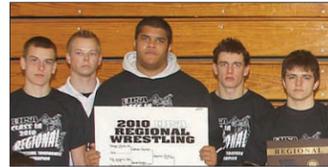




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Comet wrestling dream team picks



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A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER

Ex-mayor: 'We have to protect what we've got'

BY BRIAN MURPHY
CORRESPONDENT

There was a somber atmosphere during the regular City Council meeting Nov. 24 at Braidwood City Hall. It was the first meeting since the death of Commissioner Charles "Charlie" Hart on Nov. 13, and Mayor Robert Jones asked for a moment of silence for Hart. City Administrator Tony Altieri and Commissioner Doug Money were not present for the meeting.

Former mayor James Vehrs spoke during public comment and was concerned with the city's image.

"I drove by Marathon gas station yesterday and I see they got bars on the windows and across the front. This is the first impression that we are getting to our city that we are not protecting our businesses. I don't want this to turn into downtown Chicago

where every business has bars on it, so that's my only concern and I would like everyone to stay safe through the Thanksgiving holidays."

Jones said despite his disagreement there is a reason for the security measures.

"I don't want to see that either, but they've been hit (burglarized) three times down there for cigarettes."

Vehrs said the police department is under-funded but must do the best they can with the resources in place.

"We have to do something or change our image here as you're coming into town. You have to realize that our population has grown, our police department has grown, but our tax base hasn't grown to meet our police department," Vehrs said.

Police Chief Todd Lyons clarified his thoughts on the situation regarding the security measures.

"I will tell you one thing about the Marathon gas station getting hit, so did Minooka, so did New Lenox, so did Lockport. All these communities that have plenty of officers are still getting broken into. We could hire 10 more officers, but they are in and out in 20 seconds. That's why the owner put the bars there," Lyons said.

"I don't like the look either; it sends the wrong message, but that's a personal choice. We have them (suspects in the robbery) identified and our investigator did a great job, but to prevent something we would have to hire 30 guys and have an officer sit there all night."

"I understand that, but we have to protect what we've got," Vehrs said.

"I think we're doing a great job of doing that, you don't think we're doing a good job," Lyons asked.

After Vehrs responded "No" to the question, Lyons asked him to clarify

the reason.

"You're not patrolling the town the way it should be patrolled, and I will come and talk to you," Vehrs said.

"When I got here most of the cars here, most of the cars on day shift, weren't even marked and they had soft plates, so how would they even know if we're patrolling? Now we have more police presence because we have marked units. If you start speaking out and bash the police department, I'm gonna stick up for it because I think our guys are doing a great job," Lyons said.

"I did not bash the police department, I just said that we had to step up and do a bit more. I will come down and talk to you this week," Vehrs said.

In other business, council members approved the minutes of the Nov. 10, regular meeting, \$124,585.13 for payroll and approved \$77,420.90 for

the payment of bills. The largest payroll expenses were full time patrol wages at \$13,748.96, Sergeants salaries at \$9,355.20 and part time patrol wages at \$7,338.79. The largest bills were \$25,247.06 for the Water/Sewer Department, \$24,139.38 for the Police Department and \$13,604.26 for Administration.

Commissioner Fay Smith took issue with one of the bills and asked for it to be moved out of his department.

"I have a bill here and I called City Hall and they said Altieri said to put it on me. It don't belong to me, this guy never worked for me, I never okayed any of this and if there is anybody supposed to get that bill it's administration because he worked for them at one point in time. I don't see paying that bill because I didn't

SEE COUNCIL, PAGE 2



BRAIDWOOD RESIDENT MIKE Basgen (lower left) was able to secure a \$1,250 donation from his employer, Walmart in Elwood, to benefit the Community Care Center food pantry in Braidwood. Basgen presented a check to pantry director Noreen Brandle and center volunteers on Tuesday.

Donation helps stock pantry shelves

Walmart employee earns cash for Community Care Center

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

It's been 16 years since the Community Care Center Food Pantry opened its doors in Braidwood. This week, the pantry got a \$1,250 boost from one local resident and the generosity of Walmart.

Mike Basgen of Braidwood works as a yard driver at the Walmart distribution center in Elwood. Basgen has been volunteering at the food pantry for two

years, and found a way to turn his service into additional dollars for the facility.

"Because I volunteer here, Walmart has a program called a VAP program — Volunteerism Always Pays — and because I do that here, I can record my hours and then Walmart pays out to the organization. They do that for all kinds of organizations, they do group volunteer stuff, this is an individual one."

That means by turning in his hours, he was able to raise the \$1,250 all on his own.

"I enjoy it, I enjoy everyone here, everyone is friendly and nice and it was a nice atmosphere," he said of his time so far with the pantry. "Since my shift at Walmart is Friday, Saturday and Sunday, I'm off on Tuesdays and Monday when we get a truck, so I'm able to be here and

volunteer, so I do."

And that cash will go a long way.

In addition to food donations, the Community Care Center receives food from the Northern Illinois Food Bank. Thanks to this partnership, every \$1 donated helps provide \$8 worth of groceries.

Pantry director Noreen Brandle said it's hard to gauge just what effect the COVID-19 pandemic has had on those who utilize the pantry, noting that currently, the numbers are down. The pantry is currently serving between 25 and 30 families per week.

"It's on again, off again," Brandle said. "We just don't know how to get people to come in. Sometimes they're

SEE PANTRY, PAGE 2

Governor: Thanksgiving likely to have a negative effect on COVID numbers

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

Tier 3 resurgence mitigations continue to stay in effect across the state.

On Monday, Gov. JB Pritzker said the state would evaluate any effects of the Thanksgiving holiday before making any changes regarding the current resurgence mitigations.

"I spoke to [National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director] Dr. [Anthony] Fauci to get his input about Illinois' situation," Pritzker said during a press conference with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) on Monday. "He said the massive number of indoor gatherings by people visiting family and friends across the nation will very likely bring a post-Thanksgiving surge, and he believes this is no time to pull back on mitigations."

The entire state of Illinois entered Tier 3 mitigations on Nov. 20.

Per those mitigations, bars and restaurants continue to be restricted from offering indoor service. Additional mitigations include capacity limits at grocery stores and pharmacies of 50%, funerals are limited to 10 guests, and all other meetings/gatherings, including weddings and private parties, are prohibited.

Additionally, health and fitness centers, personal care services, malls, and retail stores outside of grocery stores or pharmacies are limited to 25% capacity.

Masks and social distancing remain mandatory in all

public spaces.

When asked about enforcement of those mitigations that are supposed to close down indoor service at bars and restaurants, Pritzker said local officials should be stepping up.

"It isn't just up to state troopers to enforce the law. That's the job of states attorneys, that's the job of local law enforcement, that's the job of mayors and city councils and county executives and so on... and our departments of public health," Pritzker said. "So, we're asking everybody to do what's right, to follow the law."

Local departments in Wilmington and Braidwood have not been patrolling or enforcing for masks or indoor service at local bars and restaurants. But, Wilmington Police Chief Phil Arnold did note in November that the IDPH had been in the area, and has the authority when it comes to enforcement.

Asked on Monday if he was considering a second stay-at-home order, Pritzker said the state isn't there just yet.

"When we put the Tier 3 mitigations in place, it's short of a stay-at-home order, because we may be able to avoid a stay-at-home order," he said. "That's our goal, that's our hope, if everybody follows the mitigations and if we don't see as big a surge as is being discussed nationwide, we'll be able to avoid a stay-at-home order."

Pritzker said should another stay-at-home order be implemented, it won't be an

SEE COVID, PAGE 2

Elion Logistics Park set to add new warehouse

Logistics provider will occupy new building on Kavanaugh Road

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

WILMINGTON — The Elion Logistics Park at I-55 and Lorenzo Road is set for more growth.

The Wilmington planning and zoning commission held a special hearing on Tuesday, Nov. 24, regarding the proposed annexation and rezoning of properties into the industrial park. The property in question sits adjacent to the

current border of the park, on the northwest corner of Kavanaugh and Murphy Roads.

The annexed property includes just under 47 acres of land, west of Kavanaugh Road and north of Murphy Road.

Elion is owned by Adar Ridgeport Industrial Partners.

Michael Stellino, the managing director with Elion Partners which serves as the developers of Adar Ridgeport, said the logistics park currently houses 6.4 million square feet of industrial buildings fully developed, with a 100% occupancy rate. The most recent project was an 810,900 square foot building that they were able to lease during the pandemic

"Since that time, we've been out on the market actively looking for additional tenants," Stellino told the commission. "We were fortunate enough to sign a 500,000 square foot lease for a build-to-suit with a company called Dynamic 3PL. They're currently located in two facilities north of us, they're consolidating, growing into one facility, so they will be joining us in October of [2021]."

Dynamic 3PL is a warehouse-based logistics provider. The plan for the Dynamic 3PL site will be a phased construction, with a proposed build out from the original 500,000 square feet to an approximate 1.1 million square feet total.

"We are also in talks with other tenants that we are actively perusing to join us at Ridgeport and in Wilmington," Stellino said. "We're excited about that, we're excited about our neighbors and what they have planned as well as continuing efforts with the department of transportation and others to continue to grow the project, as well as additional infrastructure to come to I-55 and adjacent properties."

The public hearing was held virtually over the teleconferencing website Zoom. While there were no public comments during the hearing, one comment was submitted

SEE ELION, PAGE 2

Tree lighting, parade Saturday

Braidwood will hold its 10th annual Lighted Christmas Parade and Festivities "A Hometown Christmas" on Saturday, Dec. 5 along Main Street.

Organizers have planned the event keeping social distancing and mask wearing in mind. Those attending are urged to wear a mask, especially when stepping inside to visit with Santa.

For starters, the Reed-Custer Madrigal Singers will sing Christmas favorites in front of the Braidwood City Hall at 141 W. Main St. at 4:45 p.m. at the tree lighting ceremony.

At 5 p.m. there will be a tree lighting ceremony across from City Hall.

The Lighted Christmas Parade will then step off following the tree lighting cere-

mony, traveling west along Main Street from Mitchell St. (Casey's) to the Reed-Custer Elementary School (Walker St. - backside of school).

The public is invited to the Braidwood Fire Department after the parade to see a special someone who wears a red suit. You can get a picture with Santa or there will be a photographer there to take a picture if you forgot your camera.

The event is being sponsored by the Braidwood Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with the City of Braidwood, it's ESDA volunteers and the police department.



Council

OK it. If you will redo that I will vote for it, but I don't want that to go for me," Smith said.

City Attorney Bryan Wellner provided clarification about the process.

"Here's the thing, I'm assuming we're not contesting that the city doesn't owe it. Whether it's coming out of your account or Wayne's, I'm sure the city still owes it. We can still have the city look into where it will be put," Wellner said.

"I think we all should look real closely at what's being spent and I think it's my job to do that. I'll second the motion since they understand what's going on," Smith said.

Commissioner Wayne Saltzman presented his statement regarding the ongoing situation about Smith's decision to promote a part timer to full time.

"At the beginning of the year, we cut Mr. Smith's budget by I think about \$150,000 and he has the lowest in the City. I went along with it just so we could work together with the rest of the city commissioners and the Mayor so we could have a balanced budget to start the year. Now it comes out where there's a lot of controversy on Mr. Smith not getting a lot of

stuff done in the city. The thing is he only has three and a half employees and what he wants to do is make his part time employee as a full-time employee. After talking with Attorney Wellner we published a thing tonight and I went through and met with Kyle our finance person today. We found the money in his budget today he most likely won't use, it's there and after we pass this, we will add some money over to the salary. I would appreciate if you would pass this so Mr. Smith can make this guy full time and we can get on with the winter months coming on and he can get his license approved."

Wellner described the process required to amend the budget and Smith's limitations without proper procedural steps taking place.

"We need to publish and make available the amended budget for inspection and would have to have the amended budget to vote on. This draft ordinance has it incorporated so that would be an exhibit to that. You need to get it on the next agenda and Kyle will need to prepare that and actually publish the amended budget. You do understand that your ability to hire and fire is capped by your appropriations; you have the ability to hire all your employees, but you can't exceed your budget."

Smith said his support of the original

budget was dependent on an understanding that has not been followed through.

"If you remember before we voted on that budget, they agreed for it to be five and five and take two of them out of water and sewer. The agreement was made, and we let it go, but they backed off. At the first of October I told the clerk to make him full time and somehow it didn't happen. I do not want to break the law and I wished everybody followed the rules and regulations like I did," Smith said.

Saltzman said the process to amend the budget has begun and is on the "right track" now.

Turkey giveaway

Saltzman shared news about the local food pantry and their turkey giveaway program.

"We've given away just short of 100 turkeys. There's a lot of people in this country out of work and they're finally running short on funds. It's really sad that a country as prosperous as ours has people out there begging," Saltzman said. "I don't know how else to get the word out to people that's what we're here for at the food pantry. We still have food left and the city has been so gracious to let us use the building over there that's centrally located."

Pantry

embarrassed. What can we do?"

While the pantry has a service area, the volunteers help everyone who comes through the doors.

"Right now, because of the pandemic, we've been serving almost everybody. Because if you need food, you need food. We don't ever turn

people away," Brandle said.

"There are a lot of people out there who are too proud to come. I know some people who refuse to come," added Wayne Saltzman, a pantry volunteer who helped found the center 16 years ago.

The center recently provided around 100 turkey dinners for Thanksgiving, and has a handful more that they plan to pass out for Christmas.

As far as the donation from Basgen and Walmart, Brandle said it will go a long way to helping stock the

shelves at the pantry.

"It's always a good feeling knowing that you're helping people," Brandle said.

Volunteers with the pantry hope that in addition to encouraging folks to utilize the service the community will also reach out to offer their support.

"There are people in need," Brandle said. "There are people in need, period. We're here to help as much as we can... Tell all your friends and family to come if they need help. We're here."

The Community Care Center food pantry is located at 112 S. Center St. in Braidwood, next to City Hall.

The pantry is open on Tuesdays from 8 a.m. until 11:45 a.m.

The pantry is also open on Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. to hand out bakery items, produce, and perishables.

The pantry services the communities of Braidwood, Braceville, Essex, Essex Township, Godley, Shadow Lakes and Bookwalter Woods.

Elion

prior to the meeting via email. City administrator Joie Ziller said the comment came from a resident who lives near the industrial park.

