a 125-mile jaunt over some tough terrain—rocky hills, desert, mountains, and brave rare but unpredictable hazards, like rattlesnakes and scor-

pions.

**Running becomes a passion**

Raised in South Wilmington, Dinelli craves the magic of small town life over suburbia.

"After working at Troy Crossroads [Shorewood] as a speech-language pathologist, I craved the small town atmosphere again so made the move to Reed-Custer," Dinelli said. "I have been working for Reed-Custer for 17 years."

Dinelli is passionate about life. Her calling as a speech therapist brings her joy and a sense of satisfaction. She is equally enthusiastic about the world of sports.

Dinelli was a collegiate athlete at Kankakee Community College and Marian University in Indianapolis. Her specialty was softball. Though a

multi-talented athlete, the idea of running long distances didn't seem particularly inspiring, until she learned she possessed a natural talent for long-distance running.

"My entire life was based around sports, so when my sister and her vet school roommate signed up for the 2011 Illinois Marathon, I invited myself," Dinelli said. "I never ran a race longer than the 100 meter dash in my life!"

With virtually no special training, Dinelli completed the marathon. Thriving on the physical challenge of running, she

SEE MARATHON PAGE 2

**BERKOT'S SUPER FOODS**  
 Coal City, Braidwood & Wilmington

**A HARVEST OF SAVINGS!**

**SALE VALID 11/28/25-12/3/25**  
 VIEW OUR FULL WEEKLY AD @ BERKOTFOODS.COM

**USDA CHOICE**

**DIGITAL COUPON**

**\$4.99 LB**

LIMIT 6  
 LIMIT 1 OFFER\*  
Price without coupon: \$9.99/lb

**USDA Choice Boneless Chuck Roast**

**DIGITAL COUPON**

**\$1.99**

LIMIT 10 LBS  
 LIMIT 1 OFFER\*  
Price without coupon: \$2.99/lb

**Premium Honeycrisp Apples**

**Campbell's**

**Campbell's Cream of Mushroom or Chicken Soup**

10.5 oz

**10/\$10**

# Cook a turkey,

continued from page 1

oven to 100 degrees. Cook the turkey for two hours. Finally, eat the turkey with fork and knife.

**By Kayla** - The first step in making a turkey is to buy the turkey. Next, you have to defrost the turkey. Stuff the turkey with carrots, broccoli, and spices. Turn the oven to 50 degrees. Cook the turkey for 20 minutes. Finally, eat the turkey with macin cheese.

**By Remi** - The first step in making a turkey is to buy a turkey. Next, you have to stuff the turkey. Stuff the turkey with candy. Turn the oven to high. Cook the turkey for 20 min. Finally, eat the turkey with your family.

**By Liam** - First, you let the turkey defrost. Next, you cook it for 20 minutes and on warm. Last, I took the turkey out of the oven.

**By Greysun** - The first step in making a turkey is to stuff. Next, you have to put it in. Stuff the turkey with seasoning. Turn the oven to 100 degrees. Cook the turkey for 10 minutes. Finally, eat the turkey with hands.

**By Carmen** - The first step in making a turkey is to put seasoning. Next, you have to rub it in. Stuff the turkey with the skin. Turn the oven to 70 degrees. Cook the turkey for 30 minutes. Finally, eat the turkey with sauce.

**By Sloan** - The first step in making a turkey is to buy the turkey. Next, you have to cook the turkey. Stuff the turkey with stuffing. Turn the oven to 120. Cook the turkey for 10 minutes. Finally, eat the turkey with candy.

**By Grace** - The first step in making a turkey is to marinate it. Next, you have to put it in the oven. Stuff the turkey with choklit. Turn the oven to 300. Cook the turkey for an hour. Finally, eat the turkey with some candy so you make a candy turkey.

**By Ember** - First, stuff it with bread. Next, put in oven for ten minutes. Last, eat with family.

**By Maci** - The first step in making a turkey is to buy it. Next, you have to put decorations. Stuff the turkey with stuffing. Turn the oven to 50 or over. Cook the turkey for an hour. Finally, eat the turkey with a smile.

**By Owen** - The first step in making a turkey is to buy turkey. Next, you have to cook turkey. Stuff the turkey with stuffing. Turn the oven to 350. Cook the turkey for 1 hour. Finally, eat the turkey with mac and cheese.

**By Rowan** - The first step in making a turkey is to buy the turkey. Next, you have to cook the turkey. Stuff the turkey with seasoning. Turn the oven to 170 degrees. Cook the turkey for 10 minutes. Finally, eat the turkey with candy.

*Happy Thanksgiving to all from Ms. Pacholski's class. Gobble! Gobble!*

# Don't miss the Dec. 6 lighted Christmas parade

The annual Braidwood City Tree Lighting will be held across from City Hall on Saturday, Dec. 6, at 5 p.m., followed by the 15th Annual Lighted Parade with the theme of A Christmas Movie Night.

This year, the honor of lighting the tree goes to the Braidwood Jr Comets JV SuperBowl champions.

The festivities will wrap up at the fire department with a very special guest in attendance.

To join the parade, contact Jessica Keymon at 815-274-1498 or email jkeymon257@gmail.com, or Angie Hutton at 815-353-3053 or angiehutton@sbc-global.net.

# Braidwood Lions will sell Christmas trees

The Braidwood Lions Club will be holding its annual Christmas Trees Sale fundraiser beginning Monday, Nov. 24. The club's stand will be located in the Whitmore Ace Hardware parking lot in Braidwood.

Balsam trees ranging in height from 6 to 9 feet along with small and large size decorated greenery wreaths, grave blankets, small & large size grave pillows, crosses, swags and sprays will be for sale. Lions club house brooms, heavy duty brooms and whisk brooms will also be available for purchase.

Hours are Monday thru Friday from noon - 7 p.m., Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., while supplies last. Sales will be closed on Thursday, Nov. 27 for Thanksgiving and will resume Friday, Nov. 28.

All proceeds from the tree sales will go back into the community in the form of the various community activities and humanitarian services that the Braidwood Lions Club provides throughout the year. For more information please call (815) 791-8093 or visit www.braidwoodlionsclub.org

## Braidwood petitions to abandon 585 W. Main St.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Publication Notice to: NONRECORD CLAIMANTS and UNKNOWN OWNERS. The requisite affidavit for publication having been filed, notice is hereby given you, NONRECORD CLAIMANTS and UNKNOWN OWNERS of the following:

CITY OF BRAIDWOOD, an Illinois Municipal Corporation, has filed a Petition to Have Property Declared Abandoned against Defendants, DAVID J. CLELLAND, SUSAN L. CLELLAND, BMO BANK N.A. F/K/A FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF JOLIET, Individually and as Trustee of the Elsie Clelland Testamentary Trust under Will dated June 3, 1975 and known as Trust No. 4302, CLAYPOOL DRAINAGE AND LEVEE DISTRICT, WILL COUNTY TRUSTEE, UNKNOWN OWNERS, AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS in the CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

Said Petition prays that the Court declare the certain property to be abandoned; that the Court direct the City of Braidwood to issue a notice to all persons with an interest in the property that title to the property will be transferred to the City of Braidwood, unless, within 30 days of the notice, the owner of record enters an appearance in the action, or unless any other person having an interest in the property files with the Court a request to demolish the unsafe or dangerous building or to put the building in a safe condition in accordance with 65 ILCS 5/11-31-1(d); that, in accordance with 65 ILCS 5/11-31-1(d), if no person enters an appearance in this action or files a request to demolish the building or put the building in a safe condition, the Court issue a judicial deed for the property to the City of Braidwood which will operate to extinguish all existing ownership interests, liens, including tax liens, and other interests in the property, as well as extinguish the rights and interests of any and all holders of a bona fide certificate of purchase of the property for delinquent taxes. The Petition involves the following:

1. Plaintiff: City of Braidwood, an Illinois Municipal Corporation
  2. Case Number: 2025MR000563
  3. Court where the action is pending: Twelfth Judicial Circuit, Will County, Illinois
  4. Title holders of record: David J. Clelland and Susan L. Clelland
  5. Legal Description of property at issue: LOT 1 OF CARLSON'S SUBDIVISION A RESUBDIVISION OF LOT 6 AND THE WEST 15 FEET OF LOT 5 IN BLOCK 16 IN EUREKA COAL COMPANY SUBDIVISION IN THE SOUTH 2 OF SECTION 7, TOWNSHIP 32 NORTH, RANGE 9 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, RECORDED JUNE 5, 1996 AS DOCUMENT NO. R96-049690, WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS.
  6. Common description of property at issue: 585 W. Main Street, Braidwood, Illinois 60408
  7. The names of the parties to be served by publication: NONRECORD CLAIMANTS and UNKNOWN OWNERS.
  8. The date on or after which default may be entered against NONRECORD CLAIMANTS and UNKNOWN OWNERS: December 26, 2025.
- Notice is also hereby given you that said Petition prays for other relief, that summons was duly issued out of said Court against you as provided by law, that the said suit is now pending.
- NOW, THEREFORE, unless you, said above-named Defendants, file your response to the Petition in said suit or otherwise make your appearance therein the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Joliet, Will County, Illinois on or before December 26, 2025, default may be entered against you at any time after that day and a judgment entered in accordance with the prayer of said relief.

CITY OF BRAIDWOOD  
A Municipal Corporation, Plaintiff  
Bryan M. Wellner - 06321702  
Attorney for Plaintiff  
Mahoney, Silverman & Cross, LLC  
822 Infantry Drive, Suite 100  
Joliet, Illinois 60435  
(815) 730-9500  
bwellner@msclawfirm.com  
Published in the Braidwood Journal, Wednesday, Nov. 26, Dec. 3 and 10, 2025.

# Marathon,

continued from page 1

began training in earnest, completing the marathon three years in a row.

"With the exception of the pandemic, I have completed either their full marathons, half marathons, 10Ks or 5Ks in Champaign ever since," she said.

### Focusing on strength training

Though Dinelli put her heart and soul into training to run marathons, her speed wasn't increasing. She enjoyed participating in marathons, yet she found herself discouraged by what she viewed as stagnation.

"I felt like I was always failing, even though I was completing these incredible feats," Dinelli said. "Therefore, I pretty much gave up running, in general, and focused on strength training before school each day at 5 a.m."

Much of Dinelli's training took place at the Kankakee Sands Preserve, part of the Will County Forest Preserve District, located on Route 113.

Dinelli passed by the preserve on her way to Reed-Custer Elementary School each day. One fateful day she decided to visit. Soon, she was visiting daily, running on the pre-servers 2.5 mile track.

As she trained—running with weights to build strength—Dinelli found herself smiling. Her pace, timing, and attitude had improved.

"In 2024, I signed up for the Sedona Stumble 5K over spring break just for fun," she said. "I had no clue this race was actually filled with massive hills going up, down and all around for mountain bikes."

Though she had completed numerous marathons by then, Dinelli had never felt such intense physical and emotional power. As she soared up and down challenging trails, her smile reached both ears.



Forest Preserve photo

**BRAIDWOOD RESIDENT Jenny Dinelli, who is training for a 125-mile trail race in Arizona next year, calls Kankakee Sands Preserve her "gift" and she wishes more people would get outside and take advantage of the preserves.**

"I kept passing so many people who had tripped and fell or were out of breath from the altitude," she said. "I feel strength training inadvertently trained my body to push through and I've been hooked on the trails ever since."