"She said she just wants to not be forgotten about," Ziller said. "She's still waiting on Elion to make her an offer on her home."

That resident, Stacey Johnstone, lives on Kavanaugh Road, south of Murphy Road.

Stellino added that Elion Partners have been in contact with Johnstone as well as other remaining residents near the industrial park.

"For the record, we reached out to this homeowner in October 2019, made an offer, we revised that offer in December 2019... the homeowner did not

respond. They ended up responding in May of 2020 with a significantly higher demand price. We've gone back and forth," he told the commission.

Per the development agreement with the city of Wilmington, Adar Ridgeport is required to make an offer to property owners within one half mile of development at 125% of the property value as of 2010, plus 2% for each year after. Stellino said the Johnstone residence does not fall in that half mile zone, but said Adar Ridgeport would continue to try to work with local residents.

"This homeowner is well outside that half mile, so in an effort to cooperate with the homeowners we made an offer, again, we actually made three offers," he told the commissioners. "We will continue to speak with this homeowner, we understand our obligation, and we will make sure that we continue to follow the guidelines of our agreement."

As far as the annexation and rezon-

ing before the City Council, the developers said these first approvals are part of the clerical work needed to clear the way for the construction to begin.

"It's really quite simple, we have an annexation agreement with the city, and under that annexation agreement, we have certain obligations and the city has certain obligations... one of which is, when we acquire property that is adjacent to the current holdings that are within the city, we're required to come to [the city] because we have to submit a petition and have the property annexed into the city," said attorney Benjamin Schuster, a partner with Elrod Friedman, LLP which represents Adar Ridgeport. "This is the zoning piece, so, we're just looking for the property to come into the city to match the zoning of the rest of Ridgeport."

The zoning change will annex the property into the city and zone it as I-5 Large Scale Planned Industrial Zoning District.

Covid

exact repeat of March.

"A stay-at-home order is about the furthest that one could go. It wouldn't be exactly like the one in the spring if it did happen. But, it's not something right now that we think we're going to have to do. What we're worried about is, you see the hospitalization numbers. We're at a peak that we haven't seen before... If we got a surge like we've had over the last three to four weeks come on top of where we are now, that would be something that was extraordinarily worrisome for all of us."

The governor also pushed personal responsibility when it comes to slowing the spread.

"Part of it is, let's make sure we're taking care of our hospitals and our healthcare workers so they can do the jobs that they need to do," Pritzker said.

"Part of it is, we've got to get people to wear masks and remind everybody of the importance of it. And part of it is, we want to make sure we get the vaccine out as fast as we can, particularly to health care workers so that we can keep our hospitals going."

As of Tuesday afternoon, the IDPH had announced 12,542 new cases of COVID-19 in Illinois and 125 additional deaths, including two in Will County, a male in his 50s and a female in her 70s.

The test positivity seven-day rolling average in Will County as of Nov. 28 is 17.4%.

Since the start of the pandemic, Will County has 49,092 positive cases, and 539 deaths.

The total number of cases in the 60481 zip code, which includes Wilmington, Shadow Lakes, Symerton, and surrounding areas is 647. In the 60408 zip code, which includes Braidwood, the total number of cases since March is 343.

IDPH to conduct COVID testing in Coal City

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), in conjunction with the Grundy County Health Department, will host a COVID-19 mobile testing site on Sunday, Dec. 6 in the parking lot of Coal City High School, 655 W. Division St., Coal City.

The site will be open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., or while testing supplies last.

IDPH is also conducting testing this week in Joliet and Kankakee. Testing is available weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Mission Boulevard Soccer Complex, 640 Mission Blvd, Joliet. A mobile site will be available at the Kankakee County Health Department, 2390 W. Station St., Kankakee, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 3.

Pandemic puts a pause on annual vigil

STAFF REPORT

Each year on Dec. 6, Angels of Hope, Inc. invites the community to gather in Campbell Memorial Park to reflect, remember and celebrate the memory of child.

Unfortunately, the annual candlelight vigil is on a pause.

In response to mitigation efforts related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Angels of Hope Board of Directors made the difficult decision to cancel this year's vigil. The hope is they will once again be able to gather with the community around the Angel of Hope statue in December 2021.

Although the traditional evening ceremony will not be

held, the organization's members encourage the public to continue with the tradition of visiting the park and placing a single white flower at the base of the angel in honor of a lost child.

Through the generosity of Matt Baskerville, of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes, single flowers will be located near the angel should individuals be unable to bring one for placement.

"Although there will not be an organized event this year, Campbell Park remains a place for you to reflect, remember and cherish the memories of our children in the days and years to come. We wish you faith, love, grace and most of all hope," said Nicole Lussion, Angels of Hope board member.

Natalie Bragg in the spotlight at RCHS

The Senior Spotlight winner for the month of December is Natalie Bragg, daughter of Charlie and Kristi Bragg.

During her high school career, Natalie was involved in Softball, POPS, and FCCLA. She was also in the crew for the school musical, on the Honor Roll, and was a volunteer coach for the RCMS Panther Softball team.

Her future plans are to attend JJC for two years and then transfer to a four-year college to study medicine.

Here are a few thoughts from Natalie's teachers.

Mrs. Arseneau says that Natalie "is an all-around wonderful student! I always get excited when she walks into my class at the start of a semester because I know that she is going to bring so much to the group! You can always count on Natalie to bring her positive attitude and infectious smile. People like this are hard to come by in life, but when you are with Natalie, you cannot help but smile! She brings her 100% effort to everything she does. She is caring and helpful to her classmates, and, as her teacher, someone I can always count on when I need her."

Ms. Baron appreciates that Natalie "is an exceptionally hardworking student. In Ceramics I class, Natalie always goes above and beyond to create stunning, quality work. Natalie comes to class with a smile and positive attitude each day."

Mr. Swanson thinks that Natalie "has a great sense of humor. She's smart and talented and a joy to be around. She has a bright future."

Mrs. Rankin believes that Natalie "is a bright, hardworking young lady who is an absolute pleasure to have in class."

Mrs. Bugg is thankful that Natalie is "kind, mature and accepting of everyone. If another student does not have a partner, she will include them in her group. She has a heart of gold and serves as a tremendous role model for



others!"

Mrs. Leveille says that she remembers Natalie "as being someone with lots of positive energy. She was always pleasant and polite, with a smile on her face often! She worked well with others in class!"

Mrs. Sukley says "if I had a daughter, I would hope she would be something like Natalie Bragg. Natalie is the type of kid whose smile lights up the room when she walks in the door. Natalie is one of the most pleasant students to interact with, as her demeanor and conduct make her unique for a high school student. She is hard-working, motivated, and full of a personality that is sure to make a lasting impression. Natalie possesses the ultimate "can do" attitude while taking on all tasks with positive energy and a smile. She is very well organized and takes the initiative to go above and beyond the expected responsibilities of her job both in and out of the classroom. I love Natalie!"

Mr. Gleixner thinks that Natalie "is one of the most kind and friendly students at Reed-Custer. She constantly has a smile on her face and she is a great example for the younger students."

Mrs. Redwitz appreciates

that Natalie "is a great young woman who is genuine and kind. My first encounter with her showed me how responsible she was. She knew I wanted to meet with her that day, but she had to leave early. She came to our office, introduced herself to both of us counselors, and explained why she could not meet with me. To me this shows a high level of maturity."

Ms. Askew is thankful that Natalie "is such a wonderful person! She always has a smile on her face, no matter what day it is. She is very mature and cares about succeeding in all aspects of her life. She is such a joy to be around and always goes out of her way to say something positive to her peers and teachers. Natalie will be successful in anything she chooses! Her hard work and positive attitude will carry her far!"

Mr. Carrescia believes that Natalie "is a down to earth student who gets along with a lot of people. She is fun to be around and has a great personality. She is a caring young woman who will do great things in life."

As a final thought, Natalie's advice to younger students is, "Get involved in a variety of things in school and

have fun. High school is only fun if you make it fun. Be yourself and have a good time."

On behalf of the teachers and staff at RCHS, they congratulate Natalie Bragg as the December winner of the Senior Spotlight.

Award Winner

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher
Ann Gill, editor

December 1880, money and merriment

Winter in a coal mining community is usually a prosperous time. And December is the best time of all. Parties, balls, concerts, plays, oyster suppers - you name it and it was happening. Get aboard the way-back machine, set the controls for December 1880.



TIME WAS....
Sandy Vasko

The first news we hear is of the problems in the Miners' Band, an organization that was truly important for the upcoming holiday season. "Suit was recently brought by the Miners' brass band against certain members to recover instruments, uniforms, books, etc.

The decision was against the plaintiffs, it being shown that the band is not an incorporated body, and is therefore unable to sue or be sued. The case is appealed to the Circuit court.

During the first week the organized festivities were announced. The Ancient Order of Foresters had a concert and supper on Christmas Eve and a ball on New Year's Eve.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians were also giving a

ball on New Year's. The Miner's Friend Lodge, Good Templars opened their hall on New Year's Eve for a party and dance.

The Presbyterians also gave a supper combined with a concert and auction. "The Presbyterians' supper and concert was quite largely attended on Tuesday evening at Music Hall.

During the progress of the affair an auction sale was had, in which a large lot of dolls, pictures, cakes, etc., were rattled off with amazing alacrity. The net profits must have amounted to a handsome sum, the tickets being fifty cents (\$13.50 today) each.

The black miners had their own celebration. "The colored people had quite a "tony" dance on Thursday night, after the celebration doings of Eli Lodge. White kids and satin slippers was the rule among the guests, and "style" was apparent in all parts of the hall."

Benefit dinners, like now, were held for those who had some hard times. "A rousing

big benefit was given Mrs. Wm. Kelso, at Music Hall, Braidwood, on Monday night by way of a concert. The spacious hall was filled, and the programme received most happily. Jas. Sime executed several fancy dances, and was encored repeatedly."

And, "A benefit concert for the widow of the late city marshal Muldowney, in the near future, is talked of." The marshal had accidentally been shot by the Catholic priest, his best friend.

Theater performances were scheduled weekly. H.M. S. Pinafore was scheduled but the performers never showed up. "Clara Wildman and her opera company failed to put in an appearance in this city on Tuesday, notwithstanding the flashy bills about town.

Now, Clara ought to rise and explain, at least. Many theatergoers had their mouths all fixed for Pinafore, etc., but alas for expectations! Just imagine the feelings of manager Broadbent!"

No problem, another booking was just around the corner, "Jay Rial's Humpty Dumpty troupe is to play a Music Hall, Braidwood, on Tuesday evening next." And "Anthony & Ellie's Uncle Tom's Cabin troupe play in Music

Hall this Friday evening. It has some fine paper on the walls (posted playbills), and is said to be a company of considerable merit."

The price of coal had gone up. The Joliet Signal complained, "The late universal demand for both hard and soft coal has forced that necessary article of consumption to figures unprecedented for a number of years past.

Wilmington and Braidwood coal now retail at \$5.50 (\$231) per ton, and hard coal is difficult to get at \$8.60 (\$148). The scarcity and high price affect respectively both the dealer and the consumer in a very unpleasant manner."

The editor of the Wilmington paper wrote, "Monday last was pay day at the mines. About \$90,000 (\$2,414,367) was paid out in all, and the yellow boys (\$20 gold pieces) have been flying around Braidwood ever since. But mighty few of them fly into the printing office."

Meanwhile, despite the good times, rumors of strikes were still in the air. The miners knew that good times could disappear in an instant, and hard times were always around the corner.

Grundy Chamber sponsors Hometown Holiday giveaway

As consumers shop local this holiday season, the Grundy County Chamber and Channahon Chamber want to know about it.

To encourage local buying, the Chamber is sponsoring a Holiday Hometown Shopping giveaway now through Dec. 14. The rules are simple — just let the Chamber know about your purchases and your name will be entered into a drawing where participants can win more than a dozen local prizes all bought by the Chamber from its members around Grundy County.

You can let the Chamber know in whatever way works for you, tag the Chamber on Facebook or Instagram with a picture of your find, send an email, or even just call the Chamber office and tell us about your shop small experience.

"Maybe you're catering your Christmas dinner from a local restaurant, bought a spa package for your wife, or purchased some growlers of locally-brewed beer for your husband - whatever it is if it's bought in Grundy County tell us about it," said Christina Van Yperen, Grundy Chamber president & CEO.

Sometimes finding the perfect gift can be difficult for certain people on your list, so if you purchase a Grundy Chamber Gift Certificate, the Chamber will also enter your name

into the giveaway raffle.

Follow the Grundy Chamber and Channahon Chamber on Facebook and Instagram to see videos and photos of the prizes.

"We all know shopping, ordering food, and getting services from right here in Grundy County is more imperative than ever as our local business community battles the impacts of COVID-19. The community has really come out in force to support our area businesses and the Chamber wants to say thank you, while keeping it going. So please, help us spread the word by sharing our posts, telling your friends about the Holiday Hometown Shopping Giveaway, and participating. Most importantly, remember to shop your hometown this holiday season," Van Yperen said.

The Chamber will enter names into the giveaway through Dec. 14 and will pull the winners on Dec. 15. Winners will be notified by the Chamber. Prizes have to be picked up from the Chamber's Morris office at 909 Liberty St.

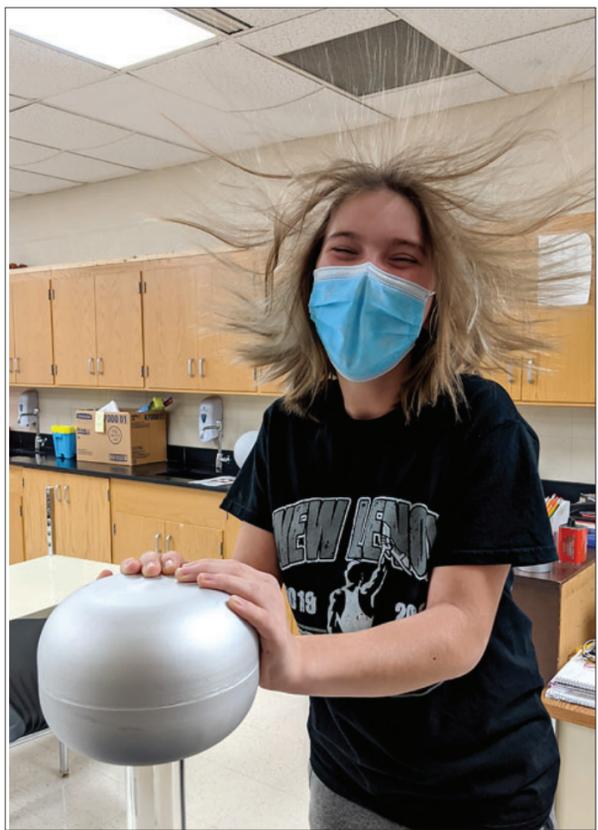
For more information visit grundychamber.com, follow the Grundy Chamber on Facebook, and Instagram, or call 815-942-0113. The Channahon Minooka Chamber is a branch of the Grundy County Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

RCMS 7th graders have 'hair raising' fun

Mr. Bell's 7th grade science class at Reed-Custer Middle School studied static electricity recently. The students and staff took part in the "hair raising" experience using a Vander Graaf machine.