Dinelli ended up winning the Masters Female Division that year and again in March 2025. She attributes the accomplishments to her training at Kankakee Sands.

### "There's no way"

While randomly perusing YouTube, Dinelli happened upon a video about the Cocodona races in Arizona. Her heart began to pound.

"I actually told myself, there is no way I could ever do any of those races," Dinelli said. "However, one day while jogging on the treadmill, I just kept going."

Though her treadmill automatically shut down after 20 miles, Dinelli reset it and continued to run,

reaching a whopping 26.2 miles.

"In that moment, I made the decision to attempt the Cocodona Sedona Canyons 125 someday," she said.

"Someday" became May 6, 2026. It appeared that once Dinelli convinced herself that she WOULD compete in the Cocodona race there was no reason to procrastinate.

"My motto for this journey is to constantly learn from myself and for myself," Dinelli said. "Even if I did not finish, I trust that even though it was something I truly wanted, it wasn't something I needed at this time."

Dinelli acknowledges that a lot can happen over the course of a 125-mile race. In fact, she suffers occasional Iliotibial band syndrome, an overuse injury causing pain at the outside of her knee. It tends to strike out of the blue.

"I never know when it's going to hit," she said. "I'm doing a lot of work to

prevent it with certain exercises. Hopefully, it will not happen during the race."

The route weaves through Sedona's red rocks, the Cocodona National Forest, and high desert trails. It's an extremely difficult ultramarathon that requires extensive training and preparation to reduce risks such as dehydration, falls, and fatigue. Certain stretches are steep, and there is always the chance of a fall.

Dinelli understands the risks, and believes her training will see her through. She controls the elements she can, and leaves the rest to luck.

"I will either finish or fail forward. I'm constantly seeking personal and professional growth and always strive to be the most positive influence on others each day... even on the challenging days," Dinelli said. "Body versus mind experiences provide this growth for me."

# Duo nabbed for Fentanyl

The Grundy County Sheriff's office reports that on Nov. 19, at approximately 3 p.m. the Grundy County Sheriff's Office Proactive Unit stopped a vehicle on Gardner Road near Gorman Road.

The unit was stopped after officers observed the vehicle commit a traffic infraction. A consent to search both the driver and the vehicle was granted after the deputy had conversed with the driver about prior history involving narcotics.

Upon searching the driver, Eric Mikolajczyk, age 35 of Ransom, a small ziplock bag containing suspected Fentanyl was found in his pocket. A search of the vehicle was then conducted where an additional 79 small, ziplock bags containing

suspected Fentanyl were located in the glove compartment. The weight of the suspected bags of Fentanyl was approx. 70 grams.

Both Mikolajczyk, and passenger, Anthony Fialko, age 34 of Streator, were placed under arrest for possession of a controlled substance and possession with the intent to manufacture/deliver a controlled substance.

Both were transported to Grundy County Jail and held pending a Pre-Trial Release Hearing.

## Destini Tax Solutions+ files as new business

### PUBLIC NOTICE

**Assumed Name Publication Notice**  
Public Notice is hereby given that on November 5, 2025, a certificate was filed in the Office of the County Clerk of Kankakee County, Illinois, setting forth the names and post-office addresses of all persons owning, conducting and transacting the business known as Destini Tax Solutions+, located at 533 N. East St., Essex, IL 60935.

Dated November 3, 2025.  
Dan Hendrickson  
Kankakee County Clerk  
Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, Nov. 12, 19 & 26, 2025.

# Police accepting donations for Shop with a Cop, Blue Santa

The Braidwood Police Department is accepting donations for their 2025 Annual Shop with a Cop and Blue Santa events this holiday season.

Both events assist the community by pairing police officers with children in a positive way to help provide a merry Christmas for those who live within the Reed Custer School District and have experienced a life changing hardship.

During Shop with a Cop, the children are paired with police officers while they shop through the aisles of Morris Walmart for toys and gifts for themselves or their

loved ones. Blue Santa takes place on Christmas Day when Police Officers deliver meals to families in need. The meals are donated by Top Fuel Saloon.

Gifts are also delivered to the families thanks to monetary donations. As a token of appreciation, all donors will receive a "We Support Our Police" yard sign."

Cash or check donations may be dropped off at the Braidwood Police Department Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Please make checks payable to: Braidwood Police Charity Fund.

# Happy Thanksgiving! God bless you!

**Christopher Scholtes**  
Financial Advisor  
311 W Baltimore St  
Wilmington, IL 60481  
815-476-6856

**Dean A Shepherd**  
AAMS®  
Financial Advisor  
311 W Baltimore St  
Wilmington, IL 60481  
815-476-6856



Member SIPC  
www.edwardjones.com



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

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

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

G.W. Communications, Inc publishes the weekly subscription newspapers named The Free Press Advocate, The Braidwood Journal and The Coal City Courant.

**Advertising and Business Offices:**  
• 111 South Water St., Wilmington, IL 60481 (815) 476-7966  
• 271 South Broadway, Coal City, IL 60416 (815) 634-0315

**Deadline for The Free Press Advocate, Braidwood Journal and Coal City Courant**  
Display Advertising: Friday, noon  
News and Classified Advertising: Monday, noon

E-mail: News & News Photos: news@fpnusa.com  
Ads & Artwork: graphics@fpnusa.com

©2024 All news, photographs and advertising material used in this publication are the property of G-W Communications, Inc. Use of the material without the consent of G-W. Communications, Inc. is strictly prohibited. Violators of this property right are subject to legal action.

Eric D. Fisher, publisher

# Unfair comparison, 1865 to 1925

Recently I came across a book entitled Strip Mining History of the Grundy, Will and Kankakee Counties by Nichols S. Kobe, Jr. I am not sure when it was written, but it is entirely about the Northern Illinois Coal Company and their various strip mines etc. It is a well-researched book, claiming photos and information from many local museums and citizens. But I took exception to one paragraph.



TIME WAS....  
Sandy Vasko

Now, I realize that the lowest strata of coal at 40 feet, was unreachable to the 19th century miner. It wasn't until strip pits were invented that it could be dug, leaving wide scars on mother earth. But still, lets look at some statistics.

In all of 1873, 500,000 tons of coal were shipped from Braidwood using approximately 45,455 box cars. We read in the Wilmington Advocate January, 1974, "To accomplish this, the C. W. & V. Company worked 800 men on two-thirds time, and pays out an average of \$42.00 (\$1,120 today) monthly. The Eureka works about 300 men; paid out \$17,200 (\$57.50 today per month per man) on the last pay day. The Diamond and Star Companies each work about 250 hands and pay out about \$15,000 (\$60 today per man) per month. The above-mentioned number of men comprises about three-fourths of the entire mining force in the field"

Looking at the above monthly salaries, could you even feed yourself, much less a family, on \$60 per month? Of course, if there were others contributing, such as sons, brothers, boarders, etc. I imagine you could scrape by.

In 1879 monthly output had quadrupled, averaging 1,300 box cars a

month. However, this increase in output did not translate into wages. If raises were given with one hand, they were taken away with the other, by asking the miners to pay more rent on the houses they lived in, owned by the mining companies.

Another scheme employed by the companies was to install screens. The miners were only paid for the coal which did not slip through the screen. Each year the holes in the screens got bigger and bigger, negating any increase in pay given to the workers.

As for working conditions, in 1873 a correspondent to the Wilmington owned Braidwood Journal wrote about how conditions could be improved. "First of all, there is neither proper care nor caution used in lowering the men down the shaft in the morning. In company with several others I have witnessed the engineer lowering the cage while men were in the act of stepping on to it which might have been the cause of a serious if not a fatal accident. This I do not blame entirely on the engineer. He is in most cases too far from the mouth of the shaft, and has a very indifferent way of seeing the men go on the cage."

"What is required is a man to be placed on top, from six o'clock to seven - the hour at which the men go down - to signal to the engineer when the men are properly on the cage and ready to be lowered down. This would prevent an

accident, which under the present system of indifference for the lives of the men is liable to occur at any time." His suggestions were not heeded.

That same year, 1873, James Braidwood, mining inspector for Will County said this in his annual report. "The inspector has given much attention to the matter of safe steam boilers. The state law is winked at in a shameless manner, and the matter is most justly called to the attention of our legislature. It would seem that the Eureka Company ignores the law totally. Its boilers are insured by an insurance company, and the company sends a band box shyster to tap them with a tack hammer very six months; then, like a telegraph operator, he "reports by sound." "Some find day we may report a boiler explosion, blowing a dozen men to atoms, and then State's Attorney Hagar may be induced to look into the matter. This gentleman, it would seem, has also winked at complaints made against King's shaft. If these charges be true, Mr. Hagar is criminally negligent in discharging his duties, and should be called to an account at once."

So, in conclusion, I put to you that a blanket statement that coal was not commercially mined before 1929 does not consider blood, sweat and tears that brought out of the ground the millions of tons of coal those years produced.

## Light Up Your House contest returns to Custer

The 17th annual Lighting Up Your House For the Holidays Contest will be held again. Enter your house or a neighbor's.

Entry forms can be picked up at Santa's mailbox at the Braidwood Fire Station #2 in Custer Park, or use the form below, and return it to the mailbox by Thursday, Dec. 11. Judging will be done that weekend. Prizes will be awarded Dec. 16 at 6:30 p.m. during the Custer Town Board meeting.

For more information call Bill Marquardt at 708-372-2500.

### Light up Your House for the Holidays Contest

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Fossil Ridge Library News

### Adult Programs

**Friday, Dec. 5-** Creativity Connections: Winter Wreath, 1-3 p.m. Just like snowflakes, each of us is one-of-a-kind, beautiful and unique in our own way. Join us to create your own personalized snowflake wreath-no two will be the same. Space is limited and registration is required. Adults ages 60+

\*\*Attendance at this event indicates consent for Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet, Inc. to use my photo to promote and increase awareness of programs and services offered by the Agency. Photos may be used in Catholic Charities' printed materials, online, media, and by grantors.

**Tuesday, Dec. 9-** Well Read-Book Club, 1-2 p.m. Dive into thought-provoking reads and engaging discussions with the Well-Read Book Club. We'll explore books that challenge your perspectives each month and ignite meaningful conversations. Join us and connect with fellow book lovers.

**December's Title:** The Storied Life of AJ Fikry by Gabrielle Zevin. Copies are available at the front desk or online in our digital consortium.

### Children and Toddler Programs

**Monday, Dec. 1-** Cookies with Claus, 6-7:30 p.m. Get creative this fall at our next Tween Scene. These instructor-led programs are a fun, educational, and social way for tweens to explore their

artistic side. In this session, we'll be making our own ugly Christmas shirts for the holiday season.

**Tuesdays, Dec. 2 and 16-** Play-Doh Playdates, 10:30-11 a.m. Join us for a Play-Doh workshop. Display your creativity using our Play-Doh and tools. This program is for children aged 2-6.

**Wednesdays, Dec. 3 and 10-** Little Learners, 10-10:45 a.m. Let's learn our ABCs. Little Learners is a fun, weekly program where preschoolers can master the alphabet through stories, music, and a craft. Join us as we explore the wonderful world of letters, one week at a time.