The Vander Graaf machine creates a low amperage, high voltage static charge by using friction in the bell on top of the machine. The charge is transferred to the person by conduction.

The hair becomes positively charged and each strand repels the other, making it stand on end. Learning about static electricity was a "shockingly" good time!



AT RCMS, Skylar Mathis gets a hair-lifting experience by touching the Vander Graaf machine as part of a science demonstration.



EVEN MRS. COPELAND gets in on the fun by demonstrating the flow of static electricity through a Vander Graaf machine.



THE 7TH GRADE SCIENCE class at RMCS learned about static electricity using a Vander Graaf machine. Demonstrating the machine is Bailey Hartley.



FUN SCIENCE is taught to the RCMS 7th grade class with the help of Chaylene Crews.



SEVENTH GRADER Kilynn Glisson gets in on the action.

RMCS names ACE Winners for November



RCMS PROUDLY NAMES their ACE Winners for November (left to right): Taylor Bova (6th grade), Jayden Brodinski (7th), Zach Markle (7th), Josie Davis (8th), and Brady Tyree (8th).

Notice of New Owners for HF CLASS OF 1969

PUBLIC NOTICE
Certificate of change
Certificate 32617

Public Notice is hereby given that on Nov. 13, 2020, a certificate was filed in the Office of the County Clerk of Will County, Illinois, setting forth the names and post-office addresses of persons owning and conducting the business known as HF CLASS OF 1969, located at 255 Larch Rd., Frankfort, IL 60423.

Addition of owner's names: Bonnie Clark, 255 Larch Rd., Frankfort, IL 60423. Marilyn Bonick, 11255 Pinecrest Court, Orland, IL 60467.

Dated this 9th day of November, A.D. 2020.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and Official Seal at my office this 9th day of November, 2020.

Edith A Plantinga,
Notary Public

Published in the Braidwood Journal
Nov. 25, Dec. 2 & 9, 2020

Notice of Withdrawal from business

PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL
Certificate 32617

Public Notice is hereby given that on Nov. 13, 2020, a certificate was filed in the Office of the County Clerk of Will County, Illinois, setting forth names and post-office addresses of one of the persons owning, conducting and now withdrawing from the business known as HF CLASS OF 1969, located at 255 Larch Rd., Frankfort, IL 60423.

Withdrawal of owner's name: Janice Fryklund of 13212 N. Empire, Hayward, WI 54843.

Dated this 9th day of November, A.D. 2020.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and Official Seal at my office this 9th day of November, 2020.

Edith A Plantinga,
Notary Public

Published in the Braidwood Journal
Nov. 25, Dec. 2 & 9, 2020

SMI Woodcrafts files as new business

PUBLIC NOTICE
Assumed Name
Publication Notice
Certificate 33672

Public Notice is hereby given that on Nov. 5, 2020 wherein the business firm of SMI WOODCRAFTS, located at 529 Heritage Lane, Lockport IL 60441 was registered; that the true or real name or names of the person or persons owning the business, with their respective post office address, is as follows:

Owner Name: Scott Inskeep and Susan Inskeep
Owner Address: 529 Heritage Lane, Lockport, IL 60441

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and Official Seal at my office in Joliet, Illinois this 5th day of November, 2020.

Lauren Staley Ferry
Will County Clerk

Published in the Braidwood Journal
on Wednesday, Nov. 18, 25 and Dec. 2, 2020.

Storytime with Santa

FUNDRAISER

@yoursantaexperience
815)701-3494 geraldcur1277@gmail.com

Santa Services in Conjunction with

Braidwood Lions Club

WILL BE HOSTING STORYTIME WITH SANTA IN THE HOPES OF RAISING FUNDS FOR THE ADDITION OF NEW PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT AT THE LIONS KIDDIE PARK LOCATED ON LINCOLN STREET IN BRAIDWOOD.

DONATIONS WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED.

DECEMBER 4TH AT BRAIDWOOD ZOO 6PM-8PM

DECEMBER 13TH AT OLD SMOKEY PARK 7PM-9PM
3RD STREET ENTRANCE PAVILION

DECEMBER 18TH AT OLD SMOKEY PARK 6PM-8PM
3RD STREET ENTRANCE PAVILION

Free Press Newspapers readers

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

paper makes every effort to forward unpublished comments to the parties to whom they are directed.
The comments stated are the opinions and ideas of the callers and not that of the newspaper. Information may not constitute the actual events or facts of a particular topic.
To voice your opinion, please go to

www.freepressnewspapers.com, -> Submit Sound-off or call 815-634-0317. Please state the town in which you are calling from or in regards to. If mailing comments please direct them to Sound-Off, 271 S. Broadway, Coal City, IL 60416 or 111 S. Water St., Wilmington, IL 60481.

Hang on America

SHADOW LAKES—Just heard your president-elect China Joe, make a statement, and it sure sounds like he is really not for "America First." Get ready for the ride of your life...always, Margot Lane.

Potential for lawsuit

BRAIDWOOD—There is a Braidwood resident who needs to learn the definitions for defamation of character, slander and libel. This person is making an awful lot of accusations and statements in public forums along with a bunch of finger pointing. Hopefully this person has actual proof and evidence to back up their claims because what they think they know and what is actually the truth are very possibly two different things. Lawsuits of this nature can cost a person a ton of money if they are on the losing end.

Who's next?

SHADOW LAKES—Rumor has it China Joe is going to pick Whoopi Goldberg as "Secretary of Intelligence."

Always, Margot Lane

A good choice

WILMINGTON—Congratulations to Robert Bolser for being named the Wilmington Chamber's Business Person of the Year. He is a polite and helpful young man. I remember several years back I was shopping at what was then Wilmington SuperValu when, in the pouring rain, I discovered a tire on my car was flat. Not knowing what to do (never changed a tire before) or who could help (no cell phone back then to call) it didn't matter because a young man working at the store came up and offered to change the tire for me. I later found out his name was Bob Bolser and he refused to take my offer of money. He became my Good Samaritan that day and I will never forget the kindness he showed to a stranger. I have heard other people praise Bob for his kindness too. He is an asset to our community.
Janet Fisher

Pay attention

BRAIDWOOD—To the citizens of Braidwood. Pay attention to what is going on with the finance commissioner who is continually being influenced by members of the past administration. One of them is trying to get a relative a position in public works. Not just any position but the supervisor of public works. The only way this can be accomplished is by moving the part time person to full time per the union contract. They had all applications sent to commissioner Smith's home. When FOIA'd nothing was produced. By sending applications to Smith's home personal information of applicants is compromised. The city now has to fill the temporary position of commissioner of public health and safety and these members of the past administration are working together to try and manipulate who is put in that position. If anyone has doubts about what the previous administration did to the city please FOIA the budget from then and now to see the difference. Their ridiculous behavior has to stop. After hearing them berate Fay Smith outside

after a city council meeting in which Fay approved a new business they wanted him to vote no to and after hearing conversations in the hallway after meetings between them and much research it is my belief they are continuing to try and destroy our city. Please be aware and research the facts on this previous administration.

Ignoring our safety

COAL CITY—I don't understand how people can just blatantly ignore the mask requirement in businesses. It has gotten really bad at our Dollar Store to the point I hate to even go in there any more. The signs are clearly posted on the entry door. What gives you the right to just ignore it? The employees are all wearing masks as are most of the customers. Come on people, get with the program or stay home.

Attacks unmerited

BRAIDWOOD—This whole personal vendetta of a newer Braidwood resident towards a few members of the Braidwood City Council needs to stop. This person is causing so much trouble in our town right now, not just for them, but for so many others as well. By doing outright attacks of these people visible to the public on social media and then become argumentative when others stand up against these attacks is just childish. It might be tough being the new kid on the block, but earning a reputation for being a troublemaker is just going to get you alienated from the rest of the town.

The new normal

WILMINGTON—According to ABC news, Sarah McBride, will become the nation's first openly transgender state senator with her election day victory in Delaware. In all there are eight transgender, gender non-conforming and non-binary candidates won election to state legislatures in six states. Our new normal.

No science background

SHADOW LAKES—On the news it was stated that Joe Biden has picked John Kerry as the climate czar. But John Kerry does not seem to have any scientific background to determine if the climate change theory is real or not. So why has someone been put in charge of anything scientific if the individual does not have the proper credentials to perform their duties in a specific area? But maybe John Kerry will work with his step son and Joe Biden's son so they can determine how to waister the taxpayers' funds in the name of science. Since their sons seem to be tied with John Kerry on who has less scientific knowledge so it will be like having three blind mice trying to find a piece of cheese somewhere in the galaxy. But their salaries would be given to them because they showed up at their place of employment to discuss what days it is going to rain and the taxpayers lose again.

It's their right

WILMINGTON— I am confused by the whiny, cry baby conservatives claiming their free speech is being censored by social media or, as they call it, Big Tech. You must of been



absent the day your civics teacher taught the Bill of Rights including the first amendment or you would know that it only protects you from the government not the private sector. When the Dixie Chicks said they were ashamed that George Bush was from Texas the back lash was instant. They were banished from country radio and endured death threats from the right. Free speech has consequences. Conservatives supported the baker who refused to bake a cake for gay people citing his First Amendment right as a private business. Well Google, Twitter, Facebook are all private businesses and if they don't want right wing propaganda and lies on their social media platforms they have that right. Maybe you should start your own social media so that you can control the content you could call it Gargle or Nit wittier or how about fascist book. There is just subjective truth in the world and you should acquaint your self with it. You will never get it from Trump, Fox news, Newsmax or OAN. Remember the truth will set you free, stay safe. Penny Lane

Freedom lost

COAL CITY—Joe Biden has plans to revert everything President Trump has done for America. He is no longer going to recognize the America First policy but he will do as much as possible to aid the foreign countries with employment while the American citizen gets lost in the shuffle. So people that voted him to be the next president can now look forward to seeing their relatives and friends lose everything to foreign workers. A lot of our great movie stars do not care about Americans, they only want the money from foreign lands and don't look to any Big Tech corporations to aid any citizen. So the people that wanted Joe Biden in office may regret their decision when their bank books decline with all the new taxes that will be imposed for The Green New Deal which is nothing but an excuse to collect funds for the politicians and their friends' wallets. Everyone enjoy your future of restricted lives and good luck trying to survive.

Capping refugees

WILMINGTON—I read President Trump thankfully put a cap on the number of refugees that could enter the country over the next fiscal year to 15,000, less than anytime during the program's 40-year existence. The historical average is 95,000 refugees yearly. For decades, America accepted more refugees than the rest of the world combined. That's not counting the illegals. Refugee resettlement has become a racket with state department sanctioned charities such as World relief and Catholic Charities getting paid by the head to find refugees, bring them here, settle them in apartments, sign them up for welfare and then move onto the next batch. Under President Trump only truly needy people were being admitted.

It's unforgivable

WILMINGTON—With billions of our tax dollars at stake, the drug companies, like Pfizer's COVID vaccine, announced their vaccine six days after the election, not before the election. Pfizer picked their candidate, that's unforgivable and that's what power will do, as they wish. Trumpism is not going away any time soon...73 million of us say so.

Taking control

SHADOW LAKES—Right now people are beginning to discover just how far some Democrat leadership will go for control over the American citizens' lives. If Joe Biden really becomes the next president there will be so much government control that we'll be living in a global economy and USA could be controlled by the United Nations where communism will take over the solvent laws and the American citizens will no longer have any voice in determining an election and many people will become political prisoners since there will no longer be free speech. Free speech is already being denied in colleges and across social media and also some people have already been denied the right to have an opinion about the Democratic party by being beaten and it will continue. Beware of promises by Democratic leadership that will not happen for the American citizens. Censorship will take control and there will no longer be transparency from the government leadership. Happy trails to you.

Political corruption

WILMINGTON—Most people are aware of the fact that in Washington, D.C. there is so much corruption that many people have continually allowed the corruption to continue by turning their backs on the truth. Lies seemed to have become more important to many people. It really doesn't matter which political party anyone prefers because corruption has forced a lot of people to look at the future elections and how the American citizens will be able to live whether under freedom or socialism. It is possible that a lot of people do not understand the real meaning of socialism. So all you have

to do is look at China or Cuba and you may discover that government control with socialism does destroy all legal rights for every individual. The people that voted for Democrat leadership to take control may discover they have destroyed their lives and the lives of family and friends unless you are a government employee. All the nuts are not in the cake.

I miss it

WILMINGTON—I was wondering if anyone else misses the leaf vac truck like we do? It was a good service for older people like us who have a hard time bagging up the leaves and can't really afford to pay to have someone else do it. It's a shame the mayor and the alderman didn't see the value of it.

Makes no sense

WILMINGTON—Do I have this right? All states Trump won had valid and legitimate ballots. All states he lost had invalid and fraudulent ballots?

Doing it all

WILMINGTON—What's next with the city? First they cut down and remove dead trees in some areas of the city. Last week they came by to remove the tree stumps. What's next? Will they be out in spring to remove mulch and replace with black dirt and grass seed? If you do all this please water also for residents. Maybe the industrial park can pay for the lost revenues?

Blind eyes?

WILMINGTON—Who is in charge of enforcing the regulations on indoor eating and sitting at the bars? Mayor? Chief of Police? People, the virus is spreading everywhere. In Wilmington, Will County, states? Some people stated the virus was going away after the election. Well it's not going anywhere. Please do your part to protect others.

Eddie

Preparing for spread

COAL CITY—With the COVID-19 rising, Florida is open and their numbers are rising. Their governor sees their economic needs with the snowbirds. The infected states are flooding to Florida. It won't be long before their beaches and economy sees the effects of opening up. I see from the Thanksgiving weekend Chicago hospitals are getting ready for tourists that flooded to Florida for the holiday weekend.

Thanks for the laugh

WILMINGTON—To the person who wrote "Shut the heck up" in the Sound-off column, I literally laughed my "blank" off. I just wanted you to know you're right, you're right, you're right. PS. Go Joe.

Hard enough to breathe

WILMINGTON—Driving through the South Island Park on Sunday afternoon I noticed three people up next to the ball diamonds raking leaves into piles and burning them. City ordinance states no open burning of leaves in city limits. Residents of Wilmington rake and bag leaves all fall season while this goes on. Please remember there is a pandemic going on with everyone supposed to wear masks. It's hard enough to breathe now and these people are burning leaves. Let's use some common sense please.

Watched, did nothing

SHADOW LAKES—I have a neighbor who has a Biden/Harris sign on his house and next to it is Back the blue. My question with that is when Antifa and BLM were burning cities, destroying businesses and these Democrat controlled cities and governors had the police stand down, I cannot understand how someone could be for Biden/Harris when they did nothing to step in on this and quell the riots. I would like someone to reply to this because these people have to be very messed up in their minds. You can't have Antifa and BLM destroying businesses, hurting people and rioting when Trump offered to send in the militia and they stood back and wouldn't allow it. And what did Biden and Harris ever say about this? Nothing. Dan Hill

Beautiful island

WILMINGTON—A big thumbs up to the Lions Club and their hard work in creating the Christmas walk on the island. Took the family through there Saturday and enjoyed it. Was sad to hear this may be the last year for doing it. want you to know it's appreciated.

Can't afford it either

WILMINGTON—They want us to give more money to help support the church. I think they need to give us a more itemized bill so we can see where the money is going. Maybe the churches need to cut back. People can't afford any more money and with the economy the churches need to cut back.

50/50 Split The Pot

Buy Your Button

Proceeds To Help Fund
The Wilmington Tourism
Beautification Program

Drawing to be held
December 21

\$3 or **\$15**
per button collect all 6

Thank you for your support!

Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Wilmington Chamber of Commerce

Buttons available in Wilmington at Bob Bolser COUNTRY Financial, El Patron Mexican Kitchen, The Free Press Newspapers, Kerr Management Consultants, Spins & Needles Sewing, Wee Sip Liquors, Whitmore Ace Hardware and Wilmington Collision Center



Thanks Bob for making the town better

SO MANY TO THANK - Bob Bolser (center), agent for COUNTRY Financial in Wilmington, accepts a plaque from Steve Evans (right), president of the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, for earning the Business Person of the Year title for 2020. At left is Bob's wife, Alicia, who he thanked for encouraging him to be involved in the community and his secretaries who hold down the office "and keep me in-line some of the time." The presentation was made Saturday under the Claire's Corner Park gazebo in front of a crowd of about 40 people. Bolser said he is thankful for growing up in a small town which allows for him to be a contributor of volunteer time and help make the community a better place to live.

An under-appreciated spirit and a fascinating story

There are cocktails that are popular on both sides of the generation gap, think Martini, Manhattan, and the venerable Old Fashioned. Some cocktails aren't so lucky, and two of those cocktails are made with one of the most under-appreciated spirits on the planet, sloe gin.



THE SUNDAY COCKTAIL
Brian Rung

Shake ingredients with ice, then strain into an ice-filled glass and add the "fizz" in the form of soda water. Note that this gin fizz does not call for the use of egg white, as other gin fizzes do. The fizz here is 100% soda water. Make sure that you use actual soda water, not tonic water, and that your club soda is fresh. I buy the small bottles of Fever Tree club soda, and I always have fresh soda when I need it.



There is a bit of confusion among casual imbibers as to what sloe gin is, and what it is not. Sloe gin is not gin. Sloe gin is a "gin-based" liqueur made by simply adding "sloes" to gin, and allowing the sloe berries to dissolve into the gin. The sloe is a relative of the plum, similar in color and flavor. Authentic British sloe gin producers use the native sloes, but domestically produced sloe gin often uses either beach plum or aronia berries. Despite its labeling as a "gin", sloe gin is sweet and approachable, without the harsh ethanol burn of lower quality gin.

Standard gin is bottled at 40% ABV or higher, whereas sloe gin is typically bottled between 15% and 25% ABV. Also, beware that some commercially available sloe gin is made from grain alcohol infused with sloe berries as opposed to a proper gin. If you want to be absolutely sure that your sloe gin is made from a proper gin base, you may prepare your own sloe gin at home.

The Charlie Chaplin is an easy to remember equal parts mix of sloe gin, fresh lime juice, and apricot brandy. Classic preparation for the Chaplin, shake with ice and strain into chilled cocktail (Martini) glass.

affairs, look into to a biography of Charlie Chaplin. He lived an absolutely fascinating life, and the excitement didn't stop when he died on Christmas Day in 1977. A few months into 1978 he was the victim of one of history's most famous cases of body snatching, with the body snatchers demanding ransom from his family in Switzerland.

The practice of preparing homemade sloe gin remains popular in the UK, not so much on our side of the pond. If you can get a hold of the right berries, at the right time of year, I suppose you could make your own sloe gin. The rest of us will have to make the trip to our local spirits retailer.

The availability of sloe gin in the US marketplace is a good news/bad news situation. The good news is that sloe gin is just popular enough to maintain a presence on US store shelves. The bad news is that you may have only one or two options depending on where you shop.

The drink was one of the most popular pre-prohibition cocktails, but was not able to regain popularity after the end of prohibition. That is unfortunate, because the drink is downright delicious and deserving of a reboot.

The ransom was never paid, the snatchers were caught and convicted, and Mr. Chaplin was returned to his rightful resting place. You'll have to read about the rest. The Charlie Chaplin is built in a shaker and served in a chilled cocktail glass. Combine shaker: 1 oz. sloe gin 1 oz. apricot brandy 1 oz. fresh lime juice Shake with ice, strain into chilled cocktail glass Garnish with lime wheel

Until next week, enjoy responsibly. By the way, if you are staying home and looking for some reading material to pass the time during the current state of

I have had good luck with Plymouth gin, and with their sloe gin. It will be a bit more expensive than some of the other options, but it is a balanced liqueur that is heavy on the fruit notes and does not go overboard on the sweetness. Many lower quality, less expensive offerings are simply too sweet to make anything other than a Sloe Gin Fizz.

By the way, if you are staying home and looking for some reading material to pass the time during the current state of

Get raffle tickets now for C.C.W. quilt

The St. Rose Council of Catholic Women are selling tickets for its annual quilt raffle.

Dec. 20 with the drawing taking place after the 11 a.m. mass.

For ticket information contact Pat Stromquist at (815) 476-6199.

Each year Mrs. Anonymous, a parishioner and talented quilt maker, donates one of her creations to the C.C.W. to use as a fundraiser. The raffle and drawing normally take place during the C.C.W. annual card and game party luncheon in May. Unfortunately that event could not take place this year. Therefore, all parishioners now have the opportunity to purchase raffle tickets to win the bright and beautifully made quilt. Tickets are being sold at all weekend masses through

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Special measures are in
place to keep you safe!



MORRIS
HOSPITAL
& HEALTHCARE CENTERS

Braidwood Lions to collect used Christmas lights

The Braidwood Lions Club will be collecting used/non-working strands of Christmas lights starting Sunday, November 15th. Collection bins will be located inside Whitmore Ace Hardware in Braidwood and Coal City, and inside Braidwood City Hall until January

31st. The strands of lights will be recycled by the Lions of Illinois Foundation with proceeds to benefit the foundation's sight & sound services provided to local Lions Clubs. A collection bin will also be available during the club's annual Christmas Tree Sale fundraiser.

Exelon generation's 'fishing for a cure' raises \$41,000

Charity purchases wheel-chair accessible bus

Braidwood Station's 'Fishing for a Cure' charity bass fishing tournament was canceled earlier this year due to COVID-19, but that didn't stop employees at the Exelon Generation nuclear plant from giving generously to a local charity.

Employees at the power plant held virtual fundraising events and raised \$41,000 for Special Connections of Grundy County, a charity that serves special needs individuals throughout Northern Illinois.

"We are overwhelmed at the generosity of Exelon, the employees at the plant and those who run the fishing tournament," said Kelly Thompson, executive director of Special Connections. "I cannot express how grateful we are for this donation. It's more money than our charity raises in a year, probably two years."

Two years ago, Special Connections suffered a "huge loss" according to Thompson when the charity's bus was destroyed in a car accident. The bus frequently transported Special Olympics competitors and other events across Illinois.

Thompson said in recent years volunteers have carpooled with multiple vehicles traveling to events, but that Special Connections clients have missed traveling together. Considering this year's Exelon donation, Special Connections decided to use donations from Exelon's 'Fishing for a Cure' to purchase a wheelchair-accessible bus for the charity.

"We have needed a new, accessible bus for a long time and all of our folks are all



HOLDING THE \$41,000 donation check are (center, from left) Kelly Thompson, executive director of Special Connections of Grundy County, and Jeremy McNabb, a Braidwood Station employee. Special Connections board members Rob Fisher (left), Jennifer Price (second from right) and Jeff Rzasa (right) were there to express their appreciation.

ecstatic to once again be able to travel together to and from events once the pandemic ends," Thompson said. "Seeing their happiness and watching them interact with each other, it makes you feel great too."

'Fishing for a Cure', Braidwood Station's signature

charitable event, has now raised nearly \$670,000 since it began in 2002.

Braidwood Generating Station is one of six Illinois nuclear plants owned and operated by Exelon Generation producing carbon-free, reliable electricity for more than 11 million homes

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Pritzker intends to borrow \$2 billion from federal program

BY SARAH MANSUR
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD — Gov. JB Pritzker announced Wednesday the state would give notice to the federal government that it plans to borrow \$2 billion from a federal program created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in an effort to fill the state's budget deficit.

That figure is less than the \$5 billion in short-term borrowing authorized by the Illinois General Assembly in May when it passed legislation allowing the state to tap into the Federal Reserve's Municipal Liquidity Facility program. The program permits the central bank to buy the debt of state and local governments that are in need of funds.

The MLF program was approved as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security, or

CARES Act, which is a \$2.2 trillion stimulus package passed by Congress in March.

Pritzker said the \$2 billion will be used to cover revenue losses and unforeseen COVID-19 expenses for this current fiscal year.

The state previously borrowed \$1.2 billion from the Fed's MLF program to cover losses from the last quarter of the previous fiscal year, and is the only state that has borrowed from the MLF thus far.

The state has paid \$200 million toward the first \$1.2 billion federal loan, according to Pritzker's spokesperson. The interest rate incurred on the \$1.2 billion loan was 3.82%.

Since the announcement Wednesday was only for a

notice of intent, the interest rate on the \$2 billion would not be known until the actual sale is finalized. As of Nov. 23, the website for the Federal Reserve Bank of New York showed a sample rate of roughly 3.37-3.41% for municipalities with Illinois' investment grade, which is one notch above what is referred to as "junk status."

"Although the General Assembly authorized as much as \$5 billion of borrowing from the Federal Reserve, I am very reluctant to saddle our state with that large amount of short term debt. I believe it would be irresponsible to borrow that entire amount, given the persistent fiscal pain it would cause over the next

three years, as we would struggle to repay that entire amount," he said Nov. 25. "Our collective intention is to repay this line of credit as early as possible, after either the awarding of stimulus by Congress or a sufficient recovery of state revenues."

Pritzker said the goal of the short term borrowing is to continue managing the state's massive bill backlog, which has reached more than \$7 billion as of Nov. 25, according to the Illinois Comptroller's Office.

The governor's comments on the state's financial situation came during his daily COVID-19 briefing, which he and members of his administration delivered remotely

Initial COVID vaccine shipment may be smaller than expected

Ezike says Illinois may only get 80k doses at first

BY PETER HANCOCK
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD — The first shipment of COVID-19 vaccines to the state of Illinois may be less than one-quarter of what officials had originally been told to expect.

Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike said Nov. 24 that the latest word from federal officials is that the first shipment may contain only about 80,000 doses, or one-fifth of the 400,000 doses that state officials were expecting as recently as last week.

"We know that even if everything goes through smoothly in the next couple of weeks and the vaccine is shipped, there won't be many doses," Ezike said. "I know I had originally quoted 400,000 doses because that's what we've been told. That number has already been downgraded to something like 80,000. Again, all of these numbers are constantly in flux and so we are staying very nimble in order to adjust. As the feds give us more information, we adjust and tweak our plans."

Ezike spoke during Gov. JB Pritzker's daily COVID-19 news briefing which was held entirely remotely due to the Tier 3 mitigation order that went into effect Nov. 20. Before then, they were mainly held at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago with a limited number of

reporters present while other reporters observed by streaming video and asked questions online.

Interest in how the state plans to distribute a vaccine has heightened in recent days as a number of pharmaceutical companies have announced plans to apply for emergency use authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Pfizer and BioNTech recently announced they had submitted an application for two vaccines the companies

are developing jointly, and the FDA said it would put those applications on a fast track for approval, which means a limited number of doses could be publicly available by the end of December. Moderna Inc. has also said a vaccine it is developing a vaccine that has shown promising results in clinical trials.

Ezike said the first people in line to receive the vaccines will be frontline hospital workers who treat COVID-19 patients and other first responders.

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Now is the time to spot owls at Midewin

Think cold weather is for the birds? If you're a bird watcher, it sure is. With annual migration and leafless trees, now is a perfect time for spotting owls, harriers, kestrels and other elusive birds overwintering at the USDA Forest Service's Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. Here are a few ideas about where to look and what to look for.



KESTRELS, COOPER'S HAWKS, great horned owls, barred owls and more active now at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

In recent days, the fence along the pasture on the east side of the Group 63 Trail has been lined with the long lenses of dedicated bird watchers. In late afternoon hours, just before sunset, short-eared owls and northern harriers have been competing in the sky for voles on the ground.