**Thursdays, Dec. 4 and 11-** Toddler Time, 10-11 a.m. We welcome toddlers and their caregivers to join us weekly to explore various toys and sensory materials. Toddlers can enhance their gross and fine motor skills, social interaction, and language skills. Caregivers must accompany their little ones throughout the program.

**Thursdays, Dec. 4, 11 and 18-** Listen and Create Storytime, 5:30-6:30 p.m. This program is specially designed for children aged 3-5. Every week, children can explore new books and engage in a fun craft project. Please make sure to dress in clothes that can get messy, as the craft project will involve getting creative with various art materials.

Registration is required for all programs. For more information call 815-458-2187.

## RCHS names students of the month



REED-CUSTER High School students of the month for November are (from left) Breckell Bezona (Sophomore), Kamryn Hutman (Fr.), Karyssa Cinotti (Sr), Elliana Chavez (Fr), Tony Hammack (Sr), Cloey Herbert (So), Logan Bean (Jr), Elizabeth Brooks (Jr) and Jade Lipinski (Sr).



THE REED-CUSTER MIDDLE School Speech Team performed exceptionally well at the IESA State Speech. Members include (first row, from left) Presley Gilberg, Harper Vignali, Avery Micklos, Kaelyn Freitas, Harlee Heelan, Katie Carson and Marshall Gee. Second row: Brooklyn Dente, Alaina Hakey, Lucas Doolin and Benjamin Hedrick. Third row: Riley Probus, Haley Stephens, Raegan Cesena, Willa Meyer and Paisley Wilson. Fourth row: Charlie Barry, Gaius Davies and Emmalynn Line.

## RCMS Speech Team Attends IESA State Speech Contest

The Reed-Custer Middle School Speech Team performed exceptionally well at the IESA State Speech Contest on Saturday, Nov. 8.

Out of 19 entries the team brought home 12 first place entries, 5 second place entries, and two third place entries.

Members of the speech team include 6th graders: Gaius Davies, Kaelyn Freitas, Presley

Gilberg, Alaina Hakey, Benjamin Hedrick, Harlee Heelan, Emmalynn Line, Avery Micklos, and Harper Vignali.

Also 7th graders: Lucas Doolin, Willa Meyer, and Paisley Wilson. 8th graders: Charlie Barry, Katie Carson, Raegan Cesena, Brooklyn Dente, Marshall Gee, Riley Probus, and Haley Stephens.

## Aldermen approve four-story hotel

BY ROSE PANIERI  
STAFF WRITER

There was a full house during the Nov. 18 Wilmington city council meeting as residents of Waters Edge Subdivision packed the council chambers. All were awaiting the board's decision on whether or not to approve a four-story hotel at Illinois 53 and Peotone Road.

Ray Sundine, a lifelong resident of Wilmington, expressed that a hotel will bring revenue to the city, and would benefit everyone.

Roy Surdej, a resident of Waters Edge, argued that approving the hotel—and its requested variance of a 45 to 48 feet in height— would not especially benefit the residents in the nearby subdivision.

He spoke of what he believes are broken promises by the city council, especially with regard to the Love's Travel Center that opened in June on Illinois 53. Surdej would like to see a "nice restaurant" rather than a hotel on the property.

One suggested that the hotel be built in the city's business district at Lorenzo Road at Interstate 55.

When asked why the hotel needed to be four-stories rather than three, the petitioner said that a four-story construction was a brand issue, and that all major hotel chains require a minimum of four stories.

### Business district

The hotel, previously discussed in October, is now one step closer to becoming a reality.

City aldermen unanimously

approved the ordinance granting a Planned Unit Development (PUD) and conditional use to allow for the four-story hotel.

Gompers-Lewis Hospitality, LLC is the contract purchaser of the parcel (PIN 09-18-19-300-007-0000), located at the property located northeast of the Peotone Road-Illinois 53 intersection.

The currently vacant 11-acre parcel is owned by M20 Land Investments, LLC of Chicago.

The property is zoned B3 Commercial, and the council determined that the Gompers-Lewis Hospitality, LLC is well within its rights to construct a hotel on the property.

Access to the site will be via Illinois Route 53.

Free Press Newspapers readers

# SOUND-OFF

To voice your opinion 24 hours a day, go to [www.freepressnewspapers.com](http://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. The Free Press Newspapers reserves the right to edit remarks for taste, length, personal attacks, racism, threatening, calls for boycotts and libel. 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](mailto:courant@fpnusa.com) with "soundoff" in the subject line or visit [www.freepressnewspapers.com](http://www.freepressnewspapers.com), 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. There can be only one submission of 250 words or less per person during any given week.

## Are they legal?

WILMINGTON—I saw the police pulled over a semi-truck on Arsenal Road. They need to do that more often and check all these semi-drivers who don't know how to read English. Look at all these semi-trucks hauling cargo containers down Peotone Road and you'll see drivers from foreign countries. The police should be pulling them over and checking to make sure they have legal drivers licenses and make certain they know how to read road signs. Make sure they all have proper CDLs and are legal.

## Against our will

BRAIDWOOD—Braidwood residents, it's time to make some noise. The mayor and his management consultant are going to cram this data center down our throats, regardless of the number of residents who oppose it. They are dead set on getting this thing and need to listen to what the residents have to say about it. It's time to remind them of exactly who they answer to, us the residents. All of these big fancy dreams and visions for Braidwood all hinge on this data center being built. Without that income, these dreams all go up in smoke. They are going to try and be as quiet about it as they can while trying to deflect from the issues surrounding data centers using the same old Braidwood smoke and mirrors tactics that every other administration before them has done in other to fit their agendas against the will of the people.

## A big fuss

BRACEVILLE—I don't understand what the big fuss is about the voters card all the time. I've never had to show mine, but we sure get a new one every year. Why?

## Hear our concerns

WILMINGTON—I was at last week's City Council meeting along with over 60 other concerned residents while the Council discussed the new hotel that will be overlooking Water's Edge. While the Council ultimately did not vote in favor of our concerns, I am most disappointed by the comments of one particular alderman with spotty attendance. Apparently, our pleas and concerns meant very little to him, if at all. He was not involved in any of the discussion between the aldermen before the vote. Instead, he decided to instead say, "Can we just vote on this now?" It is shameful that he did not have any care whatsoever in our concerns. Aldermen need to remember when citizens and other aldermen voice their opinions, they should listen. That's why they are elected, to listen to taxpayers. Why even be on the Council if you won't listen to the people. This is clearly not the job for him to do if he has such a lack of regard for us as taxpayers.

## Keep the penny

SHADOW LAKES—Stop minting pennies? Has anyone stopped to look at our lonely penny? This small coin has the portrait of our 16th president, Abraham Lincoln. I consider him as being one of our greatest presidents. But, instead our government has declared no more pennies. It is claimed it costs 4 cents to make 1 cent. Looking at what our government does and what they spend, it is a small price to pay for a coin. I always figured, every person can have a penny in their pocket, look at it, look at honest Abe, and remember why we are all here today.

Obediently yours, Margot Lane.

## Now they're interested

CUSTER PARK—The Custer Park Township officials now seem to be only interested in the Custer Township Cemetery upon finding out a War of 1812 veteran and other war veterans are buried in the cemetery. They could be careless about fixing the damage to the tombstones caused from their hired landscaping company, but the officials now appear interested in the Custer Park war history in the cemetery. Maybe they should take the time to learn these deceased veterans' names, about their families, and about the history they brought to Custer Park? Cemeteries hold much history.

## Trump talk

WILMINGTON— The Trump Code. We know Trump language by now and when he says "hoax" we know he means "truth". Furthermore it means everyone should be extremely suspicious and downright frightened about what he's up to.

## In the dark

BRAIDWOOD—Why aren't the Christmas wreaths on the light poles in downtown Braidwood lit up at night? All of the other decorations on light poles are turned on, just not the ones on Main Street between city hall to the railroad tracks. The decorations on Main Street from Division Street to city hall is all lit up, then it looks dark and gloomy along the remainder of this stretch. Somebody at city hall trying to save a few pennies on the electric bill? Just turn them on already.

## Progressive Mayor

WILMINGTON—I don't believe Mayor Johnson of Chicago can make a statement without playing the race card.

## Another failure

WILMINGTON—Trump's brilliant idea of having Elon Musk run a new Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to drastically reduce government spending by \$1 trillion has disbanded with a total net cut of \$8 billion. Put another check mark in the failure column.

## Biden blunders

DIAMOND—To all the Trump haters out there, how did Trump get elected? The Democrats gave him tons of help. After everything Biden screwed up, the voters had enough after four long years. The Democrats seem to have forgotten all about the Biden blunders. I would gladly remind you if you like. Maybe another time. For now let's reminisce about Biden's campaign for a second term. Biden's own party insisted he step down because of all his disasters. Remember that? I didn't think so. Then here comes Kamala who may have had a chance until she stated in an interview that she would not change anything Biden did. Talk about taking yourself out of the race. The voters did not want four more years of that mess. So, who was left? I'm sure many of the voters would have preferred someone else but they had to get away from the Biden mess. Way to go Democrats! Then someone states that Epstein himself said Trump knew about the girls. Who says? The news? The news is meant to persuade you rather than reporting accurate facts and we all believe what we want to hear. Then the talk about Trump and his classified documents. Biden was caught with his own stash also. Anyone who thinks these two



are the only ones who have done this is foolish. They were the only two dumb enough to get caught.

## Things happen

BRAIDWOOD—"Things happen" said Trump casually last week about the brutal murder of Jamal Khashoggi, an American journalist, by the order of Saudi Prince MBS in 2019. The horrific details that a bone saw was used to torture and dismember Khashoggi were not widely publicized six years ago but we now appreciate Congressman Eugene Vindman of Virginia for bringing forth the recorded screams of Khashoggi as he died. This case comes to the forefront recently due to the royal visit of Saudi Prince MBS to the White House for which Trump laid out the red carpet amid much fanfare. During these past six years Trump has suppressed information regarding Khashoggi's savage murder due to Trump's love of the Saudi wealth spigot.

## With no respect

WILMINGTON—All I hear from MAGA's is how the President is mistreated and picked on. He is always the victim. Maybe this is a reason. I read how the President uses his elementary level vocabulary to demean people most days. He likes to call his perceived enemies low IQ, lowlife, loser, nasty, no talent, wacky,

"piggy," etc. Why couldn't his daddy buy him a dictionary instead of draft deferments? If he just learned to speak politely and respectfully, most of his problems would not exist. But he has been speaking like this for 79 years so I doubt we will see any change in his speech or behavior in the near future. But I would have loved it if the reporter he called piggy responded back with Tubby or Fat Boy. He is his own worst enemy.

## A big con

WILMINGTON—Getting ready to apologize to my family on Thanksgiving for my vote in November. I wanted closed borders but these unidentified thugs terrorizing entire communities without warrants and a process is outrageous. Not even 15% of arrests even have speeding ticket. This has to be the worst system ever concocted. What happened to getting gang members and criminals? I feel like I've been conned for several reasons.

## No gas price deals for Thanksgiving

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have risen 2.2 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.23/g Monday, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois. Prices in Illinois are 2.1 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 9.5 cents per gallon higher than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has increased 0.8 cents compared to a week ago and stands at \$3.77 per gallon. Not much has changed when it comes to gas prices

in the area. Prices in Wilmington range from \$2.92/g at Mohsen, up to \$3.09/g at Shell. Expect to pay \$3.25/g across the board in Braidwood, and \$3.29/g at all stations in Coal City. Morris is reporting \$2.99/g at all stations. Bourbonnais is still higher than usual, with the price of gas ranging from \$3.09/g at Gulf, all the way up to \$3.15/g. "Ahead of the peak of Thanksgiving travel, the national average has remained relatively steady,

holding close to where it's been for the last few weeks," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. "With refinery maintenance wrapping up, we're likely to see more relief soon, particularly in the Great Lakes and West Coast regions. Many states could begin to see further declines in the weeks ahead, just in time for the holidays." The lowest price in the state was \$2.67/g while the highest was \$4.79/g.

### NOTICE OF PROPOSED PROPERTY TAX INCREASE FOR WILMINGTON COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 209-U

I. A public hearing to approve a proposed property tax levy increase for Wilmington Community Unit School District No. 209-U for 2025 will be held on Monday, December 8, 2025 at 6:15 P.M. at the Wilmington High School, 209U Wildcat Court, Wilmington, Illinois 60481.

Any person desiring to appear at the public hearing and present testimony to the taxing district may contact Mr. Kevin Feeney, Superintendent of Schools, 209U Wildcat Court, Wilmington, Illinois 60481. Phone: 815-926-1751.

II. The corporate and special purpose property taxes extended or abated for 2024 were \$9,873,251.

The proposed corporate and special purpose property taxes to be levied for 2025 are \$12,341,564. This represents a 25.00% increase over the previous year.

III. The property taxes extended for debt service and public building commission leases for 2024 were \$2,434,847.57.

The estimated property taxes to be levied for debt service and public building commission leases for 2025 are \$1,999,850.00. This represents a 17.9% decrease over the previous year.

IV. The total property taxes extended or abated for 2024 were \$12,402,079. The estimated total property taxes to be levied for 2025 are \$14,341,414. This represents a 15.64% increase over the previous year.

# THANK YOU

Thank you to all the wonderful VOLUNTEERS that helped put our 2nd Annual Fundraiser event together, worked it and collected donations. Your hard work and dedication did not go unnoticed!!!

Thank you to all the donors, this event would not have been possible without your generosity and donations.

Thank you to the Braidwood community and surrounding communities that came out to celebrate with us. It was nice to see familiar faces and a lot of new ones.

We look forward to our 3rd Annual in 2026!

Thank you!!  
American Legion  
Post 39 and  
Commander Bill Kiley



American Legion Hall  
in Braidwood

## Midway Airport Shuttle

**FREE Parking**                      **\$2.00 Fare**

**Non-Stop** from Manteno **365** days a year!

Choose the departure time that works best for you:

**11 options** on weekdays beginning at 4:55 AM

**5 options** on Saturdays beginning at 7:10 AM

**4 options** on Sundays/major holidays beginning at 8:10 AM

Nearly a **quarter-million** rides have been provided with a **9.2/10** rider satisfaction rating!

Details at

[RiverValleyMetro.com](http://RiverValleyMetro.com)



**Manteno Metro Centre**  
Oak St., Downtown Manteno

## Help families in need by bidding during Operation St. Nick auction

Operation St. Nick announces its 43rd consecutive annual Radio Auction making a milestone year of reaching \$3 million raised for local families.

Operation St. Nick will host its radio auction on Sunday, Dec. 7, broadcasting live from 8 a.m. to noon on WCSJ 103.1 FM and streaming on WCSJNews.com.

This year's auction marks a historic milestone as Operation St. Nick is expected to surpass \$3 mil-

lion raised since the Radio Auction began in 1982... funds that have directly supported local families facing hardships during the Holiday Season.

Operation St. Nick is an all volunteer organization that will assist 60 families with 150 plus children, including toys and clothing from each child's personal wish list. Families also will receive food to help them through the holidays, plus help with their winter heating bills, ensuring warmth and stability dur-

ing the winter's coldest months.

Joe Schmitz, of Operation St. Nick said, "The 2025 Auction Brochure, featuring 90 items, is available now at Grundy Bank, where many of the items are displayed. Community members are encouraged to pick up a brochure and participate by bidding on one of the 15 items, purchasing any of the other 75 items directly, or making a donation of any amount."

Guy Christensen, added, "That a special Memorial Hour will take place from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., during which the names of beloved ones will be read on the air as part of memorial donations, a long-standing tradition that honors those who have passed while supporting families in need at this special time of year."

Operation St. Nick invites the entire Grundy and Will County community to join in, listen, bid and make this milestone year one of the most meaningful yet.

## Women of the Moose to hold craft show

The Women of the Moose, Wilmington Chapter 781, will hold a vendor/craft show on Saturday, Dec. 6 at the Moose Lodge on West River Road in Wilmington.

The show will be open to the public from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be various vendors and crafters who will have tables displaying their items. The chapter will have lunch available for purchase. There will also be a raffle table sponsored by the Women.

Contact Janice Hopwood at 815-922-9039 for more information.



*The experience and personal attention to help you secure a lasting and meaningful legacy:*

- **Simple wills**
- **Estate planning**
- **Trust administration**
- **Probate**



**MEENTS LAW, P.C.**

Family Law | Real Estate | Business  
Estate Planning | Probate

207 S. Water St., Wilmington • 815-476-7635

## HOLIDAY HEARING SPECIAL

# Hear Your Loved Ones This Holiday Season



The holidays are a time for family, friends, and meaningful conversations. Don't let hearing loss hold you back from connecting with the people who matter most.

Did you know? Untreated hearing loss is linked to cognitive decline, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease. Early intervention is key to protecting your hearing and brain health.

With the year-end fast approaching, your insurance deductible has likely been met - making now the perfect time to use your benefits before they expire.



## \$200 OFF

### any pair of hearing aids

Offer valid through December 31, 2025

Reconnect, enjoy conversations, and enter the new year with better hearing!

Call 815-846-7180 or visit [www.swhearingsolutions.com](http://www.swhearingsolutions.com) to schedule your hearing evaluation today.



**Call 815-846-7180 to schedule your appointment**

*"Unleash the power of conversation with Southwest Hearing Solutions & Signia IX hearing aids"*

Dr. Jamie Sikora

S O U T H W E S T



HEARING SOLUTIONS

1802 N. Division St., Suite 218  
Morris, IL 60450

email: [drjamie@swhearingsolutions.com](mailto:drjamie@swhearingsolutions.com)  
[www.swhearingsolutions.com](http://www.swhearingsolutions.com)

**AUTO • HOME • LIFE • BUSINESS • PROPERTY**

Your local State Farm Agent for 30 years

**Jerry Hallahan - Agent**

1350 E. Division St., Diamond  
(815) 634-2222 jerry@jerryhallahan.com

**INSURANCE**

**State Farm**

**MOTORCYCLE • REC VEHICLES • WATERCRAFT • LIABILITY**

**BLACK WEDNESDAY, NOV. 26**  
8pm-12am

No Cover **"VANGURA BROS"**  
Metro Rock

Closed Thanksgiving on Nov. 27

ALL PLAYOFF GAMES ARE ON AT TUFFY'S!

Get your TUFFY'S SWEATSHIRT for winter!

Check out our website Like us on!

**TUFFY'S WILMINGTON, IL**

A Class Act  
Wilmington's Neighborhood Drinking Establishment  
1099 S. Water St. (Rt. 102), Wilmington • (815) 476-2700

**SUNDAY FUNDAY!**  
DOORS OPEN AT NOON! FIRST RAFFLE AT 2PM!  
It's NOT BINGO but a RAFFLE like BINGO... You play it like BINGO!! Lots of cash prizes!!! BIG PRIZES!!!

**QUEEN of HEARTS**

Every TUESDAY at 553 W. Kennedy Rd. Braidwood  
You must play BINGO to participate.  
Doors open at 4pm. Drawing is held at intermission.  
Queen of Hearts Pot is \$16,495.00  
For BINGO players only on Tuesday nights and see the QUEEN rules at the BINGO hall for rules and regulations.

**Braidwood Post 039 BINGO**  
Tuesday Night Flash Max Bingo

Pull Tabs	6:30pm	Hot Food, Snacks & Beverages
Bingo	6:30pm	553 Kennedy Road
Doors Open	4:00pm	Braidwood, IL 60408

Home of the "Big Guy"  
Commander Bill Kiley  
815-216-2570

**LIVE ONLINE**

**WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS LAND AUCTION**

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2025 AT 10:00 AM<sup>CT</sup>

15.90 SURVEYED ACRES • 1 TRACT

SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Huber land is located 4 miles southeast of Braidwood, IL or 20 miles south of Joliet, IL. The land is further described as being located in Section 13, T32N-R9E, Custer Township, Will County, Illinois.

Ideally located and the perfect size for a homesite or small farming operation.

**LANA HUBER**

Representing Attorney: Jeffrey L. Terry  
Schmiedeskamp Robertson Neu & Mitchell LLP  
525 Jersey Street, Quincy, IL 62301 | (217) 223-3030  
Auction Manager: Kevin Haas (309) 264-7767

**SULLIVAN AUCTIONEERS** (844) 847-2161  
www.SullivanAuctioneers.com License #444000566

Make Your Holidays Festive with Fiber-Fast Internet!

**SURF Internet.**

Fiber Internet Plans Starting at

**\$30/mo\***

Taxes & Equipment Fees Included

- NO contracts
- FREE installation\*
- All-In Pricing\*
- Price-Lock for Life\*
- Local customer service

CALL 1-833-544-2983  
VISIT SurfInternet.com

\*Restrictions apply. Go to SurfInternet.com for details. ©2025 Surf Internet

# Illinois SNAP program at risk due to errors

Congress' "Big Beautiful Bill" which passed last summer could prove to be far more damaging to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in Illinois than most people know. A SNAP "death penalty" is built into the budget reconciliation law.



**CAPITOL FACTS**  
Rich Miller

Before we go further, there's a caveat: The US Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has not yet released definitive guidance for how the federal government intends to enforce the law.

As I've told you before, Illinois' SNAP "error rate" (providing too many benefits or not enough) was 11.6 percent last year, according to the US Department of Agriculture. The new law requires states with error rates above 10 percent to pay 15 percent of the SNAP benefit costs.

That would translate to a \$705 million price tag for Illinois - which is obviously money the state cannot afford.

Analyses from several experts claim that if Illinois does not lower its error rate and cannot pay the full federal penalty of potentially hundreds of millions of dollars, then the SNAP program may disappear here.

The widely held assumption was that if the

state couldn't pay the error rate penalty, then SNAP spending would be lowered by the same amount. And that could still happen if the coming federal guidance allows the state to reduce eligibility. But benefits would have to be cut by up to 17 percent if none of the \$705 million penalty can be paid.

Not good in an era of rising grocery prices.

However, according to those experts, if the state can't pay the penalty in the 2027 federal fiscal year, which begins next October, the entire SNAP program could quite possibly be shut down in Illinois.

An analysis by David Super, the Carmack Waterhouse Professor of Law and Economics at Georgetown University, concluded that "(I)f a state does not pay its state share, USDA could find the state in violation of the Act and terminate the state's participation on that basis."