The east pasture is where bison graze, creating shorter grasses and the perfect feeding ground where birds can more easily spot prey. Grazing also stirs rodents, which is why coyotes follow the herd and can be heard yipping and howling way off in the distance starting at about 4 p.m. nightly.

"Both northern harriers and short-eared owls are native grassland birds in Illinois, and they can possibly be seen throughout the year at Midewin NTP. However, both species are rare here during the nesting season, and the timing of the recent sightings suggests that these are winter migrant birds that are using the expansive grasslands of Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie to forage," said Midewin NTP Restoration Team Leader Michael Redmer.

Short-eared owls are known for being able to travel great distances, with recorded migrations as long as 1,200 miles. You can identify them by their yellow, piercing eyes and beige-colored faces. Northern harriers have white on their back sides and their tails are longer than the tails of short-eared owls. Like owls, they rely on hearing as well as vision to capture prey. Their disk-shaped face looks and functions much like an owl's face, with stiff facial feathers helping to direct sound to the ears.

There were more owls and harriers seen on Saturday, November 28 than on other days, and there were kestrels and even a Cooper's hawk spotted flying.

With the dark and rainy weather all day on Wednesday, November 25, owls and harriers started showing up earlier than on other days. At 2 p.m., a short-eared owl swooped past bird watchers as it headed west from the bison pasture and flew low over the Group 63 Trail.

On Sunday, November 29 at 4:30 p.m. an obscure American kestrel flew into trees near a bunker on the west side of the Group 63 Trail, just north of the open bunker. The kestrel rested in the trees for a time before dashing through the sky in search of more food.

On the fourth of July this year, two barred owls were spotted in a tree together at

Midewin NTP. On June 14, a barred owl was photographed flying over Midewin NTP.

Two great horned owls were spotted perched together in a tree in the <<https://tinyurl.com/yyn779r>>South Patrol Road Prairie restoration area. If you are looking for owls in this area, there are many photo opportunities: Prairie Creek is about a 15-minute walk north Boathouse Road from here.

Across from the northwest corner of the restoration area stands a white oak tree that was instrumental hundreds of years ago in establishing Wilmington Township boundary lines. Parking: 41°20'32.2"N 88°10'16.5"W.

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OBITUARIES

Irene Jeffries

WILMINGTON—Irene Kay Jeffries (nee Highbaugh), 63, of Wilmington, passed away unexpectedly, Wednesday, Nov. 25, 2020 at her home.

She was born Dec. 30, 1956 in Key West, FL. She was a member of the First Christian Church in Wilmington. Irene graduated with the class of 1975 from Joliet West High School. Soon after graduation she married the love of her life, Kenneth Jeffries on June 7, 1975 in Wilmington. She was an avid Chicago Cubs fan and had a passion for bargain shopping, finding "treasures" and antiquing. She also had a love for camping and always looked forward to taking the family trips to Hayward and the Gulf Shores. If you were lucky enough to know Irene, you knew she loved to talk and had the gift for gab. Her one of a kind personality will never be forgotten. The world lost a beautiful soul that had a heart of gold, and will always be remembered.

Surviving are her parents, Robert and Darlene (nee Koca) Highbaugh, of Joliet; husband of 45 years, Kenneth Jeffries, of Wilmington; three children: Marissa (Greg) Hall, of Wilmington; Stuart Jeffries, of Carmel, IN and KaraLynn (fiancee, Matt Morris) Jeffries, of Wilmington; six grandchildren: Cameron and Angelina Bergman, Benjamin and Lucy Hall,



Annie Bergman and Addy Morris; four brothers: Randy (Sharon) Highbaugh, of Shorewood; Steve (Kim) Highbaugh, of Wilmington; Kenny (Lynette) Highbaugh, of Braidwood and Bobby (Heather) Highbaugh, of Crest Hill; honorary daughter, Heather Davis, of Coal City; sister-in-law, Sharon (John) Crichton, of Apache Junction, AZ; numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and friends and her beloved four-legged companion, Walter.

Preceding her in death were her mother-in-law and father-in-law, Lydia and Charles Jeffries and brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Chuck and Sue Jeffries.

Memorial visitation was held Tuesday, Dec. 1 at R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, Braidwood. Cremation rites have been accorded.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations to the Juvenile Diabetes Association would be appreciated.

For more information and to visit her online guestbook, log on to www.rwpatterson-funeralhomes.com or find them on Facebook.

R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, 401 E. Main St., Braidwood is in charge of arrangements.

Claudia Karn

BRAIDWOOD—Claudia Karn, 63, of Braidwood, passed away Wednesday, Nov. 25, 2020 at St. Mary's Hospital in Kankakee.

She was born Sept. 30, 1957 in Chicago to Harold and Carol (nee Melzer) Maunter. Claudia is now home with the Lord in Heaven. Her family and many friends are so blessed to have loved and been loved by her for all those years. Claudia enjoyed the fall and winter holidays and she had a love for scrapbooking, photography and being at the place that centered her most, her love in the Great Smoky Mountains.

Surviving are her husband, William Karn, of Braidwood and his family; one sister, Doreen and her family; many friends, especially her long time close friends: Erin, Jane, Jen and Nicole and of course the many doctors that



cared for her.

The family would like to thank the many doctors, nurses, and support staff at St. Mary's Hospital in Kankakee for their compassion and care they gave her and the family.

Cremation rites have been accorded. Private services will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in her name may be directed to: smokiesinformation.org, under the membership tab, there is a place to donate.

For more information and to visit her online guestbook, log on to www.rwpatterson-funeralhomes.com.

R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, 401 E. Main St., Braidwood is in charge of arrangements.

Karen J. Neste

HOMER GLEN—Karen J. Neste, 77, of Homer Glen, passed away Tuesday, Nov. 24, 2020 at Park Pointe Healthcare and Rehabilitation in Morris.

Born May 23, 1943 in Chicago, Karen Jeanne was a daughter of John and Jeanne (Dennett) DePyssler. She was raised and educated in Mt. Greenwood and graduated from Morgan Park High School. Karen worked as a custodian, and retired from the Orland School District. In her free time, she enjoyed playing cards, cooking, baking, shopping and watching her soap operas, particularly General Hospital.

Survivors include her four children: Kim (Mike) Budz, of Channahon; Sheri (Billy) Dowling, of Dade City, FL; Jeff (Kim) Neste, of Morris and Terry (Nikki) Neste, of Michigan; grandchildren: Amber (Ryan) Denato, D.J. Crook, Riley Neste, Arayah Neste, Shaydon Neste, Izabell Neste, Aryonna Neste and D.J. Neste; two great-granddaughters, Payten and Harlee; one brother, William (Suzie) DePyssler,



and one sister-in-law, Jeri Goss.

Karen was preceded in death by her parents, granddaughter, Valerie Crook and her former husband and the father of her children, Ken Neste.

Cremation rites have been accorded and a Memorial Mass will be planned for a later date at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Morris.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Karen's memory to the Immaculate Conception Building Fund, 514 E. Jackson St., Morris, IL 60450.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Karen's memorial page online through social media by logging onto: www.ReevesFuneral.com/obituary/Karen-Neste

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

Margaret A. Keigher

JOLIET—Margaret A. Keigher, of Joliet, passed away peacefully on Friday, Nov. 13, 2020, at her home in Joliet.

Margie was born on Sept. 7, 1931, the daughter of Leo and Veronica (née Haley) Keigher. She was born in Chicago and soon after moved to Joliet, where she attended St. Patrick's Grade School and graduated from St. Francis Academy, where she was the editor of the school paper and the lead in several school plays. She was a parishioner at St. Patrick's Church and the Cathedral of St. Raymond Nonnatus.

After graduation, Margie was involved in the Catholic Social Club of Joliet, worked as a counselor with the YMCA, and then worked at the Joliet Correctional Center on Collins Street in Joliet. It was her interactions with those entering the prison that led to her life's work of helping those in need. Margie then joined the Daughters of Charity, founded in France by St. Vincent de Paul and Saint Louise de Marillac to help the poor and sick. Margie took the name of Sister Leo after her father, Leo. She began teaching at St. Vincent's Grade School in Perryville, MO, close to the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, for which the Daughters of Charity are renowned. While in Perryville Margie continued her education on weekends and summers at Marillac College in St. Louis. Her brother, Francis (Brother Leo) served as a Vincentian brother in Perryville while Margie lived there.

After Margie's time at Perryville, she taught at grade schools in Birmingham, AL; Milwaukee, WI; St. Louis, MO and New Orleans, LA. After her father and brother passed away, Margie returned to Joliet to help her mother. After serving as a Daughter of Charity for 23 years, she continued her work as a teacher in Joliet at Hufford Jr. High School, Washington Jr. High, Joliet Junior College (Adult Learning Program), and also at the Spanish Center in Joliet.

Margie was such a kind and loving person and made an impact on so many lives. As a teacher, she had a gift for making learning fun, which made her a favorite with her students. She was always finding ways to help the poor and lonely both during her years as a Daughter of Charity and afterward in the Joliet area. She reached out to strangers she chanced to meet with a smile and a kind word, and would often say good-bye with a gesture upwards and the words "See you at the Party." She kept contact with her classmates from St. Patrick's and St. Francis Academy, enjoying the many reunions



over the years.

Margie loved her neighbors on Glenwood Avenue, often calling them "her angels." She really enjoyed their visits and was grateful for their friendship. She loved her parish, St. Patrick's Church, where she was a volunteer at liturgies and events throughout the years. She especially enjoyed their annual St. Patrick's Day party.

Margie loved and was devoted to her large family. She always looked forward to the many parties, reunions, events and vacations which she enjoyed so very much. She loved playing the piano, especially the old songs like Easter Parade, Doodley Doo and Till We Meet Again. When it was someone's birthday without fail she would call up and say "I have a singing telegram for (So-and-So). Please hold..." and after settling herself at the piano she would play and sing "Happy Birthday."

Having such a positive attitude and strong faith, Margie inspired her family to count their blessings, be generous to others, and stay close to Jesus. She led a sparing and sharing life, denying herself what most of us take for granted and giving very generously to charities, especially Food for the Poor. Margie set an example, day in and day out, of what it means to love one's neighbor, and the lessons she taught us will live on for generations. Her family loved her so much and she will be dearly missed by all.

Margie is survived by her siblings: Francis "Bro. Leo" Keigher, C.M.; Theresa (the late Jerry) O'Connor, Rita (the late Glenn) Keenan, Eileen (Tom) Schiltz, Jim (Joyce) Traina, Patrick (the late Carroll) Keigher and Kathleen (Warren) Lindsay and her brother-in-law Tom Flavin. Numerous nephews, nieces, and cousins also survive.

She is preceded by her parents, siblings: Mary (John "Buddy") McGrail, Lois Flavin and Mike Keigher; niece, Sheri Schiltz and great-niece, Marina Schiltz; as well as several aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Funeral Services were held on Saturday, Nov. 28, 2020 at the Cathedral of St. Raymond Nonnatus in Joliet, where a Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated. Interment followed at St. Joseph Cemetery in Manhattan, IL.

In lieu of flowers, memorials in her name to St. Vincent De Paul Society appreciated.

For more information visit her Memorial Tribute page at www.fredcdames.com.

Fred C. Dames Funeral Home in Joliet was in charge of arrangements.

Roger E. Melvin

COAL CITY—Roger E. Melvin, 81, of Coal City, passed away Saturday, Nov. 28, 2020 at Morris Hospital.

Born Aug. 9, 1939 in Bloomington, IL, Roger Earl was a son of Earl Laverne Melvin and Edith Eva (Pittman) Melvin. He was raised and educated in Streator, and on Oct. 16, 1960, Roger married Brenda Kaye Brady in the Presbyterian Church in Chenoa.

Roger worked as an automobile mechanic in Coal City for several years before gaining employment with Material Service Corporation, where he retired as the Superintendent of Maintenance following 35 years of service. He was a member of the Coal City Area Club, and was a lifelong member of the A.F. & A.M. Braidwood and Wilmington Masonic Lodge where he served as Grand Master (1985). Roger loved spending time outdoors, boating and fishing with his family. He enjoyed traveling with his brother to fish all across North America from Florida to Canada, and he took great pleasure in vacationing at the family home in Friendship, WI.

Roger will be remembered as a cherished and devoted husband to his wife, Brenda. He was a loving father and grandfather who always had a story to tell in his own unique way; always with a smile and some laughter. He will be deeply missed.

Survivors include his wife of 60 years, Brenda; three children: Dean (Marianne) Melvin, of Coal City; Darren (Heather) Melvin, of Wilmington and Jennie (Art) Johnson, of Crest Hill; son-in-law, Todd Schumacher; eight



grandchildren: Heather (Derek) Davis, Matt Melvin, Brian Popovich, Katie Cialone, Julie Popovich (fiancee, Hunter Sayers), Amy Popovich, Douglas Johnson and Brady Johnson; five great-grandchildren: Emily Popovich, Braxton Davis, Kade Melvin, Jace Cialone and Ella Popovich; one brother, Michael Melvin, of Oglesby; one sister-in-law, Mary Ann Melvin, of Streator and numerous nieces and nephews.

Roger was preceded in death by his parents, daughter, Debra Schumacher and six brothers: Randall (Mary) Melvin, Ronald Melvin, Gregory Melvin, Dennis Melvin, Richard Melvin and Roland Melvin in infancy.

Per Roger's wishes, green flameless cremation rites will be accorded, and a memorial visitation and celebration of life will be planned for a later date.

Roger will be laid to rest in Woodlawn Memorial Park in Joliet.

In lieu of flowers, preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Roger's memory to the Coal City Food Pantry.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Roger's memorial page online through social media by logging onto: www.ReevesFuneral.com/obituary/Roger-Melvin

Green flameless cremation services and memorial arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves Funeral Homes, Ltd. in Coal City.

Billy W. Pittman

WILMINGTON—Billy W. Pittman, 66, of Wilmington, passed away Wednesday, Nov. 25, 2020 at Amita Health St. Joseph Medical Center in Joliet.

Born Jan. 31, 1954 in Chattanooga, TN, he was the son of Henry and Willie H. (nee Farmer) Pittman. He retired from Big Bay Lumber after 30 years of employment. Billy enjoyed living the lake life at Shadow Lakes and was a member of the fishing club. His main hobby was fishing, but he also enjoyed traveling, shooting guns, and gardening, which he was known to have grown the best tomatoes.