The only option, according to Super, would be if the state cut SNAP eligibility, which would lower the cost of the program and, therefore, the state's cost share.

This topic came up in testimony to an Illinois House appropriations committee last month by Illinois Department of

Human Services Secretary Dulce Quintero.

"The state match requirements are all or nothing," Secretary Quintero told the committee. "If we're unable to pay all of the state share, we will receive no federal funding, putting the entire SNAP program for Illinois at risk."

Chloe Green with the American Public Human Services Association told the US House Committee on Agriculture in September: "Absent any change to the current legislation, our understanding is that if states cannot pay the funding that has been shifted to them, they will not be able to operate a SNAP program."

Again, this could change when FNS releases guidance.

The governor's office is confident the state can lower the state's error rate (and therefore the penalty) in the coming months. They're hiring 250 people to tackle the problem. They're also re-training workers, rolling out some new tech to alert case-workers to potential errors and to evaluate data collected from recipients, as well as "identify and resolve Integrated Eligibility System defects."

They're requiring more info about shelter and medical costs (big reasons for the error rates). And they're reinstating six-month eligibility periods instead of annual reviews, and doing in-person interviews. They're also conducting a public awareness campaign.

According to IDHS, "inadvertent" recipient errors make up two-thirds of the error rates. An example: "A customer applied for SNAP and reported \$570 in monthly rent paid to the landlord. During Quality Control Review, IDHS discovers their rent is \$500, with \$70 paid to the landlord for utilities and internet."

Another third is blamed on agency errors: "A caseworker verifies the customer's income as \$525 but accidentally enters \$255 in the eligibility system."

Despite all the hyp about fraud, IDHS insists it's "less than 0.10% of errors."

Illinois' error rate has historically been lower than 10.6 percent.

The state claims that a big reason for the increase is "technical errors." IDHS Secretary Quintero told the House appropriations committee last month that the feds "moved the goalposts" in 2022 by including technical mistakes in the error rates.

New Jersey, Quintero pointed out, saw its error rate skyrocket from "below 4 percent to 35 percent" after that federal change.

Whatever the case, a whole lot is riding on the state's effort to lower its error rates, including possibly the very existence of SNAP here.

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

## Christmas decoration exchange and giveaway open to everyone

The Wilmington Public Library, 201 S. Kankakee St., will host a Christmas Decoration Exchange and Giveaway on Tuesday, Dec. 2, to get everyone in the holiday spirit!

Participants may begin to bring in items on Nov. 23 for the exchange. Drop off your unwanted Christmas decorations (in good, used condition please) and receive an early entry ticket to come and "shop" from

9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. (or any time before 1:30 p.m., but the first hour is reserved for the exchange participants only).

If you bring in five items then your ticket will show that you may take five items, etc... The exception to this is that there will be a 10 item limit regardless if you bring in more than 10 items.

From 10:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. anyone is invited to come and choose a few "new" Christmas decorations for free! Any leftover items will then be donated to a non-profit organization to give away.

There will also be refreshments and Christmas music to enjoy!

## Winter craft weekend planned

The Forest Preserve District of Will County is hosting Winter Craft Weekend on Saturday-Sunday, Dec. 6-7, from noon to 3 p.m. at Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon. Take on a winter scavenger hunt, then warm up indoors with cocoa and creative crafting. All ages; free.

## Drive-up Italian beef dinner Dec. 6

The Coal City United Methodist Church, 6805 E. McArdle Rd., will hold a Drive-up Italian beef dinner on Saturday, Dec. 6 from 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

The menu will include an Italian Beef sandwich, loaded mashed potatoes and green beans. The cost is \$15 per person. We hope you will stop by and pick up a warm homemade meal with no need to leave your car! Everyone is welcome to attend.

## Christmas Cantata in Coal City

The City-Wide Choir and Coal City United Methodist Church will present "A Thrill of Hope," a Christmas Cantata composed by Joel Raney.

The cantata will be presented in the sanctuary of Coal City United

Methodist Church, 6805 E. McArdle Rd., on Sunday, Dec. 7 at 4 p.m. with composer Joel Raney conducting.

The community is welcome and invited to attend this special performance.

## Sign-up for yoga hike

The Forest Preserve District of Will County is hosting Yoga and Hike on Sunday, Dec. 7, from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon.

Start the day with an all-levels yoga session followed by a refreshing hike through scenic trails. Ages 14 or older; free. Register by Dec. 6.

**warrencollisioncenteril.com**

- ✓ Finest quality warranted collision repair
- ✓ Rentals available
- ✓ Certified technicians
- ✓ All insurance accepted
- ✓ Completed in a timely fashion

**WARREN'S COLLISION CENTER**  
860 E.Z. St., Braidwood  
815-458-3300

**WE CARE BEYOND THE REPAIR!**

Public Notice of Draft NPDES Permit  
Public Notice Number: [LAT:25100201](#)

Public Notice is hereby given by Illinois E.P.A., Division of Water Pollution Control, Permit Section, 1021 N. Grand Ave. East, P.O. Box 19276, Springfield, IL 62794-9276 (herein Agency) that a draft National Pollutant Discharge System NPDES Permit Number [IL0026085](#) has been prepared under 40CFR 124.6 (d) City of Wilmington, 1165 South Water Street, Wilmington, Illinois 60481 for discharge into Receiving Water: Kankakee River From: City of Wilmington STP, 601 East Kankakee River Drive, Wilmington, Illinois 60481, (Will County)

This facility provides treatment of wastewater generated within its service area

The application, draft permit, and other documents are available for inspection and may be copied at the Agency between 9:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. A Fact Sheet containing more detailed information is available at no charge. For further information call the Public Notice Clerk at 217-782-0610. Interested persons are invited to submit written comments on the draft permit to the Agency at the above address. The NPDES Permit and Public Notice numbers must appear on each comment page. All comments received by the Agency not later than 30 days from the date of this publication shall be considered in making the final decision regarding permit issuance.

Any interested person may submit written request for a public hearing on the draft permit, stating their name and address, the nature of the issues proposed to be raised and the evidence proposed to be presented with regard to these issues in the hearing. Such requests must be received by the Agency not later than 30 days from the date of this publication.

If written comments and/or requests indicate a significant degree of interest in the draft permit, the permittee authority may, at its discretion, hold a public hearing. Public notice will be given 30 days before any public hearing.

# Wind energy becoming more efficient

Dear EarthTalk:  
What's new on the horizon  
for wind energy?  
-- R.H.K., Newport, RI

## EARTH TALK

Questions & Answers  
About Our Environment



**WIND POWER IS** poised to become significantly more efficient -- and safer for wildlife -- in the coming years thanks to technological advances.

Wind power, a renewable energy source generated from wind turbines, is expected to become significantly more efficient in the coming future. Experts have long been researching, improving and rethinking the structure of wind turbines and wind farms for maximum efficiency.

Recently, a team at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) improved on the Momentum Theory, devised in the 19th century to model how rotors move in an environment. Many factors go into operating a wind farm, like continuously monitoring and changing the direction, angle and rotational speed of the turbines.

By advancing this mathematical model, the

MIT team devised a tool that allows wind farm operators to make more precise adjustments to maximize energy production. "This is what we're so excited about, is that it has immediate and direct potential for impact across the value chain of wind power," says Michael Howland, an Assistant Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at MIT.

Improvements to conventional turbines also show promise. For example, producing turbines with longer blades allows each turbine to capture more energy. Creating taller towers enables generating electricity from

the stronger winds that exist at higher heights.

Another feasible development is "wake steering," which purposefully misaligns turbines with the direction of the airflow in order to generate more energy.

Some companies are innovating beyond the familiar wind turbine, such as Vortex Bladeless, a start-up that has engineered a conical, bladeless wind turbine that utilizes vorticity, an effect that creates a vortex.

Vorticity is often avoided because it can cause oscillation, movements back and forth. But David Suriol, a Vortex Bladeless's founder argues,

"why don't we try to use this energy, not avoid it."

Another way to generate more energy is to create turbines so they can harness energy in less windy places that don't have the space for wind farms, like large cities.

Some scientists want to harness wind power on the ocean with offshore turbines that float on platforms tethered to the ocean floor.

Although there have been great advancements by researchers, scientists and engineers, there is still strong resistance from people across the country.

Policy makers have the important role of developing public knowledge and experience with wind energy, especially in places that are not typically wind-harvesting areas.

If you are interested in wind energy's progression, take the time to educate yourself, friends, family and community about wind energy and the potential it has. In addition, you can contact elected officials to support wind energy legislation in the country.

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

**LIFE'S BETTER WHEN YOU BUNDLE.**

You could save on home & auto when you also purchase life insurance from American Family Life Insurance Company.

Get your personalized quote today.



**Gerald Gresham, Agent**  
1095 S. Water St., Unit C  
Wilmington, IL 60481  
[teamgresham@amfam.com](mailto:teamgresham@amfam.com)  
(815) 476-6364



\*Customers who bundle home, auto and life policies may save on their auto and/or home policies. Discounts may vary by state, property, policy form and company underwriting the auto and/or home policy. Discounts may not apply to all coverages on an auto or home policy. Discounts do not apply to life insurance policies. Products not available in every state. American Family Mutual Insurance Company S.I. & its Operating Companies, American Family Life Insurance Company, 6000 American Parkway, Madison, WI 53763 ©2024 22535 - 04/24 - 24029512

### Commentary

## Support and celebrate small businesses this holiday season

BY RHEA LANDHOLM

This holiday season, will you shop at one of the 33.2 million small businesses that make up 99% of all businesses in the U.S.?

Up and down rural main streets in rural America, shopkeepers are readying their stores for the season. Business owners are stocking special gifts and rolls of wrapping paper to provide added value when you spend your money with a local retailer.

Independently owned businesses are what keep our communities thriving.

They rely on our patronage during the crucial holiday season as well as year-round.

This year, more than ever, small businesses need our support. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Small Business Index, 79% of independent business owners say this upcoming holiday season is important for their overall profit this year, up from 70% last year.

When you shop local, you support your community by paying sales tax. You are also helping out a small business owner who in turn might sponsor a school

activity or host a community event, showing just how important main street businesses are as part of our life in rural America.

Shopping local is good for consumers as well. During this holiday season, more than half of small businesses, 56%, say they are planning to offer seasonal discounts and 48% say they will extend regular business hours (up from 39% last year).

On average, shoppers plan to do 41% of their holiday shopping at small businesses, increased 5% from last year. I am one of these shoppers. Are you?

Small Business Saturday is on Nov. 29—a nationally recognized day to show your appreciation for local retailers. During this holiday season, and year round, #ShopSmall. Support your community, your friends, and your way of life.

When local businesses succeed, we all win.

Rhea Landholm is communications manager for the Center for Rural Affairs, a private, nonprofit organization working to strengthen small businesses, family farms and ranches, and rural communities.

NOV 1 — DEC 15

## DECEMBER CASH GIVEAWAY

Enter to win \$1,000!  
On Dec 15, two (2) \$1,000 winners will be drawn



[www.accelentertainment.com](http://www.accelentertainment.com)  
Winner must present ID to claim prize.  
Must be 21 or older to participate. No purchase necessary.  ACCEL ENTERTAINMENT  
Purchase will not increase chances of winning.  
Odds of winning depend on number of entries received.  
See management for full rules or more information.  
Gambling problem? Please call 1-800-GAMBLER (1-800-426-2537).