Surviving are his wife of 30 years, Mary (nee Mucci) Pittman, who he married April 21, 1990 in Melrose Park, IL; five children: John (Chiara) SanFilippo, of Naperville; Billy Girard, of Chicago; Dena (Edward) Siears, of Chicago; Jamie (Joseph) Allen, of Naperville and Joseph (Ben Brooks) Pittman, of Yorkville; eight grandchildren: Jesse, Jeremy, Alyssa, Alex, Olivia, Audriana, Ella and Conor; one great-granddaughter, Mackenzie; two brothers, Wesley



(Wanda) Pittman, of Seymour, TN and Gary Capps, of Alba, MO; one sister, Vickie (John) Lester, of Charlotte, NC and several nieces and nephews and their families.

Preceding him in death were his parents, step-father, Virgil Capps and six siblings: Debbie, Brinda, Cricket, Terry, Larry and Jerry.

Visitation was held at the R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, Braidwood, Sunday, Nov. 29, 2020. Cremation rites were accorded following services.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in his name may be directed to the All Clear Foundation supporting first responders, www.allclearfoundation.org.

For more information and to visit his online guestbook, log on to www.rwpatterson-funeralhomes.com or find them on Facebook.

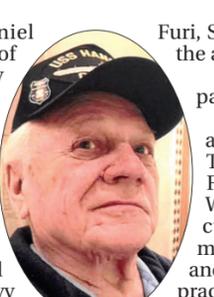
R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, 401 E. Main St., Braidwood was in charge of arrangements.

Daniel E. Sedlachek

WILMINGTON—Daniel E. Sedlachek "Dan," 83, of Wilmington passed away peacefully Monday, Nov. 16, 2020 at his home.

Born Sept. 5, 1937 in Pipestone, MN, Daniel Edward was the son of Edward Sedlachek and Florence DeBates. He was raised and educated in Pipestone, and graduated from Pipestone Area High School with the class of 1956. Dan served honorably in the United States Navy until his retirement in 1976 after 20 years of service. He was a member of the VFW Malcom J. Mayo Post 5422 in Wilmington and served on the Honor Guard. Dan also held membership with the Wilmington Masonic Lodge 208 and Loyal Order of Moose Lodge 241, as well as the Elks. He attended First Presbyterian Church in Wilmington. Dan's biggest passion was spending time with his family and friends in various settings. He enjoyed golf and was an avid bowler in his younger years and continued to bowl as much as he could in his later years.

Survivors include his life companion, Helen Ziller, of Wilmington, who he married on April 23, 2016; special families members: his loving step daughters, Debbie (Kevin Sao) Marion and Veronica (Marty) Orr; grandchildren: Brian (Nicole) Furi, Isaac Orr, Erica Orr, Jay Mashburn and Jessica (Jeremy Penfield) Kahler and great-grandchildren: Gavin and Mia



Furi, Stella, Jeremy Jr. and Adam who were the apple of his eye and made him laugh. Dan was preceded in death by his parents and sister-in-law, Alice Ziller.

The family will receive friends for a COVID observant visitation on Thursday, Dec. 3, 2020 at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd., in Wilmington from 3 until 6 p.m. Due to current pandemic guidelines, face masks will be required for attendees and measures of safe social distancing practices will be in order. The funeral home staff will assist the family not to exceed the safe number set forth for the visitation.

A private family service will follow Friday morning with Masonic Rites officiated by the A.F. & A.M.

Dan will be laid to rest in Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery with military honors provided by the Wilmington VFW Honor Guard.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Dan's name to the First Presbyterian Church of Wilmington, 301 N. Kankakee St. in Wilmington.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, or share Dan's memorial page by logging onto: www.BaskervilleFuneral.com/obituary/Daniel-Dan-Sedlachek

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



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OBITUARIES

Viola Starmann

WILMINGTON—Viola Hebert Starmann, 96, of Wilmington, and formerly of Joliet, passed away Saturday, Nov. 28, 2020 at Alden Estates of Shorewood.

Born Oct. 30, 1924 in Watseka, IL, Viola Mae was a daughter of Leslie and Ona (Peters) Allain. She was raised and educated in the St. Anne and Kankakee area and graduated from Kankakee High School with the class of 1942. Viola retired from Joliet Junior College as the assistant comptroller in 1982. She was a former member of the Kankakee Moose Lodge, belonged to the Joliet VFW Auxiliary and served as an officer with the Wilmington Senior Social Club.

One who was known for always willing to help others, Viola lived both fully and passionately. Traveling was a true joy, and she enjoyed traveling regardless whether it was in a motorhome, by plane, boat or in a car for fun. She especially took great pleasure in spending time with her children and grandchildren, and was proud to have been able to visit every place her family has lived both throughout the United States and abroad, including military bases. She will be remembered as an avid crafter, master angler, voracious reader and dedicated Chicago Cubs fan.

Survivors include her son, David (Kathleen) Hebert, of Joliet; son-in-law, Thomas Kohl, of Bourbonnais; grandchildren: Deborah (Todd) Groth, of Bourbonnais; William



“Stormy” Kohl, of Bradley and Kristine (Joseph) Zenkus, of Lake in the Hills, IL; great-grandchildren: Father Michael Groth, Lauren (Taylor) Oxner and Garret Kohl.

Viola was preceded in death by her parents, first husband, Robert Hebert in 1981; second husband, Charles Starmann in 1999; grandson, Michael Hebert in 1978; daughter, Judy Kohl in 2014, and one sister, Bernice (Phil) Gladu.

Per Vi's wishes, cremation rites have been accorded.

A graveside service was held on Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2020 in Kankakee Memorial Gardens, where she was laid to rest with her parents and grandson. Viola's grandson, Rev. Father Michael Groth will preside.

In lieu of flowers, preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Viola's memory to the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Disease Research.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Viola's memorial page online through social media by logging onto: www.BaskervilleFuneral.com/obituary/Viola-HebertStarmann

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

Barbara G. Smith

MORRIS—Barbara G. Smith, 61, a resident of Saratoga Towers in Morris, and formerly of Joliet, passed away Monday, Nov. 30, 2020.

Born Aug. 2, 1959 in Joliet, Barbara Gail was a daughter of Jean (Hannah) Stedman of Gardner, and the late James Thomas Stedman. She was raised in Joliet, and graduated from Joliet Central High School where she was active in ROTC and was an expert rifleman. Barbara enjoyed sewing and crocheting, and took pleasure in participating in craft shows throughout the years. Above all else, she was a wonderful mother who made her children her priority and loved them very much.

Survivors include her mother, Jean Stedman, of Gardner; daughter, Holly Smith (fiancé, Cody Kuehni), of Coal City; son, Jeremy Smith, of Bolingbrook; siblings: Dorothy Stedman (Linda), of Godley; Bob (Debbie) Stedman, of Tennessee; Mike Stedman, of Gardner and Debbie (Ken) Knepper, of Braidwood; numerous nieces and nephews, including Frank (Marissa) Staats, of Emington, IL and the father of her children, Keith Smith, of Bolingbrook.

Barbara was preceded in death by her father, James Stedman, and one son, James Smith on July 6, 2020.



The family will receive friends for a COVID observant visitation on Saturday, Dec. 5, 2020 at Reeves Funeral Home, 75 N. Broadway, one block north of Illinois Route 113 in Coal City from 10 a.m. until the time of private family funeral service at 12 p.m. Due to current pandemic guidelines, face masks will be required for attendees and measures of safe social distancing practices will be in order. The funeral home staff will assist the family not to exceed the safe number set forth for the visitation.

Those wishing to participate in Barbara's services online are welcome to join the live-streamed service beginning at 12 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 5, 2020 by logging onto her memorial page.

Cremation rites will be accorded following the services.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Barbara's memorial page online through social media by logging onto: www.ReevesFuneral.com/obituary/Barbara-Smith

Funeral services and cremation arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves Funeral Homes, Ltd. in Coal City.

Tier 3 mitigations: What it all means

STAFF REPORT

Tier 3 resurgence mitigations went into effect statewide on Friday. As with Tier 1 and Tier 2, masks and social distancing are required in all public spaces.

The resurgence mitigations include the following guidelines:

Gathering limitations

Indoor gatherings of more than one household are prohibited. Outdoor gatherings are limited to no more than 10 people.

Restaurant, Bars, and Social Events/Banquets

No indoor service. Outdoor service is permissible provided establishments follow social distancing guidelines of 6-foot separations between tables with parties of six people or fewer. Such service should be by reservation only. Tents/temporary outdoor structures may be used provided they have at least two of the sides open to provide adequate air flow, and patrons inside a temporary outdoor structure must be seated, and tables must be spaced a minimum of six feet apart. Such structures must also adhere to state fire marshal standards.

Patrons must follow the restaurant and bar guidelines in the establishment, including wearing masks when wait-staff approach and when they are not eating or drinking at a table.

All bars and restaurants should close by 11 p.m., and open no earlier than 6 a.m.

Meetings/Gatherings

Meeting rooms, banquet centers, private party rooms, country clubs, etc. may not host meetings or events – including weddings – under

any capacity.

Retail

Grocery stores and pharmacies can operate at 50% capacity. Retail and service counter stores that are not primarily engaged in the sale of groceries or medicinal drugs (pharmacies) are limited to 25% capacity. Big Box stores that sell both groceries and other items are limited to 25% capacity.

Malls are restricted to 25% capacity within each store as well as in common areas, and mall food courts are restricted to take away services only. The capacity limits do not include employees.

Flea markets and farmer's markets should operate at 25% capacity, or 15 people per 1,000 feet, with booths places the lesser of every third spot or 30 feet apart.

Sports and Fitness Centers

Health and fitness centers are limited to 25% of occupancy at any given time. No group fitness classes are permitted, but one-on-one personal training is allowed. Health and fitness centers should configure workout stations to be six feet apart, and locker rooms should be closed. Health and fitness facilities must use a reservation system to keep track of capacity as well as to assist in potential contact tracing efforts.

Youth and recreational sports

All indoor group sporting and recreational activities including youth and adult recreational sports are not permitted. One-on-one indoor sports are permitted. Teams may practice outdoors in groups of 10 or less, with proper social distancing. Competitive play is not per-

missible. Golf courses can continue to operate under the golf guidance. Professional sports and collegiate level sports teams are exempt from these mitigations.

Indoor Recreation

Movie theatres, museums, and bowling alleys are closed.

Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreational facilities, including outdoor exhibits at zoos and museums, can continue to operate at 25% capacity. Outdoor group activities limited to 10 people or less, participants/guests must wear face coverings at all times

Casinos

Casinos are not permitted to operate. All video gaming terminals in bars, restaurants and other locations must be closed.

Personal Care Services

Personal services facilities such as spas, hair salons, barber shops, nail salons, waxing centers, tattoo parlors, and similar facilities may be open but must cap occupancy at no more than 25%, and services that require patrons to remove face coverings are prohibited. Spa body services such as body scrubs, body wraps and other body treatments should not be provided. Nail services are permissible with face coverings at all times, and at 25% capacity. Pet grooming is permissible at 25% capacity.

Places of Worship, Funerals

Religious organizations and houses of worship are strongly encouraged to consult and follow the recommended practices and guidelines from the Illinois Department of Public Health, including providing online, outdoor, or drive-in services. Funerals are limited to 10 fam-

ily members of the decedents, not including staff.

Daycares

Daycares licensed by DCFS should continue to follow those guidelines. Day camps not licensed by DCFS can operate in group sizes of 15 or fewer.

The Illinois Department of Public Health will continue to track the positivity rates and hospital capacity metrics in regions over a 14-day monitoring period to determine if mitigations can be relaxed, if additional mitigations are required, or if current mitigation should remain in place.

In order to see a removal of Tier 3 mitigations and transition to Tier 2, a region must experience less than 12% test positivity rate for three consecutive days and greater than 20% available intensive care unit (ICU) and hospital bed availability and declining 7-day average COVID hospitalizations in 7 out of the last 10 days.

State and local law enforcement along with local health departments and the Illinois Department of Public Health are empowered to enforce the resurgence mitigations.

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Cheatgrass wreaks havoc on our ecosystems

Dear EarthTalk: What is Cheatgrass and when did it become such a big problem out west?-- William G., Portland, ME



Cheatgrass is an annual grass native to Europe and eastern Asia that European settlers brought to North America in the late 1800s as forage for grazing their livestock.

Little did they know at the time that this innocuous looking herbaceous plant would eventually wreak havoc on ecosystems across the American West, edging out native plants and creating conditions ripe for now all-too-frequent brush fires.

"It probably wouldn't have outcompeted with native vegetation if early settlers hadn't also introduced large numbers of livestock like cattle and sheep into sagebrush country," reports Mike Pellant, a retired Rangeland Ecologist with the Bureau of Land Management who volunteers for the non-profit Sage Grouse Initiative.

"Our palatable native grasses and forbs [herbaceous flowering plants] weren't adapted to those high levels of uncontrolled overgrazing by domestic livestock, which created a void that Cheatgrass

quickly filled."

And once Cheatgrass gains a foothold, it ups the risk around it significantly, in part because it sets seed in the spring and by the heart of fire season, in mid- to late-summer, its shoots have dried out and become like tinder that can spark into fire with the slightest provocation.

"Basically, cheatgrass is comparable to tissue paper covering the landscape-an easily-ignited fuel that carries fire quickly and spreads it rapidly," adds Pellant.

Native plants in the Great Basin have not evolved to handle such frequent burns-every five to seven years on average lately. As such, each Cheatgrass-fueled brush fire creates more open space for more of the weed to quickly colonize. And by moving into open territory before native

plants have a chance to set seed, Cheatgrass ensures its dominance over the desert ecosystems it inhabits.

The ascendancy of Cheatgrass is also a big problem for native wildlife as well as plants. The Greater sage grouse, Mule deer and Pygmy rabbit are just a few of the iconic desert species dependent on healthy sagebrush plants for their own survival. If sagebrush steppe landscapes go the way of the dodo thanks to Cheatgrass, so will these species and dozens of others which contribute to making the American desert such a special place.

That said, there is little we can actually do to effectively stop Cheatgrass' spread-it has already taken over some 50-70 million acres of desert across the American West.

Herbicides applied widely

have been effective at removing grown Cheatgrass plants, but these synthetic chemicals do nothing against the seeds already rooted in the soil-meaning the plant will sprout anew the next spring regardless.