# WEESIP LIQUORS

1099 S. Water St., Wilmington • 815-476-2764



## WE BUY Gold & Silver

Let me give you a free estimate on scrap gold, gold jewelry, sterling silver, coins & more



**ANY CONDITION**

We appraise and/or buy coin collections...  
Over 20 years experience

Meet by appointment only  
**CALL 815-370-6110**

112 E. Jefferson St.  
Wilmington

Email [crowncoin23@gmail.com](mailto:crowncoin23@gmail.com)




## Bank Anywhere!

- Check Account Balances
- View Account History
- Transfer Funds
- Pay Bills
- Mobile Check Deposit
- Find Branch & ATM Locations

Download our mobile app from your smartphone.





# Bank of Pontiac

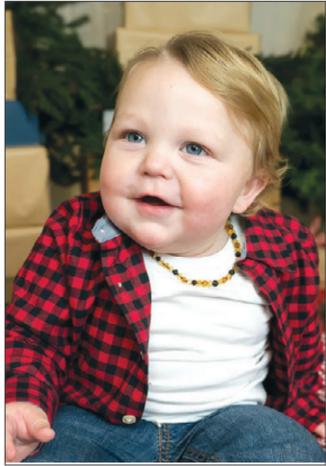
Bloomington • Coal City • Delavan • Dwight • Fairbury • Forrest  
Melvin • Minier • Odell • Paxton • Piper City • Pontiac  
Toll FREE 855-844-6151 | [www.bankofpontiac.com](http://www.bankofpontiac.com)  
Member FDIC

Web access is needed to use Mobile Banking. Check with your service provider for details on specific fees and charges.

# Vote big and often for your favorite elves



**LAINEI OSMANSON**  
BTI Tire & Alignment



**RYATT PETERSON**  
The Corner Tap



**WESLEY COOPER**  
Wilmington Pharmacy



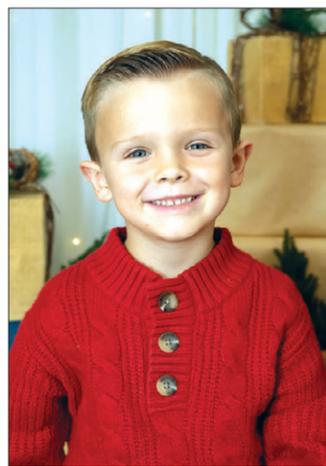
**NOAH CLAUSEN**  
Wilmington City Hall



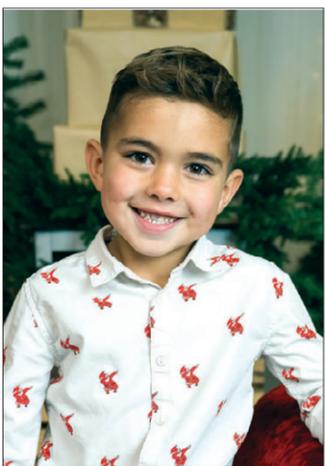
**MCCOY MANN**  
Angelo's Liquor



**MACI ROARK**  
Old School Brewing



**OWEN HANSEN**  
The Rustic Inn



**KANE MURPHY**  
Mimi's Cafe



**LILY DINKINS**  
Covet Consignment



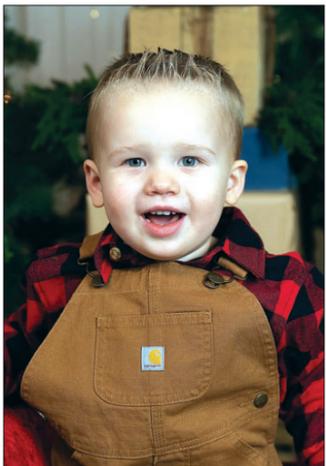
**HUDSON DELEHANTY**  
Arnie Bauer Chevrolet and GMC



**ELLIE SKORYI**  
Route 66 Bar & Grill



**CASH BILLINGSLEY**  
Shell Gas Station



**EASTON FARMER**  
Riverfront Lanes



**CHARLOTTE DZIUBAN**  
Blue Horse Martini Bar



**AVA KAVANAUGH**  
Wilmington Pizzeria



**ADONIS LIAROMATIS**  
Nelson's Furniture



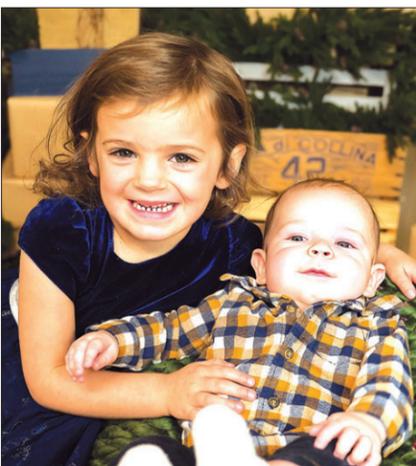
**BRYCEN BOERSMA**  
Grundy Bank



**WYATT RAGAIN**  
The Free Press Newspapers



**JANE, JACK & JAMES SCHMUCKER**  
Tuffy's Lounge & Patio



**LILY & MILO RUZICH**  
The Flower Loft



**AVA ALVAREZ & CARTER RODRIGUEZ**  
Wilmington Tire Tracks



**COOPER & ELAINE ALBERICO**  
The Wine Cafe



**CHANDLER & MAGGIE STICKEL**  
Birdie'sCafe



**MASSIMO LAUD**  
Midtown Mart



**EMERSON KENT**  
Wilmington Currency Exchange



**EMILIA, TONY, ELIANA AND SOFIA VERCELLI**  
Faletti Meats

Photos  
courtesy  
Laura Jane  
Photography  
by Brittany  
Allen

# Vote big and often for your favorite elves



**ROXI & BRADY ADERMANN**  
Abby's Closet



**TEAGAN & BRODY FLOREY**  
CVS Pharmacy



**BEAU & JASE HOLMES**  
Whitmore ACE Hardware



**JOSIE & LUCY MACDONALD**  
Hayden's Crossing



**MCCOY AND CHARLIE BUTCHER**  
Subway



**LIVI & LENNON MARSHALL**  
Wee Sip Liquors



**HARLEE & BILLIE COMBES**  
VFW Post 5422



**GRANT & EVERETT VERCELLI**  
Wilmington Moose Lodge



**CAROLINE & JOE KEMPES**  
The Garage on Water Sports Bar



**ELLIE & COLT HATFIELD**  
Chick-A-Dee Restaurant



**BROOKS & CAM CAPWELL**  
Wilmington Park District

**Vote early, often for your favorite Christmas Elves**

Those doing their holiday shopping will notice Chamber of Commerce's Elf Contest donation boxes at 39 local business checkouts. The boxes are decorated with photos of local children who are helping raise money for the Christian Help Association. The CHA is helping over 1,500 needy people this Christmas. Proceeds from the Elf Contest go to the CHA to use for 400 families who are less fortunate in the 60481 zip code. Elf box donations purchase fresh produce and meat for Christmas food bags and any presents needed to complete the gift tag project. The CHA is thankful to the elves' parents for teaching them that children of any age can help raise money for a great cause. Donations may be placed in the boxes. Everyone is encouraged to vote many times and stuff the boxes. A penny counts as a vote and the three elf boxes containing the most money will generate prizes in Chamber gift certificates. Residents are asked to give spare change now through Jan. 3 to help make a local impact. The goal is to raise over \$6,000 this year, surpassing the all-time high goal set in 2007. Photos of elves and their sponsoring business appear above.



**OWEN WILBUR, RAYLEE MANDES, & GRAYSON SWISHER**  
Wilmington House Restaurant



**OWEN, GAVIN, & MASON FARMER**  
AJ's Hotdogs & Gyros

**Matching Angels 2025**

Double the impact of your donation!  
The first \$6,500 in donations received through December 14th will be matched.  
Mark your donation "Angel Fund" and mail to:

Kuzma Care Cottage  
635 S. Main St., Wilmington IL 60481  
or donate online at:  
[www.kuzmacarecottage.org](http://www.kuzmacarecottage.org)

# Turkey prices lower Thanksgiving meal costs

BY HANNAH SPANGLER  
FARMWEEK

Although shoppers might notice higher prices for certain ingredients, the overall cost of preparing a Thanksgiving dinner has decreased, according to an annual survey from the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF).

In its 40th year, the Thanksgiving survey reports a table of classic dishes for 10 people will cost an average of \$55.18, or about \$5.52 per person, down 5% from last year, but still higher than four years ago.

The estimated cost in Illinois is 11% below the national average, with an estimated total meal cost of \$49.20.

Taking center stage in the survey, and most Thanksgiving tables, the turkey drastically decreased in price, helping lower overall meal costs.

The average price of a 16-pound frozen turkey is \$18.03 in Illinois and \$21.50 nationally, with the national price down more than 16% from last year.

"It's encouraging to see some relief in the price of turkeys, as it is typically the most expensive part of the meal," AFBF Economist Faith Parum said.

Parum noted farmers are still rebuilding turkey flocks hit hard by highly pathogenic avian influenza, but overall demand has declined. That combination is helping keep turkey an affordable option for families this Thanksgiving.

Other ingredients that dropped in price nationally include dinner rolls and stuffing, due to lower wheat prices reducing the cost of flour-based items, along with fresh cranberries. Pumpkin pie mix and pie shell costs stayed about the same as last year. However, prices increased for sweet potatoes, frozen green peas, whole milk, whipping cream and a vegetable tray

of carrots and celery, which jumped more than 61% from last year.

Labor shortages, transportation delays or trade disruptions are among the factors that can cause sharp, short-term price spikes. Parum said fresh produce is typically lower-cost, so even small increases can significantly affect year-over-year percentage changes.

"While the average cost of a Thanksgiving meal has eased in recent years, families are still feeling the effects of the dramatic price spikes we've seen," Illinois Farm Bureau President Brian Duncan.

"Illinois farmers continue to advocate for solutions to address the challenging farm economy and permanent, enforceable trade agreements to provide long-term certainty for farmers."

AFBF analysis shows regional differences in meal costs. The classic Thanksgiving meal was cheapest in the South at \$50.01, followed by the Midwest at \$54.38, the Northeast at \$60.82 and the West at \$61.75.

The expanded meal, added in 2018 and including the classic dishes plus boneless ham, Russet potatoes and green beans, was also most affordable in the South at \$71.20, then the Midwest at \$76.33, the Northeast at \$82.97 and the West at \$84.97. The expanded meal adds an average of \$2.19 per person to the national total and about \$2.25 per person in Illinois.

This year's national average was based on surveys with pricing data from all 50 states and Puerto Rico.

Farm Bureau volunteer shoppers checked prices in person and online through grocery store apps and websites during the first week of November, finding the best prices without using promotional coupons or bundled deals.

This survey is considered an informal snapshot of current prices.