Employing all-natural soil microbes to inhibit the growth of Cheatgrass' root system below the surface shows promise as a potential solution. But it could be years before we know whether it's feasible to use on such an epic scale given how much Cheatgrass has already spread across the sagebrush steppe.

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INVASIVE CHEATGRASS has taken over more than 50 million acres of desert across the American West.

Commentary

No good for taxpayers – Biden administration likely to tout more taxpayer-funded broadband

BY JOHNNY KAMPIS
THE CENTER SQUARE

President-elect Joe Biden's broadband plan indicates he will push for more government-owned (taxpayer-funded) internet networks, which would be bad news for taxpayers.

Biden's agenda on his website talks in detail about his broadband goals. That includes expanding broadband to every American, which could include wireless broadband through the deployment of 5G.

The most alarming part of the plan: Biden says he will task the U.S. National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) "to support cities and towns that want to build municipally-owned broadband networks." This means that taxpayers will be on the hook for these systems.

A Democratic task force put together by Biden and Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) wants to empower the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to largely undo much of what was accomplished by Chairman Ajit Pai under the Trump administration, includ-

ing reversing the agency's stance on government broadband.

"Democrats will take action to prevent states from blocking municipalities and rural co-ops from building publicly-owned broadband networks, and increase federal support for municipal broadband," the recommendations released by that task force this summer state.

But the list of such projects that were tried and failed are quite long. The Taxpayers Protection Alliance highlighted many of them in its report "GON with the Wind: The Failed Promise of Government Owned Networks Across America." More follies are noted on TPA's "Broadband Boondoggles."

Jeffrey Westling, a fellow in innovation and technology policy at R Street Institute, told TPA that government can help usher in infrastructure growth in other ways, such as loosening regulations and offering incentives to private providers to aid expansion to high-cost areas such as rural America. That's a better plan than promoting municipal broadband, he said.

"There's a better way of doing this that doesn't put taxpayers at risk," Westling said.

Wish list for the Biden administration

U.S. Telecom: The Broadband Association agrees with Westling. In its agenda for the next administration's first 100 days, the organization lays out its wish list for the goal of connecting every American with broadband.

This includes addressing "antiquated policies" that harm broadband deployment and discourage competition. U.S. Telecom said the administration can work to eliminate high pole attachment rates, help expedite permitting processes and lift mandates that companies must sustain outdated networks rather than devote more resources to deploying the next generation of networks.

U.S. Telecom also said Congress should fund the Broadband Data Act so the FCC can create better broadband maps to ensure taxpayer resources are better targeted toward unserved and underserved areas. The group also rejects any proposal that would treat broadband as a government utility and the potential red tape that could ensue.

"All policies should be viewed with an eye toward

removing barriers that impede getting broadband to everyone," the U.S. Telecom agenda states.

Biden has indicated his desire to significantly increase spending on broadband infrastructure – a move not unheralded, if never implemented, under President Trump – including allocating an additional \$20 billion in rural broadband infrastructure.

As for a program to specifically fund government-owned networks, a plan touted by Democratic presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), is not likely if the GOP keeps control of the upper chamber of Congress.

"I don't see something like that getting past a Republican Senate," Brent Skorup, senior research fellow in technology at the Mercatus Center, told TPA.

Rather than push for the growth of government internet, the FCC under the Biden administration would be better served to leave the task of infrastructure growth to the private sector and remove any regulations that would impede that goal.

Johnny Kampis is a senior fellow and investigative reporter for the Taxpayers Protection Alliance.

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

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

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	
11				12		13			14			
15					16				17			
	18				19				20		21	
					22	23			24			
25	26	27	28	29								
30						31						
32							33	34	35	36	37	
					38	39	40		41	42		
					43				44			
	45	46	47									
48					49			50	51	52	53	54
55					56				57			58
59					60				61			
62					63				64			

- CLUES ACROSS**
- Opposite of west
 - Caesar, comedian
 - Helps little firms
 - A way to censor
 - Expresses atomic and molecular weights
 - Chalcedony
 - Type of sword
 - A corporation's first offer to sell stock to the public
 - Attired
 - A sequence of winding turns
 - Pal
 - Expresses pleasure
 - Amendable
 - Clear
 - A way to cut off
 - Indigenous Thai person
 - Pale brownish yellow color
 - Aquatic plants genus
 - Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
 - Merchants
 - Fix a chair
 - Throws into disorganization
 - Famed German composer
 - Keyboard key
 - Oral polio vaccine developer
 - Partner to pain
 - Where golfers start
 - Jenny __: weight loss program
 - Sailing dinghy
 - Suffix that forms adjectives
 - Speeds at which music is played
 - Body part
 - Fall back
 - Ancient Greek sophist

- CLUES DOWN**
- One point south of due east
 - Wings
 - One point south of southeast
 - The shirts on our backs
 - One who works on the seas
 - Select jury
 - Small intestines parts
 - Plant of the heath family
 - Extrasolar planet
 - Creates more of
 - Before
 - Forms over a cut
 - Runs down
 - Exercise regimen __-bo
 - Unkeyed
 - Principle underlying the universe
 - Corpuscle count (abbr.)
 - Residue
 - Company that rings receipts
 - Rugged mountain range
 - Commercials
 - NY footballer
 - They __
 - Soviet Socialist Republic
 - Poked holes in the ground
 - Pitchers
 - Your
 - Diana __, singer
 - Important document for inventors
 - Bangladesh capital
 - Fluid that flows in the veins of Greek gods
 - Famed daguerreotype photographer
 - Where military personnel work
 - Play a role
 - La __ Tar Pits, Hollywood
 - Unstressed-stressed
 - Type of palm tree
 - Judo garments

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to jewelry. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 22 = R)

A. 18 2 9 2 12 22 16
Clue: Personal ornaments

B. 17 20 22 20 15
Clue: Measure of purity of gold

C. 19 22 13 12 12 13 20 14 6 2
Clue: Intense brightness of light

D. 22 13 14 10
Clue: Finger jewelry

Answers: A. Jewelry B. karat C. brilliance D. ring

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to jewelry.

LISREV

Answer: Silver

Guess Who?

I am an animal expert and conservationist born in Australia on December 1, 2003. I first came into the limelight when I appeared on my father's reality show. I followed in my famous parents' professional footsteps and co-host a television show about animals.

Answer: Robert Irwin

JEWELRY WORD SEARCH

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

WORDS

ARTICULATION
BAGUETTE
BANGLE
BRIOLETTE
BROOCH
COLLET
CRYSTAL
DESIGN
DIAMOND
EARRING
FACETS
FILIGREE
INCLUSION
MARQUISE
NECKLACE
ONYX
OPAL
PEARLS
QUARTZ
RHINESTONE
SETTING
SPACER
STONE
TRADEMARK

Illinois State Trooper squad struck on I-80

Motorist charged with reckless driving

On Sunday, Nov. 29 at approximately 11:34 p.m., an Illinois State Police (ISP) District 05 Trooper was conducting a traffic stop on Interstate 80 westbound at Francis Road in Will County.

The Trooper was seated inside his fully marked stationary squad car with the emergency lights activated on the right shoulder of the roadway. While conducting a traffic stop on a White Honda, the Trooper's squad car and the Honda were struck.

A silver Chevrolet failed to yield to the authorized emergency vehicle and struck the driver's side of the Trooper's squad car and continued forward striking the rear end of the Honda. The driver of the Honda was transported to a local area hospital with injuries. The Trooper did not sustain any injuries.

The driver of the Chevrolet, Cheyenne T. Payton, 21-year-old female of Naperville, also did not sustain any injuries. Payton was arrested and charged with



A 21-YEAR-OLD Naperville woman was charged with reckless driving after failing to follow Scott's Law by slowing and moving into the opposite lane, and thus hitting a Illinois State Police squad car that was making a traffic stop on Interstate 80.

reckless driving and was cited well as other Illinois Vehicle Code (IVC) violations. The ISP reminds the public of the requirements of

"Move Over" (Scott's) Law. When approaching a stationary emergency vehicle with emergency lights activated, or any stationary vehicle with their hazard lights activated, drivers are required to slow down, change lanes if they can do so safely, and in all cases proceed with due caution.

"It is especially important now, as winter is fast approaching, to be aware of emergency vehicles and stranded motorists on the side of the roadway. Please avoid an

unnecessary tragedy by making responsible choices when behind the wheel," stated ISP District 05 Interim Commander, Lt. David Keltner.

"Emergency personnel risk their lives daily to protect others. We would like to remind the public to obey all traffic laws, including the "Move Over" (Scott's) Law, in order to protect the lives of our Troopers, other first responders and all members of the motoring public," he concluded.

CHAMBER SPOTLIGHT

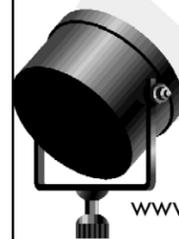
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Illinois gas prices at a stand still

Illinois gas prices are unchanged in the past week, averaging \$2.14/g Monday, according to GasBuddy's daily survey of 4,378 stations. Gas prices in Illinois are 3.5 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 41.9 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois is priced at \$1.78/g Monday while the most expensive is \$2.79/g, a difference of \$1.01/g.

The lowest price in the state today is

\$1.78/g while the highest is \$2.79/g, a difference of \$1.01/g. The national average price of gasoline has risen 1.8 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$2.11/g.

The national average is unchanged from a month ago and stands 47.6 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

"As the nation saw subdued traffic for Thanksgiving, gas prices have been mostly stable in the last week as gasoline demand plummeted to the lowest since spring as Americans stayed closer to

home," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy.

"With oil holding near a pandemic high around \$45 per barrel, we may see additional upward pressure in the weeks ahead, but it's unlikely to be earth shattering. We're likely to remain in somewhat of a limbo until early 2021 or vaccines begin to see widespread distribution and Americans slowly start venturing back to their normal lifestyle- if they ever do."

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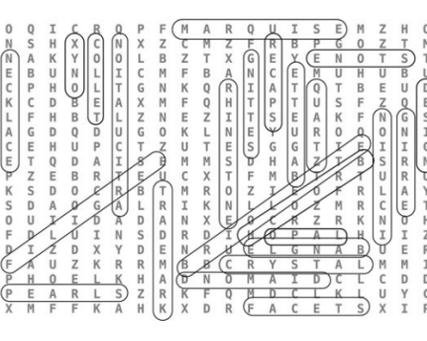
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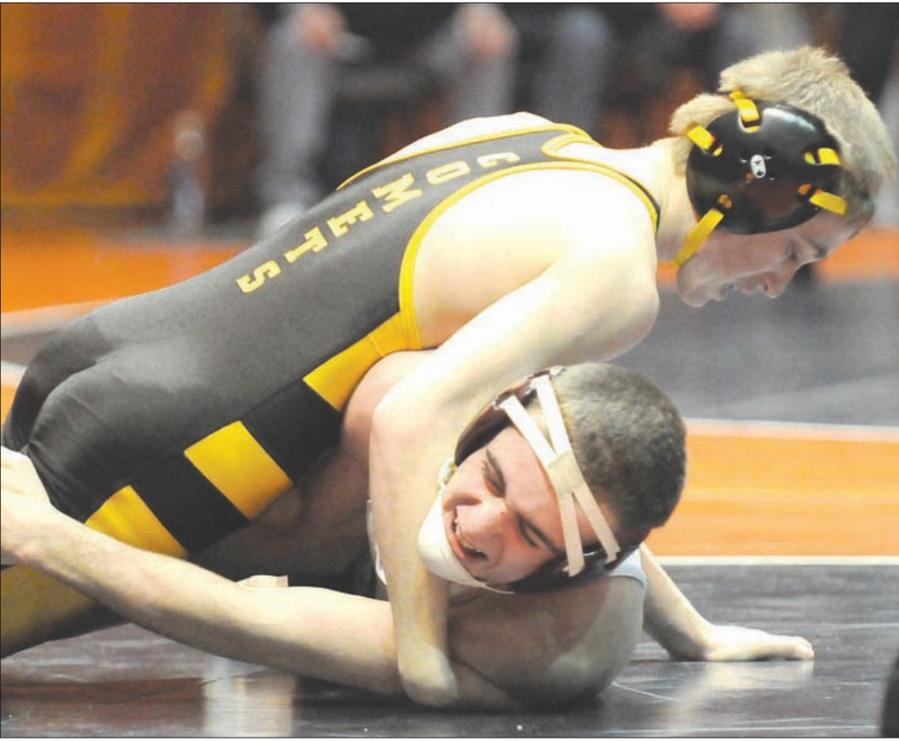


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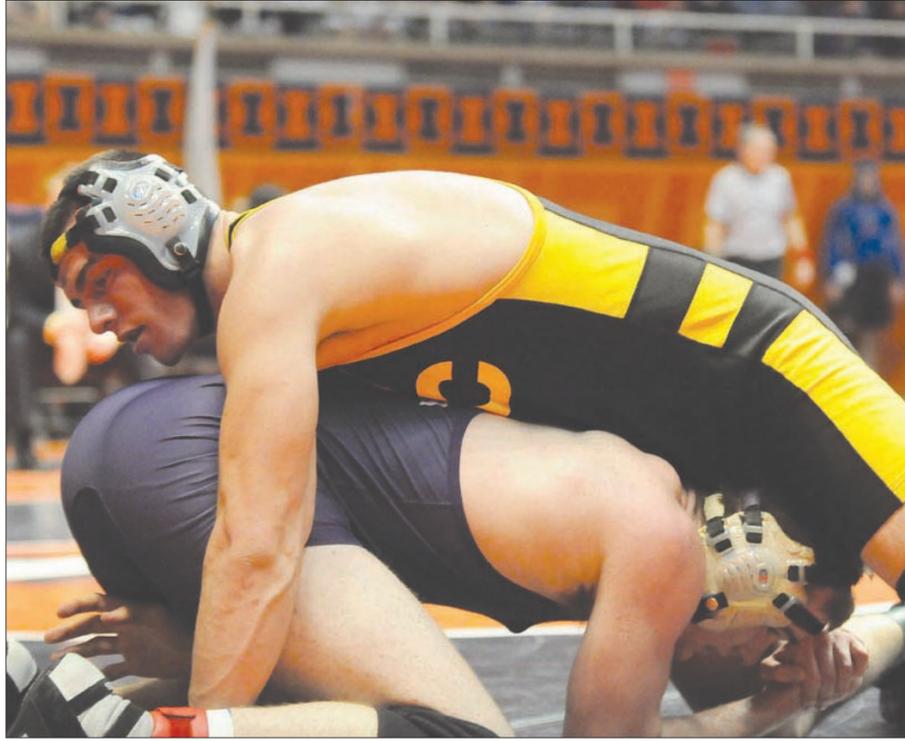
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COMET SPORTS



File Photo
STEVE ROSENBERG was also named as an honorable mention to coach Thomas Davis' dream team. Rosenberg placed third in his senior season.