*This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeek Now.com.*

# back to Bethlehem

a journey through Bethlehem on the night of the birth of Jesus

A new journey begins every 10 minutes  
No reservations required - come at any time  
Refreshments following your journey

December 5th & 6th

Friday 6:30-8:30 pm  
Saturday 5-8:30 pm

Island City Baptist Church  
120 Vine Street  
Wilmington, IL  
815.476.9750



### ILLINOIS THANKSGIVING DINNER COSTS

16-POUND TURKEY: <b>\$18.03</b> or <b>\$1.13</b> per pound	3 POUNDS OF SWEET POTATOES: <b>\$3.39</b>	12-OUNCE BAG OF FRESH CRANBERRIES: <b>\$1.89</b>
30-OUNCE CAN OF PUMPKIN PIE MIX: <b>\$4.24</b> HALF PINT OF WHIPPING CREAM: <b>\$1.89</b>	14-OUNCES OF CUBED STUFFING MIX: <b>\$3.45</b>	TOTAL DINNER COST FOR 10: <b>\$49.20</b> <small>11% lower than national average</small>

### Lisa Marie's HAIR SALON

- Men
- Women

CUTS ★ COLOR

450 Davy Ln., Wilmington  
(708) 465-3198

## Wilmington Park District Christkindlmarket

220 N. Water St. | Sat., Nov 29th  
& 110 Bridge St. | 3PM - 6PM

3PM - 6PM	Open Air Vendor Market - 45+ Vendors Ice Carving Demonstration & Individual Portraits *Sponsored by the City of Wilmington Candy Cane Lane Kids Tent & Games Holiday Friends Photos Photo Ops
4PM	Lamplight Carolers
4:15PM	Park District Dancers
5PM	Classic Christmas Movies Holiday Parade *Chamber of Commerce

Follow us on Socials for all the latest details!

Facebook: @wilmingtonparkdistrict  
Instagram: @wilmingtonparkdistrict

## Coal City High School Junior Class Presents The Festival of Trees

### Assumption Catholic Church Berst Center

245 S. Kankakee St., Coal City, IL 60416

Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup> 10 am - 6 pm

Santa 3 pm - 5 pm

Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup> 10 am - 5pm

FREE Admission  
Local Live Entertainment  
Refreshments

# OBITUARIES

## William D. Burns

MORRIS—William D. Burns, 87, of Morris, passed away Friday, Nov. 21, 2025 at Serenity Estates in Morris.

Born Jan. 21, 1938, in Pulaski, IA, William Dean was the son of Bernard Marvin and Edith Gertrude (Wilson) Burns. He was raised in Pulaski and graduated from Pulaski High School. On July 8, 1962, Bill married Judith Reeves at the Methodist Church in Morris, and together they created a family rooted in love.

Bill farmed in Wauponsee and Norman Townships, where he raised Polled Hereford cattle. He also worked for Caterpillar Tractor Company in Joliet, dedicating more than 30 years to the company before retiring. A man of strong faith, Bill was a devoted member of the First United Methodist Church in Morris for more than six decades and was active in the Retired Men's Club.

Bill loved farming and being outdoors. He found pleasure in helping with 4-H cattle projects, working in the garden, and trimming the shrubs. He was easy-going, friendly and enjoyed talking. He also enjoyed country music, especially singer Mickey Gilley. Bill was family-focused and loved trips to visit family in Iowa and Tennessee. He also enjoyed vacations to Branson, MO, the Green Bay Packers, and watching classic western movies. After retiring, Bill found great joy in riding his bike up the road for miles and tending to his purple martins. Above all, he cherished his role as a grandfather and great-grandfather. He loved every minute he got to babysit or support them in their activities. He was a man of faith, an early riser, and a tireless worker. Known for his kindness, gentle spirit, and sense of humor, Bill touched the lives of all who knew him.

Survivors include his loving wife of 63 years, Judy; children: Leann (Jim) Hill, of Morris; Cheryl Stalder, of Huxley, IA and



Philip (Rhonda) Burns, of Morris; grandchildren: Jonathan (Jessica) Hill, Lauren (Ryan) Vincent, Samuel Stalder, William Stalder, Taite Burns and Owen Burns; great-grandchildren: Emily Vincent and Elijah Vincent; siblings: David (Debbie) Burns Pulaski, of Iowa; Bonnie (Junior) Kerns, of Las Cruces, NM; sisters-in-law, Shirley Jorstad and Carol Jacobs, both of Morris, and brother-in-law, Jerry Gaffney, of Barneveld, WI, as well as numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents; sister, Marilyn (Burns) Harryman; brothers-in-law: Merlin Harryman, Russell Jorstad and Gilbert Jacobs; sister-in-law, Nancy Gaffney and son-in-law, Kenneth Stalder, as well as his father-in-law and mother-in-law, Glenn and Goldie Reeves.

The family will receive friends for a visitation at the First United Methodist Church, 118 W. Jackson St. in Morris on Sunday, Nov. 30, 2025 from 2 p.m. until 5 p.m. and again on Monday morning, Dec. 1, 2025 in the church from 9 a.m. until time of funeral service at 10 a.m. Pastor Hyo Sun Oh will officiate.

Burial will follow the services in Evergreen Cemetery, Morris. Pallbearers will be Bill's nephews: Steven Jorstad, Scott Gaffney, Ryan Jacobs, Brad Burns and Matthew Burns. Honorary pallbearers will be Bill's grandsons: Jonathan Hill, Samuel Stalder, William Stalder, Taite Burns and Owen Burns.

The family would like to express their sincere thanks to the staff at The Gardens at Park Pointe, Serenity Estates, and Lightways Hospice for their compassionate care, love and support.

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

## Stanley Long



WILMINGTON—Stanley Long, 91, of Wilmington, passed away peacefully on Saturday, Nov. 22, 2025 at his home.

Born Feb. 24, 1934 in Bennett, NE, Stanley Bruce was a son of Charles and Elsie (Gee) Long. He was raised in Nebraska and graduated from high school in Beaver, OK. Following high school, Stanley served in the United States Marine Corps from 1954 until his honorable discharge in 1957. On Feb. 22, 1958, he married Sandra Sue Kranz and together they shared 52 years of marriage until her passing in 2010.

Stanley began his career with Northern Petrochemical in Iowa, before relocating to Texas and then Illinois in 1971. He worked as a processing technician at LyondellBassell in Morris until his retirement after 35 years of dedicated service. Stanley was a devoted member of Grace Lutheran Church where he enjoyed singing in the choir. He had a beautiful singing voice and shared that love not only with his church family but with the public through a local community choir. Stanley was also a big fan of the Wilmington Wildcat football team and was proud to be a "Cat Backer." He instructed Judo while living in Texas, and found great peace in being outdoors. Whether it was fishing, gardening, or going for a long walk, Stanley was happiest when he could be out in nature. He also took great pleasure in traveling all around the world with his wife, as well as a special trip to the Boundary Waters along the Canadian border in Minnesota with his grandsons.

Stanley was a family man who never said a bad thing about anyone. He had a great sense of humor, and was a lover of all living creatures, especially his dogs. He will



be deeply missed by his family and friends who were blessed with his love for his 91 years.

Survivors include his daughters: Regina (Greg) Bauer, of Wilmington; Mila Morrison, of Wheaton, IL; Wendy (Kevin) Gorges, of Wilmington and Nikki (Brad) Haase, of Bradley, IL; six grandchildren: Bradley (Nicole) Bauer, Josh (Miriam) Wilkes, Jacob (Jayme) Long, Madison Gorges, Nicholas (Makenzie) Redmond, and Teagan Haase; five great-grandchildren: Jovie, Margot, Cody, Liana, and Lainey; one sister-in-law, Jennifer (the late Jim) Price, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Stanley was preceded in death by his parents and his beloved wife, Sandra; son, Robert Long; mother and father-in-law, Walter and Helen Kranz; seven brothers and sisters: Robert, Gerald, Ivan, Rosalie, Eloise, Lowell and Dean; and his brother-in-law: Gary (Joyce) Kranz.

The family will receive friends at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd., in Wilmington on Friday, Nov. 28, 2025 from 11 a.m. until the time of funeral service at 1 p.m. Reverend Paul Carlson will officiate, and interment with full military honors will follow at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Stanley's memory to Grace Lutheran Church, 907 Luther Dr., Wilmington, IL 60481.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto [www.BaskervilleFuneral.com](http://www.BaskervilleFuneral.com) to sign the guestbook, upload photographs, and share Stanley's memorial page online through social media.

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

## Dolores Hertenstein

COAL CITY—Heaven gained another angel when Dolores Gagliardo Hertenstein, 100, passed away peacefully in her home on Saturday, Nov. 22, 2025, surrounded by her family and the endless love she inspired throughout her life.

Born on Sept. 4, 1925 in Coal City, Dolores was the beloved daughter of Albertina "Bert" LaZier and Joseph "Ginger" Gagliardo.

On Nov. 2, 1947, Dolores married the love of her life, Leslie E. Hertenstein. Together they built a beautiful life and raised two daughters. For roughly four decades, Dolores and Leslie also operated a successful photography business, capturing the history of their community one moment, one family and one wedding at a time. It was a unique privilege that allowed them to preserve generations of memories with care and artistry. Per Dolores's wishes, the family will be donating their entire library of negatives to the Carbon Hill Museum.

Dolores was a woman deeply committed to her community. She founded the Eileen Villagers and proudly served as its president. She was a dedicated Girl Scout Troop Leader for many years and a very active, dedicated member of the University of Illinois Homemakers Extension. Through every role she took on and every hat she wore, she poured in her heart, her talent and her unwavering generosity - somehow always finding the time to share her magic and love with everyone who knew her.

She is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Sherrie and Michael Taylor, of Morris; her son-in-law, William Boresi, of Coal City and her grandsons; Matthew (Melissa) Boresi, of Chicago; Joseph (Tania) Taylor, of San Diego; Justin (Rebecca) Claypool, of Dwight and her granddaughter, Amity (Phillip) Provenzano, of San Diego.

Dolores was preceded in death by her husband, Leslie E. Hertenstein, her daughter, Susan L. Boresi, her cherished grand-



daughter, Gina Boresi and two brothers: Marvin (Cleo) Gagliardo and Maynard (Patti) Gagliardo.

Grandma Dee treasured her 12 great-grandchildren: Tre (Jocelyn) Chavez, Gina (Cristian) Chavez Robles, Giada, Silvana and Nino Provenzano, Zoey (Cody) Weaver, Audrey, Blake and Carter Claypool; Joey and Jeremy Taylor and Vivian Boresi. Dolores also was privileged to know her two great-great-grandchildren; Thea Weaver and Savyn Chavez.

Dolores lived a full and extraordinary century - one marked by grace, strength and an unmistakable elegance. She was the epitome of class and sophistication, with a presence that made everyone feel loved, welcomed and celebrated. To know her was to truly love her.

The family will receive friends for a visitation at Reeves Funeral Home, 75 N. Broadway, one block north of Illinois Route 113 in Coal City on Friday, Nov. 28, between the hours of 3 and 7 p.m. Funeral services will follow on Saturday morning at 11 a.m. in Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Roman Catholic Church, 215 S. Kankakee St. in Coal City. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated with Reverend Josh Miller presiding.

Cremation rites will follow, and a private family inurnment will be in Braceville-Gardner Cemetery, where Dolores will be laid to rest with her late husband.

Memorials in Dolores's name may be given to the Chicago Chapter of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society or Easter Seals of Will & Grundy County.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto [www.ReevesFuneral.com](http://www.ReevesFuneral.com) to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Dolores' memorial page online through social media.