File Photo
ZACH BOYER was another wrestler to be an honorable mention pick on the wrestling dream team. Boyer placed fourth in 2011.

RCHS dream team

CONT. FROM PAGE 14

and he lost to him all three times. He was a great wrestler coming into high school and then he just built himself into a brute. There were so many one point matches between the two of them. They were both awesome wrestlers.

The other Spiker brother Alex also deserves a mention. Alex qualified for state in 2002 during his senior year, won his first round matchup and ended up falling in wrestlebacks with a sparkling 36-6 record.

"He was a very powerful hard working kid. He was really good. I mean, we wrestled the best and back before there were two class and now there's three. When there were two classes, there were a lot better kids in the weight classes so it made quite a difference."

Steve Conrad

The lightweight Conrad wrestled at 103,

qualifying for state three different years. He placed fourth in 2001. During that span, he holds one of the best winning percentages as a Comet as he won 82% of his matches during those three seasons.

"He was a great kid. He was a hard worker and he'd do whatever you told him to do and just go. Very coachable and likeable at the same time."

Brandon Zalud

Another two-time state qualifier and placer Zalud won a pair of third place medals at 152 pounds in 1994 and 95.

"Brandon was the master at the inside fireman's tilt. He could tilt anybody. When he shoot in on a guy, he'd take his elbow and then he'd drop the elbow to the mat and just shoot around. He could do that to almost anybody. If the guy stood up, he'd fireman him. That was his big one. He had a very good switch too."

Zalud carried a 75-13 record during that time.

Matt Mathena



File Photo
STATE CHAMPION COMET Trent Lyons was an honorable mention named to the wrestling dream team after winning state in 2011.

Mathena would be slotted in at 285 after placing third in 1999 with a 34-4 record.

"He was probably the best heavyweight I've ever had," added Davis. "Him and Jim Reed were two very good heavyweights. He placed third and he was good."

"He was big. After his freshman year, he had to make 275 so he had to come down from 300-something every year to make weight. Then, he was a big powerful. He was really good with what we call the 'Reed-Custer headlock' which was basically a Greco headlock where you can either throw them one way. Then, if they put their head down to your chest, then you could screw him down to the mat. You just take his head, bury his head to your chest and twist hard and then he goes down. He did that to almost anybody."

Brian Shinski

Shinski was the first state qualifier for the Comets, making it to state in 1980. Davis notes even though Shinski was before his coaching tenure, he heard a lot about him.

"He graduated before I took over the program. I just heard he was good. I met him once when I was coaching JV basketball before I took over the wrestling program."

Duffy brothers

Dan Duffy, Patrick Duffy and Brian Duffy were all standout wrestlers on Davis' teams. Dan and Patrick made it to state in the lightweight class.

"They were strong bulls. They just went after it. I don't think they were afraid of anything."

Patrick made it to state in 1993 at 125 as a senior and got through his first round opponent by way of a 19-6 major decision. He fell in wrestlebacks but he was the first of the Duffy brothers to go to state.

The other one was Dan Duffy who went in 1998 as a junior. He made it through his first round opponent with a 6-3 decision but he too had problems in wrestlebacks. He finished with a 34-8 record.

Darrin Austin

Austin, who transferred over to Reed-Custer, would be the next wrestler to make the dream team. He made it to state in 1991 at 140, finishing with a 34-12 record.

Dennis Hennessy

Hennessy, who was nicknamed the 'Horse', was the next of Davis' wrestlers named to the team. Hennessy made state at 152 pounds, finishing with a 20-6 record as a junior.

"He was flexible and he was strong as an ox. Technically, he wasn't the most sound wrestler but he didn't need to be because most people, if he got in the right place, he'd get them on their backs."

Jeremy Helsing

Reed-Custer assistant wrestling coach Helsing was a sound wrestler at 135 pounds that made it to state.

"He was a good technique wrestler and he ended up winning a regional championship in Dwight when we beat Coal City. He was very flexible and he went at it hard too. He's a technician he knows a lot."

Zach West

West was another state qualifier, who deserves a mention on the team. He qualified for state in 2000 at 140 pounds and finished with a 21-5 record that year. He lost a close matchup during the first round.

"Zach West was a tall, skinny beanpole. He was great with his legs."

Matt Kuchar & Bobby Tribble

Kuchar, who was a state qualifier at 171 in 1997, was also selected for the dream team. Kuchar finished with a 28-7 record that year. Bobby was also a member of the same team and even though he didn't make it to state, he was a very strong wrestler at the upper weights. He is actually the father of Reed-Custer 113 pound wrestler Ryan Tribble.

"Matt and Bobby were both very good wrestlers. Both wrestlers were very good with their legs. Very good technique wrestlers. I think Kuchar was on the state team, the one that won fourth place."

Nathan Sharper

Sharper, who made it to state at 171 in 1994, was also named to the dream team. Sharper finished with a 1-1 record at state and an overall record of 33-11 that year.

"Nathan was just a strong kid who really went at it. He was determined. He was tough. He wrestled with Billy Waliczek, who wrestled at 215. He won more one point matches than somebody I've ever seen. He was very patient."

Jacob Sinkular

Sinkular, who qualified for state as a senior in 2002, was another standout wrestler for Davis. Sinkular, who was nicknamed "Pip" finished 21-8.

"Great kid, great personality and a really good wrestler. He was tall and lean. He was a good shooter."

Jimmy Lee

Lee, who went to state in 1986 at 155, was named to the dream team. Lee won his first match by way of a decision. Then, he ran into the eventual champion and was unable to get by him, finishing with a 34-6 record.

"He had a great fireman's carry. He was kind of like Zalud's but a little quicker."

Chris Weber

Weber was another standout wrestler that made the team. He actually got better as the time went on and became one of the top wrestlers by the time he was a senior.

"Chris Weber was a cool story because his freshman and sophomore year, he didn't win a match. In his junior year, he went on and he won all kinds of matches and his senior year same thing so he's a great story about what hard workers can do."

Jon Loveland was another state qualifier for Davis. Loveland made it to state during the 2001 season, holding a 29-7 record that season.

Davis was also very thankful to have his assistant coaches Brian McTague and Ryan Bunton, who really helped him out coaching the team.

"Those two were absolutely awesome. They were part of the reason I was successful was them."

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File Photo
STATE CHAMPION COMET Trent Lyons was an honorable mention named to the wrestling dream team after winning state in 2011.



Photo by Fred Ruetz

REGIONAL CHAMPS - The Reed-Custer wrestling team captured first place in the Plano regional 10 years ago. Comets include (from left, front) Matt Engel (135 champion); Jonathan Eichelberger (112 champion); Pat Casagrande (145 champion); Trent Lyons (103 champion); Zack Speed (171 champion) and Steve Rosenberg (119 champion). Standing are assistant coach Nathan Martinez; Jake Jedryck (140 4th place); assistant coach Jake Sinkular; Spencer Butler (285 champion); Zach Boyer (160 2nd); Ryan Garbin (152 3rd); Alex Edgar; Shane Speed (215 2nd); Chase Fisher (189 champion); head coach Andy Gleixner; Billy Chancey (125 champion); Luke Vandermyde; Ryan Shorkey; assistant coach Jeremy Helsing; and assistant coach Joey Rivera.

Davis highlights Comet state champion, place winning wrestlers on 'dream team'

BY SHAWN LONG
SPORTS WRITER

To come up with a dream team of Reed-Custer High

School wrestlers we needed a coach with longevity. We turned to Thomas Davis, who remembered some of the top student-athletes from his 25

years of coaching Comet wrestlers.

Davis began coaching Reed-Custer in 1981 and finished up in 2003. During that

time, he took them to state eight times, capturing a fourth place trophy in 1996 when the Comets were 22-7 with three state placers. That was the biggest moment of his wrestling coaching career, having three wrestlers in the Grand March.

"We were planning that day for what we'd do the next year," said Davis. "That's the way it always was. We never took the time to enjoy what we had. We always tried to think about what we could have the next year. I think the year we had three or four in the state finals where all my coaches got to walk with somebody, I think that was very special for me and one of my favorite moments."

Jay Conley

Davis' first state placer was 152-pound champion Jay Conley, who in 1990, after battling regular season rival Vic Sebastian from Peotone, he won 7-4 to finish with a 37-3 record.

"My first state champion had one of those rivalries that went back-and-forth," commented Davis. "He'd beat him then he lost to him. Then, he'd beat him and he finished it off at state in their five meetings throughout the year."

Jay was solid on his feet.

"Jay had a great double leg. He was just a great basic. You couldn't stop his double leg and you couldn't stop his switch so if you could take somebody down and you could get away, you could beat anybody. And Jay was very flexible. He just went into every match like it was the

first time he was wrestling somebody. It was really fun to watch."

Branden Petersen

Petersen, who now coaches at Coal City Middle School, earned third place at 103 pounds in 1996.

Petersen picked up a 6-0 decision and a pin to capture third. He was a two-time state placer, third and second place in his final two seasons at Reed-Custer. He finished his senior season with a 34-8 record. He was 69-13 in his two state qualifying seasons.

"He placed three times second place. He lost to the same kid from Coal City every time Todd Combes," added Davis.

Petersen was a wrestler that liked to use a couple different tools in order to win according to Davis.

"He was a great leg wrestler. He was really good with ankle picks. He could really do it all. Good switch. Good stand up. He was good."

Don Hall

Hall captured second place at 135 with a 37-6 record during his junior year in 96.

"He was a great kid and a great wrestler. He was another one of those that had a kid in his weight class that was one of the best in the nation. His senior year, he ran into a kid in the state finals that was just awesome."

Jason Mandac

Mandac earned second place at 152 with a 37-5 record during his senior season. Jason was a two-time state qualifier and a single state placer.

Ron Housman

Housman, who placed fourth individually on the 1997 Wrestling Comets, was also named to the dream team. Housman finished 34-7 at 119.

Donovan Marschner

He was a three-time state qualifier, placing second in 1993 with a 37-3 record at 140 pounds.

"He lost in the finals to a kid from Pinckneyville, the coaches son. Donovan was strong, was a really hard worker and worked at it all the time."

Donovan's legacy continues through his nephew Kody, who went to state in his freshman year. Davis notes even though Kody is bigger, he sees a lot of Donovan in him.

"He's a stud. He did really good last year and this year would have been his coming out year. I watched him wrestle last year and then also in sixth grade with Yale being the coach. I said, 'He's going to be good'. In seventh grade he lost in the state finals and the year after that, he won state so pretty impressive."

Joey Spiker

Joey, who placed second at state in 2000, had a nice rivalry going with a kid from Bishop McNamara.

"Spiker was a big strong kid. He went back-and-forth all year with this Kimberlin from Bishop McNamara. They met at a dual and Joey beat him 2-1 in overtime. Then, they met at regionals, sectionals and state."

SEE RCHS DREAM TEAM, PAGE 13



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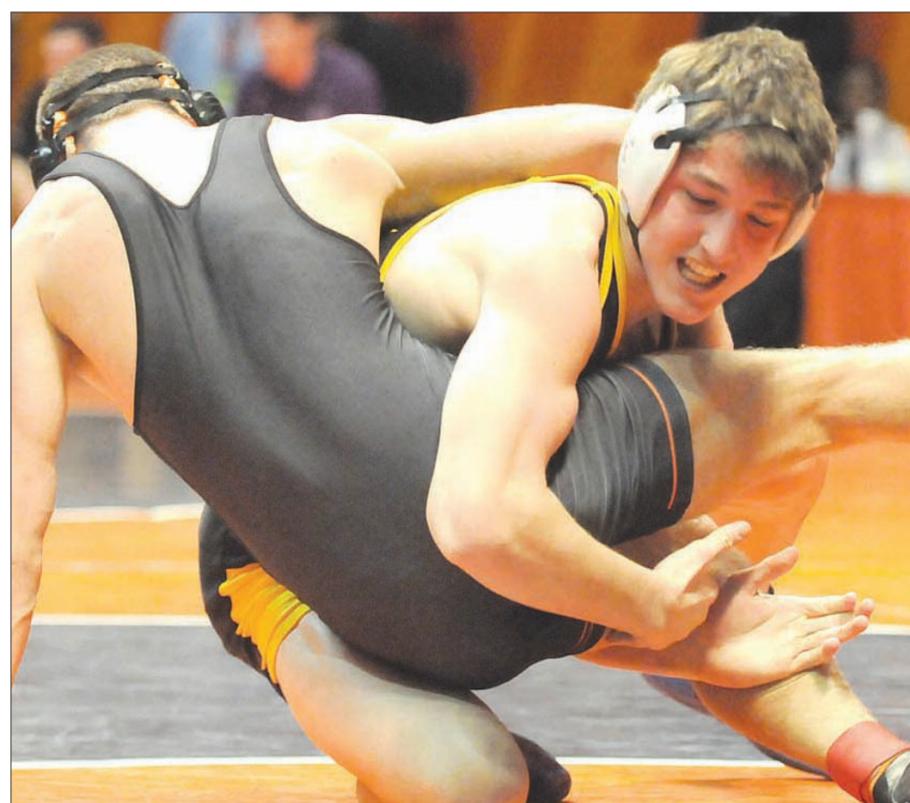
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File Photo

BILLY CHANCEY was selected by former Reed-Custer wrestling coach Thomas Davis to be a wrestler on the dream team after capturing two state titles in 2010 and 2011.

Braidwood Journal correction

In the Nov. 25 edition of the *Braidwood Journal*, the story entitled 'Past coaches give volleyball dream team nod' did not

include Kim Stewart, Michelle Montana and Kay Cannon as rightful members of the dream team. This newspaper tries

to be fair and accurate in its reporting. When errors do occur, we appreciate the opportunity to correct them.