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

## Lawrence Shroba



WILMINGTON—Lawrence "Larry" Shroba, Formerly of Wilmington, passed away on Nov. 10, 2025, at the age of 76 years.

Larry is survived by his son Kevin (Becky) and daughter Angie (Ted) Lefere. He will be missed by his grandchildren Andrew and Daniel Shroba and Maggie, Helen, Luke, and James. Larry is also survived by his brother Steve (Gail) Shroba and multiple nieces and nephews. Larry is preceded in death by his wife Karen, parents Andrew and Mary, brother Thomas, and sisters Marianne Kemp and Diane Craig.

Larry was born in Joliet, IL on Jan. 30, 1949. He graduated from Joliet Central High School in 1967 and enlisted in the Army the following year. He served in Vietnam and was proud to be a veteran. Larry never hesitated to shake the hand and thank a fellow veteran in public, frequently buying a round of drinks or their meal.

Larry met his future wife Karen shortly after coming home from war and they were married in the fall of 1973. They enjoyed 51 years of marriage together before Karen's passing in January of this year. They were the perfect pair, with Larry's quiet humor and wit always recognized in contrast to Karen's chattiness.

The couple raised Kevin and Angie in the home Larry single-handedly built. They spent over 40 years in this home along the banks of the Kankakee River. Larry was active from sunup to sundown, fishing, tending to his garden, working in the yard, and tinkering on multiple projects. However, he would always pause to watch some football, especially the Chicago Bears. Larry was a skilled craftsman and extremely talented at metalworking, especially with copper. He was able to construct and fix anything. He shared his tool and outdoor knowledge with his grandsons and allowed his grandchildren



to help around the house and yard with multiple projects.

Larry was a true provider for his family and spent 35 years as a Union Local 265 Sheet Metal Worker. He discovered karate after his retirement from Peter Perella Company in May 2007 and earned his black belt, bringing home many trophies from competitions. He and Karen also enjoyed traveling together, making annual trips to Florida and South Carolina.

Larry was loved by all those who knew him. He had a wicked, yet quiet, sense of humor; he didn't need to be the center of attention to get the laughs. Everyone who knew Larry remembers his trademark smirk. He humored his kids, and then his grandchildren, with his creative drawings and stories. Larry was a fun dad and grandpa, never hesitating to throw a ball, hook a worm, make some paper chef hats before making pizza with the grandkids, swim, grill out, or cheer the kids on at sports events. He never complained about the hand he was dealt, even as his health declined. "Everyone loves Larry," was a compliment commonly delivered.

Larry was a loyal husband and a dad who never failed to let his kids know he was proud of them and supported them. He was known to be a sweet, funny, smart grandpa who could figure anything out. Sincere thanks to the entire team at Vista Grande Villa and Tammy at Careline Hospice. The compassion, care, and love you gave to Larry did not go unnoticed.

Larry will be laid to rest alongside his wife, Karen at the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, IL. A military funeral honors ceremony will be held on 4/17/26 at 2:00 P.M. at the Cemetery, with family and friends gathering at the Silver Dollar Restaurant in Elwood immediately following.

In memory of Larry, we invite you to honor him with a contribution to the Wounded Warrior Project, a cause close to his heart.

## John Hynds

MORRIS—John William Hynds, "Jack," of Morris, passed away Thursday, Nov. 20, 2025 at his home.

Jack was born Nov. 26, 1939 in Morris to William I. Hynds and Jane (Crook) Hynds. Jack attended Immaculate Conception School and graduated from Morris Community High School in 1957. He graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree and obtained his law degree from the Northwestern University School of Law in 1964. He clerked for Illinois Supreme Court Justice Walter Schaefer for one year before returning to Morris to join his father in the practice of law. Jack practiced law in Morris until his retirement in 2023. He married Karen N. Clausen in 1966 and together they raised three children in Morris.

In addition to practicing law for 59 years, Jack owned several retail stores, developed real estate and was the co-owner of Advantage Realty, Inc. and Advantage Property Management, Inc.

Jack was always active in the community. He served on the board of the Morris Area Public Library. He served on the Morris Hospital Board of Directors from 1971-1980 including as board chairman. In 1994, he co-founded the Morris Hospital Foundation and served as its chairman for 15 years.

Jack was active in and supportive of Immaculate Conception Church. His



strong belief in Catholic education and formation led him to devote many rewarding hours to raising scholarship funds for Immaculate Conception School. Jack volunteered at ICS as the boys' basketball coach. He and Karen organized the first Octoberfest at ICS, which has become a primary fundraising event for the school.

Jack is survived by his wife of 59 years, Karen; his children: Anne (David) Bzdill, John (Jennifer) W. Hynds Jr., and David N. Hynds; six grandchildren: Jeffrey and Meghan Bzdill and Luke, Henry, Carly and Cassie Hynds; and his sister, Anne Gorham.

Jack was preceded in death by his parents.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Wednesday, Nov. 26, 2025 at Immaculate Conception Church in Morris, with Father Jason Stone presiding and Deacon Paul Jung assisting. Burial was in Mt. Carmel Cemetery, Morris.

Those wishing to make a donation in Jack's memory are encouraged to consider Immaculate Conception School in Morris.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto [www.FrulandFuneral.com](http://www.FrulandFuneral.com) to sign the guest book and share Jack's memorial page online through social media.

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

## Linda Lee Pierce

CARBON HILL—Linda Lee Pierce, 74, of Carbon Hill, passed away Monday, Nov. 24, 2025 at her home.

Born April 7, 1951 in Decatur, IN, Linda was a daughter of Marvin and Margaret Maye (Weaver) Stetler. She was raised in Pleasant Mills, IN and graduated from Adams Central High School with the class of 1969. On Oct. 7, 1972, Linda married David Michael Pierce in Pleasant Mills, and together they would eventually make their home in Carbon Hill.

Linda achieved her Bachelor's Degree in Nursing, and had a long, dedicated career as a registered nurse. For the past 25 years, she served with Lightways Hospice in Joliet, caring for countless people in need. In her free time, Linda enjoyed getting away for girls trips and solving jigsaw puzzles. She was a lover of all things Elvis and the dynasty era Chicago Bulls, especially Scottie Pippen. Above all else, Linda was happiest when she was with her family. Being with her husband, daughter, and grandkids was always her priority, never missing any of her grandkids' events. Linda



also had a great love for animals, particularly her pets whom she spoiled. Her passion for service, dedicated care and compassion, and love of family will be a lasting legacy for those who knew and loved her.

Survivors include her husband, David Pierce, of Carbon Hill, and her daughter, Kelly (Pete) McConnell, of Diamond; two grandchildren: Avery and Declan; one sister, Diana (Norman) Chamberlain, of Decatur, IN; and her nieces and nephew: Lonnie, Angie, Stephanie, and Travis.

Linda was preceded in death by her parents.

Per her wishes, cremation rites are being accorded and their will be no services.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto [www.ReevesFuneral.com](http://www.ReevesFuneral.com) to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Linda's memorial page online through social media.

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

Happy Thanksgiving





# COMET SPORTS



Photo by Eric Fisher

COAL CITY'S Alyssa Wollenzien takes the ball to the basket during the Comet Classic tournament held last week.



Photo by Eric Fisher

LADY COMET Morgan Toler drives the lane while being pressured by a Grant Park player.



Photo by Eric Fisher

LADY COMET Kamryn Wilkey breaks away for a lay-up. Wilkey had a total of seven points.

## Lady Comets go 3-1 during Classic

The Reed-Custer girls basketball team went 3-1 last week during the Comet Classic Tournament.

They opened their season on Monday with a 55-24 victory over Grace Christian.

Junior Alyssa Wollenzien was on fire, scoring 22 points including 6-for-9 at the free throw line. Senior Morgan Toler chipped in with eight points while Kamryn Wilkey and Harlee Liebermann contributed eight points each.

Scoring four points each were Atiana Hood and Skylar Wilkins.

On Tuesday the Lady Comets upended Grant Park 39-19, with another impressive display by Wollenzien who finished with 16 points.

Hood helped out with six points, Liebermann tossed in

five points while Wilkey and Toler tallied four points each.

Things didn't go their way against Wilmington on Wednesday when they lost 43-24.

The Lady Wildcats built an early lead with six three-point shots before holding on in the end.

Wollenzien and Liebermann led the Lady Comets with seven points each. Hood contributed six points.

On Friday the Lady Comets defeated Coal City 34-24 to close out the tournament.

It was another impressive night for Wollenzien who put up 19 points while Wilkey tallied seven points and Liebermann five.

The Lady Comets will host Wilmington Monday.



Photo by Eric Fisher

LADY COMET Atiana Hood dribbles down the court during Friday's game against Coal City.

## Panthers lose to tough Seneca

The 8th grade Panthers dropped their home opener 35-23 to Seneca.

The boys played hard and battled all game. The shots just did not drop for them on this night.

The Panthers were led by Nolan Frietas with 7, along with Kasey Kolb and George Morgan adding 5 points to the cause.

The Panthers will look to get back after it at home on Wednesday against Bradley.

Photo by Eric Fisher  
**THE LADY COMETS** have plenty of bench support this year under the direction of head coach Shelby Zwolinski and assistant coaches Matt Hines and Claire Mountain.



## Standouts earn spots on Illinois Central Eight All-Conference volleyball team

The Illinois Central Eight Conference released its 2025 All-Conference Volleyball Team, and several local athletes from Wilmington, Coal City, and Reed-Custer were recognized for standout seasons on the court.

**Coal City**  
Coal City placed two seniors on the All-Conference list, each instrumental in the Coalers' strong season.

Sydney Larson, a setter, earned honors for her leadership and consistency running the offense. Larson's court vision and ability to spread the ball effectively helped power Coal City's balanced attack all year.  
Riley Walker, right-side

hitter, also earned recognition. Walker's combination of blocking presence and attacking strength made her a key two-way contributor.

**Reed-Custer**  
Reed-Custer junior Alyssa Wollenzien was named All-Conference at middle blocker, anchoring the Comets' front row. Her ability to control the net and convert quick-set opportunities made her one of the conference's top middles and a major bright spot for Reed-Custer this season.

**Wilmington**  
The conference winning Lady Wildcats had four athletes named to the All-Conference Team, high-

lighting the program's growth and the strength of its upperclassmen.

Melia Hincherrick, senior outside hitter, earned honors for her dynamic offensive play and all-around consistency.  
Sami Liromatis, junior Libero, received recognition for her defensive command, passing accuracy and ability to keep plays alive.

Rachel Smith, senior outside hitter, was selected for her steady offensive production and leadership on the court.

Molly Southall, senior setter/right-side, earned dual-position honors for her versatility, setting precision and strong presence in the front row.

**Geo's PIZZA** "Proud to be serving the community for the past 40 years!" FRESH HOT DELIVERY!

**COUPON**

**40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL**

**1 X-Large - 2 Topping Pizza**  
XL Geo's Nuggets, 2-Liter of Soda and Slice of Brownie  
(Limit 1 coupon per party per visit)

**ONLY \$31.99**

Not valid with any other offer. Plus sales tax. Expires 11/30/2025

**715 S. Broadway, Coal City** **815-634-8858**  
Order online at [www.geospizza.net](http://www.geospizza.net)

GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and X.